

Origin



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History and Research Bureau**

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EDITORIAL



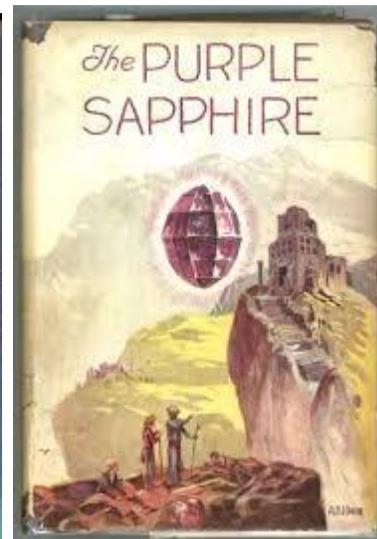
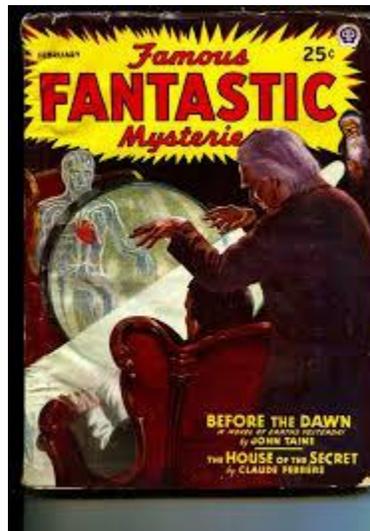
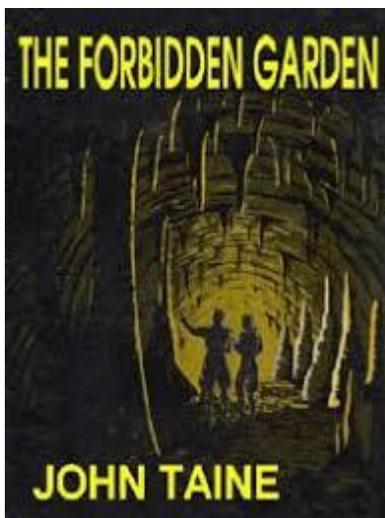
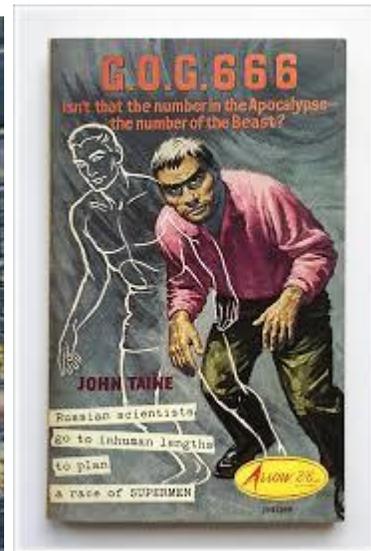
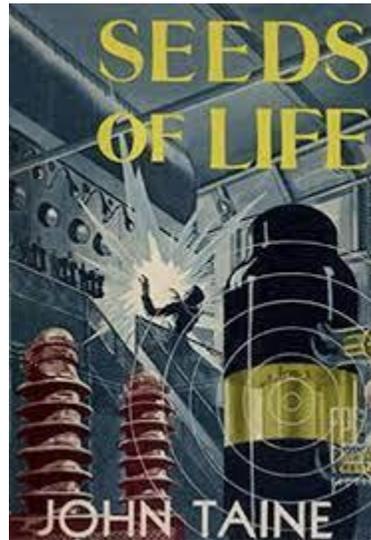
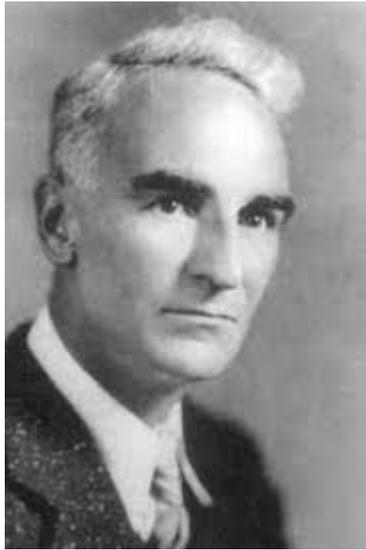
Two Ways of Doing Things

