

MYTHOLOGIES



COVERING NOTES

by Bonnie Dalzell

The cover on MYTHOLOGIES this month is, as is obvious, a two color job. This particular version is the third try. How did this happen? Well, originally it was going to be an oriental style brush and ink cover. However, a good sumi drawing (or even a poor sumi drawing) comes out with various tones of grey as well as black. The resulting painting must be subjected to half tone screening before reproduction. Much too expensive.

Wouldn't it be nice, suggested Sheila, her eyes dazzled by the vision of a two color fanzine cover, if we used more than one color. The second try was, before Sheila's enlightenment, going to be an India Ink drawing; this would give the solid blacks needed for unscreened offset. However, I had a bunch of direct image offset masters around that I wanted to try out. Even more to the point, my friend Mike Zubrisky had an offset press behind his kitchen which he wanted to try multicolored work on. So I produced two shaded pencil drawings on the offset masters, one of the Unicorn and one of the bamboo and title. These drawings will print with full shading, not just in solid blacks. But Finagle's Law held, although we ran four trial pictures the crucial cover drawings did not print acceptably. The readers of MYTHOLOGIES were spared a Dalzell hand lettered title.

I did not take the time to redraw the cover more than once more, so I used India Ink on drafting mylar (which is translucent, simplifying the color separation, considerably) and did the two cover drawings. I then took the originals and laid them on top of lithographic film, exposed the film, and produced the negatives for the cover. The title was typeset by Nancy Hussar, and I made a negative and scotch taped it into the masking sheet along with the bamboo negative. Because there was no camera "interpretation" of the original work of art, this cover is actual a fine print of an edition limited to 325 copies. The method of reproduction is offset lithography, but not photo-offset lithography. Zubrisky has done a fine job of interpreting my art with his press and the entire edition is acceptable to the artist. Soon we may rival the Franklin Mint and the American Arts Guild. Subscriptions to future editions, while not solicited, will be happily accepted.

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EDITOR'S AFTERTHOUGHT

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank personally Bonnie, Nancy Hussar, and Mike Zubrisky for their efforts in production of this cover. I also wanted to thank those of you who are responsible for my name appearing on the Hugo ballot for best Fan Writer this year. Although I have had in the past some rather critical remarks to make about the fan Hugo's, I nevertheless recognize that this distinction is quite an honor. I hope to thank some of you in person in Kansas City this September.

MYTHOLOGIES

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EDITOR: Don D'Ammassa
PRODUCTION: Sheila D'Ammassa

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Rhode Island 02914 (401-438-3296)

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

---Leonard Cohen

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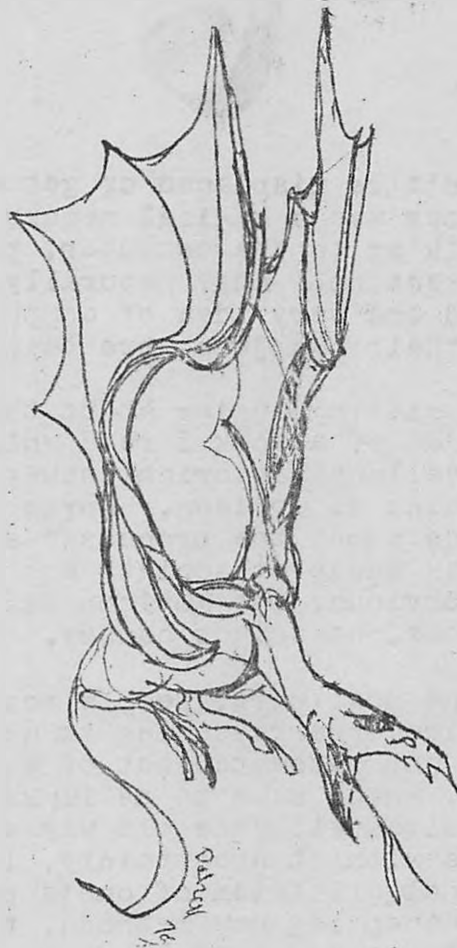
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COVER: BONNIE DALZELL

INTERIOR: Bonnie Dalzell p.1
Tim Marion p. 2,10,26
Al Sirois p. 39
Bruce Townley p. 4
Jim Young p. 19

LOGO: Nancy Hussar p. 1

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"There are no manners in the world today, young man."

--- Clifford Simak, THEY WALKED LIKE MEN



There's an IBM System 3 computer where I work. Within its limitations, it's a fine piece of equipment, and the various problems we've had with it have been almost always attributable to poor programming. But when the computer was installed, it was interesting to see the reactions of various people to its advent. Some reacted with total ignorance, like the clerk who stapled the IBM cards together so they

wouldn't be misplaced or get out of sequence. Others thought the computer was a magical memory machine, and that they should be able to walk up to the computer, punch a button, and get the answer to any question. And, naturally, there were those who feared and resented the very idea of computers, who found fault ceaselessly even when their own jobs were being made easier.

I was sitting musing about this last group the other day when I was reminded of a book I read while serving in Vietnam a few years ago, an excellent historical study titled MEN, MACHINES, AND MODERN TIMES by Elting E. Morison. Morison's book opens with a series of observations about the processes and effects of invention, innovation, and new ideas on society and on individuals. Some of his points may seem obvious, but Morison did not confine himself to pointing out symptoms, he sought causes.

For the most part, people resist the introduction of new machines. Sometimes the reasoning is quite obvious. One does not want to see one's job automated out of existence. But there are less obvious cases, which seem to be linked to the tendency of people to identify themselves with the old way of doing things. Any attempt at change brings with it uncertainty, insecurity, and may well be viewed as personal criticism of one's past life. And when people are coerced into accepting new methods, they resist. "One problem is that men tend to continue the patterns of behavior developed in earlier conditions into the new, often quite different conditions set forth by the introduction of different mechanisms."

There is, naturally, some actual danger in the process of change. All change implies a mixture of construction and destruction. You can't often put in the new without at least symbolically destroying the old. There is always the danger that the balance will be upset, that too much of the old will be disrupted before viable new ways are implemented.

These points, among others, are illustrated by several case studies, each of which are fascinating historical events. The first concerns the introduction of a means of continuously firing gunnery aboard US warships in the early 1900's. Until then, gunners could fire only when the target and the firing ship were properly aligned in the obviously unstable ocean. Telescopic sights were traditionally mounted on the barrel itself, and the barrel fixed at a particular inclination. It doesn't take much mechanical aptitude to realize

that a given gunner might have a long wait before his fixed piece just happened to fall into alignment with its target. A Captain Sims of the US Navy observed an innovation on a British naval vessel. In this case, the sight was mounted on a sleeve, which allowed the barrel to move independently. The elevation of the barrel was controlled by the gunner, who could adjust his weapon rapidly for each shot. Sims' attempts to convince the US Navy to adopt this advance are fascinating.

Sims converted a single ship to the new gunnery system, trained a crew, and then scored some unprecedentedly high scores in target shooting. But when he tried to present in detail his evidence of a clearly superior technology, he was met by a spontaneous (but soon organized) resistance from the very men - career oriented naval officers - who had the most to gain.

This resistance took three forms. The first stage was disbelief, apparently quite honestly held. Shooting records such as Sims claimed were unheard of, therefore they were impossible, therefore Sims lied or was deluded. Fortunately, Sims was a stubborn and determined man. He continued to apply pressure for recognition and implementation of his plans, despite the open disapproval of his superiors. The fact that he was beginning to make some progress caused the opposition to escalate its attack. Officer after officer issued "expert" statements "proving" that Sims' scores were impossible or coincidental. Arguments were found which purported to show that the movable firing system was unworkable and inaccurate, despite the near universal use of this system in the British navy. Sims was unimpressed with their arguments and continued his campaign. The opposition escalated again, this time taking the form of personal abuse, attacks on Sims' character, his capability as an officer, his morality, loyalty, and veracity, even his sanity. But Sims persevered and, ultimately, triumphed.

Morison offers a tentative explanation for the behavior of all parties concerned. Sims damaged his own career in his zest for the continuous firing gunnery system, a determination which Morison credits to a mixture of sources: "He was moved, it seems to me, in part by his genuine desire to improve his own profession but also in part by rebellion against tedium, against inefficiency from on high, and against the artificial limitations placed on his actions by the social structure, in his case, junior rank." Morison also explores the motivations of the resisting officers. One change in a society almost inevitably leads to others. People tend to realize this instinctively and resist. In this particular case, gunnery officers became more important when their effectiveness was improved, so they were promoted more frequently than formerly, at the expense of the other specialties.

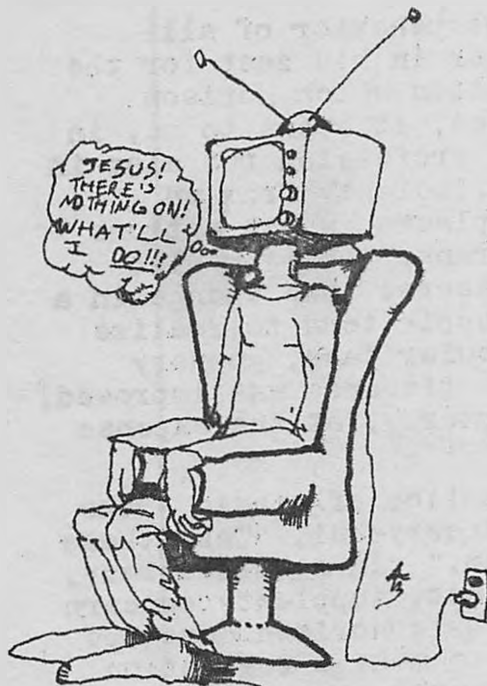
Morison then moves on to the ultimate manifestation of stasis - the bureaucracy, which he characterizes with the apocryphal, "Take these papers, file them alphabetically, and burn them." In a bureaucracy, the concern with process, with paper as an object, supplants concern with the information the paper carries. From this Morison develops a number of corollaries, as (1) "It is easier to make a regulation than to abolish it", or (2) "It is easier to conform to a regulation, even when it is inappropriate to do so, than it is to seek a sensible exception." Regulations, which derive from bureaucracies, tend to

multiply: "So the tendency in every regulating body is to reach out and extend rules over the whole range of human activity. That is why questionnaires get longer and the set of regulations more detailed."

Morison cites other case studies. During World War Two, the army air force advocated actions which infringed on naval operations. Specifically, they wished to replace the conventional convoy system of Atlantic shipping with a comprehensive search and destroy operation designed to destroy enemy warships before they attacked allied shipping. The navy refused to consent to the change, refused even to experiment with it. Possibly the convoy system would have been proven more effective anyway, but the fact is that the navy reached its decision not on the basis of facts and logic, but because the navy bureaucracy resisted the idea of change, particularly change which might increase the influence of the army.

In another case, the WAMPANOAG, the fastest ironclad warship in the world, was drydocked because naval officers felt it was too big a target, that it was unmaneuverable, and that its masts were in the wrong places. The truth was that it was superior in the first two cases to conventional naval vessels, and masts were irrelevant on a powered ship in any case.

While not anti-machine, Morison does point out that there is a certain amount of validity to the charge that machines tend to dehumanize people: "They perceived that a machine, any machine, if left to itself, tends to establish its own conditions, to create its own environment and draw men into it. Since a machine, any machine, is designed to do only a part of what a whole man can do, it tends to wear down those parts of a man that are not included in the design." But Morison feels that this problem is not inherent in machines, but a failure of our society to realize and act upon the implications of a machine oriented society. "The tendency is to fit men into the machinery rather than to fit the machinery into the contours of a human situation."



After finishing Morison's book for a second time, I found my interest was thoroughly whetted, and decided to run through half a dozen books that dealt peripherally with the impact of technology which had been sitting around waiting for me to read them. One of the more famous of these was Alvin Toffler's FUTURE SHOCK. Here, I thought, would be some interesting, detailed insights into humanity's unwillingness to change. But I was in for a disappointment. A lot of people were apparently entertained to see a "serious" social commentator talking about topics familiar to SF readers (space travel, cyborgs, robots, etc.). But Toffler offers no insights, his work is almost entirely derivative. He doesn't even draw any surprising

correlations. Toffler merely summarizes the remarks made by a myriad other writers. He restates them a bit, updates them at times, but says nothing thought-provoking - and at great length.

My next step was to deliberately look for a novel critical of technology. I found Roger Rapaport's THE GREAT AMERICAN BOMB MACHINE, which is critical of nuclear technology. Unfortunately, Rapaport is sort of a liberal John Stormer. He opens with a rather gruesome piece about a museum of nuclear weapons in Texas which has printed cute uniforms on dummy atomic bombs, and which sells miniatures bombs as souvenirs. But from this point on, his telling criticisms are usually lost among his hysterical ravings.

Rapaport feels that the US should engage in immediate unilateral disarmament. His reasoning - if such it can be called - is based on his fear that a crashing bomber could cause a nuclear explosion. Apparently he is not cognizant of the fact that these bombs must be armed before they can be exploded. He insists that our own nuclear arsenal is far more dangerous than the combined nuclear weapons of China and the Soviet Union.

Some of Rapaport's arguments are valid. There are some very risky situations developing, particularly with regard to nuclear spills, security of materials in transit from one site to another, and the disposal of waste material. But this is hardly justification for Rapaport's hysterical charges. Like many extremists, he has no sense of humor. Referring to an obviously tongue in cheek article which states that a nuclear war would solve the taxation problem, Rapaport claims this as an accurate example of the inhumane thinking of nuclear planners.

Needless to say, I was neither amused nor particularly enlightened by the book. So next I turned to John McHale's THE FUTURE OF THE FUTURE, a book so overloaded with jargon that I left over 100 pages unread. Like Toffler's book, this was more reiterative than anything else, so I finally resorted to reading another old favorite, Aldous Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD REVISITED.

This is a short collection of essays in which Huxley pointed out that many of the trends he had predicted in his novel, BRAVE NEW WORLD, were becoming fact, primarily because of advances in technology and a sudden diminution of freedom caused by the ever-growing population. Huxley felt that population pressure was causing a permanent state of international tension. "But liberty, as we all know, cannot flourish in a country that is permanently on a war footing, or even a near-war footing. Permanent crisis justifies permanent control of everybody and everything by the agencies of the central government."

Huxley felt that technology is increasingly important in the loss or maintenance of liberties, because it causes concentrations of power. The media is perhaps the most obvious example of power within a nation, weaponry the best example of power among nations. The solution, as Huxley saw it, was to educate people to preserve their own freedoms and resist the misuse of technology, because of the growing danger that "an unexciting truth may be eclipsed by a thrilling falsehood." Unfortunately, Huxley's arguments ultimately weaken themselves, as he goes on to suggest that we need legislation to prevent political figures from "resorting to the kind of anti-

rational propaganda that makes nonsense of the whole democratic process." This seems to be a self-defeating step to take, embracing a loss of freedom to prevent being embraced by it.

A brief reference in two of the preceding books convinced me I should next read John Gardner's SELF-RENEWAL. Early in this short volume, I came across a mind-boggling statement that seemed to make entirely suspect Gardner's perceptions. He claims that "many Americans have a sentimental and indiscriminating view of change. They think it is, without qualification, a good thing." This seems to contradict all of the previous books, commonsense, and my own observations. But it is later apparent, following a particularly good criticism of the educational process in America, that Gardner also recognizes that the opposite is more often the case. "So stubborn are the defenses of a mature society against change that shock treatment is often required to bring about renewal."

Gardner then explains nostalgia as the instinctive wish for a time when things were more fluid, rather than stratified as they are now. He lost me entirely here. It seems quite evident that the rate of change has accelerated so far beyond even that of my own childhood, that it is the present which is fluid - the only constant is the fact of change itself. But Gardner feels that the contrary is the case, that the appearances may change more than before, but the underlying patterns are the same. He feels that "what is oppressing the individual is the very nature of modern society."

A few years ago, a very clever satirist named Leonard Lewin wrote a Book titled REPORT FROM IRON MOUNTAIN ON THE POSSIBILITY AND DESIRABILITY OF PEACE. It purported to be a secret study requested by the President, and its conclusions were that modern society could not survive in the absence of war or the threat of war, that it's economy would fall apart, that sufficient substitutes could not be found. Although taken in at the time, like many others, I felt that the report had failed to consider entire areas of human activity. But even though the report itself had a spurious origin, it did make some telling points. Because of our technology, we no longer need as many man-hours to produce the same amount of goods, and our efficiency is increasing more rapidly than is the marketplace. The idea of full employment might make good politics, but under our present technological set-up, it makes bad economics. It is highly unlikely that we will tailor our machines to be less efficient, except on a short term basis, even if it is clear that society will benefit. The only alternative is to alter society to conform to its technological nature. If this process were being consciously controlled, we might end up with a workable society, but at present we are adapting in a haphazard fashion. There is little effort being made to educate people to use their free time. The archaic welfare system creeps on, taking on a bigger load each year, operating less efficiently each year, because the assumption is always (for political purposes must be) that the underemployment situation is a temporary inconvenience.

We're playing ostrich, with our heads in the sand. The industrial revolution has turned into the technological revolution. If we don't plan rationally for it as a society, we'll see the same kind of violence (but on a much larger scale) that was seen in England when automation first began to eliminate jobs there. Technology, misunderstood, can be a very mixed blessing.

A SLIGHT TALE, GUILTY OF ALLEGORY

by PAUL DIFILIPPO

One day, as I was sitting at home, my doorbell rang. I answered it and found a salesman on the steps. He must have walked, or arrived from nowhere, for I heard no car. I only had time to notice that he was slickly elegant in appearance, because he immediately insinuated himself inside before I knew what he was doing or could stop him.

He pushed me back into a chair and sat down in one opposite me, so closely that his knees touched mine. He laid a satchel between us.

"I have something for you," he insisted oozingly, "the ultimate uselessness of which has never been doubted by anyone with an iota of common sense. It is priced positively beyond your means and, moreover, will assuredly ruin you. Yet -- and this is the point you will probably find hard to believe -- I do not insist that you purchase but one of these; no, I am overjoyed to press upon you many more than you need. Now, what do you say to that?"

I was stunned. The pitch and delivery of this knave were so overwhelming and completely compelling in their flatfaced, arrogant absurdity that I was reduced to merely nodding dumbly. The salesman took this as a signal to continue.

"Fine, fine, let me show you this marvel of insidious trash." So saying, he took a knotted length of rope from his sample case.

I had regained my voice, and I asked him if this simple horsehair was his product.

He choked on an exclamation of disgust. "Horsehair!" he yelled. "I'll have you know that this is no such antiquated product, sir. No, this is a modern, perfected, utilitarian, all purpose Technological Noose."

Well, I said, seen in that light, it was slightly more interesting.

"That's not saying the half of it, sir. This Noose has a host of astonishing features which beggar such pale words as interesting. Our Noose is made of a duplicitous outer coating of 100% synthetic fibers guarantted to chafe, beneath which are interwoven strands of a special alloy designed to impart a unique strength and unbreakability. At the core of the Noose is a miniature nuclear reactor that powers the choking and asphyxiating mechanisms inside. This Noose, you see, requires no outmoded adjuncts like trapdoors and horses. One merely adjusts it around one's neck (one size fits all) and affixes it to an overhead anchor, standing flatfooted all the while. Next, one triggers the on switch (no moving parts) and the Noose automatically shortens the requisite length. Telltales placed at eye level notify the user of his demise. A last feature is the Noose's almost unexplainable attraction. Leave it lying around the house: friends, strangers, business acquaintances, even enemies who would rather die than use anything of yours -- all will succumb to the delicious temptation of the Noose. No one will want to be without it. We stake our reputation on this."

