

Origin 36



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EDITORIAL



Looking Over the Scene

I think we are doing pretty well in our presentations of science fiction and fantasy and their backgrounds. We have Jon Swartz recollecting science fiction of the past, Jeffrey Redmond analyzing and interpreting science fiction, and Judy Carroll writing about how it is to be a fan of reading of this type. All we lack is you, the reader, joining us in going over this field of reading, but who knows, some day we may even have that.

I am myself going through research materials on the internet and looking for facts that may be of present interest to our readers. I think I have done pretty well on this so far, quoting from prime sources of information which pertains to the background and present relevance of science fiction and fantasy, and then thereafter I look for discussion, perhaps even seeking philosophical considerations on science fiction and its place in the modern world, and fantasy and the influence it has had on us. We look for more and deeper meaning in our reading experience, and seek for it to become more a part of our lives. We may want to abstract the good that sf and fantasy have brought to us and pay special attention to what we have derived from it.

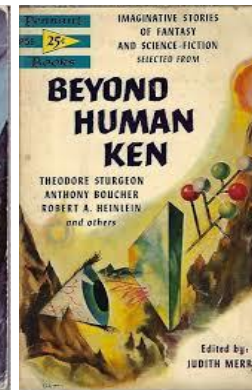
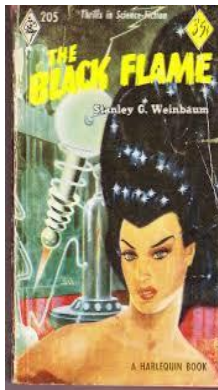
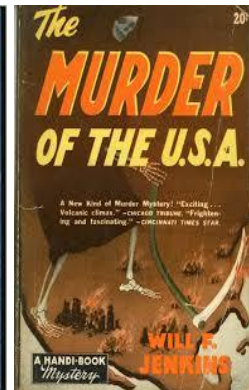
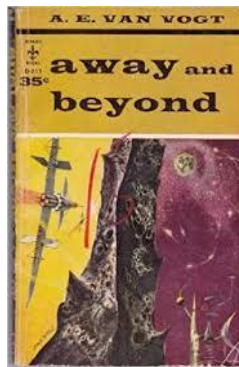
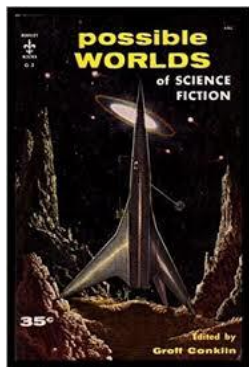
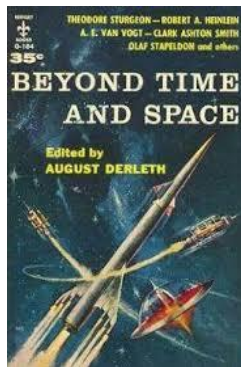
This is in many ways an exciting and interesting world we live in, with much to see, hear, and talk about. Science fiction, with its careful attention to what goes on, is an aid to doing this. Fantasy, provocative of the imagination, helps us to dream and visualize. We have it here before us and might well want to make use of it.

Look over those fascinating paperbacks and their covers which Jon Swartz describes. Speculate along with Jeffrey Redmond. And consider Judy Carroll's viewpoints about science fiction and the lives we lead.

We hope that what we are writing gets across to people and gets readers thinking.

OTHER EARLY PAPERBACK SCIENCE FICTION PUBLISHERS

by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian



My previous articles in this series were concerned with the major American paperback publishers of the 1940s and 1950s. This article focuses on some of the noteworthy minor publishers of SF/F/H fiction during the same period.

Century/Merit

The reprint paperbacks of Century Publications, a small publisher in Chicago, stand out for several reasons. Not only were their books distributed to the nation's major cities, but many of them even reached the newsstands of very small towns. These paperbacks were distinguished for another, completely different, reason: the Merit titles included some of the earliest SF paperback originals (PBO) to see print in this country. They are summarized below:

TIME TRAP by Rog Phillips (Century Book No. 116, 1949), a 25 cent mass-market PBO with cover art by Malcolm Smith.

