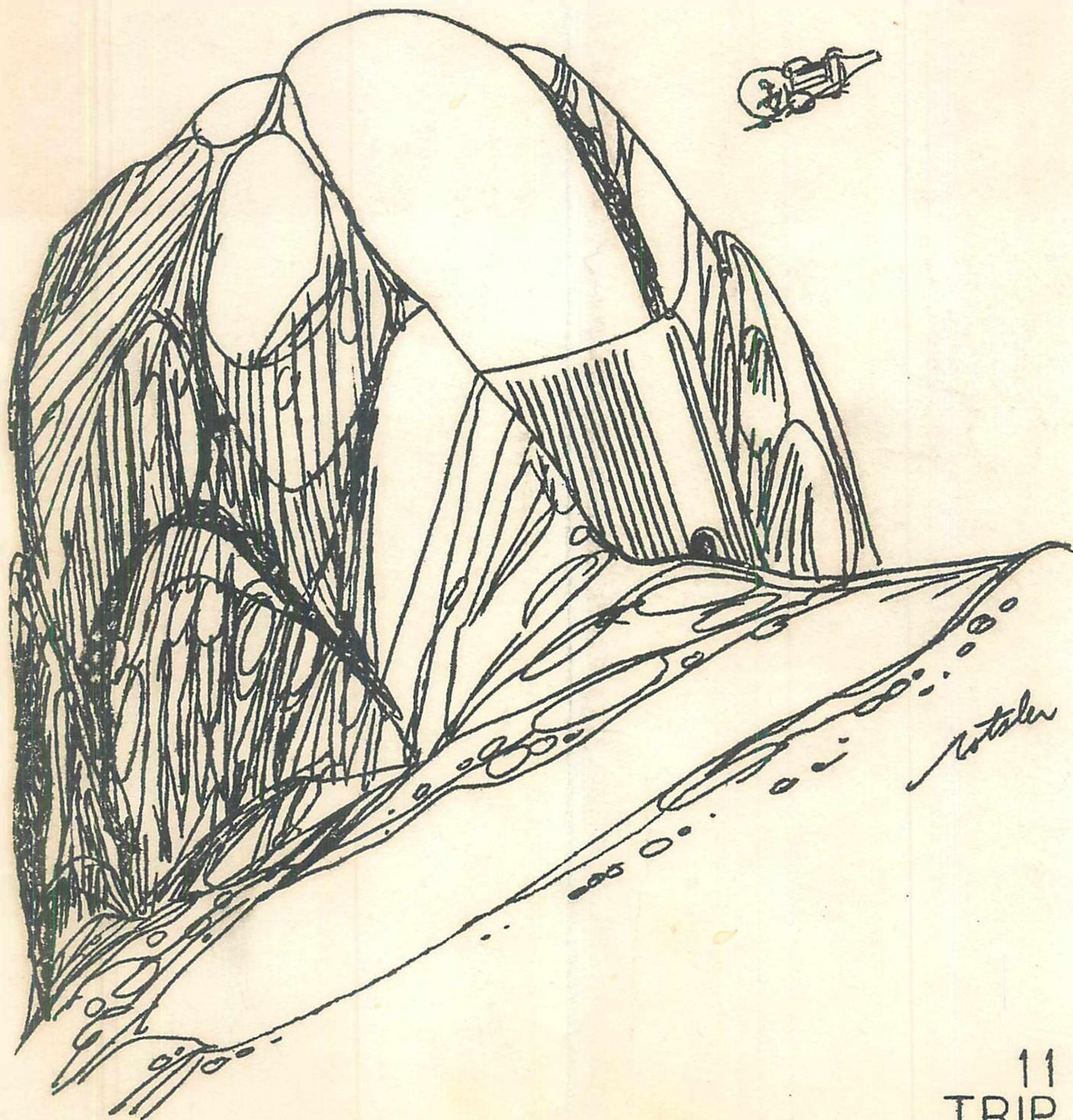


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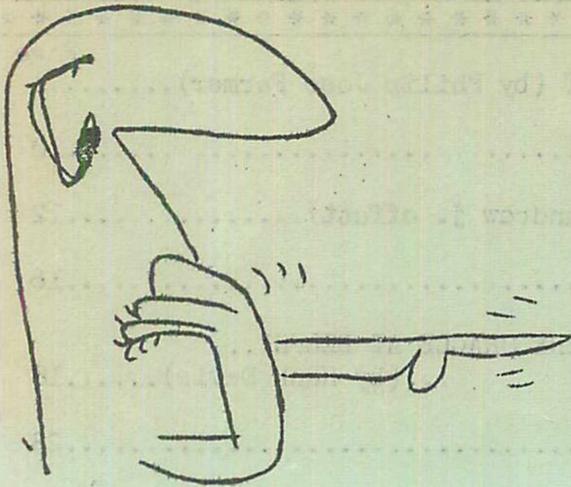
THE OBSCURE LIFE AND HARD TIMES OF

KILGORE TROUT

A SKIRMISH IN BIOGRAPHY

by

PHILIP JOSÉ FARMER



Who is the greatest living science-fiction author?

Some will tell you he is Isaac Asimov. A large number swear it's Robert A. Heinlein. Many nominate Arthur C. Clarke or Theodore Sturgeon. Franz Rottensteiner, well-known Austrian critic, proclaims little-known Polish author Stanislaw Lem as the champion.

However, if we are to believe Eliot Rosewater, Indiana multimillionaire, philanthropist, war hero, fireman extraordinaire, and science-fiction connoisseur, none of the above can equal Kilgore Trout. Trout is not only the greatest s-f writer alive, he is the "greatest writer." This means that Rosewater ranks Trout above Melville, Balzac, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy. As Rosewater stated in the only fan letter Trout ever received, Trout should be President of the World. He alone would have the imagination, ingenuity, and perception to solve the problems of this planet. But there is evidence that Rosewater's judgements in anything are not well balanced.

Rosewater, drunk as usual, once burst into the science-fiction writers' conference (not convention) at Milford, Pennsylvania. And he found, to his sorrow and amazement, that the "immortal Kilgore Trout" was not attending. Lesser men could be there, but Trout could not come. He was too poor to leave his job at Hyannis, R. I., where he was a stock clerk in a trading stamp redemption center. Kilgore Trout, author of 87 great paperback novels, was poverty-stricken. And, worse, he was unknown outside the s-f field and not too well known in that.

Who is this neglected genius?

To begin with, Kilgore Trout is not Theodore Sturgeon. Let us dispose of that base rumor right now. Trout is not derived from anybody but his own parents, no matter what Sam Moskowitz may say in the soon-to-be published definitive work, Origin of Those Who Never Found Tomorrow, and its projected sequel, The Great Borrowings. It is only coincidence that the final syllables of the first names of these two authors end in -ore or that their last names are those of fish. As we shall see, the author of the classical and beautifully written More Than Human and The Saucer of Loneliness couldn't possibly be the man whom even his greatest admirer admits can't write.

Trout was either born in 1890 or 1902. The correct date depends upon whether Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater, Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1965, or Slaughterhouse-Five, Delacorte/Seymour, 1969, is right. According to evidence in the former (GEY,MR), it was in 1956 that Rosewater crashed the Milford conference. Trout was 66 years old then and so would've been born in 1890. But in the latter (SH-5), Trout is 62 years old when Billy Pilgrim runs into him in Ilium, N.Y. in 1964. Hence, he would be born in 1902.

I favor 1902 as Trout's birthyear, since he was wearing a full black beard in 1956. It doesn't seem likely (unless he dyed it) that he would not at least have gray hair if he were sixty-six. He is, however, in 1964 (SH-5) described as an old man. He would be 62 years old then but would look much older, having suffered much and become very bitter.

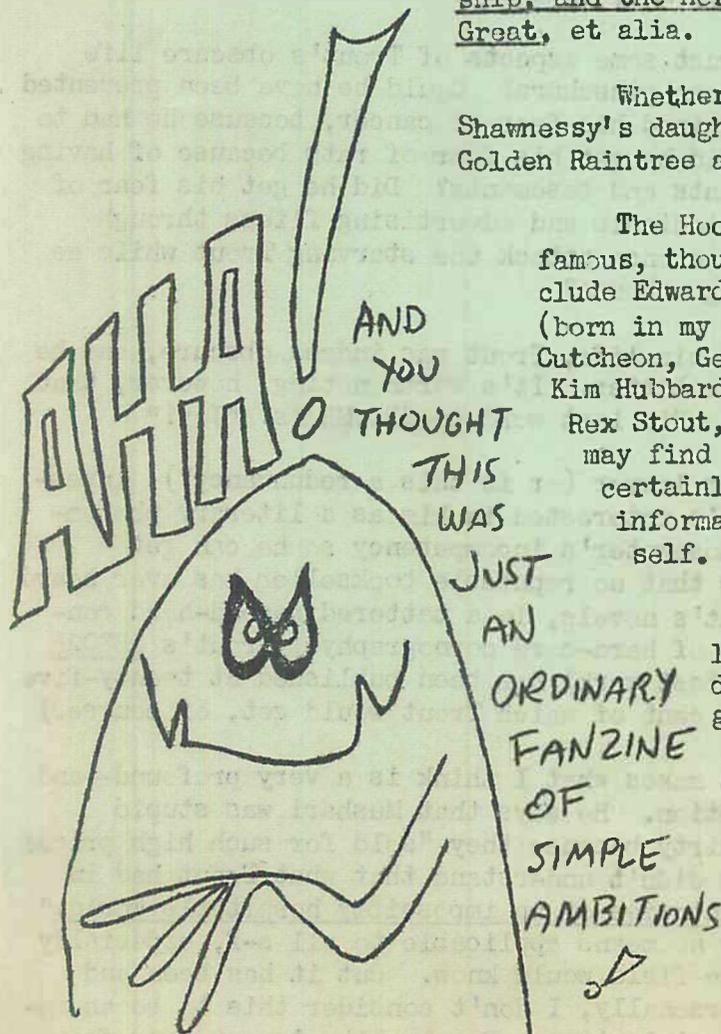
Vonnegut does not tell us his birthday or birth place. But Trout's character indicates that he is an Aquarius and so was born between January 20 and February 19. There is, though, so much of the Piscean in him that he may have been born on the cusp of Aquarius and Pisces. Until a definite date comes from an authoritative source, I'll postulate the midnight of February 19, 1902, as the day on which society's "greatest prophet" was born. (The quoted words are Eliot Rosewater's.)

Trout is first met in Indiana. This, plus the strong odor of certain Hoosier elements in his character, make me suspect that he was born in Indiana. He may be a native of Raintree County. Indeed, for all we know, Trout could be a grandson of Johnny Shawnessy, the hero of Ross Lockridge's Raintree County. If this is so, Trout would be the great-great-grandson of Thomas Carlyle, the crabbed eccentric Scots writer, author of Sartor Resartus, The French Revolution, On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History, History of Frederick the Great, et alia.

Whether or not Trout was the son of Johnny Shawnessy's daughter, we know that he was looking for the Golden Raintree all his life.

The Hoosier state has given the world many famous, though not truly great, writers. These include Edward Eggleston, George Ade, Theodore Dreiser (born in my home town, Terre Haute), George Barr McCutcheon, Gene Stratton Porter, William Vaughn Moody, Kim Hubbard, Booth Tarkington, James Whitcomb Riley, Rex Stout, Ross Lockridge (whom future generations may find to be great), Lew Wallace, and last, but certainly not least, the primary source of our information about Trout: Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. himself.

Mr. Vonnegut does not tell us the lineage of Trout, perhaps because he doesn't know. We're probably on safe ground in speculating that Trout same of hard-working pioneer stock of British origin. He seems to have held nothing but menial or low-paying jobs, so it is doubtful that he ever went to college or even finished high school. But, as we shall see, he did get a doctor's degree in late life, though this may have been awarded by an institution of more than doubtful accreditation.



Physically and mentally, Trout bears all the scars and traumas of his never-ending battle against the most abject poverty, of unceasing labors in writing his many works, of a terrible neglect by the literary world, and an incessant screwing by his fly-by-night publishers.

Eliot Rosewater first saw Trout's face on the back cover of one of Trout's novels (Venus on the Half-Shell). He saw an old man who looked like a scared and aging Jesus whose sentence to crucifixion had been commuted to imprisonment for life.

Later, Rosewater, coming out of a mental fog in a sanatorium, sees Trout but does not recognize him, though he seems like a close friend. Trout looked to him like a kindly country undertaker. Rosewater did not recognize him because Trout had shaved off his beard. He had done this so he could get a job which required clean-shaven applicants.

In 1964, Billy Pilgrim (whose story is told in SH-5) runs across Kilgore Trout. Trout has a paranoid face, that of a cracked Messiah, and he looks like a prisoner of war. But he has a saving grace, a deep rich voice. He admits to being afraid of cancer, rats, and Doberman pinschers. (In my opinion, these fears are not irrational.) When Pilgrim finds him, Trout is living friendless and despised in a rented basement in Ilium, New York. He is barely making a living as a circulation manager for the Ilium Gazette (a newspaper probably on a par with the Peoria Journal Star). Cowardly and dangerous, he succeeds in his job only by bullying and cheating the little boys who carry the papers. He is astonished that anyone knows of him. (Pilgrim was introduced to Trout's works by Rosewater in a German POW camp in Dresden.) Trout goes to Pilgrim's engagement party, where he is lionized for the first, and undoubtedly the last, time in his life. After this one moment of glory, we hear no more of him (from Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., that is).

Is it going too far to reconstruct some aspects of Trout's obscure life from his fears of cancer, rats, and Doberman pinschers? Could he have been prevented from completing his schooling, and have gained his fear of cancer, because he had to quit school to support a dying parent? Did he get his fear of rats because of having to live in so many vermin-infested tenements and basements? Did he get his fear of Doberman pinschers while distributing periodicals and advertising fliers through various suburban districts? Did a Doberman once attack the starving Trout while he was robbing a chicken coop or burglarizing a house?

Whatever the specific events in his life, Trout was indeed obscure, and he had good reason to look paranoid and to be bitter. It's worth noting, however, that Trout was not always cynical and hostile. His last word in GBY,MR is: "Joy!"

In GBY,MR, Mushari, the sinister lawyer (or is this a redundancy?), investigates Trout. He does so not because he's interested in him as a literary phenomenon. He only wants to get evidence of Rosewater's incompetency so he can get control of Rosewater's fortune. He finds that no reputable bookseller has ever heard of Trout. But he does locate all of Trout's novels, in a tattered second-hand condition, in a shop which sells the hardest of hard-core pornography. Trout's 2BRO2B (which Rosewater thought was Trout's greatest work) has been published at twenty-five cents but now costs five dollars. (Not a cent of which Trout would get, of course.)

Here (page 29, GBY,MR) Vonnegut makes what I think is a very profound—and somewhat cutting—analysis of science-fiction. He says that Mushari was stupid enough to think that Trout's books were dirty because they "sold for such high prices to such queer people in such a place. He didn't understand that what Trout had in common with pornography wasn't sex but fantasies of an impossibly hospitable world." (Italics are mine.) This statement is by no means applicable to all s-f, especially recent s-f, as even a casual reader of the field would know. But it has been and still is true of a large part of s-f. Personally, I don't consider this to be an indictment of the field, whatever Vonnegut's intention. People like to get away from

this grim and harsh planet by reading of a place where virtue is rewarded, where heroes are free of neuroses, where right does triumph over wrong, and people have a chance to live happily. And where they're not choking themselves to death in their own physical and psychological poisons.

However, I would like to note that Vonnegut's descriptions of Trout's novels contradict his statement about Trout's fantasies. Trout's plots seem to be about very inhospitable worlds indeed. Vonnegut is so anxious to push his own weltanschauungs that he failed to see the contradiction.

Rosewater's father, the senator from Indiana, admires Trout as a rascal who could rationalize anything. Vonnegut says that the senator did not understand that Trout never tried to tell anything but the truth. Is this a man whose works resemble pornography's in telling of an "impossibly hospitable world"?

Vonnegut comments that Trout's works are deservedly unpopular. His prose is atrocious. Rosewater echoes this when he breaks into the Milford conference. Science-fiction writers can't "write for sour apples." But Rosewater then says that this doesn't matter. S-f writers are poets all the same, because they have a sort of radar which detects significant changes, and the mainstream authors who write so well lack this. Rosewater says: "The hell with the talented sparrowfarts who write delicately of one small piece of one mere lifetime, when the issues are galaxies, eons, and trillions of souls yet to be born."

A specimen of Trout's prose, taken from Venus on the Half-Shell, is indeed bad. That is, the prose is bad; it's the typical hack semipornographer's. The specimen, however, is a good one of Trout's prose, if we are to believe Vonnegut. (By the way, if I had to characterize Vonnegut's own prose, I'd say it is by Smollett out of Sterne.)

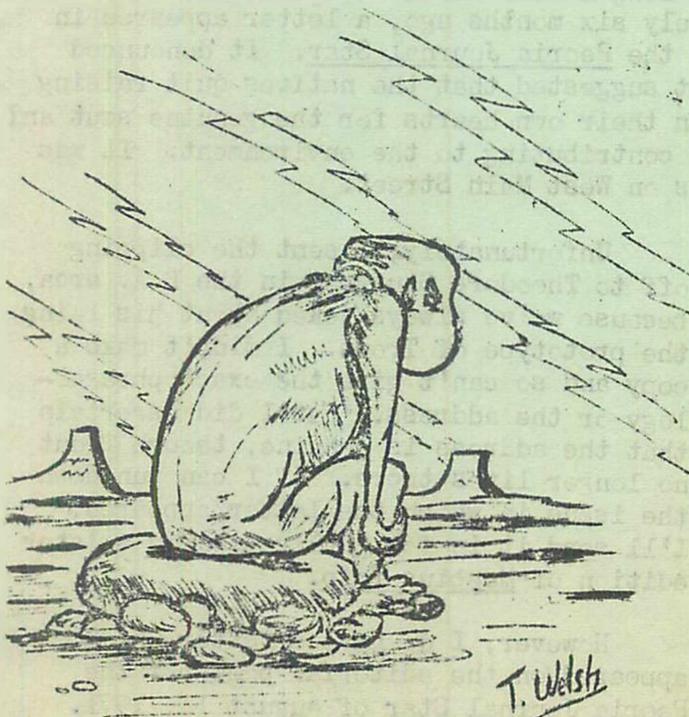
Kilgore Trout is looking for the answer to the question that so sorely troubles Eliot Rosewater (and the world). This is, How do you love people who have no use? How do you love the unlovable?