This man's talk had left my brain spinning. I was up in the air of some nonhuman wonderland of gimmickry and gadgets, and it was a heady atmosphere. And then, of course, to add to my befuddlement, there was that sample Noose lying in the man's lap. It had quietly inserted tendrils into my skull during the salestalk. Suddenly, before I realized what I was saying, I heard myself agreeing to buy several dozen Nooses. I was already determining to whom I would send them and how I would use mine.

"You won't live to regret it," the fellow told me amiably as he was leaving with my payment. And naturally he was right.

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SO WHAT IF OUR OIL GETS CUT OFF?

by MARK M. KELLER

It is incredible to what extent a really advanced technology can get by with synthetics and substitutes. Those who think the US will collapse because of an oil embargo, or a cutoff of chrome, should consider the experience of Germany in the two World Wars.

Germany in 1914 was a highly industrialized nation, with many skilled researchers. Its economy depended heavily on imports for raw materials of basic industry - rather like the position of the US in another ten or fifteen years. Petroleum was imported for vehicle fuel, guano was imported for nitrate fertilizer to produce crops.

Came the war, and imports were stopped by the British blockade. "The Germans will collapse in a year", predicted the British economists. "They have no oil and no source of nitrates. They will have no motor transport, they will starve." There was a local supply of iron ore, coal, and wood, however. The German industries got by on that.

The Fischer-Tropsch process, 1915, enabled the Germans to make oil from gasified coal. More important, the Haber process, 1915, used nitrogen from the air and hydrogen from water to synthesize ammonia to nitrates. Wood alcohol replaced petroleum solvents for industrial work. Germany hung on until 1918.

There were limits, of course. Food did run short, and wood was not usable as human nutriment. Ersatz sausages, stuffed with processed sawdust, generated mutinies when they were tried. Animal fats ran short; no more soaps could be made. Detergents were invented to replace them, but didn't clean as well. German clerks went to work with yellow shirt collars.

During the 1920's and 1930's, Fischer-Tropsch "synthetic oil" plants were built in the US, Britain, and Japan - "just in case". Synthetic rubber was developed in 1935, but not marketed. The petroleum based "Neoprene" cost 75¢ a pound, while natural Malayan tree rubber sold for 10-20¢ a pound. There was no profit in synthetic rubber, unless the Malayan supply was cut off.

World War Two began. Germany had oil for a while, from Ploesti in Rumania, and from some Russian wells in the Ukraine. But they lost these, and had to use coal as a source of gasoline. Much of the oil was used to make Buna-S synthetic rubber, but this was always in short supply. Japan held the rubber plantations of South East Asia, but there was no way to get the latex to the German factories. One submarine in 1943 did carry fifty tons from Singapore to Hamburg, when Germany needed 10,000 tons of rubber a year.

The US had plenty of oil, and (from late 1942) plenty of synthetic rubber. The Americans even lined their tanks with sponge rubber, something no other nation could afford. This wasn't a luxury. In rough terrain, tank crews were bounced off the insides of their vehicles; German panzer crews had a 3% hospitalization rate from cracked elbows, shattered kneecaps, and fractured ribs, even in peacetime. No wonder they wore padded helmets inside their tanks.

By 1944, German industry was running short of everything. Yet it still produced war machines as fast as ever. Airplanes were made of laminated plywood, as aluminum was too scarce. The last production model was the Volksfighter, a jet interceptor to be flown by untrained teenagers. It had a V-1 pulse-jet engine that ran on kerosine, a plywood body, and no landing wheels. It was never used in combat. The last Messerschmidts were marvels of substitution. The controls worked by mechanical linkages (no hydraulic fluid); the insulation for the electrical cables consisted of oilcloth tubes stuffed with glass beads (no rubber left). But the planes still flew. Automobiles ran on methane from compost heaps, fumes from charcoal burners, or wood alcohol. Today's "ecology cars" are using methods tried in occupied Europe 35 years ago.

If the US is cut off from Rhodesian chrome, or Chilean copper, or Saudi petroleum, don't expect US industries to collapse overnight. A mature industrial technology has the ability to develop substitutes for nearly everything.

(Details on the synthetic petroleum process are in Neal Cochrane, "Oil and Gas from Coal" (Scientific American, May 1976)

parable

THE SHADES OF ROBERT AICKMAN

As an avowed science fiction fan, it is with some trepidation that I confess to a secret fondness for ghost and horror stories. Poe, Blackwood, Lovecraft, James, and others rank with Asimov, Simak, and Laumer in my esteem; Sturgeon's *SOME OF YOUR BLOOD* is re-read as frequently as *THE DREAMING JEWELS* and *THE COSMIC RAPE*. So when I read Gahan Wilson's laudatory review of *SUB ROSA*, a British hardcover collection of ghost stories, in *F&Sf* a couple of years ago, I started paying particular attention to appearances of its author, Robert Aickman.

Aickman is a Briton of varied interests. He is active in the London Opera Society, British Waterways, and is involved in psychic research. Although he has had several collections published in Great Britain, he is available in the US only through anthologies and an occasional prozine appearance.

The first country to appear in this country was "The Visiting Star" (*HAUNTINGS* edited by Mazzeo), which later appeared in the paperback anthology, *THE THIRD FONTANA BOOK OF GHOST STORIES*. Wilson describes this particular story as "a corker", a sentiment I fail to share. An aging actress and her nervous companion arrive in a small town to take part in the revival of an old play. They are preceded by a mysterious stranger named Mr. Superbus, who has a never fully explained relationship to the pair. We later learn that Superbus has removed the actress' personality and incarnated it as the companion. Aickman dresses up the story with a pair of mysterious deaths, then a hotel fire which kills the companion, thereby causing the actress to vanish in the middle of her performance. But what happened to Superbus? Who or what was he? What kind of pact had he made? Was he responsible for the deaths? What does it all mean? Aickman answers none of these questions.

This is essentially the flaw in most of Aickman's stories. Many ghost stories fail because the internal logic is violated. Aickman avoids this by having no logic at all. The excuse that these stories deal with the supernatural, hence, require no rules, is fatuous. Vampires must avoid garlic, banshees must signify death. If no rules at all apply, the story becomes pointless - the hero or heroine has no opportunity of escaping.

Take, for example, "Just a Song at Twilight", from the *FOURTH GHOST BOOK*. A young couple purchases an abandoned house on a remote island. A visitor arrives one night, distraught, and tells them that her

house is haunted. They loan her enough money to leave the island. Then, moments after she leaves their house, the husband mysteriously decides to follow her. Why? Why mention the ghost if this is just a story of adultery? Who was the ghost anyway? There is no explanation, no suspense, no climax, and no conclusion.

"The Inner Room", from THE SECOND FONTANA BOOK OF GHOST STORIES, starts off well. A young girl receives as a birthday present an enormous, realistic doll house. She begins to have dreams about the residents of the house, even to a point where she imagines while awake that they actually dwell inside her toy. Eventually her parents decide that her fascination is unhealthy and dispose of the house. Up to this point, the story is believable, logical, and suspenseful. Then Aickman loses control. Years pass and the girl grows up. While hiking, she becomes lost and soon encounters a full scale version of her doll house. Further, the inhabitants correspond to those she dreamed of as a child. But rather than use the conventional though uninspired explanation of clairvoyance, Aickman uses an unconventional, but rather silly device of having the dolls transformed into people who berate the protagonist for not keeping the doll house in better condition.

Aickman's ability to create a vivid setting is undisputed. It is particularly well done in "The Trains", from THE FONTANA BOOK OF GHOST STORIES. Two young girls, hiking through the English countryside, are forced to shelter from a storm in a strange house near a busy railroad line. Their host appears to be mildly insane whenever he discusses anything connected with railroads. His butler turns out to be a transvestite whom one of the girls kills for no discernible reason and with no apparent regret. The man's dead aunt may or may not have hanged herself in the house. Again, no resolution, no explanation, no internal logic.

Another good idea gone astray is the plot of "No Stronger Than a Flower", THE FONTANA BOOK OF HORROR STORIES. This time we watch a young, unattractive housewife undergoing extensive beauty treatments. Her personality begins to change simultaneously, much to the dismay of her husband. She grows cold, remote, even hostile. When he finally confronts her, she attacks him and leaves their house forever. As usual, the reader is left to wonder about her motivation.

In 1970 F&SF began reprinting Aickman's stories. The first chosen was "The School Friend". A middle-aged woman looks on as her old school chum returns to occupy her deceased father's home. There is some indefinite mystery surrounding the man's death, and there are soon indications that something is wrong about the daughter as well. She is secretive, lives alone and with no visitors, won't allow mail to be delivered to the house. There are ghostly figures, animal noises, a strange altar built in the library. What does it all mean? If Aickman knows, he's not telling.

"Ringing the Changes" (1971) is the most successful of Aickman's stories to appear in this country. A young couple honeymoon in a remote English town. Shortly after their arrival, every bell in the village begins to peal. They are told that the townspeople are ringing to "wake the dead". They eventually succeed and the couple are swept up in a necrophilic bacchanalia.

"Bind Your Hair", reprinted that same year, is more typical. The suspense is built adequately as a young girl becomes involved in strange rites on a foggy hilltop, but she avoids rather than escapes the clutches of the worshippers and the climax never quite arrives. "Pages From a Young Girl's Journal" (1973) was the first story by Aickman to make its initial appearance in this country. It won an award at the first World Fantasy Convention held in Providence last year. I suspect this was because of the horror story orientation of that convention, and the lack of serious competition in the field of horror writing, for it is not one of Aickman's stronger pieces. It is a reasonably good story of a girl who discovers she is becoming a vampire, but at times Aickman's attempts to maintain a diary format become bogged down in triviality and vague sidepaths.

"The Clock Watcher" (1974) is another example of Aickman's failure to provide an explanation for his horrors. A man realizes shortly after his marriage that his wife has an unhealthy fascination for clocks, and that they are somehow linked to her aging process. One day, inexplicably, she and the myriad clocks she has bought, disappear, never to be seen again. Aickman explains nothing, neither the relationship between the woman and the clocks or the reason for her departure. There are some genuinely thrilling moments in "The Same Dog" (1974), a ghost story of sorts in which a girl visits the site of the violent death of a childhood playmate.

Following a gap of over a year, Aickman has now had two appearances in 1976. "The Wine Dark Sea", which appeared in the first issue of Willis Conover's SCIENCE FANTASY CORRESPONDENT, is a minor story about a man who finds three sorceresses living on an isolated Greek island. "The Hospice", published in F&SF, builds up a good mood of suspense and terror, but once more Aickman's plotting disintegrates. A stranded traveller finds himself in a very strange inn, where the boarders are compelled to consume enormous meals, where the bedrooms have no windows, and where unexplained screams disturb the night. But comes the morning, and our hero departs, unhindered and unenlightened.

Aickman is an evocative stylist. Some of his scenes (particularly in "The Trains", "The Inner Room", and "Ringing the Changes"), are incredibly real. Unfortunately he tries for too subtle an effect; the element of terror is insufficient to break the spell cast by the setting. Aickman seems to be so wrapped up in preparing the setting, fleshing in details, and then introducing bizarre effects and characters, that he ignores all but the faintest concessions to plot and internal consistency. Only "Ringing the Changes", and to some extent, "The Same Dog", succeed in consistency conveying a sense of horror through to the final paragraphs.

One could pick on Aickman for a few other points, one of which would be the often expressed contempt of the narrator for female characters. This sometimes colors the characterizations, destroying some of the verisimilitude. Fortunately, Aickman is a good enough writer to avoid being trapped by this, and may be merely reflecting the traditional nefarious place of the female character in horror fiction. Regardless, Aickman is at once a fine writer and a poor fantasist. And so it is that he has provided us with many examples of very poor horror stories, written very well.

History and Biology in Poul Anderson's Fire Time:
Exploring Some Aspects of the Two-Phase Biosphere

---By Mark M. Keller

Science fiction writers have often used the idea of cyclic history as a background. Civilizations rise and fall, rise and fall -- coming to glory by an inner drive, collapsing from internal weakness or repeated natural disaster. Most writers stick to one phase of the cycle, generally the downfall of the old order and the promise of a new one: Asimov's Foundation, Piper's Space Viking.

Only on rare occasions does a writer have a wide enough sweep to cover several turns of the cycle. Stapledon did this in First and Last Men.

Few others have equalled the Stapledonian vision. The usual SF "history" epic is based loosely on Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", with the hero as one of the lonely troops out in the barbarian marches, trying to prevent the fall. That is the kind of story Poul Anderson has often written, in his Flandry series. But Fire Time (SFBC, 1974; Ballantine, 1976) has a bit more, and is far better than Anderson's other books of the past decade.

What is Fire Time about? What is the conflict, the theme?

On the far planet Ishtar lives a race of intelligent centaurs. They are admirable, in the way that Anderson's brave aliens tend to be: long-lived, tolerant, individualistic, humorous, and wise. They are devoted to family, proud of their traditions, and enough like humans to trade dirty jokes with visitors from Earth. Their technology is pre-industrial, somewhere around early Iron Age. But they are willing and anxious to learn new ways.

This admirable and appealing race of beings is under impending threat of death from the freakish climatic variations of planet Ishtar.

Every thousand years, the planet goes through a century of drought and blistering heat: "fire time". During each of the last four or five cycles, the Ishtarians have built a civilization during the normal climatic phase. Each time, the crop failures and massive livestock deaths of "fire time" have destroyed the Ishtar-ian economy, causing a collapse to barbarism.

Now, once again, the Ishtarians of the southern continents -- the Gathering -- have built a high culture. It is based on pastoral nomadism of great herds of meat animals, divided among military clans resembling Roman legions. To this Gathering, in the last century, have come scientists from Earth: guests, explorers, teachers.

But Fire Time approaches. The Tassui -- the barbarians of the northland -- live on that part of Ishtar most affected by Fire Time. They are moving south, to overrun the lands of the Gathering. The Legions probably cannot hold.

Can't the Earth visitors help their friends from the Gathering? No, it seems not. Earth is at war, far away, and a task force from the Earth Space Navy has landed on Ishtar. There is martial law "for the duration", and all the transport of the Earth civilians has been confiscated by the military. Regulations will not allow

their use to help a tribe of aliens.

So, we have a crisis. Only the advanced technology of Earth can help the Gathering survive intact through the Fire Time, and the Earth civilians, due to an ironic accident of timing, are unable to use that technology.

The Ishtarrians remember what happened the last time they tried to survive Fire Time on their own: barbarian invasion, total collapse, 300 years of Dark Ages before society got organized again. And each Fire Time is a bit worse than the one before it.

How do the Ishtarrians respond to the coming Apocalypse? Which way will their society turn in the face of certain doom -- denial, acceptance, futile struggle?

Before we look at the Ishtarrians' reaction, we should take some time to see how they got into this mess in the first place. The origins of Fire Time involve some interesting background work in celestial mechanics and planetary orbits, the result of a collaboration between Poul Anderson and Hal Clement.

The basic system was designed by Clement, and the climatic cycles of Ishtar resemble those of the planet Abyrman in Clement's earlier book, Cycle of Fire (Ballantine; 1957, 1975). But let's save Cycle of Fire for the discussion of Ishtarrian biology, in the next section. Anderson is quite capable of making his own planetary systems when he chooses, as in "World Called Cleopatra" in Book of Poul Anderson (DAW, 1975). But in this case he works within the frame created by another writer, which can be a useful exercise. Notice that Fire Time is dedicated to "Hal Clement, worldsmith".

Ishtar revolves around the star Bel, part of the triple-star system Anu-Bel-Ea. The major components are the red giant Anu, and the yellow sol-type Bel; Ea is a distant red dwarf, mentioned once in passing. Anu and Bel move around each other in eccentric orbits, with periods of about 1000 years.

At ^{close} ~~farthest~~ passage, Anu is ⁴⁰ ~~220~~ a.u. from Ishtar, which is the distance between Sol and Pluto, rather close for a red giant star. Anu is almost 300 times as luminous as Sol. Anderson has worked out the effects. The northern hemisphere of Ishtar will experience an increase of 20% in the radiation it receives, during the century of Anu passage. The weather patterns of Ishtar will vary wildly, the northern land surface will reach temperatures that may approach the boiling point of water: "fire time".

There is no escaping the periodic Flame Deluge. It will be hanging over the heads of the Ishtarrians for as long as they have a culture capable of learning basic astronomy. How will they respond?

There are three options: ignore the coming disaster, accept it as the way things must be, fight even though failure is inevitable. As you might expect in an Anderson novel, the Ishtarrians take the path of struggle. Other writers have examined some of the other possibilities, and it may be worth a short digression to see how they have handled this theme.

You can ignore the coming doom, and live as if it will not arrive.

Some fine stories have described this: "Nightfall" by Asimov, "Letter to a Phoenix" by Fred Brown. Some real turkeys have used this theme also, namely The HAB Theory by Allen Eckert (published

by Little, Brown - 1976). HAB is on my list of Ten Worst SF Books of the Seventies. It tells of a self-taught scientist who discovers that the Earth tips over every 7000 years, due to the weight of the polar icecaps. The next tip is overdue. He runs around like Chicken Little, but nobody believes him, until.... (Sorry, Allen. We can't all write like Poul Anderson, can we?)

You can accept the coming doom, justify it, welcome it.

Niven & Pournelle have a novel about a species that reacts this way to repeated population crises: the Moties, in Note in God's Eye (SFBC, Ballantine - 1976). The Moties are doomed to a repeated collapse not by a configuration of the stars, but by their own social biology. They become industrial, overpopulate, run out of food and resources, lose 95% of their numbers in brutal food wars. Then they start all over. They have done this at least 500 times in the last million years. It has happened so often that species of vermin have adapted to living in ruined Motie cities, which are a permanent feature of the landscape.

The more intelligent Moties know their society will soon collapse. They know it, and hate it, and fear it. But they will not move to stop or slow the downfall. They feel that the Cycles have always been, are, will always be. Their religion is pseudo-Hindu, with rebirth and rebirth and rebirth.

More than accepting the collapse, the dominant Motie ideology will fight to make sure it happens. Trying to change history is not merely sacrilege; it is the worst kind of insanity. It will only make things worse. In the last Cycle, some Motie lords launched an interstellar probe, to look for new resources and new land. The current Moties are bitter about the results: the starship wasted huge amounts of badly needed energy and metal. It also attracted the attention of the Terran Empire. The Terrans are expansionist warhawks, who have their own solution to the Motie Problem -- obliterate the planet.

The Moties are extreme conservatives. Internal evidence in the book indicates that they can limit their population, but choose not to, for ideological reasons. The Moties are absolute Malthusians. They limit their growth in the natural way: disease, famine, war. Anything else is immoral. They would rather die than change their ways.

The Motie mentality can be seen among Earth humans today, of course. I will refrain from giving examples for the moment, although I am tempted.

Anderson's Ishtarrians are too rational a people to ignore or worship the coming doom. They will try to prevent it. Maybe they can do so this time, even without direct human aid. They have picked up a goodly amount of technical data from the Earth people during the last century. The Ishtarrians can assimilate such information more easily than Earth people, since Ishtarrians have a superior brain system. They are, in fact, generally superior to humans; they have evolved farther, to a "post-mammalian" state.

