

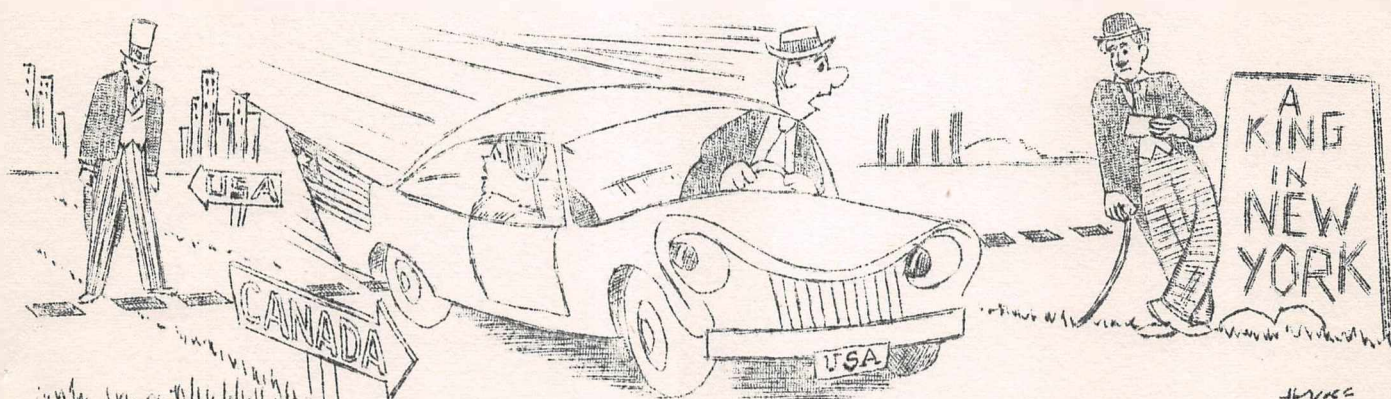
CANFAN

October
1957
NO 35

RAY BRADBURY:

INFLUENCES THAT SHAPED HIM

by Sam Moskowitz



"You Think I'm Un-American? I won't Buy A Ticket Until I'm Out Of Sight Of Uncle Sam!"

October 22



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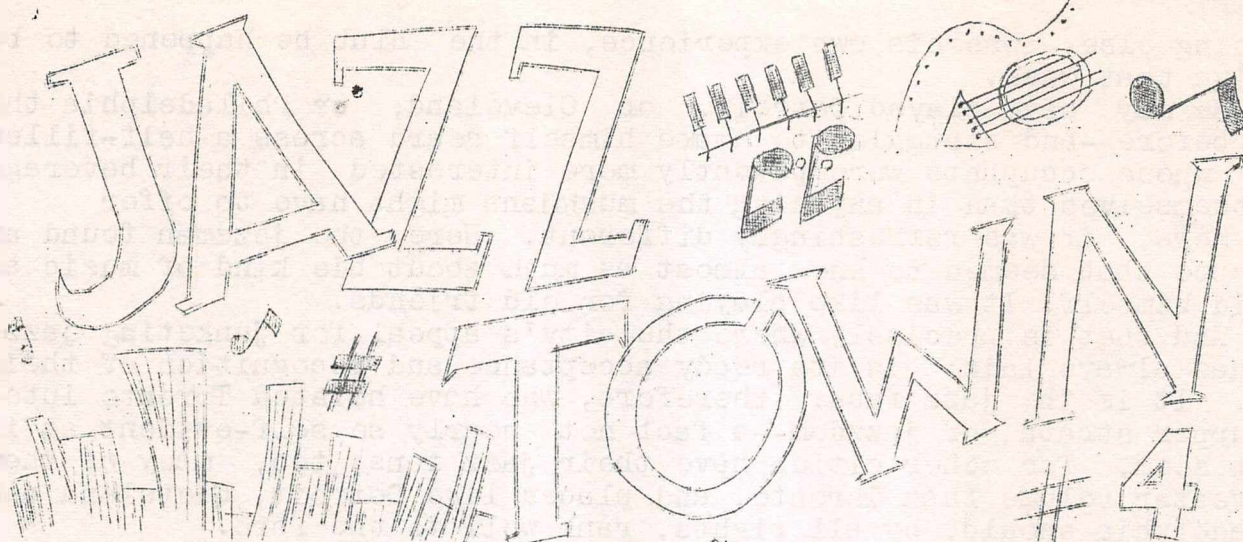
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by Patrick Scott

The jazzman, a greying graduate of the speakeasies who had plied his trade on two continents and the waters between, looked out on Toronto, approvingly, from his hotel room window.

"You might not think so at first glance," he said. "I didn't myself. But take my word for it--this is a hip town."

Hip is the jazzman's, any jazzman's, tribute supreme. It is an adjective that may be applied to anything and anybody: performers, audiences, writers, chefs, statesmen, bartenders, quarters--and cities. It denotes awareness, sharpness of knowledge, in short, of the score. That which is hip is not square, and vice versa.

It is a word being applied to Toronto, with increasing frequency and conviction, by those who should know. Toronto, in fact, has become a recognized capital in the wide, wide world of jazz, rated an easy fourth--hard behind New York, Los Angeles and Chicago--by the profession itself.

A photograph taken from the window of the professional we have quoted would not, however, be particularly illuminating. It would not, for instance, show the dim-lit subterranean chamber where starting at midnight three times a week, the advance guard of Toronto jazz fills the premises with startling sound and patrons attracted by nothing else but near-beer and salad.

Nor would it encompass the dining room, in another, not so respectable part of the city, that offers spaghetti and meatballs six nights a week and spaghetti and jazz the seventh.

It would not, for that matter, even include the mainstreet nightclub employing the visiting jazzman.

But it was not of such physical things the jazzman spoke--if for no other reason than the fact his own night work precluded a first-hand acquaintance with other than his own place of business.

He had, however, heard of these other places--and of the hometown musicians who kept them in business. And of the booming trade in his own and others' records here; of the local composers and arrangers whose work had gained them greater recognition in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago and at home; of jazz at Stratford and a place called Casa Loma; of a program of broadcast jazz surpassing anything else, anywhere.

But what really prompted the jazzman's compliment, more than

anything else, was his own experience, in the club he happened to be working that week.

He may have played Detroit, or Cleveland, or Philadelphia the week before--and struggled to make himself heard across a half-filled room whose occupants were patently more interested in their beverage and themselves than in anything the musicians might have to offer.

Here, it was refreshingly different. Here, the jazzman found an audience that seemed to know almost as much about his kind of music as he did himself. It was like playing for old friends.

And that is precisely where the city's appeal for junketing jazzmen has always lain: in its ready acceptance and recognition of their work. It is the jazz fans, therefore, who have hoisted Toronto into, the upper strata of jazzdom--a fact not nearly so self-evident as it might seem, for other cities have their jazz fans, too, many of them in greater volume than Toronto, and places like Detroit, Cleveland and Philadelphia should, by all rights, rank well to the fore.

What makes the Toronto fan different?

Much of the answer lies in the fact that until comparatively recently the Toronto fan has not had the opportunity to enjoy a great amount of live jazz; familiarity has not bred contempt, as it has throughout so much of this music's native land.

But Toronto has had just enough first rate, in-the-flesh jazz over the years to sharpen its appreciation, whet its appetite and at the same time steer it from the pitfall of wantonly embracing everything that even smacks of jazz.

It is that very hauteur so often associated with Toronto, in fact, that makes it the hip place it is--because hipness also implies a certain discrimination, a stubborn unwillingness to accept anything but the best. And in its jazz, Toronto has long been conditioned to the best.

Among those finding their jazz in mainstem surroundings these nights are more than a few who dug it 20 years ago in so provincial a setting as the Canadian National Exhibition, where they danced or just listened to the Goodmans, the Dorseys and the Shaws. (And some who may even recall the great Fletcher Henderson band of the very early 30's at the Palais Royale.)

The other greats slept here, too, through the years, before or after one-nighters at the old Queensway, the Top Hat and Mutual Arena. Lunceford, Ellington, Calloway, the Casa Lomans--they came just often enough to keep the Toronto fans in touch and leave them eager for more.

They had, happily, a unique institution called, variously, the 1010 Swing Club and Jazz Unlimited, which for nigh on 20 years has been bringing them up to two hours of the very best of every kind of recorded jazz over their radios every Saturday afternoon. This program alone has shaped, and shaped well, the tastes of a couple of generations of jazz fans.

Toronto, on the record, has been rather hip all along. The only thing that kept a lot of people from knowing it was the fact the boom hadn't come yet--the day when you didn't have to wait for the CNE or one-nighters at the dancehalls; the night when you could get your jazz, and get it live, on streets like Yonge and Queen, and come back the next night or the next week for more.

But when the boom did come, starting about a dozen years ago, Toronto was ready for it.

