

ORIGIN 44

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A monthly publication of the History and Research Bureau intended to bring you news of and increase the activity and output of that bureau. (Much of my writing is in Latin form, which is inscrutable to the reader at the present time, but remains a substantiating memory of me from an earlier N3F, which was highly complementary to me about that very thing.) That we are an N3F publication is thus set forth:

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

Inquiry OK.]

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Editorial



Bright Horizons

Nothing could make me more pleased with what we are doing here than for Origin to win a Neffy award, and I was happy indeed to find in the mail a certificate of achievement of this award, beautifully created and a thing to show off to others. I'm not saying that I and the staff did not vote for the fanzine Origin, which undoubtedly carried us, but in the previous year's awards this wasn't so, and I consider the award to show that the staff here is with it and for it, and we weren't brought down by the rest of the vote. Let this issue signify the happy receipt of that award, and I hope the award brings favor to the N3F via this introduction to the fan public of an N3F zine which is one creditable to the organization. The handsome appearance of that award certificate shows manifest respect for our publication and is an additional boost to morale, I'm sure. In these dire times it is a happy circumstance to be so signified. Let Origin stand in the annals of the history of the NFFF, and let this issue signify that.

I heard from Jeffrey Redmond that he felt a great pleasure in receiving an award and there is another man honored by its receipt. We've been too busy with other things for me to have communicated yet with the others, but I assume they received the award with equal pleasure. Though this reminds me that we are not in constant correspondence, which is a lack we still have in the bureau, but there is indeed likely to be a pile of work keeping us busy on all sides, and we still have that difficulty about contact that has been getting in the way of our activity all the time, and it is a wonder

that there hasn't been any defaulting by the staff during our extended run, for which I thank the other bureau members. They show considerable spirit for the advance of the organization. To rectify this deficiency of contact, I am continuing to change our policy of aloofness toward one of interchange and interactivity, and in this issue I am doing this by commenting on the work done by the others, in this way forming inner activity regarding our fan publication. This being made visible makes for a better bureau where members can see us better. I have often noted that there is little opportunity to express my reactions toward what the other bureau members write, and writing a letter to the publication would not look right for us, as the bureau is not that big and active, and the letter column would be for respondents among the membership. But I do have comments and thoughts evoked by what the others are writing, and I think it will make for more interesting reading for the membership for me to express, or "voice", these thoughts here. And so I have commenced doing that, and I think it is taking a step in the right direction, and might lead to further results. It makes for a more complex and active bureau, rather than a showcase. Is it mis-spending our time to work for the NFFF, one which brings us little return from the world at large? No, it is time well spent, and as Will Mayo says, you only have one life to live, so LIVE it. When you are doing your work here, regardless of lack of returns on it, you are creating something and there is something happening, and it enlarges the scope of the spirit of the Now. It is beneficial to yourself, and potentially beneficial to others, whether it becomes historic work or not. As Sister Sledge says, "Be true to you and the things you do, you won't go wrong". Make love, not war.

Others are welcome to send historical and research papers to our bureau, or to mention our bureau and its doings in letters to Tightbeam and TNFF.

I feel I have said something about our organization in these lines, and I feel good to have done so. It's so much better than being silent.

Yes, we are all really here, and we should make the most of it. It doesn't detract from our living to do this, it increases the worth of that living. One is a visible person, and not a dud. And as you know, there is a great tendency in the writings of the times to call other people duds. Look what is being said about the government. Let's be more optimistic than all that. Let's try really actively existing, and see how that works out.

Astronomers and Science Fiction by Jeffrey Redmond

Mr. Redmond looks over the effects on SF of the viewing of the Cosmos



Astronomers have played the key role in developing the cosmic perspective that lies at the heart of science fiction. Their science has given birth to an understanding of the true size and nature of the universe. But not without difficulty, given the public reluctance of the Medieval Church to accept non-geocentric cosmologies.

In the 1640 edition of his astronomical treatise *THE DISCOVERY OF A WORLD IN THE MOONE* (1638, expanded version *THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW WORLD* 1640) John Wilkins appended a “Discourse Concerning the Possibility of a Passage Thither”. He took the notion of lunar travel out of the realms of pure fantasy into those of legitimate speculation. Johannes Kepler’s *SOMNIUM* (1634) was developed from an essay intended to popularize the Copernican theory.