This question also troubles Mr. Vonnegut, who voices it over and over, in one fashion or another, in his novels and short stories.

Trout's favorite poet is William Blake (as he is mine, and, I suspect, Vonnegut's.)

Rosewater had tried to get into contact with Trout for a long time. But no two books of Trout's ever had had the same publisher. And every letter was returned because the publisher had gone out of business and left no forwarding address.

(Many of us s-f writers know what Trout's paranoid expression looks like. We can see it by looking into our mirrors. Our trouble, however, comes not from failed publishers but royalty statements whose accuracy we have good reason to doubt, and the dragging of publishers' feet when it comes to paying us money contractually owed us. Somehow, the checks are always getting "hung up in the



accounting department." I hasten to add that not all publishers are this way.)

I don't propose to describe the plots of the wild and wonderful books Kilgore Trout has written. These are outlined in God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater and Slaughterhouse-Five. I recommend both books, though I far prefer the former. SH-5 is, when all its aspects are compared with GBY,MR, an inferior book (in my opinion, that is). The recurring phrase "So it goes" becomes very irritating after a while. Perhaps this was Vonnegut's intention in using it so much, but I can't see that it's esthetically validated. GBY,MR should be read first, because it occurs first in time.

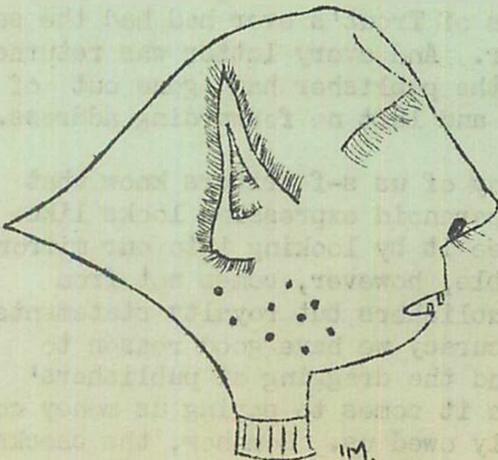
I'm not making any accusations of plagiarization, but it's worth noting that Vonnegut thinks highly enough of Trout's plots to borrow some for his own books. Trout's favorite formula is to describe a hideous society, much like our own, and then, towards the end, indicate ways in which the society may be improved. In his 2BRO2B, he shows an America which is so highly cybernated that only people with three or more Ph.D.'s can get jobs. This sounds much like Vonnegut's Player Piano and his short story Welcome to the Monkey House (in Vonnegut's collection, Welcome to the Monkey House). Trout's The Big Board is, among other things, about a man and woman kidnapped by extraterrestrials and put on display on a planet named Zircon-212. Vonnegut's SH-5 tells of how Billy Pilgrim and the famous and beautiful movie star, Montana Wildhack, are similarly treated by the sentients of the planet Tramalfadore.

Most of Trout's novels deal with time warps, extra-sensory perception, and other unexpected things. So, it must be noted, do Vonnegut's stories. In fact, there is a lot of Kilgore Trout in Vonnegut, as there is in many of us s-f writers. If I didn't know Trout was a living person, I'd be inclined to think he was an archetype plucked by Vonnegut out of his unconscious (or the collective unconscious of the s-f writers' mind).

Kilgore Trout, as of 1971, is getting old, whether he was born in 1890 or 1902. It would be nice if he would finally make some money from his books and thus be able to retire. Vonnegut doesn't say what happened to Trout after the engagement party of Billy Pilgrim in 1964. Perhaps, Mr. Vonnegut may be induced to give more biographical details in a later work. In the meantime, it is known that Trout was a resident of Peoria, Illinois in 1971. How long he has lived here and whether or not he is still here is not known. Approximately six months ago, a letter appeared in the editorial page of the local newspaper, the Peoria Journal Star. It denounced Peoria as being essentially obscene, and it suggested that the natives quit raising so much hell about dirty movies and look in their own hearts for the genuine smut and outside themselves for the poisons they're contributing to the environment. It was signed by Kilgore Trout and gave an address on West Main Street.

Unfortunately, I sent the clipping off to Theodore Sturgeon in the L.A. area, because we've always joked about his being the prototype of Trout. I didn't make a copy and so can't give the exact phraseology or the address. But I did ascertain that the address is genuine, though Trout no longer lives there. If I can run down the issue in which the letter appeared, I'll send it in for publication in a later edition of Moebius Trip.

However, I do have a letter which appeared on the editorial page of the Peoria Journal Star of August 14, 1971. This was from a B. Raabe, no address given. Herein is the abridged letter.



"Speaking from the floor of the Coney Island Tap Tuesday evening, Dr. Bernardino Ventura, former Bradley business letter writing instructor, noted that in terms of motorcycle strength we far surpass the Russians. He pointed out that the great variety of motorcycles is another point in our favor... Eminent scatologist, Dr. K. Trout, W.E.A., in an interview outside the public facilities in Glen Oak Park, had some things to say about the Russian-Indian pact... On the subject of internal disorder, Dr. Trout noted that if Indian food becomes a fad in Russia, the Russians may 'loosen up a bit' although they might become a little touchier in certain areas..."

Apparently, Trout does have a doctor's degree (though I haven't ascertained yet what W.E.A. stands for), but he is unable to get a teaching position and so once more is working at a menial, and unpleasant, job. He has decided that if the world is going to treat him so crappily, he will become an authority on crap. He knows where it's at, and he works where it all hangs out.

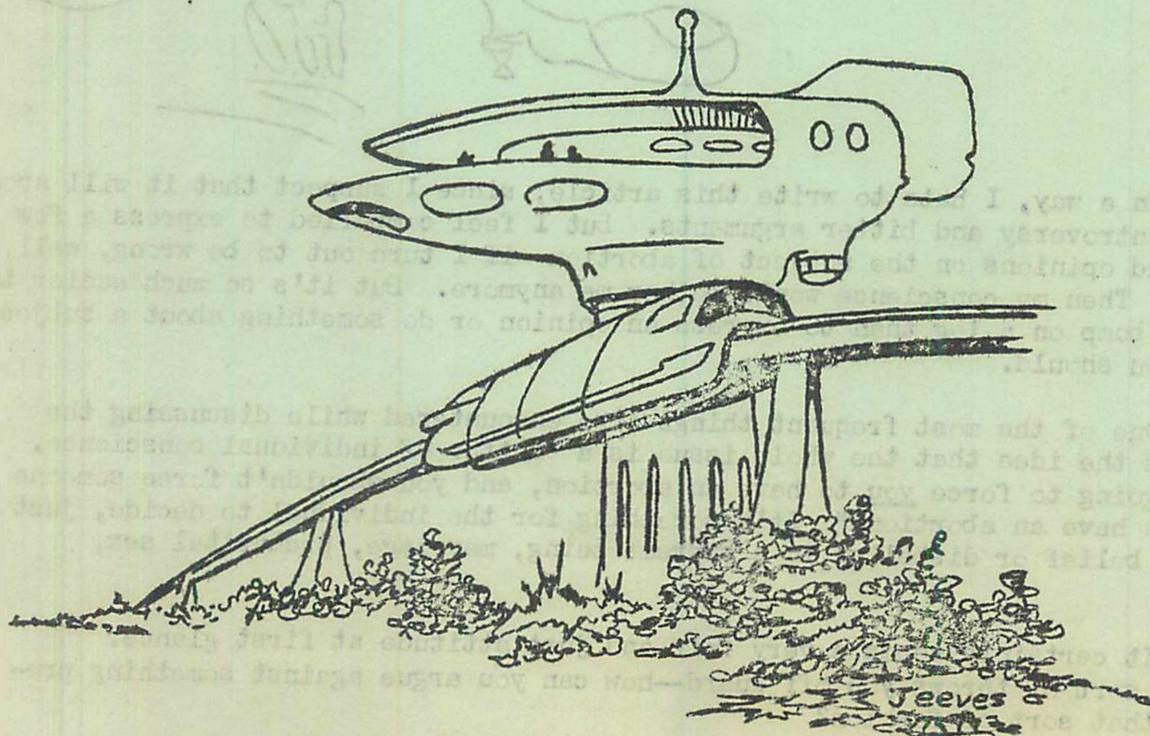
If I find him in Peoria, I will assuredly interview him and so give you a more complete biography than either Vonnegut or myself has been able to offer so far.

The following is an incomplete list of Kilgore Trout's works. They must number over a hundred by now, but Vonnegut only gives the titles of nine. He does outline the plots of some others, such as the one about the money tree which attracts humans to it and then uses them as fertilizer for its roots after they've killed each other fighting to gain control of the tree. (I'd love to read this one.) But I list only the titled books.

1. 2BRO2B
2. Venus on the Half-Shell
3. Oh, Say Can You Smell?
4. The First District Court of Thankyou
5. Pan-Galactic Three-Day Pass
6. Maniacs in the Fourth Dimension
7. The Gospel from Outer Space
8. The Cutless Wonder
9. The Big Board

-----Philip José Farmer.

F I N



SOME
THOUGHTS
ON
ABORTION

by

CY CHAUVIN



In a way, I hate to write this article, since I suspect that it will arouse a lot of controversy and bitter arguments. But I feel compelled to express a few thoughts and opinions on the subject of abortion--if I turn out to be wrong, well, that's ok. Then my conscience won't bother me anymore. But it's so much easier to sit like a bump on a log than to express an opinion or do something about a subject you feel you should.

One of the most frequent things I've encountered while discussing the abortion is the idea that the whole issue is a "matter of individual conscience. Nobody is going to force you to have an abortion, and you shouldn't force someone else not to have an abortion." It's something for the individual to decide, just like one's belief or disbelief in a supreme being, marriage, premarital sex, etc., etc.

It certainly seems a very fair and just attitude at first glance. I mean, it sort of throws you off guard--how can you argue against something presented in that sort of fashion?

Unfortunately, I don't think that the decision to have or not to have an abortion is purely a personal one, since it's really a matter of deciding: "Is this fetus an individual person or not?"

And that isn't a spiritual or philosophical question that can only be answered by the individual person. No one can "prove" by scientific means that god exists, or that marriage is a good or bad thing for you. These are matters of individual conscience. But a fetus is a physical thing—it is entirely possible to prove by scientific means whether or not it is an "individual person" at each stage in its development. It is a matter of scientific fact. No marching, militant Woman's Lib members, no shifty, trend-following politicians, no sickeningly sweet preaching moralists will change any of it.

So I hope I've shot that argument down.

The other notion that I've run across most frequently, and would like to disprove, is the idea that the fetus is merely a "biological growth" until naturally separated from the woman's maternal life support system at birth. From this you would suspect that the female human body must work something like a polaroid camera, the baby popping out instantly at birth, fully developed, with nothing else of significance having occurred prior to this event. Which is nonsense, of course.

A baby is by no means fully developed at birth; he has as much growth to accomplish outside the womb to achieve adulthood as he has had within the womb. Nor does this attitude take into account the facts of modern medicine: a miscarriage (either natural or artificially induced) after the fourth month of pregnancy is classified by doctors as a "premature birth." And with modern incubator care, the survival rate of these premature infants is high. Nor does this attitude of the fetus being a "growth" until birth take into account the new biological devices now in the planning stage—the "artificial womb," for instance, which has been much talked about in sf stories. This could easily lower the survival stage for the fetus to two months or even below. The fetus cannot be considered simply a "growth" until birth. And if the fetus can survive separately and independently from the mother, then can it be a true "person"?

What's that? You say that supporting a fetus through the use of an artificial womb "isn't natural," and therefore does not prove that the fetus is a separate person at all? Well, maybe—but what about all those people who have respiratory problems and have to be supported by an "iron lung"? Or the ones that use kidney machines? Are these people less than "human" because their lives depend on artificial means? No, and neither can you apply this argument against a fetus in the womb.

So, you pro-abortion people, you're going to have to come up with some better arguments than these!

-----Cy Chauvin.

(III)

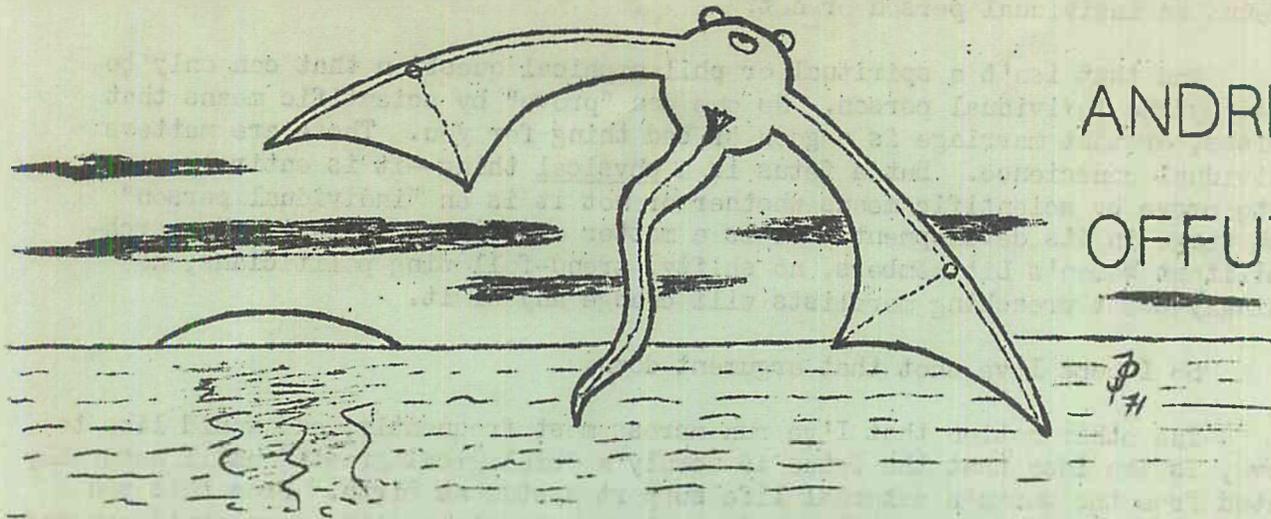
Editor's Note: The opinions expressed in the above article are the writer's own & are not necessarily the views of the publisher of this fanzine. Reasonable comment is invited. -ecc.

(III)

ON THE INADVISABILITY

OF BEING IMPLAUSIBLE

ANDREW
OFFUTT



One of the great problems with so many books and articles along the lines of Hamlet's remark to Horatio about all the things we don't dream of in our simple (minded) philosophies is that of the writers' trying too hard. And they include too much "evidence," again and again.

Erich von Daniken did, in Chariots of the Gods? (Putnam, 1969), and he does again in Gods From Outer Space (Putnam, 1971). But von Daniken is a pretty cautious fellow, really. The man has traveled, and dug, and climbed, and descended, and read and read, and thought, and unthought, and taken pictures, and compiled notes that surely run into the hundreds of thousands of words. But he went a bit further than Fort; he, uh, syncretized his notes, while Fort's works tend more to being compilations (and his notes, certainly, ran into the millions of words).

What do I mean by "going too far?"

Can you believe that there have been people who have had to interrupt salesmen to tell them they were sold? Can you believe I have been on both sides of that ridiculous situation? But the salesman knows so much, and has memorized so much material (often including his salestalk), that he hates not being able to lay it all on the prospect. He can't believe that he's good enough to make the sale without laying out all the material he has, like an Islamic rug merchant who insists on unrolling the entire carpet (not to show its flawlessness, but to show that it contains one flaw, but that's another story).

Let's look at Ivan T. Sanderson's Invisible Residents (World, 1970, 186 pp, plus 28 pp appendices, footnotes, and index). Sanderson's thesis, simply put, is that there are intelligent beings living beneath our waters, that they have been there a long time and are scientifically advanced (and probably came here from elsewhere). And he presents a damned good case to back it up. Yet it would have been an even better one, far more smashing and mind-jarring, had he and his publisher been content with a much shorter book.

Sanderson lists hundreds of incidents, and the few that really make you stir are those that tell of things, with lights, that have come out of seas —and gone up, and flown on out of sight. Yet by page 37 he had prompted me to make a marginal notation: "All these 'into the seas' accounts impress little. But these things COMING UP FROM the sea —wow! Obviously no 'standard' explanation." Already, you see, he was bugging me by including too much, too many accounts that proved nothing but that he thought helped his case. To a guy with an analytical mind who reads with pen and yellow hi-liter, these hurt him. At bottom of page 44, weary of a deluge

(sorry) of reports that proved and added nothing, I noted "OK; nothing."

Yet he was selling me. The kernel was there. There is much emphatic evidence that our waters are peopled by intelligent beings with submarine craft that are lighted and highly and swiftly maneuverable and that can lunge up from the water and fly. And you wouldn't believe how many submarines have been lost. Just... lost.

He also had some other information that he brought in but failed to stir into the batter. Thus at bottom 134 I noted "These gents always seem to add in items that enhance/advance not their cases. To be remembered when I do my (sorry, secret) factbook about inexplicables."

That entire chapter (9) should have been left out, as should have a lot of other accounts, narratives, and mentions of occurrence dredged up to fill space and pad the argument. Deeply involved, subjectively blinkered and forging onward toward his thesis, Sanderson couldn't resist putting in all his notes, and couldn't see that he was lessening his own credibility. Yet he's very nearly sold me, in spite of his being less careful, less analytical and scientific-minded than I. The book contains one photograph. It's a mindblower. Obviously it is a fancied-up delta-winged jet fighter aircraft. But it's a gold trinket -- a thousand years old. What the hell did that artisan SEE?