How the Ishtarrians got to be that way, and how the humans respond to such superior creatures, involves a deeper look at Ishtarrian biology, and a survey of Anderson's changing approach to the problem of human/alien interaction. First, let's look at the biology. What is "post-mammalian"?

Fire Time threatens the civilization of the current Ishtarians. But ironically, Fire Time is what made them into sophonts in the first place. Much of the biology in the book is implied rather than stated, but the background is there if we look.

A billion years ago, Earth and Ishtar were at the same stage geologically. Ishtar is a bit smaller, but it has an iron core like Earth (implied, since it has "continental drift"). Maybe evolution worked a bit faster. Anderson hints that Ishtar had land plants 1000 million years ago, while Earth got them 400 million years ago. Then the nearby star, Anu, 1.3 solar masses, went nova, and expanded to a red giant. Fire Time began.

Still, life evolved at a steady pace on Ishtar. I wonder about this a little bit. Has Anderson calculated what the radiation flux from a nova would do to a new biosphere? Anyway life evolved as before on Ishtar.

Details are skimpy. Ishtar forms moved onto land, became plants and animals. The plants are described as having yellow photosynthetic pigments, with red auxiliary pigments, like red algae on earth. This implies they absorb the blue and green wavelengths of sunlight, reflecting the longer wavelengths. There are plants with such pigments on Earth, mostly algae in deep waters where there is no red light, only blue and violet. The red wavelengths are absorbed by the upper few meters of water.

Earthly land plants have green pigments; they absorb red and blue light, reflect green. The red-orange-yellow pigments of Ishtar land plants (p.62) implies that they live under a sun that emits light mostly in the blue range, a brighter, hotter sun than Sol. Yet Bel is described (p.17) as a G2 star, a bit smaller than our sun, perhaps a bit cooler. This doesn't make sense. Plants growing under a cooler, redder star would tend to have less yellow and more blue pigments. Vegetation of the planet orbiting an M5 star should be dark blue or violet, almost black, to take the extreme case. Vegetation under a B5 star would be brilliant scarlet. The green of Sol III vegetation is the intermediate case.

There is no environment on Earth that supplies pure red light for plants, but the ocean 30-40 meters down does supply close to pure blue light. Take a look at all those bright red algae down there. (Bring your own supply of white light if you want to see them. At 30 meters, red plants look like red blood from a wounded fish: dark emerald green.)

I'd also like to ask Anderson about those six-legged land vertebrates. He suggests (p.65) that six-legs vs four-legs is pure accident. There is at least one theory, the Dalzell Hypothesis, which suggests it is not quite so accidental. Dalzell postulates that Earth fish spent some time out in deep waters before they came ashore, and in this pelagic state, they lost all but two pairs of fins. On a world with wider, shallower oceans, the fish could have come ashore while they still had three or four pairs of fins. Hence, we get six-legged antelopes and eight-legged tigers. This could explain those eight-legged thoats of Barsoom --- Mars had shallow seas. Sure.

Two hundred million years ago, the ways diverged for Earth and Ishtar. On Earth, two groups of reptiles evolved into warm-blooded land animals: the therapsids became mammals, the thecodonts became dinosaurs. Since the climate was warm and mild over

much of Earth, the hairless dinosaurs had the advantage. They became the dominant forms, driving the mammals into marginal habitats. Only when the dinosaurs died out, 70 million years ago, did the mammals get a start. (See Adrian Desmond, The Hot-Blooded Dinosaurs -- Taplinger, 1976).

On Ishtar, the mammals, or "theroids", got their start early, since the millennial Fire Times produced an unstable climate. There were never any major groups of cold-blooded vertebrates on Ishtar. The dinosaurs, even though they were warm-blooded, could not have taken the heat. Anderson, by the way, hints that Earth dinosaurs were cold-blooded, which runs against current evidence. The Ishtar-ian "theroids" have a 130-million-year head start on Earth mammals. Theroids developed mutualistic relations with algae and moss growing on their skins. Theroids developed a better circulatory system, a more integrated nervous system. Intelligent theroids simply don't become insane.

How do the Earth visitors respond to these superior beasts? Anderson has long been interested in "culture-contact" stories, and the pattern therein differs greatly among his published works.

Usually the humans have the superior technology; it is the aliens who must adjust to us. In the early work ("Helping Hand") this was quite one-sided. Earth technology and culture simply ran over and absorbed native civilizations, analogous to Western cultures swamping Australia or North America. Later, the contactees often absorbed some Earth military science, formed a hybrid warrior society, and came after Earth as an enemy -- the Merseians in the Flandry stories, for example.. The analogy on Earth would be Japan in the Nineteenth Century.

Lately, there has been more of a mutual exchange between races, with humans learning as well as teaching. The winged Ythrians in People of the Wind, and now the centauroid Ishtar-ians in Fire Time, offer the possibility of a hybrid society, the best of both cultures. I wish I had an analogy from Earth history to offer, but we don't seem to have reached that stage yet.

In Fire Time, the humans don't have a unified society to present to the Ishtar-ians. There are conflicts between and among the civilians and sailors from Earth, aggravated by a distant conflict which closely resembles the Arab-Israeli Wars.

The war is distant, needless, counter-productive, and one that Earth should not have entered. Some readers may jump to the conclusion that Anderson is revising his opinion about Vietnam, but this is not so. The war in Fire Time -- the Earth-Naqsa War -- is clearly the Middle East. Look at the sequence of events.

A new planet is colonized simultaneously by two species: humans from Earth, pinnipeds from Naqsa. The human colony is Mundomar, the pinniped colony is Tsheyakka. The partition of the planet soon breaks down. Humans occupy the continent G'yaaru on the pinniped side, rename it Sigurdsson-ia, and ship in loads of settlers. Tsheyakka starts guerilla warfare to recover its lost lands, with military aid from Naqsa.

Mundomar asks Earth for weapons and men. "Should Earth help Mundomar defend occupied Sigurdsson-ia against the evicted Tsheyak-ians?" We hear this argument whenever the U.S. Congress debates military aid to Israel.

I wonder if Anderson meant the name "Naqsa" to be another clue. It is an Arabic word, meaning "disaster" or "catastrophe", which was widely used in the Arab World from 1967 to 1973. It described the impact of the Six-Day War on the Arab nations. Even Time and Newsweek picked up the term, and used it, local color in their Middle East stories. Did Anderson see it there?

This useless war will prevent Earth from helping the Ishtarians.

There must be conflict between the Tassui from the north, and the Gathering in the south. The Gathering is sitting on the only land that can support large numbers of centaurs through Fire Time, and the Tassui want it. There is a fourth party involved -- besides humans, Tassui, and Gathering -- and these are the most interesting of all. The fourth group, the Dauri, appear only for a short time. They live on the northern continent, north of the Tassui. The Dauri don't mind Fire Time at all. In fact, they prefer it. Only during Fire Time does Ishtar get warm enough for them to be comfortable.

The Dauri are really alien aliens.

What are they doing on an Earthlike planet like Ishtar? They didn't start there, to begin with. We can now look at one of the more unusual concepts in Fire Time -- a planet with two separate Biospheres, mutually repellant to each other, of different biochemistries and different origins.

A billion years ago, Anu was a bright yellow sun, circled by the planet Tammuz. Increased radiation speeded up evolution on Tammuz; intelligent space-faring life appeared, just in time to watch its sun go nova. This is the subject of many space opera epics -- "escape from the nova" -- but here the drama is muted by the passage of eons. This all took place in the pre-Cambrian, when Earth was footstool to sponges and coralline algae, long long ago.

The nearest refuge was Ishtar, 40 a.u. at close passage. That's not too bad, within range of chemical rockets. Ishtar turned out to have the wrong kind of biosphere, however. A colony was planted, but it failed. Bel didn't produce quite enough heat for Tammuz-life. Ishtarian cells had levo-proteins and dextro-sugars, like Earth cells. Tammuz cells had reversed chirality: dextro-proteins, levo-sugars (Pp. 102-103). The colonists could not eat Ishtar food; their plants could not grow in Ishtar soil.

The colonists sterilized a large island, seeded it totally with Tammuz forms of life. The ecosystem was too small. Colonists, animals, plants died.

What was left of Tammuz, a whole world of living creatures? Smears of carbon on a charred rock around a nova star, and a few clumps of bacteria in the soil of an alien planet.

Some of the bacteria survived on the island. They fed on Tammuz-life corpses for a while. Some were photosynthetic, and adjusted to the weaker rays of Bel. They adapted to their new home. They mutated. They became eucaryotic, multicellular. They covered the whole island. They must have, since Anderson says the island remained exclusively inhabited by the T-forms. What prevented the waves from washing Ishtarian seaweeds ashore? What prevented the winds from carrying in the spores of Ishtarian mosses and ferns?

For the sake of the story, "New Tammuz" Island retained exclusively T-forms, while the rest of the planet was filled with

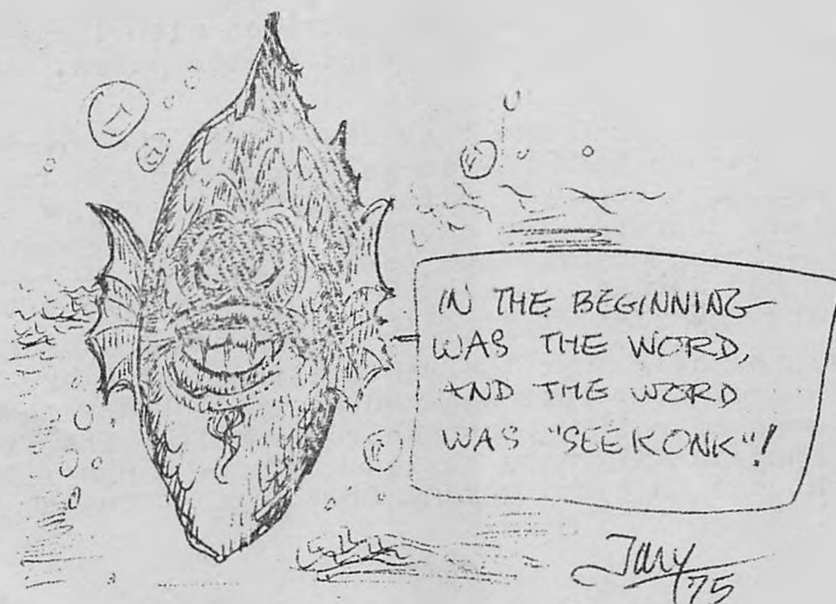
ortho-life, native Ishtarian forms. After a hundred million years (?) the whole Tammuzian ecosystem had re-evolved on Ishtar: seaweeds and seed plants, birds and flowers. The bacteria succeeded where intelligence failed. Score one point for natural selection.

The T-forms only reached full growth during Fire Time, the hot phase of the cycle. Between times, they just hung on, marginally. They still could not assimilate food from ortho-life cells, or survive outside their enclave. Two disjunct biospheres had been formed on one planet. After half a billion years, continental drift carried "New Tammuz" island against the major northern continent of Ishtar, as India joined Asia. Now there was a land connection between T-life and ortho-life. But they did not mix: two ecosystems at opposite ends of a continent, divided by a neutral transition zone.

Neither form did especially well. The T-life was limited by the cold phases. "Animals on the Starklands are all dwarves" (p.46). The ortho-life was limited by the periodic famines of Fire Time, and also stayed small. Since Anu was heating up, each Fire Time was a bit longer than the last. In another 200 or 300 million years, perhaps Ishtar would be hot enough for T-life to cover the whole continent, and ortho-life would be driven to enclaves around the south pole -- a reversal of the original situation, $1\frac{1}{2}$ gigayears back.

A biologist would ask here -- could an alien ecosystem last so long on an Earth-type planet? Probably it could, if it was isolated. There are patches of anaerobic life on Earth, remnants of the days when the air contained no free oxygen. That was at least two billion years ago, and the anaerobes are still here, at the margins of our life space. They have been in hostile territory for a long time; exposure to Earth's current atmosphere will kill them in minutes. So they stay down in the mud, the black ooze, the sulphur deposits -- strangers on a planet they once dominated: remnant bacteria.

Would the T-forms remain isolated? This is more doubtful. They live in the open air. They may not eat Ishtarian food, but they share exchange of atoms with ortho-life. They are part of the Ishtarian mineral cycles: carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus. T-form animals use oxygen produced by ortho-plants. T-form plants take in carbon dioxide released by ortho-animals on the other side of the planet. Water falls as rain in the Starklands (T-form area), flows along the rivers into the sea, mixes with the ocean, carrying remains of dead T-forms down into the ocean bottoms.



Anderson says T-forms cannot assimilate ortho-molecules, and ortho-life cannot assimilate T-form molecules. Not at all? After a billion years?

Are there any T-form decomposers in the oceans? If not, the life on planet Ishtar is in trouble. We run into what ecologists call the "neck-deep theory" of ecological re-cycling.

Let's look at the results. A T-form animal dies in the Stark-lands; its body is decomposed by proper Tammuzian bacteria into simple molecules, which dissolve into the soil water. There the molecules provide nitrate and phosphate for T-form plants. OK so far. It's the same as ortho-life on Ishtar and Earth.

What if a flying T-form dies in ortho-territory? What about spores or seeds of T-forms that blow into the ocean? Anderson seems to hint that they will never decay. He refers to "blue-leaf" or Phoenix Tree, a T-form tree that is cold-adapted. It can grow in the transition zone, near the ortho-tree forests, far south of most T-form plants. "Once it is removed from the zone, it never rots". This means that the waters of Ishtar contain logs of T-form wood that have been there for 500 years, or 5000 years, or half a million years. Presumably they stay there until mechanical action reduces them to dust.

This is the "neck-deep theory": if some compound is produced by cells, but not destroyed, then over geological time it will accumulate until we are neck-deep in it.

There is a worse problem than undecayed logs taking up space. In each gram of unrotted wood, there are nutrients: phosphate, nitrate. The accumulation of "Uneatable" molecules means that less and less of the soil fertility is being returned from each generation. Soon -- depletion, sterility.

It has happened on Earth, in some places, temporarily.

Two examples will do -- cow flocs in New Zealand, phosphates in detergents. There are no large native herbivores in New Zealand, thus no soil bacteria or earthworms have evolved the ability to digest masses of cow manure. The local forms could handle bird droppings, and the occasional latrines of Maoris and their dogs, but not much more. Starting in the 1840s, English settlers imported large numbers of sheep and cows.

The pastures of New Zealand are lush, especially the Canterbury Plain. Grass grows for ten months a year. The cattle and sheep did exceedingly well. They left pastures littered with large droppings that slowly hardened into rock-like lumps -- ten years, twenty years, thirty years.

Soon the lumps got so dense they choked off the growth of new grass. It didn't happen that way in England, said the ranchers. There the cow pats just sort of melted away in a year or so. The solution was obvious: import large amounts of English soil, containing appropriate dung-eating organisms. Better yet, why not import cattle dung that had already started to rot? That way you could be sure of getting the right bacteria and worms.

Well, that's exactly what the New Zealand Cattle and Sheep Association did. A freighter left England in the 1880s with a special cargo: thirty tons of rotting Devonshire cowshit. The freighter also carried a hundred emigrants anxious to make a new life in New Zealand. I might add that the voyage from England to New Zealand

usually took 90 days. If the captain wanted to risk a high-latitude passage, he could shave this by sailing south of Africa, cutting close to Antarctica, then taking the West Wind Drift past Australia; the more usual route was down to 40 degrees South, then follow the latitude through the Indian Ocean. (Check it on a globe.)

That must have been quite a voyage. I suspect the captain was willing to go quite a way south, hoping the cold would kill the stink from the cargo. But the manure arrived, and was distributed, and New Zealand ranching was saved.

A second example, not so colorful, is the bio-degradable detergent. Bacteria in the streams could not pull apart the linear molecules that were the active ingredients of 1950s detergents. So the molecules built up, and caused great heads of foam in ponds and streams and reservoirs. Federal regulations went through: detergents had to have branched molecules, which were known to be digestible by the bacteria.

From 1965 on, there were no foam layers on the rivers. The bacteria ate the branched phosphate molecules, and released the phosphorus, which previously had been locked in unbreakable form. River algae are normally starved for phosphorus. Now suddenly they had all they could use: population explosion, lakes turned green, more regulations...

Like the cow manure, like the phosphate detergent, bodies of T-form life are rich supplies of nutrients for any ortho-bacterium that can develop a way to assimilate them. Not one? In 250 million years?

So the T-forms have dextro-proteins? That's no real problem; we have cells on Earth that can handle right-handed amino acids. When an animal body decays, the amino acids tend to racemize. Some levo-molecules shift to dextro forms. The extent of this shift can even be used to measure how long a fossil has been buried (Scientific American, March 1976) Do you notice a sea of dextro-protein molecules sloshing around your ankles? No. Then something on Earth is eating dextro-proteins.

If Earth life can do it, so can Ishtar ortho-life. The two biochemistries are so close that Ishtarians can drink Earth beer, although they think it tastes terrible. Earth humans can eat Ishtarian food, though they need supplemental amino acids and vitamins to avoid scurvy.

Flies' genes have learned to safely assimilate DDT. Bacteria can use penicillin for breakfast. Marine microbes can eat crude oil. T-forms? As soon as one ortho-bacterium has an enzyme that can digest one T-form food molecule, the Starklands are gone. It's only a matter of time before ortho-life spreads in patches as far north as the climate allows, between Fire Times. Goodbye transition zone, goodbye two-phase biosphere.

Yes, Anderson does mention this. About the interzone: "In a way, it covers the whole planet. The theroids incorporate a few T-microbes in their symbioses. But only in the South Valennen area, ((interzone)) do you get interaction between metazoans, or higher plants." "Two distinct ecologies, neither able to exploit the other." (p. 104)

Notice that throwaway line about the symbiotes -- it invalidates the rest of the argument. There is a clever description of

mutualism among the animals on page 105. T-form tigers co-operate with ortho-antelopes. The tigers can't eat the antelopes -- wrong molecules. But the tigers can chase off ortho-leopards trying to eat the antelope. In turn, the antelope lead the tiger to herds of edible T-form deer.

But this is only the start. The plants would not merely "compete for light and space", as Anderson says. There is biochemical co-evolution to consider. T-forms would release poisons into the soil, poisons that kill ortho-plants. It's a lot easier to evolve a poison than a food supply.

Next step: the monarch butterfly. Monarchs eat milkweed leaves on Earth. The milkweed produces poisons: harmless to insects, violent cardiac toxins to vertebrates. The monarch caterpillar stores these poisons under its skin, and as a result is not eaten by birds. One or two mouthfuls of monarch caterpillar cause an inexperienced young bluejay to vomit repeatedly; the bird has learned not to eat monarchs. The adult butterfly retains the toxins, and is also shunned by birds.

So, we have ortho-forms that mimic T-forms, as the edible Viceroy butterfly mimics the inedible Monarch. Then we have ortho-forms that actually ingest T-form leaves, or lick off T-form oil. No, it is not usable as food, but it will scare off predators. (Rub some garlic cloves on your skin, for an example. Now imagine a vampire is a T-form predator.)

Step three: those T-form symbiotes. Cellulose is difficult to break down into glucose molecules. It takes a long sequence of enzymes. Metazoans on Earth have developed a short cut -- rather than evolve the enzymes using their own DNA, they provide a home in their intestines for cellulose-digesting microbes. The microbes already have the enzymes; the metazoan supplies them with macerated cellulose. So we have termites with their internal symbiotic bacteria and cows with their internal symbiotic bacteria -- all digesting cellulose.

