



MYTHOLOGIES

#13

Editor: Don D'Amassa
Repro: Sheila D'Amassa

19 Angell Drive
East Providence
Rhode Island 02914

401-438-3296

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"Then let us compare
mythologies.
I have learned my
elaborate lie."

---Leonard Cohen

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I HAVE NO OPINION ON
THAT PARTICULAR TOPIC
RIGHT NOW. IT HASN'T
COME UP FOR DISCUSSION
YET IN MYTHOLOGIES.



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BACK COVER: MARK CONROY Fred Jackson III, pp. 1 & 18
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fault of the editor.

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MYTH

As many of you already know, I have for years been plagued with chronic car trouble whenever I plan to attend a convention. So this year, when Leah Zeldes and the Autoclave committee asked me to be co-Guest of Honor, Sheila and I decided to be circum-spect. We were careful never to mention the convention when the car might be able

to overhear us. On the day we left, we kept saying that we were only going to visit Sheila's family in Pennsylvania. And it worked. We made it to Detroit and back without incident. But four days after we returned, the car had its revenge. The transmission went and, pushed too far, we traded it in as it was for a Mazda Rotary Wagon.

But it was worth it. Autoclave was the most enjoyable convention we had ever attended. There was an air of friendliness that made it much easier than I had expected to give a formal speech. And the necessity to provide a speech of some sort forced me to think about fandom itself. I have rarely written here or elsewhere about the institutions of fandom. I rarely discuss the philosophy of fan pubbing, I'm relatively quietly critical of the Hugos, and I find fan politics for the most part boring. Preparing that speech forced me to think through my positions on some aspects of fandom, and the convention itself raised other points.

Specifically, there was a panel on fan publishing, at which Mike Glicksohn posed the question, why is it that the best fan writers are those that have been writing for years, and that there have been no really good new fanwriters (and incidentally little in the way of fannish legend-making) since the "golden days" of fanzines. I wasn't totally prepared for the question at the time, but I objected then, and object still more strongly now.

So, since I have been expending so much effort on these things of late, I thought it was about time that I set out my positions once and for all on a number of fannish issues.

Let's address Mike's query first. As I understood him, his points were these. First, the general quality of fanwriting has declined over the past several years. The few really well written, polished pieces still appearing come mostly from the few writers still active since that period. He specifically mentioned Walt Willis, Bob Shaw, and Bob Tucker. Second, as the result of this dearth of good writing, the general quality of fanzines has declined. Third, there is very little fannish myth-making going on any more. There are no new fannish concepts like propellor beanies and Tucker's hotel. A fourth point, made by someone who agreed with him (possibly Ben Zuhl) was that fanwriters then used to write about each other, but now they write about themselves, and that this is what contributes to the decline.

I contend that Mike's first point is subjective, partly a matter of artistic judgment, partly the result of prejudices of taste. Most - if not all - of the better fanwriting from the past has been fannish, humorously oriented, what Dick Harter calls the "Erma Bombeck School of writing". One takes a mildly amusing incident and, through hyperbolic wit, makes it funny beyond itself. There is no question that the majority of the better writers of this particular school of writing have been with us for a long time. For one thing, it takes practice to become talented at that sort of thing. But there are examples of the same type of writing being produced by new names. Susan Wood's "The Breast Fetishists of Sol III" or Rick Dey's "How to Write Swell" come immediately to mind, and there are others. Part of the problem of recognition is dilution. There is such an enormous ocean of fan writing being produced, it is far more difficult to pick out the gems, and their

existence is likely to be obscured by the recollection of the weight of dreck one reads concurrently. But it is there.

But I think that much of Mike's perception of fan writing today results from his personal tastes. There is far more non-humorous writing being done today than ever before, and much of it is of high quality. There are few writers active in fandom today, or at any time, who can equal the overall quality of a Joe Sanders, a Mark Keller, a Richard Delap, or a John Curlovitch. And I don't mean to slight the many other fine writers either.

Similarly, the personalzine has developed a number of very skilled writers, writers who don't appeal necessarily to the same people who enjoy a Charles Burbee or a Dean Grennell. I'm thinking of such writers as Don C. Thompson, Richard Harter, or Ira Thornhill. Harry Warner Jr is still the best known loc-writer, but he has strong competition from Jessica Salmonson, Ben Indick, Jessica Salmonson, and others, including that Glicksohn fellow. And I see promising new writers emerging all the time, like Jeff Frane, Ray Davis, Avedon Carol, and Tony Dalmyn. And I could add at least a dozen others to each of these lists.

I'm suspect as well of the claims to the value of fannish mythmaking. Mike said that he actively attempts to create these legends. I find that to be almost an anomaly. True myth-making is not that conscious an act. The things which survive into next generations (of any group) are not necessarily those things which contemporaries expect to survive. It's the spontaneous things that live in our memories. We have no way of knowing what will be remembered from 1970's fandom in the 1980's and 1990's. But I doubt that there will be any diminution in them. We remember the ones from the past because only the best survive.

The last point, that fan writers write about themselves rather than others is, as an observation, probably true. But I don't find that an explanation of the decline in quality of fanwriting, since I don't accept that there has been a decline in quality (except as a byproduct of the increase in quantity). If anything, I think this has helped to improve the quality of the writing, because it has made things so much more personal. Among the things I remember most clearly from the past several months of fanzines are Richard Harter's struggle to give up smoking, Bud Webster's adventure as a bouncer, and Mike Bracken's misadventures on the West Coast.

All of the above notwithstanding, I do concede one point. The increase in the number of fanzines looking for material does tend to lower the quality of fan writing. First of all, so many one, two, or three issue fanzines appear, printing so much material, that there is a glut of markets. A lot of rotten stuff must necessarily be published. Second, with so many people willing to publish one's pieces, almost sight unseen, there is little incentive to spend a lot of labor on them, and plenty of incentive to mass produce them. I confess I gave in to this myself on more than one occasion, even sending out composed on typewriter first drafts and having them published, sometimes with internal flaws big enough to choke a banth. (I have, subsequently, adopted a policy of writing only what I want, when I want, and not submitting it until I'm at least relatively satisfied with it)

With that exception, though, I reject Mike's argument. I think there is a decided change coming to fandom, coloring it with a lot more seriousness (MYTHOLOGIES is an obvious example). This doesn't mean that the humor is going out of the hobby. Fandom is and, hopefully, always will be primarily for fun. But for some of us it can be just as rewarding to engage in a good argument, or talk about SF, or solve the problems of the world. I don't think the diversity can do anything but good to us all.

Having just finished arguing that good fanwriting is increasing, I am now about to do an apparent contradiction and argue that good fanzines (genzines, at any rate) are declining. This may appear to be a contradiction, but I don't think it really is. There are two basic questions involved. First of all, what is a good genzine? Second, why are there so few? Some of the following is going to seem pretty basic to many of you. Please bear with me. A large proportion of our readers are not long time fanzine fans. Many have no or little other contact with fandom (although some of them have since begun to interact elsewhere). A few don't even read SF (which should help them to fit in quite well, he said sarcastically). I have always conducted a conscious policy of encouraging people to become active in fanzine fandom; I have a weakness toward the Messianic urge.

So what are the attributes of a good, generally available fanzine (genzine)? The most obvious, of course, is good written material. But they must be more than just well written; they must as well be discussable. Because good material may make a good issue, but in order to be a good genzine, there are two other properties that are essential - continuity and individuality.

Regularity simply means that the zine must appear on some sort of schedule with reasonably short intervals. Lee Hoffman's SF FIVE YEARLY is impressive when it appears, mayhaps, but it is essentially a one shot each time. I suspect the most practical interval is every three to four months. There have been more frequent fanzines, but they are essentially personalzines, even Donn Brazier's TITLE. It simply takes a good couple of months to mail out an issue, have it arrive, receive locs back, and put together the next issue.

Individuality and continuity are not so easily maintained. Continuity requires regularity of appearance at a minimum. One of the best mechanisms for this is in the lettercolumn. MYTHOLOGIES readers may have noticed that I tend to overlap the topics under discussion. The discussion of the editorial from issue 5 may be phased out in issue 8, the editorial from issue 6 phased out in issue 9, etc. The purpose is to create an ongoing discussion, so that readers of one issue will be forced to recall the earlier issues. This does make it slightly more difficult for new readers to participate, not knowing what has gone before, but that's a problem common to any letter column in any case. As a peripheral point, I am of the opinion that the lettercolumn should be as large as possible, without using repetitive or dull letters. The greater degree of participation one extracts from the readers, the better. This is why MYTHOLOGIES is available for loc only. And it is, of course, essential that the good material appearing in each issue should also be discussable. A lettercolumn full of "I really liked/disliked that article" is not going to be interesting to read.

It is also important to have some continuity of approach. Although I expect many people to disagree with me on this, I think it is important to maintain one's format. Slight changes are always possible if they improve things. Major changes should be avoided unless they make a major contribution. It is better to stick to a mediocre but familiar format than to make a major change to a slightly less mediocre format. The format is the best way to provide some personality, yet the vast majority of genzines use essentially the same format, with minor alterations in each issue. Much of TITLE'S popularity is, I suspect, the result of its unique format. It is probably unwise to adopt a format radically new (as Bill Bridget has attempted from time to time) but it is possible to establish a distinct personality with seemingly inconsequential efforts. The most obvious examples of distinct fanzines are STARLING, TABEBUIAN, or YANDRO, I suspect. Mike Bracken's KNIGHTS, despite having fine material and slick covers, never seemed to have a personality of its own because Mike was still trying to develop a format. Victoria Vayne's SIMULACRUM is just beginning to show its own personality.

So, assuming I have convinced you all, we now have a regularly appearing genzine with good, discussable material in a fairly standardized format, with a long, well edited letter column. What else do we need? Well, obviously, good repro. Good material is no use if you can't read it. The question of artwork is one that has been argued in these pages before. I look upon good artwork in very much the same fashion I look upon good book reviews or good humorous articles. If they are available to me, I sue them; if they're not, I don't. I totally deny the argument that you need good artwork to break up the monotonous pages of print. If you're a comics fan, maybe, but I'm a reader, I've always been a reader, and I pick up a fanzine to read, not to look at the pictures. When I want to look at pictures, I pick up a collection of Gahan Wilson cartoons or something from my art library.

There are other points, not as significant as those mentioned above. It is generally a good idea to have each issue balanced. Mix serious and humorous material. Mix long and short pieces. This is true not only in the original material but in the letter column as well.

Some degree of informality is recommended. MYTHOLOGIES is more formal than most, but there are some genzines where one never gets the impression at all that the editor is involved. The easiest place to accomplish this is in your letter column.

Lastly, I think it is important to be fair to your readers. The editor has a very great advantage because he always gets to have the final word. It is possible to make even the most reasonable remark sound stupid. It is, on the other hand, very difficult to be totally fair, and, after all, part of the fun of editing a zine is that one DOES get the last word. I have periodically tried to neutralize this by providing a writer, in advance, a copy of my proposed remarks. The letter writer then has the option to rebut in the same issue, or rewrite his or her original letter. Constraints of time usually make this impossible, unfortunately. But if you consistently take unfair advantage of your readers in this fashion, they'll simply stop writing letters. Who loses then? I recently had an unfortunate experience with a faned who summarized one of my letters without mentioning any of my arguments, and characterized my position as one of ignorance not worthy of printing. Where is the incentive for me ever to write to this person again?

Having now described what I consider the elements of a good fanzine, and having earlier stated that there is a superabundance of genzines cropping up, why do I then contend that genzines are in a decline? The most obvious answer is that most titles only see one to three issues and are gone. How many genzines being published today were with us three years ago? SPANISH INQUISITION is folding. GRAN-FALLOON appears to be no more. The only long standing genzines I can bring to mind are (excluding SF FIVE YEARLY), DYNATRON, YANDRO, MOTA, MYTHOLOGIES, and SIMULACRUM. KNIGHTS has folded. OUTWORLDS is going professional. TITLE is really a personalzine. From overseas there are only ERG, MAYA, and SF COMMENTARY. And dozens of titles have disappeared: THE ESTARRIAN EXPLORER, NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT, KYBEN, PROFANITY, OXYTOCIC, etc.

To what do I ascribe the decline of the genzine? Well, first of all, there has always been a high attrition rate, and with the increase in the number being launched, it's no surprise that a far greater proportion should fail. But there are other factors aggravating the situation.

For one thing, there are the financial considerations. It costs a lot of money to publish. I spend \$1500 per year on MYTHOLOGIES, for example. And since most fans are young, many college or high school students, there just isn't enough money to pay regular publishing bills.

There is even, strangely, a lack of material. There are so many would-be faneds attempting to put out their first or second issues, even the mediocre stuff is in short supply. Of the really good material that is being published, much is going to the personalzines, zines where the writers can talk about whatever they want to talk about at whatever length, because - being their own editors - they don't have to consider the wishes of another editor. Similarly the boom of apas has diverted a great deal of effort from the genzine. Unfortunately, in addition to the low circulation for apa material, the frequent regular deadline causes a preponderance of the last minute type of writing that is eminently forgettable, even when potentially memorable. There are exceptions, of course. But by and large, apa material is as poorly written as the worst of genzine material.

The spread of local conventions has not helped either. A lot of people who wrote because this was essentially their only means of communication with their fannish friends now have the opportunity/excuse to see them more often. There is less incentive to write.

And, of course, people in general are becoming less talented at writing. The art of good letter writing is fast disappearing. Twenty years from now, will anyone care about printing the collected letters of today's fans (or for that matter, of today's pros?) I doubt it. Not very many people are willing to spend much time constructing a letter anymore. This is neither the time nor place to discuss what has caused this decline in literacy. Television, declining standards in schools, and the anti-intellectual overtones of our society all play some part. The fact remains that only a small minority of people in fandom look upon writing as a craft to be mastered. Most look upon it merely as a game to play.

For some people, awards are a major factor. I'll get into the discussion of the Fan Hugos as opposed to the FAAN Awards a bit later, but for the moment, let's acknowledge the fact that, for most people, there is still more prestige in winning a Hugo than in winning a FAAN. Given the now near impossibility of any small fanzine or small fanzine writer winning a Hugo, this award is now effectively neutralized as a goad for many would be writers. The FAAN has yet to develop a degree of acceptance sufficient to replace it.

We are mostly, after all, interested in egoboo of one sort or another. And egoboo, when it comes at all, comes faster to a frequent personalzine or apazine than to a genzine, and most of the egoboo in those cases reflects directly on the faned. Much of the egoboo directed toward a genzine is for the contributors, and only indirectly rewards the editor.

Faced with difficulty in getting a steady flow of good material, high production costs, and infrequent and erratic egoboo, the prospective faned often finds it difficult then to sustain interest for further issues. Presented with the more immediately satisfying alternative of developing a personalzine or joining an apa, it should be no surprise that most drop the genzine approach. After all, why should anyone pay to print and reap egoboo for the work of someone else?

What do I expect for the future? More of the same. Personalzines continue to be highly successful. Although the boom of apas seems to have disappeared, it is mostly the generally oriented apa (like N'Apa, RAPS, and Apa45) that have suffered. The specialty apas (EOD, CHAPS, etc.) have prospered. Most of the regional apas (APALDOOSA, MINNEAPA, etc) seem to be doing well also. The number of people coming into fandom seems to be increasing as well. I have a turnover rate of approximately 20% per issue of MYTHOLOGIES. That's 40 new readers minimum each issue, and usually closer to 60. A few genzines will continue to appear, edited by people who have a reasonably good income and who derive satisfaction from that particular form, but I expect the ratio of genzines to personalzines to continue to drop.

Having disposed of all of that, let's look at another tempest in a teapot, the controversy over the value of the Fan Hugos. On the one hand, we have the people who see nothing wrong with the present set-up, who feel that ALGOL, LOCUS, and SFR deserve to win all the Hugos each year because they are unquestionably the best fanzines being published. Aligned against them is the bulk of fanzine fandom (I suspect) who propose one or more of the following: (1) Change the definition of fanzine so that the semi-pro zines do not qualify (2) throw out the Fan Hugos altogether (3) Replace the Fan Hugos with the FAANs.

As it happens, I don't even set much store by the pro Hugos, so it is hardly likely that I would be particularly concerned about the amateur ones. This does not reflect any snobbery. I simply doubt that most people voting in any category really know enough to make a fair judgment. So it doesn't make much difference to me whether the rules for the Hugos are changed, whether it is just presented to Dick Geis in perpetuity, or whether the award is discontinued.

As it happens, I was a member of the original FAAN committee. I didn't then, and don't now, subscribe to all of the restrictions and qualifications under which the FAAN is operated. Although it is less pronounced than in fandom in general, the FAAN still to some extent suffers from lack of total knowledgeability on the part of the voters (unavoidable) and is quite likely still a function to some extent of the personal popularity of the contenders (also probably unavoidable). I consider the FAAN a more valid award than a Fan Hugo, but a less noteworthy achievement. For anyone other than the big contenders to win would indeed be an accomplishment in the Hugo balloting, but I don't expect it to happen until there is another big circulation fanzine competing with them.

I'd like to see the FAAN's continued for the sake of those who need this sort of egoboo. I wouldn't even mind winning one every few years myself. But I think that the often acrimonious controversy raging over the various awards is silly and out of place. At best, the entire subject should be one for satire, not raised voices and impassioned rhetoric. Saying which, I'll change the subject.

Yet another controversy, I'm told, is the friction between convention fans and fanzine fans. This strikes me as about as sensible as having a battle between all the near-sighted people in the world and all the people who wear glasses. Most fanzine fans also attend conventions. A very large proportion of convention goers are in some way involved in fanzines.

The difference is one of emphasis of course, exacerbated by a few oddballs who have very narrow interests and therefore assume that everyone else does as well. "Fanzine fandom is no longer important" said one Eastern fan. Another responded that there would be no organized fandom if fanzines weren't around to carry on the traditions. Both statements are partially correct. To the former, fanzines were no longer of interest, so they were no longer important -- to him. To the latter, the traditions that count are those that are carried on in fanzines. Conventions were just a form of punctuation point in the paragraph of fannishness. I don't suppose either will ever realize how shortsighted they sound.

Whether you consider fandom just a goddamn hobby or a way of life is unimportant. Life, as much as hobbies, should be fun. If you take your hobbies, or your way of life, too seriously, you'll leach all of the fun out of it. There have even been SF organizations that make a point of telling new members that they shouldn't expect to have fun. When fandom begins to seem a duty, then it's time to choose another hobby. When arguing about how fandom should be run takes more time than "doing" fandom, it's time to take a new look at ourselves.

AFTER SUCH KNOWLEDGE

The quest for knowledge has long been a major theme in literature of all kinds, so it should be no surprise to find it recurring in science fiction and fantasy as well. Marlowe's DR. FAUSTUS, Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN, and others early proclaimed the danger of too much knowledge, "things man wasn't meant to know". SF has produced a number of works with similar themes, although the negative side of knowledge has been increasingly relegated to films. In our technologically oriented society, we are more concerned with the preservation of knowledge than its suppression. A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ by Walter Miller is the obvious example, but there are dozens of others, including almost every post-nuclear war novel from Wyndham's RE-BIRTH to Cooper's THE CLOUD WALKER. There are many more novels in which science is outlawed, or kept as a source of secret power for the privileged few. There has, admittedly, been some examination of at least the bittersweet side of knowledge, as in George R.R. Martin's "With Morning Comes Mistfall", but practically the only writer to consistently and skillfully demonstrate the double edged sword of technology has been Christopher Hodder-Williams, and this anti-establishmentarianism is almost certainly a contributing factor to his lack of success in the US science fiction market.

The late James Blish wrote a thematic trilogy of novels dealing with this quest, to which he gave the overall title After Such Knowledge. The "trilogy" consists of DR. Mirabilus, an historical novel dealing with the life of Roger Bacon, A CASE OF CONSCIENCE, probably Blish's best single work, and BLACK EASTER (alternate title, FAUST ALEPH NULL), a strangely appealing novel that seems to grow in power and meaning with each re-reading.

DR MIRABILUS has never been released in paperback in the US (there is a Panther paperback in England), although there is a hard to find hardbound edition. It is a largely fictionalized biography of Roger Bacon, fictionalized of necessity for little is known of the man's life, a life enshrouded in a cloak of legend. Bacon was an Aristotelian scholar, a Franciscan monk, whose patrimony was lost during a period of civil unrest. Bacon is placed under the watchful eye of Adam March by their mutual superior in the order, Robert Grosscote. At their insistence, Bacon journeys to Paris where he studies under Albertus Magnus. An immediate, powerful aversion arises between the two men. Bacon's outspokenness in criticizing the knowledge and methods of his superiors and fellow scholars alike lands him in an increasing tangle of trouble.

Bacon joins a clandestine group of experimentalists, and his subsequent experiences convince him that he was meant to be a scientist rather than a theologian. He becomes involved in writing an encyclopedia of all human knowledge, but before he can complete his work, he is convicted of a minor heresy and imprisoned for over a decade. When a change of policy frees the elderly Bacon, his mental prowess has diminished too thoroughly for him to continue.

Bacon judges the search for knowledge to be a holy endeavor: "Nor do I run after knowledge for greed or pomposity, but out of the lust to know, which I count holy." Unfortunately for his own well-being, Bacon allows this desire to reign ungoverned, unwisely challenging even God to interfere: "Thou hast taken away mine house; so be it. But thou shalt not take away from me what Thou hast given me, which is the lust to know Thy nature!"

Bacon's ultimate confrontation with his superiors results from this unequivocal stand, this insistence that "whatever is natural to man, whatever becoming, whatever useful, whatever magnificent, including the knowledge of God, is altogether worthy to be known..." Bacon's life is ultimately a tragedy, for the knowledge that is so attractive to him makes it impossible for him to compromise with the ignorance of his fellow men.

The first half of A CASE OF CONSCIENCE first appeared in IF in 1953, eleven years before the publication of DR MIRABILUS. It was designed to be part of the Twayne Triplet series, but never appeared in that form. Ballantine published a novel length version in 1958, the addition being primarily the inclusion of an inferior sequel to the original novella. The diminution of its quality was not noticeable enough to prevent it from winning a Hugo as best novel of the year.

The plot is, at least at first glance, familiar, if not trite. An expedition from Earth is gathering information about the Lithians, the first alien intelligence that man has encountered in space. The government of Earth has yet to decide just what type of relationship should exist between the two races, so it plans to rely heavily on these initial reports. There are four men involved. Cleaver is anti-Lithian, a spokesman for xenophobia; his intention is to convince the authorities that the reptilian aliens are useful only as slave laborers, and that the planet should be turned into a gigantic experimental station for development of nuclear technology considered too dangerous to experiment with on Earth itself. Michelis is initially enamored of the Lithians and wants them to be accepted as equals. He later reverses his position when a Lithian infant is raised on Earth and it becomes obvious that the two races will have profoundly adverse effects on one another.

Agronski, a chemist, is ambivalent, as is the central character of the novel, Father Ruiz-Sanchez. Initially, he too believes that the Lithians are fellow children of God, and even speculates that they may be entirely free of Original Sin. This is only the first of many heresies into which the priest is to fall. He later becomes convinced that the Lithians were not in fact created by God, but rather by his adversary. As a result of his beliefs, he exorcises the entire planet, which promptly explodes. Cleaver's nuclear research station is blamed by the government and the reader is never explicitly told which interpretation is true, allowing each to make his or her own choice.

The arguments for the religious interpretation are not obvious. Blish attempted to make the alternate interpretations equally plausible. At the outset it should be pointed out that Ruiz-Sanchez is not a superstitious self-deluder. "Belief and science aren't mutually exclusive - quite the contrary." Blish leaves the choice of interpretations up to us, not having decided himself which is the "real" answer.

Ruiz-Sanchez observes that Lithia has no crime, no laws, no politics, no nations, no religions, no greed, no need for a reward-punishment system. Lithians are "overridingly social beings, who respected their own conventions as they respected natural law." While originally attributing this to an absence of Original Sin, he eventually becomes convinced both as a priest and as a scientist that the Lithians are too good to be true. "They're a people who couldn't exist - and yet does."

Lithians seem to lead perfect Christian lives, but the tenets of their civilization "derived from reason, none from precept, none from faith". Since a Christian moral code cannot be derived from logic alone, there is an obvious contradiction. Lithians have no irrational postulates, such as faith. The priest decides that the planet is an elaborate trap, created by the Devil to convince man that a perfect society can exist without religion. -9-

Ruiz-Sanchez is told by his Pope that his beliefs are heretical. Manicheanism - the belief that the universe is the battleground between two equal forces, each with the power of creation - has long since been discarded by the Church. The Pope's position is that the Lithians were not, could not have been, created by the Devil, although they may be possessed by him. It is he who directs the performance of the ceremony of exorcism.

There is internal evidence contradicting the position of the priest. If his position is true, then the Lithians should have no self-awareness. "Only the children of God had been given free will, and hence were often doubtful." But a large part of the novel is told from the point of view of Egtverchi, a Lithian raised on Earth. Further, Egtverchi can distinguish between good and evil: "I have a notion that it may be a sin..."

There are subtle forms of support for the priest. At the beginning of the novel, Ruiz-Sanchez describes Lithia to himself as a veritable Garden of Eden. While pursuing knowledge, primarily of their culture, a Lithian appears and offers to allow him to spend a night with his family. The priest gives in to this temptation from an obvious serpent figure, despite the fact that he knows he is leaving the seriously ill Cleaver unattended. The symbolism is obvious, particularly when one recalls that Cleaver refers to the aliens as Snakes.

As with Bacon, Ruiz-Sanchez has given in to his quest for knowledge, and the result is a fall into heresy. The religious symbolism appears constantly through the novel, but should not be construed as proof of the religious interpretation. Blish has written that "I must entirely deny that I conceived the Lithians to be essentially evil; I only wished to make them essentially alien, which is quite a different matter."

The third volume in the thematic trilogy is BLACK EASTER, which, oddly enough, has a sequel not really a part of the trilogy, THE DAY AFTER JUDGMENT. BLACK EASTER is the story of three men who change the world utterly beyond recognition. The first is Theron Ware, a black magician who has made pacts with a number of demons, supporting himself by arranging supernatural assassinations. The second man is Baines, a bored millionaire, who wants to enliven his life by setting all the demons of Hell free for one night unfettered on Earth. The third is Father Domenico, a white magician and member of the Roman Catholic Church, sent to observe but not to interfere with Ware's dealings.

Although Ware is startled at the scale of Baines' ambition, the desire to know is too strong and he succumbs to the temptation. Even the horrified Father Domenico is fascinated by the audacity of the two men. The result is that the demons are set totally free, and Ware is unable to banish them at the end of their allotted time. They are told that God is dead, and that the demons are no longer compelled to obey the laws that formally fettered them.

There are subsidiary characters destroyed by their own ambitions as well. Hess and Ginsberg, two of Baines' assistants, find their fascination with the black arts has a fatal attraction. The novel is beautifully done, and has some of the most quietly horrifying scenes in all literature.

Less successful was the sequel, THE DAY AFTER JUDGMENT, which has never appeared in paperback in the US either (there is a Penguin edition in England). In it we learn that the demons, having displaced the angels, are forced to take their places. There is ultimately little change in the status quo, for knowledge of the reality of existence forces even the ungoverned demons to change. Knowledge then not only is power, but also contains power, power to change its possessor's life, be he Bacon, a space travelling priest, or the Devil. -10-

Miscellanea Technica

by patrick l. mcguire

A while back I asked Don whether he'd be interested in an article on MIRKHEIM'S relation to the rest of Poul Anderson's Technic Civilization series. What you have here is not that article, but it is the product of some of the research I did toward it. The project kept putting out branches, getting more complicated. The richness of associations in Anderson's work is such that it is not easy to isolate any one topic. Moreover, a number of issues began to look more interesting, or at least more pressing, than my original theme. I kept finding myself with two pages of footnote to one sentence of text. Consequently, I decided to present here some separate short studies. Eventually I hope to tie these points together with others into one integrated structure. In the meantime, I hope that even individually they'll interest those who have enjoyed Anderson's major series.

I. CHRONOLOGY

The internal chronology of major sub-series within the Technic Civilization group (the Van Rijn stories, the Flandry stories) can sometimes be determined with precision. The recent MIRKHEIM does much to pin down the number of years between various Van Rijn or Falkayn stories. Similarly, especially since A KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS, the relative dates of many of Dominic Flandry's activities can be determined. However, either because Anderson has not made up his own mind or because he wishes to give himself leeway to change it, the relative dates of the various sub-series, and the relation of all of them to our own time, are indicated only very approximately. Anderson has probably profited from the example of what happened to another series of his -- what Sandra Miesel calls the "Cosmos" series -- which had a published "future history" chart like Robert Heinlein's. Anderson stopped adding to it because "World War III failed to happen on schedule."¹

Even so, casual references relating one sub-series to another have been mounting up, and one or two references to the more distant past have made it possible to assign very approximate AD dates to a number of stories in the series. (Thus in "How to Be Ethnic in One Easy Lesson" [Elwood ed., FUTURE QUEST], it is stated that the Chinese had come to California five or six hundred years before. In KNIGHT, Flandry remarks that a poem -- which turns out to be Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "The Musical Instrument" -- is over a thousand years old.) A list of works and events for which moderately certain dates can be assigned is given below. Since the internal order of stories in this series is almost always clear, the reader can interpolate approximate dates for most other stories in the future history as well.

<u>WORK OR EVENT</u>	<u>DATE (VERY APPROXIMATE)</u>
"Wings of Victory"	AD 2250
"Problem of Pain"	AD 2300
Van Rijn stories begin	AD 2400
Start of Time of Troubles	AD 2500
Rise of Terran Empire	AD 2650
PEOPLE OF THE WIND	AD 2750
Flandry stories begin	AD 2950
Onset of Long Night	AD 3100
"A Tragedy of Errors"	AD 3300

WORK OR EVENTDATE (VERY APPROXIMATE)

LET THE SPACEMEN BEWARE!
"Starfog"

AD 3700
AD 7000

II. PRESENT RELIGIONS IN THE TECHNIC FUTURE

To judge by his fiction (and also by a few stray comments in fanzine columns and so forth), Poul Anderson seems to consider that the religious impulse is a constant of human nature (for some fraction of the population), but that its manifestations will vary with time and culture. Consequently Anderson has not only invented new religions for humans and extraterrestrials (the most striking of the latter being the New Faith of the Ythrians), but has also depicted some developments in existing ones. It is notoriously difficult to prove a negative, but from the fact that Anderson fails to mention several existing religions, and eventually stops mentioning any, it seems reasonable to conclude he is projecting the extinction of these beliefs.

Virtually every moderately sophisticated religion that has ever existed still claims a few practitioners today (usually in some small community in Asia), but as of the twentieth century five religions in particular have manifested historical staying power, and still seem in reasonable health. These are the two "ethnic" religions Hinduism and Judaism, and their three "universal" offshoots, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

A number of secondary characters in the Technic Civilization series derive from India, as does Chunderban Desai, hero of THE DAY OF THEIR RETURN. He seems to believe in some sort of Hindu-based monotheism, probably some form of Brahmanism. Desai is contemporary with Flandry, in the late third millenium.

