

GERMAN/US TWINS

Comments by Kenneth R. Johnson

From 1967 to 1974 an agency called Three Lions Inc. offered reprint rights to European cover art to various US publishers. I don't know how many genres might have been involved but they were extremely successful marketing their Science Fiction covers. Ultimate Publications, which was then publishing *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic* as well as a steadily proliferating string of reprint magazines, used more than 30 of these covers. *If*, at the point it changed hands from Robert Guinn to Universal Publishing, used 2 covers. In addition, two paperback imprints, Curtis Books and Popular Library, used just shy of 10 covers each.

Three Lions may have been a bit cagey about the origins of the cover art. Ted White, the editor at Ultimate for most of this period, seems to have been under the impression they were Italian. Actually they were German, and almost all of them had originally appeared on the German edition of *Perry Rhodan*. The German Perry Rhodans were part of a post-war publishing boom that started while still under Occupation. Although the equivalent of American pulp fiction, the format of many series was more like our older Dime Novels. They were saddle-stapled pamphlets, 8.5" by 5.5", all about 80 pages long, and many appeared weekly. Some of these series were about single characters, like Perry Rhodan, others were anthology series, publishing unrelated books. The 6 non-Rhodan covers shown here were from 2 of the anthology series.

I became aware of the origins of these covers 40 years ago, while cataloging the large collection of German dime novels at the MIT Science Fiction Society. Although I did manage to insert the information into the Contento/Miller SF Magazine Index, it still remains largely unknown. Since I became aware of the Bookscans website, and watched the "Twins" section expand to cover a wide variety of reused covers, it has been in the back of my mind to compile this gallery. Unfortunately, since I no longer have the ready access to MITSFS that I once had, it was going to take a major effort to extract and scan their Perry Rhodans, so it remained a "back-burner" project.

All that changed when I stumbled across a wonderful German Science Fiction site at <http://www.sfhefte.de>, which displays thousands of covers of German paperbacks and dime novels, from which I shamelessly downloaded all the German covers seen here. The covers for *Amazing*, *Fantastic* and *If* were scanned from my own collection. The covers for the reprint magazines were downloaded from Phil Stephenson-Payne's Galactic Central web site. One scan was supplied by Jerry Boyajian. All the paperbacks were already in the Bookscans database.

There was one more instance of German covers being reused on American paperbacks, so I have documented those here as well. Ace Books published English translations of over a hundred volumes of Perry Rhodan. Early on, they reprinted the original German covers on 8 books. Two covers (#s 12 and 13) were swapped onto the wrong books. I had thought this was corrected on the second printings, but these have now been posted to Bookscans and those two covers were still mismatched.