It's said that there's two ways of doing things, the right way and the wrong way, but all of us are apt to do them both at the same time, the complexities of life being what they are. My new laptop (it is impossible to operate it while it is on my lap) knows a few hundred wrong ways of doing things, while I am constantly trying to do things right, and at the present time I am unable to do anything about the way it keeps fouling up my carefully contrived format, and so this issue will probably arrive in a mutated form with a jumble of misplaced headings and stretches of blank paper, such as were seen in the last issue, but it will probably be worse in this issue because my Word has been acting up as if it were trying to. Good formatting is a plus I don't like doing without, but there's nothing I can do about it. Hoping you find the reading good anyway.

I think science fiction writers are pretty incisive in their linguistic expressions, and could well be quoted in describing the terrors of modern times. "I shrieked, and *knew* what primal star and year had sucked me back from man's dream-transient sphere!" (HP Lovecraft). Certainly this expresses the existential terrors of the modern times, when scientists are expressing doubts as to the reality of existence. "Things lose their place, the center cannot hold...the best lose all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity" (William Butler Yeats). "The poets know that justice is a lie, that good and light are baubles filled with dust—this world's slave-market where swine sell and buy, this shambles where the howling cattle die, has blinded not their eyes with lies and lust." (Robert E. Howard) "They have been no longer than usual in coming to this place. Terror of time, they murmur, equals the terror of space. All cancels out in the end, they say, and the end is nothing..." (Conrad Aiken). So, is anybody at work on doing something about the terrors of modern times?

A lot of science fiction has been written about the end of the world. But has anything been written about the beginning of a new age? Say the Age of Aquarius, or Xanadu?

JOHN TAINE, by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian



John Taine was the pseudonym of Scottish-born mathematician and author Eric Temple Bell (1883-1960), who lived in the United States beginning in 1902. Under his own name, he published 200+ papers in mathematical history and theory and several books. He received a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1912. In 1927 he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Genre Novels

Taine's first genre novels were *THE PURPLE SAPPHIRE* (1924), set in Tibet where an ancient race possessed the secret of atomic power, and *THE GOLD TOOTH* (1927), set in Korea, where another ancient race's secret was the transmutation of metal.

Before beginning to write for the science fiction (SF) magazines in 1930, Taine also published QUAYLE'S INVENTION (1927), about the invention of another technique for transmuting metals. In GREEN FIRE: THE STORY OF THE TERRIBLE DAYS IN THE SUMMER OF 1990: NOW TOLD IN FULL FOR THE FIRST TIME (1928), he wrote of a mad scientist who attempted to control atomic energy.

"The Ultimate Catalyst" (June, 1939 **Thrilling Wonder**) promulgated similar crises in short form.

BEFORE THE DAWN (1934) was a prehistoric romance in which the age of the dinosaurs, as dramatized through the life story of a Tyrannosaurus Rex—was observed through a time viewer.

THE TIME STREAM (December, 1931-March, 1932 **Wonder Stories**) was a time travel adventure into the past, the future, and to other worlds which is considered by genre critics to be an outstanding story from the early pulps.

THE FORBIDDEN GARDEN (1947) was another lost race tale, set in Tibet. The title story of THE COSMIC GEOIDS AND ONE OTHER (1949) was a "literary experiment" taking the form of a series of imaginary scientific reports dealing with extraterrestrial objects; the "one other" in the title is the novella "Black Goldfish" (1948 **Fantasy Book**, Vol. 1, #4).

Taine's last genre book was G.O.G. 666 (1954), an "apes like humans tale" whose monster was treated sympathetically.

