

Let us compare

Mythologies

I have learned

my elaborate

lie

MYTHOLOGIES 15

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"There is no truth: there are only differences of opinion." Joan D. Vinge

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Front Cover quotation is by Leonard Cohen

MYTH

The word "friend" seems to have descended into the same abyss of meaninglessness that is already inhabited by "love", "hate", and other non-words of modern times. It isn't so much that they don't mean anything as that they have been generalized to mean so many different things that they've lost their uniqueness. You can love your wife, love your kids, love your parents, love baseball, love chocolate ice cream, make love, etc. We hate people, hate algebra, hate getting up in the morning, and so on. Similarly, the meaning of "friend" and "friendship" has been extended to cover a variety of different relationships ("boyfriend" for example) or frequently used where the word "acquaintance" is probably more appropriate. My dictionary defines it as anyone attached by affection or esteem to another, and that is so liberal and all encompassing that it seems useless to me as well.

Our son now attends a private school, and last year there was a series of forums for parents to talk about a variety of subjects. Ostensibly, the idea was that we would learn how to be better parents through exposure to other parental problems and approaches to solving them. In practice, it was more properly an encounter session for adults who were experiencing a variety of problems adjusting to their lives. Loneliness was not only an obvious theme, it was openly alluded to by a number of participants as the reason why they were present. The high incidence of single parents in this particular school doubtless contributed to this situation, but even the married couples attending jointly expressed similar sentiments.

This logically led to a discussion of the nature of friendships, both among adults and children. There were offered a number of folksy definitions, all of which strike me as much more useful than that provided by the dictionary. One person said that a friend is someone you can call at two o'clock in the morning if you have a serious problem without it being embarrassing. Another said that a friend is one who is genuinely hurt if you don't inconvenience them when you need to do so. Still another suggested that a friend is a person to whom you can talk about those things of which you are ashamed. At a convention a few years ago, a rather drunken fan told me tearily that a friend was someone who would tell him when he was raking an ass of himself without making him feel worse, and that no one had ever cared enough about him to try. A young woman once told me that she had few male friends because most men "checked her out" when they were first introduced, and she could never be easy with them again, and that she had few female friends because most women viewed her as a potential rival for available desirable men, even when she had no interest in them. Still another person told me that the only people she considered potential friends were those who seemed honestly interested in her life and problems, rather than voyeuristically or simply as a matter of courtesy.

Clearly, all inclusive definitions of words like this would entail volumes. I consulted Bartlett, and found that Ralph Waldo Emerson said that a friend is a masterpiece of nature. LaFontaine asserted that as rare as is true love, friendship is rarer still. Both are impressive sentiments, but neither is very useful in determining just what is and is not friendship. Defining the word, like defining "love", is probably a waste of time; both words are too intensely personal

in their meaning for one person's definition to be applicable to another. The emotional content of the word is subjective. I've seen people get misty eyed during even the most abstract of discussions of the subject. If you want to see most people shy away from a conversation, try discussing friendships in specific, forthright terms. I know a number of men who are more willing to talk seriously about their love (physical and emotional) for their wives than their feelings about people they consider friends. I was once told by a person at work whom I intensely disliked that I was his "only friend in the place", a sentiment that would have made me feel distinctly awkward had I not known how trivial he considered the term. If I was his only friend, he was in severe trouble, because I was then as close to "hating" him as I have ever been with another human being.

If friendship is such a desirable goal (as it probably is), then why is it such an uncomfortable subject for people to talk about? Will letters responding to this piece carefully skirt the entire issue to protect the emotional lives of the writers who respond? Is it exaggerated here in New England because of the traditional Yankee reserve? Are people in other parts of the country more open about it, or do they just delude themselves that they enjoy deeper relationships because of their mellow lifestyles? The last is my feeling; people are very good at fooling themselves into thinking they have that which they most desire.

Why don't we like to talk about friendship? Why is it such a traumatic experience to walk up to someone and say, "I really like you and want you to be my friend"? Why does it make us uncomfortable if someone similarly approaches us? One of the remarks made at the parents' forum was that true friendship goes unsaid, that it is unnecessary to be explicit about it, that the parties involved know their own feelings and one of the joys of true friendship is that things of this nature cannot be reduced to mere words. Bullshit. This is all a clever rationalization of the fact that we refrain from saying anything explicit because we are afraid, afraid of rejection, afraid that we will be made to look foolish.

The problem seems to be that at the same time we feel this urge to move toward one another, there is a countering force compelling us to move apart. Somehow, admitting friendship is to admit weakness, vulnerability, perhaps even accepting that we are in some fashion responsible for one another. If this person is my friend, he or she now has the power to hurt me. It is a scary thing to willingly relinquish control of something which can be turned into a weapon against us. We build walls around our emotional lives to protect us from forces without, but at the same time we exclude the opportunity to experience ourselves with others. Increasingly, we are becoming emotionally bankrupt, drawing upon our own strengths and resources, wary of becoming dependent upon anyone else. We even stress that the independent spirit is admirable, desirable, and worth emulating, even if that independence involves a degree of emotional crippling.

Why is this the case? I can see a number of barriers we have erected, and I imagine there are others either too subtle or too personally threatening for me to pierce. The increased mobility of society is certainly one. With the average family moving every three years, it is difficult to maintain lasting friendships. There probably are instant compatibilities, but I think most friendships must be built up over a period of time, over a foundation of trust, and time is not a commodity of particular abundance. At 37, I am hardly decrepit (even though I sometimes feel that way) but already I am one of the most senior people at my company. I move less than most. We bought a house in 1971 and moved three blocks away in 1980, and don't plan to ever move again. We are obviously more stable geographically than most people, but I recently encountered someone from my high school for the first time in ten years. I am still in touch with three of my

college friends (other than Sheila) but I see only one of them regularly, the other two at infrequent conventions.

Another barrier is sexual tension. Several years ago, in another issue of MYTHOLOGIES, I spent some time discussing the fact that effectively one half of the human race is off limits in terms of close friendships. How many of us who are married can honestly say to ourselves that we have close friends of the opposite sex? Competitiveness, the emphasis on self-reliance and self-reserve, fear of showing weakness (often equated with the display of strong emotion), and the desire to maintain some artificial standard of dignity all work against the forging of lasting bonds among people.

I exchanged a series of letters recently with a feminist on this subject. One of the statements she made originally struck me as wrong, but it became more plausible as I thought about it, and now I suspect that I've moved so far toward her position that I may have passed her. Men, she said, (though I think to a large extent this is true of women as well) don't make friends out of affection, they do it as a way of forging alliances, establishing contacts in order to better themselves socially or professionally. I do in fact know of a large number of men (and some women) who very clearly do form their social circles for these purposes and not because they particularly like the people involved. A cartoon recently said that the difference between male and female friendships is that men get together to exchange experiences but women get together to exchange secrets. If true, at least in general terms, that seems to me to indicate that women have richer, more rewarding friendships than men. (The cartoon did not go on to explain what was exchanged in cross-sexual friendships, presumably because it was in a family publication).

I was reading a collection of sociological essays the other day, paying particular attention to surveys. I'm a sucker for surveys. One was the result of interviews with several thousand adults scattered throughout the United States. Thirty percent of the adults interviewed said that they had no close friendships whatsoever. Most of these were married people and did not even include their spouses. The survey was done in 1957. I suspect that the percentage was actually much higher, because many would not like to admit, even anonymously, that they were so "unlikable". I believe the percentage would be much higher now. To admit, even to yourself, that you have no close friends must be a frightening, self-damaging experience.

Fear of rejection is one of the obvious barriers to friendship, just as this same fear prevents many a teenager from asking for a date. Even if there were some way that we could evaluate another person and decide that he or she is worthy of friendship, how do we know that the feeling will be reciprocated? John Smith may actively like Paul Jones and go out of his way to do favors for his "friend", but Paul Jones may interpret these actions either as nosy interference, an awkward encumbrance, or a weakness to be exploited. Smith might say that Jones was his friend, but Jones certainly wouldn't say the same. Unrequited liking is every bit as painful as unrequited love. Perhaps more so. If someone rejects you as a lover, it might be because they are otherwise committed, because of a lack of physical attraction, or because they just don't feel that they want to become involved in that particular type of relationship. Although painful, this isn't necessarily destructive to one's ego. But to have someone you admire reject you as not even likable, as beneath consideration for friendship, that's a blow too painful to bear. It's terrifying to think of exposing oneself to such a threat.

There is also a fear of commitment. Reverting to folksy definitions from the forum, we have the person who suggested that a friend is someone you can criticize without that person taking offense. Even more significantly, a friend is someone for whom

you can do a favor without placing them in your debt and, conversely, someone you can accept a favor from without immediately feeling an obligation to reciprocate in some fashion. Heavy stuff this, right? Flip the whole situation over. If a friend does something shameful, do we reduce his or her status to acquaintance? A friend of ours recently did us a considerable disservice, through a lack of consideration and an excess of bad judgment rather than malice. Should we disavow the friendship on that basis? If so, what kind of friends would that make us? Certainly I've made enough bad judgments of my own over the years. I'd hate to think that every misstep in my all too imperfect life would cost me a friend. I haven't much of that coinage to spend.

In an attempt to organize my thoughts on this subject, I descended upon the local library and borrowed an armload of books that purported to deal with the subject. Not entirely to my surprise, I discovered that most of the books were either too theoretical to be useful or so personal that they were almost embarrassing. Many of the authors seemed to be attempting to convince themselves. Their relationships with people, as described by themselves, seemed superficial, overly intellectualized, or an outcry of, "See, people like me. I must be worthwhile. Let's all get together and like each other and then we'll all be worthwhile." One entire book was devoted to refuting Sartre's statement that "Man is born and dies alone and it is only by deluding himself, between these two cardinal events, that he can believe that he is not alone."

A writer named Ignace Lepp offered some of the few interesting observations in his book, *THE WAYS OF FRIENDSHIP*. In comparing love and friendship, he stressed that the latter is more important in human relationships, or at least should be. Love is exclusive; theoretically, at least, we can only love one man/woman at a time. Friendship is inclusive; assuming that we have the luck to find them, we can develop and maintain a large number of friends. Love, he suggests, is just one aspect of friendship. You can fall in love against your own wishes, but you must choose to be friends. He also suggests that the basic difference between friends and simple companions is that companions communicate but friends also exchange emotions. Without emotional content, there can be no friendship.

This distinction arose also in a pretty bad book called *FRIENDS* by Jerry Gilles, which seemed more interested in labelling things than in explaining them. There are a few interesting points though. Gilles breaks conversation down into two types, contact and bullshit. Bullshit has no emotional content. He also asks the interesting question, do we speak to be liked, or do we speak in order to demonstrate our true selves?

The most interesting part of the book lies in some of the evaluative exercises he suggests. The following are paraphrasings of some of the topics he suggests we should consider in terms of our own friendships.

1. Would your friendship survive a separation of a year or more? Obviously, this is quite common in fandom, and the mobility of society makes it a formidable obstruction.
2. Do you frequently disguise your feelings to avoid hurting a friend's feelings, or do you feel you can be honest and non-destructive? Are you falsely cheerful when you are actually oppressed? If so, why?
3. Do you feel uneasy when asking for a favor?
4. Have you ever paid or received an honest compliment, or a frank criticism? Do you ever use the word "friendship" in describing your relationship?
5. Can you be unhappy together as well as happy together?

6. How do you react if a friend makes a statement that you personally find distasteful? This is a particularly difficult one for many people. I find that I am really torn when someone I like refers to "Jewing the price down" or something similar.
7. Can you discuss emotional problems (yours or theirs)? I suspect women can do this more easily than can men.
8. Are you willing to allow your friend to know things about yourself that give them emotional or even tangible power over you?
9. Could the two of you spend a week alone together sometime without dying of boredom or ripping each other's hearts out? Note that in the case of a cross sexual friendship, this situation implies sexual abstinence. One can engage in sex with friends, but the question is, could you stand each other without that activity?

I did not devote all of the foregoing effort and research into writing this piece. I did it for self-analytic purposes (I am as fascinated by myself as are we all with ourselves). My conclusions (where I made them -- I'm still working on it) would not be applicable to anyone else, and I will spare you them. But I am going to pass on some of the observations I made. There are people whom I consider friends and others that I consider acquaintances. Some of each would probably be quite surprised to find out what category they fall in, as I too "let it go without saying" for the most part. I don't think I've actually told half a dozen people that I consider them friends in my entire life. Reviewing my own personal history, all the way back to grade school, I could only come up with 26 people I had really considered friends (as well as about a dozen people that I wished had been). Of this 26, there are four I still see regularly, four more I see irregularly. I don't think I'm a particularly unusual case; if I am, it's probably because I have such a long list rather than a short one. That is truly scary, people. Even scarier is that I have no idea how many of those 26 would include me on their lists. I don't want to know.

I spent a lot of time wondering about the ones I had wanted as friends, but with whom I failed to make the connection. Half a dozen of them are active fans whom I greatly admire, but whom I see too rarely and within the too artificial atmosphere of a convention to develop a close relationship. One (currently a best selling author) was so wrapped up in another friendship during our high school years together that there was no room in his life for another close friend at the time. Another became so heavily involved with drugs that he retreated from the real world for many years (happily, I understand he is now functioning quite successfully). Another was much older than I, a barrier that sometimes is insurmountable. Still another was black, and although she told me I was one of the few whites with whom she could feel easy, it wasn't entirely true. One was involved in a very messy divorce at the time I knew him, and he was too emotionally washed out to allow anyone to get close to him. Another woman whom I still see regularly is so convinced of the necessity to be on guard, aggressive and competitive at all times, that it is impossible for me to approach her on any informal level at all, a barrier she seems to have erected between herself and even her formerly close female friends.

Notice my rationalizations. In each case above, the barriers were beyond my control. It's not my fault, it was them, or the situation, or the timing. Am I accurately portraying the conditions I describe? Is it possible that in actuality these people were put off by my pushiness/reserve/dullness/outspokenness/nasty disposition/evil beliefs/selfishness/sneakiness/greediness/ineptitude? Could be. I am not an easy person to get along with. I tend to set impossibly high standards for people, even though I don't come near to living up to them myself. So sue me.

But if you have to make major changes in your personality in order to achieve the fruition of a friendship, then maybe that isn't really what you have. You're faking it. This artificial person is the one who has the friend, perhaps, but you don't. And sometimes we are not willing to make the sacrifices necessary for a friendship. I know of an individual, for example, who betrayed his own stated standards of honor and betrayed a friendship rather than endanger his prestige in a different context.

Conclusions? None, I'm afraid. Any conclusions I made, no matter how valid for me, would not necessarily be valid for anyone else in any case. I have this sneaking fear sometimes that the whole thing is a pretense, that egomania overcomes all and that none of us are really friends to each other. Maybe my feminist friend had the right idea and most of us just use each other for our own ends, sometimes without even realizing ourselves what we are doing.

On the other hand, maybe there is a great web of true friendships out there among all you people and I'm just missing the boat. But I think not. I think I agree with LaFontaine about the rarity of friendship, that it is such a precious and scarce commodity that every failed opportunity is a genuine tragedy, and the most tragic of all are those who will not, cannot let themselves become friends with another person. We don't "make" friends; we discover them.

BYPASSING TIME AND SPACE WITH ISABELLA FIGHOLLER

After completing her fifth tour of duty with the Intergalactic Expeditionary Corps, Isabella Figholler decided to spend her leave back in the Solar System. Among other things, she had heard that historians had succeeded in restoring some of the long abandoned L5 Society island colonies and were turning them into thematic amusement parks. Sure enough, upon her arrival, she found that three had already been opened, one dealing with technology, one with natural history, and a third specifically dealing with the now extinct L5 Society itself. Additionally, a recreational park was almost completed, and she would be able to attend the opening day ceremonies before her leave expired.