The only Buddhist in the series of whom we get a close view is the Wodenite convert, Adzel. Adzel is explicitly a Mahayana Buddhist, but he is rather eclectic within that wide tradition, interesting himself in Indian, Chinese, and Japanese forms of the religion. If the version of Adzel's belief which Falkayn gives in SATAN'S WORLD is accurate, Adzel could have a very "modern" view of Buddhism, one carrying it over the thin line out of religion and into philosophy. However, stray remarks by Adzel suggest a more supernatural interpretation. In MIRKHEIM, at one point Adzel uses the form of invocation of Amida Buddha characteristic of the various Pure Land sects of Japan. (In a familiar enough dichotomy, some Pure Land adherents believe in salvation by faith, and others in salvation by good works. Adzel seems closer to the good works side, though the distinction is not thoroughgoing.)

So far as I recall, this is the latest allusion to Buddhism in the series, except for the fact that the planet Altai, settled by Central Asians, has a much-altered religion which is said to derive from a synthesis of Buddhism and Islam. (This is in Flandry's time.)

Quite a few secondary characters have Iranian, Arab, or Turkish backgrounds, and might well be Muslims, but (again except for Altai) there are few specific religious references. Yasmin, the Iranian-descended heroine of "A Tragedy of Errors", does believe in a monotheistic God, and presumably is not a Christian since she accepts polygamy, but there is no specific indication that she is Muslim. (This is during the Long Night, in perhaps 3300.) One could at least make the case that Anderson is not overmuch in sympathy with Islam. In KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS, Aychar-aych tries to convince Flandry to spare the Chereionite memory banks by suggesting that the personalities recorded therein are analogous to Terrans including "Gautama

Buddha, Kung Fu-Tse,...Jesus the Christ, Rumi..." Mohammed seems significantly absent from this list, replaced instead by Jalal ed-Din Rumi, a mystic poet of the highly altered Sufi branch of Islam.³

Anderson fairly frequently portrays Jews, though usually in secondary roles. These include Falkayn's early boss, Martin Scheuster, and Flandry's sponsor, Max Abrams. (Both of these are religiously and not simply ethnically Jewish.) Abrams is from the Jewish-settled planet of Dayan. Mention is also made in THE DAY OF THEIR RETURN of religious Jews on the planet Aeneas. As far as I recall, there are no allusions in any post-Empire stories. Anderson has not spent enough story time on Judaism to make any evolution of belief or practice clear. The Jews we see are fairly assimilated, but then any strict Orthodox Jews would be presumably out of the mainstream of Technic life.

By contrast, Anderson has devoted a fair amount of space to developments in Christianity. In the first place, in this future history Protestantism seems to have gone completely out of business -- I cannot recall a single clear Protestant in the entire series.⁴ (Present-day and future Protestants -- in the latter case, usually neo-Puritans -- do appear in other future histories, however.) We are left with various branches of Catholicism (in a broad sense) and Orthodoxy.

Early in the series, in perhaps 2300 AD, we watch Peter Berg confront "The Problem of Pain". Berg seems to be a Roman Catholic, and there is an implication that much of the population of the planet Aeneas is also Catholic. (The place-names are Italian, including a Nova Roma, and the narrator ascribes Berg's religious earnestness or naivete to his early upbringing.)

Incidentally, note that Berg also says "'Way back before space travel, the Church decided Jesus had come only to Earth, to man." Space travel having presumably started in or before 1969, it is now safe to say that this is not so. There are strong arguments in favor of this position, but nothing viewed as authoritative: an article advocating the opposite appeared in the Jesuit weekly AMERICA as recently as 1974. Anderson had earlier made the same statement in a non-Technic story, "The Word to Space". Accordingly I asked him about it in approximately 1974, and he admitted he had been under the impression that the issue was already decided in Roman Catholic eyes.

Later Catholics in the Technic series include Nicholas Van Rijn, who with some regularity falls into the deadly sins of lust and gluttony, but on the other hand constantly lights candles to St. Dismas (patron of thieves), and occasionally practices more substantial good works. More stern in his religion is Van Rijn's employee Manuel Gomez y Palomares, from the planet Nuevo Mexico.

Phillippe Rouchefort, a Terran in THE PEOPLE OF THE WIND in about 2450, is a "Jerusalem Catholic", whatever that may be. None of his expressed beliefs differ from Roman ones, so we have no idea what characterizes this apparent schism. Nor is there indication of cause: the political considerations in large measure responsible for the Catholic/Orthodox schism, or for the Protestant Reformation, would not seem to play a role, since there is no established religion on Earth -- nor have we been given any indication that the Terran Empire is hostile to any religion. A second Nuevo Mexican, Admiral Cajal, appears in PEOPLE. He is obviously some sort of Catholic, but the exact affiliation is not described. I once asked Anderson about Cajal, and he replied that he supposed the Admiral must belong to some local church. (Anderson is not committed in print to this position, however.) Thus the Roman Catholic Church, which in 1977 had an absolute majority of all the world's Christians, and which has become even more predominant among Christians in early Technic times by surviving or re-absorbing Protestantism, is

breaking up in the early Imperial period. In Anderson's historical vision, no institution is permanent.

Rouchefort is from Earth, but by Flandry's time (about 2950), religion plays a very minor role on the mother planet. It is stronger on many of the colony worlds. Seven centuries after Peter Berg, there is not one mention of a Catholic (Roman, Jerusalem, Anglo-, or whatever) on Aeneas, but a vague allusion is made to Christians more generally there, and it is stated that practically all Aeneans have some sort of religion. The prostitute Djana, in *A CIRCUS OF HELLS*, is a Christian of sorts, and again presumably a Catholic, since she knows the "Hail Mary". Curiously enough, Flandry instantly recognizes this prayer for what it is -- but this presumably is a reflection of his antiquarian interests. Flandry also sometimes quotes from the Bible, but in much the same spirit as his frequent allusions to Lewis Carroll. (Sandra Miesel somewhere remarks that devotion to the Alice stories seems to be the touchstone of genuine culture in the Technic series.)

The Serbian settled planet Dennitza, in *KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS*, shelters a development of Eastern Orthodoxy called Orthochristianity. This denomination, unlike the Catholicism of "Problem of Pain", does proselytize among extraterrestrials, and apparently there have been converts at least among the Merseian-descended inhabitants of Dennitza. Moreover, in the same novel mention is made of a Diomedian (the beings from *WAR OF THE WINGMEN*) who is wearing a crucifix. Since a crucifix is characteristic of Catholicism rather than Orthodoxy, the implication seems to be that the prohibition on proselytization to extraterrestrials has been rescinded, or else that it is simply ignored by schismatic or successor churches such as Jerusalem Catholicism.

As far as I recall, there is no mention of Christianity in any post-Empire story. Nuevamerica in *LET THE SPACEMEN BEWARE!* might well be a colony founded by Nuevo Mexico, or a second colony founded by Old Mexico: surnames such as Tolteca and the ship name QUETZAL suggest Mexican origin. But by the time of the story (ca. 3700 AD), Nuevamerica has become a secular society with little or no religious belief. However, there are sufficiently few post-Empire stories (five, to the best of my knowledge) that one cannot firmly state that the old religions have died out.

It is even possible that, just as Buddhism lost out in India, and Christianity in Palestine, so in the post-Empire period Christianity has been taken over by extraterrestrials such as the Diomedians and Merseians while disappearing among humans. That would be "a prophet is not without honor except in his own country" with a vengeance!⁵

III. FLANDRY AND AYCHARAYCH

Not long ago I was reading an old issue of a British fanzine (*SPECULATION?*), and someone therein suggested that Aycharaych was a pun. Well, I myself think only an Englishman would have "HRH" so firmly in mind, and in any case the ch's are supposed to be pronounced as in German. (In some passage I can't find now, Anderson refers to the "open consonants" of the name -- a German ch is open, and an English one is not.) I would imagine the ay's are pronounced as in "aye", too. Having thus established that "Aycharaych" is not a pun, we might add that if it were a pun it would be appropriate, for we learn in *KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS* that Aycharaych is the last of his race, and can thus presumably grant himself any rank he feels like.

The name of his world, the dry and gloomy Chereion, recalls Charon, boatman of the dead. Or "carrion", with similarly morbid connotations. In Classical Greek, as

best I can discover by poking around in the dictionary, the word means "worse". Worse than Terra? Worse than Merseia? (Anderson himself is a confessed devotee of poking around in foreign-language dictionaries, but I don't know whether this meaning was intentional. In one sense it doesn't matter -- it's in the book, for whatever reason it got there.)

Flandry and Aycharaych have several times referred to the special sympathy they feel for each other. In KNIGHT, for example, Aycharaych says, "We share a soul, you and I. We have both always been alone." In previous books the cause of this sympathy was unclear, or at least it was unclear how it differed from the comradely respect that Flandry and his Merseian opposite, Tachwyr, enjoy. In KNIGHT, at least one aspect of this sympathy becomes clearer, with the revelation of Chereion's true nature -- it is a world dead except for computers, holographic recordings, and Aycharaych.

Aycharaych defends -- often by immoral means -- his dead home. Flandry uses only slightly better means to defend his dying home of Terra. In KNIGHT, the two trade charges:

"Why prey on the living?...You sit in a tomb or travel like a vampire -- are you crazy, Aycharaych? Is that what drives you?"

"We had our services, you to a civilization you know is dying, I to a heritage I know can abide while this sun does. Who has a better right?"

Well, Flandry does. Let the dead bury the dead, and all that. If the Turks use the Parthenon for an ammunition dump, if the Nazis fortify Monte Cassino, the destruction of a cultural heritage may become inevitable. No Andersonian character is a villain without motivation. But Aycharaych comes close to pure evil, as a being whose motivation comes from his choice of a wrong hierarchy of values.

Aycharaych, all questions of ideology aside, lacks kindness, which for Anderson is a cardinal virtue. (See Sandra Miesel's discussion in her "Challenge and Response".) KNIGHT clears the Chereionite of tormenting for sadistic pleasure, but reveals that instead he torments as a steppingstone toward esthetic pleasure, which is not much of an improvement. Like Elizabeth Barrett Browning's god Pan, Aycharaych hacks down and guts the living reed for the sake of a beautiful song. He lies and betrays, and induces others to lie and betray. If some of the personalities recorded in Chereion's memory banks are indeed analogous to Earth's great religious leaders, one wonders how they react to the being who claims to be protecting them. The practice of invoking personalities of the past, by the way, smacks of witchcraft, especially as conceived by Elizabethan drama. Consider the similar actions of Marlowe's Faust. Nor does Aycharaych deny that in a sense he is in league with the devil. His only defense is to say to Flandry, "You too play a satanic role."

And there is much truth in this remark. If Aycharaych is literally or metaphorically destined for hell, then Flandry seems bound either for a higher-up circle in the same inferno or at best for a very long stretch in purgatory. Chereion means "worse", and Aycharaych is worse than Flandry, but on an absolute scale, Flandry has done much bad himself. I think it was James Blish who said that the typical Anderson hero is a man who does the wrong thing for the right reason. Flandry has been trying to pretend to himself that the end justifies the means for so many years that it has taken a visible toll on his personality.

Consider even the account that Flandry, partially regenerated by the traditional Love of a Pure Woman, gives of the occasion a quarter-century earlier when Djana put her curse on him. Flandry has been more honest with Kossara than with anyone

else in the series, but even to her he describes Djana merely as "a different woman angry at me". It was clear at the time in A CIRCUS OF HELLS that Flandry had no idea how deeply he had wounded Djana, but one might have hoped that better judgment would come with increasing years.

Flandry thus has a sort of tragic flaw. In a "metadramatic" sense -- "meta-" because the necessities involved here are not those of plot -- it is this aspect of Flandry's nature, his similarity to Aycharaych, which brings upon him the ghastly retribution of KNIGHT -- the death of his betrothed and the necessity of executing his own son. (A son who in one sense he had no business having -- compare King Arthur and his bastard Modred.)

This of course is "dramatic" rather than "theological" justice: innocents such as Kossara are punished along with the guilty. But then I don't suppose the plague victims of Thebes were reconciled to their deaths simply because Oedipus was exposed and punished thereby. This conception of a somewhat wildly swinging karma is very ancient, and it retains dramatic power to this day.

Having been through this purgation, will Flandry emerge a better person, as does the former king of Thebes in OEDIPUS AT COLONUS? (Or Sir Lancelot, who after his treachery against Arthur, finished his days as a priest.) Indications are still unclear. Flandry betrays no one, manipulates no one in the closing pages of the book. But it would be easy, even after -- or because of -- all his suffering for Flandry to slip back into the old ways. There is clearly room for more volumes in the series -- and indeed Aycharaych has probably survived the bombardment of Chereion -- so we will have to wait and see what Anderson has in mind for the two of them.

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There is, by contrast, one small indication about the future of Dennitza after the fall of the Empire. It is remotely conceivable that Anderson has a similar Serbian epic in mind, but the oration which opens and closes KNIGHT seems to be closely modeled on the medieval Russian LAY OF IGOR'S CAMPAIGN. Russia was to survive the fall of the Byzantine Empire, which had Christianized it and formed its culture. Perhaps a similar survival is hinted at for Dennitza vis-a-vis the Terran Empire.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Sandra Miesel, "Poul Anderson: Maker of Universes". I have seen this only in manuscript, but I believe the Science Fiction Foundation in Britain has made a microfilm. If there is not a US publication of this useful study, there should be. I have tried to give credit for remarks drawn from published sources, but some additional ideas in this paper are drawn from discussion with various fans, especially Mrs. Miesel. Also, "Maker of Universes" gives a complete bibliography of the Technic stories published to that date.

2. Anderson makes surprisingly little reference to another quasi-religious offshoot of Judeo-Christianity, namely Marxism. In some undetailed manner, the communist countries have been absorbed into capitalist Technic civilization before the series opens, but even so I would expect Marxism (specifically Marxism -- not just socialism or authoritarianism, which Anderson does portray) to be practiced by dissidents somewhere in the human-settled universe. Or (as was true from 1848 to 1917) at least to be preached, even if nowhere practiced. The fact that Marxism has been repeatedly refuted by events is beside the point, given human powers of rationalization. What does seem significant is that it is a powerful ideology, at least as influential on minds and events as Islam ever was.

3. But on the other hand, Aycharaych lists Christ's contemporary Rabbi Hillel rather than Moses or Abraham, and there is obviously no slight to Judaism intended. Incidentally, if it's pedantically Kung Fu-Tse instead of Confucius, why the Greek Jesus and not the Hebrew Yeshua? (Well, because a) Anderson wants a distancing effect, but b) doesn't want to make the names unrecognizable, I suppose. Aycharaych does more "correctly" say "the Christ".)

4. The unnamed narrator of the Van Rijn story "The Master Key" speaks of the third commandment when he has in mind what is the second commandment by Catholic or Lutheran reckoning. This might suggest he is a (non-Lutheran) Protestant, but the Orthodox use the same numbering as Protestants, and the Jewish numbering, while different from either, has the same #3 as the Protestant.

5. Anderson of course depicted a similar development in his humorous THE HIGH CRUSADE.

* * * * *

Consider His Ways

One of my earliest favorites among SF writers was the British author, John Wyndham. Although not tremendously prolific, his career spanned from the 1930's until his death in 1969. John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris was born in 1903 in Warwickshire. He was unsuccessful in his initial attempts to study law, and as an advertising copy writer. From 1931 to the early 1950's, he was an above average writer of space operas, about which we will have more to say presently. Most of these early stories were written as John Beynon or John Beynon Harris. In the early 1950's, he became disenchanted with other worlds adventures and scientific marvels, and began to concentrate on characterization and plot. As a means of escaping his past, he adopted the name John Wyndham, and went on to produce a number of first rate novels and not quite so satisfactory short stories.

The pre-Wyndham days saw a large number of short stories and two novels. Harris was an unabashed writer of space operas, and it is no surprise to find that most of his fiction was written for US magazines. Although for the most part these stories reflect the accepted science-saves-all attitude of the genre at the time, Harris brought to it an implied cynicism and pessimism about human society that was missing from the work of most of his contemporaries.

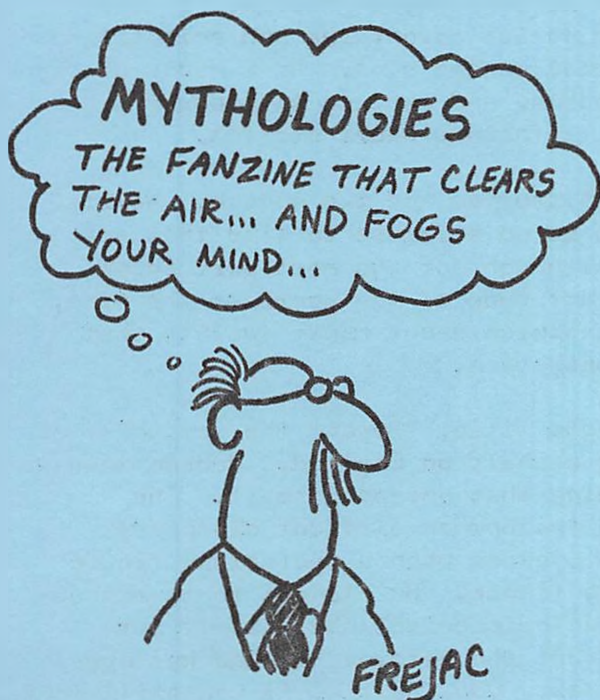
Take for example "Judson's Annihilator" (alternate title, "Beyond the Screen"), a story published in 1939 which predicted the air assault on England. Judson invents a force field that swallows without trace anything that passes into it. The screens are erected all throughout England, and the German airfleet disappears from the sky. Unfortunately, the hero later is present when a mysterious figure emerges from the force field and carries off his fiancée. He plunges in to rescue her, and finds himself in the future, after a bacteriological war has all but wiped out humanity. His mission is successful, but the heroine has had her eyes opened to the realities of existence: "I will marry you, Martin, if you still want me. But I don't think I want to bring children into this kind of world."

This cynicism is similarly apparent in "The Man From Beyond" (alternate title, "The Man from Earth"). An Earthman is brought out of inadvertent suspended animation by Venusians far in the future. He warns the Venusians of the perfidy of Earthman, telling them of his own career in treachery and ruthless competition for advantages in interplanetary trade. Later, when he learns that all life on Earth was destroyed thousands of years in the past, he commits suicide. Despite his own unsavory background, he has redeeming qualities. As he says himself, "You can't be a good villain if you are ashamed."

One of his better early stories is "Phoney Meteor", published in 1941. A colony of minuscule aliens is planted on Earth. They are so tiny that it is difficult for them to realize the existence of humans. Conversely, humans think of them as some irritating form of insectlife, and they are exterminated almost as an afterthought.

One of his best known, and longest, early novelets was "Exiles on Asperus", a space opera in the classic tradition. A group of Martian prisoners revolt and maroon their human captors on the asteroid Asperus (which has a breathable atmosphere, an attribute Harris granted nearly every heavenly body in one story or another). The stranded humans find the remains of a ship that crashed years earlier, and soon discover that most of the survivors of that crash are now slaves to the batrachs, a winged race that issues forth at night from their subterranean (or subasperian) chambers.

Naturally, this unnatural state of affairs cannot continue to exist. After a series of adventures, the humans manage to defeat the batrachs and order them to set free their slaves. This is where Wyndham/Harris pulls his switch. The batrachs have carefully conditioned the second generation to fear the outer world, to fear normal humans. The slaves refuse to be freed. What's more, the author takes the side of the Batrachs, at least in part, when he has them point out that their conditioning is essentially no different than that provided by any society: "Every thought of yours is based on somebody's teaching, or a scrap of information picked up from somebody else."



"Venus Adventure" is a similar departure from the thematic material of space opera, even though the plot and setting are completely traditional. Noah Watson, a religious fanatic, and Henry Headington, a millionaire, construct a gigantic spaceship, designed to help them and their followers escape the destruction of Earth. They mistakenly believe the Earth to be dying and set off for Venus, where they and their descendants are cut off from the rest of humanity for 800 years. When an expedition from Earth finally visits Venus, it finds 2 human nations. The Wots are atavistic, fast breeding, and ignorant; the Dingtons are technologically oriented, and have developed a mature culture. The latter are allied with the native intelligences, the Gorlaks, although it takes the aid of the space visitors to subjugate the Wots completely.

There is little point in talking about each of the many stories that Harris wrote during these years. They were all characterized by cynicism about the state of humanity. With some exceptions, they are interesting solely as literary curiosities. There is no great depth of characterization, no distinctive style, and in most cases, a very primitive level of plot subtlety. Most of them deal with the efforts of a few to overcome some incredible menace. In "Worlds to Barter" a future generation of man travels back to our present and orders the entire human race to prepare to exchange worlds. An invisible and incredibly resilient monster escapes from a crashed spaceship in "The Invisible Monster". An inventor is worried by visions of the destruction of Atlantis and Lemuria when he invents a new death ray in "The Third Vibrator". In "Wanderers of Time" a disparate group of people confront machines driven by intelligent ants. Moon men attack from the past in "The Last Lunarians". And so on.

There were two novels published in the 1930's as well, STOWAWAY TO MARS (also published as THE SPACE MACHINE and as PLANET PLANE) and THE SECRET PEOPLE, which Harris had originally titled SUB-SAHARA. Although both novels dealt with fairly standard subject matter, and although neither was up to the standards Harris would later demonstrate, they are both unusually well written for the type of books they are.

THE SECRET PEOPLE is a lost race novel. An ambitious project is undertaken to turn the Sahara Desert into an enormous inland sea. Mark Sunnet decides to take his friend Margaret Lawn on a tour by means of his rocket plane. Unfortunately, the rocket malfunctions and crashes into the sea. After a brief respite on a small island, where they find and rescue a cat, they are set adrift again in the powerless hulk of his rocket. Then the Earth's surface collapses under them and they drop into an enormous system of caverns beneath the desert.

Before long they encounter and are captured by a race of troglydytic pygmies who inhabit the caverns. Mark is badly hurt, and regains consciousness in a prison cavern, along with 1500 other prisoners from the upper world, descendants of other prisoners, and pygmy criminals. Margaret is no place to be found, and we later learn that because of their descent from an Egyptian people, the pygmies hold the cat to be sacred, and have made Margaret into a quasi-priestess. The novel then diverges into subplots. Mark joins a group secretly digging a tunnel to the surface, a group fearful that fellow prisoner Miguel Salvades intends to betray them in order to win the freedom of the upper caves in exchange. Above, Margaret enjoys the limited confidence of Garm, a pygmy whose intelligence is such that he has long suspected that his society was at least partially based on self-deception.

The two subplots are eventually woven together. Salvades locates the secret tunnel and betrays the intended escapees. He is freed, and soon learns from Margaret the chance of escape furnished by the wrecked rocket. Margaret mistrusts Salvades, however, believing correctly that he would never bother to bring help if he were to escape. She frames him, but he evades capture, and eventually kidnaps Margaret, forcing her to reveal the rocket's location.

Meanwhile, an army of pygmies has been unable to overcome the surfacemen defending their tunnel. At the height of the battle, the surface is reached, but it is now under several feet of water. The onrushing water destroys both sides, and only a few humans manage to escape to the upper caverns in the confusion. There is the expected final battle with Salvades and a small group of survivors win to the surface. The influx of water proves too much for the pygmies, and we are left with the conclusion that their entire race will perish. A typical 1930's lost race adventure tale, right? Well, not exactly.

Although his attempts at social commentary were usually crude in these early years, it is undeniable that Harris possessed a great deal of understanding of what makes individuals and cultures work. The special treatment provided Margaret might seem too obviously contrived to fit the necessities of the plot had not the author gone to a considerable effort to legitimize his situation. "Superstition and suggestion through superstition are greatly neglected powers nowadays. I don't mean that there aren't plenty of superstitious conventions and taboos about; there are, but they're formless and ill-controlled, and very often conflicting. There's a great influence over men and women just wasted and running to seed today."

As well as the role of superstition, Harris was well aware of society's cultural conditioning, particularly in the formative years. "The church has the right idea. It got in as soon as it decently could with a baptism service. When they followed that up with a proper course of training, they'd got the poor little blighter just where they wanted him. He couldn't think for himself. He thought he could, mind you; he often thought he was doing no end of a fine think, but that didn't matter; he was only playing a kind of game with the rules already set in his mind. In practice, he was only crawling around in a mental pen." And an offhand remark that has particular relevance lately, "What else but a superstition could produce the fantastic idea that all men are equal?"

A less satisfactory novel, though more ambitious, is STOWAWAY TO MARS. One of his early stories, "The Lost Machine", dealt with a robot from Mars that flounders about on Earth, horrified to discover that machines are only tools on our planet, when they are intelligent partners on Mars. "Surely man and machine are natural complements: they assist one another." Zat, the robot, is so upset, particularly when marooned following the accidental destruction of its ship, that it commits suicide. The scientist who learned to communicate with the robot is disbelieved when he cannot produce the intelligent robot he claimed to have contacted.

This scientist's daughter, Joan, is the stowaway of the title, STOWAWAY TO MARS. She smuggles herself aboard the experimental space ship built by Dale Curtance, for its attempt to be the first human ship to reach Mars. Their voyage is a strained one. Joan's presence has disturbing sexual implications...leading to a surprising development in a science fiction novel of any decade -- the sympathetic hero, Curtance, attempts unsuccessfully to rape her. So does at least one other member of the crew. Froud, the rather oddball journalist, an inveterate cynic, finds himself in the unusual situation of her sole ally.

Their eventual landing on Mars does little to break the tension. One of the crew members has gone entirely insane, and maroons the entire crew except for Joan. Unfortunately for him, the Martian countryside is the hunting ground for packs of defective machines, and he is killed. Joan is rescued by other robots and taken to a hidden Martian city. There she and a Martian, Vaygan, fall in love, only to discover that because of the mutual antipathy of their respective bacteria, it is impossible for Joan, or any other human, to remain on Mars. They order the British crew off their world -- the American ship crashes on landing, killing all aboard, and give similar orders to a Russian expedition, which has also landed. Back on Earth, Joan dies in an unsuccessful attempt to give birth to Vaygan's child, her reputation now as sullied as that of her father. Curtance and Froud set off to Venus and are never heard from again. A low key ending for a story published in the era we tend to think of as full of upbeat space opera.

Harris obviously was saying a great deal about what a skeptical and unkind public does to the reputations of those who dare to be different. His cynicism speaks through Froud, and through the actions of the Martians, expelling us forever from

their planet. Joan learns that the Martians are constantly changing the nature of their robotic friends. "Tradition is a useful weed for binding the soil, but it grows too quickly and chokes the rest. Periodically it must be burned out."

There was as well a third story in the series, "The Sleepers of Mars". The Russian crew is unable to take off. They are brought to one of the nearly empty Martian cities while the authorities argue their fate, but while there, they discover vaults full of Martians in suspended animation. As Mars began to die, the Martian authorities put a large proportion of the population into these vaults, promising to revive them when the ecology had recovered. Obviously, it never did. The Russians revive several, who react with outrage when they find that the world has deteriorated still further during their thousands of years of sleep. They revive large numbers of sleepers and attack the contemporary Martians. Harris completes the circle of cynicism; even the remote, ancient Martian culture is torn by internal flaws.

Had Harris continued to write space opera of this sort, it is likely that he would be remembered in the same general terms as are Nat Schachner, Don Wilcox, G. Peyton Wertenbarker and others. He may have been one of the better purveyors of this sort of light entertainment, but it was still a literary deadend that was doomed almost from its inception. But in the early 1950's, something happened, something significant enough that almost everything Harris was to write thereafter was to appear under the John Wyndham byline, and was as well to be far superior in almost every way to that which he had accomplished before. At least three of his Wyndham stories were to be filmed (THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS, THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS, and "Consider Her Ways"). His work was to find itself into such prestigious publications as COLLIER'S magazine and PLAYBOY.

In no particular order, I'd like to browse through most of the significant short stories of the 1950's and 1960's, although it should be remembered at the outset that, with one exception, Wyndham was never to prove a particularly capable short story writer. That one exception is "Consider Her Ways", about which I'll have considerable to say in the final section of this article. Wyndham's reputation rests otherwise with his novels, the menacing killer plants from THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS, the suboceanic menace from OUT OF THE DEEPS, the sheer good story telling of RE-BIRTH, and others.

One of the earliest stories to demonstrate the changing nature of Harris/Wyndham's concerns as a writer was "The Eternal Eve", and its sequel "No Place Like Earth", the latter of which was also published under the incredibly bad title, "Tyrant and Slave Girl on Planet Venus". "The Eternal Eve" was the first story to appear under the Wyndham byline. Earth has been destroyed, and the sole humans left are scattered survivors on Venus and Mars. Amada Vark is one of the last women on Venus, and she absolutely refuses to consider herself a breeding animal. Her dislike of the ever more importunate advances of the surviving men eventually leads her to escape into the wilderness, from whence she returns only when she has determined for herself the role she will play in society. In the sequel, Bert stranded on Mars, resists the well meaning attempts of the natives to enculturate him. "You all of you think that you ought to be better men, or bigger men, or at least different in some way. We wonder why a whole race should have the inferiority complex which makes it base its virtues on the assumption of its own inadequacy."

Bert's desire to find something else, something human, to do disappoints and puzzles his Martian friends. "What was it the Earthmen imagined they sought with all their strife, drive, and noise? Not one of them could tell you that ultimate purpose. For all one knew there was none, it might be just a nervous tic. All their

boasts need not be more than the rationalization of a dominating egoism imposed upon a kind of transcendent monkey inquisitiveness." Eventually he decides to travel on a ship to Venus, where the developing dictatorship and slave society so depresses him that he returns to Martian society rather than remain among his fellow humans.

"Una" (alternately titled "The Perfect Creature") is one of Wyndham's rare attempts at humor. Two men investigating alleged brutality to animals encounter a scientist who has created a "perfect" intelligent creature. The creature, Una, falls in love with one of the investigators and attempts to carry him off, much to the latter's dismay.

Wyndham's slightly suspicious view of scientists pops up here, although it is more clearly expressed in a less successful story of Martian exploration, "Never on Mars". A scientist therein is confronted with the charge that "You are a priest of this century's mystique. The educated accept you as an authority on the mysteries of nature, the uneducated think you're crazy but a bit dangerous, so they respect you superficially too."

"The Wheel" is a fairly successful story which anticipates RE-BIRTH. Following the destruction of civilization, the wheel is outlawed as a sign of the technology that led to the destruction. The story serves to illustrate that "You can't kill an idea the way they try to. You can keep it down awhile, but sooner or later it'll come out."

Wyndham then has an ambivalent attitude toward science. He is in favor of progress and the development of human knowledge, but at the same time he recognizes that science disrupts the lives of most people, and that they have a legitimate right to resent it. In "Wild Flower", Felicity Fray finds a beautiful mutated flower at the site of the crash of a plane carrying radioactive elements. But before she can acquire any seeds, the entire area is sterilized. Science then can be the source of beauty, but at the same time, if not properly controlled, and destroy the very same beauty it creates.

