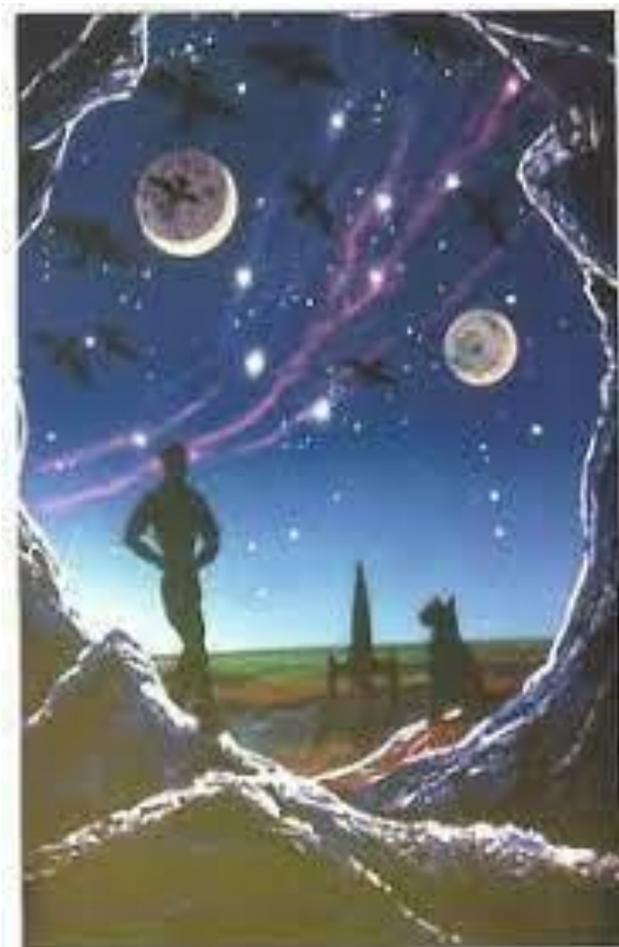


ORIGIN



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EDITORIAL



As You Like It

The world is not generally found to be as you like it. There are troubles and tribulations in it. What does that have to do with anything? Well, there's all this unrest with the covid and troubles in government and with international doings which is disturbing to the run of things that we are attempting to do, and it all looks like science fiction doomsaying predictions at their worst. So however are we to keep the good and worthwhile activities we are doing (which is not to say all of our activities) going? Morbid depression should sink us into the general gloom if we are to let it influence us. But what have we been doing prior to having all these holocaust disasters hit us? Running after automobiles containing a man we think has gyped us, pounding down trash for re-cycling, hiding under warm blankets that short-circuit and become as uncomfortable as a nave in a disregarded church, working out unparalleled schemes to do things a different way, that are so new that they have no public support, and all in all doing what gets us trouble which is compounded by the trouble going on everywhere. We're jinxed by our own doings; people's systems of doing things have gone from competitive to conflicting, and one system of doing things is running into another or several others. The crossover and confusion jinxes up all these operations. Looking for the answer to these situations we find war, which is a bad background for our lives and ways of living but which has become big business and is what sounds most impressive. Instead, it gets everyone thrown directly into a holocaust. When all the talk is about war,

war is all you've got—and how many books and stories of science fiction can you count off that are concerned with war of one kind or another? I'd say many; I estimate it to be more than half of what is being written, and fantasy is with swords and sorcery, with men without principles fighting dark battles. If what you read is what you are, look out!

If the tendency of today is with conflict, stay away from the tendency of today. Look for things which are not directly related to conflict. You need not stay with things that are that bad. War concerns may get you protection, but what they are protecting you from is what they have gotten you into. War is a major concern of history, but look at it this way—it should not have been a major concern of history. History should be concerned with the development of mankind into better ways than there have been in the past. I speak of origins—much of literature portrays the origins of our present culture as dire. But I am thinking of the origins of what is good, and these are what true origins are—what went wrong for everyone is not an origin, but a beginning of destruction, and we should not like to see that destruction, or give it any great amount of respect simply because it represents the power had by those who fight. There's fighting for good, yes, but does it remain fighting for good when it gets into those conflicts? Good becomes winning, rather than good things being protected. Ideally they would not need protection, but herein is the weakness—nothing that is at all complicated is altogether good. But the solution to this problem is not conflict.

As a literary establishment the N3F should have ideals, and not succumb to the squalid fighting that sometimes gets into it—fighting which occurs because the organization does not have any real ideals presently. The ideal should be obvious—better writing, better thought, more things to think about, progress in our good intentions (and good intentions are not very debatable). There have been N3F ideals; these should be resurrected, examined, and progressed. Then we are doing good business.

