

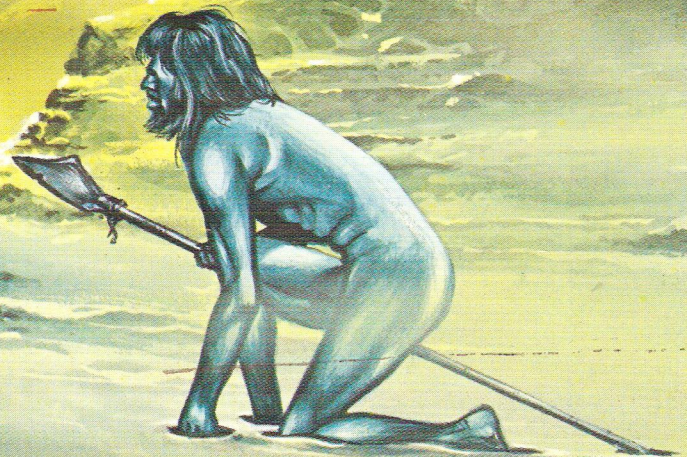
# ALGO

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT  
SCIENCE FICTION

WINTER 1977

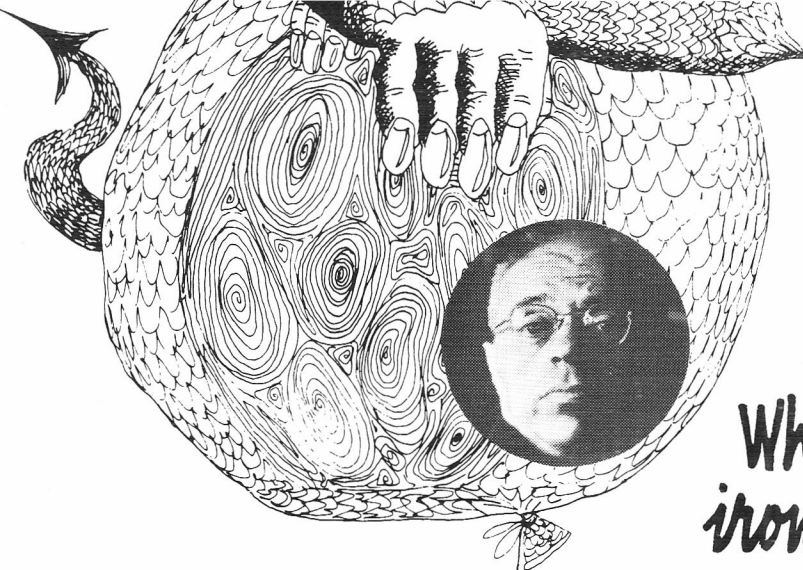
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# ALGOL

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT  
 SCIENCE FICTION

## CONTENTS

5	Beatle Juice: editorial	Andrew Porter
8	From The Pulp To The Classroom	James Gunn
17	Professionalism	L. Sprague de Camp
22	ALGOL Interview: Isaac Asimov	Darrell Schweitzer
29	Lupoff's Book Week: books	Richard Lupoff
36	Marta's Lupoff Week: more books	Marta Randall
41	Propellor Beanie: column	Susan Wood
45	Sketches: column	Vincent DiFate
51	Introduction to The Exorcists Of IF	Bob Shaw
52	The Exorcists Of IF	James White
57	Random Factors: letters	The Readers
62	ALGOL's People	The Contributors
65	The Penultimate Truth	Meet Your Mailing Label
65	Classified Advertisements	
66	ALGOL's Conlog	Convention Calendar
66	Advertisers Index	

## ARTWORK

Terry Austin	29
Grant Canfield	60
Ross Chamberlain	8, 41
C. Lee Healy	38, 58, 59
Allan Holzib	16
Robert Huntoon	57
Eddie Jones	Cover
James Odbert	64
Andrew Porter	48
William Rotsler	55, 58
Stu Shiffman	20
Steve Stiles	5
Michael Streff	39
Arthur Thomson	51, 52, 53, 54

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# IT SURE WAS THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMIC STRIPS!

The 1930s saw the growth of a special entertainment medium: the adventure comic strip. Of dubious parentage (both the dime thriller and the movies were blamed), the lusty waif enjoyed no more than twenty years of fame before the onslaught of his own legitimate offspring, the TV adventure show.

Popular culture scholar Ron Gouliart (known also for his prizewinning fiction) opens the yellowing pages of yesterday's newspapers, flipping past ancient front-page stories about dictators and New Dealers, to alight on the meaningful pages—the comic strips. Among those he brings back to life (helped by numerous illustrations):

**BUCK ROGERS.** As the 20s ended, Anthony Rogers went to sleep, to wake up in the 25th century.

**TARZAN.** The jungle lord was given a leg up by his chief chronicler, the amazing Edgar Rice Burroughs. But never forget the contributions of artists Hal Foster, Rex Maxon and Burne Hogarth (whose drawings of the titled apeman were displayed in the Louvre). **AVIATION STRIPS.** Smilin' Jack, Tailspin Tommy, Skyroads, Scorchy Smith, Flyin' Jenny and Barney Baxter ("approved by the Junior Birdmen of America").

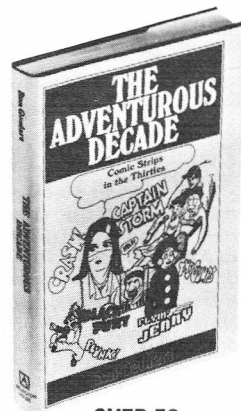
**GANGBUSTERS.** Dick Tracy, of course. And Dan Dunn, Secret Agent X-9 (created by Dashiell Hammett and Alex Raymond), Radio Patrol, Red Barry.

**CAPTAIN EASY.** Above and beyond its superior draftsmanship, this mock epic influenced many another feature.

**FLASH GORDON.** Drawn by Alex Raymond, perhaps the seminal and certainly the most admired of all strip artists.

**THE WAY WEST.** With the exception of Red Ryder, cowboy strips were inked by city fellers who had never thrown a leg over a saddle. One strip, in fact, was drawn by a *New Yorker* cartoonist.

Urbane, scholarly (chockful of actual interviews with Milton Caniff, Alfred Andriola, Roy Crane, *et al.*) and appreciative, *The Adventurous Decade* is a warmhearted, careful study of one of yesterday's innocent pleasures.



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- Authentic Scorchy Smith strip by Noel Sickles (of course) plus Bert Christman (try to find his work in any book!). Sickles—for the first time—talks about Scorchy and about life with Milton Caniff on Terry & the Pirates
- *Art Treasures of America* (well, almost). Reminiscing about Hairbreadth Harry... Minute Movies... The Gumps... Vintage Funnies... Prince Valiant... The Phantom... Brick Bradford... Jack Swift... Skyroads... Little Orphan Annie... Annie Rooney... Frankie Doodle... Joe Palooka... Joe Jinks... The Spirit... Miss Fury... Don Winslow... Roy Powers
- The Way West. Yes, yes, there was the Lone Ranger. But do you remember Bronc Peeler, Tex Thorne and White Boy?
- Dan Dunn Sunday strip drawn by Alfred Andriola (Andriola himself has no sample of this strip!)
- Coulton Waugh—his last interview. Plus interviews with Caniff, Andriola, Roy Crane, Dick Moore, Mel Graff, Leslie Turner
- Tarzan Every Sunday. The jungle lord's newspaper adventures were more complicated than any encounters with pygmies or rogue apes
- Roy Powers strip, ghosted by the celebrated Frank Godwin
- Rare advertising pieces for Wash Tubbs and Terry & the Pirates
- The 500-Year Nap. How Buck Rogers went to sleep in the pages of *Amazing Stories* and woke up in the funnies. Plus career studies of Dick Calkins, Phil Nowlan and the other swell guys in the Buck Rogers engine room
- The Depression as Fertilizer: how the rich loam of the 30s nurtured the comic strips
- Cops and Robbers. While public enemies grimaced on the front page, the good guys pursued the bad guys back in the funnies: Dan Dunn, Secret Agent X-9, Radio Patrol, Charlie Chan, King of the Royal Mounted, even Inspector Wade of Scotland Yard
- Glenn Chaffin tells you how he helped create Tailspin Tommy back in the 1920s
- The Life & Times of Flash Gordon. Alex Raymond wasn't always going to ghost Tillie the Toiler. He had dreams
- Terry & the Pirates. Of course Milton Caniff never went to the Far East. It would have spoiled everything
- It's Superman!—soaring from the pages of a comic book into your local paper
- Boys in Uniform. A war can be just the tonic for an ailing comic strip
- Keep On Reading. Ron Gouliart's Pick of the Best. Where to find more on adventure strips, including a roundup on reprints, collections and publishers (with addresses)
- EXTRA! 50 of the 30s—50 of the choicest (and scarcest) comic strip graphics of the 1930s

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I enclose \$1. Please send *The Adventurous Decade* by Ron Gouliart at no further cost and accept my membership in the Nostalgia Book Club. As a member I get to buy Club books and records about our happy yesterdays (1920-1955)—movies, music, radio, early TV, show biz, fads, fun—at discounts of 20% to 94% plus shipping. I get a free subscription to the Club bulletin, *Reminiscing Time*, with data about new Club books and records plus news about fellow members and their hobbies. EXTRA! Personal service—just like 1939. No computers! My only obligation is to buy 4 books or records over the next two years, from some 150 to be offered—after which I'm free to resign at any time. If I want the Selection, I do nothing; it will come automatically about a month later. If I don't want the Selection, or I prefer one of the many Alternates, I merely let you know on the handy form always provided. I'll be offered a new Selection every 24 days—15 times a year.

ALG-101

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Every time I change the subscription rates for ALGOL, or the paper, or charge more for advertising, I brace myself for a deluge of complaints. Somehow, they never come. I'm beginning to suspect that you people are used to these sudden changes in direction *because* you read SF. Or maybe it's because you know I'd never do anything really offensive without first checking with you.

The newest increase in subscription prices is for a one year subscription. I'm charging \$4.50 for three issues; this comes to \$1.50 the copy. The six issue subscription stays at \$7.50, or \$1.25 the copy. Of course, the six issues will last only two years instead of three.

I said last issue that I hoped ALGOL would go quarterly. Obviously, this hasn't happened. I made a lot of public plans and announced in a lot of places that ALGOL would go quarterly, but when it came down to the cold equations of money and time, I couldn't do it. What's happened in the past is that after I pay off all the bills for an issue, I have a couple of months to build up the kitty again. Going quarterly, I wouldn't have this leeway, and I'd be broke just when a whole new batch of bills were due. So, the new schedule is three times a year instead of four. And instead of twice a year, too.

I don't know what to call the schedule—semi-annual was confusing enough to people who thought it meant every two years—but the issues will be out in February, June and October. This first issue under the new schedule sees a new printer as well. I've moved to Lithocrafters, a large short-run printer in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Besides printing magazines, they'll be doing the ALGOL Press titles also.

But I'm rambling. The new frequency meant I kept the old \$7.50 rate (and I want to thank those loyal subscribers who renewed at that rate. The money came in at a time when I was struggling to pay the bills, bills that my suppliers demanded be paid "right now." Why is it that people you owe money to want it "right now," but people who owe *you* money feel they can take their time and pay "real soon now?") and set the higher one year price.

Coupled with that, of course, in order to make subscribing vs. buying ALGOL at the bookstore a Good Deal again, is a higher retail price. Fred Clarke of *Cinefantastique* charges \$2.50 the copy (the retail price) for subscriptions. If you buy a copy direct from Fred, it costs \$4.00. And it's worth it, too. But Fred has eight pages of 4/Color in every issue, and that stuff costs a lot of money. I don't have that. But ALGOL does have color covers on the best paper stock in SF; typeset interior, good graphic design and artwork, and some of the best writers in the business talking about the

subject they know and love the best.

If you want to read publications printed on newsprint with typewriter type, they're there for the reading. But ALGOL gives you more. I think ALGOL is worth the extra 45¢, and I think you'll feel ALGOL is worth that new price of \$1.95.

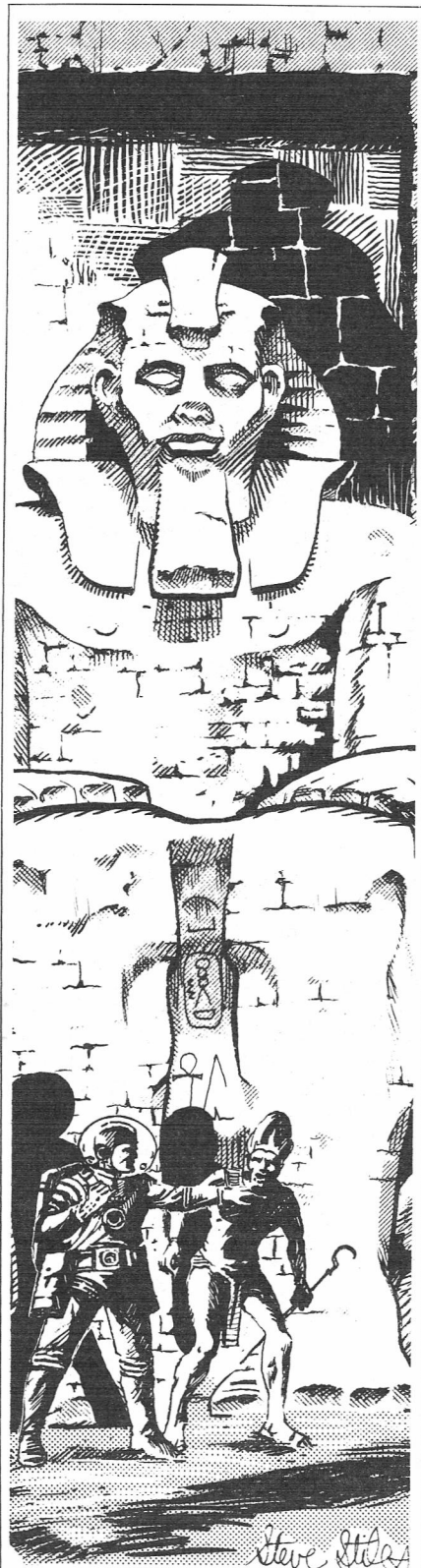
Dick Lupoff notes a possible problem arising from reviews of his books by Marta Randall, elsewhere in this issue. Lupoff suggests that some suspicious reader will say that Lupoff is Book Editor of ALGOL, and of course he got a reviewer to praise them. Lupoff says it's not so. In fact, Dick tells me he pointedly avoided discussing the books and the reviews with Marta at any time, and the reviews were sent to ALGOL without any sort of alterations on Dick's part.

Which brings up a common point raised by Dick's review, a couple of issues ago, of "Exploring Cordwainer Smith," the first ALGOL Press title. A couple of people said that it looked awkward to have the book reviewed in a magazine published by the same people (although no less a publication than *Publishers Weekly* flaunted a review of one of their own books in the news section of their magazine, rather than with all the other reviews at the back of the issue). The result was that when I published "Dreams Must Explain Themselves" by Ursula K. Le Guin, I did *not* send it to Lupoff for review, but relied on other media for reviews (most of which were very favorable, I hasten to add).

Now ALGOL Press is embarking on a vast expansion, some of which is evident in the advertisement in this issue. Chapbooks, initially, like the two published (and joined by the new "Experiment Perilous" just off press) with authors such as Gardner Dozois, Samuel R. Delany, Roger Zelazny, Robert Bloch, Poul Anderson, Sam Moskowitz, and lots more. I hope that ALGOL Press will eventually get into publishing paperbacks and hardcovers, but, like ALGOL, the Press is starting small and working up. All ALGOL Press titles will be sent to Lupoff for review, and reviews should appear in future issues with some regularity. They may even be favorable; who knows?

I announced in last issue's "Stop Press" (a small square cleverly designed to fill a hole on page 56) that Frederik Pohl was joining ALGOL as a contributing editor. Fred's contributions to SF are legion: old time fan and long time pro, collaborator with C. M. Kornbluth and Jack Williamson, editor of *Galaxy* and *Worlds of If*, past President of the SFWA, author of much fiction and nonfiction, and most recently SF editor at Bantam

# BEATLEJUICE BEATLEJUICE



# EDITORIAL



Books, where he's published an impressive array of talked-about SF. (There are to my way of thinking, two classes of SF books: those published and which disappear from bookstore shelves in a couple of months; and those that are published, reviewed, talked and written about, become possibilities for Hugo and Nebula awards, make news when they're sold to reprint houses or go back to press, and in general are the books that make being an SF editor worthwhile.) Fred, in his short time at Bantam, has made that house one of the major publishers of SF, with books like *Dahlgren*, *Triton* and *The Female Man*.

So it's with particular pleasure that I announce that Fred Pohl will join ALGOL as a Contributing Editor, providing a column talking about the publishing scene, utilizing his experience as agent and author, as magazine and book editor.

Fred replaces Ted White, whose "My Column" will no longer be published by ALGOL. Ted's last submitted column contained information about a field in which I feel he has not had much experience—that of the professional publication and book art director—and much of that information was, I felt, incorrect, misleading or just plain wrong. Rather than publish material which could only provoke a great deal of ill-feeling and anguished response, I chose to reject it.

I also chose to close ALGOL to Ted's columns in the future. I've been receiving an increased amount of amazed comments from legal people over some of Ted's columns, and libelous statements he's made in them. Although I've edited out many comments of this sort in recent columns, I think ALGOL has a responsibility to its readers, when providing information about the SF field, to make sure that such information is the most correct as well as the most honest available.

Looking back at a relationship that

began more than twelve years ago, I feel sorrow that it could not have continued or ended amicably. But I am drawn to the inescapable conclusion that while ALGOL has grown in size and circulation and stature from a small and rather bumbling fanzine to what some fans call a "semi-prozine," attracting the best contributors to the field, with a circulation in the thousands, Ted has not grown with the magazine.

Fred Pohl's first column will appear in the next issue, out in February.

Inside this issue, you'll find such goodies as an article/speech by L. Sprague de Camp, originally given at last year's Pghlange before an attentive audience of several hundred fans. I think it'll give you some idea of why Sprague can call himself a "dirty pro" with pride. Also, Susan Wood Tells All about why some of you may have read her first installment of "Propeller Beanie" in other pages, as well as providing insight into the oft-times insular world of British fanzine fandom. Vincent DiFate continues his education of us in matters artistic with his "Sketches." You'd better read it carefully: there's a question-and-answer period following his column which decides whether or not you get to pass on to the next issue. Isaac Asimov is the subject of the ALGOL interview this issue. The Good Doctor, who is now married to Good Doctor Janet Jepson (thus making for some confusion at conventions, I suspect), talks about the usual concerns of an SF writer, as well as the unusual concerns of a public person trying in his own way to stem the fall of civilization.

Meanwhile, as New York crumbles about me, I invite your participation in next issue's letter column. Remember, a published letter of comment gets you a free issue. For the February issue, deadline for letters and comments in general is January 1st.

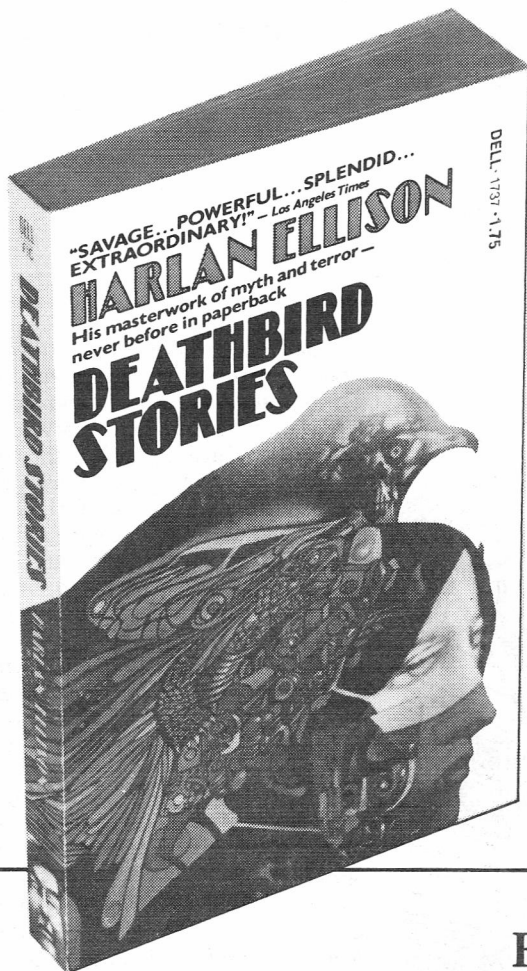
Andy Porter's Friendly Fan Match-making service is proud to say, after last issue's editorial asking howcum various fans in various places didn't have local clubs, that one fan in New Orleans was provided with a listing of local people, and another excited subscriber in Edmonton was united with Fandom-as-we-know-it, and is happily at work on his first fanzine.

Last issue I asked subscribers who move to please notify me, and the response has been gratifying. The last several months have seen the least number of returned ALGOLs of any period in several years. The Post Office, meanwhile, has done such sneaky things as raise the price of Address Correction notices from 10c to 13c to 25c within two weeks, raise third class rates, and manage to destroy several million pieces of mail—mostly books, incidentally—in their new and "efficient" bulk mail sorting facilities. Once again, I ask that if you move, let me know. If an issue gets returned and I have to send it out again, I deduct an issue from your subscription, because this process can easily cost over \$1.00 in postage and postage due.

Hugo voting time has come and gone, and as I type these words it's less than a week till MidAmeriCon. I want to thank all you people who nominated ALGOL for another Hugo Award. I honestly don't think I'll win, and will be greatly surprised if I do. Next year I understand the rules are being changed to eliminate the possibility of ALGOL being nominated for a "Best Amateur Magazine" Hugo. Presumably ALGOL will then be in the same category as *Analog* or *Orbit*. The mind boggles. Then again, the ALGOL Press titles would figure into it, and... hmmm. I'll see you all next issue.

**Andrew Porter, Editor & Publisher**





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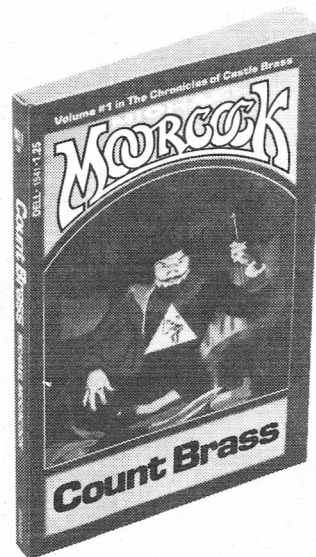
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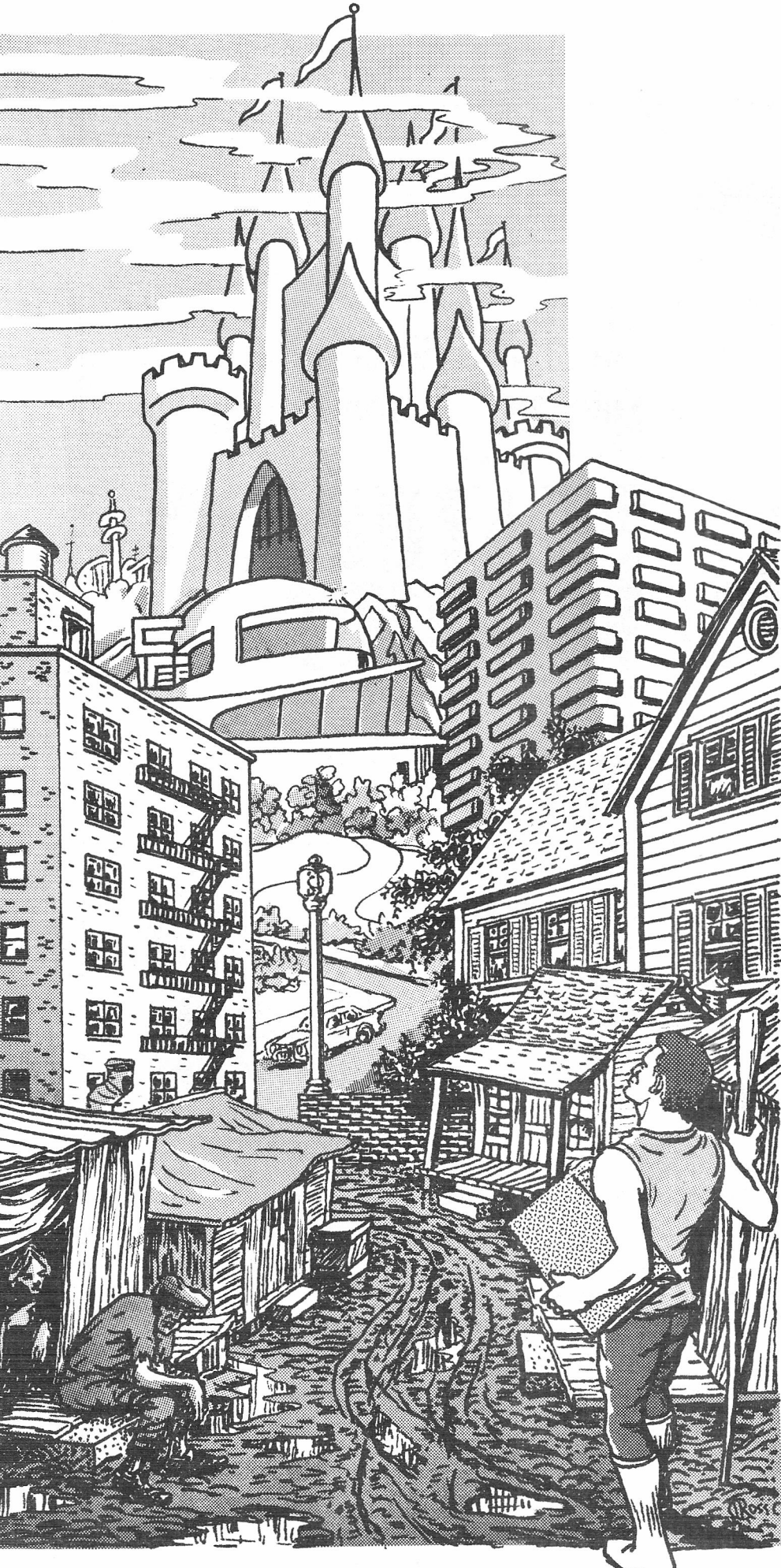
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Science fiction has traveled a strange road from isolation, in part self-imposed, to critical and academic acceptance. From the marvelous adventures of Edgar Allan Poe through the extraordinary voyages of Jules Verne to the scientific romances of H. G. Wells, under whatever name science fiction has passed over the century and a half during which it has existed, it always has seemed like an unwelcome relative at the feast of literature.

Even its creators looked down upon it. Poe preferred his mood stories and his tales of ratiocination to his more science fictionish pieces. Wells thought more highly of his contemporary novels of manners than the pessimistic scientific romances of his early days. Wells's admirers, Joseph Conrad and Henry James, much as they liked his scientific romances kept after him to give up his journalistic ways with a story and devote himself to high art, but Wells "was disposed to regard a novel as about as much an art form as a market place or a boulevard." I have no evidence to support the notion, but I would not be surprised if evidence should appear that Jules Verne liked *Mathias Sandorf* and *Michael Strogoff* better than *Journey to the Center of the Earth* and *From the Earth to the Moon*.

There may be an illuminating irony in the fact that in almost every case the science fiction has endured and the rest has faded. At the time they were written, poor relation to literature or not, prototypical science fiction passed in the great society of books as fiction of only small difference from the rest, perhaps more popular than some, perhaps less artistic than others, but part of the general spectrum of literature.

But the creation of the mass magazines in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the development of the all-fiction pulp magazine beginning in 1896 with *Argosy*, and the creation of the category pulp magazines starting with *Detective Story Magazine* in 1915 encouraged the separation of a species into genera and genera into families, and



# From The Pulps To The Classroom

## JAMES GUNN

in each enclosed environment the families of fiction began to evolve separately. In 1926 science fiction split off the parent stock with the founding of *Amazing Stories* and began its evolutionary struggle toward some ideal form.

When science fiction enclosed itself in what would later be called a ghetto, it dropped out of critical view. As late as 1914, Sam Moskowitz has pointed out, the *New York Times* was reviewing books such as Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes*. By 1926 not only were such reviews unlikely, science fiction was scarcely being published in book form, and what was published—stories from the early pulp magazines, books by Burroughs and A. Merritt, the Balmer and Wylie collaborations from *Bluebook*, the strange and wonderful speculations of Olaf Stapledon—was not available in libraries.

A great deal of fantasy was available in book form during this period, and it was reviewed. Fantasy always has enjoyed a better critical acceptance than science fiction, perhaps because it was less concerned with reality and therefore less threatening, certainly because it was more traditional and thus yielded to existing critical techniques, but most of all because fantasy could not be subtracted from the history of literature without stripping literature of origins and half its substance.

Science fiction, however, was ignored by publishers and critics. It was a late comer, a product of the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Reason and the scientific enlightenment, and to overlook it was the act of a gentleman and a connoisseur. Science fiction was brash and crude; it smelled of oil and hot metal; and where science fiction was brashest and crudest and most typical, in the science fiction magazines, was where it was ignored by everyone except its fans, those strange new creatures that Hugo Gernsback discovered when he published *Amazing* and called by name in his third issue. Books to come out of this environment—real

science fiction with the smell of the pulp magazines still on them—had to wait until the middle Forties, mostly until the two big 1946 postwar anthologies, Groff Conklin's *The Best of Science Fiction* and Raymond J. Healy and J. Francis McComas's *Adventures in Time and Space*, and the fan presses that began preserving for posterity the immortal words of H. P. Lovecraft and E. E. Smith.

Twenty years, almost to the day, science fiction spent in its pulp ghetto, and almost another twenty years elapsed before the critics noticed that something new had emerged from that period of isolation. It is that period and that process, those years between 1946 and the present, that I wish to describe here, because it has helped to shape the present situation of science fiction and we can move on more confidently in the academic consideration of science fiction if we know where we have been and where we are and how we got here.

By 1946, of course, Donald A. Wollheim had already edited a couple of science fiction books, one for Pocket Books, one for Viking, J. Berg Eisenwein and Phil Stong had edited even earlier anthologies, August Derleth had founded Arkham House and published Lovecraft's *The Outsider, and Others*, and J. O. Bailey had completed his pioneer dissertation, *Pilgrims Through Space and Time* (the preface to the 1947 Argus book was dated December, 1945). A few critical studies had been published before Bailey's, such as Philip Babcock Gove's *The Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction*, which would be followed in 1948 by Marjorie Hope Nicholson's *Voyages to the Moon*. But Bailey's was the first critical study actually to concern itself with science fiction, even if he refers to it throughout his book as scientific fiction.

The most important books in the critical appreciation of science fiction, however, were the Conklin and Healy and McComas anthologies. I know what they represented to me—a World War II veteran returning after three years to finish up his final year of college; they

provided an overview and understanding of the recent accomplishments of science fiction that I could not have obtained by a perusal of all the science fiction magazines published between 1926 and 1946, even if they had been available anywhere west of Sam Moskowitz and east of Forrest J. Ackerman. Groff Conklin's and John Campbell's introductions to Conklin's anthology were particularly helpful; I like to think of them as the opening wedge of critical understanding that later would allow science fiction to slip into the tunnel vision of the mainstream. Another pioneer book of criticism, the slim, red volume called *Of Worlds Beyond*, edited by Lloyd A. Eschbach and published by his Fantasy Press, came along in 1947 as another revelation.

Conklin followed his epic collection with other anthologies, which not only made stories from the magazines more broadly available but continued his critical and taxonomical approach to the field. He was joined by others, particularly Derleth, whose anthologies for Pelligrini & Cudahy beginning in 1948 and culminating for me in the 1950 collection, *Beyond Time and Space*, were unusually helpful in tracing a literary genealogy for science fiction back to Plato. A double handful of fan presses would follow Arkham House in keeping science fiction books in print until the commercial publishers caught on to the sudden new surge of interest, just as Advent Press was virtually alone in publishing science fiction criticism until the past couple of years.