One of Wyndham's best shorter works is "Survival", one of the most horrifying stories in the genre. Alice Morgan is the only woman left alive aboard a ship stranded in space. As the food shortage grows, the men around her begin resorting to cannibalism to keep themselves alive. Morgan, though pregnant, manages to manipulate the men into sparing her through force of her personality, determined that she and her baby will survive. When rescuers finally arrive, finding only Alice and her child left alive, she is unable to think of them in any terms other than as food.

One of the last stories Wyndham wrote was "Wise Child", published in PLAYBOY. A scientist whose ethics seem to have been stillborn determines to experiment with a drug he has developed upon his own unborn child, hoping to enable it to be born already possessing the power of speech. When his wife and his French assistant object, he fires the latter and convinces the former that he has given up the idea, while he has actually already treated her food with the drug. With poetic justice, the child is in fact born with the ability to speak the language of its parent --- French.

The other major short piece is "Consider Her Ways", a novellette about a woman whose experiments with drugs enable her to temporarily occupy the body of a human breeder in a future where men are extinct. The bulk of the story consists of her arguments with a historian of that period on the role of women in history. In the final section of this article, I'd like to examine Wyndham's views of women in some detail. But first, let's examine briefly Wyndham's novels.

Wyndham's reputation does not, however, rest on his short stories. Although THE SECRET PEOPLE and STOWAWAY TO MARS did not really give any hint of what was to come, Wyndham was ultimately to prove himself capable of turning out fine novels, novels of understated terror on a worldwide scale. The first of these was the famous DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS (also published as REVOLT OF THE TRIFFIDS). There are probably few SF readers who have not either read the novel or seen the very inferior film of the same name, but for those who haven't, a summary follows.

An unexplained atmospheric phenomenon (later assumed to be man-made) leads to the irreversible blindness of almost the entire population of the Earth. The few people who somehow were unable to witness the light show find themselves in a world that is rapidly falling to pieces. Their existence is further complicated by the triffids, ambulatory plants with poisonous stings which were formerly no serious menace, but are now multiplying limitlessly as their human victims are by and large unable to avoid them.

William Mason wakes up that fateful morning in a hospital. Almost immediately he senses something wrong: "When a day that you happen to know is Wednesday starts off by sounding like Sunday, there is something seriously wrong somewhere." Mason and Josella Playton are among a small group of sighted who plan to flee London and set up a workable group of survivors somewhere in the country. But the two are then kidnapped by another group of sighted, who feel obligated to protect and feed the thousands of blind still alive. Each sighted person is chained to two burly blind ones, then assigned a few dozen people and a foraging area.

Eventually both escape and set off after their original group, but internal strife and other problems separate William and Josella for most of the novel. Ultimately they are reunited, and flee the mainland to a remote island when it is clear that the growing dictatorial governments springing up in England will only temporarily avert the attacks of the triffids, which now roam the countryside freely in enormous numbers.

Mason is a rather low key hero, and his experiences lead him to almost an enjoyment of the altered state of the world. "I was emerging as my own master, and no longer a cog. It might well be a world full of horrors and dangers that I should have to face, but I could take my own steps to deal with it -- I would no longer be shoved hither and thither by forces and interests that I neither understood nor cared about."

Other characters reflect the same disenchantment with our present society. Colonel Crump, head of the surviving group, points out that "We have not simply to start building again; we have to start THINKING again -- which is much more difficult, and far more distasteful." And eventually, despite the death of civilization and most of the population, despite the virtual enslavement of most of the survivors, and the growing power of the triffids, Mason and the others are able to find much to be happy about: "There is an inability to sustain the tragic mood, a phoenix quality of the mind."

The novel owes much in style and concept to the works of H.G. Wells. It resembles in many ways the plot of THE FOOD OF THE GODS and perhaps bits and pieces of THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. There is as well the rather obvious references to "The Country of the Blind" and "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid". Wyndham also makes use of Wellsian understatement. Most of the menace of the triffids is implied rather than overt, and increases in its effect thereby. The scene where thousands of triffids stand mutely pressing against Mason's fences is far more frightening than his occasional encounter with a single plant. Like Wells, Wyndham is not particularly concerned with his characters. They have plausible characteristics, enough so that we prefer to see them survive, but they are not so vivid that we hate to part with them at the end of the novel.

I made an interesting discovery when I set about re-reading OUT OF THE DEEPS (which has also been published as THE KRAKEN WAKES and THING FROM THE SEA). The US paperback I was reading had some pages loose, so I picked up the British Penguin edition, and looked for the place where I had left off. Lo and behold, it wasn't there. I eventually discovered that the two editions are totally different, with the Penguin version considerably longer, though rougher in spots. I suspect that Wyndham revised and condensed it for the US edition.

Again, the plot is Wellsian -- the basic story of THE WAR OF THE WORLDS with a dash of "The Sea Raiders". Fiery objects from outer space begin crashing in our oceans, eventually revealed to be the leading wave of alien immigrants. There is inevitable conflict between humans and the unseen denizens on the oceans' floors, with humans dropping bombs and the aliens using strange devices to destroy our shipping.

Eventually the aliens begin melting the ice caps in order to flood the land, there are few assaults in pressurized armored devices having met with disaster when faced with our military sophistication. As in DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS, civilization begins to disintegrate, and our ultimate salvation following development of an effective counter weapon results from the pulling together of scattered groups of survivors.

Although the two versions are very dissimilar, most of the changes are not major ones. In the US edition we learn a lot less about what is going on away from the two main characters, a husband and wife journalism team. The actions of various governments are covered far more fully in the British edition, which also spends more time on the particulars of various attacks by the aliens. One interesting point is that in the British version, the wife is concerned about the husband's incipient nervous breakdown, but in the US version, she is the one who collapses.

OUT OF THE DEEPS, like TRIFFIDS, is understated, particularly in the US version. In a passage not found in the Penguin edition, one character remarks that "It doesn't look like an interplanetary war to me now, whatever it is", and another replies, "That...I would ascribe to two main causes. First, constipation of the imagination; and, secondly, the influence of the late Mr. H.G. Wells".

Wyndham also implies a rather pessimistic view of the interaction between intelligent species in a passage not found in the US edition. "But it is very unlikely that the ideas of betterment held by two different types would be identical -- so unlikely that it suggests a hypothesis that, given two intelligent species with differing requirements on one planet, it is inevitable that, sooner or later, one will exterminate the other."

Wyndham's cynicism about humanity (despite his obvious affection for it) comes through constantly. The total inability of the bulk of mankind or its government to face the realities of the aliens' existence until the very last moment, and the persecution of the resourceful Dr. Bocker are obvious examples. Dr. Bocker himself is a cynic who is determined to speak the uncomfortable truth. He remarks of another character that "He's a civilized, liberal-minded man -- with the usual trouble of liberal-minded men; that they think others are too."

Even the sympathetically portrayed characters display perverse character traits. One says (British edition) "All my life I have been surrounded by things I'd rather not know too much about, so I have come to feel that truth made naked without purpose is really a wanton." Nor does Wyndham have much respect or affection for the institution of government: "Doesn't it sometimes strike you as odd that all our governments who loudly claim to rule by the will of the people are willing to run almost any risk rather than let their people have arms?"

Wyndham later remarks that "If all the energy that is put into getting votes could be turned to useful work, what a nation we could be!" He doesn't spare the US either, as in this comment, removed from the US edition. "Business is their national sport, and, like most national sports, semi-sacred."

The third novel to appear under the Wyndham name is (RE-BIRTH (British title is THE CHRYSALIDS), my personal favorite. David Storm is a young boy growing up in Waknuk, a post-holocaust civilization in Canada. His society is a religiously dominated one, similar to that in "The Wheel". Purity of the human (and every other) form is the key tenet of their beliefs. Mutants are either killed or sterilized and sent out to live as best they can in the Wastelands. The fate of the rest of the world is almost totally unknown.

As a child David befriends Sophie, a strange girl with six toes. Her eventual discovery and expulsion weighs heavily on David's conscience, and causes him to have serious doubts about the validity of his society's worldview. It is further shaken when he realizes that the secret telepathic ability which he shares with a few other children is also viewed as a dangerous mutation. David, now teenaged, flees into the fringes with his sister Petra and his cousin Rosalind, ahead of a band of pursuers which includes his cruel father. They are eventually rescued from a band of mutants by an expedition from New Zealand, which has been attracted by Petra's unusually strong telepathic ability.

Damon Knight has pointed out that the only major failing of this novel is that it declines into a routine chase and rescue adventure rather than having its characters really come to grips with their problems. Wyndham might well have succeeded had he chosen to do so; the seeds were certainly there. One of David's uncles is shown to be a fair, open-minded man, as is Rosalind's father. The uncle commits a murder at one point to save the children's secret, and his dislike of the odor of sanctity adhering to David's father is obvious. When commenting upon the cause of the disaster, he remarks that "We've got to believe that God is sane, Davie boy... but whatever happened out there...what happened there was NOT sane, not sane at all. It was something vast, yet something beneath the wisdom of God." Thus, the idea that the holocaust was a punishment inflicted upon man stands refuted.

The uncle's contempt for the church crops up again and again: "Souls are just counters for churches to collect, all the same value, like nails." And later, "They weren't God's last word like they thought. God doesn't have any last word. If he did he'd be dead, and he changes and grows, like everything else that's alive. So when they were doing their best to get everything fixed and tidy on some kind of eternal line they'd thought up for themselves, he sent along Tribulation to bust it up and remind 'em that life is change."

But Wyndham chose not to pursue that path. The novel remains excellent even on repeated re-reading, but one can't help wondering how much better it might have been had Wyndham chosen to handle it differently.

THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS was the original title of the novel now called VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED, following the filming from the novel of a fairly loyal movie. The novel is another Wellsian adventure, a sort of RE-BIRTH in reverse. The psi powers of the alien children are the equivalent of the giantism of the children in FOOD OF THE GODS, with touches from STAR BEGOTTEN.

The remote town of Midwich becomes even more isolated for a brief period when all life within it becomes anaesthetized by a mysterious force, apparently originating from a flying saucer. A few months later it becomes obvious that every woman of child bearing age has become pregnant, and the children, when born, show obvious similarities, as well as uncanny mental abilities.

THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS revolves around the relationship between the alien children and an elderly scholar named Zellaby. Even when most of the village has turned against them, even when the children have announced their intention to use their powers whenever necessary to preserve themselves, and eventually to supplant humanity, Zellaby continues to think of them affectionately. It is ironic then that it is only Zellaby who can bring about their destruction, which he does by carrying a powerful bomb into their presence.

Zellaby's crusty views on human affairs are the means by which Wyndham makes his opinions known. "I regard the plagues of Egypt as an unedifying example of celestial bullying; a technique now known as power politics." Zellaby seems to consider the children as no more inherently evil than any other force of nature: "It is because Nature is ruthless, hideous and cruel beyond belief that it was necessary to invent civilization."

Although well written, the novel never seems to sustain the sense of menace that infused the earlier ones. Zellaby is a more realized character than most, but the very alienness of the children makes it difficult to think of them as people.

A similar problem makes the segmented novel, THE OUTWARD URGE, far less than successful. Wyndham apparently decided it was time to write a novel set in space, so he chronicled five adventures of the Troon family, a space faring family flourishing before, during, and after a nuclear war that destroys most of the northern hemisphere.

Unfortunately, we don't see enough of the individual characters to become really involved with them. In the first story, a Troon gives his life to avert the sabotage of a British space station. In the second installment, a Troon is the commander of the British moon station when the US and USSR destroy themselves in a nuclear war, a war that Troon believed inevitable: "But true peace has never been one of the genuine dreams -- we have got little further than preaching against war in order to appease our consciences."

Brazil becomes the leading power in space in the third installment, which details a disastrous trip to Mars. The Australian branch of the Troon family successfully claims Venus and breaks Brazil's monopoly in the fourth, the last included in the book. A fifth story, "The Asteroids: 2194", is a minor Troon adventure in the asteroid belt.

The last major novel by Wyndham was TROUBLE WITH LICHEN. Two researchers independently discover a source of immortality in extracts from rare Chinese fungus. Francis Saxover treats his own family, but can think of no way to release the secret to the general public without causing enormous upheavals. Diana Brackley, however, hits upon a clever idea. She creates a high class beauty parlor, catering to the wives of the powerful men of England. Within a few years, it is obvious that her treatment works, but she waits until the proper time to announce to her customers what she really has been doing.

Basically, her plot succeeds, although along the way she and the Saxover family are subject to threats, kidnapping, public abuse, treachery, and a host of other less than savory human activities. Brackley realizes that it is necessary to make the public want something, even something beneficial, before it can be presented to them, for even morals are subject to change: "She had a proper respect for all of the Commandments that were currently in good standing."

Wyndham's last novel before his death was CHOCKY, an expansion of a novelette, and possibly the ultimate in "imaginary friend" stories. A young boy insists that his imaginary friend actually comes from another planet, and can communicate a

great deal more than idle chitchat. It's a very lightweight novel, one that takes very little time or concentration to read, but is enjoyable for all that.

That, then, in very brief terms, is the lifework of John Harris/Wyndham. When I announced that I was working on a re-reading of Wyndham's work, one local fan commented that Wyndham's only problem was his unsympathetic portrayal of women. That wasn't my recollection, but it had been years, so I was open-minded on the subject. So with critical eyes, I began to note passages like the following: "Hobbies are convenient in the child, but an irritant in the adult; which is why women are careful never to have them, but simply to be interested in this or that." Not really a very damning statement, that from "More Spinned Against", a fantasy about a woman turned into a spider. But it did seem to imply a basic psychological difference between the sexes. I read on.

"For years now, when she was off her guard, those pillars of smoke had been likely to start up in her mind. She hated and feared them. They were the triumphant symbol of science." (from "Wild Flower") This seemed slightly more damning, particularly in view of the portrayal of Felicity Fray as a highly neurotic person, hiding from the world: "How comfortable to be a cow. Neither expecting nor regretting; having no sense of guilt, nor need for it." But perhaps Felicity is not to be considered the typical woman; after all, she turns out to be sympathetically viewed at the end of the story.

In STOWAWAY TO MARS, the hero's wife remarks that "With Dale it is not people who are my rivals so much as things...Why do men think so much of things?...Sometimes I think they are the natural enemies of women." This seemed more damning. There was a consistent distrust of science among Wyndham's female characters, wasn't there? Although one must admit that the major character of the novel is the woman who stows away, and she is a scientist herself. Later on, the unhappy wife remarks again, "This was a man's world, women walked unhappily and fearfully among its gears and flywheels."

I searched further. In "Survival", the sole female aboard the wrecked spaceship remarks that "at that moment she loathed it, and all the inventions of men, with a hard, hopeless hatred." The psychological gulf seems to be emphasized again in THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS, when Zellaby points out that "A fruitlessly worrying male is a nuisance. The best thing he can do is to disguise his worry and stand staunchly by, impersonating a pillar of strength while performing certain practical and organizational services."

Not much evidence to base a case on. At worst, Wyndham seems guilty of no more or less a chauvinistic attitude than the majority of writers. But let's read a little deeper. Maybe we are misinterpreting the evidence.

Most of the male characters in STOWAWAY TO MARS attempt rape or at least mashing on Joan, the stowaway. Not a very complimentary portrayal of the male characters is it, particularly of the typical hero, Dale Curtance. The only human male who is sympathetically treated remarks, "I, personally, think it was a mean trick. ["It" is the artificial channeling of women's interests.] It has resulted in vast quantities of women in a vastly interesting world being shut into vastly uninteresting compartments. Because, you see, Nature's little scheme necessitated a curtailment of the imagination to keep them on the job." Joan, however, who is the sole hero of the novel, disagrees that it is Nature that is responsible, rather than society in general. And, as even Curtance must admit, "A woman doesn't eat less or breathe less. Is there any really good reason why she shouldn't be treated the same way?" And remember, this novel was published in 1935.

My contention is that Wyndham was in fact strongly in favor of Feminist goals, more so and with a lot more perception than many writers now identified with those ideas, and he espoused them decades ago. Wyndham's view is that society - primarily as the result of natural conditions preceding civilization, - acts to condition people into sexual roles. His work is shot through with this sort of thing, but the surface reader may well react to the gloss and not detect the meaning beneath.

Wyndham is conscious of the insidious aspects of conditioning. A female character in "Reservation Deferred" admonishes, "But my poor dear, don't you understand? They're all men's heavens, and that's hell for women. Seems as if nobody ever got around to designing a heaven for women, don't ask me why." Men are conditioned for one set of expectations, women for another, when society bothers to consider women at all.

Coker, a practical, empathetic character in DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS, loses his temper with a young woman who refuses to learn how to repair the machinery that keeps her alive and comfortable. "Moreover, it's an affectation to consider yourself too spiritual to understand anything mechanical. It is a petty and a very silly form of vanity. Everyone starts by knowing nothing about anything, but God gives him - and even her - brains to find out with. Failure to use them is not a virtue to be praised; even in women it is a gap to be deplored." The emphasis on women is obvious sarcasm, as is borne out a moment later. "And here have I been explaining that women have as many brains as anyone else, if they'd only take the trouble to use them." And just in case we still might suspect that Coker is not in fact combatting conditioning, he goes on a bit later to state: "And what I meant was that in the world that has vanished women had a vested interest in acting the part of parasites."

Coker is later attempting to explain why logic doesn't work. "Most people aren't [reasonable] even though they'd protest that they are. They prefer to be coaxed or wheedled, or even driven. That way they never make a mistake: if there is one, it's always due to something or somebody else...They have minds of their own -- mostly peasant minds, at their easiest when they are in the familiar furrow."

Not only does Wyndham ascribe to the view that women are being conditioned to be less than they might, he feels that it is increasing. Zellaby, of THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS observes that "All my life I have deplored the Teutonic view of women, and all my life ninety percent of them have been showing me that they don't mind it a bit. Is it an illusion, I wonder, that when I was a young man I used to meet many intelligent young women, whereas now I seem rarely to meet one who is not a lazy-minded conformist?"

The closest to an explicit statement of this comes in CHOCKY. "I don't know, nor do they, for instance, how far this compulsion that most of them have to produce a baby as soon as possible after marriage is attributable to a straight biological urge, and what percentage of it can be more justly credited to other factors such as conformity with people's expectations, the desire to prove that one is normal, the belief that it will establish status, a sense of personal achievement, the symbol of one's maturity, a feeling of solidarity, and the obligation of holding one's own in competition with the neighbors."

THE TROUBLE WITH LICHEN is, in many ways, a Feminist novel. Diana Brackley remarks that "All my life I've been watching potentially brilliant women let their brains, and their talents, rot away. I could weep for the waste of it; for what they might have been, and might have done." Even as a young lab assistant, she wonders "Why is it that mothers still think it so much more respectable to be bedworthy than brainy?...I mean, being just a woman and nothing else does strike me as one of the

deadend jobs. You can't get any promotion in it -- not unless you take it up as a courtesan."

At another point, a more explicit statement: "What I don't like about us is our readiness to be conditioned -- the easy way we can be made to be willing to be nothing better than squaws and second class citizens." Similarly, Wyndham has foreseen (rightly, I believe) that the major stumbling block to intellectual emancipation for women is actually other women. "All the rights that women need were won ages ago. All that's been lacking since then is the social courage to use them. The suffragettes and the rest thought that by technically defeating male privilege they'd scored a great victory. What they didn't realize is that the greatest enemies of women aren't men at all, they are women; silly women, lazy women, and smug women. Smug women are the worst; their profession is being women, and they just hate any women who make any other kind of professional success."

Accepting then that Wyndham is not in fact a male chauvinist pig of the first order, I looked for specifics. In "The Eternal Eve", Amanda Vark is one of the few women left alive of the entire human race. She refuses, however, to choose a mate. She is even willing to kill to avoid being impregnated: "'No!' she said. 'It was NOT wrong. I've a RIGHT to protect myself - a RIGHT...He had no rights over me. No one else has rights over me. I'm my own...'" Although she eventually does take a husband, it is clear that she does this through choice, not as a biological duty. "This hasn't got anything at all to do with duty to community, or to posterity, or to history, or to moral obligations, or the racial urge to survive -- or with anything but me. I'm doing it because I want to do it."

Clearly Wyndham believed in a woman's right to do with her body as she wished. And there have already been several instances where Wyndham stated belief that women should be free to use their minds as they wish. In "Venus Adventure", one of the few stories in which the government of Earth is portrayed in favorable terms, one of the female characters is described in highly intellectual terms. "Already, at twenty-four, she had interesting discoveries behind her and a future of brilliant promise. It was given to her to leap where others plodded."

Many of Wyndham's stronger characters are women. Diana Brackley from TROUBLE WITH LICHEN is an obvious example. Phyllis Watson from OUT OF THE DEEPS is another. It is her forethought and resourcefulness that leads to the survival of herself and her husband. Joan, from STOWAWAY TO MARS, is the central figure in that novel. Amanda Vark from "The Eternal Eve" is one of his best realized characters, and one of the most determined masters of her own fate. The sole female survivor in "Survival" is as strong a personality as one can find in all of fiction.

A Martian woman is purchased as a slave in "Dumb Martian", and her exposure to scientific knowledge enables her to overcome a brutal human owner. Margaret Lawn, in THE SECRET PEOPLE, indignantly informs Mark Sunnet that "I don't in the least mind being protected, but I will not be treated as an idiot." Indeed, she almost succeeds in disposing of the villain unaided. In RE-BIRTH, Sophie sacrifices her own security, and later her life, in attempts to rescue males. The final deliverance of the mutant children is effected by a woman from New Zealand, a woman with high position in that society.

There are more instances in Wyndham's fiction that would add further weight to the argument, but I suspect the above is more than enough already. So I'll only spend a few more moments on the subject. Because the most Feminist of all Wyndham's fiction is the long novelette, "Consider Her Ways", a somewhat didactic story that has never had the popularity it deserves. It is possibly the most radical Feminist story to appear in the genre until the 1970's.

The plot isn't all that spectacular. Dr Jane Waterleigh experiments with a new drug and wakes in the far future in the body of a Mother, a woman bred and conditioned to produce babies. Men are extinct, you see, because of a 20th century scientist's carelessness. Waterleigh eventually engages in a long defense of the division of the sexes in our society against a future historian, and the latter comes off decidedly with the advantage. Unconvinced, Waterleigh eventually returns to the present and murders the scientist; she never discovers that his son was the actual cause of the extinction of the male sex.

The arguments hinted at in Wyndham's other stories are more explicit here. The concept of romance is portrayed as a means to convince women they should be consumers rather than producers. "Women must never for a moment be allowed to forget their sex, and compete as equals. Everything had to have a 'feminine angle' which must be different from the masculine angle, and be dinned in without ceasing. It would have been unpopular for manufacturers to issue an order 'back to the kitchen', but there were other ways. A profession without a difference, called 'housewife', could be invented. The kitchen could be glorified and made more expensive; it could be made to seem desirable, and it could be shown that the way to realize the heart's desire was through marriage."

Of course, this type of life was a sham. "Real life simply could not come near to providing the degree of romantic glamour which was being represented as every girl's proper inheritance. There was probably, in the aggregate, more disappointment, disillusion, and dissatisfaction among women than there had ever been before." But, naturally, women would feel guilty about expressing their dissatisfaction, because it was unnatural.

Not only did this conditioning distort women's lives, it distorted as well their personalities, making them cheapen themselves in the quest for a goal that was illusory. "The desire for Romance is essentially a selfish wish, and when it is encouraged to dominate every other it breaks down all corporate loyalties. The individual woman thus separated from, and yet at the same time thrust into competition with, all other women was almost defenseless; she became the prey of organized suggestion."

Ultimately, the all female society recognized one indisputable scientific fact: an all male society is doomed to failure; an all female one is not. "Without male rulers to confuse and divert them they began to perceive that all true power resides in the female principle. The male had served only one brief and useful purpose; for the rest of his life he was a painful and costly parasite."

Wyndham was not the best writer the field ever produced, but for a genre writer whose roots were in the pulps, he succeeded better than most in making himself over from a mere hack adventure writer to an author of gripping suspense novels, and revealed along the way a great deal of insight into how our society works. We need more writers of his calibre.

* * * * *

A complete list of Wyndham's works and appearances would be far too long to print, but the following short story collections contain virtually all of his significant shorter fiction.

JIZZLE (Four Square paperback in England; never released in the US)
SEEDS OF TIME (Penguin in England; never released in the US. I need a copy.)
TALES OF GOOSEFLESH AND LAUGHTER (Ballantine)
THE INFINITE MOMENT (Ballantine)

Science Fiction & the One Big Myth

Technical analysis of the little details of SF stories is useful for keeping the writers on their toes. It's a game that fans have played since memory runs not to the contrary - "how many mistakes in this story?" But let's face it, many of the best, most memorable SF works are studded and larded with flaws and inconsistencies. People still buy them and still read them.

Obviously DUNE or STAR WARS have an appeal beyond the presentation of a coherent realistic world. They strike at a deeper level. They convince emotionally even though they fall apart on logical analysis.

What they have, I suggest, is resonance with the great Monomyth.

Don't believe that modern scientific-technological societies like the US lack mythologies. A myth is a story that everyone generally accepts as true and accurate, a story that isn't questioned or analyzed. There are plenty of those around today. Myths can be full-fledged religious narratives, or they can be mind-sets which tend to push observed events into categories that may not correspond with the facts.

Despite the quote found at the front of this zine, a myth is not an elaborate lie, to those who tell it. Lies are fictions, fables, folklore, superstition. A myth seems right; it snuggles into your prior concept of the universe without rough edges.

Want to see a myth in action? Suggest something outside the conventional wisdom. Observe the way people try to shift your statement into palatable form, or if that isn't possible, watch them reject it. They may not know why they reject it, but they do. Some statements that jar accepted knowledge among fans:

-- Cats are good to eat, roasted or fricaseed.

-- The best and happiest century for humanity was the Thirteenth in Europe.

-- Space travel to the planets, let alone the stars, is an utter waste.

If you shrank back violently, if these statements are so blatantly false that you can't even come up with a rational refutation...see what I mean?

OK, and the Monomyth - what is that? Classical scholars found that stories of the gods and heroes fell into patterns that are told over and over and over. Without the pattern, it doesn't seem like an authentic story of heroes. "The One Myth".

Campbell, in HERD WITH A THOUSAND FACES, describes one such pattern. Roughly, the Hero is born to royal stock. He lives a while in the mundane world, then leaves

Mark M. Keller

on a great adventure, a Quest. He may be looking for treasure, or the herb of immortality, or the hand of a princess. He enters realms where no human has gone before, a Far Land or an underground cavern or a world in the sky. Deep within and far away from the human home, he struggles with forces and powers not human and more than human. He wins, and returns to the mundane world bearing his triumph and (sometimes) his reward. He brings back a gift for his people: dragon's head, queen, wisdom.

Sure you've seen this story before. Think about it -- Gilgamesh, Theseus, Orpheus, Aeneas, Beowulf, Odin on the tree. And in SF? Frodo Baggins, for a start.

It resembles a drama, an initiation rite. If the Hero is worshipped, his Quest may in fact be copied in an initiation rite. The aspirant leaves the realm of man, enters a dark room, perhaps naked, perhaps blindfolded. He hears noises, he sees monsters. He passes the test (death for failure in theory) and returns to the world of common day with a new status, one who has redeemed his former life and is born again as a benefactor and hero.

The manhood rite of passage of whatever tribe your knowledge of anthropology can retrieve...the entry into the Lodges of Freemasonry...becoming a member of a college fraternity -- the same pattern.

But today we don't do much of that, do we? No initiation, so no Monomyth. Well, not quite. Jewett and Lawrence have an interesting book called THE AMERICAN MONOMYTH (Anchor, 1977), which brings the Monomyth up to date, and applies it to SF.

The introduction is by Isaac Asimov (he's everywhere!), and ties in the New Monomyth with the Old one. Isaac introduces the figure of Heracles, the greatest of the ancient heroes. Heracles didn't always fight monsters far away from the lands where men lived. Sometimes the Cosmic Balance shifted and the monsters were loosed to ravage the human lands instead. Hero into Monsterland: Monsters into Human Land.

Herc fought them all -- hydras, lions, even Death's own guard dog. He did this not for reward but out of compassion, or under obligation, depending. He was (as Isaac notes) the original Mysterious Stranger, who appears out of nowhere to solve our problems and then vanishes again once the job is done. "Who was that masked man, anyhow?"

Now you see the Monomyth adapted to a secular culture without initiation rites. It took crucial shape in the US during the 1930's, and it goes like this.

1. There is a peaceful mundane Eden, a pleasant happy valley where folks live in harmony and speak politely, where food is fresh and home-cooked, where nobody rushes or bustles about. It is rural and bucolic, nay idyllic, nay again: it is pastoral. (You know it -- the Golden Age in its American guise: the Good Old Days, when life was simpler. Walt Disney Yesterdayland.)

This is the Frontier, two generations later. The mountain men are gone, moved out. It got too civilized for them. The wild animals are gone. The savages are gone. It's what everyone dreamed of on the long journey, all come true.

2. Supernatural evil threatens the valley. Rational attack is hopeless. The law can't do anything. Aldermen babble, mayors sweat and turn pale. The sheriff is shaking too badly to load his gun. Nobody can save them.

3. Out of the distance comes the super-hero. He is an Outsider, with no emotional bonds to the town. He is not sexually attracted to the women of the town, though ~~in the~~ they find him exceedingly masculine. For his honor, for his quest, for simple love of abstract justice, he will battle the monster.
4. There is a trial by combat, a duel. The villain strikes first but misses. The hero counterpunches and strikes the villain dead.
5. Now that he's no longer needed, the hero rides off into the Far Lands from which he came. Rarely, he stays to settle down and marry and become domesticated, but more often he goes away. The community has been saved from Evil, but it's own hands are clean - the necessary violence was done by someone else. It settles into happy peaceful life once more. (Moral: normal democratic processes don't work against Evil; you need someone who is outside the law, but on your side. That way none of the happy villagers have to break the law themselves.)

Recognize it? That's right. All those westerns first: SHANE as exemplar. And all those bloody adventure films - JAWS, WALKING TALL, BILLY JACK, DEATH WISH. In each one, society helpless against the wicked ones. In each, the Outsider, a man not really part of the community, viewed with suspicion, who saves the day after all.

And in SF? STAR TREK, with Kirk as the Lone Ranger. (Maybe Spock is God.) DUNE with its deliberate casting of Paul Atræides as the Hero.

Jewett and Lawrence have other details in the book I haven't touched here. There are the apocalyptic catastrophes - earthquakes, plane crashes, towering infernos, nuclear plant meltdowns: very popular these days. Nature punishes human moral wickedness, just like in the Bible. Watch a disaster movie, and you know who's going to get killed. Commit a sin and you are marked to be wiped out. Adultery, nastiness, greed, un-hipness, and oh a multitude of other sins - zap!

They even peer into the sugary world of the non-violent Outsider hero who redeems the wicked by sheer niceness rather than by punching their faces in: the "Heidi redeemer", in their phrase. This is generally a small girl child, so appealing, so good that the wickedest hearts melt and reform. Dickens' A CHRISTMAS CAROL, right? Rarely is an adult woman, even less often an adult man, fitted into this role. It doesn't fit culturally.

