LAN'S LANTERN 17

FROM THE EDITOR

The High Cost Of Voting

A few months ago at a fannish party I was talking with a friend about the Hugo awards and what I was nominating for 1985. He told me that he would like to vote this year, but that paying $20 just to vote was too much, and attending even the NASFIC was out of his reach. It then struck me at how expensive the Worldcon had gotten, $20 just to vote for the Hugo Awards and select the next site!

LACon, what have you done???

Up until the Worldcon in Chicago in 1983, the supporting membership for the World Science Fiction Convention was less than attending membership--by at least half. At CHICON IV, LA was running unopposed, and boosted the price to vote as a supporting member to be the same as an attending member, $20. At CONSTELLATION the following year the supporting membership was $20 and attending membership was higher. I guess the Worldcon Committees think all fans are sufficiently solvent that they can afford to pay those high prices. However many of the fans I know cannot.

Yes, I understand that prices are higher for everything, and that to please the hordes of fans that descend upon a city for a Worldcon takes lots of money, lots of programming, but what actually is the purpose of the Worldcon?

Initially it was to get fans from all over the coutry together and meet one another. With the advent of the Hugo Awards, the voting became one of the central purposes. The present charter (bylaws, constitution, whatever) gives three charges for a Wordcon: first, to administer (gather nominations, collect and count ballots, and present) the Hugos; second, set up means for selecting a site for the next (one-year, two years, three years in advance) Worldcon; and three, hold a buisness meeting to conduct and act on Worldcon business. A fourth activity may be included, if the approaching Worldcon is out the North America; to provide for a NASFIC.

Nowhere in there does it say anything about providing programming, films, masquerades, parties, and so on. Why should those who want to vote for the Hugo Awards have to subsidize those who want those other things?

Why not just have a voting/supporting membership? Membership lists are sufficiently computerized now that once one has paid to vote, s/he gets those particular progress reports for nominating and voting. A person need not know everything else that goes on in preparing for the Worldcon if s/he only wants to vote.

Alas, I don't see any Worldcon Committee stepping back and trying to help the younger, poorer (or even older and poorer) fans. The profits reaped by LACon seem too good to pass up (although to be fair to the LACon Committee, they are using those profits for fannish purposes). So we are stuck with high prices, and more extravagant Worldcons, who cater to large number of fans. At the same time, the number of voters for the Hugo Awards decreases.

Is anyone else worried about that?

In this issue:

Lots of book and movie reviews, several articles, and my choices for the 1985 Hugo Awards top off this issue of LAN'S LANTERN. And lots and lots of letters, stretching back over three issues. Once again, as for the last couple of issues, I must apologize to the artists for some of the fading during printing. The artists like Sylvus Tarn and Steve Fox do beautifully intricate work, but I cannot afford to run the issue off using the expensive printer. Expense is the main reason why this particular issue is late in getting out, much later than I had wanted to publish it. I've had some financial problems, lately, also some problems finding the time to put the issue together. This has further complications when I look to publishing the next issue. Yes, there will be a LAN'S LANTERN #18, but I don't know exactly when it will come out, although it will probably be at the end of this year. I have some material for it already.

When's my next Special Issue? Who is it on? I don't know. Several big names are coming up, authors who have been involved in Science Fiction for 50 years and who are still alive and writing. If you have a suggestion of a writer who meets these criteria, let me know. Wollheim, delRey, Van Vogt, Heinlein, Asimov, and many others will be hitting their Golden Anniversary in the next 5 years. Maybe a monsterzine with articles about all of them? It might be worth considering.

So now enjoy this fanzine, and keep those cards, and letters, and comments, and art, and articles coming in.

The 1985 HUGO Awards

LAN'S LANTERN 17

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DEDICATION

To: Maia, of course.

Ted Sturgeon, whom I met twice, but whose meetings I treasure; May his writings be read unto eternity.

T. L. Sherred, whom I did not know well, but who was always amusing to listen to.

Why you are receiving a copy of LAN'S LANTERN #17:

___ Contribution of an article or some art.

___ Letter of Comment or verbal/written comment.

✓ We are trading zines.

✓ You are still on my mailing list.

___ You are mentioned inside (on page(s) _____).

✓ I would like you to contribute something.

___ This is your last issue unless you contribut something -- or at least write a loc.

BEST NOVEL

Neuromancer by William Gibson
Job by Robert A. Heinlein
The Integral Trees by Larry Niven
Emergence by David Palmer
The Peace War by Vernor Vinge

I was somewhat pleased and somewhat disappointed with the selections of the novel nominations this year, moreso delighted after the selections last year. Three of my nominations made it to the final ballot, but two I had hoped would also be there didn't make it. World's End by Joan D. Vinge and The Tomorrow Testament by Barry Longyear certainly deserved to be on the list.

William Gibson's Neuromancer is a high-tech "Mission: Impossible" type of adventure. Although Gibson could easily lose his readers in the background he has set up, he carefully manages to steer clear of his own love of the universe he has created, and guides the reader through the story. Still it gets quite dense at times, especially when the protagonist Henry Dorsett Case "jacks" into the computer net.

Case was a computer cowboy whose skills were almost legendary, till he was caught stealing from his bosses. They burned out his neural interfaces and permanently cut him from the job he loved. Or so he thought. Molly, a mercenary, finds him and takes him to Armitage who can have his neurons restored in exchange for a job -- tracking down the "key" to free Wintermute, an artificial intelligence housed in orbit. This he manages to do with Molly, Armitage, and a few other people assembled for this impossible mission. They are successful, and Case comes out ahead -- some new internal organs (he was kept under "control" through poison sacs in his body), and a new job.

When I first read the book, I misread the last part. Case returns to the "Night City" and it seemed that he had not been affected by his adventures, which would make it a story as pointless as some others I've read. Reading more carefully a second time I found there was a change, and the outlook for the hero Case was much better.

Job by Robert A. Heinlein is an even better improvement over his last one, Friday (which was a vast improvement over the previous one), but still not Hugo quality. It was a fun book to read, trying to keep track with the hero, Alexander Hergensheimer (who quickly becomes Alec Graham), of the different worlds to which he keeps getting transferred. Margarethe, his companion since after his first world-change, and he keep jumping from world to world for no apparent reason, until they eventually end up separated in the after-life. Then Alec tries to track her down through a bureaucratic heaven and encounters his wife from his original world. Eventually Alec and Margarethe wind up together.

The story is a wonderfully funny romp through worlds and a poke at human foibles connected with religion. It was enjoyable, but alas not of the qualities I expect for a Hugo Nominee. I do look forward to the next Heinlein novel; his skill is rapidly returning to what is was in previous years.

The next nominee was the only one I had not read before the final ballot came out. I skipped over Larry Niven's The Intergral Trees when it appeard as a serial in ANALOG, mainly because I waited until all parts were in, then saw that it was being released in paperback, and as a Book Club edition. When I finally got my copy, I was busy doing other things, and only read it after I found it listed on the ballot. Anyway, I probably would have put it down after about a quarter of the book if it had not been nominated. As a novel, it is very poor; as a new idea, it is excellent.

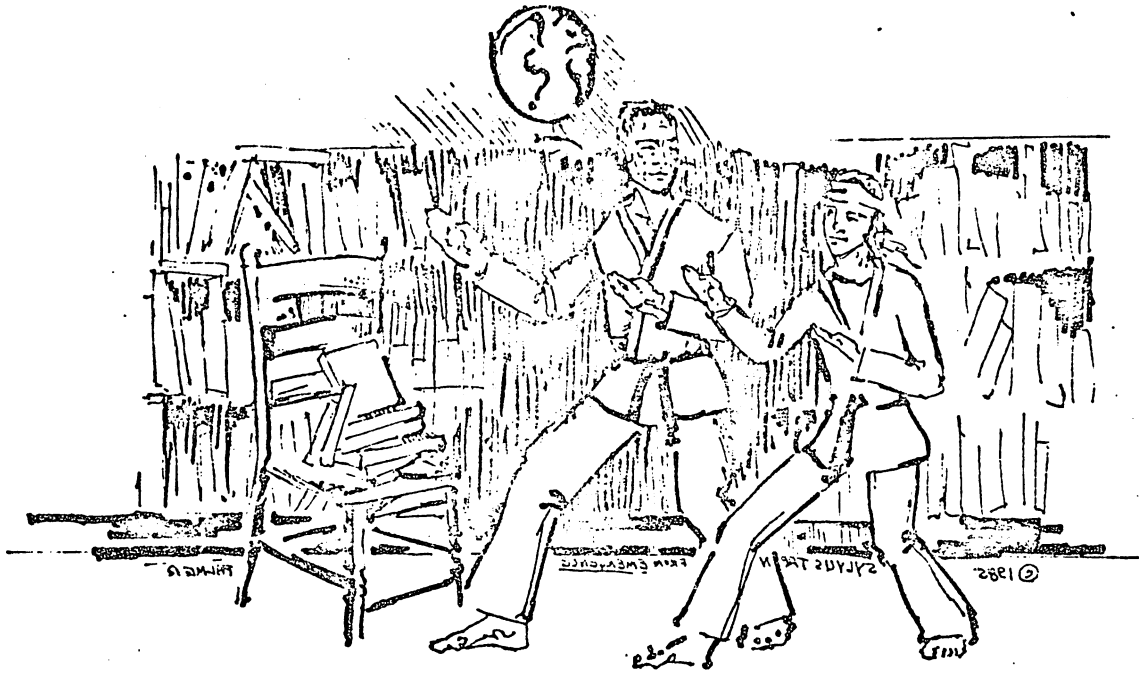
The integral trees are real "trees" existing in a gas torus around a neutron star. The human dwellers are from a State Survey ship who mutinied and thus could go no place else. The background of the setting, and the various societies could make fascinating reading, but a little dry. The main characters are many, and at times difficult to keep track of (I kept mixing up Grad, Clave and Gavving), and Niven does very little to give the reader reason to care what happens to any of the characters.

The first 50 pages is more of a travel-log a la Clarke, marvelling at the wonders of the ecology of the tree. Mixed with this is a quest/journey with little motivation (in spite of the expressed "we need food so we'll send a hunting party up the tree" reason -- why not move the whole colony?). I found it quite boring. It isn't until about halfway through that I felt more concern about what was happening to the characters, but even then only mildly. The ending was so-so.

The idea was interesting -- life in a gas-ring, growing up in zero-G or less-than-earth-normal gravity, and how the ecology of the place worked. Humans were an intrusion in this system, but adapted well. However, with little sympathy for those human characters (even cardboard, stock-characters would have been better) the story fell flat. Murray Leinster had a similar scenario in The Forgotten Planet, but succeeded much better for two reasons: he didn't have to spend a lot of time explaining a far-out setting (the ecology ran wild when the instructions for the next seeding of the planet was lost), and the characters (descendants of a lost colony ship), although two dimensional, were archtypically heroic. Maybe Niven will do better with his next story set in the same place.

Last year I predicted that this would be on the final ballot. Emergence does indeed deserve it. David Palmer has written three stories so far, all of which have received nominations, and all of them are in this novel. "Emergence" was his first novella. It nominated for a Hugo, as was his second novella, "Seeking". These both appear in the novel Emergence. David Palmer is a slow writer who tries to do things well. It must work, since everything he's written has been nominated for awards.

Candidia Maria Smith-Foster is an eleven year old genius and 6th degree black belt in karate. She survives armageddon and searches for her own kind, the hominem post hominem, whose mutated genes and abilities put them well above normal humans. The book chronicles her (and her macaw's) adventures in search of other survivors. She meets Adam (whose real



name is Melville Winchester Higgenbotham Grosvenor Penobscott-Jones, IV), and together they continue her search, finding a few surprises along the way.

The book is written in short-hand phrasing which takes a little getting used to, but flows quickly once the reader catches on. There are a lot of wild happenings at the end, which seem fantastic in retrospect, but seem perfectly natural in the course of reading the novel. Once the reader accepts the initial premise he puts forth, Palmer is in control from then on. And Candy's dry humor (not to mention Adam's puns) add a superb touch to the story. Palmer obviously cared very much about his characters; so does the reader.

I am looking forward to his next book; I just wish he would write faster. But I will wait, for the quality he puts into his stories is well worth it.

The last nomination is The Peace War by Vernor Vinge. In the future there is a Peace Authority, whose force-field bubbles had stopped WW III, and whose power now tries to stifle any scientific advancements which could upset the world-wide peace that civilization enjoys. But it is oppressive.

The Tinkers, a loose group of electronic repairmen and peddlers, are willing to organize to win back true freedom for the world. Paul Naismith, who as Paul Hoehler developed the main weapon of the Peace Authority (the "bobble"), leads this band of men and women, along with child prodigy Willi Wachendon. Through Willi's intuitive understanding of mathematics and thus his insight into the particular equations which made bobbles possible, Paul discovers that they are much more than they seem to be. And it is this that the Tinkers needed to help them win.

There is a lot more in the novel, subplots and characterizations. Vinge also cares about his world and its characters, and he makes an interesting statement about people in power, whether for good or ill reasons.

My Vote: For the most part, this was quite easy; my problem was where to put No Award -- before, between, or after the two novels undeserving to be on the ballot. First place is definitely Emergence by David Palmer; second goes to Neuromancer by William Gibson; and third place is The Peace War by Vernor Vinge. For fourth place I decided to put No Award. Fifth place goes to Heinlein and Job, with Niven's The Integral Trees bringing up last place. Intriguing setting without sympathetic characters don't qualify.

BEST NOVELLA

Cyclops by David Brin
Valentina by Joseph H. Delaney & Marc Stiegler
Summer Solstice by Charles Harness
Elemental by Jeffrey A. Landis
Press Enter ■ by John Varley

There were quite a few good novellas this year, and all that made it to the final ballot deserved it. Still, I found it easy to pick out my first choice; second and third were difficult, but the last places were easy.

"Cyclops" by David Brin is a sequel to "The Postman", which missed winning the 1983 Hugo Award by 8 or 9 votes. Gordon Kranz continues his journeying through the remains of Northwestern US, disguised as a Mailcarrier, and living a lie that the Restored US on the other side of the Rocky Mountains is struggling to put things back together. In this episode of his adventures, Gordon comes across technological toys he thought were all destroyed in the very short World War III. He follows clues to Corvallis, Oregon, where there is still active a supercomputer called Cyclops. This computer dispenses advice, sometimes cloaked in obscure language like a modern Oracle of Delphi, and has made the surrounding areas a peaceful and secure place to live--that is until the survivalists begin their attacks. And

Gordon also finds out that Cyclops isn't exactly what it seems to be.

David Brin makes Gordon a bit idealistic, though continually plagued by self-doubt. Gordon, living his own lie, makes his own hell as he decries truths, half-truths, untruths, and actions unbecoming civilized man. The internal tension gives Gordon and interesting character and David plays on that, sometimes too much, but the introspection makes for fascinating reading. I am very interested in reading the last section of this story, called "Cincinnatus", which will be in the novel (aptly called The Postman), released this fall. I want to see how David finishes this modern-day treatment of Myth and Hero.

One final note. David said that he renamed the ERB Memorial Student Union where the shoot-out with the survivalists takes place, sending him on his journey to find Cyclops, the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Student Union, in honor of his colleague whose death came two days before he received the galleys of The Postman. A small tribute to a great man.

"Valentina" by Joseph Delaney and Marc Steigler was the first of three novellas to appear in Analog about the artificial intelligence named Valentina. Designed as a computer program that could learn by Celeste Hackett, Valentina tries to maintain her freedom as an entity, but there are several problems involved. Celeste is a poor hacker from Europe, and hasn't the money to the necessary purchase computer time which would be a place where Valentina could "live." Valentina is such a large program that it would be difficult for her to hide in any of the other large mainframes around the country/world without alerting programmers that something is amiss. Valentina's attempt to stay in the mainframe at the law offices of Finucan, Applegarth, Levin and Breckenbridge is discovered, and Paul Breckenbridge whose account was credited with her stay asks Jurisearch to look into the problem. They send over Gunboat Smith, a hacker from way back who still plays games in the Worldnet, who impresses Paul not at all. Still Gunboat is good, and eventually determines what Valentina really is and nearly destroys her. Things happen quickly after that, but rest assured that Valentina, Celeste and Gunboat come out relatively safe in the whole matter. Paul Breckenbridge, with his penchant for underaged girls, comes out a bit worse for wear, and a desire for revenge which rears itself in the other parts of the novel.

This story is complete in itself. Valentina is a marvelous and charming character. Gunboat and Celeste are seemingly typical of hackers (sloppy, ugly, fat, etc.) but it is refreshing to get some characters who are not strictly beautiful and perfect physically. The collaboration of Delaney and Stiegler is a good one. The other stories are also very good, and together comprise the novel Valentina: Soul in Sapphire.

An alien named Khor, an anthropologist who is in search of various life-form specimens, needs to resupply and repair his ship in "Summer Solstice" by Charles L. Harness. He lands in third century BC Egypt on Earth and enlists the aid of Eratosthenes, the famous Greek mathematician who first calculated the circumference of the Earth. In helping Khor, Khor in turn helps Eratosthenes by saving his life from the chief priest of Ptolemy, named Hor-ent-yotf, the avenger of Horus, and since Khor resembles Horus himself, takes Hor-ent-yotf to the stars with him (he heeded a sample of a featherless biped anyway).

My interest was only mildly piqued by this story. Harness does go through Eratosthenes' method of measuring the earth's circumference, and that is somewhat intriguing. Still, I think it's more of personal taste; I have little interest in Ancient Egypt (although I do have a fascination with ancient Greek history).

Magic and Science have grown up and developed side-by-side in Geoffrey Landis' "Elemental." A group of farmers in Italy inadvertantly invoke the Earth elemental, causing it to move from the center of the Earth where it resides. Physicist Ramsey Lewis and thaumaturge Susan Robinette work together to control and return the elemental to its home, and prevent it from erupting once more Mt. Vesuvius.

This is a short summary of a fascinating story. Just merging the two concepts would be a problem for most writers, and many would just conentrate on how it has been done, leaving little in the way of a story. Like Gibson did with Neuromancer, Landis manages to avoid trapping himself and boring the reader with a description of his world.

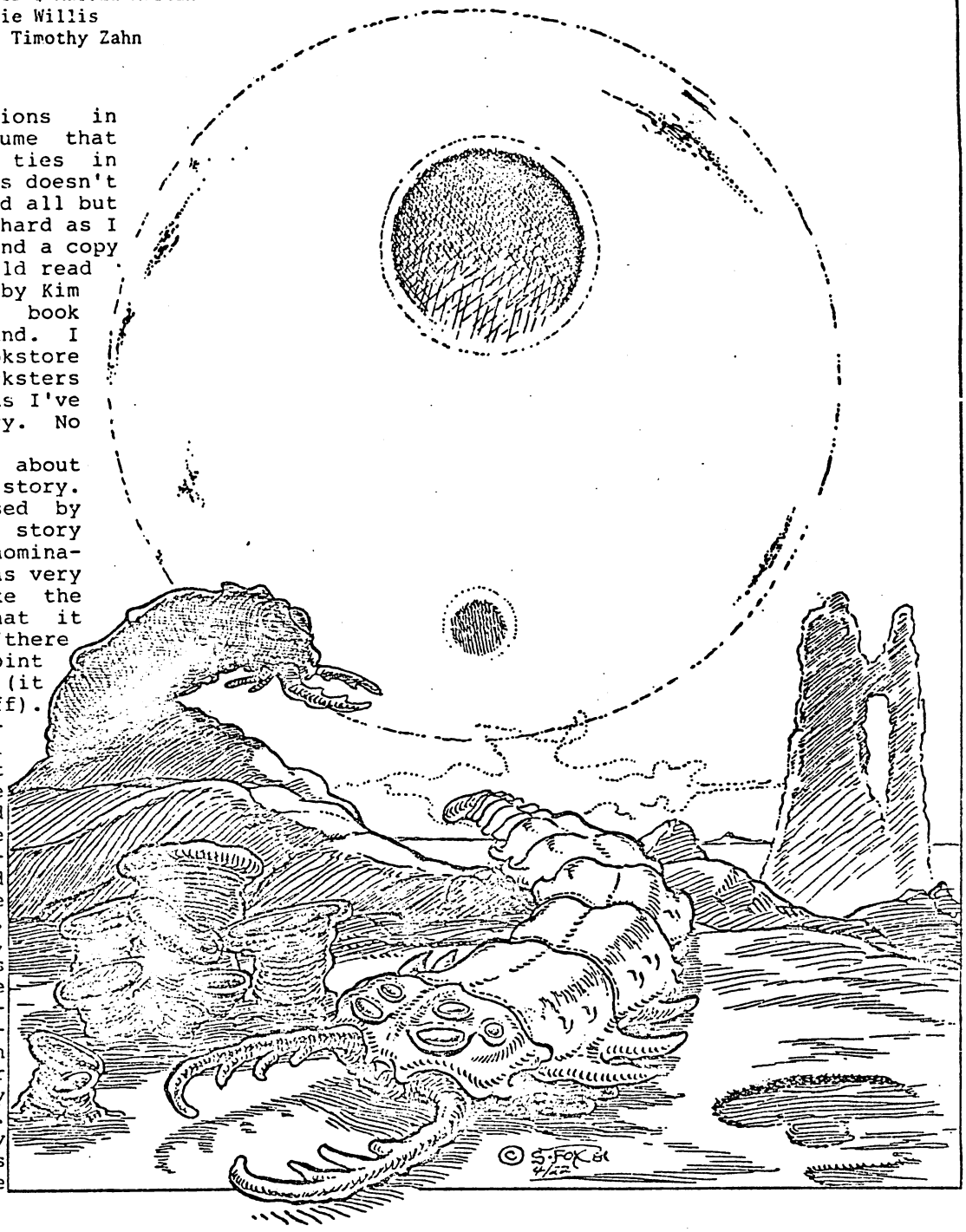
Charles Kluge is/was a computer expert, but a non-person. His records showed that he was really William Patrick Gavin who died in 1967. With his home computer he made himself invisible to the outside technological world, but he was found dead, killed apparently by his own hand, but Detective Osborne of the LAPD thinks otherwise. To complicate matters, Kluge's will gives everything to his neighbor Victor Apfel, a veteran of the Korean War who lives alone.

Enter Lisa Foo, a survivor of the Vietnam/Cambodian wars and an expert with computers, who cracks many of Kluge's secret codes, but scratches only the surface of his dealings. Victor and Lisa fall in love, and other things start happening as Kluge's secrets are graduallyuncovered.

John Varley's "Press Enter ■" is one of his best pieces, and that's saying a lot. As with his other stories, he makes the reader care for his characters, then does strange things to them. The emotional paces he puts us through are wide and varied...and memorable. I found it difficult to look at a microwave for a week after I finished "Press Enter ■" without thinking of the story.

My Vote: Varley's "Press Enter ■" has to be first. It deservedly won the Nebula Award, and is the best of the Hugo nominees. Second and third place is a toss-up between Brin's "Cyclops" and "Valentina" by Delaney and Stiegler. After rereading these two novellas I am putting "Cyclops" second and "Valentina" third (and believe me, it was a difficult choice). Fourth place goes to Landis' "Elemental" (and I hope he returns to that world; it has many possibilities), with Harness' "Summer Solstice" bringing up the end.

Blood Child by Octavia Butler
The Lucky Strike by Kim Stanley Robinson
Silicon Muse by Hilbert Schenck
The Weigher by Eric Vinicoff & Marcia Martin
Blued Moon by Connie Willis
Return to the Fold by Timothy Zahn



With seven nominations in this category, I presume that there were a couple of ties in the initial voting. This doesn't bother me as I have read all but one of the stories. As hard as I looked and tried to find a copy of Universe 14 so I could read "The Lucky Strike," by Kim Stanley Robinson, the book was nowhere to be found. I tried almost every bookstore in the area, the hucksters rooms of the conventions I've gone to, and the library. No copy of Universe 14.

I am not concerned about not reading Robinson's story. I have not been impressed by his writing. When his story "To Leave a Mark" was nominated two years ago, I was very surprised. I did like the novelette except that it either ended too late (there was a good stopping point earlier) or too soon (it just sort of trailed off). This story was incorporated into his novel Icehenge, which I first thought might make more sense if he completed the events begun in the novelette, but the story remained unchanged in the novel as the first of three parts. This is bad plotting, and the other stories I've read of his have flaws that are not easily overlooked. Robinson's "Black Air" which was nominated last year was not SF and barely categorized as fantasy. "The Lucky Strike" may be good, but Robinson's track record with me makes it doubtful.

"Blood Child" by Octavia Butler is a story of the symbiotic relationship between the Tlic and Humans. The Tlic are insectoid and implant their eggs into the human body cavity until they hatch. All this is discovered by the reader in a very oblique way. The main character Lien is a young boy whose is to become the host body for T'Gatoi. Through the events in the story he discovers exactly what this will mean.

Butler has constructed the story well, and the characterizations of Lien, T'Gatoi, and the supporting cast are well done. It is a difficult story to read since the information is given gradually and it is up to the reader to piece it together. But it is all that much more rewarding because of this style of writing. And it is a story not easily forgotten.

A computer with artificial intelligence (there's a lot of computer stories nominated this year) is the central figure of "Silicon Muse" by Hilbert Schenck. The computer has Total Access to the university files at certain times, and during those times it is used to write fiction incorporating everything that it has access to, and according to specifications programmed in. To continue experiments

with the computer and its use of Total Access (which originally was to help the university with functions and operations), Dr. Charles Perry and the computer must convince a panel of judges to give them a grant. And they do so, admirably.

The kinds of story ideas that Schenck has come up with are strange, many times having internal stories involve the main story or characters thereof. His nomination last year, "The Geometry of Narrative" was such a story, and this one has the computer writing a fiction which uses the panel of judges as characters. It's nicely involuted and strange. But very enjoyable.

Like Kim Stanley Robinson, Lucius Shepard's stories have not impressed me that much. Occasionally he does something good, and he does know when to end a story, so I would put him a notch better than Robinson. However, his novelette nominee, "The Man Who Painted the Dragon Griaule" was one I had started and didn't finish. I went back to read it in full since it was a Hugo nomination, but it was still a waste of my time.

The artist Meric Cattanay conceives of a project to permanently kill the Dragon Griaule whose body is petrified, but whose mind still influences the town of Teocinte. The city fathers eventually accept the 40 year project to paint the dragon's body with poisons which will eventually penetrate and destroy it. The whole idea turns out to be merely the joke/plan of Meric's friends, which he took seriously.

I found the idea intriguing, but my interest wandered several times in reading it (which was why I put it aside in the first place).

On the other hand, like the strange culture presented by Octavia Butler, there is "The Weigher" by Eric Vinicoff and Marcia Martin. The story is told from the alien's point of view, through the eyes of Slasher, a panther/lion/feline creature who is a "weigher", a sort of judge and jury in one, who weighs situations and disputes, and passes judgements on them. In spite of some in-fighting between liberals and conservatives, the society is pretty stable. Enter the clones of earthmen who first give away knowledge and advice for improvements, but under the advice of Slasher they begin to sell the information. The new methods irk the conservatives, (especially the new idea of cooperation) and Pam and Ralph are challenged as is the custom. Slasher, acting as their agent, takes up the challenege and almost gets killed herself. Matters work out in the end, although Slasher loses her position as weigher, and moves to other territory.

Unlike the extreme difficulties I encountered with "Blood Child" in understanding an alien culture, this one was quite easy. The story was interesting and enjoyable to read.

"Blued Moon" by Connie Willis is a different sort of story altogether. Remember the old saying, "Once in a blue moon?" Willis takes the idea and puts it into effect as Mowen Chemical's pollution control operation turns the moon blue and all sorts of strange coincidences begin to happen. The story is a hilarious romp through the personal lives of the members of the Mowen Chemical Company.

I moved on to the next story after a couple of pages the first time I tried to read "Blued Moon." I found it a better story than indicated in those two pages when I read the whole thing as a Hugo nomination. It is funny and somewhat interesting, but not my favortie of the novelettes.

In "Return to the Fold" by Timothy Zahn, Tomo is a genetically altered human who is able to withstand the solitude of interstellar travel. On the approach to planet Maigre, Tomo asks Max the computer about possibly going dirtside this time, and sets of a series of events which nearly end in his death. As a mainter of the ship, Tomo isn't even supposed to be thinking of associating with people let alone going down to a planet. The story shows the methods man has employed to make the stars an attainable goal, and that apparent inhumanity doesn't mean that humanity has been lost. And there is a nice little surprise ending tucked in, which follows quite nicely from the story.

My Vote: The first four places were tough. Butler, Schenck, Vinicoff and Martin, and Zahn all had good, well-constructed stories, but each was good in a differnt way, ways I like. Evaluating them in terms of re-reading interest, "Silicon Muse" dropped into fourth place, with "The Weigher" in third, "Blood Child" in second, and "Return to the Fold" in first. I read the Zahn story three times, and got more out of it each time. Butler's novelette was easier to read the second time through, but not as enjoyable. Her handling of the old SF ideas (fear of insects, using a human host for eggs) was very well done. Vinicoff and Martin's background came through better in the second reading but the story paled a little bit. One of the main aspects and interests of "Silicon Muse" was the surprise at how the fiction by the computer integrated the characters of the story. That surprised was diminished the second time through.

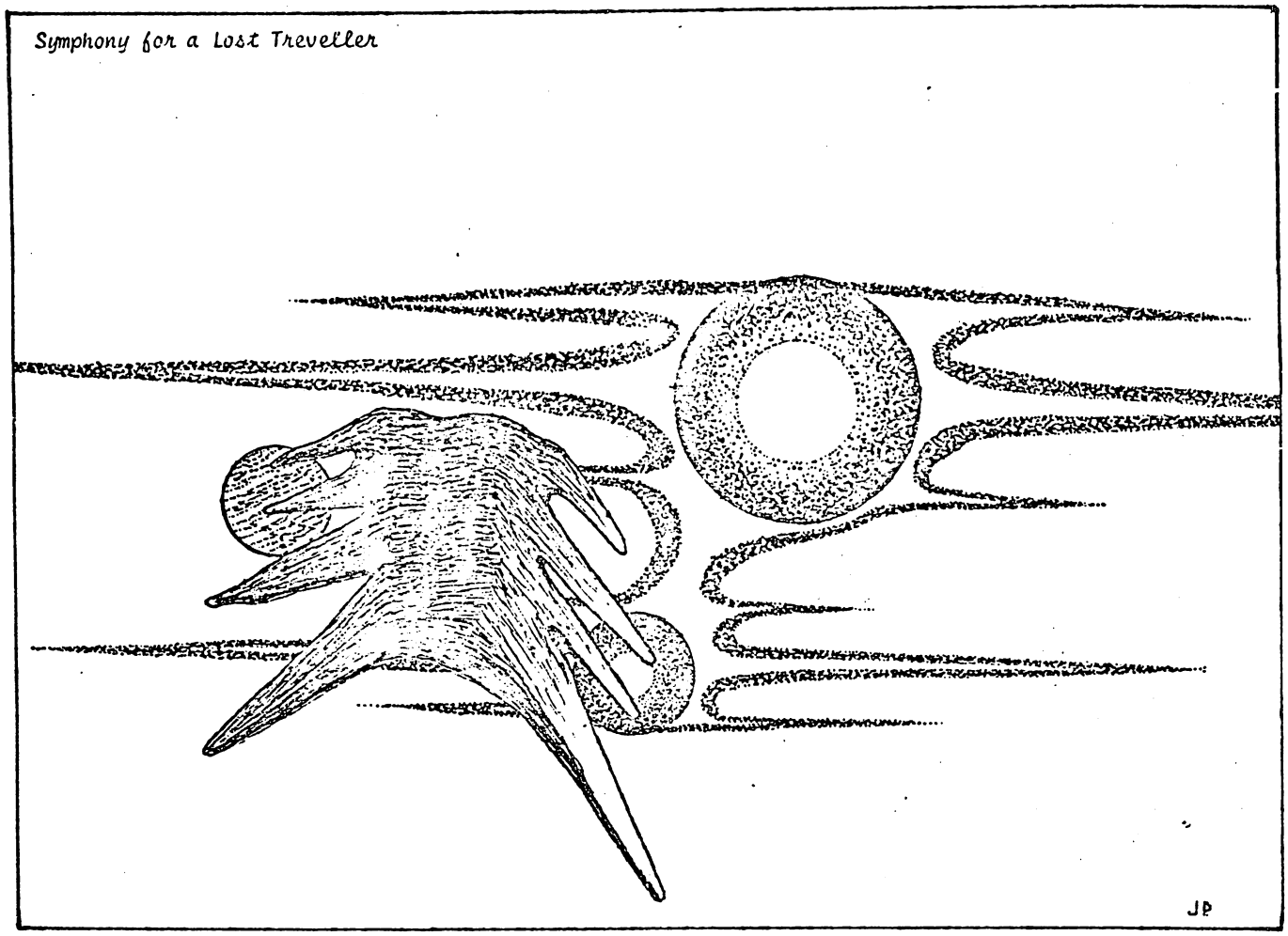
As for the rest, "Blued Moon" and "The Lucky Strike" are fifth and sixth (I'm giving Robinson the benefit of the doubt, since I've been unable to find the collection). No Award is seventh with Shepard's story last.

