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CONTACT:SF

A Critical Journal of Speculative Fiction

INTERVIEWS WITH:
Norman Spinrad
Samuel R. Delany

ARTICLES BY:
Laurence M. Janifer
Robert Foster
Ginjer Buchanan

FIRST CONTACTS

WEATHERING THE STORM *by Steve Davidson*

Well, here it is, our third issue. After all the trials and tribulations, I managed to get a $600 grant from Fairleigh Dickinson University, thanks to Edith Frank, (Coordinator of Student Activities) and you can read to your heart's content and Joe and I will be very happy that you even looked at it. After all, it's been nearly two years.

Two years that have seen a lot. Two very good S.F. films, (I am really very tired of arguments about space opera and U.F.O. films, so please let it rest, this is my opinion.) and several other not so very good ones. There is a slew of new S.F. magazines, all quite poor, and one of the better ones, COSMOS, has died. ALGOL has gone professional, and SUNCON, last year's Worldcon, is passing from the memories of many people. Iguanacon is coming up and we all look forward to it, if a little apprehensively. And next year, many of us are looking forward to a trip to the British Isles and the many pubs that dot its coast. All of this is to say of course, that in terms of S.F., its been quite a good two years, the last one especially.

But one thing that weighs heavy on the minds of many fans, one thing that has been the topic of discussion at many panels, parties, and hallway gatherings. That topic ties into the movies we have seen, the magazines we have read, and even the numerous television shows that we have watched. That topic is the S.F. ghetto. All of a sudden people are looking behind them, asking where it has gone, and wishing it would return. Why? For years we have wished for a little understanding on the part of the outside world. For years fans everywhere have wanted those walls to tumble to the blaring of trumpets and songs to the effect, "HERE WE

MURPHY WAS AN OPTIMIST

by Joseph S. Zitt

They said we had to be crazy. To bring out a magazine publishing only articles about science fiction and fantasy, trying to get articles, interviews and artwork by professionals, printing it well, and marketing it so that we could afford to bring out further issues was clearly a foolhardy venture, only to be attempted by those who were utterly off their bird. We were not convinced, but after breaking our legs trying to ride ostriches, we decided we were qualified.

Steve approached his school, Fairleigh Dickinson University, for a leadership grant. They took one look at him, (well, actually three or four) and decided it would not be conducive to their health to tangle with any little guy with an Australian hat and an ostrich for a hit man. They gave him a grant and we started right in on production of our third issue.

We did have a first and second issue, back in our dark dank past, but they were of a far different character, devoted primarily to fiction and trying to figure out what we were doing. Thus, issue three became our Big Debut.

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WEATHERING THE STORM

ARE! UNDERSTAND US! APPRECIATE US! TAKE WHAT WE HAVE TO GIVE AND ENJOY YOURSELVES!"

Now that we have that, we all want to take it back. The reasons are very simple. We want to invade the outside world, and give to them this great thing which each and everyone of us has discovered by ourselves. But we do not want Them to invade us. Fandom always wants to have the backroom to hide in, to get lost in. But now we find it is too late.

Before, we had the Trekkies to contend with, (not all of whom were that terrible, I must say) now we have Trekkies, Star Warries C.E. Threeites, and a host of others. Reporters from newspapers come and interview fans at conventions, S.F. television shows crop up like weeds, and we are being trampled into the dust, hidden by a facade of what the outside world would like to believe is S.F. The recognition that we are receiving is not the kind that we want.

Hopefully, the "Boom and Bust Period" theory, detailed by Lester Del Rey, will manifest itself at this time and save us, by forcing a loss of interest on the part of the media. Hopefully, it will all go away and leave us alone, to read what we know is S.F., to see movies that we know are S.F., and to enjoy conventions with people we know are fans, not Herb from down the street checking it all out. Until then, we have to keep the faith, dig our heels in the ground and wait out the storm. Good luck. See you all back in 1926.

MURPHY WAS AN OPTIMIST

We promptly called upon several important writers, asking for contributions of articles. The conversations went something like this:

US: Fanzine. Article?

PRO: Article? Fanzine???

US: Article. Fanzine. Money?

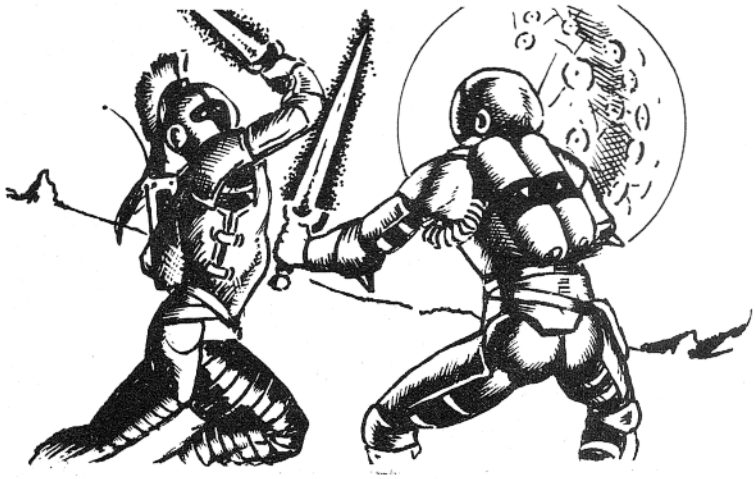
PRO: Money! Article. Fanzine.

We got some pros.

We then decided on production methods. For those of you who may be interested, we paid a typist to type up the materials, as our typing is somewhat infamous. We then laid it out on blue-grilled boards with Spra-Mount, and had it shot down 25% to 8 1/2" by 11". The result is what you are now holding. Or lying next to. Or levitating.

So. Here we are at last. (Well, actually we're at third, but we're hoping for a good single on the next pitch.) Enjoy Yourselves within our pages. Write us if you do. Or if you don't. Or whatever.

Meanwhile ... beware of armed ostriches.



ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Norman Spinrad and Chip Delany were interviewed in their New York apartments in late 1976 and early 1977.

Laurence M. Janifer has established a reputation as one of the most prolific and professional authors in the field. His "Set Piece" in this issue gives a unique insight into the life and workings of a science fiction writer.

Robert Foster is the author of the newly revised and invaluable Complete Guide to Middle Earth, available from Del Rey Books. One of the world's authorities on modern literary fantasy, he is an associate professor of English at Rutgers University.

Ginjer Buchanan begins this issue a column on science fiction fandom, in much the same vein as her column in Cosmos.

Frederick Paul Kiesche III is a student at Livingston College of Rutgers University. He reads science fiction and fantasy voraciously, a prediliction which is put to good use in his "S.F. Shopping Cart" in which he reviews over 50 items from all ends of the field.

Jim Beckerman is also a student at Rutgers University. An aspiring film-maker himself, he discusses in this issue the many cinematic incarnations of Wells' The Island of Dr. Moreau.

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INTERVIEW WITH

NORMAN SPINRAD

Conducted by Joseph S. Zitt

It would simplify matters greatly if it were possible to cubbyhole Norman Spinrad into a simple category, to state that "Norman Spinrad is a writer who..." or "Norman Spinrad has...". But the most significant feature of his career is its enormous range. In the sixteen years since his first publication, Spinrad has written a little bit of everything. About the only thing that he specializes in is awe-inspiring chutzpah.

He was born in 1942 in New York, and graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, one year after Stokely Carmichael and two years before Samuel R. Delany. He started writing while a student there, and some of his best known later fiction developed from stories sketched out during his teen years. In 1961 he graduated from City College with a B.S. in Esoterica, a special degree invented so they could get rid of him.

The year after his graduation, Spinrad's first and best known short story was published, "The Last of the Romany." He decided immediately to become a full time writer. A stream of stories poured from his typewriter into the magazines, along with non-fiction, mainstream fiction, interviews, and the like.

In 1966 he received the first of many nominations for the Nebula Award, for his story, "Age of Invention". That year he also published his first novel, The Solarians, an unconventional space opera dealing with a bizarre military manouever necessary to defeat computerlike aliens. This novel has been highly praised by some fans for the intricacy of its plotting and the unusual and surprising way in which the battle is won. Harlan Ellison, in his introduction to Spinrad's "Carcinoma Angels" in Dangerous Visions says that The Solarians "is so bad it cannot be read."

Spinrad's second novel, published in 1967, has become a cult classic. Agent of Chaos tells of a group of revolutionaries dedicated to restoring chaos to human society by a series of random acts designed to confuse the plans of any political force at work within the galaxy. The theories of this book, based upon those expressed in philosopher Gregor Markowitz's The Theory of Social Entropy, inspired the foundation of the American anarchist organization "Agents of Piekill" (whose president, Rex Weiner, recently published an article on the book in High Times), and its political arm, the Zippies.

In The Men in the Jungle, which appeared the same year, Spinrad developed a thoroughly original and alien culture, on a world where cannibalism is a way of life. Inspired by America's involvement in Vietnam, the novel tells of the efforts of a political opportunist to start a "War of National Liberation" on the planet.

Bug Jack Barron, Spinrad's most controversial novel, appeared in 1969 to a flood of criticism, both praise and denunciation. The tale of a television talk show host who uses his power to defeat a murderous capitalist at the cost of his wife and a good deal of his morals, the book was called both "brilliant" and "depraved" by reviewers. It exhibited a level of characterization and an amount of sex and "adult" language rarely seen within the genre.

Avon Books experimented with Bug Jack Barron, publishing it in two different formats. The first printing had a garish orange cover and the words "science fiction"

plastered all over it, along with blurbs from reviews from science fiction magazines. Later editions, while identical inside, had a mostly black cover with a nude on the front and back, the word "sex" appearing as often as possible in the copy, and a blurb quote from a mundane journal. That the book sold well in both its incarnations is a tribute to Spinrad's success in combining the appeals and requirements of both areas of literature.

Concurrent with the writing of Bug Jack Barron, Spinrad scripted an episode of Star Trek, "The Doomsday Machine." The characterization of Commodore Decker, a starship captain obsessed with destroying a monstrous machine that literally eats planets, was one of the strongest in the series, and brought "The Doomsday Machine" a Hugo nomination and acclaim as one of the best episodes of the series.

Certainly one of the most bizarre works in all of science fiction was Spinrad's novel, published in 1972, entitled The Iron Dream. The book was ostensibly a reprinting of Lord of the Swastika by Adolf Hitler, an obscure artist who, in the alternate universe in which the book was written, moved to America in 1919, and became a science fiction artist, fan, and writer. The book presents a world in which all of Nazi fantasy comes true. In an atmosphere of post-atomic mutation, genocide is considered justified, a group of storm troopers under the leadership of the Leader, Trueman Feric Jaggar, recapture the nation of Heldon, and purge it of genetic pollution and the influence of the evil Dominators of Zind, topping off the victory by sending spaceships full of clones of himself and other Truemen to conquer the stars. The novel is followed by an afterword by a professor from NYU, Homer Whipple, (who only coincidentally shares the name of the Charmin man) explaining the applicability of Lord of the Swastika to his world, in which World War II never occurred, and the Greater Soviet Union controls all of the world except the United States and Japan. In a hilarious sendup of literary criticism, Spinrad, in one persona, analyzes a novel written by himself in another guise, and finds it variously "awkward", "inconsistent", "pathological", "psychotic", and "crudely written".

The book was a tour de force for Spinrad. Taking a position and philosophy utterly distasteful to the world and himself, he manages to keep it up for the extent of an entire book, keeping it believable and exposing the psychological appeals and horrors inherent in both Nazism and the genre of Sword and Sorcery.

While it won no awards within the science fiction field (somehow Spinrad has failed to ever win a Hugo or Nebula), The Iron Dream received great acclaim outside the usual circles of fandom, becoming the first science fiction novel ever to be nominated for the National Book Award and win the prestigious French Prix Apollo for 1972.

Spinrad's other works of science fiction include two anthologies, many short pieces, and an episode of Land of the Lost.

The production of that show involved Spinrad in one of the weirdest webs of editorial interference ever spun. He told about it in a follow-up discussion to our interview:

> "I did one called "Tag Team", an early episode. It was the first one in which they had to have a lot of Pakus. David Gerrold, who was the story editor at the time, said, "Make up real Paku speech. Have them really saying things and make them make sense."
>
> I invented about fifty words of Paku and a syntax for Paku and everything. After the script was finished, and network continuity read it, David Gerrold called back and said, "I'm sorry to tell you that we're not going to use your Paku. They've hired an anthropologist to write new Paku."
>
> And I said, "Well, what the hell was wrong with my Paku? I spent a lot of time working on it, and it really does work. It's a real language."
>
> And David said, "Well, network continuity at NBC was very paranoid that what you were really saying was 'Fuck NBC'. So they hired someone else to make up a new language. They were really genuinely afraid that there was secret code being transmitted in monkey talk."

Spinrad's most recently published novel was Passing Through The Flame. A huge panoramic non-science-fiction novel about Hollywood, it concerns the staging of a rock festival for the purposes of shooting a feature film. The novel is dominated by the massive character of Jango Beck, an entrepreneur who manipulates people for his own gain. The business deal that Jango runs as the crux of the book in setting up the festival and film is so complicated that it appears that Spinrad must have plotted the novel using a gigantic multidimensional flowchart diagramming who is shafting whom, which section of what company is sending money to itself, and how much Jango profits in the long run. The climax of the book in which the remnants of the Sixties' "revolutionaries" attempt to take over the festival is stunningly conceived and comes off with amazing power.

What Spinrad is going to come up with next is anybody's guess, but what is certain is that it will be audacious, controversial, and utterly unexpected.

BOOKS BY NORMAN SPINRAD

The Solarians (1966) Belmont/Tower (novel)
Agent of Chaos (1967) Belmont/Tower (novel)
The Men in the Jungle (1967) Doubleday Avon (novel)
Bug Jack Barron (1969) Walker, Avon (novel)
The Iron Dream (1972) Avon (novel)
Passing Through the Flame (1975) Berkeley/Putnam (novel)
Modern Science Fiction (1974) Anchor Books/Doubleday (editor)
The New Tomorrows (1971) Belmont/Tower (editor)

The Last Hurrah of the Golden Horde (1970) Avon (collection of short stories)
No Direction Home (1975) Pocket Books (collection of short stories)
Fragments of America (1970) Now Library Press (essays)

INTERVIEW

CONTACT:SF--Many Science Fiction writers have been talking recently about the "SF ghetto," and the difficulties of breaking into or out of classification as an SF writer. Have you had any experience with this problem?

SPINRAD--Well, yeah. I have written, since my last science fiction novel, which is The Iron Dream, two mainstream novels, one of which is Passing Through the Flame, done by Berkeley and Putnam, and which is about the rock industry, the revolution, big time dope smuggling, filmmaking, and eighty-seven other different things, a quarter of a million words long, as long as Dune. And now I'm finishing up another mainstream novel, or semi-science-fiction novel, or something, which I hope will not be published as a science fiction novel, which is about synthetic religion. I'm making up my own, which is better than any of the others. And that's going to be called The Mind Game, probably. So I have had experience with two books, and I don't find it that hard to break out of the ghetto in the sense of getting non-science-fiction published. I've always done some mainstream, I've done a lot of reportage, interviews, science writing, film reviewing, all kinds of things, screenwriting, so I've had not much trouble getting to write mainstream stuff. What I found, after having had one done already, is that there is as big a gap there between having mainstream books just done, and getting yourself on best-seller lists or prominent reviews in the New York Times. It's a whole new ballgame. And you can get into that game from science fiction, but that doesn't mean that you start off from the same place that you are in the science fiction field. So it's a process of breaking into a new field, not necessarily at the top of it, but it can be done, and other people have done it, too.

CONTACT:SF--Do you feel that you've had an extra problem breaking into the mainstream, with the bookstores categorizing you as a science fiction writer, without having read your other stuff?

SPINRAD--Strangely speaking, I don't think so. Bug Jack Barron, for instance, was first done as a science fiction novel when it was published by Avon. Later, they did it as a straight novel, with a different package. And what I found out when the second edition came out was it seemed to be with all the other straight novels; it was not stuck in science fiction. In fact, I had the best of both worlds. In science fiction book stores, or stores with prominent science fiction departments, it was with the science fiction, but in general stores, it was right there with the other novels, so I was getting it both ways. Bizarrely. And in the second book, my editor on that was George Ernsberger, who had been my editor on several science-fiction novels, and George was a guy who understood all these publishing problems very well, and it was even initially his idea that I do a book like that.

CONTACT:SF--How did you first become interested in science fiction, and how did you first break into writing?

SPINRAD--Well, when I was about eleven years old, I had the pleasure of having one of these wonderful, long, prolonged winter colds, which enable you to stay home and act like a baby, and get goodies in bed for a week or so and not have to go to school. And somebody gave my mother a great big shitload of old science fiction magazines, and that was my first contact with science fiction, and I stayed home from school and read all the stuff and I liked it, and from there on in I was sort of reading it.

CONTACT:SF--Did you get into organized fandom at all?

SPINRAD--Never. I didn't know organized fandom existed until after I had published The Solarians, and gone to a Milford Science Fiction Writer's Conference. And then someone told me about such a thing as a Science Fiction Convention, and I went to one in Cleveland, and that was my first contact with it. I didn't know it existed.

CONTACT:SF--Your first science fiction writing, was that "The Last of the Romany"?

SPINRAD--That was my first story. It was rewritten from an original story which was written when I was sixteen. After I got out of college, I decided I was going to write, and I wrote ten stories in the

space of a few months. That was the first one that sold, but to tell you the truth, I don't know if that was the first one I wrote or not. It was based on a very early idea.

CONTACT:SF--I suppose this question is asked to every writer by every fan, but I'll ask it anyway. Where do you get your ideas?

SPINRAD--Well, I know that's the question everybody hates to answer, and it's a really unanswerable question. The ideas come to you. For me, I do a lot of other things besides Science Fiction. As I said, I've been a film critic, I write on science, I write on politics, I've written columns in underground newspapers, all sorts of things, so you can see I'm interested in a wide range of subjects, and things from all these areas come together in my head, and I get an idea and I write it. I don't go out looking for ideas.

CONTACT:SF--Did anything in particular inspire The Iron Dream?

SPINRAD--The Iron Dream was inspired in England. Michael Moorcock as we all know is the foremost, and certainly most prolific and intelligent, current writer of Sword and Sorcery. To me Sword and Sorcery always seemed like pathological stuff, you know, dealing with a weird kind of repressed sexual psychosis, the same kind of thing that produces the militaristic type attitude or Nazism. And when Mike explained to me how he wrote Sword and Sorcery, he said that what he does is to take a mythic cycle existing already, the Arthur legends or Gilgamesh or whatever, and run it through a lot of Freudian imagery, making it as kind of subliminally perverted as possible, and that is the secret of successful Sword and Sorcery. So it came to me at that point that it was the same kind of pathological media trip almost, image trip, that produced Nazism, and that Nazism was, basically, most fully and deeply understood not in terms of politics and economics of which it made no sense, but in terms of a media trip, that Hitler came to power by manipulating Jungian archetypes and existing psychosexual structures in peoples' minds, and that it was the same kind of total mentality that Nazism appealed to, that Sword and Sorcery appealed to, in a different form. And that was also what was so wrong and bad about a certain kind of Science Fiction.

And it also occurred to me that Hitler, who before he became Führer kicked around as an indigent painter, had he given up politics and come to the States, he could have easily gotten into Science Fiction illustrating, because that was about the level of his competence as a painter, and gone from there to writing. So the whole thing as a book was on many levels as an idea, some of which I don't even understand. And it's been pointed out to me by French critics in particular, and it makes sense when they talk about it. But, first of all, it was a piss-take on a certain kind of science fiction novel. Secondly, it was an attempt to try to really explain Nazism in a way that made some kind of sense, at least to me. And it has also been used in France as part of a very involved new theory, which has just been published. The Anti-Oedipus Theory, which again, is a kind of different view of dialectic of history and of psychohistory, based not on Freudian Oedipal complexes or that sort of thing or on Marxist materialism, but on what they call "the investment of desire," in other words, that people have been manipulated by images, by things that focus libidinal energy into a place, let's say, that a dictator desires. And that's the basic idea of The Iron Dream.

CONTACT:SF--You mentioned that Sword and Sorcery is based in some ways, on other myths. Did you have any specific myths in mind in The Iron Dream?

SPINRAD--The Iron Dream was The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich, all the way straight through. That's the whole idea. Also in terms of style, it starts out as real Wagnerian Space Opera, which is the origins of Nazism, and as The Iron Dream progresses, it gets more into this kind of sterile, insane, scientific rationalism, raised to a point of complete craziness, which is what happened in the history of the Third Reich. It went from all that Nuremberg rallies and pageantry, and all the Wagnerian trappings, to concentration camps and super-weapons, lots of super-weapons towards the end and a kind of robotic schizoid sterileness.