The literary image of the astronomer as it developed in the eighteenth century

was, however, by no means entirely complimentary.

“The Elephant in the Moon” (In *THE GENUINE REMAINS IN VERSE AND PROSE OF MR. SAMUEL BUTLER*, collected 1759, edited by Robert Thyer) by Samuel “Hudibras” Butler (1613-1680) was a comic poem with a group of observers witnessing what they take to be tremendous events on the Moon. These subsequently turn out to be the activities of a mouse and a swarm of insects on the objective lens of their telescope. Jonathan Swift’s *GULLIVER’S TRAVELS* (1726, revised 1735) included a sharply parodic account of the astronomers of Laputa. Samuel Johnson’s *RASSELAS* (1759) features a comically mad astronomer.

The revelations of astronomy inspired nineteenth century writers, including Edgar Allan Poe, whose rhapsodic “poem” *Eureka* (1848) drew heavily upon contemporary work. They also encouraged hoaxers like Richard Adams Locke, who foisted his imaginary descriptions of lunar life on the unwary readers of the **New York Sun** in 1835. The development of sci fi in France was led by the nation’s foremost astronomer, Camille Flammarion, who was also one of the first popularizers of the science. His *LUMEN* (1887, translated anonymously in 1892) is a remarkable semi-fictional vehicle for conveying the astronomer’s particular sense of wonder and awe.

One of the first popularizers of astronomy in the USA, Garrett P. Serviss—author of *CURIOSITIES OF THE SKY* (1909)—also became an early writer of scientific romances. His most notable was *A COLUMBUS OF SPACE* (January-June 1909 **All-Story**, revised in 1911). The affinity between astronomy and science fiction is eloquently identified by Serviss in *CURIOSITIES OF THE SKY*: “What Froude says of history is true also of astronomy. It is the most impressive when it transcends explanation. It is not the mathematics, but the wonder and mystery that seize upon the imagination. All of the things described in the book possess the fascination of whatever is strange, marvelous, obscure or mysterious, magnified, in this case, by the portentous scale of the phenomena.”

Sci fi is the ideal medium for the communication of this kind of feeling, but it can also accommodate cautionary tales against the hubris that may come from the illusion of close acquaintance with cosmic mysteries.

Astronomical discoveries concerning the Moon were rapidly adopted into science fiction. Jules Verne’s *AUTOUR DE LA LUNE* (1870, translated 1873) was

particularly rich in astronomical detail. And observations of Mars by Giovanni Schiaparelli (1835-1910) and Percival Lowell, which seemed to reveal the notorious “canals”, were a powerful stimulus to the sci fi imagination.

But many twentieth century discoveries in astronomy have been inconvenient for sci fi writers, revealing as they do the awful inhospitality of our nearest neighbors in space. It was astronomers who banished Earth clone worlds to other solar systems, and made much early pulp melodrama seem ludicrous.

Intriguing and momentous discoveries in the universe beyond the solar system have, however, provided rich imaginative compensation. One of the best known and least theoretically orthodox contemporary astronomers was Sir Fred Hoyle. He wrote a good deal of science fiction drawing on his expertise, including the classic *THE BLACK CLOUD* (1957) and, in collaboration with his son Geoffrey, *THE INFERNO* (1973). Unkind critics remarked that Hoyle’s later speculative nonfiction, written in collaboration with Chandra Wickramasinghe—including *LIFECLOUD* (1978), *DISEASES FROM SPACE* (1979) and *EVOLUTION FROM SPACE* (1981)—seems even more fanciful than his fiction.

The US astronomer Robert S. Richardson has also been an occasional contributor to sf magazines under the name Philip Latham, and some of his stories are particularly clever in dramatizing the work of the astronomer and its imaginative implications. Examples include “To Explain Mrs. Thompson” (November 1951 *Astounding*), “Disturbing Sun” (May 1959 *Astounding*) and “The Dimple in Draco” (in *ORBIT 2*, anthology, 1967, edited by Damon Knight).

New forms of telescopes, and quasi-telescopes with unprecedented observational powers, are occasionally deployed as sf inventions. The titular device of Piers Anthony’s *MACROSCOPE* (1969, cut in 1972) is the best known of these. Like the super telescope of Jean Delaire’s *AROUND A DISTANT STAR* (1904), it can double as a Time Viewer by observing ancient light. Further examples appear as the central sci fi device in Eric C. Williams’ *TO END ALL TELESCOPES* (1969), and fleetingly in Philip E. High’s *SOLD—FOR A SPACESHIP* (1973).

