



AKOS

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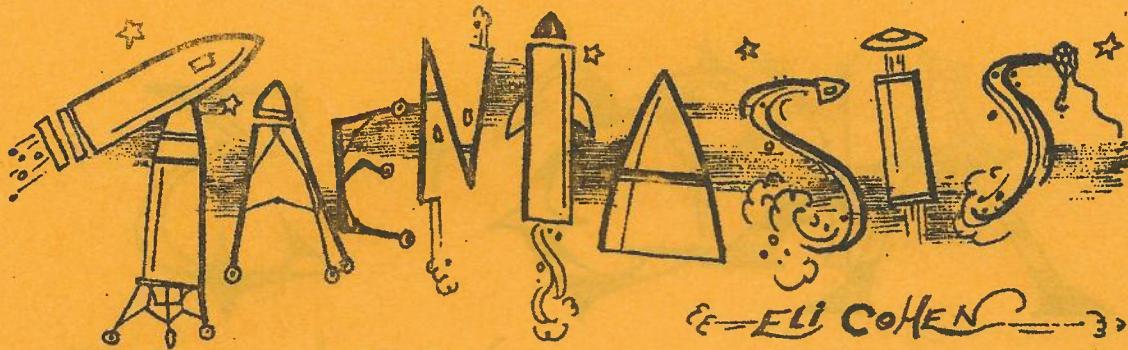
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p. 26. Andy Porter, p. 28.

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As you can see, AKOS still lives; it was merely in a state of suspended animation (that is, New York). We have finally bestirred ourselves out of our lethargy, and despite the six month gap since AKOS 2, we are doing this issue in two weeks the way we always do. In fact, as we (meaning in this case your humble editor, as opposed to the entire collection of editors, writers, artists, lunatics, and mome raths that constitute our staff) write these words, it seems highly unlikely that #3 will ever come out. Recollecting the situation a week before St. Louiscon, however, gives us some slight cause for optimism. If we could do it then, we might be able to do it now. After all, we can always collate at Lunacon. (Disclave? Pghlange???)

Our success story this time is Judy Mitchell, whose artwork can be seen gracing these pages (and the cover!). As of the August FANTASTIC, she becomes our resident professional artist: she did the illustration for the J.G. Ballard story in that issue. We hope this will be the start of a long and successful career.

There were complaints about the repro last issue. Something about the ink being too light. We think we have found the solution to the problem: give the readers something else to worry about, so they won't complain about the repro. Therefore, be ye warned that in addition to giving off mysterious radiations that may be hazardous to your health, this paper will explode when subjected to certain stimuli. We wouldn't spoil the fun by describing the stimuli; just watch out for anything purple. (\*And don't lesnerize!)

THIS IS NATIONAL AVOCADO WEEK:  
TAKE AN AVOCADO TO LUNCH



(Whereas the use of the plural pronoun adds a certain royal dignity to our august personage which we find useful at times, it does become occasionally wearisome. If you'll forgive us, we will abandon our plurality for the duration of this column, and mingle with the common hordes, as it were.)

I read a fascinating article recently--"Cultural and Natural Checks on Population Growth," by D.H. Stott (in Environment and Cultural Behavior, ed. A.P. Vayda, Natural History Press, N.Y., where I read it, or in Culture and the Evolution of Man, ed. M.F. Ashley-Montagu, Oxford University Press, N.Y., where it originally appeared). The thesis of the article is that population rarely reaches the point where starvation will cut it down; a variety of mechanisms act first, aimed at the next generation. For example, when aphids become crowded on a plant, the next generation grows wings so that they can emigrate. (I have a vision of Earth's human population reaching umpteen billion; all of a sudden babies start being born teleports, and the next generation just flies away to a new planet. Wonder what Arthur C. Clarke would say.) Or rats under over-crowded conditions, when social patterns break down: a cause of pregnancy failure in rats is contact with a strange male. "After mating with their familiar sire the females suffered a 'blocking' of the pregnancy even if they only detected the odor of the intruder on nesting material. After some five days they came in heat again and could conceive, but a breakdown of social dominance and exposure to a succession of strange males would presumably inhibit pregnancy indefinitely." (Imagine if birth control pills could be replaced by something like "Scent of Stranger.")

The principle mechanisms for population control, however, seem to be various stress-produced birth defects. While over-population may have been the primary cause of stress, and the reason such mechanisms evolved, as they are now they can be triggered by a variety of circumstances--and they are documented in humans as well as animals.

To return to rats for a moment: I've got to describe a particularly sadistic experiment designed to show the effects of mental stress on pregnancy. Female rats were trained to expect an electric shock when a buzzer sounded, but they were provided with a door that allowed them to escape. After being mated, they were put back in the same cages, with the same buzzer, but with the electric shock disconnected. However, the escape door was locked to produce "anxiety." The offspring of these unfortunate rats were significantly more sluggish, less intelligent, and less adventurous (e.g. they took nearly three times as long to leave an open cage); in other words, they were generally substandard. By varying the torture, various malformations could be produced in the rats' offspring. A biochemical explanation is suggested by the fact that "...the administration of hormones such as cortisone and thyroxine tends to produce malformation. With the known effects of rage and fear on the endocrine system, strife and harassment resulting from shortage and overcrowding might be expected to reduce fertility."

With humans, wartime provides a stress situation for large groups of people that would approximate overpopulation. The rate of infant malformations does in fact go up--the incidence of anencephaly and spina bifida peaked in Birmingham,

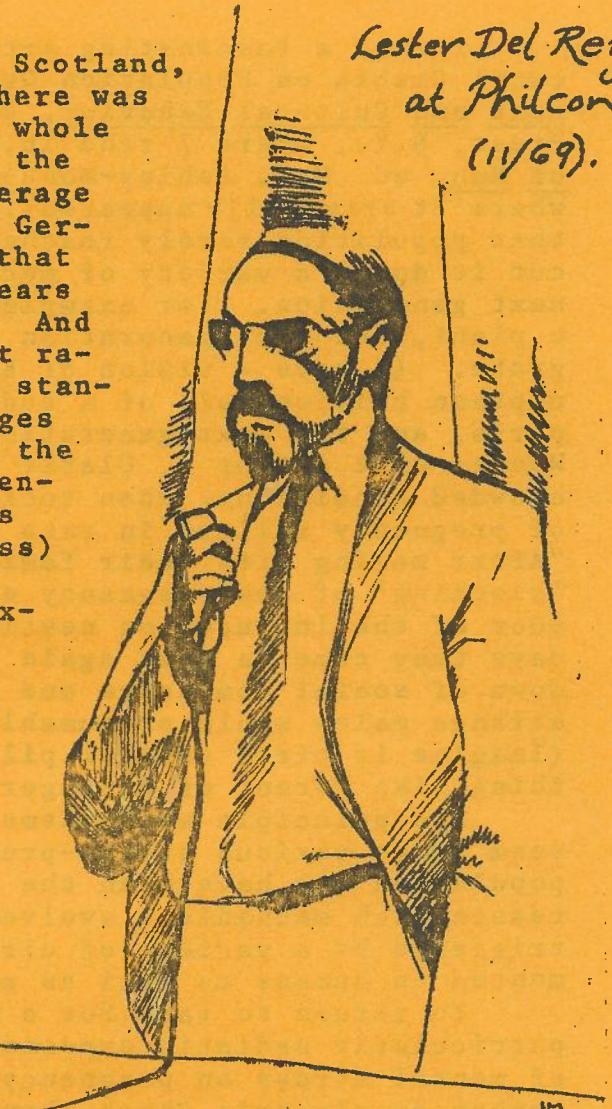
England, during 1940-43, while in Scotland, where there was little bombing, there was no significant peak. "During the whole period of the Hitler terror up to the outbreak of war (1933-39), the average rate [of infant malformation in 55 German hospitals] was nearly double that obtaining during the last seven years of the democratic Weimar period." And in Britain, at least, an efficient rationing system raised the general standard of nutrition, so food shortages should have had little to do with the effect. It's interesting that anencephaly (the incidence of which is apparently very sensitive to stress) occurs three times as often among girl babies as boys--a possible explanation for the increase in the male/female ratio during wartime (and one which I prefer to Nature providing more boys to make up for those killed in the war).

Another study found "pre-maturity to be over twice and death of the infant in the first month nearly three times as frequent among [extramaritally conceived] children compared with those conceived after marriage." Anxiety over the pregnancy is a likely reason.

Not only physical and lethal birth defects, but mental retardation and general impairment of intelligence are correlated with pregnancy stress. "It may seem paradoxical that a lowering of intelligence in the next generation should be the biological response to stress," says the article, but this would help to lower the population by increasing vulnerability to predators. The implications of this are rather frightening. As Chad Mulligan says in Brunner's Stand on Zanzibar, "POPULATION EXPLOSION--Unique in human experience. An event which happened yesterday, but which everyone swears won't happen until tomorrow."

Everyone knows about the social consequences of overcrowding (Stand on Zanzibar does a good job on this, as does Harry Harrison's Make Room, Make Room), but I don't think anyone was counting on a rise in infant mortality, an increase in physical and mental defectives, and a possible lowering of the average intelligence level. It seems that if we don't limit our population ourselves, Nature will do it for us in some highly unpleasant ways.

Lester Del Rey  
at Philcon  
(11/69).



CONCERNING MACROSCOPE: OF HARD SCIENCE AND SIGNIFICANCE  
by Sand Meschkow

*What the cloud doeth  
The Lord knoweth  
The cloud knoweth not*

*What the artist doeth  
The Lord knoweth  
Knoweth the artist not?*

Sidney Lanier (1842-1881)

*"Bear in mind as you write that the subject  
of the novel is what happens between people's  
faces when they talk to one another."*

Samuel Delany, *Nova*

Not so very long ago every literate English-speaking person thought within the common framework of Judeo-Christian and Classical myth. Everyone knew what you were doing if you were a "Prodigal son" or if you were behaving like "Achilles sulking in his tent." There was a highly organized common system of literary allusion, or a grammar of symbology, that an author could draw upon; but that just doesn't cut much ice any more. There is a whole sub-genre of sf consisting of novels in which there is a strong mythic or symbolic framework which plays an important role. If an author can find or build a grammar of symbology, if he can tap a strong mythic vein, he can give his characters added dimensions and overtones they might not ordinarily have, because he can play around with at least one additional level of meaning.

Lately, authors have been mining assorted subdivisions of the occult, mythology, and non-Western religions for their own grammars of symbology. Zelazny used the Hindu pantheon in *Lord of Light* and Delany used the Graail Legends and the Tarot deck in *Nova*, just to give two obvious examples. Now, Piers Anthony has put his considerable talents to work on a space opera with symbolic significance called *Macroscope* using astrology and the life and works of Sidney Lanier, the southern post-Civil War American poet, as his grammar of symbology.

Playing the old shell game with characters, symbols, and archetypes may be delightful for the author but it can sometimes be tedious for the reader. It should always be kept in mind that the purpose of a grammar of symbology is to enrich the story by working through the second or third level; it should not be the story! Neither should the story be a total loss to someone who hasn't spent three semester hours studying the myth/religion/subdivision of the occult the author is working with. The story must stand on its own: why read a heavy-handed updated retelling of the Gospels, for instance, when you can read the original?

