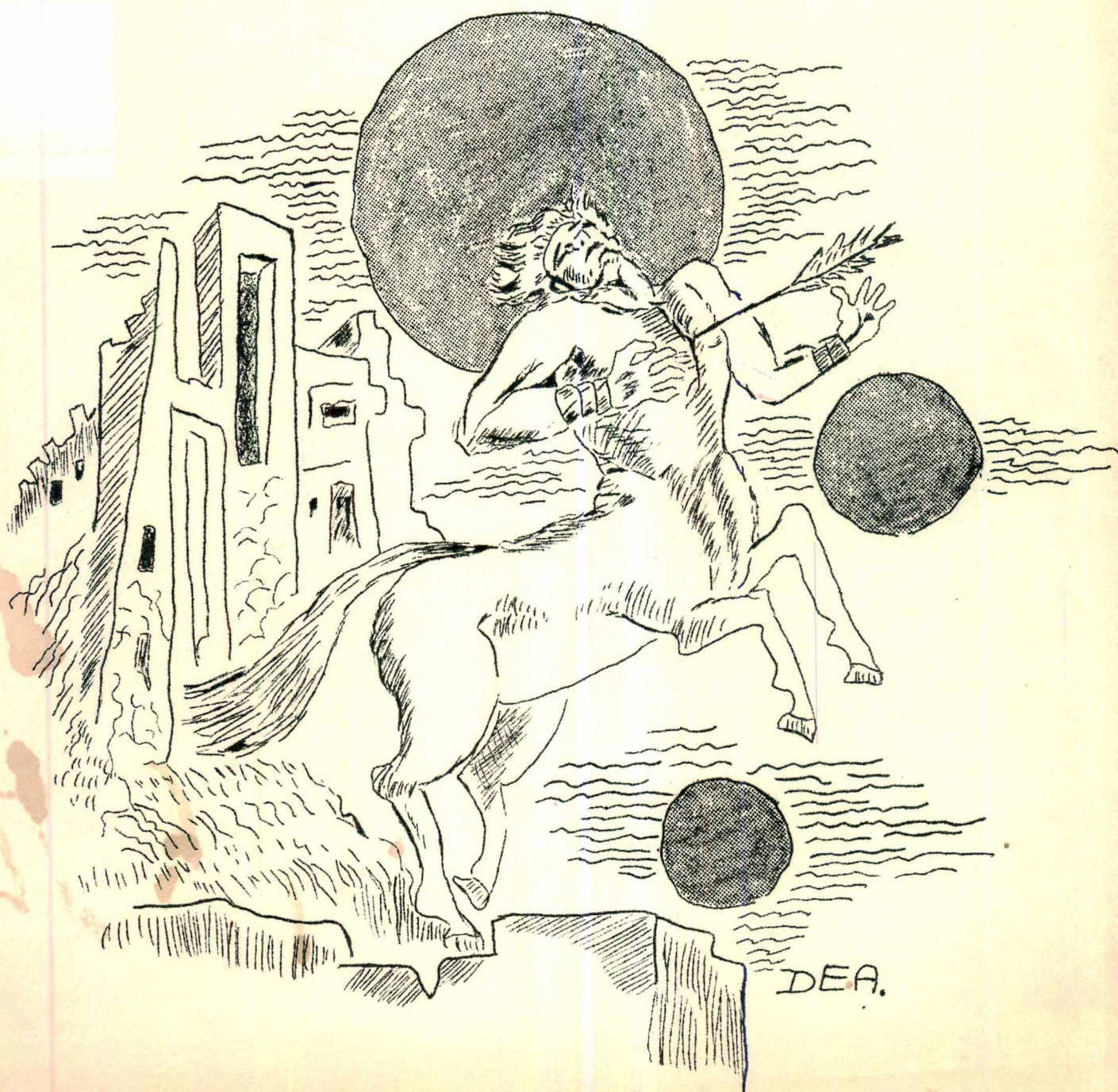


double:bill 9



DOUBLE:BILL is (starting this issue) an irregular fanzine published and edited by Bill Bowers and Bill Mallardi. Available for trade, contributions of art or material, or printed letters of comment. The Easy Way Out is $\phi a \$ h$, at 25¢ each, or the bargain sub price of 5/\$1.00. Oversee Agent is Charles E. Smith, 61, The Avenue, Ealing W. 13, London, England, at 1/9 each or 5 for 7/-.

JUNE
1964

DOUBLE-BILL 9

VOL. 2
NO. 3

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IMPORTANT NOTE: Send everything for D-B (Subs, material, LoCs & trades) to: BILL MALLARDI, 214 Mackinaw Ave., Akron, Ohio, 44313; Send Condolences to: BILL BOWERS, 3271 Shelhart Rd., Barberton, Ohio, 44203.

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Cover by Margaret Dominick (DEA)

Heading by Bowers

Bacover by B. Joe Fekete

Columnists: Robert Coulson, fanzines; Mike Shupp, book reviews; Jack Eldridge, jazz reviews.

Notice: There are NO copies of D-B #'s 7 and 8 left. Sorry.

We're also very sorry to report that Judith Merrill's tribute to Mark Clifton was not received - hence is not in this issue as we announced in #8. If it arrives later, it will still be used.

FROM WILLIAM'S PEN...

editorial BILL BOWERS



Greetings, people of distinction and Good Taste...you hold in your freshly washed hands the 9th rerun of the fanzine-without-a-schedule... more frequently called DOUBLE:BILL. Several factors have delayed the appearance of this, theoretically the April, issue...including the fact that we didn't get the January issue out until the first of March...but herewith is the completed issue, which I guess is the important thing, after all.

Two title changes this issue...one probably minor and the other possibly a major one. The first change is contained within the already existing title of this fanzine. Out DOUBLE-BILL, in DOUBLE:BILL; down D-B, up D:B. This all came about when in reading "Double Trouble" last issue (just like the rest of you folks), I noticed Bob Tucker's use of the colon in our title, liked it, and immediately informed Mallardi that we were modifying our title. Somehow, to me, the use of the two dots rather than a running dash is singularly appropriate to DOUBLE:BILL. Besides, it eliminates the necessity of lowering the typer's carriage in the middle of the title. Typen' hyphen's ain't no fun.

A Major Keyes notes a dress in the con. mentions a cot on Flo Oer's printing machine, and says: "It's a pressing situation".

The major change...to me at least...is at the head of this page. I have long been dissatisfied with the "Just Plain Bill" label, and finally decided to Do Something about it. "JPB" was a title hurriedly thought up for the first issue and the reason it hasn't suffered change heretofore is probably due to a lack of initiative on my part. I hope that you like the new title. (Frankly, I don't give a tucker's damn whether you do or don't, but it's Not Nice to say things like that.) I rather think that "From William's Pen" is more apt to my shy, lovable disposition than the stark reality of "Just Plain Bill".

A few weeks ago, Bill mentioned to me that the reason we're having troubles with our reproduction might have to do with the fact that one of King Rex's rollers is out of wack. "Yes Bill," I answered, "I get that impression, too."

It suddenly occurred to me that I may have picked a more apt title for this column than I had realized. You see, unless I can become a physical wreck by hard drinking and running around with evil-type fans, I shall be drafted, probably before the summer's out. Therefore, there is a good chance that several of these little gems (my editorials, in case you're wondering) will be composed with pens, hopefully mine. This

also is the major reason for D:B going irregular. It may well have come down to that in any event, but we'll never know now.

The date that the Great Event will take place, I'm not sure of right now. From what I hear it will probably be in late August, but I hope not. You see, I still have hopes of being able to make the scene at the Pacificon. We do plan on getting DOUBLE:BILL #10 out before I go (around the middle of August), and a goodly portion done on #11, which will be our glorious 2nd Annish. One thing must be reiterated, though...and that is: We have no intention of folding D:B just because Uncle will be making me yell "Sam!" DOUBLE:BILL shall go on! Maybe not as often...maybe not as big...but we ain't gonna be stopped that easily, are we BEM? Certainly not!

I don't think I have any great disillusion about the whole matter. I don't really want to go in the service, but the prospect doesn't bother me as it might have at one time. I do figure that the whole thing will in the end be quite a help to my writing aspirations in several ways: in forcibly removing me from proximity to my tv; in giving me (strange as it seems) more time for actual writing; and, of course, the travel and experiences can't help but be beneficial. Now please, no one write in and discourage me--I'm desperately trying to convince myself that this is the way it will be. Wish me luck, what say?

A pilot name of Cleve Kontz was flying over northern Ohio when his navigator turned to him and said, "There's bad weather ahead, so Cleve, land here."

A little aside to those of you who received the first two issues of Bayta--for obvious (and some others) reasons, I'm afraid there will not be a third issue, at least not in the foreseeable future. Rather than rushing out a crud third issue, I thought it best to let the poor little thing die a clean death. Thanks, however, are due to Harry Warner and Earl Evers for writing very interesting letters. Very Special Thanks to Roger Zelazny for a loc and a short story; the latter ("The New Pleasure") will (probably) be in the next D:B. And so Bayta ends...not with a bang...not with a whimper...but with a bayonet through the guts. (For the benefit of the uninitiated, Bayta was my N'APA zine.)

RE: the little item shown on page 27 of the June Analog and a recent MINAC (#14?) (BEM mentions that he had seen it previously in a fanzine, possibly DYNATRON?)...I made a drawing of the same thing for one of my (many) bosses a few months ago, and was tempted to air it here before the above two mags appeared. The story I get is that it (this gadget) first appeared, seemingly independently thought up, in several areas of the country at approximately the same time, and was published in several of the trade journals in the engineering field. Our title for it was..."A Two-Pronged, Three-Pronged Thingamboo", which I think pretty well describes it. If you have a few days sometime, you might try and draw the item up to scale...let your own sanity be your guide. Those of you who haven't seen either Analog or MINAC, and are wondering what I'm talking about, will just have to go on wondering, I guess....

As stated before, we intend to have D:B #10 out before I go, so write and never despair...for DOUBLE:BILL will Live On (by the sweat of Mallardi's brow)... See many of you at the MidWesCon, I hope...

BILL BOWERS

... AS OTHERS SEE US ...

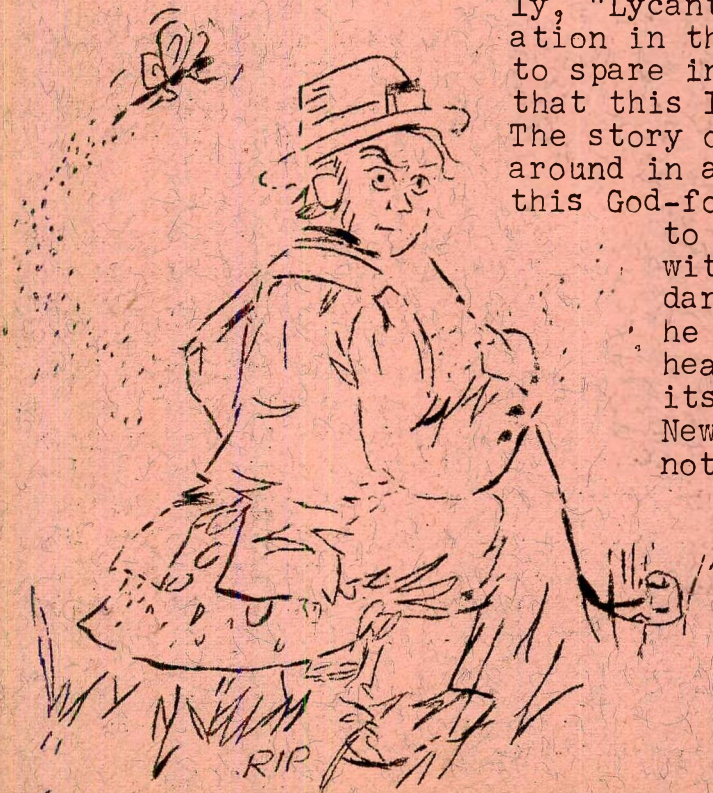
BY ROBERT COULSON

British citizens often like to think that they know more about the United States than Americans do about Great Britain. In individual cases, this is true; Alan Dodd, for example, undoubtedly knows more about the United States than I do about Great Britain (sometimes I think he knows more about the United States than I know about the United States). British authors often set their stories in the U.S., for one reason or another, and the stf authors, at least, usually manage a fairly convincing background. U.S. stf authors rarely use a British setting--U.S. horror-fantasy authors sometimes do, but I have my doubts about the authenticity of their settings.

Once in a while, though, the Englishman pulls a boner, and when he does, it's likely to be a fat one. There is in England a publishing firm called John Spencer & Co. Mostly, it relies on publishing a rather cruddy line of paperback books for its income, but on occasion it has sallied forth into the field of magazine science fiction. (At one time, it regularly published no less than four stf and fantasy mags, every one of which was unreadable. Which would seem to be some sort of record.) At any rate, one evil day I crossed someone's poem with a shilling and sixpence and received in return Vol. 1 #1 of SUPERNATURAL STORIES. Not being one to waste my money, I even read the mag--it was work, but I persevered. And the second story in the magazine provided ample repayment for my time and money. It not only had me rolling hysterically on the floor while reading it, it provided numerous jokes for fan gatherings, and eventually inspired this article.

The story is titled, rather unimaginatively, "Lycanthrope". However, the lack of imagination in the title is made good and with some to spare in the next line, which informs us that this little gem was written by Ray Cosmic. The story opens with the protagonist paddling around in a gloomy swamp. "The swamplands in this God-forsaken corner of Indiana were places to be shunned at the best of times. Now, with the choking mist and the clinging darkness, they were as near to hell as he ever hoped to get." Well now, I've heard some unkind things about Indiana, its climate and people, but not even New Yorkers call things this bad. (Well, not very often, anyway.)

At any rate, the protagonist eventually arrives at the gloomy old mansion set in the middle of the gloomy old swamp, and meets some other characters. After some chitchat about Indiana's terrible swamplands (do you suppose he could have got the place mixed up with Florida's Everglades?) one of the



others says "At times, I thought we were never going to make it. Couldn't get hold of a boat at any price. Damned superstitious lot of beggars, these natives." I RESENT THAT! Us natives are almost civilized these days.

Later on, one of the characters mentions seeing "a tiny, monkey-like thing" in the swamp. "There was silence for a moment. Then Charles Devlin said in a strained voice: 'There are no monkeys round here for at least a couple of hundred miles, Mr. Shallon. It couldn't have been a monkey you saw.'" Well, now, there are monkeys within a couple of hundred miles of where I sit--there's a whole cage full of them in the Michigan City zoo. But it's been a long time since I've heard of any roaming around wild in the woods (pardon me; in the swamps). Mr. Cosmic seems to have heard all sorts of things about Indiana that are news to me.

There's a particularly good example of Mr. Cosmic's writing ability on page 61. "A long moment fled, then they heard Devlin cry out way out on their right. An instant later there came the unmistakable sound of a revolver shot. It was followed quickly (sic) by another. And then another. Chalmer's fingers closed tightly on Dean's arm, biting into the flesh with a steel-like strength. 'Something's happened,' he yelled harshly." Now that's what I call a brilliant deduction, well worthy of Sherlock Holmes. However, back to Cosmic's vile insinuations about Indiana.

And what was Mr. Devlin shooting at? An alligator. A full-sized, scaly alligator, right here in the swamps of Indiana. (True, it turns out later to have been a were-alligator, but none of the characters seem to think that finding an alligator in Indiana is anything unusual. I consider it downright fascinating, myself.)

Later on, someone gets strangled by a python, and one of the characters remarks: "Where on earth do all these animals come from. You heard what my husband said earlier. There are no creatures like this for a hundred miles." Right, lady; not for a hundred miles, or two hundred, or a thousand. I've never quite figured out why, of all the particularly God-forsaken places on earth, Cosmic should have picked Indiana as the locale of his story. Obviously, he didn't know anything about the state, but weren't there any real swamplands in the world that he did know about? Or does the name Indiana carry some particular overtones of primitive culture to the average unenlightened English reader? Whatever the reason, it produced unintentioned hilarity in at least one reader.

this is the fact of the fiction that was

NEWSWEEK (16 March, p. 68)
shows a picture of the first Laser Rifle delivered to the Frankford Arsenal for field test. The barrel contains a $3\frac{1}{4}$ -inch long synthetic ruby which concentrates a narrow beam of light powered by several regular dry-cell batteries. The rifle reportedly, at close range, can set off explosives, start wood burning, blind a man. So you see, the old ray gun is here. Within the decade we'll be armed by a whole host of Buck Rogers weapons.

---contributed by JEFF SUTTON

STRAIGHT FROM THE JUG JAZZ REVIEWS JACK ELDRIDGE

Duke Ellington, who's played for presidents and princesses, is considered by many to be the greatest composer in the history of jazz. Considered a romanticist, Ellington's music reflects the personality of an era in which he has lived. As times change, Duke's music undergoes subtle changes so that it always remains contemporary. In all of his thirty-eight years in jazz, he has never been accused of falling behind the times.

Ellington's romanticism involves great clusters of color tones and a sensitive use of dynamics. He is a master of orchestration. His repertoire is almost entirely his own, or is under his influence. He is unique in that he is capable of creating a complete musical evening employing only Ellington standards or original compositions.

Duke Ellington is a pioneer of the performing of jazz in true concert form, from his Carnegie Hall concerts in the 1940's that featured extended works such as "Black, Brown and Beige", and the "Liberian Suite", which were important in achieving recognition for jazz as an art form, to his latest recording, "The Symphonic Ellington". This new album should not actually be considered as jazz in a third stream bag as the title implies, for although the band is recorded with members of various European symphonies it is strictly Ellingtonia in its finest form.

Duke Ellington is a genius at scoring improvisations. This is why an Ellington composition always has the spontaneous feeling of a freshly improvised melody. Ellington's band features

some of the finest musicians around, including Clark Terry and Johnny Hodges, but the figure of the Duke dominates the proceedings. His music has a timeless quality and possesses all emotions from humor to excitement to tranquility. It is always mellow.

The Duke has remained an important figure in the jazz world for 38 years. He will not only remain an important figure as long as he is active, but, long after he retires from the musical scene, all subsequent music will retain a touch of Duke.

Although the liner notes say the orchestra is backed by 500 of the finest European classical musicians, the album never gives an impression of vastness or pretension. Two of the longer works on the album are "Night Creature", and "Harlem". "Night Creature" has never before been released on records. It was first performed at Carnegie Hall in 1955 with the Symphony of the Air. "Harlem" was previously recorded with Duke's regular band in 1952.

The solo work throughout the album is excellent as usual, with fine efforts turned in by Hodges, Jimmy Hamilton, and Paul Gonsalves. The album itself is a major step in Duke Ellington's already amazing career. Even though some of the writing was sketched out in a hurry, according to the liner notes, the results are very successful in this exciting album which is very different for Duke, in comparison with his other recordings. I hope this won't be Duke's only venture along this line of music. It will be interesting to see where this amazing orchestra and leader go from here.

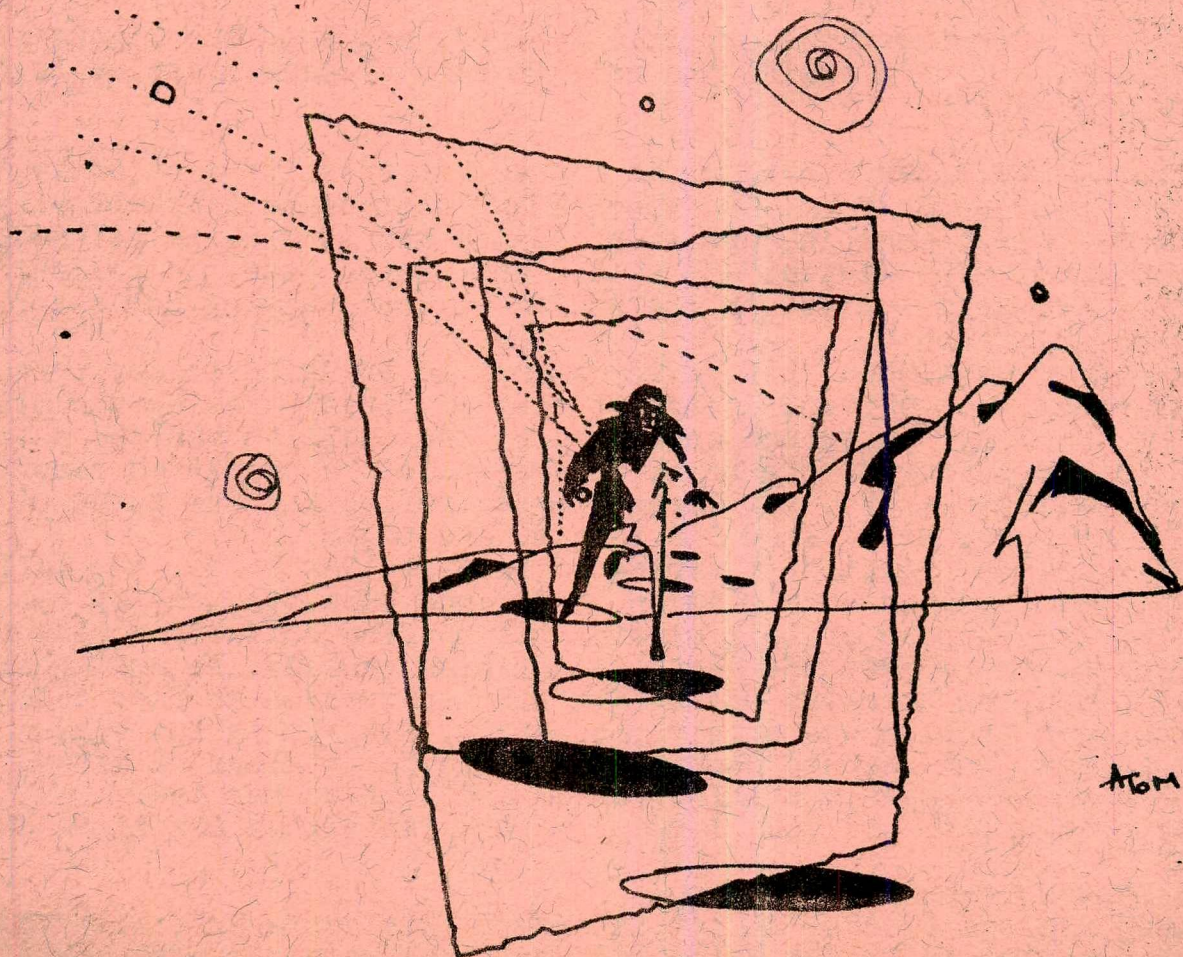
* * *

NIGHTCAP....The most recent of the Young People's Concerts by the N.Y. Philharmonic featured "Jazz in the Symphony Hall", and presented some interesting works by Gunther Schuller and Arron Copeland, as well as a beautiful piece of music by a young composer whose name got lost in the static from my neighbors electric drill. The quintet working with the orchestra was made up of Don Ellis on trumpet, Benny Golson on tenor, Eric Dolphy on alto, with Richard Davis on bass and Joe Cuoco on drums. Ellis played very well on Schuller's interesting updating of "Peter and the Wolf". I am used to hearing Ellis play with small groups like The George Russell Sextet, but it was more interesting to hear him with the large orchestra. He has studied hard and it showed up in the performance.

Old Ohio Folkfrag

Alien wind, when wilt thou blow
That the green rain down can rain?
And fallout, when wilt thou fall
Down on a Cleveland Con again?

—Roger Zelazny



AGM

STAR BRIGHT *fiction* > PAUL GILSTER

Deep within the bowels of the ship, it stirred. The Pain of awakening into the harshness of the ten-gee world was made only a little easier by the gelatin-couch in which it lay, and by the drugs injected every few moments into its bloodstream. It was horror of the kind that was never forgotten.

The gelatin-couch closed over it as it tried to move against the will of the master, and, without resistance, it sank back. Going against the master would be unheard of. It waited, and tried to bring to a head the distant mists of memory which were always present, and always elusive. And, as always, it failed in its goal. Concentration was impossible. So was life, almost impossible. So it mused, and tried to relax.

The electric shock ran its course through its fingers, and this time the gelatin-couch did not stop it as it struggled into its position in front of the control board. Immediately, the board lit up with tiny light bulbs, and, as always, it depressed the buttons under each of the lights as soon as they lit. There were no words printed under the buttons. None were needed. Its job was simply to press the right button, and the master would fulfill its task.

This time the master had little desires, and soon the lights stopped flashing, and once again, the gelatin mold closed, pressing it deep into unconsciousness.

General Hollister looked up as the secretary slipped silently into the narrow conference room. The general had stopped talking abruptly when she had first come in, and then, seeing who it was, he resumed.

"Sit down, Miss Hawley," he said, "and please take the following down on tape." He swivelled in the chair, without waiting for a reply, and resumed his speech.

"And now, gentlemen, before we attempt to bring forth any personal opinions about this matter, I suggest that we firstly review the situation. Mr. Harlan," he turned and gazed at the smallish man who sat hunched in the corner of the room, "please read the committee report."

The small man arose, his large glasses reflecting the scene of suspense in the room. He cleared his throat, and began.

"In 2013, the first of a series of interstellar ships, the NATION OF TERRA, was launched on a mission to Lalande 18867543, one of our nearest stars. The purpose of this mission was to find suitable worlds for colonization, to relieve the severe population problem. We must realize that the situation then was not at all like that which we face today. Then, the main problem was solely population. Now, it is The Plague."

He gulped, and reached down to the table for a glass of water.

The secretary gave a stifled scream and leapt to her feet.

"Mr. Harlan, should you? I mean, water? Isn't that taking an awful chance?"

Hollister rose in a frenzy.

"Miss Hawley! Please, do not interrupt this conference with your childish remarks. As to the water, do you think we would risk anything?"