Modern observational astronomy has become far more obscure as it has diversified into radio, x-ray, and other frequencies. And its visionary implications have become increasingly peculiar as its practitioners have found explanations for such enigmatic concepts as quasars, and empirical evidence for the existence of

theoretically predicted entities, like Black Holes and Neutron Stars. Notable science fiction stories featuring peculiar discoveries by astronomers include Gregory Benford's *TIMESCAPE* (1980), and Robert L. Forward's *DRAGON'S EGG* (1980).

The advent of radio astronomy has made a considerable impact on post World War Two sf, in connection with the possibility of picking up signals from an Alien intelligence. This has been a theme developed in sci fi novels ranging from Eden Phillpott's cautionary *Address Unknown* (1949), through James E. Gunn's enthusiastic *THE LISTENERS* (fixup 1972), to Carl Sagan's over-the-top *CONTACT* (1985) and Jack McDevitt's *THE HERCULES TEXT* (1986).

In the real world, various projects connected with SETI (Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence) have been mounted or mooted, and many stories have proposed that the receipt of such a message would be the crucial event in the history of mankind. A satirical dissent from this view can be found in Stanislaw Lem's novel *GLOS PANA* (1968, translated as *HIS MASTER'S VOICE*, 1983). And there is also a paranoid school of thought which suggests that aliens whose own SETI discovers us might easily turn out to be very unfriendly. Our radio telescopes nearly become the agents of our destruction in Frank Crisp's *THE APE OF LONDON* (1959), and the television serial *A FOR ANDROMEDA* (1961).

Astronomy is sometimes confused by the ignorant with astrology. Although sci fi has been remarkably tolerant of some other Pseudo-sciences, it has rarely tolerated Astrology. An exception is Piers Anthony's *MACROSCOPE* (1969), which combines hard science devices (including a hypothetical remote viewer of awesome power) with astrological analysis. Two writers outside the genre have, however, written satirical novels based on the hypothesis that astrology might be made absolutely accurate. Edward Hyams with *THE ASTROLOGER* (1950), and John Cameron with (again) *THE ASTROLOGER* (1972).

No doubt astronomers will continue playing an important part in the development of science fiction, especially with future NASA space probes. It will be just a matter of time.

An editorial reaction to the article: The study of the heavenly bodies and speculation about what is out there is indeed a great influence on the formulation and writing of

science fiction, and gives this writing a solid and substantial basis, a scientific place in the real world.

There is a sense of awe in the finding of a person speculating about travel to the moon in a time when there was no flight happening, or even generally conceived of, that might unite us in thought to John Wilkins, the speculator of the seventeenth century, who had seen seas crossed but nothing happening in the air, and space was beyond even that. Now we see space being crossed, and pictures sent back, and it is a good work of the mind to look back on how things were then by way of comparison. These writers were indeed ahead of their time. Why it was only the Moon that attracted their scientific notice isn't clear. Mention could be made also of Cyrano de Bergerac, who may have written the longest story about a journey to the moon. People really seemed to be rollicking with all the Moon talk, from this account. But they weren't all doing it at the same time. That being a more gradual era or two or three in history may give that impression. A special note about Jonathan Swift's Laputa—it's been my understanding that La Puta would be "the whore", if the reader will excuse my mentioning this. But Jonathan Swift was a satirical writer and I suppose this bawdiness was intentional.

Richard Locke seems to have made his name as a hoaxer. I wonder if the hoaxers of today will live on in a name.

SETI has so far not come up with a single positive identification of a responsive signal and one wonders how they would come to invest so much money in such a project as that and then sustain it. I suppose most of their equipment belonged to someone else and they were making use of it, but one sees pictures of SETI headquarters.

I wonder if it was Fredrick Hoyle who started all the news about black holes and singularities. From this article he seems to have been writing about things of this sort in advance. The news stories about these phenomena have always had a fictional tinge.

Astrology was, I think, brought considerably to the attention of science fiction readers by the Rosicrucians, who used to advertise spiritual things and secrets of the unknown in science fiction and fantasy magazines, which they continued doing until into the mid 1950s. Though they may have had little effect on science fiction readers, there are a couple of books which practically bear reference to them, THE DA VINCI CODE and THE LOST EQUATION by Dan Brown, which portray a world overtaken by things of the sort that Rosicrucians wrote about, and his secret societies appear to include Rosicrucians.

