

DAGON

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I'LL SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS

XLVI. Land without Wertham

About a third of a century ago, American comic art was badly mauled by a Dr. Frederic Wertham, who in his book Seduction of the Innocent claimed that comic books were leading America's youth into a life of crime, violence, and sexual passion. In response to his largely specious but not totally groundless arguments, a 'Comics Code Authority' was founded which professed to pass judgment on all mention of crime, violence, drugs, or sex - especially sex - in comic books. Comic books that did not have the imprimatur of this "authority" were removed from the newsstands, either under local ordinances or by private pro-censorship groups. Almost the entire line of EC fell victim to this hysteria, since EC alone refused to knuckle under to these censors.

From the middle 1950s to the late 1960s, American comic art fell victim to an epidemic of blandness. Innovations were not made, new ideas were not tried, and when the intellectual ferment of the late 1960s began, it expressed itself in comic art not with the 'zines that observed the Comics Code, but in the anti-war, anti-establishment, and strongly sexual "underground comics". Not until these had run interference for the "overground" comics for several years did such strips as Doonesbury, Bloom County, Cathy, The Far Side, and Mother Goose and Grimm start challenging the political and sexual standards of the old strips, or jump the line into weird, surrealist art and humor. And even these have stayed out of comic books; they run as daily newspaper strips, or in bound hard-cover or paperback books, but are unknown on the comic book racks.

What, we might asked, would have happened, if Wertham had kept his paranoid thoughts to himself? For the answer, we need only look across the Pacific Ocean, in a look provided to us by Frederik L. Schodt in Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics (\$10, Kodansha/Harper & Row, 1986, a revised paperback edition of a 1983 hard-cover version). I am indebted to Jim Dunnigan through Albert A. Nofi for the loan of this book, which is copiously illustrated with examples from before Perry's time to the date of publication, and concludes with translations of works by four of the greatest comic artists in the world today: Reiji Matsumoto, Riyoko Ikeda, Keiji Nakazawa, and the incomparable Osamu Tezuka, who is under-rated when you call him "the Walt Disney of Japan".

Comic art is now very much more popular in Japan than it is here. Though Sturgeon's Law applies there as here, their best is well beyond our best. Comic books appear not only monthly, but also weekly. Sales are far beyond those here per capita. They appeal to all levels of the population, and the romantic comics aimed at girl readers are the product of specialist women cartoonists, rather than coming from the same male artists and writers who also do the adventure, science-fiction, and humorous comic books. Stories are considerably longer, so artists can "spread out" and spend time and effort on good artwork. The Montage technique, which is almost unknown here, is very common and well-done in Japan. An American reader is left with the nagging thought that we might have had something like this, if the dead hand of Frederic Wertham did not still rest upon the American comic book.

* - "99% of everything is crap." - Theodore Sturgeon

Schodt, who speaks Japanese and has translated Ikeda's contribution to the book, mentions briefly caricatures from the pre-Meiji periods, but really begins his account with the first introduction of western comic art to Japan in the early Meiji era. (There were even Japanese editions of Punch and Puck.) Until World War II, comic art in Japan roughly paralleled that in the U. S. The opposite number to Mickey Mouse in the Japan of the 1930s was a small black dog named Norakuro, obviously lifted from the dog who accompanied Betty Boop on her adventures, and eventually surrounded with toys and other spin-offs. As in the America of the late 1960s, some artists of the 1920s and 1930s protested the militarization of their country. Almost all of them were eventually pressured into either silence or conformity, but one, Tarō Yashima, fled to America in 1933 after being arrested and tortured, and he drew anti-war cartoon booklets which were air-dropped to Japanese troops during the war.

The loss of the war wrenched Japanese thought, including comic art, into new directions which seem strange to Americans. The traditional samurai virtues of dedication, struggle, and perseverance unto death if need be, still exist in Japanese comic art, but glorification of war is absent; there is no Japanese equivalent of Sergeant Fury, Sergeant Rock, or America's other comic book "super-soldiers". These samurai virtues are either placed in stories of events of Japan's past, or applied to sports stories, a sublimation of war

where they are appropriate. The
verse to the right comes from the
theme song of an animated TV show

Kyojin no Hoshi ("Star of the Giants"). And until you fulfill your vows as a man
Fifty years ago, such sentiments
might have appeared in a war comic,
urging a patriotic devotion to the Em-

With the iron will your father helped you forge
You stake your life; nothing can stop you now!
Give your all! Make those speed-balls burn!
You must sweat blood and ignore your tears.
Onward, Hyūma! Ever onward!

peror. Now they apply to a boy who realizes his dream of pitching for the most renowned baseball team in Japan.

One of the four selections presented by Schodt in English translation is Bōrei Senshi ("Ghost Warrior") by Reiji Matsumoto. This takes place late in World War II on a remote Pacific island where two Japanese soldiers find themselves. The Americans and Japanese are equally the victims of the war. There are some great action pictures of aerial combat, but in the end the futility of war and the military mystique dominates the story.

Japan's "economic miracle", now called into question by the reeling Tokyo stock market, seems to elicit mainly humor from Japanese comic artists at the expense of the businessmen and their toadies. Schodt lists under this heading a whole series of comic books devoted to, of all things, mah jong, but these properly belong under the sports comics, judging from the single-minded devotion which many Japanese seem to take towards this game. (The Japanese play a game much closer to the original Chinese rules than is the degenerate form played in U. S. women's clubs.) Nor does he give much space to the numerous science-fiction comics, which dominate a large rack at Forbidden Planet. Matsumoto is the man who dredged the Yamato up from the bottom of the Pacific, rebuilt the world's largest battleship into a spaceship, and sent it to the stars in the series called in English Starblazers. And Tezuka's Tetsuwan Atomu, called in English "Astro Boy", was briefly on US TV in the 1960s. (It made its American debut at the 1963 World Science Fiction Convention in Washington.)

Tezuka also originated the girls' romantic comic in 1953 with Ribon no Kishi ("Princess Knight"). Like a substantial number of Japanese adventure and romantic comic strip, it was placed not in Japan's past but in Europe's, and its heroine was a princess who dressed up in men's clothing and rode about the countryside righting wrongs. This established a tradition of sexual ambiguity in the romantic comic strip, and another of strict authenticity in costume and customs. Not for the Japanese are the American comic strips or historical films that show Roman cavalymen with stirrups, or William the Conqueror in full plate armor. And these stories argue a better knowledge in Japan of the history of the west, than we are likely to find among us of the history of the Orient. (I had to check an encyclopedia before I established that the events of Kurosawa's great film Ran ("Chaos") took place in the late 16th century.)

Most of the artists of the girls' comics are women, and one of them, Riyoko Ikeda, is represented with Berusaifu no Bara ("Rose of Versailles"), a costume drama that runs from the arrival of Marie Antoinette as the teen-age bride of the Dauphin, and ends with the deaths of the three chief characters: Marie Antoinette, her lover Count Fersen, and the fictitious Oscar de Jarjayes, a woman who has disguised herself as a man and serves in the Guards. Like all heroines of the romantic comics, Marie Antoinette has large, round, dark, liquid eyes. (So does Oscar.)

