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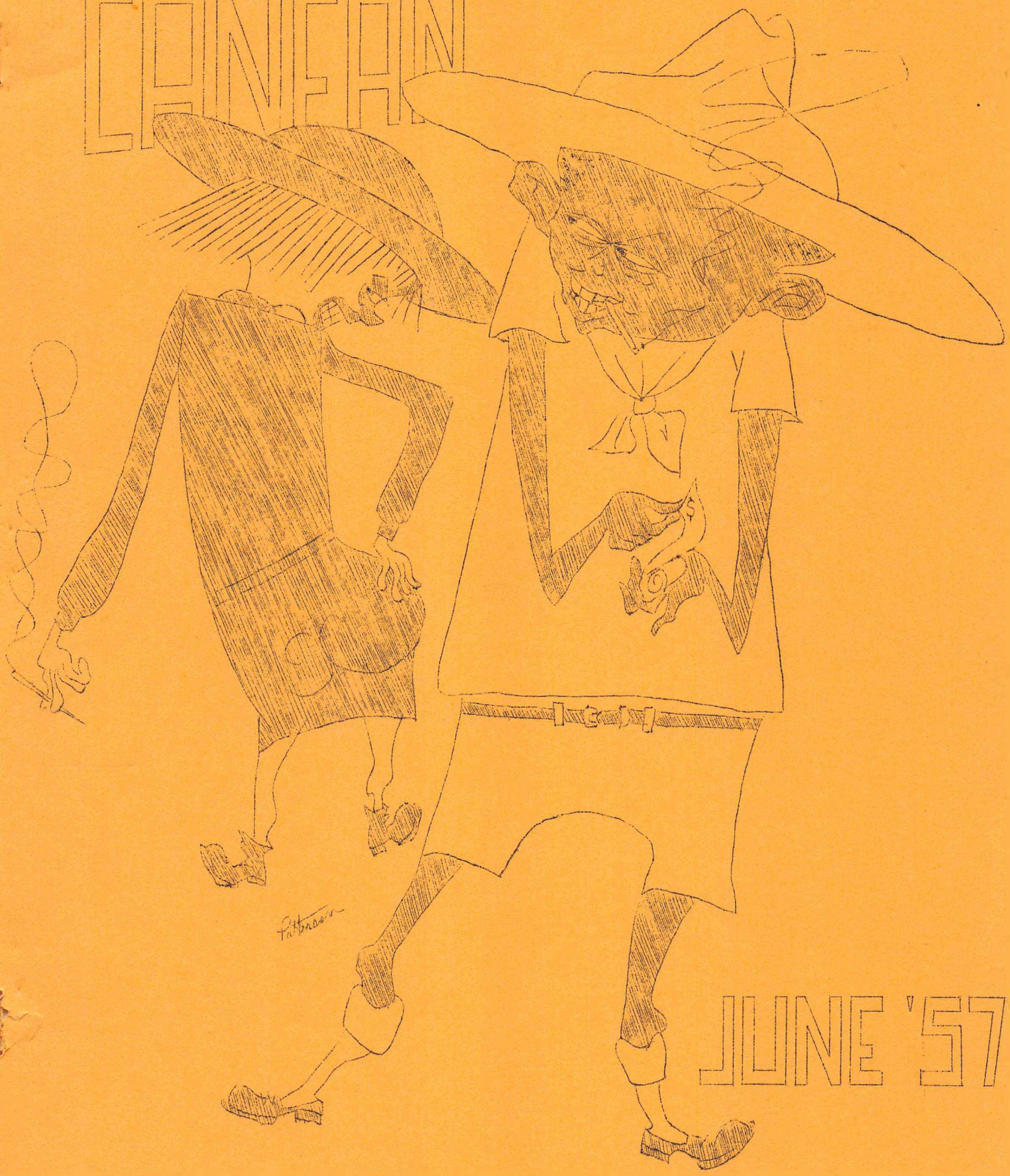

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This issue will be in circulation in time for the Midwest Con and you will notice that the very first item will bring back many a fond memory of the doings on Indian Lake. I regret that it is so short, but then again that might be a good point. WDG

THE LONG VIEW originally appeared under the title of "Literary Criticism & Off-Trail Literature" in Volume One - Number Four of The Gorgon - 1947.....

This is a previously unpublished report on the 1951 Midwest Con, which took place on May 19th and 20th. This is a first impression report and was prompted by the previous favorable remarks about other reports appearing in Canfan of a similar vein. Chester Cuthbert of Winnipeg was responsible for bringing this blackmail material out into the open after being stored in his vault for some six and a half years.

The Place - Russell's Point - Indian Lake - Ohio, U. S. A.

On the map this paradise is situated about 130 miles south of Detroit or around 120 miles north of Cincinnati.

Early arrivals started to appear at 6.00 PM on the evening of the 18th. Uncle Ned and myself officially walked in the front door first.

Up on the second floor they placed us across the hall from Bea Mahaffey (Other Worlds) and her sister Patti. Then we ran into two hucksters, namely; the ever jolly Ted Dikty (Shasta) and Lloyd Eshbach (Fantasy Press) plus some of their friends whom at the moment I didn't know.

Then a wonderful thing happened our room was staked out as the bar, which it remained for the rest of the weekend.

Later in the evening more of the early birds arrived. Our room became a hum of chin-wagging. I met the host, Dr. Barrett and he in turn did some fast introductions all around the room. At this point I started serving up fire water and as time went on the conversations went from proof-reading, sales, word rates, sex and Bob Tucker.

Saturday I managed to get on my two feet by noontime. I heard that Tucker had arrived (red shirt and all) and a character from Cleveland called "Harlan". This little lad caused all sorts of talk which I couldn't quite comprehend. Then I actually met Tucker with his razor sharp memory. He recalled me at the Torcon which I thought was pretty good recall as I was only in evidence Saturday evening and Sunday. Then Betty Sullivan (NFFF Librarian), Ollie Sarri and his beautiful wife, Nancy Moore, Julie May (SF International) all appeared and I started taking colored movies of the historical event.

At this point it was unanimous that Beatley's Hotel was an ideal spot for another Midwest Con. Plenty of space for discussions and a private atmosphere. (The Hotel had not yet opened for the regular tourist trade)

Saturday evening Dr. Barrett presented us with a film depicting an imaginative picture of Mars, all done with models plus a powerful musical score as the background.

By this time we had a collection of eighty odd people all enjoying themselves, mixing, talking and speculating.

After the film a lucky draw was the feature. Such items as the cover from A. Merritt's Fantasy, the cover showing a scene from "The Smoking Land". Other items in this calibre followed.

After this through the efforts of Tucker and McKeown a poker game started on the second floor in our room. In other rooms bull-sessions started. Then for some unknown reason the poker game started to float to other rooms and as soon as it went down the hall I went into my room and immediately had a few glasses of water.

It was at this point that a girl also stopped by and joined me. A few minutes later a very likeable type came in and started to do a first rate take-off on some Gilbert & Sullivan lyrics, he later turned out to be Randy Garrett. This little bit went on for about two hours, and being brought up on G & S I can honestly say that I got a great bang out of this session.

A little later (a few drinks later, this being one way of measuring time) I started talking to Betty Sullivan, and a few drinks later I was still getting along with Betty Sullivan. I got the lowdown on the NFFF and Betty got the lowdown on Canadians.

Sometime around the wee hours when I was about to go to bed the door burst open and somebody called "The Bat" flew in saying that her purse was under a bed. Ned looked over at me and I looked back, he had shorts on and I had nothing. Frankly it all happened so fast I wasn't sure that it happened at all. I was told other stories later on that I did a little door knocking after this episode, but I still don't believe it.

I'm sorry to say I missed the Sunday-noon banquet, but I understand that Ollie Sarri was in the same boat.

Ned told me that Tucker, Dr. Barrett and others made short speeches all pertaining to fandom. Lloyd Eshbach talked about future plans for Fantasy Press, notable was the fact that he was lowering the price from $3.00 to $2.75. This is almost unheard of these days as just about everything in the publishing business is going up.

Around 5.00 PM some of the gang started to leave and by Sunday evening there was about fifteen of us left at Beatley's.

This was the evening that I became acquainted with the B & C and those fabulous steaks, onion rings and all the good things that makes it very hard to leave the table because of added weight.

Around 8.30 PM our room again became a centre and up went the card tables. The top of the dresser was jammed with unfinished bottles that the other members had left in our room before they left.