WORLDS WITHIN by Rog Phillips (Century Book No. 124, 1950), a 25 cent mass-market PBO with cover art by Malcolm Smith.

WORLD OF IF by Rog Phillips (Century Publications/Merit Books No. B-13, 1951), a 35 cent digest-sized PBO with cover art by Malcolm Smith.

THE GREEN MAN: A Visitor from Space by Harold M. Sherman (Century Adventures 104, 1946, 25 cents, digest-sized).

OPERATION INTERSTELLAR by George O. Smith (Century Publications/Merit Books No. B-10, 1950), a 25 cent digest-sized PBO with cover art by Malcolm Smith.

Bart House

Bart House Books were published by Bartholomew House, Inc., located in New York. They started producing their initial series in 1944 with #1, and continued through #39 in 1946. They also produced three movie tie-ins, numbering them #101-103. In addition, they published digest-sized paperbacks from 1946 to 1958. The most collectible genre paperbacks in this series are numbers 4 and 12, both books by H.P. Lovecraft—and #102, which was ghost-written by Walter B. Gibson. Gibson (1897-1985) was best known for his work on the pulp hero, The Shadow. The two Lovecraft paperbacks, and one other genre book, are listed below. They all sold for 25 cents.

THE WEIRD SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH (1944) and THE DUNWICH HORROR (1945), both by H.P. Lovecraft.

REBIRTH: WHEN EVERYONE FORGOT! (1944) by Thomas Calvert McClary.

Berkley Books

The Berkley Publishing Corporation was founded in 1954 by Frederick Klein and Charles N. Byrne, who, with a third party (not involved in publishing) owned the company. Both Klein and Byrne had worked for Avon as vice-presidents, and began Berkley with two magazines: **Chic** and **News**. Paperbacks were introduced in 1955, priced at twenty-five, thirty-five, and forty cents. Early SF books of interest included the following titles:

MISSION TO THE STARS [*aka* THE MIXED MEN] by A.E. van Vogt (1955) [cover art by Richard Powers].

POSSIBLE WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION edited by Groff Conklin (1955).

THE ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGY edited by John W. Campbell, Jr. (1956).

SCIENCE FICTION OMNIBUS edited by Conklin (1956).

A TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION edited by Conklin (1957).

THE TIME MACHINE by H.G. Wells (1957).

STRANGERS IN THE UNIVERSE by Clifford D. Simak (1957).

BEYOND TIME AND SPACE edited by August Derleth (1958).

THE OUTER REACHES edited by Derleth (1958).

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON edited by Derleth (1959).

THE ENEMY STARS by Poul Anderson (1959).

AWAY AND BEYOND by van Vogt (1959).

A TOUCH OF STRANGE by Theodore Sturgeon (1959).

Checkerbooks

Checkerbooks, Inc. was founded in 1949 by Lyle Kenyon Engel, a music consultant to **Woman's Home Companion** who had also been active in procuring music scores for movies. Checkerbooks sold for 15 cents and were identified by a red and black checkerboard pattern at the bottom of the front covers. Only twelve titles were published, however, and the company ceased activity in 1950. Although some of their titles were popular with the public, the publisher failed because of his book prices, which were too low to give distributors a high enough profit margin.

Genre titles published that are of interest today include the following: THE JEWELS OF JADE [Terry and the Pirates], A THRILLER-CHILLER FROM THE LIBRARY OF BORIS KARLOFF, and HORROR AND HOMICIDE, an anthology of stories from authors such as Sax Rohmer, Cornell Woolrich, and Dashiell Hammett. All of these titles were initially published in 1949.