One surprising feature of the Japanese romantic comic books is sexual ambiguity, and sometimes outright male homosexuality. "Tales of homosexual relationships between young boys, when depicted 'aesthetically'," Schodt reports, "are very popular among female readers and are an extension of the underlying bisexual theme traditionally present in many girls' comic stories." This does not sound too different from the fanzines published by female Trekkies in this country, relating homosexual romances aboard the Enterprise, and called "K/S fanzines" for "Kirk/Spock".

Sex, violence, and scatology are far more common in Japanese comic books than they are here. Japanese comic artists have had to put up with censorship from everyone from the Tokugawa Shōguns to the American occupation authorities, and they are not going to stand for it any more. Every governmental attempt to censor Japanese comic art produces resistance, usually successful, from publishers, artists, and authors.

One of the most striking examples of this defeat of censorship is Tatsuhiko Yamagami's Gaki Deka ("Kid Cop"). Gaki Deka is a boy who always wears a policeman's cap and a wide, very long, polka-dotted necktie, and engages in acts that are violent, surrealistic, and irreverent. As Hisao Kato says of him in The World Encyclopedia of Comics (Chelsea House, 1976), he is "impudent, undependable, filthy, stupid, and vulgar." And there are others who go well beyond Gaki Deka. Almost every taboo in Japanese society - and they have a good many more than we do - is regularly violated in these comic books, to an extent that would not be tolerated here except in "underground" comics, and there only because the authorities have learned that initiating prosecutions is usually not worth the bother. (The Japanese authorities have also realized this.) Yet Japan is a much less violent or sexually active society than ours. These are probably due to deep social and historical reasons for this, rather than the opportunity that Japanese have, and we largely do not, of exercising such fantasies vicariously rather than carrying them into action. A character like Gaki Deka in American comic books, newspaper comics, or (perish the thought) on TV would probably generate behavior like his in real life, to an extent that it has not done in Japan. After all, violence in American society is generated not alone by comic art and television, but by regularly hearing respected national leaders urge that some foreign country be hit with all the power of the U. S. military arsenal. A society organized for war, praising war, and erecting huge memorials in its capital to its war dead, will as an inevitable consequence have a high level of domestic violence. Comic books can do little to increase (or, it seems, to decrease) this level.

Often an American reader of Japanese comic art will be startled to find, in the middle of themes not unlike our own experiences, something indicating an alien mode of thought. This appears in one of the selections chosen by Schodt as an example: Tezuka's Hōō ("Phoenix"), a part of a longer work which Tezuka is obviously making his major opus, Hi no Tori. This is carried over several centuries, and represents the search for the Phoenix "as a framework to analyze the meaning of life". In this episode of Hi no Tori, an 8th-century master sculptor named Akanemaru, obsessed by the Phoenix theme of immortality, is on his way by ship to visit an island where the Phoenix may live, when he is washed overboard and drowned. He is reincarnated as a "miserable little speck" of plankton. To the ghostly voice that informs him of this, he protests "Why have I changed? What have I done to deserve this?" He is told: "You didn't do anything wrong...This was simply your destiny...to become something different, when your life as a human ended." Even those westerners who believe in the un-Christian doctrine of reincarnation believe that it has something to do with reward or punishment for deeds in one's life as a human. But for the cartoonist (and physician)

GETTING CAUGHT UP

DAGON is a fanzine of commentary on science, science-fiction, fantasy, comic art, censorship, and anything else that at the moment happens to interest its publisher, who is John Boardman, 234 East 19th Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11226-5302. DAGON circulates through APA-Q, an amateur press association which is collated at the same frequency and address. It also goes to other people who have expressed an interest in it, or whom I think might be interested.

APA-Q is an amateur press association open to anyone who cares to contribute and/or pay postage costs for the mailings. It is collated here every third Saturday, and the copy count is 35. On some Saturdays, such as today, people come over at 2 PM to help collate the Distribution. On other weekends I may be busy on Saturday and will put it together myself, at such time as I can. If you'd like to come and help collate APA-Q, give me a phone call a day or two earlier to see whether I'll be needing help with the APA that weekend.* The collation dates of the next few Distributions appear to the right. There may be some problem with the collation of APA-Q #276, since that is a four-day weekend usually devoted to conventions.

Today is also the collation date for the 36th Mailing of APA-Filk, a quarterly amateur press association for filksingers. It is also going to be assembled at this address today at 2 PM. People who get both APA-Q and APA-Filk will find them mailed out in the same bundle. People whom I have a reasonable expectation of seeing during the next week will have their copies of APA-Q and/or APA-Filk handed to them in person instead.

Everyone who gets this present issue of DAGON will also received ANAKREON #36, my contribution to the present APA-Filk Mailing. Like all November issues of ANAKREON, this one is a collection of such verses of the Pagan filksong "That Real Old-Time Religion" which have come in over the past year. This time there are only 15, of which I had to compose 12 on stencil a week ago myself. Obviously, the steam is running out of this enthusiasm, and until further notice this will be the last annual supplement of additions to this song.

Also being collated today is the 542nd issue of my war-gaming fanzine GRAUSTARK, which contains a front-page announcement which may surprise GRAUSTARK readers more than it does people who get DAGON. (Or maybe it won't. I suspect that the subject matter of this announcement will not exactly surprise regular readers of GRAUSTARK.)

As of today, and including postage and envelope costs for this present Distribution of APA-Q (and APA-Filk if you get it), you will find the balance of your postage and printing account in the blank to the right. Anyone who wishes to receive either or both of these APAs should send me a few dollars for costs of mailing (postage plus 15¢ for the envelope). I will keep you posted on the balance of your account. Accounts that fall into arrears will be suspended. Presently suspended accounts are:

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|-------------------|---------|----------------|------|
| Winnie Bartilucci | -76¢ | John Hartzell | -79¢ |
| Andre Bridget | -72¢ | Dana Hudes | -28¢ |
| Shelby Bush | -\$5.98 | Mark Keller | -86¢ |
| Liz Ensley | -37¢ | Ted Pauls | -39¢ |
| Mike Gunderloy | -\$2.01 | Joyce Scrivner | -75¢ |

APA-Qover #270 (Malay): I detect distinct elements of Max Headroom in your recent APA-Qovers, John. It seems that this electronic pookah, having been banished from the airwaves, is finding his last hospitable refuge in APA-Q. And the acronym of the

* - Our telephone number is 718-693-1579. We have an answering machine. I can sometimes be reached during business hours at 718-780-5180.

"Committee Against Communist Agitators" fits very well. After its long domination of American popular culture and political activity, anti-Communism is sinking down among anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, racism, and the other forms of bigotry which at one time or another have found substantial followings. After all, there are so few Communists in this country that they make a poor target, but anti-Communist fanatics are moderately common, and have a habit of making themselves ridiculous through their own antics. This is not a new phenomenon, though it has increased in recent years. Over thirty years ago, shortly after Senator Joseph McCarthy got married, it was said that "he divorced his wife the next morning because he found a little red in her bed."