This water has been thoroughly treated, and is perfectly free of germs."

The secretary went pale, and then spoke. Her voice was meek with fear.

"I-I'm very sorry, sir. Where I live, the going price on a clean gallon of water is over five thousand dollars. Most of it is filthy with the Plague, and we're all living on syntho. I guess I just didn't think."

Hollister grunted.

"Well, all right, but see that it doesn't happen again. Go ahead, Harlen."

"Ah, as I was saying, the purpose of this mission was colonization. This mission was a success, and completed the flight in ten years at a null-space gravitational speed-weight of one gee. This was almost exactly one hundred years ago. At that time, the government was not taking seriously the problem we now face, and scientific developments slowed down remarkably. If more time had been spent then working on better drive systems, we might very well be free of the situation. As it is, we have to rely on antiquated equipment.

"In 2034, the starship MAGNETIC STAR was dispatched to the Epsilon 234 system. No habitable planets, but the ship did report the detection of a system around the star Scimtar, our present goal." He shifted his glasses.

"This trip took fourteen years. Realizing the position the world was wedging itself into, another trio of ships were dispatched to other stars, and again, there were no planetary systems capable of supporting life as we know it. Then, 18 months ago, the starship FREELORN was launched to the Scimtar system. I need not remind the committee that this is our last hope. The land section immediately surrounding the capitol and Washington Spaceport is the only land left to us that has not been touched by the Plague. This condition cannot remain indefinitely. Soon even this last land will be reached by the Plague. All our hopes rest on this one machine.

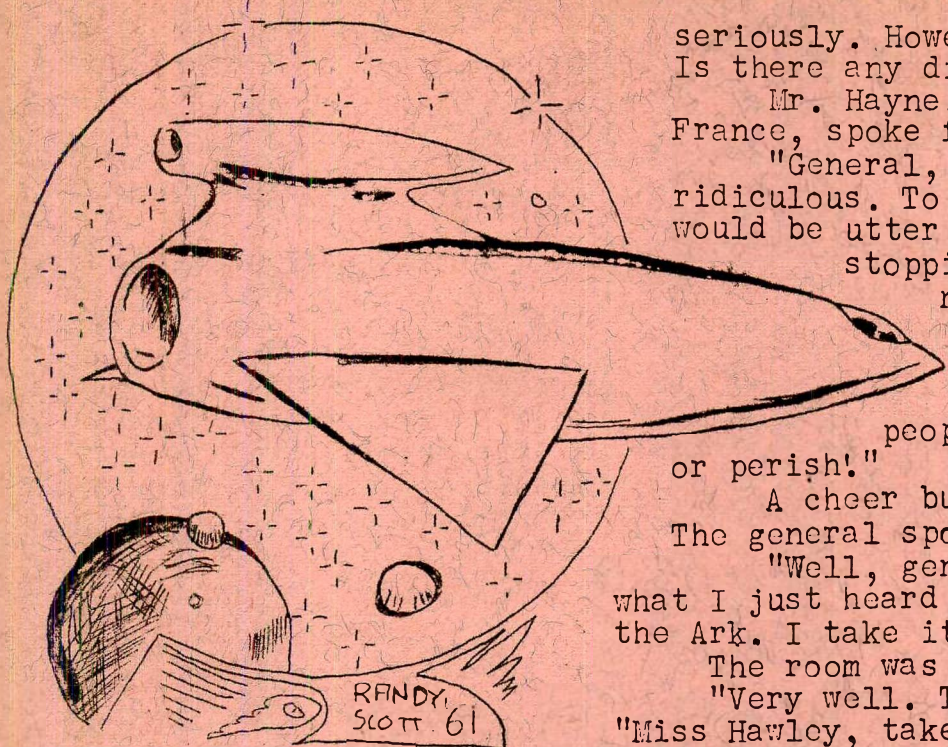
"At the Washington Spaceport, the Ark is under construction. When completed, in about a month, it will be capable of carrying one hundred people to the Scimtar system. If the Scimtar system does not have any planets fit for human habitation, the only thing to do will be to try to overcome the Plague here on the home front. With the immense distances involved, and with the limited equipment which we have available to us, we have to build each ship specifically for one mission. And so, the Ark is given just the right amount of fuel, just the right amount of supplies for the Scimtar flight. This, gentlemen, is the only star we can reach with the Ark."

He finished with a dramatic look at the committee and then turned to General Hollister.

Hollister grunted. "Very well, Harlen. And now gentlemen, we must come to a decision about the topic under discussion today."

He shifted position and went on. "As most of you undoubtedly know, there is a rival faction to the building of the Ark. Their policy is to forget the Ark and use all of our materials trying to beat the Plague here on earth. It is our duty to decide.

"Now, at the present, the Ark is almost completed. The cost so far in materials has been enormous. It will continue to be so for the next month or until the Ark is finished. I admit it is possible that if we stop work on the Ark and concentrate solely on defensive measures, we just might beat the Plague, but to tell you the truth, I doubt it very



seriously. However, a vote is in order. Is there any discussion?"

Mr. Hayne, of the Dominion of France, spoke first.

"General, I feel that this is ridiculous. To stop work on the Ark now would be utter folly. The chances of stopping the Plague are almost nil at this late date. I have seen what the Plague has done to my country, and to its people. We must continue,

or perish!"

A cheer burst through the chambers. The general spoke.

"Well, gentlemen, I take it from what I just heard that you are all backing the Ark. I take it we're all agreed then?"

The room was silent.

"Very well. The Ark will be completed.

"Miss Hawley, take down an order. To the construction crew out at the Spaceport. Go

ahead with construction as planned. Rush that over right away, Miss Hawley."

"Yes sir." The secretary left the room and the committee looked up expectantly.

Hayne spoke up again. "Ah, general, may I inquire as to the speed that the FREELORN is travelling?"

"Oh, of course, Mr. Hayne. The ship is travelling at a null-space gravitational speed weight of 10 gees. The pilot is kept unconscious most of the time by the use of drugs, and wakes only once in a while to feed adjustments to the computer system. We have implanted the 'god' principle into his mind. He thinks of the computer as god."

Trisk, committee member from Africa, now spoke up.

"General, this is all right, but why did you include a pilot? From what I heard, a few minor adjustments and a pilot would not have been needed. This way, we lose a life, since the ship is going to fall into Scintar at the end of the mission."

The general gave a small, indulgent smile.

"Mr. Trisk, the addition of the pilot was by the personal choice of Commander Mann, who volunteered to do it. Apparently he was aware that he was not essential to the trip, but he said he wanted to get into space on his own. He will be awakened fully at the termination of the voyage for a brief period. This will be after the drive has cut, and he will be falling into the primary. The 'god' principle we implanted into his brain will be erased. This was his idea, and he wanted to awaken at the end of the trip. Otherwise, a man would not have been used at all. I think we can rely on the machines.

"Well, gentlemen, is there any other business?"

No one stirred.

"Very well, then, the meeting is adjourned." The general rose, followed by the committee.

* * *

The ship raced on through the black void, and no one was aware of the slight deviation in course that meant the failure of the mission. It wasn't much; in fact, it wouldn't have even been noticed in the early orbital missions. But the interstellar distances are just too great for deviation of any kind. No computer could handle this, it was too big a task, even for a machine. The ship raced on, and the star slipped over to the port side.

The electricity raced through its fingers, and it again rose to a semi-conscious state. The chronometer flashed 1 yr. 7 mo. 14 d., and the warning bell flashed. Its instincts awoke. The hum of the computer was drowned out by the roar of the rocket blast and the vibration that was carried through the hull, but it knew that the master was working. The board was lighted up fully, and it depressed buttons as fast as it could.

Suddenly, without warning, all the lights died, and there was a scent of burning from somewhere. The viewport sprang open, and, as soon as it did, the acceleration died with the cut-off of the engines. It was pressed back into the couch, and it felt the machines grasping and clamping themselves down on its head. This it felt and more, but suddenly, mysteriously, all was black, and its tenuous hold on reality slipped away into nothingness.

Pain. Searing, brilliant, whitehot pain. Pain that was death, pain that destroyed, pain that wounded forever. He felt out with tiny thought tentacles, and there was pain and more pain. But under the pain was something else. Something was there, lurking.

Something was there

Something was there

Something was there

He saw light, and life, and death, and the living, all were stretched out before him. Night became light of day, and day became night. Light was dark--dark was light. Mist of memory haunted, and terrified.

He stood looking up at the sky, and there was no master to rule over him, only the infinite eye of God. He was being launched on the mission, he was being briefed about the mission.

The impassive face of the project engineer was before him. It moved, the mouth opened, and the face spoke.

"Why do you want to go along? It's sure death."

Why? Why? Why? Why?

Why? Why? Why? Why?

The memories dissolved for a moment. He stood looking down at the earth. They cheered him. He was surrounded by newsmen, swamped by good wishes. He climbed aboard the ship. He sank into misty twilight, and deeper...and deeper...and deeper.

He awoke. His body was incapable of movement, but he was aware of the ship and the destination, and the why of it all. Burnt insulation found its way to his nostrils. That would be the computer. It had tried too much, and had failed. This he was aware of. The computer was no god, but a machine. So was the ship, only a machine.

He looked out the porthole. A bright star evidenced itself. That would be Scimtar, too far away now to scan. He could see the constellations he knew so well. There was Orion, changed just a bit, but still looking like a hunter. There was Draco, and there, there was the Coal Sack, an inky spot of blackness in a void where blackness rules. He knew that the panorama of the universe was spread before him.

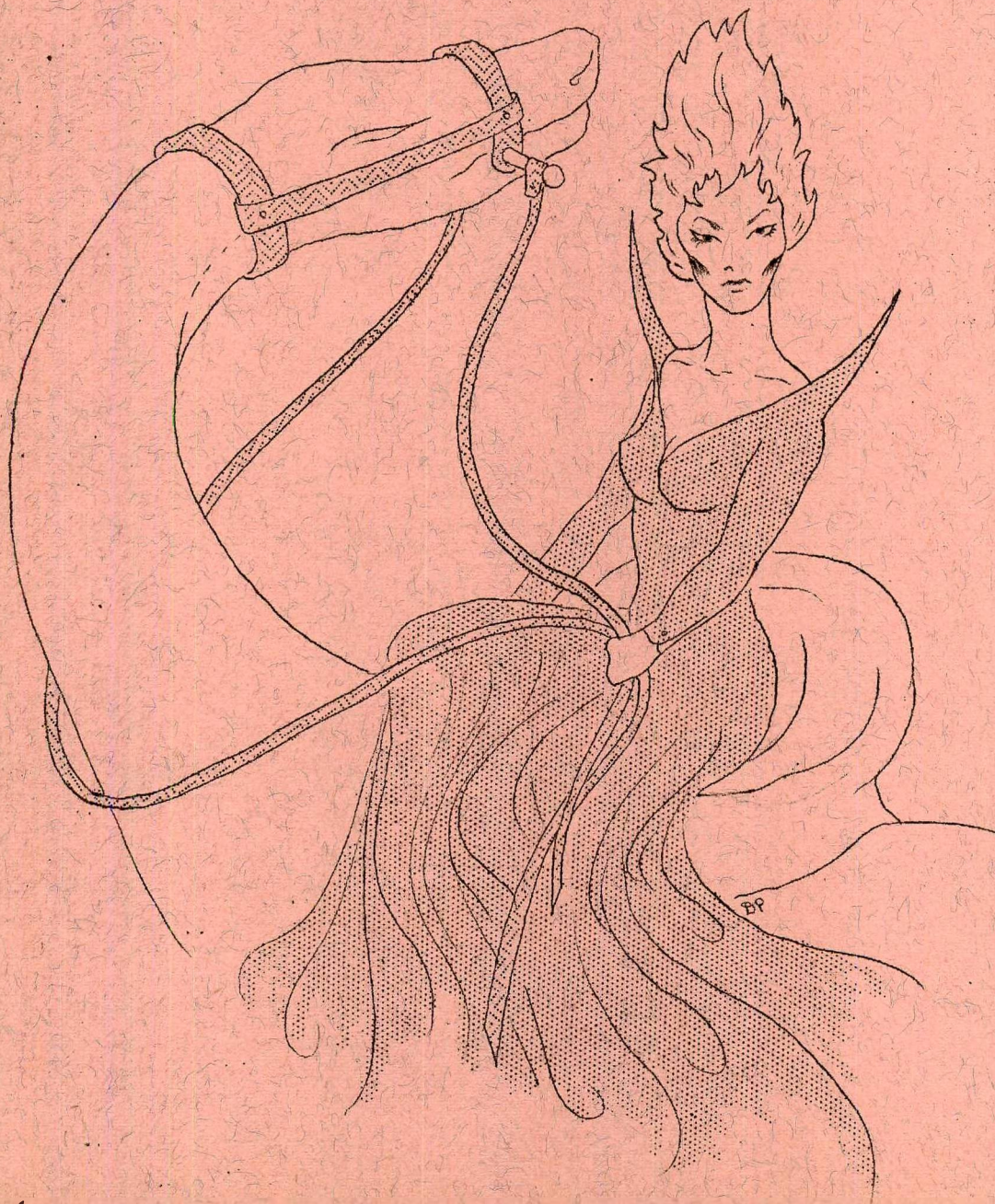
At the speed he was moving, Scimtar was already beginning to fall

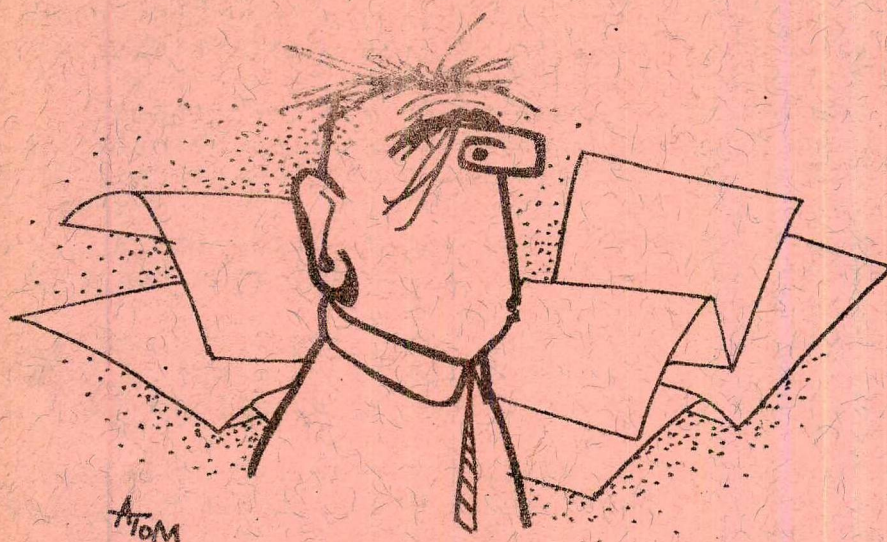
behind. Soon the air and the food supplies would be gone, and that would be the end. He knew that they would know what had happened to him back on earth, they had probably already tracked him.

It--now he, sighed. You can't leave everything up to machines, you've got to include a human factor somewhere, and not just as a passenger, but as a pilot. The computer could not help, it was slag. A man could, if given the chance.

He sank deep into the couch. Man's destiny would have to remain undecided. FREELORN lunged on into the starry, eternal night.

—PAUL GILSTER





MIKE SHUPP

Book
Reviews

THE MIMSY BOROGOVES

THE ANACHRONAULTS

LEST DARKNESS FALL
L. Sprague de Camp
Pyramid F-187 40¢

GENUS HOMO
L. Sprague de Camp
P. Schuyler Miller
Berkley G536 35¢

CITY AT WORLD'S END
Edmond Hamilton
Crest S 494 35¢

Time travel is old hat in science fiction, but now and again an author will come down with a bit of Robinson Crusoe-mania, and again set a character adrift, to be marooned in time. Three such novels have been out in paperback reprints for some time now: one that I would rank as a classic, one that is a fairly good novel, and one disappointing effort by a skilled craftsman who wandered from the path of world-wrecking.

The classic, *LEST DARKNESS FALL*, differs from the others in that it has but one time-exile, and the time is the past--in the year 1288 of the City Rome, or 535 AD. It is also the best of the three, and slightly more believable, probably due to the research so evident in the background. That research must have included Mark Twain's *A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT*, for although they differ in the style and in the outcome, both have a similar theme--man from out of time attempts to alter the course of history--and some similar incidents.

Martin Padway of 1939, an American archeologist visiting Rome, is struck by lightning, and finds himself elsewhere--fourteen centuries out of time. Within the space of a few years, he has introduced arabic numerals and brandy, printing and the telescope, defeated the best generals of Justianian, who is bent on becoming the ruler in fact of the western Empire he claims, and just barely escaped from marrying the Gothic princess who wants to kill his wife, as soon as she can be located. In the process of that, Padway escapes from prisons, is arrested for sorcery, practises the art of bribery, and lets himself in for a bit of fighting.

De Camp does this sort of thing very well indeed, and manages to fill the pages of the book with a great deal of observations about 6th

century Italy, and the people of the times, as well as with the trials and tribulations of Padway, determined to alter history so the Dark Ages will never settle over Europe, or as much as he can before death in the form of plague or trial for sorcery can overtake him. Unfortunately, Padway is never interesting as an individual; he isn't a stereotype, but like most de Camp characters, a mild, scholarly type with a modest sense of humor and a small desire for adventure, who suddenly falls into a great deal of adventure, and comes out on top. Plots may come and go, but de Camp's heroes remain the same.

But for the color and detail of 6th century Rome; the verge and action of the plot; above all, the joy of a book that from cover to cover entertains and captivates the reader, the book is excellent.

* * *

GENUS HOMO was written in a different vein. The research so evident in LEST DARKNESS FALL, is not here; in fact, there are a number of things that bemuse me. The book reads somewhat like a first draft, not in the sense of needing revision, but that it seems to have been written spontaneously, with more than a smidgeon of van-Vogtian kitchen-sink technique.

Again in 1939, or thereabouts, a busload of people--chiefly scientists and chorus girls, are trapped in a cave in Pennsylvania, to wake up a million years later. After the obligatory Where-are-we?-Who-is-responsible?-Is-it-that-damned-man-in-the-White-House?-and-Where-are-we? bit the twenty-five people begin trekking across the countryside, losing a few people to assorted beastoids, and eventually get themselves captured by gorillaoids. After spending some time in a zoo--the humans don't do so well on an intelligence test--, they impress their captors and get their freedom. But an invading force of baboonoids is coming down the continent, and the humans soon find themselves in the war effort, which they eventually help win, with the help of some beaveroids. Finally there's a happy ending, and the humans fit into the gorilla culture amicably.

Unfortunately, despite the smoothness with which I read the book, there are a few minor questions that I never did find an answer for. Though the authors never say so, it is fairly obvious that the human race was destroyed in some sort of war, probably atomic. Yet if the war was so widespread, how is it that other creatures, particularly the other members of the primate family, escaped unscathed? Where did all those people go? And where did all those metals go also?

But these are minor quibblings, for de Camp and Miller carry the plot along well, and make the characters a little more interesting and varied than usual--even somewhat believable. The people are still stick characters, but they are flexible sticks. The book is a good way to use up a dull afternoon.

* * *

Hamilton, in his bad novel, makes a few magic passes with poorer than comic strip science fiction, and presto! an enormous bomb dumps a city of some fifty thousand into the far future, when Earth is a planet-wide desert of the type in Clarke's CITY AND THE STARS. Earth is a harsh world of bitter cold, uninhabited by all but sparse vegetation, and left behind in neglect by the breed of humanity that rules the galaxy. At this point, Hamilton could have made the book a study of triumph over a barren world, could have shown heroes, could have used his book to develop a theme no form of literature can show like science fiction--the

possible glory of the human spirit, the greatness that lies latent in Man as a whole.

However, he didn't, and it isn't the business of a review to go into any preaching, so we must concern ourselves with what the author has done. Unfortunately it isn't very much. In fifty thousand people, only one man seems to act with any sort of intelligence and dignity, and it isn't the hero, but his boss--Hubble, the chief of the hidden defense center Kenniston worked at.

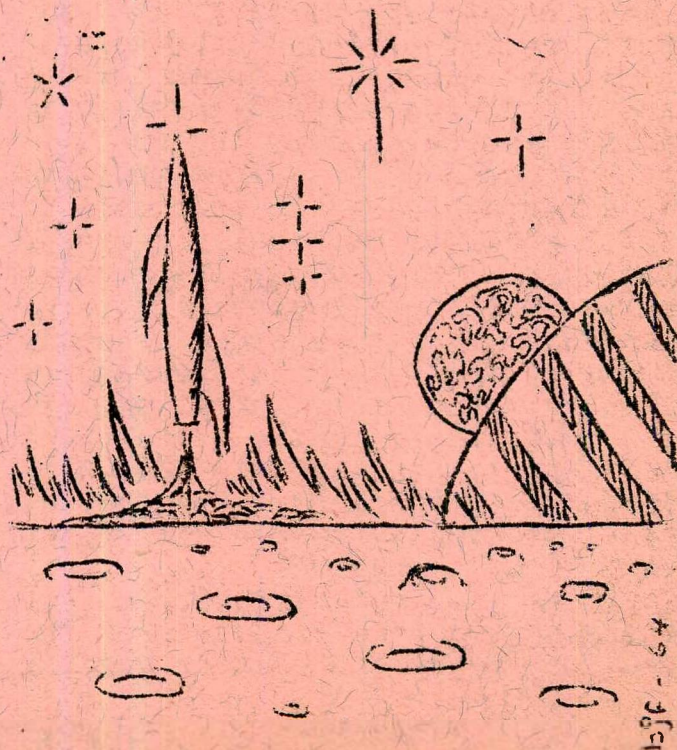
After some time Hubble and Kenniston persuade the rather slow mayor to move the citizenry to a deserted city they have discovered, and eventually an exodus begins. Throughout the book the same citizenry shows an incredibly identical reaction to every event coming their way: a dull shock, coupled with a distrust of science and everything not done in the same manner that their fathers did. No doubt this is probably the reaction that most people would have, but surely not all but a small handful out of fifty thousand people? Unfortunately the hero is little different from the townspeople in all but degree, which costs him his girl, and further clutters up the story with his--boring--personal life.

After getting the apathetic people to the deserted city, they set a radio signal going, which is soon answered by a ship from the FEDERATION OF STARS, a human dominated Galactic confederation of races. The people of Middletown try to shoot the crew because of a few non-human crewmen, are unsuccessful, revolt against being sent to a better suited planet, are again unsuccessful. Then the unheroic hero staggers on board to address the Board of Governors in full session, to present the city's case, to ask them to rejuvenate earth, with a process invented by one Jon Arnol, to stoke up the fires in the core of the planet.

Kenniston presents his case in a rather unimpressive speech, that everyone feels is 'magnificent', but loses because Norden Lund, the back biting second-in-command of the ship that discovered Middletown, reveals that the city was cast into its future by an atomic war. Middletown is to be dismantled and the people forcibly deported from earth to show them a lesson. Kenniston makes a rebuttal, but the Board of Governors votes against him, so he takes off into the wild black yonder with his non-human friends, Jon Arnol, and the lovely Varn Allan, commander of the ship that came to Middletown. The process works; the cops show up; Varn Allan and Lund are demoted and censured; everyone else is vindicated; the people of Middletown return to their homes, with high school band and drum majorettes marching before.

And after dreading every AU of the distance from Earth to the Board of Governors, our hero suddenly decides that Space is for him, as is Varn Allan.

The thing that hurts about this book is that it isn't really



so bad as all that might indicate. It reads well, if you can accept that the average human is that bound to conformity and unthinkingness, and in a few places is convincing in its description of a world near death. But it should be obvious by now that Hamilton can write far better science fiction. If the book were his only departure from World-wrecking, it wouldn't be so disappointing. But when compared with such works of Hamilton as "What's It Like Out There?" and THE HAUNTED STARS, one of the best science fiction novels to come out in 1960, CITY AT WORLD'S END is not representative Hamilton. He can do better, and has.

-oOo-

<p>WAR WITH THE ROBOTS Harry Harrison Pyramid F-771 40¢</p>	<p>Almost unnoticed--except by labor unions--is a second population explosion that we seldom think about. This is the expanding number of automatic appliances and machines. Almost all human functions can be duplicated by servomechanisms and automata. And every day these mechanical intelligences take more control over our lives, from the computers that mail bills and form 1040 to automatic elevators. But how much control shall we permit machines to have over us? Should they have control over us at all?</p>
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In these eight stories from Fantastic Universe, Galaxy, and F&SF, Harry Harrison probes into the effect of robots on our culture--and that culture on the robots. The first, "Simulated Trainer", documents the sneaky little explanation of the first Martian expedition. Sneaky, because I can't classify it as humor or adventure, and because--but that's the story. "The Velvet Glove" delineates the character of a robot undergoing all the pressures of anti-robot prejudice, much as Negroes today are persecuted. And of course, it has a happy ending, though there is just a hint of more to come in the future.

"Arm of the Law" is genuinely funny, and you can't but help feeling a bit sorry for the police of Nineport as XPO-456-934B, Ned the Rookie Robot Cop, cleans up Mars. It's my favorite. "The Robot Who Wanted to Know" did not have a happy ending. Caught in the unbreakable web of robotic obedience and human curiosity and initiative, I can't see how any of the Filers would possibly be happy--if robots are happy. Apparently they can be unhappy though...

"I See You" goes into the problem of crime in a robotic civilization, its punishment--and an unforeseen loophole. Next story is "The Repairman". Unless machines eventually learn to repair themselves, they will need repairmen. Sometime repairing the machines will present various problems, and you will need a special type of repairman working on very special machines, under very special conditions. And when you attempt to repair a temple, the True Believers may be a bit troublesome. "Survival Planet" is not a robot story, until you remember that robots are intended to replace men. These people were bred to replace robots, and didn't like it.