I think a good example of a balanced handling of surface story vs. symbolic framework would be Fletcher Pratt's *The Undying Fire*, a recasting of Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece, which is probably remembered now mainly for the beautiful Powers cover painting of the paperback edition. Too bad--it had some good characterization, some enjoyable skulduggery, and a number of extrasolar planets of various ethnic stripes that really held up better than most paper countries in contemporary spy novels. The structure is all there, but if you don't know from Jason, fine. The retelling stands in its own right.

From Pratt's happy medium an author can veer off in two directions. He can give his characters such strong mythical identification that they run away with the first level of the story, or he can make them so bound by the underlying symbolic framework that they never get up off the floor.



I think Delany is guilty of the first fault in *Nova*, excepting that section of the book that concerns Lorq Von Ray's childhood. I'm in favor of juicy, lusty characters, but I find the crew of Lorq Von Ray's ship a bit too much. In fact, a good parody of *Nova* would involve Long John Silver (complete with parrot) signing on a crew consisting of David the shepherd lad, Marilyn Monroe, Bobby and Jack Kennedy, the Jolly Green Giant, Falstaff, and an angry author who ran away from home to stoke the radium furnaces of Cloaca when he was thirteen and who thinks that neither Lorq Von Ray nor Prince Red is "so much." I will admit, however, that even if Delany's characters are Tarot cards come to life, they can stand on their own feet. Edit out every reference to the Tarot and the Grail Quest giving the reader no clue to the underlying symbolic framework, and you would still have a good story with lively characters. I wish I could say the same for Piers Anthony's *Macroscopic*.

You can draw some strong parallels between *Nova* and *Macroscopic*, from their dedications to the fact that both novels have characters with strong musical abilities who get to play on two very unique instruments. However, it is pretty clear from a reading of *Nova* that Delany doesn't really expect you to believe in his Illyrion technology nor in his space-sailing starships to the extent that he expects you to believe in cybernetic studding or in his political and so-

ciological background. But Illyrion makes a good object for a Quest and a dive through a nova makes a good symbol of death and rebirth. Half his planets would be uninhabitable, too. Okay. We allow him to get away with poetry instead of physics because he makes us. (Would you let your sister dive through a nova in a Delany or Zelazny story? That's my test of hard science!)

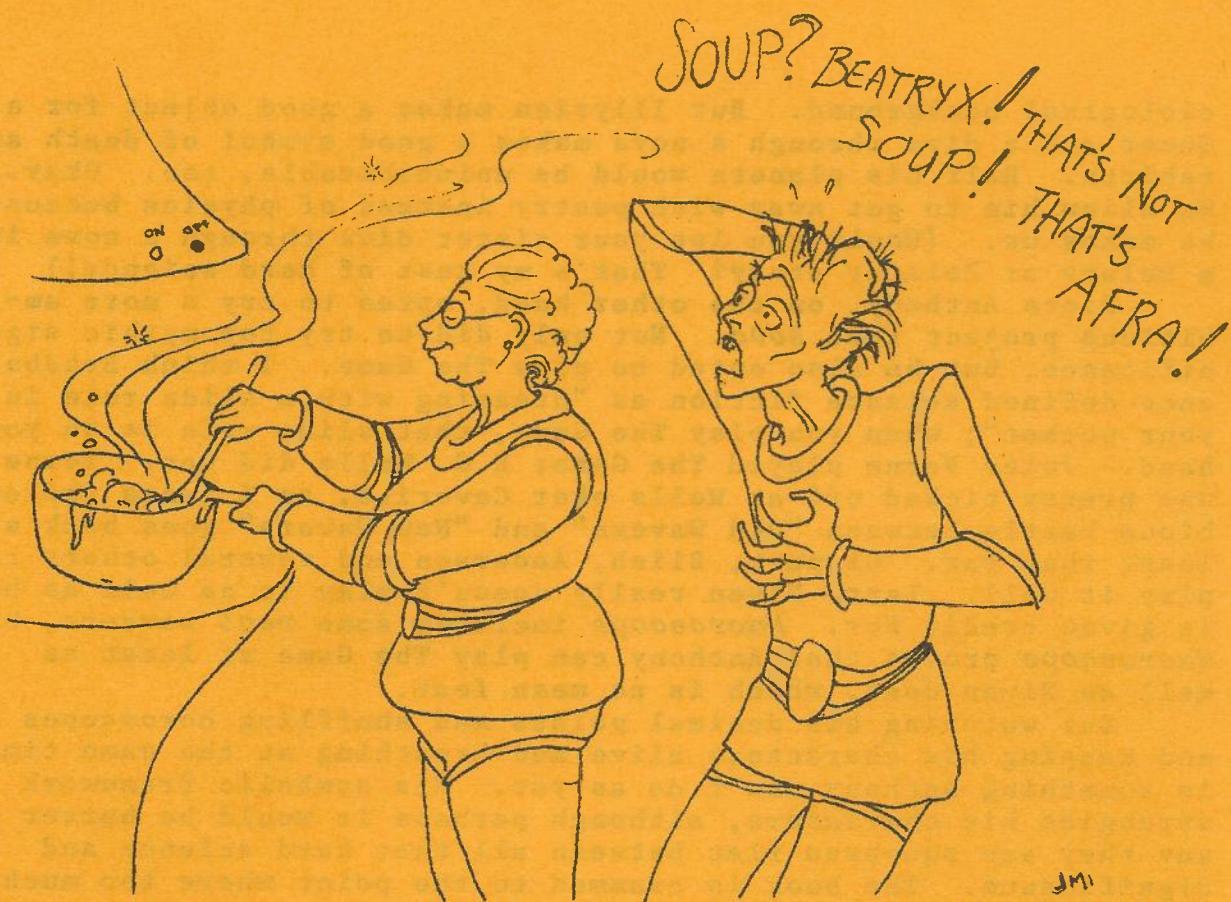
Piers Anthony, on the other hand, opted to try a more ambitious project than *Nova*. Not only did he try for mythic significance, but he also opted to play The Game. I think Bradbury once defined science fiction as "dreaming with a slide rule in your pocket"; when you play The Game, that slide rule is in your hand. Jules Verne played The Game; H.G. Wells did not. Verne was pretty ticked off at Wells over Cavorite, so I guess the dubious battle between "Old Wavers" and "New Wavers" goes back at least that far. Clement, Blish, Anderson and several others can play it well. Larry Niven really doesn't play it as well as he is given credit for. *Macroscopic* includes some real wowsers, but *Macroscopic* proves that Anthony can play The Game at least as well as Niven does, which is no mean feat.

But watching his decimal points and shuffling horoscopes and keeping his characters alive and breathing at the same time is something Anthony can't do as yet. His symbolic framework strangles his characters, although perhaps it would be better to say they are squeezed flat between all that hard science and Significance. The book is crammed to the point where too much of the action is sometimes told and doesn't happen.

I've always suspected Dick of using the *I Ching* to plot *The Man in the High Castle*; Anthony used the horoscopes of his characters to fill in their characterizations, or, for all I know, to create them entirely. The results do not speak highly of the method.

I can buy the hero as a nebbish. After all, he is only a false front persona erected by a thoroughly nasty superman, so he can be a crippled personality. I am bothered that the heroine, Afra, has a thoroughly Freudian hangup for a character built on an astrological basis. But such hangups are common enough, and the author must do something to keep boy from getting girl until the end. But the characterizations of the couple that play Martin and Margaret Crane to their Richard and Dorothy Seaton leave something to be desired.

Beatrix Groton is not really so dumb, but she is so sweet, understanding, forgiving, placid, and commonplace that she gets on your nerves. At one point, as the others stand awed for hours gaping at our galaxy as seen from 30,000 light years above the galactic plane, she enters and says, "Soup's on." She doesn't add, "...children," but she doesn't have to. Okay, maybe she is some kind of takeoff on Margaret Crane, Dorothy Seaton and all the other game but useless dolls who used to accompany guys in space operas, but to me she smells suspiciously of chicken soup!



Her husband Harold Groton is the Vulcan/father figure of the story. He is not the "blinding flash and deafening report" type of scientist. And having Beatrix for a wife has turned him into a good, lucid lecturer. But it has also almost turned him into a potato; the only time he really shines is in one sequence when he is in an alien body away from the rest of the quartet. He does a very credible Van Vogtian job of mopping up the opposition. I suspect that had he been given his head sooner the story would have moved faster and the hero would have wised up sooner.

It is saddening to compare *Macroscopic* with *Hasan*. There is obviously as much research in one as in the other, but while *Hasan* reads as if it was written joyously, in hot blood, *Macroscopic* is very clearly written in cold ink. Too bad, too. Cut by 75% and shorn of much of the Significance it would have made a juicy Nivenesque novel with Skylarkian technology, a Stapledonian several-million-year galactic history, a method of surviving high G and interstellar travel that is as gratuitous and gory as anything out of Farmer, and a superman out of Frank M. Robinson's *The Power*, save that he talks too damn much. Cut by 75% and shorn of much of the hard science it would have been an allegorical love story colored by the poetry of Sidney Lanier, much concerned with predestination vs. free will, and devoted to

the elaboration of the "doctrine of Microcosm and Macrocosm"--that is, "the concept of the individual as the cosmos in miniature, while the greater universe is total man in his being."

This last, by the way, is Anthony's definition of astrology. This book contains the real stuff, the best unbiased primer as to what astrology is supposed to do I have come across. I can't swallow it, but it's worth half the price of the book. It is too bad Anthony used it to steer his characters around by their ears with.

I might as well admit openly that I am biased in favor of the hard science aspects of this book. I commend it to hard science fans for all the good things they can steal from it and all the fun--and apoplexy!--it will bring them. Read the astrology sections, too. Sneering is good for the facial muscles.

I cannot commend this book to fans of Sidney Lanier, if there are any besides Piers Anthony. Come now, could Sidney Lanier be the only American poet who wrote about man's free will? If clouds are predestined but artists and men have the free will to improve themselves, they also have the free will to make mistakes. This was one of them.

I cannot commend this book to fans looking for good characterization, either. Anthony kills off his two best characters, for all practical purposes, by the end of Chapter Two! *Macroscope* would make a great *2001*-type movie and these two characters would make great cameo roles. Of course, you could do a lot for the characters by casting them properly: Dustin Hoffman playing *The Graduate* all over again as the hero, Raquel Welch as the girl, Rod Steiger playing a cross between Scotty and Mr. Spock, and Shirley Booth playing an Earth Mother. I don't know how much Significance would be left, but the special effects would be fantastic and people would flock to watch Dustin Hoffman fondle Raquel Welch, hear Rod Steiger lecture on astrology, and watch Raquel Welch melt--yes, melt!--into a pool of cellular goo. And *Macroscope* would become a cult object book. As Anthony intended? Well, the artist knoweth, but I do not.

But for a book with solid characters, good hard science, and a controlled grammar of symbology, we will have to wait. Don't be surprised if Piers Anthony writes it!