It began as part of the immediate postwar upsurge in just about

everything.

First, a swirling flood of records, after the long wartime drought; still 78's then, but on a never-ending stream of labels.

The rush for records prompted the first, tentative jazz concerts: Ellington at Massey Hall, Sidney Bechet at Eaton's Auditorium, Charlie Parker at the precipice of Bop.

The concerts in turn brought the fans closer together, giving birth to clubs. One of the first was called the Friday Moods, a group that devoted that night of the week to oft-times rousing record sessions in a Rosedale mansion. One of the biggest never had a name at all, but drew carloads of fans to Fantasy Farm every Sunday night.

It was here, in a Don Valley riding academy, that such domestic jazzmen as Moe Koffman and Jimmy Coxon first exchanged improvisations in public, in sessions that set the pattern for what was to follow years later in places like the House of Hambourg.

And then came the biggest shot in the arm of all: cocktail bars, and with them nightly jazz; the beginning of an era that has seen Ellington not at Massey Hall for one evening but on a main-street bandstand for six nights running. And before and after Ellington, most of the other great names of jazz.

The success of live jazz as entertainment has benefited its local practitioners. They are finding after-hours havens all over the city: a Dixieland quartet at La Coterie on Avenue Road; a newer-than-tomorrow concept at George's Spaghetti House at Dundas and Sherbourne, a hardy band of Rampart Street Paraders at La Maison Dore on Asquith Avenue.

The fan clubs, too, are thriving. The president of one of the most active offers a convincing explanation of why the visiting U. S. musicians feel about Toronto as they do.

"We try to make them feel at home," says Dave Caplan, a leading light of Toronto's Jazz society. "We turn out in a body to hear them, and often on their last night in town we throw a little party for them."

The visitors sense the difference, of course. They are soon made aware that this is Toronto, not Detroit, Cleveland or Philadelphia.

They learn, too, of a man like Norm Symonds, a jazz composer and arranger regarded by many as one of the most brilliant in the trade, who has written by commission for such fastidious performers as George Shearing and the Australian Jazz Quintet.

They have talked, these visiting jazzmen, to others of their nomadic tribe who have sampled the dream setting of the Stratford Jazz Festival, and they are aware that the bulk of Stratford's listeners come from Toronto.

Jimmy McPartland, the veteran Chicago cornetist, puts it this way:

"Here, in Toronto, it's like the old days in Chicago and New York. Jazz was still a new thing then, and we were all in it together, the musician and the listener."

"It's that way here now. You know that if you play well it's going to be appreciated, and if you louse something up you're not going to get away with it the way you could a lot of other places. They know too much here, they keep you on your toes, and you find yourself playing better than you have since you were here the last time. You feel good about it, and you can tell your listeners feel the same way. It's a ball."

PS

Best On The Quarter

BEST ON THE QUARTER

CRIFANAC "5" June 1957
Edited by Tom Reamy
4332 Avondale
Dallas, Texas., USA

There is a lot of talent in and around this magazine. Some of you may find the contents a bit disjointed, but believe me there are some golden nuggets.....MEET LYN

VENABLE by the lady herself was excellent and I must not forget the photo that goes with it.....Also way above the average was Reamy and Koogler's S-F MOVIE REVIEW. This really covered the field, but I would be hesitant in setting up a star rating as most SF fans would have to push their imagination to even give one star to any of the films mentioned, with the exception of "The Shrinking Man".....Reproduction is first rate.....

CAMBER
Edited by Alan Dodd
77 Stanstead Road
Hoddesdon, Herts.,
England

What is it about an English fanzine? Is it the illustrations? Is it weird articles like SUICIDE AIRCRAFT AND THEIR OPERATIONAL USE IN WORLD WAR II by John Berry that completely surprises you by their appearance in a fanzine? This is truly a Doddering Production and nobody anywhere else

can make this statement. I have been a Berry subscriber for several years and so far I've never been let down. Humour is the byword throughout and as usual Dodd has filled the pages with interesting fannish material to which English fans and a few Americans that appreciate this kind of fun.....

FLAFAN # 1 Sept. 1957
Edited by Sylvia Dees
PO Box 4082 Mallory Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida., USA

Let's put it this way. This is issue number one and some very well-known contributors have more than done their bit for Miss Dees. Just to give you an idea Rike, Young, Berry, Stark, Dodd, Rotsler, Jones, and a few I don't know. The result is a

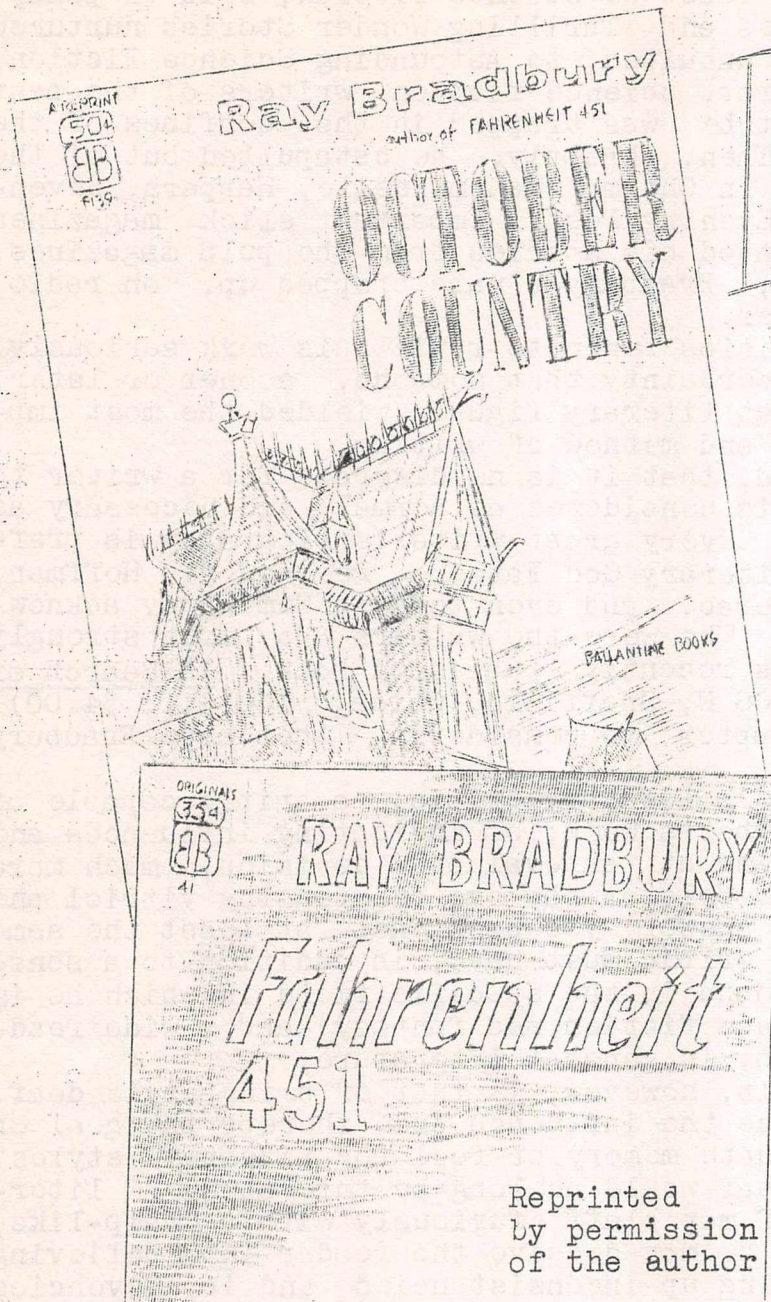
fanzine in lighter-vein. The initial try is a good one as compared to some in the past. One thing I didn't like was the printing on one side only, this results in a pretty bulky package in the mail and I would guess some extra postage. The price of admission is a contribution and believe me that is more than fair.....

CRY OF THE NAMELESS # 107
F. M. and Elinor Busby
Box 92 920 3rd Avenue
Seattle 4, Washington., USA

SF FIELD PLOWED UNDER harkens my mind back to 1947 when quite a few fanzines devoted space to reviewing the current pulps. In fact I think there was one job that devoted the entire contents on pulp

reviews. So for the record, this is an outstanding contribution and an eye-opener for those of us who don't buy all the current pulps or slicks.....Also included is a fair sized fanzine review column, plus the usual humour that prevails with a club zine.....

(continued on page twenty-three)



INFLUENCES THAT SHAPED HIM by SAM MOSKOWITZ

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Every group as well as every nation is proud of its heroes. The science fiction world is especially proud of Ray Bradbury. Bradbury is the epitome of every young would-be science fiction writer's dreams. He is the boy who published fan magazines, wrote stories and articles for other's fan magazines (many of which were returned as being below standard), attended conventions and even got involved, to some extent, in a fan feud.

