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# BeABohema 66666666

BeABohema is available for contributions, letters of comment that are printed (from now on; has to happen, baby! I'm trying to cut down on a lot of stuff and this is going to have to be one way to cut down on the mailing list, I'm afraid; but that will be letters that are good enough to be printed, meaning a note will get you an empty mailbox unless you would have received BAB anyway), trades and you'll get it if you're mentioned, which has always been my policy, and will remain as one now. You'll get it if you're mentioned AND I have your address, that is. And for money: 60¢ an issue 4/\$2. Edited and published by Frank Lunney at 212 Juniper St., Quakertown, Pa. 18951. Asst Ed is Bill Marsh and all artwork should go to ArSe Ed Jim McLeod at 7909 Glen Tree Dr., Citrus Heights, Ca. 95610. This is Deutch Noodle Press Mark II publication 10. Copyright Francis G. Lunney 1969. This is Oct. 28, 1969.

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Perhaps I should explain why both the "Inside Story" articles are included in this issue instead of having one in the next issue. Well, it's simply that the author, Paul Hazlett, phoned me last week and asked that they both be published at one time because a lot of things are developing, and they could become dated. And for page fetishists...this issue is 108 pages long, a bit longer than I expected. Damn it....cover by Richard Delap and bacover by Jim McLeod and Gabe Eisenstein.



# BELLOWINGS

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If you look very hard at this issue of BAB, you may find somewhere the addendum to Piers Anthony's column in which Piers answer a few of his critics. And you may find a few of the answers with ultimatums of their own. Well, this is where Things Become Known, I guess, because the rest of the issue was getting too long and I figured I might as well take space I would have used to just go on and say nothing in the first place.

So, this is where a few things are explained. Piers challenged Bob Vardeman to find any of Piers's statements that were unfactual, and have a stake of \$1 to the TAFF Fund hinged over each questionable point. Lackey Lunney wrote to Bob and received the following:

As I said, I've other things to do, but I commend Piers's support of TAFF. Enclosed you'll find my check for \$10 made out to TAFF. To show I bear Piers no ill will and that I'm sick of the whole mess (which has been blown far out of proportion), I would like you to send it to whoever is TAFF administrator as a donation in Piers's name for me. Since my ignoring Piers's challenge to arms would have denied TAFF some money, I feel I should rectify this. Perhaps Piers can see fit to match this contribution and forget his misguided jihad.

So, Bob has declined the challenge, and in the best way.

And I do agree with Bob when he says that the whole affair has been blown far out of proportion. And the blame really has to rest on the shoulders on Al Snider who published the whole Piers Anthony package in his own fanzine, CROSSROADS! in order to stir up some...well, read his column in this issue of BAB. Maybe Big Al is changing his ways...but he's not doing it until after he's dragged a few people through the mud...and he's done it very well, I must say; for one who couldn't get Piers to answer the suggestions he smeared all over C!

The challenge is still before the whole of BAB's readership, I guess, and the judge is still standing by, as Buck Coulson would have been the Decision Maker in this conflict. So, anyone with a Piers Anthony misstatement before his eyes...

Finally, there was the matter of Bob Tucker, who said a few things which may have been wise or not. Piers proposed the panel of outstanding fans in the field, and came up with the names of Roy Tackett, Bob Vardeman and Lin Carter. All three were questioned about their possible presence on the panel.

From Roy Tackett:

No, I am not the least interested in Piers Anthony's latest idea. I have not the time nor the inclination.

Besides I don't believe I've ever knocked Piers's ability as an author. I have referred to some of his shorts as "mediocre" and mediocre means "average"--check your Webster. I give him his due as a writer.

Piers Anthony, would-be-fan, is something



else again and, quite frankly, I grow a bit weary of him. I will continue to read his fiction--as long as he entertains me--but his fannish Babblings will in the future be ignored.

Bob Vardeman wrote:

The idea about judging Piers's vs. Bob's book is so stupid I wonder what ignoramus (damned ignoramus?) thought it up. I credit Piers with more sense than that. Piers is a better writer in his field than Bob is in his, but this doesn't mean a thing. Bob writes time travel stories--has Piers written even one? I like TT stories, for the most part (Up the Line really blasted my feeble mind). So would Bob score heavily for Lincoln Hunters, Time Masters and Time Bomb? As to atomic destruction stories, this seems the only meeting ground. Long, Loud Silence is far and away better than Sos the Rope. And yet my enjoyment of Chthon and especially Omnivore probably exceeds that of some of Tucker's minor stories (one about an undersea dome whose name escapes me comes to mind--how's that for confused thinking? \*\* I've been practicing trying to match Piers. Alas, I can't). Such comparisons can't be made and judgment as to which is better could never be made (unless one is God, and I haven't heard even Piers claim that one yet).

And Lin Carter:

Hi, Frank Lummy: ((Oooooooooohhhhhhh!))

Afraid I shall have to decline chairmanship of the committee in this matter of Tucker et al vs. Anthony et al.

I have three books to finish between now and Christmas, and the feud looks like a time consuming chore. Even if I could spare the time, which I can't, I am not inclined to do any favors for BE/BOHEMA anyway.

And when I wrote to Bob Tucker himself telling him All About It:

Cheers:

Why, that's fantastic.

And you may quote me.

Which I did. And I really think this should be the end of it. Piers has been able to get everything off his chest from what has come off from the triumvirate thus far, and will have some more to say in the next issue, probably, when he reads of Bob Vardeman's actions. In fact, I know what--approximately--he will say right now, but the issue is just about done, and as Piers said, this issue already has enough material from him. So...maybe a few Final Words from Piers in the next issue, and then, as Bob Vardeman said, "When I said the matter was dead in my mind, I meant it."

Getting close to the bottom of the page, but there's already a comment in about the Paul Hazlett article. Oh hell...Alexei Panshin knows approximately what the article was about from what I told him last week, and he doesn't dig much of it, especially from someone he's never heard from. And the next issue is coming out sometime in the future....yeah....

--F.L.



# THE INSIDE STORY OF THE SFWA

In "The Inside Story of the Milford Mafia" ((later in this very issue of BAB; if you haven't read it already, do so...NOW!)), I mentioned those excellent story criticism situational-experiences developed by Damon Knight and his wife, Kate Wilhelm. During their writer's conferences, a serious effort seems to be made to disassociate a writer's identity from his story, and this is good for every writer. However, at the same time a subtle, probably unconscious, comraderie is built between "in-group" members which creates a tight bond and which forms a group known as the Milford Mafia. The Milford Mafia probably is the strongest organized group within the Science Fiction Writers of America if for no other than the following reasons: (1) Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm form a nucleus around which fourteen years of meetings have welded members, for right or for wrong, (2) The Milford Mafia at least stimulated and sustained SFWA, if not invented it.

As I said in my previous article, I can be wrong. I can only ask questions, record answers and make personal judgments. At first look, I thought the Milford Mafia was to be congratulated for their achievement in establishing SFWA. After all, the fact that one group of humans find themselves compatible, even on a right-or-wrong emotional level, isn't bad for anyone except those who stand on the outside looking in.

My second look brought about grossly different perspectives. When I asked members, "Is SFWA doing its job?" I found a difference in thinking even among the formidable Mafia. Although I haven't interrogated Damon Knight, SFWA's grandfather, I'll bet even he entertains serious doubts about its present competence and its present abilities.

I know the above is vague, because I'm discussing an analysis which, by necessity, must cover so many different facets. Perhaps I should take them one at a time.

Nebula awards seem to stick like a kind of boiled lobster, shell and all, steaming hot and all, in the throats of many members. "Milford Mafia members win the awards. They stick together," I've heard it said. Anne McCaffrey, Secretary of SFWA, seems to feel she has statistics to prove otherwise. Perhaps Frank Lunney can wriggle them from her.

Whatever the true case, it seems reasonable to me that comraderie alone could bring a greater proportionate share of votes to "in-group" members under certain conditions.

What are these conditions?

If the story votes are light, a small number of "friendship" votes could easily swing the balance. If the number of story recommendations were too large for reasonable evaluation by mem-

BY PAUL HAZLETT



bers, a small number of "friendship" votes could swing the trick. If several friends deliberately got together in their nominations to scratch one another's back, it could sway the nominations, and therefore the votes. If one kind of literature, say the New Wave, had representatives who felt persecuted, like the world was against them, like nobody understands them, they might tend to vote more frequently, en bloc, and for their own kind, more than others.

I'm not saying that any of the above occurs. It is interesting to observe, from where I stand, that most of the above ifs are exactly those which seem to have taken place!

Also, please note that I am not saying the winners did not deserve the awards. Maybe, maybe not. It's the socio-dynamics which interest me, and should interest you.

Maybe Anne McCaffrey will shed light on this subject.

Another thing I've heard is this: "Why should pro writers seek adulation and fanship from other pro-writers? What does winning such an award signify? The only true test of 'good' literature is the test of time, as with Shakespeare, and so forth." The fact that a very small number of writers have voted for a particular story, among a very tiny number of stories, certainly cannot be construed to mean anything significant to the reader or fan, can it?

Oh yes, I know what the publisher does with the votes. He (or she) puts big red letters on the next edition saying NEBULA AWARD WINNER. This is supposed to sell more books, and maybe it does. If so, the writer is supposed to make more money, and maybe he does. But, does the reader genuinely get more and better? I personally doubt it and those I've interviewed also have grave doubts, even when some have been nominated for the award. (Talk to Piers Anthony, for example.)

Enough said on that subject.

Let's hope that those who have won the awards, and comment on this article, will be as objective in their answers as they claim the voters to be!

SFWA has a Bulletin and a Forum which is supposed to provide certain services for its members. It seems that the SFWA members are expected to pay a fee (now \$5.00, but recommended to go up to \$25.00), then are not supposed to have anything further to say over their own organization.

Harry Harrison has already asked Terry Carr to resign from his editorship of the Forum for the simple reason that Terry Carr felt the Forum to be his personal fanzine. (I haven't yet learned how Terry Carr and Barry Malzberg got elected to their positions. Possibly they were assigned by the incumbent officers, thus beyond the recall of all members, not to speak of just one member.) In a high-minded effort to "improve the mental calibre" of SFWA members, by "exposing them to purer literary efforts," Terry refused to publish anyone's letters unless they refrained from name-calling or contributed something of "interest and significance." Damon Knight had already objected to censorship in the Forum because that publication was originally designed for open, free expression of opinion among members, while the Bulletin was intended for official, public business.

Among those who, in Terry Carr's opinion, in the last Forum, were brilliant



enough to uplift the minds and writing of other SFWA members were Joanna Russ, Samuel R. Delany and Isaac Asimov. Joanna Russ had a pretend Chaucerian piece about Sam Moskowitz. Samuel R. Delany wrote about nearly everything, on and on. Isaac Asimov had a short note about an earlier dispute among members. It was obvious that Terry Carr did not feel quite big enough--yet--to screen out Isaac Asimov. (I saw that Forum, Harry Harrison, and I agree. In spite of Terry's cussing at you, in his letter to you, and the risk that he'll do the same to me, he should go!)

Ok. That's just a fight among old pros, you say!

Not so! I checked around the Worldcon and found dozens of new writers who had had letter after letter screened out of the Forum. This seemed to have happened even under our new Robert Heinlein writer, Alexei Panshin, when he was Forum editor, though not to the extent it does under Terry Carr.

One member, Larry Niven, I think, persisted in recommending that only those writers who "work full time" be permitted the vote. One member had already written formal notes to SFWA President Gordon Dickson, Secretary Anne McCaffrey and Bulletin editor Barry Malzberg, recommending that no SFWA officer or staff member be permitted who was an editor or publisher. He reasoned that old members could not speak against pro-editors for fear of losing old markets and new ones could not speak up for fear of not getting into the market. Sounded reasonable to me. The suggestion, so far, has been well ignored.

What's the moral?





Well, it simply means that a \$5.00 bill from a new SFWA member is not as valuable as a \$5.00 bill from an old pro (like Isaac) or a friend of the censor, Terry Carr. It is hardly likely that two twenties and a five will be as valuable for the new members as it will for the old friends and the censor's friends when the entry fee is raised!

Believe me, friends, it is downright shocking, when you're interviewed dozens of the newer writers and find that literally multiples of dozens of letters have been censored out, though they were in no way argumentative, and, perhaps, even had innovative ideas since their originators, Terry Carr's victims, were not part of the old-line clique and just might have had new, fresh ideas.

One member was overheard to ask, "Are Bulletin and Forum editors subject to the will of the members, the will of the president or to their own egotistical will?" Robert's Rules of Order would normally answer in favor of members. Apparently Gordon Dickson feels they should answer only to their own conscience and damn who pays the bill!

"How many here want the editor to be censored?" Gordon Dickson asked at the SFWA rump meeting at the Worldcon. Why didn't he ask, "How many here want the SFWA rank and file to be censored?" You see how easy it is to push a group around if you limit discussion by arbitrary time rules, formulate the questions yourself, and harshly cut-off those who just might upset the old applecart?

Another thing I overheard from the meeting at the SFWA session: Anne McCaffrey, apparently fearing that Harry Harrison, and his ilk, were beginning to make points, made a stirring, heart-rending speech explaining how hard all the officers, staff and editors worked. "who, here, is willing to take on the dirty Forum job?" she challenged, eyes flashing like a flying dinosaur. "I am!" Perry A. Chapdelaine shouted. Further discussion was cut short at that point. Need I add that, as near as could be determined, he was not offered any part of the "dirty" Forum job. This naturally fits in with the pattern that old-line SFWA people have a terrible, deep fear of both democratic processes and of losing control of the organization to newcomers.

My bet is that Robert Moore Williams's earlier letter in this fanzine hit on the head. The old-timers have pushed their snout up to the swill and by-God they aren't about to let another shoulder his way in! In other words, this behavior seems very consistent with the idea that money is to be made from the SFWA is one can control its communications, its offices and its behavior--money for those who have control.

I have one last observation on the SFWA. Some, like Damon Knight, SFWA's grandfather, and Robert Moore Williams, iconoclast, would like SFWA to become a tight trade union. To that end, the trade union could begin hard, fair bargaining with publishers and editors. Others, like Gordon Dickson and Anne McCaffrey, would like SFWA to be recognized as a professional organization which occasionally prods, suggests, formulates policies and principles and otherwise behaves with dignity. I heard one SFWA pro (whose name I didn't get) suggest that SFWA stay a social club, like the Mystery Writer's Organization.

All of the above sounds very much like the difference between a teacher's "professional" organization, a teacher's union and the PTA. What thou hath wrought, Grandfather Damon, is a can of worms! I predict that so long as democratic processes do not prevail among the rank and file, and communications continue to be slanted or cut, the ins will stay in and the outs will stay out. Well Damon, are you man enough to straighten out the mess?



# WABBLE

By - Fiers  
Anthony

Upon occasion I have mentioned that I want to sell good stories and novels and make a name for myself--not because I crave fame and fortune (though I do, I do!), but because I need that name in order to be able to tackle more ambitious projects. I realize that this sounds backwards; usually a writer publishes something ambitious and then receives suitable acclaim, whereupon he can put his lesser junk into print at lucrative rates. But this is a two-edged sword. A writer who makes a name for himself is granted more leeway subsequently to do his thing. If his thing is junk, the publishers may realize this but have to tolerate it for the sake of the drawing power of the name. But his thing may not be junk; it may be good material that the publishers don't understand, and would not tolerate from an unknown writer. Thus a Name purchase can lead either to inferior material or superior material (though most often to similar material). It is the second course I have in mind.

Big talk, you say, from a writer whose mouth is known to be louder than his talent. What gives me the idea I could turn out anything worthwhile even if granted \$25,000 and carte blanche? And this is a fair question, because at this writing I have won no meaningful awards, set no sales records, and indeed have had my work bounced more than accepted by publishers. Shouldn't I wait until I do--if ever--have some awards, etc., before sounding off? And this too is a fair question.

First answer: I don't want to wait too long, because I lack confidence in the situation: personal, publishing and world. Specifically, on personal: I may suffer an accident later in life that would prevent me from writing. (An



irate BAB reader might catch up with me, for example.) I hope not; but if I do have a serious project in mind, and can do it now, why wait and chance such a loss? (Perhaps I am too morbid. But I was told that I would have died from the measles in high school, had modern techniques such as intravenous feeding not been available, and even so I brushed uncomfortably near. And I doubted I would ever wake when my car sailed off a six-foot bank at 40mph in 1956. As it happened, I survived the turnabout and rollover and drop with only a bruised shoulder and momentary unconsciousness--but I was lucky. So I know it can happen to me, as it has to some of those close to me.)

On publishing: of course that has vicissitudes. Right now many publishers are buying much material--but a decade or so ago it was different, and a decade hence it may be different again. So I'd best do my important stuff during a favorable market, even if it isn't terrifically favorable for me.

And on the World Situation: here I grow morbid again. I honestly fear that all of us may die together within the next score years. You know what I mean. If I should live to be a hundred in peace and contentment, I will be happy to ridicule my present uncertainties. But at the moment I'm living in the tenuous present. I want to write in the present.

But mainly, I became a writer so that I could do what I wanted to do--and I want to do this.

My reading interests over the years have coalesced around three main areas: science fiction, mythology and history. Of course I am also fascinated by astronomy, paleontology and many other sciences and disciplines--but astronomy is really a subdivision of SF, in my private cosmos, and paleontology is the history to the world before man. So understand: these groupings are not logical, they are subjective and approximate.

My participation in SF is known. I collect it, I write it, I read and write about it. Mythology is more of a private fascination, though occasionally it finds its way into my fiction in overt or covert form. Today we suggest that science can accomplish impossible things, like traveling in time or faster than light or bringing peace on Earth. One or two or three thousand years ago or more they suggested that witches or magic or gods could accomplish similar things. The one is as reasonable as the other; mythology is the science fiction of the ancients. Or, if you prefer, science fiction is contemporary mythology.

And history--history really embraces all of it. The future is history that is about to happen; the past is history that has happened. Science is part of history; religion is part; art is part; philosophy is part. And so is literature, including mythology/SF. And so it is history that commands my ultimate attention. I find it utterly compelling.

Yet history was a borderline subject for me in school. I remember those tedious hours memorizing lists of British kings, of matching famous dates to their events. I remember signing out, the summer before I entered twelfth grade, the American History text we were to use. I read it and enjoyed it. I learned then, for example, how the US fostered, via gunboat diplomacy, the breakoff of Panama from Columbia--so the US could have its canal. (The text is banned in some states --because it tells the truth about such things. America's history is not all pretty.) I knew I would do well in the course.





Sorry--I flunked the very first quiz, and not narrowly. Something like 31 of a possible 100 points. I flunked the whole first month. I wound up the year with something like a C.

What happened? Well, among other things, modern education happened. The quiz did not ask what occurred between Columbia and the Colossus of the North; it said (and I believe I remember this verbatim) "Name the man who made the maps that influenced Columbus." Not an event, not a vital fact--just the name of a man. And, in other questions, dates and technicalities.

And there you have the true crime of contemporary teaching techniques. I remain a certified high school teacher (English) (though I'm not teaching any more), so I do have some information to go on aside from sour grapes. Damn it, history is not names and dates! History is the animated progress of mankind. And it is a terrible thing to ruin it for those who are really interested by cluttering it up with irrelevancies. I dare say I had a better appreciation of the tides of history than did some of the "A" students of my class. But I could not remember names and dates readily, so I was a "poor" student. Mind--I do not say names and dates should be excluded from such studies, but they should not be stressed as rote-memory exercises. This makes history a semi-mathematical tabulation of little actual worth.

The truth is that the memorization of numbers and terms is busy-work. Once the final exam is done, it all can be forgotten with no loss. But the comprehension of original concepts, and changes in a person's pattern of thinking--these will affect him for the rest of his life. Specifically: it really is unimportant whether you can name the man who made the maps that influenced Columbus. But it is important that you comprehend the true nature of our nation, and know that shameful chapters exist along with the glorious ones. Then, when you travel abroad--say, in South America--you will have some warning how you may be greeted. It just might save your life.

Another thing that disturbs me about the teaching of history is its almost exclusively western orientation. The typical history of the world that I have noted goes like this: Civilization started in Egypt about 3,000 BC, with a parallel but less important culture in China. Soon it spread to Greece, and then



to Rome, whose empire was the greatest the world has ever known, except for possibly the later British empire. The barbarians overran Rome and the dark ages followed. But in the past thousand years Europe has risen to the highest level yet (except for America) and the European cultures now dominate the world, uplifting it. Isn't that about it, in capsule?

Well, I call it bunk. Oh, there was civilization in Egypt, but it was predated by that of the Tigris/Euphrates valley, and that was preceded by cultures in the vicinity of Anatolia (Turkey, roughly). It is from those other cultures that we derive most of our heritage, not Egypt. The Roman empire was great, yes--but may not have been greater than the Han empire in China, contemporaneous, or the Moslem empire that followed, or the Mongol empire that stretched from China to eastern Europe (and, but for chance, would have embraced all of Europe) in the thirteenth century AD. The Han empire repulsed the Huns, whose eventual migration to Roman territory precipitated the collapse of that empire, at any rate. (The whole story is a good deal more complex, however, so don't take this as definitive.)

Then there's the one about how the white man brought civilization to Black Africa and Red America. This is sickening, and not only because of the license it implied for black slavery and red eradication. Reasonable definitions of civilization, based on culture and law rather than on technology, produce an entirely different story when serious explorations are made into the actual histories of these places.

Oh, there is so much more, it hurts me not to be at work on it this moment. History: the living record of our species, and indeed the proper study of mankind. If only this fabulous saga could be presented accurately and interestingly--ah, then many, many people turned off by the numbers, names, games would respond and benefit.

There are excellent histories of segments of world and time, and there are simplified overviews. But something more is needed--something to provide both the immediacy of historic life, right down to the details of dress and dinner and conversation--while putting entire millennia into perspective. A history, if you will, that reads like fiction--yet covers all the world for all the time that man has been upon it.

Impossible, naturally. It would take a library of tomes just to contain such an epic, and no one would have the time to read it, let along write the thing.

And, granting for the sake of argument that it could be done--who would do it? Not the professional historians; they are responsible for the existing misfortune of historical narrative. Not writer of other fields; they lack the necessary knowledge of the subject.

Ah, but what of fiction writers whose hobby is history? Shouldn't these have the capability and incentive? What about those in our own field of science fiction, who have already demonstrated the ability to write intelligibly in related areas, such as de Camp or Silverberg? I think we're getting warm. There are also those who have talent and serious interest in history, such as Zelazny and Delany and probably numerous others. I don't know about. They could do it.

In fact, I could do it myself.



In fact, I'm going to.

No--not a library-length epic. Something of manageable proportion. Necessarily skimpy, but perhaps enough to suggest the way to later writers with similar aspirations. And perhaps improve subsequent teaching methods a bit.

I have spent years thinking about this, and have collected over a hundred books on history and archaeology and related subjects for my researches. Originally I planned to do it later in life, since fate has arranged things so that if the current society endures I will probably be able to retire in my fifties with comfortable finances. But for the reasons specified herein, I'm gearing down for it now. Of course I'm having the usual difficulty finding a publisher--one ignored my query a couple of years ago entirely, and another has been slow to reply--but let's face it: if the world needed a publisher to prevent it from expiring next year, chances are it would end.

If I do this project, and no publisher will take it, then when I achieve that comfortable-finances state I'll publish it myself. After all, Lord of the Rings was vanity published originally, and while it may be too early to say for sure, it appears successful. And people like Vardis Fisher (Testament of Man series) and James Michener (Hawaii, The Source) have been doing roughly similar projects with good success. Roughly similar; my notion is more ambitious than theirs, and quite different in detail.

No need to go into tedious details of how I worked it all out (actually, much remains to be worked out, including all of the plotting); I'll simply describe the project as it now stands.

There is a framework: a circular chart marked off in one huge spiral from 100,000 BC to the present. It's a geometric curve, in that the earliest gradients are 20,000 years each, and the latest 200 years each. (Maybe that's a logarithmic curve; I forget my terminology--and I used to teach trigonometry!) This is necessary because history as we comprehend it does become more crowded as we approach our own times, and advances seem to come more rapidly. Drawn on this spiral chart are lines of--well, of race. We begin with a common ancestor at 100,000 BC and diverge into three primary races (not being too finicky about definitions), Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasoid, and then subdivide, with the Amerinds splitting off from the first and resplitting into north and south elements; the Mediterraneans from the third; the pygmies from the second, and so on. Race is a matter of definition and experts don't agree what is or is not a race, or how many there are on Earth; some may claim three, others three hundred. Here there are a dozen. Where these racial lines of descent cross the coils of the time-spiral, there are my episodes.

The total number of episodes thus comes to a little over a hundred. Some lines are dropped along the way, in the interest of economy (not genocide!), and some recombine, such as the Caucasoid and Negroid in the American Negro. The overall picture thus becomes complex.

In this fashion all the major races of man are represented, and all the major cultures and geographies and times. Each episode is a story, averaging 5,000 words, that entertains while it illustrates the first-hand nature of that period and area. This portion will take, therefore, about half a million words--if I succeed in holding down the length.



But this is merely a chart for the series of story settings; it hardly represents history. With many thousands of longer episodes history might begin to come through, but hardly with my mere hundred. More, much more, is required. So--there are to be summaries of historical processes in the interstices, framing each story. For example, if the episode concerns the Roman empire of 200 AD, the growth of that society and power in the preceding centuries will be described, and, after the story, the circumstances of the empire's decline and fall will be described. Thus a slender history, with minimum stress on dates and names, acquaints the reader with the background of the episode--and the episode arouses his personal interest in the history. Later stories in that line will make the history continuous--and other stories, with their own frameworks, will cover areas beyond. For example again, there might be a story set within the Gupta empire of India, at a similar time; its historical framework would extend to the edge of the Roman one, so that there was no gap. And the next, concerning the African Bushmen of the same time, would pick up where the Gupta framework left off. And so on--each story advancing some in time, from 200 AD to 300 AD to 400 AD, say (remember, there are a number of items on each spiral loop, so a loop-jump of a thousand years might mean a jump of only a hundred per story), and the sweep-hand traversing the globe until it comes back to the Roman sequence...of maybe 800 AD--which is now an Arab province. (You can see why I need a detailed chart for this.) Probably the summaries will total as much wordage as the stories.

Even so, it's hard to keep track, particularly since the sweep-hand prevents more than one story per line in each spiral. That is, there can't be consecutive Roman stories. So--there will be illustrations: a series of maps, of large or small scale, showing the political state of the world and the locale at that time. A historical geography, actually--a good one. Thus each story has its historical description and its graphic representation, fixing it pretty well. These maps should add about 300 pages to the project.

Thus we have a total package of somewhere over one million words. But still it isn't enough, because it is hard for the reader to identify with characters and situations that only appear briefly and change a hundred times on the course of the work. The project has to be unified. In fact, I can hardly afford to have more than a dozen major characters; otherwise it will fall into fragments and the effect will be lost.

But how can there be a dozen characters spread over a hundred stories spread over a hundred thousand years? In mythology or science fiction, this may be possible; in realistic history, no.

Well, I am a science fiction writer. Any my marketing experience to date suggests to me that a novel I phrase as SF will sell, while one I phrase as history will not sell. (My unsold novel is historical.) So my problems of unity and marketing appear to be forcing a strange mating. Legitimate, accurate history in a science fiction framework.

If it were the market alone that forced this, I would not do it, for this project is too important to me to distort at the behest of commercialism. But





it must be unified; and the equivalent of a million words is not going to stay glued together casually. As I recall, Lord of the Rings is about half that size, and a ponderous index of its characters and places is being compiled so that LotR fans can keep track. And precious little else in the field approaches even that in size, for a single plot.

So I must scratch again. I thought of family lines that turn up remarkably similar individuals every few thousand or hundred years, so that the reader is familiar with the essential characters. I thought of racial memory, so that the protagonist of a later story could really be the same as the earlier one. And I thought of an alien presence that appears on Earth at the beginning and invests one man...shades of Adam! Maybe half a dozen aliens investing half a dozen people, male and female. The alien is immortal, but his hosts are not. So the alien intellect is passed from parent to child, so that these same intellects, with memory, are present in each story though the bodies and situations differ. Except that dilution occurs as the species grows--well, such problems are incidental plot material. I'm not too happy with any of these gimmicks, and doubt that any are original, so I'll have to keep working on it. If I find some better way to keep the same characters throughout the epic, I'll use it. Just so long as the validity of the history is not threatened--for the history is the heart and matter of this.

I have notes and maps bulging a folder, and of course all those books. My mind keeps returning to this project, and nibbling at its problems. Possibly when the final product does appear, it will hardly resemble what I have described here. But I'm pretty sure that ancient history and archaeology will be stressed, for there is where my most intense interest lies. The truth is that archaeology is one of the most vigorously advancing sciences today; more is being discovered about man's dawning civilization than the common man imagines. I believe the first third of my project will take me only to about 3,000 BC, and the second third to 500 AD. The last 1,500 years--where many texts would have it that all of history is contained--is least

As I write this--July 24, 1969--the day's newspaper headlines tell of moon rocks that suggest an age of up to four and a half billion years, making the moon's history as long as that of the solar system; of the discovery of the ancient city Thira, destroyed by volcanic eruption in 1500 BC and beautifully preserved (said by some to be the origin of the Atlantis legend--and I believe I endorse that theory); of bodies and debris where Hurricane Camille struck Mississippi with winds estimated to be as high as 229 mph (the highest ever to hit the mainland, excluding tornadoes); Nixon deciding to delay further troop pullouts from Vietnam because of renewed fighting there (uh-huh--and when will he unveil his campaign-promised solution?); and details of the MIRV--Multiple Independently targetable Re-entry Vehicle--so powerful a weapon that its possessor will be inclined to strike first, lest the other side strike first.

History, you see, is in the making at this moment, as we learn about the ancient moon, the civilization of the eastern Mediterranean three and a half millennia ago, the weather and warfare of the present and the annihilation of our future. History lives, though we die.

Is there anything more important to write about?

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## ADDENDUM: On Nipping Porcupines

The interviewer is Hoist Petard, the illegitimate offspring of Leroy Tanner and Faith Lincoln and pretty much of a figment.

HOIST PETARD: Piers! Fancy meeting you here in this dudgeon! You're a sight for an ailing anus. Did you know you've come to the attention of a complex of really prominent fans?

PIERS ANTHONY: That's great! I always hoped fandom would eventually notice me.

HOIST: Yes, the fans are gathering like tse-tse flies around your conceited corpse.

PIERS: Oh come now! As Mark Twain said, "The reports of my death of greatly exaggerated."

HOIST: Can it be you don't realize you're extinct?

PIERS: I don't feel extinct. Or even defunct. What happened?

HOIST: You poor thing, you've been Fouted upon. No one survives that.

PIERS: I don't understand.

HOIST: You ignorant lout! You've been put down by one of the longtime greats of the field. A real old pro.

PIERS: Richard Shaver!

HOIST: Schmuck! Not that great! This one has solid fan credentials, too.

PIERS: Lin Carter!

HOIST: Not that fannish! Stop acting like the ludicrity you are. I'm trying to tell you that Wilson (Bob) Tucker has crushed you utterly. And several other worthy fans whose great hands your sewerish blood is unfit to stain have stomped on the feculent fragments.

PIERS: Wilson (Bob) Who?

HOIST: Now don't get cute with me! You know who Wilson (Bob) Tucker is, ancient author of a score of novels and--

PIERS: Oh, now I remember, dimly. Didn't he do some science fiction, back in the fifties? Haven't seen any lately.

HOIST: Of course he did science fiction! He's an elder fan, isn't he? All elder fans are former pros.

PIERS: When and where did he crush me?

HOIST: Ignoramus! In DONALD SCHNEPF'S AMAZING "IMAGINE--THAT'S THE ULTIMATE SOUND HIS BRAIN CAN MAKE!" edited by Mike Montgomery. And again in CROSS-ROADS!, edited by Al Snider.

PIERS: Funny. I never saw those issues.

HOIST: That's no excuse! You're dead, wiped out, obliterated!

PIERS: Maybe you'd better read me some of this material so I know what you're blathering about.

HOIST: Gladly! Listen to what Mike Montgomery says in his preface to the issue, devoted entirely to you: "Sniping from an ape indeed!"

PIERS: He said that? Introducing an apazine devoted entirely to sniping at me? My mind boggles!

HOIST: Then Bob Vardeman really socks it to you: four pages. Boy, you are a bastard, you bastard! And he winds up saying, "But I can't really say I give a damn one way or the other, what he thinks."

PIERS: He took four pages to say he doesn't care what I think? Wasn't he the one who poked fun at me for taking several pages to explain why I had to limit my fanzine contributions?

HOIST: Quiet! Then (Bob) Tucker takes almost five illustrated pages to really out you in your inferior place, you poor fink.



PIERS: He does? Why?

HOIST: Because you wrote a paragraph in BeABohema challenging him to place a story in Dangerous Visions.

PIERS: Goshwow! Five (illustrated) pages? (Bob) Tucker said all that, in reply to a simple request for a new story from him? My, he is an angry old man, isn't he?

HOIST: Do you have an answer?

PIERS: How can I answer, when I haven't read his (5) pages in answer to my one paragraph? If he'd put it in BAB, now--

HOIST: Well, have you anything at all to say in your invalid defense, before you give up the ugly ghost?

PIERS: Yes. Is he going to write a story for Dangerous Visions, to prove he's a better writer than I am?

HOIST: You audacious pup! (Arthur) Wilson (Bob) Tucker doesn't have to prove anything! He's an Old Pro!

PIERS: But is it really too much to ask that a longtime science fiction writer write on science fiction story? To demonstrate to the subsequent generation just how great he is, and how badly neos like me suffer in comparison?

HOIST: Yes, it's too much! Some things you don't question, you have to take them on Faith. Dare you denigrate his competence, you snot?

PIERS: Oh, no, of course not, since you put it that way. I'm sorry I ever suggested that Tucker write science fiction. I should have known better.

HOIST: That's more like it. Then Roy Tackett polishes you off with one well-spoken page.

PIERS: One page? One? Is the man ill? What does he say?

HOIST: He stands pat: "One successful novel and a handful of mediocre short stories does not make a writer."

PIERS: Doesn't he mean "do"?

HOIST: What?

PIERS: Stories do not make a writer. The plural form, since the subject is plural.

HOIST: Are you questioning his grammar?

PIERS: Oh, no, I wouldn't have the nerve.

HOIST: See that you don't. What's your reply?

PIERS: I agree, I agree! Whom is he talking about?

HOIST: You, you inflated id!

PIERS: You mean I had a successful novel? Gee, thanks, Roy.

HOIST: Then we have "Piers Anthony We Love You!" in CROSSROADS! #4.

PIERS: Gee, I really appreciate that, fellows.

HOIST: Lout! They're not praising you, you colossal egotist! They're taking you apart into grotesque wriggling little slimy pieces, and the nauseous buzzards are circling low. It's a reprint of the SCHINEPFzine blitz. And editor Al Snider has some kindly advice for you, not that you deserve any.

