

ORIGIN 55 September 2022



**Journal of the National Fantasy Fan Federation
History and Research Bureau**

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EDITORIAL

I Foresee a Good Future for Science Fiction

Why are people bumming around these days, saying science fiction has seen its last, that its idea font is empty, that it is drifting away in the media, that it has been supplanted by lesser interests, that it is losing out generally? Is it because they are right? Or is it that they themselves have no particular interest in science fiction? The true fan of science fiction thinks that it is essentially all right, that the falsehoods of the world can't bury it, that the vagaries of popularity have no valid opinions in their midst and that people cannot effectively comment from that perspective. The same with fantasy, the people who don't like it are all blow and no thought. What do they like? The government? That should not be of interest from a literary perspective.

I have not been seeing much which does not, at least in part, justify the viewpoint that sf has reached a flat tire condition—much of what is written is highly repetitive of earlier works of science fiction, and new ideas for stories aren't happening, except for the avant-garde and camp attempts that are appearing in F&SF magazine. A lot of it seems psychedelic, resembling Henri Michaux's "Miserable Miracle" about the bum trip he took on mescaline. Some stories look like they're taking the Acid Test as in Timothy Leary's film. But this leads me to the notion that science fiction writing has entered an experimental phase, and like what's said about the psychedelic mob, it seems to keep on going the way it started. Perhaps a lot of it has the raw materials and needs to be burrowed into with its chief qualities being extricated and cleaned up to the tune of better writing.

Why not regard it as experimental, considering that it is based upon science? There is a lot of experimentation in science; astronomers are still running tests on their findings and using various experimental methods in doing this. Maybe the science in the stories is running tests on the fictional element. Some stories seem like notations. This notion is even expressed openly in stories where people are human guinea pigs, or where the guinea pigs have their intelligences raised by electronics and chemistry so that they can express the facts about themselves rather than showing a paucity of these facts by running through mazes. In other stories ETs are checking out terrestrials using scientific methods, their technology being demonstrative of their superiority over their cargo of abducted housewives, washerwomen, orphans, stewbums, meth users and woodland wanderers. Yes, there is a sense of incompleteness

and perhaps trailblazing about modern sf. And this, I think, is what is giving people the idea that sf has no future. Also, sf is getting panned considerably even while the current publicity is extolling it to the stars. Science fiction didn't used to have that kind of publicity and it is diverting to the things sf normally expresses—one might express present writers as being dismayed by critics, who even with their compliments are frequently out of focus with the stories they are exalting. Some stories express how difficult it is to be a writer. There seems to be impediments, even major impediments. The publishers are chocked up with bang-up business which, it seems to me, isn't earning them enough sustenance. In my Ionisphere interviews, writers are speaking of endless travails, misdirections and manufactured failure. They also discuss being derided as they proceed, a hostility to their efforts having appeared from somewhere. As if speaking in a confessional they discuss the shame brought to them by reviewing their earlier efforts—you have to learn to write, you don't start out doing it, is the appearance of things. Natural inspiration is for nanny goats, talent is tin; you have to serve a sort of apprenticeship under conditions of not being noticed and then become indentured as if you were in a guild to get you on the pay routes, if it does.

So that's the bad of it; with everybody doing servitude it doesn't seem as if science fiction would have a future, and what I've described shows reasons why the matter has come up. Another reason it might have no future is because nothing presently seems to have much of a future, except a future of warfare and plague, but we generally like to think of that as something following us from the past, because we like to progress; progress is what brings thoughts of the future to mind.

It may be true that to have a good future you have to have a good *now*, and that is why I have been suggesting constructing a good now. Some say science fiction IS the future, but it looks more like it's retrograding into the past. You might call the mass movement in science fiction today something like "science fiction studying its past," an introspection perhaps caused by the stalling of the progress of science fiction caused by an upheaval in the 70s called the "new wave". (I first heard about the new wave in a science fiction course at Purdue University, when the teacher of the class spoke of the "new wave" in science fiction. He was assuming his students had not heard of the "new wave".) The "new wave" appeared to be science fiction influenced by so-called "underground writing" such as was found in the social changes supposedly taking place then whereby there was a "youth culture" and a "counter-culture". Science fiction had a certain affinity with the changes taking place, and proponents of the "beat generation" seemed to get involved with science fiction. The counter-culture surprised me when I met someone reading Heinlein, and the book they were reading was STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND, with which they identified. I read the book, and it seemed like Heinlein was identifying with them. Things he spoke of were also being talked by the counter-culture. Also heard of among those people was A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, a kind of science fiction which seemed to be written with them in mind, though not quite science fiction to me as the author had not appeared in any sf magazines and the book was not labeled as science fiction on its cover. Also Kingsley Amis, an "Angry Young Man" of England and hence a person of the counter-culture, had written a study of science fiction, presumably for his already existing literary audience of angry young people, called NEW MAPS OF HELL, which title I didn't find exactly favorable to science fiction and it made it out to be critical of society. So science fiction appeared to be getting knocked for a loop by the entrance of these particular cultures which