Genre Books

The Purple Sapphire (NY: E.P. Dutton, 1924)

The Gold Tooth (Dutton, 1927)

Quayle's Invention (Dutton, 1927)

Green Fire (Dutton, 1928)

The Greatest Adventure (Dutton, 1928)

The Iron Star (Dutton, 1930)

Before the Dawn (Williams & Wilkins, 1934)

The Time Stream (Buffalo Books Co., 1946)

Three Science Fiction Novels (Dover, 1964)

The Forbidden Garden (Fantasy Press, 1947)

The Cosmic Geoids and One Other (Fantasy Publishing Co., 1949)

Seeds of Life (Fantasy Press, 1951)

The Crystal Horde (Fantasy Press, 1952)

G.O.G. 666 (Fantasy Press, 1954)

Tomorrow (Armchair Fiction, 2021)

Critical Comments

Taine's prose style has been described as "sometimes crude, with his characterizations lacking finesse", but "his best work shows an admirable imaginative flair".

Taine loved to do things on a grand scale, with many of his novels ending in catastrophes that overwhelmed whole continents.

Some Concluding Comments

The first story I read by Taine was BEFORE THE DAWN, in editor Donald Wollheim's THE PORTABLE NOVELS OF SCIENCE, published in 1945. I liked it all right, but thought the three other novels in this collection, by H.G. Wells (THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON), H.P. Lovecraft (THE SHADOW OUT OF TIME), and Olaf Stapleton (ODD JOHN) were better.

In addition to John Taine, Bell also used the pen names of Richard C. Badger and James Temple. He called his genre stories "fantascience".

Taine's unpublished manuscripts are kept at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas.

Sources

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



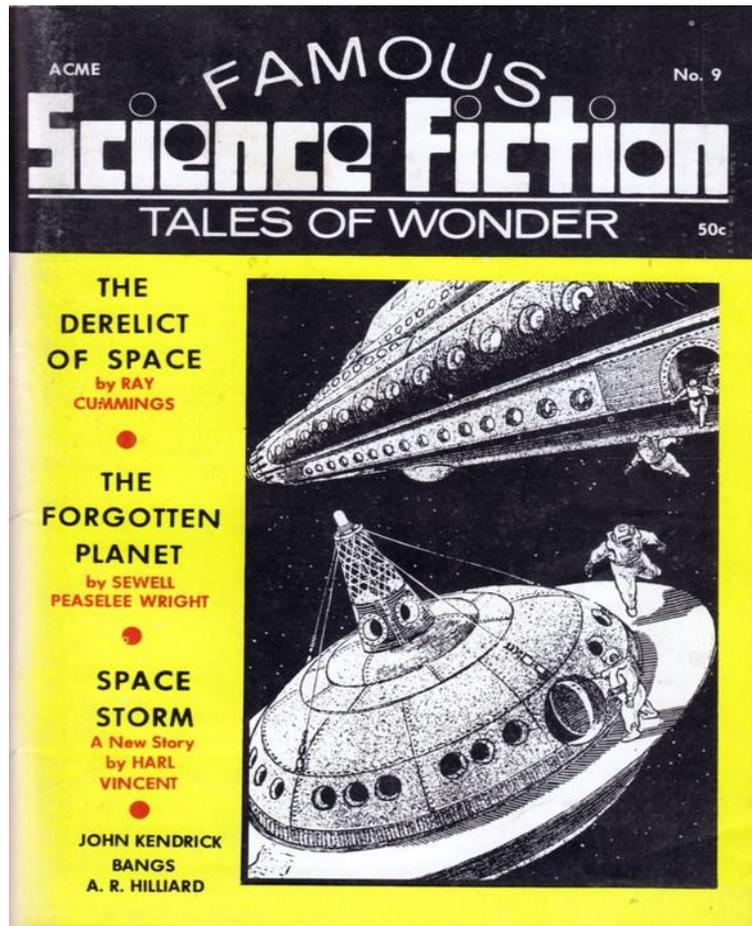
Machu Picchu village on a mountaintop

OUT OF THE PAST EARLIER WORKS OF SCIENCE FICTION

by Martin Lock

This time, three takes on the golden age, vintage science fiction...

FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION, Spring 1969



Famous Science Fiction reached its final curtain with its ninth issue, dated Spring 1969. It was approximately six months since the Fall 1968 issue, so things were definitely not going well—and there is no “Coming Next Issue” preview. It does have a new title logo on the cover, which uses a classic piece of work by Frank. R. Paul.

