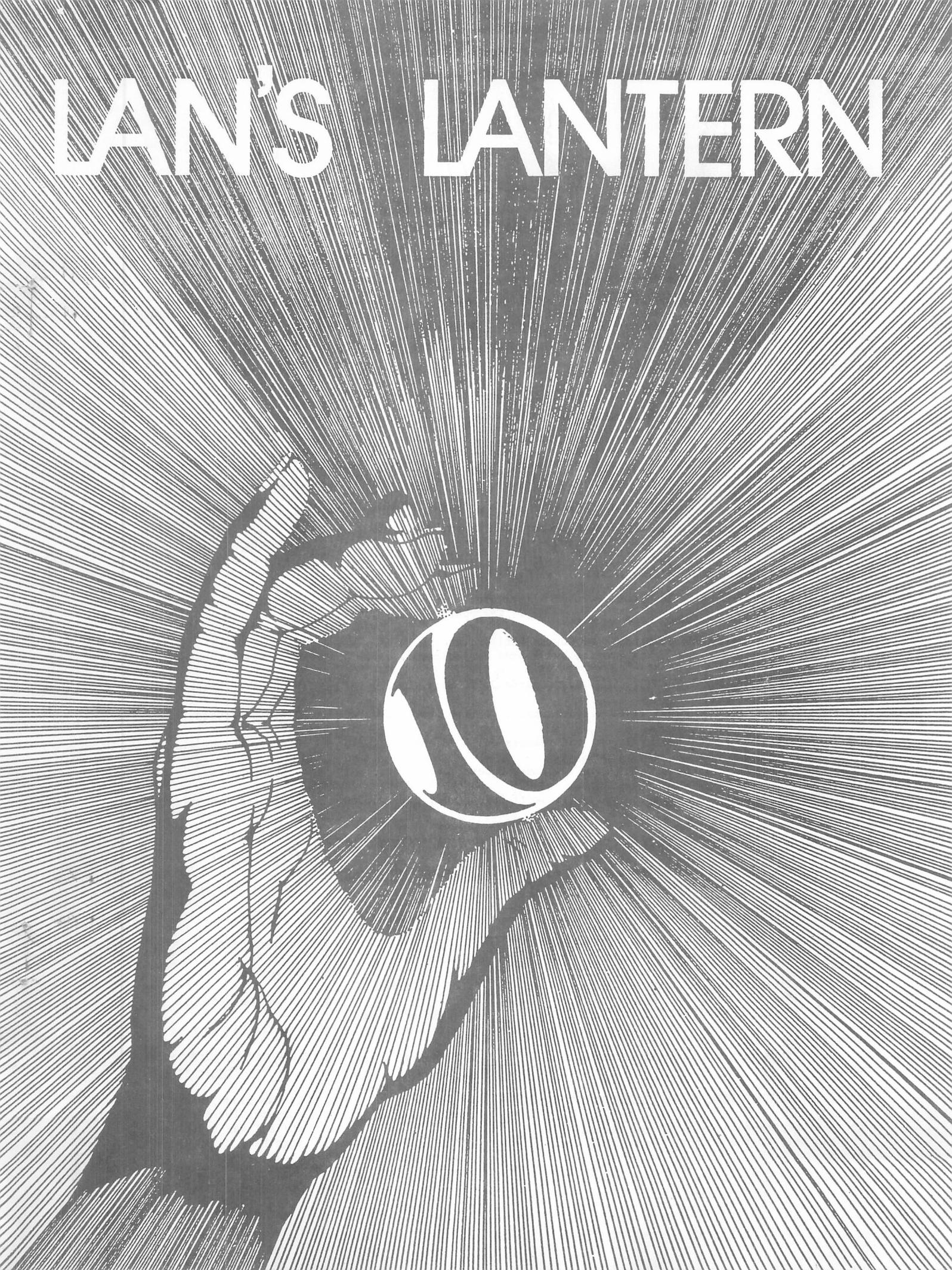


# LAN'S LANTERN





From the EDITOR —

## Public Education?

I teach in a private school, an independent Educational Community known as Cranbrook. Those of you who know me, and/or have followed these issues of LAN'S LANTERN also know that the Community is divided into several major institutions; I teach at Kingswood School, the girls highschool. For some reason this year, more than the other years that I have taught here, I have noticed a certain lack of mathematical ability in my students. These students were all new this year; they came from public schools in areas both near and far (as far away as Florida). In most cases, these girls were getting good grades, some straight A's, and were at the top of their school in grade averages. Then they came here, a college prep school, and their grades dropped---I mean the straight A student went down to C's, or lower. This was not just in math, either. In every subject!

When I started teaching at this school four years ago, I was told by several colleagues that there was a big difference between public and private education. I did not believe them. Being a product of parochial schools, I sensed very little difference between the education I received and that of my friends who went to public schools. But that meant that there was no difference between public and parochial education. A private, independent school was a different matter. And Cranbrook Educational Community was slightly more different than that.

Students who graduate from the Cranbrook schools are ready for higher education. Many are so ready that they place out of some of their freshman classes. Some don't do too well on the advanced placement tests and have to take the regular freshman load; still they have a fairly easy time because they know how to study, they know how to meet their obligations, and have fun and party as well. Many who come from public schools wash out in their first year, many in the first semester. Why is this so? What is the difference between public and private education that makes the student educated?

Public schools must meet for 180 days. Private schools need not, as long as there educational activities going on all the time. At Cranbrook there are study times, mainly for the borders, on the weekend. (Yes, this is a partial-boarding high school.) Some of the students come in on weekends, even the day students, to use the facilities--the library, the computer center, etc. Actual classroom days number around 150, usually less. But the intensity of the education, the workload, is tremendous. All-nighters are something which college students use to cram for exams, finish papers, etc., but they are common here; papers are due on certain days. Lateness counts against you. Absences which are not excused are counted against you. Quizzes, tests, sometimes 3 tests on the same day, all are thrown at you in a moment's notice. The teachers are good in their various fields; and they work the students--building knowledge in those fields, AND responsibility. *RESPONSIBILITY!* I think this is the key. The students are treated like adults. There are responsibilities and obligations which they are expected to fulfill. If they are not done, if the student acts irresponsibly, a penalty is paid. If a student decides not to do the reading in a particular class, s/he might be skirting possible disaster in terms of a possible failed pop-quiz.

Intensity of study, responsibility, and treatment as adults are part of the independent education program. Are these things done in public education? Sometimes. Because one of our history teachers was on jury duty, we had a substitute for her for a couple of weeks. Her only teaching prior to this was in public schools. The students had a difficult time with her; they were not used to regurgitating facts which they had read; they wanted to see trends, relate those facts to other aspects of the same period of history; they wanted other viewpoints from other writers and texts. The teacher told me that this was an eye-opening experience.

One of my students went back to her old high school. The things she was doing in her sophomore English and history classes here was in some ways superior to that being done in the senior courses there. She is very happy to be at Kingswood; she may be getting C's, but she's learned more this year than she had ever learned.

IN THIS ISSUE: The two year old interview with Ben Bova is finally published--but it was updated last year. In it, along with several people who were present, he discusses education; it goes well with the editorial. I recorded the GoH speech of C.J. Cherryh at AECHON II about two years ago. It is reprinted here with permission of Carolyn herself. Responses of CD Doyle's and Steve Bridge's articles on Cryonics fill the letter column, as well as an article by Laurie Manri. There was also, surprisingly, a big response to Mark Leeper's comments on the PBS production of DRACULA. Also included are film and book reviews, including a fascinating commentary on ALIEN by a lovely neofan, Mary E. Cowan. Hope you enjoy this one. It's been a long time coming!



Love,

Jan

# A Conversation with

*This interview was originally done at MINICON in the spring of 1978, with Ben's wife Barbara, daughter Rose, and several fans, Barney Neufeld and Jim Satterfield among them, and Spider Robinson, who walked into my room in the middle of the interview. All contributed to its success. I did a follow-up phone conversation with Ben in the spring of 1979, which has been incorporated into this. ---Lan*

# BEN BOVA

## and Friends

LAN: Before you assumed your present position as the editor of OMNI, you were the editor of ANALOG since the death of John Campbell. How were you chosen as the editor of ANALOG?

BEN: The people at Conde Nast asked Kay Tarrant, who had been there since the beginning of John's editorship, to produce a list of potential candidates to succeed him as editor. Kay, in turn, asked several of the regular contributors to the magazine to do the same. I was not a steady contributor, but my name appeared on several lists. The management interviewed different people and finally wound up asking me to take the job. I was more surprised than anybody, I think, except for Barbara my wife, and Gordie Dickson, both of whom had no doubts whatsoever that I'd get it.

LAN: I'm glad you took it. I thought you did a very good job. As editor, I know you didn't read every manuscript that came in, so...

BEN: I certainly did!

LAN: ## Surprised ## Every single manuscript?

BEN: Yes. There was only one reader at ANALOG, me. There is still only one reader at ANALOG; now it's Stanley Schmidt.

LAN: No slush-pile reader? ##Still ~~amazed~~ astounded##

BEN: There hasn't been one since Campbell took over the job.

LAN: So it was the policy before then, but John Campbell decided that he wanted to read every story that came in.

BEN: Yes. John very much wanted to change the face of what was then called science fiction, and produced the kinds of stories that we now accept. And the only way for him to do that was for him to go into the slush-pile, find the stories he wanted, encourage the writers who were almost there, but not quite, and throw out the stuff he didn't want. The rest of the publishing industry works upside down. They take their most inexperienced people and say: "There is a big pile of ore; find the gold nuggets!" These are kids out of college English courses, still wearing their sneakers, and they don't know beans from science fiction. The result is that you have the least talented people doing the toughest job. They are trying to find good, new stories. They wouldn't

know a good, new story if it fell on them. They are trying to find stories that would please their English teachers, and they come running to the chief editor saying: "This is wonderful; you've got to publish this." The guy reads it and it's a rehash of Herman Melville. So he says: "Naw, this isn't what we're looking for." Now it's bad enough that these slush-pile readers pick the wrong stories to come rushing in and gush over; the really terrible thing is the good stuff that they miss, which they send back to the writer and convince the writer that he hasn't done a good job. In a well-organized publishing company the most talented, most experienced, highest paid editor should be reading the slush, because that's where the gold is. Anybody can pick up a new Robert Heinlein novel and publish it; you don't have to be a genius to figure out that Heinlein is going to make money for you. But to find a good new writer...this is why we established the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer of the year, to point out the fact that John spent his entire life, gave up a very promising career as a writer, to find other new writers, writers like the seventeen year old who wandered into his office who turned out to be Isaac Asimov. It's a classic story. And if you look at those who have received the award over the years, you will see that they are now very established writers. It was a fitting way to honor John Campbell.

LAN: Even Barry Malzberg.

BEN: No, that's the Campbell Award that the academics give out. It has nothing to do with the Campbell Award for the best new writer of the year, which is awarded by the fans at the World Science Fiction Convention. There is a Campbell Memorial Award given out by the academics, mainly through the aegis of Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss, and that is a panel of academic experts picking the best novel of the year. For the most part they've managed to pick novels that are totally obscure, no punch to them at all.

LAN: I see. Thanks for clearing that up for me. Before I had gotten into fandom I had heard about this Malzberg controversy, and never quite understood it.

When John Campbell took over ASTOUNDING/ANALOG he gave up his own writing career, but you didn't.

BEN: I can't afford to. John could afford to live on what he earned through his editorship at ASTOUNDING/ANALOG. I pay my bills by writing. ANALOG for me, and OMNI, for that matter, as it was for John, is a hobby, financially. It's a part time job. It does not pay enough to pay the bills of the editor.

LAN: Which brings us around to your stories, in par-

ticular *MILLENIUM*, which I thought was the best novel for 1976. I nominated it for the 1977 Hugo Award but it never made the final ballot.

BEN: Yes, this is the old story about Adlai Stevenson: after he was slaughtered in 1952 by Dwight Eisenhower, he kept running into people who said they voted for him. He said, "If all you people voted for me, how come I lost by such a large margin?" You know--where were you when we needed you?

LAN: You pulled the book out from the Nebula Award voting.

BEN: No, I didn't pull the book out from the Nebula Award. I have pulled *everything* of mine from the Nebula consideration; I don't think that the editor of *ANALOG* should be in competition with writers for an award which is voted on by the writers. It is a conflict of interest that is unconscionable, I think. When I became editor of *ANALOG* I told SFWA that I did not want any of my works considered for the Nebula, so long as I was editor of *ANALOG*. That applied to everything that I had written from that point onward, and in 1976 it included *MILLENIUM*.

LAN: The first book of yours that I remember reading was your first book published --- *THE STAR CONQUERORS*.

BEN: Oh yes. That book is so bad that I finally resurrected it and I want to sell it to Hollywood. \*laughter\* I think it is bad enough to work as a sequel to *STAR WARS*.

LAN: And how did you come to write *THE STAR CONQUERORS*?

BEN: That's an interesting question, because in a way *MILLENIUM* spawned *THE STAR CONQUERORS*. I had written a novel about Kinsman, the hero of *MILLENIUM*, and the first flights to the moon. In that early novel, written in 1949/1950, I had postulated the idea that the Russians had been operating in space long before we were, and the Americans would mount a crash program to catch up, and their crash program would be to leap-frog the Russians and send a crew to the moon. Kinsman was one of the first astronauts to step foot on the moon. Well, publisher after publisher rejected the novel and largely because, I think, it was poorly written. It was my first novel, and most first novels richly deserve to be rejected. But one publisher, at what was then called The Winston

Company in Philadelphia, a guy by the name of Donald E. Cook called me into his office and said, "This isn't as bad as a lot of the stuff we do publish, but it suggests that the Russians could be ahead of us in some technological areas. It suggests that the Russians are smarter than we are in a way, and this would stir up the ire of Joe McCarthy." Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin in the 1950s was terrorizing the country. And Cook said in so many words that the flack we would catch from Senator McCarthy would be more than he or I could put up with. So he wasn't going to publish this, and he asked me to write something that had nothing whatsoever to do with contemporary politics. So I sat down and said I'd fix the sonovabitch and wrote a thud and blunder novel set in the far future. I took Harold Lamb's biography of Alexander of Macedon, and projected that into an interstellar arena. It became *THE STAR CONQUERORS*, a thud and blunder novel. You call it "blood and thunder" when it's good; this is "thud and blunder..."

And there you are--they snapped it up. Not only did they buy the novel, but they said, "Gee, the astronomical background is interesting. How about a non-fiction book for the same kind of reader on this stellar astronomy?" So I wound up writing my first non-fiction book called *THE MILKY WAY GALAXY* which is a book for general readers about stellar astronomy.

LAN: What year was *THE STAR CONQUERORS* published?

BEN: 1959.

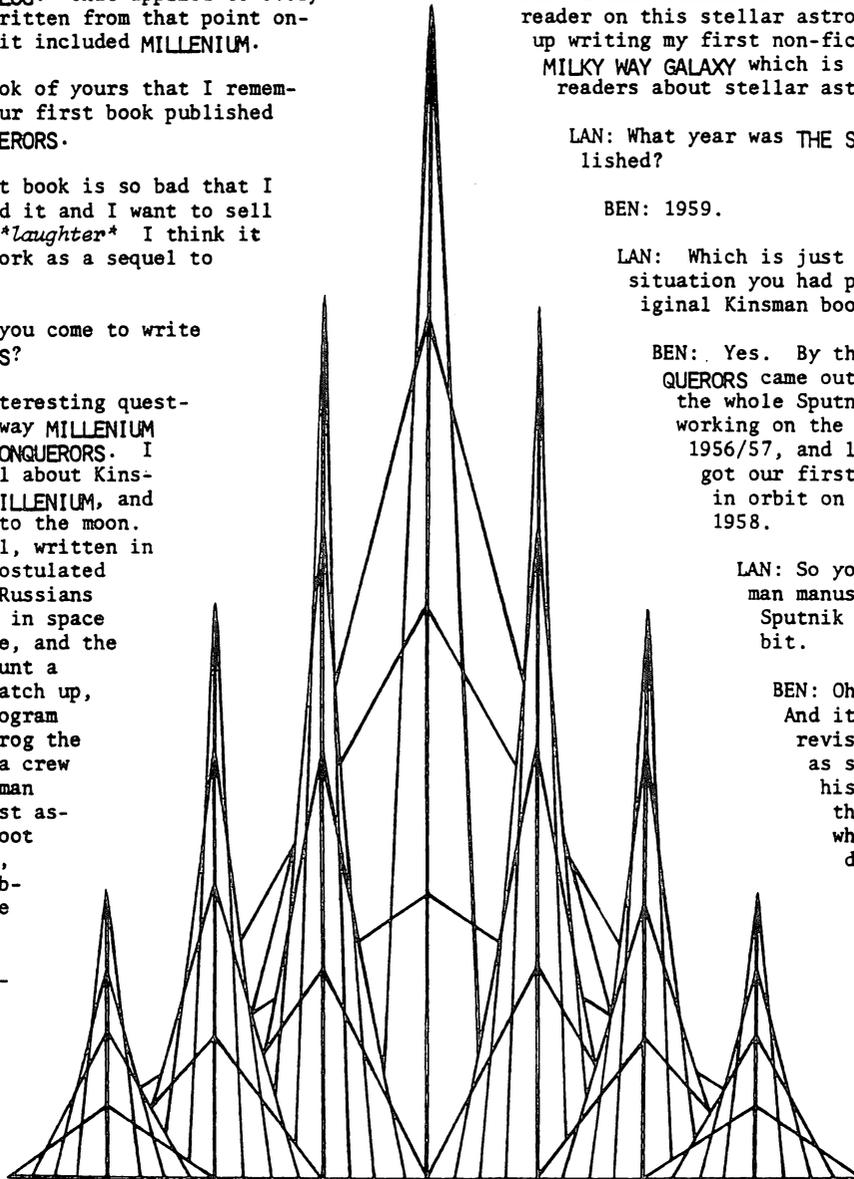
LAN: Which is just shortly after the situation you had postulated in the original Kinsman book actually happened.

BEN: Yes. By the time *THE STAR CONQUERORS* came out, we had been through the whole Sputnik business. I was working on the Vanguard Project in 1956/57, and left shortly after we got our first Vanguard satellite in orbit on St. Patrick's Day in 1958.

LAN: So you had your first Kinsman manuscript written before Sputnik had been put into orbit.

BEN: Oh yeah, in the mid 50s. And it went through several revisions as what I wrote as science fiction became history. It wound up as the novel *MILLENIUM* which, as you know, deals with not the struggle to get to the moon, but what happens after people start living there, and how it changes things that are happening on earth.

LAN: Okay, let's go in both directions from *MILLENIUM*. Going backwards, you have some



Graphic Design by  
RICHARD W. SMITH

“TITAN TOWERS”

from Ben Bova's  
AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN

novellettes which show the beginning and early life of Kinsman, which is referred to in *MILLENNIUM*. There is a gap between those stories and the novel. Are you going to fill in that gap?

BEN: Yes. I've got a contract with Dell to publish *KINSMAN* in August of 1979. It will include all the material from the early Kinsman stories, as well as a lot of new material, and take Kinsman from about age 18 until just before he takes command of the Moon Station in *MILLENNIUM*.

LAN: Will it be picked up by the Book Club?

BEN: Yes, I believe it will.

LAN: Good!

BEN: Naw, that's not good. You fans should go out and buy it at full price. A man's got to eat, you know.

LAN: So do we.

BEN: No you don't. Someone asked me once, what is the meaning of life, what is the purpose of life. I found myself answering that life is a biochemical reaction that exists solely to support science fiction writers.

LAN: *\*laughter\** Were you ever a fan yourself?

BEN: No. My life has slowly been meshed with fandom and I've been slowly turning into a fan. In fact, in my Guest of Honor speech at *BOSKONE* in 1977, I confessed that I started as a pro, and I'm becoming a fan. Every year, year by year, I degenerate further. Fandom is a wonderful thing, and it's a great social institution, but a writer can go broke writing for the fans. You've got to write for a much larger audience. Now the fans are very influential; they form a hard-core audience that swings a number of votes. I am a fan, but I've never been one in the sense that I've contributed to fanzines, or letterhacked, or produced a fanzine, or whathaveyou. When I started writing, I didn't know fandom existed. I just wrote what I wanted to write. It was quite a surprise that there was this whole underground community which has spread all over the world. It's a lobby and it's a family. And it's a marvelously supportive and warm family group. I remember Jay Kay Klein standing up at *DISCON* where he was the Fan Guest of Honor, at the banquet when we finally got Andy Offut to shut up, and Jay Kay looked across this room of sweating, surly people, and he said: "Just about everybody I love is in this room!" And we all burst into tears, because we knew he was going to talk for another twenty minutes.

It's a great family. Economically, it is an insignificant clan in the science fiction market--except as an influence. What I mean when I say "insignificant" is that you can sell your story or book to every fan in the world and go broke. But what happens is that when the fans begin to buy it, the book-sellers, the bookstore people, the salesmen, begin to get the feeling that this is worth selling, that they have a hardcore market there. Then the book begins to sell to a wider audience.

But I never sit down and say that I am going to write this book for the fans, or for anybody else for that matter. I very seldom picture a group as a market for a book that I'm doing.

LAN: Are you working on anything now?

BEN: A writer always has two or three other things cooking on the back burners. Right now all my writing time is being taken up by a novel that could only be written as science fiction. Scientists finally get definite, unequivocal proof that there is life, intelligent life, elsewhere in the universe, and every major political, social and religious group tries to keep it a secret and use the information to its own advantage. It's still in first-draft form, so I don't know how it's going to end up.

LAN: Wow! That sounds good. Are you going to do anything more with Kinsman? A sequel to *MILLENNIUM*?

BEN: No, because Kinsman is dead.

LAN: He did die? I was uncertain at the end of the novel.

BEN: He's as dead as a doornail, as dead as old Jacob Marley. Without his being dead, nothing wonderful could happen in this tale. He certainly did die. *COLONY*, a novel that was published in 197 by Pocketbooks, takes place a few years later, and shows the aftermath of the events in *MILLENNIUM*. When you try to set up a world government, most of the big power groups of the earth are trying to resist it, you have O'Niell-type colonies being set up, major corporations are running rough-shod over the world, and many of the same political problems that we have today are still going on. They haven't been solved. In a sense it is not a sequel to *MILLENNIUM*, but a novel about the same world-view a few years downstream.

LAN: And all the small countries control the weather.

BEN: No, actually the large corporations control the weather.

LAN: I noticed you don't like to waste characters. You brought Ted Marrett from a short story into the novel...

BEN: No, actually, *THE WEATHERMAKERS* was a novel.

LAN: Oh? But what about the short story that appeared in your collection *FORWARD IN TIME*?

BEN: That was an excerpt from the novel. The short story was published in *ANALOG* back in the 60s sometime. But *THE WEATHERMAKERS* was written as a complete novel. It was really written as a testbed for a major adult novel about real weather manipulation, the kind of work that is being done today, the kind that was done in Southeast Asia. Every time there is a really major storm, somebody worries that it has been caused by overzealous weather manipulators--like the white hurricane in Boston.

LAN: Are you doing more of that, tying in characters from other stories?

BEN: Here and there, For example, in *COLONY*, there are a couple of characters from *MILLENNIUM* who are still alive and pop up: Leonov, for one, and dePaolo, who really creates the world government from the ashes of the old United Nations. Most of the story and the major characters are quite different.

BEN: I can't help but notice that you have a whole set of stories centering around *MILLENNIUM*, the Kinsman, the weathermakers, and such. You also wrote a series of novellettes which was combined into the novel *AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN*. Are you eventually going to connect those two?

BEN: Eventually, if I live long enough they will all connect, because they are all written around the same pattern, the same scenario. Some are set much farther in the future than others, but it all stems from the same basic background, the same view of the future, THE WEATHERMAKERS, THE DUELING MACHINE, AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN. AS ON A DARKLING PLAIN is in a way a sequel to THE STAR CONQUERORS, because it still deals with this idea that there are alien intelligences that shape our own being here on earth. It's an old science fiction theme...

LAN: ...mostly brought out by Arthur C. Clarke.

BEN: Arthur C. Clarke, and Stephen Spielberg, and a lot of other people. \*chuckles\* Including Moses.

LAN: How does Moses get in there?

BEN: Well, he wrote a science fiction story about human destiny being shaped by an extraterrestrial visitor. Only he didn't have the guts to spell out the man's name.

LAN: Well, you weren't supposed to pronounce Yahweh!

BEN: I'm not sure that's how it was pronounced, but you weren't supposed to pronounce it anyway. \*laughter\*

The real question with Moses, however, is: is it science fiction or is it fantasy? Is it based on realistic things, or is it a product of his imagination? To this day there are burning bushes in the Middle East, and pillars of fire--it's just outgassing from all that oil they've got. Many people complain that if Moses, when he had left Sinai, if he had made a right turn instead of a left, the Jews would have been in control of all the oil instead of in Israel. The Arabs would have been our friends, and we would be worried about the Jews controlling all the energy. But those are the breaks. God has made a special deal with the Jews, but he didn't tell them everything. There's an old Woody Allen joke about going to the synagogue on the Holy-Days and thanking God for reneging on all his promises.

LAN: Joe Haldeman once mentioned to me that the Arabs would be very smart if they started investing in Solar Power, setting up energy collecting stations in the deserts and funding their own energy-collecting satellites.

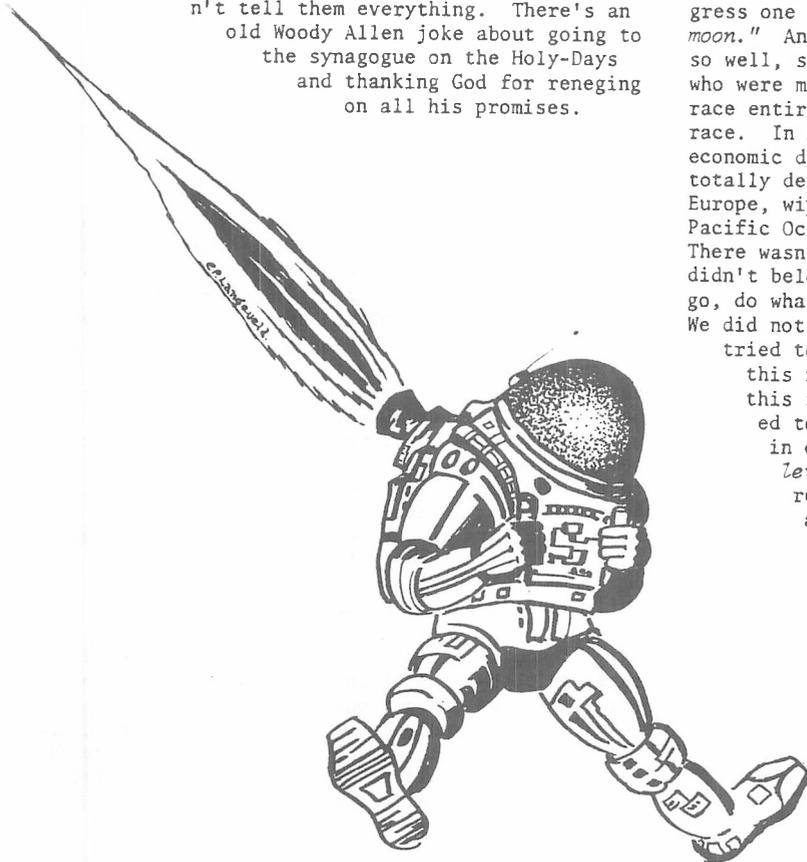
BEN: No, no. They don't have to put anything in orbit. They have enormous tracts of land right where the oil wells are now which get enormous amounts of sunlight. Why go through the trouble of putting anything in orbit when you're getting all the sunlight you want anyway? They even have the basic material for solar cells; all that sand is silicon, and all they have to do is process the stuff and turn it into solar cells. What they should do is get the Japanese who will make pilgrimages to the desert every year, and every Japanese family will bring home bucketsful of sand and spend a whole year, by hand, making them into solar cells. And the following year the family will make another pilgrimage to put their cells down next to all the others in the desert, you know, like dominoes, pick up more buckets of sand, go back and repeat the process. In the course of many generations you will cover all the deserts of the earth with solar cells, and the Arabs will still have control over most of the energy.

It seemed to me that it was a terrible shame that the Arabs stopped their oil embargo. If they had kept it going for ten years, by the time it was over the United States would have had an energy technology that would have stunned the rest of the world. We would have been selling new energy ideas all over the world. Then oil would go back to being a minor product making LP records and greasing bicycles. What is so frustrating is to watch this country going through these gyrations of trying to hold on to an ancient way of doing business, trying to hold on to oil and natural gas, and keep using it. We have such enormous power, enormous talents in this country.

Now stop to think of the things you've witnessed in your own life. We had a president stand up in congress one day and say, "I think we ought to go to the moon." And in less than ten years we did! We did it so well, so fast, and so thoroughly, that the Russians who were more than half-way there, dropped out of the race entirely and tried to pretend there never was a race. In my own lifetime, this country has solved an economic depression that had curled everybody's hair, totally destroyed an army that had conquered all of Europe, wiped out a navy that had taken all of the Pacific Ocean. In 1945, talk about *mare nostrum*! There wasn't a drop of salt water on this planet that didn't belong to us. We could go where we wanted to go, do what we wanted to do. But we gave it all up. We did not establish a world empire; we went home and tried to become peaceful again. The power that this nation has is incredible! We could move this fucking planet out of its orbit if we wanted to! Instead, we sit around with our thumbs in our mouths and moan, "Oh, the Arabs won't let us have enough oil!" If the Arabs were really our pals, they would cut off the oil altogether, and inside of ten weeks we would have solar cells coming out the kazoo.

People come up with these occult ideas, pyramid power. The Egyptians have all those pyramids, but they don't have any power. \*laughter\* If the pyramids were really powerful, the Egyptians would be running the world. It's assinine!

\*In walks Spider Robinson who sits down to listen.\*



LAN: *\*Looking at his notes\** Now let's see, how far have we gotten?

BEN: Yeah, seriously folks... *\*laughter\**

LAN: Getting back to your writing, I received several letters about the interview I did with Joe Haldeman about his writing technique. Joe sits at the typewriter and says the line over and over again until it sounds right, then types it out. It takes him a long time, but then he doesn't have to re-write much. Do you have a specific technique?

BEN: Well, the first draft of a story is usually torture. For me a first draft is like you are producing a play: you have the rudiments of a script, and all the players have copies; you put them on a stage and they read: "*Oh dear, what shall I do?*" You then say, "*When you say that, move over there to a chair...wait, there's no chair. Hey Joe, put a chair there.*" You are moving the characters to places where they need to be, getting them to say the lines they need to say to accomplish the plot. Once you've done that, then you can start doing a second draft where you are really writing rather than stage managing. If all goes well, that's really when things begin to come together. Once in a while stories write themselves. They just sort of zip right through the typewriter. When I did **THE STARCROSSED**, I was so pissed off at my experience with **THE STARLOST** that the novel rattled right through the typewriter. I was as surprised and amused as anybody watching it come off. "*Hey, that's funny! Yeah, it really happened!*"

LAN: You mean it really wasn't about Harlan Ellison, it was about you?

BEN: It was about Harlan, it was about me, it was about Keir Dullea, it was about an inordinate number of twits and morons *\*laughter\** in that wonderful world of television. **THE STARCROSSED** was inspired by real life; it was an exaggeration of real life, but not much. The major difference was to turn Keir Dullea into a hockey player, which was a reversal.

SPIDER: Since then, he's been starring as a hockey player. *\*laughter\**

BEN: In a way it's only fitting; there were so many hockey pucks connected with that show that they needed somebody who could hit them into a net.

LAN: How's your goal-tending, or is it shooting, with OMNI? How did you get wrapped up with it?