\* \* \* \*

*The Shilluk were an African tribe who executed their king (by sealing him up in a hut and leaving him to suffocate) when they thought he was getting old and feeble. One sign was his inability to satisfy his numerous wives, whence the expression, "In as much trouble as an impotent Shilluk king."* --IPT

\* \* \* \*

VAUGHN BODE DOES RAID COMMERCIALS!

\* \* \* \*

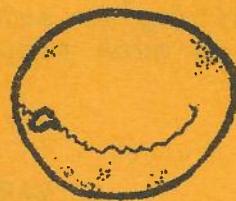


Spring has finally groped its way to the Columbia campus. Outside my window I hear the soft staccato of chanted slogans, the tinkling of broken window glass. Black flag has sprouted where once there was nothing but the monotony of mud and discarded frisbees. The campus walk is sprinkled liberally (?) with leaflets. I cough and write....

So much for all you Gene Stratton-Porter freaks. The up-shot of all this, however, is that there are demonstrations, bomb scares, injunctions, etc., and some very uptight people in the upper echelons of my office. (SDS and D4M don't bug me much--I can always check out what's going on in their fuzzy little minds from Ricky's fuzzy little brother. "How's Gerry, Ricky?" "Revolting.") This is a partial explanation of why this, our November issue, is actually being published in April. We haven't had access to the usual typewriter or mimeo machine. It seems that certain highly-placed individuals think we might get bombed (???) if we work after hours (but, obviously, there's no danger of this during office hours.... H'mmm....). So, eventually we all but snaffled a mimeo machine and wound up using the selectric in the Bureau of Applied Social Research. Aren't you lucky? now Eli can AKOST you with another issue!

NOTICE TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE WE PROMISED TO REVIEW: Sorry about that! The reviews are being held for the Annish due to the incredible production problems thish. So you can stop holding your collective breaths for the nonce.

For all those (three) of you who have been anxiously waiting--AT LAST IT CAN BE TOLD! THE TRUE STORY BEHIND KIPPLE! Ted Pauls has managed to trace the term all the way to its origin. Ted, if you remember (or if you don't) from lastish, got the name of his zine from a Donald Duck comic book. "Do you like Kipling?" "I don't know--I never kippled." Around 1961 or 1962, Ted relates, he was involved in a fan feud with some New York fans. "The whole thing seems silly now, as most feuds do retrospectively, but it was serious then.... Anyway, one of



their ploys was to turn 'kipple' into a common noun, defining it as 'useless junk, the sort of thing that collects in piles on the top of your desk.' This usage didn't catch on generally, but about that time another fan returned to the West Coast. He took 'kipple' with him, apparently added the 'reproduces itself when you're not looking' bit on his own, and introduced it to California fandom. Years later, Phil Dick heard the term at a party, and eventually decided to use it in a book." The book was DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? and that's where I picked up the "kipple" for my title. So now you know.

PLEASE BE SURE TO NOTE OUR ADDRESS CHANGE! Mail is guaranteed to reach us if it is sent to Ricky's address. However, the rest of the AKOS staff is in the process of apartment-hunting and all addresses other than Ricky's are subject to violent change.

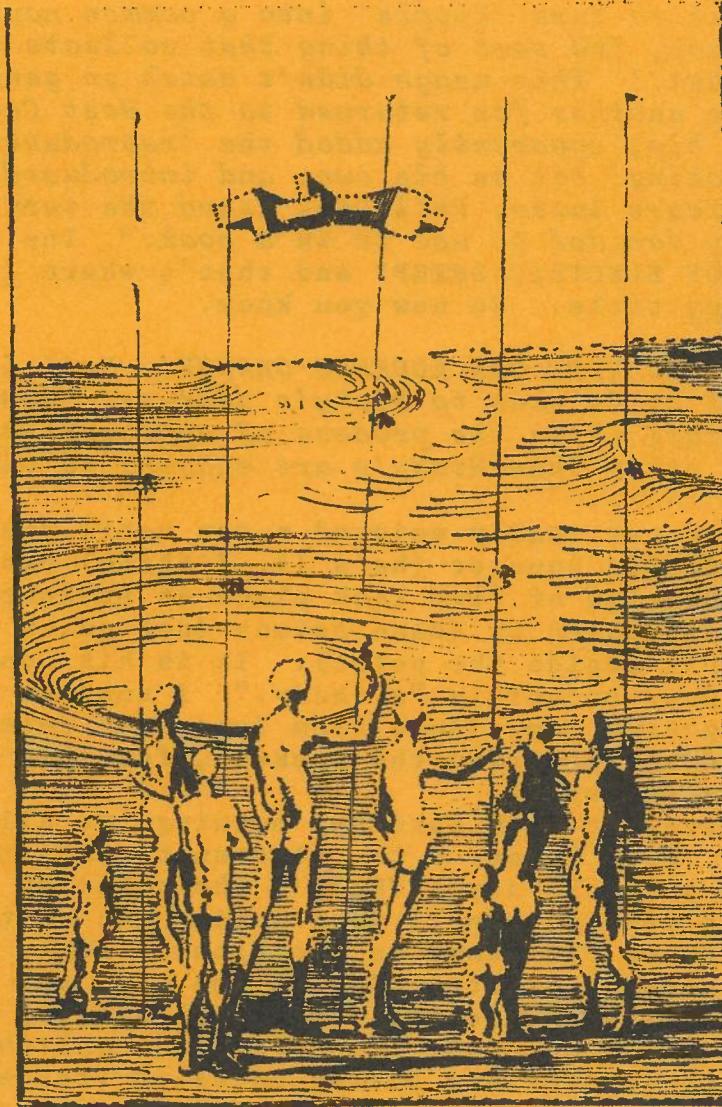
You have never really enjoyed a con until you have dragged your non-fan little younger (he's 15, I think) brother to one. Christofer's baptism of fire took place at Boskone, where he was mightily impressed by Isaac Asimov (not quite the same way I am, but that's beside the point). It is his considered opinion that the Good Doctor is "a dandy." I suspect that Christofer may have gotten some ideas from Isaac (we seem to have run into him quite often during the weekend, for some odd reason)--which could be dangerous.

At any rate, at 4:30 Saturday morning, we all wound up in Ricky's room. Fred Lerner & Co. (I wasn't going to mention Fred by name, but, as Ricky says, "What's the point of knowing Fred unless you can pick on him?") were making out on the bed. Jon and I were playing Gin Rummy on the floor. Ricky was snickered on the blog, hanging off the edge of the bed, and kibbitzing my hand (and I was losing badly). Yarik was sitting in the closet ("Why are you sitting in the closet?" "I'm getting dark-adapted." "Oh."). And Christofer was taking notes on Fred's technique, putting out my cigaret every time I looked away, and leafing thru the old GALAXYs I'd bought that afternoon. Fred & Co. were pretty much oblivious to everything, until Christofer got curious. He looked up from a GALAXY cover and asked, "Who's Fritz Leeber?" Suddenly Fred & Co. were both bolt alert, demanding in chorus, "Who said that???" We explained that we'd just last weekend started Christofer on Retief stories. They decided it was all right in that case, and settled back down to the business at hand.

Beware the wrath of Yarik!

...Jon (she said, plaintively), can I go home now?

The Chugton



*FIRST LANDING*  
by Janet Fox

Far down the wind the cries of dark hungry things with eyes snapping fire lost in darkness. Two men in a child's toy silver cylinder of metal on a plain where the very sound of the wind is nails scratched across a blackboard.

"If I could only open the view-port just a crack."

Springs of sweat oozed out of the man's skin, bathing him in stickiness.

"No, please." At the thought of it his stomach was left behind, high arch on a rollercoaster and down, freefalling into a swarm of fireflies below.

The other man's hand approached the windowlever. The thousand miles of shrieking emptiness poignant as an aching tooth tried to curl up in his guts. His hand shook, approached the lever, fell.

"God, we're a pair, a sweet pair." His laugh scaled upward, cracked, shattered.

"Try again...maybe."

The hand shook, a voluntary puppet, shook, gripped the lever, pulled. The machinery of the viewport, functioning perfectly, hummed a half-inch crack in the opaque shield that covered it.

"What...what is it like?"

A spasm went through him as seventy thousand tons of square-cut crystalline mountain fell noisily into his head.

A wind which was not the wind hit a high wild note that did or didn't sound like a child shrieking in a burst of excitement.

"What's it like? Can you see? What colors, what shapes?"

Kaleidoscope images -- fiery shadows -- colors that had no names numbed his imagination. Amoebas of darkness with cherry-red, lime-green, butter-yellow centers, continually turning themselves inside-outside-out.

"I don't know."

"Close it."

"I can't."

"Close it."

"If I turn around I might see."

There was a sound outside that was like a fast trill on a flute, but not at all like it. An elephantine quadruped with human eyes peering from a face of greenish-gray rock was settling down just above his breast-bone, causing an ache that he smashed at with his fist.

"I opened it. You close it." Tears were streaming down his rugged, magazine-ad face.

"I don't want to close it...I want to...want to go home."

The word registered in their minds at the same moment. Lush fields of grass that was really green. A sky that was a conservative shade of blue. Dirt under your feet that was rich...brown...earth. Earth under your feet with all her surprises that were so familiar.

"We can go home."

"Hurry."

The straps and webbing seemed clumsy and unnecessary to their anxious hands. The return course was set; the cylinder gave off an aura of fire and began to shoot upward.

The wind said a word as they left, but it was too alien to be intelligible, though it sent a shiver like a shaft of ice down each of their spines.

# ILLUMINATED ALUMNI

When the Good Doctor asked if he might interview Roving Girl Editor Megson, the rest of us found within ourselves the capacity to refuse. Yes, we, with hearts of gallium (it melts at a touch), who can't even refuse a panhandler, were ready to refuse the Good Doctor. ("We keep her for ourselves!" "Yes, she is ours! She must not be allowed!") Unfortunately, while we were busy telling ourselves that Megson was ours and ours alone, Doctor Asimov had taken her by the hand (?) and was leading her astray. (Ahh'm, I mean away, don't I?) This touching scene so affected us that we were unable to prevent it. The circumstances of the interview, however, left us with a paucity of quotable material from the Good Doctor. Therefore, despite her somewhat exhausted state, Editor Megson gallantly agreed to interview Robert Silverberg, too. But yet a villain lurked within the machine. The tape cassette, curse its evil works, self-destructed in five seconds, six thirds and a fourth. Some careless hand, deciding that all was lost, tossed it into a corner, where it would have vanished into an ever-expanding pile of kipple but for the garbage-laden mind of YHOS. As I was wallowing in my usual haunts, I heard the rustle of the fearful magneto-strictor. Taking the matter in hand, I gently coerced the tape from its lair. After much trial and travail, we managed to decipher what you are about to read. Alas, several pieces are missing (including one we carefully removed from the transcription...); nevertheless, we suspect that you will enjoy what remains. --Yarik P. Thrip

Next time I volunteer to interview Isaac Asimov, I am going to have all my questions written down--so that I can't forget them, even in moments of stress.  
--Janet Megson

ISAAC ASIMOV: How old are you, by the way?  
THE MEGSON: Twenty-three.

I wouldn't have thought you could grow them that big in only 23 years.  
I "thinded 'em"--like Valentine Michael Smith.