Quant Suff! #154 (Malay): You think Judge Bork looks Mephistophelean? When she first saw him on TV, Perdita thought that it was Dick Eney, a Big Name Fan of over 30 years' standing who has been around the Washington scene for so long that it was a good bet that sooner or later he'd do something newsworthy. (Eney does something obscure for the State Department. Twenty years ago he was doing something even more obscure in Vietnam for the so-called "Agency for International Development", a name that the C. I. A. used with the same facility as a pair of lovers will use when signing into a motel as "Mr. and Mrs. John Smith".)

There have been a few problems with New Jersey's attempt to prove that New York City is responsible for all the junk that washes up on the Jersey beaches. Newsday reported on 7 October that six days earlier 2,500 plastic bottles had been released into waterways at three locations in New York and two locations in New Jersey by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. "As of yesterday, 900 of them had come ashore in New York, 500 on Staten Island*, another 400 drifted toward Long Island and were found on the Rockaway beaches." Only one got to New Jersey, and it washed up on the tip of Sandy Hook, barely escaping being carried out into the Atlantic. Each of these bottles contained a postcard with an "800" phone number and instructions for free mailing. It might be amusing to take one with you, should you find a bottle, and mail it when you go on vacation in Key West or Anchorage or Lake Wobegon.

The genealogical chart of the House of Amber is getting even more complicated than the obligatory chart of the descendants of King Edward III, which has to appear in every study of Shakespeare's historical plays so you can understand what all those noblemen were murdering one another about.

When Barbarella was made into a film, two characters were merged to produce its "Duran Duran". One was Durand, the elderly leader of the underground organization in the Labyrinth of Sogo, who greets Barbarella when she arrives and cues her in on the local situation. The other was the Master Locksmith ("Le Serrurier"), who captures Barbarella when she tries to sneak into the palace. He puts her into a device which the English translation calls "the Excessive Machine", which is supposed to cause her to die of pleasure. In the movie, Barbarella was so innocent that she shorted out the machine, but in the comic book she was so jaded that she overloaded it. Jane Fonda's portrayal of Barbarella was as a serene innocent, but Jean-Claude Forest's original Barbarella was a lady who'd been everywhere and done it all. In a sequel, Barbarella has an affair with a handsome rascal, which results in her going to the planet Gyn-Gyn and giving birth to a son.

There is some doubt as to whether Infocom's Plundered Hearts was a good idea. Computer gamers are so overwhelmingly male in numbers that there may just not be a market for a romantic bodice-ripper or Regency novel as a computer interaction game, no matter how well designed it is. # 1461

Brighton Beach Memoirs (Blackman): New York City has a mixture of Dutch and British place names. If you go to the next overseas Worldcon, in the Netherlands, you are

* - Most of us think that Staten Island is a part of New York. However, many people in New Jersey have not yet reconciled themselves to the terms of a colonial land grant that put Staten Island and Liberty Island into New York.

This is
O At
P Great
E Intervals
R This
A Appears
T To
I Inflamm
O Optic
N Nerves

going to find Haarlem, Utrecht, Breukelen, Vlissingen (Flushing), and other New York City place names. Even Flatbush was once spelled "Vlatboesch".

It was less than three years from that disastrous panel at the 1984 Lunacon to the panel on "Must There Be War?" at the 1986 Worldcon, but I feel that the tide of opinion has turned in fandom on this question. The Rambo enthusiasm has waned even faster than it arose. Baen, Pournelle, and the rest of the militarists might ululate with outrage when Life During Wartime wins the 1988 Hugo, but at long last the tide seems to be running in that direction. I may have been a bit too hasty in predicting that Amerika will win the Drama Hugo next year; the rate at which its viewers dropped off for the later installments may be a measure of how fast the steam is going out of Rambo science-fiction.

"What undid the Library of Alexandria," you quote Bob Shaw as saying, "was overdue fines; because they were living BC, no matter when people returned scrolls it was earlier than when they had borrowed them." This caused me to discover the real reason why the dinosaurs became extinct. It all works out on the assumption that time travel was discovered by Baron Ferenc Nopcsa, the gay paleontologist. First he traveled forward to the San Francisco of 1985, and caught AIDS. Then he traveled back to the late Cretaceous, and infected the dinosaurs.

You report that the new £1 coin in Great Britain is called the "Maggie", because "it's thick, brassy, and thinks it's a sovereign." When the Susan B. Anthony dollar coins were tried about 10 years ago, some people called them "Carter quarters". They came out during the Carter administration, could easily be mistaken for quarters, and would buy what a quarter ought to buy.

The political issues of the past are still alive in London, as I found during my visit there in 1959. In front of the House of Commons is a statue of Oliver Cromwell, standing as if he were daring the kings buried across the street in Westminster Abbey to come out and try contentions with him again. And the Beefeaters who guide tours around the Tower of London give the same sense of the contemporary - "There's the tower where King Edward V was murdered - there's where Archbishop Sudbury was killed in the peasants' revolt - there's where we kept Rudolf Hess..."

I don't think that Julius Caesar was giving the ancient Keltic Pagans a bum rap about those wickerwork statues. To this day, in Belgium, large wickerwork figures are carried in parades, and sometimes even burned afterwards, though they are no longer stuffed with prisoners of war. And, if Lucius Apuleius can be trusted, there was once a time when Pagans persecuted Witches.

(It says something about the changes in society over the centuries that only two completely honest translations of Apuleius's The Golden Ass have ever been done into English. Most of them got very nearly-mouthed when the topic of sex came up. But the two honest translations were done by Philemon Holland, a subject of Queen Elizabeth I, and by Robert Graves, a subject of Queen Elizabeth II.)

To finish the story, the destruction of London Bridge in 1014 by King Olaf the Fat of Norway did no good at all, aside from inspiring a popular song. The Danes against whom he was fighting ruled England for another generation, and when they were finally ejected most of the English regretted it. (See the old romance "Havelok the Dane" for how the rule of Knud the Great entered English popular history.)

I see no reason why the figure of Ronald Reagan at Madame Tussaud's shouldn't be "too young". Such reputation as Ronald Reagan will have in history will depend on what he did in the 1940s, not on what he did in the 1980s.

One of the more interesting things about the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace is the crowd of tourists. Among them, and under their voices, you can hear repeated, in every dialect of English, lines from That Poem. The poor guardsmen must be as tired of it as Dennis Casey is of "Casey at the Bat".

(Next summer will be the centennial of its composition. Spare a thought of sympathy for Dennis and his ilk.)

Blancmange #190 (Blackman): The Yvain of the Arthurian tales was originally the old Welsh name Owen or Owain. The king or knight who is sleeping in his cave until his people need him is a feature of the mythology of several nations: Denmark's Holger,

England's Arthur, and Germany's Friedrich Barbarossa all have this tale told of them.