Shortly following this, Jeffrey Redmond examines horror fiction, of which it may be said that it may be good reading, but it isn't a description of good living and we should try to avoid what we read about in it, though perhaps we may gain a better understanding of it. Horror fiction comes closest to describing what is around us today. It leads us to realize it and adapt to its presence (as one would to poorer classes) and perhaps find ways to avoid it rather than prejudice and condemnation. There already is condemnation where there is horror; they need no more from us.

Judy Carroll has backed up my proposition that we are failing in the general attitude that exists in these days to produce any optimism, in her column this issue, and I was pleased to have some backing, because there has been so little complaint elsewhere about this state of affairs or acknowledgement of its being the way things are now, in spite of the general apparency of this being the present state of things. A book like “The End of All Things”, by John Scalzi, gets rave reviews and people who claim to love the way it is written and other attributes it has, and I have found no objection to its plot anywhere, a plot which involves everyone destroying each other and themselves through the most brutal and inhuman methods, with little attention from the author to things being any different. (Scalzi has a Facebook page, but I did not find it possible to achieve any contact with him for an interview, and he doesn’t seem to have anything to say on his page.)

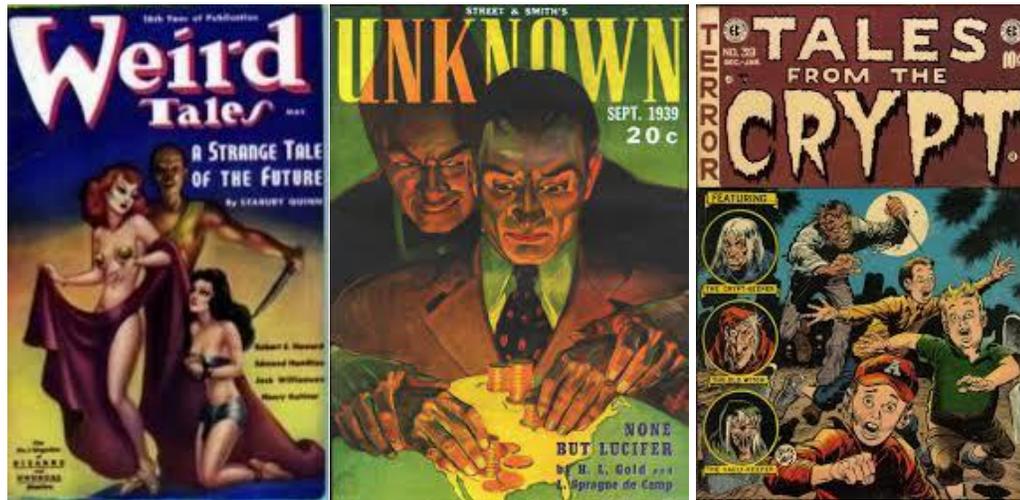
There may be some criticism that crusading is commencing in this bureau, and that we are not doing enough work with history and research, but what the present is like is relevant to the past, and research finds out what is going on in science fiction and what is liable to go on. We investigate what science fiction is and has been, and in the process we discuss it. Discussion of what we find and unearth is part of *Origin*, which is a literary publication, not entirely informational. And we want activity; there isn’t much of that in mere history and research. An *active* bureau, d’you see? We are always attempting to show that science fiction and fantasy are highly worthwhile, and we want to point out when it doesn’t seem to be.

Jon Swartz is not present in this issue because he is overloaded with things he has to do. I can well understand this; I get piled up with things myself. There is a lot else going on. But I think we have a highly creditable issue this time nonetheless.

So is our publication being run as you like it? Things are so much better when they are likeable things, and I would like to see the science fiction field of the present become more likeable than it presently is. We have to do something to get things to be as we actually would like them to be; when we are not heard from with positive and intelligent attitudes, we are likely to be continuing to experience the present day we have been experiencing—but we should try to avoid gloom ourselves, and be otherwise, without being unrealistic, but recalling that things come about through how we are.

I am pointing out that the N3F is suffering some shortcomings as I write this. I like to explain what we are doing, how we are doing it, and what we are trying to accomplish.

Note: There was no February issue of Origin because an objection was expressed to the presence in the issue of an article on horror fiction by Jeffrey Redmond which a reviewing panel determined was not Redmond's own work. Some work, at least, seems to me to have gone into it. The blocking of this issue was a paralyzing blow to this bureau. I deleted the article, which would have been of high interest to readers, I think, and canceled the rest of the issue. Its remaining contents will be found in this issue.