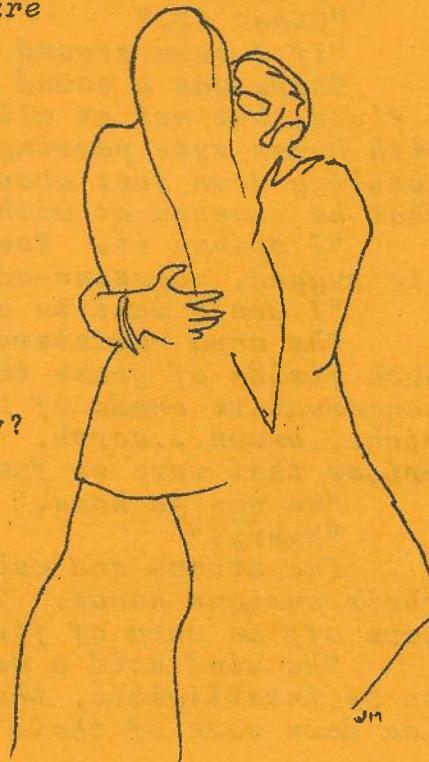
I see, you think breasts.

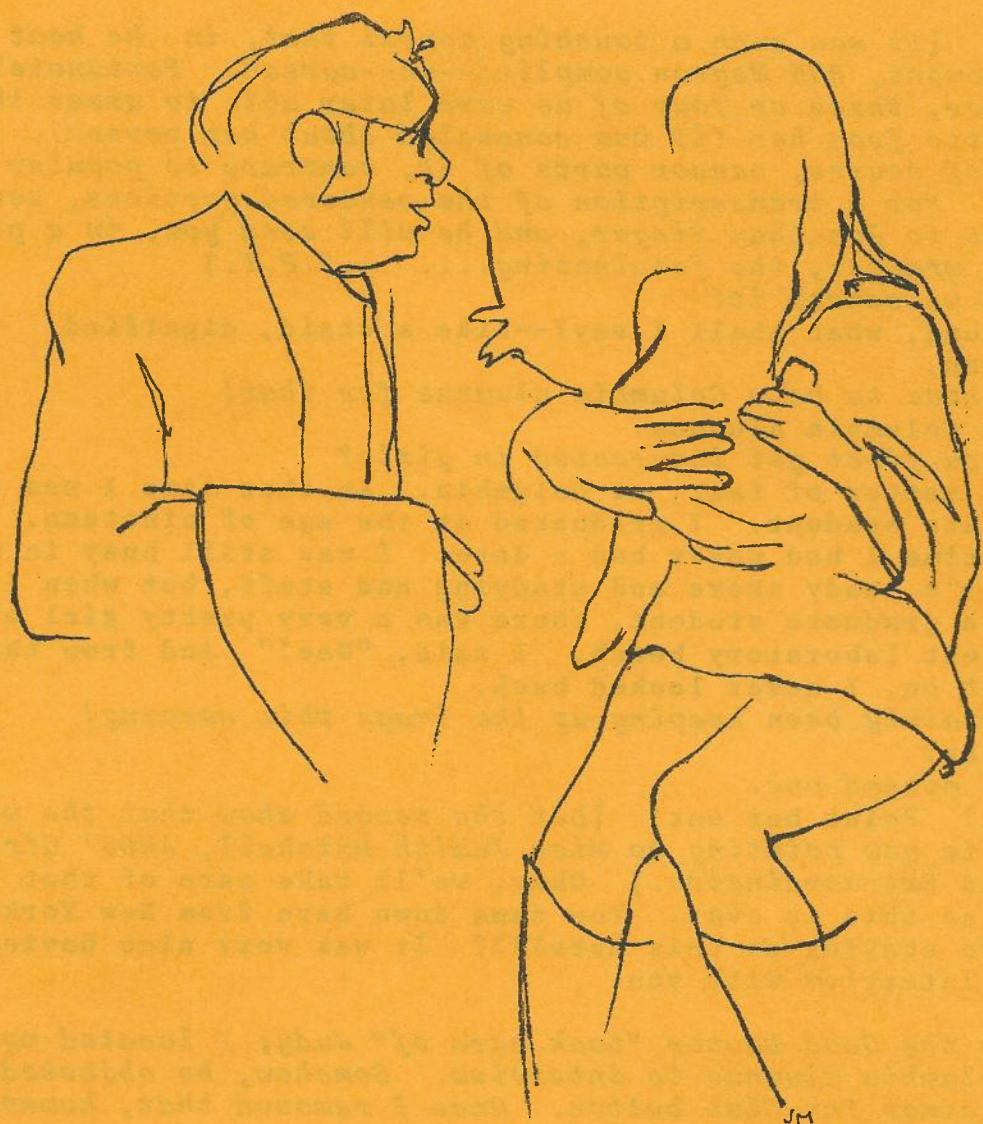
Right.

I think breasts, too, but not on me.

Didn't help you, hunh?

No, flat-chested.





I wish you wouldn't do that--I can't remember my questions.  
Why don't you ask me how it feels to be a great author?  
All right! Dr. Asimov, how does it feel to be a great author?  
How does it feel to be a well-endowed girl?  
Wonderful!  
Well, it feels that way to me, too. I mean--you being a well-endowed girl. Where are you going to print all this?  
In AKOS.  
Oh, my god! Censor it, will you?  
Would we censor something you said?  
Yes.  
Why?  
Because I'm asking you to....

All right. [It was such a touching appeal that, in the heat of the moment, RGE Megson complied--uh--agreed. Fortunately, however, three or four of us were later able to wrest the cassette from her (it was concealed about her person). We did, of course, censor parts of it, contrary to popular belief. For a transcription of the censored portions, send \$15.36 to Jonathan Singer, and he will send you, in a plain brown wrapper, the fascinating.... --Y.P.T.]

How should we censor it?

Make me sound, what shall I say?--like a staid, dignified old man.

But you'd have to be a Columbia alumnus for that!

But I am a Columbia alumnus.

When did you first get interested in girls?

Well, as a matter of fact, at Columbia. At that time I was a graduate student. I graduated at the age of nineteen. At that time I had never had a date. I was still busy in my father's candy store and studying and stuff, but when I became a graduate student, there was a very pretty girl at the next laboratory bench. I said, "Gee!" And from that moment on, I never looked back.

You've certainly been keeping up the image this evening!

Have I, dear?

...But you missed one.

Oh, my god! Point her out! [Let the record show that the witness is now pointing to Miss Judith Mitchell, AKOS' Girl Artist Extraordinaire.] Okay, we'll take care of that as soon as this is over. You came down here from New York? You're staying at this hotel??? It was very nice having this interview with you.

While the Good Doctor "took care of" Judy; I located myself another Columbia alumnus to interview. Somehow, he objected to my Isaac Asimov Fan Club button. Once I removed that, however, we were able to reach an accord.

RGE Megson: First of all, can we ask you what it's like living with Harlan Ellison?

Robert Silverberg: I didn't actually live with Harlan Ellison. I lived next door to Harlan Ellison. It was very unpredictable. He would frequently--he was not successful as a writer at this time, I may say--he would frequently threaten suicide and I would encourage him, open the window, and he'd fink out every single time. He worked in a book store and would come home with Anchor Books. Anchor Books were just getting started then, and they were very expensive, like about 65¢, and Harlan had them all which he would buy at wholesale. I would invite him to follow through on the suicide business and leave me all of his Anchor Books which I couldn't afford at the time. But, no, he insisted on just talking suicide. But anyway, it was very exciting.

*Do you feel that having gone to Columbia has had any effect on your sf writing?*

At SMU or UCLA, it would have been much harder to have handled the professional end of things. As far as the education, yes, I think so. I took a lot of lit courses and got to read a lot of things that I should have read anyway. Nice to get college credit for them. I don't think I did Columbia much good, but I'm rather glad I went there.

*Okay, we have a nasty question to ask you.*

*You may get a nasty answer.*

*How long did it take you to write Up the Line; and, specifically, did you spend more time on the first half than on the second?*

No, I wrote it at a fairly consistent pace. I don't recall exactly how long it took but I think it was on the order of two months or so, which is par for a novel of that sort. And if there are any differences in the levels of different parts, I think it's mostly a question of the unusual circumstances under which I was writing all during 1968. Which is to say, in exile from my own house after a fire, and under much strain and confusion, I began running out of steam on many projects. But it was not written any faster or slower than the things I have been writing in the last few years.

*And we also wanted to know: About that paradox...where Judd reappears in the street and prevents the girl from being killed.*

Well, you have to think four-dimensionally to understand that, really. And, um, well, what about that paradox???

*Eli claims it doesn't work.*

It's quite possible that it doesn't--the only way you can find that out is to try it. Up the Line was a romp, a trip, which was not necessarily intended to be lovingly precise, although I hoped it had a reasonable internal consistency while I was putting it together. It's quite possible that if somebody reduced the paradoxes to schematics, he would find that they don't connect at all the corners, but I'd rather not know about it.

*And we'd like to hear your version of the dinner that followed NyCon.*

*How did you hear about this?*

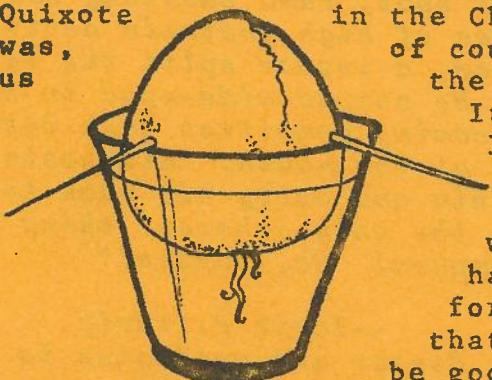
*Eli heard it from Harlan.*

Harlan, yes. Harlan was there. Well, we went to a restaurant where I'd eaten many times, successfully, called El Quixote in the Chelsea Hotel at 23rd Street. It was, of course, Labor Day, and they warned us the service would be a little slow.

It was a little slow. It was roughly two hours before we got menus.

And many after that before we ate.

This was a group of about sixteen writers, wives and fellow-travelers, hangers-on. I waited patiently for the menus and all because I knew that coming on top of the delay would be good Spanish food. But these writers, being basically unstable people, kept drift-



ting to the bar and drinking as their impatience grew...and so a nightmarish texture crept into the experience as they got more and more thoroughly lit, as the restaurant proceeded to do nothing whatever. We were, incidently, in a back room, because we wanted to be all together where we wouldn't be cluttered up. And they put us in the back and there were four garbage cans behind our table overflowing with stuff. It was Labor Day--no garbage collection on Labor Day. And that was sort of discouraging--these gray cement-lined walls. Harry Harrison got on Gordy Dickson's shoulders. Gordy carried him around the room. They behaved themselves unprofessionally. Now I had recommended this place and it's a good restaurant--but it didn't work out well. [Tape blank courtesy of Lafayette Radio.] ...And we didn't even win any Hugos. The whole table was in bad shape.

Thank you very much. You're much easier to interview than Isaac Asimov.