Fawcett/Gold Medal/Crest/Premier

Fawcett was also an independent newsstand distributor, and in 1945, the company negotiated a contract with New American Library to distribute their Mentor and Signet titles. This contract prohibited Fawcett from becoming a competitor by publishing their own paperback reprints. In 1949, Roscoe Fawcett wanted to establish a line of Fawcett paperbacks, and he felt original paperbacks would not be a violation of the contract. In order to test a loophole in the contract, Fawcett published two anthologies—THE BEST OF TRUE MAGAZINE and WHAT TODAY'S WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MARRYING AND SEX—reprinting material from Fawcett magazines not previously published in books. When these books successfully sailed through the contract loophole, Fawcett announced Gold Medal Books, their new line of paperback originals. Some of these were published as Fawcett-Crest, or as Crest Books.

Early genre titles of interest today include the following:

SAVAGE BRIDE by Cornell Woolrich (1950).

RETURN OF SUMURU by Sax Rohmer (1954).

YOU LIVE AFTER DEATH by Harold Sherman (1956).

CITY AT WORLD'S END by Edmond Hamilton (1957).

5 TALES FROM TOMORROW edited by T.E. Dikty (1957).

THREE TIMES INFINITY edited by Leo Margulies (1958).

RALPH 124C41+ by Hugo Gernsback (1958).

WAR WITH THE GIZMOS by Murray Leinster (1958).

FOUR FROM PLANET 5 by Leinster (1959).

5 FROM WORLDS BEYOND edited by T.E. Dikty (1958).

THREE FROM OUT THERE edited by Leo Margulies (1959).

NO PLACE ON EARTH by Louis Charbonneau (1959).

The Premier imprint specialized in reprints of non-fiction books, and sold for 50 cents.

Handi-Books

James Louis Quinn (1909-1992) was the publisher of Handi-Books. His only other major publication was the science fiction magazine **Worlds of If** (*Aka If Science Fiction*), which was started in 1952 and sold to Robert Guinn in 1959. Not much else seems to be known about Quinn. His company published the following genre books of interest today:

LAZARUS #7 (1943) [15 cents] by Richard Sale.

THE LAST SECRET (1945) by Dana Chambers.

THE MURDER OF THE U.S.A. (1947) [20 cents] by Will F. Jenkins, Jr. (Murray Leinster).

These books were advertised as mysteries, usually as "unusual" mysteries.

Other authors with books published as Handi-Book mysteries, but who also wrote SF, were Leigh Brackett, Sam Merwin, Jr. and Cornell Woolrich.

Harlequin

In May 1949, Harlequin was founded in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada as a paperback reprinting company. The business was a partnership between Advocate Printers and Doug Weld of Bryant Press, Richard Bonnycastle, plus Jack Palmer, head of the Canadian

distributor of **The Saturday Evening Post** and **The Ladies' Home Journal**. Palmer oversaw marketing for the new company and Bonnycastle took charge of production.

The company's first publication was Nancy Bruff's novel THE MANATEE. For its first few years, the company published a wide range of books, all offered for sale for 25 cents. During these years, the company was not very successful.

Among the novels they reprinted were works by Agatha Christie and Somerset Maugham. In addition, they published the genre books listed below:

LAZARUS NO. 7 by Richard Sale (1950).

THE PALE BLONDE OF SANDS STREET by William Chapman White (1950).

THE HOUSE THAT STOOD STILL by A.E. van Vogt (1952).

THE BLACK FLAME by Stanley Weinbaum (1953).

THE LOST WORLD by Arthur Conan Doyle (1953).

THE GOLDEN AMAZON by J.R. Fearn (1953).

FORBIDDEN by Lois Bull (1954).

Two other "Amazon" books by Fearn in 1954 and 1958.

Later, of course, Harlequin became very successful when it developed a stranglehold on the romance novel market, which the company is known for today.

In fact, it is difficult to find anyone who thinks of Harlequin as anything other than a publisher of romance novels, and not especially in a good sense either.

Hillman

Hillman Periodicals, Inc. was an American publishing company founded in 1938 by Alex L. Hillman, a former NYC book publisher.

It is best known for its true confession and true crime magazines, for the long-running general interest magazine **Pageant**, and for comic books, including **Air Fighters Comics** and its successor **Airboy Comics**.