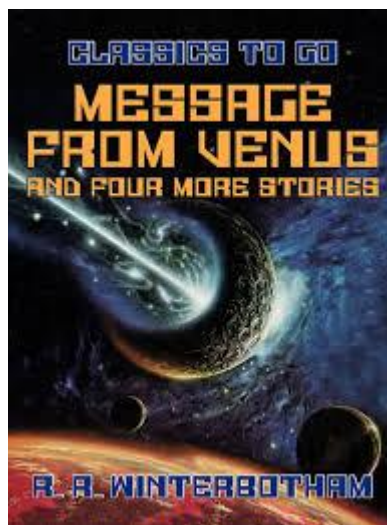
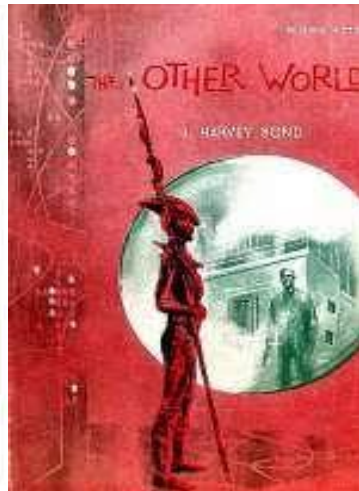
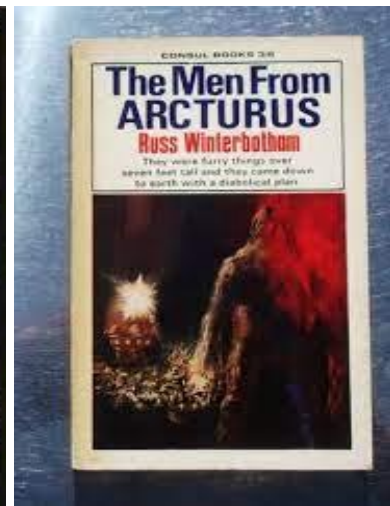
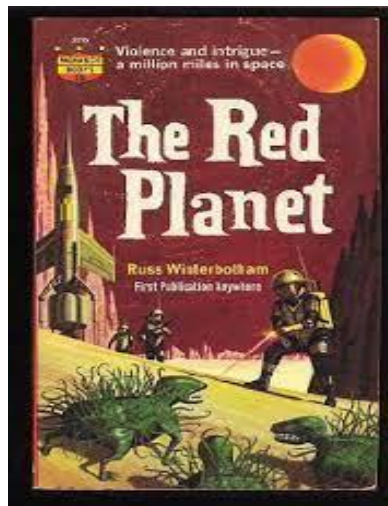
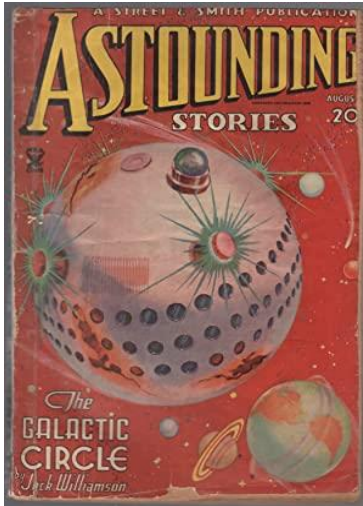
ran contrary to normal society, and the result was things of an avant-garde nature being added to science fiction, the avant-garde being the "advance guard" which strove for things which were new. But science fiction was already with new things, and the advance guard did not seem to be necessary to reinforce science fiction writing. Some science fiction became "camp", which I have heard stated in science fiction circles, camp writing and art being something intentionally detached from the normal culture. Science fiction, too, was not in the mode of normality, but it wasn't "camp" either until writers of "camp" science fiction appeared with their books. Science fiction was by its nature outside of the range of normality, but camp and the avant-garde were intentionally outside of normality, in other words, revolutionary. I don't think that science fiction is in itself a revolutionary genre. It has not had that intention.

So, then, there were a lot of changes in science fiction during the 60s and 70s, and these changes were not especially desirable. Science fiction should not hop out of its normal mode if it is to remain pure literature. Those were days, however, when science fiction was attacked from within by feuding and argumentation about what was and what was not good sf, and the influx seemed to provide them with warfare, and as you can easily see, it came out possessing formidable weaponry—most of it imaginary, perhaps, but going way beyond ray-guns. Somebody seemed to be putting the brakes on science fiction as it progressed.

Well, it looks like I might be doing anything but predicting a good future for science fiction. Readers might think what I was trying to say was "it's always darkest before the dawn", but that's fantasy and a superstitious mode of thinking. Yet when people hit bottom they have a tendency to rise again, instead of continuing to descend, and after populating the bottom for as long as they can endure it, they start pulling into sight again, and this same tendency exists on up, the bottom of whatever level is dwelt in tends to rise, even when people prefer the bottom, as a lot of people do these days. "More earthy." But when that earthiness is frustrated, and there is a tendency to deprive people on the bottom of whatever they still may have, then they're back into a rise, start being visionaries, etc. (You may have seen people going around be-smutting material realities.) I'd say the writing of good, clear science fiction is bound to emerge here and there, and get people's interest, and things might swing back into intentionally clear and interesting writing. As NaiveNeoFan, Codename: Hopelost once told me, "Things have got to get better, but when? Are some of us to live our lives in this kind of desolation?" I reminded him of what Ken Hahn had said, "Stop and Smell the Roses", and everyone at our room at the Windycon laughed at that. "You've got to give him SOME advice," one of them said. They asked me when I thought things would get better. I said, "Perhaps in this Century". Which they did not. Someone said, "That LONG?" I said, "Not for the individual, if you quit looking at all that drag."

Well, I've been thinking that the new century should see some change, but it hasn't for about twenty years, as the Weird Shadow Over Us All continues, but about when we hit 2020, things did start to change, from my point of view, at least. And here in this and the other fanzines with which I am connected, I am trying to change with this change. I just plain would like something better, and something truly better starts to involve everyone when things have been like this.

Russ Winterbotham by Jon D. Swartz, NBF Historian



CHRIS WELKIN, *Planeteer*



By RUSS WINTERBOTHAM

Newspaperman-author Russell Robert Winterbotham (1904-1971) wrote as R.R. Winterbotham, Russell R. Winterbotham, Russ Winterbotham, and as R.R. Winter; but most of his work signed R.R. Winter was not science fiction (SF).

His first published story was "The Star That Would Not Behave" in the August 1935 issue of **Astounding Stories**. During the late 1930s, he published another ten stories in *Astounding*. He also had SF stories published in **Amazing**, **Planet Stories**, and **Space Science Fiction**. Moreover, in the early 1940s he contributed to SF fanzines.

Big Little Books

Winterbotham is reported to have written at least sixty big little books (BLBs). I have some of them, and have seen copies of others. All the ones I have read were entertaining, workmanlike efforts, as good as most others in the genre.

The Whitman Publishing Company of Racine, Wisconsin released the first Big Little Book in 1932. During World War II, Whitman published especially written BLBs for the Armed Forces. Although earlier BLBs had dealt with aviation, the navy, and the marines, none had been written with the war effort in mind; but most of these books included ads that promoted the buying of War Bonds.

Winterbotham wrote several of the Armed Forces' BLBs, including ALLEN PIKE OF THE PARACHUTE SQUAD, U.S.A.; WINDY WAYNE AND HIS FLYING WING; CONVOY PATROL; RAY LAND OF THE TANK CORPS, U.S.A.; and KEEP 'EM FLYING.

There were three Winterbotham BLBs published featuring Maximo, a Superman-like character: MAXIMO, THE AMAZING SUPERMAN (1940), with artwork by Henry E. Valley; MAXIMO, THE AMAZING SUPERMAN AND THE CRYSTALS OF DOOM (1941), with artwork by Valley; and MAXIMO, THE AMAZING SUPERMAN AND THE SUPER-MACHINE (1945), with artwork by Erwin L. Hess. Other genre titles by Winterbotham were THE GHOST AVENGER STRIKES (1943) and HAL HARDY IN THE LOST LAND OF GIANTS (1937).

At least one critic described the three Maximo titles as follows: "Maximo was a very original effort and the writing of R.R. Winterbotham was truly inspired."

Comic Strips/Juvenile Novels

Winterbotham also wrote several syndicated comic strips (Captain Midnight, Red Ryder, Kevin the Bold, and Captain Easy) and the Captain Midnight and Red Ryder juvenile novels, JOYCE OF THE SECRET SQUADRON (1942) and MYSTERY OF WHISPERING WALLS (1941).

In addition, he revised six "Roy Rockwell" books, originally published during 1900-1913, for publication in 1939 by Whitman.