BEN: After about seven years I resigned from the editorship of **ANALOG**, and intended to be a full-time writer. The editing work wasn't much of a financial sacrifice; it's more like a hobby. In the meantime, OMNI had started, and Diana King, who was an associate of mine at **ANALOG**, was the fiction editor. After the first issue of OMNI was published, Diana resigned for personal reasons, and left a hole in the staff of the magazine. Frank Kendig, who was the executive editor of OMNI, and I were having lunch, and I told him that I felt a little sheepish about having recommended Diana and she left him in the lurch. He suggested that I could do something about it by joining the staff. And I thought, "*What the hell. OMNI looks like too much fun to turn down.*" So I accepted, and have been having fun ever since. I came aboard in August, and, even though the first issue was already set, my name is on the masthead as the fiction editor for the first issue as well as all the subsequent ones.

LAN: Is it any different working for OMNI than it was working for **ANALOG**?

BEN: It's totally different. **ANALOG** is a small, digest size magazine, essentially a one-man band which has been in operation for almost fifty years or so. OMNI is brand new. It hadn't been in operation even forty-five weeks when I came on the staff, and everything being done here is being done for the first time. It's a fairly sizable and assorted staff. There are about eight people determining what goes on in the office, plus the secretarial help, administrative help, and lots of outside writers. It's rather a business operation where you have editorial meetings, big production meetings, meetings with the art department, and so on. It's a design dominated magazine, a visual magazine, which sometimes forces us to either lengthen or shorten the editorial copy just so we can fit in the design. That makes for some problems with fiction, but we are getting around to the point where we are able to handle those problems. Basically what we do is get the fiction in early enough so that the design is laid out around the text, and pot vice-versa.

LAN: You've come a long way from **ANALOG**.

BEN: I think that the whole field has come a long way. OMNI is an incredible innovation, something we've all been looking for for years and years, and Bob Guccione did it. We are now selling more than 900,000 copies per month on the stands alone, and our subscriptions are about 150,000. So we are selling more than a million copies per month (*Present figures, I believe, place the sales at more than 1½ millions copies per month.*), whereas **ANALOG** has only a hundred thousand per month. And our sales are increasing. Most of those who buy OMNI have never read science fiction before, so the magazine is enlarging the readership.

LAN: Do you think that's good for the field?

BEN: How could it be bad?

LAN: Are you having any difficulty getting good stories in?

BEN: Not really. We are having some difficulty getting the top writers to contribute to OMNI. Some of them appear to be scared to death. But the younger writers who don't know any better have no qualms about submitting to a magazine with a million or so readership. Too many of the top writers have been living in the science fiction world for so long that they're afraid to try something new; they still have that ghetto mentality years, even decades, after the ghetto walls have crumbled. But slowly they're coming around. In all fairness to the writers, lots of them are tied up with other commitments and book contracts, and don't have the flexibility of time to do short fiction. However, with the attraction of a thousand dollars or so, you might think they could spare the time to knock off a short story.

LAN: Spend a weekend or so.

BEN: It would take more than a weekend. One of the problems is that the SF in OMNI has got to be the best fiction we can get our hands on. We are talking to a very broad audience, a very large audience, and, by and large, people who have never read science fiction before. Now all of us in the science fiction field have been running around for years saying that

I ONCE HAD A CASE OF BEN BOVA, IT TOOK A VISIT FROM MIKE GLICKSOHN TO GET RID OF IT.



those people out there should pay attention to this writing. Well, that's what I want to show these people, show them the best. It's difficult for a writer to do a good strong story at the short story level, especially for people who don't know the jargon. The author really has to knuckle down and do a first-class job on it. And it's being done every month now; I've gotten some excellent stories in. They take more than just a slap-dash effort.

LAN: Are you enjoying yourself there?

BEN: Yes. I find Bob Guccione and Kathy Keeton very good people to work for. The staff is sharp and eager.

JIM SATTERFIELD: Ben, I'd like to ask you what we could do about some of the teachers of science fiction courses. I took one in college and it turned out that I knew more about SF than the teacher.

BEN: This is standard practice in the whole academic institution: teachers are assigned to teach the subjects they know nothing about. It's a terrifying thing! It's like people becoming politicians when they know nothing of politics.

LAN: Don't say that, I'm a teacher. I've taken great pains to learn...

BEN: Then why the hell are we having a million or more illiterates being graduated every year? Why do we have nine thousand high school teachers in New York City who cannot pass a high school reading test? It's called teacher abdication. Teachers are in charge of the schools; if the students are running the schools, it's because the teachers have abdicated their responsibilities, and their authority.

SPIDER: Did you hear about the high school principal who kicked out a student in New York?

BARBARA BOVA: Oh yes. A teacher started to see the power the student was accumulating, and he had the student removed.

BEN: Good. He ought to get a job at something that pays well.

BARBARA: Students are not your peers, your equals. The teachers are superiors.

BEN: Get rid of the troublemakers. If you really believe in Sturgeon's Law that 90% of everything is crap, get rid of it. You are not going to accomplish anything good working with crap. The marching morans will march on; the only thing you can do is try to keep the good 10% together. Those should be science fiction fans.

JIM: I'm planning on being a drama teacher, and working in theatre.

BEN: Becoming a teacher today is somewhere between the bravest and most foolish thing that I can imagine. I guess when you get right down to real courage there is a large amount of real foolishness involved. But the system is so shot up, so bad, that it's really terrifying. What can real, good teachers do?

JIM: Because of my goals, I am learning all there is to know about the theatre: lighting, stage work, make-up, and so forth. Any course I teach will encompass *all* the stuff I'm learning now.

BEN: You know, the best teacher I ever heard of did not operate in a building; he operated in a grove of trees. And he was given a cup of hemlock for his efforts.

SPIDER: Most of the teachers I had thought I was really crazy, but there were one or two of them who took me aside and said, "No, you're not crazy after all. Come over here and let's work together."

BEN: Do you realize how many good teachers get drummed out because they do that?

SPIDER: Right. Or they become bitter drunks.

BEN: I keep getting angry letters from teachers because I suggested that teaching is a bureaucracy that no longer has any measure of merit. You have one way of measuring merit: take the average income tax paid by teacher's students five or ten years after they graduate, and peg the teachers' salaries as the amount his ex-students pay. The teachers are furious about that!

BARNEY NEUFELD: I can see why.

BEN: Sure, it's a silly thing to say. But I counter: come up with a better way of judging whether a teacher is doing a good job or not.

JIM: It's not easy to do. There are some fields where it would be very difficult to tell. Some of the teachers I have now don't try to push the student into the subject, but try to get the student interested in it first.

BEN: There's an article which appeared in the NEW YORK SUNDAY TIMES last year. I clipped it out, made xerox copies, and sent it to several correspondents at ANALOG. It was entitled something like, *The More We Pay, the Less the Students Learn*. The basic point

that the author made as a teacher was: when the teacher stopped being an authority figure and started becoming the students' pal, the educational system went to hell. Students have enough pals. When they go to school, they want somebody they can look up to and learn from. They don't want somebody who will dress the way they do, talk the way they do, and be just as stupid as they are.

BARBARA: They need somebody they can respect.

JIM: Some of the teachers I had, some of the best ones, were those who were in charge of the classroom, who were authority figures, but who could also be friends with those who were interested in learning the subject.

BEN: Fine. Listen, if it weren't for a high school teacher named George Paravicini, I would have been a failed chemical engineer. Teachers are enormously influential. The point is we need more good ones. Teachers' colleges should not be the place people go when they can't cut it anywhere else. And that's where it is now.

Abraham Flexner who totally revamped medical education in this country in the early 1900s, the man who founded the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, was saying in 1960 that the real problem today in education is that the schools of education have rigged it with the politicians so that only their graduates, with their credits, can get jobs teaching. Albert Einstein could not teach physics in New Jersey in 1950. He may have been a lousy high school teacher, but that's beside the point.

BARBARA: He didn't have the proper education credits, which stopped him from teaching anywhere, except in college.

LAN: Isaac Asimov couldn't teach English.

BARBARA: And Picasso couldn't teach art...not in a high school, not in a grade school.

BEN: The schools of education have concentrated on the forms of teaching methods without any content. I worked with Nobel Laureate physicists building a course in high school physics because these guys, mainly from MIT and Harvard, were upset that the incoming freshmen knew nothing of high school physics. They came in with top grades, A+ in physics, and all they knew about was how to fix a refrigerator.

So these professors built a high school physics course in the mid to late 1950s, and I wound up writing teaching films. The stars in the films I wrote were these Nobel Laureate physicists. Hans Bethe, the guy who figured out why the sun shines, and others, I was putting words in these guys' mouths.

JIM: Did anybody use them?

BEN: Oh yes. Physical Science Study Committee was the name of the organization, and the course they developed was used very widely around the country, and still is. They have expanded; they are now called Educational Services Incorporated, and they are producing courses in many different fields now.

SPIDER: Since only 10%, according to Sturgeon's Law, of the students are reasonably intelligent, doesn't it behoove us to slip some secret agents into kindergarten, first grade, etc., to find these people?

BEN: If you can. The problem is that the whole organization of the school is built around getting rid

of the bright people. Chaim Ginnot was a child psychologist and teacher. He had been a teacher for years, and he happened to be speaking in the town in which I lived in New England. I was his escort, and I asked him how he had gotten interested in child psychology. He replied: "Well, I was a teacher in Israel and it occurred to me, and I asked a colleague of mine, how come we have these shining, bright, inquisitive, eager five-year-olds, and we put them through a school system and they come out at the age of 16 as dull monsters? What are we doing to them?" He said that education is the process of beating the originality out of a child. He got interested in how you influence children, how their brains work, and how our socialization works on them.

BARBARA: If you send your child to kindergarten or first grade, and that child can read, by the time the child reaches the next grade level, s/he has unlearned that skill.

BEN: I wish I had a nickel for every science fiction fan who told me that the first years in school were a process of unlearning everything he already knew. The first thing they try to do is make you as stupid as everybody else.

SPIDER: Very early I got locked onto by some teachers: I had a High IQ, and I was a speed reader, and all this stuff. So they gave me a special reading course, extra work, I skipped the third grade. I seemed to have gotten an overdose of attention that just about killed me.

BEN: Oh, come on, Spider, you turned out all right.

SPIDER: I seem to have turned out okay, but I was a little crazy for awhile.

BEN: Yeah, but you were not in the New York City schools.

SPIDER: It was strange being a year younger in age than everybody I was hanging out with.

BEN: Well, welcome to the club. I think everybody in this room probably went through that.

DENNIS JAROG: There is a line from a fanzine which had been excerpted from a newspaper about this one school district in which the office for gifted children was located in the handicapped children's division.

BARBARA: That's exactly right, that's what they are.

DENNIS: And I ask, who is more handicapped in the public schools? The gifted children of those listed as handicapped?

BARBARA: The teachers. *\*laughter\**

BEN: Well, the whole jargon is handicapped. What are special children?--the brain-damaged cases. They get the special ed classes.

BARBARA: This is what the push is for now in this country--not for quality, but just the opposite. Equalization on all levels.

JIM: I just switched to the school of education, and the first thing they tell me is that they are *mainstreaming*, which means that they are bringing all the handicapped children into the regular classroom. Now, if you were expected to teach the EMR children,

the Educable Mentally Retarded, what are you going to be doing with the normal kids, and the exceptionally bright ones?

BARBARA: Ignoring them.

BEN: That's the best news, frankly, that I've heard in a long time, because the more you ignore the bright kids, the more they'll learn from themselves.

BARBARA: The bright students can learn for themselves, and they are only a minority anyway. You can concentrate on the regular students and the special ed cases.

BEN: Look, we talk about science fiction fandom and having a purpose to our lives; fandom should catch these bright kids, bring them to science fiction conventions, and really teach them.

BARNEY: But to do that we have to be in the schools, and not too many of us can stand the schools.

BEN: Just go in long enough to ask: "All right, who's the one getting good marks and always getting his ass into trouble? That one? Good! You, kid, come with me. Have a beer."

BARBARA: Save the Child! Listen, if Anita Bryant can do it, there's no reason why we can't.

BEN: Instead of giving him orange juice, we'll let Gordie give him scotch.

SPIDER: The best teacher I ever had was a guy who walked into class the first day of a James Joyce

course, and the first words out of his mouth were: "Is there anyone in here who does not want an A?" There was a period of silence, so he repeated: "I said, is there anyone in here who does not want an A?" One guy raised his hand. He said to him, "Okay, come up here; I'll deal with you later. The rest of you, you've all got As. Now, henceforth, you don't have to do a goddam thing, you got your A. So if you don't want to show up, stay the hell out. In fact, if you don't want to show up and you do, I'll kick you the hell out. I don't want anyone in here who isn't passionately interested in doing what we're doing, because I've got about ten billion words to tell you about James Joyce, and I only want people who are listening." And half the class emptied, and those of us who wanted to know about Joyce stayed. Unfortunately the guy was fired at the end of the semester.

BARBARA: I've had teachers who did that, but it was just a put-on.

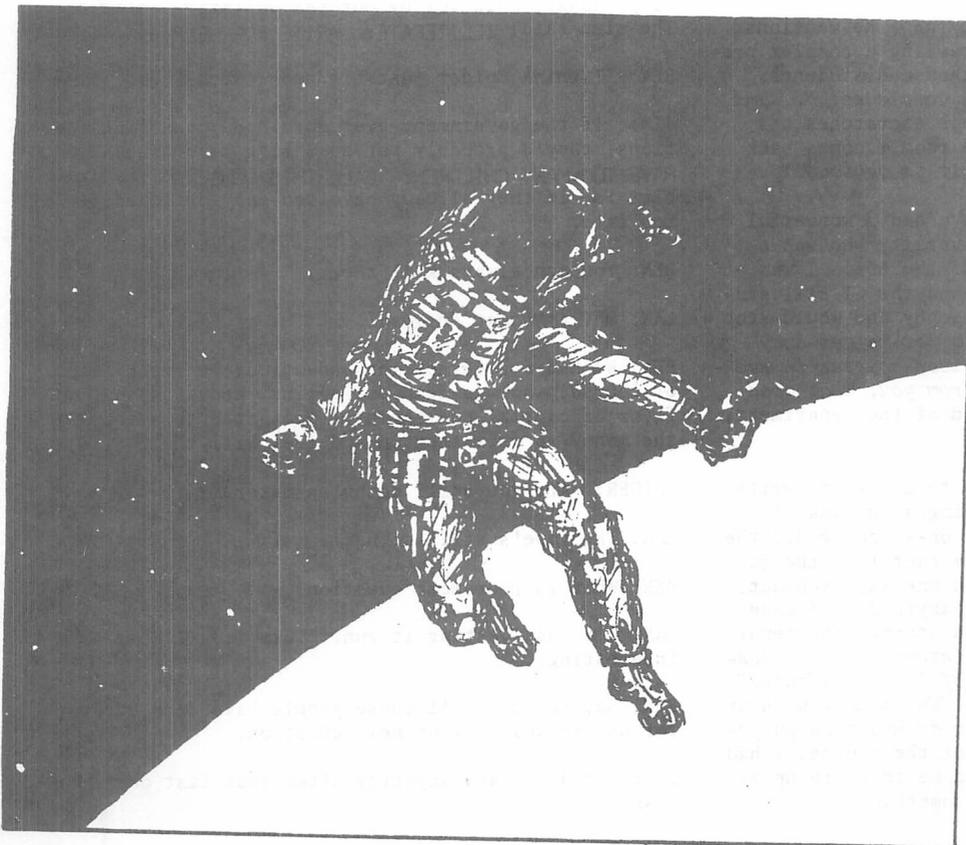
BEN: It is a good technique, and it catches the students' attention. Barbara went to school after raising three children, and her technique was to go to the teacher at the beginning of the semester and say: "I am an A student; are you an A teacher?" And the poor schmuck was terrified. He would look up her record and see that she had straight A's.

BARBARA: The worst thing you could do is to say, whenever they make a statement, "Can you prove that?"

BEN: When I was an undergraduate, the veterans from World War II were all there on the GI Bill. These guys would be sitting in the back of the room cleaning their M-1s and saying, "That ain't the way it is!" Profs who hadn't changed their notes since Napoleon had threatened to invade England were all shook up.

BARBARA: There is a challenge there from the best students, and some teachers don't like that challenge.

BEN: But the original idea of a University was a collection of people who were interested in learning, and the students have got to do it too. The students must challenge the teacher. There's the old joke about the difference in European and American Universities: In Europe, the professor comes in and the students all stand up and snap to attention. The professor says, "Good morning, class." The students all answer, "Good morning, herr professor." In an American University, the professor comes in, and the students are all slouched in their seats. The professor says, "Good morning, class." The students all write it down.



from KINSMAN, drawn by Haji Uesato

JIM: In the university classes, the teachers say that since we are giving you this many hours of credit, we expect this many hours of work. Then the actual amount of work that you have to do is anywhere from three to four times greater. I *tried* to take German last semester. By the time we got less than a fourth of the way through the term, I had a list of verbs, without putting anything else down except the present and the barest two-word definition, I had a list, two single-spaced columns, three-quarters of a page long.

BEN: And I bet I know what the first word of all those definitions was: *to*.

JIM: There is so much information that they are trying to cram into your brain that sometimes it doesn't work. The teachers would be better off finding a textbook that would be usable, or making up their own if they had to, giving it to you, and saying, "I'll be here. Come in and ask questions if you need to."

BEN: Most students can't deal with that kind of freedom. There's a classic story about Norbert Weiner when he was teaching Math at MIT. He was going through this abstruse mathematical formulation, and he puts the formula on the board. Then he says, "As you can all see, the answer to this is..." and he chalks up the answer. "Any questions?" A student raises his hand and says, "Professor Weiner, I don't see how you got that answer." Weiner says, "Oh, okay." He erases the answer, stares at the chalkboard, then puts the same answer up. "Now you understand." And the student, slightly sheepish and a little upset, "I'm sorry, professor Weiner, I still don't understand." So Weiner erases the answer again. Now he stares real hard at the board, puts the same answer up and turns to the student. "Now I've done it three different ways. You must understand it!" *\*laughter\**

JIM: I would do what the teachers always tell me to do when I pull something like that: "Do it in writing."

SPIDER: In Brunner's *STAND ON ZANZIBAR*, he mentions the professor of logic who was scrawling a complex proposition on the blackboard for a thousand students, stares at what he has written, and concludes: "...and it is therefore obvious..." He stops, scratches his head. "Excuse me." He leaves the room...comes back ten minutes later, "I was right! It is obvious!"

BEN: I had the good fortune to have had a wonderful philosophy professor at Temple University who was a forerunner of the student unrest of the 60s. I was there with the silent generation, and the GI Bill students. He would be teaching philosophy and would stop a minute and say: "Are you going to let me get away with that? You people should be given courses in heckling! If I don't learn anything from you, what good is this course?" He's now the head of the department, and has lumps all over his head.

SPIDER: One thing I did learn how to do was to write to entertain. I didn't know anything about what I was supposed to be writing a paper on--I never did the work--so all I had to go on was the fact that the guy had read 50,000 identical papers on the same subject. If I could entertain him, he'd buy anything! I made up a language questionnaire once and started the report with: "This questionnaire was administered to two loose groups of students, or two groups of loose students." It was filled with questions like: "Which do you think is funnier, Lyndon Johnson's accent or his foreign policy?" He actually gave me an A for the course; I had done nothing whatsoever. He wanted me to write up my results in a technical journal or something.

BEN: So he could send it to the FBI. *\*laughter\**

SPIDER: The funny part about it was that there were no results at all. I had administered it to a bunch of guys playing bridge in the end hall lounge, and multiplying all their answers by seven.

BEN: Spider, you've never taken a course in statistics; that's how they all do it!

Did you ever hear of Robert Heinlein's favorite writing class? When he was at Annapolis they had a class in the writing of orders. These were future naval officers, and the class consisted of these forty guys sitting at their desks. The instructor comes in and presents them with a situation. He points to one guy. "You are the commander of a flotilla of destroyer escorts. This is the weather, this is the enemy position, etc., you have this much fuel, etc. You will write an order to the other ships in your command, and the rest of the students will spend the rest of the class trying to misinterpret your orders. If they can, you flunk for today. There are only two grades: four-oh and zero." Robert said that that was the most wonderful writing course he ever had. He learned to write clearly so people understood what you wanted them to do.

JIM: There was a class in which the professor administered a final exam of one question: "What did you learn in this class?" One student wrote down on the exam, "Not a damn thing." The prof gave him a B; he had misspelled *damn*.

SPIDER: Before we leave the subject of education... *\*laughter\** This may be old, but it's still my favorite story. This is the key to the problem about why we have so many illiterate students walking around.

BEN: Illiterate teachers. *\*laughter\**

SPIDER: A few years ago I saw a sign in the New York City subway, paid for by our tax dollars. So help me. The sign said: ILLITERATE? WRITE FOR HELP! *\*laughter\**

BEN: I think Spider just hit upon Catch-21.

JIM: If the government ever got into sponsoring abortions, they'd probably put up a sign that'd say: HAVE TOO MANY CHILDREN? CALL THIS NUMBER. The problem is, if they already have too many children, it's too late.

BEN: You can always kill them.

LAN: Oh, *A Modest Proposal*.

BEN: We had a governor in Connecticut, a republican, of course, who was dead set against abortion, but in favor of capital punishment. He wanted to spend all the money to grow them up and then kill them.

SPIDER: Are you still doing an interview?

LAN: The tape's still going.

BEN: What is your next question?

LAN: I'm just letting it run. This is all just as interesting.

BEN: No, no, no. All these people have done our work for us, so what's your next question.

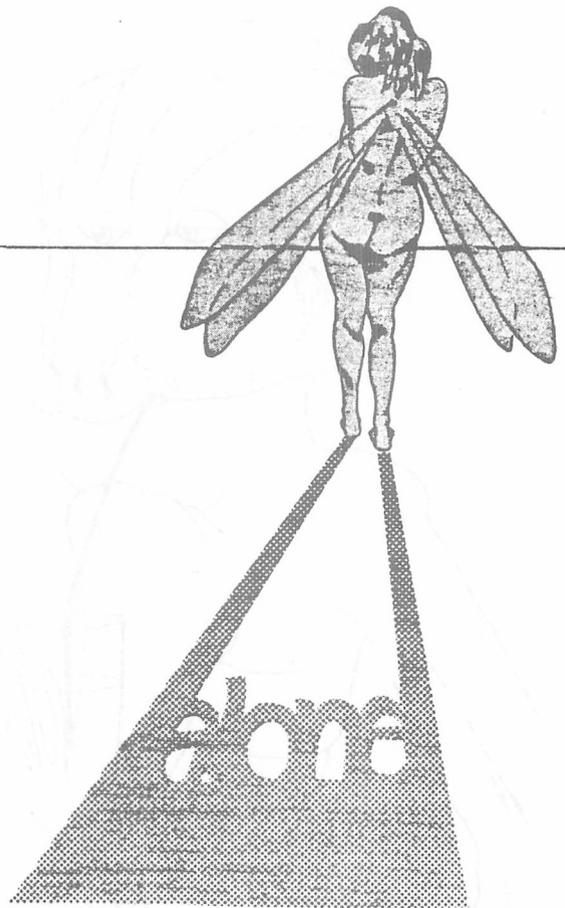
LAN: I didn't have anything after that last one I asked a while ago.

BEN: Well, okay. Turn it off and we'll go home.

DE -

# GAFIATION

by  
Jan Brown



In a last minute of near-panic, I stared into the mirror in my motel room and wondered what I was doing at another con.

Between moving into my own apartment, job changes, upheavals in my personal life, and my natural tendency to isolate myself, I looked around one day early in 1978 and realized that behind me were two years of unrelieved mundanity, and before me was more of the same.

It had gotten so bad that Ross Pavlac threatened to have some of the Michigan fen kidnap me and bring me to MARCON by force! I had visions of Tom Barber flinging me over his shoulder and carrying me off, with all sorts of dire consequences to my body....

I promised Ross to go to MARCON, but found an excuse not to. After two years of mundanity I was scared. I had changed -- had everyone else? Had I outgrown fandom? Would I find the friendliness intrusive? The people immature? Did I still know anybody? Did anybody know me?

MIDWESTCON was another matter. I didn't have an excuse, and it was easier to go than to cancel a motel reservation. Besides, isolation was beginning to look worse than involvement. Before I could start thinking about it again, I put my registration money and my room key in my pocket and went downstairs.

What is it about a good con? Pheromones? Kireseth pollen in the air conditioning? Before I even talked to anybody, I felt it -- a sense of welcome, of acceptance. It closed over my head like the cloud-waters of Hali. Apprehensions? They belonged to someone else -- some mundane who didn't exist any more.

I've come home.

# Splinters & Hulp



BOOK REVIEWS

78

# A Far, Far Call

A book review of  
Gordon R. Dickson's  
THE FAR CALL.

by Clifton Amsbury

As Gordon Dickson has been concentrating more and more on "thoughtful" books, he has also produced books easier and easier to put down. I noticed this particularly with THE FAR CALL. True, the book is broken up into fragments by the nature of the method of telling, but that in itself does not interrupt the grip of the story. Try, for instance, H. Beam Piper's LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN. It too is told in such fragments of chapters, but it is not at all easy to lay aside.

During one time when I was taking a break from THE FAR CALL, my eye chanced to fall upon an old Galaxy Science Novel: THE HOUSE OF MANY WORLDS. I recalled the story and many of its highlights, and have often thought about it. What I had not remembered was that it had been written by Sam Merwyn, Jr. Sam couldn't write for sour apples. Time and again one's attention is torn from the story by an awkward phrasing, an inappropriate word, an infelicitous grouping of words, the crudeness of a stereotype, a general ineptness of expression. But even with that kind of competition, the story carries you along.

Gordon Dickson used to write stories like that, and without Sam's deficiencies as a writer. It seems he still can, as witness THE DRAGON AND THE GEORGE. Therefore, the lack of "grip" in his other kind of books must be on purpose. These books are not to be ignored. They may be easy to put down, but sooner or later they demand to be picked up again. While reading THE FAR CALL, I also reread not only THE HOUSE OF MANY WORLDS, but also Merwyn's THREE FACES OF TIME (back to back with Norton's THE STARS ARE OURS! on Ace double 121) and UNICORN GIRL by Michael Kurland.

Dickson had something important to say and the whole book maintained the aura of an important statement. He was in no hurry to say it, and I did not wander off to another new book; I picked up old ones I'd read years ago and had remembered.

He's a craftsman, so it's good writing. He has inspiration, but he's not trying to get us excited. He's dealing with feelings of glacial certainty, not febrile drive, though there are characters with that also. But I have a fundamental difference of opinion with him. He says "man is" certain ways, "therefore". I've seen similar statements in other science fiction tales. James P. Hogan has an anthropologist do it in INHERIT THE STARS. OK, the char-

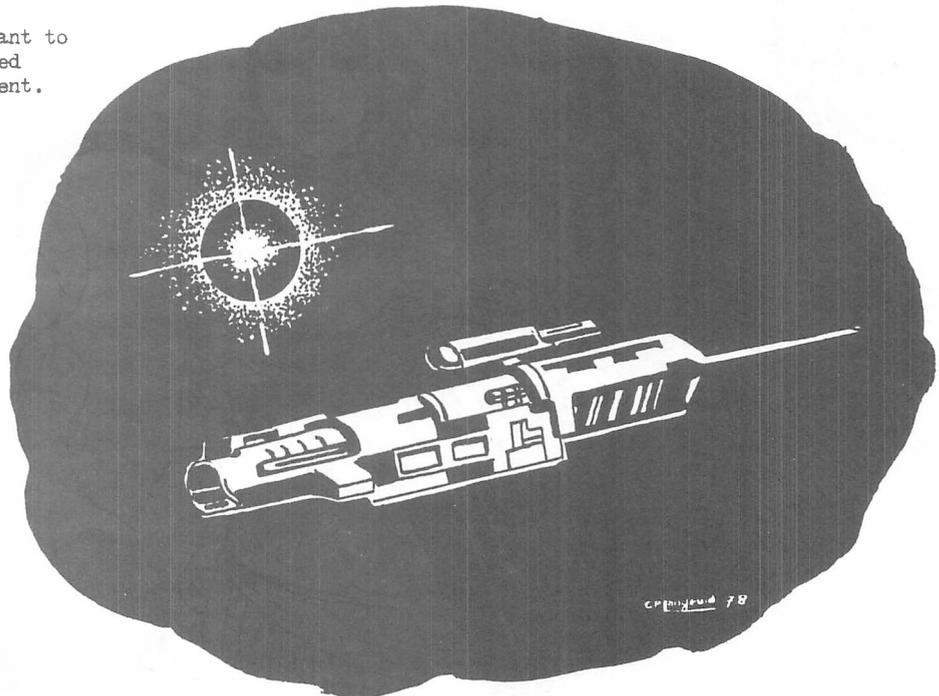
acter was a human biologist, but even so, few anthropologists would do that with either the personality traits Gordie is touting, or that to which Hogan was referring.

They were referring to different traits, but each of them was referring to traits which are not characteristic of "man", but of "some men." An anthropologist would likely say "human beings are capable of these kinds of actions and of the feelings which go with them," and would likely add that in many cultures such feelings and actions would never occur to anyone.

I, too, believe that "we" will answer the Far Call, but not because "man must." We will do it for the same reasons why we build, and the South Sea Islanders of a hundred and fifty years ago built, battleships. The Eskimo never did. Their neighbors on the Northwest coast did. And so do we. But we don't let the Polynesians or the Indians do it anymore.

THE FAR CALL is about whether "they" will let us build and operate spaceships anymore. He weaves a rich tapestry. There's no hurry finishing it. Even the story stops dead for nine months at one point, and for lesser times at others. But it is by no means dull and it does tap into some of the individual and group motivations, misunderstandings, and operations that move us forward or hold us back.

A lot of research went into this, even as the dedication seeks to make clear.



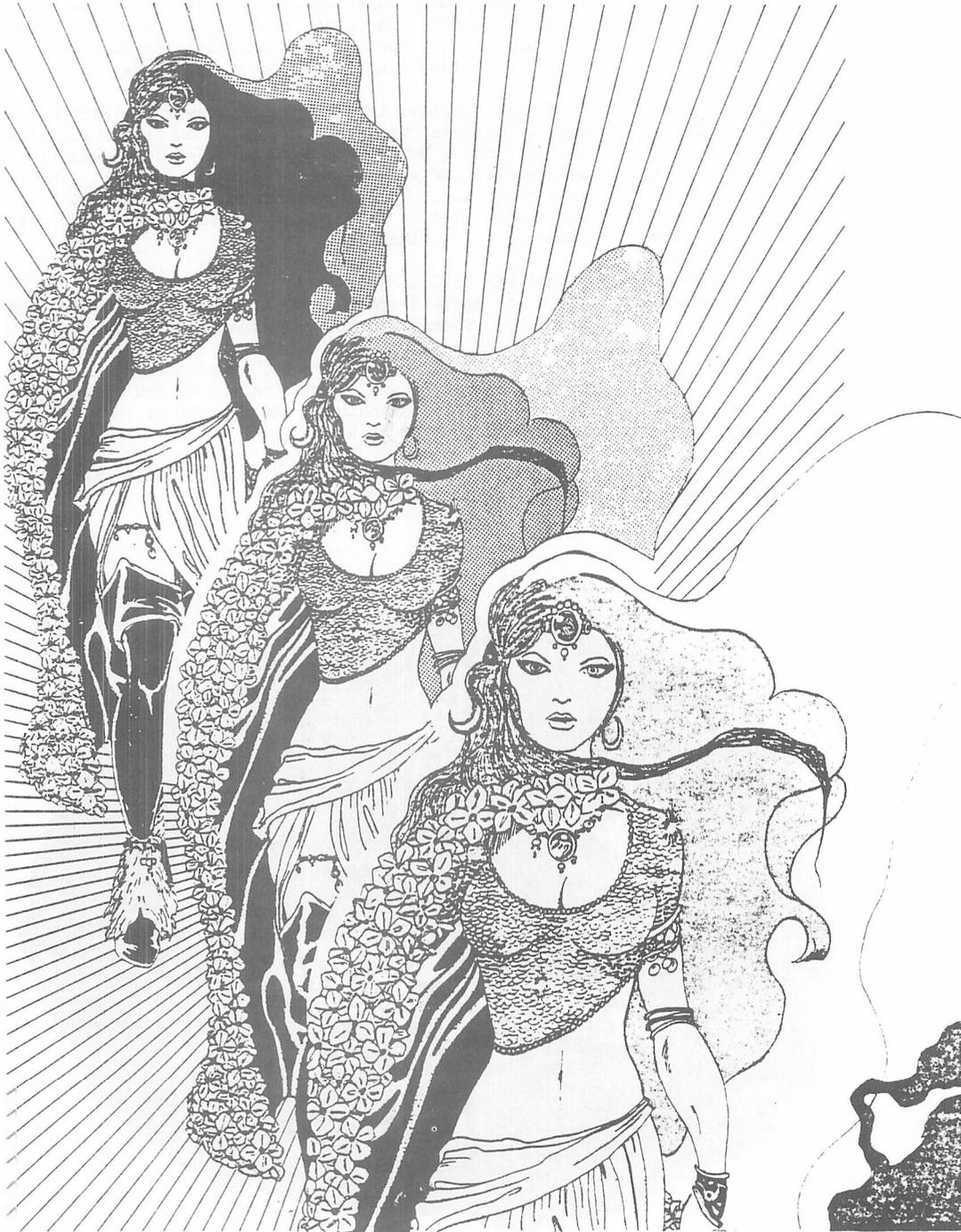
# DREAMSNAKE

DREAMSNAKE is an adventure novel. It is written with some originality, and with more depth of character than usual, but I cannot make more extravagant claims for it than this.