In 1948 Hillman began publishing paperback books. The Hillman paperbacks lasted until 1961.

The most memorable early SF book from Hillman was Jack Vance's THE DYING

EARTH, which appeared for the first time in 1950. Hillman later published a few genre books by Sax Rohmer.

Lion

Lion Books was founded in 1949 by Martin Goodman (1908-1992), a publisher who also owned the Magazine Management Company and the comic book company that would become Marvel Comics.

In 1957, New American Library (NAL) bought Lion Books.

Some of the Lion genre paperbacks were as follows:

THE LOTTERY by Shirley Jackson (1950).

THE HAPLOIDS by Jerry Sohl (1953).

FRANKENSTEIN by Mary Shelley (1953).

FALSE NIGHT by Algis Budrys (1954).

THE GREEN MILLENNIUM and CONJURE WIFE, both by Fritz Leiber (1954).

FULLY DRESSED AND IN HIS RIGHT MIND by Michael Fessier (1954).

HELL'S PAVEMENT by Damon Knight (1955).

HUMAN?, edited by Judith Merrill (1954).

GALAXY OF GHOULS, edited by Judith Merrill (1955).

ESCAPE TO NOWHERE [*aka* ONE] by David Karp (1955).

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS by Jules Verne (1956).

Pyramid

Pyramid Books also no longer exists. Founded in 1949 by William Jovanovich, of HBJ fame, the press was sold ultimately to the Harcourt Brace group, which reshaped it into the Jove imprint, and then sold it to the Penguin Group in 1979.

Early Pyramid genre books included the following paperbacks:

THE MOONSTONE by Wilkie Collins (1950).

A WAY HOME by Theodore Sturgeon (1956).

THE SYNTHETIC MAN by Sturgeon (1957).

MEN AGAINST THE STARS, edited by Martin Greenberg (1957).

HELLFLOWER by George O. Smith (1957).

WHO? By Algis Budrys (1957).

THE LOST WORLD by Arthur Conan Doyle (1959).

OFF THE BEATEN ORBIT [*aka* GALAXY OF GHOULS] edited by Judith Merrill (1959).

THE FALLING TORCH by... (1959).

AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT by Arthur C. Clarke (1960).

Some Conclusions

These publishers conclude my research on the early SF/F/H paperbacks. Undoubtedly, there were other publishers of genre books at the time, but my friends and I didn't read or collect them—and at the time we searched out just about anything related to SF.

Belmont, Collier, DAW, Lancer, Leisure, Macfadden, Mayflower, Monarch, Paperback Library, Tower, Zebra, Zenith, and other publishers of SF/F/H paperbacks were active mostly in the 1960s—1970s, so their paperbacks were not included in this current series of articles.

As pre-teens and teenagers, my friends and I read and collected the paperbacks of the 1940s and 1950s. By the 1960s, we were in graduate school, or out of school and pursuing careers.

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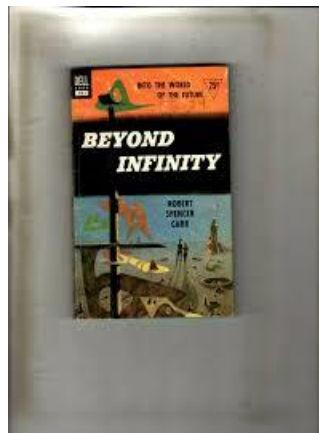
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Note: This article was written several years ago. It has been revised somewhat for printing in Origin.

Other Interesting Covers, including Pocket Books, added by editor



DEFINITIONS OF SCIENCE FICTION **by Jeffrey Redmond**



Here's a further look at what science fiction is.

Science fiction is a literary genre that focuses on imaginative content based in science.

Traditionally, scientific principles and facts have been crucial to science fiction writing. These principles are set in surprising, fantastical, and unusual settings with characters and situations that make the story "fiction". Depending on the novel, short story, film, or television show, the "science" part of the genre will be more or less accurate. Some stories only acknowledge science as a loose basis for what they're proposing, while others are more strict in their use of theories.