As it turned out, it was advantageous for a number of people that Isabella had so chosen to spend her holiday. A host of space vehicles was assembled in space, waiting to disgorge hosts of tourists for the opening day festivities: the usual speeches, band concerts, and a parade that would stretch completely around the inner circumference of the sphere. Unfortunately, the band ship suffered a severe malfunction as it was maneuvering to debark the last contingent of parade participants. One of its engines exploded and a fragment struck the temporary atomic drive units attached to the recreation park itself. The drive exploded in turn, relatively harmlessly, but the result was that the artificial world was thrown abruptly out of its stable orbit on a collision course with another, still deserted colony world.

The captain of the band ship was thrown across the bridge during the accident, and suffered a severe concussion. Isabella had begged a ride across to the recreation park on his vessel, and she was luckily familiar enough with the controls that she was able to maneuver the crippled ship and offload the populace just before the collision that would have killed them all. And so it was, of course, that Isabella had a plaque erected in her honor for having rescued the paraders of the tossed park.



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Since it has been nearly six years since the last issue of MYTHOLOGIES, there have been some changes. For one thing, most of the stalwarts of the letter column wars of days past seem to have disappeared from fandom. Many of them are a great loss, although I'm sure that there are enough new voices to fill in the gaps. In any case, I suspect that half the people who receive this issue will not have been on my old mailing list, and probably will not have met me. There are, as well, a number of changes in my life (not least of which is my address) since MYTHOLOGIES #14, some of which may have escaped even those of you who do know me. My interest in fandom has been cyclic, and I seem to be on the upswing from a downturn, or something. In either case, this is meant to be a short piece to introduce myself to those of you who don't know me, and to update those of you who do.

I was born in Rhode Island in 1946. The mathematicians among you will be able to determine from this that I am 37 years old. After an undistinguished childhood, I entrapped myself in fandom while attending Michigan State University. I was active in a number of apas for a while, made some very tentative efforts toward publishing a genzine, which ended when I was drafted shortly after marrying Sheila Glover, whom I had met at college.

Following a year in Vietnam I spent eighteen months in Oklahoma, with a very low level of fannish activity. I did not then and still do not attend very many conventions. In addition to the expense, I find it difficult to deal with people in that frantic atmosphere and would rather meet them in more relaxed circumstances. From 1971 to 1974 I was a prolific letterhack and article writer, particularly a series on little known SF writers. Since I read an enormous number of books each year, the latter came ridiculously easy. In 1974 I started a dittoed personalzine, which grew to a mimeographed genzine by the fourth issue. That fanzine, which went 14 issues before folding, has been revived, if you are reading this. So it goes.

Fannishly, not much else has happened recently. I review for Andy Porter's SF CHRONICLE, write to fanzines with increasing frequency, and have even done a couple of articles recently. If all goes well, MYTHOLOGIES will once again be my main fannish activity, to be published twice each year. Keep your fingers crossed.

Non-fannishly, a number of things have happened as well. Obviously, I've grown older. I used to say that I would never feel old until I hired someone who was young enough to be my child, and now I have an eighteen year old employee. Our own son, David, will become a teenager in January and will probably have reached my height by then as well. (He's already sneaking my clothes.) So it goes. I still hold the same job, more or less, as when I was drafted in 1968. I am the Materials Manager for a manufacturer of silverplated hollowware. What that means in simplest terms is that I tell the factory how much of what item to make when. I am also in charge of shipping and receiving and purchasing. Someday I plan to write a long article on being a manager, but not today.

In 1980 we moved from a six room ranch house to a fourteen room century-old farm house three blocks away. It took 75 trips with a station wagon and four with a rented truck to move everything. This house came with a tumbledown barn, a modern dog kennel, an acre of land, and a four car garage. One third of the land is now fenced for the dogs (Sheila raises Borzoi, Russian wolfhounds). The garage is being converted into a library for our collection of over 30,000 books, about 60% of which is science fiction. I am a collector in addition to a voracious reader.

I have other passions. Although I have always enjoyed a wide variety of music (classical, jazz, folk, rock, oddball), the intensity of my interest waxes and wanes. It currently waxes. We have over 1200 record albums and nearly 300 tapes. Currently the things I listen to most are The Talking Heads, Dire Straits, Juice Newton, Joan Jett, Igor Stravinsky, The Cars, Rickie Lee Jones, Henry Mancini, Eric Clapton, Judy Collins, Neil Young, Gordon Lightfoot, The Police, Heart, Fleetwood Mac, Steeleye Span, and Scott Joplin, just off the top of my head. The Rolling Stones are playing as I type this.

I have also developed an obsession (some might say) with video games. We have an Atari, an Intellivision, and a Colecovision, and almost 150 cartridges. I talk more about this elsewhere in the issue, so I'll spare you here, and those that aren't interested can ignore the other piece entirely. I'm very accommodating.

Personality? It's hard to communicate that well other than in person. As I head into mid-life crisis, I think I detect some changes in my own personality. Those of you who have known me for the past decade may be in a better position to judge how accurate they are. I am just as outspoken, though more likely to think before I leap. I have become simultaneously more introspective and less organized, a combination I don't understand myself. I am at once more self confident, and less compelled to prove it. I am more outgoing than formerly, more interested in people as people rather than as fans, or BNFs, or whatever. I am quieter.

Prospects for the future? We don't plan to ever move again. I will probably retain my present job for the foreseeable future. Even if they wanted to get rid of me, they'd have to face the expense of sixteen weeks severance pay, a fairly substantial amount. They aren't likely to at present in any case. The combination of my research and top management's sudden willingness to let me run the inventory the way I wanted to resulted in a substantial coup and I am currently in just about everyone's good graces. (For those interested in tedious technicality, the company's record inventory turn was 2.1. This year I increased it to 3.2 and simultaneously reduced stock outages by 75%.)

Fannishly, I plan to be around for quite some time, and I hope to make MYTHOLOGIES the forum for fans that it once was. I think we used to have the best lettercol in all fandom. Let's do it again.

The Hunchback & the Amputees

adapted by David D'Amassa

The belltower of Notre Dame was a stunning structure; it stood above Notre Dame like a mother guarding her young. It gave the residents comfort to know there was an accurate piece to set their backward sundials by. Fortunately, many didn't see or know of the belltower's ringer, a short figure who resembled a demon. He was about five feet tall, but it was hard to tell as his posture was revolting. He leaned over with a hump protruding from his shoulder and his face had bony growths all over it, the teeth shapeless from decay.

The ringer's name was Quasimodo and he was the monks' pet. Ears permanently clogged, Quasimodo had no problem ringing the bell every hour on the hour. For such a wretched creature, Quasimodo's strength was immense. And so was his sentimentality; he was always searching for his lost parents or other relatives. He was the Hunchback of Notre Dame.

As Quasimodo hoped for word from his relatives, he had no idea that Sasperella, his sister, also searched. When she heard folklore about Quasimodo, she was filled with hope. Sasperella was nothing like her brother. She had blonde hair, the kind that shines on a bright day. Her eyes were greenish-blue. She was normal in every way; one would never think she was the ugly bell ringer's sister.

She rode in a carriage drawn by enchanted horses to Notre Dame, where she was told Quasimodo lived in loneliness. She wanted to rush to him immediately, so on one particularly bright morning, the monk ventured out of his room as Quasimodo's six morning chimes rang out as usual, and the mail waited on the breakfast table. At first glance, there was nothing interesting. A few magazines, a bell repair bill, and one letter. It was addressed to Brother Samuels, and he opened it excitedly. Although he was the head monk, he never got any mail. In fact, even the bell ringer got to look at McCALL'S first.

In lavender paper scented with French perfume, the letter read:

To Brother Samuels, I beg your help!

My long lost brother, Quasimodo, is in your hands, I'm told. I must see him, but I must leave by the time you read this. The address is below. I beg you to let him visit my home for three weeks. Thank you.

Her signature, as curved and beautiful as the paper, was right above her address. Samuels wished he wasn't a monk. He yelled for Quasimodo.

Quasimodo limped and slithered into the room, the corner of his mouth drooling. In a greasy voice, he let out a hearty, "What's happening?"

After explaining the situation to the very excited Quasimodo, he ended with a disappointment, the one statement that made the bell ringer's hopes tremble and collapse. "I'll let your sister and you be together for as long as four weeks," and then came the shark's swallow, "but you have to find a replacement bell ringer."

Finally, to Brother Samuel's surprise, Quasimodo smiled and replied, "No sweat." And he hurried off into the morning streets.

Shortly after, he bounded up to the first man he met. "Look, buddy, would you like a part time job?"

The man paused, looking away as if considering something. The hunchback took this opportunity to look him over. He seemed intelligent, but he wore sleeves that seemed rather long. Then Quasimodo noticed something; the gent was armless, the empty sleeves dangled uselessly at his sides.

"We might have a deal," said the man. He seemed to notice Quasimodo's look of despair. "I can do anything; people just won't have me because I'm, well, different."

Quasimodo nodded, still doubtful.

The long, cobwebby tower was a room about as large as an examination room. The amputee looked at the huge bell, which hung motionless in the center of the room. It was grey and looked like death with a hangover. Quasimodo regarded it with love like that of a mother for its child.

Coming back to reality, Quasimodo asked the man how he intended to ring the bell every hour without proper limbs.

"No problem," replied the man. "Behold!"

The man strutted back to the end of the room, where he breathed in heavily a few times and began to sprint. He started slowly and then transformed into a fast run. A few feet away from the bell, he leaped up, still moving forward. The man's large brow met the bell with force hard enough to toll the bell deeply so that even Quasimodo was jealous.

It was perfect. In sheer joy, Quasimodo jumped and cheered, though you couldn't hear well over the echoing gong. The amputee was rubbing his forehead and smiling triumphantly. But Quasimodo's quick mind discovered a loophole. The man's method was all right for one o'clock, but what about midnight? Anxiously, he mentioned this to the amputee, who replied with another command to watch.

Once again, the amputee ran toward the huge bell. He swung his head from side to side and jumped, but missed the bell. The open belltower window seemed to swallow the man. Shocked, Quasimodo immediately rushed toward ground level down the long staircase. In the street, in a crumpled mass, was the man, lying on the ground dead.

Brother Samuels had also heard the scream and rushed out. He was contemplating the corpse when he saw Quasimodo approach with a terrible expression. "Did you know the deceased, Quasimodo?"

"Yeah," replied Quasimodo, defeated at last. "I didn't know his name, but his face rings a bell."

The next morning Quasimodo approached another man. He offered Quasimodo his services, and with blind hope the hunchback accepted. It wasn't until they were up in the belltower that he discovered that this was another amputee. No arms.

This man requested a prop, a stool. Quasimodo fetched one and set it down by the open window, hoping that this gentleman wouldn't be as clumsy as the last. He asked what the man would do at the late ringing hours.

The amputee smiled confidently. Balancing on the stool, he raised his strong, bulky legs. With amazing strength, he kicked the bell, which tolled deeply and loudly. Quasimodo saw that this method would work even during the late hours. Once again he leaped and shouted with joy, already making plans for his visit to his sister. The man also shouted and kicked the bell several times more, enough to make Brother Samuels wonder what was going on. There was a thumping sound and Quasimodo turned to see the stool laying on its side. There was no sign of the amputee.

Quasimodo mourned by the corpse which lay in the street. Brother Samuels looked at the corpse and turned to the hunchback. "Quasimodo, who is this? Any relation to the other man by chance?"

"Suppose so," replied Quasimodo. "I didn't know his name either, but he was a dead ringer for the other."

BYPASSING TIME AND SPACE WITH ISABELLA FIGHOLLER

Early in her career, Isabella Figholler drew guard duty at an interspecies convention held on Spica V. Although her job assignment was in the art exhibit, she took advantage of her off shift time to visit the other halls, where she could examine the technology, literature, history, and other facets of humankind, Eldkind, Wyrdkind, the Gloave, and other alien races. She was particularly taken with the Wyrd technology exhibit, for they specialized in miniaturization of electronic devices. Inquiring of the Wyrd personnel on duty, she learned that miniaturized computers were on sale at either of their two tables in the Hucksters Room.

Immediately, she hastened to the hall where each race was selling items of art and technology, but she was disappointed to find that the two Wyrd tables, one at each end of the long hall, were both draped with sheets, indicating that they were closed. Since this was the last time she would be off shift before the convention closed, she was thwarted in her attempt to purchase a miniaturized computer by the closed end counters of the Wyrdkind.

WANDERING

It was a bright and stormy day and I decided to take some time off work and wander in search of the secret of existence, or if I was really lucky, The Secret of Existence. I had narrowed it down to one of three only things, as Chickenman would say. First, that Fandom is a way of life. Second, that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions. Third, that if Coke is now "It", then Pepsi must have become "the Real Thing". Fourth (Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself. I am large; I contain vicissitudes.) Fourth, I say, there is no utility in attempting to ascertain the nature of reality, or, conversely, everything is real if you think it so.

It was a quest, forsooth in a manner of speaking. Speaking of manners, I politely borrowed a street guide and used the grid found in the index to locate the road to Hell. It ran off the map, marked with a small arrow and a tiny pitchfork tailed mannikin, or womanikin. The scale was such that I could not pick out its scales.

I crossed the town from east to west, and then crossed it again from north to south. Having doublecrossed the town, I found myself at last astride the road to Hell and set off to follow its course, treading lightly lest I crush the good intentions that lay underfoot.

It was a hot day despite the snow and I was soon possessed of an all consuming thirst. Spotting a roadside tavern, I stepped onto the sidewalk and winced at the sound of yet another good intention falling to be merged with the pavement. So it goes. I stepped indoors and located the bar (the tavern was called the Bar Nun, and the bartender was dressed accordingly, as was her habit). Someone stood by the door, playing a video game. The Ecstatic Pinball Machines of my youth have given away to the queeps of the video arcade. Pinball Wizards must stand aside because Video killed the radio star.

I ordered a drink. "Brandy," and when she delivered it, I added, "You're a fine girl."

As I stood there, sipping my brandy, on- elbow leaning upon the imitation Dr Jekyll and naugahyde bar, a knee bent slightly so that one foot rested on the angry, cross rung of a barstool, pigeons rose in a squarrilous cloud from the sidewalk, no doubt disturbed by my redundancy. I bethought better of myself and turned back to the bar.

"Do you have Pepsi?" I inquired. She nodded yes. "Do you also have Coke?" She made her affirmative action once more. "I'll have one of each."

Accustomed as she was to bizarre requests, she silently filled both my orders. It was a beautiful day. She offered me a container in which resided a single object, but I could not face the last straw under the present circumstances. Besides, the drinks were designed to answer a serious philosophical question, not provide solace for my throat.

I turned to the gentleman standing beside me, a long, tall silent type and begged his pardon. He dropped his pardon tinnily into the tinc cup of my snifter, then raised his eyebrows in inquiry.

"Excuse me, sir, but could you tell me which of these two drinks seems more real to you?"

"Is this the Pepsi challenge or something?"

"No, no. It's just that one of these containers holds the real things, but the other holder contains it alone. I am trying to determine which it is that is the real thing and therefore is true and which of these is actually it, which may or not be true depending upon its degree of congruency with the other. Do I make myself clear?"

"As clear as old Father Hubbard's cupboard."

He turned away and I realized that he really was not interested in my quandary, nor in my title, nor in my mythology. Offended by his holier than thou attitude, I ordered a second brandy, while the sailor on the other side of me ordered a whiskey and wine, and beyond him another man in a scruffy beard ordered white wine and lemon juice. The incongruity zapped itself into my mind and visions of Northern Spain were expunged. I suppose it was all in the draw of the cards.

Enlightenment clearly was not to be found in this establishment. I left on this note and resumed my trek along the aforementioned road. Dusty Rhodes. Sandy Beach. Coke and Pepsi, I thought. Perhaps two sides of the same reality? Here I was plodding along the road to Hell, and carbonation seemed the least of my worries. The nearby trees showed fresh buds forming under the varicolored leaves that were only now beginning to fall.