Little Blue Books

Apparently, Winterbotham began his professional writing career by doing several Little Blue Books. He is credited with writing three titles in this series: LINDBERGH: THE HERO OF THE AIR (#1349) [1928/apparently his first publication], CURIOUS AND UNUSUAL DEATHS (#1419), and CURIOUS AND UNUSUAL LOVE AFFAIRS (#1428), all under the name of Russell R. Winterbotham.

For a time he also worked as circulation manager for this paperback publisher. Little Blue Books were small, paper-covered booklets, published by E. Haldeman-Julius (1889-1951) of Girard, Kansas, beginning in 1919. At one time Haldeman-Julius had the largest mail-order book publishing house in the world, with more than 500,000,000 of these five cent and ten cent books published in over 2,000 different titles. Several SF stories, most of them famous classics, were published in this format (e.g., stories by H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, Jack London, etc.)

Science Fiction Book Bibliography

THE SPACE EGG (Avalon, 1958)
THE RED PLANET (Monarch, 1962)
THE MEN FROM ARCTURUS (Avalon, 1963)
THE OTHER WORLD (Avalon, 1963—as by J. Harvey Bond)
PLANET BIG ZERO (Monarch, 1964—as by Franklin Hadley)
THE PUPPET PLANET (Avalon, 1964)
THE LORD OF NARDOS (Avalon, 1966)

Mystery Book Bibliography

MURDER ISN'T FUNNY (as by J. Harvey Bond), 1958
KILL ME WITH KINDNESS (as by J. Harvey Bond), 1959
IF WISHES WERE HEARSESES (as by J. Harvey Bond), 1961

Use of Pseudonyms

In addition to several variations of his real name, Winterbotham used other pseudonyms during his writing career, including J. Harvey Bond and Franklin Hadley (see above). In 1951, he created and wrote the SF comic strip, "Chris Welkin, Planeteer", but under his own name. Art Sansom, of "Born Loser" fame, was the artist.

At one time or another during his career, Winterbotham was a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America, the Mystery Writers of America, and the Western Writers of America. Don Tuck has reported that Winterbotham also was a bridge expert and edited the Oswald Jacoby bridge column syndicated through NEA.

Concluding Comments

Some critics consider Winterbotham to be a neglected SF author. Although he had several SF books published, he's not given much coverage in any of the major reference books. When he's mentioned at all, usually in the older works, his SF writing is given very short shrift—with his other writing (newspaper comic strips, BLBs, juvenile novels, non-SF books, etc.) highlighted.

Of his several SF books, only THE SPACE EGG and PLANET BIG ZERO have been deemed worthy of any critical comment. Although David Wingrove found Winterbotham's SF novels to be "enjoyable adventures", the typical comment is that he produced "routine" or "unambitious" work.

I recently re-read THE SPACE EGG, a novel that tells of an invasion of Earth by alien symbiotes. The plot was much as I remembered it, but I had forgotten Winterbotham's explanation of the origins of the space eggs. I now find the "science" he used in the story quite inventive, especially for the 1950s.

Shortly before Winterbotham's death, the SF critic and historian R. Reginald quoted him as saying: "The science fiction market doesn't seem to demand my talents, whatever they are, and I need the rest."

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Goulart, Ron (ed.). THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN COMICS, 1990.

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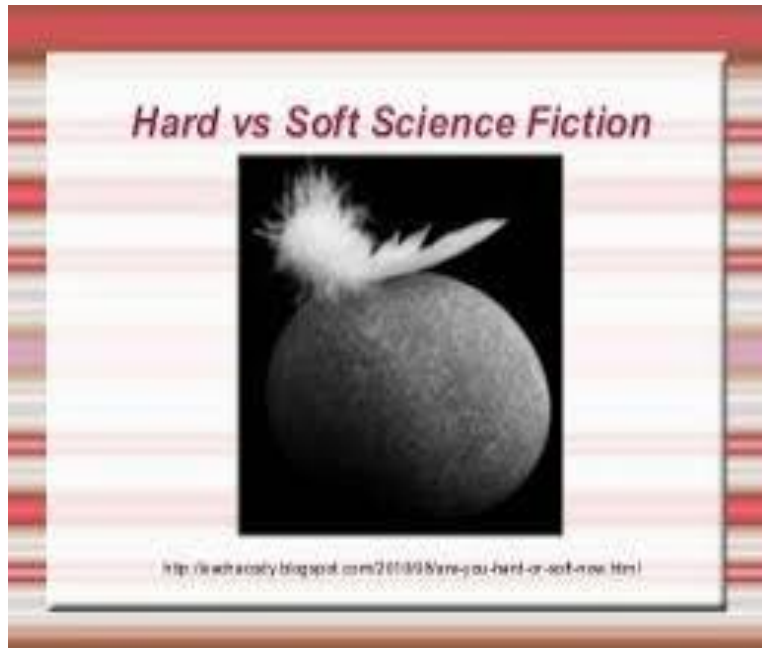
Note: In addition to the above, several Internet sites were consulted, including Fancyclopedia 3 and Wikipedia.



space opera

Soft Science Fiction by Jeffrey Redmond

A review of the meaning of the term



Soft science fiction, or soft SF, is a category of science fiction with two different definitions, defined in contrast to hard science fiction. [1] It can refer to science fiction that explores the "soft" sciences (e.g. psychology, political science, anthropology) as opposed to hard science fiction, which explores the "hard" sciences (e.g. physics, astronomy, biology). [1] It can also refer to science fiction which prioritizes human emotions over the scientific accuracy or plausibility of hard science fiction. [1]

Soft science fiction of either type is often more concerned with speculative societies and relationships between characters, rather than speculative science or engineering. [2] The term first appeared in the late 1970s and is attributed to Australian literary scholar Peter Nicholls.

Definition

Peter Nicholls, the first person attested to have used the term soft science fiction, in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, writes that “soft SF” is a “not very precise item of SF terminology” and that the contrast between hard and soft is “sometimes illogical”. [3] In fact, the boundaries between “hard” and “soft” are neither definite nor universally agreed-upon, so there is no single standard of scientific “hardness” or “softness”.

Some readers might consider any deviation from the possible or probable (for example, including faster-than-light travel or paranormal powers) to be a mark of “softness”. Others might see an emphasis on character or the social implications of technological change (however possible or probable) as a departure from the science-engineering-technology issues that in their view ought to be the focus of hard SF. Given this lack of objective and well-defined standards, “soft science fiction” does not indicate a genre or subgenre of SF but a tendency or quality—one pole of an axis that has “hard science fiction” at the other pole.

In *BRAVE NEW WORDS*, subtitled *THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF SCIENCE FICTION*, soft science fiction is given two definitions. The first definition is fiction that is primarily focused on advancements in, or extrapolations of, the soft sciences; that is social sciences and not natural sciences. The second definition is science fiction in which science is not important to the story. [4]

Etymology

The term soft science fiction was formed as the complement of the earlier term hard science fiction.

