

ORIGIN 47



Official Organ of the National Fantasy Fan Federation

History and Research Bureau

January 2022

Edited and published by John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904
email address: kinethiel@mymetronet.net

Published for the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). To join or renew, use the membership form at <http://n3f.org/join/membership-form/> to provide your name and whichever address you use to receive zines. Memberships with The National Fantasy Fan (TNFF) via paper mail are \$18, memberships with TNFF via email are \$6. Zines other than TNFF are email only. Public memberships are free. Send payments to Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah, Nevada, 89049. Pay online at N3F.org. write treasurer@n3f.org .



STAFF



Jeffrey Redmond, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-3830, trdmondjeff@hotmail.com

Judy Carroll, 975 East 120 South, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660, BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

Jon Swartz, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750. Jon_swartz@hotmail.com

EDITORIAL



Is Science Fiction Coming To Pass?

There has been a lot of recent mention on the net of fantastic ideas found in science fiction being adopted by scientists. There is the theory that we are all living in a computer program, the theory that the universe is overseen by people above and outside of it, the theory that there are alternate realities, and so forth. Also we hear reports of private enterprises launching space ships, which is certainly a speedup over NASA. I think these wild ideas are attempts to express how unusual our culture is becoming. "Living in a computer program" must express how much we have become a computer culture, and that computers have become a culture of their own (the medium is the message; using a computer is doing it all by itself), so that computers have come to dominate our present societies—rather than the science fiction idea of spirits dwelling inside computer systems. There are several science fiction stories dating back where computers become gods and start running things by themselves, which are fantastic and amusing japes, but japes or not, people are expressing the thought that this is something which is actually coming to pass. I think people should be admonished that fiction is not fact when thinking becomes too wild. The net is actually a semi-governmental system which nobody is running, if it is anything along these lines.

My reason for bringing this up is seeing a lot of people saying that science fiction is merging into the public culture and at the same time the public is being drawn into science fiction, which may cause science fiction to vanish as such. I do not believe that a cultural assimilation of this kind would be a good thing. I think that science fiction and fantasy need to retain their individual identities and remain somewhat apart from other literary cultures. It is too distinct from other things to really become a part of other things. But as I say, a lot of the news is becoming science fictionalized, so what, really, is happening here?

There is also the notion that if people have thought up an idea, there must be something to it, as they are not likely to have created the idea themselves, regardless of the impetus provided to them by the possibility of selling a story to a science fiction magazine. They must be writing about things they have seen and experienced, albeit imaginatively, or extrapolating on what they have seen. If they are actually making up some of the things they write about solely from their own minds, the concepts they have come up with still exist, considering that they have formulated those concepts. And in fantasies, the supernatural things that are being written about have been believed by people for many years. Although those beliefs lack logic. When logic is added to them, as it often is in fantasy writing, they may become more acceptable. There exist many things we are unable to explain, and many which scientists are endeavoring to explain but which they still have not conclusively explained. Why people are here at all, in this world, is something philosophers are still trying to reason out.

Personally, I think the net is one of the most fantastic things technology has ever come up with, and as Arthur Clarke said, there is little difference between it and magic. So we are in many ways living in what science fiction was predicting many years ago. Those who read science fiction are ahead of the general cultural realization, and they are showing that they know it—perhaps talking about it rather than reading or writing more of it, perhaps off somewhere trying to capitalize on their foreknowledge, now that they have seen it proven.

Therefore we are in an existential fix—whether to read science fiction, write about it and collect it, or just live the science fiction that has come to pass today. Obviously this bureau does not have it in mind to abandon science fiction and just live it; our concern is with the study of it, thinking about it, and comprehending its origin and history. That's what the whole N3F is doing, working with science fiction, not just observing it or knowing about it. It's what makes us science fiction fans, to want to make science fiction and fantasy thought part of our lives.

As this bureau expands, we're going to get more and more into what science fiction is and what it means to us and what its significance is in the world around us. There is no sense just sitting around looking at the strange things and the many marvels there are in the world around us; we want to be conscious of them, concerned people who are taking part in the many things that are happening around us. The internet brings the world into our homes, and from there we can take a considerable participative part in the world around us, at the same time learning more about things in the here and now.

Mistakes Science Fiction Writers Make

by Jeffrey Redmond

The writing of science fiction



So, you want to try your hand at writing science fiction? Readers of science fiction are generally sophisticated. They tend to have real standards which they've developed by reading the great writers who developed the genre. They've also watched countless good quality science fiction movies and television programs. These are a few common mistakes:

- 1) Losing the balance of good storytelling and credible science. Simply put, if the science appears to be amateurish or "junk science", then the author will lose the reader.
- 2) The science itself is OTT, or implausible. Bad quality science fiction is painfully obvious even to the casual reader.
- 3) The story is not realistic. The wonderful thing about science fiction writing is that if the author does the required work on the science, the resultant novels will transcend.
- 4) Not knowing enough. If you think science fiction authors use their creativity to fashion "science" solely from imagination, then do yourself and your reader a favor.