Other contributions to a critical consideration of science fiction would follow: my master's thesis was completed in 1951 and some 20,000 words of it were published in *Dynamic Science Fiction* in 1952—probably the only thesis ever serialized in a pulp magazine, thanks to Robert Lowndes. Reginald Bretnor edited an exciting and important collection of essays about science fiction, *Modern Science Fiction*, for Coward-McCann in 1953. Rumors of other studies and dissertations floated



around; but this time Jack Williamson was working on his study of Wells which eventually would find its way into Leland Sapiro's *Riverside Quarterly*, and then into a book, *Critic of Progress*, published by Mirage Press. Other consciousness-raising reviews and essays by Damon Knight and James Blish appeared in fan magazines and later were collected into *In Search of Wonder* and *The Issue at Hand* in 1956 and 1964 respectively. But all of these efforts were largely missionaries talking to the already converted.

The emergence of science fiction from its exile was represented in the Fifties by the interest of the occasional literary figure such as Basil Davenport and Clifton Fadiman. Both were associated with the Book of the Month Club; Davenport wrote an introduction or two, edited anthologies, and wrote *An Inquiry into Science Fiction* in 1955; Fadiman edited *Fantasia Mathematica*; and both (if I remember correctly) allowed themselves to appear on the back cover of the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* saying something in praise of science fiction and the magazine. Unlike other magazines, *Fantasy and Science Fiction* tried to broaden its base of readership, extending pseudopods into the mainstream by reducing reliance upon conventions, insisting on skillful writing and a greater concern for the complexities of character and of language, by associating science fiction with more literary works in the fantasy tradition, by reprinting stories from the experimental mainstream, and by critical or biographical headnotes. And their back cover ads consciously tried to attract non-science fiction readers.

Then the critical situation for science fiction began heating up. In the publishing field conditions were not promising: the big magazine boom of the early Fifties had collapsed, dragging some old standards down with it, the surge of new science fiction writers which always seems to accompany magazine booms had slowed as well, Tony Boucher had retired as editor of *Fantasy and Science Fiction* and Horace Gold was in his last couple of years as editor of *Galaxy*, the early enthusiasm created by the founding of Ballantine Books had dwindled, such path-pointing books as Vonnegut's *The Sirens of Titan* and Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* had not yet been published; in fact, conditions were pretty much as usual for science fiction—lousy. But I did get a letter from my agent, Harry Altshuler, that Bantam Books was looking for some new writers and shortly after that they accepted *Station in Space*. Some vibrations were making themselves felt, perhaps, but little was happening except that some college professors led by the

late Professor Scott Osborn of Mississippi State University organized the first Conference on Science Fiction under the Modern Language Association. That was 1958; a year later the first academic journal in the field, *Extrapolation*, was founded.

Meanwhile something extraordinary was happening at Princeton. Kingsley Amis, a recognized English poet and author, presented a series of lectures for the Christian Gauss Seminar in Criticism in the spring of 1959, and in the lectures he proclaimed his long-time admiration for science fiction. A year later the lectures appeared in book form as *New Maps of Hell*, and various surprised popular media, reviewing the book, began to reconsider their own policy of consistently ignoring or denigrating the science fiction which had somehow reached their desks. *Time Magazine*, which previously had mentioned only to ridicule, started publishing an occasional favorable review, including one retrospective look, as I recall, at Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*, which had been published only in paperback, and other magazines and newspapers began to include articles about science fiction, authors, and individual works, including the *New York Times* (which still has not published a major review on a science fiction book, as it has on a mystery), the *New Yorker*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and many others, although some of them would not discover science fiction until much later.

One small event in the real world might have been a precipitating factor: in 1957 the U.S.S.R. launched its first satellite, *Sputnik*. With that event space travel became plausible and with it the fiction that had dealt so consistently with space flight.

Other major critics were making themselves heard: Bruce Franklin's study of nineteenth century American science fiction, *Future Perfect*, was published by Oxford University Press in 1966, which also published Mark Hillegas's *The Future as Nightmare* in 1967, and I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War* in 1966. C. S. Lewis's essay, "On Science Fiction," was presented as a talk to the Oxford University English Club in 1955, and his "Unreal Estates" was recorded as a discussion in 1962, but they did not get into print, apparently, until the latter was published in *SF Horizons* in 1964 and both were published in *Of Other Worlds* in 1966.

The most recent voices raised in behalf of science fiction have been those of Leslie Fiedler and Robert Scholes, professors of English at the State University of New York at Buffalo and at Brown University, respectively.

Oddly enough, their views have been expressed in essays with similar titles: Fiedler's "Cross the Border, Close the Gap" and Scholes's "As the Wall Crumbles" in *Nebula Award Stories Number Ten*. Both have other critical works about science fiction, in particular Fiedler's historical-critical anthology, *In Dreams Awake*, and Scholes's *Structural Fabulation*.

I met Fiedler first. At the Science Fiction Research Association meeting in Toronto in 1971 he seemed a novice at science fiction, as eager to learn as he was to teach, but he was a quick study, and by the Nebula Award Day in New York the following spring, where I invited him to speak, he had much to say. For too long, he said there, critics had been trying to tell readers why they should like what they don't like; what they ought to be doing, he said, is trying to find out why people like what they like. Why, for instance, has H. Rider Haggard's *She*, in spite of its artistic deficiencies, never been out of print since its publication in 1886?

Fiedler seemed to like science fiction not because it was good but because it was vulgar—no, that's not quite right, because vulgar, or pop, literature is good. In "Cross the Border . . ." he wrote, "We have . . . entered quite another time—apocalyptic, anti-rational, blatantly romantic and sentimental; an age dedicated to joyous misology and prophetic irresponsibility; one distrustful of self-protective irony and too-great self-awareness." The answer, he wrote, is to turn frankly to pop forms, such as the western, science fiction, and pornography. In New York he asked for a cross-fertilization of science fiction and pornography such as he saw in some of the work of Philip José Farmer. One wonders where Fiedler's desire to break new critical trails begins and his attempts to shock his readers into new awarenesses leaves off.

In his anthology, *In Dreams Awake*, Fiedler wrote that science fiction writers, often accused of "slapdash writing, sloppiness, and vulgarity," cannot learn from "the floggers of a dead avant-gardism, capable of creating neither myth nor wonder, only parody and allusion. No, it is precisely out of 'slapdash writing,' 'sloppiness,' and especially 'vulgarity,' as exemplified in, say, Shakespeare, Cooper, Dickens, and Twain, that myth is endlessly reborn, the dreams we dream awake."

Being loved by Leslie Fiedler is a bit like being loved by a lion; we aren't sure we're being appreciated for the right reasons.

On the other hand, we feel more comfortable with Robert Scholes—at least I do—because he relates us to the rest of literature rather than setting us



off because we're different. Scholes is a leading critic of contemporary literature, particularly that branch of contemporary fiction for which he supplied a name in his book *The Fabricators*.

I met Scholes at a science fiction gathering, too—the World Science Fiction Convention in Washington, D. C., in 1974—and later asked him to contribute an essay to the recent volume of *Nebula Award Stories* that I edited. In “As the Wall Crumbles,” he put the literary position of science fiction this way: “Pleasure in fiction is rooted in our response to narrative movement—to story itself. This is a fundamental kind of pleasure, almost physical, and closely connected to physical sensations like those of motion and sex.”

Much “mainstream” fiction, he went on, is so overburdened with a weight of analysis and subtle refinement of consciousness that we do not get from it the pure fictional pleasure that lies at the heart of our need for narration. “One result of this situation is that many people may resort, more or less guiltily, to ‘lesser’ forms of fiction—outside the mainstream of serious literature—for a narrative ‘fix,’ a shot of joyful story-telling. . . . What most people need in fiction is something that satisfies their legitimate desire for the pleasures of story-telling, without making them feel ashamed of having some childish and anti-social impulse. We need recreational texts, good stories that leave us refreshed without any feeling of guilt. We need stories that are genuinely adult in their concerns and ideas while satisfying our elemental need for wonder and delight. Science fiction at its best answers this need better than any other form of contemporary fiction. And it does more. . . .”

Now, as a science fiction writer and reader, I say, “That’s more like it!”

Scholes also speaks the more esoteric language of academia. That is a valuable asset, because it allows him to attack the stronghold of scorn and indifference with its own weapons. In *Structural Fabulation*, which is not only the name of his book but the name he gives science fiction, Scholes traces science fiction to the romance (in the traditional division of fiction between realism and romance); he divides the romance into pure romance (sublimation with minimal cognition, sometimes called “escapism”) and the didactic romance (or fabulation, as in allegory, satire, fable, and parable); the didactic romance he divides, in turn, into speculative fabulation (or romances of science, such as More’s *Utopia*) and dogmatic fabulation (romances of religion, such as Dante’s *Divine Comedy*); speculative fabulation he

divides, at last, into pseudo-scientific sublimation (space opera, and so forth) and structural fabulation.

Structural fabulation, or science fiction, is “the tradition of More, Bacon, and Swift, as modified by new input from the physical and human sciences.” And Scholes restates the message of “As the Wall Crumbles” in more academic language: “We require a fiction which satisfies our cognitive and sublimative needs together. . . . We need suspense with intellectual consequences, in which questions are raised as well as solved, and in which our minds are expanded even while focused on the complications of a fictional plot.” And he goes on, “In works of structural fabulation the tradition of speculative fiction is modified by an awareness of the nature of the universe as a system of systems, a structure of structures, and the insights of the past century of science are accepted as fictional points of departure.”

Scholes has other pleasant things to say about science fiction: the Hugo award is at least as reliable an indicator of quality as, say, the Pulitzer Prize for fiction; and, the most appropriate kind of fiction that can be written in the present and the immediate future is fiction that takes place in future time. But most of all he urges his “fellow teachers and makers of curricula to open their courses to the literature of structural fabulation and allow it to contribute to that critical reevaluation of our literary past which functions so powerfully to keep that past alive.”

Other critics have worked within the field itself, struggling with definitions and classification, strengthening our internal structures. I could mention names like Tom Clareson and Darko Suvin and Dale Mullen and Robert Philmus, as well as Joanna Russ and Samuel Delany, who are critics as well as writers of fiction, but I am primarily concerned here with the ways in which the outside world—the *mundane* world, the science fiction fan language would call it—has become reconciled to science fiction.

The process of reconciliation, of acceptance, of discovery continues. And that continuing process of opening the science fiction treasure house to an unsuspecting and up-to-now largely unappreciative non-science-fiction-reading public is the condition of science fiction criticism today.

Meanwhile the concept that science fiction was a branch of literature which could be taught to the better understanding and appreciation of students began occurring to a few teachers here and there. Sam Moskowitz has conducted an unrelenting quest for encyclopedic knowledge of science fiction and pre-eminence in the science fiction fan

world, a quest recorded in his history of fandom, *The Immortal Storm*, whose fruits are the biographies of science fiction authors and editors published first in Ziff-Davis magazines in the late Fifties and early Sixties and then in the books *Seekers of Tomorrow* and *Explorers of the Infinite*. He tells about organizing an evening course in science fiction for City College of New York in 1953 and 1954. But the first course taught within the official curriculum of a college is believed to be Mark Hillegas’s course at Colgate in 1962. Jack Williamson began teaching a course at Eastern New Mexico University in 1964, and Tom Clareson was not far behind at Wooster.

My own science fiction teaching began in 1969. About the same time Robin Scott Wilson began his Science Fiction Writers Workshops at Clarion and Stanford launched a summer Science Fiction Institute. Courses have burgeoned since then. Jack Williamson’s last survey in 1972 counted some 240 college courses. Judging by a little experience and a lot of intuition, I would say that there is scarcely a college in the nation that does not have at least one science fiction course a year, and if a college doesn’t have a course it is because the faculty can’t find anyone to teach it rather than that they believe it is beneath them.

At the University of Kansas the single annual course that I began teaching in 1971 to as many as 165 students has increased by two courses offered at the sophomore level, six sophomore courses in fantasy (eight in the spring), a course in the writing of science fiction, and a summer program for teachers. There are special reasons for such growth at Kansas, of course, but I suspect that similar developments are occurring at other places around the nation: junior colleges, four-year colleges, universities—at last count the nation had some two thousand colleges and universities, and it may be a reasonable estimate that they are teaching some two thousand science fiction courses.

What began as an attempt by a few pioneers to teach students what the teachers themselves found uniquely fascinating and what they were uniquely equipped to teach changed into a kind of self-preservation in the late Sixties when student power became an issue and relevance became a byword, and in the Seventies when vocationalism began diverting students away from the humanities toward business, journalism, engineering, social work, and the social and behavioral sciences. The question of jobs became the issue, not just for the students but for the faculty as well; the end of automatic enrollment increases and the beginning of enrollment drops

made the attractiveness of course offerings a subject for concern in English departments everywhere.

I do not like to think, nor would I suggest, that colleges have taken up science fiction only in response to the need for inducing students to take some kind of English course, but it may not be unfair to propose that the pioneers were not so much trail-breakers for the wagon trains of settlers that would follow as the first scouts for a pack of migrating lemmings.

The question of qualified teachers was raised early. I began to think about it in 1969, when a combination of circumstances that I have related elsewhere led me to consider the development of a series of lecture films featuring science fiction writers and editors talking about those aspects of science fiction that they knew best. Basically I hoped to provide help for teachers who felt unprepared, unqualified, unable to cope with their new assignment. There were many of them in the early Seventies. When I was president of the Science Fiction Writers of America in 1971-72, I received one or two plaintive letters a week from teachers saying that they had been assigned this science fiction class, they had never read science fiction before, and could I send them a list of what to teach and suggestions about how to teach it.

It was enough to make a professor go write a book. I didn't—not about the teaching of science fiction—but others wrote or compiled such books. I'll get to them a little later, and to the book I did write.

That science fiction lecture series developed more slowly than I ever could have imagined. It was an education for all of us in the difficulties and costs of making films. But we now have eleven films in the series, in color, ranging in length from twenty to forty minutes; and three more are being edited toward availability. They have been seen all over the world—two institutions in Australia have standing orders for all the films we produce—and it is a source of considerable satisfaction to me that students, wherever they are, have the opportunity to hear the history of science fiction from the lips of Damon Knight and Isaac Asimov, its ideas from Fred Pohl, its techniques from Poul Anderson, its themes from Gordon Dickson, its film history from Forrest Ackerman, its relation to the mainstream from John Brunner, and its new directions from Harlan Ellison, as well as Jack Williamson describing the early days of the magazines, Clifford Simak reminiscing about his career, and Harry Harrison and Gordon Dickson discussing with the late John Campbell a story idea that later developed into an *Analog*

serial.

During the period that science fiction was spreading like a plague from space through colleges and universities, it also was beginning to swim upstream—to mix the metaphor—into high schools and junior high schools and even primary schools. The secondary schools had different motivations from the colleges. Some of them want to provide incentives for poor readers, and discovered that some students could graduate from television cartoons to comic magazines to science fiction stories; anything was legitimate that got students interested in reading. At the other end of the academic spectrum, gifted students often were bored with the pace of secondary education, and science fiction, with its concern for ideas and themes, kept their attention and their involvement.

In addition, the loosening of academic disciplines in secondary schools—perhaps part of the same movement toward relevance which may be responsible for the increasing difficulties with the written language that students are bringing into college—provided a place in the secondary curriculum for a spreading system of elective mini-courses. Among the mini-courses, almost always, was a science fiction option; administrators soon found that science fiction courses were always over-enrolled. Meanwhile, teachers in disciplines other than English discovered that through science fiction they could get students to consider the human aspects of science, sociology, politics, philosophy, religion, and other intellectual areas to which they might come unwillingly, or without understanding, in the abstract. Of course Profs. Martin Greenberg, Joseph Olander, and Patricia Warrick, with their endless string of academic anthologies, know all about such matters.

Whatever the reasons—I do not pretend that my list is comprehensive—science fiction courses have proliferated in high schools until they may rival woodworking or home economics.

All of this movement of science fiction into the academic curriculum has had its inevitable reactions: delight, sometimes mixed with disappointment, on the part of students; consternation and bewilderment and sometimes a sigh of relief on the part of teachers; and disapproval, in general, on the part of the science fiction community. Writers and editors and readers saw science fiction threatened by the same hand that had, they thought, throttled the life out of Shakespeare and beat the dickens out of Dickens, and by the same dessicating mouth that had turned history into dust. Moreover, they thought, the hand and the mouth weren't even prepared; they had no idea

what science fiction even felt like, much less what it was really about.

People such as Lester del Rey and Ben Bova and Harlan Ellison saw in the new academic interest disaster for science fiction. Teachers were using science fiction merely as a stepping stone for their ambition; they were riding the winds of popularity; they were liking science fiction, if they did, for the wrong reasons; and they would turn students off to science fiction faster than the authors and the magazines were turning them on.

Much of this resentment of the science fiction community against academia seemed to come to a focus at a two-day meeting at Kean College of New Jersey in the spring of 1974. There I heard writers complaining bitterly about what was being taught and who was teaching the courses. Harlan Ellison had horror stories about his campus visits and what teachers were doing to science fiction there, and even the reasonable Fred Pohl viewed with alarm.

Phil Klass, who wrote so many magnificent stories under the name of William Tenn, had described the situation even before that 1974 meeting. In a "Science Fiction and the University" issue of the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* for May 1972, he wrote an article entitled "Jazz Then, Musicology Now" in which he worried about the impact on science fiction of academic responsibility. Then Ben Bova published an editorial in the June 1974 *Analog* raising more serious questions about the preparation of teachers and the academic exploitation of science fiction. He asked why the Science Fiction Research Association was not setting and demanding professional qualifications among science fiction teachers; and he feared "a variation of Gresham's law in which the bad teaching and schlock movies and TV shows will drive out the good ones."

In a rebuttal in the November 1974 issue of *Analog* for which Ben should be given credit—when I dropped into his office after the Kean College conference he asked me to write it; even better, he offered to pay me for it—I tried to respond to the fears that Ben's editorial had voiced. I said, in brief: 1) science fiction's fear of outsiders is part of the ghetto mentality; 2) our history of booms and busts makes us paranoid about booms; 3) every new subject or discipline goes through a period when its teachers are unqualified; 4) professional organizations, at least in the academic disciplines, do not determine qualifications; in colleges, at least, this is done by departments; 5) all of us, including writers and editors, use science fiction for our own ends, and none of us is truly innocent of exploitation; 6) science fiction needs



sophisticated criticism and should welcome academic critics; 7) science fiction will stand out as an oasis in a desert of required courses, no matter how poorly taught; 8) the teachers who volunteer for science fiction courses tend to be the better, more experimental teachers; 9) college and high school classes provide an opportunity unparalleled since the founding of *Amazing Stories* to create new readers; I cited evidence that it was doing so; and 10) in any case, only the stories can turn people on, and we should be devoting our concerns toward writing them better and with broader appeals.

You will note that I have given the

rebuttal more space than the argument, but that's always the case when one participant in a debate is absent.

That editorial had an amusing sequel. Lester del Rey wrote a rebuttal to my remark, and that of others, about science fiction as a ghetto. In the March 1975 issue of *Galaxy*, he began his article by saying it wasn't a ghetto at all, that he had always read and written extensively outside the field; and he ended his piece by saying, "Stay out of my ghetto."

So much for ghettos.

One of the problems I didn't mention in my guest editorial in *Analog* was the difficulty with teaching tools.

I'm not talking about scholarship here, although scholarship clearly contributes to teaching through insights and through the education of teachers. I am talking about the books the students handle and hopefully read, the textbooks and the anthologies and the novels.

Although Bruce Franklin's *Future Perfect* was published in 1966, it was concerned with nineteenth century science fiction, a topic more scholarly than teachable, particularly in the introductory classes most of us teach. The first teaching anthologies, Robert Silverberg's *Mirror of Infinity* and *Science Fiction Hall of Fame*, the

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second because of its contents and selection process, by the authors themselves, and Richard Ofshe's *Sociology of the Possible*, were not published until 1970. The last never had a cheap edition, I think, and the first two were not available in paperback until a year or two later. Sam Moskowitz's books of biographical sketches, *Explorers of the Infinite* and *Seekers of Tomorrow*, were published before 1970 but, though useful, were not really teachable, and in any case were not available in paperback (or in any other form, for a while) until the recent Hyperion Press reprint. The same is true of his fascinating studies of early science fiction, *Science Fiction by Gaslight* and *Under the Moons of Mars*.

Tom Clareson's *SF: The Other Side of Realism*, with its useful reprints of scholarly and popular articles, and Dick Allen's *Science Fiction: The Future*, were published in 1971. Don Wollheim's personal history, *The Universe Makers*, was published in 1971, and Clareson's academic anthology, *A Spectrum of Worlds*, in 1972; neither has appeared in paperback. It is instructive about the youth of our field that a standard such as Harrison and Pugner's *A Science Fiction Reader* did not appear until 1973; the first thorough history of the field, Brian Aldiss's *Billion Year Spree*, appeared the same year, although Sam Lundwall's *Science Fiction: What It's All About* was published in 1971. Two books for high school teachers, Calkins and McGhan's *Teaching Tomorrow* and Hollister and Thompson's *Grokking the Future*, came out in 1972 and 1973, and Beverly Friend's *Classroom in Orbit*, in 1974. The discursive symposium, Reginald Bretnor's *Science Fiction, Today and Tomorrow*, appeared in 1974, paperback in 1975.

My own illustrated history, *Alternate Worlds*, was originally scheduled for 1972, could have been published in 1973, but various problems including complexity and a change in editors delayed it until fall 1975. The edition coming out in November from A&W Visual Library is priced at \$7.95. On the positive side, that is much less costly than the original hardcover at \$29.95. I don't think any science fiction teacher worthy of the name should be allowed to teach without the book in his or her personal library; but that may be my particular bias.

By the summer of 1975 I could prepare for the students in my Institute a list of fifty-five books of academic interest or usefulness just from those I could see on my shelves.

I would like to return for a moment to the matter of price and format: these are serious matters, particularly at the college level where a semester's course may involve ten to fifteen novels or short story collections. With this many

required texts, none of them can be expensive; they must be in paperback—and in print. Being published in paperback in our field means that the books go out of print as rapidly as they become available. A case in point is Jack C. Wolf and Gregory Fitz Gerald's useful anthology *Past, Present, and Future Perfect*, which was published by Fawcett in 1973 and has been unavailable ever since.

The problem of availability has been even a greater problem in the science fiction books themselves. Paperback publishers traditionally have been geared to the rhythm of the newsstands. The publishers throw a big printing of books onto the stands for a period which may last from a month to three months; at that point, the newsstand proprietors replace the old books, tear off their covers, and return the covers for credit. Nor all your piety nor wit will get a reorder out of such a publisher; he doesn't have the warehouses or the mechanism. The books will be out of stock or out of print until the next printing, if any. I have often received notices from the university book store that one-third to one-half my book orders were out of stock or out of print. Teachers of science fiction got used to scrambling for replacements, or, if we were more sophisticated, to ordering fifty percent more books than we intended to use. The latter solution, though it had the psychological advantage of cynicism, often left us with two or more books serving the same purpose.

Even this situation is easing a bit as paperback publishers become educated to the fact that science fiction is not the same as mysteries, westerns, nurse novels, and gothics, which may well be interchangeable. The publishers are keeping science fiction books in print and in stock longer; I have received special educational flyers recently from Ballantine, Bantam, and Dell listing their science fiction for the classroom. If nothing else, teachers may have helped the science fiction community achieve a momentary victory in its long campaign to convince publishers that science fiction books sell year after year and should be kept in print.

Four publishers have brought old "classics" back into print, beginning with Hyperion and followed by Arno, Gregg, and Garland, Hyperion and Gregg coming out with second series. The price of the books, however, as well as their antiquity make them additions to scholarly resources rather than to classroom teaching, although the Garland series did include a number of titles from the so-called Golden Age. Students, at least, can find the books in the library.

Avon Books has started a Rediscover-

ery Series that it says is "dedicated to making important and influential works of science fiction available once more—and on a continuing basis—to discerning readers." That's a promising dedication, and it would be even more promising were it not for the suspicion that these "important and influential works" are also those books that happen to be available, either because the rights belonged to Avon already or because the rights had been reverted to the author by the original paperback publisher.

What else lies ahead for science fiction teachers? Jack Williamson has edited a book for teachers of science fiction; it will be published by Mirage Press under the title of *Science Fiction: Education for Tomorrow*. Tom Clareson has edited a collection of essays about the science fiction writers of the Thirties and Forties; by the time this piece sees print Bowling Green University Popular Press should have published the book under the title of *The Voices of Science Fiction*. A book about the writing of science fiction, *The Craft of Science Fiction*, edited by Reginald Bretnor and published by Harper & Row, also should be in book stores. *Writer's Digest* soon will publish a book about the writing of science fiction by arrangement with the Science Fiction Writers of America. Marshall Tymn is putting together *The Guide to Fantastic Literature* for FAX Publications. Through the efforts of Martin Greenberg, Joseph Olander, and Patricia Warrick, SFWA and SFRA have combined forces, put together teams of ten science fiction writers and ten teachers, two by two like Noah and the Ark, to produce an anthology called *Science Fiction: Contemporary Myth Makers, the SFWA-SFRA Anthology*, to be published by Harper & Row. And two companies are making back issues of the old magazines available once more, in microfilm, one edited for Greenwood Press by Tom Clareson.

Back in the late Sixties, Arthur C. Clarke made a comment that was picked up by the Science Fiction Writers of America as a motto: "The future isn't what it used to be." It has been a strange journey for science fiction from the pulps to the classroom, but for science fiction teachers I suggest that the best is yet to come. ■

"From the Pulps to the Classroom" will appear as a chapter in *The Guide to Fantastic Literature*, edited by Marshall Tymn and published by FAX.

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# PROFESSIONALISM

## L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP

Tonight I shall talk about professionalism: what it is, why people praise and condemn it, and what you need in order to achieve it.

According to the dictionary, "professional" is the opposite of "amateur." "Amateur" is a French word from the Latin *amator*, "lover." In English, it means "One who cultivates a particular pursuit, study, or science, such as painting, from taste, without pursuing it professionally; also, in disparagement, a dilettante, a dabbler." "Dilettante" is an Italian word, *dilettante*, meaning one who delights in something. In English, it means much the same as "amateur" but with a stronger implication of casual, superficial pursuit of some art or science.

A professional, then, is one who follows, as a means of livelihood, an occupation requiring special knowledge or training, beyond those needed for commonplace commercial, agricultural, or mechanical jobs. A professional can teach you golf strokes, cure you of what ails you, argue your lawsuit in court, defend your country as a soldier, design your house, paint your portrait, act in your play, compose you a song, write you a story, and finally preach a sermon at your funeral. Since these acts are his main or only means of support, he expects to be paid for them.

The professional, however, devotes his full time to his profession, whereas the amateur only plays with it in his leisure hours. The professional has to give his task his full attention in order to live, while the amateur has other means of support. Therefore the professional tends to excel the amateur in the practice of his profession.

In fact, a comparatively poor, weak professional can usually beat the best amateurs hands down. Hence "amateur" has acquired the secondary meaning of "beginner," "tyro," or "bungler." Con-

trariwise, "professional" has come to imply a competent, effective practitioner, even though not all professionals merit such praise.

In the arts and sciences, this is no great matter. Some people dabble in writing or painting or music or astronomy or botany as a pastime. The late John W. Campbell played with electronics and photography as an amateur. P. Schuyler Miller was a distinguished amateur archaeologist. But such amateurs are comparatively few, and they are not usually in direct competition with the professionals.

Sports, however, are competitive by nature. Many amateurs like to compete in sports but want to keep professionals out of such contests, because they know they'd get licked. They want a chance to win sometimes, too. So during the nineteenth century, starting in England and spreading to other countries, there arose amateur athletic associations, which passed rules to keep the professionals out. They barred anyone who had ever played or taught the sport for money.

The British Amateur Rowing Association went further; it excluded anyone who had ever done manual labor of any kind. The excuse was that such a man, having wielded a shovel or heaved a sack of coal, would have grown such bulging Conanlike muscles that he would have an unfair advantage. The effort to draw a sharp line between the amateur and the professional has given rise to endless disputes and scandals, as in the question of scholarships and other subsidies to college athletes.

Since a professional is almost always more proficient at his pursuit than an amateur, why should some amateurs look upon themselves as somehow a cut above the professionals? The explanation lies in the class structure of British society before the

present century. Most of the amateurs belonged to the upper classes: the nobility and the gentry. The latter were those who, although not of titled rank, had inherited enough property so as not to have to work for a living. For convenience, we may use the term "gentry" to include the nobility.

The gentry were by no means all mere well-heeled idlers. Many kept busy at such genteel professions as the clergy, the army, medicine, politics, law, or science. Some of them, like Charles Darwin, Joseph Lister, and Richard Francis Burton, achieved great things.

In sports, however, they were amateurs. Therefore, in sports, "amateur" came to denote "gentleman" in contrast to the supposedly proletarian "professional." In cricket, it has been the custom to mix amateurs and professionals in English cricket teams. On the program, the amateurs are listed as "gentlemen" and the professionals merely as "players."

These class connotations have leaked out into other fields. Hence, some people not only practice an art as a pastime but also make a virtue of their amateur status. The outstanding example in our field is Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

As I suppose you know, while my biography of H.P. Lovecraft has had gratifying sales, I have received a lot of flak from the inner hard core of Lovecraft admirers, who resent any mention of their hero's faults as a personal affront. In some cases they have pointed out real errors, which I hope to correct in future editions. In others, though, they have merely accused me of saying things I had not said. Why any grown man should become so emotionally partisan about a person whom he never knew and who has been dead for nearly forty years, I

shall have to leave to the psychiatrists.

During and after the First World War, young Lovecraft was a leading light in the amateur-journalism movement. He wrote a lot of prose and verse for amateur publications, similar to our fan magazines but not focused on imaginative fiction. When it was suggested that he seek commercial outlets for his writings, Lovecraft was aristocratically shocked. What, a *gentleman* ask money for the products of his creative art? He said: "I write to please myself only, and if a few of my friends enjoy my effusions I feel well repaid."

Later, Lovecraft reconciled himself to selling his stories for money, although his income from this source was trivial. Most of his earnings were from ghost writing, or "revision" as he called it. In his later years, I estimate that he averaged something like \$1,000 a year from ghosting, but only a couple of hundred from his stories. This was not enough to live on, even in the twenties and thirties and even on Lovecraft's frugal scale of living.

When his mother died in 1921, Lovecraft came into legacies totaling, I estimate, between twelve and thirteen thousand dollars. This sum had several times its present value—probably over \$50,000. Still, he could not live on the interest from this money, even when it was added to his other earnings. Hence he kept dipping into his modest capital until, at his death in 1937, it was nearly all gone. The remainder consisted of three mortgage notes on a quarry, valued at a total of \$500.

Even though he sold his stories for money, Lovecraft clung to the ideals and attitudes of the amateur. His friend W. Paul Cook, another eminent amateur journalist, said of him:

And Lovecraft was an amateur. He never wrote a line with the publisher or the public in view. He refused to alter a story when it changed to suit an editor, it would have been accepted and paid for. If his work as done according to his own inclinations would sell, well and good. If not, he had the satisfaction

of refusing to subordinate his art to mammon.

Lovecraft remained stubbornly ignorant of and hostile to professionalism. The idea of pursuing worldly success by the methods of the professional repelled him as "commercial" and "tradesmanlike"—to him, terms of utmost scorn and contempt.

Some approve of this attitude. Cook did, for one. So does the man who reviewed my *Lovecraft* for *Science-Fiction Studies*. In speaking of Lovecraft's life, this reviewer says: "This seems to me to have been a good life, one with little or nothing to regret from the standpoint of personal fulfillment, and one that might well be pondered by any teen-ager with a small inheritance." The reviewer then scolded me for what he considered my censorious attitude towards Lovecraft's amateurism.