The Avon Science Fiction Readers

by Jon D. Swartz

Historian Jon Swartz shows an important early sf and fantasy anthology series



There were three AVON SCIENCE FICTION READERS published during 1951-1952, all edited by Donald A. Wollheim. The Readers were digest-sized and saddle-stapled, sold for 35c, and the first was described as a companion, pocket-priced anthology to the publisher's successful AVON FANTASY READER—eighteen of which were published during 1947-1952. From the beginning there was controversy over whether or not these irregular publications were magazines or books. While some SF fans treated them as a chain of book anthologies, many genre critics have considered them to be pulp magazines rather than books, and they were listed as such in several of the standard reference books on science fiction. As late as 1997, Clute & Grant in THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FANTASY stated that, while the Avon Fantasy Readers were "the first regular paperback fantasy anthology series", the AVON SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY READER was "a new, genuine magazine". A recent search of the Internet revealed that sites mentioning the Readers classify them both as magazines and as books, with one of the sites stating that they "straddled the book-magazine categories".

It seems certain to this writer, however, that all these publications were paperback book anthologies. What is the evidence that the Readers were intended to be books, and not magazines? Wollheim himself wrote that, after he had conceived and sold in the mid-1940s two early SF anthologies, he was able to "sell Avon Books the idea of a series of similar anthologies—the Avon Fantasy Readers—which led me to joining their staff and finding myself almost immediately their editor". Furthermore, the first Avon Science Fiction Reader was described in an ad as a "companion" to the Avon Fantasy Readers. Although Tymn & Ashley included the two Avon Science Fiction and Fantasy Readers in their reference work, SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY, AND WEIRD FICTION MAGAZINES, they admitted that Avon publisher Joseph Meyers thought of the Readers as "a series of books", not as a magazine. In addition, the Readers had no interior illustrations and the text was laid out in the traditional one-column book format rather than the traditional two-column format of magazines.

The Readers featured such well-known SF authors as Ray Cummings, Edmond Hamilton, Murray Leinster, and Jack Williamson—and also included stories by Wollheim and a couple of his fellow Futurians: John Michel and Robert W. Lowndes. The majority of the authors with stories in the Science Fiction Readers also had stories in the Fantasy Readers. For the most part, stories in both publications were reprints from early genre pulp magazines.

Avon Science Fiction Reader #1 (April, 1951/128 pages)

Contents—

Edmond Hamilton: "The War of the Sexes"

Frank Belknap Long: "Green Glory"

Clark Ashton Smith: "The Immesurable Horror"

Murray Leinster: "The Morrison Monument"

Wallace West: "The Incubator Man"

Sewell Peaslee Wright: "The Dark Side of Antri"

Donald A. Wollheim: "Blind Flight"

A. Merritt: "Rhythm of the Spheres"

R. F. Starzi: "Madness of the Dust"

Jack Williamson: "The Cosmic Express"

Avon Science Fiction Reader #2 (June, 1951/128 pages)

Contents—

Sewell Peaslee Wright: "Priestess of the Flame"

Donald Wandrei: "The Whisperers"

John Michel: "When Half-Worlds Meet"

Bob Olsen: "The Superperfect Bride"

Clark Ashton Smith: "Vulthoom"

Ray Cummings: "The Man Who Discovered Nothing"

Robert W. Lowndes: "Highway"

Leslie F. Stone: "When the Flame Flowers Blossomed"

Miles J. Breuer, M.D.: "The Book of Worlds"

Lord Dunsany: "The Rebuff"

Avon Science Fiction Reader #3 (January, 1952/128 pages)

Contents—

Frank Belknap Long: "The Robot Empire"

S. Fowler Wright: "P.N. 40"

Francis Flagg: "The Master Ants"

Kenneth Sterling & H. P. Lovecraft: "In the Walls of Eryx"

Mary Elizabeth Counselman: "The Black Stone Statue"

R. F. Starzl: "The Planet of Dread"

Hannes Bok: "The Alien Vibration"

Thorp McClusky: "The Ultimate Paradox"