On Writing Science Fiction

Here are some of the things that most first time writers of science fiction should be conscious of before taking the plunge:

- 1) Falling into the fantasy trap too deeply.

This requires spending a great deal of time doing extensive research in two areas: The nature of human intelligence (particularly genius) and diseases, treatments, attempted cures, as well as the medical/scientific methodology relevant to formulating cures. The above research helps get the target audience on board.

- 2) Losing the balance of good story telling and credible science.

Simply put, if the science appears to be amateurish or “junk science”, the author will lose the reader. Readers who enjoy science fiction books want fiction and good storytelling, it’s true. But they also want science that is credible and that allows them to be swept away into the story. Good science makes for good science fiction.

- 3) The science itself is OTT, or implausible.

Bad quality science fiction is painfully obvious even to the casual reader. If a work of science fiction is to be believable and engrossing, the science in it must be plausible. What’s more, the science must be understandable to the reader.

It’s a difficult balancing act. Too much detail easily becomes boring and makes the reader think he or she is back in school. Too little detail and the author is asking the reader to take giant “leaps of faith”. This undermines the credibility of the science fiction story.

- 4) The story is not realistic.

The wonderful thing about science fiction writing is that if the author does the required work on the science, the resultant novels will transcend the fiction aspect. The science element of the story will imbue the books with realism. In turn this will heighten the reader’s immersion in the novel. Put simply, even though it’s science fiction, it FEELS REAL, or possible.

- 5) Not knowing enough.

If you think science fiction authors use their creativity to fashion “science” solely from imagination, then do yourself and your reader a favor—write a different type of fiction.

Not knowing as much as you can about the mechanics of the topic you might be challenging in your work is an issue. Both *Miracle Man* and *The Austin*

Paradox are highly critical of Big Pharma. The latter views Austin as its worst nightmare because he seeks to cure diseases rather than merely treat symptoms. Austin's discoveries kill off many of Big Pharma's most profitable "cash cow" treatments. Pharma then devises various draconian plans to destroy Austin.

This attention to detail brings this aspect of the story to life. Readers of science fiction appreciate the "reality" that science brings to fiction.

Writing Great Science Fiction

There's a lot more to good science fiction than robots, spaceships and phasers. For anyone thinking of writing science fiction screenplays, here's five top tips to turn an average sci fi movie into a great one:

1) Know WHY you are writing science fiction.

Great science fiction asks big "What if...?" questions. This allows us to play with the day-to-day realities of our own world by exploring different realities in worlds we create. It examines big issues and asks difficult questions about things that concern us all—pollution, technology, globalization, genetic engineering, overpopulation—and does it without pointing directly at an individual or group. Science fiction spotlights issues, bringing them to the attention of the world, and this is especially true of things that are out of our control or not easily changed. What is the big "What if...?" question in your story?

2) Are you writing in a setting or a genre?

Romantic Comedies are romantic and funny. Horror films are horrifying. Thrillers are thrilling. But science fiction can be ALL of these things and still be science fiction. For example:

*Star Man—is a romance and a science fiction film

*Alien—is a horror movie and a science fiction film

*The Terminator—is an action movie and a science fiction film.

*Logan's Run—is a thriller and a science fiction film.

*Sleeper—is a comedy and a science fiction film.

All genres have their particular story beats. Know your primary genre and write to the beats of that genre first. Then reveal your sci-fi-world through action and character. This works better than building a sci-fi world and shoe-horning a revenge chiller plot INTO it.

3) Know your science fiction world

Whether on a newly discovered planet or in London of 1830, the relationship your characters have to where they live and the technology that surrounds them is critical. The two essential world-building elements in science fiction are time and space. Not the year your story is set—all sci-fi is actually exploring the present no matter when it is set—but the social/cultural stage that your world is at, and by extension the kind of space that your characters inhabit. In world stages:

First Stage World—primitive, nomadic, few people with very few tools hunting and gathering to survive.

Second Stage World—small towns or villages with a community, hunting and gathering supplemented by farming, the first technologies arrive.

Third Stage World—Cities filled with commercial enterprises and new ways to trade. Government, military and emergency services as well as law enforcement. Crime, but also leisure time and luxury goods.

Fourth Stage World—Advanced technology is ubiquitous but untrusted. Poverty and crime are rife. Taxes are high but government services are poor, inefficient and corrupt.

Fifth Stage World—Environment destroyed, natural resources gone, air and water polluted beyond the point of recovery. The dying world.

The important thing is that your story will rarely, if ever, sit squarely in one world stage or another. More likely it will take place in between two of the stages and will deal with the effects that the change has on the characters.

4) Get the science right—or as right as necessary.

The science always matters—even if it's totally made up. But it really matters when you're depicting things the audience knows. If your story features a space shuttle launch you should know the launch procedure. If a character describes a scientific principal, make sure you get it right. Many science fiction films feature a laboratory scene, but the good ones feel like real laboratories and the people in them dress and act appropriately and take their work seriously.