As usual “Down to Earth” starts the issue, with its mixture of editorial background, pieces of letters from readers, and responses from Robert A. W. Lowndes. Continuing at the back of the issue, as was the habit in many old-time pulps, it runs to almost eight pages. There’s also the six-page Editorial itself halfway through the issue: “The Borders of Science Fiction”.

The lead novelet is "The Forgotten Planet" by Sewell Peaslee Wright (name spelt slightly wrong on the cover), previously seen in the July 1930 issue of **Astounding**, and twenty years later in AVON FANTASY READER #13. It was the first of ten stories starring Commander John Hanson—a series which ended when Astounding moved from Clayton to Street & Smith. "A Glance Ahead" by John Kendrick Bangs, first published in "Over the Plum Pudding" in 1901 comes next, after a four-page introduction by Mr. Richard A. Lupoff,* "John Kendrick Bangs—Forgotten Master of Fantasy".

"Space Storm" by Harl Vincent is indeed a new story, not a previously unpublished relic; as he explained in a letter with his submission, he had had to retire from sf writing in nineteen forty-one, "when war work in my regular field of engineering became so urgent. And it is only during the last three years that I've gotten back into it a little". Sadly, he had passed away since sending this story in; Lowndes notes that "That last new material under the name of Harl Vincent that was published while he was still here was a paperback novel, THE DOOMSDAY PLANET, and a novelet, 'Invader', which appeared in **If**, September 1967".

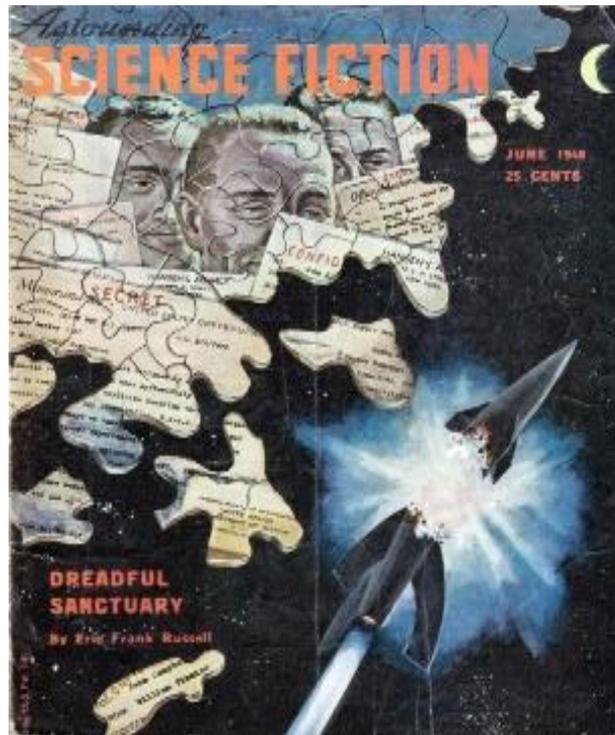
"Death from the Stars" by A. Rowley Hilliard made its fourth appearance here, after being seen in **Wonder Stories**, October 1931, then **Startling Stories**, September 1941, and in September 1950 the anthology THE SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY, edited by Groff Conklin. And that just leaves the issue's second novelet, "The Derelict of Space" by Ray Cummings. "At the edge of the solar system, where no human beings had been before, the expedition came upon a derelict, clearly made by man, not some alien beings. It was just as clearly not a spaceship. What, then, was it, and how came it here?" The story was first published in **Wonder Stories Quarterly**, Fall 1931, and then reprinted in **Wonder Story Annual**, 1950, where it was co-credited to William T. Thurmond.

And so it ends, part of what was, at the time, a unique look back across the earlier years of science fiction, thoughtfully curated, with plenty of background on the people involved.

ASTOUNDING, June 1948

The cover for the June 1948 issue of Astounding Science Fiction is by William Timmins, who also provided the interior illustrations for the first part of the three-part serial, "Dreadful Sanctuary", by Eric Frank Russell: "In which it is shown that a deadly—and plausible—idea is just as deadly whether it is true or not!" Fantasy Press published the US hardcover in 1951, with Museum Press following in Britain two years later. The first paperback, from Lancer, didn't arrive until 1963. Checking WIKIPEDIA, I see that "Russell rewrote the novel for the first American paperback edition, published by Lancer

Books in 1963. Editorial interference forced Russell to replace the original ending with a more tragic conclusion in this edition.” Reviewing the earlier hardback in F&SF, Boucher



and McComas praised “its vivid whodunit plotting and its magnificent concept”, but castigated its “ridiculously anticlimactic ending”, so maybe a change wasn’t a bad idea.