Afghans are always fighting somebody. If no one is considerate enough to invade them, they will either fight among themselves or invade somebody else, usually India. The U. S. ought to recognize that there are some parts of the world where the local people would rather kill one another than do anything else at all, and just stay out of such places. (And I mean anything; why do you think the birth rate is falling in Ireland?)

I haven't read Williamson's Historical Whodunits for some time, so I don't recall what Hugh Ross Williamson said about King Richard III. He seems to think that King Edward III was a closet Pagan, and puts Pagan significance to the famous incident about Lady Hastings' garter.

There is no tune for "Eskimo Nell" as far as I am aware. However, in his introduction to the collection, "Count Palmiro Vicarion" claims that "many tunes exist, but the common 4/4 ballad rhythm will usually do. And besides, I have come to feel that the dirty song tune is almost instinctive."

How to...in 8 Easy Lessons (Del Grande): The whole point of SDI is to have a "perfect" defense system, enabling the possessor of the SDI "defense" to nuke the hell out of some other nation and be perfectly safe from retaliation. Or at least that's the way President Johnson characterized an attempt, over 20 years ago, by President Kosygin to guard the Soviet Union with such a system. Your concern about "future Hitlers" reminds me of a line that inevitably comes up when anyone tries to defend the proposition that peace is preferable to war. Such a person is invariably asked "What would you do if Hitler..." or "What would you do if Stalin..." The correct answer to such a question is, "He's dead." If the militarist objects, stand by this statement. It cannot possibly be refuted.

"What do I know about weapons shipments? I'm a computer scientist."

"Was weiss ich über die Vernichtung? Ich bin Ofenaussesserer."

NEVER Bluff a Libarian (Burwasser): The reason why the police shot the polar bears never seems to have got on the national wires. There were three boys involved, and they had all shed their clothes before going swimming in the most of the bear enclosure. Two of them then got frightened, and ran home, leaving their pants behind them. When the police arrived, they saw enough clothes for three boys, and only one body. There was a real possibility that the other boys might still be alive, somewhere in the bear enclosure. That's why the police shot the bears.

We may hear quite a bit about Jean Kirkpatrick's book next year. There's a rumor around that she is going to try for the Republican presidential nomination. (This may simply be a way of getting the Vice Presidency, or a job in President Bush's cabinet.) Book reviews of non-current books can be found in back files of the New York Times Book Review or any other such publication. A book by a person as prominent as Kirkpatrick would also have been reviewed in several of the publications listed in the Periodicals Index.

I agree; forty years of steady, unrelenting anti-Communist indoctrination is not a good preparation for calling a second Constitutional Convention. I also agree with Roland Green's characterization of Dudley Pope. Pope's non-fiction is good also. His The Black Ship is an account of the Hermoine mutiny, one that makes the Bounty look like a cricket match. Pope correctly lists the personal failings of Captain Piggott which led to the mutiny, but he did not go on to analyze the social system that put men like Piggott in charge of ships like the Hermoine. "National necessity" is the cloak that covers and excuses all evils.

We have been quite familiar around here with "footfalls of a clumsy cat". Lucifer once tried to jump through a closed window, Swing once fell down the stairs, and in general is the worst klutz I've ever seen wearing cat fur. In an imperfect world there must necessarily be tone-deaf Welshmen, sea-sick Scandinavians, Jews who flunk out of college, and clumsy cats.

If the WeaponsCon committee ever got educated, no rumors of it have thus far got thus far north. More generally, Beyond this Horizon seems something of an anomaly among Heinlein's earlier works, and it is one of the earliest. It may have been that

poor sales, poor critical acclaim, or both, persuaded him that society was not yet ready for the message that the book carried. And indeed, in the early 1940s there was still a lot of social consciousness around. It was not until the 1950s made selfishness and militarism into virtues that Heinlein started preaching again. (Remember, the first part of Stranger in a Strange Land was set aside in the early 1940s, and not completed until the late 1950s, when Heinlein may have felt society was "ready" for it. Heinlein was most upset when the book became a sort of "hippie bible".) It is not exactly an accident that the critical acclaim for Heinlein's writing began to decline at about this time. In 1964, Tom Perry called Farnham's Freehold a "book-length Goldwater pamphlet". And from there, things just got worse and worse.

It does indeed seem that "blood, not semen, is the main carrier" of AIDS. Or, as I've also heard it put, the principal instrument for the spread of AIDS is not the penis, but the needle. There has been quite a bit of controversy locally, which I plan to refer to elsewhere in this or the next DAGON, about just how much heterosexuals who don't shoot up are at risk for AIDS.

A decade ago it looked as if the investigative reporter was the new hero of his or her profession. Journalism majors suddenly became popular in colleges. Where are all these bright and shining snoots when we need them to scrape the teflon off the Reagan administration? Of course, the problem may be in media management and not in the leg-men and leg-women. (Is that last term altogether correct for modern usage? There is a strong risk of innuendo.) Recall that, in all but one of the ten post-war presidential elections, newspaper endorsements were overwhelmingly Republican. For all we know, reporters may be filing detailed reports about corruption or stupidity in the Reagan administration, only to have them killed by senior editors working on the publisher's orders.

It is generally believed among war-gaming fans that the craze was kicked off by a game called Tactics, which was published in 1958 by Avalon-Hill. The A-H version was called Tactics II, implying an earlier version, probably from a smaller publisher with poorer distribution, though I cannot find any information on this. The first Tactics II board was a square grid; I believe that a later edition has the more popular and practical hexagonal grid. In the following year, Allan Calhamer published Diplomacy, on his own. (He says that for a while his apartment was mostly filled with long, flat maroon boxes; there were a few distribution problems in those days.) Diplomacy was purchased by Games Research Inc. in 1961, and sold by them to Avalon-Hill in the early 1970s. But neither game attracted much interest until the middle 1960s. I designed postal Diplomacy in 1963, and could only get five players for the first postal game. Diplomacy is a wargame and not "something separate", though it remains one of the most popular. More precisely, it is a war-plus-negotiation game, as the most popular ones are. Dungeons & Dragons was an outgrowth of a personal combat system involving warriors of the pre-gunpowder era. Gygax and Arneson first extended the combat system to elves, trolls, and such individuals, and then designed adventures into which the individual combats could fit. Gygax says that the two biggest literary influences on D&D were Tolkien's Lord of the Rings and Anderson's The Broken Sword; in both, humans and a number of non-human species interact with one another. Poul Anderson later became rather diffident about The Broken Sword. It is, after all, a sword-and-sorcery (S&S) novel, and he has preferred to make a name as a writer of hard-science s-f. The sequel promised at the end of The Broken Sword never has and never will materialize.