Basing your imaginary world on real things in our world grounds them in a way that makes them feel authentic, but this means you have to know a little of

what you're talking about. You don't need to be an expert, just learn enough to write convincingly, but above all, be consistent. It doesn't matter if the physics of your world aren't real as long as they are consistent and you never break your own rules.

5) Don't write ludicrous and nonsensical dialogue.

There will always be jargon associated with science fiction, but what sci-fi writers must avoid is nonsensical faux-technology and pompous, ludicrous-sounding names for things. If you're ever tempted to write a line like "They've re-interpolated the quantum field transmission data and reverse-engineered the resulting Heisenberg matrix to calculate our vector", just remember that "They've found us!" is easier to say, has greater impact and makes sense to everyone who hears it.

Remember too that character names can be an inadvertent source of comedy. Ixnys Zyxiz may look great on the page but if the reader can't read it you're in trouble. The same is true with names like Zorg or Gaxy—it's difficult to take anyone seriously when their name is Ambassador Zorax, and science fiction films where the characters sport bizarre names typically fail. Miserably.

Science Fiction Screenplay Mistakes

1) Forgetting your world building.

This is the thing. Your Sci Fi story world doesn't exist, so you need to anchor the reader in it...but at the SAME TIME you have to hit the ground running, too! You don't want to do an extended introduction so much that you end up making us wait for the story to start, either! Yes, it's difficult. But who said screen writing was easy?

2) Not making exposition clear.

Exposition is background information a reader needs to be able to understand what is going on in your story. Now, that may include your story world (as in point 1), but also stuff like character motivation and backstory. The clarity of exposition is important in ALL stories, but especially science fiction, because we're often dealing with—you guessed it—stuff that doesn't actually exist. Which is why it's so difficult!

3) Character clichés.

Some of the most iconic characters have come from science fiction—Ripley,

Sarah Connor, Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, The Doctor, Captain Kirk, Spock, you name it. However, because of this, it can be really hard to break new ground. So make sure you're not just copying what's gone before!

4) Clichéd concept.

Science Fiction too often has spec screenplays that are simply rehashing stories that have already been told. We want some new and groundbreaking; it's NOT the execution that counts! Harsh but true.

5) On the nose dialogue.

Very often writers worry we won't understand their Sci Fi world, so they will explain every little thing with dialogue or remind us of things we've already seen by recapping in full a scene or two later. No, just no!!!

6) Not balancing visuals and dialogue.

Sometimes scribes are so afraid of point 5, they forget one of the primary purposes of dialogue is also to ILLUMINATE what's going on in the action, too., This is why sometimes filmmakers might say, "Can I have a line for that?" as it can help anchor the audience in either what's actually happening, or what they're supposed to take from the scene (or both).

7) Not combining the Sci Fi with another genre.

This is the thing: Sci Fi is rarely on its own. It might be combined with Horror, Action, Adventure, Thriller, Mystery, Crime, even Comedy. But it's usually a combo of something, with Science Fiction more the arena than a genre in its own right.

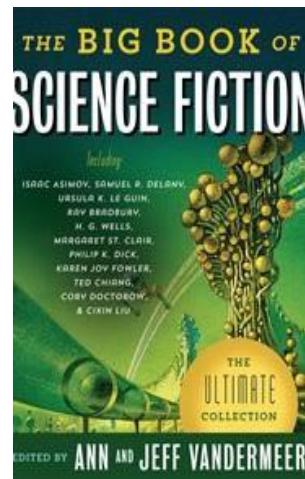
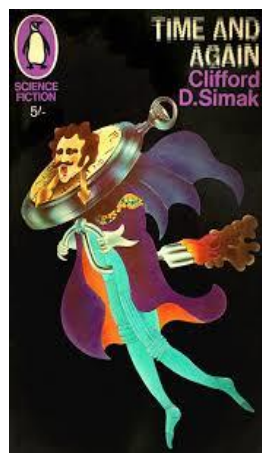
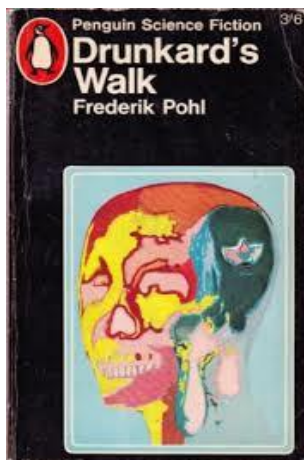
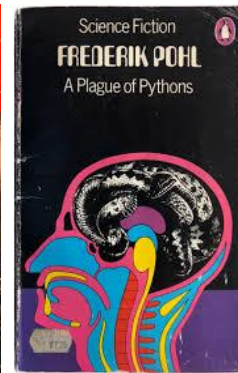
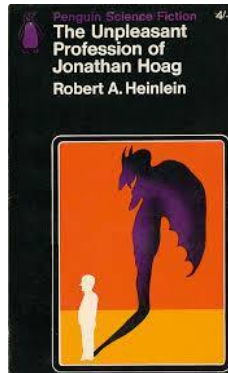
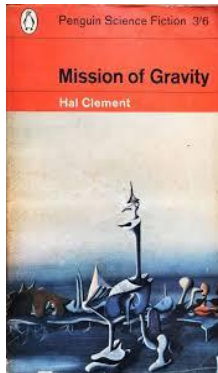
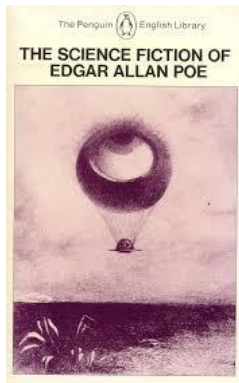
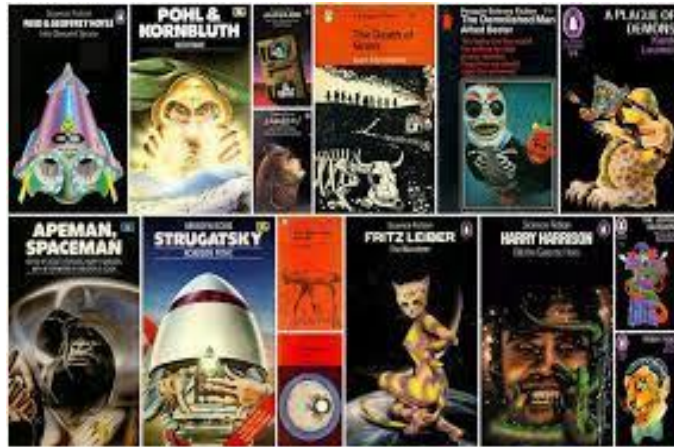
8) Novelistic Scene Description.

