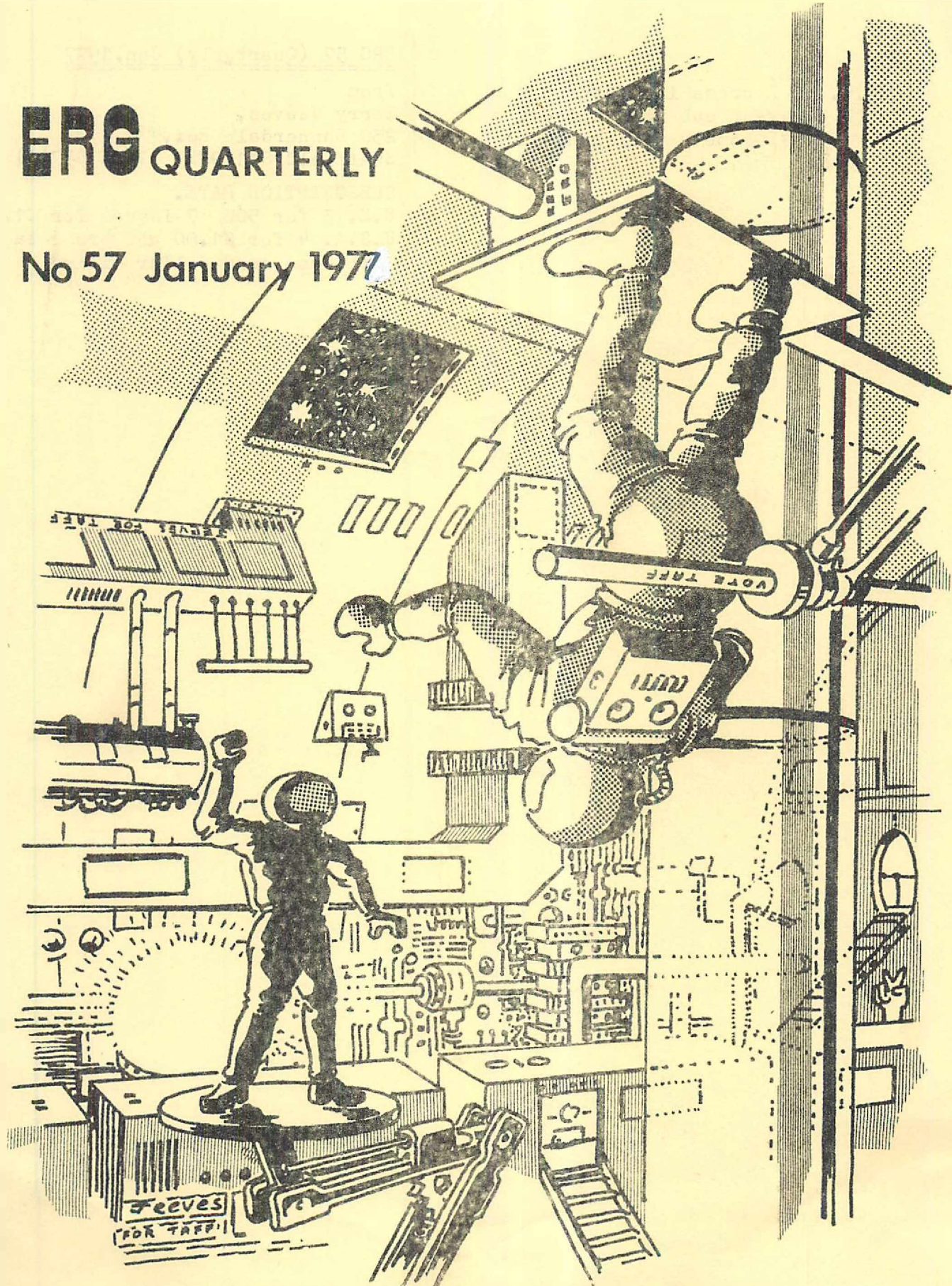


ERG QUARTERLY

No 57 January 1977



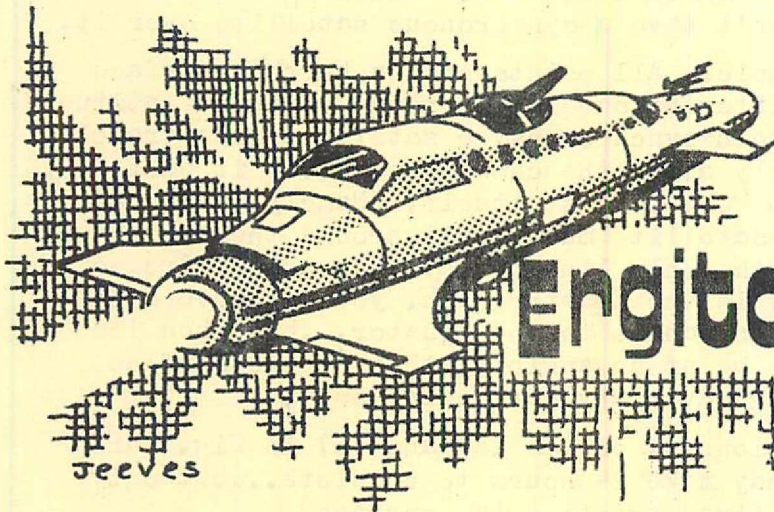
ERG 57 (Quarterly) Jan. 1977

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ERG
57

JANUARY
1977

Ergitorial

One of the delights in reading science fiction used to lie in playing 'the game' against the author. Having established his story parameters, the writer had to abide by established scientific fact and stay within the bounds of his own fictional laws. 'The Game' consisted in the reader attempting to spot any such infringements of these limits.

Thus, an author lost a point if he stated that Mars had only one moon.... an error of scientific fact. However, he could, without penalty, postulate that Mars had three moons in orbit, the third one being newly discovered. Such a third moon was OK as long as it broke no established laws...but if the author went on to make it as large and massive as Earth's own satellite, he was in trouble again, as it is stretching things to far to expect such a body to have remained undetected from Earth.

Nowadays, with SF either delving deeper into scientific waters than most of us can follow, or shading off into near fantasy, the 'game' is far harder to play. Despite this, the occasional clanger turns up to gladden the heart of the veteran game-player, and perhaps the most common of these is contained in the following sentence. Can you put your finger on the mistake?