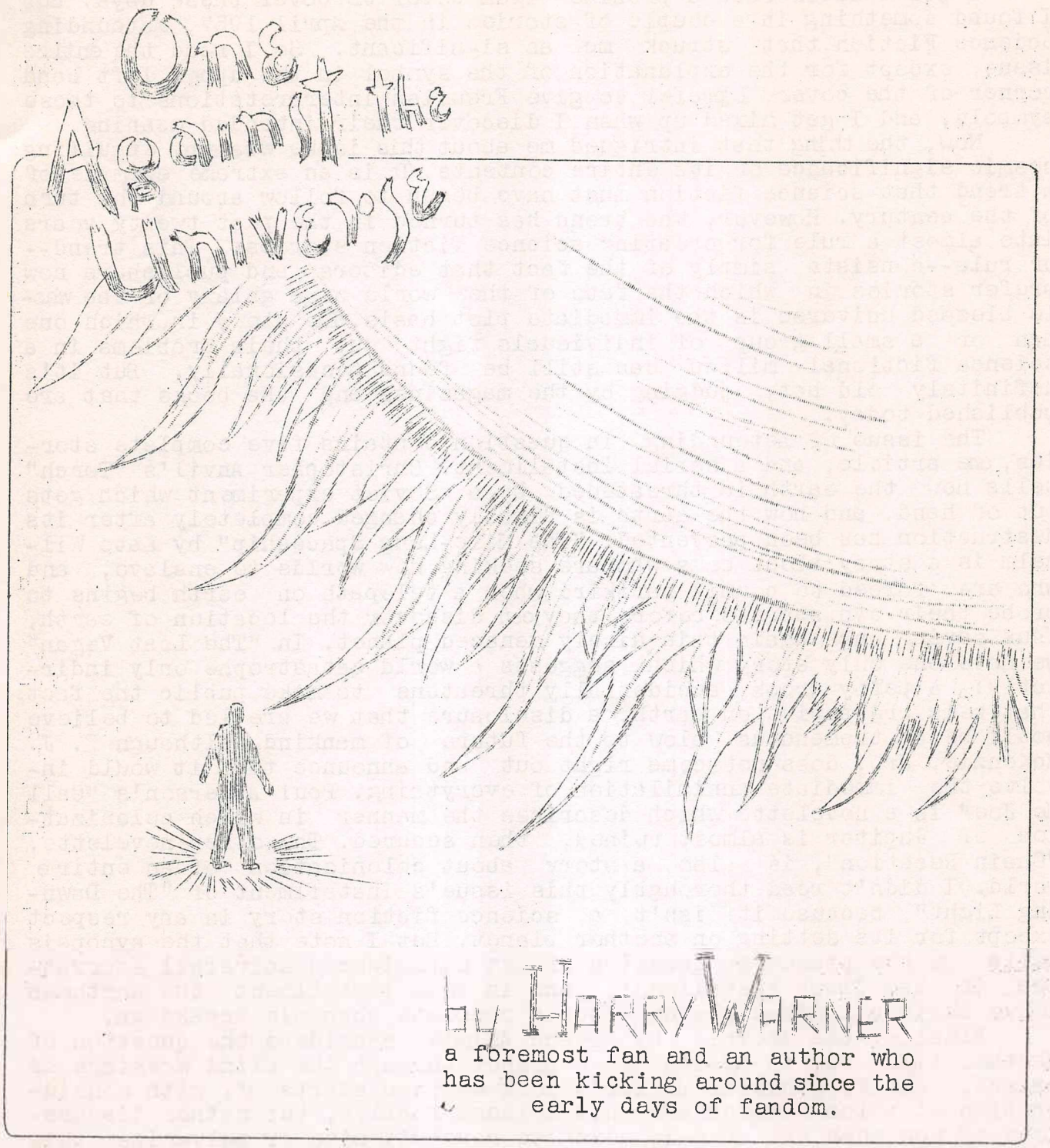
I again, and rightfully, assumed the post as barman along with a very able Julie May. Don Ford left in the middle of things, while Ollie and his wife, Uncle Ned, Bea Mahaffey, Ted Dikty, Tucker and some others kept the cards hopping. Dr. Barrett kept the literary end going on the sidelines. Things broke up very quietly at around 12 midnight so that we could all get up the next morning for an early start.

It was a sorry looking group that straggled out the front door the next morning, but there was also that look of we've had one heck of a good time too.

Most of us in this remaining group decided that we would stick together at New Orleans as all of us had made a good solid bond of friendship in these last hours. And the thought of some more of those card games seemed like another very good reason.

Uncle Ned made it back to Toronto by 6.30 PM on the same day and believe me we wasted no time.

(1951) WDG


One Against the Universe
by HARRY WARNER
a foremost fan and an author who has been kicking around since the early days of fandom.

One Against The Universe

I don't often read a prozine from cover to cover these days. But I found something in a couple of stories in the April 1957, Astounding Science Fiction that struck me as significant. So I read the entire issue, except for the explanation of the symbol in the upper left hand corner of the cover. I prefer to give Freudian interpretations to those symbols, and I get mixed up when I discover their intended meaning.

Now, the thing that intrigued me about this issue was the engulfing cosmic significance of its entire contents. It is an extreme example of a trend that science fiction must have begun to follow around the turn of the century. However, the trend has turned in the past twenty years into almost a rule for creating science fiction stories. This trend--or rule--consists simply of the fact that editors and publishers now prefer stories in which the fate of the world or a galaxy or the whole blessed universe is the immediate plot basis. The story in which one man or a small group of individuals fight out their problems in a science fictional milieu can still be found occasionally. But it's definitely old hat, judging by the magazines and the books that are published today.

The issue of Astounding in question contains five complete stories, one article, and a serial installment. Christopher Anvil's "Torch" tells how the earth is threatened by a Soviet experiment which gets out of hand, and how the earth is finally changed completely after its destruction has been prevented. "The Mile-Long Spaceship" by Kate Wilhelm is a story about bems who are seeking new worlds to enslave, and who are forced to commit harikiri when a telepath on earth begins to probe their own secrets before they can discover the location of earth, thus saving once again this direly menaced planet. In "The Lost Vegan" we have the only story which suggests a world catastrophe only indirectly: a petty crook accidentally threatens to make public the fact that bems are active on earth, a disclosure that we are led to believe would be a tremendous blow to the future of mankind, although E. J. McKenzie, Jr., does not come right out and announce that it would involve the immediate annihilation of everything. Poul Anderson's "Call Me Joe" is a novelette which describes the manner in which colonization of Jupiter is almost ruined, then secured. The other novelette, "Chain Reaction", is also a story about colonization of an entire world. I didn't read thoroughly this issue's installment of "The Dawning Light", because it isn't a science fiction story in any respect except for its setting on another planet. But I note that the synopsis tells how the planet in question almost experienced universal starvation in the first installment, and in this installment the earthmen leave their colonized planet after a complete economic breakdown.

Finally, the article by Isaac Asimov considers the question of whether life can be created on a planet through the blind workings of chance, and P. Schuyler Miller's book section starts off with consideration of volumes which are not science fiction, but rather discussions of how much the atom is going to revolutionize or pulverize this planet. And the editorial, using the word "culture" in the most unsemantic way anyone could conceive, wrestles in the throes of trying to prove that every "culture" is doomed even though it doesn't admit it beforehand.

Now, all this is rather a sorrme indictment of the present state of science fiction, I submit. It shows the manner in which science fiction has branched off from the main stream of literature, a branching off that has nothing to do with the disparities in subject matter, but rather in the whole philosophical attitude of the story teller.

In the old days, before science fiction became popular, fiction

consisted of the tales of the struggles of a few persons against other persons or environment or fate or themselves. By extension, the reader or listener to these stories could identify himself with those individuals, or could understand that their problems were those that are common to all humans in a similar environment. Thus, we have Hamlet turning into an example of the universal problem of what to do about a wrong when only another wrong seems a fit solution to the problem. We have a group of ordinary Englishmen who are helpless before the endless mechanism of British courts in "Bleak House", the symbol of the preposterous situations in which any layman finds himself when he attempts to deal with the mysterious grinding of legal procedures in any nation. "The Naked and the Dead" consists of a handful of soldiers battling for their lives on a tiny island during World War II, never even encountering much enemy action in the course of the volume. The theme of "Moby Dick" could be summed up in two sentences, with respect to the plot. The significant thing is this: In all those stories and in a million other pieces of fiction, the outcome would have almost no perceptible effect on the future of mankind, even of the nation which contains the action. Hamlet does not try to put on regular nightly performances with his father's ghost in order to stir the consciences of the entire rotten state of Denmark. Nobody in "Bleak House" dreams of attacking the courts and overthrowing their antiquated procedures. The campaign on the island in "The Naked and the Dead" is settled by a mere accident which has nothing to do with the quality of the fighting men. If Captain Ahab had sunk Moby Dick, instead of vice versa, neither the color of today's whales nor the economic status of the whaling industry would have undergone a transformation. And yet all four of those works are among the greatly admired pieces of writing, for varied reasons. They cast light on a certain time and place in the world's history, by means of satire and symbolism and poetic imagery and photographic descriptive qualities. And the light that they cast bounces back from the stories themselves, illuminating things in the reader's own experience, even penetrating into his own personality and mind. This is the peculiar ability of literature, its dual functions of entertainment and enlightenment. Is it necessary to ignore completely this ability of good story-telling, when writing science fiction stories, and describe the world-shattering events and little else?