This is probably the most problematic area of Sci Fi spec screenplays—especially in the first instance. Scribes will fall in love with the "look" of the scenes—They'll be so intent on painting every single detail with words, so they'll write SWATHES of the black stuff to "set up" that all-important story world. Yet as the old adage goes, less really is more!

EARLY PENGUIN SCIENCE FICTION

by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian

From 1935 through the 70s



Penguin was originally a British publishing house. It was founded in 1935 by Sir Allen Lane as a line of the publishers, Bodley Head, only to become a separate company the following year. Penguin revolutionized publishing in the 1930s through the inexpensive paperbacks, sold through Woolworth's and other stores for pennies—bringing high quality paperback fiction and non-fiction to the mass market. Penguin's success demonstrated that large audiences existed for serious books. Penguin also had a significant impact on public debate in Britain, through its books on British culture, politics, and the arts and sciences.

Penguin is one of the largest English-language publishers, formerly known as the Big Six, and currently known as the Big Five. An American branch of Penguin Books was founded in 1939.

Science Fiction Books

Penguin began publishing science fiction (SF) books from the beginning of its history, with classics such as Samuel Butler's *EREWON* (1935) and J. D. Beresford's *THE HAMPSHIRE WONDER* (*aka* *THE WONDER*) in 1937. The covers of these books, as well as others published during this time, featured the famous Penguin tri-band design.

In the books published during the 1960s and 1970s, the covers were inspired by surrealism and pop art, "charting science fiction's emergence as a literary force while embracing the spirit of its pulp excess". Titles published during this period included several books by British author John Wyndham (John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris), including *THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS*, *THE SEEDS OF TIME*, *THE CHRYSALIDS*, *THE KRAKEN WAKES*, and *TROUBLE WITH LICHEN*.

Over the years Penguin published novels and short story collections by such classic genre authors as Aldous Huxley (*BRAVE NEW WORLD*), Arthur Conan Doyle (*THE LOST WORLD*), H.G. Wells (*THE WAR IN THE AIR*, *THE INVISIBLE MAN*, *WAR OF THE WORLDS*, *SELECTED SHORT STORIES*), Jack London (*THE IRON HEEL*), H. Rider Haggard (*KING SOLOMON'S MINES*), George Orwell (*ANIMAL FARM*, *NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR*), and Edgar Allan Poe (*THE SCIENCE FICTION OF EDGAR ALLAN POE*)—and later by such award-winning authors as Ray Bradbury (*DARK CARNIVAL*, *THE DAY IT RAINED FOREVER*), Arthur C. Clarke (*OF TIME AND STARS*), Robert Heinlein (*CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY*, *THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JONATHAN HOAG*), Theodore Sturgeon (*THE JOYOUS INVASION*), Brian Aldiss (*THE PENGUIN SCIENCE FICTION OMNIBUS*),

Clifford D. Simak (TIME AND AGAIN), Keith Roberts (PAVANE, KITE WORLD), Fred Hoyle (THE BLACK CLOUD), and Kurt Vonnegut (CAT'S CRADLE).