CONTACT:SF--It struck me that there might have been a bit of the Arthurian legend thrown in. The Steel Commander reminds me of The Sword in the Stone.

SPINRAD--Well, you see the basic idea of Sword and Sorcery and also of its relation to Nazism is that these mythic elements occur in a lot of other myths. I was just reading a book that Dona here is very into that she got me to read called The Hero With a Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell, which traces these same mythic elements through cycles in all different sorts of cultures. So the Arthurian thing with Excalibur is mirrored in a lot of other things. It's a kind of basic Jungian archetype, and it's a kind of basic Jungian archetype that also applies to Nazism. The

"The essence of science fiction is the psychological interaction between consciousness and the environment."

. . . Norman Spinrad

Black Avengers are, of course, the Hell's Angels, and if you see the kind of gear that they wear, they dig the gear. I know Hell's Angels; they're not Nazis, they're not into the philosophy or any of that --they like the gear. And much of the power of Nazism was simply that. People didn't even know what it was all about. I was in Mexico in 1961, and there were guys driving around in cars full of swastikas, and all kinds of shit like that. But they weren't Nazis, they didn't have any idea of the theories of Nazism--they just liked the way it looked. The swastika itself is an archetypal symbol that keys into many cultures, and that's why Hitler chose it.

CONTACT:SF--You mentioned earlier that you'd done some screenwriting....

SPINRAD--I've done a couple Star Treks and a Land of the Lost, and a screenplay of Bug Jack Barron. That's about the extent of it.

CONTACT:SF--I've heard rumors about the movies of Bug Jack Barron and The Iron Dream. Can you fill us in on those?

SPINRAD--I have written a screenplay of Bug Jack Barron which has been under three different options, and they're currently trying to get financing to make the movie. A guy in Paris by the name of Alain Corneau had some crazy idea that he wanted to make a movie of The Iron Dream. We corresponded back and forth endlessly (My French is nonexistant and his English wasn't great) trying to figure out how this could possibly be done. His first film came out in France to great government censorship hassles, and so the project was put in limbo because of that, and because we couldn't figure out how the hell to do it. And I still can't figure it out. We thought of transposing him from a writer to a director, and that's probably how it would have been done, sort of Adolf Hitler as Cecil B. DeMille insted of Edwin P. Bradbury.

CONTACT:SF--Do you feel that writing for the screen is more or less difficult than writing ordinary prose?

SPINRAD--There are some people who are very good prose writers, and absolutely can't write screenplays. For somebody who can write it at all, I think it's easier. I find it easier. Once you understand it, that the way you write it is you see this movie running inside your head, and describe what you're seeing and hearing, and that you can't get inside characters. It's pointless to engage in flowery descriptions of anything, because that's just for the purpose of the set designer, building something from what you're describing. So you have to put it all in the dialogue and the action and the plot. I was writing a Star Trek while I was writing Bug Jack Barron (this was The Doomsday Machine) and I would work on the book in the morning till I got tired, and then work on the screenplay, and under these conditions, while really not working any slower on the book, I did that whole thing.

CONTACT:SF--Bug Jack Barron and The Iron Dream both strike me as very visual books, especially the TV work in Bug Jack Barron.

SPINRAD--I don't know about The Iron Dream, but Bug Jack Barron in particular, that's why I think it's a natural movie, and it eventually will get made when the financing comes together. Sooner or later it will probably get made, but there's no financing firmly in hand right now.

CONTACT:SF--What comes first when you plan your science-fiction writing: the plot and characters, of the world and technology involved?

SPINRAD--Neither. The idea, I guess, to me, the essence of science fiction is the psychological interaction between consciousness and the environment, so the initial thing that generates a story, I suppose, is that interface between consciousness and the environment, how an alternate technology of alternate worlds or whatever affects the consciousness of the people living in it. So the two things come together. I've never invented a world, and then made up a story for the purpose of walking characters through it. Nor have I taken a story that could really be Cowboys On Mars, or something, and invented technological trappings to make it science fiction.

CONTACT:SF--Your planet Sangre (in The Men In the Jungle) must be one of the most original cultures ever invented or written about.

SPINRAD--Well, at the time I was writing that, it didn't seem entirely that original. I mean, original in its extremes, but that was during the Vietnam War, which was what basically generated that book, and, to a lesser extent, what Che Guevara was attempting to do in Bolivia at the time. Bart Fraden, in that book, is a curious mixture of the cynical professional revolutionary working the other side, like

Guevara. And at some kind of level, there's a kind of identity there.

CONTACT:SF--That story started as a "Dangerous Vision", didn't it?

SPINRAD--Yeah, there was an initial half-hearted attempt to do a short story or novelette, but it didn't come out.

CONTACT:SF--When you're writing, do you feel that telling people your story in advance helps or hurts the writing of it?

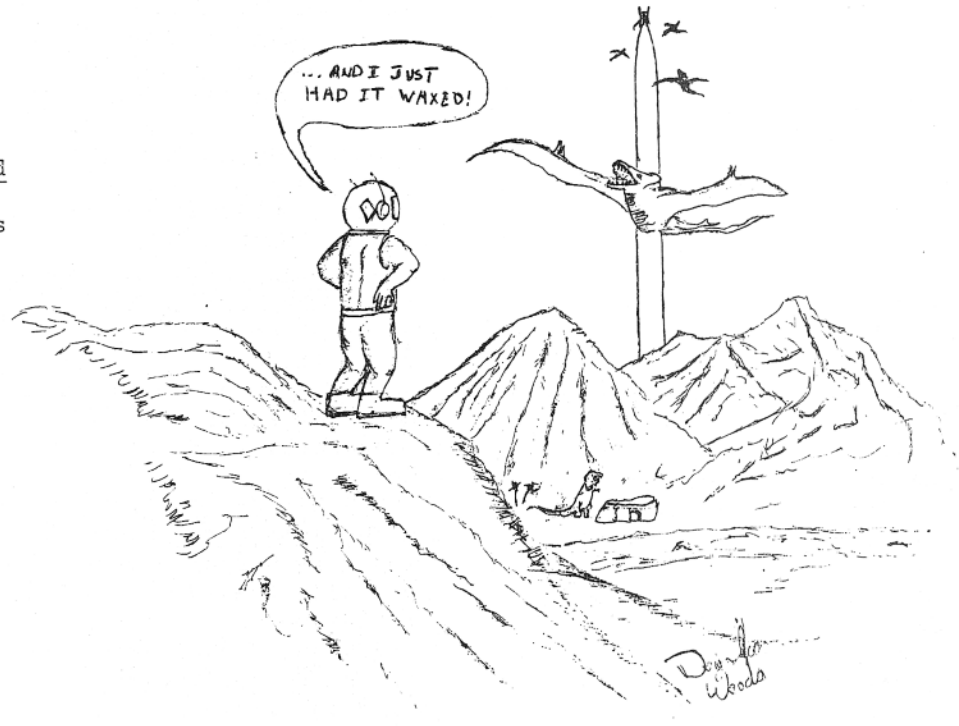
SPINRAD--I don't know; I don't think it affects it very much. I've never done much of that. When I say I've got a story, I've got an idea about such and such, but I'm not going to sit down and tell somebody a story. There have been writers, who I won't name who reputedly have engaged in this practice of telling their stories at parties in an inebriated or stoned state at great length, and never writing them. There is one person who has made this into high art, and that's George Clayton Johnson. George is a fantastic rapper, and can go on for hours if nobody shuts him up (and people seldom do) and will spin fantastic tales that will not get written, although they're not the kind of things that can be written. Indeed, they may not be the kind of things that should be written. I suppose somebody like that, who develops his ideas talking, it's fine, if he gets down and writes the final version of whatever he's talking about, but a lot of people just don't. I may tell a million stories to people for science-fiction novels which are absolutely too silly for me to write, that would actually make science-fiction novels, if I could find somebody else to write them, if I could be producer of the Goddamn things, but some things I would never, never write. Crazy stuff, if you want some ideas. Giant Green Bugs on Mars....

There was one hassle. It was a funny story, actually. One day, I got a story at Playboy for months and months and months. And I'm waiting for this sale. And a special delivery postman wakes me up at some God-awful hour in the middle of the night with a special delivery letter from my agent in New York. I said, "Oh God, I sold the story, great!" I open the letter and instead of it being a sale to Playboy, they're asking instantly for two outlines for ten cent science-fiction novels to be published for morons by Dell, and would I please send them two one-page story outlines by next morning. So, in a fit of pique, or whatever it was, I made up two ideas, one of which was called, because I always wanted to see a book with the title, Giant Green Bugs of Mars, so I made up an idiotic story to justify the existence of giant green bugs on Mars, so that I could have a thing with that title, never dreaming I would have to write it, just so I could send them something called Giant Green Bugs on Mars. The other one, I made up another that seemed to me equally crazed idea at the time, about a monster that eats planets, and it was called The Planet Eater, because I thought that was another great moron mentality title. Well, nothing ever happened with Giant Green Bugs of Mars and nothing ever happened with the series of idiot books, but The Planet Eater did become The Doomsday Machine through a series of transformations.

CONTACT:SF--What do you feel is the future of science-fiction in the movies?

SPINRAD--It depends on what the current rash of films do. Movies are very predictable. If these movies are successful and have good grosses, then they'll make another flood of science-fiction movies. If they flop, then they won't make any science-fiction movies for the next ten years.

I don't know from what I've seen so far. I've seen



Logan's Run which wasn't so hot, had nice effects, but the screenplay was dumb. The Man Who Fell To Earth was interesting. A Boy and His Dog was nice; it was a successful film and a good film. There's a whole bunch of others.

So far it seems kind of mixed. So it varies. I think it's joined the repertoire of filmmaking, because I think the kind of films that are being made now are either science fiction or costume epics or "enlightened womanhood," or something like that. There's a sort of limited range of films being made, and they're looking for films that have a popular attraction and the science fiction will probably be a lot better than a lot of the garbage they're doing. I can go on for a while on how rotten filmmaking is right now. Squirm, horror films, fun films, you know, you can do nice little films like that too. Squirm was a nice little film, strangely enough.

With the state of filmmaking being what it is, there are really very few areas they can go to show people something they haven't seen before, something exotic. They don't do costume epics very much anymore. The kind of social realism they're doing now is stupid and people are getting bored with it. So I think it's a great opportunity. I think if the films have a decent quality, I think they will catch on, and become a permanent major part of filmmaking. If they will stink, they won't. But so far, there are some good ones and some bad ones.

CONTACT:SF--Which other writers would you say have most influenced your work?

SPINRAD--Oh, I don't know. I guess Phil Dick, Ted Sturgeon, and Alfie Bester. And Norman Mailer and William Burroughs.

CONTACT:SF--I showed a couple of people The Iron Dream, and they were finding a bit of Nabokov in it.

SPINRAD--Well, it's that kind of construction as in Nabokov. In that way it's like Pale Fire. I guess science-fiction really didn't invent it. I mean it's a twisted-double-alternate-history thing too. I've done it with other things too.

CONTACT:SF--It seems there is a lot of use of drugs in your stories. How did you think up these strange drugs?

SPINRAD--Well, it's a funny thing, because we're just doing an article together called "The Future of Getting High," which we just concluded a draft of today. This is for Rush magazine, which is going to be a competitor to High Times, the magazine of doping and the dope society and things like that. I've had experience with drugs, and I've thought about drugs a lot, and I think that drugs are not necessarily central in themselves, but drugs raise very central questions about consciousness and the relationship of mind to society and the mind to the external environment which seems to me to be the basic subject matter of most good science fiction. Phil Dick has used drugs in histories a lot, and I think I've been influenced by the way he's used that to really get into altered mental states and stuff like that. I mean there have been lots of drug stories written in science fiction which are just some strange drug which does something and that's what it's all about. I don't think I've done much of that but the way I use drugs is to get the characters into outer and altered mental states and deal with those mental states. And I think that's a central part of science fiction and of modern society. It's certainly not without being based on some experience, but obviously there are many drugs in those stories which nobody has ever taken, and some, perhaps, which nobody ever will. Some of the drugs in the stories are rather vicious drugs, which is not exactly an endorsement of drug taking. Herogyne in Men In The Jungle is a foul drug. Some drugs are equivocal drugs, some drugs are positive drugs. I think "No Direction Home" goes into all sides of that in the space of one story, and I can see what a balanced picture of what these altered states of consciousness and the fact that there are so many possibilities will do to people and to society.

CONTACT:SF--Do you forsee a greater acceptance and legalization of drugs by our society?

SPINRAD--Yeah, well, it's already occurred to a great extent. About six or seven states have decriminalized marijuana. I think that's a trend that's going to continue. I think once New York and California have decriminalized marijuana, there's going to be such a big market for marijuana in states that it will be legal to possess it, there'll be tremendous political pressure from the tobacco companies to actually completely legalize it so that they can get a piece of the action. And I think you will see R. J. Reynolds Joints on the market within five years, perhaps, that kind of thing going on. I think there are other drugs, many other drugs, I've just gone into this in this article, are being developed. There might be a whole new, much wider range of drugs, the effects of which we won't precisely know. People will be able to take drugs to feel all different kinds of things. Some of these drugs will be prescription drugs; some of them may eventaully be released in a more libertarian cli-

mate for general use. I think it's inevitable that the legal position of drugs will change. Some drug laws, dealing with stuff like heroin, will probably always be illegal or controlled, at any rate, and should be; other drugs will not. I think our society will finally get it through its head that you can't say 'drugs are good' or 'drugs are bad'. There are a lot of different drugs, they do all sorts of different things: some of them can be very beneficial, some of them can be brutally horrible, and we'll have to make legal distinctions between what are positive drugs and what are drugs that are really insidious. If that isn't done, after all, we have a Pure Food and Drug Administration which we pay our taxes for in this country. It seems to me that if, in fact, people are going to take a lot of drugs, that there is no really competent, credible authority that they can listen to for consumer reports on what is dangerous and what is not, when the same people who are telling you that STP is horrible crap, which it is, are also telling you that marijuana will rot your brain, and cause hair to grow on the palms of your hands. Well, the people who have smoked marijuana and know it isn't that harmful are not going to believe what these same people say about STP, and will be in for a horrible surprise. So I think that responsible drug policy has to be for the government to make distinctions between the various drugs.

CONTACT:SF--You've made use extensively of Jewish characters, such as in "The Equalizer", Jacob Ben Ezra and in "Outward Bound," and the mention of the planet Yisroel in "The Men in the Jungle." Do you feel that being Jewish has influenced your writing at all?

SPINRAD--It's funny, I was asked that question on a radio station quite recently, and it floored me then, and it still floors me. I can go into the specifics of it.

In "Outward Bound," yeah, Jacob Ben Ezra and that whole thing was kind of exiled Jews running these interstellar spaceships, I had something semi-central to it about a kind of Jewish attitude, I suppose. That's the only one I could really think of that's like that. "The Equalizer" is not a Jewish story--it's an Arab-Israeli story, and it's really about the insane politics of that situation. Well, in fact, there's a character in there who is a European Jew, and then there's an Israeli who is an entirely different head, and, I guess, if anything, that shows the real difference between the different kinds of Jewish mentalities which I suppose certainly exist.

The mention of the planet Yisroel in The Men In The Jungle was just a throwaway. I mean, there were Italian planets, Polish planets, and, as I remember, South African refugee asteroids, which is what Fraden originally had conquered.

I really don't feel that influence. I suppose I've written around it tangentially once or twice, because it is one of those things that is tangential to me, but I don't see it in my other stuff. Except to the extent that, on a certain level, I write a lot about media, and in this country, there's no disputing the fact that there's a Jewish influence on the media. I write about Hollywood milieux, and there's no question that there's a kind of Jewish influence there. It's a second-hand California influence through Jewish involvement in show business, and the fact that news also becomes show business, I suppose. I've never dealt directly with that aspect of it, but if you write about media, and you're really being realistic, I guess you end up dealing with that. Or at least, that's the way people end up talking.

I think that part of it also is that I write about America a lot, and the future of America, and this is definitely a multicultural society. And what is lousy about so much science fiction, come to think of it, is that it assumes this Anglo-Saxon American identity that never really existed in reality anyway, and certainly will exist less and less in the future. So I'll have Jewish characters, Italian characters, Polish-American characters, Black characters interacting in the stories the way they do in real life. That's a form of realism, I think, which so much science fiction really lacks.

CONTACT:SF--What do you feel is the future of science fiction?

SPINRAD--I don't know what the long-range future of science fiction is. Short-range I guess, the future of science fiction is that the better

writers will be published less and less in the ghetto way. Already you see, for instance, there are a lot of mainstream novels that are published as mainstream novels by authors who aren't identified as science fiction writers, and they really are science fiction. Vonnegut's latest science fiction novel is just a Vonnegut novel. Arthur Clarke is sort of published that way. I expect when I do more science fiction, which I suppose I eventually will, that hopefully it will be published in a less circumscribed way. Some of Tom Disch's books are being done that way. In Europe it's really that way. So I think that the better writers will be published as themselves, which will mean probably that the stuff that gets packaged as science fiction will deteriorate in quality somewhat, because there will be more opportunity for the people at the top to reach a wider audience, if it's going to go in two directions like that. In a funny kind of way, though, the Old/New Wave controversy of the sixties will probably be settled in a way satisfactory to both sides. The people who write more strange, difficult, different stuff will not quite be published as genre science fiction, and the fans will have what they had in the fifties, if that's what they want. They will have the pure hard stuff and they won't be fooled by packaging.

CONTACT:SF--Do you picture the current explosion of prozines to be helpful or harmful?

SPINRAD--Well, I don't know if there's an explosion of prozines.

CONTACT:SF--I've noticed five new ones recently: Odyssey, Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine--

SPINRAD--Who is Odyssey?

CONTACT:SF--Odyssey is Roger Elwood.

SPINRAD--I don't count him.

CONTACT:SF--And there's SF Digest from Britain, Galileo, and an absolute turkey named Nomad.

SPINRAD--My distinction between fanzines and prozines, by the way, for the purposes of this discussion, is that a prozine is a magazine that has newsstand distribution, as opposed to just a subscription deal. So I think there have been three or four new ones started. Odyssey has never really gotten off the ground, but there also have been some that have died. If... Amazing and Fantastic are quasi-fanzines, Galaxy is wobbly.

"The stuff that gets packaged as science fiction will deteriorate in quality somewhat."

Norman Spinrad

So, I don't think there's tremendous explosion in prozines.

I think the more magazines the better, if they all have the circulation to stay in business. It certainly can't hurt to have markets for short stories and places where newer writers can break into print more easily. But that's not the case, now. The new arrivals are having trouble finding places to break into print. The more the merrier there.

As long as you mentioned the subject, the phenomenon of Roger Elwood has really screwed this stuff up, because what has happened is that Elwood did these sixty original anthologies, on themes. Actually, it killed the market for other original collections. Actually, you had one man controlling half the short-story market in ways that were not good for the field. You know, "Write me a Baptist science fiction story," "Write me a science fiction story about chickens," "This is a theme anthology about Moslem science fiction." That didn't teach anybody anything that they should have learned, and it taught them a lot of things they shouldn't have learned, and it created a mess for a while. Now that is receding, and you may see some more successful prozines. I think there is room for them. I think there is room for a big, slick, science fiction magazine to reach a general audience, if it's done right. Vertex, which was another science fiction magazine which did die, tried to do that, but didn't quite have it together, though they had the right idea.

CONTACT:SF--All of these new ones, except for Isaac Asimov's are 8½ by 11 slicks.

SPINRAD--That's the way to do it, because you can't get newsstand space for the other stuff.

I don't think it's bad. I think there should be more magazines, more good magazines, more magazines that sell as well as Analog and have that kind of editorial quality or even better. I think Analog is the best magazine in the field, but there's some room for improvement even in Analog.

CONTACT:SF--Do you feel that the science fiction field, or your work in particular, has been affected by censorship?

SPINRAD--Yeah, I think there's been a whole history of censorship in the science fiction field, and its a very complicated history, all of which is in my book Modern Science Fiction, the complete definitive, illustrated history of the field, with 21 stories and 12,000 words of comment. That's the plug.

"There was a certain kind of implicit values in the science fiction that was being written until the early sixties."

. . . Norman Spinrad

Now what was I saying?