Snake, the protagonist, is a healer on a future earth. Her medicine is worked with snakes. While trying to cure a boy's tumor, one of her snakes is killed, one that is almost impossible to replace. This loss endangers her role as a healer, and the rest of the novel details what happens to Snake as she searches for a way to replace her Dreamsnake.

The novel has a number of scenes which are

attempts to reveal character. In one, a woman dies of radiation poisoning and a broken back, while Snake watches powerless to help her. She is not a superwoman, able to save everyone (though McIntyre has you believing Snake is saving the woman for awhile). In another scene, a man with sexual problems (he is made to feel inferior by his father and himself) makes love to Snake. Despite both these encounters, Snake is unchanged. At the end of the novel, she is the same person as at the beginning. She acts no differently. She seems in perfect emotional control of herself at all times. Her lack of change is not convincing; other characters in the novel grow, but not her.



ALLEN DARNELL SAWYER  
© 1978

The ethical situations in the novel are also simplistic. People are either good or bad (mostly good), but the two are never confused. The city-dwellers (whom we only glimpse, after all), turn Snake away. North, who captures Snake near the novel's end, hates healers. Snake is good; she is kind to the "crazy" that destroys her camp and steals her maps and journal, she even decides that to force North to take the dreamsnake venom would be unethical: she doesn't need to hurt him to escape. But the novel never deals with the familiar situation of good people being forced to do wrong things because of circumstances. The novel does not deal with tragedy--or joy. It does not deal with deep emotions.

Much more admirable and unusual are the strong female characters. All the authority figures in the novel are women. They are affectionate and supportive to one another, and described in stronger terms than the men--or at least the men we'd care to identify with. (Raas is a strong,

traditional masculine character, but he's also a child molester.) McIntyre's handling of sexual customs in this society is also free of traditional, sexist and discriminating roles. Unfortunately, while I find this admirable, it's more because I feel what is described is what our society should be like, rather than admiration for McIntyre's literary invention. I might not care to live in Russ' While-away (or rather, could not), but THE FEMALE MAN is a more interesting novel.

The best portion of the novel is the first chapter, which is composed of McIntyre's short story *Of Mist and Sand and Grass*. The details in this first chapter are very sensual and mysterious. We are plunged into an alien world without explanation, and as Thomas Disch says, this creates one of the most enjoyable challenges in SF. But no one can keep this up for over 200 pages (e.g., an advantage the short story has over the novel). McIntyre's world and culture are much less interesting after she explains them.

The novel has some excellent moments of suspense--e.g., Snake's climb from the snake pit near the novel's end. McIntyre can describe physical agony quite well--it's only the emotions that she cannot depict as forcefully as she and the reader would like.

--Cy Chauvin

## The Fountains of

A review of

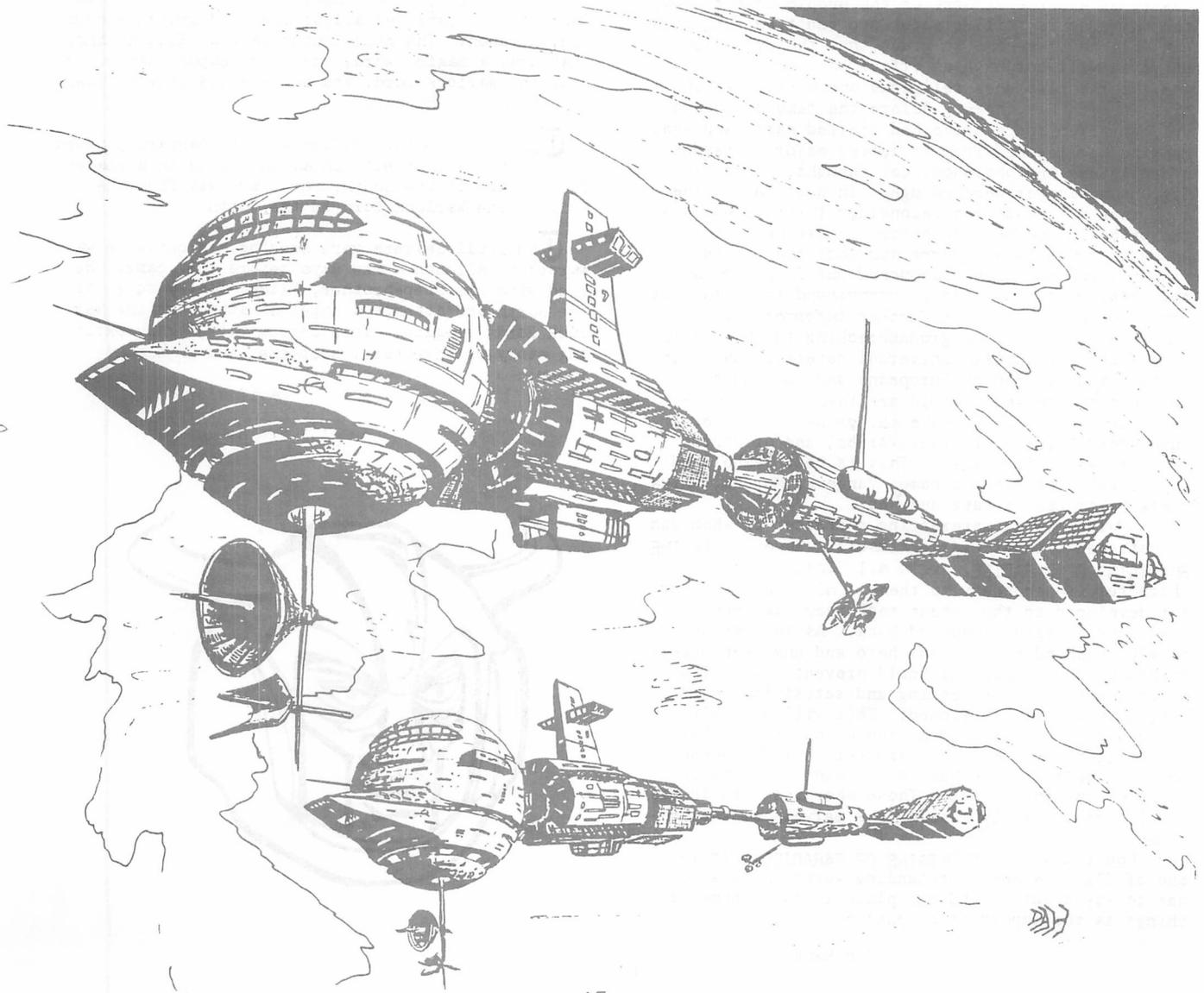
Arthur C. Clarke's

## Paradise

THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE

Arthur C. Clarke has always been one of the most thought-provoking writers in science fiction. His novels have dealt primarily with man and his place in the universe. He has always shown man dwarfed by a universe of magnitude and grandeur beyond his understanding, but always striving upward. Clarke has been called the poet of science, and time after time he has proved himself worthy of this title. Several years ago his *RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA* won for him every major award the field has to offer. Now, his latest and possibly last novel, *THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE*, has arrived and it ranks with his best.

It is hard to know where to start in reviewing this marvelous book. It is a deep, rich, and multi-textured novel. It has Clarke writing in all of his styles, combining the technology of *EARTHLIGHT*, the vision of *CHILDHOOD'S END*, and even adding bits of the far future as in *THE CITY AND THE STARS*. The novel



deals with mankind and his relationship with the universe as have all of Clarke's major novels. It is the culmination of Clarke's writing career, stating clearly and brilliantly his ideas about us and our future.

Nominally, it is the story of engineer Vannevar Morgan and his efforts on the greatest engineering project of all time: the building of a "space elevator" between Sri Kanda, the Sacred Mountain on Sri Lanka, and a synchronous space station. The idea is fantastic and Clarke's writing makes the reader look on in awe as bit by bit the giant tower is built. If this were all the book were about, it would still be a good novel just on the merits of its sheer narrative force.

But, as in all of Clarke's novels, it is much more. On another level it presents a visionary look at mankind. Morgan's efforts to reach the stars are paralleled by those of King Kalidasa, a tyrant in second century Ceylon who also tried to reach heaven by building his pleasure gardens and the Fountains of Paradise. Clarke presents the upward striving of mankind as a universal drive and through this makes the novel much more than a simple hard science story.

The book does a lot of speculating on man and his place in the universe. Time after time major action in the novel is affected by the universe. Events beyond the control of anyone often change events, either helping or hindering Morgan. As fantastic as are the efforts of the people in the book, the universe is still greater and can't be forgotten. Man will never become so great that the mysterious universe will not have an effect on him.

Clarke also does religious speculation which ties in with his theme. Before the time of the novel, an alien space probe had visited earth and what mankind had learned from it forced major revisions of religious and philosophical thought. Older religions no longer were enough. In particular, the line that most made men reconsider their views was the probe's last message before departing. *Starholme informed me 456 years ago that the origin of the universe had been discovered but I do not have the appropriate circuits to comprehend it. You must communicate directly for further information.*

The novel is also groundbreaking in that it is one of the few totally universal novels I have seen. It is not dominated by Europeans and Americans. People from the whole world are involved in the events and therefore we have things being done by Europeans, Chinese, Indians, Arabs, and of course the natives of Sri Lanka. This is best symbolized in the main character's name, Vannevar Morgan, which contains traces of East and West.

Morgan is an interesting character in whom can be detected bits of Clarke himself. However, in THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE, as in all Clarke novels, character is secondary to theme. His characters are not developed to the extent that they take center stage and mankind is pushed back. As in previous novels, mankind is the real hero and any deep development of the individual would prevent this. Thus Morgan, while an interesting and satisfying character, is not fully developed. This will probably bring a few complaints from those who insist that all fiction must deal in character. Clarke doesn't do so because what he has to say can't be said in terms of the individual. Those who miss this in his novels are literally missing the marvels of the universe.

Don't miss THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE. It is one of Clarke's most outstanding works and what it has to say about us and our place in the scheme of things is too important to pass by.

Jim Mann

## The Sword of Shannara

A REVIEW OF TERRY BROOK'S NOVEL

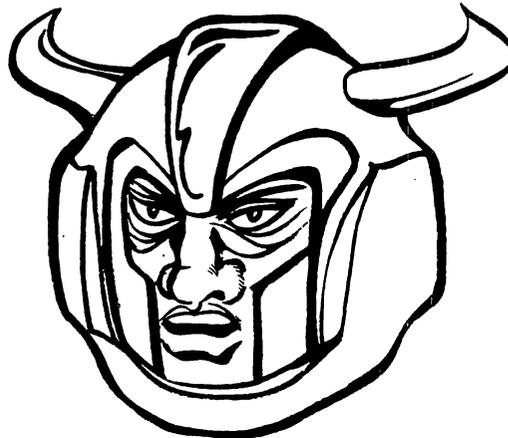
The book, THE SWORD OF SHANNARA, is an exciting adventure story that, from some hints in it, we can tell takes place in our future. Their history says that a long time ago their world was almost destroyed by a great war, and that the people who survived changed: the Dwarves stayed underground for a long time and over the years they slowly became shorter; the Trolls became big and strong for they lived in rough mountainous terrain; the Men stayed above ground and didn't change--they built villages and lived much like medieval man did; the Gnomes lived underground, like the Dwarves, and they often had wars with them, which built up a great hatred between the two races; the Elves had a history which was unknown to most peoples--they dwelled in the forests and they had a magical nature.

Helping to keep the peoples from destroying themselves were the Druids, who were based at Paranor. Some of the Druids turned evil and they separated themselves from the good Druids. The evil Druids (Scull Bearers), under their leader Brona (the Warlock Lord), destroyed all of the good Druids except one, Allanon. The good Druids gave an Elvish king, Shannara, a magic sword, the only weapon that could kill the Warlock Lord, and which could only be used by an heir of Shannara.

The Scull Bearers killed all of Shannara's heirs except one, a half-elf, Shea, who lived in a peaceful village in the South, far, far away from the evil of the Warlock Lord in the North.

The Scull Bearers were seeking him out. He was warned by Allanon a few days before they came. He fled with his step-brother, Flick, to try to go to the North and attempt a hopeless attack on the Warlock Lord's regime. Thus begins this highly exciting story of adventure, suspense, and dramatic irony.

David Albrecht  
Nathan Sefcik



# HEROIC FANTASY

A Review

HEROIC FANTASY. DAW Books no. 334 is titled thus, and seems to be an invitational new story anthology. The editors are Gerald W. Page and Hank Reinhardt, each of whom contributes one story. All the stories are good craftsmanship. I'm sorry, but to me at least none of them is memorable. I had to look back to see who the authors were, and once the book was stuck on my shelves, I had to go to a newsstand to check the editors' names and the title so I could recover the book.

Page is obviously enthusiastic over Hank Reinhardt, who is prominent in Southern fandom and a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism. In that persona he contributes three commentaries on *Swords and Swordplay*, *Armor*, and *Courage and Heroism*. For one so contemptuous of people who make minor errors like equating mail and armor, he makes a far greater one, claiming that the Romans "attached no particular significance to the sword. ...it was just a tool..."

\*sigh\* You'd think a Southern gentleman, or at least a member of the Society, would know better. It's true that the sword of a common soldier was just a common sword--a killing tool. The shield let him past the enemy's weapon and the sword at short range let him past the enemy's skin. Of course the shield itself was a pretty terrible weapon, too.

But common soldiers were not the only Romans. There were also the Roman knights, the patricians, the hereditary officers' caste. And just as there were two different castes of Romans, there were two types of swords, and even different words for those different weapons.

The common soldier's *gladiolus* was a short, broad, stabbing sword, the descendent of the Hallstadt short-sword, which has sometimes been miscalled a dagger by non-heroic archeologists. Our flower, *gladiolus*, is named for the Roman short-sword.

Another botanical term is *spathe*. This Greek word was used by the Hellenized Roman aristocrat for his sword, the descendent of the Hallstadt longsword. From it we have the name of a suit of cards (spades, which are, naturally, the highest ranking suit) and it also has yielded the Italian and Spanish words for sword. After all, in the Medieval and early Modern ages, commoners didn't use swords at all; they used polearms, then firearms.

Two factors should be noted. The *gladiolus* was a mass-produced, government-issued non-entity. The *spatha*, like all special swords, was individually and carefully crafted for noble ownership and often as not bore an individual name, as did heroic swords generally.

Second, the heroic sword was special because it belonged to a special person: the hero. And hero simply means Lord, as Hera simply means Lady.

Things have come to a pretty pass when the only memorable item in a thick DAW anthology is an error in a footnote by the lesser of the two editors. However, if you're a fan of the genre, the book is, as I said, competent, and if it won't rouse your blood much, it will at least help you escape from reality, and while away a few gas lines.

Clifton  
Amsbury



# the STAR TREK novels:

## an overview

by JIM MEADOWS III

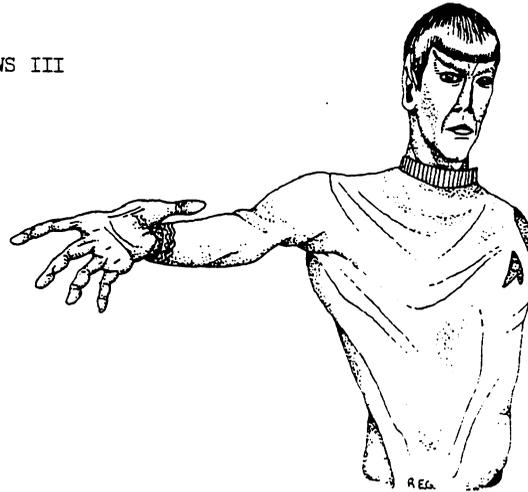
If a fiction series really clicks, it spawns not just imitators, but continuation. When a writer is fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to create a universe that really works well, a lot of people just don't want to leave. Sherlock Holmes is one example. Oz is another. Both of these worlds have been dwelt in, not just by Arthur Conan Doyle and L. Frank Baum respectively, but by a host of others, Ruth Plumley Thompson, John Dickson Carr, Jack Snow, Nicholas Myer, and more. The quality of the tale isn't always important. But the quality of the world in which that tale is set is vital.

STAR TREK is another example. Yes, STAR TREK. You don't think people watch that show for its skillful extrapolation of SF concepts, do you? That sort of thing doesn't last long with the time-worn SF ideas of STAR TREK. What people are really interested in are Spock, Kirk, and McCoy, beaming down like the hosts of 60 MINUTES, to save worlds and play with other's eccentricities. To savor the interplay of characters, STAR TREK fans will put up with a lot of shortcomings. And you can find a lot of shortcomings in the ST fiction put out in print, and not just in the lightweight script adaptations of James Blish and Alan Dean Foster. The novels, the original works cooked up for a captive audience of trekkies, are replete with faults, to which the TREK fans are oblivious. Some pretty big names in the genre have done work in the field of STAR TREK novels, and it is amazing how such big names can willingly accept money for such tiny works.

It started with Mack Reynolds who wrote a rambling juvenile called MISSION TO HORATIUS ten years ago for Whitman. While future STAR TREK fiction dropped the cud-chewing qualities of that particular number, it did set the tone for TREK novels in years to come, and that tone was "rambling."

James Blish wrote his STAR TREK novel in 1970. It was called SPOCK MUST DIE. Actually it was a rather crisply written (at 118 pages, it had better be) and it even had a nice premise, hinging on some nice extrapolations concerning the workings of that faithful prop, the transporter. But Blish, somewhere in the midst of trying to meet deadlines, I guess, sort of got lost in the plot department, although the writing stayed crisp throughout.

It was Joe Haldeman who produced a STAR TREK novel that I found most enjoyable. His was PLANET OF JUDGEMENT, published two years ago. It benefitted from Haldeman's ability to capture the personalities of characters that were not his own, and even to ex-



pand on them. But this novel, also short, had the same problem as Blish's in the area of plotting, although perhaps for different reasons. Haldeman started out with a storyline concerning some passengers on board the Enterprise; halfway through, he seems to have remembered that he was supposed to be writing mostly about good ol' Kirk, McCoy, and Spock. Rewrite the whole thing? Hell, no -- that's for Joe's serious work. Instead, Joe went off on a tangent, almost forgetting the shipboard passengers, and changing plotlines in midstream as he sought ground that would keep the stars of the show in the picture. The writing, and Joe's feel for the characters remained stable, but as a novel, PLANET OF JUDGEMENT bogs down.

For me, anyway, getting the plot strengthened in STAR TREK print fiction was not the high priority, although it would have been nice. Just getting the ambience of the series down on paper (a quality which means nothing if you are not enamoured with the show) was a hard enough feat for most writers. Blish and Haldeman working in novels did it fair enough, but wrote the works so hastily that they did not bother to give their narrative any shape. The one that did have shape was SPOCK, MESSIAH, written in 1976 by Theodore Cogswell and Charles Spano, Jr. It is hard to figure out how Cogswell, the veteran, and Spano, who had never been published before, got together. However, it is easy to see who was responsible for the rather gollygee writing, and who contributed the only solid storyline I ever saw in a STAR TREK novel.

The most promising STAR TREK fiction I have ever seen has been written by fans. The lack of a waiting market made the tone of STAR TREK fan fiction different from fan SF in other types of zines. Good writing, lacking a professional outlet, stayed in the

zines. Thus it was possible for Bantam to publish two (so far) volumes of TREK fiction, THE NEW VOYAGES, with much of it culled from the STAR TREK fanzines, while the quality remained on par or above the TREK fiction written by pros. The fan writers (some of whom, like Ruth Berman and Jacqueline Lichtenberg, did turn pro) made up in their caring for their work what they lacked in experience and/or expertise.

All the same, the one TREK novel I couldn't even finish was one written by a couple of STAR TREK fans. THE PRICE OF THE PHOENIX, by Sondra Marshak and Myrna Culbreath, did not exactly ramble like most pro novels; it just sort of bogged down. At 182 pages, it was one of the longer TREK novels, and it apparently had a few of its chapters cut out by the editor with no subsequent revision. Since I did not finish it, I could not even try to explain its labyrinthian plot, but I can tell you how the novel managed to demonstrate the greatest excesses of STAR TREK fan fiction. Most TREK fan fiction is written by women, and a lot of these women came into TREK fandom due to a certain bubblegum infatuation with Spock, or, less often, the other male members of the cast. Those who got out of that stage (and the many "lay Spock" fan stories that it produced) transferred the affair to the friendship between the show's principles, Kirk and Spock. If you read STAR TREK LIVES! by Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Joan Winston and Sondra Marshak, you will find a whole chapter devoted to the insufferable niceness and true-blue eternity of their friendship. The friendship of the two characters is indeed an integral part of the series' strength, but it does not get terribly gooey until you get to TREK fan fiction. It gets very gooey in THE PRICE OF THE PHOENIX, very gooey and astoundingly overwritten. Quoting sections from the novel does not really give the whole effect because the total affect comes from the same mood being sustained indefinitely, until it collapses of its own weight.

Next in line comes MUDD'S ANGELS by J. A. Lawrence, James Blish's widow. The book takes Stephen Kandel's two Harry Mudd episodes for the series (very popular with the fans) and adds on a third section using the same character. The adaptations of the two episodes are adequate enough, with Blish's partially completed novellettes being finished by his wife's more or less able hand. It is the third section where she goes crazy. Her plot, handled in less than a hundred pages in large type, sends the Enterprise crashing out of this galaxy into another, threatened by dilithium crystals which are seemingly increasing in size approaching infinity, only to be saved by some incredible deus ex machina that bounces the starship back where it started from. The plot has so many holes and series inconsistencies that it makes the rambling little-lost-lamb storylines of Blish and Haldeman look dignified. And its unabashed scope in the midst of such cramped space reminds me of bad novellas that ran in the pulps back in the 1939s (things like "'The Blue Infinity,' a novel in which the Earth moves!").

The most recent STAR TREK novel I've come across is THE STARLESS WORLD by Gordon Eklund, published last year. Eklund has been coming out with work that would not be labeled space opera for the last few years now. But for STAR TREK, he grinds it out. Many of the standard props are there. The cute

alien planet which is actually a spacecraft headed on a forgotten mission, full of nice, rather human, little aliens, one of which has the hots for the captain (this, thankfully, is played down). Then there is the baffling, inflexible force that guides the planet, perhaps down the wrong path, until Kirk talks him out of it with his usual calm Federation logic (ah, we could have had peace with honor in Viet Nam with Kirk around at the Paris Peace Talks).

Eklund's lone little strike for originality is in depicting the guiding force as being possibly a god (a standard STAR TREK plot device is to make the guiding force a computer in god's clothing). He leaves the question up in the air at the close of his 152 page novel. But this little gesture is buried under a work that is, well, turgid. Eklund gets very complex when he is developing his own characters, but when he is grinding out STAR TREK to pay the bills, it seems to lose interest with him.

And that is what makes the STAR TREK novels several levels below, say, THE SEVEN PERCENT SOLUTION. Most of the writers who carry on Sherlock Holmes, Oz, and Alice were really in love with the world they wrote about, and often did not care how strong the existing market was. But for STAR TREK, the market is strong, and the publishers know it. It is the publishers who commission the novels, not the writers who offer them. Since it is not the first love for the writers, an awful lot of potential falls away under the weight of apathy and hasty writing.

None of which will stop the STAR TREK novels. They sell, not because they are good, but because STAR TREK was. Since I have dropped away from reading them, more have come around, including an effort by Stephen Goldin, known for the novels he co-writes with the notes of the late "Doc" Smith. The upcoming movie, STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, may even accelerate the production of these volumes of half-assed, hastily-written science fiction. It certainly has not hurt them, as each one seems to go into further reprints. Blish's first volume of STAR TREK adaptations must be nearing its 30th printing by now, and that is during a thirteen year span. Over the same number of years, a work like Ray Bradbury's FAHRENHEIT 451 has gone through paperback printings numbering only seven. It's amazing.



I think that anyone who is into any genre of cinema finds that his taste and the public's taste are not perfectly correlated. There are popular and well-known films that a fan will think are garbage and there are obscure films that the fan respects and will feel never got a fair shake. This latter group of films are, of course, the films of greater interest. This is my list of lesser-known films worth watching for, and why I feel they are worth watching for. If a film is marked with an asterisk, I consider it very much worth your time to make the effort to see it.

# **Science Fiction and Horror Films**

**Which Ones to Watch for**

**...and Why**

by

**MARK R. LEEPER**

**BATTLE OF THE WORLDS** (1960) - There are a number of these Italian science fiction films that show up periodically on television. This one is, somehow, a cut above the others. Claude Rains plays a renegade scientist who has predicted the entering into our solar system of a planet guided by a computer. He must predict the actions of the computer and try to counter its moves. Present are the usual cheesy Italian spaceship special effects, but also a few that are somewhat better effects. Overall, the film does not live up to the quality of its concept. Most of what I've said for this film can be said for another decent Italian science fiction film, **ASSIGNMENT OUTER SPACE**, which is not quite up to **BATTLE**, but has a few good ideas going for it.

\* **CARNIVAL OF SOULS** (1962) - New Year's Eve, 1966, I was sitting home alone and some channel had a film with an intriguing title, so I watched it. It took me about five years to find someone who could confirm that there really was a superior horror film called **CARNIVAL OF SOULS**. The film was made on a shoe-string budget in Lawrence, Kansas, under similar conditions, I imagine, to those under which **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** was made. While **NIGHT** is frightening due to pure shock value and the sledgehammer approach, **CARNIVAL** creates scenes of eerie, frightening beauty. The sheapness of the production only serves to make the film seem more real. The ending of the film is its Achilles' heel. The idea has been done before, but getting there is *all* the fun. While I have mentioned two effective films made on shoestring budgets, let me just mention a third in passing: **NIGHT TIDE** (1961). It's not up to the other two, but well worth seeing.

**CREATION OF THE HUMANIDS** (1962) - The director and most of the actors should be taken out and shot. The scriptwriter should never have trusted them with his fine literate script. He should try to do the story again, not as a film, but as a stage play. The set designer should get the **CARNIVAL OF SOULS** award for fine work on a meager budget.

**CREEPING UNKNOWN** (1955) - see **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH**

**DARK INTRUDER** (1965) - This film was an unsold TV pilot film first presented on **THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK HOUR**. It didn't sell so the producer, Jack Laird, who later produced **NIGHT GALLERY**, released it as a film. The style betrays its television origins, but the plot is original and refreshing. The story is complex without being convoluted, and there are several unexpected plot twists. The use of Sumerian mythology and the setting in turn-of-the-century San Francisco give the film a distinctive flavor.

**DEVIL COMMANDS** (1941) - An unusual film based on William Sloane's novel, **THE EDGE OF RUNNING WATER**. At a time when most of Boris Karloff's horror roles involved his returning from the dead by scientific means for some sort of vengeance, he plays a surprisingly sympathetic scientist trying to find an electronic means to pick up the brainwaves of the dead and hence communicate with them, particularly his late wife. Surprisingly imaginative is the representation of the

equipment he uses which goes a long way towards creating the atmosphere of the film, particularly the chilling climactic scene.

\* **DEVIL DOLL** (1963) - Perhaps this film was inspired by the ventriloquist episode of **DEAD OF NIGHT**, perhaps not. The story deals with a ventriloquist's hateful relationship with his uncannily life-like dummy, Hugo. William Sylvester, an American actor who has played only in British films (**GORG0, 2001**), is a reporter intrigued enough by the performer to learn the secret of the dummy. The film is a genuine horror story with a chilling punchline ending.

\* **THE DEVIL'S BRIDE** (1967) - Most films depicting Satanism spend the first four-fifths of the film establishing the existence of the cult. Only in the final reel do we get to see the cult in action, and only rarely do we see an effective depiction of the Satanist ritual and/or power. This includes a number of very fine films such as **BLACK CAT**, **CURSE OF THE DEMON**, and **DEVIL'S OWN**. The power of the Satanist Cult is established in the first ten minutes of this adaptation by Richard Matheson of the Dennis Wheatley novel **THE DEVIL RIDES OUT**. The result is the best of the films directed by Terence Fisher, and one of the two or three best films Hammer has ever made. Twentieth Century Fox, who released both **DEVIL'S BRIDE** and **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH**, never gave either film the released it deserved, or they would already be the classics they are only slowly becoming.

**ENEMY FROM SPACE** (1965) - see **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH**

\* **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH** (1967) Nigel Kneale wrote three serials for the BBC involving alien invasions of the earth and a British rocket scientist, Bernard Quatermass. They were **QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT**, **QUATERMASS II**, and **QUATERMASS AND THE PIT**. In 1955 and 1956, Hammer films adapted the first two into the films known as **CREEPING UNKNOWN** and **ENEMY FROM SPACE** with Brian Donlevy as Quatermass. Both were superior suspense films. In the first, the first manned spacecraft returns from space with only one of its three crew members, and he is possessed by an alien spirit. Richard Wordsworth, as the unfortunate astronaut, presents a truly alien characterization. In the second film, Quatermass, who is in the process of designing a moon base, discovers a similar base on an isolated point of the English coast, the beginning of an alien colony. Hammer realized in 1956 that they lacked the resources necessary to do an adequate job of adapting the third and finest of Kneale's teleplays. In 1967, at the height of their success, they were ready to produce the third story. For such a little-known film, there are surprisingly many science fiction fans who call this the best science fiction film ever made. In one fell swoop, Mr. Kneale tries to present a hypothetical explanation for race prejudice, psychic phenomena, telekinetic, and the coincidental appearance of identical myths in widely separated cultures. For such a highly cerebral film it is very well paced, building in tension and suspense to one of the most thrilling climaxes of any science fiction film.

**MIND BENDERS** (1963) - Low-key British film, semi-science fiction. An eminent scientist working on the effects of sensory deprivation apparently sells out to *the Enemy*. Was he a voluntary traitor? or had his experiments destroyed his will and made him a puppet of the Russians? Dirk Bogarde is an associate scientist devoted to his wife. Can the same experiment

be used to brainwash him against his wife? It is tried, with negative results -- he is as devoted as ever. You can work out the rest of the plot from there yourself. Well-acted and engrossing.

**PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN (1950)** - This film is a magnificent failure and fairly unique among fantasy films. If Hemingway had written fantasy, this is the sort of thing he probably would have done. Ava Gardner is not the legendary Pandora, but Pandora Reynolds, an American nightclub singer vacationing in Spain. James Mason is peculiarly cast as Heynrík Van Der Zee who in the 16th Century cursed God and was, in turn, cursed to sail the seas, deathless, and come ashore only at set intervals, until he can find a woman who loves him enough to die for him and release him from life. There are a host of other Hemingway-esque characters -- Pandora's lover, who is a race driver trying to break the world land speed record; Montalvo, who is a vain and jealous toreador who is the hero of Spain; and a scholar studying legends, whose main purpose is to be the narrator and tell the legends to the principal characters. I think that the adult fantasy film will go the way of the adult western. There were only a handful made, almost all British, and there was only one **PANDORA AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN**.

**PRIVILEGE (1967)** - Peter Watkins was a documentary maker for the BBC when he was commissioned to make **THE WAR GAME**, a realistic picture of the effects of an atomic attack on Britain. He made the film completely realistically and screened it for the BBC. The decision was that this optimistic picture of the results would cause no less than a public panic so it was shown only in art theatres instead, and won awards. Watkin's reputation for documentary science fiction of the near future was established. His film **GLADIATORS** was disappointing, but **PRIVILEGE** has some interesting ideas. Rock singer Paul Jones plays Steven Shorter, a phenomenally popular rock singer who becomes a symbol of rebellion, but in reality is the docile puppet of his manager. His power over the public is first exploited by Madison Avenue (or whatever the British equivalent is) and finally he is manipulated by the government to lead his followers away from rebellion into the less bothersome field of religion. I didn't know whether to think that it could never happen, or that it already has.

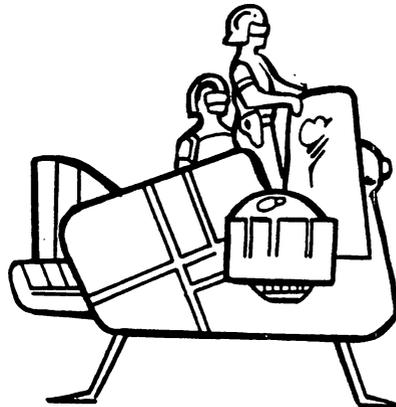
**QUEST FOR LOVE (1971)** - Almost all science fiction films have some sort of nominal "love interest." Don't ask me why. Perhaps, in most cases, the term "interest" is a misnomer, since it is usually the duller part of the film. Still, the science fiction film was, for the most part, a product of the Fifties, which was a sentimental period, and in the Fifties, an inevitable theme in science fiction films was "boy meets girl." (Since then, it seems that only the verb was changed.)

One film that does well as both a science fiction film and a love story is **QUEST FOR LOVE**. Tom Bell plays a British scientist whose experiment goes wrong and who is catapulted into a parallel universe that branched off from our universe in the 1920s. World War II never happened, Everest had not yet been conquered, etc. He finds that he has changed places with the new universe's version of what he became: a successful playwright and a consummate, self-seeking bastard. He also finds himself suddenly married. What is peculiarly

interesting is that he cannot be understood when he tries to explain what has happened to him. His past behavior in that world has conditioned people to what sorts of things he does say, and his explanations are all misinterpreted. I could be wrong, but I think this may be the only common film that uses a parallel world concept, and it does quite a decent job of it.

**THE SEVENTH VICTIM (1943)** - Val Lewton was the Ingmar Bergman of horror film producers. He was an artist making finely crafted horror and fantasy films. The one fault of his films is that he has an unfortunate tendency to be --dare I show my bad taste and say it? -- dull. **SEVENTH VICTIM** is one of his best. I've seen only a very cut version mischosen for a TV slot aimed at children, but between the copious commercials there were some hauntingly effective scenes. Lewton in one scene makes a city street seem as ominous and forbidding as a jungle. Particularly effective were the "poisoning" and "dying neighbor" scenes which I shall refrain from describing for fear of destroying their impact.

\* **UNEARTHLY STRANGER (1963)** - It seems that part and parcel of science fiction films are special effects. It is nearly impossible to tell a science fiction story without explosive camera wizardry and/or lavish sets. This British film's biggest single expense was probably the rent on a building with a "modern" or "futuristic" looking circular stairway. No special effects, no lavish sets. Just actors acting in front of the camera, and yet it is one of the most thought-provoking of all science fiction films. I should point out that as with a good percentage of British films, the acting is excellent, and there are a few familiar faces, like Jean Marsh. The story deals with a group of scientists working on projecting their minds out of their bodies and into alien worlds where the minds will take corporeal form. Hence, we would be able to explore other worlds without physically leaving Earth. Unfortunately, all the scientists making any sort of progress along these lines are being killed by an unknown force. Can it be that if we can send our minds to other planets, alien civilizations can send their minds here? The suspense is very well-handled, and the ending, while not totally unpredictable, catches the viewer completely off guard.



# T h e C H O S E N

by Evelyn C. Leeper

In *THE CHOSEN* (previously titled *HOLOCAST 2000*), writer/director, Alberto De Martino, has chosen to deal with only one of the *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (fire, famine, war, and pestilence) -- fire. In this film, the Antichrist plans to use an atomic power plant to destroy the world. The story, which deals with the attempts to stop him, is at times obviously forced to parallel the *Book of Revelations* (Chapters 13 and 20). For example, the plant has seven towers, each with ten vents, and each has ten security systems, which represents the beast with seven heads, each with ten horns, with ten crowns upon the horns.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the film Robert Caine (Kirk Douglas) sets off the first dynamite charge for the construction of the plant (in some unspecified MiddleEast country). The blast, which destroys the *Cave of the Vision* (where an ancient prophet foresaw the *Apocalypse*), is beautifully filmed from all angles and in slow motion so that it seems that the chain reaction which is to destroy the world has been set off right then. We then follow Caine to London where his wife attempts to stop construction of the plant. There is an attempt on Caine's life by a very *Mephistophelean* assassin (Massimo Foschi), and in the struggle, Mrs. Caine is killed. Gradually we come to the realization that anyone who attempts to stop the project will meet with a similar fate.

There is a lot of religious symbolism throughout. Some, such as a computer printout of Christ's name backwards to indicate the Antichrist, are far-fetched. (It's a pity filmmakers are so fascinated by computers; they only display their ignorance when they portray them in films.) But some of the symbolism is well-executed. For example, the boardroom scene with Caine and the twelve directors is an exact visual duplication of the *Last Supper*. And towards the end, we see Caine, arms outflung, the perfect representation of a Christ figure.

The visual imagery of the film is excellent. The best sequence is a nightmare of Caine's, which cannot be effectively described. It is a shame, however, that the director (or editor) insisted on intercutting the dream with scenes of Caine tossing and turning in bed -- it interrupts the flow and the mood. And Angel Caine (Simon Ward, Caine's son, who throughout most of the film plays an ambiguous role, is always dressed completely in white or light beige, giving a very striking impression. (Simon Ward, by the way, gives the best performance of the film, although Foschi, Alexander Knox as a Nobel Prize-winning scientist, Anthony Quayle as the company doctor, and Romolo Valli as the priest, all contribute admirably. As far as the leads (Douglas, and Agostina Belli as his lover), their performances are competent, but not up to that of the supporting cast.)

There are, of course, the usual scenes of demonstrations opposing the plant on ecological and safety grounds. Even here, the demonstrators are not merely people, but grotesquely clothed and made-up. The ending<sup>2</sup> is ambiguous enough to leave room for a sequel, if this film succeeds. And, as was mentioned before, the scientific elements are at their usual cinematic level (i.e., absurd). But for imagery and atmosphere, this film gets top marks. Overall rate it 3 (on a 1-4 scale).

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<sup>1</sup>See *Revelations* 13

<sup>2</sup>Based on *Revelations* 20

## M e s s a g e F r o m S p a c e

by Jon Rosenthal

*MESSAGE FROM SPACE* is a Japanese film and it has all the technical skill that they used on their *B* movies. The plot is found in various different movies and TV shows, from *STAR WARS* to *MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY*, from *BATTLESTAR: GALACTICA* to *LOST IN SPACE*. In total, this film is for kids under the age of nine. The style, plot, costumes, and script all lacked intelligence and ambition that made movies such as *STAR WARS* such popular films. This movie is for people who have nothing better to do and would like to waste some money.

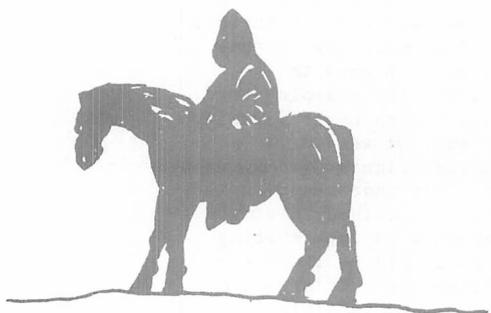
# The Lord of the Rings

by David Albrecht

The movie THE LORD OF THE RINGS is an excellent film, full of charm and brilliance. The scenery and background of some parts is extremely well done, and as a whole the animation is very good. Some of the characters are real pictures of people, filled with color; they tend to be too dark and shadowy, and they are hard to distinguish.

The movie displays the history of *Middle Earth* at that time quite well. However, many small parts that were in the books were left out, along with a few important scenes: They left out a whole series of adventures with Tom Bombadil of the Old Forest; they omitted many parts of the trip from Rivendell to Moria, concerning wolves and the terrible Misty Mountain cold; Eomer was left out of much of the film's end where he played an important part in his disobeying of King Theoden's orders; they also failed to show Aragorn's hereditary lineage to the kingship of Gondor.

Altogether, despite some problems, this movie is well worth seeing.



# Invasion of the Body Snatchers

by Jon Rosenthal

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS is the remake of a film put into circulation in 1958. The new version is, however, not as good as the original film. Although some people like the newer movie, I personally prefer the older one. There was much more care taken both in time and skill to develop the characters and film the movie. The new film is nothing spectacular, but it is all right. If you have seen the original film, I suggest that you see the new one for curiosity's sake.

# Close Encounters of the Third Kind

by Greg Frederick

In the continuing effort to inform SF fans, the following is a comment about the film CLOSE ENCOUNTERS.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS begins with a series of interesting clues. First, some ancient World War II planes were found in a Mexican desert. They were in perfect working order, although they had been lost for over thirty years. Then on a radar screen, an air traffic controller notices what happens when a UFO nearly collides with a passenger jet. Then the encounters come closer to man. An electric line repairman, Roy Neary, is buzzed by a UFO which happened to be exploring the Midwestern United States. Another lady's son is running around their house mysteriously. Neary, and the lady, Jillian, come upon a UFO together while Jillian is trying to find her son, who had been taken by the aliens. They didn't know that, though, so they kept on searching for the boy. During the night when they saw a UFO, they received a vision, or a hypnotic suggestion, of a mountain where the landing would be. So

they set off to find that mountain where the UFO was going to land.

Paralleling this action, the government is decoding a secret message which is continually being broadcasted by the aliens. They then found the location on earth indicated by the message and evacuated the area. There the military set up their camp. All the people who have had an encounter with a UFO receive a mental image of the place where this UFO would land. Unfortunately, the Army manages to keep away everyone from the landing site except for Neary and Jillian. Then they see the most incredible sight of all, right on that mountain top.

Columbia Pictures did an excellent job on the movie, especially with the special effects. Trumbull, the man in charge of special effects, did an outstanding job, as everyone, I'm sure, will agree. Columbia Pictures blew a lot of money into this picture, and it came out for the good.

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*Futurelife* magazine headlined ALIEN as "Bigger Than STAR WARS"?; but the only feature it has in common with that movie, besides possibly the amount of money involved, is that most of the action takes place in space. This is a film to be taken very, very seriously.

The title sequence is quiet, deliberate, a promise that we won't be beaten over the head with flashy special effects. The camera pans slowly across the dark face of a planet, past the stars to the space freighter *Nostramo*. Its statistics flash on the screen. What could be more ordinary than an ore freighter? But even in the first few minutes the scene evokes an atmosphere of unease. Empty corridors. Papers ruffling in a draft. Moving parts on the machines, electronic mutterings, but still a pervasive silence. Dim lights. Is the ship occupied or deserted? The audience gets its first small shock when the computer screen jumps to life, reflecting eerily off an (empty?) emergency helmet.

The scene changes; the lights come up and the actors come to life. The transition from silent freeze chamber to breakfast is abrupt, bringing the audience into the reality of the scene by its very commonplaceness. We get our first glimpse of the crew's personalities and relationships. They swap jokes and complain about the food and the pay--and what is more ordinary than Parker's and Brett's resentment about being paid less than the others? These people are nothing more or less than workers heading home after finishing a job. All that concerns them is that it's almost over.

They settle down to the business of landing the freighter, only to find out they're nowhere near home; there's just enough uneasiness in their reactions to keep the audience on edge, not enough to cause premature panic. The responses to learning about the (possibly alien) radio beacon are completely predictable: some are curious, some don't want to be bothered with extra work, some simply play it by the book without any questions.

The landing sequence is beautifully-oriented special effects. The routine of the landing craft, played against the visuals to create an atmosphere of authenticity, is no more melodramatic that it has to be. It's anyone's guess why the script calls for the ship to be damaged when it sets down; it adds nothing to the plot. But the interplay between Parker/Brett and Ripley "down under" provides insight into all three characters. The two engineers take their jobs no more seriously than they have to; they feel that the rest of the crew looks down on them, and complain because "no one ever comes down here"--but they don't want anyone invading "their" territory. Ripley, on the other hand, takes herself very seriously. She may not be popular, but she does the job right.

The choice of "volunteers" to investigate the alien ship is also revealing. Kane is instantly eager, Dallas naturally includes himself, but Lambert's grimace tells far better than words her opinion on the subject. Ash shows neither overt eagerness nor reluctance, but he's obviously interested in what's out there; his "facts" ("Mother says the sun is coming up in twenty minutes.") are all aimed towards encouraging the expedition.

Technical details are the foremost feature of the scenes in the alien craft. The ship itself is ominous, truly inhuman. Nothing is recognizable as machinery, except the pilot's chair. The immense size, inside and out, is disconcerting, even without the total absence of familiar features.

Now we begin to get small hints of what's to come. Ripley sets to work on the beacon and discovers it's a warning; Ash discourages her from alerting the investigating team for what sounds like a logical reason. Inside the ship, Dallas notes that the alien corpse looks as if it had exploded from the inside. We don't know what yet, but something is definitely going to go wrong.

Kane shows far more courage than brains in his exploration. Any sensible person would have moved, *fast*, if something completely unknown had started to show signs of life; but no, he has to stand there watching until it attacks him. That offended my "willing suspension of disbelief," but then again--there'd have been no story if he'd been safely out of reach! The attack itself is a brilliant horror scene; we know it's going to happen, but it still catches us by surprise. The alien is grue-

An

Analytical

Commentary

by

Mary E. Cowan

some, but the film doesn't dwell on the disgusting aspects, preferring to go for the head and not the stomach (uh, no pun intended).

The alien itself inspires much scientific speculation. Were the eggs ready to hatch, with the *Nostromo's* crew simply arriving at the convenient time? Or do they remain dormant until they detect life, and if so, how? Warmth (through a space suit?), light, movement? At least the "science" in this science fiction movie stimulates the scientific imagination more than it defies it.

Of course we know that the Alien will get on board the ship somehow, but the confrontation between Ash and Ripley is necessary to the story and the characterizations. On the one we have the science officer (with a hidden motive) who claims to be following Dallas' orders, but is obviously eager to examine the creature; on the other, the third officer whose main concern is the safety of the rest of the crew. Lambert and Dallas may be worried about their own welfare, but are more concerned with getting help for Kane. Theirs is the most human reaction, but Ripley's is the most intelligent, and in the long run, the most humane. She doesn't let her emotional reactions compromise her sense of duty, by the book or by common sense.

It doesn't take long for the crew to find out just what they're up against. Over Ash's objections, Dallas starts to cut the creature off Kane's face (with a most authentic-looking surgical laser), and it promptly bleeds acid through three decks. An interesting scene, though not as suspenseful as others; and it even has touches of humor, as when Parker mutters, "Hell of a defense mechanism!" and when Dallas returns Brett's pen, half-eaten away by the acid. But above all, the audience realizes the danger of trying to attack the alien: if it's injured badly enough, it will probably destroy the ship.

My immediate question is, why indeed don't they dump Kane in the freeze unit? Of course, to repeat, if they had, that would have been the end of the story. At least, the script does try to justify the decision, to make it credible. Dallas is just a ship jockey, and he's willing to leave the science decisions to the science officer, trusting him to make the right choices. In his argument with Ripley he says as much, but this scene also drops one more hint of the final confrontation between Ripley and Ash. When she says, "I don't trust him," the audience too begins to have its doubts.

The disappearance of the Alien comes when we aren't expecting it. The scene is carefully arranged: dim lighting, Kane's still figure, the great caution they take...then an ominous tail falls over Ripley's shoulder. Surprise! It's Dead! This is just one instance of the film's use of anti-climax (Aha! You thought it was going to be something a lot worse!) to relieve a little tension in order to make the next real shock even worse. The scene also highlights Ash's supreme self-control, and adds a touch of irrelevant interest: what are we likely to assume about Ripley's concern for Dallas, and his shielding her when the Alien drops among them? This isn't the only implication of a very close relationship between them, which gives depth to the characterizations but is subtle enough not to interfere with the flow of the story.

Another moment that artfully misleads the viewer is Kane's reawakening. Ash's statement, "I think you'd better see for yourself" how his condition has changed makes us expect something awful; but he's only awake, and hungry, apparently none the worse for wear (again, lulling our suspicions after arousing them). The next scene is carefully set up. Brett mentions the freezer; Kane pleads for one more meal: the fatal delay.

The "kitchen scene" is one that hits almost everyone the hardest. It's one of the two grisliest scenes in

the film. Still, there's an artistic excellence to it. When Kane goes into convulsions, the rest of the crew reacts, not with panic, but with attempts to help--notice Parker trying to get a spoon between Kane's teeth; the director didn't ignore the slightest detail. The first spurt of blood catches us by surprise without really preparing us for the Alien's "rebirth." The camera doesn't dwell on the gore, however. Before anyone can react, the Alien is gone (in retrospect, was Ash trying to protect Parker from the Alien's lethal defense mechanisms, or the Alien from Parker's attack? Or both?).

Kane's burial is a small intrusive spot, unnecessary to the story; why did the director include it? Why do they all take time to watch the body hurtle into space when they should be hunting a monster? If nothing else, it does give the Alien time to grow and metamorphose (and, could it really grow so large so quickly?), for the convenience of the plot, but it also underscores the feeling the crew have for one another--their humanity, the need to pay those last respects (did anyone notice whether Ash was in the group?).

Before their first attempt to capture (as yet, not kill) the Alien, Brett makes a point of mentioning that the prod will not harm it. A sensible precaution, considering previous demonstrations of its dangers; at the same time, there is no overt hostility towards the Alien itself at this point in the movie, only an awareness of the threat it could pose.

Tension builds when movement registers on Ripley's sensor. Slooooooowly they creep up on the locker--and it's the *cat!* There probably isn't an audience anywhere that didn't burst into laughter. And there probably isn't a person in the audience who didn't mutter "Stupid!" when Brett goes off alone to catch him (though at least we're given a logical reason why he must be caught). We know Brett is going to get his: the scene is paced to stretch our apprehension to the limit. But it also stretches credibility. Why doesn't Brett go back to the others as soon as he finds the skin? Why doesn't he look around suspiciously when the cat hisses? And what's a *cat* doing in a room full of falling water?

For that matter, why a cat in the first place? From a logistical standpoint in the film, he is a catalyst for some of the more dramatic scenes (like the one just mentioned). But he also adds a touch of hominess to the ship, a sense of the mundane that throughout the film is balanced against the unearthly terror. Notice that even in a blind panic Ripley remembers to get Jones to safety, that he was in the freeze unit when she released the poison gasses. There's something basically decent about the crew of the *Nostromo*, that shows in many small ways; such human touches help immeasurably in our identifying with their situation.

And how many viewers half-expected that the Alien had "gotten to" the cat, and that it would turn into something nasty while we weren't paying attention?

Possibly only after Brett's death does the crew realize how serious a danger the Alien is. At least most of the crew; Ash's response to a request for ideas is a comment on its "marvelous adaptability" ---it's becoming evident that he's more interested in studying it than killing it. When they do come up with a possible weapon, Ripley immediately volunteers; is this a touch of her character, or an ironic comment on the fact that she'll be the only survivor? And another question: does the computer really have no information regarding Dallas' plan, or is it withholding evidence on Ash's orders? This is a film that almost *must* be seen twice, the second

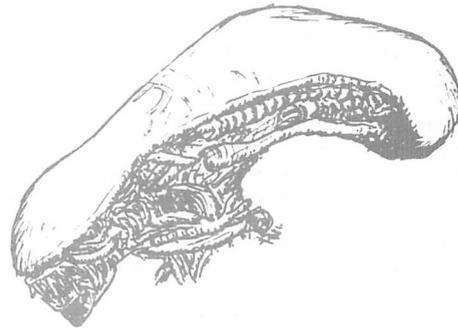
time to make careful note of the myriad seemingly irrelevant details that come back to haunt us once we know the full story.

The search through the ventilation system is classic horror. We see the claustrophobic tunnels, the junctions closing ominously behind Dallas. We watch the monster as a simple electronic blip, appearing, then disappearing, then reappearing as it moves with deliberate (?) speed towards its prey. We share Lambert's hysteria, the sudden moment of terror when the Alien appears out of nowhere. And it's over; no need to dwell on the obvious.

The vehemence of Parker's slamming the incinerator onto the table is an excellence response to the previous scene. What else is there to say? There is no choice now but to answer violence with their own violence, physical and emotional. Their hostility is directed not only towards the Alien, but also towards Ash, who is still calmly treating the threat as a scientific problem; but the audience still doesn't suspect anything more than intellectual stubbornness and cold-blooded scientific curiosity, until Ripley's discovery of Special Order 937. "Crew Expendable." Those two words transform the crisis from a terrible accident into a deliberate trap. As Parker later exclaims, "It's the damned Company!" We aren't expecting anything more than a scary-movie, and suddenly we have political intrigue. How likely is it, how often does it happen that "They", the Company, the Establishment, place their own priorities (profits, national security) above the safety and welfare of the people under their control? We are confronted with yet another unanswered question: did "They" know about the Alien before the *Nostramo* ever came close enough to receive the distress signal? Was Ash a deliberate plant or merely a coincidence? Was all this a set of tragic coincidences, or was the crew set up for the encounter so "They" would have someone to bring home the Alien? How much of this could have been avoided by placing caution above curiosity, personal safety above rewards? On an individual level, Kane was destroyed because he was too curious to acknowledge the danger--on an institutional level, was the crew of the *Nostramo* destroyed because their employer was too greedy to care about their fate?

Ripley's final confrontation with Ash tosses us one complete surprise after another. We don't expect her to break down, not to attack him physically as she does. We certainly don't suspect that he's a robot; though did anyone notice the milky "sweat" on his temple? Is his attempt to choke her deliberate, or has she knocked something loose and deranged him? I know that I was deeply offended by this particular revelation. I don't like seeing robots in particular, and technology in general, made the villain as a pat explanation of why things happen the way they do. This scene was the only one that seemed as if it were included merely because it was disgusting. The sight of a headless Ash erratically attacking his crewmates is certainly shocking, but why should he be a robot in the first place? Perhaps it was the only explanation the scriptwriter could think of for why Ash had handled things the way he did. Maybe the Company couldn't trust a human to ensure the Alien's survival until They could get Their hands on it. Maybe the writers couldn't conceive of a human behaving in such a callous manner. Or, maybe they wanted to add one more gruesome scene, and it's okay to trash somebody if, after all, it's only a machine.

The decision to blow up the ship is both inevitable and a reflection of their emotional state by this time--their outrage and desire for revenge. They've been attacked by an unknown horror, bereft of their friends, betrayed by a crewmate and by their employer--maybe Ripley's decision is as much a strike against that employer as it is the only means of destroying the Alien.



We almost expect the three of them to succeed, even as we're waiting for the Alien's next appearance. The characters have been so well-defined that the final scenes are believable--we don't get the feeling that it happens that way because that's what the director wants to happen. When Lambert sees the Alien and is literally too frightened to move, it's acceptable because of her earlier reactions: she's a good worker but not exactly fearless, more emotional than the others and less in control of herself. (Surprisingly, her reactions do not come off as sexist stereotyping; a couple of people have asked me what I think of this as a "feminist" film. In my opinion it isn't, but the *lack* of stereotypes and silly roleplaying is noticeable and very refreshing.) And Parker, in spite of all common sense, *will* try to rescue her before attacking the Alien. They are trapped not only by the monster but by their own personalities. Ripley races to rescue them whether or not she realizes that she will be too late, even as she stopped to find Jones and get him to safety. A concern for life motivates these people more than any knee-jerk reaction of, "Oh, it's ugly, kill it!" This factor in itself lifts the film far above the average horror movie.

We almost had hope until Parker's and Lambert's deaths; now we honestly *don't know* if Ripley will survive. Sure, the good guys always win--but they haven't so far, and this film, blessedly, doesn't deal in clichés. It would be difficult to improve on the suspense sequence that has Ripley set the Destruct, see the Alien, go back to cancel it--and be too late. We don't know until *the* last minute if she will make it. Her last mad race is made through shrieks and whoops and flashing lights and clouds of steam, as chaotic as her own mind must be by now, with Mother's implacable countdown ticking away the last traces of sanity.

The explosion is glorious, deeply satisfying. But--the more observant have already realized that she left the shuttle door open. We're waiting for the Alien to show up; and it doesn't. She lovingly pets Jones and puts him safely in the freeze unit. No Alien. She sets the controls; nothing. She undresses; still quiet. Just one more detail before she settles down--and *then* it's there, after we've almost given up on our suspicions!

Sigourney Weaver deserves an award for her performance in this film, if only for the final scene. She's visibly trembling as she hides among the suits--but she's still thinking, the only member of the crew to maintain good sense throughout the film. It's anyone's guess why there would be poison gas jets in an emergency shuttle (routine decontamination?), but by this time we don't care about such niceties. We just hope she makes it. I don't

think even Ripley knows if she hit the airlock button deliberately or by accident; at least she did it. And the grappling hook is a perfect touch; it knocks the Alien out the door but also tethers it to the craft. The rocket blast provides a satisfying end to the Alien, and to the film.

It's appropriate that the film should end quietly, the way it began. There's nothing left to say or feel, just a report to make to anyone who's listening, and a long, cold sleep.

Even after the credits have rolled up and away, ALIEN maintains a hold on the imagination. Part of the reason is the film's sheer physical beauty, the loving attention to detail that is evident in even the most minor scenes. But it isn't just "pretty"--everything looks real. Obviously as much attention is paid in putting this film together to accuracy and credibility as to visual impact. Therefore, the film is naturally more believable, and so more engrossing.

Nowhere is this attention to detail more evident than in the characterizations. The actors are given free rein to develop their parts, with the result that each crew member is a Real Person, with individual faults, virtues, mannerisms, eccentricities, and motives. Even their clothing is an expression of their personalities. Tennis shoes on a space freighter? Why not?

In short, nothing is done just because it makes an appealing melodramatic scene. Even in scenes that were more obviously contrived to further the plot, there's a motive for every action, a reason for every decision, an explanation for each one's behavior. Such integrity and depth make ALIEN more than just a monster movie; they make the difference between a bad movie (heavy on the gore, and don't worry if it doesn't make sense) and a good movie. Alien is an excellent movie. It does not just scare us; it makes us think.

And that, after all, is what science fiction is all about.



# Romantic/Science Fiction:

## THE OLDEST FORM OF LITERATURE

by C. J. CHERRYH

I taught Latin and Ancient History for eleven years in high school, and in the history class, when we studied ancient China, a particular incident would catch the minds of my students. During the reign of Shih Huang Ti, from 221 to 206 BC, the emperor thought that the history of the world should begin again, starting with his own dynasty. So Shih Huang Ti ordered the beheading of all scholars and the burning of all books, except those on religion, medicine, and agriculture. There were some people at this time who dared to preserve books, in spite of the imperial edict, and when the emperor died, they pulled out their concealed books from the walls of houses, temples, shrines, and so forth, and the new government that was established took an interest in this. All people who had books, or who had memorized even a few lines of a book, were asked to come in to central points to turn in the volumes, or recite those lines to government scribes so that the books could be collected and reproduced, the lines collated, and the lost history of China recovered.

I asked my students: If the same thing happened in the United States under a dictator, which book would you risk your life to save? Which book would mean enough to you that you would want to dedicate your life to preserving in into a new generation, and pass down to your children? I told them to think about it for a minute, and I would ask them their answer. The general reaction was the question: "Just one?" I'd answer, "Well, two. Maybe a person could care for two books in a lifetime. So you're taking one for duty, and one for yourself."

Then I would go around the room, thirty to sixty people per year through eleven years of teaching, and I'd ask which books. Usually the roughest, toughest character in the class would say, "The WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE." And, knowing this fellow, I'd ask why. He'd reply, "'Cause it's culture, and I think it oughta be saved." Then this little girl with frills and laces would tell me, "THE THREE MUSKETEERS." Among the other things they would name would be those you might expect to find: the U.S. Constitution, the Bible, the Declaration of Independence, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Greek playwrights. Then we came upon some strange choices: Ray Bradbury, the Lord of the Rings, Robert A. Heinlein, Jules Verne, other works of SF and Fantasy.

This would happen year after year, a random selection of the world's romantic classics, precious documents, and works of Science Fiction and Fantasy. This is what they would save.

You ask any science fiction reader to define science fiction, and chances are what you will get is, not a definition, but a list of books. You would find on the list Sherlock Holmes next to STAR WARS, and you try to figure out the commonality between the two. When people ask me to define SF, I start making a list, and that's all I can do. To me it's all one thing. Science fiction to me is not the youngest literary form in the world. In my estimation, the youngest literary form in the world is what we tend to call "mainstream." I say this because, prior to the year 1782, almost all fiction was romantic fiction, which shows very little difference in theme or content from modern science fiction. You start out at the beginning, 6000 years ago, the Gilgamesh story; coming forward you have the same fantastic stories in Egypt, Greece, Persia; stories like Sindbad the Sailor, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Greek dramas, the Aeneid, the Metamorphoses of Ovid, Beowulf, the Niebelungenlied, the Legends of King Arthur, La Commedia Divina of Dante, Shakespeare's MacBeth, Midsummer Night's Dream and the Tempest, the works of Sir Walter Scott, Moby Dick. We can carry this on to our own age. These are not mundane fiction. These are romantical works, and they deal with actions outside of the ordinary, voyages over the edge of what's known to us, to realms where strange powers work and we meet strange and unusual beings, where man's ingenuity is tested to the utmost.

Take the first one, Gilgamesh, written on clay tablets, and published many years actually before it was written down, close to 6000 years back. The world as those ancient people saw it was flat. It was surrounded by mountains at the edge, and around those mountains flowed two streams of water: the Apsu, the good water, sweet water, and around that, the Tiamat, the dragon water, which was chaos or evil. The Apsu wells up in the center of the world and flows towards the edge to join itself, and recycles endlessly. The hero Gilgamesh embarks on a journey to the mountains at the end of the world and he plunges down into the Apsu, the very well-spring of life, looking for the secret of immortality, because his best friend has died, and he discovers that he doesn't want to die himself. He finds the secret, he carries it back to the world of men, and loses it to a serpent. The quest to the very edges of his world, beyond it, and back again, is the very spirit of science fiction. The quest into the unknown, in search of things of cosmic value, coming to grips with issues not just of the moment, but with the entire condition and essence of mankind.