"Mike flipped on the video, spun the dials and brought in a programme from South America beamed to Earth from the relay satellite hanging in stationary orbit directly over London"

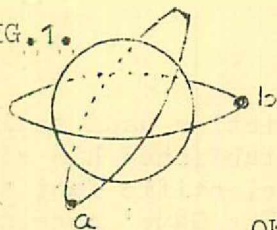
Well, the plain fact is that unless London has been moved to a new location, no 'stationary' satellite can hang above the place. 'Stationary' orbits (where the satellite's movements synchronise

with those of a point directly beneath it on the planet's surface) are of course quite possible...they are called 'Synchronous orbits' - but all such orbits must lie along the Earth's Equator. Since London doesn't lie on that imaginary line, it can't have a synchronous satellite over it.

The reason is simple. All points on the Earth's surface move from West to East (at different speeds depending on their latitude) as the Earth rotates. To remain synchronous, a satellite must travel in the same direction, directly above the chosen spot...so it must perforce travel directly from West to East itself. Namely, along a line of latitude. But ...a satellite must orbit around the centre of gravity of its primary...and the only line of latitude which circles the Earth's centre of gravity is the Equator. Oh, you can have a 24 hour satellite travelling at any angle to the Equator...but then its direction of motion will also be at an angle to that of the surface beneath...so it can never 'hang' over any particular spot.

Putting it in a diagram, orbits (a) and (b) in Fig.1 are both permissible...and both may take 24 hours to complete...but only (b) remains directly above a fixed point on the surface.

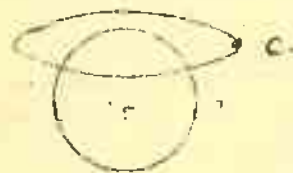
FIG.1.



Looking at Fig.2, we have an impossible orbit...you may postulate it takes 24 hrs. to go round the thing...you may say it remains directly above a fixed spot such as London, directly beneath it...BUT, the orbit is impossible, since it does not orbit the centre of mass of the planet.

OK, if you want to quibble and put the centre of mass or the centre of gravity away from the centre...such a planet may be possible...but in the stories where this particular boob has cropped up, no such explanation has appeared. So, orbit (c) may appear to follow a meridian, but it is a no-no as far as a real-life synchronous orbit is concerned.

FIG.2



This one seems to have replaced the old, 'Rockets need something to push against in a vacuum',,, there may be others floating around. If you can think of any, let's be having them...maybe we can revive 'the game', and have a bit of fun at the same time.

Bestest,

Terry Jeeves

TAFF is a worthy cause. A voting form is enclosed, no matter who you support, I hope that you'll send it in with your vote. If in doubt as to your voting eligibility, simply enclose a few lines saying why you think you qualify (con attendance, fanzine contrib. and so on). Even if you know you may not be eligible, TAFF still needs your financial help, so please join in.

A SHORT INTERVIEW WITH

GORDON R. DICKSON

5.

(Wherein Dickson talks about
writing, the future, and
prediction....)

...with Michael A. Banks.

Banks "What methods do you use in setting up believable backgrounds for stories? I'm thinking of, for example, such things as the marching societies in Necromancer

Dickson "All writers write out of either firsthand or acquired experience; acquired experience being the sort of experience you can get from reading books or talking to someone who knows. This is because it is impossible to write about something you cannot conceive and you have to conceive it out of experience."

"This is the reason no one has ever been able to describe a truly different alien life form. If you look closely at any described alien in fiction, you'll find that it is either a variation of some earthly creature we all know, or made up of a combination of such creatures -- that is, it has the trunk of an elephant, the tentacles of a squid, with the body of a bear -- something like that."

"As you become a more experienced writer you realise that this is so, and you begin to use this fact deliberately. My mind for many years now has been like a squirrel, picking up and storing useful or interesting bits of information which will later come out when I'm writing."

"You ask specifically about the marching societies in Necromancer. I don't remember where I encountered the idea of marching societies, but the back of my mind tells me there were such things -- not the way I have described them in Necromancer, but societies which went under that name. Also, since these marching societies in Necromancer look forward to the Friendlies of the later books in the Child Cycle, I drew on the habits and customs of the Friendlies as far as their dress and attitude went. The Friendlies in their turn drew heavily on the extremely puritanical elements in Scottish and English Christianity from the 16th Century onward. In short, any novel in its characters, its dialogue, its setting, and everything else -- and this includes background such as the marching societies -- is made up out of transmuted forms that the author has encountered either at first or second hand in real life."

Banks "What significant changes -- social, technological, political, etc. -- do you feel will come about during the next 25 years?"

Dickson "Predicting, even as far as twenty-five years away, can be a very risky business. This is because of what I've called the 'wild card' phenomenon. Every so often someone comes along with the discovery of Penicillin or the development of transistors, and our technological society becomes noticeably modified in customs and behaviour by that fact."

"I think there is a great deal to be said for cyclic movement in civilisation. For example, I started saying nearly twenty years ago that we were moving toward what I called a neo-puritanical revival around the turn of the century. This is a guess and only a guess: but I would not be surprised, not merely to see us back at the time where everybody goes to some kind of church on Sunday, but a revival of the blue laws, a strictness of covering dress so that we all walk about muffled to the ears, and a completely new set of taboos paralleling those of the Victorians."

However, in predicting this I would also predict that it would be short-lived. Again, the changes in the technological base of our society are advancing too rapidly for anything like this to be anything more than a passing phase."

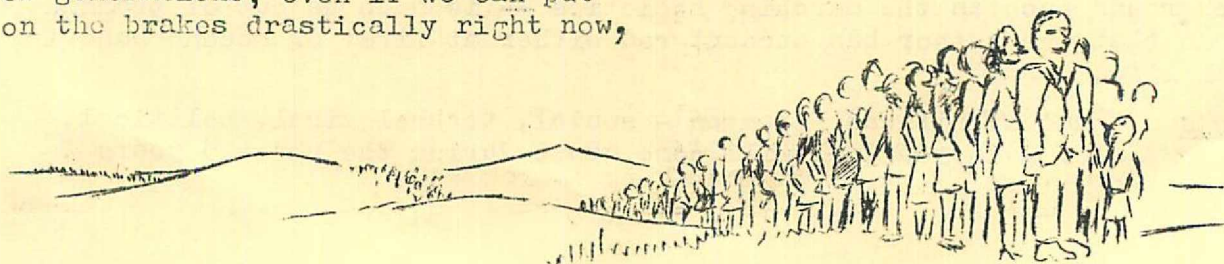
"In the longer range, I think we're moving into a time in which people will live longer, be healthier in their older years, and have much more in the way of technological helps to sustain and make easy their extended lives. Meat is going to become scarce. The world is going to become more overpopulated. Our individual freedoms are going to be more and more circumscribed by these developments."