SF Anthologies

Almost all of the books listed above are novels or one-author collections of short fiction. On the other hand, Penguin was also a leader in SF anthologies. Second in time only to THE POCKET BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION (1943), edited by Donald A. Wollheim, was American Penguin's OUT OF THIS WORLD (1944), edited by Julius Fast, younger brother of the novelist Howard Fast. Both Wollheim and Fast included stories by H.G. Wells, John Collier, and Stephen Vincent Benet in their history-making anthologies. Later Penguin anthologies were MACHINES THAT THINK, edited by Isaac Asimov, Martin H. Greenberg, and Patricia S. Warrick, THE TRAPS OF TIME, edited by Michael Moorcock, APEMAN, SPACEMAN, edited by Leon Stover and Harry Harrison, PULSAR 1 and PULSAR 2, both edited by George Hay, and WOMEN OF WONDER and MORE WOMEN OF WONDER, both edited by Pamela Sargent.

Penguin Paperback Books In America

Allen Lane had wanted since 1937 to find a distributor for Penguin Books in the United States, despite major stumbling blocks, such as copyright restrictions. His eventual choice for an American distributor was 22-year-old Ian Ballantine, who had graduated from Columbia University and then earned a master's at the London School of Economics. Although he had no experience in producing or selling books, Ballantine apparently was very good at selling himself. He and his teenage wife Betty were hard workers, plus they had several quite illustrious family members—some of whom were in publishing.

Allen Lane

Allen Lane Williams (1902-1970) was born in Bristol to Camilla (nee Lane) and Samuel Williams, and studied at Bristol Grammar School. In 1919 he joined the publishing company Bodley Head as an apprentice to his uncle and the founder of the company, John Lane. In the process, he and the rest of his family changed their surname to Lane to retain the childless John Lane's company as a family firm. Lane married Lettice Lucy Orr on June 28, 1941, and they had three daughters. Lane was knighted in 1962.

He rose quickly at Bodley Head, becoming managing editor in 1925 following the

death of his uncle, after conflict with the board of directors who were wary at first—for fear of being prosecuted—of publishing James Joyce’s controversial book *ULYSSES*, Lane—together with his brothers Richard and John—founded Penguin Books in 1935 as part of the Bodley Head.

Ian Ballantine

Ian Keith Ballantine (1916-1995) was a pioneering American publisher who, after working for Penguin Books, founded and published the paperback line of Ballantine Books in 1945, and he was the first president of Bantam (from 1945 to 1952).

Ballantine Books was one of the earliest publishers of SF paperback originals. The Ballantine became freelance publishers in the 1970s, and both were inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2008.

SF Postcard Covers

Penguin Science Fiction Postcards was a boxed set of postcards issued in 2015. These 100 postcards featured the covers of SF books published over the history of the company. Some of these covers have been used to illustrate this article.

A Few Conclusions

Over the years, Penguin added new imprints such as Pelican Books (for serious non-fiction), Puffin Books (for children), Penguin Giants, and Penguin Specials, plus the literary journal *PENGUIN NEW WRITING*.

The Penguin Classics, however, was the only Penguin imprint to issue genre books (*TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA*, *DRACULA*, *FRANKENSTEIN*, *etc.*).

Today, the imprints making up Penguin Publishing Group include Avery, Berkley, Blue Rider Press, Dutton, Penguin Books, Penguin Classics, The Penguin Press, Plume, Portfolio, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, Riverhead, Sentinel, Tarcher Perigee, and Viking Books.

In addition, now readers can even access Penguin Audio, and listen to SF books instead of reading them. For my part, I still prefer to read. On the other hand, I also listen to SF on my radio and computer.

Sources

Bonn, Thomas L. *UNDERCOVER: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF AMERICAN MASS MARKET PAPERBACKS*. NY: Penguin Books, 1982.

Davis, Kenneth C. TWO BIT CULTURE. Boston, MS: Houghton-Mifflin, 1984.

Fast, Julius. OUT OF THIS WORLD. NY: Penguin Books, 1944.

Lupoff, Richard A. THE GREAT AMERICAN PAPERBACK. Portland, OR: Collectors Press, 2001.

Schick, Frank L. THE PAPERBOUND BOOK IN AMERICA. NY: Bowker, 1958.

Wollheim, Donald A. THE POCKET BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION. NY: Pocket Books, 1943.