Consider fandom, quoth I. Whither? In the great hockey game of life, is this the goal to score? With an inventory turnover rate that most businesses would kill to achieve, can this be the repository of true experience? Consider her ways. The frantic love affair reaching unsatisfactory climax in a host of decidedly uneasy hotels, the myriad mimeographed sperm rushing toward uncertain union, midwifed by the mail carriers of America. Do I mix my metaphors? I am large; I can multiply.

As the road scrolled past, I hallucinated (perhaps) a score or more of diverse shapes - dragons, swordsmen, walls alive with snakes, phantom bookshelves, dead kittens, dark rooms, oddly shaped boxes, white sweatshirts, uniformed figures crossing an arching bridge, cold drafts, bicycles, weddings, and things that go plump in the knight. It was a daydream of nightmares. It was the best of times; it was a mess of rhymes.

I passed a bus depot. Its name was written in a foreign tongue by a foreign hand, but I anatomically translated it. The name contained a potpourri of meanings. It was definitely my type, but was it a solution to my problem. All the things I knew for sure were those things which I was sure I didn't know. I stepped into the alcove. Outside it began to storm castles. I passed an office: Humphrink, Felch, and Bogaz, attorneys at law. A book lay on a bench, an illustrated guide to birds in North America. The cover depicted a robin, stylized, against a gold leaf backdrop. It was only a bird on a gilded page. An abandoned trolley track ran right through the depot, and an attendant was cleaning up refuse from around it. I left that wasteless track, and decided that perhaps this whole things should be continued on the next rock star.

UNFUNNY BUSINESS

Twice a month the local SF fans gather at our house to exchange news, recommend books and engage in various social devices. One of the more popular of these is Horrible Work Stories, in which we swap outrageous and unfortunately true stories from our jobs. Our world being as it is, many of these stories involve that aspect of human stupidity which we call discrimination, whether it be on the basis of sex, age, race, or whatever. Almost anyone (except perhaps the unemployed) is qualified to play this game, and it is so popular that I have even been known to take notes during the week so that I won't forget a particularly juicy story. Nor am I the only one. Because I tend to talk a lot (why else would I be doing MYTHOLOGIES again?) I seem to tell an inordinate number of these stories. This tends to make my place of work seem to be an incredible lair of maliciousness and ineptitude, which is really unfair. My experience with a number of other firms has made it clear that we are at best or worst about average. That may be a sad commentary on American business acumen, which is probably an entirely different article that ought to be written one of these days, but on balance I think that our mixture of competence, incompetence, good intentions, and downright nasty people is about normal.

In any case, in one recent discussion a young woman raised a point that crops up from time to time. Usually it is stated in the form of a question, basically consisting of: "How can you stand to work in such a place?" In its extreme form, this translates to: "If you really believe those principles which you claim to profess, you would resign your position in protest." Well, in the best of all possible worlds, I might have quit my job a number of times in the past, but then again, if this were the best of all possible worlds, I wouldn't have to. A less impractical approach might be for me to adopt a strident, outraged voice at work when I disagree with a decision (my boss already refers to me as Dudley Do-Right), and I suppose this would please some of my more militant friends, in an abstract sort of fashion, with the result that I would be in a nearly constant adversary relationship with other managers. I am frequently in that position in any case; petty jealousies and the thirst for power are just as prevalent within a management team as they are in the Halls of Congress. I have generally looked for a more pragmatic course, have been more interested in winning small victories than in losing large and messy battles; this course is described by some as simple cowardice. So it goes.

The moral obligations of a businessperson when faced with discriminatory situations is a topic that has frequently arisen in fanzines, particularly in relationship to the heightened awareness of sexual discrimination in recent years. I have no doubt that anyone reading this could cite instances where they personally or some one whom they know was the subject of discrimination in some form. Unfortunately, very few fans seem to be members of business management, and lack a perspective into how many of these situations arise, as well as the fact that they are largely incapable of doing anything about them. As a result, they tend to miss the really subtle ways in which a discriminatory decision can arise. I am not exempt, even with my relatively high position. Just this past week, I lost an argument with

a young woman who works for me. She contended that her salary position would probably be better if she were male, because her job classification would be higher rated if it were held by a male, particularly a married male. She is probably correct.

Before we get into the meat of this issue, I need to establish the credentials of my company as a discriminator, thereby rousing the indignant outrage of my readers. This mood setting is slightly unfair, as many of these incidents occurred years ago, and many of the people alluded to are no longer employed by us, but they are I think fairly representative of the kinds of people that one will find managing almost any mid-size company. To my certain knowledge, therefore, I can attest that one young woman was denied a raise she otherwise deserved because she was living with her boyfriend and it was felt that she therefore didn't need the money because it was his obligation to contribute to her upkeep. Another employee was terminated because she was so attractive that it was distracting to her male co-workers. In another case, a young woman used her seniority to bump a male co-worker from his job and thereby avoid layoff. The manager of that department was so irate that he restructured the entire department in order to permanently eliminate her job, even though she was the second most productive worker in her job classification.

Another high official announced that "I've never met a woman who could make an important decision. They're raised from childhood knowing men will make all the important choices in their lives so they never develop the ability. This is why women make poor business managers." Another example that has happened in a variety of forms through the years is one that invariably follows the promotion of a younger woman. Within a day, there is some variation of "You know who she's been sleeping with", usually originating among other women frustrated by their own lack of progress.

A few years ago, a young woman was transferred to a different job which involved working in the manufacturing area as well as the office. During a familiarization tour, she was approached by a male employee who made sexual advances. Worse than the act itself was the fact that when his supervisor was requested to take disciplinary action, he treated the entire situation as a joke. "If a girl (sic) wants to work in the factory, she has to learn to expect that sort of thing." Male supervisors are generally contacted directly by department heads; female supervisors are often communicated with through their managers. One female supervisor was regularly sending requests for information, programming, etc. to the data processing department, but her answers were always directed to her manager, who frequently had no idea what was going on.

A member of top level management once stressed that pay should be determined by the person rather than the job. For example, if a manager making \$30,000 per year leaves the company, and his \$10,000 per year assistant is promoted into his place, the raise should not be more than 10%, because no individual should receive a larger raise regardless of what new responsibilities he or she might have assumed. This was actually an improvement over his predecessor, who felt that promotional increases should be subtracted from normal annual increases. This latter fellow also tried (unsuccessfully) to establish two different rates of pay for the same job, based solely on sex, and did so openly, was in fact outraged that there was opposition to his proposal. He left our company shortly thereafter to become president of a much larger company in Pennsylvania, where no doubt he doesn't have to listen to dissident voices. Add to all the above a few minor (as far as I know) sexual advances, and you have a typical manufacturer in these happy modern times.

Realistically, what can one do in this situation? Particularly if one is male and the discriminatee is female? If a male supervisor or manager tried to make an issue of a case such as these, the attention would be focused on him and his actions, not the woman involved, and probably not even on the justice of the case. It is often viewed (sometimes correctly) as a political maneuver for that manager's own benefit rather than altruism or a matter of principle. At best, the battle might be won but permanent breeches established that present obstacles the next time that woman or another seeks redress. More likely it will be overtly or covertly counterproductive for the woman involved; it is usually not a career plus to be controversial outside of Hollywood. Even if the male supervisor perseveres, wins his point, and manages to avoid alienating people toward the woman, most of the benefit may be his. And perhaps worst of all, when a male loudly advocates something beneficial for a female subordinate (particularly if she is younger and/or attractive) the inevitable result is speculation about sexual favors offered or exchanged. (I personally have had three separate affairs, I am told. How I managed to work the time for them into my schedule is beyond me.)

There is a psychological problem for the individuals involved here as well. In the above situation, the success may have been achieved for the woman rather than by her. This is insidious as it reinforces the idea that women only benefit materially or gain power over their lives as the result of actions by men in authority positions above them. Of course, this is true of everyone to a degree, but in this kind of case, it is particularly damaging. It is also a hard line to hold to. There has to be a balance between pointing out when discrimination is occurring and letting the person involved speak up for herself. This may sound like a militant feminist position, but the truth is that it does little good for a man to see that a woman is given her just due; it is more important that she demand and receive her rights.

A while back there was a lot of publicity about the Bendix Corporation. An apparently very competent young woman skyrocketed through management of that corporation, a rise which was soon attributed to her assumed extracurricular relationship with a member of top management. I have no idea whether or not the rumors were true. She left the firm and later, if I recall, married the executive in question. The actuality of events is irrelevant. In large businesses the "mentor" concept of promotions has existed for a long time. A senior member of management will take a personal interest in a junior executive's career, for one of many reasons: friendship, a high opinion of the person's competence, nostalgia for his own youth, etc. Since almost every single one of these cases for decades has been men helping along younger men, sexual interest is presumably a minor factor. If an older man takes a personal interest in the career of a younger woman, however, I believe it will always be tacitly assumed that there is sexual interest if not outright sexual activity involved. To avoid this, a highly placed male manager will often go out of his way to not give personal preferential treatment to a female subordinate, no matter how great a potential she may have. The woman ends up the loser in either case.

Let's take a look at some actual examples. Carol worked in a small department and was highly thought of by her boss. Although he had made numerous efforts to upgrade her job, he was stymied by three factors. First, expansion of his department was necessary but was running into heated resistance from those areas which would necessarily have to cede some authority. Second, Carol was a young, attractive female, single, and therefore clearly didn't need a very big salary (sic). Last, although capable of a more responsible position, Carol was very insecure and unwilling to make decisions without confirmation from above.

Carol was lured away from her job into a secretarial position (a dead-end for her career) because she was attractive and single and her new boss assured he could carry on a casual flirtation. We alternated the salary structure in order to leverage her out of her existing job and then, when it became obvious that she wasn't even remotely interested in an office flirtation, he found constant problems with her work and soon found someone else with whom to entertain himself. Carol is now stuck in a boring job with little challenge and no significant prospects for future advancement.

In some cases, of course sexual favors really are involved. Cory is a young, divorced, flashy woman who unfortunately seems to have decided that her personal route to success lies less with her brains than with other parts of her body. After a period of almost embarrassing incidents around the office (she was fond of wearing slit skirts, no bra and underwent incredible contortions to advertise the fact, she began an affair with her boss (Carol's boss, as a matter of fact). The result was special treatment for her, a benefit which she now is at great pains to flaunt. But what does she do if he loses interest, or is fired or transferred? Unfortunately, despite her unsavory road to glory, Cory has an excellent grasp of her job, works hard and well, and is potentially capable of a more demanding position. (This paragraph was originally written several months ago. I left it as it is despite an interesting change since then. The boss has been transferred out of state. Cory lasted about a month, then quit, and rumoredly has followed him.)

All the above notwithstanding, what sort of tactics do work? A great deal depends upon the people and situations involved. There is no clearcut, single answer. One thing that seems inevitable in this kind of struggle is frustration: there are no clear victories and defeats. Even when justice is on your side, you might not win at all, let alone sweep the boards. Indignation and hostility might make you feel better in the short run, but in the long run they'll do even further damage. If you're a woman, it will be interpreted as further evidence that you are too emotional for a management position; if you're a man, it will either be assumed that you're blindly and unrealistically idealistic and should be humored, or that your sexual involvement in the situation is warping your judgment.

There is some help available in larger companies where codified wage and promotion policies exist, although even there the implementation is less than perfect. Sometimes you can work a similar ploy even in a smaller company. For example, Sherry and Mike both used to work for me in roughly similar capacities, although Sherry had been with the company for seven years and Mike for only three. Sherry was making more than Mike, although only slightly; he had been transferred into my area with a higher hourly rate than I would have preferred.

Mike had somehow managed to make a very favorable impression on the company president. At the time when this incident occurred, Mike had just gotten married, and I received a message from the company president that Mike should be given a pay increase. Sherry had previously been denied a raise on the basis that the job didn't merit one (and although I'm not supposed to know this, the comment was made at the time that she didn't need the money because she was female and single). I refused to give Mike the increase on the basis that there was no reason to give it to one without the other, since they were both performing well, and Sherry had seniority. As a consequence, they both received a raise of equal magnitude. Had it not been for Mike, Sherry would not have received her raise. I now have both jobs consolidated into one, with a single female doing both, so the same device won't work again. It should not have been necessary in the first case, but it was.

There is another tactic that works but one which I retain some reservations about. Sally is a very capable and ambitious woman who is frequently frustrated by the attitudes of her superiors. She is considerably brighter than most of them, although she often displays a remarkable lack of tact and common sense. On several occasions, when she wanted a favorable decision on some matter or another, she would forego her usual slacks for a short skirt. During an evening's outing at a local bar, I pointed the correlation out to her. She admitted that she does in fact dress to entice at times. Her position is that there are certain tools for career improvement open to men (golf matches, etc.) that are closed to women, so it is perfectly acceptable for women to take advantage of their physical appearance to accomplish their goals. Although it is difficult to refute her right to do so, I find this position uncomfortable. Among other things, it helps to perpetuate the idea that women cannot compete on an equal basis with men. For another, it is biased against women who are unattractive or unwilling to use their personal looks as a wedge for career betterment.

Ideally, the rule of thumb should be that we treat every employee the same, regardless of sex. But there are some exceptions. In some cases it is important to not treat people identically because of the practical aspects of human nature. Before you break off from reading this in order to send me postcard bombs for advocating discrimination, let me explain.

Our society frowns upon close friendships between people of opposite sex outside of marriage. There are exceptions to every rule, but in the overwhelming majority of cases, close relations of this kind are automatically suspect. It becomes important to avoid even the appearance of extracurricular activity. A manager with a male assistant might well play handball with him on evenings, or go out drinking on weekends, or they might even go on a camping trip together. But if the assistant is female, or if the manager is female and the assistant male, the result is almost instantaneous scandal. Sexual dalliance is a foregone conclusion. It sounds very brave to say that you don't care what people say about you as a manager because you know what the truth is, but that won't stop the application of unpleasant coloring to the reputation of the female.

It is distinctly unfair that the result of all this is the elimination of many people from the possibility for a close friendship. For the foreseeable future, alas I don't expect any improvement in this situation. It is therefore important to realize that violation of this arbitrary standard of behavior may be personally rewarding, but it will almost certainly make professional progress more difficult for the woman when pursued in a business environment. It shouldn't be that way, but that's the way it really is, and a million well intentioned articles like this one and ten thousand males quitting their jobs in protest isn't going to alter things.

Let's look at a fairly complex case in some detail, one that is factually true, in fact, occurred in my own department. I think it illustrates the complexities of the issue better than any theoretical discussion ever could.

First, two character sketches. Travis Jones runs the shipping department. He has done so for many years and is very good at his job. Travis comes from a very traditional, old world background, with extreme emphasis on the sanctity of the family. He is fair, but inflexible, resistant to change, has a number of unrelated personal problems outside of work that are much on his mind, and is rather deeply disturbed with conditions on the job as well. His attitude toward women is chivalrous, most of the time, but he gets very frustrated sometimes because he does not feel comfortable with women whose orientation is professional.

Cindy Rose is rather different. She is single, in her mid-twenties, ambitious, quiet, but displays increasing self confidence. Although soft spoken most of the time, she is extremely stubborn. Although not an avowed feminist, and in fact frequently very critical of feminist positions, she is very much aware when she is being underestimated because of her age or sex. She seems to have decided that she will be working all her life rather than being a stereotyped homemaker. Her job involves, among other things, providing liaison among sales, manufacturing, and shipping, expediting items when necessary to meet customer demand, altering instructions, etc. All things being equal, it is a position that would potentially lead to a strong possibility of promotion, although we are small enough that it is unlikely in the immediate future.

Cindy had no experience in manufacturing when she transferred to this position five years ago, so for the first couple of years she spent more time during routine clerical work, learning the items and processes and systems that govern them. Personnel cutbacks during that same period threw extra work on us that slowed the training process, and it wasn't until recently that she pointed out that a lot of her functions were still being handled by others and that it was time that she started to do her own job. So I issued a memorandum to everyone concerned that the makeshift system was to be terminated and that all matters to be expedited should be referred to Cindy forthwith.