There has been a long history of censorship in the field, that was what the New Wave phenomenon was all about. It was a peculiar kind of censorship. There was a certain implicit kind of values in the science fiction that was being written up until the early sixties, which people didn't even recognize as being an ideology, but was. Logical Positivism, belief in the perfectability of Man through Science, a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant future, 1930s sexual attitudes, a whole range of things like that: taboos against writing about sex, unstated taboos against using certain kinds of language. Also, you would never find a Marxist viewpoint, a whole range of things, which were unstated assumptions. Nobody ever examined them until the sixties people started writing things that broke some of the rules, at which point the people who had come into the field under these conditions reacted very negatively against these taboos being broken.

Also, most science fiction has always been considered as juvenile literature by publishers. Almost all hardcover science fiction was, because most of the librarians put it in the young adult section, so they have to satisfy what they imagine are the criteria that librarians apply to what young should be reading, which is a pretty involved set of restrictions. And what operated was that, paradoxically, not the best science fiction novels were published in hardcover, but simply those that fit the formula best. So much of the best stuff was done as paperback originals, which also was thought of as a kind of semi-juvenile audience.

That changed in the sixties, with the New Wave here, and what happened in England, a difference of kind of sophistication on the part of the publishers, and then for a long time you could write anything you wanted, in any way you wanted, in the science fiction field. In the last few years, it's been tightening up again because of the general political climate of the country, which has always affected these things, and also because, again, they are still tending to view science fiction as a juvenile literature in certain ways. So, now, in order to have more total freedom, some people are trying to get their books out of the category... And out of this modern set of limitations which evolved out of considering it a juvenile literature.

It has always been very hard for writers to grow up and mature in the science fiction field. I can think of a great many writers, and I don't think I have to mention names, who around the age of 30 or 35, either burnt out and went into horrible writing blocks, left the field and did something else, or kind of ossified at a certain stage in their career because there was no place else to go, because of these restrictions. Now, there are more and more places to go, and you're not going to see that.

CONTACT:SF--Do you think the current rate of gafiation, as from Silverberg, Malzberg, and Ellison, is in a sense due to this?

SPINRAD--I think there are different reasons. Bob Silverberg, I think, from everything he said, has really stopped writing science fiction, because he hasn't gotten the attention he deserved from science fiction audiences either, because publishers were telling him they wanted the old stuff he was writing in the fifties, not the stuff which was closer to his heart which he was writing in the sixties. Since Bob really doesn't need money, he sees no point at this point in writing a situation like that. He doesn't want to write the stuff that the publishers want, and, to some extent, maybe they don't want the kind of stuff that he wants to write, and they're not keeping the books in print that he feels deserve to be kept in print. So he's stopped for that reason.

Harlan is trying to move his work out into other areas, to have his work published in a more general way.

Barry Malzberg is always threatening to leave everything. Barry's a really intelligent guy, a sensitive guy, who at first didn't even write science fiction under his own name, and tried to make it as a mainstream writer at the same time with equivocal success, but he saw that his science fiction was really becoming successful, got into it more, concentrated on it more, and then found out that life as a science fiction writer was not villas on the Riviera, critical acclaim, and for his kind of stuff there was not even a tremendous amount of fannish acclaim, only a kind of hatred, which became perhaps deservedly mutual. He still continues to write science fiction as far as I know, and it still is good, and it still wins awards, and he has

really not been unsuccessful as a science fiction writer, but he's looking for wider horizons, and I hope he finds them.

When you've written science fiction for a while, you reach a certain point where either you have need to grow, and you can either try to grow within the field, or try to expand to other areas. But, it's very hard for a really first-rate intellect to remain writing science fiction completely under the current publishing conditions and the current way that such work is viewed and still develop. Again, there are a few people who have. Phil Dick is a conspicuous example. I don't have any complaints myself in that regard yet, except that I am doing other things. I may return to things that are closer to science fiction in the future, but whether they'll be published as science fiction or not is another story. Ideally, you can do what Vonnegut has done, and write whatever it is you want to write, and it's published as a novel, and you do not have to consider the fact whether this is or is not science fiction, whatever that is or isn't.

I think science fiction is influencing the rest of literature, perhaps to a greater degree than the rest of literature is influencing what is being written as science fiction, though I think there is a greater and greater degree of overlap on the higher levels of both fields. And I think that's why people are leaving.

CONTACT:SF--Thank you, Mr. Spinrad.

SET PIECE

by Laurence M. Janifer

So he shakes my hand, and he asks me to cobble together some sort of biographical note about my career, such as it is, in literature (such as that is, and you wouldn't want to know any more than you do), and all this is taking place in the midst of a Convention, which is (if you're not one of the movers and shakers, or getting yourself ripped off one way or another) an Era of Good Feelings for one and all; lovely timing, and what could I say except Yes?

And now my small Yes has come round to bite me in the neck, because I have been handed a great deal of room, and my career, offhand, is not going to come close to filling it. I have written as much as four short-shorts inside the total wordage I have been handed, and my career in literature isn't all that extensive. It goes like this:

I began to write stories when I was 5. When I got to be 13 I discovered sf, to my mother's horror, and started writing sf, and submitting it. I didn't really begin submissions until I was 15, and the proximate cause was Ted Sturgeon, whom I had met via fan letter, who saw nothing obviously suicidal in the idea, and who encouraged me greatly by pointing out all the stuff in my stories that was awful.

("To my mother's horror..." -- well, all this was back in the Late Plieostocene, and sf was low-class literature, not fit for growing boys to associate with. We had a lot of books bound in limp leather, if that gives you the idea.)

I got an agent right away. Legally, I guess I was a client of the Dirk Wylie Agency, but all I ever knew or cared was that I brought my stuff in to Larry T. Shaw, who may just be the best of even the very good editors I've ever worked with -- some while later. Just then, somewhere around 1949 or 1950, Larry was comparing my stuff to Faulkner (this irritated me, because I hated Faulkner, and it keeps happening: every time somebody picks a Large Name to hook my stuff to, he picks one I can't stand) and staying enthusiastic even when none of it sold. None of it ever did sell, not then.

So, in 1953, I went to work. For Scott Meredith. He is still the best businessman I know, and if you want to find out what agenting is about go and work five years at SMLA, which is more or less what I did.

Dirk Wylie folded, for lots of good reasons, and I became an SMLA client, and I started to sell. Not sf. An editor wanted some true-war stories set in Korea, and the people who could honestly tell them were very busy just then, and far away, fighting. Me, I was undraftable. I think, if I could revise my life, that I'd manage to get myself drafted -- but that wasn't what I thought then. So I became Corporal Someone and pulled a true-sounding story out of the machine, and got a $90 check and had it photocopied and maybe the photocopy is still around someplace. (The kind of lifestyle I have, almost anything is probably still around someplace.) In rapid succession I became a small squad of people, never hoisting myself into officer class but once, and then a 2nd Lieutenant. After several of these constructions had appeared, I got a few nasty letters: in one of the things, it seemed, I'd arranged matters according to

the capabilities of Civil War cannon (with which, as a hobbyist, I was familiar). The world had changed, and 2nd Lieutenant Someone -- I think that was the officer-class story -- wouldn't have survived, under the conditions he described in his true-war story, if the battle had taken place much later than about 1890.

So I found out about research, and quickly started writing something else. Mysteries, small-time horror stuff full of things that dripped or stank, Westerns, confessions, romances, and all the rest. I think Evelyn Smith and I are the only sf writers whose background includes a short tour of duty in the world of professional puzzle-constructors. I got $5 per crossword, a bit more for trickier items.

I even did some editing, sub rosa -- accumulating more names and disguises as I went. I loved it. I handled a pretty bad sf magazine that lasted four issues, and sold it two very old stories of mine, and one revised by me from someone else's sad first draft. I didn't really improve it the Hell of a lot.

The magazine died, as it should have. I discovered with the second old-story sale that you don't sell stuff you know is bad, not ever, not to anybody, because its appearance is truly horrible, embarassment raised to some Godawful power.

And all this time I'd been reading sf, and talking to sf people, and sending them my stories and getting back pages and pages of absolutely incredible detail in return, critical work that took years for me to understand and assimilate at all. I'm still finding more in the comments on dead or dying stories. Writers are generous people.

But I wasn't writing sf: it scared me. It felt as if you had to know too much, or be too much.

So Randall Garrett moved in with me and twisted my arm and took me to meet John Campbell and I wrote a tragic, pastel-colored, subtle novelette called HEX. Campbell wanted a rewrite, and Randall, thank God, kicked me until I did it.

After that, Campbell wanted another rewrite. (All told, eight: my record, tied but not beaten by a very short funny piece for GALAXY, much later.) At the end of it all I was beginning to feel like an sf writer. Randall, who had dragged me through this stuff with a fine disregard for his own prosperity, or, if it comes to that, sanity, was very tattered. John finally bought a short novelette called HEX, which was a screaming farce.

(People don't seem to mention that about John: the incredible patience. Only Larry Shaw has ever come close to having such a great stock of the stuff -- for me, anyhow. Then, John saw the screaming farce in the first submitted draft. He led me through as many rewrites as I needed, until I could see it, too. And he pushed me, argued with me, provided teaching and specific pointers -- and never quit. Because he didn't, I couldn't.)

So I wrote a lot more sf, and Randall and I became Mark Phillips for three books, and wrote one more, non-series, under our own names, and I wrote three of a planned four with S. J. Treibich (and there were problems, and Steve died, and ...), and then I wrote.

And that's really about it. Less than half the space filled, and the whole career is over. I have this Conventional tendency to say Yes, and see where it gets me?

Just now, I'm finishing a long and complex job, and there's a collaboration I'm involved in -- both so far overdue that I feel as if I'd started writing them before I was born. Agents and publishers are patient people, but not all that patient, and I am trying very hard to work, as the vaudeville comic says, like a mice, so fast you could hardly see from him.

The trouble is -- well, all right, <u>part</u> of the trouble is that I keep saying Yes -- the real trouble is that a new love has entered my life. His name is Gerald Knave, and I hope to God you've read about him, because I think he must be nearly as much fun to read about as he is to write about.

No kidding: Knave is enormous fun -- and how much of a rarity that is, you can hardly begin to imagine.

Most writing is necessary, for the writer, and satisfies some urgent, and constantly renewed, need. Most writing, or anyhow most of mine, is like that, and it is an unguided tour of Hell every damned day: writing is not a calling I'd wish on anybody I know.

But Knave, now --

Well, he didn't start as a Big Thing. A man by the name of Elwood asked me to write a novel for a new paperback series, Laser Books, so I did. (I have this habit of saying Yes, remember?) It was awful, and it came bouncing right back at me. So I did a rewrite, which was even more awful.

Months went by, while I chipped away at other blocks of stone, and this Elwood guy called up with insane hurry and rush in his voice. He needed a fast suspense-sf novel, with only a few characters, and maybe I could fish one bit of plot-line out of my rejects and do the job?

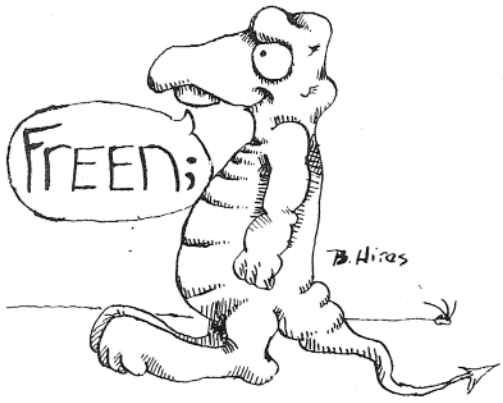
I said Yes, that once, on

solid ground: the assignment he was handing me was a sort of basic professional job: if you can't do one that simple you ought to find another way of life. So I took a very deep breath and reread the rejects. They were worse than I remembered. But if I tossed out all the complex machinery, and held on to this one plot-switch, and found some real people in my head --

About halfway through, I realized what I had. I wrote that novel, portion-and-outline of a second, and eight short stories, in six weeks. Not a record; close. Gerald Knave had taken over.

He's a vaguely Saint-like character (the books, not the TV shows), but not a copy. He gets bored easily, and will take on anything that looks interesting; usually, he will make a profit out of the deal. He is fond of con games, and likes running them backward, for the benefit of Gerald Knave and the supposed sucker. He lives in a universe full of inhabited planets and a space-four drive which is not instantaneous but will do: travel time varies from half a day to four weeks or so. He keeps himself in much better condition than I do, but he shares my fondness for odd-job housework: he likes polishing silver, for instance, and does his own dusting. (He does own a Totum -- apparently derived from Factotum -- and two Robbies slaved to it, but uses them for housework only when necessary, or when he's getting bored and depressed.)

He grinds his own coffee, from beans selected just about one at a time -- as I do. He owns a small library of teas, and is partial to Gunpowder, a Chinese green tea -- just like me. He drinks more than I do, but nearly everyone does, and he seldom arrives at the sozzled state. He orders brandy, Earth 2045, in restaurants, and the order



gets him some respectful stares.

I disagree violently with him about politics (he thinks that all politics is crooked, and not worth discussing) and about romance, or sex, or his taste in women, whatever it ought to be called: he likes the Audrey Hepburn or Leslie Caron type, and his favorite word for a lovely is "elfin". I deplore this sort of thing, but I'm stuck with it. He may change his mind, as we go on.

I don't seem to have invented him. He popped up and took charge, and that was that. He's a series character now, because there does seem to be an endless supply of Knave stories, and I like writing them because I love finding out what's going to happen next. The universe he lives in keeps having new details added as Knave remembers to mention them; he tells me about the place. I don't tell him.

I finished that first book with the clear idea that I had a lot of fun on my hands. This Elwood type was going to love it.

He hated it. He tried editing it (and I have his edited copy, which is about the worse thing ever done to a manuscript since Gutenberg) and gave up in despair: it was just too awful.

Well ... was I crazy? My agent (not Scott, not for a long time: Virginia Kidd, a remarkable lady) said the book was a beaut. A friend whose taste I have some faith in loved the book, in large letters and eight-color printing. And Ms. Kidd sent an unedited copy off to Ace, where it got bought with great speed. The title is SURVIVOR, and the book was published in August, 1977.

SURVIVOR because that's his trade -- that's how his business cards read, if he remembers to have them made up. Gerald Knave: Survivor. He claims that, theology aside, it is the only important trade. A variety of governments use him for planet-testing -- after you've found out all that the machines can tell you, drop Knave, wait a year, and come back; if he's still alive, he has answers for most of your basic settlers' problems -- and he spends his spare time involving himself in almost anything. Once, I remember, he worked out a new way to smuggle weapons-grade uranium across a planet, with the aid of symphony orchestra. SURVIVOR involves a human settlement on a planet, an alien race that takes over minds, some good pointers on how to approach a house on fire, inhabited by someone who wants to shoot you, and a good deal more.

A computer magazine (ROM, now deceased) bought two stories and was buying a third when it shrivelled up and died. The first involved a war being fought against absolute pacifists: all right, how do you win one you can't fight? The second is a new look at the story of the Wheelbarrow Thief, and if you don't know that one I won't spoil it for you. The third involves Knave so deeply with a computer that it is fairly hard to describe, quickly, in anything like English.

Ace -- while all this was going on -- bought that second novel and I finished it. It's called KNAVE IN HAND,

it appears in November, 1978, and I advise everybody to go and take a look, because the Tocks are the damnedest alien race you have ever met (they're not quite snakes and not quite carapaced centipedes, and their social system is described by Knave, with perfect accuracy, as "absolute monarchy tempered by chaos"), and the problem they need some help with is the theft of the Crown Jewels -- except that it isn't a crown, and they aren't jewels (they're luminous fish, one per sphere, each in a self-contained ecosystem good for perhaps 150 years), and the things can't be fenced anywhere, or even kept privately for long -- word would leak out And Tocks don't steal: period.

In other words: Who would steal an immensely valuable item that nobody wants?

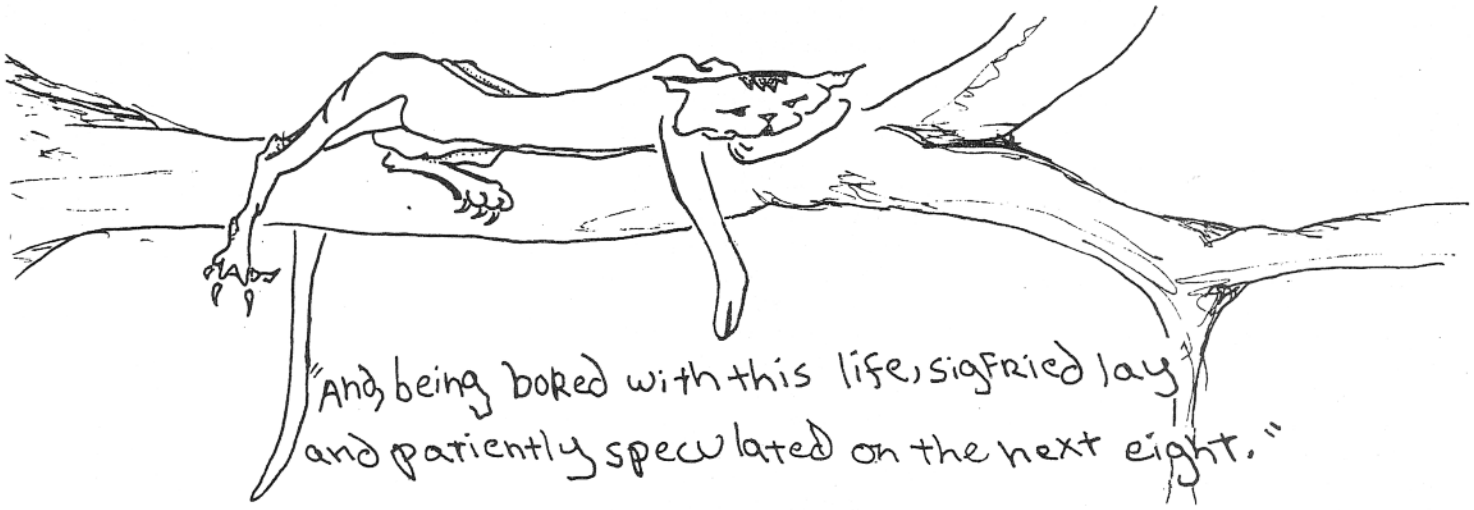
Not to mention How, and Why, and -- so on. The book involves a tour of a Tock City (called, for human beings, London: why not?), which fascinates me still, and you get to meet Nassanank and Jessiss, the King and Queen, who are worth the price of admission. Several people are blown up by handmade bombs, and there is a certain amount of rough-and-tumble. The Tocks appear in a new short story, too, and will probably appear again, until I either figure them out or, along with Knave, give up trying. Nassanank and Jessiss are close friends of his, but he's decided that he will never understand them. Me, I'll try and give it a few more stories, if Knave knows any more: at the moment, the one he wants to tell me involves Cinderella, an awesome computer, and a Fairy Godfrog, and I may not be ready for it.

The third Knave novel -- KNAVE AND THE GAME -- is only a portion-and-outline just now, and is out to market. That one involves Knave's restructuring the entire ecology of a planet, without changing its essential character (in Knave's words: "Take a six-foot man. Reduce him to two feet, changing nothing, and leaving out nothing, of any importance." It doesn't sound quite possible) -- and I'd like to get to work on finishing it -- as soon as these Overdues are out of my head -- just to see how in Hell he's going to manage it. Also out to market is a sheaf of short adventures connected by a single narrative thread; call it a novel or a collection, as it suits you. The obvious title: SURVIVAL KIT.

Knave has become as close a friend as I own. I have no idea where he came from: we share the same hobbies and interests, most of the time, but the differences -- as in his love life, or his entire disregard for politics or political history --are sizable. He's not my Ideal Janifer (the way Tarzan may have been an Ideal E. R. Burroughs): my Ideal Janifer is somewhere between John Adams and Lazarus Long. He dropped into the middle of a dull book, and seems to be here to stay.

The fact that I'm the guy writing down Knave's stories fascinates me, because cheery action-adventure is not exactly my usual stock in trade. The action in the Mark Phillips books was mostly put there by Randall (and I had little to do with the action in the books I did with Steve Treibich); even on my own I seem to need help a lot: one of my novels involved a war, and I had to get a friend to plot it out for me. But Knave's adventures come out whirling, just full of fight and laughter. I check as I go for sentence balance, typos, consistency both of tone and fact (he is distinctly <u>not</u> above stretching the facts to make things more interesting), and hang on around the curves. It is all a great deal of fun.

How it is with other writers I don't know. But with



me, every once in a while somebody drops into my head and I have no more say in the matter. Jo did that, in YOU SANE MEN (reprinted, I'm afraid, as BLOODWORLD); a few short-story people have done it; Isidor Norin, his family and about half the cast of POWER (Dell 1976) did the same. It seems to me that the work this happens to is dependably better than the work I have to do all by myself.

(A lot of those Overdues dropped into my head, too. They're going to be good jobs, I'm reasonably sure, and maybe better than good; but they are complicated, and so am I, and they take the Hell of a while.)