I said that mainstream is the very youngest form of literature in my estimation, and I gave a date of 1782, which happens to be that of James Watt, who made

the steam engine practical, and ushered in the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution brought mankind a great deal of good -- you have to admit that -- but it also brought about a great many problems, such as crowded urban situations, child labor, the horrors of modern warfare, and many others. Consider the themes of books, those that are deemed to be serious literature, and those that are considered to be "pulp fiction," frivolous literature, and you start looking at dates. About the mid 1800s, just about the time for Mr. Watt's engine, we started producing some profound social changes. There is a sudden tendency in the academic world to approve of works that come to the conclusion that the world is depraved, and to dismiss other works as thoughtless. Romantic literature was not in tune with the developing academic ideology, and began to die in the academic world about the mid 1800s. SILAS MARNER was written in 1861, MADAME BOVARY in 1856, BABBIT in 1922. These are not romantic literature. You have the slice-of-life novel, the social-scandal novel, the so-called "realism" school in which man is forever beaten down and brutalized by his environment, the reform novel which is supposed to make us all take up arms and rush to the street to correct something-or-other. All these became approved themes for serious literature. Any book that dealt with the world in a romantic fashion tended to be relegated at once to the field of popular literature, people's literature, with the theory that the average man of the public was not capable of deep thought or serious literary understanding. What the scholars, in my mind, did not take into account, was that to any question of ideology there is an opposite point of view. The Romantic age allegedly died with the coming of the machine. Romantic literature had no future, no academic merit. But remember those kids in the class-

room, and the works they were willing to dedicate their lives to save. You don't find BABBIT on the list. I've never heard it named in all the years I asked the question. Romantic literature is a positive literature. It says that the world is not doomed. And the modern movement of science fiction as a separate literature seems to have begun about the same time, actually a little before 1782, because vision is always a little before the fact.

Take one of the most remarkable early science fiction novels, written by Mary Shelley around 1816, FRANKENSTEIN. You have not so much technology in the original novel--that quality does not play the forward role. Consider the theme: man the creator. Man creates something he cannot control. That book came first. It has gone on from that point in countless adaptations. It's popular more than a century later with a people who will read it without a literature teacher telling them to. And that's my definition of a classic!

In the 1860s, Jules Verne. You don't have to tell students to read Jules Verne. They find TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, et cetera, on their own, and they like it. It says something to them in a positive way. It's a romance of the machine. It doesn't say this world is doomed. Granted, there are some gloomy elements in it, but it makes the point that evil is in the hands of the man who uses the machine. Good men can use them well, an attitude which is different from the academic novel of the day.

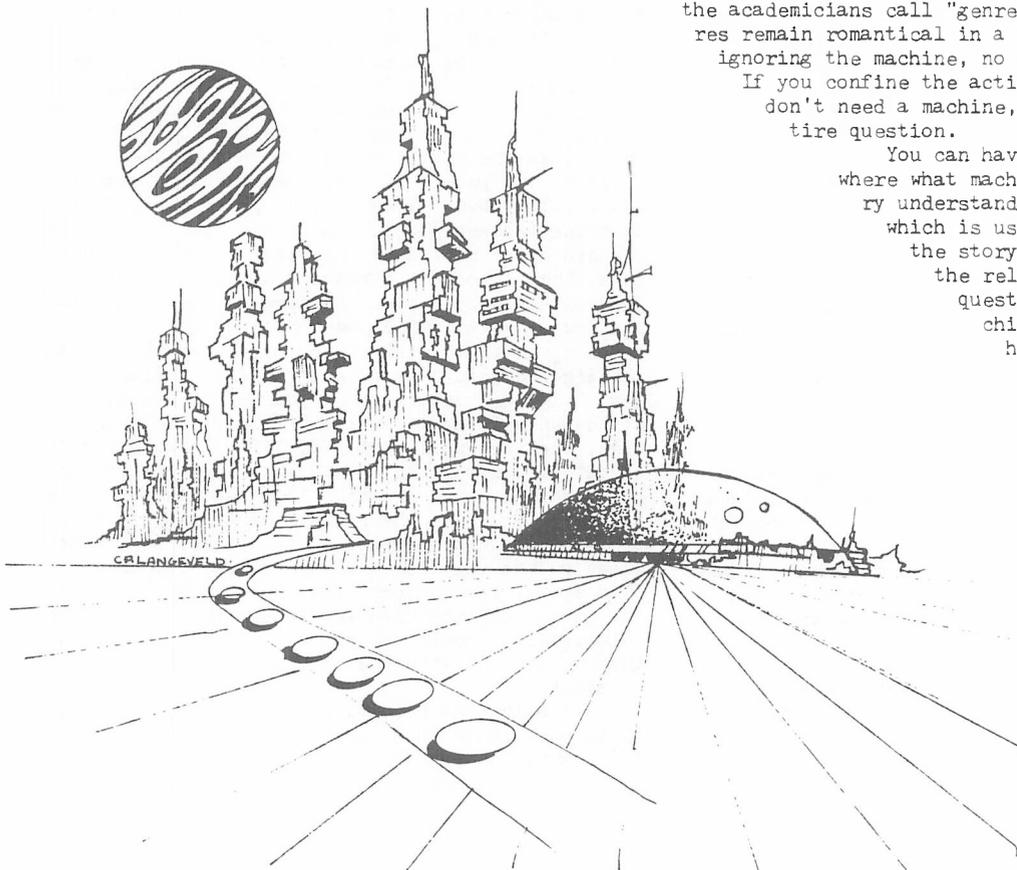
In the 1890s, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes contributed a whole new sub-branch of literature in the detective novel. Consider Holmes the technician, the man of science, living in the crime-infested city of London, applying technology and the scientific process to the betterment of man. Holmes was another one the students wanted to preserve.

Besides the academicians' official proclamation that romance is forever dead, and that you can't write romantic literature in the machine age, there are ways of getting around the machine, which has spawned what the academicians call "genre literature." Such genres remain romantical in a machine age generally by ignoring the machine, no matter what the story.

If you confine the action to indoors, and you don't need a machine, you can ignore the entire question.

You can have an adventure story, where what machinery there is is gadgetry understandable to the audience, which is useful in the context of the story, but you don't explain the relationship, the whole question of man and the machine. There is also the

historical, which manages to avoid the question by confining the action to an era where the technology is either non-existent, or antique and therefore non-threatening. In a sense, fantasy depends on magic for its technology. The frequent theme lately seems to be a nameless menace which threatens the wholeness of the earth, and the earth fights back with the healing powers of good magic. It is different from the despair novel.



Fantasy is romantic adventure because in it life is always healed, nature comes back. It is optimistic. You can read between the lines -- technology for magic -- and many people do. So the genre of fantasy does not really ignore the question of the machine, although machines generally don't appear in fantasy at all.

But science fiction -- that's the field that has come under the heaviest fire, the heaviest and most bitter criticism from the scholars in times past, because it is the most diametrically opposed to their philosophy. It's not only romance, which is "bad," it's a romance of the machine, which is heresy. It strikes at the heart of the whole view that they wish to take of mankind in a technological age. Science fiction has said that the outlook should be optimistic.

If you go back to 1895, where we left off, -- THE TIME MACHINE by H. G. Wells. That book is a vision in every way equal to that of Gilgamesh, which is rated as one of the world's great classics, and the time traveler goes to the very end of time -- a mind-boggling concept.

In 1903, the first airplane. In 1905, Einstein's theory of relativity. In 1911, Hugo Gernsback wrote his first story. World War I, Americans were isolationists. 1928, Buck Rogers was born. In 1931, atomic hardware was discovered, and that was really a world-shaker. The man on the street didn't realize that could be important to him. Very sadly it became very important, at Hiroshima. Then Russia got the bomb, and it became a two-way street. Suddenly the man on the street was confronted with something he never had to think about before-- the BOMB, global destruction, mankind as a unit. It shook people; it shook them very badly. And average people during those years had an amazing reaction to science fiction at that point: it scared them; it really frightened them. People were afraid of enemies everywhere back in the fifties. There were the McCarthy trials; the movies -- when they chose to do science fiction, they picked WAR OF THE WORLDS, invasions from outer space. Everybody was paranoid.

Science fiction at that time was actually after-the-bomb novels. They went on to show mankind coming out of the ashes like a phoenix. SF said that mankind can learn from its mistakes, even if it hurts. Science fiction remains optimistic. It says that we can learn from our mistakes, and even that we can learn from our literature. This part of it is something that the man in the street never got around to understanding in that age. The 1950s was the era of the bomb, the cold war; science fiction novels of that day were talking about new worlds, voyages to the moon, to Mars, to Venus. We believed that if the bomb dropped, man would survive. We still believe it. When we voyage to other planets, we go not as warring nations, but as mankind.

In 1957, Sputnik. Suddenly, American scientists hear this little bleep from outer space. A whole new reality opens up. A Russian satellite. The whole pattern of American education changed abruptly in 1957. Nobody went into science or math before 1957, unless you really wanted to pursue it. Women, perish forbid, the poor things never considered mathematics, never considered science. For men, they were impractical -- how could you make a living at them? Suddenly after 1957, science courses began to be mandatory right down into grade school. Science came to the masses; it came in the 1960s, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. It ended

the worst of the fears of the bomb. It scared the heck out of us. We got right to the brink of disaster, and it didn't happen!

We pulled back from that point, back into ourselves politically, for a time. We started analyzing our society, started turning to other things, away from the fear of the bomb that had kept us busy for quite a while, and we had this long period of social re-adjustments, demonstrations. But science fiction during this era had quietly moved out of the solar system, onto exploring other stars, different worlds outside of the solar system, while the real space program was landing on the moon.

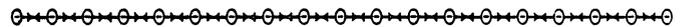
A certain portion of our early science fiction at this point began to pass into the realm of fantasy almost. Leigh Brackett's beautiful Martian cities, Jekkara, Barrakesh-- we landed on Mars and didn't find them. But to my mind, we go on looking -- if not in this solar system, maybe we'll find them on the dusty fourth planet of some other star. We go on looking for things like that.

It's a romanticism to which I think the average man is beginning to catch up. Those fellows who, back in 1928, were laughing at the things that Buck Rogers was predicting, the same men, years older, are sitting in their living rooms, watching weather reports from outer space, and watching a man walk on the moon on a television set. Science fiction cannot be that foreign to him. It's a whole new reality.

I think also that the popularity of STAR WARS may relate to that 1957 crop of students coming of age, and the fact that suddenly mankind is seeing technology not as the ogre that is going to destroy him, but maybe we've been through the worst of it -- we've suffered through the dirty part of technology, and now perhaps through solar power and other things we can reach for a new generation of technology that finally the man on the street can see the vision we have made.

In spite of an entrenched system in fiction where bookstores never bothered to report popular literature in sales because it was frivolous, and the sales just couldn't amount to much, suddenly in 1976 and 1977 books like WATERSHIP DOWN, THE LORD OF THE RINGS, CHILDREN OF DUNE, STAR WARS, THE SILMARILLION, THE BOOK OF MERLIN were on the best seller list. In 1977, one-sixth of all the paperback books published were either science fiction or fantasy. Science fiction books of generations ago are being reprinted for new generations of readers. New writers, as witness yours truly, are breaking in. The field is far from closed.

I think that science fiction is a literature of the young, only insofar as romantical literature is a literature young at heart. But when you really analyze it, that's the thing that endures. It's the thing that lasts. And, like my students, if it comes down to a choice, it's the thing that I would be willing to save.



*This is the Guest of Honor speech delivered by C. J. Cherryh at ARCHON II, July, 1978. Transcribed by the editor, it is being printed with the permission of C. J. Cherryh.*

Oklahoma City writer C. J. Cherryh (pronounced Cherry) had a little help from her dad, who liked to read Edgar Rice Burroughs, in discovering at an early age that she wanted to write and that what she wanted to write was science fiction.

BY

The John W. Campbell Award winning writer first developed an interest in science fiction when she was small and her father brought home Burroughs books for her to read on Fridays after she'd finished her school work. Her mother was also an influence.

BARBARA

"She always chose books with lovely fantasy illustrations and I quickly developed a disdain for the mundane."

BARTHOLOMEW

A more unlikely influence came from nearby Fort Sill, in Lawton, Oklahoma, where Cherryh lived between the ages of three and sixteen.

C. J.

She'd been interested in science from a young age. "I wanted to know the 'why' of things.

I grew up next to Fort Sill and I wanted to know how they aimed the guns, so I figured out the math. I may not have been too good at counting apples and oranges, but I knew how they aimed the guns."

C H E R R Y H :

She began writing when she was ten, working with science fiction from the beginning. "I decided then I would be a professional writer and always followed that ambition, doing a novel a year and tucking each into the closet."

No one outside Cherryh's family knew that she wrote and even family members thought of it as a hobby.

She wasn't brought up in typical little girl fashion. "Dad taught me to drive a nail and fix anything that could be fixed.

Mother had the same relationship with my brother. If he had a stain on his shirt, she'd send him to wash it himself."

## A Corrupter of Minds?

Cherryh credits this upbringing with her ability to be independent as an adult. "I never have to call a repairman and my brother never has to take a button somewhere to be sewn on."

( of course not! )

She thinks that it is the environment, the way they were brought up, that kept all but a handful of women writers out of science fiction in the past.

"It's not that they were kept out, that editors wouldn't buy from them, there just weren't that many. It's different now in that most of us are the post 1957 (Sputnik) crop who studied science."

Cherryh is tall, dark-haired, and has a cultured voice that shows little trace of a regional accent. Her Oklahoma City home fits comfortably into a neighborhood of brick ranch-style houses on a street adorned with red tricycles and small children. As she walks up to her own house, a little girl calls, "Carolyn."

She smiles and lifts a hand in greeting. Inside it's different. Cool and dramatic

in an understated way, the house seems to reflect its owner's personality. In the living room there is a small white sofa, a chair or two, swords hang on the walls (a gift from her brother), and the

John W. Campbell Award plaque which she received in 1977 in Miami is displayed.

Her office is the most original. It is a small room near the back of the house, but with imagination the writer has opened the doors to the universe. A wall-sized visual of space, emphasized by side mirrors, expands the little room into endless vistas.

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Cherryh was born in St. Louis, but her parents were natives of Oklahoma and returned to the state when their daughter was three.

She graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Latin in 1964, attended John Hopkins University as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, graduating in 1965 with a masters in Classics (Latin, Greek, history, archaeology, comparative languages). Her specialties are in Roman history, law of the early Empire and Bronze Age myth.

She speaks Latin, Greek, French, has had Russian and German, is reasonably fluent in Italian and can understand Portuguese and a smattering of other languages.

She taught for eleven years in the Oklahoma City's public schools and still holds strong opinions on the education of the young. She thinks that most of the literature chosen for high school study is inappropriate.

"Young people are romantic. They should be romantic, idealistic, enthusiastic. Young people shouldn't understand SILAS MARNER or BABBIT."

She speaks of herself as a "persistent corruptor of the young." As a teacher she helped to compile a reading list of books to interest and excite her students and soon it was being distributed beyond the walls of her own classroom.

At the conclusion of her last year in teaching, she entered the classroom to find the whole class waiting.

"They put my coat on me and dragged me off to a restaurant where they'd made reservations for lunch. I don't know what the authorities would have done if they'd come in and found the whole class missing!"

During those last years of teaching Cherryh was also trying to break into science fiction writing. "I never took a writing course. All the courses had mandatory assignments which I considered would divert me from the novel length writing I preferred. I had limited use for any writing course since they didn't take into account differences in methods and direction.

"Also, I was too shy to read my work aloud, as is required in most courses. Having ability as a writer isn't the same as having ability in dramatic reading.

"When I thought I was ready, I started sending manuscripts in to be read by editors. After seven years of trying to sell, I began to try to figure out what I was doing wrong.

"That last year I was getting frustrated, and one part mad. I'd learned to write, now I set out to learn how to market. I studied the professional publications, learned who were the editors and publishers of my favorite books."

She found that Donald Wollheim, editor and publisher of DAW books, had bought many of her favorites. She sent a query letter introducing her book, BROTHERS OF EARTH, which was 100,000 words in length.

Wollheim wrote back, confessing preference for shorter works, but inviting her to submit BROTHERS anyway.

She sent the manuscript to Wollheim and in two months, while still teaching fulltime at John Marshall High, wrote GATE OF IVRELL, also sending that book to DAW. Both were accepted.

"After several years of peppering the markets, once I took a professional approach to marketing, I sold my first submission."

In 1977 Cherryh won the John W. Campbell Award as the most promising new writer.

Also in 1977 she quit teaching and went into fulltime writing. She enjoyed her subject and still misses the kids, but the awful volume of work -- 40

students in some classes, stacks of homework, sponsoring clubs, filling in forms for the government, and all the other work that goes with teaching -- as well as writing was making for 18-hour working days.

Now as a fulltime writer she enjoys her new freedom. "As a teacher I dreamed of being able to come and go as I pleased. It would be like having a perpetual summer."

She travels extensively. "I do not take tours, but do my own driving, and spend most of my time out in the countryside hiking about old battlefields, never the nightclub scene.

"I've been over Caesar's campaign route, up to the Roman wall in England, to Mycenae, Sparta, lived a week with a Greek family, hiked about the back hills of Thebes, sailed past Ithaca, attempted camels and hovercraft, over to Troy and Istanbul and Izmir and Ephesus, all about Cnossos and the back hills of Crete."

She speaks of herself as being like "Toad of Toad Hall," with many enthusiasms, claiming a new hobby each week. She starts projects, decides a room needs redecorating, or, in the spring, will start a garden. "Then the book will take hold and I'll have a weed patch in the back yard.

"In the creative phase I have to keep something torn up so I can go and bang a hammer -- or draw and paint -- when I'm trying to work things out. There're certain times when I drown the plants as I keep walking around the house pouring water in all the pots."

She is, however, a regular and consistent worker. She sets a low quota of required work for herself, two pages of copy per day, feeling this is less intimidating and will often lead to greater output. She writes each day of the week.

She spends mornings and evenings creating original work, using the afternoons for correspondence and other routine chores. Sometimes when a manuscript gets bogged down she will retype the whole thing to get a "running start." She said she's learned that when she really gets depressed with a work, by retyping, things begin to click because she's perceived the problems and can begin to work them out.

She does as many as five rewrites. "I may reach Chapter 24 and find all my characters are staring at each other and have to go back to the first chapter and give them a reason to move."

Cherryh confesses to working almost as hard now as when she was teaching fulltime and writing. "I work from the time I get up in the morning until fairly late in the evening."

She has to reserve time to write. She uses electronic answering devices both to keep the phone from being an interruption and to prevent missing important family or business calls.

She points out that she only has one chair in her office and that chair faces the typewriter. That doesn't mean that she spends all her time in the chair, however. "I may go out to the bookstore, drive around the lake, or go for a bike ride. I may write two lines, then ride around the block. Sitting still all day doing exacting work is no good."

When she begins a book she has very little idea where it is going, a surprising fact considering the involved social systems described in her novels. "I sketch a character. I may know a few things about the characters. I draw the landscape."

She depends on her characters taking over. "That's why I don't know the ending; the characters move the book towards its ending.

"Any person tends to have more than one reason for the things he does and it's the same with a character. If you have five people, each of whom has conflict and choice, it makes the book much more unpredictable. This is what keeps me interested in my own books."



To date she has published six novels: GATE OF IVREL, BROTHERS OF EARTH, HUNTER OF WORLDS, THE FADED SUN: KESRIITH, WELL OF SHIUAN, and THE FADED SUN: SHON'JIR.

Works scheduled for publication in 1979 include FIRES OF AZEROTH, HESTIA, and SERPENT'S REACH. SERPENT'S REACH, her longest novel thus far, is a story of a quarantine zone of space, occupied by aliens

so dangerous to humanity that the two species can't live close to each other. Humans who must occupy the zone have to undergo sociological change in order to live there.

Cherryh still speaks somewhat regretfully of the teaching career she has left behind, but as for ever giving up writing -- "That would be like a conscious decision to give up breathing."

Probably the most extreme expression of our present-day denial [of death] is the cryogenic movement. The members of this association believe that biological death is not necessary at all. Testimony to that belief lies in the fact that there are now several dozen corpses immersed in canisters of liquid nitrogen in various repositories throughout the country, waiting for the day when medical science discovers the cure for what killed them. It is believed by that time science will also have solved the problems associated with restoring a frozen body to life.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Fulton

As human beings, we have two things, (and only two things) in common--that we have been born and that we shall die. People "deal with death" in a variety of ways. Some chose to view themselves as technically immortal, since they feel the universe ends when they die. Others immerse themselves in a religious organization which promises immortality to the true believers. Others come to understand their mortality, accept it as part of their lives, and live accordingly: since life is finite, live it to its fullest. And others never even think of death at all.

Members of the cryonics movement have chosen an unusually technocracized view of death. They believe that if they are put in capsules of liquid nitrogen, they will one day be raised from the dead, healthy and whole, to enjoy an immortal future. This is, of course, a gross over simplification. There is much more to the cryonics movement than that. However, to read the articles by Carolyn Doyle and Steve Bridge in LAN'S LANTERN #8, one might get that very impression. In order to understand what has been going on in the cryonics movement for the past thirteen years, a history of the movement would be very useful.

The concept of freezing someone, in hopes of reviving him/her at a later date, probably first appeared in a science fiction story by Neil R. Jones in 1931 called *The Jameson Satellite*. It turned out little Bobby Ettinger had read the same story at around the same time.<sup>2</sup> Bobby Ettinger grew up to be Robert C. W. Ettinger, a physics professor. After World war II, he became interested in the concept of freezing tissue at very low temperatures. He reasoned that if tissues and organs could be preserved, then humans could be frozen and later revived. In 1962, he had his book, *THE PROSPECT OF IMMORTALITY*, privately printed and circulated. In 1964, the book was picked up by a major publishing house and received nationwide attention. By 1966, groups promoting the book's ideas sprang up in several major American cities. However, at that time, the actual technology involved in building a freezing capsule had not been developed.

<sup>1</sup>Robert Fulton, *DEATH AND IDENTITY* (Bowie, Maryland: The Charles Press Publishers, Inc., 1976). p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Frederik Pohl, *THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS* (New York: Del Rey Books, 1978), p. 254.

How the

Cryonics

Movement

Thawed

Out

by LAURIE D. T. MANN

Curtis Henderson, a New York lawyer, was very impressed by Ettinger's premise. With Saul Kent and Karl Werner, he formed the Cryonics Society of New York. Enthusiastic about the initial response to their organization, Curtis Henderson and Karl Werner took a cross-country trip in the summer of '66 to visit some of the other cryonics groups.

*In Springfield [Ohio], it turned out the three men behind the cryonics scene had dubious scientific credentials. One was a used car salesman, and the second, a man who somehow made money buying up bankrupt companies. The third was a newspaper man who had been guaranteed a Pulitzer Prize if he stuck with the other two.*<sup>3</sup>

Like the group in New York, the Springfield groups had not yet figured out how to freeze a body after death. Despite this "set-back," Henderson and Kent continued westward. In Las Vegas, they went to visit a man who had sent them a one-thousand dollar contribution. There, they were briefly arrested because their benefactor had been thrown in jail for counterfeiting.

They finally made it to California where they found several people who had a vague notion of engineering, trying to build a freezing capsule. Somewhat heartened by the discovery, they returned to New York. Over the next year, an early procedure for freezing was developed, and a man who had died of lung cancer was the first person to undergo cryogenic interment, in 1967.

Members of the cryonics groups had many similarities: they tended to be "...Atheists with above average education and lower-middle to middle socio-economic status. Many are devotees of science fiction."<sup>4</sup>

*The cryonics movement has apparently attracted a large number of individuals who cannot face the thought of decomposing after death. In all interviews conducted, references were continually made to the repulsiveness of decaying, rotting or decomposing after death.*<sup>5</sup>

*...Members...were conventional, serious people who said it was the logic of the idea that first appealed to them. "This is so obvious--how can anyone not do it?" they thought. In addition, they frequently mentioned "not wanting worms to get to them."*<sup>6</sup>

Aside from the fear of physical destruction after death (which, interestingly enough, is what children fear most about death), another theme researchers have found repeated in cryonics groups is the notion that cryonics groups are almost cultish in nature: "Ettinger was their prophet and THE PROSPECT OF IMMORTALITY, their holy writ. The true believers awaited their marching orders."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Steve Berman, *Frozen Immortality: An Idea Whose Time Has Gone*, SCIENCE DIGEST, vol. 80, #1, July, 1976, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup>Clifton D. Bryant and William D. Snizek, *The Ice-man Cometh: The Cryonics Movement and Frozen Immortality*, SOCIETY, vol. 11, #1, Nov/Dec, 1973, p. 59.

*The motto of this movement, appropriately, is "Freeze, wait, reanimate." While the adherents of this movement believe themselves to be the ultimate secularists, it would appear that they are contemporary practitioners of what might be termed "refrigerated Christianity."*<sup>8</sup>

In her article, Ms. Doyle seems to be a "true-believer," but is open-minded enough to say

*We ask not for blind faith, but for interest. Queries and arguments are welcome -- we will listen to them, think about them, and will admit you are right if you are even if it means we're wrong. We realize we have much to learn, but we also insist we have something to teach, and to talk about...*<sup>9</sup>

One problem that has plagued cryonics societies since their inception has been the lack of money. Cryonics is extremely expensive. In the mid-Seventies, Curtis Henderson said that cryonics cost about \$12,000 for the initial interment, then about \$100 per month "for death." People who wish to be frozen must either be very wealthy or spend a good bit of money buying insurance or setting up a trust fund. Less than thirty people have been frozen in the past twelve years. Of this thirty, one was removed from cryonic interment by his wife and buried, and several others were in danger of "losing their capsules" because their trust funds could not cover the cost of cryonics. Once, in the New York chapter, a "memorial dance" was held as a fund raiser to keep two corpses interred. In at least one other case, the son of a frozen man has attempted to break his father's will, which left the bulk of his estate in trust to pay for freezing upkeep. The judge ruled in favor of the dead man and did not break the will.

By 1973, it was generally acknowledged that the cryonics movement was dying. The New York chapter went from a high of about 130 members in the late Sixties to about a dozen in the mid Seventies. Some businesses formed to make cryonic capsules and other materials folded. Plans for a 150 capsule "cryatorium" in California were scrapped. Most of the bodies are now either in California or New York, although at least one New Jersey man has his frozen wife in a "crypt" in his back yard.

Serious publications have rather mixed sentiments about the future of cryonics. The 1977 edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA said although cryogenics has been very successful in freezing organs, sperm, and tissues, "...the prolonged preservation of whole animals, especially men, is now considered impossible due to the complex and varied nature of the body."<sup>10</sup> In 1976, SCIENCE DIGEST

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>6</sup>Arlene Sheshkin, PhD., *Forever Flasks*, HUMAN BEHAVIOR, vol. 7, #10, Oct, 1978, p. 58.

<sup>7</sup>Bryant, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>8</sup>Fulton, loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup>Carolyn "C.D." Doyle, *A Bid for Immortality*, LAN'S LANTERN 8, March, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>*Applications of Cryonics*, ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, 15th edition, vol. 5, p. 319.

said "Cryobiologists don't discredit the idea, but they don't think such a freezing job is possible either."<sup>11</sup> And TODAY'S HEALTH, in 1976, stated experts don't consider cryonics "... utterly impossible, given a future of unknown discovery that may extend for thousands of years."<sup>12</sup> However, no one, except for those connected to cryonics groups, seems to take cryonics very seriously now.

There may well be a resurgence of interest in cryonics, at least according to Carolyn Doyle and Steve Bridge. None of the articles I surveyed on the subject of cryonics mentioned either the Institute for Advanced Biological Studies, Inc., or LONG LIFE magazine, implying that these are either very small or very new. According to the READER'S GUIDE TO LITERATURE, only one article on cryonics appeared in a major magazine in 1978, two in '76, one in '74 and one in '73. If the movement is starting to pick up momentum, the media has not paid it much attention. Television, when it mentions cryonics, has taken a hard-line, scientific approach. The flaws of cryonics are emphasized: it is expensive, currently there is no technique for reviving frozen individuals, and the entire technology is unproven. A human body ought to be seen as more than the sum of its parts; just because some parts of the body can be frozen, and revived, then function properly, does not mean the entire body can.

Frederik Pohl discusses his ideas about cryonics in his autobiography THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS. Although he has been an enthusiastic promoter of cryonics in the past, he has no intention of being frozen after death. His eloquent explanation is:

*The reasons I have for not signing up to be an immortal superman are philosophical and economic. Philosophical: what makes my life desirable to me is the network of relationships and the endless iterative series of projects I am always involved in. Stop them*

*and restart them at some future time and they are no longer the same. Economic: freezing costs. I estimated when I first heard of it that it would take easily fifty thousand dollars cold cash to make and protect a corpse. Now I would put it at a lot higher. So buying the chance of future postfreeze life costs some sacrifice in this one; and it seems to me that I'm more interested in the quality of my life than the quantity of it.*<sup>13</sup>

I think Fred Pohl's analysis of why he did not decide to be frozen after death is worth noticing. I agree with him that it is the people of our lives which makes life worth living. Although the premise of *future knowledge* is certainly tempting (especially for SF fans), living one's life for a *slightly* possible future seems to be a waste of time. After doing some research into cryonics, I am not at all convinced by it; it is *too* chancy. And that is the basic flaw in the logic of both Carolyn Doyle's and Steve Bridge's articles: cryonics is much less than even a *bid* for immortality. Even if the technique for "thawing back to life" becomes perfected, geneticists still doubt the possibility of reversing the aging process. So, once a person is revived and cured of whatever it was that killed him/her, s/he would still have the aging body s/he died with.

Most articles written about cryonics make it clear that most people who get involved in the cryonics movement do so because they are terrified of death. Instead of facing up to death in a rational manner, they deny it by saying that they will be frozen, and "therefore," immortal. It's not that I'm against progress, technology, or feel that cryonics is essentially *against nature*; I believe that people must come to terms with their mortality even if they decide to be frozen. When potential *freezees* "put their faith in the future," there is still an excellent chance that they won't have a future after freeing.

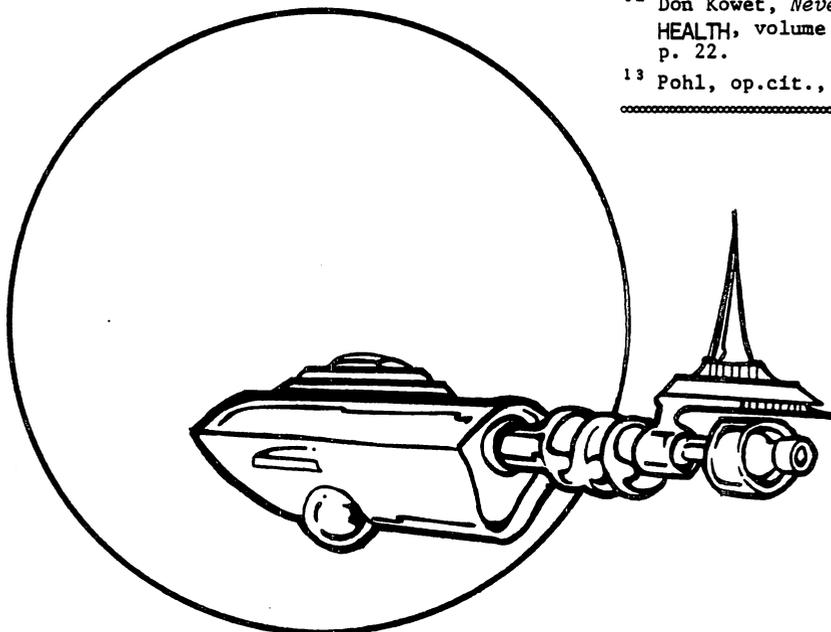
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<sup>11</sup> Berman, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Don Kowet, *Never Say Die*, TODAY'S HEALTH, volume 52, #7, July, 1976, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Pohl, op.cit., pp. 258-259.