"On the other hand I see empathy, which has been nursed in the particular cradle of our western world, spreading and gradually affecting the rest of the cultures around the globe to the great benefit of all. I think -- and most people know I'm an optimist -- that in long-range terms we are moving towards the kind of non-violent, intelligent creative society that most of us dream about; a society in which the individual has the maximum possibilities open to him in terms of life and work, and a minimum of things to block him along these paths."

"This however is very long-range indeed. For my long-range predictions you only have to look at the books of the Childe Cycle. I think, for example, that we are not going to get away from some form of war; we are going to see the planets settled; there is going to be an economic base holding them together for a certain length of time; and so forth."

Banks "What do you feel will be the biggest problems -- resulting from current events or from future changes -- that Man will have to face during this same period?"

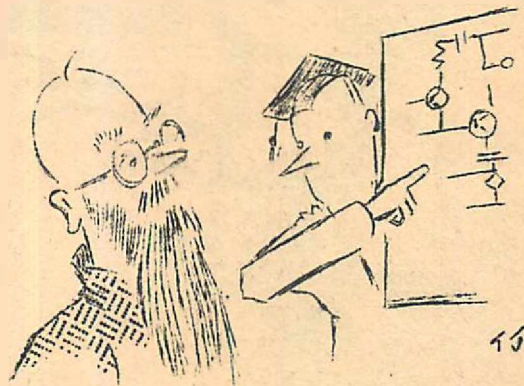
Dickson "Far and away the greatest is going to be the matter of overpopulation. Pollution we could lick right now if we gave it the necessary attention and the necessary money. Overpopulation is still running away from us; it will continue to run away from us for a number of generations, even if we can put on the brakes drastically right now,



7.
simply because there are so many young people in the world still growing up who will become future parents."

"Aside from this, the greatest problem is going to be culture shock. The time is past when someone growing up could dream of pwning the white house on the hill and a coach and four (four horses, that is). Nowadays, by the time you grow up the house is entirely different, the horses are no longer used for transportation, and the hill itself may not be there; it may have been bulldozed flat or turned into a lake -- or a city dump. Beyond this, there is the fact that we are moving into space, whether people like it or not; and this will be part of our future environment and necessarily part of our thinking. Those of us who are alive today may spend our old age in hospitals at least in orbit where our more feeble bodies will have a chance of surviving the debility that goes along with old age."

"I think we're also moving into a time in which the average person will have to go on learning all the days of his or her life; and inevitably; the race will go to the swift; to those who have the greatest capacity to learn. This may sound unfair on the surface, and certainly to us who are involved in it, and who dream of everybody having the same opportunity for a good life, to be cruelly unfair. But in the end it may be the saving of the race in that we can no longer let mediocrity steer this world-ship in which we are all passengers. We want the best possible at the helm and in charge of the machinery which makes it move."



THE END

=====

EIGHT WAYS TO KNOW IF YOU'RE A BNF

=====.....Michael A. Banks

1. Everyone laughs at your jokes - even the bad ones
 2. You no longer try to talk about SF at conventions
 3. Your latest social accident becomes a fannish tradition
 4. Neofans come up to you and say, "I don't know you, but would you mind introducing me to Gordon Dickson?"
 5. Other neos come up to you and say, "Oh I've been dying to meet you...what? You mean you're not Harlan Ellison?"
 6. You never have to eat lunch alone at a con.
 7. People you don't know start to talk to you at cons
 8. People you do know stop talking to you at cons.
- =====

SKYFALL

by Harry Harrison
Faber & Faber 33.50

REVIEWS



When the combined U.S./Russian solar-power satellite Prometheus develops troubles on the pad, political expediency demands that the launch continue. Once into a shallow, atmosphere-grazing orbit, her six astronauts are beset by a succession of troubles commencing with a malfunctioning booster stage.

This leaves Prometheus with only a brief stay in orbit before the 20,000 tons of nuclear-engined spacecraft plunges down on a major city in an atomic holocaust.

Tension mounts, skilfully augmented by flashing vignettes of seemingly unrelated 'small folk' in England, before they too, along with a host of other characters are caught up in a gripping chain of events. As time runs out, political manoeuvring and international one-upmanship plus a sudden solar prominence, add to the excitement.

Highly authentic, and believable dialogue without excessive jargon or 'technicalese'. This is one of Harry Harrison's superlative 'bests'...and the opening pen and ink drawing admirably sets the opening scene. I'd recommend this to anyone.

THE FIRE CAME BY

by John Baxter
Thomas Atkins
Macdonald & Jane's
33.95

In 1908, the Tunguska region of Central Siberia was the site of a major cataclysm. Witnesses agree on a blinding flash accompanied by a stupendous explosion. Others, nearer the event also describe searing heat, and a great black cloud rising into the sky.

This book is an investigation into what actually occurred and an examination of the various theories which have been put forward. Was it a huge meteorite? a contra-terrene object? a direct hit by a black hole? or even the wreck of an alien spacecraft? The facts all indicate an atomic explosion..but in 1908..when only natural radioactivity existed ??.. The authors have produced a fascinating account (including an Asimov foreword, also

an eye-witness report, and another by the first scientist to investigate. At times, there is a tendency to pad with irrelevant material such as a painting of the Jupiter probe. Again, although four maps are included, no attempt is made to correlate them as to scale or object trajectory. Quibbling aside, this is the first in-depth treatment of an enigma which up to now has only merited a few 'filler paragraphs' of a sensational nature. I for one was delighted to get hold of such a comprehensive investigation into the mystery. Whether or not you agree with the writers' theories, you'll still find plenty of food for thought in this highly readable volume.

THE SPACE MACHINE

by Christopher Priest
Faber & Faber £3.50

The year is 1893, and Edward Turnbull encounters Amelia Fitzgibbon, secretary to an eccentric scientist, creator of a machine capable of travel through time and space. The couple essay a brief jaunt to the 20th century and are almost killed in what seems to be a pitched battle. In their haste to escape, the machine is damaged and the journey takes on a bizarre nature. To reveal more of the plot would take away much of the pleasure of discovery.

Mr. Priest has captured superbly the writing style of his chosen period. Indeed, had he used a time machine to go back to the period of H.G. Wells, (who appears as a character in this tale) I have little doubt that it would be Priest and not Wells to whom we should turn as the father of British SF. The author writes beautifully in the style, but without the dusty pedantry.

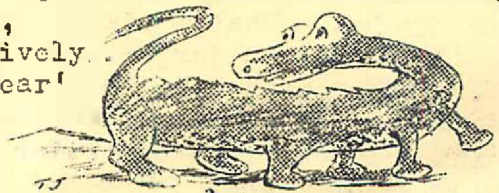
I found this hefty (360 page) volume enthralling reading - perhaps a trifle naive by modern standards - but intentionally so, and therefore the conceit succeeds admirably. Very good reading, and especially recommended to Wells societies as a 'must' on their buying list.