Last of the eight is "War With the Robots". As the robots take over various facets of humanity, they will take over more and more of each facet. Eventually people will not be needed and the robots will get along very well by themselves....

These are good stories, and it's nice to be able to turn back to the beginning and read "A Note from the (Human) Author". After all, I need some such reassurance after reading about the TXO computer at MIT....

-oOo-

WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD
Andre Norton
Ace F-263 40¢

Sooner or later Andre Norton gets around to writing a sequel to most of her books. In this case, it seems to have been sooner, and though it pleases me in spots, I find myself inclined to wish that it had been later--much later. Not that WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD is a bad book; on the contrary, it is well written as a whole and as usual for Miss Norton very competently done, but compared with WITCH WORLD, it is a distinct letdown.

As Miss Norton has gone in for a great deal of action and plot we might as well get most of that out of the way in a brief summary: by the middle of the book, Simon Tregarth, now March Warden of Estcarp, and his wife Jaelithe, she who was once witch, have been separated, and are beginning to forget each other and bear a slight resentment against the other--Simon because Jaelithe takes such an obvious delight in that she has not lost her witch powers in marriage with him, and Jaelithe because the remaining witches of Estcarp will not believe what she says; Loyse, heiress of Verlaine and ex-bride of Yvian, the mercenary who rose to power in Karsten, has been abducted and taken from Es Castle to the city of Kars, leaving Koris of Gorm to champ at the bit and think about sacking Kars; Fulk, the father of Loyse and the Lady Aldis, have been revealed as agents of the Kolder, those mysterious invaders from some other time and space, even as Simon was, but with more bloodthirsty aims. This sort of thing continues for a good amount of time, leaving most problems to be resolved by Simon's burgeoning powers as a wizard, and plenty of fast shooting and swordplay. Again, at the end of the book, as in WITCH WORLD, there is the promise of a happy ending for Simon and his witch.

Now this is all very good, if you like action, and I must admit that though I wasn't particularly delighted with the book, it did interest me enough to read it in one short setting. But at the same time, it seems to me that by placing more emphasis upon plot and action, and less upon the background of her world, Miss Norton has lowered her standards to some extent. Much of what was barely touched upon in the first book, such as the people of Sulcar and the Falconers, could well have been amplified here, but the author did not choose to do so, even though Jaelithe spent some time on a ship of Sulcar. Equally as bad, though we are given a hint as to what the Tormarsh was like at one time, in the days of Volt, the Tormarsh and its people at this time are but sketched in. Kolder is only slightly more explained; and for that matter, in neither this book nor the first has Miss Norton revealed much about Alizon.

The characterization in WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD also seems beneath the standards of WITCH WORLD. Though Tregarth comes off well in this department, particularly under the mental domination of the Kolder, and the relationship between Simon and his witch-wife is well developed, Loyse is not as convincing as she was in the first book, and the motives of such people as Fulk and Aldis in turning Kolder agents are not explained.

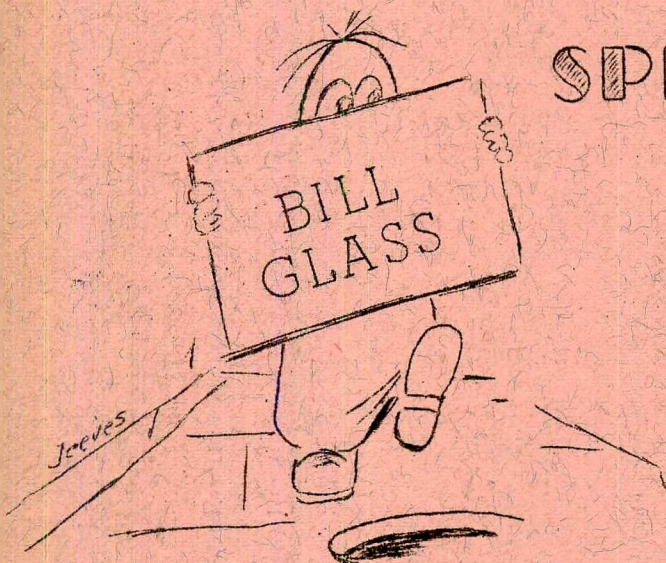
On the credit side, we also have a minor subplot around Jaelithe's efforts to regain recognition as a witch, and the natural reluctance of her former sisters to have anything to do with her, as well as the growth of Simon's own wizard powers. Jack Gaughan did the artwork again, not as distinguished as the cover on WITCH WORLD, but you get a map, which really should have been in the first book.

It seems rather unlikely that there will be a third volume in this series; either Simon and Jaelithe have at last done in all the Kolder, leaving Simon little to do, and no justification for a third book; or

else there are more Kolder or such other similar menaces as Miss Norton can drag up, which would easily and quickly sink into a dreary series of repeat performances. And yet, she has left us a great deal of the Witch world unexplored, a vast and ancient planet full of wonder and lore which she has only hinted at in these two books. WEB OF THE WITCH WORLD has cleared away only very small portions of this wilderness, and only as a consequence of the neccessities of plot. It is competent, but it would seem that Miss Norton has primarily been filling in the formula this time.

—Mike Shupp

Editor's Note: It is our understanding (via Our Cleveland Spy "J") that there is indeed a third book in the WITCH WORLD series, which has already been sold. We believe that, unlike the previous two, it will appear first in hardcover (probably from World) and will not be brought out in paperback for at least a year. If our information is wrong (or if she has anything to add), will Miss Norton please let us know? At the time we got this info we were meeting with Spy "J" in one of those quaint little bars on Cleveland's South Side. We weren't in too good a shape to receive his report as we were all coked out.



SPECIAL BOOK REVIEW

HORROR PIT, Rupert A. Humdrum, Puntone Sons, New York, 1965, 356pp., \$4.50.

Last year, Rupert A. Humdrum copped the Hugo for best novel of the year by cashing in on the sword and sorcery revival. He is now attempting to win his fifth Hugo by doing the same with this year's Gothick horror revival. Lovecraft, Bierce, Walpole, Stoker, LeFanu, Polidori, and even

Beckford have all been exhumed and are selling well. Now, Humdrum has joined the pack and he keeps with the stride with his entry, Horror Pit.

Horror Pit was originally written to run as a three part serial in the Magazine of Flawless and Superior Fantasy; however, the magazine's editor, his beard glowing a bright red, turned the manuscript down saying it "reeked of a strong, pervasive, reptillian musk." Dispite the book's lack of salability, Puntone Sons, the established publisher of Humdrum's adult novels, ignored the magazine editors and published the hardcover edition of the book which is little changed from the original magazine manuscript: thus, the only way you will be able to get Horror Pit before the balloting deadline for the LonCon II in September is to buy the hardcover.

The story itself deals with the euridite Roger Upman who is a student at Mistatomic University on his GI Bill. There he discovers the

dreaded book of the Dark Cosmos, The Neomycin. He then becomes aware of bizzare happenings in the area surrounding Mistatomic University. A giant, striding, noisome collossus desicrates and razes several churches during Sunday meeting which provides Humdrum with an opportunity to digress for fifteen pages on the futility of superstitious religious beliefs; a burbling, blasphemous, shapeless horror gibbers through the countryside; and pasty-faced, not-quite-human children begin to appear in the costal town of Sailem. From his reading of The Neomycin, Upman realizes that someone or something has created a Rift which allows the Elder Ones, the Other Ones, and the Ultimate Ones back into oursphere of the universe.

In this novel, Mr. Humdrum has, at least, remedied one flaw of his last novel by providing a definite antagonist--the messenger and leader of the Elder Gods and Their Allies, the Crawling Chaos of a Thousand Shapes--Nyalthrotup.

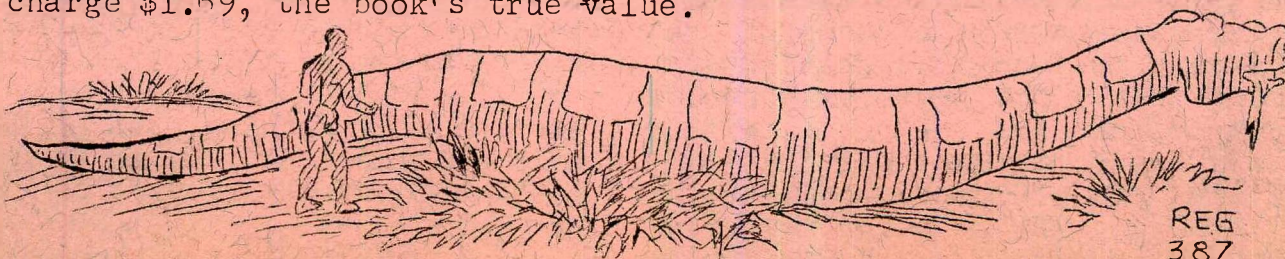
Upman steals The Neomycin from the University and obtains weapons from a near-by armory to form an underground movement against the Elder Ones. The group is taught by the writings of The Neomycin how to combat the evil menace of the Elder Ones. During the month of final preparation for the Final Conflict, Upman falls in love, marries, and has several functional sex scenes with Nancy Lathrop, a girl who has joined his organization. When Upman's organization is fully prepared for the Conflict, Upman himself gives a tomorrow-we-save-the-world speech which arouses the emotions of the group to a fever pitch. Upman's legion of the Good and Pure sweep out of hiding and kill everyone who was connected or thought to be connected with the Ultimate Evil of the Elder Ones.

Humdrum devotes a chapter to the battle between the Good and Evil forces, but let it suffice to say the Elder Ones and Their Allies are repulsed from our sphere of the universe. However, Roger Upman's body is destroyed by his wife Nancy, who in reality is Nyalthrotup in one of his (?) Thousand Shapes, and his brain is placed in a metal container to be taken to the unthinkable and indescribable home of the Elder Ones.

This, then, is the end of the story; however, it occurs on page 286 which leaves seventy pages to go. These are used by Mr. Humdrum who has Upman's brain sit in his headpan describing and commenting on the world, society, mores, and just plain dirt of the Elder Ones, Other Ones, and Ultimate Ones.

Horror Pit is decidedly under par for a Humdrum novel, way below average for any science-fantasy effort for that matter; however Puntone Sons has made a beautiful book of it. The binding is black with gold lettering and the dust jacket is a superb red monocromatic of the statue of the death of Laocoon and his sons which is done by Bonn Feeder Incorporated. In spots, Horror Pit is an unintentional humorous burlesque of the Gothick horror novel despite the fact the majority of the book is taken up with Roger Upman spouting Rupert Humdrum's philosophy.

If you are any but one of the hard core of Humdrum fandom, buy Horror Pit, if you must, from the Science Fiction Book Club who will charge \$1.69, the book's true value.



wallaby stew



ROBERT COULSON

algol #5

(Andrew Porter,
24 East 82nd. St., New
York, N.Y., 10028 -
irregular - 15¢) I

just got through review-

ing the last issue for YANDRO

and this one appears. I must say it's

an improvement over #4--but then almost anything would be. It's a small mag. A couple of pages of reviews are good enough, and the letter column is quite good. A report on an ESFA meeting is probably all right if you dig this sort of thing--I don't. A vignette by E.E. Evers and a poem by Porter are downright bad. Reproduction is readable. Porter has also run across the fact that there are numerous variations of the verse "Gully Foyle is my name, Terra is my nation; Deep space is my dwelling place, The Stars my destination". The one he notes is by James Joyce; someone else spotted a variant by Kipling. These all stem from an original folk-song verse, which appears in several old songs. I'm not sure that "One-Eyed Reilly" is the original, but it's the dirtiest, and undoubtedly the source for Joyce and Kipling and possibly Bester. The original goes:

"_____ is my name (singer inserts own name)

America is my nation (if not American, substitute own nationality)

Drinking gin my claim to fame,

F--king women my occupation."

Aren't fanzine review columns educational, though?

scottishe #3

(Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey, Great Britain - quarterly - 5 for \$1 - USAgent, Bob Lichtman, 6137 So. Croft Ave., Los Angeles, California) As Brian Varley points out in his column, this SCOT shapes up as a "Why I Hate America" issue. US fans should by all means read it; it will make them feel better. Americans are often criticized for being smugly superior about our "American Way Of Life", but it's been a long time since I've encountered as much smug self-satisfaction as Ethel's readers produce. Of course, they have their points, too--but I imagine any American fan already knows the shortcomings of our society. Ethel, of course, is pro-American, which is what started the discussion, and Varley provides what seems to be a logical analysis of some of the reasons behind the anti-Americanism. It all goes to show that British and Americans are more alike in their thinking than I had previously realized; we all pride ourselves on our broadmindedness and tolerance, without ever actually showing much of it. The only disappointment was that Walt Willis continued his column contemplating his old correspondence; Walt could undoubtedly produce a

better argument either for or against America (depending on which side he chose) than anyone else in the fanzine, though Varley does his usual good job of writing.

dynatron #20

(Roy & Chrystal Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87107 - quarterly - 20¢) Roy has managed to simultaneously raise the price, lower the quality, extend his schedule from the previous bi-monthly, and join N'APA (which may well explain the other three points). Probably the most interesting item is "The Complete Checklist Of Ace Science-Fiction Paperback Books", by Richie Benyo. Now all the collectors can write in and point out all the titles Benyo missed; I've noted 4, so far. Even with a few omissions, however, it's a good enough list for collectors, being neatly arranged by series, number, and year. Roy provides a stirring example of grass-roots democracy in action, there is fiction, and there are several pages of comments on the last N'APA mailing, largely useless to the outsider. (Except I note that Gem Carr is still peddling her usual brand of Profound Thinking.)

excalibur #6

(Len Bailes, 1729 Lansdale Drive, Charlotte, N.C., 14284, and Arnold Katz, 98 Patton Blvd., New Hyde Park, N.Y., 11043 - quarterly - 25¢) It says send contributions to Bailes and comments to Katz, but it doesn't say where to send subscriptions; maybe they aren't expecting any. This issue shows a vast improvement over the last one, which brings the quality up to about average. The typed reproduction is good enough this time round; headings and illustrations are still largely unreadable. (But then, who reads illustrations, anyway?) Bailes has a very good article on the Burroughs stories, his conclusion being that they're pretty ridiculous but he likes them anyway. I have no faults to find with this attitude--it's far superior to that of the fan who refuses to admit that anything he likes can possibly be anything but great literature. The Burroughs acolytes I sneer at are the ones who claim that he was "a great story-teller" or "a great writer". There is a story by Katz which I'm not sure about--it appears to be serious, but it's perilously close to a parody of the old PLANET STORIES yarns. Slightly overdone sword-and-sorcery stuff, but better than a lot of fan fiction I've seen, at that. The only really bad thing in the issue is Clay Hamlin's "analysis" of fan authors. The idea was to list a group of fan writers who might contribute to neofanzines, and tell something about them. Unfortunately, the analysis isn't always very accurate, being made from inadequate information. Clay scrupulously lists his "basis of judgment" for each writer (a point which other fan writers would do well to copy) and quite often the basis is simply one story submitted to the N3F short story contest. Which leads to a dismissal of John Boardman as "poor by fanzine standards". The fact that John is primarily an article writer (and a damned good one) isn't even mentioned. Precisely 1/3 of the authors listed are judged on the same basis. Even if they were judged on the basis of 40 stories, however, I can't see any intelligent editor selecting his contributors on the basis of someone else's value judgments. A far more useful contribution would have been a couple of pages of names and addresses of authors who want to write for fanzines, and the types of material they are prepared to do. There are two good and fairly long editorials, fairish reviews, and a lettercolumn which is a big improvement over the last issue.



nights of snog Nov. '63

(Bo Stenfors, Lillkalmavägen 7, Djursholm, Sweden - irregular - for trade only) This is primarily a reprinting of some of the artwork that appeared in Bo's earlier publications. Mostly girls--nothing to do with stf, but it's pretty. Stenfors is noted both for the quality of his original art, and for his excellent reproduction.

beyond #4

(Charles Pratt, 8 Soller-shott West, Letchworth, Herts., England - monthly? - no American rate given, but send 15¢) This mimeographed issue is an improvement over the previous dittoed ones. Material is largely mediocre fiction, but a transcript of an interview with John Carnell is an excellent exception. (Carnell mentioned in a letter that Pratt had interviewed him by telephone--the 4 printed pages of results make me worry about Charles' phone bill. I guess that's the sort of

dedication it takes to get material though.) The other main exception to the fiction is a symposium on the British Science Fiction Association. This was supposed to be a sort of higher-class British version of the N3F, but the various complaints of members listed here give the impression that it isn't doing as good a job as our own club. Overall, this is a big improvement over previous issues--even the fiction, while not outstanding, isn't too bad and is an improvement over past efforts.

menace of the lasfs #89

(Bruce Pelz, Box 100, 308 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, California, 90024 - bi-weekly - 5 for 50¢) My opinion of convention, trip and meeting reports is pretty well known; I continually surprise myself by actually reading occasional issues of this. It grows on you--like fungus. In among the meeting comments, there are little news items--like the mention of a new paperback which I've seen on the stands but forgotten to say anything about, titled Countdown For Cindy. This is one of the end results of making science fiction more popular--it's a standard nurse novel, except that Cindy is a nurse on the moon. Ech. (Which reminds me; there is also a new paperback out titled Hoot-enanny Nurse, a title to appall any folk fans in the audience.) Or appal them, if you don't like my original spelling; both versions are recognized according to my dictionary.

graustark #20

(John Boardman, 592 16th St., Brooklyn, N.Y., 11218, - bi-weekly, I think - 10 for \$1) This is an official publication of the newest fan craze, postal Diplomacy. (It's a Game.) Write John for the

rules and regulations. He mentions that a new game is to begin, with an entry fee of \$2.00. Plus 10¢ for a copy of GRAUSTARK #17, which explains the rules of postal Diplomacy, and \$1. for a Diplomacy rulebook. Maybe this doesn't sound as expensive to you as it does to me.... A good many fans seem to think that it's the greatest thing ever. It does have the value of being an exact scaled-down version of real international diplomacy; every move appears to be based on either treachery or military force, or both. I'll stick to chess, but then I'm not much of a game player. (I can't even recall the title of that interplanetary thing that was making the rounds a few years ago--I saw it being played at a convention, but I have better things to do at a con than play games. I will say that Diplomacy sounds more interesting than that one did.)

satura #2

(John Foster, P.O. Box 57, Drouin, Victoria, Australia - bi-weekly - for trade or comment) But don't try to trade him a fanzine full of fiction; he's not interested. This issue contains a rather bad verse, plus comments on fanzines and fans in general. Everything except the verse is entertaining, but "everything except the verse" (and except one full-page illustration, which isn't too hot either) adds up to 3 pages. Which isn't too many (though if you're trading a quarterly magazine John will probably be sending you as much readable material as you're sending him).

mickey #4

(John Kusske, Jr., 522 9th Ave. West, Alexandria, Minnesota - irregular - no price listed, so presumably free for comment) Half the mag is devoted to comments (generally good) and a short story (pointless) by the editor; the other half to a fairly good story by David Patrick. (I suppose I should make a slight correction before everybody including Kusske jumps on me. His story did have a point--that young males "in love" are incredibly stupid. But this is such a fictional cliché that it amounts to being no point at all.) Patrick's story was good right up to the end where I got jarred by the line "He knew enough about some- things to know the man could have killed him?" Somethings? Was this a typo, or a misguided attempt to show the protagonist's reversion to barbarism? If the later, it was an error; it should have been in a direct quote instead of a description.

FILED

It is day and night inside,
And I do not hear the evening bells.
It is all four seasons here,
And I do not hear the Black Man call.
My sunset will abide,
I'll dream of forgotten earthen hells,
I'll renounce all games of fear
And wait for outdoor death to fall.

- BILL WOLFENBARGER

DOUBLE-TROUBLE

ROBERT COULSON, ROUTE 3, WABASH, INDIANA

I was particularly intrigued by the answers of J. Francis McComas -- now there is a man after my own heart. Also, the answers of Bob Tucker and Brian Aldiss to Question 4 are quite interesting when compared. Apparently, in addition to "fanzine fans" and "convention fans", we also have "fanzine pros" and "convention pros".

Stricklen's little item was great, as was the Barr illustration on page 11. I'm interested in Kyles's comment about bad artwork damaging -- by its proximity -- the good art of Cawthorn and Jones. Do you suppose the ink gets contaminated and goes over and smudges or distorts the good artwork? It's a quite interesting theory, for fantasy.

Will you, or somebody, please explain to Sapiro that fans groups are separate from the fans who comprise them, and that therefore it is possible to make fun of an individual without necessarily implying ridicule of the group as a whole? I didn't do this in my original statement because it had been my experience that fans were intelligent enough to realize this without being told. I was wrong; the regular subscribers to YANDRO are this intelligent, but some of the people who get hold of second-hand copies don't seem to be. It might also pay Leland to pay attention to what is stated, rather than to what he thinks is implied. If he wants to defend Pelz, he has a perfect right to do so (even if Pelz hasn't requested any defense or even taken much note of the affair). If he wants to defend the LASFS, he should wait until it's attacked, remembering that the wicked flee where no man pursueth. The fuggheadedness that I find amusing might be mine, but in this case it isn't.

Tell Richard Mann that there are fans in Barbados; how far is that from Puerto Rico?

On the Cleveland voting, I can't say that I'm particularly worried about the impact of having the preceding con in London. (Why should I worry -- I'm not on the committee.) It's been done before, and I don't recall any trouble about getting the con returned to the right city. (And there were all sorts of dire predictions made ahead of time.) Your idea of mail votes is a lot better than Franson's suggestion -- I think being in the N3F is beginning to affect Don's judgment. Any idea of the US fans voting at some con over here on the '66 Worldcon site should be stomped on thoroughly. It's a direct slap in the face to every British fan, it departs completely from all previous convention procedure, and it is unnecessary. I wouldn't object to a modification of convention procedure which allowed all members, attending or not, to vote on the next site -- but remember that it would mean a considerable change in procedure. Either there would be a considerable time after the con (while the mail votes were being counted) before the next con-site could be announced, or all bids and presentations would have to be made by mail, at least 6 months in advance of a convention. It could be done, and it's quite fair -- but are fans ready to saddle all future conventions with the extra work required? (Because it would have to be a permanent change; if non-attend-

ROBERT COULSON, concl:

ing members get to vote when the con is in London, then they should have a right to vote when the con is in New York or Los Angeles. I have just as many prospects of going to London as I have of going to L.A. or any other west coast convention.)

((Agree with you all the way down the line, Buck. There's more to this than meets the eye, and I suppose the fans will have to decide this themselves, if they think it needs deciding. I rather like Grant's idea, below. \$\$Re: my remark of bypassing London...that's all it was, a remark mentioned in passing. I wasn't that serious about it, but thought it might bring some discussions on the subject of voting, which it did.---BEM))

LEWIS J. GRANT, JR., 5333 S. DORCHESTER AVE., CHICAGO 15, ILLINOIS

Harry Warner, Jr. wants to know what's happened to paper clothing. So far, non-woven cloth, while getting better year by year, just doesn't match the woven stuff. It's either stiff or rough, or it comes apart. I imagine it will get better. E.E.Evers is right about laws changing slower than customs, but eventually the laws give up chasing the changes in the customs, and sit down for a rest. For instance, it is still illegal to appear in a public place in Chicago in your sh--- sl----- . How many coatless types do you think they pick up per year now? I can cite for Richard Mann a number of times and places when complete nudity wasn't anything unusual, including medieval times, when they indulged in mixed bathing. However, the point I wished to make is that Post-Darwin man is different from Pre-Darwin man in a number of ways, and the nudity taboo is just one, (perhaps the most minor). Avram Davidson's chinee is just one of the many peoples who have a nudity taboo. The Judaeo-Christian nudity taboo is just the one we are stuck with.

MZB's comments were intelligent and interesting, but I have the feeling she missed my point. A taboo is something that tells you that you have to do something, even if you don't want to. I am all in favor of clothes, especially when I haul out of bed on a cold March Monday, and go ten miles to work. Fortunately, we have already dumped a large load of clothing taboos. For instance, how long has it been since MZB felt she had to wear a hat on the street? Women quite recently thought they had to.

On the problem of who gets that Con after the London one, I suggest that the Limeys have two registration fees, same as we do, and that any one who pays the complete fee would get a proxy card. This would entitle him to vote, or designate a proxy.

I have been looking over the symposium, and it looks wonderful, but I am going to hold my comments until all three parts are in. Saturday, if I get a chance, I am going to suggest that Advent look at the symposium with a view toward publishing.

((Fans note corrected address; #8's COA was a typo:))
E.E. EVERS, APT. 4-C, 268 E. 4TH ST., NEW YORK 9, N.Y.

The jazz column is mildly interesting, which is odd because jazz, along with classical and all forms of music other than folk music, sounds like so many tin cans banging down the stairs to my minimally functioning ears.

Eldridge points out a phenomonon that jazz shares with SF and so many other fields - so many of the fans are still all tied up with past work

E.E. EVERS, concl:

and artists that they damn all new work as inferior, say there are no new greats developing while paying no attention to the younger group now rising to prominence, and keep crying that the field is going to Hell. Of course they've just fallen into the ancient and universal pitfall of Classicism. Worshipping the Good Old Days in SF or Jazz or whatever is right in the same class with saying there's been nothing original in philosophy since Plato. (Yes, there are people who claim Plato as the last Original Thinker; I had a teacher who managed to mention that fact almost every day in class.) Of course this line of reasoning leads one to consult Aristotle to find out the number of teeth in a horse's mouth, but then there's a lot of people who are, always have been, and always will be afraid the horse will bite them if they examine his mouth. Which is fine with me, except I wish they'd get the Hell out of fandom and the SF field in general.