Artwork

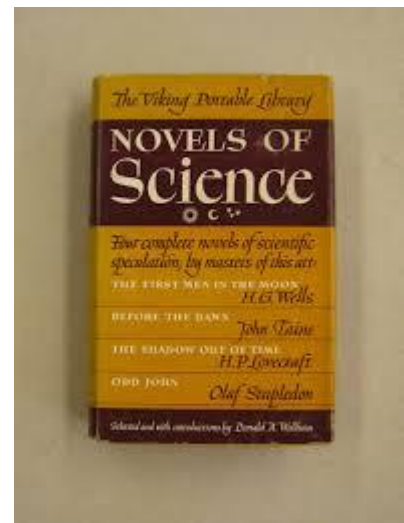
All three covers featured what has come to be known as Good Girl Art (GGA). The cover of Issue #1 was by R. Crowl, who also did the cover artwork for several of the Avon Fantasy Readers. I have been unable to identify the artist who did the cover art for Issue #2; but the cover artist of Issue #3 clearly was Earle Bergey, famous for his GGA paintings of scantily clad women usually wearing tiny or transparent outfits. As previously stated, there were no interior illustrations in any of the issues.

Avon Science Fiction and Fantasy Reader

After Wollheim left Avon, an attempt was made to continue his two series under one combined title. The Avon Science Fiction and Fantasy Reader (ASF&FR) published under the editorship of Sol Cohen, differed from the two earlier readers by Wollheim in that it featured previously unpublished stories and also had interior illustrations. Because of these differences, it is easier to see why this publication is sometimes classified as a magazine rather than as a book. With new stories by such authors as Arthur C. Clarke, John Christopher, John Jakes, and Jack Vance—and the slightly different format—ASF&FR generally was well received, but was itself discontinued after only two issues (dated January and April 1952).

Donald A. Wollheim





Wollheim (1914-1990) was an avid early proponent of science fiction in the United States. He began his SF life as an avid reader and then became a founding member of the famed Futurians of New York City. Later he edited the short-lived SF magazines **Cosmic Stories** and **Stirring Science Stories**, both on very small budgets (Wollheim has written that his budget was “nothing, literally nothing”). Then he was a pioneer in editing SF in books. He edited THE POCKET BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION (1943), the first collection of SF stories in book form and the first book to use the term “science fiction” in the title; and THE PORTABLE NOVELS OF SCIENCE (1945), the first collection of SF novels in hardcover. He edited anonymously the first *original* SF anthology for Avon (THE GIRL WITH THE HUNGRY EYES AND OTHER STORIES, 1949)—a trend developed later by Ballantine Books. After his first stint at Avon, in 1952 Wollheim joined A.A. Wyn at Ace Books; and in 1953 he introduced SF to the Ace lineup. Then in 1971 he left Ace

to found DAW Books, named by his initials, the first mass market specialist SF and fantasy fiction publishing house. In 1985 award-winning SF scholar Thomas D. Claeson described Wollheim as “one of the most influential editors in the contemporary field”.

Conclusions

Critics usually compare the Avon Science Fiction Readers with the earlier Avon Fantasy Readers, and find them somewhat wanting. Apparently, the Fantasy Readers were favorites of both SF fans and the reading public in general. The Science Fiction Readers, on the other hand, did not sell as well—possibly because of the competition from all the SF books and magazines being published at the time. Some have attributed the short life of the Science Fiction Readers to Wollheim’s departure from Avon to help establish Ace Books—and to the fact that the Science Fiction Readers relied entirely upon reprinted stories from genre magazines of the 1920s-1930s. Others have written that publishers in the early 1950s were torn between publishing SF books and SF magazines, and this dilemma also may have helped hasten the end of the Science Fiction Readers—since at the time they were viewed by many SF fans as somewhat of a publishing anomaly.

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Note: This article was published originally many years ago. It has been modified somewhat for publication in Origin.

Some editorial comments on the preceding article: Not to reawaken an old controversy, but I think critics were mistaken in calling The Avon Science Fiction and Fantasy Reader a magazine. Magazines have editorials, letter columns, articles, essays and the like as well as fiction. The Avon book does not seem to have had any of that.

It is interesting to see science fiction being introduced to a book-buying public. These books seem to be an origin place to books on the stands.

Wollheim did an urban horror fantasy book called TERROR IN THE MODERN VEIN which included Fritz Leiber's "The Girl With the Hungry Eyes" as well as a story by H.P. Lovecraft called "He". It was in hard covers and there was no paperback edition of it as far as I know. I used to see everything that was new on the stands.

