

# CAMBER 14

Jim  
25.7.68



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(Combined by Jim Cawthorn)

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This issue sells for 2/6d(25¢) and previous issues are still available  
in certain cases, No.13 @ 2/6d and copies of others if available @  
2/- Copies are also available of CAMBER ART FOLIO, THE DYING OCEAN  
by Don Stuefloten, FEMALES FACT & FICTION by John Rackham(Art) and  
odd pages and illustrations from most back issues or odd ones free  
for postage, the latter. CAMBER is available for trade with most other  
amateur magazines of all kinds, and for contributions. Articles and  
artwork for future issues are most welcome at all times. \*\*\*\*\*

# DODDERINGS

Producing a fanzine can in fact be one of the most rewarding things there is to a fan, it can also be one of the most unrewarding when the reception does not match up to the amount of work put into an issue. Two years ago the most expensive edition of CAMBER was produced, with Xeroxed pages, cartoon strips, many illustrations and a great deal of painstaking work by Jim Cawthorn. I received something like 10 letters of comment on it. This is why there has been no issue until now. There has been no incentive. There has also been very little time, this issue then is being produced not for the many silent readers of the last issue but for myself, for old friends, for new ones and for those who have helped, assisted or done something for me in the past and to whom I want to extend this issue of CAMBER as my words of thanks. Most of you I already know already and have probably expressed my thanks in personal letters, to others this will be my thanks.

Since it is no longer possible to send out more than three issues of a fanzine for postage of a shilling it will not be going to as many people as past issues have been sent, in fact if I have not heard from anyone in a year I assume they are dead or not interested anymore, if they want a copy of this issue they have only to write once they hear it has been completed. But if the excuse isn't a good one then I don't intend to waste postage money on sending them a copy. It just costs too much, and friends who maybe write once every six months will not receive a copy. No one has any excuse for not writing in six months unless they are seriously ill.

English fandom has for many years been in a terrible state of doldrums, there have been no new fanzines or fans or groups. There has been nothing and the old guard is fading away quicker all the time. One of these years I feel the conventions are going to become a whole time card-playing convention without any pretence at having to be connected with science fiction. In fact I am sure there are certain fans who would be quite happy to start, continue and end the Easter convention with a pack of cards. So be it. But why pretend it has anything to do with science fiction?

Happily three new fanzines have come into the foreground, and their enthusiasm and energy more than makes up for the slackness of the rest of fandom. These three are BEYOND (Chalres Platt, 8 Sollershott West, Letchworth, Herts), ZENITH (Peter Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, BIRMINGHAM 31, and ALIEN (Harry Nadler, 5 South Mesnefield Road, Lower Kersal, Salford 7, Lancs. Of the first let me say Charles has the

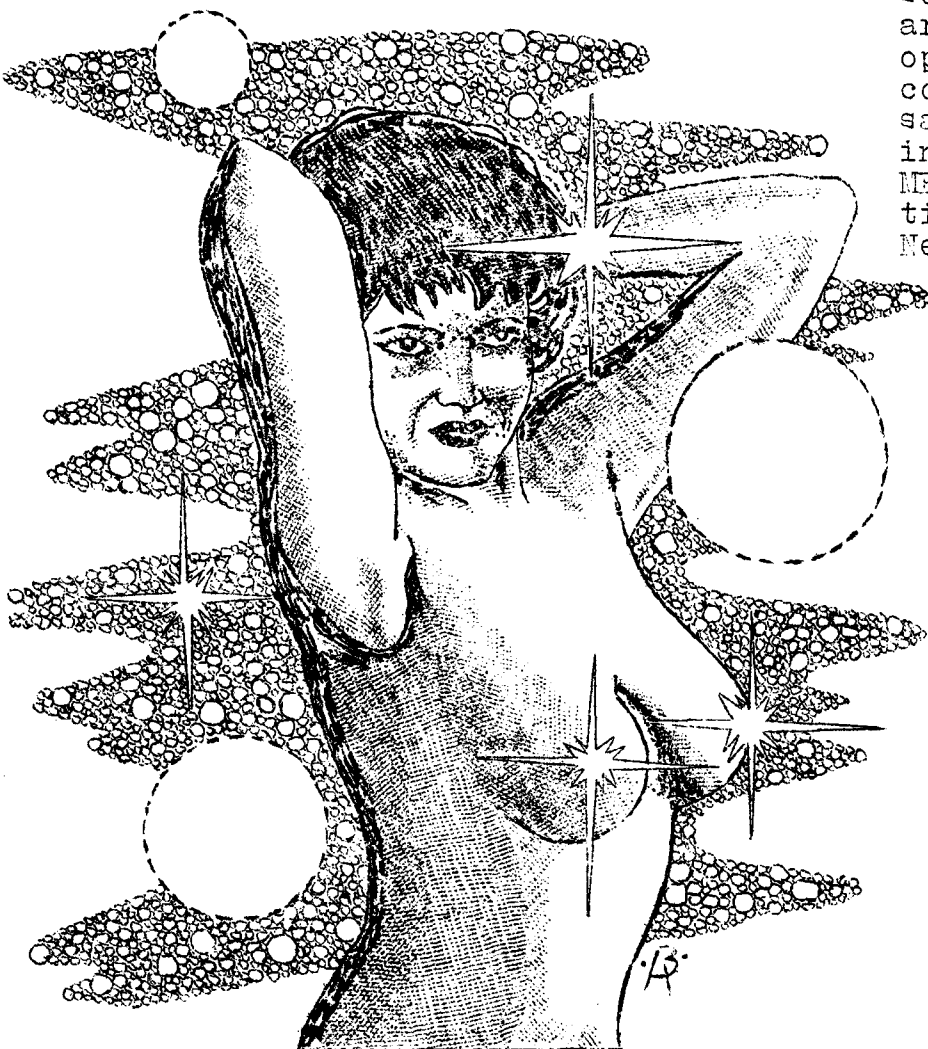
misfortune to live in the same county as I do, thus when he has sent out BEYOND to various fans he has received not so much comments on the fanzine but, "Do you know Alan Dodd?" which is enough to put off any hardworking editor. Luckily his enthusiasm has kept BEYOND going very strong as I hope it will continue to do so. Of Peter Weston I can only say we have the most astute businessman in British fandom who not only has solved the problems of getting free books for review but actually manages to get commercial advertisers to pay for advertising in his fanzine! His ingenuity knows no bounds! Of ALIEN it is ironical to report it was two American fans, Gordon Guy and Jeremy Barry who first mentioned the existence even of Harry's fanzine which has a part printed cover and is bound with an edging tape - excellent piece of work. I wish all three editors the success in fandom they deserve over the coming years and hope they never have cause to be as embittered over an issue as I was over CAMBER - let's see - No. 13? Aw, c'mon, that's not the reason surely?

A word now of Bill Harry who used to produce such excellent artwork for CAMBER in the past and for many years was art editor,

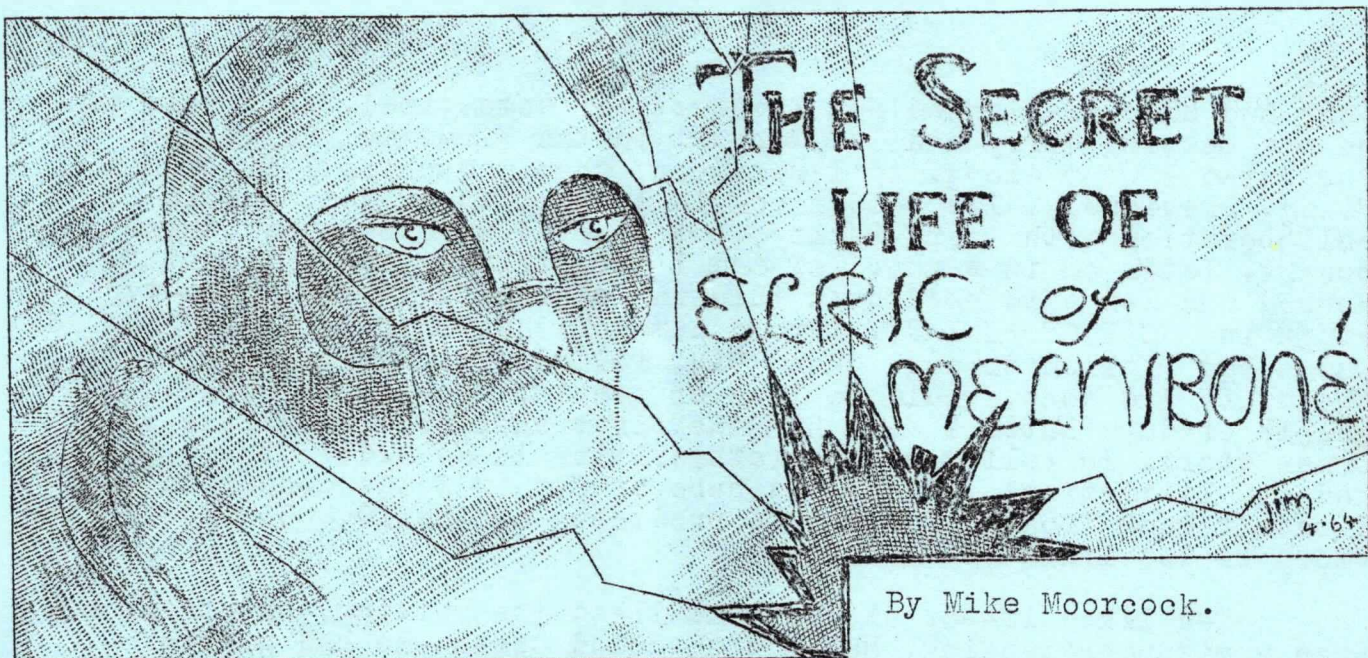
some samples of his work are in this issue, indeed opposite this text. A couple of years back he sank £60 into a "What's on in Liverpool paper called MERSEY BEAT, along, long time before the Beatles. Needless to say he is now on the bandwagon, with coloured photos of pop stars, and a rolling bandwagon. He deserves his success too. MERSEY BEAT is 6d from 81a Renshaw Street, Liverpool 1.)

And a final word of many thanks to Jim Cawthorn whose generous, unstinting and unlimited help in stencilling all the artwork in this issue makes possible every issue of CAMBER, without him I could not do anything. Thank you Jim, for this and for every other issue, and for all those many hours of picking out this fine lined work. \*\*\*\*\*

ALAN DODD.







By Mike Moorcock.

Some years ago, when I was about 18, I wrote a novel called **THE GOLDEN BARGE**. This was an allegorical fantasy about a little man, completely without self-knowledge and with little of any other kind, going down a seemingly endless river, following a great Golden Barge which, he felt, if he caught it would contain all truth, all secrets, all the solutions to his problems. On the journey he met various groups of people, had a love affair, and so on. Yet every action he took in order to reach the Golden Barge seemed to keep him farther away from it. The river represented Time, the barge was what mankind is always seeking outside itself, when it can be found inside itself etc. etc. The novel had a sad ending, as such novels do. Also, as was clear when I'd finished it, my handling of many of the scenes was clumsy and immature. So I scrapped it and decided that in future my allegories would be intrinsic within a conventional narrative--that the best symbols were the symbols found in familiar objects. Like swords for instance.

Up until I was 20 or so, I had a keen interest in fantasy fiction, particularly Sword and Sorcery stories of the kind written by Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith and the like, but this interest began to wane as I became interested in less directly sensational forms of literature, just as earlier my interest in Edgar Rice Burroughs' tales had waned. I could still enjoy one or two Sword and Sorcery tales, particularly Poul Anderson's **THE BROKEN SWORD** and Fritz Leiber's **GREY MOUSE** stories. A bit before this casting off of old loyalties, I had been in touch with Sprague de Camp and Hans Santesson of **FANTASTIC UNIVERSE** about doing a new series of Conan tales.

I think it was in the autumn of 1960, when I was working for **SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY** and reading SF for **SUSPENSE** (the short-lived companion to **ARGOSY**) that I bumped into a colleague at Fleetway Publications, Andy Vincent, who was an old friend of Harry Harrison's



(who had also freelanced for Fleetway for some time). Andy told me he was meeting Harry and Ted Carnell in the Fleetway foyer and suggested I went along. As I remember, that was where I first met Harry. Previously, I'd sold a couple of stories to Ted, one in collaboration with Barry Bayley, but had had more bounced than bought. Later on in a pub, Ted and I were talking about Robert E. Howard and Ted said he'd been thinking of running some Conan-type stuff in SCIENCE FANTASY. I told him of the FANTASTIC UNIVERSE idea which had fallen through when F.U. folded, and said I still had the stuff I'd done, would he like to see it. He said he would. A couple of days later I sent him the first chapter and outline of a Conan story. To tell you the truth, writing in Howard's style had its limitations, as did his hero as far as I was concerned, and I wasn't much looking forward to producing another 10,000 words of the story if Ted liked it.

Ted liked it--or at least he liked the writing, but there had been a misunderstanding. He hadn't wanted Conan--he had wanted something on the same lines.

This suited me much better. I decided that I would think up a hero as different as possible from the usual run of S-and-S heroes, and use the narrative as a vehicle for my own 'serious' ideas. Many of these ideas, I realise now, were somewhat romantic and coloured by a rather long-drawn out and, to me at the time, tragic love affair which hadn't quite finished its course and which was confusing and darkening my outlook. I was writing floods of hack work for Fleetway and was getting sometimes £70 or £80 a week which was going on drink, mainly, and, as I remember, involved rather a lot of broken glass of one description or another. I do remember, with great pride, my main achievement of the winter of 1960 or 61, which was to smash entirely an unbreakable plate glass door in a well-known restaurant near Piccadilly. And the management apologised...