Of course, an artful writer can combine Heidi with the Hulk - witness KUNG FU. The hero is so modest and unassuming, he talks so gently of love and kindness. Who wouldn't be converted into a nice guy by listening to him?

The villains wouldn't, that's who. They're so shaggy and nasty and ugly they don't even listen to him. So he goes into action with kicks and hacks and he breaks a few kneecaps and rib cages. That's the best kind of Outsider Hero. He talks of love and then annihilates those who don't get the message. For you fans who read nothing but SF, I'm talking about Valentine Michael Smith as well as the Kung Fu kid. The Stranger is a true outsider, been through the initiations and all on Mars, and he can murder by a mere act of will those who offend him. Even Shane had to draw a gun to wipe out his enemies. Even Captain Kirk has to signal his ship for reinforcements. Not Smith. He is his own avenging angel.

Science fiction? Hardly. This is pure wish-fulfillment fantasy.

But it has the Monomyth, and there is that resonant chord, and people feel that's the way it should be, in some better version of this rotten world.

Jewett and Lawrence also talk about the "Werther effect", which is the attempt to make a work of fiction come real in your own life. Goethe wrote *SUFFERINGS OF YOUNG WERTHER*, about a young man who languishes because his beloved woman is indifferent to him, and who finally kills himself rather than live without her. It became a best-seller in early Romantic Europe. Adolescents formed Werther salons and discussion groups. The suicide rate rose slightly. There were Werther tea sets and Werther cameos and Werther literary societies in the 1770's.

Sound like STAR TREK fandom to you? Sound like the Church of All Worlds, which tries to actualize the dreams of Robert A. Heinlein's Martian water-brother cult? Do the members of these groups think they belong to a fan club, or is it already a religion? I have read a Trekkie comment that Spock's philosophy works, because it's been tested successfully on Vulcan for a thousand years. To be polite I must reply that some people can't tell fantasy from the real world. You can find the quote in *STAR TREK LIVES!*, p. 119.

STAR WARS fits this pattern well, although its worshippers don't have a dogma yet. Give them time. My own analysis says Kenobi is the Outsider Hero, and of course Vader is the supernatural villain, backed by that 20-km diameter battle moon. The film came out since the Jewett and Lawrence book. Did they predict well?

* * * * *

"Ideas and opinions, like living organisms, have a normal rate of growth which cannot be either checked or forced beyond a certain point. The more unpopular an opinion is, the more necessary it is that the holder should be somewhat punctilious in his observance of conventionalities generally."

--- Samuel Butler, in "The Art of Propagating Opinion"



In my dreams he still is running, the white hound, the wind hound
In my dreams he still is running, running down the wind.
In my dreams I still see him go, a blur of white against the snow
Where he has gone I do not know

I wish I did, I miss him so
My great white hound who loved to go
Running down the wind.

A dead dog's safely in the ground
A live dog lost is still around
You ever dream he will be found.

In my dreams I see him running, swiftly with the wind
And I find myself still calling, my words lost in the wind
"Come home, come home, my wayward hound!"

My voice a thin and windy sound
"Will you never become weary
Of running down the wind?"

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Elaborate Lies

THE FALL OF ROME

[LAURIE MANN]

About the Curlovich-Keller controversy on the Romans and the Greeks. A year ago, back in MYTHOLOGIES 9, John wrote a letter which opened with the following point: Like Emerson, Gibbon was a writer who overstressed a civilization's military values. Then he went on to make a series of glaring generalizations, concluding that the Church is to blame for today's state of affairs. In MYTHOLOGIES 10, Mark responded to John's letter with even greater generalizations and an incredible insult to boot ("John makes...a density of mistakes that ranks him with Eric Van Daniken and L. Ron Hubbard.") Mark's reference was totally unfair: John was writing a general letter, not some ridiculous treatise like CHARIOTS OF THE GODS.

Unlike either Mark or John, my knowledge of the ancients has been limited; a ninth grade ancient history class, three years of Latin, Gore Vidal's JULIAN, Lew Wallace's BEN-HUR, a smattering of plays like ANTIGONE, THE FROGS, parts of Caesar's COMMENTARIES, some Cicero, and so on.

The Olympic Games were the high points of entertainment in Greece. Everything stopped while the games were in progress, including war. Thousands of people travelled to watch them and participate in them. While most of the Greeks (particularly the Athenians) enjoyed great oratory and stressed reason in their everyday affairs, the games were constantly a source of national pride. These games stressed physical courage and endurance and were at the heart of Greece, along with the great poets, tragedians, and orators of the day.

Granted the "public line" of the Catholic Church was self-deprivation for the greater glory of God. Many nuns and monks lived like this. Common people felt intimidated by the Church and did likewise. However most archbishops and cardinals (certainly the Popes) lived in comparable luxury. It was another case of "Do as I say, not as I do."

Why was Mark's academic background relevant?

((I would think that Mark's academic background would be among the most relevant statements involved. If two people are arguing about a chemical formula, and one is a chemist and the other an accountant, which would you tend to accept? Which doesn't mean that I agree completely with Mark's position, but it certainly is relevant, and it was John who brought the subject of Mark's background up.

[JIM MANN]

It seems to me, and I'll give the reasons as I go on, that John defends himself quite well, while Mark goes way off base and even looks quite silly on a couple of points. John is obviously right on his first point. He never, as Mark tries to claim, says that the Byzantines were weak and unmanly. Gibbon says this, and John says that Gibbon should have known better.

I think both John and Mark are right to some degree in respect to the value placed on physical strength by the Roman and Greek cultures. They neither based their culture on physical strength, nor did they ignore it. The answer here is somewhere in between. I think that part of the argument may even be semantic in nature. What do we mean by physical? Does admiration of the human body constitute something physical or something spiritual?

The third point results from a very poor reply on Mark's part. John may have been putting it a bit too strongly when he said that the savage tribes "erected no buildings, conducted no trade, created no art." However, when Mark replies (in issue 10) that the tribes moved in and lived in the Roman buildings, and ran the Roman system, he in no way refutes John's original statement. Living in the Roman buildings does not constitute erecting buildings or creating art.

In all the points about the church and pleasure, I agree very strongly with John. The church constantly tried to put the lid on comfort and pleasure. They have always emphasized the pleasures in the next world and the suffering that must be endured in this world to obtain these other-world rewards. As for chastity, one only has to look at the way Mary is considered very holy for her virginity. Virginity is considered pure by the church and always has been.

In his seventh point, Mark actually seems to agree with John, he just expands on it. Ditto what John says about Mark's acute literal-mindedness in point nine. Certainly in his original letter John did not use "draft refusers" literally. Mark was being a bit silly when he took it that way.

As for the last point, John was going a bit overboard in trying to blame the church for everything and Mark was right in taking him up on this point. However, his expansion of this point in his present letter makes his argument much clearer. I'm not sure if I agree with him fully on it, but I do think that attitudes that the church has encouraged are responsible for many of our present problems. John's point of view is certainly a valid one.

Looking at John's letter as a whole, I think he backed up and explained what he was saying quite well. His comments are intelligent and soundly grounded in history. In fact, the only annoying part of his reply is that he resorted to name calling a bit much.

Mark objects to John's reply to Mark's criticism. He calls it a reiteration of previous errors. It seems that he has ignored all the explanations John has added, all the new points, all the references. He also objects to the name calling. I agree. But Mark should be reminded that it was he who compared John to Van Daniken and Hubbard.

The rest of Mark's article is hard to analyze in any sort of organized pattern. He should have again argued with John point by point and not tried to form the "Curlovich hypothesis", which does not seem to relate very well to John's views of the Roman and Greek cultures. By doing so, he manages to ignore some of John's points entirely and to twist around some of them so much that they no longer are what John originally had to say.

One point that Mark makes several times is that one should look to the historians to know the attitudes of a society and not that society's writers. Historians, he says, put things in the right perspective. (He ignores the fact, by the way, that John uses both a society's writers and later historians to form his opinions.) Here

Mark is wrong. Later historians may be better at analyzing what happened. But attitudes -- no way! It is the writers of a society who reflect the attitudes and ideals of that society. To quote Edith Hamilton (from THE GREEK WAY): "The golden deeds of a nation, however mythical, throw a clear light upon its standards and ideals." The artists of a society know what they and the people around them look upon as important. They see the likes and dislikes and the attitudes of their culture as it is. Historians have the prejudice of their own culture shaping their views and attitudes on societies they are studying. Perhaps now historians can better describe American history of the 1920's than could a man writing in the 1920's. But can that historian reflect the feeling of those times as well as F. Scott Fitzgerald? Fitzgerald's writings in the "Jazz Age" can reflect the attitudes of the time better than any present historian. The same is true of any period of history. Can a historian describing Nazi Germany do a better job of reflecting the terror felt by a Jew in hiding than Anne Franke? I think not.

At another point, Mark gives a long quote about economic and social change, and says that by reading John's letter one would never guess at these facts. Of course not. John wrote a short letter, not the history of Rome. He didn't try to explain all aspects of Rome, so certainly there are facts about the civilization that a reader wouldn't know from just reading his letter.

In another section of his article, Mark wanted John to footnote and give references in his letter. Come on, Mark, this is MYTHOLOGIES, not some sort of scholarly historical journal.

Mark ends by saying that he hopes that no one still takes John seriously and says that he has taken away the scraps of reputation John still had left. Does Mark really think he did that with this article? I have great respect for Mark on the basis of much he has done in the past, but in this case he falls on his face. The article's valid points are overshadowed by Mark's gloating, by his twisting of phrases, by his attempt to tell us what John said, by his attacks on John, and by his refusal to even look at many of the arguments that John makes. Both men seem to know a good deal of history (from inspection, John seems to know much more) but Mark messes up his own argument by not working his knowledge into a logical argument that actually tries to refute what John says. John's reputation is still very much there, and I still respect his knowledge of history.

((I don't think the veneration of Mary is so much because of her virginity as that she (allegedly) bore a child while virgin. Quite contrarily, the admonition to be fruitful and multiply obviously implies the virtue of non-virginity.

While the church was the means by which many attitudes were imposed upon people, it was with their implicit consent. I suspect that the church then was the focus of social attitudes, and was manipulated by society just as any other institution was, and that it is invalid to judge it as somehow external, acting upon rather than as a part of society as a whole.

While not a student of Rome, I am a student of literature, and the claim that writers best express the tone of the times is being misused. Fitzgerald was, no doubt, expressing the ideals of the jet set, but the jet set was hardly the majority. What about Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein? Even today, which authors do you think capture the tone of the times? Ayn Rand or Norman Mailer? James Baldwin or Russell Kirk? Heinlein or Disch? THE FEMALE MAN, THE DISPOSSESSED, or DHALGREN? Or maybe STARSHIP TROOPERS?

As for footnotes, I have no intention of requiring proper notation. But in discussions of this sort, it is useful to at least cite references. The biggest major criticism of George Fergus' lengthy article a few issues ago was the lack of formal references.)))

[ERIC MILLER]

Ah, an opportune moment to air my favorite theory about the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West. Rare occasion, this. I hold that one major contributing factor was the absence of an industrial revolution in Rome. Rome was culturally and technologically parasitic; the inspiration for its art, furniture, weaponry, religion, and governmental organization came from outside. Hellenistic influence was particularly strong. This in itself was not unhealthy: borrowing ideas is a legitimate and universally practiced means of cultural advancement. But the Romans rarely added their own technical improvements to whatever method or mechanism they appropriated. Constant innovation is necessary for constant development; the Romans were not innovators, and they stagnated. A possible explanation for this curious lack of inventiveness lies in the Roman educational system. Roman pedagogues placed great emphasis on rhetoric; consequently, they cultivated brilliant administrators and lawyers, men who could quibble eloquently over the niceties of a legal dispute or run a complex bureaucratic hierarchy with consummate ease. But the intellectual climate was inhospitable for creative endeavor and probably smothered the Alexander Bells and Albert Einsteins of the day. Even from that barbaric period now dubbed the Dark Ages, inventions more significant than any that ever appeared in Rome emerged: the tandem harness, the heavy-wheeled plow, the horseshoe, and the first effective horse collar.

The Roman army conveniently illustrates the Roman lack of innovation, and its consequences. Throughout its five century existence, the army relied almost entirely on heavy infantry. Roman cavalry always occupied the wings and usually operated as a delaying and skirmishing force. Although the Romans repeatedly battled mounted archers and lancemen, sustaining considerable losses in the process, they doggedly continued their reliance on infantry. I say "considerable losses"; this is vague. On the plains of Praaspa, 16 legions under Marcus Antonius engaged a smaller Parthian force, consisting of mounted bowmen. The Romans lost 14000 infantrymen; in total the Parthians lost 400 warriors. Yet Roman commanders refused to recognize or ameliorate the shortcomings of their infantry-based system. A soldier of the Late Republic, transported miraculously into the late empire, would notice virtually no difference in the uniform and arms of his later counterpart. Cavalry was never used to any advantage by the Romans.

Rome's success against minor powers such as the Asian princes can be attributed not to innovative tactics and original strategy, but to unshakable determination, a large tax base from which to draw funds, a huge manpower pool from which to recruit reinforcements, and a superlative administrative technique.

Concerning the Curlovich-Keller debate: Keller is consistently more reasoned and thoughtful; his arguments are elegant. Keller also avoids the emotional pitfalls that Curlovich stumbles into.

[GENE WOLFE]

I wish I knew enough history to join Curlovich and Keller; I do not. But I can't resist commenting that I have read descriptions like Curlovich's "these odd sectarians, blackening the roads of the empire as they rushed about fighting heresy, wearing hair shirts, inserting pebbles in their sandals, never eating full meals and never smiling..." elsewhere (I think first in H.G. Wells's OUTLINE OF HISTORY);

and it has always seemed to me that though all those things may be true, there must have been a great deal besides that was true as well. Those things would never convince anyone. Those things would repel everyone.

We moderns find it very easy to be hard on medieval parish priests for their attitude toward sex; but we moderns have effective means of birth control, clean obstetric wards, and a cure for gonorrhea. Who can guess today how many women in their twenties a priest of (say) 1077 A.D. had buried by the time he was forty? The echoes of their screams died long ago.

[ROBERT WHITAKER]

John Curlovich assumes because pagan Rome fell and the Christians took over that the Christians were responsible. At that point, Christianity took over, not as a religious force, but as a political movement. It saw an opportunity and took advantage of it. I don't like Christianity any more than Curlovich does, but I don't see any reason to heap up fabrications on an admittedly hazy subject.

I admire Curlovich's love of classical literature, an area where I've only wet my toes and quietly dried them. Juvenal was one of those old poets of old Rome who wrote about the city's rot and decay and moral collapse, wrote pretty frankly about the lack of proper sewage in the center of Rome and the foul odors which persisted everlong until the rains came...the glories of Rome, the persistent glitter, the seeming sweetness of old pagan life...well, these folks had their own horrors and problems. People just like to overlook them.

[POUL ANDERSON]

Mark Keller is obviously on much sounder ground than John Curlovich in his evaluation of Classical civilization vs. its Western/Christian successor. As Herbert J. Muller remarked (quoted from memory), "There was always a great deal of hell in Hellas." To judge Greece only by Euripides or Rome only by Marcus Aurelius is like judging the West only by St. Francis of Assisi. Even extreme asceticism and fear of hellfire to come had their pre-Christian antecedents, e.g., among the Pythagoreans, and pagans persecuted Christians while they were able -- admittedly more for political than ideological reasons -- as vigorously as Christians later persecuted pagans and heretics.

Indeed, our romantic view of the Classical world as being inhabited exclusively by philosophers, patriots, and handsome athletes is itself pretty much a Christian invention. First the medieval world simply looked back wistfully to what it imagined had been a golden age of security and prosperity. Then, in the later Middle Ages and still more during the Renaissance, Europe came to look upon that era as the source of all worthwhile culture (while gaining a somewhat more realistic view of its politics, as seen for instance in Machiavelli).

Mr. Curlovich's anticlericalism seems unduly to bias him against Christianity. Actually, on balance the Christian record seems no worse than any other, and better than most. For instance, bad though the Inquisition and witch hunts of Cortez's time were, Indians flocked to his side when he set out to overthrow the Aztecs. Most of our ideas about humanitarianism and social justice derive from the Church. It is debatable to what extent our ideas about individual liberty do, but some influence is clearly demonstrable. To a large extent, the crimes against humanity committed by Christians, including those in power who committed them in the name of faith, represent a failure to live up to Christian ideals. On the other hand, Roman genocides, gladiatorial games, systematic dehumanization of slaves, etc. represent no such failure because there ~~was~~ no such ideal.

[RICK BROOKS]

Curlovich and Keller are fun. Both pick different positions to defend with Keller willing to admit that there are viewpoints other than his. Both tend to ignore pertinent arguments of the other. I do fault Curlovich on "the many books the Greeks and Romans left behind them". Literally a drop in the bucket when compared to what they didn't leave behind them. We can't be sure that we have a representative sample of the whole time span.

((Nor can we be sure that the great writers of the day were representative of the majority of people of that time.)))

(BUCK COULSON)

Curlovich and Keller both show up as better name-callers than they do as historians. Keller in particular seems more interested in rephrasing Curlovich for easier refutation than he does in reading what Curlovich actually said.

((Ah, but it's such high class name calling.)))

[BRETT COX]

I am not nearly as conversant with world history as I should be, so I'm not qualified to comment on the Curlovich/Keller debate. But I am interested in history and have recently become especially interested in early Europe, so I found their debate fascinating and rather instructive. It seems to me that, while both men are obviously knowledgeable, Keller has a better grasp of the facts, while Curlovich is hampered by a desperate need to find glory and supremacy in ancient cultures and therefore ignores facts that indicate whatever glory and supremacy in these cultures was attained, was more likely than not based on war, slavery, and other not-so-nice pastimes.

[RAY DAVIS]

Curlovich didn't come off very well in the MYTHOLOGIES Debate Club section. Keller's reply matched what I know about Classic and Medieval times much better than Curlovich's views. Keller's case is also undeniably aided by his being the better writer. Some fans may take offense at the force of his personal attacks on Curlovich, but there's no doubt that Curlovich went just as far in his piece. Personally, I don't see much point in either side indulging in such tactics; surely it's possible to discuss the merits and demerits of differing views of history by comparing evidence without directly attacking another writer's intelligence and skill. Virtually all such remarks could've been cut out of both statements without affecting the arguments in the least -- and it would have made things a lot easier for the people involved, not to mention those readers who are easily distracted by name-calling. It's this sort of thing that turns discussionzines into feudzines. (That's the problem with fandom -- too many feudo-intellectuals.)

At any rate, I wish that Keller had, in his rebuttal, gone on to Curlovich's interpretation of the Middle Ages. Curlovich charges Keller with "literal-mindedness" by confusing Christianity's pro-peace theories with the actual (warlike) practice of the Church. Curlovich seems to be doing much the same thing as regards chastity and the sensual pleasures, as well as not taking into account the varying nature of the Church, which was far from being constant in policies and practice. Curlovich seems to be taking the reformers as typical leaders of the Church. It's true that they are perhaps the best known, but that's at least partly due to the Church emphasizing their holiness while staying away from the less (small-p) puritanical portions of their history. In many periods, the monks and bishops -- even the Pope himself -- were as fleshly and "happily lustful" as anyone might

desire. And please, let's not forget that the philosophers of the Classical world also frequently urged self-abnegation. As for the case of Apuleis: would any group seeking converts, no matter what its views (in the Church's case, undeniably slanted for the most part toward chastity), appreciate a book in which a typical member of the group was pictured as a "villainness" and "slut"?

((I had very mixed feelings about the invective in the exchange, but since John felt that he had been personally attacked earlier, and since his style is acerbic in any case, it seemed only fair to follow his wishes for an unedited response. And having allowed one that liberty, I could hardly deny it to the other. I suspect my red pen will be more active in future such cases.

THE BAD POPES by E.R. Chamberlain provides some interesting insights into the less, er, highly regarded Popes.)))

[TONY DALMYN]

I don't want to embroil myself in the Curlovich/Keller debate. I note however that Curlovich relies on quotes from the ancients to support his position. Surely he would not seriously accept the pronouncements of most contemporary writers upon our society as conclusive as to the state of our culture. Indeed, often the quotes that he uses are the self-serving "for the record" comments made by well-meaning windbags.

Curlovich takes the Catholic Church's position on Vietnam as evidence of something, a warlike tenor to Christianity. Not so. The position of the American Church is partly one of non-alignment. The historical Church-state split revered in the US depends on the Church never questioning the political-economic forces of the day. That amounts to abdication to the status quo - but also an attack on what will inevitably become a status quo as undesirable and stale as today's. It is a religious version of "Who gives a damn". It is not an expression of martial ardour. And the Church position was anything but firm, witness the Berrigans, Eugene McCarthy, et al.

[GEORGE FLYNN]

Mark again does a good job of refuting John Curlovich, but I think I can find a number of points he didn't get around to. Mark does point out that Athens did not fit Curlovich's image of it, but it should also be noted that Athens was not typical of Greek culture either. Of the dozens of Greek city-states, Athens was the one which offered the best environment for writers; this ensured its dominant place in subsequent history, but what real importance it had at the time was primarily the result of military predominance (which was of course what made that cultural environment possible). The typical Greek city had a much lower level of high culture; the error here is the same as judging contemporary American society by New York and Hollywood.

Curlovich claims the Goths were not Germans, on the ground that the Classical writers distinguished between the two terms. But this merely indicates that Tacitus et al were ignorant of linguistics; now we know better, and use "Germans" for all the Germanic-speaking peoples, rather than in Tacitus's geographical sense. Both usages are arbitrary generalizations, of course: it wasn't until around the 10th century that "Germans" began to refer to themselves collectively as such. In the same paragraph, Curlovich's reference to cooperation between Goths and Huns neglects the difference between the acts of individuals and of nations; the same is true of the Huns who turned Christian individually, after the Hunnish state had ceased to exist. Odoacer was not king of the Ostrogoths but of the Heruli;

the Ostrogoths in turn overthrew him a few years later. A small point, but suggestive.

It is a strange contradiction for Curlovich to charge the Christians with welcoming the fall of Rome, yet criticize them for requiring men to serve in the Roman army. More remarkable is his inability to recognize facts in contemporary history, by charging American churches with opposing Vietnam War resisters. Now there were certainly many church dignitaries who did so; but anyone familiar with the antiwar movement knows it was permeated with clergymen. As for the Catholic church in particular, I have here some quotes from its most official recent declarations on war and peace (Second Vatican Council, 1965): "But it is one thing to undertake military action for the just defense of the people, and something else again to seek the subjugation of other nations...Neither does the mere fact that war has unhappily begun mean that all is fair between the warring parties." "Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their populations...merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation." "It is our clear duty, then, to strain every muscle as we work for the time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent...Hence everyone must labor to put an end at last to the arms race, and to make a true beginning of disarmament...backed up by authentic and workable safeguards." And on the specific point at issue, "it seems right that laws make humane provisions for the case of those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms..." Nearly all major Protestant bodies have issued similar statements. Now of course the rank and file for the most part ignore these principles: the temptation to render to Caesar whatever he wants is as strong as in the fourth century. But this attitude is now clearly in opposition to official Christian teaching, not in accordance with it.

That "civilization" means "world of cities" is true only in the most remote etymological sense. The word was not invented until the 18th century, and originally was a prosaic legal term referring to the conversion of a criminal case to a civil one. In its wider sense, "the world of civility" (i.e., those virtues appropriate to a citizen) would be closer to the meaning. But then, one does not expect etymological sophistication from one who refers to "Webster's dictionary" as if that meant anything.

The prayer for the Roman Empire that Mark quotes of course referred to the Holy Roman Empire. It therefore was withdrawn from use after 1806 (except in Austria), though the text wasn't withdrawn from the missal until the complete revision in the 1950's. (It's interesting that the Church recognized all the Holy Roman Emperors after 1530 only as "acting", since none of them bothered to come to Rome to be crowned.)

[JOHN LELAND]

Keller has done an admirable job of answering Curlovich, but there are so many questionable (or worse) statements in Curlovich's remarks that Keller could not possibly have dealt with them all, and I would like to add a few points of my own. I may begin by remarking that, like Keller, I can claim professional expertise to some degree; I am an M.A. (and Ph.D. candidate) in Medieval Studies at Yale.

First, there is the question of whether the Greco-Roman culture was military-minded. A prime piece of evidence is found in Herodotus (Rawlinson's translation, Book I, Section 29-30). The Asiatic king Croesus asks the Athenian statesman Solon who, in his opinion, was the happiest of men. Solon offers an Athenian named Tel-lus. Why? Because he lived to see his grandchildren, and then "...his end was surpassingly glorious. In a battle between the Athenians and their neighbors near

Eleusis, he came to the assistance of his countrymen, routed the foe, and died upon the field gallantly. The Athenians gave him a public funeral on the spot where he fell, and paid him the highest honors." There is some question whether the interview between Solon and Croesus took place, but there is no question that the tale was told, with manifest approval, by an ancient Greek writing for an Athenian audience. If this was what the Athenians called surpassingly glorious, what can be said of the Spartans? They dominated Greece far longer than the Athenians (off and on) and I don't suppose that even such a selective scholar as Curlovich would deny their military ideals. I trouble to make this point because Keller's rejoinder referred chiefly to either earlier (Homeric) or later (Roman) times and I can imagine Curlovich saying that his ideal was the intervening period, the "Golden Age" of Athens.

I would make another point Keller did not. The Greeks and Romans in their pagan days were no more tolerant of philosophers who criticized their gods and wars than were even the worst medieval bigots (I would not deny, any more than Keller, that there were plenty of medieval bigots). It was not Christians but free, pagan Athenians, chosen by lot, and therefore a fair random sample, who condemned Socrates to death after one of those rhetorical displays Curlovich admires so much. It was good gods-fearing Athenians who exiled Anaxagoras for his proto-scientific theories. Euripides, whose moving words Curlovich quotes, is said to have narrowly escaped death because his tragedy THE TROJAN WOMEN was considered by the Athenian mob to reflect on their treatment of a conquered city (which was, as usual, brutal). Puritanism was hardly unknown to the ancients either. We are aware that some Greeks and Romans were by no means strait-laced largely because we have the horrified and often viciously nasty attacks on them made by their fellow-citizens. Classical literature from Aristophanes to Juvenal includes violent denunciations of sexual deviations and excesses. Augustus (whose own private life was hardly exemplary in some ways) exiled Ovid, apparently for some sort of immorality. And more examples could be given. The picture of the "ancients" as happy, uninhibited free-thinkers and the medieval folk as miserable, puritannical bigots was very popular with romantic writers, and even some genuine scholars, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but I know of no scholar today who would not regard it as a grotesque caricature.

As regards the fall of Rome, I would agree with Keller that it is not so much that Curlovich is necessarily wrong in an absolute sense -- there are still reputable scholars who would lay the chief blame on the barbarians and the Church, though they may be a minority at present -- as that he is far too extreme in claiming that his interpretation of the evidence is the only possible one. The scholarly consensus, insofar as there is one, is, I think, closer to Keller's view -- there were many causes for the fall, and the economic and social collapse of the city-state system contributed as much or more than the barbarians and the Church.

Certain points of detail do require correction. Curlovich says that the Vandals were Athanasian Christians. In fact, they were more bigoted Arians than the Goths. Some of the Vandal kings actively persecuted the orthodox in Africa, which was one of the excuses for the invasion and destruction of the Vandal kingdom by the Byzantine emperor Justinian. (See Procopius. There is also, I might remark, an Arian Vandal exile, Fritharick, in De Camp's LEST DARKNESS FALL, which is not evidence but may interest those readers who care for SF). The only barbarian tribe which converted directly to orthodox Christianity from paganism were the Franks, and they did not do so till about 500 A.D. (the exact date is currently under debate) -- at all events at least twenty years after the nominal "fall of Rome" in 476. During the "Fall" period the leading barbarian tribes were all either Arians or

pagans; it was the last defenders of Roman civilization who were orthodox Christians (and, in many cases, bigots, like Justinian, who was far less tolerant than the Arian Ostrogoths he was fighting in Italy). As regards the Huns, I refer Curlovich and others to a compilation of sources called THE AGE OF ATTILA, which contains the meager surviving material. The claims of conversion of Huns are there, but it is clear that they refer to individuals or minor subgroups; the Hunnish nation as a whole was pagan aristocracy ruling largely Arian Germanic vassal-tribes right up until its destruction by those tribes.

As regards the deposition of the last Western Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, which Curlovich attributes to "Odovacar, King of the Ostrogoths", Odovacar was neither a king nor an Ostrogoth. He was a mercenary commander of a miscellaneous collection of barbarians in Roman service, and his personal tribal affiliation is uncertain. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, THE BARBARIAN WEST, describes him as a Hun; others, I believe, as a Rugian. He did not think of himself as ending the Roman Empire in the west: he simply sent the western imperial regalia to the Eastern Emperor and claimed to rule Italy under the Roman title of Patrician. The real King of the Ostrogoths at the time, Theodoric the Great, in fact deposed Odovacar at the request of the eastern emperor. It takes real genius to confuse the issue to the extent Curlovich has done.

As to whether the Goths were Germans, I think it largely a meaningless question. In those days there was no official "German" nation of which one either was or was not a citizen. The Goths spoke a Germanic language, although it was of a different branch than the direct ancestors of modern German. They may or may not have come from Scandinavia originally (the point is still debated) but they first appear in history in southern Russia and the Balkans. Like most of the other barbarians they travelled very widely. I tend to feel myself that their language meant more to them than their geographical position, and hence would accept the term "German" for them in a loose sense.

I agree with Keller that Curlovich's picture of Augustine and Orosius cheering on Alaric to the sack of Rome does not, to put it mildly, square with what we know of their lives and writings. But unless Curlovich has evidence to offer I think the idea too incredible to be worth debating.

It also seems worth pointing out that Curlovich is, so far as I know, unique, in saying that the Church contributed to the fall of Rome by encouraging the military interests of the barbarians. Others who blame the Church as at least a contributory cause usually say it was at fault for discouraging such interests among the late Romans. Before the conversion of Constantine many early Christians were strongly pacifistic; some of the early martyrs were soldiers who refused orders to fight. Even after the Empire became officially Christian, although the Church accepted the justice of war in defence of the empire, the best Christian leaders would not condone the excesses of Christian emperors. St. Ambrose is known for his denunciation of a massacre by the Emperor Theodosius. The first heretics to be executed in the West -- the followers of Priscillian -- were executed by the usurper Maximus over the protests of the leaders of the Church.

FROMM AND MAY

[DAVID MOYER]

Fromm advocates a society in which each individual has a vote in the decisions that will influence his/her life. In theory Fromm's idea is likeable; I know that I wouldn't mind having a small say in many of the issues that have recently been passing through Washington. But in practice Fromm's idea is about as practical as

trying to fit a bumble bee with a space suit. My main gripe is with the "lifelong system of formal education" that you mentioned. While at school during spring term I spent the majority of my non-sleeping hours studying just four courses. By the end of that term I had acquired enough knowledge to allow me to attain good grades for each course. But in the overall view of the term I am still a novice in each of those fields. At the end of four years of study I will not hold the rank of novice in only one field - my major. That's four years of study in order to get a firm grasp on one field. Yet Fromm wants every individual to vote on issues that will encompass every possible field of study.