The earliest known citation for the term is in “1975: The Year in Science Fiction” by Peter Nicholls, in *NEBULA AWARDS STORIES* 11 (1976). He wrote “The same list reveals that an already established shift from hard sf (chemistry, physics, astronomy, technology) to soft (psychology, biology, anthropology, sociology, and even [...] linguistics) is continuing more strongly than ever.” [4]

History

H. G. Wells is an early example of a soft sci fi writer. Poul Anderson, in *ideas for SF Writers* (September 1998), described H. G. Wells as the model for soft science fiction. “He concentrated on the characters, their emotions and interactions” rather than any of the science or technology behind, for example, invisible men or time machines. [4][5] Jeffrey Wallmann suggests that soft science fiction grew out of the gothic fiction of Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley. [6]

Carol McGuirk, in *FICTION 2000* (1992), states that the “soft school” of science fiction dominated the genre in the 1950s, with the beginning of the Cold War and an influx of new readers into the science fiction genre. [7] The only members of the soft science fiction genre were Alfred Bester, Fritz Leiber, Ray Bradbury and James Blish, who were the first to make a “radical” break from the hard science fiction tradition and “take extrapolation explicitly inward”, emphasizing the characters and their characterization. [7]

In calling out specific examples from this period, McGuirk describes Ursula K. Le Guin’s 1989 novel *THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS* as “a soft SF classic”. [7] The New Wave movement in science fiction developed out of soft science fiction in the 1960s and 70s. [7][8] The conte cruel was the standard narrative form of soft science fiction by the 1980s. [9] During the 1980s

cyberpunk developed from soft science fiction. [7]

McGuirk identifies two subgenres of soft science fiction: "Humanist science fiction" (in which human beings, rather than technology, are the cause of advancement or from which change can be extrapolated in the setting; often involving speculation on the human condition) and "Science fiction noir" (focusing on the negative aspects of human nature; often in a dystopian setting).[7]

Examples

George Orwell's NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR might be described as soft science fiction, since it is concerned primarily with how society and interpersonal relationships are altered by a political force that uses technology mercilessly, even though it is the source of many ideas and tropes commonly explored in subsequent science fiction, (even in hard science fiction), such as mind control and surveillance. And yet, its style is uncompromisingly realistic, and despite its then-future setting, very much more like a spy novel or political thriller in terms of its themes and treatment.

Karel Capek's 1920 play R.U.R., which supplied the term robot (nearly replacing earlier terms such as automaton) and features a trope-defining climax in which artificial workers unite to overthrow human society, covers such issues as free will, a post-scarcity economy, robot rebellion, and post-apocalyptic culture. The play, subtitled "A Fantastic Melodrama", offers only a general description of the process for creating living workers out of artificial tissue, and thus can be compared to social comedy or literary fantasy.

George S. Elrick, in SCIENCE FICTION HANDBOOK FOR READERS AND WRITERS (1978), cited Brian Aldiss' 1959 short story collection THE CANOPY OF TIME (using the US title GALAXIES LIKE GRAINS OF SAND) as an example of soft science fiction based on the soft sciences. [5]

Frank Herbert's DUNE series is a landmark of soft science fiction. In it, he deliberately spent little time on the details of its futuristic technology so he could devote it chiefly to addressing the politics of humanity, rather than the future of humanity's technology.

Linguistic relativity (also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis), the theory that language influences thought and perception, is a subject explored in some soft science fiction works such as Jack Vance's THE LANGUAGES OF PAO (1958) and Samuel R. Delany's BABEL-17 (1966). In these works artificial languages are used to control and change people and whole societies. Science fictional linguistics are also the subject of varied works from Ursula K. Le Guin's novel THE DISPOSSESSED (1974), to the STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION episode "Darmok" (1991), to Neal Stephenson's novel SNOW CRASH (1992), to the film ARRIVAL (2016).

Films Set in Outer Space

Soft science fiction filmmakers tend to extend to outer space certain physics that are associated with life on Earth's surface, primarily to make scenes more spectacular or recognizable to the audience. Examples are:

- Presence of gravity without use of an artificial gravity system.

- A spaceship's engines or an explosion generating sound despite the vacuum of space. [10]

- Spaceships changing directions without any visible thrusting activity.

- Spaceship occupants enduring without any visible effort the enormous g-forces generated

from a spaceship's extreme maneuvering (e.g. in a dogfight situation) or launch.

Astronauts instantly freezing to death or getting a frostbite when exposed to outer space.

Spacecraft which have engine failures "falling" or coming to a stop, instead of continuing along their current trajectory or orbit as per inertia.

Hard science fiction films try to avoid such artistic license.

Representative Works

Arranged chronologically by publication year.

Short Fiction

H. G. Wells, *THE TIME MACHINE* (1895) and *THE INVISIBLE MAN* (1897) [4]

Miles J. Breuer, *THE GOSTACK AND THE DOSHES* (1930)

Ray Bradbury, *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES* (1950, short story collection) [11][12][13][14]

James Blish, "Surface Tension" (1952) [7][NB 1]

Murray Leinster, "Exploration Team" (1956) [11]

Brian Aldiss, *THE CANOPY OF TIME* (1959, short story collection) [11][12][13][14]

Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon" (1959) [14][15]

Sakyo Komatsu, "Shigatsu Joyokkakan" (1974) [16]

Novels

A Fremmen (Fan Art) statue from *DUNE*, by Frank Herbert

Mary Shelley, *FRANKENSTEIN* (1818)

Alfred Bester, *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* (1953) [7][12]

Ray Bradbury, *FAHRENHEIT 451* (1953) [7][13]

Theodore Sturgeon, *MORE THAN HUMAN* (1953) [15]

Jack Vance, *THE LANGUAGES OF PAO* (1958)[17]

Philip K. Dick, *TIME OUT OF JOINT* (1959) and *UBIK* (1969) [13][18]

Walter M. Miller, Jr., *A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ* (1960) [7]

Robert A. Heinlein, *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND* (1961) [13]

Pierre Boulle, *MONKEY PLANET* (1963)

Frank Herbert, *DUNE* (1965) [19]

Samuel R. Delany, *BABEL-17* (1966) [17] [15]

Ursula K. Le Guin, *THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS* (1969) and *THE DISPOSSESSED* (1974) [7][13]

Robert Silverberg, *DYING INSIDE* (1972) [7]

Frederik Pohl, *MAN PLUS* (1976) [15]

Michael Swanwick, *IN THE DRIFT* (1984) [7]

Kim Stanley Robinson, *THE WILD SHORE* (1984) (Book 1 of the Three Californias Trilogy) [7]

Storm Constantine, *THE WRAETHTHU CHRONICLES* (1987)

David Brin, *THE POSTMAN* (1985) [7]

Audrey Niffenegger, *THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE* (2003) [14]

Ben R. Winters, *THE LAST POLICEMAN* (2012)

Film and television

in the sense of a basis in the soft sciences:

Episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994) like the fifth season's DARMOK (SSEO2), September 30, 1991) are based on soft science concepts; in this case, linguistics. Some prime examples of soft science fiction on film and television include:

The Stargate franchise

The Star Trek franchise

The Star Wars franchise

The Farscape franchise

The Planet of the Apes franchise

The Transformers franchise

The Terminator franchise

Frank Herbert's *DUNE* and its direct sequel, Frank Herbert's *CHILDREN OF DUNE*

The Firefly franchise

Notes

The short story "Surface Tension" has also been described as an exemplar of hard science fiction. (Hartwell, David G.; Cramer, Kathryn, eds. (1994). *THE ASCENT OF WONDER: THE EVOLUTION OF HARD SF*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, Inc. ISBN 9780312855093.