BEST SHORT STORY

The Crystal Spheres by David Brin
The Aliens Who Knew, I Mean, Everything by George Alec Effinger
Rory by Steven Gould
Symphony For a Lost Traveller by Lee Killough
Ridge Running by Kim Stanley Robinson
Salvador by Lucius Shepard

As with the novelette category, there must have been a tie or a close vote for the short stories. Six nominations, four of which really belong here, and the other two I had started and never finished while initially reading through the magazines during the past year.

"The Crystal Spheres" by David Brin is a compact little piece exploring the question of why we have never been contacted by another race. He postulates that every "goodstar" has a crystal sphere about it that can only be shattered from the inside. Any start whose



system cannot harbor life has no sphere. When a probe discovers a shattered sphere, all the deepspacers who were alivewarm from deepsleep were called into active duty to take part in the exploration. They study the hospitable planet they found, and the remains of the civilization, the Natarals, and discover the some of the same conclusions Earthmen had come to. The "surprise" is that since there are only a limited number of goodstars, a starfaring civilization would settle any habitable world, thus preventing the rise of another intelligent species. The spheres prevented that. But what happened to the Natarals? And the races before them? David has some unique answers.

The writing in this little story is dense. David Brin compresses a lot of ideas in here and leaves lots of room for speculation. It's a thoughtful piece whose re-reading delighted me even more than the first time through.

"The Aliens Who Knew, I Mean, Everything" by George Alec Effinger is a humorous story about the Nuphs whose second contact with Earth (the first was when Eisenhower was President) is made known to the world. They are experts in everything, and soon bring peace and prosperity to the nations of Earth. They also become a nuisance, which turns out to be the reason a galactic civilization works: all the races become disenchanted with, and eventually hate, the Nuhps. Their "suggestions" and "expert advice" turn out to be opinions, and some of the Nuhps' "ideals" are pretty funny. Bowling is the most enjoyable thing a person can do; bowling is sex. Hollyhocks are the most beautiful flowers. Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 is the most beautiful piece of music. And so on.

The story is light-hearted, humorous, and may remind you of some very opinionated associates you may have.

An interesting study of characters is Steven Gould's "Rory." Rory is an intelligent but simple boy whose remarks on the various interactions of the adults are humorous and insightful, mostly because of his misunderstandings of the English language. (Consider: Rory, because he doesn't let the dictionary speak the complete definition of "monarch" thinks the "monarch migration" is a flight of kings and queens.)

Most of the story is spent establishing the characters: Anton Grebenchekov, Ruth McMillian, Kim Cowlander, and Rory. The crisis comes when the sleeping module of the research station they are on in the asteroid belt is severed from the rest of the station. The rescue is rather unique.

Cimela Bediako is the composer of several symphonies and musical pieces based on nature in Lee Killough's "Symphony For a Lost Traveller." All of her music is based on a tonal interpretation of the genetic DNA structure of the subject of the piece. Thus Kerel Mattias Ashendene comissions her to write a symphony based on the nucleotide of an alien whose remains were found in a derelict ship in the asteroid belt by one of Ashendene's contract miners. Cimela accepts the commission for two reasons: to use her abilities to work with alien DNA, and to give man a reason to reach out for the stars. Unknown to Cimela, the holo track for the symphony is based on a false reconstruction of the aliens, an benevolent picture rather than their actual fierce appear-

ance. Ashenden's justification is that man needed the shove; once committed to reaching the stars, he has confidence that the human race can handle anything it may encounter.

For anyone interested in music, this is a unique story. I don't remember reading any whose composer worked from a genetic base. Like Orson Scott Card's pieces about music ("Unaccompanied Sonata" and Songmaster), one has to imagine what the music would sound like. If given the option for producing this story as a film, Killough should take it. I would like to see it, but I doubt it could be made, unless we do start composing music based on DNA (which, according to a recent Science News article, is a possibility). Can you imagine what primal music should sound like? This story is a powerful one, and it was an immediate choice for me as a nomination.

I started reading "Ridge Running" by Kim Stanley Robinson, and put it down after a couple of pages. I did the same with Lucius Shepard's "Salvador". Neither captured my interest.

Robinson's story is very esoteric. It states that it is in the future, but that does not necessarily make it SF. Hints of some futuristic medical practices are given, but the story itself says little to me. It's a pastiche that English teachers would love for its obscurity.

"Salvador" relates the adventures of John Dantzler who has a frightening mystical experience during his battling days in Central America, whose effects reach into his life after coming home after his term of duty. I'm not sure what to make of it all.

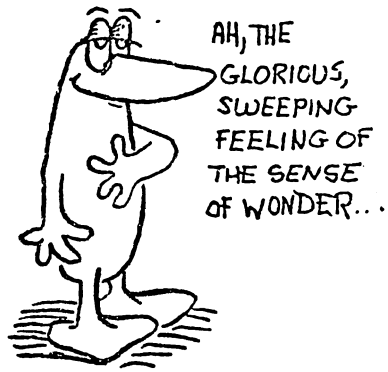
My Vote: I kept vascillating between "The Crystal Spheres" and "Symphony For a Lost Traveller." Again the re-reading trick helped me decide, but it was still close. In first place is David Brin's "The Crystal Spheres," which then puts Lee Killough's "Symphony For a Lost Traveller" in second place. Third is "Rory" by Stephen Gould and in fourth place George Alec Effinger's "The Aliens Who Knew, I Mean, Everything." Fifth is No Award, and the Shepard and Robinson stories follow in that order.

* * * * * * * *

The rest of this gives a quick look at my choices for the rest of Hugo Awards, with appropriate comments if applicable.

BEST NONFICTION BOOK

This was actually easy to choose, except for the first two places. Patti Perret's The Faces of Science Fiction is a marvelous book and I love paging through it over and over again. Eventually I want to get it signed by all those who are pictured. Alas I shall have to forego obtaining Ted Sturgeon's autograph. I will settle for the memories I have of him at CONCLAVE and at Jim Gunn's SF Teaching Seminar. As much as I would like to place this book first, I am going with Jack Williamson's autobiography, Wonder's Child: My Life in Science Fiction. The choice was not easy, but I was deeply moved by Jack's summary of his life, particularly his years with Blanche. He



has been writing SF for 57 years and he has not wanted to move from this genre. I admire him greatly and wish him another century of life.

The rest I pick in this order: Sleepless Nights in the Procrustean Bed, In the Heart, or in the Head, and Dune Encyclopedia.

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

Although criticized a lot for it not being like its predecessor, I still liked 2010: Odyssey Two. The director Peter Hyams cut material from Clarke's novel that should have been left out, and added enough to give a good feeling of continuity. Thus I put this in first place.

A close second is Ghostbusters. It was a fun movie, internally consistent, and respectful of all religions, while making fun of bureaucracy wherever it appeared. Dune is third. It might have had many faults, but it did compress a rather large book into a decent length movie. The action was quick and one should probably have seen it more than once.

The Last Starfighter and Star Trek III: The Search for Spock come fourth and fifth. No explanations necessary.

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

For his consistently high work in editing ANALOG magazine I once again vote for Stanley Schmidt in first place, followed closely by Shawna McCarthy who has done wondrous things for IASFM. Following them I place Terry Carr third, Ed Ferman fourth, and George Scithers fifth.

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

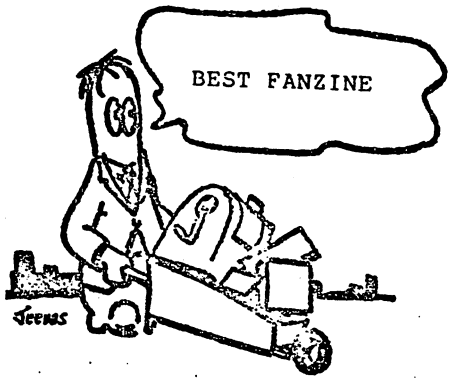
My choices in order from first to fifth are: Michael Whelan, Barclay Shaw, Vincent DiFate, Tom Kidd and Val Lakey Lindahn. (Val Lakey Lindahn is improving; I may be able to rate her higher next year).

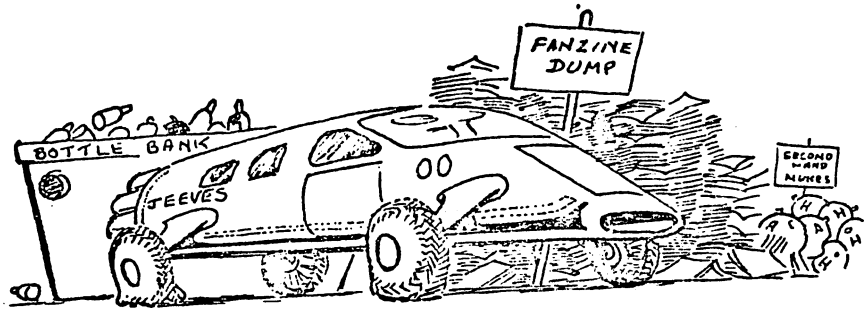
BEST SEMIPROZINE

LOCUS still has the best coverage of SF and fannish news, and with it's report of fandom around the globe, I don't think other newzines will match it for a while. So I give it and Charlie Brown first place. Andy Porter is trying hard to match LOCUS, and is slowly succeeding. His coverage of book releases is much

better, and he is improving in other departments. Having Don D'Ammassa as the book reviewer is a plus. Don has a way of giving succinct reviews, expounding only when he thinks it necessary. I don't agree with Andy's book review policy (both he and Don must receive copies or the reviews will not run), but it is his zine. To him and SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE I award second place.

The rest in order are: FANTASY REVIEW, WHISPERS, and SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW.





In spite of what other fans have said, the selection was quite easy this year. Don D'Ammassa's revival of MYTHOLOGIES made it a shoe-in for first place. That man knows how to write and edit! Mike Glyer's FILE:770 I place second. Third is RATAPLAN by Leigh Edmonds. Fourth place goes to HOLIER THAN THOU (sorry Marty and Robbie), and Dave Langford's ANSIBLE brings up the rear.

BEST FANWRITER

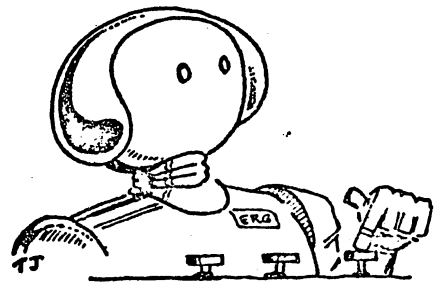
Leigh Edmonds heads my list of choices in this category. I've enjoyed his work the past several years and I think he deserves the award. Second place goes to Mike Glyer. I've like his witty and insightful comments on a variety of topics. Arthur Hlavaty drops to third place this year. His humorous commentary on a variety of topics did not seem to be up to par this past year (except for his report on the missing parts of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom). Fourth place goes to Dave Langford for the same reasons as Mike Glyer, except that Dave's comments tend to be more obscure to me. Fifth place goes to Richard E. Geis.

I've seen lots of good Steve Fox artwork printed in fanzines, some repeated here and there, but all good. He seems widely read in SF and Fantasy and can translate his readings into superb artistic pieces. He's my first choice for this award. Brad Foster's stuff has also been circulated widely, and he is good with detailed work. Thus I give him the second position. I still like Joan Hanke-Woods' art a lot, but little has appeared in fanzines this year. I see her seldom at conventions, although her work does appear in her artshows. Joan's serious stuff is very good and her cartoons clever. To her I give third place. Alexis Gilliland seems to be concentrating less on art and more on writing for I have also seen less of his stuff in fanzines. His style is nice, pleasing and clever. I don't recall seeing any of his serious stuff. To him I award fourth place. Stu Shiffman has been drawing for a long time and has been nominated almost perennially since I joined fandom. I like his stuff; his cartoons are quite clever, but like Joan and Alexis, I've seen little of his work this past year. I place him fifth. I think Bill Rotsler has been over-rated. I've seen little development in his work over the past few years, and nothing serious from him. I'm tired of the characters with big noses, although sometimes the dialogue is clever. I give him seventh place after No Award.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD

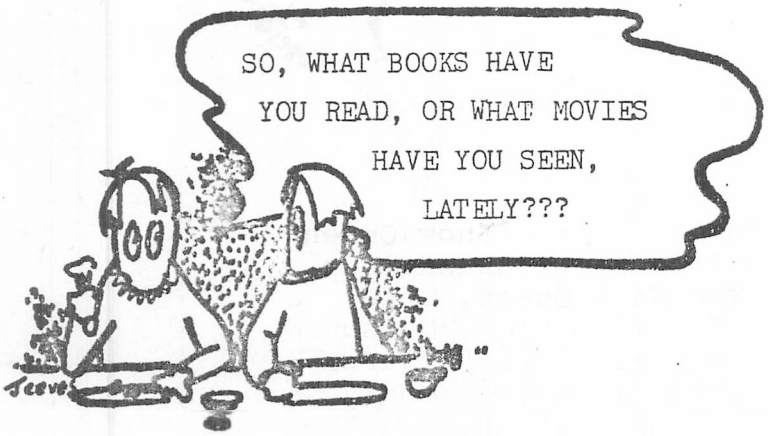
My choice for first place for the Campbell Award for best new writer will probably surprise everyone. Lucius Shepard. In spite of what I've said about his stories above, he is a good writer. His better stuff (in my opinion) never made the ballot, and I have read his more recent stories this year, and his improvement is quite apparent. Maybe next year one of his stories will deservedly appear on the Hugo ballot.

A close second is Jeffrey Landis. I hope to see more from him soon. In order after him are: Melissa Scott, Ian McDonald, Elissa Malcohn and Bradley Denton.



PULP & CELLULOID

BOOK AND MOVIE REVIEWS



WORLD'S END

World's End, by Joan D. Vinge. 1984, Bluejay Books, hc $13.95.

World's End is "Volume 2 in the Snow Queen Cycle." It follows the life of BZ Ghundalinu, a supporting actor in The Snow Queen, after the final events in the earlier book. Consumed with guilt for what he perceives as failures in his past, BZ follows his (unworthy, but older) brothers to World's End after they are reported lost. World's End is a forbidding land of desert and madmen, controlled by an

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amoral and greedy Company, and dominated by Fire Lake, where natural laws go haywire and humans go insane. There is nowhere that BZ would rather not be. But driven by his sense of duty, he is resentful of his brothers' folly but determined to save them --and thus redeem himself in his own eyes.

This book is deeply introspective, narrated by BZ as a journal of his "pilgrimage". The journey into the hellish land surrounding World's End parallels BZ's journey into his personal hell. Memories of the events in **The Snow Queen** plague him (and thus subtly the reader is informed or reminded of the necessary background). Every aspect of life in World's End reminds him that "law" can be wrong, or meaningless --his own life, ruled by and upholding the traditions of his homeworld and the laws of the Hegemony, is therefore discovered to be hollow. Each step he takes into the desert, accompanying a desperate prospector and a vicious criminal, seems to take him further from his purpose, and his experiences also lead him further from his sense of self, everything he lived for in the past. He observes, "The real trap is the past; every choice we make leaves us few options for the future." Yet in the end, he transcends this "trap," refusing to surrender to oppressive circumstances. He reaches not only his original goals, but a new sense of purpose for the future, which would not have been possible without this ordeal.

World's End is not an easy book, or a "fun" book. Wait for a time to read it when you can put a lot of effort out for the enjoyment you get. But by all means, read it. In fact, anything Joan D. Vinge has had published, I would recommend without reservation.

Reviewed by *Maia Cowan*

HISTORY, POLITICS AND RED DAWN

A film review

Anybody out there remember Invasion USA? It was a paranoia "science fiction" film made in 1952 about a Soviet invasion of the good old USA. Trivia fans may remember it as having two actresses, both of whom played Lois Lane on the TV "Superman" show. It also had Dan O'Herlihy, who just this past year played a gung-ho iguana in The Last Starfighter. It featured unintentionally hilarious scenes like the secret police breaking in on a company president and a window-washer bouncing in through the window announcing, "I'm giving the orders now!" It is an interesting relic of those nightmare years when studios felt they had to constantly demonstrate their loyalty or they'd be shot down.

Finally the pendulum swung to the other extreme and the most popular TV shows and films had calm, collected liberals arguing with brain-damaged reactionaries. Since my natural bias is left of center, it took me a while to admit to myself that my side was no fairer to the conservatives in the Seventies than the conservatives were to us in the Fifties. In any case, it's been a good long time since a film came out that responsibly represented the opposing view. Now it's come and it is virtually an updating of Invasion USA.

Red Dawn is the story of what happens when the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua invade the United States through a revolution-torn Mexico and sieze the middle section of the country. It is told mostly from the point of view of a group of young guerillas who resist the invasion and eventually become a potent force for fighting back. What happens to this country is patterned on a number of other countries' invasions -- notably Afghanistan's (minus the chemical warfare). The freedom fighters name themselves the "Wolverines" after their high school football team. And they seem to demonstrate the same sort of enthusiastic loyalty as they would for their team. They spraypaint the name "Wolverines" on everything fromwalls to destroyed enemy tanks.

John Milius, who previously made Apocalpse Now and wrote and directed Conan the Barbarian, directed and co-wrote Red Dawn. Many of the arguments he makes in the film are not cogent but at least are correct. For example, the enemy knows exactly where the Americans have all their guns, because years earlier we had very obligingly registered them. Yes, Mr. Milius, if the balloon ever does go up we may be sorry we registered all those guns. In all but the most extreme circumstances, I'd feel a lot safer with guns registered, thank you.

Milius seems to have done about half of his homework. The invasion by paratroopers is fairly credible on a small enough scale, but not the scale the Communists would need. Yes, the Soviets may want to steal a harvest of American grain; no, they wouldn't invade just at harvest time. That's a really good way of making sure nobody is free enough from fighting to harvest the grain. Yes, the enemy might show Russian patriotic films in small-town movie theatres. But, Mr. Milius, don't you know that Alexander Nevsky is the last film they'd want to show? Alexander Nevsky is a great old Serge Eisenstein film about a Russian who successfully defended Russia by fighting off the sadistic invading Teutons. Its main purpose was to get people mad enough to defend their homeland from invaders.

There is a lot to dislike in Red Dawn. I left the theatre only mildly pleased by the film (that is, a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale). Still, I really hope that it restores political dialogue to film. I would really like to see more films showing cogent conservative, as well as liberal, viewpoints.

After all, what's wrong with a little discord in cinema? The old Coke commercial went, "I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony." Take my word for it, perfect harmony is as dangerous as all-out war. Most people who have actually tried to make the world sing in perfect harmony are not people you'd want to share a Coke with. And speaking of singing, in this post-Vietnam era any filmmaker who can make "America the Beautiful" sound as defiant and courageous as "We Shall Not Be Moved" deserves some sort of award.

Reviewed by *Mark R. Leeper*

A COMING OF AGE

A Coming of Age by Timothy Zahn. A Bluejay International Edition. Bluejay Books, $14.95, 292 pages.

Imagine a planet and a society where at age five the children gain telekinetic powers, and lose them with the onset of puberty. It's a frightening thought. Yet this is the world on which Tim Zahn sets his novel A Coming of Age, only at a time when the society has stabilized and handles the immaturity of the young and powerful through a highly structured system.

Against this background on the planet Tigris (a lost Earth-Colony, most of whose technology was lost in the dark years of the first generation with those new-born psi-powers), Tim follows four plot lines, weaves and interweaves them quite liberally until they converge to a fine central point and climax the mystery of the book.

Lisa Duncan is a preteen on the verge of Transition (moving into puberty and losing her psi-powers). Frightened but rational about losing her psi-powers, she elicits the aid of a friend who has already gone through Transition, and has him teach her how to read (something forbidden to pre-Transition children). Lisa's clandestine meetings with Daryl eventually get her into trouble.

Matthew Jarvis, a genius in biological research, kidnaps Colin Brimmer who is just turning five and begins an experiment which could upset the delicately balanced society of Tigris.

Yerik Martel, known as Omega to his followers, is a fagin, a user of children, whose "religion" only disguises his latest attempt at personally becoming rich.

Stanford Tirrell, a Detective First, and his Righthand, Tonio, follow up leads on the kidnapping of Colin Brimmer, thinking that either a known fagin is operating again, or another has started up "business." This investigation starts the intertwining of the various plots.

The stories mesh beautifully and Tim's skill in plotting and piecing in the background are better than his previous novel The Blackcollar (which went into its third printing within a year of its initial publication). I found it difficult to put the book down, and I hope that Tim returns to Tigris with another story. It's too fascinating a world and society to let go with only one look at it.

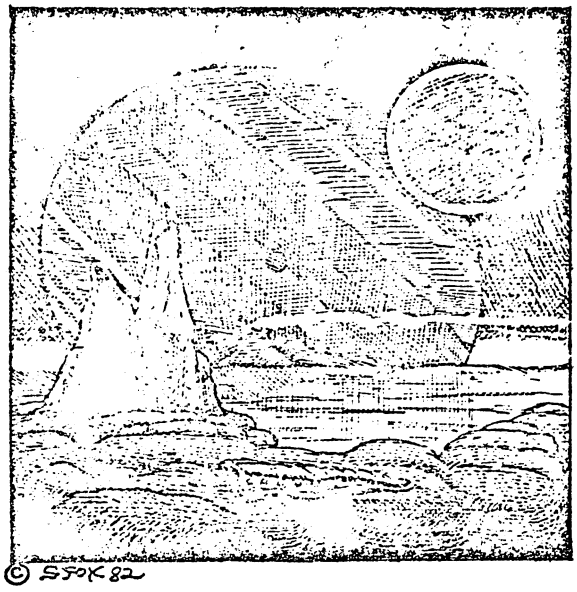
Reviewed by *Lan*

2010: THE YEAR WE MAKE CONTACT

A Film Review

Peter Hyams is one of the last people whom I would have expected would make a sequel to 2001. It was a point of pride with Clarke and Kubrick that their 1968 film be as faithful to scientific fact as was possible. Hyams has played fast and loose with scientific accuracy in his two, Capricorn One and Outland. Hyams was to write, produce and direct 2010 by himself. Clarke had retired to Sri Lanka and apparently could not oversee the scientific accuracy of the production.

So how do the two films compare? Hyams' film by itself is a remarkable film. As an adaptation of the book, it is a real rarity.



It is a pure science fiction film. That does not mean science fantasy, it does not mean science horror. It means that this is a film that takes scientific ideas and plays with them. It does so not to scare us with monsters, not to give us a western set in space, not to give us a love story that happens to take place in space. It is an extrapolation of theory and idea. The story concerns men and women making scientific discoveries, but it is primarily about the discoveries, not the people making them. By following a team of scientists as they attack scientific problems it is closer in spirit to Clarke's Rendezvous with Rama than it is to 2001.

2010 stands head and shoulders above anything that we could have expected from Hyams based on his previous work. But it is no surprise since Hyams merely had to be accurate to a pure science fiction book. Word has it that it is a fairly accurate representation, with a few minor liberties. As far as pacing, the second film is a considerable improvement. Hyams has made a slightly less visual film, still very visual, and picked up the pace considerably. 2001 was intended to be a showcase of the future and that means in many places the plot stops dead to show a visual effect. The new film's science is a little less accurate. As in Outland, Hyams does not understand gravity, artificial and natural.

With the exception of scientific errors, the worst faults of 2010 probably lie with Clarke and the novel. The film teasingly promises to give new insights into the questions raised in the first film. It then reneges on that promise. When it is over, the alien race is as much a mystery as it was in 1968. There are more theories as to what the monolith actually is, but they remain theories. Clarke's "see the movie, read the book, see the movie, read the book..." does not seem to be a sufficient answer to the questions. Now it probably is true that that is a realistic touch. The aliens probably would be unfathomable to the human mind. But to fall back on that does not make for good cinema and even makes for unsatisfying science fiction. The trailers and script promise that at the end of the film "something wonderful" will happen. In fact, what happens is wondrous, but the film is very unsuccessful in conveying why it is wonderful. Most of the effect of the "something wonderful" appears to be that it temporarily averts

a war on Earth and that there are somewhat superficial celestial events that can be seen from Earth. The full implications of the "something wonderful" are never explained. The impact of the "something wonderful" on the audience is considerably undercut by an almost identical "something womderful" that happened in another popular science fiction film of the past few years. That makes the big surprise at the end something of a letdown.

Production credits are all very good. Visually the film shows a number of remarkable sights without making them the static set pieces that the first film made of them. There are still a number of scenes of stark beauty, such as the view of the churning surface of Jupiter. I was a little sorry to see the part of Heywood Floyd going to Roy Scheider instead of the underrated William Sylvester, who played the part in the original and is a familiar face from a number of good British genre films. John Lithgow is along in large part for comic relief. Helen Mirren, familiar from The Long Good Friday and Excalibur, plays one of the few Russian characters not played by a member of the cast of Moscow on the Hudson. Bob Balaban at first seems miscast as Dr. Chandra, since he has no Indian accent, but by 2010 he could be a second or third generation American. In a less than stellar year for science fiction films this is the best so far. Give it a 2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

Reviewed by *Mark R. Leeper*

Dune

A Film Review

In reviewing Dune, I cannot help but feel a certain sense of deja vu. Just about a year ago another film came out that made almost all the same mistakes and had almost all the same strengths. That film was The Keep, based on the novel by F. Paul Wilson. Both were films that I enjoyed greatly, but neither can I recommend. There are a number of reasons why I fell that neither film can be recommended. Each story is told in a moody, stylized, almost mystical fashion that makes the films almost impossible to follow without being familiar with the story before one enters the theatre. Not that that always helps because each varies somewhat from the plot of its respective source, but without having read the novel, the viewer would be left in a twisting maze of bewildering events. Neither films tells the story of its novel very well, but each film is visually stunning and serves as a beautiful set of illustrations for the book. It is unfortunate that these two films were made about the same time, since each film could have been a valuable object lesson to the director of the other had the timing been different. The Keep hit the box office with a resounding thud and it looks like Dune will do the same.

It has been eleven years since I read Dune by Frank Herbert. That is probably just about the optimal gap between reading the book and seeing the movie. It means that I remember the basic plot and some of the language of the planet Arrakis, but a lot of the plot subtleties have long since been forgotten. The film vaguely follows the plot and in fact has surprisingly fidelity to the long and complex basic plot, but it simplifies it a little too much at important junctures, changes the plot just a bit too much. The way the long awaited Dino De Laurentiis production is able to get so much of the plot of the novel into Dune is to simply tell the long story at a very fast clip. Whatever you can say negative about David Lynch's direction and a lot of silly things added to the script, he was able to cram all the real essentials of the long novel into the film, and there are not many screenwriters who could have. The price is that it is much harder to digest an important scene before moving on to the next important scene, making it even harder for someone who has not read the book to follow what is going on.

Where Lynch really falls down is that he completely misses what makes a film a compelling experience. Herbert's characters had little human interest, but the book was fascinating because it detailed the background of the story so well. Herbert's background work of designing the culture, ecology, and history of Arrakis gave the book a real feel of authenticity. It is almost like reading a historical novel with an encyclopedia close at hand verifying the accuracy of the story. There is no way a film can give the same feel of authenticity, so it would have to make the characters more interesting. Lynch fails to do that entirely. The characters are flat and uninvolving. The strongest emotion that Lynch makes us feel is revulsion for the Harkonnens. The main characters are dull and lifeless, completely uninvolving. That means that Dune will fail to capture the targeted Star Wars audience for the same reasons that Space: 1999 failed to capture the Star Trek audience. All the stylized mise-en-scene and the moody images only serve to separate us from involvement in the story. We are left with a very enigmatic main character and a very dry film (in more ways than one) that simply seems a sort of Lawrence of Arrakis.

Visually, Dune is a mass of contradictions. It has more than its share of jaw-dropping spectacles, yet some of its simplest effects are done on the cheap and really look bad. We see pictures of a moon of Arrakis superimposed on a sea of stars, and we see the stars right through the moon as if the scene were a cheap double exposure. We see a human in the mouth of a sandworm and the special effects people used two different film stocks to film the worm and the man, so that the result is totally unconvincing. On a forty million dollar film one can expect more competence than that. What nobody expected were Carlo Rambaldi's sandworms. Rambaldi was the man who did such a horrible job of making a mechanical King Kong that a human stand-in was needed for all but about four seconds of the remake of King Kong. Even after he did E. T., itself a reasonable effect, nobody thought he could do Herbert's sandworms justice. Rambaldi has redeemed himself in spades. The sandworms have to stand as one of the most awesome yet believable special effects anyone has ever put on the screen. From the first flash we see of a sandworm--looking somewhat like a scene from Moby Dick diving from wave to wave--to the final massive attack with many of the worms, they are accurate to John Schoenherr's famous illustrations.

In Dune we see and hear echoes of previous films. All too often, De Laurentiis seems to assume that the essence of science fiction is overly ornate and usually oddly structured sets. Many of the set from Dune could have come from Barbarella or Flash Gordon. These sets sit there as background, but add little to the feel of the film. There are a host of

actors from previous De Laurentiis films. We have Max Von Sydow from Flash Gordon and Conan, the Barbarian. Kenneth McMillan and Brad Dourif are familiar from Ragtime. And, of course, there is a rock score. De Laurentiis likes rock scores for fantasy films. Flash Gordon had its effect much damaged by its score. (Dino wanted to have a rock score for Conan, the Barbarian, but John Milius insisted on giving the score to Basil Poledouris, or at least so Poledouris claimed in an interview. It was the right choice. Poledouris' score is just about the best thing about Conan, the Barbarian).

But even with all the flaws, this film had more than enough to keep me pleased with what I was seeing. With the odd mix of virtues and problems, I find that this is a film that I like, but I cannot recommend. See it at your own risk. You might like it, you might hate it. It will be a while before you can forget it. For the record, I liked it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. But I am of such a mixed mind about this film it could easily have been a -2. It just depends on how much someone weights the bad elements and how they weight the good.