There are ortho-ruminants on Ishtar. Start with one of those antelopes. Imagine the ortho-antelope browsing on T-form plants. In the stomach of the antelope are two chambers. One contains T-form bacteria, sheltered and warm. These convert T-cellulose into T-sugars. Still unusable by the antelope, T-sugars move on to the second chamber. Here grow ortho-bacteria that can assimilate T-sugars; maybe only a little, maybe slowly, but T-sugars. The antelope then feeds on the bacteria, or on their waste products.

It sounds complex, but cows and termites do it all the time.

The antelope cannot survive only on T-plants, since the elemental ratio is probably wrong. It nibbles on some ortho-plants between time to get the vitamins and proteins that it needs. The antelope probably ends up reeking of T-form essential oils and aromatics, which drives away predators and other herbivores,...except for mates during the breeding season, who are attracted by the strange odors.

This stage was reached on Ishtar a hundred million years ago. Since then, things have gotten even more complex.

I wonder if there would be any non-symbiotes left on the planet: any life forms wholly ortho or wholly T-type. Maybe most forms are "interzone", with only the cold southern polar continent of Haelen

as pure ortho-life, and the sub-Anu hot spot during Fire Time as pure Tammuz-life.

This reminds me of one final point: the Dauri, the T-form sophonts that do seem to live in that hottest, most nearly pure Tammuzian, hot zone of the Starklands. Where did they come from?

They evolved from the T-form bacteria, and achieved intelligence. They are now primitive, but evidently achieved civilization at one time. In any case, there is a ruined city in the Starklands, and the Dauri have a 3-D star map indicating some sophistication. Either they made it themselves in a lost culture a half million years ago, or it is a remaining artifact of the Old Tammuzians of 1000 million years ago. The second possibility is hinted in the story, although I find the idea of an artifact surviving for a billion years on a planetary surface just a bit hard to take.

The Dauri are contacted by one of the Tassui centaur barbarians, who uses their aid to further his invasion of the south. They are, in terms of the story, neither competitors with the Ishtarrians, nor symbiotes with them. They are something apart.

This is interesting, because in the Hal Clement novel, Cycle of Fire, mentioned earlier, there are equivalents of the Dauri on planet Abyormen. These "hot forms" are interesting as a contrast. We can see how two writers use the same basic background, and diverge widely.

Clement starts with a big blue-white star, Alcyone, around which orbits Theer, the red dwarf. Theer has a planet, Abyormen, with a very eccentric orbit. (I'm not sure it would work dynamically as Clement describes it.) Abyormen has two phases, each lasting fifty years Terrestrial: "cold time" and "hot time". The term "cold time", apastron, is relative, of course. Abyormen midwinter is like August in Death Valley, and that's only on really chilly days. "Hot Time", periastron, is when the water boils off Abyormen's surface.

I wonder about that boiloff -- clouds, chemical combining -- but let's continue with the story.

Earth scientists visit Abyormen during "cold time". One cadet finds the intelligent "cold time" race -- crusty little dwarf humanoids. They have a technoculture: literature, gliders. They have metal tools, but are forbidden by strong taboo to make or use fire. Puzzle: where does the metal come from?

"Hot time" approaches. The Earth scientists discover dormant "hot life" spores in the soil. When they heat these, the spores germinate as bacteria, which combine nitrogen and oxygen from the air to make nitrogen dioxide. The atmosphere during "hot time" becomes NO₂ plus water vapor at over 100° C.

Lo and behold, the bodies of "cold time" animals and plants are filled with nodules, which are "hot time" spores also. The animal dies; its body decomposes in the heat; the nodules sprout into little "hot form" animals that scamper away. It's alternation of generations, clearly, or maybe it resembles those pines whose seeds have to go through a forest fire before they will germinate. (Yes, there is such a tree.)

The intelligent Abyormenites are also studded with "hot time" spores. To reproduce their "hot time" offspring, they must walk out into the desert and die, when the white sun begins to glare above them.

The "hot time" animals resemble worms and echinoderms. There are intelligent forms that resemble giant six-armed starfish. Anderson's Dauri of Fire Time also resemble starfish. The fastest way to show alienness without excessive detail is to display alien symmetry: something other than the bilateral symmetry we know from Earth vertebrates. Radial starfish will do fine. These Abyormenite forms do not reproduce sexually, though they can regenerate lost parts, or grow a clone from a lost part, like Earth starfish.

The "hot time" starfish provide the metal for the "cold time" humans of Abyormen. As the planet recedes from the white star, it cools off. The temperature drops below water boiling stage, the hot forms dies, the atmosphere loses its NO₂ to soil bacteria, there is a lot of rain. The bodies of the hot forms crumple, releasing spores to grow into cold forms.

Some hot form starfish live on through the cold, in steaming caves near volcanic springs. They rule the cold form himans as oracles. Similarly, a few non-reproducing cold form "Teachers" survive the close approach in deep polar caves, to pass information to the next generation.

Clement separates his two phases in time, as Anderson separates them in space.

Abyormen has cycles to an extreme extent, and the inhabitants have the fatalistic attitude one might expect. They can only reproduce by dying, which has implications Clement hardly begins to discuss. Biological determinism can hardly go any further than this.

At the end of the book, the native Dar leaves his Earth friends to go die in the desert. He could have survived as a sterile Teacher in the caves, but feels he has a duty to perpetuate his race.

Does Dar fear the coming of his personal Fire Time? Clement never shows us anything below the surface of the Abyormenites, and the surface is pure Stoic, rational and calm. For that matter, so are the Istarians of Anderson Stoics all, although they do show emotions at times.

That's one approach to the cyclic doom. I'd like to see others.

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We usually get a number of requests for extra covers, and since this cover is a special one, we have with Bonnie's permission arranged to have a few extra copies printed. They are available for 50¢ each, and will be sent out with your next issue of MYTHOLOGIES.....first come, first served. If enough of you are interested, we will consider doing this regularly. Bonnie has put in quite a bit of work on this cover, doing the color separation and the negatives herself, and I'd like to thank her publicly for her time, effort, and skill. It is in large part your enthusiastic response to her work that keeps those covers coming, though....so please keep it up!!!

sheila

REQUIEM FOR AN AGE NOT DEAD

The ornamental lady sits
her hair is ashen gold,
Her body and her face are screens
Where other's dreams unfold.
Her purpose, to pleas a man
To decorate his arm,
With wit her conversation rings
Her manner, light with charm.

The ornamental lady lives,
in a world we can't conceal,
Her purpose, to display a man
His splendor to reveal.
All he sees is ashen gold
In the ashes of her soul
She is the setting that he needs
his grandeur to enfold.

The ornamental lady moves,
through a world that's not her own.
She lives that others might behold
The splendor of his ownership
The grandeur of his management
The essence of his accomplishment
For her hair is ashen gold!

amid the ashes of her sould
she seeks, she seeks in vain
the self she faced the cosmos with
the self she once contained
but all that's left of self is pain
she's lost her self
what has she gained?

For decoration we have bred
our hounds,
our steeds,
our cars,
These things without a soul exist,
that glory can be ours
fitting that women, too
Display through golden bars!

Elaborate Lies

COURAGE

[JIM HUDSON]

As I remember, back in junior high we got pushed into reading PROFILES IN COURAGE, especially after the assassination and subsequent martyrdom. Seems like the archetype there was the guy who gave up everything to do what he believed was right. Particularly when all his peers said he was wrong, and he got no support from anybody. Physical courage is one thing; it's something I think I haven't got, having been in a couple of situations where I froze when I shouldn't have. Moral courage without support is something very different, and something I hope to have when I need it.

But, for any courage, there's got to be a source. Courage programmed in by a society and followed blindly doesn't mean much (as your rock climbing or innumerable other stupid actions by many of us). Courage to impress friends and show them you're OK is also not very meaningful, and can be hard to spot (Ann McCutchen pointed out that Ellsberg had joined with a new, liberal/radical life-partner shortly before stealing the Pentagon Papers; moral conviction or showing off?). So courage means doing what we think is right without respect to the immediate consequences on us. And our "rights" should come from our own reasoned convictions, rather than programming or a desire to please others.

OK, so we now have a working hypothesis. But unless there's some genetic coding of what's "right", or Plato's absolutes exist, or God does define these things, or whatever, most of the right and wrong decisions come from the other people we know, who are involved in our experiences and help set our beliefs. And right and wrong change all the time; there's no anchor. So let's bring it back to a matter of degree: courage is doing what you feel is right, even when it's tough. One of Meyer's Laws, from the Travis McGee series, is "In all emotional conflicts, the thing you find hardest to do is the one you should do." Seems to me that courage is actually doing it.

There's another way to get a definition, which I don't like as well. It's to identify some larger group (family, nation, species, planet) as the thing which should be supported, and to try to do what's best for that group (again, your reasoned belief, not what somebody tells you). This leads to fanatics, like Niven's Protectors with their bloodlines; it leads to holy wars and to most of the great acts of heroism recorded. But courage wouldn't exist if this identification didn't, because you've got to sacrifice yourself for something.

I'm rambling a bit. Let me try to close it off by going through your examples, and giving a couple of definitions. Call courage doing what you ought to do, even though it's tough. And even though it's liable to leave you personally worse off than before the action. Then your first two actions weren't courage, because they were both for personal gain (respect of peers and your life). The last one

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was courageous, but it's remotely possible your commander was too (supporting the goals of the army at the risk of his career by falsifying data?) ((Well, it's possible)). And I can't see how you would have an act of courage unless it is accompanied by a real fear that things will be worse off for you personally after the act, even though better for whatever large group you believe in.

((Being from a Protestant background, it was one of the biggest shocks of my life to find that "right" and "wrong" were abstracts. Eventually I recovered, and became cognizant of the fact that I never will really know right from wrong except in personal terms. So perforce my personal feelings on any moral subject become my rules for action. Sometimes the rules change as my opinions change. But I think one has an obligation to actively pursue what one personally believes is right, not what someone else (be he priest or politician, parent or friend, boss or commanding officer) says is right. The colonel wasn't concerned with the goals of the army; he was protecting his own career. Which leads logically to the next letter.)))

[REED ANDRUS]

Your definition of courage: An argument I don't want to get into, because (1) everyone's definition is different, (2) I'm not sure I like yours and don't want to fight. But I'll say this and then let it be -- 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 - the government wiped out all those on inactive duty because those two rover boys compromised them. To me that is not courage, but political expediency, and while there's nothing inherently wrong with the latter, this is one case where I was personally affected and harbor strong feelings.

((I couldn't resist printing this. What I've seen of Daniel Ellsberg does not impress me very favorably. I frankly think he was looking for personal publicity more than performing a public service. But this does not alter the fact that he did perform a public service. There is almost no one left who seriously argues that the information in the Pentagon Papers was being concealed from foreign sources. It was suppressed in order to mislead the US public. Similarly, the CIA's assassination plots - which violate their own charter - have apparently resulted in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The CIA had no right to suppress this information from the Warren Commission, but it did. Federal agency after agency is being shown to harbor information which should have been made public. In my own case, it may seem a small victory, if victory at all, since I'm sure everything has reverted by now. But the fact is that unless more and more people go public when they see government being misused for the personal convenience of the few, our government will continue to grow more corrupt and inefficient. I'm sorry that you were inconvenienced by the government's reaction, but I'm shocked that you value your own convenience so high that you feel that important information should be suppressed in order not to jeopardize it. I don't see how you could make a good argument for this position, unless you draw in a particularly extreme form of Ayn Rand's philosophy. But were I in a similar position again, even if I were damaging the position of a friend, I would be compelled to the same action.)))

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[GERARD HOUARNER]

You will forgive me, I hope, if I make the rather general statement that people are born cowards, and that they spend the rest of their lives trying to hide the fact. Some men put up the "machismo" act, others fall into this act without ever realizing their own fears (and thus become insensitive -- which is why I guess construction workers and career soldiers and such are considered (ah, these generalizations) brutish, crass, uncouth, etc: They have failed to recognize an essential part of their humanity and have thus become "inhuman"). Still others surrender to these fears and become useless parts of the society. Knowledge of oneself inevitably includes knowledge of fear and the ability to recognize and deal with these fears makes one "enlightened", healthy, together, or whatever positive jargon you happen to use.

Wisdom then is the avoidance of any situation in which these fears might be exposed and thus be a danger to the individual. Your climbing was an unwise act because it put you in danger and exposed your fears.

Attach a "maybe" to that last paragraph, because it seems to imply that courage does not exist. I'm not sure. Overcoming fear is certainly an act of courage, but how worried were you when you were fooling around in the colonel's office? Did you overcome a basic, primal fear?

((I'm not certain that fear of being court-martialled is a primal fear specifically, Gerard, but I think all fears are manifestations of those basic insecurities. Fear of falling, fear of loud noises, fear of death, fear of being alone. Some fears are perfectly rational. If my car goes out of control, I'm justified in getting scared. On the other hand, I have a fear of spiders that, viewed objectively, is quite exaggerated and probably comical, but that makes it no less real. Even the act of crushing one under my heel sets my adrenalin running and I have to sit down for a few seconds. Now you know why I'll never be a worshipper for the Great Spider.)))

[MICHAEL BISHOP]

I know that being in the service can be inimical to one's reserves of courage--draining of them, in fact--and more often in peacetime administrative situations perhaps than in combat. While I was in the Air Force teaching all manner and variety of English courses at the Air Academy Preparatory School, including speech, we once had occasion to put on a speech contest in the base theatre. Both the commander of the Prep School, a colonel, and his executive officer, a lieutenant colonel, attended. We warned both men in advance that the students had been permitted to choose topics of their own, establish as a dramatic condition the sort of audience they were going to pretend to be speaking to, and use a level of diction and vocabulary suitable to that specified audience. We explained that in order to judge the speeches on effectiveness one had to imagine himself to be a member of that specified audience. In retrospect I don't know how wise we were in giving the students so much latitude in their presentations, but we did explain the nature of the contest to the commander and his exec and they assured us that these conditions were acceptable to them.

The student who in the minds of the members of the English department (our vote was unanimous) gave the most effective speech was a black cadet candidate named Horton who specified that his audience was an assembly of poor Newark blacks and who then proceeded to deliver a powerful but corrosively militant address urging violent revolution. While he was speaking he assembled a wicked-looking automatic weapon (it was plastic, we learned later; a children's educational toy, no doubt) and concluded by cocking this thing--a frightening, ratcheting series of sharp clicks--and raising it high in the air over his head. The speech was melodramatic, a little bit actorish, and very, very effective in spite of or maybe because of these things. Our department, despite the tempering influence of two stolid Mormon officers, was of a decidedly liberal bent, but we gave the award to Horton on the merit of his presentation, his clear superiority to the other speakers, and not out of any impulse to demonstrate our own dubious triumphs over racial prejudice. The ordinarily conservative Mormon officers voted with us, after all, and one of them--a serious, conscientious lieutenant a little older than the rest of us--had organized the contest.

The commander blew up. He blew up at the speech (afterwards, that is; he endured the speech itself in an almost apoplectic silence) and at our department's decision to give the award to Horton. As soon as it was over, he got up and stalked out of the theatre. The executive officer, a heavier, taller man with red veins in his cheeks, followed in a dudgeon even deeper and less comprehending than our commander's. We knew we were in for it even before we returned to the Prep School building, and when we got back there, we were told that the award would not go to Horton. It would not be presented at all. I remember going home that evening and attacking a colony of ants in our back alley with shovel and kerosene. I dug at them for an hour and a half, trying to work off my rage.

The next day I taught my morning classes and then went downstairs to the executive officer's little suite and requested permission to talk with him. I felt that I could talk with him, whereas with the commander I would be reduced to sitting still for a lecture. The exec respected me, I think, and was not ordinarily an imposingly authoritarian officer in spite of his having taken a deep and profound offense at Horton's speech. I told him in the course of our talk that both he and the commander had failed their own assignments in listening to Horton's speech, for they had reacted not as Newark blacks (maybe we were naive; how much chance was there, after all?) but as career military officers. "Why can't your students give speeches on Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson?" the exec countered, trying to comprehend what I was telling him. "Horton's speech was traitorous, provocative, and filthy." (Horton had saved a rather mild epithet for the conclusion of his speech; had, in fact, diluted his language to the point of Uncle Tomism, had his audience really been an audience of militant blacks.) I threw up my hands, figuratively if not literally, and said, "Sir, that's an attitude I could maybe accept in a man of little education and no experience, but coming from you it's sickening, it really is." And I left.

At the time I thought this was one hell of an heroic act--a courageous one, in all respects. By itself, however, it accomplished very little,

and it hurt the man whom I had spoken to. Other members of our department protested in a like manner, though, to the commander as well as the exec and by the end of the week we were told that the award would be restored to Horton, if in the future we controlled the topics of speeches delivered in the annual contest. We agreed, and our protests died after this concession--even though at the Prep School's year-end awards banquet Horton was merely named as the recipient of the speech award rather than being called to the podium to receive his plaque. If anybody showed any real courage during this whole brouhaha, it was probably Horton, who kept both his cool and his humor, and maybe even both our commander and our exec, who accepted our after-the-fact protests and publicly reversed themselves. My own act of "courage" was really not much different from my attack on the ant colony the evening after the speeches had been given--a means of releasing pressure, blowing off steam, and I now feel that I was unfair to the executive officer in not sticking around longer to penetrate his obtuseness rather than stalking out high-handedly on a good exit line leaving it, his obtuseness, intact and overinflated...An ironic note: I still receive Christmas cards from the man who was my executive officer and not too long ago, when he retired from the service, he listed my name as a possible reference when applying for a teaching job in Florida. Strange, strange...

((This is probably the point where I should insert the sequel to my finking on the colonel. It doesn't reflect too favorably upon any concerned. Our exec was also a warmer, more open man than the commander. I suspect that this is intentional, that they are coached in some ways to assume these roles. Major Muhlenfeld professed to be very disappointed with me. He remonstrated with me for violating a personal trust. I tried to point out to him that it was a trust that had been thrust upon me without my ever having been consulted, and that I had higher loyalties than that to the CO. Nevertheless, I was told, an answer to my letter had to be written, an answer that would not only counter my every argument, but one that will cast into doubt my veracity, my honesty, my loyalty, and my sanity. And I was to write it. Well, I did write an answer. Everything I wrote was factual, though it was slanted in such a way to make it seem that my earlier letter had been mistaken. The final version included at least one outright lie, added by the Exec, which I typed as instructed. Higher headquarters added some more outright lies - which were later exposed by PLAYBOY in another case. But I didn't write my own reply to the army's letter until I was safely out of the service. The point of this is that I held a great deal of respect for the major, a sentiment no other officer I served with ever earned. He was the only one whom I ever felt I could talk to as an equal. But during the argument about my letter, I pointed out an injustice being done to one of the other men in our unit, to which the major replied, "Who ever said that life was just?" I argued that men of good character might accept that, but would at least attempt to correct injustices. The major dismissed this as idealism. If I had pressed further, maybe I could have made my point. Should I have? I don't know.)))