This typical fan wrote endlessly for the professional magazines. Accumulated a mass of rejection slips that would be the envy of no one. Refused to be discouraged, stuck to his guns, even to the extent of selling newspapers in the streets evenings to provide enough money so he could write full time during the day.

Ray Bradbury: Influences That Shaped Him

His greatest stories, at least of science fiction, sold to penny-a-word markets. Planet Stories and Thrilling Wonder Stories nurtured him. His subject matter was unsuited to Astounding Science Fiction, the breeding ground of most great science fiction writers of the past twenty years. It seemed that he was trapped in the confines of the second level pulp markets. Then, abruptly, he catapulted out of the field. His stories appeared in Charm, Mademoiselle, Harpers, Seventeen, Colliers, The Saturday Evening Post. Important slick magazines like Esquire and Coronet reprinted his stories from the pulp magazines. Soon, everywhere one turned, Bradbury's name cropped up, on radio, television, and moving pictures.

Inevitably, important critics began to review his work seriously. When that happened, it was a certainty that someone, sooner or later, would attempt to determine what literary figures wielded the most important influence on his style and method of writing.

It should be kept in mind, that it is no disgrace for a writer to be influenced. In fact, it is considered as normal and necessary as for a child to have parents. Every great writer's biography is prefaced by a reference to his literary God Father. Poe had his Hoffman, Swift favoured Cyrano de Bergerac, and even today's Hemingway acknowledges a debt to James Joyce. Who were the writers who most strongly affected Ray Bradbury? In his recently published book, In Search of Wonder (Advent: Publishers, 3508 N, Sheffield, Chicago 13, Ill; \$4.00), Damon Knight, devotes a chapter to considering what made Bradbury click.

For the man who would be a literary critic; a critic capable of analyzing and interpreting another's work; of indicating influences and motivations and finally arriving at an evaluated decision, much more is required than the desire to bolster the ego by tossing vitriol and insult at someone who cannot answer you back, not at least the same week or month. The competent critic must have, in addition to a sense of fair play, a solid background in the specific field in which he is operating (in this case, science fiction and fantasy) and a wide reading, if not a formal education, in general literature.

The one irreparable fault, however, is that of being style deaf. How can a literary critic trace the influence and thereby the goal of a writer, if he has an inadequate memory or feel for literary styles? A music critic who was tone deaf would not long be tolerated. A literary critic who is style deaf may bluff furiously with a whip-like, savage turn of the phrase; he may deceive the reader into believing that he is perceptive by turning up inconsistencies and irrelevencies in the technical plotting and composition of a work of fiction, and this will suffice when the suffice in the story in question is of no particular significance and rates no comparison beyond that of its technical competence. It is not enough to pass muster when the verdict must be rendered on a comparative literary basis.

The tragedy of Damon Knight as a critic rests in the fact that he is style deaf. When not affected by personal prejudice, his ability to perceive the faults and strengths of a work of science fiction are sometimes pronounced. But he lacks the ability to compare works of fiction stylistically, and this lack is not merely a minor defect in his case, but one so glaring, so obvious, so shockingly acute as to complete negate the value and validity of his criticism whenever a stylistic comparison is called for.

Ray Bradbury: Influences That Shaped Him

This major flaw is nowhere more glaringly apparent than in Knight's appraisal of Ray Bradbury in chapter ten, of his book In Search of Wonder, titles "When I Was In Kneepants: Ray Bradbury." In this chapter, Knight attempts to pin-point the literary influences on Bradbury. We read on page 77:

"There is so much to say about Bradbury's meaning that perhaps too little has been said about his technique. He is a superb craftsman, a man who has a great gift and has spent fifteen years laboriously and with love teaching himself to use it. 'For here was a kind of writing of which there is never much in any one time--a style at once delicate, economical and unobtrusively firm, sharp enough to cut but without rancor, and clear as water or air.' That's Stephen Vincent Benet, writing in 1938 about Robert Nathan; the same words, all but the next to last phrase, might have been written with equal justice of Bradbury." Again, on page 79 he says;

"Learned opinion to the contrary, Bradbury is not the heir of Poe, Irving or Hawthorne; his voice is the voice (a little shriller) of Christopher Morley and Robert Nathan and J. D. Salinger."

Of all the writers of science fiction, few present an easier problem for analysis, for comparison as to style influences, than Ray Bradbury. Not only is the evidence as explicit as the all-clear after an air-raid test, but to make it still more absurdly simple, Bradbury himself, openly and without reticence, has acknowledged part of his debt in one of his stories.

Bradbury owes a major, pointed and at least partly admitted debt to two great American writers: Thomas Wolfe and Ernest Hemingway. I am sure he would be puzzled as to the extent of his indebtedness to Nathan, Morley and Salinger, though undoubtedly he has read them and profited to the extent one profits from reading any good author.

The most powerful single impression upon Bradbury's style was made by Thomas Wolfe. Wolfe, a dynamo of powerful, driving, descriptive rhetoric, who achieved his best effects through pounding repetition, yet could always turn up with a poignant, poetic phrase, is apparent everywhere in Bradbury's writing. A dramatic, comparative example may be found in the opening paragraph of Bradbury's story "The Long Rain," on page 77 of his book The Illustrated Man:

"The rain continued. It was a hard rain, a perpetual rain, a sweating and steaming rain; it was a mizzle, a down-pour, a fountain, whipping at the eyes, an undertow at the ankles; it was a rain to drown all rains and the memory of rains. It came by the pound and the ton, it hacked at the jungle and cut the trees like scissors and shaved the grass and tunneled the soil and molted the bushes. It shrank men's hands into the hands of wrinkled apes; it rained a solid glassy rain, and it never stopped."

Compare that, with a descriptive passage by Thomas Wolfe from page 72 of his most famous book, Of Time and the River:

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"The moon blazed down upon the wilderness, it fell on sleeping woods, it dripped through moving leaves, it swarmed in weaving patterns on the earth, and it filled the cat's still eye with blazing yellow. The moon slept over mountains and lay like silence in the desert, and it carved the shadows of great rocks like time. The moon was mixed with flowing rivers, and it was buried in the heart of lakes, and it trembled on the water like bright fish. The moon steeped all the earth in its living and unearthly substance, it had a thousand visages, it painted continental space with ghostly light; and its light was proper to the nature of all the things it touched; it came in with the sea, it flowed with the rivers, and it was still and living on clear spaces in the forest where no men watched."

Another paralleling example to the previous Bradbury quote from Wolfe, page 69, Of Time and the River;

"Therefore they stood upon the rocking platform of the train, wild and dark and jubilant from the fierce liquor they have drunk, but more wild and dark and jubilant from the fury swelling in their hearts, the mad fury pounding in their veins, the savage, exultant and unutterable fury working like a madness in the adyts of their soul. And the great wheels smash and pound beneath their feet, the great wheels pound and smash and give a rhyme to madness, a tongue to hunger and desire, a certitude to all the savage, drunken and exultant fury that keeps mounting, rising, swelling in them all the time!"
and:

"Sleep lay upon the wilderness, it lay across the faces of the nations, it lay like silence on the hearts of sleeping men; and low upon lowlands, and high upon hills, flowed gently sleep, smooth sliding sleep--sleep--sleep."

Then the nostalgic smell of peppermint and the taste of sarsaparilla, familiar in so many Bradbury stories, and the mood of the October Country, which Bradbury used as the title of a book. I fear at least a portion of these is inspired by Thomas Wolfe.

Take a typical Wolfeian passage from page 155, of Of Time and the River:

"It is the place of exultancy and strong joy, the place of the darkened brooding air, the smell of snow; it is the place of all the fierce, the bitten colours in October, when all of the wild, sweet woods flame up; it is also the place of the cider press and the last brown oozings of the York imperials."

Quotes could be drawn interminably matching stylistic similarities of Wolfe and Bradbury. The very quantity of them, the unquestioned closeness of the rhetorical devices, could establish, beyond debate, beyond cavil, that Thomas Wolfe is God and that Ray Bradbury is his prophet, except that Bradbury has made it still easier for us.

The Spring, 1950 issue of Planet Stories carries a tale by Brad-

bury titled "Forever and the Earth". The blurb tells you what it is about:

"They brought the great blazing writer three hundred years into the future. They gave him the stars and the planets and all space for his hungry pen. Then they tried to put Thomas Wolfe back in his grave."