Interestingly, Francis Flagg had poetry in the fantasy poetry anthology DARK OF THE MOON, edited by August Derleth and published by Arkham House. Mary Elizabeth Councilman was a regular writer for Weird Tales.

It's odd not to have heard more of Sewell Peaslee Wright, considering that "Priestess of the Flame" is a pretty ambitious title.

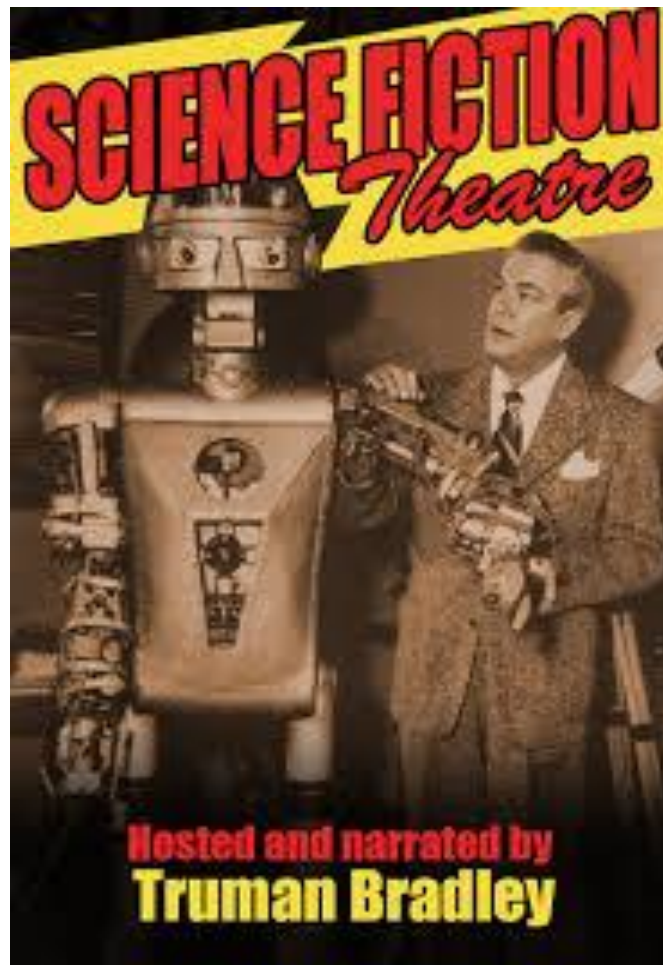
Hannes Bok occasionally wrote stories, but not very often, and he is not celebrated as an author. He is perhaps the only SF and Fantasy illustrator to have written stories, and there must have been a lot of comments made about it when he did. His art was usually magnificent and viewer-pleasing. There is a book in some circulation called "The Hannes Bok Sketchbook" in which most of the art is rather trashy, but there's no telling where the art in it came from. At one time fandom seems to have claimed him, and he was doing some fanzine art, but it doesn't appear that he was involved in fandom for very long or all that much. (Bok's art can be found looking back in Origin.) "The Alien Vibration" seems like a rather unlearned science fiction title; it reminds me of H.P. Lovecraft's "The Colour Out of Space", though one concerns sight and the other refers to sound. I don't suppose it's very available any more, but I'd like to know if the vibration described is sonic, super or subsonic, or of a sonic range unknown to man. That a vibration involves sound is substantiated by the noted song "Good Vibrations" which says "I'm picking up good vibrations" and on the recording there is an attempt to simulate the vibrations picked up by a sound-producing machine.

These earlier writings ought to be discussed, not simply noted—but where is there to do it?

Science and Science Fiction

by Judy Carroll

What of the background of science? We take a first look at it here.



I've decided to do something new this month.

As you know, I love science fiction. What you don't know is science and I are poor companions. I've taken required science courses in junior high and in high school and college. But science is a mystery to me. So, instead of trying to cover this month's topic on my own, I've decided to quote from websites. If you wish to read the complete articles, the information is listed below each section.

Science and Its Relation to Science Fiction

"Movie screenwriters and book authors come up with extraordinary sci-fi stories that could excite and delight us. Many science fiction elements are based on real science, but are not always accurate. There are also older sci-fi stories, featuring technology that didn't exist then but does now. In some ways, science and sci-fi are very much related. In other ways, science has not caught up with some of the things presented in sci-fi stories. Either way, we can appreciate both science and science fiction as two separate, but interesting topics to learn about."