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# Ramblings 10

((As I sit here in mid-March, getting ready to write up these con reports, I realize that almost two years have passed since the last ones I did in LL #8--that is, my reports then reached as far as June of 1978. This is 1980. So what am I to do? Looking ahead I'm sure you see that I have indeed begun with MIDWESTCON of that year. I thought briefly of not doing any con-reports, and just starting with things they way they stand now; but that would take time to fill in all the detail of why things stand the way they do. So, there then follows my con-reports and ramblings in fairly chronological order, but I promise, these will consist of the highlights of those conventions, and pertinent points in my mundane life. I hope.))

## MIDWESTCON XXIX

The Cincinnati fan group changed hotels for this convention. Instead of the Norwood Quality Inn where the con had been for ages, and where I had the pleasure of meeting new fans and making contact with some of my favorite authors for two years previously, the con was held at the Holiday Inn Holi-Dome, a superb vacation/resort/fun hotel. In the evening of the Friday, first day of the con, I was in the consuite getting my usual drink, and came upon a lovely woman, who looked as if I should know her. I didn't, for I had never met her before, but her name on the badge rang a bell --Jan Brown. She saw me looking at her, read my namebadge on my hat, and said, "I owe you 75¢ for the fanzine." The name fell in place; Ross Pavlac had given me her name and asked that I send a copy of LL to her.

For the next 48 hours we were seen together, and I was pretty much oblivious to everything else that was going on at the con. The person with whom I was sharing a room I saw very little of. Jan and I talked---I probably did more talking about myself to her than I had to any one person up to that point, especially in that short of time--but then consent to do that to a person. Jan was in the process of de-gaffiating ((See her contribution on page 13.)) and was really happy to be back in the real world. We ate together, spent time talking and reading (she put me to shame with her reading speed, not that mine is anything to boast about), and I drove her to the Cincinnati Airport in Covington, Kentucky, so she could catch her plane back to Lakewood (near Cleveland) Ohio. We got there late--Jan had read the times wrong on her ticket--so she cashed them in, and I drove her all the way home. It wasn't too far out of my way, going home to Detroit from Cincinnati by way of Cleveland.

But something had indeed happened between us at that convention. A bond was formed, which was to last for awhile. At this same time I was still seeing Beth Ollesheimer, but that relationship was winding down. We were seeing less and less of each other--she was busy with her work, and schooling; that re-



lationship ended very quietly. I've been very bad about ending such things--I suppose my courage fails when I try to bring up painful subjects, so I tend to let things go and hope the situation rights itself. But I have been working on that.

Indeed, MIDWESTCON XXIX was a portent of things to come.

## RAMBLINGS 10.1

I had originally decided to go to school for the summer and start taking course towards my continuing education certificate, but decided against it when I looked at my financial situation. Instead, I spent the summer at home, working in my garden, canning and freezing vegetables, relaxing, and not working on anything terribly constructive. The plans for working on the fanzine, on writing, did not materialize. I also went to a lot of conventions, which put me in debt even farther. And I spent a weekend in Lakewood, Ohio; Jan spent one with me--over Labor Day weekend, both of us missing the worldcon in Phoenix--neither of us having the money to go.

Sometime in August (or was it July?) I received a phone call from a fan in Arizona, Leslie David. It was a good, long conversation which has been repeated several times since. One of these days I will have to meet her in person. We got to know each other quite well, but long distance phone calls are not a substitute for actually talking face-to-face.

## ARCHON II

CD Doyle had talked me into going to this convention. I drove down to Indianapolis to pick her up (spent the night there with her folks), and we headed out to St. Louis. It's true, the Arch is a breathtaking sight. The

convention was fun. Barb Fitzsimmons, the conchairperson found out how delightful my hands were on her feet, legs and back. And as part of the program, there was filksinging on Saturday night. Because of the way the hotel was constructed, the function space was in the same area as the restaurant and other shops. Thus, the hotel closed down those places at 2:30 AM, and the filkers were moved elsewhere--outside to the parking lot. It was a warm summer night/morning, and they sang the sun up. A police officer drove through the parking lot, stopped to listen, and left. No commotion, but it was lots of fun.

C. J. Cherryh was the Guest of Honor, along with Rusty Hevelin. I must have spent about 6 hours in conversation with C.J., at least two of that alone, talking about teaching and a myriad of other topics. One of the panels she ran dealt with her process of creating alien races, and the questions she answered afterwards increased my awe of her. She was asked about the aliens she had created for THE FADED SUN series. She answered the questions in terms of the alien philosophies she had created, from their point of view, not ours.

C.J.'s Guest of Honor speech intriguing. I received permission to transcribe and print it here ((see page for the complete text of the speech.)).

### AUTOCLAVE III

I wasn't sure what to expect from AUTOCLAVE this year. I knew Derek Carter, one of the Guests of Honor, and I had only heard of Terry Hughes by name; I had never seen his zine MOTA, nor knew anything else about him. It was pleasant to hear him speak. Derek's speech was a riot; he shows, with evidence, that Mike Glicksohn is ghod...or at least the new christ.

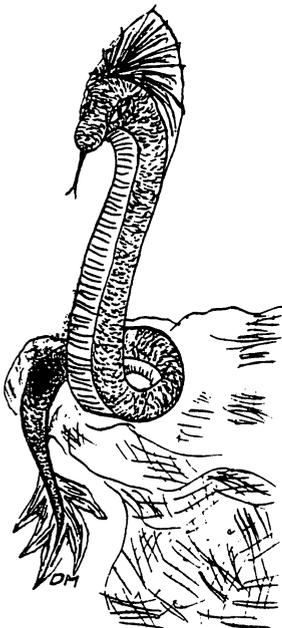
Most of the time, I spent talking to fans, in particular, Laurraine Tutihasi.

The hotel was not the greatest--fortunately I did not stay at the hotel but commuted from home. The Hotel had booked some religious group--Baptists, I believe,--at the same time. Very bad planning.

I met and got to know quite well a relative neo, Luann Huber. Her, I and Alex Eisenstein had one of the nicest times after the con. The three of us were in the hall outside the consuite during the deaddog

party, and a black man comes up the stairs looking for soda from the pop machine. They were all empty, but Alex got him one from the suite. He sat and talked with us for awhile. He was with the broadcast team for the Oakland A's, who were in town to play the Detroit Tigers. Luann was interested because she likes baseball, and managed to get some tickets for us--for her, her friend, and myself. Alex was leaving so he could not go to the game. Chicago is a bit of a drive to come to Detroit for a baseball game, when neither of the teams belong to your home town.

Anyway, he invited us up to his room and we talked



for another hour or so, he telling us about his painting (he does portraits--has done some: Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, Pope John XXIII, and many others), about the books he writes; and we each talked about some goals we had. It wasn't until we found where the dead dog party had crawled to, and we told Madman Riley whom we had spent the previous 2½ hours with, that we found out how big a celebrity Curt Flood was. "Curt Flood! He's the one who challenged the reserve clause in Baseball, took it all the way to the Supreme Court, and won! You spent all that time talking to him and you didn't know that?"

The following Tuesday, Luann, her friend (I forget his name) and I went to the game, and met Curt afterwards. We offered him a ride back to his hotel; he gratefully accepted, saying that since the A's had lost, the bus would have been like a tomb. At the hotel we bought him a couple of drinks, and Curt introduced us to some of the members of the broadcast team, and Luann kissed the promotion manager who had gotten the tickets for us. We parted as friends.

### RIVERCON IV

Rivercon was pleasant in most aspects. I went to Lakewood to pick up Jan, and we went together to Louisville and met several old friends--this time I did take time to talk to people other than Jan. At the con were several fans I had not seen since B'HAM-ACON, and I met a few more fans whom I had known and corresponded with, but never met in person. Mike Rogers was one in particular, with whom I had a nice long talk. Shelby Bush, Nicki and Dick Lynch, Ned Brooks (who was the Fan GoH), and Robert Bloch.

I remember Susan young doing a bang-up job as the consuite hostess; had a good conversation with Lynn Harris; another with Ann Asprin; woken up late Friday (Early Saturday) by a phone call from a fan looking for Mike Glicksohn; heard for the first time the Neil Diamond/Barbra Streisand song, "You Don't Send Me Flowers;" and helped the Wookie get into his costume. One unpleasant point which sticks in my mind were two bad run-ins with Larry Niven. After recording a panel he and Andy Offutt were on, I asked for his address so, if I wanted to print it, I could send him a copy of the transcript for approval. He refused outright. Even after I told him that I do this, get approval before printing, he did not give me his address--but broke down and gave me his agent's address in New York. This I could understand; some authors like to be recluses (but I did find out later that he is not a recluse; he has fans over all the time--and a couple of members of Waldo & Magic, a local fan group, have his address). The second time: In the consuite, I saw him talking with Sandra Miesel, fans walking by them, other activity going on in the room. I come up to sit and listen--very adamant, almost belligerent, "NO! This is a private conversation!" Why then in the con suite? So much for an attempt to be friendly.

### RAMBLINGS 10.2

The rest of the summer went along quite smoothly; I worked in the garden, Jan came to visit, we made plans to go to PghLANGE. School started, and I was eager and ready for it. This year, I was on the Kingswood resident faculty, which meant that I would be doing dormitory duty at Kingswood, the girl's dorm. I would be teaching pretty much the same subjects I had been teaching in the past, ex-



cept that I would be handling two slow Algebra II classes; that stood well with me, since I did have a knack working with the slower students.

The fall schedule went well; there was no interference with respect to conventions at the outset. I would be able to go to PghLANGE; however, there was a price to pay--no OCTOCON again. Oh well, can't have everything.

#### PghLANGE X

I left as soon as I could on that Friday, September 29, as soon as my last class finished. I drove through Ohio, swinging up to Lakewood to pick up Jan, and got into Pittsburgh in a reasonable amount of time. I had promised to help out in any way--Barbara Geraud does have a way with fen--and I helped a bit at registration and with running the films. I met Marc Glasser for the first time there, renewed an acquaintance with Wendy Lindboe, John Curlovich, and many others.

It actually was a looney weekend. I needed the con, after not having been at one for two months, and it showed in my actions...or at least in the profuse number of puns that came out of my mouth. Lunacy started with the con itself: the GoHs were Phil Foglio and Rick Sternbach, both of whom won Hugos that year as artists, fan and pro respectively--PghLANGE has never had an art show! With registration, however, each person got a folio of artwork done by each of the GoHs.

My height of lunacy was the shaving of my full beard which I had grown over the summer, cutting back the whiskers to the more standard van dyke I usually wear. No one noticed. So much for lunacy.

#### WINDYCON V

At the end of August I received a letter from Kathy Marschall a relatively new fan, and artist, from Minnesota. We had met at her first convention, a MINICON the previous spring, and we had not had our paths cross since. She demanded I come to WINDYCON. So I did.

I could not afford it; I would have to arrange to sleep in a room of many fen, try to find someone to ride with me, or I with them, to cut down on expenses that way, and eat little. Mary Mueller was going, so we went in her car, sharing gas (we also had Larry Diehr along). I called up Kathy, and fortunately she

she did have room for one more person in her suite. And I contented myself with meager meals. I think there was a hucksters room, but I don't remember; I didn't buy anything. Wait--it comes back to me now--there was a hucksters room! Dave Wixom was there, and a whole contingent of Minneapolis fans, which almost made it a MINICON. (Ah, isn't it nice when memory serves...)

The ConComm did a poor job in advertising, in responding to registrants. I would not have been able to find the hotel on my own; for a native Chicagoan the landmarks might be fine, but for out-of-towners they mean nothing. Mary Mueller had been there before; she knew the way...almost. We did have to stop for directions---once.

The con itself was quite pleasant, from the Moe-bius Theatre's production of PARKING ORBIT, to Bob Shaw's very funny Guest of Honor speech, to the delightful conversations with Mary Long, Diedre Murphy, Kathy, and Erica Simon.

The ride back was significant, since I was stopped for speeding. Were I driving my own car, that would not have happened; Selena and I have a good relationship and she tells me when I'm going too fast. Mary's car was strange to my foot, and thus I had some difficulty controlling its speed.

There was one other "sinking feeling" at the con. Chris Clayton grabbed my hat and took it into the auction room, and almost had it put up for auction. It was with great relief that I got it back.

#### RAMBLINGS 10.3

Sometime in the previous spring I had started attending the Waldo & Magic, Inc., meetings in Ypsilanti, and helped to plan CONCLAVE III. The deadline approached rapidly through the month of October, as well as several other things.

First quarter marks were due, with comments on all students. I managed that with a fair amount of ease. There was also a Parents' Visiting Day, for which I had to be on Campus, and thus miss OCTOCON. Jan went by herself, catching a ride with Linda Moss and Barney Neufeld, I believe.

Some trouble at home--I was told by a colleague that there was an undercurrent of dislike for me by much of the faculty, that I seem to buy friendship by giving of my time and giving away my canned goods and such, and do not accept any return except friendship, that I seem to be depressed at being thirty and still single. This hit me hard. I have never been good at on-the-spot arguments, nor with thinking quickly on my feet. So I just listened, and thought things through later. But this depressed me, considerably. This and with the small concerns about me, the ONLY single male faculty member on duty in the girl's dorm, and how I was viewed by the girls, sent me into a deep fit of depression. I did not realize how deep, until one of my students noticed it, and complained that I didn't seem to be doing a good enough job, like at the beginning of the year. When something affects my teaching like that, I have to do something about it. I did. Acceptance of myself as I am, changing the things I didn't like about me, regardless of what others felt were wrong, and identifying my relationship to the girls in the dorm as a parent, rather than a big brother, broke me out of it. Talking about this in MISHAP, and concentrating on several things that made me feel good (like working on the Williamson Special of LAN'S LANTERN), helped tremendously. I came to understand myself a little bit better through this experience, and I am hopefully a better person for it.

### CONCLAVE III

This was a convention I really needed. I remember getting drunk the first night, and getting Jan somewhat upset with me because of it. The Drunken Spacewoman Party, fannish swimming at the pool, with the windows covered for total privacy, was extremely successful both nights. Jan and I both went to the banquet, listened to the Eastern Michigan University Madrigal Singers who surrounded each table and just enveloped you in beautiful music, and was morally uplifted by Ted Sturgeon's GoH speech.

There was also an election of a pope (this being a Conclave and all), and I felt flattered at being nominated. Elizabeth Pearse, the fan GoH was finally elected as Pope, and when she got up to the podium to deliver her GoH speech, she began, "I think it is only fitting that as Pope I am standing at the right hand of Ghod..." Ted Sturgeon was sitting at her left at that point. She received a thunderous ovation at that.

Dotti Bedard-Stefl was around and being her impressive self. At one point she caused Jay Kay Klein to leave her presence with one of her remarks. She was sitting on my lap and I was massaging her back. Jay Kay passed, and I asked him how things were going. He said okay, then noticed that Dotti looked a little tired. This was on Sunday, Dotti's birthday. He asked Dotti how she was, and she replied, "Tired. But I don't want to sleep until after the birthday party and the Dead Suzi party." Instead of a dead dog party, we have a dead Suzi party, that is, Suzi Stefl, Dotti's mother, who doesn't sleep all weekend, and collapses on Sunday Afternoon. Dotti continued, "I'm waiting for my mommy to get dead so I can go home with him." Referring to me. Jay Kay just kinda looked at me, I smiled, he half-waved and departed. Dotti was 10 years old that day.

Dotti also managed to send a roomful of people into stitches. Someone had put on a tape of THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW in one of the function rooms, and one of the people inside was lying on the floor when another came up and pretended that he was going to stomp on him. The fellow on the floor yelled, "Please, stomp on me. I love it," or some words to that effect. "Don't do that," said Dotti. "We don't want to disgust the maids!"

The con ended; I stayed around for awhile and bade farewell to Eric Lindsay, who was leaving for Australia after the con.

### ERIC LINDSAY

I've purposely said nothing about Eric until now. I met him during my first year in fandom, and marvelled at how he was able to take so much time off from work in Australia and tour the US. He returned to the US in the spring of 1978. I first saw him at MIDWESTCON but was so much entranced with Jan that I barely remember seeing him there. I saw him at con after con after that. The strange thing about this is that I never seem to sit down and actually talk to him. I have my own set things that I do at cons, as does he. We meet in passing, or we manage to be in the same place, but part of different conversations.

I do not think that there is an international fan more loved in the midwest than Eric. While visiting here, he gets rides, has places to stay, everyone manages to help him extend his stay just a little bit longer, help him stretch his expenses.

I admire him for his diverse exploration into different fields of knowledge. At CONCLAVE he was deep in conversation with other fans about programmable calculators.

He's one of those fans who brushes by and leaves

something beautiful in his wake, something intangible, but loving. Maybe it is his character, maybe it is part of him that is Australian. All I know is that I miss him when he is gone, and I anxiously await his return to the US, to the Midwest.



CHAMBANACON 8

This convention was my anniversary con. This was the one that had started me attending conventions regularly. And I have always enjoyed it. This time was no exception.

The major high points were few, but I did have a good time. I spent a considerable amount of time with Denise Parsley Leigh, talking, among other things. And then there was Dotti, and the incident with Ken Moore.

Dotti Bedard-Stefl, Steve and Denise Leigh, Suzi Stefl and I were standing near the door, inside the Hospitality suite. I had one arm around Dotti, one around Denise, a towel around my neck and a t-shirt that came just below my swimming trunks, and made it look as though I was wearing nothing underneath. Ken came in, looked at me and the rest of the crew. He said, "Lan, you had better be careful with Dotti." And Dotti piped up, "Don't worry, I know he's under-age." Ken stood dumbfounded for a few seconds while the rest of us doubled up with laughter. "I can't take this!" he mumbled, and walked out.

Jan Brown and I went to hear Andy Offutt's GoH speech, and I learned a few things from it. There are still fuggheads in fandom who like to talk while someone is giving a speech, and Andy exhibited remarkable self-control in not verbally blasting the offending people. Alcohol (in moderation, of course) can prevent heart attacks. Men involved in test-tube baby research may be suffering from vagina-envy; it is very unlikely that women, enlightened women anyway, suffer from penis-envy.

I left the next afternoon, with Paula Smith, Tullio Proni and Renee Sieber as passengers, and we made it to Kalamazoo ahead of the storms which threatened to turn into snow. I got back on the freeway and arrived without accidents at a reasonable hour to get enough sleep to teach the next day.

The new year season was somewhat uneventful. I did go to a party in Kalamazoo at the House of Isher, and had a good time.

I was thinking about going to CHATTACON, but could not afford it. So I resigned myself to staying home for the rest of my vacation and catch up on all the mailing comments I was behind in the two apae I was in. Then I got this frantic phone call from Suzi Stefl. She had to get out of the apartment in Detroit where she was living. Actually it's a house in a not-so-nice part of the city. She found an apartment in Ann Arbor, and wanted to move there as soon as she could --like right then. I couldn't refuse. Thursday night Nancy Tucker, Dotti, Suzi and I loaded up a U-Haul rental moving van with all the heavy stuff and a lot of little stuff. It was clear that we would not be able to do it all in one trip. This almost devastated Suzi who wanted to get out of the place as fast as possible. I told her that I would come by the next morning and help finish off the moving.

I've always though myself as having limitless energy, but I found out that thursday evening, as we were dragging the refrigerator up the stairs, that my body will only take so much--I almost collapsed. I was hyperventilating and had no strength to do anything. Fortunately, about this time Larry and Leah had arrived (Leah was sharing the apartment with Suzi and Dotti) and helped out, as did a couple of the neighbors. One thing that complicated matters was that it was one of the coldest days in Michigan for that winter, and the winds were blowing, bringing the temperature down well below zero fahrenheit. The next morning I got to Suzi's house around 6:00AM, and we proceeded to finish packing the truck, drove to A<sup>2</sup> (with Suzi driving my car, I the rental), and unpacked said rental. We were under a deadline, and Suzi got the truck back to the U-Haul place with minutes to spare. We did a little unpacking and arranging of things, but as soon as everything was fairly well stored in the apartment, or the basement storage area, we got into my car and headed for Cincinnati, and stayed the weekend with Steve and Denise Leigh.

### E/C<sup>2</sup> CONFUSION

And I thought moving Suzi in winter was bad! The hallways at this CONFUSION were unheated. It was cold that weekend. Not just cold, *cold*. Like with icicles dripping from the end of the nose. Highlighting the con though were Spider and Jeanne Robinson. Spider's speech had all of us rolling on the floor and groaning in pain from the puns. Great stuff (reprinted in an issue of Mike Glicksohn's XENIUM). Jeanne, a student and teacher of modern dance, put on a show in place of her GoH speech. Terrific stuff! I met Joan Vinge for the first time there, and fell in love with her. We arranged to meet at MINICON and I would do an interview of her. I hope to have that out in the next LL. And I met Carol and Dave Yoder, friends of Roger Reynolds. Carol and I stayed up for a few hours together talking about teaching.

Jan Brown was there, my roommate. We did spend some time together, some time apart. She watched Lou get the highest marks in the Joseph Haldeman Memorial Seminar on the Redistribution of Economic Wealth through the Application of Statistics and Psychology. She was Also a member of the Cuddle Squad--since the halls were so cold, the concom decided to designate certain people who would cuddle with members of the con and keep them warm as they wandered down the hallways.

The rest of January and the month of February was dull for the most part. School went on, my personal problems with the faculty member, other faculty members and the kids seemed to work themselves out. I made two trips in February, one to Findlay Ohio to visit Roger Reynolds and his family and Carol Yoder and Dave, and some other members of Findlay fandom, and the other to Lakewood Ohio, to spend time with Jan.

Interim Term came at school--we suspended classes for two weeks and did other kinds of course work, not found in the regular catalogue. I taught a SF Short Story course, and a Fanzine course. I applied for, and got, a loan which helped put out LL#8, and gave me the major funding for LL #9. The Fanzine class helped me put together the zine, in time for distribution at MARCON XIV.

### MARCON 14

I almost brought a couple of students with me to the convention. They were interested in Katherine Kurtz and her Deryni series, and pressed me to sponsor a field trip. At first I declined, then after thinking it over, and getting to know those who would be coming along, I thought I could handle it. Then they decided not to go. When I mentioned this to Jan, she had visions of me in embarrassing situations---"Gee, Mr. L, what's that on your head?" "Why do you have a woman on each arm?" "You look good in that skimpy bathing suit, Mr. L."

I fell in love with Katherine when I saw her. I knew she was pretty, but.... And when she said that she really came to cons to be with the fans and talk to the fans, I decided to interview her, and did. I invited her up to my room, along with Jan Brown, Barbara Gompf and another fan, and for almost an hour and a half she talked into my recorder, answering questions I asked, and the others asked.

I also played lifeguard for the pool, had a great time listening to Fred Haskell, the Fan GoH, and spent some time with friends. While standing in the hucksters room (passing out copies of LL) a lovely woman approached me and asked if I was the same George Laskowski who used to teach at St. Joes. I cringed. "Oh no, what have you heard about me?" It turned out that she was best friends with a couple of the students I had when I taught there for one year. Her name was Mary Cowan, also known as Maia. We talked for a considerable length of time then, and on Sunday. Little did I know what was going to happen between us later that year.

On Saturday evening, I was standing outside where the banquet was going to be held, and Gordie Dickson asked me if I was going to the banquet. I said no, and he asked if I wanted a couple of tickets. He had been invited out to dinner, and was looking for someone to use them. Very gladly and thankfully I accepted them. Thus Jan and I went to the banquet; we had a lovely dinner, and listened to Katherine's speech, and Fred sing.

I also remember talking for a long time with Flahsh on Sunday. It was warm, especially for March, and a lot of us assembled out on the lawns of the hotel to relax and have fun.

The hotel that had been so nice the past two years screwed the concom. They rented out rooms to a local firm who wanted to keep them vacant for trainees who would be coming in at different times. Thus many fans had to stay in overflow hotels. The concom changed hotels the next year.

# Empathic Post Scriptings

*Trying to cut down the letters and their contents into a manageable size was extremely difficult. Some of the people whom I cut altogether are (were?) friends and good fans; parts sliced from those I am printing were good comments, but repeated elsewhere, or now outdated. In any case, I am limited by space, dictated by money, and have tried to get the best comments (and a little egoboo) without much repetition. My comments will be parenthetically italicized. ed.*

Letters on LL 8

Roy Tackett  
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Let's dispose of cryonics, as it is now practiced, first of all. Clinical death is generally defined

as the point where brain function ceases these days. Barring some quantum jumps in medical technology I doubt that the restoration of brain function can be achieved, even if the question of playing Frankenstein and reanimating a dead body can be answered. (Considering that medical technology has yet to produce a cure for the common cold, I haven't much faith in its ability to make quantum jumps.) I'll grant that it might be possible to revive some individual cells from freezing and thereby use them to produce a clone but, alas and alack, my clone would not be me.

But *A Bid for Immortality*...for whom, CD, for whom? And under what circumstances? Or for an elite group? If for the latter, then who decides, and how? And if for the former, then what do you do about population control? The planet cannot properly feed its present billions. What to do if all those billions go on reproducing forever?

Immortality would have to be combined with rejuvenation. Who would want to live forever with a senile brain in a worn-out body? which means that the problem of dying brain cells would have to be solved. Senility is caused by the dying of brain cells, steadily, every day once we pass age 30 or so, and unlike the other cells of the body, they are not replaced.

Sociologically...what are these immortals to do? Consider the average working man or woman who puts in his 40 hours a week or so at the factory, mill, whatever. Do we expect them to continue doing so forever? An eternity of drudgery? The average worker now makes just about enough to pay the rent and buy the groceries (and with inflation there isn't enough left over for beer). That's a prospect to look forward to forever? Or how about the legendary peasant in Botswana?

The subject of immortality has been explored in a host of SF stories. No solution has been presented in any of them.

Mary Long  
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I feel very ambivalent towards the whole idea (*cryonics*); on the one hand, I firmly believe that when my time comes,

it'll come, and I then go on to whatever form of existence or life or reincarnation, or whatever it is, that exists beyond *death*. Because I believe that, I don't *fear* death; but I'll be sorry to go in that there are so many people I love here whom I don't want to leave, who I think (I hope I don't sound big-headed) will be grieved by my departure. It's possible that people will be interested in cryonics not only for the reasons CD gives, love of life or whatever, but also fear of death, as a nothingness. On the other hand, what existence is it, frozen in a pod? As a matter of fact, I wrote about this not that long ago, and in that loc I mentioned a programme I had seen several years ago in England on

just this subject. I remember one of the technicians referred to the pods as *forever machines*. What I was more interested in, and which was never touched upon, were the legal ramifications, and the emotional ones too. For example, does the man in the pod become legally dead and thus his estate is administered, or does it get frozen, or what happens? And if the man returns -- he presumably looks and acts as he was when he died, that age, I mean. And suppose it had taken 20 years for them to find a cure; his wife, his children, and his friends are all that much older. Could they stand the emotional shock of his return? And what about his own mental and emotional state, contemplating dying again? (*And would he and his wife still be married?*)

I enjoyed the report of the RIVERCON stickup. The only person I know who was there didn't even mention it, so maybe they missed it. If it actually happened. I must admit, whilst I read it, I was irresistibly reminded of the *WONDER WOMAN* episode set in a convention (apparently attended by 30 people, all in fancy dress), complete with runners, yet! (*You mean the one in which the hotel clerk is telling one of the roomers that he can't have 12 people in his room because of fire regulations?*)

Some interesting comments on the BBC/Jourdain version of *DRACULA*. But I must point out that, as I recall it, it was billed as a "Gothic Romance based on Bram Stoker's novel." What I couldn't understand was why the two female leads were, apparently (or did I get it wrong), made into sisters? The running together of the two male characters didn't trouble me a lot, since they didn't really do all that much in the book. Interesting comment about vampirism being presented as almost a sexual perversion. Doesn't the book reek of sexuality to you? (*Sorry, I myself have not yet read it.*) It hits me in the eye whenever I read some scenes (a thing which has not escaped commentators, I've noticed). I think this is not so much the actions and reactions of the vampire and his victim, or not *only* so. Is not the mouth an important part of sexuality? (Is it significant that the hickey is called a lovebite in the UK?) I think that they tried to present the vampire as something which is feared but fascinating; something dark which the victim hates and yet desires. On the other hand, I've no idea why that should be so, rather than the thing being presented as purely an evil to be feared and loathed only. The only other analogy I can think of--no, two-- are guns and snakes. Some folks fear them but find them fascinating, drawn to them against their will almost. Hypnotic, I think, is the word I'm thinking of. One thing I never did find out was why the traditional mark of the vampire is two small wounds, like ' ', whereas the fangs are opposite each other in the mouth -- or are they double-fangs? Maybe what we need is a dental/medical look at the whole thing!

Well, I don't know if your memory goes back this far, but as I recall it, Mrs. Peel's husband was supposed to have been lost in the Amazon Jungle, presumed

dead. His return was the signal for her to stop going on missions with Steed. And the only glimpse you get of Mr. Peel is that as they drive off--and *didn't* he look like Steed? ((He most certainly did!)) Then there was Tara King, the next one along, played by the very tall and broad Linda Thorson. Never remembered much about her. ((Not too many people do--she was not the best of Steed's partners; besides, it turned out that I was working parttime evenings during that period of the show.)) Then the first one was Shirley whatsername, who went on to be painted gold by Goldfinger. ((Nay, Shirley Bassey sang the GOLDFINGER theme; it was Honor Blackman who played Pussy Galore in the movie, who was Steed's first partner, that is after he got rid of that group of male companions-in-spy.)) Purdy I like. ((So do I.)) She is very much her own character and I think she is the prettiest of the lot. What a swiz, though, in that recently televised 2½ hour version, when they billed Mrs. Peel as returning--she had about two lines, and in one of those she says (in a house with furniture covered by dust-sheets) that she's changed her name--which Steed knows...mystery upon mystery! Originally I didn't like Gambit, but now I like to see him trounced by Steed and Purdy. They retained Steed's wit very well, and to tell you the truth, one of the best bits is (are?) the exchanges between Purdy and Gambit, choppy dialogue or not.

Did you see they are making AVENGERS/USA? That's all I know about it, but it could be fun. Who knows, they may yet turn up in a place you know!

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Stan ((Schmidt)) suggests MORE THAN HUMAN as the only novel that is greater than the sum of its novелlette parts that he can think of, but Joe Haldeman's ALL

MY SINS REMEMBERED came immediately to my mind. The book, I think, is more powerful with the connecting material that joins the sections, but perhaps Stan would not consider this sort of episodic work to be a real novel.

I always enjoy your ramblings and conreports, George, even if they are from the dim and distant past (to me). But tell me something: surely you don't mean to imply that the con reports you did in this issue were taken from memory!! I find that mind-croggling, if it's the case. Here you are talking about minute details such as when you picked up your hat and when you registered at a con that was 14 months ago, and I'm not at all sure whose room I crashed in last Saturday night at MARCON! Please tel me you take notes and refer to them later or I'll never be able to stay on the wagon until MINICON. ((I do not take notes, Mike...I used to do that during my first year when I attended a lot of programming so I could be accurate in reporting those things, but I no longer do that. If there is a panel or something that I would like to remember, I record it. Aside from what is lucid in my memory when I sit down to write my conreports, I have two memory jogs: the program book from the various cons, and my apa work, which, up to this time, I have not had to refer to yet.))

Was forcibly struck by the dedication shown by your comment that "A new Semester started the next day, and I wanted to be somewhat fresh-looking when I started teaching." That shows a major difference between us right there! My kids are well aware of my numerous trips to conventions and they're used to me coming back to school having had six hours sleep in the previous three days, not having eaten solid food since Friday, and making sloshing sounds when I walk. The cruel ones say that's when I do my best teaching; the more sympathetic ones use a softer pencil to keep the noise down. (Of course, for our second and third

THE REASON YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS FANZINE IS TO ATONE FOR YOUR SINS.



REPENT, MY BROTHERS!

frjuc  
1-79

terms I'm not returning from a con on the first day, and even though I've started seven of my eight years on the day after returning from five or more days at the Worldcon, I don't actually teach the first day of school so I'm not so bad as far as my record on new semesters goes.)