Jim 4.64



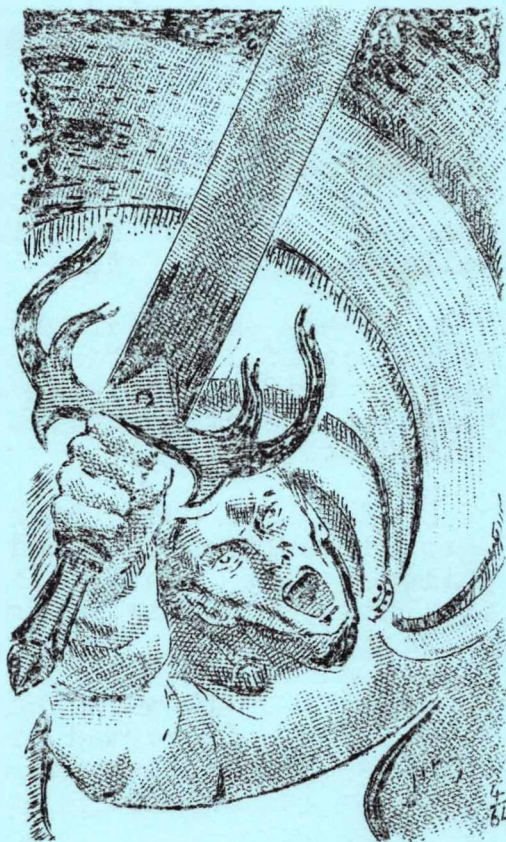
I'm mentioning this, to give a picture of my mood at the time of Elric's creation. If you've read the early Elric stories in particular, you'll see that Elric's outlook was rather similar to mine. My point is, that Elric was me (the me of 1960-1, anyway) and that the mingled qualities of betrayer and betrayed, the bewilderment about life in general, the search for some solution to it all, the expression of this bewilderment in terms of violence, cynicism and a need for revenge, were all characteristics of mine. So when I got the chance to write THE DREAMING CITY, I was identifying very closely with my hero-villain. I thought myself something of an outcast (another

romantic notion largely unsubstantiated now I look back) and emphasises Elric's physical differences accordingly:

'His bizarre dress was tasteless and gaudy, and did not match his sensitive face and long-fingered, almost delicate hands, yet he flaunted it since it emphasised that he did not belong in any company--that he was an outsider and an outcast. But, in reality, he had little need to wear such outlandish gear--for... (he) was a pure albino who drew his power from a secret and terrible source.'

(STEALER OF SOULS, Page 13)

The story was packed with personal symbols (as are all the stories bar a couple). The 'secret and terrible source' was the sword STORMBRINGER, which symbolised my own, and others' tendency to rely on mental and physical crutches rather than cure the weakness at source. To go further, Elric, for me, symbolised the ambivalence of mankind in general, with its love-hates, its mean-generosity, its confident-bewilderment etc. Elric is a thief who believes himself robbed, a lover who hates love. In short, he cannot be sure of the truth of anything, not even of his own emotions or ambitions. This is made much clearer in a story containing even more direct allegory, the second in the series WHILE THE GODS LAUGH. Unfortunately, Ted left out the verse from which the title was taken--



I, while the gods laugh, the world's vortex am;  
Maelstrom of passions in that hidden sea  
Whose waves of all-time lap the coasts of me,  
And in small compass the dark waters cram.

--Mervyn Peake (SHAPES AND SOUNDS)

This, I think, gave more meaning to both title and story which involved a long quest after the Dead God's Book--a mythical work alleged to contain all the knowledge of the universe, in which, Elric feels, he will at last find the true meaning of life. He expresses this need in a somewhat rhetorical way. Then the wingless woman Shaaarilla asks him why he wants the book he replies:

'I desire, if you like, to know one of (misprinted as or in magazine version) two things. Does an ultimate God exist -- or not. Does Law or Chaos govern our lives?



'Men need a God, so the philosophers tell us. Have they made one--or did one make them?' etc.etc.

Here, as in other passages, the bewilderment is expressed in metaphysical terms, for at that time, due mainly to my education, I was very involved with mysticism and also the terms suited a Sword-and-Sorcery hero in a world without much technology, a reliance on magic etc..

It may seem odd that I use such phrases as 'at that time' and so on, as if I'm referring to the remote past, but in many ways, being a trifle more mature, perhaps, happily married with a better sense of direction etc. all this does seem to have taken place in the remote past.

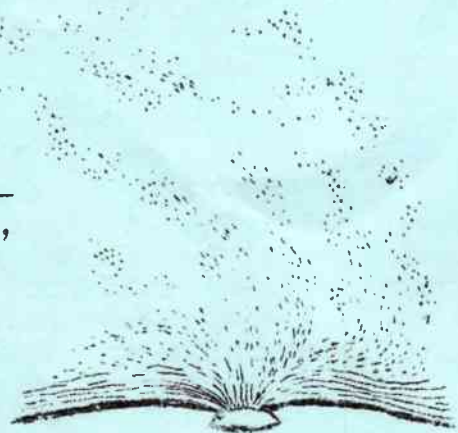
The Dead Gods' Book is eventually located in a vast underground world which I had intended as a womb-symbol, and after a philosophical conversation with the book's Keeper, Elric discovers it: This passage is, to me now, rather overwritten, but, for better or worse:

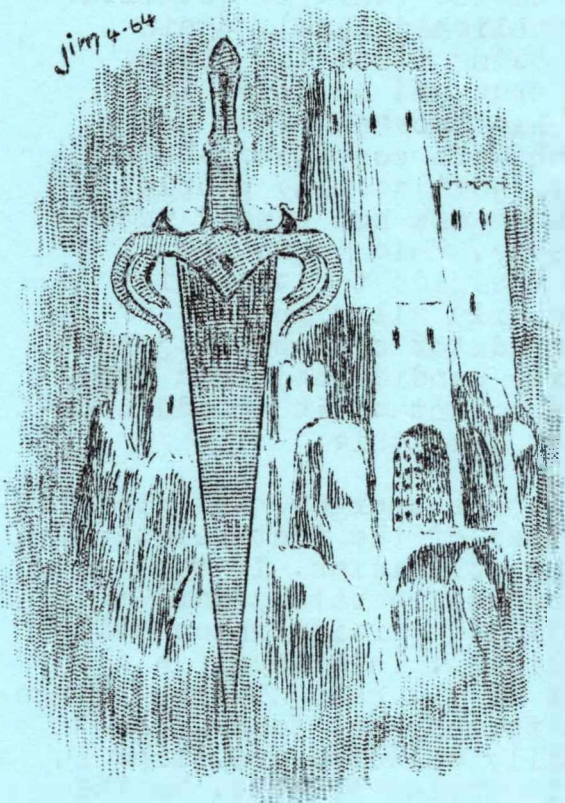
'It was a huge book--the Dead Gods' Book, its covers encrusted with alien gems from which the light sprang. It gleamed, it throbbed with light and brilliant colour.

'At last,' Elric breathed. 'At last--the Truth!'

He stumbled forward like a man made stupid with drink, his pale hands reaching for the thing he had sought with such savage bitterness. His hands touched the pulsating cover of the Book and, trembling, turned it back...With a crash, the cover fell to the floor, sending the bright gems skipping and dancing over the paving stone. Beneath Elric's...hands lay nothing but a pile of yellowish dust.'

The Dead Gods' Book and the Golden Barge are one and the same. They have no real existence, save in the wishful imagination of mankind. There is, the story says, no Holy Grail which will transform a man overnight from bewildered ignorance to complete knowledge, the answer already is within him, if he cares to train himself to find it. A rather over emphasised fact, throughout history, but one generally ignored all the same.





THE STEALER OF SOULS, the third story, continues this theme, but brought in rather different kinds of symbols. Coupled with the Jungarian symbols already inherent and inherent in any tale using direct mythic material, I used Freudian symbols, too. This was a cynical attempt and a rather vulgar attempt to make the series popular. It appeared to work. THE STEALER OF SOULS, whatever else it may be, is one of the most pornographic stories I have ever written. In Freudian terms it is the description of, if you like, a night's love-making.

Which brings me to another point. Although there is comparatively little direct description of sexual encounters in the stories, and what there are are largely romanticised, the whole Elric saga has, in its choice of situations and symbols, very heavy sexual undertones. This is true of most Sword-and-Sorcery stories, but I have an idea that I may be the first such author to understand his material to this extent, to know what he's using. If I hadn't been a bit fed-up by the big response received by THE STEALER OF SOULS (Magazine story, not the book) I could have made even greater use of what I discovered.

Other critics have pointed out the close relationship that the horror story (and often the SF story for that matter) has with the pornographic story, so there's no need to go any deeper into it here.

The pornographic content of the Elric saga doesn't interest me much, but I have hinted at the relationship between sex and violence in several places, and, indeed, there are a dozen syndromes to be found in the stories, particularly if you bear in mind my own involvement with sexual love, expression in violence, etc at the time the stories were first conceived. Even my own interpretation of what I was doing is open to interpretation, in this case!

The allegory goes through all ten stories (including TO RESCUE TANELORN which did not feature Elric) in SCIENCE FANTASY, but it tends to change its emphasis as my own ideas take better shape and my emotions mature. When, in the last Elric story of all, the sword, his crutch, STORMBRINGER turns and slays Elric it is meant to represent, on one level, how mankind's wish-fantasies can often bring about the destruction of (till now at least) part of mankind. Hitler, for instance, founded his whole so-called



'political' creed on a series of wish-fantasies (this is detailed in that odd book DAWN OF MAGIC recently published here). Again this is an old question, a bit trite from being asked too often, maybe, but how much of what we believe is true and how much is what we wish were true. Hitler dreamed of his Thousand Year Reich, Chamberlain said There Will Be No War. Both were convinced--both ignored plain fact to a frightening extent, just as many people (not just politicians whose public statements are not always what they really believe) ignore plain facts today. This is no new discovery of mine. It is probably one of the oldest discoveries in the world. But, in part, this is what nearly all my published work points out. Working, as I did once, as editor of a party journal (allegedly an information magazine for party candidates) this conviction was strengthened. The build-up of a fantasy is an odd process and sometimes happen, to digress a bit, like this.

The facts are gathered, related, a picture emerges. The picture, though slightly coloured by the personalities of the fact-relaters, is fairly true. The picture is given to the politician. If the politician is a man of integrity he will not deliberately warp the facts, but he will present them in a simplified version which will be understood by the general public (he thinks). This involves a selection, which can change a picture out of all recognition, though the politician didn't deliberately intend to warp the facts. The other kind of politician almost automatically selects and warps in order to prove a point he, or his party, is trying to make. So the fantasy begins, until quite often, facts are built on fantasy, until the real picture is almost irrevocably lost.

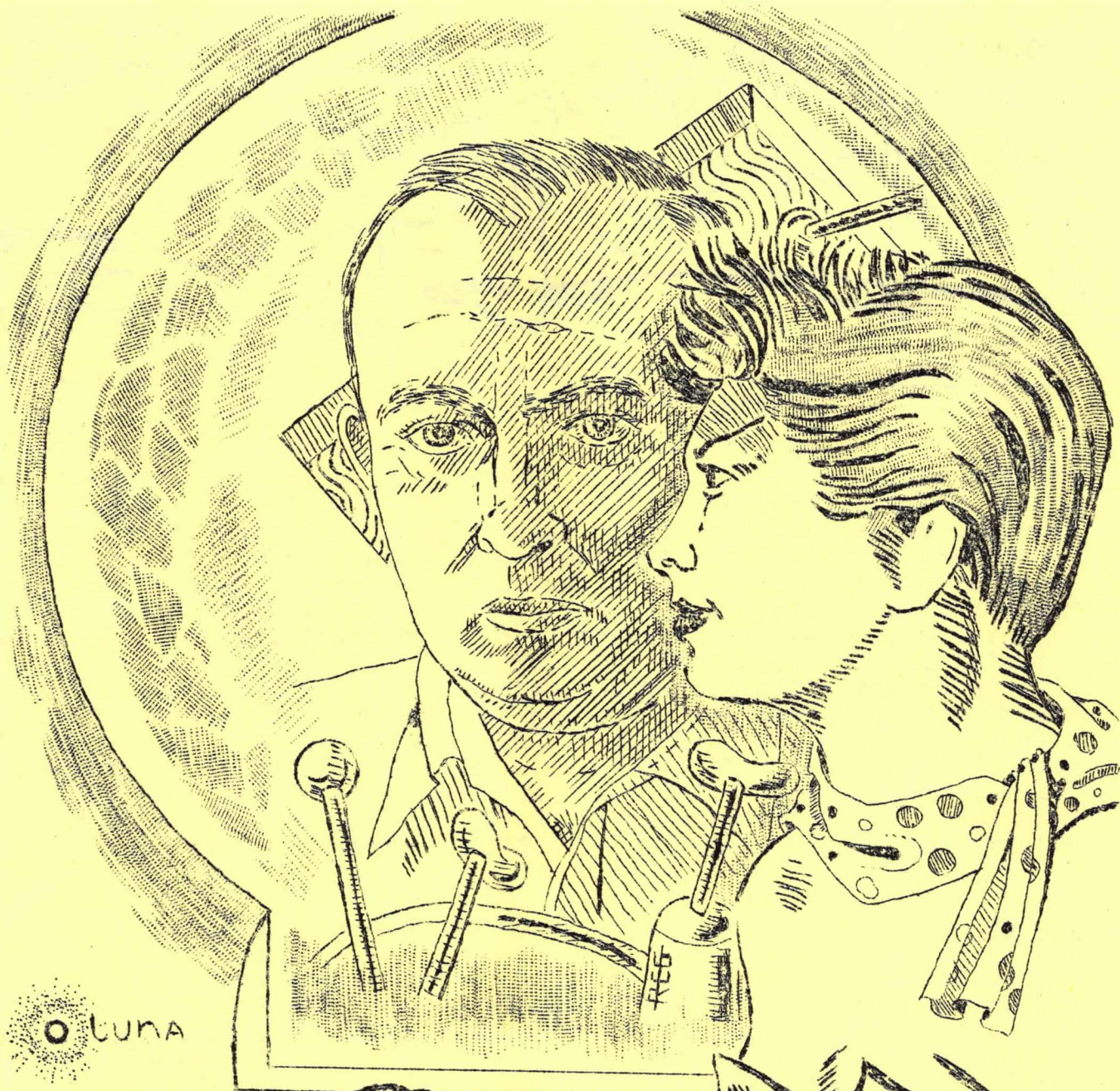
Therefore this reliance on pseudo-knowledge which seems to prove something we wish were true, is a dangerous thing to do.