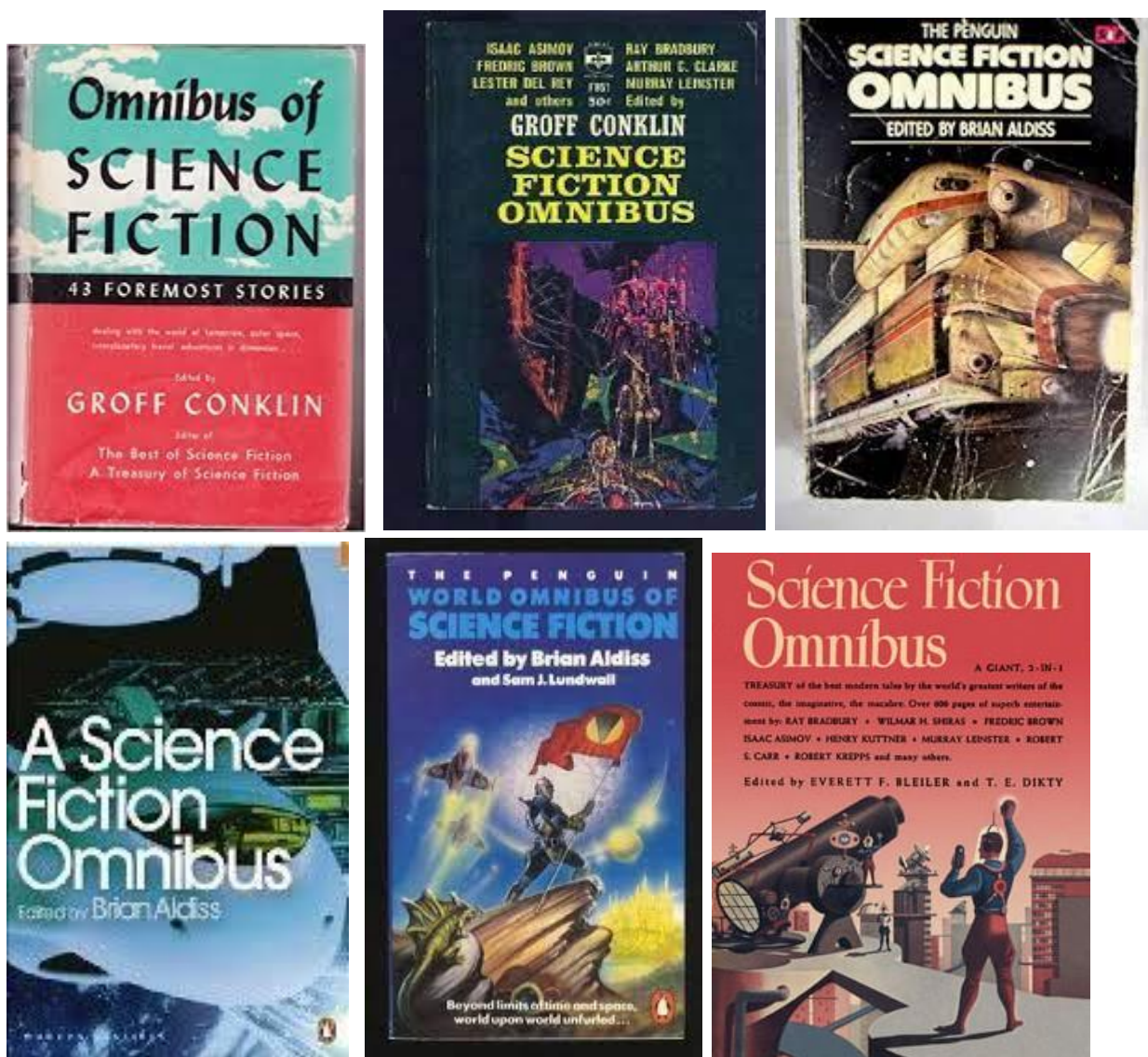
Note: This article was originally published in **Paperback Parade** years ago. It has been revised somewhat for reprinting here.