PIERS: Al Snider. I remember him now. He sent me a copy of CROSSROADS! #2 with a note suggesting I take on John Pierce, or some such. Seemed to want controversy.

HOIST: Well, now he advises you to fold your BeABohema column and go back to pro writing.

PIERS: I don't quite follow. I thought he wanted me to be fighting people. Like John Pierce.

HOIST: Not in someone else's fanzine, moron!

PIERS: Oh. You mean, if I won't write for CROSSROADS!, then I can't write for anyone else--even if my BAB column precedes his solicitation. And I get blasted in CROSSROADS!. Very interesting.





HOIST: And he says:  
"Too often somebody wanders  
into Fandom and decides that  
they are going to own the  
place within a week."

PIERS: Doesn't he  
mean "he"?

HOIST: What?

PIERS: He is going to  
own the place. The singu-  
lar form, since the subject  
is singular.

HOIST: Grammar again?  
I warned you about that be-  
fore!

PIERS: Sorry. Just  
wanted to get it clear.

HOIST: Don't let it  
happen again. What's your  
reply?

PIERS: I agree. To whom is he referring?

HOIST: You, you grubby neofan!

PIERS: Is he serious?

HOIST: Of course he's serious! He says he's been active in fandom for  
a good three years and he's written more than you.

PIERS: Three years? That is incredible! I only entered fandom officially  
in 1962, after reading and collecting science fiction for fifteen years and doing  
the stuff for my college degree. Though I admit to being surprised that a fan with  
that tremendous experience should never have encountered my fan writings before.  
Of course, I confined it mostly to crudzines like YANDRO and NIEKAS, that won crud  
awards like the Hugo, that he wouldn't know about. One of my pieces from the  
1966 NIEKAS is being republished in FANTASTIC, I believe. And I used to write  
40,000 words of straight SF correspondence per month that didn't hit the fanzines,  
though now I settle for about a quarter of a million words of finished fiction  
per year. Had to slow down when that daughter the fans so resent arrived. So  
I can't really compare to his vast experience. Even if I counted each draft of  
everything I write, I dare say my fictive total wouldn't come to much more than  
five million words, and possibly even less for my nonfiction writings--letters,  
diaries, essays and such--to date. So I admit it: I'm sadly overmatched.

HOIST: You're trying to get cute again.

PIERS: Oh, no, I wouldn't dare. I really appreciate Al Snider's fatherly  
advice--based on three years experience--on how I should conduct myself in fandom,  
and I'm sure he is setting a very fine example. In fact, he sounds almost like  
one of the ninth graders I tried to teach English to back in 1966. Never did get  
those confounded singulars and plurals straight!

HOIST: Tried? Couldn't you even teach high school, you verbose hack?

PIERS: Oh, we were making progress. But he got expelled for misconduct.  
Maybe he had too many fanzines to produce per day, and couldn't afford school.

HOIST: Well, Snider says that organized fandom has a nasty habit of not  
allowing anybody to act superior, and he means to teach you a lesson for being too  
uppity. He says you kiss your image in the mirror, and that the world of fandom is  
proud and lonely.

PIERS: To think I thought the world of writing to be proud and lonely!



Boy, he certainly has a lot to teach me. I do hope when I've had as much experience as he has had, that I'll know half as much as he knows. And that I'll be half as humble. Think of all the misery I could have saved for myself, back in 1947, when at the tender age of thirteen I picked up my first ASTOUNDING--had I but heeded Al Snider's profound advice. Ah, where were you when I needed you, Al? But I have one tardy, bedraggled question to ask him, if he'll condescend to even reply to a rank neo like me--

HOIST: Well, he might stretch a point and answer.

PIERS: Hasn't he learned, in his fantastic experience, that it is something of a fannish code, when you print material about someone, particularly negative or critical material, and when you address him directly and personally in the second person and request his conformance to your standards--

HOIST: Get on with it!

PIERS: Hasn't he learned that it is nice to send a copy of the issue to the one you are addressing?

HOIST: You made that up! Who says so?

PIERS: Well, how about Ben Solon, a few months ago in his unspellable? Or you're welcome to query any established fan on this point. I think you'll be satisfied.

HOIST: OK, we'll print your stupid question and see what he says. But be warned, Piers--you're dealing with a real long-time fan here, who knows much more about it than you do, and you're likely to be sadly hurt to read his reply.

PIERS: I know, and I tremble. But I want so much to learn proper fannish procedure.

HOIST: Al has some excellent comment in CROSSROADS! #5 if that will help you.

PIERS: He didn't send me that one either. What does he say?

HOIST: He says: "If you're out there, angry at me because I've said harsh things about you...why not relax. I only say what I think...if I express an honest opinion, I do it because I am an honest man. (sic) Nothing personal. I'm just calling the shots as I see them and I hope you would rather have it that way than have me running around licking your ass all the time."

PIERS: Beautifully spoken. Why, I've been doing that for years, and licking no asses or even donkeys. But I'm curious--

HOIST: You certainly are!

PIERS: Why is it such reasonable, polite policy when he does it, but up-pity superiority, mirror-kissing, and un-fan when I do it?

HOIST: Because you've only been in fandom a week. He's been three years. Clear now?

PIERS: Yes, thank you so much. Now I do understand.

HOIST: And you even get some undeserved praise, this issue. He says if writers like you can be attacked--

PIERS: Attacked? I thought he was giving me fatherly advice.

HOIST: Stop butting in. So this time an anonymous pro tackles Chip Delany and Roger Zelazny. Says they don't write proper SF and don't know which from that. And you Chthon is praised, to the disfavor of Delany's Einstein Inter-section.

HOIST: So my name is used to help denigrate Delany and Zelazny? Thanks a whole smelly pile! I only learned the distinction between which and that a couple of years ago, and I'm sure Chthon can be faulted on that ground.

HOIST: If that's the way you react to praise, no wonder you get lambasted!

PIERS: I guess I feel that if a writer wants to take the top writers of the field, he shouldn't hide behind a pseudonym.

HOIST: You appalling hypocrite! You're a pseudonym!



PIERS: But everything fannish I have to say goes under that name, unless the faneds foul it up, as some do. So if I want to say that few SF writers show the literary finesse of major mainstream writers--and I do say so--

HOIST: Get off the damn soapbox!

PIERS: I was only agreeing that, despite the sniping aspect, that anonymous writer does have some good points, as I dare say Z and D will agree in a later issue--assuming this copy is sent to them. (At least this copy of BAB will be sent to them, because they are named, so they'll know they are attacked in CROSSROADS! #5 and can beg a copy from some enemy of the editor.) Both Z and D have been granted accolades and awards for promise--and now it is time for them to fulfill that promise, and they do not seem to be doing so. So it is left to longer-time pros like Brunner to forge ahead, and lesser known ones like LeGuin. I believe the 1969-1970 awards pictures will reflect the shift

HOIST: Ha. Now the letter column. Lee Klingstein puts you in your lowly place, calling your remarks about people like Tucker "almost stupidly rude."

PIERS: I never addressed Tucker before he addressed me--and then all I did was summarize his progress, ask him some questions and challenge him to write one little SF story. I never called him angry or impatient. And I set up a good market for that story, where I knew it would have a fair chance. Funny that should make him and his fans so mad. He started the name-calling between us, after all. So why isn't he stupid or rude?

HOIST: Don't quibble, you stupid rude angry impatient neo. Lee goes on to call all your novels "highly pretentious and boring" while your dental novellette is OK.

PIERS: That pretty well defines that person's critical ability, doesn't it? John Pierce take note--here's an ally.

HOIST: Then Harlan Ellison pours oil on the waters--

PIERS: They're getting pretty mad about that on the California coast! Tell him to stop before the beaches are ruined.

HOIST: If you don't watch it, he'll touch a match to it! He says you overreacted. What do you say to that, you hothead?

PIERS: Since I have called Harlan fouler names than I have any of these other fans, and he has responded with praise of my work and personal encouragement, I really am not in a position to challenge his opinion here. I'd just like to point out that it was Vardeman's unfair cuteness about Dangerous Visions in general and Farmer's entry in particular, that prompted me to tell V off. And I stand by that; he deserved it, however blind his friends are to his arrogance. And I stand by his right to tell me off in return, though I could have wished he had done so openly, in SANDWORM or BeABohema, instead of cobbling up a private publication for the purpose. He missed a golden opportunity to score honestly by quoting from my own remarks on DV in NEEKAS. That really was the start of this entire sequence, I think--V's unwillingness or inability to stand up and meet the issues head on. A person who acts like a jackal should expect to be treated like one. Tackett and Tucker decided to tell me off, and they are experienced enough to know when they are buying into trouble. Of course it is also their right to do so. Ghod knows I jump into enough other quarrels as gratuitously as they did here. But people who do this can not legitimately cry when they get hit back. And spectators should at least verify the issues and the dirt on their own hands before calling names. Since I soon discovered I could not depend on fair treatment in SANDWORM, I had to set up shop elsewhere, responding to Bob and (Bob) and Roy in a fashion similar to their remarks about me. And it seems they didn't appreciate their own medicines so much...and this is where Harlan comes in the second time. The escalation has been theirs; and once again, I am replying in similar length. I find it strange that I should be condemned for this, rather



rather than the instigators. Anyway, if Harlan feels I overreacted, he must be right. But if my response--that is, replying in similar length and tone to jibes directed at me--was overreaction, what are we to call the performance of these others? When they pass up the opportunity to challenge me in the fanzine where I made the remarks they purport to find distasteful, and instead go to such lengths to produce a hate-zine without sending me a copy?

HOIST: You must have a guilty conscience. You're blathering even worse than usual. Harry Harrison tells you never to start feuds with old pros and/or old fans.

PIERS: You know, the most insidious page I ever saw directed at Harry (in my week of fandom) appeared in a recent SF REVIEW. I wrote it. He, like Harlan, responded by praising my work and buying my material. So again I am caught off balance--but I really don't think I started this feud. I'm sure finishing it, though...

HOIST: Harry says: "It was a fair fight and Piers was licked."

PIERS: Ask him if he still feels that way.

HOIST: And Dave Gerrold says you shouldn't bitch about fanac in fanzines. You should present some of the background material on Chthon.

PIERS: I refer him to ALGOL of a couple of issues ago, where I did several thousand words on Chthon. But some fans criticized me for doing even that, though it was by editorial request. It is hard to win that sort of byplay. Of course, that piece met my usual standard of arrogance.

HOIST: Every miasmic breath you take meets your usual standard of arrogance! Ed Cox says you apparently deserved what you got, and feels that Tucker's piece on you was good.

PIERS: Ask him if he feels Tucker deserves what he gets in this discussion, then.

HOIST: And try this on for size, you hypocrite: "One final remark about Friendly Old Piers Anthony...It is the final fillip to his whole attitude, and mentality, that he makes his remarks about his pseudonymity and some various fan editors who have not kept the faith and all that rot. But right there in his seven-year novel in the copyright notice it says: 'Piers A.D. Jacob.' Who's the one blowing the cover?"

PIERS: Well, that's problematical, because--

HOIST: Answer the question!

PIERS: BALLANTINE BOOKS. Has Mr. Cox checked the copyright credits on my PYRAMID or ACE novels?

HOIST: And Mr. Cox really smears you with this: "Of course, the net result of all this will no doubt be some sort of detached rejection of fans and fandom as a whole being completely beneath any further acknowledgment or consideration..."

PIERS: Beautiful! If I reply at all, I'm an overreacting warmonger; if I don't, I'm a yellow hypocrite. I just love the lading on those dice.

HOIST: Don't you mean "loading"?

A CARROT FOR THE OLD

NIGHT  
VISION,

BABY!





PIERS: Lading. Send Mr. Cox a Bill of Lading and ask him if he still expects me to pull a Ballard.

HOIST: For a supposedly pro writer, your syntax gets mighty confusing. And Dale Goble Jr. notes that your ego is akin to Frank Lunney's.

PIERS: Slander! Libel! Incest! Lunney's ego pales into insignificance beside mine!

HOIST: And in LOCUS, Tucker really put you in your ridiculous place.

PIERS: LOCUS is a good newszine. What's he doing there?

HOIST: You ignorant tworp! He has a column there! He doesn't fool around with crudzines the way you do. The man has taste.

PIERS: Well, I haven't had 30 years to work up to LOCUS. Give me time. Meanwhile I'll just have to struggle along with my columns in SF REVIEW and BeA Bohema, though I realize they are beneath the notice of a Great Fan like him.

HOIST: Sniveling will get you nowhere, you feeble excuse for a neo. Read this LOCUS column and weep.

PIERS: I keep telling you, I don't have time to keep up with fanzines. I've just taken almost 4,000 words right here explaining about things like that, in addition to the thousands of letters I've sent out to faneds saying the same thing.

HOIST: Hundreds of letters. But I admit you seem to have more time for fighting than for honest pursuits.

PIERS: That's how you get a reputation in fandom. Bot by writing good fiction. You don't see the fans devoting whole issues to discussing my fiction. They want controversy. So, by giving them that, I am giving them what they really desire. I'll bet a lot more current fans have heard of John Pierce the Founder than have heard of John Pierce the established, authoritative writer.

HOIST: You mean there are two John Pierce's?

PIERS: See? What did I tell you? And a good many fans know what a bastard I am personally who have never read my novels. One even suggested I was going for a fan Hugo.

HOIST: So that's your game, you sly dog! You're going to pull a Ted White and win a Hugo for your fannish meanderings, then I'll bet you conveniently forget to admit that you're Hugo-winning status wasn't for the stuff you sell. People will get the illusion that you really are a decent writer. Clever, clever!

PIERS: No. That's why I'm not running for any fan award. I'm driving for pro Hugo, nothing else. I would turn down the fan one, were it ever profered, because I am not a fan. At least, not in the fannish sense. I am a longtime-- 22 years--reader and collector of science fiction, but my current participation in fandom is in the guise of a pro peering under a moldy rock and finding it fascinating and repelling. Practically everything I say in fannish print advertises my pro status. Were I interested in fanning for the mere sake of fanning, I would adopt a rather different tone. That's why I use my pro pseudonym in my fan writings--not for concealment, but to clarify my status. Otherwise I could fool a number of fans (the breed does run stupid) into thinking that the obstreperous fan personality had no connection to the decent writer, and that would be hypocrisy. Originally I did use my real name for fan comments, and fans were fooled--but I never commented on my own material (except occasionally when a faned put the wrong name on my letter). But now, because too many fans mistake me for a fan--even to the extent of offering me snide--I mean Snider--advice on how to fan, I have to conceal my address. I repeat: I am not a fan turned pro, I am a pro dabbling in the muck of fandom. It would help if certain fans would pry open their ponderous and marble skulls enough to let that fact seep in. My experience in fandom probably exceeds that of the avergae practicing fan today--but that does not make me a fan, because the whole purpose of my present activity is to inform





fans of my pro activities and thoughts, and to keep myself informed of fan activities of interest to me. There are some (few) worthy fannish enterprises going, questionable as this statement may appear. Now what does that LOCUS column say about me?

HOIST: I can't quote it here, dolt! It's copyright material. I'd have to get permission from the author. But you'll be pleased to know he quotes a paragraph from one of your inept BAB efforts.

PIERS: But BAB is copyright, and nobody asked my permis--

HOIST: Shut up! Would you presume to set ridiculous standards for WILSON (Bob) TUCKER, you incredible crud?

PIERS: But shouldn't he follow the same laws--

HOIST: For a pro dabbling in fandom, you're awful naive.

PIERS: Sorry, I asked for that. I suppose I should feel flattered if he chooses to magnify my paltry remarks on housing or finance--

HOIST: Guess again, moron.

PIERS: On neighborhood animals?

HOIST: Never. If Tucker liked animals, he'd be better disposed toward you.

PIERS: On my little girl? I know some fans think it's irrelevant and boring for me to admit how much I care for--

HOIST: Imbecile! If Tucker cared about little girls, he wouldn't have ordered three boys from the stork for himself. He's concerned with fan personalities.

PIERS: Ah! Of course! My Praise for Seth Johnson, as deserving and decent a fan as the field has known. I have to admit that I corresponded with Seth because I felt he was a great guy. I normally consider posthumous awards ironic, but if I were running the convention this year--No, I can't object to Tucker's feeling the same. Obviously he does have some human sensitivities.

HOIST: Sometimes you are so dense I wonder if you're real.

PIERS: It was a mild column, I thought. I can't think what else I might have said that would interest a superpro like him.

HOIST: How about your uncommment in the addendum on Leo Kelley's book?

PIERS: You mean that was the one thing Tucker--?

HOIST: The man has taste. When, if ever, you develop taste like that, you'll be almost as big a sport as he is.

PIERS: You're right. I'll never make it.

HOIST: And he's sharp on reviewers, too. He praises Faith Lincoln.

PIERS: That's right. You should appreciate that. She's your illegitimate mother, isn't she?

HOIST: Yeah, few bastards can match my credentials.

PIERS: Just out of curiosity--which of his books did she review?

HOIST: Dunderhead! She only reviews contemporary SF.

PIERS: Oops, my mistake.

HOIST: Now let's return to that SCHNEPF fanzine. You have conveniently avoided replying to the remarks three fine fannish personalities made about you therein. What incompetent, gratuitous excuses do you intend to dangle out now?



PIERS: I can't answer until they send me a copy.

HOIST: You crybaby! You're not interested in fanzines and don't have time to read any, as you've said so boringly thousands of times. They are being kind.

PIERS: Hundreds of times. And I have shown interest in remarks about me or my work, and almost always reply.

HOIST: Even one reply is several too many, blivet-head. So are you going to answer, or are you chickening out like the coward you are?

PIERS: But if I don't have a copy how can I--?

HOIST: Don't quibble. That's the trouble with quibbles, as Dave Gerrold would say. Naturally your copy was forwarded to you through BAB, since you hide your stupid address.

PIERS: No it wasn't.

HOIST: Are you calling me a liar, you liar?

PIERS: I'm just saying--

HOIST: Well, through SFWA, then. There are lots of ways to reach you even without an address, as you should know. Sometimes the P.O. even forwards material.

PIERS: Well, unless the P.O. lost a bunch of material, no copy of this stuff was sent to me, because I never got it, or even any post card notifying me. How did you get your copies?

HOIST: I don't see that that is any of your business, but if it makes you happy: Geis of SFR sent me his copy of SCHNEPF because he thought it might interest me. And Lunney of BAB finally got hold of the two CROSSROADS!--he belongs to an apa or something--and shared his copies with me because he thought I might bug you about it. It pays to keep up your fan connections, see--as you would know, if you ever had any. And both YANDRO and LOCUS reviewed some of it, too, so you had no business being ignorant, you ignoramus. But you're trying to change the subject again: Are you daring to imply that a man like Wilson (Bob) Tucker would write something about you and not arrange to send you a copy? He's an experienced fan, and your claim borders on libel.

PIERS: It wouldn't be the first time.

HOIST: That you've said libelous things? I agree.

PIERS: That Tucker neglected to send me any copy.

HOIST: You unmitigated pup! Name a for-instance!

PIERS: For instance: when he took a small swipe at me and several others in an apa.

HOIST: You filthy liar! Have you no miniscule modicum of decency at all? Tucker never did that! In fact, he says so right here in SCHNEPF: "The only two apas I belong to are FAPA and Lil-apa, and I haven't mentioned his name in either one." Dare you challenge that?

PIERS: It takes a peculiar brand of courage to snipe at someone behind his back, and when openly challenged on the point to deny it--behind his back. Tucker must be Real Proud of himself, and of the honor he does fannish principles. I have a standing arrangement with BAB's editor that every person named gets a copy, if at all feasible. Some people can't be located, but we do try. And a copy of BAB is a much bigger deal than most of these apa flimsies that are just regurgitated to make a dull minimum. And I believe SFR has a similar





policy, and the other better productions as well. But of course I'm not a Big Name Pro like Tucker--all I do is write science fiction, so I'm disqualified. And Lunney isn't a Big Name Fan like Tucker--Frank just tries to improve his fanzine, which disqualifies him. Maybe different customs apply, in that rarefied major league atmosphere.

HOIST: Did you send one to Slippery Dick last time?

PIERS: I don't think so. He's sort of busy with ABM right now, foisting it off on an unwilling electorate for the benefit of his campaign contributors.

HOIST: So you're lying again, you contemptible snot!

PIERS: Well, I was thinking primarily of fans. Maybe Lunney can send a copy to the Lily White H--

HOIST: Stop trying to change the subject. When and where did Tucker ever mention your foul-smelling name in any fanzine?

PIERS: Apart from SCHNEPF and CROSSROADS! and LOCUS, you mean? And any others I haven't been informed about?

HOIST: Yes, I mean. That apa lie you told, trying to pin a snipe on an honest talented moneymaking elder author.

PIERS: Remember, I said I've never seen a copy. And I know very little about apas. But a correspondent told me that he received, as part of FAPA circulation, one LE ZOMBIE put out by one Tucker, and that the issue dated December 31, 1968 contained this quiz item: "Who said, 'Modesty is a virtue not often found among poets, for almost every one of them thinks himself the greatest in the world.'" Now I would have supposed the answer to that would be Miguel de Cervantes, the famous Spanish author of one of the world's first and greatest novels, Don Quixote; but the answer supplied by Tucker was "Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad, Ted White, Piers Anthony, Sam Moskowitz, Joe Fann."

HOIST: Big deal! If you can't take a mild rib like that--

PIERS: Oh, I don't mind. It's clever enough, though I am rather miffed that he listed me fourth instead of first. Alphabetically I should have been first, and who ever heard of quiet twerps like those others? But when I inquired gently of Tucker "Are you content merely to snipe from the anonymous security of an apa?" he attempted to deny (as you inform me now)--in a GESTALT apazine--that he had done so. That makes it a trifle more sticky. Combined with his apparent refusal to meet me on my own ground, that I thought was his too--the science fiction short story--I really do wonder whether he isn't better at sniping from such cover than at writing stories.

HOIST: You utter crap! LE ZOMBIE is a genzine, not an apazine.

PIERS: I didn't say anything about the status of the zine. I said he sniped from an apa--and unless my correspondent was sadly mistaken, that is a fair description of what he did. He also sniped from general circulation, and from another apa, even after being challenged on that point, so I think we can see where his talents lie. He has sniped more this year than he has written SF, as far as I can tell--and that is what irritates me. If you're going to throw your big Pro name around in an attempt to squelch practicing writers in the field, you ought at least to prove you are competitive in that field. Otherwise you have precious little basis for your lordly attitude. It's a form of intellectual dishonesty, and a man with his vaunted experience should be aware of that.

HOIST: Lies! Lies! He never did! He said he never did! I'll take Tucker's word over yours anytime. How can you even think of casting such foul aspersions on such greatness? I won't listen to any more of this garbage!

PIERS: That attitude seems rather common in CROSSROADS!, I must admit. Strange that those writers didn't comment in BAB.

HOIST: Anyway, you've changed the subject again. We were about to discuss SCHNEPF point by point. Editor Montgomery says he has no quarrel with you--



PIERS: I understand. Is he or is he not a pen name for Bob Vardeman?

HOIST: That's irrelevant!

PIERS: So he spared my feelings by deleting my copy.

HOIST: Are you trying to be sarcastic, you dimwitted boor?

PIERS: I guess I don't have much talent for that sort of thing.

HOIST: That's for sure. You write mediocre stories and pretentious and boring novels and rude letters and asinine columns, and you're a real hairy wart on the rectum of fandom. Ask Fucker. I mean Tucker--you make intentional typoses, too.

PIERS: You damn me with faint praise.

HOIST: Shut up. Now here in SCHNEPF Vardeman leads off with some real solid truths about your crimes--

PIERS: Real, real solid! I only hope his large intestine didn't hurt after he got that feculent mass out.

HOIST: Dare you deny any of it, you compulsive prevaricator?

PIERS: There is a technique used by those who have very little genuine ground for complaint, in which they throw a few truths, more half-truths, yet more irrelevance and a spicing of outright nonsense into the pot. When the victim attempts to grapple with such an octopus, they toss in more of the same. Thus the other party hardly has a chance to catch up. But such tactics do not alter the basic picture.

HOIST: You should talk! You're avoiding the issue again.

PIERS: Tell you what: if Vardeman ever has the guts to repeat his supposed truths in BAB, I'll refute them. Until then, I stand on what I said about him here.

HOIST: You preposterous coward!

PIERS: On the contrary. I simply need to have the kid stand up where I can see him, for a change. BAB is where I hang out, as well he knows. If he really thinks he has anything that will stand up, this is the place to show it. Otherwise, he can run all over fandom--and I trust other fans will appreciate his velocity.

HOIST: Put your money where your typer is.

PIERS: OK. I stand by anything I say here. I'll even contribute a dollar to TAFF for any misstatement Vardeman--or anyone else--can demonstrate I made in BAB. I'd extend that to other fanzines too, but my work is subject to too much, er, editing elsewhere. BAB is about the only place I'm free of that (though Lunney did cut two lines from my last addendum, innocuous as they were). All I require is that any challenger agree to put the same money into TAFF for every accusation I successfully refute here--or any misstatement I prove he makes in BAB, once he challenges me. I rather think Vardeman will trim his sails somewhat, then...

HOIST: You're still wriggling out. Who's to decide who's correct? You?

PIERS: No, some fan of repute who has no special interest, acceptable to both parties. Harry Warner, maybe, or Charlie Brown, or Buck Coulson. He can read the contested statements and arguments--it may take several issues for some--and call it.

HOIST: You're bluffing. With an objective judge, you'd go broke!

PIERS: Try me. Oh, there'd have to be one other qualification--

HOIST: Uh-huh. I thought so. This doesn't start until 1985, right?

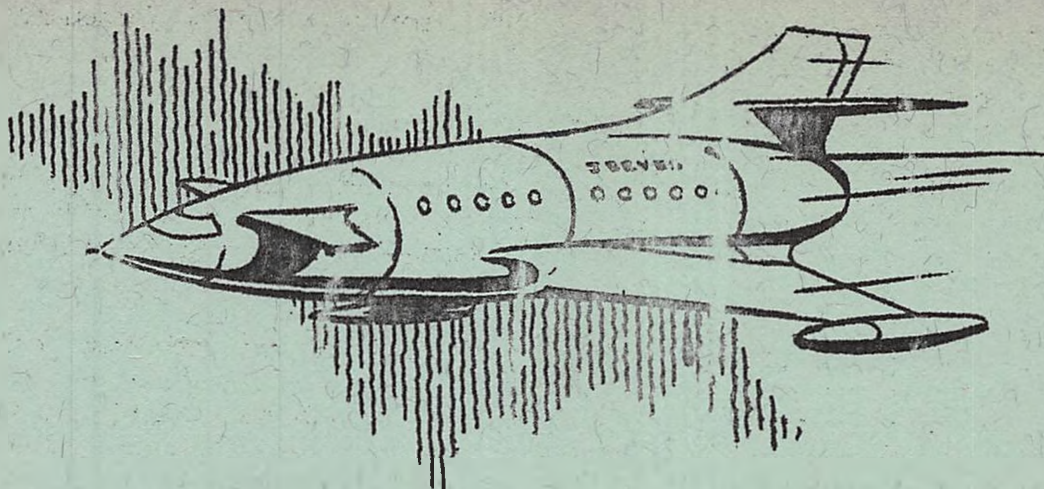
PIERS: Wrong. It starts now, retroactive to the first issue of BAB. (Two bucks for any misstatement I made in BAB #1!) Maybe others will get in on it, and fatten TAFF's coffers. Seems as good a way as any.

HOIST: So what's your "qualification?"

PIERS: Material that is obviously facetious doesn't count.

HOIST: Your whole column is obviously facetious. Your entire involvement in fandom. Your complete writing career--





PIERS: Care to make that statement a test case?

HOIST: Anyway, why not let the judge decide what's serious and what isn't. You can commit libel in a humorous vein, you know.

PIERS: That's true. OK--find me a fair and willing judge, and the contest is on.

HOIST: I'll put my lackey Lunney on it. LUNNEY! Line up a Good Man. We're going to nail this Bad Man to the outhouse door.

PIERS: Bring a big hammer.

HOIST: And don't think I haven't noticed how neatly you've excluded that arrogant missive of yours that started all this in SANDWORM. You don't dare stand by that, do you?

PIERS: I stand by it. The problem there is that it was edited.

HOIST: What casuistry! Do you expect anyone to believe it?

PIERS: Well, again I'm open to outside opinion. Since that first letter was addressed also to Dean Koontz and Jim Young, I'd be interested to hear their reactions to it. Dean, Jim--do you feel that, taken as a whole (that is, including the portions that never saw print), my letter was all that bad? Or was it typical of provocative, editor-ribbing, conversation-making, straight-talking LoC's--the very kind of thing that adds zest to a fanzine? As opposed to the bland, blah, "This story was great, this article stunk, gee I don't know what to say about the editorial, why don't you get some Finlay cartoons and some Ballard fancomment" type of LoC. I'm sure the spectators would like to see your views on this.

HOIST: Never have I seen such audacity! You're attempting to twist things so that even your victims have to defend you. You're dirtier than Earthquake McGoon!

PIERS: Thank you. I personally feel that some of these fans who attack me are pretty arrogant themselves, to assume that they are anything but comparative novices in such in-fighting. I hope they have learned their respective lessons now.

HOIST: I think I'm going to be sick!

PIERS: You are sick. You're just a feeble imitation of Hoy Ping Pong to begin with, and you don't know your place. You're lucky I even acknowledge your existence. In fact, I don't acknowledge it, you fake!

HOIST: You--you--

PIERS: <sup>N</sup>And your bitchy mother was a fake, too.



HOIST: I'll get you, you--I swear it!

PIERS: Go take a flying fuck at the moon.

HOIST: I can't. Vardeman and Young and Koontz aren't through with it yet. Meanwhile, how come you never mention the other responses to that original letter?

PIERS: It didn't seem necessary. Harry Warner commented, of course.

HOIST: So you admit it! The most experienced fan of all! I'll bet he really put you in your place.

PIERS: Yes, he sympathized. Apparently he didn't find it so objectionable. In fact, the few fans who are or have been pros seem to agree essentially with my position. Those that commented at all.

HOIST: Except for Tucker. Explain that away, nimbletoes.

PIERS: There are exceptions, yes. But the strange thing is that most of my sparring has been done with simplistic fans who seem to have to cheat in order to score points. Those personalities whom I deem to be in the major leagues in this sort of thing, such as Harlan Ellison and Harry Harrison, and who really could hurt me if they tried, have been careful to avoid such confrontations. Now they're even coming out in my defense--despite provocation that should more readily have put them on the other side. I find that intriguing.

HOIST: You bloated simpleton! Are you implying that HE and HH are afraid to tackle you?

PIERS: No. That's what makes it intriguing. Each has some idea of my capabilities, particularly HE, but neither believes I am dangerous to him personally. So it should have been easy for each to put me down or to stand aloof. Instead they extended themselves to ask for peace.

HOIST: Not that you gave it to them!

PIERS: When a case gets as distorted as this one has, it isn't too easy to lay down the arms--particularly when to do so at this time would be taken as both cowardice and confession to crime. If, after this, my detractors care to admit their errors and subside, I'll let them go. As I said, they did the escalation, perhaps supposing that they were jumping on a harmless rabbit. Sometimes a stiff lesson is good for such naivete. Tacky seems not to have his heart in it, though, and we've covered Vardeman in another fashion, and flies like Montgomery and Snider are hardly worth swatting. Once we eliminate these pipsneaks, only Tucker is left to bear the brunt. It's too bad, because he's out of practice and in poor shape; in his prime he might have been worthy. But he did ask for it.

HOIST: You megalomaniac! What are you trying to prove?

PIERS: That when a hound chooses to nip at a porcupine, he is apt to come out of it hurting.

HOIST: You're a porcupine?

PIERS: Precisely. I do not attack people entirely gratuitously. I strike only those who annoy me, however deviously and, I admit, sometimes unintentionally. Some, like Harlan, recognize this configuration and respect it for what it is, while not necessarily approving. Some, like Tucker, don't.

HOIST: You damned Jingoist!

PIERS: What?

HOIST: You know--"We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do--"

PIERS: Yes, now that you mention it. But I fight honestly. I announced my battlefield--BeABohema--and meet all comers here. I believe I said as much in the very column these people are objecting to. These others have chosen to be violent and underhanded--which tells something about them, don't you think?

HOIST: I'm not paid to think. You still haven't replied to Tucker's remarks in SCHNEPF.

PIERS: What does he say?

HOIST: He is interviewed by Hoy Ping Pong. Pong says you're an F.T.P.



PIERS: F.T.P.?

HOIST: Full Time Pro. And don't question the redundancy.

PIERS: Funny. I wasn't aware of much redundancy. How do you differentiate from the Full Time Fans and the Part Time Pros?

HOIST: Hoy Ping Pong manages to do it. And Tucker says he dislikes being castigated for attitudes erroneously attributed to him.

PIERS: I don't blame him. I feel the same myself. I'd call that a well-spoken sentiment.

HOIST: You're the one he's talking about.

PIERS: What attitude did I erroneously attribute to him?

HOIST: That he felt that those who are trying to make good in today's more competitive market are impatient.

PIERS: Odd. I'm trying to make good in today's more competitive market, and have said so in detail, and he has called me angry and impatient. Is his memory weakening in his Senior Citizenship?

HOIST: He isn't on the stand, fool. You are.

PIERS: Sorry--I forgot.

HOIST: And he says he has reason to suspect Harlan Ellison would not be happy to read a submission from him.

PIERS: Doesn't Harlan dislike being castigated for attitudes erroneously attributed to him?

HOIST: There's no law in fandom that says Tucker must practice what he preaches!

PIERS: Excuse me, I'm sorry. It's just that from personal experience I know Harlan better than that. I presumed that Tucker, with his longer experience in fandom, knew that also.

HOIST: You presumed too much. And he says he didn't read every word of your SANDWORM letter, because he had seen the same thing many times before. But he did read every word of your BAB col, and some of that was new, anyway. And he says he didn't say that quote that ends "...a handful of mediocre short stories." He says someone else may have said it, though.

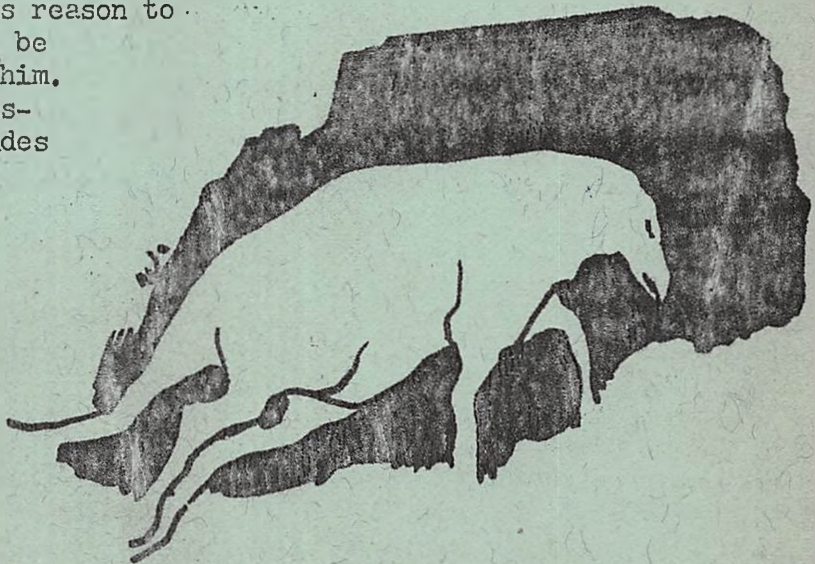
PIERS: Remarkable. Did he read every word of page 32, too?

