

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Edited and
Published by
ROBERT W. FRANSON

MARCH 2, 1964

NUMBER 14

NOVA ECLIPSED

by John Carnell

Part of Britain's s-f history comes to an end in March, when Nova Publications Ltd ceases to exist and their two pioneer magazines, New Worlds Science Fiction and Science Fantasy are discontinued, leaving only two USA reprints and five importations in a narrowing sales field.

Formed originally in 1948 by an enthusiastic group of British fans and writers solely for the publication of good science fiction, Nova was refinanced in 1954 by the Maclaren Group of publishing companies and expanded both magazines nationally, developing mainly British writers. Nobody ever thought the time would come when the magazines would disappear, but changing conditions in the general public's reading habits are reshaping publishing patterns, both here and in the USA.

Despite numerous obstacles, the two magazines were in a thriving position in 1958, when two apparently insignificant and unrelated factors occurred. In October of that year, import restrictions imposed as a wartime economy were relaxed—and the paperback market started its mushroom growth. By the middle

Editor's note: John Carnell was one of the original partners in Nova, and is the editor of both New Worlds and Science Fantasy.

of 1959, the battle for space on the bookstalls and newsstands was developing into open warfare as paperback production stepped up and a steady flow of imported magazines and paperbacks came in from the USA. At the same time, through similar circumstances, three-quarters of Nova's exports to Australasia were swept away.

In 1959, after the demise of Authentic and Nebula, the Nova magazines had a circulation of over 20,000 copies per issue at a time when only two or three s-f paperbacks were published each month with a maximum print run of 20,000 copies (of which about 15,000 were sold in six months). In 1963, Nova's circulation had been halved, while eight to ten s-f paperbacks a month were coming from some ten publishers with a minimum first print of 30,000 copies and reprinting within six months. The figures speak for themselves.

However, it isn't just s-f which has been affected. During the past two years almost all the regular detective, western, and thriller magazines have ceased publication, 50% of the national and specialist magazines have been revamped in size, style, and presentation, in a desperate attempt to combat the rising tide of paperback sales, and hardcover publishers are leaning more and more on direct-supply library sales than sales to the general public. Only publications owned by the big

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SFR STORY RATINGS

Story category	NOVELLAS	NOVELETS ...	SHORT STORIES
Length in words	(19-39,000) ...	(10-18,000) ..	(up to 9,000)
Worth buying magazine for .	I-IV	A-C	a-b
Worth reading	V-VI	D-E	c-d
Read at your own risk ...	VII-IX	F-H	e-g

NOVELS

(40,000+ words)

Worth buying 1-5
 Marginal 6-7
 Buy at your own risk . 8-10

The ratings designate how well we liked the story. We do not rate collections or anthologies. Two stories "worth reading" usually make an issue worth buying.

SCIENCE REVIEWS

by Bill Pond

Recently two magazines have come out, one from Britain and the other from America. They are not devoted to science fiction, but to science fact. They are included here because it is felt that they will be of interest to readers of science fiction.

The BASRA Journal, Vol. 1, #6.
 21 pp. 2/- (28¢)

This magazine contains various pieces written by amateur scientists, ranging from short tidbits to long articles. The magazine is published by the British Amateur Scientific Research Association as a method of publishing the various ideas of amateur scientists. Subscription to the Journal is membership in the society.

Subscription rates: 8/- or \$1.12 per year (four issues).
 Send to: James England, 64, Ridge Road, Kingswinford, Staffs, England.

The Journal of Scientific Controversy, Vol. 1, #1. 32 pp.
 \$1.25 (9/-)

The JoSC might be described as the professional equivalent of The BASRA Journal. It contains articles by professional scientists who have ideas which might harm their reputations, or

are not generally accepted. This magazine is recommended to those really interested in science, as it is not written down to its readership.

Subscription rates for the intermittently published magazine are: \$4.00 for 4 issues. Send to: The Journal of Scientific Controversy, Box 855, Boulder, Colorado 80301.

Back issues of SFR are only ten cents apiece. If you like, mention which ones you want when you renew, and they will be deducted from your future issues.

NOVA ECLIPSED

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combines and distributed on a national basis are standing any chance in the present war but are not in a very happy position. One after another the small companies are being merged—or sub-merged.

It is a simple matter of statistics why the two British magazines are to cease—but this is all a matter of change rather than decay. Just as the pulp magazines were ousted by the digest-sized, so the latter is being strangled by the paperbacks—and in this latter field I hope to set up a chain of s-f short story publications which will take the place of the dying Nova magazines. If you cannot lick them—join them.

—John Carnell

MAGAZINE REVIEWS by Dean M. Sandin

Serials are not rated until the review of the final installment. Fantasy is not rated.

Amazing, March, 1964. 130 pp. 50¢ (3/7)

"Sunburst," a three-parter by Phyllis Gotlieb, begins here. It is about psionic children in a society that imprisons them. As of now, the serial is only so-so.

INFORMATION ABOUT AMAZING

Amazing's subscription address is:

Amazing Stories
434 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Published monthly, Amazing costs \$2.99 for one year, \$5.75 for two, in the U.S. Elsewhere: Western Hemisphere, \$3.49; other, \$3.99.