Definition and Explanation of Science Fiction:

Science fiction is a genre of literature in which writers use scientific elements in combination with fictional ones in order to craft new stories. The genre rose in popularity in the last hundred and fifty years, as did scientific progress. New advancement in the computer age and with the advent of space travel meant that writers had new content and a newly receptive audience to write for. The public's minds were opened to the true possibilities of technology, and they had a new desire to read about some of those possibilities, even though some were only loosely based on science.

Why Do Writers Write Science Fiction?

Writers choose to write science fiction in order to reflect on human nature, our interactions with technology, and, most importantly, where those things are taking the human race. Science fiction novels and stories put forward various visions of the future, some more appealing than others, and readers are allowed to explore and attempt to understand them. By basing science fiction stories on something real, such as the

human desire to colonize other planets, real terraforming technology, or advancements in personal communication devices, readers are able to suspend their personal disbelief and see how real and possible these worlds are.

Examples of Science Fiction Novels:

(1) FOUNDATION by Isaac Asimov

Foundation is one of the most important science fiction books ever written. It was published as part of the Foundation trilogy that later became the Foundation series. The novel is a collection of short stories that tell the story of the Foundation, an institute seeking to preserve the galaxy after the predicted collapse of the Galactic Empire. It was published in 1951.

(2) STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND by Robert Heinlein

Stranger in a Strange Land was the first science fiction novel to enter the **New York Times Book Review's** best-seller list. It also won the 1962 Hugo Award for Best Novel. It was published the year before and told the story of Valentine Michael Smith, a man born and raised on Mars and returned to Earth by the Martians who cared for him. He spends the novel escaping captivity on Earth, exploring the human world, and revealing powers he acquired on Mars.

(3) RAMA by Arthur C. Clarke

Rama is the first book in the Rama series. It was written in 1973 and took place in the 2130s after humanity discovers a cylindrical alien ship floating, presumably abandoned, through space. The investigation of the ship takes up the majority of the first novel. It turns out that the ship is almost unfathomably massive, at an incredible 31x12 miles. The human scientists and astronauts who enter the ship initially believe the massive interior to be completely empty, but slowly, more and more oddities reveal themselves, including a crab-like creature, alien flowers, and more. The novel is usually recognized as one of the most important novels of Clarke's career.

Examples of Science Fiction Short Stories:

(1) "Nightfall" by Isaac Asimov

Nightfall was published in 1941 and has been voted the greatest science fiction story of all time by a number of different organizations. It explores a new darkness on a planet, Lagash, that has only known light through one of its six suns.

(2) "The Million Year Picnic" by Ray Bradbury

The Million Year Picnic is the story of William Thomas, a governor, who travels to Mars to escape the war. The story was published in Bradbury's collection THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES.

(3) "The Weapon Shop" by A.E. van Vogt

Published in 1942, The Weapon Shop is also considered to be one of the best sci-fi stories ever written. It follows Fara, a businessman, who encounters several issues after becoming enraged over the appearance of a weapon shop in his town. He tries and fails to get the shop removed, and as the story develops, his allegiance changes.

Examples of Science Fiction Films:

(1) 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

Based on what is commonly cited as one of the best science fiction books of all time, 2001: A Space Odyssey by Arthur C. Clarke, the film has been equally influential. Directed by Stanley Kubrick, the groundbreaking film was released in 1968 and is often considered an epic of the genre.

(2) GRAVITY

Gravity is a 2013 film that was praised after its release for its strict adherence to the science of space travel. It stars Sandra Bullock as the lone survivor of an accident in space and follows her attempts to get home.

Types of Science Fiction:

(1) Soft Science Fiction

Soft science fiction is based on the social sciences. These include politics, anthropology, and any others revolving around human behavior rather than technological advancements. These stories address the consequences of specific social choices and focus more on the emotions of those involved.