HOIST: Naturally. That's where he quoted your diatribe against him from, bonehead.

PIERS: Even just three lines above that passage, where I said "The quotation near the opening of this column is one such, by Roy Tackett"? I thought I made it clear, for anyone who so carefully read every word and who has long sense familiar with the material anyway.

HOIST: And he says he's earned over \$17,000 from one book.

PIERS: My, my! I could become very placid and patient with that type of money! I had no idea science fiction could pay that well. But it does make me wonder why he can't afford to take time off for one measly story for a worthy volume whose editor is eager to have the very best. Does he spend his riches that rapidly?





HOIST: Don't start prying.

PIERS: Sorry. Might I inquire which novel it is?

HOIST: He doesn't say.

PIERS: How very convenient. Reminds me of the butcher who undersold all competition--when he was out of stock. So we'll just have to guess which science fiction novel paid so well.

HOIST: You're presuming again. He didn't say it was science fiction. He says the water is as wet as ever. But he didn't say SF.

PIERS: Well, I was talking about SF. I thought that was evident. I mean, Tucker is participating in SF fandom here, isn't he? Addressing me as an angry impatient SF writer? So--

HOIST: Well, you're wrong. He writes mostly mystery thrillers.

PIERS: You mean that's what he's counting? Material outside the field... and leaving it unidentified so fans will think it's in the field?

HOIST: Is there any fannish law against it?

PIERS: Well, it is problematical to compare work in different genres. And I don't see that mysteries give his pronouncements any more authority in the SF field. Hell, on that basis I could count my years as a technical writer, and my college degree in writing, and my time as an English teacher, and--what's his degree in, by the way?

HOIST: We aren't discussing education.

PIERS: Does he have one at all? Did he even attend college? Did he even graduate from high--

HOIST: Out of order! I'm asking the questions here.

PIERS: It just seems to me that for someone who talks so condescendingly about the bush leagues--well, if he doesn't have more literary training than I do, and if he has to reach outside the field to match my production--

HOIST: He doesn't have to reach outside! He's way ahead of you in or out of the field.

PIERS: Oh? How many SF stories has he had published?

HOIST: Just a minute while I look. Day...MIT...a total of seventeen, if you count a couple of PROBABILITY ZERO's in ASF and exclude To the Tombaugh Station, because it was republished by ACE as a novel.

PIERS: Seventeen. Was this the man who sneered at my sales total of seventeen? (Actually, it's twenty now, in SF.)

HOIST: But you yourself have said the magazine field is restricted.

PIERS: True. So let's skip the stories and compare novels. How's he doing there--in the field, of course?

HOIST: Hm. The Tuck index--hey! Get that! Tuck--for Tucker? It doesn't list them all. But delving deeper, I make it seven, counting Tombaugh.

PIERS: Seven. I've sold seven.

HOIST: You said five!

PIERS: That was months ago! Now it's seven, though one is an advance sale. And I have two more, amassing about 140,000 words, on the market right now, that may have sold by the time this sees print.

HOIST: Big deal. Have you earned \$17,000 for any one novel?

PIERS: No, I have to admit that my best still runs between five and six thousand, though two others have better long-range prospects. But my first novel was published in 1967. Tucker is twenty years older than I am, and his first came out in 1946. It wasn't even SF, though some say it was his best novel ever. The Chinese Doll. He followed that a year later with To Keep or Kill, and after another year, The Dove--in fact he published a novel a year for a decade or so. Compared to my rate of--well, chances are my tenth will be published by the end of 1971, so in or out of the field I seem to be progressing more rapidly. It will



be interesting to compare my figures--on both number of novels and income-per-novel--at an equivalent time span.

HOIST: How come you're talking about his outside novels, when you wanted to compare strictly in the SF field? You're just begging for a time bomb, nut!

PIERS: Right. I'd better confine it to the subject. Sticking within the field, I'll bet my first five or six outmass his seven, in wordage. So I still would like to know what bush leagues he's talking about.

HOIST: He's had material published in Japan! Can you match that?

PIERS: No, but--

HOIST: So there!

PIERS: I was about to say that while I haven't published there yet, my novel Sos the Rope has been sold to a Japanese publisher, and I have received the advance. Perhaps it is the same one he's at--Hayakawa Shobo, anyway. So--

HOIST: This is ridiculous! You can't judge performance or merit by number or mass or foreign appeal! Damon Knight is only listed for about five novels, and the same for Roger Zelazny. Not that any person of taste would mention them in the same breath with the likes of you. It's how good you are that counts.

PIERS: I agree, I agree! I've been saying so all along. I'd rather turn out a genuinely meritorious novel than a best seller or super moneymaker.

HOIST: And that's where Tucker beats you into a no-contest. In sheer, unadulterated quality.

PIERS: With efforts like The City in the Sea, The Long, Lous Silence, The Time Master, Wild Talent, Time Bomb and The Lincoln Hunters? I understand those are mostly mystery-thriller types transposed to SF.

HOIST: Even mystery-thriller-SF is better than your crap!

PIERS: I'm game, then. I'll match Tucker novel for novel, my best against his best, my worst against his worst, etc. Let's just find out, objectively, which of us is the more capable writer of science fiction or fantasy.

HOIST: If you weren't such an atrocious heel, I'd almost feel sorry for you. How can you even think of comparing your neoistic efforts to his masterpieces?

PIERS: Well, if he won't match contemporary stories, we have to go to the novels already existent, don't we? It should be possible to prove or disprove his implications about my inferior status as a writer. Unless he prefers to back off from any such implication...as indeed he might. Now.

HOIST: Oh no you don't! You started this line of comparison. Now you take the consequences.

PIERS: Very well. Suppose we set up a committee--several intelligent readers (the more intelligent the better!) who would consider both mine and his and rule on each. Then we'd have our objective evidence: who is the pro, who the pretender.

HOIST: This is absolutely sickening! Where in all fandom will you find any judges who owe you that much money?

PIERS: OK, skeptic--you pick them. You don't behave nearly as well as Tucker's Hoy Ping Pong, anyway, so you might as well work.

HOIST: That's because I'm not a figment of Tucker's imagination. Let's





see--the obvious first choice would be an experienced long-time fan of unchallenged perspicuity and objectivity. Right?

PIERS: Right.

HOIST: Roy Tackett!

PIERS: But he's one of the--

HOIST: You said I could choose the judges, didn't you?

PIERS: But--

HOIST: Now, to balance the panel, a newer fan, one who publishes a sharp clever fanzine and attends conventions and never takes things personally. Agree?

PIERS: I suppose so.

HOIST: Bob Vardeman!

PIERS: Oh-oh.

HOIST: Quiet! Oh, this is fun. Now, to chair this august panel, we need a fan with solid pro credentials, preferably one also noted for thoughtful reviews of novels.

PIERS: That sounds fair.

HOIST: Lin Carter! What do you say to that? OK, lackey Lunny! You complete the necessary formalities and get the August Panel moving before next August. We'll expect you to publish its final report in, oh, six months. You may have to arrange for copies of the novels in question to be circulated to the judges. And find out how each author rates his novels, so they can be paired off fairly. Stupid--how do you rate your losers?

PIERS: Well, there are different factors, different types. I have never done the same thing twice. It depends--

HOIST: Don't give me that pusillanimous mealy-mouthing! Just rank your hack, top to bottom, and no more whining.

PIERS: If I have to. 1. Macroscopic. 2. Chthon. 3. Omnivore. 4. --do collaborations count?

HOIST: Only to break a tie. Stick to your own work, instead of leaning on better men.

PIERS: 4. Hasan. 5. Sos the Rope. And for tiebreaking: The Ring.

HOIST: Tie, schmie! That's only six novels, total, to his seven.

PIERS: If you'll give me a small time extension--

HOIST: No! Only those currently published. In print by the end of 1969 or thereabouts.

PIERS: Yes, sir. I'll just have to forfeit last place to him then.

HOIST: And next time don't try to get smart with me, neo. You don't seem to realize when you're overmatched.

PIERS: You arrogant bastard son of a bitch--you're worse than I am! I've a good mind to pull your plug.

HOIST: You wouldn't have the nerve. I said I'd get even! You thought I was just a mouthpiece, ho, ho! I'll go on talking just as long as I--

(PULL! Curtain drops, water drains, and another ugly friendship bites the cliched dust. Will this internecine struggle continue? Tune in your next friendly BeABohema issue...)

HOIST: What do you know! He pulled the wrong plug. He's gone. So now he can't do that ADDENDUM-DUM covering EXILE 6, the British COSMOS, AVESTA #1, couple YANDROS, SCHAMOOB #1, MATHOM SECONDS (phases I and II), WSFA JOURNAL #67, RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY (Aug 69), several LOCII, SF COMMENTARY #2 and THE ESSENCE #1. He liked the text of the next-to-last quite a bit and the format of the last considerably, and its envelope was just right for mailing Macroscopic page-proofs back to the publisher, so he was going to say a Good Word. And he even liked Denny Lien's letter and James Blish's challenge to Ted Pauls...to bad you won't get to read all those positive comments he was going to make before he pulled the wrong plug. Maybe I'll plug him back in in time for next BAB...then again, he went Too Far when he called Faith a fake, so maybe not...



# THE INSIDE STORY OF THE MILFORD MAFIA

What is it? Where is it? Is it diabolic, clever, like the American-Italian Mafia? Does it really control SFWA, and the Nebula Awards as well as writers? How does it operate? Who heads it? Is its influence for good or evil? Books have been dedicated to it; editors have cussed it; writers have disparaged it. Is it real?

As with the other Mafia, truth had to be pumped from informers and stoolies. Checks and cross-checks for accuracy have been carried out to reasonable lengths. I asked questions, recorded answers and synthesized as included here.

Is there really a Milford Mafia?

The name Milford comes from Milford, Pa., home of Damon Knight and wife, Kate Wilhelm.

The Milford Science Fiction Conference headed by Mr. and Mrs. Damon Knight has been going strong for fourteen years and appears to be the key to understanding the Milford Mafia, the SFWA (Science Fiction Writers of America) organization and other things.

During the Writer's Conference, which lasted from June 7-14 in 1969, Damon Knight assigned story review periods to each attending writer. In the morning everyone sat around the beach house in shorts, swim suits or old clothes, reading one another's manuscripts from the year since the conference was held in Madeira Beach, Florida. In the afternoon selected manuscripts were criticized by everyone in the conference. (Before describing this event further, I should explain that the charge is about thirty dollars per person and, contrary to rumors, most of that money is spent on food, drinks and house-keeping conveniences for the benefits of most writers.)

The reader should clearly understand that review of manuscripts during the conference is a psychological experience deliberately designed to shock the writer into some kind of dis-identification with his words. This de-personalization experience is a vital and necessary value of the conference and also a key to understanding the Milford Mafia. Mark it!

Each person, in turn, spends whatever time necessary to criticize your story. Comments include trivia on accuracy of fact as well as syntax and story value. Anything with respect to the submission is fair game. During the fifteen reviews, done successively in semi-circle or circle, by each other member of the conference, you, the writer, are not permitted to answer back. You can take notes on each comment for later rebuttal if you wish.

BY PAUL HAZLETT



During my investigation I overheard some members remark that no other writer's conference exists like this one. It cuts at the heart of story defects rapidly and effectively. Very few writers can/are willing to stand-up under the psychological bludgeoning.

Those who have weathered the storm report on many a writer who leaves the conference early, angry after their story is reviewed. Or they never come back the following years.

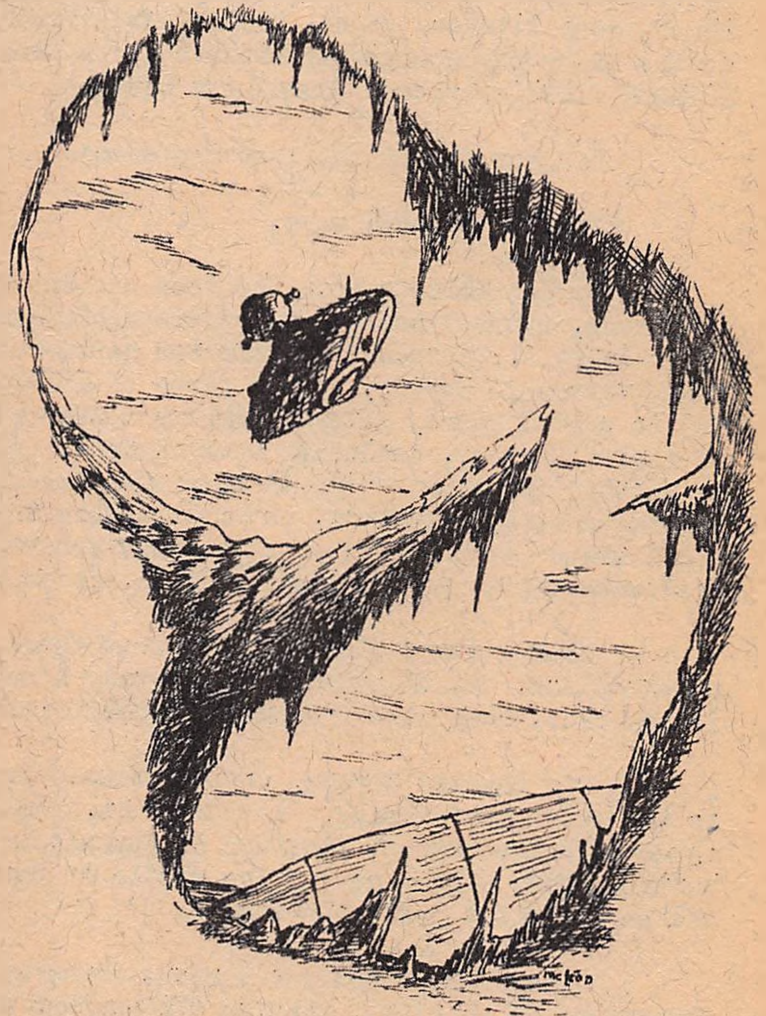
One story in particular stands out. A young fan, whose name shall be omitted herein, attended an early writer's conference at Milford. His writing and story were mercilessly criticized. Breaking the rules, this young writer stood up angrily, denounced his critics and swore that he would come back more famous, a better writer and wealthier writer than all of them. This person did in fact make good, financially and publicity-wise. Apparently he returns to the SF Writer's Conference annually, not for need of criticism, but to flaunt the fact that he is bigger and better than any of his former critics.

In spite of all the faults of the Milford Writer's Conference and its bastard child, the Milford Mafia, this one aspect of story criticism probably ought to be practiced by every would-be writer. Anyone can find a friend to praise your story; can you find a friend who is willing to damn it?

Is an SF Writer's Conference conducted by the Milford Mafia a good place to read exciting SF stories?

No!

Only a small handful of SF stories were submitted for review this year. Ben Bova presented a first chapter on what appeared to be a good, hard-core SF story. Perry A. Chapdelaine submitted a complete manuscript which had already been criticized by Virginia Kidd and John Campbell and others. Gordon R. Dickson had something about two hunters, one after the other guy's wife; Harlan Ellison, his non-SF "A Boy and His Dog"; Carol Emshwiller, a poem written in essay form; Burt K. Filer, something about a coal-belt tender; Richard Mill, a





Harlan Ellison horror; Keith Laumer, a first chapter of a Philip Marlowe imitation; Anne McCaffrey, a lady's housewifey thing; Larry Niven, a fantasy; Andre Norton, her thing; Joanna Russ (forgive me Joanna, I couldn't find out what you had, but it wasn't SF); Jack Williamson, a first chapter on a college textbook for the teaching of SF writing; Gene Wolfe, psychological symbolisms; Damon Knight; fantasy; Kate Wilhelm, psychological symbolisms based on Jungian psychology.

Kate's story reminds me of a comment I overheard. Unless the story was written with a Freudian foundation, it was torn to shreds by most reviewers. The current literary vogue, though unrealistic and badly out of date, seems to be the major psychological criteria at the writer's conference. You'd think SCIENCE FICTION writers would know better!

Did fur fly at the last conference?

Yes, in several ways.

Harlan Ellison took the lead-off in tearing Perry A. Chapdelaine's story to shreds, unquestionably on craftsmanship grounds as well as Freudian psychology. Later Perry A. Chapdelaine broke the house-rules by tearing Harlan Ellison's story-moral values to shreds, with a piece of Ellison attached here and there. According to what I heard, several members walked out during Chapdelaine's critique of Harlan's story, including Damon Knight. (This kind of subtle social pressure is another important thing to note when describing a Milford Mafia.) Later, according to my informant, several members thanked Chapdelaine for bringing these moral values to public light; probably someone thanked Ellison for bringing poor craftsmanship to public light. If so, it looks like a sort of draw to me.

Within every closely knit group there are closer knit groups. This one was no exception. Keith Laumer invited only a select few to his home. If Relief is any clue, they were probably the "most influential" of the group.

Dr. Patrick Strang, world-renowned psychologist, was invited to speak to the group one evening. As I hear it, Damon Knight and some few others did not agree with the current findings of psychology, liking their old-fashioned kind better. They walked out in the middle of the talk. Sorry, Damon, we can't adjust the world to fit just your image!

Other rumors and antagonisms appeared and reassembled throughout the seven days of meetings. Harlan Ellison and Damon Knight bought some of the stories. This probably became a large prestige factor in itself. Where some members would be inclined to bring their experimental or troublesome works for review and help, others would be inclined to bring their best so someone would buy. Cute conflict of goals right there!

Betty Ballantine and Ejler Jakobsson attended the meeting briefly but, from what I was told, they couldn't find anything worth reading, not to speak of buying.

Unimportant in themselves, little groups and in-groups, petty likes and dislikes serve to illustrate one of the defects of the conference. I understand better scheduling and communication from Damon to members might have created a better controlled environment. Some meetings did not start until as late as 10:00 P.M. Sometimes finding which restaurant would be the one for the evening



was a matter of knowing the correct in-group.

Evening discussions were a matter of secret group ballot. Damon Knight sent queries to each member asking their pleasures in the matters. From the final subjects chosen, I wonder if Damon didn't perform as a telecast. "How does it feel to grow old? What do you believe about God, or a supreme creator, or about the universe? What would you most like to see happen in the world?" all seem to be questions which Damon asks over and over, in person or in his stories. I can be wrong, but the rest of the description of the evening's fun sounds like nothing more or less than an old-fashioned group psycho-therapy session.

Writers may need such therapy more than other breeds; but do they need it under such unexpert supervision?

Frankness and honesty of mind, heart and soul is dug for by Damon and Kate's writer's conference. Writers' personalities are ripped to shreds, not once, but fifteen times successively during the afternoon sessions. At night sly, subtle digging through each writer's subconscious takes place, lifting little emotional barriers, permitting emotions to come oozing outward to cling wherever possible among each participant. Probably participants, themselves, are unaware of the process.

In the days and evenings, freedom of expression is encouraged. So long as this expression conforms to the kind of Jungian group pseudo-mind being built, it is called free. Subtle flow of control of the anti-group member takes place simultaneously. Little things like laughter at the right place, construction of in-group cliques, petulance, walking out of uncomfortable situations and the like isolate those who do not conform.

Those who survive such treatment, and can identify themselves with one another's goals and problems, to the exclusion of all other reasonable factors, right or wrong, unknowingly become members of the unlisted Milford Mafia. Those who do not survive the treatment become outsiders with, perhaps, dirtier names.

Whether such a Mafia is good or bad is another story.

One thing seems clear from my research. Much effort is expended to disassociate writing personalities from their stories. Similar effort, consciously or unconsciously, goes into creating a certain kind of conformance under a loose comradeship. There, my friends, is where is born the Milford Mafia!

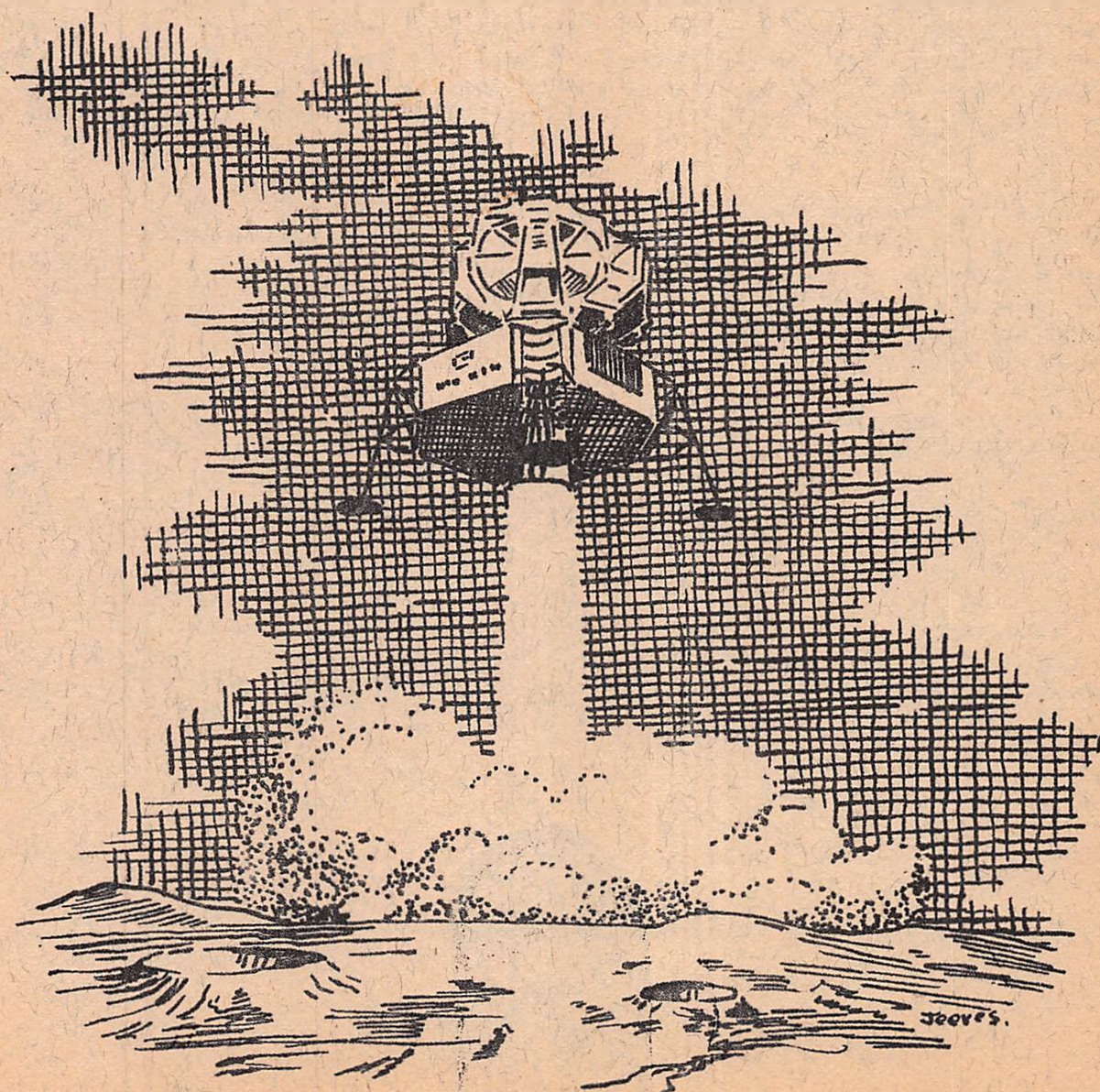
--Paul Hazlett



P.



# SUNDAY ON THE MOON





When Hubbard was a small child, he wanted to go to the Moon...  
 or Mars...  
 or Venus...  
 or Jupiter.

My earliest memory was of being nearly electrocuted when I stuck a hairpin into an electric outlet. My next-to-earliest memory was of a Flash Gordon space-suit. I was an avid Flash Gordon fan--no, I take that back, not of Flash. Not a fan of Flash Gordon. Flash was a shadow. A character invented to hang a story on. He was Buster Crabbe in disguise.

He was someone who got into trouble so they could continue the story next Saturday. That was the way serials went.

Zarkhov was my hero. Zarkhov's spaceship. Ming, merciless, cruel. Mongo. Mars. The Hawkmen. Alien landscapes shimmered in the mind of a young child recently moved from a slum to the cubed monotony of a post-war housing project. Suburbia was yet to be. It was 1952.

The planet Earth was not a friendly place to the child Hubbard. The Earth was a gravel road covered with creosote in front of the house. The Earth was stringing beads in kindergarten the way the teacher wanted them strung--"one red square, one blue oblong, an orange round one, a yellow square..." The Earth was cheese sandwiches for lunch.

The Earth is a pretty bleak and dumb place to be when you're five years old.

While Zarkhov was building paralyzer rays and getting that dummy Flash into more trouble (and why not? Gordon was only a crummy polo bum to begin with, anyway), Hubbard was trying to build snowmen from crumbly clay and getting his hands slimy from the creosote on the gravel.

Other children my age sought the security of familiar things...their homes  
 ...  
 their yards...  
 that dumb gravel road...

I could only find life tolerable in the belief that there was someplace besides Here. On the other side of that blue sheet overhead, I knew, were Other Things. Things I wanted: space, adventure, other planets, monsters, strange things, and--yes, even at age five--beautiful women.

Other kids played games based on familiar things...  
 car driver...  
 cowboys  
 and Indians...  
 war

I had a spaceship.

by Gary N. Hubbard • • •



A Nash Rambler.

A Nash makes a good spaceship.

When I was six.

Things had changed.

The road in front of our house had been paved. Flash Gordon was no longer on TV. My outlook had become more mature and scientific--somewhat. I learned to read. I realized by then that Zarkhov's spaceship probably wouldn't have worked, and that the Nash was definitely out. I learned that my impressions of Mudmen and nightgown-clad Princesses running around on Mars were probably mistaken. I learned that space monsters might have a hard time inhaling, and that space was farther out beyond the blue sheet than I had previously imagined. Life on Earth became a ritual of mealtimes, schooltimes, and bedtimes...bleaker than ever.

Then

Hope.

A radar beam had been bounced off the surface of the Moon and its signal picked up returning to Earth. Proving only that it could be done. The V-2 rocket had gone higher than any manmade object ever had before.

I took to reading books on astronomy.

I came to know the planets very well. I could name them in order from their distance from the Sun and by size. I knew the mean distances of some of the nearer planets to the Earth, the probably atmospheric contents of each planet, and made up my own mind concerning the surface conditions. My conceptions were not entirely accurate and they were not entirely original. They were drawn from astronomical speculations of doubtful authority and colored by memories of Flash Gordon.

Mercury didn't rotate on its axis in those days. It stayed right where it was. One side was constantly exposed to the heat of the Sun. Rivers of molten lead ran in cracks on the planet's surface. The other side of Mercury was in constant darkness. Frozen gasses covered the surface like snow. But there wasn't any light there, so you couldn't tell whether the snow was white or not. A temperate region--called the Twilight Zone--ringed the planet from pole to pole. The surface there was mainly mountain crags and deep valleys.

Venus was jungle. Soggy, lavish jungle. Mushy swamps where uprated lizards slithered and tromped, smashed down trees, ate other lizards and pulled these little raft things the Venerian natives hitched to them. I always thought that it was a shame that the dinosuars had died off on the Earth before anybody could put them to good use. So on Venus it was different.

Venus was nice for a while, but I developed hay fever around age seven, and acquired an extreme dislike for flowers, foliage and uncooked plants.

Mars had a much more hospitable climate for a kid with hay fever. The



dust storms were kinda bad, but then, you had to wear a respirator anyway. At least there weren't any plants around. Well...there were these plantlike things out on the desert, but they didn't shoot any pollen out at you. They consisted mainly of scaly tentacles and spikes and burs. Mostly small armored animals lived on Mars. The Martians had died out long ago leaving broken-up cities and shallow canals filled in with sand in some places. Once I had the idea that under its crust, Mars had huge caverns filled with water, and that the canal building had been an extreme form of urban renewal. But that sounded a little absurd even to the child Hubbard.

The asteroids and the moons of the giant planets were only mildly interesting. Just little balls of rock floating around in space like a circular gravel road. Probably covered with creosote, too.

The giant planets stunned you. Their size was impressive. On the Rand McNally maps they were often drawn bigger than the Sun. On Jupiter, Neptune, Saturn and Uranus there were valleys bigger than the whole Earth, and atmosphere of swirling, colored gasses--with a tendency toward red--went up and up forever. You had to feel small and very unimportant in the scheme of things. But after awhile the monotony of the landscape got to be boring, and the scheme of things became very unimportant to Hubbard.

Saturn, at first, seemed like a neat place. Because I remember that Buck Rogers had gone there once and taken a ride on a keen little ket-car the Saturn-Men had invented. But then I found out that the rings of Saturn weren't solid bands as I had first surmised, but actually hunks of rock--and, no doubt, covered with creosote.

Pluto was the backside of Mercury with a little more light (but not much), and as such it made the solar system a giant Mobius band that funnelled eventually back to Earth. The Road was open most nights--they took down the sheet at night, you know--and I was out upon it many a time. And for a long time I completely ignored the Moon. Never thought about it for a moment. Just another big rock covered with creosote.

Then I was eight and discovered spaceships.

Oh yes, spaceships...

real spaceships...

or they would be someday.

And a far cry from Zarkhov's snubnosed firecracker or the Nash. I saw them in books written by Fletcher Pratt and illustrated by Coggens, articles in Collier's magazine written by Willy Ley and Arthur Clarke, Things in Life magazine and Trus. The Walt Disney show ran episodes on space travel in those days. I was the only kid on my block who knew who von Braun was.

I dreamed of spaceships.

Sleek needles that were slimmed down V-2s with wings. Unsleek squat messes that were a bunch of metal balls held together by metal frames. Huge stage rockets with delta-winged rocket-planes sitting on top. Monsterous flat-topped rockets that piggy-backed smaller rockets into orbit. Atomic powered rockets that looked like the hood ornament of a '56 Olds Rocket 88 and had wings





that fanned out or folded into the sides of the ship as need be (never could figure out what exactly the need could be, but who cared?).

Beautiful ships.

And to the child Hubbard very real. I could feel the metal--polished to a mirror brightness--and smell the hard odor of rocket fuel and the musk of heated parts in the electronic equipment. I knew what it felt like to wear a spacesuit and walk across the hull of the ship in deep space.

And I knew where the ships were going.

The Moon...

La Lune...

Selene...

Luna.

I suddenly became very interested in the Moon.

The Moon was where those spaceships were going to go someday, and if that's where they were going, then that's where Hubbard was going, too. I said good bye to my mental planets and pulled the blue sheet down across the Road for good. I turned my attentions toward the Moon with a passion.

I read everything I could on the Moon. I learned its distance from the Earth, surface temperature and rotational period. One lunar day was equal to one terran month, so the entire length of one May I pretended I was on the Moon. My room became a pressurized chamber. Every time I went outdoors I clothed myself in an imaginary spacesuit. I counted the passage of the month in hours instead of days.

I learned that one side of the Moon never showed itself to the Earth. Ha, a mystery! I imagined all sorts of wild things about the Dark Side. Deserted cities, lakes of ice, huge caverns filled with air and weird life forms. Back on the side facing Earth I got back to facts. I learned of the rills and rays, the cracks and craters, the Lunar Alpines--mountains higher than any on Earth--and one-sixth gravity that would enable one to leap tall buildings with a single bound. Because there was no air, there were no dust particles on the Moon to diffuse light. One could step into shadow and completely disappear from sight.

And because of that same non-diffusion factor, Heinlein talked of putting a monster Coca-Cola sign on the Moon with rockets filled with black powder. And although I viewed the Moon with religious fervor, I concurred. I wasn't above desecration.

By the time I was ten I had one foot on the Moon already.

People laughed.

People laughed at Hubbard and called him "that crazy kid who wanted to go to the Moon." I used to sleep in the light of the Moon, and they said it had affected my mind.



I didn't  
care. I had a dream.

And in the  
movies, Young Tom  
Edison, Eli Whitney  
or Janis Joplin have  
a dream, are laughed at  
by everybody in town, and  
go on to do the Great Thing.  
Like inventing light bulbs, dis-  
tilling cotton booze or screaming.  
But things don't work out like they  
do in the movies, do they?

Hubbard failed math and chemistry,  
couldn't get into college, didn't have the  
ability or temperament to become an Air  
Force officer, and couldn't even drive a  
car. The Earth got grimmer.

So having proven himself endowed  
with no particular talent at all--save for  
an ability to dream dreams that stayed  
dreams, I set out to roam the bleak planet  
Earth. I went into the Army for four years  
and distinguished myself in nothing except  
smoking unfiltered cigarettes, drinking bad  
booze and playing pinball and poker. I got  
out and--faced with being ground up by the  
gears of the Great American Industrial Complex--  
I took to selling paint in a department store.

Still dreaming, I said "Moon" and people still laughed. In Florida, a  
Democratic Administration was reaching for the Moon, but still they laughed.  
They were convinced that at the last moment the Government would come to its  
senses, pull out and divert the money to the Space Program to more important prob-  
lems. Like the race problem, crime, welfare or cancer research. I talked about  
the Moon and girls never accepted a second date.

On the twentieth of July, 1969...

Hubbard was vindicated...