With the serial taking up sixty-four pages, there is just room for one novelette and two short stories; the novelette “War of Intangibles” is by Eric Fennel, for whom the isfdb lists ten stories from 1947 to 1957, starting with **Planet Stories** and ending with **Venture SF**. “One of those strangely delicate, strangely deadly situations where the cooperation of two bitterly hostile enemies is essential to the success of the plan of each—and each fully knows it!”

“No Connection” by Isaac Asimov takes up sixteen pages; it’s in THE EARLY ASIMOV, of course, and in THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES: 1949, edited by Bleiler and Dikty. And then “A new feminine science fiction author gives a slightly different slant on one of the old themes—and a brilliantly bitter story results,” the introduction by Campbell says: “That Only a Mother” by Judith Merrill. It’s her first SF sale, and has been in dozens of anthologies; her second sale turned up in Astounding too, in the January 1949 issue.

The Editorial is on “The Atomic Power Pile”, while the article “Inverted Alchemy” (“On how—and why!—to turn gold into quicksilver!”) has no name attached. “The Electrical Robot Brain” follows, by E.L. Locke, part two of an article discussing an automatic course-computer for robot missiles, with graphs, drawings, and photographs. The Book

Reviews section leads off with ONE TWO THREE...INFINITY by George Gamow, reviewed by Willy Ley, and follows with "The Well of the Unicorn" by George Fletcher, reviewed by L. Sprague de Camp, who does hint that the author was actually someone he had collaborated with—that would be Fletcher Pratt. "If you are at all a connoisseur of fantasy, get it" is the verdict.

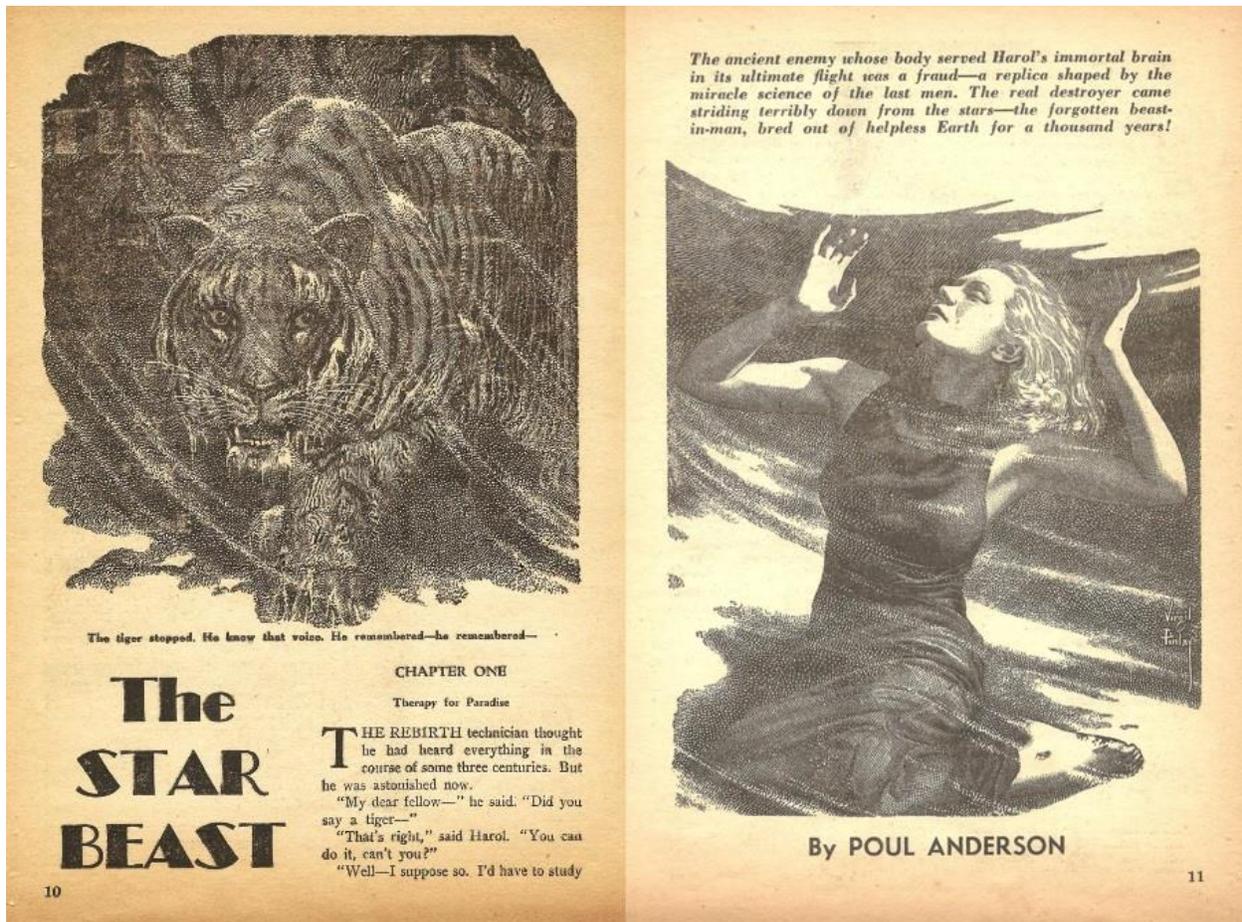
The "Brass Tacks" letters column leads off with the editor defending the presentation of the "article" on thiotimoline in the March issue—"The Endochronic Properties of Resublimated Thiotimoline" by Isaac Asimov, on the material so soluble that it dissolves 1.12 seconds before contacting water, had ruffled a few feathers. It seems that it took some people a while to realize that it was a hoax.