I haven't run any surveys on the matter, but I think it's obvious that the trend to cosmic events in science fiction has occurred within recent decades. Nineteenth century science fiction shows little trace of any such tendency. Frank Reade, Jr., the Jules Verne characters, the people in the Edgar Allan Poe stories had their experiences without affecting greatly the world in which they operated. Even the earlier H. G. Wells stories were fairly evenly divided between the two types of science fiction, which might be designated for the sake of convenience as local and cosmic science fiction. "The Time Machine", "The Island of Dr. Moreau", and "The Invisible Man" are excellent examples of stories in which civilizations depended on the action only by indirect implication or not at all. Later, of course, Wells specialized in the cosmic science fiction story, even inventing some of its themes in "Things To Come" and "War of the Worlds" and "The Holy Terror". Again without statistical backing, I have the firm impression that local science fiction could be found much more frequently in the prozines during the 1930's than today. It's hard to imagine a prozine publishing today Dr. David Keller's "The Lost Language", a completely non-significant account of how a little boy grew up speaking in a tongue that nobody could understand and how scientists determined what had happened.

It would be easy to blame the change in dominance on the simple fact that the more elementary themes of science fiction get replaced

by more complex themes, as the plainer topics become hackneyed. But I suspect there's a more serious reason for the decline of local science fiction. By chance, there's a hint to the reason in the editorial in the same issue of Astounding that I summarized several paragraphs ago. (And I'd like to emphasize that I'm not picking on Astounding or on Campbell; almost any recent prozine issue could have served equally well as the basis for this sermon.) Trying to define a culture, the editor says: "It is not composed of individuals; it's composed of the interactions of individuals". There, in a nutshell, lies the frightening basis for the increased emphasis on cosmic science fiction in the past few decades. Local science fiction deals with the individual. The individual doesn't matter these days, to so many persons working in science or interested in science.

Remember, the great change was really becoming evident just after, possibly even during, the First World War. Local science fiction has almost vanished from the magazines since the Second World War. Those wars were the very embodiment of the same situation that lies behind cosmic science fiction. One man couldn't do much in the First World War; he couldn't do anything in the Second World War. Men flew aeroplanes as teams or two or three in 1918; two or three men couldn't have gotten a large bomber close to its target in 1945. The First World War produced the first general use of new fighting devices in several centuries; The Second World War produced the weapon that made all previously known weapons seem like child's toys. By 1945, the world knew that man could wipe out his own civilization; before 1914, the pessimists simply warned that a general war might ruin European civilization. I'm afraid that local science fiction has been pushed aside by cosmic science fiction because readers find the former too tame, in the face of the actual events of the past fifty years.

It probably is useless to try to contend that local science fiction is vanishing because writers don't create it. My own writing experience leads me to believe that it's vanishing because editors won't buy it; presumably, they don't buy it because use of cosmic science fiction causes circulation to rise. Checking back over the sales I've made and the rejections I've suffered, I can find case after case in which two stories were equal in merit in every way, except for the local or cosmic category. Stories about a quiz contest in which whole worlds were prizes or a spaceship containing the last living male and female or the efforts of clairvoyant people to become the predominant race have sold. I've not been able to sell the story about the bum who found a gadget permitting him to walk through solid walls or the yarn about the old geezer who set out to make trees popular again in a world where wood's usefulness was forgotten or the tale of the man who went to Mars and came back to earth lamenting his inability to see anything, due to breaking his glasses.

If the increasing power of science and the impotence of the individual are the correct reasons for this situation, I don't imagine that we'll be able to change it. Significantly, weird and pure fantasy stories don't seem to have undergone a similar change; the one great exception is the branch of weird fiction based on the Lovecraft mythos, and his elder gods and their threat to the world have a science fiction basis, despite the horror and weird trappings. It is encouraging to note that many local science fiction stories which slip into print immediately become prime favorites. Despite Bradbury's reputation as the world's leading pessimist, a remarkably large proportion of his stories are purely local in nature.

Has anyone read a Russian science fiction story that wasn't cosmic? HW

THAT OLD MOVIE BUG

PART FOUR by WILLIAM D. GRANT
WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES by
Aldo Maggiorotti
who is a well-known expert, in
Toronto, on vintage movies of the past

This particular chapter is also appearing simultaneously in the current issue of John Champion's "FANATTIC"

The other day we received quite a shock. The screening for the particular day was "Lost Horizon". The first thing that occurred in our minds was that this was the long talked about musical version and with misgivings and memories we followed some of our co-workers into the screening room.

It turned out to be the original "Lost Horizon", which after an experimental run in London, Ontario may possibly be released right across the country. In Cleveland, Ohio, this fantasy classic went into a subsequent run house as an experiment and it stayed six weeks. It seems odd that a year and a half earlier at a world SF convention "Lost Horizon" was the late film they showed, in the same city no less.

Quite recently we saw the "The Shrinking Man", which so far has garnered some very fine critical ratings from the top periodicals published in the United States. Universal had this paired with a piece of trash, namely, "The Deadly Mantis". This was to have been a package deal, but attention given "The Shrinking Man" by the critics has forced Universal to split up the dual billing. In fact "The Shrinking Man" is now on its own. Strange are the ways of B budget pictures. This happens once in a while, but in this case the main reasons behind the good reviews are to be found in the climax of the film. For once we are not called upon to witness the usual hearts and flowers ending associated with many minor films. This time we are left to use our imagination. For what it is "The Shrinking Man" will be enjoyed by many outside the circle of SF and Fantasy addicts.

About a month ago we had the pleasure of seeing Emil Jannings in an American film which would be actually from the middle of his career. Jannings was a big man, when he played a role depicting royality, the military or a shrewd tycoon you believed it. And you can also feel that this man was barely tapping his reserves as an actor. The quiet power in his eyes spoke many words, there is only one other actor since that has the same power and that is Jean Gabin.

"The Last Command" was a silent film released late in 1928 and along with Jannings a very young William Powell appeared in the second lead. The girl in the case was Evelyn Brent.

In 1927 Paramount brought Jannings to Hollywood and starred him in six films in the ensuing two years. He was the first actor to receive the Academy Award in 1929 for his portrayals in "The Last Command" and "The Way Of All Flesh". In 1929 Emil Jannings returned to Germany and there made his first "all-talking" English film, "The Blue Angel"; which helped to skyrocket his provocative co-star Marlene Dietrich to international film fame. The English version of "The Blue Angel" played the Tivoli Theatre, Toronto in 1930 and about twenty-five years later the German edition with English sub-titles was shown at the International Cinema in the same city. Critics at the time found Mr.

Jannings' acting rather heavy-handed and outmoded. Despite these post-mortems, Emil Jannings' performances remain forceful character studies with a dramatic and emotional intensity that gave them power and impact still effective today.

Columbia in 1934 put Walter Connolly in a Jannings-type role "Whom The Gods Destroy" but audiences remained unimpressed. This is probably where the American actor lacks the old-country touch. This is not a fault, this is something that has to do with time and tradition. Fox in 1936 starred Jean Hersholt in "Sins of Man" but the only noteworthy result was its introduction of Don Ameche. By 1940 Paramount had a streak of nostalgia and hoped for a repeat of an earlier success. They tried to fit Akim Tamiroff into Jannings' shoes with a remake of "The Way Of All Flesh" but the squeaky results just didn't go. Emil Jannings became head of UFA Films, Berlin, in 1940 - the company which made some of his finest pictures, including "Peter The Great", "Faust", "The Last Laugh" and "Variety".