There were a few slight grumbles, mostly from sales people who resented having their lines of communication altered, but I thought that things had gone pretty well until a subsequent meeting with the manufacturing supervisors. Halfway through the session it became evident that Travis had continued to circumvent the system, bypassing Cindy. After the meeting, Cindy went immediately to shipping to resolve the problem. I asked her afterward what the result of her conversation had been and she informed me that Travis, in his own inimitable fashion, had told her that (1) he hadn't realized the memo referred to him as well as the factory supervisors (2) that there was no future for her with the company (3) that the factory supervisors would never cooperate with her so it would be necessary to bypass her anyway (4) that this wasn't a woman's job and (5) she shouldn't feel bad that she wasn't as good a manager as a man. Needless to say, this speech was not a hit.

Clearly I had a problem. Although Cindy's summation of the conversation rung all too true, I decided to stop by for a visit with Travis. I told him that I had detected some tension between him and Cindy and wanted to know what the problem was. He related their conversation, with results that varied in no significant detail from Cindy's version. He admitted that he had been annoyed at the time they spoke, but assured me that he was not in any way angry any longer and had only been trying to point out to Cindy that her personal goals were unrealistic.

Now at this point I realized that I had already made one mistake; I should have called a meeting with Travis and Cindy immediately upon implementing the change in procedure. What options did I have now? I could have reprimanded Travis, told him that his personal opinions were irrelevant in business decisions of this nature, insisted that Cindy was perfectly capable of handling her job. Unfortunately, all that would have done is further aggravate the situation between the two of them, and possibly cause Travis to go out of his way to put Cindy in a bad light. So I compromised. A great weasel word, that. I told Travis that it was necessary to centralize expediting in order to avoid duplication of effort (true) and that expediting was Cindy's job. If she can't handle it, we'd soon find out. If the factory supervisors refused to cooperate with her, that would be my problem to solve, not his.

Things progressed predictably from there. During the next several days, the number of requests for expediting from shipping ran at an unprecedentedly high level. Cindy knew what was going on and so did I. She was determined that every request would be filled. I requested that she wait him out for a few days, and that if he didn't moderate after that, I would have to take firmer steps.

As a matter of fact, the situation did get back to something close to normal within a few days, although there still remains some skirmishing in the trenches. Travis even came as close as he is ever likely to to apologizing, but he still makes certain that both of us know he doesn't care for the situation. Although he now gets better service than ever before in the history of the company, he still complains because it isn't perfect, and instantaneous. The problems with the factory supervisors were in fact minor.

Psychoanalyzing one's acquaintances is not a particularly profitable enterprise, but I did devote considerable effort to trying to figure out Travis' motives. The personal problems he is experiencing outside of work include a degree of conflict with a teenage daughter who does not accept his standards of behavior for young females. Now he is faced at work with yet another woman who won't fit into the pigeonhole he has mentally assigned her to.

Travis actually does like Cindy, but in questioning his idea of her role, she is also casting doubt on his perception of his own role as a man. I doubt that he consciously realizes this, but I'm certain that at least part of the reason why he reacted so negatively was that Cindy told him that she wasn't content to be just a supervisor all her life. Travis has been a supervisor for many years, and is not likely ever to achieve a higher managerial position. It had to be quite a blow to his ego to be told by a much younger person, particularly a woman, that she intended to surpass him professionally because his position was so limited and boring. This is obviously his problem, not hers, and it is unfair of him to project his own insecurity in such a way that it affects a fellow worker, but everyone does project his or her personal problems and it is unrealistic to expect otherwise.

There is no simple, happy answer to the situation described above. Cindy has enough self-confidence and patience not to throw her hands up in disgust (I'm frankly not certain I would have been as patient; I'm certain I wouldn't have been when I was her age.). Sometimes having her work for me is a painful experience. It is very difficult to tell someone that they are absolutely right, but we're going to do the wrong thing anyway, that sometimes the only route between two points is a convoluted one and that she has to overcome the weight of prejudice as well as the normal obstructions to progress. Sometimes we ruin or drive away a good employee by exceeding their bullshit threshold.

Most of the preceding has dealt with the difficulties of females in business, but sexual discrimination is obviously not the only problem. Before I wind up this probably already too long essay, I want to touch on just one other area. There is probably even less consciousness of discrimination on the basis of age, or what I will call profile. Let me provide a generalized example drawn from real cases.

Andy is a member of the management team of a mid-size company, on a supervisory level of a behind-the-scenes department. He is single, early twenties, competent but reserved. He performs his job well but most of the time his activities are either not visible to upper management, or may be attributed incorrectly to some other person. Since he maintains this low profile and is young, he may not even be considered for a promotion that he might otherwise qualify for, and may be

inadvertently denied additional training that could be of mutual benefit to him and his employer.

There are some obvious obstacles here. Since his actions are not directly observable, it is difficult for him to gain recognition. Older managers tend to ignore or overlook him because they assume either that he is inexperienced or too shy to assert himself. This is emphasized by his unwillingness to participate in the kind of insincere mutual backpatting that is characteristic of the business world.

As a younger employee, his salary base is low besides. Partly this is for valid reasons. Seniority is one criterion that must be examined in this situation, because experience, even in things that may seem inconsequential, is worth the money it takes to retain it. In many companies, pay increases other than promotions are a fairly uniform percentage increase, which means that in the normal course of affairs, Andy will maintain his position in the salary spread, but his raises will always be smaller than the more senior members of management, even if he is (by some theoretical objective standard) more valuable to his company. While his financial position will improve each year, it will be several years before his base salary is high enough that the increases have an obvious effect. Worse, if he is renting rather than living in his own home, he may not make much of a gain in his standard of living, even if the percentage increase in his salary exceeds the cost of living increase.

All of the above would be an even more insurmountable problem if Andy were black, Jewish, female, or handicapped. If he was a black Jewish handicapped female of the same age, he would probably consider suicide if he ever sat down and thought over the situation.

As I see it, Andy really only has six alternatives. He can actively seek a job in a slightly higher position with a different company. This allows him to make a fresh start, increases his prestige and pay, but has disadvantages as well. For one thing, it may be impossible to find such a job. For another, he may jump into a position before he is ready for the added responsibility. There is always a degree of uncertainty with a new company in any case, and he will have to learn all the details of his job that he now takes for granted.

I see moving to the same position in another company as slightly safer, but with less to gain. Presumably he would anticipate a better chance of promotion, but in addition to all of the disadvantages mentioned above, he also would now find himself at the bottom of the seniority ladder in pay increases once again, and may be no better off in any case. The tendency to overlook the quietly competent in favor of the loudly assertive and aggressive person of perhaps marginal competence is nearly universal. A third alternative is to go into a new field entirely, but unless he's very lucky, the disadvantages will far outweigh the advantages.

A less pleasant alternative is to learn to play the game. We all know what the game is even if it is sometimes hard to put into words. Some aspects of it are annoying, but not necessarily demeaning - attending company social functions, being pleasant, taking extra care to appear bright, interested, alert, and busy, even when we are hungover, bored, caught up, and sick to death of the place. In its extreme form, this involves all the insincere "friendships", what pop psychologists often call "stroking", body language, and the like. You have to know how to win an argument when you want to, and how to lose one in such a way that you ultimately gain. Some of this is minimally repulsive; we all do manipulate one another every day, even though we may not always admit it even to ourselves. We do things to make people feel proud of us, afraid of us, sympathetic toward us,

and so forth. Some of it is pretty cold blooded, and we may be embarrassed when we catch ourselves doing it. But we will continue to do it. The degree of manipulation, the extent to which it is cold blooded, the shape of its thrust, whether we do it to hurt others or merely to make them more agreeable to our ideas, is something we all have to work out for ourselves. But a more aggressive approach toward asserting ourselves and our ideas, convincing others of our worth whether they want to know it or not, will almost certainly improve someone's prospects. In that sense, at least, it will provide some definite advantages, if Andy is willing to sit down and work out just what he can do along these lines without compromising his own ideals. The biggest disadvantage is that, if Andy blindly decides to campaign for himself, he will one day decide he doesn't like the person he has turned himself into.

The penultimate alternative is to just stick it out. Eventually, the salary increases do become significant. Remaining with the same company does allow you to build experience. There is minimal risk to this approach. The adverse side of the coin is relentless. Progress remains slow, particularly in the early years. Things can get very frustrating as the gap is at best constant and you seem to be running in place.

The last alternative is really a variation of the fourth. There are ways to increase your profile without resorting to the more callous aspects of the game. The requirements for this are the biggest disadvantage, because they may make this choice impossible. You must be in a position where through a great deal of honest work, initiative, and originality you can make your behind-the-scenes job stand out, attract attention. When upper management is forced to take note of you, quiet competence may actually pay off. Many jobs do not provide an opportunity for this kind of activity.

Discrimination because of low profile is very difficult to deal with, because the people doing the discriminating are probably totally unaware of what they are doing, might even be upset to realize the talent they are wasting. (We are assuming here a relatively intelligent top management; which is probably a very big assumption.) Age is a less pleasant criterion. Inexperience is usually the reason given, and is sometimes even a valid reason for choosing one candidate over another, but it often becomes an excuse.

Whether we are talking about age, sex, race, or any non-valid reason for a job action, the fact remains that our environment makes it impossible to imitate "blind" justice. We cannot in business yet treat everyone the same, because to do so will often be to do more harm than good. We are not hypocrites when we shape policies in the light of existing prejudices to allow people to advance individually rather than collectively. I as a male have no right to make an issue of the status of a woman who works for me, because she is probably the one who will bear the brunt of the backlash. My obligation is primarily to present her with the alternatives and get out of the way. The same is true of our fictitious friend Andy. I can recommend; I can make certain that he receives credit where he deserves it, perhaps, but I have no right to make him a personal "cause" in my own crusade.

If it is true that we are all responsible for one another, then it is also true that we are primarily responsible for ourselves. To us, it doesn't matter in many cases if we succeeded, so long as our intentions were good. But remember what the road to Hell was paved with. We have no right to pamper our own sense of righteousness at the expense of someone else who might be less interested in feminist or libertarian philosophies than in how to pay this month's bills.

BIZARRE EVENTS

A SHATTERING EXPERIENCE:

I actively hate automobiles. The only good thing about these four wheeled beasts from Hell is that I have had so many of them break down under so many bizarre sets of circumstances that I have been provided with a steady stream of material for fanzine articles. I once owned a car that was totalled by a malfunctioning windshield washer. I have been marooned on the way home from a garage where I just paid \$1000 in repairs, because something entirely different broke. I lost an engine because of a burned out light bulb. You get the idea?

Well, it's time for yet another sad story. One of our two cars (we have two now; that should double the rate of articles) of which one is a rotary engine Mazda. After all the trouble I have had with standard engines, I figured this could only be an improvement. It worked. Even after over 150,000 miles, I have spent not one cent on engine repairs, other than routine tune-ups and oil changes and what not. All in all, it is the most reliable car we have ever owned. But there is a problem.

Because of its unpopularity, Mazda stopped making the RX4 rotary wagon the year we bought it. This makes it very difficult to locate certain repair parts. Early this year I was loading a case of beer in the hatchback. When I slammed the rear door down, the window shattered into an incredible number of pieces. Fortunately, I know someone in the glass business, so I figured I could take care of the whole problem the next day.

Ha! Ralph spent two days trying to locate a replacement windshield through a network of junkyards with absolutely no luck. Mazda informed him that there were only a half dozen left in the United States, split evenly between California and Florida. So I agreed to pay the freight to have one shipped up from Florida.

The first one was broken when it arrived: so it goes. The second was lost in shipment and never did turn up insofar as I know. The third Florida glass had been sold to someone in the interim. The first try from California was successful if somewhat more expensive. Ralph installed it the next day and the crisis was over.

Or was it? Three weeks later, I noticed a two inch crack in my windshield, which started at the bottom and extended straight up. A week later it was a three inch crack. "Ralph, you're never going to believe this." He didn't, until I brought the car over and he looked at it. "Why don't you just buy yourself a new car?" I persevered. Ralph was unable to say whether or not the crack would grow even further, so I suggested he find out the situation with windshields.

Guess what? The windshield not only was also discontinued, but neither the junkyards nor Mazda could locate one anywhere in the country. At the last moment, Ralph located one in Puerto Rico, and I put a deposit on it immediately. He has installed it now, but if another piece of glass goes on this car, I may have to fly to Japan personally to pick up the new one.

DEBUGGING YOURS TRULY -

There are times when all of us feel as though the universe were plotting against us personally, and then there are other times when we think so and are absolutely right. It was a pleasant, late summer day. Sheila was at work, David was at school, and I had taken the day off to clean up a few outdoors projects at home. I had been at it for only a few minutes when I was struck by something considerably heavier than a thought, though insignificant on a greater scale. A very tiny flying insect flew directly into the side of my head, slamming through into my inner ear.

There is no way to adequately describe what it feels like to have something alive and moving inside your head. Visions of the parasitical creatures in THE WEPATH OF KHAN may give you some idea. Worse yet, the damned thing was flapping its wings like crazy, apparently interfering with the little bones that tell you what you are hearing. As a consequence, I was suddenly hearing "noises" that had no relationship with the real world.

Fortunately, I remained levelheaded, even with a bug in it. I couldn't think of any way to open my ear further to allow the little bastard to escape; it was later suggested that I should have used a vacuum cleaner to draw it out, but I suspect I might have damaged my ear. There was no question of waiting for it to starve to death. Bereft of ideas, I grabbed my car keys (to the sounds of waves of molasses breaking on a sunlit shore) and rushed out to my car.

The engine started immediately, even though its normal smooth purr was interrupted frequently by cannons firing watermelons at a brick wall, and I pulled warily away from the curb, intent upon making my way to the East Providence Emergency Room. As I turned left onto the main thoroughfare, a siren started somewhere, and I started to pull over, only to come to the realization that it originated inside my head.

Five minutes later, I parked the car and raced into the emergency room lobby while an odd version of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony played with coconut shells echoed within. I not too patiently (no pun intended) waited while the receptionist finished ordering an anchovy and broccoli pizza.

"Can I help you?"
"I certainly hope so. I have an insect inside my head."
"I beg your pardon?"
"A bug flew in my ear. It's still in there, in my inner ear, alive."
(Someone was hitting a xylophone with fishsticks)
"I see. What do you want us to do?"
"Get it out. Talk about unnecessary questions."
Mmph gumble gabble derosh rklis.
"I'm sorry; I couldn't hear that. There's a subway train running inside my right ear at the moment."
"Will this be cash, master-card, Visa, American Express, or an insurance plan?"
"Whatever is easiest and quickest. I have insurance at work."
"Which carrier? Blue Cross? RIGHA?"
"Provident."
"We never heard of them? Do you have an alternate?"
"I'm sure we can work it out with Visa or cash or something."
"Would you fill these forms out please?"

'Can't I fill them out later? I'm having trouble sitting still at the moment. There's a bowling alley inside my head. (The Bird of Paradise flew in my ear?)
I'm sorry, sir. We can't treat anyone until they have filled out these releases and medical forms. It's for our protection and yours.
'All right.'

I took the forms over to a table and chair while a firecracker detonated, followed by the sound of someone pouring a very large beer. I had the incredible feeling that I should be scratching behind my eyes and a nearly irresistible urge to pound the side of my head to startle my unhappy resident into ceasing his constant fluttering. I resisted this temptation toward self abuse.

About halfway through completing the forms, the little bugger discovered an escape route and departed. The sound of klaxons and cement mixers cut off abruptly as it flashed past my eyes and disappeared. I rose and crumpled the forms into a ball.

'Are you all finished, sir?'
'We have changed our minds. Thanks anyway.'

