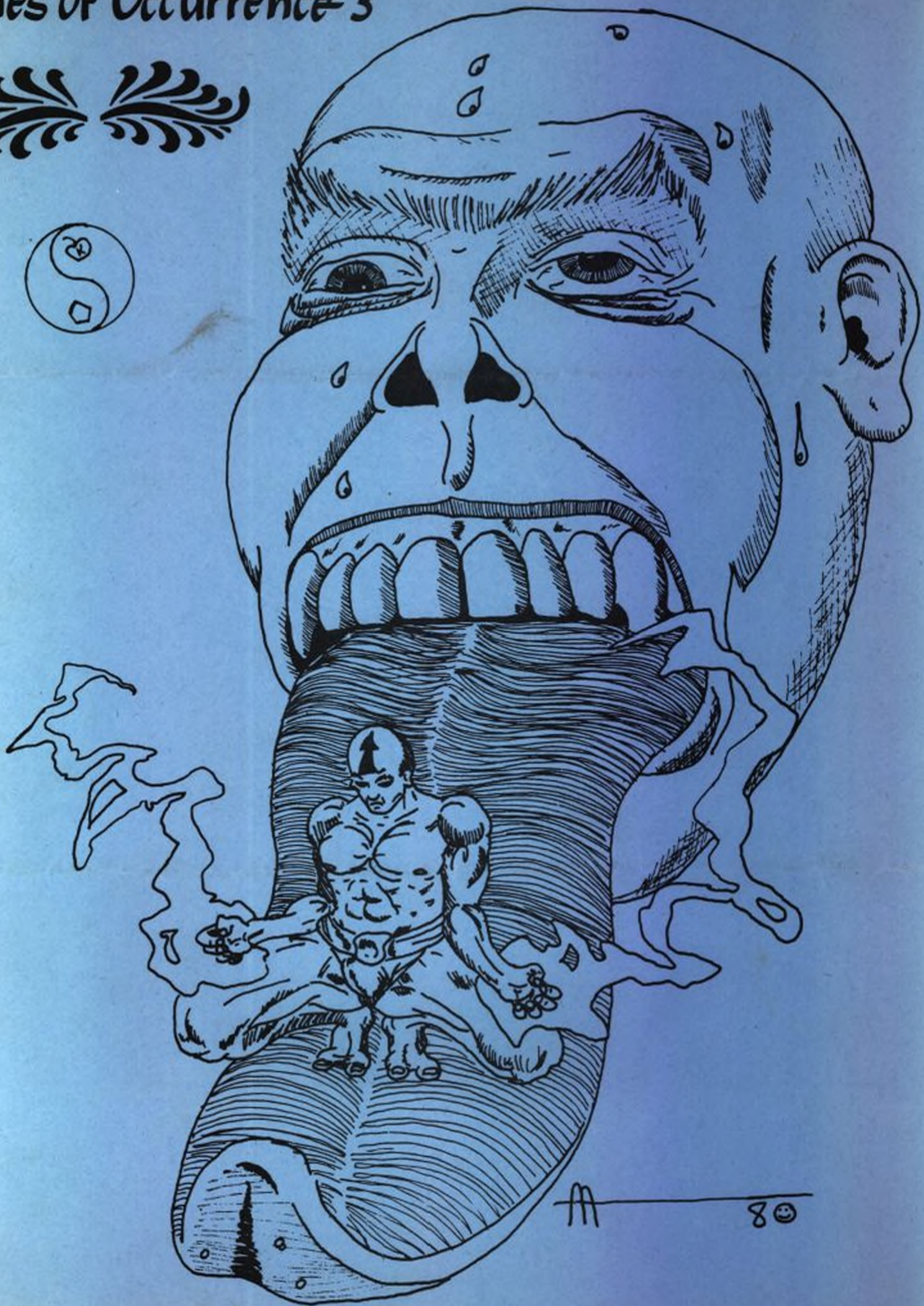


# Lines of Occurrence 3



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Some say that a con report should have a theme. If so, I would be tempted to build this report of my very first worldcon ever around the theme of failure--failure in dealing with the Real World, failure to meet people I wanted to meet & to spend enough time with some of those I did meet, failure to win the Hugo. But that would be misleading, for in many ways Noreascon II was a success for me, and it certainly was a pleasure. Perhaps my tendency to think of it as a failure indicates setting my standards too high, that I have still not gotten over my underachieving youth & the burden of a great potential. Anyway, this con report has no theme.