They needed a man to describe the vast immenseness of space, the strange lonely alieness of Mars; the very concept of man against the universe, so they decided to bring Thomas Wolfe back from the dead. Ray Bradbury, speaking through his character William Fielding, expresses, beyond need for elaboration his feeling for Thomas Wolfe:

"Tom, he thought faintly, in the half awake warmth of an old man calling after his favorite and long-gone child, Tom, where are you tonight, Tom? Come along now, we'll help you through, you've got to come, there's need of you. I couldn't do it, Tom, none of us here can. So the next best thing to doing it myself, Tom, is helping you to do it. You can play with rockets like jackstraws, Tom, and you can have the stars, like a handful of crystals. Anything your heart asks, it's here. You'd like the fire and the travel, Tom, it was made for you. Oh, we've a pale lot of writers today, I've read them all, Tom, and they're not like you. I've waded in libraries of their stuff and they've never touched you for that! Give an old man his wish then, for God knows I've waited all my life for myself or some other to write the really great book about the stars and I've waited in vain. So, wherever you are tonight, Tom Wolfe, make yourself talk. It's that book you were going to write. It's that good book the critics said was in you when you stopped breathing."

Quoting Bradbury's "Forever and the Earth" just a bit more:

"Space was like October, wrote Thomas Wolfe. He said things about its darkness and its loneliness and man so small in it. The eternal and timeless October, was told of the rocket itself, the smell and the feel of the metal of the rocket, and the sense of destiny and wild exultancy to at last leave Earth behind....."

One scarcely has to be a psychologist or have any intuitive sixth sense to comprehend that Bradbury holds Wolfe in high esteem. Nor can one accept credit for extraordinary perception when he informs the reader that the thing Bradbury most wants to do, the thing he has tried to do, above all things, beyond all dreams, is to describe the world of the future and the boundless stretches of space that fall around to infinity, just as Thomas Wolfe would have described them!

Yet, Damon Knight prattles about influences of Robert Nathan, J. D. Salinger and Christopher Morley. I fear he has omitted Hugh Lofting and L. Frank Baum! A critic so stylistically myopic that he cannot see the relationship between Thomas Wolfe and Ray Bradbury can at best plead ignorance of Thomas Wolfe, which is instantly an admission of literary incompetency when it comes to evaluating science fiction

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against important mainstream literature.

Since I find it difficult to believe that Knight has never read Wolfe, and since Wolfe's style is so unique, so powerful and stimulating as to leave an indelible impression, the conclusion that Knight as a critic is a cripple, a man who is so style deaf that he cannot tell one writing style from another, follows inexorably, and incontrovertibly from his analysis of the influences upon Bradbury's writing style. To extend the conclusion one step further, it follows also, that no matter how biting, how pointed, how absorbing as entertainment the reviews of such a man may be, his conclusions must always be subject to doubt and qualification.

Read "Forever and the Earth". Read Bradbury quoting Thomas Wolfe, then trying to write passages as Thomas Wolfe would have written them, and then see if you can doubt what the major influence was on Ray Bradbury.

The second major influence upon Ray Bradbury is Ernest Hemingway. In his early days, Bradbury alternately wrote sections of his stories with the repetitive colour, power and description of Thomas Wolfe and in the cold, clipped, economical dialogue of Hemingway. The story I quoted, the first Bradburian paragraph from, "The Long Rain", to indicate the closeness of Bradbury's literary devices to Wolfe's, is a case in point. From the second paragraph on in that story you will find Ernest Hemingway. If you proceed in the story, Wolfe will return and then Hemingway, again and again.

As he became more proficient in his craft, Bradbury combined some of the terseness of Hemingway to speed up the verboseness of Wolfe. The combination, the unusual consistent combination, of an author writing science fiction in the rhythms and methods of Wolfe and Hemingway is what gave Bradbury that different quality which is the groundwork of his present success.

Rarely had such styles been used in science fiction before. It resulted in tales with a freshness and difference that was the outgrowth of the method of narration rather than the originality of the plots themselves.

Secondarily, Bradbury incorporated the popular themes of mainstream literature, such as race relations, religion, child psychology, et al, in the dramatic manner in which they were to be found in best-sellers, i. e., told from the emotional rather than the intellectual viewpoint.

Now let me quote Bradbury making like Hemingway from the second paragraph of "The Long Rain":

"How much farther, Lieutenant?"

"I don't know. A mile, ten miles, a thousand."

"I don't like this rain. If we only knew how far it is to the Sun Dome, I'd feel better."

"Another hour or two from here."

"You really think so, Lieutenant?"

"Of course."

"Or are you lying to keep us happy?"

"I'm lying to keep you happy. Shut up!"

Now let's take passages from Ernest Hemingway's famous short story "The Killers":

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"I'll tell you," Max said. "We're going to kill a Swede. Do you know a big Swede named Ole Anderson?"

"Yes."

"He comes here to eat every night, don't he?"

"Sometimes he comes here."

"He comes here at six o'clock, don't he?"

"If he comes."

"We know all that, bright boy," Max said. "Talk about something else. Ever go to the movies?"

"Once in a while."

"You ought to go to the movies more. The movies are fine for a bright boy like you."

"What are you going to kill Ole Anderson for? What did he ever do to you?"

"He never had a chance to do anything to us. He never even seen us."

Since Ernest Hemingway is undoubtedly the single greatest influence upon modern writing today, it is scarcely unusual that Bradbury would emulate some of his methods. What is unusual is that any individual that pretends to be a critic, could conceivably fail to recognize the styles of both Wolfe and Hemingway. The previous conclusions again admits the only answer.

The Stephen Vincent Benet eulogy to Robert Nathan, which Knight quotes in his book In Search of Wonder was taken from the Barley Fields, a collection of five novels by Robert Nathan published by the Literary Guild of America in 1938. It is fair to judge that Knight read that book. Let us take narrative and dialogue quotes from that volume to see if there are also similarities between Bradbury and Nathan.

Dialogue from page 288 of The Bishop's Wife:

"No, my friend; if I do not turn christian like so many others, it is not because of the religious practices. It is because I do not want my grandchildren to hate the Jews. There is too much hate in the world as it is; in this country it flourishes like the weed. Here even the poets hate one another. Very well, I stay a Jew, I do not go over on the side of the haters. I do not buy my way up, so that I too, can spit down on my people. Do you think I love the Jews so much? How can I tell, when I am one? But I am sick of those who hate them, because I am sick of hate. What we need is more politeness in the world. Let people shake hands and say, Come in."

"Do you think it is a pleasure to be kept out of everything?"

Narrative: From page 280 of The Bishop's Wife:

"Potter with his wagon, trudged up and down the Mall; he imagined that he was being busy, that he was drawing behind him an important load. For this reason there exhaled from his diminutive figure an air of dignity mixed with melancholy; he gazed at the other children who were only amusing themselves, without envy. Nevertheless, he wished

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them to admire him; and when his nurse asked him to sit quietly beside her, he refused. Upon her insisting, he galloped away, drawing his cart after him, and when she overtook him, he kicked her shins."

What has Robert Nathan in common with Bradbury? Essentially nothing except that both are writers. Robert Nathan, writing, gently, almost poetically. Even in his most heartfelt lines, his most pointed message, such as the Jew explaining why he did not wish to become a gentile, the bite is softened by an immeasurable patience and understanding. Nathan's knowledge of intolerance and racial injustice is hereditary and part of him. Bradbury while he does well, writes of it as a man who suddenly and quite shockedly, discovered that such things exist.

Most typical of the softness and poignancy of Nathan's truth impregnated fantasies are lines from one of his recent novels "Sir Henry":

"Now I do regret that I was never wed to Alisane," he said, "for it would be a sweet thing to remember." "You might have been," said the Shape, "for there was a cathedral in Chichester, where you stopped." "It had a handsome window," said Sir Henry, "in three colours, and the altar was lit with many tapers. And there was a chapel, for small occasions. I wish I had the memory of it, in this hour." "It was too close at hand," said the Shape. "That was the trouble."

Sir Henry lay stretched out on the earth, with a mortal wound in his heart. And it seemed to him that Alisane was there, bending over him. "I am dying," he whispered; "dear Alisane." "You were not lucky this time, my darling," she said. "No one is lucky against himself," said Sir Henry.

"And then it was Meghan's face he saw above him, smiling at him gaily and tenderly. "Well now," she said, "you will see the Grail after all." "Why, so I will," said Sir Henry; "and I will think of Abigail's little silver porringer."

The comparison of Bradbury to J. D. Salinger, author of the Catcher on the Rye, becomes more puzzling, because while his themes are sometimes diverting and different, Salinger basically writes a flip, souped up slick style, with wonderful proficiency, but with scarcely any elements that seem to have been picked up by Bradbury. Take a typical bit of dialogue from his short story "For Esme--With Love and Squalor":

"You seem quite intelligent for an American," my guest mused. I told her that was a pretty snobbish thing to say, if you thought about it at all, and that I hoped it was unworthy of her.

She blushed--automatically conferring on me the social poise I'd been missing. "Well. Most of the Americans I've seen act like animals. They're forever punching one another about, and insulting everyone, and--You know what one of them did?"

I shook my head.