This is one of the main messages of the Elric series, though there are several others on different levels.

Don't think I'm asking you to go back over the stories looking for these allegories and symbols. The reason I abandoned the GOLDEN BARGE was because among other things it wasn't entertaining. The Elric stories are meant to entertain as much as anything else, but if anyone cares to look for substance beyond the entertainment level, they might find it.

One of my main reasons, though, for taking this angle when Alan asked me to write a piece on Elric, was because I have been a little disappointed at the first book being dismissed by some professional critics (who evidently didn't bother to read it closely, if at all) as an imitation of Conan. When you put thought and feeling into a story -- thought and feeling which is yours -- you don't much care for being called an imitator or a plagiarist however good or bad the story -- probably the millionth novel about a young advertising executive in love with a deb and involved with a married woman has just been published, yet the author won't be accused of imitating anyone or plagiarising anyone. It is the use to which one puts one's chosen material, not that material, which matters.



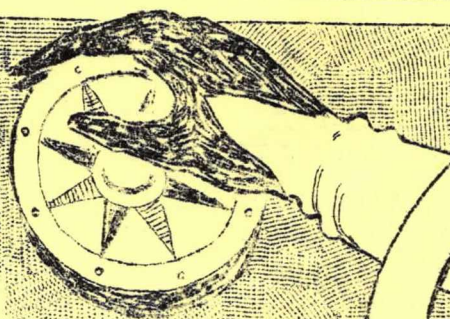


○ LUNA

○ BARSCOM

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STATION



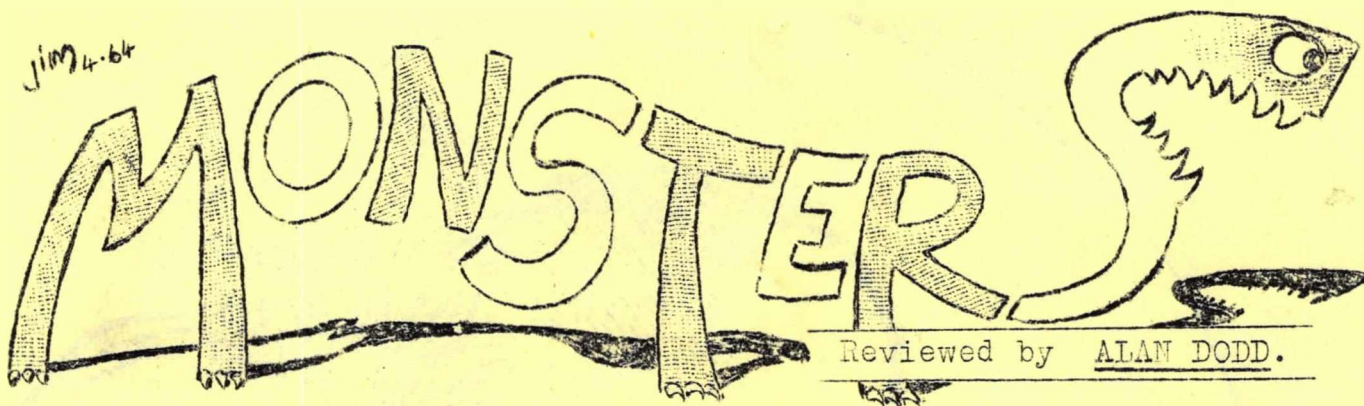
A HARRY GILBERT PATENT

B.



Jim 4-64

# MONSTER



Reviewed by ALAN DODD.

MAD MONSTERS: No.7. Quarterly from Charlton Publications Inc.,  
Charlton Building, Derby, Connecticut, U.S.A. 35c copy.

For the completist collectors of monster magazines the two reviewed on this page are each in their individual way ones which should be added to any collection. Firstly MAD MONSTERS which gives complete coverage of many horror films tracing the story through stills and frame enlargements and other photos not usually seen in such a comprehensive array. If you have a favourite monster film from the past whether it be recent past or lost in the ages of time you'll find this magazine will cover it at one time or another. The issue on hand has material ranging from KING KONG VERSUS GODZILLA (The most complete photo article on this film I have yet seen), a nostalgic tribute to the old horror master Lionel Atwill giving some intriguing details of his past career, I MARRIED A MONSTER FROM OUTER SPACE, an early film of Tom Tryon before his success with Otto Preminger, several useful miniature reviews for the completist, Karloff's CORRIDORS OF BLOOD and THE DEADLY MANTIS. Preferring to concentrate on the memory rather than the more current material of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND this is a most useful addition.

HORROR MONSTERS: No.7. Publisher's address and price as above,

The memories were certainly stirred by this issue containing as its first article Lon Chaney's THE MAN MADE MONSTER of the killer who escapes from the electric chair because electricity cannot kill him, many rare stills unseen in any other horror magazine, several capsule reviews with stills of very old and rare horror films including THE MAD GHOUL, NIGHT MONSTER, THE MAD DOCTOR OF MARKET STREET and the Karloff version of THE BLACK CAT. For the lighter side a full coverage of BUD ABBOT AND LOU COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN. Further unpublished photos of Lon Chaney Snr., Hammer's THE MAN WHO COULD CHEAT DEATH covered fully with nine different stills, WEREWOLF IN A GIRLS' DORMITORY, a quiz of horror films and like the previous publication a large selection of advertisements for various horror products ranging from Vampire Photos to a - honest - "Do-it-yourself Werewolf Kit" for only one dollar for which you get The Werewolf Curse, Werewolf Calendar, Origin and History of Werewolves, Werewolf fangs plus six wallet-size photos of the world's all-time favorite wolfmen. What more could one ask?

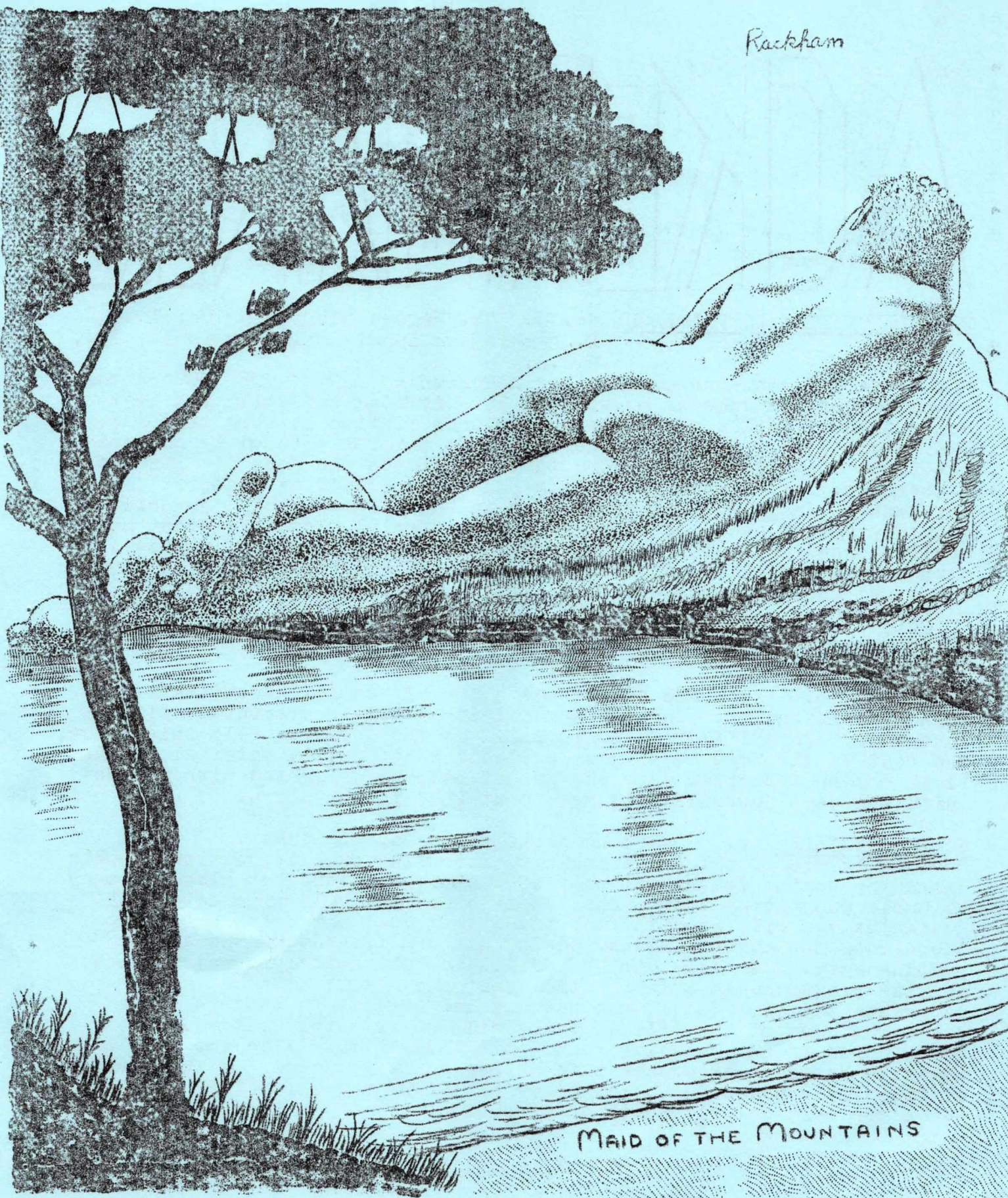
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Rackham



MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS



# ACKERMAN ZINES

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND: No.28. 50c. Warren Publishing Co. 1426  
E. Washington Lane, Philadelphia 38, Pa.,  
U.S.A.

No. 28 should convince anyone that Ackerman's FAMOUS MONSTERS is the granddaddy of all monster magazines, long imitated but still the best collection of stills of horror and science fiction is this magazine. The juvenility of earlier issues has been partially tamed by Ackerman but it is still too jazzed down to the children who form its largest readership. Page 7, the first text page is composed of material I sent Ackerman in July 1963, it sees print in May 1964 suitably juvenilised so I hardly recognised most of my original material. However since he did spell my name correctly I ought not to complain too much I suppose. I just wonder what kind of mentality Ackerman does have to write down to sometimes though... Some excellent stills of ISLAND OF LOST SOULS, THE MANSTER and an unusual FRANKENSTEIN among others. Best quality photo printing of any horror magazine. What a pity the writing isn't on an equal par.

SPACEMEN. No.8 Price and address as above. Issue No.8 shows this is much more irregular, and the March 1964 date is overprinted with a June date. 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH is the featured film this issue, the rest is the most nostalgic collection of serial material of the Flash Gordon and other days one cannot help be delighted with it. Not quite the same juvenile writings contained in the above.

SCREEN THRILLS: No.8 - Also as above price and publisher. Most nostalgic of all Ackermanzines, recording each issue with graphic thoroughness the deaths not only of the bigger stars but also the many valuable supporting stars, character actors and old time actors. I guarantee you will not find one issue that does not bring a tear to the eye of the hardest viewer seeing his own friends of the screen passing away. Not that SCREEN THRILLS is all nostalgia and sadness, it also preserves memories of the great ones still with us, and refreshes the memories of the past we had of moments that in these declining days of the film industry will never surely return. We speak often of the elusive "Sense of Wonder" but I do not recall any magazine before that evokes this phrase so well as far as the world of films is concerned. The articles on SABU and THE SPIDER this issue are particularly worth of attention.