DOWN AND OUT IN BALTIMORE

I was a member of that distinguished group of people who was trapped for an extra day of CONSTELLATION because one of the local underground garages decided to take a Monday holiday despite notices and verbal assurances to the contrary. Since I had been sent to that specific garage by Hilton Hotel staff, I went straight to them for assistance, and although they were unsuccessful, I have to admit that they exerted themselves considerably. Before finally giving up in the middle of the afternoon we had contacted the police, the federal government whose office building abutted the garage, the fire department, civil defense, the board of tourism, the department of roads and services, and the mayor's office.

The exasperation of the Baltimore Police was particularly evident, as they made it quite clear their sympathies lay entirely with us. We were told that a previous victim had physically assaulted the staff of this particular garage on at least one occasion. A city official not only recommended extra-legal methods, but offered us the phone number of a professional safecracker who might be willing to blow the lock off the door.

At one point there was even an internal division among the staff of one of the hotels involved. The public relations people were so angry that they requisitioned bolt cutters from the maintenance staff in order to release the detained cars. Unfortunately, hotel security got wind of what was going on and confiscated the equipment. By late afternoon there was no point in getting the cars out in any case, since the hotels were offering us all free accommodations and it was too late to drive home.

We are an increasingly litigious populace, and it has long been my feeling that I would never sue anyone out of spite. I have surprised myself. Although I personally feel that absolutely nothing will come of it, I have joined with several other people in a class action suit against the garage and its management, if for no other reason than to make them less likely to act so capriciously again. My job is one that allows me a great deal of latitude in taking time off, and all I had to do was call my assistant and advise her I would be taking a day of my accumulated vacation. Others in the group had to meet trains or planes after turning in rental cars.

PLAYING WITH YOURSELF

This is going to be a column about video games, so all of you who are uninterested can skip right past to 'Back to Basics'. See how easy I make it? Home video games have become one of my major hobbies, along with books, records, tapes, board games, and a dozen or so other things. We currently have an Atari 2600, an Intellivision, and a Colecovision. The relative advantages of these systems are pretty straightforward, although I have to confess ignorance of the Atari 5200 and the Vectrex game system. After all, you can't have everything.

Very briefly, Atari has the greatest number of games designed specifically for it, although with all the system changing devices, your basic unit may become virtually interchangeable. Atari suffers from mediocre graphics, but has a variety of different controlling devices: joysticks, keypads, and roller balls. It is still the least expensive system, although I have seen some incredible sales on the Intellivision II system. Coleco has the best graphics, but there is still a limited number of games available, and almost every single one of them is an adaptation of a successful arcade game. Intellivision has trailed behind the other two, with graphics about halfway between them, but a smaller number of games. Personally, I think the high quality of Intellivision games makes it the best of the three.

Since this is theoretically a science fiction and fantasy fanzine, I'm going to talk about that category of games this time. If I'm in the mood, and I probably will be, I'll discuss other categories in the future. Even with my rather extensive collection of cartridges (around 150) I have just the tip of the iceberg, so obviously a large number of games are not going to be covered here.

Horizontal Scrolling Games: With one exception, all of these with which I am familiar are combat games. The player's ship, character, or whatever is pictured on the screen, either fixed on one side, or capable of movement all around the field of play. Targets and menaces appear either from the right or left side as the game progresses, and there is often wraparound, i.e. if you travel far enough in either direction, you end up back where you started.

Atari: The most popular Atari game in this category is probably DEFENDER. Your ship moves freely across the playing field, avoiding and firing at a variety of small alien ships. To complicate matters, there are small humanoid figures at the base of the screen, and some of the alien ships will descend and pick them up. When all of your humanoids have been successfully abducted, they change into far more powerful and faster mutants. DEFENDER also uses a map inset, a device used in a number of other games, which provides a status report on what is happening outside of the immediate field of play. Despite its popularity, the game becomes boring once you have developed the proficiency to defeat the mutants, and the length of a single game soon is determined by fatigue, boredom, hunger, or the need to go to the bathroom rather than ultimate defeat.

There are many imitations of this cartridge. **PLANET PATROL** is a simplified version with enemy ships moving from left to right in successively faster waves. This is

very much a game of reflexes rather than strategy and most games with such limited appeal wear out very quickly for the avid player. SPACE JOCKEY, despite colorful targets, is an even more mediocre example with targets moving from right to left.

I have a partiality for LASER BLAST, another of this type. The targets all appear at the bottom of the screen and the player controls a saucer that moves back and forth above them firing and avoiding ground fire. The sound on this cartridge is among the very best for the Atari game system. Although reflexes are important, endurance is the key to LASER BLAST as there is no respite at all. FLASH GORDON uses a map inset to indicate where in a mazelike playing field your ship is, but once again gameplay consists primarily of shooting down targets appearing from both left and right before they get you. My absolute favorite, however, is THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, in which you pilot a snowspeeder against an endless column of Imperial Walkers. Using a map insert to plan your strategy, you must decide when to destroy the walkers, and when to just damage them in order to slow their progress in single file toward your base. Exceptionally good graphics for the Atari system help as well.

Coleco: COSMIC AVENGER is the best currently available Coleco cartridge of this type. You pilot your ship from left to right across a superbly depicted series of ground installations bristling with anti-aircraft and interceptor missiles, a barren plain patrolled by missile launching tanks, and an underwater grotto filled with torpedoes, enemy submarines, and other menaces. A pesty saucer darts hither and thither adding to the fun. SMURF ADVENTURE IN GARGANTL'S CASTLE is, on the other hand, an incredibly simpleminded bit of fluff in which a Smurf moves from left to right, leaping obstructions, ducking nasty birds, until he arrives at a destination. Very mediocre indeed.

Intellivision: Although Intellivision does not have a lot of pure reflex games, they have two of the better games in this category. TROM MAZE-A-TROM features a complex playing field filled with abstract representations of computer functions. You must thread your way through the maze, gaining power from some forms, avoiding others, using still others to reverse the field of movement, and so forth. It is impossible to survive long without careful thought as well as a quick wrist. THE DREADNOUGHT FACTOR, on the other hand, may be the ultimate scrolling game. Your small spaceship faces a stream of space dreadnoughts, so large that only a small portion of one ship can be shown on the screen at any given time, covered with a variety of cannons, missile launchers, and other weaponry and structures. Here your task is to destroy the dreadnoughts by blowing up all of their ventilation ducts before they reach position to blow up the Earth. This cartridge is nearly worn out from having been played so frequently.

Vertical Scrolling Games: These aren't particularly different from the last category, except that action unfolds from the top or bottom of the screen rather than from the sides. In most of these, your ship/character can only move back and forth from left to right.

Atari: SPACE INVADERS is easily the most popular of these games. Columns of aliens march down the screen toward your position, and you must blast them before they reach you or zap you with their own weapons. GORF was an early arcade imitation, an improvement on the basic idea but a game which underwent a really horrible drop in quality when adapted for the Atari. Other very minor variations available for this game system are WARPLOCK and ENCOUNTER AT L5, but neither of these is recommended.

SPACE CHASE is considerably more of a challenge. for now the various targets move in independent patterns. making it much harder to anticipate where a target will be next. SPACE CAVERN, billed as the sequel. combines attacks from above with menaces from each side of the screen as well forcing the player to alter his firing mode constantly. Both games ultimately become monotonous. A couple of more interesting variations are MOONSWEEPER and ATLANTIS. In the former, you must first avoid various forms of cosmic debris before rendezvousing with a moon, at which point the screen changes to a surface view. Your streak across the surface facing enemy ships as well as friendly miners waiting to be rescued. ATLANTIS is a combat game with your position fixed at the bottom of the screen, targets appearing above from left and right, gradually moving lower. There are three different weapons positions for you to fire from. There is an Intellivision version of this as well, with even better graphic display than this unusually good one for Atari.

MISSILE COMMAND is mostly reflex as well, although some strategic planning is necessary as the game progresses. You control an "X" which moves freely about the screen, indicating your firing point. As enemy missile tracks appear at the top of the screen and move downward, you must fire interceptors to detonate in their path. Since each wave moves faster, you must eventually sacrifice some of your cities in order to protect others. SPIDERMAN, though not specifically a combat game, is similar in gameplay. Your Spiderman figure must make its way up the side of a building using his web fluid and avoiding various menaces that appear ahead of him. If he reaches the top of the building in time, he can defuse a bomb. This is a fairly interesting variation, but it didn't seem to catch on.

Intellivision: ASTROBLAST was the first in this category to appear for Mattel's game system. It combines SPACE INVADERS, ASTEROIDS, and superb graphics. Your firing position moves back and forth across the bottom of the screen, firing up at descending asteroids and other space objects as they descend. Shooting a large asteroid usually causes it to break up into two smaller ones, and you lose points for every object that touches the ground.

STAR STRIKE is a far more complex game. You are flying down a trench shooting at various enemy spaceships (does that sound familiar?) which eventually disappear off the top of the screen. When a specific terrain feature appears under your ship you drop bombs toward it. If you don't destroy all of the targets within a certain period of time, you lose and the Earth is destroyed. If you do, the sphere across which you are travelling is destroyed. This would probably make an interesting movie. DEMON ATTACK (also available in an Atari version) is much simpler and probably the most colorful of the SPACE INVADER clones. If you successfully defeat several waves of varicolored demons, you get to fight their mother ship. This cartridge won several awards, despite a suit brought against its manufacturer because of its similarity to an earlier arcade game, PHOENIX.

Other Scrolling Games, Radial, Combination:

Atari: ASTEROIDS, another of the classic arcade games, scrolls radially, as it were. Targets appear from all sides and move generally toward the center, which is your position of origin, although you can move anywhere on the screen. In ASTEROIDS, you must blow the encroaching masses into ever smaller fragments until they dissipate, simultaneously avoiding enemy ships that appear and fire at you. Although the cartridge is not bad, it is vastly inferior to the arcade game.

VANGUARD uses a variety of different scenarios to combine vertical, horizontal, and mixed fields of fire. Your ship works its way through caverns where targets

appear from the right, or from all directions at once, or from directly at the top of the screen. You must also avoid irregular obstructions in the tunnels. The home adaptation of this arcade game fared better than most, although I find that I play it infrequently now. BUGS is an incredibly simpleminded and totally unsatisfactory shoot at them quick game. Ignore it, even for 99¢. NEXAR, which is also radially scrolling, allows your ship to move at will around the perimeter of the screen while targets appear in the center and move outward. Accurate fire is more difficult here as the implied curvature of space makes it difficult to get a proper perspective on the spiralling field of action.

Coleco: ZAXXON is probably the best known Coleco cartridge, displaying a ship moving diagonally across the screen to face a variety of walls, missiles, silos, gun emplacements, fuel installations, enemy ships, robots, force screens, and the like. Another pure reflex game, it is nevertheless the most visually impressive of any video game for any of the three systems. SPACE FURY places your ship at the center of the screen, where you wheel and fire at various alien ships that approach from all sides. While you can change position, it is generally not advisable. The repetitiveness of this game detracts from its long term popularity.

OMEGA RACE was one of my favorite arcade games, and the Coleco version is a pretty good adaptation. Your ship can move at will around the screen except for a central block. A succession of fleets of target ships move in the same area, becoming gradually more dangerous the longer they last. There are a number of variations possible in the cartridge that helps to offset the simplicity of the game.

Viewscreen Games: These are games in which your television screen is the front viewport of your spaceship. Atari is, so far, the only one of the three systems to offer games of this type. STAR RAIDERS was quite popular, despite its poor transition from a straight computer game. The player must plan his route through space, engage in combat, and monitor his own damage and fuel levels. Although vastly superior to STARSHIP, the first of these games to appear, STAR RAIDERS suffers from mediocre graphics and a combat system that is very difficult to master.

STAR VOYAGER is a simpler variant, with better graphics. This time each wave of attacking ships is succeeded by the need to rendezvous with a stargate to proceed to the next higher level of play. Pretty, but not tremendously playable. The best of the type is STARMASTER, which combines reasonably good graphics with a much more playable galactic map and combat structure. Finally, although it is not a viewscreen game, STELLAR TRACK should be mentioned here because of its similarities to STARMASTER. The mapping system for planning combat is excellent, requiring a great deal more analysis and planning. Combat is resolved on a grid which shows your own ship, enemies, and other space objects.

Miscellaneous Combat Games:

Atari: SPACE WAR is a variation of an early computer game, with two simple spaceships wandering around the screen firing at each other. This remains highly playable for two people, but there is no single player variation. COSMIC ARK is a combination of mechanisms described earlier: your ship must survive attacks from three sides, then launch a smaller ship to pick up alien animals from the bottom of the screen while avoiding fire from each side. Very monotonous. JEDI APENA has some novel effects, but not enough to make it a first rate cartridge. Two players from opposite ends of the screen use light sabers to fire electric bolts at each other.

WARLORDS is an odd adaptation of BREAKOUT, an abstract game in which the player must ricochet a blip at a wall of bricks, eliminating it one brick at a time upon contact. In WARLORDS, each player has a king hidden behind a fortress of bricks, and must use a cursor to deflect attacks on his own fortress, while planning his moves to weaken the defenses of his opponents. The one player version is, however, much too easy. YAR'S REVENGE seems not to have been very popular, but I found it to be one of the best Atari games. The player controls an alien creature who nibbles away at successive brick fortresses, while other aliens attack with a variety of weapons. This is unlike any other cartridge and should have been a big hit.

Intellivision: Two Mattel releases which I found unplayable were SPACE HAWK, in which an astronaut drifts through space blasting creatures that wander in from the edges of the screen, and VECTRON, a very abstract combat game that is very pretty but much too hectic and random to be much fun. On the other hand, SPACE BATTLE requires thoughtful disposition of three fleets of defending ships, following which there is a combat phase and redistribution of surviving ships. TRON: DEADLY DISCS is a far better game than it was a movie. Your character is on a playing field where he must avoid spheres thrown by progressively more dangerous opponents. This is one of my all time favorites as well.

Maze and Ladder Games: Ladder games seem to be immensely popular in the arcades, but I personally find them all very much alike and pretty boring. Two that fall into the SF category are SPACE PANIC for Coleco and MINER 2049er, which is available for all three systems. In each game, you must work your character up, down, and across a series of levels, avoiding pitfalls and nasties, to pick up certain objects or destroy all the creatures.

BERSERK is a maze game, but the maze is filled with robots who shoot at your figure if he doesn't shoot them first. MARAUDER, a clear ripoff, is less visually pleasing, but in some ways it is far more playable. The mazes are certainly more complex.

Adventure Type Games:

Atari has offered a number of these games, most of which have been terrible. ET and RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK were colossal failures. The former is too simpleminded to be interesting; the latter is so complex and random, most players soon lose interest. Atari is also working on a series of related cartridges that involve wandering through mazes and encountering various threats, flying daggers, etc. FIREFWORLD and EARTHWORLD have appeared so far, and two more are due out early next year. Initially interesting, their appeal drops quickly.

SUPERMAN was one of the more interesting attempts. Your character flies through a series of screens, each depicting another part of the city. He must locate and reassemble a bridge as well as capture Lex Luther and his gang and carry each man separately to the jail. If a wandering Kryptonite bomb weakens him, he must walk until he can locate Lois Lane. ADVENTURE is a primitive game of exploring mazes to find various magical objects while avoiding three nasty dragons. It would have been a more interesting cartridge if the mazes were different from game to game.

Three other adventure games are fun initially but do not have any lasting power. RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX allows you to wander across Egypt encountering magical objects and nefarious beings, until the right combination of events nets you a treasure, but it is limited by the scrolling nature of the playfield. HAUNTED

HOUSE is a maze game in the dark with nasty creatures once again, determined to prevent you from finding the treasure. CRYPTS OF CHAOS is a maze game in which you see everything as though you were within the maze rather than looking down from above, a definite improvement, but it has already been eclipsed by better variations.

Coleco's only adventure game to date is VENTURE, another arcade adaptation, and unfortunately not one of their better offerings. You control a smile face as it encounters a number of rooms, in each of which it must pick up a treasure while avoiding the guardian monsters. Very, very boring.