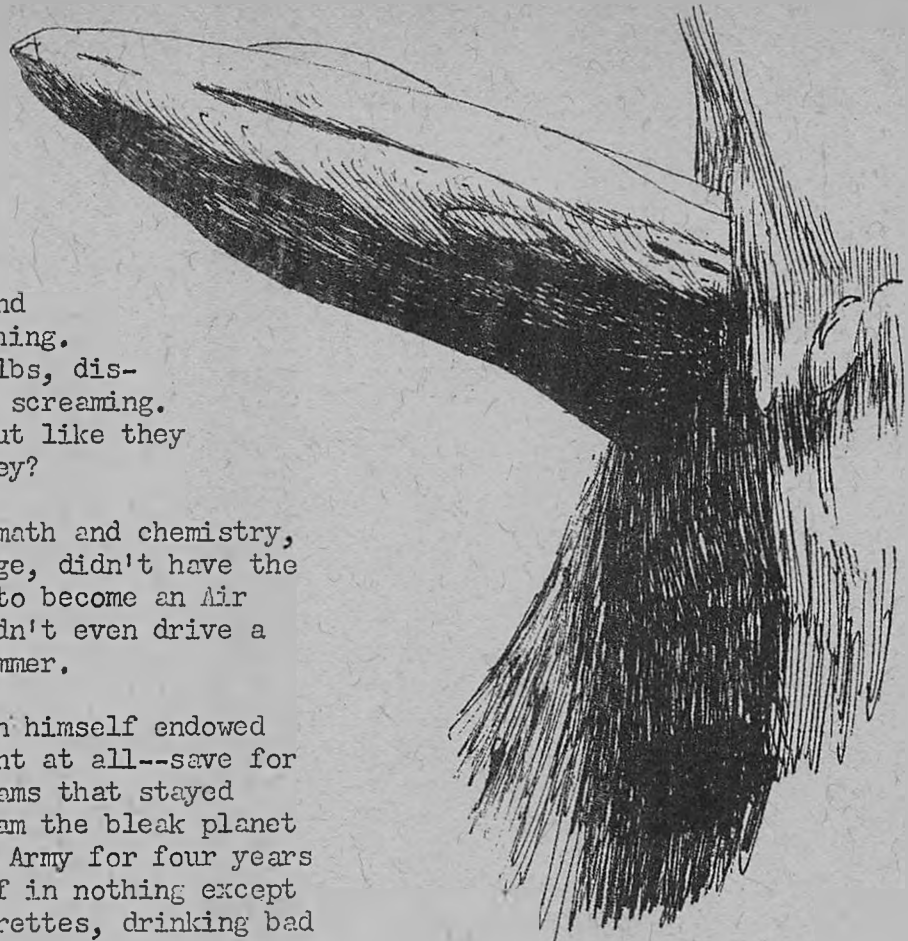
almost.

With two lunar flybys accomplished, it looked as if someone might finally  
land on the Moon after all. People stopped laughing and took to complaining in-  
stead. They felt that the Government should come to its senses and spend money  
on things they were against. Like the race problem, crime, welfare or cancer  
research.

The twentieth of July...

was a workday for me...

like most days.





And the one day I didn't want to sell any paint. Unfortunately there were more people in the store that day interested in increasing their property values than there were in the landing. I missed it. And here is how it happened.

There I was. I'd gotten rid of as many people as I could. I told them we either didn't have what they wanted or what they wanted was not what we had. And still they came. And still they held me trapped in the Paint Department unable to get near a radio or television set. I sometimes think that an evil sociologist is setting people and events into motion to cause me trouble.

Fifteen minutes before the landing. There was no one around. So I ran off to the Appliance Department--where all the tv sets are--I wanted to watch the landing at all costs.

Did I?

Of course not.

Listen:

Fifteen minutes before the landing. I was watching the simulation on channel two. "Customer assistance in the Paint Department," said a voice on a loud speaker. Well, they're gonna have to wait.

Ten minutes before landing. "Customer assistance in the Paint Department." The simulation on channel seven was better than on the other two channels, so I focus all of my attention on that. "Customer assistance in the Paint Department." Can't that idiot find his own paint?

Four minutes before landing. "Customer assistance in the Paint Department."

Three minutes. "Customer assistance..."

Two minutes. "Customer..."

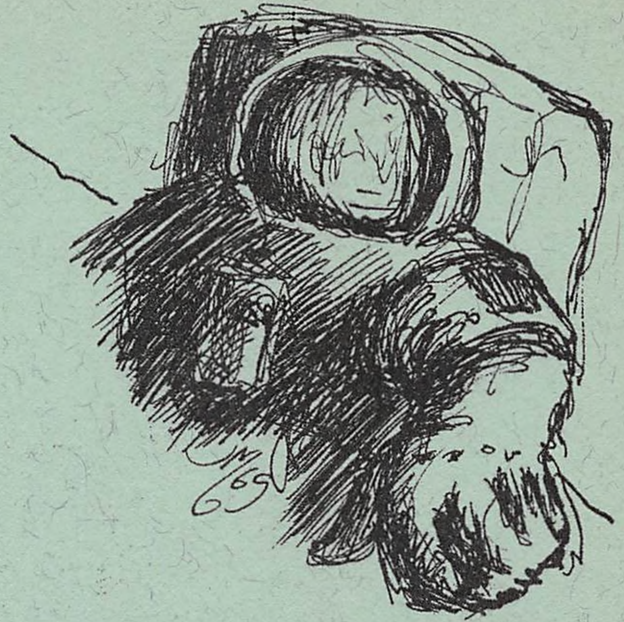
One minute and thirty seconds.

And at one minute and twenty-nine seconds before the greatest event in the history of Mankind--and Hubbard's life--was about to occur, a representative of the Management came to me and requested my presence in the Paint Department.

And while two men on a flimsy construction of metal and fibreglass confronted the surface of the Moon, Hubbard confronted an irate woman with curlers in her hair and red stretchpants who wanted a pink toilet seat. At that point I could have gladly murdered every woman, housewife and mother in the United States with a smile in my heart and a laugh on my lips. I wanted to take that toilet seat and cram it down that lady's mouth after it had been used for a few months.

After the store had closed, I left and just walked the streets for a few hours. I didn't know what to do. Well, it had happened. My presence hadn't been required, but it happened just the same. I should have been happy, but I wasn't. Was Moses happy when he was shut out of the Holy Land? I had been shut out of my Holy Land just as surely as he had been shut out of his. I was doomed to walk the desolate Earth till the end of my days.





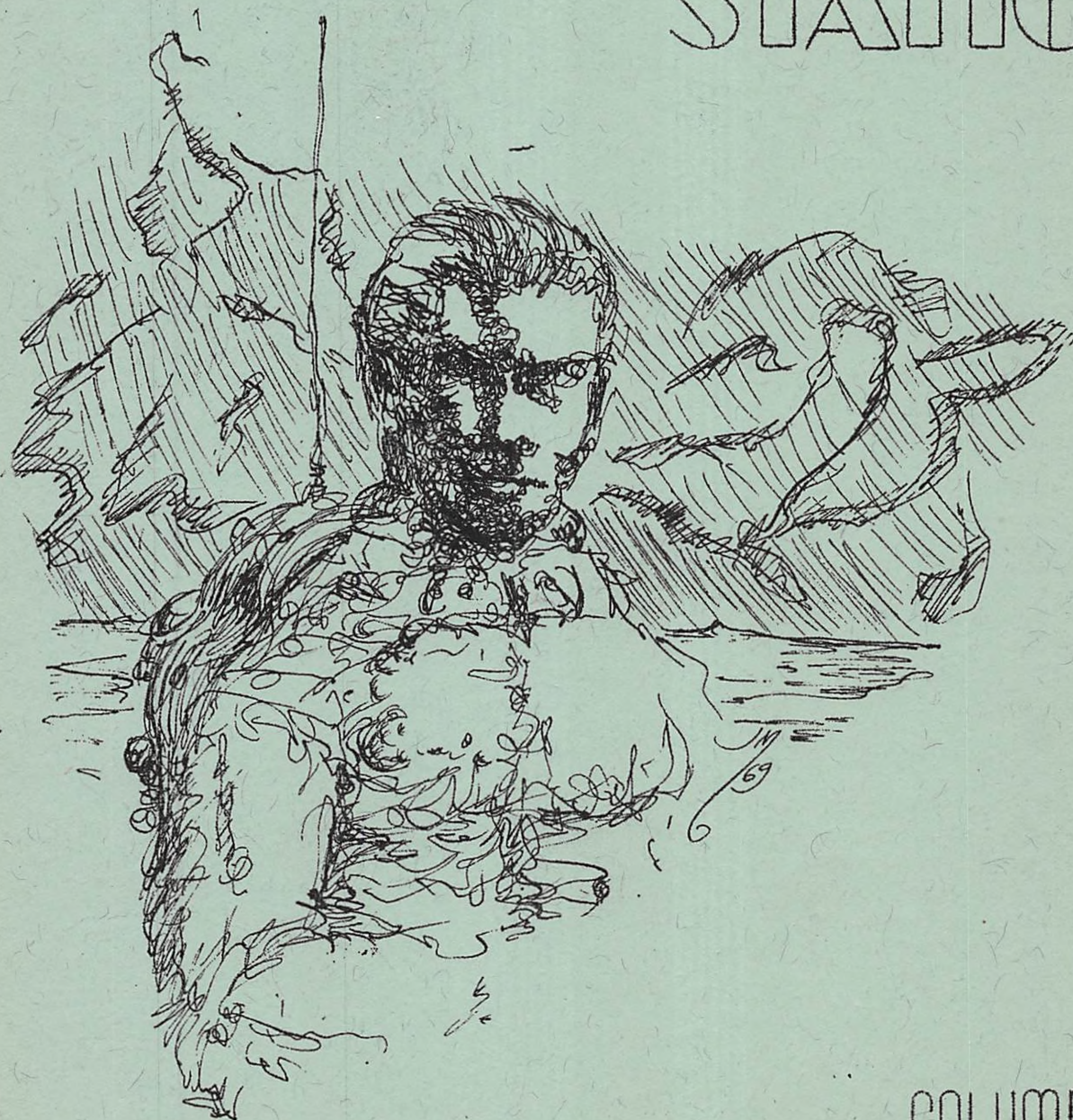
Then it got dark...  
and I looked up to the Moon...  
and the long lost Road  
opened up.

Sunday I was on the Moon.

--Gary N. Hubbard



# WAY STATION



A  
COLUMN BY  
DEAN R. KOONTZ



FOLLOWETH THE TRUTH, DEAR BEABOHEMANITES:

"I think you said," a girl with long hair, dark skin, pale lips, limpid eyes, sexy-as-hell-but-phony-to-the-teeth (I mean, she's in college, and despite her hip attire, hip looks, and hip language, she actually has her texts COVERED and with paperbags from Mary Sacks, the most expensive department store in the area) "that the plot of a story or book is the most vital--ah, I think you said vital thing the writer has to handle."

The way she says "vital" makes it sound vaguely obscene.

"I did," I say. I have finished with my little lecture and have asked for comments, statements or questions.

"But surely, modern fiction has proved that theme is the most important of all aspects of writing. Mood and characterization are next. Plot, for heaven's sake, is pretty unimportant."

"That's the impression you will get from creative writing courses, no reflection on your teacher, but which is not actually the case. You will not see anything of yours in print in large quantities--that is, you will not sell anything you write--unless you can create a solid plot."

"Oh," the girl says. "You write for money."

"Partially."

She smiles.

I leap over the podium, smack her in the teeth, twist her ears, punch out her eyes...

"And so did Shakespeare."

"I don't see how you can say that," she says.

"If you will research Shakespeare's life--I mean further than a mere high school student's summary, dig into everything from his period that vaguely notes his existence--you'll find he wrote for money. You'll find, in fact, that some of his very best plays were actually ripped off in one version, without re-writing, to meet a production deadline."

She is quiet.

She looks deadly.

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A PAUSE TO REFRESH...

When you earn your living, or try to, as a writer, you are immediately condemned to the position of a curiosity in the eyes of those people who live around the fringe of literature (as opposed to those involved in it, such as other writers, editors, agents, and maybe even a few knowledgeable teachers). I am not talking about the average fan, for he has developed a great deal of sophistication



about such things (what other field provides a direct avenue of communication, aside from the fact of the book itself, between writers and readers?). But a writer does have to put up with things like: the local bookstore owner who displays your books and sells an extra fifty or a hundred and fifty above what he normally would because you are local--then tells you he is only bothering with all this to help you with your royalties. He doesn't seem to understand that even if I earn out the advance on a book, his hundred and fifty copies bring me no more than three or so dollars. Or like: the people in the store whom the owner introduces you to while you're innocently minding your own business, browsing through the racks. They invariably ask (after the owner has run off to grab your latest masterpiece) how long it took you to paint the cover and seem shocked to hear there are actually leagues of people who earn their living in such a nefarious manner as paperback book cover artists. Jack Gaughan, you are nefarious! And also ask, invariably: whether you ghost write, how much you paid to have the book published (the other extreme consists of those who think you've made anywhere between fifty thousand and a quarter of a million from a science fiction novel), and whether your wife works. And if she does, they give you a snide, knowing look. You try to be polite, though you would like to maim them a little. Just maim, not kill. Although you may be the gentlest, most non-violent person in the world, you want to instantly attack and mangle! You feel your fingers twitching to get at their throats and a strange, ominous bloodlust rises in you as it did in the werewolf in Lon Chaney Jr's movie (Larry Talbot, was it?).

Recently, I was tricked into volunteering to return to my old alma mater to talk to the creative writing classes of a teacher I had had while there. It seems that I was at a party given by the ONLY brilliant teacher I ever had in college (amend that, ever had anywhere) who was celebrating his annual Rites of Mid-Summer. I had had three peppermint patties (never had the drink? Try it once) and was not too keen. Somehow, I was badgered into this absurd proposal and had to follow through with it.

After it was all over, I realized, perhaps for the first time, that college creative writing courses and college literary courses in general, dull the mind tremendously and are the greatest single handicap to the would-be writer. Not only do they teach you that the fundamentals of fiction are theme and mood, but they proceed to misinterpret every decent work of fiction in the last fifty years--or, rather, overinterpret it, which is much more deadly. I remember spending three weeks on the first page and a half of Finnegan's Wake (or Finnegans Wake, without the apostrophe, according to what sources you read and whether or not you are convinced the lack of the apostrophe was, as Joyce asserted in a letter once, a printer's error that became established). THREE WEEKS! Good, god, almighty, that was a strange period. (Structure of the last sentence intentional.) Then we covered the remainder of the novel in three more. Hmm?

So I preached my gospel that the two most important things a writer must learn are plotting and characterization. I was not popular at either session. When the student attacks got violent enough, I allowed my mild mannered facade to crumble and let out the vicious, screaming banshee in me. What I told them was, simply enough, that the reason they were taught to hit first for THEME and MOOD was because those two things are exceedingly easy to teach, whereas plotting and characterizations require hard work on the instructors part. Furthermore, the reason they perpetuate this THEME and MOOD emphasis is because these are easier to write (unless you demand subtlety of yourself like Momaday or Mailer) than Plot and Characterization. In short, they are too damn lazy to learn.



Then came the surprise. Lavinia, the teacher, had had the students purchase F&SF with "Muse" in it. Supposedly, they were going to ask questions about it. We were going to discuss it. They would criticize. I liked this idea, because it would help fortify what I had said.

Some of them were hip to sf.

But others (our "cool" girl for one--who, I saw, had painted her toenails frosty pink, made them look like little animals peering out of her sandals) could not comprehend the basic sf element.

"But there are no such things as symbiote slugs!" one protested.

"We don't even have real space travel," another said.

"This is set in the future," I pointed out.

"But the future could never be this way?"

"Why?"

"There isn't any life on other planets."

"I think there's life on other planets," another says, "but it could never be anything like this."

"What would it be like?"

"Animals, maybe humans, probably."

"Humans like us?"

"What do you mean?"

"How about humans with four arms?"

"Maybe..." reluctantly.

"But then they're not human!"--forcefully.

"Just because they have four arms?"

"Yes!"

"Have you ever heard of the word xenophobia?" I ask.

No one has.

"Okay," I say. "Humans like us. Except that they're all of one sex."

"That doesn't make sense," the cool girl says knowingly.

"You apparently know little about biology. It is possible. Even, maybe, probable." I hesitate to recommend The Left Hand of Darkness because it is such a spotty book, but I finally do mention it because of its mindstretching qualities and the ideas presented (even if they are not fully developed).

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Let's ramble around....

About a year ago, I guess, I got a letter from Ed Ferman, the editor of F&SF (which had a brilliant year last year, don't you agree?) which said some nice things about my work (which, being the fiendish egotist Pauline Palmer implied I was last issue, I always like to hear) and proposing that he recommend me for a fellowship to the Breadloaf Writer's Conference which he could do, having some connections or being an alumni, I forget which. I was pleased, said yes--knowing Breadloaf is the most highly revered of all writer's conferences.

I filled in the forms, and Ed sent along copies of "The Twelfth Bed" and something else I had done for him. Much later, I received a letter from the head



of the writer's conference (his name has passed into obscurity) informing me that "The Twelfth Bed" was a very excellent story but that, unfortunately, I had been passed over for fellowships to more serious forms of fiction. Hah!

But wait!

He also informed me that I could receive a partial scholarship to cover room and board and something like a third or fourth of tuition.

Yes!

Hooray!

Except...

All Breadloaf asked of me, in return, was that I work four or five hours a day in the dining hall as a waiter. The head of the conference assured me that the work would not interfere with my studies or with any part of the conference, and that the work, too boot, was EASY. I wrote back to inform him that working as a waiter in a collegiate type dining hall is not easy, that, indeed, it is quite hard work. I should know; I worked at that job for three shifts, with anywhere from four to eight at a table. ARGHHH! I have done heavy construction work I considered easier. I also informed him that I considered "The Twelfth Bed" serious fiction, as did the editors at PLAYBOY, who sent me a full page rejection on it, the editor at ESQUIRE, who condemned it in a rejection of several hundred words (for being morbid), the editor at THE NEW YORKER who liked it very much but said that, unfortunately, they shy away from even good science fiction, the editor at ATLANTIC who asked to see more of my work on the basis of that, plus five other rejections from major magazines, none of the standard printed slip form. Ed Ferman considered it serious fiction; he published it, and not with a cast off introduction as he might give a Ffellow's story or a Chameleon Corps story. (Ed was the only editor to see that the story was not basically morbid, but basically hopeful and favorable to the human character,)

I never heard from the gentleman again. I might have come on a little strong (though my wife censored it and toned it down before I wrote it and sent it in final form, and she is a paragon of stability), but I detest being treated with a condescending attitude, which is the attitude which most college pedants look upon any genre fiction. But, though I did not hear from him, I did become very curious about how many of the Breadloaf Fellows ever had anything published...

I just thought that I am beginning to sound like Piers Anthony launching on one of his "investigations"...

Well...

First, I wrote to Middlebury and asked the college for information on the fate of their Writer's Conference Fellows. I assumed, naturally, that some of the writers must be a success (this being the most respected conference of all) and that the college would have issued a promotion pamphlet containing this information. Breadloaf and Middlebury produce tremendous looking catalogues and very convincing public relations material. But I never received a reply, despite the fact that I had enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for one.



Two months later, I wrote again, noting the fact that I had written before with regards to the same subject.

The letter was nice, cordial, businesslike, and short, understand.

A month later, having received no reply, I wrote a third time and asked if I could have my stamped envelope back.

I received a reply from their public relations man saying they were terribly sorry about the foul-up. What had I been requesting?

I wrote a fourth letter, telling him.

I received every public relations brochure and catalogue they had published since 1965--with twelve cents postage due. I paid it, not knowing what was in the fat envelope. Foolish me. There was not even a word in any of those pamphlets about the Writer's Conference fellows.

I wrote back to the public relations chief and requested my two stamped envelopes and the twelve cents postage due.

I never received a reply, but am still receiving their public relations bullshit from time to time.

Next step: I took their catalogues for the last five years which listed the fellows of the previous year, copied the names of the fellows, and went to the library to see what they had done. I used the card catalogues to check for books, first of all. This is a state library of more than average size, containing, surely, almost any hardback of importance (large number of sf) in the last several years. I found three of the sixty-some fellows represented. On closer check, one of those proved to be a different author with a similar name. Two had published books. One had published one book. The other had published two. A perusal of the reader's guides turned up four instances of these writers in national magazines. That's an average of about one published article a year, from, incidentally, less than four percent of the total number of fellows in the same time.

Supports the contention that most college-oriented courses are a waste, doesn't it?

I should mention that I found college highly easy and had a 3.5 average in my major at graduation. That isn't because of any particular intelligence on my part. I merely adopted the attitude of my instructors, mimicked their critical lines, and was patted on the back as an up-and-coming academecian.

In my room, downtown, away from campus, I got my real education by discovering Vonnegut, Nabokov and a raft of others not yet (then) in favor on the campus.

-- Dean R. Koontz



## ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MANKIND

Men on the Moon! The mind boggles! Science fiction becomes science fact!

The engineering and the science that went into that feat are staggering. The men who made it happen accepted their deserved praise and went on dreaming of Jupiter and Venus. Spiro T. Agnew called for the landing of a man on Mars by the year 2000. Someday...

We all lived through that momentous achievement and rightfully gloried in it. Most of us watched most of it on television. We heard Walter Cronkite enthuse, "Gee!" We had lumps in our throats, too. Oh, the magnificence of the mind of man and of the works to which he chooses to turn his hands! To quote from Hamlet: "What piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel, how like a god..."





# TRACKING STATION

by

leo p. kelley



Meanwhile, back on Earth...

The approximately 10,000 sufferers from fatal kidney disease in this country kept on suffering. Approximately 1000 of them found themselves luckily cyberged to that many available artificial kidney machines which would insure their survival. The other 9,000 may have watched the mockups and the "simulations" of the Moon journey, listened to the voices of the astronauts, or maybe they played canasta or scribbage while they waited...

In the Papal Palace, accountants in cassocks kept their eyes on the arithmetic of the world's stock exchanges and not on the derelict poor in the piazzas.

And consider the blind lady in New York City. She owned a dog called Princess. The lady, of course, couldn't see the Moon, not to mention television. But she fed Princess dutifully while the astronauts journeyed. The good lady could not have guessed that New York State would cut her Medicaid payments in August (lack of sufficient funds) and she would find that 50¢ a day that had been allotted to her feeding Princess would no longer be part of her benefits. Nor would carfare to pay for her Sunday trips to church.

The Moon was there and its lights blessed Earth on those nervous nights of that epochal journey just as it had done for countless centuries. Under its



light, out in the bush, Biafrans died, but not of any obscure, incurable disease. They died of hunger. By the light of the Moon...

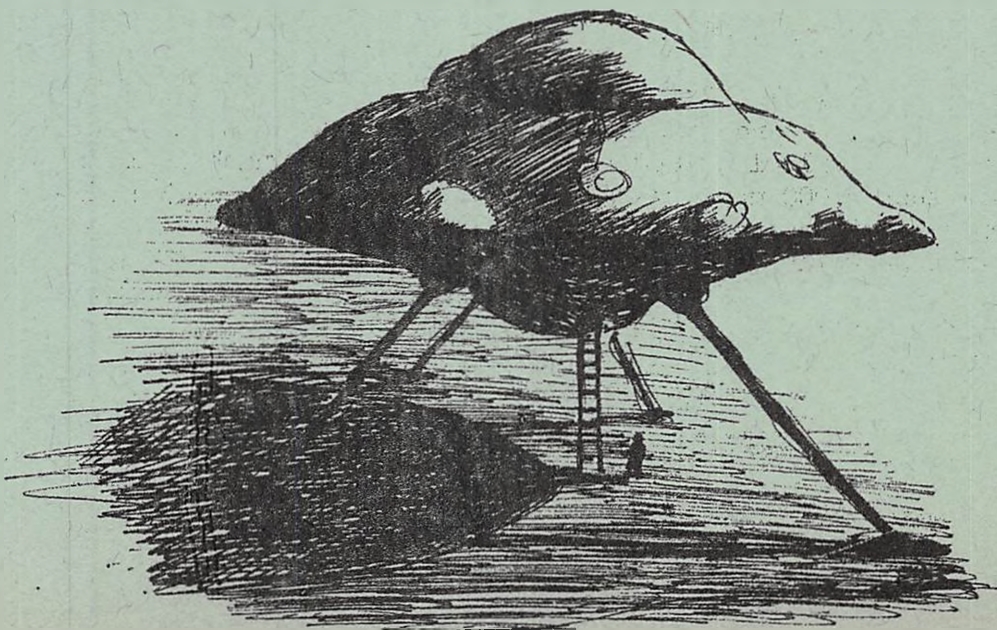
While the Moon waited for the men to come to it, so did the stockpiles of chemical and bacteriological weapons stored by the United States here and around the world--in West Germany, Okinawa, the Dugway Proving Grounds. In the laboratories where more such weapons were being created, the work shifts continued on a normal schedule as did the decontamination processes designed to protect the health of the well-paid employees.

While those of us still sadly Earthbound watched the comforting presence of the television set, others dreamed on street corners of our cities and elsewhere. They swayed slightly, their heads nodding gently, oblivious to the Moon, aware only of their very private drug-induced dreams. Later, Mayor John Lindsay would attend a ticker tape parade in honor of the astronauts. He would also veto a bill providing for the establishment of a methadone treatment program for the city's heroin addicts.

Perhaps the prisoners in Maryland's jails, during those history-making days, discussed the majestic event over their meals for which the state allots only 61¢ per day per man.

Did Eldridge Cleaver see the Moon that memorable night? Did he consider that, since it was no longer an exile, there might be hope for him?

Where was Fannie Lou Hamer during those days and nights? Registering voters somewhere? Organizing a demonstration to protest welfare budget cuts? Or just gazing at the overwhelming whiteness of the Moon?





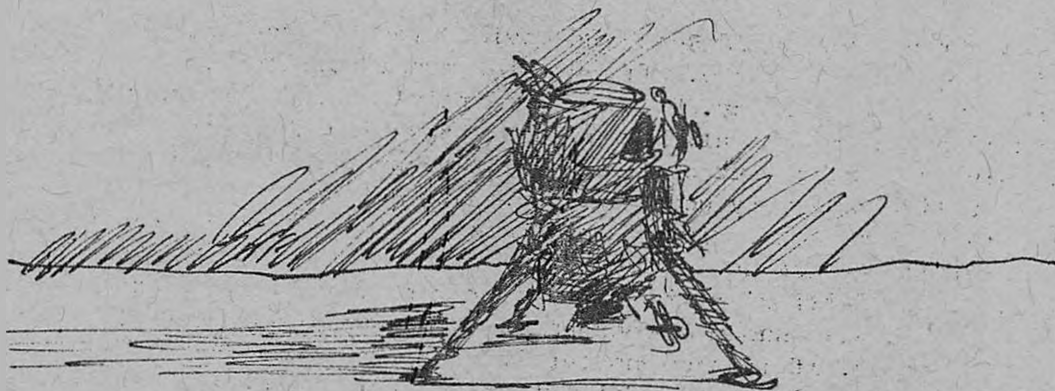
The Moon saw the hills of Appalachia, quiet in the way that despair is sometimes quiet. But its light could not penetrate the abandoned mine shafts nor the desolate shacks on the sides of the hills where men with gaunt faces and women with worn faces watched their children instead of television and thought about food stamps.

The astronauts returned healthy and safe. The money--staggering sums of dollars--had been spent and well spent as nearly everyone agreed enthusiastically.

Maybe even the blind lady in New York would consider the cost of the Moon landing small in terms of its achievement and promise to make man no stranger to the stars. Maybe addicts will someday dream of the Moon instead of drugs. Maybe Biafra will someday land an Ibo tribesman on the Moon when other pressing matters in their country have been resolved. Maybe a few spoilsports--people dying of kidney disease because of the lack of artificial kidneys or the inability to pay for their hire, perhaps--will murmur that priorities are tricky things and the Moon is surely willing to wait until we can truly afford to set foot on its mysterious surface. Maybe the prisoners in Maryland jails weren't very hungry.

But there is just no denying it. It was indeed one giant leap for mankind. One might only quarrel with the direction in which the leap was taken. And when, considering...

--Leo P. Kelley





# FANDOM'S VOCAL POINT

Send all fanzines to be reviewed to Al Snider, Box 2319, Brown Station, Providence, Rhode Island, 02912. Please make sure they are marked "Review".

This issue I think I'd like to talk about a trio of fan publishers that has for a while utterly mystified me. They do strange things for even stranger reasons, and when watching all three of them at work at once one gets the feeling that they're doing something incredibly evil...but you just don't know what. They seem organized to some evil end, but I'll be damned if I can explain any of their motions.

The gentlemen are Frank Lunney, Ed Reed and David Malone. I think they form the exemplary head of a new wave of fans emerging on the scene with a new sort of fanzine. I like to think of the new fanzine type as the "Neo-Geisian" style. Publish a fanzine, call people nasty names, strangle a few big names until they give up contribs, and then watch the blood start to flow in the letter column.

At times this method can be ugly, distasteful, and somewhat disgusting. At times you can see that people are doing things not because they believe they need to be done, but because they feel it is the best thing to do in the interests of exciting the readers and expanding the scope of the magazine. Indeed, "Faith Lincoln" emerged on the scene as a vehicle for criticism who was soon overwhelmed by her own importance as a trouble-maker and controversy-causer. The good points that Faith brought out were blocked by the infatuation with gnawing elbows. And that's really too bad, since she did have something to say.

But, in many cases the editor uses his circulation count and his lettercol size more than his head. What we have then are good fanzines which are getting lost in vain attempts to become the center of fannish discussion.

Thus, Frank Lunney, Ed Reed and David Malone emerge upon the scene as the members of the genzine new wave. Offend a few pros, publish some good stuff and a lot of junk and you're on your way. Frank has certainly become the most successful of the three publishers, and is only barely yet struggling above the dangerous neo-Geisian stage. Only now gasping out of the Piers Anthony/Faith Lincoln mess, Frank is on the verge of publishing a very good fanzine. But, BEABOHEMA needs several things before it can attain that state. First, Frank has got to keep away from tempting things like asking Margroff, Offutt and Anthony for articles to appear in the same issue, and then when they do run 'killer' reviews of their work in the same batch of pages. Several of the latest items have shown a tendency to accentuate good articles and play controversy on a low key. If it happens let it do so by itself. Next, he's got to learn how to edit. He's got to learn to edit artwork, covers, articles, letters, and everything that he publishes. Much of the material Frank publishes is very good, but at times it fails to make up for the pure junk that he runs. A 100-pager is impressive to hold in your hand, but boring as hell to read. But, the prospects for BAB are fairly good, seeing as how Frank is attracting enough good work to keep things interesting. Now if he'd just learn when to quit on accepting things. Like this column.



Next we come to David Malone. Somehow I always connect Dave's fanzine attempts with Frank's. In DMSFF [David Malone's Science Fiction Fantazine] he is desperately attempting to prove to the readers that this is "where it's at" and that he as an editor is able to attract names and controversy.

And please note the controversy point. He's fallen victim to the same thing that Frank has. In his first issue he decided to give Campbell and ANALOG a rough time, and so he instituted a parody section. Of course, the whole thing was crudely done, what with picturing the lettercolumn as a reactionary American Independence Party forum, playing up racism in the stories, and sticking in accusations of stupidity just for the halibut. And, of course, some people took offense to it. Anne McCaffery was one of them, and wrote an insulting letter back to Dave. This, of course, must have inflated his ego to no end, and his response to her tended to indicate that. The sight of Dave and Anne arguing about Campbell, and with Malone playing the "wise man on the hill" bit, it was a little much for my poor mind to accept.

And the lettercol. Malone comes over with the "...big names? You bet!" thing. It's something that I really don't understand, myself. A pro can write a letter of absolutely no redeeming value [as Piers Anthony has done on a couple of occasions I can remember] and still get it published, and with a lot of fanfare, too. I think if some pro took the worst rejected letter that Malone received and signed his name to it it would get published for sure. It's a lesson that many more people than these three are going to have to learn. In fact, I could use a good dose of it myself. Big names do not necessarily mean big thoughts.

Dave has, however, done a fairly good job with the physical production of DMSFF, and here he does a better job than both Frank or Ed. DMSFF comes out looking quite nice, and reading well, it's just that after a while the underlying flavor of the thing seeps through. And that flavor is one of "Hey look at what I'm saying, and how very, very controversial I'm being about the whole thing." Yes, a low key approach would be favored here, also.

Now we come to Ed Reed. He is the third and perhaps less prolific of the bunch, but he certainly can tell us something about the changing fanzine picture. L'ANGE JACQUE is a fanzine that runs more towards words and less towards lay-out and artwork. And, one is not often dissappointed in finding it to be at least as interesting as DMSFF.

Ed Reed pulled off a decent coup by publishing #3 in a sort of "build your own fanzine" kit. While not doing as good a job as I would have liked [but then, my idea would have taken too much research work] it wasn't all that bad. But then, I believe I talked about this a while back, so we won't continue.

But, of the three L'ANGE JACQUE shows the most promising attitude. Ed Reed has proven himself to be as staunch a Neo-Geisian as the rest in the past, and the image of Faith Lincoln stands out in my mind. Leo Doroschenko tells me that Reed is the one who added in the personality, and all he did was add the criticism. That may not be a truism, but nevertheless I'll take it as an indication that Reed was an evil part of the plot. However, lesss of the "hey look at me" stuff comes through in LAJ than in either of the two aforementioned fanzines.

Reed does some interesting and enlightening talking about rock music. Since it's a hobby of mine also, I usuallu enjoy these sections. IT AIN'T ME BABE, a small thing he sent around with early issues was of this type. I've noticed that rock has taken a deep root in many fanzines, such as the APA-45 genzines, EXILE [Seth Dogramajian]



and LAJ itself.

I doubt that Ed has a large enough circulation or enough 'big names' yet to try and follow Frank's line of Neo-Geisian tactics, and one hopes that he doesn't, but we can be sure that the elements for it are there. Enough contact with publishers of this type, a desire to make LAJ into a "powerful, dynamic fanzine" [which all Neo-Geisians envision their fanzines as becoming], an intelligent contact with SF coupled with an ability to discuss it well enough to know how to make trouble, and a basic energy and desire to publish fanzines.

And that, dear friends, is what it takes.

The first revived issue of PSYCHOTIC was a revolution. It wasn't a revolution in that first issue, but what was to follow was to change the style of fanzine editing entirely. What was once thought to be a brave stand by old standards was now looked upon as "nothing special". When Ted White and Norman Spinrad and Harlan Ellison and Poul Anderson and Dick Geis started to go at it, things started to happen. More and more people joined in until it became obvious that unless you were reading PSYCHOTIC [later SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW] you just weren't where it was happening.

And everyone who published a fanzine read SFR and realized what they were competing against. Some tried to outdo Geis in reproduction and artwork, and the TRUMPET school was born. SHAGGY tried to combine the two but just didn't make it. WARHOON went its own way old way, and at least got nominated.

But, those people who didn't have the skill and money to publish a TRUMPET and lacked the fannish skill and contacts to do a WARHOON ended up trying to do a SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. A lot of outstanding people went down this path, and believe me, it's the wrong way. It's wrong because neither Frank Lunney, David Malone, Ed Reed or Al Snider is a Dick Geis. And even if they were they could produce nothing better than an imitation.

So, a word of advice to those people out there who are either thinking about or are publishing a fanzine: the true measure of your publication is in how your style and thoughts, when coupled with that of your contributors, can mesh with your readers. Making trouble for trouble's sake not only makes enemies, but it loses its attraction after a while.

I can say this because I've been watching the scene and have been convinced, by my own thought and other's urgings, that I have been doing this myself. Controversy as the cry of the day has already outlived its time, and we're back to the standard of readability. It's just that several people don't know about it yet.

So, here we are boys. We're four young upstarts who have tried to publish controversial fanzines. I've decided that we're doing it wrong. And you?