McAuliffe-Shepard Blog

The Relationship Between Science and Science Fiction

july 28, 2020

"The greatest thing about scientific approach is its adaptability. Science tends to consider each and every possibility in order to test their validity and consequently rule out the ones which don't work. If one backtracks through the details of various scientific marvels we have today, they will eventually stumble upon a period when these very concepts were supposed to be impossible. Now, every 'consequence' needs a 'trigger', and the amalgamation of curiosity, need, and imagination has acted the same way for this beautiful era of 'scientific consequence' we are living in. While 'curiosity' gets its fair share of credit and 'needs' are needed to be sufficed, we tend to forget how important is this part of 'imagination', its limitlessness and how it has demolished the gap between possible and impossible through a bridge called 'Science Fiction'."

Science and the Impossible: Influence of Science Fiction on Science

Sukant Khurana

"Many commentators have pondered the relationship between science and science fiction. Some twenty years ago, Physics World wondered whether the use of sci-fi could

help reverse the fall in the number of students studying physics, and more recently reminded us that STAR TREK has 'inspired countless of today's scientists and astronauts'.

"But it's a complicated relationship. The 'science' part of science fiction can be tenuous, from the obvious— 'aspiring screenwriters repeat after me: you don't explode in space' —to the not-so-obvious, such as the recent devastating news that wormholes, upon which so much sci-fi depends, might not be a solution for faster-than-light travel after all.

"As for the 'fiction' part, well, 'the whole of western literature has not been kind to scientists and is filled with images of scientists meddling with nature with disastrous results,' notes Lewis Wolpert, a fellow of the Royal Society. 'And where is there a film sympathetic to science?'"

Physics World

The Complicated Relationship Between Science and Sci-fi

23 October 2018

Graham Jones (talks to physicist David Deutsch, film-maker Olga Osario, and academic-turned-novelist Gianfranco D'Anna about the use of science in fiction).

Notes on the Above Column (by the editor): Here we have research, and on a topic of great interest to us, science, which is not commonly much researched from the perspective of science fiction except in the science columns the magazines sometimes have had. It might be a good thing if science fiction writers and editors had a closer look at science and its history. As a basis for stories, it's been taken too much for granted. Perhaps fantasy writers might also want to research various mythologies and fairy tales of the past, as well as esoteric writings. Neither science fiction nor fantasy have been taking a real retrospective into their sources, with a few exceptions. (Perhaps research would uncover more exceptions that I don't know about.) The present might be a good time for a lot of retrospective research, as we seem to have reached an epoch in science fiction's development.