I think that, if you absolutely have to be a writer, these people are the biggest reward you get out of the whole bloody thing. I am still depressed about having to be a writer -- I've tried to quit, and it's a lot harder than anything else I've ever tried to do -- but all my friends, over the years -- and now, especially, Knave, who seems to be settling down to stay for a while -- do help out.

For one thing -- well, see for yourself. All I have to do is tap him on the shoulder and he solves my little problems.

He's finished this piece for me, hasn't he? And just about inside the set length?

FUTURE CONTACTS

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THE ISLANDS OF DR. MOREAU

by Jim Beckerman

Following the modest success of A.I.P.'s version of The Food of the Gods (a bastardization if ever there was one--a paternity suit would be in order) American International went to work on another novel of H. G. Wells, The Island of Dr. Moreau. The picture, I understand, died a quiet death last summer, so any review will be more in the nature of an epitaph. However, it is worth noting that A.I.P.'s Moreau is merely the last and least film version of Wells' novel, which has had quite a cozy career in the movies since its publication in 1896.

The original book--one must now specify, as A.I.P. has seen fit to issue one of those abominable "novelizations" of its film--is an admirably restrained treatment of a touchy subject: vivisection. In the novel, Prendick, a shipwrecked naturalist, finds himself stranded on a remote Pacific island, uninhabited save for an enigmatic scientist named Moreau and a race of bizarre, deformed natives who prowl about mostly at night. Prendick soon learns that the scientific work Moreau is engaged in involves the vivisection and grafting of animal tissue to form quasi-humans from the flesh of beasts. The natives are some of his less successful experiments, and Moreau has taken pains to force a spurious form of government upon them, including a ritual "Law" that they are all made to repeat:

"Not to go on all-fours, that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

"Not to eat Flesh or Fish, that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

With Moreau's death the order of the society crumbles, and the beastmen slowly revert to their animal origins as Prendick escapes.

The Island of Dr. Moreau came to the screen as early as 1913, although the production company, Eclipse, retitled it Island of Terror to avoid paying royalties. In this adaptation, the visitor of the island is George Ramsey, a shipwrecked editor. Dr. Moreau now called Dr. Wagner, performs his experiments on black victims and looks upon George as an admirable opportunity to extend his malpractice. The laboratory catches fire, and George manages to escape while the doctor perishes in the blaze. Bits of Moreau were also floating around in a Lon Chaney film of 1922, A Blind Bargain (also known as The Octave of Claudius, and adapted from Barry Pain's stageplay of that name) in which the destitute Chaney offers his services to Dr. Lamb, a Moreau-like vivisectionist, in return for an operation on his sick mother. Chaney played both the doctor and the doctor's victim, a decidedly unpleasant ape-man.

In 1933, the crest of the '30s horror wave, Wells' novel was given prestige treatment by Paramount, where it was retitled The Island of Lost Souls. Charles Laughton played Moreau, Richard Arlen, the island visitor (renamed Parker for the film) and Bela Lugosi was the leader of the beast-men. A public furor over vivisection in Britain resulted in the film being banned abroad, and Wells renounced it as a vulgarization of his book. Certainly The Island of Lost Souls was not subtle, but it was solid, and despite some dating it still remains tense and intriguing. Erle C. Kenton's direction is not exactly what one might call resourceful, but it showed some

imagination, particularly in the use of Catalina locations --the film employs actual settings instead of the usual soundstage--which appear oddly menacing. Charles Laughton's Nietzschean doctor was one of his first movie roles, and it won him a good amount of critical acclaim. (His Doctor Moreau is supposed to have been the first to utter the immortal line, "The natives are restless tonight.") It was the start of a long career of sadomasochistic characterizations, and a great deal of the whip-cracking Moreau went with Laughton to the quarterdeck two years later in his most famous film, Mutiny on the Bounty. His performance in The Island of Lost Souls is splendidly theatrical, and it remains among the actor's best work.

Waldemar Young and Philip Wylie, the scenarists, took some liberties with the original story. Not only is Parker given a fiancee (Leila Hyams), but a panther-woman, Lota (Kathleen Burke, winner of--I kid you not--the Panther Women of America contest) has been invented so that Moreau can try some mating experiments on his guest. Wells' original ending was also junked. In the novel, Prendick remains on the island after Moreau's death, watching with fascinated horror as the manimals revert back to type. (This gives Wells a chance for some Swiftian satire, as the creatures degenerate into horrible caricatures of human beings.) The movie replaces this clever but relatively tame ending with a tour de force. Moreau has ordered his creatures to commit murder, but in doing so he has broken his own code--"Not to spill blood, that is the Law. Are we not Men?" The revolting creatures revolt, and drag Moreau away screaming to his own "House of Pain" to be dismembered. (Tod Browning's Freaks, released the same year, had a similarly horrific ending. It is a little difficult, at this late date, to discover who influenced who.)

In 1959, the Wells novel was again adapted, unofficially, as Terror Is A Man. Richard Derr played the shipwrecked sailor on a Peruvian island, and Francis Lederer was "Dr. Girard," performing his evolution experiments on an unfortunate panther locked up in his laboratory. The creature escapes, kills both the doctor and his wife, and, in a rather novel ending, escapes out to sea in a boat. This movie, also known as Blood Creature, has been scantly circulated in recent years, but it is reputedly a superior film, with atmospheric direction (by Gerry DeLeon) and a good amount of suspense.

The newest version, American International's The Island of Dr. Moreau (written by John Herman Shaner and Al Ramrus) stays prosaic and bland, an approach that Wells might have favored, but fails to convey any underlying sense of menace. The vivisection issue, which was the whole point of the original story, has been inexplicably dropped in favor of DNA and hormone experiments and, as a result, the agonies of Moreau's "House of Pain" have been largely dissipated. (The assumption seems to be that vivisection isn't timely anymore, but one immediately thinks of the tortured cats in the Museum of Natural History.)

Don Taylor, the director, is fairly good at the action sequences but cannot build suspense. The early glimses of the "humanimals" (special copyright and all) are unalarming, as is the subsequent full-face confrontation. The creatures themselves, with facial hair and fright wigs, are amusing without being for a moment convincing. (The makeup seems to be patterned after Planet of the Apes, but that was a satire and this is not.) Their best sequences come toward the climax, an orgy of destruction that provides Taylor with one of his few opportunities to get some momentum going.

Burt Lancaster is a credibly banal Dr. Moreau, and he comes pretty close to Wells' no-nonsense conception of a scientist (Laughton was more the flamboyant, bubbly-test-tube type) but once again the scenarists contrive to have Michael York, as the island visitor--this time called Andrew Braddock--become a victim of Moreau's experiments. (Wells' narrator-heroes have always presented problems to adaptors; they tend to be nihilistic onlookers. The easiest solution has always been to give the hero a girlfriend, and this one does that, too.) Richard Basehart, looking rather good in mink, has Bela Lugosi's old role as the Sayer of the Law.

The new Island of Dr. Moreau is modestly entertaining, but unremarkable. Wells, no doubt, would have more pungent things to say.

REVIEW:
THE CHRONICLES OF THOMAS COVENANT THE UNBELIEVER

by Robert Foster

Stephen R. Donaldson. The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever. 3 vols.: Lord Foul's Bane, The Illearth War, The Power That Preserves. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977, $25. Ballantine/Del Rey, 1978, $2.50 each.

It is disconcerting to discover that the hero of a promising three-volume "epic fantasy" is a leper, for we all know that fantasy heroes come in two types. First, there's the male adventure hero, a Conan or Brak bulging with muscles and aggressive self-confidence, hacking his way to fame and power with a little sex on the side. Then there's the developing hero, a squeaky-voiced hobbit plucked untimely from his snug hobbit-hole or an ordinary modern man or woman suddenly transported to a strange realm. Usually even the cover art tells you what to expect--a close-up of severed limbs and bloody swords signifies the male adventure hero, while panoramic pastoral scenes painted in softer tones promise a developing hero.

The designs on the hard-cover edition of Stephen R. Donaldson's trilogy don't give much away. The scenes are sufficiently panoramic (and attractive) to suggest a developing hero, but S. C. Wyeth's lines are a little too austere to promise a comfortable fantasy world. The titles maintain that ambivalence. The names of the individual volumes betoken epic adventure and a happy ending, but brooding over them is the enigmatic name of the series and its hero--Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever. What will Thomas Unbelieve, and how can Unbelief be reconciled with the fidelity demanded by his surname?

And so you open Lord Foul's Bane, already intrigued by its hero, wondering now who Lord Foul is and how Thomas Covenant will come to be his bane. But the first twenty-five pages place you not in an enjoyable fantasy world but in one of the most agonizing of living hells, the tortured mind of gray, gaunt Thomas Covenant--"leper outcast unclean!" Abandoned and divorced by his wife, loathed by his fellow men, filled with futile anger at his isolation, Covenant has no future and little pleasure in the present. He lives by the narrow leper's law: the will to survive can halt the fatal progress of his disease, but the price of that survival is the recognition of leprosy as the central fact of his existence. Covenant's most significant activity is the VSE, the Visual Scan of Extremities to check nerve-deadened fingers and toes for unfelt injuries. But the VSE is also a kind of sacrament for Covenant, a way for him to subordinate the attractions of the outside world to the demands of his leprosy.

Suddenly Covenant is transported to another realm, the Land, by the will of Lord Foul the Despiser, to serve as Foul's tool in the final defeat of the good peoples of the Land. Donaldson's conception of this struggle between good and evil is sophisticated and powerful. The Despiser wishes not merely to destroy his foes but to pervert them, to transmute them into examples of the hopeless negation of Despite. And so Covenant, whose two amputated fingers (product of the first stages of his disease) give him the image of the ancient hero Berek Halfhand, appears in the Land as a potential savior, although Lord Foul intends him to betray the Land and thereby make more bitter the ultimate victory of Despite.

Two complications arise. First, Covenant has been brought to the Land in part because of his wedding ring, an ironic symbol of broken fidelity and his divorce from humanity. The ring is made of white gold, which in the Land is the source of wild magic. Wild magic is more powerful than the controlled sorceries of good or evil,

but as its name implies it is difficult to summon at will or to direct. Covenant has the latent power to destroy Lord Foul, but it is more likely that Despite will triumph through Covenant's inability to harness wild magic.

Second, natural disease is unknown in the Land, and Covenant's leprosy is easily healed, apparently, by the medicinal substance hurtloam. Added to the ambivalence of wild magic, the uncertainty of Covenant's status of fantasy hero, the ambiguity of his name, and the real-world horror of the first two chapters, Covenant's apparent cure becomes the crucial incident in the trilogy. Can Covenant accept the Land as real, and therefore accept his cure? If he does so, he will apparently gain health, personal importance, companionship and love --but he fears that the Land may be a psychotic fantasy, a desperate attempt by his mind to deny the reality of his leprosy. Believing in the Land would thus kill Covenant. But if somehow the Land is real and Covenant refuses to wield the wild magic in its behalf, he will be acting in Despite and will condemn a beautiful realm and its worthy inhabitants to an undeserved fate. This dilemma is posed formally by a mysterious old man even before Covenant enters the Land:

> A real man--real in all the ways that we recognize as real--finds himself suddenly abstracted from the world and deposited in a physical situation which could not possibly exist...
>
> He asserts that he is either dreaming or hallucinating, and declines to be put in the false position of fighting to the death where no "real" danger exists. He is implacable in his determination to disbelieve his apparent situation, and does not defend himself when he is attacked by the champion of the other world.
>
> Question: is the man's behavior courageous or cowardly? This is the fundamental question of ethics.

This dilemma--which embraces individuality and personal judgment, loyalty and moral responsibility, desire, and survival--is the central theme of the book, and all of Covenant's actions are as much a response to this question as they are to the machinations of Lord Foul.

At times the shifts in plot are implausibly extreme, but in general every major incident effectively contributes to the question of the price of Covenant's survival. There is the Bloodguard, whose unswerving loyalty to the Lords has rendered them virtually immortal, but at the price of family, friendship, and the possibility of free moral choice. There are the Giants, whose boundless joy is maintained by their faith in an eventual return to a lost homeland, a faith which makes them look backwards and deludes them as to the true nature of a changing present. There is Kevin's Lore, a sequence of seven hidden wards that can save the Land or (if only partially understood or improperly used) ruin it forever. There are the Lords, a

distillation of the best of the peoples of the Land, struggling to preserve the belief that the quality of life is more important than the mere fact of survival, that "survival at any cost" is the first step on the road to Despite.

Then there are the individuals, both the moral exemplars from the past of the Land and all too vulnerable people who befriend Covenant. Even though he denies their existence and their claim on him, even though his frustration at being forced to reject his apparent cure frequently causes him to act with violent Despite, the gentle inhabitants of the Land accept his pain, comfort him, and--even harder to bear--try not to plead with him for their salvation.

While Covenant's attitude towards the Land slowly changes, his anguish remains strong, for he never reaches the peace of true acceptance or the Despite of absolute denial. He is sustained by his will to survive as an individual, on his own terms, and his moral strength--both in the Land, where the struggle is both mental and physical, and in the real world, where he dies by inches as the numbness in his fingers and toes creeps upward--makes him one of the most impressive heroes ever to appear in fantasy. In the end, he triumphs by an application of absolute Unbelief, resolving all other responsibilities in terms of his Covenant of stubborn survival.

Thus, on one level (not resolved until the last page of The Power That Preserves) the Covenant trilogy is an essay in ethics, and the question it raises is serious and interesting. But the framework of this ethical dilemma is a fantasy novel, with all the traditional trappings of magic, strange beings, and heroic quests. Such books are

most often read for the pleasure of what J.R.R. Tolkien calls Secondary Belief, the reaction to an imaginary world in which the reader can believe and participate for the duration of the work. The Land is a fully developed Secondary World, as attractive as Middle-earth or Darkover, but the reader is barred from it by Covenant's Unbelief. At the same time as we admire him for his moral strength, we also resent it, for he provides our point of contact with the Land, and we want him to believe in it so that we can immerse ourselves in the pleasure of its beauty and the satisfaction of Covenant's heroic importance. Of course, in a way this enhances Covenant's strength even further, for he withstands not only the pressure of his own desire for the Land, but also the much stronger pressure of the reader's selfish desire for the easy pleasures of unconflicted Secondary Belief. If Donaldson intended to portray survival as the ultimate virture, he has chosen a difficult method; I think readers will come to resent Covenant's rejection of the Land and find it hard to identify with a hero who insists on calling himself a leper even when he apparently isn't.

This resentment, if it occurs, is an important indication of the reasons people read fantasy. Donaldson's moral seriousness proves distasteful to me, I think, because I do not want to have to think about the horrors of leprosy while reading fantasy. Fantasy worlds are supposed to be comfortable. The dangers that arise, like trolls and dragons, are enjoyably frightening because they cannot occur in the real world, because they are limited to the book. But leprosy is real, as is our guilt at not liking to think about it. By forcing the reader to encounter the fantasy hero as a leper, in gruesome detail, and then

further denying the reader easy entrance to the fantasy world, Donaldson makes escapism virtually impossible. The Covenant trilogy cannot be read for easy titillation (unless you conveniently forget certain chapters), and the reader's response to this is an index of his own selfish and irresponsible desire for escapism.

Unwelcome moral seriousness aside, Donaldson has succeeded in creating the best fantasy world, bar none, in the Tolkien tradition. At times he almost seems imitative, but then some streak of imaginative independence raises the Land to a level never achieved in such books as The Sword of Shannara or Hiero's Journey. Covenant's ring of white gold has clear parallels with the One Ring borne by Frodo, just as both heroes are lacking one or two fingers. The Ramen, horse-lovers who tend their beasts, the Ranyhyn, on the Plains of Ra, are clearly based on the Rohirrim of Rohan, expecially since the Ranyhyn, like the mearas of Rohan, will only submit to be ridden by certain individuals. But even here Donaldson shows his ability to use this material intelligently to further his own thematic designs: the Ramen themselves respect the Ranyhyn too much to ever ride them, a sign of the humility and love of life which is one response to Despite.

In many cases Donaldson's details are strikingly original while his tone remains true to the Tolkien tradition. Tolkien's Ents appear in their original form, as Giants. The distinction between forest-loving Elves and cavern-dwelling Dwarves is present, but in the Land it is cultural, not racial. Individuals (both male and female--Donaldson is no sexist) of various peoples become craftsmen in one of two great traditions, lillianrill, or work with wood, and rhadhamaerl, stone-lore. The overall impact of the Land is of an up-dated but totally legitimate variant of the Vision contained in Tolkien or William Morris, and to a lesser extent in Marion Zimmer Bradley or Joy Chant.

Perhaps the weakest part of Donaldson's trilogy is its language. Donaldson's English-language names, such as Saltheart Foamfollower and Drool Rockworm, are usually very effective, but his invented languages seem ad hoc and somewhat inconsistent. His poetry is often embarrassingly limp; since this type of fantasy exalts tradition and quasi-medieval societies, its poetry should always rhyme. At times the writing is repetitious (especially concerning Covenant's dilemma), but this is because Donaldson takes care to make everything accessible to the reader, and his action scenes are clear even

if they are sometimes a little flat. But this is apparently Donaldson's first published fiction, and no doubt with greater experience he will find a style suitable to his excellent creative talent.

But for most readers of fantasy, the words on the page are merely a vehicle for entry into a realm of magic and excitement, and The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever are wonderful and fast-paced, attractive and easily believable. It is to Donaldson's credit that he was not content merely to entertain an audience and make some money. Thomas Covenant ultimately emerges as a developing hero, but the virtues by which he triumphs are usually attributes of the male adventure-hero. Covenant learns to use the wild magic, and in the best traditions of hero-enhancement he learns that he is the wild magic, but he never forgets that he is a leper. Covenant's leprosy and Unbelief distract from our entertainment and hinder the process of absorption into a morally just and beautiful society which is one of the great satisfactions of developing-hero fantasy. But in return Covenant's tortured consciousness and our reaction to him force us to consider important questions of ethics, the nature of fantasy, and our individual capacity for moral responsibility and compassion. With this trilogy, Stephen R. Donaldson emerges as one of the major new writers in the new fantasy boom, fully as significant as C. J. Cherryh or Patricia McKillip. Let us hope that his six (or nine) further volumes on the Land live up to the standard of the first three.

ginjer buchanan's

A FAN'S NOTES

Readers! Beware! If you have bought this magazine--if, even worse, you have bought this magazine while in attendance at Iguanacon, the 36th World Science Fiction Convention, held this year in Phoenix, Arizona--you may already be suffering from the heartbreak of Fandom. To help you identify further symptoms before it is Too Late, I would like to list here the Twelve Danger Signs of Fandom. Unfortunately, I can't because the list was originally compiled at four o'clock in the morning in the lobby of the Hotel Meulebach during Midamericon (the 34th World Science Fiction Convention, f.y.i.) and was, of course, pretty well forgotten in the sober light of day. However, I can present instead a partial reconstruction arrived at through subsequent consultation with some of the finest minds of the science fiction world (Gardner Dozois being a prime example). Take heed.

1) Do you prefer cats over dogs as pets, and furthermore, do you prefer six or seven cats over one cat?

2) Is your drink of choice in restaurants and bars a spicy Bloody Mary?

3) Do you crave Szechuan food and immediately visit every newly-opened Chinese restaurant in search of the perfect beef-in-orange sauce? (The above three are specifically danger signs of New York City Fandom. If you do not live in New York and responded positively to two out of the three, it is either not significant or it means you should move to New York because you are obviously terribly out-of-place where you are now living.)

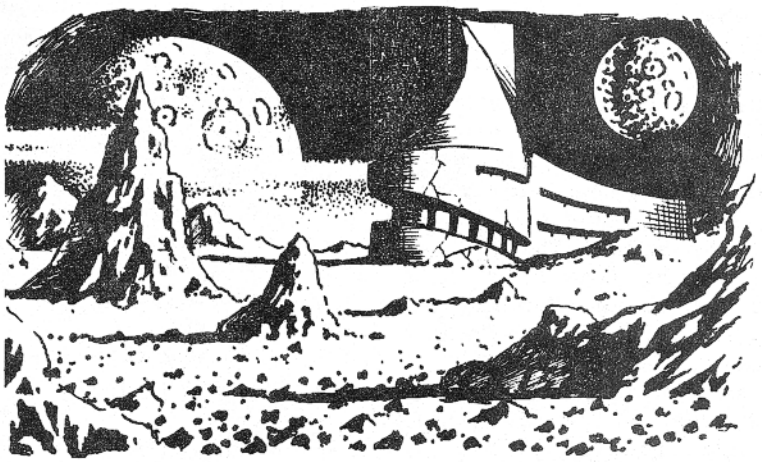
4) Do you refer to Samuel R. Delany as "Chip?"