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# CLEOPATRA

A FOLIO

25-11-1962

*Jim*



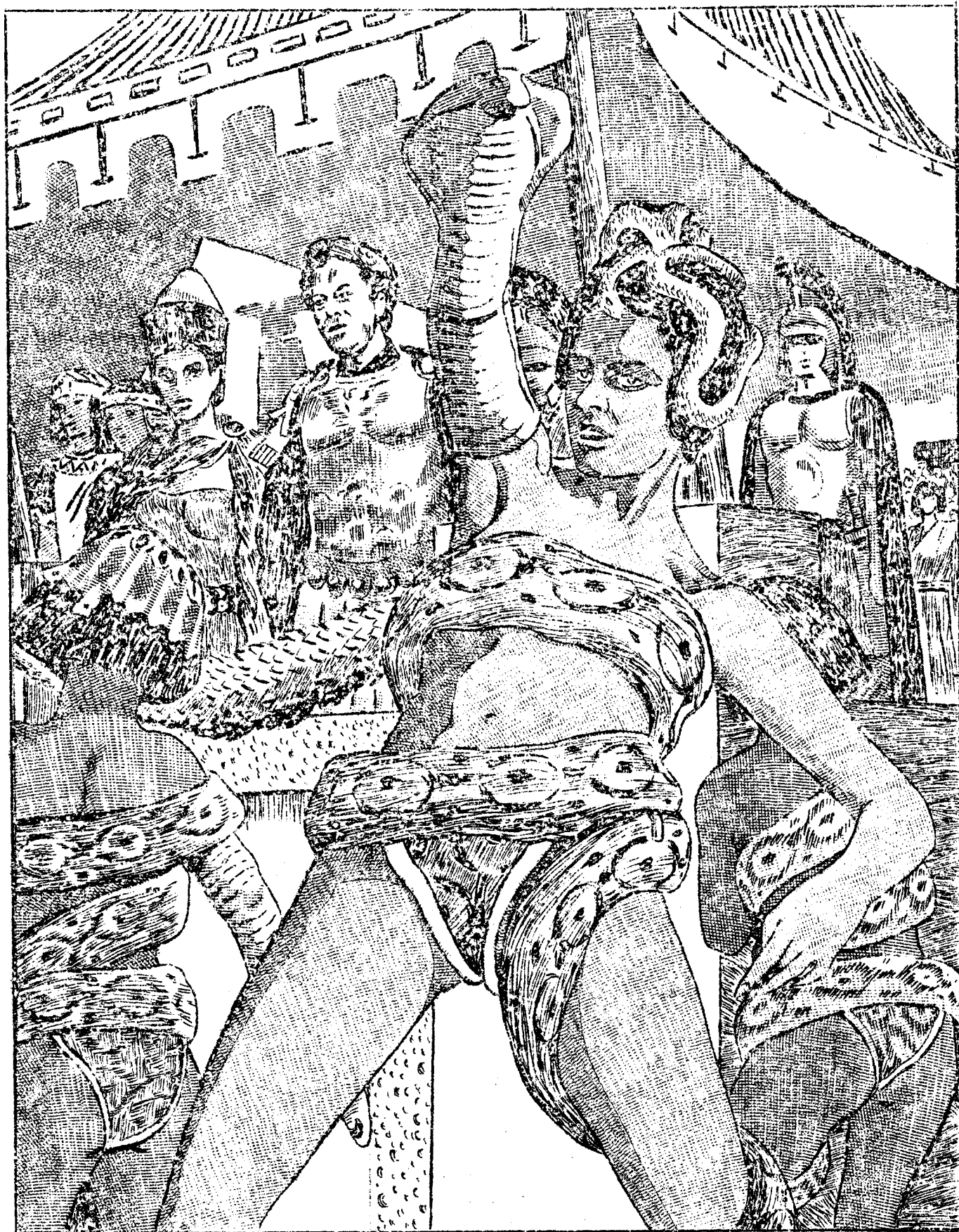




# THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM



Jim  
9-12-62





# TAYLOR~MAIDS

Jim 31-3-63







It was on one of my travels to Egypt that I first encountered Colonel Caldicot late of the 11th Hussars. He would have been in the 12th Hussars but he was late for that as well. On his retirement his ambition had been to conduct an expedition to seek out the Lost Tomb of Cleopatra.

The first problem was to hire a camel. But since most of those we saw were too high already we soon abandoned the idea. The desert signboards were of no help at all, one even said, "Anywhere - simply miles", so with the merciless sun beating down we approached an Egyptian guide who identified himself as Omar. "My father," he informed us, "is a beggar in the city." "Tell," said Caldicot understandingly, "We all have our moments."

"Pipe down," I told him, "Pipe down my foot!" He shouted. "A funny place to keep a pipe," muttered Omar shaking his head in bewilderment.

Our long trek began across the burning sands of the desert. "It's the sand," complained Calidcot through parched lips, "Everywhere the sand. I've got sand in my shoes. Sand in my ears. Sand up my nose. Sand. Nothing but sand. I can't go on. I can't. I can't."

"Oh good," said Omar, cheerfully, "let's leave him here."

Onward we marched as day became night and night became the burning glare that was the desert. Soon we approached a half covered mound near a dune where the tools of workmen were scattered about an entrance of stone lying half hidden in the drifting sand. A stone door, partly cleared, revealed mysterious writings on the stonework.

"What are all those peculiar symbols written up there?" asked Caldicot, peering through the now graying darkness at them.

"Hieroglyphics", answered Omar.

"And what's all this writing underneath," he wanted to know.

"Lowerer glyphs."

Seizing a shovel lying nearby Omar proceeded to clear away the remaining sand blocking the entrance. "I will clear the doorway," he informed us uneasily, but I will not go into the tomb with you. There is a terrible curse on those who venture into the winding labyrinth inside. The last time I went into such a tomb I came across a terrible sight. Three old ladies - locked in the labyrinth.

In the darkness we groped slowly along using home-made torches to throw some small light. It was a veritable honeycomb of tunnels. We were a-mazed.

We penetrated further and further into the tomb pausing only to pick up a strange twisted piece of metal with a sharp point. It was the Opener of the Way. Soon we should know the age-old secret of this desert mausoleum and feast our eyes upon the riches of an Egyptian Pharaoh.

"Can you see Tutankamen?" breathed Omar who had been persuaded to follow us.

"That's miles from here." said Caldicot impatiently.

"Tutankamen - the Pharaoh - not Tooting Common", I shouted, my voice echoing in the silence of the tomb.

And there - in the middle of the floor we saw it!

However we stepped around it and continued on our way.

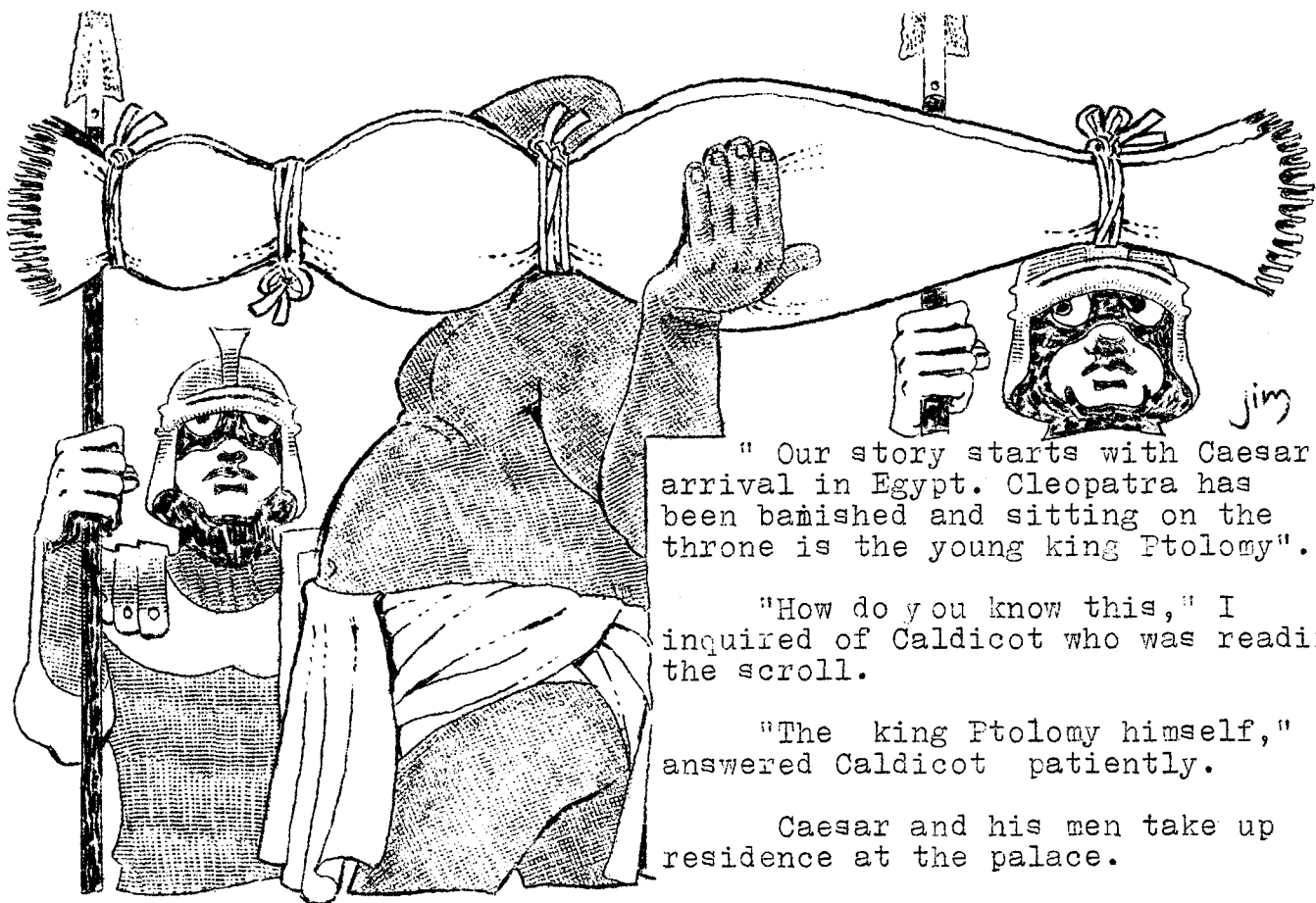
"At last," roared Caldicot stentoriously, "Sarcophagus!"

"Bless you," murmured Omar politely.

"Dare we open the lid?" I inquired.

Inside the mummy was untouched by time and so well wrapped up even the post office could not complain.

Inside - the Scroll of Quintus Nittius, Senator Extraordinary of Rome and a story that not even time itself could perish:---



"Our story starts with Caesar's arrival in Egypt. Cleopatra has been banished and sitting on the throne is the young king Ptolomy".

"How do you know this," I inquired of Caldicot who was reading the scroll.

"The king Ptolomy himself," answered Caldicot patiently.

Caesar and his men take up residence at the palace.

"Oh, mighty Caesar, I counsel you to be ever watchful," urged Quintus, "these Egyptians are not to be trusted. I've seen the writing on the wall."

"So have I," remarked Caesar, "And I can't make head or tail of it"

"You would," said Quintus, "if you'd seen the writing on the wall where I'd seen it."

"I want a drink," commanded Caesar, "Fetch me a Martinus".

"Do you mean a Martini?" asked his servant.

"Then I want two I'll ask for them" roared Caesar.

"Where is my good friend Flavius" commanded the leader next. "I am here Caesar" came the swift reply. "What of news from Rome?" "There are, I regret to say, rumblings in the Senate. It's Brutus, Cassius and all the other bods." "Ah," reflected Caesar wisely, "Nothing unusual, one always gets rumblings from Senate bods."

"Is this all?" demanded Caesar of Flavius next.

"This is the end of the news, mighty Caesar."

"And what about the weather forecast?"

"Hail, Caesar!".

A sudden knock silenced the conversation as the door opened to reveal a stranger carrying a roll of carpet over his shoulder.

"I bring a gift for the great Caesar!" thundered the giant stranger."

"Well, we don't want your carpet", spat Flavius, "Beat it".

"Wait," ordered Caesar, "Let him bring his gift in."

"Thank you, thank you oh mighty one. A very lovely Egyptian carpet. I will unroll it before you. See."

So saying, he unrolled the carpet before Caesar and a beauteous young woman unrolled from it.

"Hm," murmured Caesar, "I've heard of gift wrapping but this is ridiculous." "She looks like Elizabeth Taylor," remarked Flavius, "That an XXXVIII XXXI -I -I -AY. Caesar!" "Yes, yes, I will," said the elderly leader, stretching forth. "This is a historic meeting," informed Flavius recognising Cleopatra, "Now the Queen of Egypt meets our own august Caesar." "August," said Cleopatra contemptuously, "He looks more like late November to me. Oh, I have heard of his reputation with women, how harshly you treat them. Is it not true that when you first set eyes upon a young lady you smote them over the head.?"

"That is past now," said Caesar sadly, "I have given up smoting."

But from this meeting came eventually one of the graat loves of all time and they were happy for a while until Caesar was recalled to Rome.



It was over a year later that Cleopatra joined Caesar and her entry into Rome was triumphal. Acrobats, belly dancers, chariots, soldiers and a giant Phinx upon which Cleopatra stood while pulled through the streets by thousands of sweating Nubian slaves.

"My beloved, no sooner have we met than we must part. I have business in the senate. You shall be escorted to your residence by my faithful friend Mark Anthony."

At Cleopatra's residence the two are alone.

"Why don't you come closer," pouted Cleopatra.



"Caesar is my best friend", answered MarkAnthony firmly. "Kiss me". "Caesar," repeated Anthony, "Is my best friend." "I'd do anything for you," promised Cleopatra. "Oh well," shrugged Anthony, "There goes another friendship."

Meanwhile at the Senate the plotters were conspiring. Brutus warned them of the coming of Caesar, "Now is the time Casca to draw our daggers." "Are you suggesting murder?" uttered the shocked Casca. "Well," suggested Brutus, "We'll have a stab at it." "Where is Cassius?" "Ah'm here," was the loud reply, "ah'm the greatest Ah'll take him in five rounds." "Why don't we forget about Caesar," suggested Casca, "And have a go at him?"

"Now what are you lot hanging around for" asked Caesar entering the crowded forum.

"Your end is in sight" snarled Brutus menacingly.

"What?" said Caesar in alarm, "Has my toga slipped again."

The attack, and Caesar lies bleeding, unbelievably he says, "Stabbed in the back by three of my best friends"

"Ah well," remarked Casca, "That's fandom".

