

Origin 21

November 2019



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

Editor and Bureau Head: John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904, email kinethiel@mymetronet.net .

EDITORIAL



Getting Ahead

We speak of the past here, of history and research. Well and good to know the facts, and that is what we are here to do, to research the facts and find them out—some of them historical facts, and some of them applying more recently. Our research does not extend exactly into the present; we don't report new developments here. However, we have an article in this issue about Harlan Ellison, who was dynamically progressive, and caused major changes in the science fiction that has been written by his influence.

The study of his career moves me to point out that science fiction was already progressive, and has been a progressive literary form since its origins. As time has gone by it has continued to evolve, and in the latter half of the 20th Century it began invading other literary areas, so to speak, and made its way big time into the motion picture and television world. There even came into being a special channel devoted to science fiction. Science fiction got into the Space Program, and it was reported that Analog was being read in the Skylab.

Also in this issue is Jon Swartz's examination of the first issue of Astounding, tracing the beginnings of a form of literature that was beginning its evolution. So enjoy.

A Science Fiction Background by Judy Carroll



When I first discovered science fiction I would watch almost anything that even hinted of other worlds and other people. Included in this were horror, fantasy (above and beyond Disney), magic and the supernatural. Since we couldn't go to the movies very often (unless Westerns were involved) I would scrutinize every newspaper, TV listing, commercial, magazine ads and articles to discover what movies would be coming my way. On many Friday or Saturday evenings I could be found watching late night TV with hosts stranger than the movies they were hosting.

When any new science fiction series came on TV, I watched them. I didn't like all of them. I usually watched at least the first three episodes trying to give the series a chance. After all, it takes time for the actors and writers to join together and create something worth watching. Some of them were so bad my family would tease me for watching even the first episode.

I did then, and still do, watch old movies, new movies, classic movies in color or black and white. I don't care if top-named stars are in the movie or TV series or if the actors are new and mostly unheard of. I don't care if the special effects involve a man turning into a werewolf with each progression from tree to tree (Lon Chaney Jr. in *The Wolf Man*—1941) or huge multi weapons and people vying for the survival of the universe as they know it (*INFINITY WAR*—2018). I watch for The Story.

Now that I'm older (I'm not going to say wiser) I don't watch every movie or TV series

that involves strange and unusual beings, worlds, or dimensions. Though I will occasionally watch them, I stick mostly with science fiction. There's just not enough time in this world to see everything that comes out. So I try to be selective. This is not as easy as it may sound.

I rarely watch TV because I cannot guarantee that I will be able to watch each weekly episode. I do watch Netflix Streaming and receive Netflix DCDs through the mail, but there are still choices to be made. Such as, Do I want to watch the latest Supergirl movie when I'm quite happy with the Supergirl TV series? What about all the Marvel TV series and movies? Should I watch only the series, or only the movies? Should I stick with one or two characters and follow their lives—while neglecting the others?

Though it is sometimes hard to choose which movie or TV series to watch, I am so glad there are so many choices available today. Science Fiction is no longer for the "strange" among us. Science Fiction has finally been recognized as a genre worth exploring and enjoying.



Astounding Stories of Super-Science: First Year

by *Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian*



In 1926 Hugo Gernsback began **Amazing Stories**, the first all science fiction (SF) magazine. William Clayton, a successful publisher of several pulp magazines, considered starting a competitive title in 1928, but didn't. The following year Clayton suggested to Harry Bates, a newly hired editor, that they start a new magazine of period adventure stories. Instead, Bates proposed a SF pulp magazine, to be titled **Astounding Stories of Super-Science**, and Clayton agreed.

Clayton's Astounding

Astounding Stories of Super-Science was published originally by Publisher's Fiscal Corporation, which became Clayton Magazines in March, 1931. The first issue appeared in January 1930, with Bates as editor. Each copy sold for 20 cents, was standard pulp size with untrimmed edges, and used volumes consisting of three issues, the pages numbered consecutively pages 1 through 432 for each volume. During the magazine's early issues, Dr. Douglas M. Dold was listed as consulting editor. Dold was the brother of the illustrator Elliott Dold.

The Great Depression caused Clayton financial difficulties and led him to switch to a bi-monthly schedule with the June 1932 issue. Some printers bought the magazines that were indebted to them. Clayton decided to buy his printer, but he didn't have the money to complete the transaction.

The last Clayton Astounding was dated March, 1933. In April, 1933, Clayton went bankrupt and sold his magazine titles; the buyers quickly resold the titles to Street & Smith, a reliable and solvent magazine publisher at the time.

