



The Magazine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation's
History and Research Bureau
"Discovering Science Fiction"

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EDITORIAL



What Does Science Fiction Have of Significance to the World and to Culture?

Science fiction came into being with a desire to catch people by surprise and introduce them to new and sensational concepts, as may be seen from the titles of the earlier magazines—Amazing, Astounding, Startling, Thrilling Wonder, Famous Fantastic Mysteries, Astonishing, and others, titles which suggested readers being transported away from the ordinary and into new realms of thought. It was exploratory, innovative, extraordinary, iconoclastic, and it had a drive to it that gave readers a sense of excitement. The stories were fast-paced and entertaining. Perhaps this all arose from the fact that science was engaged in studying things and finding out about things which were unknown. It lacked color, but science fiction gave it that. Fantasy had the same sort of imaginative progress, and unearthed its wonders without being asked about it by science, but it met with science on the exploratory front and had a similar perspective towards the ways of existence.

In the midcentury science fiction seemed also to encounter the philosophy of existentialism, which concerned man's place in the world and the possible purposes to be found in being in the world. Questions were being raised about what science fiction was in those times of the digest-sized magazines. This might have led later on to the evolution of the term "speculative fiction" as a possible replacement term for "science fiction", it being a term which suggested a wider range of thought. Science fiction seemed to flout normal existence and insist upon the unusual, but one cannot have that outlook without considering what that outlook is. Found within that realm of thought concerning science fiction and its meaning and purpose is the idea that mankind has some kind of inherent default and needs progressive learning and contemplation of life

to overcome the deficit.

Some consider science fiction too far outside the normal run of writing to be considered a form of literature. It would seem to these people that it has no relation to real life or any relevance to actual matters of life, except for the abstract matters of science. In fact it has considerable significance to worldly matters and to culture and tradition. Its concern is with the progress of thought and it considers cultural matters from its own perspective, outstanding examples being the interpretations of society and the way things are set up that are found in such works as NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR, BRAVE NEW WORLD, WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, WAR OF THE WORLDS and TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, or with societal possibilities such as are found in the writings of Theodore Sturgeon, Philip Jose Farmer, Fredrick Brown and many others. It is not disruptive writing; rather, it studies disruptive events and, as Stanley Schmidt has stated, one of the essentials of science fiction is problem solving. It keeps pace with changes in the world, and often its visualizations of the future have shown a lot of prophetic ability.

As for cultural awareness, science fiction actually studies culture, as do the sciences of anthropology, archaeology, and sociology, and it studies human nature also, as do the sciences of psychology and biology. Many science fiction stories are concerned with anthropological and archaeological findings, and some of the stories of this genre practically constitute sociological speculation. People have shown the tendency to emphasize mainly technological considerations found in science fiction when considering what science fiction is, but technology is a small part of the sciences involved in science fiction writing. (This matter has been of concern to people writing in NFFF magazines for as long as I have been reading them.)

Since the fifties there has been existential interest in science fiction, and nothing studies or contemplates life more than existential philosophy. This may represent a maturing of science fiction over its original excitement. Farmer, van Vogt, and Asimov have all shown existential considerations in what they write, and there has been a lot of talk about existentialism in science fiction fanzines. Since that time and over the sixties and seventies science fiction has been studying itself, an advancement in its development as a concerned literature.

Nobody is "practicing escape" or "wasting their time" reading science fiction and fantasy; both are of concern to the thinking man or woman. It may be that with some further interpretation of it in the present, it will continue to mature as a literature.

Some Definitions of Science Fiction

by Jeffrey Redmond



Learn to know the genre.

What is Science Fiction?

Science fiction, often called “sci-fi”, is a genre of fiction literature whose content is imaginative, but based in science. It relies heavily on scientific facts, theories and principles as support for its settings, characters, themes, and plot lines, which is what makes it different from fantasy.

So, while the storylines and elements of science fiction stories are imaginary, they are usually possible according to science—or at least plausible.