That's because I'm not pinching you the whole time.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THRU TIME AND SPACE WITH GRAYSON GREENSWARD

The swamp-dwelling inhabitants of Honda, who had adopted Japanese culture in the first years of interstellar travel, were delighted to learn that they were about to be visited by Grayson Greensward, famed interstellar troublestrangler. The way they received the information involved a massive security breach which was almost patched up quickly enough. Greensward, as it happened, was in dire need of the vacation; in fact, he was on the verge of a major nervous breakdown.... They met him at the space port with their version of a brass band, which is unsettling under the best of conditions. I don't think it is really necessary to say that it left GG in a rather touchy state. At any rate, they calmed him down by installing him in luxury at a fine hotel, and sake'd and sushi'd him at all the best places. But they saved the piece de resistance till the end. On his very last day they showed him their finest restaurant. This magnificent edifice overlooked a famous resort spot, Fuma Bubbling Bog. Unfortunately, it was also in an area of high tectonic activity, and as Greensward sat eating dinner, a tremor split the restaurant practically under his feet. He stared wide-eyed in horror as his dinner and half of his welcoming committee sank into the muck, and then collapsed, foaming at the mouth. His hosts had no recourse but to strait-jacket him and carry him back to his ship on a stretcher. To the end, the only coherent thing they could get out of him was, "Oh, tempura! Oh, morass!"

--Yarik P. Thrip

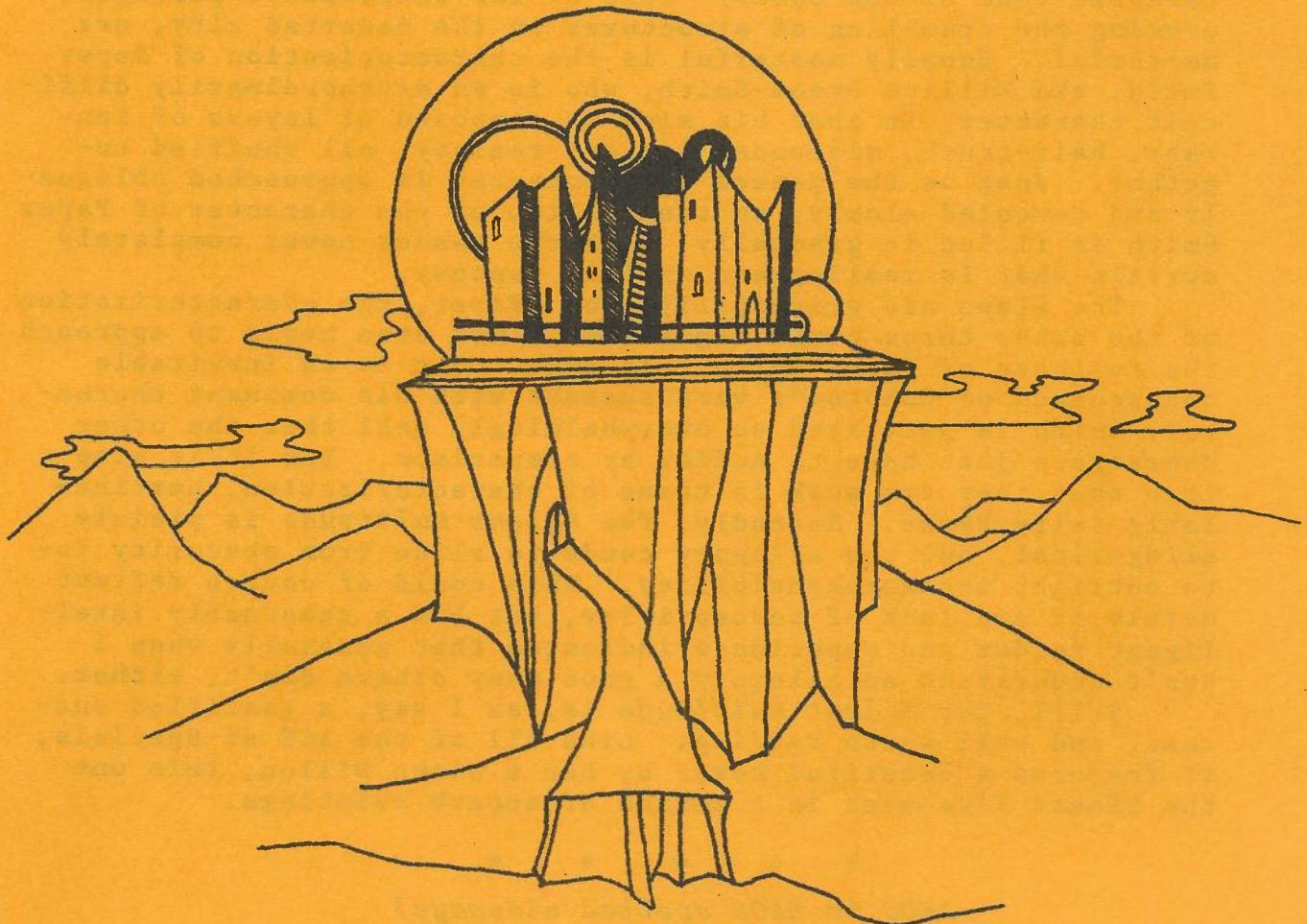
(with thanks to Jon Singer and apologies to Cicero)

D.G. COMPTON'S THE SILENT MULTITUDE

--review by Ted Pauls

In undertaking to write this particular novel, Compton set himself quite a challenge, and before proceeding to consider whether he succeeded or failed in meeting the challenge, I should like to quietly applaud his courage in attempting it. *The Silent Multitude* is designed in such a way as to require great skill and effort on the part of the author merely to hold it together. With a starkly meager skeletal structure, no significant external event beyond the initial causal event, no problem for the characters to solve, no Good Guys/Bad Guys dichotomy, the novel is wholly dependent upon Compton's ability as an author; the writing itself, and the characterization, are the only things capable of holding the reader's attention. Not every writer would deliberately set up such a challenge for himself.

The plot is sparse. In the 1980's, man has moved well into the Space Age and has unwittingly brought back to Earth a fungus which attacks granite and limestone, thus causing modern cities to crumble. The fungus comes to the city of Gloucester, England, and most of the population is evacuated. The city crumbles. That's all. (Do you see what I mean by "starkly meager skeletal structure" now?)



Compton focuses on five characters remaining in the evacuated city as it disintegrates: Paper Smith, an aged, eccentric recluse, who collects but does not read newspapers, and whose mind is a bower of fantasy and confusion; Sally Paget, a newspaper reporter exploring the dying city in search of a story; Robert Goodliffe, Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, who like a captain stubbornly clinging to the bridge of his sinking ship insists on remaining and continuing to hold services in the 850-year-old cathedral; Simeon Crankshawe, the son of a famous architect, who travels around to every city struck by the fungus because he enjoys watching the crumbling of buildings; and Tug, Paper Smith's tom-cat. All five are used as viewpoint characters, but the old recluse is the central character of the novel.

*The Silent Multitude*, though flawed, is at least a qualified success. There is some splendid writing--Chapter One stands out as particularly impressive, perhaps precisely because it is the first and because it establishes the mood and tone of the novel. (Compton approaches the plot-line obliquely. Because the viewpoint characters either do not know about the fungus, or know about it and take it for granted and hence speak little about it, the reader does not get the full story for quite some time. This fact bolsters the under-stated, fatalistic tone of the book.) Some of the descriptive passages, evoking the crumbling of structures in the deserted city, are masterful. Equally masterful is the characterization of Paper Smith, aka William Broom-Smith, who is an extraordinarily difficult character, in that his mind is composed of layers of fantasy, half-truth, misconception and reality, all shuffled together. Just as the menace to Gloucester is approached obliquely and revealed slowly, so the outline of the character of Paper Smith is filled in gradually, with the reader never completely certain what is reality and what is fantasy.

The flaws are principally two. First, the characterization of the other three human figures does not even begin to approach the fullness of Paper Smith. In part, that is an inevitable consequence of Compton's very success with his dominant character: Smith is portrayed so overwhelmingly well that the other characters just have to suffer by comparison. But it is also true that they are weak in terms of characterization, particularly Sally Paget. Secondly, *The Silent Multitude* is plainly allegorical, but the allegory tends to slide from obscurity into outright incomprehensibility. This could of course reflect merely my own lack of perceptivity, but I'm a reasonably intelligent reader and experience indicates that generally when I don't understand an allegory a good many others don't, either.

Still, *The Silent Multitude* is, as I say, a qualified success, and well worth reading. Like all of the ACE sf Specials, it features a beautiful cover by Leo & Diane Dillon, this one the finest I've seen in a series of superb paintings.

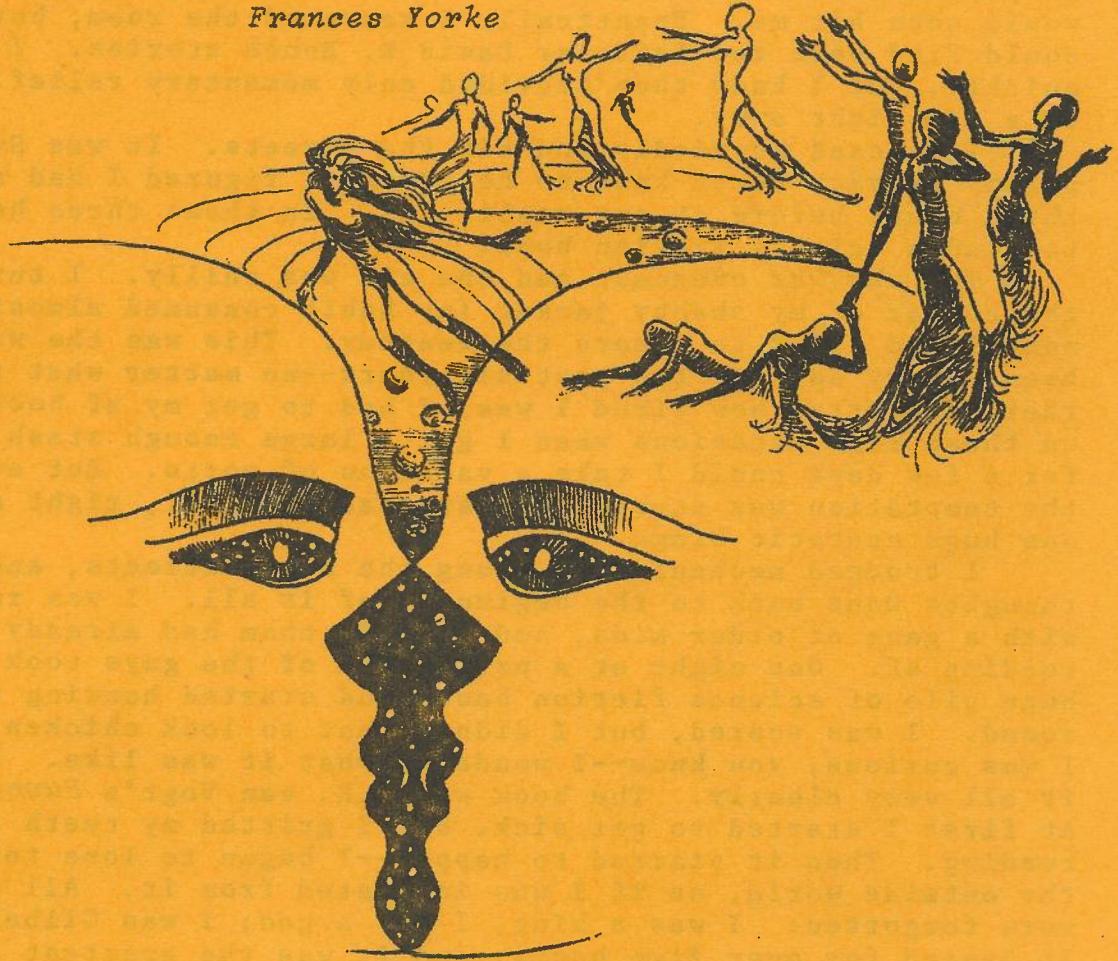
\* \* \* \* \*

AKOS is KAOS spelled sideways!