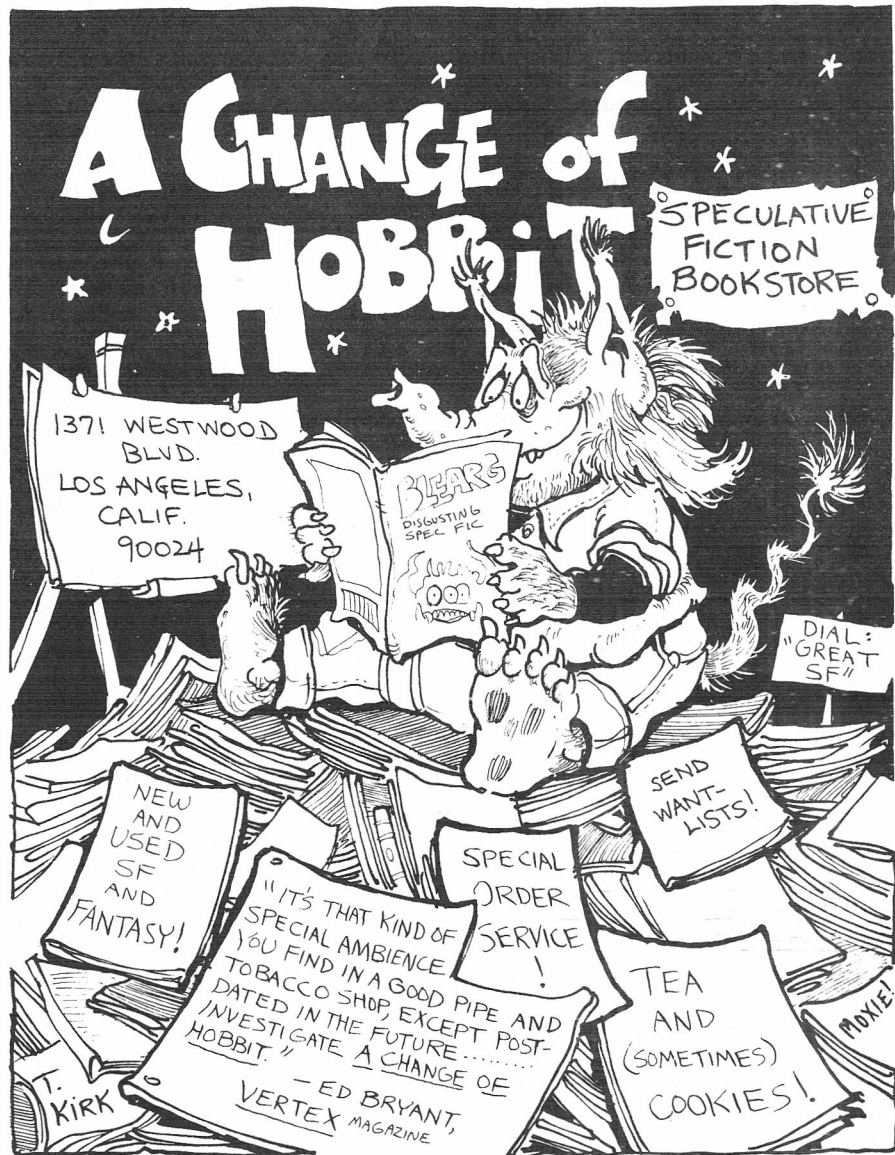
I did not mean to scold Lovecraft, who in any case is no longer around to benefit or suffer from my advice. If I did scold him, I apologize to his ghost. Certainly he had every right to lead the sort of life he did. But it is hard to keep one's own attitudes completely out of one's writings, and my views are professional. I have my prejudices like others; and, as an old pro, advice like that of this reviewer gives me cold chills.

Let us, however, try to put aside our personal feelings and look objectively at Lovecraft's life. Was it a good life? The term is pretty vague and subjective; still, to me, a man who, time and again in his later years, writes bemoaning his inability to earn a decent living, laments his nonfulfillment of longtime ambitions like visiting Europe, calls himself a has-been and a failure, and predicts his own eventual suicide when his money gives out, can hardly be said to have had a good life.

I don't mean that Lovecraft felt so depressed all the time. He doubtless had his ups and downs like the rest of us. Still, these late letters hardly give the impression of serene self-satisfaction.

Now, make no mistake. Lovecraft had great talent—or genius, if you prefer. And his works did in time achieve success. But this success took place decades after Lovecraft was dead. Posthumous success has come to quite a few artists, such as Poe among writers and Mahler and Nielsen among composers. But these men were all professionals. Almost anyone would prefer that such success as he achieves occur while he is still around to enjoy it.

The rationalization of amateurism like Lovecraft's in the arts is that the would-be artist is trying to create great art, above the understanding of the masses. Since the masses cannot appreciate it, this art cannot be expected to support the artist in the style to which he would like to become accustomed.





So he creates as an amateur and depends for his living on some other source. When Lovecraft was giving away his writings to the amateur press, he said:

Amateur journalism is a pastime, but it is more than a common pastime. It is at bottom a spontaneous striving for untrammelled artistic expression on the part of those unable to speak as they choose through the recognized literary channels; and as such it possesses the fundamentals which make for permanent endurance.

But what *is* great art? It is not necessarily what you or I or Lovecraft happens to enjoy in our own times. As far as we can pin a definite meaning to this term, it is a work that people not only enjoyed when it was created but have also continued to enjoy long after the artist is dead.

Hence people class the works of Homer and Shakespeare, of Praxiteles and Velazquez, of Shelley and Brahms, as great art, simply because they have outlasted the works of these artists' contemporaries. But we cannot predict how any contemporary work of art will seem to our descendants, centuries hence. Even among historical artists generally called "great," there have been many ups and downs. Shakespeare underwent an eclipse in the late

seventeenth century, and a survey made at that time would have barred him from the ranks of great artists.

Furthermore, most of the artists recognized as "great" have been just as eager to get their hands on some mammon as anyone else. Michelangelo loudly complained all his life of poverty; but, when he died, he was found to have squirreled away a tidy fortune in golden ducats. Shakespeare, too, did quite well by himself.

So we might as well give up trying to figure out which contemporary artistic works are great art. Our judgments are too much swayed by our individual prejudices and by temporary vogues and fads to be worth much in the long run. If we think we have a bent towards one of the arts, we might as well do the best we can, try to give our clients their money's worth, see to it that they pay us at least the going rate, and leave it to posterity to decide whether we have made anything worthy of being called art.

Neither is it likely that, with the passage of time, many amateur works will overpass those of professionals in public esteem. For all Lovecraft's brave words about the "permanent endurance" of "untrammelled artistic expression," this rarely happens in real life. Amateurs have seldom made lasting

contributions to the arts, except for a handful of artists like Lord Dunsany and King Frederick the Great of Prussia, who was a competent musician and composer. These men were amateurs as a result of being rich enough not to need the money they got or could have gotten for their works.

Poor Lovecraft was trying to do the impossible. He endeavored to be a professional while maintaining the methods and attitudes of an amateur. He attempted to play a rôle—that of the gentleman amateur dilettante artist and esthete—for which he did not have the needed economic basis. Even if he had had it, the rôle itself was fast becoming obsolete.

For instance, there used to be an aristocratic tabu against talking about money or showing an active interest in it. Gentlefolk deemed such overt interest "vulgar." Lovecraft adopted this attitude, not merely as an affectation but as an unbreakable tabu. He said: "For commercial pursuits I never had the slightest aptitude. . . . I simply *cannot* think or calculate in terms of gain." Nowadays this tabu has pretty well disappeared with the breakdown of the class system on which it was based. The few titled persons whom I have known seem just as eager to get a fair return for what they have to offer as

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. . . Poul Anderson, 1 August 1975.

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those of commoner clay.

I do not contest Lovecraft's *right* to this quixotic attitude. If, however, one insists on playing the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, Don Quixote de la Mancha, in real life, one need not be surprised when one gets knocked arsy-arsy by a windmill. I have a right, when I go to nearby Wayne, Pennsylvania, to deposit a check in the bank or to buy a ream of typewriter paper, to ride over on a horse, clad in chain mail and bearing a lance and a sword, and hitch the horse to a parking meter while I go about my business. I'm sure it would make the locals sit up and take notice. But it might also, at the very least, damage my credit rating.

Lovecraft's tragedy—and it was a tragedy—was that he simply refused to take these facts of life into account, until it was too late to do any good. If someone else—some “teen-ager with a small inheritance,” as that reviewer put it—wishes to emulate Lovecraft's career, that's his problem. I wish him luck; but I am not laying any bets that such a course will turn out well.

Suppose, then, we agree that amateurism is for the birds, at least for those of us who cherish serious literary ambitions. We want to be professionals. How do we go about it?

The main thing is to know one's profession. A profession, remember, is by definition an occupation requiring more training, study, and special knowledge than a non-professional one. So don't expect to master any profession cheaply, quickly, and easily. If it were easy, anybody could do it, and there would be nothing in it for the professionals. The gap between the amateur and the professional yawns wide, and the self-taught man is often at a grave disadvantage.

That was one of the errors in lifemanship of Clark Ashton Smith. He dropped out of school after the eighth grade and educated himself by such

heroic methods as reading the unabridged dictionary and the encyclopedia through. This self-education was effective in poetry, for around the time of the First World War, Smith was hailed as a leading American poet. Later, as public taste underwent one of its faddish, unpredictable changes, Smith's verse went into eclipse. Nowadays, the only ones who appreciate it are connoisseurs of imaginative fiction, like us.

Moreover, Smith found that poetry would not support him. A poet in modern America is practically forced to practice his art as an amateur, because this art does not have enough commercial possibilities. So Smith went into drawing, painting, and sculpture, which he worked at for the rest of his life. In these arts, he was also self-taught. I suppose he thought that, if self-education worked in poetry, it would work in other arts. As things turned out, it did not; his drawings and rock carvings remained at best talented primitives.

Luckily, being versatile and enterprising, Smith could always support himself, if on a modest scale, by casual labor. Curiously, while Smith is today best remembered for his horror-fantasies, he had no strong urge towards story-writing. Most of his tales were composed within a few years in the 1930s, when he needed the money to care for his aged parents in their dotage. After they died, he wrote fiction only at intervals of years.

When I say: know your profession, I mean more than simply being acquainted with other works in your field. I mean learning to do all the things that you must do to practice that profession, and learning to do them well. If your profession is law or medicine or engineering, you must go through years of formal training before you may practice. In the arts, such as fiction-writing, the requirements are much less formal and rigid, but it

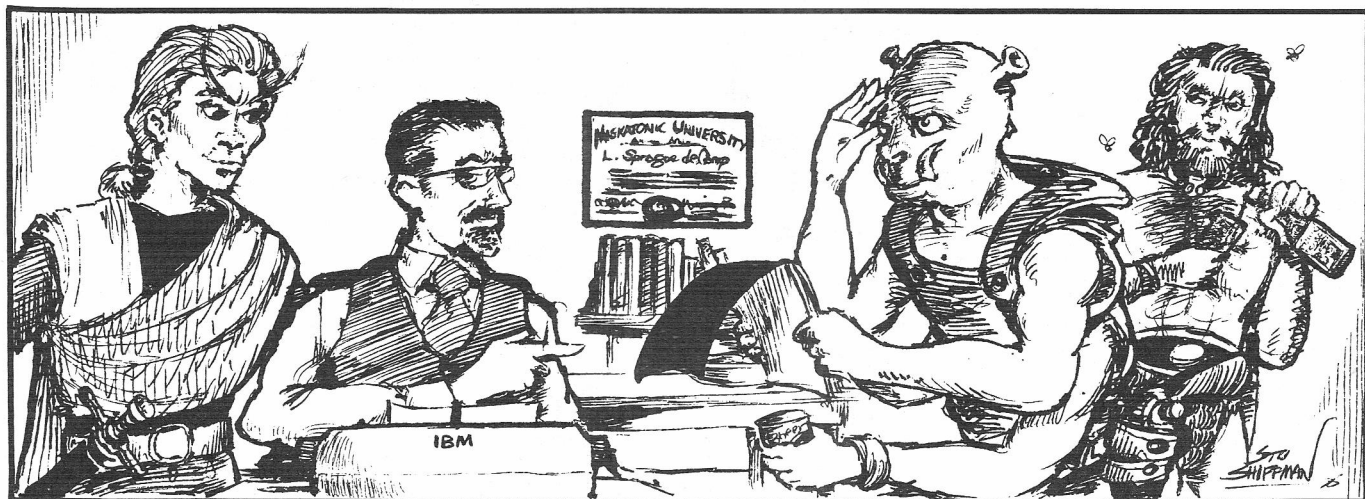
doesn't follow that it is any easier to become a competent practitioner. It may, in fact, take you just as much time and effort.

Any profession, moreover, involves activities quite different from artistic creation. In writing, for instance, one should master such mechanical techniques as touch typing and record-keeping. One should learn the business and legal aspects of the trade: copyright and contract law, accounting, and so on. Even if you find some of these boring or repugnant, if you don't learn them you will sooner or later be sorry. Nobody lives long enough to learn all the tricks in any trade, but one can only do one's best.

Professions also have their codes of ethics. In some professions, like law, these are written out in detail; in others, they are tacitly understood. In writing, I suppose the main rules are that, when you promise to write something for a publisher, you do it and write it as well as you can; and that nobody can hire you to write, as truth, something you know to be false and misleading.

For those who wanted to undertake the writing of imaginative fiction in a professional way, about twenty years ago I wrote a book called *Science-Fiction Handbook*. This has long been out of print. Recently, my wife and I have rewritten it, and George Scithers has just published it. We have deleted things that had become obsolete and added the lessons that we have learned since the original book was published.

I am not going to give you a hard sell. I will only say that, if I had known all that is in that book forty years ago, when I started writing professionally, I should be a rich man today. It's the old joke about becoming old so soon and smart so late. I hope, however, that some readers, by taking advantage of the lessons that we have had to learn the hard way, will be able to get smart a little sooner than they otherwise would. Thanks. ■







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# ALGOL INTERVIEW



## ISAAC ASIMOV

INTERVIEWED BY

## Darrell Schweitzer

*ALGOL:* What difference have you noticed between the way space travel was depicted in early science fiction and the way it actually happened?

*ASIMOV:* In science fiction, space travel was a one-man operation, with a bright inventor inventing the damn thing and getting into the ship and sailing off to Deneb III, perhaps with his sidekick, perhaps with a villain, and in real life we know what happened: it was a team endeavor and they went through an immense number of stages before they headed for the moon.

*ALGOL:* When you were writing stories in the 1940's did you think that it would involve professional astronauts rather than somebody in their back yard?

*ASIMOV:* Obviously not, you see, because the first story I ever wrote about a trip to the moon was exactly like any other science fiction story: the inventor did it himself.

*ALGOL:* Are you pleased in the way that science fiction's predictions about space travel have come out?

*ASIMOV:* Well I'm pleased that science fiction people had complete faith in interplanetary travel when none of the "intelligent" people did. The "intelligent" people never know what's going on anyway.

*ALGOL:* When you were writing these early stories, could you come up with any practical reason for space travel? Was it a dream of the stars and a chance to get rich?

*ASIMOV:* Well, I think that the history of exploration on Earth is primarily that of curiosity as to what's beyond the next hill. Naturally there's always the hope you'll find new room to live in. But I don't think in general that exploration on Earth has been the result of people trying to get new frying pans or something. Unfortunately with space travel we're expecting the general public to pay for it, and you have to promise them something in return. You want to reach the stars. They want new coatings for their frying pans. So you promise them new coatings for their frying pans.

*ALGOL:* Can you think of economic reasons to colonize another planet?

*ASIMOV:* A trillion ones. For one thing we're going to learn a great deal, and the more knowledge we have, the more comfortable we're going to be able to make our lives. Secondly, by reaching out into space we may eventually learn how to tap solar energy out there and beam it down to Earth, to solve our energy crisis. Thirdly, we will have people living on a multiplicity of worlds so that if anything happens to any one of them, even to Earth, mankind will continue. Again, because people are living on other planets, and in colonies in space, these people will probably be better equipped to explore space than



Earthmen are. The burden will fall on them for the expansion of the human race.

**ALGOL:** Carl Sagan is now saying that it's possible to terraform Venus by seeding algae into the upper atmosphere—

**ASIMOV:** It's conceivable. I don't think it's possible, but it's conceivable.

**ALGOL:** How could we go about convincing anyone that this might be worthwhile, although it might not pay off for a hundred years?

**ASIMOV:** I don't know. Perhaps it won't be possible to persuade Congress. Perhaps the Soviet Union will do it. It doesn't matter to me who does it.

**ALGOL:** Since experience has shown us that the way things are predicted in science fiction is not the way they really happen, will we ever have a problem in the field that the writers cannot believe their own speculations?

**ASIMOV:** No. No one expects to believe our science fiction speculations. Science fiction speculation isn't intended to be believed. It isn't intended to predict. It's merely a story. The only thing that science fiction predicts is that the future is going to be different from the present, and that will always come true. The future *will* be different from the present. Except for that, science fiction consists of cautionary tales. They tell you what might come true, and if you like it you fight for it. If you don't like it you fight against it. That's all. They don't tell you what will be true. Nobody knows.

**ALGOL:** When you write a story is it a case of "just suppose" or do you worry about the scientific feasibility of it?

**ASIMOV:** I worry about the scientific details, but I don't ask myself even for one moment whether this will really come to pass. In other words, if I have somebody reaching the star Deneb, I don't ask myself whether somebody will reach the star Deneb, but as long as they're there I try to describe Deneb as it really is. I don't call it a red dwarf.

**ALGOL:** Do you ever worry about your own fiction dating?

**ASIMOV:** No, as a matter of fact, I don't. Some of my stories date in the sense that they take place in a year which is now in the past. My story "Trends" takes place in 1973 and is all wrong. But even that doesn't date because there's more to the story than just the events which take place in 1973. It's still an interesting story. And then too, a lot of my stories aren't going to date in my lifetime because I set them in the far future and I involve myself with events which aren't likely to either come to pass or to clearly *not* come to pass. For instance, I can live a considerable time before I can worry about whether we're going to have robots as intelligent as human beings, or galactic

empires, or we're going to have time-travel, or even an electronic pump. It's a mistake, I think, to write stories which try to catch tomorrow's headlines, because you may make good sales for now, but they will be dead next year.

**ALGOL:** It seems that on that basis "Trends" should be dead, but people still read it. Why?

**ASIMOV:** That's because the story wasn't written really realistically. Take as an example Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain*. What's the good now of reading excitedly about a virus brought back by astronauts, when you know it's not going to happen? Or *On the Beach*, for instance? You know nuclear warfare is not going to work that way, so there's sort of a Victorian flavor to it. This is what I would like to avoid anyway. Of course those stories may hit the best seller lists, and maybe that's all the authors go for. Bless them. I go for other things.

**ALGOL:** What do you go for?

**ASIMOV:** I would like to see to it that my books are read after I'm dead.

**ALGOL:** What makes a science fiction work last?

**ASIMOV:** I suppose what makes a science fiction work last is that as in all literature, it will have something to say to generations yet unborn. Shakespeare's plays don't have meaning only for the English people of 1600. They deal with human beings in such a way they have meaning for us today. While I don't pretend to be anywhere near Shakespeare, I would just like to get a little bit of that. For instance, the young people who read *The Foundation Trilogy* now, and who like it, and are pleased with it, are sometimes not aware that it was written thirty years before they were born. And yet, I don't think if one were to read *The Foundation Trilogy* that there'd be much of a sense of dating about it. You can't read it and tell yourself this is typical 1940's, because it isn't. At least not in my opinion.

**ALGOL:** Untypical 1940's ... One thing that strikes me as odd about the series is that it's based on the premise that history actually repeats itself in detail. Is it likely that there will be imperialism along Roman lines in outer space, as opposed to something entirely new?

**ASIMOV:** Probably not. There'll probably be something entirely new, and if I were writing it now I would try to make it something entirely new, and I might not succeed. This was written when I was in my twenties, and the only way I could do it was to repeat the Roman Empire, and I did it with the vigor and ignorance of the twenties—the age, not the decade. So there is something in it that appeals to people. I could do it much better now and probably fail. For

instance, I wrote "Nightfall" when I was twenty-one. It's poorly written, but if I wrote it now I could write it much better and it would be a much worse story. I needed that twenty-one-year-old not knowing what you're doing in order to get it across.

**ALGOL:** Then you've never been tempted to go back and tamper with your earlier work?

**ASIMOV:** No, no. Let it stand as it is, especially if it's been well received. You know, you don't want to break up a winning team.

**ALGOL:** If you were to write a series now about the next thousand years of human history, how would you go about it without using the Roman model?

**ASIMOV:** Darned if I know. I've never given it any thought whatsoever. I obviously am never going to do it, because I'm never going to compete with the *Foundation*.

**ALGOL:** In what direction would you like to go in science fiction right now?

**ASIMOV:** Well, I may not go in any. I've written a straight murder mystery, and instead of taking seven months as a science fiction novel takes me, it took me seven weeks, and I enjoyed it tremendously, and if it does well I may want to write some more murder mystery novels. I've written in the last four or five years twenty-six mystery short stories, and I enjoy them too. So I have this horrible feeling that after I've been a science fiction writer for so many decades I want to be a mystery writer for a while.

**ALGOL:** How about more science fiction mysteries?

**ASIMOV:** Well, anything that is science fiction is so damn hard to write. Science fiction is the hardest thing in the world to write, and I can say that better than anyone else can because I'm the only person I know who has written in just about all subjects, fiction and non-fiction, at all age levels, so I can compare different things, and to me it's clear that science fiction is the hardest thing to write, and it's not because I do it poorly. I do it very well. My feeling is if I can get away without doing science fiction as I grow older and lazier, I would like to. Nevertheless I do write science fiction at the present moment. At the present moment I've got several science fiction stories in press. I've got a new collection of science fiction all published in the last couple of years, called *Bicentennial Man & Other Stories*, published in October. I've got a science fiction story written that I haven't succeeded in selling yet, believe it or not. I've tried it in three places, but none of them are science fiction magazines. It was originally written for *Seventeen*, and I hesitate to show it to science fiction magazines because they

may be tempted to take it on my name only, and since I wrote it for teenagers the readers in the science fiction magazines might not like it. So I'm waiting to see if there's a logical outlet for it. I'm not hurting for money, so I can afford to let a story sit around.

**ALGOL:** Since you're not hurting for money, do you ever still want to write science fiction for the love of it?

**ASIMOV:** It's the only reason I write it, because there's nothing that pays me so small a sum per hour as science fiction. My *F&SF* essays pay me a little less than three cents a word, which is the least I get for anything I write, but my *F&SF* essays take me a day apiece, and they're fun, so I'm willing. A science fiction story the same length would take me a week, and it wouldn't get me any more hardly. So any time I write science fiction it's for the fun of it, unless maybe I were to write another *Foundation* novel, because Doubleday is anxious enough for it to be willing to bribe me heavily, and the paperbacks would probably bribe me heavily. But writing another *Foundation* novel is a frightening thing to me, because I have a feeling that I would write it much more skillfully and it would be much poorer, and that all the science fiction fans would say, "Read the first three books. Don't read that fourth one. It's no good." I hate to do that.

**ALGOL:** If science fiction is the most difficult type of writing, why did you start there, when presumably at the age of twenty-one or so you didn't know as much about writing as you do now?

**ASIMOV:** Because that's all I wanted to write. I wasn't writing to make a living when I started. I was writing because I wanted to write, and this was what I wanted to write. It was only much later on that I discovered I could write other things too, easier things, that made more money. And I still write science fiction because the love lingers.

**ALGOL:** What are your writing methods like?

**ASIMOV:** Absolutely nothing to describe. I sit down at the typewriter and type.

**ALGOL:** One draft?

**ASIMOV:** No, no. I write it up, go over it and make corrections in pen and ink, and then I type it up a second time. Everything goes through the typewriter twice.

**ALGOL:** Do you write from the top of your head, say an article you read in a magazine which has an idea you can make a good story out of, or do you work more from the subconscious?

**ASIMOV:** Oh no, I think. I don't let inspiration strike. What I usually do is I get some basic notion. Then I think up a problem involving it. Then I think up a resolution. After I have a problem and the resolution, I think up a place to

begin. And then I start, and I write toward the resolution. The details I make up as I go along. I never outline. Even my most complicated novels were never outlined.

**ALGOL:** Do you worry about *how* it's going to be written, or let that take care of itself?

**ASIMOV:** No, I never worry about it. When I first started off I figured if I couldn't finish a story I'd throw it away. I think maybe once or twice I couldn't. But once I'd been writing for about two years I finished every story I started. It's just too late to worry about it now.

**ALGOL:** A few years back, when we had "The New Wave," and everybody was letting off verbal fireworks, did you have any inclination to join in?

**ASIMOV:** No, because I can't. The sort of stuff that Harlan Ellison writes, that Barry Malzberg writes, or John Brunner wrote with *Stand on Zanzibar*, is something I can't do. And I don't believe in trying to do something I can't do. I write what I write. If the time comes when people don't want it, then I won't be able to sell. If people continue to want it, then I will sell. There's no urgency to try to keep up with the fashions. I just do what I can.

**ALGOL:** When you started writing did you try to write what was then fashionable?

**ASIMOV:** Well what happened was I started writing, and I liked Weinbaum; I liked Nat Schachner. I tried to write like that. And as time went on I liked Clifford Simak; I enjoyed Robert Heinlein, and my writing automatically bent in that direction. Now my writing may bend in the direction of Harlan Ellison every time I read a story of his that I admire and envy and wish I could have written, but it can't bend very far, because the talent isn't there. Still, my new mystery, *Murder at the ABA* is definitely not in my usual style. There is more sex in it, more realism. But you know, not very much. I mean, if Harlan were writing it there'd be a lot more.

**ALGOL:** Is this really a difference in talent, or just personality, a case of a writer writing one sort of story because that's who he is?

**ASIMOV:** No, there are some writers who have many styles, I'm sure, who can imitate different fashions. I can't. My talents are very limited. In fiction I tell very straightforward stories, with very unadorned style, and in non-fiction my great talent is to explain difficult things simply without becoming inaccurate. And these are not very important talents, but they're enough, so I can make a living.

**ALGOL:** What writers outside the science fiction field have had any influence on you?

**ASIMOV:** As far as my writing is

concerned? None. I admire writers like Shakespeare. It sounds phony to say I admire Shakespeare, but I wrote a two-volume book on him, so I think I can claim to admire him, and I was very fond of Dickens, and I was very fond of Wodehouse, but I've never tried to imitate them either consciously or unconsciously. Agatha Christie, who I have also admired, has had a great influence on my murder mysteries. And maybe even my science fiction mysteries. Okay, that's fair enough. Outside the science fiction field maybe Agatha Christie. Possibly G.K. Chesterton. But except for them, all science fiction people. And even with Christie and Chesterton—they're category fiction writers too. I mean, none of the great Literary Lights influenced me, because either I didn't read them, or I read them without being able to be influenced by them.

**ALGOL:** How do you feel about the science fiction label? Lately there have been a lot of people saying we should remove the science fiction label. Do you think this will do any good?

**ASIMOV:** Well, let me tell you a story. Once, people objected to the smell of Camembert cheese, so they took off all the labels saying 'Camembert cheese,' and they wrote on it 'rose petals.' Do you think the smell changed? Okay. Science fiction is science fiction. Call it anything else you want and it's still science fiction. If people don't want to write science fiction, then they don't write science fiction. If they want to call it speculative fiction, they can call it speculative fiction, but if they write rotten science fiction, calling it speculative fiction won't make it good speculative fiction. If they write good science fiction, but think the phrase is a drag and hurts sales, and they want to call it speculative fiction, they have a right to, and I hope they sell better. But as for me, I'm sticking to science fiction, because when I write science fiction that's what I write. The important thing is to write good stuff, I think, whatever they call it.

**ALGOL:** What do you think would happen if a science fiction novel of yours were released as general fiction?

**ASIMOV:** I think my fans would buy it in the same numbers that they would buy it if it were called science fiction, and that the people who never heard of me would continue not to buy it. I don't think it would make any difference in sales whatsoever.

**ALGOL:** Do you think there are people who are not buying it because it's labelled science fiction?

**ASIMOV:** Well, if people buy my stuff because they don't realize it's science fiction, they won't like it anyway because it will be science fiction. For instance, all my non-fiction stuff—lots



of it, anyway—is sometimes put in the science fiction category. In other words you'll go through the science fiction shelves and you'll see *An Easy Introduction to the Slide Rule* by Isaac Asimov. In fact I once got a phone call from someone who said, "Do you realize that at a certain bookstore they've got *An Easy Introduction to the Slide Rule* in with the science fiction?" I said, "I don't care. It's my science fiction readers who buy my non-fiction too." In other words in my particular case—I don't say this is true for other writers—all my books fall into a particular category, Asimov fiction, and there are people who will buy anything that I write, and there are people who will buy nothing that I write. And any category that I place it under other than Asimov isn't going to change it.

**ALGOL:** Haven't you wanted to proselytize for science fiction by reaching new readers?

**ASIMOV:** As a matter of fact I do that all the time. I'm constantly writing articles on science fiction in non-science fiction journals. I've written articles in places like *The Humanist*, *Intellectual Digest*, *Smithsonian Magazine*. I've written an article on science fiction in the *Britannica Yearbook of Science and the Future*, for instance. I've made speeches about science fiction in all sorts of places, including The American Association for the Advancement of Science. I'm a very active proselytizer at all times.

**ALGOL:** If you were to publish a science fiction story in, say, *Playboy*, would it be recognized as science fiction? A lot of people seem to feel if they don't call something science fiction they have a better chance of selling it to a bigger magazine.

**ASIMOV:** Well, I don't know. They might say so, but how can you tell? I had a science fiction story in the *New York Times* magazine section, for instance, January 5, 1975. I don't know if it was labelled science fiction. It was called "The Life and Times of Multivac" and you couldn't read two paragraphs without knowing it was science fiction. If you're just against reading science fiction on principle, you're not going to read that story. Well, I don't know how many people read it and how many didn't.

**ALGOL:** In your early days did you find that you tended to get categorized as a "pulp writer"?

**ASIMOV:** That's what I was. I was a pulp writer, just as I'm now a science fiction writer. I'm not ashamed of where I started. That's where I wanted to start. And there's nothing wrong with being a pulp writer. I wanted to be a pulp writer, so I became one. I wanted to be a science fiction writer so I became a science fiction writer, and to

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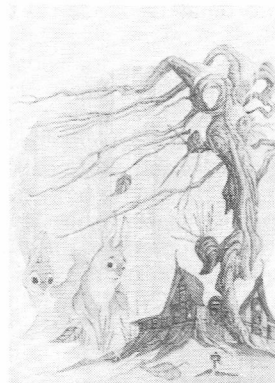
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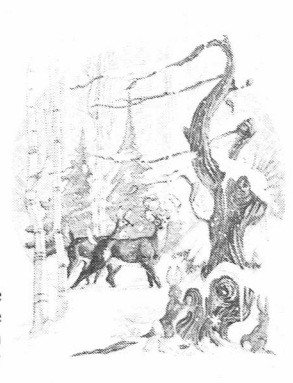
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this day I'm not ashamed of it.

ALGOL: You make a difference between the two.

ASIMOV: Simply that a science fiction writer was one of the categories of pulp writer in those days. A pulp writer was someone who wrote for the pulp magazines, and in order to make a living, or to make any serious amount of money writing for the pulp magazines, you had to write a lot. And I learned how to write fast and a lot. I've published 172 books. I've learned my lesson. If that doesn't make me a pulp writer, what does?

ALGOL: Can you still be a pulp writer when you're writing books?

ASIMOV: Well, as now there are scarcely any pulp magazines, you can't be a pulp writer literally. I'm a pulp writer in the sense that I still write fast, and a variety of things. That was another thing a pulp writer had to do if he wanted to make a living. He had to write all kinds of things, because you couldn't make a living from one magazine. So I learned how to write fast and a whole lot of different things.

ALGOL: Do you write your best work fast?

ASIMOV: I would like to be able to answer that, but I write everything at the same speed, top.

ALGOL: Has it always been this way?

ASIMOV: Always.

ALGOL: You mentioned that it takes seven months to write some novels—

ASIMOV: Right, it takes seven months to write some novels, one month some others, not because I spend more time at the typewriter, but because I spend more time in between doing other things. In other words when I write my murder mystery, things go sufficiently easily that I can sit there day after day and work at it. When I write a science fiction story, the thinking up things, working out the society and so on, is such that I maybe don't work oftener than one evening a week on it. The rest of the time is thinking time; I'm doing other typing. If you could take all the typing I actually did in the seven months and squish it together, it would come out seven weeks just like the other one.