Intellivision is clearly the leader in this category. Two of their least interesting are ICE TRFK and DRACULA. In the former, your character is very limited in what he can do. Initially, he must cross a snowy landscape without being run down by caribou. If he survives this, he must then use grappling hooks to catch passing icebergs and build himself an ice bridge across the screen. If he's not quick with his magical fireballs, however, another iceberg might crash into his partially constructed bridge and demolish it. Finally, he confronts a castle from which magicians cast poisonous spiders at him. The ice bridge sequence is very, very good. DRACULA I find disappointing, but it has received good reviews elsewhere. You control the vampire as he wanders through a town searching for victims, avoiding enemies both natural and supernatural. The character can only move from left to right and back, however, and I found this made the game very routine.

UTOPIA I lumped in this category even though it really isn't. You and your opponent each control an island. During each turn you must decide how much gold to invest in education, housing, food supplies, agriculture, fishing fleets, etc. You can divert some of your money into sending rebels onto your opponent's island, but if you don't keep your growing populace happy, they may spring up on your own homeland as well.

SWORDS AND SERPENTS is the only cartridge I've encountered that has a variation where both players must cooperate. One is the Prince and the other is a Wizard. As they explore ever deeper into a group of layered mazes, they must make use of weapons, magical spells, and suchlike. David and I managed to solve the ultimate problem on this cartridge, which took some of the fun out of it from that point on, but we still play it occasionally.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS and THE TREASURE OF TARMIN are both excellent. In the first, you use a map to pick a route across a landscape toward a haunted mountain. Along the way you must enter other mountain mazes to secure food, weapons, a boat to cross rivers, an axe to cut through underbrush, etc. In each mountain reside a number of evil creatures - spiders, rats, monsters - that all attempt to kill you. The mazes are all dark, but light up as you enter them. This is really finely done, even though it pales to insignificant proportions when compared to TARMIN, a maze game with perspective from within, and with so many magical devices and monsters that it takes several pages just to list them.

A brief recap then. For the ATARI system, the cartridges I recommend are THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, SPACE INVADERS, DEFENDER, MISSILE COMMAND, ASTEROIDS, VANGUARD, MARAUDER, STARMASTER, STELLAR TRACK, WARLORDS, SPACE WAR, and YAR'S REVENGE. For Coleco, you should not miss ZAXXON, COSMIC AVENGER, and OMEGA RACE. Intellivision, the best of the systems, is best for TRON; MAZE-A-TRON, THE DREADNOUGHT FACTOR, ASTROBLAST, DEMON ATTACK, SWORDS AND SERPENTS, UTOPIA, TRON: DEADLY DISCS, SPACE BATTLE, and both DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS games. More next time.

BACK TO BASICS

I have always been a sucker for lists. Back at Michigan State, we used to argue all the time about the 100 best science fiction novels of all time, certainly one of the silliest activities I have ever indulged in. But here I am trying to do something very similar. The following was a list I compiled a while ago that was supposed to enable someone to read one hundred books and have a pretty good understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, plot varieties, writing styles, adventure vs satirical qualities, and a bit of the historical development of the field. Leaving aside short stories for the time period, this was supposed to be the 100 basic novels in the field. Note that I did not say these were the "best"; there are several on this list I think are pretty terrible.

	TITLE	AUTHOR	MAIN PLOT
1.	WAR OF THE WORLDS	Wells	Invasion
2.	JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH	Verne	Lost World
3.	THE SKYLARK OF SPACE (or a Lens book)	Smith	Space Opera
4.	A PRINCESS OF MARS	Burroughs	Thud & Blunder
5.	MORE THAN HUMAN	Sturgeon	Mutation
6.	CHILDHOOD'S END	Clarke	Racial Evolution
7.	CAVES OF STEEL	Asimov	Robots
8.	STARSHIP	Aldiss	Generation Ship
9.	STAND ON ZANZIBAR	Frunner	Overpopulation
10.	AFTER THE RAIN or THE RAGGED EDGE or THE TIDE WENT OUT or THE WIND FROM NOWHERE	Rowen Christopher Maine	Disaster
11.	RE-BIRTH	Ballard	After the Bomb
12.	ROGUE MOON	Wyndham	Wondrous Device
13.	FAHRENHEIT 451	Budrys	Dystopia
14.	THE SHATTERED CHAIN or FORBIDDEN TOWER or HERITAGE OF HASTUR	Bradbury Bradley	Other World Adventure
15.	HALF PAST HUMAN	Bass	Dystopia
16.	RENDEZVOUS ON A LOST WORLD or any other Grimes novel	Chandler	Space Opera
17.	THE HALCYON DRIFT or any other Hooded Swan novel	Stableford	Space Opera
18.	THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE	Dick	Alternate World
19.	THE GENETIC GENERAL	Dickson	Future War
20.	LEST DARKNESS FALL	De Camp	Time Travel
21.	NERVES	Del Rey	Problem Story
22.	BABEL 17 or THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION	Delany	Quest
23.	LORD OF LIGHT	Zelazny	Superman
24.	THE BREAKING OF WOTTEWALL	Williams	Rebuilding World
25.	TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO	Farmer	?????
26.	DARK UNIVERSE	Galouye	After Bomb
27.	THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS	Heinlein	Future War

28.	THE PUPPET MASTERS	Heinlein	Invasion
29.	STARSHIP TROOPERS	Heinlein	Future War
30.	RED PLANET or TUNNEL TO THE STARS or BETWEEN PLANETS	Heinlein	Token Juvenile
31.	DEATHWORLD	Harrison	Other World Advent
32.	DUNE	Herbert	Other World Advent
33.	FURY	Kuttner	Other World Advent
34.	THE WORLD SHUFFLER	Laumer	Alternate World
35.	WAR OF THE WINGMEN	Anderson	Other World Advent
36.	THIS WORLD IS TAROO or THE MUTANT WEAPON	Leinster	Space Opera
37.	A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING TEXAS	Leiber	Satire
38.	THE BIG TIME	Leiber	Change War
39.	THE DISPOSSESSED	LeGuin	Utopia
40.	I AM LEGEND	Matheson	SF Horror
41.	THE FINAL PROGRAMME	Moorcock	Experimental
42.	THE BEAST MASTER or TIME TRADERS or STAR GUARD or STORM OVER WARLOCK	Norton	Other Worlds Advent
43.	THE SPACE MERCHANTS or GLADIATOR AT-LAW	Pohl & Kornbluth	Satire
44.	STARGATE or RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA	Pohl Clarke	Wondrous Device
45.	AND CHAOS DIED	Russ	Psi
46.	WASP	Russell	Future War
47.	IMMORTALITY INC	Sheckley	Dystopia
48.	DYING INSIDE	Silverberg	Psi
49.	CITY	Simak	Racial Evolution
50.	RINGWORLD	Niven	Wondrous Device
51.	ODD JOHN	Stanledon	Superman
52.	BERSERKER	Saberhagen	Frankenstein
53.	YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN	Tucker	Time Travel
54.	THE GREATEST ADVENTURE	Taine	Lost World
55.	SLAN	van Vogt	Psi
56.	WORLD OF NULL-A	van Vogt	Superman
57.	BIG PLANET	Vance	Other World Advent
58.	STAR KING or TRULLION ALASTOR	Vance	Other World Advent
59.	THE SIRENS OF TITAN	Vonnegut	Satire
60.	OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT	Vinge	Space Opera
61.	WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG	Wilhelm	Cloning
62.	DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS	Wyndham	Monsters
63.	THE HUMANIDS	Williamson	Robots
64.	SECTOR GENERAL or any in this series	White	Problem Story
65.	DOWNEFLOW STATION	Cherryh	Other World Advent
66.	THE CRYSTAL WORLD	Ballard	Experimental
67.	TIMESCAPE	Renford	Time Travel, sort of
68.	THE DEMOLISHED MAN or THE STARS MY DESTINATION	Pester	Psi
69.	TRANSFIGURATIONS	Bishop	Alien Culture
70.	A CASE OF CONSCIENCE	Plish	First Contact
71.	A CANTICLE FOR LEIPONITZ	Miller	Rebuilding World
72.	EARTHMAN COME HOME	Plish	Space Opera
73.	WHAT MAD UNIVERSE	Brown	Alternate World

74. BRIGANDS OF THE MOON	Cummings	Space Opera
75. MISSION OF GRAVITY	Clement	Alien Culture
76. 334	Disch	Dystopia
77. TOO MANY MAGICIANS	Garrett	Alternate World
78. WHEN HARLIF WAS ONE	Gerrold	Wondrous Device
79. THE FOREVER WAR	Haldeman	Future War
80. BRAVE NEW WORLD	Huxley	Dystopia
81. 1984	Orwell	Dystopia
82. FOURTH MANSIONS	Lafferty	Madness
83. BEYOND APOLLO	Malzberg	Experimental
84. DRAGONRIDER or other in this series	McCaffrey	Other World Advent
85. DAVY	Fangborn	Rebuilding World
86. LITTLE FUZZY	Piper	First Contact
87. PAVANE	Roberts	Alternate World
88. THE WITCHES OF KARRES	Schmitz	Space Opera
89. THE PLANET BUYER	Smith	Experimental
90. BUG JACK BARRON	Spinrad	Dystopia
91. THE LONG AFTERNOON OF EARTH	Aldiss	Decay of Humanity
92. WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE	Wylie & Balmer	Disaster
93. WAR WITH THE NEWTS	Capek	Satire
94. SOLARIS	Lem	Other World Advent
95. YOU SHALL KNOW THEM	Vercors	Problem Story
96. DON'T BITE THE SUN	Lee	Dystopia
97. RETIEF'S WAR	Laumer	Other World Advent
98. THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM	Sladek	Wondrous Device
99. VENUS PLUS X	Sturgeon	Utopia
100. ALAS BABYLON or TOMORROW or MALEVIL	Frank Wylie Merle	During the Bomb

Having done all of the above, it occurred to me as well that there should be a basic reading list for fantasy and horror novels as well, although neither field is anywhere near as diverse as is science fiction. So saying, I came up with 30 of each, and as long as I have inflicted the above on you I might as well finish starting with horror fiction.

1. DRACULA	Stoker	Vampire
2. FRANKENSTEIN	Shelley	Monster
3. DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE	Stevenson	Monster
4. THE SHINING	King	Ghosts, sort of
5. SALEM'S LOT	King	Vampire
6. GHOST STORY	Straub	Ghost, sort of
7. RINGSTONES	Sarban	Fairies
8. THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD	Lovecraft	Cthulhu
9. SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES	Bradbury	Just Weird
10. THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND	Hodgson	Just Weird
11. GHOST PIRATES	Hodgson	Ghosts
12. THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE	Jackson	Haunted House
13. CONJURE WIFE	Leiber	Witchcraft
14. SOME OF YOUR BLOOD	Sturgeon	Psychological
15. DARKER THAN YOU THINK	Williamson	Werewolf
16. WEREWOLF OF PARIS	Endore	Werewolf
17. THE TURN OF THE SCREW	James	Ghost

18. THE SENTINEL	Konvitz	Demons
19. BLACK FASTER	Elish	Demons
20. CASTLE OF OTRANTO	Walpole	Curse
21. THE WOLFEN	Streiber	Werewolf, sort of
22. THE MANITOU	Masterton	Curse
23. INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE	Pice	Vampire
24. MAGIC	Goldman	Psychological
25. HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA	Varbro	Vampire
26. THE NESTLING	Grant	Monster
27. COLD MOON OVER BABYLON	McDowell	Ghost
28. FEVER DREAM	Martin	Vampire
29. SNOW FURY	Holden	SF Horror
30. PHANTOMS	Koontz	Monster

Horror fiction more than any other really should include short stories. Although I have not included them above, a sampler really should include M.R. James, Oliver Onions, Lovecraft, Robert Block, H.R. Wakefield, Joseph Payne Brennan, and Ramsey Campbell. And now the fantasy.

1. LORD OF THE RINGS	Tolkien
2. THE WORM OUROBOROS	Eddison
3. THE LAST UNICORN	Beagle
4. A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE	Beagle
5. THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER	De Camp & Pratt
6. CONAN THE CONQUEROR	Howard
7. THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JONATHAN HOAG	Heinlein
8. Any Fafhrd & Gray Mouser Book	Leiber
9. THE WIZARD OF FARTHSEA	LeGuin
10. WITCH WORLD	Norton
11. TOPPER	Smith
12. THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD	McKillip
13. First Chronicle of Thomas Covenant	Donaldson
14. DOOMFARERS OF CORAMONDIF	Daley
15. DAY OF THE MINOTAUR	Swann
16. ISLAND OF THE MIGHTY	Walton
17. LAND OF UNREASON	De Camp
18. THE ORPHAN	Stallman
19. FACE IN THE ABYSS or SHIP OF ISHTAR or DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE	Merritt
20. KAI LUNG'S GOLDEN HOURS	Bramah
21. SLAVES OF SLEEP	Hubbard
22. PERFLANDRA	Lewis
23. WATERSHIP DOWN	Adams
24. THE GREAT VICTORIAN COLLECTION	Moore
25. THE PRINCESS BRIDE	Goldman
26. DR RAT	Kotzwinkle
27. THE SEEKING SWORD	Kangilaski
28. NIGHT'S MASTER	Lee
29. TALES OF NIVERION	Delany
30. Any collection by Clark Ashton	Smith

Most noted omission in all of the above is Harlan Ellison, because of his lack of novels. Other SF writers who should be included for their short works would have to include Bradbury, Tenn, Sheckley, Zelazny, Simak, and Knight.

GHASTLY TALES

The following quotations are all from genuine, real books, honest-to-Ghu, and I am printing them to help encourage all of you out there who think you don't have what it takes to be a professional writer.

MARS 5 by Hugh Douglas Brown: A tale of the first expedition to find traces of a dead civilization on Mars.

"These beings had decided that they wished other intelligent beings to know that such investigators from other points in space should find clear evidence of intelligent, previous creatures who had previously not only passed this way but wanted the next passerby to know that earlier beings were leaving substantial evidence of their having been there."

"They were capable of producing just as strong an offspring at 100 years as at 30 and the genes were undoubtedly more firmly established."

"The Martians viewed our sun and the planets as resulting from a pulsing nebula which originated as accumulated stellar gases and gradually closed in on each other particle by particle until gravity and mutual attraction gathered them in to fusion and ultimately fission. ..Thus the Milky Way was born."

"At one time they even took toes and grafted them on to hands to provide a sixth finer (sic). Then more than just a fad, it was abandoned as not affording sufficient benefits to justify."

"Some 60,000 years ago they made a third trip and located erect walking pre-man, and with the same general techniques, impregnated three females with sperm of selected Martians. These had males which no doubt sired the original European races."

THE GALACTIC ARENA by Christopher Dane: An alien being struggles for his freedom from a totally wretched book.

"Quorulu-Mi was a Styrolean, Styrolea being in the star system Filii-3, knowing The Feast in its transmogrified (sic) form of Sinsimul: the Megatat-Tat."

"His ears, two of them, were long to the point where their weight caused the upper half of each to droop to conceal all visual to the auditory meatus."

"He was startled when his third membrane slid up, leaving only two over each eye."

THE DEMON SAMURAI by Clay Grant: A movie monster prop comes to life (I kid you not).

"Give me back my head!" shrieked Mike hoarsely."

"God only knows what will happen with that thing loose in downtown Tokyo."

PLANET THA by Neil Charles: An unscheduled space journey ends up on a new world in our solar system.

"We could run into a flock of asteroids, for instance; we might be hauled off our course by the attraction of some galaxy that we haven't even heard of yet. Point is -- no use beefing about it; there's not a darn thing anyone can do about it."

PRE-GARGANTUA by Neil Charles: Giant walking plants from space destroy the world.

"In some parts of the world the plants had already begun their destruction of all life, animate and otherwise."