EYE AMONG THE BLIND

by Robert Holdstock
Faber & Faber £3.95

Biologist, Zeitman returns to Ree'hdworld with the twin objectives of a reconciliation with his wife who has 'gone native', and to study the Ree'dh way of life. Behind him, he leaves the 'Fear'; an unknown disease which is destroying each world it reaches. In addition to the Ree'dh, he also encounters the more bestial Rundi, and rumours of an earlier master-race, the Pianhmar. Ghosts of these are reputed to have been seen, and they are also credited with the vanishing of the strange, blind Maguire, who has the ability to 'see' and who now returns, 700 years later with the power of teleportation. His main function seems to be to point Zeitman in the right direction to encounter the developing powers of the Ree'dh (which include telepathy and ancestral communication)

Holdstock has spun together an enthralling tale, neatly avoiding the common, 'clever-human, slightly-dumb alien' syndrome. He effectively keeps the rest of the universe and the 'Fear' well in the background as the Ree'dhworld situation develops. I enjoyed this one immensely, and hope that you will too.



VIEWS

by

Roger Dean

G O Publishing Ltd.

Where to begin to describe this volume poses a considerable problem. Just as all roads lead to Rome, all approaches to this review lead to a load of superlatives. I'm a bit unsure of the price..the catalogue says £4.75 and the jacket of my review copy says £3.95..even at the upper rate, it's a winner.

Essentially a showcase for the designs and artwork of Roger Dean, this is a physically large (12"x12") book boasting 150 beautifully produced pages. Photographs, both colour and black and white, and superb paintings. Many of the latter you will have seen adorning the pages of the late SFM or on your favourite record albums.... 'YES', 'SNAPU', 'WITRO FUNCTION' ... the list is long, the quality top-drawer.

Dean not only illustrates, he designs. You'll love his 'retreat pod' and the photos of its construction. His stage settings are literally SF brought to life before your eyes, and the same applies to his furniture and his architectural designs.

Want more ? Well how about the introduction by Don Lemkuhl, and fascinating details of Dean's techniques...including the unusual cloud effects caused by a cat walking across one of his paintings before it had dried. Undoubtedly, Dean's work is different...but the difference is not that of the incapable who invents a gimmick to sell his wares. The artwork in this volume is evocative, striking, sometimes pixy-like and always very beautiful. If you drool over art, or simply love album-covers this one is a MUST for you.

Finally, if you can raise an overdraft, the same firm also produce the following goodies...which if on a par with 'VIEWS' will be things to cherish if you are a comic buff

AUTOMATA. by Michael Hall. 40 pages of robotic cartoons for £1.50

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|---|------------------------------------|
| ORIGINS OF MARVEL COMICS | £3.00 |) | Each by Stan Lee, and running to |
| SONS OF ORIGINS | £3.25 |) | 256, 7" x 10" pages. The volumes |
| BRING ON THE BAD GUYS | £3.25 |) | present the origins and history of |
| | | | many famous comics characters, the |

third one is where the 'baddies' get their chance in the limelight. If you have a rich uncle, get him to buy you the lot...you'll never regret it.

TODAY & TOMORROW

Isaac Asimov

Coronet 60p

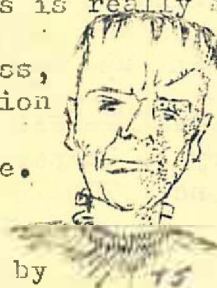
The good doctor is back with a further selection of his science articles taken from a variety of magazines. This time, he chats about the platypus, circadian rhythms, solar eclipses, asteroids, Mars, scientific discovery and also has excellent essays on Chemistry, The (old) elements, and Physics. What I like about this collection is the utter readability and freedom from jargon..and if Asimov does use jargon - then he explains it. Here you have no less than seventeen highly readable items, each an ideal length for easy assimilation. I liked 'Asimov on Astronomy', but think this one is even better - and if you're a writer, then it is a goldmine of ideas.

THE FRANKENSTEIN FACTORY

by Edward D. Hoch
Robert Hale Ltd. 23.25

Scientific investigator, Earl Jazine assumes the guise of an industrial photographer when he arrives to investigate a cryonic body-bank on a tiny island off the coast of California.

A small group of scientists have been assembled to construct a human being using body parts taken from the cryonics vault, but no sooner is the creature completed than a chain of murders begins. In approved mystery manner, the island is isolated by sabotage of boat and radio. Then, one by one the scientists are picked off. Despite the 21st Century setting (very loosely sketched in), it is debatable whether this is really SF. The Frankenstein experiment being mainly a peg on which to hang a more or less standard who-dun-it. Nevertheless, and apart from the rather cardboard characters, the action and interest are sustained throughout..and so is the suspense. This one would (will ?) make a terrific movie.

MERLIN'S MIRROR

by Andre Norton
Sidgwick & Jackson
23.95

Ignore the amateurish dust-jacket by David Hardy, and jump into this fantasy set in legendary pre-history. A robot probe answers the call of a failing beacon on Earth, it settles in and after bringing about the virgin-birth of Merlin,

equips him with strange powers to use against the Dark Ones. The latter have also been called to Earth by a different signal. Merlin has two tasks; first to provide a leader to bring peace to the land, and second to re-energise the Great Beacon (Stonehenge) to call the rest of the benign powers. I'm a bit unsure why anyone capable of such activities as space probes, levitation and virgin births should need to create a Merlin to act for them - or for that matter, what use it would be to call them as they succumbed to the Dark Ones at the time of launching the space-probe. Ignoring such trivia as any lover of sword and sorcery must do, here we have Miss Norton sporting her characters, Merlin, King Arthur and the rest in the good old days of legend. A feast for Norton-lovers.

DRAGON RIDERS

by Anne McCaffrey
Sidgwick & Jackson
23.95

This one is less of a 'Dragonrider' tale, (though you'll find them here) than of life in the Holds and Weyrs... which seems akin to the drudgery of existence in a mediaeval castle, work, drudgery and little pleasure. So, when old Harper Potiron dies,

Merolly his young apprentice cannot become Harper since she is a girl. Instead, she is ill-treated by her parents, and kept from the music which she loves. A hand injury proves the final blow, and the young girl flees the cheerless Hold and finds refuge in a cave of dragon-lizards, kin to the great Thread killing dragons. During a Threadfall, she manages to impress none of the lizards, and this, plus her musical ability lead her to Benden Weyr.