I agree with you that Fromm's "apolitical group would soon possess control in a more absolute manner than ever before in history, and human freedom would be dead." But let's live in a fantasy world for a while and assume that such an apolitical group would work for the whole and not for their own end means. Human freedom would still be dead, or at least it would be flopping around like a fish out of water, because no one would have time to pursue a trade, or craft, or anything that is not connected with the political machinery.

Fromm makes a valid observation about love, and you make a strong point by saying that "if a man and woman feel a close relationship, they recognize it as love, and therefore conclude that it is necessary for them to have sex. And it just isn't so." But I would go as far as to say that the converse is also gaining popularity - sex without love is acceptable. I say this because many males of about my age (20) are only interested in that. They're not interested in love but in quenching their sexual desires.

((Part of the latter is the myth of the physical need for males to have sex. Sex is obviously a strong drive for most people. On the other hand, while in Vietnam I observed that males (married as well as single) felt that it was an admission of unmanliness to ever refuse the opportunity to patronize a prostitute. They excused their adultery as necessary to their physical health.)))

[JOE NAPOLITANO]

It seems to me that you are a latent conservative and don't know it. Not that being a conservative is bad or anything but it is obvious that you like May far better than you like Fromm. The two men are at opposite ends of the political spectrum and you tend to come down on May's side. Personally I don't like either one. Neither has proved his case as far as I am concerned.

((Since May is considered a liberal and Fromm is obviously a socialist, I find your description of them as at opposite ends of the political spectrum amusing. Since my own political views tend to run toward socialism I find that aspect of your remarks hilarious. You're right, though; I do like May better than Fromm. I think May has a better judgment of what's really going on; Fromm is a glassy eyed dreamer out of touch with reality.)))

[RAY DAVIS]

You made some good points in your discussion of Fromm's theories, but it seemed to me that you didn't point out some equally obvious errors in May's. As you say, he seems to be particularly weak in his knowledge of history. For example, violent, unsubtle, "sick" humor is hardly a recent development, as any student of literature can tell you. It has been popular throughout history even among the most sophisticated (DON QUIXOTE's success is the most obvious example; it's full of violent humor, although this aspect is usually played down in these more squeamish days). On the contrary, it's the tendency to find any form of cruelty unamusing that is the

recent development. The "insistence on a split between reason and emotion" can also not be called new. Greek and Roman philosophers made a careful distinction between the two, and the debates between the proponents of "reason" as against the emotion-ruled idea of "sensitivity" was perhaps the chief question in Western intellectual life of the 18th and 19th centuries.

[GRAHAM ENGLAND]

With modern telecommunication, using Telex, TV, and telephones, a distributed democracy could be very fast. Decisions made by hundreds of assemblies could be integrated in a matter of days. It would not be cheap, and might not be as cheap as actually moving people about, but it is not impossible. Plainly this integration gives considerable power to the integrators. Since several hundred decisions of perhaps one thousand words each need to be represented as evidence at each decision making level, information distortion must set in. We often call this distortion abstraction, paraphrase, or precis. I've noticed that no one enjoys having their ideas summarized in that way. This summarization occurs normally and is part of life. It is generally objected to and must get worse as more people appear to have more ideas, all different.

((Even with all our modern devices, it would still be too cumbersome. You would have to assume that nothing was discussed before voting. It just isn't practical to consult every citizen directly before each decision is made on a national level. Neither is it likely to be desirable. Can someone with no knowledge whatsoever of energy consumption make useful decisions on nuclear energy development?)))

[DONALD FRANSON]

Isn't it strange that socialists like Fromm always like to compare present Capitalism with ideal Socialism? That's unfair. I haven't much to add to your rebuttal. In fact you present the arguments against him so well that you leave little room for any additional comment. Is that good, in a fanzine?

((Probably not, but thanks for the comment anyway.)))

THE ODBERT COVER

[MARK SHARPE]

I liked the cover but have never heard of the artist. He is very good and the cover is the first female centaur I've seen...that I can remember anyway. I think Taral does a few but I can't remember seeing any. One thing that has always bothered me about centaurs though is the internal organ/skeletal structure. I can hear the cries of fakefan filling the air. Really, a centaur has two torsos, both of which would probably have a heart, lungs, stomach, intestines, liver, bladder, pancreas, the other organs, plus a modified rib cage and other structures. Many authors use these and other fantasy creatures which have equally impossible innards but fail to explain why a fantasy beastie would need to be built like they portray. To me it seems just as plausible as giant ants and spiders in the 1950's horror shows.

[MARK SWANSON]

The cover is beautiful. Somehow your cover girl looks part antelope rather than part horse to me, which makes sense. Evolution presumably favors centaurs that can run fast rather than those who can carry bipeds.

((Of course in a fantasy world, it is not necessary to justify creatures in terms of biology or evolution.)))

[DAVID TAGGART]

Bewitching cover by James Odbert. For some reason, I have been keeping MYTHOLOGIES on the top of my fanzines-to-be-locced pile, and I believe that Odbert's cover is the reason.

[RICK BROOKS]

The Odbert cover carries on the MYTHOLOGIES tradition quite well. Another good one.

[GARY DEINDORFER]

The cover is very fine. Very erotic centaur.

[FRED JACKSON III]

I never thought that I would lust after a centaur but you accomplished just that with the cover of MYTHOLOGIES 12. That is an erotic cover, my friend. She is sporting a come hither look if I ever saw one.

[MARK M. KELLER]

Nice job by Odbert. I look forward to antelope centaurs and reindeer centaurs and lion centaurs and...

SEX ROLES

[JERRY POURNELLE]

Holy cow! I begin to agree with those colleagues who tell me to stay away from fanzines. Really, people, I don't actually give much of a damn about the "sexist" argument. My household will not change one whit as a result of anyone's winning or losing the debate, and my wife holds her views on the subject much more emotionally than I do. Neither of us do housework, we having long ago found that we are both happier if that is hired out.

Moreover, fanzine debates are generally public dialogues, in which the parties do not talk to each other, but past each other for the benefit of the audience. I suppose I am as guilty of that as anyone -- and for me it is senseless; I would do far better to employ my time writing books if I want to talk to a lot of people.

I have a couple of questions. Ayres, who is generally sensible and well-informed, says that by every definition of species he knows the St. Bernard and the Mexican Hairless are separate species from the rest of the canines (or so I interpret his remark about the "mistake" in MOTE).

I can only turn to A DICTIONARY OF LIFE SCIENCES (E.E. Martin, ed.; MacMillan of London, 1976) and read: "Species. A unit used in the classification of plants and animals. Ideally a species is defined as a group of organisms that interbreed with each other to produce fertile offspring. Members of different species do not normally interbreed; if they do, the progeny are sterile." I then look out my window at the oh-so-fertile St Bernard/Beagle crossbreed bitch and wonder if (1) there is a definition more widely used in the professions and neither I nor Martin are aware of it, (2) the dog, despite protestations of her owner, is not really part St. Bernard, or (3) I have found something really valuable, like a three color tomcat, and should bring it to the attention of the biological authorities?

Indeed, the implication that we can breed a new species in a few dozens of years is profoundly disturbing and would have, I suppose, implications for the social sciences and racial theorists. I am willing to admit mistakes, but what "mistake"

.....

have we made in NOTE? I ask as a genuine question.

((If I might interpose here, I think you misunderstood his point. Don didn't say that a St Bernard was a distinct species from other dogs, but only from the Mexican Hairless. I assume his reasoning is that, since the two dogs cannot normally interbreed for physical reasons, they do not fall into the definition you cited as being the same species. I don't accept his reasoning, because I suspect cross-fertility rather than the physical means by which to consummate things is the deciding criterion, but since the whole concept of "species" is a man made thing in any case, I suppose there can be differing opinions of its definition.)))

Keller at least discusses evidence. Now I don't really care all that much about the sexism debate -- I made it very clear in my essay and notes that I hold my views rather tentatively and was concerned only to show that they are intellectually defensible, not the result of blind prejudice; that reasonable people might hold them, as reasonable people might hold their opposite. I do care that I not be castigated for what I didn't say, or for small sections lifted from paragraphs or sentences used out of context.

If it appeared that I ascribe to any single cause "all the social upheavals" since the 1940's, I apologize for being unclear. Obviously no sane person believes that (1) our social ills are caused by any single factor, or (2) that if they were the factor has been identified, or (3) that we have an adequate social science that allows us even to assert a theory of causation in human social movements. (There are a number of "principles" of statecraft, some going back to Aristotle, and a number of conflicting propositions about causation in human affairs, but I think the rash of pseudo-mathematical "systems" of psychology and sociology that so abounded when I was in graduate school have died away. At least I hope they have; taking a couple of indefinable concepts and linking them with what appear to be mathematical operations wastes the time of those who devise them and those who must memorize them.)

For my own part, I abandon the field, head bloody but unbowed.

((I don't really think that the reaction was a surprise to you. As you will recall, I provided you with an advance copy of George Fergus' article before acquiring your permission to reprint the original essay. And I'm sure you knew in advance that you were espousing an unpopular position. Frankly I was afraid that I was going to have to censor out many of the responses to you (particularly your comment that there are certain onerous tasks that women are better suited for) but the readers demonstrated more restraint than I expected. I don't feel you've been handled at all unfairly in the debate. And if you dismiss this kind of discussion as useless, you have to dismiss all discussions of controversial topics. The effect is no less from being in print in a fanzine than it would be in a bull session at a bar or in practically any other milieu. Did we change any positions? Overall, no; in some details, I suspect yes. I know I've modified some of my thinking.)))

[LAURIE MANN]

Anti-abortion is a stance, particularly for a woman, that I do not really comprehend. How can a person say to another, "I believe that what you are doing is murder and I am going to stop you" with a clear conscience?

((I am not going to debate abortion - at least not now - in MYTHOLOGIES. But I have to point out that your point is ludicrous. If a person really believes that abortion is murder, then he/she can't in good conscience NOT make such a statement.

As I see it, the whole abortion issue hinges around this one point, and it's a point that is unresolvable. The fact that you stand on one side of the issue does not mean that there are not honest, concerned people on the other side.)))

[JESSICA SALMONSON]

It is very frustrating and irksome to outline a theory and have it not debated, nor discussed for clarification, but invalidated by non sequiturs. Arguing for the sake of arguing,, without regard for the information actually presented, is not constructive. But worse, presenting ideas that are new to your readership is a waste of my time when these ideas are nullified by Joe Pine-isms that the audience will applaud as the final word. There is no arguing with a champion Joe Pine-ist, whose ego exceeds intellect.

I was discussing some personal perceptions on the differences between male and female, and you respond with "You are never going to win equality by legislation." Non sequitur. Had I been discussing equality by legislation, I'd have made much your same conclusion. I would have said that the first feminist movement was killed by the efforts of namby-pamby moderates who believed the Right To Vote made them equal; who upon achieving that vote said, "Thank you very much, sir" and went right back to their kitchens without any comprehension of why their lot hadn't magically changed with one gigantic bit of law reform. Men gave women the right to vote; now you point out with misplaced pride that men's vote is necessary for the ERA to pass. But legislation wins nothing. Women's strength will not be exercised by the good will of men.

I discussed the subtle, societal oppression that funnelled me into a secretarial job without my hardly realizing how I got there, and you say your favorite line: "support for the ERA is considerably higher among men than women, you know." Non sequitur. Had I been discussing ERA support, I would have considered the same fact. I would have pointed out that in every caste system (sexual, economic, or racial) it is the lowest on the totem who always resist restructure. In India, it is the non-people, not the ruling class, who most violently oppose change. In the Black struggle, Uncle Toms often out numbered warriors. In a classist society, the lower classes are turned against themselves for the service of the upper classes and the maintenance of the status quo. Why else does the working class find itself divided, women and Blacks who are hired on affirmative action battling with senioritied white males for five-digit incomes, while the Fat Cat Corporates are safe with their seven and eight digit incomes?

I also outlined for you the basic tenets of political lesbianism and lesbian feminism -- widely recognized principals that are new and alien to you personally -- and you call it simply "Crap". I don't appreciate being crapped on. It is not crap to the many heterosexual feminists who define themselves as political lesbians, seeking their peace of mind and freedom with other women; it is not crap to the many dykes who are confronted with the special fears of a patriarchy that perceives women who don't need men as dangerous to a society that demands women validate themselves through men. You paraphrase me poorly with "You say that...lesbianism is a political issue related to women's rights." Where did I say anything about rights? I said that to the patriarchy, lesbianism is -- whether I like it or not -- political. I did not add that it was related to women's "rights", and this is your subtlest non sequitur and your biggest twist of my statements. What it is related to is the fear of a paranoid, sick, male-controlled world, but I've no hope that you can understand that; after all, I didn't say anything about "political sex" and your misinterpreting lesbianism as a mere sex act shows me pretty much where your head is at (and why you think of crap).

My daily life, my survival, is influenced by these issues in a very major, critical fashion. I have a personal investment, and experience, you will never have to approximate. To me these are emotional, life and death issues. To you they are witless, pseudo-intellectual games: tin cans on a fence, you with a handful of rocks. Well I'm in one of those cans, privileged sir, and I'm tired of waiting for your rocks. You say I "can't experience life by running away from every conflict of opinion" which is disgustingly egotistical of you: your patronizing, elitist difference of opinion does not enrich my life experience one bit. It merely hurts me, endangers me, and angers me. Why should I value an argument riddled with non sequiturs from a privileged male who considers me crazy and wrong?

Your lowest-blow is: "You know darn well that what you've just outlined is as sexist as anything proposed by the most reactionary male." I know no such thing. Sexism means one thing, so learn it: cultural, social, and individual power used by men against women. There is no such thing as reverse sexism. Nor, if there was, is there any reason to assume my theories would fall into such a category. I am amazed and disgusted by men who leap up and down in defense of the basic differences between men and women, but who are burnt into little turds when I propose the theory that these differences may explain why early goddess-oriented civilizations lived in peace while the surviving god-military civilizations never have. It's a valid theory. If it is to be debated, it must be done with more than your you-know-better-than-that shit.

You say you agree there can be no free men until there are free women, but that "I'm not sure you believe that yourself. If you do, then you seem to be contradicting yourself." If I contradicted myself, you failed to show it, or even attempt to show it, or even to throw in one of your non sequiturs. You just say it, without pointing out conflicting data.

Read WHEN GOD WAS A WOMAN (Merlin Stone, Dial Press) and check the bibliography of THE FIRST SEX (Elizabeth Gold Davis, Anchor/Penguin) if you wish more information about the remarkable discoveries at Anatolia and similar ancient cities. What I said is not "false".

((Jessica and I exchanged a series of letters about this, which did not seem to help at all to bridge the gap between us. I still feel that much of our disagreement lies in semantics, but Jessica might well disagree. To illustrate though, let's look at two terms. As I interpret the word "sexist" in Jessica's letter, she has narrowly circumscribed its definition. She means it to apply solely to the instrumentalities of male suppression, oppression, or exploitation of women. Even if she was willing to grant that other instrumentalities exist which have the same effect on men for the benefit of women, she would say that another term needs to be used for it. I think I am interpreting this correctly, but so many of our basic terms seem to differ that it is hard to say. If I am essentially correct, then I reject her definition of the word, but not her arguments. Similarly, she defines "lesbianism" as a sort of esprit de corps rather than a sexual term. I think she defines lesbianism as a move toward self-actualization with other women. Again, I disagree with her definition but agree with her argument. It has always been a characteristic of our society that women have had difficulty making friends with other women, because (among other things) it is presupposed that they are competing for men. Why this should work with women and not men is a mystery to me, but it does seem to have a factual basis. Jessica's arguments are emotional, as she says, but basically sound. Her largest flaw, as I see it, is that she has assigned new meanings to existing words, and upsets people by what they think she said, rather than what she thought she said.

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That doesn't mean I agree with everything that Jessica said. I considered not responding at all because of the apparent language barrier, but there are a few points I think ought to be cleared up.

(1) I never expressed male pride that men's votes were necessary to pass the ERA. I was merely stating the fact, as part of my argument that it would be counter-productive to alienate all men needlessly. I don't think Jessica understood this.

(2) It is true that women are, by and large, directed to validate themselves thru men. To a great extent, the converse is true as well. A male's social prestige in his adolescent years are largely a function of his ability to not an attractive female companion. The pressure is detrimental to both sexes, probably - in this case at least - the female in particular.

(3) Lesbianism, the sexual act, is no more political than male homosexuality. By Jessica's definition, it certainly is. But I don't like Jessica's definition, because of the ease of misinterpretation. If she had said Sisterhood, or used a less emotionally loaded term, I doubt she'd get any argument.

(4) I never said there were basic differences between men and women, Jessica did. (Obviously, we're not talking about the physical organism.) Jessica accuses me of non sequiturs. Well, in one case at least, she's right, but it's because of my misunderstanding of her definition, not a subtle ploy. Jessica credits me with more subtlety than I possess. If I am guilty of non sequiturs then, Jessica is guilty of setting up a paper tiger. I never made any such statement, although I think I have an open mind on the subject. Mark Keller's remarks last issue seem to indicate I might be wrong.

(5) Even re-reading the relevant passages, I see no indication that Jessica was proposing the goddess-oriented, Anatolian, man-as-competitive, women as cooperative, argument as theory. It appears to me to have been presented as fact.

(6) I did not say that Jessica's description of Anatolia was false. I specifically asked for references so that I could investigate for myself. What I said was false was her assertion that there was universal acceptance of this theory. There isn't.

If nothing else, this interchange has taught me that it is a good idea to define the significant terms one uses. Had Jessica and I agreed to the meaning of a couple of words before starting the discussion, I at least suspect it would have been more amiable. It is clear reading my own remarks, with her definitions in mind, that they appear to be saying something else entirely. But, as we will see a bit later in the discussion of the MYTH on rebels, this isn't the only area where an ambiguous term caused an argument where there was essentially agreement.)))

[SHERYL SMITH]

George Fergus has made a lovely case for sexual role differences in nature and the variations in sex roles within human culture -- what an exhaustive and sensible piece of work! The fact that Pournelle seems more tentative in his afterward than in his original statement is a tribute indeed to this article. However, it seems to me that there are a few fallacies in Pournelle's argument itself that have been insufficiently dealt with, into which breach I am of course most happy to step.

Point #1: It is inconsistent in the extreme for Pournelle to accept non-humans and in some cases non-mammals as demonstrating the "natural" relationship between the

sexes, and yet disregard the different sex roles of fellow humans with the statement "the survival of primitive tribes with strange customs says little of relevance to us." An odd sense of relevance indeed to take birds and spiders for models of behavior (p. 72) while disregarding the actions of other members of our own species!

Point #2: Pournelle states repeatedly that it is at least possible that societies which do not attain "universal obliteration of cultural sexual dimorphism" ("in which most women retain the traditional role of home guard and child rearer") will survive while those that do not "will perish". Since he not only fails to give evidence for this notion (I doubt there is any, but he also even neglects to state his reasons for believing or suspecting this hypothesis, or suspicion), one cannot but conclude that the whole business is without rational foundation.

Point #3: Re his insistence that there are "temperamental differences between the human sexes" which are "biologically determined". My impression, gleaned from Fergus and others, is that we already know pretty much about this subject -- there have of course been recent studies -- and that no such non-cultural temperamental differences have been pinned down. These differences and Pournelle's "mechanism of determination" have been looked for in all the logical places already (hormones and chromosomes), and nothing to support his contention has been found. I submit that it is not a reasonable action to reject a sufficient body of evidence and base one's opinions on -- dare I say it -- prejudice. Oh yes, Pournelle submits as evidence the temperamental differences between his wife and himself and his male friends. Well, to belabor the obvious, aside from the personal bias involved in one's selection of a wife and friends, one woman and a small group of men do not begin to constitute a sufficient statistical sample from which one may validly generalize about the entire human race.

Point #4: Pournelle's statement that the assumption behind THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE is that history is cyclical and the fact that the cycle seems to have, conveniently and coincidentally, just gotten around to the 1950's conservative view of women (work till you can get a man, choose between marriage or a career) seems like a facile cop-out to me. But since I don't want to have to read the book, I won't belabor the point.

((Various objections notwithstanding, you ought to read the book. I make no apologies about my fondness for well written space opera.))

[ROBERT WHITAKER]

This bit you've mentioned several times on losing friends because they were women, or losing the potential of friendship: I've had it happen several times, and it does seem kind of odd. Once it happened that the friendship I had with a woman dissolved after I met her husband. He liked me to such a great extent he monopolized all subsequent conversations and meetings. His wife, though still liking me greatly, spoke through him to me. One woman I knew, a rabid SF fan, was very glad to let me meet her husband. He nodded and said "Hm?" a lot and listened while the two of us talked. He said afterwards he liked my company, for in listening to the two of us, he understood her better...and isn't that what friendships can be good for?

((Another syndrome, prevalent among my relatives, is that after a get-together meal, the women go off to the kitchen to clean up, and the men go into the living room to have a drink and solve the problems of the world. Frequently I prefer the solutions

coming from the kitchen, but most of the wives are less likely to speak openly in front of their husbands.)))

[ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE]

Pournelle states unequivocally that women in the Minoan culture had greater freedom than their counterparts on the mainland. For this there is not a single minuta of hard evidence, and we are profoundly ignorant of the daily life of the Minoans. True, there are papers by eminent experts which contain inferences and reasonable conclusions, but no proofs. As to religion, the bare bosomed beauty toying with snakes may be an amateur herpetologist, not a "Snake Goddess". A book has been published (Gordon) demonstrating that Linear A is old West Hebrew. Within the decade a semi-popular book has been published showing that the Minoan palace was funerary architecture. Minoan culture is a fruitful source of discussion (in particular the flush toilet in the queen's apartment). As yet the culture is at most proto-historic if not prehistoric.

[POUL ANDERSON]

The debate between Jerry Pournelle and George Fergus, while interesting, is harder to comment on because we do have so few hard data on inherent differences or non-differences between the sexes of man. I myself would be surprised if it should be proven that -- statistically, of course -- no genetic variations exist between the psyches as well as the somas of the sexes and, for that matter, the races. (However, "race" is such an ill-defined word that most discussion in this area has consisted merely of verbal knee-jerks on all sides.) If this is indeed the case, then man is unique among the vertebrates.

The problem is to find out what the inheritable characteristics, if any, are. Environment does have a tremendous effect. For example, it was long taken for granted that feelings of closeness to the young and a strong urge to care for them are "natural" to the mother in far greater degree than to the father. This was seriously questioned when psychologists began to note that fathers who had much to do with their children from infancy on developed the same kind of emotions. (It happened to me, for one.) Then anthropologists pointed out that this is not at all uncommon in many "primitive" societies where the men are around home base about as much as their wives; even such otherwise cruel peoples as the Sioux and Iroquois produced paternal feelings and behavior indistinguishable -- except for nursing -- with those we had been thinking of as maternal. Apparently such a parental "set" is latent in both sexes, but early and close exposure to the infant is necessary to actuate it, and until fairly recently, few husbands in our culture and many others got such exposure.

So conceivably physical aggressiveness, as usually defined, is brought about by circumstances more than by the Y chromosome. If so, one can easily see why it is nearly always expressed more in the male than the female; few women have the physical bulk and strength to make it pay off. Yet the bullying wife is found in many cultures; and my own, quite unscientific observation throughout life has been that, by and large, women are more aggressive and less compromising in private life than men are.

As for mental capabilities, who knows? In my own line of work, today's high incidence of first-rank women writers, as well as the many in the past when there was less encouragement of them, seems to indicate that in this area the sexes are born equal. On the other hand, I know of no first-rank women composers, ever. Noteworthy female painters and sculptors seem, at best, very rare. Perhaps I am simply ignorant of them, or perhaps women simply had inadequate opportunity in these areas

until today, when the decadence of the graphic arts leaves us with no great men in them either. One could go on trying to make comparisons, with due allowance for historical circumstances, in all creative fields.

The point is, none of this has any scientific value. Amaury de Riencourt (SEX AND POWER IN HISTORY) does try to argue a case that most people today would call "masculinist" on biochemical as well as historical grounds -- but goes into speculations about prehistory which are as wildly unfounded as Salmonson's, and, while he does examine other civilizations than the Western, has very little to say about anthropological findings -- not that these have any clear meaning for the present argument anyway. I do recommend the book as a corrective to some of the more strident feminists.

A few attempts are being made to establish empirically what kinds and degrees of sexual dimorphism, if any, are genetically determined in man. Not only are these being met with violent opposition, often amounting to suppression, like similar studies of race -- but I suspect that in either case, even given full freedom and ample funding, they wouldn't get far, at least not in our lifetimes. To start with, we don't even really know yet what the parameters are which we might try to measure.

However, all such issues can become academic if we simply live up to our own ideal, the traditional American one, and remove all artificial barriers and handicaps from the individual. As they used to express it when I was young, "An equal opportunity for everybody to become equal." This has its own social costs, of course, but they are orders of magnitude smaller than the costs of Big Brother's interventions.

((Or the rephrasing that I prefer: "All men and women are created equal, in the eyes of the law." Even assuming that one could determine that the sexes differed with respect to Behavior A, individual women would vary as much as individual men, and only the actions of any one person could determine his or her behavior.)))

[DOUG BARBOUR]

I found the Fergus piece fascinating, and, unlike Jerry, had no difficulty in accepting most of what he said, nor in seeing "relevance" in the behavior of "primitive tribes with strange customs". For one thing, if McLuhan is correct, we're returning



to a form of tribalism (all changed utterly, admittedly, by our technologies). For another, simply because such behavior reveals human potentials. Pournelle does score a point with his "presumption" that Fergus' reports are correct; the scholarly part of me would have liked full footnotes, but another part realizes that a fanzine is likely not the place for them.

I don't think the problem really has to do too much with how Fergus or Pournelle would "read" the evidence. Pournelle makes a good case for an open mind from his side as well as from Fergus', as far as the scientific evidence is concerned. But we have been talking about SF. It strikes me that a lot of the problem is critical, by which I mean it's a problem having to do with various persons' perceptions of the literature. Pournelle is right; he has written a number of commentaries on MOTE and all of them have been at some pains to defend the characterizations, especially that of Lady Sally, as well as the concept of cyclical history.

I'll get back to the characterizations in a moment, but let's look at that concept of cyclical history. Why should the cycle have returned to basic 1950's WASP home-life and mores (which were still quite Victorian then, and sure seem to be in the novel)? Why not a cycle which in returning to a semi-feudal political set-up also returns to the mores of that time, which was not prudish, as MOTE's culture is definitely shown to be? Why not a cycle which returns to a situation in which women of the upper classes at any rate held a lot of power and fought alongside their men (I think Pournelle's own beloved Scotland had such women, and they would not have been the coy fool the lady Sally so often turns out to be)?

Well, of course, this is bringing me to the question of characterization. Having read A SPACESHIP FOR THE KING, I have to admit that Pournelle is good at the sort of thing that he does there, and can handle at a basic level the characterizations of men in groups, especially such groups as the army. Kept sufficiently distanced, the characters in MOTE are OK too. But the one woman, let alone some of the important men, cannot be kept so distanced; the authors want to do more than write a simple space opera. They have written a damn fine first contact story, but they haven't written a novel of characterization, and they'd be better off just keeping silent about that. Lots of people, even I, liked MOTE for the things it did well; but that did not include characterization.

I believe that one of the major things the anti-sexist SF readers want is solid characterization of everyone in the story. They would like to see extrapolations which argued that continued changes in society will change cultural values and give women equivalence to men, but I imagine that most of them would be willing to accept the possibility of cultures going "backward" and of women being chattels, etc, in certain carefully developed cultures. But they want, now, the other as well, and solid characterization of women characters anyway.

[ALAN BOSTICK]

The long section on sex roles and biology was quite interesting, although it is almost tediously large. As far as the debate between Pournelle and Fergus, I feel that Pournelle came out ahead, although I do not wholly agree with his views at all. Fergus comes up with a lot of data, but his conclusions seem rather vague to me. Fergus makes a rather interesting point on page 31: that our sex roles became polarized with the advent of agriculture. This idea smacks of rightness to me, the more so when I consider the fact that the Women's movement has come (historically speaking) simultaneously with the advent of technology and modern medicine. Since life expectancies have risen to the point where women no longer are forced to be baby-

producing machines to ensure the survival of some of their children to adulthood, and since modern schools care for children for much of their childhood, modern women are given an amount of freedom that is unprecedented in history, so it is only fair that they should wish to take advantage of it.

Anne Laurie Logan says that SF doesn't offer any believable and acceptable role models for females. This is the case because SF doesn't (or at least not until recently) offer believable models for either sex. The hero with the firm jaw who can build a disintegrator ray on the spur of the moment out of baling wire and an old beer can is just as ridiculous a stereotype as the chesty heroine who faints at the sight of the least BEM. Kids don't read SF because it provides role models; there's enough other trashy juvenile fiction for them to read if their inclinations run in that direction. Kids read SF because of that almost-cliche, the sense of wonder. It is interesting to note, though, that many female fans had a tendency to identify with the male protagonists of the stories they read, and to hell with their sex.

[RAY DAVIS]

I was disappointed, at first, to see the articles on feminism. You'd think that the topic had been kicked around long enough in fandom, certainly long enough that there are few new things to say on the topic and little chance that any opinions would be changed at this late date. My disappointment increased upon reading Pournelle's essay. Full of unsupported and faulty reasoning, it seemed ill thought-out -- a rushed job. I was not looking forward to Fergus' reply, which I expected to be just as sloppy. But Fergus' article turned out to be a most enjoyable surprise. It's the most informative, closely reasoned piece on the subject I've seen to date in fannish or mundane publications. A very impressive article, which I intend to read often and press others to read. My only complaint is the lack of notes. After this superb performance, I'm afraid that Pournelle's "Afterwords" seemed even worse thought-out than his original attempt to discuss the issue. Perhaps lack of time kept him from examining his views carefully and thoroughly, though I suspect that lack of inclination played a more important role.

I was pleased to read your reply to Anne Laurie Logan. Many feminists seem to feel that the way to overcome society's prejudices about women is to replace them with equally vicious generalizations about men. This tactic never fails to irritate me, as the things they say about "men" rarely seem to include me (or many intelligent males of my acquaintance), and I certainly regard myself as a man. The men who do fit their generalizations have generally been forced into the role in much the same way that most women in the past have been forced into theirs. I particularly take offense at her assertion that all men who support feminism do so merely as a prelude to seduction.

As for why women "are more aware of their status", I doubt if publicity is the reason so much as money. Many women did not strongly feel the need to be liberated until they looked for a job and found that not only was it more difficult for a woman to get work, but that once gotten, she would probably receive less pay than a man doing an equivalent job.

((To be fair, I don't think Anne Laurie meant to imply that all males who espouse feminist views are necessarily using it as a pretext for seduction. Just off the top of my head, I suggest that few homosexuals who support feminists would fall in that class. On the other hand, I know of at least two men who profess feminist views whenever they can get an audience, and who appear upset that their women friends don't immediately gallop off to the nearest bed with them.)))