"One of them threw an empty whiskey bottle through my

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aunt's window. Fortunately the window was open. But does that sound very intelligent to you?"

With wonderful proficiency Salinger can slide into the "like-they-really-talk" type of thin, as in the same story where:

"Clay stared at him for a moment, then said, rather vividly, as if he were the bearer of exceptionally good news, "I wrote Loretta you had a nervous breakdown."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. She's interested as hell in all that stuff. She's majoring in psychology." Clay stretched himself out on the bed, shoes included. "You know what she said? She says nobody gets a nervous breakdown from just the war and all. She says you probably were unstable like, your whole goddam-life."

"X" bridged his hand over his eyes--the light over the bed seemed to be blinding him--and said that Loretta's insight into things was always a joy.

Clay glanced over at him. "Listen, ya bastard," he said. "She knows a doddam sight more psychology than you do."

"Do you think you can bring yourself to take your stinking feet off my bed?" 'X' asked.

I think you will agree that Bradbury is not the voice of Salinger. It would also be a remarkable lucky long shot to prove Christopher Morley his Dutch uncle. Good old Christopher Morley, one of the most versatile of all writers. At once a story-teller, essayist and poet, but probably one of the most typically Morley stories is "The Commutation Chophouse" a fantasy from Tales from a Rolltop Desk. Let us quote from this story which is set in Greenwich Village in New York:

"And so it was. On the corner of the pavement stood a tall, stout, and very well-nourished man with a ruddy face, wearing shabby but still presentable cutaway coat and gray trousers, and crowned by a steep and glittering stovepipe hat which twinkled like a heliograph in the dazzling winter glare. But, most amazing, when we elbowed a passage through the jocular crowd, we saw that this personable individual was wearing, instead of an overcoat, two large sandwich boards vigorously lettered as follows:

THE COMMUTATION CHOPHOUSE
OPENS TODAY
59 Ann Street
Celebrate the Merry Yuletide's
One Prodigious Meal, \$1.00
BUY A STRIP TICKET
AND SAVE MONEY
TODAY ONLY
100 Meals for \$10.00

This corpulent sandwich man was blithely answering the nanter of those who were not awed by the radiance of his headgear and the dignity of his mien, and passing out print-

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ed cards to those nearest him.

"Do all the hundred meals have to be eaten today?" asked Dulcet. "If so, the task is beyond my powers."

"Like the man in the Bible," I said, "he probably rented his garments. But he couldn't rent that admirable abdomen that proclaims him a well-fed man. It seems to me a very sound ad for the chophouse."

"Unquestionably," said my friend, gravely, "he is the man who put the ad in adipose."

So they went to the Commutation Chophouse, bought a strip ticket offering 100 meals for \$10.00. Ate one, found it good and then returned the next day for the second meal. I again quote:

We turned down the passage at No. 59. Quite a crowd of patrons were waiting their turn, I saw. They were standing in the courtyard by the chophouse door, talking busily.

"You see," I said, "it's still crowded."

We reached the entrance. The door was closed. The sign over the doorway now had additional lettering painted on it, and read:

THE COMMUTATION CHOPHOUSE
The Other 99 Meals Will be Served
In Augusta, Maine.

Bradbury once used the sign effect in one of his stories announcing a hot dog stand on Mars, but that story, as all of his stories, lacked one element that overridingly characterizes Morley. That one element is humour. Genial good humour which was as much Morley as any single item. If Bradbury were to be influenced by Morley, it is incomprehensible that he could have remained impervious to the brand of infectious humour that Morley dished out. If there is one author who could run as a candidate on a ticket that he had virtually no influence on Bradbury and win every time, that author is Christopher Morley.

This is the total of it then. First, the gentle, patient, almost poetic Robert Nathan; at times almost cloying in his sweetness and sentimentality, virtually free of bitterness even in his most complaining moments. Second, the slick, clever sophisticated hand, J. D. Salinger, who can write slice-of-life gutter talk with the best of them, and mix the two like ingredients in a cocktail glass. Thirdly, the whimsy, clever humour and clear style of Christopher Morley. Is Bradbury the voice of these diverse and widely different writers?

Rather he follows Thomas Wolfe, with whom style came first, to whom story was sometimes a necessary appendage to his descriptive passages, who nevertheless developed a style of such power, colour and poetry that the debate still rages as to whether he is great and his final niche has not yet been decided. After Wolfe add Ernest Hemingway, Nobel Prize winner, generally acknowledged as one of the most important living writers. A man who has influenced an entire generation of writers, with his stipped, hard-hitting dialogue. The effect of these two men is not a ghostly fragrance that can be detected only subtly and occasionally in Bradbury's style, but are living, powerful overriding elements, readily apparent to all but the style deaf. SM

This is a first impression report by a well-known fan. Bill Conner has been trying to get to one of these gatherings for several years and at long last he finally made connections. WDG

GREAT WOODCHUCK HUNT

MIDWEST
CON

1957

BILL CONNER'S

Dear Woodchuck:

When I motored down Reading Road that Saturday morning past the Plaza, my first glimpse of fandom was the mob scene at the water hole out front. There were some strange looking critturs lurking around the pool, so I made my approach cautiously. I soon discovered a face that looked disturbingly familiar. Could it be he? The resemblance to drawings appearing in Canfan was pronounced. Then I saw him take out a cigarette and stick it into a holder. Yes, by Ghod it was indeed the great Bob Bloch! Gee, Gosh, Wow! Bloch doesn't know it, and probably never will, but he has the honor of being the first fan or pro to reflect an image on my eyeballs. I then noticed that he called his companion "Marty", so I assumed correctly that this was Marty Greenberg. Somehow recognizing two well known "names" made me feel more at ease, and less apprehensive.

After watching the antics of two of the First of First Fandom, the action at the other side of the pool attracted my attention as I heard some one shout "Kent Moomaw!" This character rushed up to accost a shy-looking young neofan type who was quietly observing the poolside socializing of his elders. The prodigy of 8th Fandom looked to me like he had just been chosen "Mr. Teenage Neo of 1957".

By now I decided that I should make the tracking down of the "Old Woodchuck" my first order of business. I shoved my inferiority complex and anti-social tendencies into my back pocket and began the manhunt with a determined look in my eye. I soon found myself at Schuler's Bar downing an "Echo Seven" (double) to keep that determined look in my eye. After inquiring at the Office back at the Plaza, I found the room you were quartered in. As I had expected, there wasn't any response when I rapped on the door of Grant's Temporary Tomb. Recalling some of your legendary Con activities, I decided that the "stake out" method would be ridiculous. I set out to find some fan who might know of your whereabouts. Spotting "Mags For Sale" smeared with red lipstick on an upstairs window, I decided that here was an easy opening. I went up there and spoke the magic words necessary for admission; "I want to look at some of your mags!"

I eagerly dug into the stacks of mags. What a collection! My fingers fondly leafed through some musty old Unknowns and some ancient Weirds that had that eldritch crumbly feel, and the exotic musty odor that only old SF and fantasy pulps seem to have.

Then I realized that I was in a huckster's lair, and that the dying man-reaching-the-green-oasis-after-crossing-the-barren-desert bit might prove to be dangerous. I tried to think of something to break the spell. My hand reached into my back pocket, and there resting between complex and tendency was a copy of the latest ish of Muzzy! I turned and faced the crowd with "it" in my hand.

The Great Woodchuck Hunt

"Does anyone care to look at the latest ish of Muzzy!", I casually inquired.

The words seemed to reverberate around the room like the crack of doom as a shocked silence fell and faces looked upon me as though I had just announced that I was a Martian and then showed them my green tentacles to prove it! Poor fans - they thought that they had at last come face to face with Clod himself.

One stalwart soul soon regained his composure sufficiently enough to approach me and ask to look at "it", whereupon I identified myself, amid sighs of relief. If my memory serves me correctly, this brave fan was Bob Coulson. I informed Bob that I was looking for the "Woodchuck" high and low, but couldn't seem to find him. Bob seemed to think that you might be around the swimming pool or in the lounge, so, after he gave me a description to go by, I set out on the quest of Grant again.

I decided to find the lounge first, but I forgot to ask Bob where it was! I knew it was in one of the basements, so I made my way through the dark Stygian labyrinths under the Motel buildings. Half expecting to suddenly find myself trapped in a cave full of Deros by stumbling through a trapdoor or taking a wrong turn somewhere; I made my way cautiously through these trackless passages until I found the lounge.

Seeing no one in the lounge fitting Bob's description; I turned the search to the swimming pool, but found it devoid of shutterbugs with bathing trunks on.

After no little bit of legwork I decided to try a "stake-out" in the lounge and this finally paid off. Before I could consider the enormity of accosting a BNF with a self-introduction; I went ahead and plunged into it. After all, look at all the effort I expended in finding you!