In any event, things began inauspiciously. Adrienne Fein & I had reserved a room for Friday thru Monday morning, but we felt that we wanted to get to the con earlier, so when Donna Camp & Marc Glasser were kind enough to offer us space in their room Thursday night, we gratefully accepted.

The train schedule said that there was a train through Rye at 2:30 PM that would go to Boston. Unfortunately, the train schedule was a year old, and in the intervening time, Anthrax had decided that such a train interfered with their plans to have 1.5 passengers per seat on all trains, and so they had canceled it. Adrienne & I managed to deal with that & get on a later train, but we wound up getting into Boston in the evening.

The cab from the station to the hotel provided a legendary experience. On being told that we were on our way to a science-fiction convention, the cab driver actually said, "That Buck Rodgers stuff?" (We also took us to the hotel by a circuitous route which wound up costing about \$2 more, thus demonstrating the moral inferiority of anti-sf bigots.)

At the hotel, it seemed for a moment as if the entire con could be held in the lobby at that time. In some order, we were greeted by Suzi Stefl, Lynne Holdom, Rick Brown, Maia (Mary Cowan), Warren Cartwright, and Tony Parker, and I'm sure I've left out a few.

Marc & Donna were not amongst those we saw in the lobby, but we soon managed to track them down and find our way up to their room. There, the partying began, and soon I met one of the legendary figures I was hoping to see at the con.



All I was trying to do was accept children on their own terms and the little beggars gave me 10 to 20.

Samuel E. Konkin III is not nine feet tall, though he does noticeably tower over me. He does not emit lightning bolts from his forehead to strike down partyarchs & statista, or at least he did not do so in my presence. He is a big, but surprisingly soft-spoken man who would not look out of place sitting at a bar with Waylon Jennings & Willie Nelson, and he & I had a most pleasant chat. Also in attendance was a man who has written some truly fascinating fiction--R. A. Lafferty.

My report of the evening is necessarily incomplete because the party was also attended by the legendary Yoda Keebler, and I tried one of his enchanted cookies. The experience merely reinforced my belief that my favorite kind of substance abuse is, for me, incompatible with public gatherings, as anything which diminishes my mediocre social skills is counterproductive, no matter how good it feels. Thus I compromised by eating or smoking near the end of each evening.

In any event, we return to our narrative the following morning, at 8. Some malign deity or bearer of Powers has placed a curse upon my head, such that I wake up at 8 in the morning and find it most difficult to get back to sleep. This is particularly harmful at cons, as it tends to force me to go to sleep at some bizarrely early hour like 2 AM.

Friday brought new problems. Adrienne was suffering from a minor infection--not contagious nor serious enough to keep her from attending the con, but annoying. She had undergone tests from her doctor back home and called him to get the results. He prescribed some medicine for her.

But the state of Massachusetts is very vigilant. It would not do to permit out-of-staters to engage in nameless abominations while under the influence of illicitly-obtained antibiotics. So they have a law saying that prescriptions from out of state are invalid unless made by a doctor specifically licensed to practice in Massachusetts.

Problems. I will not bore you with the difficulties that bit of statist pettiness caused us. Suffice it to say that after much difficulty, and with heroic assistance from Neil Belsky, Adrienne managed to get her hands on the necessary contraband.

There was a most welcome interruption to all this nonsense. As Adrienne was on the pay phone, attempting the doomed task of reasoning with an Authority, I noticed a small group of people walking past, and Barney Neufeld, a tall man, visible above them. I called to him. Seeing Barney again was nice, but there turned out to be even better news, as the group also included Sally Ann Syrjala and Leslie David, 2 fellow LASPAFANS who were very high on my hope-to-meet list.