--Al Snider

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Crossroads, 25 cents per, Al Snider, Box 2319, Brown Station, Providence, Rhode Island, 02912.

Beabohema, Frank Lunney, see table of contents.

L'ANGE JACQUE, Ed Reed, 668 Westover Rd., Stamford, Conn., 06902.

DMSFF: David Malone, Bacon Rd., Roxbury, Conn.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, Dick Geis, Box 3116, Santa Monica, Ca. 90403.







# T U R O COUNTRY O F P L A N E T

The Demon Breed, by James H. Schmitz,  
Ace H-105, 60¢

In the past year, I have read nothing but unabashed praise of this book, often from people whose critical opinions I respect. Dean R. Koontz, in *SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW*, lauded it as an exciting and rewarding novel, and observed that he had nominated it for the Nebula award. Andre Norton is represented on the back cover with remarks that are silly even by the broad standards applied to back cover blurbs. Bob Vardeman, in *SANDWORM*, called The Demon Breed one of the ten best books of the year, deserving of a Hugo nomination.

I beg to differ.

The Demon Breed is a fairly well-done, though minor, novella hiding in an incompetent novel. The novella involves two resourceful humans who foil an alien invasion of an outlying planet by convincing the invaders that they are up against not only a race of normal men but secret, immortal, invulnerable, omnipotent Guardians. This is an interesting and valid idea, though it has been done before and more cleverly (for example, Eric Frank Russell's "Plus X"). It is distinguished by some good action-writing and fine pacing, and by some of the detail about the planet Nandy-Cline and its inhabitants. Its faults are evident but not





fatal.

The essential element in the novella is the successful bluff of the Parahuan invaders, which was made possible by a combination of the circumstances and the psychological predisposition of the aliens. The story ends on page 88 of the Ace book; in the remaining 70 pages, the whole point changes and the human protagonists, abandoning artful bluffing, manage to bring about the physical destruction of a considerable portion of the invading force. The author accomplishes this feat for them through a contrived arrangement of the entire climate of Nandy-Cline, plus, for good measure, Parahuan incompetence; the result is not only unbelievable, but ridiculous.

The floating islands of Nandy-Cline are teeming with all manner of weird life-forms, many of which spring into existence from Schmitz's keyboard as needed to aid his heroine, Dr. Nile Etland (he has a hang-up on names, too--all of them are that bad). There is an aura of high camp about the entire process. Constipated? Well, well, look over here, some Flongitt pods. Need to dispose of a pursuing menace? Well, well, there's a Zooch Killer Vine. B.O.? Say, look, here's a Suzle leaf. You get the idea... For anything that Nile and her fellow biologist, Dr. Ticos Cay, can't handle, the author provides three intelligent, talkative, mutated sea otters with vaguely unpleasant personalities (ordinary otters acquiring human intelligence and vocal capacity all at once seems to confuse mutation with black magic, but then credibility of detail is not this book's strong suit). Any further assistance that is required is provided by the bumbling Parahuans, who manage to have their supreme commander bumped off early on by leaving him for some unexplained reason unguarded and asleep in an abandoned building.

There are plenty of other things wrong with The Demon Breed, too. The writing, though workmanlike and perfectly adequate, is not stylistically impressive; at no point does it rise above simple competence. Characterization is uniformly dreadful. The heroine is a name only, with no personality (the only indication that she is a woman is that Schmitz says so in the narrative--"Nile Etland" could otherwise be a man, a eunuch or a Jovian hermaphrodite). Dr. Ticos Cay is old, and that's all we know about him. The rest are cardboard outlines. In the latter part of the book, by throwing in some sermonizing about man's natural aggressiveness and the limitations of Federation government which might have been written by Heinlein or Campbell.

But in the final analysis it is the wholly contrived pattern of events leading to the Parahuan debacle which makes this a second-rate novel. Near the end of the action (through 20 pages before the end of the book), there is a scene in which Nile, a newly arrived human aide and the three otters have planted bombs in two large Parahuan ships underwater, and are swimming away from the scene when the explosions (described as "vast" and "massive") occur. Possibly Mr. Schmitz has never heard of concussion, and what an underwater explosion does to a human being anywhere in the vicinity. But if this had occurred to him, he would merely have added the line, "As they jetted away, Nile and Dan turned on their Dinkleman Anti-Concussion Fields."

Because that's the kind of book this is.

--Ted Pauls



## Will Success and Money and Power and Sex and Immortality Spoil Jack Barron?

What will happen to a flaming leader of the young radicals of today after a handful of years have passed? He is older, possibly over thirty, becoming un-trustworthy money hungry power hungry status hungry fame hungry California of the mind hungry. Give him a chance to satiate said hungers and what does any red-blooded baby bolshevik do?

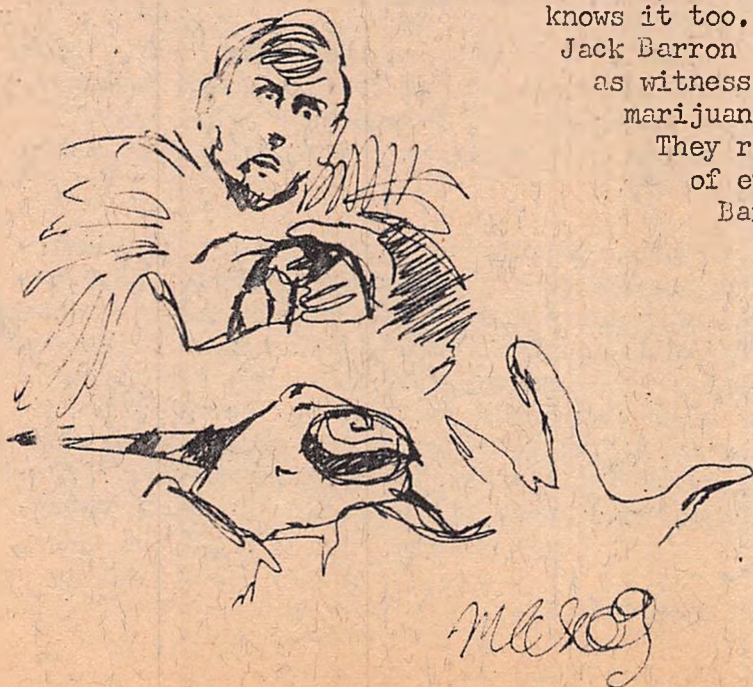
He cops out, naturally.

Jack Barron, guest victim on a Joe Pyne-style harassment TV show proves such a greater crowd-pleaser than the original MC, one (brace yourself) Joe Swyne, that he becomes MC and Head Inquisitor on his own show, "Bug Jack Barron" (which also happens to be the title of a book that Avon is pushing for 95¢). This new-found TV personality is Jack Barron, former Berkeley student leader, fighter in the streets and on the courthouse steps for Good and fearless leader of the New Left (or perhaps the New New Left that will inevitably come after our New Left). When baby bolshevik makes good and gets one hour of network prime time in living color, will he continue the fight against evil, bigoted, reactionary America?

You bet your sweet ass he doesn't. Negative. Nyet. Jack Barron cops out, playing it safe, balancing one diatribe with another from the other side, giving the schmucks sitting a-drool in front of their color sets the scent of blood without actually drawing any. The possibility of actually wounding the forces of evil unsettles Jack Barron brings thoughts of sponsors cancelling FCC investigating pressure on network loss of show job money power prestige fancy meals fancy women fancy apartment disguised as science fictional California of the mind. Barron plays it cool, keeping his show but losing his wife Sara Westerfield. She knows buggable Jack Barron is a copout. Jack's friend, Lukas Greene, one-

time black militant, now governor of completely black Mississippi, and possessor of a presidential itch, knows it too. But to the malcontented masses, Jack Barron is Fearless Crusader for Right, as witness the consumption of his sponsor's marijuana cigarettes by aging rebels.

They rejoice in the electronic spectacle of evil-doers crying, "Curse you, Jack Barron!" after a raking over the coals, and never realize the circus is bogus.



Then comes the night that a discontented Negro calls the show and charges that the Foundation for Human Immortality, an outfit which freezes corpses in liquid nitrogen to preserve them for the time when they can be returned to life and made immortal, is practicing racial



discrimination; case in point (says he): me! After this accusation, Barron tries as per usual to balance the ledger by getting a rebuttal from Benedict Howards, multi-millionaire, wheeler dealer and head of the Foundation, but can only reach the Big Man's flunkies. In spite of himself, Barron winds up with a show blasting Howards.

The next day, surprise, Howards contacts Barron and wants not Barron's head on a platter but Barron intact and on his side. The carrot dangled thuswards is a free freeze job, cash value fifty gees. Barron, suspicious, stalls. Howards, impatient, waves the same carrot under the dainty sniffer of the aforementioned Sara and instructs her to bring in the reluctant Barron. Sara agrees, planning a doublecross and hoping to get Jack back, being tired of living in a world barren of Barron.

Why is Howards going to such lengths to get Jack Barron on his side? Because a bill to give his Foundation a monopoly on the cooling of corpsicles is currently festering in Congress and he wants it passed. Given a monopoly on the possibility of rebirth, he will have limitless power; and have it forever, for research by the Foundation has developed an immortality treatment and Howards is now immortal. The treatment, however, has a catch...and Howards consequently has a secret which he must keep at all cost. Jack Barron, old pro that he is, sniffs the effluvium of coverup and is out to dig up the dirt while at the same time, is possible, getting his free ticket forever. Then the fireworks start.

I found BJB highly enjoyable. It is a marked improvement over The Men in the Jungle, for that dreary novel was lifeless and this one surges with energy. The plot, though never surprising, is not predictable and is a pleasant surprise after the clumsy jerrybuilding of TMitJ. This book reminded me (God help us all!) of Heinlein in three ways. First (though the dialogue is unlike anything that Heinlein would write), there is a continual easy flow of lively, colorful chit-chat. Second, the more interesting characters (who are, again, unlike any who would appear in a novel by The Master) are thoroughly what they are; though not complex, they are solid. Third, Spinrad has set down meticulous and convincing detail of the functionings of Jack Barron's TV show much as Heinlein would authoritatively describe the making of a revolution, making the machinery come alive. Like Heinlein, Spinrad is interested in how things work.

Concerning less creditable matters, some of the characters are unconvincing. Sara is the worst, since her actions consist mostly of saying, "Oh Jack, you're so wonderful." She talks and thinks like Raquel Welch acts. Even the heroine of TMitJ had more depth than Sara. And the villainous capitalist Benedict Howards represents little advance over the villainous capitalists of Harl Vincent's "Vagabonds of Space" (ASTOUNDING, October 1930), aside from his use of dirty words. And, though Spinrad tried to picture Jack Barron as a mere man, fashioned of frail clay, torn between good and evil, he comes off as Tom Mix with gonads. There was never any doubt in my mind that Jack Barron would not sell out to Benedict Howards. The only region of doubt concerned whether or not Howards would trick him into a trap.

A flaw in the plot is the dependence on coincidence when Henry George Franklin just happens to phone the show at the same time that Jack Barron is playing one-upmanship with Howards. I have the feeling that this flaw should bother me more than it does. More serious is Sara's noble sacrifice, which is something out of a grade B movie. But since Sara herself is something out of





a grade B movie, the cliché does not jar greatly.

The book hardly breaks new ground in sf, aside from Spinrad's frankness about sex. Historians of literature may someday give him a footnote as the writer who introduced the blow-job into sf. The plotting is fairly straightforward nuts-and-bolts type, and this clashes with Spinrad's use of Williams S. Burroughs-style description/thought streams. The graft does not take. Moreover, though the Burroughs approach may be interesting or even enjoyable--once--I consider this method of description and mood-setting patently inferior to other techniques at the disposal of writers. Spinrad has stated that his intent was the writing of a "coherent Nova Express." Unfortunately, he has succeeded. Much of the force of Nova Express derived from the matching of style to structure; i.e., chaotic, both.

The defects in the book, however, do not suffice to negate the enjoyment I received reading this. Great it certainly isn't, but it is as much fun (though Mr. Spinrad will probably not care for the comparison) as a John Wayne western flick.

--Hank Davis

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The Brass Dragon, by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ace Double 37250, 60¢

There must be a fantastic temptation to hack out books such as this, pouring the words onto paper as fast as your fingers can hit the keys and never glancing backward. I mean, in a stereotype juvenile adventure, who cares about plot, consistency, adequate writing and the like?

Well, Marion Zimmer Bradley apparently cares, and for that, at least, she deserves our admiration. She turns out novels which, however empty and banal, at least have the merit of being neatly and carefully constructed, and over the years Bradley has become highly competent at her craft. Of course, that is not really as much of a compliment as it appears at first glance: like spoon-playing or imitating the sound of a walrus, writing juvenile SF novels is such an inherently small and uninteresting thing that being good at it is not really much improvement over being bad at it. Still, this author is good at it, and occasionally manages to rise above the medium, as with The Colors of Space, written in 1963.

The Brass Dragon does not rise above the medium, but it is a tour de force in a peculiar way. It is almost as if the author had deliberately constructed



a framework of all the most shallow elements of mediocre juveniles, as an exercise in what pure craftsmanship can do with absolutely nothing to work with. The plot is the standard one: a teenage boy gets involved in a conflict between Bad Aliens and Good Aliens, gets shanghaied and dumped on Mars along with two of the Good Aliens, escapes, swipes a flying saucer and returns to Earth, has a few narrow escapes, sees the Bad Aliens get their comeuppance and lives happily ever after. In addition to the hero, a teenage boy straight out of mid-1950's "Ozzie and Harriet", the book is populated by a variety of wooden objects which the author moves around occasionally: a carbon-copy teenage boy who is one of the Good Aliens, two Fathers, a Girl who giggles a lot and joins the adventure in what must be one of the most embarrassingly naive passages of any book written this decade, a Kindly Doctor, a Science Fiction Writer and a Villain.

And yet I read the damned thing all the way through; craftsman Bradley succeeded to that extent. There is no sloppy writing, the story moves along without too many digressions or pauses, and there is even a chapter (nine) where the action is so engrossing that I nearly managed to forget that the three characters concerned are stereotypes about whom no reader could possibly care.

If I rated books on a 1-to-10 scale, I'd rate The Brass Dragon about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ , but add an asterisk and the note: "However, she still better with this tripe than most any other writer I can think of would have done." A left-handed compliment, admittedly, but it's the best I can do.

with

Ipomoea, by John Rackham

Quantitatively, Ace Doubles offer you more for your money than any other books on the newsstand. At 30¢ per novel, you can hardly go wrong.

Quality, of course, is not to be expected. The original material in the Doubles ranges from pleasant escape literature to utter kipple. Rackham's Ipomoea falls somewhere in the center of that scale. It is stocked with the usual assortment of characters and ingredients: a modest, unassuming hero; a sexy girl; a fatherly-unclely mentor; some minor villains; and one major villain, a madman who has discovered the secrets of an alien science and has the power to cloud men's minds. You know how it goes. Rackham pulls the strings with some skill, bringing the Good Guys through some narrow escapes and allowing them to prevail against all odds over the Bad Guys. There is no place where the writing is above competent hack level, but by the same token there is also no place where it is notably poor or sloppy.

So if this kind of thing is your bag--and it must be somebody's, because these Doubles sell--you could do a lot worse than Ipomoea.

--Ted Pauls





A NOTE, IF I MAY

The editor of this fanzine has kindly consented to provide me with a platform from which I can sponsor and lead the extended standing ovation for which the management of Ace Books is long overdue. All together now: (applause, whistles, stomping, sound of bra straps being snapped)! Take your bows, Don and Terry, then back to work.

Seriously, now, what Ace has been doing recently may not have gone altogether unappreciated and unremarked, but certainly there hasn't been enough said about it. Throughout 1968 and 1969, Ace has been publishing in its series of Specials some of the very best science fiction available. Original material, not reprints. And with those sharp-looking cover layouts and superb art by the Dillons that makes them a pleasure to look at as well as to read. It has just occurred to me, in fact, that the three best SF books I've read so far this year have been Ace Specials: Brunner's The Jagged Orbit, LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness and Zelazny's Isle of the Dead.

So, three cheers for Ace. And thanks for the use of your half-page, Frank.

--Ted Pauls

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The Wagered World, by Lawrence M. Janifer and S.J. Treibach, Ace Double 81680, 75¢  
(with Tonight We Steal the Stars, by John Jakes)

This is the third book in a series. The first two I haven't read, but after the fun of this one I will have to rectify this. The situation, gathered from only the one novella, is this: We have a future world that is extremely short on metals. There is a great deal of animosity between the various races. These two facts have hampered the development and use of space travel. The two space stations which have been sent up have been destroyed, and the group of intrepid astronauts who had a hand in all this have just had an uncomfortable touchdown on Earth. What happens next shouldn't happen to a microbe from Venus (if such exists, of course).

The world is run with credit cards and computers. When the hero, Angelo diStefano, tries to use his card to satisfy a passion for a piece of rhubarb pie, the card is rejected. This leads to a representative piece of hilarity:

"I'd like some information," he said casually, "on Angelo diStefano." He read out a set of recognition numbers from his card.

The computer paused hardly a second. "Deceased," it said.

Angelo blinked. "No," he said. "This is me. I'm talking to you. How can I be deceased?"

Computers have neat, logical minds. "In any number of ways," this one told him. "As for instance: heart attack, diabetic coma, automobile or flyer accident, old age, resistant viral strains of--"

"Wait a minute," Angelo said.

"One minute," the computer said. "Now counting. One. Two. Three. Four..." It went on. Angelo listened carefully to the numbers from one to sixty, wondering if even advanced electrical engineers, or physicists, or black magicians--whichever category was appropriate--had



ever figured out a way to talk sensibly to computers.

And then there's Juli. This is the eternal optimist of the group. She has an undying faith that poor Angelo can get them out of any mess; he doesn't share this belief. The relationship between the two is generally the following:

"Angelo," Juli breathed, "I just know you can."

Someday, he promised himself, when he was feeling better and all this trouble was over, he was going to award himself with a rare treat and strangle that woman.

As you can see, there is a warm feeling that they share.

They go from one wild incident to another. The Earth, still worried about alien invasions (the reason the first two space stations had been built), decide to send Angelo, an officer in UN Intelligence, and Juli out into the deep reaches of space in a starship of alien design. After a weird hyperspace journey they end up not on some planet but inside some spaceship. They now attend an intergalactic party where some of the wildest beings are encountered:

He brought the carrot within an inch or so of his open mouth.

"Down," the carrot said.

Angelo blinked. "Huh?"

"I," the carrot said frostily, "am a full ambassador. Fomalhaut System."

This party also turns out to be extremely important in determining the Earth's future.

On their return home, the daring duo and their alien companion (an intergalactic party favor) are greeted by an extremely warm reception: Angelo and Juli are charged with treason and rape! What happens at the ensuing trial is enough to blow anyone's mind as a woman "hanging judge", two idiotic lawyers, wacky plaintiffs, Angelo, Juli and the party favor all work to bring about an astounding and universe shaking climax.

Overall, this is a fast-moving work that is chock-full of amusing bits and pieces. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if a reader just drooled over each incident and the interrelationship between the characters instead of placing too much importance on the overall storyline. While pointed comments about the future world are made, I believe that the overall desire of the authors was to provide fun for the reader. If so, they are successful.

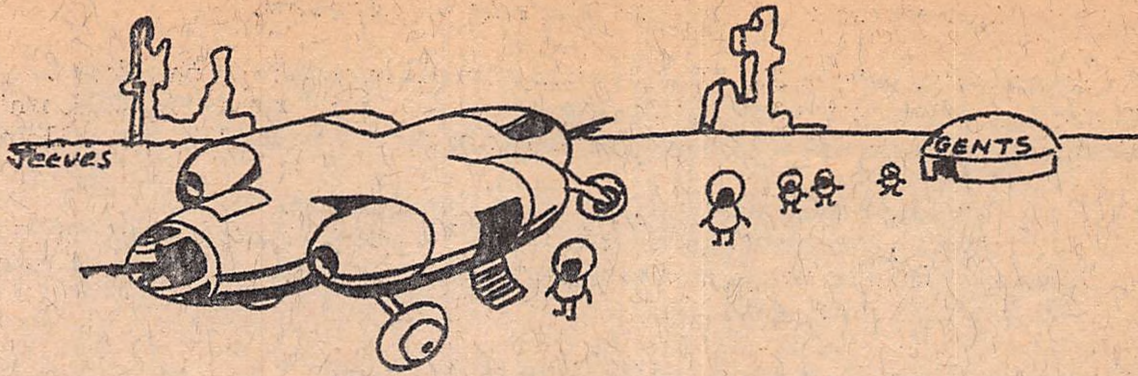
--Sandy Moss

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Dangerous Visions #2, edited by Harlan Ellison, Berkeley Medallion N1704, 95¢

So much has been said about Dangerous Visions in the past two years that the reviewer is at a loss to find an original opening for comments on a section of the three part paperback version (#3 will be out by the time this sees print). Suffice it to say that DV was one of the finest science fiction anthologies ever published, albeit not as brilliant and revolutionary as Harlan insisted (would it





be fair to say, Doctor, that Harlan Ellison has a slight tendency to overstate a case?). The volume at hand contains eleven of the stories from the hard cover edition, with cover and interior illustrations (!) by Leo and Diano Dillon, and would be a bargain at twice the price (Harlan's introductions alone, some as long as four pages, are worth 95¢).

The first story in the book is Howard Rodman's "The Man Who Went to the Moon--Twice". It's well-written in a quiet sort of way, but the point it has to make is a rather obvious one which the author could have made more easily in a short essay--in fact, the author does make it more easily in the short essay (author's afterword) that follows the story. It would be wrong to call the story "mediocre", since it's too technically competent; let us just say "modest".

"Faith of Our Fathers", by Philip K. Dick, is the longest piece in the anthology, and having noted the identity of its author it should hardly be necessary to add that it is among the strangest. It postulates a future in which the Communists have won the Cold War and the USA is reduced to a third-rate state. The story takes place in Hanoi, and centers on a CP functionary named Tung Chien, a loyal Party member at first who is recruited into an anti-Party group. Up to that point, it resembles an Asian 1984, but there are, shall we say, complicating elements. Like the fact that the head of the Communist Party is none other than--God! ("God Is Not Dead--He Is Simply Being Re-Educated In The Correct Marxist-Leninist Philosophy" This is not, of course, frivolous as Dick uses it, and this is not a frivolous story, despite this far-out concept and other elements (like the fact that Asian Party bureaucrats speak in English/American slang). It is a rather grim story, quite superbly done.

Larry Niven's "The Jigsaw Man" is an organ-transplant story; they seem to be awfully popular these days. This one is better than most, extrapolating a future society in which the need for organs has brought about a resurgence in the popularity of the death penalty. As Niven portrays it, this is a depressingly logical turn of events, and this story is therefore much more realistic than others which have postulated the same need for organs bringing about different conditions (for example, Peter Tate's "Beyond the Weeds").

The next selection, Fritz Leiber's "Gonna Roll the Bones", was the winner of both the Hugo and Nebula awards--i.e., both the general SF-reading public and Leiber's fellow writers independently concluded that it was the best story of the year--and so clearly demands more than cursory attention from a reviewer.



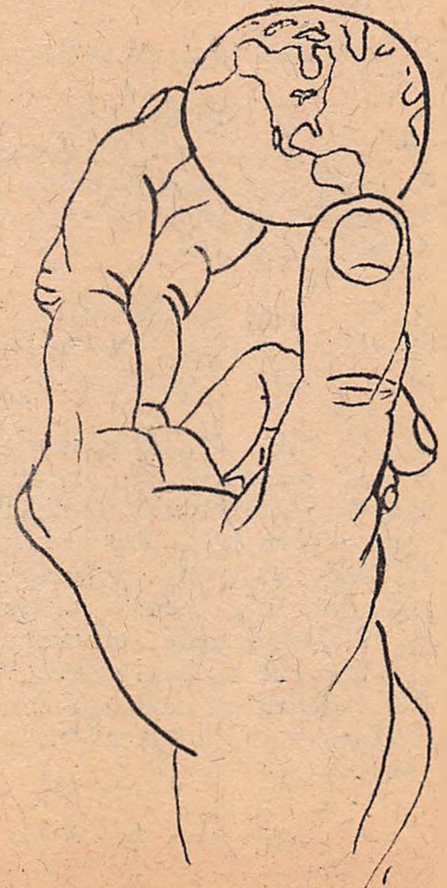
I found the story disappointing, and this despite the fact that it contains some of the very best writing Leiber has ever done. It would, in my opinion, have been very much better as a classic horror-fantasy, but the last few paragraphs upset the tone of the story, and its placement in the future and the references to space travel are simply pointless frills which, while adding nothing to the plot, detract from the mood. But the heart of "Gonna Roll The Bones"--the one long scene which is the entire story minus the first four pages and the last five paragraphs--is magnificent; it may be the finest writing of Fritz Leiber's career (which is saying a lot), and it's certainly the best treatment of this rather familiar kind of scene that I have ever encountered. The distractions are therefore doubly irritating--Ah, Fritz, if only you'd stuck to the fantasy basics, this would have gone down in history as a classic. But then, it probably will anyway; mine is clearly an extreme minority opinion.

"Lord Randy, My Son", by Joe L. Hensley, uses one of the 101 Standard Science Fiction Plots For All Occasions: the mutant superchild/god whom society treats as retarded. By a good deal of clever under-writing and a slightly oblique perspective, Hensley manages to produce something memorable and somehow original from this theme.

Poul Anderson is represented by "Eutopia", a typical Poul Anderson story: typical in terms of craftsmanlike writing, expert construction, and the philosophical-political viewpoint which we all by now associate with the author. And as with a number of Anderson's stories, history buffs will find "Eutopia" of interest. Of actual story, there is not much; the philosophical sermonizing at the end is the raison d'être for "Eutopia", not the minor action-adventure of the first 4/5ths of the story. The principal reason for its inclusion in this anthology is apparently the "surprise" at the end, which ought not to be a surprise to very many readers.

Two short stories by David R. Bunch follow. The first, "Incident in Moderan", portrays a future world in which there is permanent, apparently senseless warfare being carried on by robots, while the remnants of humanity, reduced to savagery, skulk around in bomb craters. It is as grim and hideous as Bunch wanted it to be. The second, "The Escaping", is a remarkable vignette--remarkable because I felt a great sense of sadness while reading it, yet did not comprehend it at all.

The final three selections can be dealt with briefly: "The Doll House", by James Cross, is another oft-used theme (the djinn/imp/demon that cleverly double-crosses the human being trying to force it to do his bidding) that is made worthwhile by extremely capable writing and a few different twists. Carol Emshwiller's "Sex and/or Mr. Morrison" is one of the few stories by that author that I haven't found at least inter-





esting. And Damon Knight's "Shall the Dust Raise Thee?" is a Frederic Brown short-short without Brown's light touch.

In general, an excellent anthology, though I must admit I could have done without the afterwords by each author, some of which partook of an attitude of Now-to-explain-to-these-dumb-readers-how-brilliant-I've-been.

--Ted Pauls

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Ubik, by Philip K. Dick, Doubleday, \$4.95

Ubik is the latest of Dick's unending number of novels that come out year after year. Dick has got to be one of the best authors who can write material by the pound as does Brunner and yet not have to resort to the identical plots in each book as does Andre Norton. His latest novel, Ubik, is an excellent novel up to a point after which I never quite figured out what happened.

Ubik takes place in a world that is infinitely more interesting than the plot. Here is a world of Espers and Inertials, the Inertials being people who have the unique ability to cancel the powers of the Espers. People hire the Inertials from Runciter's large company to protect their "freedom of thought" from the Espers. In this far future world are two big corporations, the Hollis group which is a corporation of Espers for hire and the Runciter group of Inertials. Hollis devises a plot to kill off the top ten Inertials and Runciter at one time on the moon.

But now I'm getting ahead of myself.

In this world of the future, a person doesn't die when his body cops out. If a dead body can be placed in a "coldpak" quickly enough, he can go into "half-like" during which his brain may still live for some time. Relatives, etc., can listen in on the half-lifers' brainwaves and talk with them until the half-life eventually fades.

Also in this world everything is commercial. If a man doesn't have a nickel, his front door might not let him out of the apartment. You have to pay each of your appliances to eat breakfast, etc.

Dick has this wonderful world, but doesn't really use it--which is a shame. Runciter and his Inertials get a client who gets them a job on the moon which is all a plot os Hollis' and a bomb goes off leaving them without a boss. They return to Earth to plan a reaction, and suddenly the world begins to revert in time, elevators turning into stairs, jets into biplanes, TV sets into radios, and pens into pencils. Then Runciter's face begins to appear all over the world, on TV commercials, on coins and the Inertials begin to wonder who is alive and who is dead and in half-life. Soon their quest is mixed up with something called Ubik, a spray-can of some substance that is guaranteed to do anything as long as one follows directions on the can. And then a creature follows them and begins to eat them up.

This book is really surprising from one of the authors I consider to be New Wave. This is a type of novel I would expect from someone like, oh, say Laumer



or Fredric Brown, not Dick. Philip K. Dick did quite a good job on writing an old-time type of story up to the end where I am not entirely sure what happened. He sort of lost me at the last chapter. But, you'll have to go and read it yourself to decide what happened at the end of this very good novel. Read Ubik, safe if used as directed.

--Steve Lawrence Goldstein

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Timescoop, by John Brunner, Dell, 50¢

Timescoop is another novel from another very prolific writer who is too good considering the amount of stories that come out each year by this British author. This particular book is a change of pace for Brunner to something a bit lighter. I'd imagine that if he wrote nothing but Stand on Zanzibar-type stories he would be a cynical old man by this time.

Timescoop is a sort of light-hearted semi-comedy about a tycoon and his huge multi-billion corporation. This guy decides to have a family reunion in the Grand Canyon to help a publicity campaign against his chief rival. Then when he hears about the success of one of his company's projects, Timescoop, he decides to do something really different--have a family reunion with his ancestors.

Timescoop is the name of the method by which a slice of a fraction of a second of existence is taken from the past and is processed in the present, thereby making an exact duplicate of whatever it sliced away: a stature, a cat or a man. And this guy decides to bring back his most famous relatives: a musical composer, a civil war spy, a poet, an explorer and others. But his relatives do not quite live up to his expectations. The composer turns out to be an evil man who had a musician locked away in his castle to make music, a composer who has a strange passion for boys; a female spy who is a nymphomaniac; a poet who loves women, especially the women of important men; an explorer who is also a slave trader, etc. A spy in the organization discovers the facts about these people and the tycoon's rival begins to make plans to ruin the reunion.

What goes on with the reunion which is televised to the world and what the organization does to keep the relatives under control during this party is hilarious, although as I said before this is not a complete comedy. A murder is caused somewhere along the line and the book begins to get a bit serious.

Timescoop is a nice change from all the heavy serious stuff I have been seeing around lately. Perhaps if some of the Old Wave/New Wave extremists would stop and read some of these types of books for a while it'll take their minds off their fanatical views and let Swampy's Ultimate Foundation dream come into effect. Read this one too, when you have a chance; it's a goodie.

--Steve Lawrence Goldstein



hey! i think this is

:::CUM BLOATUS!

AN OPEN LETTER TO PIERS ANTHONY by Lin Carter

12 Sept 69

Hi, Piers:

I see by your column in BEABOHEMA 5 that you are very anti Lin Carter. Sorry to hear this. I have no particular reason to want to make an enemy of you or of anybody; I find life simpler and more fun with friends instead of enemies.

So I thought, what the hell, the least I can do is drop a letter to this guy and discuss his gripes. This is the civilized thing to do. Then, if he still prefers to think Lin Carter is a turd, well, that's his business.

Your gripes seem to boil down to the fact that you feel you got gypped and ignored on a fanzine sub, and also I gave a book of yours a negative review. Let's take that first gripe first.

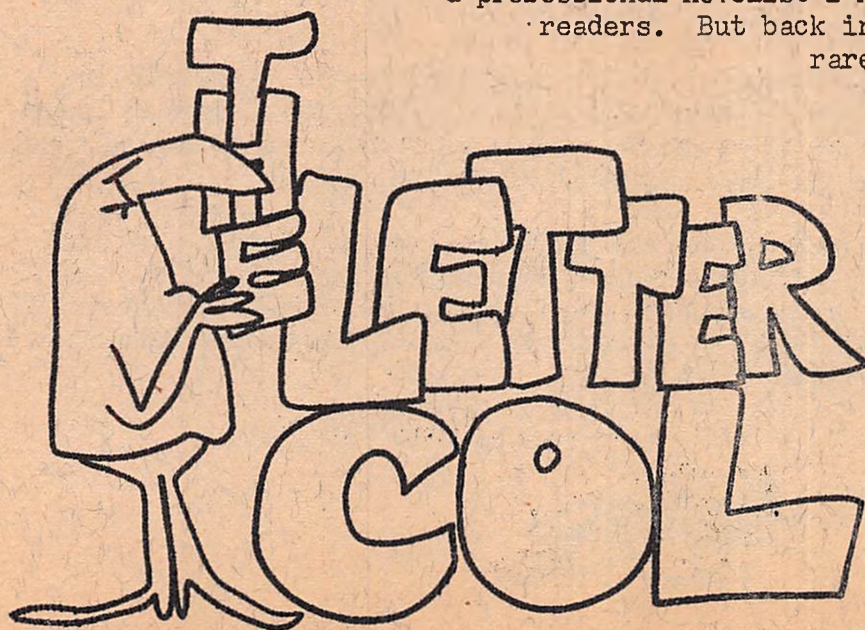
My temperament and laziness and procrastinatory inclinations are such that I am far from an ideal fanzine editor, as I soon found out with SPECTRUM. I hate writing letters. These days, when I get fan mail, I make a point of answering them, because as a professional novelist I have an obligation to my readers. But back in my SPECTRUM days I

rarely got around to replying.

So you see I didn't just ignore your letter.

I just never got around to answering it. No deliberate affront was intended, I am just lazy about letters.

If I only sent you #3 and 4 instead of #1 and 2 as you requested, chances are my supplies of the first two issues were exhausted. As for the





remainder of your subscription, #5 was printed and sent out--frankly, I have no idea why you didn't get it, at this late date--and #6 was never distributed.

Nor did I ever get around to refunding sub monies. I'm sure this is very reprehensible, but I am hardly the first fan ed to gaffate so completely. I have lost many a buck on unfulfilled fanzine subs myself, but I don't think I ever bore much of a grudge for very long. I once subbed to something called GROTESQUE and never got anything. I once subbed to Ellison's DIMENSIONS and eventually got one issue. Most fanzines lose money and when they fold the remainder of the sub monies are absorbed by the debts incurred in publishing. Most fans do not seem overly irked when this happens.

However as you seem to hold this against me, I tell you what I'll do. You say the word and I will send you your dollar back and I will also scare up a complete set of all six issues for you, even if I have to part with my own complete set to make good on this.

Is that fair enough, Piers? Just say the word and off to you they go.