ALGOL: But basically there's more mental work in it.

ASIMOV: More mental work, yes.

*Additional questions asked by Andrew Porter, in a telephone conversation.*

ALGOL: Several years ago you wrote an essay in *F&SF* applauding homosexuality as one possible solution for the population problem. What was the reaction to that essay?

ASIMOV: Why, none at all. I didn't get any letters denouncing me or anything. I also pointed out that oral and anal sex was another way to avoid conception, and that masturbation is still another way to avoid conception. My plan was that one should stop objecting to "sexual perversions" that do no harm to anybody, since it is the most natural and most effective method of contraception, without giving up sex. That was my point. I don't applaud any of those methods as being my favorite particular way, or anything like that, but I simply point out that the reason they're considered perverse is that in past cultures it was felt to be important to assure conception, to assure a lot of babies, simply because the death rate was so high, and infant mortality was so high. We don't any more have to have a lot of babies, so why retain the arbitrary moral distinctions between sex acts that are not only no longer applicable but which have a positive danger.

ALGOL: Speaking of population, you've said you think things are going to go bust.

ASIMOV: I think the chances are better than even that they will.

ALGOL: How have the last few years' efforts at environmental controls and clean-ups affected those views?

ASIMOV: Unfortunately, as soon as the environmental clean-up seems to tangle with somebody's profits or somebody's jobs, they back away. It's this sort of short term advantage that's reflected all over the world in mutual violence: both sides in Northern Ireland, in Lebanon, in the Middle East generally, both sides anywhere generally place a short term victory over their opponents ahead of the long term survival of the human race. As long as this goes on, we're not going to make it.

ALGOL: How much editorial control do you have over *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine*?

ASIMOV: I don't have detailed editorial control, and I don't want detailed editorial control. I've chosen an editor—

George Scithers—who sees things parallel to my own views.

ALGOL: Do you think your name alone will sell the magazine?

ASIMOV: Of course not. It will have to be a good magazine. If it isn't a good magazine either because we're not capable of putting out one, or because we don't get enough good stories, or because we don't recognize good stories when we get them, then it won't succeed. I don't expect it to succeed if it's a bad magazine.

ALGOL: Do you think its sales will cut into those of *F&SF*?

ASIMOV: I hope not. I consulted, before I made my final decision, with Ben Bova and Ed Ferman. Both were enthusiastic and gave us a clear go ahead. I would not have done it, I would *absolutely* not have done it, if I had thought that it would in any way harm the other science fiction magazines. I have been in the field too long, I have too many friends, to do harm to the field just to get out a new fiction magazine. So, it's with the clear feeling that this will help the field generally that I'm putting it out. I may fail, you know, but I've got to try.

ALGOL: Do you have a large royalty income?

ASIMOV: It's a respectable royalty income. It's not as high, for instance, as John Jakes' is, or Michael Crichton's. It's picked up slowly over the years. There've been no unusual jumps. Don't forget, I've never had a bestseller, I've never made a movie sale.

ALGOL: And your non-fiction books and foreign sales?

ASIMOV: Each one makes a little bit—there are no huge sums. No bonanzas. The only reason I make a good living is because I have a lot of books, each of which sells well. But no million dollar sales.

ALGOL: You have no agent, though you once did, right?

ASIMOV: Yes, I haven't had an agent now for something like a quarter of a century. I do all my own paperwork, all my own business dealings. It does get very complicated, but I manage. It may mean that my total income is less than it would be with an agent, but money isn't everything. I get pleasure out of dealing with editors and publishers.

ALGOL: Thank you, Isaac. ■

STOP  
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As this issue goes to press, the British Pound has fallen to an all-time low of \$1.64, headed down to oblivion (look at the Israeli Pound for a true disaster story). Accordingly, I ask UK people who want to subscribe to ALGOL to send an International Money Order to either ALGOL in New York or Waldemar Kumping, ALGOL's European agent. I'm sorry, but despite even higher UK subscription rates (see page 3) ALGOL can no longer afford to accept subscription in Sterling.



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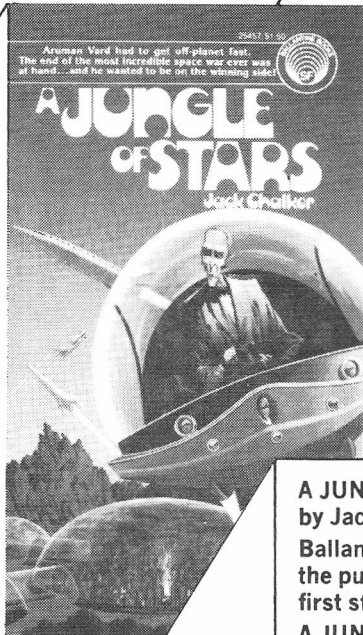
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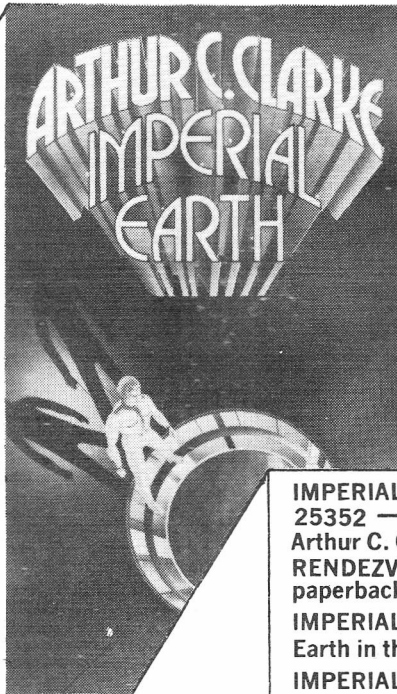
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# RICHARD LUPOFF'S BOOK WEEK



**INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE**, by Anne Rice. 371 pp. \$8.95. ISBN 0-394-49821-6. 1976. Alfred A. Knopf.

This book, in case any reader of *ALGOL* has been estivating beneath a mossy rock for the past year, is one of the media "events" that set the industry a-buzz. Anne Rice—you've almost certainly never heard of her—emerged from a tuition-free writing group conducted at a local Unitarian church by longtime SF fan and sometime SF pro Ray Nelson.

Rice decided she'd try her hand at a horror story, wound up with a vampire novel, sent it off to Knopf and got back not the usual first-novelist's two- or three-thousand dollar pittance, but a very handsome five-figure advance. Knopf showed the manuscript to Paramount and film rights were snapped up for a sum several times as large as the publisher's advance—something into six figures.

Word of a big-budget, major-studio vampire movie set paperback row into a spell of visions of another *Exorcist*-type breakout, and sent bidding for *Interview* paperback rights soaring past the half-million dollar mark. Thus, before the book was even published, its totally unheard-of author stood to earn the better part of a million bucks! This is very strange to contemplate. A Lovecraft can live in poverty and die in near-bankruptcy; one of his heirs in the horror-story genre becomes wealthy on the basis of one book, before it is even published.

Well now, just what is there about *Interview with the Vampire* that makes it a million-dollar property? Is it really all that good a book? Or is this some kind of fluke?

For starters, Rice uses a rather surprising sort of structure to tell her story. She opens in present-day San Francisco where a young broadcast-

journalist (we never learn his name, he's always and only "the boy") is taping an interview with a man who claims to be an authentic vampire. Not a psychic, metaphorical, or psychological vampire (fleeting thoughts of *Some of Your Blood*) but an honest-to-God, literal, blood-sucking, coffin-sleeping, sun-avoiding, immortal *Dracula*-type vampire.

"I was a twenty-five-year-old man when I became a vampire," the vampire tells the boy, "and the year was seventeen ninety-one." That makes him, in 1976, something like 210 years old (I'm not much of a mathematician; anybody want to check my arithmetic?). After a few preliminaries, gazings-out-the-window-into-Divisadero-Street, lightings-of-cigarettes and similar bits of business, the vampire goes into his autobiography. And, with only an occasional break for the boy to change cassettes and perform similar minor

business, the vampire proceeds to tell the story of his life for the next nearly-four-hundred pages.

In other words, the framing sequence, which was surprising only because it is so totally hackneyed and obsolete a device (only Lin Carter and the other neo-pseudo-Burroughsians use it any more, or so I thought until today), is also totally superfluous.

As for the vampire's autobiography, it's a little hard to follow the time sequence of the book, but apparently it runs only up to about a hundred years ago, skipping then to the present for the end of the book. (I say end rather than climax as there is no real climax; the autobiography/interview just kind of peters out.) If the story runs from 1791 to, let's say, somewhere between 1875 and 1900—why is the frame set in 1976? That's a little bit hard to say; my guess is that the author intended to bring the story up to the present but overwrote her outline, discovered that she had reached and passed her projected length (and probably had said all that she had to say), and so simply scrubbed whatever vampiric adventures she had planned for the past hundred years. This is called lack of control, and it is neither a shameful nor at all an uncommon ailment among first-novelists. Someday I'll tell you the story of my own first. . . .

But it's certainly bad for the book.

Aside from this control problem in terms of overall length, Rice has a severe pacing problem. Again, as typical among first-novelists, she doesn't know when to give you every nattering detail of a thing, when to hit high points, and when simply to skip. Thus, at one point (fairly late in the novel at that, but my guess is that the second half of the book was written before the first; at least it reads like the work of a less-practiced hand) the vampire, Louis, attends a play in Paris.

Rice gives us a complete description of the performance, character by character, action by action, expression by expression. The thing goes on for pages. Clearly, this must be vital to the plot, right? Wrong! It's quite trivial. The whole performance is there only in order to have Louis meet the cast after the play! Why did the author then force us to sit through the whole play (it's a dull and pointless one, at that!)? Not because she wanted to be mean to her readers, surely—but because she didn't know better!

The general tone and performance of the book is like that. The pace is excruciatingly slow. The characters (particularly the vampires: Louis, his mentor Lestat, his protegee Claudia) are very effectively drawn; the settings are also effective and atmospheric: New Orleans, the obligatory visit to Transyl-

vania, Paris. But the vampire matters on and on and on about his feelings, hopes, fears, the clothing everybody wears (would you believe half a page about a little girl's outfit—for no apparent reason that I can detect, at least, except that "it was there"); and endless talk, talk, talk. Between conversation, introspection and description, it's a wonder that anything ever *happens* in the book. And yet a great deal does. A plot summary (I will not inflict one upon you) would really have a lot in it.

And some of the scenes in which things happen are very nicely handled: an encounter with a shambling, mindless vampire in eastern Europe, a number of chase scenes, and a few sequences of the actual attacks of vampires. The last are described with astonishingly vivid, erotic intensity.

So—it isn't altogether a bad book, and Anne Rice shows a fair talent that might someday become a major talent.

But a million dollars? *Nah!* This has to be one of the all-time crazy flukes of a crazy industry.

And what should Anne Rice do with her million bucks? Should she feel guilty, embarrassed, ashamed? Not a bit of it!

Take the money and run, Anne! If the crazy bastards want to pay you a fortune for a mediocre neo-gothic, that's their lookout, not yours! ■

**THE RAY BRADBURY COMPANION**, by William F. Nolan. 339 + xiv pp. \$28.50. ISBN 0-8103-0930-0. 1975. Gale Research Co. (A Bruccoli Clark Book)

Way back—w-a-a-y back—when I was a little science fiction fan first becoming addicted to those strange publications called fanzines (actually this happened in 1952), there appeared an unusual booklet called the *Ray Bradbury Review*. It was photo-offset from typewriter type, printed digested and saddle-stitched (i.e., stapled like ALGOL rather than like *Analog*), and was produced by one William F. Nolan.

It was by far the most elaborate fanzine I'd ever seen: it quite dazzled me; and Nolan asked, in it, for recommendations of other subjects to whom he might devote similar publications. I remember sending him a list of recommendations, although I cannot now recall what those recommendations were.

As far as I know, Nolan never did get around to publishing any more of those *Reviews*, but here, a quarter-century later, we have *The Ray Bradbury Companion*. It's probably grossly unfair to Nolan for me to do this, but I can't help thinking of the *Bradbury Companion* as a revised and expanded version of the *Review*.

The book is a loving tribute to by a solid journeyman writer to an older colleague who has been touched by the hand of fame and—as Nolan, for one, obviously believes—true greatness. There are herein all sorts of information and memorabilia concerning Bradbury. There are photos from the Bradbury family album, reproductions of multiple editions of Bradbury *oeuvres*, reproductions of rough drafts, variorum editions of published stories, comic book adaptations of Bradbury stories. There are indices and bibliographies of Bradbury's works and of works about Bradbury. There are facsimiles of promo slips that were included in Bradbury books. We see facsimiles of the covers of the four issues of Bradbury's fanzine *Futura Fantasia* (1939-40) and tables of contents of all issues. There's a facsimile of the first page of a *Weird Tales* yarn by the late E. Everett Evans, which Bradbury story-doctored by adding a new opening scene; Nolan kindly marks Bradbury's contribution so the reader will know exactly where it ends and Evans' begins.

And so, on and on, telling you just about all that you might wish to know about Ray Bradbury. (Perhaps more than you wish to know, but if your interest in Bradbury is less than fanatical I doubt that you would want to own this book; looking at it in a library is another matter, and in those circumstances, it is fun.)

I think the most interesting thing in the *Companion* is the introduction, "The Inherited Wish," by Bradbury himself. This is fairly lengthy (thirteen pages) and has never appeared elsewhere. And the most interesting part of it, for me, is Bradbury's story of how he made his first big break out of the category-publishing ghetto into the sunlight of general literature, where he made his fame and his (relative) fortune.

Bradbury tells the story of the publication of *The Martian Chronicles* under the "Doubleday Science Fiction" imprint. As he puts it, the critics were quite underwhelmed with the book. It was one more ignorable category sausage.

Then one day Bradbury recognized a fellow-browser in a bookstore. It was Christopher Isherwood. Bradbury gave him a copy of *The Martian Chronicles* and begged him to read and review it. Isherwood did. He liked it! He raved over it! Suddenly Bradbury was "in" with the literary intelligentsia! Next, he got Doubleday to drop the "Science Fiction" from the second printing of the book, and the label has been omitted from every Bradbury book since.

And if Isherwood had arrived at that bookstore an hour later, or left an hour earlier than he did. . . ? Who



knows? Maybe Bradbury would have made it anyway. Or maybe he would be a struggling semi-hack today. Who knows indeed?

Well now, is Bradbury really that good and that important an author? Is he really worthy of a beautifully-produced *Companion* printed in two colors on heavy paper, bound in rich cloth and slipcased? Is he really a great author?

That's hard to say. One thing is certain: he's a *dreadful* poet, and every time he goes mouthing Buzza-Cardozo grade rhymes about sleeping with Ben Franklin, Herman Melville and God in that great four-poster in the sky, he only embarrasses his friends and gives ammunition to his detractors. His latter-day theatrical efforts have been disasters. And even his latter-day fiction, what little of it there is, reads like a parody of his earlier, stronger stuff.

But there are *still* those vibrant works of earlier decades, *The Martian Chronicles*, *Fahrenheit 451*, the fine and underappreciated screenplay that he did for *Moby Dick*. I have used Bradbury short stories in classes for gifted children with marvelous effect—after twenty-five years they still hold up beautifully.

If, as is only fair, the weaker and self-derivative Bradbury works fall away

with the passage of the years, and the strong, fine stories survive, I think that Bradbury will yet emerge with stature undiminished, will prove that Nolan's worship is earned, that the *Companion* is a deserved, not an excessive, tribute.

**TRITON**, by Samuel R. Delany. 369 pp. \$1.95. 1976. Bantam.

After the sensation of Delany's *Dhalgren*, it seems inevitable that *Triton* come as some sort of anticlimax. Yet I found it a thoroughly absorbing, highly rewarding reading experience. *Triton* is a much more modest undertaking than *Dhalgren*: far shorter (although at 369 pages it's still a hefty package), far more conventional (although still not particularly conventional: it's all relative), and consequently likely to be far less controversial.

Delany postulates a future in which the moons of the outer giant planets have been partially terraformed and successfully colonized. "War" of a sort occupies much of the solar system, but it's more a sort of cut-throat commercial rivalry *cum* sabotage process than war as we know and love it here in the twentieth century. In short, it's a future a lot like that of Clarke's recent *Imperial Earth*.

Even the structure of the books—Delany's and Clarke's—shows considerable similarity: a male hero-resident of a

colonized moon returns for a visit to earth, renews an abandoned romance, tours the earth of the future, and finally returns to his home. But as Clarke's attention focuses mainly on externals—hard-science futurology—Delany concerns himself with internals: the emotional lives of his characters, particularly (of course) that of his protagonist Bron.

There's even a similarity in the sexuality of the future worlds postulated by Clarke and Delany: Clarke projects recent trends so that bisexuality, homosexuality, and group sex are as much taken for granted as the more familiar heterosexual pairings of earlier days. But Delany outdoes Clarke, he outdoes him at every count, and in *Triton* not only sexual orientation but actual sexual physiology is changeable on demand. (So is race, although this plays a far lesser role in the book than sex.)

Thus, in *Triton* it's nothing remarkable to say goodnight to the person at the next desk to yours at the office, a person who's a white male, and in the morning say hello to the same person, who is now a black female. Sexual orientation can also be switched at will: heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual with a mild bias toward hetero, etc.

There is also a great deal of attention devoted to theatre, including

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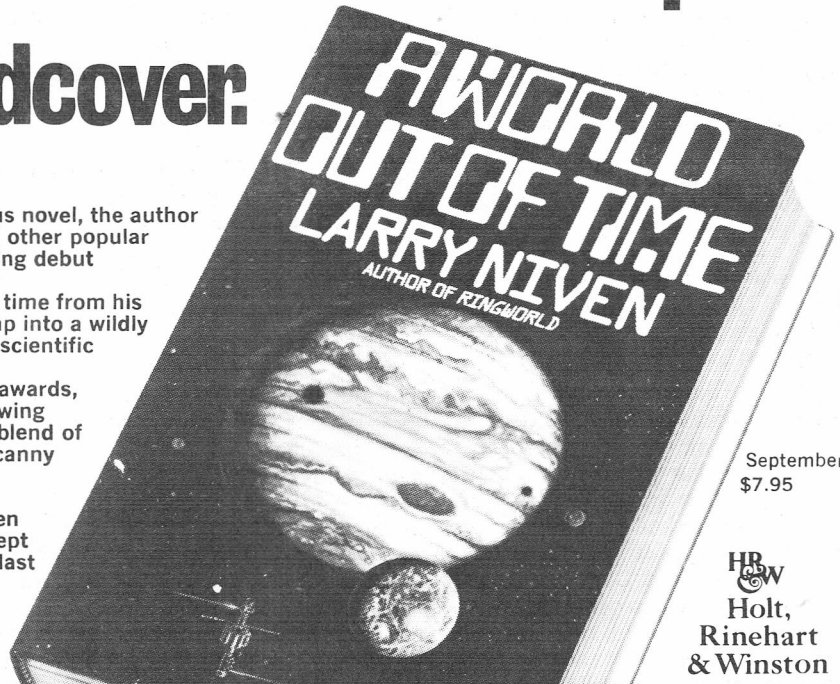
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the intriguing concept of performances for unique audiences—individuals selected by the theatre troupe and not even aware that they are being made the audience of a performance.

The society of *Triton* is a sort of multiform experimental community with straight, outlaw, communal, private, etc., sections. There is a slight flavor of the hippy-dropout ethic of five to ten years ago, a milieu clearly dear to Delany (*Dhalgren* reeks of it; *Triton* has it in a more refined form).

The book has its humor and its pointed comments. There's a gorgeous throwaway line about women doing most of the child-raising as long as they do most of the child-bearing, and another about the custom of taller-male /shorter-female couplings leaving a lot of lonely tall women and short men.

Yet, as he moves through this book, which is largely light and easy-going by Delany's recent standards, Bron is not happy. And his unhappiness derives largely from sexual/romantic dissatisfaction. In the end (I hope this isn't a terrible giveaway) he opts to become a woman: in the world of *Triton* this is not a shocking or disapproved course, yet for Bron it is clearly an act of desperation, and for her it fails in the end. I think that the failure is also Delany's; the book ends abruptly, I think not because the story was over but because Delany found himself unable to carry it on.

Still, even though the novel ends in failure, I think it is a noble and fascinating experiment, and I think that it speaks well for the author. Clearly, over the span of *Dhalgren* and *Triton* Delany has been experimenting, learning, and maturing. The talent which informed his early novels, novels which were sloppy, self-indulgent displays of pure bravado, is now becoming disciplined, sharpened. Delany is still young, with vast potential for growth if he cares to apply himself, to take the hard path.

He is taking that path, and I expect each successive work of his to demonstrate continued development. ■

**AND STRANGE AT ECBATAN THE TREES**, by Michael Bishop. 154 pp. \$7.95. ISBN 0-06-010352-3. 1976. Harper & Row.

First of all, the name. *Bleech!*

Now that that's out of the way, this is a delightful book, a new treatment of a somewhat familiar theme but crafted into a strange shape and told with such fineness of presence and such impressive use of language that it hardly matters what the book is about. Does this sound as if Your Reviewer is so enchanted by technique and style that he's lost all concern for substance? Maybe so. It's just that so much science fiction (and

other fiction!) is so crudely crafted, that an author who uses the language the way Bishop does, quite dazzles Your Reviewer's tired old eyes.

Bishop writes about a colony-world monitored by an orbiting observatory; the colonists have been left alone for generations to develop their own civilization, but there is a stricture against their ever developing a weapons technology. Technological warfare was the bane of human history, and these people will never be permitted to blow themselves up and scorch the skin off their planet.

The result is a sort of technological paradox-world of the type John W. Campbell used to love, with the queen arriving by horse-drawn coach to attend a theatrical performance while the stage manager is busily programming the house computer.

The world that Bishop creates is a strange one: there is a fairly rigid two-caste system of intellectual elite and common folk. There is a social prohibition against displays of emotion or exuberance, even to the point of singing, dancing or acting; but the prohibition does not extend to corpses, so there is a strange theatre in which all roles are played by electronically reanimated corpses.

Bishop's world is a strange, cold place inhabited by strange, cold people who move with stylized, deliberate, yet jagged starts. His style of writing (I will not quote; it takes a while to get accustomed to, and a short passage would seem pointless) is as oddly compelling as an unfamiliar hypnotic dance.

The book is very short, but it is totally absorbing and in a way that surprises the reader, moving. An eccentric, accomplished performance; an impressive and admirable one; enjoyable? astonishingly so, once the strangeness is overcome.

Highly recommended! ♣ ■

**OUT OF THE STORM**, by William Hope Hodgson. 304 pp. \$10. 1975. Donald M. Grant, publisher.

Small-press publishing has increased hugely of late, and Don Grant, as one of the pioneers in science-fantasy oriented small press work, has expanded his activities. The current volume is a major contribution to the field, one of Grant's finest efforts and one of the best and most important books of its sort in many years.

William Hope Hodgson was a horror-story writer who had spent some time as a boy apprenticed as a sailor; he hated the life, left it at his first opportunity, and never returned to seafaring. Even so, the sea provides the backdrop for many of his stories, as if he were struggling over and over to

work out the bad experiences that he carried away from those years.

His most important stories were published years ago in a huge Arkham House omnibus, *The House on the Borderland*; other books include a selection of psychic-detective stories titled *Carnacki the Ghost Finder*, and *The Ghost Pirates*.

To produce the present book, Sam Moskowitz has pored through back files of long mouldering magazines (Hodgson was killed in 1918 while serving with the British army in France), and turned up seven horror stories by Hodgson, which he claims have never before been collected. I believe him.

They're not Hodgson's most important stories, of course, but some of them are very good, and all of them are of interest historically. There are highly atmospheric and appropriate illustrations by Stephen Fabian and a very long introduction by Moskowitz (over 100 pages). I found the introduction highly informative and generally well written, a great bonus. There are just a few of Moskowitz's usual solecisms:

*Theosophical* and *theological* are not synonymous (page 99); the word *addenda* has a plural meaning, the singular is *addendum* (page 112). And the statement (page 106) that Hodgson was married in 1918 is almost certainly a typographical error or one made in transcription—all evidence suggests that it should read 1913.

Still, these are minor flaws and Moskowitz's commentary is filled with useful facts—a commendable research job! If anything, I would suggest that the reader hold the introduction until after reading the stories, as Moskowitz may give more information than the reader really wants before reading the stories—some of them are described too fully, their endings given away. I assume that this results from the introduction having been written for the briefly-revived *Weird Tales* magazine of a few years ago, rather than directly for the present book.

On balance, *Out of the Storm* is an outstanding book, a must for scholars, a fine investment for speculators, a gem for collectors. Not to be missed!

Other recent publications from Grant are very varied. *The Bowl of Baal* by Robert Ames Benet, with an introduction by Stuart Teitler and illustrations by David Ireland, is a grand old pulp-era lost race novel, wherein the intrepid Irish aviator finds his way into the lost city in the middle of the Arabian desert, meets the beautiful competing priestesses both of whom fall in love with him, etc. It creaks a bit with age but it's good fun, and like the Hodgson collection is a first book edition that will surely accrue in value.



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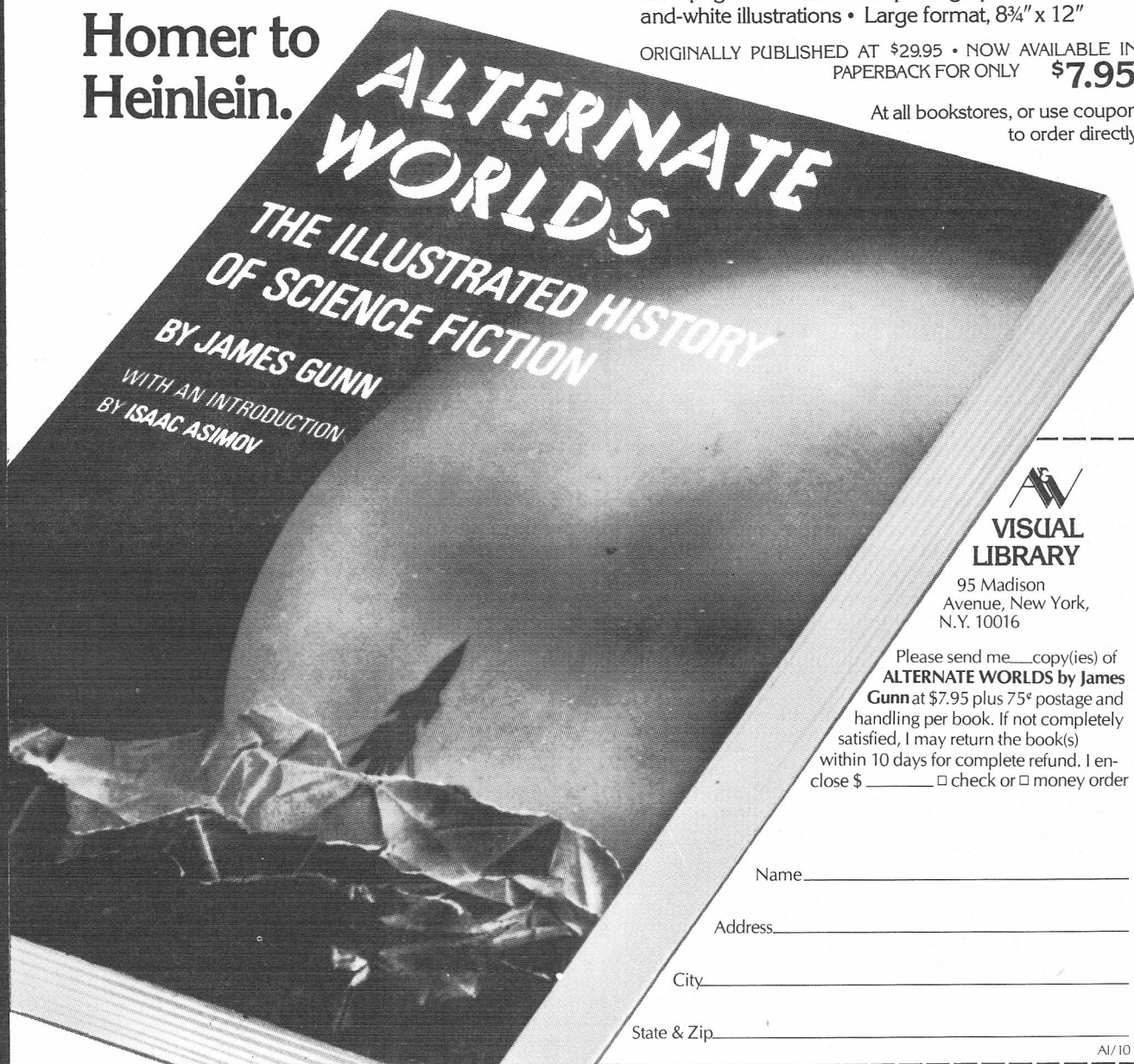
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An *Astrology Sketch Book* is an unusual item to come from a publisher like Grant, but in this case there's a reason for it—the artwork is by Virgil Finlay, one of the three artists generally regarded as the most important science fiction illustrators of the magazine era (the others were Frank R. Paul and Hannes Bok). Finlay loved both classical and fantastic themes, and his color and black-and-white illustrations adorned scores of issues of *Weird Tales*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, *Fantastic Universe* and other science fiction and fantasy magazines from the 1930s onward.

His illustrations for astrology magazines are less known to SF art collectors, and this compilation of them will be of great interest to admirers of Finlay's fantastic art, as well as persons with an interest in astrology.

*Red Nails* by Robert E. Howard with illustrations by George Barr is one of the most lush productions I've ever seen—and it is just one of a series of Howard volumes Grant is issuing, printed in tinted ink on fine, cream-toned paper with monochrome drawings and decorations and tipped-in color plates. I will not pretend to hold a higher opinion of Howard than that which I hold: I respect him as an original (a regard which is not afforded to his slavish imitators) but I rather disdain his crude and repetitious plotting as well as his excesses of violence.

Nonetheless, I must regard *Red Nails* and its companions in the Grant series as supreme examples of the book-maker's art, and recommend them on that plain most highly. ■

**FAR LANDS OTHER DAYS**, by E. Hoffmann Price. 590 pp. \$15. 1975. Carcosa (Box 1064, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514) ISBN 0-913796-01-8.

In case you don't know who E. Hoffmann Price was—is, I should say, for at the age of 78 he's as full of vigor and vinegar as a man one-fourth his age—he was one of the most talented pulp writers, one whose work has been inexplicably overlooked in the years of mining and collecting gems from the pulps. He had a modest Arkham House collection a few years ago (*Strange Gateways*, now out of print), but *Far Lands Other Days* is his first major collection and it is a blockbuster.

There are thirty-one stories in it, originally published over the span of years from 1926 to 1950. The magazines in which they appeared include *Weird Tales* (of course) but also such diverse and little-mined pulps as *Golden Fleece*, *Strange Detective*, *Spicy Adventure*, *Spicy Mystery*, *Speed Mystery* and others including the great *Short Stories* and *Argosy*.

Some of Price's stories are outright fantasies, mostly with an Arabian Nights motif rather than the more gothic themes favored by most of the *Weird Tales* crew; other yarns, although not technically fantasy, still have much of the same magical atmosphere thanks to their exotic settings, ranging from Syria, Egypt and the Red Sea to the Philippines.

The first half-dozen stories in the book deal with Pierre d'Artois, a French psychic detective created by Price, whose adventures ran in *Weird Tales*. Like the late Seabury Quinn's Jules de Grandin, d'Artois was immensely popular with readers—but Price grew tired of him, and of the unavoidable comparisons (and suggestions of imitation) between his own and Quinn's creation.

Price's solution was simply to drop the series and turn to other stories; in an introduction to *Far Lands Other Days* he says that he regards the d'Artois stories as inferior stuff and that he included them in the book only because of pressure from his publisher. Well, they are of great period interest, but in all honesty I must agree with Price—the d'Artois stories do not hold up nearly as well as I remember them.

But some of the other yarns are just fine, especially those dealing with oriental rugs. Price is something of an authority on the subject of rugs. He tells the story of how he became one—by making friends with a Middle Eastern rug merchant (in New Orleans of all places!) in the early 1930s, getting a job as a shill at rug auctions, finally taking one home to study it, and then trading it for another, another, another. . . .