ESPERCHANT

Listed as missing in disappearing pages,  
Posting past earth-blue light and lunar ranges  
We stride the spaceways that the mind uncages.  
Tasting communications flesh estranges,  
We pierce the time-ways that are sparked with wonder,  
Horror and ecstasy. Tongues may not render  
The surge of Highways where farplanets thunder  
In any language--arrogant or tender.  
Witchcraft and weirding in the mind's strange marrow  
Burnt all our yesterdays. We see tomorrow  
And dare not catch it in words cold and narrow  
Lest earthbound hearers jeer our joy to sorrow.  
So, secretly we test and taste strange pathways  
Mind-walking time-wise through long loves and rages  
Until we end, by alien mind-dumb deathways,  
Listed as missing in disappearing pages.

Frances Yorke



## MEMOIRES OF AN SF ADDICT

The following was submitted by an obviously far-gone science fiction addict. He came up to me, fell down on his patch-covered knees, and begged me to help him out. As I helpfully escorted him to the door, he pulled this manuscript out and offered to sell it. We finally settled on two ACE Specials and a copy of the February AMAZING, which he clutched tightly to his torn, dirty clothing when he left. He asked us to withhold his name, since "I have already caused my family enough embarrassment and pain." Though this editor is of course too busy with fanac to read any science fiction, I sympathize with his plight, and offer this as a warning to those who may be tempted to sample that "crazy Buck Rogers stuff." --E.C.

I woke up and reached for the book by the bed. With horror, I realized I had finished it the night before. I began to shake in psychosomatic anticipation of the withdrawal symptoms that would soon hit me. Frantically I searched the room, but all I could find were two leftover David R. Bunch stories. I read them quickly, but I knew they provided only momentary relief. I needed a fix right away.

I dressed hurriedly and hit the streets. It was Sunday--but my private demon knew no holidays; I figured I had about three hours before it got really bad. In those three hours I had to find a science fiction book.

The sky was overcast and the air was chilly. I turned up the collar of my shabby jacket (my habit consumed almost all my money) and tried to ignore the weather. This was the way it had been, every day for the past six years--no matter what the weather, no matter how tired I was, I had to get my sf books. Only on those rare occasions when I got a large enough stash to last for a few days could I take a vacation of sorts. But even then, the temptation was strong to just read them all, right away, in one huge ecstatic binge.

I trudged mechanically along the dirty streets, and my thoughts went back to the beginnng of it all. I was running with a gang of older kids, and some of them had already started reading sf. One night at a party, one of the guys took out a huge pile of science fiction books and started handing them around. I was scared, but I didn't want to look chicken. Besides, I was curious; you know--I wondered what it was like. I remember it all very clearly. The book was A.E. van Vogt's *Pawns of Null-A*. At first I started to get sick, but I gritted my teeth and kept reading. Then it started to happen--I began to lose touch with the outside world, as if I was insulated from it. All my troubles were forgotten: I was a king, I was a god; I was Gilbert Gosseyn. It lasted for over five hours, and it was the greatest thing that

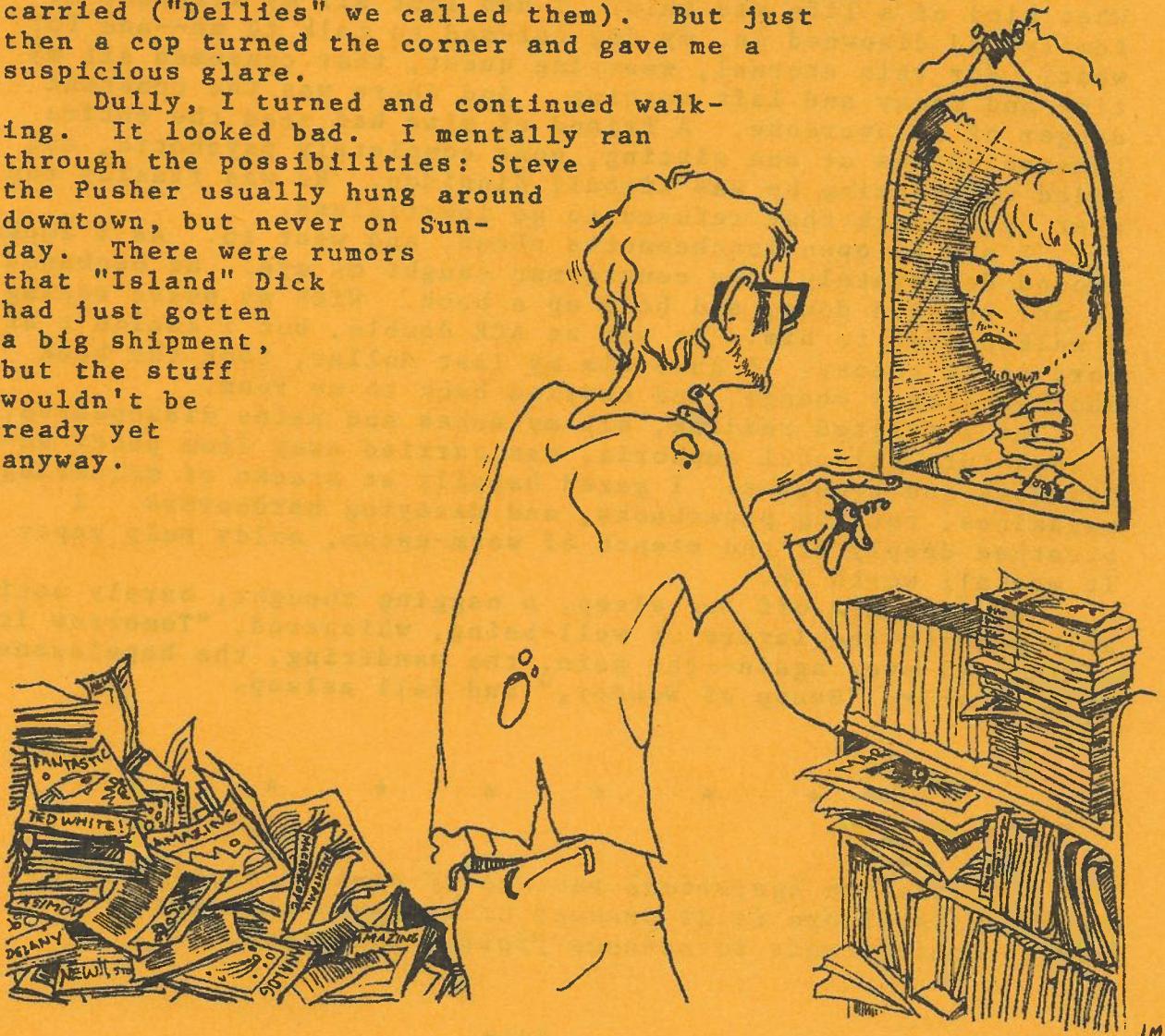
had ever happened to me.

It developed slowly, but the seeds of my addiction were all there. At first it was just an occasional thing, two or three times a month. Then it was every weekend, and before I knew it, I had a book-a-day habit. But I didn't really know I was hooked until the weekend I ran out of sf.

I had forgotten to buy enough Friday to last me. Saturday morning I woke up and it hit me. I felt sick, really sick--my hands were shaking, I had cramps, and my library books were overdue. I staggered over to a mirror and stared in despair. I was trapped in that bright moment when I first learned my doom: the face that stared back was that of a science fiction addict.

A chill gust of wind brought my thoughts back to the present. As I turned my collar to the cold and damp, my eye was caught by the flash of a neon light. It was a drugstore sign. I peered into the window: closed. My heart started to pound; I knew I didn't have much time left. I could break in and steal a couple of the Dell paperbacks they usually carried ("Dellies" we called them). But just then a cop turned the corner and gave me a suspicious glare.

Dully, I turned and continued walking. It looked bad. I mentally ran through the possibilities: Steve the Pusher usually hung around downtown, but never on Sunday. There were rumors that "Island" Dick had just gotten a big shipment, but the stuff wouldn't be ready yet anyway.



On and on I went. My stomach began to tighten, my head began to ache, and my secret decoder ring started to fall off. Suddenly a dirty, unshaven man in a shabby grey overcoat stepped in front of me.

"Psst," he whispered hoarsely, "Want some?" As he spoke he pulled something from beneath his coat. I had a glimpse of stars and blaring blurbs on a background of science fiction purple, and my heart leapt. With trembling fingers I gave him the money, grabbed the book, and turned towards home. And then I looked more closely.

"WHAT IS THE AIR FORCE HIDING?" screamed the cover. "TRUE STORY...SECRETS...THIS AUTHOR CHOSEN TO REVEAL...."

It was a flying saucer book! I hurled it from me with a curse and whirled around, but the stranger had disappeared.

The pain was getting worse now. I could feel my body sweating and my GALAXY subscription expiring. Why couldn't I quit? What kind of a life was this? I had lost all my friends, my family had disowned me, my dog refused to talk to me--and for what? For this eternal, wearying quest, that consumed all my time and money and left nothing. And there was the constant danger of an overdose. A friend of mine had read the entire Lensman series at one sitting, gone completely psychotic, and ended up thinking he was Kimball Kinnison. He was finally run over by a truck that refused to go inertialess.

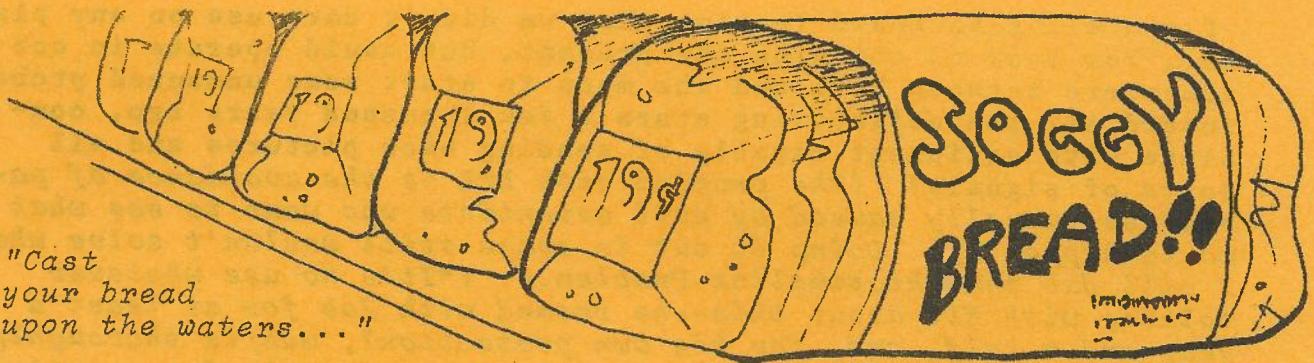
I saw an open luncheonette ahead, and went in. As I looked around desperately, the counterman caught my eye. He beckoned to me, reached down, and held up a book. With my pulse racing, I walked over to him. It was an ACE double, but I couldn't afford to be choosy. I gave him my last dollar, took the book and the nickel change, and hurried back to my room.