Bill Wolfenbarger's poem creates an interesting rhythmic effect - it starts off slow with stressed syllables packed together, speeds up through standard iambs into half-stressed syllables due to hyphenated words - gives a "coming to a point" effect, like driving in the meaning of the poem, contained in the last line, with a wedge. It's a pretty good innovation - most verse uses stressed syllables to carry the meaning through, but this works just as well, and better now because of its novelty. In other words, Wolfie, don't screech too loud when I steal this device and use it myself.

Si Stricklen's faan fiction is excellent - why is so much extremely faanish fiction much better written than serious fan fiction? My only answer to that isn't too favorable as far as fans turning pro is concerned - any writer produces better work when treating subjects he knows intimately. So this phenomonon of faan fiction being better than serious fiction means most fan-writers are more concerned with Fandom than with science, literature, or people. Which is fine as long as they're writing for your entertainment or mine in fanzines, but doesn't count for much anywhere else.

RICHIE BENYO, 118 SOUTH ST., JIM THORPE, PENNSYLVANIA. 18229

My first plea is this -- I didn't get DB #7, and I'd like to see what a 100 page zine looks like, so I'll say, "To the first person, or persons who send me a copy of DB #7 (in good condition, you cutter-uppers) I'll send them three issues of my fanzine: Galactic Outpost #1 and #2, and GO Special Issue #1". Are there any takers? I'd also like to get copies of #1-5 of the DB, but I won't offer that much. I just can't force myself to realize that someone would pub a 100-pg. zine, and still stay mentally balanced. ((Who said we were?---BEM))

This is re BEM's editorial: I was very surprised to see the mention of radio station 1150 in your editorial, as in the area here (Carbon County, Pa.) there is a station bearing the same numerals, with the literal translation of WYNS. In contrast to 1150 WCUE, WYNS is slanted almost totally toward rock'n'roll, especially the BEATLES. ((It figures.---BEM)) Which brings up a point: Did you read where Ringo is a s-f fan. No, not fandom fan (faan, I think it is), but just plain fan. Only goes to prove three things: 1.) fans come in all shapes, sizes, and occupations, not to mention temperaments, 2.) fans don't mind being different, and 3.) the British fans think up some weird ways to advertise British fandom. Imagine, sending a singing (?) group to the U.S. just so they could, in a round-

RICHIE BENYO, concl:

about way, advertise their fandom's activity. Maybe that could be classified as extra-curricular fanac.

Would you know, off hand, how old the Randy Scott is who did the page 7 illo? It bespeaks either warped abstractions or a neoish articism, but either way, it is very striking by all means. Reminds me of the crazy worlds created in Krazy Kat. Is that s-f? Probably more or less a form of weird fantasy. I really dig those backgrounds, whether they be modern abstractions, inhuman productions from the mind of a paranoid schizophrenic, or one of my wild dreams. ((Know sumpin'? You talk funny.))

I always enjoy Buck Coulson's fanzine reviews, so I'll make no comment on them. Hey, hey, hey. "Panicdotes---I" was most enjoyable. Factual report, huh? It's quite possible, I suppose.....

((What are you trying to do, Richie, alienate the English fans?! I wonder what they DO think of the Beatles...)) Sorry, we don't know how old Randy Scott is...methinks he's still in school though. Either high school or college. Can anyone help Out There? Randy?---BEM))

JIM HARKNESS, 112 WEST HARDING, GREENWOOD, MISS.

I know the radio station of which Bill Bowers speaks, and have heard the Contact program before, though I missed the Gernsback stint. On one installment they had the mother--and I think the wife, but I don't remember clearly--of Lee Harvey Oswald. Her position was that Oswald was railroaded (on which I agree) and that he was innocent (on which I don't agree). I spent most of the time it was on wondering how the station screened out the calls from crackpots and thrill-seekers.

Have you heard of the new Beatle Detergent? You use it to remove bathtub Ringo... (Oh, I just had to tell you that.)

((A glutton for punishment, eh? OK, here's my revenge: Did you know that there are only three Beatles left? Yeah, the fourth one got married and he's now a Bedbug...---BEM))

Artwork...Richard Kyle says some things I've started to say quite a few times myself, but have chickened out. Why is so much art in fanzines bad? Even the topnotch artists aren't anything special. No doubt the mimeograph medium contributes a great deal to this; your electro-stencilled material is very pleasing--I've seen much worse in magazines like The Readers' Digest. But the problem is, who's going to shell out the cash to have regular art electro-stencilled? Another thing is the artists themselves. A lot of them have been around so long that their reputation places their work--DEA for instance. She impresses me as a frustrated Robert Gilbert. Gilbert, as Kyle said, is a competent artist--but his pictures are hell out of the book to stencil. I know. If Joni Stopa could draw something as pretty as what she sees in a mirror, she'd be quite an artist. But she either can't or doesn't. Art Thomson is terrific, but he uses large areas of solid black in almost all of his serious (non-cartoon) drawings, and they lose something in transition to a stencil via shading plate. It's a complex problem with no readily apparent solution.

Your (Bem's) statement that you lost 50-75¢ on each copy of the anish astonishes me to the point of amazement. With the 200+ copies you claim to have mailed out, the very least you could have lost would be over a hundred bucks. Do you mean to say, baldly assert in bold mimeograph ink, that you lost that much money and haven't folded? I find this a bit (very) hard to believe. You didn't exaggerate even a little bit, Bem?

Jack Eldridge's jazz column is a great idea, and I hope it'll be

JIM HARKNESS, concl:

continued. The great majority of fans seems to think that it sounds superior to profess a liking of only the so-called greats--Brahms, Beethoven, Chopin, et al. I can take about three minutes of each--then that's all, brother. As a mild suggestion, why don't you ask Jack to work up a series in his column on well-known jazz groups. "The Village Stompers," despite their rock-and-rollish name (not that I've anything against rock and roll) are very good, and their combination of folk music and dixieland would be an interesting item for a column.

((Re: electronic stencils...if you had a number of small filler illo's (say 5 to 8) you could have them all electronically stencilled on one stencil(with good arrangement) at the cost of that stencil. Which shouldn't be over \$3.00; and Bowers and I split expenses, which helps. \$\$ No, I don't think I exaggerated the cost of the Annish, but we never did actually figure the costs of it down to the penny. For example, at 18¢ each to mail, with the 200+ mailing list, postage alone was over \$36.00; the cover was close to \$30.; Paper, stencils, etc., was over \$50.;and that isn't all the expenses we had -- so you can see that it DID cost over \$100. altogether. Splitting the cost between us brought the bill down to half for each of us. And we've no intention to fold...crazy, aren't we?! Does that convince you,now?---BEM))

HARRY WARNER, JR., 423 SUMMIT AVE., HAGERSTOWN, MD. 21740

I feel a small amount of the collective guilt that has been laid upon the head of your readership for their failure to go on and on in comments about it,((the Symposium)) so maybe I can rectify somewhat my transgression by tackling it immediately.

One thought that occurs immediately is inspired by the remark in the letter section about your "putting science fiction back in front" in fanzines through this symposium. On the contrary, I think that the only real defect of your symposium consists of the fact that much of it has nothing to do with science fiction. I believe this is an oblique commentary on what is wrong with science fiction: writer after writer has made comments on the art of writing fiction, without considering the problems peculiar to writing science fiction. This is the natural outgrowth of the fact that so many writers are creating bad science fiction these days because they are writing mundane fiction disguised only a little more carefully than the westerns that used to turn up in Mars on the pages of the Palmer Amazing Stories.

Look, for instance, at the answers to your seventh question, the one involving characterization and dialog. Science fiction is peculiarly situated in these respects for obvious reasons: so many of its characters are non-human or humans from the far future or those with special differences from normal humans, and most science fiction takes place at far distances in space and time where ways of speaking will be altered in unknown ways. But how many of these writers have even shown any awareness of the problems as they concern science fiction, in these answers? They have given the advice that will be found in books on fiction-writing with little or no effort to suggest how non-human traits can be made believable in a character unlike anyone the reader has ever seen, or how a conversation can sound real, yet impossible to occur in today's life.

Another impression that derives from the symposium without reflecting on its merits is: these professional writers show little inclination to be frank. I'm sure that at least one of the 23 who answered the query about

HARRY WARNER, cont:

why they write science fiction in preference to other types of literature should have admitted that he can't sell anything except science fiction or that he prefers to be a bigname author in a little puddle, rather than an obscure non-entity in the vast pool of mundane fiction.

I was unhappy to see so little mention in replies to the fifth question about the writer's own mind as the most productive source of ideas for science fiction stories. The science periodicals should be to the science fiction writer what tax rolls and church records are to the historical fiction writer: something to make a few readers who happen to be experts on the specialized field aware that the story has some authenticity behind it, nothing more.

For me, the most interesting section dealt with the eighth question, about the moral or message in a novel. The way some of the answers replied to other answers is quite instructive: McComas sneers at the question by citing Treasure Island and Bloch refers to the virtue-triumphs theme that turns up in most adventure stories of this type. Dick to the contrary, much music does have a message for me. In the case of the late Beethoven quartets, it is that life goes on and can be either defied or enjoyed, depending on the quartet in question, despite the most excruciating struggles and troubles that have ever been embodied in tone. I don't mean to say that I picture an individual fighting against the problems of living when I listen to the music but I feel that this sort of thing is implicit in the very structure of the works. Maybe I'm just imagining things on the basis of that shred of a clue that Beethoven inserted when he called one movement the song of gratitude of a convalescent, but I note that your question deliberately or accidentally asks if a novel requires a message or moral, not if the author must deliberately put one into the novel.

This whole symposium does deserve more permanence and availability to fans to come. But I doubt that it would be financially practical in printed form. If you save your stencils, couldn't you turn them over to the NFFF for reprinting as a booklet as soon as the demand justifies the work? Or, perhaps the most appropriate way to perpetuate all this work would consist of boiling it down into a sort of super-Fandbook. I can visualize a concentrated version that would be perhaps one-quarter or one-third as long as the complete symposium will run, consisting of a statistical analysis of the opinions and statements wherever such counts could be made, then a summarized version of the most typical and most significant answers to each question.

On the worldcon voting matter: I feel that all worldcons are regional cons in everything except name. Assume that Los Angeles and the Bay area had continued to compete for the 1964 convention and that the decision had come up for vote at the Discon. I doubt that there were more than about 30 persons at the Discon for whom the decision would have been based on any considerations other than personal likes and dislikes of the potential con committees, because the two areas would be equally distant for all but a handful of the Discon attendees. The hundreds of fans in California who will attend the 1964 convention would not have had a chance to exercise their choice at Washington, because they weren't there. Exactly the same thing will occur at London in 1965, assuming that it wins the convention: there will be a few dozen American fans on hand, badly outnumbered by the European fans, and the choice will be made on the same principles as would have occurred last year at the Statler-Hilton. I

HARRY WARNER, concl:

doubt that there has been a worldcon for more than a decade at which more than 20 per cent of the attendees has had a voice in the choice of its site, and usually the proportion has been much smaller. I don't say that this is an ideal situation, but if there is to be a change in procedure for 1965, I think that the procedure should stay changed every year. Perhaps the simplest and most exciting procedure would consist of the right of convention members to give proxies, if unable to attend the current year's convention, to those who are on hand. To hold the primary at the Midwestcon would still give an unfair advantage to one or two potential candidates for the 1966 convention, if cities over a wide geographical area remain in the running.

I don't care enough about jazz to comment on the new column, but I defend your right to publish it in a fanzine. Why don't these critics who fuss about mundane stuff in fanzines complain about mundane stories in science fiction magazines? Or about high school publications that run nothing about the studies for which people go to high school? Or about newspapers that devote only about ten per cent of their space to news?

The front cover looks startlingly like Bjo's art work, except for the face, the only weak part of the drawing. I don't care as much for Dick's back cover. It somehow fails to look like anything in particular, and I get the strange impression that there are two eyes visible, even though close examination shows that only one is there.

((The 'proxy method' seems to be the consensus of opinion so far, and I like it...now if the future committee's will go along with it... It is more work for them, I admit, and if done once it should be done all the time. \$\$ However, I rather doubt your statement re: only about 20 per cent of past con attendees had a voice in the choice of convention sites; it seems when more than one city bids during a given year the selection of the winner is more heated, with big campaigns, etc. Trouble is, I can't prove this; any ex-con committee member out there have some statistics? \$\$ Bowers and I think the face of #8's cover girl isn't the ONLY weak spot!---BEM))

((Another new address for Mike. Man, do you get around.-BEM))
MIKE McQUOWN, 129½ N. FRANKLIN BLVD., TALLAHASSEE, FLA.

I would like to thank those people who put me down for the second place in the egoboo poll; I was at a very low ebb, and this made me feel very good, indeed.

I would like to talk for a moment about a play. The author is James Forsyth, former dramatist in residence of the Old Vic as well as television and film dramatist. He has decided to let the FSU performance stand as a representative work, a tribute to the stature of the University's department, which has often attracted professional players.

The title of the play is TROG, short for troglodyte. During WWII, at a rear area hospital, Captain Philip Lister unearths the strange being he dubs TROG. A deformed creature (portrayed by Broadway and TV's Frank Daly) Trog lives in a world of fairy tales, believing himself to be a handsome prince turned into an ugly toad by an evil spell. His head is nearly seven times too large for his body, his neck barely able to support it. There have been many interpretations put into the symbolism of the play, but since I haven't had the opportunity to talk to the author himself, I will make no conjecture as to his message. There is a parallel drawn between Trog's inability to fit into human society and that of the

MIKE McQUOWN, concl:

fate of the Jews in Europe - both are doomed to destruction because their faces do not fit the social order which man has made for some to live in.

Eventually, this play will go Broadway, TV or on the road with another company. There is a great depth in the play and in the players. If TROG ever comes your way, do see it. It is, I think (and FSU seems to have a knack for this) a very fannish thing, for Trog is as much the bem in his way as any from outer space, and the people range from the mundane to the superfan. There is a solid helping of comedy, and that, too is very fannish in a special way - at least, to me.

Frank Daly struck a very low note in the newspaper interview last week, regarding the state of American theatre; he credits the university theatre programs as being the last strongholds of artistic latitude and freedom, due to the necessity of the commercial success of Broadway production.

This brings a question into my mind. Why? What can be done? I have some ideas, some half-formed, others further along.

Many of us write; how many have tried to do plays? How many have even considered it? Recently, Fritz Leiber wrote a playlet which was pubbed in F&SF, one of the first such things to be seen since Vidal's VISIT TO A SMALL PLANET. Have there been any fannish works turned out along this line? Just how many? Why not more? I can guess at some of the answers from my own attempts - too few of us really know enough about the dramatic structure, the technical problems. Theatre is a far more technical business than it was in Shakespeare's day, and a playwright has to have some idea of the limitations under which he must work - if not, no matter how good his lines, his work may be unperformable. But I'd like to hear some ideas from others out there. How about it, Bills, will you give me a little room to play with? I think you might find this to be a very productive field to sow.

{{ Sure, Mike, we're game for a try at it...other fanzines have printed them before. Send us a play - done well - and we'll print it.---BEM}}

WALT WILLIS, 170 UPPER N' ARDS RD., BELFAST 4, NORTH IRELAND

Your suggestion about postal balloting for the Consite is a good and sensible one, but someone is bound to write in and point out it won't allow for second and subsequent ballots in the event of multiple contenders. If so, I suggest you do as I did when I was involved in a similar controversy many years ago, and explain that all that is necessary is for the postal voters to indicate their second and third preferences. If after



the combination of present and proxy votes one site does not have a clear majority, the one at the bottom of the poll is eliminated as usual and the second preferences of those who voted for it postally are counted as first preferences. The only reason fan politicians dislike this system is that it doesn't permit of avalanche-tripping and similar machinations, which I think is an argument for it. You want honest organisers to run a convention, not crooked politicians.

I thought your letter column was terrific, even though you broke one of my Laws of Editing, or so you claim when you say you didn't do much cutting. Either you wielded your scalpel with cunning delicacy or you have a very intelligent and succinct bunch of readers. I've always believed you must either cut ruthlessly or not cut at all, the second system producing a letter column with a wayward unscripted charm of its own. Any compromise is usually fatal.

I'm shocked to the depths of my provincial soul by Marion Bradley's startling disclosure that in her college "women students aren't even allowed slacks, let alone shorts, except on the tennis courts". I suppose this contemporary free-style education is all very well, but I must say my sympathy is with those modest girls from old-fashioned homes who must huddle fearfully in the tennis courts until dragged out and stripped by their naked jeering colleagues.

((Re: editing the lettercol: I usually edit most of the personally directed egoboo about us - tho of course others egoboo sees print...plus stuff I think doesn't seem as interesting as the rest of the comments. In other words I usually edit the letters so only the choicest bits stay in, while still keeping each individual's letter reflecting him personally. This is a sort of compromise, and it doesn't seem to be fatal here... In #8, if you noticed, I printed a lot of egoboo to Bowers & I, plus lots of repeated remarks and extraneous comments that could have been cut completely. But I decided to relax the knife a bit only for that issue. From now on I shall be even more viscous...(snip! snip! snip!) ---BEM}}

ATOM FOR TAFF....yes, and CLEVELAND'LL BE KICKS IN '66! ...ATOM FOR TAFF.

MARGARET DOMINICK, 55 PLUM ST., NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. 08901

I often wonder about the age of those fan-art critics who feel uneasy if some of the female fan-artists try to do a nude of the human figure. I don't need a textbook to draw a nude fairly well in any size, or position. but I won't do a study on it or send out complicated drawings for mimeo-work. Since I don't make my living as an artist it takes me more time. From time to time, however, I like to try something different and one of those experiments was the simple, geometrical nude in the annish D-B. To tell you the truth, I had to look up that picture again, to find out just what he found as hidden sex symbols in it...in the design...and you know what, since it was pointed out to me, maybe he was right...if you look at it that way, of course... Next time I will send an inkblot and let's see just what kind of interesting letter you will receive from the youngside of critics on the subject of symbols.

The rest of the criticism leaves me cold, just who is he to think who is greatest or more likely as a fan-artist? I draw because I like it, first on subjects I like or that just come into mind, and to please myself, second. If some fanzine editor can use the stuff and finds it ok, then my time wasn't completely wasted... if anybody's else was, just by looking at it, it's just too bad.

RICHARD KYLE, 2126 EARL AVE., LONG BEACH, CAL. 90806

Since you prefer to have comments on the "Symposium" delayed until next issue, there isn't too much to write about this time. ((I'm afraid you misunderstood my remark last issue: I complained about the lack of good comments on the Symposium, and THEN said the LEAST I hope happens is that most of the remarks will be sent in by issue #10...but not that I preferred that to happen.---BEM))

I don't know who Si Stricklen is, whether he's real or pseudonymous, but I do know that he has produced a really marvelous "factual report". I hope there'll be many, many more of these, all equally factual. ((Si is real, and there will be more Panicdotes forthcoming from him from time to time.---BEM))

Other than Stricklen and the Symposium, the contents struck me as being uneventful (I'm virtually tone-deaf, so the jazz column is meaningless to me). On second thought, I take that back: the front cover is genuinely notable. It is the first time I've seen a drowned mermaid. Extend my congratulations to the artist. Originality is hard to come by these days.

I imagine you've received a few outraged howls from the artists I criticized in this issue. If they show up in D-B 9, I'll be turning a deaf ear. To my mind, there is never any excuse for shoddiness or haste in an amateur magazine. I don't expect professional-quality work from fan artists and writers and editors. But I do expect those artists and writers and editors to do as good a job as they can --- and my objection to most of the art in D-B 7 was that the artists had "clearly made no effort to master anatomy and composition and technique." All of the artists I criticized were, I am convinced, capable of better work than they gave you --- much better work. Sure, they may have done "fairly well, considering the facts" ---but, considering the facts, they shouldn't have attempted to draw at all. What good is a shoddily contrived drawing? It's still shoddily contrived whether the artist took ten days or ten minutes.

Admittedly, if fan contributors took my feelings to heart, there would be fewer contributions --- and subsequently fewer fan magazines. But there would also be many better fan magazines than there are today.

TED WHITE, 339 49TH ST., BROOKLYN 20, N.Y.

I am, perhaps, unduly sensitive to such charges, but I am always annoyed when I hear someone talking about "the critics" and how they're ignoring this or that, or jumping on this or that bandwagon, etc. I had a brief feud with New York's Mort Fega -- mostly on his part -- when he chose to read a review of mine over the air for the purposes of arguing with it. I had panned a "Poll Winners" album, and after he read portions of my review, and sneered at it, he played a track from the album. It was the worst track on the record.

Fega is typical of the jazz deejays who set themselves up as superior in taste to the "critics" -- thus making critics of themselves in the process -- while all the time protesting a much greater friendship for jazz and the jazz musician. I've never heard Eldridge's program, of course, and I am impressed by the fact that he's played Ornette Colman on the air. But so has Symphony Sid. I know of only one jazz deejay who selects his material with out bowing to popularity, and that is Willis Conover, who unfortunately no longer does a domestic program.

All this to one side, as a jazz critic and a friend of such critics as Ira Gitler, Joe Goldberg, Nat Hentoff, and Bill Coss, I can cheerfully state that "the critics" follow no group rules whatsoever insofar as personal tastes go. Each is his own man. By following any given critic for a while one can establish his preferences and read accordingly. But to say, as Eldridge does, "the jazz critic, the majority of which /sic/ choose to turn a tin ear away /!/," is neglecting "many fine artists", "to listen only to the familiar musicians to whom they have been listening for a decade or more." -- this is ridiculous. How can one then explain the notices paid to such newcomers as Eric Dolphy, Roland Kirk, or John Handy? Not to mention Ornette Coleman.

As a matter of fact, the present jazz scene is so destitute in talent of real stature that the critic welcomes with open arms anyone showing the slightest promise of talent. Check the International Jazz Critics Poll in the last three or four years' DOWN BEATs for verification.

The fact of the matter is that a man does not develop into a major talent over night -- in any field. Musicians like Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Charlie Mingus -- these men have been on the scene for twenty to forty years, and we can hope they remain for an equal time. Not one trumpet player today can yet approach Gillespie in verve, passion of expression, or multiplicity of ideas.

Duke Ellington is still maturing, still developing, both as a pianist and composer. And Charlie Mingus, for all the brilliance of his past works, will probably develop yet further. His recent explorations on the piano (an album devoted to them is upcoming on IMPULSE) promise at last a successor to Tatum, and he has already become an acknowledged virtuoso of the bass.

It would be folly to rate Freddie Hubbard over Gillespie, or even so gifted a young bassist as Steve Swallow over Mingus.

A recent album bore this out. SONNY MEETS THE HAWK brought together one of the most challenging modern tenor players with Coleman Hawkins, who's been playing tenor since 1927, and just about invented it. Of the two, Hawkins came off best. He should; Sonny Rollins owes it all to him.

There are many other older men who are curiously neglected by those who, like Eldridge, appear to desire only to stay right on top of the current jazz scene. Lucky Thompson is one of the most fantastic tenor men in the business. His conception is curiously convoluted, his way of phrasing unique and ingenuous. But he has a hard time selling records, or get-

TED WHITE, concl:

ting them played on the air. He lived in France for a number of years during the fifties, after having battered against the closed doors of popularity for many years before that. He returned to New York this year, and perhaps better fortune awaits him -- if the deejays can stop looking for the next New Thing long enough to pay a little attention to the men who really have something to say.

The best critics have always divided their attention between the older, more developed artists and the newer, younger ones. Their criteria, after all, should be the worth of the music -- not the musician's age, or the length of his time on the scene.

Eldridge nominates Freddie Hubbard. Tommy Turrentine and Dupree Bolton as "just three of the brightest, finest young trumpet players around", and complains that they rarely rate in the polls. Why? Well, for one thing, there are better trumpet players. To name three who're younger than Dizzy and Miles, there's Clark Terry, Thad Jones, and Don Ellis. Ellis has been around about the same time as Hubbard et al. Each of these three has more individual style, and more to say, each in his own way, than Eldridge's three. While Hubbard is potentially very good (his work on Dolphy's first album was quite good), most of his recorded output -- as is all of Turrentine's -- is comprised of dismal "blowing sessions" recorded without forethought or preparation, and absolutely lacking in challenging material. If Hubbard and Turrentine choose to present themselves in this fashion, they have no one but themselves to thank for the opinion we critics hold of them. (Bolton I simply haven't heard enough of to judge.)

I'm afraid Eldridge will have to accept the fact that most critics take a more rounded view of jazz than he'd prefer; last year's musician may be old hat among the deejays, but he's not necessarily musically obsolete.

I may be reacting too strongly to Eldridge on this, and if I am, I apologize. But that's one set of corns that's been too heavily trodden. Sorry. ((Jack's column this time 'round might help clarify his views on well-known's in jazz...---BEM))

I was amused to note that according to Leland Sapiro, "the LASFS has now supplanted the ESFA as the most worthwhile fan organization in the U. S." And he wonders why the LASFS is held in low repute elsewhere?

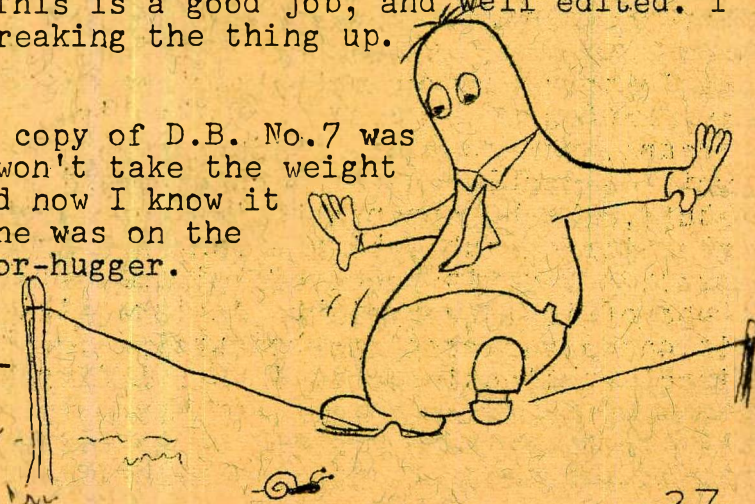
The Symposium continues to fascinate. I read it less for any objective consensus of opinion -- although this occasionally crops up -- than for insight into the various writers. This is a good job, and well edited. I for one approve of your way of breaking the thing up.