[JOHN CURLOVICH]

Emerson is not the only writer "who should have known better" who overstresses the military virtues. Gibbons DECLINE AND FALL, majes-

tic and even overwhelming as it is, is marred badly by this prejudice. ("In the state of nature every man has a right to defend, by force of arms, his person and his possessions; to repel, or even to prevent, the violence of his enemies, and to extend his hostilities to a... measure of satisfaction and retaliation," etc., etc.) It is his enchantment with physical strength and with the dubious arts of warfare that led to Gibbon's unjust condemnation of the Byzantines, whom he considered weak and effeminate. It is particularly inexcusable that Gibbon, of all writers, should have thought this: He should have recognized that this fascination with physical strength and courage derives not from the world of the great classical cities, but from the savage tribes who destroyed them; who erected no buildings, conducted no trade, created no art, yet preyed successfully on the people who did those contemptible, unmanly things. This attitude was early assimilated by the Church, which righteously attempted to clamp the lid on pleasure and physical comfort of all sorts. Large numbers of early converts were in fact tribesmen, so the Church's stern, puritannical ways were constantly reinforced until, in the early middle ages, it became everywhere implicit that it is somehow a better thing to be physically strong than wise, better chaste than sensual, athletic than contemplative, brave soldier than brave draft refuser. And here we are, a millenium and a half later, wondering how our world came to be in such a mess. The Church, Donald; the Church, like its imaginary triune man-god, is everywhere.

((I think blaming everything on the Church, specifically the Christian church, is an oversimplification. If somehow Christianity had never arisen, man would still have found something to quarrel about. Religion is the excuse, not the cause. If I had to assign a single reason to man's botching of the world, I'd go along with Simak in WAY STATION. Man's basic problem is that he fears himself: "That was the way with Man; it had always been that way. He had carried terror with him. And the thing he was afraid of had always been himself.")))

/SAM LONG/

It was foolhardy and foolish to be talked into climbing a cliff that was beyond your skills, but not cowardly. You should have asked to start climbing on an easier slope and work up to the big one that you so feelingly describe. Rock-climbing, or any sort of sport like that requires not so much physical courage as a lack of height phobias and an eye for estimating difficulty--and a knowledge of your own limitations. As long as you're within your capabilities and observe common sense safety precautions, you're quite safe on a cliff, since you're not (within the meaning of the act) exposing yourself to danger unnecessarily; and to expose yourself to danger unnecessarily is foolish--or at least may be so.

As for being under fire, you should have been fannish and had a paperback with you, so you could at least be doing something as you crouched in the bunker. Or you could've made a witty reply. As it was, you grin and bore it (part tense of grin and bear it). As you observe, though, this was neither cowardice nor courage.

Your Fort Sill adventures don't require so much courage as a knowledge of right and wrong and an ability to distinguish between the two--and a trust in the Constitution. I can't say I admire your actions there (except as regards the mail surveillance, which was clearly illegal),

but I admire the attitude of your superior officers even less, since they made the mistake of equating their own good with the good of the Army and the good of the Army with the good of the country, which propositions might be true but also might not; and in fact usually are not, if only because you cannot equate subsets with full sets. The country has not lost, and may well have gained, if your colonel does not get promoted because he couldn't whip up Bond fever; but any army that decides promotions on the basis of bond drives and not the combat leadership displayed by its officers is already far gone down hill. I'm against bond drives and such like because they attempt otherwise upright officers to paperwork veniality, which can lead to veniality in bigger things. Or if they must be held, let the form say, x men in the outfit, y bonds bought, and if the men don't buy 'em and the officers feel that y should be a certain proportion of x, then let the officers buy 'em themselves. Thus is truth preserved-- though perhaps at the expense of the spirit of the bond drive.

((Sam, let me pose you a question. If you had good reason to believe, no, make that certain knowledge, that your commanding officer was forwarding a sensitive combat readiness report with fraudulent data to his superiors in order to protect his own reputation, and that he was preparing another fraudulent report which was being sent to various members of Congress, and to make things worse, you were personally being directed to fabricate the report for his signature, what would you do?)))

[PAUL WALKER]

I would not call myself a coward, but courage has never been one of my strong points. It is very difficult for me to do anything I am really afraid of doing, because I am so self-conscious of my fear, so instantly guilt-stricken by it, that I am inhibited from taking the pains necessary to overcome it. To do so I need time, patience, and an absence of harassment, and generally all but the latter are lacking. But I have overcome many fears along the way, some of them more than once, yet fear itself remains undaunted. Learning to cope with one fear does not necessarily teach you to cope with another.

I have never known an utterly fearless person. The bravest men and women I have known were all terrified of something real or imaginary. I used to believe that "courage" was the magic, God-given ingredient in a person's character that determined their capacity to deal with fear, but more recently I have come to see that there is only fear, "courage" does not exist.

What is courage? We agree that it is not fearlessness. You quote Twain, "courage is a resistance to fear, mastery of fear -- not absence of fear." With that, I agree in sentiment but it contains a misconception that at one time or another makes cowards of us all. Fear cannot be resisted nor ever "mastered" in the conventional meaning of those terms. And it is the very power of the will of a coward to resist and to master a fear that prevents him from overcoming them.

Granted, I am playing a bit with words here for, I hope, our mutual amusement, but the fact is that there are levels of fear. The spectrum runs from extreme terror to queasiness. How a person reacts in a hazardous situation depends on the level of fear within them. Most

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often this has nothing to do with resistance or mastery: they are afraid and the degree of intensity of their fear will determine their ability to function in the situation. There are things that make us slightly nervous to do which do not faze other people at all while they terrify others. There are people like Patton who enjoy combat. People who have no anxiety about heights. People who are exhilarated by high speeds, and so forth. Fear is exhilarating, and all of us enjoy being afraid and go to horror movies and amusement parks and participate in contact sports. The degree of our enjoyment is in proportion to the degree of the level of our fear.

You will say this is a specious argument because our enjoyment of the fear of horror movies and amusement parks is only vicarious while the fear of combat and heights and high speeds involves the threat of death. Not so. We go to horror movies and to amusement parks because we enjoy the exhilaration of our fear; and the same applies to the danger lovers. They are seeking pleasure, personal satisfaction just as we are. Twain did many a courageous thing, but they were all things he wanted to do, things he enjoyed doing regardless of the danger. He was simply not that afraid to do them.

That is what it comes down to: if the degree of the intensity of our fear is greater than the pleasure we derive from it, or than the objective we wish to achieve, then we will not tolerate it. To a degree, then, fear is pleasure; beyond a point, it is pain. This "point" varies from individual to individual.

You give three instances of your own experience with fear. I would like to do some variations on your themes. Confronted with any problem involving risk there is a period of mental preparation in which the problem is previewed. The essential part of this preparation is the use of the imagination. I believe the function of the imagination is akin to the memory. It projects behavior into the future and in doing so programs the mind and body for action. If it projects success--if one believes one is going to succeed--the level of anxiety will naturally be less than if one believes he or she is going to fail. The projections of the imagination (virtually instantaneous "playing out" of one's behavior in a situation consciously or subconsciously) are preordained by the memory of one's past experiences. If you have failed before, you will likely see yourself failing again.

Fear and anxiety are looked at as negative traits, like pain -- which they are varieties of -- essential but nasty. On the contrary, without them one could hardly accomplish anything. You say it was fear of derision that made you attempt the cliff-climb, but it was anxiety that saved your life when the rocks collapsed under your feet; anxiety that gave you the adrenalin, the will, to climb to safety. Anxiety is the power the imagination exerts over the mind and body. Fear is the immediate sensation, like pain it is specific and localized, but anxiety's concern is with the future. Our imagination has already foreseen what we are going to do, it has programmed the mind and body to be ready for what's coming, and it is the function of anxiety to co-ordinate the future functioning of mind and body to produce the desired result.

If one imagines success, then anxiety works for success. If one

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imagines failure, anxiety then works to prevent injury by stopping the action. If the human mind were a monolithic organism, once the imagination perceived danger, the action would cease, but the mind is a network of functions that are interacting and interdependent, but not totally integrated. It is possible for functions to conflict. If the desire to achieve an objective is stronger than the anxiety that opposes it one may defy it, but the success of one's "resistance" is dependent on the imagination's projection of the final outcome. Regardless of how much one desires to attain an objective, if the imagination perceives certain failure, the anxiety level will go up and up until it becomes more intense than the desire to achieve the objective, i.e. until the pain overwhelms the pleasure.

The brain is logical, if not necessarily always accurate. Its duty is to preserve the welfare of the organism. But its logic is nature's, not man's. The brain is capable of deciding that suicide is in the best interests of the organism. There are common cases of people who have murdered their entire families and themselves believing it was for their own good. Such is the logic of the brain. But one cannot do without it, and it is really impossible to "resist" its logic. It is possible to change it but not to overcome it. To change it one must persuade the imagination of the possibility of success.

This can be done inadvertently as when one is afraid to swim and then is thrown into the water and learns quickly to stay afloat. Of course, there are people who would just sigh and sink out of sight in the same situation. It can be done in progressive stages of de-sensitization in which one is overcoming fear, but what is really happening is that one is testing a new concept of imagined behavior. You climb so high, then stop and look down; then the next day you climb a little higher, etc., until it seems as if your fear has disappeared. It has not. What has happened is that each time you stopped, you imagined yourself achieving success; and with practice you became capable of imagining complete success. The fear did not disappear by itself; the imagination simply did not produce it.

As you state in your own examples, fear of derision by one's peers is often enough the cause of so-called courageous acts. The mind perceives that the threat of being stigmatized as a coward is greater than that of the danger to be faced. It may not be, of course, but that's how the mind perceives it. Guilt may also be a cause of brave acts, as your last example points out. The burden of guilt becomes such that it is perceived as a greater threat to the organism than the "consequences" of a hazardous action. So you blew the whistle on your boss. The logic of the brain being what it is, the notion of courage being a virtue is an illusion. If I had to redefine it, I would say it was the capacity to cope with the risks involved in achieving a desired objective.

((It's been a long time since I felt much guilt about my fears. Embarrassment, yes; guilt, no. When I was very young (about 8 or 9), I was chosen as the current target of one of the two bullies. I was fairly big for my age, but he was 14 and must have been easily twice my weight. Every time he'd attack me, I'd wade in to him and get creamed. My stubborn streak wouldn't allow me to refrain from backtalking him, so I invariably got trounced. Well, as you can well imagine, I didn't care for this all that much. So one night I took

my trusty baseball bat and laid for him outside his house. He came out just after dark, and I clobbered him. I only hit him once, but I knocked him out. Then I rang the doorbell and ran off. The official story was that he fell and hit his head. But he never bothered me again. Creative use of fear.)))

[JACKIE FRANKE]

The only situation in which I ever considered my action as displaying courage happened while we were on vacation, when the children were all quite young. Our camp in Wisconsin, near Lake Geneva, was struck by a storm and a tornado whipped across the lake; the funnel passing about five hundred feet from the campgrounds. As the winds kicked up ever higher, and our belongings began to be literally blown off the picnic table and across the fields, I knew something was happening a bit more dramatic than a sudden thunderstorm. My husband and oldest boy had gone to the restrooms, and our other two children and I were trying to clear away breakfast dishes when the winds struck. I herded the kids into the tent--a clearer head would have ducked under the table, evicting the dog who had quite logically chosen that sturdy shelter--and had them lie on the floor, straddling them on hands and knees, protecting them with my body. Our Coleman stove came rocketing into the tent, followed by the wooden supply chest and assorted junk, and tree limbs came falling down everywhere with mighty cracks and groans and the wind whistled and howled like the end of the world was coming. One limb, off the huge oak trees that braced our tent, slammed against the tent, half collapsing it and knocking off my glasses, stunning me. I knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that I was going to die (sounds silly now, but was quite grim at the time). I tucked Brian and Sandy underneath me as best I could and tried to prop myself on my elbows so I could act as a partial arch, and waited.

Of course, nothing further happened; the tornado passed, almost as quickly as it came through--quicker, in fact--and I felt a bit over-reactional about it all later. Yet I mentally patted myself on the back for being a Brave Mother. But some months later, on thinking about it, I wondered--was I truly being Brave? Or had I just done what I could in a spirit of resignation--for I wasn't afraid, I hadn't been "sacrificing" myself, for--as I stress--I was convinced that the storm would kill me; all I hoped is that I could somehow protect the kids. I still haven't solved that personal riddle, and by now, doubt that I ever will. I had been in a situation where there was no choice--there was nowhere, no way, that I could run to safety--and it is the fact that a person elects to face danger rather than run, or simply avoid danger through other means, even inaction, that separates the brave person from his fellows. In that sense, I stand unblooded, still unsure how I'd behave. Sometimes it bothers me... what if I had had somewhere to go? Would I still have stuck by the kids? My ego says: "Of course!" My conscience says: "Who Knows?" And unless some other freak of circumstance puts me in a situation where I have to choose, I will never know.

[ELLEN FRANKLIN]

I do agree with Myth...It's so easy to go along with the crowd, and succumb to peer pressure. True courage is standing up to someone or for something you believe to be right, regardless of the consequence. Sticking to one's convictions and beliefs in the face of an adversary.

I am basically not a courageous person. I crumble and become frustrated too easily. However, I am slowly learning the act of self control, from which comes the strength to be calm and rational and fight for what you believe in. My current battle, which will be staged tomorrow, comes from my refusal (when it was demanded of me) to get my boss her coffee. Power trips come in many forms. Her belief is that it's standard and accepted practice for lowerlings to fetch their boss's coffee; my belief is that it's a role for a servant not a secretary, that it should not be considered one of my duties and responsibilities. Unfortunately, in this company others in my position don't feel this way. They are willing to accept fetching lunches, coffee, lying for one's supervisor, etc., as a matter of course. I can not. I haven't decided how to deal with it yet. I was told in writing; we didn't have the opportunity at the time it occurred (the incident in question) to discuss it, and was left a note. I'm not sure how to approach the situation...although I would like to resign now, because of various problems; it isn't feasible. I can't point blank tell her what I think of her, so to me it becomes a tactical act of courage (and I'm basically a coward) to prepare myself for the battle, which I know in reality can't be a battle. I must maintain my self esteem...without being cocky and pompous. We shall see.

((Many companies, including the one for which I work, have an unwritten policy that executives will not be caught making their own coffee or washing out a coffee cup. Luckily, I have my own office, away from the rest, and the bigwigs don't realize that I don't make use of my secretaries in this fashion. I'd feel rather silly if, as a matter of course, I used my employees in this fashion - particularly since I drink close to a dozen cups per day of coffee. But there is often pressure on the boss to conform too. I know of at least one case where an executive was told to sell his economy car and buy a bigger one (to help bolster the company's image) or lose his job. Dark hints were dropped about my hair style and, of all things, flared pants at work at one time, although the fact that I ignored the remarks entirely seems to have beaten them off. I used to type my own correspondence, since I type faster than I handwrite, and cannot dictate. I did make this one concession, though, because I was tired of hearing how un-executivelike it was to do my own typing, and because a reorganization of duties left my secretaries with some spare time I could fill this way. Now my writing speed is improving at the expense of my typing speed. Which is why this MYTHOLOGIES is so late? You won't believe that, huh? Oh well.)))

FRANK HEATH

Vietnam and the people that came back have upset me a little. I feel a need to get something off my chest, and perhaps you're the person to whom to give it. Now I was blessed in the fact that UncaSam didn't give me a call to go over and serve in his noble Southeast Asian campaign...So I feel in no position to judge those who went. However, I have worked with many who came back. And (with the sole exception of you) they fell into two groups: the silent ones and the "heros". The former group I don't have to go far into yet. They are the ones who are perfectly talkative about any subject except 'Nam. Then they fall into monosyllables if they respond at all.

The "heros", however, are the most godawful outspoken bloody talkers of all time. Now I don't claim to be more holy than the next guy. There are frequent times that I too dig raw sex, violence, and dirt. Ghu granted me an overabundance of endocrines or something. BUT, I don't go around trying to prove that these periods are something to be admired! Now, even IF what these "heros" claim about their accomplishments are true, I don't feel any obligation to admire them, nor do I feel any hesitation in calling them on their claims.

((I'd guess that you'd find that the majority of the talkers were rear line troops like myself who never saw any action other than a casual mortar attack. The quiet ones were probably front line troops (such lines as there were), Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols, and such. The only combat soldiers likely to be talkative were helicopter doorgunners, who weren't close enough to their work to see the results. There were enough clearly documented atrocities committed by US troops in Vietnam to spread the guilt around pretty widely. My roommate in Vietnam, for example, shot a six year old boy to death because the kid shortchanged him in selling him pot.)))

/GEORGE FLYNN/

I've never thought too much for physical courage, which as usually honored seems to consist mostly of acting without thinking (and being lucky enough to accomplish something). But that's easy for me to say, since I'm at the other extreme myself: in a stressful situation I always tend to think twice (and maybe a few more times) before doing anything. This is usually justified by the dubious results of impulsive action, but I don't think you'd want to be in combat next to me.

((Or next to anyone else, to be quite honest.)))

/LAURINE WHITE/

How can some people think of Calley's deeds as showing courage? Nobody ever denied that Custer had courage. Stupid, yes, but he wasn't a coward. It seems now that courage is frequently equated with stupidity. Whatever happened to that all-American hero, Jack Armstrong? He's just another quaint character to laugh at. Look at the treatment of Batman and Doc Savage on tv and in the movies. They are portrayed as corny. I really enjoyed the movie about Audie Murphy, starring himself. Shortly before he died, some character tried to smear his name by claiming Audie had pulled a gun and threatened him over a dog. That really bothered me.

((I seem to recall that there was a series of incidents involving Murphy which were none too savory. The fact that the man did a heroic deed during the war doesn't necessarily make him an admirable character elsewhere. And men change.)))

/BUD WEBSTER/

I used to work as a bouncer at a private club. As a general rule, it was fairly quiet with only an occasional fake ID to contend with, and a few friends who'd had too much to drink to discourage from making nasty all over the place. I'm a pretty big person, and most people don't like to pick fights with big people.

In any event, one night the club was hosting a private party for a rather well to do couple; tuxes, evening gowns, etc. I myself was in

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a monkey-suit, hating every moment of the captivity. Things were going well, until I heard the tell-tale rumble/snort/vroom of two very large bikes, ridden, I was to discover, by two very large bikers.

Now, understand, I have no desire to put myself on the wrong side of any biker, or group thereof. BUT...this was a private party, the people were nice, and they were enjoying themselves. The two bikers pushed open the door and piled back to the bar before I could say anything or do anything to stop them, making mealy-mouth and leaving a dust trail of trail-dust on my nice clean floor.

To get it down to the khyber rifles, by the time I had pulled off my coat, kicked open the bar, and grabbed my nunchaku off the nail I kept them on, they were in the barroom and threatening the barkeep with violence if he didn't give them a beer RIGHT NOW!

About this time, I came through the door and tapped the biker at the bar on the shoulder and said in what I hoped was a commanding voice, "I'm sorry, sir, but this is a private party, and you'll have to leave." Of course, he didn't take this at all well, and he drew back to blap me one on the punim. I had a couple of choices. I could let him deck me, and lose my job (not to mention the humiliation of not having done my job); I could back down (ditto); or I could put him out of the way before he trashed me (definitely the most desirable choice).

So I pulled the nunchaku from behind my back and hit him once along the jaw line and then again along the other side of his face. Not hard, just hard enough to make him uninterested in continuing the altercation. I heard the other biker break a bottle of gin on the bartop and start after me and then I heard the voice of the barkeep say "FREEZE!" When the standing biker looked around, he was staring down the barrell of a .357 magnum. He froze.

Well, we threw them out. That took courage, right? Nah. I just didn't want to lose a generally comfy job or get my face pushed in.