With this volume, Miss McCaffrey rounds out her Dragon trilogy. To the best of my knowledge, this one hasn't seen prior magazine publication...so if you want the set, don't miss this one.

SUPERNOVA 1

Faber & Faber \$3.95

A six-author, twelve story anthology with no editor listed as such - though an acknowledgement credits Philip Pollock. The themes are varied; accelerated life, space exploration, alien surgery, race survival on an ancient oil-rig, even a menace from the moon. The volume sets out to reflect what is happening in the SF world today by presenting the writing of six new authors -- and all six write well, even excellently. My own favourites were Holdstock, Douglas, Rickets and Allen. For my taste, Stall and Lawther proved a little too involved and frenetic. What really appealed to me about the whole collection was that all the stories are stories and not merely verbose fragments in search of a plot. Enjoyable reading and boding well for future volumes in the series. (E.J.)

SWAMPWORLD WESTPerry A. Chapdelaine
Coronet 70p

Swampworld seems a good place to unload Earth's swarming millions. The spindly-legged aliens are both intelligent and friendly - except for the unhappy fact that every ten Earth years, they run amok killing each other and Earthmen with insane ferocity. Marjac, a native who has survived two previous 'amoks' seeks a cure. An ageing physician does likewise, and Earthman Carseegan, deserter from Earth, tries to save a band of settlers. The whole thing is basically cowboys and Indians in space but still a good read and far better than the pot-boiler which it sounds. I enjoyed it, and hope you feel the same way. (E.J.)

IN THE PROBLEM PITFrederick Pohl
Corgi 65p

A good collection of 10 stories and 2 articles. The title story adorned the special Fred Pohl issue of F&SF in 1973 and is one of the worst in the book. Many of the others are much older and include such classics as 'What To Do Until The Analyst Comes', 'Let The Ants Try' and 'The Man Who Ate The World', together with some more recent pieces like the superb, non-SF, 'I Remember A Winter'. If you don't have a good collection by Pohl, this is a good book to pick up. (P. S-P)

DOCTOR MIRABILISJames Blish
Panther 75p

When future generations remember Jim Blish, as they surely will, will they remember his Star Trek books, his criticism as William Atheling, or his relatively few major books. Let us hope the latter, and in particular his 'After Such Knowledge' trilogy. Of these, 'A Case Of Conscience' and 'Black Easter/The Day After Judgement' are well-known and generally available. Now at last, the first of the series is again in print. Very different from the others, it tells the story of Roger Bacon the unorthodox scientist priest of the 13th Century. The book will not appeal to many, but it is a remarkable piece of mainly-fictional biography that must rank as one of Blish's best books. Strongly recommended. (P.S-P)

BLOWN and IMAGE OF THE BEAST.. both by Phillip Jose Farmer. Quartet. 95p

The first two of Farmer's bizarre porno-SF novels. Action is explicit and in places, very gruesome. The plot exists - just. It's probably cheaper and better written than its Soho equivalents, so if that's what turns you on, they're worth trying. (P. S-P)

WATERSPACE

Saul Dunn
Coronet 50p

Third in the series, and this time, Steeleye (2 metres tall and with a built-in ray gun in one eye-socket) comes to the aid of the inhabitants of 'Waterspace' - a three light year span of intelligent water (ignore the mass-pressure problem). Steeleye is called by Lolan and starts off by giving her a child, but the baddy then rapes her, so that she bears twins, one good, one bad. They grow up in about a day and the bad one kills Steeleye and his wife Chaos before android Tousle repairs them both and saves the day. What more needs to be said? I enjoyed the word imagery of the first 'Steeleye', but this one is not in the same class.

WAY STATION

Clifford D. Simak
Methuen 65p

Enoch Wallace lives alone in an isolated house, his only contact, the local mailman. Then statistics show him to be 124 years old. An investigator finds an alien grave near the homestead and from here Simak takes us into the strange world of Enoch Wallace, operator of a way station for star travellers and dweller in an impenetrable house. Written with typical 'Folksy' Simak style and with a powerful imagery which suspends disbelief and holds you right to the end. This must be one of Simak's best - and you get an excellent cover to wrap up the deal.

CASEY AGONISTES

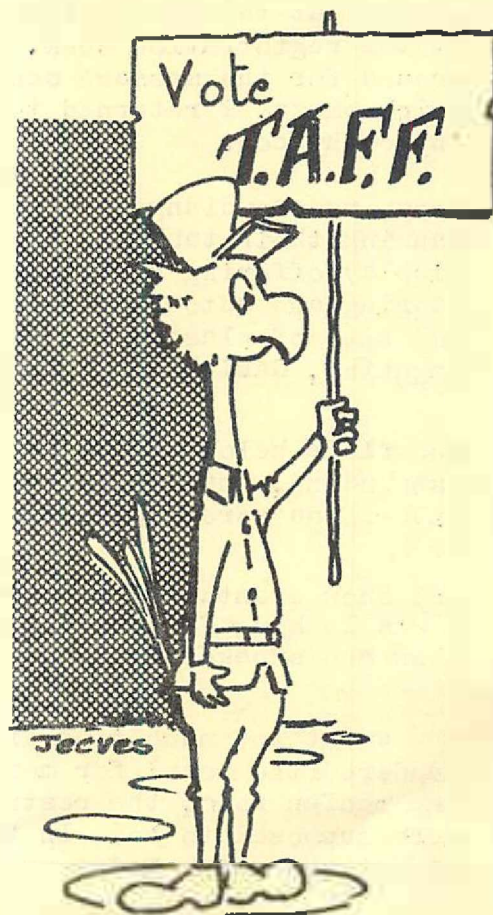
& Other SF and Fantasy Stories

Richard Mc Kenna

Pan. 60p Only five items in this collection, but all good. The title story concerns the inmates of a ward for incurables, who dream up an ape which they dub 'Casey'. In 'Hunter Come Home' we have a better-than-normal variation of how to tame a planet where the vegetation won't co-operate. 'The Secret Place' deals with the play world of children; 'Mine Own Image' is a chilling yarn of tribal rituals and finally the great 'Fiddler's Green' where men in a lifeboat create a mental haven of their own. Good value for your money, and the opening introduction by Damon Knight will be of value to budding writers.