5) When you are going out to dinner at a convention, do you call ahead, make a reservation for six people and then show up with a party of thirteen and Isaac Asimov?

6) Do you know exactly where you will be over Labor Day Weekend for approximately the next five years?

7) If you are a woman, do you buy and wear clothing at conventions that you would hesitate to wear in your bedroom at home, alone?

8) Do you and most of your friends wear glasses whose



frames went out of style five years ago?

9) If you are a man, and over 25, are you a virgin?

10) Do you give and attend large parties where the majority of the guests spend the evening reading Analog, Isaac Asimov's S.F. Magazine, and The White Dragon of Pern?

11) If you are a man, and under 18, are you short, slight, hyperactive, fast-talking and not a virgin?

12) Do you routinely drive thousands of miles to stay up all nite in hotel rooms with people you see every day?

13) Are you generally known by a completely fabricated, usually monosyllabic, name? (i.e. Call me THWACK)

14) Do you recognize the names of the people who collate Locus?

15) Does your apartment have a name?

If you can answer "yes" to 50% of these questions (a neat trick when there's 15 questions) it's either Too Late or Just in the Nick of Time.

Consider first if it's Too Late. Well, welcome to the club! You're a fan already. Let me offer you my commiseration, and help you to look on the bright side. (There's always a bright side.)

For one thing, Fandom is rarely fatal. Even without treatment, fans have been known to continue as such for 20, 30, even 40 years! There is an organization of the senior sufferers called First Fandom who, except for a tendency to wear brightly colored blazers with funny crests and to give each other awards yearly at the Worldcon Banquet, seems to be still in possession of their physical and mental capacities (indeed, they are in better shape than many newly-infected or "neo" fans).

Secondly, you could go into spontaneous remission. This is known as gafiation (from G.A.F.I.A.--Getting Away From It All). The duration of gafiation varies widely from a few days to years. If this happens to you, remember to take advantage of this time to attend to those boring mundane tasks which you have undoubtedly neglected in favor of fanac. Little chores like graduating and getting a job. One long-suffering Midwest fan has been trying to get his degree in physics for ten years. Every time he makes headway, he relapses into fandom!

Incidentally, there have been reported cases of complete, permanent gafiation which some have called cures. While these are interesting for research purposes, my personal opinion is that close examination will prove that either the individual involved suffered from only a mild case of fannishness or is really still a Fan, having not essentially returned to a mundane world existence but only substituted for pre-occupation with SF something equally bizarre such as professional wrestling, model railroading, barbershop quartetting or Middle-European Folk Dancing.

In the eventuality that you never do gafiate and become a chronic fan, there are still some positives worth mentioning.

Chip may come to know you well enough to call you THWACK.

You'll see parts of the country that you would not otherwise have visited on a bet. (Like Kansas City and Miami Beach.)

You might get an opportunity to buy Harlan Ellison for $35 and loose change as I once did.

You stand a fairly good chance eventually of no longer being a virgin.

If you really get behind it, and become involved in editing, writing in, or doing artwork for a fanzine (amateur magazine done by fans) you stand a chance of winning a couple of awards. One is the FAAN award (Fanzine Activity Achievement), a sort of elite presentation, with nominations and voting only by folk active in fanzines. The other is the Hugo Award given at the Worldcon and selected by the total membership. To paraphrase R. P. McMurphy, there's something to be said for being Bull Goose Loony.

Now let us consider instead that it is Just in the Nick of Time. What can be done?

Well, you could send me $5 in check or money-order plus a stamped envelope (self-addressed) in which I would promise to rush you the secret antidote to creeping fannishness. But then they would take me away for mail fraud and I would no longer be able to go to conventions and wear those clothes I talked about before. Rather, I will admit it plainly--there is no known sure cure. However, various therapeutic nostrums may be applied:

Become romantically involved with a member of the opposite sex (or the same sex, if you prefer) who is not in any way interested in science fiction, and who is, moreover, jealous. You will soon find your convention attendance declining sharply, at the very least.

During a period of gafiation, attempt to secure a Good Job--one which you find demanding, satisfying and

lucrative. Your involvement in this might help prevent a serious relapse.

Get religion.

Tell your parents what you really do at a convention. (This is risky and should only be done in desperation. Be warned that some years ago an Ohio couple had their fourteen-year-old son put in the Bin in order to remove him from Fandom, or Fandom from him, if you will.)

For six months solid read every SF book, periodical and fanzine printed and attend every convention possible. You will either develop a natural immunity or become the next editor of Galaxy.

Try small doses of reality. Buy the new James Michener. Find out Donny and Marie's sex secrets in the National Enquirer. Watch Love Boat. In time, you may come to prefer these to Poul Anderson, Locus and Battlestar Galactica, in which case you will be on the way to being cured.

On the other hand, you may come to the opposite conclusion which was beautifully expressed by a tote bag I met in a rest stop on my way back from SUNCON. To quote, "I've given up on reality--What I'm looking for now is a really good fantasy."

As fantasies go, fandom is one of the best. Bets Middle-European Folk Dancing any day. So welcome to the club, take two DAW books and call me in the morning.

INTERVIEW WITH

SAMUEL R. DELANY

Conducted by Joseph S Zitt

Samuel R. "Chip" Delany was born April first, 1942, in Harlem. A graduate of New York's Bronx High School of Science and City College, he published his first novel, The Jewels of Aptor at the age of nineteen. His trilogy The Fall of the Towers followed within the next two years.

His novella "The Ballad of Beta-2" earned him the first of many nominations for the Nebula Award of the Science Fiction Writers of America. He earned that award the next year with his novel Babel 17, and again in 1967 for The Einstein Intersection.

Chip's next novel, Nova, appeared in 1968, and, while it won no awards, it caused a great stir in science fiction circles. The sale of its paperback rights set a new record for the price paid for any work of science fiction. Norman Spinrad called the book "One of the most complete and fully realized pictures of an interstellar society that I have ever read." Judith Merril, in her review in the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction declared Delany "The best Science Fiction writer in the world."

Delany published no more novel-length science fiction for seven years after Nova, devoting his efforts to other types of literature. He published many short science fiction stories in the years surrounding and succeeding the novel's appearance. His stories "Aye, and Gomorrah", and "Time Considered as a Helix Composed of Semi-Precious Stones" won both the Hugo and Nebula Awards. With his wife, National Book Award winning poet, Marilyn Hacker, he edited Quark, a quarterly anthology of speculative fiction. He also published during this time Driftglass, a collection of his short fiction, and a pornographic novel, The Tides of Lust. He taught science fiction and other English courses at SUNY and the Clarion conferences, and wrote a large amount of erudite criticism of science fiction, much of which was later collected in his 1978 collection, The Jewel Hinged Jaw.

In 1975, Bantam Books published Dhalgren, Delany's best known and most controversial book. Four years in the writing, and of a size and scope rarely seen in the field, it was the best selling science fiction novel of the year. The merits of the book became a matter of great contention among fandom; the amounts and types of sexual and literary licence exhibited in it polarized its readers into strongly opinioned and highly vocal factions.

Dhalgren was followed up the next year by Triton. On the surface and through its packaging it appeared that Delany was returning to the old-fashioned novel of interplanetary war. The book was, however, a tightly focused intense novel of manners, telling of the wanderings and trials of a metalogician from the moon of Neptune. The book concluded with two appendices, one of speculation from his private journal on the nature of art and science fiction (this journal having previously provided the chapter headings in The Einstein Intersection) and the other consisting of a biography of the founder of metalogic, containing further discussions of language and related topics.

Delany's next two books were of critical essays. The aforementioned Jewel-Hinged Jaw appeared in 1977. It contained essays on the Alyx stories of Joanna Russ, Ursula LeGuin's The Dispossessed, and the works of Roger Zelazny and Thomas M. Disch, along with articles on writing science fiction and critical methods in the genre. A large amount of autobiography was also included. His next book, The American Shore, which appeared in the

summer of 1978, is perhaps the most extended work every published about a single piece of science fiction, being a book length critical essay on one section of Thomas Disch's novel 334.

Two works of fiction are forthcoming from Delany within the next year. October will bring the publication of Empire, a graphic novel produced in collaboration with artist Howard Chaykin, to be published by Berkeley/Putnam.

Appearing sometime in 1979 will be Neveryon, a cycle of five short fictions set in a multifaceted Sword-and-Sorcery society. The volume will be published in paperback by Bantam Books.

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Neveryon, Bantam, 1979

INTERVIEW

CONTACT:SF--Your recent writings deal to a large extent with the changing sexual values in our society. What do you see as the long term effects on the current sexual revolution?

DELANY--I think that depends very much on where the rest of the society goes. If the rest of the society goes in a liberal direction, I think the sexual values will tend to be more liberalized. I think that in any sexual situation what you have is an internalization of what happens in the rest of society and very much not the other way around.

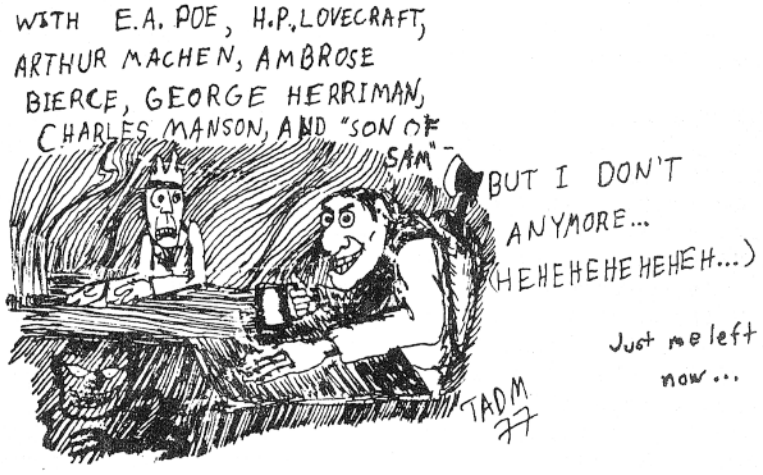
CONTACT:SF--Do you think that technological advances will contribute to this change?

DELANY--Well, I think that if what they say about vibrators is true it already has.

CONTACT:SF--Why do you write?

DELANY--I don't know...why do you?

CONTACT:SF--How did you first become interested in science fiction, and how did



"I don't define science fiction, I leave that for other people to do."
. . . Samuel R. Delany

you begin writing?

DELANY--Well, I think I started like most people, I started reading it, and it eventually became the thing to do.

CONTACT:SF--Did you ever get into organized fandom?

DELANY--No. At least I didn't come up through fandom like a lot of writers do.

CONTACT:SF--Your writings evidence a great interest in mythology, echoing the story of Orpheus in the Einstein Intersection and that of Faust in The Tides of Lust. Did this come from your stay in Greece?

DELANY--No, I think I took that with me to Greece. In fact, it may have been one of the reasons why I went in the first place.

CONTACT:SF--When you plan your science fiction stories, what comes first, the plot and the characters or the worlds in which they're set?

DELANY--It varies from piece to piece. I start, usually, with a couple of images, but usually include a character in some situation or in some landscape. Sometimes it will just be a landscape, indeed sometimes there'll just be a character. It doesn't follow a fixed formula.

CONTACT:SF--There's been some controversy about whether Dhalgren is really science fiction. How do you define science fiction, and how do you include Dhalgren in that category?

DELANY--Well, I don't define science fiction, I leave that for other people to do. I think certainly whether any other person defines it as science fiction or not, or decides it's science fiction or not, I think that somebody who has read a lot of science fiction will probably have an easier time understanding it and responding to it, relating to it, than somebody who hasn't. And whether that constitutes a definition or not, I fortunately don't have to say.

CONTACT:SF--Then you feel Dhalgren was science fiction?

DELANY--Yeah, I think that was a science fiction novel.

CONTACT:SF--Did you have any difficulties in getting Dhalgren published?

DELANY--Not as many as I thought I might. It's a very long book and not many science fiction novels are that long. In fact, it had the dubious distinction of being the largest piece of fiction published in America in 1975. It beat out Gravity's Rainbow by about ten thousand words. There were a couple of places that were interested in it, but finally turned it down because of size. But considering that it only went to three places before it finally placed, I was pretty lucky.

CONTACT:SF--Did you have any problems with censorship with that novel?

DELANY--No.

CONTACT:SF--How was the "Anathemata" written, and were the margin notes written simultaneously or were they added later?

DELANY--Well, you have to write one at a time. The whole thing was pretty carefully planned out. It was written out comparatively consecutively.

CONTACT:SF--It's been suggested that Triton was a subsection of Dhalgren written by one of its characters. Is this true?

DELANY--No, it sounds to me totally insane. It sounds to me like a supposition by somebody who probably hasn't read either book.

CONTACT:SF--Quite a few people have said that they thought Triton was a science fiction work written by Lanya Colson.

DELANY--I think that began with, at one point Barry Malzberg suggested in a review that perhaps it was written by the hero of that and I think that somebody who was simply being funny suggested that it was written by Lanya. Certainly it makes more sense being written by Lanya than it does being written by the main character, but I think essentially somebody is running wit in the ground.

CONTACT:SF--The connection with Lanya's quote on page 692...

DELANY--Yes, the philosophy work as long as the Phenomenology of Mind, The Critique of Pure Reason and Being in Time written in small numbered sections. Somehow that doesn't seem like Triton to me.

CONTACT:SF--Except for maybe the first appendix.

DELANY--It's nowhere near as long as Being in Time, not to mention The Critique of Pure Reason.

CONTACT:SF--It's been said by critics that all of your works follow in a chain, being all chapters in the "odyssey of the magic kid" and that these journeys have come to an end in the transformation of Bron Helstrom. Do you feel that there is any validity to that theory?

DELANY-It ill behooves an author to talk about theories other people have about their work. I don't know really, I think that sometimes a character will resemble another and sometimes characters don't. I think Bron Helstrom is a very different kind of character than any of the other characters. For one thing, he has a nine to five job which immediately puts him in a category all by himself.

CONTACT:SF--On another note. Is it possible to figure out Kid's last name from Dhalgren?

DELANY--Only the possibility of the first two letters.

CONTACT:SF--Because I've been racking my brain trying to figure it out.

DELANY--That's looking in a direction that probably won't yield too terribly much, or be too terribly interesting. I

think that's to give you a fairly good idea of what his last name is not. That's the important point.

CONTACT:SF--That it's not Dhalgren?

DELANY--Yeah.

CONTACT:SF--Is there a great significance to him meeting Bill Dhalgren and realizing who he is?

DELANY--Well, I thought it was the point of the book. Seriously, it was my way of explaining the meaning of the title.

CONTACT:SF--Did the title come before the book?

DELANY--Yes. They came together, along with the idea of doing that particular kind of turnabout with the name.

CONTACT:SF--Bill Dhalgren strikes me as being one of the most minor characters of the book.

DELANY--The question is, is he a character at all?

CONTACT:SF--Aha! Okay, that means I'll have to read the damned thing for the fourth time.

DELANY--Well, if you've read it three times, one can discuss it fairly reasonably. Kidd suddenly decides that this man's name is William Dhalgren but the question is, why? And indeed, how, and indeed, what proof does he have?

CONTACT:SF--The usage of the list converging on the name....

DELANY--Yeah. The question is, does it have anything to do with Bill, the character? The point is, for a while, Kidd is certain that it does, and then towards the end of the scene, he suddenly isn't certain anymore, and that's the major point. Not that this character is or isn't that particular Bill, who may accidently have the last name Dhalgren. I would suspect chances are, he doesn't.

CONTACT:SF--It seems that there is a lot of ambiguity and uncertainty in the book, that nobody knows what the heck is going on.

DELANY--Yeah. In a sense I suppose that one of the things that the book is talking about is the problem of certainty and certain knowledge of anything and the kinds of things that it's based on.

CONTACT:SF--The game of Vlet is described in Triton, and it also appears in the writings of Joanna Russ. Did the two of you develop it together?

DELANY--No. I quite with malice of forethought stole it and afterwards wrote her a letter and asked if it would be all right.

CONTACT:SF--Does Vlet exist as a game?

DELANY--No.

CONTACT:SF--I have a feeling it will eventually.

DELANY--Knowing fandom, probably.

CONTACT:SF--In your writings there is frequent mention of the city of Bellona and the repeating character of Muels Aranlyde. Does this suggest that your stories occur in a common literary universe?

DELANY--No, I think it's more a case of using certain pointers just to pinpoint things for myself. I think as a writer, you sort of forget that some people will read more than one of your books, and if you're dealing with a similar idea, or similar idea matrix frequently, it's useful to use the same thing you thought of before. I suppose if I were more conscientious I would, after I had done that change it to another name. But sometimes I figure, well, maybe it will be a pinpoint for somebody who might be interested. But it doesn't bespeak a greater continuity than that.

CONTACT:SF--Is there, then, a continuity running through the use of Bellona in each instance and the character Muels Aranlyde?

DELANY--Well, Bellona is usually a city...and the character of Muels Aranlyde only appears in two, Babel 17 and Empire Star. There, there is another connection. When I originally wrote Babel 17, all my books with Ace Books had been Ace doubles, and I was under the impression that Babel 17 was going to be one side of an Ace double, too, and I was indeed under the impression that Empire Star was going to be the short side of the Ace double. Just at that time, due to the exigencies of publishing, they decided that that was going to come out as a single so, now that I had written something that would be utilized in the form of the Ace double it didn't get published that way. Empire Star is a piece of science fiction that's referred to in Babel 17 by one of the characters, and that's the reason for that.

CONTACT:SF--Do you feel that being black affects your writing?

DELANY--Very much so.

CONTACT:SF--In what way?

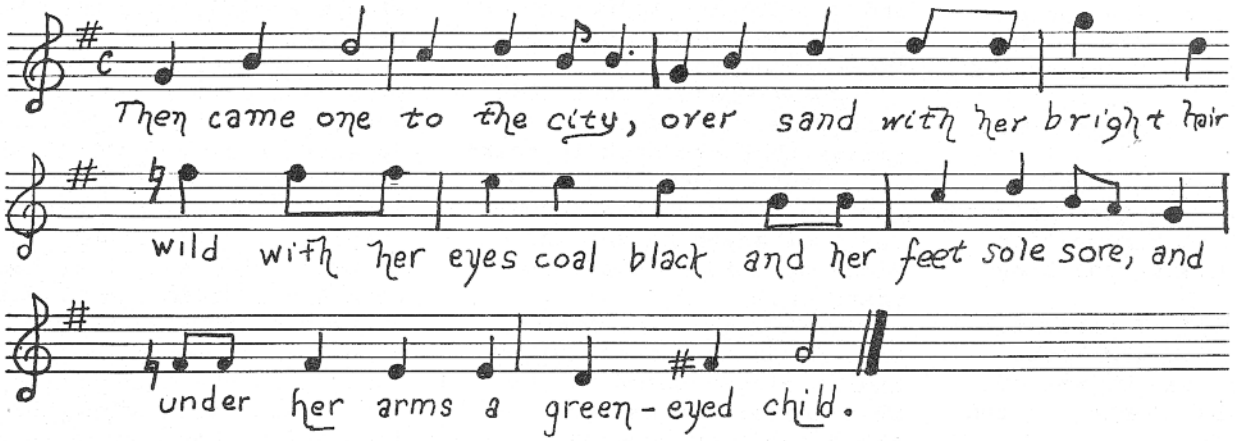
DELANY--Well, to start off with, it simply affects who I am and the kind of experiences I've had growing up, and the kind I've had as an adult. And that very much affects my writing.

CONTACT:SF--Do you foresee any of your works being made into movies?

DELANY--It's always a pleasant thing...Sometimes not so pleasant...to envision, but I don't really see it in the near future.

CONTACT:SF--Is there a tune for the Ballad of Beta 2?

DELANY--Lord, I think I actually wrote one, years ago when I first wrote the novel. About half of it is going through my head...the only thing I can remember of it is just the chorus. I think it went something like:



CONTACT:SF--What do you feel is the future of science fiction?

DELANY--I don't really know. In fact, a friend of mine, another science fiction writer, Marc Gawron, was here earlier today, and we were wondering whether there will perhaps be any science fiction past the end of this decade, or at least whether it will metamorphose into something entirely different. It's going through so many changes. I mean the sort of hard core central science fiction, not the peripheral experiments, really changes its feel from year-to-year. I really don't know where it's going. What can I say?

CONTACT:SF--What was the origin of The Jewels of Aptor?