Also interspersed with the difficulties, Adrienne & I managed to get a room. It was a nice large one, and it came equipped with supplies. The previous guests had left behind some vodka, a bottle of club soda, a six-pack of ~~tattlat~~ Perrier water, and, for some reason, 3 bottles of catsup.

The size of the room, and the supplies, were Good Things, as Adrienne & I had decided to give a party, inviting fellow members of the Illuminatus! nut cult and APA-69. Bear, Rick Brown, Richard Onley, & I went to a nearby supermarket for food & drink, and we prepared for the gathering.

The party turned out to be scheduled for the same time as a Wiccan circle, which drew somewhat the same group, but was still extremely successful. Sally & Leslie gave me a present. Somehow they had gotten the idea that I am the sort of person who says, "Hello, little girl, I'm Uncle Arthur. Come with me, and I'll give you a lollipop and something to suck on." (Possibly because I do say things like that, but only to "little girls" who have passed puberty.) Anyway, they found a lollipop in the shape of a banana, and as Sally said, somehow they thought of me. This gave the party something of a theme.

Another guest was one of the best fan artists I know, Nina Bogin. Nina's specialty is drawings of fellow fan, and they almost always resemble their subjects. (This, I am informed, is very hard to do.) She was sketching at the party, and she did one of a group of us. Bear & Adrienne, among others, looked like themselves, but she had made me look like Terry Carr.

One disappointment: GiGi Dane, a good friend from APA-69, had hoped to be at the con, but it turned out that she couldn't get there. Her husband, Bruce, did show up and came to the party. That's how I'd known him--GiGi's husband--but he turned out to be an interesting person, too.

A couple of meetings fit in here somewhere, but I'm not sure where. One was Joan Hanke-Woods, a most talented fan artist. I've never gotten around to asking her for art because I usually have more than I can use, but I like her stuff. When we met, she managed to bring up the fact that she had been nominated for a Hugo, which I can

not blame her for, as only a lamentable lack of subtlety, of which I am only too aware, kept me from doing likewise over & over again. In any event, I underwent one of my rare bursts of quick thinking and said, "Me too. It's a pleasure to meet an equal."

The other was Gary Farber, whom I've met once or twice before. A couple of years ago, with no malice aforethought, I am sure, Gary laid an albatross around my neck. In a review of DR, published in the 35th issue of KARASS (Linda Bushyager's newzine of blessed memory) Gary described DR as "devoted to being unfashionable and finding the secret truth of the universe." I suspected he was, at best, half right, but I did not complain. Then Colin Lester's International Science Fiction Yearbook picked up the phrase. Then, I heard from a reference book of little magazines that wanted to list DR under that description. Having some idea of the audience that would appeal to, I suggested another description entirely. But shortly before Worldcon, I got a letter from someone offering to write fiction for DR if the price was right. I informed hir (the letter was signed with initials) that the price wasn't and asked where s/he had heard of me. S/he sent me a clipping from an unnamed source describing DR as (you guessed it) "devoted to finding the secret truth of the universe," & mentioned that s/he too was interested in such quests. Uh oh. (The secret truth of the universe is buzzards, OK? Are there any more questions?) Let me put it this way: If I don't get any more people looking for the secret truth of the universe, that's OK. If I get one more I'll introduce him, her, or it to the first one. But if I get a whole lot, I may start telling them there's this person named Farber....





Saturday afternoon's major activity was the collation of APA-nu, the apa of an organization known as NYUSFS.

Those who wish to define social stratifications in fandom generally agree that NYUSFS is the organization Trekkies join to have someone to look down on. As Akbar Del Piombo once said, "Sacha's taste was distinguishable by a total absence of prejudice as regards age, size, color, or physical condition. It closely resembled no taste at all." NYUSFS has a similarly nondiscriminatory policy, as even the most superficial acquaintance with some of its members will demonstrate. But note that I said no taste, rather than bad taste, as there are some thoroughly delightful people in it.

APA-nu reflects the organization which spawned it. Its distinctive approach is what Sam Konkin calls "psychotic dada."