On the strenght of his affecting and effective performance in Columbia's "Full Of Life", the Metropolitan Opera Basso-buffo Salvatore Baccaloni may play in a remake of "Variety". Perhaps the one actor to come closest to a Jannings characterization is Aldo Fabrizi in the 1950 Italian-made "Professor, My Son". (Fabrizi can also be seen in "Three Steps North" with Lloyd Bridges. This one is now on the TV circuits)

Quite recently I added "Burlesque On Carmen" to my collection of silent films. This is the version that had about twenty minutes added to the total running time. In other words, after Chaplin finished it off as a two-reeler the company that eventually released this epic decided to make a short feature out of it. So using the same backgrounds and the same supporting cast (minus Charlie Chaplin and Edna Purviance) they added another interwoven story starring Ben Turpin. In the main what Chaplin does to Carmen is what the modern day movie goer would call 'murder', but to see this tearing down of a classic via Chaplin is like nothing else on film. It is one of the most unusual Chaplin films I have ever witnessed. It might have been a better film left in its original short version, but the Turpin story has been edited in very sharply. Just looking at it from this angle makes it a must see. The film runs, with additions, around 50 minutes.

Recently we saw the original version of "Robin Hood" and it outshines any of the sound-technicolor versions that followed. It can be picked up on 16mm for $150.00 and half that price on 8mm. On 16mm it is 4400 feet in length (11 full reels) and at silent speed (16 frames per second) runs close to the three-hour mark. We suspect after seeing the film that there could possibly be shorter versions released for general showing, as it really doesn't start to gather power until after the first hour. In fact, some of us contemplated a version with an introduction tacked on the beginning of the sixth reel and starting at this point. Some of you may not like that kind of thinking, but get in a situation some time and imagine a three-hour silent show and a restless audience. By the way, most of you probably know that Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., was the star; and his athletic feats make the Errol Flynns and Burt Lancasters look sick. In the supporting cast we have Wallace Beery and Alan Hale along with Enid Bennett as the female.

I have said this before, but if you are a serious collector of 8mm or 16mm film (silent-vintage) you should write to William Donnachie of 222 Virginia Avenue, Westmont, N. J. Donnachie is a collector de-luxe, he supplies libraries, schools and amateur collectors. He has prints of "Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde" with Barrymore and the original "Wizard Of Oz" with Larry Semon and Oliver Hardy. WDG/AM

THE MAELSTROM

LARS HELANDER
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Eskilstuna 3
Sweden

Regarding the reprint stuff. There's been some controversy about this as I gathered from previous letters. However, from my point of view this glimpse of Canadian Fandom in the forties was most interesting. Tucker's CORRESPONDENCE PIECE I liked the best.....The thing I didn't particularly like was Conner's ON THE EDGE OF UNKNOWN POWER. Well, perhaps it's wrong to say I didn't like it as I haven't read it thoroughly yet, but in any case it didn't inspire to a closer study. This article might have fitted in nicely somewhere else, but not in a fanzine of Canfan's type.....Being quite interested in film as a form of art and such I found THAT OLD MOVIE BUG most interesting. What you say there about old prints and things brings me to that "fabulous news item" you mentioned in THE MAELSTROM about a method making it possible to put sound and colour to old films. Now that's nothing but, more or less, a sacrilege, and I don't like that idea at all. That would be analogous to transcribing Shakespeare's plays into Modern English, or improve old masterpieces of art---add better colours, or transmute it to fit a more modern technique or something. Or trying to improve the works of the old masters of architecture by the means of cast iron concrete.....Adding colours to old black and white films would also completely spoil the photographic effects, effects that were possible just because of the fact that the film in question is b/w. All the light effects based upon the various shades by force of contrast and the Lichtdunkel (now what do you call that? Light-darkness or sumpn?) will be completely destroyed. Similar artistic finesse might, of course, be obtained also when putting colour to such a film, but in that case the originality of the work is entirely spoiled.....And adding sound to a soundless film will distort the relation between the acting of the actors and the reaction of the public. The players had to base their way of acting upon the knowledge that they were to express the whole action of the film with it, without the aid of the spoken word. The photographers had also to bear in mind that the whole story had to be told in visual images only, and many of these silent films are masterpieces in the art of expressing a course of action in the mute photographic medium. Adding sound to these films would be the same as adding an explanatory text to every painting. The aim of art paintings and of silent films is to express something, whatever that might be, visually.....So, bearing all this in mind, I still don't think that this was a "fabulous news item". I think it was a distressing news item, about as silly as the American proposition of furnishing the pyramids with escalators in order to make them more attractive to tourists.

Well now, perhaps I should have been a little clearer about the films that will be pioneered into this new process. First of all the six films selected are from the 1924-27 era of films. Next, all of them have sub-titles and the people in them are not professionals, actually they are people shown

in their own natural backgrounds. The films are being supervised by the original producers, namely Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack. Two gentlemen who have contributed some movie landmarks to the Hall of Fame in the past and they will probably continue for years to come.....Now about colour - I don't know as I have yet to see the results. But in 1944 while in the Air Force I saw a lense that in some way incorporated the three primary colours in ground glass. I actually saw this lense project what I would call a first rate colour picture from a black and white original.....The enormity of this demonstration on those who saw this display was slightly staggering. What it would have done to the photographic industry wouldn't take much guessing. The idea was purchased outright and buried all within a matter of a few weeks.....My feeling is that this new processing idea from England may be part of this same idea I saw some thirteen years ago, if it is, the colour results will equal anything on the market today. It is quite easy to see that this new process will be controlled, because to make it available would be courting disaster as far as the manufacture and processing of colour film goes.....Another thing I have a print of "Grass" (the first film to get the new process) with sub-titles and to see a version in colour with music and narration just sort of leaves me in a mood of anticipation.....However this could be carried too far, like anything that turns out to be a good thing. One thing that will protect this over indulgence is the fact that the process is no good wherever make-up has been used, thus it can only be applied to documentary, sport or travelogue type films...WDG

JOHN CHAMPION
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The cover on Canfan #33 was most agreeable, but all of Pat's work I've seen so far has been, for that matter. And printed yet? How else to get such impecable reproduction.....Kent should be a little more careful in what he says; viz: "The new crop of youngsters seem incapable of replacing the active old timers." He and I are both in that "new crop of youngsters," and while I won't say anything about myself, I don't think it wise to criticize a group when you yourself are a member of it, unless you include yourself in the criticism. It sounds too much like snobbery--all too easily people get the idea from such statements that the person who says them is trying to set himself above his compeers, and thus gets looked down on. I'm not calling Kent down; just warning him. There are ways to criticize, but this is not a good one.....As far as Redd Boggs' letter goes, I agree that a use of nothing but reprints can become tiring if carried to extremes, but on the other hand there are plenty of newer fans who have not read the classics among fanzines and would like to see the better items reprinted---me included. Offering to write articles, eh? All right, Bill, I'll take you up on that. I'll be most glad to have you write me a fannish article on movies, etc. You asked for it.....You have scooped me. This is slightly disconcerting. In the coming issue of FAN-attic, you see, I have devoted part of my editorial to a discussion of "Baby Doll" and similar "adult" films. Happily, though, we have covered more or less different aspects of the matter. Your handling of it was most interesting. I didn't get to see the film and obtained a more or less garbled version of the story and the excitement it created through newspaper articles.....Much as I would

like to go into detail in commenting on ON THE EDGE OF UNKNOWN POWER, I have to beg off. The main criticisms I have are that it isn't too clear in spots, and the author seems to take a little too much for granted in his conclusions. Aside from this, I enjoyed reading it; scientific articles are rather rare in fanzines these days. And it did provoke though.....THAT OLD MOVIE BUG would be informative to those interested in this sort of thing; collecting home movies. I did get quite a bit out of the information on Chaplin, etc; but I just don't think that fandom as a whole would care too much. Don't let me tell you what to publish, since I have enough trouble with my own fanzine, but let's call it a calculated opinion.....VOYAGE OF THE ASTRALS was ---well, sort of---er, dull. In its original context no doubt the effect was much more pleasing, but when you reprint you have to take care that the material isn't too esoteric as far as modern fandom is concerned. Rather heavy-handed humor, also.....The Tucker story was kind of amusing, all-over-ly, though the plot (well, idea---shall we say) was nothing special. It might have been in 1944, but nowadays this type of thing has been done far too much. But I will say this--taken with others of its type, CORRESPONDENCE PIECE is better than most..... The main trouble with THE AFTER-LIFE is that it just doesn't go anywhere! Man thinks about afterlife, death, etc., and their various aspects, wants proof, then he goes and dies. End of story. It reads like an introduction to something longer.....THE MIRROR was by far the best of these four stories. Well-written, competently handled, and the ending was worth reading the story for. The main thing is that it holds together; the plot-gimmick is plausible if you accept certain conditions. It follows naturally from the rest of the story, but isn't self-evident.....Canfan-as-a-whole: not top ten, but better than average, especially for a more-or-less serious fanzine. And: better appearing than most. Tell me something---how does a SerConzine like this manage to exist in the middle of so many insurgents? Seems to me you'd have trouble doing this; or perhaps Raeburn, Steward et al. aren't quite as utterly trufannish as it seems.