SUPER SCIENCE STORIES UK #2



The Second UK reprint issue of Super Science Stories from Pemberton's (of Manchester), Ltd was based on the September 1950 US issue, and brought us "two novels of future worlds" and four short stories. The cover is credited to H.R. Van Dongen, though the isfdb tells us "According to pulpartists.com, Norman Saunders added the woman and the exploding planet to Van Dongen's cover art."

The title "The Star Beast" was used a few years later for the full-length novel by Robert A. Heinlein, and had in 1949 been used on a short story in **Planet Stories** by Damon Knight. The opening two-page illustration by Virgil Finlay survived the move to Britain, and, courtesy of the Internet Archive, I can show it below.



The Anderson take on the title is reprinted in his STRANGERS FROM EARTH and ALIGHT IN THE VOID collections, not to mention THE STAR BEAST AND OTHER TALES in 2014 from Armchair Fiction, and in some anthologies.

Next in this issue comes "Half-Life" by Alfred Coppel, followed by "Ultimate Quest" by John Holbrook (Jack Vance—whose full name, used on his mystery books, is John Holbrook Vance). "The First", by Kris Neville", doesn't make the cut, however, which means his name was removed from the cover—easy enough to do, as it had been on the black background just above the mention of Neil R. Jones. We do get "The Undying Ones" by Fredric Brown, subsequently known as "Obedience".

"The Mind Masters" by Neil R. Jones was one of his latest Professor Jameson stories, the second short novel. Missing in action was "The Word from the Void" by Mack Reynolds, and also, a reprint from All-American Fiction, February 1938, BEYOND SPACE

AND TIME by Joel Townsley Rogers, which can be tracked down in 1959's A TREASURY OF GREAT SCIENCE FICTION, Volume One, edited by Anthony Boucher. We do get the final story, "Final Enemy", by L. Ron Hubbard...though of course we miss out on the letters column, the editorial, the rest of the illustrations, Frederik Pohl's book reviews, and a poem, "The Titan's Goblet", by Lilith Lorraine. But for the money, an increase from the previous issue's nine pence, it must have seemed pretty good value at the time.