2: UFO's, the Easter Bunny, Herakles, and Toledo

Sanderson's book shows that it's more difficult to disprove than to prove that we have had, for years and years, visitors on earth, and that they came down in the obvious place: where our own spacecraft have come down, and that they stayed there. (Which reminds me of John Campbell's "spacegoing submarine.") Von Daniken makes it obvious that it's much harder to disprove the long-ago existence of e-t visitors than to prove they were (are?) here. Donnelly's book (Gramercy Pub Co, undated; an updating of the Crown edition of 1949, which was an updating of the 1832 original version) makes it obvious to me that I'd never undertake to disprove the existence of a once-mighty and now sunken continent, whether it was called Atlantis or Haldeman or Boolaboola. To say "nonsense" is just childish. Remember the Stan Freberg record in which the guy said he didn't believe in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, or Toledo?

I do not need to put my hand into wounds. I merely respect the inarguability of a fact and the privileged position of a probability. A few years ago I spent two years reading a couple of hundred books about religion. My final conclusion was that Moses, Samson, mad-dog Joshua, and Jesus all belong in the same category with Atlas, Herakles, King Arthur, and perhaps Clark Kent. About a year later I was nearly made to believe that the things Jesus (Yeshua han-nasri; Yeshua bar-Yosef) believed in were: a complete end to churches and formal religion (mandated in the Sermon on the Mount), mutual regard among all people and peoples, and reincarnation. Most of this was stamped out by AD 400. And it is one hell of a lot easier to "prove" these things from the Christian bible -- a sort of Romano-Jewish Iliad and Odyssey -- than it is to back up the nonsense they've been throwing at us for the past 1,940 years or so.

That was a windy digression, and I apologize.

In 1965 Edward Ruppelt, in The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, taught me to keep my mind wide open about ufo's. There may be something to the tenet that I read recently: that ufo's exist and that the Air Force can be explained as mass hysteria and weather balloons, particularly if weather balloons may be loosely described as fleeting gasbags that occasionally explode with much sound and fury that signifies very little. But Ruppelt also included a lot of junk that made it easier for his critics to single out items and say "See: he's prejudiced and unscientific."

Back in the 1930's D. H. Rawcliffe published a huge volume called The Psychology of the Occult, with a foreword by Julian Huxley. In 1959 good old Dover reprinted the book as Illusions and Delusions of the Supernatural and Occult. Included among the 28 chapters are a long one on ESP (the occult?) and another on hypnotism(!), about which Rawcliffe displayed less knowledge than could be expected to overflow a chestnut shell. Rawcliffe just couldn't restrain himself. It's an utterly fascinating book, but seriously damaged by those inclusions and some other pure bovine feces, as well.

3: Lo! —New Lands of the mind!

Sir James Frazier, in The Golden Bough, said that he was proud of being chameleonic, always ready to change his beliefs in the light of new knowledge, new probabilities. And Baur said that the critic—or the historian, or the sociologist, or the researchist—isn't going to be worth much if he is not more or less disinterested and objective as to the outcome of his labors.

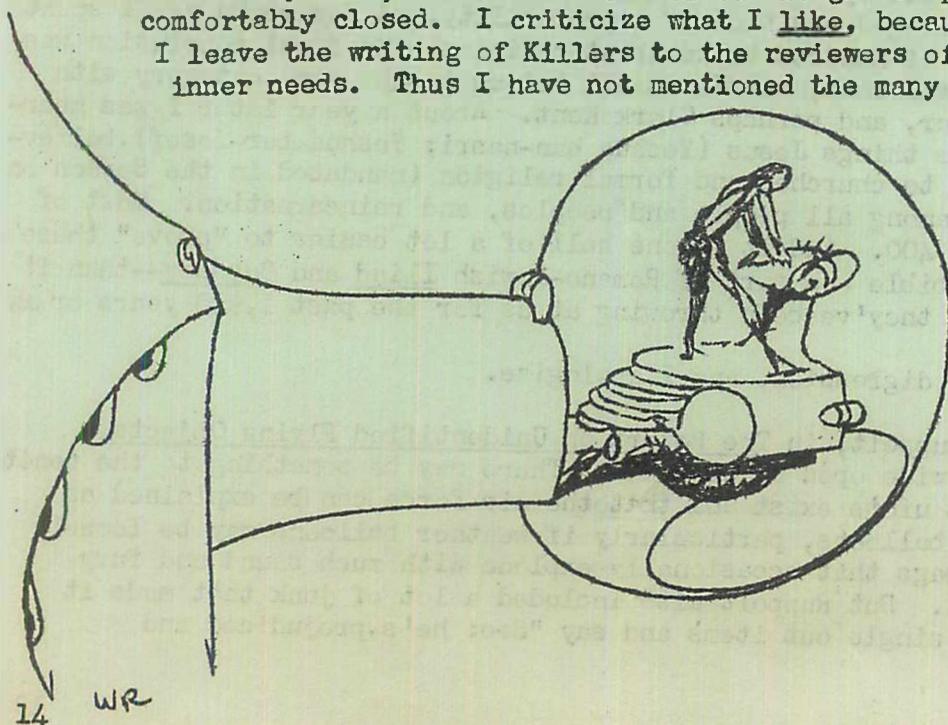
Fort may not survive, now; he may have done, though, had he not felt obliged to postulate certain concepts and then sledge-hammer them in, again and again. My previous article caught a lot of praise here because it merely laid out the evidence and did not attempt to force a conclusion or an embracing postulate. The tremendous danger, obviously, is in being too big-mouthed about one's tenet, too zealous in trying to create serried ranks of evidential indices; had Sanderson let me read his ms, for instance, I'd have begged him to leave out a lot of it and play down a bit more, as well as advised him of a couple of possibilities he made me think of that he didn't think of.

Now that's a big fat egoistic thing to say, but my point is that none of us should ever compile a series of "proofs" for a thesis without letting a more or less disinterested party go through them. I did not say opponent. Two closed minds of opposite belief are of no more value in arriving at any sort of conclusion or synthesis or syncretism than two closed ones of identical belief. (Example: a political candidate loves to speak to an audience composed of members of his party. But of what value is it? In fandom we'd call that auto-egoboo-ism.)

Understand this. I have referred only to those books that brought about some change in my Frazerian coloration, that opened up another of the millions of doors in my mind, doors that most of our neighbors prefer to leave safely and comfortably closed. I criticize what I like, because I wish it were perfect. I leave the writing of Killers to the reviewers of books and their little inner needs. Thus I have not mentioned the many books and articles that

have failed to sell me or that, even worse, hurt their own causes (many of the ufo books; Estabrocks on hypnotism, Louisa Rhine on ESP, Millett on Sexism, etc-etc), or that were just so incredibly and egregiously sloppy and/or bad as to be unworthy of resting on the bookshelf near even so bad a historian as, say, Will Durant.

I have done one short story, with Robert Margroff, that can be



called by the too-ubiquitous generalization "Fortean." It's in ORBIT 8. And one novel, again in collaboration, that will catch the same adjective when it at last appears. And I have a lot of 4x5 cards with notes and thoughts and a lot of books and magazines full of yellow highlights. (You know those marvelous inventions, don't you, that relegate underlining as a means of marking passages to the mouldering sink of nostalgia?) And I plan, eventually, to put together a factbook ("fact" book, then) that will draw together several theories and sets of inexplicables and, if nothing else, get me nice letters from von Däniken and Sanderson and the Atlanteans, if not from the U.S. Air Force. And I am firmly resolved, with the help of Baur's and Frazier's grace, to be most cautious in what I include and conclude.

Sanderson, von Däniken, Ruppelt, Donnelly, and a lot of others would have done themselves and their readers a tremendous service had they restrained themselves, had they not dared us but acted merely as reporters (well, columnists, perhaps; they're allowed opinions while reporters must sneak theirs in sidewise and resort to careful coloration). That way they'd have provided no fuel for their critics to use in burning them up with comments such as "(X) has some interesting ideas, and some fascinating inexplicables, but his work is all so cluttered and thicklied o'er with encrustaceans of the readily explicable that one finds it difficult to give him the credence he might perhaps deserve." (And that, you realize, would be a favorable review.)

Had these researchers, these thinkers with open minds, done their cutting and their sifting as well as they did their compilations, they'd have robbed their critics of any ammunition.

A man says "andy, this damned ufo stuff... the USAF has said that it explained 97% of all the cases it investigated. Now how do you account for that?" And I say "Joe, the last I heard the USAF had investigated just over 4,000 separate cases of sightings or presumed or alleged sightings. Now 97% means they failed to explain away three percent, and 3% X 4,000 equals 120 separate and individual reports that the Air Force DID investigate but could NOT explain. Now I don't know if those sightings were of bald eagles, or Mister Broccoli testing new devices for James Bond flicks, or survey craft from a civilization hidden beneath the sea, or observers from the system of the star Wolf 359. But my mind has to remain open, when all the tremendous resources of manpower, dollars, and technologia of the USAF couldn't dope out what the hell a lot of people had seen —one hundred and twenty separate times in one hundred twenty places. Now don't pretend to me that you EVER considered opening your mind or thinking a little."

I wish that all the researchists into the unexplained and seemingly inexplicable would merely end their books in such a way that my eyebrows were up, that I felt I wasn't being led, and could set the book aside saying "He-y-y-y... suppose...."

Next time Connor allows me onto the slippery coil of his Moebius Trip it will be with a lot of quotations. But right now, with apologies, I will end with one that appears on page 39 of my copy of Invisible Residents:

"How inexplicables quite o'ercome tiny minds
All fixed on their fragile old vines!
Knock out their dottles!
Give 'em new bottles:
Containers for their resisted new wines!"

That bad doggerel appears at the bottom of that page. The apology is offered because it's in feltpen, and it strongly resembles my own printing. Had Sanderson known he inspired me thus, he'd probably have entered another line of work.

-----andrew j. offutt

endit

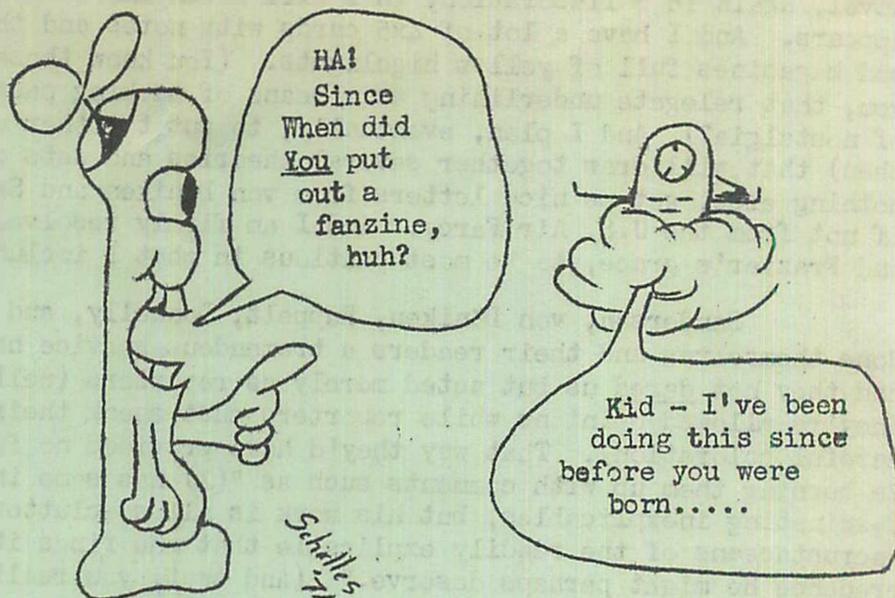
next: "Charles Fort, Neil Armstrong, and the Credibility Gap."

AH, SWEET ISFANEWS!

BY

DAVID
LEWTON

(This article has been put together and edited up from parts of two letters Dave sent me around November of 1970. —Cy Chauvin.)



Yes, fanhistory is one of my first loves. I am a compulsive collector of all sorts of useless information concerning fanac (especially local fanac). I feel that if Dave Burton gafiated tomorrow, I might be the only person qualified to write a chapter on him and his work, having seen damn near everything he has ever published. (That includes an ill-fated two-page Tolkien zine called LUMENN never put out, a copy of the FTL zine HOLOGRAPH which was never run off, and the first (and last) issue of HOOSIER, a carbon-reproed newszine and the forerunner of APEX.) I remember Burton in all but his first fannish moods. The first being: "If I am to be classified as anything, call me second foundation." However, the first letter he wrote to me was signed "Long Live the New Wave." Recently he has gone ultra-fannish, and in the new RAPS mailing announced that he is "disillusioned with fandom as it detracts from the real world" or something like that. I tell you, it would be the most interesting chapter in the book (the fanhistory of the 70's?). This passion for fanhistory has been fed by copies of ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, THE IMMORTAL STORM, and FANCYCLOPEDIA II. But as Tom Lehrer said in his immortal (immoral?) song about SMUT, "more, more, I'm still not satisfied!"

I don't think you know exactly how old ISFANEWS really is (there is no collector in existence with a complete set). When the Indiana Science Fantasy Association first started in 1950, people were informed of the meetings by cards. Well, by 1951, new fan Lee Ann Tremper (now Lavell) was pubbing a one-sided, one page fanzine (ISFANEWS) that told when and where the meetings were held, and also contained a column by a fan now dead (who was the first to include his stf collection in his will).

By 1952 ISFA had grown. However, there was a power struggle and founder Ray Beam (the only good thing the sob ever did was found ISFA) had copyrighted the name "Indiana Science Fantasy Association." He had gotten into a position of power in the club and changed the name to the Galactic Glee and Perloo Society (Ray was a member of drinking fandom—ugh). Well, most of the members quit then and formed a new ISFA, which was the same except the "fantasy" part of the name was changed to "fiction". And ISFANEWS began rolling again. By the September 1954 issue, it seemed that Lee (who has the longest record of publishing ISFANEWS) had built up a nice eight-page genzine and she felt that a name-change was due. So with the October issue it became PHOEBOS, still keeping the old numbering. With PHOEBOS came an increased page number and some experimentation on the part of the editor. Now also in September 1954, a separate magazine called SLI (whose initials stood for "Stf League

of Indiana") was published for a club that was the alliance of Isfa and Eisfa (The Eastern Indiana SF Association) by Lee Lavell. It was small (four pages), and lasted only three issues. This piece of trivia does have a purpose in being mentioned, for Lee, having perfected her style, decided to combine the two fanzines into a new one: MERLIN. That is why I went to the trouble of explaining "SLI, the crafty fanzine" to you.

Lee continued with the same numbering, but I'm not exactly sure when PHOBOS changed to MERLIN. Suffice to say early 1955. Now, in my estimation, MERLIN was the best incarnation of ISFANEWS to date. Lee had reached an agreement with herself as to style, and had what she wanted to do down pat. Besides the talents of the Coulsons, Jay Crackel, and James Adams that she carried over from PHOBOS, MERLIN marked the maturing of their styles and the true emergence of fan artist Dave Jenrette, who was on every cover of the old PHOBOS and many of the genzine ISFANEWS, but really came to life with MERLIN. His covers were of pure genius and inside was one of the best cartoon strips ever published, called "meeb". It was about the adventures of a human-like amoeba. There were also lots of other strange little goodies, like a piece of fan fiction by Harlan Ellison, a parody of Raymond Palmer by Joe Hensley, and a Midwestcon report by "Thomas Stratton" (Buck Coulson and Gene DeWeese). MERLIN lasted until August '55, and then went under due to Lee Lavell's gaffiation, which was partly caused by a disagreement with Dave Jenrette.

Well, that was it for ISFA until February 1960. And then once again, Lee ended up putting something out for the club. This time the numbering system was started anew and the one pager was called SPACE CAGE, taking the name from a local coffee house. Well, by the third issue SPACE CAGE had become a fourteen page genzine, and miraculously, the name remained the same. SPACE CAGE lasted for eight issues, number seven being the largest, a hefty thirty-two pager. For club matters there was Jim Lavell's one-side fanzine the "Space Page" which lasted three issues, and is damn rare as most people threw away their copies (it was infested with Jim's humor).

I liked SPACE CAGE, but not as much as I liked MERLIN, though there were good items, better ones than in MERLIN. A piece of fiction by F. M. Busby called "The Moderate Man" that deserves professional recognition, in other words, a classic. Many items by Dick Lupoff, Mike Deckinger, filk songs by Les Gerber, "Ted Johnstone" (in reality David McDaniel, a man who fanned under a pseudonym because he felt no one would believe his real name), and one of the funniest cartoons Ray Nelson has or ever will do again. But there was an electricity about MERLIN that simply didn't find its way into SPACE CAGE.

Well, the club then went into hibernation, until youngfan Dave Burton (!) decided to create a stf club. Within two meetings he had started ISFA all over again, and gotten a good many of its old members into the club. Lee joined on the condition that she would not publish the club journal. And so there you have it. The history of ISFANEWS, the twenty-year old clubzine.

-----Dave Lewton/Nov. 1970.

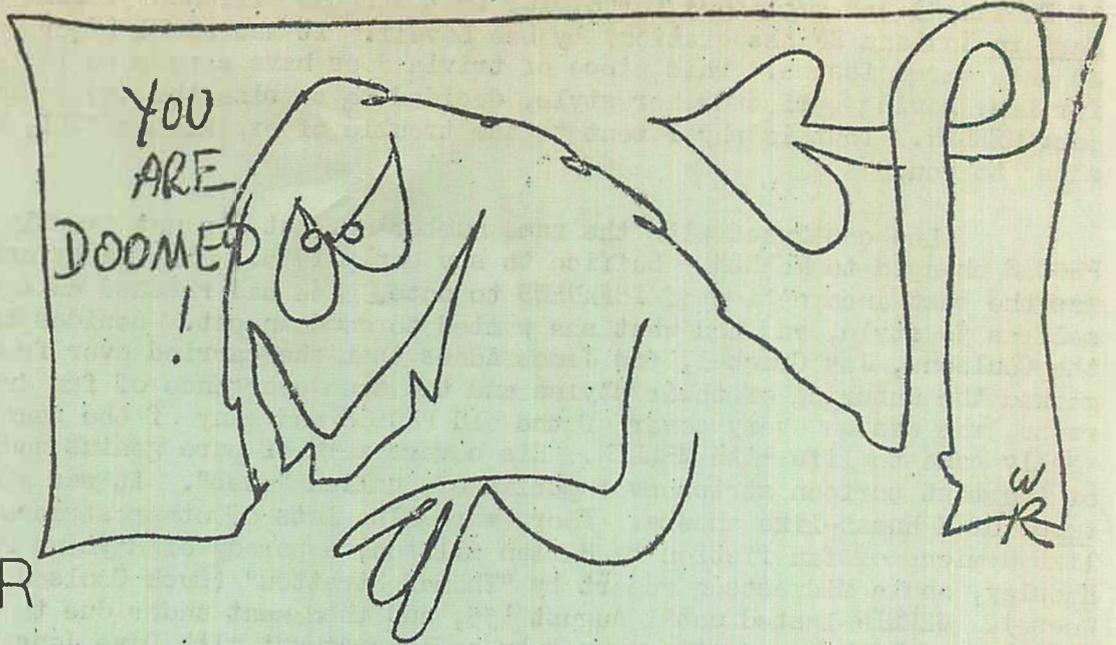
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Editorial burp: Subsequent editors of ISFANEWS were David Lewton himself and David Gorman. Today the publication continues its precarious but seemingly indefinite existence....