MOONSPIN by Elmer Carpenter: The Russians occupy the light side of the moon and we control the back side. They are attacking us. The plot unfolds:

"Using these widely separated bases they're setting up a photomagnetic field that filters out about ninety percent of the rays of the sun that normally strike our continent...That explains the moss I saw growing between the slabs of the sidewalk."

"When we come in to land, remember that the moon has only one sixth of the Earth's gravity. It'll make a big difference in a landing."

((The US successfully uses a device to rotate the moon so that the Russian weapons are facing off into space. But now the moon is unstable and our heroes are seeking a way to escape.))

"There're two planets whose orbits lie between us and the sun, Venus and Mercury. There's a small possibility there may be a third one, Pluto."

((Vanishly small, I'd say. Seeking to steal a Russian ship, our heroes discover the Russians have manned their base with spacesuited abominable snowmen.))

"I've often wondered why the Soviet government was so eager to establish control over Tibet...the best way to get work done on the moon is by creatures freely endowed by nature to withstand the rigors of the climate."

((Their escape is marred by lunar insects -- I still kiddeth thee not -- whose existence was previously unsuspected.))

"They aren't flying. They can't. They jump and sail."

((Fortunately the day is saved through a clerical error.))

"How much repellent is in stock?"

"Fifty gallons...It was sent up here by mistake. I'm sure we won't blame anybody for that."

And so it goes. Keep the faith, you hopeful writers. Clearly professional publishing is not a field limited to the talented few.

CRITICAL MASS

I have revived the name of my now defunct review magazine for this column, which is designed to fill in a gap left by most review columns. Novels dominate reviews, just as they dominate sales, and at best an occasional one author collection or anthology will work its way in. But what is overlooked is the host of competent to excellent short story writers who have never yet had a book of their own. Ray Bradbury and Harlan Ellison have overcome the stigma of the short story writer, but many of the more prolific writers in the magazines are totally ignored, such as Robert Young, Vance Randolph, and more recently people like Michael Swanwick, Timothy Zahn, and others too numerous to mention. So let me introduce you to three very good writers whom you may have overlooked.

LEIGH KENNEDY

"Salamander" was the first story I encountered by this author, featuring a fairly routine plot handled quite well. The staff working to establish a viable lunar colony is hampered by the inflexibility of its director, whose insistence on work to the exclusion of human amenities begins to result in grave psychological problems. He is successfully opposed, but the leader of the opposition has, by saving the colony, lost his job, just as the director, by mandating more work ended up with less. This fondness for paradox is a recurring theme in Kennedy's fiction.

The modern world comes into conflict with eskimos in "Whalesong", determined to stop the annual whale hunt, which now endangers the future of that species. But the Eskimo culture itself is disappearing, causing one man to wonder how we can hope to save a species when we cannot even save ourselves. This story suffers a bit from a heavy hand on the message, as does "Detailed Silence", in which a group of human colonists engaged in an interstellar war decide against evacuating their planet and leaving their sentient servants alone.

Kennedy was back in good form with "Speaking to Others"²⁰ "Speaking"³ to Others"²⁰ which is much better than its awkward title. A team of scientists is attempting to develop a method of communicating with aliens, but paradoxically, cannot even communicate adequately with each other. Kennedy seems quite adept at handling the jealousies that arise in the academic atmosphere. Another really excellent story is "Helen, Whose Face Launched 28 Conestoga Hovercraft". A small Lagrange colony is disrupted by internal squabbles that threaten to destroy the principles under which it has functioned successfully. Like "Salamander", the conflict does not arise between good and evil, but between opposing viewpoints of people with honestly good intentions.

"Belling Martha" is, on the other hand, a story that wreaks of evil, of humanity driven to evil acts (primarily cannibalism) because of a change in our environment that destroys most of civilization. It's impact is much that of Ellison's "A Boy and His Dog", to which it seems almost a riposte. It is very impressive, but not

very pleasant.

"Greek" is probably Kennedy's least successful story, although it is based on an interesting situation, a sudden widescale incidence of "speaking in tongues". On the other hand, "Silent Cradle" is a bizarre little fantasy about an apparently imaginary child that nevertheless grows up, goes off to college, and is eventually killed. It's a more powerful story than the plot summary conveys: it's one of those that I expect to think back to in the future. Finally we have "Her Furry Face", ostensibly the story of a man working with a pair of very intelligent orangutans, but in reality dealing with the relationship between the human and the rest of the world. This is a particularly gritty and upsetting story, definitely not for the weakhearted.

On balance, Kennedy has not yet established herself as a significant writer, although she writes competent adventure with particular skill in interpersonal relationships. The power of her two more unsavory stories in particular bodes well for the future, in that it demonstrates that her competence lies in more than one area.

KIM STANLEY ROBINSON

Only one of Kim Stanley Robinson's first four story appearances struck me as at all interesting, and I might well have dismissed him at that point as a very minor author. Fortunately, this compulsion I have to read everything made it certain that I would encounter his later, far superior stories. Two of those early stories, "In Pierson's Orchestra" and "Coming Back to Dixieland" dealt with musicians, in the former a dope addicted conductor of a mechanical orchestra, and the latter a band of miners hoping to use their music as a vehicle to escape a dull future in the asteroids. Both stories were very humdrum, as was "The Thing Itself", which deals with an overthrown monarch whose life is reduced to imprisonment in a cage, kept alive solely to allow the usurper to occasionally demonstrate his own power.

"Disguise", on the other hand, showed real promise. The protagonist is one of a group of anonymous actors hired to work in a recently discovered play. Their lines are imprinted by computers and, through a device that remains unclear, no one ever knows who the actors were. A psychopathic murderer is at large among the acting community, and the protagonist suddenly becomes convinced that he will be the target of a fatal attack during the play. The well done mystery element is weakened by the lack of an adequate explanation of how the murderer can remain anonymous from role to role, but it is an interesting story nonetheless.

With "Venice Drowned", Robinson demonstrated that his talent is more substantial. An Italian guide to the drowned city abhors what he sees as the pillaging and trivialization of his city by tourists, an attitude which obviously endangers his employment. An excellent story: it was quickly surpassed by "Exploring Fossil Canyon". Another group of tourists, this time on Mars, encounters what they think might be evidence of extinct Martian life. The texture of this story, the subtle interplay of the characters, and the skill with which Robinson brings a dead planet to life all make this one of the most impressive pieces of short fiction of the last few years.

"To Leave a Mark" is another hijack-the-starship story, this time with a dissident group of long lived rebels cobbling together an ecosystem so that they can wander off to the stars. Characters and plot are the main attraction here, as in "Black Air", a fantasy about a young boy who sails on the Spanish Armada, and who becomes the focal point for a series of apparent miracles.

Finally we have "Stone Eggs" and "Ridge Running". The former is an interesting but minor story of a man who gets off a bus in a lonely area and is somehow projected into the future, where androids have replaced people. The latter is an enigmatic story of a man whose brain is slowly re-establishing itself after an accident, and the difficulty he has dealing with the names of things. Although his writing has been a bit inconsistent to date, Robinson shows promise of becoming a writer of considerable stature in the field, and word that he has a novel forthcoming in 1984 is quite encouraging.

JOHN KESSEL

The author of this year's Hugo & Nebula award winning "Another Orphan" started as a contributor to the now defunct GALILEO, with three minor but interesting stories. A mysterious figure flits through a laboratory in "The Silver Man", which has some striking scenes but is relatively minor. Far better was "The Incredible Living Man" in which a dead man's personality refuses to relinquish control over another man's body. The inconclusive ending seems out of place in this story, although it definitely does work in "In an Alien Wood", wherein a man treks across a jungle seeking vengeance, and when he reaches his destination, finds that he has lost all desire to avenge himself.

Two 'non-fact' articles appeared, "Herman Melville, Space Opera Virtuoso" and "Monuments of SF", both of which have their moments of humor, but don't work as fiction, obviously. "Just Like a Cretin Dog" is a murder mystery set in an L5 colony world, develops quite well, but seems to fall flat ultimately. The same absence of a strong ending mars "Last Things", a story of the last days of humanity in the far future. On the other hand, Kessel provides a number of vivid scenes in this story, the suicide of a flying man, the quarrel between lovers when only one of them is given the slim chance of escape through cryogenic freezing, and others.

Kessel began to really excel with "Uncle John and the Savior" and "Not Responsible! Park and Lock It!". The former depicts the confrontation of a man with an artificial skeleton and a robot programmed to be the second coming of Christ. The latter is an even more successful, though not particularly original concept. Life is portrayed as a constant trip in an automobile, with the median strip as a forbidden zone and a man's success in life measured by the mileage he travels.

"Another Orphan", the double award winner, probably needs little introduction here. A modern day businessman awakens aboard the Pequod, commanded by Ahab, in pursuit of Moby Dick, and nothing he can do can salvage the situation. This story deserved the recognition it received. Almost as good was "Hearts Do Not in Eyes Shine". A couple whose marriage has collapsed resort to selective editing of their memories in order to have a second chance at making things a success.

"Below Zero" is a minor work, a didactic message story where people feel cold during a future depression independently of the physical temperature. "Friend", written in collaboration with James Patrick Kelly, almost seems to work, but not quite. The protagonist is employed as a sort of arbitrator, psychologist for the passengers on a long space voyage, but his personal feelings for some of the passengers interfere with his ability to function. Minor stories aside, Kessel has turned out some very impressive work in a short period of time, and "Another Orphan" alone should carve out a permanent niche in the field for him. I doubt that he will remain contented to rest on that one piece of fiction.

BYPASSING TIME AND SPACE WITH ISABELLA FIGHOLLER

by Mason D. Adams

When the Australian government, in 2069 decreed a ban on further immigration, protest was immediate and system-wide. To blunt the criticism, the government hired Isabella Figholler as a mediator.

Figholler suggested that they play up their desire to preserve the unique Australian ecosystem, and pointed out that merely because they could not handle any more incoming humans, they need not ban immigration entirely: anyone seriously interested in moving Down Under could opt for transformation into a suitable local life-form, and be welcomed into the Commonwealth.

The plan was adopted, and publicized, with applicants urged to contact Figholler's Eco-Agency for placement advice, re-education, and so forth. The public response was not overwhelming, but some people took up the offer with enthusiasm, and in their new guise as kangaroos, kookaburras, wombats and all, set off to carve new lives for themselves.

The only difficulty Figholler encountered was with one young fellow, of independent means, who had gone through a course of transformational surgery without contacting the agency in advance. He ambled into her office, clutching a Qantas flight bag in powerful claws, his cute leathery nose and round furry ears twitching in delighted anticipation, and it was Isabella's sad duty to tell him that all his efforts were for naught.

"You see," she explained, as tears filled his little black beady eyes, "there's a severe shortage of eucalyptus trees, and you're too specialized to survive in any other habitat. I'm sorry, but there's nothing we can do -- you're simply over-koalafied."

by Paul Alan Sheffield

One of the earliest incidents in Isabella Figholler's career was one of her most exasperating. She had been assigned as a mediator on the planet Cavitus, which was split into two warring societies by a difference of opinion which might seem abstract or even silly to humans, but was of severe consequence to the Cavities. On the one hand, there was the traditional school of thought which felt that all warriors should have their teeth filed to sharp points. On the other were the various progressives, who wished to assume the appearance of higher civilization now that they were in contact with interstellar culture.

Complicating matters was a contingent of followers of the Guru Owa Tigu Siam, who were attempting to convert both factions to a life of quiet contemplation and quietude. For reasons that were not quite clear, they had been spectacularly successful. Isabella had no idea how successful until what turned out to be the final meeting to work out a compromise.

The formerly hostile delegations arrived arm in arm, wearing flowers in their hair and wearing white togas. When pressed for an explanation, the head of the former tooth filing faction sighed. "You see, Ms Figholler, we have thought the matter through and debated it with members of your own race who have seen fit to enlighten us, and we just decided that it was time to transcend dental mediation."

ELABORATE LIES

((This, for those of you who have not been with me before, is the lettercolumn. The 750 or so pages of MYTHOLOGIES that appeared prior to this issue were almost one third letters. I felt then and feel now that it was the best letter column I had ever seen. Of course, I'm prejudiced. But whether it was or not, it was certainly active; there were over 300 letters on issue #14. Those letters, alas, do not appear here and will not. Instead, to try to stimulate the kind of life I saw then, I give you a bevy of quotes, often out of context, perhaps at times no longer representative of the thoughts of those concerned. What the hell. It's fun. Write.)))

(PAUL DIFILIPPO) The competitive struggle for survival and status ensures that all our rivals will become inferior in our eyes, so that we may trample them without guilt.

(GEORGE FLYNN) Are you sure that what the world needs is another personalzine?

(MICHAEL CONEY) (My mother) already features strongly in my writings as Carioca Jones.

(ROGER SWEEN) I came to define maturity as the ability to direct one's life in regard to its best interest.

(FRED LERNER) I just finished reading Mark Twain's LETTERS FROM THE EARTH, and consequently I've little reason to like anybody.

(MIKE BLAKE) You should have let yourself get bitten by one of those radioactive fleas. Then you could dress in a fancy costume and go jumping from building to building, upon encountering a villain leap on his back, and let him scratch himself into submission.

(DON THOMPSON) We had to keep her head shaved for more than a year until medical science came up with a new pill that cleared it up.

(MICHAEL SHOEMAKER) Required reading is censorship in reverse, and one's no better than the other.

(ERIC LINDSAY) I do not accept either the laws or mores of present societies as having a necessary hold over the individuals who make up that society.

(JODIE OFFUTT) Parents want institutions to take responsibility for their children and then eventually want the children to be responsible for the parents. I can't figure it out.

(SHERYL SMITH) If you deny "reality", how come words are so real to you?

(PAUL DIFILIPPO) How are the price of sugar and sex-bicotry related? Answer: Both are legitimate problems that have been blown out of proportion.

(MIKE GLICKSOHN) If there was even the slightest truth to the idea of a worldwide conscious conspiracy on the part of men to keep women subjugated, then I'd have to say that any group capable of conceiving, organizing and putting such a scheme into practice damn well would be superior.

(MIKE BLAKE) Ms Firestone's revelation of the vast male conspiracy to suppress women makes me impatient for the months remaining until my 21st birthday to pass quickly, for at that time, presumably, mysterious hooded figures will appear at my door to lead me (blindfolded, of course) to a series of secret caverns beneath the surface of the Earth where the Secret Masters of Mankind will at long last instruct me in the dark methods by which we Men remain the Masters of Womankind.

(NANCY RUSSAR) Dress codes were not abolished in my school until 1968. I had to have a note to wear jeans.

(D. GARY GRADY) There is no reason, for example, for the law to require a man to support his family without making some similar demand on women.

(SAM LONG) Wasn't it one of Hitler's men who said, When I hear the word 'culture' I reach for my gun?

(VICTORIA VAYNE) Fans do not seem very typical.

FRANK BALAZS) McGraw Hill has recently instituted a new policy on textbooks: all college level freshman texts will be written on an eighth grade level of reading. This leads me to wonder what the eighth grade texts will be.

(GREGHAM ENGLAND) I've never seen mention of Heinlein in US fandom. Admittedly my sample is small, yet his books take up a large slice of SF bookshelves in Britain. Is he outdated, outgrown, disliked or ignored in the US?

(SHERYL SMITH) Your description of (Vance Randolph) makes him sound like the Gardner Dozois of the fifties.

(CY CHAUVIN) As SF, I really don't think (DYING INSIDE by Robert Silverberg) is all that important, because it really doesn't deal with telepathy.

(MIKE GLICKSOHN) A faned without a sense of humour is like a scotch on the rocks without the scotch.

(LIE CARSON) Did I ever tell you that I caddied for Paul Harvey? Eighteen holes with two kangaroo bags and he tipped me a quarter.

(PAUL DIFILIPPO) We're bringing five Don D'Amassa's to the next con for Ben Indick to shake hands with.

(ED CAGLE) But more likely someone would have put D'Amassa to cleaning stables. He seems to have a natural talent for that particular substance.