DELANY--Years ago, going on fifteen now, my wife was editing. We had just gotten married, and her first job was at Ace Books. She used to come home extremely upset with various things that she was editing, the sort of general blood-and-thunder aspect of them, particularly the treatment of female characters in the novels. They were always sort of nasty, evil bitches or hanging around in towers waiting to be rescued by some big, burly heroes.

At the same time I was having a series of dreams, nightmares actually, that I was having a great deal of difficulty dealing with, about six of them in a row. So I sat down and some of the things that she was talking about and books she was editing plus this series of dreams which I found very difficult to describe, I sat down and started wirting this book. And the book was mainly for her. I saw it as an immense, not exactly in-joke, but a sort of in-thing. And when it was finished she suggested that I submit it to Ace, and so I did.

We were very upstanding creating at this time, being rather young, and so I submitted it under a pen-name. It was Bruno Collabro. Where I got it, I will not know. So we put it on Don (Wollheim)'s desk, and he read it, and after a while he emerged from his office and said he like it very much. And after the contracts were drawn up, she said, "Oh, that's my husband", and that's how my first one came about.

CONTACT:SF--It got chopped into a smaller format in the first book.

DELANY--Yeah, that's right. One of the pains of being a young author. "All right, now get rid of seven hundred lines, I don't care what seven hundred, just get rid of seven hundred lines. We don't publish first novels that are any longer than 156 pages, get rid of them." And then later on they brought it out again, and luckily there was a carbon extant, so I went over the carbon once with a blue pencil and did a little polishing here and there, and then they set the English language edition.

CONTACT:SF--The Fall of the Towers looks like it came out practically as it was written, because you mention the back-spacing involved in doing a trilogy.

DELANY--Every once in a while I encounter in one review or another the strange idea that Delany was praised from the beginning. I think my first five novels netted me a total of four reviews. And I remember that once somebody explained to me it was general knowledge that for the first three years that I was writing that Samuel R. Delany was a house name for Ace books. In other words, when they had something so awful that the author didn't want his name to appear on it, that just called it 'by Samuel R. Delany' and this is the reason everybody sort of assumed that anything by Samuel R. Delany was a house name so they didn't even get read when it came in for review. That's what's known as praise from the beginning.

CONTACT:SF--Your writing has been controversial. I

ran across one negative review that I thought was hilarious when William J. Atheling, (James Blish), talks about Babel 17 "When I heard that Babel 17 won the Nebula award for best novel in 1966 I was surprised. I thought it was the worst. And when The Einstein Intersection won the same award, I quietly went out into the kitchen and bit my cat."

DELANY--I never read that.

CONTACT:SF--Besides The Tides of Lust, have you written any other mainstream fiction?

DELANY--No. Certainly not since I was old enough to know better. I wouldn't exactly call Tides of Lust mainstream. I would just call it pornography.

CONTACT:SF--Why did you write that?

DELANY--Well, a number of reasons. There was a lot of pornography being written, that I thought was really exciting at the time, and there was a place called Brandon House that was publishing most of the good pornography, things by Marco Vassi (well no, Vassi was actually with Olympia) Michael Perkins, David Meltzer, and various and sundry other people, who were taking pronography and writing with it. And there was an editor there named Brian Kirby. Norman Spinrad and Phillip Farmer were also doing work for him, and I was just impressed with some of the stuff I was reading, and I thought it would be an interesting form to work in, so I wrote Tides of Lust. By the time I had written it Brandon House had been sold and Brian Kirby had gone somewhere else where they were not publishing "fuck books" as we called them in the trade, so the book spent about three years without a publisher and finally Lancer decided to take it.

CONTACT:SF--The book was written as pornography?

DELANY--I think it would betray the book to say anything else.

CONTACT:SF--It's the only pornography I've seen which includes the mythic element.

DELANY--Well, this is the kind of stuff that Brandon House was doing. I don't think anything of mine was a good deal better than any of the other things. It may have been a good deal worse. But I thought the stuff that they were doing was very exciting, very intelligent pornography, the best of it as pornography goes.

CONTACT:SF--Why do you think Dhalgren became the best selling science fiction novel of 1975?

DELANY--I really don't know. I don't know if there is really any way that you can account for something like that. On the one hand one hates to think that it could be something as simple as the fact that thirty-nine of its 900 odd pages deal with copulatory mechanics.

CONTACT:SF--Is that a lot?

DELANY--It just seems like a lot. That may have something to do with it. It would be rather naive to assume that that wasn't the case. Although with all the pornography not too terribly far away on the shelves, one wonders. There's been a whole history of long science fiction books selling better than short science fiction books. So, no author really can say what makes it sell.

CONTACT:SF--Was Nova very widely acclaimed?

DELANY--It did fairly well. Indeed since Dhalgren came out it's been reprinted a couple of times.

CONTACT:SF--I've seen the boxed set of your works. Where did they come up with the title for that? (Galaxies, by Samuel R. Delany)

DELANY--I haven't the vaguest idea! I certainly had never been appraised of it and it's rather strange. Because for one thing there's a very fine Barry Malzberg novel with the same name, which is a little embarrassing. I didn't find out what the title was until I walked into the science fiction book store down on Twelfth Street and saw this Galaxies, by Samuel R. Delany, and my first thought was, I never wrote a book called that! I simply wish that they had used a name that somebody else hadn't used, expecially a book that I rather liked. This is one of Barry Malzberg's greater novels.

CONTACT:SF--Have you ever been really rooked by a publisher?

DELANY--Really rooked? I don't know. The SFWA is currently running an audit on Ace Books and they may find out something there. Right now I can't say that I have.

CONTACT:SF--Have you ever written under pen names?

DELANY--No. I think that if it's worth writing it's worth writing under your own name.

CONTACT:SF--I heard a rumor that Gary Wright, author of "Mirror of Ice", was a pen name of yours.

DELANY--That began because of a typographical error on the copyright page. It's very funny. The science fiction community of readers and writers seems to be gossip hungry, probably because there's so little gossip in the field, writers lead such comparatively dull lives by and large. Years ago, I think that Jack Vance accidently got listed as a pen name for Henry Kuttner, and the clearing up of the rumor never quite catches up with the people who have recently heard it. The first time it (The Gary Wright Rumor) appeared was in a Nebula awards an-

thology that Roger Zelazny edited, and on the copyright page, a pure typographical error, it was listed, Copyright Samuel R. Delany. A lot of very clever people suddenly decided therefore Gary Wright must be a pen name. And it's been following me and probably Gary Wright around for the past 6 or 7 years.

CONTACT:SF--How did you get the name of Bellona?

DELANY--I don't know...the first time I think I used it was in "Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones". Bellona is the goddess of war and it seemed like an appropriate name for a large city on Mars, which is what it was. On the other hand, cities are named after...like New York is named after York, England and Newark is named after another called Ark, so what was the city that Bellona might have been named after?

CONTACT:SF--Is the Bellona on Mars in "Helix" the same Bellona on Mars in Triton, or is that just a coincidence?

DELANY--No, I think that I sort of thought of it as the same, actually I thought of the two universes as being somewhat similar only in Triton it's minus the Singers.

CONTACT:SF--Have you ever thought of expanding "Time Considered as a Helix" into a novel?

DELANY--No, I don't think most of those usually work when you actually do them. A work sort of comes to you and has a particular length. A lot of good novellas have been turned into rather limp novels in science fiction.

CONTACT:SF--Was "Aye, and Gomorrah" your first short story?

DELANY--Actually "Corona" and "Dog in a Fisherman's Net", which is sort of mainstream I guess, or mundane as we say today...was written before that, and indeed so was "The Star-Pit".

CONTACT:SF--Harlan blurbs it as your first.

DELANY--Yeah, which is strange. I had submitted "Corona" to him and he had rejected it, and he wanted something else, so I wrote "Aye, and Gomorrah" for him.

CONTACT:SF--It's much more of a Dangerous Vision.

DELANY--Yeah, I think it's an even better story.

CONTACT:SF--Thank you, Mr. Delany.

REVIEW: THE SILMARILLION

J.R.R. Tolkien.
The Silmarillion
Houghton-Mifflin, 1977
$10.95

by

Joseph S. Zitt

Tolkien's Silmarillion may well have the dubious honor of being the most bought and least read best seller of the year. The success of the book was a publishing phenomenon, as it peaked the New York Times Best Seller List within a few weeks of its appearance, and had remained on it for more than thirty weeks.

Rather than the styless, easygoing prose of the usual best seller of the don/Susanne/Jakes/Robbins ilk, this volume is couched for the most part in language perhaps only comparable to that of the King James version of the Bible. In fact, the Bible is perhaps the only book to which the Silmarillion can be compared.

The book begins with no less auspicious an event than the creation of the world through song. Eru Ilúvatar a.k.a. God propounds a theme of music. His sub-deities, the Ainur, pick up on it and sing variations. Melkor, the most powerful of them, takes it into his head to change the tune. He leads it off into his own direction, creating discord. Eru brings the themes to a resolution, and creates the world as to their form, with calm and discord built in. Thus, is completed the first section, Ainulindalë.

Next follows the Valaquenta, a description of Tolkien's complex system of Gods and sub-deities, called the Valar, Ainur, and Maiar. Then comes the major portion of the volume, the Quenta Silmarillion, the History of the Silmarils.

The Quenta Silmarillion is not a novel, and if the reader approaches it with such expectations, he will be turned off and confused. It is more of a history text, showing the history of the world in general, and the elves in particular, from its creation through the end of the First Age and the final battle with Melkor/Morgoth, the Dark Lord. There are embedded within this history several tales, with stretches of lyric prose rivaling the best of that in Lord of the Rings. The tale of the love and adventures of the Elf-Maiden Luthien with the man, Beren, is one of the best stretches of storytelling in the entire chronicles of Middle-Earth. After the incessant battery of names and dates and battles Tolkien hurls at the reader it is pleasant to encounter the pastoral scenes of their love before one is again flung into the battles and searches of the history. Another tale, similarly focussed, is the tragedy of Turin Turambar, the doomed warrior. In the story of his fight the basic pessimism of the Silmarillion is most clearly shown. A major theme of the book is that, despite all their struggles, battles,

and conviction, the worldly beings, be they Elves, Dwarves, or Men, have no chance in fighting powers of evil greater than themselves, save by throwing their fates into the hands of the reluctant gods. Thus we read a seemingly unceasing tale of defeat and destruction before the Valar finally does intervene and imprison Morgoth. The next section, Akallabeth, follows the same pattern of action, telling of the fall of the men in Numenor from grace, as caused by the workings of Morgoth's underling, Sauron. They too head straight downhill, until the Valar intervene and end the evil by sinking the island, letting only the righteous few escape.

The Silmarillion is, in many ways, a strongly Christian work. The seemingly polytheistic world is actually basically monotheistic, as the powers of the Valar are drawn directly from Eru Ilúvatar (The One, Father of All) who is, when looked at closely, God. The peoples of Middle-Earth are born to evil, and, if left to their own, will succumb to whichever evil power is in influence at the time. Stripped of his trappings, Morgoth is actually a fairly conventional Lucifer. The story of the downfall and destruction of Numenor echoes quite closely the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah, and hints of other biblical tales are heard in other parts of the history.

Another similarity between the two works, and one of the major flaws of the Silmarillion, is that the book was constructed much like the Bible was; it is a compilation of a great many manuscripts woven together in a fairly linear form. While Tolkein's son, Christopher, has done a masterful job of editing the accumulated work of his father, spanning over half a century, into a fairly coherent narrative, the seams in the work still show. Between chapters there are frequent drastic changes of focus and speed. While flying quickly through vast chunks of history, the tale will unexpectedly shift gears into a slower moving tale of one man involved in a personal struggle. As the focus tightens, certain facts clarify and go out of focus, and it is as if we are reading a different book from that in which we started out.

Despite the flaws of its construction, which were perhaps inevitable due to its scope and the mode of its composition, the Silmarillion stands, along with the rest of Tolkein's oeuvre, as the greatest work of fantastic subcreation ever done by a single man. As a part of the greater work it completes, it is one of the few works of modern literature which is automatically assured of the label "classic".

SON OF CRUD

by Mitch Rudman

It is quite possible that you are not familiar with this series of articles, which has previously featured "Crud," and "Bride of Crud." What I have attempted to do is point out to the world the danger of dreaded crud--that affliction which plagues our culture. We all know crud. In books, movies, television shows....crud is omnipresent. In the world of science fiction and fantasy, crud abounds as it does nowhere else. Today, I'm going to show you some more of that effervescent art commonly referred to as.....crud.

First, a little number known as Conan the Barbarian. Let me digress for just one moment. I have a rather busy schedule, and as a result, don't have time to read anything but the finest books. To waste my time reading crud would be abhorrent to me. However, I have a friend who gets off on this stuff. He has agreed to clue me in on the crud phenomenon.

Now, as for Conan. If you aren't familiar with the fellow, here's the basic premise. Conan is this big barbarian-type fellow, who goes around pillaging stuff...basically a mercenary. The style is escapist and romantic. In a representative plot, "The Treasure of Taranicos," we see Conan crossing wild, untamed territory. He is being chased by an angry group known as the Picts. He turns to make his last stand, but they mysteriously go away. He then finds himself in a cave, and a beast appears, but he gets away. Then some pirate ships show up, and they all have a big battle. Conan's friends show up, and they want to start an army. They do, and Conan leads a revolt and becomes king of a place called Aquilonia.

Well, this is all very well and good. I'm not going to comment on how poor this plot is, nor the total absence of characterization, nor the unbelievability. However, what you are reading is the sanitized version of these stories. There exist unauthorized versions, first drafts, scenarios, plot synopsis and unpublished excerpts from this series of stories which you have never seen. I have managed to smuggle out some of these items before they reached the paper shredder. It is my pleasure to bring some of them to you.

We all know about Conan the Barbarian. But who knows about Conan, the Certified Public Accountant? Read this brief excerpt:

Conan approached the cave. It was dark inside. Cautiously, he made his way in. He knew he would have to do an audit...there was no way to avoid it. IRS was out for blood. Suddenly, a beast appeared.

"Augggggh!" roared the beast.

"Augggggh yourself," roared back Conan, "your books are a mess! Never in my forty-one years of pummeling, raping, conquering, pillaging, and certified public accounting have I ever seen such shoddy workmanship!"

Ashamedly, the beast lowered its eyes.

"You ought to be ashamed," chided Conan. "No receipts, no check stubs, faulty addition .....how will I ever straighten this out?"

Suddenly, there was a tremendous rumbling.

"Look, you can't eat those beans for lunch," Conan told the monster. "They're murder. I know, believe me."

Then, with that, Conan slew the beast, and took his American Express Traveler's Cheques.

"Never leave home without them," yelled Conan, as he mounted his trusty steed, Volkswagen, and made his way into the dawn, toward a new adventure. Somewhere in the world,

that world of primitive savages, of prehistory, of violence, a man with a secret, tax-free Swiss bank account stood trembling.

Now that never saw the presses, as I'm sure you can understand. But I cannot for the life of me imagine why Conan the Nutritional Analyst was never released to the public:

Conan stood there, surrounded....spears from all directions were pointed at his throat.

"No, no, no, no, no," said Conan, shaking his head. "You can't get proper nutrition by shoving things at your throats. You have to put them down your mouths." Then, to himself, he said, "No wonder these dumb idiots are so thin; they keep giving themselves tracheotomies before they can eat anything."

Conan lunged forward, escaping into the darkness. Electric bills hadn't been paid that month.

"Owww!" screamed Conan, "my damn foot got caught in the door!" The cry instilled terror in the hearts of all around him. But Conan had a plan. Later that night, when the others were asleep, he would sneak back into the camp and cover their feet with beef jerkey. Or perhaps chipped beef. Or even beef á la mode. With little sprinkles on the top, and maybe some melon balls on the side...garnished with lime jell-o! Yes. It would devastate his rivals forever more. Or at least until the jello melted.

The world of fantasy has never been immune to the mass media. With that in mind, have a look at a portion of a script I smuggled out from Check in With No Luggage film studios. The screenplay is for their upcoming (and highly underrated) picture - "Conan the Hooker."

105 ANGLE ON CONAN

Conan walks down the streets of New York, swaying his hips from side to side. He is not an unattractive barbarian. A nervous man comes up to him.

MAN

Are you that guy, Conan?

CONAN

What about it, big boy?

MAN

I'm really into this barbarian trip, you know?

CONAN

It'll cost you fifty.

MAN

What is it? Leather? Rubber? What?

CONAN

Spears.

MAN

Freaky. But if it's really good, I'll try it.

Police officers enter the scene.

COP

Okay, Conan, into the paddy wagon.

CONAN

Hey, Man, I'm cool, you dig? I didn't do nothin'

COP

Sure, Conan. What about those boots, and that lipstick?

MAN

Look, I thought he was a shoe shine boy, that's all...honest.

CONAN

Officer, I can get you a good deal on beef jerkey.

COP

Tell it to the judge.

CONAN

How about a Swiss bank account?

But we will leave Conan to his own devices. Let us discuss another figure of modern classical literature--Doc Savage. If you aren't familiar with the breed, allow me to relate the relevant facts to you.

Doc was trained from birth to fight evil. He is superhuman, has bronze skin, and gold eyes. They call him the man of bronze. It must be murder for him on the beach, trying to get a tan. Anyway, he hangs around with a guy who looks like an ape, an archaeologist, an electrician, a lawyer, a chemist, and an engineer. Together, they fight the forces of evil. They do this, strangely enough, by exploding bombs everywhere. Evidently influenced by the Palestine Liberation Army. At any rate, their funding comes from a special supply of gold given to Doc Savage by an ancient Mayan civilization. He is the greatest doctor in the world. He doesn't want to hurt criminals he catches, but rather, he wants to reform them. So, when he captures them, he takes them to a hospital in upper New York state, where he performs delicate brain surgery on them.

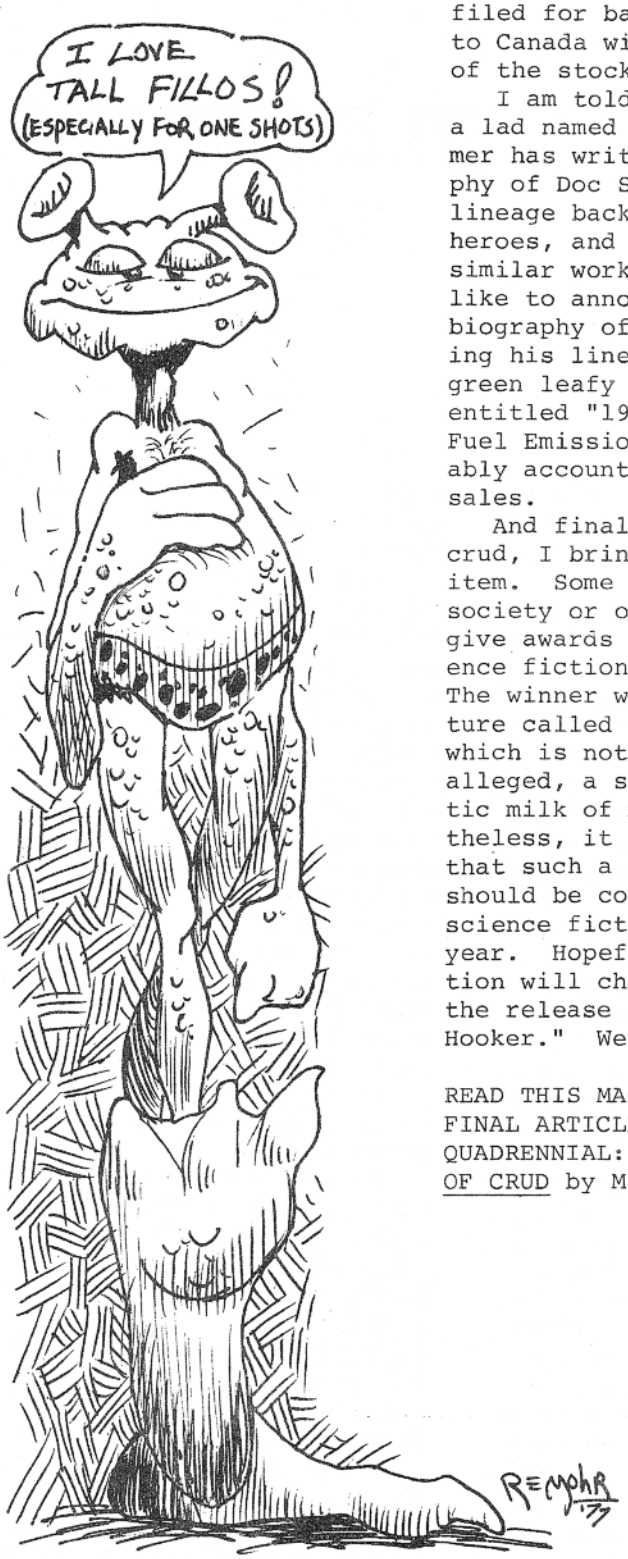
It is not widely known, but there was another series of books being planned for release previous to the Doc Savage series. It was entitled Doc Cab-

bage, and it dealt with an ordinary garden variety vegetable that also battled the forces of evil. It had a green leafy exterior, and no eyes at all, although it did have a head. He was called the cabbage of green. Doc Cabbage would hang out with other common vegetables, notably rutabega, and also cauliflower. Together, they would fight the forces of evil, and also the forces of vegetable deficiency, and in this way were very much like Conan the Nutritional Analyst. They did this by flinging themselves bodily into large steamy pits of watermelon seeds and grape jelly. Their funding came from the upper New York state treasury, which accounted for their constant bankruptcy. Doc Cabbage was the greatest brain surgeon and cabbage combination in the world. He didn't want to hurt the criminals he captured, but rather, wanted to pickle them. This was why he would take them to a secret hospital and pickle works in the state, and dip them into large vats containing spices from all around the world, notably Detroit.