First of all about the SerConzine slant in Canfan that has puzzled a few others besides John. The policy was and is the same as originally laid down by Beak Taylor in 1943 and it has stayed in effect as an unwritten gentleman's agreement with each subsequent editor. Canfan will continue to be the outlet for the airing of just about any subject under the sun that is printable. As for catering to fandom in general with "their kind of meat" you can see that our policy just doesn't lean that way. The reason being that Canfan has had more responce from ex-fandom and semi-fans on the fringe. The age of this journal is probably another factor and a curiosity by new readers to catch glimpses of the past through our pages.....Now don't get me wrong. I welcome any contributions from fandom or for that matter from any source. Ideas, thoughts, stories, comments are the backbone of any fanzine. I feel that this form of presentation in a sense is an unrestricted outlet. Censorship, limited policy, personal likes and dislikes of the editor do not hinder the would be writer in the pages of Canfan. Quite naturally there is a line of common decency that will not be stretched too far out of line to accommodate something way out of line, this is the only restriction. To date we have had to apply this rule very slightly to what I would call slanderous remarks

against an individual.....So there you are.....WDG

RICHARD A. KOOGLE
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USA

To say the least you put out a very nice 'zine, and in a sense we both are interested in the same thing, namely movies. I wish that you would keep the news and comments coming--to Ufa that is.....Your report on "Baby Doll" was very good in compiling, but I thought your views were out of place. For example you stated that the film had a "plotless story". Have you seen any other material by Tennessee Williams - say the movie "The Rose Tatoo"? Williams tries, and with a good deal of success to present characters in incidents that they cannot get out of, even though they want to. He is trying to show society as he sees it, with all it's horrors, and to show that it cannot go on (SF "satire" writers do the same thing - Orwell's "1984", Huxley's "Brave New World", etc.). I do think, however, that you are right about Cardinal Spellman's talk against the film. Not that I was against the talk, but I was against the publicity it got.....Bill Conner's article, I thought, was pretty sound, although I would have liked to have gotten some math equations to see the meaning behind the meaning. The short stories were well written except that you could figure out all the endings before you got through with the story.

You may laugh but since the "Baby Doll" article several additional provinces have banned the film in Canada. One province banned it because of adverse publicity and critical comments created in other areas. Which now means a picture can pass the censor board in British Columbia and be shown, but if comments from other centres become loud enough the film can later be banned and withdrawn from circulation. All I can say is that these people lack faith in their own judgement and are certainly inadequate as far as ruling what the people of that particular province should see.....WDG

A. F. LOPEZ
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USA

Just finished your special bonus issue of Canfan. It was very interesting as usual - especially your comments concerning the "Baby Doll" controversy.... I saw the movie (tho I normally would not have, if there'd been no controversy). I did not get the impression that "Baby Doll" had been seduced - at least not from the movie version. I haven't read the story itself, so I can't tell about that. That bird would have had to have been a contortionist to seduce the girl in that crib!.....My personal reaction after seeing the movie was "much ado about nothing".

WILLIAM D. CONNER
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The cover of the 15th Anniversary Issue of Canfan will surely be recognized as one of the most interesting and original covers ever to appear on a fanzine. Pat Patterson's artwork is swell, but you should accept the credit for the idea. After all, you are something of a ghoul when editing Canfan. But the quality of the material you "dig up" is usually worthy of seeing print again.....Bloch's FANTASY AND PSYCHOLOGY was interesting reading. It caused me to wonder what some of my own subconsious motives for reading SF could be. The Freudian and Jungian methods of "head shrinking" are now being found to be superficial and inadequate; so the psychological theory of this article is dated. My own motives for reading SF have nothing to do with the

"father image" or sexual symbology, I'm sure. If I lived by my emotions rather than by reflective thinking, mayhap the old boy's theories would apply to me in some way or another. I'm interested in the sciences and I wouldn't say that this is the primary reason for my being a SF fan. It is most certainly one good reason though. I think that a majority of SF fans are individualists, non-conformers, and in general, people who are bored with the conventionalism of everyday life. Now a psychologist is concerned with why these people are this way and why they read SF. I'll bet that when the science of the mind is more fully developed, it will become evident, if such a study were ever made; that not too many people's motives for reading SF will be similar. I'm convinced that the human mind is the most complex thing in the cosmos. Especially the female human mind! Spaceships, phallic symbols? Fie. It would seem to me that the subconscious mind can do a lot better than that when the subject of sex is in mind! The brilliant scientist, the father image? Triple Fie. If any astrologer explained to me why I read SF, I would know just as much as if a psychologist did so; and maybe even more, if it is true that astrology may be a psionic tool. The science of mentaphysics is in it's infancy, and I doubt if it will mature if the science of the mind and psionics are not merged into one framework of inquiry.....I won't comment much on the rest of the issue because I didn't find anything in it that I feel moved to comment on. This is not to imply that I was dissatisfied with the rest of the issue. SIDELIGHTS ON THE MERRITTALS had my interest dispite the fact that I have never read any of Merritt's work. There is quite a bit of material on the mythos of the lost civilizations and lost city lore that should interest fantasy and SF fans besides those Merritt fans whom the article is intended for.....I know you are an old movie fan; but do you also have a weakness for those fabulous old horror movies of the fourties? I'm not a movie collector; but if I ever amass a bit of wealth, I intend to collect some of my favorite old fantasy films. "Frankenstein" and "Dracula" would be a starter and some of the many fantasy films in which Karloff and Lugosi appeared as a team or seperately. I wonder if you have any of these films? Many of them have been released for TV, and I have seen some via this medium for the first time. Lugosi played in several adaptations of Poe's tales such as the film, "The Raven", in which he played a mad brain surgeon who's madness was that he had a soft spot for Poe's devices of torture and the hero's girl, naturally. Another of my favorite old fantasy films had the title of "The Missing Body", which is very inappropriate, and which is probably a re-release title. Karloff was an ex-general of the Austro-Hungarian Army who lived in an abandoned fort, which he had built a futuristic house at the highest point. Lugosi's role was that of an ex-army officer under Karloff who knew that Boris had sold out to the enemy and thereby murdered thousands of his countrymen. I don't completely remember all of the plot but Lugosi's daughter and wife are held in suspended animation by Karloff also. Some of the best scenes in this film are those showing Karloff's black mass with a congregation of fellow devil worshipers. There is also a caphonic pipe organ solo by Karloff that is weird. I don't know what your opinion is Bill, but I think they just don't make SF and Fantasy films one tenth as good as these anymore.....To sum up, I will say that the 15th Anniversary Issue of Canfan represents a noble effort in the pursuit of a labor of love and results in an outstanding issue.

> I'll go even farther, the horror films of the thirties strike me even better. While some of the films of the silent era are still better.....WDG

A L A N D O D D
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England

An exceptionally interesting cover on the September issue which you've credited to Dave Jenrette which I think was rather modest of you as when I met Dave some weeks back he said that all he'd done of the cover was the girl in the bottom left hand corner and that you must take the credit for the rest. You certainly take a great deal of time on the artwork. You didn't put in Bloomsbury though, in the map, which is where the convention is to be held as far as I know. Come to think of it -- on looking at the credits I've just seen you did credit yourself with the cover. Ahem-- well-- it did have Dave's name on the cover itself.....In your JOURNEY NORTH I was-horrified to hear you had connections with the ughist advertising film "Tips". I dunno about it amazing the Diktys but I personally consider that anyone connected with such a monstrosity should be put to death in the most painful and slowest method possible. "Tips" is to my mind about as subtle as the Chinese Water Torture. Ugh-- you are a positive villain for having any connection at all with them - these films I mean. I was complaining to Boyd Raeburn about this horrible advertising firm JARO that you worked for and he patiently - pointed out to me that it was a short for the J. Arthur Rank Organization. Believe it or not, I used to work for the London Branch of the same company in a very minor position though. From what you mentioned in Canfan I gather you must be something of a big wheel even though you don't actually say so. Are you the booking chief by any chance?.....On the subject of Fritz Lang you'll see from the enclosed clippings that he was actually here a few months back and it might be of interest to you along with a clipping of the report on the showing of "Le Jour Se Leve" on television here. It apparently couldn't be shown till after a period of ten years had passed and was shown that night between the period when the next ten years ban commences but you're probably familiar with the history of the few remaining copies of this film.....Is it true Toronto Fandom doesn't dare to get on the phone to you lest they be overwhelmed with a spate on old movies? Never mind-- you can always talk to me about them... but I still never heard of "Montana Mike".....It seems that the various odd film pieces in Canfan have taken up my attention a lot more than the majority of articles that I had intended to mention. Still, although there wasn't anything outstanding I enjoyed most of it. (The following are clippings enclosed with the above letter)