Although examples of science fiction can be found as far back as the Middle Ages, its presence in literature was not particularly significant until the late 1800s. Its true popularity for both writers and audiences came with the rise of technology over the past 150 years, with developments such as electricity, space exploration, medical advances, industrial growth, and so on. As science and technology progress, so does the genre of science fiction.

Example of Science Fiction

Read the following short passage:

As the young girl opened her window, she could see the moons Europa and Calisto rising in the distance. A comet flashed by, followed by a trail of stardust, illuminating the dark, endless space that surrounded the spacecraft—the only place she had ever known as home. As she gazed at Jupiter, she dreamed of a life where she wasn't stuck orbiting a planet, but living on one. She envisioned stepping onto land, real land, like in the stories of Earth her father had told her about. She tried to imagine the taste of fresh air, the feel of a cool, salty ocean, and the sound of wind rustling through a tree's green leaves. But these were only fantasies, not memories. She had been born on the ship, and if they didn't find a new inhabitable planet soon, she would surely die there too.

The example above has several prime characteristics that are common in science fiction. First, it is set in the future, when humans no longer live on Earth. Second, it takes place on a spacecraft that is orbiting Jupiter. Third, it features real scientific information—Europa and Calisto are two of Jupiter's moons, and as Jupiter is a planet made of gas, it would not be possible for humans to live there, explaining why the ship is currently orbiting the planet rather than landing on it.

Types of Science Fiction

Science fiction is usually distinguished as either "hard" or "soft".

Hard Science Fiction

Hard science fiction strictly follows scientific facts and principles. It is strongly focused on natural sciences like physics, astronomy, chemistry, astrophysics, *etc.* Interestingly, hard science fiction is often written by real scientists, and has been known for making both accurate and inaccurate predictions of future events. For example, the recent film GRAVITY, the story of an astronaut whose spacecraft is damaged while she repairs a satellite, was renowned for its scientific accuracy in terms of what would actually happen in space.

Soft Science Fiction

Soft science fiction is characterized by a focus on social sciences, like anthropology, sociology, psychology—in other words, sciences involving human behavior. So, soft sci-fi stories mainly address the possible scientific consequences of human behavior. For example, the Disney animated film WALL-E is an apocalyptic science fiction story about the end of life on Earth as a result of man's disregard for nature.

In truth, most works use a combination of both hard and soft science fiction. Soft sci-fi allows audiences to connect on an emotional level, and hard sci-fi adds real scientific evidence so that they can imagine the action actually happening. So, combining the two is a better storytelling technique, because it lets audiences connect with the story on two levels. Science fiction also has a seemingly endless number of subgenres, including but not limited to time travel, apocalyptic, utopian/dystopian, alternate history, space opera, and military science fiction.

Importance of Science Fiction

Many times, science fiction turns real scientific theories into full stories about what is possible and/or imaginable. Many stories use hard facts and truths of sciences to:

Suggest what could really happen in the future.

Explore what could happen if certain events or circumstances came to be or suggest consequences of technological and scientific advancements and innovation.

Historically it has been a popular form for not only authors, but scientists as well. In the past 150 years, science fiction has become a huge genre, with a particularly large presence in film and television—in fact, the TV network "SciFi" is completely devoted to science fiction media. It is a particularly fascinating and mind-bending genre for audiences because of its connection to reality.

Examples of Science Fiction in Literature

Example One:

A genre-defining piece of science fiction literature is H.G. Wells' 1898 novel THE WAR OF THE WORLDS, which tells the story of an alien invasion in the United Kingdom that threatens to destroy mankind. The following is a selection from the novel's introduction:

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter...No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger.

Here the narrator describes a time when mankind was naïve. He is setting up for the story of when Earth was unexpectedly attacked by an alien race, and how they were completely unprepared and too proud to believe that any other force in the universe could threaten them. Though only a story, *War of the Worlds* addressed a scientific concern and possibility that is a mystery for mankind.