The whole BNF question is one to avoid, but since you talked about how one might become one, I'll comment briefly on your ideas. It depends on what you mean by "working within the fanzine areas." I work within the fanzine field and while I don't lay claim to the Big Name Fan title myself, it is often tacked on to me. Yet if you ask the 6000 subscribers to ALGOL ((now STARSHIP--it has been awhile since this letter was written!)) who Mike Glicksohn was, you might find one in ten, or maybe one in eight who could tell you. But every one of them knows Andy Porter and Susan Wood and the regular columnists in ALGOL. If you'd question the 4500 attendees of IGGYcon as to who Harry Warner was, do you think as many as a third of them would have known? How many of them would have recognized the name Walt Willis? ((Who?)) Less than a quarter, I'll bet. When you talk about BNFs, you have to realize that this is primarily a term that only has meaning in the hard-core of fandom, among the fanzine people, and among the die-hard, regular con-goers: and even in the small pond of fandom, that's a pretty small, separate puddle.

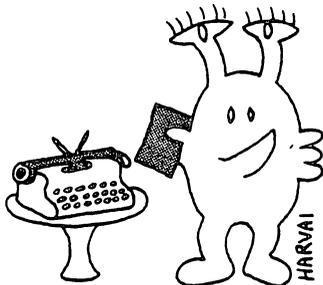
I can't agree with you that block voting can still win a fan hugo today. At one time it could very easily but as I remember the figures from IGGY, there were hundreds of ballots cast even in the fan categories. (I just looked up the figures: it was about 900 ballots in each of the three categories.) Figure out how many of those must be non-fanzine fans who only get LOCUS and/or SFR and simply choose between them, or vote for the only name they know. Do you really believe any fanzine like LL could generate a large-enough block vote to overcome those sort of numbers? I may earn myself a place in fan history as the last fanzine editor ever to win a Hugo! ((My mailing list is over 600; if all of them voted for me... Actually, I would be content with a Hugo nomination. Then the next year...))

Myself, I don't particularly object to other people using the term sci-fi, although I prefer it to be used (when pronounced "skiffy") to delineate the garbage that uninitiated people sometimes mistake for science fiction. But I don't use it myself to refer to SF and I know it bugs some people a lot more than it bugs me. Pugmire wants to know why he's being insensitive and if drawing flack, let him reread his own comments, imag-

ining himself addressing them to an audience of blacks and replacing the word *sci-fi* with the word *nigger*. Maybe *he'll* grow up.

It should be pretty easy for a science fiction fan (with concomitant broad mental horizons) such as the delectable Ms Jan Brown to imagine what fandom would be like without Glicksohn: (1) All fanzines would be a couple of pages thinner; (2) There would be many more poker-playing fans with money left in their wallets; (3) Attractive female fans would no longer need to wear Adidas to cons in order to get a fast start; and (4) Consuites would no longer run out of scotch and beer on Friday nights. Easy, wasn't it.

My favorite in-joke in *THE AVENGERS* was in a show set over Christmas. Steed was looking at some Christmas cards and murmured, "Mrs Gale...wonder what she's doing in Ft. Knox?" This, of course, was right after Honour Blackman had appeared in *GOLDFINGER*. (Speaking of *THE NEW AVENGERS*, Mrs Peel guest-stars tonight in a special episode. After the show went back to being produced in England, I think it picked up considerably and I quite enjoy it. Purdee is definitely superior to Tara King, even if she isn't another Mrs Peel. But then I am one of those iconoclasts who thinks Kathy Gale was the best partner Steed ever had!



The hardest typos to spot are the ones that read write.

should be. Purdy may not be near as impressive as Diana Rigg, but I think she's very watchable, and Gambit is competent. The three do manage to get some very witty repartee going at times, and I never find the show boring. But, of course, there's bound to be some sort of talk about the recent episode with a guest-starring role by Diana Rigg. I managed to miss most of that episode, but I can guess what it was like. Steed and Peel together again was the high point of the series, but it was still not quite as good as the original. Am I right? That always seems to be the pattern with these situations. ((I did not see the episode myself, but from what I heard, Emma Peel did not have a large role at all. Pity....)) And as for the question of who was Mr. Peel, I suppose that's a question of the same class as the two that are asked most about *THE PRISONER*: Is No. 6 John Drake? And, who is No. 1, really? Now that's a series I can really get into. I saw it twice on PBS not long ago and thought it was just fantastic. I checked the credits and it seems Brian Clemens did not write any of the episodes like you were wondering. Most were done by David Tomblin. Unless, of course, Clemens uses a pen name. ((Samuel did; why not Brian?))

And it's apparent that this ish didn't come out in time for *BUCK ROGERS*, because had it, I'm sure you would have nominated that film for the worst ever SF movie. Compared to it, even *LASERBLAST* was profound.

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I've never seen the original *AVENGERS* series in the US. It is being rerun on one rather local station, but at such a late hour as to make viewing impossible for me, especially seeing as how I have to work the next day. But I have found the new series to be quite good. Steed is a pretty interesting character, droll and urbane like a good Englishman

I actually walked out of the theatre it was so bad, and I never do that. I sat through *LASERBLAST*, but I couldn't endure *BUCK ROGERS* for more than 30 minutes. On TV it would have been merely contemptable, but at the theatre, after paying almost \$4 for it, it was downright insulting. Glen Larson produced it and from this I can tell that the only reason *GALACTICA* has any integrity at all is because of Robert Thurston's influence. Without Thurston, Larson ran amuck and totally prostituted the Buck Rogers legend. I could give you details that'd make you dry.

The artwork was good, especially Derek Carter's piece on page 43, and Charlie Wise's work. He has a very good style, Wise does. And Hank Heath's style looks so much like Alexis Gilliland's I mistook them for Gilliland's until I checked the art credits. Are those two clones or something? ((Not that I know of---maybe one is using a pen name?))

I'm curious, what kind of school do you teach at? You mention dorms, which leads me to think college, but Allen Chen calls you a high school teacher. Is it some kind of private high school? ((Yes, a private, independent, high school, with a partial boarding school population. The calibre of the student here is very high to medium; the ones who attend from public schools find that their grades drop dramatically. Students getting As and Bs with almost no studying in public schools are getting Cs while working their tails off. The Kingswood/Cranbrook schools are college preparatory schools; generally speaking, if a student graduates from here, s/he has little trouble in college. Usually, the pressures are less in college than here.))

John Thiel  
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I was interested to see from the contents inside that you are a teacher. I'm glad to see a fan who has a really good profession; and your explanation that you are sincere about it is truly heartening. Education is important in the formation of good character, and leads through knowledge to a greater interest in life; but for education to succeed there must be good teachers. I have no doubt that, with your high intelligence, you are one such. ((Thanks. \*blush\*)) Moreover, your dedication to your calling is reassurance that there is at least one school in Detroit where good education is practiced. I suppose the Motown riots get on your nerves a little from time to time, but these may be transient phenomena. ((Kingswood/Cranbrook is not in Detroit proper; it's located in one of the northern suburbs, the ritzier places. It's easier to be dedicated because the students are well motivated. I could be teaching in a public school in Detroit (although it might be difficult to get in now because of all the teacher lay-offs that have been happening), but I'm not sure I would enjoy it as much. Given a choice of teaching in the inner city, or juvenile delinquents, or somesuch, and not teaching at all, I would take the teaching. Since I do have a double major, Math and Latin (an MA in Latin) I've been asked which I prefer to teach more. I always reply, it doesn't matter; as long as I'm teaching I'm happy.))

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I don't want to argue against the Cryonics resurgence, since I did that extensively in *Freeze-Out* ([F, Oct 1972). If the pro-freezers get too rambunctious, I'll repeat some of the arguments.

It's so hard to read the fine print, but this is the direction that fanzines must go, so I can't complain. Yes, I can make a practical suggestion: darker ink makes fine print much more readable.

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The material on cryonics brought to mind a short story by Edgar Allen Poe. It was the one where a man was hypnotized before he died. It was to experiment to see how a body would react to being "preserved" in this manner. I forget the exact name of the story, but I have never forgotten the content. This hypnotized being remains preserved in this state for quite some time. Then a feeling the spirit wants release from the body is transmitted to those around it. Therefore, the being is removed from its hypnotic trance. Upon release, the body is reduced to a puddle of yellowish fluid. It is a story you don't easily forget and one of Poe's best, and that is saying quite a bit.

If you believe the spirit is separate from the body, you do not think of the passing of the body as "the end."

It is merely the beginning of a new phase of existence. Therefore, why fear the passing of the spiritual self from one plane to another? It can be viewed as the logical step in the evolution of the spiritual self.

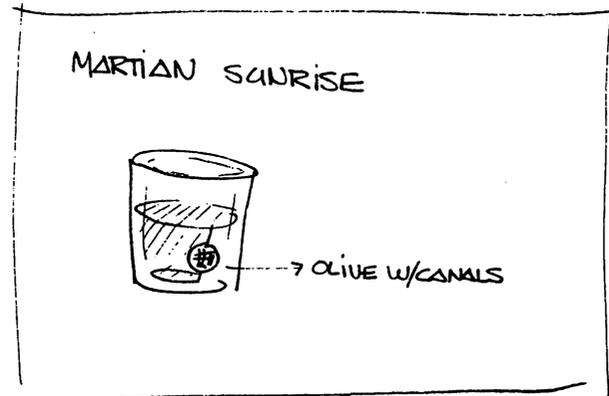
Consider the cultural shock of being "awakened" in a distant future. One would have complete strangers surrounding them. These strangers would have the knowledge which would make the recently awakened seem as a pre-schooler in comparison. One would no longer have the circle of friends and relatives they enjoyed in their past. Their occupation would most likely be obsolete and their prime interests in life could very easily have passed from the scene.

This leads to some thoughts on the aviators from World War II returned to earth in the movie CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. It would have been interesting if the movie had explored their re-entry into society. They were returned unaged from the chronological point of their disappearance. Their own children would most likely be "older" than they, not to mention the age of their spouses. Their world would no longer exist. Would they like what had taken its place? Would they be able to retool their knowledge to fit into today's world? Would they want to? Were the aliens benevolent in returning these people to such a fate? Interesting questions.

Very much enjoyed Don D'Amassa's AUTOCLAVE II GoH speech. It brings to mind the present governor of Massachusetts. Just as the army regarded disagreement analogous with disloyalty, so does this elected official. A welfare worker was ordered out of her job for daring to hint someone in the department for many years might know a little about the department's workings. An advisory committee was recently disbanded after voicing disagreement. Of course, the decision had been made BEFORE the criticism, but not acted upon until after. Then it came to light another committee was being formed to take the place of the errant committee. One would assume it would be a more "agreeable" committee.

For some strange reason many people seem to suffer from the insecurity syndrome whereby a conflicting opinion/view is taken for disloyalty to the team. One wonders how people can be so paranoid as to think all those who disagree with them are against them. It is simply a means to gain a discussion of the subject matter and exposure to all sides so the issue could be brought more clearly into focus.

The material on cryonics brought to mind a short story by Edgar Allen Poe. It was the one where a man was hypnotized before he died. It was to experiment to see how a body would react to being "preserved" in this manner. I forget the exact name of the story, but I have never forgotten the content. This hypnotized being remains preserved in this state for quite some time. Then a feeling the spirit wants release from the body is transmitted to those around it. Therefore, the being is removed from its hypnotic trance. Upon release, the body is reduced to a puddle of yellowish fluid. It is a story you don't easily forget and one of Poe's best, and that is saying quite a bit.



What a boring world this would be if everyone saw everything in the same way. It would be a nation of pods--maybe they have taken over and the few of us left don't realize it yet. Such circumstances would produce few new inventions as the questioning needed as an impetus would be missing. The reading material would all present the same side so it wouldn't really matter what book or magazine you picked up; they would all be alike. Let's hope that the ability to

question and disagree remains with us for a long time to come. ((I strongly agree. I used to think that disagreement meant the person(s) didn't like me. I was a very insecure person, but I never let on to that fact. I just figured that if they didn't like me, I could do without them. I guess I lost a few potential friends that way. I learned. Too many constructive things can come out of such disagreements.))

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What happens after death? Well I hear they suck out all your blood and other bodily fluids, and rip out all your guts. Ghu knows what they do with the stuff. I shudder to think of it. But seriously, I think not too often on the subject--I figure it will take care of itself. I wonder more often what went on before birth. Where was I? I can't remember hearing about any best-sellers on that subject. And has anyone weighed babies at birth to see if they'd notice when the soul entered the body?

Enjoyed your interview of Stanley Schmidt, even though it did make me feel guilty. Another author I haven't read. And was that a Rolls-Royce spaceship I spotted on p. 13? ((You bet!))

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The only complaint I have (small though it is) is the artwork which occupied page 34 was definitely not mine, nor was there on any other page for that matter. So before I get the praise for someone else's masterpiece, let me here and now proclaim that I, Colin Patrick Langeveld, Late of the Queens own Foot and Mouth, did not do it. ((Indeed, an error on my part. It was Anji Valenza who had done that piece which I attributed to you. My apologies to you both. (And I'll print some of your stuff in this issue. Fair enough?))

Nice to read W. Ritchie's review of COSMIC KALEIDOSCOPE. By coincidence I had just finished reading it, and had met Bob Shaw at YORKCON at Easter. Bob, with his usual pot of ale in his huge fist, autographed the book with his other, and thanked me for reading it. Bob is one of the most unassuming guys you could hope to meet. His northern Irish accent lends a note of the ridiculous to his after-dinner talks. I mean, this bloke has got to be heard to be believed. His puns alone are atrocious. Funnier still are his articles for MAYA. A very nice man and a damn good author. ((I heard Bob at WINDYCON in 1978; indeed he was funny. At some point I would like to hear him again.))

Another celebrity I met at YORKCON was Douglas Adams, who wrote the highly successful BBC radio serial: THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY. ((Thanks for the tape--Adams has written a hilarious script.))

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I know how annoying it is to have people nitpick over a complicated joke (I hope it was a joke!) like the RIVERCON III report. I will therefore re-

frain from asking how one pronounces *Shi Dor sai* or if the walking trashcan is R2-D2---HOWEVER, my Tae Kwon Do instructor saw this and he insists the monks in Red fare from an obscure branch of the Shoa Lin temple who perform a pattern of exercise, meditation, and diet that is named "Drunk Monkey in a Tiger's Eye." Now I myself think that they are priests of Lord Whatshisname from Robert Heinlein's SIXTH COLUMN. I would hate for this argument to continue (When Mr. Chan wants a toothpick he hits a wooden table with his fist; at least one piece is big enough after that), so could you please clarify this. ((*The Monks in Red Robes are called the Guardians of the Red Gate. They act as a self-appointed welcoming committee at conventions. As for the report being real or not...see comments from other people in this letter-column.*))

To Mark Leeper: Concerning Renfield--actually NOSFERATU and the Todd Brown DRACULA make the same assumption, that a vampiric madman must have somehow been caused by Dracula. In NOSFERATU, Renfield is the head of the agency for which Harker works. He is an occultist who is deliberately arranging affairs in Germany for *The Master's Coming*, but is somehow driven mad by the Count's presence. (This is not an uncommon effect of Black Magic.) In DRACULA (Universal), Renfield is the agent who is sent to Transylvania in all innocence but after being bitten and controlled, his mind snaps, drawn between an obsession with blood and horror at what happens to the ship's crew after he has gotten the boxes abroad.

When I first read the book, I expected that Renfield would turn out to be somehow created by Dracula, or planted by him as a servant, but this doesn't develop. His madness is merely a convenience, and Dracula's power over him is that which he holds over other ignoble animals.

In DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS, this idea is used very well. Dracula plants a harmless madman whom he himself has driven mad near a monastery. Eleven or so years later, after being cared for all that time by the monks, he receives a telepathic message and invites Count Vald in. The CIA calls it deep cover in which even the spy is unaware he is a plant. The KGB is better at it, however.

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Cryonics is *not* the only path yielding promise. Researchers are looking into some promising areas involving hormones,

cloning, RNA signals and even genetic engineering (assuming, of course, the Naderites don't send civilization and science back to the days of reading catechisms in your medieval cell). And the argument that researchers would be spending decades testing a life extension drug before it is allowed to be used on humans ignores some basic economics. There *are* an awful lot of us out here who would like to live to be 200 in *this* incarnation. If such a drug were to come into existence, what with the demand a supply would be made available, Food and Drug Administration regulations notwithstanding. In fact, the invention of a life-extension drug would probably create a black market industry generating enough money to make the marijuana business look like peanuts!

Life extension research is good, even necessary, but there are other more important questions that must be asked. Will we be able to continue civilization with the technological comforts to which we've become accustomed? Considering the limited energy resources that we've traditionally used, how much conservative/ecofreak resistance will there be switching to new ones?

Rodger Olsen's article got me rather upset. The idea of violence at an SF con upsets me muchly. It's sort of like having a brawl at Callahan's Bar. Not that the assholes who tried to rob the RIVERCON hotel didn't deserve exactly what they got. Not that I wouldn't have even joined in the revelry (I like a good brawl as much as any working class kid). But had some fan gotten him/herself killed as a result, what sort of article would have been written about RIVERCON? Would another con have been able to be held in Louisville, or anywhere else? ((*But a fan wasn't killed, and in fact, some people who were there are not sure the episode happened.*))

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I agree a great deal with Cy Chauvin on Dick's A SCANNER DARKLY; I feel the author's efforts to put the novel in the 1990s and introduce science fiction story ideas was misdirected. Believe it or not, some novels are not at their best in a science fiction setting (now don't drown me out with your gasps and sighs of *sacralige*). The subject matter of the novel--Dick's personal experience with some very real and tragic people--was plenty for one novel. But Dick's efforts to project those experiences into the near future just didn't work out. It's especially a pity, as Dick has written that he believes A SCANNER DARKLY to be his masterpiece. I wish he hadn't felt compelled to make it science fiction.

In reading Mark Leeper's review of the public television DRACULA dramatization, I should clarify something; while this DRACULA was shown on PBS, it was not produced by PBS. PBS does not produce any programs, but simply distributes them. This particular version of DRACULA was produced, I believe, by the BBC, a production house familiar to the watchers of public TV. By the way, has Mark checked the stage version of DRACULA? There have been more than one, I would guess (even before the many DRACULAs to hit the stage in recent years), but I think Mark would at least be interested in the stage DRACULA in which Bela Lugosi starred in the 1920s (which led to his film portrayal) and later appeared somewhere in the '40s. There must be a script of it in a university library somewhere... ((*I'm sure Mark will be interested in your comments.*))

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Does anyone know what *ultramundane* means? It's not what you'd expect. But back to that later.

Living forever is a fate worse than death. I would love to live for a few thousand or million years. But cling to the drab cliff forever? The view may be great from the top of that 5,000 foot cliff, but that's hardly all there is. If we can bear to let go of our safety-nets and learn to fly, we'd see so much more. I firmly believe that consciousness does not cease at death--people go on, learn to use the wings they grew on the cliff. I don't know what life is like on those wings, but I *want* to know. I am more curious than afraid of death.

I can imagine an even worse fate than living forever, though. If someone were frozen successfully, and never re-awakened, they'd be stuck here, unconscious, forever. Hopefully, the machine would break down after there were no more humans to tend it, or who cared enough to tend it, but if it didn't---well, all I'll say is I'd rather get the chance to fly when my wings are not fully grown than not at all.

I'll give you a hint on *ultramundane*. It is an adjective that describes most SF and Fantasy, and most of fandom, quite well.

If everyone in fandom has something in common, which is not likely, I would think it would be carrying more books, papers, *useful* items, and junk than most mundanes find physically possible.

All right, already. *Ultramundane*, according to Webster, means: 1) *being beyond the world or the limits of our solar system*; 2) *beyond life*. I think fandom ought to adopt it.

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Re: the hatred of the ignominious term *sci-fi*. From my limited experience, it seems to me that the eschewing of the term *sci-fi* for

SF or any other quaint abbreviation is a rite of passage, a neo's initiation, the first step towards openly denouncing the mundane--and signifying that you realize that they do live partially on a different earth than you do. I, personally, don't care what someone calls SF. I write SF, I say (making a pun of *sci-fi* that is Irvin Koch's fault) *skiffy*, which sounds sorta like peanut butter. When someone says or writes *sci-fi*, I may chuckle (due to the unconscious indoctrination that teaches many fen to despise the word) but I'm not thrown into fits. I just think that people who look down on mundaneness are (perhaps unconsciously so) using their fannish difference as a deliberate barrier, almost as if to say: "I am not mundane, I am not sane! Thus I am above and beyond you--you silly measly earthlings!" Maybe I'm wrong, but I think some fen aren't quite as indifferent to mundane disapproval as they try to appear, and so they court the title of wierd, and bask in their oddity as an American in Paris might

refuse to learn French and then be proud because the frogs can't understand a word he's saying.

The condemnation of *sci-fi* is in some cases snobbery, some insecurity, some (horror of horrors!) conformity, and scores of other reasons that prove fen are human too. If some of us were as non-conformist and open-minded as we pretend, we wouldn't care if mundanes, neos, or fellow-fen called SF regurgitated soufflé or XYZ! ((I do think you have hit the nail on the head, proverbially speaking. I have seen too many neos verbally assaulted and ostricized because they inadvertently used that word *sci-fi*. Too many fen are still children in this respect. I wish some of them would grow up a little.))

I don't really believe that there's a heaven or hell (unless self-made) or anything quite that understandable in the next world. I do believe that something lies after death. The way

I look at it, we'll just be born from this womb into a larger place. I figure if I'm gonna die, I'm gonna. I don't know anything that's strong enough to hold me here, or that I'd miss so bad I'd be homesick. Maybe I'm lacking there. I know I'd fight death like the devil, 'cause I'm a bit of a coward about newness, but I think in the end I'd much rather be birthed and grow, rather than stagnate, clinging to the earth like a child who doesn't want to be born. I've already had experience with trying to hang on to early stages of development, and it just doesn't work. Besides, I wouldn't want to live on the earth forever. I'm a cynic about mankind now and I'm only 17! Jeez, I'd become a mean old bastard if I out-lived my time here.

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While it's pleasant to be lucky, and for whom life is so enjoyable that you want to keep it going, that lot doesn't apply to me, and the suggestion of immortality seems in bad taste. An endless, uncountable, succession of mistakes, rejections, and sickness is not a pleasant prospect, and leads me again to my fantasy of suicide.

There's plenty of violence here in Britain to fill my wish for self-hurt, with John Collick calling for faneds to lie on hand-grenades and Alan Davey for tores to crush their heads with half-bricks, both vibrant images to live with as the voices in my head scream, "you're worthless," and "you don't get anything done."

So lucky people for whom life is happy and fun and who want to keep it going, I'll grab joy and pleasure and comfort while they're about, which isn't often. ((Graham, I've felt like this at times too. Things usually turned up after awhile. I hope they have for you. I would like to meet you again!))

A point that grabbed my attention was Lloyd Biggle's question: "What brings about this paranoid urge to become permanently attached to a typewriter?" Rob Holdstock (he of **BERSERKER** under the pseudonym of Saberhagen) claims he has a deep sexual relationship with his typewriter. All programmers have a personal relationship with their computers--it's either a bloody minded bastard, or just stupid, so that every command has to be carefully and pedantically posed. Hence the grey-ness that enters the programmers soul.

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I doubt that anyone who really wants to write will be seduced by "easy publication, amateur standards, and the illusion of being a writer." Those who just want to see their name in print may be--but in that case, why not? Nobody is going to get any inspiration to write at a convention (unless one writes about conventions, which is a very limited sub-genre and the rest of you kindly stay out of it), but the amount of conventions you go to won't affect your writing. (Contrariwise, if you're interested in writing, then the amount of writing you do will affect the number of conventions you go to.)

Neither does your amount of fanac affect your chances of being a pro writer. Naturally most of the pros "came up in the days when fans were few and fan activities minimal"; the days when fans outnumber the cockroaches and conventions are held weekly arrived too recently for very many people from these days to graduate into prodom. Because, of course, one doesn't become a pro writer - normally - while one is an active fan, one is an active fan first, and then one is a pro, with diminished fanac. But F.M. Busby, Terry Carr, Ted White, Greg Benford, Bob Shaw, James White and others were just as active as fans as anyone today, while they were fans.

Of course, there is a way to be a fan and a pro both, if you don't have to do anything else. These days you can live on the proceeds of two novels a year. (Not if you want to live well, but if you don't eat too much you can do it.) Add in some short stories or maybe a third novel (a potboiler for Manor Books, say) and you have both the money to engage in fanac, and plenty of time to indulge in it. But you can't do it if you are working an 8-hour-a-day job and writing in your spare time. There is a breaking point I've run up against, there, and that's trying to change over from a regular job to writing. You can write a novel in your spare time; no problem. But you can't live on



one book a year. Eventually you either have to give up the regular job and starve a little while you are getting established, or you keep the regular job and cut out all other spare-time activities while you're getting established. Either way, your fanac drops; you're short of either money or time. Once you're established then the fanac can pick up, if you want to; look at Gordie Dickson.

Or, if you're lucky, you marry somebody who pays the bills while you're getting established—in which case you can go right ahead with fanac. (But don't count on that; the bill-payer may have ideas on what you're up to with your spare time.)

I'm rather amazed at the number of fans who want to talk about writing too. Mostly the ones who are going to do anything about it don't detail their plote to you, but some of them need outside encouragement. (This is entirely foreign to my whole nature, but I just snarl at the illogicality of people and forge ahead.) I've never had anyone ask me to read his/her story (having a nasty reputation has its advantages), but I'm sure someone will, eventually. I've run into a few fans who say, "I have this chapters-and-outline done, where's the best place for a newcomer to send it?" Those are the people who are going to sell, eventually. Lloyd is quite right about the need to sit down and do the writing. (I could be better off if I used it more myself, except I have no particular urge to write, except as a means of earning a living—and I'm already earning a living.) Basically I agree with him; except that I really don't think that good advice is needed by those who will become writers, and it's wasted on those who only want to talk.

Jan Brown  
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No, to me there is something oddly comforting about the fact that I won't go on forever. I'm part of nature, part of the endless cycle of birth and death. There's something almost obscene about putting oneself outside that cycle, something fundamentally dehumanizing. We may find, if we ever achieve immortality, that it does indeed rob us of our humanity, whatever that may mean. And that does indeed scare me.

Your interview with Stan Schmidt is up to your usual standards. I've met Schmidt at several cons, but don't feel I know him, so thanks very much for the insights. ((My pleasure. I enjoyed doing the interview.)) You are going to have to do a follow-up now--STANLEY SCHMIDT: EDITOR. ((It is in the works now!))

Brian Earl Brown  
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F & SF arrived yesterday (with its no improvement *new style* look) with a review of Stanley Schmidt's *LIFEBOAT EARTH* by Algis Budrys. I wonder what Schmidt's reaction would be to that? I mean, to be told one is writing power fantasies for lower-level management-types based on no true knowledge about bureaucrats? A devastating blow!

Still...Budrys is so on-target about this point, and its so endemic to *ANALOG's* fiction. I think that stuff was part of the reason I quit reading *ANALOG*. I outgrew *ANALOG* about six years after I began reading because of a number of re-occurring vices--low literacy, and a tendency to be revenge pornography for abused technocrats. Laumer's *RETIEF* is the most obvious example, even though it never appeared in *ANALOG*. ((But it has--had you at least read the covers for the past few years, you would have known this.)) Retief was so right, and everybody else was sq wrong. Pohl's *The Gold at the Starbow's End* was a perfect send-up (???) of the type of stuff Campbell was buying at the end of his life, and I don't see where Bova or Schmidt had deviated from this course. ((I didn't care for Pohl's story either, but much of what has been pubbed in *ANALOG* has

been far superior to most of the stories in other magazines. Different tastes, I suppose.)) What it comes down to really is that I read little SF today, and like even less of what I read.

I'm not sure if it's the poor repro of this issue, but LL has a very pedestrian appearance. The layout isn't complex or confusing (as it occasionally is in some fanzines), but at the same time it leaves me very cool in ways that *XENOLITH* or *SFR* doesn't. If I knew why this was happening I'd suggest ways of avoiding it, but I can't. ((I don't use top-line borders, which tend to unify the page.)) The use of florid script press-type was unwise, resulting in frequent unreadability. Gothic lettering is another poor choice for press-type, but that's because people continue to assemble titles out of all capital letters. Gothic capitals don't form recognizable shapes; lower case Gothic letters do, but few people bother to use both upper and lower case Gothic letters. Lastly, I would suggest that you didn't letter titles by stacking the letters in vertical rows. It's hard to read. I have nothing to printing them sideways. ((I am continually experimenting with graphics and layout. I am not totally satisfied with what I have done---I hope that I never am; it will keep me experimenting.))

Cy Chauvin's book reviews are so well done that it's no wonder Ted White used to print them in *AMAZING*. Moreover, Cy's writing has a distinctive flavor to it. It's very precise and low-keyed, the sort of quietness that causes a raised eyebrow to speak volumes. And Cy is not hyping or hacking the books like most critics today seem to do (Ghu save us (or at least me) from Spider Robinson's book reviews). Cy is honestly considering the book under review.

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Mike Rogers Letter on, and your response to, "What makes a BNF?" might need some more clarification. Rogers' name is familiar to me, probably

from convention flyers and the like, although I have never met him. You're familiar to me because I've met you at several mid-western conventions, and also because of LL. When a fan is more into conventions than fanzines, obviously those fans who run and work at conventions will be "bigger BNFs" to the con-going fans. When a fan just reads zines and never goes to cons, then faneds and letterhackers will be BNFs to him/her.

I think it depends more on the fan's own interests, rather than some mystical formula of two conventions + one fanzine + eight locs + one apazine = BNF.

Frankly, I'm not impressed with most of the self-proclaimed BNFs at all.

To give you my honest feelings about the chances of LL getting a Hugo nomination, I must agree with Mike Rogers' assessment. However, I've been sufficiently impressed by the high quality of your interviews, and by some of your other writing, that I think it would be a shame if you didn't get a Best Fanwriter nomination some day. ((\*blush\* Thanks!))

I'd say my writing is more off the tip of my nose than the top of my head.



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I would be more impressed by research into regenerating the recently dead to capitulate on those still-thriving cells, especially in recharging the inactive brain, than by experiments in freezing corpses. Freezing myself would make more sense if I could go into the process while still living --which I can't, for the reasons CD cites. Still, successes with reviving drowning victims and rescuing patients from clinical death on the operating table does give the process some promise. My major fear is damage to the brain due to lack of oxygen, which means the freezing process had better be damned swift.

Phillip Lenud's review of THE JUPITER THEFT leaves me with absolutely no desire to read the book. A little too goshwow, with no substance to back his claims. A little like NEWSWEEK's rave review of the SUPERMAN movie, which only served to turn me further off the film.

Leeper's analysis of the PBS DRACULA was superb, well-backgrounded, and studded with perceptive criticisms. While his focus on the erotic in the new version as contrasted with Stoker's original version is appreciated, he might have made more mention of the blood flowing freely in Jourdan's version, rather than concentrating on special effects. An early scene in the telecast, skipped over very hastily, suggests that the Count brings his retinue of female vampires kidnapped infants from the surroundings to feast upon.

I am quite upset to see you offer derogatory mention to that oft-abused film, THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH, a work of whose merit circumstances have appointed me to sole defender. True, the scripting and acting are as atrocious as in the run of low-budget horror flicks, if not more so. But the director showed an idiot savant's grasp of how to convey suspense through staging and crosscutting, making some scenes uncannily effective, and some of the black-and-white photography was rather atmospheric. Easily a better film than DUNGEONS OF HORROR or THE INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES WHO STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME MIXED-UP ZOMBIES.

And you didn't even bother to get the title right. How would you like it if people started referring to your fanzine as GREEN LANTERN? ((I'd think they had found out my secret identity!))