Because of the diverse sources of these stories, there is an erotic flavor to many of Price's works seldom found in the puritanical stories turned up from the pages of *Amazing*, *Wonder* or *Astounding*—why, once in a while, in a Price story, somebody actually gets \*|\*a\*|\*d\*. Wow! Will the Hayward Science Fiction League ever recover from the shock?

In sum: good fun, nice atmospherics, fine period fluff. This massive compendium is rather much to take end-to-end, but it's a pleasure to have on hand and dip into for a story every now and then.

*Far Lands Other Days* is the second offering of Carcosa, by the way. The first was *Worse Things Waiting* by Manly Wade Wellman; the proprietor of Carcosa, Karl Edward Wagner, tells me that the Wellman book is still in print, although the stock is no longer large. Carcosa, like Grant (and like a few other specialty houses) is doing what Arkham House began to do almost forty years ago, and I suspect that most of the early titles of Carcosa, Grant, etc., will work

the same way that *The Outsider*, *Skull Face*, and the other early Arkham titles did. That is, they'll go begging for a while, titles will remain in print and available at list price for quite some time. . . .

. . . but one fine morning we'll all wake up to find that—oh, *Far Lands Other Days* or *Worse Things Waiting* or *Out of the Storm* or whatever the title is—has gone out-of-print. And then the prices will start to creep upward. And then they'll start to soar. And those who bought single copies will sit smugly content with them, those who bought extras on spec will ponder whether to sell now for the quick profit or hold out for the bigger one. . . .

. . . and those who put off will start frantically scurrying after books, bidding premium prices, kicking themselves for not buying while the buying was good.

If you have any interest in these books, whether for pleasure reading, scholarship, or collecting (the speculators will take care of themselves), I urge you to order copies of these books now, while they're in print, while small and impecunious publishers need your support. You'll be grateful in a few years! ■

**CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE FICTION AUTHORS**, by Robert Reginald. 368 pp. \$20. ISBN 0-405-06332-6. 1974. Arno Press.

This is a magnificent reference work, indispensable for any scholar concerned with modern science fiction and almost as valuable merely for browsing on the part of any fan. Reginald has done what various SF fans and critics have been talking about doing for the past three or four decades: compiled in one volume the available biographical and bibliographic data available on every living science fiction writer (or at least every living science fiction writer he could identify).

Great and near-great, famous or obscure, young or old—if you'd published any SF professionally by the time Reginald compiled this book, the odds are overwhelming that he's got an entry for you. There are 483 bibliographic entries, and Reginald managed to get biographical data to go with over 300 of them. Reginald used the direct approach—sending questionnaires to as many authors as he could locate—and supplemented the responses by consulting dozens of secondary sources (indices, *Books in Print*, checklists, the Tuck *Handbook*, fanzines, SFWA publications, files of *Locus*, dealers' catalogs).

Want to know Philip Jose Farmer's birthday? January 26, 1918. (page 93)  
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Illustration taken from The Storm Lord by Tanith Lee

first sale was? "The Secret in the Tomb." (But his first professional publication was "The Feast in the Abbey." Both appeared in *Weird Tales*; for some reason, the magazine bought "Secret" first but held it until after buying and publishing "Feast." Dates of publication were January and May, 1935.) (page 24)

Want a guaranteed stumper for the next science fiction trivia quiz? Try this one: Which SF or fantasy magazine did Harry Harrison once edit under a pseudonym, what was the pseudonym, and what else was remarkable about that editorship and the use of that pseudonym?

Answer: *Fantasy Fiction* (for one issue only—November 1953), the pseudonym was Cameron Hall, and the remarkable aspect of its use was that it was used jointly by Harrison and Lester del Rey as co-editors of the magazine. (page 126)

Of course Reginald isn't quite clairvoyant; for some authors the entries are very terse. Thus, for Eric M. Livesey, we are told only that he is the author of *The Desolate Land*, published 1964 by Digit.

But that isn't Reginald's fault, and in addition to the author entries in the book he provides an index by titles for cross-references and a list of known pseudonyms. Even this list contained a number of surprises for me: E.V. Cunningham is really Howard Fast, John Rankine and Douglas R. Mason are the same person, Volsted Gridban is really E.C. Tubb (I thought Gridban was really Vargo Statten!). . . .

According to the Arno edition of *Contemporary Science Fiction Authors*, this is a slightly-revised reprint of the first (1970) edition of the book. Reginald says that he is at work on a full-fledged second edition, which is very good news, in view both of the arrival of new authors on the scene and the continued bibliographic accumulation on the part of those already listed. There are, however, two problems which this does not take into account, and which suggest the need for some sort of companion volume, perhaps one to be titled *Historical Science Fiction Authors*.

The first problem is that many science fiction authors had ceased to be active in the field (most but not all of these being deceased) prior to Reginald's date for "contemporary" (1960-68). Second, with the passage of time, authors listed in *Contemporary* retire from the field or die. Merely flipping the pages of the book brings up the names of Otto Binder, James Blish, John Wyndham, Murray Leinster. These will presumably be omitted from later editions.

Thus, the need for the companion

volume.

But purely on its own merits, the Reginald book is a magnificent achievement, one for which he deserves all credit, and one which belongs in every science fiction reference library, without exception! ■

**THE BITTER PILL**, by A. Bertram Chandler. 158 pp. \$5.75. ISBN 0-85885-111-3. 1974. Wren.

Bertie Chandler has been turning out science fiction stories for over thirty years and novels for the past fifteen, and in my reading experience they've all been nice, safe, cozy, pleasant little adventure stories, largely based on Chandler's career as a merchant mariner rather literally transposed to space. You know the trick, it's more usually worked with westerns where the cowboy becomes a spaceman, his six-shooter a blaster, etc. In Chandler's version the sailor becomes the spaceman, tramp steamer becomes spaceship, exotic ports become distant planets, colorful natives become aliens. The ultimate exercise of this nature was probably Chandler's own rewrite of *Mutiny on the Bounty* into a space opera called *The Big Black Mark* a couple of years ago.

All of which makes *The Bitter Pill* the more surprising, for in place of the nice cozy little sea-story-transposed-into-space-opera we are accustomed to, Chandler offers a tough, gritty, rub-your-nose-in-it realistic novel more than a little reminiscent of the kind of socio-extrapolative things that Fred Pohl and the late C. M. Kornbluth used to write together.

The Pohl-and-Kornbluth formula, you'll remember, was to take one aspect of society and exaggerate it into a totally dominant force: What if the advertising industry takes over the whole world? What if the lawyers take over the whole world? That kind of thing. Some wag at the time suggested the ultimate Pohl-Kornbluth notion as, What if the garbage men take over? Garbage strikes in major cities some years later made the joke seem not so funny.

Chandler's "What if?" seemed a lot more likely a few years ago when the youth cult was at its peak (in this country, anyway) and before ZPG got off the ground, but it still packs a fair little wallop. What if, Chandler asks, the young people unite as a coherent political force and—by perfectly legal means—take over the government and the control of society? And what if, having done this, they institute a series of steps against their elders (defined as anyone over 45) including job discrimination, encouragement of suicide, and commitment to slave labor battalions

for minor legal infractions (first offense, one year; second offense, life).

It's a grim, gritty world, and Chandler paints it in darkly realistic colors, a surprising and impressive little novel. I use the word "little," however, not in the sense of "modest." On the contrary, *The Bitter Pill* is by far the most ambitious of Chandler's works that I've ever read; it's *physically* rather little—I'd estimate about 45,000 words and the book could well have run to 60,000 or more.

Thus, a very major sequence of events that should have run for twenty to thirty pages (in my opinion) is condensed by Chandler into just over four pages by the now-hoary device of excerpting radiograms, TV shows and the like. I don't know why Chandler did this, except that it occurs near the end of the book and he might simply have been getting tired. In any case, it's regrettable and makes a serious although not fatal flaw in the book.

It's surprising to see Chandler at this stage of his career suddenly switch from space opera to "serious" novels, but with *The Bitter Pill* as his maiden work in the new mode, he's off to an excellent start and I will look forward to future works.

Just a word about the publisher: Wren is an Australian firm and *The Bitter Pill* is the first of their publications I've ever seen. (They have issued at least one other science fiction novel since, *The Pawn* by Arthur Mather, 1975.) Their books are nicely made, printed on excellent stock and hard-bound in handsome jackets. I do not know if they are available through any US outlet; if you can't get any bookseller to stock or at least special-order them for you, you can order them from Space Age Books, 305 Swanston Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000, Australia. You'll have to pony up an extra buck-and-a-quarter for postage and handling, but even at \$7.00 the Chandler book is not out of line with contemporary book prices. ■

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#### MARTA'S LUPOFF WEEK

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**SANDWORLD**, by Richard Lupoff. 188 pp. \$1.25. 1976. Berkley Medallion

**THE CRACK IN THE SKY**, by Richard Lupoff. 207 pp. \$1.25. 1976. Dell.

**THE TRIUNE MAN**, by Richard Lupoff. 219 pp. \$6.95. 1976. Berkley Putnam.

The trouble with Richard Lupoff is that he's a damned uneven writer, as the trilogy of books herein reviewed amply demonstrates. When he's good he's very, very good; when he's bad, he's merely okay; and it's the "merely okay" in



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contrast to the "very good" that's infuriating.

*Sandworld*, for example, is a quick paced adventure story. A station-wagon carrying three prisoners from San Quentin, one guard, and an ACLU observer is mysteriously transported from a rain-soaked highway to an alien, desert world, inhabited by ghostly but nonetheless deadly vampires. The characters are well-presented, the plot engrossing (I think Lupoff is incapable of bad plotting), the dangers chilling, the ending fitting. One of the book's best touches is the nature of the desert through which the characters travel—a barrenness of tiny particles which, when exposed to moisture, explode into life, becoming plants, animals, entire jungles from a patch of dryness. The magic of it works every time, the sense of wonder—I wish the entire book had concerned itself with this one small piece of delight. But it doesn't, and I put the book down with a frown of discontent. Something missing here.

*The Crack in the Sky*, as title, is the publisher's, not Lupoff's. The book was originally, and more fittingly, titled *Fool's Hill*, and written in 1972, although published only this year. After *Sandworld*, *The Crack in the Sky* comes as a shocker. It is reminiscent of some of Silverberg's dark and fearsome visions

of the future, but lit with Lupoff's flashes of playful humor—transmuted, here, to a somber lightening. Here there is a world polluted beyond habitation, save for domes where the remnants of humanity conduct their lives. Politics, riots, prejudice, alienation, power trips—the entire mess compressed into bubbles of life that barely maintain themselves against the poison outside. Lupoff's characters, generally kindly, decent people attempting to live their lives amidst this turbulence, are involved in the politics and diverse cultures of the domes, try to make their peace and some small form of life within their tense societies. And fail. It's a rich, complex book, its characters better realized than are those of *Sandworld*, its story more compelling, its pace fierce. I read it in one sitting, and put it down with a shiver.

It strikes me that what *The Crack in the Sky* has, and what *Sandworld* lacks, is that sense of passion, the propulsive force of controlled emotion that takes what could all too easily be yet another "oh-lord-it's-the-end-of-the-world-again" story and turns it into a strong and terrifying vision of a world yet to come.

*The Triune Man* is Lupoff's tour de force. There are more story-lines running through this book than in any other book in the field I can readily remember, and, like a literary juggler, Lupoff keeps them all moving, all interesting, all distinct, and never fumbles once. Basically, we have one character who, victim of a multiple personality complex, embodies three separate personalities: Buddy Satvan, comic book artist, pleasant, low-key and gentle man; Roland L.K. Washburn, a neo-Nazi fanatic of the worst type; and Auburn Sutro, well-to-do genius mining engineer. One of these men, prior to the beginning of the story, murdered Washburn's second-in-command, and Satvan/Washburn/Sutro is (are?) presently in the care of a banana ranch specializing in multiple-personality cases. Who pulled the trigger? None of them know, and the gradual discovery of the actual murder/personality is one of the many, and one of the minor, threads running through the book. Buddy Satvan is mysteriously transported to Sravasti, a distant and artificial world populated by three mysterious and ghostly caretakers. These caretakers, the Yakshis, have programmed Sravasti's giant computers to pick the one man capable of saving the universe from a growing and world-devouring absolute vacuum. The computer picked, and transported, Buddy. How is Buddy going to save the universe? Along with Buddy have come the other components of his personality, each of whom have their times as chief head, and Washburn, especially, wishes

to use Sravasti and its power merely to advance his own evil ends. Yet the Satvan who has been transported is, in effect, an analogue Buddy, and Buddy still lives in a complete form back at the institution on Earth, alternately being the violent Washburn and the diligent Buddy, who strives to maintain his popular comic strip despite the machinations of the syndicate heads, who want to sell the strip idea to Hollywood but are convinced that Buddy's association with the strip, and the still-fresh public memory of the murder of Washburn's aide, will spoil the deal with the movie people.

Whew. Still there? There's more to come. The comic character is Diamond Sutro, super-hero, whose arch-enemy is the evil Dr. Anubis. They grow from simple characters in Buddy's recorded week-by-week continuity to characters in their own right who also appear on Sravasti. And there are also memories of a small boy in Holland during the second World War, a boy who is captured by the Nazis and survives the concentration camps.

How many plots are going on here? I stopped counting early on. The wonder of it is that Lupoff keeps them all constantly moving, constantly engrossing, each one populated with strong, well-realized characters whose thoughts, actions, and goals are uniquely their own, while still blending with the paces of the other stories and contributing their share to the total work. I was sure, as the end of the book grew nearer, that Lupoff would blow it, the juggler would fumble or, at the very least, when he had most of his story-spheres down and together, there would still be one or two orbiting helplessly, without end. But Lupoff is a much better writer than that. The climax ties it all together, answers all the questions, resolves all the conflicts (and, incidentally, saves the world) in as compact and elegant a manner as one could wish.

So, we have a book of clockwork perfection, a joy to read. And a book of passion and force, a bleak vision. And a simple, quick-paced juvenile, which leaves something to be desired.

Lupoff, at his worst, is still a competent and skilled writer. And at his best, he's one of our best. ■

—Marta Randall

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# Propeller Beanie

A COLUMN by SUSAN WOOD

ROSS C.

Several people, including Andy Porter, were surprised when my first column for *ALGOL* showed up simultaneously in *Amazing*.

So was I.

The Aussiecon column was originally written for the special 50th Anniversary issue of *Amazing*. Not incidentally, it was planned as my final column for "The Clubhouse." I had put a good deal of effort into that last column, and was reasonably pleased with it. As you can imagine, I was disappointed when Ted White, *Amazing's* editor, informed me (through a third person, not directly) that it had been squeezed out of the anniversary issue. (Columns were frequently delayed like this.) I wrote to Ted, asking to withdraw the column altogether, and submitting the resignation I'd planned to offer after the annish. I didn't hear from Ted, directly or indirectly, but frankly didn't think this was unusual.

Uh-uh. Mistake. Bad. Slap on wrist, Susan. (Ouch!) *Always* wait (patiently) until a manuscript is returned.

Andy Porter had asked me for a column. I was marking final exams; writing time just didn't exist. I did, however, have this lovely, unpublished, and (so I assumed) unclaimed manuscript around. I sent a copy off to Andy, telling him its antecedents. I sent it, and Andy accepted it, in good faith.

And then the *Amazing* hit the stands.

I gather that Ted White never received my letter. Certainly he never told Sol Cohen, the magazine's publisher, that I'd withdrawn the column. The latter found that if he cut the column (in the middle of a sentence) he had room to run it after all. Apparently everyone concerned is furious. Certainly, only Andy Porter has contacted me directly to find out what happened. I've apologized to Andy for any problems I may have inadvertently created for him; and I apologize to you-the-reader, to

whom I had no intention of offering the same material twice.

It was only a year ago that Rob Jackson was lamenting in *Maya* that "The entire UK fanzine scene seems to be at a standstill now." Something happened. That scene is now so active that an old fan and tired like myself, balancing my teacup out here in the Last Outpost of Empire, can't even begin to keep up with the new fanzines (sorry, lads).

Recently I assembled a heap of British printed matter from September 1975 through to June 1976. Then I read through it all in two days, without benefit of pie or pint, or even a sup of Pat Charnock's cider. Now Ratfans, the Gannetfather, the Tweed Elephant, the underground Goblin, several persons named Ian, the odd Kittenfan, and Gerry Webb's peke, all drawn by Harry Bell, dance through my fevered brain singing "Britain is fyne in '79!" Occasionally they stop to insult Malcolm Edwards, who replies with polite, devastating polysyllables. It's enough to make a poor North American break out in generalizations. For example:

British fandom certainly is active, these days. I suspect it's a self-reinforcing process, like most waves of fabulous fannish activity. Local groups—the Gannets up around Newcastle, the Kittens in the Kingston area, the Rats infesting south London—hold meetings, publish fanzines, put on conventions, and generally bring people together in an atmosphere of enthusiasm that inspires other people to engage in these fannish activities, putting out yet more fanzines full of yet more letters which in turn. . . . The enthusiasm reminds old gafiates of why they enjoyed fandom in the first place, and so Peter Weston, Eric Bentcliffe, Terry Jeeves and others start writing and drawing again. Bob Shaw enjoys himself at an Eastercon, writes about it, and keeps on writing. Harry

Bell, drawn back into fanac by Gannetfandom, starts contributing Hugo-quality cartoons (like the brilliant cover for *Maya* 9) to every fanzine in sight. And after eleven years, Walt Willis is lured back into active fandom—a letter crosses the Atlantic to the Katz's revived *Swoon*, a column is promised for *Maya* 11, where it will join forces with work from Bob Shaw, Pete Weston and Tom Perry.

Meantime, Peter Roberts is maintaining the high standards of fannish writing we expect from The British; and Ian Williams, Pat Charnock, and potentially at least the Skeltons are reaching those exalted standards of excellence. Those people can put you right into their lives . . . marvellous stuff. (Parenthetically, I wonder about the level of Male Chauvinist Piggery among the Rats and their ilk. Pat seems to be attracting criticism for her so-called "strident" feminist views, expressed in her *Wrinkled Shrew* and Ian Williams' *Goblin's Grotto*. Personally, I find what she has to say to be calm in tone, and reasonable, even obvious and familiar, in content. Of course, most other British females seem to be mentioned in terms of their male partners or their breast size; Pat is probably pretty radical just by being herself.)

There are plenty of other good fanwriters; the lettercols are full of familiar names and new ones; the fanzine review columns list dozens of titles besides those I've collected here. And obviously, all this fanzine activity is only the foaming crest of a large wave of British activity. When it breaks over British Columbia, though, after three months or more crossing the Atlantic, it still carries a tremendous sense of excitement and involvement.

British fandom is varied, though at first it may not seem that way. Several overseas fans have pointed out, in loco I've just been reading, that it's unfair to

compare "British fandom" with the much larger "North American fandom" and expect the same level of activity from both. Yes, but British fandom isn't comparable to a single city's fandom, either, though it shares some characteristics. Notably, there's the inevitable in-groupishness which occurs when friends write to and for each other's zines, about the same conventions and personalities, sharing the same feuds or jokes. Eric Bentscliffe, in his entertaining fanzine column in *Egg* 10, reviews *Maya* 9 and *Goblin's Grotto*. Malcolm Edwards, in his excellent (translation, wish I'd written it) fanzine column in *Maya* 10, reviews the Charnox' personalzines, Ian Maule's *Checkpoint* and . . . *Egg* 10, commenting in passing on John Brosnan's insults. Brosnan and Greg Pickersgill, in their personalzines, deliver the (apparently) obligatory insults to everyone in British fandom, and especially Malcolm. So it goes.

(Those insults disturb me, rather. As Jerry Kaufman points out in *Maya* 10, British fans actually print gossip and personal comments which North American fans only speak. The "serious and steady invective" of John Brosnan, Greg Pickersgill, and to a lesser extent the other Ratfen—and retaliating Gannets and such—just isn't common, over here. Or if it is, it's part of a Deadly Feud. It took me awhile to realize, and longer to accept, that their crude and constant nastiness was serious. I dunno—Brosnan especially puts so much effort into being Vile that he fills me with unholy fascination.)

(There's also an anti-intellectualism which labels anything above its own level "pseud," for pseudo. Shows the unity of British fandom, I guess, that such people feel moved to insult; over here, I expect the book review or whatever would just be ignored.)

Despite the apparent insularity, there's really a wide range of interests covered by the fanzines I have here. At one extreme there's the scholarly journal *Foundation* and the serious SF-reader oriented *Vector* maintaining a high standard of interesting discussion and reviews. The major Gannetzines, *Goblin's Grotto* and *Maya*, are solid genzines. I'm not the only reader who believes that, in just a year, Rob Jackson has turned *Maya* into a Hugo-quality fanzine. In fact, it's characteristic of North American insularity that so few zines and writers outside this continent ever get recognition; *Maya*, Harry Bell, Peter Roberts and of course Bob Shaw are notably missing from this year's Hugo ballot, as are Australian writers like John Bangsund. Like other genzines—Eric Bentscliffe's revived *Triode*, Bernie Peek and Dave Rowe's *K*—the Gannetzines dispel the ingroup image with contributors and loc-writers

from North and South America. Maybe this column will help increase the communication.

Finally, shading into the lunatic fringe come the fannish genzines like Peter Roberts' inestimable *Egg*, the fabulous Ratzines, and a whole crop of fascinating, if ephemeral, personalzines, which their perpetrators would prefer not to have mentioned, since they are Not Generally Available. (But thank you, people. You write so well, I really feel I know you. And I'm looking forward to meeting you. Even Brosnan.)

The only other generalization I have to make is that the new breed of British fanzines are better reproduced than those of 6 or 8 years ago. There's more artwork (and, luckily, Terry Jeeves and ATom are still contributing their embellishments), and a greater concern with layout and legibility. *Triode*, for example, is a most attractive mimeod zine, proving that you don't have to lash out £80, as Rob Jackson claims to have done on *Maya* 9, for a good-looking fanzine. (Rob also claims to work 87 hours a week as a paediatrician, on top of which he edits, writes articles, is co-authoring a novel, chairs a fan group, and works on the '79 committee. And *he* apologizes to *me* for not writing letters! Personally, I think he must be a millionaire android.)

Rob invests the money and the time, he says, purely for "response"—communication and egoboo. On that basis, he certainly succeeds, as do the more modest zines. They're all mad, in the British rather than American sense—insane, silly, fabulously fannishly crazy, resolutely not serious-dull even on serious topics. They're very, very enjoyable.

The following list, though incomplete, may help your personal trans-Atlantic crossing. Send a money order or bank draft in either US dollars or British pounds; do not send US cash or stamps (yes, I do have to keep reminding people, like the ones who think Canadians can use US stamps.) Be patient while the fanzine travels round Cape Horn on a slow windjammer. And enjoy all those Harry Bell creatures jumping through the pages crying "Britain in '79!"

*After the Flood*. David Griffin, 83 Maple Rd., Horfield, Bristol BS7 8RF, U.K. American agent, Don D'Amassa, 19 Angell Dr., Providence, RI 02914. The usual (that is, contribution, trade, letter of comment), 25 p., 60¢. Serious genzine (reviews, etc.) with emphasis on Scandinavian material. Nice Steve Fabian and Terry Jeeves artwork.

*Checkpoint*. Ian Maule, 8 Hillcroft Cres., Ealing, London W5 2SG, U.K. The usual or 5/40 p. Regular, if thin, newsletter of British prodom, British and overseas fandom. Malcolm Edwards

complains there's "no decent gossip" and I agree I'd like more personality.

*Egg* 10. Peter Roberts, 6 Westbourne Park Villas, London W2, U.K. The usual, not available for cash. Rave, rave, rave. *Egg* is fascinating, fannish, miscellaneous, ATom-illustrated and fun. Highlight of this issue is Peter writing about crudzines, and the "fascination of the naively atrocious." Roberts for TAFF!

*Fanzine Fanatique* 2. Keith Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Rd., Lancaster, Lancs., U.K. The usual, 10 p., request. British and overseas fanzine reviews.

*Foundation* 9. Peter Nicholls for The Science Fiction Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Rd., Essex RM8 2AS, U.K. 3/£2.55, 3/\$7.50 surface to US and Canada. Richard Cowper on writing SF, Peter Nicholls on *New Worlds* and the death of James Blish, J.G. Ballard on *Crash!*, reviews, etc.

*Goblin's Grotto* 2. Ian Williams, 6 Greta Terrace, Chester Rd., Sunderland SR4 7RD, Tyne and Wear, U.K. The usual, 35 p. or \$1.00. Harry Bell art, Rob Jackson on being a doctor (this needed editing, Ian), various people being serious about *Dhalgren*, a good lettercol, and the highlight—Pat Charnock's "Second Generation Woman."

*Gunputty*, "the fanzine of mince fandom." Sam Long, Box 4946, Patrick AFB, FL 32925, USA. The usual or show of interest ("a quarter or two.") Fannish/personal token-British fanzine, with a Harry Bell cover, Terry Jeeves artwork, photos from the 1975 British Eastercon and the like. Sam recently married British fan Mary Reed, thus demonstrating the advantages of trans-Atlantic contact.

*Maya* 10. Rob Jackson, 21 Lyndhurst Rd., Benton, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE12 9NT, U.K. US agents, Sam Long and Mary Reed, Box 4946, Patrick AFB, FL 32925, USA. The usual, 40 p. or 3/£1.00 UK, \$1.00 or 4/\$3.00 US and Canada.

*Scabby Tales*. John Brosnan, 4 Lothair Rd., South Ealing, London W5, U.K. Personalzine.

*SPI* 4. Graham Poole, 23 Russet Rd., Cheltenham, Glos. GL51 7LN, U.K. The usual, "suggestions, \$ bill or by jumping up and down shouting 'Are you going to give me one then?'" News, reviews, articles highlighted by James White's Beneluxcon GoH speech, and an active lettercolumn, all in half-size faded offset. My latest copy is September 1975 (it's been awhile since I cleared up the mail) so I hope *SPI* is still going!

*Stop Breaking Down*. Greg Pickersgill, 4 Lothair Rd., South Ealing, London W5, U.K. The usual, show of interest, or 20 p. in British stamps. Graham Charnock talks about sex and sharing a room with Chris Priest (separate activities, I hasten

to add); Peter Roberts reminisces about his first fanzine; Simone Walsh longs for friendly, atmospheric con hotels of a kind unknown in North America. Rat-fannish personalzine, fannish and enjoyable.

*Triode* 22. Eric Bentcliffe, 17 Riverside Cres., Holmes Chapel, Cheshire CW4 7NR, U.K. Whim, or 3/£1.00, 3/\$2.50. The leader of revived oldtime British fandom. Eric writes well about touring the Balkans; Irish fan John Berry fingerprints monkeys; and Terry Jeeves asks that "heaven preserve us from the teachers of s-f." (Speaking as one myself, I'd have to agree.) Jeeves, who's also listed as "producer," illustrates the lot. It's fabulous, fannish, and good reading; I'm glad you're all back.

*Vector* 71, 72, 73-74. Journal of the British Science Fiction Association, edited by Chris Fowler, 72 Kenilworth Ave., Southcote, Reading RG3 3DN, U.K. Free to members of the BSFA. 6/£3.30, 6/\$6.—overseas subs "please send sterling cheques or money orders payable to *Vector*, or, failing that, cash in US dollars." A serious-but-not-dull magazine, valuable to the SF reader. The (appallingly regular) issues here contain such goodies as Ursula Le Guin's Aussiecon GoH speech; interviews with Robert Silverberg and J.G. Ballard; and lots of reviews. I wish Chris would stop being so defensive about the fact that he took over *Vector* from Malcolm Edwards; and I also wish he'd exercise a little more editorial ruthlessness on the reviews and letters. Those quibbles aside, I think he's doing a fine job.

*Wrinkled Shrew* 5. Pat and Graham Charnock, 70 Ledbury Rd., London W11, U.K. *Shrew* has a small print run, and Pat warns that some nameless recipients have found it "repulsive, filthy and loathsome." I dunno why; the double-enders shouldn't shock anyone over the age of 6 (and the "Inside Shrew" section is brilliant.) This issue has a good lettercol, a fannish board-game, Roy Kettle's memoirs, Tad Lawrence on "Black Holes in Space and the Woolwich Work Camp." Above all, it has Pat's writing, cut-and-pasted together by Graham. A thoroughly enjoyable fannish personalzine. Ask politely and send a loc, fanzine, or contribution.

If I've covered half the current British fanzines, I'll be surprised. There certainly are a lot of them, aren't there? With that banal observation, I'll leave you to buy sterling money orders, after these few addenda.

\* \* \* \*

I've just received the third issue of New Zealand's only fanzine, *Noumenon*. It's edited by Brian Thurogood, with the assistance of Deborah Knapp, at: Wilma Rd., Ostend, Waiheke Island, Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand. It's pub-

lished monthly, neatly offset, and a year's sub costs \$5.50 N.Z., \$6.00 US/Canada seamail. It will mostly be of interest to Kiwi and Aussie SF readers, for whom a basic fan glossary is supplied; it contains reviews, letters, articles about SF, lists of SF books available Down Under and so on. Brian, and a good many isolated readers like him, first made person-to-person contact with fandom at Aussiecon; I'm glad that fine fannish enthusiasm is still being generated, to power projects like *Noumenon*.

*South of the Moon*, the amateur press association directory, is now being edited by Andrew Sigel, 424 Greenleaf

St., Evanston, IL 60202, USA. It's available for information on apas, or 25¢

*Apple* is a new apa "for lovers of food, gardening and handcrafts" to exchange recipes, patterns and how-to hints. There are no dues, and the OE can run stencils for you. Information: Sheila D'Amassa, 19 Angell Dr., E. Providence, RI 02914, USA.

Fanzines for review should be sent to Susan Wood, Department of English, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1T6, Canada, where Susan regrets that she is rather too busy working to respond to every fanzine properly. ■

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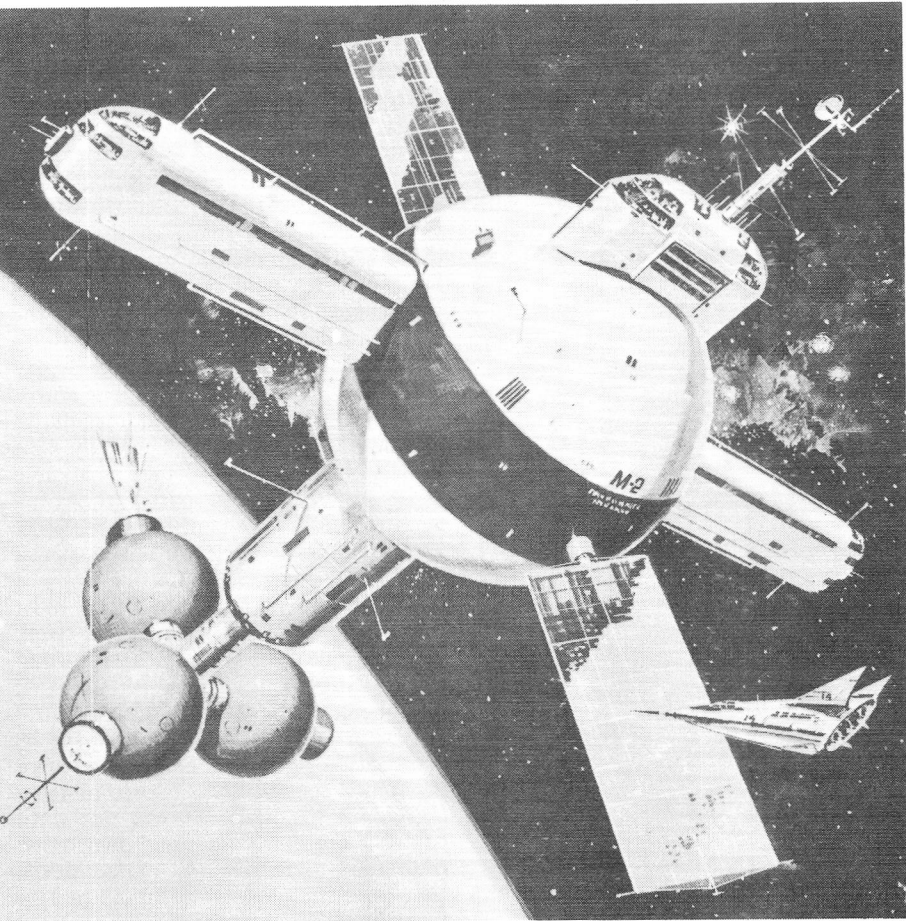
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# AVON



Ed Valigursky demonstrates much of the old mastery that made him a key factor in paperback gadget art in this recent rendition of a space station for the SF Book Club's promotional mailing piece, *Things To Come*.