Contents of the First Issue, January 1930 (Vol. 1, No.1)

Editorial: What are "astounding" stories? Well, if you lived in Europe in 1490, and someone told you the earth was round and moved around the sun—that would have been an "astounding" story.

Or if you lived in 1840, and were told that some day men a thousand miles apart would be able to talk to each other through a little wire or without any wire at all—that would have been another.

Or if, in 1900, they predicted ocean-crossing airplanes and submarines, world-girdling zeppelins, sixty-story buildings, radio, metal that can be made to resist gravity and float in the air—these would have been other "astounding" stories.

Today time has gone by, and all these things are commonplace. That is the only real difference between the astounding and the commonplace here—time.

Tomorrow, more astounding things are going to happen. Your children—or their children—are going to take a trip to the moon. They will be able to render themselves invisible—a problem that has already been partly solved. They will be able to disintegrate their bodies in New York and re-integrate them in China—and in a matter of seconds.

Astounding? Indeed, yes.

Impossible? Well—television would have been impossible, almost unthinkable, ten years ago.

Now you will see the kind of magazine that it is our pleasure to offer you, beginning with this, the first number of *Astounding Stories*.

It is a magazine whose stories will anticipate the super-scientific achievements of Tomorrow—whose stories will not only be strictly accurate in their science but will be vividly, dramatically, and thrillingly told.

Already we have secured stories by some of the finest writers of fantasy in the world—men such as Ray Cummings, Murray Leinster, Captain S. P. Meek, Harl Vincent, R.F. Starzl and Victor Rousseau.

So—order your next month's copy of *Astounding Stories* in advance!—The Editor.

The Beetle Horde: Victor Rousseau (Man-sized beetles attack a defenseless world/Part 1 of a 2-part novel)

The Cave of Horror: Captain S.P. Meek (Unseen horror of Mammoth Cave strikes again—a Dr. Bird story)

Phantoms of Reality: Ray Cummings (A bloody revolution is unleashed in the Fourth Dimension)

The Stolen Minds: M.L. Staley (The protagonist's mind is stolen from his body)

Compensation: C.V. Tench (A professor disappears, but the diamond from his ring remains)

Tanks: Murray Leinster (Infantry men are left to fight the war of 1932)

Invisible Death: Anthony Pelcher (A millionaire manufacturer is threatened by an invisible killer)

Cover by Wesso (Hans Waldemer Wesslowski), illustrates a scene from "The Beetle Horde". [Wesso also did most of the magazine's interior illustrations during the magazine's first year of publication.]

Note: A listing of the contents of the other issues of that first year of publication will appear in our next issue.

Some Concluding Comments

Only a few of the authors who appeared in the magazine's first year are known to most SF fans today, notably Murray Leinster and Ray Cummings. Some may have heard of editor Harry Bates because of his connection to the popular SF movie THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL.

The letter writers from the first year included many prominent SF fans, as indicated above [in the complete listing in our next issue], some of whom later became SF authors/editors themselves. This trend was continued in subsequent years. For example, the January 1931 issue (not described in this article) had a letter from a teenager interested in SF, Jerome Siegel, of Cleveland, Ohio! Of interest to me, Siegel wrote that he liked the stories by Starzl and Cummings.

Astounding Stories of Super-Science is still with us, the longest running continuously published SF title in the United States. It has undergone several name changes over the years, primarily to Astounding Science Fiction in 1938 and then to Analog Science Fact & Fiction in 1960. In November 1992, its logo changed to use the term "Fiction and Fact" rather than "Fact & Fiction". It exists today as Analog Science Fiction and Fact, published by Penny Publishers, a division of Dell Magazines.

Bibliography

Clarke, Arthur C. *Astounding Days*. NY: Bantam Books, 1990.

Clute, John & Peter Nichols (eds.) *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. London: Orbit, 1993.

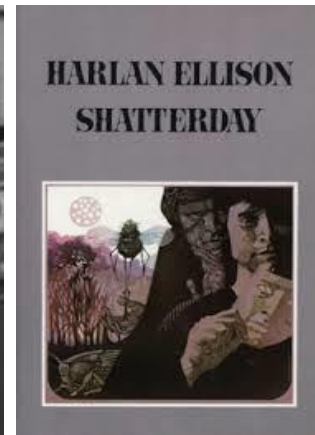
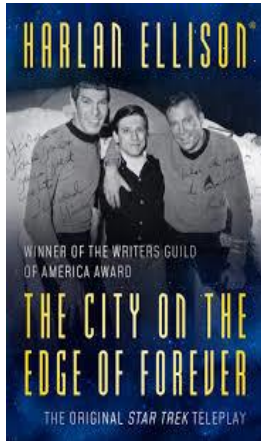
Rogers, Alva. *A Requiem for Astounding*. Chicago: Advent, 1964.