Reviewed by *Mark R. Leeper*

COBRA

Cobra by Timothy Zahn. Baen Books, paperback, $2.95, 346 pages.

In order to fight the invasion of the alien Trofts on the frontier worlds, the Dominion of Man decided to create a special soldier to fight a guerilla warfare on those worlds and bring a speedy end to the war. The Cobra force was initiated and it had the desired effect. But once a Cobra was made, he could not be unmade. What was the Dominion to do with a soldier whose weaponry was all internal? The laser cannon in the left calf, the auditory and visual enhancers, and the arc throwers and sonic weapons could all be removed, but the finger lasers, the servomechanisms in the joints, the laminae which made their bones virtually unbreakable, the fusion power plant, and the nanocomputer that controlled the power and coordinated the weapons and body movements could not.

Timothy Zahn explores this problem and others in this novel. He follows the career of Jonny Moreau from his enlistment in the army, through his training as a COmputerized Body Reflex Armament soldier, a return home as a veteran, and finally as a protector and politician on a colony world. Mixed with the warfare and the marvelous abilities of the Cobras are themes of power and curruption, some political intrigue, an examination of heros and myth, a look at the political system of the Trofts, and a deep, fascinating, inspection of Jonny Moreau and his motivations.

Tim shows his ability to take two previous novellas (which were the basis for this novel and the sequel (soon to be turned in to Baen Books), both demanded of Tim by the managing editor of Baen, Betsy Mitchell) and merge and adapt them into a novel. I could pick out the small variations within the novelized portions which were different from their novella counterparts. For the most part they were references to happenings earlier in the novel.

I've seen this novel compared to Heinlein's Starship Troopers by Debbie Notkin in the May issue of LOCUS (she asks why people keep trying to rewrite Heinlein's book, but says that Tim's ideas and treatment, after the similarities to Heinlein are finished, are quite good), but I can't comment on that since I have never read the Heinlein novel. In comparing it to Joe Haldeman's The Forever War, Tim handles the themes as well as, if not better than, Joe. Yet that's unfair to both of them, since the intentions of each are different. Although both follow the career of one character, Joe's character remains a soldier first and foremost, fighting a war in space that seemingly takes forever because of the time dilation factors of the space drives. On the other hand, Tim works with a soldier whose primary concern is to bring about and keep peace, and his struggles to be accepted as a person who is no more special than anyone else, yet who can't ignore that he is special, a Cobra, with responsibilities.

In comparing this novel to Tim's The Blackcollar, they are remarkably similar but contrastingly different. Instead of the experts in unarmed combat which is the Blackcollars' forte, the Cobras use high technology weapons. Tim shows his versatility with both forms of warfare (in contrast to his genuinely gentle manner). He also shows an improvement in plot handling and character development, although characters have always been a strong point in a Zahn story.

The cover artwork is little misleading. It shows a soldier holding a futuristic rifle. A better depiction for the novel would have been a Cobra firing laser beams from both hands and blasting an armored vehicle behind him with the laser cannon in his left leg. Still, one does get the sense of the story being about warfare from the cover.

Overall, Cobra is an interesting novel full of some unsuspecting twists and turns, yet Tim never leaves you unprepared for them. His clues are carefully planted, and his skill as a story-teller misdirects the reader sufficiently enough until the crucial points. People who like high-tech, hard science stories will like it; those who like warfare will like it; those who like characters and psychological insight will like it; those who like bloodshed and gore probably won't like it, but may still enjoy it.

I liked it a lot, for all these reasons.

Reviewed by *Lan*

WEB

Web by John Wyndham. Penguin Books.

A peculiar practice the seem to be becoming common is when a popular (or even a not-so-popular author) dies, you stash his last novel in a vault somewhere for a decade or more, wait for the author to become legend, then publish the book. The reading public is supposed to see the book for sale and say something like "A new book by Mort D. Ceased?!? Why, he's been dead for years! I gotta have this book to complete my collection." More often than not you find out that this may not have actually been his last novel, but is an earlier work that the author--perhaps inspired

by the parent in a Lovecraft story about a monstrous child--could not disown, but could not release on the world either, so hid in the attic. I guess what started that trend was Tolkien's Silmarillion. More recently there was a new "Fuzzy" novel by H. Beam Piper. There are a whole series of Doc Smith and Robert E. Howard books published after the authors' deaths with the help of a co-author that the poor dead author never chose. But this is a slightly different but related trend. It all comes down to the fact that when an author dies his name may become more popular and he totally loses the right to sat that one of his works turned out wrong and should not be published.

Web is a new novel by John Wyndham. These days if you ask me who my favorite science fiction authors are, you will probably get an evasive answer like "I don't have favorite authors, only favorite books." That's an easy out but it avoids claiming I like everything by a given author. Nonetheless, if you had asked me that question when I was in high school, you'd probably get Wyndham as one of the top three. Wyndham never published Web, and the reasons are clear from the novel. It is not that Web is not an enjoyable book to read, but when it comes right down to it, Web simply failed to become a whole lot better than a nature disaster novel like any number of writers like James Herbert or Arthur Herzog write -- perhaps not even that good.

The plot of Web involves an attempt to start a Utopian community on an isolated South Pacific atoll. One major problem, however, is that this particular island has been taken over by a new mutated breed of spider. They are no different than any other spiders except that they have learned to cooperate like ants and bees do. The result, reminiscient of Phase IV, is that they have become rulers of their environment and when they are invaded they battle for dominance of the island. There is also a subplot of a native curse of the island that seems borrowed from a grade-B movie, not that that in itself is bad. The Day of the Triffids is superficially about giant walking man-eating plants. If that isn't a B-film concept, nothing is. Wyndham can take an unpromising idea and make a good book out of it.

Well, Web isn't a bad book. It is well-written with a sense of wonder at the natural history of spiders. After reading Web, I find spiders much more interesting creatures. And there are some interesting discussions of nature and the naivete of looking at nature as benevolent or as anything but a vicious game in which humans are temporarily the best players. Web is a book written with vision which simply failed to be sufficiently different from a hack novel. So wyndham never published it. And Penguin books did when Wyndham could not say no. It's okay fare overall. Completists won't have too bad a time with it.

Reviewed by *Mark R. Leeper*

JOB: A COMEDY OF JUSTICE

Job: A Comedy of Justice by Robert A. Heinlein. Ballantine Books, 1984, $16.95.

This one starts out with more promise than other recent Heinlein novels (Number of the Beast and Friday, in particular), but about halfway through Heinlein once again reverts to stock characters and the novel loses steam.

The premise is intriguing. Alex (that's Alexander Hergensheimer) is on a cruise in an alternate world to ours in which the Moral Majority would seem positively decadent. He walks through a fire in Polynesia (on a bet) and finds himself in an alternate world (to his) which is far more free. There he meets Margrethe, a stewardess on the cruise ship, who has been having an affair with Alex Graham, Alex's alter-ego in her world, and conveniently decides to fall in love with Alex. (If her name sounds like a literary allusion, it's no accident.) If this isn't confusing enough, some gangsters are after Alex Graham for the million dollars he has in his lock box on board, and in the confusion that follows, Alex and Margrethe end up in yet another world. This is just the beginning -- they jump from world to world, usually with nothing more than the clothes on their backs (sometimes less).

Now, I liked all the alternate world stuff, but that's my particular thing. I don't think Heinlein does it particularly well, but then he has an out -- but that would spoil some of the plot. He's done this sort of thing before (in Number of the Beast), and it wasn't all that great there either. But the different life-views are interesting, even if all the consequences are perfectly worked out. Alex is a born-again Christian (of course -- but would the phrase 'born again' have arisen in his world?); Margrethe believes in Odin. Together they conclude that someone (some deity, actually -- Loki? Satan?) has it in for them, and that's why their world keeps changing.

Unfortunately, somewhere around world #8 (give or take a couple of worlds), they meet a couple a lot like Robert and Virginia Heinlein (one presumes) who live in an amazing house (luckily we are spared precise descriptions of the plumbing, which up until this novel seems to have been a Heinlein mainstay) and have very radical ideas. There's a lot of talk about nudity and sex (another Heinlein staple -- I wouldn't mind it so much if he did it well) and the usual philosophical speeches before Alex and Margrethe once again jump somewhere else. It's also about here that Alex and Margrethe start talking like stock Heinlein characters. A pity -- they were interesting up to this point.

Then about three-quarters of the way through, Heinlein does an abrupt left turn and the novel becomes something else entirely. Unfortunately what it becomes is not nearly as interesting as what it was. (Telling what would ruin the surprise, which is about all it's got going for it.) The novel just sort of trickles out, with a very unsatisfactory conclusion.

Job is better than other recent Heinlein novels (everything since Time Enough for Love), but it's not up to his earlier work by any means. It will probably be nominated for a Hugo (it seems that any novel by Asimov, Heinlein, or Clarke is), but it's a nostalgia nominee. (Strangely enough, it seems reminiscient of Silverberg's Up the Line, though I can't pin down why.)

Reviewed by *Evelyn Leeper*

THREE BOOK REVIEWS

FOR THE EYESTRAIN OF ONE

Orlando: A Biography by *Virginia Woolf*

Passing for Human by *Jody Scott*

I, Vampire by *Jody Scott*

The theme of separateness--how the individual who is an outsider to a society interacts within it--is not peculiar to science fiction. Hemingway and Sartre both created dreary protagonist after dreary protagonist who felt at odds with the world in which he lived. In fact, these protagonists felt at such odds with their respective societies that they were invariably contemplating suicide (which I always wished they would get on with and thereby end at least my misery). Fortunately, the idea of separateness has inspired jollier and more imaginative writers than the men from modern literature. Jonathan Swift used the idea of separateness to comment on his society by thrusting his hero into a series of made-up worlds. Gulliver's earthbound reactions to these worlds created the humor of the work. Both Virginia Woolf and Jody Scott have used Swift's model but reversed it -- they have introduced aliens into the Earth's world. These characters' reactions to our world result in three witty satires.

As Woolf's work serves as the inspiration for Scott's, hers should be considered first, and insofar as she is generally not thought of as a science fiction writer, perhaps a little background information is in order. In the dry language of literary scholarship, Woolf is a "modern" writer credited with reshaping the novel so that the action is portrayed by the instantaneous perceptions of the characters rather than filtered through a narrator. She was also renowned as a literary critic. None of these insipid labels suggest that she was a woman of great wit whose works would still be inspiring authors 50 or 60 years after they were written, but then, who believes in literary labels?

Certainly not Virginia Woolf, who unglued herself from the sticky, constricting things with the publication of Orlando: A Biography. Set in the sixteenth through twentieth centuries, Orlando is the story of an Elizabethan noble/poet who ages about as rapidly as women on soap commercials, and who miraculously changes sex (in about the seventeenth century) without the aid of even one Scandanavian doctor. (And as I'm sure all of the historians have already surmised, Orlando also gave up on being Elizabethan somewhere in there, too.) As Orlando slowly matures, she manages to bump into most of the great English male writers of her various ages--Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Johnson, and the rest of the gang from Freshman English--and is continually astonished to learn what ordinary sorts of people they are. At first, in fact, they are quite ordinary--their clothes are dirty and their manner coarse. But as the ages move on, literature becomes more established (and part of the establishment) and the wealth and social stature of the writers increases concomitantly. In the twentieth century, Orlando finally finishes the one great poem she has been working on for almost 400 years, called "The Oak Tree," which bears an uncanny, word-for-word resemblance to Vita Sackville-West's poem, "The Land."

Who, you may ask, is Vita Sackville-West? (Rest assured that she probably did NOT make even a cameo appearance in English I.) Besides being a distinguished poet and card-carrying member of the "Bloomsbury Set," she was also one of Woolf's lovers. The book is dedicated to her, and the pictures and photos of Sackville-West (make that Lady Sackville-West) and her ancestors are used to illustrate the book. More importantly, the book is in some ways her biography--like Orlando, she bore two children, married a man who was rarely at home, grew up on a country estate that once hosted kings and queens, and loved poetry.

In a deeper sense, Orladno is a biography not just of Sackville-West's life, but of the literary development of all poets. Woolf believed that because each writer drew from the literature of the past, the story of the development of literature was where the story of any individual writer's development began. (1) Woolf begins her tale of literary development when Shakespeare was at his height. Her poet hero/ine (with touching consideration for the feelings and dissertations of scholars everywhere) obligingly changes sex at about the time that Aphra Behn (1640-80) first began scandalizing London's literary lions by writing and producing plays that were more successful than theirs. (2)

The story of Orlando is the story of an outsider looking in and finally joining the crowd, but on her own terms. For much of the book, Orlando is a wry, critical observer of the literary community--wanting to be a writer but unable to wholly fit into the then-masculine world of letters. In eras when women were treated well, Orlando writes more easily. More repressive times, such as the Victorian era, make it practically impossible for Orlando to write. She only joins the literary community and writes freely when the literary community has become so established and well-fed that it can afford to be tolerant and heterogeneous. The movement of the work is from separateness to assimilation and the ending is one of quiet triumph.

Woolf was one of the first women writers to not only command a place for herself as a writer, but also as a critic. More than earlier women authors, she has probably been an inspiration to the women who followed her because her legacy has included a way of looking at the creative process. Woolf was one of the first to articulate what it means to be a woman writer--how the creative process was necessarily different for the sex that had been

(1) For a lengthier discussion of Woolf's views, see Winifred Holtby's Virginia Woolf: A Critical Memoir (Cassandra Press: Chicago, 1978). Or you could just read all of Woolf's works, which, in this country, are published by Harvest/HBJ Books.

(2) If you wish to know more about this absentee from English I, try either Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own (Harvest/HBJ Books: New York, 1956) or Dale Spender's Women of Ideas (Ark Paperbacks: London, 1982).

systematically excluded from education or serious consideration as writers. Her influence is obvious in Scott's work. Although I generally hesitate to talk about influences in the works of living authors, Scott almost explicitly links Passing for Human and I, Vampire to Woolf and to Orlando.

The major difference between Scott's work and Woolf's is that Scott is concerned with society as a whole, not merely with the literary community. In Passing for Human, she introduces Benaroya, the anthropologist from outer space (Rymensia, to be exact). Benaroya's introduction to life on Earth, and her reactions to it, provide a scathing but witty commentary on Western, especially American, society. From Richard Nixon (after whom all robot servants are modeled) to Brenda Starr to the Mafia, Scott mercilessly laughs at our pretentions, affectations and stupidities.

She continues in this vein throughout I, Vampire as well, but takes her fiction a bit further. Passing for Human ends with only the plot resolved--no solutions are offered for the society that is so thoroughly satirized within it. I, Vampire is more the story of how Benaroya attempts to redeem or improve humankind with the help of her friend and lover, Sterling O'Blivion, the vampire of the title. Sterling is both an outsider, like Benaroya, and someone who is of the Earth. She acts as a mediator between Benaroya's unworldliness and other people's mundaneness. And when Sterling finally overcomes her earthbound unhappiness, we are probably meant to see her victory as a way that we can overcome the shallowness and unthinking idiocy of our own lives.

The problem is that Benaroya's "teachings" are not all that specific-- she basically preaches a kind of warm, fuzzy, let's-hug-everybody psychology. And like the beliefs of Leo Buscaglia, this philosophy just doesn't survive beyond the second it's been articulated. Warmth, buoyancy and optimism may fill the reader at first, but woe to whomever tries to think about what was said. In some ways, reading Scott reminded me of when I first heard of Buscaglia. When I found out that he had never been married, I grew angry that he would dare to preach about how easy it was to love when apparently he had never been able to love in a way that survived the demands of a commitment. That lack of willingness to deal with the dreck of life--the grinding little details that make a wholly intellectual or spirtual life impossible--mars Scott's philosophy as well. Perhaps my own biases keep me from understanding her, because I see happiness as an achievement more than something I can effortlessly "become." Therefore, I am suspicious of promises that happiness will ever become omnipresent just by some vaguely articulated mental/emotional process.

Another question that Scott avoids is what kind of life would we really have if tension, stupidity and unhappiness were wholly eliminated from the Earth. Where would humor be? Is humor merely some sort of compensation for an imperfect world? Or is humor an important part of what it means to be human? Do the world's imperfections provide the only medium in which humor can flourish? If we don't have human foibles to laugh at, at what should we laugh? Human virtues?

It could be that Scott's work is evolving and if another "Benaroya" book comes out, it will be more specific in its philosophy or will deal more with the problems Benaroya's "solution" would bring. Certainly Scott isn't the first satirist who's failed to offer a sufficiently interesting, credible way for people to live. One could hardly argue, for instance, that the Houyhnhnms section in Gulliver's Travels is the basis of the book's enduring fame. Scott's books are funny enough to make them well worth reading at least once (although anti-feminists may not appreciate all of the jokes). Whether they are worth rereading probably depends on whether you prefer to create your own solutions or to critique others'.

Reviewed by C. E. *Jackson*

FRONTERA

FRONTERA by Lewis Shiner, Baen Books, 1984, $2.95; a book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

This is a book which has a lot of promise, but just doesn't deliver. The premise is good: the first permanent Mars settlement--Frontera --was cut off from Earth when all governments and social order in general fell apart back on Earth. Now, several years later, the corporations have picked up the pieces and are sending a "rescue mission" to Frontera.

The scenario for the transition from government to corporation rule on Earth does not bear close inspection, particularly in the USSR, but little time is spent on Earth, so this could be glossed over. And Shiner does have a good writing style, capable of holding your interest with realistic descriptions of life in the Martian colony. But unlike Occam, he multiplies entities (in this case, premises) needlessly. The children born to the colonists on Mars are mutants who have set up their own laboratory in a cave where they may or may not have developed faster-than-light travel/matter transmission. None of the main characters is what could be described as normal, and this soon starts to look like "Funny-hat-ism," where everyone is identified by the funny hat they wear. In many ways it reminded me of Frederik Pohl's Starburst (an expansion of "The Gold at Starbow's End"), with its gratuitous (in my opinion) mysticism. I didn't like Starburst either.

It's a pity. If Shiner had just stuck to the idea of the stranded Martian colony and how they survived, without all this FTL mumbo-jumbo, he could have had a great story.

TWILIGHT ZONE SILVER ANNIVERSARY

NIGHTMARES

TWO FILM REVIEWS

I saw these programs on two consecutive nights. Both are anthologies originally made to be shown separately on TV. The Twilight Zone Silver Anniversary is made up of three of the four episodes that until now never got put into syndication. Two were held out because of lawsuits over their originality, and the third

for reasons never made public. A fourth episode that never made it to syndication is considered offensive to the Japanese-American community and will probably never be shown again on TV. (These facts are from The Twilight Zone Companion). Nightmares is a collection of four episodes of an unsold TV series which were edited together and released as a theatrical film. Now it has made it back to TV, or at least cable TV.

The episodes in The Twilight Zone Silver Anniversary were chosen for their previous unavailability, not for their quality. They are pretty much run-of-the-mill. They come from later and somewhat uninspired seasons. The program started with a little boilerplate on how great the series was (and it was, some times), all the great stars who got their start there, etc.

The first episode was "A Short Drink from a Certain Fountain." This is a very minor youth serum story starring Patrick O'Neal (who hosted The Twilight Zone Silver Anniversary). To call this predictable is an understatement. There is no simpler plot for a horror story about a youth serum. There is only one thing that can go wrong with a youth serum. It told that story.

Next came an hour-long episode called "Miniature." With a half-hour TV show, there are about eleven minutes to establish a situation, eleven minutes for plot complication, and about two minutes for the intro and credits. Most of what made the half-hour Twilight Zones good was clever use of the eleven minutes of plot complication. That part had to move very fast. The hour-long Twilight Zones had the same time for set-up, credits, etc., and the extra twenty-four minutes went into plot complication. That meant there were thirty-five minutes to do what Serling used to do in eleven. So much for Serling's skill of telling a story fast. The hour-long episodes were real foot-draggers for the most part. "Miniature" would have made a good half-hour episode, but it is tedius in the hour format.

It stars Robert Duvall as a poor friendless schnook who is molly-coddled by his mother and ridiculed by his co-workers. He does, however, have one thing that makes his life interesting: he looks into a particular doll house in a museum and the wooden dolls come to life and play out a story for him.

To enhance the fairytale quality, a process has been used to show what goes on in the doll house in color. This is a computer process in which a technician gets the first frame of a scene on a screen and paints it using an electronic pen. The computer then recognizes the same field in the next frame, so it automatically paints it the same way. The technician paints only the new fields that have been created by, say, a character coming into the frame. The result is not as believable as a color film, but it is colored as well as could possibly be done by hand. The colors look like they came from old French postcards. Duvall's performance is a little overdone, a pity considering the superiority of his acting later in his career. This is an okay story, but it is too much like other Twilight Zone stories and is overly long.

"Sounds and Silences" is about a noisy man who is punished by first being made overly sensitive to sound, then under-sensitive. The three stories act as reminders that although Twilight Zone at best was excellent, many episodes were fit for one watching but not much more.

Somewhat better on the whole were the four stories from Nightmares. The opening to the film (and presumably it would have been the opening to each episode of the series had the series been made) is a logo every bit as disquieting as the logo of The Twilight Zone. The viewer is racing over a landscape and under an overcast sky, both in electric blue. They come together at a dark horizon punctuated by two red disembodied eyes. Not that it buys a whole lot, but the logo is eerie.

The first of the four stories (called, as I remember, "Terror in Topanga") is a standard suspense story. It concerns a housewife so addicted to smoking that she goes out for cigarettes in spite of warnings that an escaped homocidal maniac is loose and doing his thing. The story is built around a surprise plot twist. In fact, the twist is a little too understated and short. There is more padding than story, but the padding is presented crisply and suspensefully enough that even if the plot twist is missed the story is worth seeing.

"The Bishop of Battle" is named for a mysterious videogame. The main character is a videogame addict who has a compulsion to find out what happens when a player gets to the 13th level. "Some guy in Jersey did it twice," we are told. That's a good touch, incidentally, since it is clear from the story that nobody would get to level 13 a second time and the rumors are apocryphal. In classic EC Comic tradition the story starts out by showing us the main character is a videogame hustler. In the old EC Horror Comics all sorts of nasty things happen to people, but they were always evil-doers and the unpleasantness was always presented as justice. The idea of something really nasty waiting on an unattainable level of a videogame is clever and original enough to justify the story, even if the actual nasty does not come up to audience expectations.

"Benediction" is the clicker of the set. In it we have a Catholic priest who is losing his faith getting a sign that the Devil exists, in the form of a flashy, black pick-up truck with tinted windows. It borrows heavily from The Exorcist, Prey, and especially The Car. Only one very nice dream sequence and one imaginative entrance of this hell-on-wheels truck make this segment watchable.

Nightmares saves its best segment until last. "Night of the Rat" stars Veronica Cartwright and Richard Masur as a couple whose house has a rat problem.... On top of having a few small rats, they have the leader of the pack-- a giant (well, 6-foot) demon rat out of German folklore. Not too bad a story at all. The special effects were even adequate. Not really a piece of frightening horror, but not too bad.

What's the moral of all this? Well, I guess it is that the great old series we remember just seem great because we remember the best. The Twilight Zone had more weak stories than good ones. I am watching some of the third-season Star Treks and they were really hokey at times. These are series that started good and built their reputation on their best efforts. TV fantasy was good in the golden old days, the days of the first couple of seasons of The Twilight Zone, the first and maybe the

second season of Star Trek, but even that was pretty spotty. This is another of those golden years it seems, because Tales from the Darkside so far has had more good episodes than bad. Nightmares, had it sold, would have had at least three good episodes. The best shows were very good in the old days, just like the best of British television is pretty good. But that does not mean that the average show from Britain of the 1950's was all that good. It may be that the highs are not as good. The best of Tales from the Darkside may not affect us like the best of The Twilight Zone, but then series lasted longer in those days.

Compared by *Mark R. Leeper*

SHERLOCK HOLMES THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

SHERLOCK HOLMES THROUGH TIME AND SPACE edited by Isaac Asimov et al., Bluejay Books, 1984, $14.95. A Book Review by John W. Watson, M.D. (as told to Evelyn C. Leeper)

It was one of those clear Sussex evenings. The rain which had been falling all day had cleared, leaving the warm sun to cast its final rays upon the downs. Holmes was busy with his scrapbooks and I was sitting beside the fire, wondering how to spend the evening hours when Holmes suddenly interrupted my thoughts with, "You really should, you know."

It took me a few moments to realize that he meant I really should discuss the latest book of "his" adventures. I had, in fact, been staring at the book on my desk when he spoke, something which had obviously not escaped his notice. He was right (as always); my publisher was always eager for my opinion on these forgeries, as Holmes insisted on referring to them, though he must have realized that the authors did not expect their readers to believe any of them. Since Holmes retirement to the downs, the public has been deprived of the constant source of enjoyment they had from my poor accounts of his cases, and Holmes steadfastly refuses to allow me to make public those cases that until now have been withheld from the public, though he has said that when the last member of the strange cult of Ba'ala has died, he will allow me to reveal that horrifying story. The result is that authors everywhere attempt to deduce what the giant rat of Sumatra was, with considerably less success than Holmes had, I might add. But then Holmes was on the scene and saw the peculiar footprints whereas they ...but I digress.

This anthology, sent to me by my agent in London, contains 15 accounts, of which only my own ("The Adventure of the Devil's Foot") has any truth in it at all. It is only because of the British copyright laws which have placed my accounts in the public domain that it even appears here; had I any control over its publication, it would not be used to bolster the public's mistaken belief in the fictional accounts it appears with. In particular, these authors have seen fit to have Holmes consorting with aliens ("The Adventure of the Sore Bridge -- Among Others" by Philip Jose Farmer and "The Adventure of the Extraterrestrial" by Mack Reynolds), mad scientists ("A Father's Tale" by Sterling E. Lanier), and innumerable other ridiculous characters.

In one case, Holmes is merely used as a dramatic device for a pun! And to further deprecate Holmes' talents, the previously mentioned Mr. Farmer has written "A Scarlet in Study," in which he claims that a dog(!) has the same powers that Holmes does. I feel I must state here that Holmes is quite distressed by these portrayals of him and if they do not cease, he will reveal to the public all that he knows about the singular disappearance of the Peoria City Council.

A large number of stories do not show Holmes at all, but rather use some person or incident as a basis for the most absurd conclusions. I will state now that there is no truth to the vile rumor that Moriarty survived the Falls at Reichenbach and escaped via a time machine (the beginning of "The Adventure of the Global Traveler" by Anne Lear), nor have my writings ever been the basis for demonic summonings. These accusations and slanders must cease immediately.

This volume will undoubtedly sell many copies in the bookstalls of London and other world cities. The authors have some skill in writing and to the outside reader, the tales probably seem plausible. I must admit to a certain enjoyment of some of them myself. And the public is understandably eager for further accounts of my companion's career. But an entire planet of teddy bears acting out Hounds of the Baskervills ("The Adventure of the Misplaced Hound" by Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson)? That is going too far. Holmes refuses to go to New York to protest the publication of this volume to Mr. Frenkel directly. He claims that it would not be in keeping with his new character, which is, as he said, "Sedentary, my dear Watson."

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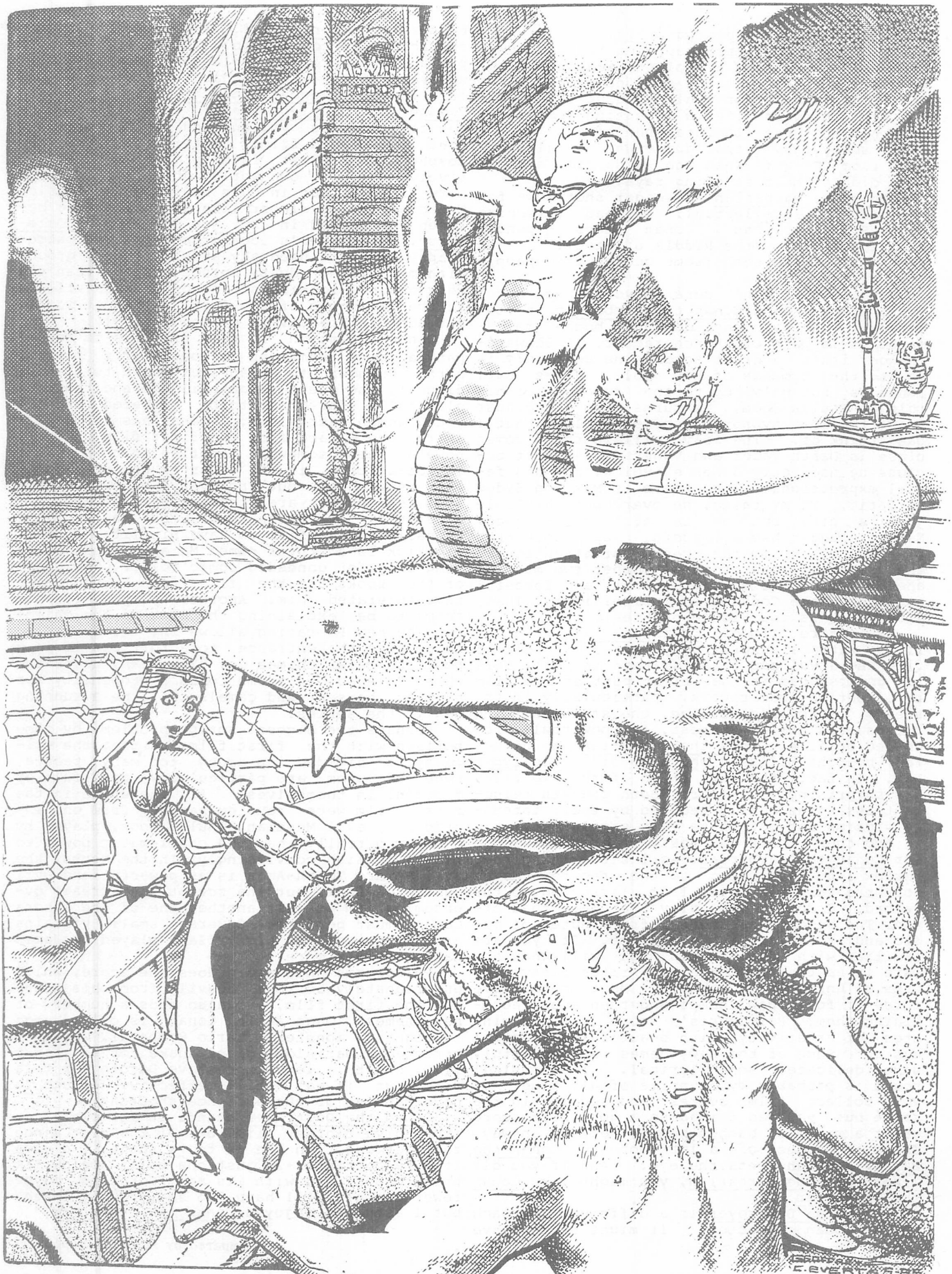
[I feel that Dr. Watson is being too harsh on this book. True, there are many other fictional accounts of supposed Holmes cases that are better written, but the peculiar science fiction bent of these stories makes them worth reading. Of course, one has the problem of writing a science fiction mystery, which Asimov has talked about before--how can you expect the reader to deduce along with the detective when the reader may not know, for example, that time travel is allowed in this story? "When the impossible has been eliminated, whatever remains, however improbable, is the truth." But how do you know what's impossible? And the illustrations by Tom Kidd are very nice too. --Evelyn C. Leeper]

CONAN HEAVY AND CONAN LITE

A comparison of the two Conan films.