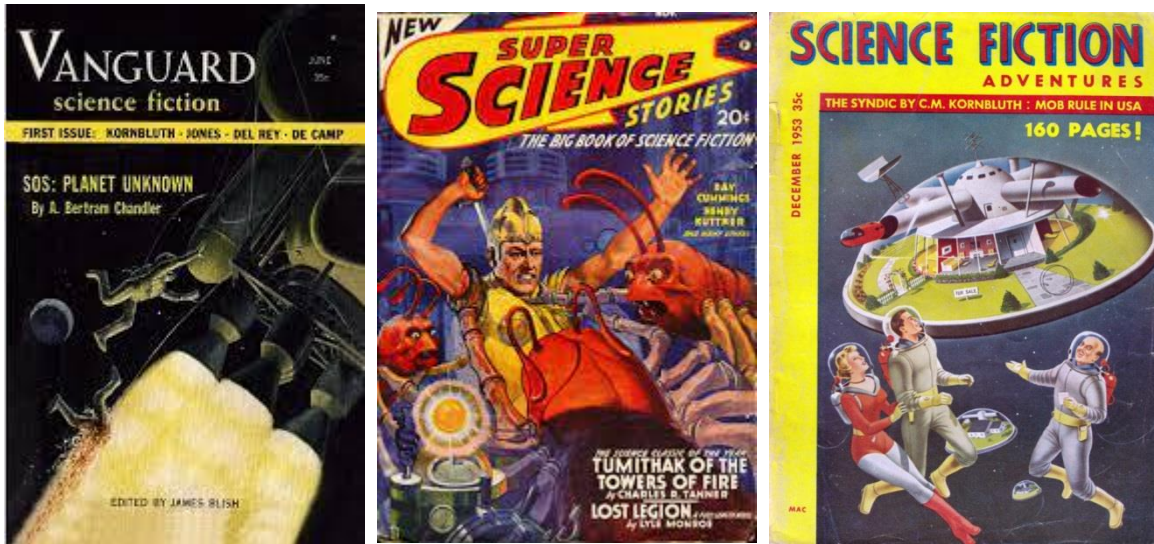
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INTO THE PAST by Martin Lock



For a fairly random threesome this time, let us start with the first issue of **Vanguard Science Fiction**, from June 1958, with a cover by Ed Emswiller. On a bimonthly schedule, edited by James Blish, it lasted for...just this one issue.

In his editorial, James Blish says "We hope to print authentic science fiction: the pure stuff, of which we have seen all too little in recent years. Everyone has his own definition of what 'the pure stuff' means. We subscribe to Theodore Sturgeon's: 'A good science fiction story is a story with a human problem, and a human solution, which would not have happened without the science content'".

The lead novelette is "SOS, Planet Unknown" by A. Bertram Chandler: "It was a curiously Earth-like world the castaways found—and like Earth, its real savagery was hidden." It hasn't been reprinted, according to the isfdb, though the novelette at the other end of the 128 page issue, "Reap the Dark Tide", by C. M. Kornbluth, has been seen in anthologies, and the A MILE BEYOND THE MOON Kornbluth collection: "A whole culture afloat, with a savage code to drive it—but not half so savage as what the outcasts found on land".

James E. Gunn's "When the Shoe Fits" is the first of the three short stories (since seen in his BREAKING POINT collection). "The Strad Effect" by Raymond F. Jones makes its only appearance next, while "Farewell Party" by Richard Wilson is in 100 GREAT FANTASY SHORT STORIES, edited by Asimov, Carr & Greenberg. L. Sprague de Camp brought us what was supposed to be the first of a series of regular columns, "Wonders are Many"...and the book review department was in the capable hands of Lester del Rey.

"The Tales they Tell" had as a quarter-page header the magazine's only piece of interior art, by Kelly Freas, and then this quotation from Herman Melville: "To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme. No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the flea, though many there be who have tried it." The column itself begins "No book was ever so bad that someone didn't like it, if only the author..."

NO BLADE OF GRASS by John Campbell is the first book covered. "It uses one of the best basic postulates I've seen, and I'm kicking myself for not having thought of it." Del Rey

urges you to buy it. Staying with British authors, HIGH VACUUM by Charles Eric Maine comes next, but he finds it "far below Ballantine's usual level of science fiction." For BIG PLANET by Jack Vance, the review begins "Like most books from Avalon, this shows evidence of considerable heavy-handed cutting and editing that hasn't improved the 1952 **Startling Stories** novel. Apparently these books are meant for lending libraries where length matters less than number of pages, and the average of less than two hundred words to a page doesn't make for any bargain." The story is still worth looking into, though. He has to be tactful about the next book, as it's THE FROZEN YEAR by James Blish—"one of Blish's and Ballantine's best."

Lastly on the book review front is the Ace Double of THE 13th IMMORTAL by Robert Silverberg, which he feels Silverberg would have been well advised to use a pseudonym on, "as he's done much better", and THIS FORTRESS WORLD by James E. Gunn: "For those who want an escape to a world of fantasy, adventure, mystery and nonsense, it's a good buy in this form. It's hokum—but pleasant hokum." That leaves room for a paragraph about "A Sound of Different Drummers" by Robert Alan Arthur—which was a television drama in the "Playhouse 90" series. He thought the story of a book-burning future was great—though, checking on Wikipedia, apparently Ray Bradbury thought it borrowed so heavily from his FAHRENHEIT 451 that he sued.

There were problems with distribution around this time, so maybe Vanguard would have thrived if that hadn't been the case. For "Coming next issue" were promised "Mine Host, Mine Adversary" by Lester del Rey, again with an Ed Emsh cover, plus "Mirror, Mirror" by Alan E. Nourse, "Alone" by A. Bertram Chandler, and, by Damon Knight, a tale with what seems in retrospect an ironic title: "To Be Continued". The Nourse story relocated to the June 1960 **Fantastic**; Knight moved to the October 1959 **F&SF**, while "Mine Host, Mine Adversary" led off that month's **Fantastic Universe**...while I suppose "Alone" must have changed its name, so that my best guess would be "The Silence" in the February 1959 **Amazing**.