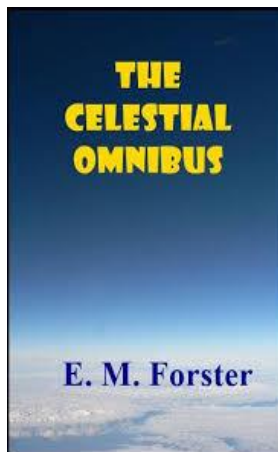
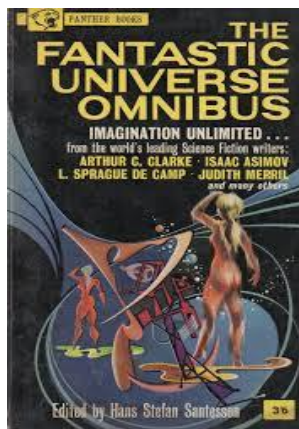
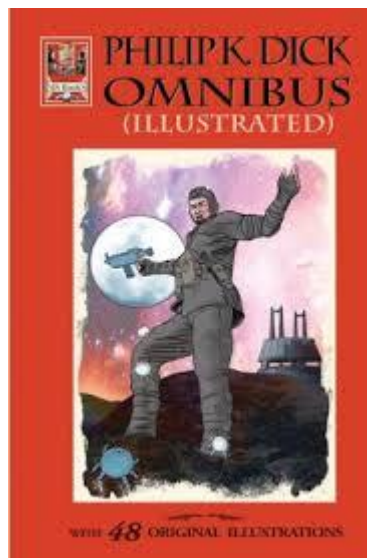
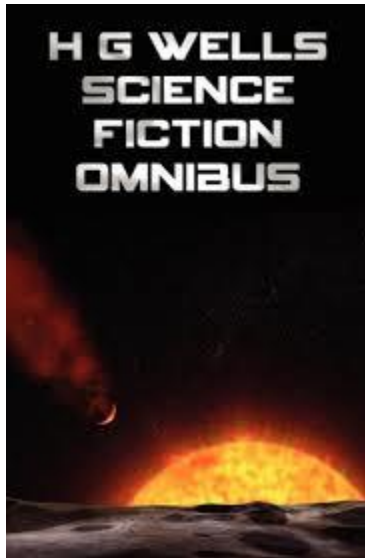
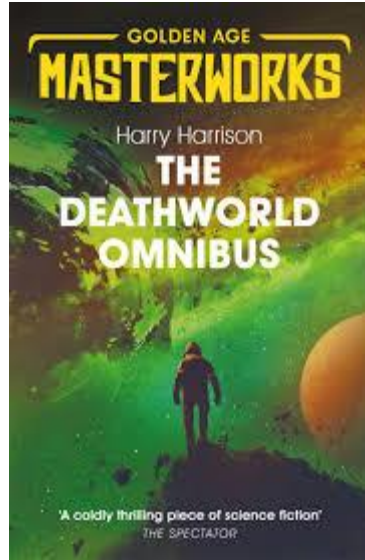
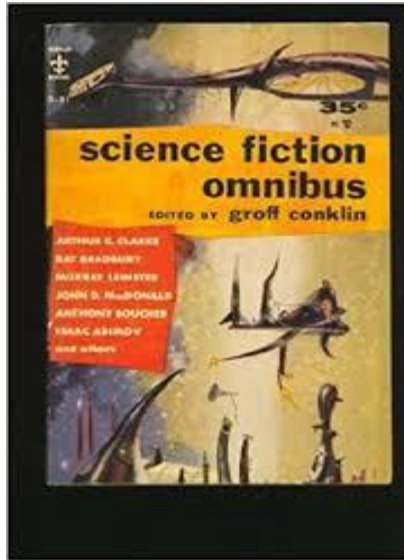
Omnibus by John Thiel



Looking over Jon Swartz's article on Penguin Books, I found Brian Aldiss listed as the editor of THE PENGUIN SCIENCE FICTION OMNIBUS, which recalled to me that Groff Conklin had had a science fiction anthology called OMNIBUS OF SCIENCE FICTION. I wondered if Aldiss or the people at Penguin had been aware of that title similarity, or had just come up with the thought of calling the book an omnibus themselves, perhaps after reading Roget's Thesaurus. It seemed too much of a coincidence that they would find that title appropriate and that Groff Conklin would also have done so, as the word is rather far-fetched. Recalling that Conklin's anthology had the word Omnibus in its title (I was recalling it as THE OMNIBUS OF SCIENCE FICTION, but may have been wrong). I looked the title up on the net and was surprised to find that there were a lot of science fiction books having that word in the title and that the title was being juggled around as editions were re-printed. Which put me in mind of what had popularized the word, and

that was a long-running television show entitled OMNIBUS. The word meant a miscellany of treasures. Below are the titles I found with that word in them:





There were quite a few others, over twenty more, with the word "Omnibus" in their titles, but these are enough to give the picture. It seemed to me odd that Groff Conklin would have wanted to rearrange the words in his title, or that Penguin would want to do it. Aldiss seems to me to have noticed the rearranged title's similarity to his own anthology's title and to have conceded with a retitled anthology called "A Science Fiction Omnibus", meaning there had been more than one, then developed a little hubris and changed the title to "World Omnibus"; Bleiler and Dikty had Conklin's new title, and Conklin came out with the same title with a different cover. The Deathworld Omnibus wasn't a real omnibus, and the Wells title wasn't real, either, if what it contained was his short stories. Dick's omnibus also seems to have been a one-author work. An omnibus was a variety. The Celestial Omnibus was, I believe, a fantasy novel; perhaps it described a vehicle. The last one there seems to have been put together by someone who had become disgruntled with the word being used in titles.

It seems to me the word "omnibus" wouldn't be known or in use if it had not been for that television show, which always had a lot of interesting variety to it.





By Judy Carroll

I am on vacation this month. I have hopes that I will have caught up, and am on pleasant terms, with all the things I have to do, need to do, and want to do in the next few weeks. I would love to take more time to relax and implement my goals, but I don't think there is enough time for that leisure.

My visiting relatives are on a four to six week road trip visiting many of the western states. They'll be back some time in February. If their trip is successful they may decide to move to one of the western states. It would be great to have them a few blocks or a few hours away.

A brief bit about them. The husband is the family adventurer. He has searched for Sasquatch and visited remote tribes in Peru. The wife is a master baker, and can make a traditional wedding cake one day and the Millennium Falcon the next. The son, seventeen, is interested in writing, music, and video games. The daughter, fifteen, is a good artist and loves animals.

I plan on introducing them to the N3F.