*Interviewed in an early issue of Ionisphere



art by Richard Andre



by Judy Carroll

Some days I spend many hours on the computer, writing, researching, playing mahjong, or just wasting time. While I am busy ignoring the world around me, the sun begins to set. Since I have my desk light on and one or two other lights in the room, I don't realize the darkness until I feel it coming through the opened curtain window. When the darkness comes—sadness comes with it.

Last fall, two relatives, a husband and wife, were visiting me. I mentioned that even though the overhead lights were on, my room was still on the dark side. The gentleman looked at the ceiling, left the room, and came back with a ladder and light bulbs. He replaced not only the dead bulb, but all of the bulbs.

I discovered, over the next several nights, that I no longer had a problem with the darkness. All I needed were stronger lights.

Life does this sort of thing. It sends something our way, leading us to believe that we can do nothing to stop or change whatever is bothering us.

Granted, the last few years have turned the world as we knew it into something to be questioned, to be concerned about and to newly navigate.

When life knocks us down, we don't have to stay there. We can get up and keep

going. We can't change everything, but we have the ability to change some things. Especially things concerning our own lives. We can tweak our lives a little, and eliminate the darkness by bringing in stronger lights.

We are members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. We have many opportunities within our reach to brighten our days and make life more interesting. And we don't even have to leave our homes. All we need is access to a computer.

Following are some of the opportunities the N3F has to offer:

If you like to draw and would like others to see your work, join the Artists Bureau.

If you would like to talk with someone who has interests the same or similar to yours, join the Correspondence Bureau.

If you would like to help others learn about the N3F, join Membership Recruitment.

If you would like to discuss selected topics join the Round Robin Bureau—either Postal Mail or Netflix Streaming.

If you have a short story you would like to enter in a contest there is a Short Story Contest at the end of the year.

If you are interested in writing or in reading other members' work, join the Writers Exchange.

If you would like to greet new members and help them get better acquainted with the N3F, join the Welcommittee.

All of the bureaus listed above have the contact information on page two in the current TNFF publication.



CORRESPONDENCE

It's a red letter day when we get some.



GARTH SPENCER: Thank you for the issue of Origin. You may be interested to know that I am working on a volume of Canadian fanhistory, if you weren't aware.

The inconclusive article by Judy Carroll describes one kind of nonstandard behavior; we have a wide range of citizens with nonstandard behaviors, and in fandom—as, I suspect, in many other leisure interest groups—we have at least our share of nonstandard members. It would be a good thing if fandom were the kind of environment that helps neurodivergents mimic adequate social skills. But I guess one has to do it himself.

Your final comments about the social bias against SF fans struck me as...may I say quaint? [No.-ed] After the rise of STAR TREK, and STAR WARS, and the films and TV serials that followed, screen-format sci-fi has become almost a mainstream form of entertainment. The media fandoms that instantly formed have also become a standard fixture of popular culture. Didn't the social bias against SF fans disappear after the 1960s? Or have I been living in a sheltered backwater?

No need to thank me; I didn't send you a copy, the N3F did, as you are on its membership list. Or I think so; I haven't seen the membership list in a long time. But I did ask Kevin Trainor if he could trace out one for me to look at.

Bias doesn't disappear that quickly. I think the various cases mutated from simple bias into a form of warfare. ST and SW are not the kind of science fiction that I like; their major attention is to warfare. So what the public is watching is wars instead of good SF.

**Supernatural
Science Fiction**



THE ISSUE IN REVIEW

Noticing that John Taine had a couple of stories set in Tibet leads me to wonder, as it has similarly with numerous writers, if he has ever been in Tibet or the Orient. Possibly the settings were culled from imaginative reading and research on the country involved.

Famous Science Fiction's having a misspelling of an author's name on the cover is an editorial ineptitude surprising when the editor has written a long editorial describing the lineaments of science fiction. That's a very thoughtful editorial and a thoughtless editorial mistake. Maybe everybody was rushed. It does seem rather hastily put together, resembling a fanzine, up to and including the outstanding typographical error.

Also I was struck by three authors having the same title for a story; some intellectual property seems ignored there. The title isn't so good that two of them couldn't think of another.

Judy Carroll writes of the same point I mention in the editorial, that things are getting pretty bad everywhere. I am glad to see rays of hope offered in her column.



Roscoe