Example Two:

Published in 1949, George Orwell's *NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR* shows the future of mankind in a dystopian state. It is set in what is now the United Kingdom, and shows society under the tyrannical rule of a government that has their population under constant surveillance and threat of imprisonment for having wrong thoughts. Throughout the novel is the constant theme that "Big Brother" is watching.

Outside, even through the shut window pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no color in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-mustached face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. *BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU*, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own.

This passage describes the story's setting—dull, colorless, and monitored—and hints at society's status. At the beginning, Winston is a citizen who wants to fight the system, but by the end, he falls victim to the government's control tactics.

Examples of Science Fiction in Pop Culture

Example One:

Perhaps the most popular and well-known examples of science fiction in popular culture—specifically “space opera” science fiction—are George Lucas’ legendary STAR WARS films. Star Wars has perhaps one of the largest (if not the largest) fan-followings of all time; and its status in the science fiction world is absolutely epic. This renowned science fiction series is particularly unique because it actually starts in the middle of the story, with “Episode IV”. In fact, Episodes I, II, and III weren’t produced until almost forty years after the first film’s debut. The following clip captures the well-known opening of the first film, STAR WARS EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE, which is now referred to as the “Star Wars Opening Crawl”. It also features the iconic “Star Wars Theme Song”, which is instantly recognizable by fans and non-fans alike.

Star Wars Intro HD 1080p

Since the first film is actually “Episode IV”, this opening “crawl” lays out the precluding storyline and provides (fictional) historical context for the audience. The later films (Episodes I-III) actually bring this back-story to life.

Example Two:

THE MATRIX is a sci-fi action film that thrilled audiences upon its release. It tells the story of a world where human existence is completely controlled, and life on Earth is actually only a simulation occurring in our minds. This simulation is called “the Matrix”. In the following clip, the audience and the main character learn what Earth is actually like behind the simulation:

What is the Matrix?

Here, the protagonist, Neo, is presented with the information that his life is all an illusion, and it is almost more than his mind can handle. Eventually, he is given the choice of whether to continue to live in the Matrix, or to live in reality and try to save mankind—a task that is almost impossible, and at times terrifying.

Related Terms

Fantasy

Fantasy is a genre of fiction that concentrates on imaginary elements (the fantastic). This can mean magic, the supernatural, alternate worlds, superheroes, monsters, aliens, and so on. Many science fiction works involve elements of fantasy, like imagined worlds, made-up beings from other galaxies, paranormal powers, *etc.* So the two genres tend to overlap. However, the primary distinction is that the elements of fantasy in science fiction always have a basis in science, whereas fantasy is strictly imaginative.

Space Opera

A space opera is one of the most popular forms of science fiction where the whole story or majority of the story takes place in outer space. Its name comes from the idea of a television "soap opera", but it has nothing to do with a musical opera. Space operas usually feature conflicts in space with beings or societies who have advanced technology or supernatural powers. Usually, space operas are action and adventure-themed, featuring space travel, interstellar wars or heroes trying to save the universe (*e.g.* Star Wars).