For the last half dozen (and more) issues, the editor of ISFANEWS has been — hold your breath — Bruce Coulson, scion of the Coulson publishing dynasty. Could be that its greatest days lie yet ahead. —ecc.

"!"!"

AIMING
A
ROCK
AT
THE
HOLDER



OF
THE
MORTGAGE
ON
THE
ORACLE
AT
DELPHI
by
HANK
DAVIS

The job of sf is not to predict the future; but it should try, anyway. It often succeeds in the predicting which is not its job; when it too-obviously does not succeed, we should not noice the news around outside the family...

...he said, after reading the Michael Glycer essay in MOEBIUS TRIP 9.

Mr. Glycer's point that "science fiction isn't especially predictive" is not new, has often been made before. L. Sprague de Camp, in GALAXY, February 1952, surveyed sf written at the turn of the century looking forward to the middle of this century, and wrote, "the later Victorian story-tellers managed to be right in a few broad and simple respects in their prophecies... As they got more specific and detailed, though, they went further astray and some important developments they overlooked pretty generally..." G. Harry Stine wrote an article with the title "Science Fiction is too Conservative" for ANALOG, May 1961, complaining that when sf writers have hit the mark, they have overestimated the arrival time of the coming wonders and that they were not keeping up with the present state of technology, let alone leading it (and this was ten years ago!). Heinlein, in his essay in The Science Fiction Novel (Advent) and in his introduction to The Worlds of Robert A. Heinlein (Ace), emphasized that sf handles maybes, not willbes. Frederik Pohl said the same thing in the interview published in the same MT that Glycer's article appeared in. I am certainly not going to argue that sf is "especially predictive."

But then, you may say, I surely have no reason to throw rocks at Michael Glycer? Wrong!

Look back at my first paragraph. Glycer is heaping scorn on sf for failing to predict the future: which is not sf's main card trick. And he does not give sf credit when it succeeds in pulling off that card trick. He has, at least, kept the squabble in the family. Credit is due there. But, worst of all, he has not done his homework. That is always a good reason for rock throwing.

Let's look at that homework...

Glyer accuses sf of taking credit for predicting the atomic bomb, television, and the manned landing on the moon. Then he observes that TV, invented in 1927, preceded any mention of it in sf. All sf has done is add a three dimensional picture capability, which is impossible. Not only that, but the 2-way wrist TV sported by Dick Tracy, though not impossible, is very unlikely due to difficulty in making a cathode ray tube that small.

Wrong, wrong, all wrong. Sf did too predict television. Mark Twain did it in a story entitled "From The London Times of 1904", which was reprinted in Damon Knight's anthology A Century of Science Fiction (Simon & Schuster, 1962). In 1911, a year after Mark Twain's death, none other than Hugo Gernsback wrote Ralph 124C41+ which begins with Ralph, in the first chapter, talking with the heroine via long-distance TV telephone; and seeing her, of course. 1927, indeed!

Glyer has recanted, in the lettercol of MT 10, his assertion that 3-D TV is an impossibility because "RCA is now developing TV with perspective" (surely he meant depth), but he still deserves a rock or three because he should never have made such a statement.

About ten years ago I discarded the copies of POPULAR SCIENCE and POPULAR MECHANICS which I had collected during the previous ten years (beginning shortly after I learned to read), and therefore cannot check my memory on this, but...in one of those magazines, sometime in 1954 or 1955, I read an article explaining an operational 3-D TV system. Two regular TV cameras were used to get the two different perspectives required, and the two pictures appeared on one TV screen, though not at the same time. They were alternated, at a very swift rate. The viewer watched the screen through a device which contained a rotating "butterfly" shutter, rotating in synchronization with the alternation of pictures on the TV screen. The shutter operated so that one of the viewer's eyes was always blocked off by the shutter. When the left eye's vision was blocked, the right was clear; and vice versa. The high speed of rotation of the shutter made the viewer unaware that he was watching the screen through one eye at a time, just as he would be unaware that the "moving" picture on the screen is a series of still pictures. Consequently, his left eye saw the image from the TV camera on the left, and his right eye saw the image from the camera on the right, and his brain combined them into a 3-D picture. In 1955.

In fact, without any such fancy equipment, a 3-D picture could be broadcast on any color TV set right now. Simply use two TV cameras, disconnect the blue and green signals on the camera on the right and disconnect the red and green signals on the camera on the left, then run the signals into the transmitter as usual (except, no green signal will be broadcast). The viewer, watching his set will see two images, one in red and one in blue, on his TV screen at the same time. He simply puts on a pair of cardboard spectacles with red cellophane over his left eye and blue cellophane over his right eye, and he will see a 3-D picture. Of course, it will be in black and white, and maybe Mr. Glyer meant a TV picture in 3-D and color. Well....

The method used for 3-D color movies in the 1950's used two pictures, projected onto the same screen through two polaroid filters set at different angles, then viewed through glasses with two polaroid filters set at the same angles. This could be done with a color TV tube. We could be fancy and develop a phosphor which emits polarized light (in red, blue, and green as desired, of course), then make a picture tube with the usual red-blue-green triads of phosphors, but half the phosphors emit polarized light at one angle, and half at another angle. Back at the studio, we're again using two cameras, each sending out all three color signals now, and feeding the signals to a pulse code device that "knows" the positions (standardized, naturally) of the two different sets of triads. The viewer watches the two pictures, each emitted by a different set of phosphor triads, through polarized glasses, and sees a picture in living color aaaand living 3-D. Since the number of

phosphors for each picture on the 3-D tube is half that available for the picture on a normal tube of equal phosphor area, the picture may be grainier than usual, but that can be handled by halving the size of the phosphor triads and doubling their number; which would require a more sophisticated electron gun in the cathode tube, but it's just an engineering problem; nothing inherently impossible. And maybe we don't want to fool with developing phosphors that emit polarized light, so we work out a system for covering the face of the tube with a layer of polarizing material structured like a fine mesh screen (each hole in the screen being a polarizing filter set at one of two angles) and increase the brightness of the screen to compensate for the light lost in passing through the filter, and again: 3-D, and in color. Neglecting the sales problem of getting people to buy a TV set which must be watched through special glasses, it's just an engineering problem. But maybe Glycer meant a 3-D picture without glasses. Well....

He needs to learn about holograms; among other things. And he should consider the possibility that still more methods of creating images without a cathode ray tube may come along. (Or, to arrogantly invoke Davis's Law: There's always another way to do it.)

As for his complaint about the wrist TV (which is relatively recent, by the way; for years, Dick Tracy struggled along with a mere wrist radio), I again dredge into my memories and come up with (fanfare!) a flat screen TV that somebody (RCA?) made about 1955 and which showed up in newspaper articles and COLLIER'S (remember COLLIER'S?) among other places. It was about an inch thick and operated without an electron gun. The phosphor dots were fired not by a cathode beam, but by wires carrying current, one wire leading to each dot. Again, it's just an engineering problem (in this case, how do you mass produce such a thing to compete with cathode ray tubes...?).

His comments about telephones with television not coming into use because nobody wants it are a bit behind the times. According to Bell Tel. ads I have been seeing, somebody in Pittsburgh wants it, and Bell is providing it.

Passing to atomic energy, Glycer complains that Buck Rogers has been getting undeserved credit for first conceiving it. Perhaps so, since rascally Mark Twain again beat everyone to the punch in his atomic energy story "Sold to Satan" (recently anthologized by Harry Harrison in The Light Fantastic, Scribner's). And Glycer writes, incorrectly, that the celebrated story in ASTOUNDING which led to a visit from the FBI successfully described an atomic explosion. Actually, no explosion took place, because the secret agent in the story (titled "Deadline", by the way, and written by Cleve Cartmill) kept the bomb from going off. The FBI actually was given an attack of jitters because the story had an atomic bomb with U-235 in it, which was a hush-hush element in those days.

And finally, the moon landing. Glycer accuses sf fans and writers of thinking "Now we're headed for space, nothing can stop us now!", when actually we're headed "back into the welfare business." Nonsense! Sf fans and writers are aware of the lack of public/government support for spaceflight and are worried about it (with the exception of those lamebrains who favor cutting NASA's funds and doling it out to the starving masses of Poughkeepsie or somesuch). In fact, that space might be regarded as an unnecessary activity was considered by Asimov in "The Martian Way," by Fredric Brown in The Lights in the Sky are Stars, and by James Gunn in the novelets later collected in Station in Space. And Glycer, curiously, lambasts the sf writers for not foreseeing the need for a LEM in a moon landing, but says this immediately after stating that "Many previewed the step system, the multi-stage rocket," apparently unaware that the LEM is an extension of the multi-stage rocket. He claims that the legend of Icarus and Daedalus had as much to do with previewing the moon landing as sf did, but one could say the same of television; that those pools and mirrors of legend in which one could see distant events, predicted television; or that anyone

who ever wished for the power to see faraway occurrences predicted TV, which does that very thing (which is why they named it "tele/vision"; wasn't that clever of them?). It's a bogus argument.

His homework aside, when Mr. Glyer rails at sf for not predicting the future, he has missed the point of the genre, rather like someone who dismissed The Iliad for being filled with nonexistent gods, or Hamlet for having a ghost as a character. Sf exists for the same reason that other types of fiction exist, and, having its own special bent, can make different shivers run down readers' backs — when considering vast spans of time, for example, as Clarke and Stapledon do. If sf manages to predict the future successfully, its success is irrelevant to its quality as fiction and to the legitimacy of the existence of the genre; just as the erection someone may get when he reads something by Henry Miller is irrelevant to the quality of Miller's writing.

Even scientific obsolescence is not fatal to an sf story. Both Heinlein's "The Man Who Sold the Moon" and Wells' The First Men in the Moon have been rendered in the category of "it didn't happen that way" by the landing of the Eagle. But Heinlein's story might have "come true", because nothing in it is impossible, while Wells' story could never have been true — the moon is not like that and antigravity cannot work that way. But both stories are, and always have been "true" in a more important sense: the only sense necessary for good fiction. While you are reading them, they are real.

And now for two "buts."

But #1 — Although the importance of sf does not stand or fall on the eventual accuracy of the pseudo-futures it conjures up, sf writers must still construct futures which proceed logically from the present we know. I think this is obvious, so I won't dwell on it. When an sf writer creates a future (not the future), he must not create an impossible future, therefore must extrapolate from the present in some way.

But #2 — And, given enough sf writers writing enough stories, each (cross your fingers) extrapolating a future from the present in a logical manner, some aspects of those pseudo-futures will come to pass. When Mr. Glyer complains that sf's "successful forecasts are rare...and only minor parts of a larger incorrect vision," he belabors the obvious, not to mention the inevitable. And I have difficulty in understanding what he expects of sf. Extending his complaints to their logical conclusion, all sf writers should write about the same, consistent future at different periods, with a consistent set of characters and all of their stories, every sf story ever written, in fact, would be rendered valueless if the progress of history made even the smallest detail in any of their stories false — if, for example, they predicted the first moon landing down to the circuitry of the Saturn V rocket, but said that a transistor was made by RCA, when the transistor in the real LEM was a GE product. Does he really want to argue that?

Sf, of course, did not come that close in any moon landing stories. But, once one holds that men will someday reach the moon in a rocket-propelled vehicle, all other details — whether the ship is built by private industry or the government; whether all of the ship lands on the moon, or one stage goes into orbit and another descends; whether that transistor has RCA or GE stamped on its case — are matters of degree and not of kind. That a rocket to the moon is possible forms the base for launching stories. And Mr. Glyer is not willing to give sf credit for having seen the possibility at a time when few did. Steinmetz, the electrical genius, once stated that spaceflight was impossible. NATURE, in 1924, gave a scoffing review to Hermann Oberth's pioneering book on spaceflight. In 1941, PHILOSOPHICAL MAGAZINE scoffed at spaceflight. And, only a year before Sputnik I was launched, Dr. Richard Wooley, the Astronomer Royal, stated that spaceflight was

"utter bilge." And the same attitude prevailed toward atomic power. Lord Rutherford, who has a unit of radioactivity named after him in tribute to his pioneering work studying the same, laughed at the idea of releasing atomic energy. And John W. Campbell reportedly once had a professor who was less skeptical — he thought atomic energy might be possible by the year 2000! That science fiction ever had balls enough to proclaim those possibilities in such a climate of thought is more than enough excuse for drinks on the house and dancing in the streets.

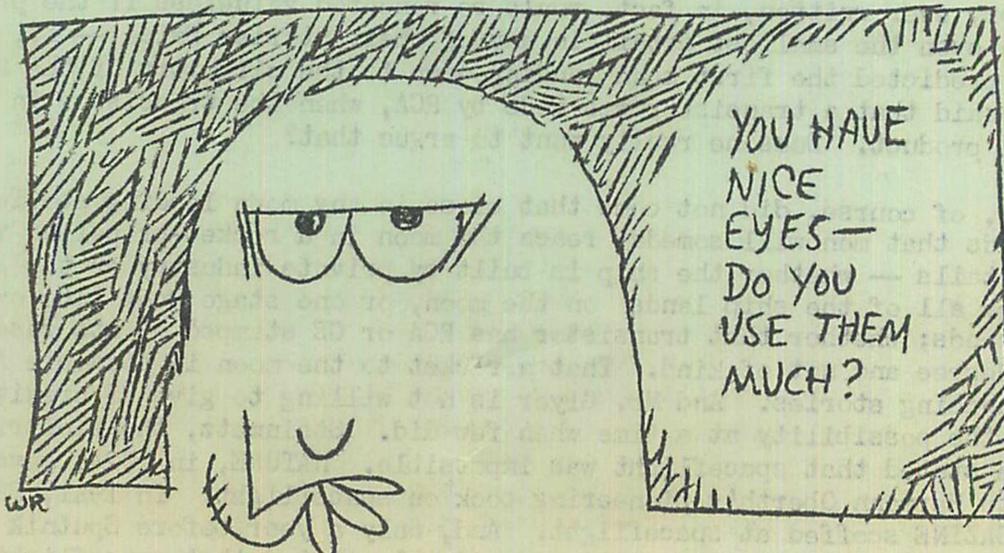
All that has gone before in this rambling essay is shiny-eyed idealism. Now for das Realpolitik...

Science fiction has had many a hard knock, and been subjected to unfair harrassment, as befits a ghetto dweller. Sf stories have long been attacked on no other basis but that they were "impossible," "ridiculous," "nonsense," etc. Even critics who supposedly were evaluating sf on purely literary grounds gave forth grunts of pain at having to read such "preposterous" stories. This still pops up, as when Frank McGee began a 1968 NBC hour-long report on spaceflight by cautioning, "This is not science fiction..." (He seems to have been losing weight lately; I hope it's leukemia...) But sf lately has acquired a reputation of having made predictions which have come to pass. You know that sf's predictions are much more general, gentle reader. And I know it. And, in spite of the strange interpretation he places on the fact, Michael Glycer knows it. But Walter Cronkite and the mundane schmucks out there don't know it. And now that men have reached the moon, sf begins to get long overdue respect for having clearer vision than the mundanes once thought. And if they want to get hung up on prediction, which is not sf's purpose, and credit sf with 20/20 vision when we actually only had 20/100 (though the mundanes had 20/1,000,000 at best), it is all right with me. There are debts to be paid.

Which is why I am glad that the "Delphic Oracle" article was published in a fanzine, keeping the matter in the family. Published in a national magazine, it might have caused the schmucks to stop respecting sf for all the wrong reasons and go back to sneering for all the wrong reasons. And those debts won't be paid overnight...

Can it be, you may ask, that I am serious? Damn straight!

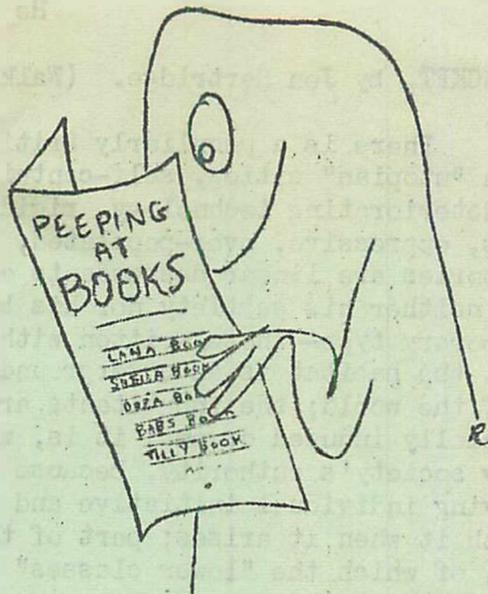
—————Hank Davis.