Fantasy and Science Fiction, March, 1964. 130 pp. 40¢ (2/10)

In this All Star Issue, the best story is J.T. McIntosh's "Humanoid Sacrifice." In it, an Earthman is hired by an alien race to repair the Automatic Weather Control system on their planet. However, he finds that a nineteenth century British girl is being kept in suspended animation in a local museum. SHORT STORY - d

Included also is a fair novel-let reprint, Oscar Wilde's "Lord Arthur Seville's Crime." It is not really science fiction or fantasy at all; rather, it is a mainstream story weakly linked to the imaginative fiction field in that Seville believes the words of a palm-reader.

Science Fantasy, February, 1964. 112 pp. 3/- (42¢)

Michael Moorcock, in his next-to-last Elric story, "Sad Giant's Shield," a novella, tells of a crucial encounter at sea between the forces of Order and Chaos. Elric, who has the elements of both sides within him, fights for Order and wins the day—but the final battle is yet to come, in the next issue. The stories in this series are among the best of heroic fantasy.

Analog, March 1964. 96 pp. 50¢, 5/-

The first half of "Spaceman," by Murray Leinster, makes its appearance here. It concerns a space voyage on which the crew mutinies. The hero—Braden, the Rim Star's first mate—and the captain must protect the ship, its cargo, and its passengers. This is lighter-than-average science fiction, at which Leinster often excels; read it. It's hard not to enjoy it.

"Outward Bound," a novelet by Norman Spinrad, would make this issue worth buying even if there were nothing else more than passable in it. A scientist—escaped from Earth authorities with a secret of utmost importance to Mankind, which Earth had tried to suppress from the galactic civilization it rules—is taken aboard and protected from the authorities by a trading ship.

NOVELET - C

We thank again P. Schuyler Miller for his kind and favorable mention of Science Fiction Review, in his review column, The Reference Library, in this month's issue.

Subscription rates: 10 issues for \$1.00, 22 issues for \$2.00, 45 issues for \$4.00. Advertisements are five cents per word, minimum remittance \$1.00. Back issues are ten cents per copy; all are available.

PUBLISHER

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW
Box 1568
San Diego, California 92112
U.S.A.

OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES

Kenneth F. Slater
75 Norfolk Street
Wisbech, Cambs.
England

Graham Stone
Box 185, P.O.
Manuka, A.C.T.
Australia

THE WANDERER, by Fritz Leiber.
Ballantine, N.Y. U6010, 1964.
318 pp. 75¢

THE WANDERER is the story of a planet which is able to move through the universe. Its occupants are fleeing from a Universal government which seeks to stop the development of intelligent life. The Wanderer stops in our galaxy to pick up fuel (Luna), and the gravitational pull of the Wanderer drastically affects the Earth.

At several spots THE WANDERER is very good but in general it is a rather poor book. It is seriously hurt by its jumping around from one scene to another, and the whole lacks continuity and a central theme. Mr. Leiber also brings in parts of other SF books into THE WANDERER and achieves an effect which is not at all pleasing. An author should be able to write his own book without using the ideas of other authors, even if he does give credit to them. (8)

—Glenn Keene

CHILDHOOD'S END, by Arthur C. Clarke. Ballantine, N.Y. U2111, 1964. 214 pp. 50¢

CHILDHOOD'S END is the story of the maturing of humanity. It begins with the coming of the Overlords, who are immensely superior to Terrans, and who by virtue of this superiority take charge of the Earth and instill a worldwide peace. However, the dealings of the Overlords are shrouded in secrecy, and although humanity is curious it can only speculate as to the motives behind their actions. Eventually it is discovered that the Overlords are working for someone higher, and the actions of this higher being reshape the human race entirely.

The book is very interesting and well written. It should occupy a high position on anyone's reading list. NOVEL - 3

—Bill Pond

FEATURE SELECTION

DOUBLE STAR, by Robert A. Heinlein. Signet, N.Y. D-2419, 1964. 128 pp. 50¢

An unemployed actor in 2100 in the most dangerous and least known role of his career is the center of action in DOUBLE STAR. Heinlein, in a masterful combination of humor, action, and suspense, presents a future situation in which the most important statesman of three worlds is kidnapped by forces of his political opponents. To insure continued political peace, actor Lorenzo Smythe becomes statesman Number One in body and action.

Eventually, the real political leader, Mr. Bonforte, is found, but he has been broken by the use of a drug that affects the mind. Lorenzo is asked to continue his impersonation, until the ultimate question arises: will the real Mr. Bonforte ever be able to continue with his work?

The Hugo-winning DOUBLE STAR is among the best novels of Heinlein, and would make (unless you have the 1956 Astoundings or a previous edition), an excellent addition to the libraries of Heinlein fans and science fiction readers in general. (2)

—Marshall Hurlich

THE CHRONOSCOPE

Books reviewed in the next issue will include Miss Norton's WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD, a sequel to her WITCH WORLD; THE TOWERS OF TORON, by Samuel R. Delany; and THE LUNAR EYE, by Robert Moore Williams.

Forthcoming books include: NO FUTURE IN IT, by John Brunner, from Doubleday; DOCTOR TO THE STARS, by Murray Leinster, from Pyramid; and reprints of TALES OF TEN WORLDS, by Arthur C. Clarke, from Dell, and ORPHANS OF THE SKY, by Robert A. Heinlein, from Putnam.