I don't recall too much of what was said, but it was nice meeting you though I may not have said so at the time, I certainly hope our conversation didn't seem too one-sided to you - I am sometimes wont to be a bit gabby when I meet a person for the first time. But I believe it is better to say something to prevent the conversation from dying. I became engaged in a conversation with some other fans and when I looked up you were conversing with some BNF's and Pros. I don't think I saw you again except at the Banquet. You must have had a hell of a night because I don't recall seeing you at all Sunday.

The fans who I met in the lounge when you stacked up some Canfans turned out to be a group from Chicago. I more or less "joined up" with them. Maybe I should say that I crashed their party. But at any rate, the banquet found me seated with Lewis Grant and Jerry DeMuth of Chicago. Lewis Grant sat next to me and performed a service for which I am much obliged. He pointed out BNF's and Pros for me. However, Lewis has a seemingly unlimited repertorie of cornfield after cornfield of puns and jokes that he will recite when given the proper encouragement, which can be as slight as the proverbial "drop of a hat". Needless to say, I had a good time at the dinner even though the levity at the banquet table produced indigestion. (which was later annihilated by vodka and whisky)

†I was informed that I was sitting immediately behind Bob (Gee-Gosh) Tucker, who was sitting at the table across the aisle. Asimov was at the far end of this table next to the wall, and I had a ring-side seat for his part in the program as he read and made some caustic remarks on Bob Bloch's "classic" "The Vengeance Of The Tchen-Lama", which was printed in Ray Palmer's fanzine Other Worlds. The banquet

would have been a completely enjoyable affair if it had not included the damnable TAFF method of election vote. It was a confused, even the confusors became confused, farcical debate on the methods of how many ways to select a likely candidate. When the heat of the room seemed to become intolerable, one more fool would jump up and add to the chaos. I was certainly glad when it was over.

After sitting in the stifling banquet room, I imagine everyone had worked up a good thirst for the night's revels. I returned to Room 12 with DeMuth and there was a few people already there. This particular room had been advertised as a place to come and get a drink while looking over Advent's Freas Portfolio and Knight's In Search Of Wonder. The party started when a bottle of Vodka was fished out of the bathtub which was filled with ice. Gin and Rum were also floating in the ice pack. The commode seat lid and water closet top served as a bar. I remember many names, faces, and bits of conversation in the night's festivities, but not in any semblance of the right order. I do remember talking to Lee Ann Tremper and Dick Luppoff of Indiana until their interests turned to other things.

DeMuth and Jim O'Mera left for some smokier smokefilled rooms, and after a bit I too decided on a change of scenery. I again entered the basement catacombs, but hurried through there as quickly as possible. Who knows - maybe that was where Bloch had hidden the most important part of his luggage - his vampire coffin! Or maybe one of those irate fans I disturbed in the hucksters room still thought I was ClodHall. Even now a fiendish plot of revenge could be in motion - you could pull a "Cask of Amontillado" down there and no one would ever be the wiser.

I finally ran into DeMuth and O'Mera again and we wound up in a smoke chamber where some BNF's and Pros were holding court. We decided to roost there for a while. L. Sprague de Camp, Jim Harmon, Scortia, Dr. Barrett, and Tucker were among those I could recognize through the blue fumes. They were having an esthetic discussion of the art of telling good jokes. I've never heard so many new dirty jokes before at one sitting.

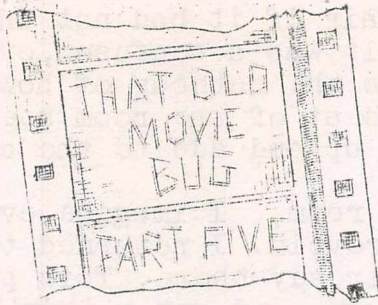
Four-thirty AM found me staggering in the direction of bed. I had been resigned to spend the night on the back seat of my old '49 Pontiac, but DeMuth suggested that I try to rent some one's couch for the night. Lewis Grant and his roommate had a couch in their room and they permitted me to use it for a modest sum. My last memories of the night were of Dr. Barrett wandering around the parking area in front of the Motel looking for poker players as the dawn lighted the sky over the distant eastern hills. The Doctor must have stayed awake for the entire Con.

I was content to watch the BNF's and Pros who got a good nights' sleep socialize in the lounge the next morning with DeMuth and company after an abominable breakfast at Howard Johnson's Restaurent. I felt as though I was existing in the bottom of a jar of molasses all that morning. I finally decided to leave after having lunch with DeMuth, Grant, and party. By then I was still feeling quite wasted and felt that I should get the 100 mile drive over with so I could take a good shower and hit the sack for about twelve hours.

It was great meeting fans and pros for the first time. I'm not a Con-neo anymore, and I know I'll be attending more in the future. I realize now that you aren't really aware of what fandom is really like until you attend a Con.

BC

That Old Movie Bug



by William
D. Grant

I guess by now most of you have recovered from the new Late Show series featuring all the old horror classics. At this date well over 35 TV outlets have gone for this series, so for you fantasy-horror fans the bonanza has been struck.

Universal's "Frankenstein" with Colin Clive, Boris Karloff, Mae Clarke, John Boles and Edward Van Sloan is the initial classic of the group. And I have to admit that I have never seen this early sound shocker. A friend remarked all good things come to those who wait and I think many of us can apply this statement to the above news.

While digging into the past I went to a one showing only of "Grand Hotel" which still remains a classic even though it originally appeared in the early thirties. The mere mention of this film stirs many memories, this is the film that Garbo spoke those famous lines, "I WANT TO BE ALONE". Along with her a matchless performance by John Barrymore, in fact one of his best. Wallace Beery playing the role of a German tycoon, Joan Crawford as the stenographer. Lionel Barrymore playing the role of Kringleman. Lewis Stone as the Doctor with the scarred face. While there are moments that definitely show the age of the film there are so many other great sequences that the minus points are soon forgotten. Those of you who are in the areas where MGM films are being released on TV should be on the watch for this one.

I have only walked out on a film twice, several weeks ago was my second time. The show, "The Cyclops" and "Daughter of Dr. Jekyll", the second of the two being the all-time worst. "The Cyclops" could have been a longer picture, the relationship between the Giant and the cast was barely touched. After the build-up, which takes more than half of the 65 minutes our cast is held at bay in a cave. Then with words of wisdom the explanation of the Giant is explained and that's it, the pot-boiler is over.

A step above these two minor epics was "The Land Unknown" with Jock Mahoney, William Reynolds and a beautiful creature billed as Shawn Smith. The editing of actual Navy footage and the almost plausible crash landing inside an Antarctic crater was handled fairly well. From this point on you either go for it or it becomes incredible trash. But let me say that there were signs and sparks of originality which got lost in the shuffle.

Charlie Chaplin's latest film "The King in New York", regardless of adverse comments, will do a rip-roaring business. As far as I know the film will not be released in the United States, hence the reason for the cartoon cover. To further this I will quote from a recent interview which inspired the picture:

It was only after pleading with the warders-off around him that Canada has a special interest in this movie that I was able to get to Chaplin.

Why should Canada be especially concerned with A King

In New York? I made the point with Chaplin.

"Is it true," I asked, "that American film distributors are going to block the film?"

"Block it?" he said. "Good heavens, no. I haven't made this film with the intention of its being shown in the United States. It's for the rest of the world."

"It will definitely be shown in Canada?"

"Oh, yes. The deal hasn't been finalized yet but it's almost certain to be on there before Christmas."

"That means," I said, "that the only chance Americans will have of seeing the film will be to go across the border into Canada. When it plays places like Windsor and Niagara Falls it will probably do sell-out business, mainly with Americans."

Chaplin's pale blue eyes under his white thatch lit up.

"Doesn't that conjure up a lovely picture!" he said.

"Americans sneaking over the border into Canada to see it and no doubt being conscious-stricken that they are being un-American!"

From this you can gather that the war between Chaplin and the USA is still up at a high pitch. I always feel sorry for this artist, who in his early films created comedy out of the simple things in life and who will never be surpassed. Now it is another story, a personality using the motion picture screen to display his dissatisfaction. It shows that the white-haired Charlie has never grown up in one corner of his mind, but nevertheless I feel that the legacy of his early films are a part of our times and regardless of the above he still is Chaplin the Great.

Now for a recommendation. The film, "Hell Drivers" with a cast of personalities unknown to North American audiences except for Peggy Cummins. This one is about truck-drivers, a crooked boss, a killer and a modern temptress. I will say nothing more than to warn you that this is a British made film and I haven't been so entirely thrilled in ages. Or lets use that other word "entertained".

I recently enjoyed "The Man With A 1000 Faces" in which James Cagney does an excellent job of portraying Lon Chaney, Sr. The bits and pieces recalling some of his great screen roles did a thorough job of making me wish I could see all of them. The thing that did surprise me was that Chaney did make one sound film and being made under Metro's banner I can only hope that the "Unholy Three" will turn up on TV.