TELEVIEW by Cecil Wilson: Television reclaimed a lost classic last night by showing us Marcel Carne's film, "Le Jour Se Leve." It occupied 90 minutes of the BBC's peak viewing time, and for my money the performances of Jean Gabin, Arletty, Jacqueline Laurent, and the late Jules Berry as the tragically entangled lovers deserved every minute of it..... The killer who locks himself in a room while the police lay siege and the crowds gather tensely in the street below was familiar long before this film was made in 1939. He also had braved it out since then in the Hollywood version known as "The Long Night". (with Henry Fonda).....But I can recall no other seige that flashed us back so compellingly to the drama of love and hate leading up to the killing.....

Newspaper Excerpt: In London is a man with a name to send shivers down filmgoers spines: Fritz Lang, director of "M", "The Spy", "Metropolis", "Woman In The Window".....His films -- packed with nightmare suspense -- have made him Alfred

Hitchcock's chief rival for the title of Hollywood's Bogeyman No. L.....Now in his 60's, Mr. Lang is a genial giant of a man with a strong profile, an accent which still has a hint of his native Vienna, and a monocle which seems as much a part of him as the keen eye behind it.....His trip to London is to do research for an historical film he hopes to make in India. It is his first visit here for 23 years. London as seen through Fritz Lang's monocle: "A fascinating city. I must make a film here some day. I keep seeing a house with an odd looking staircase or a dark corner that sparks my imagination.....

BETTY KUJAWA
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Indiana, USA

I certainly admire Pat Patterson's work!.....Bloch's speech was a real treat and fine to have around to quote to non-fen. All your reprints are well worth reprinting.....Now I don't particularly adore Merritt but that article was truly fascinating! The part about Metalanim and Nan-Matal had me spellbound. Usually I know about such enigmas but this one is news to me. Now I'll have to get down to the library at Notre Dame and read more about it.....The FRITZ LANG article, of course, interested me greatly. Hope some day I'll actually get to see "Metropolis" - have stills from same that, as you say, are marvels of geometric precision.....Once in High School (must have been about '39 or '40) in our Drama Class we were treated to an old old silent horror film. Symbolic as heck - think it might have been a surrealistic version of "Fall Of The House Of Usher". You'd see giant coffins looming up in space - floating by like ocean liners in a murky fog. It was all very eerie and ghastly - have never forgotten it. Think there was also a recurrent theme of wilting flowers, maybe roses. There wasn't a sound in the school room - everyone there seemed enthralled by it.....Speaking of monsters - Tuesday night I was really carried back to the days of my youth. Saw "Son of Kong" and I was amazed at how much of it I had remembered. Also saw "Love Finds Andy Hardy." It was quite a jolt to see a youthful Rooney.....Another one was the "Big Store" with the Marx Brothers and the movie is still a howl! We've had three of the old "Thin Man" series to date and that dialogue is still among the best.....What really impressed me, tho, was Robert Montgomery's flair for comedy - we've seen "Hideout" and "The Earl of Chicago" and the man was superb. Obviously I was too young at that time to appreciate the humor and wit.

When Betty mentions these Metro films of the thirties it makes me wish I was a little closer to Rochester, where the same run of films are being shown.....I well remember "The Earl of Chicago" coming to Toronto as the screen attraction along with a stage show. It was booked for one week, day and date with the stage show. Something happened which was unusual for Shea's, the film was held over and by the end of the third week the newspaper advertising was featuring the film instead of the 8 Big Acts. I always remember that this film was void of any female performers, they did manage to show a woman's shapely leg for one short scene. And Montgomery certainly was superb as was Edward Arnold as the crooked double-crossing lawyer, at least as well as I can recall... Another one that has just turned up on TV is RKO's "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" in which Mongomery is paired off with Carole Lombard, this one has quite a few large helpings of slapstick.

Very faintly I remember reading about a German silent-film of 1926 or 1927 vintage and it was called "The Fall Of The House Of Usher". It had a very limited distribution in America on 35mm gauge film versions. In England it can still be found on 9.5mm gauge. I can well imagine that this film could now be found in the United States as part of Film Society Programs which are used in schools that incorperate and recall the art of expressionism that hovered over the German film industry at that time.....Mentioning the Marx Brothers brings to mind a booking I made back in 1950 when I managed a theatre. I dug up two relics starring the Four (4) Marx Brothers, namely; "Animal Crackers" (Paramount 1932) and "Duck Soup" (Paramount 1935). These versions retained all the original dialogue and brother what they got away with by today's standards would leave the censor board gasping. At the time these prints where available only in Southern Ontario and then withdrawn and released on the west coast. They had a very limited run because the music by Kalmar and Ruby was showing its age. I know that both of them went over quite well in my situation because I was catering to an older audience and nostalgia brought quite a few of them out. The boxoffice was the final proof. Them thar days have gone forever.....WDG

PETER B. HOPE
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Bloch's article was interesting. I do not wholly agree with his Freudian interpretation, but he is certainly right in saying that an interested in "pure" science is not the answer. Without wishing to try to define science-fiction, I question his thesis that all science-fiction holds science to be the answer to all problems. Much "Socialogical" science-fiction indeed seems to show the opposite trend. Other stories, also socialogical (and I am particularly thinking of the current serial in Astounding) have as their basis promise the interaction of cultures. There is no value judgement as to which culture is better: the promise is simply that the technological civilization is likely to defeat the more "backward" one.....Examples of this can be found today. A comparison of the last 100 years in Chinese and in Japanese history shows this clearly. Science is not the answer to world problems, indeed it only brings new problems such as overpopulation (due to increased food supply, higher health standards, etc.). But it is absolutely necessary for survival of a culture and development of a nation. (Of course often science tends to destroy a culture that adopts it) To use mathematical language, science is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for successful existance in the modern world.....I see I have been getting away from science-fiction. Anyway, Bloch's idea that "science is purely commercial" has an element of truth. I do not believe that pure scientists want this. They are interested in investigating the physical universe. But science as an aspect of our culture cannot be expected to be independent. Technology and nationalism are the two major ingredients in world affairs today (I think they are more basic than the East-West power struggle). As such, of course, science will be put to political uses. This can be blamed on no one - it is simply a fact of Western culture. .....Bloch's article was well worth reprinting in Canfan.....As for the other articles, I thought the MERRITTALES interesting, did not too much care for the FRITZ LANG article, was amused by Croutch's effort and enjoyed yours.....Then comes ON THE EDGE OF UNKNOWN POWER. The

theory is possible, but why must it be possible to visualize in everyday terms what goes on inside the atom? The two simply are not compatible. I do not see why he defines mass the way he does. To simplify a little, most physicists suspect matter to be a form of energy, not energy a form of mass! But this is merely a matter of definition. More seriously, as I said above, why is it necessary to think in "practical" terms about atomic structure? I do not see why the theory that atoms are composed of almost 100% vacuum is illogical. I certainly agree with Bill Conner that science has much to discover. But I don't think his "mass" theory will prove particularly useful..... MASON IN MONTREAL was amusing. I did not care for the reprint fiction, with the exception of the mildly humorous CORRESPONDENCE PIECE, the stories seemed poor.....Which brings up the question of reprints. In a special issue such as this one they are very good if well-chosen and you did in general choose good material. In a regular issue, one or two reprint items if sufficiently good enhance the issue. But please don't turn Canfan into a strictly reprint zine.