THE SHORES OF ANOTHER SEA, by Chad Oliver.
(Signet #T4526; 75¢)

Reviewed by Ted Pauls

Here we have a suspense novel which in its basic plot structure bears a disturbing resemblance to most monster movies: a series of unusual occurrences, increasingly ominous, and a deepening atmosphere of brooding tension, finally leading up to a confrontation between the hero and the creature(s) from outer space/the Black Lagoon/20,000 fathoms/the Los Angeles sewers/you name it. Techniques available in the film medium are capable of making the suspense effective, albeit on a superficial level, but such a plot rarely serves in a printed work, except when it is directed at an audience for whom the basic concepts are new. Thus, a mainstream-oriented novel with science fiction or fantasy elements, such as "Rosemary's Baby," is successful because the average reader's comprehension of the suspense-inducing factors does not substantially surpass that of the characters. Whereas the same sort of novel is usually a terribly boring failure within the genre (especially when written by a mainstream author who doesn't know any better), because nothing is more fatal to a "suspense" story than the readers casually jumping three or four steps ahead of the characters.



"The Shores of Another Sea" ought by rights to be a flop. Its plot is simple even by monster movie standards. A ship of aliens lands in a remote area of Kenya, they attempt for reasons of their own to take over the minds of baboons and, eventually, humans, and this leads to a confrontation with the book's hero resulting in their departure from Earth. True, there is a different element introduced near the end, in that the human/alien confrontation takes place on a more civilized level than might be anticipated, but apart from that nothing in this plot structure is essentially different from "The Kumquat From Outer Space" or whatever is the latest Hollywood (or Tokyo) abomination. With an audience of readers who accept, well before the hero, that there are aliens from a spaceship taking control of the local baboons and causing his problems, this novel should be little more than an exercise in boredom.

It is not, however, for two reasons. First, Chad Oliver manages, somehow—don't ask me how—to write the novel in such a way that suspense is sustained over 150 pages, irregardless of the fact that there are no real surprises for the reader after the first two chapters. The excitement and tension, the ominous brooding sense of things about to happen, are conveyed so well that it doesn't matter that nothing that happens surprises the reader in the slightest. The reader feels no suspense of his own, but Oliver writes his narrative so superbly that we feel the suspense of Royce Crawford, the central character. Second, and here again is an element that is nothing less than brilliance on the part of the writer, this novel offers a marvelous evocation of East Africa. Chad Oliver brings the Kenya bush to life in page after page, to such an extent that after a while the reader can almost swear that he can feel the heat and gritty dust, hear the leopard's cough, smell the blood and animal hair. He does this so well that I would recommend this book even if it were an unredeemably poor SF novel, because it is beyond question a first-rate Africa novel.

This, then, is a triumph of sheer writing ability, what might have been a dull second-rate science fiction novel transformed by excellent suspense narrative and magnificent evocation of background into a first-rate book.

—Ted Pauls.

He also reviews

EARTHJACKET, by Jon Hartridge. (Walker, \$4.95.)

There is a peculiarly British school of prophetic science fiction involving hellish "utopian" cities, self-contained and artificially sustained by a superior but often deteriorating technology, rigidly stratified into dominant and subservient classes, oppressive, over-populated, stifling, totalitarian and usually decadent. Such stories are linear descendants of George Orwell's "1984", though most share with Orwell neither his subtlety nor his basic pessimism. Some of the similarities of the contemporary type—those written within, say, the past five years—are remarkably detailed: the habitat is an underground or domed city, thoroughly isolated from the rest of the world; the inhabitants are controlled by drugs and kept "content" by artificially induced dreams; it is, while dangerous, relatively easy for the hero(es) to defy society's authority, because those in control cannot imagine their subjects displaying individual initiative and resistance, and so have no ready means for dealing with it when it arises; part of the rebellion generally consists in the discovery of sex, of which the "lower classes" have been deprived; and so on, ad infinitum.

These similarities, amounting to a complex of commonly held premises and commonly acknowledged background facts, probably enhance the credibility of the background in any single story, but their more significant effect is an unfavorable one: a boring sameness, a repetitively morose atmosphere, and a formula predictability in the hero's successful defiance of society. This impression is heightened, naturally, if you happen to read several such stories in a row and/or if they happen to be mediocre.

"Earthjacket" is the second consecutive novel of this type that I read (purely by accident), the first being Douglas R. Mason's "Horizon Alpha"; and it is also, in general, a mediocre novel. Hartridge is a competent writer but, in this novel at least, displays no capacity for infusing his prose with excitement or drama. Even though the entire book is a first-person account by a man who defies and brings revolution to the oppressive society, it is a dryly pedestrian narrative delivered with all the taut emotion of a laundry list. There is horror in some of the descriptions of conditions among the lower class people, but it is a detached horror, a product of the reader's reaction to a scene that never really effects the character through whose eyes the scene is revealed.

Basically, "Earthjacket" is sterile—its ideas are too familiar to generate any real interest, and its author isn't able to generate any emotion. That doesn't leave much to recommend the novel, even though it is technically perfectly competent and well designed.

————Ted Pauls.

The Editor reviews

GROUND ZERO MAN, by Bob Shaw. (AVON SF Original #V2414; 75¢, 160 pp., Sept. 1971.)

Ground Zero Man begins on a very familiar keel — the world as it is just a while from now, the setting England. More or less like any of hundreds and hundreds of other books I've read or have on hand to read — mystery, detective, SF, etc. And right away I realized that Shaw was writing in an even more competent — more assured — vein than I'd noted in the past.

(I have only read one other novel by Bob Shaw, the one where rather unlikely island-farms float overhead, kept up by anti-gravity; that was fair fun to read — but just a little below the quality I prefer to spend money for. I've read several reviews each of a couple of his other volumes, though, so am fairly familiar with his record.)

The bare bones of Ground Zero Man's plot are: Hutchman, an obviously brilliant mathematician and scientist, has a sudden insight — almost as if it had been given to him by a higher intellect, as the author notes — into how a neutron resonator can be made which will be capable of almost instantaneously detonating all nuclear devices on Earth.

The explosion of an H-bomb over Damascus adds urgency to Hutchman's determination to construct a machine; he does so in a month. He then finds a place to hide it and mails data concerning its existence, capabilities and make-up to several hundred worldwide leaders. His letter proclaims that at a specific hour on a rapidly-approaching date, he will switch on the machine. (He hopes, of course, that by that time all Earth's A-bombs will have their most vital ingredients dispersed.)

But the police are already after Hutchman, who has escaped "detention" after getting involved with "socialists" and a corpse or two (all very cleverly and plausibly contrived by Shaw).

It is not long, though, before the authorities know that Hutchman is the man who has sent the letters, who has the machine to detonate all A-bombs, who is the "ground zero man." An agent of a foreign government is able to find him almost immediately, but is accidentally killed an instant before he can slay Hutchman. After which our hero heads for the city and the house in which he has concealed his awesome creation.

Alone, sickening, he waits out the final hours. Comes a knock at the door — somehow (we know, but he doesn't) his wife has gotten his address. (Naturally, she has been followed by all and sundry.)

(Pause to note again that this book is excellently written; Shaw could go far by concentrating on Creasy-Marric-Innes-type adventure or detective yarns.)

But — at the climax of this book's action, when Hutchman, facing Her Majesty's Minister of Defense and soldiers who've just machine-gunned two foreign agents to bits (and who are now aiming the old-fashioned blasters pointblank at him and his machine), has his hand on the button and says that the setup is a "dead man's hand device; it will work when I take my finger off the button," you could catch the author in a booboo.

Unfortunately, he overlooks the undeniable fact that at this point it is not necessary to kill Hutchman; the machine itself is extremely vulnerable — albeit self-powered — and could easily be gunned into ineffectiveness before its maker could react by taking up his finger.

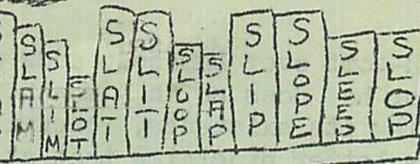
That is a quibble, however, since one could argue that neither the Minister or the soldiers see this easy way out. The author could, certainly, have had Hutchman secrete his masterwork behind a makeshift bulletproof barrier...but perhaps he wanted us to see that neither soldiers nor Ministers of Defense are omniscient.

Since I doubt that many readers will consider this a possible aberration, it is probably better for everyone's peace of mind to accept the certainly that the author did it that way intentionally. "Why?" is something for each of you to figure out, correlative to your enjoyment of Ground Zero Man.

I won't give away the ending, although it's of a type which, by subtle reasoning, you might be able to deduce. Shaw has written the book with, apparently, the intent to face the realities of human political nature. No sugar-coating at all. You might feel let down but — damnit — that's the way it's gotta be because, logically, that's the most probable way it would, under such circumstances, be. Definitely recommended.

The SF BOOKSHELF

BILL WOLFENBARGER



Black Sabbatical by Josephine Saxton; (FaSF, December 1971), comprising 14 pages.

Just mayhaps you could call this one a kind of New Wave fantasy. The fantasy element could be con-

sidered a "fantasy-by-chance";

but I feel the Fantasy is there for real. Told in a delicate manner, it concerns the fate of a Westerner

in Morocco in search of his missing wife; a disturbed middle-age man with wife & children who must finally consult the aide of a magician.

Personally I favor this story because it has suspense, characters who seem real, a background constructed logically, that sense of "nowness," all told in a style of perfect pace conforming to plot essence. And I feel Josephine Saxton is a very remarkable talent, and

I consider it a gift whenever the science-fiction/fantasy magazines give us a chance to read her.

Foundings Father by Jack Wodhams; (ANALOG, December 1971), comprising 21 pages, with interior art by Kelly Freas.

It's so good to find amusing yarns in ANALOG, a story of attempted Utopia, one that actually makes you chuckle. Basically it's about the first group of settlers on a Brand New World who are disrupted by other Earth "outsiders"; both groups haggle and challenge; then a third group comes to this far fair planet and it's just like Earth 1971 all over again.

But I've got to hand it to Wodhams for writing such a delightful story. Do read this one. Jack Wodhams has something to say.

(The Freas illustrations are delightful!)

The Goddess on the Street Corner by Margaret St. Clair; (BEYOND FANTASY FICTION, September 1953), comprising 8 pages, with interior art by Balbalis.

You just don't hear much from Margaret St. Clair lately; do you wonder why? The only memorable thing I've read by her is The Goddess on the Street Corner, and I call it a minor classic. It's a love story between man and goddess ----; ah, you say, but that theme was old at least two hundred years ago! Well, that's true. But here St. Clair has done a marvelous reworking, given old clothes a new wash, and came out with something fresh and bizarre. The prose is poetry. Stoned on the Muse, if you will. I first read this story in June 1960 & I've carried on a private one-way love affair with it ever since my eyes read it and memory called it up again. Often wondered why no one has anthologized it... Often thought that when/if (more likely "if") I ever edited a group of imaginative stories, this one would be the first to be included. Haunt the back-magazines of your friends, or even your own library & try this one out for size.

Into the Infinitesimal by Kaye Raymond; (WONDER STORIES, June 1934), comprising 44 pages, with cover art by Frank R. Paul and interior art by Schneeman.

This author only had four stories published in the sf magazines, beginning with Into the Infinitesimal in 1934 in one of Hugo Gernsback's farout publications, and the remaining 3 of shorter length in ASTOUNDING in 1937. Kaye Raymond's debut yarn was nothing new, even in 1934; world within atom theme. The writing style is really rough, the plot is outrageous, the characters are puppets. But I had a lot of fun reading it! The scene is inside the electron-world. The baddies are out to get the goddesses. And, by the end of the story, justice is preserved.

It fascinates me to read old sf yamms! Into the Infinitesimal is one of those having a sense-of-wonder, even though there's no "life" in the characters.

In the Lair of the Space Monsters by Frank Belknap Long; (MAGAZINE OF HORROR #35, February 1971), comprising 22 pages, with interior art by Amos Sewall.

This is a reprint from the October 1932 issue of STRANGE TALES, and the issue of MAGAZINE OF HORROR carries the original illustration.

It was nearly a year ago when I read this story aloud to wife Loretta one evening, and she helped me with pronounciations. Couldn't have made it without her. Anyway, her reaction was, roughly, the same as mine, in that we thought it was written at a longer length than was actually needed. The story itself concerns human beings captured by a space monster and taken, with ever-sickening horror, to their lair. I enjoyed this story, moreso than Loretta. I've always found something to enjoy in Long's efforts. He has a good taste of the weird and horrible. The present tale called for a certain amount of restraint that Long didn't give it. But the values of this story show inspiration from Howard Phillips Lovecraft in the manner of basic weirdness. I'd say it's worth reading if you can dig on strange, weird stories. I might add that the story's illustration is a poor one.

*

Note Of Interest: Sorry, folks, but I just couldn't find much first-printing material in the magazines to comment on. My ideal was to review three current efforts, and one review from a magazine-story of the past. Reader-wise I find it a very sad state of affairs.

Some interesting things are happening, however; like the new Isaac Asimov novel to be serialized in the March GALAXY with the first installment, the April IF carrying the second, and the May GALAXY with the concluding installment. . . which makes a science-fiction first! The novel is The Gods Themselves, and is already being planned for a hard-cover edition by Doubleday. I'll review Asimov's latest in this column.

We've all heard (& voiced) all the old (& new) gripes about the sf magazine situation; the main hassle seems to be with the distributors. How will I ever see my dream come true of a revived WEIRD TALES??? It's my guess that GALAXY and IF are in the most trouble, currently. Editor Eljer Jakobsson has tried several things to boost circulation, but I don't think it's working. There's been serious talk of GALAXY and IF folding. I hope this doesn't happen, but I fear both GALAXY and IF will cease publication sometime in 1972. And you know there's always the chance (yes, there really is!) of a bright new writer coming along, bursting with the brilliance of x x . well, er, brilliance of a new Stanley G. Weinbaum, a new Robert Heinlein, a new Ray Bradbury, a new Jack Vance, a new Joanna Russ, a new Carol Emshwiller, whathaveyou; the time is ripening quickly. ANALOG has been discovering new talent, but they don't seem to travel many places. (I mourn John Campbell's passing.) (And I wouldn't want to be in Den Dova's shoes.) FaSF has been discovering new writers now for quite some time, but no brilliant star to my knowledge among them. Ted White would seem to be having the most success with beginning writers through FANTASTIC and AMAZING. However, as we all know, the over-all situation looks bleak.

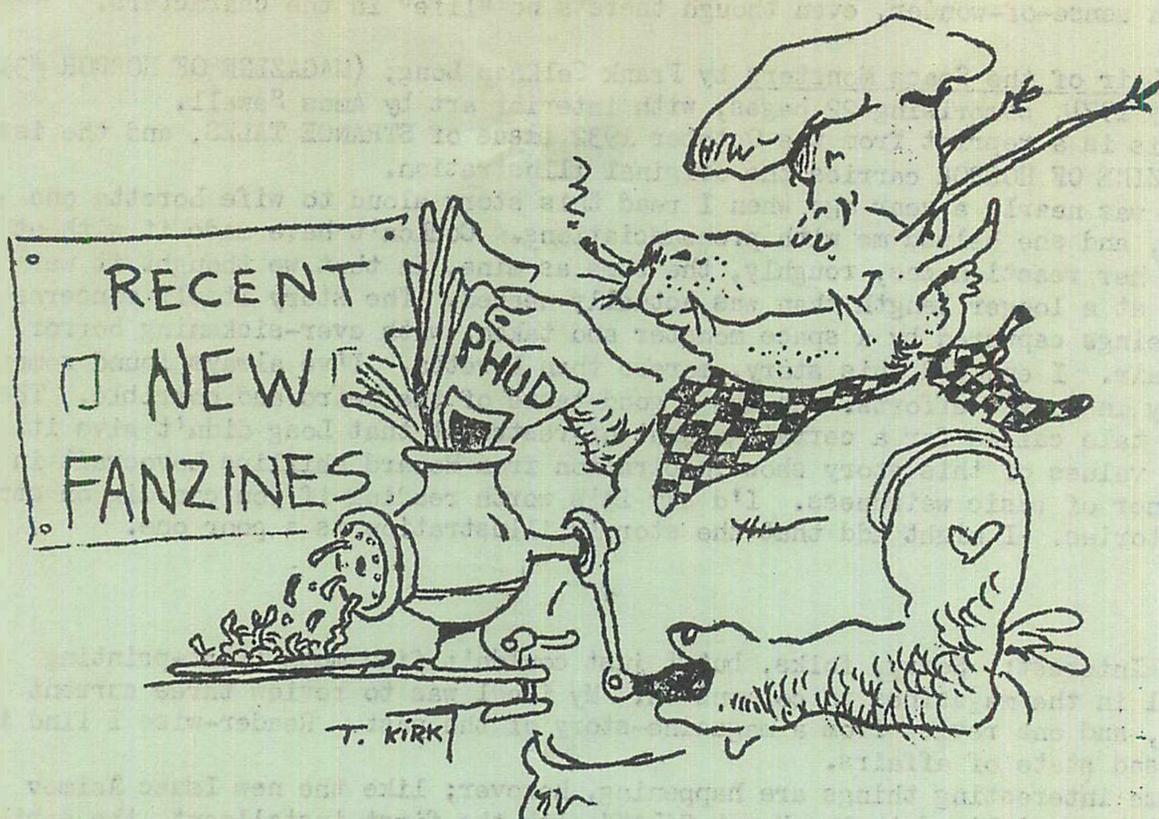
One good thing that's happening in the sf magazines is Theodore Sturgeon reviewing books now on a regular basis in GALAXY. (I'm sorry to see Algis Budrys cease his column, but he knows best; he's ready for other things.)

Maybe next issue the newsstands will carry some sf/f magazines with something really farout. We can hope so. Or perhaps there is a new, young, brilliant star of cosmic genius among us . . .

-----Bill Wolfenbarger
Bloomington, Illinois
November 1971.

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ASPIDISTRA #3 (from Susan Glicksohn, 32 Maynard Ave., Apt. 205, Toronto 156, Ontario, Canada.) Available for 50¢ in hot, hard cash (NO cold, heartless bank-cheques) and other forms of coercion. A must issue — in the upper echelon of current fanzines. A stellar line-up — written and drawn. Ecological natterings, including a bit by yhos which could have been ten times as long, other weird articles by Mae Strelkov, Arnie Katz, Devra Langsam — why go on? The alignment gives only a hint of how really exciting it all is. If you don't send for Aspdistra you don't — *sob* — love fanzines any more.