This form appears to be largely the creation of a remarkable writer named Jeff Grimshaw, who holds roughly the place in APA-nu that J. G. Ballard held in NEW WORLDS. Like Ballard, he is original, inventive, and idiosyncratic. Like Ballard, he holds a jaundiced view of the contemporary world that fascinates and at times repels. Like Ballard, he is a bad influence, because he makes it look so easy that others try to emulate him and discover (or, worse, demonstrate without discovering) that he really is inimitable, and the apa is often littered with his failed followers. (A further warning: Like Picasso, who once claimed that he occasionally painted Fake Picassos, Jeff will every so often write a shabby, third-rate imitation Grimshaw just to keep the audience on its toes.)

But Psychotic Dada is by no means the only thing APA-nu has to offer. There are usually zines by Sam Konkin & Donna Camp, two of the champions of the "thorough, but obscure" style of mailing comments. (The third of the Big Three, Adrienne Fein, does occasional 'nuzines.) There are Nina Bogin's excellent pictorial con reports, which I mentioned earlier. There are the curious fictions of I. Abro Cinli & Greg Baker. There are now the awesome putridities of Rick Brown. The issue we collated at the Worldcon included a bit of STAR WARS porn in which Luke and Han made a Leia sandwich. (Adrienne suggests a sequel in which we go from "Let the wookie win" to "Let the wookie watch.") If I have whetted your appetite for

these verbal and pictorial delights, I suggest that you send \$1 for a spec copy to Marc Glasser, 41 Eastern Parkway, # 10-B, Brooklyn, NY 11238, and tell him Uncle Arthur sent you.

After the collation, Judy Bemis, Tony Parker, Neil Belsky, Adrienne, and I were thoroughly misserved at the Ground Round (which overcooked the food until it tasted like Ground Ground). The evening was devoted to party hopping, among other things.

I might as well confess that on Sunday, Adrienne & I did something trufans are not supposed to do: We attended a panel. Our friends Dennis Jarog & Judy Gerjuoy were taking part in the panel on "Author Cults." (Note subtle propagandizing in the title.) They & Susan Schwartz and a few others whose names I have forgotten made some valid points about how participating in the alternate realities created by specific authors can be not merely escape but a form of imagined & symbolic adventure which prepares them for dealing with the real world. They all denied the cheap slur implicit in the term "cult," and made it clear that their feelings were merely respect for creative power. This impression was dissipated a bit at the end when several panelists sacrificed small animals to their chosen writer.

(To return to the world of mere fact, Adrienne & I both decided independently that while we enjoyed the panel, we had reached the stage where we preferred to be on panels ourselves.)

Wandering through the huckster room a bit later, I had the good fortune to run into someone I was hoping to meet--William Rotsler. Not only has he entertained me in a variety of ways--from his delightful minimalist cartoons to "Patron of the Arts" to Supertongue--but he, like such other talents as Frederik Pohl and Robert Bloch, graciously encouraged me from the beginning of my fan-writing career. We did not have much time to talk, but it was a pleasure to meet him.

Thence to the fan room, competently run by Dick & Nicky Lynch (2 more old apa friends I was glad to have the chance to meet in person), for the collation of WOOF.

WOOF stands for Worlcon Organization Of Faneditors, and is an annual apa, collated at every worldcon. I thought this was a simply marvelous idea, and put together 2 pages of assorted smartass, sociologizing, Filth, and pasteup junk (along with quality illos by Eluki Kenobi & FMaki Shimbo) & printed up a mess of copies. (I still have some & will gladly send them in exchange for a self-addressed stamped envelope.)

The apa was a bit of a disappointment, I must say. I expected mobs of both contributors & collators, but I found a single table, with about a dozen people around it. Still, the apa had some interesting contributions & the collation gave me a chance to meet a couple more postal friends--Sra Swider & Wayne Brenner--as well as a completely new person, Julie Scott.

There, too, Adrienne & I met (by pre-arrangement) with Carol Kennedy and her brand-new husband, Jonathan Adams. We went out to the nearby Chinese Spaghetti House, and except for a slight amount of difficulty in extinguishing Adrienne's flaming Polynesian dinner, we had an excellent time.