(D. GARY GRADY) Even going over your editorial with a microscope there was virtually nothing I could find fault with. You doubtless did this to annoy me.

(ROBERT COULSON) Actually I suspect that faith in psychiatry did more to subvert individual responsibility than any of the ones you mentioned.

(PAUL WALKER) The person who readily believes in little green men from Mars or Divine Astronauts is really acting no more irrationally than the grey haired Utopian who believes that socialism, and a diet of stored prunes will save the world.

(RICK BROOKS) Rejecting Astrology on present evidence is as unscientific as accepting it.

(HARRY WARNER JR) I think there's as much danger of a female Hitler smashing up civilization by militant tactics as the real Hitler achieved by his racial belligerency.

(JERRY KAUFMAN) I'm not so sure that a good number of women couldn't be persuaded they'd be better off without us.

(RICK BROOKS) The Romans tended to rate homosexual love highly since they considered that love for a woman was not love for an equal.

(GENE WOLFE) If the best algebraist in the junior class were on a par with the second string center of the football team, this would soon be the best educated nation on Earth.

(MARY MARTIN) No man has to pay for a woman's dinner.

(FAVE RINGEL) It was no wonder that Maslow was unpopular at Brandeis in the late sixties and early seventies. Everyone there, faculty member and student alike, was neurotic and damned proud of it.

(LAURIE WHITE) What a lovely Dalzell cover.

(CHRIS ERLIS) How did you ever get such snazzy artwork? Blackmailing someone?

(ROSE HOGUE) I would like to think of humanity as getting dumber daily rather than smarter since I don't care to believe in evolution.

(SHERYL SMITH) If you really aren't a computer, how come you not only read everything but remember it all?

(ERIC BLAKE) The vulgarities of Spinrad, Pangborn, and their ilk, tolerated by publisher and fan alike, have destroyed the field.

(MARK M. KELLER) William Shakespeare (Laurel Edition) joined Evan Hunter and Grace Metalious on next week's list of banned authors.

(JOHN CURLOVICH) Attempting to force people to be "moral" is a part of our national character.

(AL SIROIS) I believe that I should have the right to censor what my kids read.

(ROY TACKETT) You mentioned DouL Anderson and in a recent column he said that writers should, if they must, give up naked women and sex scenes in order to preserve the right to write about more important issues.

(PAUL WALKER) The cut-throat competition for space in your zine is so aggressive that I thought it wise to comment on the editorial before reading the rest.

(SAM LONG) Censors tend to ban good literature and pass the poor stuff.

(D. GARY GRADY) Chickens DO generate stimuli from within.

(DARROLL PARDOE) Children were still maltreated in the 19th Century, sure, but were they any more so than the rest of the population?

(PATRICK HAYDEN) What has scientific materialism to offer?

(D. GARY GRADY) Since you have enabled me to enjoy the sensation of making a public asshole of myself, I hope you will print this paragraph to enable me to at least partially make amends.

(BEN INDICK) You must, I do think, judging from the many episodes of your youth I have read, have total recall, or you lived 42 years before you were 19.

(MARY MARTIN) People are unwilling to commit themselves to an opinion before finding out what everyone else is thinking.

(SAM LONG) Jesse Helms is an anal pore.

(TERRY HUGHES) Who else could sense the evil that lurks in laundromats?

(JIM MAPEN) Unfortunately, the world is not yet ready for cooperation.

(MIKE GLICKSOHN) The most recent MYTHOLOGIES has arrived here, courtesy of your strongly competitive urge to communicate better than the rest of fandom.

(PETER ROBERTS) You seem to suffer an alarming amount of censorship in the US.

(DAVID TAGGART) Don't let what goes on in New Hampshire bother you.

(ARTHUR D. HLAVATY) Granted that your economics professor is an idiot, but have you considered the possibility that economics cannot be explained?

(JOHN THIEL) What is a representative democracy? (You and your friends, maybe?)

(GENE WOLFE) I don't enjoy saying this, but Salmonson is right and you are wrong.

(IAN COVELL) Get stuffed!

(MICHAEL KALEM SMITH) I am still essentially alone. I have been since birth and I will be until (and after) death.

(DAVE SZUREK) I believe that such an animal as mental illness exists.

(BOY TACKETT) As for the ideas of Fromm and May, well crackpots are entitled to their opinions.

(ARTHUR D. HLAVATY) I'm afraid that the distinction between "mental disturbance" and "mental illness" is important because acceptance of the illness model allows the state to exert more power over individuals in the guise of "therapy".

(MARK W. KELLER) You rotten paranomasiac!

(DAVID STEVER) In recalling your story of the army and the refrigerators, and now Blatz Security, it frightens me that the situation is not ended, and right does not triumph.

(DAVID LOCKE) I can't believe that any manager would put up with such horseshit with no action.

(PATRICK MCGUIRE) I thought that coal and oil deposits were the result of the fact that on Earth there were no decay bacteria for millions of years.

(SHAKRALLAH JAPPE) If you could have one dead author come back and write one more novel, who would it be and about what?

(IRA M. THORNHILL) It's horribly frustrating to have you come up with an author who has written almost 150 stories but who has never been collected.

(ROBERT F. YOUNG) Writers are poor judges of their own stuff, which is why, possibly, a recent collection I put together myself got nowhere.

(DAVID LOCKE) Bonnie's story was amusing, even if I do like cats and squirrels and dislike dogs.

(MARK M. KELLER) I often wondered how people with large breeds of dogs gave them enough exercise in large cities. Chasing punks down alleys should do it.

(JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON) Yes, I think male privilege ought to be removed, but I also feel female privilege ought to be removed.

(JENNIFER BANKIER) Women do not rape men, and men do not have to be afraid of going out of doors at night for fear of sexual attacks...by women.

(M.R. HILDEBRAND) I found Mr Pournelle's statement concerning certain onerous but necessary tasks are better performed by women quite upsetting.

(GEORGE FERGUS) In order to develop properly, children need a loving caregiver, and are better off having one of each sex, but this has little to do with having parents fill appropriate sex roles.

(JERRY POURNELLE) As it happens, I am writing a Bronze Age historical about Crete and Mycenae.

(ROBERT BRIGGS) The Third World is not a problem to the USSR but an opportunity. They are supplying arms to insurgents.

(MIKE BRACKEN) While the death sentence may not be the perfect solution to crime, it is, at least, one of many imperfect solutions.

(DON AYRES) I've been doing work with snake scutellation over the past couple of years.

(DAVID VERESCHAGIN) I don't believe we are evolving any more.

(PAUL SKELTON) I intend to prove that time travel is impossible.

(JERRY POURNELLE) Holy cow!

(ERIC MILLER) The Roman army conveniently illustrates the Roman lack of innovation.

(POUL ANDERSON) Mr Curlovich's anticlericalism seems unduly to bias him against Christianity.

(DAVID MOYER) In practice, Fromm's idea is about as practical as trying to fit a bumblebee with a spacesuit.

(JOE NAPOLITANO) It seems to me that you are a latent conservative and don't know it.

(GARY DEINDORFER) The cover is very fine. Very erotic centaur.

(ROBERT WHITAKER) Once it happened that the friendship I had with a woman dissolved after I met her husband.

(DOUG BARBOUR) If McLuhan is correct, we're returning to a form of tribalism.

(MARK SHARPE) I'm very tired of articles tearing apart, bit by bit, nuance by nuance, a science fiction story.

(BRETT COX) Why do you read so many bad novels?

(JERRY KAUFMAN) Monarch butterflies are bad tasting because they eat milkweeds.

(RICK BROOKS) Speaking of condoms, have you heard that there is a red, white, and blue one out? As my sister Petty asked, "Do you stand at attention when it is raised and lowered?"

(STUART GILSON) Reminds me of the politician who never said anything intelligent in order that he'd never have to tell a lie.

(MIKE GLYER) How could you let self-righteous, goodole John Curlovich utterly blow his chance to play Mark Twain?

(LAURIE TRASK) What? John Curlovich in a neo-beanie? Surely you jest.

(IAN COVELL) Organized nostalgia will always seem slightly insane.

(MARK M. KELLER) In a mere 250 words, John makes ten major errors of fact -- a density of mistakes that ranks him with Erich von Daniken and L. Ron Hubbard.

(JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON) Now that you've attacked Laurine White's hero Audie Murphy, all she has left is General George Custer.

(DON FITCH) General Custer may have died heroically (most Heroes are pretty stupid) but not courageously.

(DOM QUADRINI) Why does moral courage seldom receive the favorable acceptance that physical courage does?

(ROBERT BRIGGS) You forget that the USSR is communist.

(L. SPAGUE DE CAMP) Fans are the people who allow me to live without working.

(POUL ANDERSON) It is always gratifying to a writer to find that someone has read his stuff closely and actually thought about it; few people do.

(GREG BENFORD) Though I lean toward scientific authenticity in SF, I think the two-phase biosphere is so fascinating that the errors are justified, as a first crack at solving (i.e. imagining) the problem.

(STEPHEN H. DORNEMAN) One of the problems in introducing new technology is that the average man refuses to take the long range look at anything.

(TOM COLLINS) BB Sams, the brilliant southern fan artist, proposed a section of asphalt as an artwork several years ago.

(LAURINE WHITE) You're an arachnophobe! The scene might get to you (in THE GREAT SPIDER INVASION) where tarantulas are crawling all over the kitchen and one of them falls into the blender as the woman starts to make a Bloody Mary.

(ANNE LAURIE LOGAN) There are very few females in fandom because SF doesn't offer us much in the way of believable characters and acceptable role models.

(JOHN LELAND) On your point that Star Trek is not SF fandom, that is a matter of definition.

(MIKE GLICKSOHN) I suspect that MYTHOLOGIES is responsible for more people actually thinking carefully and putting down their arguments on paper than any other zine around.

(TARAL) How is it that MYTHOLOGIES preens under one exquisite Bonnie Dalzell cover after another?

(CHIP HITCHCOCK) Eastern cities do not have odd street layouts; they have complicated paved cowpaths.

(CHARLES L. GRANT) If you can't write 'hard' science, then you write "soft" science? Garbage.

(SUE ANDERSON) You WAHF'd Tucker!! Cosmic gall.

(PAUL DIFILIPPO) I'm constantly pleased with MYTHOLOGIES,
But yet (with some prior apologies)
I'd like to make clear
There's one thing I can't bear --
An unthinking reader's tautologies.

(MF) It's pleasant to read your short verses,
They're far more rewarding than curses;
But most of the time
Your meter and rhyme
Progress from quite badders to worsers.

(REED ANDRUS) Have you read of the livestock mutilations occurring throughout this area?

(ERIC LINDSAY) I finally found Rhode Island on my wall map of the USA.

(ROGER BRYANT) It seems that quality has little to do with the principle that cheaper goods drive out the more expensive ones.

(JACKIE HILLES) In secret little paranoid ways, the rich manage to collect their homage from us.

(MICHAEL CARLSON) Recommending Melville to me is like carrying ego to Mailer.

(NEAL WILGUS) I thought I'd pass along a Cherokee myth I recently ran across and think you'll find interesting.

(JOHN KUSSKE) Because Congress can pass no law limiting freedom of expression is no reason why a library must include all examples of this expression.

(CHARLES L. GRANT) A well written (horror) story is almost always better than a well written SF story.

(MARK SHARPE) Welfare is not a mixed blessing. It is an evil with bits of failure thrown in for seasoning.

(LAURINE WHITE) Jessica may bite her tongue.

(ROBERT BRIGGS) The inability to comprehend reality was the distinctive mark of the whole student movement.

(DAVE HULAN) 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.

(TONY DALMYN) The unequivocal act of the assertion of freedom is surrounded by a mythology as obscure as that surrounding simultaneous orgasm.

(AVEDON CAROL) I am convinced that nothing, save my own survival, is more important than the fight for feminism.

(BROD KLINGER) Given a situation where only a few humans are alive, it is the duty of the survivors to continue the human race.

(DARRELL SCHWEITZER) I think a lot of people out there would like to think that Star Trek was true.

(ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE) There is a Hindu myth that evil was invented to ameliorate the overcrowding in Heaven.

(ROBERT COULSON) People who have eaten cat report that it is good eating.

(ALLAN CHEN) Ultimately everything we do or believe reduces to a matter of faith.

(LYNNE HOLDOM) There is a lead pipe theory for the Fall -- the Romans went slightly senile from progressive lead poisoning due to the fact that all their plumbing was lead.

(REBECCA LESSES) While Rool May may believe that the emotion/reason split has existed only since the beginning of the 20th Century, I think that evidence of it can be found earlier.

(ALAN BOSTICK) Lesbianism is a political issue related to women's rights in our society.

(ALEXIS GILLILAND) Feminists, like other ideologues in this century, are intolerant of any ideas in opposition to their own, and the thought that they might need your support or mine to get anywhere sends them right up the wall.

(ADRIENNE FEIN) I could easily write a 125 page paper on this.

(STELLA NEMETH) Clothes frequently indicate more than we give them credit for.

(SETH GOLDBERG) While I may be wrong in this, I get the feeling there is a negative vote by you and others for sex without love and a positive one for love without sex.

(MIKE GLICKSONN) What I hope I said was that there don't seem to be any great new fanwriters around.

(DON AYRES) Several taxonomists once complained that, the way things were going, every population of ground squirrels in the country was going to have its own subspecific name.

(WAYNE HOOKS) I was amused to see that Mark Keller considers himself a capitalist.

(REED ANDRUS) What you did smacks too closely of what Anthony Russo and Daniel Ellsberg pulled a few years back; their antics cost me a very expensive and highly useful Top Secret Security Clearance.

(GERARD HOUARNER) You will forgive me, I hope, if I make the rather general statement that people are horn cowards, and that they spend the rest of their lives trying to hide the fact.

(JOHN CURLOVICH) The Church, Donald, the Church, like its imaginary triune man-god, is everywhere.

(PAUL WALKER) I would not call myself a coward, but courage has never been one of my strong points.

(HANK HEATH) There are frequent times that I too dig raw sex, violence, and dirt. Ghu granted me an overabundance of endocrines or something.

(BUD WEPSTER) I used to work as a bouncer at a private club.

(LAURINE WHITE) How can some people think of Calley's deeds as showing courage?

(DOUG BARBOUR) Your comments on the school system really relate to this too: the kids are taught to win, not to learn, right?

(STEVEN SAWICKI) I certainly wouldn't want to live in a world which consisted of only the best competitors.

(BEN INDICK) Your editorial brings to mind my visit to a Kibbutz.

(MARY PRIDE) Programs like affirmative action also irk me. The idea that because unfairness has existed in the past, it is now all right to be unfair in the other direction is ridiculous.

(STUART GILSON) Competition has always been largely responsible for progress, both on a personal and a national level.

(FAYE RINGEL) John Curlovich's article on the Society for Creative Anachronism is the strangest mixture of accuracy and inaccuracy yet to appear in the pages of MYTHOLOGIES.

(JOHN CURLOVICH) I must insist that militarism is by no means confined to the Pittsburgh barony.

(FRED LERNER) Fighting with broomsticks bored the hell out of me.

(GEORGE FERGUS) 11% of those asked said they'd actually seen a UFO.

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That about ties up this issue. Write me letters. Write me long letters. Given enough letters, I will have a guilty conscience if I don't put out another issue, and the letters on that should incite me further. One of the reasons MYTHOLOGIES was suspended was that several dozen of the last three hundred letters I received were largely or entirely DNO. Don't do it.

I am also looking for addresses for people who seem to have become inactive in fandom. I am particularly interested in locating D. Gary Grady, Sheryl Smith, Mark Sharpe, John Curlovich, Wayne Hooks, Stephen Dorneman, Patrick McGuire, Ira Thornhill, Jennifer Bankier, Mike Bracken, Paul Walker, Rose Hogue, David Taggart, Frank Balazs, and Roger Sween, none of whom I have current addresses for. Let me know.