[GEORGE FLYNN]

Without any specific knowledge, I suspect that Jessica's pre-bronze-age Utopia reflects the same neglect of economic factors that Mark Keller points out in Curlovich. I imagine the scenario went something like this: The invention of agriculture led to a huge increase in available resources; in effect, everyone was rich by previous standards. But it also allowed the population to rise. After a few generations, population caught up to resources, and scarcity made its appearance again. People have never been willing to accept a lowering of their standard of living, so someone had the idea, "If we could take what they have, we wouldn't have to go hungry." And so war and all the other nasty phenomena appeared. I'm sure this is grossly oversimplified, but it's probably the core of the matter.

[WAYNE HOOKS]

To Jennifer Bankier: Women do rape men, beat their husbands, rob banks and much more. However, under US law a man cannot be raped. A Florida court judge decided that. For every ten beaten wives, there is at least one abused husband. Worst of all, he has no where to turn. In our society, he is an object of ridicule. Violent crimes by women are increasing daily. Women do punish men who don't fit the macho stereotype. Most women react unfavorably when the male they are with is not "masculine".

A judge recently released a rapist, because the 14 year old girl was "of poor character" and wore short skirts which "provoked" the assault. And the judge was a woman.

((While your points are valid, they don't strike me as particularly major ones. The action of one female judge is no more typical than that of Archie Simonson, the recent male judge recalled because of a similar ruling. Abused husbands no doubt have it bad, but I read recently that when most women who were habitually beaten by their husbands approached doctors, they were frequently prescribed sedatives for themselves, rather than treatment for or protection from their husbands. So beaten wives don't necessarily no where to turn either.)))

[DAVE HULAN]

Can somebody tell me where I can find source material on the Anatolian civilization that Jessica Salmonson talks about? I've heard it mentioned in passing elsewhere by female supremacists, but always in about the same terms she used - i.e. a flat assertion that that's how things were in Anatolia in pre-Sumerian days. Since this is in conflict with every work of ancient history I've ever read, I'd like to be able to go to a scholarly work of some sort and look at the evidence myself. How does anybody know who ruled prehistoric Anatolia? Are there written records that have been deciphered, and, if so, how? Or if it's strictly archaeological findings, what enables them to deduce a matriarchy? I have an open mind on the subject, but when someone makes a statement that conflicts with the generally accepted theories, I think it's incumbent on that person to at least cite a source.

((Jessica cites a source in her letter this time. There are also comments on the subject in letters from Keller and Leland to follow.)))

[BEVERLY KANTER]

Pournelle says, "I suspect but do not know that certain onerous tasks are less hateful to them than to men; just as I think men are better suited to other no less undesirable jobs." What I and many feminists contend is that in our society, the average job available to the uneducated woman is harsher, poorer paid, and more

dangerous than the jobs available to a similar man. My experience of nine years ago bears this out. Before I was accepted for Social Security Disability, I was frequently out of work. Every snack bar, beer bar, and factory boss or personnel director here in Los Angeles told me, "State law prohibits our hiring women for possible night work unless they have suitable transportation, which means a car in good running order. It is therefore our policy to hire men without cars, but not women." Pacific Telephone told me the same story. My attention was called to a reprint of the California Labor Code posted on the wall. The only places that would hire me were plastic molding factories. So I worked three weeks at a place whose name I have forgotten, six weeks at Setco Plastics, and six months at McDonald Enterprises Incorporated. At all three factories, the bosses, forklift operators, and technician repairmen were men, and the machine operators mostly female. The machines often produced stinking fumes and the heat near them was like an oven. At Setco, the woman I replaced had lost her right hand in a compression mold through an error of judgment. I could understand how her judgment had wavered -- workers were not allowed to leave the machine except during breaks, nor to sit down while the plastic was baking, and while being filled the mold dripped hot wax on my hands. Every night I scrubbed fiber glass dust out of my skin. I knew I, and all the other workers, were inhaling fiberglass.

Only at McDonald Enterprises were the machine operators supervised by a woman, and this "leadlady" was paid less than half the wage of the male technician. She was paid \$2.10 per hour. She was not allowed, as the technicians were, to work overtime, a necessity for promotion...I worked faster than I could think. Operators also lifted heavy filled boxes onto the forklift. They could not leave their machines unless relieved by a floor girl or boy. Several times I was relieved for my three prescribed breaks all in the last hour of work. Once I defecated in my pants so I would not have to leave my machine and be fired at once. I worked graveyard shift, so I was sometimes sent home at 3:30 AM, in defiance of the posted State Labor Code.

When I go back to work I'll find out if this unfair division of labor is still prevalent, and if it is, I'll consult a Feminist lawyer about applying the provisions of Title 4 of the Civil Rights Act.

((I can't speak for the West Coast, but locally the kind of sweatshop antics you describe are largely gone. Unions, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other governmental and private agencies have done a relatively good job on overt situations. They have done virtually nothing about covert discrimination -- particularly wages and promotions, less so in new hires -- and I doubt that more than 10% of the major manufacturing concerns in this area could get even a relatively clean bill of health if a thorough Wage and Hour investigation was conducted. I suspect there are so few because of political expediency, and because employees are ignorant of their rights, or afraid of repercussions if they do complain. This holds true for males as well as females.)))

[MARK M. KELLER]

Jessica, what evidence do you have for the "matriarchal utopia" in prehistoric Anatolia, or anywhere else? The idea that matriarchy preceded ancient European patriarchy must be a hundred years old in anthropology theory, but that hundred years hasn't produced convincing proof of such a stage of society.

It began with Victorian scholars (male) who couldn't accept the Bible picture of the origin of human society. One group was especially interested in the origin of kinship systems and family law. They knew Roman Law - the basis for most European

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legal systems - was solidly patriarchal. Studies of non-European cultures, notably the North American Indians, uncovered kinship systems that were profoundly un-Roman: some were even matrilineal and counted descent through the mother rather than the father.

These men - Morgan, Tylor, Maine - were by and large social evolutionists. They saw societies aligned along a chain of development from the most primitive (Bushman) to the most advanced (Victorian England). The Indians of New York studied by Morgan were taken to represent a primitive stage of social life, long abandoned in Europe but still remaining in savage backwaters. So the idea ripened -- primitives or savages at the lowest level of humanity bore traces of female rule; those who had made progress along the road to civilization discarded female rule for the higher status of rule by males.

Engels took this as the frame for his theories of the origin of the family, state, and property. Darwinists picked it up as a commonplace. But how did it come to be the ideology of so many feminists at the end of the 19th century?

Theory came from Bachofen's MOTHER RIGHT - the steps to civilization were promiscuous horde to matriarchy to patriarchy. Helen Diner's MOTHERS AND AMAZONS kept the sequence but reversed the values. Matriarchy was defined as a good period in history, a time of peace and tranquility and prosperity. It had two of the features that characterize utopias: perpetual peace and guaranteed plenty. The third feature of utopia, conditioned virtue in all citizens, was presumably guaranteed by Mother Worship religions.

In other words, the lost matriarchy became the Golden Age, a theme much used in European culture. It was Eden, it was Avalon, it was the Isles of the Blessed. It was literally Paradise Lost. And there had to be a way back to the Garden.

All of this theory, I must add, was not based on anything much in the way of historical evidence. Advocates of "progress" saw their goals in the future; believers in a Golden Age saw their goal in the past. They spoke of the Great Restoration, the return to Mother Rule as Earth became redeemed again. They differed little from Hesiod longing to return to the Age of Cronos, Christians longing for Eden, Rousseau longing for the Noble Savage.

Alas, friends, the Age of Cronos is a fantasy, Eden is a myth, the Noble Savage never existed, and the Matriarchy...well, I have doubts. Curious, that with all our increased knowledge of prehistory and human society, some feminists go back to be inspired by a century-old Victorian fairy tale. "The world not as it is, not as it was, but as it should have been." And I - I lack faith.

Like Don, I do not plan to join the Effeminists. One local organizer gave me a recruiting pitch for a "men's consciousness raising group" a few months ago after we met in the aisles of a radical book store. He was a great example of the converted sinner preaching to those still in darkness: "Oh, was I wicked! Oh, did I oppress women! Let me tell you about the time I laid six women in one weekend and I was a chauvinist pig to each and every one of them. I was so macho in those days that I...etc, etc." It's a curious form of egoboo, but I can hear more colorful confessions any night at AA, if I want to. The invitation was to join the circle and define myself in terms of how I treated women, an offer I turned down. He made it sound like a locker-room brag session with ritual moans of repentance after each score. Did I just run across an unusually incompetent recruiter? Possibly. But

he sure killed any curiosity I had. I learned at age 16 that gossiping about women-friends with men-friends was one way to lose the women-friends in a hurry.

I notice Jessica has her mythical matriarchs engaging in neither war nor violence, under the slogan "women cooperate but men compete". That's a very shallow and careless view of the world, especially on one point: war. Think of the greatest evils committed by humans on other humans in wartime, and you realize that the deadliest armies are not those of barbaric egotists, each out for loot and self-glory. The real monsters appear in mass formations where the individual is subordinated to the whole, where soldiers work together to obey orders, where "natural" instincts are suppressed and the trooper does what he is told to.

A barbaric army would break up when each fighter satisfied his own lusts; it was self-limiting. A civilized army, based on cooperation, would keep soldiers in the field killing and destroying long after they tired of violence. They stayed not because of aggressive instincts, but because they had learned as children that obedience and cooperation was a good thing.

The "lifer" or career soldier gets along in his society by not competing, by following orders and not making waves, by placing his own desire for glory and power below the wishes of the hierarchy he serves. Only when he gets up to captain's rank or above is he supposed to show initiative. Those too low in status are discouraged from trying new things or disobeying orders to attack the enemy more effectively. Even those high on the ladder, even generals, can get booted for being too original or too unorthodox.

Aggression and competitiveness, in other words, are to be kept within strict bounds. The players must go "by the rules". Those who don't are kicked out.

The bloodiest combat in history -- the Western Front in World War I, three years of direct frontal assaults by infantry across wide open fields of mud into machine guns and artillery. What made the soldiers do it? The British lost 50,000 men killed in one futile day of hopeless charges at Ypres, and next day, when the survivors were ordered to go over the top and charge again - they did so. "Madness", you say, and I agree. But what motivates men to walk out into the 60% certainty of death at Paeschendale?

Cooperation, that's what. A perverted form of social cohesion, the desire to not look like a coward - most of all, the feeling that one shouldn't let one's buddies down. If they went, you could do no less. Competition? When French and German soldiers in WWI began to reject the social cohesion, when each man began to think about his own skin...there was wide-scale mutiny. No sane man would cross the barbed wire to satisfy some "aggressive instinct". The troops decided to stay where they were, orders or no orders.

The ideal soldier was super-willing to cooperate with others. The ideal general in the early 20th century army was an authoritarian with a weak ego, who always made sure to check his ideas with others superior to him. (Ego weakness means lack of confidence, continual fear of failure, refusal to accept unpleasant facts. Authoritarian means compulsive neatness, intolerance of ambiguity, hostility to anything foreign, and an intense desire to keep doing things the way they were done before.) Such people require constant reinforcement of their world-views: orders for the sergeant, fawning for the general. Everybody gives egoboo to everybody else.

It's cooperation at its most intense, and you can have it.

[SETH GOLDBERG]

Keller makes a good point in noting Pournelle's mistaken notion about Lysenkoism. A friend of mine recently wrote a very good and readable 27 page paper with reference to Lysenkoism demonstrating arguments such as Pournelle's to be overly simplistic. He explains how the unique Russian psychology and government helped to allow Lysenko to be "the paradigm snake oil salesman in modern history". It was not Marxism (Stalin never gave Lysenko full support until 1948, well after he had gotten rid of all of his opponents), but Lysenko's manipulation of second rank bureaucrats, and the big problem of the Stalin reign of having the concentration of power without responsibility and the diffusion of responsibility without power.

However, Mark's comments on Mormonism and polygamy are not as accurate. The Mormon dropping of polygamy in the late 1800's was not just because of the number of men and women now being equal, but mainly a political move so as to gain statehood. It also indicated the beginnings of the move from a radical church to one very much aligned with mainstream America. While the ration of women to men did play a major role in starting polygamy, so did Joseph Smith's attempts to rationalize his own internal sexual passions. Religious motives and practical motives are often not identical, which is why using religious groups to demonstrate rational behavior is not always a good idea. While many of their actions are rational and practical, still they value rightness over reality. It was 30 years or more before polygamy completely died out within the Mormon church (though it was kept secret after 1890) and many polygamist splinter groups from the Mormons exist today. Mark's point about the oldest system not being the "one natural" system is still well taken.

((I don't think Mark meant to imply that the ratio of the sexes was the sole reason for the disappearance of polygamy. And it's not only splinter groups. As recently as last year, the Mormon church was trying to decide what to do about the thousands of known polygamists "for reasons of conscience" within their church. They profess themselves to be concerned, but I'm rather doubtful, since at the same time they were insisting that church sponsored Boy Scout troops could not have non-white patrol leaders.)))

[ERIC LINDSAY]

While I can see Jerry Pournelle's point re equal vs equivalent, the undisputed fact of sexual behavioral differences in lower animals do not prove (though I'll grant that it is suggestive) similar behavior differences in humans. It appears part of the nature of humans that their behavior is determined more by nurture than nature, as compared to other species. This being so, we can assume that a behavioral change developed from moral considerations is as much a part of our nature as is our unconsidered behavior. The legendary Amazons would presumably not display a reaction similar to that Jerry gives in his church example. However no such speculation answers the question of how much of our behavior is caused by our nature, nor even whether our natures are in fact different. All this being so, there seems little reason why SF writers should not choose any type of society they like to display, but it is then just as reasonable for feminists to complain that their choice is not desirable to that particular group. In short, I think that Jerry is correct in claiming that the feminists are moral subjectivists, but it is also true of their opponents; this being so (and since they probably can't get their way by force) then argument is their only weapon, whether it be reasonable or not.

George Fergus points out that 97% of SF has male protagonists, a figure I wouldn't be prepared to dispute (it seems reasonable in my experience), but perhaps this is because 97% of the writers are male, or because books with female protagonists don't

sell to male editors, or even to a majority male audience. On Jerry's reply, concluding that we may be better off if large numbers of women don't change their careers and life styles - if our concern is that society continue approximately as it is. Since I'd prefer to see it change (it might get better), I'd prefer to see women changing careers and life styles.

((I find your first paragraph, in particular, to be among the best written on the subject in this entire exchange.)))

[MAUREEN LESHENDOK]

While the human society in MOTE is sexist, an explanation is given in the book and it rings true. The objectionable sexism is in the alien society, and in the authors' approach to it. The Moties are dangerous because they are female. The only hope of neutralizing the alien menace is to keep them male! Actually, as any woman knows who is on the Pill, the Pill works making your body think it is pregnant. Obviously, that is the solution to the Moties' problem. Note also "Crazy Eddie". Naturally any problem solver in a female society would have to be male.

I'd hurry to add that I was impressed by the book and enjoyed it immensely, but was distressed by the blatant sexism. Treatment of human blacks in such a fashion would bring swift condemnation. It's a measure of how trivially women are still perceived that there was no comparable outrage over this book.

The "strange" societies mentioned on page 36 are actually a good many cultures, and western civilization before the 18th or 19th centuries. While women have largely stayed at home (though Tibetan and Sherpa women go on trading trips of their own, as do peasant and farm women around the world) they work there alongside men who also work near home. In our society now, women at home have no real economic function besides raising children, which is not the way things have always been. Indeed, the nuclear family as we know it is new in human history.

Dr. Pournelle hastens to assure us that his "competent and professional wife" remains "feminine" and "reacts very differently to emotional storms from the way I and most of my male friends do." That statement is a collection of emotionally laden cliches that convey little objective information. It is an insignificant and skewed sample to base any judgment on. Besides, my husband and I react basically the same to what we would consider "emotional storms", to the point that arguments frequently end with one of us blurting, "that's my line!"

What, I wonder, are the "onerous but necessary tasks" that one sex does better than the other (p. 36)? Childbirth for women? Managing General Motors or commanding a starship for men? I don't think the two are equivalent. I do think that only women under current technology can give birth, and only men can father children, and that is about the only sex-related work that really makes a difference. Men, after all, can be prostitutes, and women can seek them.

There is clearly a problem in family relations and the raising of children, but it is simplistic and of little value to blame the problem on feminism. So much has been written on the subject that it is pointless to go over it again. I am shocked that Dr. Pournelle parrots those old tired cliches as some sort of proof for his argument.

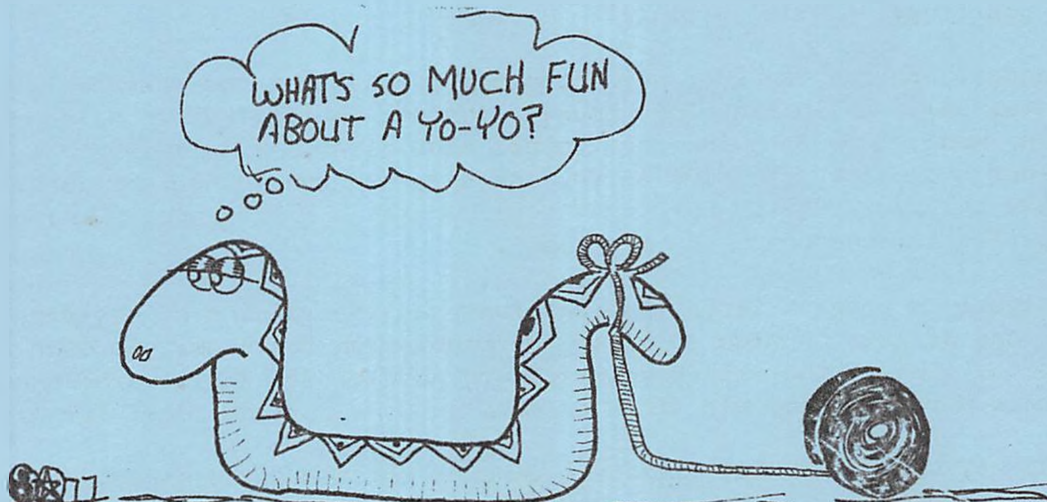
In MAN'S WORLD, WOMAN'S PLACE, Elizabeth Janeway describes the social myth of woman's place. It is a myth because it is not consistent with either historical or current reality. I would suggest that Jerry Pournelle is very much in the grip of the myth.

Consequently, "Afterwords" reads like someone refusing to allow his beliefs to be clouded by facts. It is a shame to see the fine critical, creative intelligence who writes those books and science articles which I read so faithfully, produce something so poorly thought out and so obviously biased.

[JOHN LELAND]

I believe you are right in doubting Ms Salmonson's feminist Utopia in Anatolia. The theory was genuinely propounded, many years ago, by pioneer anthropologists (male, incidentally) but it was also abandoned, many years ago, in the face of more data. Early Anatolians did worship the Great Mother and in some cases allowed women more freedom than other ancient cultures, but they were still male-ruled, warlike societies. The old theory did, however, inspire many interesting literary works, such as much of Robert Graves' writings and Maude Meaghan's THE GREEN SCAMANDER, a fascinating reconstruction of an Amazon society in Anatolia as it might have been.

As regards the question of whether women are "naturally" subservient, and whether disturbing this "natural" condition will be dangerous, my own view is that subtle hormone balances, etc., had very little to do with the position of women. The crucial facts were biological, but much more obvious. Until very recently, (1) there was a surplus of resources -- IF THEY COULD BE USED -- lots of land, few tillers (2) war was determined by sheer population far more often than not (I concede exceptions, but consider they do not affect the overall picture). These factors meant that a successful society which expanded and developed was one in which women were persuaded or coerced into concentrating on breeding. Males might or might not be objectively better at ruling, fighting, etc., but they had the overwhelming advantage that they could conveniently combine these activities with breeding. A woman may be able to fight, hunt, etc., on a near equal physical basis



with a man, but not if she is pregnant. A woman was usually kept pregnant from the time she reached puberty till her death, which was frequently a direct result of the strains of pregnancy and childbirth. The only real alternative to pregnancy was chastity; birth control methods were very unreliable and abortion was crude and at least as dangerous as childbirth. The church did permit some women to make careers for themselves by making chastity respectable; some few women (Empress Wu in T'ang China, Eleanor of Aquitaine) managed to survive their child-bearing days and become notable political figures later on; a few strong minded royal women, like Elizabeth I, chose secular chastity. This century has seen two crucial changes: (1) birth control and abortion have been made relatively safe, reliable, and available; the former, at least, is now generally accepted in civilized countries. (2) Technological advances and the exhaustion of resources have meant that breeding is no longer such an imperative part of the survival of a culture; a stable society without major population growth probably has the advantage over a high-breeding one. These two factors have appeared on a world-wide basis for the first time in the last 50 years. My own belief is that they render it inevitable that women will never again be reduced to the level of breeding machines, and will very probably continue to expand their non-breeding careers, UNLESS THE PRESENT CIVILIZATION FALLS.

The assumption of THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE is precisely that: our present civilization fell; eventually the "first empire of Man" replaced it, and then that in turn fell. The loss of life was tremendous, and the result was a recreation of a situation where resources were underused; furthermore, although it is not, so far as I recall, made specific, it seems likely that the more unlucky planets lost control of birth-control methods as well. Under these conditions the re-subjection of women is not unreasonable as a hypothetical social result. Fergus' statement that we know empire/fall and boom/bust cycles exist, but this does not mean social cycles also occur fails to take into account the fact that the known politico-economic cycles could very probably have the results on the social cycle that Pournelle postulates.

I do not say that this is the only possible result of such a collapse; I agree with the comment of one writer (I cannot relocate at present) that it is very convenient for Poul Anderson (and I think it applies to Pournelle as well) to assume that future circumstances will combine to re-create the social structure with which he is familiar. I think it could be argued that since one of the merits of SF is its exploration of exotic situations, creating a hypothetical situation in which the collapse occurred (I think we must allow Pournelle his collapse, as it is basic to his entire future history, as well as depressingly probable) but did NOT have that effect, with a plausible explanation, would perhaps be more meritorious, in that it would break more new ground. However, I think it unjust to criticize Pournelle for adopting his hypothesis on grounds of probability, as I think it a quite likely result of such a collapse.

((A couple of years ago, I decided to re-read the complete works of Michael G. Coney, a talented newer writer whose first couple of novels had just been published, and who seemed to have a very distinct, clear, entertaining style. As I began to read critically, I began to notice things which disturbed me in his characterizations. It is, of course, dangerous to assume that the words of any particular character are the thoughts of the author. But as I read more and more, it became evident that Coney had a rather negative view of women who had ambitions to be other than bedmate, housekeeper, and mother. This eventually led to an exchange of letters and Coney's ultimate admission that yes, he did think women had no place in the professional or academic world. But unless one finds this kind of attitude infusing the body of a writer's work, it is unwise to single out an individual piece

and assume it to be typical.)))

THE MOTIES

[ERIC MILLER]

"Irrational" is a prejudiced, indeed, egocentric choice of words. The implication is that all intelligent alien lifeforms must be philosophically identical to Man in order to be "rational". But they are alien, their psychology is alien, and perforce their philosophy must be alien. Calling it irrational is equivalent to calling a baboon irrational for having blue and scarlet buttocks -- since it would clearly be irrational for Man to have buttocks of the same coloration. An interesting article that I agree with in the main.

[MARK SHARPE]

I'm very tired of articles tearing apart, bit by bit, nuance by nuance, a science fiction story. The whole purpose of science fiction, hell, literature in general, is to entertain. Everything else is secondary. Trying to find a "hidden meaning" or "significance" to a story is ridiculous because each reader has different conceptions about what is a "hidden meaning" and what is or isn't "significant" to him. The Moties are creations of the imagination and to argue whether or not "the Moties are a less rational race than the Ishterians or the humans" is pointless because they are fiction and any piece of fiction cannot represent an entire race. Still, Dalmyn's article/letter was well done.

((I disagree utterly. The primary purpose of literature may be entertainment, but there are a number of secondary purposes, information, propagandization, and to earn the author a living, among others. And I think that you misunderstood the argument. The discussion is not whether the Moties are more rational than the Ishterians; there are no such races so the question is irrelevant. The discussion was whether the Moties are more or/less rational as presented by their respective authors.

I also disagree about the value of searching for greater depths to a story. First, your statement implies that authors never intend deeper meanings, which is demonstrably untrue, and lessens the value of their work. Second, the possible fact that an author intended no deeper significance does not necessarily mean that such significance wasn't there. Did Shakespeare think he was providing classic examples of basic human passions? Probably not, but his works live as outstanding examples of jealousy, treachery, love, and madness. Lastly, such comparisons are fun, and if people find them to be fun, then they're worth doing.)))

[HARRY WARNER JR]

If I remember correctly THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE, I was quite skeptical that any intelligent race like the Moties would remain in the situation which formed the real basis of the story. We can't know what forms intelligence may take on other planets but we should give any form of intelligence credit for taking steps to break up old disaster-oriented patterns. There's the legendary kee bird whom you may have heard about, the one who got its name from the plaintive cry it makes all winter long, as it spends its days sliding down snowbanks and lamenting, "Kee-rist, I'm cold!" That's the difference between animals and humans: the former can't adapt through any mechanism other than the tedious evolutionary process. If the kee-bird were intelligent, it would build itself little sleds or wear bloomers or do one of the many things to be more comfortable.

((I'll accept your argument if we avoid the disaster oriented pattern of over-

population.)))

[RAY DAVIS]

I enjoyed Tony Dalmyn's article -- not surprisingly, since the Motie way of looking at things and the Crazy Eddie concept were far and away my favorite things in THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE. Incidentally, during a brief conversation at last year's world-con, I asked Jerry Pournelle whether (as I suspected) the Moties were derived from aspects of some Eastern religions. He replied that no, actually he and Niven came up with the Moties' biology first, developing the Moties' view from that, instead of vice-versa. Some may see this as an excellent example of the differences between the (o hated words) New Wave and Old Wave ways of treating a subject, since to both of us, the "natural" way to develop a book would seem ass-backwards to the other. However, I find it more interesting to note that no matter which direction a writer started from, the final physiology and culture of the Moties would be much the same. This illustrates my idea that, given intelligence and an ability to research, it doesn't make much difference as far as science fiction is concerned what sciences (be they "hard" or "soft") an author is most interested in and concerned with. A good story will touch on all the necessary areas regardless.

[GEORGE FLYNN]

I'd have to reread the book to be sure, but my first impression is that Tony Dalmyn may be reading into the Motie philosophy more than is there. I would say there is "a universal standard of rationality": rational behavior is that which tends to achieve the goals one really desires. Which means Tony is right in judging the Moties rational, if harmony with nature (in his or some equivalent formulation) is really more important to them than the survival of civilization. But is this in fact a conscious choice, or simply an unexamined assumption? I would go on to quibble over the distinction between "irrational" and "insane", but I see Mark Keller did originally refer to "insanity". One other quibble: when Tony refers to "what price must the rest of the universe pay?", it must be remembered that the Moties have a very limited knowledge of the rest of the universe.

((I don't like your definition of a standard of rationality. There are people whose inner desires are for death, dissolution, or loss of self. This is presumably what their real goals are, no matter what their conscious mind is convinced. Is the pursuit of such goals rational? And cannot races share this sort of anti-life desire? I'm not sure I'd like to call such action "rational".)))

[MARK M. KELLER]

Good grief! Tony Dalmyn has covered half the curriculum of the Department of Motie Studies at Imperial University. I almost forgot that the quirks and traits of the Moties are inventions to fit the plot requirements of an action/adventure SF novel.

What I meant by calling the Moties "irrational" was this: their goals as a species must always be destroyed by the means they use to approach the goals. Yet they are depicted as still using methods they know will fail. There is no way that the policies of the Motie Lords will produce "meaningful continuation of existence". What they produce, as they have done 500 times before, is collapse and mass death. There is no escape from this double-bind, into which they have been placed by a malicious God. (Well, actually by Niven and Pournelle, who want the human Imperial Space Navy to win.)

((Just as we all know from the beginning that no matter how much of an advantage Darth Vader has, he's going to lose in the end. On the other hand, it doesn't detract from our enjoyment to know it.)))

[JOHN LELAND]

I would challenge the article arguing that the Moties were not irrational. It seems to me that they are a cardinal example of a people failing to use its talents to save itself. The kind of crisis that recurs in their culture is obviously meant to parallel our present problems: it could only recur for them, however, because they permitted it for some reason that I cannot fathom, which is what I mean by irrational. The crisis in our culture developed because our technological advances far outstripped our biological/social studies. But this was not the case with the Moties. They are obviously superb manipulative biologists. Their solution to a problem is frequently to develop a new brand of Motie to meet it. Dalmyn's defense of the Moties is based on the assumption that they reject "unnatural" alterations, but why is developing a Motie who does not breed so frequently more "unnatural" than the variations we know they deliberately developed? Surely there must have been some variation in Motie breeding rates (the little ones appear to breed faster, for instance) and even if direct DNA work was unknown to them (which I think wildly unlikely) surely they could select the relatively less urgent breeders and develop Moties who could breed less frequently and still survive; utter sterilization, the only other alternative they appear to even consider, is far more drastic than necessary. Stepping outside the fictional framework for a moment, I suppose my remarks might be construed as a criticism of Pournelle and Niven: a race that has an uncontrolled, ultra-high breeding rate that is destroying them, and a race that are superb biological engineers and develop mutations to meet their problems are both very interesting ideas, and well worth exploring, but creating a race that is both is creating a paradox unless some far better explanation for their failure to use their skills to solve their problem is presented.

AND OTHER SCIENCE FICTION

[JIM MANN]

I don't think the resentment of the New Wave came entirely from the fact that the writers were questioning the religion of science. Certainly this was a part of it. I think the major reason, however, stems from the fact that many of the post-1960 writers began using styles that were much more complex than the straightforward style that most SF writers had used up to this point. The use of surrealism, non-linear structure, etc., also helped scare away many traditionalists who wanted to think of nothing but the wonders of the content. Thinking of style, theme, and so on was alien to many readers of SF. Analyzing science -- yes. Analyzing fiction -- huh? They wanted to feel with their sense of wonder and not their spirit or their mind. The same attitude still holds today in many readers who don't like Silverberg, Leguin, Ellison, and many of the other non-traditionalists.

((It's interesting that the "radical" field of SF is essentially a very conservative genre.)))

[GEORGE R.R. MARTIN]

The review of NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE FICTION was much appreciated. I have sold two additional volumes of the NEW VOICES series, to HBJ/Jove, the new paperback arm of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. They will also be releasing the first volume in paperback next May. As to making the series a regular annual event, well, that's my hope, but it will depend on how the first two volumes go, I imagine. So far the hardcover of NEW VOICES appears to be doing well: Macmillan has already gone back to press for a second printing, the reviews have been excellent, and we even got a mention in the Book-of-the-Month Club NEWS. But of course it is much too early to say anything definite. I do, however, have high hopes and even higher ambitions for the series.

[JERRY POURNELLE]

Bartucci comments on WEST OF HONOR and I find much to agree with. Perhaps the writer's rather obvious references to old combat units were not well advised (I was briefly a part of the 501st some years ago and the reference was, as Bartucci notes, deliberate; as to the Legion and Kipling lore, some likes that and some doesn't) but I enjoy them and will probably continue to use them in other works.