"Don't Laugh, but you know, I actually enjoyed Conan the Barbarian." I heard it about six times from six different people. Usually it is from people who know fantasy but who also know this film took a real lambasting by the critics for some very predictable reasons. Conan the Barbarian was a violent film. That is because Robert E. Howard's character Conan is a violent man. His weapon is a two-handed sword. On Saturday morning cartoons, I am told, there is a barbarian character with a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sword that shoots stunning rays. That's because children are not supposed to know that the sword is really a violent weapon. Also, the scriptwriter must be someone really sick. What kind of a person would make up lines like the best thing in life is defeating your enemy and hearing the lamentation of his women? Well, sorry, guys: that quote was actually taken from Genghis Khan who also had a sword that didn't shoot stunning rays.

Conan the Barbarian also got shot down for being overly intellectual. Instead of keeping up a Star Wars pace, Conan stops to ponder questions like "the Riddle of Steel." Then there are those bothersome quotes from people like Nietsche.

Actually, I don't care if you laugh but I still enjoy seeing Conan the Barbarian on videotape. The violence doesn't bother me because it is part of the character. If Schwarzenegger isn't a great actor, he certainly is up to the demands of his role. James Earl Jones is not only up to the demands of his role as Thulsa Doom, he turns Doom into just about the most hypnotic screen villain that I can think of. The only villain that comes close is Darth Vader and Vader falls short because he had only Jones's voice, not his facial expressions. Then there is Max Von Sydow as Osric. To my taste, he overpowers his role just a bit, but he is also quite good. Schwarzenegger has a forceful appearance that usually makes him the center of attention on the screen. Both of these other two men, by sheer weight of acting talent and forceful speaking, make Conan seem insignificant. That, after all, is the Riddle of Steel.

The entire film of Conan the Barbarian is filled with a surprisingly effective feel of fire and steel and fatalism rare in film. This is underscored in the first part of the film by effective camerawork, particularly in the scenes of Conan's village, the steam-snorting horses, and the icy forest, all powerfully recorded on film. Conan the Barbarian was directed by John Milius, who also did Apocalypse Now. In fact, the last third of the two films are surprisingly similar. Both concern reluctant assassins nearly seduced by their intended victims and both have very similar styles.

And then there is Basil Poledouris' score for Conan the Barbarian. As I sit writing this review I am listening to the record. Maybe for the fortieth time I am listening to the record. I don't even play Star Wars that often. The record has about fifty minutes of music and it never reuses a theme. If you are familiar with film scores, you will know how rare it is that a composer writes fifty minutes of unrepeating themes. Most scores have three or four new themes and then keep recombining them. Poledouris's score is fifty minutes of creativity with beautiful orchestral music. Some of the new themes are powerful, some delicate, some lyrical. The musical score is probably my favortie of all time. If you collect film scores and see it in the store but you can't imagine a good film score about a man who bashes heads, get it anyway. There is a heck of a lot more to Conan the Barbarian than meets the eye. And if you did like Conan the Barbarian, you might like Conan the Destroyer.

Conan the Destroyer is a different approach to the Conan character. It might better have been called Conan Lite. The approach to the character is considerably lighter. This is primarily due to the replacement of John Milius as director with Richard Fleischer, known for 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, Fantastic Voyage, and Soylent Green. The style of the new film is less violent and macho, more like that of a Sinbad film. Lost is the primal atmosphere the first film projected so effectively. In his own world, the character is more famous, but in ours he is less credible. The contrast is almost like the difference between James Bond in Dr. No and Bond in Octopussy. Fleischer's idea of atmospheric photography is a tinted sky and a tinted ground with men riding dusty horses rather than the very natural-looking scenes of Conan's village at the beginning of the first film. It works, but not as effectively or convincingly.

Conan's mission in this film is to accompany a young woman on a quest for a magical horn. Unknown to Conan (but known to the audience), the quest is an evil one and the true plan calls for Conan to be murdered and the young woman sacrificed. Conan has a sidekick Akiro, the wizard from the first film. Akiro's powers seem somewhat modified in this film. The first time, it was clear he had some magical knowledge, but not very much. In this film, his powers are inconsistent. He has considerable levitation power, but does not use it early in the film to save his life. Another sidekick is a thief named Malak, a buffoon along only for unneeded comic relief. The Conan of the books and the first film would never have tolerated him. Another purpose for him seems to be explaining the plot to the children the new PG rating allows in. For example, Akiro says the entrance to a fortress is in a pool and Malak chimes in, "You mean, under the water?" Also, it seems Conan's propensity for hitting horses and camels will be a running gag in the series.

Perhaps the biggest script problem, by comparison with the first film, is that the villainy is divided up among too many people, none of whom are particularly powerful or forceful in themselves. All the evils in the first film were rays emanating from one incredible, evil Messiah, Thulsa Doom, played by a man who really has the charismatic power to play a messiah convincingly. In the books, the evil wizard Thoth-Amon is as powerful and evil as Thulsa Doom, but the script just treats overcoming him as just another one of the labors Conan must perform. Several small villains are effective; one big villain played by James Earl Jones is more so.

Poledouris once again does the score, which unfortunately borrows heavily from his score for the first film, but also adds a number of new themes. Once again, Conan is called upon to fight a monster. Carlo Rambaldi, who constructed a marvelous giant snake for the first film, built a less impressive Dagoth for this film, but it was still effective enough to have members of the audience shouting.

Conan the Destroyer stands on its own as an impressive fantasy film, one of the best since the last one. On the -4 to +4 scale, I'd give it a respectable +2, just one point below its predecessor. And with its new PG rating, maybe fewer people will have to say, "Don't laugh, but I actually enjoyed Conan the Destroyer."

Compared by *Mark R. Leeper*

EROS DESCENDING

Eros Descending by Mike Resnick. Phantasia Press and NAL/Signet Books.

This novel is the third in the "Tales of the Velvet Comet" series by Mike Resnick. The first two books, Eros Ascending and Eros at Zenith, showed the Velvet Comet's rise to fame and shining glory as the most opulent Brothel in the history of Man. Eros Descending is the story of the Comet's fall from glory.

Dr. Reverend Thomas Gold is the head of the "Jesus Pures," the "Church of the Purity of Jesus Christ." His major objective is to bring down the Vainmill Syndicate because of its oppression of the lower classes and alien races. The Velvet Comet is only a symptom of Vainmill's wickedness, but if he can hurt Vainmill that way, Dr. Gold will.

Thomas Gold is on the Comet as the presenter of the trophy of a horse race put on in his honor. Gustave Plaga, the head of Vainmill's Entertainment and Leisure Division, hoped to sway Gold from his damning sermons by honoring him thusly, along with a sizable contribution to his Church. While on board, Gold sees that there are two aliens "pressed" into the service of harlotry, the Andricans of Besmarith II, named Titania and Oberon, who are nicknamed "faeries," because of their resemblance to those imaginary folk. Gold becomes obsessed with freeing them from bondage to the exclusion of everything else. The real reason for his obsession is quite apparent to the reader but the characters of the story take more time to figure it out. Meanwhile, as Thomas Gold goes off the deep end, his son Simon takes over the Church of the Jesus Pures, and his fanatacism overrides rational action.

The Steel Butterfly, the Madame on the Velvet Comet, and her security officer Attilla, try to keep the Brothel solvent and safe, in spite of the verbal attacks of Thomas Gold and the fanatacal attempts at destruction from his son Simon. They also have to justify their positions to Vainmill and the new head of the Leisure and Entertainment Division, Michael Constantine. Attilla and Steel Butterfly show a rational attitude towards loyalty--for people and their security. Constantine, Thomas and Simon Gold (and other characters) also show different degrees and facets of loyalty and devotion, from blindness to obsession and fanatacism.

Mike Resnick does a marvelous job in handling these ideas and making them work. His study of Gold's character and the reactions from the supporting cast is well done, and the contrast from rational thinking to extreme fanatacism with the shades in between shows Mike's skill as a writer. I can't wait now to read the conclusion of the series; if it's anything like the last volume of the "Tales of the Galactic Midway", it'll be a blockbuster!

Reviewed by *Lan*

ENDER'S GAME

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card. Tor Books, $13.95; 357 pages.

After earth miraculously defeated the first wave of the invading insectiod race, all efforts went into building fleets of ships which were launched pilotless against the "bugs", and education and training were directed towards building up a troop of fighters who could direct those ships by remote control through instantaneous communication devices. A special search commenced for one who could be the supreme commander of this troop of pilots, and hopes rested on Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, who seemed to have the qualities, yet who also hated to hurt others. Yet, through training session after training session, through one simulation after another, Ender and his crew won, despite the odds thrown against him. And eveneventually Ender defeats the "bugs", opening up the galaxy for human colonization.

If you read (and remembered) Orson Scott Card's novella "Ender's Game", the plot should sound familiar. It is the same story expanded, with several subplots mixed in, most of which relate to the central story, but the major subplot seems to have no bearing to the main story until the end. Scott ties up the loose ends very nicely, leaving room for the sequel, Speaker for the Dead, which he says is better than this novel. If that's so, then I can't wait until the sequel comes out.

One major problem I had with the story was the age of the kids. Ender was six when he was first taken away from his regular school and placed in the military training school. The language he and his companions used was good, well-constructed English, and I thought Scott was forcing the reader to suspend disbelief a bit too much. However, after talking with Scott at CONTRAPTION about the serious conversations he has had with his five-year-old son and how his son has corrected some of his teachers at school (Yes, he wants to be a Paleontologist and study dinosaur fossils; no, they say, he wants to be an Archeologist and study dinosaurs!), and hearing how well our neighbor's two-year-old talks, and how well my own neice was talking at 2, and how much my six-year-old nephew knows about the world, I found that I really didn't have to suspend my disbelief that much. Kids know a lot more at an early age then we give them credit for. Additionally, the society was being directed towards fighting the enemy, and thus pushing kids in that direction would naturally increase fluency in language and military knowledge.

Overall, the book is excellent. It is painful to read in some spots, as Ender keeps getting put in a position that he has to fight against his peers or older kids, but the intricate weaving of the subplots, and the final tapestry of the story make it all worthwhile. And as I said, I can't wait until the sequel Speaker for the Dead comes out.

Reviewed by *Lan*

ALIEN STARS

Two book Reviews

Alien Stars edited by Elizabeth Mitchell. An anthology of three novellas: "The Scapegoat" by C. J. Cherryh, "Seasons" by Joe Haldeman, and "Cordon Sanitaire" by Timothy Zahn. 1985, Baen Books, pb $2.95.

Alien Stars is an anthology of novellas by C. J. Cherry, Joe Haldeman, and Timothy Zahn. The cover describes the contents as "three short novels of future war," but the subject is "war" in the usual sense only in the first story, "Scapegoat", by Cherryh.

Humans have been fighting a costly and apparently endless war with aliens they call "elves", ever since the elves destroyed a civilian human starship with no warning and no explanation. They have no way of communicating with the enemy, and have been unable to take prisoners to learn anything about them. Then, an elf presents itself as a voluntary prisoner, in order to attempt negotiation.

Most of the story involves the process of each side attempting to understand the other's motivations and methods. Told from the point of view of the soldier that "captured" the elf, it focuses on his battle experiences, and on his inability to follow the elves' reasoning; but also on his, and his enemy's, fierce desire not merely to win, or to end the fighting, but to know why they are fighting.

"Scapegoat," then, is more introspective than active. The issues raised are skillfully explored, but perhaps not truly settled by its ending (but can they be?). The writing, and especially the characterizations, are impeccable, as we should expect from C. J.

The conflict in Haldeman's "Seasons" is far more personal and less organized. A group of human anthropologists "goes native" to study the primitive inhabitants of a distant planet; the idea being not to "ruin" the culture by exposing it to advanced technology and new cultural concepts. They are completely out of touch with the homeworld, and generally left to their own devices, but confident that nothing could go wrong with the easygoing and genial natives. Unfortunately, preliminary observations of the natives' behavior and life cycles were incomplete; the anthropologists' ignorance, both of the natives and of survival without benefit of technology, leads to tragedy.

The main idea in this story is excellent, and the ending both surprising and fitting. However, I tried twice to read it through, and each time skipped over large portions. It seemed to me that the descriptions of the anthropologists' ordeals were overdone --they could have been fewer and less repetitious to just as good effect. I was not so much shocked or nauseated as tired of it after a few scenes that all made the same point. However, other people's tolerances and tastes may be different, and even if, like me, you don't read every word, the story is still worth a try.

Zahn's "Cordon Sanitaire" is a change of pace from the first two stories, a "scientific mystery" which combines an intriguing problem with an emphasis on characterization that's all too rare in this type of story. The title is meaningful on several levels, and if he tries a little to hard to make each level explicit, at least the greater depth than is usually found in a "hard tech" story is, again, commendable.

The "war" here is with a danger of unknown cause. A team of scientists is camped out on a planet for a full range of explorations. The dominant life form is obviously far below human intelligence, and generally shy. Why, then, and how, do they acquire sophisticated weaponry and take up shooting at any human that goes outdoors? Even more important, how do the humans defend themselves, not only against the weapons but against their individual reactions to the crisis?

My only quibble with this story is that Zahn is capable of better writing style. This is eminently readable, but he tries too hard to give a futuristic "flavor" by using turns of phrase that are more awkward than clever: "What in starnation"; "the food went down like so much untextured protein supplement"; "avoid such things like Syrian leopard snakes." His descriptions sometimes give mere words rather than images, as in, "Mitch was very obviously bursting with questions, but restrained himself well." Is it necessary to be so obvious? It's praiseworthy, though, that while the "problem" is the main focus of the story, what he gives us is the people in the story working out the problem, with plausible and sympathetic character development.

"Scapegoat" and "Cordon Sanitaire" are essentially stories of discovery; the former of psychological or moral realities, the latter of an "objective" scientific problem. "Seasons", on the contrary, focuses on hindsight. This may be why I found the other two to be more engrossing than "Seasons," and more satisfying.

Different as these three stories are (and the variety is a strength of the anthology), they do have a common theme beyond the "war" label given to them. In each, the conflict arises from a misunderstanding of the situation. And that arises from the assumption that the world really does work according to "our" rules, a failure to acknowledge that someone else may see things differently, and therefore act in opposition to our own decisions but by, to them, completely valid principles. Each story is an excellent "cautionary tale" against such unwitting arrogance.

A word --several words-- of praise should go to Betsy Mitchell for the selection of stories in this anthology, and for the brief but eloquent introductions to each story. I hope this is only the first of many anthologies she will edit for Baen.

Reviewed by *Maia Cowan*

Although labelled on the cover as stories of "future war", this anthology may more accurately be termed a collection of stories about "alien conflict". It is only the Cherryh story whose topic is war itself; the other two deal with conflicts with aliens and their cultures.

"The Scapegoat" depicts the wrapping up of a too long war between humans and a race called the "elves". Neither attempted to understand the other side, nor the reasons why the war has gone on as long as it has, until

the elf Angan allows himself to be captured by the human John deFranco, and between them they resolve the war, each having to take on the burden of his/its respective race. The story is intriguing, though not active; it is very introspective.

A group of anthropologists "goes native" in order to study the Plathys race in their natural habitat. They have weapons hidden in their native-looking ones, which they are to use sparingly and as a last resort in a life-threatening situation. The scientists expected no trouble from the docile natives, and didn't get any until the next change in the Plathys' seasonal life. The initial study was woefully incomplete, and the group ends up fleeing and fighting for their lives. What winds up as the story are the recordings made by four of the surviving members (recording devices were implanted into one of each person's molar). The ending of the story proper was not wholly unexpected, but all through the final scenes I was hoping for something else. The tag on the end is something typical of bureaucracy, even today. I found Joe's story quite exciting, even though it ended on a depressing note.

"Cordon Sanitaire" is a scientific mystery involving conflict with an alien race -- the subhuman tarsapiens have somehow developed weaponry far advanced of human technology and are taking pot-shots at any human who steps outside of the scientific study-station. There were former inhabitants on the planet, and members of the team were studying the remains of the civilization, but they had been gone for centuries; even if the weapons were left behind by the former race, how would the tarsapiens learn how to use them?

Mixed with this mystery are also conflicts among the humans of the scientific expedition. Each has his or her own reasons for teaming up with Lyell Moffit, the leader, and each has his/her own personal problems to work out, as well as the conflicts with others. The title has more than one meaning, and Tim uses it effectively.

My only quibble with this story was Tim's attempt to give it a futuristic flavor by using phrases like "Starnation" and others. Aside from that, Tim's novella fits in well with the other two "older" (i.e., more established -- having been writing longer) authors. In fact, I think he does quite well, even bettering both Joe and Carolyn.

It is difficult to rank these from good to best (none certainly is less than good). Had they appeared in different publications at different times, it might be easier to judge them. Still, I'd have to put Tim's story as the best of the three, with Joe's second and Carolyn's third, merely as a matter of taste and interest. I definitely was not disappointed in any of them, and I don't think you would be either.

Reviewed by *Lan*

LIFEBURST

Lifeburst by Jack Williamson. DelRey/Ballantine Books, hardcover, $12.95, 271 pages.

The earth is girdled with Clarkean tethered satellites, owned by one family/company which has neatly suppressed the rest of the earth inhabitants into structured societal classes. There is a human outpost in the Oort cloud on the verge of making contact with a galactic

culture which seems reluctant to make contact with us. A pregnant, metal-eating, cybornetic Queen-huntress has ensconced herself in an asteroid, preparing to give birth to several metal-hungry children who also will carry out their organic-life-destroying programming.

Against this sweeping background of ideas is a lone boy named Quinn who grows up in the Oort station. He never really fit in there, and when his burning desire to return to Earth becomes a reality, he finds that he doesn't fit there either. Contrasting the small and humble with the broad and grandiose, Williamson carries Quinn through several adventures and growing-up experiences and makes him the focus of several ideas as well as the deciding contact person for galactic acceptance.

This book is not an easy one to read. It takes work to untangle the various plot lines and weave together the various different starting places that Jack has put into the story. But the effort is well worth it. Jack Williamson, who has been writing SF for 57 years, gives the newer, younger writers a run for their money. He is not an author who has sat back to rest on his laurels, or write the same sort of story he did decades ago. Instead Jack tries new ideas and extrapolates on the most recent findings in science. He also takes some old ideas and gives them new twists.

This delights me no end. Jack may be a dinosaur in the field of Science Fiction, but he certainly is no fossil. His mind is still young and sharp, and I hope he continues to write, and grow, and keep the younger writers on their toes.

Reviewed by *Lan.*

SUPERLUMINAL

Superluminal, by Vonda N. McIntyre. 1984, Pocket Books, pb $2.95.

Vonda McIntyre combines intriguing biological extrapolation with strong characterization in this novel, as with most of her writing. She assumes that unaltered humans would not survive the stresses of faster-than-light-- "superluminal"-- travel, and also that genetic and mechanical engineering would provide a solution. She also invents a race of "divers", humans altered to live underwater, who can also communicate with cetaceans. These ideas are not in themselves original, but the exact processes as she describes them are enough to keep the reader's attention. Starship pilots have their hearts replaced with rotary pumps and learn biocontrol techniques so that, divorced from the natural rhythms of the human body, they would not experience the physical and psychological conflicts that kill normal humans. The divers, too, are explained, not merely described, in terms of sophisticated and plausible biotechnology. They also provide an undercurrent of humor: the younger divers are faithful fans of the old and wildly inaccurate (to them) series The Man from Atlantis.

The story, though, is not about the technology but about the people. It begins with Laenea Trevelyan recovering from the operation which makes her a pilot. Impatient with hospital procedure, she "escapes" and quickly becomes involved with a non-pilot crew member, Radu Dracul; the affair ends tragically when they discover that close contact with non-pilots disrupts her biocontrol and could be fatal. He applies to become a pilot but is turned down because he is "too dependent" on his natural biorhythms. From this point, the story becomes Radu's, detailing his unique ability to survive transit without the surgery and the resulting conflict with the pilots. Another crew member, the diver Orca, becomes involved; the story also traces her difficult choice between outer space and her family's world undersea, as her clan votes whether to adapt further to underwater existence and so move further from "lander" humans.

In their differing yet intertwined circumstances, the main characters deal with a common problem: they are isolated by their unique qualities from those who share their lives: Laenea and Radu, Radu and Orca, Orca and her brother who has never entered the landbound world. The minor characters show this same trait: Marc, the former pilot who, having suffered brain damage in his first flight, isolates himself from the outside world; wealthy Kathell Stafford, who insists on giving but will accept nothing in return; Vasili Nikolaievitch, who ultimately antagonizes even other pilots with his superior manner, an exaggeration of most pilots' aloofness from their surroundings. As the story develops, the isolation is more clearly defined -- but it is also transcended by each person's recognition of a need for others, and ability to overcome the difference in order to reach a common goal, or to recognize simple human caring.

Superluminal can be read as "just" a story in which the science is intriguing and the adventures are challenging, but the "message" of the characterizations is what gives it depth and quality.

Reviewed by *Maia*

Jabberwocky

A Film Review

"The Time has Come," the Walrus said,
"To get a little talky.
I must tell you a thing or two
About the Jabberwocky.

The Film is planned, I'd say off hand
To be a great sensation
By chasing after Holy Grail
In skillful imitation.

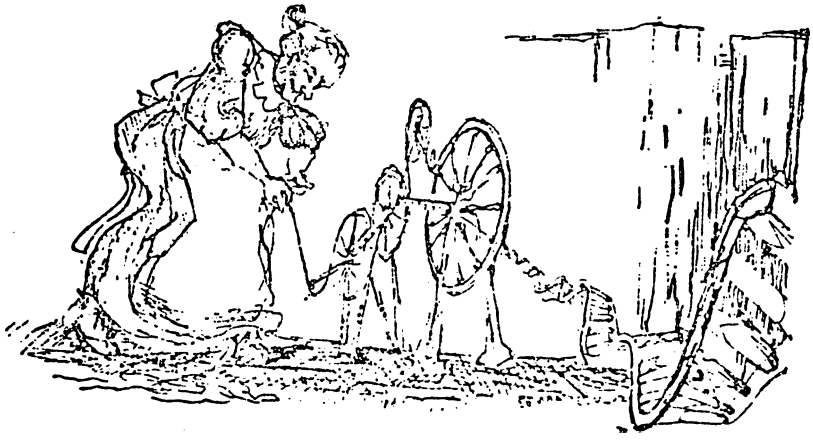
There's quite a lot of filth and rot;
The people never wash.
For the most part it looks like the art
Of Hieronymous Bosch.

Special effects are not complex --
Some matted-in spires,
A decent beast, that is at least
When you don't see the wires.

Set in the past, they have a cast
In realistic apparel.
Still with that touch, there's still not much
Left of the original Carroll.

There was some wit; I do admit
That some scenes made me laugh.
But still it's not so very hot;
Rate it 2-1/2." [on a 1 to 4 scale]

Reviewed by *Mark R. Leeper*



ORCA (©) THE SAKE OF THE MINDGE
© 95 SAMUS TRASH
FROM V. McTIMKE'S SUPERLUMINAL

Who was

HUGO GERNSBACK?

AN EDITORIAL BY EVELYN C. LEEPER

Every year the World Science Fiction Convention members give out the "Hugos," awards named after Hugo Gernsback. But what did Gernsback do to deserve this honor, and the respect that he is given in the science fiction community?

He didn't invent science fiction. Whether you want toclaim that science fiction was invented by Jonathan Swift (or even earlier) or are one of those who dates (modern) science fiction from Shelley, Verne, and Wells, you have to admit that Gernsback did not invent it. He didn't even write much of it -- his one surviving work is Ralph 24c41+ -- and a pretty bad novel it is. He didn't seek out and promote the best authors -- Wells and Stapledon were not regular contributors to AMAZING. What he did do was to give science fiction its own name -- and its own ghetto. Far from performing a service for the genre, he acted in such a way that it has taken almost fifty years to even attempt to recover from the damage he did.

Before AMAZING STORIES, science fiction was published in mainstream magazines. After AMAZING STORIES, science fiction was published in science fiction magazines. Before AMAZING STORIES, authors could expect a good novel to be reviewed by the press, sell well, and be read by a lot of people. After AMAZING STORIES, authors could expect a good novel to be reviewed by the press, sell well, and be read by a lot of people -- unless it was science fiction, in which case it wouldn't be reviewed (except in science fiction magazines), sell just about the same number of copies as any other science fiction novel, and be read by just about the same number of people as any other science fiction novel. The phenomenon of "it's not science fiction because it's good" got started here; science fiction books were not reviewed by major reviewers.

At last we seem to be escaping from this trap. What prompted me to write this editorial was the number of "cross-over" books that are being reviewed in both the science fiction markets and the mainstream markets. Authors like Isaac Asimov, Arthur Clarke, and Robert Heinlein you might expect to find on the best-seller lists and reviewed in the NEW YORK TIMES REVIEW OF BOOKS, but Anne McCaffrey and Philip Jose Farmer?

The "horror novel" was exempt from Gernsback's scope, and so (until a few years ago) horror novels were kept in the fiction section of the bookstore, not in the special section next to "science fiction" and "juveniles." With the Stephen King phenomenon, and what seems like every author coming out with a horror novel, some (but only some) stores have set up separate sections for horror novels, but even this seems to be going away. Not with the science fiction section, though -- Waldenbooks is even giving it its own club.

The result is that everyone loses. The authors whose books are classified as science fiction sell less (which is why so many "science fiction" authors have renounced the field). The readers who prefer science fiction tend to do all their browsing in that section and miss the good novels filed in the fiction (which may or may not be science fiction anyway). Authors you might have missed by not checking the fiction section include Russell Hoban (Pilgermann), Virginia Woolf (Orlando: A Biography), and Doris Lessing (Shikasta). Other authors of the fantastic not to be found in the science fiction section include Jorge Luis Borges and Robertson Davies.

Given all the trouble that he's caused, why do people venerate Hugo Gernsback?

A

COUNTER-EDITORIAL

BY

MARK R. LEEPER

Evelyn's editorial suggesting that Hugo Gernsback has had a negative effect on the field of science fiction deserves comment. In the guise of the "loyal opposition" I would like to disagree. Her argument is two-fold. First, it is that he was an incompetent writer and second, that by creating separate science fiction magazines, he pulled science fiction out of the mainstream and made it a separate genre that the critics could ignore.

On the first charge I have to admit that Evelyn is right, but Gernsback is guilty with mitigating circumstances. People like Wells and Verne were writing for a fiction-reading audience and were putting new twists on fiction writing when they wrote what we call science fiction. Gernsback was a science writer. He started with science articles about the present, went on to scientific speculation about the future, and then as a twist on that he started putting characters in, and writing his articles as stories. He was writing the literary equivalent of a World's Fair exhibit showing the world of the future. These exhibits, incidentally, often create a fictional character, usually called Jimmy, and take Jimmy through a typical day. One gets to the end of such an exhibit with some dubious idea of what the future may be like, but rarely does he or she get any earth-shaking insights into Jimmy's psyche.

What Gernsback discovered was that just like there are long lines outside World's Fair future exhibits, there was a demand for his future fiction. Now at this time there were maybe two or three novels written in a year about the future. Maybe one in six was any good, so every couple of years there would be a competently written book that we would consider a science fiction novel. Critics noticed this one book every couple of years and called it to the attention of their readers, many of whom had some interest in the fantastic.

Gernsback recognized this interest and started devoting a separate magazine to it. Readers brought writers; writers brought more readers. Suddenly readers no longer needed the critics to point out where fantastic literature was -- it was right there on the magazine shelf. Critics continued to point out literature their readers might miss, but it was not science fiction because that was not hard to find. Also, the percentage of hack writers had increased with a proven demand for science fiction. They tended to give the field a bad name. Soon every science fiction magazine had its own critics reviewing science fiction and telling which were the good. There was no need for mainstream critics to discuss science fiction at all.

Now what gave science fiction a bad name were the hack writers and the demand for even hack science fiction. There was a real market for bug-eyed monster stories in magazines with bug-eyed monsters on the cover. Through all this the critics disdained the bad stuff and enjoyed the good, but there was little need to review the good because people who liked the fantasic had very apparent ways of find the better writing. In the fifties, celebrities, including prominent critics, would show up on the back cover of F&SF extolling the virtues of science fiction.

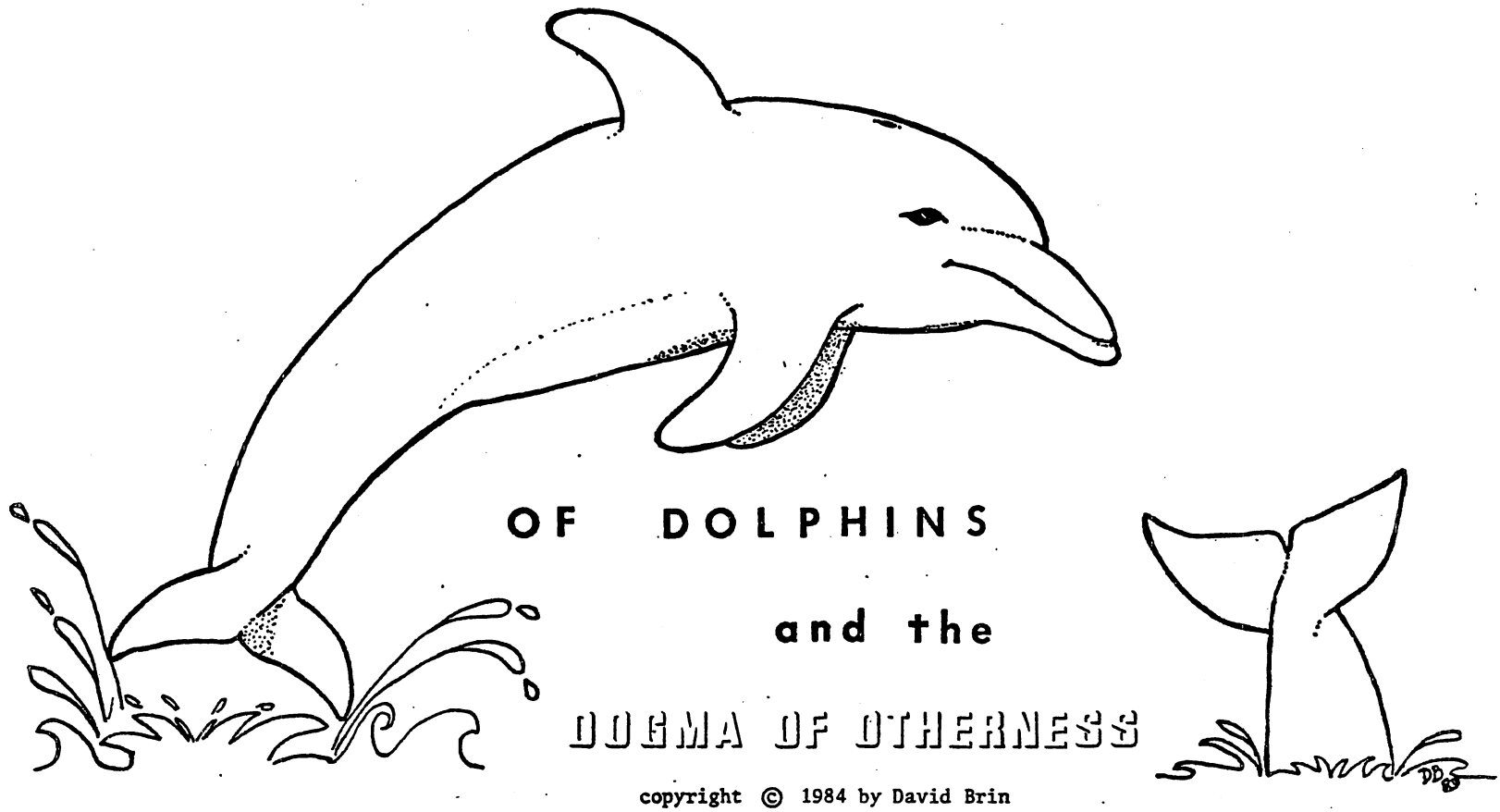
Most high school English teachers were not well-read in science fiction and, having seen newsstands, were painfully aware that much cf science fiction was bad, backed away from letting students read it for school. Now the readership of science fiction is expanding as never before. Baby-boom children who grew up on Captain Video or Captain Kirk make up a large proportion of the reading public. That means that science fiction is now creeping onto the bestseller lists. Further, there are people who do not read the science-fiction-only critics who are also getting interested in the field, so mainstream critics are reviewing science fiction for them.