With Caesar gone there was a battle for power in the senate. While in Egypt the love of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra blossomed. In Rome Octavion, Caesar's nephew stirred up anger against Mark Anthony calling him a traitor and a usurper of the power of Rome giving away valuable territories until at last war was declared. The two great armies met at Actium in a bitter and hard struggle. However they finally managed to get Mark Anthony into his ship and off they went.

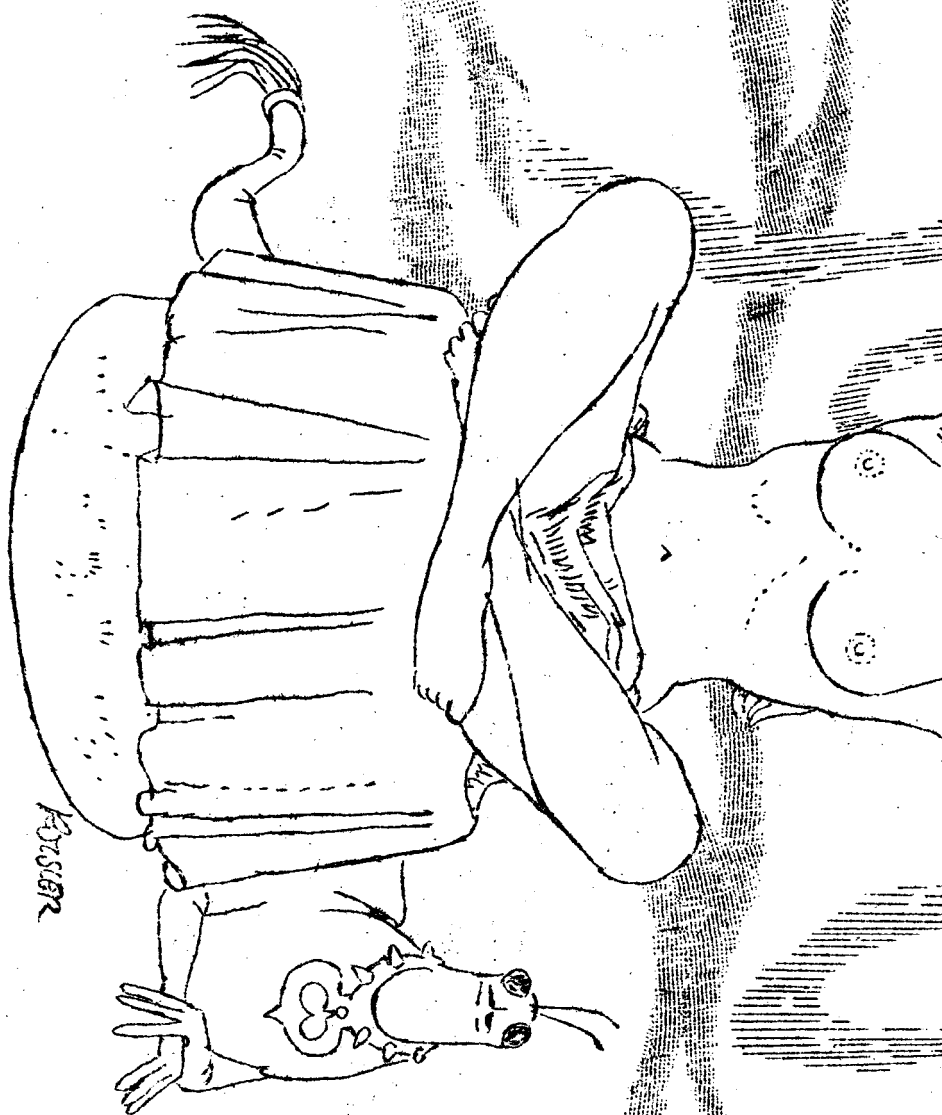
Octavion soon overpowered the Egyptians and what few supporters Mark Anthony had, quickly deserted him. He fled back to Egypt a broken dishonoured soldier.

"I must kill myself," was Anthony's decision, "Aaaaarrrggghh. Aaaaahhhh. Well - that's got the dagger out of the sheath. And now the deed is done...."

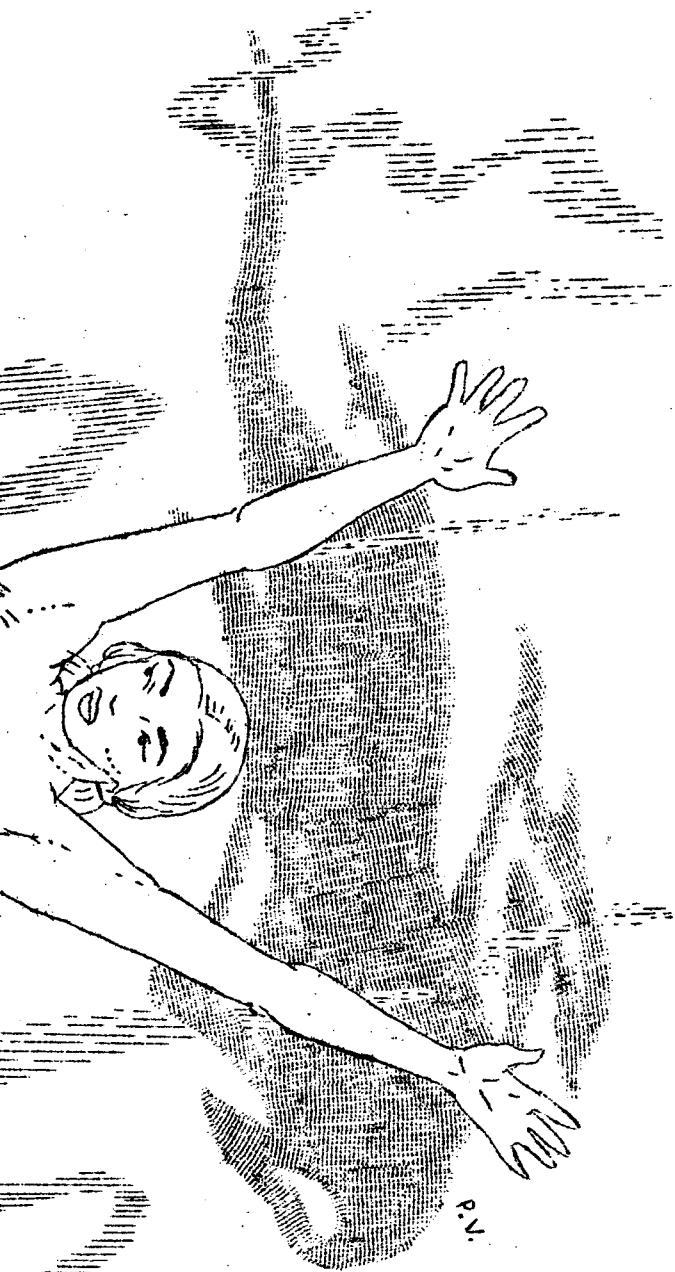
Octavion had by now reached Cleopatra's hiding place and demanded entrance. "Quick, bring me the bowl of fruit" urged Cleopatra, to her serving girl. "You're not going to throw it at him?" asked the frightened girl. But inside was the asp whose poison soon did its work.

Thus ended the manuscript, so Caldicot and I and Omar left the sarcophagus and the labyrinth and proceeded from there with the scroll back to civilisation, to the highest bidder and tomb it may concern.

\*\*\*\*\* YE FINISH \*\*\*\*\*







P.V.

## for the specialist

There will always be specialists, no matter what they specialise in, one already knows much of the fans of Edgar Rice Burroughs, of comic fans, of fans who collect only one author, or have only one interest in one branch of fandom and it might perhaps be well to mention here the specialist who owns not only his own film projector but also his own collection of films. In 8mm for example one can obtain digest versions of almost all major horror, SF, weird and other films of one form or another, my own collection happily contains among others Karloff in THE MUMMY, Lugosi and Chaney in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN, Karloff in BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, Richard Denning in THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, George Melies 1903 TRIP TO THE MOON and Charles Urban's 1908 thriller BATTLE IN THE CLOUDS, the first film to show aerial warfare, tanks and guided missiles in action. The bible for this specialist is undoubtedly:-

8MM COLLECTOR: (Samuel K. Rubin, 734 Philadelphia Street, Indiana, Pennsylvania 15701, U.S.A. 2 dollars per year. English subs 15/- per year to Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd., Hoddesdon, Herts. Quarterly. Printed. Newspaper format)

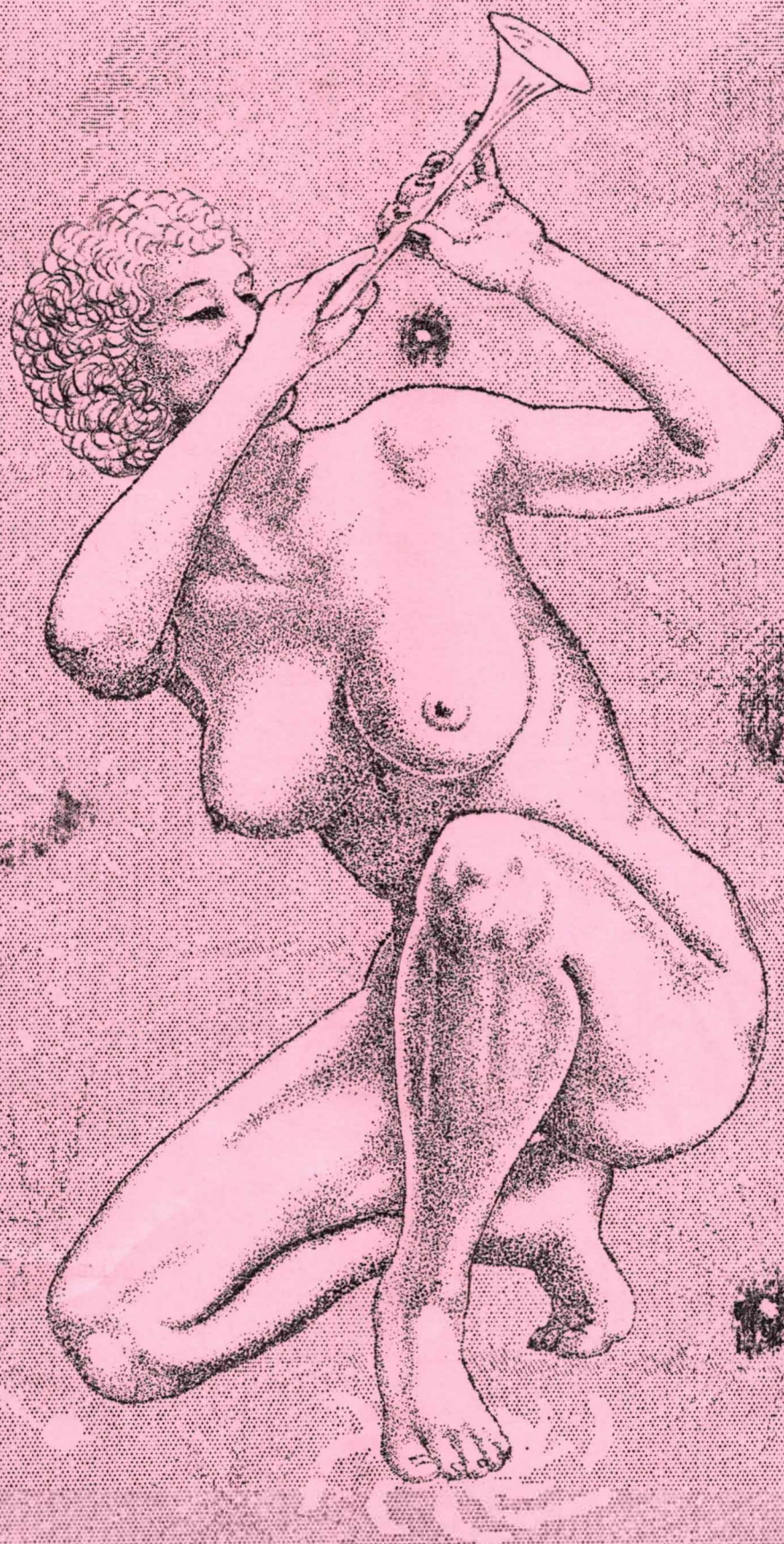
Issue No, 7 contains many items of interest to every kind of fan, illustrations and articles on the early Chaney "Hunchback of Notre Dame", The Gold Rush, Laurel and Hardy, SON OF TARZAN, METROPOLIS, Griffiths' INTOLERANCE, THE GOLEM and countless other articles, pictures, news items, reviews and places where to obtain rare items never seen normally in this country. It is a most worthy publication and anyone with the remotest interest in films or in projecting should not hesitate to get a copy. One has to see a copy to appreciate just how much an editor can in fact cram into a single issue. It has to be seen to be believed.

FILM FAN MONTHLY: (Daryl A. Davy, 210 Durham St., New Westminster, B.C., Canada. 35c a copy. English sub rates not quoted by Daryl, but a line to him may get the necessary information).

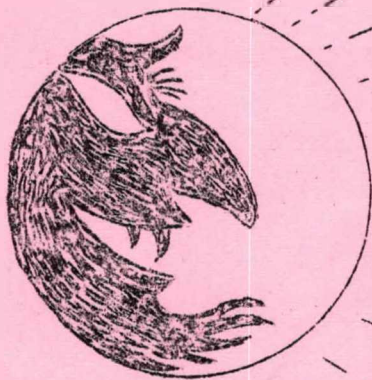
A very chatty and readable specialist publication not only for the 16mm fan but for anyone interested in films of any kind, SF and otherwise. Where else for example could you learn where to buy a 16mm Cinemascope version of Ray Milland and Maureen O'Hara in LISBON for £14. There are many other bargains too if one has the money, even if not the news of availability is most interesting. FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK is a particularly readable column.