And now, briefly, here's the fourteenth and final British edition of **Super Science Stories**, from June 1953—and as the U.S. magazine had ended by then, we are back to the June 1941 American issue. The cover, from 1941, was by Robert C. Sherry; the isfdb site thinks it may have been reprinted, but if so, they did a pretty good job. Mention of "Lost Legion" by Lyle Monroe was removed from the bottom right, as it was one of the casualties of the cut from 144 to 64 pages, plus covers. That story is also known as "Lost Legacy," by Robert A. Heinlein.

Losing "Lost Legion" means that "Tumithak of the Towers of Fire" by Charles R. Tanner leads off the issue here, the third of four Tumithak tales—the final one was published posthumously in 2005. The other "dramatic novelette" is "Red Gem of Mercury" by Henry Kuttner, only seen since in the \$40 2011 Kuttner collection HUNTER IN THE VOID: "A stone from the stars kept vigil, and a dead man smiled, as Steve Vane bore a death token from Mercury to the man who had promised him—murder!"

There are three short stories, starting with "The Biped Reagan" by Alfred Bester—his tenth of a sale, and apparently unreprinted. "Monster of the Moon" by Ray Cummings follows, and then we get a story by Walter Kubieli originally from the May 1943 issue.

Perhaps those responsible for putting together the Pemberton's reprints knew that this was to be the final issue, as it was simply titled, "Journey's End."

The December 1955 seventh issue of **Science Fiction Adventures** has a cover by Schomburg—you just know immediately that the guy on the right is a realtor (estate agent) showing a young couple a desirable new residence, don't you? "The Syndic" by C.M. Kornbluth wouldn't have anything to do with that scenario, I think; this edition has the first half of the novel, running here to 55 of the 160 pages. "There have been a thousand tales of future Utopias and possible civilizations. They have been ruled by benevolent dictatorships and pure democracies, every form of government from extreme right to absolute left. Unique among these is the easy-going semi-anarchistic society ruled by THE SYNDIC," editor Harry Harrison's introduction tells us. He had just taken over the position from Lester del Rey, and would hold it for the next two issues. The magazine folded then, though its name resurfaced in 1956, edited by Larry T. Shaw.

"Tryst" by Mike Lewis is the novelette in this issue—the second appearance by this author in SFA, and indeed the second and last sf tale anywhere, according to the isfdb. The five short stories are by Alan E. Nourse (using his cunning pen name "Allan E. Nourse"), Stephen Barr, Philip K. Dick, Winston K. Marks (as by Ken Winney), and Hal Clement.

Harry Harrison's editorial likens sf to a "scolex", being "the head or working part of a tapeworm". Well, he was new to the gig. There is the debut of a new feature, "Fanmag", this time by the editor of the fanzine **Spaceship**, one Bob Silverberg—the idea was to have a different leading fan each issue presenting a kind of fanzine inside the magazine. Wisely, Robert Silverberg used his seven pages to give an outline of fanzines and fandom in general. This does seem to be his first appearance in a professional sf magazine, leaving aside letters of comment. Speaking of which, "The Chart Room" is revived here, but has only one letter to share with us, from James V. Taurasi, concerning "fanvets"—armed forces veterans who are sf fans.

"The Dissecting Table" has Damon Knight reviewing THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN by Ray Bradbury, over almost four pages, with some stories liked a lot more than others, plus a page on the first volume of STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, edited by Frederik Pohl, where he ruthlessly divides them into As and Cs...the A-listers are by Lester del Rey, Fritz Leiber, Henry Kuttner & C.L. Moore, and Arthur C. Clarke's "The Nine Billion Names of God"—"about which I will only say that the ending is predictable, but this fact doesn't matter in the least". And I'm shivering as I type this, just thinking about that ending...



FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION TV SHOWS FOR CHILDREN

by Judy Carroll



I've been checking into fantasy and science fiction movies and TV shows for children 2-6 years. (Since I have not been to a movie in a few years I will not include them in this research.)

Let's start with television.

Fantasy

The Disney channels have many programs for children 3-6. Most of them fall into the fantasy category. One of their newest cartoons is ALICE'S WONDERLAND BAKERY. Alice is a baker and a descendant of the original Alice. (Her granddaughter, I think.) There are also descendants of the Mad Hatter, the White Rabbit, the Queen of Hearts, and other characters from the original movie. It's fun to watch, and shows you that you don't have to be like someone else to have friends. You can be who you are.

Bluey is a cartoon about a dog family. Their last name is Heeler. The dad is Bandit, mom is Chile and the girl pups are Bluey (looks a lot like her dad) and Bingo (looks a lot like her mom). This series is very family-oriented. It's a fun show to watch, especially with young children.

The creator of this popular series is Joe Bruman, an Australian gentleman. Disney acquired the international broadcasting rights in June 2019 (excluding Australia, New Zealand and China). You can watch the episodes on the Disney channels.

Paw Patrol is on the Nickelodeon channels. The stories are about the adventures of Ryder, the boy who leads the Paw Patrol, which is a group of six pups of different breeds. Each has a specialty. Chase is a police pup. Marshall is the fire rescue pup. Skye is the aerial rescue pup, and the only female. Rocky is a recycling pup. Rubble is a construction pup. Zuma is a water rescue pup. Two other pups appear periodically. Everest is a female snow rescue pup. Tracker lives in the jungle and has great hearing.

Science Fiction

Spidey and His Amazing Friends appear on the Disney channels. Spidey (Peter Parker) and his two webbed friends, Spin (Miles Morales) and Ghost Spider (Gwen Stacy) use their super web powers to fight the bad guys—Rhino, Doc Ock and Green Goblin. Sometimes the Hulk, Ms. Marvel and Black Panther help Spidey and friends to defeat the villains.

Netflix Streaming

Here we run into problems. What is frightening to some children may be comical to

others. It depends on their age, their level of understanding, their nightmares and what they believe in, such as ghosts, zombies, monsters under the bed and scary stories told to them by other children and adults. Parents need to check a series before letting their children watch it.

Following is the Maturity ratings for TV shows and movies on Netflix.*

TV-G: Suitable for General Audiences

TV-Y: Designed to be appropriate for all children

TV-Y7: Suitable for all ages 7 and up

PG: Parental Guidance suggested

Once you have found a series suitable for your child you can relax a bit. In most cases, Netflix will allow the series to keep running until it runs out of episodes.

If you have approved of a movie for your child, it will also run until the movie ends.

YouTube

I tried looking up ratings for TV and movies, but there were so many sites I decided to let those reading this look up the information if they are interested.

The first paragraph under Netflix Streaming applies here, but more so.