WILLIAM F. TEMPLE

I see Wally Weber says his copy of D.B. No.7 was on the floor "because the table won't take the weight of it " I've since met Wally, and now I know it was on the floor simply because he was on the floor too. He's a compulsive floor-hugger.

This was at Ella Parker's.

There were empty chairs. Wally preferred to sit on the floor -- to begin with. Soon he was lying out flat on the floor, and newcomers took him for a rug. This disturbed him, and he



WILLIAM F. TEMPLE, concl:
tried to get under the floor.

This is not fantasy. Walt and Madeleine Willis, Ethel Lindsay, Atom, and Tedd Tubb were among the witnesses present and could testify. When we tried to lift him off the floor, the floor began to come away with him. So we desisted. For all I know, he's still there, embedded.

I feel sorry for Ella. She used to have such a nice floor.

Part II of the Symposium is every bit as mentally stimulating as Part I. It's impressive in its range: the imagination Biggles at it.

BOB LICHTMAN, 6137 S. CROFT AVE., LOS ANGELES, CAL. 90056

Those are pretty clever interlineations in Mallardi's editorial regarding the Beatles. I wonder what you fellows think of them? ((Not much.---BEM)) Frankly, I think they are a gas, and have even bought one of their 45 rpm singles ("I Want To Hold Your Hand" & "I Saw Her Standing There"). Perhaps you do not agree with me; in fact, you probably don't judging by your comments on the Trashmen's "Surfin' Bird." For the record, I will agree with you that it was perfectly horrible music, but I thought it was funny as hell and bought it the same time I got the Beatles record. Perhaps this makes me one of the "gullible public", but if so that's tough. I dig the beat of "Surfin' Bird" and think it is one hell of a record to twist to, even though it is not specifically a twisting record.

Eldridge's column seems to be dragging its heels, this first time out, but perhaps this will go away after he gets over this introductory bit and starts reviewing things. I hope you keep him writing for you.

I don't find too much difference in the amount of kicks I get in putting out an apa zine as opposed to a general fanzine. The only thing that bugs me about either is getting too hung up on them, so that I lose the distance that makes their creation a process in which I don't feel too heavily involved. By this, I mean that if you get too hung up on something like the production of a general fanzine, or--to stretch out the definition--your job, or making love, or just about anything under the sun, you tend to lose your critical sense and the product or action suffers. At least I find this to be true for myself. A certain detachment is desirable, I believe, yet at the same time there should be an involvement. The thing that interests me is doing it well, doing it at a pace which keeps me from working too hard at it all at once, and producing a product that is either entertaining, communicative, or both, depending on what I have in mind.

Thanks, Scott Kutina, for the book recommendations. I've read in those books in the past and found them interesting, though I don't own copies of them. As for why I've got HPL stuff from the amateur press groups, it's because it just sort of came to me. I was in the NAPA for a while a couple years back, and while in was given a lot of older NAPA stuff, which happened to include a lot of Lovecraft material. If you're planning on publishing a fanzine devoted to Lovecraft, I could probably provide you with some of this material on loan so you could reprint it. None of it is copyright in its original appearance, and perhaps some of it has never been grabbed up by Derleth & other publishers for professional publication. Get in touch if you're interested.

BOB LICHTMAN, concl:

Richard Mann perhaps doesn't know that, in regards the Dictionary of American Slang, when the right wing types were trying to ban it, one of the tactics they used was to select the "choicest" definitions from the book and print them in a circa-20 page booklet, which they passed around as an example of the kind of "filth" to be found in the Dict. of Amer. Sl. I think this is pretty funny, myself. The Dictionary of A.S. is not really all that much of a big deal. True, it has neat definitions for crud ("dried semen adhering to clothing") and so forth, but a large portion of it is devoted to out-of-date slang like "23 skiddoo" and "gosharootie". Besides, at \$7.50 the copy, the book is hardly the sort of thing that kids will buy right off the shelf. At that price, I'll gladly dispense with it myself.

Mike Irwin's notion of the day approaching when some girl will proudly proclaim that she is a "virgin once removed" is, at best, rather quaint. I think Mr. Irwin doth protest too much; perhaps the subject of virginity embarrasses him? According to folk knowledge at my disposal--i.e., talking to girls at one time or another--I understand there are a number of ways of "officially" losing one's virginity without employing a male sex organ. It can be a Do It Yourself project, or you can undergo a simple operation. According to my sources, they have known some girls who have done this when they decided they were ready to have sex with males so as to avoid the traumatic effects possibly redounding from the loss of virginity in love-making. This strikes me as a fairly reasonable idea.

Marion

Bradley's comments on clothing vs. nudity all line up pretty well with what I might say on the subject, except for this business of it being easier to wash skin than clothes. Frankly, Marion, if I had the choice of getting housepaint on my clothes rather than my skin, I'd wear clothes while painting.

HARRIET KOLCHAK, 2330 N. HANCOCK ST., PHIL., PA. 19133

Being an agent, and having a fair acquaintanceship with most of these authors, I have not had the opportunity to see them in quite the same light I get from the answers they have presented here.

I had taken Katherine MacLean to be a very hard and serious worker. She gives the idea here that she is a person who does her work from the side of light amusement. I know she is a wonderful girl and I hardly think that she would not put some real endeavor into her writing. If she does write from sheer enjoyment of writing the stuff, as a good many others say they do, she should continue to turn out first class S.F. for a long time to come.

As for Asimov; Well now, Ike, you write good, really good S.F., but what's all this jazz about science? It is not my opinion that real science is one of the required factors for good S.F. If I wanted science, I would pick up a text book and read it.

By the same thought, I read the stuff so as to be able to escape from the world and its scientific problems of today, so why should it provoke me to thoughts of the effects it can have on the world today. I already have too many problems of my own making, without having to worry about what the problems of the world are.

I note that Ike is still giving Campbell the credit for his success. Come off it, Ike, if you could not write you would not have been the success you are today. If you had not had Campbell behind you, you would still have made a go of it. Let's call a spade a spade, shall we?

TERRY JEEVES, 30 THOMPSON RD., SHEFFIELD, 11, ENGLAND

TOP MARKS for cover, art-work in general, and some of the best duping, layout and headings I've seen in a long time.

I'm sorry that Richard Kyle doesn't particularly like my art-work, but I would like to go on record as saying that like it or not, I was pleased to see comments on the artists. This was a refreshing change, as we so often never get a mention. More power to Kyle's elbow. Hit or miss, it's far better to be noticed than ignored. You may be interested on a couple of points on that comment on my being a better cartoonist than serious artist. I make about \$600 a year by part-time cartooning, but when I do 'serious'...i.e. non funny pictures, they are usually in gouache color, so that may prove something.

Not going for jazz, I'm afraid that Jack Eldridge's column held nothing for me...but I hasten to add, that this is my fault, not that of the column.

BRUCE ROBBINS, 420 MEMORIAL DRIVE, CAMBRIDGE 39, MASS.

For your minor interest, "The Prophets Of Doom" by Hugo Gernsback, which was originally delivered here, had its first appearance in print singly, in mimeographed form, by Uncle Hugo himself; Most copies of which were distributed to members of the M.I.T. S.F. Society. Gernsback then probably sent some to various fan-eds all at once, thus resulting in its mass appearance.

BILL GLASS, 23908 CALIFA ST., WOODLAND HILLS, CALIF. 91364

I really don't think either the front or back cover was really inspiring, just average. I usually don't like REG and always like ATOM, but the REG's illo was the second best in the issue. It has, the longer one looks at it, a sense of wonder, though it looks like an illo from many stories where the virile space man leaves his simple native girl behind. The piece of artwork in the issue was, of course, Barr's on page 11. (Has anyone ever told you it looks a little like Rick Jason on Combat?)

You seem to defeat your purpose by first saying that Franson's proposal for voting on the '66 Worldcon site at the '65 Midwestcon is "a bit presumptuous", outlining a more or less logical proposal, then saying if London won't go the bit on your proposal, the Americans always could, Anglofen willing, vote on the site at the '64 Pacificon. Now aren't you trying to be a bit presumptuous? ((I see your point. However, the "presumptuous" I was referring to about Franson's proposal was the bit re: "the bidder going to London with the Con in his pocket" even before the votes were tallied in London.---BEM))

I feel that Mr. Eldridge's lament about critics and fans paying more attention to the established old timers than to the up and coming brilliant young talent could also be applied to science fiction where as soon as a Heinlein novel is nominated for a Hugo, it wins mainly because Heinlein is heinlein. (I still feel sore about SIASL copping the Hugo from Galouye's Dark Universe.) (By the way, does anyone know how to pronounce Galouye? I always say Gal-oh-ye.)

Of course I'm chicken to comment and argue on statements in the symposium. It's just that I really don't think the opinions of an unheard-from little neo would hold water against those put forth by the BNF's, let alone the pro's themselves. When are the pro's going to argue their views in your lettercol?

((A good question I'd like to know the answer to, myself. Apparently the pro's aren't THAT interested in the symposium.--BEM))

...the ALSO HEARD FROMS:

Subbers since #8 include DON HUTCHINSON, JOHN R. ISAAC, ENS. RONALD HICKS, BRUCE ROBBINS (renewal), ROBERT P. BROWN, RICHARD WILSON, DAVID JENKINS, MICHAEL VIGGIANO, DON FITCH, JAMES A. McCALLUM, SAM MOSKOWITZ, DICK ENEY, and ALEX EISENSTEIN. I hope you people realize now, that since UNC' SAM is calling Bowers, this zine will no doubt go from quarterly to irregular....thus stretching out your subs a longer period of time. It could be a Good thing, or Bad, depending on your point of view! We're just glad we were able to finish the Symposium off before he goes.

§ § §

Mike Deckinger made the AHF's (just barely!) with a postcard explaining why he couldn't write a letter. Seems some silly, mundane reason like his getting married is keeping him from D-B. C'mon, Mike, you can make up a better excuse than that. (But we both send you our congratulations, anyhow!) His new address (tho no doubt it isn't very new by now) is: APT. 10K, 25 Manor Drive, Newark 6, N.J. Mike does surprise me with this comment: "Harold Robbin's earlier books were fairish, but I thought THE CARPETBAGGERS was oversensationalized mediocrity." ## Hell, everyone I know who read it liked it very much, as did I. And I heard rumors (that may or may not be true, natch) that a lot of it was actually based on some of the lives of a few(in)famous movie stars. Does anyone know for sure?

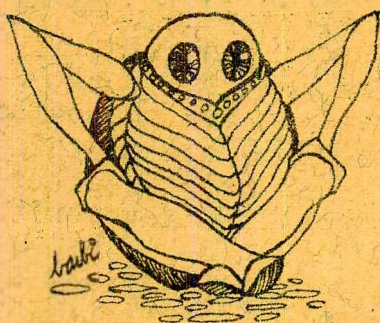
Alma Hill writes a letter and a postcard...and one aside she makes is: "About those hentracks that Bob Tucker finds in very young fans: where does he keep them pickled? And how does he get at them???" Alma also goes on about us getting the Symposium published -- and possibly subsidized by the N3F. Thanks for the helpful hints, Alma, but as of now things look quite different. You and the others who commented on the subject will be interested to see this from Lloyd Biggle, Jr., himself: "I held up commenting further on this business of publication until I could have an exchange of letters with Earl Kemp. I asked him for a candid opinion, and got it -- a quite detailed one.

"As for your publishing the symposium to help out your convention plans -- forget it. Emphatically. Earl states that even with Advent, where they have the necessary experience and know-how, they are unable to reach the break-even mark until a year or more after publication. If you tried it yourself, you'd have a substantial outlay, and no profits coming in in time to use anyway. If Advent did it, even according to the arrangement you had in mind, you wouldn't have the outlay, but you still-wouldn't get profits in time for them to be of any use to you." ## So it appears like that kills that.... And if the Symposium IS printed, it would be for charity -- like TAFF, instead of any other purpose.

Others we heard from, (that I can recall) were Clay Hamlin, Robert Weinberg, and Andre Norton. (That's about it -- now let's see some good letters discussing in depth on the symposium in #10 -- hear?! ---BEM))

§ § §

NOTICE! Are there any fans in the Midwestern area who plan to motor to Pacificon come September? If so, please contact either of us. We'd like to go in a Caravan of Cars, if possible...and whether you have a car or not, it doesn't matter. BEM & Bowers (if Unc' Sam agrees) will be sharing expenses in BEM's Valiant - and would like to have others join too - thus keeping traveling expenses at a bare minimum. Interested? Write!



THE BEMS' CORNER

BILL MALLARD

Welcome back. Once again you didn't think we'd make it, did you? But make it we did. (We revel in disappointing you fans out there.) Our theme: Lateness, again; Our schedule: Nil. The fact that Bowers is deserting D:B to run off at the ~~NOXX~~ first call of Dear Uncle has torpedoed what was left of its schedule. It

looks like I'll be doing most of the manual labor while Bill lends spiritual and monetary aid from his vantage point as Faraway Agent. However, don't despair, this won't occur for a while yet, as Bill points out. The policies of this mag won't change one whit, either -- although starting now everything must be sent to me -- to keep Bill from tearing his hair out with last minute emergencies and fanac before he does go.

So remember, ALL material: subs, contributions, letters, and trades of course, must be sent to me. Groaan. What with all the work to be on my bent shoulders, I can't promise you that I won't make mistakes -- only the Pope is infallible. (Now watch some agnostic write in to argue the point!) But, if they insist, then I'll have to agree with them...after all, I think I'm perfect....

Being irregular will be quite a nice change for me, too, since in the long, hot summer I dread being cooped-up indoors anymore than I have to. As it is I'm ghastly white in color from working nights and sleeping days. I'd dearly love to get out on the beaches under the warm sun, ogling girls and getting a good, rich tan. (Though I never tan -- to tell the truth, I just burn.) But I like swimming, fresh air, and girls, and as any fanzine editor will tell you, publishing a fanzine too often isn't exactly conducive to getting them.

§ § §

We will now have a moment of silence...so everyone bow your head in respect. The End Of An Era has past, for CRY OF THE NAMELESS has finally folded. I never thought I'd live to see the day, it seems almost beyond fannish ken that the zine would some day never be published. But Wally Weber, esteemed TAFF candidate and mainstay of CRY, was transferred to the sticks by his employer, Boeing Aircraft...some place called Huntsville, Alabama. So it was decided by the Busbys and Wally to fold CRY after its 175th issue. That leaves only YANDRO as the highest numbered/longest issued genzine around...right, Buck? As an old CRY Letterhack I will certainly miss it, it just won't seem the same anymore. And Don Franson, what'll I do with my old CRY Letterhack Card?? Frame it, I guess, huh?

I do have a funny feeling though, that we haven't seen the last of CRY...it can't up and quit on us so suddenly...could it be...yes, it must...it's just a hoax pulled on fandom by the Seattlites. It has to be. CRY will live forever.....(won't it?)

§ § §

It appears my remarks re: music (trashy kind, that is) has struck home to the hearts of a few fans. (Though in D:B's lettercol I admit that most, if not all, of the writers agree with me.) As an aside, before

I go into this, my apologies to Arnold Katz, Pete Jackson, Robert Weinberg, and Jim Cawthorn for omitting their letters this time 'round. Next time, OK? (Though Jim's did arrive too late to be included the first three were just misplaced until too late.) Jackson & Cawthorn agreed with my comments on the Beatles, but Weinberg thinks that "knocking it (rock & roll) in- and out- of an editorial sounds more juvenile than the music itself." Why, Bob? Isn't an editorial the place for the editor to sound off about anything he wants? An editorial can be about anything. If I chose to satirize and knock the Beatles and rock and roll in general -- I can do so, and it isn't as juvenile as the music itself. Herewith, the following:

When I first entered fandom years ago, I'm sorry to say I suffered under the delusion that "most fans had good taste in music." I found out soon after though, that they didn't. Such is life. (Of course there are a lot of fans who do like good music of all kinds, but methinks they/we may be outnumbered by the 'pop' lovers in fandom.) Remember, folks, this is just a personal vendetta of mine, so don't get too riled up...though if a few toes ARE trod on, I could care less. But I hate the trash most of the radio stations blare out at the 'pop'-conscious billions...it's pretty damn sickening at times. (It isn't all bad -- I don't claim it is -- there are good songs and instrumentals out in the pop field, but they're few and far between.) And I don't like to wade through hours of junk to hear a few good songs.

Thank heaven there are some good-music radio stations around here, or I'd go batty. Really, people...stop and think....isn't what the majority of the radio stations play actually aimed at the younger, teen-age audience? It sure as hell is. But who buys most of the products advertised? The adults. (Those 14 year-old kids sure won't be buying BLANK-LABEL beer, that's for sure.) And what of the adults? To hear good music they are forced to buy and listen to FM radios, unless there are a few AM stations in their area who don't follow the crowd. Now, I'm for Thinking Young, as they put it....after all, who wants to grow old and senile? But not to the extent of being fed pap on a microwave platter. There's a limit to it. Let's be sensible about it all.

And did you notice? The stations don't have 'disc jockeys' anymore, they're called 'personalities'...they crack corny jokes, have all kinds of gimmicks to draw listeners, talk loud and long as if the next breath they take will be the last, not to mention playing 5 or 6 Beatle records (or fill in your own favorite) in a row. Some of the "singers" they get to play are real winners too. It's as if they (whoever they are) discovered such talent by dragging any ol' kid from off the streets, shoved them in an echo chamber with instructions to say "Yeah, yeah!" to the beat of a drum, and jabbed them with a needle from the rear to help them hit the high notes. Mhghod, after hearing crap like that I almost feel like sterilizing my radio to get it "clean" again! Talk about the commies brainwashing people...we're being brainwashed right now, and don't even know it. And what's to do about it? I'll be honest and say I don't know.

But I would like to try this: I'd like ALL you receiving this issue to write me either a letter or postcard, with your likes & dislikes in music, plus any pros and cons on the above subject; and any ideas or comments at all that you may have. Would you? I'd like to see what a representative section of fandoms' tastes in music are. I'll print them in D:B some future issue if I get enough.

So now it's your turn..I've had my say this issue. Seyolater.

Bemmishly, Bill Mallardi

DOUBLE-BILL ^{AND} LLOYD BIGGLE, JR. PRESENT:
"THE D-B SYMPOSIUM" *PART 3 (final)*

"A Questionnaire for Professional Science Fiction Writers and Editors"

IN THIS ISSUE:

CHARLES BEAUMONT
JAMES BLISH
ANTHONY BOUCHER
LEIGH BRACKETT
MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY
REGINALD BRETNOR
TERRY CARR
ARTHUR C. CLARKE
HAL CLEMENT
AVRAM DAVIDSON

LESTER DEL REY
AUGUST DERLETH
HORACE GOLD
EDMOND HAMILTON
JOE HENSLEY
ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES
RICHARD LUPOFF
MACK REYNOLDS
ERIC FRANK RUSSELL
JAMES H. SCHMITZ

ROBERT SILVERBERG
E. E. "DOC" SMITH
GEORGE O. SMITH
WILLIAM TEMPLE
THEODORE THOMAS
TED WHITE
KATE WILHELM
JACK WILLIAMSON
and
ROBERT F. YOUNG

+++++

QUESTION 1) For what reason or reasons do you write (or edit) Science Fiction in preference to other classes of literature?

TERRY CARR SF is the field I know best and am therefore best at. It's ten times as easy to write in a field in which you know the clichés backward and forward, know what's a new idea, etc. A couple of my stories are illustrative of this: BROWN ROBERT (F&SF, May 62), which rang in a time travel ramification which has been treated remarkably seldom in sf; and HOP-FRIEND (F&SF, Nov. 62), which sort of takes A MARTIAN ODYSSEY and turns it upside down.

There's also, of course, the fact that sf is a comparatively easy field for the beginner. The literary standards (alas, from the fan's standpoint) aren't as high as in non-category fields, and the competition isn't as tough either.

A final note: I've written (and sold) other stuff than sf. However, sf is certainly my primary field, and is likely to remain so.

AUGUST DERLETH I write everything except Western stories (I always had difficulty staying on horses and bicycles) and true confessions (I'd rather live them).

CHARLES BEAUMONT Originally it was because I liked this sort of thing; later because I realized certain social comments could be made which otherwise couldn't or would come too hard. Sf accounts for only about 20% of my output, which is much too variegated, I suppose. Twilight Zone has for some years taken up most of my time.

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES I am no longer sure that this is the case, but if it should be, it would most probably be that (so long as I cannot afford to write fiction for love) it seems as if I have the best chance of making a little money in science fiction. Could I afford to write on speculation, I might go into another field entirely.

ARTHUR C. CLARKE Because most other literature isn't concerned with reality.

WILLIAM TEMPLE One writes s-f for love or money. For me it used to be love. Now it's money. Because the kind of s-f I love few authors write nowadays, and fewer editors will buy. I like stories about people adventuring in a strange environment.

Too often these days the story element (narration: i.e., "What happens next?") is thin. There are no people, because efforts at characterization are frowned on. As there are no people, there are no adventures, because adventures can happen only to people. And the strange environment is taken for granted, as a matter of fact, as if it's not strange at all. No wonder -- and no wonder!

JOE HENSLEY I suppose that the best answer I can give is chance. I read science fiction in the late thirties and in the forties and was a fan, edited an amateur magazine, and the rest. When I began trying to write I wrote all sorts of things, but was more successful in selling the science fiction, probably because I liked it better than any other field I was writing in...

MACK REYNOLDS It is increasingly the field in which a non-conformist can express his opinions. By compromising only to the extent of laying his story in the future, or on some other planet, the writer can say considerably more of what he believes needs saying.

LEIGH BRACKETT The reason is certainly not economic, and that is largely why I have turned to "other classes of literature." But the reason why I began as a s-f writer and still return to it whenever I can is simply that no other field allows such a soaring freedom of the imagination, and no other field is so much "sympatico" with my particular temperament -- i.e., though I loved cowboys, Indians, and pirates as a kid, I would always drop them with a bang for anything science-fictional. As a more mature comment, too, I would say that only the s-f field has turned up anything really different and splendid in the way of literature (using the term "s-f field" in its broadest sense, which is the only sensible way to use it, I think). Who else could have given us a NIGHT LAND, a PURPLE CLOUD, a LAST AND FIRST MEN, an ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU...?

ROBERT SILVERBERG Because it's fun to write, because editorial taboos are relatively restricted instead of restrictive, and because it's one way of making concrete my own speculations and daydreams.

ANTHONY BOUCHER I never have, and I'm not sure anybody should. I suspect most s f writers would be well advised (both esthetically and commercially) to keep at least one foot in some other market--like Anderson, Biggle, Brown, and so on down the alphabet.

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL I scratch where it itches.

E.E. "DOC" SMITH Two. a) I like science fiction better. b) My efforts in other fields were not very successful, and there's not much sense in writing something that no one will ever read.

JAMES BLISH Only about 60 percent of my output is s-f, but I guess that's enough to constitute a preference. I have no logical reason for it; I'm just fond of it. In some directions it gives me a feeling of freedom that I enjoy; in others, I find it very restricting but I love it anyhow. On the other hand, if I were forbidden to write anything else I wouldn't last long.

RICHARD LUPOFF This is a curious self-intensifying phenomenon. SF was a hobby with me long before I wrote or edited anything professionally. As a result, it is the field which I know best. It was because of a hobby interest that I first became acquainted with a number of writers, editors, artists, and publishers in the SF field; through one of these acquaintanceships I received the offer of my present job, and through my present job I am becoming better acquainted than ever with the field and the people in it. See? A self-intensifying phenomenon. If that original schoolboy hobby interest had been in detective fiction, westerns, historical books, etc., the whole process might have taken place in that field instead of SF.

MARION ZIMMER 1. Because I like it, and I don't think anyone can really
BRADLEY write, sincerely, fiction which he does not enjoy reading. I couldn't, for instance, write for women's slicks, because I don't believe in the premises behind their fiction.
2. Because I think it's probably the only way in which one can comment, without fear of criticism or accusation, on the society in which one lives.

JAMES H. SCHMITZ I don't. I write more of it because I've always been able to sell it.

AVRAM DAVIDSON I do write "other classes of literature", and have attained success therein, too; but my natural inclination seems towards SF or F, my first efforts were in this field, and I suppose its lack of rigid form and its infinitely imaginative possibilities continue to appeal to me. Also, I have more success in selling SF than "mainstream literature"--though not much more than with crime fiction.

LESTER DEL REY 1. It pays better on the average. 2. My reputation is now better established in s-f field. 3. It's the only major field of pulp fiction appearing in magazine form - and I prefer both writing for and reading magazine pulp fiction to the supposedly superior type of junk appearing elsewhere. Mostly, I write the type of stories I'd most enjoy reading.

HORACE GOLD I'm more interested in writing science fiction -- and fantasy, which is very closely related for most of us -- because it has greater survival value than other popular fields. However, science fiction and fantasy account for less than 5% of my total production in the past. I regret that; though

there were very few such markets at the time, I might perhaps have been wiser to speculate on future prospects -- I can't say, because making a daily living by writing of any kind was a tough grind. However, it's a fact that I still get sales of my s-f and fantasy stories 25 years later, whereas my other work is as dead as many of the magazines it appeared in.