All this might or might not have happened without Gernsback's help. He was just someone who saw a demand and made some money filling it. But be creating a dependable source of his "scientific fiction" -- a magazine that showed up down at the corner drugstore once a month -- he brought together the people who wanted to read science fiction and the people who wanted to write it. Once that happened, both the success of the genre and the ghetto were inevitable. The former is what Gernsback is gratefully remembered for. The latter was a temporary minor inconvenience resulting from the formation of the genre. The formation of the ghetto could have been avoided only if the supply of science fiction had remained very small. And that is too high a price to pay for a few pats on the back from mainstream critics.

To blame Gernsback for the formation of the science fiction ghetto is like blaming Henry Ford for our country's dependence on petroleum. All this convinces the writing critic that there is enough interest in science fiction that their readers will want to read about the field.

DAVID BRIN

The Guest of Honor Speech from CONCLAVE IX



OF DOLPHINS and the DOGMA OF OTHERNESS

The "panels" at science fiction conventions are an amazing phenomenon. These chautaqua seminars seem to range from catastrophically boring all the way to sheer fascination. Sometimes I'm alone before the audience, sometimes I share the podium with some amazing people. But always there follows a period called "Question Time," when some of the panelists leave and a few, like me, stay to field any pop flies the audience cares to crack at us. I want to use these encounters as a springboard for some thoughts that have been cooking in my head for a while.

Pretty often, during the last year, somebody steps up to compliment me on my novel Startide Rising -- especially my treatment of the dolphin characters. They tell me what a fine, empathic, humane fellow I must be in order to get into the wonderful creatures' heads so believably.

Then, after that fulsome prefatory remark, the person inevitably asks what I think of porpoise intelligence here and now in the "real" world.

It really is predictable. After all, everybody loves a dolphin. We have to. There is something compellingly appealling about a species that so obviously (for lord knows what reason) likes us. (And all the evidence seems to indicate that dolphins like us quite a lot.)

People want to know more about them. How much progress, they ask, has been made in teaching dolphins to speak our language? Or have researchers yet learned to talk to them in theirs?

The questions are filled with so many implicit assumptions. I won't say that I hated to disappoint them, since I've always been the sort who likes to see what happened when you lift the lid off of a beehive and tap it lightly. Still, I sort of regret having to give them my answer.

"I'm afraid real dolphins aren't all that smart. Those folk stories about high cetacean intelligence, including language skill as or above our level, are just stories. It's a shame, but it's true."

This is not how a lecturer remains popular, perhaps. And not once has the reaction from the audience varied. In every single case someone leaps to his or her feet to challenge.

"But you can't know that!"

A mutter of agreement shows that this is the general opinion of the crowd.

"Well," I reply, "University of Hawaii Professor Luis Herman's work with the deepwater species Stenos Bredanensis --widely recognized as one of the brightest breeds-- has proven that the higher dolphins are indeed quite sharp. They can parse four-, and even five-, element semantic signals at least as well as those widely publicized studies claim chimpanzees can manage with sign-language. Also, dolphins seem to be far more even-tempered and more interested partners in the experiments.

"But even if they are as close to us in intelligence as any member of the animal kingdom, the basic problem-solving skills of even the brightest porpoise barely match those of a human toddler. I am sorry to say this, but if we want other minds to talk to, we're going to

have to look elsewhere...or construct them ourselves.

"I'm afraid that right now dolphins just aren't smart enough."

I say it with great sincerity. But, of course, the argument doesn't stop there!

"There may be other ways of dealing with the world intelligently than those we imagine!" somebody protests. Another person joins in. "Those tests the dolphins had to solve were designed by human beings, and may miss the whole point of cetacean thought! In their environment they're probably as smart as we are in ours!"

Now how do you answer statements like that? Do you describe how it sounds to listen to long tapes of dolphin "speech", transposed in order to compensate for frequency differences? The sounds are complex all right, but highly repetitive and clearly filled with emotional, not discoursive, information.

They would have to listen for themselves. And even then it would be a matter of opinion.

I could explain about how some of the experimental problems that had been used were so fundamental, so simple, that even differences between aquatic and terrestrial modes could never explain the differences.

But that statement, too, could be disputed, I found.

The same would apply to all of the other proofs which had led me away from my own strong optimism that it was only a matter of time until we found a way to understand the speech of the cetacean, and so broaden our horizons. They would insist that there might be other varieties of intelligence that went beyond our most careful and imaginative efforts to comprehend.

This had been going on at several of these seminars, until finally came the day that I gave up arguing.

"You know," I said, a little exasperated, "I have had the same, identical reaction from every single group of non-scientists I've talked to about this. I've spent a fair amount of time wondering what it means. Now I think I've finally figured it out."

They look at me, puzzled. I explain.

"Anthropologists tell us that every culture has its fundamental beliefs or commonly shared assumptions -- called dogmas -- that each individual in the tribe or community will maintain vigorously, almost without thinking, like a reflex.

"But I think contemporary North American culture is the first one in which a major reflex dogma is that there can be no dogmas!"

Blank looks. I shrug and continue.

"Look at how you all leapt to refute me, not with facts, of course, since I'm the supposed "expert" here, but with the assertation that any expert can be wrong!

"Oh, his observations may be correct, you react, but no matter what his credentials, no expert can know all the answers!"

This was a bit of a revelation to me, even as I said it. It was coming out as it occured to me.

"The dogma of the more enlightened American who attends this sort of chautauqua is that 'there is always another way of looking at things.' And this is particularly true when some expert tries to make statements about other peoples or, especially, species."

"Yeah?" one of the fellows up front says. "Well isn't that true? There is always another way!"

I have to shrug. "I was brought up in this culture, so I share your dogma of otherness ..." I roll the phrase over on my tongue.

"The Dogma of Otherness," I pronounce, raising a finger perhaps a little pontifically, "insists that all voices deserve a hearing, that all points of view might have something of value to offer. Having been raised in it myself, I believe it as fully as you do. Witness how reluctant I was to finally admit what all of the evidence told me about dolphin intelligence.

"But think, for a moment, how unique this is...how unusual this cultural mind-set has to be! Throughout history nearly every human society has worked hard to ingrain into its children the assumption that there was only one way to do things -- their way!

"Oh we still get a lot of that here, as well. It's probably automatic when you mess around with flags and nations and tribal stuff like that. But where, and when, else has the dogma included such a powerful indoctrination to defend otherness?"

A lady in the fron row speaks up.

"That's awfully culturally chauvinistic, wouldn't you say?" There are agreeing nods all around the room. "I mean what's so special about our culture? We're no better than, say, Asian civili..."

"You're doing it again!" I cry, this time delighted. I can hardly sit still.

This time, several members of the audience blink for a moment, thinking. And then a few faintly smile.

"But..." the lady tries to continue but I'm too excited. I'm afraid I interrupt her.

"Look, it may be true that there's something to be learned from all points of view. But might it also be true that that's just the bias our heterogeneous, melting-pot culture has imposed on us in order that we can live in some degree of peace together? Those of you who have read history, think how strange this Doctrine of Otherness would seem to an ancient Roman, or to the Chinese, who thought the world revolved around Peiping, or to Tudor England, or to most of the peoples of the world today!

"Now think carefully. You do insist that all points of view have some merit, right?"

"Right!" the young woman answers firmly, with her jaw set.

"And your insistence could be called a declaration of faith in a 'Doctrine of Otherness,' right?"

"Yes, I guess so. But..."

"And you'll agree that as a truly pervasive set of assumptions this Doctrine is pretty much a liberal North American, or at least a very recent western, phenomenon, won't you?"

"Well..." She doesn't want to admit it. But after a moment's thought she finally nods. "Okay, so there are other ways of looking at things. We have a so-called Doctrine of Otherness, as you say. So what? Other people have their own cultural assumptions, of equal value."

"But," I smile, "by saying that you are stating that those other points of view are wrong! By the very act of claiming all points of view have merit, you are insisting that your cultural dogma --this "Doctrine of Otherness"-- is the best! You're a cultural chauvinist!"

She doesn't like this. Her mouth opens and closes a few times. Finally she frowns and scratches her head.

A man on the left raises his hand, and then slowly lowers it again.

From the back, a voice calls.

"But that's a tautology...or a paradox...I forget which. It's like when I say--"This sentence is a lie." You've got her trapped either way she goes!"

I shrug. "So nu? When are deep-seated cultural assumptions ever fair? They're adaptations a society makes in order to survive...in our case they're circumstances dictated by being a nation of immigrants. They don't have to be entirely logical, so long as they work.

"But one thing strikes me at once. Perhaps, by the logic we've worked out, we ought to be pretty proud of America, or at least California, for being the prime promulgator of a dogma of difference and choice..."

Ooh. They react quickly!

"But that doesn't make us better than anybody else!" an elderly lady remarks vehemently. "It's no great shakes to measure your own culture by your culture's standards, and come out with the answer that you're okay! We worship diversity, so by that token we see our worship of diversity is virtuous..."

"THAT is a tautology," I point out. Fortunately, she ignores the interruption.

"...but that doesn't mean that our culture doesn't come up lacking by some OTHER set of standards!" she insists.

I shrug. "You're doing it again." I sigh.

This time a few members of the audience laugh. The speaker glares for a moment, then, seeing the humor, she slowly smiles.

"Okay," she says. "So I'm a product of my culture. But that doesn't necessarily mean I'm right. I mean it doesn't necessarily mean I'm wrong!... I mean..."

She stops, shakes her head, and laughs. The others join in, and the anger is defused. But I find, after the crowd has dispersed, that I can't stop thinking about this strange Dogma of Otherness.

Look around and you'll see it everywhere, behind almost every "liberal" idea or movement and a hell of a lot of ideas that aren't so liberal at all. It's been a major force in the Twentieth Century, and so strongly assumed in certain quarters that it lacked even a name.

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Perhaps it began with Copernicus, when the Earth was permanently exiled from the center of the Universe, replaced by the sun.

If this were so, the thinking process had to go: why then Europe (or China, or Arabia) could not be the center of creation, either. The implications have been profound. People who accepted the new astronomy also had to adjust to the idea that what their senses told them every day was untrue...that the world did not revolve around them alone.

As the centuries passed, this Copernican "Principle of Mediocrity" became stronger and stronger in the physical sciences. In astronomy, in particular, we found that the sun was really a rather mundane star, in a not unusual galaxy among billions of other galaxies. Now we find that the Milky Way's spiral arms teem with the very chemicals of life, implying that our home, the Earth, truly is a pretty mediocre place.

And mankind's place in the four billion year history of the planet is brief enough to be, as well, a lesson in humility.

Meanwhile, relativity tells us that there is no absolute frame of reference; and Godel and quantum mechanics have teamed up to finally tear down Hegel's mad dream of certainty. Truth --it has been proven mathematically-- is relative, and a little slippery when you look up close.

So perhaps it was modernity, as well as the sociological needs of a melting-pot nation, that caused us to develop the Dogma of Otherness. If there's nothing so special about our own place and time, maybe there's nothing particularly special about our own selves, and the points of view we happen to hold.

Nor, perhaps, is there even anything all that special about being human!

(Until a hundred years ago, children's stories very seldom featured sympathetic animal characters. In 1907 the "Teddy Bear" was criticized as "likely to warp the mothering instincts of young girls." Now sympathy with other creatures is inculcated at an early age, with wise owls, cuddly pandas, and friendly little aliens.)

The Principle of Mediocrity has not only vitalized science, it's given us the ability to re-examine centuries of prejudice, and shake off old tribal taboos with hardly a wince. In spite of the new horrors that madmen can perpetrate when their clutches fall upon modern technology, we have made progress. It's a more mellow world we live in today.

Still, philosophies, even philosophies that do good, can outlive their vigor. What Copernicus began need not continue forever.

There is a new principle making the rounds these days--called the "Anthropic Imperative." Its most vigorous proponents, including Professor Frank Tipler of Tulane University, seem to be saying that we have gone too far in claiming that there is nothing special at all about the time or place in which we live.

Simply stated, the Anthropic Principle says that it is quite possible for an observer's time and place to be unique, if the unique factor is necessary in order for there to be an observer in the first place!

Irredentist on a universal scale, bucking the popular enthusiasm for the search for "extra-terrestrials," Tipler and a few others dare to propose that it is quite possible that Mankind may be the sole intelligent species in the galaxy, perhaps anywhere, anytime.

We can't go into their arguments here. I discuss them (and the counter-reasoning) elsewhere. But this is just one edge of what seems to be a new philosophical movement -- one that does not seem to threaten the Dogma of Otherness so much as threaten it with change.

Old Philosophies

There were essentially three major views of Man in Nature which contended with each other in Western thought a century and a half ago. Traditional Christian, Mechanistic, and Romantic.

The traditional Christian point of view was that nature was placed here for the use of man, and that the world was meant for short-duration use anyway. The wilderness was a cruel parody of the Garden of Eden, a travesty to be fought and tamed. Other creatures were separate from man in the fundamental sense of lacking souls.

As Matt Cartmill puts it, man "saw nature as sick, and man as inherently above nature -- that is, supernatural."

The Mechanistic view, a reaction to the one above, grew out of the Enlightenment. The universe, as the emerging sciences and particularly mathematics unfolded its mysteries, was seen as a majestic clockwork...with mankind merely a complicated little subset of parts, spinning in unseen harmony with the rest, under the apparent chaos of daily life.

This was a tremendous step toward Otherness, a direct outgrowth of the Principle of Mediocrity. But it, too, had its day and then saw the creation of a counterreaction.

The Romantic movement answered the Age of Reason with emotion, logic with Sturm und Drang. With Rousseau's extolling of the natural, and condemnation of civilization as the essence of corruption, the suite was complete. Man can only dream of rising to a return to harmony with the natural world. He can best do this by abandoning an arogant insistence on his own difference.

All subsequent attitudes towards the natural world, and other species, have sprung either from one of these basic outlooks, or from a hybrid of borrowings from two or even all three at once.

Both the traditional and the mechanistic views contributed to our culture...the first by orienting us toward the future, and toward taking command of our world. The mechanists taught us to appreciate that world's delicate, beautiful balance. And about the romantic view, Cartmill said that

> "...a prevalent vision of man as a sick animal estranged from the harmony of nature conditioned new scientific theories and lent them the mythic force and consequence that they needed to be widely accepted."

Ducks That Rape

But the Twenty-First Century looms. Taken by themselves, each of the philosophies discussed above appears ludicrous to a modern man or woman. Might it, perhaps, be time to craft a new view of nature and our place in it?

The Doctrine of Otherness has been backed by powerful propaganda over the last several decades. In particular, the animals have been getting awfully good press.

"Man is the only animal (take your choice)
... murders its own kind
... kills its children
... kills for sport
... commits sexual assault
... wages war
... destroys the environment..."

A generation has grown up being told these things over and over. And in having humility and shame pounded into us, over and over, we have begun, indeed, to look upon ourselves differently. It isn't just because of Teddy Bears that we now treat the other creatures around us with more respect. It is also because we have had it driven home again and again that we had better shape up if we ever expect to live up to a standard of decency.

But whose standard?

Why our own, of course. And here's where that paradox comes in, again. Species have ALWAYS gone extinct. That is how evolution works. The shame comes in when WE see nature's creations as beautiful, and when WE feel shame over wiping out something as unique and unreplicable as a blue whale, or a manatee, or a dodo.

No question where I stand in all this. I think environmentalism is Good. That's with a capital G. Not only am I a thoroughly acultured member of my generation--fully innoculated with guilt feelings over mankind's crimes --but I'm beginning to see, along with millions of others, that keeping up a complex ecosystem is the best way of insuring our own long-range survival.

This view of Man the Destroyer...a beast within ourselves who must be constantly watched...may be the very fairy tale needed to frighten us into our senses. Cartmill puts it aptly.

> "There is no way to tell for sure whether this mythmaking has contributed to our survival thus far. I suspect it has. I doubt that the world would have ended if Muir or Twain or Freud or Jeffers had never lived. Other visionaries would have come up... But I think it might perhaps have ended by now if we hadn't learned to be afraid of ourselves long before that fear was entirely reason-reasonable."

The propaganda we grew up with was a Good Thing, no question about it. It appears to have saved the otter, the dolphin, the gorilla, and perhaps the whales. Maybe even ourselves.

But is it true?

Bad-mouthing mankind has been important drama. But once we are in the habit of protecting nature for its own sake, do we have to keep it up?

Now I want everyone who is not already a committed environmentalist to close their ears before I go on...

Is it only "us" here, now? Good. Now let's have the truth.

It's all a big fat lot of hype. Nice hype, but hype nonetheless. All over the natural world are an almost infinite variety of animals that (take your choice)
... murder their own kind
... kill their children
... kill for sport
... commit rape
... wage war
... destroy the environment...

Et cetera, et cetera. Day by day we are finding that the line dividing us from the animal world blurs, becoming one of magnitude, not quality.

Apes use tools in the wild, and can be taught sign language. They are also prone to simpler versions of every type of human mental illness.

Male lions will kill the cubs of their predecessors, after winning cunning "wars" of eviction.

Stallions will deliberately kill each other.

Historically, a large part of the deforestation of the Middle East seems to have been performed not just by man, but by goats as well. Elephants devastate the African Savannah.

Mallard ducks have been observed to commit "gang-rape" on mated females. The behavior is common among birds.

Even dolphins, almost alone with mankind in being capable of altruism outside of their species --of helping others no matter how different-- have also been observed murdering their own kind.

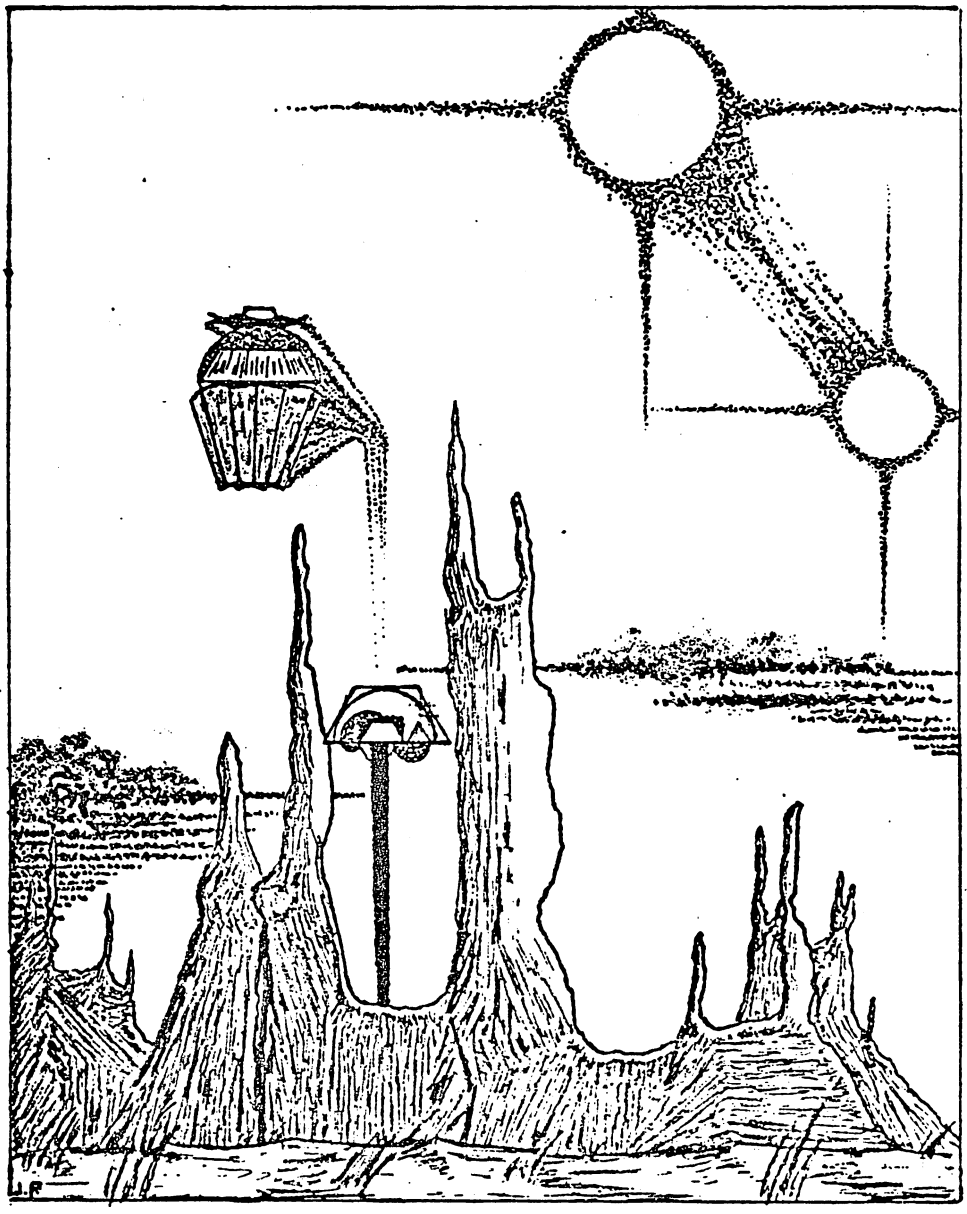
The nineteenth century worldviews lie in shambles around us. Only a traditionalist fool would say that man is the "paragon of animals" and nature our playpen. Only a pollyanna would contend that the clockwork spins majestically on, in harmony, whatever we do.

And it is romantic nonsense to say that we are a pimple on Creation...that the world would be somehow better off without us.

We should not stop pumping out the nature films, and the "humility propaganda", for there is still a world out there stuck in phases one and two. But for those of us who have passed through the Doctrine of Otherness, it might be time to move on.

Perhaps to the attitude of an Elder Brother -- only a little more knowledgeable than his fellow creatures, but with the power and the responsibility to be their guardian. In time, if we do well with the garden, we might even have reason to pause and give ourselves a little bit of credit...to look as a species in the mirror and see neither Lord of Creation, nor Worldbane, but merely the first of many on the world to rise to the job of Caretaker.

Note that this is not the actual speech David delivered at CONCLAVE IX, but the written draft from which he was working. *Lan*



JOE AND I AND THE USSR

by Clifton Amsbury

In the August 1983 ANALOG, Joe Haldeman has an account of his experience of the USSR and Soviet Publishing. Essentially the same essay introduces Nebula Award Stories Seventeen. The best account of our trip is by Art Widner in his FAPAzine, YHOS. I don't know if he has any copies left. I also wrote up a few things Art missed, but Joe introduces a whole new dimension. We went as fen; he's a pro.

Joe has some insight into the humanness of the people we met, but he perceived the differences between the publishers there and here, while some of us fen saw the deep similarities. He also says that coming home (on Finnair) he felt safe for the first time in two weeks. To me it was just the opposite. Who is really safe on the streets here, especially after dark?

I was "safe" in Madrid in 1978, with glaring lights and with crowds and with guards all over the place. But in 1982 in Kiev and Leningrad there were no great crowds, no more light than here, and no "militia" (civil police) or soldiers anywhere, but the people were friendly and good at sign language and we (I and those with me) felt safe. It reminded me of Berkely before the Cold War.

Joe speaks of having been exposed to "the rhetoric of Stalin,". but what he had been exposed to was what he read in American books and newspapers. He mentions the Russian machine guns in Vietnam. My experience was different. Fighting against the Fascist conquest of Spain I was very happy to have a Russian Maxim and a belt or two of bullets for it. And if Joe had shown me his scar I would have shown him mine from a strafing Fiat, and would have expressed my outrage, not at those who sent arms to the Vietnamese, but those who sent Joe there -- those who played in Vietnam and Chile, and now in Central America, the role which Germany and Italy played in Spain.

So how do we understand the Soviets in terms of our own history? The first question is: when was our revolution against absolute monarchy?

It was in England over three hundred years ago. Russia's was 66 years ago. From whom did Stalin learn to run a state? From tsarist police and the Black Hundreds, which were the prototypes of Fascist stormtroopers.

Kruschev, building on a base laid by Stalin, fixed things so that there would never be another Stalin, but the Soviets today are in many ways more like England under Cromwell than like the US under Gerald Ford. That answers a lot of questions, but let's take some more specifically.

Joe recognizes that here also we have to submit to publisher's choice. He probably knows that as concentration of control narrows, we have less and less freedom for writers. If he wanted to buck the censorship of those who pay well for what they want, he might find publication, but he wouldn't be paid anywhere as well. As anywhere, it is not "the state", but the stomach, which compels one to "take a useful job."

In fiction, the ideal here is "no ideological content." In practice that means "the same as the publisher's." So the publisher picks an editor whose "taste" (ideology) he approves and the problem is solved. There are fewer and fewer publishers and hence less variation or leeway in ideology. If Joe doesn't chafe under that, it just means that they approve of what comes naturally to him.

And after all, that's the best way.

As to his reference to "review by committee"; in scientific publishing I'm so used to "peer review" and "refereed journals", that between irritations I rarely think of it.

Just as scientific peers and magazine publishers often base their judgments on ideology rather than other merit, the Soviet Communist Party is specifically charged with moral (ideological) education and development of the Soviet People. Remember, their revolution was only 66 years ago. Some of the things they object to which make writing "not nice" include racism, agressive warfare, advocating exploitive social systems, pornography, violence simply for excitement, and specific attacks on or distortions of socialism as they see it. In the early United States, each state might have an established church. The established churches had the role of moral (ideological) guidance. After 1870 it was realized that the XIV Amendment ("equal protection of all the laws") applied the first amendment (no established church) to all the states. That amendment was passed 90 years after our own revolution and 200 years after the English Commonwealth established the "rights of Englishmen" for which our ancestors (mine, anyway) were fighting. The XIV Amendment was not passed with religious liberty in mind.

And even now would-be church establishments still have power in some places to ban books (and burn them), to block ERA and other things, and even control elections.

Yes, history is powerful.

Joe protests that there are "no left-handers" in the schools. When I went to school, and in some schools here today, you'd better not try to be left-handed. Revolutions are not instant affairs.

Joe and I are very sloppy dressers. But I had learned that the Soviets, or at least the Russians, have a concept of nie-culturny, which means "not cultured" or ill-bred, much like the Spanish malcriado. And they think that if you're not actually doing a dirty job, don't wear dirty or sloppy clothes. Customs gave Joe a bad time. I dressed up and was never told to open my bags going or coming. Well, no, that's not true. Coming back through Seattle...

Conreports...

Wapakon: Because of the cost to get to California and stay there for the Worldcon, a group of us poor fen got together for a party on Labor Day weekend in Wapakaneta, Ohio, and had a party. Gay Haldeman directed Niel Rest to give us a call to inform us of the Hugo winners. A cheer went up as David Brin's and Timothy Zahn's names were heard (obviously local favorites, mine too).

Octocon: Still in Sandusky but at a new hotel, OCTOCON remains one of my favorite pure relaxacons. Lounging in the jacuzzi, swimming with Becca Levin, talking with Carol Forste, eating dinner with Brad Westervelt, conversing with Mike Resnick and bunches of other fans, and seeing Sara Eaves-Spiegel for the first time (although I assiduously avoided contact with her) were among the highlights.

Conclave: Meeting, talking with, interviewing and just experiencing David Brin topped anything else that happened (although celebrating Dorothy (Dotti) Bedard-Stefl's 16th birthday was a high point).

Chambanacon: Once again being with Tim, Anna and Corwin (my he's getting big!) Zahn, having dinner with them, seeing Tim's Hugo and his gift from CONTACT (his first GoH-ship,) and talking about a variety of things was one of four high points of the con. The second was seeing our friends Chris and Pat Swartout, our best people from our wedding, who moved to Champaign last June. The third was having lunch with Sam, Mary and David Long on Sunday afternoon. The fourth high point was getting together with Paula Robinson and discussing books and writing.

Windycon: Maia and I shared a room with Brad Westervelt and Wendy Council, and we again saw David Brin who was a special guest. We also saw Barry Longyear, another special guest, who unfortunately got ill on Saturday morning and stayed in his room the rest of the convention. Seeing Bill and Alexia again, talking with Phyllis Eisenstein, Mike Resnick, and Roland Green, his wife Freida Murray and daughter Violet (who was fascinated with my beard), and shopping in Woodlfield Mall were among the other highlights. I had a short but interesting conversation with Alan Dean Foster, the GoH, and one with Jack and Blanche Williamson. This would be the last time I would talk to Blanche before her death. There was also the closing of the consuite early Friday night because the pop dispensing machine was leaking (all the way from 5th floor to the basement), and the false fire alarm which made the convention rather unique.

MAD Christmas Party: Mike and Doris held their annual Christmas Party in Toronto and Maia and I went, regardless of what else went on that weekend. It was fun, relaxing, and something I needed. I enjoyed every minute of it. We saw Romancing the Stone on videotape, then walked a few blocks to the Runnymede Theatre to see 2010.

Confusion: With Mike Resnick I discussed some points of his soon-to-be-published novel Santiago, and had dinner with Alan Dean Foster, the GoH, who told us about his trip to Africa. I fell in love with Julia Ecklar who up until this con was to me just a name and filker with a pretty good voice (I had heard her sing at Naomi Konoff's wedding, which really didn't show off her talent). One surprise was seeing Ruth Woodring, whom we thought was not able to make it to the convention, and her meeting with Bruce Schneier through which they discovered that they liked each other. Seeing Laurie Mann, talking with Susan Peel, and the big Dress-up Dinner Party, which has become a tradition, topped off the con.

The Seminar: Although not SFal related, it sure felt something like a con. This was a seminar for experienced teachers to attend and find renewal. There were four of us from Kingswood School who, in my opinion, were all among the BEST teachers here. We met with teachers from all over the Midwest, and some of them knew fans I knew. Said one person from Chicago: "There's a couple who support our school and are involved in a science fiction group. Do you know the Passavoy's?" The main difference between this seminar and a con was that most people went to bed between 10 and 11. I found no one awake after midnight.

Inconclusive: Again, seeing and talking with Mike Resnick was delightful. I passed out copies of the Norton Issue of LL, and Carol Yoder beamed at seeing her name in print. Spending a little time with Mick Hamblin and seeing Nancy Tucker as "The Broad of Avon" selling perfume and such rounded off the con.

Nova: I got to know Ted Reynolds a bit better, and he (unknowingly) sparked an idea for a story. I also talked with Sylvus Tarn about some art ideas for this issue.

Contraption: I renewed my acquaintance with GoH Orson Scott Card, spent hours talking to him and had dinner with him, Maia and Tara Edwards on Saturday evening. Scott's GoH Speech was in the style of an old rivival meeting (with recognizable parables cast into SF and Fantasy forms). It was marvelous! I found out more about Julia Ecklar, the fan GoH, and enjoyed her performance in "Spock Pacific", a spoof of Star Trek III. I also had a good long talk with Ann Cecil.