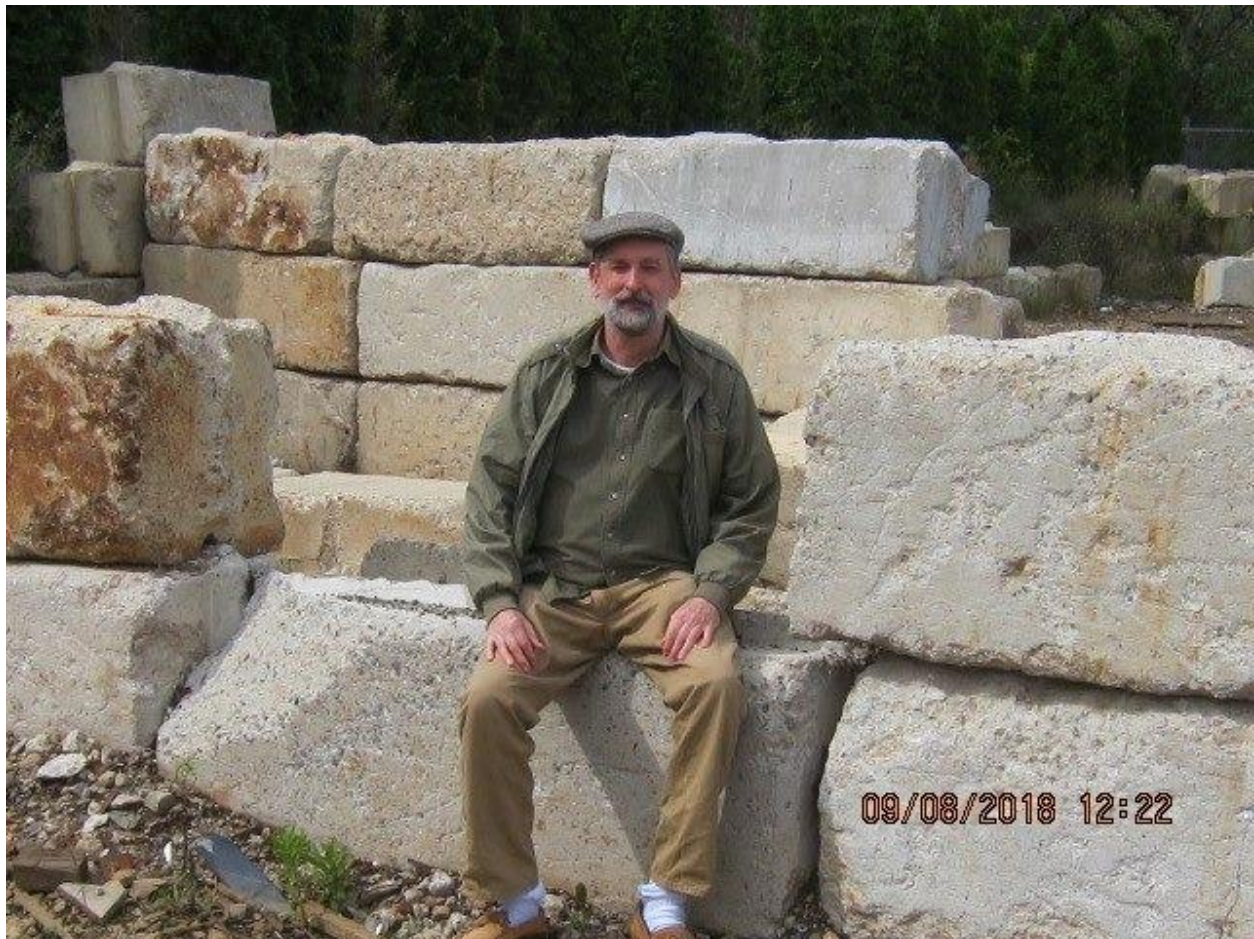
I think it might be a good thing to do here in this bureau to make a listing of research and study centers on the net relating to science fiction, science, and perhaps fantasy, and present readers of Origin with opportunities to study further research. This sort of thing would help to get things together nicely for science fiction. Judy has been doing something I don't do very much, and that's reading various net blogs and writings

relating to science fiction. In this column she has mentioned a few of them. In issues of Ionisphere way back I was pointing out the existence of science fiction courses now being taught in schools, which was an advent of further study of science fiction at large. The college I went to, Purdue University, didn't have any cognizance of science fiction when I was going there, but in a period of some years they began having science fiction courses, which I think was almost revolutionary there. I was not able to find out when the change in the English Studies department there got started, or what faction of what had urged the change, as it was simply not being discussed, though the university had had a past conflict between the humanities department and the sciences department which involved many of the students. Perhaps the interest in science fiction emerged from there. In science fiction science and the humanities were merged. That was also a time that that university developed a more international viewpoint and was having exchanges with foreign universities, including foreign exchange students from Asia and Europe, and more recently Africa and South America. At the present time there is a sort of gestalt resulting from these intermixtures. Courses in foreign religions and philosophies were created there, unlike in previous times in the history of the university. "Beat" writing began to be found in the univeristy library, not without battles occurring. We had a good view of the new ways of life that were beginning to be discussed in the news, the counter-culture and whatnot, from seeing what was going on in that univeristy. At one time the university was infiltrated by people describing themselves as "robots", which is something else the science fiction courses may have resulted from. Purdue was very doctrinal at one time, but all that changed. I don't know whether that made for a better educational institution or not.

Well, that's my contribution to this issue of Origin—where readers have not been commenting on the many things that are commentable in our columns, I have been doing some commenting to make up for it, and I've seen many things in the writing I've had here that I would like to have commented on if there had been any place to do it. I've made that place here, and I think you are looking at a more active or interactive bureau. If any of you start taking an interest in any of our topics or studies, there is room in Origin for your comments.



any comments?



Jeffrey Redmond



SF Fan Views the Future



end of issue