There is a vague distinction, not precisely delineable, between mercenaries and men who enlist in the armies of countries other than their own. After all, the notion that a man must enlist under the flag of his own country is one of the last two centuries. Prior to the nationalistic fervor evoked by the Napoleonic Wars, a man who wanted a career as a soldier or sailor could look into the possibilities and decide which monarch he would enlist under. To this day, a young Gurkha male has his choice between the British and Indian armies. The Vaeringer may have seen it the same way a thousand years ago.

There is a story about a Frenchman who enlisted in the army of Friedrich the Great (reigned 1740-1786) even though he spoke no German. His mates prepared him for a

little stunt that the king like to pull when he was inspecting the barracks. The king was in the habit of picking one soldier at random and asking him three questions which never varied in order and substance. They were:

"How old are you?"

"How long have you been in my service?"

"Do you like the pay and the food?"

The Frenchman was told what answers to give. And, sure enough, he was picked by the king during one inspection. The king first asked, "How long have you been in my service?" The Frenchman replied, "Twenty-one years, Your Majesty." The king puzzled, then said, "You look rather young for that. How old are you?" The Frenchman replied, "One year, Your Majesty." The king then blew up and shouted, "Do you take me for a fool or a jackass?" And the soldier replied, "Both, Your Majesty."

Fortunately, King Friedrich also spoke what he fondly believed to be French, and an inquiry in that language soon straightened the matter out.

DAGON #360 (me): And am I ever glad I finished with this one. I can't, as the commercials used to say, believe I finished the whole thing.

I am currently reading Bimbos of the Death Sun, and will have a review in the next DAGON. The "cult author", Applin Dungannon, isn't a caricature of L. Ron Hubbard as I had suspected, but he reads more like a combination of Robert Adams and a male Marion Zimmer Bradley - except physically; he's a scrawny little runt who writes S&S fiction for "compensation".

The Bork nomination and the World Series have faded into history, with the latter having the greater impact. The World Series was as uninspiring as the last soccer World Cup; making a choice between the St. Louis Cardinals and the Minnesota Twins was like making a choice between West Germany and Argentina. As a National League fan I at last came down on the Cardinals' side, but it was hard after rooting against them for the whole last half of the season.

As I should have seen, Senator "Fonzie" D'Amato voted for Bork. After all, he won't have to face the people of New York for another five years, but he has to deal with the White House every week. Senator Moynihan, as we all fondly recall him, comes up for re-election next year, and obviously did not have to run in the primary election against a Democrat who would excoriate him for voting for Bork.

And at that the next nominee after Bork might be easier to defeat. The compulsory pregnancy lobby (which calls itself "Right-to-Life") was at best lukewarm about Bork. Bork believed that the issue of birth control was strictly a state concern. Whether a state voted to ban or to approve birth control, he would have supported that decision as a Supreme Court Justice. But he did not have the categorical, reflexive opposition to birth control that the compulsory pregnancy lobby demands. Reagan's next appointee might - and he will be lucky to get as many as 42 votes in the Senate. It should be recalled that the last time an exasperated President decided to name an even more conservative Justice in the place of a rejected nominee, he came up with a man who was later arrested for soliciting a vice squad cop in a men's room.

Mark Blackman has already printed in APA-Q some of the "new computer languages" which Bruce Schneier has described, so I won't repeat them.

The Return of APA-Q #62 (Sacks): Bishop Mugavero was indeed offered an honorary degree by the Faculty Council of Brooklyn College in May. He refused to accept it. That's his problem.

I am not surprised that Congress should vote to pay off the men whom Presidents Truman, Johnson, and Nixon sent to conquer Asia or whatever it is they were supposed to be doing. Congress was, after all, equally culpable in those expeditions - or "co-conspirators" as we now say. I wonder what would happen the first time a "Contra" puts in for U. S. veterans' benefits! The Constitution is quite definite about what the U. S. government has to do in order to go to war, and no U. S. government has done it since 1941. President Reagan's expedition to the Persian Gulp* has precisely the same legal status as would a Hatfield who enlisted in the army and then took his rifle back to West Virginia and shot McCoys with it.

* - Of course "Gulp". It gulps down lives, money, and reputations.

HOW SCIENCE IS DONE

There is no slightest doubt among the geologists, paleontologists, biologists, and other scientists of today about evolution, and there was very little in Darwin's time. We can speak not so much of a theory of evolution as of the observed fact of evolution. The controversies come over the means by which this process takes place - are the terms "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" really appropriate descriptions of what is going on? What causes the small changes that could give one organism an advantage over others? Is the history of life on Earth nothing but a steady accumulation of small changes, as Lyell and the "uniformitarians" told us over a century and a half ago, or do sudden, drastic changes in the environment enter into the process?

These questions have been very much to the fore lately, as new ideas have come up about the massive extinction, some 65 million years ago, of all the widely varied beasts placed under the common heading "dinosaurs", together with all the great sea reptiles except turtles, and a wide variety of planktons and land plants. They are addressed by Kenneth J. Hsü in his book The Great Dying (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986). In this short and lively book, Hsü describes the controversy over this and previous "Great Dying's", and the various ideas put forward to account for them.

Readers will find in this book a detailed and careful account of the measurements to which geologists and paleontologists refer when they try to figure out just what went on at the end of the Mesozoic. Readers who have read about the iridium layer in the popular press, and want to know more precisely what it shows, will find the details here. The important matter of varying isotope distributions is carefully explained, and applied to deposits laid down at the crucial time. Hsü gives us a picture of what happened at the time of the Great Dying of 65 million years ago, and in the last chapters gives us a tantalizing look at what little information we have about the even more drastic Great Dying of 250 million years ago, and the one that can be dated 560 million years ago at the beginning of the Cambrian period.

And in this book the author leads us through the process by which our present understanding was established. We see the false leads and ideas that didn't pan out, including several of his own. And, since science does not spring out of the air but from the work of large numbers of real human beings, we see brief sketches of Hsü himself and of several of his colleagues, and how they came to hold the ideas and use the approaches that they did.

Hsü's own career is important in understanding why he holds the ideas that he does. As the lines from this book, quoted in the last DAGON, show, he spent the first 19 years of his life in his native China, the second 19 in the U. S., and the third 19 in Switzerland. Taoism rather than the Judaeo-Christian tradition is his intellectual basis, and here the curious reader might want to read what Joseph Needham has to say about the relationship between Taoism and science in the second volume of his Science and Civilization in China. From a childhood filled with memories of war, invasion, and revolution, he strongly rejects that perversion of evolutionary thought known, unfairly, as "social Darwinism". (Stephen J. Gould has pointed out in his essays that Darwin himself rejected the ideas that are collected under this name.) Hsü may carry this view a little far, since at the present time "social Darwinism" is utterly discredited and abandoned in the sciences, and survives only in political ideology. After all, the dinosaurs no more "deserved" to die out than the people of China "deserved" to be trampled by invading armies, plundered by foreign merchants and native landlords, or shattered with revolutions.