There's a punchline to this. About three months later, the two bikers came back with their leader. This guy made Robert Blake look like Wally Cox. I felt a cold wind blowing through the old vitals. The leader looked up at me and said to the biker I had hit "He the one?" Upon obtaining a positive answer, he strode over to me and said in a voice just full to brimming with menace, "I hear that you took out m'man here." Brazen it out, Bud, you're gonna die anyway. "Yeah, what about it?" Courage? Nah. I had nothing to lose. The boss stuck his hands on his hips and said, "How'd you like to ride with my pack?"

Was I stunned? You have to ask? All I could think of to say was, "No, thanks, my mom won't let me ride motorcycles." Now that took courage. Could you laugh just after looking death in the face? So I bought 'em all a beer and they went away happy.

((Remind me not to pick a fight with you, anyway. I'm five foot six inches, and when I'm overweight, I'm 125 pounds. My secretary - who only dates bikers - told me once that she could understand why bikers often beat up their dates. "They need to take out their frustrations on someone.")))

[SHERYL BIRKHEAD] I've always liked Dalzell artwork and never tire of seeing it and appreciating it! Keep it coming. Can't say as how I've seen too much of it around elsewhere.

[JAN MORGAN] Please tell Bonnie Dalzell that I loved her "Not One Step Closer". Wonderful.

[JODIE OFFUTT] The cover of MYTHOLOGIES #8 is wonderful. It's so...unstatic.

[CATHY McGUIRE] Bonnie's cover was magnificent. I had the art director in my office matt it, and it looks beautiful on my wall. (((See elsewhere in this issue for instructions on receiving extra copies of Dalzell covers.)))

[HENRY ARGASINSKI] I don't feel I could do justice to Bonnie Dalzell's covers by saying anything. They were both beyond words...

[REED ANDRUS] Bonnie's cover was as good as her cat/lion/beast man of a couple of issues ago. Hard to tell which one I like most. Easily the best two covers on zines anywhere in the last year or two.

[DOUG BARBOUR] I don't usually notice art in fanzines that much, but the cover is truly a marvelous piece of work, and I think also shows that Bonnie has been improving her craft with each cover. I like it, I like it very much.

[RICK BROOKS] Bonnie's cover is lovely as usual. What else can I say? I did like the little touch of "feathers" around the hoof, a feature shared by a breed of stocky draft horses.

[MICHAEL BISHOP] Another beautiful Dalzell cover on MYTHOLOGIES 8.

[NEAL BLAICKIE] Bonnie Dalzell's cover for issue 8 is absolutely gorgeous. Truly one of the best (and most striking) pieces I've seen in quite some time. Her art is simple yet very, very effective.

[LYNNE BRODSKY] Has anyone said Dalzell's covers are bad?

(((Nope.)))(((I'm happy to say that Bonnie is on the FAAN ballot this year, in fact.)))



[PAUL DIFILIPPO] Has Bonnie considered sculpting a unicorn like the one on the cover of MYTHOLOGIES 8? Properly used, it would make a unique corkscrew.

[ELLEN FRANKLIN] Bonnie's covers are magnificent; not only are her creatures exact, they now have personality as well. They reach out to you.

[JACKIE FRANKE] Bonnie's covers for the past few issues have really been knockouts. I do dote on her beautiful creatures; so life-like yet so imaginative. You're to be envied for managing to corral enough of them to present so often. I will restrain myself from gnashing my teeth too loudly as I type - I may drown out the clatter of this typer and disturb my children's sleep.

[STUART GILSON] The Bonnie Dalzell cover was magnificent. (#7)

[JIM HUDSON] Covers: Ever more beautiful. Bonnie's animals now no longer look "right", they also look real. She's posing them for an audience, so you feel part of the picture, and the dark backgrounds make the details show up beautifully.

[JIM LANG] Another great cover by Bonnie Dalzell.

[SAM LONG] That's an excellent cover. Bonnie keeps getting more and more egoboo on her art--every bit of it deserved. The eyes of the unicorn remind me of the eyes of the horse in a picture called "Nightmare", I believe, painted in the late 18th century or early 19th by the English-Italian painter Fuseli. I don't happen to have an art reference book handy, but I'll check on the title and painter next time I go to the library and let you know if I misattributed it. (((Fuseli completed "The Nightmare" in 1781.)))

[ERIC MAYER] The cover this time is really outstanding, beautifully done, one of the best I've seen.

[TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD] Another of an unending series of Dalzell covers. How I envy you. Bonnie is one of perhaps five artists currently in fandom whom I will admit my equal or superior. I had the opportunity to meet Bonnie at Balticon and discovered to my delight that she is a paleontology freak. We only spoke together for about half an hour before the wee hours drove her to bed, but in that time I learned some things from her I didn't know before. For instance, a process on the humerus of the duck-billed dinosaurs is indeed a muscle anchor, as I thought, but she clarified its function. A muscle runs from it to an extension of the shoulder blade that mammals do not have. The extension prohibits reptiles such as duckbilled dinosaurs from moving their forelimbs straight forward. In order to achieve a forward motion then, the limb most likely rotated outward in a paddle motion.

[JIM MANN] Bonnie's cover was spectacular. The covers are getting better with each issue.

[MARY PRIDE - formerly MARTIN] You are lucky to have such friends as Bonnie and Al Sirois. The artwork in MYTHOLOGIES is consistently

superior.
(((I know.)))

[PAULINE PALMER] I didn't think Bonnie's cover this time was as good as some of her previous work that you've been fortunate enough to publish.

[DAVID SINGER] The cover, as usual, was great.

[LAURIE TRASK] Bonnie's starkly contrasting cover was a gem.

[BRUCE TOWNLEY] Liked Bonnie's cover on #7 better, but I feel like a jerk making comparisons among such a high standard of work.

[DIANA THATCHER] The Dalzell Cover: Although I'm familiar with the print and so could not be delighted and surprised by a Dalzell I haven't seen, yet this is an altogether striking and wonderfully arranged usage of the illo - marvelous!! The enthusiastic comments on Bonnie's cover for #7 make me wish I'd seen that one also.

[DAVID TAGGART] Is it just my beer-addled brain, or do I perceive that MYTHOLOGIES 8 has fewer pictures in it than #7. Yes, I'm sure of it. Bad move, Don. Bring the illustrations back. On the same subject, Bonnie Dalzell's cover was absolutely beautiful. If she doesn't get nominated as best fan-artist this year, you'll know that the Hugos are fixed. And printed on such great paper, too. How extravagant.

((Alas, MYTHOLOGIES does not have a wide enough distribution for it to contribute in any meaningful way to getting anyone on the Hugo ballot. We exert ourselves on the covers (1) because they're worth it, and (2) because we don't run much interior art, intentionally. I have nothing against interior art, mind you, I like artwork, but I'm having enough trouble trying to decide what letters I don't have room to print as it is.)))

[LAURINE WHITE] Bonnie Dalzell's cover for MYTHOLOGIES 8 is really beautiful. The unicorn is so magnificently wild.

[BUD WEBSTER] Bonnie just gets better and better, doesn't she? Were it not for the fact that she is deluged with pro work and doesn't have time for a great deal of fannish nonsense, I would ask her for something quick and off the wall. But I guess I'll be satisfied with any further MYTHOLOGIES covers and an occasional bit in F&SF.

((Bonnie's also had some showcase pieces in recent GALAXY's. And her time is also taken by the doctoral thesis she's been working on. I sometimes feel guilty inquiring about the possibility of a cover.)))

[PAUL WALKER] The Dalzell cover is a beaut!

[RANDY REICHARDT] I quite enjoyed Bonnie's cover, although I enjoyed her work on #7 a bit more.

((For those of you who've never corresponded with me, I liked the cover Bonnie did for MYTHOLOGIES 4 well enough that it has become my stationery.)))

[DOUG BARBOUR]

Your MYTH is interesting, though it seems more so in the context of a later remark by Mary Martin and your reply, for one of the neat mind-bending problems to deal with is how the ideal of competition--with what appears to be an emphasis on the individual, and therefore on individualization as a way of life and learning--connects with the fear to have your own opinion, to speak out for yourself, even if a mass of others disagree. Maybe we have been too neatly trained to think in team terms. Not just the army, but the sports which most hold our attention (note all the talk about how the "good" coaches like the late Lombardi were little dictators over their players), are team oriented. Though there's golf, and tennis is getting bigger play. I'm not sociologist enough to make any order out of the chaos of information here, but I think there may be some interesting insights to seek in the mass of info related to bureaucratic self-serving and the kind of competition taught, the win at all cost thinking. Your comments on the school system relate to this too; the kids are taught to win, not to learn, right?

((Essentially, yes. I'm not down on team playing. I think that it's good to subordinate yourself to a team effort from time to time. But the key idea here is that you subordinate yourself, through choice. Outside force coercing cooperation is unsatisfactory. I'm not an insider with the Boston Celtics, but I suspect that the major key to their success is that the players respect one another and have learned to subordinate their own interests to the ends of the team because they are educated in this manner, rather than ordered to conform by a dictatorial coach. Heinsohn gets a lot of bad press from his rivals because of his sharp temper, but the key is that he gets involved with the cause of his players. Just because he's not on the court doesn't mean he doesn't feel the same tensions. He probably feels more, through the frustration of not being able to physically do anything.)))

[STEVEN SAWICKI]

Competition as a means of weeding out inferiors? I don't think so. To say that this is true would be to say that the traits which are inherent in a good competitor are traits that the society wishes to maintain. I certainly wouldn't want to live in a world which consisted of only the best competitors. Or for that matter in a world which consisted of only competitors no matter what level of competency. Granting the fact that through evolution the degrees of competency are higher than today.

((You miss the point. We're all competitors whether we want to be or not. We compete for jobs, for positions in schools, for a place on the bus. To reduce it to its lowest level, the sperm that eventually resulted in each of us was the best competitor of a group of sperm vying for that honor.)))

[BEN INDICK]

Your editorial brings to mind my visit to a Kibbutz. This one was the classic type, fully communal, no personal possessions to speak of. (The other type is the moshav, where a communal responsibility still exists, but personal belongings -- car, TV, etc. -- are okay, and even private farming is permitted). The one we stayed at was a very

COMPETITION.....

large one, with much agricultural work (and a veritable Holiday Inn set-up for tourists, which brings in revenue). The members live in small stone houses, two families to a house, with 2½ rooms each, including a small kitchenette. However, meals are mostly taken in a communal dining room. Kids sleep in a separate baby house (actually they sleep there until they are teens and ready to become members. They have their own responsibility to dress and wash, even as tykes. My wife, a nursery school director, visited the school, and was somewhat dismayed with the utter laissez faire attitude. It is a spartan life...what is its appeal? Why do guests from around the world come to work with them, many of them non-Jewish? And many stay on for years too. Apparently it is because they and the members feel the individual contributions to a common good make their own lives more fulfilled.)

((A few years ago, I read a series of psychological studies of adults who had grown up in kibbutzes. The authors of the study said at the beginning that their sample was probably too small to have a tremendous amount of validity, and that measuring techniques were not exactly adequate, but that it seemed that there was a tendency of more personal self-confidence, responsibility, and determination in Kibbutz graduates than the general public, but that there seemed to be some difficulty in making lasting personal relationships. I suspect that some blend of the Kibbutz and our more conventional nuclear family might work out as the best overall set-up, but the needs of individuals vary so much that a hard and fast rule is almost certainly impossible.)))

[MARY PRIDE] (((I should probably mention that Mary recently married a charming gentleman named Bill Pride.)))

Bill and I are both competitive individuals, but lately something strange happened. Individually we seemed to be losing our drive. I was not putting enough effort into my work and Bill was jobhunting in a lackluster fashion. Somehow talking together over this problem gave us both a push. I do not really know what caused the problem, but I theorize that we had been both concentrating so hard on not competing with each other that we found it increasingly difficult to compete with anyone else. It is hard to be selectively competitive.

I do not think competition is destructive in and of itself. It is unfair competition, i.e., sabotaging other people's efforts in order to get ahead, that causes trouble. Unearned success is just as bad, too. For example, there seems to be a prevalent feeling that everyone has a "right" to go to college. Nonsense. If you can't pass the entrance exams (and I'm not talking about those "sign your name correctly and you're in" farces), then you shouldn't go. The reason college degrees are so worthless today is that everyone has one.

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. Why should anyone pay for the sins of the fathers? An absolutely rigorous, fair hiring policy would make much better sense. The world does not owe anyone a living, including me.

[PAUL WALKER]

Apparently I was not clear in what I said about intellectual competition. There is nothing wrong with asking a person what he has read and what he thought about so-and-so per se, unless, as is often the case, it is an invidious effort to categorize the person adversely to protect one's own ego. Categorization is the intellectual's method of neutralizing an opponent. In fandom, it is sufficient for some to label a writer "new wave" or "old" to dismiss him or her entirely. "Right-wing", "left-wing", "middlebrow", etc. etc. are just some of the categories intellectuals use to try to encapsulate an opponent in a pejorative mode. One of the most common and effective to many is to accuse a writer, critic, or any scholar of being "out of touch with contemporary thought". I remember two articles dismissing Edmund Wilson for this because of his 14 year study of Victorian literature. The clear implication being that Wilson was unable to cope with modern times and had retreated into the past: one step from senility. Gore Vidal was recently criticized for his historical novels for the same reason. And, of course, we have all read of someone dismissed, if not scorned, because his or her works did not reflect "political consciousness".

I think all intellectual types are guilty of this to some extent. Including me. It is a natural human trait to feel superior to other people. In fact, I believe it is necessary to be able to function successfully, and especially to function ambitiously. It is amusing to hear critics laud the "humility" of an Arthur Rubenstein or Albert Einstein, but how easy it is for them, for anyone, to be "humble" when the world has given them a standing ovation. The rest of us must settle for less. Of course, feelings of superiority to others is considered socially undesirable--not something one admits to openly and something one should temper within oneself--it is snobbish, elitist, and it can take on an obnoxious character such as pompousness. I used to feel very guilty about feeling superior to anyone until I realized that the people I felt superior to felt superior to me and were not the least bit ashamed of it. There are people who are proud they have never read a book in their lives. And perhaps they should be. It is a matter of values, what accomplishments a person respects. We differ with them; we shake our heads at the Archie Bunkers; but their accomplishments are as real as any intellectual ones. Their feelings of superiority have some basis in fact.

((Although in general I agree with you, I suspect that the first sentence in your second paragraph is poorly phrased. Everyone is guilty of this, intellectual or not. In fact, aren't you really committing the same act by using the word "intellectual" as a mild pejorative? Using myself as an example, it is reasonably well known through the fan critics circle that I'm inordinately fond of Bunch, Ballard, and other new wave (in the generally accepted meaning of the term) writers. So when I recently gave bad reviews to books by Alan Burt Akers and Brian Lumley, the response was that I was letting my prejudice against Edgar Rice Burroughs and H.P. Lovecraft show. Now as it happens, I enjoyed nearly all of Burroughs, even though I read him late in life, and Lovecraft is one of my favorite writers. Which reduces their complaints to nonsense. A degree of labelling is necessary, though, because there is an enormous amount of data which we must remember. They should be considered trends, not absolutes, tho.)))

[HARRY WARNER JR]

I seem to have received less than the usual share of this competitive urge that your editorial is about. When I was a kid, I never started to smoke in order to keep up with the other kids and I never got into a really serious fight because I didn't feel it was worth the trouble of finding out if I could lick another kid. People still have difficulty understanding one way in which this situation manifests itself in me. They know I'm an all-out baseball fan and yet I don't root strongly for this or that team. Most people can't disassociate the love of baseball from the desire to see the good guys win and they just don't comprehend the fact that I like the game itself, the skills involved and the way baseball is a living legend, so I don't care too much who wins, and I can get as much pleasure watching a couple of little league teams play as I obtain from watching professional players. However, I don't have much of an impulse to be cooperative, either, so maybe the two contradictory urges that you wrote about are linked in some secret way. I can cooperate if it is essentially a case of showing off whatever abilities I possess, but I could never be joint editor of a fanzine or part of a missionary team.

((Some of the more fortunate of us learn early in life to accept ourselves as we are, and to hell with what others think about this or that aspect of our personalities. In my case, this process didn't start until half way through college. I suspect that in your case, it happened a great deal earlier.)))

[MICHAEL CARLSON]

A CBC special on the new competitiveness in Japanese society concentrated on special militaristic prep schools, where the students live, work, and exercise while attending classes, in addition to going to regular high school. They sleep in tiny, unheated boxes, are beaten regularly for each mistake (and the cameras caught a student being poled for an English error that was the teacher's) and are in general made to suffer so that they will have a better chance to get ahead in the fierce educational system.

((It was shown on US TV also. My opinion should be self evident.)))

[JERRY POURNELLE]

I did note a remark by Tackett, for whom I have great respect; the particular remark, though, betrays some confusion on his part. If four supermarkets sell the same products for about the same prices, this is hardly proof of lack of competition; it is more likely evidence that competition is working.

Prices are established in a free market simply by competitive action: the price is forced down to the lowest level at which efficient firms can survive. If they go lower, eliminating economic profit, a firm will put its investment in another line of business. Supermarkets are a pretty good example of a highly competitive industry, which is why the prices are so nearly identical, and further competition must be carried out in ways other than price reductions: loss leaders, advertising, services, etc. Let 3 of those markets go out of business and you may be certain that prices in the fourth will experience a sudden rise.

/ DAVID TAGGART /

Sure, a lot of people put competition down, but maybe this is because "winning" is so great, and in any form of competition (except Presidential primaries) there can be only one winner. Winning may not be the only thing, as Vince Lombardi suggested, but it tends to make whatever else there is look like dogshit.

((I'm afraid we disagree totally. When I play board games, for example, I do my best to win, not because it's important that I win, but because it's unfair to the other players to do less than my best in a game. I'm sure we've all had the experience of a player who gets disgusted with his luck or the actions of his opponents, and deliberately arranges to throw the game to a single player. And, naturally, I'm pleased when I win, particularly in strategy games where I feel a degree of personal skill is involved. But it is more important to me that the game being entertaining and the company congenial than that I win.)))

/ STUART GILSON /

I don't agree that man has necessarily suppressed the competitive instinct, nor do I feel that such suppression leads to social progress. Competition has always been largely responsible for progress, both on a personal and national level. Competition has, of course, assumed various forms which have differed according to environment, government, and circumstance; without the competitive urge, however, man, either collectively or individually, would never have been driven beyond the cave. Industrial progress especially serves as an example for it has traditionally been provoked by competition for power and money (though not, alas, by an altruistic concern for the good of mankind). And a more recent example would, of course, be the American-Russian space race; as a result of the national competition that occurred there, scientific progress was accelerated worldwide. Perhaps the same thing could have been accomplished had the two countries collaborated in a unified, cooperative effort; it's doubtful, however, that the same results would have been achieved in as short a time.

((I didn't advocate the suppression of competition, just that it be tempered with cooperation. The emphasis is all on the former, even though you have to cooperate in order to compete in our world, and I don't believe we're doing enough of it. For example, the army, navy, and air force all duplicated each other's efforts in the space program because of the competition among the services, which naturally lowered our efficiency in competing with the Russians. The Republicans and Democrats will often stalemate a bill merely because the authors were of the opposite party, then try to pass their own - nearly identical bill. Had the US and USSR cooperated on space exploration, we might not have yet gotten as far as we have, but we might have a viable space program instead of the current stymied one. We might also have reaped subsidiary benefits such as better international cooperation on other matters, and acquired some influence in high Soviet scientific circles. And, for all we know, some Soviet discoveries unknown to us, linked with some US discoveries unknown to them, might have enabled us to go even further in the space program. It's all a very theoretical argument, I admit, but if you haven't read this issue's MYTH, pay particular attention to the part that deals with proposed changes to the convoy system during World War Two.)))