Tuck, Donald H. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy*, Volume 3; miscellaneous. Chicago: Advent, 1982.

Tymn, Marshall B. & Mike Ashley (eds.) *Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Weird Fiction magazines*. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1985.

Note: Several Internet sites were also consulted.

HARLAN ELLISON by Jeffrey Redmond



This writer flamed through the science fiction world starting in the late fifties and on into the next century, changing things completely in many ways. He was one of those bringing on the New Wave and had something to do with all that was new and different in science fiction during the second half of the 20th Century. Jeffrey Redmond here goes over his career.

Harlan Jay Ellison (May 27, 1934—June 28, 2018) was a 5'3 American writer, known for his prolific and influential work in New Wave speculative fiction, and for his outspoken, combative personality. His published works include more than 1,700 short stories, novellas, screenplays, comic book scripts, teleplays, essays, a wide range of criticism covering literature, film, television, and print media. Some of his best-known work includes the STAR TREK episode “The City on the Edge of Forever”, “A Boy and His Dog”, “I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream”, and “Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman”, and as editor and anthologist for DANGEROUS VISIONS (1967) and AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS (1972). Ellison won numerous awards, including multiple Hugos, Nebulas, and Edgars.

Ellison was born to a Jewish family in Cleveland, Ohio, on May 27, 1934, the son of Serita (*nee* Rosenthal) and Louis Laverne Ellison, a dentist and jeweler. His family subsequently moved to Painesville, Ohio, but returned to Cleveland in 1949, following his father’s death. Ellison frequently ran away from home, taking an array of odd jobs.

Ellison married five times; each relationship ended within a few years, except the last. His first wife was Charlotte Stein, whom he married in 1956. They divorced in 1960, and he later described the marriage as “four years of hell as sustained in the whine of a generator.” Later that year he married Billie Joyce Sanders. They divorced in 1963. His

1966 marriage to Loretta Patrick lasted only seven weeks. In 1976, he married Lori Horowitz. He was forty-one and she was nineteen. He later said of the marriage, “I was desperately in love with her, but it was a stupid marriage on my part.” They were divorced after eight months. He and Susan Toth married in 1986, and they remained together, living in Los Angeles, until his death 32 years later.

Ellison attended the Ohio State University for eighteen months (1951-53) before being expelled. He said the expulsion was for hitting a professor who had denigrated his writing ability, and over the next twenty or so years he sent that professor a copy of every story he published.

He published two stories in the **Cleveland News** during 1949, and he sold a story to EC Comics early in the 1950s. He moved to New York City in 1955 to pursue a writing career, primarily in science fiction. Over the next two years, he published more than one hundred short stories and articles. He served in the U.S. Army from 1957 to 1959. His first novel, *WEB OF THE CITY*, was published during his military service in 1958, and he said he had written the bulk of it while undergoing basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. After leaving the army, he relocated to Chicago, where he edited **Rogue** magazine.

Ellison moved to California in 1962, and subsequently began to sell his writing to Hollywood. He wrote the screenplay for *The Oscar*, starring Stephen Boyd and Elke Sommer. He also sold scripts to many television shows: *THE LORETTA YOUNG SHOW* (using the name Harlan Ellis), *THE FLYING NUN*, *BURKE’S LAW*, *ROUTE 66*, *THE OUTER LIMITS*, *STAR TREK*, *THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.*, *CIMARRON STRIP*, and *THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK HOUR*. Ellison’s screenplay for the Star Trek episode “The City on the Edge of Forever” has been considered the best of the 79 episodes in the series.

In 1965, he participated in the Selma to Montgomery marches led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1966, in an article that **Esquire** magazine would later name as the best magazine piece ever written, the journalist Gay Talese wrote about the goings-on around Frank Sinatra. The article, entitled, “Frank Sinatra Has a Cold”, briefly describes a clash between the young Harlan Ellison and Frank Sinatra, when the crooner took exception to Ellison’s boots during a billiards game.

Ellison was hired as a writer for Walt Disney Studios but was fired on his first day after Roy O. Disney overheard him in the studio commissary joking about making a pornographic animated film featuring Disney characters.

He continued to publish short fiction and nonfiction pieces in various publications,

including some of his best-known stories. One story, “A Boy and His Dog”, examines the nature of friendship and love in a violent, post-apocalyptic world, and was made into the 1975 film of the same name, starring Don Johnson.