And did I ever tell you of the time I became a member of the Garden Ghouls who have their own magazine? I wish I could find their card....









# A DEAL with THE DEVIL

Jim 4-64

by Mark Seigel.

"Very well, what is your wish?" inquired the Devil.

"I want to live as long as the sun shines." replied the man who was about to sell his soul.

Satan laughed his unholy and unearthly laugh, as only he could laugh.

"Very well," he said, "It shall be done".

Whereupon the both signed the contract.

Meanwhile, on a spaceship inside the orbit of Mercury, a conversation between two natives of the planet Orgol which circles Sirius. "Rrogg, I tell you these Earth natives are evil. They must be destroyed by the quibkest and easiest means possible."

"Very well, Gough, destroy the sun Sol at once."

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## MACABRE

MACABRE is surely one of the most unique fanzines I have ever seen, it is modestly printed professionally with no illustrations and does not pretend to be anything more than it is. What is most unusual is it's creator is Joseph Payne Brennan, one of the truly distinguished WEIRD TALES writers still practising. MACABRE is obviously his labour of love. As indeed is his Macabre House which publishes his collections of very fine stories, those of you who have read NINE HORRORS AND A DREAM will know this is no exaggeration. Now comes his SCREAM AT MIDNIGHT (3.50c) (91 Westerleigh Road, New Haven 15, Conn, USA) which contains "The Horror at Chilton Castle", "The Midnight Bus", "The Seventh Incantation" and "The Dump". For those of you who have regretted the passing of WEIRD TALES there is this, there is THE DARK RETURNERS, and there is MACABRE at 50c a copy. But above all there is Joseph Payne Brennan - so many others have gone, or retired, he deserves whatever support can be given him. There are only 250 copies of SCREAM, each is autographed. -27-

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Eastman Colour. Tohoscope.  
Japanese.

Directed by Inoshiro  
Honda & Eiji  
Tsuburaya.

Starring Akira Kubo. Hirshi Koizumi. Yoshio Tsuchiya.

Seven people on a yacht encounter a sudden storm, which blows them far from home. They weather the gale, but drift helplessly for days. Finally, with food and water gone, they sight a strange fog-covered island.

Here they discover an abandoned ship, part of a research expedition testing the effect of radioactivity on plant and animal life.

But what has happened to the crew?

The food found on the strange ship is soon eaten, and the seven, faced with starvation, become panic stricken. They scour the island, but find little food save a few reptile's eggs, seaweed and roots. There is, however, a strange type of fungus, which seems edible, but they refrain from eating it because the ship's log records that it will send one mad.

But, -- one does eat the fungus, and then another. One by one members of the once gay sailing party eat it and, to their horror, they become fungi -- hideous beyond belief. Their life as human beings ends, and they become vegetable.

Only one escapes, but on return home, he is immediately labelled as mad. For who would believe that men after eating a fungus called "Matango" would eventually become a vegetable.

Running time: 89 min:

The above information comes from a unique Japanese film magazine in English called UniJapan Film Quarterly, Shochiku Kaikan Bldg., No.8, 3-chome, Tsukiji, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan. No price is quoted but it is the kind of magazine every country should have to promote its films abroad. Perhaps a line to the above address will get further information. It is profusely illustrated.\*\*\*\*\*



*Robert E. Gilbert*

# HUMAN EQUATION

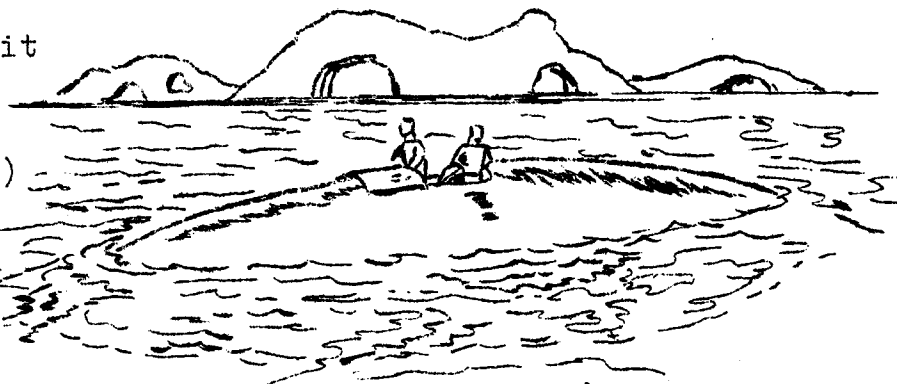
By JOHN RACKHAM.

Be warned: the object of this exercise is to make you think. It will deal with matters you may take for granted, quite wrongly; it will challenge some of your deeply cherished assumptions too. To do this effectively needs careful and difficult-to-follow argument. If you're not in the mind for it, you'd best turn the page and leave this alone.

After all, who goes deliberately seeking a headache?

However if you do want to pay along, you're welcome. It will help if you have done your homework in copies of *NEW WORLDS*, *ANALOG*, *GALAXY* and the book-trade. Specifically, if you have read Mack Reynolds' "Black Man's Burden" in *ANALOG*; "Minor Operation" serialised in *NEW WORLDS*, from the book "Primal Urge" by Brian Aldiss; the John Baxter editorial, also in *NEW WORLDS*; Kingsley Amis on "New Maps of Hell"... and, in *GALAXY*, a big story by Bob Silverberg, the title of which eludes me (that's probably significant, in itself) but which has as its gimmick, a regular and quite random selection of groups of people, fifteen men paired with fifteen woman, and such groups ruthlessly dispatched to suitable planets to get cracking on colonisation. If you've read it, you'll be sure to remember. If not, and if you haven't read the others either, never mind. You'll just have to work that little bit harder to keep up.

Now, my thesis (what I'm going to try and prove) is that all the aforementioned matter, with one exception, has a common factor, an assumption; that the same assumption, or one very like it, can be found in most, if not all, mainstream fiction.



*Robert Eo*

That it is an essential ingredient there; and that it is (a) false, and (b) dangerous. To make the point complete, the exception (which happens to be "Black Man's Burden") contains the correct version of the assumption, and is included by way of a "control". What assumption?

It's a carefully structured thing, and it goes like this. First, it takes for granted that the function and duty of the serious 'writer' is social criticism. This can range all the way from ridicule and satire to just plain bitter comment, and I shall, in what follows, use the term 'criticism' to cover the whole range. This then, means that the writer must put up his own particular version of the social scene, as he sees it, and show exactly what, according to him, is wrong with things. He may condemn the whole business, or he may elect to fasten on one particular bit and magnify that. He may laugh, or weep, or bleed..but these are just the tools of the trade. According to Baxter, he should hone up a fine edge on his language, so as to cut deeply and extract the utmost possible meaning from his material.

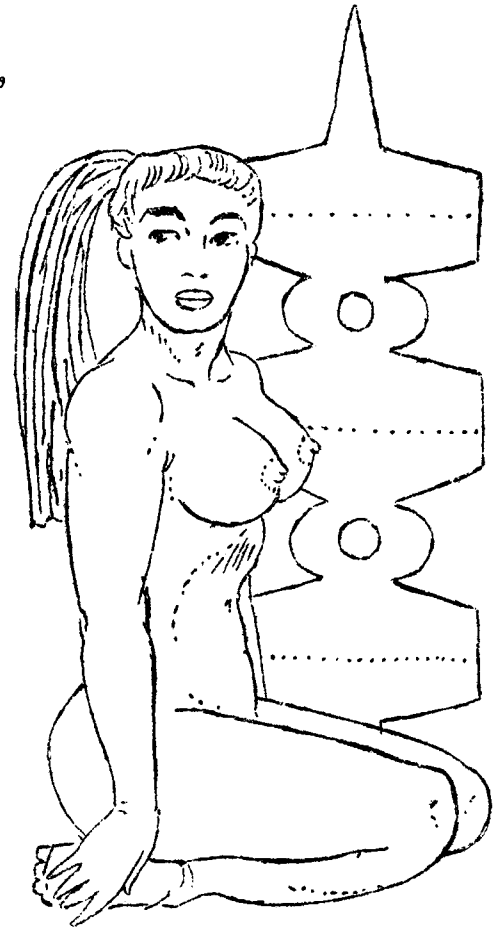


Amis, gracefully and generously, allows that S-F can do this kind of thing rather well, when it so chooses. His grief is that S-F writers don't try to do it often enough, or well enough. And he insists rather fulsomely, that Fred Pohl is the arch-expert at this function. Social criticism..what does it mean,when you get down to it? Just this.. that you are entitled to your opinion: you are entitled to express your opinion,too..and that some people are more entitled than others. And my thesis, may I refresh your memory? is that this assumption is (a) false, and (b) dangerous.

Let us begin at the simplest possible level,with the first of our deeply cherished illusions. "You are entitled to your opinion Who says so? You do. I've said it..we've all said it, at some time. You take it for granted. But,no matter how much you may assume it,there is no way of testing that proposition, one way or the other. It is neither true, nor false. It is just a statement of belief. Right away, it's dubious. It could be wrong. We shall never know. Take the next step. You are entitled to express your opinion" Are you?



By now, our hypothetical literary figure in the dock may become restless. This, he may claim, is not the kind of social criticism he deals with. His is on a much higher level altogether. Is it? When a writer, no matter who, sets out to express in a story, his comment on some aspect of the social scene.. he is saying, in effect 'This is what I think is wrong with..' whatever aspect of society he has chosen. In S-F, as a rule, the tendency is to go just a bit further than this, and add '..and this is what I think could, or should, be done to put it right'. I've no quarrel with that. It is a perfectly legitimate device. In point of fact, any writer, no matter who, if he is dealing with a recognisably 'human' scene or problem, cannot avoid expressing an opinion of some kind, if it is only in description. His sympathies will show. But, let me stress, that is all he is doing. He is expressing his opinion. Where the error creeps in, with the 'social critic' writer (e.g. Aldiss, Amis, Silverberg, Pohl..with backing by Baxter) is in this assumption that the opinions of these people are, somehow, valid and valuable. This, plus the exquisite language they are supposed to have mastery of, lends a spurious air of 'value' to the work.



REG

Spurious, because I must ask the inevitable question..what, if any, are their qualifications? This word, as I have learned from experience, is somehow infuriating to a social critic. I wonder why? I have just had a man in to correct a minor defect in my TV. Not the chap next door, who is employed in the local gas-works, and with qualifications of his own, but an acknowledged 'expert' TV mechanic. If you had toothache, you wouldn't ask your MP to do something about it..you'd go to a dentist. Similarly, then, if I want a qualified opinion on some aspect of social mechanics, I go to an expert, to someone with qualifications. At least, I would, if I could find one. But when you begin to search for some such person..isn't it odd!?!..they are all experts, but with no qualifications. It's a sort of gift, an instinct! So far as the naked eye can discover, all you need to be regarded as a worthwhile social critic, is the ability to write reasonably good English..plus a grievance!

While you're thinking about that, let's look at some of the outpourings of these 'qualified' people. In the Aldiss story already mentioned, we have a view of British society that is a fantastic garbel of self-contradictory items. We are told that this new device, an intimately personal affair, spreads with remarkable uniformity through all levels and all classes..which is in direct contradiction to observed facts about class-level ways. We are told that the British are, by nature, a reserved nation ( a dubious generalisation, in itself) then that such a nation submits, willingly, to novel and little understood surgery (in itself unlikely, in view of the wide-spread ignorance on medical matters) in order to have its most private, and feared, emotions made glaringly public. You can't have it both ways like that. Either the British are a reserved and aloof people, and cherish their privacy on an emotional level..or they aren't. One, or the other..but not both. Purely as a side-issue, the 'science' in this astonishing story is of the kind you make up as you go along. There is, for instance, an appalling confusion between 'gene' and subconscious, a suggestion that you can have an emotion without knowing it, that the subconscious is not only a 'place', but that a gadget can be connected to it..and so-on. One may be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that what Aldiss is really complaining of is that there is no way, so far, of knowing whether or not a girl will..if you ask her. His gadget effectively overcomes this deficiency, and achieves what every adolescent schoolboy has dreamed of at one time or another..how to know, for sure, whether you're on to a good thing or not.