FANGLE #1 (from Ross Chamberlain, 50 East First Street, New York, N.Y. 10003.) Available for trades, 35¢ in coin, etc.; 8 times a year. Articles by Arnie Katz; Kunkel and Komar; the editor — who also did most of the artwork. An excellent first effort; not to be missed.

BEARDMUTTERINGS #1 (by rich brown, 410 - 61st St., Apt. D4, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11220.) Offset, with 12 well-filled pages. TAFF is scrutinized in an article which all concerned fans should read. Everything except the art is by rich. NOT available for money, but will trade. Also, if you request a copy, you'll get one, to start you off. Oddly enough, here's another zine any genuine fan (and especially fanzine-hound) won't want to miss.

AFAN #2 (by Dave Hulvey — Rt. 1, Box 198 — Harrisonburg, Va. 22801.) Irregular, mostly nicely mimeoed. Comes for contributions, LoCs, or whatever you can induce the editor to take. A tip-top article by Dennis Stocks of Australia, a weird Arnie Katz piece, and from there on things degenerate . . . although the letters are fairly uniform in interest.

BURGER #1 (emanates from Ed Smith, 1315 Lexington, Charlotte, N.C. 28203.) Comes for trade, contributions of articles, cartoons, etc. Smith "desperately" (to quote him) needs material. Stuff this ish is not bad — it includes a fine piece by the inimitable Ed Cox. I hesitate to predict when the next ish will be out, but try for this first, OK?

MOTA #1 (Terry Hughes - 407 College Ave., Columbia, Mo. 65201.) Trades with other fan-ed's desired, and you'll probably get a sample for a plea (I'm quite late with this review but copies should still be left), so that you can write a LoC or contribute material. Thish all editor-written. Will likely get better.

ANANT #1 (Penny Hansen - 1607 Lincolnwood - Urbana, Il. 61801.) (I'm even later with this review; seems I used Anant to mark my place in another zine and they temporarily got sidetracked in the avalanche.) This zine's the O.O. of the SF Soc. of the U. of Ill. Ished mainly, I gather, for trades, etc. Thish pretty good, and the next ish is now overdue. Mebbe now that Chamhanacon's over they can afford a 2nd issue...?

* * *

EDITORIAL NOTES

I wonder how long it'll take for my recent letter to my long-time correspondent in Bombay to reach India, now that war is raging? Curiously, he had inquired (as of 4 or 5 months ago) about the sentiment in the U.S., which he thought favored Pakistan, but I assured him that popular opinion was more in India's favor, and certainly few could be found anywhere who approved of Pakistan's butchery of the Population in East Bengal. In addition, I mentioned that a probability for the future seemed to be that Red China would take over the entire Asian sub-continent, unless stopped by Russia. Weirdly enough, the situation since then has developed to the point where that is an even greater probability. If East Pakistan appears to be going under, will not Pakistan's backer, Mainland China, see that the only way to save it is a massive invasion of India? And with India & Russia now having a pact, if Red China so invades India, will Russia be far behind in invading Red China?

The bickering at the U.N. over the issue lost little time in reaching the point of Red Chinese-Russki heel-snapping.

This is how the big ones start. When the ruling maniacs are in positions where they cannot back down, lest allowing the other side an intolerable advantage and/or themselves suffering an intolerable loss of face.

Our "pollution" may get a lot worse and stay that way for a looong time.

#

Authors who've written stories touching on visits to Stonehenge, or who contemplate writing such, should note that the site is guarded by what are described as "electronic geophones." They are underground listening devices which send out alarms when someone nears the fenced-in area when it is officially closed to visitors. Hmmm...I guess you could have your characters float in via helium balloon, or perhaps antigravity, eh wot?

#

I was going to mention in MT-10 that a third WIZARD OF ID paperback is out, when what to my wandering eyes should appear but a fourth ID paperback. If they'd only keep the damned things in print longer....

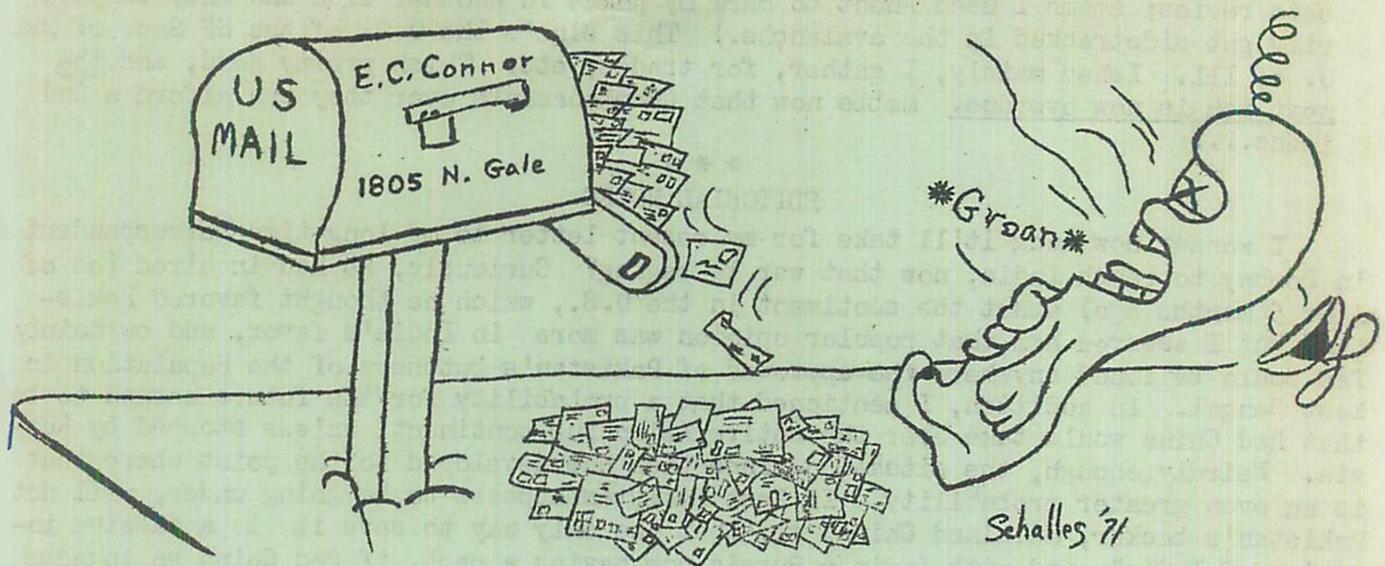
Also, I keep forgetting to put the "copyright" info on the contents page or somewhere. Some writers like to retain rights, even to the stuff they have in MT. Oh well, how about "The printed matter in this ussue is Copyright (c) 1971 by Edward Connor for and to the individual authors." Any arguments?

I only learned a few weeks ago that there was a dock-workers' strike at the U.S. east coast and a P.O. embargo on lower-class mail. So -- since the strike was aborted about the 3rd week of November some European readers of MT may get #11 before #10 (the one held up by the embargo).

#

MECHTA, a new "magazine of comment, criticism, and scholarship in SF." is to be issued in Toronto, Canada, with Bob Wilson as editor (his address: 210 Markland Dr., Apt. 1001, Etobicoke, Ont., Canada). His associate is A. Philippe Boyer. Subs: \$1.00 (U.S. or Canadian) for 3 issues. Inquire as to what material is needed -- for columns (specialized and general), in-depth studies of authors, bibliographies, thematic studies, interviews, etc. (Do not send fanzines in expectation of trade.) I must add that good articles are hard to come by; I feel for Mechta's editors but naturally I hope to see the best articles first (as I'm sure they understand).

LOCAL



PAUL WALKER
128 Montgomery St.
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Those of you who enjoyed the Pohl interview might be interested in what was left out. In early September of 1970, Dick Geis asked me if I'd like to do a series of interviews with pros for SFR. I said, yes, and among the names he suggested was Fred Pohl's. I asked Geis to contact these people beforehand, for I doubted if any of them would know who the hell I was. We quibbled about it for a while, then one day a postcard arrived saying: "Fred Pohl consents to be interviewed. GO!"

Having no conception of how these things were done, I went about it in my usual haphazard frenzy. I read two of Pohl's books and asked everyone I knew who had ever met him what he was like. Then with a small stack of information beside me, I ignored it and made up four questions based on his last novel, "The Age of the Pussy-foot." I had hoped to confine the interview to that book alone, but as I soon learned, the interviewee has a habit of interviewing himself.

I deliberately chose "antagonistic" questions for two reasons. One, I disliked the insipid tone of the questions I had read in most fanzine interviews. I wanted to present questions that would provoke the readers even more than they would provoke Pohl. And, too, in the time I'd been active in fandom it had become apparent to me that there were many unasked questions of this or that pro that tended to poison the aura about his name. I culled my questions from this atmosphere: Was Pohl an old fuddy-duddy? An arch-reactionary? The declared enemy of the New Wave?

If I had believed he was any of these things I never would have done the interview. I don't like people I don't like, period. I don't review their books, and I don't interview them. I have no talent for objectivity. I have been a fan of Pohl's since the mid-fifties, and I believe he is one of the best sf writers ever. Unlike the New Wavicles, he incorporated mainstream slick techniques into the genre with intelligence and respect, and in my opinion, his work is more avant-garde than most of their's.

If I'd told Pohl this in my cover letter it might have smoothed things over, but timid as I was, I submitted the four antagonistic questions along with a self-conscious, wise-cracking letter, and he justifiably got a bit upset. That is,

he sent me a five page letter with his own ideas of how he would answer the questions.

I replied with an apology and an explanation and the next five-page letter filled in the blanks from the first. There may have been a third letter. Anyway, I spliced the interview together from all three; in some cases adapting the questions to the answers. I still held to my "hostile-interviewer" slant. It was not until I read the thing in print that I realized how obnoxious I sounded.

Pohl was not a bit offended. I sent him a copy of the interview after I had it typed up, and he replied saying he thought it was too long, and that I should never again allow the interviewee to see the completed interview. I did cut the thing a bit more, but what I cut were redundant passages as my two sets of questions had covered the same ground. Then, too, I had to divide up some of my questions which were too long. I was not sure how long Pohl was going to put up with the whole business so I wanted to make every question count twice. If the questions seem leading, it is because I wanted to elicit full responses in certain areas and to avoid any hedging on his part, so I simply presumed for clarity's sake and let him correct me. He did, too, and where I was off the track I reworded the questions.

Understand, PLAYBOY has weeks and weeks to interview their subjects, and plenty of space to give them. I had neither. I wanted to create as accurate a portrait of the man as I could in as short a space as possible.

The interview was conducted by mail from Sept. 26, 1970, to October 7, and then I spoke with Pohl briefly on the phone. We've never met. I sent the interview to Geis who eventually sent it back to me when SFR folded. Part of the piece was to have been a biography that I decided against submitting to ((M.T.)) because I felt it was too long. Here is some of it:

Fred Pohl has been called "cadaverous," and by Larry Niven, "the farmer in American Gothic, but with three drinks in him." He has published seven collections of short stories (eight, now?), four novels, and six works in collaboration with C. M. Kornbluth (who he tells me pronounced it "bluth" not "blooth"). Also he has collaborated with Jack Williamson on two novels, and edited the six classic Star Science Fiction anthologies, which are due to be re-issued by Ballantine.

He was born in New York City in 1919, entered fandom in 1933 with Brooklyn Science-Fiction League and later joined the Futurians. From 1939-1943 he was an editor of Popular Publications producing SUPER SCIENCE STORIES, and, ASTONISHING STORIES. In 1943 he went into the Air Force where he began a novel about the ad business; but he realized he knew little about it. He joined an ad agency in '46 as a copywriter, but insists that this experience did not influence his style.

Later he was editor of the book department of Popular Science Publications, collating articles from the magazine into book form. Then, in 1949, to help an ailing friend, he took over a literary agency which folded in 1953.

You may not believe it but he was married to Judith Merrill from 1948 to 1951 when they were divorced. He married his present wife a year later and the two live with their children in a sunny little Jersey suburb, Red Bank. He (along with Lester Del Rey who formerly lived across the street from him) were (and possibly still are) frequent guests on a popular local (?) radio show, "Long John Nebel," which is heard over WNBC radio from 12 until 5 in the AM.

I believe Pohl's first published novel was "The Space Merchants," the classic collaboration with Kornbluth. That was in 1953, and in the same year his first collection of stories was published from Ballantine, "Alternating Currents." His first solo novel was "Slave Ship" in 1956, again from Ballantine.

When Horace Gold of Galaxy became ill, Pohl took over (Jan. 1, 1961) and

piloted the prozine and its companion, IF, to three consecutive Hugos: '66, '67, '68.

He was formerly on the executive board of the (Jersey) Monmouth County Civil Liberties Union, and was a member (he may still be) of the Monmouth County Democratic Committee. He received the rarely awarded Edward E. Smith Memorial Award at the Boscon in 1966.

He is quiet, serious, and a most relaxed man to talk to. He is self-effacing about his work; I found him generous, patient, and kind. In short, a nice guy.

TOM DIGBY My experience in apas leads me to expect that things like con
330 S. Borendo St. trip reports and other personal experiences, no matter how in-
Los Angeles, Ca.90020 teresting to read and deserving of egoboo, often do not inspire
comment. But the bit about the canals of England—I gather
that they were dug long before the invention of the bulldozer, steam-shovel, etc.,
and were therefore dug mostly by men with shovels, by hand. Just think of showing up
bright and early one morning, shovel in hand, and being confronted with rows of
stakes marching off into the distance, knowing that all the dirt between the stakes
was to be dug out to such-and-such a depth. Of course if there's a large group of
guys with shovels, and they don't look off toward the horizon too often but instead
think of it as a steady, semi-permanent job, then it's not too bad until they finally
draw near to whatever river the canal is to connect to and they realize that in an-
other month or two they'll be out of work.*1*

And that review of SNEAK PREVIEW reminds me of something I read years and
years ago. I don't remember title; author, or anything but there was a scene in
which a planeload of retired people being flown to Florida (or some such place) was
gased in midflight and the bodies dumped into the Gulf of Mexico. This was evidently
routine as the pilot could do it all from his control console by pushing the right
buttons and the crew considered it so routine that they were talking and eating their
lunch while it was going on. Also, if it'll jog anybody's memory, brainwashing was
referred to as a "laundry job." If I remember right, the passenger-dumping scene
included a trainee on his first flight who wasn't told in advance that that was what
was going to happen, and found out as the singing from the passenger section ("Our
fun in the sun has only begun...") stopped when one button was pushed and the plane
lurched a little at the push of the next button.*2*

1 I calculate that horses, mules, etc., did a lot of the work, like pulling earth-
gouging implements, dragging out rocks, etc. As for "being out of work," this
sounds ideal for convict-labor; wonder if such was used?

2 You remember the early mag pubbing of "Sneak Preview." Of course I didn't ac-
tually know of it, but of course suspected that an early version existed. See the
following Loc by Hank Davis. ((NOTE: Tom is moving; may now have a new address.))

HANK DAVIS ...If Bob Vardeman thinks that the review of Harlan's Love Ain't Nothing
Box 154 But Sex Mispelled was a pan, he should have seen the one in SATURDAY
Loyall, REVIEW.
KY. 40854.

Strange that it's only the non-American fans who write in and say nice
things about Jeff Schalles' cartoons. I like 'em, but seem to be alone on these
shores....

Speaking of Jeff, he wonders why cars are made capable of going so much
faster than is necessary or safe. Simple. People want their cars to be toys as well
as transportation. I'm reminded of this every night, since the house is next to a
drive-in restaurant and many of their (young) customers seem convinced that there
exists a high positive correlation between the ability to accelerate from zero to
sixty miles per hour in one second and the possession of a pair of descended testi-
cles... Not that I mean to claim saner-than-thou, but my case of the disease is

directed elsewhere. I've got this thing about airplanes and just can't get very excited about a vehicle that can't fly.

...The Flash Gordon serial that Mervyn Barrett mentions may be the series made for German TV in, I believe, the mid-1950's. I understand that the show flopped....

Robert Bloch's Sneak Preview appeared originally in the November 1959 AMAZING, incidentally...but since it occupied only some 80 pages in the magazine, it may have been expanded....

Well, yes, if UFOs are our descendants out for a little time-travelling jaunt, then their behavior does make more sense than if they are interstellar visitors. But so would their behavior if they are some sort of natural phenomenon ("natural" equals "not constructed by/controlled by a rational being with intelligence greater than that of, say, a dog or cat") that we don't understand. Besides, we have no reason to believe that time travel is possible, and if it is possible (into the past, that is) a great many basic theories of science are going to be in trouble, not to mention all concepts of causality. (Yes, I know that, if tachyons exist, which has not been proven, then for every observer who records a tachyon emission at A followed by an absorption of the tachyon at B, there must exist an observer who recorded a tachyon emission at B, followed by an absorption at A, but that's no way to get back then to murder your own grandfather.) Just as, should somebody invent a working anti-gravity device (unless it is also an inertia neutralizer), General Relativity is going to be in trouble, because then you will be able to tell, when you are locked in Einstein's windowless elevator, whether your elevator is in free space accelerating at one gravity, or it is sitting at rest on the surface of the earth.

Even if UFOs are time travelers, anyone trying to attract serious scientific attention would be well advised not to push the notion. It will be hard enough to get them to take seriously the possibility of interstellar visitors. (But that brings us back to that behavior that doesn't make sense: why come all that distance and not say hello? But then, instead of a They, we might be dealing with a That. Imagine a race which does its interstellar exploration by robots. One computer controlled ship makes a trip of a hundred or so light years at sublight speed, comes into the solar system, finds something interesting — us — sets up a complex on Mars or in the asteroid zone or somewhere and starts manufacturing saucers that zip around the atmosphere of the third planet, testing, measuring, stuff. Saucers report to Mama ship; Mama sends info back home on a laser beam, if they haven't anything better, and the beam travels for a hundred years or so. Any changes in the program of the computer take another hundred years to arrive, of course. Even now, the message "Wipe 'em Out" may be on its way to Mama Ship. Cheers....) That was Gene Wolfe's Loc I was reacting to, I almost forgot to say.