FORTHCOMING books from Robert Hale,
no review copies available :-

THE HELLHOUND PROJECT Ron Goulart
HUMAN MACHINES Scortia/Zebrowski
NOVA 3 Harry Harrison
THE MANTS OF MYREMEDON
by Burgess & Friggens
THE HALLS OF THE EVOLVUS..Barrett



WORLD CON REPORT

Michael A. Banks

I hadn't planned on going to Midamericon; I couldn't get away from work for the entire con, and would have needed to fly both ways to attend the last three days - something I couldn't afford. An eleventh-hour 'phone call changed that. Bill Connor called with an offer of a free ride back and a free room! An offer I couldn't refuse, as it required only that I drive back to Cincinnati from Kansas City (A mere 1050 Kilometres or so) ((For those unfamiliar with Colonial measurements, that's 651 miles. TJ)).

I made quick preparations with TWA, and Sam. Saturday morning saw me leaving for the airport. Sometime later I arrived in Kansas City, crossing a time zone in the process, and spent an interminable time waiting for transport to the hotel. Finally arrived at the Muelbach Hotel, and found umpteen messages awaiting me at the registration desk. I ignored them, as there were 2000 people around for the message senders to hide among. After ducking out for a quick pizza, I returned to leap - headfirst and with both eyes closed - into the con.

The huckster room was a delight. Plenty of room, no crowding. The usual faces from Midwestern cons were there manning their tables - along with sundry items such as a Laser Books display offering a giveaway portrait by Kelly Freas; Dave Kyle huckstering and autographing his book; a sultry Scandinavian lady selling odd bits of plastic as jewelry; and a representative of a new SF magazine, GALILEO, selling copies of same at a discount.

The art show spreading through three rooms on the floor below the huckster room, was fantastic (not to mention Astounding, Amazing and all those others). Rather hard to describe unless you were there, if that makes sense.

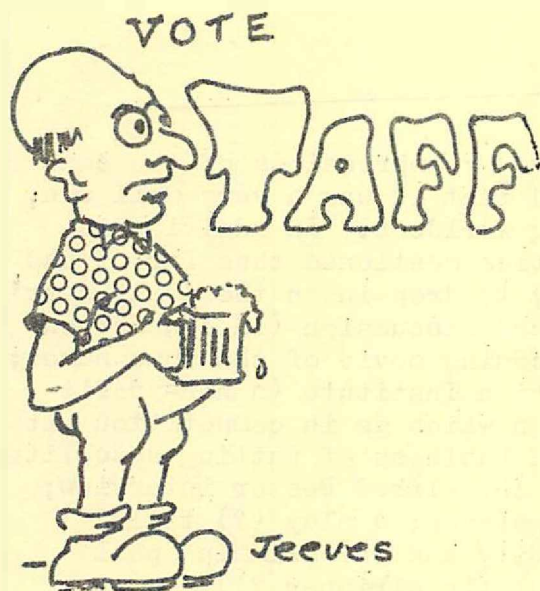
Dragged myself away from the huckster room and art show eventually and started looking for people. Turned out everyone I was looking for was in the huckster room (saw me heading for the art show and sneaked past me to the aforementioned, no doubt.)

Eventually located most of the Ohio contingent, and spent too much time explaining how I happened to be at the con. Wandered the hotel for most of the afternoon, finding the film room, the neofan room, the restrooms and other points of interest where they were supposed to be. In the process I became acquainted with the hotel elevators; which had a nasty habit of stopping between floors.

Ended up wandering around with Ben Jason before supper, and being introduced to A.E. van Vogt, Frank Robinson, and R.A. Jafferty - the latter being one of the few SF writers who doesn't look like an SF writer. Out for a quick bite at the greasy spoon joint across from the hotel, and back to try to get into the masquerade without waiting in line for tickets. (The line began early in the afternoon.) ((It's all those naked ladies what does it !)) Got in on the basis of a press-page... legitimate by the way, as I was doing an article on the con for the local city magazine.

The masquerade was rather incredible. Highlights were 'Tars Tarkas', 'The King and Queen of Cups' (from the Tarot), 'The Green Viking' - A Norse of 8 Different Colour (First depiction of a pun, as far as I knew), 'The Viking I Lander', and a number of the audience who should have been on stage. 'Entertainment' was provided during the intermission by a stripper who threw her bra to Robert Heinlein, the rest of her clothing being distributed to unknown spectators. ((Who got the stripper ?)).

The usual parties followed the masquerade. Things are rather fuzzy after that, but I do remember finding Bill Connor and getting him to take me to the room about 4am. I also remember the greasy spoon joint being packed at 3am, mainly with locals gawking at the con. ((and the stripper ??))



Up and about at 9am Sunday, finding the hotel already jammed with people who had been up for hours. Talked to Perry Achermann, Buck Coulson, Gene Wolfe, James Gunn, and half a million others, broke for a brunch and settled into the film room to see, 'Popeye Meets Sindbad'. Missed other films I wanted to see because I forgot to drop in when they were being shown.

Sunday afternoon I spent more time in the huckster room, hung around the lobby talking to other drifters and dropped in on the art auction, and the belly-dancing performance. ((Bet that was painful)) Ate dinner, and roamed until the

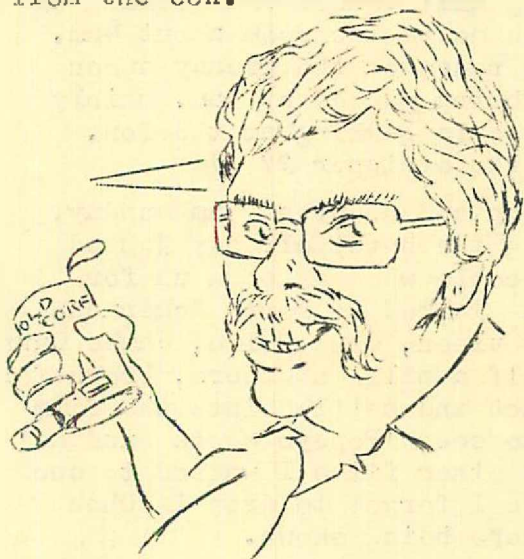
Huge wards, ducked out early and caught Heinlein's Goll address on the TV later (all programmes were videotaped and shown twice)((That's what I call 'Double Jeopardy'))).

Another round of parties Sunday night, starting at 10pm. Vague memories of watching a re-run of the masquerade in the Cincinnati suite, watching the parade of pros through same, and watching

Joe Haldeman's Hugo, which he left in our Cincinnati suite for some reason. (Also recall smashing Haldeman in a revolving door earlier in the day, but he says it was his fault) ((Whatever turns you on !))