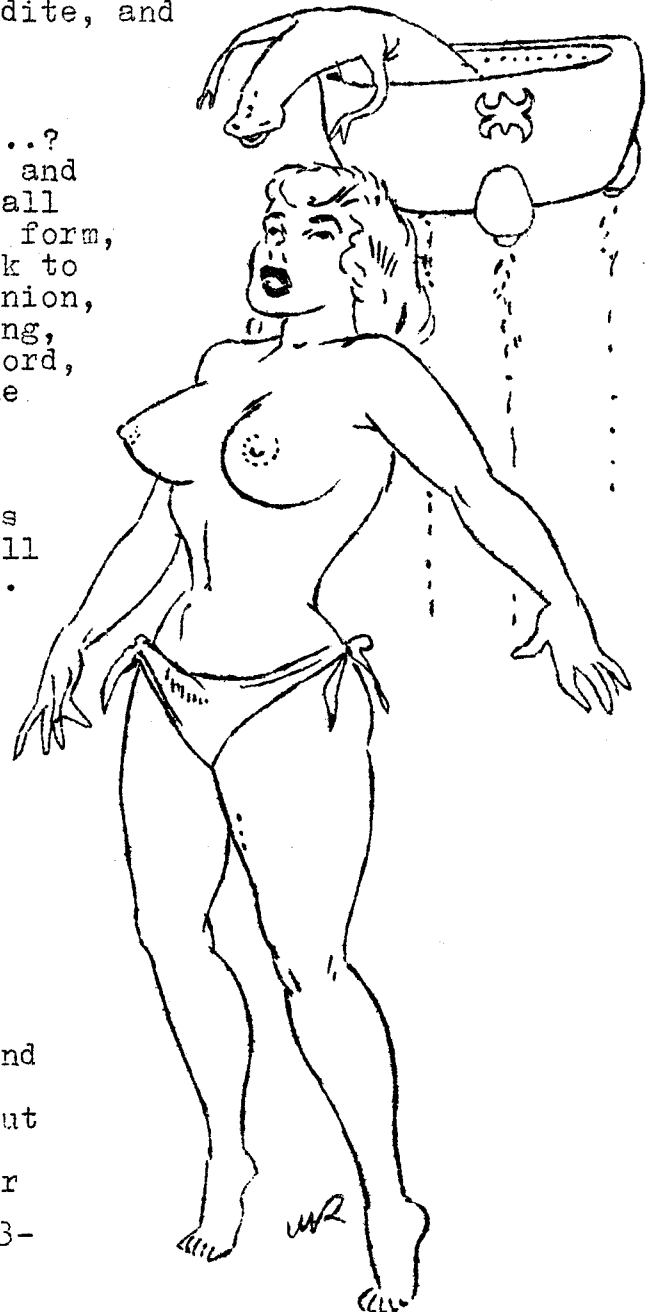
The Silverberg story is of a different calibre. In order to pave the way for some dubious exploration of sex reactions in the wild, and some rough and tumble adventures on a strange planet, Silverberg postulates a situation on Earth such that everyone within a certain age-spread must register, and be filed with a random-selection computer. Regularly, a thirty person group, sexually balanced, is selected, gathered, loaded on to a star-ship, minimally equipped and trained, and dumped, just like that, on some newly-discovered Earth-type planet. No argument, no objection, no rights-of-the-individual, are considered. Wives can be taken from husbands and children, and vice-versa. No account is taken of age-levels, personal merit, qualifications..nothing. Just 'you, you and you'. This, Silverberg suggests, is possible. I suggest that it is nonsense. I don't think any government, in the foreseeable future, will be so moronic as to try any such thing..nor would I expect them to get away with it if they so tried. But..this is my opinion against his. Silverberg feels able to use such a social set-up as a legitimate peg to hang a story on. Pohl, the arch-social-critic, as editor in this case, thought it valid enough to pass, accept, and pay for, to publish in his magazine. Again, I wonder, what are the qualifications you need, to be able to pass this kind of opinion on society?

Baxter, in his guest editorial, names a few 'experts' in this field, out of the hundreds he claims could 'belt science fiction right out of the ground' (an interesting phrase, that. I wonder what it means

if anything?) He lists Lewis Mumford, Bertrand Russell, Arnold Toynbee and Will Durant. He claims, in bewildering fashion that these men have given lifetimes 'to the study of society's weakness, strength and possible lines of development' He also says that when it comes to 'intelligence and scholarship and all-round ability, we (meaning s-f writers) don't stand a chance in the extrapolation business' And a lot more. You really must read the editorial itself, for one of the wildest slash-out-at random diatribes ever to be published between the covers of NEW WORLDS. Let me just try, here, to extract a fact or two from the flurry. 'Erudition and insight' is one phrase used..a very significant phrase indeed. It means, obviously, that, so far as Baxter is concerned, one becomes heavily qualified to make social comments of real value by virtue of being erudite, and possessing insight.

Learning; training; skills  
scientific observation data facts...?  
No, you don't need them. Erudition and insight, that's the stuff! Let's call it intuition, expressed in literate form, and be done with it. Or, to get back to where we came in..one person's opinion, on what he thinks is right, or wrong, with society. Backed by what? Mumford, professionally, is an architect. He has a specialist's reputation in American literature, culture and technical history. As a writer, he is a 'generalist' with a strong bias towards philosophy. Bertrand Russell is a philosopher and mathematician. Toynbee is a historian, of sorts, and a philosopher. Durant, also, is a philosopher. I respect them all for their erudition. I would like to respect them for their insight, too.

But I don't know just what it's worth. I suspect that Baxter, in common with many more people, takes "insight" to mean the ability to recite and link up significant sounding concepts to make them sound more significant than before. You will have heard that old story about the three classical students who fell into argument about the number of teeth a horse has.



Two of them went at it in the traditional manner of all chair-borne experts, quoting 'authorities' at each other. A contest in erudition. The third took the trouble to find a horse, to look and count and come back with the facts. There are two points to the tale. One is that the 'erudition and insight' brigade rejected the factual answer. Such people always do reject or ignore facts which do not happen to fit in with their chosen beliefs. As Bernard Shaw once pointed out, the reason why we all tend to dislike experts is because their 'facts' may disagree with our 'beliefs'.



The second point is that neither of the E & I philosophers was in the least concerned to get a fact or two to start with, although they were readily to hand. This is characteristic of philosophers, in all ages, all over the world. They fancy that by studying the opinions of their illustrious predecessors, and then by reclining comfortably in an armchair in a quiet room, they can, somehow, come at a 'new' truth. Whereas in fact, unless the room has a window, or a clock, they can't even tell you what time of day it is. I have read extensively of Mumford, Russell, Toynbee and Dewey..and many others. Not one of them has given any indication of being in any way concerned with 'facts', in his big opinions about social questions. Not one of them is a sociologist, nor makes any deductions from sociological findings.

Let me make this quite clear. The four men quoted are estimable gentlemen, with massive qualifications..but qualifications for what? If we leave out Mumford's engineering, and Russell's physics and math, all these men are in a position to do is..to pass their opinion on the various opinions of their contemporaries and predecessors. And this is a serial regress. Please note that each one is well versed in history. You might be naive enough to believe that history is a factual record. In fact, 'history' is a shaky skeleton of rare, disputed and badly observed events, bulked out enormously by the opinions, evaluations and deductions of whoever happens to be writing the history. You doubt it? Compare, sometime, the English, US, French, German and Italian versions of the same set of events in history, and see for yourself.

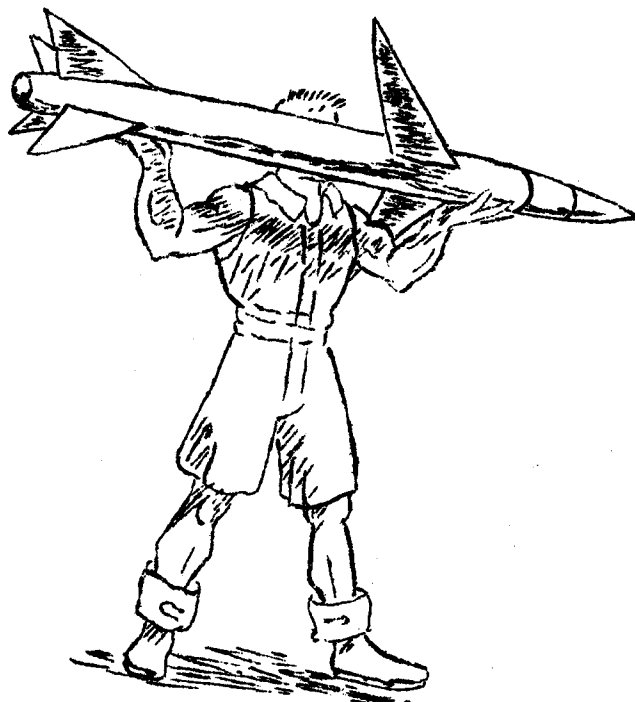
In the story about the horse's teeth, I made the point that adequate facts were readily available. In the case of 'society' this is not so. But there are some facts available. There are qualified people who have been studying societies; their patterns of forces, their habits and structure; big and small, old and new; primitive and modern; simple and complex. Books have been written, and many of them are available in paperback. Let me list just a few authors; Max Weber Bronislaw Malinowski, Ashley Montagu, Eric J. Dingwall, G. Rattray-Taylor,



with Margaret Mead, of course, Sorokin, Sapir, and many more. Surely everyone has heard of, if not read the works of, Vance Packard, for instance?

Now these books, so far as I know and have read, do not contain many big, glorious, sweeping generalisations, nor do they extrapolate to any extent. In fact, the authors know they are dealing with scanty and hard-won facts, and are commendably reluctant to soar off into the wild blue yonder, at random. And this must make such works terribly dull for the Baxter-type mind. Which is a pity because this is just where the silliness comes in. Sociology is very much an infant science, with very few 'hard' facts in the bag, so far. What can be said, however, is this..that practically all the hitherto taken-for-granted beliefs about 'culture' and 'society' are utterly and completely wrong.

This, then, is why I included 'Black Man's Burden' in the homework. I am not concerned, here, with its merits or demerits as a story, or a piece of literature. I leave that to those better qualified than I am. What I am interested in is that this is the only story I have come across, recently, which puts this issue fair and square. Based on Reynolds' own observations in Africa, it makes quite clear that all the measures presently being advised, supported and taken to assist the emergence of Africa from 'primitive' to 'modern' are based on very little more than myth and wishful thinking. Of all the influential bodies involved, none agree either in what to do, where to begin, what to aim for, how to get there, or why! In fact, nobody knows, yet, the answers to such questions, but many millions of Baxter type people firmly believe they do know..not only what is wrong and right with their own societies, but with the rest of the world as well. And such people, with such thinking, are dangerous.



You will remember, I doubted your right to express your opinion. And there is the reason why. So long as opinions are expressed, and beautiful books are written, with marvellously sharp honed language slicing away..at the same old cheese.. so we will have 'authorities' disputing with each other about their own pet illusions, ably backed up and sponsored by the chair-borne brigade, who do it all by insight. Facts? Who wants them?

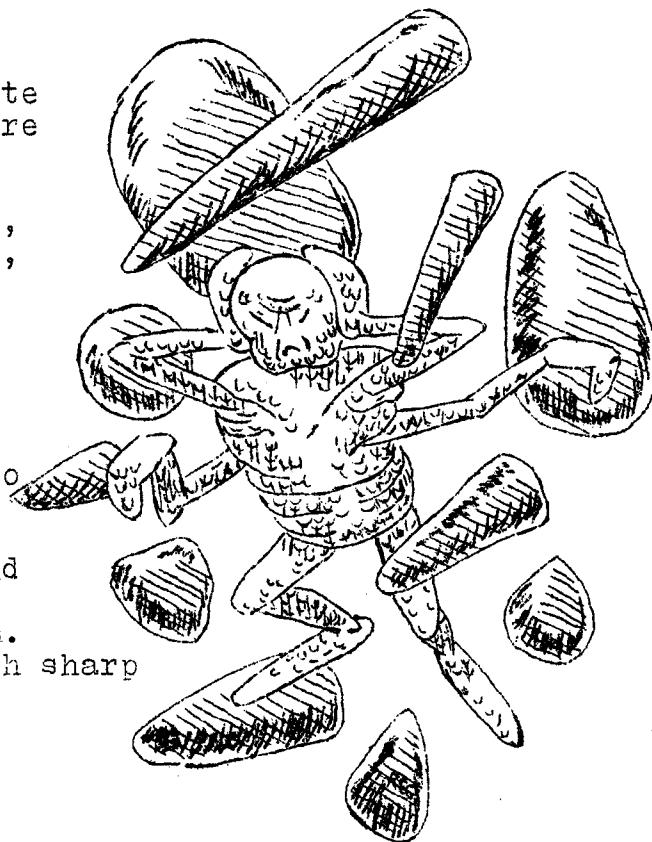
Yet, you know, if s-f is to have any sort of a future at all, facts are of the essence. Those who are old enough to remember how it all began will know that the early pioneers were writers who had studied the available facts, had taken the trouble to familiarise themselves with the disciplines, and then extrapolated from there. Baxter claims that

S-F doesn't stand a chance at extrapolation, if matched against the erudite and insight 'giants'. The facts, here, are quite the reverse. Science fiction has chalked up such a fantastic number of accurate guesses, in its brief history, that many people firmly, and mistakenly, believe the basic function of s-f to be 'prophecy'. It's not, of course, but you don't score bullseyes like that by aiming from, or at, insight and belief.

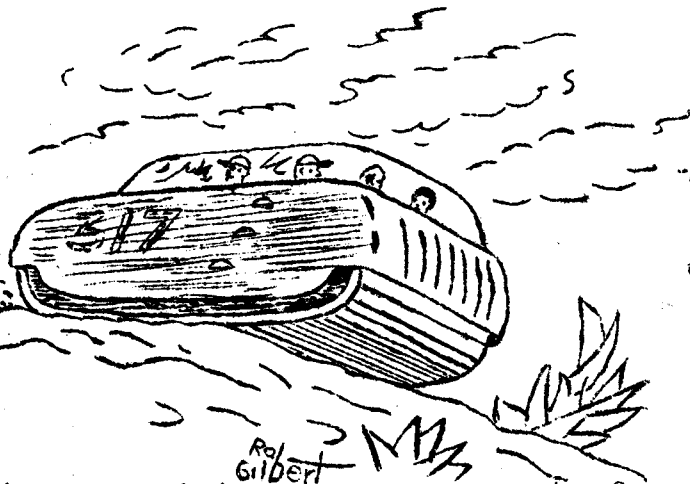
It is a simple enough matter to juggle a set of personal beliefs into a lattern and to extend it into a gloom-or-glory future, with great round ringing phrases. The result may be literature. It may be social criticism. It might be exquisitely sculptured with sharp edged phrases..but it won't be S-F. It will be fantasy, and its value, if any, as ephemeral as the beliefs of time. You doubt this, too? All right. Try listing the number of accurate predictions emerging from the works of the social satirists. You won't need many fingers. So far from not standing a chance, S-F stands head, shoulders and chest above any other speculative medium, in this respect. And this it did, and can do again, only by standing squarely on a structure of observable, objective fact, and by understanding and employing the logic of science.