(2) Hard Science Fiction

Hard science fiction adheres to scientific principles and theories. These stories involve a great deal of knowledge in the various fields important to the plotline and therefore appeal to real scientists who want the opportunity to address what they see in the future. Without elements of "soft" sci-fi, hard sci-fi would not appeal to the majority of readers. It's important for the genre to contain emotions and human stories as well as thought-provoking scientific advancements of both.

Science fiction, abbreviation SF or sci-fi, a form of fiction that deals principally with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals. The term science fiction was popularized, if not invented, in the 1920s by one of the genre's principal advocates, the American publisher Hugo Gernsback. The Hugo Awards, given annually since 1953 by the World Science Fiction Society, are named after him. These achievement awards are given to the top SF writers, editors, illustrators, films, and fanzines.

The World of Science Fiction:

Science fiction is a modern genre. Though writers in antiquity sometimes dealt with themes common to modern science fiction, their stories made no attempt at scientific and technological plausibility, the feature that distinguishes science fiction from earlier speculative writings and other contemporary speculative genres such as fantasy and horror. The genre formally emerged in the West, where the social transformations wrought by the Industrial Revolution first led writers and intellectuals to extrapolate the future impact of technology.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, an array of standard science fiction "sets" had developed around certain themes, among them space travel, robots, alien beings, and time travel. The customary "theatrics" of science fiction include prophetic warnings, utopian aspirations, elaborate scenarios for entirely imaginary worlds, titanic disasters, strange voyages, and political agitation of many extremist flavors, presented in the form of sermons, meditations, satires, allegories, and parodies—exhibiting every conceivable attitude toward the process of techno-social change, from cynical despair to cosmic bliss.

Science fiction writers often seek out new scientific and technical developments in order to prognosticate freely the techno-social changes that will shock the readers' sense of cultural propriety and expand their consciousness. This approach was central to

the work of H.G. Wells, a founder of the genre and likely its greatest writer. Wells was an ardent student of the 19th Century British scientist T.H. Huxley, whose vociferous championing of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution earned him the epithet "Darwin's Bulldog". Wells' literary career gives ample evidence of science fiction's latent radicalism, its affinity for aggressive satire and utopian political agendas, as well as its dire predictions of technological destruction.

This dark dystopian side can be seen especially in the work of T.H. Huxley's grandson, Aldous Huxley, who was a social satirist, an advocate of psychedelic drugs, and the author of a dystopian classic, *BRAVE NEW WORLD* (1932). The sense of dread was also cultivated by H.P. Lovecraft, who invented the famous *Necronomicon*, an imaginary book of knowledge so ferocious that any scientist who dares to read it succumbs to madness. On a more personal level, the works of Philip K. Dick (often adapted for film) present metaphysical conundrums about identity, humanity, and the nature of reality. Perhaps bleakest of all, the English philosopher Olaf Stapledon's mind-stretching novels picture all of human history as a frail, passing bubble in the cold galactic stream of space and time.

Stapledon's views were rather specialized for the typical science fiction reader. When the genre began to gel in the early 20th Century, it was generally disreputable, particularly in the United States, where it first catered to a juvenile audience. Following World War II, science fiction spread throughout the world from its epicenter in the United States, spurred on by ever more staggering scientific feats, from the development of nuclear energy and atomic bombs to the advent of space travel, human visits to the Moon, and the real possibility of cloning human life.

By the 21st Century, science fiction had become much more than a literary genre. Its avid followers and practitioners constituted a thriving worldwide subculture. Fans relished the seemingly endless variety of SF-related products and pastimes, including books, movies, television shows, computer games, magazines, paintings, comics, and, increasingly, collectible figurines, websites, DVDs, and toy weaponry. They frequently held well-attended, well-organized conventions, at which costumes were worn, handicrafts sold, and folk songs sung.

The Evolution of Science Fiction

Antecedents of science fiction can be found in the remote past. Among the earliest examples is the 2nd Century Syrian-born Greek satirist Lucian, who in *TRIPS TO THE MOON* describes sailing to the Moon. Such flights of fancy, or fantastic tales, provided a

popular format in which to satirize government, society, and religion while evading libel suits, censorship, and persecution.