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# sketches Vincent Di Fate

I've received a good deal of response to the first "Sketches" column, and most of it, I'm happy to say, was favorable. Many of you who wrote expressed the view that "finally, someone who knows something about the professional art field is taking the time to express his views about it." I thank you for your interest and for your faith in my ability to provide useful information about the art field.

Of the letters not favorable to my views, the following is typical. I've numbered the relevant places and my responses follow: "With regard to Paul, I agree with you almost 100%. I deviate slightly when it comes to his garish palette<sup>1</sup> and his characterization as 'a dreadful colorist.' If the latter means his color lacked reality,<sup>2</sup> you're right, but they were excellent for effect. They attracted the eye . . . as much as the machines and perspectives. His colors made for *good SF cover illustrations*

and, after all, that was Paul's objective."<sup>3</sup>

1: Look again at several of Paul's covers: the "garishness" of them should be evident to you. 2: You use the phrase "lacked reality" in an effort to interpret what I'm saying, but this has nothing to do with my criticism of Paul. Paul Lehr, for instance, does not use a *naturalistic* palette, he uses highly saturated colors in analogous, triadic, or split complement harmonies, but the key to it is that the colors *relate* to one another. A basic fact about color relationships: cool colors (blues, greens, violets) recede in the presence of warm colors (reds, yellows, oranges). A good example of this is Paul Lehr's cover for the Bantam edition of *The Stars My Destination*, several years ago. The red-orange flames of a burning spaceship literally spring off the blue background. Color recession is not theory, it is fact: a fact, unfortunately, that Frank R.

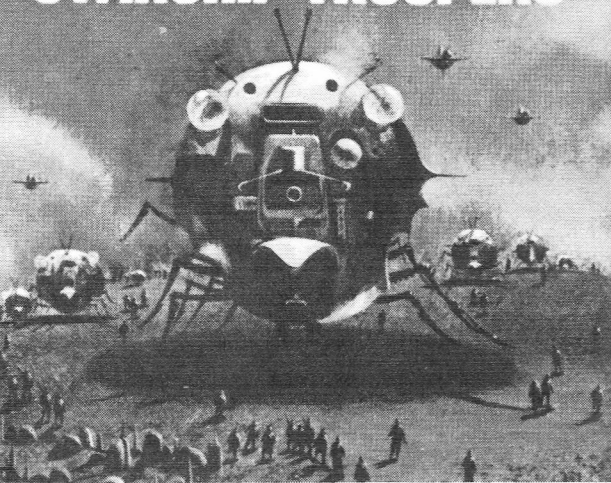
Paul was unaware of.

3: Last issue, I said, "There is a startling quality to his cover art because of his directness of treatment (flat, highly saturated colors and linear patterns) . . . The net result is a dynamic that is at once unsettling to the eye while at the same time *attention-getting and compelling*. . . Paul's product is . . . the most annoying, unsettling inept body of work I have yet seen in our genre, but it is *quite extraordinary and unique*. It is *good*—my inclination is to say *great*—SF illustration." I think Paul's work was ugly and inept—but I never said his paintings didn't work! In fact, I call them dynamic, attention-getting, compelling, extraordinary and unique, good, even great, SF illustration.

The fact is those who admire Frank R. Paul caught only the negative things I had to say, while those who despise him latched on to the good things and

# ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

## STARSHIP TROOPERS



Paul Lehr's eccentrically paranoid vision of technology is clearly characterized by the spidery warship for Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*. Certainly this painting will come to be remembered as a milestone of SF art.

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collected me for holding back. There is much to be said of Paul both good and bad. Certainly his contribution to the development of genre illustration is of immense importance. But, as with his literary equivalent, Hugo Gernsback, he marked only the starting point for us. Others have come along with different viewpoints, different insights and expanded Paul's vision of the future. It is important that we exchange ideas so that we can learn from one another. Perhaps in my efforts to render objective judgments about Frank R. Paul, I overlooked a more basic gut reaction to his work. The bulk of my criticism was based on the way people relate to his pictures, and I think I was fairly objective in those aspects of the article. The best was *my opinion*; an opinion rendered not to see how many people I could get to agree with me, but one based, for better or worse, on my understanding of my craft.

Comments of this sort clearly demonstrate the need for establishing basic guidelines for the evaluation of illustrative art. It is not my ambition to turn "Sketches" into a critical review, there are certainly enough people doing admirable work along those lines in other publications. My interest is specifically

in providing information, clearly and explicitly, about my field. Even in an historical survey, one would be compelled to render certain judgments about the quality of the artworks, and especially when considering an artist of such far-reaching influence as Frank R. Paul. He, after all, was the first to popularize many of the conventional themes of science fiction, and to develop a vocabulary of elements which gave the genre an identity which separated it from other types of literature. He was the standard, with all his faults and all his virtues, by which others would be judged.

But there were many other artists of the "gadget" school who were far more gifted at their craft than Paul, if perhaps not quite so inventive. Howard V. Brown was a brilliant colorist and may well have been the best of the gadget artists to work for the early pulps. Alex Schomburg, possessing much of the same keenness for finely rendered mechanical details as Paul, but none of his crudeness with color and draftsmanship, was to do much fine work of this kind in later years. Leo Morey, H.R. Van Dongen, Malcolm Smith, all gifted craftsmen, were to use their special talents to flesh out those earlier visions of the technological

future, and to add new visions of their own. Many of the artists who worked for the pulps, however, were illustrators first, working for a wide variety of magazines; adventure, horror, westerns, mysteries, war stories, love stories, and so, understood little or nothing about science fiction. If they had a common virtue at all (and many of them were quite skilled at picture making, even if their pictures held no special meaning for science fiction readers), it was the ability to depict figures in a wide range of moods and situations. Earle Bergey was one such artist, an excellent craftsman, whose resourceful and imaginative paintings are often neglected by fans because his women had the remarkable ability to zip through space without the need for protective clothing. J.W. Scott was a masterful illustrator and a special favorite of mine. Edd Cartier was not only a gifted painter, but had a most delightful sense of humor as well. Hubert Rogers, above all others, formulated, with the guidance of John W. Campbell, an approach to genre illustration which emphasized mood and characterization to such an extent that there is often a conspicuous absence of technology in his work. It was not until paperbacks came into their own, however, that there was any radical deviation from the parameters established by the gadget school.

The artists who have worked for the magazines have received considerable coverage in the past year or so in such excellent books as Brian Aldiss' *Science Fiction Art*, James Gunn's *Alternate Worlds*, Anthony Frewin's *One Hundred Years of Science Fiction Illustration*, and Lester del Rey's *Fantastic Science-Fiction Art*. We'll return to them again and deal with each individually in future columns, but for the meantime, let's deal with some information that is not so readily available.

There were many artists who carried the gadget tradition into paperbacks because that look so strongly identified the category. Ed Valigursky was an early example and worked for both the magazines and paperbacks, though he is best remembered for his work in the latter. He, along with Ed Emshwiller, dominated the Ace SF line in the 1950's. What distinguished Valigursky from many of the pulp people was his slickness and his distinctive mannerism of applying paint. Toward the end of the Second World War, artists who worked for the major aircraft manufacturers were streamlining their technique as that industry looked optimistically to the future. Characteristic of the new mannerism was a simplification of values and a conspicuous presence of variegated brushwork which gave the illusion of detail without deal-



ing with specifics. Similarly, architectural illustrators were developing a cleaner vision of tomorrow as architects abandoned the geometric redundancies of Art Deco to settle upon the more basic forms of pyramids, rectangles, and spheres. It was this streamlined quality that made Valigursky's work so vividly futuristic. As surrealist art grew more prominent in the packaging of mass market science fiction, Valigursky's work in the genre decreased sharply. He is still at it, as evidenced by the accompanying illustration for the December 1975 SF Book Club's promotional pamphlet, *Things to Come*, though the bulk of his work in recent years has been for the lucrative aerospace market.

Paul Lehr began his remarkable career in SF art toward the end of the 1950's. Uniquely, Lehr combined many of the mood elements of Richard Powers with an eccentric view of technology. While not strictly a gadget artist, his vision of the machine is so paranoid, that it is worthy of mention here. If a Lehr machine is not glaring at you with a large, opalescent eyeball, then it is employing its spidery legs or caterpillar body in a manner to set your skin crawling. A classmate of John Schoenherr's while at Pratt Institute, Lehr studied illustration under artist Stanley Meltzoff, whose cover painting for NAL's paperback edition of Robert Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters*, must rank as one of the greatest SF illustrations of all time.

Dean Ellis was hardly new to illustration, when, in the early '60's he was commissioned by Bantam Books to do the cover art for their entire series of books by Ray Bradbury. He has since gravitated to the upper echelon of the gadget school, and is not only remarkably good at it, but has a strong track record in paperback sales as well. He has done all of the recent editions of Arthur C. Clarke books for Ballantine, the Asimov books for Ace, and a wide range of nuts-and-bolts artwork for all of the major paperback houses. Characteristic of his work is a crispness and professionalism possessed by few artists in the SF field. His keenness for detail and his sense of scale add a breathless wonder to his art, off-setting his usually naturalistic palette.

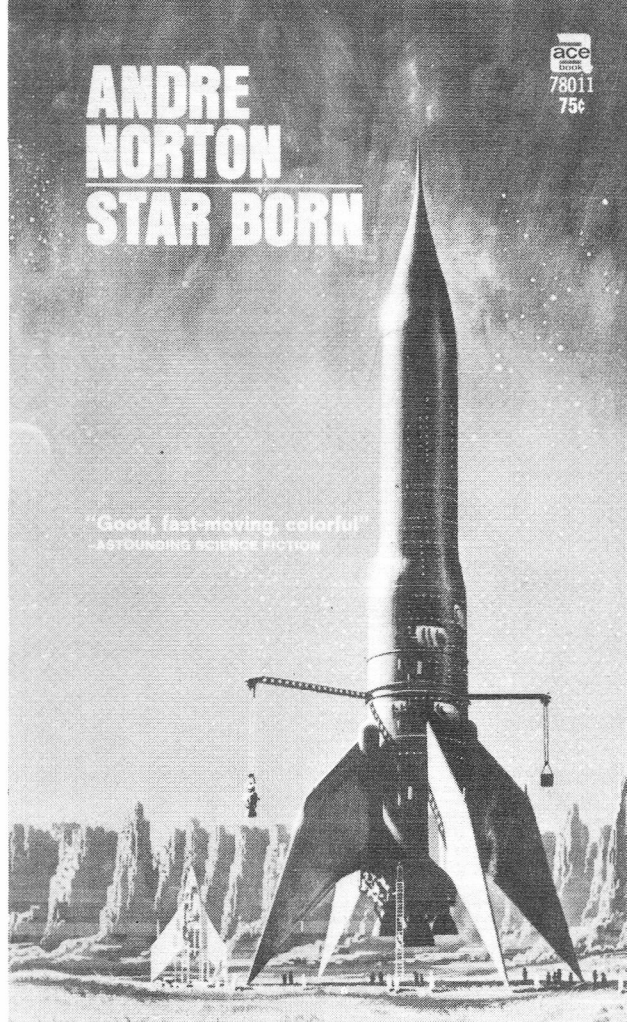
Of the airbrush artists to invade the SF market in recent times, Christopher Foss has demonstrated tasteful restraint in the use of that instrument. Foss is British and I know little of him other than that his work has dominated the European SF field over the past few years. His spaceships are veritable junk heaps of access panels and windows, convincingly portrayed by his diligent brushwork and softened around the edges with an economical spatter of airbrush. His palette is usually natural-

Dean Ellis: his keen sense of detail and scale is breathtaking, his professionalism equaled by few artists in science fiction.

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Note the strong diagonal forces at work in Chris Foss's startling cover painting for John Brunner's *The Dramaturges Of Yan*. His sparing use of airbrush and wealth of detail lend a remarkable believability to his work.

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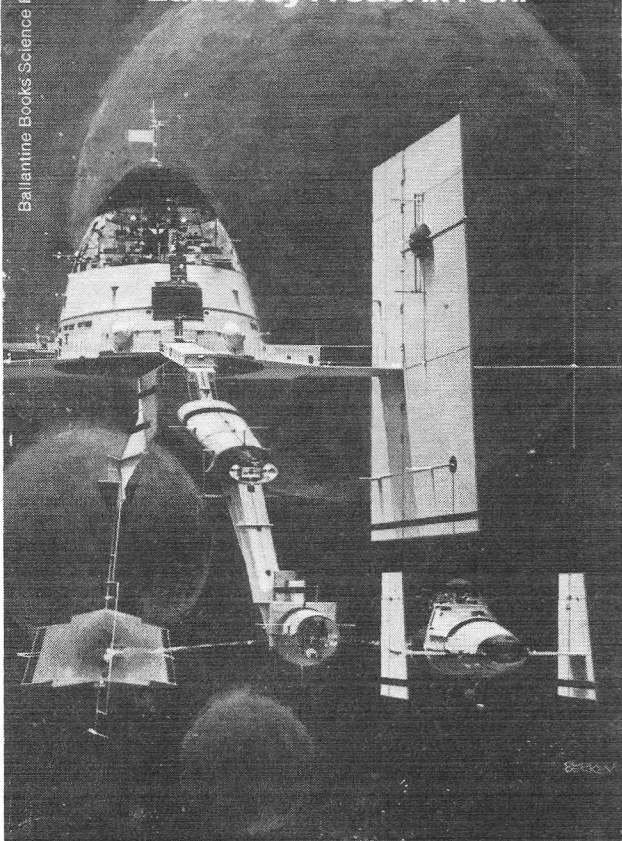


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# STAR SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by Frederik Pohl



John Berkey, perhaps today's most prominent gadget painter, brings new vitality to art with this kind of his deceptively casual mannerism. A closer look reveals complex details to be strategically placed blobs of paint.

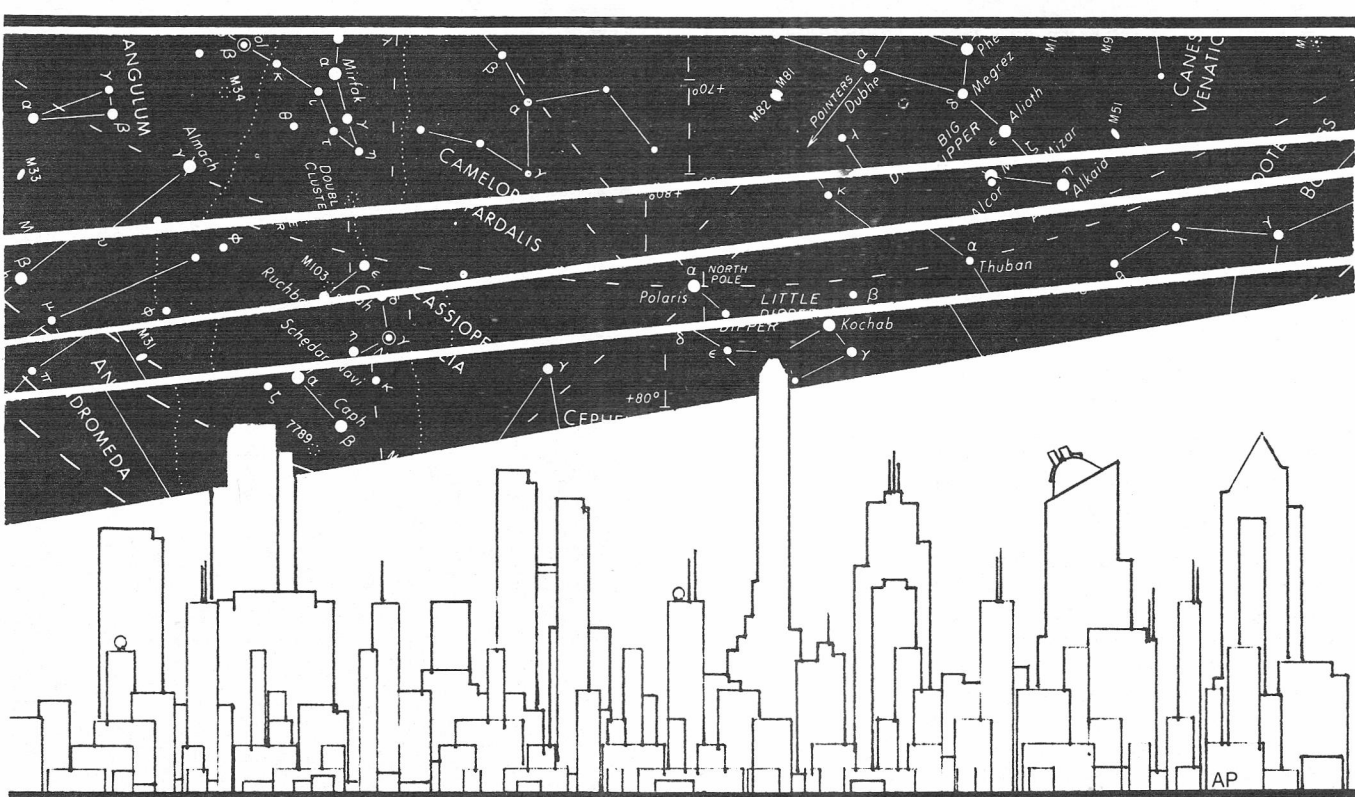
so much in demand nearly two decades ago, brings a new level of sophistication to the gadget art mentality. His work has a marvelously fluid feeling to it. Details are convincingly indicated by mere flicks of the brush, and it is often difficult to realize just how loosely the paintings are executed. This mannerism extends to an occasional figure or two (as with the cover of Thomas N. Scortia's *Earthwreck!*) and it is surprising how well Berkey can handle both men and machines in the same technical context. His colors, almost always naturalistic, are clean and rich and very tastefully handled, but the principal strength of his work is in its execution.

While gadget painting has always been a staple of SF packaging in the mass market, the first real break with traditional attitudes toward the art originated in the paperbacks and was almost entirely the doing of one man. That wonderfully gifted man has never been fully acknowledged or properly honored by science fiction readers, but is, nevertheless, the only innovative talent to have as profound an influence on our field as Frank R. Paul. Richard Powers, whatever your view of him may be, was the first to tear away the sheet metal and expose us to the dark, fearsome landscape of the inner mind. Next time we will take a glimpse into the nightmare world of surrealism, for it is there that we will find the seeds of the "New Wave" of SF art.

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istic, though quite varied and rich. His compositions are often quite startling. John Berkey is today's most pop-

ular gadget artist, and deservedly so. His approach, though based on many of the same qualities that made Valigursky





## WEIRD HEROES

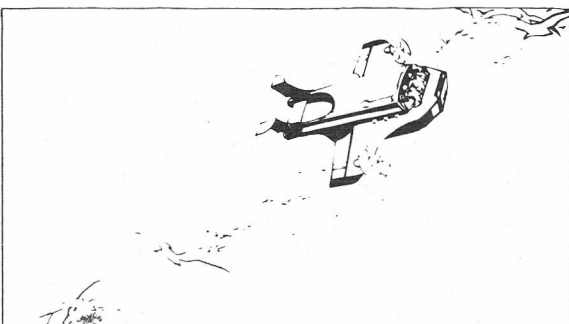
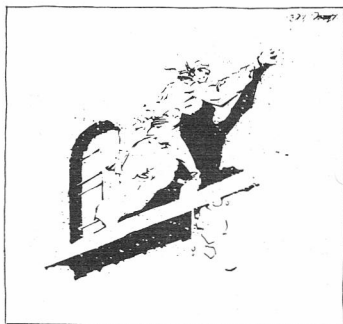
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## PHOENIX/NIGHTSHADE

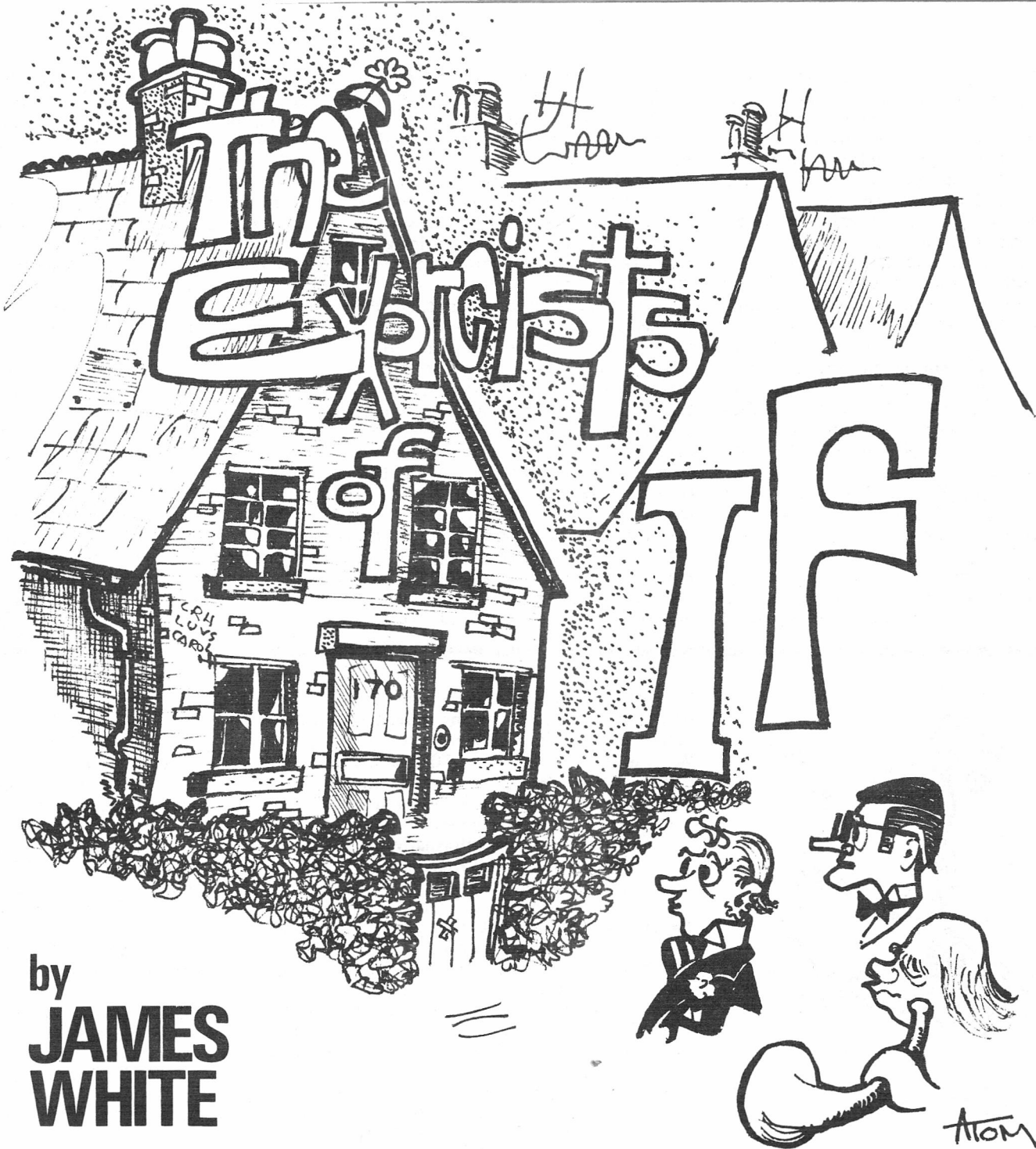
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by  
**JAMES  
 WHITE**

## INTRODUCTION BY **BOB SHAW**

Jim White has been an occasional and welcome contributor to fanzines for more than a quarter of a century, and hence it really means something when I say that "The Exorcists of IF" is easily the best piece of non-professional writing he has done.

On one level it is a fond, wistful exercise in nostalgia, a paper time machine trip to an era which was important to all the people concerned. Northern Ireland has always seemed a rather unlikely place to generate one of

the most active fan groups ever known, but its remoteness from other population centres—plus a background culture which generally leaned towards the mystic rather than the scientific—meant that when half-a-dozen SF fans got together in Belfast around 1950 they created a binding force of nuclear intensity. And, just as the nucleus of an atom contains particles of dissimilar natures, Irish Fandom (The "IF" of the title) easily accommodated widely different types of people.

The cast list—quickly established in fan writings, and cameoed in Arthur Thomson's drawings—included: Walt Willis, founder of the group, owner of Oblique House (170 Upper Newtownards Road) where the meetings were held, intellectual, humourist, fanzine editor; James White, ascetic within reason, fanatic about space travel and future technology, but with an impractical streak which led him to neglect putting oil in his car; John Berry, policeman from England, prolific fan

writer, super-enthusiastic about everything, especially the fair sex; George Charters, SF collector, expert on Western books, a few years older than the others and therefore regarded as venerable; Ian McAulay, physics lecturer from Dublin, frequently perplexed by the non-scientific utterances of the others, connoisseur of beer; Bob Shaw, trencherman and boozier, whose disregard for social niceties often led to disruptions. These are caricatures drawn with a broad brush, but they constituted a useful fannish notation for the real people concerned, and only they know the extent to which they may have eventually played up to their cartoon images. The important thing was that they all contributed to the group identity.

It made not the slightest difference to any of us that our political range covered Conservative, Socialist and Don't Know; or that our religious range covered Protestant, Catholic, Atheist and Don't Know. When we had an argument it was about the speed of

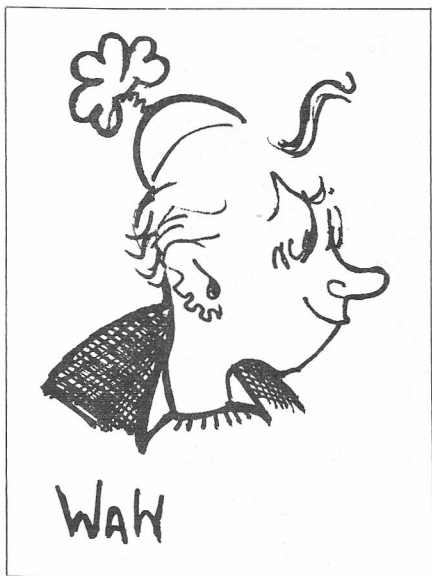
propagation of gravity, or the relative merits of *Astounding* and *Unknown*. None of us would have gone so far as to claim that fandom is a way of life, but our criteria for judging our peers were "fannish" in the highest sense of that word. Did a person have a genuine, creative, unpredictable sense of humour? Did he have enough imagination to regard himself as a citizen of the universe?

The above sounds idealistic, but the unique entity which is science fiction fandom—and I know that Jim White agrees with this—was created around an ideal, a central belief that people have to be a bit special if their minds encompass all that is expressed by the following set of black marks on paper: galaxy, fanzine, Bradbury, continuum, *Galaxy*, alternative universe, TAFF, Lensman, clone, annish, slan, time machine, Finlay, esper, *Quandry*, quasar, *Astounding*, con, . . . Certainly they have plenty to talk about, and that's what happened most of all at Irish Fandom meetings—we talked. We had

long meetings *three times a week* for many years, and a number of fanzines emerged, but mainly we talked. Even when we played ghoodminton (our close-quarters, no-holds-barred form of badminton) we talked.

This leads on to the second level on which "The Exorcists of IF" is written—the one on which Jim expresses his revulsion for intolerance and violence in the macrocosm which exists outside SF fandom. He is a gentle person who sees as the human race's greatest achievement the invention of a system in which power is transferred by means of the ballot rather than the bullet. If Jim had his way, all differences of political opinion would be settled by the parties concerned getting together—three times a week if necessary—and talking. I'm not trying to trivialise the issue when I say that Jim regards war as unfannish.

I know the sadness he feels over what has happened in Northern Ireland, and I think that when you have read "The Exorcists of IF" you will know it too. ■



A large and vulgarly ostentatious station wagon with the name of a local estate agent inscribed on its flanks pulled in and parked outside the garden gate of 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast. Within a few minutes the Willis MG, the Charters Morris and the White Fiat, which happened to be red, pulled in behind him. The estate agent introduced himself to the three drivers, then paused while four Saracen armoured cars whined past in low gear.

"It was very good of you to come," he went on, when they could hear themselves think again. "I know there should be five of you, but Mr. Shaw has moved with his family to England and

Mr. Berry recently retired from the police fingerprint department to do the same. But I hope that you three, Mr. Willis as a former tenant of 170, and Mr. Charters and Mr. White as frequent visitors to the place, will be able to help me. You're my last hope, in fact."

"You weren't very informative on the telephone," said Walter. "What exactly is your problem?"

"And if we're your last hope," said James, "who or what did you try first?"

"I . . . I couldn't go into details on the 'phone," the estate agent replied nervously. "And the first person I tried was Father Mallon from the chapel down the road—"

"I know of him!" James broke in. "He's a member of the British Interplanetary Society and he's got a private pilots licence and a 12-inch reflector on the presbytery roof which the Army thought at first was a SAM 7 missile system and, although he doesn't read SF, he's a very—"

"Well," said George, "nobody's perfect."

The estate agent gestured towards the three-storey, red-brick building which was 170, then went on, "I told him about the voices and noises and . . . other manifestations, and he agreed to visit the house for a preliminary reconnaissance prior to briefing himself on exorcism procedures. But he couldn't do anything. Apparently the bell, book and candle bit works only against manifestations of evil and these particular spirits were noisy, hyperactive and almost palpable, but not, so far as he could ascertain, evil.

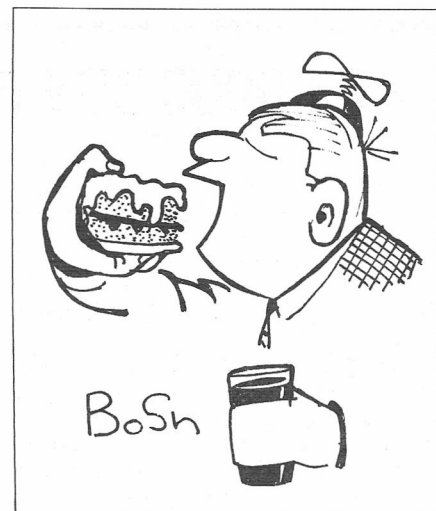
"When he left he was talking theology, I think," the agent finished, "and he said something about the questionable efficacy of a Holy Water sprinkler against an Opponent armed with a spectral water-pistol."

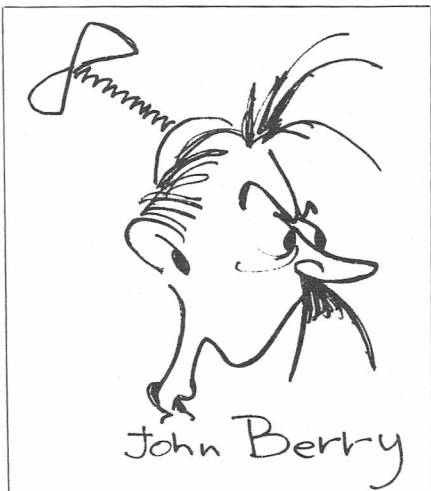
Walter and George looked at James, who tried to look innocent.

"Anyway," said the agent, "he agreed that there was something there, all right, but he just couldn't enter into the spirit of the Thing."

"A priest," said James solemnly, "could get excommunicated for a pun like that."

"Please be serious, gentlemen," the estate agent went on. "People, potential tenants or buyers, even I myself, have heard and seen things, the laughing and shouting noises. But I have never been able to make out what the voices were





saying, or shouting. There has always been something strange about that house since you left it, Mr. Willis, and since the Troubles started it has become steadily worse. It's a good, well-built house, but nobody will live in it for more than a week. That is why I contacted you gentlemen. I am hoping that you can do or suggest something that will rid me of these awful ghosts."