Incidentally, in offering free subs to pro authors and editors on SPECTRUM I really was not trying to "curry favor with Names" as you seem to think. It was just by way of courtesy.

Your other gripe is that I gave a very negative review to your novel SOS THE ROPE in the Dietz's newsmag.

I plead guilty to this: the review was mighty negative. Now, I am sensitive to bad reviews of my own stuff so I can understand why you are angry. However...

In the first place, I did not go out of my way to attack your novel. I did not even volunteer to review it. Ann Dietz asked me to review SOS THE ROPE and even as I recall sent me a copy. Ann probably will still remember the circumstances and if you inquire I believe she will corroborate this.

Now, surely, Piers, you will admit that it is hardly likely that every reader of any given novel is going to like it. Whether the novel is brilliant, good, mediocre or lousy, a certain number of readers is going to like it a lot, another group is going to be indifferent and a few of us are bound by the law of averages to dislike it. Will you agree with this?

I honestly did not like SOS THE ROPE at all. I can't help it. My dislike of your book was sincere. Perhaps it is due to a flaw in my reading taste, perhaps I just fell into that last percentile reader-group, I don't know. But in my review I tried to do an honest job of reviewing: that is, rather than just saying "I don't like it," I tried point by point to explain WHY I didn't like it. More than that I cannot do.

Surely, Piers, you will grant me the freedom of disliking the novel if that is my honest reaction.

And surely you will also grant that I have the right to publish a negative review. If such a review peevs the author, well, that's tough. But if nothing but favorable reviews were published and all negative criticisms were suppressed for fear of hurting an author's feelings, what would be the point of reviewing





anything?

Can you honestly disagree with this point of view? Do you really take it as a deliberate personal insult that I did not like your book and dared to say so in print?

I can't believe that a novelist as successful as yourself can be so sensitive or petty. I refuse to believe it.

One other thing. In your column in BEA-BOHEMA 5 you say my bad review was motivated by jealousy alone. To be precise, you accused me of being "crazy-jealous-mad."

Do you really believe my negative review of SOS THE ROPE was motivated by jealousy and nothing else?

Well, it simply is not true. I have no particular reason to be jealous of your success, Piers, or to begrudge you whatever triumphs come your way. Why on earth should I be jealous of you? I have sold two, maybe three times as many books as you have, and I am fairly successful in my own right. I am not "crazy jealous mad" that you won that \$5,000 prize with SOS THE ROPE--I was not even competing for that prize--you can ask my agent (Henry Morrison) and I am sure he will confirm the fact that I did not even submit a novel to the contest.

Is it that you honestly believe I am "crazy jealous mad" of your literary skills? Is that it?

Now, look, Piers. I do not mean to put you down, but in all honesty if I was the sort of guy who envied other writers of perhaps superior talent I can think of easily two dozen of our colleagues I would be crazy-jealous-mad of long before I ever got around to envying Piers Anthony.

I would envy Bradbury his critical success, Heinlein his smooth way with narrative, Clarke his international repute, de Camp his wit, Sturgeon his emotional values, Zelazny his word skills, Laumer his sense of humor, Vance his sparkling invention, Anderson his story-telling gift, van Vogt his plotting ingenuity, Brackett her lean gutsy prose, Asimov his concepts, Blish his precision--and so on and on, before I ever got around to Piers Anthony.

So...if envy accounts for that review, how come I am not all over the place with acid attacks on all of these authors?

Surely you will be honest enough to admit that even Piers Anthony will agree what maybe Clarke, Heinlein or Zelazny are superior writers to Piers Anthony.

Well, that's about all I have to say. I doubt if any of this has changed your opinion that Lin Carter is, as you called me, a turd. You may continue to hold whatever opinion of me you wish. But I felt the least I should do is drop you this note by way of discussion, to sort of clear the air. This is not a letter of apology, because I don't see that I have anything to apologize for.



Oh, incidentally, since you chose to make your anti Lin Carter remarks in public print rather than in a personal letter, I feel sure you will grant me the same courtesy and not add to your list of gripes the fact that I am sending a copy of this letter to BEABOHEMA.

Best Wishes,

Lin Carter

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((In the last issue of BAB a challenge was set forth by James Blish to Ted Pauls that Ted identify the authors of each chapter in A Torrent of Faces by Blish and Norman L. Knight. So, Ted's reply below...with guess who's? response following...))

Ted Pauls 1148 Meridene Dr. Baltimore, Md. 21212	Naturally, I have taken note of Mr. Blish's challenge. In order for me to rise to it in proper fashion, it would be necessary for me to completely re-read <u>A Torrent of Faces</u> , an ordeal which I frankly lack the strength to face. In the six months or more since reading it, I have forgotten it almost entirely. That puts me at a bit of a disadvantage. However, on the basis of a quick skim, I would say that chapters four, five, six, nine, eleven, thirteen and fifteen, and probably sixteen, were written by one author, the rest by the other (chapter eight is too short to place).
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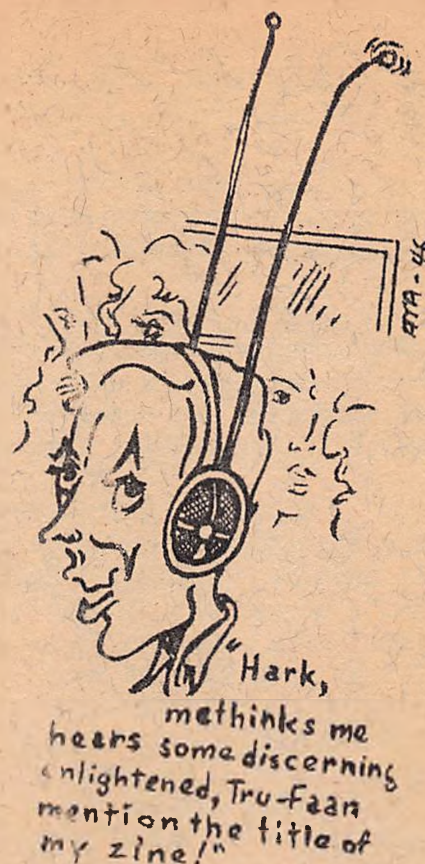
James Blish 2, Fisherman's Retreat St. Peter St. Marlow, Bucks. England	Chapters four, five, six, nine, eleven and fifteen were indeed written by the same author. He did not write thirteen or sixteen; on the other hand, he wrote one half of each of chapters two, seven and ten.
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Mr. Pauls' ear thus scores 12/19ths or 63%. I would call this a passing grade, especially in view of the fact that I made an effort to write as much like Norman as possible, and to edit Norman's copy to make it sound as much like me as possible. Norman is the iceberg Mr. Pauls has seen 63% of.

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Richard Schultz 19159 Helen Detroit, Mich. 48234	You know, now that it is known all over the place that Faith Lincoln doesn't exist and never did, I have a very definable sense of loss.
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True, mayhaps it became a beast which got the egoboo and robbed the real writers of their just desserts. True, mayhaps some people might feel unhappy





over being hoaxed. But not here. Rather I feel as if a very kooky and nice person has somehow died on me, just when she was beginning to fulfill the promise of talent she had.

You know, Tucker is right...if Faith Lincoln was a succulently vengeful reviewer...critiquer would be more accurate, it was because there should be someone like her around in real life.

Faith first came to my attention in BEABOHEMA, I think, and shortly thereafter she wrote me about the EN GARDE that I publish. She was a delightful and earthy-tongued wit even back then, and her letters were usually not only full of clippings and notes on THE AVENGERS and Diana Rigg, but were a joy to read in their own right. Mainly because of her attitude.

Maybe that attitude should have tipped me off, but it rather confirmed her three-dimensionality instead. Fairly well-to-do parents, somewhat earthy in speech, a tell-it-like-it-is girl in so many entrancing respects. She was not a gooey female, but an adult who would very probably be attached very soon to some lucky chap she might not even have met yet. Her way of speaking was no different from that of many of the ultra-emancipated younger generation, and her attitudes were very much of the present generation, the Now generation. If she was sharp-tongued, it was because a woman could take on many of the so-called masculine traits without losing her femininity these days. And because fandom itself abhors women who do not use their brains and guts. Unlike most of the mundane world, fans do not like those vampirish critters who in word and deed show how much they depend on their big strong men to protect them and care for them, etc., etc., ad nauseum. If a woman doesn't live up to her potential, the average fan feels somewhat insulted. Next time you go to a con, look for that. The average femme fan is expected to tell-it-like-it-is, to be a functional human being working at full capacity. The dumb blonde just isn't our ideal sort of woman. Look at Harlan Ellison... You saw him at the StLouiscon anyways, and you noticed the lovely blonde English lass that Harlan trailed around him during much of the con. She might appear to be the mythical Dumb Blonde at first glance, but a word of warning...she's a sharp wit in her own right. And if you think she isn't smart, just ask yourself why she's the first woman he's not been able to talk into marriage. She's one of the first women Harlan has ever known with whom he has to treat as an equal.

So, what with the competent femmes that have infiltrated fandom, a few Trekkies, a few brought into fandom by their husbands or boyfriends, and even a few Diana Rigg-Mrs. Peel fans, Faith Lincoln was not all that extraordinary. What was extraordinary was that she chose to gratify her verbal yearnings in print instead of in person like most of the intelligent verbal-oriented femmes I have known and heard about. Still, odds say that such creatures exist in measurable numbers and it was therefore no surprise that she gravitated into fandom.

So, for a while there, it was great fun. Faith came on as a very sane individual, someone who thought of fandom itself, EN GARDE and fringe, as being fun, as being entertaining and as being a lovely means of expressing this joy and enthusiasm. She came into fandom and the EN GARDE fringe as a person having mucho fun, not as a fanatic, and for this reason if for nothing else, she should have existed, damn it!

I'm going to miss her.



Mike Moorcock  
87 Ladbroke Grove  
London W11  
England

It was kind of you to send Hank Davis's piece on The Final Programme.

Firstly, Hank's piece seemsto me to be a very reasonable and well-intentioned discussion and is a refreshing change from some of the rather inarticulate screams of rage I've seen in one or two other fan-zines.

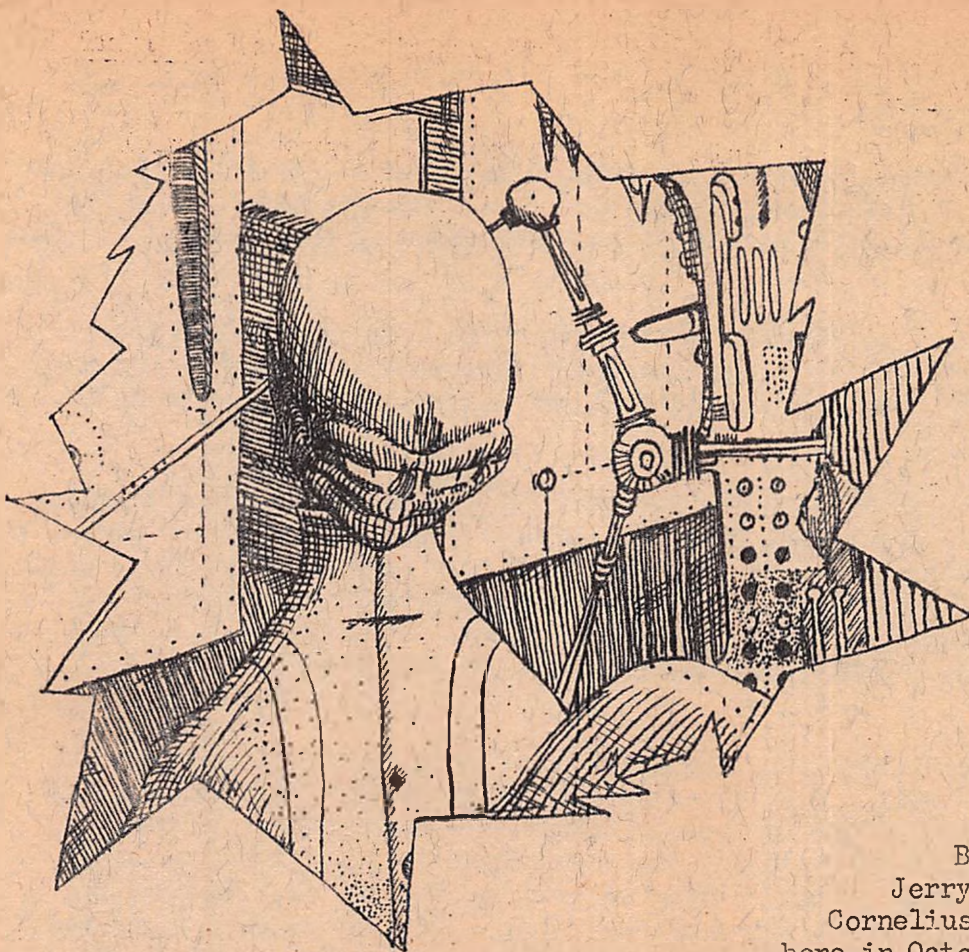
It's as well, now, to remember that I wrote the book almost five years ago and might not be able to describe accurately the exact intentions I had when I sat down to write it. For the record, I'll try to outline how FP came to be written...

I was tired of both S&S and conventional SF. I found both forms limiting in that working in the form I felt that much of what I wanted to say was distorted or strangled altogether. Yet I wanted to find a form and a style in which I could express myself while engaging with contemporary reality as I saw it and still retaining the spirit of, say, the Elric stories. I wanted to experiment, but not at the reader's expense, not so that I was ramming something down his throat.

I suddenly came up with the idea for Jerry Cornelius as, to some degree, a contemporary Elric. Originally it was an attempt to retell the Elric stories in modern dress, but as I wrote the possibilities of the form began to dawn on me (I still haven't finished exploring those possibilities) and I became exultant. I had never enjoyed writing a book so much and I felt that at last I'd begun to find my "voice" as a writer--my own voice. And that voice was not the rather solemn one of the Elric stories, but an ironic, sardonic, comic voice. In one sense, therefore, FP is an affectionate spoof on my earlier sword and sorcery stuff and much of my later work has the same elements (for instance in A Cure for Cancer where you'll find references to The Jewel in the Skull and The Sundered Worlds as well as chapter titles lifted from old pulp magazines like SUPER SCIENCE and PLANET, for which I have a similar affection--if not a far greater one, since these were amongst my earliest sf influences and gave birth to Sundered Worlds and many of the others). I still enjoy writing "straight" sf that is mainly escapist, in much the same way that people like to vary their reading between pure escapism and more seriously intentioned books. I find a good sf or S&S relaxing to write and satisfying to do well, but after writing one I feel the need to engage with something a bit more realistic (in attitude, not necessarily expression). For me, it's a perfect way of working--a bit like a piston. A purely escapist book makes me want to write a "serious" book and having done the Serious, it makes a nice break do do an escapist book again, and so on. Sometimes, too, I'll try an in-between book that is more didactic than I normally like to be--like "Behold the Man" and The Black Corridor. I enjoy writing what, in different moods, I'd enjoy reading. But that's something of a digression, meant to show that I'm not, by implication, knocking sf or S&S of the traditional sort.

The parallels between The Stealer of Souls and The Final Programme were, of course, deliberate and I was disappointed at first when these were not immediately noticed. I had hoped they would be noticed, because, naturally, a dimension would be added to them if they were compared. The idea I'm much prone to using is the one about cyclical time. Most of my books have some reference to it and, of course, "Behold the Man" deals, to some degree, with the same subject, though perhaps in a more sophisticated way. In The Eternal Champion, which Dell





will be doing, I think, next year, I deal with a man who is "doomed" to be a hero in many different cycles (there are references to characters who have appeared in many other books, including The Ice Schooner, The Sundered Worlds, The Jewel in the Skull and The Time Dweller--and Jerry is also mentioned here). In a thriller that Macmillan will bring out next year, The Chinese Agent, the rather seedy

British spy appears as Jerry Cornelius. In a Jerry Cornelius short story appearing here in October in an anthology called The New SF, there are references

to Elric, Dorian Hawkmoon and various other characters. Like many writers, I've a natural

tendency to synthesize and these various cross-references reflect that process, perhaps. All these central characters (most of whom are written about in third person but from a first person viewpoint) are, of course, aspects of myself--characters I might like to be, characters I am frightened of being, and so forth. Therefore, for me, I hope that these different aspects feed back to some extent and give my work (much of which is awful) a unity of some kind. I'll tend to take an idea stated crudely in, for instance, The Eternal Champion (originally done between 1956 and 1961) and produce what I hope is a more sophisticated version of it in, say, The Black Corridor (written in 1969). Many of my heroes being larger than life wish-fulfillment heroes, I tend to produce other aspects of them in what are, I suppose, fairly described as "anti-heroes"--like Jerry Cornelius. The messianic aspects are explored in "Behold the Man" and in A Cure for Cancer (though in very dissimilar ways, of course--among other things, one's very bleak in tone and the other's light, almost dandyish, in tone). In a serial I'm doing for THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA, Jerry Cornelius is an intrepid captain of a spacecraft in a very, very basic sf story written to familiarise the Indian audience with sf--and he's reminiscent of a wooden character from a Gernsback magazine of the twenties.

The last book at this moment projected in the Jerry Cornelius tetralogy, The Condition of Muzak, is a straightforward black comedy set in contemporary London and with no sf or fantasy elements in it at all. Jerry's more spectacular encounters--particularly the sexual ones--are seen as the seedy masturbatory



fantasies of a seedy, lower-class Londoner and other characters--Miss Brunner, Bishop Beesley, Catherine and his mother and father, Mitzi and Karen von Krupp, etc.--and are placed against this ordinary background and work out the same conflicts but in ordinary day-to-day terms. The nearest thing I've done to this so far was in The Chinese Agent where the spy is embarrassed by his sneaky, disreputable relatives who live in the area (Portobello Road) where most of the action takes place (CA is a comedy thriller, not a James Bond type thing).

I use the JC things (there's also a comic strip running here in INTERNATIONAL TIMES) to spoof a lot of things, both private and public (the U.S. involvement in Vietnam in A Cure for Cancer is about the nearest I've got, I think, to a fashionable target) and I think that what Hank Davis sees as "idiocy" (pages 55 and 56 of his article) is actually irony. I don't resent Hank's reaction because we all have areas where certain kinds of humor fail to touch us (I don't much care for Vonnegut, for instance) and, in fact, the Avon edition of Final Programme had a copy-editor, I discovered to my horror, who had missed much of the irony and simply deleted or "rationalised" whole paragraphs. A nice example is where Jerry's laconic "Well, bugger me..." (appropriate, I felt, in the circumstances) is changed to an exclamatory "Damn me!" or where Jerry "senses Marek and Miss Brunner in the caverns of his mind" has been altered from "sensed Marek and Miss Brunner having it away in the caverns of his mind". Annoying changes, including the arbitrary ones where a "comprehensive school" is changed to "consolidated school"--a little throw-away play on words being totally wrecked. I didn't see the proofs of the book. The English hardcover edition has, for what it's worth, the original text. Ironic references in the Avon edition became explicit (and rather dull) statements.

All this has not been intended as a defense against Hank's criticisms. I feel that a well-reasoned review, such as his, deserves to stand on its own. It is a decently argued explanation of Hank's reactions to the book and only a fool would expect everybody to like every book he wrote. Hank's review was the best kind (whether favorable or unfavorable) that an author can get, in that his intentions are respected even if the reviewer feels the author hasn't fulfilled them as well as he could.

However, I should point out that the stuff about time cycles and so on is also partly ironic; partly symbolic and I was not trying to present Jerry literally as a reincarnation of Elric. That is, it was not intended that the reader should see Jerry as Elric born again, but that he should see a more sophisticated version of Elric in a contemporary setting. A natural conservative, I tried to preserve the best of the old while trying to make use of the best of the new. I did a lot in FP which I haven't seen done before and my job now is to explore the possibilities of this method of producing fiction.

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D.D. Sherman            I can hardly lay claim to any competence as a book reviewer.  
520 No. 19th Ave.    Most of my reading is for relaxation and/or enjoyment, but  
Philadelphia, Pa.    BAB's own Terrible Tyke should stop reviewing at least until  
19130                he learns how to read. I refer, of course, to the Wonderful  
                      Wimple himself, Steve Lawrence Goldstein.

"No, I'm not a prude." p. 52, BAB 4. Oh, no? You should read your own reviews. Let us first take Farmer's Flesh. "All the paperback companies are now



going . . .to . . .find dirty sf." Define dirty, please. From internal evidence in your pieces, "dirty" would seem to be almost anything having to do with sex. You decry the fertility rites as being "...just big orgies." What do you think fertility rites are, Maypole dances? Check your cultural anthropology. The primitive fertility rite--or the more sophisticated one--is coming together of the male and the female. Any man, any woman. No restrictions as to who, how often, how many. The idea being that old Mother Nature isn't too bright and needs the reminder so that she will be fertile again and the crops will grow and the village, clan or whatnot will have food for the next year. And I will venture to hypothesize that our very pre-human ancestors many thousand generations removed may have had a regular rutting season in the early spring which eventually evolved into a reminiscent orgy that ultimately received priestly sanctification as a heavenly ordained thing and, thereby, became a rite.

From here on your "review" completely falls apart and fairly well demonstrates that you didn't read far past the crowning of the studgod. Not quite ethical to review a book that you didn't read in the first place, is it? You call Flesh "dirty" and "smut". Boy, I wish I had some pornography on hand to send to you. Hopefully, you would then learn the difference, and use the terms where they belong.

As for your not having read it, you convey the impression that the entire story consists of nothing more than Captain Stagg's ravishing of every woman he can get hold of. Horse apples! The story concerns Stagg's growing awareness of his fate, to be a human sacrifice, and his extremely difficult fight against this almost overpowering compulsion to mount as many women as possible between sunset and dawn, and his ultimate (non-happy-ending-type) success.

You seem to object to sex being the raison d'etre of Flesh. Surely, a force of mind vs. force of compulsion novel can be written about subjects other than sex, but can you name a viable one? Who's going to be interested in a novel about an enforced gourmand? Captain Peter Stagg (the very name is a pun, you know) is a great hero. He fought the unbeatable foe--himself. As for Flesh not being science fiction, son, it's far closer to hard core "Old Thing" sf than it is to anything else.

On to Zanzibar! Though your reading of this one seemed quite perfunctory, at least you did take it to the end. But...

"Immense ideas." Name one new one in this novel--or even one that hasn't been well handled before. And if you really think that the view is so pessimistic, you may as well geld yourself now because otherwise you'll just contribute to the horror of it all, and it's your children who will suffer. But if you'd care to look again, you will see that the sun is peeking through quite a number of places in those clouds. And bear in mind that man is a highly adaptable animal, and that many aspects of our life would have seemed as terrible to our ancestors.

Zanzibar is not four animals in one, nor is it a bunch of chapters jumbled together--both of which claims you make on the same page. It is, rather, to quote Norman Spinrad in the September AMAZING, "...a literary construct consisting of one novel, several short stories, a series of essays and a lot of what can only be called schticks..." And far from being jumbled together, they are orchestrated, like a composer working his various themes about.



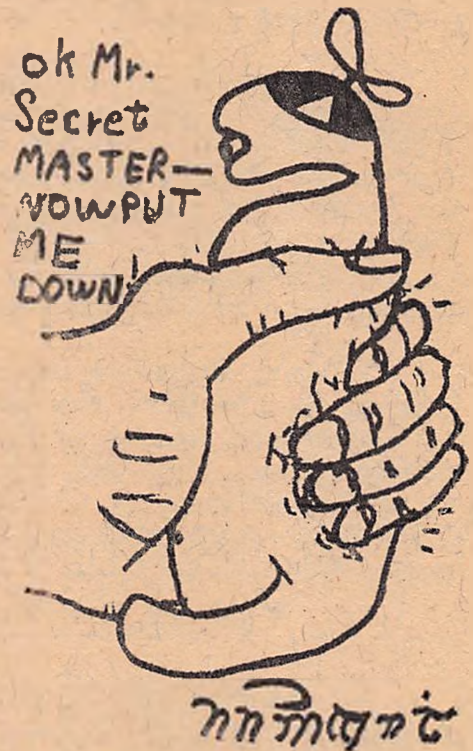
Continuing on the construction of the novel, you blandly state that the book's purpose is to show a possible future. Well, no screaming willywhoppers! That's what science fiction is all about. By definition, the genre explores man's future (Old Thing) and his potentialities (New Wave). It was nice of you to notice, but I think the rest of us are already aware of the obvious.

As for SOZ, as you so quaintly call it, having no climax, might I suggest that you re-read "Continuity" alone? You may discover that there are several small climaxes leading up to two major climaxes, one each in the Donald Hogan/Norman House plot lines.

I'll only pick on a couple particulars.

First, Sugaiguntung was not interested in genetically improving the next generation of Chinese. It was his government that was making the claim that he could--only, the Chinese had nothing to do with it. The sparse geographical information in the book indicates the country was either the Philippines or Indonesia, and the Chinese aren't particularly welcome in either of them.

Second, your anti-smut chimera raises its ugly head again. "A shiggie is a female prostitute..." Come alive, kid! Where did you read that? Taken in context, a shiggie is simply an unmarried woman. Let me explain a few things to you. Marriage is an economic group, formed to give the greatest possible security to a man and a woman in a hostile world, and to enable offspring to survive long enough to form their own families. Somewhere along the line, marriage got all botched up with religion and is falling apart (this will have to be the subject of a different lecture). In a society where few can have children, men can buy their clothes in stores and eat ready-prepared meals, where women no longer need a man to supply the food and other raw materials needed to keep a family fed, clothed and what-not, marriage and the family become something less than an anachronism. There is no further need for them. Given such a situation, individual men and women can come together at will. Add to this vast overpopulation where housing of any sort is at a premium, it is only natural that single men and women would choose to live together in conubial bliss, as it were, for so long as they may see fit. In such a society, as in any society where sex is a normal part of life, and is not hidden as if it were something nasty, there is no need for prostitution. A prostitute is a woman who gives the use of her body in return for material gain-- most commonly money. A woman who lives with a man to whom she is not married is not necessarily a whore. I said before that marriage is dying. I mean today. I know several unmarried couples who are living together. None of the women involved can be called prostitutes.





I seem to detect some glimmering of intelligence behind your sexual hang-ups. As you grow up, I hope that you will mature and discover that sex is not something dirty, or nasty.

A man who doesn't fuck is almost as unnatural as a man who doesn't eat.

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Steve Lawrence Goldstein    After reading that one letter from Denny Lien or what-  
12058 Milton St.            ever his name is, I just have to reply to his bombastic  
Wheaton, Md. 20902        attacks on my article (is that the correct word to use?  
                             In any case it sounds intellectual).

First thing off, the reason I sound like a "16 year old" is that I'm close to that age--18. I just haven't grown up entirely yet.

Next, I think that the overemphasis on sex is a reason not to read Bug Jack Barron. I don't see where it is my "phony-liberal" tendencies coming out. I just feel morally and intellectually insulted when I read a book filled with four letter words and this is called superior science fiction (by the New Wavists, not by me). If a novel has to fall back on using four letter words to hide the fact that the plot is rather poor and backwards (the method of using radiation of children's glands that disintegrate the children but not the glands is very absurd) that book is not a good book and is a waste of time to read.

Having scenes in which "someone eats dinner" can be very useful in a novel, showing that person's character or dinner talk that develops the plot, but sex in a book that goes to no useful purposes is just pointless (except perhaps as comedy relief). Why not write about a character going to the bathroom, it'll get to that stage yet. It is this lowering of standards that I resist in stf. If I wanted to read about sex, I would go down to the local newsstand and pick up one of those things that they sell in plain brown wrappers! Aarrrggggg!!!!

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((And now, the Ted White Letter That Was Six Months In The Waiting. Let me just say that the following letter was written for BAB 4, and it's followed by Ted's loc on #5, and he explains it well enough, so I'll let it go...))

Ted White                    Here ~ three BEABONEMAS have come to me (well, the last two,  
339 49th St.                anyway--I don't recall seeing the first), and it's high time I  
Brooklyn, N.Y.            commented on them. The third (which came in today along with  
11220                        a batch os books from Berkeley and Ballantine, and the page-  
                             proofs on the Sept. AMAZING and Oct. FANTASTIC--the mail does  
seem heavier lately, yes) picked up a lot of checkmarks in its margins, the  
largest percentage next to stray mentions of my name. I suppose this is a new  
stage for me. Ten years ago only my friends mentioned me in their fanzines.  
Then, starting maybe five years ago, everyone who took a dislike to me dropped  
stray hints to that effect every time they felt their blood pressure rising over  
almost any subject at all. Now I am simply being quoted or referred to as some  
sort of fixture in the field, without either strong positive or negative conno-  
tations attached. I think I like it. ((Well, you have been around for at least  
15 years, Ted, and now being editor of a couple of magazines...you must be a fix-  
ture, now wielding power everyone sort of wishes they had.))



For instance, in your editorial I find a sudden mention of myself in the middle of one paragraph. I take it as a favorable comment (don't disillusion me), but it still perplexes me a little that a forthright statement on a subject should generate such enormous reaction in some quarters. I rarely go out of my way to say outrageous things, although I do usually state what I believe with a conviction proportionate to my belief. Thing is, people tend to overlook the wishy-washy things I've also said--things I've carefully qualified because I'm not certain of my stand--and remember only the big, bold, glaring things I've said--most of which are things which put their backs up. (People remember disagreements far more readily and for far longer than they do agreements. Take Piers Anthony, for example...but I'll get to him in a minute.) Once or twice someone annoys me sufficiently that I set out to bug him back. The Rev. C.M. Moorhead did that years ago, with his fundamentalistic, "Smash the heathen!" un-Christian attitudes, and ever since I've jabbed at him from time to time in YANDRO, for instance.

I have a theory. My theory is that fans are insecure about themselves and often react in a paranoiac fashion to what they regard as threats to their security. Which is to say, suppose (hypothetically) you were a sixteen-year-old girl, and you read hot piece I had in the last WEEKAS in which I passingly remarked on the emotional maturity of sixteen-year-old girls. If you were a fannish sixteen-year-old girl, you'd be insecure (why else would you be in fandom?), and my comment might seem akin to a personal attack on you. And then, suddenly, you might conceive a violent dislike for me, and--so on. This more or less happened to me, in fact, although the girl (wife of a friend) was older. She couldn't see the difference between a generalization and her own circumstances and--further--was sufficiently insecure that she took a simple statement of fact (no emotional connotations) as a put-down of sixteen-year-old girls and thus, ergo, herself.

Fans do this all the time. It's very discouraging.

So you either have to side-step and backtrack for every forward step you take, carefully explaining to one and all at each step of the way, "Hey, nothing personal; no offense," or you simply let the chips fall where they may. Most of the time I do the latter. The former is too damned complicated and rarely works that well anyway. (Like, a paranoid will ask himself, "What did he mean, 'no offense'? Was there something offensive to me in that line? Did he know it, and is this just his cop-out? Why bring it up at all if he didn't intend offense? Isn't this just White being snotty and getting in a few low jabs at my expense?" Etc.)

My world is divided up into Good Guys, Bad Guys and The Rest. The Good Guys are the people whose company I really enjoy; the Bad Guys are people I detest and will go out of my way to avoid if possible, and The Rest are people I either don't know that well, or have only moderate feelings towards. I write for the Good Guys. I figure the Bad Guys will take offense no matter what--and I hope The Rest will either view the proceedings with a balanced eye, or simply sit back to enjoy a good show, fireworks and all. It seems to work out about that way.

Piers Anthony...you recall I mentioned him earlier? I said something, passingly, some time back, and he remembers it fondly, if not well. Harlan Ellison was naming the names of major new writers we'd never see in ANALOG, back when PSYCHOTIC was not yet SFR. One of those names was Piers Anthony. I said, more or less in passing comment (in a letter), that I didn't think Anthony was a major new



writer (and at that time if any of his books were out I had not yet read them), but that he had appeared in ANALOG (defense), but he remembered the part about my not thinking he was a major writer (offense). He's cited it several times since, and alludes to it yet here again. Picky, picky, picky, Piers.

((I think, Ted, that Piers' favorite line from that letter is: "If Anthony is an 'important writer of today', then I'm next year's Hugo winner! You did win a Hugo, remember?))

He also mentions Spinrad and myself and wonders how we compare in money earned and wordage sold. Well, I've never thought of my work in that sense before, so it will take a little figuring. I sold my first two stories in 1962, in July or August, within days of each other. They were published in IF and AMAZING, in January, 1963, within days of each other. I messed around with a few short stories thereafter, but wrote little and sold little. I've sold a total of nine short stories, out of ten written. (More recently I wrote four for Harlan Ellison's Again, Dangerous Visions, at his request. He bounced them all, despite the assurances of such people as Alex Panshin and Lee Hoffman that he'd love one or more of them. \*Sigh\*. But I don't count them as unsold in any permanent sense, since they're still being marketed by my agent.) In 1963 Terry Carr suggested we do a book for Monarch, and I've devoted most of my professional writing energy to books since then. I have eleven published books on my "vanity shelf", and more as yet unpublished.

Of those eleven books, I acted as a front man on one, doing some plotting and editing, and pulling down \$100 for it. Two others are collaborations. Collaborations result in both parties doing more than half the work each would do on his own book, but splitting the money down the middle. Two of the books are hardcover juveniles, the first of which is in its fifth printing and earning me around or over \$1,000 in royalties every year. The second was just published this month. (The advance on each juvenile was \$1,000, but since I've made over \$3,000 on the first in earned royalties, I don't object to the low advance. I've never come close to earning royalties over and above the advances I've received on paperback originals.) Totalling things up on all eleven books, I find an approximate wordage of 595,000 and earnings of about \$13,725, gross (before agent's fee, etc.). So I've sold slightly less than Piers in actual wordage, and received some four or five thousand dollars less. (But then, I never won a \$5,000 dollar prize, which jacks his earnings up a trifle.) Then too, I have contracts for additional books to the tune of \$10,000. And, unlike Piers, I've sold just about everything I've ever written. I'm stunned that Piers sells only about "one-eighth" of what he writes. That means that his actual earnings, spread out over his actual wordage written (including three drafts or more), averages very low. I think I'd shoot myself; I couldn't take an actual earnings-rate that low. I'm sure Norman has sold a much larger percentage of what he's written, too.





Checking my files, I find I have unsold at the present the four stories I mentioned above, plus an old collaboration with Calvin Demmon which I shall run through my typer again sometime soon and see if I can't sell it. Of course I am presently in the enviable position of being able to backstop myself as the editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC. But I am hesitant to buy many stories from myself, no matter how much I think them deserving, simply because it smacks of self-service. I notice Fred Pohl publishing his own novels in IF and GALAXY, but I'm not sure I have as muchchutzpah--and, too, I'm not the Name Fred is. But I did publish one story in the July AMAZING (reader reaction thus far has been outstandingly favorable), and I wrote a novelette for the October FANTASTIC around the cover painting because I couldn't find anyone else for the job on short notice.