However, Hsü in his revulsion against "social Darwinism" may have gone a little too far. Natural selection and uniformitarianism may not represent the entire history of the Earth, but neither can they be discarded. To use an example presented by Hsü, it was not the struggle for existence and natural selection that caused whales to replace mosasaurs in the ecological niche labeled "large, ocean-going fish-eaters". The mosasaurs perished in the Great Dying, 10 million years before some creodonts took to the sea and evolved into whales. But, during the Cretaceous, the large, fast, modern

sharks evolved and displaced the ichthyosaurs just as natural selection predicts: they were better at catching and eating fish and cephalopods, and presumably they ate many of the ichthyosaurs as well. An even better example is provided by the multituberculates. This was, in terms of duration, the most successful order of mammals that ever lived. They survived dinosaur predation during the Mesozoic. They even survived the Great Dying that killed off the dinosaurs. Their fossils continue uninterrupted into the Paleocene and the Eocene, where they scampered between the feet of ungulates and dodged creodonts as ably as they had once scampered between the feet of triceratops and dodged coelurosaur predators. But then along came the rodents, with better gnawing teeth, generally better fitted for that ecological niche, and the multituberculates became extinct.

But, if natural selection is still the right approach for most of the Earth's history, a different set of conditions prevails during a Great Dying. Hsü lays out the scenario for us. It begins when a large comet struck the Earth, probably in an ocean. The first effect was a great blast of heat, burning any vegetation exposed to it and throwing huge amounts of smoke into the air. This would have been followed by a nuclear winter - for Hsü observes a very close correlation between the nuclear winter which would follow a nuclear war, and the blockage of sunlight by debris in the atmosphere would cause temperatures to plummet catastrophically. If the meteorite had hit the ocean, so much water would be thrown into the air that there would have been five meters of rain a day for weeks. At the temperatures produced by the blockage of sunlight, this would come mostly as snow, and 1 centimeter of rain is the equivalent of 10 of snow. Such a large snowfall would have reflected solar heat back into space, even after the air cleared, and kept the temperatures low.

If these had been the only effects, the Great Dying would have been short by geological standards. But the impact of the comet or meteor would also produce huge quantities of the oxides of nitrogen in the atmosphere. And these nitrogen-oxygen compounds would have come down with the rain, producing an attack of acid rain far worse than those about which we are now concerned. The acidity of the oceans would have risen, producing just what has been observed in the ocean sediments deposited at that time. The isotope differential between two varieties of carbon atom did not exist, meaning that there were too few living organisms to separate those isotopes. Hsü and his colleagues call this condition "a Strangelove ocean", after the well-known anti-war film of a quarter-century ago, in which the final nuclear war breaks loose. Added deaths would have been caused by damage done by the comet to the ozone layer, and possibly by drastically changed temperatures which interfered with the dinosaurs' reproduction. It took thousands of years for the Earth to recover.

Hsü dismisses the proponents of "Nemesis" by both paleontological and astronomical arguments, and the so-called "Deathstar" seems to have died itself. He admits that the fatalism of the Orient may color his view of the Great Dying, and certainly "social Darwinism" has been shown over a century to be nothing but the intellectual tool of murderers and profiteers. But this in itself does not prove Darwin's natural selection to be wrong.

One of the best features of Hsü's book is the way in which he takes us through the day-to-day research upon which his conclusions are based. We are not simply told "it can be shown that..." or "we now believe that..." We are told how cores are taken from the bottom of the ocean, how they are examined, and what changes in our ideas have been made as a result of these examinations. Illuminating conversations at scientific meetings are quoted, showing how an idea can jell, or be rejected. This book, aside from presenting a view of the last Great Dying and the scientific evidence and philosophical foundations for it, tells us how science is done.

I'LL SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS (continued from p. 3)

Osamu Tezuka, the answer is the same as it is for the geologist Kenneth Hsü, in the book reviewed in this same issue of DAGON. Destiny or, if you prefer, the laws of nature, governs us all.

Schodt's book ends with the work of Keiji Nakazawa, one of the few Japanese cartoonists whose work has been published in American comic books. Nakazawa has a unique perspective on the major issue of our time. He was a six-year-old schoolboy in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb struck it on 6 August 1945; his father, sister, and brother were killed, and he escaped only by sheer luck, as he was on his way to school at the time. In his series Hadashi no Gen ("Barefoot Gen") he tells his story through an alter ego, Gen Nakaoka, whose experiences parallel his own. Barefoot Gen has appeared, though with poor distribution, in English-language comic books in this country. They show the Nakaoka family in the last year of the war, scorned by their neighbors because they are unenthusiastic about it, and also because they stand up for the better treatment of the Korean laborers in Japan. The episode chosen by Schodt shows the actual fall of the bomb, and the subsequent fire that swept Hiroshima. Nakazawa's art work, like his message, is stark and uncompromising. Let politicians and other ideologues threaten nuclear attacks against nations whose policies displease them. Nakazawa has been there and knows the reality.

Schodt observes that "American readers sometimes complain that the effects of the bomb are depicted too 'graphically'." This is nothing more than a necessity for human survival. As the studies on nuclear winter have shown, suppression of warfare and in particular nuclear warfare have become not just a desirable political position, but an absolute necessity for human survival. We have not merely a right but a duty to put a stop to it. Those who are willing to consider war as a possible option must be made to shut up. If ridicule will work, ridicule should be tried. If the militarists are immune to ridicule, try scorn. If they are also immune to scorn, they must be forcibly suppressed. The only alternative is the one shown by Nakazawa, but extended to a world-wide scale.

One thing retarding the popularity of Japanese comic art in the United States is the extreme difficulty of the Japanese script - or, properly, scripts. As Schodt explains in this book, there are no fewer than four different ways of writing Japanese, and they are all used to one extent or another. There are Chinese ideographs (written but not pronounced as they are in China), two syllabaries, and romaji, the familiar (to us) Latin alphabet. Furthermore, Japanese when written horizontally goes from right to left; strips are arranged the same way, unless as in older books they go in columns.

Japanese can, unlike Chinese, be written very easily in romaji. Their country could be brought into the world's cultural mainstream by this relatively minor change. (Turkish, Malay, and Rumanian are now all written in the Latin alphabet rather than in the ones in which they were originally transcribed.) The language is said not to be all that difficult to learn, and foreigners could handle it much easier if it used an alphabetic script. Resistance to this reasonable step comes mainly from pedants who like to show off their mastery of the ideograms and syllabaries, and fear that they would be reduced to the level of the rest of the population if Japanese were made more readable.

*

In the last issue I claimed that the first gay couple in a daily newspaper comic strip had appeared in Boner's Ark on 18 July 1987. However, several DAGON readers have reminded of the deliberate sexual ambiguity which the late George Herriman built into his legendary character Krazy Kat. Believe it or not, the bricks that Ignatz Mouse threw at the Kat were signs of affection - and Ignatz had a wife and three kids. Offisa Pupp had a more abstract and ethereal devotion to Krazy, as an idol to be protected from the indignities of bricks. Krazy Kat once showed up with a litter of kittens, but these later proved to be borrowed. It is rumored that Herriman once planned a sequence in which Krazy would be pregnant, but scrapped it.