Walter inclined his head, but he was staring at the well-remembered house as he said, "We'll do what we can, of course. Can I have the keys?"

"Thank you," said the agent, handing them over. "You all know your way about the place, so I'll just stay out here and mind your cars. Good luck."

They left him pacing the pavement alongside their cars, where he would be able to reassure the Army patrols who might otherwise decide that their vehicles were possible car bombs and blow them up, and went through the garden gate and up the three steps on to the lawn. The gate still creaked and the lawn was covered with the same irregular patches of clover and/or shamrock, and the distant clattering of an observation helicopter merged with the buzzing of insects both actual and spectral.



"It all comes back, doesn't it?" said Walter.

The voices from the past were saying things like "Let's not collate today—we can discuss broad matters of policy *and* get sunburned" and "I rather lie on shamrock than real rock, which is why I like champagne, too" and "Nonsense, George, shamrock only grows on Catholic lawns" and "Is it cruelty to animals to shoot down a wasp with a water-pistol?"

Walter said, "Let's go round the back."

It was much quieter in the back yard. A ghostly Bonestell-type spaceship towered all of 8½ inches above the tiles while the misty figures of an impossibly young Walter, Bob and James and a slightly less elderly George Charters crouched over it, discussing a technical problem.

According to the youthful, ghostly James, who even then had been a lapsed member of the British Interplanetary Society, the trouble lay in the fact that his balsa-wood spaceship weighed ¾ ounce while its motor developed a maximum pre-Brenschluss thrust of only half an ounce, which caused the thing to just sit there hissing and straining upwards. The answer which had been worked out was breathtaking in its simplicity. A length of thread had been attached to the vehicle's nose cone, passed over the Willis clothesline and a small bunch of keys—weighing just under ¾ ounce—was tied to the other end. Phrases like "It's an old trick but it just might work" and "It beats the Dean Drive" hung in the air.

"Pity," said the contemporary James, "there weren't more clotheslines in the lunar insertion orbit."

They passed through the oblivious figures and into the kitchen before the phantom spaceship took off and set fire to the spectral clothesline.

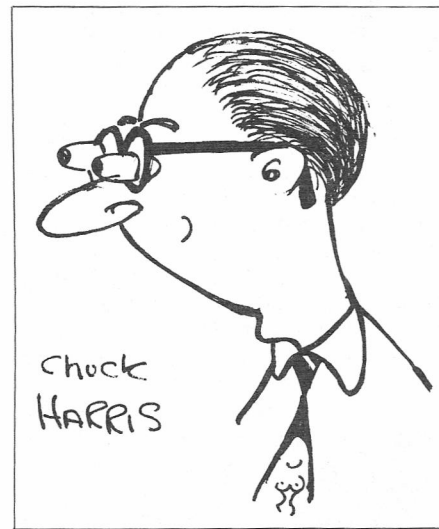
"Surely," said Walter, "you were never that skinny, James. But you, George, haven't changed a bit. You must have been *born* old and venerable."

"Not true," said George. "I got like this in primary school when I started carrying little girls' tablets of stone home for them. I didn't build the pyramids until a long time after that."

The remembered smell as they entered the kitchen was a culinary effluvia describable only by Ray Bradbury in his homespun period, and the air was made even thicker by conversation like "I hate to see you slaving over hot dishes, Madeleine. Can I give you a hand?" and "Go sit in the lounge, Harris, you're not going to slaver over *my* dish!" and "Farmhouse vegetable soup clogs water-pistols" and "It happens to be a *diabetic* apple tart riddled with visually loathsome masses

of undissolved Saccharin" and "Sorry, we're fresh out of eyes of Newt" and "No newts is good newts. . . ."

They shuddered in unison and moved into the dining room where a ghostly, double-dished light fixture—which Peggy White had called a candle-bra—shed a warm effulgence (because light had already been used in this sentence) on a dining table groaning with good things and bad puns provided, respectively, by Madeleine and all the fans who had visited Oblisque House over the years—Lee Hoffman, Vinç Clarke, Ken Bulmer, Chuck Harris, Mal Ashworth, both Ian McAulays and dozens of others.



The noisiest spectre of the lot was Chuck, who at that time had recently gone completely deaf and had not yet learned to modulate his voice properly. He kept shouting for everyone to write it down because he couldn't lip-read Irish accents, then surreptitiously pocketing the scraps of paper for use in his monumental fan work *Through Darkest Ireland with Knife, Fork and Spoon*. The leanest and hungriest ghost was that of Bob Shaw, who complained of having hollow bones and a fifth-dimensional gut.

"Yes, I tried the ginger-bread and found it not guilty" they were saying, and "Nobody *asked* if I wanted a seventh cup of tea" and "Why do English people speak English with that terrible English accent?" and "White lions running down the middle of the road, it's the lines they keep locked up in the zoo" and "Maybe it was a mane road" and "We could use grief-proof paper" and "We didn't like assembling the mag on a dining table—nobody knew if we were going to have a meal or a small collation. . . ."

In the front lounge a ghostly John Berry, on tip-toe and with his arms flapping up and down like a pterodactyl, was describing the preliminaries to love-making in his house. The idea





was to display one's ardour, physical fitness and aerodynamic control by launching oneself off the top of the wardrobe to make a semi-crash landing into the eager arms of one's mate. All that was required was a flat-topped wardrobe, a solidly sprung bed and a steady diet of watercress.

In a series of temporal overlays the other fannish conversations and incidents which had taken place in the room proceeded over and around the flapping figure of John, including one involving George surrounded by exploding fireworks, a box of which he had inadvertently ignited with the ash from his cigarette. The other occupants of the room had hurriedly evacuated the area and were watching George from the safety of the lawn. But George had been trapped by the Willis settee, whose upholstery was as soft and yielding as quicksand. . . .

"Surrounded by all those sparks and glowing balls," said Walter, "you looked like a Virgil Finlay illo, George."

"And if it had happened now," George replied, "we would probably have been interned for running a bomb

factory."

A slow, clanking sound—which mundane folk might well have mistaken for rattling chains—grew louder as they mounted the stairs towards the box-room. Apart from the noise made by Manly Bannister's printing press turning out one of the later editions of *Slant*, the room was quiet—except when one of the fan composers accidentally dropped a stick of type on the floor and felt the need to relieve his feelings; or when Bob and James were trying to decide whether an illo was crude or stark; or when Madeleine arrived with the tea-tray; or when a ghostly Walter dashed into the room, immaculate in tennis whites, to set a few lines of type between matches in his club's tournament, to dash out again looking like a less than immaculate Dalmatian.

Respectfully and almost ashamedly they backed away from that tiny room and its ghosts, the scene of so much fannish energy and enthusiasm, to climb slowly and thoughtfully to the front attic.

There, the ghosts of people and things were almost palpable.

Ranged around the bare plaster walls were the spectral shapes of bookshelves bulging with promags and fanzines, the duper, the Bannister press which had been moved up when the box-room became a nursery, the big wall mirror with the transverse crack which Bob had painted over with a rocket-ship trailing a long trail of fire, the Marilyn Monroe calendar, the ATom illos, the St. Fantony statuette, the Berrycade, which was a wooden frame covering the inside of the window to prevent John Berry from pushing his posterior through it, as had been his wont, during games of Ghoddminton. And across the table and net in the centre of the room raged the game of Ghoddminton itself, a game which was part Badminton, part all-in wrestling

and part commando assault course.

"Face! Face! You hit my face, our point!" the players were shouting, "Take the shuttlecock out of your mouth, then, before you warp the feathers" and "It went into the bookcase, out. Our point!" and "It's not in the bookcase, it must have gone into hyperspace" and "Hyperspace is out. Our point!"

But it was the other voices which sounded stronger and more insistent. There was the southern brogue of Ian McAulay, who often motorbiked the hundred plus miles from Dublin on Thursday nights to play Ghoddminton and talk before leaving early to get back across the border before the Irish Republic closed for the night. And there was the ghostly faces and voices of Big Name and small name fans from the US and UK who had come and been so affected by the Ghoddminton or Madeleine's cooking or the unique fannish atmosphere of the place that they, too, had left a part of themselves behind to take part in the haunting.

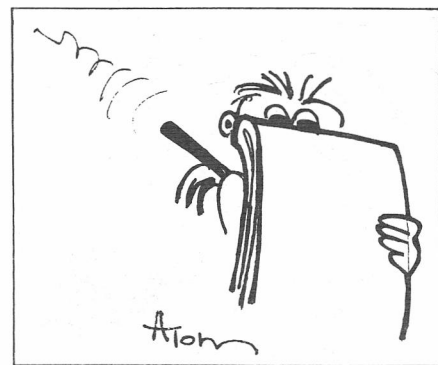
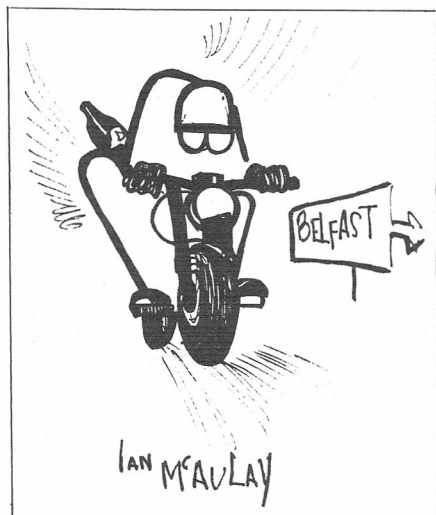
"We can remember," said Walter quietly as the three of them stood in the middle of the attic with the conversation and the laughter beating insistently at them from all sides. "But why should it affect ordinary, non-fannish people who—"

Suddenly a savage, crashing detonation rattled the windows and a black, misshapen finger of smoke poked slowly into the sunset sky. Very faintly came the crackle of automatic weapons, the snap of a high-velocity rifle and the distant braying of an ambulance. But the voices from the past were there, too, and louder than ever.

"Sounds like your side of town, James," said Walter in a worried voice. "It will be dark in an hour, and you would be safer back across the Peace Line before—"

"The fuggheads," said George, still looking at the ascending pillar of smoke.

"Yes," said James absently. He gestured, the jerky movement of his hand taking in the room and the house all around them, and went on quietly, "I think I know what is happening here. Think for a minute about a haunted house. It is a place where something so



terrible or evil has happened in the past that the very structure becomes imbued with it, and it lingers and frightens the ordinary people who come in contact with it.

"But now," he went on, waving towards the window, "it is the city and the country which have become so terrible and evil that they frighten the ordinary people, with bombings, ambushes, sectarian murders, widespread intimidation. It is the *outside* that is haunted, and in here. . . . Well, remember the people and the kind of place this used to be. It wasn't just the fan group or the awful puns or the fanzines we put out. No, we were fanatics, in a quiet way, about other things, too. Like religious toleration, racial equality, lots of things. But now we are scattered. Even we three can't meet very often, things being as they are, and the people we used to be are reacting to this present ghastly situation

all around us by haunting the place."

"I think you've got it," said Walter. Very seriously, he went on, "But remember, James, despite our religious and other differences, we three haven't changed."

"No," said George, "we haven't changed."

"That's right," said James, "we haven't."

They stood together for a moment looking out over the city, then they left the bare and utterly silent attic and walked slowly downstairs past the box-room, where the ghostly clanking of the Bannister press was stilled, past the kitchen, dining-room and lounge which were likewise silent, and across the lawn which buzzed only with this evening's insects.

The estate agent hurried forward to meet them, then he saw the expressions on their faces and went past without speaking. For several minutes they

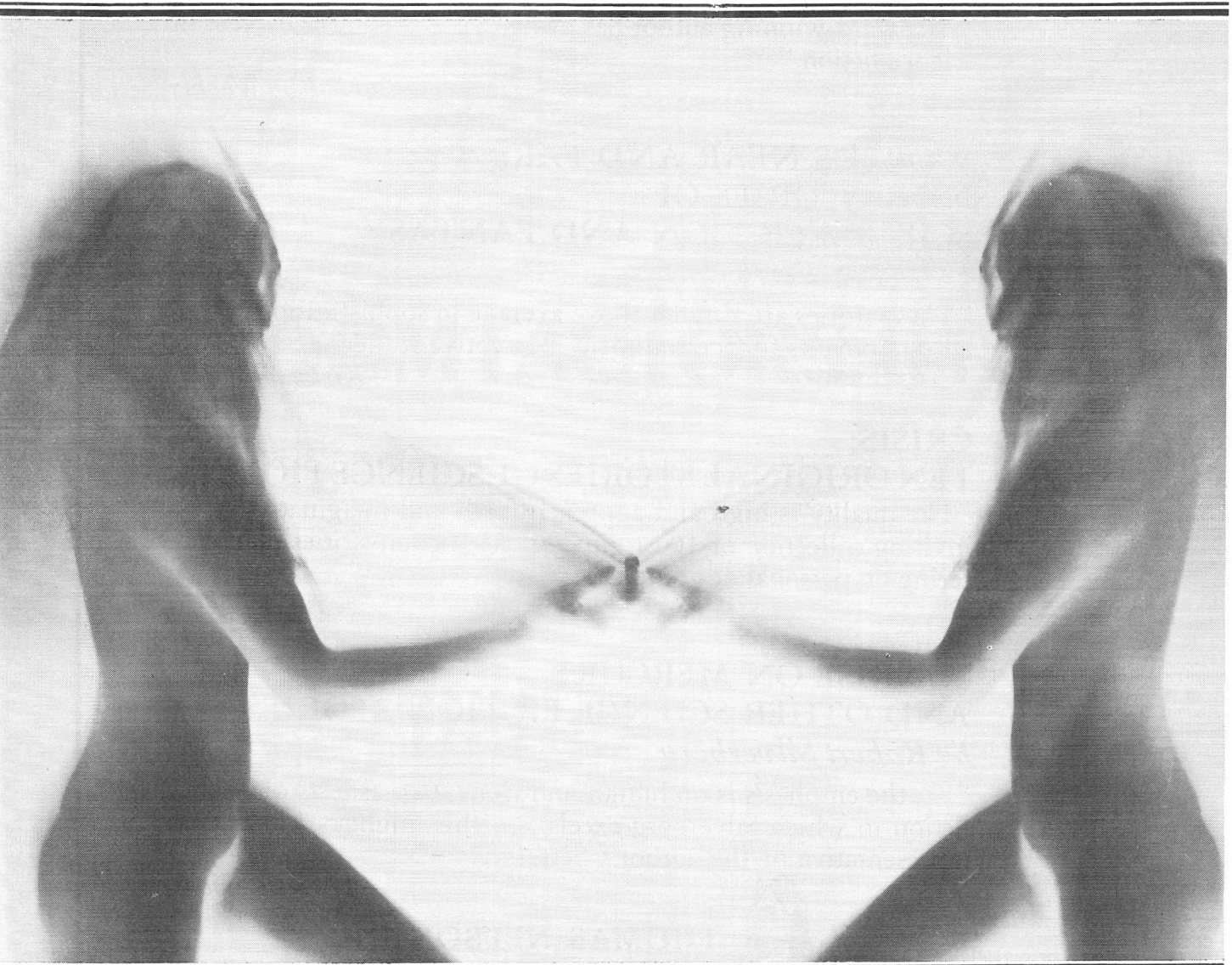
could hear his feet clumping about on the floorboards and stairs of the now empty house, then he returned.

"You've done it!" he said excitedly. "It, they, whatever it was, has gone. Thank you, gentlemen, very much. . . ." He paused, studying their faces for a moment, trying to analyse the expressions which were not sad, exactly, and not exactly triumphant, but a peculiar mixture of both feelings. Hesitantly, he went on, "If you can tell me, how . . . how *did* you get rid of those ghosts?"

The three old-time fans looked at each other, and nodded. James cleared his throat. "We managed to convince them," he said quietly, "that they weren't dead yet." ■

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"The Exorcists Of IF" first appeared in MOTA, published by Terry Hughes.



William Rotsler

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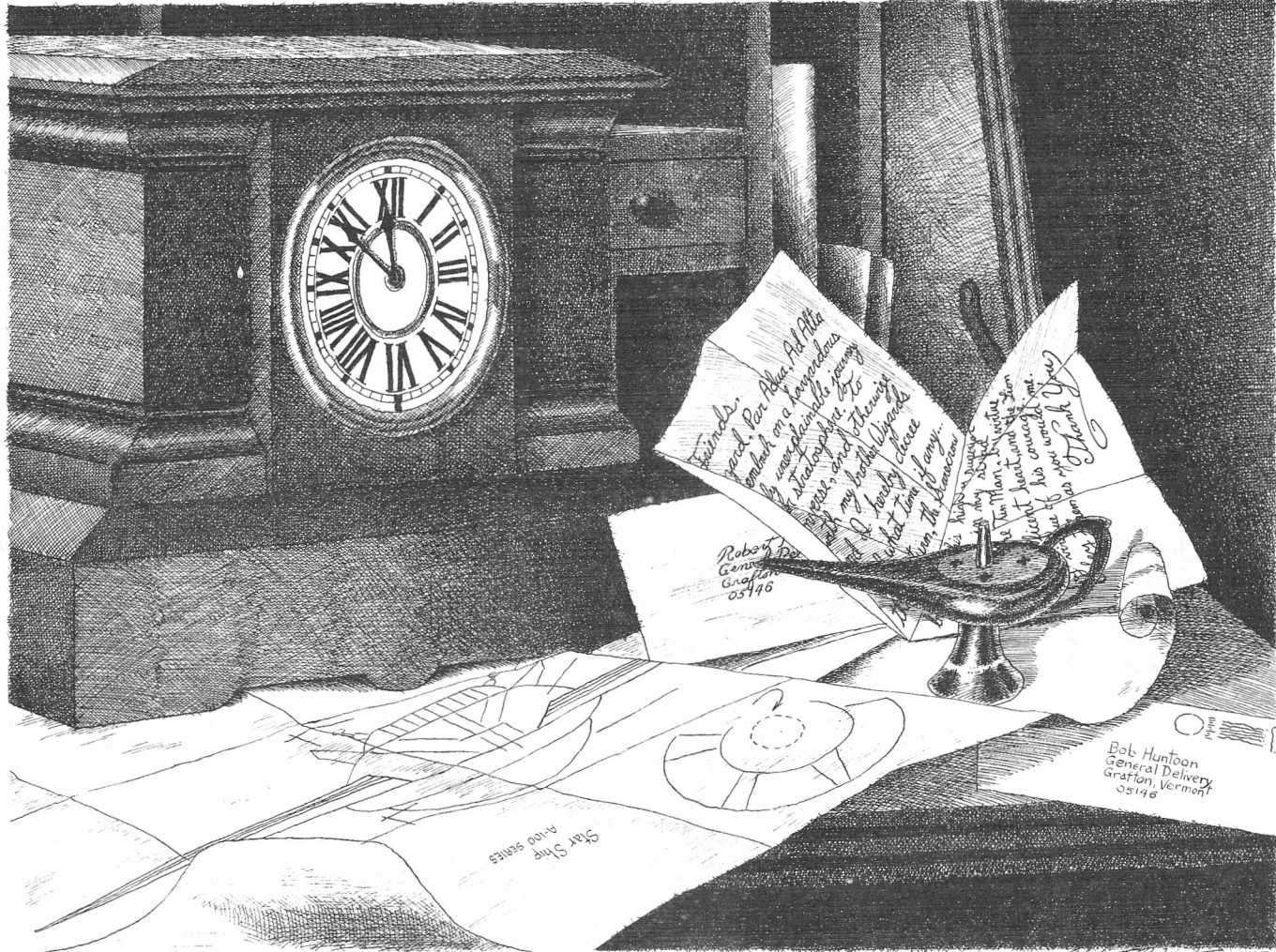
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# RANDOM FACTORS: LETTERS

*EDITORIAL NOTE: Response to last issue wasn't nearly as great as that to the Silverberg piece in ALGOL 25. More of a steady stream rather than a rushing torrent. Using the usual editorial scalpel and scissors, I swashed and nearly buckled as I cut a wide path through the letters. Here, then, are the results. Fred Fowler wishes to make certain things clear, and I graciously let him: remember, Fred, I'll let Ian Andrews at you with the thumb-screw if you don't behave ... there, that's much better.*

*And again, we plunge headlong and mouth-first into the bubbling columns of type. This issue, in keeping with the gun control laws, we're dispensing with battle-lasers. How about copies of ALGOL dipped in water and plaster and allowed to harden? A certain quaint style to it, and a satisfactory "crunch!" as we lay into the letters. Okay, everyone, here we go-o-o-!!!*

Fred Fowler  
200 Laura Lane, Apt. B6  
Rocky Hill, Conn. 06067

The statement in ALGOL 26 about what I said in my last letter is somewhat misleading, in that it might give some readers the impression that I retracted all of what I had written in the letter in ALGOL 25. The only part of that letter that I would retract is the

part in which I attacked Mrs. Miesel's motives for saying what she did in her letter in ALGOL 24. I don't know what her motives were, and it was wrong of me to assume that they were bad. Beyond that, I wished to apologize for the uncharitable tone of my letter. I still firmly believe that Mrs. Miesel and Mr. Lupoff are wrong, and what I said still stands, but I could have easily set forth what I had to say a little more courteously than I did.

Gregory Benford  
Physics Department  
University of California  
Irvine, Calif. 92664

Stephen Antell brings up a point I should have stressed more, about science and SF: unlike almost all literature, SF can and does show science as a process. I think this is because most writers simply don't understand that it is a method of enquiry, not a body of Revealed Wisdom. Communicating the joy of the method itself, and the continuing feeling of brushing against the unknown, is a hard bit of work, I find, rather like making up detective stories with no true villain, only a body to explain. (I've just finished a few attempts at showing the process as the central concern, rather than the results, in a piece with Gordon Eklund, "The Anvil of Jove" (F&SF July 1976) and, in more detail, in a

long novel titled *In the Ocean of Night*, to appear from Dial next year.) In the case of Godwin's "The Cold Equations" Antell is quite right; the point is scientific reason (and culture) vs. dogmatic social "truths" (which are often mistaken for "humanistic universals"—virtually a contradiction in terms). This confusion between rational methods vs. dogmatism pervades almost all political discussions of science. In fact, the misunderstanding of this relationship is one of the important errors in western culture. I suspect people really don't want methods for finding truth, especially if it's announced to be "merely" relative truth. They lust for absolute, comfortable, easily-remembered answers. Saying nay to all this strikes me as a singularly good justification for SF, too.

Jeff Hecht  
54 Newell Rd.  
Auburndale, Mass. 02166

I think your comment to Harry Warner Jr. on the Silverberg article may sum up the matter best—20 years of writing is a lot, maybe Silverberg is tired of writing SF. I work on a trade magazine that deals with lasers—the magazine is 11 years old and the first laser was only built in 1960. (I've been there just 2 years.) Even though I enjoy the work, I couldn't conceive of being there 20

years from now.

And thanks, by the way, for the profile of Dick Lupoff. It's refreshing to know that some pros spent longer collecting rejection slips than I have (so far).

Robert Silverberg  
Box 13160 Station E  
Oakland, Calif. 94661

I took a certain grim pleasure in reading the comments on my autobiographical piece—such as the one suggesting that *Thorns* is derived from a Saberhagen novel published five years after it, and the notion that my withdrawal from SF is caused by glandular imbalances and general bodily decay.

I am, like many of us, older than I used to be, but my health is excellent and my doctor thinks I'm in fine shape. There were 57 reasons for my retiring, but senility wasn't among them. Incidentally, a lot of my books will be coming back into print in the next twelve months; even so, I find no desire in me to return to writing. The impulse simply isn't there. I'm busy and happy doing other things.



Harry Warner Jr.  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, Md. 21740

Vincent DiFate on [Frank R.] Paul gave me almost as much satisfaction as the first manned landing on the Moon. I felt like a lone voice in the wilderness, defending Paul as an artist in fanzines during years when hardly anyone else writing locs had a good word for him. The attitude toward Paul seems to have started to undergo a major revision in the past few years among some fans and some prototype critics. So I feel increased confidence in my belief that Paul will eventually be discovered by the mundane art world, that he'll become as much of a sensation outside the science fiction world as Grandma Moses became, as a primitive of enormous ability.

Fred Pohl was amusing and even exciting in the reference to a possible book about these early fannish days. I wonder how long it will be until the pros who have been fighting so bitterly among themselves in recent years will be able to write as genially and forgivingly about their feuds as Fred can do about those hectic 1930's in New York City fandom?

Hardly anyone today seems to use or even to remember the name Walt Liebscher invented for the kind of fiction which Dick Lupoff describes in his review of *The Shudder Pulps*, the apparent fantasy or science fiction stories which turn out to have a mundane explanation. Walt called them Gay Deceivers, when he used to review an occasional example in the pages of his wonderful old fanzine, *Chanticleer*. It's also nice to see some support for my generally high estimate of the quality of fiction in the oldest prozines. But while I agree with Dick, when he explains why imitations of the old style aren't convincing when written today, I don't think the old style as found in prozines of the 1920's and 1930's was necessarily "the most advanced they were capable of." What today's readers overlook is the strong similarity between the techniques that early prozine authors used and those that were utilized by the most successful writers of mundane fiction in that period. What seem like faults to many 1976 readers can be found in the fiction of people

like Booth Tarkington and Zane Grey. It was writers like them whom the prozine authors were imitating, not the stylists who have emerged in the 1950's and 1960's.

[Actually, Harry, I suspect the reason the term has fallen out of whatever use it once had is that the language has changed to where "Gay" has completely changed its meaning. They may still sing, "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay," in Hagerstown, but elsewhere it's greeted with derisive sniggers. AIP]

Clifton Amsbury  
768 Amador Street  
Richmond, Calif. 94805

On page 34 algol/summer 1976, I find, with reference to February 1933, the flat statement by Frederik Pohl that "fandom did not yet quite exist." Even making allowance for his tender years and Brooklyn provincialism, this requires correction.

What I may refer to as "Very First Fandom" had been in existence for some time. First there were people writing to each other, getting names and addresses from letter columns of *Amazing Stories* and *Weird Tales*. Then Ray Palmer got us organized and issued an official organ. Later the original name of Science Correspondence Club was changed to International Scientific Association. Some time after that Aubrey Mac Dermott organized Eastbay fans (Berkeley to Hayward in California—later a few San Francisco members) into the Eastbay Scientific Association.

After several years as president of the international, Ray Palmer declined to run for reelection and it passed to someone in the area of New York. By 1931 president was a guy named Eason in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1932 Aubrey Mac Dermott became president, and editor of the journal, *Cosmology*. That spring I graduated from the University of California and that summer I visited members of the Association in Oregon and Washington, then Ray Palmer in Milwaukee, and a local group in Chicago. President of the local club was Walter Dennis.

In December 1932 (Christmas time—two months before Pohl's "not yet") I visited a very active local group in Boston, and Connie (for Conrad) Ruppert in South Ozone Park, New York City. Connie put out a beautifully done, very readable fanzine called *Science Fiction Digest*.

I was told there had been a local club in New York, but it had broken up.

Surely there are others out there to add to the story of Very First Fandom. For one thing there were more than just the two fanzines whose titles I happen to recall. I also believe there were other active local groups than these four.

Patrick McGuire  
133-D E. Sterling Way  
Mid-Florida Lakes  
Leesburg, Fla. 32748

My usual plaudits for Susan Wood. Question: how come lately I can't find much to say about Susan's writing besides that I like it? Tentative answer: Because lately she's writing more about herself and less about SF or other external concerns? I can argue or add on about SF, or even about women in society, but about the only possible response to a very subjective article is to say something subjective about one's own self.

Much praise indeed to Vincent DiFate. I am hopelessly obtuse about visual art, despite dutiful and reasonably prolonged efforts to improve myself, but even so DiFate writes in a manner which entertains and instructs me. It's curious that in the Soviet Union, SF art is much more distinct from written SF than in the United States. Perhaps this has to do simply with the fact that Soviet color presses are not very good, so that few books and magazines have full-color illustrations. The black-and-white ones vary greatly in quality; some are quite good, but many are not. The illustrations from the Children's Literature publishing house (which also publishes adult-level SF), especially from a few years ago, are a case in point: the artists go out of their way to avoid science-fictional scenes, and instead give a simple portrait of the hero or whatever. At the same time, quite a number of artists paint on SFnal themes (the most notable if not the most talented example being the cosmonaut Leonov), but only occasionally get reproductions published, and then often as not in art books or in sets of postcards (the latter being a peculiarity of Soviet publishing).

On Lupoff's advice I dug a copy of London's "The Red One" out of the library, and will maybe get it read before vanishing into the sunset. I'd like to put in a good word for London's novel *The Iron Heel*, still available in paperback. There is probably no one on Earth less Marxist than I, but once you have granted London his premise, he develops it most entertainingly. I don't think it's exactly fair to say that London "predicted" the rise of Fascism, and American history (despite some strained comments relating to the 1968 Democratic convention by the author of the intro to the pb) has not turned out much like London's scenario, but seen as a work of fiction rather than as a piece of propaganda, the book is most skillful (especially for 1906), and very entertaining.

One thing I've noticed in myself about SF's alleged promotion of adaptability is that I'm not particularly in favor of change, at least in my own life. Yet I keep reading SF.





Perhaps if SF does anything in this line, it predisposes one to recognize the existence of change, and to think out the possible ramifications of any given change. This needn't make one much in favor of the whole business. It may well instill an intelligent conservatism, in the tradition of say, Edmund Burke, Bismarck, Teddy Roosevelt, or whatever. In fact, numbers of SF writers are rather conservative. So empirically I think Jeff Clarke is wrong when he says that "coping" means bending to the wind.

I would recommend to Jeff Clarke an extended stay in a country with even as much as half the standard of living as the U.S. After that, let him tell me that poverty has no adverse spiritual consequences.

Doug Barbour  
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Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada T6E 1K2

I think of my one worldcon and speculate that it will be a longish time before I attend another (maybe Sydney Cove in 88? because it will be *smaller?*). Torcon was huge and I didn't know many people, and a huge con is not the best place to meet and talk with such. A small con is, and I have enjoyed the V-cons I've been to, and will likely attend next year's Westercon because it's in Vancouver and there will be people I know there. But perhaps I've already found other, equally diverting "fandoms," and they are where the energies of *friendly community and communication* Susan makes so admirable and worthy in her column go. Anyway, I loved Susan Wood's really moving meditation on what fandom is to her, now.

I also found Vincent DiFate's "Sketches" perhaps the best art column I have yet come across. He shouldn't be so hard on himself about his writing abilities: the clarity of his exposition helped me to see what he was talking about. He wasn't simply praising or putting down certain SF artists, but revealing the hows and whys of their work. I learned something from it, and that's important.

I agree with William Trojan about Dick Lupoff's review column. It gets better and better (or is that he doesn't disagree with me as often anymore?), and I place him up there with Judith Merril, Joanna Russ and Algis Budrys as a review columnist whom I read for the pleasure of his/her company as well for the review/opinion he is putting across. This column was a good example because much of what he reviewed I'll probably not get around to for a long time, if ever. But his reviews were still fun to read even when the subject was not close to my heart.

On the whole, Thomas F. Montealeone's "Fire and Ice" is a fine piece of work. How can I fault a critic who loves the same Zelazny short fiction I do, viz., esp., "For a Breath I Tarry." The piece as a whole is a good overview of Zelazny's short fiction, and presents the major themes and images/metaphors, etc. of that fiction well. I agree that "For a Breath I Tarry" is about the "experiential quest," yet I find the movements of its plot, for want of a better word, much more complex than Montealeone shows them to be. Frost "knows" what it's like to be human, even the first time he's put "into" a body, but "he" can't take it. Thus it's against his will, almost (as I see it) that he is made by the machines—which worship man, and knew he was man during those few moments his "awareness matrix" was in that body—to suffer through the slow trauma of becoming a whole man, and that Beta is made to suffer similarly to become a woman. This is a small point though, but it points to one of the most exciting aspects of Zelazny's style in this story—how he energizes his prose to make us feel the trauma as it occurs.