As I started reading, all my aches and pains disappeared. I sank into blissful euphoria, was carried away from petty annoyances and troubles. I gazed happily at stacks of moldering magazines, rotting paperbacks, and decaying hardcovers. I breathed deeply of the stench of worm-eaten, moldy pulp paper. It was all worth it.

As I nodded off to sleep, a nagging thought, barely noticeable beneath the layers of well-being, whispered, "Tomorrow it begins all over again--the pain, the wandering, the hopelessness." But I mumbled "Sense of Wonder," and fell asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

Despite the hysterical ravings of certain highly-placed individuals, there is at present no evidence that use of Marvel Comics leads to science fiction addiction.



(denotes Eli's comments)

(\*denotes Janet's comments)

HARRY WARNER, JR.

423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, Md. 21740

Even if it's taken almost a month to make the statement, I'm delighted with the second issue of AKOS. (Since it's taken us almost six months to print the statement, you're excused for the delay.) Once again the front cover sets a standard that the rest of the issue seems to try mightily to equal and practically succeeds in that attempt. You might set a commendable fannish pattern by giving recognition to your printer as well as his address. If the firms that turn out superior work will handle mail order business, there's no reason why their identity should be known only to one fanzine editing staff apiece. (What do you think of the cover this issue?)

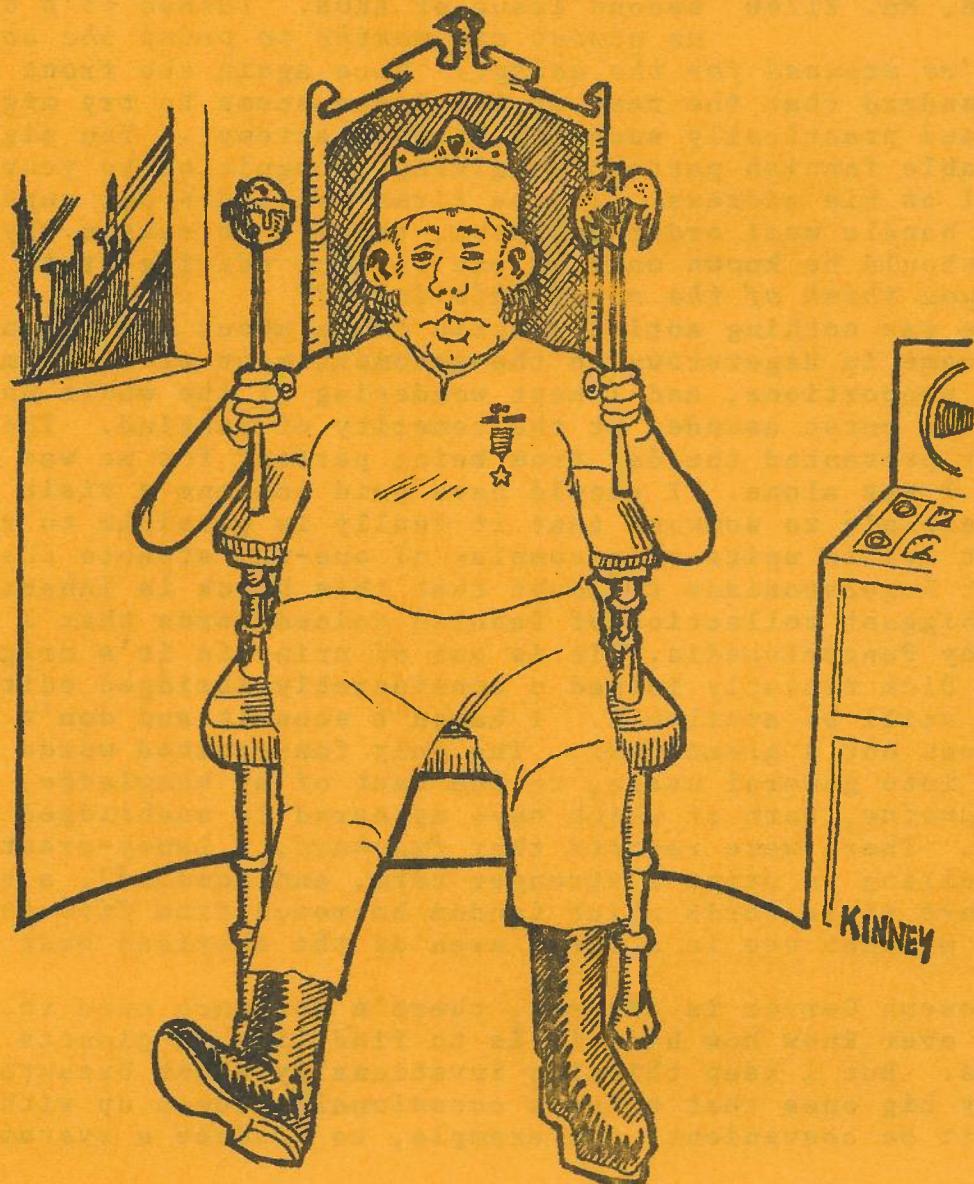
There was nothing anti-climactic to me about that moon landing. It came in Hagerstown to the accompaniment of a storm of Wagnerian proportions, and I kept wondering if the whole universe was about to burst asunder at the temerity of mankind. The only thing that prevented the day from being perfect for me was the fact that I was alone. I should have paid someone a visit or tried to explain to someone that it really is possible to reach 423 Summit Ave in spite of a complex of one-way streets that cause most Hagerstonians to doubt that this block is inhabited.

The biggest collection of fannish coined words that I know is the Eney Fancyclopedia. It is out of print in its original form, but Dick recently issued a considerably abridged edition which may still be available. I haven't seen it and don't know if it leaves out a great deal. The only fan-created words that have gone into general usage, to the best of my knowledge, are *bem* and *fanzine*, both of which have appeared in unabridged dictionaries. There were reports that *fugghead*, a Laney-created way of spelling in print a stronger term, and *rosebud!*, a synonym for more vivid words which fandom borrowed from *Citizen Kane*, went into mundane use in a large area of the American West for a while.

If Joseph Gerver is correct, there's not much need to worry that I'll ever know how hard it is to find life on planets around other suns. But I keep thinking irrationally about breakthroughs, the really big ones that science occasionally comes up with. Wouldn't it be convenient, for example, to produce a system of

of traveling backward in time that we didn't dare use on any planet, for fear of changing the present, but could operate in orbit somewhere between here and the moon to start some unmanned probes toward all the neighboring stars a few thousand years ago, complete with equipment capable of sending back pictures and all sorts of signals? (The problem with FTL is the avoidance of paradoxes, usually caused by evil scientists who want to see what would happen If. Doing it out in space still wouldn't solve what I will dub the Thiotimoline Problem.) (\*It's no use whatever talking with Eli about this--he roomed with Joe for at least a year and a half, and, for his own protection?, was/is thoroughly brainwashed on the subject.) Or a reliable formula for creating extra-sensory perception which could reach out over the light-years? Or a telescope of stupendous proportions far out in space, capable of getting close-ups of the nearer stars?

"And Baby is 3.1416" (I'm lazy tonight) is perhaps the best



of the many human-computer dialogs I've seen in fanzines in recent months. (I swear we didn't even know there were others until letters started coming in.) It is the only one of its type that caused me to wonder which was which, too, and I would love to see the Boston convention feature SHRINK in conversation with John W. Campbell, Jr., regarding recent Analog editorials. (I'd like to state here that despite all those people who want to know who wrote the thing, the dialog used was a real program and a real computer.) (\*Only Ricky was synthetic.)

The letter section was entertaining. I always imagined kipple to be an English translation of Tolkien's mathom, but apparently it has some other meaning, come to think of it, because I vaguely remember fans complimenting Ted Pauls when he introduced the new title for his fanzine, as ideal for the kind of material featured. (\*For the True, Unexpurgated Story of kipple and its origins, see "Mind-Kipple" thish.)

The back cover illustration is a positive stroke of genius. I can't remember any fanzine doing this since nearly a decade ago, when John Berry, the original John Berry, told little stories with the covers of Retribution, a fanzine devoted to the adventures of the Goon Defective Agency operatives. But he stressed humor and AKOS uses the gimmick to achieve a certain sort of poetry and to give the reader reassurance that all's right with the world after all. (\*The reader, maybe. But how'd you like to be an editor of a fanzine that has two staff artists (yes, not one, but two!)--neither of whom reads sf unless it is foisted upon him/her, and both of whom hate technology!)

FRED LERNER

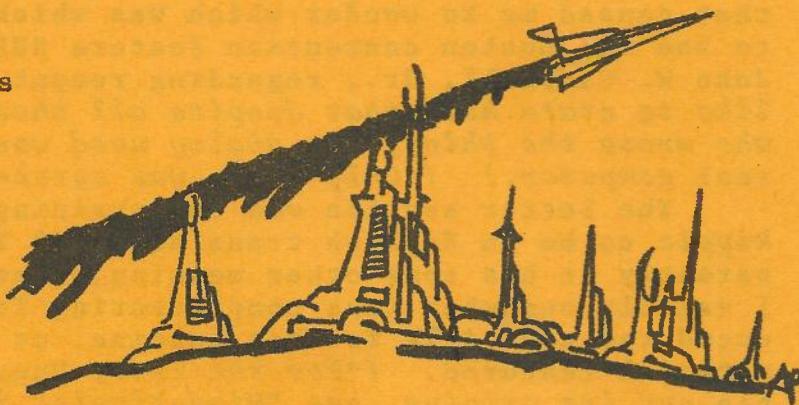
95 College Hill Rd.  
Clinton, NY

Since DisClave was about the only eastern convention I did not attend during 1969, I was especially pleased to see your report of it. While my usual purpose in reading convention reports is to find out what I was caught doing, it's good to be able to read one and concentrate on getting the goods on someone else. (\*Say, Fred--would you like your swim-trunks back???)

From your description the program was one of the best of the year. This is surprising, perhaps, since DisClave is supposed to be a very informal affair with only a limited program. Yet I've found, of all the regional conventions I've attended over the years, that the DisClaves have consistently been among the most memorable in terms of programming. A few years back, in '65 or '66, guest of honor Roger Zelazny's "speech" was a pre-publication reading of "Death and the Executioner"; I imagine that I was not the only one who waited impatiently for Lord of Light to appear. If only other convention committees would concentrate on a shorter but better program, and on larger and wetter parties.... (The preceding has been published as a public service to plug the up-coming DisClave. It's strange how if you just wait long enough between issues, all that obsolete stuff becomes relevant again. Assuming we get this issue out before DisClave, that is.)