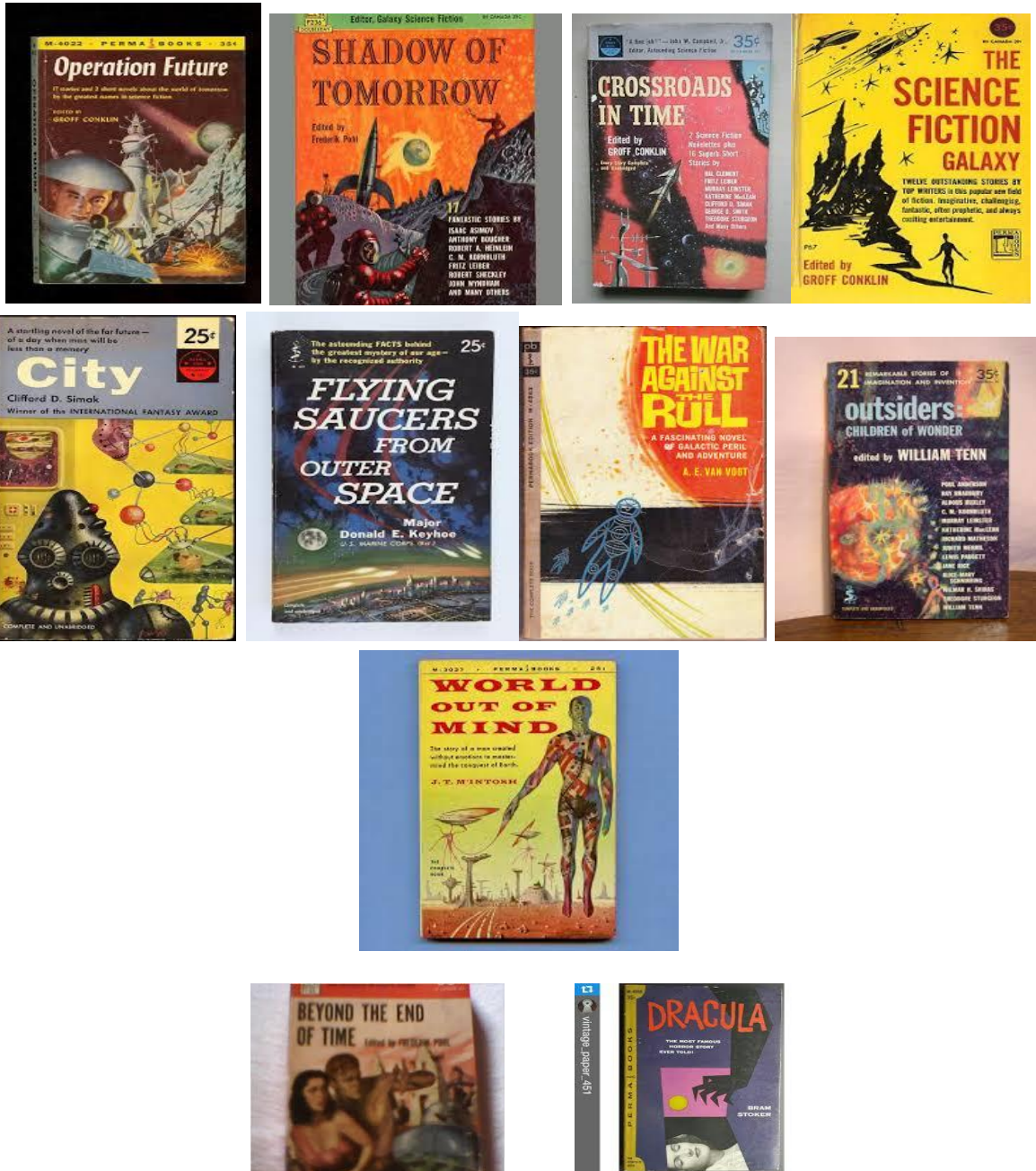
Conclusion

In conclusion, science fiction is a genre of possibility, imagination, and innovation whose popularity rises in relation to advances in science and technology. Its authors use real science to create fictional stories that explore the possible future of mankind and the universe in a way that is both imaginative and realistic.



SCIENCE FICTION IN THE EARLY PERMABOOKS

By Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian



PermaBooks, (*aka* Perma Books), a paperback division of Doubleday Publishing, was established in 1948. Although their books were issued by Doubleday's Garden City

Publishing Company in Garden City, Long Island, the editorial office of Permabooks was located at 14 West 49th Street in Manhattan.

Promoted with the slogans "Books of Permanent Value for Permanent Use" and "Books to Keep", the early Permabooks were priced at thirty-five cents rather than the twenty-five cents most other paperbacks sold for during the 1940s-1950s.