WEST OF HONOR had a problem: the story was told from the viewpoint of a junior officer with a hero-worship attachment to Falkenberg; obviously he couldn't be allowed to see the CO in a dither, although just as certainly Captain Falkenberg must, somewhere in the privacy of his rooms, have broken into cold sweats at the chances he took. I thought I had made that clear when I had the young protagonist a couple of times quote Falkenberg to the effect that "your job is to look unafraid and make the men think you know what you're doing". I guess I could have let the kid realize that was being done to him (the insight wouldn't be beyond him) but the opportunity didn't arise.

I do rather hope Bartucci is right and that Mr Campbell would have enjoyed WEST OF HONOR, and I thank him for the appellation "exciting" which is all I ever had in mind for the story.

[STEPHEN SOWLE]

Lately I have read -- and been impressed by -- much of Stanislaw Lem's material. Lem seems to be such a refreshing change from the run-of-the-mill SF. I was particularly impressed by his book THE FUTUROLOGICAL CONGRESS. His satire of human behavior and of the human condition was amusing, but, sadly, all too true.

((Although SOLARIS has generally been accepted as Lem's masterpiece, I've found that I like several of his other titles better. THE INVINCIBLE is pure STAR TREK, but done with a power unknown to that series. And the few shorter pieces that I've found (particularly those in THE CYBERIAD) make me crave more. On the other hand, I deny the claims made in some quarters that he is head and shoulders above the best writers of the US and England.)))

[SHERYL SMITH]

To Mark Keller: R.A. Lafferty has already done a story about the Ptolemaic Ecu-mene; it is called "The Entire and Perfect Chrysolite" and is collected in STRANGE DOINGS. It is more Jungian than Davidsonian, but worth a try.

Your reply to Alexander Doniphan Wallace about the reasons readers and writers use the past seems a bit facile, even when applied only to fandom. True there's a lot of nostalgia and escapism going on (as always) but Moorcock's DANCERS AT THE END OF TIME trilogy, for example, demonstrates that there is room even in this genre for other approaches. And mainstream writers have often written about the past in non-romantic fashion.

((I didn't mean to imply that ALL writers use the past out of a failure of imagination, but I still believe it to be true of the great majority.)))

[HARRY WARNER JR]

I suppose the ghost story continues to attract readers because it is based on universals, the suspicion that there may be survival of something after an individual's death which can be perceived by the living, the sense of guilt which most of us feel from time to time upon learning of someone's death which has ended for all time

the possibility of carrying out a good intention we had involving that individual. It may be significant that ghosts are most commonly supposed to be the shades of individuals who were badly treated in life. One strange sidelight on the ghost situation is the failure of the movies to do much with serious treatment of ghosts. There have been some successful lighthearted movies about ghosts, like BLITHE SPIRIT, but very few genuine ghost stories on film were meant to scare people, amid the vast quantities of vampire, demon, monster, and other varieties of supernatural movies. THE HAUNTING proved that it can be done in Hollywood.

((Of course, TOPPER and THE CANTERVILLE GHOST would seem to support your theory on films, but there have been others that were quite chilling: I'm thinking of one in particular about a haunted yacht that I cannot recall the name of. And there is an excellent film called THE UNINVITED. GHOST BOAT, a recent novel about a haunted submarine, is coming as a film as well. The ghost story has always been a more European than American fascination, which may account for its infrequency in Hollywood, which has always been more interested in the grotesque and overtly horrifying than the subtle touch of ghosts.)))

[ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE]

With due respect and appreciation for the D'Amassa - Keller confrontation on archaism, I must confess to being dissatisfied with the explanations as to why there is concern for the dim and distant past. It seems to me that several reasons can be readily invented -- racial nostalgia and the search for roots. The erroneous belief that life was so much better in the good old days. A natural fear of the unknown future. LeGuin placed her biography of Ged the Mage in a paleomedieval setting, a goat-culture, with not even horses or oxen, a very low energy civilization. Having gotten his migrants to the Blue World, they face an even more primitive culture, essentially non-metallic, in Jack Vance's eponymous novel. There must be hundreds, if not thousands, of novels in which this passion for the past is a major element. And outside SF & F, from novels to the local historical societies and the scholar's study. Keller's discussion of the author's problems and the reader's acceptance (or reason for acceptance) is indeed sensible. You and he reverse time's arrow, changing the sign. We are not quite as ignorant of the past as we are of the future, almost, if we go back to 5000 BC. There are just about as many alternative pasts as there are alternative futures. What has posterity done for me?

[RICK BROOKS]

I personally resented the New Wave because some of them not only called the Old Wave crap, but said that I was inferior for reading it. I admired Ballard because he refused to explain his books on the grounds he wrote them to speak for him. We do agree on at least one point. I like Stableford's THE BLIND WORM the best of his fiction.

((That's a charge I've heard often, but I suspect it's apocryphal. I recently read all the editorials and book reviews in the Moorcock NEW WORLDS, as well as a plethora of other non-fiction by writers associated with the New Wave. With rare exceptions, they failed to do anything but honor the old masters - though admittedly they pointed out many of the literary faults of the genre. On the other hand, a number of Old Wave proponents - Ackerman, Wollheim, etc. - actively condemned New Wave writing in uncompromising terms. On balance, I'd say the charge is, at best, misdirected.)))

[BRETT COX]

I enjoyed your article on P.M. Hubbard, even though I've never read any of his stories. I particularly enjoyed your discussion of why people continue to read and enjoy

ghost and supernatural stories when the form is, as you say, "rigidly formula-ridden". Obviously the development of mood and suspense has a lot to do with it, but I believe that one other important factor which must be considered is whether or not the reader is willing to accept the premise of the story. A lot of people are so locked into the real, scientifically proved universe that they can't suspend their disbelief long enough to enjoy a story of the supernatural.

Your article on the works of Joe Poyer was quite good, but once again it gives rise to the question: Why do you read so many bad novels?

I was rather amused by Rick Brooks' comments on DYING INSIDE and your response -- I'd thought that that particular novel was pretty much discussed out. I'm not sure if I ever mentioned it before but while I wasn't as totally ecstatic as you were, I did think it was an excellent novel.

As for new SF, I've only read two 1977 novels so far, but both come highly recommended: THE ALTERATION by Kingsley Amis and THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE by John Varley. The Amis novel combines high literacy with immense readability, and the Varley novel is pure dynamite. I'd put it in a dead heat with Zelazny's THIS IMMORTAL for the best first novel ever to come out of the SF field.

((The best first SF novel is, as far as I'm concerned, incontestably A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ. While I enjoy most of Varley's stuff, and parts of his novel, I was very disappointed in OPHIUCHI. I have an article on him coming up in Mark McGarry's EMPIRE. And why do I read so many bad novels? How do I know they're bad unless I read them? Actually, I suffer from literary masochism. I can actually enjoy a bad novel under the right circumstances.)))

[BUCK COULSON]

It has nothing to do with the argument, but I found it interesting that in your response to Keller, your examples of "blatant nonsense" which ruined a story were both badly designed social systems, while the errors which didn't destroy your enjoyment of the books were both in the physical sciences. (Which I think just might explain why we differ violently on about half the books we review - possibly combined with the idea that your nonsensical social system might not always be mine. I enjoyed RINGWORLD but I have never thought it was all that marvelous and have wondered at all the praise heaped on it, while RINGS OF ICE lost me almost immediately - though Piers' nerdish characters helped somewhat there).

What put me off Robert F. Young was that all his stories were very slick and almost entirely without any real content. They reflected the popular view of their time - not the stf-readers' view, the mass public view - and nothing else. They would have fitted in very well in the SATURDAY EVENING POST or COLLIERS; pleasantly liberal without anything disturbing in them. Literary marshmallows.

((I think your first comment is very nearly the correct explanation for our differences.)))

[GEORGE FLYNN]

Your guess that P.M. Hubbard died around 1969 would seem to be in error, since he's averaged a book a year since then. I suppose he just found more lucrative markets than F&SF. ((George appended a bibliography of Hubbard's mystery novels, for which I thank him.)))

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The overlap between SF and spy novels isn't particularly "modern". Spy stories about secret weapons go well back into the 19th century; this may seem less obvious because so many of the projections have long since been overtaken by technology.

You managed to get quite a few misinterpretations of my views into one paragraph. "With Morning Comes Mistfall" was and is one of my favorite stories, precisely because it deals seriously with the conflict between rationality and romance. I criticized it only in that the "rational" protagonist has an unnecessarily unpleasant personality, which weakens the clash of ideas. I also like fantasy, even in your sense of works "that discount rationality and the scientific method as irrelevant"; what annoys me are stories that are pure fantasy in content, but mask this in a superficial coating of "science". Rightly or wrongly, I think this is what Young does. As for the "giantism" stories being separate, I was simply commenting on a pattern as you were; to the extent that a reader is conscious of such a pattern, it cannot help affecting his reactions.

((Sorry for misinterpreting your opinion of the Martin story. On the other hand, as a long time spy novel devotee, I disagree that the genre was as concerned with superscience in the past as it is now. Spies in modern books have to combat clones, robots, nuclear devices in suitcases, and the like. With the possible exception of the super-plague, the major spy novelists of the 1950's and back were rarely concerned with science-fictional devices. Even most of Ian Fleming would be tame today. You won't find SF in the spy stories of Eric Ambler, John Buchan, E. Philips Oppenheim, Edgar Wallace, early Edward S. Aarons, etc. But look at the works being published today by Philip McCutchan, Rosenberger, Sapir & Murphy, and others.)))

[DONALD FRANSON]

I don't see the use of reviewing old magazine stories or authors for which you feel no great enthusiasm. It's no service to those of us who have a large magazine collection, partly unread. What I'd like to see is reviews of old stuff you thought was simply great and should not be missed, worth looking up, taking down and reading in preference to current stuff. I could make a list of such gems, but so could you. And you're the reviewer.

((In theory my goal is to eventually write an article about everyone who ever wrote SF. I'm not likely to ever make it. I've been working on those writers about whose work I have fond memories. Often, upon re-reading critically, I find myself disappointed. And there is very little fiction from any source that I think was "simply great" in any case.)))

[C.L. GRANT]

In PARABLE on Hubbard, you made a comment about ghost stories that I was going to reply to. The problem is, it turned out to be much too long for a letter, so I turned it into a column for KNIGHTS, a good thing since I had mentioned briefly fantasy and sf in my last KNIGHTS column. Basically, what I said was: a well written (horror) story is almost always better than a well written sf story. If nothing else, I'll get letters.

((That you will. Mike Bracken sent me a copy of the column, but I'll refrain from commenting upon it until it has appeared there. It's always nice to know that I've sent someone off on a presumably useful chain of thought. I notice, as a possibly interesting side issue, that Charlie has a new horror novel out in paperback from Major books, titled THE CURSE.)))

[ARTHUR D. HLAVATY]

I was a bit shook up by your comments on sf technophiles opposing the New Wave because it was not in keeping with their religion. I myself believe in a form of the religion of science, but I also enjoy mainstream and New Wave fiction. I do feel that you have oversimplified the causes of opposition to the New Wave. Of course there were some readers who didn't want their comfy little separate realities disturbed by any sort of changes, from different views of man to stylistic improvements. Nevertheless, I think that there were some valid reasons for opposing some or all of the New Wave.

Elsewhere in this issue, you perceptively discuss those radicals who are more concerned with showing how radical they are than with dealing with the conditions they oppose. I believe that some New Wave spokesmen fell into this trap. They issued manifestoes to the effect that SF must become relevant, must warn against the evils of technology, must recognize the essential puniness and helplessness of humanity, etc. Some Old Wavers understandably reacted more to the excesses of these statements than to actual New Wave writing.

Those who considered the New Wave a literature of insignificance and despair were not entirely mistaken. Even writers as good as Thomas Disch and J.G. Ballard did books in which the world collapses while a few characters look on helplessly. I don't find repeated portrayals of man as a helpless puppet in the hands of nature a great improvement over repeated portrayals of WASP males conquering the universe. (Thomas Hardy did it better, and when you've seen one end of the world, you've seen them all.)

I am not attacking the New Wave; I think that CAMP CONCENTRATION, THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM, and many of Ballard's stories are brilliant. I am not trying to set up theological criteria for fiction; Vonnegut presented a view of man's insignificance in THE SIRENS OF TITAN, and Tom Robbins defended technophobia in EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES, but both did so with style and wit, and I enjoyed the books. All I am saying is that it's possible to be a fairly devout technophile without applying such views blindly to literature, and that technophobic cliches are no better than technophilic ones.

((As mentioned in my response to Rick Brooks earlier, I never meant to imply that New Wave proponents were without guilt. But the majority of testimonials to see print were anti-New Wave, simply because Old Wave editors controlled most of the forums. Neither did I say that all technophiles opposed the New Wave for one specific reason; I am wary of absolutes. At the same time, I feel constrained to point out that I consider the possibility that the future will be along the lines portrayed by E.E. Smith and other Old Wavers as just as despairing as New Wave writing. In his future, man is simply an instrument to spread human technology and culture among the stars (and I do mean "man" in this context), and woman was there to be menaced and to have the hard science explained to her. The aliens were plot devices rather than characters, and humanity spent its future doing pretty much what it always has, just in greater quantities.)))

[MARK M. KELLER]

To Patrick McGuire - There are bacteria that will happily eat petroleum fractions if available. Oil buried underground is simply not available for a few tens of millions of years. But this sequestered carbon is only a small part of Earth's total. All the oil and coal burned by humans since 1850 -- maybe 10% of the fossil fuel buried in the world -- helped raise the carbon dioxide level of the air by about 13%. If all the buried fuel is burned, and the CO2 level doubled over its present amount, that still wouldn't be much. Fifty times the present atmosphere level of carbon dioxide

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is dissolved in the oceans, and more than that in surface carbonate rocks. All the buried carbon in all the oil pools and coal seems is less than the current ocean load of CO₂.

I can't estimate how much carbon would be biochemically "buried" on Ishtar by incorporation into undegradable T-form cells. But over geological periods there hasn't been any major loss of carbon or nutrients, as Anderson sets it up.

To Darroll Pardoe - Do the "serious errors" in my discussion of FIRE TIME fatally injure the argument, or are they correctable details? I did oversimplify too much on detergents. It was analogy that didn't work. Sorry. And I will recheck on racemization times of free amino acids. Aren't they used to date sub-fossil, recent animal bodies? (Not stuff ten million years old.)

The real question raised by the Ishtarian biosphere is, what kind of biochemical difference between T-life and ortho-life could maintain such a total separation for 1000 million years? Chirality of proteins or sugars doesn't seem like a sufficiently great barrier. And in fact, we are told that T-form bacteria are symbiotes in ortho-form centaurs: the barrier has been crossed.

Widely alien biochemistries on Earth stem from local variations in chemical environment - anaerobic vs aerobic conditions, for example. Can you think of any such difference that might work on a continental scale on Ishtar? Depicting a planet containing two or more incompatible biospheres has tempted many SF writers, most of whom haven't done as well as Anderson. For a prime example, look at Frank Herbert's DUNE with its impossible anhydrous sandworm ecosystem.

To Greg Benford - One point I missed last time: the planet wide equatorial deserts on a split-biosphere world will be subject to steady winds, and will put a lot of dust into the air. There would be a continuous dust haze over such deserts, as over the Rann of Kutch (Earth) and the lowland plains (Mars). Dust reflects sunlight back into space and shades the ground below, producing a cooler surface. Would this reduce the storm gradient equator to pole?

Probably not. The equator will be a bit cooler, but the sunlight reaching the poles goes through a long long path of dusty air, so the poles get a lot colder. The temperature difference is still there. It may even be intensified. More polar cold fronts, more storms, more fluctuating weather in middle latitudes.

What else the dust would do is 1) provide spectacular sunsets all over the planet, and 2) encourage adaptations to dust among plants and animals. As to sunsets, recall the 1815 eruption of Tambori and the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa on Earth; both puffed cubic kilometers of volcanic dust into the upper air. Both produced a year of cold, rainy weather, and of brilliant red and pink and gold sunsets night after night. The skies of your planet would likely be brown or pink like that of Mars, at least near the equator.

You did an article on sky colors a while back, so I guess you have the data to fill in the rest of the atmosphere effects. Dust-adapted plants tend to have fuzzy skins, to catch airborne particles and keep them from blocking the pores for air intake. Dust-adapted animals might end up resembling camels, with flaps to cover ears and nostrils and extra transparent membranes to protect the eyes.

((All you need now is a plot, Mark, and you can write the novel yourself.)))

[MARY LONG]

For setting the scene and development of mood, I can think of no one better than M.R. James, a particular favorite of mine. And on the subject of authors not collected: I have a small tale of woe here to relate. Some time ago, my mother gave me a book which she in turn had been given by one of her early employers. She was in service as a parlourmaid as a young woman, although not quite so long ago as the era depicted in UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS. This was just before the war, and as her own parents were dead and she was still under 21, her employers had to give permission for her to marry! Anyhow, this book contained the first E. and H. Heron stories I ever read. For years I've been looking for other ones; and never found them. Then about a month ago, I got a catalog from Ken Slater's firm; what do I find? Two, count 'em, two anthologies with E. and H. Heron in them - but the same story. If anyone knows of any in print, I'd be obliged for a note of the relevant details.

On the subject of what one may call macabre stories, have you noticed that in recent years anthologies have tended to swing from the ghost and inexplicable bumpings in the crypt type stories to what I would describe as "physical abuse" stories, with torture and maimings and death by mistreatment much more common (and more graphically described)?

((I purchase quite a bit of British paperback horror fiction, and there is a definite trend there. There is little macabre short fiction published in the US, so I don't think it's universal, at least not yet.)))

POEM BY BISHOP

[GENE WOLFE]

I'm tempted to ask what a poem as good as Bishop's is doing in a fanzine, but alas I know.

[HARRY WARNER JR]

"A Poem for My Daughter" is one of the very few new poems I've read in recent years which has genuinely moved me. It's the ideal illustration that a modern poem need not be a total enigma to be fresh and worthy of repeated readings.

[BRETT COX]

My reaction to Michael Bishop's poem can best be expressed by the title of a song Kurt Vonnegut wrote for the rock group Ambrosia: Nice, Nice, Very Nice. I liked it a lot. If nothing else, it was a pleasant change to see a poem with a strict meter and rhyme scheme appear in a fanzine.

[C.L. GRANT]

I'd like to commend you on publishing Mike Bishop's poem; I couldn't have said it better to my own son if I tried. There's an emotional depth to Mike's work that, I think, too many people tend to miss because of his style/subject matter, an emotional depth that has resulted in some really fine creations. "A Tapestry of Little Murders" illustrates this perfectly, and yet, as far as I know, it has never been anthologized anywhere by anyone. I think I'm right in saying it's one of his favorites; I only wish it were a favorite of someone else besides me.

[BEN INDICK]

Michael Bishop's poem was touching without being sentimental.

[JOSEPH NAPOLITANO]

In all honesty, I must say that I don't think your zine is a fanzine. It's more like a semi-professional political journal. You might not be aware of this fact. When I was in college I majored in political science and in those days there were a lot of semi-pro political journals around. There still are. I've been through so many of them that I got bored and stopped reading them a long time ago. I guess to someone who really doesn't know too much about politics your zine would seem interesting

((Of course, in the face of such a store of knowledge, experience, and perspicacity as yours, I'd be foolish to bother rebutting that remark, wouldn't I? But what non-fiction do you read? Isn't just about anything a rehash of old ideas? And while MYTHOLOGIES is not a reviewzine, it does publish more words per year about SF than the majority of fanzines. But I'm not limiting my interest to SF as literature in a vacuum. If you choose to, that's your prerogative.)))

[MARY PRIDE]

You said some things in MYTHOLOGIES 10 that I would like to discuss. Quote #1: "Truth is relative." You pulled a Mohammed Ali type head fake in your response to Sheryl Smith. She said that if you believe you can fly it isn't true just because you believe it. You and I know what she meant. If you stood on your front porch and believed, you still wouldn't fly. Now there's a snappy answer to this - "you just didn't really believe". Unprovable assertion, but there is an experiment which could test the whole theory. Take one small child who has just learned what flying is. Tell him he can fly. Will he? No. Many kids have jumped off roofs with umbrellas, expecting to float gently to the ground. Did they? No. The experimentally verifiable hypothesis is that there is order in nature, and laws which don't change. Our entire lives are based on this assumption. Consider crossing the road. If the basic law of physics governing the motion of large particles (e.g. trucks) ceased to operate, you couldn't judge accurately when to cross. If you drop a ball, it will fall, as long as you don't change the place where you drop it to outer space or some other type of environment, and if you drop it in the new environment it will be possible to calculate what will happen to it, because there are certain ordered patterns that exist.

((You've answered your own argument. By changing your environment, you do change "truth". That child could fly if he were in free fall. Oh, I know that you're referring to "immutable" laws of the universe, but all I said was that "truth", a creation of man, is relative to the situation. Semantics, if you will, but since whatever truth you are dealing with is expressed in words, it must be a semantic issue. And I'm not even entirely convinced that there are immutable laws of nature. We keep finding new exceptions all the time.)))

Quote #2: "I regret sorely that right and wrong are not concrete, identifiable qualities, but my regrets will not alter the facts that right and wrong are ideas created by man, they have no existence outside of man, and therefore are abstracts." Later you talk of a "moral duty" to see that your version of right prevails. If there are no absolutes, there can be no such thing as a "moral duty". Both "moral" and "duty" are words which presuppose an absolute standard of reference. It would be more accurate and less semantically misleading to say, "I prefer my standard of right to prevail!" This leaves no basis for judging anyone, since your preference is no "better" or "worse" than theirs.

I have tried to show the logical conclusions which may be drawn from the absence of an absolute right and wrong. Now, you stated that it is a fact that there is no

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absolute wrong or absolute right. Facts, by definition, are based on absolutes. That which is based on something relative is not a fact, whatever else it may be. What is the absolute you started reasoning from? I don't want to pick you apart word by word, but since this seems to be your philosophy, I ask, "on what does it rest?"

((On the same basis as everyone else's philosophy, personal prejudices. Facts, like truths, are chimeras. One person's fact is another person's falsehood. Is abortion murder? Laurie Trask says no; I know others who say yes. The latter are not lying, nor are they mistaken. That's how they define the word. Abortion is the taking of a human life, a fetus is human life. You or I may or may not accept this chain of reasoning, but it is just as subjective as deciding which of two paintings are more pleasant to look at. There are very few controversial subjects that don't involve rejection of one's opponent's facts. If religion, for example, were based on demonstrable fact rather than faith, there'd only be one religion, and it would be the true one.)))

[MARK SHARPE]

"Now we have welfare, a rather mixed blessing..." Argh! A socialist in our very ranks. Welfare is not a mixed blessing. It is an evil with bits of failure thrown in for seasoning. I'm a capitalist by the way. We cannot be our brother's keeper. It just doesn't work, never has, never will (on a large scale). As long as you give someone a handout that doesn't give an adequate return for the investment - a "Public Works Bill" is fine. They are getting paid for jobs needed to be done -- and no incentive to improve themselves, you are going to have people who sit back and say, "Oh, look at me. I've been deprived. Help me. Give me money."

((No one ever claimed that there aren't people on welfare who shouldn't be. But I notice that you expect hopeless invalids, infants, and the elderly to get out and find jobs too. And you don't seem to take any cognizance of the fact that a certain level of unemployment is inevitable, as the changing market structure requires alterations in the work force itself. And you also seem to ignore the continuing job discrimination against women, blacks, and other minorities. Your argument sounds good until you look at the realities and see that to do things your way, we would have to accept death by starvation and deprivation of thousands of people (at least) every year. If what you're saying is that our present welfare system is a ghastly horror show, then I doubt many will disagree. If you're saying that we don't need one, because there's jobs for everyone fit to work (and to hell with the unfit) then I suspect you'll find plenty to disagree with you. And you'll also be ignoring the pragmatic reality that, barring the fall of civilization, we are almost certain to have some form of welfare for ages to come.)))

(DAVE SZUREK]

I haven't thought you seemed exceptionally self-righteous. Maybe I'm wrong. Some people however use the term as a means of blackmail. It's one of those bugbears - like people being told that "they take things too seriously" in an attempt to intimidate them into being "good little niggers". Surely, such a quality as self-righteousness exists. But often it is just applied to anyone who dares to declare their own identity. If keeping the strength of one's convictions is self-righteousness, then so be it. Maybe we need a liberation movement for the self righteous.

((I can't imagine anyone acting under the assumption that his beliefs were wrong. If you believe them wrong, you change them. To not act at all because of the inevitable uncertainty that you're right is suicide. When I'm convinced that an idea

or belief is wrong, I alter it. Until then, I act on my beliefs.)))

[LAURINE WHITE]

Ghu spare me from ever having a hero like George Custer. Ever since seeing the Disney movie about Tonka 20 years ago, I've hated the man. Jessica may bite her tongue.

[ROBERT WHITAKER]

I wonder if Paul DiFillipo knows of the ASTERIX books, which are written in French and translate pretty well into English and include a large number of puns. I suspect some of the puns are obvious due to situations and careful writing, but it does seem rather odd to my ear at least. I once suspected that works of that nature were left out of bounds to persons of another tongue, unless they took the task of learning the language of the original. One lady I know used the ASTERIX books as a way to wax her French upwards to a polish by reading the originals.

((Local fan Sue Anderson has many of the ASTERIX books, a few of which I've read. They are indeed fun.)))

[GENE WOLFE]

Please tell your readers what a gazehound is, and what a retriever is, and what a working dog is, and so on. So few of them seem to understand the terms they use -- it's like listening to mundanes trying to talk astronomy.

((I'll have to consult Sheila for some of this. A gazehound - such as Borzoi, Irish wolfhounds, Scottish deerhounds, and Afghans - hunt their prey by sight rather than smell. One of our two Borzoi, Hilary, is taken regularly to go lure coursing, where a lure is dragged through a field by a motorized wire track and the dogs chase it. (Incidentally, Hilary this past month became the youngest Borzoi to win a field championship in lure coursing ever.) I imagine most people know what a retriever is. They are essentially sporting dogs. A working dog is a dog used for herding or guarding, like shepherds, collies, etc. Another word for a gazehound is a sighthound. Dogs that hunt by scent are, unsurprisingly, scenthounds.)))

[DON AYRES]

I agree entirely with your criticism of the "do it better" argument, and I suspect my choice of the phrase "Put up or shut up" is at fault more so than the rest. I can see an implication that a competition must be engaged in, but I didn't interpret the phrase that way as I composed it. Let me re-emphasize that last sentence: "George has a point of view that he's interested in seeing in print in fiction, so I sincerely suggest that he do so."

George and I have different backgrounds which have molded what each of us believe. It is impossible for me to present his viewpoint to the perfection that he might himself express it, and I get tired of him demanding that I do so.

((I just received a lengthy loc from George Fergus which is, alas, too late for this issue, but which will appear next time. Considering the lengths George went to last time and again in the letter you've yet to see, he certainly isn't avoiding writing about the issue. Indeed, some might say he'd written far too much.)))

[ROBERT BRIGGS]

Indeed the inability to comprehend reality was the distinctive mark of the whole student movement. They felt that goods were produced by the Tooth Fairy, not by work, organization, and technology. It's obvious that the US worker is oppressed not by

capitalists but by our socialist government through high taxes and inflation (another form of taxation).

((You started out with a valid, though oversimplified point. You ended with a nonsensical one. Inflation is not inflicted by the government. It is a product of market forces, including those oppressed workers looking for higher wages. I'm not at ease with economics, but I at least am willing to acknowledge that forces causing alterations in economy are a lot more complex than you imply. And we're still among the least socialist, and least highly taxed peoples of Earth.)))

[BUCK COULSON]

Shakrallah Jabre's letter. An intriguing idea, though I'm not sure I could answer it. One dead author come back and write one more novel. I suppose picking Heinlein to come back and write one more Future History novel wouldn't be considered quite cricket, would it? But I've felt that way for the last several years...I'm also tempted to pick Arthur W. Upfield, but though Jabre didn't restrict it to stf authors, I would assume from his answer that he intended to. (Surely nobody would pick Burroughs above all other dead authors, would he?) Hmm. Not too many stf novelists are among the dead, though a few occasionally write that way. Narrow it down to Kornbluth, Kuttner, Pangborn, Swann. I guess I'd pick Edgar Pangborn to write another novel of the future city-states. Second choice, Thomas Burnett Swann, writing about anything.

((I'm an Upfield fan too, although I've only managed to locate about a dozen of his titles. See, we agree on some writers, even if they're not SF.)))

[BRETT COX]

Concerning Shakrallah Jabre's query about having one dead author come back and write one more novel: I don't believe I could answer this, since all of my favorite authors are still alive. I'm tempted to say that I'd like J.D. Salinger to write another book about the Glass family, but then he's still alive. (Uh, he is still alive, isn't he?)

((He was last I knew. I heard that he was still writing book after book, but had arranged that none be published until after his death, so you may well get your wish. I'm a Salinger fan myself, having read FRANNY AND ZOOEY countless times.)))

[GARY DEINDORFER]

I like early John Updike much better than the later stuff of his I have read. RABBIT RUN is a strong book. I haven't read it in over ten years, but it had truth to it, vivid interior stuff that I can still remember the feel of if not the substance. And I was very struck by THE POORHOUSE FAIR. Here is a book set in an old people's home. This is an offbeat setting for a novel, especially a novel by the then very young Updike. It is very mysterious, probing dark, strange emotions and states of mind. And the other thing I remember about it is these extraordinary visionary descriptions of skies, of cloud formations, sunsets and so on. Take my word for it, if nothing else, THE POORHOUSE FAIR has the most amazing descriptions of different ways the skies look I have ever read.

((Like you, I lost interest in Updike about the time he wrote COUPLES. He even wrote a very inferior sequel to RABBIT RUN called RABBIT REDUX. I think he got caught in the mill of best sellerdom, and while I can't fault the man for writing the kind of book that would bring him the most money, I at the same time long for the writer who turned out the Olinger stories and other books that I enjoyed.)))

[GEORGE FLYNN]

Let's see if I can explain the point that puzzled George Fergus. Whatever one's theory of government, it exists to oversee certain classes of interactions among individuals. But as the population increases, the number of possible two-person interactions increases roughly as the square of the population; thus the government must grow similarly if it is to keep accomplishing the same tasks. (Example: if there are twice as many people, there are twice as many criminals and twice as many potential victims to protect.) It is perfectly correct that this cannot go on indefinitely; at some point what's needed to maintain services at the former level outruns the available resources and things can no longer "keep running as always". In other words, government breaks down. In my judgment, this happened in New York (for example) some time ago. It's a very crude model (and original with me, as far as I know), but I think it gives a useful perspective.

[D. GARY GRADY]

Your responses to Mark Keller and Dave Szurek, plus your letter to KNIGHTS about my article on space, lead me to wonder why you seem to be on an anti-technology kick. I realize your main point is that too many people (fans and otherwise) tend to cling to a dogma without considering other points of view, and I quite agree on that.