I enjoyed *Stranger in a Strange Land* because that novel contains more of Heinlein's political/moral philosophy than any of his other books. Now, I won't insist that Heinlein as an individual agrees with all the points his various protagonists make; but I maintain that there is a general world-view presented in the corpus of his science fiction, one which is as complete and consistent as (for example) that created by Ayn Rand.

I have read every science fiction story that has ever been published professionally under Heinlein's name and under his known pseudonyms--most of them I have read five or more times--and I can find none that are inconsistent with this philosophy of libertarian individualism. Again, I won't insist that Heinlein himself agrees with this philosophy; but he has created a philosophy that many readers accept, myself included. (I myself never understood why people call *Starship Troopers* "fascist": everybody enjoys all his civil liberties, with reasonably complete freedom of action. My feeling is that his society is unstable and would quickly lead to some sort of totalitarianism; but as portrayed, it certainly fits into a libertarian framework.)



NEIL REST

For various reasons (physical limitations and neurotic comfort), societies operate on the basis of myths. One of the current ones seems to be the crunching menace of The Computer. Being a new, powerful, somewhat complicated tool, it is, naturally, more often than not, mis-used, mis-understood by "management" (the guys makin' the "executive decisions," like to get automated), and feared by the yahoos. The damn things couldn't wet their pants without help. When idiocy spews out (old cybernetic expression: "GIGO"), it's 99 and 44/100ths% certain it's because the nit feeding the thing got turned around (garbage in, garbage out). (What about self-programming machines and experiments in artificial intelligence?) The only worry is arrogant incompetent ninnys usurping unwarranted power, privileges and arrogance...but there's hardly anything new or unusual about that. Or, as they say, "It would have taken 50,000 mathematicians 250 years to make that mistake." (\*Neil, luv--I would have printed your address except that you seem to change it once a month and I've lost track. Where the hell are you???)

JIM SANDERS  
?????????????????

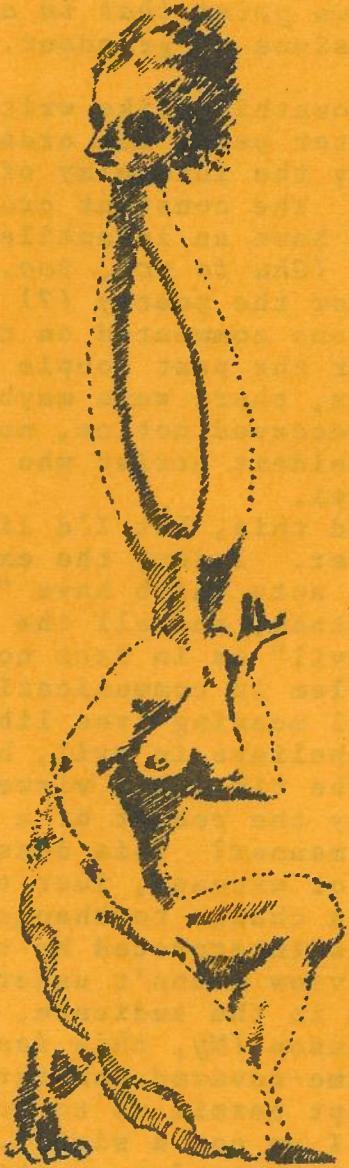
?????????????????  
family magazine? --\*No.), and extreme delusions of grandeur.  
Satisfied?

Commenting on #2 is a bit difficult, something like writing an exegesis of a strawberry malted with butter pecan ice cream. Frothy, quite enjoyable, and made more so by the interplay of the two flavors, but not very well describable. The constant cross talk between the editors delights me, but I have an infantile sense of humor, so I've been told. (Goo!) (Ghu to you, too.)

The art is, except for the two illos for the poetry (?)(\*??), of a remarkably high level. Has anyone commented on the improvement in the level of fanzine art over the past couple of years? It seems that five years ago or less, there were maybe forty artists in all of fandom whose work deserved notice, now it seems as if every fanzine has its own resident artist who turns out work at a better than average level.

It would take too long to really defend this, but I'd like to disagree with both Fred and Michael Gerver. I deny the existence of evil. I don't deny that there are acts which have "evil" consequences. I admit the existence of Vietnam, and all the rest. But I'd like to ask if the assumption of "evil" is in fact not just another use of a label to avoid a problem in communication and understanding. No, that's not the usual meaning-free liberal cliche. I just want to ask those who believe in evil, how often have you committed an act which, at the time, you viewed as evil? Are not most "evil" actions simply the result of a person's viewing the situation in a different manner? This does not mean that these actions are to be forgiven or excused, just that they should be understood so that there is a chance to change rather than condemn them. (Understanding is interpreted by too many people to mean acceptance, a point of view I don't understand.) I oppose the War as much as anyone in the audience, if not more, but I don't think that seeing Johnson (*My, this issue is a bit late, isn't it?*) as an oozing, slime-covered monster of ego and racism is going to do anything except permit us to stand by the altar and say, "Thank the Lord that I am not a sinner." Yeah, it is nice, but it won't keep any Vietnamese from getting a napalm bath.

However, if we hit our ego over the head, and start to use our brains, and ask ourselves, "What do the war hawks think they are accomplishing by the war? Since this war seems so irrational to us, yet these rational men support it, what is the difference in the way they view the world, what is the difference in their essential postulates which causes this difference? What value judgments are they making which are different from ours: why do they ignore what are obvious facts and factors to us?" then may-



be we can actually do something about changing the system and ending the war. It is rough, because it is always the most difficult thing in the world for someone to really accept that other people's view of the world is completely different from his own. It is so much easier to throw mud and labels, to assume that the other person REALLY sees what I see, thinks the way I think, but that he is acting differently out of perversity or a love of evil, that if you just shame him enough and call him a "sinner" or a "murderer" or a "criminal" loudly enough he will "repent."

It is always more difficult to concede that your enemy is acting irrationally or rationally from postulates that you consider irrational, than it is to embrace the doctrine that all men are born in sin. The only problem is that in this point of view, the belief in "evil" simply doesn't WORK. If someone talks to you about some action you are doing, and shows that he has no understanding of why you are doing it, do you pay any attention to him? So why do you think you're different, eh, Charlie?

I'll wait until AKOS 4, see how everybody piles on me, and then expand on this a bit.

I'll have to admit that Yarik's column this issue was MIRVelous. (Maybe on second thought you'd better not print my address.)

I'll leave you with this final suggestion. If either of the editors writes a column for another zine, he might use the title: "UnAKOSTomed as I am...." (You know the one about the nudist leader, who said, "Unacostumed as I am....")

SANDY MOSS  
c/o Ramirez  
4017 Seagate Ave.  
Brooklyn, NY 11224

The cover was a masterpiece! Knowing you have only one artist (\*Count 'em thish, luv!) and not liking the cover and much of the artwork in AKOS 1, I was shocked to see the general excellence from the new cover to the last page. The unicorn was done in exquisite detail, and its branding with the zine's name was a stroke of genius. The fact that the symbol of the Unicorn in '74 is also a unicorn was a piece of coincidental good luck. (\*Was it?) Even the background came out well; you could tell there was a forest without

everything in sharp focus. The hazy forest gave a feeling of depth and darkness and helped the white unicorn stand out in sharp contrast. A cover such as this really hits you the minute you see it.

Turning to the interior, Judy's art work continued to impress. The pieces seemed to have more detail, to be on a greater range of subjects and, where humor was intended, to be funnier. The silhouette on the last page also made its point (pun intended, I'm afraid).

On to the mundane world of prose and poetry. First off, I must say that I found the continuous editorial interjections to be annoying. I can't understand why, but they were. I guess having two editors can be a strain on everybody, including the two editors. (*There's no strain, is there, Janet? Janet? Janet, put down that scissors!*)

I found "And Baby is 3.14159" to be quite amusing. It reminded me of a couple of scenes in *The Wagered World* by Janifer and Treibich. It seems that humans and computers don't quite think on the same wavelength. This leads to situations that are funny, funny, funny!

Eli's famous style of wit (?) came through in all that he had a hand in writing. I could just picture him running around with his copies of AKOS, making his sales pitch, and not leaving until he had gotten a poor sucker (like myself, for instance) to buy the zine, or until he had been suckered out of a free copy. He's really a persuasive little cuss, and I should know! (Translation: Eli got \$1.00 and I get three issues of AKOS. \*Sigh\*.)

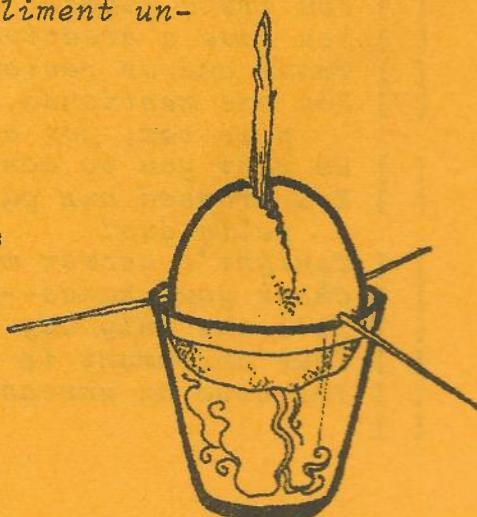
More LoC's, please. You might also leave out the section telling why we got the zine. (We know why we received it; many, in fact, want to forget why.)

DOUGLAS FAUNT, JR.  
310 Holly Street  
Columbia, S.C. 29205

How come the repro on the cover is so good and everything else looks as if it had been washed three times in straight Clorox? Otherwise, it's great. (I told you we were experimenting with electrostencils...but Mike Glicksohn called it "faded offset," which is sort of a compliment under the circumstances.)

Miss POOKIE T. UNDERFOOT  
95 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Dear AKOS People: In answer to Janet's bewilderment in AKOS 2, Fred Lerner is a figment of my imagination. He also makes a very good scratching post.





WHY YOU GOT THIS:

- [ ] Dr. Frederick Wertham thinks you're an adolescent.
- [ ] You are recovering from a bad case of the corflu.
- [ ] We've got a little list....
- [ ] You contributed.
- [ ] Your cat contributed.
- [ ] You thought you were trading with us.
- [ ] You are a member of FSFSCU.
- [ ] You can spell FSFSCU.
- [ ] You can pronounce FSFSCU.
- [ ] It's the only way we can get rid of it.
- [ ] There are some things that man was not meant to know.
- [ ] You sleep with Pookie T. Underfoot.
- [ ] You are a figment of Pookie T. Underfoot's imagination.
- [ ] You have a creative plastic extrusion.
- [ ] Trade and/or review.
- [ ] You are mentioned. For the LOW, LOW price of only \$487, plus tax, you can purchase the entire run of AKOS 3.
- [ ] We want you to contribute.
- [ ] You crossed our palm...and we didn't even know you were religious!
- [ ] Tonight's secret mystery answer is: THREE!
- [ ] Check your hands--mimeo ink never dries, you know.
- [ ] It's the only way we can get rid of you.
- [ ] Your apartment is infested with a mome rath.
- [ ] You have an unreasoning fear of avocados.
- [ ]