The higher price of these "Books to Keep" was because they did not have the flexible covers usually associated with paperback books. Instead, as the name implies, the first Permabooks were designed in a more durable format with laminated board covers. The interior looked like a paperback, but the exterior, measuring four and three eighths inches wide by six and one half inches deep, gave the impression of a reduced-size hardcover. The edges of the stiff, inflexible board covers extended one eighth inch past the trim of the interior pages. The books were printed on special presses in Hanover, Pennsylvania.

These special presses were later used to publish Doubleday's line of Anchor Books, created in the late 1950s to reprint serious fiction and non-fiction.

The Permabook covers were actually thicker than some so-called hardcover books of the period (*e.g.* VIKING PORTABLE NOVELS OF SCIENCE). This more durable cover format only lasted for three years, however, with Permabooks switching to the standard paperback format in 1951. At first, the company specialized in non-fiction, but it turned out mostly fiction titles in the early 1950s. Some of their non-fiction titles, such as their dictionaries, sold millions of copies.

Several of the Permabooks in the 1950s were SF/F/H anthologies, and most of them are described below:

Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Anthologies

THE SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY (1950)

Edited by Groff Conklin

Stories included in this SF anthology were divided into six sections:(1-Worlds of Tomorrow, 2-Wonders of the Earth, 3-Dangerous Inventions, 4-Other Dimensions, 5-From Outer Space, 6-Far Traveling) with two stories in each section: 1- E.M. Forster ("The Machine Stops"), Rudyard Kipling ("Easy as A.B.C."), 2-William Hope Hodgson ("The

Derelict"), Arthur C. Clarke ("The Fires Within"), 3-John D. Macdonald ("A Child is Crying"), Margaret St. Clair ("Quis Custodiet...?"), 4-Murray Leinster ("The Life Work of Professor Muntz"), Miles J. Breuer, M.D. ("The Appendix and the Spectacles"), 5-A. Rowley Hillard ("Death from the Stars"), Theodore Sturgeon ("The Hurtle is a Happy Beast"), and 6-Ray Bradbury (King of the Grey Spaces"), and Lawrence Manning ("The Living Galaxy").

There was an introduction by Conklin, in which he stated that "science fiction has at last arrived". The cover art for this book was by popular SF artist Richard M. Powers.

THE PERMABOOK OF GHOST STORIES (1950)

Edited by W. Bob Holland

This was a collection of twenty-five ghost stories, mainly by Edgar Allan Poe and Guy de Maupassant.

There were also stories by other authors included, but they were either uncredited or by considerably lesser-known authors.

Like THE SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY, published the same year, this Permabook was published with hard covers, not the flexible covers that other paperback publishers of the time employed.

IN THE GRIP OF TERROR (1951)

Edited by Groff Conklin

This collection of twenty-two SF/F/H stories included such classics as "The Illustrated Man" by Ray Bradbury, "In the Vault" by H.P. Lovecraft, "Bianca's Hands" by Theodore Sturgeon, "The Pit and the Pendulum" by Edgar Allan Poe, and "The Moth" by H.G. Wells. Other genre authors with stories in this anthology included Saki (H.H. Munro), Stephen Crane, E.F. Benson, H.L. Gold, Will F. Jenkins (Murray Leinster), Wilkie Collins, Guy de Maupassant, Ambrose Bierce, Margaret St. Clair, Howard Wandrei, and W.W. Jacobs.

The cover art of this book, although not identified as to artist, was outstanding, showing a creepy man standing behind a terrified woman and clutching her arm. This book was published in the usual paperback format, not the earlier hardcover format.