And then it was time for the big moment --the awards. I had assumed, or at least hoped, that I would remain relatively calm through the presentation. The ever-efficient con committee had gotten me a packet with a variety of goodies in it, including 2 tickets for the Special Nominees' Section and a large red ribbon proclaiming me a HUGO NOMINEE, which I of course had the bad taste to wear. And so Adrienne & I sat in the nominees' section, taking seats behind Alexis Gilliland, for whom I've been campaigning for years. There I noticed Lea Day, still another spa friend, and one whom I'd met at my party. She was with Keith Curtis, there in his role as DUFF winner, and I was pleased to note that he too is an illuminatus nut. (We're everywhere! Today DUFF, tomorrow the world!)

The ceremonies began a bit late. The author of more first-rate sf than anyone else in history--Robert Silverberg--turned out to be a fascinating toastmaster. He announced, "This year's ceremony will feature a special treat, Isaac Asimov's bar mitzvah...Is Rabbi Ellison in the house?" The alleged rabbi, wearing a shiny red jacket Mojo described as "something no self-respecting Puerto Rican pimp would be caught dead in," conferred with the toastmaster, who then announced that Rabbi Ellison first wished to perform Lester Del Rey's circumcision. Not all of the performance was at that high a level of taste, but after making a joke out of the Gandalfs, insofar as that is not a redundancy, Silverberg got to the genuine H\*U\*S\*O\*S\*.

The first was the fan artist award, and Alexis finally won it. I cheered. Then the fan writer award, presented by Terry Carr. Carr got to my name, attempted to pronounce it, came close, and said, "Aw, he won't win. No one can pronounce his name." It would be nice, I thought, to win the award after that, to have Maia (who was one of the people who did the actual handing out of the awards) escort me across the stage, but it was not to be. Terry Carr was spared the pronunciation challenge as Bob Shaw won.

((Noted conspiracy theorist Adam Weishaupt has asked for a bit of space here: Just as revelations of the true role of the Trilateral Commission have forced David Rockefeller to clumsy public denials, so my investigations into the machinations of the Learned Elders of FAPA have forced them to the crude step of having one of the members claim not to know another. We know better.))

I sat there, perhaps sulking, as the rest of the Hugos were announced. George Scithers,



who looked more like a successful feed & grain merchant than any other participant, won the Editor award. George R. R. Martin had no sooner gotten back to his seat with his short story award than he had to get up again to accept the novelette award. Barry Longyear took the novella award with his excellent "Enemy Mine." Finally, the Big One went to, alas, Arthur C. Clarke for his ragbag of story ideas, The Fountains of Paradise.

Logically, I should feel no pain at losing. After all, I've been losing Hugos since the damned things began. The only difference is that this year I came closer. Surely, there is no shame in losing to Bob Shaw, a man who has been turning out first-rate fan writing for a long time. And in my more lucid moments, I am aware that there is no such thing as "the best fan writer," that there are a lot of good, but different, fan writers, and thus that it is largely a matter of taste whether one prefers one of the nominees, or Dave Locke, Avedon Carol, Ed Zdrojewski, Jeff Grimshaw, or Marty Levine, to name just a few.

Nonetheless, the conditioning that tells us that anything but WINNING is LOSING turned out to be a bit stronger in me than I had suspected, and I was a bit depressed.

In fact, I was tired. The long con was taking its toll. There were people I'd wanted to see, and wouldn't. One particularly was Gil Gaier. I knew the party he was supposed to be at, but there was a problem. The architect who created the Sheraton-Boston had been frightened at a tender age by the second volume of Lord of the Rings, so he designed the hotel in the form of two towers. And I was in the wrong one. The thought of facing 2 elevator rides was too much.

#### L'Envoi

Monday morning I felt a bit better. And at breakfast I got an insight into the Hugo which had pissed me off the most. Someone I will mercifully refrain from identifying mentioned voting for The Fountains of Paradise. Preparatory to delivering a harangue, I said, "You liked that?" "Oh, I didn't read it," was the reply, "but Clarke is a hard-science writer, and he's written so much good stuff in the past." As Brian Aldiss said, sf may be about the future, but fandom is about the past. Oh well, that's democracy for you.