Blody useful, then, to have the interview with Samuel R. Delany right next to it. As usual, Delany is sharp, perceptive, articulate, and provocative. Your interviewer, however, is just a wee bit coy. He did after all publish an article called "Dully Grinning Delany Descends to Disaster" in \*dare I say it? \* *Outworlds* recently, in which he said, "Delany has been put out of business artistically," and other such dogmatically damning statements. To be fair, I was in that same issue struggling valiantly to tell the world what a great book *Dhalgren* was, so I am not unbiased here. My point, and I believe it's a valid one, is that Darrell did not ask Delany those "tough, embarrassing" questions his review of *Dhalgren* leads me to believe he could have asked, had he wanted to. As well, I wonder if Delany yet knew that his interviewer had attacked his most recent book so savagely? I believe Delany would still have done the interview, for I believe he's a professional in these matters, and knows how to handle bad reviews. But the interview might have been different, and might have been more interesting had the interviewer revealed his prejudices against what Delany has written recently, thus forcing Delany to respond to specific statements against his *kind* of fiction-making. On the other hand, perhaps it would've been a stupid thing to do, and the interview has none of the nasty overtones such a confrontation might have manifested. I did enjoy it, and Darrell did the proper interviewer thing: he stayed silent long enough to let Delany make his points.

[I think ALGOL readers would be happy to know that Dick Lupoff placed 4th in the LOCUS poll for "Best Critic," behind Dick Geis, Lester del Rey and Algis Budrys, and ahead of Spider Robinson, Joanna Russ and Theodore Sturgeon. AIP]

Barry N. Malzberg  
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The interview points out one of the reasons why I can't admire Delany as much as I'd like to or most people around the field do. Somehow he gets himself saying to Schweitzer, "When you look at where mundane fiction was in the fifties you see it was pretty uninteresting stuff . . . we hadn't had the sort of thing that you get with Barth and Barthelme and all the experimentation of Faulkner and Dos Passos was far in the past."

Tunnel vision. It leads me to the suspicion that perhaps our most respected writer has absolutely no literary background outside of his field. In the first place I object to the fannish use of "mundane" as adjectival to every aspect of the world not related to matters science fictional or fantastic. (Damon Knight does this too and much as I admire *In Search of Wonder* I cringed when I found him using that phrase.) I don't understand why Delany, now thirty-four, still uses a phrase of teenage fans.

Secondly and more importantly I would like to note without further comment some American fiction of the nineteen fifties. All of it was as available to Delany (and me) as *Galaxy* or *More Than Human* (work of quality, all). Has he never heard of: *Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger  
*The Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison  
*Advertisements for Myself*, by Norman Mailer  
*On the Road*, by Jack Kerouac  
*Wise Blood*, by Flannery O'Connor  
*The Magic Barrel*, by Bernard Malamud  
*Franny and Zooey*, by J.D. Salinger  
*The Deer Park*, by Norman Mailer  
*Poorhouse Fair*, by John Updike  
*Giovanni's Room*, by James Baldwin  
*The Natural*, by Bernard Malamud  
*A Fable*, by William Faulkner  
or does he find them all negligible?

Mark Gisleson  
Box 1040  
Ames, Iowa 50010

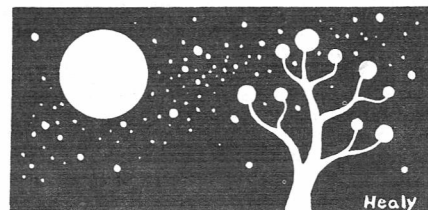
Having recently done a paper on Zelazny's novels I immediately dived into Montealeone's article and emerged sometime later after much head nodding and yawning. I agree heartily with everything he said, but I couldn't get excited about any of it. Just once I'd like to see a critical article on the works of Roger Zelazny and not a critical appreciation (which by the way is exactly what my paper was). Critical appreciations are fun to write, and once in a while they are fun to read, but they are not exceptionally stimulating to read for the most part.

The Delany interview was enjoyable but somewhat superficial. In future interviews Mr. Schweitzer might consider using a technique commonly referred to as a "follow-up question." Rather than read from a list of prepared questions you listen to what the interviewee has to say and then press him for further comments. The "shotgun" technique used by Mr. Schweitzer got me consistent "D's" and "F's" in basic reporting classes and with good cause. Also, too many questions dealt with SF in general, and not Chip Delany's works. And worst of all, after reading Schweitzer's interview I still don't know a goddamn thing about Chip Delany the person (although come to think about it, damn little was offered in the way of information on Chip Delany the writer).

"Sketches" surprised me. I glanced at it and thought, "Oh hell, an artist attempting to write, and worse yet, trying to write on the subject of art in the pulps." I was amazed to discover that DiFate not only *can* write, but can write well enough to interest a reader like me in two subjects I don't particularly get excited about (art and pulps). I'm happy to see that "Sketches" will be a column from here on out.

Michael Cassutt  
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I have some minor complaints/criticisms: is there another interviewer in the SF subculture besides Mr. Schweitzer? I really hope so, because his pieces are stunningly dull. I've seen about 4 or 5—in various places—and I just don't think he ever gets to the *person* he's interviewing. Lots of philosophy, yes, and a person's philosophy is certainly an essential of his or her character, but it's implicit in more concrete details: where were you born, what were your parents like, do you like rock music, will you get in an airplane willingly, do you write during the day or in the middle of the night, what do you read? etc. Of course, you can also go right for the jugular: do you have any bizarre sexual habits you'd care to talk about? Ever tried acid? What I'm getting at is that Schweitzer's questions don't elicit enough gossip. They get responses, as far as I can tell, right out of the subject's writings, and that, to my mind, is poor interviewing. Yes, I know Schweitzer just sort of runs into these people at conventions and that the interviews are sort of spur-of-the-moment. That explains their quality, but it doesn't excuse it.





Jessica Amanda Salmonson  
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About your new ad-policy: I agree on all counts. In fact, I find the ads one of my favorite features, and as long as I know they're not cutting into text content, they're surely not any kind of bother.

Favorite article is by DiFate. Two of my favorite artists are David Johnston and Gervasio Gallardo; I hope DiFate will eventually get around to covering these and other High Fantasy Artists (for fantasy art, these two have it all over a Frazetta or Jones or Barr).

ALGOL again leans all the way to hard science fiction. You really ought to find a columnist, or at least an article per issue, covering High Fantasy. Perhaps hard SF is your primary interest, and your readers' preferred major slant, but with coverage of art, of fannish fandom, well, high fantasy almost looks slighted as a literature.

[I certainly would like to publish articles about modern fantasy; it would be a wonderful thing if Katherine Kurtz were to write about her fiction. But what I don't receive, I can't publish. There are various people working on articles for ALGOL, and I've suggested many topics to various authors, but once again . . . perhaps Lester del Rey might step into the breach, if asked softly enough. AIP]

Roger Waddington  
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Norton, Malton  
North Yorkshire, England

DiFate on SF art is something I hope that you'll keep going; it's more interesting to hear an artist on art than a critic, however impressive his credentials! And surely as interesting and perhaps to be explained is how art in SF has illuminated, and spread through, the medium, more than in any other . . . My view is that it has achieved such a synthesis because SF deals so exclusively with the concepts that cannot be, with experiences so far outside the normal range of experience that we need art to illuminate them . . . I know my own introduction to SF came not through the juvenile titles, but through the inspired artistry of Frank Hampson with his Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future strip . . . There were the spaceships, the alien races, the terror and the beauty of Deep Space, laid out in loving details on the page, a vision that left me entranced and paved the way for my deep and abiding interest in the SF of today; certainly, it was a desire to see even more that found me pawing through the SF titles in the school library!

Dr. Al Ackerman  
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In his very interesting new column, Mr. DiFate speaks of Frank Paul's "uncompromising linear style" and says in the same breath that he was a "dreadful colorist." I think this last is purely subjective judgment, and I don't see how Mr. DiFate could possibly hope to defend it on any other grounds. I happen to think Fabritus, Salvator Rosa, quite a few of the 19th century "Decadents" and Adolf Wolfli were poor colorists. But that's just me, and there are plenty of people who would be happy, even hot, to argue the point. And why not? Purely subjective, as I say. As for condemning Paul for his "uncompromising linear style," this really makes no sense at all. It's like talking about El Greco's "unfortunate elongated astigmatism" or Giacometti's "unpleasant spindliness." It is to cry for a four-sided triangle—etc., etc.

You see what a tangle this can get to be—this use of the "critical method"? And yet I don't believe for one minute that anything has been accomplished either by Mr.

DiFate's assertions or by my own counter-assertions, no matter how knowledgeable they are made to sound. In the end, there is still the enigma of Frank R. Paul, which is to say the enigma of SF Art. All we've done is turn on our toes and kick up dust.

My own inclination is to agree entirely with his conclusion—Frank R. Paul is a great SF artist. As for the rest of it—discovering Paul with the so-called "critical" eye . . . well, it is as if Mr. DiFate had spent days on a slow train for Baltimore only to wind up, unaccountably, in WuWu, China. What he says about Paul's supposed faults and virtues "critically" speaking, leads to the conclusion that Paul was a great artist.

Nor does the issue become any less confusing when Mr. DiFate drags in Sidney Mead and Dean Ellis and presents them, particularly Ellis, as the heirs of Paul. These two artists, who are not at all hindered by Paul's defects, possess, according to Mr. DiFate, "a level of technical competence and imagination unsurpassed in the brief, but eventful history of our genre." Fine. If the "critical method" is to be followed and believed then Mead and Ellis should be miles ahead of poor old Paul. But what in fact happens? When I put the Paul, the Mead, and the Ellis side-by-side and really look at them—then magically I see no such thing. Mead and Ellis are slick, sophisticated, pleasing to the eye—they do everything "right." Frank R. Paul does a great many things "wrong." Yet Paul remains the greater SF artist. How to explain it?

Recently I was asked by a German DaDa publication to contribute my favorite sentence about art. The best I could come up with was "Some enchanted evening, you will meet a stranger. . . ."

I wasn't joking. I wasn't even playing DaDa. This was literally the best I could do. Nobody I've ever met has ever been able to do any better.

What I am saying here is I don't think art—in this case, SF art—can be logically explained. Certainly not in a sentence; certainly not in the brief space of a column; maybe never. Very probably never. Whether you are looking/talking about Paul, Wesso, Fawcette, or Kelly Freas—there are things going on that simply are not accessible to any sort of critical method, I don't care whether your name is Levi-Strauss, G.H. Gombrich, R. Barthes, or Franz Rottensteiner.

Alan Lankin  
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I'd like to see DiFate write something on Richard Powers. He has been prolific in the area of SF paperbacks almost since they started being generally published. His work demonstrates much strength and power and, while missing the mark as cover art, captures some of the feeling and emotion of the SF he illustrates. He was also the first prominent SF illustrator to use a synthesis of modern art (especially surrealism) as a basis of his work instead of the work of other illustrators.

Graphically, the issue was another good one. I found Mike Streff's illos to be especially striking. He's a fan artist to watch. I also particularly liked the art by Odbert, McLeod and Roy Porter.

[Your wish, sir, is our commend. Next issue will feature a cover by Powers, plus an interview by Vincent DiFate. As a longtime Powers collector and appreciator, this illumination of the man is long overdue. AIP]

Frank Eck  
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This past issue was again a super job,



especially the very perceptive article by Thomas F. Monteleone on Roger Zelazny's short fiction. Of special interest to me was Vincent DiFate's new series on cover art, since I'm doing a similar type series for *The Armchair Detective* on crime-suspense cover art.

I agree with DiFate that paperback cover art has been going through a tremendous burst of creativity and this makes his detailed and historical examination of the field all the more valuable and leaves me eagerly awaiting future installments.

Unlike the SF field where cover art has always been highly esteemed and where such artists as Hannes Bok, Virgil Finlay, Frank Frazetta, Jack Gaughan and Vincent DiFate have developed almost a cult-like following, the average reader of crime-suspense fiction remains almost totally unaware of the artists enlivening his genre, with the possible exception of Sidney Paget, the illustrator of the Sherlock Holmes stories. More of an informal survey than an historical approach, my series will attempt to introduce to the mystery connoisseur the work of some of the better artists currently portraying "the simple art of murder." For those genre jumpers out there, who enjoy reading both SF and crime-suspense you might want to look in on the opening article of the "Shadow Gallery" series in the July issue of *The Armchair Detective* (Available from 243 12th St., Drawer P, Del Mar CA 92014. \$10 for 4 issues).

William R. Hamblen  
946 Evans Road  
Nashville, Tenn. 37204

Cheers for Vincent DiFate. It's a joy to read words like "lighting" and "atmosphere" and "reduction of chroma." I wonder,

though, if Frank R. Paul might have been righter than he knew. After all, there is no atmosphere in space, and all the instinctive visual conventions of lighting and atmosphere are not true up there. I hope DiFate tells us about the unsung heroes of the paperback book covers. I think that I am not much different from most SF readers, and while I know pretty well the works and names of the magazine illustrators, I do not know many of the anonymous creators of book covers (some of whom should be spanked and have their chalk taken away).

Unadulterated compliment: ALGOL has the best SF covers I've seen. Only *Analog* comes close. Was the selection of Vincent DiFate's painting for the Summer 1976 cover a deliberate tie-in to the Paul and Ellis on pp. 30-31? Strong diagonal, counterbalancing force.

[*Vincent's cover just happened like that. But if you know what you're doing, it seems to me that covers will tend to come out with counterbalancing forces inherent in them. Besides, that was the only painting Vincent gave me. AIP*]

Miriam Greenwald  
215 Edgemoor Rd.  
Merion Sta., Pa. 19066

I am speaking as a woman, an artist and an SF fan. Why is there still generally such a preponderance of "centerfold" SF illustration in these times of growing feminism? Writers and artists who are female are beginning to get a toehold on what was once the almost exclusively male territory of SF but predictably lushly delineated women-as-sex-objects still occupy a sizeable section of layout in many publications. Why? That the technique in most cases is excellent is not to be denied but the subject matter probably makes many women downright uncomfortable if not plain bored.

[*As I pointed out to Ms. Greenwald, I have been toning down the more flagrantly sexist artwork in ALGOL. Then again, with a readership that's 75% male, I think ALGOL should have three nekkid ladies for every nekkid man. I've been informed, however, that my new printer has Sensitive Young Highschool Girls—child labor if ever I've heard it—in their employ, so perhaps ALGOL will print fewer artistic pictures in the future. Or, to quote an old fannish expression, Maybe Not. AIP*]

Arthur D. Hlavaty  
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I liked Ursula Le Guin's idea that as SF becomes more accepted, fans can stick together because they want to, not because they have to. As sociologist William Bruce Cameron has pointed out, there are WE groups ("Look what WE can do") and US groups ("Look what They're doing to US"), and it's more fun to belong to a WE group. As SF becomes more of a WE group, perhaps fans will see the achievements of the more literary writers as something WE're doing, rather than as a sellout to the hated and oppressive Them.

And as Lupoff reminds us, E.E. Smith et al. were the innovators of their time. I guess that's true of a lot of things. John Holt says that a conservative is someone who worships a dead radical. I suspect that in 30 years, new writers will be doing things that we can't begin to imagine now, while the Old Wavers yearn for the good old days of traditional writers like Silverberg and Delany. But I wouldn't go so far as to say that the innovators are the Good Guys. Clarke and Pohl don't seem to be pushing at any boundaries, but I like what they're doing; and every issue

of *New Worlds* offers evidence that There are Some Things That Man Was Not Meant To Experiment With.

Robert A. Bloch  
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Los Angeles, Calif. 90046

It's a good-looking issue, but to me the best news is the stop-press item on page 56. If Fred Pohl becomes a contributing editor then you are indeed to be congratulated on having scored a real coup. Like Lupoff, he brings a refreshingly modest and low-profile approach to his work which in no way detracts from its obvious excellence. I'm happy at the progress and future prospects of ALGOL—and, as always, grateful to you for letting me enjoy it.

Richard Brandt  
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Picking up this gorgeous ALGOL 26, I can't help thinking how unfair it is to consider Vin DiFate's beautiful cover in the light of the overpowering Gaughan creation for the previous issue. Yet here we have not only a consummate technical effort (as usual) but a sparing use of color to striking effect, working with the depth of lighting effects to create a superb sense of atmosphere. Not altogether a bad start.

Thomas Monteleone's piece on Zelazny begins unpromisingly, with an uninspired recitation of publishing credits and a rehash of the generally accepted attitudes towards Zelazny's standard elements. Even as he starts into his story treatments, he tends to merely paraphrase the plot line and expound on the most obvious themes. But—ah!—in his latter section, as Thomas closely examines Roger's shorter works, we hit real paydirt. His faithful and insightful renderings of Zelazny's under-

lying themes, his discovery of the treatment of "technological" man, his study of the excellent "Man Who Loved the Faioli," all reveal T.M. as the serious critic we have expected to find all along. (Would only that his fictional writings were so rewarding!) It's especially pleasing when Tom admits that his opinion of a work's quality is only his personal response, an admission detestably lacking in the run of literary critics.

I've always admired Delany's fiction for the wealth of material made accessible by his rich but not difficult prose. (In regard to the "style vs. content" controversy, *Babel 17* is particularly concerned with the problem of language used merely as a means of conveying a message. Without style there indeed is no content.) The reader who complains about (and avoids) literature which he has to "work for" in order to read and comprehend, is the reader who will not tackle Homer's verse, *Billy Budd's* nautical jargon, or even Shakespeare's English. I have no complaints against a book which demands that the reader put forth an effort; after all, we expect the author to put in at least as much effort as is required to produce a good read. However, I do object when an author places an obstacle before the reader on his way to comprehension—a stumbling block, if you will. And I believe this is what Delany has done in the last section of *Dhalgren*. The chopped-up, mangled prose of the "notebook" is contrary to Delany's faith in clear English prose and to the apparent experiential intent of the novel. To quote quite a few of *Dhalgren's* readers, "I don't understand it."

Ah, Susan Wood on the glories of a Worldcon. Oddly, I seem immune to the tendency to fall slaving at the feet of an SF idol; I may be reluctant to approach one of course, but aside from the fact that they have no idea

Letters conclude on P. 65.

The New York Science Fiction Society (The Lunarians, Inc.), announces:

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# ALGOL's PEOPLE

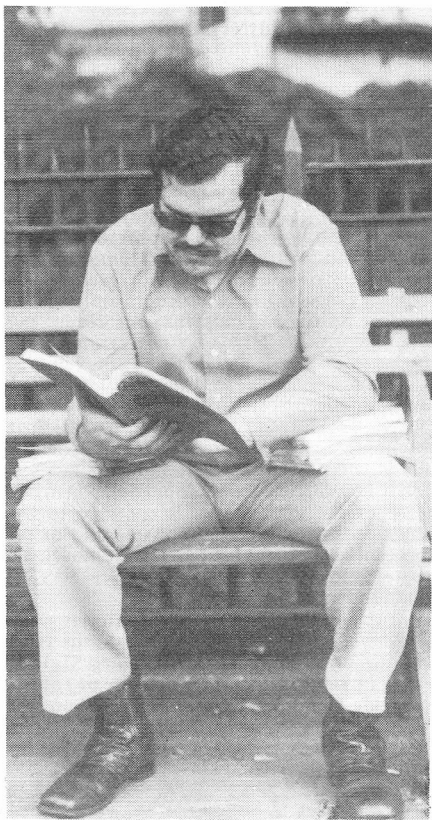


photo by Evelyn Kesler

ALGOL'S PEOPLE PRESENTS: ANDREW PORTER (Yay!!!): Usually this space is occupied by one of the occasional or even regular contributors to ALGOL. Artists, writers, etc. This issue I've put off the possibility of getting anyone to write about themselves because I didn't think there'd be enough room. Now, with 45 pages of this issue pasted up and awaiting the finishing touches before they shuffle off to the printer, I find myself with a definite hole to fill. (For true terror tales about filling holes in issues, I refer you to the "Barrington Barometer," published by Gene Wolfe. Gene has been telling us the story of his life, his editorial philosophy, strange Jon Singer discoveries in America's heartland—the fan belt—and the truth behind Proctor & Gamble. Including why P&G's candle-making factory apparatus has never been destroyed. For a subscription to this erstwhile magazine, which doesn't exist, send \$50.00 to Gene Wolfe, Box 69, Barrington IL 60010. For your \$50.00, I'm sure Gene will be suitably charming and witty.)

But enough of this fine witty chatter. The bare facts, make of them what you will: Born March 24th, 1946, in Highland Park, Michigan (yes, I invented Cy Chauvin). Second son of a

Detroit high school phys. ed. teacher. Moved to New York City after the death of my father, in August 1956. (Same weekend, in fact, as the NYCon 2. Curious coincidence.) I was already reading SF at the time, a habit picked up from my brother. By the late '50's, I was already into Norton and the Heinlein juvenovels, plus a lot of other SF. My reading grades passed college level by the 8th Grade. Yes, I was shy and introverted (a fact some people might doubt: but years of practice at being extroverted have hidden the facts: I have a sensitive fannish soul) and didn't participate in sports, instead sat in the corner and read that crazy Buck Rogers stuff. Was called "Spaceman" in school. The whole senseless oppressive to young minds sort of environment, outside of my home, that has created so many of us SF readers/fans in the same mold. Discovered magazine SF in 1960 (the May 1960 *F&SF*: a wonderful Mel Hunter robot cover), and shortly the other magazines, esp. *Amazing's* 35th anniversary issue. From there it was a short distance to fandom, via the help of Donald A. Wollheim, who I talked to on the phone one momentous fall afternoon.

"What you need is fandom," Don told me. And he gave me the names of Ted White, host of the Fanoclasts (see my editorial in ALGOL 20), and Frank Dietz, host of the NY SF Society, the Lunarians. I attended my first fan meeting in 1961 at the age of 15, and I've been lost to normal society ever since.

First came the meetings, then the conventions, beginning with the ESFA meetings in Newark NJ, then on to Philadelphia and Washington and Cleveland and Cincinnati . . . more than 90 conventions in the last 15 years. And fanzines, too—my own bumbling attempts producing the first two issues of ALGOL (spirit duplicated, 25 copies, 2 pages each, without any redeeming social merit, alas), then DEGLER!, which changed from a weekly fanzine for Apa-F, into SFWEEKLY (precursor to *Locus*), and other fanzines. Names like *South Norwalk*, *Quiescently Frozen*, *Frisco-Mikado* & *Golden Spike Gazette*, my current *Twentieth Century Unlimited*, published for FAPA. But always, and first in my publishing dreams, ALGOL. Going from those two dreadful pages to first 10, then 12, picking up contributors, learning the ropes and rules of operation, getting experience at layout and production and editing through my mundane jobs (a proofreader after leaving college in 1964; then editorial assistant to Sam Moskowitz on *Quick Frozen Foods*, later Associate Editor at Lancer Books, then production assistant and production manager on trade magazines like

*Boating Industry*, *Electronic Purchasing*, *Modern Floor Coverings*, *Toy & Hobby World*) but using ideas adaptable to ALGOL, to magazine publishing in general.

All the time ALGOL was getting bigger, my ideas of what it should and would be were changing, getting bigger, and I was growing with those ideas. Changing, thinking, beginning to see where I'm going in life, in fandom, in science fiction.

And, full circle, perhaps back to my beginnings. If ALGOL will support me—and with ALGOL Press, I think it can—then I hope to get out of New York City within a year or so. Ann Arbor is a nice town. It's a university town, but also has an uncommon group of good printers, is centrally located, is a good city, with few of the problems that New York faces (ghod, how I'm growing tired of hassles in my daily life). My brother lives there, there's a local fan population . . . all the elements of paradise. Or, perhaps, in the fannish tradition of the phrase, Maybe not.

Okay, final paragraph: people talk all the time about editorial personality. I don't think editorial personality has to be expressed by having a spittoon in the corner and an editor who conducts business sitting in his underwear. ALGOL, from my viewpoint, is a magazine, not a fanzine. I think there's a difference in conduct, in policy. If you want to read a warm and relaxed fanzine, read RUNE. It's really very good, and I like it a lot (I even do artwork for it occasionally). But if you want to read about SF, and a hell of a lot of people do, then stick around and enjoy ALGOL. I enjoy ALGOL, and I'm so involved in its production that I usually can't see the stars for the stacks of bills. And that's the last time I talk about this subject.

Until next issue, anyway.

There it is: the (expurgated) story of my life. If you want to hear more, see me at a convention, buy me a Pepsi, or call me on the phone.

One more thing: Susan Wood notes in the MidAmerican Program Book that "U.S. fans can't cash Canadian cheques." In ALGOL's case, not so. Some people have asked howcum ALGOL wants Canadian cheques payable to Andrew Porter from Canadian subscribers. The answer is that I have a checking/savings account in Montreal, and have had for several years. It's all part of one of my aliases as, or so Susan calls me, a "Closet Canadian." It's too long to go into here, but I believe in keeping Canadian funds circulating within Canada, among other things. And the Montreal account pays Susan and other Canadian contributors. This is too long, and ends Here.

—Andrew Porter, 20 September 1976.



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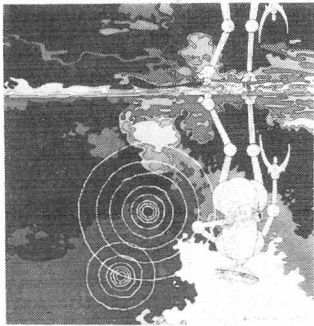
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who I am (rationale, you see), I am basically a shy person. I had somewhat less trouble confronting idols whom I'd chatted with through the mail; but even I had no trouble chatting casually with "Alfie Bester" (the secret is to catch him when he's talking about movies, heh heh). Thing is, you must remember when you face your Idol that he/she is really just a human being after all. And what a "just" that is—what a wealth of flesh and experience is wrapped up within each of us! I had much more trouble writing a fan letter to a (gulp!) Real Pro and actually getting a (gasp!) Real Letter back from them! Their print persona can be so much more formidable—that's the Robert Coulson or L. Sprague de Camp that you only know as a written page! (And ho boy, what a page!)

Lupoff was better than ever. His note of Goulart's affinity for "second bananas" in fiction as a basis for the wonderful inclusion of the lesser-known heroes—sheer beautiful insight. The "Weird Menace" selection also reminds me of a perfect film example, *The Vulture*, an appealingly offbeat idea totally ruined by attempts at unbelievable length to provide a "scientific" rationale. And his ideas on current pulp fiction practitioners are thought-provoking, to say the very least.

A beautiful, awe-inspiring production. On a less pleasant note, I notice all the attention in the press today towards the "un-literate" generation we're raising. What did happen to the society that read a book by the fireplace each night? I see myself perversely attracted to the medium of film, where I don't have to describe a scene—I can build it. Am I a born writer in a world where my ideal profession has been largely forgotten? Are we destined to see SF fandom relegated to the spawn of an Establishment which doesn't care to teach its young the skill of reading? Will our Robert Silverbergs ever find a Best-Seller audience that can wade through anything deeper than Harold Robbins? Literary trends may not even exist; they may be dying out. If the paperbacks are the true pulps, then shall Perry Rhodan be the inheritor of the mantle of *F&SF* and *Fantastic*? Oy. Perhaps we go back to square one. Mute and inglorious again, and to start over.

More of ALGOL, then, and more of Lupoff and Susan Wood and Doug Barbour! and perceptive letterhacks like Mike Glicksohn and Harry Warner. A slick and comfortable refuge for those who can still write and who still like to read. Yeah.

**WE ALSO HEARD FROM:** Geir Arne Olsen, Michael Mandelberg, Ronald Salomon, C.T. Smith, Frank Wilimczyk, Dr. A.D. Wallace, Harry Bose, Bob Frazier, Stephen Compton, Robert Runte, Elsie Wood, Fred Jakobic, D.A. Bollington, Michael Cross, David Schirmer, Alex Eisenstein, Donald Robertson, Peter Martin, David Garnett, Terence Green, Milton Hallman, Lee Vernon, Michael Wohl, Craig Hill, Bill Heron, John S. Kelly, Dave Travis, Mark Sharpe, Gary Cobb, and Jackie Hilles.

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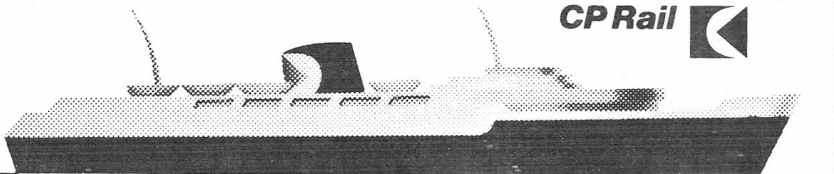
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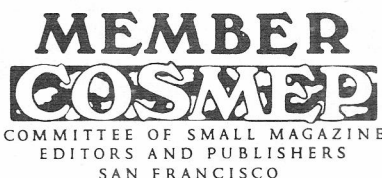
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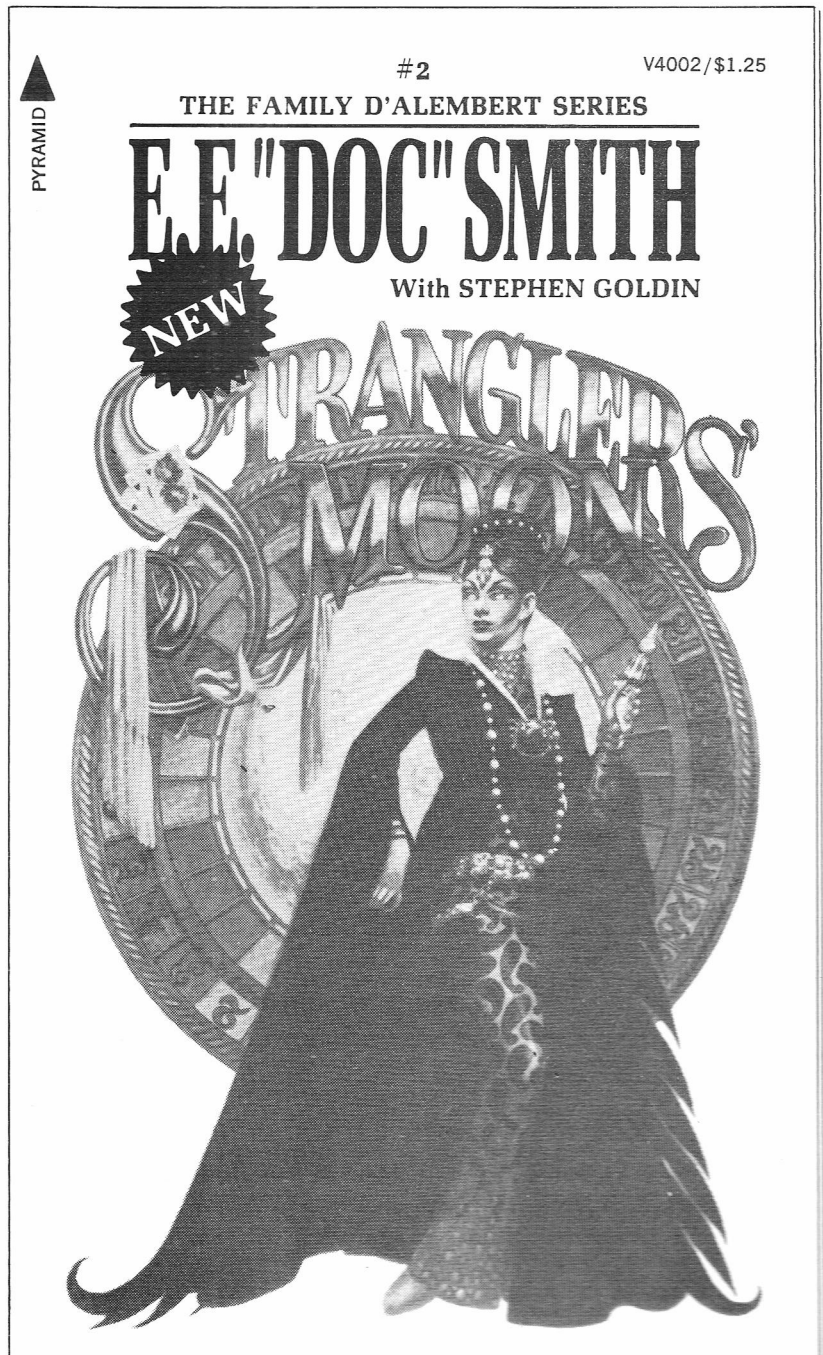
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