COMPETITION

/STEVE BEATTY/

Re: DiFilippo's comment on competition. An economy is not a zero-sum game. Yes, national resources may be limited, but using them in different ways can change the total wealth. Human intelligence is also a resource. Paul Walker doesn't seem to see any difference between competing to get something you want and competing because your peers, parents, teachers, coaches, or whoever expect it of you.

((Well, aren't you then competing for the approval of your peers, parents, etc.? I agree with your point, mind you, but you've phrased it wrong. The difference is between innate desires and imposed desires. On the other hand, most innate desired are imposed through conditioning, so I suspect the differentiation is subtle indeed.)))

/SCOTT DEVORE/

The comments I've read concerning competition in the school system remind me of a teacher I have who is annoyed by the emphasis his students place on grades. "A grade is only a mark on a piece of paper," he'll say when someone gives him a hard time concerning marks. "What's important is what you retain from this course." That's very nice, and I agree with him in principle. But I always have to point out that grading is part of the educational system, and while the accumulation of knowledge happens to be my primary goal, I have to get those grades in order to have a halfway decent opportunity of continuing my studies on a higher level. But, as much as I hate the competition in education, I don't think it would be realistic to think there is any way of avoiding it. Except for small isolated and atypical groups, such as "motivated" students, I don't think an education system would last very long without competition to drive it.

((I exhort you to read SUMMERHILL by A.S. Neill. Although I don't agree with everything Neill says - he opposes the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, for example - it's clear that he has had astounding success with non-graded school situations. But then I don't support the idea of ten years mandatory school attendance in the first place.)))

/GEORGE FLYNN/

I can't agree with Mike (Blake) that competition is peculiarly American. Let's see, "wars, new customers, bridge, or Little League baseball games". Well, we don't have much to teach the rest of the world (especially Europe) about wars; in business, the Japanese are very cooperative with each other, but stand back when they go up against outsiders; it was the British who got thrown out of the world bridge championships for cheating; and as for sports, what about all the riots (and some near-wars) caused by soccer? I have come to the conclusion that the obsession with thinking oneself unique (for better or for worse) is a peculiarly American one.

What Paul (DiFilippo) says about zero-sum games is true enough. Alas, society must inevitably resemble a zero-sum game more and more as the resources run short. The prognosis is not pretty. (The present state of Britain, which has fewer resources than we do, is a good indication of the likely trend.) And when society's the game, you can't "refuse to play".

((Americans are only unique in a competitive sense in that we give it lip service as a near religion. Free enterprise.)))

[HANK HEATH]

In Paul DiFilippo's ecomment on this subject, he mentioned that the world economy is based on a zero-sum game. I believe that I already pointed out that this is not so. A zero-sum game is based on a fixed amount of "points" (in this case natural resources and artificial resources, such as money). Well, I don't have to point out that this doesn't hold true for the world economy: resources vary with advancing technology, and artificial resources vary with legislation and fashion - e.g. printing excessive money or devaluing the lira, etc.

((While the total upper limit may be unknown, the acknowledged limit is pretty well determined. Additional resources brought into the game might change the strategies somewhat, but I don't see that they invalidate the structure of the game. And printing extra money has no effect. The artificial resource is "purchasing power" not actual money. If a country doubles its amount of script, it does not double its purchasing power with other countries.)))

[TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD]

I wonder if the researcher who conducted the test Glicksohn took for competitiveness ever made it profitable for the players to cooperate. Suppose, for example, there was simply a point level, which if exceeded, earned a player a sum of money. Suppose also it was possible for both players to win enough points to win the money. Then, but only then, would the test begin to indicate whether the players were more apt to cooperate than to compete.

((Even then it would be flawed. It would then be more profitable for them to cooperate than to compete. You would have to develop a test situation in which it was clear to both players that they had an equal chance no matter which course they took.)))

SCIENCE FICTION

[LAURINE WHITE]

The situation described in Arrant Nonsense #3 was carried to ridiculous extremes in a book published several years ago called FACIAL JUSTICE. I think the author's name was Hartley. Through plastic surgery ugly people were given beautiful faces, all of which looked alike, to keep them from feeling inferior. Concerts were given where someone with no ability played musical instruments. That way he wouldn't feel jealousy of a person with musical talent. Every member of that society could feel equal to everyone else.

You're another person who prefers HPL's Dunsanian stories to his creepy-crawlies. Before Ballantine published the actual short stories by Dunsany, I thought "Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath" was one of the greatest fantasies ever written, even if the hero didn't carry a sword. Such beautiful singing phrases. I wrote down some of the best and used to read them at night before falling asleep, in hopes they'd filter into my subconscious and produce beautiful dreams.

((Lovecraft often rivalled, though never surpassed, Dunsany in his fantasy. One of my favorites is "The Strange High House in the Mist". You should look into THE PRINCESS BRIDE by William Goldman, from Ballantine, a fine, wonderful, fun fantasy. FACIAL JUSTICE is by L.P. Hartley, was released in paperback by Curtis Books.)))

[ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE]

Herewith an insoluble problem: Could Isaac Asimov or R.A. Heinlein have succeeded as mainstream authors? Without supporting evidence: Asimov probably not, and Heinlein possibly. It is, it seems to me, correct to say that RAH has always been closer to people than IA. Some of RAH's stories are in the SF category only in virtue of what might have been termed "specious local color" in Edwardian times. (Of course this is true of much SF.) An excellent example of such is DOUBLE STAR, which is in the Ruritanian-Graustarkian line, along with Mark Twain's THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER. No fundamental changes would be necessary to write DOUBLE STAR on this world, in an imagined nation at more or less the present time. If this line of reasoning is not accepted then it needs to be argued that THE PRISONER OF ZENDA is science fiction at base. Of DOUBLE STAR and much other science fiction it can truthfully be said that empty space is a mighty barrier protecting the reader from reality. In other words, space is a gimmick. Now I know of nothing of IA's that is quite comparable to anything quite liked DOUBLE STAR in this respect, though such novels probably exist in the IA canon. Both PODKAYNE and "The Roads Must Roll" can be similarly treated. To sum up, these three pieces are about as much mainstream as they are SF, and they have adsorbed rather than absorbed whatever science there is about them. These remarks are not really "evidence" that would stand the scrutiny of a High Court of Literary Criticism, but I think that many more broadly read in SF&F could produce more telling arguments. If a novel is not good fiction, then it is not good sf.

The above leads to a tentative hypothesis that 75% (qualitative statistic) of SF (excluding fantasy) is mainstream ornamented perhaps with extrapolated science, or quasiscience, but not seriously changed by such. LeGuin's LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS is a troublesome case, and this may be true science fiction. It is, of course, a straightforward narrative adventure novel, but the decision turns on whether or not androgyny is vital to the tale. (The ansible and suchlike may be dismissed from consideration.) The emotional clothings that the novel wears is an additional factor but does not affect the decision. The BEMs in RAH's STARSHIP TROOPER could be replaced by humans with little change. There would be little left of SF but starships and future armamentaria, and these are gimmicks. Perhaps an input of superior wisdom could change my views on these matters.

((I don't know about the superior wisdom, and I agree with your major points. Certainly space is a gimmick. The hoary old claim that true SF cannot be written without its scientific content has always displeased me for the very reasons you cite: it would disqualify nearly everything. SF is a combination of gimmicks, color, science, setting, approach, execution, and other imponderables. Much of SF is failed mainstream, inferior writing dressed up in trappings of perhaps acceptable science. Asimov's FOUNDATION SERIES is a replaying of the disintegration of Rome. THE CURRENTS OF SPACE and THE STARS, LIKE DUST are also Graustarkian. The same could be said of nearly every writer in the genre. Most SF writers could not be nearly as successful in the mainstream. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. Their (at least the better ones) imaginative construction of setting and color is superior to that of successful mainstream writers. They've found their proper niche. And most SF fans are

seeking an escape from reality. There's nothing wrong with that, so long as one doesn't lose touch with reality altogether. And, in a paradox, this same quality gives SF a unique opportunity to be satiric, because it helps the reader to step outside of his culture and look at it with some objectivity.)))

[CY CHAUVIN]

Jim Mann says that people are influenced by critics because they don't want to make up their own minds. I don't think that is true; more likely, people are influenced because everyone has only a limited time to read, see, or listen to the vast amount of books, films, and records produced, and they find it useful if someone helps them sort out the good from the bad for them. Besides, Jim makes "critics" sound as though they were a breed apart from "people", when all they are in actuality is someone who has set down his or her opinions about something and have had it published.

((Yes, and one of the more aggravating remarks I see from time to time is one that goes something like: "Joe Critic has no right to say that an author should write a book to please him; the author writes to please the readers." What the hell? Aren't critics readers too?)))

[JOHN CURLOVICH]

I found C.L. Grant's comments about me rather amusing. Why is it, these days, that whenever one criticizes something, people start hollering about rights? I never questioned Elwood's rights, simply his editorial competence. And I consider my opinion vindicated by the very criterion Grant proposes: Readers are not buying Elwood's books.

[DON AYRES]

My only complaint about the Sarban commentary is that you failed to give publication date on the Ballantine editions.

((All three were released by Ballantine in 1960-1, and all three have been subsequently re-issued in editions to which I have no access, so cannot date.)))

SCA

[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. When John speaks of his personal experiences as a member, the things done to him, the events in which he participated, etc., he is dead right (I would not question his veracity and besides, word has reached me over the ninja network that this is indeed the way things are in his group, the Barony of the Debatable Lands). But as soon as he begins to generalize, his article is completely inaccurate; his statements beginning "The SCA does or is" may apply to his own group, but they do not apply to the East Kingdom, or to the Society as a whole. I will discuss some of the misconceptions, based on my four and a half years of experience in the SCA, in two groups of the East Kingdom, and a longish visit to the West as well.

1. The SCA is completely militaristic; the basis for inter-kingdom power is warfare.

John: What does your group do in the winter? Don't you have feasts, revels, courts of love, universities, dance practices, poetry contests? The rest of the Society does (Except for the few groups in warm climates who also have year-round tourneys; in these groups - deserts and such - the summer is the indoor season, it being too hot to fight then). True, fighting is a big SCA activity; nevertheless, at this moment in the East, the ratio of enthusiastic combatants to non-combatants is somewhere around 1:3. The fighting is the most dramatic of our activities; naturally it grabs the attention of the media, is the thing people tend to associate with us. This is partly because our outdoor tournaments tend to be open to the public; our indoor feasts and revels are not. In the Society's early years on the WestCoast fighting did play a predominant role; it sounds as if your group fixated at this early stage and never went beyond it.

2. Women have no place and/or power in the Society.

Utter nonsense. While the King holds the dramatic spotlight, the East Kingdom at least gives equal place to the Queen. Her signature must appear on all laws, awards, etc. She may call council meetings, and has equal say with the King in their running. Still, the Society, like China, is really run by the Civil Service, the great officers of state and their subordinates, who remain in office from year to year (Kings and Queens only reign six months). There are many female officers; I am one, Seneschal of the Shire of the Bridge. The administrative set-up of your group, the Debatable Lands, is an anomaly in the Society, which is neither a Democracy nor yet an autocracy, but more of a genial anarchy. You were unfortunate in living under the one-man rule of a man with Napoleonic, if not Stalinic tendencies. (He has, since the writing of the article, left the Society, and informed the East Kingdom that he is to be considered officially dead. Latest rumor hath it that he misses his power, and his ghost is again stalking Pittsburgh. Such men don't die easily.)

Also: only in your group is the Knight Marshal a figure of such awe and power. Generally, the Knight Marshal is the fighter with the evenest temper and most equable mind, not a paranoid general. He sees to the proper running of tournaments, as the seneschal sees to the proper feeding and entertaining of the people.

3. Safety rules are not enforced; people go wild with steel.

In the Society as a whole, but especially in the East Kingdom, Knight Marshals are paranoid about safety. True, injuries happen; but so do they in football, basketball, etc. And in my experience, unlike in hockey, the injuries are never inflicted in malice. One lord of the kingdom broke his arm this past fall, not because his opponent set out to hit the weak lower arm bones, but because of a sort of wrist twist or flick he was testing, which locked the bones in an awkward position. True again, our men aren't angels, occasionally they will lose their tempers on a field. But far more often have I seen fighters voluntarily throw away a shield if their opponent has lost an arm, or acknowledged a blow which spectators (who really can't judge) think not hard enough. Despite personal quarrels and the typical fan feuds we know so well, I have never seen a grudge match in the lists of the Society. Challenges are in fun (like Mark Keller and Elliot Shorter, defending the merits of, respectively, Lin Carter and John Norman.)

4. The War, and what there transpired.

I attended the war, and again, your personal observations ring true. But I had fun, despite the 12 hour long ride each way. Once again, all the truly regrettable incidents you name (the kids smoking, getting drunk, the barbarians with the arrows) involved members of your group. True, the crafts fair was not up to standards -- considering we had to bring our stuff in crowded cars from miles away. But you don't even mention the Renaissance music concert (I sat in the itchy grass and played and sang for several hours)!

And most important; I hope you didn't visit the bonfire at which I was singing, because I certainly resent the "off-key singing" remark! But I won't send my champion to challenge you. Instead, I extend a heartfelt invitation for you to visit Rhode Island. See RISFA, the atypical SFclub. Then come to some real SCA events, and I will sing for you and you can judge for yourself. You could sample some of our local cooking, our homebrewed mead and lemon beer, try our dances, sing some of our songs. You might come with us when we do a lecture-demonstration for a high school, or put on a mammoth medieval fair for 10,000 people. Or simply flirt with the ladies, and be tried by a court of love. In any case, come and on my honor as a Lady of the Society, I will do my best to convince you that first impressions need not be lasting ones.

((I don't ordinarily allow people to respond to a question in the same issue. However, because of certain pressures, John Curlovich has responded to Faye with what he says will be his last word on the subject. I should also take this opportunity to point out that I took steps to see that a dozen copies of the article were delivered to prominent SCA members and their responses invited. With the exception of Faye and two other members - whose letters follow John's - no one felt called upon to respond. On the other hand, I received fifteen letters backing Curlovich on one point or another. As it happens, I have no way of judging the militarism of the SCA. The one group I had some contact with (in Michigan) was not militarily oriented, but did exhibit an overwhelming preoccupation with fantasy that Curlovich alludes to, and a point that I do consider valid, for the most part.)))

[/JOHN CURLOVICH/

1. I must insist that militarism is by no means confined to the Pittsburgh barony. On at least three occasions we scheduled events which were to be wholly non-combative, a Mayfair, a Christmas revel, and another Mayfest. These were turned into tournaments by the express request of the reigning kings, whom I emphasize were not members of our group. Also, when our group made a bid to become a principality, we were told that we didn't qualify because we weren't strong enough militarily.

((I'll break another self-imposed rule here to interrupt a letter. I was able to investigate this particular incident, and the party directly implicated reportedly said just the opposite, that Pittsburgh qualified only in its military. It appears that the Pittsburgh leaders either misunderstood or misrepresented this point in order to press for a more military orientation.)))

2. As for arts in the SCA: I must further insist, on purely empirical grounds, that the atmosphere is far from healthy for any sort of serious endeavor. A number of us in the Pittsburgh group decided the

barony should have its own organ of expression... We put together a fanzine called the ALTHING which I daresay was better than anything else published by the Society. Were we encouraged? The then Queen dismissed it as a "rag", an insult she delivered straight to our faces. The "great officers" of the kingdom tried to force us to stop publication, even to vague threats of legal action. Ignored by our own nobility and threatened by that of the kingdom, we let our magazine atrophy and eventually die.

Despite all this, I still contend that the worst thing about the SCA is the way its members get caught up in the fantasy. I note this, Faye, in the way you write, for example. "His ghost is again stalking Pittsburgh. Such men don't die easily." Come on, now.

But let me give you an extreme example of what I'm talking about. Some while ago a member of the Eastern kingdom found his wife heavy with child (the mock medieval style, I'm afraid, is catching). Before her pregnancy was past three months, the prospective father had already chosen a society name for the kid, worked out the kid's persona, was considering designs for his armor, and had plans to turn him into the youngest king the society ever had through a strict program of training. Do I need to point out what lunacy this is? Suppose the kid had been a girl? Or a boy who'd rather play Chopin than beat someone with a stick? These things, as near as I can judge, were never even considered: this child would be a king. I repeat, this is irresponsible to say the very least.

In sum, even though a lot of the specifics I used in the article were drawn from the Pittsburgh group, I was very careful to assemble a mosaic which, in my opinion, is an accurate representation of the SCA as a whole. This is why I focused on the war instead of any of our local events. With only a few glaring exceptions, the Pittsburgh people were the pleasantest, sanest, most adult people I met in the society. Watching them get drawn into the general excessiveness was the most unpleasant thing about the society for me.

[MARK M. KELLER]

John Curlovich warns us that his description of the Society for Creative Anachronism "must seem ludicrous". It does, especially to members of the SCA. Curlovich joined a small aberrant chapter of the Society, isolated and self-contained. He made no effort to meet fannish medievalists outside the Pittsburgh chapter.

Readers, a question: how does one draw the line between ignorance and malice? Suppose a neo-fan in Lawton, Oklahoma, was looking for fannish activities. He joins the only SF club in town - one Deglerite pamphleteer, four comic fans, and a drooling SPACE 1999 groupie. He is naturally upset at their uncouth behavior, their yelling and hollering and quarreling. He writes a story for the local paper, saying all SF fans are grubby morons. Is that story justified? Curlovich has written that story about the SCA - an ignorant hatchet job, based on fallen hopes and one bad experience.

The SCA began as a weekend party held by fannish admirers of the Middle Ages back in Berkley in 1966. It spread across the continent, with chapters in many cities. I won't give the history of the group here; see Poul Anderson's memoir of the early SCA in THE CONAN GRIMOIRE.

.....

People join the SCA because they like wearing costumes and speaking in courtly fashion. They like the music and the dancing, the good food and drink. Most SCA meetings are scheduled around some kind of revel - St Agnes Day, Midsummer Day, April Fools Day: celebration with feast, flowing bowls of mead and wine. There are some serious researchers: jewelers and blacksmiths who try to rediscover the "material culture" of the Middle Ages. There are dedicated cooks and brewers and calligraphers. But mostly people join the SCA to have fun at the events.

Most events do not have any fighting scheduled, those that are indoors, or at night, or in winter. But for outdoor summer days - yes, there are tourneys, with simulated "combat in the lists". The fights are spectacle, crowd attractors. A minority of SCA fans actually participate, 15% at most.

Curlovich devotes his entire story to one aspect of the SCA: fighting. He would have you believe the whole SCA consists of nothing but gladiators and cheerleaders. This is gross error. It ignores 5/6 of the Society. Why he is telling such a lopsided story I won't speculate on.

Perhaps he will dispute the percentage of fighters? As of May 1976, the East Kingdom SCA has about a thousand paid members. Half are women, who almost never fight in the lists. Of the men, a third have at one time or another carried sword and shield in combat. The other two-thirds of the men do not choose to fight. They are still members in good standing. How then did Curlovich get such a distorted picture of the Society for Creative Anachronism? He joined a chapter in which the chief organizer thought of himself as Frederick the Great. The Pittsburgh chapter of the SCA - the Barony of the Debatable Lands - recruited large numbers of high school boys with promise of combat and combat. Other aspects were neglected.