Not so good is the new Cinemascope version of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" with (a not so terrifying) Anthony Quinn and (a non-revealing--covered in rags) Gina Lollobrigida. I think the fact that this film was photographed in colour is the chief detriment. Colour kills the mood that was obtained in the original black and white versions. Quinn is good, but the make-up department let him down. Just compare it with the make-up in the aforementioned "Man With A 1000 Faces". I have always felt that Universal has been way ahead in this market through the years, because they have turned out a steady stream of horror films and how shall I say it--this has made them go on to greater heights and obsenities in shock. So for the record, the new "Hunchback" is interesting, but it will come off as a pale shadow as compared with the original Chaney or the later Laughton sound version. WDG

Modern Art Forms

It is, to me, interesting that art forms in the world today have a basic similarity. Consider the art forms: poetry, painting, music, sculpture, photography. In this the twentieth century they are painfully similar. If you make a study of one, you know the characteristics of them all. The characteristics, to me, are a bit frightening and capable of pushing off into dangerous directions.

ITEM 1. JAZZ. The "modern", "progressive" type. I don't know beans about this type of music and, truthfully, don't much care, though I do feel a bit of loss when among the aficionados or self-named aficionados. So what I do know about jazz is picked up second hand, third hand, or worse, from people who claim to know. One such person is Dave Rike, of Rodeo, possessor of some fan-nish fame.

I'm not knocking Dave's liking, or disapproving of it, or anything of the sort. Rusty (the read headed wife) and I favor the classical stuff mostly, but don't throw up our hands in righteous wrath at anything modern.

Dave Rike was over our apartment in Sacramento and we were trying to discover his reasons for liking jazz. I explained that a lot of the classical and semi-classical stuff could produce pictures to me, stir emotions, tell stories.

Dave tells me that progressive jazz does nothing of the sort--no pictures, no meaning, no story. This took me somewhat aback and I couldn't help thinking "Then what good is it?"

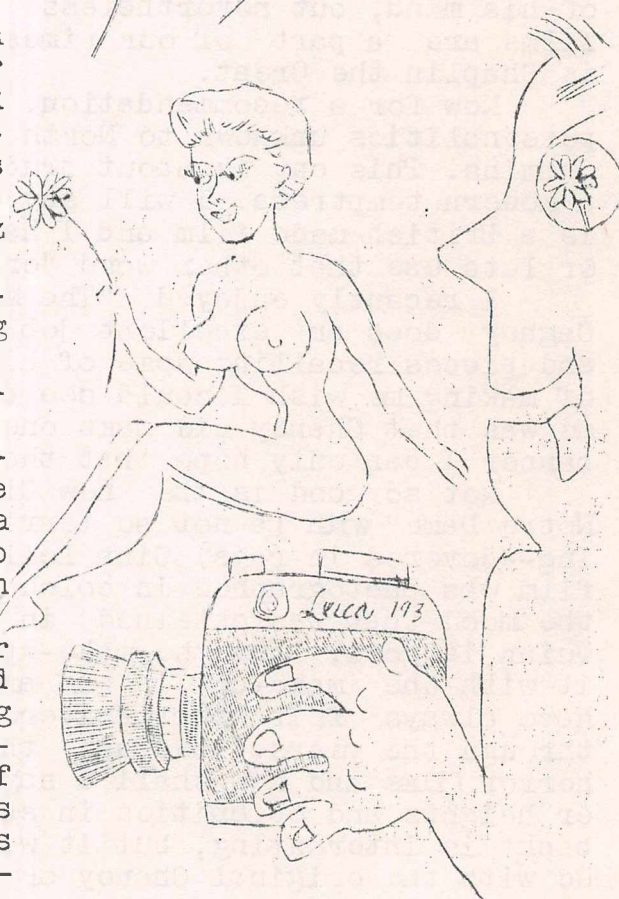
OK, then what is progressive, modern, new jazz?

I really don't know, but if my original sentence of this article is true --"Art forms in the world today have a basic similarity"--we should be able to figure modern music by studying modern painting, modern playwriting, etc.

ITEM 2. MOBILES. I can't remember the year (though 1931 sticks in my mind somehow), but the mobile, the moving living sculpture form is a recent product. Rusty and I have made several of these and enjoyed them--they're not as easy as you might think. Everyone is familiar with the mobile form: a collection of wires, tin, cardboard, etc.

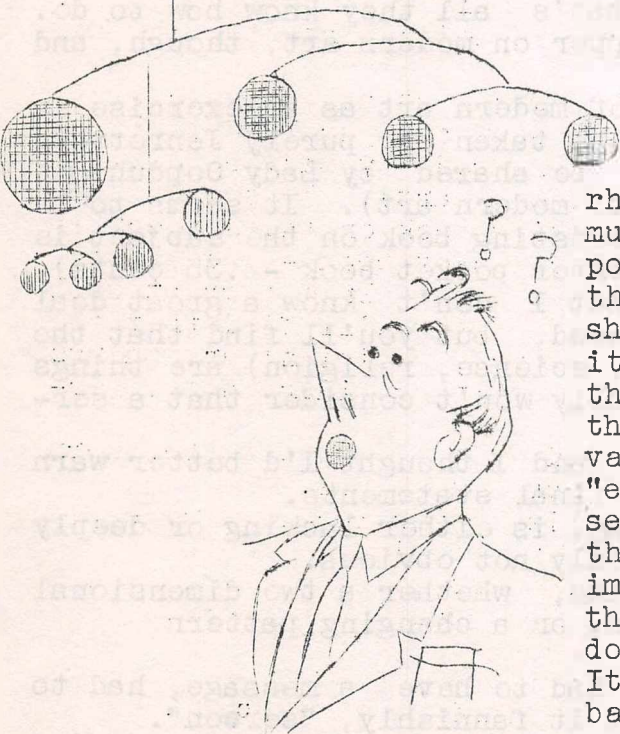
MODERN

BY DAVE



ART FORMS

VENTURE



hanging down from the ceiling. Strongest characteristic of it is its sense of motion, mobility.

A mobile is a pattern, a changing shifting form.

ITEM 3. THE MODERN PLAY. This includes such things as WAITING FOR GODOT and such. The obvious thing about these is lack of real plot, the complete "stupidity" of it all. These things are not usually commercial successes except as oddities, though I'm sure a dialectic will be reached which will make these things palatable to the masses and yet give them a sense of being avant garde --by that time they will be completely worthless, probably.

OK, the characteristic of the modern play seems to be a lack of direction, complete disassociation with reality, and a strange blending of diverse elements.

ITEM 4. THE POETRY FORMS. The extreme poetry forms. Like this:

The Now

The now before then,
not over but now
there where the last
of the was
looked up and fled
to before;
the stirred never soup
the boiled never pot
The endless, repeated, question
ringing through the eternal
now. (Eve Pettijohn)

Does it have meaning? It doesn't rhyme and it doesn't seem to have too much in the way of sense. I'm sure the poetess couldn't tell you what she was thinking of when it was put down, but she would be the last one to admit that it was "stream of consciousness" or anything like that. Certain words are in it that might bring up vague thoughts, vague memories ("Now", "never", "eternal", "endless"), because anyone with a time sense, who knows that he will die must think of these things and realize the importance of each passing moment. Yet this poem (if we can call it that) doesn't proceed from beginning to end. It makes about as much sense reading it backward as forward. Or does it? It has words, it has phrases that lead to other

Modern Art Forms

words, other thoughts. "The boiled never pot" and we think: "a watched pot never boils" which reminds us that those things which we concentrate on too fully don't give good results, like "the pursuit of happiness".

So maybe there is something to it--maybe it does have a meaning, but the meaning is incidental, what's important is the general, total effect, the pattern.

ITEM 5. MODERN ART. Everyone seems to have opinions on modern art--oops--Modern Art. I'm not sure that it's at all what it was supposed to be in the beginning. And since I don't know what it was supposed to be at the beginning, that isn't much help, is it?

But one thing is certain: when a woman, emotional type, stands in front of a globulous painting entitled "Afternoon of a Beer Can" and starts crying from sheer sentiment, the nearby artist, creator of the picture, is sneering.

Why? Because that's not what it is. And there isn't a "right" way to hang it (the right way might very well be face against the wall in the majority of cases). Modern Art is no more than pattern work, art reduced to its paint globs and lines. It has little need of perspective and no resemblance to real things.

Modern art is pure composition. A dark blob here, a matching white line over here, a thin procession of dots there; voila, a pattern, and, for popular, "educated" consumption: "The Last of the Gandy Dancers".

Many of the artists are fully capable of "straight" artwork--take a look at Picasso's early work if you doubt it, but don't forget that a monkey is making money these days from her modern art canvases.