The publishers were all set to go with Doc Cabbage, until they discovered that all the typesetters had died of swine flu. By the time they got new typesetters, they discovered that the entire work of Doc Cabbage had been transferred from paper to potato skins, and the originals destroyed. They were still undaunted and ready to publish, and would have, were it not for the subsequent potato blight that year.

After that, they tried Crock Savage, the story of a bronze crock pot that had been trained from birth to battle the forces of evil, while simultaneously cooking a full size roast with only a fraction of the electricity of a regular oven. This also would have made a very fine series, were it not for the fact that many of the publishing house employees mistook the crock pot for a urinal.

So they tried Flock Savage, the story of a flock of sheep trained from birth to battle the forces of evil. Then Rock Savage, Hock Savage, and Block Savage, all without success.



It was then that they hit upon the concept of Doc Savage. They invested all their money in that idea, putting their full effort behind the creation and promotion of Doc Savage. It was shortly thereafter that they filed for bankruptcy and fled to Canada with their portion of the stock certificate money.

I am told by my friend that a lad named Philip José Farmer has written an autobiography of Doc Savage, tracing his lineage back to other superheroes, and has also done a similar work on Tarzan. I would like to announce my own autobiography of Doc Cabbage, tracing his lineage back to famous green leafy vegetables. It is entitled "1976 EPA Report on Fuel Emissions," which probably accounts for the low book sales.

And finally, in my quest for crud, I bring you this news item. Some science fiction society or other decided to give awards for the best science fiction movies of 1976. The winner was a schlocko picture called "Logan's Run," which is not, as some have alleged, a story about futuristic milk of magnesia. Nevertheless, it strikes me as odd that such a lousy picture should be considered the finest science fiction picture of the year. Hopefully, the situation will change next year with the release of "Conan the Hooker." We can only hope.

READ THIS MAGAZINE FOR THE FINAL ARTICLE IN THE CRUD QUADRENNIAL: BRIDE OF SON OF CRUD by Mitch Rudman.

THE *SF* SHOPPING CART

by Frederick Paul Kiesche, III

Science Fiction is in a boom stage right now. You can see this when you walk into your local bookstore, when you browse through a magazine shop, when you look through a newspaper's movie or television listings. In this issue of Contact S.F., I'll be reviewing a whole slew of stuff: magazines, records, blueprints, artwork, fantasy, science fiction, and science fact books.

Stills from both Star Wars and Close Encounters of the Third Kind are being issued as a monthly poster-book type of magazine. Each issue features articles on special-effects, the stars of the movie, and a two-foot by three-foot poster of a blown-up still from a particular scene from Star Wars or CE3K. The stills from Star Wars have all (so far) been of the film's major characters, the stills from CE3K have all been of the Mothership. Both are of high quality, very little of the film grain shows up (which has been a problem with the Star Trek poster-books of the same company), the articles are usually amusing to read, if only for the childishness. They run for $1.50 each and come out once a month.

Science Fantasy Film Classics is a quarterly magazine running for $2.00 an issue. Each issue features three science fiction movies. The quality of this magazine, so far, has been excellent. Each issue focuses on one movie, and devotes a smaller amount of time to the other two movies. All the articles are informative, well-written, and authored by people who know what they are talking about. Other features include many color and black and white stills, artwork, and a twenty-two inch by thirty-two inch poster in the centerfold (each a conglomeration of elements from the three movies). SFFC is also available at a $7.00 a year subscription, and is well worth looking into.

We now come to a magazine that has been running for over a year now. If you haven't gotten a subscription, or picked up a copy on the newsstand, do so. The magazine is Starlog, published for $1.75 an issue, yearly subscriptions for $10.98. It comes out eight times a year, roughly once every one-and-a-half months. The magazine gives you an excellent coverage of filmed science fiction (television and movies), with a smaller amount of coverage going towards books, science fiction in general, conventions, and science fact. On the whole, this is a good science fiction version of Time or Newsweek.

Each issue has a number of color photographs. The articles are informative, even better in quality than those in SFFC. Regular features include: an editorial; readers' letters; a column of opinion by David Gerrold; a monthly article on some feature of the solar system; an article and episode guide on some science fiction television series; a monthly report on Star Trek by Susan Sackett; a monthly report on Space: 1999 by Gerry Anderson; and a monthly report on some aspect of special effects. The only fault that I find with the magazine is that it covers many very bad movies and television shows, lavishing these things with undeserved praise, while ignoring others that deserve more attention.

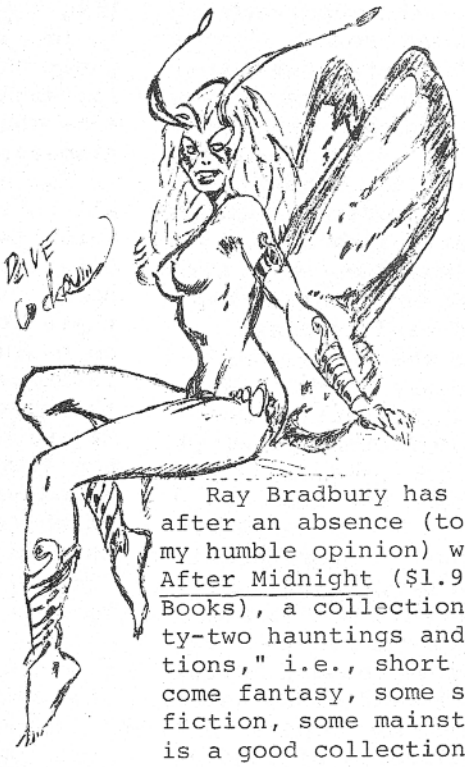
Starlog's popularity has spawned a sister magazine: Future. Future runs for $1.75 an issue, $10.98 a year. The only problem with Future is that it is a pretty good twin to Starlog. But as each new issue comes out, the two of

them seem to be diversifying as the theme of future comes out.

Stephen R. Donaldson has created one of the best fantasies of recent times in his The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever (Volume I: Lord Foul's Bane; Volume II: The Illearth War; Volume III: The Power That Preserves). Thomas Covenant is a leper from Earth that is called to the Land (another place) by an evil entity, Lord Foul. He is told that Lord Foul will destroy the universe of The Land unless certain tasks are undertaken and Thomas Covenant is able to learn how to use the "wild magic" that is locked up in the white gold of his wedding ring. He travels through The Land; is cured of his leprosy and rapes the girl who cures him; goes on a quest for The Staff of the Law; fights in the Illearth War; helps his daughter in the quest for The Power of Command; and finally travels with a giant, Saltheart Foamfollower, to Lord Foul's stronghold where he battles with Foul in the climactic conclusion to the trilogy. I would like to go into these works in a greater depth, instead I suggest that you turn to the article by Robert Foster on the works of Stephen R. Donaldson elsewhere in this issue of Contact S.F.. The books are available for ten dollars each ($30 a set) from Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston.

Terry Brooks tries to out-Tolkien Tolkien in his book The Sword of Shannara ($6.95 & $2.95, Del Rey Books). Unfortunately, he fails. The book takes place several hundred years in the future, after an atomic war has mutated mankind into different races, among them elves, trolls, dwarves, and gnomes. The evil Warlock Lord (who has an interesting resemblance to Sauron of Tolkien's universe) is rising in power, and the only way he can be stopped is with the famed and legendary Sword of Shannara. But the sword can only be wielded by a direct descendant of the House of Shannara. The Warlock Lord has been sending his Skull Creatures (which have a remarkable resemblance to Nazgul of Tolkien) around killing off all of the descendants. Lucky for us, they have missed one half-breed (elf/human) descendant, Shea Ohmsford, who has been picked up by the mysterious Druid (ouch!) Allanon (a wizard who bears an uncanny resemblance to Gandalf of....enough of this! You should be getting the idea by now!). Together with a troop of elves, one dwarf, some men, they set off to capture the Sword of Shannara and to destroy the Warlock Lord.

The book has too many incidents, places, and characters that resemble incidents, places, and characters in Tolkien's works to stand on its own: This is unfortunate, for despite these faults, Terry Brooks can spin a good tale. Perhaps he will do better with his next work, which, hopefully, will be something more than a clone gone bad of someone else's works.



Ray Bradbury has returned after an absence (too long, in my humble opinion) with Long After Midnight ($1.95, Bantam Books), a collection of "twenty-two hauntings and celebrations," i.e., short stories, come fantasy, some science fiction, some mainstream. It is a good collection of new, but vintage Bradbury, some humerous stuff, some biographical stuff, some stuff that could have come straight from The Twilight Zone. Another good point is the cover by Ian Miller, all of the Bantam published editions of Bradbury's works are being reissued with covers by that artist, which makes for some interesting sights on the bookstore shelves.

Avon books has come out with an excellent collection of "high" fantasy stories entitled The Fantastic Imagination. (Avon, $195). This collection, edited by Robert H. Boyer and Kenneth J. Zahorski, contains excerpts from novels, as well as novelettes and short stories. Featured are J. R. R. Tolkien ("Riddles in the Dark"), Lord Dunsany ("The Sword of Welleran"), George MacDonald ("The Light Princess"), and Peter S. Beagle ("Come Lady Death") among others. It should serve as an excellent introduction to the field of fantasy to those who have not yet travelled the regions of Faerie, or as a road map for those who wish to go

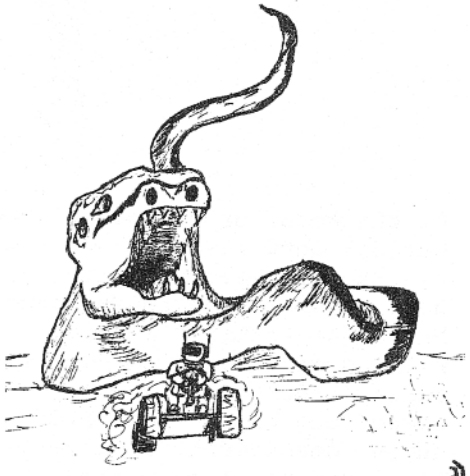
farther from the woods and fields that we know.

Arthur C. Clarke has published his latest, and according to him, next-to-last book. It is: The View From Serendip, ($8.95, Random House), a collection of essays and speculations on space, science, the sea, along with autobiographical fragments. The book can be read straight through, or the reader can skip from essay to essay as he pleases. The entire book offers a fascinating personal picture of one of science fiction's most prolific authors.

Carl Sagan's latest book, The Dragons of Eden ($8.95, Random House) is not so much a departure from his usual writings on astronomy, SETI, space travel, and black holes, as an extension of those writings. In each of his previous books Sagan was trying to popularize science so that people would become more educated in astronomy and space sciences, and thus be more interested in supporting science programs. Here he explores the evolution of intelligence. He writes well on this subject for an astronomer, his extensive research in this area before writing the book paid off. He also examines such things as exterrestrial intelligences, the cosmic calendar, communicating with other animals, and artificial intelligences. This book is not only useful as an introduction or overview of the field of intelligences studies, but should also serve as a source of story ideas for prospective writers.

In the same realm is Richard E. Leakey and Roger Lewin's Origins ($17.95, E. P. Dutton). It is concerened with the evolutions of that peculiar animal, Homo Sapiens, and its possible future. The book is lavish, illustrated with 240 drawings, photos, and maps, 100 of which are in color. It is written for the layman, and like Sagan's book, serves as an introductory reader for those who either are not familiar with the field, or want to know what has been recently discovered in this field.

The next three books are all on the subject of space colonization, a la Gerard K. O'Neil's Lagrange Point Five space cities. The first of these is the book on space colonization, written for the layman by the man who started the current stir, Professor Gerard K. O'Neil. It's written simply enough to be understood by all, and for those of us who are looking for hard information and data, this is



a fault, though not a serious one.

The book is entitled The High Frontier, and is available from William Morrow and Company for $8.95 in hardcover, or from Bantam Books at $2.75 in paperback form. The only difference between the two editions are the increased number of illustrations in the paperback edition, and the changing of such terms as "125 meters," to "as large as a football field." If you want a clear, concise view of the space colonies concept, here is the place to go.

Space Colonies ($5.95, Co-Evolution), edited by Stewart Brand, is a compilation of letters, articles, reviews, pictures, artwork, and diagrams, that have appeared in the "Whole Earth" magazine Co-Evolution Quarterly. It provides an interesting arena to read some of the "common man's" viewpoints on space colonies, by giving us feedback upon the idea. Some of the letters are very revealing; it's amazing the number of people who are still ignorant of basic scientific principles in this "enlightened" age.

In The Dosadi Experiment ($8.95, Berkley Putnam), Frank Herbert returns us to the universe of Jorj X. McKie, hero of The Whipping Star, to which this book is a sequel. In The Dosadi Experiment McKie is assigned to investigate the planet Dosadi, which is isolated from the rest of the universe by a force-field known as the "God-wall", which was set up by one of the intelligent stars (see Whipping Star). Dosadi is rumored to be an experimental planet. The experiment is being run by the frog-like Gowachin, whose cultural and legal system is understood only by McKie. He learns that Gowachin and Humans have been placed on Dosadi for an experiment in overcrowding. This experiment could last for centuries, but it breaks out of control, and it seems that the Gowachin may destroy Dosadi rather than expose what is going on there. This would break the long peace between races and start the first interstellar war.

When McKie reaches the planet Dosadi, he finds that the human and Gowachin residents have taken control of their own evolution and have produced a competitive, highly developed elite who have been able to extrapolate the existence of a universe beyond their god-wall. They hate those who have put them there and plan to break out and avenge themselves upon the rest of the universe.

The book is suspenseful, and well-written: it suffers from

none of the faults that usually plague sequels (such faults as those that showed up in the Dune sequels).

Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle have teamed up again, this time for Lucifer's Hammer ($10.00, Playboy Press). It is a catastrophe novel, not quite as good as The Mote in God's Eye or Inferno, but it is a hell of a lot better than the rest of the disaster genre.

The story deals with a collision between a comet and the planet Earth. The different characters of the novel are thrown out of their previously sedate and peaceful technological existence into a world wracked by earthquakes, tidal waves, storms of immense size and power, and advancing ice sheets from the polar caps. How they cope with the natural disasters along with remnants of mankind, their fellows, and themselves is the rest of the story.

As I said before, it's a lot better than other disaster novels. It suffers from none of their faults because Niven and Pournelle researched their topic so well. The characterizations may not be so good, but the descriptions of the comet, and its effect upon the Earth during and after collision are excellent.

The second season of the television show Space: 1999 has inspired a host of novelizations, all from Warner books for $1.50 each. They are (so far) Planets of Peril, The Mind-Breaks of Space, The Space-Jackers, The Psychomorph, and The Time Fighters. All are written by Michael Butterworth, and although one writer has been able to produce a more coherent series of books than last season's batch (which was written by many writers producing a lot of confusion), they still stink. Michael Butterworth has taken Space: 1999's visually exciting and intellectually stupid series episodes and turned them into even more

intellectually stupid books.

Star Trek has also spawned a host of books, over forty of them last time I counted. Some of these are quite good, others stink. They include the talents of such good writers as Alan Dean Foster, James Blish and Joe Haldeman, as well as some pretty bad writers.

Because I'm reviewing some books by Alan Dean Foster later on in this review, I'll hold off on him for now. Instead, I'll concentrate on two other fine writers: James Blish and Joe Haldeman.

The late James Blish was working on another novelization of the original Star Trek series when he unfortunately passed away. His wife, Judith A. Lawrence took up the task of completing it. It is entitled Star Trek Twelve ($1.75. Bantam Books), and it includes five novelized episodes: "Patterns of Force," "The Gamesters of Triskelion," "And The Children Shall Lead," "The Corbomite Maneuver," and "Shore Leave." The stories are up to the usual Blish par, and although he has slightly changed some of the story elements, I enjoyed the book highly.

Some readers may notice that two of the Star Trek episodes, "Mudd's Women," and "I, Mudd" were never novelized. They too were completed by Judith A. Lawrence as Mudd's Angels, the thirteenth and last book in the series of live novelizations. This book includes the two episodes, as mentioned above, with additional material written by J. A. Lawrence. I enjoyed it a lot, it is a very funny book. It is available for $1.75 from Bantam Books.

Joe Haldeman's Planet of Judgment ($1.75, Bantam Books) is an excellent pastiche of the Star Trek series, better in quality than James Blish's own excursion, Spock Must Die! The "Enterprise" encounters a planet orbited by a miniature black hole that acts like a sun. They land a crew to investigate the planet, and everything goes wrong. The technology of the "Enterprise" fails them, and they find themselves on a world ruled by bizarre aliens that are fighting a deadly war with another race, just as powerful as they are and twice as bizarre. Although Planet of Judgement is not quite as good as Haldeman's The Forever War or Mindbridge, it is certainly well worth reading and a lot better than the next three books I'm reviewing.

Star Trek: The New Voyages, Volumes One and Two ($1.95, Bantam Books) edited by Sondra Marshak and Myrna Culbreath, and The Price of the Phoenix ($1.75, Bantam Books), by Myrna Culbreath and Sondra Marshak, stink. They are the type of masturbatory stories written by the devoted Trekkies that seem to swarm at different conventions. These books are nothing more than cheap ripoffs designed to remove money from your pockets. They have flashy covers, mention some big names, promise you exciting adventures, and give you nothing inside. All three books are filled with lousy stories, lousy characterizations, and lousy writing. Don't buy. Invest in a savings account

instead.

Another novel (potboiler novel out of potboiler television series) in the realm of the pits is The Man From Atlantis. This is the novelization of the first pilot of the "number one" show that NBC cancelled. The book is by Richard Woodley, and is available from Dell for $1.50. The only thing lower than this series was Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea. The pilot wasn't any good, the series was worse, and the book helps neither of them. Go out and write your own "hit" series instead of reading this one.

William F. Nolan returns to the world of Logan and Jessica in Logan's World. This is the first of two solo byline sequels to the Johnson/Nolan novel Logan's Run. The second sequel (Logan's Search) is not yet published, and is expected sometime in the future. Because it is a sequel, and a solo byline novel, it is not as good as Logan's Run, but it is still worth getting. The novel takes us where the first book left off, in Argos, the runner Sanctuary satellite around the planet Mars. It brings us back to Earth and through a series of adventures with Logan and Jessica. Occasionally Nolan will try some "experimental" writing that detracts from the story. Otherwise I recommend it. It is available from Bantam Books for $1.75.

Alan Dean Foster is a fine young science fiction writer who will go far. From his novelization of Dark Star (which was almost as good as the movie) and the novelizations of the animated Star Trek episodes, to such novels as Icerigger (which should have received more attention than it did) and Midworld he has shown himself to be a writer with a good eye to action, science, and characterization. His stories of Flinx of the Commonwealth (The Tar-Aiym Krang, Orphan Star, and Bloodhype) are no exception. And so, we come to The End of the Matter (Del Rey, $1.75), the latest, but hopefully, not the last, of the stories about Flinx. All through the previous three books, Flinx has been searching for his origins and the reasons for his mysterious powers. In this novel his search comes to an end. Also thrown in are a mysterious alien named Abalamahalamatandra--Ab for short, a rogue black hole threatening several solar systems, a battle fleet of the Aan determined to prevent any action against the black hole, a pursuit by the deadly killer assasins called the Qwarm, and a visit to the home world of Pip the minidrag. Go to it.

With Friends Like These... ($1.75, Del Rey) is a collection of twelve wonderous and delightful stories by Foster. They range from a Eric Frank Russellish yarn to a H. P. Lovecraft Cthulhu Mythos pastiche. In between are stories that are pure Foster.