Got stuck tending bar for a time in the suite, and mixed double shots for everyone in retaliation. Learned that Larry Niven is thinking about a sequel to RINGWORLD ((Called Hoop La, maybe ???)) and that the British fan whom I thought was Eric Bentcliffe, wasn't. ((His wife will be pleased to know that)). (No, I don't know who it was, Eric...) Gained at least one, and perhaps three hundred more supporters for JEEVES FOR TAVF ((Sounds a bit ambiguous, but thanks anyway.)) Learned the name of the lovely young thing who was so fascinated by my writing (That's OK, Terry; my wife never reads those things anyway...) ((Ah, but does the lovely young thing's big tough boy friend ???)).

Somewhere among all of this I got a good half hour's sleep, (between 4-30 and 5am I believe), and regretfully departed later that morning. Fourteen hours later we arrived in Cincinnati, and I took a solemn oath on a stack of ERGs that I would never again ride in, let alone drive, an automobile. Currently I'm in the process of recovering from the con.



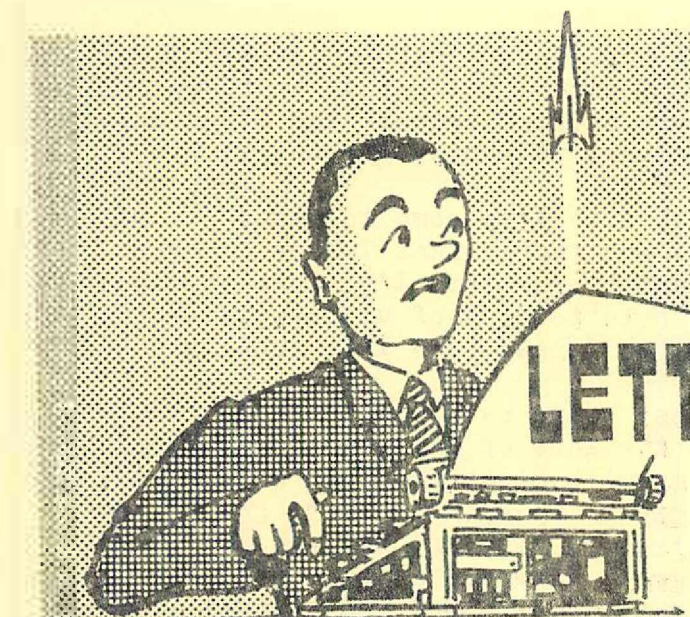
These are my impressions of the con. I might add that it was a very well run, interesting worldcon. In addition to the activities mentioned thus far, I had opportunity to drop in on the 'Star Wars' slideshow and discussion (in connection with an upcoming movie of the same name); The Foundation Institute (a non-profit organization which is in competition with NASA in the business of putting satellites in orbit); the Alfred Bester interview;

several author readings; an excellent lightshow; a play (?) titled 'Gonad The Barbarian'; downtown Kansas City and the swimming pool (missed the skinny dipping...) ((How about the stripper ???))

Heinlein's GoH Address was interesting, to say the least. Alternately drawing boos and cheers, he stated (among other things) that we WILL reach the stars, there will be another BIG war, and the primary interest of Man and men should be survival - at any cost. He limited his speech to half an hour, setting up a timer and stopping in the middle of a sentence when the time was up. ((Everyone saved by the bell it seems)).

All in all, a damn' good convention...leaving only one question how many days till SUNCON ????

N.A.E.



Regretfully, space limitations mean that I can only include a fraction of the incoming mail.

Nevertheless, I still want to hear from you, so please keep them coming. ((Where I chip in, you'll see the double brackets..like this...TJ))

This time, Brian Tawn opens the batting from 29 Cordon St., Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 2LM

"Thanks for ERG 56 and the nice clean, unfolded envelope in which it came ((Ah, but you paid extra lolly for that. If anyone else wants the same treatment, it'll cost 4p an issue.)). Congratulations must be in order to Michael Banks for his observations about the aliens among us (spot the Simak title in there and win nothing at all). He missed out the main details though...like where the aliens are and what they look like. ((At this point, Brian composed a nice theory as to how the aliens among us are the cats which get so much pampering for so little return. Sorry Brian, but Bill Temple sold this idea to 'Tales of Wonder'. I think the title was, 'The Smile Of The Sphinx, nice try though.))

So logically, we come to :-

Michael A. Banks
P.O. Box 312
Milford,
Ohio 45150

"Liked the table of contents on ERG 55 ((A bit late this LOC, but it makes some nice points)). The disintegrator in your story, 'INSOLATION' sounded strangely like the Thrint 'digging tool' used by Larry Given in 'WORLD OF PTAUVS' (which your story preceded naturally); nice coincidence there. Sort of goes back to a comment you once made about the fact that you regularly invent things, then see them in production by someone else ten years later. ((So I guess I know how Brian must feel about his cat theory in the previous LOC.)). The Bradbury piece was most interesting, though I'm afraid the author of same ((Michael Banks, to newcomers)) was a bit biased in favor of his topic. Nice illo and layout on that one, Terry. I must disagree with Eric Dentcliffo on a point or two. All readers of SF are not looking for Perry Rhodan and Star Trek type material ((Coirse not, what's wrong with Vargo Statton ?)) I run across a number of casual SF readers at talks I give on SF who prefer the material presented in ANALOG, GALAXY, et al. They aren't looking for casual escapist material - they're looking for the same thing we fen are. Even if the mass market of SF is blasted by trufen, it still sells - to those casual readers who don't want to be challenged by their reading material.

Dave Cookfield
31 Durham Ct.,
Lebburn
Tyne & Wear

"Thanks for ERG 56. Unfortunately for the first time, I must express my disappointment at an issue of your fnz. It was full of nice artwork and I was especially taken by your cover, it was ..err..cute.

Your comments

on current books were as informative as I've come to expect them to be. I'm glad to see that someone else out there likes Telzey Amberson stories too. Your lettercol was good and longer than I've come to expect, your binding of fnz. article, a great help to many of us but... THE FAN FICTION was ----- I refuse to resort to bad language so I'll keep my comments to myself.

ERGITORIAL seemed a bit lost going over old themes every fan must be familiar with although I find the idea of white holes spewing out stars very amusing. And that leaves me with Michael's look at rockets. It started off rather boringly but picked up speed when he got on to the subject of UFO's, a topic guaranteed to give any self-respecting fan palpitations. ((That first paragraph scared me a bit, but on balance, you seem to have enjoyed No.56. I thought it a good issue apart from a rotten cover...so let's see what you think of this issue..which marks a full EIGHTEEN YEARS of ERG.))