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I don't know if the RIVERCON III conreport by Roger Olsen is legit, but it should be. It sounds exactly like the sort of thing likely to happen. Anyway, Olsen's

Jean Shepard-style rendering of the incident was hilarious.

Actually, John Williams reminds me more of Erich Korngold than any one classical composer. Now that Korngold and Herrmann have had symphonies released, possibly we'll have the opportunity to hear some of Williams' serious compositions before he dies. As to particular similarities between Williams and other classical composers, they certainly do exist. In STAR WARS, note the variation on the pounding ostinato rhythm of Gustav Holst from Mars (THE PLANETS SUITE) which is especially noticable when the rebel blockade runner is being taken aboard the Imperial cruiser near the beginning of the film. Also (a curious double-influencing this), when Threepio is wandering in the desert of Tatooine, there is a distinct echo of Stravinsky's RITE. What is odd is that this section is the same section of RITE used by the Disney people during FANTASIA to show the heat of the drying earth prior to the death march of the dinosaurs. So...was Williams influenced here by Stravinsky...or by Stravinsky as seen by Disney? I'd like to ask him.

Indeed, the NEW AVENGERS is a disappointment, though the fellow who plays Gambit is quite good. The show

misses not Mrs. Peel, but Diana Rigg, a superlative actress (who, I might add, is even more impressive up close than she ever was in the show).

I don't know about the worst SF movie ever made, but my vote for the worst SF film title goes, unreservedly, to WRESTLING WOMEN VS. THE AZTEC MUMMY. Honest! A Mexican import more debilitating than Montezuma's Revenge!

Mike Rogers  
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Lloyd Biggle Jr. is right on about piano playing, anyway. That's exactly how you do it. And the hours you spend practicing aren't any guarantee that you'll make it. The talent has to be there, but you also have to have a good teacher who can solve the kinds of problems you run into and who plays the way you want to play. Rosina Lhevinne and Adèle Marcus may be great teachers, but they're not for everyone.

I'm also sure that his comments apply to writing equally well, though I'm not sure one can be taught to be a writer. For that matter, no one can be taught to be a great pianist, either. Some parts of the skill can be learned, but not taught. ((Lloyd does know music; he's a musicologist, with expertise on the clarinet, as well as being a mystery and SF writer.))

Come on now, that RIVERCON story wasn't real, was it? I was there, and I don't remember anything of the sort. It is a good story, though.

In regards to John Williams, did anyone notice that one of the motives in the SUPERMAN score (during Lois Lane's flight with Supie) was a direct quote from the Liebestod of TRISTAN UND ISOLDE? ((Interesting. See Alan Dean Foster's comments about Williams. Maybe the two of you should start corresponding.))

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First, I don't think you have enough funny cartoons in LL. Where are all the cartoons by Rotsler, Canfield, Gilliland, Kunkel, etc.? ((I don't have anything by them.)) The serious art you print just doesn't do anything for me--even the beautiful stuff by Joan Hanke-Woods doesn't faze me.

I don't think it is a good idea to write around the illos. Or the headings. The best example of what not to do is on page 39 where you ran the heading for Conreports and Ramblings 8. ((Indeed, that one was something of a mistake, but I do like to vary where the art is placed, so I will continue to type around the illos. In fact, I was considering putting one on this page and typing your letter around it...))

I think it should be expected that Bob Shaw improve as a writer over 17 years. W. Ritchie Benedict seems surprised by the development of a writer over time. W. Ritchie surely isn't (or won't be) writing the same way he did 17 years ago (from now). He might also be interested in knowing that Bob also wrote for fanzines, and is still doing so, before he wrote professionally.

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I think I realized, reading this ish, what it is about you and your zine I really like.

The word is quality. I'm not saying that you are the best, ever, that could be, but it seems in everything you do, you are concerned with ethics and quality. In preparation, you don't do things half-assed, and constantly work on improving things. There are some exceptions, but I can't really gripe about them, and it is refreshing to find someone today who seems to care so much about the consequences of what he does. ((\*blush\* I seem to be doing a lot of blushing this issue. Thanks for the kind words. I hope to keep the quality high...I hope.))



I think the only thing I didn't like about the ish was *Rings of Saturn*. It seems to me that the navigator would have his ass busted out of the fleet for attempting such a crazy-ass trick. And would that be worth it? Usually, if you have that kind of dream, the only way to fulfill it is to be independently wealthy or wait for years and *work* for earning the challenge. By *earning the challenge* I mean, the money, the financing, the necessary experience to accomplish it, etc.

I like both the PBS television and radio stations out of Dallas. They're what keep me going. I can listen to classical music when I want to and don't have to bother with the top-40 (which, at the moment, seem to be particularly horrid) or C&W. Plus, *All Things Considered* has got to be one of the greatest news programs ever put together.

But the constant fund-raising conducted by both is annoying, and it is during these times I don't listen to them quite so much. I am (or was) a member of public radio, and our family has, from time to time, memberships in the TV station...but they carry it just a little too far. I remember when I was watching DR, STRANGELOVE, they broke in twice during the movie for about 20-30 minutes per break. This got to be very annoying, and it happens every time they have a full-length feature, and sometimes even in the middle of MONTY PYTHON, depending on the importance of the drive. It makes me want to write nasty letters. And when they are going over the premiums for the 53rd time in one break.... ((I get somewhat annoyed too. I haven't written any nasty letters yet either, but I am usually doing something else at the same time that I'm watching the tube, so the annoyance is less. But one of these days....))

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The article on the PBS adaptation of DRACULA hit me because 1) inter-media adaptations of art works interest me, since they can or should demonstrate something about the

content versus form of a particular artistic statement and may thus reveal something I didn't know before about the content of a particular work and/or about art forms in general; 2) DRACULA and vampires interest me. Oddly, FRANKENSTEIN, for all its dramatic genesis and lurid character, does not fascinate me. Anyone want to explain cogent differences rather than cogent similarities? Maybe it's just the quality of the writing; I can stand to read Bram Stoker but not Mary Shelley, who was writing several decades earlier (my taste doesn't run to 19th-century fiction, as a rule, for light reading). Mark Leeper hit a number of interesting points in his article, such as the irrelevance of the histor-

ical Count Dracula to fictional vampire portrayals and the different devices used to shorten a novel into a movie.

I disagree with him on a couple of points. First, he regrets the omission of Dracula's ocean voyage to England in the PBS version. Granted that an independent report of Dracula's character is lost, the episode is quite self-contained (Mr. Leeper does make that point when he notes that it would make an excellent horror story in itself, p. 49) and has little internal connection with the rest of the plot; this means that dropping or drastically condensing it does no violence to the plot, and, to my mind, justifies eliminating it from a dramatic adaptation which must, as Mr. Leeper also notes, necessarily condense the action considerably, hopefully without distorting the plot line too much. In other words, if some part of the novel *has* to go, that one can disappear as painlessly as any.

Second, DRACULA and vampire tales in general are, at least on one level, clearly sexual allegory. One telling point in favor of this theory is that the title character attacks only female victims. When Harker first visited Dracula's castle, Dracula himself was an impeccable host, but three female vampires were ready to drink his blood. Harker himself took this as a potentially sexual encounter, in that he perceived them as rivals to Minna, even while conscientiously remaining faithful to her. Dracula as a blood-consuming vampire (rather than as a force for evil) menaces the male characters only through Lucy and Minna, as they donate blood to Lucy (again, this is seen as a quasi-sexual exchange, *marriage*, by Van Helsing, and note also that no female blood donors are used for Lucy) and through the mind-link created between Minna and Dracula by the double blood-exchange. In short, all blood-to-blood encounters are between members of the opposite sex. (If Stoker was into Gay lib, he wasn't talking about it in DRACULA.) The concept that blood-drinking (particularly repeated blood-drinking, and most particularly the double blood-exchange, willing or not, between Dracula and Minna Harker) creates a mental or physical bond is also reminiscent of sex. From the Freudian point of view, the exchange of life-giving fluid, oral gratification, and subsequent exhaustion of one party and engorgement of the other, represent significant factors representing a distorted but definitely sexual picture. Part of the horror is that these quasi-sexual encounters lead directly to death and (pardon the phrase) worse than death, undeath. Blood-exchange bonding (eros) is not opposed to death (thanatos) but in alliance with it. I do agree that Stoker, regardless of the current permitted level of frankness, would not necessarily have made Dracula openly erotic (the sexual undertones make DRACULA mildly erotic with amplification). For one thing, another part of the horror of the character lies in his perfect (almost inhuman) social restraint, contrasted with his ghastly appetite; a character who visibly had other appetites (vampires traditionally do not eat or drink, either) would be more humanly understandable.

I was glad of a guide to how the various screen and radio versions of the novel were condensed, but I was a little disappointed that there was no discussion of the stage versions. The Edward Gorey sets for Broadway (which I eventually saw) were more than mildly noticeable, though I cannot honestly say that they added to the authenticity of the play's rendition of the original novel. Perhaps the opposite; they added a faintly comic air of stylized unreality which was less conducive to horror than to detachment from the willing-suspension-of-disbelief. Admittedly a stage version is limited to a few, weldom-changed lo-

cales and (less rigidly) to a relatively small cast, as well as being limited by playing time and intermission requirements.

Finally, I'd like to list three items for the bibliography:

**THE TRUTH ABOUT DRACULA** by Gabriel Ronay, gives a lot of information about the vampire legend and details the unappetizing career of Vlad (The Impaler) Dracula in a manner neither extremely tedious nor extremely sensational. Also titled **THE DRACULA MYTH** (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), paperback.

**A CLUTCH OF VAMPIRES** is an anthology of vampire stories edited and introduced by Raymond T. McNally, from ancient eras up to the twentieth century. Most of the stories are literature or folk tales rather than supposedly factual accounts of vampire attacks. The intent is to show the popular picture of vampirekind over a long period of time, including our own era. (New York: Warner Paperback Library, Warner Books, 1974).

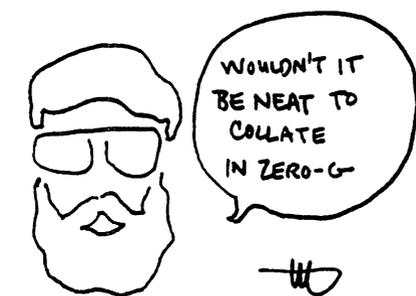
**HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA** is a novel by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro in the gothic style; the plot concerns an episode in the career of a most sympathetically and logically portrayed vampire in 18th-century Paris. I include it here largely for the brief but cogent discussion of vampires at the end of the book. (New York: Signet, New American Library, 1978), paperback.

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I very understandably took something of a beating in your letter column over my giving a positive review for **EXORCIST**

II. Re-reading my review, it seem to me I said a lot of negative as positive about the film. There is very little specific rebuttal of the points I liked (or disliked) about the film. The disagreement then comes in weighing the positive and negative factors. An interesting concept carries a lot of weight with me. Almost all of my favorite films are films with an interesting and original idea. (Don Ayres, take note: With the possible exception of **STAR WARS**, I consider **QUATERMASS AND THE PIT** to be my favorite film of all time.) Instead of just grinding out another **EXORCIST** imitation, Boorman presents an interesting idea that was new to me, and as far as I can tell, new to film. (Richard Brandt: What is *Teilgard De Chardin*?) I don't remember noticing that anyone was acting in an unmotivated way in the film, though some motivations did not become clear until the end of the film. Also, I do not

agree with Brandt that the context of the first film is redefined in the second film. The second film just answers in a novel way some questions raised in the first film. The context is not so much redefined as extended. It creates a viewpoint



that makes the first film more interesting. I didn't see that happening with **JAWS** II.

It is interesting that **LAN'S LANTERN** readers think I'm too kind to some films. I am corresponding with Andy Offutt who thinks I come off in print as being snotty-nosed and vicious. I guess if you walk down the center of the road you get hit by cars going in both directions.

Mark Sharpe sadistically asks me to review **LASER-BLAST**. I would much rather forget it. Incidentally, there are at least two versions of the film (like **EXORCIST** II). The version shown at **BOSKONE** was different from the one I saw in the theatre in New Jersey. (It

did not have Keenan Wynn listlessly mumbling over and over something about *Project: Sand-dust*.) I have to comment about Lan and Sharpe naming *the worst SF film of all time*. There is even a book out on the 50 worst films of all time. The problem is that the best films get noticed and the worst are so obscure it is unlikely that they were ever released, and there are hundreds of these (at least). In Massachusetts there was one theatre called *Reject Theatre*. The owners somehow obtained films that were made to be released, but were just too lousy to get released. One I was told about had a mad scientist with a gun that turned people into tree leaves. Pieces of the set kept falling down. Now how can anyone judge what are the worst science fiction films if they haven't seen this little gem? I can only judge what are the worst films I have ever seen. I would say that worse than **HORROR OF PARTY BEACH**, **LASERBLAST**, or any of the other commonly named *worst films* are **FIRE MAIDENS FROM OUTER SPACE** or **CRAWLING HAND**. My personal choice as the worst film I have ever seen is **CREEPING TERROR**. This film was almost entirely narrated to save the expense of syncing the voices with the film. The monster is clearly two men under a very slightly doctored carpet. The narration is embarrassingly bad, and has often caused people to groan rooms away from the television showing this film. See this film before you say you think you know the worst SF film ever made. And I can only say that this is the worst film I have ever seen.

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Joan Hunter Holly's remembrance of meeting Heinlein brought to mind the first time I had met him, at Big **MAC**. I had followed Barney Neufeld, who had followed a lady named Petia, and we both crashed Kelly Freas' birthday party. I'd say that was certainly an experience I'll always remember. Getting in, I found myself jammed into the closet and momentarily shared the small compartment with a beautiful lady. I checked her name badge afterwards and found it had been Jodie Offutt. I remember telling Poul Anderson where the booze was, and Polly Freas continually giving me popcorn as she smiled happily, strolling through the crowded room. Over in one corner was a gathering of people so I went to see what was going on. And who to my wondering eyes should appear but Robert Heinlein! I was stunned. But I held my cool (very difficult) and tried to remember not to act the way I had when I first talked to a pro, Leigh Brackett (I had made an ass of myself, unable to talk coherently, which was very strange behavior for me, let me tell you!)

Finally I got to talk to the great man and found out that he had researched the child-birth sequence in **FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD** with a nurse/midwife, and told me that if I wanted to write about something I didn't know much about, get first-hand knowledge, or read like hell until I did. Still remember that advice. One neat thing happened after I had had my turn. Joe Haldeman, whose **THE FOREVER WAR** had won the Hugo that year, came over and told Heinlein that he owed all of his success the TFW to him. Heinlein told him, "You don't owe me nothing. You did it all yourself." Joe demurred, but it was a moment I was glad to have witnessed. I didn't know anything about Joe Haldeman then, but my feelings for him as a person have always been positive because of the brief exchange.

I also recall telling Larry Niven about Spider Robinson's filksong, *Eova*. Larry sang me back a totally different one, and we talked about his Hugo, standing on a table being re-glued. Somehow the rocket had decided to take off and was forcefully corrected of such a notion with some stronger glue. Gad, what a party that was for a humble neo to be part of!

As usual, your own writing, *Ramblings*, was the zine's highlight. Just one comment: Gayle Dixon's hubby is Bill Dixon, not Steve. ((*Uh yeah, I found that out at MINICON 15 when I spent some time talking with her and Bill.*))

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I found Mark R. Leeper's critique of the PBS *DRACULA* informative and interesting. Although I am as ignorant as to never have read the original novel, I would like to express some disagreement with him. I found the optical effects in the PBS version to be very effective. Also, the other faults he found so obvious in the special effects were not all that obvious to someone not looking for them. However, I must agree in having been appalled by the fake Texas accent. One of the things the British do poorly is imitate American accents, not that I've seen ((*heard?*)) Americans do any better with British ones. Laurence Olivier and Peter Ustinov are very good, but they're exceptional actors. *LILLIE* is the first British TV production I've seen with decent Americans.

My response to Joan Hunter Holly's point about mundane reactions to the presence of Heinlein in their midst is this. I have found that many, perhaps half of all, mundanes have never heard of our most illustrious writers. I have mentioned Isaac Asimov on occasion, only to be asked, "*Who?*"

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I was very pleased with the PBS *DRACULA*, and with Louis Jourdan's portrayal of the Count. I had recently seen the Lugosi version for the first time in ten years or so, and was astounded at how bad it was (compared to the book, at any rate; maybe for its time the movie was good). In fact, I've seen the PBS version three times now, and each time I've caught more details from the book that aren't in most other versions. My only major complaint was Quincy's *awful* accent. I've lived in Texas all my life and I've *never* heard anyone talk like that. But Jourdan was superb: menacing, understated, elegantly fascinating and, yes, erotic. Let's face it, anyone who can convince so many people to let him bite their necks has got *something* going for him. That's one possible interpretation. I'd like to hear Leeper's opinion of the *Cliffhangers DRACULA*, even though it's not an adaptation of the book. At least the accent was closer to Transylvanian than Jourdan's.

There are some very interesting philosophical questions raised by cryonics for those who believe in a *soul* or *spirit*. What happens to the spirit while the body is frozen? And would it be able to return? For those who believe in reincarnation, what would happen if the spirit were in another body when the frozen body was revived? Would it just *not* revive? Would it be a vegetable? Would another spirit enter it (which could be quite a can of worms, legally speaking)?

The technology may be a long way off, but I was very intrigued with the idea of transferring memories from the original person to his/her clone, as in Varley's future. Which would also have problems for those concerned with a spirit or soul.... ((*Intriguing questions--perhaps you could explore some of them in a SF story....*))

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The articles on *immortality* caught my eye. Being an artist (weaving), I am interested in preserving, not me, but my work. In art, the artist's work is the important thing. If it can withstand time, it is considered important and so is the artist. I'm not so sure that in most cases the artist would improve with age the way wine or his/her

work might.

Re Ms. Doyle's article, I must point out that cryonics doesn't come under the heading of *immortality*, just a break in life, *if* it is possible. For example, if I began a weaving, and after working on it awhile, put it away away for a year before resuming it, I would not consider that I have *worked* on it for a year. I would have spent only a month *real time* on it. The piece hasn't really aged, but it hasn't gained any longevity either. In the same way, the person who is *restored* will still live the normal life span; their life was just interrupted for a time.

I found *On Being a Writer* a very good article and Mr. Biggle pointed out a real distinction--that of a person who wants to be a writer, and a person who wants to write. I was surprised, however, that he did not urge would-be writers to read, but some people believe that most would-be writers read alot. This is not always the case. Last year I met a man who wanted to write. Indeed he had written two manuscripts, but he rarely read anything besides the *NATIONAL ENQUIRER*. His writing showed it; it was barely literate and the story itself was deadly dull. He was very out-of-touch with the audience he wished to reach. I was also surprised that he felt fanzine writing had little positive value. I think they at least get one to the typewriter, no mean feat of one who wants to write and finds it hard to start. I admit that what he says about fanzines being "...*easy publication, amateur standards, and the illusion of being a writer,*" may be true for some, but not all. Fanzines can be a good training ground. Everyone needs a place to be bad before s/he can be good. I also feel that writing for an amateur publication can give one a feel as to whether one really wants to be a writer, or of the person who is just in love with the idea. The person who is interested will move into the pro publications once they get into the habit of writing, if they are so inclined.

I was at *RIVERCON III* and I must have missed *that* part of it for I did not see any of the events described, nor have I *ever* heard that story before.

Joe Celko's DSC history reads more like a short history of Atlanta's fandom than a history of the DSC. It was a bit sparse on DSC details outside of Atlanta. ((*See more details about the DEEPSOUTHCON in the next letter.*))

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Had to write to you about Joe Celko's *History of the DEEPSOUTHCON*; Joe is a good friend and a talented writer, but he seems to have been mistaken on many of his facts, and some of his exclusions are surprising.

Atlanta's DSC in 1970 was indeed the first one to exceed 100 memberships; after that, it went to New Orleans in 1971, and back to Atlanta in 1972, under the direction of Steve Hughes and Joe Celko, with Binker Hughes offering invaluable assistance. From there, it went to New Orleans in 1973, then back to Atlanta in 1974. It's surprising that Joe can't recall the GoH for 1974, since that was the year he gave the convention, inheriting the idea of a *Mardi Gras* convention from Glen Brock, who committed himself to the concept and then backed out. The convention was rather different by DSC standards: no consuite, room parties were discouraged, and there were some ill feelings between the SF fans and the Anachronists at the con. There was *no* guest of honor, although there had been rumors that Poul Anderson would show up as GoH.

Joe is very wrong when he says that the DSC alternated from Atlanta to NO to Atlanta throughout the 70s, except for the 1977 con in Birmingham, Alabama.

In 1975, the DSC went just as far north as it could go and still be in the South, and Louisville's RIVERCON (also functioning as the 1975 DSC) was a superlative convention. Cliff Amos presented Philip Jose Farmer as the GoH that year, and while there were some problems with communications among the committee members, the convention ran smoothly and had a record attendance for a DSC at that time.

1976 did bring the DSC back to Atlanta, under Steve and Binker Hughes' guidance. While Steve had been *in charge* in 1972, Bunker was the driving force behind the 1976 convention.

Other discrepancies: Joe was *not* a chairman at the convention where two New Orleans fans got carried away and one knocked the other cold. That event occurred in 1972, and Joe was part of the chairing committee at that con, but he was not the chairman, according to both my memory, and the Hughes', who made up the remainder of that committee. It's worth noting that there wasn't ever a real problem of the two getting carried away, either; the KO came about inadvertently after some horse-play, and the two boxers merely avoided each other until tempers cooled down.

In mentioning Southern conventions (I know the topic was DSCs, but Joe *did* mention comics cons and Trek cons) you can't ignore the continuing RIVERCON in Louisville, the KUBLA KHANS in Nashville under Ken Moore's aegis, and Chattanooga's CHATTACON, begun by Irvin Koch and now headed by Dick and Nicki Lynch.

An aside: Joe remarks that we're on ASFO V. I'll accept that viewpoint, even though we are the Atlanta Science Fiction Club now, and we chose that name in part because of the bad feelings ASFO IV had left with some people in the area. The club has been going on for about two years now, and while I don't wish to discredit Joe's prediction that it'll die from lack of interest any time now, we *do* seem to be moving right along with a healthy membership and organized programming. As President of the club, I *hope* someone'll tell me if we're about to fold!

A final note in answer to Joe's query about an Atlanta DSC in 1980: unless a new bid forms quickly, there's not much chance. Atlanta has no one really interested in bidding for the DSC, as far as I know, and I hear rumors of a Nashville bid for the convention instead. Now if Joe wants to bid... *((I believe that Nashville did get the bid for the 1980 DSC!))*

And after all my corrections and additions, I'll have to say that Joe did a pretty good job with the history, and I thank you for printing it and getting a skeletal framework into the hands of the fans who otherwise might not know what a DSC is. *((Thank you very much for the additions, corrections, and other-mentions. They are quite helpful.))*

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*A Bid for Immortality* was, as promised, intriguing and controversial. Several objections immediately suggest themselves. One,

there are lots and lots of people on earth already. If some of them don't die off, where are we going to put the next generation? Heinlein solved this problem neatly in *TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE*, but the Diaspora may yet be quite a ways off. The second objection is rather more serious: the best you can say about some people is that they die and leave the rest of us in peace; and very often the greatest hinderance to social progress is that the opposition won't go away--an idea (e.g. votes for women, integrated schools) that meets with fierce opposition in one generation is often more easily accepted in the next, and some people will never change their minds in 50 years or 500. Finally, to quote Larry Niven's *Cautionary Tales*: "*Ten thousand years wasn't enough...no lifetime was enough, unless you lived it in such a way as to make it enough.*" Of course the impression of the article is that only a relatively

few people would be interested in immortality (or cryogenics), and those people would be intelligent and enlightened enough not to make a nuisance of themselves by (you should pardon the expression) outliving their usefulness. Let's hope so. My self, I have no real desire to go to sleep for X years and wake up in a world even stranger to me than midtown Manhattan would be to Shakespeare. My personal solution is not to waste the years I already have.

*The Rings of Saturn* was an original --and optimistic!-- treatment of a subject that's not too common in SF. What happens when the new and exciting becomes mundane? I too prefer to think that the human spirit won't long be content with resting on its laurels. I particularly like the phrase "*electrically stimulate my pleasure nucleus.*" It lends itself to several interpretations; and one of them is watching TV. How many of us miss out on even the mildest adventures because we're glued to the boob tube, and how many are regarded with deep suspicion because we, like Langsdorf, prefer more real pleasures? *((But it takes soooooo much energy to do those other things; isn't it easier to just sit and be entertained? I think that some of my students have no real desire for learning. They sit in class and want to be filled with knowledge; when asked to think, and apply the knowledge they've learned, some are indignant. They don't realize that thinking, or learning to think, is part of education.))*

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*The Rings of Saturn* is a fine story. Encourage Dareion Morgan to do more. I have, though, one nit-pick. The vast majority of adventurers

do their danger either alone or with volunteers. They would not think of taking an entire shipload of unsuspecting people into such a situation as they are wont to try. To do so would be foolhardy and reckless beyond belief. I recognize this flaw is essential to the story (which would not exist without it), and in spite of it, I thoroughly enjoyed the piece.

I am suddenly taken with the number of good writers who never had any contact with fandom until after they started publishing (and secured fans of their own). People like Mr. Schmidt, Spider and Jeanne Robinson, and Orson Scott Card give strong support to Lloyd Biggle's suggestion that fandom is a bad influence on (possible) writers. I am aware of such notable counter-arguments as Joe Haldeman and maybe Bob Asprin (though *COLD CASH WAR* did not appeal to me at all). Still, the fact that so many fine writers come to us from *beyond the pale* so to speak is food for some thought.

Re MINICON 13: the Bova interview was Saturday night. I remember because that was also the night (much later) a bunch of us spent several hours of the morning singing with Spider. These two events were the highest heights of a con full of highs for me.

Kathy Marschall has indeed blossomed into one fine artist. MINNEAPA #117 has a set of covers by her which are beyond praise.

I consider it tacky to comment on my own material in someone else's fanzine. (Not something I have to worry about much yet, as I rarely appear elsewhere. But, might as well develop good habits early.) However, this time I will make an exception. It's been well over a year (and another CONFUSION, which I missed) *((and another since then, as I type this up))* since I wrote that piece. I am surprised at how well it reads. (It brought that whole incident vividly back to me--without the horror of that hour, thank Ghu, to feel again). In fact, I am often surprised to reread my old writing and find how well it stands up. In your own con reports you mention that I stress only one incident of the con. This is true. My e-



from covered wagons to moonwalks. He's gone from pulp writer to scholar and never forgotten his beginnings, never adopted the academically-fashionable pose of contempt for SF's pulp origins. He's a warm, caring human being who always seems to have time for neo-pros like Andy Offutt then, and neofans like that long-ago Harry Warner--and for teenaged would-be writers. I imagine he was a superb teacher.

Once in awhile someone as thoroughly good as Jack comes along--and once in a great while somebody does something as warm and thoughtful and loving as your Williamson Special. Thank you.

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"Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." In a very real

sense, this quote applies to Jack Williamson, as your Special issue shows. For he has laid down his life for us in science fiction--his friends. He has influenced us, taught us, and guided us for 50 years. He has shown us what science fiction should be--and insisted that it live up to that promise. Yet, he has done all of this quietly, unassumingly. He has never shouted, never railed, never shrieked, for "my way." He has only written. And may he long continue.

You have done a masterful job of presenting him to us. Your roll call reads like a Scroll of Honor of science fiction--fan and pro. That so diverse a gathering can only say "I love you," is the mark of the man. I must say that all the art in the issue is excellent. I am especially impressed by Kathy Marschall's cover. I have never before seen any of her serious work. She should do much more.

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I think all of Williamson's stories should be in print. Seems like someone should make all this stuff available to modern readers and let them decide whether it's old-

fashioned, instead of worrying about it. These are finished stories, and don't have to be updated. (I hope they aren't, even by Jack himself.) ((Unlike mainstream novels, bok-of-the-month books, and popular fiction, SF is always being reprinted. Some of our classics were written in the thirties and forties and even fifties. These are still available. Where are the popular classics of modern fiction released only a few years ago?))

Forry Ackerman goofed. Jack Williamson did write a story about a war with giant ants...THE LEGION OF TIME. So go ahead and say: "Jack the GI-Ant Killer."

Deb Hammer Johnson  
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When I glance over this zine, I think of the strange *deja vu* episode that I had with Jack in the elevator at NASFIC. Right after

registering, I stepped onto the elevator and found myself at chest level with Jack's nametag. Holy Guacamole! I was instantly stricken with prophobia, but he smiled at me a said a mellowvoiced "Hello." Then I ran into you a short while later, and completed a strange *gestalt* triangle that makes this letter a bit special. I've never benn a special fan of Jack's, since my tastes run more toward social science fiction and the woman's view, but I was surprised to find that many of my favorite short stories from the earliest years I read SF were by him. I agree with the assessment of most of your contributors that his reputation lies with his ability to continually develop with the times.

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Jack is one of the several people in our field who is only now coming into the re-

cognition he richly deserves, and is long past due.

The issue itself is exceptional, from Anderson's poetic tribute to Lafferty's whimsey. I have immediately added it to my permanent files. My only complaint is that I was unaware of your efforts, and thus in no position to contribute. (In other words, I really wish you had dropped me a note--but I suppose you couldn't contact everyone who knows Jack, that being about everybody in science fiction!)

Congratulations; do it again sometime with another of our senior writers. ((When I was putting the issue together I did not have your address. But I will contact you for the next special I do--on Clifford Simak.))

Jessica Amanda Salmonson  
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You Jack Williamson issue is very nice, and I expect a wondrous experience for Mr. Jack himself.

The one thing I'd like to have seen which you really didn't include was some serious analysis, essays, reviews, criticisms, coverage of the man's work. Platitudes are nice to receive, but also too damned easy. If someone does a paper on the work of an artist or author, that's even more flattering because it takes thought, energy, concern, and interest. A paragraph of praise--any dipshit can come up with that, whether it is sincere or whether it seems good politics. So, next time you honor another author, you might try to get your hands on at least one serious essay on what the given author has produced. ((You speak for a good number of people; I have taken up your suggestion, and for the Simak Special, there will be some good articles on Clifford's works.))

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The Jack Williamson issue of LAN'S KANTERN is splendid. I'm so glad about it for two reasons: first, that you carried out the project so well, and second, that you did so while Jack was still able to enjoy the egoboo.

I'm tired of memorial tributes to pros, no matter how well meant, when the same tributes could just as well have been done in their lifetimes.

In fact, the only real criticism I can make of the issue is the way you put me in somewhat too strong company. I feel sort of out of place among all those pros. Well, I technically am a pro in that I've made my living by writing for newspapers since 1943, but almost every one else whom you featured is known as a pro in the science fiction field. On the other hand, I can console myself thinking that for once at least in my life I'm between A. E. van Vogt and Andy Offutt in the literary sense.

It was strange, though, to re-read what I wrote for you and then read parallel things to what I wrote in some of the other contributions. For instance, I was delighted to find that *Born of the Sun*, which I remember so vividly, also sticks in Jack's own memory so firmly that he referred to it in his description of the pulp magazines. I suspect, incidentally, that Mark Owings overlooked a re-print of that story in his bibliography. I'm almost certain I remember reading it in just the past few years in an anthology somewhere. If I didn't, then I must have dreamed about it again, this time a dream of re-reading it in a book and having this dream so vividly that I retained clear memory of it. ((I have two copies of the story, *Born of the Sun*, in comic-strip form, in the STARSTREAM comic magazine. Mark didn't mention that either.))

One of the nicest things about the Jack Williamson Special is the way everyone sounds convincing and sincere. I didn't detect a false note anywhere in the extended remarks about Jack's character and about his ability as a writer. I hope also that Jack senses this genuineness because it should convince him that