*

Most of Luann has been an undistinguished strip about a girl of about 13, teetering between girlhood and adolescence, and plagued with parents who obstinantly will not buy her a horse, a clod of a big brother, and the fact Luann Boy will pay no attention to her. When things get too bad, she complains about them to her best friend, a very plain girl named Bernice.

Greg Evans has apparently decided that his strip needs to become a little more "contemporary". In a recent sequence, a handsome hunk named Derek sweeps poor drab Bernice off her feet. When she falls for him, he asks her if he can keep his gym clothes in her locker. This doesn't look wrong - except that Derek has to get to that locker three or four times a day. Yes, gang, you guessed it - Derek is the school drug dealer. There is a conversation in which Bernice pokes fun at Derek for using drugs, and winds up by dumping his stash down a sewer. But in the next day's strip, Bernice is worried about breaking up with this handsome object.

What, we may wonder, comes next now that Evans has discovered the facts of teen-age existence in 1987? Does Delta get pregnant? Does Eric, the class freak, turn out to be gay, and has AIDS? Does Aaron Hill, Luann's heartthrob, get beaten up by the police while demonstrating against aid to the Contras? Does Luann's brother Brad get drafted and sent to the Persian Gulp? Will Luann turn out to be the larval form of Cathy?

Don't expect all of this to happen. But more and more comic strips are going to wake up to the real issues of our time.

*

Speaking of the real issues of our time, the professional football players' strike has apparently inspired a strike by the characters of Bloom County. They have all walked out, though poor, non-political Opus had to be talked into abandoning his TV set and joining the walkout. One of the issues is the decreasing size of comic strips. (In the face of Japanese competition, this could do to American comic strips what the superior engineering of Japanese cars has done to the U. S. car market.)

With the collapse of the football strike, this sequence in Bloom County is a bit less timely now. Breathed will probably abandon it soon, and get back to the Iran-Contra mess as soon as the indictments come down. Or, Steve Dallas may be picked to fill that vacancy in the U. S. Supreme Court. (His qualifications seem to be about as good as those of the other likely nominees.)

*

The New York Daily News of published, in its business section of 25 October, an article on how the current stock market troubles are going to affect investors of various categories. But each category is illustrated by an appropriate comic character. The "single woman, 28" is Cathy. "Yuppie couple, no kids" is of course J. J. and Mike Doonesbury. "Married couple, three kids" is Family Circus, though they have four kids. The married couple with two teen-age children is the Bumsteads. And the retired couple are of course the Wallets.

Now - what stock market advice would you give to Howard Oruse's Wendell?

*

The Sunday Bloom County strip, which is apparently not being affected by the strike, revived an old philosophical dialog on 25 October. Mike Binkley and his friend Oliver are lying out on a hilltop at night and looking up at the stars. Binkley quotes from Mark Twain:

"'We had the sky up there,' said Huckleberry Finn, 'all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them, and discuss about whether they was made, or just happened.'"

The boys think the matter over. Binkley, the poor insecure nebbish who desperately hopes that the universe has some reassurance for him, says: "Made." Oliver, the confident young scientist who has studied the laws of nature, replies, "Just happened."

*

Philip Cohen sends along a few strips from the Raleigh News & Observer. It runs Family Circus, Dennis the Menace, That's Jake, Cathy, Kudzu, The Middletons, Andy Capp, Bloom County, Garfield, Hi and Lois, Gil Thorp, Show, Tumbleweeds, Snuffy Smith, Phantom, B. C., Doonesbury, Mal, and The Far Side. The Raleigh Times has Marmaduke, Heathcliffe, Herman, Trudy, Bizarro, Blondie, Hagar, Peanuts, Gasoline Alley, Funky Winkerbean, Beetle Bailey, Wizard of Id, Mary Worth, Calvin and Hobbes, For Better or For Worse, Duffy, Luann, What a Guy, and The Lockhorns. Phil says that Bizarro is a

Far Side clone, while Mal is a sort of Ziggy with a supporting cast. That's Jake is, apparently, a hillbilly strip, while The Middletons reminds me of The Born Loser. Of the Australian strips I mentioned in the last issue, Phil says: "Bristow is English and makes Ziggy look like Doonesbury."

*

Garry Trudeau is taking on a pretty big target. It has been established that Uncle Duke borrowed money from a mob loanshark to finance one of his pipe dreams. The project fell apart and the money vanished, and now Duke and Honey have been brought before a mob boss - who turns out to be John Gotti, the pride of Howard Beach. This is no pampered pet of Mafia bosses, like Frank Sinatra, another Trudeau target. This is a Mafia boss, and one that is so vicious that he scares other Mafia bosses.

THE MINISTRY OF MISCELLANY

I was looking at the wrong line of the calendar when I mentioned the death of our cat Lucifer. It was on the evening of 7-8 October that, as we later discovered, he crawled off to a comfortable private place, lay down, and died. He was 18 years old, and had suffered during the past year with feline leukemia and general decrepitude. He was a formidable 16-pound black prowler at his prime, but people who have visited us frequently over the years have seen how poorly he was looking recently.

*

Some of the people who have postage accounts for APA-Q (or APA-Filk) may wonder what happens if I should decide to send along something else besides the Distribution that you have coming. In that case, no matter how much postage the manila envelope carries, your account is debited only for what the Distribution and envelope alone would cost.

*

I have just become faculty adviser of the Brooklyn College Science Fiction Society. Despite its name, it seems mainly to be a war-gaming club, and groups peel off from it and go into other rooms to set up fantasy role-playing games. I have taken some of my games there; they seem particularly to like Talisman, which has just come out with its third expansion kit.

If you're in the vicinity and have the time, the BCSFS meets from noon to 2 PM every Monday and Wednesday in room 5407, James Hall.

*

Dr. Robert L. Park of the American Physical Society publishes a weekly newsletter of public events, usually in Washington, which affect our profession. The 9 October 1987 issue of this newsletter comments on what the Federal Bureau of Investigation calls a "library awareness program". This is part of a more general plan, on which Park has also commented in What's New, to try to restrict American scientific contacts with foreign countries, partly for the purpose of maintaining American "competitiveness" in an increasingly technological world market, and partly for the sake of "military secrecy". (See I Samuel 13:19 for an example of how successful this sort of thing usually is.)

And what is a "Library awareness program"? Well, it seems that "the FBI...has asked certain New York librarians to watch for and report on library users who might be diplomats of inimical powers recruiting intelligence agents. Librarians have also been told to keep an eye on those who might be gathering information harmful to U. S. security." -(Jeanne Kaufman, Newsday, 12 October 1987). Park observes that "none of the libraries in question have classified holdings." Nevertheless, the FBI has attempted to justify this surveillance in a letter to the American Library Association, dated 24 August 1987. "We have programs wherein we alert those in certain fields of the possibility of hostile intelligence powers or their agents attempting to gain access to information that could be potentially harmful to national security." By "national security" is meant, of course, the security of the political careers of the people who have the power to tell the FBI what to do.