You decide you want a list of sites that read children's books to the viewer. After typing in your request, such as "books read to children", you find a site that appeals to you, Betsy Reads**. You eagerly click your choice and there she is, Betsy. You start the video. Betsy is nice, understanding, polite, and has a nice voice. You watch for a little bit. She's chosen a book suitable for the age group your child is in. You check the next three or four entries in the row. Everything looks great. You call your child in and place the little person comfortably in front of the TV. You leave the area to take care of things you have been trying to get to all day. Confident all will go well.

A while later, you hear screaming, crying, yelling. Harsh sounds are bouncing around your ears. You rush into the room where you left your child ready to ground the little person for changing from Betsy Reads to this horrible sounding nightmare. Your child is sitting there with a confused look staring at the screen. As you come close, that little face you love so dearly holds out tiny arms toward you. Safe in your arms the offspring says, "What happened to Betsy?"

I can tell you what happened to Betsy. She gradually disappeared and was replaced by someone or something else.

I've discovered that there could be a hundred videos by Betsy, but somehow, no matter how many she might have, they are not in the same place—all lined up together. There are videos of things you don't want your child to see, that somehow end up available to the eyes of young children.

You have to monitor everything.

*<https://Netflix.com> **Betsy Reads is not a real site on YouTube (as far as I know). I didn't want to name a real site for concern a reader would think I was trashing a well-loved site.

DONALD WOLLHEIM, a founder of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and also a founder of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, writing on the creative days of FAPA, reprinted from The Fantasy Amateur, June 1942. Notification and discussion of the reprinting was done on the FAPA Facebook Page, with Eric Leif Davin, who posted the item there. Davin posted this intro to the article:

Formed in 1937, FAPA—the Fantasy Amateur Press Association—was the first APA in SF fandom and is the one all others are modelled after whether they know it or not. British fans were involved in it from the very beginning. Below is a piece by Don Wollheim detailing its creation, followed by a list of zines run through FAPA by UK fans in the years up to 1980. [List not printed here.]

In 1936 fan magazine publishing first began to enter into the phase of growth that marked the transition from the club organ period to that of amateur journalism. Prior to that year only few fan publications were attempted, and outside of the famous Fantasy Magazine and two or three less successful ventures, the only fan publications were club organs, often of a local nature. But the growth of fandom and its gradual acquisition of certainty in itself and independence of mind resulted in a larger and larger output of fan publications everywhere. Fandom took on some of the aspects of today with new magazines appearing on all sides and old ventures collapsing or combining. A certain amount of chaos grew.

In that year, while corresponding with the late H.P. Lovecraft, I first heard of the existence of national amateur press associations where persons interested in publishing and editing for the fun of it and not for profit would exchange magazines in general mailings. I joined the National, the United, and several local Amateur Press Associations. Likewise some of the New York fans, primarily John B. Michel and Frederik Pohl.

Gradually it grew upon me that an amateur press association modeled after the decades old national types and specializing in fantasy amateur journalism would be an excellent thing. So many fans wanted to bring out magazines “for the hell of it” and for indefinite periods. They did not like to have to depend upon dubious subscription lists which they might never be able to live up to or to repay. They did not want the bother of commercial fan publishing. They wanted to bring out fanzines for the fun of it. In cautious discussions with various fans, it became clear that fandom would welcome the creation of an organization for the free exchange of amateur non-subscription fantasy magazines.

I discussed this at length one night in the Spring of 1937 with fans Bill Miller and Jim Blish, and it was here that the Fantasy Amateur Press Association was first formulated, named and planned. However, affairs having to do with the dissolution of the I.S.A. kept me from further work on it until June.

In June John B. Michel and I decided to start definite work on the organization of the F.A.P.A. We decided to have a simple clear workable constitution already written, to have an emblem prepared, to get a nucleus of enthusiastic members and to prepare a first mailing with which the campaign for organization would be formally started. We determined to

start it with a bang in order to give it the best chance for survival.

After studying the constitutions of existing general amateur press groups, I took the Constitution of the New England Amateur Press Club as the simplest and best model, and wrote the first FAPA Constitution. It followed the wording and organization of the NEAPC in most particulars. The present revised FAPA Constitution is still essentially the original document in general.

After correspondence, the following accepted the posts of organizers: I took the presidency as it was my job to direct the work and co-ordinate things. Michel undertook the Editorship so he and I could work together on that. Bill Miller agreed to handle the secretarial work of registering applicants and collecting dues. Daniel McPhail undertook the Vice-President's task of booming up membership.

I wrote Morris Dollens, at that time foremost fan artist, requesting designs for an emblem. He sent three of which Michel and I picked the one which has remained official. I then had engravings made of this emblem and we printed membership cards on the Michel-Wollheim press. One of these engravings I kept, the other cut I presented to the FAPA to remain in the custody of each Official Editor. When last heard of, Milton Rothman had this cut.

Correspondence was beginning to bear fruit and we had a few applications in before any mailing appeared. The first fan to pay dues and receive a card was Frederik Pohl. Among the original members of pre-first mailing status appear the names of Edward Carnell, Harry Dockweiler, J. M. Rosenblum, Robert A. Madle, Robert W. Lowndes, and James Taurasi.

The first mailing was due to come out in July 1937. Time did not allow Michel and I to prepare a first Fantasy Amateur so instead I mimeographed a three page magazine entitled "The FAPA Fan", the third page of which was an application blank, the first two pages of which contained an explanation of the FAPA and a request for members. The FAPA Fan did duty as a semi-official organ until the appearance of the first Fantasy Amateur, which was not until after the first regular election.

The first mailing appeared in July. It contained mostly excess copies of older fan magazines, some new material done for the occasion such as two or three "Mijimaga" and stuff. It wasn't a bad bundle considering.

Response was very encouraging. But Secretary Bill Miller unfortunately chose that moment to lose interest in fandom. He allowed his work to lag and finally resigned in September, turning material over to me. I undertook the work of Secretary-Treasurer for the rest of the year as well as the president's post. Oddly enough, it can be recorded that our first Secretary, Miller, never became a member of the FAPA.

Another organizational mailing came in October and the first election was held in December. The first Fantasy Amateur, dated Spring 1938 and sent out in May 1938, contains the results. Myself and MacPhail remained in our organizational offices. Baltadonis took over the secretaryship and Fred Pohl relieved Michel as Editor. The number of ballots received reveals that by January 1938 we had about 25 members. By May 1938 we had 243 members and had reached healthy maturity. A host of new FAPA magazines were appearing and healthy discussion was permeating the ranks. A heated contest was forecast for July and the FAPA was 100% alive and kicking.