BEYOND THE END OF TIME (1952)

Edited by Fredrik Pohl

This SF anthology contained "The Embassy" by Martin Pearson (pen name of Donald A. Wollheim and C.M. Kornbluth); "The Hunted" by John D. MacDonald; "Heredity" by Isaac Asimov; "Rock Diver" by Harry Harrison; "The Little Black Bag" by C.M. Kornbluth; "The Lonely Planet" by Murray Leinster; "Operation Peep" by John Wyndham; "Let the Ants Try" by James MacCreigh (a Pohl pen name); "There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury; "Scanners Live in Vain" by Cordwainer Smith; "Such Interesting Neighbors" by Jack Finney; "Bridge Crossing" by Dave Dryfoos; "Letter from the Stars" by A.E. van Vogt; "Love in the Dark" by H.L. Gold; "Obviously Suicide" by S. Fowler Wright; "Rescue Party" by Arthur C. Clarke; "Stepson of Space" by Raymond Z. Gallun; "Death is the Penalty" by Judith Merrill; and "Beyond Doubt" by Robert A. Heinlein and Elma Wentz.

Editor Pohl provided a brief introduction. The cover art, not identified as to artist, depicted a scene from the John D. MacDonald story. This book also was not published in the hardcover format.

SHADOW OF TOMORROW (1953)

Edited by Frederik Pohl

This SF anthology collected "The Year of the Jackpot" by Robert A. Heinlein, "A Bad Day for Sales" by Fritz Leiber, "C-Chute" by Isaac Asimov, "Perfect Creature" by John Wyndham, "The Marching Morons" by C.M. Kornbluth, "Transfer Point" by Anthony Boucher, "Watchbird" by Robert Sheckley, "To a Ripe Old Age" by Wilson Tucker, "Orphans of the Void" by Michael Shaara, "The Old Order" by Lester del Rey, "Genesis" by H. Beam Piper, "Halo" by Hal Clement, "Common Time" by James Blish, "Love" by Richard Wilson, "The Misogynist" by James E. Gunn, "The Luckiest Man in Denv" by Simon Eisner (Kornbluth), and "Not a Creature Was Stirring" by Dean Evans.

Pohl provided an introduction in which he thanked H.L. Gold, probably because the majority of stories in this anthology came from **Galaxy Science Fiction**, which at the time was edited by Gold.

The cover art was by Richard Powers, and this book also was not published in the hardcover format.

CROSSROADS IN TIME (1953)

Edited by Groff Conklin

This SF anthology contained the following: "Introduction" by Conklin, "Assumption Unjustified" by Hal Clement, "The Eagles Gather" by Joseph Kelleam, "The Queen's Astrologer" by Murray Leinster, "Derm Fool" by Theodore Sturgeon, "Courtesy" by Clifford Simak, "Secret" by Lee Cahn, "Thirsty God" by Margaret St. Clair, "The Mutant's Brother" by Fritz Leiber, "Student Body" by F.L. Wallace, "Made in U.S.A." by J.T. McIntosh, "Technical Adviser" by Chad Oliver, "Feedback" by Katherine MacLean, "The Cave" by P. Schuyler Miller, "Vocation" by George O. Smith, "The Time Decelerator" by A. Macfadyen, Jr., "Zen" by Jerome Bixby, "Let There Be Light" by Horace B. Fyfe, and "The Brain" by W. Norbert.

This anthology was originally published by Doubleday in 1953.

Cover art for the paperback was by Richard Powers. This reprint was also not published in Permabooks' earlier hardcover format.

OPERATION FUTURE (1955)

Edited by Groff Conklin

This anthology contained the following stories: "The Education of Drusilla Strange" by Theodore Sturgeon, "C/O Mr. Makepiece" by Peter Phillips, "Technical Slip" by John Beynon, "Short in the Chest" by Idris Seabright, "Cure for a Ylith" by Murray Leinster, "Exposure" by Eric Frank Russell, "Worrywart" by Clifford D. Simak, "Day is Done" by Lester del Rey, "Quit Zoomin' Those Hands Through the Air" by Jack Finney, "Hilda" by H.B. Hickey, "Blood's a Rover" by Chad Oliver, "Call Me Adam" by Winston K. Marks, "Special Delivery" by Damon Knight, "The Garden in the Forest" by Robert F. Young, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" by Malcolm Jameson, "Games" by Katherine MacLean, "The Holes Around Mars" by Jerome Bixby, "Project" by Lewis Padgett, and "The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov.