# Reviews

The Barbie Murders, by John Varley  
(Berkley pb, 260 pp., \$2.25)

Last time, I mentioned the "new wave" in sf, and suggested several possible definitions of it. I'd like to return to a couple of those.

One (most frequently used by opponents of the New Wave) is in terms of their view of humanity. New Wavers tend to see Homo sapiens as an uppity species, seeking power & comfort and other evils, instead of submitting to Mother Nature. But, we are reassured, sooner or later, either these pushy little beings will do themselves in, or else Mother Nature will get out the paddle & give them the spanking they so richly deserve. This approach comes out in the "disaster" or "post-holocaust" novels of J. G. Ballard and M. John Harrison (then) and Suzy McKee Charnas (now). Old Wavers, on the other hand, believe that since our species is gifted with intelligence, we can triumph over the oppressive parts of our environment without resorting to stupid force and destruction. By this definition, I am a hard-core Old Waver. The New Wave approach can be amusing in the hands of a sufficiently clever writer (Kurt Vonnegut, in The Sirens of Titan) but usually produces boring & masochistic fiction.

But there is another definition. The New Wave looked at the majority of the sf that preceded it, with its white male heroes, mindless heroines, emphasis on violence as the best solution, unquestioned assumption that heterosexual monogamy was the best path for all, etc., and said there's got to be a better way, and derived one, from the best of the sf that had preceded it, as well as mainstream examples. By that definition, I am a New Waver.

Maybe the definitions were never any good, or maybe there's been a synthesis in the last 10 years, but today there are writers who are both Old and New in the same way I am, and one of these is John Varley.

Varley's reality is one in which science has given us good things. Humanity has been freed from being trapped in one planet (tho not in the way we might like). Nor are we trapped in sex roles or other restrictions of the body. But Old Wave as Varley may be in that sense, he is profoundly New Wave in reacting to feminism, gay liberation, consciousness expansion, and other positive social changes.

The Barbie Murders is a collection of short stories which represent Varley at his best. "Bagatelle" is a suspense story set in the future. "Equinoctial" is a look at possible approaches to dealing with the environment. "Beatnik Bayou" is a look at future education. They, and the other stories in the book, are most worth reading.

THE WRETCH TAKES TO WRITING, available for the usual (I think from Cheryl Cline, 1621 Detroit Ave., # 23 ((aha!)), Concord, CA 94520.

I mentioned in DR a while back that I don't pretend to understand Punk Rock. I theorized that there seemed to be an element of glorification of stupidity, envy, and violence in it. That theory has, alas, been confirmed by contact with some of the Punk punks in fandom. But there must be more to it than that.

My evidence for saying so is Cheryl Cline's punk/fanzine, in fact punk/feminist/fanzine. (Cheryl offers evidence that this is not a contradiction in terms.) Her title comes from Virginia Woolf (hardly a typical punk source) and while I cannot judge her writings on music, she seems generally to know what she is talking about. One feature I enjoy is her skilled use of rubber-stamp art to provide illustration & contrast. This is a most enjoyable zine.

nfs, available for \$1 from Taral Wavne, 1812-415 Willowdale Ave., Willowdale, Ont. M2N 5B4 CANADA.

This is a portfolio of Taral's best serious art work, in the form of a coloring book. Most of the drawings are of Taral's own extraterrestrials, the Kjola. Taral's Kjola at their best have an eerie beauty --all the charm of Jerry Collins's Bambi creatures, with the addition of a definite alienness. At times, the Kjola have slipped to mere cuteness, a quality which, combined with the eroticism Taral occasionally employs, gives an effect not unlike kiddie porn. But Taral has chosen well from his own work, and most of the illos here are delightful. I highly recommend this collection. Another good thing about it is that it does not contain Taral's opinions on matters smoffish.





Another Good Thing I'd like to mention is an innovation in huckstering. Donna Camp has taken to selling home-made bread, cookies, jams, and preserves at cons. Very tasty.