Weddings: Ruth Woodring married Tiomoid of Angle Bloomington, Indiana, and Michelle Fisher married John Donat in Chicago, Illinois, two weeks apart. We attended both. An added bonus was talking to Phyllis Eisenstein and John Varley at Michelle's wedding (and seeing so many fans in ties whom I had never thought would be caught dead in one). Ruth's brother's apartment, where her wedding was held, had to be seen to be believed. I don't ever remember seeing walls that color (and a white carpet in front of the fireplace). And she was upstaged by a cat!

On the way home from Michelle's and John's wedding we stopped to see Meg Stull in Dowagiac, Michigan, and ended up taking Vicky Eaves and her daughter Sarah home. Vicky was also at the wedding, but had left Sarah with her grandmother in Niles, Michigan. The swing up to Williamston then back down to Bloomfield Hills wasn't bad at all.

Mikecon: The annual Michaels Glicksohn and Harper birthday party went off well, except for the rain on Sunday. Joe and Gay Haldeman were there with Rusty, and Sue Levy brought her sister Ellen (whom we've been trying to get to come to cons--she's a fun, interesting person). Brad and Wendy were also there. The big trip was to the Toronto Zoo, which is the best one that I've been to. It is an amazing place. Aside from Ellen, two other interesting new people met were Peter Roberts and Heather Ashby.

Ad Astra: Once again we went because David Brin was the GoH, and he was marvelous. I wrote the program book bio for him, Maia was on four panels, and I got to meet Vonda N. McIntyre, although Maia spent more time with her than did I (she interviewed Vonda as one of her panels). She is a neat lady, but I didn't get to talk to her much. We stayed with Mike and Doris who are always a pleasure to see and be with.

Midwestcon: There were some people here whom we had not expected to see, and some whom we had expected to see didn't show up. The con was fun. I had several long and interesting conversations with Heather Ashby, Paula Robinson, Marie Miesel and Wendy Council. Other highlighted conversations included Mike Resnick, Mike Lallor, Jack Steele, Jim and Laurie Mann, Ruth Woodring, Mike Wallis, Dierdre and Jim Rittenhouse, Betty Gaines, Michael Banks and Bruce Schneier.

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The year went both slowly and quickly. Looking back on it, I find that it really did go fast, but the day-to-day existence and suffering made the time interminably long. The actual teaching in the classroom was the best part, as I expected it would be. I am a teacher and I enjoy the time in the classroom.

However, as most of you know, there was this little job called the Service Program that I had to take care of. Every day student is supposed to perform some service to the school once during the six-day cycle. They do things like vacuum floors, wash boards, sweep the dining hall, wipe off lunch tables, and so on. My job was to assign duties and make sure they were carried out, and conduct make-up sessions when kids skipped.

In the second semester, I had cut back my own supervisory sessions to nine during the school day (from 35). Since almost every one of my free periods during the cycle was taken up with conducting a clean-up assignment, I had little time to meet with students for extra help. I thought that was ridiculous for a teacher, so I made some students (mostly seniors) supervisors which turned out to be a mistake, since many were as irresponsible as a lot of the kids.

By the end of the year, I had some kids owing me up to 7 hours of make-up, and some seniors were in danger of not graduating. Some students played cat-and-mouse with me during the year and eventually it caught up with them, though I wish I could have handed out a worse punishment than just Citizenship Probation. The net result is that I trust very few kids now, and that will carry into the classroom next year.

And speaking of next year, I will be continuing the Service Program for one, and only one, semester. This is to help with the transition from this school year where the two schools, Kingswood and Cranbrook, have been pretty much autonomous, to one merged school. I am doing this as a favor to the head of the upper schools, Joe Merluzzi, though I would really rather not.

Additional changes are happening as a result of this merger. I am leaving behind the classroom I have taught in for the past 9 years and moving over to the Cranbrook Campus with the rest of the Math Department. The new school is being oraganized along departmental lines. I don't know what the effect will be on the faculty and students, but not too many people are optimistic.

I am not optimistic. I am hoping that someone on the board will wake up to the fact that many of the better teachers have been leaving this year, mostly because of their decisions as to administrators, and certain policies. The school has become top-heavy in administrators, and the kids seem to be lost in the shuffle. Recommendations made by some of the committees have been ingored. I recommended that the Service Program be dropped and a regular maintenance crew come in to clean, but that was vetoed. The new Service Program will have two teachers on each campus supervising the overall structure, and two student volunteers helping. It wasn't until early July that I found out I would be having some help. Until that point, no one else had volunteered.

I am giving the place two more years, and if things do not improve, I will be looking elsewhere. In the last two years the Board and the Administration have taken a place of joy and happiness and a way of life and turned it into a job.

On the brighter side, many nice things have happened to me, mostly centered around fandom. The Norton Special Issue of LAN'S LANTERN was well received. Mike Glyer chose my article

about Mike Resnick and Maia's "The Marvelous Tarot" as among the top 15 fan articles of the past year. Both my parents retired and are doing well. I've seen friends get married, change life-styles and find happiness. One of my favorite students graduated; I'm sad to see her leave, especially since Kay and I have been good friends during the four years she has stayed in the dorm at Kingswood, but she is moving on to better things.

I have also started writing again, something I had no time for previously. Actually, I did have some time, but I spent it doing other things. I had less time this year, but during my breaks and vacations, I was in the computer room working on fanac and an occasional story. I am hoping to be able to submit one or two for publication at the end of the summer.

As I finish this off, I am looking forward to a good time in the garden with lots of vegetables coming in, completing this issue of LAN'S LANTERN, and doing lots of reading and writing. Fanac for the coming year should be good, especially with me and Maia taking over the editorship of MISHAP. I am dubious about school and teaching, but who said life was always easy or fair. I'll just have to wait and see what will happen.

Here is a list of addresses of those who have written letters of comment, and supplied art and articles for this issue.

Tony Alsobrook-Renner, 2916 A Keokuk St., St. Louis, MO 63118

Clifton Amsbury, 768 Amador St., Richmond, CA 94805

Allan Beatty, PO Box 1906, Ames, IA 50010

Ruth Berman, 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55417

Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Jackie Causgrove, 6828 Alpine Ave. #4, Concinnati, OH 45236

Robert "Buck" Coulson, Hartford City, IN 47348

Maia Cowan, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013

Dennis Fischer, 366 N. Spaulding Ave. #12, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Paula Gold Franke, PO Box 873, Beecher, IL 60401

Gregory Frederick, 3520 Franklin Park, Sterling Hts., MI 48078

Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6 Canada

Joseph L. Green, 1390 Holly Ave., Merritt Island, FL 32952

Arthur Hlavaty, 819 W. Markham Ave., Durham, NC 27701

Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666

Carol E. Jackson

Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield, S. Yorkshire, S11 9FE United Kingdom

Michael D. Kircher, Box 4559, Duke Station, Durham, NC 27706

Mark & Evelyn Leeper, 80 Lakeridge Dr., Matawan, NJ 07747

Prof. Francis Lyall, University of Aberdeen, Dept. of Public Law, Taylor Buidling, Aberdeen AB9 2UB Scotland

Jim Meadows, 919 W. Moss Ave., Peoria, IL 61606

Margaret Middleton, PO Box 1256, Mountain Home, AR 72653

Sandra Miesel, 8744 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46240

Andre Norton, 682 S. Lakemont, Winter Park, FL 32792

David Palter, 1840 Garfield Pl. #201, Hollywood, CA 90028

Jon E. Pryor, 2508 W. 9th St., Panama City, FL 32401

Mike Resnick, 11216 Gideon Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45249

Jessica Amanda Salmonson, PO Box 20610, Seattle, WA 98102

Mark Schulzinger, 528 Woodruff Bldg., Springfield, MO 65806

Sally A. Syrjala, PO Box 149, Centerville, MA 02632

John Thiel, 30 North 19th, Lafayette, IN 47904

Lynne Alisse Witten, 1919 17th Apt. A, Lubbock, TX 79401

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740

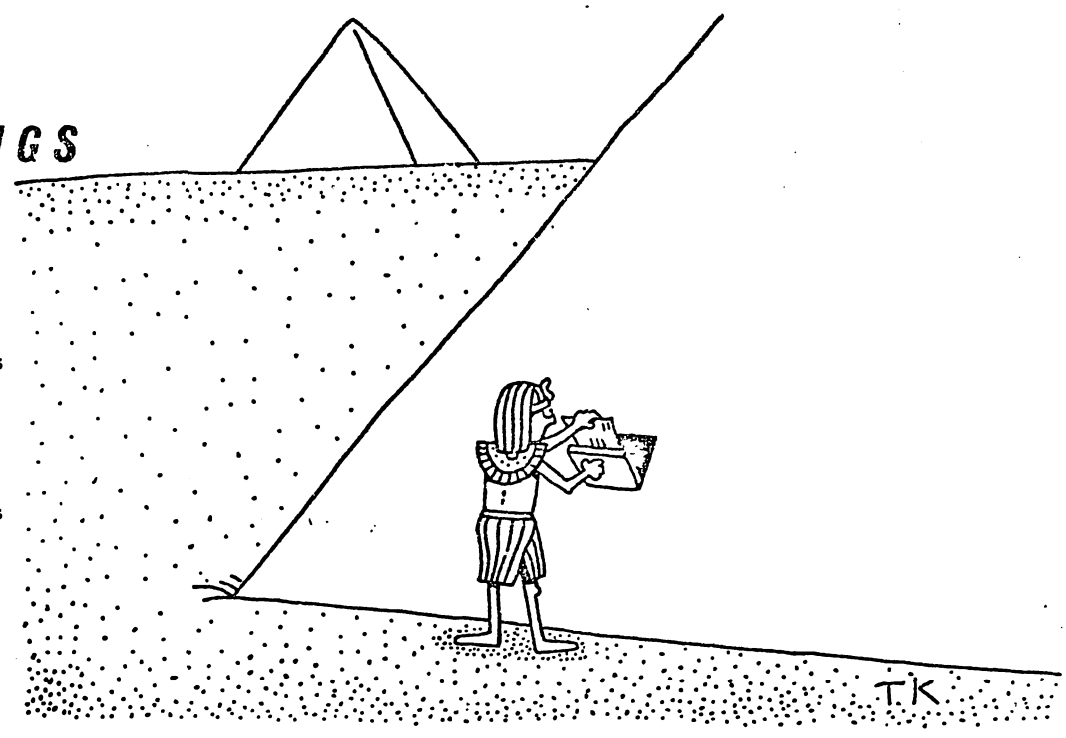
David G. Yoder, RD 2; Box 264, Bernville, PA 15506

I also heard from the following people, and probably a few others whom I've forgotten to mention --

Greg Hills	Donald Wandrei	John Brunner	Sheryl Birkhead
Neil Kaden	Lynn Hickman	Peter Roberts	Heather Ashby
Ruth Berman	Donald Franson	Bill Cavin	Tim & Anna Zahn
Orange Mike	Cicatrice	Mike Lallor	Marie Miesel
Albert Trestrail	Verna Trestrail	Jim & Laurie Mann	Megret Stull
Lynne Alisse Witten	Maj. Terry N. Taylor	Eric Lindsay	Jean Weber
T.L. Sherred	Mary Lou Sherred	Ned Brooks	Mike Glyer
Jim Gray	Brenda Callahan	Mike Banks	Margaret Middleton
Mark & Evelyn Leeper	Capt. David Heath Jr	Greg Fredericks	Howard Devore
Daine Fox	Hania Wojtowic	Steve Georges	Harry J.N. Andruschak
Larry Sternig	Fred Jakobcic	Paula Robinson	

EMPATHIc

POST ScRIPTINGS



I've received lots of letters on the last three issues of LAN'S LANTERN. LL #14 dealt with comic book superheroes, but some letters brought up the non-superheroes of the writers' youth. LL #15 was a general issue with some interesting features. The Andre Norton Special was LL #16, and I've received many complimentary comments both written and verbal on it.

So here are the letters:

EDUCATION

Sally Syrjala: Maia's loc manages to catch the fact that balance on the razor's edge is needed in education as in all things. The conflicting points need to be recognized and the best taken from each side. What I'm trying to say is that we need our educational system to recognize that it needs to have its porrage "just right", giving a scope of individual freedoms balanced by a sense of discipline to keep the tight-rope balance intact.

Terry Jeeves: Naturally, as an ex-teacher (retired after 32 years), I was interested in your item on education. I can't speak in any way for the USA side, but from my observations in the UK, our education system could be improved AND the budget cut, despite all the howls of anguish from the teaching groups whenever budget cuts are mentioned. All this, without the spectre of payment "on merit". That latter sounds good, but there is no use assessing it on a vote by students up to the age of, say, 16. I even doubt its efficacy with older ones, as popularity is NOT the same as "being a good teacher". Popularity is part of the job -- students will work harder for someone they like-- but other aspects are exam percentages, general happiness of the students, fairness of performance, and of course, how much of the set objectives are achieved. That latter, the "set objectives", is one of the things nobody in education ever seems to want to define. What IS the aim of education? Exam passing? "A fuller life"? Groundwork for expanding one's own horizons? Creating a person capable of fitting into society? Or just instilling the ability to read, write, and cypher? Ask ten teachers and you'll get ten answers. Ask ten "Education Experts" and you'll not get ONE answer, but yards of waffle. Until we are all agreed to just WHAT is the purpose of education, I submit that you can NOT fairly rate a teacher's "merit".

Now as to the budget cut/improved effectiveness (and remember, I speak as I see the UK end of the stick)... First, remove all the NON-teaching tasks from teachers: meals supervision, school supervision out of school hours, bus stop duty, wet weather/dinner hour supervision and registration, money collections, and the like. These are non-teaching jobs which eat into a teacher's available time and energy. I'd also include yard duty at a time when a teacher needs a break as much as, if not more than, the pupils.

Remove from the "education budget" such fringe items as "free meals", free shoes, clothing, etc., children in care, and so on. They come under Welfare.

Stop advertising teaching posts which are already filled. Our unions demanded (and got) a ruling that ALL vacant posts must be advertised nationally. Result: despite the Headmaster and Office wanting (and determined to have) Fred Bloggs fitted in the slot, hundreds had to be spent on advertising the post. This brought in (in one case I know of) over a 100 replies, which involved printing and mailing off 100+ application forms. This was followed by a token "board" to screen six candidates (and refund their travelling and hotel expenses), before Fred Bloggs was given the job. Finally, 100+ letters had to be sent saying the post was filled.

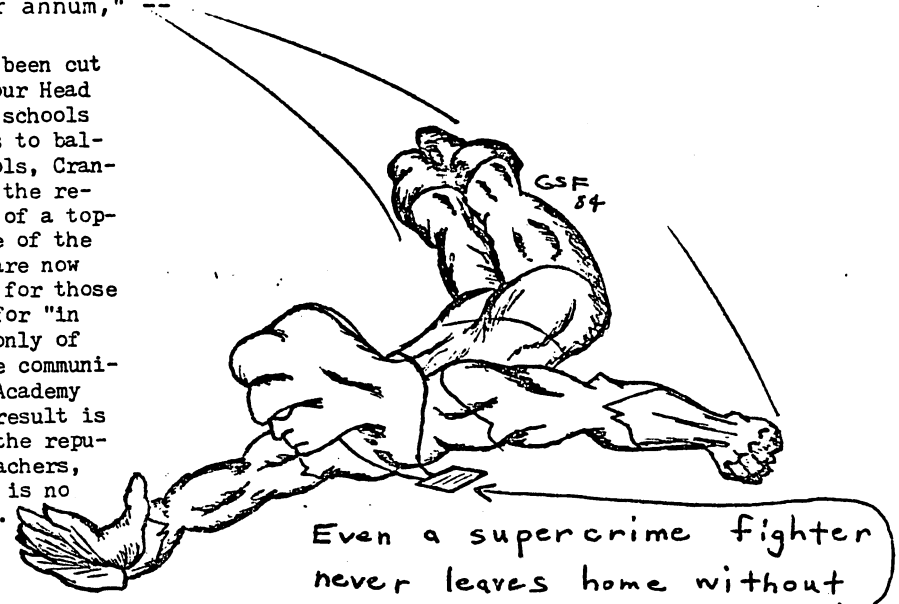
Multiply that loss by umpteen thousand teachers and you have another source of waste.

I could go on, but the point is that far too much lolly is wasted on out-dated or nonsensical procedures. Our schools now have large "Boards of Governors" (at much cost of time, money, and deterioration of service) whose sole task seems to be to take over the running of the school from the Headmaster, whose authority grows less each year. Yecch. Money COULD be saved!

Paula Gold Franke: I am now pursuing a Masters degree in media communications and working parttime in the University's television studios as an audio technician. I'm also director of a touring theatrical company that visits elementary schools to perform a play that teachers little kids (K-6) how to recognize and deal with sexual abuse.

Prof. Francis Lyall: I was interested to see the state of education there, from your viewpoint. Here [in Scotland] we are coping with cutbacks, not least in the library caused by the soaring $. Our budget has gone awry with the cost of periodicals and books coming across the Atlantic, and that has had to be corrected--a nasty business, which has caused a lot of ill feeling. "Why should I lose 3 periodicals while that department over there still gets X Abstracts at £7000 per annum," -- you could imagine.

The budget of our school library has been cut almost in half. This does not make our Head Librarian happy. // These Cranbrook schools have been cutting back a lot in hopes to balance the budget. The two upper schools, Cranbrook and Kingswood,are merging, and the restructuring seems to have the effect of a top-heavy administration. Thus, in spite of the attempts to save money, the schools are now losing a lot (well, paying out a lot for those adminstrative positions, and paying for "in depth studies" of the problems, not only of the schools merging, but of the whole community which includes the Cranbrook Art Academy and the Institute of Science). The result is that those who do the most work for the reputations of the schools, i.e., the teachers, get little or nothing because "there is no money" for adequate salary increases.



COMIC COMMENTS

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Jim Meadows: I brought a mixed attitude to the Special comics issue. I enjoy comics, but comics often let me down. The dependence that comic books have on superheroes is just one big rut to me. It's no big surprise that the last bastion of pulp fiction in America uses such a simple and simplistic genre. It is surprising that it dominates the industry to such a large degree.

My last comic-reading kick was about a year ago; I picked up the anniversary issue of Detective Comics and got hooked on Batman again. The character seemed wonderfully sophisticated since I read the comics 20 years ago, and something about Bruce Wayne's total lack of window-dressing superpowers made him more interesting to me. But it only lasted a few months. Comics as a whole are much improved over the comics I read as a kid, but they're still written for kids -- their junk food fiction, so to speak. My junk food fiction of choice are the newspaper comics. I read them religiously. The adventure and soap opera counterparts of the comic books are a dying breed, slowly strangling on reduced space and changing reading habits. But I enjoy them, something as camp, sometimes as entertainment, and willingly suspend my impatience as their stories inch along, a few centimeters a day. The newer, post-war comics, the ones I really grew up with, are a deeper joy. They do their job better within their constrictions than pre-war American comic books do.

Mike Kircher: I'm embarassed to admit it, but I know next to nothing of comic books or most comic heroes/villains. There, it's out in the open. *gasp* However, I did enjoy perusing this issue. I found your explanation of how you got Lan out of George quite enlightening. I hadn't pondered it long when I decided it was likely a losing battle and took it for granted that you liked Lan.

Margaret Middleton: I always preferred the Marvel line of superheroes myself, for much the same reason as Lan gives--there was always more to their problems each month than simply knocking out the current super-opponent. My personal favorites were the Fantastic Four and the X-Men. Them I wrote fanfiction about. The others I just read.

Tony Alsobrook-Renner: I've been reading comics on and off since the mid-60's when I was but a wee lad, and am currently in an "on-phase". The top titles today are: The New Mutants, great art and fine, suspenseful stories but more than a little confusing at times; X-Men, Alpha Flight, Batman/Detective, and Fantastic Four. I also read The Defenders every month, I guess just to see how awful the book can get.

The thing that struck me about the articles in this issue is the way in which the authors talk about comic characters as though they were "real." I'm always conscious of the fact that comics are being written, and for me the interest in comics is watching the way in which the creators manipulate the characters and format they are given. In other words, when talking about the new Fantastic Four, I'm much more likely to say, "Did you see how John Byrne is making Sue Richards a much more powerful character?" than "Did you see how Sue Richards is discovering her full potential?"

Mark Schulzinger: LL #14 was pleasant to read even though I admit that my contact with comics was long ago and far away. My parents believed that such reading material was not for intelligent people and much preferred to see me with my nose in a copy of the Saturday Evening Post, Astounding, Popular Mechanics, and the other magazines to which they had subscriptions. As a result, my contact with the comics was limited to a few issues of some of

the old DC's, etc. I recall a few heroes of those days, viz., Ibis the Invincible, Captain Marvel (the Binders', not the court-mandated replacement), Superman (of course), Frank Buck, The Mighty Atom, Boy Commandos, and Blackhawk.

My first real love affair with a comic began with Mad and my wife (who also had to sneak them past the eagle eyes of her watchful parents) and I will still refer to The Shadow as "Lamont Shadowskeedeeboomboom". I can recall sitting on the streetcar on my way to a meeting of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, reading a copy of Mad, laughing like a loon, and being vaguely embarassed as the other passengers looked at me strangely (an obviously demented 12 year old child, related in some way to the Jukes family).

Still much later I discovered R. Crumb, Barbarella, and Phoebe Zeitgeist. Even later yet I found the Marvel innovation of Elfquest and bought all the issues they put out, mainly because the artwork was, to me, so unusually good for a comic. I admit that the story let me down badly and did no good for the generally negative attitude I held about most comic books as a result of my upbringing. I won't fault them, though, since I have read and enjoyed them from time to time. My only regret is that Bill Gaines, after abandoning the old Mad format (I will agree that he was under considerable pressure from the newly-formed Comics Authority Code) abandoned the newer format for the present, very unfunny Mad. Superduperman and Captain Marbles were good. Bill Elder, Wally Wood, Jack Davis and others were good. Ernie Kovacks, Roger Price, Bob and Ray, Henry Morgan--they were wonderful. I miss them very much.

Ben Indick: Your superhero issue was quite engaging, moreso than the plethora of comic books which choke newsstands. Indeed I regret not taking up your invitation for an article--to state why I dislike superhero comics (in my dotage--not in my youth) and much prefer other comics, from the wonderfully imitative Yellow Kid, Buster Brown, etc., through the magnificent art nouveau of Windsor McKay, the surreal, zany brilliance of Lyonel Feiningy, etc. etc., right up to today's irreverent, splendidly drawn, insightful and hilarious "Bloom County" of Berke Breathed. There's genuine art in all of them, a quality absent (aside from a real cinematographic style) from superhero comics.

But then, that is all something else, isn't it? And, for heaven's sake, I failed to mention above some such beloved favorites of mine as Krazy Kat (aside from McKay's graphic brilliance, probably the greatest of all comics, creating its own true world), Katzenjammer Kids, Jiggs, etc., et al! Roses to all those treasures of yesteryear!

Sally Sryjala: Comics have to be a part of growing up in that the vast majority of children read them at one time or the other in their growing years. Comics are able to get the imgination into action. They present concepts in the superhero editions which are larger than life. They show there are gray areas in decision-making, and give role models as to the ability to make decisions based on morality.

One of the comics I first encountered was Katy Keene. After reading an issue, it would be necessary to sit down and draw a group of new designs for the modelling wardrobe. I would like to reread some of those old issues and see how I react to them today. Perhaps now I would see them as sexist, but the memories are steel in the soft part of the heart, the space that forgives most transgressions.

Batman also came into my life at about this time. Bruce Wayne/Batman has undergone many changes -- perhaps as many as society itself.

Comics reflect that which is about them. As we and our ways of looking at life change, so do the characters in the comics. They undergo our same pain of metamorphosis and maybe help us understand it a little better.

Harry Warner Jr.: Comic books are among the many things in this space-time continuum which I know almost nothing about. They didn't start to appear in any quantity until I'd grown old enough to feel superior to such things. If I'd been born a few years later, so they would have been an already existing part of my environment, I might have become a big fan of them, an ardent collector, and equipped with enough knowledge of the field to argue about a dozen of the more esoteric points brought up in this LAN'S LANTERN. But the way things are, all I can do is tell you that the issue interested me enough to keep me reading all the way through and follow that compliment with a few generalized comments.

One thing that impressed me right away about your own contributions to this issue is how like me you are in one respect. You spent

most of your space talking about plots, characters, and individual episodes. Another comic book fan might have emphasized instead the artistic aspects of the comic book series: how artists achieved their effects, the sources of their techniques and special idiosyncracies, and biographical details of the inkers or whatever they call the people who help the artists. It goes to prove that you and I are both word-oriented people, even when something composed equally of art and text is the subject matter. Even in this respect, however, I find myself backsliding dangerously in one minor manner as I grow older. When there's some spare time, I've grown fond of turning on the MTV satellite channel, turning the volume control all the way down so I can't hear the music or the lyrics, and just watching the video parts of those little productions. My glands get a good stirring up by some of the videos, and my musical tastes aren't offended by the rock music.

Something else that I noticed while reading several contributions to the issue: the long life of some of the heroes and villains and the probabililty most of the individuals who buy comic books chronicling their adventures today have little knowledge of their background. Unless comic books systematically review what has gone before once a year or at some other frequent interval, I would think it hard for a young person to undersrtand properly the full extent of the potentialities of superheroes and the reason why the villains are so villainous and similar matters. When Forry Ackerman was editing Famous Monsters of Filmland, he used to publish rehashes of the basic articles about the classic horror movies and the career of notable monsters at specific intervals, once every five years or so if I remember correctly, on the theory that most of his readership would have changed since the last time he brought them up to date on such matters. Could it be that the slow decline in comic book sales was caused in part by this factor, the unfamiliarity of new readers with the traditions and past highlights of the long-running series?

MTV? Oh Harry! Well, as long as you turn the sound down, I guess that's all right. I suppose that next you'll be telling me that you watch exercise programs too! // I have always read comic books for the story and plot, not just the artwork (though I do notice sepcific styles, liking some and hating others). // The comics do review past events occasionally, which sometimes makes long-time readers upset. For them it's a wasted issue, especially when the company takes a full issue to recap the history of, say, The Avengers. But collectors will continue to buy it (can't interrupt a run, you know!).

Dave Yoder: Yours and Carolyn Doyls's reminiscences of the comics bring on my own. While there is nothing comical about most of them, there was always the occasional Tom and Jerry, Sad Sack, Baby Huey, or Disney to lighten up with after the other, more violent, titles. Come to think of it, there was probably more violence in the humor magazines than the others, all of it (relatively) bloodless violence though. And even in those others, as I remember, characters might receive horrible wounds but generally didn't bleed much from them (actually I think they smoked more than anything else) until the view moved back where you might see a small, tasteful, patch of red attached to the body. (I seem to remember Sgt. Fury bleeding more from a minor flesh wound than did the German who had just taken ten to twelve .45 caliber slugs across the body and ought to be in danger of coming apart.)

I'm not really sure just when or why I stopped buying and reading the magazines. The newspaper comics still have me turning to them first and I faithfully follow Mandrake, the Phantom, Tarzan, Prince Valiant, and all the series I can get my hands on. I've got quite a few of the collections that have been done in the past few years, but even there I lean more toward the newspaper strips--Beetle Bailey, Doonesbury, Any Capp, etc.

Exactly where I was first introduced to comics I don't remember but I started buying them as soon as I could afford it. In the beginning they were only a dime, which, though a good bit of money to a young boy at that time, still allowed one to purchase a fairly wide selection. When the price started going up faster than income could keep pace, I dropped back to just my favorite titles (the owner of the newsstand where most of them came from didn't mind you looking over a dozen or so as long as you bought some, so you could keep your eye out for something new which looked promising).

Let's not forget waiting-room stacks, either. Most places that had kids in their clientele had comics to keep us occupied while we sat around. A good pile of comics would often get me to the doctor's office a good half-hour early so I'd be sure to have enough reading time. In particular, there was the barber who always had a big pile, kept it reasonably current, and leaned heavily toward the Marvel titles. I clearly recall reading the first appearance of the Hulk there.

Special favorite titles were: Spiderman, Strange Tales, Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos (and later the Shild books), GI Combat, Justice League of America, and Kid Colt, Outlaw. Other regulars: Iron Man, The Fantastic Four, Incredible Hulk, Tales to Astonish, Captain America, Avengers, Rawhide Kid, Star-Spangled War Stories, and on, and on. Sometimes I'd just get an issue for the sake of the villain--Doctor Doom was always a favorite character, along with Prince Namor and the Silver Surfer (they weren't really bad guys but were often adversaries).

Thanks, Lan, and my thanks to the others who appeared in LL #14 as well, for recalling all this to me.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson: As I'm by no means a comics fan, this is not the most exciting issue of your Lantern I've seen. I think I was 17 years old when I gave up comic books cold turkey. I was addicted until then; and Green Lanterm was in fact a favorite. I was so clearly aware that each purchase was good for less than 15 minutes entertainment if I read it slowly and really appreciated the pictures as I went along. I was also aware of how really stupid the dialogue style of comics happened to be. And I liked the awful things anyway. Still, I wanted to spend more time with realistic stories -- I wanted to read more science fiction and supernatural fiction which, though equally tacky, had at least more depth than comics. I was ashamed of myself for

having this idiotic concern for the future of Superman. I was "intellectual" enough to know that comics format had a great potential as art; but I was not then, and am not now, deluded into any notion that DC or Marvel ever has, or ever will, approach such art. So I just gave them up. All at once. And since I've more than doubled the length of my life since then, it becomes more remote, and less important, that comics were ever meaningful to me. I do continue to keep a few really unusual undergrounds around; I do like Gorey, Gross, and some other genius cartoonists; and I wouldn't part with volumes of Little Nemo or Krazy Kat; and my big stuffed Felix is a cherished critter; so that in some way the best aspects of comics influence on popular culture remains in my life. But DC and Marvel? I don't regret breaking that habit at all. I think there is something stunted about anyone whose primary reading habit leans toward comic books for long periods of time. Commercial comics and television have about the same level of intelligence, which is very low, and no argument about "potential" alters what the stuff is.

When I was very small, I wanted to gain archery skills on the order of Green Arrow, which I believed were realistic compared to the outrageousness of most superheroes (I just remembered this). I had also convinced myself (with the comics influence) that I was a creature from another planet living a secret identity and being indestructable. If I cut myself, the blood, I believed, was actually a fungus I picked up while on another planet, and I would let it grow on me long enough to convince other people that I was vulnerable. Whenever my legal guardian beat the shit out of me, which was fairly often, and I blubbered and whined, deep inside I knew I was only pretending to be hurt to preserve my secret identity. Traces of this on-going fantasy haunted me until my twenties, actually, it had been so habitual; and it only went away when replaced by a more complex inner fantasy of strange symbolism and erotic content that may someday (though I doubt it) be useful in a novel I could possibly write.

Ben Indick: I was delighted with Jeffrey Tolliver's summary of those priceless Charles Addams bits, although that is rather generalized for a superhero issue!

CAROLYN DOYLE'S SUPERHERO ARTICLE

Tony Alsobrook-Renner: Carolyn Doyle gives you some taste of what the article I was supposed to write for you when she mentions Jimmy Olsen. All of the Jimmy Olsen stories I've seen from the 50's and early 60's are just as corny and illogical. Not really illogical, but without logic of any kind. For instance, in one story Jimmy is transported into a future where the people believe Superman is a murderer because of something they saw only part of occuring in the past. I guess the writers of these stories thought up nifty concepts and then had to resolve them in any way they could.