Let me wind up with a practical application. 'Society', as a concept, is the major human problem, today. Here is one 'hard' fact about it, courtesy of Margaret Mead. All the 'insight', speculations about 'society' are quite wrong, in a certain respect. They assume, in one way or another, that 'society' is an artificial thing, that it somehow stands between Man and Nature..whether they are discussing a city, a tribe, a culture-group or a nation-complex. They all, each in his own way, pin-point some aspect or other which is wrong, and give remedial suggestions. Carefully examined, all these suggestions are please for a return to some form of naturalism. Quite clearly, they believe, that the real villain of the piece is 'artificial, man-made unnaturalism'. And they are quite wrong.

In the first place, there is nothing 'unnatural' about a thing which is 'man-made', any more than a nest is artificial because it is bird-made. In the second place, every sociological and anthropological study yet made shows that 'society', of some kind, is as much essential to man as water is to a fish. The error comes in trying to study Man..and society..as two separate things; whereas the proper object of study..the only possible object of study in this field, is

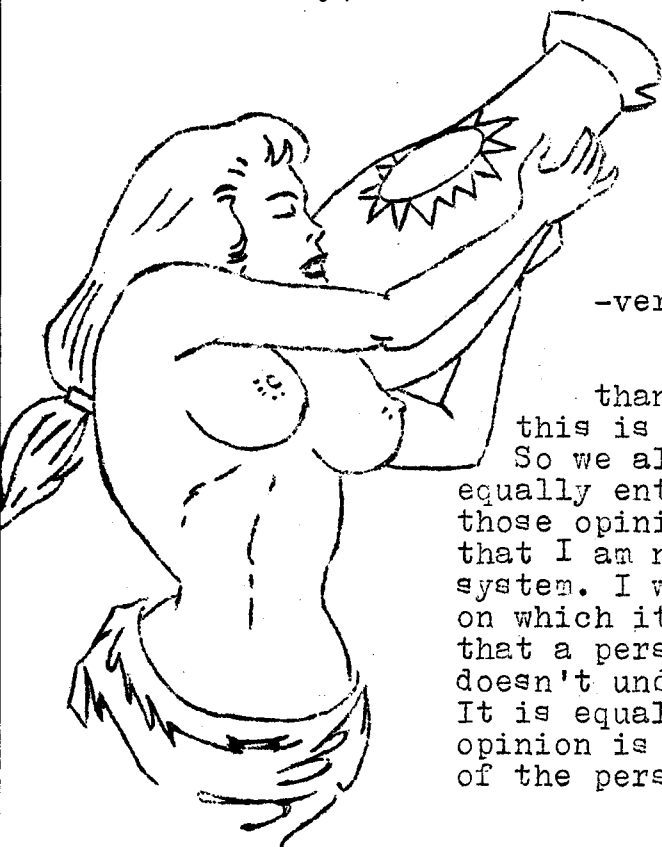


Do you guarantee to know, beforehand just what the reactions will be? I doubt it, very much. The next step, that you are entitled to expect other people to value the opinion you express, is an even more debateable proposition, unless you can produce solid evidence as to your qualifications, your expertise in the particular field on which you are passing judgement.



(A digressions here. I am passing an opinion, on one aspect of S-F. I submit my qualifications, thus. I have been reading, intensively S-F since I was ten years old; that is for thirty-five years. I have been writing s-f, in my small way, for the last ten years. I have been diligently studying general science, especially in the fields of psychology, sociology, biology and related subjects during the whole of that thirty-five years. I am literate, educated, and with a measured, fairly high, intelligence quotient. Those are my qualifications)

Let us now look again at this thing, on a different, but equally simple level. We are all entitled to have an opinion, we say, on the social scene. We have, regularly, opportunities to express this opinion in a very simple and fractionally effective way..at an election. And here, the fallacies begin to mount up so quickly that it is difficult to keep track of them. Here, your opinion is called a 'vote'. You have one I have one. The only people over twenty-one not allowed to vote, in this country, are aliens, convicts, lunatics, bankrupts, peers and parsons. If you have managed to live long enough, and been lucky enough to avoid those mentioned categories, you're in. You may be a dim muscle-head, not safe with a wheel-barrow, incapable of reading the news of what goes on in the world, much less understanding it..but you get just as many votes as the most brilliant international observer in the country..one!



If you know of anything more fallacious than this, I would like to hear of it. Yet this is the law, and the way we run our affairs: So we all accept the principle that we are all equally entitled to have an opinion, and that all those opinions have equal weight. Please understand that I am not, at this moment, criticising the system. I want merely to show that the assumptions on which it stands are false. It is false to assume that a person can have an opinion on something he doesn't understand, or has never even heard of. It is equally false to assume that one person's opinion is as valid as anyone else's, regardless of the persons involved.



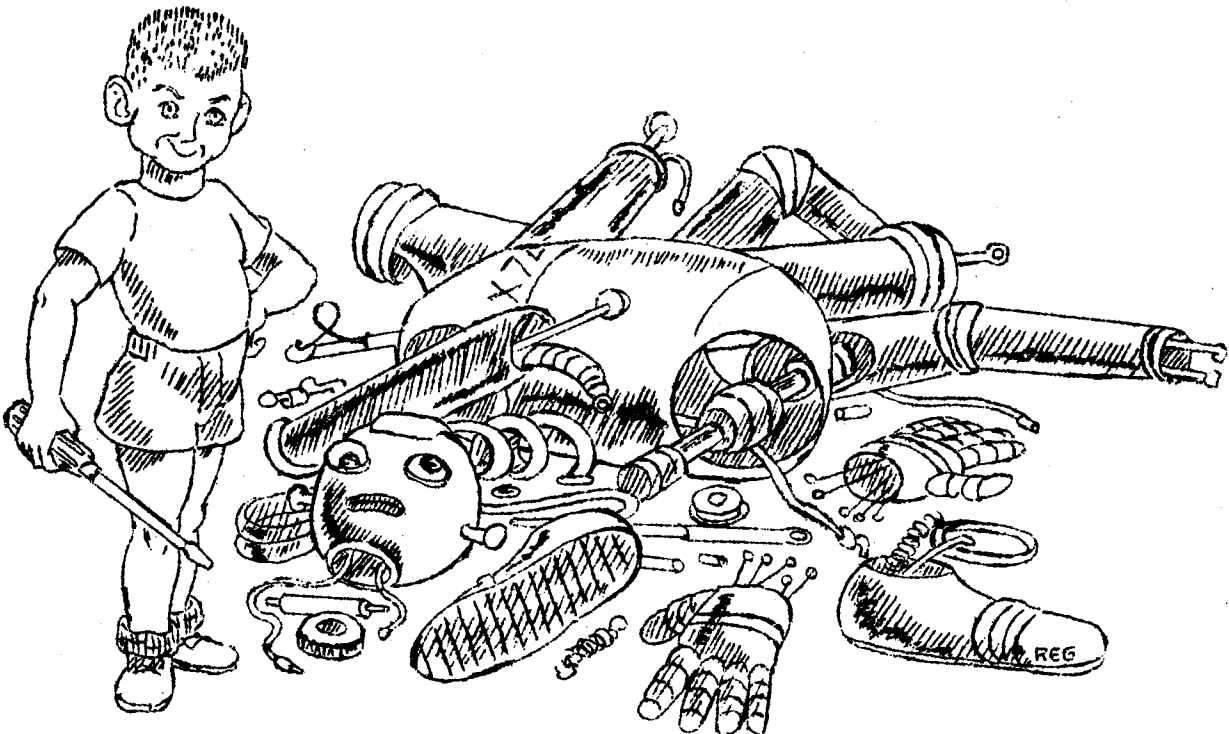
"Man-in-Society". This is 'natural man'. It therefore follows that the road towards the ideal society is by more artificiality, more gadgets, more culture..not less! The ideal society, always supposing there ever will be such a thing, would be a completely man-tailored-fit, completely 'artificial'.

At first glance, this is a horrible and frightening thought, but this is only because we have all been so thoroughly brain-washed by the 'back to nature' brigade, who have been speaking from 'insight' rather than hard facts. And that is the whole point of this thesis; that social comment and criticism from the armchair, without facts, is false and dangerous. Wrapping it up in fancy words and lovely literature only serves to intensify the error. Offering social criticism without factual basis is about as fruitful as trying to blow bubbles without water; all you get is a rush of hot air. And, in conclusion, one of this has any place in s-f, at all. In my opinion for what it may be worth, this is what has been wrong with s-f of late; far too much make-it-up-as-you-go-along-science, serving merely as a hook to hang some 'literature' out to dry. Too much 'fiction' and not nearly enough 'science'. They are all trying to do it the easy way. I wish they would stop it.

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\*\* THE END \*\*

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JOHN BAXTER says on reading THE HUMAN EQUATION, "If the fatuity of THE HUMAN EQUATION isn't immediately apparent to everybody who reads it, I'm sure nothing I can say will have much effect. But some of the more blatant inaccuracies and distortions just beg to be hit, so....

First it is established that the writer is (a) extremely knowledgeable, and (b) possessed of a Great Truth that he will graciously pass onto us. We then glimpse this "difficult-to-follow" argument, which, summed up in a few words, is (a) the function of literature is social criticism, (b) social criticism is, in effect, the expression of an opinion, and as (c) very few people have the qualifications to express an opinion, therefore (d) only those who Know should be given the opportunity, those who Know in this case being sociologists.

Having emerged reeling from this clash of vast concepts I spent all of two seconds searching for the flaw in his reasoning. As usual in these cases the first and basic assumption is the shaky one. "First" he says, "it is taken for granted that the function and duty of the serious writer is social criticism." Indeed? This must come as a distinct shock to the hundreds of thousands of writers who feel that the function of a writer is to express himself in a manner as pleasant to his own emotions as to those of his readers. Nobody writes for anything, unless one includes propaganda merchants, preachers and polemicists in general. As anybody who has written anything from a cartoon caption to a novel knows full well, one writes to satisfy a need. And readers read for entertainment.

However, one reads Rackham as a sort of mental flagellation. The errors and contradictions are as thick and irritating as nettles. Commenting on my editorial, Rackham says "Learning, training, skills, scientific observation, data, facts - no, you don't need them. Erudition and insight, that's the stuff..." Yet the dictionary defines "erudition" as "the state of being learned; knowledge gained by study." and "insight" as "the power of seeing into and understanding things; practiced knowledge." Does one have to teach him English as well as logic? Later, we have this gem. "the four men quoted are estimable gentlemen with massive qualifications - but qualifications for what? If we leave out Mumford's engineering and Russell's physics and math..." Well, what if we leave out Rackham - 's 35 years of SF and associated reading? What right has he to comment? And so it goes on. In one place, Lewis Mumford is "an engineer", in another "an architect". Actually he is a town planner, and if Rackham doesn't know the difference then I'm glad he will never have the opportunity to build a house for me.

Rackham is a demagogue. It is common knowledge that he was barred from the letter column of NEW WORLDS because of his insulting and unprovoked attacks on another writer, and that he is cordially disliked by a large proportion of fan and prodrom. His qualifications as a "serious" writer are nonexistent, as is his authority to speak about any subject requiring sense and logic. But why bother to build up evidence - he convicts himself far better everytime he opens his mouth.



I should perhaps explain that an advance copy of John Rackham's article was sent to John Baxter to enable him to make his own comment on the article in the same issue as it appeared. Since frequently there is a long period between issues this seems the only fair way to ensure each participant in such an argument should be given his right-ful opportunity to both criticise and defend himself. The opinions expressed are of course those of the two writers themselves.

Does anyone know the present whereabouts of William Rotsler last heard of photographing nudes for the American men's magazines? And Pierre Versins? I would like to send them both copies of this issue in which their work appears.

Seth Johnson, 339 Stiles Street, Vaux Hall, New Jersey 07088, U.S.A. will shortly through reasons of changing address be forced to dispose of his science fiction collection of some 300 fine hardcovers and these are for sale to anyone with either £70 English money or 200 dollars American. This is a mere fraction of the original cost and a real bargain to any collecting fan who has the actual money. Owing to the shortage of space at his proposed new address Seth will unfortunately be only able to sell and not trade. Anyone interested is recommended to write to Seth as soon as possible. By the time this appears he may in fact have already moved but requests will be forwarded.

Jim Cawthorn has taken an unusual step in artwork this issue in combining two different illustrations by two different artists and making them into one illustration. The effect on pages 10 and 24 will be seen to be most unique. The face of the man on page 10 is in fact a self portrait of the artist Robert E. Gilbert himself.

I also have a quantity of duplicate science fiction acquired in recent years, mostly American, which is available for trade for other pocketbooks if anyone is interested. 3 or 4 pages of titles available from yours truly in the editorial address.

A proposed new fanzine as yet untitled from D. West, 44 Park Road, Bingley, Yorks. Editors requested to contact him. If time permits a circular will be sent out with this issue with more details.

With the demise of Nova Publications I am pleased to say we shall also be getting rid of their Circulation Department which is the most incompetent I have ever encountered in any magazine, never once have I got the correct order I have sent for from this department. I hope they are not being transferred to Roberts and Vinter the new publishers. Goodbye Mrs. B.J. Whiteacre, thank God you are going! You should work for PLAYBOY magazine, they never send out the right copies at the right time either!

And so the last lines of the last stencil, I hope the issue receives a little more enthusiasm than last time. It seems a pity that work, especially of the quality of Jim's should go thus unenthusiased.



Jim  
27.1.63