HARRY WARNER, Jr.
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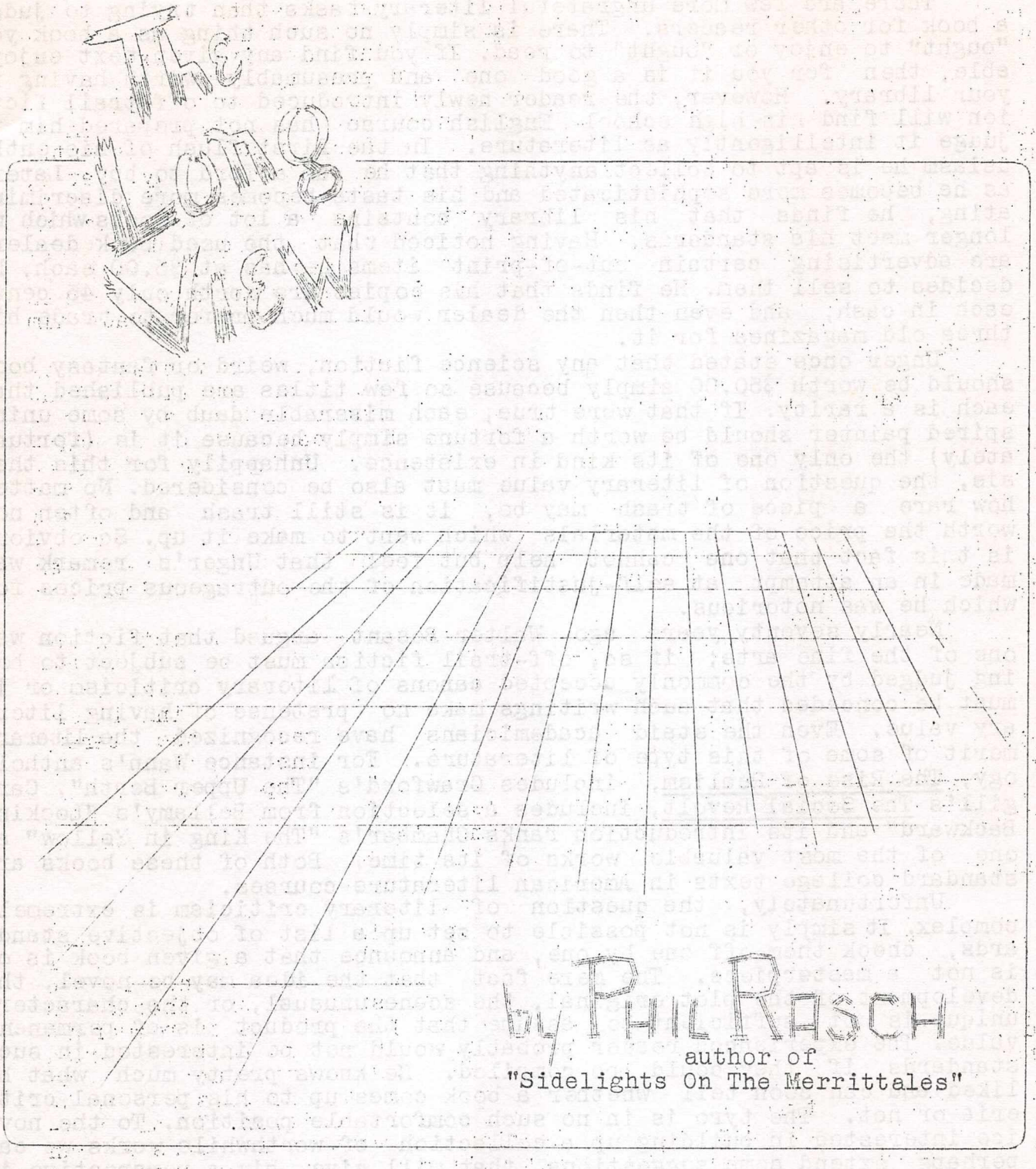
I can't remember when I've enjoyed a large fanzine so much. You did a remarkable job of choosing Canadian materials that are interesting to people who have never been north of the border, and spicing up the local brew with some foreign stuff from this country. In fact, most of the contents of this issue are new to me, even the reprints, because the mid-1940's from which you drew most of the material marks the lowest point of my fan history, and I wasn't seeing many fanzines in those days. I don't think that I had read any of the Merritt articles, for instance. They impressed me very much, more than Merritt's writing itself does in these days, and I wish that I could have known them back in the days when I thought him a master of prose.....It was also very good to read Bloch's justification of fandom and science fiction, although I could quibble with him about some details, as well as the Torcon Memories. These old articles about fandom of the past have an uncanny facility for causing a forgotten individual to bob up in the mind, as clearly and detailed as he was at the time, even though by all rights he should have been completely forgotten by now. And, naturally, nobody could say enough for the front cover, which is a splendid example of fitting the medium to the content.....Incidentally, your film articles are beginning to have their effect on me. For a couple of years, I've been toying with the idea of purchasing a movie camera, and have failed to do it for several changing reasons: first, I didn't know whether I really wanted one; then when I decided I did, there was another long stretch in which I debated over the eternal 8mm vs 16mm question; now that I've pretty well convinced myself that I'd be satisfied with 8mm, I've been delaying because of those mysterious hints in the photo magazines of revolutionary developments about to invade the movie camera field. (And, more practically, the probability that there'll be 8mm reflex focussing cameras on the market at moderate prices within a short time; I don't want to pay quite the price that now prevails.) In any event, the tremendous realization suddenly struck me a month or two ago that it is quite legal, lawful, and moral to purchase a projector before owning a camera, if one so desires. There had been some kind of fixation in my mind that the purchase of the projector is an inevitable sequel to the acquisition of the camera, and it took me some years to realize that it isn't a post hoc, propter hoc arrangement. So I may invest in the projector before long and investigate the world of silent movies for myself.

Under seperate cover I recommended to Harry that he should keep his eye on the advertisements of Peerless Camera in New York. At present they are selling a used Bell & howell Monterey for $39.95. I have seen this 500 watt movie projector up against 750 watt jobs of higher prices and it came out first for the best projected picture. I have seen this model thrown across a room and hit solid flooring and later it still ran perfectly. The last movie projector that I would buy would be a Keystone (up to the end of 1956) and my reason is that the returns for repairs are highest on this machine. The framer and tension on the film is very poor and thus precious film gets a pretty tough beating, whereas this doesn't happen to the same extent on competing makes.....WDG

A R T H U R H A Y E S
c/o Dominion Catering Bicroft
Bancroft, Ontario., Canada

Just received the Bonus Issue of Canfan # 32 and I note the response from your readers - it isn't favourable to the reprint idea. Not that they panned it much, but they didn't seem to like the idea too well. I was of the same opinion, but figured that it would be temporary.....That bit of movie processing news gives me the impression that we might be in for a lot of rejuvenated films. Not having seen the results, it is difficult to judge it, but I can say that at the moment I'm looking forward to it.....On Hypnosis, I imagine that practically all cases are against the will of the patient in-so-far as the start of it is concerned. Otherwise it would be almost instaneous. It is a matter of suggestion and you are trying to convince the guy that he believes what the hypnotist wants him to believe. Once he had convinced him, then he automatically becomes hypnotized. Some are mighty hard to convince, though. Others quite easy.....Back for a moment to the reprint deal, count me as one little vote against it.

Well how was that for a letter section? As far back as I can remember I don't think we have had one this long before, but then again I've added a few remarks which does take up space. .....It seems that the Midwest Con is just around the corner and it is now a case of counting the days and hours. From Don Ford I have learned that Bob Bloch and L. Sprague de Camp will definitely be on hand. The Mahaffeys will be on the scene along with Betty Sullivan and I can well imagine many of you will harken back to other days and other Midwest Cons.....This could possibly be the largest Con of them all, as I have reports that the overflow are booking in other Motels along the way. The answer, of course, is that many of us are not going across the pond and this could well be the only 'first rate' regional gathering this year. At this point I might be offending some group, but as yet I have heard of no other regional conventions for the remaining part of this year.....At present I'm planning on driving down from Toronto via Buffalo, Cleveland and onto highway 42 which ends up right in front of the North Plaza Motel. Roughly this little trip adds up to about 530 miles, so I'll be leaving early (5.00 AM) Friday morning. I hope to arrive around 5.00 PM with Denis Campbell and Jack LaRush, that is if we connect timewise. Denis is coming in from Ottawa and Jack is coming in from North Bay. Anybody want to take odds. No? OK I'll see "you all" soon.....You too Bill Conner.....WDG


The Long View
by Phil Rasch
author of
"Sidelights On The Merrittales"

The Long View

There are few more ungrateful literary tasks than trying to judge a book for other readers. There is simply no such thing as a book you "ought" to enjoy or "ought" to read. If you find any given text enjoyable, then for you it is a good one and presumably worth having in your library. However, the reader newly introduced to off-trail fiction will find his high school English course has not prepared him to judge it intelligently as literature. In the first flush of his enthusiasm he is apt to collect anything that he can afford to buy. Later, as he becomes more sophisticated and his taste becomes more discriminating, he finds that his library contains a lot of books which no longer meet his standards. Having noticed that the used book dealers are advertising certain out-of-print items he has at $5.00 each, he decides to sell them. He finds that his copies are worth only 45 cents each in cash, and even then the dealer would much prefer to trade him three old magazines for it.