Harry Warner Jr.: Carolyn Doyle gave me several disoriented moments. She wrote about a comic hero named Dan Dare from England. I thought I'd seen his adventures and I know perfectly well I'd never laid my eyes on English comic books. Finally I felt better because I finally realized what had happened. I'd been thinking about a daily newspaper strip that ran in the Hagerstown dailies (when I was a boy) whose youthful hero was probably named Dickie Dare, although I wouldn't even guarantee that. The newspaper strip didn't have a superhero, just a typical boys' fiction young hero transferred to a daily comic strip and spending most of his time in dangerous situations in jungles and other far places. I don't remember seeing any mention of that strip in nostalgia pieces so it was probably one of the very inexpensive comics from an obscure syndicate that the Hagerstown newspapers bought to save money.

WILLIAM WILSON GOODSON'S "Comic Villains"

Jim Meadows: Wilson Goodson, Junior, in his article on comic book villains misses the main thing about such villains that sets them apart from the others. Like the heroes they battle, they are designed for adolescents; they are half-show. It is not at all necessary to wear a tight-fitting garish costume to fight crime. And most people attempting to commit crimes would not draw attention to themselves. But, of course, that is the whole point for villains in comic books, they want the whole world to know, to have their noses rubbed in the glory of the criminal act. You don't find such people very often. I once read a book about a Frenchman who was such a person. I think his name was Mesrine. He had no fancy suit or deep grudges against the world like a comic book villain, but he did indeed commit large-scale heists involving the killing of others, just so others would know he could get away with it. He was eventually blown away by the French Police. A fascinating person.

Sally Syrjala: As to comic villains, can they not also be considered to be the mirror image of the hero? Using the Indiana Jones comic adaptation, Bellog is Indy's mirror image. It is the characterization Indy knows he could all too easy become, with but a few slight twists in the road.

Too, Darth Vader could be said to be Luke Skywalker's mirror image. The opposite is so detested because Luke knows the grains to turn into that being are there. In the Star Wars Saga this is shown when Luke battles Vader's image on Dagoth, only to see his own face in Vader's helmet. Luke also recognizes the similarities between himself and his father when in Return of the Jedi he sees Vader's artificial hand is the same as his own. They are more alike than the ego would care to admit.

Therefore the comic villains have our "good" sides battling our "evil" sides and showing how thin the line is that separates the two.

GREEN LANTERN

Ben Indick: Wasn't the Green Lantern a radio show (in the days of my own youth) with a Japanese sidekick for the hero? This would follow (as would the Lone Ranger) the tradition of The Shadow and his girlfriend Margo Lane as stooge or straight man (woman). If my memory is correct, there was at that time no cosmic do-good agency involved. (Talk about a "do-good" agency -- just think of the chutzpah of Richard Comely in Canada slipping liturgical bombs into mailings of a commercial magazine! My goodness.)

Ben, you're thinking of the Green Hornet and his sidekick Kato. The Green Lantern was never a radio show. But now that you mention it, a parallel could be drawn between the two. Green Lantern did have an Eskimo sidekick named "Pieface", who seemed to have dropped out of sight during many of the later adventures. He did return about the time Hal Jordan was considering whether or not to resign from the Green Lantern Corps. Pieface became extremely incensed that he was not consulted about the decision, and now there is animosity between the two, one-sided though.

Tony Alsobrook-Renner: I haven't read the issues of Green Lantern that you allude to in "Green Lantern: My Friend and Inspiration," but it sounds as though GL was being taught to not let himself be defeated by his inmost fears--no character in today's comics is without fears. To be consistent with my other comments, I should say that the writer of those stories was adding to the depth of characterization by introducing the concept of subconscious fear.

MAIA'S "Tarot"

Ben Indick: Maia presents perhaps the most unique approach to the subject of superheroes, amusing and knowledgeable. I dread to think of this expertise applied to actual Tarot! You had best watch your step with this formidably equipped lady.

Mike Kircher: While going through Maia's Tarot rundown I noticed something I thought I should stick in: in reference to The Fool reversed being The "Foolkiller," I ran across the same character in a folktale some years ago and can't seem to recall where he's from. Do you or Maia recall? I'd like to re-meet him someday.

Neither Maia nor I recall a character called the Foolkiller, nor could I find a reference in any of my mythology or folktale books. I wonder if anyone reading this has; if so, I hope that they respond.

Margaret Middleton: My reading on the Tarot recalls the Major Arcana are intended to be archetypes, and given a large enough pool of superheroes (such as Marvel's) it should not be impossible to make appropriate match-ups. (Where the level of boredom Maia speculated upon at the end of the article comes in is in giving one the initial notion to try the project.) It has been 15 years or more since I read Marvel Comics regularly (I let all my subscriptions lapse after getting married) and there are a lot of characters you mentioned that I don't recognize. The ones I do recall seem to be well-fitted in the match-ups.

Tony Alsobrook-Renner: I liked Maia's "The Marvel-ous Tarot" because it not only taught me about the tarot, but also taught me a thing of three about comics. The only thing I didn't like was the way in which she kept insisting that the article was so weird and way-out. Granted, the "average" person wouldn't think

to translate comic book characters into the tarot, but Maia's not an "average" person: she's a writer in a fanzine.

> I would agree that Maia is not average, but at the time she wrote the article, she was working at a place that would make average and normal seem like superior. Maia is definitely above average in all aspects as far as I'm concerned.

Paula Gold Franke: Enjoyed Maia's "Marvelous Tarot" for a couple of reasons -- 1) it's always nice to see strange variations of the deck; Ryder-Waite is fine for the purists, but the Maia deck sounds more fun. 2) This reason has nothing to do with tarot, but with her first sentence: "Driving to Toledo can be a dangerous experience." This brought back memories of a similar trip of mine during January of '77 when Bill Cavin, my sister Marla, and I made an ill-fated convention trip to Michigan and never made it to Toledo. We spent the "convention" at an Ohio National Guard Armory in Findlay, Ohio, because I-75 disappeared in a blizzard.

> I too recall that particular CONFUSION in the January of '77. The convention was extended another day since the Highway Patrol closed the entire state. At the same time you were trapped in Findlay, Roger Reynolds, famous rotund auctioneer and funny-man (and so-so poker-player) was getting married in that very ~~[illegible]~~ town.

Dave Yoder: I'm not at all familiar with the symbolism of the tarot, but it was fun running over the characters who might be better opposites than the ones Maia posited. While I did come up with a few possible substitutions, my ignorance of tarot and the years between me and my comics days were a big handicap. The only one I might suggest would be the Ancient One and Dormammu for the Magician card (which I'll admit isn't much of a change except perhaps in immenence, immanence and emmanence).

JOHN THIEL'S ARTICLES

Ben Indick: As provacative as ever, John Thiel discovers a predecessor to the stalwart "masked man" and his capable Indian friend on the unlikely plains of Spain, in the poor benighted Knight of La Mancha and his clumsy disbelieving peasant. It is an amusing concept, not without a quirky logic, but I imagine there were cowboy stories aplenty which led to the famous radio show and its various reincarnations.

> Actually John is not far off. I have heard of studies paralleling Don Quixote with Batman and the Lone Ranger. The most obvious couple derived from Cervantes' work is The Cisco Kid and his sidekick Pancho.

Tony Alsobrook-Renner: Thiel's article was disappointing in that it made too much sense while it was still obviously an example of John talking through his hat just to piss people off. I loved the paragraph about Nietzsche.

Harry Warner Jr.: John Thiel seems somewhat confused about the origin of the superman concept. It was George Bernard Shaw, not Nietzsche, who wrote "Man and Superman", if my brains haven't addled completely, and Shaw was the first to use "superman" as the English equivalent of Nietzsche's "ubermensch" which previously had been translated literally, "overman". When the comic strip borrowed the word for the name of its hero, it made him something quite different from the Nietsche/Shaw concept of humans who have the right to lord it over other humans. The man from Krypton borrowed more from Paul Bunyan and John Henry and other folk legends than from the literary men's concept. I wish I had access to a good library or a biography of Voltaire because I am afraid to risk coming right out and saying that the French writer's Micromegas was the first important superhero from another planet in literature. I may be confusing Voltaire with another writer, or spelling the name of the visitor from outer space incorrectly, or doing something else terribly inaccurate.

Mike Kircher: John Thiel's "In Search Of ..." was quite interesting, although he neglected to mention Edgar Gayce's The Sleeping Prophet along with Rhine.

Dennis Fischer: How could you miss John Thiel's glaring error in his article? The translation of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam was done by Edward Fitzgerald, not F. Scott Fitzgerald!! I mean really, they are a hundred years apart and quite different people. That kind of error throws in doubt the rest of Thiel's "research." (By the way, 1001 Arabian Nights never contained 1001 tales -- this is a common misconception. Many tales were continued from night to night, and even then the anonymous writer or writers of the book were probably not too concerned with accounting for each night.) Despite Phil Farmer's love of the Richard Burton translation, I find it overly florid and think it strives too hard for oriental flavor to the detriment of the stories, and so I would recommend the N. J. Dawood translation. Nights and The Koran are the best known, and from what I can tell, the best written, pieces of Arabian literature, and both are highly recommended. (Most Arabian literature is untranslateable verse.)

Mark Schulzinger: John Thiel's article was most strange. I can't imagine anyone assuming the Necronomicon could possibly be an actual book. In the period in which Lovecraft wrote it was not unusual to create an imaginary volume and you must remember that Lovecraft built up an impressive mythos for his works. One might as well say that, if the existence of the volume is proven by the fact that so many characters in the stories had read it, then tunnels full of rats must exist beneath all graveyards and Yog Sothoth must be an actual entity. Not so. Remember that Robert Chambers created an equally imaginary volume: The King in Yellow. He referred to it in a volume of the same name. Remember, too, that Asimov went to great lengths to give references to nonexistent journals in his article "The Endochronic Properties of Resublimated Thiotimoline".

The definitive translation of The Thousand Nights and a Night was made by Sir Richard Burton. It's a fairly dull book mainly because Arabic storytelling is quite different from Western storytelling. There are a lot of good yarns in it.

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam is interesting because Fitzgerald (NOT F. Scott, but Edward, who made his first translation in 1859) made a translation which captured the spirit of the original but not its substance. Many rubaiyats were written because a rubaiyat is nothing more than a compilation of verses which tend to have a vaguely satirical quality about them. We know of the one written by Khayyam, a noted astronomer in his time, merely because of the many Fitzgerald translations of it. The translation made within the past two decades by Robert Graves is much less known because Graves made the first reliable translation of the original text. Most people don't like it because it has a different unifying theme than does the Fitzgerald translation.

Although Thiel refers to the Khama Sutra he fails to mention the Ananga Ranga, a strange book which, although it has a lot to do with sex (remember that sex is one of the roads to nirvana) also has a lot to do with classifying all the things that are yellow versus all the things that are short and squatty. By that I mean it makes classifications in ways that are totally foreign to Western thought patterns.

Sorry, but I never heard of a book called Malefactus Malefactotem, but there is a book called Maleus Maleficarum or The Witches' Hammer. This is an inquisitor's text, useful in the screening of witches (which happens to include poisoners). I recall that the Cincinnati Fantasy Group was much enamored of this book about the time I first entered fandom.

By the way, the Kaballah is semi-forbidden. The stipulation for studying it include being over 35 and having a wife. The justification is that only a mature man who has workaday responsibilities will be able to resist the lure of pure mysticism. There's an unspoken requirement as well: the student must be completely versed in the Torah, the writings, the prophets, the Mishna, the Talmud, and various commentaries. I made the mistake of reading the first sentence of the "Zohar" (Book of Splendor). There are about nine references in that sentences alone which demand complete knowledge of all previous works. My paternal grandfather was able to study Kaballah but I'm still working my way through the Talmud. Slow-Slowly, very slowly.

Please advise Mr. Thiel that Tim Leary did not invent LSD; he merely popularized it. Lysergic Acid Diethylamide-20 was first identified in ergot and was used on psychiatric patients. Of course it made them schizophrenic but that the psychiatrists figured was a good thing because then everyone could have the same diagnosis. Later research determined that LSD can be a normal component of blood fractions of schizophrenics.

Allan Beatty: What was the point of including John Thiel's ramblings about books he hadn't read in LL #15? I had to snicker when he mentioned the F. Scott Fitzgerald translation of the Rubaiyat. Why not get more writers who know what they're talking about, such as you do in your review of Stephen Leigh's books?

John asked if I wanted to publish it, and I agreed to. If you would like to submit an article or two I would gladly consider it/them.

Ben Indick: John is, as always, an interesting and provacative writer. I won't go into the history of HPL's Necronomicon (it usually is spelled with a "c" and not a "k") or Von Kunzt's Unaussprechlichen Kulten, which was as I recall Robert E. Howard's (or maybe Bob Bloch's; I do believe the former) addition to that arcane shelf. John might also have mentioned another hazardous and unseen book, The King in Yellow, which may be the title of Robert E. Chambers' book, but not the book itself. Still, good stuff.

David Palter: John Thiel's article, "In Search of the Forbidden" etc., is very peculiar. It seems to exist in an indeterminate state between the humorous and the serious, and to succeed as neither. The discussion of the Nekronomicon is far too serious if a humorous intent was desired, yet its thesis that this was a real rather than fictitious book is either a joke or a delusion. The comment that the poem "Jabberwocky" is "the most potent of all spells ever written" is so obviously absurd as to be out of keeping with the rest of the article. Ultimately I'm not sure what Mr. Thiel was trying to do in this article.

Mike Glicksohn: And John Thiel proves once again that he cannot think, cannot write and cannot entertain. As if there was any doubt...

MIKE SESTAK'S "The nth Day of Creation"

Clifton Amsbury: I found Mike Sestak's "Nth Day" a good short summary, but in one respect too short, and in another respect out of synch. Near the top of page 21 he joins two concepts to one label. He describes both "founder effect" (the gene-pool of survivors) and "genetic drift" (the shift of gene-frequencies over a period of time--without mutations), and calls them genetic drift.

The other item has to do with the rise of intelligence. The last extinction was about 13 million years ago. Ten years ago we thought the split between our ancestors and ape ancestors was at least 15 million BP (Before Present, with "present" defined as 1950). Now it's pretty well demonstrated to have been about five million years. Both figures are out of synch for 13 million BC, but that does not alter the fact that mass extinctions do allow very speedy adaptive radiation.

Maia: There have been lots of articles on cyclic extinctions and such lately. I'm waiting for the disaster movie on the subject.

And did you hear that scientists have detected something they're certain is a planet, outside the Solar system? Of course, it's a gas giant even larger than Jupiter, but it's a start.

Yes, and it's orbiting around a Red Giant star-sun. Could this planet be Krypton? And could Kal-El be on his way now?

THE RESNICK ARTICLE

Maia: I've been reading Mike Resnick's books mostly because you keep telling me to; I haven't been disappointed yet. Even when I didn't like the endings (does everybody have to die?), I felt they were appropriate and well-done. He writes good. (But then I haven't read Escape on Ganymede.)

So what is Adventures' release date?

Adventures should be out in the fall of this year. Eros Descending should also be out about the same time. Santiago will be released as soon as the Whelan cover comes in, and since Mike Whelan is backed up with other projects, that probably means early '86.

Arthur Hlavaty: Your article on Mike Resnick is interesting. I'd considered him a thud-&-blunder hack, but now I think I should reevaluate.

Joseph L. Green: I thought the article on Mike Resnick was quite good. I haven't read much of his stuff, but my wife, who is a big fan of his, thinks he's wonderful. Well, I have most of his books on file, and someday...

Joe, when I look at all the books on my shelves that I have to read...I keep thinking about an early retirement.

Mike Glicksohn: The Resnick article interested me because Mike's books fascinate me and I enjoy reading what others have to say about his work. I tend to read uncritically, and without much in the way of a literary criticism background I frequently fail to see things that more literate readers note, and I often miss allusions and broader themes. Your article gave me a couple of insights I'd miss and was appreciated for that reason.

Mike Resnick: Just received LAN'S LANTERN #15, and am still basking in a warm glow. I deeply appreciate the time and work that went into the article, and while there will doubtless be other in-depth studies of my writing in the future, yours was the first, and I shall always cherish it.

Incidentally, you expressed some slight confusion at the underlying thematic material in Eros at Zenith. Well, it can't be defined in a single word the way one can do with most of my other books, but basically it's about people who make right decisions for the wrong reasons [Crane], and people who make the wrong decisions for the right reasons [Bello]. (Hmmm ...I guess I can do it in one word, after all: Decisions.)

Also, one tiny misstatement, which I am sure no one will give a damn about: I wrote Adventures after taping She, not 1,000,000 B.C. (which is not to say that the latter film wouldn't have inspired the same type of book. It almost certainly would have though it would probably have been set in prehistoric times rather than early 20th Century Africa.)

The article was a pleasure to do, Mike. Maybe in a few years I can do another one which would incorporate the later books. // Well, maybe you could write a book/parody based on all the B-movies about pre-historic times. Imagine trying a hot-foot trick on a dinosaur!

Jackie Causgrove: The article on Mike Resnick was informative enough, though so much was in the subject's own words I wonder what you wrote, as opposed to assembled. I've read/heard so many of the same phrases before, could almost, in fact, quote your source. If you feel unable to rewrite yourself, Lan, find someone else (Maia?) who will...

Over the past three years or so I have had many conversations with Mike about his books. It is difficult not to use a lot of that material. You may find my latest review of Mike's work a bit better, since I have had no chance to discuss the piece with him beforehand.

ARTWORK

Mike Kircher: I loved the artwork in the Comics Issue.

Tony Alsobrook-Renner: The layout of the comics issue is pretty good except for the plethora of white space on pages 40 and 41. Surely you could have found something to go in those holes.

I had nothing on file at the time that could fit into those holes. If I were an artist myself, I could have done something about it. You really don't want to see how I draw....

Harry Warner Jr.: The illustrations in the comics issue, most of which I assume are reproduced from professional publications, look fine.

All the artists are amateurs, though some are good enough to be professionals.

Paula Gold Franke: I particularly enjoyed Mel. White's Final Exam cartoon on page 44 of the comics issue -- that's almost a daily thought for me.

Dave Yoder: In regards to Lee Pelton's comments on your artwork -- art isn't what LL is about either. Good art for material in a zine

can really enhance it. However, more illos in LL, particularly filler, would often do more good on your compost heap. (Lee's zine can carry a lot more because of its different style--and his art is usually excellent.) Lots of illustrations may be attractive, but it can easily distract the reader's attention from the other things on the page which you want him to concentrate on. This is not to say that a judicious use of good filler (tough to get) can liven things up. Anyway, I thought the art use in #14 was excellent.

Yes, decent artwork is tough to get, though I am managing to acquire some.

Jackie Causgrove: The front cover is a striking piece by Steve Fox that again exemplifies his ability to capture mood (as opposed to sense, I suppose -- what's it representing, a drowned St. Louis?), and displays his wondrous grasp of fine-line pen & ink work (although I hesitate to gasp at all the dirty pictures evident in the detail along the arch ... What? You didn't notice them? Not acquainted with the name-badges Alicia Austin has done for Glicksohn, are you?).

The cover to #15 was probably done from Paul Williams' books which take place around St. Louis after WW III. // I did look, but didn't see any. I guess I don't know how to look.

I do query the illo on page 33. It appears to be designed as a cover, but as a fillo (no relation to text) it seems three, almost four, disparate drawings. They're done well enough, but show no relationship through positioning or design. Why did you use it there?

I used the large piece of art to illustrate the review for Cherryh's 40,000 in Gehenna

HUGO VOTING

Maia: You did do better on choosing the Hugos this year; so did I, but then we mostly agree on what's good, anyway. Especially Startide Rising.

Arthur Hlavaty: Thanks for recommending me and voting for me. Teresa Neilson Hayden's writing, and IZZARD in general, are quite good and worthy of awards.

Dennis Fischer: I appreciate your look at the Hugo nominees as I hadn't read every story myself, and it was interesting to get some information on the ones I'd missed. There were several offbeat and interesting novels with poor releases that didn't make it to the final ballot but which were worthy. While I enjoy Varley's writing, and he certainly does have imagination, I find his thinking faulty and unconvincing. He keeps throwing ideas at you with little regard as to whether they make sense or not. Tea With a Black Dragon is very well written, but barely qualifies as fantasy and is certainly not science fiction. The first two robot novels are possibly the best work Asimov has ever done, but this third tome certainly ranks far behind. Startide Rising was a good book; it shows promise, and possibly deserved its nomination, but the award?

So I agree with most of your comments regarding the novels and thought we may have similar tastes in SF, but when I checked your editors choices, I was not so sure. I think the stories in ANALOG to be rather boring with few exceptions. Too many I-am-an-engineer-with-this-amazing-problem-and-I-am-going-to-solve-it stories, and war-in-outer-space stories. David Hartwell has promoted some very good novels, and I like Ferman's F&SF best of the current magazines.

As with many things, types of preferred stories are a matter of personal taste. Usually, however, a good novel is a good novel, no matter what its genre (something popular critics seem not to understand -- if it's genre fiction, it can't be good). The puzzle/problem story that appear in ANALOG appeal to me, but I also like fantasy, and other kinds of stories. // I agree that Tea with a Black Dragon should not have appeared on the ballot. Publishers didn't know how to categorize it for the bookstore shelves so lumped it into SF/Fantasy. // Startide Rising was the best of the choices for the Novel Hugo. Although the writing was uneven and there were other problems, it was still a whole lot better than most other SF being written today. Actually I thought 40,000 in Gehenna was the best novel for that year.

Mark Schulzinger: It's amazing how many of the Hugo Award nominees I haven't read. It must be my age. I don't susbscribe to anything but ANALOG and the new novels don't hold my attention the way the older ones do. I did read Tim Zahn's "Cascade Point", though, and enjoyed it thoroughly. As an aside, I met Tim for the first time at INCONJUNCTION IV and couldn't place his works for the life of me until he mentioned that story. It was very well done and a pleasure to read.

FANZINE LAYOUT AND PRODUCTION

Jackie Causgrove: LAN'S LANTERN #15 is perhaps the most comment-worthy, most readable, issue I've seen you publish. But it has its faults.

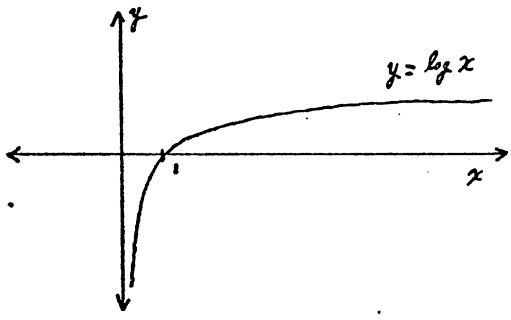
Your layout still leaves much to be desired. Why do you put illos having no relationship to each other --or to the text-- next to each other as you did on page 10? Those are fillos, Lan, fill-in illustrations, used to fill up empty space after an article has ended. You're not supposed to simply drop them in hither and yon. (I know that other faneds do things like that; good faneds don't.) You are not, especially supposed to drop them into a written segment that has nothing to do with either fillo--Joan Hanke Woods' piece at least would have served better duty on the page where you discussed the Hugo Fan Artist category. If a faned uses illos (directly, purposefully, tied to text) or fillos (used to fill in white space at the end of articles or columns), s/he should attempt to justify such intrusions to the text, even if only to his/her own mind.

Yeah, I still have to work on a few things. // I place illos/fillos in some places to break up the monotony of the written word. Usually I do put illos in that have some relation to what is on that page of the one facing it. (That's the closest I can come to justifying my mistakes!)

And since you mentioned your "typos", I won't. (N.B. Typos are things like typing "nad" or "adn" instead of "and", or "firend" instead of...well, you catch my drift. Misspellings, missed wordage, wrong wordage, is called sloppy editing/typing/proofreading. The former item is what you could stand the most improvement in.)

Mike Glicksohn: I definitely think you need to get a proofreader. This would not only help cut down on the large number of typos the issue contains but also would eliminate some of the ungrammatical writing that always results from putting material down first-draft. (As a single example taken from an embarassingly large number of possibilities I cite the sentence: "While sitting behind his table and talking, Tim and Anna Zahn came by and said hello." Maia will tell you -- you math teaching type you! -- that this ain't good English. Let's work at preserving at least part of the myth about how literate SF fans generally are!)

I can forgive you the occasional abuse of the English language (or even of the American language which has far fewer rules and requirements as we all realize) since you are, after all, a mathematician, but what am I to do about: "The events that occured during the time after this convention up until the next one followed a logarithmic curve"? As all your readers undoubtedly realize, the typical logarithmic curve is shaped like



Now it is barely possible that this curve accurately depicts the way "the more that happened", but I strongly suspect you really intended to describe events occurring on an exponential curve. Care to dance your way around that one, Twinkle Toes?

Well, Mike, if you look at the entries of a log table, you notice that the closer you get to 10 (100, 1000, take your pick), the closer together the log values are. So the closer the next convention came, the closer together events happened to me, just as the log values of the numbers get closer together.

Buy that explanation? No? I thought not. (I never was good at dancing!)

David Palter: Once again, LL is a most imposing fanzine. But no letters of comment! I have always found the letter column to be the most essential part of any fanzine. If you ask me, it would have been better to dispense with some of the reviews and instead print some of the comments which readers have been sending in (even if my own comments were not among those selected for publication -- you see, my motives are not wholly egotistical in making this suggestion).

The issue was already too long and behind the time I had wanted to send it out. Besides, that does give me a nice long lettercolumn in this issue.

CONREPORTS AND RAMBLINGS

Arthur Hlavaty: So there's a group of fans at CONFUSION who get their kicks out of dressing up as normal people. *kinky*

Sheryl Birkhead: How did you get tapped (touched?) to be responsible for the student task force (hee hee, little play on words there...yeah, very little)? Is the scheduling computerized or is it still relegated to humans?

When I was offered the position I foolishly said yes. I had to do something outside of my regular teaching duties (and dorm duties, and the extra time I spent helping kids did not count), and I could not think of anything else. I figured the scheduling part, done by hand, would be no problem (and it wasn't). However after I agreed, I thought of all the troubles that could (and did) occur. But once the administration had their sucker, they weren't about to let me go. // The upper-school classes are done by computer.

For the coming school year I have agreed to help with the transistion to one school (the Cranbrook and Kingswood schools are merging) and will work out the service duty schedule for the first semester. I've been promised not to have it the whole year. However I expect that promise to be broken; no one else has "volunteered" to help, and the original description of the service program changed from when I signed my contract for next year till now.

Mike Glicksohn: The diary of recent events in your (rather too hectic) life was interesting because I know you and care about you as a friend. It would probably have little lasting value to a casual fanzine reader, but one of the advantages of publishing a fanzine is that the editor can write for a small audience and get away with it. I hope that your professional life has been properly sorted out and that after Labor Day you'll have a good year. And once again I'm reminded that despite the sheer physical beauty of where you work and the delights of the school structure you teach in, I'm rather glad I'm teaching where I am.

Jackie Causgrove: Of your "Ramblings and ConReports" -- what can I say? Your skill is not so much in how you say it, but in what you have to say. I felt for you, going through the pressures of your school year (never, never have I appreciated more what a teacher has to cope with. Albeit you're a Resident at a Private School, you make me more fully realize the personal/political hassles a person has to go through in earning a living in your field. How, for a mild aside, Mike Glicksohn has made it continues to baffle me (not that I doubt his capability in his subject; it's the level of his superiors I wonder at.)), and the relief valves conventions provided (although

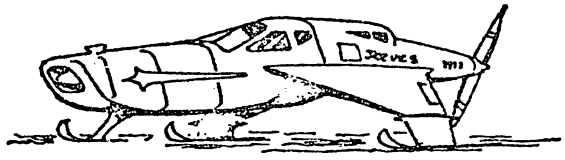
they entailed hassles of their own, the obvious pleasure you derived from going to them, again, obviously, contributed to your well-being). Having gone through suicidal depressions myself, I know whereof I speak. Looking back, they seem overblown somewhat, but you know that what triggered them could occur again. The thought at once brings you hope (you've gone through it before) and despair (but look how close you came...). I can't offer any advice except, "Hang on." You never know what the next day will bring.

David Palter: I was interested to read the detailed report of your activities in recent months. I am left with the feeling that you are a very nice person, but somewhat naive. With resepct to the house you were forced to move out of, to your great distress, there were unmistakable indications at the time you moved in that you might later be forced to leave. It would have been prudent to insist on finding housing from which you would not likely be forced to leave before you personally were quite ready to do so.

> We were in Hedgegate apartment #4 to begin with and there was an adjoining door to #3 (which was far larger than our place, and it had a fireplace). When #3 became vacant, we jumped at the chance to get the larger place. So #4 was occupied, and since there was a family coming on campus that needed a two bedroom apartment (we only needed one bedroom), we were forced to move. We couldn't move back to where we were before, so we chose a place that we were sure that we would not be moved from. (I just hope the floorboards can stand the strain of our bookshelves!)

Although I might also note that changes of address, strenuous and inconvenient though they are, are also frequently wonderful opportunities to beneficially re-arrange one's possessions into a more orderly and useful arrangement; there are indications that your latest move did also serve this function and so is not entirely to be regretted. Also, at the time when your problems were getting to you and you were seriously disturbed, even then you apparently did not think of dropping your service for the student needing tutoring in Spanish. Nothing required you to do that other than your own generosity, yet when your schedule was too much for you, you didn't withdraw the offer. While you might have felt that your failure to provide this service could have directly resulted in this student's failure in Spanish (with God knows what ultimate consequences on his future education and career, perhaps as US ambassador to El Salvador) this is not really true. It is the student's own responsibility to learn the subject matter. If you can't take him to the tutor, he can go by other means, or he can find a tutor who is more easily reached, or he can study the subject by himself and still learn it if he truly intends to do so. It can be done. In any event, at a time when you personally find the demands upon you to be greatly excessive, it is time for you to start considering which of these demands can be eliminated. (And yes, that could even include the publication of LAN'S LANTERN, although I personally would regret it if you were to cease publication.) Fortunately you seem to have emerged intact from the recent crises, in spite of the elements which I have noted.

> My priorities have always put students and education at the top, and I would cut personal things so that my students could avail themselves of my help. Now that I see more clearly that the administration thinks of the teachers as interchangeable (teaching is not assembley-line type work, but try to tell business-people that (businessmen mostly make up the Board of Trustees which runs the place); they would rather spend money on a survey or a consulting firm than raise teacher salaries), I am working things out for my own benefit. I am not letting the kids suffer, nor is my classroom teaching diminishing; my free time is becoming MINE, not the school's. // Because of the changes that are happening from the merger, a number of very good teachers are leaving. Had my financial situation been different, I would be moving along with them. As it is I am stuck here for another year or two. This may work out for the best (I'm trying to be optimistic) or it may turn out to be another nerve-wracking year (or two) (probably more realistic).