...Baxter has not seen every sf film, or at least does not write about certain ones. Including (grumble, grumble) one which I saw about 1953 which involved a team of scientists descending to the heart of the earth in a tank-like vehicle and the title of which has not stayed with me. At the 1966 worldcon, I asked Forrest J Ackerman if he knew the title, and he remembered the flick, but even he couldn't remember the title. Does anybody out there know the title? *1*

...John Piggott thinks that sf book reviews should be confined to the purely sercon zines — which zines? SFR is dead, and SPECULATION is lucky to get out two issues per year lately. SCYTHROP/ASFR has been revived, but only very recently. That leaves SF COMMENTARY. There aren't all that many sercon zines lately. So keep those book reviews coming in, friends and neighbors, I say.

1 I vaguely recall seeing something of that nature on the boobtoob.... If anyone of our readers knows, I suspect that one is Robert Bloch.

ROBERT BLOCH
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Thanks for all the goodies in MI#10. Leon Taylor's review of Baxter's book interested me: I tend to disagree with just about everything Baxter says. But there are cinema zines, Mr. Taylor — quite a few of them, and very fannish too.

George Senda's letter mentions the body-trampling scene in KING KONG; yes, I do recall it, fondly. It involved only one infant, though, as I remember. But I have always regarded it as a perfect example of how to squelch a child.

ROY TACKETT
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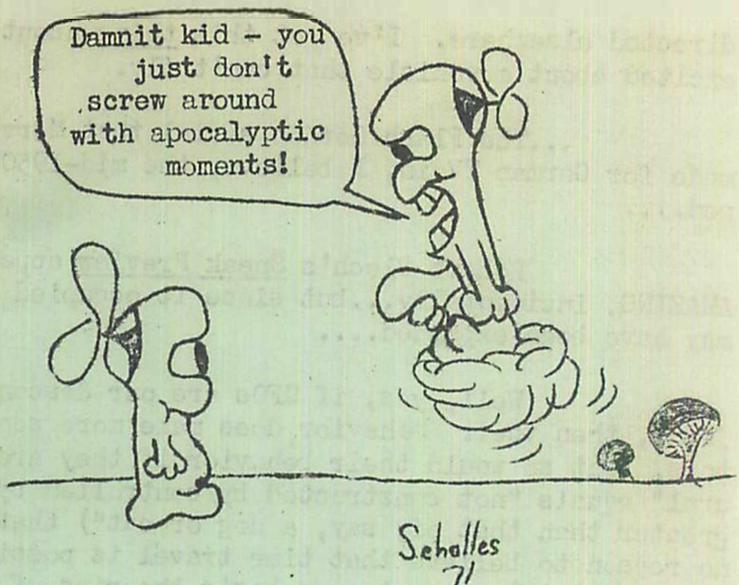
Enjoyed Barrett's con report because of the wee glimpses of Britain—like the bit about the canals. Need more con reports like that.

Leon Taylor's review: 1 1/4 pages for Star Trek is about right. Despite all the hoopla about it, the show really wasn't very good. The first season was fair but the rest of it was poor at best.

On editorial notes: Considering all the reports you don't have to sell me on the existence of something in the Scottish Lakes and the existence—up until recent times anyway and perhaps still—of Yeti. Far too many reports of the existence of both of these to flatly dismiss them. (I remain extremely skeptical about the American version of the Yeti, though.) But, old Ed, as for the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt being on a technological level with today—no way, man. *1* Stop and consider simply the physical aspects of modern technology—the support of such a technology leaves its mark on the land and there is nothing in the Middle East to indicate that. Those people, the Egyptians in particular, recorded absolutely everything—every facet of everyday life and work—they recorded no technology comparable with today's. Instead of speculating of things they didn't have it is enough to marvel at what they did have. And as for 3000 years of drifting sand...where? The Mesopotamian cities survived well into the Christian era. True they declined in population as invasion, misadministration, and the salting of the land, all contributed to the destruction of the irrigation system. Final abandonment of Babylon, Ur, and the other great cities occurred around the 7th Century AD, not too many years before the Arab conquests. *2*

1 You evidently caught Jeff Schalles' comment (in the midst of his long LoC), which paragraph he headed "Editorial Notes." So — it is his view on the specified ancient civilizations that you're answering.

I more or less agree with you. However, I feel that we have one clue which everyone (far as I know) seems to have ignored (perhaps not wanting to get involved in petty racial discussions). That is, that a race's skin pigmentation may have a much more direct bearing on the solar radiation under which that race evolved than is generally supposed. Thus, one or more of Earth's skin-colorations may have evolved on the planet(s) of a different sun (or suns). Alternatively, one or more of our planet's human pigmentation varieties may have evolved millions of years prior to the latest one (which, from all evidence, seems to be a negroid type); during such an earlier evolutionary period on Earth, climatic conditions would have been far different than now, possibly with heavy, continuous or nearly total cloud cover of such a nature that man evolved as a different "color." (And, perhaps, this has happened more than once, over comparatively vast spaces of time.)



2 But wasn't there a discovery a year or so ago of an ancient civilization somewhere...uh, I think in the SE corner of the Arabian peninsula? All sand-covered, too. Archeology suspects many other sand-covered spots, but hasn't been able, for one reason or another, to get at 'em.

MARK MUMPER Walker's interview with Pohl was rather frustrating -- Pohl 1227 Laurel Street continually refused to react to Paul's questions head-on, at Santa Cruz, Ca. 95060 least to my satisfaction. He always seemed to address himself to them at an obtuse angle, branching off into a generally related subject but ultimately failing to broach the particular question.

True, some of Paul's questions were perhaps limited in scope, specifically the first two, but on the whole they were intelligent, appropriate and provocative. For example, when Walker asks Pohl whether the general trends noted in The Age of the Pussyfoot are to occur, Pohl berates him for his assuming them to be predictions. A good point, but Pohl never does answer the question, even with the understanding that those trends are merely "possibles." If I may be bold, I accuse Pohl of pussy-footing.

Perhaps what is Paul's most intriguing question of the entire interview (#3 -- technology's effect on the nature of man) is shunted into the background of Pohl's answer, where he tosses around some mediocre responses dealing with technology's effect on actions, which actually have little to do with man's nature.

I was quite taken aback at Pohl's reply to the question dealing with "The Age of Aquarius" (a trite phrase). Pohl considers it a "function of surplus production" and adds that "there is little reason to think that the human race can sustain the creation of even local and temporary surpluses." First, I disagree that it is a function of surplus production, at least directly. It is rather a result of surplus thought and emotion, brought about by increased leisure time, which you may relate to surplus production if you wish. However, to doubt that "we" can sustain surpluses is ridiculous. The general state of the world today is the result of a well-sustained surplus -- the military-industrial complex that survived WWII as a surplus, *1* and which is with us today, stronger than ever. That rambling war in SE Asia itself is a direct byproduct of that surplus, and, sadly, I don't expect it to be dismantled all too soon. So much for the feeble sustenance of surpluses.

Pohl's analogy of the "quantum unit of progress" was very profound. I myself am under the impression that almost all experiences I undergo are valuable in the long run (under the heading "Learning from Mistakes"), no matter how painful they may be at the time. That is, of course, unless they are fatal experiences or potentially so. In that case I would naturally try to combat them. Still, sometimes one learns best while under strain.

Personally, I disagree with Pohl's attitude toward writer's groups of the Milford sort. I think they are valuable as group therapy, and of course while it depends upon the writer's own personality, I don't think they are damaging to his talent or ability. However if he thinks it is damaging, he should stay away. Certainly Fred Pohl knows himself and his intellectual/artistic processes much better than I. It seems, from his attitude towards critics, that the basic substance of his creativity is evolved subconsciously, otherwise he would engage in self-analysis and would welcome outside criticism. I have respect for such artists. Myself, I analyze and dissect my work quite extensively. I envy him.

I am annoyed by his discussion of "the professional writer" in answer to question 8. I should think that for many writers (and for me it is definitely true) the compulsion to write one particular piece comes from his own inspiration and desire to say something, rather than the existence of a market for something he can write but may not necessarily want to. That attitude smacks not of professionalism but of prostitution. I have much more respect and empathy for a writer who creates what he pleases, at the risk of his bank balance, than I do for one who fails to be true to his own artistic needs, his only satisfaction being financial stability and the title of "professional." Naturally, an ideal situation would be where one's most important work coincided with the work most in demand. If Pohl has been in this situation throughout his professional career I cannot find fault with his attitude; but to say this is true of professional writers, with no qualifications, is

stepping on shaky ground.

Once again, Pohl fails to answer directly a concise question, in this case the last. I think that he put together, at least in GALAXY if not in IF, a mature, adult-oriented sf magazine. However, I have heard of the anecdote Walker mentions, and I am curious to know whether it's true. Pohl did not refute it.

All in all, an interesting interview. Pohl is a fascinating man, all the more so because he made me upset. I don't agree with many of his points, but I'd certainly like to hear more of his opinions. The only disappointment I had with the interview was his tendency to ignore some of Paul's more direct questions....

1 As a "complex" the mil.-ind. rather poorly (except for A-bombs, but we're speaking of the entire shebang) staggered along after WWII. Perhaps the Korean War would suit your purpose better. However, "surplus" is hard to pin down in such a context because the industrial complex and the cannonfodder (both in mufti) are always at hand, to be rapidly utilized (if time permits) for warfare. It is questionable if, in the between-warfare state, such resources can always -- if ever -- be properly labeled "surplus."

JERRY LAPIDUS ...On the basis of two very recent examples, I guess I really shouldn't talk about Walker's interviewing, but rather about the subject interviewed. I guess it's something that makes a person a good interviewee, just as there is that which makes one a good interviewer. Which means this--read two Paul Walker mail interviews of authors in the last week, this one here of Fred Pohl and the one in Energumen of Robert Silverberg. Same interviewer--but I found Silverbob's exceptionally interesting, and this one here only moderately so. I've enjoyed Pohl's work, but somehow, him talking about it doesn't reach me very strongly. Still a really good interview, though: I do think it should have been edited a little tighter, as it tends to drag a bit too much.

Basic misconception lies behind Mike Glycer's article. Mike bases the whole thing on the assumption that science fiction is supposed to be a literature of prophecy, and then goes on to prove where sf has been "wrong." But who said, in the first place, that the basic assumption is correct? Merely because the popular media has been through the whole "prophecy" bit is no reason to assume that it's true. In fact, I know of no modern sfi/writer who has ever claimed that science fiction can do more than suggest a few possible futures, a few possible directions in which society might go. Mike's whole argument is based on a straw man which he has no difficulty at all easily knocking down. A few points in the discussion deserve further note.

Mike talks about the impact of television, and then seems to claim that as far as he's concerned, there has been no proven impact. Am I interpreting you correctly, Mike? Assuming I am, are you serious in implying there has indeed been no impact on society of television? Do you deny McLuhan entirely? Certainly I was under the impression that numerous studies have been conducted (and not merely Pastore's, but more than a few unbiased scientific studies); check out the Kerner commission report for only one such study, a report on the relationship between television and violence. Can you really deny the influence of TV on politics, through commercial "sale" of the candidate? Point to Nixon in '68, Rockefeller, Lindsay, a host of other politicians who've learned to make use of the media. Point to Chicago in '68, with the debacle of the Democratic party visible across the nation. Television has had no impact except to present the good guy/bad guy image? C'mon.

SF never had a pollution story before it was popular? Well, would you accept ecological disaster? As in, for example, John Christopher's original No Blade of Grass? Seems kind of dangerous to say things like "never" in a case like this.

Ed. I assume I quote you correctly in this: "Humor in fantasy or SF is OK if incidental to the story, but to debase the genre by letting it control the play makes me retch." I dunno, anyone talking about "debasement of the genre" makes me nervous, sounds like the return of J.J.Pierce. What particularly is wrong with having a primarily humorous work? A whole host of examples are possible--Brown's What Mad Universe and Martians Go Home, "Clifton's" When They Came From Space, Lafferty's Space Chantey, Silverbob's Up the Line, Panshin's whole Villiers series...I could

certainly go on. There's more in all these named books than humor, but humor is of either the primary or at least secondary import. Why is humor itself so bad? *1*

Something John Piggott neglects in saying that he hears about all the old time fannish fanzines, but not the sercon ones, is the fact that there don't seem to be a lot of sercon fans writing fanhistory articles and columns about the old sercon fanzines, either. I'd say one strong reason a lot of "sercon" material and writing isn't seen now is that a good bit of it is fairly limited in time. What I mean is that while comment on books and magazines of the time can be both interesting and valid now, in twenty years it may easily be no longer interesting. At the same time, humorous material about fans, or about life in general, more fannish material, can be applicable and readable any time. Although we do see some of the old sercon material anyhow—some of the best in Advent book collections....

1 What I said doesn't say that humor itself is bad. There are, however, occasions when an SF or F opus is too heavily larded with humorous folderol. Perhaps I shouldn't have included all funny-funnies of the type I mentioned. Still, I don't think you really got my point, since most of the books you mention are ones I don't include in the variety I railed against...because they are not of that extreme type. Gads, maybe I just hate overpowering avalanches of lousy humor; that is to say, failures by the authors to be funny. But such things are mere matters of opinion....

RICK SNEARY ...Jeeves Cover ((MT-9)) not bad.. You are an old fashion fan
2962 Santa Ana St. in that you believe the fanzines true name should go out on
South Gate, Ca.90280 front, and the date and editors name an address should go in-
side... A regrettable number of newish fanzines want to brake
with conventions so much that they leave out one or more of these "bits" of infor-
mation.. It doesn't mater now, but it is a state of Hell for the indexer and lib-
rarian of the future.

The interview with Pohl was very interesting.. One of the best glimpses into what the man is like I can remember, and found it all good. Excepting with matters of personal taste I found I agreed with him on everything...withen my own rage of experence.. I will be looking forward even more to meeting and hearing him at the LACon next year... — One point, to add to his statement about improvements. A man on radio just yesterday was saying as how the whole world has outlawed slavery.. Not to say that it isn't still practiced in some places, but there isn't a country in the world were it isn't against the law. The speaker thought that this too, shows a sign of progress. (I am tempted to ask how he can be certain that there was no romatic love before Eleanor of Aquitaine.. That it is not mentioned in clasical writing does not really prove that it didn't exist in non-clasical type people ...but I'm far from a historical scholar, and reframe from geting into any argument in which I know so little I know is true.)

Jeeves treatment of the buttered toast theory is the best I've read. Fine writing like they use to get before the war.. His Con report was good too...and makes me think it is the only one of this years Eastercon I've seen.. Con reports are not as common as they once were, and most of the art has gone out of them.. This could have done with a couple more pages of views and personal opinions, but even so, is fine stuff.. As it is, Terry makes a number of suggestions and observations... The bit about the clod moving mikeraphones around durring a major speaker is a fine example of the non-pointed remark, that helps suggest a paterern of social behaviour.. You or I might merely referred to him by name and called him a clod.. but the talented kind, like Willis and Jeeves carry it off without you really noticeing the point he is making...but later if you see something like that happen, you remember the point made...if it is someone you admire.

Michael Glycer's essay has two things wrong with it. It is based on a fallacious premise, and it is aimed at the wrong audience. The only people I can remember of who ever made statements about science fiction fortelling future events were newspaper reporters and article writers who had no connection with the field. On the other hand countelless professionals, like Fred Pohl in this issue, have denied they were fortelling the future, or even always expressing their view of

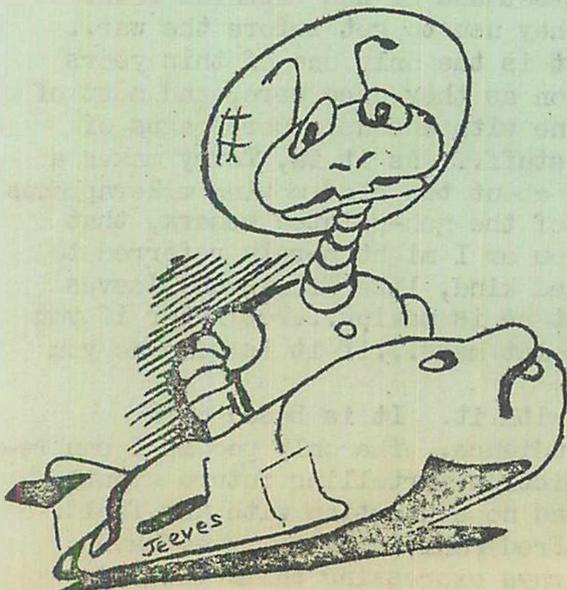
what the future would or should be. It all started with Verne and Wells, who took current ideas being talked about in scientific and intellectual circles and presented them in popular format. They didn't invent anything, but they suggested the idea to a lot of people who would never have heard of it otherwise... Science fiction didn't produce space travel, but there is no way to estimate the young imaginations that were turned on, by reading about it.. The scientific value of science fiction to me has always been its ability to open up the mind of the reader to the thought that there are many ways of doing anything, or thinking about it. A S.F. reader wasn't surprised by atomic bombs... nor to some degree would be surprised by time travel, or the news we were property... But neo-fans have been writing articles in fanzines as long as I can remember telling us that reading science fiction doesn't give us a real scientific education... I'd like one to point out a reputable voice that has ever said it did. (A few have, and been laughed down.)

Glyer's also wrong in producing a negative piece like this, if he expects to do anything but raise readers hackles.. The strong theme throughout is that anyone who believes science fiction produces the future is a dope, and that everyone who reads it, believes this.. As it is likely that your readers also read some science fiction, there is a strong likelihood they may feel that Mr. Glyer is calling them a dope.. The result is about as likely to please as an article advocating strict gun controls in GUN WORLD.. — He could have eased it out a little if he had written from the point of view that at least he and the reader knew better...but he makes it very strong that he thinks the reader is a du-du, who believes science fiction is a blue print of the future.... The blue I see is not a print....