GEORGE O. SMITH I'm lazy. Science fiction comes easy.

TED WHITE I started out writing non-fiction professionally: jazz reviews, personality pieces, and journalistic pieces for magazines such as ROGUE. My development into the field of fiction has been slow and difficult. It was only three years ago that I made the basic breakthrough and learned to plot. I still have difficulty with the finer points of characterization and dialogue. Therefore, my reasons for writing sf have hinged upon two facts: it's easier to get around one's failings as a writer while developing and mastering them and still sell; and science fiction is the field I grew up with, have always loved and aspired to write, and know a great deal about. However, I also have a high respect for the branch of mystery story created by Hammett and refined by Chandler, and I'd like to work in that field as well. I regard these two branches of literature as the most rewarding.

§§§

QUESTION 2) What do you consider the raison d'etre, the chief value of Science Fiction?

EDMOND HAMILTON By a slow leavening process, science-fiction has made the possibilities of the future familiar to at least a good-sized section of the popular mind. As of now the American people are spending billions on the conquest of space. Such an idea might have seemed outrageous if forty years or more of science-fiction, in all media from comic strips to movies, had not given them an idea that space-travel was inevitable and possible.

KATE WILHELM For me, enjoyment. I learn what science I know from science books, philosophy from philosophical books, psychology..... etc. From science fiction I expect to learn little that is new, but perhaps to be goaded into looking up something, yes. For me so often enjoyment goes hand in glove with aroused curiosity, so perhaps that is what science fiction should do, give enjoyment, and for some, arouse curiosity. But if it gives the enjoyment, that is enough.

HAL CLEMENT Same as other literature — it provides a substitute "struggle for existence", which our evolutionary history forces us to need, on a mental level which makes it unnecessary for us to harm our neighbors.

ROBERT F. YOUNG To me, its most important value is its ability to improve our perspective and in the process point up mankind's insignificance in the microcosm. Humility is a quality that is sadly lacking in the world we live in, and if s-f can elicit it even to a small degree, then s-f more than justifies itself.

JACK WILLIAMSON In an age when the effects of pure and applied science are turning the world upside down, the imaginative exploration of the process needs no apology.

REGINALD
BRETNOR

The science fiction story should always be an experiment performed in the imagination, a speculation as to where our exercise of the scientific method is leading us--or our failure to exercise that method, an attempt to participate vicariously in the great adventures, the magnificent successes, the dreadful failures and defeats of the history of men. Of course, it should also speculate on other life forms, but I think that we will find that even in this area we can never divorce our material from ourselves; it will always, because we are human, remain centered on humanity.

Socially, the function of science fiction should be to bridge the widening gap between scientific speculation as such and the vastly deteriorated (by comparison with the generations which preceded us) speculation of the "non-scientific" intellectual, of men in the liberal arts, of TV-spawned teen-age leadership types.

ROBERT
SILVERBERG

S-F at its best enlarges the reader -- provides him with new images, new ways of looking at things and ideas, new sensory stimuli. I'm a believer in s-f as escape literature, meaning that it can take the reader out of mundane realities into a more colorful, more vivid universe. The best s-f provides this enhancement, this enlargement, this view of the strange. Of course, most of the stuff is too mired in pulp cliches to accomplish this.

CHARLES
BEAUMONT

It imposes upon the writer and the reader a sense of structure, in terms of the universe. However, science fiction as a genre is quite as diversified as any other literary genre. Detective stories are usually one thing; sf stories aren't and never have been. Any field in which Ray Bradbury and Robert Heinlein can labor together is a field without boundaries.

ROBERT A.W.
LOWNDES

Stimulation to imagination, appreciation of the range and limitations of the scientific method, a vehicle for (possible) meaningful exploration of the human condition which is not as well served by mainline or other branches of fiction. I cannot, however, assert this as positively as I might have a decade ago.

TERRY
CARR

It's fun. It provides, alternately and sometimes even concurrently, a chance for both wild imagination and glamour and, on the other hand, fascinating scientific and/or logical extrapolations. In the former category, I think most fondly of Leigh Brackett's best stuff; in the latter, of stories like Charles L. Harness' FRUITS OF THE AGATHON and THE NEW REALITY, that story by Rog Phillips in the first issue of Other Worlds, Leroy Yerxa's ZERO A.D., Weinbaum's SHIFTING SEAS, and an upcoming story by William F. Temple in Analog titled, as I recall, A HITCH IN TIME.

LESTER DEL
REY

Same as any other fiction --its entertainment value. Since science fiction can be less stereo-typed and formularized than other categories, it can be more widely entertaining, at its best. Once it served to interest readers in some amount of science but that's largely gone. When literature must have "value", it stinks.

ARTHUR C.
CLARKE

Entertainment.

MACK Mental stimulation beyond that which can usually be found in
REYNOLDS other fiction forms. I consider intellectual curiosity the
greatest gift man can be given. It's continual exercise
should eventually lead us to the solving of the problems
which confront the race.

GEORGE O. The what? Oh. Its entertainment value. What else?
SMITH

RICHARD Ho, some question! All right, the Serious Scholarly reply
LUPOFF first: it broadens one's mental horizons, etc. It is also,
reallyreally, the only branch of fiction that gives serious
consideration to (a) the future, where, cliché though it is,
we are nonetheless all going to spend the rest of our lives; (b) the im-
pact of science on society, a profound and widespread influence which has
changed and is continuing to change every facet of our lives, from medi-
cine to education to transportation to communication to nutrition to ent-
ertainment to government to economics to... everything! Now, another an-
swer: SF contains some of the best "fun reading" that exists, and I like
fun. Don't you?

JAMES The best exemplars of it deal with ideas and human relation-
BLISH ships and problems that couldn't be handled adequately in
any other way. And even the poor stuff -- which means of
course the bulk of it -- usually manages to suggest a kind
of boundlessness to human aspiration and achievement that is ruled out by
the tidy problems, cozy solutions and arbitrary mechanisms of other forms
of commercial fiction.

One oddity about s-f that has always puzzled (and delighted) me:
among writers, it seems to attract a higher proportion of dedicated crafts-
men than does any other idiom I know. This is highly important if you are
a writer yourself.

E.E. "DOC" Its scope; its flexibility. It is far and away the best med-
SMITH ium for untrammelled, unbounded imagination. It is also the
best rostrum from which to deliver a message.

TED I'm not sure sf has any. Does any form or branch of litera-
WHITE ture require a raison d'etre? Isn't its very existence sign-
enough that a demand existed and was met?

MARION ZIMMER 1. See (2) above;
BRADLEY 2. To stretch the imagination. Our children are subjected
to a systematic warping and stunting of the imaginative
powers, designed at making them docile consumers and voters,
subject to mass manipulation. Science fiction, or any fiction capable of
arousing the emotions of "pity and terror" makes them think of the unheard-
of, the unknown, the undreamed; it makes them think about, and criticize,
the world they live in; or think about how it could be changed. It lessens
complacency.

JAMES H. Ideally, it permits you to use your imagination as freely
SCHMITZ as fantasy does while providing a more definite illusion of
reality.

ERIC FRANK Doesn't have to have a value - any more than Hollywood does.
RUSSELL

JOE HENSLEY There are no boundaries to it. In writing a mystery novel, for example, there's a fairly loose form that needs to be followed to have any real success in selling the book. In science fiction the further you get away from previous form and from the old tried and true characterization and plot the more chance the story has of being sold and and admired. I think Sturgeon is an outstanding example of this. I think it's the only field where, consistently, the editors themselves are experimenters. Most of them, anyway.

AVRAM DAVIDSON It does or should stimulate the imagination and expand the mental and physical horizons of the reader, preparing him for the changes now taking or about to take place in the world we live in. But anything which enriches the poetic vision is for good.

WILLIAM TEMPLE S-f is a general term. There are several types: Technical extrapolation. Pure entertainment (fairy tales for grown-ups). Satire. A fumbling guess at the nature of the universe. The first and last type overlap somewhat. Have space here to deal only with them....

Seers have extra long, extra sensitive feelers. They reach into the misty regions of thought where reason cannot. They sense the shape of things to come and things unseen. Their kind of s-f is crystal ball gazing. Earth satellites, rocket-ships, airplanes, TV, atom bombs, mechanised war, etc., were all first sighted in that crystal ball. (Paul, in the Gernsback magazines of the 'twenties & 'thirties, pictured jet-airliners with swept-back wings--but not from cold reason.) Again, time is only one of the unknown dimensions around us: Strange environments, which s-f seers dimly penetrate to and bring back samples: alien mores, machines, creatures.... They perform a kind of mental scouting of the unknown territory the human caravan must cross. (Lousy metaphors--but I washed my feelers last night and can't do a thing with 'em.)

But that kind of thing is probably s-f's chief value.

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Question 3) What is your appraisal of the relationship of Science Fiction to the "Mainstream" of literature?

HORACE GOLD Peaceful coexistence, which is to say that neither is going to take over the other, now or ever.

REGINALD BRETNOR To my mind the answer here is almost the same ((as #2)), for this gap exists in literature as well as in our daily life. At present, science fiction is living in a ghetto, and very largely a self-made one. It is quite natural that the academic mandarin whose livelihood depends on kidding kids with his Ph.D. should resent a literary form which can fire their imaginations and capture their interest--and the almost universally hostile reaction from these people to the s-f boom of the 'fifties illustrated that. It is also natural that s-f should take a beating from the staffs of magazines like Time, which have not exactly been noted for foretelling the Age of Space. But it's a damned shame that so many elements which associate themselves with science fiction should contribute to what has become a very bad public image.

THEODORE L. THOMAS An enlarging sidestream, possibly blending with the mainstream.

GEORGE O. SMITH About the same as the dime novel, the old Argosy adventure stories, and Captain Billy's Whiz Bang without sex. Now you define the so-called "mainstream of literature" for me.

JAMES BLISH It is a kind of specialty, like Westerns or detectives or slick stories, and like them can either bridge the mainstream or spill over into it, depending upon the intentions and the skills of the writer. The mainstream critic in the latter case tends to say then, "This is more than a s-f novel", when what he means is, "This is what a novel should be, and it happens to take the form of s-f." All good s-f novels are mainstream novels. All bad novels are backwaters no matter what form they take.

TERRY CARR It's problematical. On the one hand, I'm half convinced by the argument put forth by Bill Donaho that sf's aims and values are diametrically opposed to those of Literature--that to the extent that an sf story concentrates on characterization and such it's ignoring its duty to consider ideas first and foremost. On the other hand, I'd still like to see someone really good come along who'd be master enough to combine idea-extrapolation, characterization and meaningful writing, color, and all the good elements of both fields. I don't really feel that it's impossible...just damned hard, particularly at the rates of the sf magazines.

LESTER DEL REY Unfortunately, lately too many writers have been trying to create a relationship. Should be very little. "Mainstream" is a tight, confined, rigid and "now" type of literature; s-f should be loose and free. Also, science fiction should not be obsessed with the "arty" pseudo-quality mainstream style now in vogue. The more s-f fits the mainstream, the less fit it is as science fiction.

CHARLES BEAUMONT Since the best sf is concerned with human problems, as the detective story is not, I would say that it does not greatly differ from "straight" literature. It was first, in the Gernsback days, without literary value, being concerned wholly with machines. Then came ideas. Then people. Now the three are often combined, with excellent results.

RICHARD LUPOFF After a period of almost a decade in which SF attempted to ape Mainstream, and came off pretty bloodied, I believe that SF as a genre is now moving in a more independent course once more. The resurgence of "action" SF, sword-and-sorcery, the Burroughs boom, etc., all indicate a greater emphasis on the independence of SF. At the same time, Mainstream authors will continue to turn out a few successful "quasi-SF" books a year, a la ON THE BEACH, FAIL SAFE, A SHADE OF DIFFERENCE, etc., utilizing certain of the techniques and concepts of SF, but vehemently denying that their works really are part of our field.

E.E. "DOC" SMITH For "hard-core" science fiction--which is what I like--I don't believe there is any. The average main-stream reader simply has not got the imagination to understand what the writer is writing about.

ROBERT F. YOUNG Anything written in any given age belongs as much to the literature of that age as anything else written in it.

EDMOND HAMILTON I think that people either like to read s-f or they don't, depending on whether or not they possess some necessary quality of imagination. As I do not believe the majority of people like to read s-f, I think that science fiction will always remain a separate field.

MARION ZITTER BRADLEY That question is irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial. Just for the record, though; I think the "mainstream" is a clogged sewer. Give me science fiction ANY old time. Mainstream literature has lost sight of story value to inept and ill-digested psychology, and is chasing its own tail around a maze of abstractions. Maybe the future will call US the mainstream--we wrote to entertain people. So did Shakespeare, so did Johnson. Dilettantes deserve oblivion.

KATE WILHELM The population mark passed the 190 million mark recently; as long as any field of literature appeals only to 100,000 or less of that number, it will not fall into the Mainstream, but, it seems to me, the limitations are those imposed by this small group and the writers, not by the rest of the population that does enjoy science fiction under other names and with the preponderance of weight falling on the fiction, rather than on the science. If your specialty is in the making of fine hand wrought silver jewelry, you don't get into competition with Roger Bros. in turning out silver plated table ware. On the other hand, the two are never, or seldom confused by the buying public.

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES At its best, science fiction ought to offer a (possibly) more effective approach to many (but not all) aspects of being a human. The differences ought not to be blurred, but in the process of becoming "respectable" (and more profitable for the writer) they often are blurred.

HAL CLEMENT Science fiction, at least at its best, has higher standards of realism. The difference is, in my opinion, quantitative rather than qualitative.

WILLIAM TEMPLE An extra-bright but emotionally retarded younger brother. A genius in the family who finds communication difficult because he lacks the common touch. He doesn't want to keep up with the Joneses, for the Joneses are not of his world. He feels isolated, misunderstood, frustrated (except maybe at Cons). The fault of this gap is partly his. He's "different" and Mainstream isn't. That's his pride and ignorance. Partly the fault lies with Mainstream--it plods along too many well-trodden roads, lacking "feelers".

AVRAM DAVIDSON It should really be a part of it and in fact really has always been. The Odyssey is SF; so are the Arabian Nights. A SF story must, in addition to other and special requirements, be guided by or be judged by the same standards as any other kind of story.

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL There's no relationship. S-f is part of the "mainstream" already--regardless of whether or not a few literary snobs recognise the fact.

ANTHONY BOUCHER All of the ghettos (sf, suspense, western, etc.) are capable of producing work worthy of serious "mainstream" consideration. The microcosm repeats the macrocosm; there are as many levels of quality within sf as there are in "straight" fiction. The trouble is that the "serious" critics seize upon the highest level and say "This is fine! Therefore it isn't sf."

TED WHITE Science fiction is both more and less than "mainstream" literature. In many respects it transcends and surpasses mainstream literature: it deals more imaginatively with root problems and the nature of reality. But as a form of writing it suffers badly. Most of its practitioners rely upon the scope of their imaginations to substitute for writing skill. One need only read the occasional attempts sf writers have made to go outside their field to realize how wooden their writing is, deprived of the prop of Wonder. But, see ll. for more of this.

JOE HENSLEY I consider science fiction to be closer to mainstream literature than to any of the other specialized fields, if by "Mainstream" you mean the basic novel field, dealing with current or past events. But I think the structuring required in the mainstream novel is more rigid than science fiction, which has few requirements.

ROBERT SILVERBERG S-F can do things the "mainstream" can't, since it isn't limited to the here and now. So-called "mainstream" stuff can give us cards & spades when it comes to technique, expression, insight into character, etc. Attempts at synthesis are only rarely successful, but that's not due to any inherent failures, only to lack of gift.

LEIGH BRACKETT I think a lot of people in the field worry entirely too much about being, or not being, "Mainstream". "Mainstream" is merely a term, which translated means "Successful financially" or at least, "Formally reviewed". If you want to write a best-seller and make millions, obviously s-f is not the place to do it, and most reviewers are sniffish. However, it is interesting to note that the great geniuses of the Mainstream seem to be terribly short-lived--there is always a shoal of new ones coming on, and where is Galsworthy now?--whereas the timeless and enchanting legends of s-f keep being reprinted for generations of new readers.

AUGUST DERLETH No relation whatsoever. Science-fiction is a branch of fantasy, and there is no fantasy of any kind in the core tradition of American literature.

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Question 4) Do you believe that participating in fandom, fanzines and conventions would be a benefit or a hindrance to would-be writers?

JAMES H. SCHMITZ If they don't spend the time they should spend writing on such activities, it needn't hinder them and might very well be a benefit. Many people develop their ideas better if they have an opportunity to kick them around freely with others.

HORACE GOLD I have no opinion, not having participated before I became a writer, and not being involved now, aside from the very loose and informal contact of the pro Hydra Club here in N.Y. once a month or so, which I enjoy but find of no other consequence as to ideas and/or sales. A number of writers came up from fandom, but I'd say that by far the larger proportion didn't and doesn't. I don't see how participating would be a hindrance, though.

CHARLES BEAUMONT It could be a hindrance only to wouldn't-be writers. I was helped, years ago, by the necessity for well-composed letters and editorials. If sf fandom is as it was, there are many excellent writers whose challenges must be met.

TERRY CARR Either or both. It's a help because writing for fanzines gets a person used to communicating with a typewriter-- and the importance of this can't be overestimated. It's a hindrance because the standards in fandom aren't particularly stringent, and a writer can get awfully lazy writing for comparatively easy egoboo. (Though it must be mentioned that Poul Anderson once told me quite seriously that he considered it easier to become popular as a pro writer than as a fan writer.) It's a help because through fandom you can meet various important pro contacts. It's a hindrance because you can get so interested in fandom for its own sake that you may put off any serious effort at pro writing. Etc.

JACK WILLIAMSON I can't see much hope for benefit; I imagine that the fan activities might dissipate energies that would otherwise go into creative writing.

AVRAM DAVIDSON This depends on the individual. I came back to fandom after only the briefest contact in early teens and after I was already an establisheer writer. I cannot say if or not my writing since then is better or same or worse, but I think I am the better for having more friends and more experience with an additional (pardon) social milieu. I think it is possible that fannish activity might become a substitute for actual writing, but again this depends on the individual and his own tendencies and capacity for discipline. In general, I think that such participation should be a help-- again, if the would-be writer doesn't devote to fanthings time he should devote to writing. In other words: in addition to--okay; instead of--nix.

WILLIAM TEMPLE A benefit. All contact--additional to the copulating kind!--is generative. Ideas breed ideas, and a handful of fen rubbed together produces idea-sparks and sometimes flames.

ARTHUR C. CLARKE Very good for beginners, should be taken in moderation by old pros.

THEODORE L. Neither help nor hindrance; only writing makes a writer.
THOMAS

JOE Very beneficial. I think the conventions would be more
HENSLEY of a benefit to me personally if I could manage to stay
sober, but, hell, you got to have fun too. So let's have
one more beer. Kidding aside, I think that being a fan
is as much fun as being a writer and fanning is a great place to cut
your teeth.

REGINALD A hindrance--with one qualification only: if the present
BRETNOR situation in fandom changes and the tail quits wagging
the dog, then fandom could be a help. Too many active
fen today are either exhibitionists or people trying to
write and edit without real effort. I have met too many of these lately
who confess that they "have almost quit reading" the s-f magazines, and
then explain that it is because nothing produced nowadays meets their
exalted tastes! Conventions can be fun when your friends are there.
Otherwise--well, can any writer who takes his metier seriously really
derive much advantage from (a) giving his time to self-appointed amateur
critics? (2) getting his picture in the papers with Monster Men and
other Halloween characters?

MACK A benefit, though I have done very little of this myself.
REYNOLDS I didn't know fandom existed until I had sold several
science fiction stories, but I suspect that had I known
of it and participated I would have been writing and
selling sooner, and would have developed more quickly. As it was, it
took me years to learn things that many fans, and fanzine writers pick
up without effort.

TED I think that any time a would-be writer spends writing
WHITE will be valuable to him later. The most important single
need for a writer is the ability to express himself
fluently and without inhibition at the typewriter. Every
bit of the time he spends at the typewriter will strengthen this ability,
and make the typer more an extension of his thoughts, less a machine
consciously manipulated. Fandom is one way to gain this typing experi-
ence. But, I do not think that fandom serves as a specific stepping-
stone to prodom (I had this out in print with Bob Silverberg once in
1957), and I do not believe it should be perverted to serve such ends in
an exclusive fashion. I think very little of amateur attempts at fic-
tion, and I would recommend that would-be writers spend a great deal
more time consciously analyzing published material and a great deal less
time blindly striking about on their own. I think it's significant that
most of the pros to come from fandom have been in some part critics
while fans: they've cultivated a conscious awareness of the criteria of
writing--they've profited by the examples (good and bad) set before them.
No matter how weak their writing style when they start attempting sf,
they know certain basic facts about such things as plotting and grammar.
I should say that 80% of the manuscripts I read for F&SF (some 60 to 90
a week) are written by individuals whose knowledge of story construction
is entirely unconscious, and who commit the most basic of errors over
and over again. Many of them don't even know what a story is.

Fandom is most valuable for the would-be author, then, for the typing skills it gives him (not the ability to type an error-free 80 wpm, but to express himself easily at the typer), and for that part of it which serves as a critical arena (and not criticism of fan stories, but pro stories).

Conventions are for fun, and--if you're a pro--possible business contacts. But mostly for fun.

LEIGH
BRACKETT Certainly enough fine writers have come up from fandom to prove that participation is definitely no hindrance, and may well be a help through the exchange of ideas, mental stimulation, and an increased prodding of the desire to succeed. But a would-be writer should be very careful not to be overwhelmed by any one particular clique, out of friendship, hero-worship, or any other reason, lest his own spark of individuality be warped around or even destroyed by someone else's idea of how s-f simply has to be written. Many writers, of course, have evolved satisfactorily without fandom.

GEORGE O.
SMITH The question is immaterial, irrelevant, and something else that Perry Mason uses. Some it hinders, some it helps, and some it does nothing for. One thing, writing for fanzines pays no rent, and because editorial standards are low, it does not improve the batting average.

LESTER
DEL REY No importance to the writer, unless he takes his fan activities too seriously. The fan slant on writing isn't the same as that of most readers, so fan activity can't give him much experience. But it is fun to be a fan, so why not? To learn writing, a would-be writer should practice writing for the pro markets.

RICHARD
LUPOFF From the viewpoints of contacts with people professionally active in the field, this is a highly beneficial activity. From the viewpoint of a serious would-be writer, it all depends on how he "fans". If he pays attention to SF, studies it and its practitioners, etc., he can benefit professionally. That is why so many pros came from the ranks of fandom. If a fan restricts his fanac to "faaanish" activities, I do not think it will contribute to a professional career, but it can still be a fine enjoyable hobby.

MARION ZIMMER
BRADLEY Benefit, if he uses it to enrich and enlarge his knowledge of people, to supply the intellectual stretching-of-the-mind which he may not get in his own conformist milieu. Hindrance, if he becomes so in love with the easy egoboo of fanzine writing that he neglects to try the cold hard world of the professional with its rejection slips and harsh editorial comments.

AUGUST
DERLETH Any writer worth his salt can turn any experience into profit for himself. All contact with fellow human beings is of value to him. Participate in fandom, by all means, but never take it seriously lest it injure your work, because fandom represents only a very small--if articulate--segment of the readership.

HAL
CLEMENT

Could be either, depending on his own critical powers. He would be helped by practice, or ruined by trying to satisfy all his critics.

ROBERT
SILVERBERG

It can't hurt--except when fan activity becomes a drain on the creative energies. Fans trapped in the stencil-cutting grind dissipate impulses that might otherwise go into their writing careers. Convention-going is certainly beneficial to a would-be writer; any experience that staggering is bound to be useful for material later on, and it's also useful to meet editors and other writers now and then.

JAMES
BLISH

It depends on how sociable the individual writer is, at any given time in his life. At one time fans annoyed and repelled me. Now I enjoy fandom hugely and learn a great deal from it. Who knows what I'll be like tomorrow? As a generalization, though--and one with the usual perils--I'd guess that the beginning writer ought to stay clear of mass friendships and uncritical admiration until he has learned the fundamental lesson that writing is a lonely art. Once he has swallowed that large bolus and managed to keep it down, fandom cannot at the least do him any harm, and if he finds he likes it, he's lucky.

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Question 5) What source or sources would you recommend to beginning writers as having been, in your experience, the most productive of ideas for Science Fiction stories?

E.E. "DOC"
SMITH

Apply the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair and THINK. New ideas have got to come out of a writer's own head--by definition, they do not pre-exist.

EDMOND
HAMILTON

I can do no better than to repeat the advice that A. Merritt gave to me when I was a new, young writer... "Read scientific works and let your imagination play around the facts you read."

ROBERT F.
YOUNG

What this question boils down to is "Where do you get your ideas?" It is a question which I dread above all others, because I have never been able to answer it to anyone's satisfaction, including my own. It seems to me that getting ideas is a facility that has to be developed, the same as any other facility has to be developed. As a rule, I think that you will find that the more ideas you think of, the more ideas you will be able to think of. There are no sources that I know of, although I think it helps to read literary fare that has nothing to do with s-f--literary fare that no one else would think of reading. Granted, you should read s-f also; but to read s-f and nothing else would lead to what Stendhal called "painting pictures of pictures".

ERIC FRANK
RUSSELL

Ideas come when an active imagination is coupled to a good memory. The two are inseparable; one's no use without the other. I don't believe those faculties can be acquired. Either you've got 'em or you haven't and that's all there is to it.

ANTHONY
BOUCHER

The inexhaustible works of Olaf Stapledon.

KATE
WILHELM

Old science fiction stories; anthologies; today's crop; all the science books available; the Bible; old masters; newspapers; anything and everything in print. A science fiction writer can get his ideas from the Farmers' Almanac if that happens to be his only source of reading material at any given time.