Picasso I can look at and admire, for he has what I call "Consciousness of Abstraction", in other words, he knows better and can do literal work if he wants. What burns me up are the "Artists" who draw-stick figures, etc. and it turns out that's all they know how to do. This artistic monkey really puts the topper on modern art, though, and makes me wonder who the monkey is.

Incidentally, this classification of modern art as an exercise in composition and color balance shouldn't be taken as purely Jenrettean in origin. It aint. Though it may not be shared by Lady Oopduhart (most sentimental of lady collectors of modern art). It seems to be what the critics say. A current and interesting book on the subject is THE PAINTER'S EYE by Maurice Grosser (Mentor pocket book - .35 cents).

AND IN CONFUSION I want to say that I don't know a great deal about any of the subjects here discussed, but you'll find that the every day things people discuss (politics, science, religion) are things they know damned little about, so I really won't consider that a serious criticism of my article.

OK, now that that's out of the way (and I thought I'd better warn you) we can get down to the summary and final statements.

1. The content, the meat, the meaning, is either lacking or deeply buried in modern art forms. It is certainly not obvious.

2. Pattern - Pattern is the big thing, whether a two dimensional pattern as in modern art, a word pattern, or a changing pattern.

Where does this leave us?

The previous "classic" art forms had to have a message, had to have something to say. They were, to put it fannishly, "seroon".

Today's artists are suspicious of the burning message, the driving home of a point, the fiery cross; instead they are interested in

their art as art. The musician is interested in his special and different "Sounds"; the writer is engrossed in his words; the painter in his colors and arrangements; the sculptor in his forms.

Why has this come about? It may be a humbleness, a self-questioning of the worth of the whole. It may be a doubt, a disillusioning. Yet, progress must and will go on.

Today the artists are searching, working, learning their tools, their atoms, their basic constituents.

Tomorrow they may get around to putting these parts together, bringing them into a meaningful whole. When that happens I think that there will be something new and meaningful in the world. It will be something with great truth in it, I believe. It may be ultimate. It may be horrible.

We'll see.

DJ

(continued from page four)

Best On The Quarter

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Edited by Dale R. Smith
3001 Kyle Avenue
Minneapolis 22, Minn., USA

This is a serious effort and the lead article becomes quite topical with the current news about Sputnik. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MANNED SATELLITE OR SPACE STATION by Jerry E. Pournelle (Director of

Social Research, SAST) is the title and well explains the contents.... For the more serious minded types it would be well worth your time to get in touch with Dale Smith at the above address.....

REPORT ON THE MIDWEST CON
Edited and written by
G. M. Carr (no address)

This is what you would call a one-shot, but it really covers this year's Midwest Con in a very astute narration. There are observations in this report that would be missed by

most of us. So we can be thankful that Mrs. Carr has set this down on paper and then by gosh has sent it out gratis. An illustration of what a real fan is. There are six pages of text and a title page that contains photographs. A wonderful souvenir of an enjoyable event.....

YANDRO Sept. 1957
Edited by Robert and
Juanita Coulson
105 Stitt Street
Wabash, Indiana., USA

The Coulsons ramble very ably at the beginning, this is followed by more of the same by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Then Ron Parker gets into the act. Again we encounter another easy going format, which seems to be the thing these days.

Also included are some interesting letters as well as a fanzine review column.....Yandro hasn't too many pages, but then again it appears monthly, which makes it one of the very few in this category.....

PHLOTSAM # 8 August 1957
Edited by Phyllis Economou
P O Box 1325
Milwaukee 2, Wisconsin., USA

When I look at the new address I figure that Bob Bloch will be coming in contact with Phyllis. So that the lucky receiver of Phlotsam will have to be on the look out for some very jaded material in the

near future.....FAN ON SAFARI on page 19 caught my eye and gave me an insight much deeper than I had previously.....From the ancient archives a bit of fiction called MR. AUGUSTUS BROWN'S METAMORPHOSES which struck me as entertaining, but then I'm a character.....

The MAELSTROM

ALAN DODD
77 Stanstead Road
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England

Superb cover on # 33. Such excellent cover material too and the interior was as beautifully set out as ever.....I was going to ask you something which stems from a newspaper article Boyd Raeburn sent me concerning a couple of English people who came to Toronto but couldn't get a job because of their English accents. In his letter Boyd, at the same time mentioned the showing of British films in Toronto theatres and the very fact that JARO has a large organization in Canada should prove English films are shown there quite a bit. Now--if an employer will not give a person a job because he speaks with an English accent, why is it the same employer can still tolerate English accents in the films he sees? Is it that such voice carriers are not good enough to work but are tolerable enough to laugh at in a cinema? If they won't put up with them at work, then why should they in the entertainment world?.....Was interested muchly in your remarks on "Dillinger", a film which I'd seen twice. Also saw Lawrence Tierney in the cheap follow up of the first film, namely, "The Hoodlum". You don't recall I suppose whether there was ever a film featuring Pretty Boy Floyd do you? I considered that he was a much more colourful gangster than Dillinger but somehow never saw him featured in one of those biographical gangster films. Possibly his constant use of a machine gun (machine guns must not be seen in the hands of gangsters; Johnston Code) made him unsuitable material for a Hollywood film.....How about a film called "Juggernaut" with Karloff. I was reading a mention the other day of a sequence in which Karloff tears a wall phone off the wall, but I never found out any further information about what the Juggernaut or who, of the title was.....

I agree that some English accents strike me personally as a bit obnoxious and with it in some cases I get the impression of "I'm better than you". Or for the highbrows the interpretation might be called "snobbish". Or let us reverse it; how would you like an American sounding off in your quarters about something that you had done to the best of your ability all your life.....What Boyd forgot to tell you was that British pictures never received a national run until Rank came over and acquired/built his own movie houses in Canada. Or to put it roughly British pictures have been eased-in upon the Canadian movie-goer. In Toronto the Rank houses are situated in the high-income bracket areas as well as neighborhoods populated by one-generation or direct types from England. But while we may find fault let us not forget that there are pretty poor types in amongst our own, in fact very many. One just has to read the headlines. So there is a balance, nobody has the market on obnoxious characters.....I can only say that the people referred to in the article must have been pretty bad and that they made the most of a situation. For example there are double the amount of people out looking for jobs in Toronto right now as against the same period one

year ago at this time.....Reverse this situation again, suppose I came to England, the same thing is possible, there are times when I can be obnoxious. Frankly I would forget this. An Englishman or any other type for that matter who comes to Canada can strike it rich if he has anything to offer. The truth of this is around me every day of people from all over Europe who have made good in a very short time. It is only the weak, the ignorant and a newspaper man who likes to see, "the byline", his name in print that the above can turn up..

SAM MOSKOWITZ
127 Shephard Avenue
Newark 12, New Jersey
USA

I think that the two articles in your June 1957 number deserve special commendation for their excellence. Those two articles are "ONE AGAINST THE UNIVERSE" and "THE LONG VIEW".....Warner's pointing up the trend from the individual episode in science fiction to the almost-universal-acceptance of the cosmic is most valid and to the majority of today's science fiction, completely applicable.....We find that even the most ordinary and, overused plot now takes place against a backdrop of universal empires and galaxies without end. The setting is usually outside our world or solar system. There are reasons for the change and there is room for considerable discussion of the implications, but I do not have time for that at present. Warner's article was excellent.....Phil Rasch, too, deserves commendation for his views on "Merritt Revisited" and the elements in a science fiction novel that might give it "classic" stature. He has brought the subject into focus and like Warner's there is room for endless discussion.....

DALE R. SMITH
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Minneapolis 22,
Minnesota, USA

The June issue set me to thinking again about a movie I've seen only once, and that was sometime in the late thirties. As I remember it it was a Russian production of "Gulliver's Travels in Lilliput", but brought up to date with regard to military science--they used tanks. This film was done in miniatures, using small models and shooting one frame at a time. I think of this movie every once in a while and would certainly like to see it again if I ever have an opportunity.....In just a few minutes I'm going to quit the den and join the little woman for some TV viewing. This evening we are watching "A Day At The Races" with the Marx Brothers. I may have seen this one before, don't remember, but even so it should be relaxing--and that is something to achieve these days.....

Dale is lucky to be living within the powers of KMGM TV. This station in addition to the MGM library has acquired a goodly chunk of all the pre: 1952 RKO feature films.....As for the Russian "Gulliver's Travels" I would think it would be worth your while to see if there are any specialized Film Society Organizations operating, this film would be excellent subject matter for one of their programs. And who knows it may turn up on Television. It is possible, I just finished seeing an excellent French feature-length cartoon with dubbed English dialogue. Six years ago this film was screened, in glowing Technicolor, and nobody went for it in the local movie houses, so now it is on the TV circuit. This could eventually happen with all non-English dialogue cartoons that have been recorded with a separate musical sound-track.....WDG