Cover art was by Robert Schulz.

This SF anthology, originally published by Doubleday in hardcover, was not published in the earlier hardcover version Permabooks used.

Groff Conklin



Edward Groff Conklin (1904-1968) was a leading anthologist who was nominated for the 1951 Best Professional Editor Retro Hugo. He was a member of New York's famous Hydra Club. Conklin edited 40+ genre anthologies, mostly SF, wrote books on home improvement, and was a freelance writer on scientific subjects. He was also a published poet.

From 1950 to 1955, Conklin was the book review editor for the popular SF magazine **Galaxy Science Fiction**, edited by H.L. Gold.

Fred Pohl



Frederik George Pohl, Jr. (1919-2013) was an American SF writer, editor, and fan, with a career spanning more than seventy-five years, from his first published work, the 1937 poem "Elegy to a Dead Satellite: Luna," to his 2011 novel ALL THE LIVES HE LED and other work published in 2012. He won four Hugo and three Nebula Awards.

At one time he was married to SF author/editor/critic Judith Merrill. Their granddaughter, Emily Pohl-Weary, is also an author.

Richard M. Powers



Richard Michael Gorman Powers (1921-1996) spent most of his early life supported by his mother and aunt. At eleven, Powers was introduced to art when his uncle gave him a sketchbook. He studied Greek at Loyola University before switching to art, taking classes at Mizen Academy, Chicago Art Institute, and the University of Illinois, Chicago. During World War II, he took more art classes at the University of Kentucky during basic training, thereafter working in the Signal Corps.

He married and began a career in illustrations for magazines and publishing houses, continuing his art education at the New School in New York. Eventually, he became one of the most influential SF artists of all time.

Robert Schulz



Schulz (1928-1978) was one of the artists of the 1950s whose work on paperbacks helped influence the science fiction art of the time. Along with Richard Powers and Stanley Meltzoff, his work was seen as more than the typical art of the SF pulps.

His poor health as a child led to an early interest in art, and he later earned a degree in architecture from Princeton. He began his career illustrating paperbacks in the early 1950s, and—in addition to his influential work in SF—also earned him a reputation as a realistic artist of the Old West.

In the late 1970s he embarked on a series of paintings, “Man’s Place in Nature,” each of which was both a commentary on science and on the importance of man in the universe. While working on this series, he died suddenly—just three days after his fiftieth birthday.

Early Permabook SF Novels/Non-Fiction Works/Later SF Books

Early SF novels published as Permabooks included *WORLD OUT OF MIND* by J.T. McIntosh (1953), *CITY* by Clifford D. Simak (1953), *THE LOST WORLD* by Arthur Conan Doyle (1954), *OUTSIDERS: CHILDREN OF WONDER* edited by William Tenn (1954), *AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT* by Arthur C. Clarke (1954), *WASP* by Eric Frank Russell

(1958), DRACULA by Bram Stoker (1957, reprinted in 1958), and JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH by Jules Verne (1959).

In 1954, Donald E. Keyhoe's FLYING SAUCERS FROM OUTER SPACE was issued. I assume this book was advertised as non-fiction, although it was obviously fiction.

On the other hand, an interesting early non-fiction Permabook (1949) was MAGIC EXPLAINED by Walter Gibson, a professional magician who also wrote The Shadow stories in the pulp magazines of the time. This Permabook was published in the original hardcover format.

Later popular SF books were GALAXY SHORT NOVELS, edited by H.L. Gold (1960), AGENT OF VEGA by James H. Schmitz (1962), and WAR AGAINST THE RULL by A.E. van Vogt (1962).

Some Conclusions

In 1954 Permabooks and Pocket Books were merged, and their operations were taken over by Pocket Books, Inc.