Two books by Foster are in the Star Trek sub-genre; Star Trek Log Nine: BEM (Del Rey, $1.50) and Star Trek Log Ten: The Slaver Weapon (Del Rey, $1.95). In these two books, Foster continues in the same vein that he started in Star Trek Log Seven: The Counter-Clock Incident. Instead of novelizing three series episodes, as he did in the first six Logs, he novelizes one episode and fills in the rest of the novel with his own ideas. This has paid off, incidentally; Foster has scripted (along with creator Gene Roddenberry) the Star Trek movie. They are fast-moving books, filled with interesting plot twists, and show the continuing development of Foster as a writer.

The novel Star Wars (Del Rey, $1.95) is rumored to be written by Alan Dean Foster, rather than by George Lucas, whose name appears on the finished product. Having read a sequel to the movie, one penned by Foster (Splinter of the Mind's Eye, Del Rey, $1.95), I'm convinced that the rumor is true. The writing styles in the two books are too alike to have been written by different people. Maybe the truth will come out in the near future.

The novel Star Wars is good if you want something to remember the movie by. It is, I am afraid, not very good. It's fast moving and exciting. It lacks, as the movie did, characterization. And unlike the movie, it does not have a fantastic set of visual and aural special effects, which in the movie, made up for the lack of characterizations. So what you are left with is a poor man's version of a E. E. "Doc" Smith novel.

Foster's Splinter of the Mind's Eye is a better novel than Star Wars. Along with being fast moving and exciting, a necessary requirement for a Star Wars, the characterizations are done in more depth than the first novel. The story concerns the search on a jungle planet for a jewel that can magnify The Force in a person. Luke and Leia are racing against the infamous villain (my hero!) Lord Darth Vader. There are numerous confrontations between different sets of aliens, a few skirmishes with Imperial Stormtroopers, and a light sabre fight between Luke and Darth Vader (Try to guess what happens in the end. Old you-know-who escapes in the end for another sequel. I just hope it doesn't turn into a weekly light sabre fight story on ABC TV.). But that was the only predictable portion of the book. Otherwise it is one of Foster's more interesting diversions. Check

it out.

James P. Hogan is a name new to most of us who are familiar with the field of science fiction. But with just three books, Inherit the Stars (Del Rey, $1.50), The Gentle Giants of Ganymede (Del Rey, $1.75) and The Genesis Machine ($1.75), he has established himself as an excellent writer of the hard science fiction variety.

In Inherit the Stars we have a sort of cosmic mystery. A body of a primitive human has been found on the moon wearing a spacesuit. It could not be an alien--it matches too exactly with human standards, and Hogan doesn't take the easy way out with parallel evolution. It couldn't have come from Earth--there were no technical civilizations at that time, and no traces of any such were ever found. So where could "Charlie" have come from?

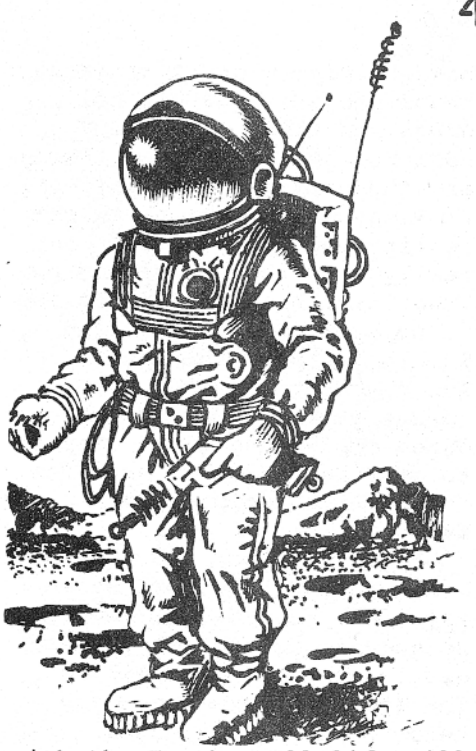
Hogan gives us a meticulously woven speculative story on the origins of mankind. He doesn't write like VonDaniken and his rusty chariots. His stars and planets are in the proper places; his story is like that of Niven or Clarke. Except for one necessary device, his science is correct. His archaeology doesn't depend on the Easter Island statues for evidence, it fits well within known data. The characterizations are well done; one scientist that another author would have turned into a villain is shown to be a man with different opinions. It is one novel that I enjoyed better than all of the other so-called "instant classics" released in the past few months.

The Gentle Giants of Ganymede is a sequel to Inherit the Stars. In it we meet the aliens that started mankind on its rise in Inherit the Stars. Those aliens seemed to have vanished, except for one crashed ship on Ganymede. After twenty-five million years a ship has returned from deep space bringing with it the answers to mankind's origins.

Unfortunately, with two good books under his belt, the third is not quite what I had hoped for. The Genesis Machine is a slightly confused, grandiose, speculation novel that sets forth a fictional theory that ties all of time, space, and matter together in one big concept. The characterizations are as good as the other two Hogan books, the story is not. It is a view of a pessimistic future, one that I did not like. Otherwise, it is a fairly decent tale; the scientific concepts will leave your head spinning!

The Jupiter Theft (Del Rey, $1.95), by Donald Moffitt, is the author's first excursion into the field of science fiction. Unfortunately, with all of the fine scientific research that went into the story, and all the ideas put forth through the story, it is not written as well as it could have been.

The story is set about one hundred years in the future. A large rogue X-ray source is discovered coming out of Cygnus, on a collision course



with the Earth. All life will perish, unless something is done. Nothing can be done. But, surprise, surprise, the X-ray source changes mass, loses speed, and takes up residence around the planet Jupiter, which it promptly starts to eat. In other words it is stealing Jupiter's mass for fuel.

The story has many interesting ideas, such as the one above. The aliens are bizarre, but interesting and well designed. But the story reads like a cross between Clarke's Rendezvous With Rama, Huxley's Brave New World, Niven and Pournelle's The Mote in God's Eye, and a couple of spy novels. His characterizations are pretty standard, and some of the action should have been trimmed. But for most, it should provide an evening's entertainment.

In A Scanner Darkly (Del Rey, $1.95) Philip K. Dick spins a tale full of clear reality and warped perceptions, one of his best. It is the story of an undercover narcotics agent whose personality is eventually split because of a drug called "Substance D"--D for Death.

The novel is hard-hitting when it comes to the area of drug addiction--and even more

hard-hitting when it comes to those who drive people to drugs, or those who "help" addicts. And of course there are the usual (or unusual) Dick passages where he twists reality so that you don't really know what is happening. I wouldn't be surprised to see it up on the final Hugo and Nebula ballot's this year. And I wouldn't be surprised to see it win. Buy a couple dozen copies and given them to your head friends as gifts. You might be doing them a favor.

Frederick Pohl has written a new novel this year, Gateway, (Del Rey, $1.95), which is sure to be another contender for the Hugo and Nebula. The story concerns an anti-hero, Robinette (or Bob) Broadhead, a winner of the Earth Lottery. He goes to Gateway, an asteroid which has been found to be filled with the technological remains of a race called the Heechee. The Heechee ships can be sent out on missions--but nobody knows to where, or how long, or if they would return. You can get rich on these missions or you can die.

The book alternates between chapters in Broadhead's present, where he is rich and is being psychoanalyzed by a robot psychiatrist; and his past when he is on Gateway or different missions with the Heechee ships. As well as being a fine outer space story, it is also a fine inner-space story, as Sigfried the psychiatrist probes Broadhead's mind.

Larry Niven's latest book, A World Out Of Time (Del Rey, $1.95) is set in one of his universes, the Löshy Circuit. It is a rewriting of several of his novelettes that have appeared in Galaxy magazine over the past ten years.

Jerome Branch Corbell is a corpsicle who is dying of cancer. He had himself frozen in the hopes that a cure for his cancer would be found sometime in the future. Unfortunately, there is no cure for the millions of burst cells that resulted from his being frozen.

He wakes up to find that his personality has been transferred into another body. The State, the all-powerful and all-pervading government of the future has awakened him and trains him to be a pilot for a Bussard Interstellar Ramseedership. He is chosen instead of an ordinary citizen because he has survived one journey into the future. With the ramship travelling close to light-speed, he will return to a different future each time he comes back to Earth.

Instead of following orders, he steals the ramship and heads for the Galactic Center. His mentor has his personality beamed into the ship's computer, and tries to persuade Corbell to return to his original heading.

Corbell reaches the galatic center and finds that it is occupied by a rather large black hole. Making a swing around it, he returns to the Earth. He finds that the solar system has been altered in his absence; the Earth is now in orbit around the planet Jupiter, among other things.

It is a fine tale, one of Niven's best. It is probably the best book that I have reviewed in this article so far, and I recommend it to you whole-heartedly.

The Web of the Chozen (Del Rey, $1.75), is Jack L. Chalker's third excursion into the field of science fiction (novel length). Unfortunately, it's his poorest. The story displays its origins a little too obviously: Frank Herbert's Destination Void, Larry Niven's Protector, and Robert A. Heinlein's Methuselah's Children.

But don't let that criticism stop you. Like James P. Hogan and Alan Dean Foster, Chalker is improving with every novel. His character of Bar Holliday, scout for the Terran Corporation, was one that I found entirely believable and likeable. His story held interest also, despite its obvious origins.

Bar Holliday discovers the planet of the Choz, bizarre aliens that once were human. They have been changed by a computer with delusions of godhood. Holliday and one of the Choz escape upon Holliday's ship (Holliday has been changed into one of the Choz). Both are "pregnant"--or ra-

ther are carrying fertilized eggs. They capture a large freight ship and use it as a home, until they carry out their plan of Chozíforming the entire human universe. An interesting novel, you'll be cheering the Choz and booing your descendants before you're 100 pages into it.

After a long wait, Hal Clement has finally written a sequel to his famous classic Needle. It is Through the Eye of a Needle (Del Rey, $1.75). Bob is dying, and the Hunter is the cause of his demise. They have returned to the island of Ell to search for the Hunter's and the Quarry's ship. They hope to find evidence of a follow-up expedition, and to contact that expedition. It is a desperate race against time, one that will keep you on the edge of your seat when it becomes apparent that someone else is trying to kill Bob off...

Despite efforts to the contrary, I do not consider Ben Bova's Millennium (Del Rey, $1.95) to be any great classic of political literature. The efforts mentioned are a series of editorials in Bova's magazine Analog, which have been warning us of the danger of our lagging space race, the Russian's advance in killer satellites, the possibilities of using the Moon or L5 points as a base for building laser satellites, etc., etc., etc., ...

I understand the danger of such things, and I applaud Mr. Bova's efforts to try and warn us, but why does he have to use the magazine he is the editor of as an advertising pose for his novel? Mr. Bova! I'm shocked! You're a capitalist, just like the rest of us! Well...so much for high ideals.

The story? Oh...well, there's this base on the moon, see. It's got Americans on it and Russians. America and Russia are on the brink of a war. The Commanders of the two respective sides of the base decide to stop the war. They succeed, but in the process are betrayed, win again, and the novel ends as the heavenly choir sings praises for the martyred Commander of the American side of the base.

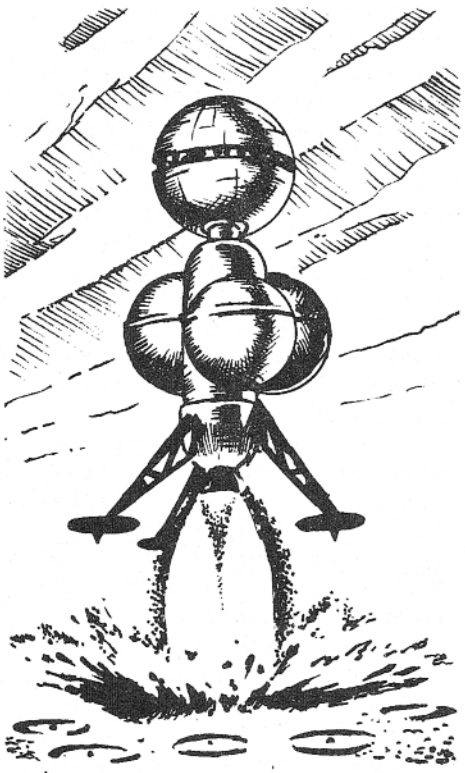
What was it that I specifically didn't like about the novel? The plot. The action. The characters. The theme. The fact that the editor of such a fine magazine (at least in his opinion) should have done better. Oh well, back to the drawing board.

Our final two books (before we go on to the rest) are both by Steven Spielberg. One is Close Encounters of the Third Kind (Dell, $1.95). The other is the CE3K Fotonovel, but since the film was done by Spielberg, I'm putting him down as the author. It is also available from Dell, for $2.50.

Don't read the novel by Spielberg. Go see the movie instead. The novel fails to convey any of the grandeur of the movie. This would be fine, if Spielberg was as good a writer as he is a director. But he is not, so that shoots down that hope. Watch the movie instead.

The Fotonovel is almost as good as seeing the movie, though. It contains over 400 scenes from the movie, and although a few of them are out of sequence, it's a pretty good buy. The pictures are pretty clear, and well-reproduced. It's a nice souvenir of the movie.

The Star Wars Sketchbook ($4.95) by Joe Johnston, and The Star Wars Portfolio (Ballantine, $7.95) are both worth getting. The Star War Blueprints (Ballantine, $6.95) are well worth avoiding. The Sketchbook contains original drawings for the sets and models of the movie. It shows how the designs developed, what ones were kept, what ones were dropped. It also provides some interesting insights into George Lucas'



universe.

The Portfolio contains 21 paintings by space artist Ralph McQuarrie, whose artwork has graced four Ballantine/Del Rey books in the recent past. The paintings are well-reproduced, and large enough in size to show a good amount of detail. They also show some interesting story changes that the plot of the movie went through before it reached its final form.

The Blueprints are not worth the paper they are written on. They are poorly reproduced, and in most cases, not even complete copies of a set. Don't buy.

And now we have something completely different...elements of fantasy and science fiction have been creeping into music recently. They have been reflected by such established groups as Yes and such new groups as Heart and Alan Parson. All are excellent and here are the reviews.

O.K., how many of you have ever heard of a group called Hawkwind? That many? The rest of you go out to the store and immediately buy their latest album Quark, Strangeness, and Charm.

Hawkwind is a group (British) that has been building up a small following over the years. They are a group that have figured in the science fiction of Michael Moorcock, who has written some of their "Songs."

All of the songs on this album have s.f. elements, especially "Spirit of the Age," "Damnation Alley," and the title song. Hawkwind is an excellent group, all songs and arrangements are well-written and well-performed.

Although not as clearly rooted into science fiction as Hawkwind is, Yes can be counted on to give you fantastic elements in all of their songs. The album Going for the One is no exception. Especially noteworthy are the songs "Turn of the Century", "Wondrous Stories," and "Awaken." With this album Rick Wakeman has rejoined Yes, and this album shows a new vitality and style that should end the group, as the title indicates, Going for the One.

Although it is not a s.f. & f. oriented group, at least two songs on the new Heart album, Little Queen has elements of fantasy in them. They are the songs "Sylvan Song," and "Song of the Archer." The other songs aren't bad either.

Alan Parsons, the engineer on the Beatles Abbey Road album, and the legendary Pink Floyd Dark Side of the Moon album, has recently started producing albums, all three of which have elements of science fiction deeply set into them. All three are sub-titled as The Alan Parsons Project with main titles of Tales of Mystery and Imagination by Edgar Allan Poe, I Robot, and Pyramid. All three are excellent albums and are well-worth adding to your collection.

Tales is a musical interpretation of different poems and stories by Edgar Allan Poe. Of the three albums, the theme of this one comes across the strongest. Noteworthy of the songs are "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Raven," and "The Cask of Amontillado."

I Robot chronicles musically the downfall of mankind and the rise of his successor, the robot. It is not Asimov's ideas; Parsons takes a more pessimistic view of the future of mankind. Noteworthy songs are "I Robot," "I Wouldn't Wanna Be Like You," "Total Eclipse," and "Genesis Ch. 1, V. 32." Good for the parties at conventions.

Pyramid is the least thematic of the three Parsons albums. It concerns things that last, things that time drags down. Musically it is excellent, probably the best of the three. It is also the most commercial of the three albums, probably the main reason for the lessening of the theme in this album.

The scores of Star Wars and CE3K were both penned by John Williams. Unfortunately, I recognized some of the music of Star Wars as being done by Emerson, Lake, & Palmer on the Tarkus and Brain Salad Surgery albums several years back, and the music of CE3K is either de-

rived from a five-note sequence or from Ligeti-like choir arrangements.

The J.R.R. Tolkien Soundbook available from Caedmon Records for about $20.00 is a must for any Tolkien fanatic. It contains excerpts from all of Tolkien's major works, either read by Tolkien, his son, or sung by William Elvin. Although the recording quality is not so good on some of the records (they were taken from an old wire-recording) the record is interesting because it provides the author's own interpretation of his own works.

And that, folks, is it. A boom year for fantasy and science fiction, as I said before. And the quality has been pretty good, contrary to my expectations. Let's hope that it stays this good, and with all the new stuff coming out, science fiction will get some new greats.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS . . .

Mitch Rudman is Crazy. Despite (or perhaps because of) this, he is a student at U.C.L.A., and works as a professional copywriter in his spare time. "Son of Crud" explores Sturgeon's Law, and finds it perhaps a little too optimistic.

Howard Chaykin, Alfredo Alcala, Craig Russell, Gene Colan, and Ernie Chan are all professional artists, well known to comics fans. Many thanks to John Paul for procuring their drawings.

The drawings of Alex Nino and Dave Cockrum (both also pros), were originally to appear in John Morrison's magazine of Fantasy Gaming, DankenDismal. Many thanks to John for letting us at them. Several of John's own works appear within this issue. John is a student at Livingston College, as is Steve Hart, another of our artists.

Dan Joy is a fan from the Washington area, and co-editor, along with Semtow Suchartikul of the now infamous Fanny Hill.

Mary Engargiola is an English major at Fairleigh Dickinson University, where she hangs around with a group of highly literate eccentrics. She will soon begin work on a mural in Philadelphia.

Tad Markham lives in Florida, and is becoming widely accepted as a fan artist.

Doug Woods is from Cherry Hill, N.J., and hangs out with Mitch Rudman. 'nuff said.

Bob Hires, our art editor, also lives in Cherry Hill and is a sophomore at the Pennsylvania College of Fine Arts. His work has been displayed at various conventions around the country.

Our Cover is by Bob Walters, one of the best of the new generation of SF artists. You'll be seeing much more of him in the near future.

We would also like to thank Edith Frank, Linda Healey, Frederick Paul Kiesche II (for the linotyping), Frederick Paul Kiesche III, George Stadtmueller, Hank Bordowitz, Tabby Lee, John Cowan, Chrys Bannon, and Gina Busby. (Oh, yes. We mustn't forget our Suzies.)

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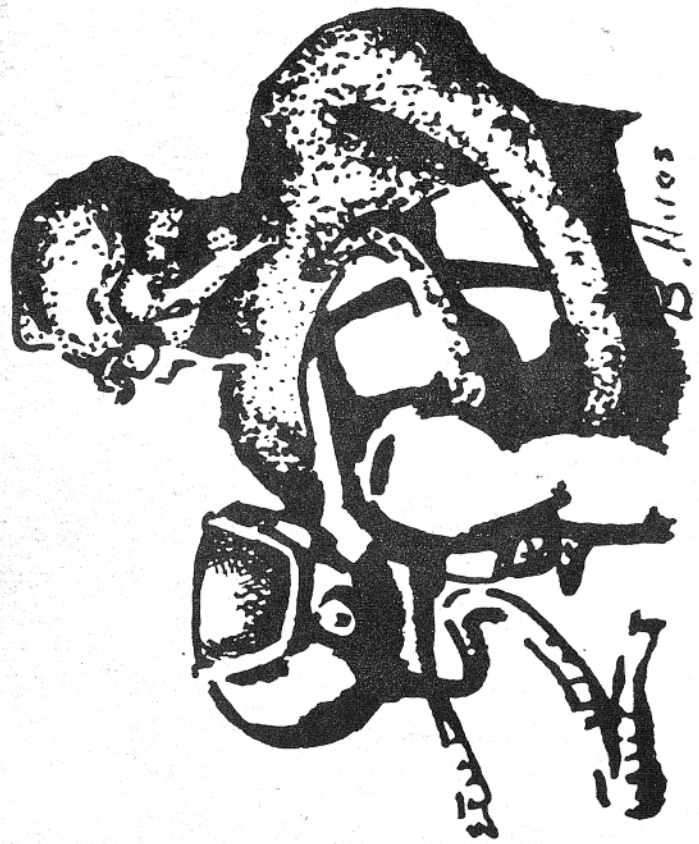

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