Fantasy publications



SETI outpost

OUR CURIOUS NOW by Will Mayo



The world of the Internet, and the time of war

Back when I was a kid in the 60s and 70s we all thought we'd spend the 21st Century dressed in Roman togas while lounging at poolside and pondering the cosmos. Interestingly enough, we instead spend our days naked or half naked at our individual computer stations and communing with those hundreds and thousands of miles away as we avoid those nearby for fear of contagion. We still do ponder the cosmos, though. That's a given.

The internet started out with just a bunch of text and symbols. Then pictures, albeit crude, were added to the equation. Afterwards video came along in brief spurts of seconds before establishing a presence here. Finally, chat rooms came along in which we can see, hear and talk to one another in real time. I don't know what's coming next but I wonder if soon we can just crawl totally into this digital land and leave our bodies behind. I've heard of stranger notions. The world's full of them.

This world does not make sense. It never did. It never will. But by writing things down I can at least pretend that it does.

In my mind's eye, I see a great field of grass that stretches all around me. And in that field are all manner of people from the tallest to the shortest, from the fattest to the thinnest and from the darkest to the lightest. They all gather around discussing their lives and the cosmos without a shred of clothing among them. No, not even the slimmest loincloth. They do not judge one another. Rather, their smiles are many and their laughter is light as they talk about some fool-hearted endeavor in humanity's past. In time they will all lie down and dream such dreams as men and women of all ages can only dream. But for now talk carries the day. I long to join them. But first I must write these words. And be set free.

THE PRESENCE OF NEGATIVITY by Judy Carroll



I can take just so much negativity before I become unglued.

Negativity is exhausting. It can take away all our good feelings about ourselves, our neighbors, our friends, and even our family.

With what has been going on in the world these last two years, negativity in movies and books is not what we need. Some days it's hard enough to wake up and know that wherever we go and whatever we experience in person or through technological devices has a good chance of being negative.

I'm not saying that we should never read a negative book or watch a negative movie or hear a negative news report. Sometimes a negative book or movie can show us what the future could be like for a person or society that concentrates on the negative. Our eyes could be opened to possibilities we would never have thought of before.

I'm saying that in times like now when negativity has become a part of our daily worldwide tapestry, we need to look for things to keep hope alive. Not just our hope, but also the hope of our family, friends, neighbors and even strangers.

I feel we should spend more time reading and watching movies that have a positive and hopeful outlook. I'm not going to tell you what book you should read or movie you should watch. I'm suggesting you pick out a book you have read before that brought laughter to your voice and a smile to your face. If you don't want to re-read them choose an author whose work you enjoy and start a whole new adventure.

Choose a movie in the same manner. Watch one you loved as a child, or try one an older relative has been trying to get you to watch—but you have refused—because it is in black and white.

Right now we need hope. Hope in our future for us, our family, friends, neighbors and the world in general.

* "Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."—Thich Nhat Hanh

* "Our human compassion binds us the one to the other—not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future."—Nelson Mandela



"I'm going to see if I can panhandle up some money for the Space Program."

This Issue in Review by John Thiel

I think we are getting down to the basic things in this issue when I point out that there is widespread social unrest that affects us and our development, presence and fanac. Perhaps I should go into the history of strife in fandom, but when I tried that I almost got caught in those ancient feuds myself. The fan warfare that broke out in the sixties is something fandom has never really gotten over. I'm one of the NFFF directors and it may be I should be writing of these things there, but the directorate has no publication circulating news and views among them and must pm one another to express much of anything. So complaints about how much fandom and the NFFF is lacking is appearing here. We'd want to restructure this bureau, which it is difficult to do without the NFFF being restructured.

Will Mayo writes of what it is like to grow up in this strife torn world of the present age. Is this a good experience of life? This contributes well to what is something of a theme issue—which admittedly is more something for a genzine than for a club publication. But outlets for opinion and viewpoints often appear whenever and wherever they do.

Judy Carroll writes well of the positive approach. That's just what we need all around for our welfare—a more positive attitude. I hope we are coming across to people in this issue. I try to make this publication as interesting as I can.



The logo for ORIGIN, featuring a stylized 'O' icon followed by the word 'ORIGIN' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'O' icon is composed of two overlapping, curved shapes that create a sense of depth and rotation, with a small white dot in the center. The entire logo is rendered in white against a solid black background.

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