John Welsh, ((And here for a too brief extract from a very interesting LOC))
23 Kelvinside Gdns. East
GLASGOW G.20 6BE



"ERG 56 was as resplendently enjoyable as ever. That cover... and those

interior illos...how I love 'em. I like most people's artwork, but especially yours, principally because of its humour. ((What a nice man you are)) But before I get carried away, I'd better say a few words about your Ergitorial on interstellar travel. It was good, but contained I'm afraid, one or two

misconceptions on the subject of black holes. It seems that every Tom, Dick and Captain Kirk would like these objects to be gateways to the stars. Just send your

space ship down one, so the story goes and hey presto ! Out it'll pop (via a convenient white hole of course) a few parsecs away. Well, to start with, any starship foolhardy enough to attempt to approach a black hole would be ripped apart, atom by atom, by the tremendous tidal forces that are present near such an object ((I'm, must admit, I clear forgot that point)) And the crew's deaths would have been for nothing because there just ain't no such critter as hyperspace - hit me if you want, but there ain't ...so far as I'm aware. It is a purely fictitious concept which rests on no sound theoretical basis whatever. I haven't read this article in Nature that you mention. That it should be seriously suggested that black and white holes are in any way connected with hyperspace - or even that white holes are created in order to balance mass loss in the formation of black holes - strikes me as quite laughable really.

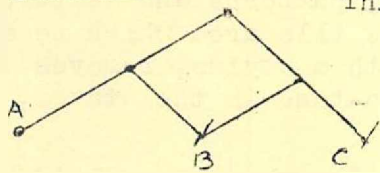
When a black hole is formed, no mass is lost at all from the universe; certainly it may be changed into a different form, but nonetheless, energy is conserved, and as long as energy is conserved there is no need to postulate the existence of supplementary white holes at the other end of magical hyperspatial throats."

ILLUSTRATIONS

REDUCING & ENLARGING DRAWINGS

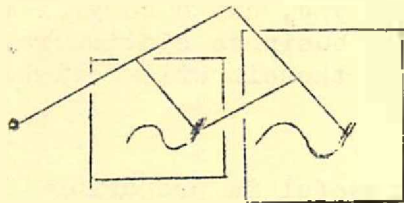
While I am not suggesting that you use this process on any artwork submitted to your fanzine, it often happens that you (or the artist) may want to re-draw all or part of an ill - perhaps from a newspaper - to a larger or smaller size. This can of course be done photographically - if you can afford the price. Again, if your drawing is up to the task it is reasonably easy to do the task freehand. However, for those who want a method which anyone can employ, here are a couple of techniques.

PANTOGRAPH



This is basically an arrangement of flat bars pivoted loosely at their joints at the corners of a rectangle and with some fixing device, (suction pad, screwed base, clamp, etc.,) at point A at the end of one leg. B & C are holders for a tracing point, and a pencil and are interchangeable according to whether you wish to enlarge or reduce a drawing. Adjustments can usually be made to vary the amount of this change in scale.

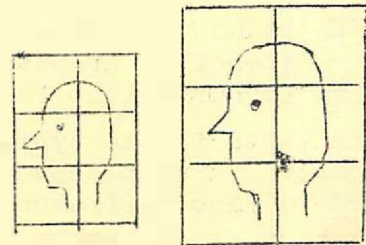
In use, (to enlarge) fix the drawing under tracing point B, and blank paper under pencil C. Check that your enlargement will not run off the paper, by moving the tracing tip to the extremes of the drawing to be traced. If all is ok, proceed to trace over all the relevant lines in the drawing and the pencil point will reproduce it to a larger size. To reduce, simply interchange points B and C. You can buy a pantograph fairly cheaply, or, if you are handy with tools, it is fairly easy to make your own.



SQUARING UP (OR DOWN)

This is the time-honoured method. You simply divide the illo to be enlarged into a number of squares (the more squares, the greater the accuracy) and then divide the area you wish to transfer it to, into the same number of larger squares (NOT a larger number of same size squares). Then using the grid as a guide, re-draw the illo into the new grid. This involves hard work, but is highly effective.

To save time (and damage to the illo) it pays to lay a squared-up celluloid overlay ON the drawing, and a set of enlarged squares in BLACK ink, UNDER the enlargement paper (which should be as thin as possible). The grid will show through for tracing, and will not need rubbing out afterwards.



LETTRASET PRODUCTS

With the increased use of electrostencil in fanzines, the artist can make use of a number of techniques unavailable to the hand-cut stencil worker, these include some of the many products from Letraset :-

LETTRASET itself, consists of rub-down letters in a tremendous variety of sizes and styles (Including Russian and Greek). Ideal for titles, headings etc. Simply slide the letter sheet into position, burnish down each succeeding letter and the job is done. Samples can be seen in the department headings in *ERG*. This system gives clear, crisp lettering excellent for reproduction by electrostencil. What is not so well-known is that the range also includes ornamental borders, architectural items, trees, cars, buses, figures, heads etc., all in the same burnish-down sheets -- ideal for the faned who wants to brighten up his fanzine.

LEBRATONE comes in an overwhelming range of tints, patterns and textures.

In use, one simply lays a piece over the illo area which needs an overall texture, cuts gently round the edge with a stylus, removes the surplus and burnishes down the rest. Called Zip-a-tone in the States, it is the material for even textures in artwork.

INSTANTEX operates rather like a sheet of patterned carbon paper laid face down on the work sheet. Draw or burnish on its back, and you have an illustration - or patterned area transferred to the work area. Some artists use this alone to provide striking artwork, but others simply use it for background areas.

Many of the above materials are available in white (for use on black areas) as well as in the normal black. Prices run from around 75p a sheet to over a pound per sheet...but you get a heck of a lot of work out of each one. If this brief outline interests you, buy a copy of the Letraset catalogue (about 1/2" thick) from any good business stationers. The price is low..less than 50p, and the material therein will delight any artist or person interested in layout.

COW GUM doesn't come from Letraset, but is very useful in preparing layouts either for photolith or electrostencil. It is a petrol-based rubber solution, and acts like an impact adhesive..the illos may be moved around to the optimum position before finally rubbing them down to stay. A great advantage of cow gum is its cleanliness. Once dry, any that gets on your fingers, or clean areas of a layout sheet may be removed by simply rubbing gently...whereupon it simply crumbles into a ball and comes away leaving a clean surface.

EVOSKIN is another impact adhesive which I find invaluable for joining stencils, or patching-in electrostencils. With this, only 1/8" overlap is sufficient for making a firm joint.

LIQUID PAPER is the typist's cor-flu. It is used in exactly the same way to cover typos in ordinary typescript. It can be tinted to match different papers...and it makes a quick way of adding stars to a black background of space in a drawing. You can also get small bottles of thinners to keep it from drying out in the bottle.