LETTERS OF COMMENT



Heath Row: I appreciated your editorial in Origin #54, "Look with Wonder Upon the World". It's easy to become blasé and jaded, to think we understand or get the world without truly paying attention to it, present in the moment. I am reminded of something said in my family: "The world is weird and wonderful", as well as Robert A. Heinlein's concept of "grokking". To fully grok something, one must drink it in, absorb and take it within themselves, to fully understand something in all its glory and grossness. When grokking something, one can fear it, love it, hate it, map it—fully comprehend the oneness of all things as individual objects and subjects become identically equal. To grok, one must see through the illusion—and to recognize the illusion, or the sheer possibility of such, one must maintain a sense of wonder and openness.

Jon D. Swartz's article about the Little Blue Books and their role in genre publishing was a revelation to me. I didn't even know they existed. I've long wondered whether it'd be possible now to publish an inexpensive line of paperback books somewhere between the Dover Thrift editions, the Armed Services Editions of World War II, the *sensacionales* comic books of Mexico, and political pamphlets such as those issued by anarchists and communists. The Haldeman-Julius Publishing Company's connection to *Appeal to Reason* didn't surprise me, for that very reason.

I also appreciated Jeffrey Redmond's piece about German sf. While on a recent business trip to Mexico City, I spent some time in my hotel room researching the state and history of sf, fantasy, and horror in Mexico before venturing to a local bookstore to look for Mexican authors—and to see what Mexican fans read. What I found was that every country probably has its Golden Age of science fiction, and that literary trends and interests can wax and wane in popularity just as they do in the United States. (That and a lot of H.P. Lovecraft and retained writers translated into Spanish! Similar to Germany, Mexico hasn't really had a culture of little magazines.) The extent of my knowledge of German sf, to be honest, was limited to the Perry Rhodan books, which Forrest J and Wendayne Ackerman helped bring to the United States in English translation. It was awe inspiring to learn about the rich history that preceded those books, as well as that which followed. There was one thing I'd have liked more of: Some sense of which of those German works mentioned and listed have been translated into English and are available for reading—if not acquiring—domestically. From my reading, that seems limited to Otto Willi Gail, Otto von Hanstein, Bernard Kellerman, Kurd Lasswitz, and—of course—Walter Ernsting and the many writers of Perry Rhodan. Thank you, Mr. Redmond, for such an in-depth introduction to so many authors!

Martin Lock's "Recalling *Galaxy Science Fiction*" was also a good read, covering the contents of what I detected to be three issues ranging from 1952-1957. It's not a bad gambit for an article, surveying available back issues, and it'll inspire me to dip into my own back issues of that little magazine. And Judy Carroll's piece on recent sf for children will serve as a useful recommendation guide to parents of younger readers—as well as family and friends who might buy children presents. Given that Judy mentioned mostly media tie-in and franchise-related titles in terms of sf books—the fantasy titles are wider ranging—it does make me wonder about the state of sf juveniles today.

This issue sure lives up to the intent of the bureau—the N3F's History and Research Bureau. Well done.

That's what I'm wanting to do—make this bureau as much like what it's said and supposed to be as I can. I think we present both to our readers very well.

*I think I was onto something that would have meaning to a lot of people—our loss of pleasure in things as we continue to speed into what we are doing. People's senses do become jaded—when I was with the psychedelic crowd in New York's Lower East Side, they were all studying the loss of the vitality of the senses and seeing if they could make their minds come more alive. This was picked up by Donovan—"Eyes take heed, the colors call", and he was with a sense of wonder with "In a tiny piece of colored glass my love was born". I have a story I wrote myself about this very thing, the loss of vitality in the senses, in my fanzine **Meteor**, available at efanzines.com, called "Branch Horizon". Heinlein's book seemed in touch with this world of psychedelia, which included Timothy Leary and Aldous Huxley, and Harlan Ellison was writing columns out there for the **Village Voice** for a while, so I was noting that this was getting infused into science fiction. This grokking as you mentioned it was like my story; its character said you might have to look just right at a plate of apple pandowdy to see it as it should or might be seen. Seeing through the illusion was something he had in mind. Speaking of the senses, Theodore Sturgeon had a character singing "May I never touch the sadness...beauty, oh beauty of touchness" in a book preceding Heinlein's—two people getting a bit psychedelic in their science fiction; Sturgeon was with synesthesia and syzygy around about then and was writing "It Wasn't Syzygy" and "The Skills of Xanadu" at the time. Once when I interviewed Daniel Keyes on the phone he said he was working with synesthesia, the mixture of the senses; apparently he was studying psychedelic results. And a lot of psychedelia was creeping into sf at the end of the seventies and apparently maturing in the eighties. They mentioned "soul fusion" and it appeared they were entering into sf by a fusion process.*

*I knew Little Big Books and Little Blue Books existed; they were talking about them in **Sigma Octantis**.*

The Mexican poet Octavio Paz has a sort of fantasy or even sf outlook—"The restless city circles in my blood like a bee". All the German science fiction I've ever seen has been "Metropolis". And for fantasy "Nosferatu". But the German artists had something going called Dadaism which was like fantasy, particularly horror fantasy. And of course a lot of people out there were toying with rocketry, such as Werner Von Braun. But I never thought Germans would ball very much with science fiction.

WRAP-UP



I've always wondered what the benefit of those writers' organizations, listed in Jon Swartz's article, are. What is gained for a writer by being in them? I've always visualized them as asking monetary contributions from the membership for their projects, if they have any.

Jeffrey Redmond certainly has done a complete listing of sources on his article. That was quite a job, doing all that researching on soft science fiction.

Martin Lock in this issue tends to be writing about unsuccessful magazines, looking through the issues for their virtues. It's a fine thing to be going through the past; it researches our foundations. And the covers of the books from that time, which we've been showing here, remind one of the thrill there once was looking at science fiction books and wondering what would come next. Those titles and art on the stands really made people sit up and take notice. (Including some people of a censorial nature; there were occasional suggestions in newspapers that science fiction should be watched out for or banned. It was too fast for some people.) Now there are some magnificent covers on some science fiction hard covers, but they lack the sensational value of this earlier art, being static in their viewpoint and demonstrative, rather than action and adventure, which qualities the contents of the books seem to lack also. Perhaps the covers capture the turgid qualities of the prose, turgid in comparison to the earlier action of science fiction. The action which exists in present science fiction novels seems to be occurring in conditions of heavy gravity and the characters are compressed by being less individual and more slaves to historical forces. Few take place in other than a newly built world created by the author, or an alternate reality painstakingly contrived, or another universe imagined out of the raw materials of this one. I've always gone for reading that holds my attention better.

Judy Carroll presents an argument for greater attention to be given to the young in her column in this issue. Fantasy and Science Fiction material made for children exists, but is unsupervised where there ought to be supervision. Perhaps this inattentiveness is what has lost us the entrance into fandom of younger people.

Reading about the origination of FAPA reminds me of what we are trying to do now, and I have been comparing what I have been doing to these earlier things and times. I hope to make out well with what I have been doing.



Ye ende of another issue of Origin.