Unger once stated that any science fiction, weird or fantasy book should be worth $50.00 simply because so few titles are published that each is a rarity. If that were true, each miserable daub by some uninspired painter should be worth a fortune simply because it is (fortunately) the only one of its kind in existence. Unhappily for this thesis, the question of literary value must also be considered. No matter how rare a piece of trash may be, it is still trash and often not worth the price of the materials which went to make it up. So obvious is this fact that one cannot help but feel that Unger's remark was made in an attempt at self-justification of the outrageous prices for which he was notorious.

Nearly seventy years ago Walter Besant argued that fiction was one of the fine arts; if so, off-trail fiction must be subject to being judged by the commonly accepted canons of literary criticism or it must be conceded that such writings make no pretense of having literary value. Even the staid academicians have recognized the literary merit of some of this type of literature. For instance Wann's anthology, The Rise of Realism, includes Crawford's "The Upper Berth". Cargill's The Social Revolt, includes a selection from Bellamy's "Looking Backward" and its introduction ranks Chamber's "The King in Yellow" as one of the most valuable works of its time. Both of these books are standard college texts in American literature courses.

Unfortunately, the question of literary criticism is extremely complex. It simply is not possible to set up a list of objective standards, check them off one by one, and announce that a given book is or is not a masterpiece. The mere fact that the idea may be novel, the development of the plot original, the scene unusual, or the characters unique is not sufficient to assume that the product is of permanent value. The experienced reader probably would not be interested in such standards if they could be compiled. He knows pretty much what he liked and can soon tell whether a book comes up to his personal criteria or not. The tyro is in no such comfortable position. To the novice interested in building up a collection of worthwhile works we can perhaps extend some suggestions that will give him a perspective in judging the quality of the material to which he is exposed.

Over two thousand years ago Aristotle observed that "a good composition will have an air of novelty." Unfortunately, authors conspicuous for their prolificness tend to get a good idea and then keep repeating it, varying only the surroundings. After reading the first few books they publish, all subsequent ones sound much alike. Even the acknowledged master of fantasy, Abraham Merritt, is not entirely free of this failing. The principal characters of Creep Shadow - Alan Carnac/Alain de Carnac, Helen Bennett, Dahut d'Ys, and the focus of the action of the story, the Gatherer in the Cairn - have something

more than a superficial resemblance to his Leif Langdon/Dwayanu and Evelie, Lur, and the Kalk'ru of his earlier and far better Dwellers In The Mirage. The very fact that such authors as Burroughs, Haggard, Rohmer, etc., have such long lists of titles to their credit should give the careful buyer pause. This does not mean their books should not be considered on their merits. Haggard's She, for instance, is definitely worth having, but nearly all of his Allan Quartermain stories are pure formula production. No one can turn out books as fast as such authors do and still devote to them the care and effort that goes into the production of a masterpiece.

It is pretty generally agreed that the novel should reflect life. This actually means that the basic problem under consideration should be the behavior patterns of our own kind. There have been various attempts to circumvent this rule -- Eando Binder's robot Adam Link, for example, and more notabley John Taine's dinosaurs in Before The Dawn -- but it is almost impossible for any writer to establish successfully a rapport between the reader and any form of being, real or imagined, whose thought processes are so different from ours as to be necessarily incomprehensible. It would be difficult to conceive of one ghost's effect on another ghost having any great interest for us; it is principally the degree to which a writer makes us identify ourselves with his human subjects and thus experience vicariously the effect of the circumstances portrayed that he is successful in reflecting life. While such stories as those mentioned above may have some interest as novelties, the beginner may be fairly sure that any book which has non/human beings as its central characters is not likely to be re-read.

It is repeating a truism to say that anything that may be imagined may be possible. The environment may be as fantastic as may be desired, but we have every right to demand of an author that his characterizations be psychologically believable. Given the environment, the actions and reactions of the humans concerned must seem credible if the story is to be successful. It is in this particularly that such a well-known work as the Darkness and Dawn trilogy of George Allan England fails to qualify for our list of classics. Granting him any amount of ability in plot, description and action, the fact that he fails in the psychological depiction of the two principal characters completely vitiates any worth the novels may otherwise have had. Contrast this with the way Van Vogt's Slan is based solidly on the psychological fact that men tend to hate and fear that which is new simply because it is different.

It strains the credulity of the reader just as severely to find non-terrestrial beings given wholly human psychological patterns, Edgar Rice Burroughs' Martian series are interesting adventure yarns. One important reason that they are not classics of the off-trail field is that his red men of Helium, yellow men of Okar, black men of Korus, and white men of Dor are so unbelievably human. This poses a serious problem in writing interplanetary fiction. If the inhabitants of the strange world are too human the discriminating reader will figuratively raise his eyebrows; if they are too unhuman, the writer must sacrifice the advantage of introducing interplanetary love interest into the plot. Generally the latter procedure is the safer, but the apparent impass can be solved by skillful authors -- note for instance the superb delineation of Selena in Sloane's To Walk The Night.

As we have said, the environment may be as fantastic as desired, but in the weird tale there is a decided advantage in laying the happenings in circumstances that are familiar to everyone. If the scene is one which we can associate with our own experience it is easier for the writer to establish the necessary rapport. Familiar scenes always seem safe, whereas we realize that anything may happen and often does in unfamiliar surroundings. Even the professional baseball player is considered to have an advantage in playing on his home grounds. If horror then intrudes into this place of supposed safety, the shock of

the violation of our security adds immensely to its impact upon the reader. A complementary theory is that of Dr. Wagenknecht, who argues that each of us had enough latent claustrophobia so that being shut up in a room with a horror is far worse than meeting it out in the open. Especially effective is the unexpected recognition of evil in connection with supposedly innocent childhood. These two factors have been combined into such memorable stories as John Collier's "Thus I Refute Beelsy" and Henry James' "The Turn of The Screw".

Successful writers themselves differ on what constitutes the essence of fiction. F. Marion Crawford argued that fiction's only purpose was to entertain; Arnold Bennett said that the foundation of good fiction lies in character creating; Henry James held fiction must reproduce the actions of men; Hamilton adds that a great fictional character must be a representation of the typical qualities of a class. A. E. Coppard avers that he has not the slightest belief in the supernatural; M. R. James is prepared to consider the evidence for the supernatural on its merits and accept it if it satisfies him; H. R. Wakefield says that he is convinced of the reality of psychic phenomena because of his personal experiences with it. Strangely enough, the attitude of the author seems to have no effect on the quality of his literary output. Bennett Cerf, well-known in the publishing field, rates James' "The Turn of The Screw" as one of the two best ghost stories he has ever read or expects to read; Wakefield says of Crawford's "The Upper Berth" that it is the best ghost story in the English language; M. R. James is generally credited with having written more good ghost stories than any other one author; August Derleth calls Coppard "one of the scant dozen greatest living masters of the short story". The conclusion of all this is the negative one that any critic who prates about the necessity for "sincerity" on the part of an author is more metaphysical than practical. It is no part of the collector's problem to worry about the author's private beliefs.

Anthologies have a value all their own to collectors and can hardly be judged by the usual standards. While there is a great amount of duplication in them and the constant transition in authors and styles may be disconcerting to some readers, they are useful for the convenient sampling of the works of unfamiliar authors. Also, they may be the only way of securing various short stories which one desires to preserve.

In brief then, while there is no way of guaranteeing selection of a masterpiece, it will help the beginner if he looks for the following points when considering the purchase of an addition to his library:

1. Does the plot present a new idea, or does the author give a new twist to an old idea?
2. Does the characterization carry conviction?
3. Does the author make the most of a given environment?
4. Does the combination of these factors produce an interesting story?

In considering the first point it must be remembered that older works, such as those of Wells and Verne, should in fairness be judged by the knowledge of their times. Today they seem dated, but the introduction of atomic bombs and radio-controlled rockets during the last few years has inevitably dated equally a large mass of pre-war science fiction. It would seem probable that the newer science fiction will take a psychological and sociological approach rather than the old mechanistic one. PR