The Baron and Knight Marshal of Debatable Lands, because of their particular attitudes, produced a very atypical chapter. The horde of "militia" kids, average age 16 or 17, never attended SCA events at other chapters. Most SCA groups maintain contact via regional crafts fairs, feasts, revels, and "universities", bringing together SCA fans from five or six states. The Barony didn't hold such events, and didn't travel to such events.

Curlovich did not participate in the fighting which was the main activity of the Pittsburgh chapter. He also did not participate in the "cultural" SCA which existed even in Pittsburgh. He wanted to discuss medieval literature, he says; he wanted to learn more about medieval art. Yet he made no move to reach people in other chapters who shared those interests.

Do such people exist? Of course they do. Each chapter has members whose role in the Society involves research and study of medieval life: Master of Sciences, Mistress of Arts, Heralds, Guildmasters of Cooks and Musicians. Not all SCA members are interested in research - as I said, the SCA is in many ways a social rather than a scholarly group. But anyone who wants to learn can certainly find someone with similar interests. How could Curlovich have met these people? The SCA newsletters, which he mentions, contain articles on costume and manners and medieval song. The names and addresses of the writers

are given in each issue. Curlovich can read and write. He was supposed to be Master of Sciences ("chief researcher") for the Barony. He never contacted any of his fellow M.S.'s in other chapters to find what they were doing, although he certainly had addresses and phone numbers. Curlovich was supposed to be organizer of a Poets' Guild in Pittsburgh. He never spoke or wrote to any songwriters or bards in other chapters; he never to my knowledge even held any meetings in the Baronial chapter. The only poetry that came out of the Debatable Lands was a self-praising war song by the Baron, telling how great the barony militia was. It was received with scorn by the rest of the East Coast SCA chapters.

Only for a war would the baronial levies visit the rest of the SCA. In the grand melee Curlovich describes, all the Eastern chapters sent only 80 fighters altogether, of which 30 were from Pittsburgh. You can judge from these numbers that combat is really enjoyed by only a minority of SCA men. As Curlovich implies, the Barony has a reputation for loud bragging and poor fighting, or for not showing up at all on the field. The horde of berserker Debatable Land teen-agers ran about in a random manner, piling on foes six on one, hitting people in the back, pounding fallen opponents. Most SCA fighters don't like those tactics, John. Most SCA fighters know the damn thing is a simulation, a game, and not a duel to the death. Why use taped rattan swords rather than steel, when steel looks so much more impressive? Rattan is safer, that's why.

The bloodthirsty berserker is a distinctly uncommon and unpopular style among SCA fighters. A western Knight Marshal wrote an article some years back calling for bloodier combats. His ideas were solidly rejected by the majority of fighters in the Society, who have no wish to "really try to kill someone" on the field. The SCA lists are not a bull ring or a stock car race; we do not need the promise of violent death.

Disgusted with the Pittsburgh Barony, ignorant of the rest of the SCA, John Curlovich dropped from the rolls of the Current Middle Ages. Then he wrote his "Lawton fan club" article. He never saw the Ostgardr Fair (New York) or the Carolingian University (Cambridge), events more important to the Society than the Pennsic War. He never attended a coronation feast, or a mead-toasting party, or a court dance, or even a post-revel filksing. So he wrote that the core of the SCA is "excess and violence".

He wrote that "arts and sciences play only the most minor role" in the SCA, having never seen any examples of either SCA arts or SCA sciences. No wonder his vision is skewed. Curlovich wrote 2500 words about a bad part of his life. It's unfortunate that he confuses it with the Society for Creative Anachronism.

[TIM MARION]

I feel sorry for John Curlovich for his experiences with the SCA. But then again, it doesn't exactly heighten my mood, since lately I've been very excited and elated to not only find the local branch of the SCA, but to join it as well. And apparently, the SCA here is by far different from the SCA he was involved in. Here, most of the members are female, and many of them stress the fact that you do not have to

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be a fighter simply because you are male. There are very few men and few of them are half-hearted fighters. There is also a great deal more emphasis on the arts here. Altogether, I'm just very sorry John has had so many bad experiences, but I'm also sorry that I have to be subjected to a lot of anti-SCA criticism just when I'm getting into it, as well as that garbage on the next page by Sue Anderson.

((The very fact that you react so violently to even good natured criticism - Sue Anderson is an ex-SCA person - lends a great deal of credence to some of Curlovich's criticisms. No human endeavor is above criticism or satire. Your statements, were they to be taken at face value, would imply that no one has the moral right to criticize any human institution, because it might hurt the feelings of some of the members thereof. Come off it. Curlovich's article will have little if any lasting impression on the SCA. Sue Anderson's poem even less. But an overreaction like yours, reducing itself to catcalls and verbal abuse, will linger later.)))

[FRED LERNER]

John Curlovich's experiences with the SCA indicate that those characters haven't improved any in the past five years. I remember one SCA function back then. It was held in a field in northwestern New Jersey on a hot summer afternoon. Fighting with broomsticks bored the hell out of me, but a lot of friends whom I wanted to see would be there, so I put on my Funny Clothes and went. Things didn't start on time, which was fine with me: there was good conversation and beer to drink. Finally someone got things organized, and the conversations were abruptly interrupted with a command that we turn out for the opening ceremonies. These consisted of standing in the hot sun while some clown forsoothed interminably at us. After about twenty minutes my patience was exhausted, and so I changed my persona from the Jewish trader Ephraim ben Chaim Yitzhak to the Greek hero Agamemnon, and went off to sulk in my tent. A couple of others followed my lead, and the beer was not yet exhausted, so the afternoon was not a total waste: but I have had precious little to do with the SCA after that. Neither they nor I have had any regrets about that.

[RICH BARTUCCI]

This fan-fa-riddle about the SCA brings me to wonder if a gent interested in the practice of medicine as per the standards of the Middle Ages might be allowed to join the serried ranks of the Society. With a little leechcraft and some poulticework, none of the members injured in battle need want for medical care--though they might require the services of a sympathetic mortician.

[ED CONNOR]

Interesting piece on the SCA. On the whole, the groups and individuals in this society seem to be even further removed from SF than I'd supposed. It is active in this area, since there have been several stories about its activities in the local press over the past couple of years, but SF has never been mentioned in the same context.

[DAVID TAGGART]

Curlovich's article on the SCA more or less confirmed my suspicions. Strange people doing strange things. Perhaps this could signal the start of a series of exposes in MYTHOLOGIES. (((No way.)))

((Already I'm on page 57, and I still have a stack of letters left to type. I suppose I could just cut it off here, but I'm loathe to. As a compromise, I'm going to continue the letter column from this issue in the next issue. So for those of you who see your name listed on the credits page, but no letter, the following people have letters appearing in the next MYTHOLOGIES: Sam Long, Neal Wilgus, D. Gary Grady, Michael Shoemaker, Alyson Abramowitz, Robert Jackson, Jessica Salmonson, John Curlovich, Chester Cuthbert, Michael Carlson, Don Ayres, John Kusske, Jerry Kaufman, Doug Hoylman, Bud Webster, Mark Keller, Chester Cuthbert, Tim Marion, Randy Reichardt, Pauline Palmer, David Singer, Denny Bowden, Scott Devore, Stuart Gilson, Dave Szurek, David Taggart, George Flynn, Rick Brooks, Laurie Trask, Jim Mann, Jim Hudson, Gerard Houarner, Lynne Brodsky, Mike Glyer, Barbara Geraud, Diana Thatcher, Paul DiFilippo, Jim Lang, Eric Mayer, and Laurine White. And I'll fill out this issue with the following.)))

/GEORGE FERGUS/

John Robinson says that my estimate of the ratio of men to women in Fandom as about 5:1 is "easily 15 years behind the times". (I never realized that I was quite that reactionary. I've only been in Fandom for 13 years.) He apparently feels that it is really about 2.5: 1 at present, and predicts that it will decrease to 1.5:1 by 1980. Yet in that very issue of MYTHOLOGIES, the letter column showed the presence of 29 men and only 6 women, which seems fairly typical of fanzines in general. Perhaps some difficulty arises in defining Fandom by means of clubs, conventions, or fanzines. Things may be very different in college clubs today, but there must still be a lot of us old fogies around. The 1973 LOCUS poll and survey found fandom 83½% male to 16½% female. (A ratio of slightly over 5:1, for those of you without your calculators handy.) In 1974 this changed to 82%/18%, and in 1975 to 80%/20%. If one can extrapolate this in a straight line to 1980, the ratio would still be about 70%/30%.

George Flynn asked for a little more info on that Gallup Poll about UFOs. It was back in 1973. 11% of those asked said they'd actually seen a UFO. It was not asked whether they thought these were actually flying saucers from Out There. Perhaps it was taken for granted that they are. A whopping 46% said they are now convinced that there is intelligent life on other planets. (Although a number of people now say that intelligent life on earth is decreasing. We may get to the point where people believe intelligent life is more likely out there than here.

Re the space program, the important point is not that it involved a mere 1 or 2 per cent of the federal budget, but that money for costly (and, at this time, relatively useless) manned space flight reduced the budget available for other scientific research of a generalized non-essential nature. I would also like to amend Elst Weinstein's reportage of cutbacks in research grants that supposedly point toward a forthcoming collapse of our society. President Ford's proposed budget for the next fiscal year, while further reducing the NASA budget, includes major increases for basic scientific research. At the recent annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston, it was asserted that public and governmental

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appreciation of science and technology is on an upswing, after reaching a low ebb a few years ago, with people now beginning to realize you have to invest in general knowledge in order to solve today's problems.

Graham England suggests that day care for children of working mothers is equivalent to the "baby farming" discussed briefly in MYTHOLOGIES, the only difference being that the infants do not die but merely suffer from "Stunted Psyche" due to "lack of play and lack of affection". It should be pointed out that children in day care centers, on the average, engage in more play activity and achieve an easier social relationship with others than they would if kept at home. Also, as long as children receive affection and emotional involvement at home, they appear not to suffer any psychological damage from daily periods of separation. Jerome Kagan of Harvard, who has been very outspoken about possible hidden psychological dangers of day care, recently reversed his position because of a 2½ year study on the subject during which he could find no significant differences between day care and home reared children.

Mark Keller asks if any historical data is available relating to the theory about an "original matriarchy" that supposedly ruled over a long-lost golden age of peace and plenty before recorded history. The available evidence, sparse as it is, is presented at length by Elizabeth Gould Davis in THE FIRST SEX (1971, Penguin, \$1.95). A less charitable "male chauvinist" view can be found in one of the early chapters of Amaury de Riencourt's SEX AND POWER IN HISTORY (1974, Dell, \$3.95).

I must lodge an objection to Paul DiFilippo's contention that primitive hunter-gatherers such as the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert have cultures even more male dominated than our own. Considerable documentation has become available in the last decade on the sexually egalitarian and non-aggressive nature of the Bushman society. (Read, especially, Patricia Draper's paper in the forthcoming compendium, KALAHARI HUNTER-GATHERERS, edited by Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, from Harvard University Press). Cooking and child care, for example, are done by both men and women. Some activities are confined to one sex or the other, but this is not associated with any enormous difference in social status, as occurs here. (Although returning male hunters are greeted with slightly more enthusiasm than returning female gatherers because the former are usually gone longer, and meat is a scarcer commodity than vegetable food.) Anthropologists have even been able to watch the decline of female status as large numbers of !Kung Bushmen have finally abandoned their ancient way of life and become settled agriculturalists like their Bantu neighbors.

Even if I could ignore everything that D. Gary Grady has said about women in previous issues (including his opposition even to equal pay for equal work!), I find his statement that he's really been for "women's lib" all along as ridiculous on the face of it as someone's saying he is a devoted reader of "sci-fi". It's nice to hear that he's so lacking in prejudice that he won't let his egalitarian beliefs cloud his knowledge of the biological facts. It's too bad that his knowledge of the biological facts is apparently on a par with his knowledge of the Joanne Little Case. (He is not alone, however. Not

one of those commenting here in MYTHOLOGIES on her murder trial managed to spell her name right.

Another person whose name you didn't get right, Don, is William Shockley, one of the co-discoverers of the transistor, who was attacked and hounded for attempting to present proof of genetically-based racial differences in IQ. And I would question your statement that his interpretation of the evidence was eventually shown to be wrong. You do not mention Arthur Jensen, who is much more well-known than Shockley, and who has suffered similar indignities at the hands of angry students and blacks for paying attention to race differences in his papers on genetic factors in IQ. Jensen, being an educational psychologist, cannot be accused like Shockley of operating outside of his field of knowledge, and has been fairly successful in rebutting his critics. I can go into this more deeply sometime, if you like.

((OK, write me an article. I've seen Shockley's name wrong so many times lately, it has imprinted itself. My understanding of the Shockley controversy was that his definition of "intelligence" was highly suspect.)))

THAT'S IT, FOLKS. NO MORE ROOM. MORE OF GEORGE'S LETTER WILL APPEAR NEXT ISSUE AS WELL. THANKS TO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WHO EITHER CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE (400 plus pages of locs) OR WILL BE SEEN IN MYTHOLOGIES 10.

Alyson Abramowitz, 638 Valmont Place, Elmont, NY 11003
Reed Andrus, 1717 Blaine Ave, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108
Henry Argasinski, 359 Pacific Ave, Toronto, Ont M6P 2R2, Canada
Don Ayres, 5707 Harold Way #3, Hollywood, CA 90028
Doug Barbour, 10808 75th Ave, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1K2, Canada
Rich Bartucci, PO Box 75, Cedar Brook, NJ 08018
Steve Beatty, 1662 College Terrace Dr, Murray, KY 42071
Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20760
Michael Bishop, Georgia
Neal Blaikie, 4608 St Nazaire Rd, Pensacola, FL 32505
Denny Bowden, 917 Tracy St, Daytona Beach, FL 32017
Lynne Brodsky, 624 Alvarado Rd, Oakland, CA 94705
Rick Brooks, RR #1, Box 268, Fremont, Ind 46737
Michael Carlson, 3585 Ave Lorne #7, Montreal, PQ, H2X 2A4, Canada
Cy Chauvin, 17829 Peters, Roseville, MI 48066
Ed Conner, 1805 North Gale, Peoria, Ill 61604
John Curlovich, 108 Montville St, Pitts, PA 15214
Chester Cuthbert, 1104 Mulvey Ave, Winnipeg, Manitoba S3M 1J5, Canada
Bonnie Dalzell, Massachusetts
Scott DeVore, 100 Briggs Lane, Tiverton, RI 02878
Paul Di Filippo, 124 Old River Road, Lincoln, RI 02865
George Fergus, 1810 Hemlock Place, Apt 204, Schaumburg, Ill 60195
George Flynn, 27 Sowamsett Ave, Warren, RI 02885
Jackie Franke, Box 51-A, RR #2, Beecher, Ill 60401
Ellen F. Franklin, 262 Trapelo Rd, Belmont, MA 02178
Barbara Geraud, 1202 Benedum Trees Bldg, Pitts, PA 15222
Stuart Gilson, 745 Townsend Ave, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2V5, Canada
Mike Glycer, 14974 Osceola St, Sylmar, CA 91342
D. Gary Grady, 3309 Spruill Ave Apt 5, Charleston, SC 29405
Hank Heath, 250 Dale Rd, Cassadaga, NY 14718
Gerard Houarner, 25-33 48th St, Long Island City, NY 11103

Doug Hoylman, 190 Franklin St, Morristown, NJ 07960
 Jim Hudson, 262 Trapelo Rd, Belmont, MA 02178
 Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave, Teaneck, NJ 07666
 Robert Jackson, 21 Lyndhurst Rd, Benton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, NE12 9N7
 England
 Jerry Kaufman, 880 W. 181st St, 4D, New York, NY 10033
 Mark M. Keller, 101 S. Angell, Providence, RI 02906
 John Kusske, 989 Burgess St, St Paul, MN 55103
 Jim Lang, 162 Fifth St, Hicksville, NY 11801
 Fred Lerner, Box 515, Montpelier, VT 05602
 Sam Long, Box 4946, Patrick AFB, FL 32925
 Taral Wayne MacDonald, 1284 York Mills Rd Apt 410, Don Mills, Ont
 M3A 1Z2, Canada
 Jim Mann, 10-D Denver Dr, McKeesrocks, PA 15136
 Tim Marion, 614-72nd St, Newport News, VA 23605
 Eric Mayer, R.D. #1, Falls, PA 18615
 Cathy McGuire, 130 Harrison Ave, Westfield, NJ 07090
 Jan Morgan, 4918A Hwy 75S, Denison, TX 75020
 Jodie Offutt, Funny Farm, Haldeman, KY 40329
 Pauline Palmer, 2510 48th St, Bellingham, WA 98225
 Jerry Pournelle, 12051 Laurel Terrace, Studio City, CA 91604
 Mary Pride (new address unknown - help please)
 Randy Reichardt, 58 Penrose Place, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 1S1, Canada
 Faye Ringel, 199 Williams St, Providence, RI 02906
 Jessica Salmonson, Box 89517, Zenith, WA 98188
 Steven Sawicki, 31 Mohawk Dr, Unionville, CT 06805
 Michael Shoemaker, 2123 N. Early St, Alexandria, VA 22302
 David Singer, 5501 Old Richmond Dr, Richmond, VA 23226 (back at school
 maybe?)
 Al Sirois, 550 Dixwell Ave, New Haven, CT
 Dave Szurek, 4417 Second, Apt B-2, Detroit, MI 48201
 David Taggart, 215 Austin Hall, U.V.M., Burlington, VT 05401
 Diana Thatcher, Zoology Dept, SDSU, San Diego, CA 92182
 Bruce Townley, 2323 Sibley St, Alexandria, VA 22311
 Laurie Trask, 6-A-3 Morewood, 1060 Morewood, Pitts, PA 15213
 Paul Walker, 128 Montgomery St, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
 Dr. A.D. Wallace, 2119 NW 21st St, Gainesville, FL 32605
 Harry Warner Jr, 423 Summit Ave, Hagerstown, MD 21740
 Bud Webster, PO Box 5519, Richmond, VA 23220
 Laurine White, 5408 Leader Ave, Sacramento, CA 95841
 Neal Wilgus, S.S. Rte Box 175A, Corrales, NM 87048
 Jim Young, 1948 Ulysses St NE, Minn, MN 55418

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 I received locs also from the following persons, some of which will
 also appear in the next issue, particularly Judith Schrier and Gayle
 Kaplan. WAHF: Adrian Washburn, Alan Lankin, Tom Morley, Mike Glycer,
 Jodie Offutt again, Rod Snyder, Ken Josenhans, Doug Barbour again,
 Paul Walker again, Hank Heath again, Kevin Dillon, Mae Strelkov,
 Milt Stevens, Dave Hulan, John Robinson, Gil Gaier, Roy Tackett, Mike
 Bracken, Vic Kostrikin, Gene Wolfe, Robert Whitaker, Lesleigh Uttrell,
 Frank Balazs, Rebecca Lesses, Toby Staffman, Barry Hunter, John
 Robinson again, Greg Benford, Brian Earl Brown, Bruce Townley again,
 Stephen Dorneman, Chip Hitchcock, Neal Wilgus again, Lee Carson, Dale
 Donaldson, Barbara Geraud again, Shakrallah Jabre, David Merkel,
 Brett Cox, Ian Covell, Tony Cvetko, and others. Poll results next
 time.

If there is an X in this _____ space, you have to write to get the
 next issue.

Cover printed by Mike Zubrisky.