I don't care what anyone says; I like Empiricon. The social arbiters I mentioned in the Worldcon report say that it is beneath contempt. In FILE 770, Darrell Schweitzer reported that "New York fandom was conspicuous by its absence," from which we may conclude that the con was actually run by ringers from Bridgeport. It also runs at the same time as Westercon, which is a problem for fans adventurous enough to welcome coast-to-coast travel.

I enjoyed Empiricon. One interesting factor was their imaginative choice of Guests of Honor, tho I accept the possibility that they were making a virtue of necessity.

The Pro GoH was a book editor, for the first time I can recall, and they picked the best one. Dave Hartwell used to be a reviewer, whose opinions were not only correct (i.e., close to mine), but well expressed. He then became an editor, first at Berkley, now at Pocket Books. In the meantime, he put together the Gregg Press line of quality hardcover reprints, based on the revolutionary assumption that such reprinting should go to the major works of contemporary writers, as well as to windy 19th-century tracts whose main virtues are Historical Importance and expired copyright. Now, at Pocket, he is bringing out good stuff. In fact, they reprinted 2 of my all-time favorites (John Sladek's *Mechasm* and Chester Anderson's *The Butterfly Kid*) in consecutive months. Now if only Dave could get Pocket off its corporate ass to publish the other two volumes of *Schrodinger's Cat*.

The Fan GoH was a good buddy of mine, Marc Glasser. Marc is probably not what you would think of as a BNF, but he is a major figure in what I am ignorant enough to think of as New York fandom, and a hell of a nice guy. Marc gave a very good GoH speech, in which he mentioned that fandom is a place where you can be your own hoax, where you are given a second chance to make yourself in a better image than the mundane world has given you, and if you go about it right, you can make that hoax real.



"Joseph Nicholas reviewed your zine."  
 "Oh, what'd he say?"  
 "Tedious, bland, ignorant, verbose, moronic, offensive,...."  
 "Whew! I was afraid he was mad at me."

## FROM SILENT TRISTERO'S EMPIRE

### Main

Unlike Luke McGuff, I enjoy reading other people's con reports. They're often the next best thing to being there--and anyway, it's not so much the con itself (though a long time ago in a *Galaxy* *far*, *far* *away* I used to attend all the programs so I could write a proper report) as friends' experiences there that interest me. The sex panel sounds rather like Rocky Horror Picture Show--it'd be terrific if it weren't for the audience. Maybe there could be a way of limiting attendance to people who've had sex within the last three *years* *days* hours. I suspect that would get rid of most of the hecklers you described.

I suspect that restricting the audience to those who've had sex (no time limit) would have brought a noticeable improvement.

Harry Warner, jr. I get nervous every time I read in a current fanzine something about the New Wave. I keep fearing that just maybe, one such article will be particularly persuasive or infuriating or intriguing and as a result the entire New Wave uproar will break out again throughout fandom and prodcon and I'll have to endure another three or four years of finding page after page in most fanzines filled with unreadable and unintelligible essays and comments on that topic.

Gee, Harry, maybe your comment will be the one that does it.

This time, you didn't mention the phenomenon involving the New Wave that irritated many of us most of all. It was the assumption by the New Wavers that there was something intrinsically meritorious in any science fiction which followed New Wave precepts in theme or format. It was something like the 19th-century party loyalty that caused generation after generation of a family to vote only for Democrats or Republicans, no matter how the party philosophies changed, no matter what manner of politicians bobbed up in one or the other party. If just one New Waver had spoken up and said: "Well, Sturgeon's Law affects the old type of science fiction, ninety per cent of which is trash. What's more, ninety per cent of the New Wave science fiction is trash. But I think you ought to hunt out the ten per cent of the New Wave stories because they're very much worth reading."--If such a statement had been made, I think many of us would have made a genuine effort to find what was worth reading in the New Wave magazines, even though we would have remained aware that the New Wave was an awfully old wave, representing the application to science fiction of mundane literary tricks which had come to the fore before and just after the turn of the century.

Movements don't work like that. The energy necessary to generate such a movement comes from zeal (if you like the movement) or fanaticism (if you don't) such that the followers believe that their approach is unquestionably better than what preceded it, if not perfect.

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