The clearest forerunner of the genre, however, was the 17th Century swashbuckler Cyrano de Bergerac, who wrote of a voyager to the Moon finding a utopian society of men free from war, disease, and hunger. The voyager eats fruit from the Biblical tree of knowledge and joins lunar society as a philosopher—that is, until he is expelled from the Moon for blasphemy. Following a short return to Earth, he travels to the Sun, where a society of birds puts him on trial for humanity’s crimes. In creating his diversion, Cyrano took it as his mission to make impossible things seem plausible.

Although this and his other SF-like writings were published only posthumously and in various censored versions, Cyrano had a great influence on later satirists and social critics. Two works in particular—Jonathan Swift’s GULLIVER’S TRAVELS (1726) and Voltaire’s MICROMEGAS (1752)—show Cyrano’s mark with their weird monsters, gross inversions of normalcy, and similar harsh satire.

Another precursor was Louis-Sebastien Mercier’s L’AN DEUX MILLE QUATRE CENT QUARANTE (c. 1771, THE YEAR TWENTY-FOUR FORTY, Memoirs of the year Two Thousand Five Hundred), a work of French political speculation set in a 25th Century utopian society that worships science. While many writers had depicted some future utopian KINGDOM OF GOD or a utopian society in some mythical land, this was the first book to postulate a utopian society on Earth in the realizable future. The book was swiftly banned by the French ancien regime, which recognized that Mercier’s fantasy about “the future” was a thin disguise for his subversive revolutionary sentiments. Despite this official sanction—or perhaps because of it—Mercier’s book became an international best seller. Both Thomas Jefferson and George Washington owned copies.



VIEWING SCIENCE FICTION by Judy Carroll



New N3F emblem by Alan White

A long time ago, when I joined the N3F for the first time, I was fascinated with all the activities and opportunities the club offered. There was so much to do and so much to be. There seemed to be an almost endless supply of members and adventures one could go on while staying at home. I was so excited to discover a group of people who loved science fiction as much as I did, and were neither “afraid” nor “embarrassed” to say so. If you mentioned *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND*,* and used the word “grok”, you didn’t have to give a short book report on what you were referring to. (I was so taken with the book and “grok” that I found myself using it in normal conversation with family members—most of whom were not science fiction fans.)

The N3F has changed many times since its beginning in 1941—just as everything changes from its birth through its life and sometimes its death. But the N3F is still alive. It’s still functioning. It still has devoted members—some of them very active, others who give the N3F a nod and a smile full of pleasant memories, and others who are quietly resting in their own corner of fandom watching the science fiction world pass by.

This doesn’t mean that the N3F is failing. If there are fewer active members now than there were twenty or thirty years ago it doesn’t mean that in the near future the N3F will cease to exist. Everything changes. Everything evolves. But not everything dies. Some beliefs and dreams seem to disappear, only to be brought to the foreground at a later date, stronger and more meaningful than before.

Our world judges success by how many new cards are sold in a designated time frame, how

often a writer has a best seller, and how many likes and dislikes a person receives for a comment on social media. But the N3F runs on a different track—one of closeness, old and new ideas, and friendship with those we may never meet in person, but have a strong bond with.

Memories and knowledge of the past are important to keep alive in the collective mind of the people who cherish and believe in something dear to them—such as science fiction. This is what Origin does monthly. It takes us to the past—shows us what some of us have never seen, or heard about, that happened before we were born, or before we discovered science fiction. It helps us relive the moments of our first discovery of an author we came to love. It reminds us of beliefs we once thought we could live without. It shows us what life was like decades ago, months ago and yesterday.

Yes, we are still talking about science fiction. If you have followed science fiction closely you may have noticed that many times a story that needs to be told can only be told through science fiction. Perhaps I should say, can only be understood and recognized through science fiction. Many science fiction stories, be they books, movies or television series, have taken on the issue of people equality. Watching the pain, terror and hopelessness an alien being is going through sometimes connects, in the mind of the “observer”, to things that have happened in reality—making them more aware of injustice.