HAL
CLEMENT

Looking for the word "obvious" in scientific articles, and trying to picture what things would be like if the "obvious" weren't so.

ROBERT A.W.
LOWNDES

History, psychology, all the "humanities", a general course in science sufficient to avoid absurd and elementary errors, and such special fields which are congenial to the individual, are certainly requisite. It's difficult to think of anything which might not be productive--but universality is certainly important. Writing science fiction, ideally speaking, should engage the whole person, and not just one section of the person; and the person should be whole, not lopsided. The beginning writer should sample all possible types of what is considered the best "literature", then dwell most deeply on what seems most congenial--outside of science fiction. Acquaintance with the best of science fiction is also needed, as well as cautionary acquaintance with the worst junk.

REGINALD
BRETNOR

Most important today is the source I would recommend against. The beginning writer should begin by smashing his TV. 99 44/100 percent of the stuff on it is garbage--and don't kid yourself with this "it's just entertainment" guff. The writer gets out of himself just what his parents, his teachers, his environment and associates, and he himself--just what all of these have poured into him. Pour garbage into a blender and you'll get blended garbage out. And the "occasional good program" justifies nothing. We used to hear the same thing about commercial radio--and what does the "serious literature" of commercial radio consist of now? Half a dozen volumes of mediocre plays by screwy leftists experimenting with strange noises. The best thing any beginning writer can do is read: read the great periods of the language--the Elizabethans, the writers of the 17th Century especially, perhaps the Middle Scots poets because of the rough wonder of their tongue; read Jane Austen and the Brontës, read Smollett and Sterne; read great storytellers--Conan Doyle, Conrad, Kipling, Maugham; read all people who knew when not to put words in, Voltaire especially. Read what you feel is good, not what a mess of newspaper critics tell you is good. If you feel that Henry Miller writes filthy drivel--which he does--don't let anyone tell you otherwise. And remember that a strong story, a beautifully written story, an effective story is what it is no matter where it may appear: academic quarterly, pulp magazine, or fanzine. Above all, don't model yourself on anyone. Don't copy Saroyan or Heinlein, Dickens or Faulkner. Read as much as you can; then do the best you can to be yourself. I have discussed literary sources. There is no need to discuss "idea" material. Just walk into the public library.

GEORGE O. SMITH Mostly Asteounding Whoops! I mean Analog, with Galaxy second.

JAMES BLISH I am a purist; I like writers who keep up with the scientific journals and know how to use them. These give you background ideas. As for fictional ideas--that is, ideas for the foreground of the story--there is no substitute for close observation or people-watching. And I don't just mean sitting on the front stoop and watching them go by, although that can be fun; I mean close, intense, snoop, eye, ear, nose, throat and heart observation. Science-fiction is fiction, and there are no sources of ideas for it that doesn't apply to all forms of fiction. Its uniqueness lies almost entirely in the background ideas, and keeping up with the sciences seems to me to be essential for that.

LESTER DEL REY Science fiction magazines first--it takes a heck of a lot of reading in any field to serve as a background for writing. Second, the current science magazines. The s-f writer who doesn't keep up with honest science is crippled --like a one-legged skier. Above all, avoid like plague any college literary courses or "little" magazine writing, since the worst slant on s-f writing comes from such sources.

RICHARD LUPOFF Well, I haven't written any professional fiction, but as an editor I would recommend the great anthologies of the field: ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE, THE BEST OF SCIENCE FICTION, THE (first) GALAXY READER. Here, the beginning writer will learn in a few pleasant hours what has been done, so that he won't, as so many otherwise talented tyros at SF have, come up with some old-hat idea, thinking that it's new and creative and the greatest thing ever conceived.

MACK REYNOLDS Since my own particular interest is political economy and my best received stories deal with the social sciences, I can comment intelligently only along this particular line. However, I believe that the world is currently going through the most revolutionary period in history, and the writer who is not up on the subject is inadequately prepared. I would strongly suggest that the ambitious tyro science fiction writer study everything from anarchism to technocracy and study these things from their sources. That is, if he wishes to obtain a clear picture of Socialism and Communism, to go to Marx and Engels, and in this country Daniel DeLeon, rather than to the propaganda of either the West or the Soviets.

JACK WILLIAMSON First, the science fiction magazines; second, science itself--books, lectures, articles, especially such magazines as SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.

WILLIAM TEMPLE The only source is imagination. An imaginative mind can create an idea from almost any incident of everyday life. Take the dreary business of commuting, e.g. Once my train ran into a station I'd thought it had already passed. Result: an AMAZING yarn about a man who kept slipping cogs in time. Another day, I couldn't recall my train passing a certain station: it was as

though a whole section of the line had been removed. Result: a 4th-dimensional yarn in THRILLING WONDER. But the initial idea is only the seed. It needs fertile soil to be planted in. To grow a plausible plot, s-f wise, you must have some store of knowledge concerning 4th-dimensional geometry, physics, etc. But general reading in popular (at least) science, which provides this, seldom provides the actual initial seed. Not to me, anyhow.

AVRAM
DAVIDSON

Extensive and indiscriminate reading has been, in my opinion, in my case, the begin with, the chief source--but I've gotten ideas from newspapers, conversation indulged in or overheard, and not infrequently from the Universal Aether.

I would discourage trying to take stories, SF stories, already written, and turning them inside out or on their heads--although certain successful (commercially speaking) SF writers have done this. But it requires a very special talent and is always a substitute for genuine creativity and can become a dead end. Conversations on possible stories with other writers--conversations with other writers, to clarify--can be productive, if you don't wind up arguing about who gets to write the stories thus engendered.

HORACE
GOLD

The single greatest idea well in s-f and fantasy is other s-f and fantasy stories. The more you read, the more ideas you'll get. But writers aren't doing their science homework as they used to, when s-f predicted such current news as anti-matter, radar, tranquilizers, not to mention rocketry, at a distance of two and three decades. One of the best sources I can recommend is Industrial Research magazine, Beverly Shores, Ind. It's edited by Neil P. Ruzic, a former s-f writer. Tell him I sent you. With a magazine like I.R. around, there just is no excuse for a poor science background.

THEODORE L.
THOMAS

There is no particular source. A reasonably alert mind & a recognition of what constitutes a valid story idea are needed.

ARTHUR C.
CLARKE

All general scientific journals (e.g. Scientific American).

TERRY
CARR

Other science fiction stories. Bullsessions with fans and/or pros. (My story STANLEY TOOTHBRUSH--published under the penname Carl Brandon--grew out of a conversation with Poul Anderson and Gordy Dickson.) Science articles. In my own case, most of my ideas come from other sf stories--I have often been reading a story, decided I saw a fine twist coming, and found that the author had a different idea. So I wrote my own idea, and had a different story entirely.

§ § §

QUESTION

6) Do you feel that a beginning Science Fiction writer should concentrate on short stories as opposed to novels --- or vice versa? Why?

LEIGH
BRACKETT

Depends on the writer and the idea he has. Some writers -- like myself -- are not happy in a short length. Others cannot write a novel to save them, but are brilliant in four or five thousand words. I'd say this was up to the individual.

dual.

JOE HENSLEY I don't think it makes a particle of difference. I consider novels easier to write than short stories, but this is a personal thing.

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL Given that he knows the technique, a writer should develop any plot to its natural length. Some writers have an aptitude for concocting short-story plots, others for novel-length ones. Some can do both. The rule is not to force the issue one way or the other, i.e. by cutting to shortness or padding to length.

AUGUST DERLETH An individual matter. Form and length are determined by subject matter, and only any given author can decide for himself whether he ought to write short or long fiction. A good short story is harder to write than a good novel.

ROBERT SILVERBERG Short stories, by all means. Many amateurs can find a 3000-word opening for themselves in a magazine, build their own confidence & technical skills, and then go on to write novels. Beginning with novel-writing is putting too much demand on a beginner's ability, and puts him in immediate competition with every top-flight pro.

TED WHITE To each his own. My first two published stories were shorts -- one of them far too short. It embarrasses me now to see how much was left out. Then came a novel, and now long shorts and novelettes. Terry Carr started out with a short novel. I think that stories over 7,000 words and under 30,000 are the easiest and most relaxed to write. Shorter ones require a great deal of discipline and skill; longer ones encourage meandering. But really each story will have its own length, and after you've conceived its basic outline it's folly to attempt to set it to any rigid word-length.

JAMES H. SCHMITZ Depends on his reasons for writing. If he's doing it primarily to get sales, he should practice the short form. If he's writing for enjoyment, his own and that of his friends, and has a sufficient interest span, the novel gives him a better opportunity to bring ideas, characters and background to life, although the finished product probably will be more difficult to sell.

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY It depends on the writer. I like writing novels because my forte is atmosphere and character, and in a short story I can't develop them properly. But queerly enough, I think the short story is the ideal medium for science fiction, which is a fiction of ideas. What I write, of course, is really adventure fantasy with a few scientific trimmings, not S.F. This is true of all but a handful of the writers around.

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES Any beginning writer (unless he is a "natural genius-type writer", and these are rare) would do best to concentrate on short stories for awhile in order to learn structure, brevity, etc. What has been most sadly lacking is the discipline of learning craftsmanship (which should not become an end in itself, but is needed nonetheless). Unfortunately, far too many writers find that they can sell stories with little or no such discipline; and repeated

sales to style-deaf editors are no help. In writing, you can "earn while you learn", true, but there's the danger of deciding that you do not have to learn because the earnings look so good -- for a time.

MACK
REYNOLDS I concentrated on short stories---and shouldn't have. I must have published a hundred, before trying longer lengths. Shorts seem to be easier. They aren't. The amount of effort put into writing ten one thousand word short-stories, is considerably more than that put into one ten thousand worder. Besides that, if you don't have anything to say, beyond a cute gag, it is extremely difficult to say it in a short. I wish I had found this out sooner. It took me damn near ten years.

HORACE
GOLD Why? For the same reason that composers should do sonatas and fugues before trying to write a symphony -- you have to learn how to orchestrate and the only way to learn is by doing it. By degrees. You can't expect to know how all at once. This holds true for most, not all, of us. There is the occasional hotshot who rings the bell with the very first thing he writes, be it play or novel; and some even manage to repeat. But they're so far in the minority that they are statistically negligible.

TERRY
CARR Short stories, definitely. The competition in the longer lengths is virtually prohibitive--the established, accomplished writers are naturally writing the longer lengths, both because editors like names on the cover and because established pros don't like to throw away an idea on 5,000 words when they can write 15,000 or more around it. (As it happened, my second sale in the sf field was a short novel to Ace, but I consider this atypical and count myself as plain lucky.

E.E. "DOC"
SMITH That depends entirely on the writer -- his attitude, his knowledge, and what he wants to say. I started with a 100,000-word novel, but I wouldn't recommend that kind of a start for everybody. Consider Weinbaum, who was at his terrific best in the short story.

REGINALD
BRETNOR Concentrate on short stories. Unless you are one in a million you'll need the discipline. The novel too often uses its length to cover up poor writing and other defects.

LESTER DEL
REY Let him do what he can do best, to his own mind; however, if he wants to sell as quickly as possible, the short story is obviously in most need by the magazines. The story of 3000 to 5000 words is always a good bet, since this is long enough to be a real story but short enough to be not too attractive to most established writers.

JAMES
BLISH Short stories. The beginning writer seldom has enough control to give a 60,000-word piece a coherent structure and a sense of movement. The short story is the natural place to gain confidence and control. In addition, short stories keep your name before the public and prepare a better reception for a first novel than it is likely to get if it comes in cold. In the long run, though, the novel becomes both a better proposition in terms of money, and more satisfying to write. (Also, you can pat them; magazines decay.)

§ § §

QUESTION 2) What suggestions can you offer to the beginning writer concerning the development of "realistic" characters and writing effective dialogue?

EDMOND HAMILTON Only this: if doubtful of a character's action, or his speech, ask yourself if you ever actually saw a person doing such a thing, or heard him saying a comparable line of dialogue. This is a general statement, not to be too closely applied, of course.

CHARLES BEAUMONT That's like asking how to learn the art of writing. It can be learned, but not taught. I found that out while teaching a class in science fiction at UCLA this summer.

ROBERT F. YOUNG Try to become as involved in the story you're writing as possible. Once you become involved in it you will start caring about what happens to your characters, and once you start caring about what happens to your characters you will get to know them, and once you get to know them you can't stop them from coming to life. After that, you simply write down what they say. Lord knows, this isn't easy, and it can never be accomplished completely; but the degree to which you accomplish it will be in direct ratio to the realism of your characters and the effectiveness of your dialogue.

ANTHONY BOUCHER Read read read--watch watch watch--listen listen listen--write write write.

JACK WILLIAMSON Let him study good mainstream fiction, and standard texts on fiction writing.

JAMES H. SCHMITZ To develop a realistic character, first establish in your mind what kind of character he is, and then have him act and react consistently throughout your story in accordance with the character he is. If that clashes with the plot, either change the character or change the plot. For most purposes, that's quite sufficient. Don't worry too much about getting the character established with the reader. If you have a sound story, the reader will take care of such details.

Your dialogue will be effective enough if it moves the story along and the reader doesn't have to guess at who's speaking. Keep it as simple and everyday as possible, and you'll probably find it's the easiest part of fiction. Don't be afraid of cliches in dialogue; they're common verbal shorthand, often very expressive, and make most speakers sound more natural. If you'll imagine you're listening to a real conversation, keep it from straying from the point and cut whatever isn't essential, you should have a useful line of dialogue. Later on, you can get more elaborate about it, if you want to.

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL Good characterisation derives from the writer's own sophistication plus adequate time to take pains. Many writers with a living to earn outside of the writing field just haven't got the time to rewrite several times over before submission. In such cases the writers must take their choice between low output well-polished or higher output with less polish. The unsophisticated writer won't achieve polish anyway. Dull minds write dull stories.

MARION ZIMMER
BRADLEY None. Either you see those people, down to the color of their underwear and the way they talk to their mother-in-law, or no one can help you make them "realistic". The same thing goes for dialogue. You have an "ear" for it, or you don't. The novice could try reading his dialogue aloud to see if it sounds natural when spoken. If not, rewrite till it does.

ROBERT A.W.
LOWNDES Be open, be alert to life experiences, both first hand and vicarious. You can get the vicarious ones from the best literature, drama, cinema, and other reading, etc. The danger is the assumption that since anyone is likely to be surrounded by lunkheads at any times, and their jibber is certainly "realistic", lunkhead jibber is the only way of achieving realism. It isn't.

TED
WHITE This is a weak spot for me. I try simply to make them realistic to me and hope for the best. One of my few devices is to incorporate some trait or character insight which is not common to the field, to upset a cliché or transplant one from another field, thereby giving it new freshness. But, I'm not too consistant or too good at this.

ARTHUR C.
CLARKE Look and listen — no other method available!

AUGUST
DERLETH Develop his seeing eye and listening ear, and NOT by way of printed science-fiction.

E.E. "DOC"
SMITH I'm very glad indeed to answer this question. First, develop all your characters, however minor, in outline. Then put yourself in the place of each character. Live in and with each character so long and so strongly that you know him or her very intimately — so well that you know exactly how he or she would react to every situation that will arise in the story. Then have each character talk exactly as that character would talk in real life.

AVRAM
DAVIDSON Much depends here on the accuracy of his own eye and ear. He might keep a notebook of bits of overheard dialogue or observed personality traits and tendencies; he might also --though cautiously--take a model from a writer whose skill in these two things he admires; not trying to copy but to extend or extrapolate from what he sees is done by said writer. In other words, x "ask" Writer X how to get there from here, but don't climb on his back and try to ride there. He might not go there, after all.

HORACE
GOLD A hell of a lot of reading, a hell of a lot of listening to everyday speech, and a hell of a lot of writing character studies and dialogue -- and comparing these with what you read. Writing for sale is built on the foundation of writing for practice, listening and reading as intently as you would study for any other profession, and considering rejection slips as school grades -- until the first check comes in and tells you that hard work pays off.

JAMES
BLISH Watch; listen; participate; and write. It also pays, though it's painful, to reread what you wrote ten years ago. If you don't find it painful, there's something wrong with your ear.

WILLIAM
TEMPLE The realism of characters is geared to one's experience of life & people. As most editors seem to go along with Kingsley Amis's concept of "the idea as hero", to attempt to depict "the hero as hero", though it may make the story more realistic and adult, may equally diminish the chances of its sale -- as things are.

Dialogue: Don't attempt to "see" the words as on a printed page. That's remembering dialogue you've read. Just sit back and wait, and listen to your imagined characters when they begin to speak for themselves. If they're only cardboard characters, only rubber-stamp clichés will fall from their mouths. If they are human beings...well, you've been warned.

KATE
WILHELM Write! Write! Write! And in between, read.

MACK
REYNOLDS Read Hemingway, especially for the dialogue. For a couple of former science fiction writers who are presently developing into two of the best story tellers in the country, read John D. MacDonald and William P. McGivern, free lance commercial writers who really have it on the ball.

LEIGH
BRACKETT Out of twenty-odd years of writing experience I have evolved this one ewe-lamb of wisdom -- and it applies to any field. Write every story as though it had never been done before. Write it as though every word of it were true, as though page by page it is actually happening, in real life, to real people. And if you hit a snag, stop a while and think -- would these real people do and say what I am making them do and say in this particular case? Generally you will find that you have been forcing the story along reconceived lines instead of letting it develop itself. Above all, like what you're doing -- or nobody else will.

LESTER DEL
REY Forget such damned nonsense! You don't want "realistic" characters - they tend to be dull. You want the most interesting characters (often alien or non-human, at that) you can find. As for dialogue, if the ear of the writer is good, he'll learn dialogue automatically; if the ear isn't good, he'd better use dialogue only when he has to. Anyhow, what he has to tell means more than how he tells it.

REGINALD
BRETNOR Read writers who know how to bring their characters to life. Again, this means going back in time to a great extent, when character creation was a bit more than some New York intellectual writing about the Degenerate South for Harper's Bazaar. Read Mark Twain. And remember that, in order to bring your characters to life, you have either to love or hate them-- at least, you must have some respect for them, for their essential humanity. Whatever you do, if you take any writing courses, take them from a professional writer. Don't fall for the academic non-writers' "creative writing" pitch. If you intend to write for a living, learning to butter up the mandarins isn't going to do you a great deal of good. (Once in a while, you'll find an academic man who is a good pro, but take the trouble to find out first, because most of them in this racket are would-be's.)

- QUESTION 8) Do you believe that an effective novel requires a message or moral? Please comment.
- JACK WILLIAMSON A good novel will probably have a message, but a novel written to convey a message will probably be bad.
- ANTHONY BOUCHER Possibly I'd go so far as to say it should have an implicit viewpoint or attitude, though I'm not 100% certain of even this. More overt "messages" can be perilous (cf the later works of Heinlein; but then on the other hand of the works of C. S. Lewis.).
- THEODORE L. THOMAS Depends on what you want the novel to accomplish.
- ERIC FRANK RUSSELL Only if a message or moral is integral part of the plot. Otherwise it's superfluous. An effective novel (my italics) is one that succeeds in entertaining the reader regardless of its ethical content.
- ARTHUR C. CLARKE No — when you define "effective" to mean having a message!
- ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES An effective novel has a message or moral or whatever you want to call it. It doesn't have it because the author decided he had to present a message or moral, etc., and cast around looking for the "right" one. It has it because the author is a (reasonably) whole human being, whose state of being makes it impossible for him to write a novel that doesn't say something more than a plot outline plus cliché gestures, etc. Great art cannot escape including elements which someone will consider propaganda of some sort, but if instruction or uplift is the main purpose in writing then all you will come out with is propaganda and no art.
- TERRY CARR Absolutely not. A story's a story, and messages and morals are simply extras--nice if you can get them in (and keep them out of the way of the story), but not necessary. The above statement gives my feelings as a reader. As a writer, I confess that book-length manuscript writing is so arduous for me that by the time I'm approaching the end if there's no goddamn meaning to all this by-now-almost-nonsensical action and chatter, I lose interest. I bogged down two chapters from the end of WARLORD OF KOR, and was able to come back and finish it only when I'd managed to think of a moral to be drawn from the action of the story. This is, however, merely a personal quirk of a guy for whom writing is often hard work. As I say, the reader in me disagrees.
- MACK REYNOLDS Yes. Maybe I'm old fashioned but I believe that the modern story teller differs little from his ancestor who squatted before the fire outside the cave and spun his yarns for the tribe's youngsters, teaching them in the telling the tribal mores. And excuse me for being square, but I think something goes out of a culture when those mores are no longer "crime doesn't pay", "do unto others as you would they do unto you", "good eventually triumphs" etc., but become "never give a sucker an even break", "if I didn't do it, somebody else would", etc. -66-

AUGUST
DERLETH

No. An effective novel should tell a good story. Most novels carrying a message are poor novels and slightly silly besides. As for carrying a moral -- isn't this pre-adolescent fare?

REGINALD
BRETNOR

Every novel-- and every story-- carries some sort of message, and contains some sort of moral or, if such a term can be used, anti-moral. Every writer is, willy-nilly, a propagandist, in that he changes-- however slightly-- the frames of reference of his readers, for things don't just go in one ear and out the other. The mind records them, in their entirety or in part, and they do have an effect. No one should ever think of their work as "only entertainment"-- or believe that writing "entertainment" absolves the writer from moral responsibility for what he writes. With that as background, I personally think that, certainly, any effective novel or short story contains-- not should contain, but contains-- a moral or a message. However, when a serious novel is conceived only to present a moral, it often falls as flat as a TV science fiction show, for such novels seldom have a life of their own.

LESTER DEL
REY

Good God, no. Must we abase ourselves to the Marxist idea of purpose in art, long after the Russians are no longer 100% devoted to this idea? The purpose of a novel is to entertain. If it has a natural moral (through character development), okay. If it has a "message", it should be an honest tract. There's too much social significance written by the socially insignificant already.

E.E."DOC"
SMITH

A message -- positively. A moral, not necessarily: but it is usually implicit in the message. This message, however, should not be over-apparent, blatant, or "preachy". It should be buried deeply enough so as not to interfere at all with the story -- but it should be plain to the reader who is interested enough to give the story a careful re-reading. Witness my LENSMAN series.

AVRAM
DAVIDSON

It isn't a matter of asking, "What message or moral should I put in?" If you tell an effective story, without even thinking about a message or moral, just working at the essential story, the result is bound to convey a message or moral inevitably; even if it is not obvious or blatant...and, in fact, the less so, the better.

Don't be like the college girl who said, "My faculty advisor liked my story and we're going to meet tomorrow to put in the symbolism."

JAMES
BLISH

No, I don't. But I do think that an effective novel ought to raise a question, whether it offers an answer or not. In other words, it ought to be about something, rather than being just a 60,000-word bite of raw observation and transcription. S-F is peculiarly endowed to raise large questions and I wish it did so more often. If the author has a solution in which he believes, all well and good, as long as he hasn't started out consciously to ram it down the readers' throats at the expense of drama, emotional

content, structure and richness. (That last word is my personal substitute for beauty. I have no objection to beauty in a work of art, but many great works are ugly. Both kinds are rich if they are well done.)

WILLIAM TEMPLE Nurtured on H.G. Wells, I used to think and write so. And it's a strong habit to break. But I still try to break it. For I believe now it's true that "Wells sold his soul for a pot of message." His artistic soul, i.e. Sam Goldwyn (was it?) said: "Messages are for Western Union." And certainly, preaching is for the pulpit...or, anyhow, for non-fiction works. S-f authors should be artists, and an artist's job is simply "to hold the mirror up to nature."

CHARLES BEAUMONT Anyone who sets out to illustrate dramatically a "message or moral" is certain to write a less than first rate novel. Melville thought he was writing a story about a whale, you know. It is necessary to write about oneself, one's fears and dreams. Thinking is always a mistake for a writer, when he is writing.

KATE WILHELM Everything I have encountered that left any impression whatever on me had a message or moral of some sort, except Thorne Smith's works, and I don't seem to remember anything but a lot of fun in them. So, starting to answer yes, I finish by answering no. Depends on the definition of 'effective'.

RICHARD LUPOFF This depends on your definition of an effective novel. If you mean one that can be read with interest and pleasure (that "fun" business again), the answer is most emphatically NO! Look at LEGION OF SPACE and all the other towering space operas that exist in our field, and look at the fine entertaining novels that exist in other specialized fields, or in the mainstream. If I have a single credo as an editor, it is: Author, tell me a story.

LEIGH BRACKETT NO. Far be it from me to say that 1984 and LORD OF THE FLIES should not have been written; both were great books quite apart from their message, and the message was powerful. Well and good. But most writers are story-tellers, and there is often a painful insistence on writing "message" novels simply because the writer somehow feels ashamed to be just a story-teller and feels that a "message" will make him more important. Generally speaking -- in my opinion -- messages belong with soap-boxes, tracts, and scholarly works of non-fiction. Trying to sugar-coat some piece of knowledge or philosophy with fiction usually results in the ruination of both.

ROBERT SILVERBERG I'm against morals per se: the pat little homily on the last page. On the other hand, a novel should be about something, have a theme, a point of view, or it's a waste of everyone's time. The theme amounts to a message (Don't Distrust Aliens; Space Travel is Good; Fallout is Evil; etc.) but should be implicit in the story's structure, not tacked on sermon-fashion out in the open. The basic thing wrong with s-f today is that half the stories aren't about anything, and the other half ram their themes into your eyes.

HAL CLEMENT All that I can think of offhand contained such a "message", though I have at times suspected that the author had none, or a different one, consciously in mind. I think, but am not quite sure, that it is a necessary part of a novel.

GEORGE C. SMITH Hell no! If I want a sermon, I'll go to church.