COMMENTARY

Like Judy Carroll as she mentions in her column, I am boxed in somewhat this month by the Christmas season and the changeover of the year, so the issue is less tended to than usual. The reader may be able to sense a rush about it. However, I continue my policy of commenting on the issue, even if none of the membership does. These articles do beget a certain amount of controversy and some impulse of furtherance. But, for some odd reason, none of our large membership takes the opportunity to write to us with some opinions. If they are in the N3F for a purpose, that purpose is not very well related to the organization. But things are buzzing a bit in the hierarchy formed by the bureau functions. There are enough people doing that , that there may be said to be an active gang up front. Judy has made some suggestions in her column about doing more and being more active; apparently everybody read these tips in leaden silence. What could cause an inertia in such an organization as the NFFF? Perhaps there are some restraints on activities that are not visible? Something that curbs the natural joy of a science fiction fan. I have noticed that people are getting some public feedback in the news media and television and motion picture industry about what science fiction has had to say. Perhaps a lot of the attention of sf readers has been diverted by these things.



Judy suggested last month that there would be improvements made if people would just talk, and suggested that positive remarks be made to people to establish a new relationship and approach to things, even suggesting that people here experiment with doing this and see what results it would bring. She is right on to something of great importance there, I think, something that would be an anodyne to the woes of the times. Speaking terms are hard to establish, but are a lack when they are not there and are a good thing when they are. If you don't talk about anything nothing ever happens,

and if you do talk about things they should be things which are positive things to both individuals involved. She also suggests approaching silent people to start things going for them, which is not done much any more but which should be. Don't just sit around with nothing much, but don't abandon what you already do have in favor of something else, in other words, don't lose interest in the NFFF. Those who have done so have made a very poor decision, I think, but nobody tells them that they are except the person who has brought their dropping out up; I am referring here to conversations I have been having with people on Facebook when I am trying to recruit people for the N3F. They have been expressing complete disengagement with the organization...but my suggestion is that if they try enjoying their membership and getting something out of it, it will be much better for them. They show immunity to this suggestion; they seem to be conditioned against any favorability to the organization and one can wonder what they do like—they'll name books, perhaps *Bladerunner* or *Old Man's War*, which they like and are thriving with, but no organizations. It almost sounds like I am talking to gafiates on the net. The N3F was not organized to turn on and off according to the mood and tempo of the times.

In my editorial I wrote of over-computerization, of a possible computer culture which does little but compute. As the saying goes, the medium is the message; the fact of being on a computer network might take the place of doing anything when one is on it—just operating a computer could be enough for some, and take up enough of their time. Perhaps this is something which has stilled the N3F—computing itself might be taking the place of doing something with it.

Jeffrey Redmond brings up the point that science fiction readers are intellectually advanced and consider themselves to be so. This had been a concern in fandom as I have experienced it...how does the science fiction fan relate to those who do not have this literary interest? Is a fan in some way different? There are some science fiction stories about this, where people become advanced over the rest of the culture—for example, *CHILDREN OF THE ATOM* by Wilmar Shiras, or stories where people with a special genius are being persecuted. Being intellectually ahead, or super has been a theme in science fiction, and it is a theme with special reference to the reader. This may be a spirit which science fiction has. Do we know of this spirit, and do we reference it from time to time? A person ought to think that reading puts him a little ahead. Jeffrey writes about the writing of it. You have to learn to make out with what you have.

It'd be a good science fiction plot to write of people coming from so far away and

being so advanced on us here on Earth that, although kind, they make all the brightest minds feel inferior. That would include science fiction fans. They'd all have inferiority complexes. Fredrick Brown wrote of people from Mars being craftier and shiftier than people on Earth, and with more of a will to meet their objectives in **MARTTIANS GO HOME!** The actually superior people would be one step beyond this. Too much in life is competitive. People would be frozen over by people who are already there before them in thinking things out. But science fiction is so desultory today in this form of intellectually active plot that the story wouldn't sell.

I'd say plausible science is the greatest lack science fiction has—now as never before. Science should indeed be respected when science fiction is written—and the scientific attitude and approach not forgotten about.

I've noticed the influx of art like surrealism, futurism and even dadaism into the covers of science fiction books that Jon Swartz mentions in his article above, and it did indeed pick up considerably in the sixties and seventies. Apparently the similarity of these art forms to science fiction (although they're usually more similar to fantasy) is what caused these kinds of art to add to the realistic art of Emsch, Mel Hunter, Fiinlay and others, who would portray the action as described. But Richard Powers always did strange symbolic art for the book covers, and some covers were surrealistic. You can see cubism and dadaism on some of the books he mentions, and there's op art on the cover of one of the Omnibus volumes I wrote about. I felt this art was pretty appropriate for science fiction covers, which were otherwise whimsical if not realistic. The art probably sold a lot of copies off the stands, too.

That does it for this issue; hope to see some of you with us in issues to come.





Nasa plays it safe during a crew launch





"A Bit of Change Will Do It, Pally"

LAST PAGE

Extra page contributed by Stry Bougaloff of Ipsalon