Many times science fiction has given us a glimpse of a possible future. Some have been terrible and depressing. Others have given us a hope for a positive future for all mankind. Sometimes those glimpses have given us the future as we now know it.

Origin is here to chronicle science fiction. To tell us of its past successes and failures. To take us on a journey through a genre that has left a loving mark on all of us who love science fiction. It helps us understand who we are and where we come from.

The future needs the past. By seeing where we have been and the changes we have made—the good and the bad—we can better navigate our future.

*STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND by Robert Heinlein, published in 1961.

“grok”, to understand profoundly and intuitively

“I am all that I grok”.



Previous N3F insignia

LETTER COLUMN

Only one letter came to us this issue, but it was one I was very pleased to receive. It's from our president.

GEORGE PHILLIES: Good issue of Origin! A fine piece of work. I was especially pleased to read Jeffrey Redmond's collection of reviews of socially aware science fiction.

Yes, we're trying to find how science fiction places in society in general, and Jeffrey's article was a study of society being considered in science fiction stories, which is highly relevant to this area of consideration. Books which study society as it exists or may exist, and there are many such science fiction novels, are definitely relating to things of this world, and this shows clearly that science fiction has an important place in "serious literature". Judy Carroll mentioned this in the comment that was omitted at the end of her column in the last issue, which I have restored after my bureau memo, where she points out that many regard science fiction as unreal, but we do find much considered about reality in science fiction and even fantasy.

I was gratified to have the last issue considered a fine piece of work. Not often do we hear such reactions to the issue, and of course it makes us feel that we did indeed have a good issue. I hope this one continues in good form from the last issue.



Bureau Memo

In speaking about our bureau and the way we are managing it, as I was doing in my editorial, I think it might be good to give readers an insight into what we are doing by printing my monthly bulletin, which I send around to the other members of the bureau each month, so they can see for themselves how we get things together. This should bring the readers of *Origin* in closer to us, maybe. Here's my January bulletin relating to this February issue:

Hi, folks! (The members of the History and Research Bureau.) Time for the monthly bulletin.

I got a compliment from George Phillies on our last issue. It made me feel very good indeed and may you feel the same. One setback on my elation—I had omitted the last two lines from Judy Carroll's column. Can't think how it happened. I corrected the copy, which was too late for the distribution, but anyway it will be corrected in the N3F annals. My apologies to Judy; I can only say that it can't happen twice.

The upcoming issue is distinguished by a cover by Alan White, and my editorial points out that with the writings of the four of us, the people of the N3F are getting some good and valuable reading. I hope to keep up the pace. Jon has done some remaining paperbacks for the forthcoming issue, a good way to recollect the past days of science fiction, and I pulled up some really flashy covers for a book cover display; methinks the readers can't help looking over those bygone covers with appreciation and high interest. Books that won't be forgotten, the study of which might re-awaken current interest in what they were about and influence some writing of the present, that sf's past not subside in the new wave of the present. Jeffrey's column in the upcoming issue has a close analytical interpretation of science fiction, with references, and I think this will awaken a lot of interest.

Judy wants to know what her column should be about before she writes it, and I think what with the contents of the issue that have arrived, I would like it to concern *Origin* itself, what she thinks of the work we have been doing and what she would like to see in our future, with perhaps her impression of this bureau. She's our columnist, and its purpose is to keep a closer contact with the readers, giving them something to identify with as far as our bureau goes.

Have a cheerful February. So far I think January has been all right.—John Thiel

Note: the omitted lines from Judy Carroll's column in the previous issue are as follows:

By putting away preconceived ideas, that science fiction and fantasy are just make-believe, and have nothing in common with reality, you will be opening the door to new experiences and many interesting characters.

Something to think about there. How does science fiction relate to reality? It really is a concern highly involved with the place of science fiction in the world. And is science fiction really make-believe? I think not. How does this consideration evolve?



1950s EC Comic Book edition



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