Since What's New of 5 September 1986 reported that the "FBI had attempted to ob-

tain a list of books checked out to a visiting foreign scientist at a university library." This is yet another example of something that has been increasingly tried since the senile actor became President - classification of data for which no necessity of classification has previously been stated. Attempts are being made to prevent the circulation of information which is unclassified, never was classified, and partakes entirely of a technological rather than a military character. The excuse, when it is not the marvelously flexible one of "national security", is keeping from foreign manufacturers the technological information which is allegedly needed to maintain American "competitiveness".

Incredibly, the FBI shows not the least regret or embarrassment over this plan, and is even trying to justify it. In Newsday of 16 October 1987 appeared an article by one David Atlee Phillips, who is described as author of a book entitled Careers in Secret Operations: How to be a Federal Intelligence Officer, and described as a "former" CIA operative. (Now let's all have a good laugh.) He says that the "Library Awareness Program" is "connected with the FBI's responsibility for keeping an eye on foreign agents", and characterizes cooperating librarians (if there are any) as "spotters, assessment agents, or access agents". He expresses deep disappointment that the librarians are, virtually unanimously, refusing to cooperate with the FBI. He does not once mention the recent disclosures that the FBI has been keeping for many decades dossiers on some of the most influential and respected authors on the American literary scene, including Ernest Hemingway, Thornton Wilder, Richard Wright, Archibald MacLeish, and James Baldwin.

Phillips tries to justify the "Library Awareness Program" by telling us that other FBI agents approve of it! I am like Sir John's tailor; Bardolph is not good enough security for Falstaff. Listen to what Phillips thinks will persuade us:

"After reading of the FBI program in New York, I recently had lunch in Washington with a dozen of my retired colleagues...None of the intelligence veterans believed that using librarians was illegal...None of the intelligence types believed that the FBI initiative should be abandoned simply because of the adverse reactions; they disagreed with the critics that describe it as an invasion of privacy and academic freedom. A clear majority - two thirds - believed the operations should go ahead despite the adverse reaction."

Phillips himself, as his article's title tells us, believes that "FBI's Timing is Questionable, Not Its Morals". He thinks that the whole operation should be shelved for now, and tried again "a few years down the road."

It seems obvious that the CIA and the FBI can not be improved by cosmetic reforms, if this is the sort of argument produced by their veterans and defenders. Their abolition ought to begin to be seriously discussed.

*

Max Headroom has finally been terminated on American TV by ABC. In the New York Daily News of 15 October, George Maksian says that Max "attracted a following of cult proportions but one too small to make a dent in the Nielsen scoreboard." (Does this sound familiar, Trekkies?) However, "he remains available on cable's Cinemax channel, where he hosts a talk show called 'The Original Max Talking Headroom Show.'" However, "his future there...is still to be decided." He may be gone altogether by the time we find out which politicians have to be bribed, and with how much, to bring cable TV to Brooklyn and Queens. In Newsday of 16 October, David Friedman observes that the show "promised a glorious future...a freshness of vision, a hip, maybe even subversive point of view never before seen on prime-time television. Best of all, it promised an irreverent, hip and subversive look at prime-time television."

This throws a new perspective on why NBC killed the original Star Trek in 1969. Star Trek tells us that, no matter how threatening a situation seems to be, patient approaches can resolve it without violence. It presented the most outlandish sorts of aliens as beings with the same mixture of good and evil as we ourselves have, people

with whom we can have peaceful, friendly, and mutually profitable dealings. At the same time, the masters of the US government and the US media were preaching that all our problems could be solved if a sufficiently large number of Asians were killed. NBC obviously saw that it could not present contradictory messages on Star Trek and on its newscasts. Since nothing could be done about the newscasts, Star Trek had to go.

Now twenty years of steady demand by its fans have brought back a new Star Trek show that is giving us the same message. This may mean that a major change of attitude is now under way in this country. If the public is once more ready for the message of Star Trek, it may well be more reluctant to accept the mystique of brainless, vengeful violence that has dominated our popular arts since the last American warrior was booted out of Vietnam. The real enemy against which the new Enterprise is fighting is represented in fiction by Rambo and in reality by Lieutenant Criminal North - and they are now dissolving under beams of ridicule figuratively directed from the bridge of NCC-1701.

Several reviews have attacked the new Star Trek show, and the criticisms seem to fall into two diametrically opposed forms. Either the reviewer would rather see starships blown up every time the Federation runs into a little problem, or else they complain because the new show is not a precise duplicate of the old one in every particular.

In the New York Daily News of 18 October, under the heading "Scotty, Beam Them Out", a sorehead named J. S. Kaufman thinks that the new captain is too serious and Shakespearean - but that's the whole idea! ("Picard has taken cold fish to new heights.") Also, "viewers will take note that the new Enterprise had to stock its yuppified bridge with at least four characters to embody the qualities that Leonard Nimoy carried off all by himself: fierce loyalty (a Klingon), merciless logic (an automaton named Data); the martial arts (some blond gal, in charge of security, in a tight-fitting jumpsuit), and carnival-style mind-reading of a high order (another gal, this one with an accent.)" Sure, but would Tasha Yar have been able to drag Spock into bed?

Kaufman states that there were only four plots on the old Star Trek; those who've seen the new one think they've been kept. They are:

1. Superior, if snotty alien/computer/vegetable/whatever is bested by dumb humans.
2. Nasty virus is cured just before final credits roll.
3. Good guys travel, through time or space, where no ethnically balanced crew has gone before, to a place that looks and acts very much like Earth.
4. Rampant xenophobia, resolved either through a sudden outpouring of goodness or nuclear obliteration.

And finally, Kaufman grumps: "There was one person on the new Enterprise who seemed to show a glimmer of personality. That was a 137-year-old Bones McCoy. The producers couldn't hustle him off the ship fast enough."

In the Brooklyn College weekly paper Kingsman (16 October 1987) Bob Schreiber has called his review "Piddlin' Around with Star Trek: The Next Generation". Like Kaufman, he observes that "the crew of this new ship are divided representations of the original, beloved crew." "Dr. Beverly Crusher is totally opposite to McCoy in that she was once intimate with Picard in a way that would have gotten Bones a busted jaw if he tried the same thing with Kirk." (I am reminded of Lee Burwasser's views on the relationship between Kirk and McCoy, and would suggest on this basis that Schreiber should revise his opinion.) Schreiber sees "the blind crew member with those prosthetic eyes (as) the most shallow...a quota-filler, vix., the token Black/handicapped person." However, in more recent episodes his character has developed somewhat. I am still waiting for the same thing to happen to Worf the Klingon, whose potential does not yet seem to be adequately used by the show.

Schreiber praises the graphics and visuals, and thinks the show deserves a chance. He raises a point which I am passing on to DAGON's readers: "I wanna know if I was the only one who saw William Shatner, dressed in the height of future casual fashion, walking in the background in the scene that introduces Riker."