I have seven book presentations presently unsold. One of them is a juvenile I know will sell; it hasn't been offered to my usual publishers because I already had contracts there. Another is a mainstream juvenile which Alex Panshin is convinced will be my best book; I worked it up for Bantam Books at their request, but they opted out of the whole idea. I'll sell it sooner or later. One is a very early notion of cobbling together several short stories into a book (it opens with "The Saboteur" which recently appeared in IF) which I really have no particular desire to sell now. Besides which, Spinrad used the title (Agents of Chaos). Another is a sequel to my Pyramid book, which I decided against doing anything about for the time being, because I didn't want to get into another collaboration and I'd have been obligated to. One is a western which I never submitted anywhere. And two are collaborations with Lee Hoffman which aborted, one a boys' book series commissioned by an editor who changed her mind and with whom I now refuse to do business, and the other a genuine sf/western which confused too many editors who were genre-conscious. (I still intend to rework it and sell it some day.)

But before I get around to those, I have an Ace Special, a Dell, a Lancer, a Westminster and a Holt, Rinehart & Winston to do (the latter two juveniles), and I'm wrapping up a book for Signet right now. I figure to keep busy.

Al Snider thinks Arnie Katz edits the letters to QUIP "to pieces". He's wrong. Arnie just doesn't get much in the way of letters of comment. It's a problem all the more "fannish" zines face. A perennial problem. On the other hand, a good fanzine should edit its letter column better than most do.

Various people seem to be commenting on Leo Kelley's remarks that no one programs items for fans at worldcons. He's wrong, of course. There is usually at least one "fan panel" at each worldcon, and we devoted all of Friday's programming to fan topics, at the NyCon 3, for example. The trouble is, the bulk of your con attendees couldn't care less. They know very little about organized fandom, and have no interest in anyone but Big Name Pros. I've observed, since chairing the NyCon 3 and the last two Lunacons, that an Isaac Asimov will literally fill the hall, but that the instant he steps down in favor of fans or lesser-known pros, the hall will empty out to one half or less its previous occupancy. If you put on a panel of fan-editors, most of your audience will become bored and leave. If you put on fans discussing sf, the general reaction seems to be, "Who cares what he thinks? He's not a pro!"

Mike Dockinger recalls the "fan panel" which "lasted into the late hours" at the 1959 Detention, but he forgets that it started in the "late hours", in the late evening, and was quickly dominated by speakers from the floor. That was the



year we were all holding a wake for sf, and everyone wanted to give his opinion of why we were doomed. As I recall, Hans Santesson and Dave Kyle dominated the floor discussion. Bjo, Wally Weber, Ron Ellik and I were on the panel, and we got precious little chance to say a thing. Ron and I ended up holding our own private (off-mike) conversation for lack of anything better. Ultimately we left the stage and the panel in the hands of Kyle and crew. It wasn't really the fan panel that sustained the interest, you see. It went on without us.

George Inzer's heart is in the right place, but I wonder if he really thinks his SPASM has any influence over AMAZING? I'll tell you who has the most influence over AMAZING: Sol Cohen. And right behind him, me. Sol pays the bills and calls the shots. I work within the limits he sets me and do my damndest. There are three separate areas of change possible in the magazine. The first is the fiction. This reflects a) editorial taste and b) word-rates and submissions. I buy the best I get. I have a philosophy of what makes good fiction, but it boils down to "the stories I like." No one is going to have much influence on this part of AMAZING except inasmuch as he prompts better submissions. The second area is the personality, as reflected in editorials blurbs, editorials and features. This I have changed drastically. Long editorials with meaningful content, book reviews in depth, good fanzine reviews and a letter column put together with the best letters I get (which isn't saying a lot--why aren't more people writing letters?). In addition, I've replaced Leon Stover's science column with one called "The Science in Science Fiction" by Greg Benford and David Book--both sf readers and both physicists; Greg is also a pro and a long-time fan. I think this column will be the equal of Asimov's and Ley's--and it will be directly sf-oriented in content. Again, this is my influence, my decision. This is what I want to see in AMAZING. If someone can suggest something else, something better, that I like when I hear about it, I'll probably do it.

The third area is appearance. I know the magazines have been schlocky in appearance. I'm now gaining the opportunity to do something about that. Beginning with our November and December issues, all department heads will be redesigned and improved. The designs will be by Mike Hinge--who is also illustrating for us. Also, I'm bringing other artists into the magazines. Jim Steranko has a double-page spread illustrating Harlan Ellison's new story in the Sept. AMAZING, for example. We may also be using several of the underground comix artists, like Art Spiegelman.

Now the responsibility for all this rests with me. With the amount of time and energy and enthusiasm I pour into the magazines. It's not how many letters we get, it's how I feel about something. I am receptive to new ideas, but I am not some sort of tool to be welded by fan opinion, as George Inzer suggests. What I am trying to do is make AMAZING and FANTASTIC into better and more profitable magazines. My responsibility is to improve sales if I can. I think I can improve sales by making these other improvements. I'll be allowed to do as I please so long as sales don't actually suffer. At that point I'll be curtailed.

You could save STAR TREK by writing letters. You can't save AMAZING with 100,000 letters. You could help AMAZING with increased sales. Either by buying copies yourself, by suggesting it to friends, or by pushing for better newsstand display, locally. Sales will help. Lack of sales will hurt. That's the extent of what you can do, directly. It's a lot, but it isn't easy.



Beyond that, certainly letters supporting the changes I've made (providing you like them) won't hurt, since Sol does like to know how people like the magazines. And publishable letters for the letter column will help, since it is directly dependent upon you for letters. But that's it. That's the extent of your "real influence", George.

Gabe Eisenstein remarks upon my having been or being a comics fan. I have no desire to enter into your argument, but, for the record, yes, I was and am something of a comics fan and quasi-pro. I still buy comics (most of the Marvels, some of the Nationals), and I attend the monthly meetings of the NYC Comic Art Group, a fan/pro group which meets at Roy Thomas's place. I know many of the pros on a first-name basis, and I've gotten a fair ammount of mileage out of writing the Captain America book. More recently I've been asked to contribute stories to the new Marvel horror mags, and probably shall, mostly for the fun of it. I like the comic art medium, I intensely admire the work of Eisner, Kurtzman, Kirby and others. Old-time fans like John Benson, Bill Pearson and Larry Ivie are personal friends. I get a kick out of it when Roy shows me the pencillings for new books months ahead. Etc. But a lot of comics fandom turns me off. I regard good chunks of it as illiterate and full of profiteering swine. I told Phil Seuling to his face what I thought of a high school English teacher selling comics at exorbitant prices to kids to young to work for their money (and got kicked off his comicon program as a result). I think the dealers in comics are, most of them, cynical, sub-literate jerks--and I include Seuling, who threw Mom, Apple Pie and Free Enterprise back at me in response. Seuling can't even write English; it is farcical to think of him teaching it, ferghodsake.

((Which ends it....and I'm going directly to Ted's loc on #5...))

Somehow the letter on #3 never got off my desk. Here it is, somewhat dated by the passage of time. I'm now working on the March AMAZING and April FANTASTIC, for instance, and we're getting a hundred letters an issue on both mags, and like that. And, of course, we're now 95% new material, which is the real victory.

Piers continues to dominate your zine--he is at once the best and worst feature of it. I suppose that this is basically a Good Thing, but if he ever pulls out, you're going to be left with a huge vacuum. ((People have already been saying that Piers is actually a huge vacuum, but I think I could survive even without Piers, though things would be a lot less fun. Like...the new title of trouble-maker might have to be given to Dean Koontz or Harry Warner or someone if Piers decided he'd rather write fiction. But Piers Really Does Love Fandom.))

He misunderstands Sol Cohen's position at GALAXY. (It's fun to correct Piers about an aspect of the professional scene; he takes such delight in correcting others.) In the publishing field we have a situation where a man is named "Publisher" of a magazine, but is a salaried employee of the actual owner, who is too busy to spend his time actively overseeing the publication of the magazine. This "Publisher" is the man who negotiates printing and distribution contracts, and oversees the actual production of the magazine. But he doesn't own it in the traditional sense. Sol Cohen was hired by Robert Guinn to act in this capacity for the GALAXY magazines. Sol has been in publishing since the late thirties, when he was involved in the distribution of SUPERMAN comics. But until he bought AMAZING and FANTASTIC he had never owned any properties. He left Guinn to buy the magazines from Ziff-Davis and go into publishing on his own.



You know, I have this very foggy memory of Ed Meskys turning up one night at #AM, about half and houe after I'd gobe to bed, and waking me up with the door-bell, but I don't believe I ever knew before that Piers was with him. I'm afraid it wouldn't have impressed me in any case. There are damned few people I will climb out of bed at that hour to see. I would have enjoyed meeting Piers if Ed had brought him around earlier, and I admit it's a fluke that I was already in bed by that hour (I go to bed any time between 11:00 PM and 4:00 AM, depending on my work and my wife), but there ir is. "Not the smartest thing Ted ever did"? Not the dumbest, either.

I note that Piers is accusing me of "treating the Names quite differently from the unknowns," here as well as in SFR. I wonder to what he is referring. The sloppiness of my record-keeping, the lack of organization of my correspondence is the despair of Name and Unknown alike, Piers, and is absolutely non-descri-minatory. Since the Civil Rights Act of 1962, I have made it a point to misplace the letters and manuscripts of males and females, members of all races, fans and pros, Bigs and Littles, etc., with absolute impartiality. I regret this, and am Taking Steps to curb it, but will not be accused of somehow mistreating unknowns more than anyone else. Any my treatment of Piers Anthony (Jacob) has been more or less the same in attitude since the day (one August day in 1964, when I was visiting Buck Coulson and he showed me a letter of comment to YANDRO from Piers commenting on a piece of mine) I first registered his name in my computer-like mind. So there. ((Still, Ted, you'll have to admit that you (or any other editor, for that matter) treat Piers less seriously than someone like...oh, say a big seller like Jack Vance or, not exactly in your case, Mack Reynolds. And I'm sure Piers has felt the treatment accorded him has chnged since he's been nominated for both the Nebula and Hugo, even though the same people won't buy his stories. But again, Piers doesn't help much by not using an agent who could pressure the editors to some small--though noticeable--extent. Names get prefer-ential treatment everywhere, though.))

But then Piers puts me in exalted company, namely Scott Meredith and Fred Pohl. Jeeze, I don't deserve it. Not do I understand Piers' beef with those two gentlemen, both of whom I have met. Fred treated me quite decently when I was a wee tad among pros, rejecting each of my stories with personal notes. Perhaps that was discriminatory--had I been a Name, maybe he'd have sent me checks... but I doubt it--but at least when he did buy a story ("I, Executioner"), he did spend a good ammount of time substituting synonyms for most of the connective words while copyediting it. (For the record, I have seen the edited ms., and I don't think Fred's changes either improved or hurt the story. I just wonder why he bothered. It strikes me as a waste of his time.) But, seriously, although I don't feel I know Fred at all well, and I can't think of any reason why he should go out of his way to be nice to me, he has been unfailingly nice on every contact I've ever had with the man. ((Your comment about perhaps buying your stories instead of rejecting them had you been a name seems to ring true. Names will have an awful lot of garbage printed in the magazines simply because they are Names and have the drawing power going along with their popularity. Editors will freely admit they'll buy shit from van Vogt and pass over a better work by some Lesser Known, because van Vogt will sell copies, even though a large ammount of the readers will throw down the magazine in disgust after reading his story; the maga-zine still sells. Pohl had been going to the other extreme with IF too, it seems to me. I'm speaking of his policy of publishing a "First" story in each and every issue, some stories being good, some being illiterate. I see the idea has been suggested to you, Ted, and you've rejected it. Hallelujah!))



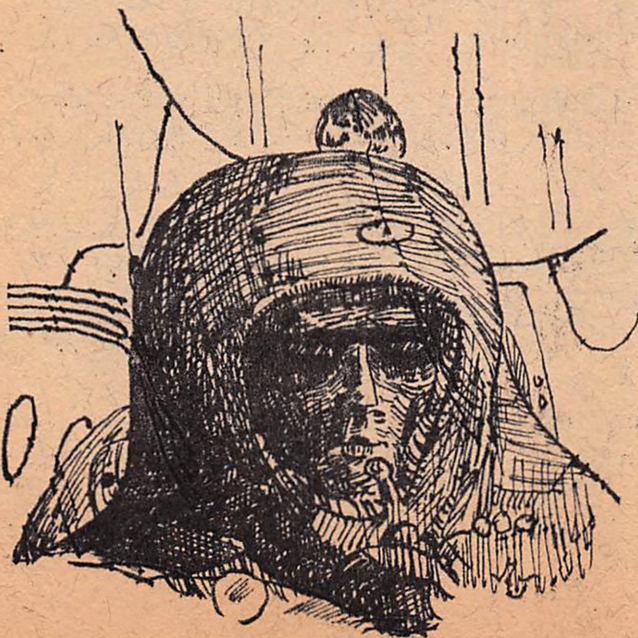
Scott Meredith is another story. I very much doubt that Piers has ever had any contact at all with Scott. I worked for him, and thus met him and got to see more of him than 99% of his clients do, but when Piers says "Scott Meredith", he really means one of the several men (and women) who front for Scott as his acting agents. Scott has well over a dozen people working for him, of whom three or four are his "pro-desk" people. They do the actual day-to-day marketing, handle the bulk of author-agent correspondence, etc. Terry Carr was a Meredith man some years ago (he wrote it up for the NyCon 3 Program and Memory Book), and a good one. My present agent, Henry Morrison, was vice-president of Scott Meredith Literary Agency, Inc. at one time. Etc. Scott's agency is as good as the people he has on his pro-desks. They vary. If Piers had some kind of bad experience with Scott, it was probably a result of his brushing up the wrong way against one of these anonymous and underpaid, overworked types. The turnover is rapid; I doubt the offender is still there if the incident took place more than a year ago.

Skipping right over to Piers' letter (I told you he was the dominant voice in BAB), if we accept his definition of a hack (as an attitude of hacking, essentially), then I don't see that John D. MacDonald fits his definition at all. But then, has Piers read any of MacDonald's work? I've read all but a couple of his novels, and a lot of his late-forties pulp stories, and I don't believe he could ever be called a hack. After his first year or so as a writer, his involvement in his fiction was very obvious, and a strong asset. That he applied himself to writing at a volume level indicates the strength of the man. I purply envy him for it.

It's an interesting point you two bring up about my application of myself to writing/editing. But you're both wrong, simply because you're arguing from an exterior situation.

For the past couple of years I have been writing less because I have demanded more of myself as a writer. Unlike some people, I cannot turn it on and off like a faucet; a rigorous schedule

may produce more wordage in a given period, but that which is in excess of what I would have written anyway is shit and will have to be discarded. So I write when I'm "turned on" to my story/book, when I'm involved with it. This involvement comes and goes. It's rarely good for more than three or four thousand words a day, but that wordage is largely finished copy. (When I have a full head of steam up, I try to do no less than a chapter a day. I have written up to three chapters in a day, but then I was really turned on and usually galloping down to the finish line. Once past a certain point in a book, I coast, and the final chapters write themselves.)





I used to reason it out that at a chapter a day (only a few hours--two or three--a day, really), I could produce at least twelve books a year and become filthy rich like Bob Silverberg. (At his peak, Bob was producing something like four times that many.) But I overlooked my inability to even sit down at a typer on some days, or the way I'd feel washed out and creatively exhausted after I'd finished a book. Now I count myself lucky to do three a year.

So that leaves a lot of holes in my time. Even at a chapter a day, each working day, I'd still have plenty of extra time. Naturally, activities expand to occupy available time, but it wasn't hard to fit AMAZING and FANTASTIC in. I do the work in my own home, so there's no question of "office time" vs. "free time." I do what requires doing on the magazines as it pops up. Usually the work comes in clumps: copyediting mss. for a pair of issues, then proofing galleys, then correcting page-proofs, etc. Incidental to that is the ten thousand words or so which I write or type for the issue--editorials, letter columns, reviews, etc.--which comes out of fanac time rather'n pro-writing time, since that, psychologically, is what it is. Plus regular ms. reading, correspondence, soliciting great new unpublished Arabian Nights-type fantasy novels, and like that. I also farm out the stories to the artists, pick up their artwork, etc. And every so often I drive out to Queens to have lunch with Sol and discuss business with him (we also talk over the phone daily). It's a cinch I'm putting more into it than I'm being paid for, but I enjoy it; on the whole, and I'm glad to have the opportunity, because, frankly, I'm much more likely to make a lasting impression on the field as an editor than as a writer.

However, Piers, I did end up selling myself a novel. It's By Furies Possessed, a novel I wrote for Signet, and it will be following the Phil Dick serial in AMAZING. It runs 75,000 words and I paid myself the same rate you got for Hasan. I decided to buy it after Sol urged me to consider the idea, and because I honestly felt it was better than most of the novels I'd been submitted recently. Still, I'm sensitive to the notion that I buy all my own stories. Barry Malzberg, of all people, leveled that charge at me, stating that I was pulling all my unsalable clinkers out to sell to myself. In six issues of the magazines, Barry published three of his own stories. In ten issues I published two of mine, one written to fit a cover. The serial will change that a little, but I will rest on its merits. (The market in magazines for my stuff seems to be opening up. Ed Ferman, who rejected all my early novels, asked to see my current output, and might even do a new juvenile I'm finishing now. It would be nice to believe that I can sell my novels to other magazines, as well. God knows I'd get more money from them.)

I have a couple of remarks pencilled into the margins of Robert Moore Williams' letter. Over the top is "paranoiac shit." Next to the second paragraph, "How to lie with statistics."

Okay, let's say that the SFWA does have 330 members. But the assumption that each one will produce at least one short story a month is nonsense. I'd guess that at least half the SFWA membership writes an average of one story per year. At least a quarter of the membership got in on the strength of one sale, which might easily be a fluke.

Williams' assumptions are at root pernicious bull-shit because he seems to regard stories as yard-goods (as anyone could guess from reading his own), each as good as all the others. So he speaks of "minimum wage standards," as if every writer deserved to be paid solely on the basis of the time he spent on a



story, irrespective of its content or quality. And he has the nerve, the gall, to remark on "the stink from the left." Sheesh!

The fact is this: 75% of the stories being written by professional writers in our field, SFWA members or not, is garbage. Those stories are sub-professional and do not deserve publication. And yet, many get into print. Why? Because there are so few good stories being written that there are not enough to go around, and less than enough to fill the magazines presently coming out. The situation is worse in the paperback-original field, where Williams is the best example of incompetence in print. If there were enough good writers turning out good novels, Williams would be out on his ear, and reduced to peddling his trash where it belongs--the \$500 a book markets, and vanity houses, etc.

A few months back, Williams had an article in the WSFA JOURNAL in which he bragged himself up as a writer, and claimed that the SFWA "ingroup" was hogging the awards. Obviously, he has now undergone another evolution in his thinking. It follows the classic sour-grapes pattern: if I can't get the award, it's no good anyway, and just a set of cheap tricks. Y'ah, sure... Williams is synonymous with "hack," and has been for nearly two decades. His writing is sub-literate and devoid of content. For some reason, he chooses to deceive himself about this and has spawned a paranoid version of reality to explain his own lack of popularity. It must be the SFWA! Mighod, there are 330 people out there tearing away at my hog-troth! And they're all ass-kissing! I refuse to ass-kiss, and that must be why I'm not getting all the kudoes. Uh-huh. Sure, Bobby. And while you're at it, you curse out "that monster", Harlan Ellison good, because he's trying to destroy you by helping to raise the standards in our field.

Don't bother trying to sell me any of your stories, fella. I wouldn't want the contamination of your lilly-white, far-right "stink" in my magazines.

Having gotten that out of my system, I might add that Williams has 90% of his facts wrong, as well. Nobody is forcing agents to bid against each other for lower rates, and they aren't doing it. Rates vary (ours aren't the best, but they aren't the lowest, either), and smart agents market their stories first to the best (highest-paying) markets. In the last few years, the going rate for paperback original novels has been nudged by agents and authors from an advance of \$1000 to a standard of \$1500 to \$2000, and prices are now being commonly quoted in the \$2,000s and \$3,000s. This is new and good. It belies Williams' theory and facts 100%. But in order to earn these new higher advances a book either has to be priced higher, or pay its author a higher percentage of royalties. Sales haven't changed drastically in ten years in the book field, to my knowledge. Cover prices have--and recently the percentage has been creeping up. The SFWA has had a strong hand in the latter, as well as in suggesting model contracts which would, among other things, eliminate such "option clauses" as Piers remarks upon. (If Piers wanted to duck that clause, he need only have done a presentation (a dozen pages or less) on a stinker of a book, and sent it around as his next submission to the company is question. Its rejection would have freed him. I suspect he continued to sell his books to Ballantine because Ballantine continued to buy them...)

Williams hints at dirty work in the SFWA. From my end of the stick, that's certainly true: various people, elected officials and volunteers, have been stuck with a lot of dirty work to do while jerks like Williams trumpet their paranoid complaints to the winds. Me, I personally did the layout, paste-ups and mechanic-



als for a year's worth of SFWA Bulletins (the ones Alex Panshin edited), for free. If I'd billed the SFWA at the current rate (and I've worked professionally at this), I'd have bankrupted the Association. My bill would've been over \$1,000.00. And I donated a lot less time than many others. Alex, for instance, laid aside work on his third Villiers' novel to do those Bulletins, when that book was his sole forthcoming source of income. Needless to say, nobody is paid for his services to the SFWA; there just isn't any money for it. The Robert Moore Williamses (and Piers Anthonys, to a lesser extent) sit back and gripe from their vantage points a thousand miles removed, but I don't see them volunteering their services to improve the organization.

I could work up a fair, if petty, dislike for Gary Hubbard on the basis of his letter here. I'll restrain myself, but I must point out that grass offers esthetic, if non-productive, rewards (not everything must be measured in terms of the dollars you get from it), and anyone who has ever enjoyed a freshly mown lawn knows what I mean. (I mowed grass every summer when I was a kid, and hated it, dumb kid that I was. Now it's a delight to take my shoes off and amble across a lawn, to smell fresh-cut grass, or just to let my eye rest peacefully on that carpet of rich green. To say nothing of the pleasures of croquet...) Likewise, frauds like LeRoy Tanner are hardly the standard-bearers of good sf criticism. But I've already remarked elsewhere on that.

You ask when "Shaw" ever appeared in a "Pohlzine." I assume you are referring to Bob Shaw. His "Call Me Dumbo" appeared in the December, 1966 IF. It surely wasn't a "major work", in comparison with "Light of Other Days," but it was a good story. It deserves more attention than it got, too.

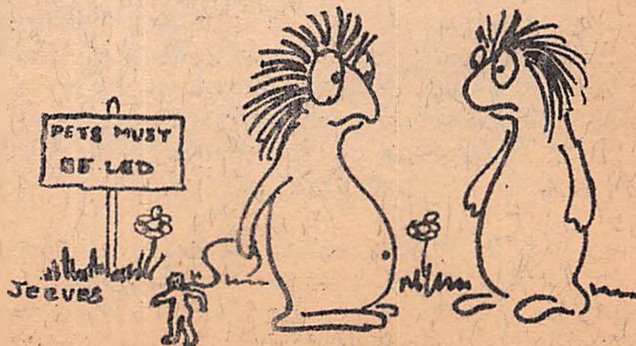
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Harry Warner, Jr.  
423 Summit Ave.  
Hagerstown, Md.  
21740

It has just occurred to me that I shall write one line for every page in the fifth Beabohema. This is utterly impractical for conveying comments and unfair from the standpoint of return for work expended by the editor, but if I wrote a four page loc, would you notice the difference? It would

be only two lines to each page.

((But it would be another sheet of paper. Huh?))

Re-read your conjecture about the fan who never finished producing a constantly growing issue of a fanzine, and imagine how a letterhack might find himself wearing out one ribbon after another with comments on an endless fanzine, and maybe you'll appreciate my self-imposed two-page loc limit. Anyway, it was a splendid issue with a remarkably high level of excellence in such a large quantity of contents. ((The thing that amazes me about you, Harry, is that no matter how short a fanzine may be, or how seemingly lacking (to my mind) in material which seems to warrant comment, you manage to come up with two pages of an interesting letter. And Ted White can just





churn them out, or so it seems. But that's supposedly the reason why you both won your Hugoes, isn't it?))

I'll accept tentatively the non-existence of Faith Lincoln with the protest that nobody involved in the conspiracy has written nearly as excellent book reviews under his own name. It would be a pity if this sort of anonymity and conspiracy impelled an extra bit of writing oomf that will now disappear. You apparently didn't have as elaborate plans for Faith as we thought up for the last imaginary fan with whom I was involved. This individual was finally to be revealed as a hoax by failure to show up for his wedding to a prominent West Coast fan. ((Leo Doroschenko was the only one who wrote the reviews under the Faith by-line, as I thought I explained last issue, and he deserves all the credit. I couldn't write under the name of Faith or my own name, and Ed Reed...))

Normally, I'm enthusiastic for any kind of indexing or bibliographic work. But I wonder about Piers Anthony's project, for this reason: It has taken years to find these people with the rare prozines needed to compile the thing. Suppose it does get published, and a person uses it to determine where he can find reviews of this or that novel. Does he spend years looking for copies of the same rare prozines? If those prozines of major prozines for public library purposes come into reality, that much of the index would be useful. But on the whole, I suspect that a more useful project would be an annual index to reviews, published as soon as possible after the start of the following year, covering not only prozines but fanzines. This might find a market with librarians and it would be useful as long as it was easy to get access to the publications in which the reviews appeared. If the index is limited to prozine reviews, it's a failure because most of the important reviews appear nowadays in fanzines.

Janet Fox's little story is excellent, and now I suppose you'll tell me that Janet Fox is the imaginary creation of Joe B. Drapkin, Ted Pauls and Norman Spinrad. ((UNTRUE!! Ted Pauls DID NOT have a hand in it. He didn't have the time when I asked him...))

Of course, nobody could possibly believe in Joe Hensley. Just yesterday, I wrote a loc on a fanzine which contained a long article about the way all fans are unable to become anything better than waiters or taxi drivers, and here's an alleged fan who has not only sold stories but has also been a successful politician and an attorney.

Leo P. Kelley may be correct in what he says about science fiction writers. But if we're to call them schizophrenic-imitators because they write about the future, what are we to say about people who write about the past? Or people who collect antiques or design next year's model autos? Or the fellow who drinks a couple of bottles of beer to forget his job troubles or turns up the radio loud to drown out the noise of traffic and screaming kids outdoors or continues to smoke because he knows those scientists can't be right about what tobacco does to the user's health? Tentatively, I'd say that the science fiction writer is less concerned with escape from reality than almost anyone because he doesn't pretend to himself that he's writing truth.

I can foresee all sorts of excitement over the guarded revelations about the SFWA in the letter section. I'll sit this one out. I didn't really hook up Piers Anthony with any specific fan, although I believe I thought fleetingly about the possibility of this being the new name for Larry Stark, a talented



Boston area fan in the early 1960's who disappeared completely from fandom without fulfilling his early promise. But Piers obviously isn't reading enough fanzines, if he thinks that I never get angry. He should have seen some of the things I said about Steve Pickering. Or my reaction when a Baltimore fan signed my name to a loc and mailed it from Hagerstown in an effort to make the addressee think I really wrote the evil things it said. I could also cite the way I've kept alive for six years in FAPA my anger over the illegal dropping of a member on a trumped-up charge that he reprinted instead of creating original writing. But in general I do present a rather bland indifference to the majority of the mighty storms that shake fankind. There are two reasons for this. One is my policy of never mailing a loc on the same day that it's written. I always wait until the next day and the time lag causes an occasional fire of temper to simmer down and I decide not to mail the letter after all because the matter isn't worth making enemies about. The other reason is the manner in which I also mess around with words and other writers in my newspaper work. It's hard for me to find reasons for getting hot under the collar at fans, after the things I encounter in my job. The wife of a prominent merchant comes in to the office and asks for her name to be kept out of the list of survivors in her father's obituary because he never amounted to anything and the publicity would hurt her social standing. Or a new managing editor knows someone at the Associated Press who takes from me the \$25 I used to get each election night by reporting how voting is going to the AP, whereupon the managing editor does it by sitting home and copying down returns as they come over the radio. A major county official resigns suddenly and I quickly discover the manipulations which caused him to leave town abruptly and because other county officials didn't bring formal charges against him there's no way to publish the story without getting sued and his reputation is unsullied. Fans seem like uniformly nice people after six or seven hours of this daily and I can't force myself to say anything nasty about them, under most circumstances. ((Snick-er. You should explain it all to Roy Tackett and Bob Vardeman and Bob Tucker and Al Snider...))

I read somewhere that lawn worship is a survivor of the era when this was largely an agricultural nation and pastures provided a clue to a man's wealth and worth. I'm hopeful that Astroturf will soon be available in small quantities. ((Snick-er. You should explain it all to Ted White...))

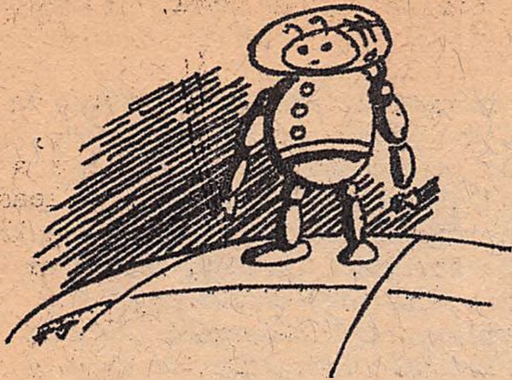
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((Once more I Have Come Through. Lin Carter sent his Open Letter to Piers a week and a half ago, and a few days later I decided it would be wise to start typing the stencils for the lettercol. I hadn't planned to having Piers' answer, you see. But...Piers Comes Through, and This Is His Answer...so, why not read Lin's letter before reading this (I know there aren't any people out there who read any way but straight through) and you'll have everything in order?))

Piers Anthony	I can't say that you impress me terrifically, or that I like all
80 Fifth Ave.	your ways of doing business, and I can't even judge your work
New York, N.Y.	because, owing to the vagaries of distribution and pressures of
10011	other business, I have never read any of it. And yet--

And yet you have now written to me directly about your objection to my remarks concerning you in BE A BOHEMA, and you have provided a copy of your letter for publication in the same fanzine. You have spoken to the point, and without abuse, making an offer to redress one of my grievances and offering your defense





of another. And you have expressed your preference for avoiding further unpleasantness between us.

I approve of the way you have elected to react in this case. I feel that you have done credit to the basic principles of fair play, when it would have been exceedingly easy to violate them as certain others have done. In so doing you have eliminated much of my ground for rancor and left me disinclined to pursue the matter further.

Certain observations in your letter warrant my reply, however. It appears that you misunderstood the basis for some of my remarks, and so a clarification is in order. This is not intended to inflame anything further, but rather to finish the matter so that you and I can move on to other, more profitable, endeavors. Since I am sending a copy of this letter to BE A BOHEMA for publication with yours, you may wish to add some further remarks, and I trust they will be run at the same time. I approve of open correspondence of this nature, because it gives a wider audience a chance to determine the validity of the points raised. This is one reason why my public utterances are generally more provocative than my private ones.

I would say that time does not necessarily make past wrongs right or past rights wrong. I remember both debits and assets, and when the occasion arises my reaction is influenced by the tally. Some may call this "holding a grudge"; I see it as an aspect of the Golden Rule. I too have lost dollars on unfulfilled fanzine subscriptions, but I have received a far greater value free despite my discouragement of this. The receipt or nonreceipt of specific fanzines is not the main issue here. Courtesy is. Since there seems to be no disagreement on the facts of the SPECTRUM case, further discussion is unnecessary.

As far as refunding my dollar or sending me a complete set of six issues--there is no current point. Those issues must now have a value, both personal and monetary, many times what it was at the time of their publication. So the offer is not "fair enough"--it is heavily weighted against you, and even if I were desperate for copies I would not accept them on that basis. I appreciate the offer, and I decline. I'd still like your permission to include such reviews in my index, however, at such time (if ever) as that index is published.

Now on your review of my novel Sos the Rope: it is true that I objected to your comments, but this was not because you disliked the novel. I do prefer praise to blame, but more than either I prefer the truth, and a thoughtful criticism is worth more to me than a thoughtless rave. I have been known to lambast favorable reviews of my work and to agree with unfavorable ones, and I carved up one reviewer in SHAGGY after he had expressed quite flattering praise of Sos and made thoughtful commentary. This despite the fact that I consider Sos to be the least of my published novels.

You tell me now that your review represented your honest opinion. Frankly, it did not strike me that way. If you care to give BE A BOHEMA permission to reprint the review with a commentary, I'm sure Frank Lunney can arrange to revive



"Faith Lincoln" (no fan of mine) to comment on both it and the novel. I suspect this would embarrass you, however.

I felt (and feel) that your review was so riddled with errors (such as assigning a twenty year duration to events that fit within a four year span), sophomoric attempts to be facetious at the author's expense ("How is that for a plot of Machiavellian subtlety, gang?"), and gratuitous cuts ("Chthon...at least, was only a bore: this one is just plain silly.") that it could not represent the considered opinion of an experienced writer and reviewer. In fact, it was so far offbase that it damaged your own image rather than that of the novel, as you may have noted by remarks in LOCUS and elsewhere. This--despite the fact that Sos would really seem to be in your own back yard. Certainly far more so than something like Chthon, which, despite your verdict, was ranked approximately third in the field for the year by both pros and fans.

If you had no ulterior motive to misread that novel, then your almost total misreading of it remains a mystery. And it is my impression that this was the only novel you reviewed in all the issues of SF TIMES I saw: issues 455-465. For someone who prefers to make friends instead of enemies, this is an unfortunate coincidence. It did seem to me that "Crazy-jealous-mad" was a fair description of your attitude, since I still cannot see how it can be called sensible-objective-peaceful. Perhaps I was wrong in concluding that you resented the more favorable critical amounts I have earned from novels like Sos, or that you were angry about my prior remarks about you and SPECTRUM; but I feel that I did have some basis for some such conclusion at the time. You say it isn't so; OK, I stand corrected.

It might interest you to know that unlike you, I do envy Bradbury his critical success, Heinlein his smooth way with narrative, Clarke his international repute, and so on down the list, plus several more. I even envy Carter his comprehensive reading background in fantasy. And I do admit that a number of these writers are superior to Piers Anthony--but, as I spell out in SF REVIEW #32, I am trying very hard to reverse that situation.

Thanks again for your note. It does clear the air and does indeed argue strongly against any continuing state of turdhood. At such time as I read a novel of yours (send me one, if you like) I shall review it in my fashion in SF REVIEW, and you will then appreciate my own techniques as a reviewer/commenter, if you have not already.