-oOo-

QUESTION 2) To what extent do you think it possible to detect a writer's viewpoints as to politics, religion or moral problems through examination of his stories?

HORACE GOLD None at all. A writer who amounts to anything will adopt any point of view that will benefit the story, no matter how it might violate his personal beliefs. And he will stick to the logic of that premise unswervingly until the story is finished, at which time he can go back to his own views. To hold a writer to his premises in any other way is to call Steinbeck an Okie for "The Grapes of Wrath" and Hemingway a Spaniard for "For Whom the Bell Tolls". Or let me make this distinction: A good writer won't let himself be detected through his work, whereas a bad writer will use it as a microphone to broadcast his dogmas.

TED WHITE It depends on how overtly he states his themes, and how much they reoccur in his work. Then too, it depends on how much of himself he feels like putting into his stories. I personally like to express different points of view in different stories--aspects of my personality, perhaps, but far from indicative of my whole personality. But then, I've written comparatively little, and much of this has been set in the simpler, more action-oriented framework. Heinlein is a writer who has received a lot of examination for what he's reiterated in recent books, and I think the sexual themes are the most significant of all he's expressed. Gordon Dickson, in DORSAI and NECROMANCER has been deliberately groping for a new area of insight into human intuitive faculties, and I understand he plans these books as part of a mammoth three-fold trilogy. In his case I assume there is a complete deliberation in this expression. In Heinlein's case, I think he's writing more or less as he feels like it, without much if any discipline.

JAMES BLISH If the whole corpus of a writer's works is available to the reader, the attitudes and beliefs common to them all can usually be separated from the temporary assumptions made for the sake of a single story. It should never be attempted on the basis of a single work, however, and particularly not in s-f, where temporary assumptions are as common as squirrels in a park.

But if a writer is skillful and also has fundamental beliefs, they will show. He doesn't have to push them--they will come out willy-nilly.

JAMES H. SCHMITZ That might depend on the writer and the stories you're examining, but I wouldn't regard it as a reliable form of analysis in any case. For one thing, writing is often a front for the writer, and it can be a very deceptive front.

JACK WILLIAMSON That depends on the writer; nobody is very sure of Shakespeare's private opinions.

JOE HENSLEY Personally, I doubt that anyone could detect my own. You build a character and you give that character certain values and beliefs. In a novel I recently finished the main character was a lawyer who was fighting capitol punishment and the book, basically, was a diatribe against capitol punishment. At the time I was writing it I was a member of the Indiana Legislature. I voted to kill a bill which would have outlawed capitol punishment. Characters are what you make them and making the protagonist in this book an enemy of capitol punishment gave him a good basic motivation for some of his actions.

ROBERT F. YOUNG To a very large extent--if you read everything the writer turns out. All writers paint a portrait of themselves, but they don't do it in one story or even in one novel--they do it little by little, down through the years. This holds true for realists as well as romanticists, and you can get to know Hemingway as well by reading Hemingway as you can get to know Curwood by reading Curwood.

CHARLES BEAUMONT It's always possible, but never, in good work, demonstrable. The Melville example must be resurrected. When the characters took over, Melville could only sit and watch and discover things about himself which he hadn't suspected. In a way, writing may be considered, if I may coin a phrase, auto-psychotherapy.

LESTER DEL REY Not too much. If so, he's a poor writer, who can't handle any character or viewpoint but his own. In s-f, why should a "way-out" story reflect the here and now of the writer? Burroughs didn't like apes better than people. A good writer adjusts his viewpoint to the limits of his story. So far, those who judged me by my stories have been remarkably wrong. The same for Heinlein, Asimov, de Camp, etc.

GEORGE O. SMITH Only when the writer is so bound up by his religious views that he cannot present an angle that is contrary to his dogma. In other words, no writer should try to write something alien to his nature, unless he has the inner strength to look his own dogma in the eye, and find the faults in it with the same ease and willingness as his neighbor with an opposing dogma.

MACK REYNOLDS Fiction is autobiographical as has been many times said. You can only write about what you know about--if you expect it to be read to any extent. Which, by the way, is one of the short comings of writers who begin publishing in their teens. They haven't usually had enough experience in life to be interesting, nor are their opinions on politics, religion or moral problems very deep. --I said usually. There are probably exceptions.

ARTHUR C. CLARKE

100%

THEODORE L. Quite possible, but requires skill.
THOMAS

ANTHONY On the basis of The Complete Works, probably you could do
BOUCHER a fair job; but any smaller sample is dangerous. It's too
 easy to blame an author for the opinions of a character;
 and especially in s f, a writer may easily be taken as
advocating what to him is only an interesting basis for speculation.

TERRY To a large extent, though you can often be misled--as
CARR Heinlein has apparently done often, by throwing out ideas
 just to kick up a fuss or to play around with them himself
 without actually believing them. But Sturgeon's warmth and
love for people comes through like a bell, on paper, and Avram Davidson's
good-humored interest in a wide variety of things is equally clear in
his stories.

 I think it's harder to tell an sf writer's real attitudes, by the
way, because by an large sf is a more cerebral medium than most, and
thus you get (as with Heinlein) a lot of people who are just toying with
ideas for the fun of it. Emotional attitudes (as in the two examples I've
given) are usually much easier to detect, because no writer who's worth
a damn toys with emotions.

EDMOND Depends on how much "author to reader" the writer puts
HAMILTON into his stories. Some writers, and I am one of them,
 consider a story a thing apart from themselves, to be made
 as vivid and real as possible to the reader. Others con-
sider the story a vehicle for self-expression, for their ideas about the
universe.

ROBERT A. W. If you have a thorough experience with a great deal of an
LOWNDES author's work, over a long period of time, and certain
 elements occur consistently, then it may be a fair guess
 that these express his personal viewpoints (or at least
are viewpoints not entirely incompatible with his own). With hack writers,
one can never tell. But one cannot be certain on the basis of a single
exhibit, and personal, intimate acquaintanceship with the author may be
necessary in order to be sure. In order to make a character convincing,
you have to make his viewpoints convincing; you have to try to think the
way such a person would think (and feel, etc.); and in the end you may
find that people are ascribing these viewpoints to you, personally.

KATE I came across a statement somewhere to the effect that a
WILHELM lifetime of any writer's works will reveal the man--or
 woman. Probably that is true, but remember that the state-
 ment said, a lifetime of his works, not a story, or a
book, not even this year's output.

E.E. "DOC" In the case of a skilled craftsman, none whatever--unless
SMITH he is deliberately waving a flag of some kind or other,
 and sometimes not even then. To develop his theme a writer
 can--and does--use any universe he pleases. This universe
may or may not (depending upon the message) agree in any given particular
with the writer's own opinions or beliefs.

HAL
CLEMENT

Inversely proportional to the author's professional skill --a poor one could present only his own ideas convincingly, an expert could present a wide variety so well that I don't think any analyst could be sure which the author

held himself.

REGINALD
BRETNOR

The question cannot be answered. It depends entirely on the writer and on the critics, and anyhow who cares? One of the obscurities of the present literary scene is that the function of the critic has been extended into the writer's private life, into the public examination of his subconscious, and into the fraudulent explication of what makes him tick. Another, incidentally, is the increasingly noticeable tendency of editors and publishers to treat writers as though they were show people, which most of them aren't. The important thing about Mark Twain was Tom Sawyer, and Huckleberry Finn, and every other work he gave the world. Very little written by his regiments of critics has enriched those works or aided any intelligent reader in his enjoyment of them. Stories, in any field, should stand on their own merits, not on the dubious foundation of an editor's smarmy blurb, or of a "conceptual analysis" by some mandarin, or on who the public press says the writer sleeps with.

-ooo-

QUESTION 10) During your formative writings, what one author influenced you the most? What other factors, such as background, education, etc., were important influences?

ROBERT
SILVERBERG

One author? Kuttner, Vance, van Vogt, Heinlein, and half a dozen others in science fiction; Maugham, Mann, and some others from the "mainstream". The rest of the question is too involved to answer here--or even think about.

AVRAM
DAVIDSON

Oh, boy! EVERYTHING I EVER READ INFLUENCED ME, EVERYWHERE I EVER WAS INFLUENCED ME, EVERYTHING I EVER STUDIED, EXPERIENCED, THOUGHT OF, HOPED FOR, HOPED NOT FOR, INFLUENCED ME. And I'm sure this is true of everyone else.

MARION ZIMMER
BRADLEY

First of all; I had solitude and leisure to read and write. I keep wondering how today's over-socialized, peer-group-reared kids ever have the long hours alone, which are the key to creativity. I worked hard--but at manual tasks which kept my hands busy, and bored me enough so that I HAD to develop an active inner life, or go crazy. A farm is good for that. I also cared (and care) little for ordinary socializing, and have no distaste for my own company.

Definite influences; Robert W. Chambers; Mary Renault; Leigh Brackett.

WILLIAM
TEMPLE

H.G. Wells, all the time. Background was a dull, dismal environment to escape from via s-f. Education (apart from self-education) was merely a long process of being whipped along cul-de-sacs I knew to be cul-de-sacs...but no alternatives were offered or available.

ERIC FRANK
RUSSELL

No one author. There were fifty of them, or more. As for background--I'm a dreamer, aren't we all?

AUGUST DERLETH My formative influences are perfectly clear in the range of my work--Thoreau, Emerson, Lovecraft, Mencken, Masters, Frost, Machen, Thomas Hardy, Proust, Mann, Doyle.

MACK REYNOLDS I suppose that Hemingway influenced me most as a writer. My family background was also a strong influence toward arousing my interests in the material to be found in my stories. My father was a Socialist who twice ran for President of the United States (1928 and 1932). I consider myself still to be in my formative years, the several wars and revolutions I have either participated in or witnessed continue to fuel my beliefs in the need for striving for a more workable world.

LEIGH BRACKETT As must be obvious, Edgar Rice Burroughs. Though there were others, chiefly Kipling, Haggard, and Merritt. As to other factors--I don't know. My interests were always dissimilar from those of my family--just natural cussedness, I guess.

ROBERT F. YOUNG Logically, Burroughs should have. I used to read him all the time, and I'm not ashamed to admit that occasionally I still do. He had the most vivid imagination of any writer I've ever read, and in my opinion his imagination more than compensates for his shortcomings in other respects. However, I don't think he influenced me at all. Bradbury did undoubtedly, as he was just coming into popularity when I first began to write. No doubt, a lot of other s-f writers did also, as well as writers in other fields.

LESTER DEL REY First, I really had no "formative writing"--my first story sold, and it was already pretty well formed. Second, I don't know what writer--probably Isaiah or Gibbon; in s-f, maybe Ray Z. Gallum. Background and education were of no relevance, except for a great deal of reading. I think millions of words of reading are the sine qua non for any writer.

JOE HENSLEY I think rather than one writer it was the mass absorption of literature by reading. I like Thomas Wolfe and Hemingway and Steinbeck and Heinlein and de Camp and Dickson and A.J. and MacKenna and almost all of the rest. My undergraduate degree was in English with a strong Journalism minor. Everything that you see and do helps.

GEORGE O. SMITH Old E-square Smith, long may he. The rest is simple, I've been involved with electronics since about 1933 and interested in astronomy since I was a kid.

HAL CLEMENT The "one" limitation prevents my answering this. I was aware of the influence of Neil R. Jones, E.E. Smith, John Campbell, and Ted Sturgeon; I can't say which had the most effect. My education has influenced the situation heavily, I have degrees in astronomy and chemistry.

THEODORE L. THOMAS As an MIT graduate, my science background was very influential.

ANTHONY
BOUCHER

Much too complex to try to answer. If one must have a single author, I guess maybe John Dickson Carr.

EDMOND
HAMILTON

Homer Eon Flint. His vast, if slightly crude, cosmic adventures kindled my imagination, although I was well aware that there were better writers. The fact that I destroyed the whole world, or nearly destroyed it, over and over again in my early stories would seem to imply a maladjustment to the world as it was.

JAMES H.
SCHWITZ

I was influenced by a rather large number of authors, but the effect was always a blended one, so I can't give an answer to the first question. The only other important influence I can think of was the early notion that writing would be a way to get rich fast and leave me plenty of leisure for other occupations.

REGINALD
BRETNOR

Sorry, I don't think this is pertinent, or that it could possibly help any beginning writer. I do think that every-one who wants to write should, where reading is concerned, try to swallow the world whole. He should read its history, its geography, the memoirs of a dozen centuries and a dozen cultures. He should certainly read at least some of the literatures of Greece and Rome, of China and Japan--not critical works, but the stuff itself in translation. He should read good historical novels and great adventure stories (things like Robert Graves' Count Belisarius and Tolstoy's War and Peace). He should take hours and hours to rummage through files of Adventure in the 1920's. He should read the entire file of Astounding and Analog. He should read the great British contemporary writers of fantasy: Tolkien, Eddison, Merwyn Peake--because these are literary vessels which have been filled, and a salutary contrast to the empty vessels which no application of Madison Avenue techniques can possibly pump up. Especially important to the beginning writer is good conversation: good conversation near him in childhood--think what advantages Aldous Huxley must have had!--good conversation as he matures--bull sessions with friends till the crack of dawn, with stone-cutters and engineers, with old soldiers, with cowpunchers and horrid old real estate women, with alcoholics and with gunsmiths and with horse-players and with expert craftsmen, with the women in your life and the women in other people's--and, in the darkness when you are alone, when the hours are there for thinking, with dead men's bones. But all anyone can say is that all these roads are good roads; the individual writer must choose which ones to follow.

JACK
WILLIAMSON

I began imitating A. Merritt; I have always admired Wells tremendously and studied many of his short stories. After I had sold a few stories, I worked for a year or so in collaboration with Miles J. Breuer, and learned a good deal from him.

CHARLES
BEAUMONT

Originally, L. Frank Baum. Then, probably, Edgar Rice Burroughs. Then Ray Bradbury. The last was especially difficult to break away from, owing to his strong, personal style. Other influences are too numerous to mention.

ARTHUR C. Stapledon; Wells; 'Don A Stuart'.
CLARKE Science hobbies.

E.E. "DOC" While I liked Haggard, Verne, Wells, Burroughs, and a
SMITH couple of others, I do not believe that I was influenced
 very much by any of them. The ideas for the SKYLARK OF
 SPACE came strictly out of my own head, and I have tried
to keep things that way ever since.

JAMES One author? Then I'll have to name Henry Kuttner, though
BLISH the margin between his influence and that of several
 other writers is rather narrow, and I name them in differ-
 ent orders on different days. For the record, the others
are del Rey, de Camp, van Vogt and Heinlein. The fact that I was educated
to be a limnologist obviously couldn't have failed to influence me, too.
And I think I was influenced for the worse by the fact that I began
writing s-f when the rates were so low, and magazines so plentiful, that
it was relatively easy to get a bad story into print by giving it away.

TED I have always thought most highly of Heinlein, but my
WHITE immediate influences are Chandler, Ross MacDonald, Ed
 Lacey, and the other mystery writers of that type, and
 sf writers like Poul Anderson and, most recently, Keith
Laumer (whom I admire despite his limitations).

HORACE There weren't many around in the late '20s and early '30s.
GOLD Even those who were selling were pretty unskillful, which
 makes the call for a return of "the sense of wonder" pure
 nostalgia and nothing more. Of those who mattered, Wells
and Verne, and Huxley's "Brave New World" and Philip Wylie, and an un-
deservedly neglected master, T.S. Stripling--all these and others outside
s-f helped form me. Let's not overlook A.E. Coppard, one of the great
short-story authors of our time. You don't know his work? Fie--trot down
to the library right now and get acquainted! Later, when I was selling,
I think Heinlein and de Camp and I influenced each other quite a lot.

TERRY Ray Bradbury, of course...I think every young writer of
CARR the last 15 years has gone through his Bradbury phase.
 Leigh Brackett was and still is a big influence on me.
 Others: Sturgeon, Poul Anderson, Matheson, Eric Frank
Russell, etc. Weinbaum, too, of course. Background? I was the only person
even slightly literary in my family, though I had an uncle in Oregon
who could spin some fine tall tales. (He appears as a character in THE
OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, F&SF, April 63.) Education? I went up through
3 years of college, English major. I learned a lot about symbolism,
mainly. Fandom was also a tremendous influence--primarily in giving me
a more natural flow of style.

-oOo-

QUESTION 11) What do you consider the greatest weakness of Science
Fiction today?

E.E. "DOC" There is too much smart, superficial, precious writing.
SMITH Too much imitation; too much rehashing of old and beat-up
 themes. There is not enough honest-to-God THINKING.

- ERIC FRANK RUSSELL Lack of completely new ideas or of completely new slants on old ideas.
- JAMES BLISH Lack of feedback between writers and readers. There are as many good authors today as there have ever been in the past--maybe more--but despite the good offices of fandom, they are disastrously out of touch with their audience.
- HORACE GOLD I think it's stronger than it's ever been, and going to be stronger still. Something that annoyed me, but had no other effect--outside of witlessly dominating the awards --was the incredible fact that people who came to Conventions didn't read s-f! They were voting on stories, books and magazines they had not read whatsoever! This irritated me when I was editing, but it had no influence on what was being written and published, since the enormous majority of writers don't attend Conventions. It's the greatest weakness of fandom today. S-f itself is in fine shape. Don't let it be dominated by non-reading fans.
- KATE WILHELM Too few editorial desks. Too few people deciding what the general reading audience will get to see, and thus influencing what gets written. Why write a short story that will not be bought because you know the people who buy don't go for that particular kind of thing? And so many sf ideas are short story ideas. With novels there is more variety, but unfortunately Book editors don't seem to know the field as well as magazine editors, and can't tell a good sf novel from a bad one.
- ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES Impossible to give a fair answer as I read virtually no current science fiction. Perhaps this is a partial answer though: very little current science fiction, even the best, arouses my interest, while I can re-read much of the (let's face it, far from good) science fiction of the 30's with enjoyment.
- JAMES H. SCHMITZ I'd say its greatest weakness, which isn't a weakness specifically of today, is that it ordinarily lacks the elements that are employed to develop interest and hold it in ordinary fiction. Or if they're used, they're not used skilfully enough. While the ideas remain fresh to a reader who happens to like fresh ideas, that's not so important, but eventually he has seen most of them in previous variations. After that, there isn't really much left to keep him interested in Science Fiction, in general, although there always have been exceptional SF stories which were satisfying by any standard.
- LEIGH BRACKETT Lack of vitality, too much introspection and self-consciousness. It is not alone. All fiction and drama these days seem to be suffering from the same thing--loss of splendor. And this at a time when man stands actually and physically on the threshold of space, with all the universe before him!
- WILLIAM TEMPLE Lack of human warmth.

JACK
WILLIAMSON

The lack of great science fiction writers.

JOE
HENSLEY

Magazines which publish good old formula stories and writers who write them.

TERRY
CARR

The complexity of the present frontiers of science. When sf started, scientific innovations were comparatively simple--spaceships, radar, television, etc. Nowadays if a writer wants to deal with what's actually new in science, or upcoming, he has to study DNA, contraterrene matter, atomic physics and a thousand more things I can't even mention (because I'm virtually illiterate, scientifically speaking). In order to deal with these ideas in a story he has to give a short course in a complex subject...and that's all too often either damnably difficult or downright impossible.

I think this is a prime reason for the recent concentration on sociology as the science in science fiction. Sociology isn't as complex as the other sciences, and since it deals directly with people it can be translated into plot terms much more easily. But it lacks that ol Sense of Wonder.

EDMOND
HAMILTON

Too much talk about science-fiction, its nature, its requirements, its exact definition, is, I think, the reason for the arbitrary pontificating which gratifies a coterie of like-minded critics, but which leaves possible new readers cold.

RICHARD
LUPOFF

I think that SF is in one of its periodic times of consolidation and preparation for the next Leap Forward. After all, since Hugo created the universe in 1926, we've gone through a number of periods: wiring-diagram SF under Hugo, followed by the Big Breakthrough under Campbell, to magnificent storytelling based on broadened extrapolation. Then the sociology and introspection of Gold and the literary highlights of Boucher. Today, the lead has passed from the magazines to the paperbacks, and we are in a period of revived adventuring. I think this is grand fun, and I hope there will always be a place for pure-adventure SF. But I think we are all stirring around looking for the real key to the future, to the next great movement in SF, and I hope somebody comes up with it pretty soon. I got pretty tired of examining XXI Century Man's navel a few years ago, and gave up contemporary SF for the Golden Age stuff I'd missed. Now I'm reading the new adventure stuff with great pleasure, but I'm looking forward to a new burst of imagination.

MARION ZIMMER
BRADLEY

Frankly, I like science fiction today--James White, Heinlein, Andre Norton, etc, etc. I could do without the burlesque s-f such as "Ferdinand Feghoot" and the itty-bitty vignettes where one never quite knows what's coming off or what has happened, but in general I like modern s-f better than that written thirty years ago, and I'll follow it where it goes. I like the trend, too, towards a renaissance of fantasy-adventure, such as Andre Norton's WITCH WORLD and my own Darkover stuff.

MACK
REYNOLDS

No guts. Conforming.

- THEODORE L. THOMAS Needs many new young writers.
- CHARLES BEAUMONT Generally poor writing, resulting from low rates. One cannot support a family when one is strictly a sf writer, though a few do try. The situation is not likely to change, either, for the world is catching up with sf. The orbiting capsules and plans for the lunar shot caused not the expected boom but, instead, a terrible bust.
- LESTER DEL REY Dullness, caused by lack of ideas. Except for a few writers such as Heinlein, Anderson etc, most in the field today are simply rehashing minor variations on tiny fragments of old themes. Most writers have learned to write skilfully now and have forgotten to think, imagine and dream before writing. Again, what is said and how rich the contents means far more than how prettily it may be penned.
- TED WHITE The greatest weaknesses in sf today are almost mirror opposites: 1. bad writing (as I mentioned earlier). 2. a pretentious desire to be accepted as part of Literature by writing slickly and sickly. One group could not meet the standards of good writing in any area which does not focus upon ideas instead of people, as ours does. The second has fallen prey to the New Yorker School of Non-Writing in which plotting and most particularly story telling are ignored. As near as I can tell, the motivation for this second school of writers is to appear in PLAYBOY, and thus and thence in Judy Merrill's collection.
- REGINALD BRETNOR 3 weaknesses: the s-f market, the s-f image, and s-f's friends. Cure these and you have it made.
- GEORGE O. SMITH The inability of the great mass of casual readers who find it hard to follow and hence hard to swallow unless it's a simple old bug-eyed-monster story from inner ocean or outer space, which is the lowest form of science fiction, if it can be called that. Second, because of the first, a dearth of outlets that pay enough to attract the better writers. A great many of our better tale-tellers started off in science fiction. They left it for the main reason for writing, or digging ditches, or inventing, or pushing a bookkeeper's pencil. Shhhhhh, it's money.
- AVRAM DAVIDSON There seems a certain lessening of the imaginative faculty in today's SF. We are resting on our oars and just eddying around.
- ROBERT F. YOUNG Its attempt in too many cases to appeal to the intellect rather than to the emotions.
- ROBERT SILVERBERG Ignoring the need to supply scenes of wonder. Concentration on meaningless plot complications instead of color and insight. Excessive use of near-future settings. Unwillingness to take chances with a story.

AUGUST
DERLETH

In all too many cases story is sacrificed to almost everything else--to science, to sociology, philosophy, etc.

ANTHONY
BOUCHER

Dullness. To be more specific; repetitive, derivative reiteration of hackneyed themes and devices.

well, that's it, people...THE END

some footnotes

It seems strange to realize that there just isn't any more of the Symposium to type. It has become a part of DOUBLE:BILL that we will be sad to see go, but we do need the rest. "The D:B Symposium" wasn't exactly a small thing--containing 72 contributors, it was spread out over three issues, totalling something like 97p--the Symposium, that is--and that was an edited version; like we cut, people, and it still grew. When Lloyd Biggle first suggested the idea of the Symposium, we figured he'd round up, like 15 or 20 pros; you know--just enough to add a nice touch to the Annish. Ghod, were we faked out.

We feel that we are right in being proud of having published the Symposium in DOUBLE:BILL...and all thanks go to Lloyd. We admit that at times we became disgusted and irritable and had a growling grunt as a basis of communication between us. At times like this, we would curse Biggle...and go on typing. But we had fun, and we got egoboo, and it was undoubtedly worth it all. So, now our part is done....

Now it's your turn, oh readers of DOUBLE:BILL. Some of you have promised to comment extensively once the Symposium was complete--well it is. Others haven't said anything--they'd better right quick like, or they may find themselves visited by a earthbound version of George Walt (that little aside is for the benefit of any science fiction fans in our audience). At any rate people, let's write, write, write--like the people above say--though it would be nice if you first wrote to DOUBLE:BILL before writing for F&SF. Let's make July 'Bury Mallardi in Tons of Mail Month', what say?

Next issue, hopefully (if he gets his novel finished) Lloyd Biggle will be with us, with some remarks on the Symposium, a sort of introduction-cum-epilogue. Remember folks, it's all Biggle's fault...so we must read how he defends himself.

For one last time, we would like to give our sincere thanks to all those who had any part in making this Symposium the success we believe it to be--the pros, most of all for their time and talents. We hope that many of them will take pen in hand and comment on the ideas of some of their comrades--it would make for an interesting lettercol, we think.

The last thing we hope for is for the Symposium to Rest in Peace...

Planned attendees at the collating Party to put this monster together on June 14, include: Joe Fekete, Ben Jason, Scott Kutina, George Fergus and maybe others. The dodad is scheduled to be held at Fekete's pad--I can see Mallardi's car struggling valiantly to haul 250 copies of 80 pages up to Cleveland and back. We may even get this issue mailed in June.

See you at the MidWesCon?

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