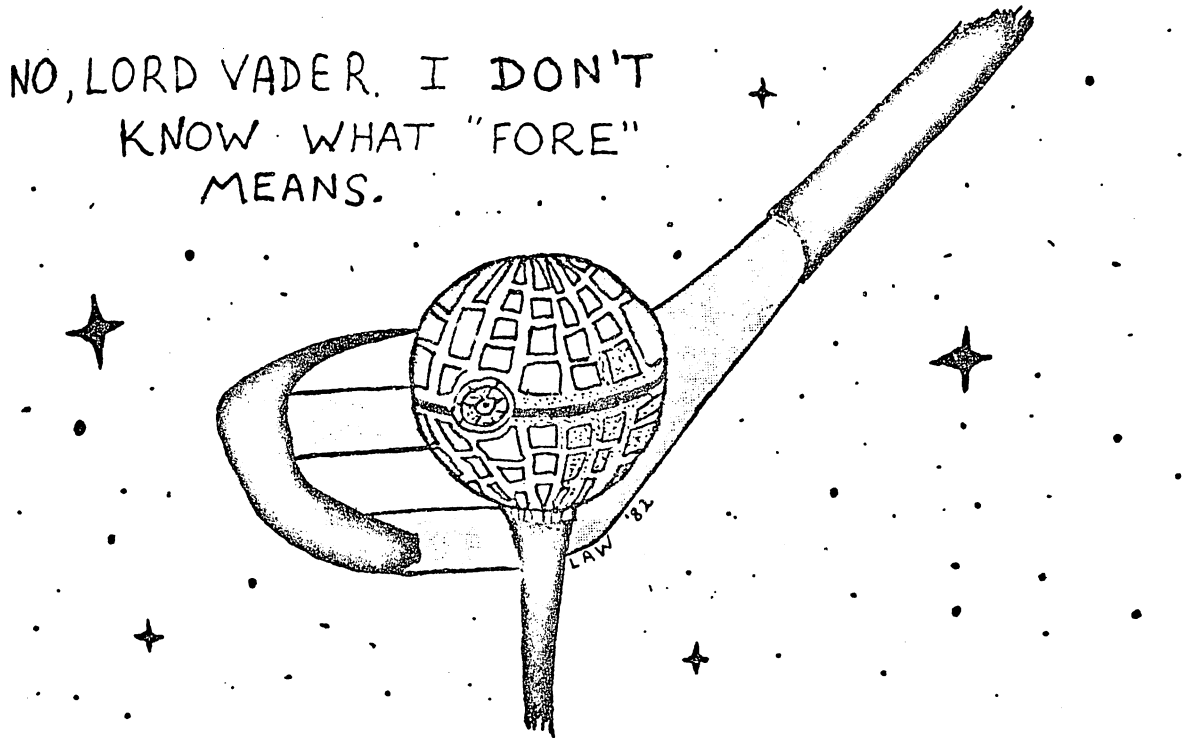


MARK LEEPER'S FILM ARTICLES

Jim Meadows: Mark R. Leeper missed what I think was the big special effects challenge of Superman III, the battle between Clark Kent and Superman. The challenge here is having one actor playing two characters in the same scene. So far, no director has figured out how to make this totally convincing, and I studied Richard Lester's attempt to see how he would fare. Regrettably, with all the money and time that Lester had, his scene was no better than the best I had seen previously, like a couple of Star Trek episodes shot on low budgets and rushed, six-day shooting schedules. The basic tricks are: (1) over the shoulder shots, and (2) the use of carefully posed doubles along with some sleight-of-hand editing. If you keep things moving well enough, the viewer forgets to watch for the trickery, and gets involved in the story. Another ploy is the use of mattes to put the actor in one shot twice, but the distance between the first image of the actor and the second image is always generous. I haven't seen any uses of that type of shot that really improved on ones made decades ago. Lester tried with one shot that was new to me. In that scene, Superman appears to be lifting Clark Kent up by his collar, the first image of the actor actually in physical contact with the second. But, of course, it's a matte, and obviously so.

It would be interesting to see what Leeper thinks of Supergirl, which closed in Peoria after just a couple of weeks.

Arthur Hlavaty: Mark Leeper says that everyone thinks that Return of the Jedi is better than The Empire Strikes Back. In fact, his is the first I've seen that said that. I go along with what seems to me to be the majority opinion: that Empire raised a lot of interesting questions, and Return found the least interesting answer for each.



Sally Syrjala: It is remarked "there is little argument that the new film is several cuts above The Empire Strikes Back." If reference to film editing cuts which tore the humanity out of the film is concerned, then perhaps the statement is correct "from a certain point of view." However, as the letter columns of the leading Star Wars letterzines will attest, there is certainly no overwhelming love for Return of the Jedi. Quite the contrary!

If I were to rank my perference for the SW films released to date, they would be:

1. The Empire Strikes Back
2. Star Wars: A New Hope
3. Return of the Jedi

Chapter 6 of the saga seems to be more machine than any of the three films.

I kept going back to see the movie one more time to find what it was lacking. To me the content was slick enough, but seemed empty. After a while I began to see it as the SF story which concerned itself with overpopulation: after a time one too many had been born and there were no more souls to give the body dimension. ROTJ seems to be missing the soul which gives life and feeling. Its main star is special effects which after a time lose their novelty.

What draws me to SW is the appeal of the mythic saga, not SFX. If I want special effects I could go out to the local army base and watch their practice maneuvers. This is not the reason for which I go to the movies.

It is interesting that a series of films which shows how technology can be defeated by more "primitive" means is primarily lauded for its technology. In SW:ANH, Luke turns off his shipboard computer to win his Death Star battle. The Ewoks are able to bring the Empire's machinery to a halt with sticks and stones guerilla warfare. In these instances, technology took second place to an inner drive.

ROTJ also did not answer all questions, It raised a few.

One would be: Did Han Solo regain his eyesight? This was never shown to be the case. What is hibernation sickness, and how long does it last? When Han frees Lando from the Sarlac, can he see with his outer or inner eyes? If he were seeing from an inner sense, it would explain why he stepped on the twig which alerted the storm troopers to his presence. It could mean his sensing abilities were not yet perfected. This could also explain why he was not able to hot-wire color coded wires on the bunker. A lack of normal eyesight could explain this, and many other questions presented in ROTJ.

Then there is the question of Obi-Wan and his Nixonese. He speaks of truth "from a certain point of view." Is not truth, truth, no matter which facet from which it is reflected? Too, would a Jedi Knight push patricide?

Next there is Luke. He did let anger control him for a time. If, once you start down the Dark Path, will it dominate your life? How will this prophecy affect Luke's life and the future of the Rebel Alliance?

Han seems to be considerably more that he appears on the surface. Who is he really, and what is his destiny?

These are only the questions which come to mind immediately. There are MANY more.

As to Han being more irritating in TESB: it wasn't until TESB that I began to see through his character and appreciate the Aragorn qualities within. Here Han's feelings came forth. His vulnerability and courage became reality. He learned acceptance. When confronted by Vader and on hearing Lando say he was sorry, Han replied he was too and marched in to face his fate. He accepted the carbon-freeze treatment, and got Chewie to so as well.

In TESB, Han was shown to be a leader and important to the Rebel Alliance. He had the respect of their generals and was called "sir" by their troops. He had won the love of the Princess. He was about to see his fate met when he went to be among the Gray Company in the deep sleep of carbon-freeze.

TESB was hauntingly beautiful and in my estimation the best of the SW Saga to date.

I also cannot understand a preference for automatic systems over human. Technology is nice, but it is a tool which is to be used. It should not be raised to a god-like level and

used to rule mankind. Technology should always remain the servant, not the ruler. Humanity is the thing we all have in common, imperfect as it may be sometimes -- Long May It Reign.

Mike Kircher: I liked looking over Leeper's Pal Awards in LL #15; I hadn't realized that some of those flicks were sooo old.

Dennis Fischer: As to Leeper's "The George Pal" Awards -- this name has been used for Awards previously at John and Bjo Trimble's conventions, and also for a George Pal society run out of the Academy of Science Fiction, Horror and Fantasy films. He makes many good choices, but I think he's still missed a few, and perhaps overpraised a few. Let's face it, as much a pioneer effort as Destination Moon and as much to be admired as it is, it is not a terribly good movie and Rocketship X-M released the same year was more than marginally better. The Monster from the Ocean Floor is downright terrible and only important as it marks the first film produced by Roger Corman. I find it incredible that for 1956, Invasion of the Body Snatchers is not even mentioned. In 1958, while The Fly may be considered a major SF film, it was not a terribly good one, and if Leeper was going to include horror and fantasy films, where's Horror of Dracula? That certainly was some kind of landmark. For that matter, in 1954 where is Ugetsu? Or in 1963, The Haunting (which included both a horror (ghosts) and a science fictional explanation (telekinesis) of the macabre events)? 1964 brought us The Sargasso Manuscript and The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao, both better than The Last Man on Earth. (And what's this about Peter Sellers playing his roles in Dr. Strangelove unmemorably? I and many others would disagree.) Where also are A Clockwork Orange, The Lathe of Heaven, Phantom of the Paradise, Death Watch (the brilliant adaptation of D. G. Compton's The Unsleeping Eye)? How about The Last Wave, Excalibur, Time Bandits, Blade Runner, Charley, Sleeper, Allegr Non Troppo, Lord of the Flies -- all deserving of mention. Oh well, these things are purely subjective, and Leeper does make several fine choices, but I'm convinced he overlooked several also.

Then again, we obviously have different tastes. I wasn't nearly so pleased with The Return of the Jedi and tended to side more with Norman Spinrad's view as expressed in Starlog. I also think he incorrectly assessed the two points Badham was making in Wargames, namely that the arms race is a "no-win situation", and that computer crime is unethical and dangerous. Unfortunately, if Leeper talks to anyone connected with our country's nuclear defense, he could hear several stories about how malfunctions almost set off the big one, but thanks to a human operator override, armageddon was averted. I would not advocate the elimination of machines nor humans from the process.

Mark Schulzinger: I have many disagreements with Mark Leeper's opinions concerning the movies, but that's what makes fandom. My wife Sally and I saw Schlock when we were living in Joplin and loved it. The film must have cost all of $25 to make but the care lavished on it made it look as if they had spent $37.50. The actor who played the Schlockthropus did a beautiful parody of Moonwatcher's behaviour, and the ending a la King Kong was delightful.

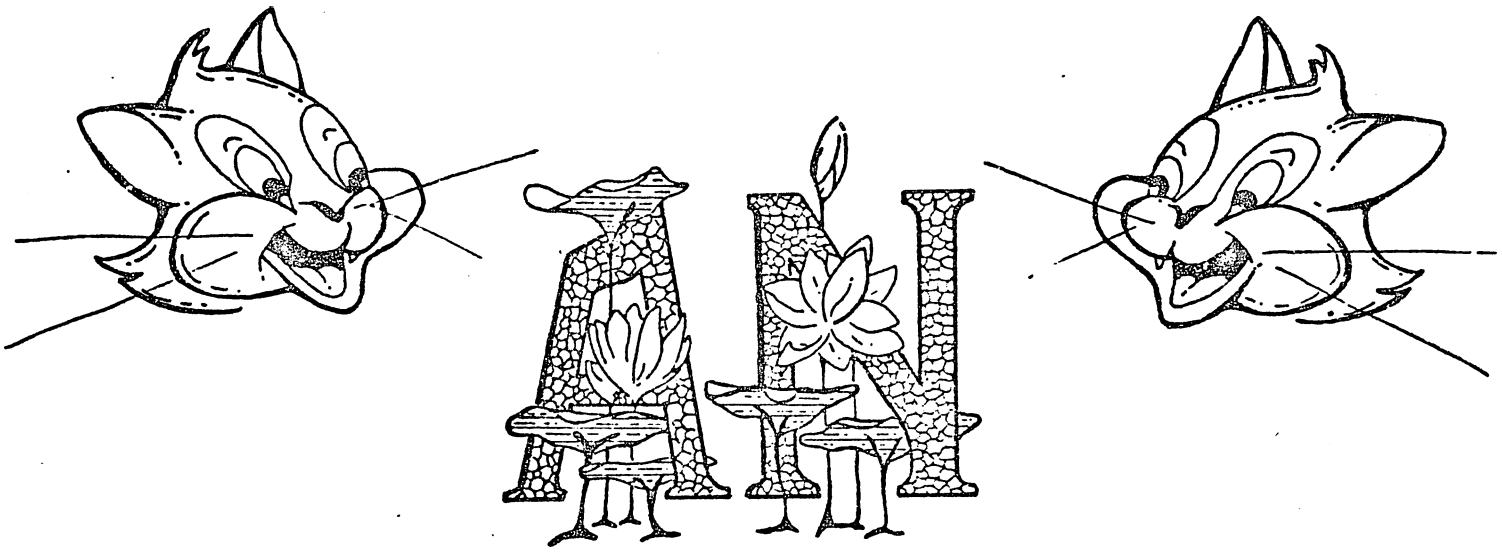
We had a chance to see Road Warrior in August when the local cable service gave us a free peek at what they were offering. The premise of the film may have been weak but the editing was extremely tight and the gratuitous sex and violence quite compelling (well, if you heard me at INCONJUNCTION, you know how I feel about that sort of stuff--love it!). Despite the theme, or because of it, the film was fascinating and I watched it twice (would have watched it yet again but the service was cut off before I could do so).

Mike Glicksohn: Mark Leeper has some truly outstanding standards which tend to render all his comments incredible to me. When someone tells me his vote for Best Science Fiction Film Ever goes to Five Million Years to Earth, I can no longer take seriously anything he says about a film I'm not personally familiar with. I read his article with interest but I'm certainly not going to put too much credence to what he has to say.

Ben Indick: Mark Leeper deserves a Pal Award himself for sitting through and then recalling all that stuff; I am, however, less sanguine about a number of his choices. As I was once told when a prize-winning play of mine was rejected elsewhere, "That's what makes horse-races." "Heretical" is scarcely the word for ignoring 2001: A Space Odyssey in favor of such ephemeral trash as he chose. Likewise for A Clockwork Orange.

Jackie Causgrove: Mark Leeper's overview of SF films I found of interest. My parents' way of saving on babysitting was to send my brother and me to the movies while they went bowling, or partying, or whatever. My parents had a very full social life; my brother and I watched a lot of movies, many of which Mark covers, and most of whose assessments I agree with. I'd put Rashomon above Man in the White Suit (though I'd be hard-pressed to defend either as a fantasy or SF film); Monolith Monsters above Kronos; On the Beach (far) above Journey to the Center of the Earth; The Time Machine at least tied with The Villager of the Damned; and Dr. Strangelove above anything that decade (save 2001, which he didn't review). Of the 70's films, I was gratified to see The Wicker Man and The Man Who Would Be King get some attention. The latter is only borderline fantasy, but an excellent film (as is All That Jazz, but only the after-death scenes would put it into the fantasy category -- the rest, if not autobiographical, is extremely close to a film/stage choreographer's experiences). We part ways on the 80's films. I enjoyed Dragonslayer and Excalibur, but thought his 1982 selections, well, barely watchable at best.

My parents also used to use the theatres for a babysitter on Saturday afternoons. Three movies for a quarter, and popcorn cost a dime a box. I saw lots of movies in the fifties at the theatres, and more on TV. Nowadays I think the prices are too prohibative to see a film randomly. // I have some disagreements myself with Mark's selections, but I bow to his expertise. He's seen a lot more films than I have.



THE ANDRE NORTON SPECIAL ISSUE

Clifton Amsbury: So what can I say about Andre Norton? It seems I began to read her because she got a prize for the best first science fiction book by an author already established in other fields. Back in those days they were always careful to explain that she was really Alice Mary Norton, Children's Librarian of the Cleveland Public Library. But now for many years she's lived among the cats in Florida, so I guess she's neither Alice Mary nor of the Cleveland Library, and it's really okay to call her Andre, even if I haven't had dinner with her.

Among the earliest books was that horrible Eye of the Monster, which, unlike her other books, was even then classifiable as "racist." And the superb series of books with Star in the title. Most of the early books were copyright by either a hardcover publisher or Ace Books, but Crossroads of Time in 1956 was copyright by A. A. Wyn, Inc. Wyn was Ace Books, and I believe that even then Don Wollheim was science fiction editor for Ace.

Since then there have been innumerable Norton books in categories claimed by fandom. On my shelf today I count sixty. Some are Ace Doubles with her name on both titles, and people wander in and borrow books all the time. She is popular with the borrowers, so I may own others. Furthermore, some of the early ones I borrowed from the Public Library here, and don't own.

My favorite series is the Time Trader series. Not only the series, but the individual books set a high standard, and capping it all were The Defiant Agents and their message that the impressing of subject and youthful armies could no longer be relied upon by governments seeking new conquests.

As far as I'm concerned, may she keep on writing forever.

Sally A. Syrjala: I am beginning to wonder if books may not be one way of a modern Shamanic journey, for they do allow the mind to travel to places which would otherwise not be open unto it. It is almost as if books are now the source of some of the "inward" journeying. For when we finish a particularly satisfying novel, we do emerge from its pages refreshed and seeing the world in a more vivid context. In Myths to Live by, Joseph Campbell says:

> "In sum, then: The inward journeys of the mythological hero, the shaman, the mystic, and the schizophrenic are in principle the same; and when the return or remission occurs, it is experienced as a rebirth: the birth, that is to say, of a "twice-born" ego, no longer bound in by its daylight-world horizon. It is now known to be but the reflex of a larger self, its proper function being to carry the energies of an archetypal instinct system into fruitful play in a contemporary space-time daylight situation. One is now no longer afraid of nature; nor of nature's child, society--which is monstrous too, and in fact cannot be otherwise; it would otherwise not survive. The new ego is in accord with all this, in harmony, at peace; and, as those who have returned from the journey tell, life is then richer, stronger, and more joyous."

It would seem this also describes the manner in which the characters in Andre Norton's books are portrayed. They take this inner journey to meet with the fundamental self, the self that carries instinctive knowledge of how to deal with the universe at large. That inward journeying serves to strengthen and to make it easier to deal with the world as it is.

It is interesting to see how the role of Shaman may now be played by authors sitting at their typewriters and using that magical device to open portals to the common traits which we all share. One book will have its many pages become the focus for one journey which may provide us with helping spirits to aid our own individual journeyings: That is a true mythic journey.

It is intriguing to be able to find the common thread which unites all. The same basic plots playing over and over with only the sociological manifestations changed. Such books as Campbell's are something which you can use to see how films and books may now be the main areas which we use to expand our consciousness. Werner Hertzog said in an interview that his films are dream images. I find looking at

both films and books from the mythological viewpoint to be a way not only to better understand them, but also to better understand yourself.

By the way, the illustration on page two was terrific.

John Thiel: One certainly has to wait a while for the LANTERN, but it was certainly worth it. The NORTON SPECIAL ISSUE seems quite successful and certainly is an item worth having (not the least for my art, which repro'd much better than I had thought it might though the shading wasn't too visible).

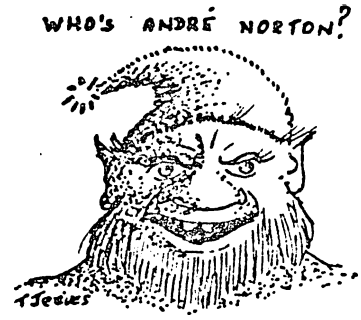
I appreciate the Norton bibliographies, and I'm looking forward to the next issue which I suppose will have stored-up feedback.

Buck Coulson: I'm not one of the many whose introduction to fandom was a Norton juvenile, but I did read and enjoy them in my earlier days. I still buy her books, but don't always find time to read them. Andre is a pleasant lady who writes very good books and has had an enormous influence on the field -not that many authors have been influenced by her style, but that reading her books is what got the other authors in the field to begin with.

David Palter: My article in the Norton issue will perhaps strike a slightly discordant note from the others, so I think I will briefly respond in advance to say that we should recognize and appreciate authors such as Simak and Norton who have made massive and invaluable contributions to our beloved genre, but at the same time we should not deify them (only one SF writer has managed to elevate himself to the status of deity, that being LRH; the results are not fortunate). I find it interesting that not one word of criticism appears about Andre Norton anywhere in this issue other than in my own article (except that Don D'Ammassa does note that some of her stories are weak). Come on, folks. Andre Norton is a very good author, an important author, and she does deserve our thanks for having so productively devoted most of her life to writing the kind of fiction we like to read--but with all that, she is far from perfect.

With the above self-defense aside, let me also say that LL 16 actually has given me a greater appreciation of Andre Norton's accomplishments as a writer. Certainly it is most impressive to read about the kind of influence she has had on Joan Vinge, Allan Trimpi, Jack Bridge, and others. Clearly Andre Norton does more than just entertain; she has had a major influence for the better on the lives of many of her readers. It's quite an accomplishment.

You missed Greg Hills' review of 'Ware Hawk which criticized parts of the novel. // The purpose of these Special Issues is to honor the chosen writer, and I'm not sure that heavy-handed criticism is necessarily a way of doing a person honor. On the other hand, giving a more balanced view as you and Don D'Ammassa (and Gregg Hills) did was appropos. // By the way, you were not the only person to point this out to me; I did get some verbal comments from fans.



Mark Schulzinger: Rick Brooks' article in the Norton Issue of LL was of particular interest because of his quotes from Bruno Bettelheim's works. In the course of my practice I have the occasion to administer reams of intelligence tests. The Comprehension Subset of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale includes three proverbs. It is rare, in recent years, to find anyone who is able to explain them satisfactorily.

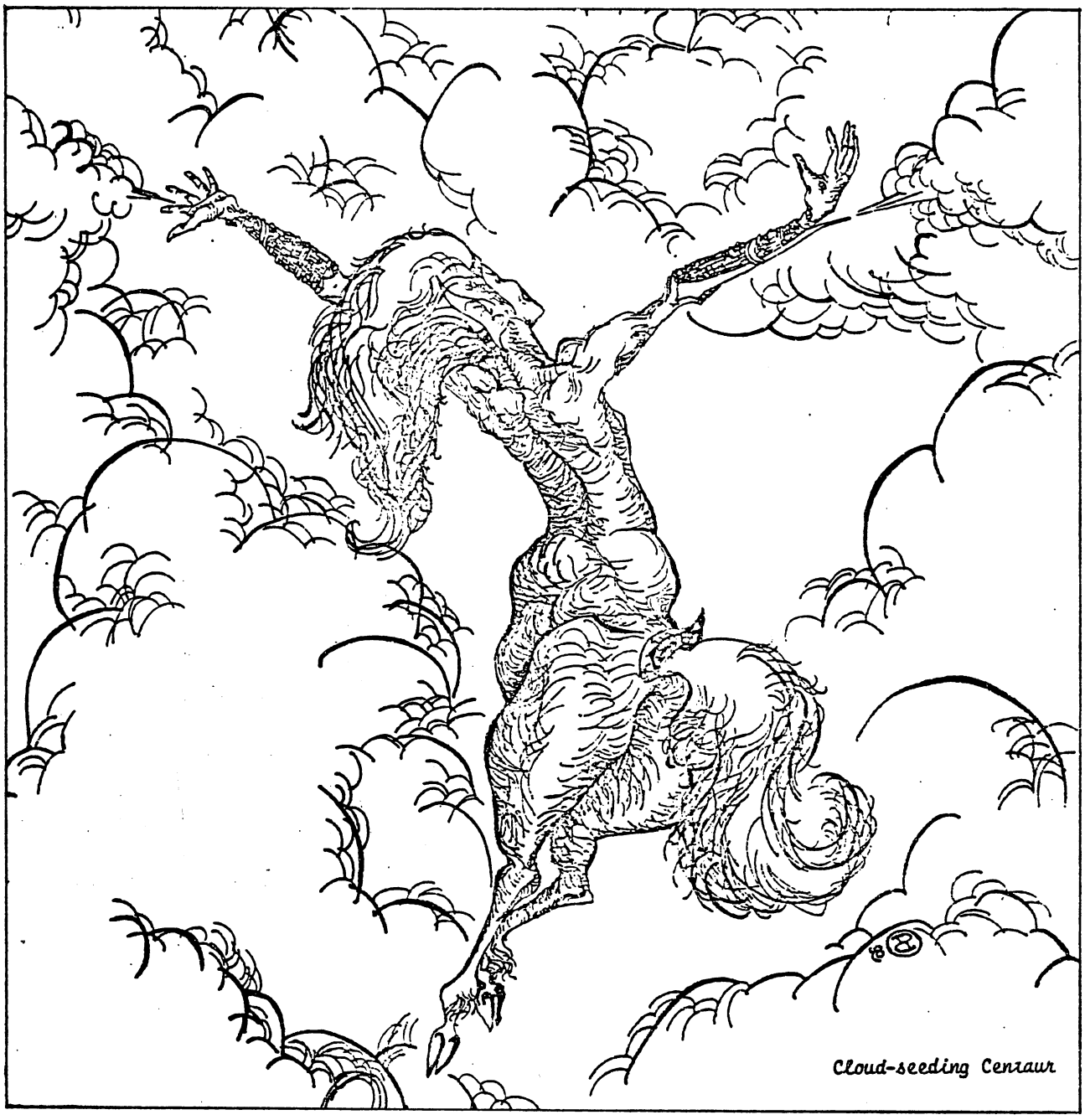
For millenia folk wisdom has been expressed in the forms of proverbs and fantasy stories. They have been used to transmit gross information in sugar-coated form from one generation to the next. Although they are usually overly general and (particularly as far as proverbs are concerned) trite, they have served their purpose admirably.

The escape from fantasy to the real world has been fostered by well-meaning but foolish professionals in many areas who felt that fantasy kept children from discovering what reality was like and thus impaired the development of their social interactive skills.

We fans aren't the only ones who know that people must have legends, myths, and fantasy in order to survive, but we talk about it in terms of "sense of wonder" rather than in terms of morality and imaginal development. There have been many myth builders in the fields of SF and fantasy, and those of us who have read their stories have generally benefitted from them in much the same ways people in earlier ages benefitted from their myths and legends. Perhaps SF and fantasy will be seen, in eons to come, in the same way we view fairy tales today. I hope so.

Sandra Miesel: I'm so glad to see the Norton Special in print at last. It arrived providentially when my younger daughter was about to do a report on Norton for her high school American Lit class. Now she can easily demonstrate the existence of enough critical materials on Norton to justify this choice of subject--the other kids are all doing Hemingway, Steinbeck, et al.

Another project in Norton's honor is about to be published. It's a unique Festschrift anthology edited by Susan Shwartz called The Moonsinger's Friends containing contributions by 16 fantasy writers who acknowledge Andre's influence and admire her personally. (Yes, I'm one of them, with my first short story sale, "The Shadow Heart.") Participants managed to keep the secret for two years until the book was ready to go to press, whereupon Susan sent Andre the cover proof and sprang the surprise. This will be published in July of '85 by Bluejay Books in hardback and trade paperback, then by Tor in mass paperback.



Ben Indick: Your Andre Norton issue has all the earmarks of affection and respect, and must surely have pleased that estimable and modest lady. She has apparently done very well indeed for many, many readers. One of the nicest things about the issue is the wide number of fans you have garnered, all in love with her, some of them very famous, others merely humble readers.

Truly a fine addition to your growing list of tribute issues, and very generous of you. It is no inexpensive hobby (but fandom never was) and is representative of fanac at its best.

Sheryl Birkhead: Two small points -- I'd like to see bigger margins and darker type (see, I said they were small). It is a nice package, and the Tarn drawings add a nice continuity -- I could have taken more of them sprinkled throughout! You sure do go for the bigger special projects.

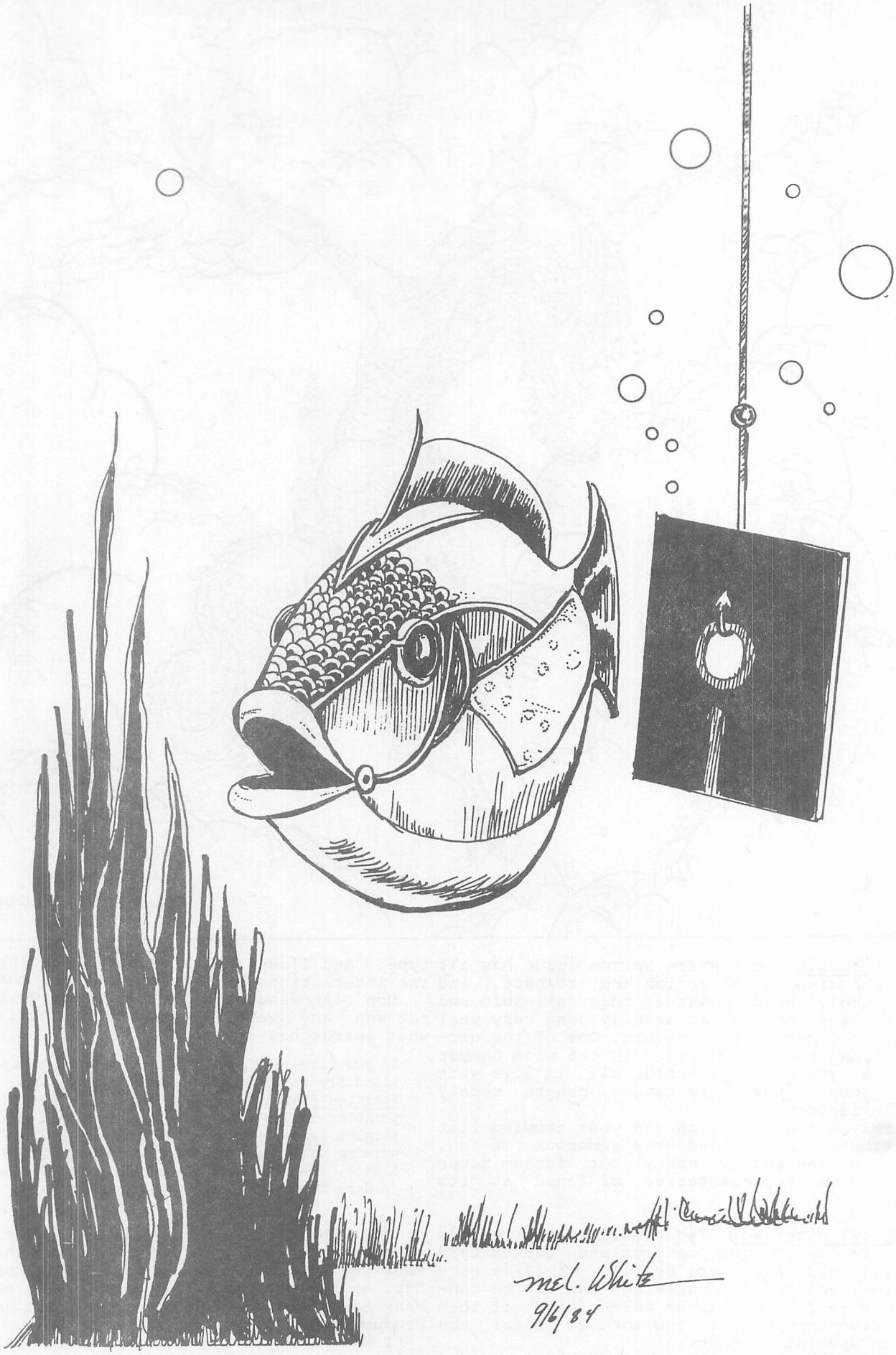
After reading "Andre's Animals," I wanted to read more about them, perhaps have some mini-sketches of each, categorized by animal type. And I've always enjoyed reading about the interactions between animals and men.

Don D'Ammassa says Andre's short works have not won any awards. Just out of curiosity, what awards has she won?

If you like reading about man/animal interactions try David Brin's novels Sundiver and Startide Rising. // I have tried to get the printing darker this time, and increased the margins (except between the columns--I'm still working on it!). // Andre is a Nebula Grand Master. I think that's the only award she has. // Here is another Sylvus Tarn drawing.

Andre Norton: I was quite overwhelmed to received the copies of LAN'S LANTERN which you sent me dealing with my work. You more than "did me justice" and I appreciate so much the many kind and generous things said about my production.

I wish I could say thank you in person--not only to you, but to all those who took the time and trouble to write articles, letters, and comments for this issue.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