((You put your finger on the answer already. If you'll recall my MYTH on resistance to change, I think you'll find that I am essentially pro-technology. But I think technology is one of many tools available to mankind. And I fear that our society in the West, at least, has begun to accept technology as the only tool of any importance. And since our technological civilization is in a precarious position at best, I'm very anti this over-reliance on what should be one expression of human activity, not its sole hope for the future. So I'm strident about it, because that's what it takes to pierce some people's belief systems. At that, it doesn't seem to have aroused very many.)))

[DAVE HULAN]

Several people were making the kind of noises one hears a good deal these days about how we shouldn't pursue technology so much but should devote that energy into learning to understand ourselves. The catch there is that if people are successful in learning more about human nature, it'll promptly be reduced to technology (which includes manipulation of the social as well as the physical environment by scientific means). And I doubt very much if the people who protest technology would like that at all. If a real science of human nature is ever developed, it will be applied by the same people who apply physics and chemistry, and for very much the same purposes - to perpetuate themselves in power, and to increase that power. And if it isn't applied, it won't have accomplished anything to develop it.

I suspect the subconscious reason the people who advocate studying human nature want it is that they don't really believe anything will come of such study, and therefore if more attention is paid that aspect, there'll be less change in the physical environment and they'll be more comfortable. Since I have more faith in human genius than that, I personally prefer to see the effort go into relatively innocuous things like the space program. People are going to innovate; I'd rather they did it with my environment than with my head.

((On the other hand, there's no earthly reason why a lot of that energy couldn't be diverted to, say, an effective, safe means of male contraception, or the intelligent management of our ecosystem - to include non-destructive weather control, or a means to exploit without exhausting the planet's resources, or to produce a more sensible and economical transport system, etc., and I'm sure you could add

others.)))

[WAYNE HOOKS]

To Robert Briggs - Environment is a concern of the Soviets; read the WEEKLY PEOPLE. Khrushchev has been out for many years. The Soviets are desperately trying to exploit Siberia. Their increasing industrialization has placed a heavy burden on existing resources. We do worry about China; why else are we shafting Taiwan? There is plenty of pressure to raise the standard of living. Why do you think the USSR is there to start with? Russians are people, not mindless robots. If the Germans had been gentler in World War II, they could have conquered the USSR. It is unlikely Stalin could rule today.

The Russians are supplying arms and so are we. We armed Castro, and how do you explain Chile, Brazil, Angola, or Argentina? And please explain how they are not moving in our direction. Forty years ago, Solzhenitsyn would have disappeared forever in Lubyanka. And we have our Wilmington Ten...

((I was very amused recently to read that the Soviet government has fallen into a situation we have frequently found ourselves; they are supplying arms to both sides in a war. Somalia and Ethiopia have been going at it for years in the Ogaden, and continued Soviet support for Ethiopia has led to the Somalians verging on ordering the closing of the gigantic Russian naval base in their country. The Arabs, chiefly Saudi Arabia and Egypt, have become increasingly anti-Russia recently, and they are providing money to Somalia on the condition that it sever its major ties with Russia. Russia, therefore, finds itself backing a losing nation, with no graceful way to cut off aid. The Ethiopians, meanwhile, are now in serious trouble with the Eritrean rebels in the North, and with the recent collapse of their fort at Jijiba, they are vulnerable to attacks throughout Ogaden. And once their defense starts to collapse, you can expect to see incursions from two other border rivals, Sudan and Kenya. As one columnist has said, it really doesn't make a whole lot of difference in the long run, but it is nice to see the Soviet government getting an Excedrin headache for a change.)))

[MARK M. KELLER]

You predicted that John J. Pierce would be running GALAXY magazine in 1977. Well, that came true: Baen is out and Pierce is the editor of GALAXY. Doubtless John's dislike for New Wave stories will complement Universal Publications' known aversion to paying its writers, and the zine will tilt heavily toward reprints from the Golden Age.

Your next prediction was that SFWA would suffer civil war followed by schism, in 1978 or 1979. If that comes true, I will write a report for the JOURNAL OF OCCULT STUDIES -- "Don D'Amassa: The Sci-Fi Seer." How do you account for this Jeanne Dixon skill you seem to possess? Synchronicity? Sniffing corflu?

[MARTY LEVINE]

Pardoe me, but I must be Franke. Are you so Vayne as to put on Ayres and think yourself D'Amassa of the whole human race, that you can sink your intellectual Hooks into anyone at the slightest provocation? Come Offutt! If you can Doyle it out I'd think that you would be able to Tackett, but I'll re-Frane from generating Heath at this time. Listen, I sometimes disagree with Laurie Mann (a Curlovich much can be said, though she's a Young Hussar) but I'm smart enough not to take her to Trask for it. Geez, I'd at least Warner before I Keller in front of all those fans. It's downright D-Gradying! (Listen, Don, what bothers me is not the Heath but D. Hlavaty

of it all! I could even mention how Sawicki I am with a Gold right now to get your sympathy, but I'd guess you'd Stever all communication with me at that point.) Reader response indicates I should've stopped back there while I was ahead. I must be Levine now anyhow, before I dazzell you with anymore of this. Good Locke on MYTH 13.

P.S. A Fuller loc of Dubois origin follows.

[MAUREEN LESHENDOK]

To Anne Laurie Logan - who asked if "any cultures that become 'civilizations'" didn't have a powerful religious network to unify it and a real or fictitious enemy to oppose it? The Tibetans were probably a "civilization" by any definition by the time they became Buddhist in the 8th to 11th Centuries, but although their religion unified a widely diverse and underpopulated nation, they had no real opposition until conquered by the Chinese 20 years ago. They did close their borders to outsiders though Tibetans regularly traded outside Tibet and returned without difficulty. Much of the isolation was imposed by the great powers which ringed Tibet. But I don't think anything in their history since they gave up organized warfare and became Buddhist fits your description of an enemy.

[ERIC LINDSAY]

"Urban Coursing" was marvelous (although the true courser would not worry about such prohibitions as not to let the dogs catch children), and I truly thank Bonnie for the most helpful advice about how to survive in Washington (I wonder if there is a RentAHound outlet there?). I do wonder however about those people who set their dogs to coursing against pedestrians walking past their front gates (or even across the street), which is a situation in which I seem to increasingly find myself. Should I make a list like the French postmen are reported to do, and equip myself with a .177 pistol which is guaranteed to repulse attacks (it was originally, so I'm told, devised for ladies of the night), or should I merely refine my language so as to attract the attention of the owner of the dog and lead them to calling off the hound?

[MARY LONG]

Two Willis puns of which I'm very fond are from the early 1960's, so I may not recall the details correctly. One was that they were brewing some beer and Walt referred to them as carboys and enzymes. The other was when they (Irish fen) were taking an American visitor around and he noticed that the fields, besides being smaller than here, were all walled-off, and commented upon it, saying that there was nothing like it in America. Walt said: "What about the Waldorf Astoria?"

[SAM LONG]

I'll add a few words about STAR WARS. It was a most enjoyable film, imaginative, fun, and utterly un-selfconscious. It didn't pretend to be any more than entertainment - space opera - and so succeeded brilliantly. And the visual effects were excellent. And, not least, it was played straight. But mainly it was fun.

((I've been five times now, which is particularly amazing when you consider that I didn't go to that many movies total in the previous twelve months. One thing I noticed about the movie is that it recalled for me the same type of enthusiasm (sense of wonder?) that I had when I first encountered SF. I already dread the inevitable inferior imitations, just as I look forward to the new adventures planned for about two years from now. And I notice that it is still playing to packed houses (on weekends anyway) at the local theatre.)))

REBELS

[GARY DEINDORFER]

Revolution is not only a political thing; it is one of the processes of the universe. It renews, but it also destroys. It is very difficult to recognize when it is doing one thing and when it is doing another.

A political revolutionary may be quite hidebound in his artistic tastes. On the other hand, take a revolutionary in the field of music or painting or writing who happens not to care about politics. A meeting takes place between the two people. The political revolutionary says, "You are not using your art to further the cause. It is not theoretically pure." The artist says, "The hell with that. I want to do what I do the way I see fit to do it and make something out of nothing."

We have all known people who radicalized themselves right out of existence. They kept having to adopt more and more extreme poses of ideological self righteousness until they couldn't stand it any more, the strain became too much, and they collapsed, exhausted. Eldridge Cleaver, that born again Christian, comes to mind, appearing on Fundamentalist Christian television shows alongside Charles Colson, former Nixon henchman and another born again Christian.

[TONY DALMYN]

Rebellion is the religion of the day's most hallowed ritual. The unequivocal act of the assertion of freedom is surrounded by a mythology as obscure as that surrounding simultaneous orgasm. The cognoscenti of any particular movement are full of cant and quotes, and entirely unable to communicate beyond their personal horizons.

The first question surrounding any rebellion must be: rebellion from what? There is no rebellion without some pre-existing order to overthrow. Generally it is assumed that the old order is bad. Generally it is assumed that the rebellion will implement a new good order, either as a matter of reconstruction after the act of revolt, or by the simple smashing of the old order.

I am critical of the epistemology of rebellion. Consider the following conversation:

Q: How do you know you are doing good?

A: Because present society (or my present life) stinks.

Q: How do you know that?

A: Because it isn't post-revolution society.

In a political context that kind of circular thinking is very common. Your previous Myth concerned Fromm - a socialist, and May - a pop-syke variety of rebel. The basis of their attack on present society is the premise that the post-revolutionary society they envision will be good. The adjective good can be interchanged with several others - loving, caring, human, humane, etc. I am skeptical of these Cook's tours of the road to happiness. There are no maps. It is not possible to draw a map from the data we have. We know where we have been - partially. How can we say we are "lost" and need to be saved? How do we know that a place of safety exists? How do we know the way?

((((That all sounds very reactionary, in the truest sense of the word. To use an overused analogy, you don't have to know how to put it out in order to yell "Fire!".

There is always room for improvement, and the only way to know is to try things. And that means change. Since society in mass resists change, the only effective way to change things is through rebellion, in one form or another.)))

[RAY DAVIS]

There could have been more about the similarities and differences between the two kinds of rebellion you mention. One arises from a difference of opinion which is being forced upon one -- the revolt comes from a perceived infringement on one's rights. The other, psychologically motivated one, is not necessarily derived from any specific wrong (though it can develop from one), and rather than seeking to resolve a problem and be done with it, turns rebellion into a way of life. To me they are distinct areas, though not mutually exclusive, and I'd be interested in a detailed comparison of the two.

I lean towards the second type of rebel, although, being quite lazy, I'm not super-active politically. Compared with most of the people I know, I'm much more prone to selfrighteous anger when I feel pushed or restricted, and I tend to be sympathetic to manifestations of the anarchistic spirit (presumably the reason that I like the Ellison-the-personality almost as much as Ellison-the writer). That said, I must point out that both you and Hoffer are a bit unfair to the fulltime rebel. Ridiculous they may sometimes be, but the "professional rebels" can also perform a valuable function at times, if only because they make it their business to actively search for new injustices to right - injustices that otherwise might go by completely unnoticed.

I also have a nit to pick with your Bessey Hall example. You say that even if the university was wrong and triumphed anyway, the protests were helpful, and that the point of Jefferson's statement was "If authority remains unquestioned, it becomes arrogant." But what matters isn't just that authority be questioned, but that it be questioned successfully in at least some cases. Of course it wouldn't be right for rebels to win all disagreements, since they may have less chance of being "right" in most cases than the various Establishments they do battle with. But the mere act of questioning isn't going to be meaningful in any real way unless the people being questioned know that there is at least some chance of their losing the dispute. How much influence, for example, have the hunger strikes of some Soviet dissidents had in changing Soviet policies? Empty protests are little better for a society than no protests at all.

((I don't agree with your last paragraph. While neither the Bassey Hall demonstrators nor the hunger striking Sovietss won their specific battles, they did fasten attention on the establishments. You can bet that MSU was very careful to have very real cause to dismiss instructors in the future, and the Soviet Union has made some (admittedly minor) steps toward humanization of their treatment of dissidents, because of the bad world press given to them as a result of those protests. Why do you think Solzhenitsyn is free today?)))

[SAM LONG]

I know the types you describe. I ran into them in college too, though the SDS member I knew was not in the YAF. (This particular chap introduced me to fandom, so blame him.) The Weatherman faction you mention causes us meteorologists a certain amount of frustration: more than once I've had to describe myself as a fore-caster not a bombcaster, because of the actions of that group. The eternal rebel you describe is a comparatively modern development, a product of a leisure society: fanatics are rare in a subsistence economy.

[DAVID TAGGART]

If rebellion serves a useful purpose, then I suppose a case can be made for repression. Rebellion may stir up things that need to be stirred up, but repression may put the lid on a situation that needs control. The problem comes in drawing the line between what is healthy and what is sick.

Repression and rebellion are linked. The adolescent rebels against his parents, and then represses his peers -- remember the old joke about "The non-conformist's uniform"? If rebellion is a breath of fresh air, then repression is the kick in the butt to get your attention.

((I think there's a difference between "control" and "repression". To me, the word "repression" implies more than just the suppression of violence and disorder; it means as well a positive move on the part of the repressors to increase the limitations placed on the repressed.)))

[HARRY WARNER JR]

"Rebellion" is a word that has been disastrously overused in recent decades. I suppose the main cause was the James Dean - Natalie Wood movie, REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE. It was a fine film which I think I would watch repeatedly even if the female lead didn't stir up my glands so violently. But there were no rebels in it, just teenagers who didn't obey their parents and showed off as egoboosting functioning. To draw a rather farfetched analogy, the film had something in common with THE IMMORTAL STORM, which was also concerned principally with teenagers engaged in immature arguments depicted as epic struggles. I'd like to see "rebel" confined to people who do irrevocable things when they want to act on their convictions; drop out of college instead of spending two days on a sit-in in protest against something the administration has or hasn't done; expatriate themselves in a nation more suited to their political preferences instead of joining some mildly liberal organization which has found a place on the FBI list of groups worthy of being watched. Otherwise, how does the three-year-old who holds his breath until his face grows alarmingly black fail to qualify as a rebel?

[AVEDON CAROL]

There was something about your MYTH that bothered me -- that is, I mean, apart from the fact that it missed some pretty essential points. It took me a while to put my finger on it, but I finally decided it must be that damned rational tone that drives me crazy -- that "I'm being objective and therefore my opinions are more valid than yours, which are so emotional" tone that I've been getting used to now that I'm a wimmin-libber.

Before I was a wimminlibber, I was in The Movement. I participated in many mythic events which later became transformed into media bullshit. Initially, my sympathy was with other groups whose oppressions I did not directly seem to share, but for some reason I identified strongly with them. Once, when someone was talking about communism, I said, "I don't believe in communism." He said, "What do you believe in?" and I said, "I don't know. I don't believe in anything." "Ah," he said, "you're an anarchist." What I had meant was that I hadn't yet heard an ideology expressed that seemed to jibe with what I felt -- that I knew that communism, mysticism, and all of the other isms which had one way or another been shoved down my throat would not take care of all of the things that were bothering me, would not cure my own feelings of discontent. I remained unconvinced that socialism, even world-wide socialism, would put an end to racism, and I was sure that no one had yet been able to put a finger on the things that were bothering me. At any rate, the oppressions I was already concerned with, like militarism and racism, were

things which directly affected my friends and therefore affected mt friends and therefore affected me, which gave me reason enough to feel strongly about them. It was years before I began to recognize that these also affected me directly. I knew that the system was fucked up and was fucking everyone else up with it, but although I could pinpoint specific instances of oppression, or recognize them when they were pointed out to me, I was not satisfied with the analysis of my communist friends and unable on my own to develop a larger picture of just what kind of changes were needed and where the roots to this oppression could be found. I did know, however, by the time I was seventeen, that oppression was not just a few isolated instances that could be dealt with individually -- like the firing of teachers or for non-hiring of one Black man who was qualified for the job. I continued to participate, as I had for years, in civil rights and anti-war actions, but I was beginning to feel used.

The first time I saw Bernadine Dorn, in 1968, she planted a seed of feminism which I was not to recognize for years. At the "Inhoguration" in January of 1969, a feminist speaker, in the first overt appearance of feminism at a major movement event, was booed off the stage. It still didn't reach me. The following day Paul Krassner rhapsodized about meeting the then-in-hiding Eldridge Cleaver and carried on at length about the heroism of this great leader who had been held a political prisoner until his legendary escape. Eldridge, I later learned, had been imprisoned for rape. The political crime which Eldridge Cleaver had used to vault him to this stature as a revolutionary against the White Man was the rape of Black Women. But I didn't know that then.

I knew, a long time before I began to get a picture of the sexual nature of the oppression in this society, that something was wrong. I knew I was oppressed, that I was suffering under great injustice, that I had been robbed, despite the fact that almost everyone on both sides of any issue placed me among the privileged class. At a time when even Chicanos were unrecognized as a "people of color", I was surely considered white. Among people who were endlessly talking about the plight of the poor and the working class, I was to all intents and purposes most visibly middle class, the most despised group of all. No matter how I worked and how many risks I took in the front lines, I could never seem to earn a place, never be redeemed, even in the eyes of people who had been given better breaks than I, had better jobs when they looked for them, and didn't have to sleep with everyone who asked just to prove that they were human. Despite overwhelming evidence that I had been cheated and used by The Man in ways that these young punks, representatives themselves of The Father and sometimes chosen sons of the very system they pretended to fight, could not even admit let alone understand, I continued to believe that I was privileged and had to earn my place among the "good" by doing everyone else's dirty work and ignoring my own needs.

What I mean to say is that if you had asked me to explain my position in 1968, I could probably have done no better than all of the people you put down in your article. In addition, I too have changed my views in many areas now to the point where it could be said that I did a 180 on those issues. But I was not merely some congenital malcontent who would have tried to start a revolution in Utopia. I was a genuinely oppressed person with legitimate cause to be at odds with the system who had simply not yet learned how to give voice to my own grievances. In addition, most of the things I was protesting against in the 60's were in fact pretty horrible things, and most of them, both directly and indirectly, oppressed me in some way. Of course I identified with the caste oppression of blacks -- after all, I was suffering the same sort of oppression myself, both as a woman in general and as a woman of color (the invisible racism that is suffered by women who are too dark to reap the benefits of

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those blondes the gentlemen prefer and too light to reap the sympathies accorded blacks) in particular. The war, and war in general, appalled me not only for those reasons which have been stated and re-stated a thousand ways, but in ways which particularly affect the women who are the friends or family of the departing soldiers. And I could hardly help but identify with the women of Vietnam who had their homes destroyed and watched while their own children were burned, their own bodies were raped, mutilated, then buried so that the crimes would go unknown. Even in those, my most pathetically male-oriented days, I knew that it could happen to me, that I would fare no better than the poor ragged women in the newsprint photos if I ever came to be in a similar position, and I could not separate myself from them, even as I refused to believe that the war could ever come that close to home.

The war, I did not then realize, had been home all along. Oh, there was no napalm falling from the skies, no impending threat of having my own cultural heritage bombed into oblivion by order of the commander-in-chief of a foreign nation. But the war was here, in my own home, in my own bed, and in the years to come I was to begin to draw the lines from the young men who staked out the bodies of Vietnamese women and those who came home to demand righteously that I provide them with sexual services I had no desire to provide, and then the men who had never gone to war, even who claimed to be pacifists, but whose demands for sexual service were just as insistent, although usually phrased with greater sophistication.

I am, today, what some people would call a fanatic (what some people have called a fanatic). I am convinced that nothing, save my own survival, is more important than the fight for feminism. I will not waste my energies on trivial, male related surface politics like those you describe in the Bessey Hall occupation. I have a commitment to preserve my energies for feminism, and I cannot take the risk of wasting my time, money and possibly my freedom for something which in the larger analysis will accomplish nothing and which carries the danger of my landing in jail or being injured. I still carry with me a number of scars which resulted from civil rights and anti-war demonstrations. I intend to waste not one more bandage; not one more drop of blood, on anything but this, my own cause.

As I say, I participated in numerous protest actions during the 60's. In the beginning, most of these were pacifistic, "rational" and clean and neat in the manner you describe in your account of the student occupation. And, like your example, they were failures. They did little more than to give false feelings of accomplishment to a few people. They never did what they were meant to do, which was end war and racism. This was proof enough for most of us that rational, non-violent demonstration was ineffective, and in our frustration we took to more noticeable means. And for the first time we began to accomplish some of our goals -- most significantly we got wide-spread media coverage and made both issues so newsworthy that reporters actually began investigating some of these situations, and although much of the reportage was slanted to the "Hey look at these weird kids" angle, it made the trials of war criminals like William Calley possible, it made people ask questions about just what it was that was so important over in Vietnam that we should risk "our" lives and kill other people. The more militant approach of the later civil rights movements, like the SNCC and the Panthers, were far more successful in securing real rights for black individuals than the earlier movements associated with non-violence and King ever did.

It is easy for some people to be rational about other people's political needs, because it doesn't matter to them. But it has been my experience that the same people who accuse me of emotionalism or fanaticism get just as heated over their own

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favorite causes, and look less ridiculous to "rational" people only because these causes are more acceptable and do not require any action or forfeiture of privilege on the part of others. Thus when an artist complains with fervor that the quality of art which is being bought to illustrate stories is inadequate, no one tries to diffuse his anger or invalidate his sincerity by claiming that he is an over-emotional nut who takes these things too seriously. Generally we nod in agreement and say that, yes, that is a terrible thing and isn't it a shame that publishers (which we don't happen to be and therefore can dislike freely without having to feel guilt on our own part) will buy stuff from a guy who doesn't even read SF while real SF artists starve in crowded apartments in the crummy section of town. Meanwhile, when the same artist accuses me of being over-emotional about the sexism which kills my patients (and, incidentally, still affords me a smaller paycheck than said artist, in addition to the myriad risks to my own life which I must take every time I seek medical attention or even a breath of fresh air), I am unlikely to get any support from his fans, who will agree with him that I am all too serious about this business. Not that they won't agree that, yes, all of these things which bug me are too bad -- it's just that, well, why am I getting so excited about it?

Eric Hoffer, with no doubt his own axe to grind, does not come off as a fanatic as long as he attacks everybody's favorite target -- other fanatics. Since few people actually see themselves as such, we can rest assured that when Hoffer patronizingly analyzes the psychology of fanaticism, it is someone other than ourselves which he is putting down and ridiculing. I can put Christians down with relative safety by speaking not of their beliefs so much as their militance, thereby obscuring the fact that it is not their commitment at all that bothers me, but the very foundation of their beliefs. I am just as contemptuous of people whose Christianity never extends to grappling me on the streets of pounding on my door on Saturday morning as I am of the Moonies and the Witnesses and so on. Even I can disguise my fanatical loathing of the Patriarchal Christian menace which has served for so long to perpetuate the oppression of Women and Blacks as long as I keep it in the acceptable confines of attributing my disgust with Moonies to their methods and possibly the insincerity of Moon himself. The proof to the pudding is in the fact that, as long as I stick to the usual course, I can say almost any nasty thing about the Catholic Church, I can get most people to agree with me easily and we can all be entertained for hours counting off the various things we can't stand about this wealthy institution which tries to repress us sexually (cutting off male access to female outlets) and steals money from the purses of the poorto line its own coffers. But the moment I let slip the depth of my beef with the Church and Judeo-Christianity in general, the crippling effects of its sexism, it is amazing how many people not only lose interest but will even suddenly step in to defend the church.

I'm a fanatic, or so I'm told. I'm told this in some pretty unusual places, to be sure. I know a man who can match my fervor 100% in arguing that women should be allowed free abortion on demand and free access to birth control. He is outraged that some women are still unable to obtain the Pill with freedom, he can't abide the idea that right-to-lifers may actually achieve some of their desired goals -- yet this same man called me a fanatic when I implied to him that he was sexist in his refusal to consider using a condom when no other form of birth control was available. He fanatically insisted that he was above using this device, but I was the fanatic, according to him. Only a fanatic would have insisted that a man take the responsibility of birth control as well as the woman.

Such experiences have given me a whole new category of fanatics to despise. I am speaking of that irrational group of people who, without regard to the realities of

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life on this planet and the terrible toll that must be paid for those of us who are not members of the privileged caste simply to survive here, insist on taking an unemotional approach to a situation which is horrifying at best. These people, in an apparent psychosis which is incomprehensible to any sane individual, have an inability to recognize the painful horror of this situation, and persist in their uncomprehending belief that there is something "sane" about being cut off from the anguish of the rest of humanity. Unable to feel like normal human beings, without the capacity for emotional response which characterizes anyone who is genuinely alive, these weirdoes, threatened by the aliveness of others who are still capable of reacting in terror to the terrifying have developed a cult of fanatical weirdoes who plead for "rationalism" and "objectivity", who beg for their own warped interpretation of what they call "reason" in a thinly disguised effort to destroy the true reason of the rest of us who are really still human.

((First of all, I should have defined my terms better. A fanatic, according to the dictionary, is someone who acts with unreasonable enthusiasm. Now, although I admit that this word is misused by many people, I don't think it was entirely fair of you to ascribe this same misuse to me. I thought I had made it clear that a fanatic is someone who supports a cause WITHOUT A REASON THAT INDICATES THAT SPECIFIC COURSE. Your letter lists your reasons for being a feminist (at least partially). Unless you are lying, then you cannot be a fanatic. I probably should have included in the original article an example of a dedicated revolutionary who was NOT a fanatic, but I never realized that this misunderstanding might arise.

Nor was I trying to minimize emotionality. But just as I reject the idea that emotion is inferior to reason, I similarly reject the converse. I hold very emotional beliefs for very rational reasons, as do you. I think the bulk of your disagreement is purely semantic.

I agree with most of what you've said. I learned years ago that it is nearly impossible for a white male activist to really find a place among black activists. To some extent, this is valuable. Blacks in our society need the assurance that they don't need whites to achieve every worthwhile goal. On the other hand, it is discouraging, because it implies that the barriers society has erected between people are a lot sturdier than we thought. Personally, I found as well that the important thing is to act according to my own beliefs. I would not adopt a policy supported by Blacks, Feminists, or any other group simply because all of my friends in such an organization supported it. Would you? Of course not. You'd examine the issue and make your own judgment. That is an exercise of reason. Having decided that a situation does in fact further sexism, we'd henceforth (presumably) be violently opposed to it. That is an exercise of emotion.

We differ primarily on our interpretation of events in the past decade. You feel that the violence that came to infuse demonstrations helped hasten the war's end. I disagree. The trial of William Calley proves nothing. He was a minor cog that was sacrificed as a crumb thrown to the public. The people who were really guilty were untouched. Even Calley got a short sentence in a luxury apartment, followed by an excellent civilian job. And if the Black Panthers were so successful in their violent phase, why did they formally renounce it as unproductive a few years ago and switch their emphasis to community activities? Similarly I think your criticism of Christianity is valid for any major religion (some are even more sexist) and that the church is no more responsible than any other institution in our society, except possibly by sin of omission. These and a couple of very minor quibbles aside, I agree with your remarks; but I think you were predisposed to believe that I was saying something entirely different than I intended. If so, why?)))

Many thanks to the kind, patient people who waited for this much delayed issue to appear. The contributors are:

Poul Anderson, 3 Las Palomas, Orinda, CA 94563
Don Ayres, 5707 Harold Way #3, Hollywood, CA 90028
Doug Barbour, 10808 - 75th Ave, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1K2, Canada
Alann Bostick, 46 Arboles, Irvine, CA 92715
Robert Briggs, PO Box 1508, Punta Gorda, FL 33950
Lynne Brodsky, in transit
Rick Brooks, RR #1, Box 268, Fremont, IN 46737
Avedon Carol, 4409 Woodfield Rd, Kensington, MD 20795
Mark Conroy, East Providence, RI
Robert Coulson, Rt 3, Hartford City, IN 47348
Brett Cox, Box 542, Tabor City, NC 28463
Tony Dalmyn, 453 King Edward, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
Bonnie Dalzell, East Providence, RI
Ray Davis, Box 333, Braymer, MO 64624
Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Ave, Trenton, NJ 08618
Graham England, 55 Colbrook Ave, Hayes, Middx, UB3 1TQ, England
George Flynn, 27 Sowamsett Ave, Warren, RI 02885
Don Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave, N. Hollywood, CA 91606
Seth Goldberg, Dept of Chemistry, Bilger Hall, Univ of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
D. Gary Grady, 318 Forest Hills Dr, Wilmington, NC 28401
C.L. Grant, Dover, NJ
Arthur Hlavaty, 250 Coligni Ave, New Rochelle, NY 10801
Dave Hulan, PO Box 1403, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave, Teaneck, NJ 07666
Fred Jackson III, 70 Illinois, Pontiac, MI 48053
Beverly Kanter, 6933 N. Rosemead #31, San Gabriel, CA 91775
Mark M. Keller, 101 S. Angell St, Providence, RI 02906
John Leland, 451 Orange St, New Haven, CT 06511
Maureen Leshendok, 12802 Ardennes Ave, Rockville, MD 20851
Marty Levine, 1023 Elizabeth St, Pitts, PA 15221
Mary & Sam Long, 425 W. Lawrence Ave, Apt 7, Springfield, IL 62704
Jim & Laurie Mann, 5501 Elmer St #3, Pitts, PA 15232
Patrick L. McGuire, c/o Pendery, 4262 Ashland Ave, Cinc, OH 45212
Eric Miller, 58 Roxborough Dr, Toronto, Ontario M4W 1X1, Canada
David Moyer, 630 Shadywood Dr, Perkasi, PA 18944
Joseph Napolitano, 2926 N. Stockbridge, Los Angeles, CA 90032
Jerry Pournelle, 12051 Laurel Terrace, Studio City, CA 91604
Mary Pride, 814 Grimstone Dr, Chesterfield, MO 63017
Jessica Salmonson, Box 5688, Univ Station, Seattle, WA 98105
Mark Sharpe, 2721 Black Knight Blvd, Indianapolis, IN 46229
Sheryl Smith, 1059 W. Sheradon Rd, Chicago, IL 60660
Stephen Sowle, 2121 Arlington Ave, Upper Arlington, OH 43221
Dave Szurek, 4417 Second, Apt B2, Detroit, MI 48201
David Taggart, Chandler Rd, White River Junction, VT 05001
Victoria Vayne, PO Box 156 Station D, Toronto, Ontario M6P 3J8, Canada
Harry Warner Jr, 423 Summit Ave, Hagerstown, MD 21740
Robert Whitaker, PO Box 7649, Newark, Dela 19711
Laurine White, 5408 Leader Ave, Sacramento, CA 95841
Gene Wolfe, Barrington, IL

plus any others I have inadvertently overlooked. WAHF: Marc Ortlieb, Steve Sawicki, Ron Salomon, Diana Thatcher, Mike Bracken, Denny Bowden, Gil Gaier, Denys Howard, Cal Johnson, Marty Levine again, Lesleigh Luttrell, Michael Bishop, Philip Davis, Adrienne Fein. Ltrs for next issue, squeezed out this time, include George Fergus, Chester Cuthbert, Tony Renner, Doug Barbour, John Robinson, Brian Earl Brown, John Bartelt, Fred Jacobcic, and another from Don Ayres. Peace, all.



Mark Conroy
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