The early Permabooks were excellent, and in 1950 my friends and I thought of Conklin's THE SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY as a "real" book because it had hard covers and therefore was comparable to the other hardcover books in our fledgling SF libraries.

The later genre books from Permabooks were excellent also, especially the SF anthologies. The later Permabooks were not thought of as "real" books, however, either in the 1950s or by later paperback collectors.

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Note: This article was written several years ago. It has been revised somewhat for reprinting in Origin.

FINDING YOUR PLACE by Judy Carroll



Now that you're in science fiction fandom, what's next?

You like science fiction and have joined the N3F. Now, what do you do?

Being oriented in science fiction fandom is like taking a tour around a kitchen you have only seen from a distance. You can be pretty sure there will be a sink, a counter, a refrigerator and a stove, but what kind of embellishments is uncertain.

The N3F has the basic setup of many groups: President, Treasurer, Directors, Constitution and Bylaws. But it has much more than that. It has a heart, a drive and a purpose for being. The N3F is a group of people that care deeply and strongly about science fiction and its place in the world of yesterday, today and tomorrow. By becoming a member you have shown your desire to be a part of the imagination and wonder that is science fiction and the N3F. But being a member doesn't stop there.

I'm going to give you a few suggestions on how you can feel at home in the N3F.

Find a place that makes you comfortable—a place you can call your own, a place with others who share the same vision as yourself and enjoy the advantage of like-interest friends.

If you like a close connection with other fans who share your interest you can join the Artist Bureau, N'APA, and Writers Exchange.

If you prefer a more personal approach, you can join the Correspondence Bureau and Round Robins.

You can also contribute by writing letters of comment (LOCs) to TNFF, joining Membership Recruitment, and entering your short story in the yearly Short Story Contest.

You can also contact the Bureau Heads if you wish to join a bureau and the Editors of the various fanzines offered by the N3F if you wish to contribute.

To get the most out of your membership in the N3F you need to actively attach yourself to it—to be an embellishment—to become part of it and all the wonder and adventure science fiction and the N3F has to offer.



Art by Frank Rider



LETTERS

KEVIN TRAINOR: Although it pains me to do so, I must disagree with your statement that SF fans are “outside the norm”. There was a time when this was true, and noticeably so, but I would argue that fandom has been increasingly annexed by the “Danelaw” of “normal” people. These days, it is rather the mundanes who are outside the norm; thanks to George Lucas, Gene Roddenberry, and other, lesser-known artists, it is no longer unusual for mature adults to talk about science fiction or fantasy, much less considered a “weird thing” and cause for ostracism.

Whether this is a good or bad thing is subjective—a good number of fans I know got into fandom as a refuge from the pressure to conform, and were horrified to discover that with the newfound popularity of Star Trek, Star Wars, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, etc., they were now trapped in fandom with all the people they joined fandom to get away from. On the other hand, SF&F becoming part of the mainstream has made books and movies (even obscure ones) easier to find, and likewise, social media has made it easier not only to find these things, but to find people to talk about them. I suspect that social media may be a big factor in the erosion of small SF conventions even before the arrival of Corona-chan: why pony up a couple hundred dollars in hotel charges, even more money for travel expenses and food, so that you can mingle with a few hundred strangers and *maybe* get to meet the Guest of Honor, when you can just log onto Facebook or MeWe and interact with people you know and authors you like?

One could delve further into this, and question whether the infamous Geek Social Fallacies are unique to fandom, or merely socially dysfunctional behavior that was more visible because we were closer to the problem(s) in the subculture before it suddenly expanded to include most of modern society, but that’s really beyond the scope of this letter. Suffice it to say that while we may be SF & fantasy fans, we are also a multitude of other things—Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, Communists, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, knitters, bakers, Medievalists, scientists, doctors, lawyers...the list of the things that coexist with our fandom is nearly infinite.

“Seen as being outside the norm” may be a better way of putting it.



Celestial Garden by Joel Tesch

**‘Till Next Time, Folks!
(That’ll be 2021)**