Ellison served as a creative consultant to the 1980s version of THE TWILIGHT ZONE TV series, and BABYLON 5. As a member of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) he had voiceover credits for shows including THE PIRATES OF DARK WATER, MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIM, SPACE CASES, PHANTOM 2040, and BABYLON 5, as well as making an onscreen appearance in the Babylon 5 episode “The Face of the Enemy”.

Ellison’s official website (harlanellison.com) was launched in 1995 as a fan page. For several years, Ellison was a regular poster in its discussion forum.

On occasion he used the pseudonym Cordwainer Bird to alert members of the public to situations in which he felt his creative contribution to a project had been mangled beyond repair by others, typically Hollywood producers or studios. The first such work to which he signed the name was “The Prince of Doom”, an episode of VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

The “Cordwainer Bird” moniker is a tribute to fellow SF writer Paul M.A. Linebarger, better known by his pen name, Cordwainer Smith. The origin of the word “cordwainer” is shoemaker (from working with cordovan leather for shoes). The term used by Linebarger was meant to imply the industriousness of the pulp author. Ellison said, in interviews and in his writing, that his version of the pseudonym was meant to mean a shoemaker for birds.

Since he used the pseudonym mainly for works he wanted to distance himself from, it may be understood to mean that this work is for the birds, or that it is of as much use as shoes to a bird. Stephen King once said he thought that it meant that Ellison was giving people who mangled his work a literary version of “the bird”. The bird moniker became a character in one of Ellison’s own stories.

In his book STRANGE WINE, Ellison explains the origins of the Bird, and goes on to state that Philip Jose Farmer wrote Cordwainer into the Wold Newton family the latter writer had developed. The thought of such a whimsical object lesson being related to such lights as Doc Savage, The Shadow, Tarzan, and all the other pulp heroes prompted Ellison to play with the concept, resulting in “The New York Review of Bird”, in which an annoyed Bird uncovers the darker secrets of the New York literary establishment before beginning a pulpish slaughter of the same.

Ellison had a reputation for being abrasive and argumentative. He generally agreed with this assessment, and a dust jacket from one of his books described him as “possibly the

most contentious person on Earth". He filed numerous grievances and attempted lawsuits. As part of a dispute about fulfilment of a contract, he once sent two hundred and thirteen bricks to a publisher postage due, followed by a dead gopher *via* fourth class mail. In an October 2017 piece in **Wired**, he was dubbed "Sci-Fi's Most Controversial Figure."

At Stephen King's request, Ellison provided a description of himself and his writing in **Danse Macabre**: "My work is foursquare for chaos. I spend my life personally, and my work professionally, keeping the soup boiling. Gadfly is what they call you when you are no longer dangerous. I much prefer troublemaker, malcontent, desperado. I see myself as a combination of Zorro and Jiminy Cricket. My stories go out from here and raise hell. From time to time some denigrator or critic with umbrage will say of my work, 'He only wrote that to shock.' I smile and nod. Precisely."

He repeatedly criticized how Star Trek creator and producer Gene Roddenberry (and others) rewrote his original script for the 1967 episode "The City on the Edge of Forever". Despite his objections, he kept his own name on the shooting script instead of using "Cordwainer Bird" to indicate displeasure.

His original script was first published in the 1976 anthology SIX SCIENCE FICTION PLAYS. He also novelized the story at that time, for the Star Trek Fotonovel series. In 1995, Borderlands Press published the story, with nearly three hundred pages, comprising an essay by Ellison, four versions of the teleplay, and eight "Afterwords" contributed by other parties. He greatly expanded the introduction for the paperback edition, in which he explained what he called a "fatally inept treatment". Both versions of the script won awards. Ellison's original script won the 1968 Writers Guild Award for best episodic drama in television, while the shooting script won the 1968 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation. On March 13, 2009, Ellison sued CBS Paramount Television, seeking payment of 25% of net receipts from Merchandising, publishing, and other income from the episode since 1967. The suit also names the Writers Guild of America for allegedly failing to act on Ellison's behalf. On October 23, 2009, **Variety** magazine reported that a settlement had been reached.

Ellison was among those who in 1968 signed an anti-Vietnam War advertisement in *Galaxy Science Fiction*. In 1969, he was Guest of Honor at Texas A&M University's first science fiction convention, Aggiecon, where he reportedly referred to the university's Corps of Cadets as "...America's next generation of Nazis...", inspired in part by the continuing Vietnam War. Although the university was no longer solely a military school (from 1965), the student body was predominantly made up of cadet members.