Dean Koontz  
4181-E King George Dr.  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17109

Piers Anthony's letter: Under Piers's definition of hack (a writer who produces by the pound and writes only for money while not caring about his quality), I am forced to correct Piers's erroneous assumption that

John D. MacDonald began as a hack and only worked himself up to a position of quality some time later. It is true, of course, that MacDonald's early books are not nearly so fine as many of his later ones. Compare, for instance, The Brass Cupcake to the excellent recent novel, The Last One Left. The difference in quality, however, seems to be more readily attributable to a simple maturation of his style and ability rather than any conscious effort (aside from the conscious effort every writer makes) to improve his work. In other words, I do not think MacDonald sat down and said: "Look here, John, you are working on a hack level and must begin, forthwith, to improve thy style." MacDonald has always written stories



whose characterization and plots show a great deal of care, thus illuminating him from the hack category.

Oh, wait, another point must be made. Although JDM's novels have always shown care and skill and writer involvement, his magazine work for the pulp detective monthlies was definitely hack. His novelets and short stories were plotted on an almost maddeningly predictable formula. Perhaps he was buying financial solvency in the pulps to allow him to write novels of better quality. Possible? Anyway, one can hardly read something like "Border Town Girl" without blanching with embarrassment. Thus we have a strange situation that bears some investigation. We have someone producing hack and non-hack work for different markets. So what do we call the writer? Does his hack work overshadow his quality work? Or take a writer like Evan Hunter. His Last Summer is a stunning novel. Sons is not exactly a minor book. And yet he does hackwork under his Ed McBain pseudonym and does not hide the fact. He seems even proud of it.

All this leads to several things I have mentioned here and elsewhere in the past. The writer who hopes to survive as a writer of genre fiction (whether it be Westerns, mysteries, gothics, suspense or science fiction) must learn to produce on several levels. He must be able to write novels and short stories he thinks are of "award" quality, while also writing novels that he knows are strictly for entertainment and without the finer levels of meaning of his major work. And he must learn to LIKE to write both levels of stuff. He should be able to enjoy writing his quality books and his sheer action stories equally as well, for in that manner he will write better books of all qualities.

Now, the operative word in that previous paragraph was "survive". It is all well and good for the writer striving to create only "award" level fiction to say: "Whatever I write ranks among the best things done in the field." It boosts his ego and makes him popular among the literati. He can proudly claim that such and such a book required nine months of his time to produce, that the next book required seven, etc. But he should never expect to make a living in a genre form if this is his rate of production. The pay, simply enough, is not good enough in any genre to support someone like this. Advances start at \$1500 and go up to \$4000 for some of the big names in the field, those who have been producing for ten years or so. Oh, yes, I have heard of the recent advance of \$7,500 for paperback rights, but this is absolutely astronomical, friends. And I somehow feel it will not be repeated. It is going to take the publisher a while to recoup his costs. Maybe he won't, despite the drawing power of this particular writer (who is relatively new to the field, by the by, having only been around for about seven years and only as a name for three or four). Even at the good advance of four thousand a book, our "award" author will find himself earning no more than an average of six to eight thousand a year, which is not a particularly affluent level of existence. With a more realistic outlook, this author could produce his high quality work while writing quality adventure, be able to live well and still win his coveted trophies. Jack Vance is a good example. He has done some marvelous work (perhaps too little, in his case) that has been hailed as the best in the genre while turning out unpretentious adventure stories (some of the best of their kind).

If all this sounds somewhat muddled, it is because my own thoughts on the formation of my writing career are not yet solidified. Maybe they never will be. But I do know, for a fact, that I would much rather produce a mixed bag of work, things of varying quality, and be able to spend the next forty years doing nothing



but writing for a living--rather than produce a novel, or at best two, a year of supposed high quality and ALSO have to go to work at some nine-to-five office to supplement my income. Very likely, under those circumstances, I would be too depressed EVER to do my best work. Perhaps I speak too quickly. There is always the chance I may end up having to work in an office and write too. This is my first year as a fulltime freelancer. I am nine months into the thing and have brought home just under six thousand dollars from my work. Extrapolating, that means I will have earned maybe eight thousand by the end of the year. In this day and age, that is not tremendous, just comfortable. It will have to improve.

Dennt Lien's letter: Denny Lien may indeed weigh thirty five pounds more than me and be (if he can be believed) five and a half inches taller than me, but I have one other advantage of which he may be ognorant: namely, I spent a year as a teacher-keeper of approximately forty juvenile delinquents under a government education program. During said year, I learned, among other things (from my students who couldn't believe I didn't know any such valuable bits of knowledge as these), how to drop-kick to the chest and roll to a standing position in less than three seconds, how to kick a crotch so that the testicles can be mashed against the thigh rather than merely joggled painfully back into their pouch, how to (in a hurry) use a plastic collar stay as a weapon (it has relatively sharp edges and can do painful though not permanent damage to the eyeball), how to reach under the rib cage in close combat and give a crude tweak to the cardiac membranes that will drop anyone into instant unconsciousness and any other number of interesting combative techniques. If any of these threats should fail to intimidate Denny (and intimidation will have to work, since I am basically as ~~powerful~~ pacifistic as Denny reports himself to be), I will arrange for my buddy Vaughn Bode to draw Denny into a comic strip and then proceed to dispose of him in some brutal and agonizing manner that will leave the real Denny Lien (if said creature can be proved to exist) quivering in fear. Abject fear, yet. If one must quiver, it is best to quiver in abject fear rather than plain, ordinary, everyday fear.

Anyway, I enjoyed Denny's letter for its enthusiasm. Fandom, as I see it, is largely a place to have fun, to learn some things about people, about other writers, to gather new viewpoints. Letter like this keep the fun in the subculture.

Or is it really a way of life?

Pauline Palmer's comment: My self-confidence is inhuman? Hmmm. I am not exactly certain of what Pauline speaks. If there was ever a self-doubter of heroic proportions, it is I. Perhaps Pauline gathers this from what I said about a few of my stories. Well, maybe she would be interested in knowing that I was not sure of those stories, bit my nails over those stories, agonized into late hours over those stories, until people like Larry Ashmead, Delany or Anderson said nice things about them to me. Then I knew... I guess maybe I am relatively self-confident on a level Pauline does not mean. I am confident in general about my chances of succeeding at whatever I do. In particulars, I am not always so sure. In other words, I am confident I can make a living at this craft, not so confident about an individual story selling. But to say that my confidence is inhuman, well... I would prefer to say that Piers Anthony's self-confidence is inhuman...

Mike Dobson's letter: I appreciate the comment that I was interesting



without being obscene (in the fan column in #4) and agree with some of Mike's comments about feuds in fandom. I have often disagreed with viewpoints in the field, but prefer to offer other concepts rather than shouts of insane anger. I don't think I've attacked anyone so far except in fun, like the comments on Denny and our friend Piers. Generally, I cannot bring myself to be pissed off at a single person. Various attitudes and postures anger me much more readily as they are practiced by various groups...

For instance...

A certain clique in SFWA is so involved in mutual back-patting and self-promotion that they treat anyone who is not of their group and who has not Made It (in the sense of being a big name for a few years) as some sort of detestable crud-creature that has crawled out of the ocean slime and deserves not even humane treatment. I've received rather snobbish treatment at several pro hands, so I know whereof I speak.

Actually, I should say that most pros I have come into contact with have been more than pleasant and personable. Although Harlan and I had a momentarily heated letter exchange over a story submitted to his Again, Dangerous Visions, I have found him likeable enough through his letters. Harry Harrison was more than kind in his editorial capacity at Ultimate and in brief exchanges since. Leo Kelley seems like a very gentlemanly sort of fellow. Piers and I fired off a few letters there for a while which seemed to be based on a strange love-hate relationship, but we've never attacked each other yet. Poul Anderson, Bob Silverberg have sent me pleasant "keep plugging" notes. Alexei Panshin, from what limited contact I've had with him, seems reasonable and personable.

Ah, but another of our beloved Names to whom I wrote a long letter of comment on a story of his (four pages, actually) replied that my criticism was welcomed but he would appreciate it if I didn't send more as he really didn't have time to be bothered with it. The same asshole told me he hadn't read any of my stories in the magazines (I had mentioned one of my stories found its germination in one of his) because "every new writer writes badly for the first year or two until he fully understands the tradition of the field." Miko Dobson, I was obscene with this man. I sent him a letter with one sentence in answer to his reply to my critique: "Fuck off." I guess maybe I should have groveled.

Anyway, this fellow belongs to the aforementioned clique. A friend of mine, Vaughn Bode to be exact, reports that a writer he met and knows vaguely actually (this is three years ago, now) spent a good deal of time trying to persuade Vaughn to nominate and vote for a story of his for the Nebula. In exchange, this author was going to help Bode win a Hugo for his artwork. Vaughn, fortunately, is not the type to be bought. To the reader who thinks that buying a vote like this would be meaningless in a Nebula election, consider the fact that winning stories often garner no more than 20-odd votes. Let's look at the list this year. The novel won on 24 votes, the novella on 30, the novelet on 19 and the short story on 19. Can you see what just a bit of dishonesty can mean? In several cases, four votes could mean the difference.

I'll go on just long enough to say that the person who attempted to buy a vote eventually won an award. Curious? Maybe that award was deserved. And I tend to think it was. But I will never be certain.





This somehow detracts from the Nebulas that were deserved. And make no mistake, 99.9 percent of them are deserved. But one or two awarded with questionable campaigning destroys the integrity of the entire setup.

I did not vote, in a recent SFWA election, to abolish the awards, but I think about a dozen members did. The dissatisfaction with some members' shennigans, then, must not be extremely limited.

On the other hand, I was confused and finally exasperated by Robert Moore Williams's letter in the last issue. I presume he means the political left when he says: "I am also aware than now and then a stink rises in it that looks as if it came from the left...in organizations such as this, where many of the members are young, rebellion and stink from the left are inevitable." What the hell is he talking about? Does he belong to the same organization I do? And if he does, what news is he receiving that I don't get through the SFWA publications? There was a brief argument in the Forum between Poul Anderson and some other members about Farmer's Worldcon speech. Maybe it could somehow be construed as a piece of left-wing "stink." I'm not sure how. In any event, I have never found a member of the SFWA to be any more subversive than a McCarthyite, which is hardly subversive at

all. If there is a problem in the organization, and there is, it doesn't have a fart to do with left wingers.

Mr. Williams makes another erroneous assumption. Indeed, I cannot imagine how he came to the conclusions he did, except to note that he does not understand whereof he speaks. True, there are say three hundred and some members of SFWA. And, also true, these would engender a flooded market if each produced a story a month aimed at the pro magazines and novel market. Except that Mr. Williams does not seem to be aware that many of these members do not produce more than two or three stories a year. Some not even that. Many may have published only in the "little literary" magazines, which are not paying markets, and are therefore not of any concern to the professional writer. Others who are members have published sf in magazines outside the field, in places like men's magazines, women's magazines, young girl's magazines. They may generally write other than science fiction. It is patently absurd to say there are too many members and the field is flooded with scripts. One need only to look at the market reports and see the falsity here. Ed Ferman reports he is understocked for F&SF. Damon Knight is perpetually reporting a need for scripts. Other editors also place reports that show they cannot get enough publishable material. Enough...

Next, Mr. Williams tells us that an agented author is in the worst position because the agent (in this flooded market) will form a clique with the publisher to get the writer's work at wholesale. If this is so, then I have not noticed. I work through an agent. For the most part, I get now what I used to get for my scripts, although the agent did bring me a 450 dollar sale I would not have gotten



on my own---and garnered an extra 250 dollars on my last book, even though it was a short novel of 53,000 words. Somehow, I think Mr. Williams has heard only of disreputable agents. Try the Scott Meredith people, Bob.

It is true, as he states, that writers are presently forming tightly knit groups to promote each other's work. Much of what fans are presently assured is quality of the highest sort is merely the material which these groups are promoting and is inherently no better or worse than the work of David Redd or Mark Geston (to name only two) who have not made friendships with other writers and, therefore, do not enjoy this mutual promotion. All I can say to Bob on this is that, eventually, time will prove the popularity of what is being written and will winnow out most of the stuff we are being sold by the hucksters.



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Leo Doroschenko      These past three, four months I've been buying books and pro-  
410 Springfield Ave.      zines through force of habit and leaving all unread. The  
Newark, N.J. 07103      fanzines, even SFR, were insignificant. Reed's duplicity--  
if indicative of the honor I can expect in fandom--drove  
me to the brink of gafia: I wouldn't even touch a sf book. But Ghu, never forgetting  
his spawn, interceded as the BABish. Now that really fired up my sluggish Cossack  
blood: I was a fool at even considering that angry letter to dmsff my swan song.  
Bless you, Frank, may both Sam and Ackerman will you their collections. ((Use  
BAB to cure gafia, fafia, feud letdown and the Mundane Blues! Safe if used as direct-  
ed!))

Ed Reed/Philip K. Dick: If comparing Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?  
to "Conditionally Human" is "libelous", how does a practice so nefarious endure  
in colleges? Maybe nobody knows of these dark rites. Maybe that's why many courses  
deal with long dead writers, but that doesn't explain the many that don't. Maybe  
nobody informed that authors in question. But now that we have The Word from both  
of you, we will all know our duty if a professor professes similarity between, say,  
R.M. Ballantyne's Coral Island and Lord of the Flies: we'll notify William Golding  
and he'll sue the shit out of that university. Come to think of it, how Anthony  
Burgess's The Novel Now, which voiced similar evil allegations, escaped with impunity  
I know not. Maybe it didn't. Perchance that's why Burgess lives in Malta: he's  
really in exile.

Reed, a query: Since, in L'ANGE JAQUE, you're so very hot in the pants  
about Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, why didn't you sally forth and butcher  
that review? Surely, it wasn't that formidable a task to decimate that "childish  
shit," or are you lost when it comes to anything beyond glittering generalities  
and adulation?

Dean Koontz: Can you honestly call Mack Reynolds "a competent writer-  
craftsman" and honestly say that "style-wise The Computer Conspiracy was aimed at  
the GALAXY-IF market from the very start" when just about all his fiction--expecially



of the credit-card milieu--constantly, until 1968 that is, appeared in ANALOG? But, a small challenge, determine "style wise" the excerpt from the juvenile IF, December 1963, pg. 13 (The Computer Conspiracy) and the excerpt from the sophomoric ANALOG, March 1963, pgs. 27-28 (Frigid Fracas):

"...The games had started as fights between skilled swordsmen, being observed by knowledgeable combat soldiers of a warrior people. But as the Romans lost their warlike ardor and became a worthless mob performing no useful act for either themselves or the State, they no longer appreciated a drawn-out duel between equals. They wanted quick blood, and lots of it, and turned to mass slaughter of Christians, runaway slaves, criminals and whoever else they could find to throw to the lions, crocodiles or whatever. Even this became old hat, and they turned increasingly to more extreme sadism. Children were hung up by their heels and animals turned loose to pull them down. Men were tied face to face with rotting corpses and so remained until death. Animals were taught to rape virgins."

"He remembered reading of the progression of the Roman games. They had started off as rather simple fights between trained and accomplished swordsmen, and those who watched were largely the soldiers of a warrior people themselves, knowledgeable and critical about what they witnessed. But each year that went by saw the spectacle grow and the need for the current games to intensify, if the watchers were to be satisfied. And the crowds became less and less trained soldiers and became the whole population, men, women and children. Toward the last, the emperors were providing hundreds of thousands of animals and men to satisfy the bloodlust of their people. Nor were simple fights sufficient. Battles, including naval engagements, were fought in the arena, sometimes between such exotic warriors as pygmies and seven-foot tall Northmen from far Scandinavia. Criminals were crucified, tied face to face with a rotting corpse until over a period of days, they smothered to death; baboons were retrained to rape virgins; living slaves were dipped in tar and strung up to be used as torches."

And how competent the craftsman-writer if

"...The Aztecs weren't an Empire. They were a federation of three tribes whose military domination didn't even cover the Mexican valley, an area smaller than Rhode Island."

"Photojournalist", ANALOG,  
February 1965, pg. 38.

"...Confused Spanish historians to the contrary, there was never any such thing as an Aztec empire: they never even completely dominated the valley of Mexico, an area about the size of the old state of Rhode Island."

Amazon Planet, ANALOG,  
December 1966, pg. 25.

These may be portions of some grand leitmotif spread over upteenth volumes, but if they are, the symbolism eludes me. And I got plenty more cross references where these came from. Uh, Piers, should I organize these notes and give fandom a "Write



It Yourself Mack Reynolds Kit/Index"?

Otherwise, Dean, I confess. I got carried away and apologize. But somehow, Reynolds pushes my buttons harder and more often than anybody else. I can't finish one of his pieces sans wanting to ram a credit card down some black belt's throat.

But what really hurts is that novels like Chthon and Rite of Passage go unpublished for years and years while ANALOG publishes approximately two long pieces by Reynolds a year. Somehow that seems to slap at every true craftsman in the field, almost enough to make me second Norman Spinrad's verdict on some editors.

Again, my apologies for suggesting a stuffing of the AnLab, but I know of two precedents: the first outlined by James Blish (The Issue at Hand, pg. 97), the second, Kyril Bonfiglioli's refusal to print complete story ratings as it might offend/embarrass/upset the authors.

Maybe I've read so much by Reynolds that I can't tell the economics apart even with a credit card, but about 99% of the economics have utterly nothing to do with the bang-bang plots. Most of the economics are in there souilly for the 3¢ word rate, no other reason. Excise them and the story is in no way, save lengthwise, altered. For infinitely superior economics, both in conception and execution, I read the originals: Keynes, Galbraith, etc. At least none of them pretend to be Adam Hall, Eric Ambler or Len Deighton.

In all honesty I will admit one Mack Reynolds story a gem, however minor, "Dark Interlude" (co-authored by Fredric Brown). But my respect for it recently node-sived when I found a chunk of it in The Twons Must Roll (the mulatto, quadroon, etc. lecture).

However, to you I bow as I bow to no man. Of all critic's critics, you alone bothered checking the cited sources--something which nobody, but nobody, especially the two twerps in Connecticut who deemed controversy the express purpose of the reviews, did.

Al Andrews: Sorry 'bout the verbosity in the Reynolds review. I originally had a surfeit of foot-notes, but lazy Frank incorporated them into the text. And that's the only unkind thing I'll say about Lunney.

Jerry Kaufman: El Hasan? A good series? You must be joking. Even accepting the premise of American blacks uniting Africa, which I question (some African nations may hail the Malcolm X's and the Cleavers, but give those outsiders any power? All you have to do is look at the myth of Arab unity, or the xenophobia of Central Africa--see Fanon. They don't even trust themselves so why foreigners?), the series is still replete with lectures--one of which, how awestricken the automated army by a man with a knife, was hurled into Computer War.

But enough of this dung bettlo. I would not have wasted another word on him had not ANALOG shown promise of improvement, however faint: only one credit card story in thirteen issues, a minimum of Christopher Anvil's poor man tour de force, a very good Schmitz, a decent Dickson, a series of superlative Freas covers, and then comes The Five Way Secret Agent.

Sooner or later, the permutations of lectures, musings, ad nauseum are



destined to run out and then even Campbell will deduce the rape perpetrated on our field by Reynolds. May they be incarcerated together and forced to read/reread their entire outputs.

Faith Lincoln: "I'm too good to be me..." Faker! Imposter! Charlatan! At least you could have quoted correctly, completed the quote, and identified the source:

"Other women hate me.  
Men never touch me.  
I am too much me.  
I'll be a witch."

--"The Dead Lady of Clown Town"  
Cordwainer Smith

Though an earlier stanza, the second, would be more appropriate.

Robert E. Margroff: You I like. Too bad I have to tear you up.

But first deadwood (courtesy J.J. Pierce) for the pruning, i.e. The Ring as a re-thread of "Rastignac the Devil"--the paragraph in question being:



"No. A special breed of Skin is given them to wear. These Skins shock them more powerfully than the ordinary ones, and the shocks are associated with the habit they are trying to cure. The shocks effect a cure. Also, these special skins are used to detect hidden unnatural emotions. They recondition the deviate. The result is that when the Chalice Man is judged able to go out and take his place in society again, he is thoroughly reconditioned. Then,

his regular skin is given back to him and it has no trouble keeping him in line from then on. The Chalice Man is a very good citizen."

That's an idea, hardly enough for a formula without some work, but even in context Skins are for the entire population. And the story soon bogs down in standard revolution against tyranny.

You say that neither Ring collaborator has ever read A Clockwork Orange, but in all your quasi-debunking, nowhere do you imply that since then you have looked it up and tested for similarities. Strange. As far as I know, A Clockwork Orange has seen at least five American printings--the most recent just last month. Perhaps you and/or Piers would like to read it and review it for BeABohema? If money is the roadblock, I'll gladly lend you my copy. But until you know something about the other title, you are clearly talking out of your ass, as I shall plainly



demonstrate.

"In 1962 there was no hallucinogenic drug problem for society to wrestle with, and though there was crime and solutions being proposed to combat crime, crime had not reached the proportions it had now." Which I shall parry with Burgess's second paragraph:

"...Well, what they sold there was milk plus something else. They had no license for selling liquor, but there was no law against prodding some of the new veshches which they used to put into the old moloko, so you could peet it with vellocet or synthemesc or drenchrom or one or two other veshches which would give you a nice quiet horrorshow fifteen minutes admiring Bog And All His Holy Angels And Saints in your left shoe with lights bursting all over your mozg. Or you could peet milk with knives in it, as we used to say, and this would sharpen you up and make you ready for a bit of dirty twenty-to-one..."

As for crime and solutions to combat crime, all you have to do is read--if you dare--any chapter of this novel. Burgess did his homework well and the novel bites deeper today. So even if you evaded this book from 1962 on, you can only rank, at best, as late comers. But just so you won't feel bad, I'll evoke the memory of Lester del Rey and Harold Shea.

Do I make myself clear!!!?

As for my extraordinary powers in deducing the ending, I'll give you an analogy. If an author's first published mystery had a butcher the villain, his second a baker as murderer, one would need the I.Q. of an amoeba not to predict a candlestick maker for the third. The same applies to the hopefully defunct two women motif in Piers's first three published novels.

One additional note for Ed Reed: Five years ago, ANALOG serialized Sleeping Planet. In succeeding Brass Tacks, quite a few readers pointed out similarities between that title and Eric Frank Russell's "Plus X". Nobody, from Burkett on down, claimed that "libel".

But a query: the Dick review appeared in BAB #2, neither in issue #3 or #4 did you claim that to be "childish libel." But after Dick's loc... Pray tell, are your senses made of slow glass? Or did you decide it true after the emporor's decree?

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John J. Pierce      Piers and you unwittingly make my point.  
275 McMane Ave.

Berkeley Heights      If most of the readers of Pohl's publications really are young-  
New Jersey 07922      sters, then it's strange they don't support the New Thing--which  
                             claims to be a youth movement, after all. ((I've been staying out  
of most of this lettercol, but I just can't let you get by, John. Answering your  
letters gets to be more fun than any other part of BAB. So...bullshit! I've never  
read any claims that the NT is a youth movement. Most of the "youngsters" haven't  
read enough sf to know when something is fresh and original or when it's a piece of  
hacked out garbage. In fact, I still won't attempt to make any more than general  
classifications...but I won't let you do it either, John.))



Just the other day, I saw Terry Carr rhapsodizing in FANTASTIC about how some fen of 14 or 15 were not only putting down "reactionaries" like myself, but even quoting the right people, like Bob Dylan, in fillers. To believe Carr, swarms of eager youths surround Ellison wherever he goes--while only those approaching senility will come near Niven. ((I don't see where you draw the comparision, aside from your overgeneralizing, and Terry Carr's overgeneralizing, for that matter.))

Fellows, you can't have your cake and eat it too! You can't, on the one hand, extol the virtues of youth and how the New Thing represents their Great Cultural Revolution against the Establishment--and then in the next breath say, "Well, it doesn't matter what the readers of GALAXY and IF like; they're just a bunch of crazy mixed-up kids." ((You're not explaining the difference between kids in the general populace and "kids" in fandom, are you?))

You seem to stand by your contention that Pohl prints only crap--I didn't mention specific stories, of course, but among those that come to mind are Heinlein's The Moon is a Harsh Mistress and Zelazny's "Damnation Alley." I don't claim GALAXY and IF are filled with art--Sturgeon's Law, remember? But on the whole, they're no worse off than the magazines and anthologies seem to prefer. ((When will you stop saying NEW WORLDS is all crap?)) ((Or, for that matter, the whole of the New Wave?))

As for "Rastignac the Devil", the only parallel I wanted to make was the obvious one--both it and The Ring were built around a device of some sort designed to enforce a social conscience--the "skin" in one case and the "ring" in the other. I'm quite prepared to accept Piers' explanation that any derivation was unconscious.

But I don't think I'll ever be able to match Piers as a letterhack.

Nice art there on your cover et. seq. parody of myself. Can you be getting worried about the Decond Foundation after all? Those electronic stencils cost! Maybe you should try to recoup on your next issue by offering a full-color pinup of C'Mell instead--I guarantee her body will sell a lot more copies than mine! ((Yeah...I'm really scared of you, John. I admit that you and your book-burning hordes might win someday. But not with your Holy War shit. You need something else to gain new recruits... How about a force of mercenaries?))

P.S. Give my regards to gullible Goble!

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Erasmus Spratt  
Dorset House  
Broadmoor Hospital  
Crowthorne  
Berkshire RGII 7EG  
England

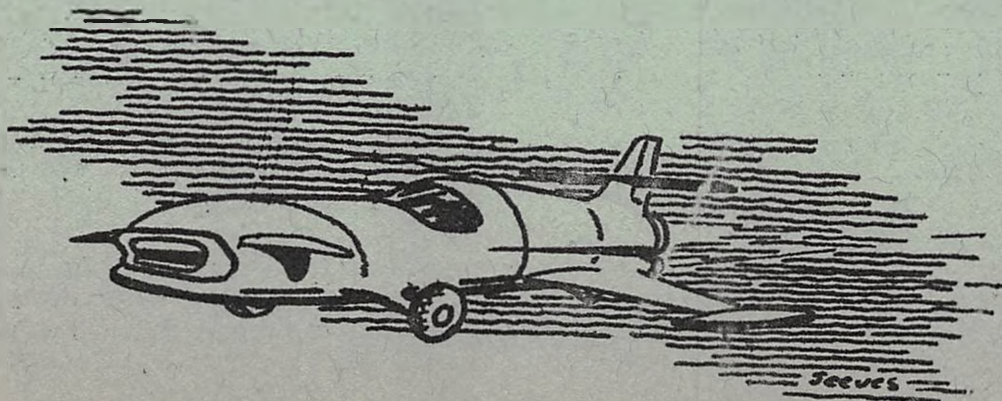
Peter Singleton handed me Beabohema two or three days ago and suggested I might care to read it, and maybe make some idle comments afterwards--hence this letter. I suppose as a writer (pro-cum-casual) who dabbles in SF from time to time, it ought to be commented on. I've been reading SF a mere 15 years, so I consider myself a mere beginner, and if I comment, it's because I am old fashioned and English enough to believe that one writer's opinion means nothing to another writer unless he is (a) earning more money by writing (b) better established in his particular field (c) known by reputation rather than output (d) plain ignorant and looking for glory on other writer's shoulders. Me...I have, so far as I know, kept out of the American market, with one or two exceptions we won't go into here, because the English/British market has fallen flat on its face again, leaving us with one magazine called NEW WORLDS which



is not strictly an SF mag at all, and which, without the financial support of the Arts Council, would have vanished years ago, since it no longer caters to its readership. I doubt, in fact, if it caters to anyone in particular, and it certainly won't print any of my old-fashioned space-opera, in which I hold to some basic rules about things having a beginning, middle and end, and the usual story form of Introduction, Exposition and Ending, which since the days of Graham Greene, has gone right out of fashion. I could write SF fantasy, but Prof. Tolkien has that wrapped up, signed and sealed with The Lord of the Rings and there isn't much left to say, since he says it all in one gigantic masterpiece. But I stick to my favorite inventions (Macrospace, Sherlock and the Goode Shippe Poona Basin), and churn out hack stuff by the foot which either sells to small and generally ignored magazines, or goes right into our own home-brewed mag, the Broadmoor Chronicle, which then goes all over the world, which is market enough for any casual writer. I like bug-eyed monsters and deep space, since we've arrived on the Moon (at last) and it proves the dull place I thought it would be, providing a few elementary mysteries on the capture of planetoids by gravitational field and an interesting mathematical problem in working out just how long it will take for it to break up and turn into rings a la Saturn, all of which Asimov has well in hand anyway. Even Psychohistory is old hat these days, since we worked it out on a computer at Reading University with some help from Yours Truly to produce a neat mathematical system for predicting social trends without tears, and got so upset with the results we put our faces to the wall and called it Sociopathogenics (writers please note, it's a brand new WORD) and considered the ways of infrasound and realized that two French physicists had the Ultimate Weapon which we also dubbed BioKill (ANOTHER new word) and I note with due respect to all American SF writers, that no-one has yet awoken to it. I am rectifying this with a full-length novel due for publication quite soon (my 1st).

In other words, pausing for breath, there is still quite enough science to go round for SF writers, without the need to take LSD 25 in search of inspiration for New Wave material, or to make do with chronic schizophrenic ramblings, with the usual lame excuse that psychotic symbolism is beautiful, or explains itself to ignorant readers, or exists, and therefore ought to be written about. (\*\*GASP\*\*)

((This letter was really some kind of monster, and I just had to print part of it, though perhaps not the right comment, but indicative of the rest. Erasmus wrote quite an extensive comment on Piers Anthony, managing to get into a few other subjects, and, of course, the comments will be passed on...))









go on for three pages pointing out the similarities between the tales to the detriment of TFP's plotting. The difference between our opinions is, I think, determined by the fact that Hank has read the Elric series, whereas I have not. If he thinks an author's borrowing from his own works isn't necessarily "illegitimate", he certainly makes it seem so. I think he should remember to judge a book on its own merits (unless it is part of a series, which TFP isn't). He wonders if some of the dialogue isn't deliberately idiotic, but if he has to wonder then he's already lost most of the enjoyment of the novel. The book may have numbed him, but I found myself responding to Moorcock's satire with vigor and excitement and a larger-than-average share of good, unwholesome belly laughs. I like good satire; does Davis?

If Goldstein reacts so prudishly to Farmer's mild sex in Flesh, I'd worry about his reaction to Farmer's hard-core stuff for Essex House. He ought to retire with his knitting to the old maid's Afternoon Sewing Circle...

Re your remark on the last page--Bug Jack Barron will be eligible for next year's Hugo...if anyone is damn-fool enough to vote for hackneyed plotting and pretentious, overwritten sex.

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Mark Schulzinger R.R.#1, Box 170 Morehead, Ky. 40351	Piers A.: Ah, ah, ah. You're not playing fair. Here we have a nice fight going and you start fishing for compliments. Just for that I won't tell you whether or not I liked <u>Omnivore</u> . Doesn't matter, anyhow; we're not discussing the quality of your writing. The brevity of my review of it was dictated by newspaper policy (the Cincinnati Enquirer, if you must know--you may have a clipping of it somewhere). PBs may be <u>Where It's Happening</u> but not in the dailies. We cater to the broad stratum of people who have dough in their pockets and a burning desire to spend it. Sheer volume of material to be reviewed combined with very little space in which to review it and an increasingly restrictive attitude by newspaper management all make it hard to cover the hardback field adequately, much less the paperback field.
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Suggestion: if you really want the hardback houses to take your work, a little personal PR can go a long way. If you get the SF editor of Doubleday drunk, offer him the embrace of a luscious call-girl, and slip him a small kick-back, he'll probably tell the college freshman who screens incoming novels to give you a plus mark.

Why am I saying things to you anyway? I'm sure you pour your heart out in your fanwriting to get sympathy. Suffer in silence, man, the way the rest of us do. I never heard Lou Tabakow gripe (not too much, at least) and he got a Hugo...

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Mike Deckinger 25 Manor Dr. Apt. 12-J Newark, N.J. 07106	The film "Mission Stardust" referred to in Dean Koontz's column is the dubbed version of the first Perry Rhodan film, which for some reason has proven to be very popular in Europe, snaring some tasteless readers who were entranced by the books. I haven't seen the picture myself, but the few reviews I've read have been strongly negative: (a) the effects and science are poor, (b) Essy Persson keeps her clothes on. The film is not intended for the exploitation market because of its inferior quality and even the saleability of Miss Persson's name has been ignored.
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The elaborate cover comic contains the characteristic BAB acidity but somehow it fails to hit its mark. There is no subtlety to it, and while Pierce is eminently suitable for satire there should be at least a trace of restraint to it. Besides, Pierce has become overused as a target, if you've noticed he has manipulated himself into the position where all the fanzines feel equally justified in blasting him. Why not be different. If it's fuggheadedness you are after you have no further to go than Justin St. John and THE GREEN TOWN REVIEW.

I'm hardly surprised Faith Lincoln is a hoax, my last letter intimated my own suspicions in that direction, and I found myself in agreement with the gist of your reply, which was "So what?" Just because the person writing Faith Lincoln reviews is not named Faith Lincoln is no excuse to discontinue them. This sort of reviewing is essential no matter what name it is produced under.

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And I'm going to end it all right here. This must be about 90 pages long or almost as lengthy as the last issue, and a lot longer than what I hoped it would be, AND a lot longer than those pre-annish issues. At least it seemed a lot longer. It was a lot of work, and I don't have all that much time, people. I haven't been able to read a book in months, and it's killing my brain. But still: this is the

WAHF, which should be rather long this time, as I have a lot of letters, and I had to chop a lot of the letters which saw print at all.

Gary Hubbard: "Reality and/or the lack of it seems to be the theme--if a thing like BAB can have a theme--running thru this issue--if a thing like BAB can be said to have such a thing as an issue."

Jeff Smith: "I only had the pleasure of reading one Faith Lincoln review--the Reynolds one--and while I agree with Koontz in 5 rather than Faith in 4, I really enjoyed reading the review. I'll miss her, I suppose--or would, if I knew her better. And I know, if I had written a book and she had reviewed it, I probably would have ignored it--much as PADJ did."

Ron Smith: "I think it might help if all of us, from now on, called off the Holy War. This includes both J.J. Pierce and Harlan Ellison. We are showing nothing but how childish we can be. I will read what I want to read and have no desire to act as personal censor for anyone."

Roy Tackett: I really should have printed this letter. Not a bad piece of ...uh....what should I call it. Anyway: "Ghod! Read Lunney's editorial interjections if you can. He not only can't spell he can't write sentences either. Or put coherent thoughts on paper." What the hell is HORT wiring...??

Mark Gawron: "Koontz, is. He, oddly enough, gives the impression of being terribly knowledgeable. I wonder just how knowledgeable he is and how deep it goes. I mean the whole column is..."Ummm, excuse me, dear chap, but you're stepping on my Stutz-Wilhelm personally customized doodad. It's tipped with a dreadfully rare Bohemian poison, you know." His style is terribly fetching. Impressing, if you will."

And Names: Terry Jeeves, George Inzer, Larry Herndon, Dave Gormon, Bob Vardeman, Bob Tucker, Piers Anthony, and probably some other names I have somewhere.