Between Ellison's anti-military remarks, and a food fight that broke out in the ballroom

of the hotel where the gathering was held, the school's administration almost refused to approve the science fiction convention the next year, and no guest of honor was invited for the next two Aggiecons. However, Ellison was subsequently invited back as Guest of Honor for Aggiecon V (1974) and Aggiecon XXXI (2000).

Shortly after the release of STAR WARS (1977), Ellison was contacted to develop a script based on Isaac Asimov's I, ROBOT short story collection, by Warner Brothers. In a meeting with the Head of Production at Warner's, Ellison concluded that the man was commenting on the script without having read it, and Ellison accused him of having the "intellectual and cranial capacity of an artichoke". Shortly afterwards, he was dropped from the project. Without him, the film came to a dead end, because subsequent scripts were unsatisfactory to potential directors. After a change in studio heads, Warner allowed Ellison's script to be serialized in **Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine** and published in book form. But the 2004 film I, ROBOT, starring Will Smith, had no connection to Ellison's script.

In 1985 Ellison allegedly publicly assaulted an author and critic at the Nebula Awards banquet. He did not pursue legal action against Ellison, and the two men later signed a "non-aggression pact", promising never to discuss the incident again or to have any contact with one another. Ellison often publicly boasted about the incident.

At the 2006 Hugo Awards ceremony, he was presented with a special committee award. His onstage behavior was bizarre, including sucking on a microphone and culminating in groping a woman's breast. He subsequently complained that she refused to acknowledge his apology.

On September 20, 2006, he sued comic book and magazine publisher Fantagraphics, stating they had defamed him in their book COMICS AS ART ([We Told You So](#)). The book recounts the history of Fantagraphics, and discussed a lawsuit that resulted from a 1980 Ellison interview with Fantagraphics' industry news magazine, **The Comics Journal**. In this interview Ellison referred to a comic book writer, calling him "derange-o". He lost his libel suit against Ellison and Fantagraphics on December 9, 1986. Ellison, after reading unpublished drafts of the book on Fantagraphics' website, believed that he had been defamed by several anecdotes related to this incident. He sued in the Superior Court for the State of California, in Santa Monica. Fantagraphics attempted to have the lawsuit dismissed. In their motion to dismiss, they argued that the statements were both their personal opinions and generally believed to be true anecdotes. On February 12, 2007, the presiding judge ruled against Fantagraphics' anti-SLAPP motion for dismissal. On June 29, 2007, Ellison claimed that the litigation had been resolved pending Fantagraphics' removal of all

references to the case from their website. No money or apologies changed hands in the settlement as posted on August 17, 2007.

In a 1980 lawsuit against ABC and Paramount Pictures, Ellison and Ben Bova claimed that the TV series FUTURE COP was based on their short story “Brillo”, winning a \$337,000 judgement.

Ellison alleged that James Cameron’s film THE TERMINATOR drew from material from an episode of the original OUTER LIMITS which Ellison had scripted, “Soldier” (1964). Hemdale, the production company, and the distributor, Orion Pictures, settled out of court for an undisclosed sum, and added a credit to the film which acknowledged Ellison’s work. Cameron objected to this acknowledgement and has since labeled Ellison’s claim a “nuisance suit”. Ellison publicly referred to The Terminator as “a good film”.

In 1994, he suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized for quadruple coronary artery bypass surgery. 2010 was probably the worst and lowest point in his life, and he received treatment for clinical depression.

On April 24, 2000, Ellison sued Stephen Robertson for posting four stories to the newsgroup “alt. binaries. e-book” without authorization. The other defendants were AOL and RemarQ, internet service providers who owned servers hosting the newsgroup. Ellison alleged they had failed to halt copyright infringement in accordance with the “Notice and Takedown Procedure” outlined in the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Robertson and RemarQ first settled with Ellison, and then AOL likewise settled with Ellison in June 2004, under conditions that were not made public. Since those settlements Ellison initiated legal action or takedown notices against more than 240 people who had allegedly distributed his writing on the internet, saying, “If you put your hand in my pocket, you’ll drag back six inches of bloody stump”. A lawsuit involving the film in Time (2011), which Ellison contended plagiarizes his short story “Repent, Harlequin!’ Said the Ticktockman” (first published in 1965), was withdrawn after Ellison viewed the film. As part of the agreement to dismiss his lawsuit, Ellison agreed that each party would bear its own attorneys’ fees.

On about October 10, 2014, Ellison suffered a stroke. Although his speech and cognition were unimpaired, he suffered paralysis on his right side, for which he was expected to spend several weeks in physical therapy before being released from the hospital.

Harlan Ellison died at his home in Los Angeles, California in the morning of June 28, 2018. He will be remembered as one of the most prolific science fiction writers ever.



ISSUE'S END