In general I agree with Brazier.. I'm not all that unhappy with the world either.. Born to the city, and without the physical strength to enjoy roughing it, I wouldn't want to be any were else. (Unless it was warmer in Winter.) He be wrong when he says that a space the size of a closet is enough for privacy... Different people need different amounts.. I have walked in the desert and mountains, and been unhappy that I could even see a sign of humanity.. I'd be willing to live in a giant apartment house (if soundproofed enough) but there should be always a open place to go, were one can be all alone.. I like being in the center of a group of friends, and I like being very much alone...as the moods hit me.. Everyone should have the chance and the choise...

I've a good deal of gray in sideburns and the parts of my beard that I cut away, and my hair is short but not crew-cut....but because I have a short neck, and I look even worse than usual with it down my collar.. I currently have a short beard and mustache...if they get long they curl unattractively... The bad thing about long hair (on men...there is nothing wrong about long hair on girls, of almost any age) is that some were it that way because it is "in" and not because they personally look good in that style.. Girls have at last approched what is almost a degree of good sense in dress...in that so many styles and fads are popular at the same time, that most are picking the one that looks good on them.. Lets face it. Some look better in pants suits than in hot pants.

Re your editorial.. I hadn't been aware that this years TAFF winner had been here before. (I didn't remember ever hearing of him, at the time he won.) If I hadn't been for Weston, it would have changed my view.. I agree that previous visits make a difference, and being well enough off to do it on your own anyway, should.. I'm not so sure about making any fast rules though. Things work best that are rule bound the least — it seems. For the first time in history, TAFF administrators are not active fanzine fans.



Letters are quite good, but do not inspire much counter comment from me. Not a case of not knowing what they are talking about either.. You edit a tight ~~5/14/66~~ column... I am glad to see from Hulvey's letter that some one can still get interested in international fandom. I've never done as much as I would like in this line myself. (Not as much as you obviously are.) Have always thought this was one of the big plusses for being in Fandom...along with TAFF. I have been sorry to see signs of chauvinism and preventualism among some new fans. So busy with the fandom in their own area that they not only don't have time to be interested in World Fandom, but suggest that it isn't important. And I'm saddest of all that the current LASFS seems to be the worst offenders.. Sigh! I've had a little of Hulvey's disillusionment with local political movements too.. They are all for electing "our man" regardless.. Partly though radio and Fandom, I've always looked to the man, not the party...and blind loyalty, is just that.. But, at grass roots, politics is small potatoes...and at one level up, it is just business. Idealism is either out side... or maybe, nearer the top... But they have to put on such an act.. Maybe one reason why Supreme Court Judges have a better image is they can be them selves..

Gosh, even in LoC's, Offutt manages to spend 90% of the time talking about himself.. Makes Ellison seem like a modest wall flower..

Doerr is mostly right, but being the Toughest Guy in Town, isn't the only way to keep from getting attacked...and such a B&W statement from a supposed fan is rather suppriseing.. - Two other answers are to appear to be too poor or worthless to bother with... Or, to appear to have something the other side doesn't want...like the plague.. -- Or you can have an Uncle who is a mean cop... A job I'd like to see the UN take on..

There were fans in New Zealand. Some like Mike Hinge moved away, others got married.. But there was a couple fanzines... The "spirit" must live some were... A smaller population, but more liberal, it seemed, than Australia.

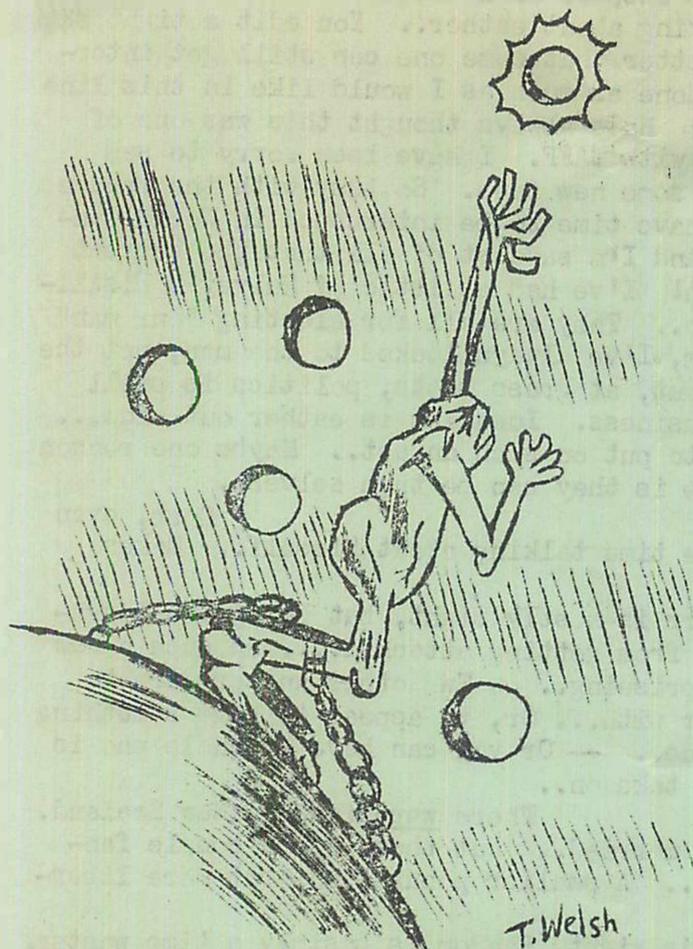
Well. Hayes is right, Fandom is basicly a time waster. But unlike TV or braiding rugs, you are making an investment that can pay divadenes in years to come.. Friends made though fandom, are beside being valueable as friends, maybe able to help you in some special way.. The look for something can be aided.. Insite of a very personal kind can also be had into the way a lot of different kinds of people think and act. Probably only radio hams have anything nearly as close, and they seem to have a greater limatation to their other interest...

ERIC B. LINDSAY ...One of the most interesting articles was the aptly titled "Fore-6 Hillcrest Ave. closing on the Oracle at Delphi" by Michael Glyer. I can't agree Faulconbridge, with the first paragraph however. I can never find "pulp magazine N.S.W. 2776 blazoned with poorly drawn naked women". Perhaps I am looking at Australia. the wrong magazines. I hear Playboy is big on SF these days.

Of course there were mistakes in the predictions of science fiction -- who cares? If SF was an attempt to provide an accurate forecast of the future one might have a valid point to criticize, but SF does not predict the future, nor is it intended to. It is written to entertain (at a profit to author and publisher), to enlighten perhaps, to make people think or consider things new, perhaps. Any accurate predictions made by SF are a bonus, not a goal in themselves. Frederik Pohl wrote in the same issue that his stories are cautionary tales about possible futures not about the future.

As for accurate predictions there were a few in Duck Rogers as I remember it. A recent edition of Nowlan's book claims that he foresaw (though not in precise detail) in 1927 such things as bazookas, walkie-talkies, jet planes (if my memory is correct they were rocket) and guided missiles. To my mind a more remarkable set of predictions were those in one of Jules Verne's less well known novels (from memory, I read it when I was about 12, and haven't seen it since) "City in the Sahara," in this Verne had centrally controlled land mines, pilotless radio beam powered aircraft, with automatic pilots and machine guns, also automatic harvesters....*1*

1 I seem to recall seeing this in a pb edition within the last two years.....



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I wanted to thank you for #10, definitely the best Moebius Trip I have seen and the most intellectually stimulating fanzine I have received in some time. The Leon Taylor and Bill Wolfenbarger columns, particularly, were excellent.

Leigh Edmonds I think was quite correct about the "depressions". Our present economy is based on a number of unsound assumptions, and among them is that of a continually increasing population. (Some of the others are continual inflation of three to four percent per year, and inexhaustible resources.)

Also enjoyed Roger Bryant's review of one of my old favorites, The Man Who Was Thursday, which I would call an allegory. For pure Chestertonian fantasy — and as I believe I said at Pecon, one of the best ever written — read The Napoleon of Notting Hill.

ANN CHAMBERLAIN
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Los Angeles, Ca. 90032

...I am presently involved in a group project of mystic intent for TAMLACHT, — which has been "cooking" (but not steady) since this time last year. What began as a simple get-together for the development

of ESP became — something unexpected. We contacted beings of the fifth dimension and they established conversation by mental telepathy with several members (united in this project)...and we have never yet caught one of them saying something that did not check out, with the others...both groups, theirs and ours, being quite honest with each other. Their trademark is that their motives are always pointed along lines of whatever will benefit mankind as a race...one many-hued race. In that way, it is possible to weed out interference, but thus far it is our "in the flesh" group who cause delays due to some personal problem. Some of us think it is not wise to be known by our real names until this has all become more firmly established...the form is in the making... on both sides. However, the spokesman for the 5-D group will be known as Mahurla. This side, the spokesman is torn between serving the 5-D people or the mate who resents his contact with them. It is also preparatory to the earthly changes due to take place at the turn of the century. There should be a lot of interest and probably more interference from this side than theirs. So we proceed with caution. There exists a manuscript some 400 paragraphs long, and there is more being added. Takes much patience. We will come up with a method by which anyone can develop with dependable guidance, whatever ESP talents are possessed by the investigator.

Obviously, that which would constitute "proof" to a telepath, would not be "proof" to one without that talent, —the latter should forego expressing opinions. It is this very thing that makes many questions impossible to answer. So we hope that only those interested in learning how to establish contact, will come forward.*1*

1 And let me just say this, in case any non-believer reading this should write in and inquire: No — they are not using a Ouija board.

MICHAEL D. GLYER ...The comments on my article of 10 these many months now were on 14974 Osceola St. the whole very ego-inflating and informative. ((I doubt if even Sylmar, Ca. 91345 the remarks in this ish can puncture such a balloon.)) Those who

had material disagreements with me (about my facts) showed where I had missed out. But those who merely differed in their opinion (about TV's influence, about my cynicism, whatever) said nothing I can really answer to, since it's simply a matter of two subjective opinions clashing....

Chauvin's comment about the writers of the 50s being ignored, or not as revered as other writers, should be left as a statement of fact, not pleaded as something to be repaired. Except for a small percentage of Bester, most CM Kornbluth, and A Canticle for Lebowitz by Miller, Jr., the good writers of the 50s were the same greats of the 40s. Pohl himself is hardly overlooked. His collaborations with Kornbluth, his anthologies and novels have all been well-received, remembered, and deemed classic. Simply reading the latest MT 10 lettercol shows that. (Quaker Cannon comes to mind as another story for the classics list, though it was a collaboration.) The rest of the 1950s writers were either our current greats whose origins in that time-period are ignored (Anderson, Ellison, etc.), or cruds who ought to be forgotten. What more can be said?

NED BROOKS
713 Paul Street
Newport News, Va. 23605

...Interesting comments by Alderson on the population problem. He sounds like he knows more about it than I do, but I can hardly believe that a closed society will not increase above 30,000. 30,000 in what area? The whole concept is unclear...

A "think-tank" character from the Hudson Institute lectured here, and claimed that the whole US population could live on 10% of the area of the country, with no greater population density than Westchester County in NY, which he described as very scenic, highest per capita income in the country, etc. He claimed that the country could easily support 600 million, and that by the year 2000, the average income (in spending power) would be 3-4 times what it is today. A very rosy picture. But it seems to me that it fails to consider that the fortunate residents of Westchester County actually occupy a great deal more area than just Westchester County. The county probably produces little if anything of what is consumed there — thus its residents, beside their living space, take up a certain amount of farmland elsewhere to grow the food they eat, a certain amount of forest land to provide the cellulose for their newspapers, books, and plastic, a certain area of strip mines to provide fuel for their electricity — not to mention the space taken up elsewhere in manufacturing the goods they use and disposing of the waste they create. What I'm trying to point out is that the citizen in an affluent society takes up vastly more "space" than the actual living space he occupies. A local politician, deriding those who are worried about overpopulation, talked of the vast "empty" spaces he saw in a plane ride over Virginia — but those spaces are not "empty" and available for living space just because no one is currently living on them. Some of them were farmland, some produced wood-pulp for politicians to get their lies printed on, some provided grazing for cattle and sheep, etc. There are, no doubt, still some non-utilized pieces of land around — but not that much.

The obvious conclusion is that overpopulation will never be felt, as portrayed in some sf, in terms of ten people living in one room and someone's elbow always in your ear — it will be felt in terms of shortages of goods. The least necessary and least efficient (and least profitable) uses of land area will go first, crowded out by the need for living space and food-producing land....

ED CAGLE - Route #1
Leon, KS. 67074

I agree with Mae Strelkov that fandom is a good source of interesting friends, whether by personal contact or through letters. And it's probably a source of occasional frustration and anger, too, but I think it's worth the rip. Even Mae, as she appears in her letters and article(s), is often confusing and contradictory, but never, never boring. Not to me. I rather admire her enthusiasm for life.

...If Jeff Schalles has an IQ of 150 plus, and gets drunk on a six-pack of beer, evidently his mental capacity is greater than his booze tolerance. Dunno about Jeff, but I know a few people who seem to think their IQ goes outta sight as their alcohol content creeps upward. I agree with them, in a way. But I think their IQ goes down outta sight, not up....

MAE STRELKOV

Casilla de Correo 55 living concerns: people. And I want to qualify that. People
Jesus Maria, per se, as a part of a crowd, depress me and I avoid them en
Cordoba, Argentina masse because they form a frightening phenomenon — the group
mind.

While gestalts are wonderful and fandom is about the best example I know of because its component parts are sincere, friendly and -- as I read -- shy in crowds and articulate on paper, I do dread mindless gestalts of any sort...a rioting crowd, a fanatical procession crying Heil or Hail. Either can be frightening, can't it?

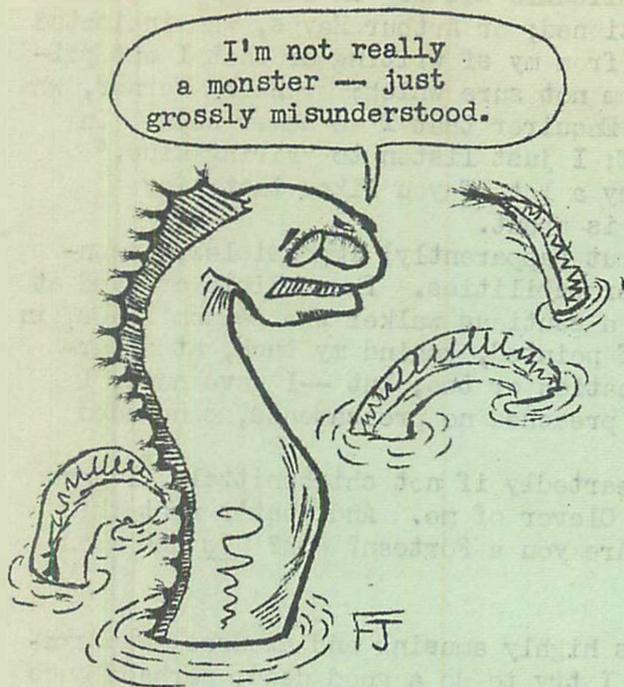
In fandom since I entered it I have been "blessed", if we may phrase it that way -- enriched -- by contact off and on with a series of vivid and honest people. Neither they nor I have felt obliged to enter into a formal routine... we'd exchange correspondence heatedly on some theme of mutual interest, and years later might not be corresponding any longer. Not because we'd quarrelled or gotten bored, but -- having exhausted that theme and not having entered into the personal sort of relationship that is difficult at a distance and consists of serving tea or lunch or whatever to the visiting crew -- exchanging remarks verbally on politics and the weather, etc., a mere correspondence does tend to die out, or slow down. Fanzines, on the other hand (especially one like yours, so dependable and regular, so cool and sensible), hold the tenuous group of farflung tentative (or "possible") friends together and in touch, even though only by the occasional comment one makes to another's expressed opinions in the lettercol.

Still, when I see a name I have once been in touch with, years ago, I think, "Hail, friend!"

People, per se, are boring. I mean the type that looks you up and down to see what you're wearing, judge the status of your purse and job and so on. They've been conditioned to keep up with the wrong parties, the mythical Joneses, and are exciting only in-so-far as one can penetrate that mindless exterior and get at the unawakened core within. In such cases, you don't get far and the "stirring of their depths" can only be temporary, unless a miracle re-animates them suddenly. As preachers used to phrase it, they planted the seed but the Lord had to water it and help it grow. Well, the "seed" planted by those do-gooders out to change the world and reform all us sinners, is a deplorable tare of non-productivity. They turn folks into timid zombies, afraid of this world and afraid of the next. And too bored with everything to find God tremendously exciting in all his manifestation on Earth and in the Sky, Nature, natural phenomena, the gifts of people...the little sparks of God within them, I mean, which is -- of course -- what I have always sought in everyone. The real self they were meant to become, before it was quenched by all the false-god-images of any religion, for I very much fear you can organize yourself out of existence, and that is what religions do to themselves and their worshippers. Turn them into static nonentities, who can't even love each other, save in a saccharine, pseudo way. It's just as bad to belong to some sector of so-called society which prevents you from loving all the other sectors. Or political outfit. I liked David Hulvey's letter re that, in thish. "Let's do everything for _____" ("Fill in your favorite cliché.") Good boy. And he owes me a letter or a new zine (No. 2).

PERRY A. CHAPDELAIN ((In a recent MT, Mae Strelkov offered to come to the defense Rt.4 - Box 137, of Mr. Chapdelaine, as a result of now almost forgotten SFWA Franklin, Tenn.37064 rumors, etc., etc., partially delineated in a previous MT article by Mr. C. Now, in my opinion Mr. C. really needs no defense, having done nothing untoward. The unknown fact-twisting bubble-machine has long lain dormant; let it rust in peace. Personally, while I don't hesitate to proclaim that both Perry & Mae are free to write MT at any time, I don't think it's necessary to go into the SFWA, etc., thing again, since everyone who wants to know about it, or cares, appears to be already satisfied -- or at least sated. R.I.P.-ec.)) ((Perry's LoC, addressed to Mae, follows:))

Dear Mae: I'm not entirely sure that our future relationship will become happy or sad. What if you do defend me, I get emotionally attached, divorce my wife and leave my ten children? That's sad? Or happy?



On the other hand, you might very well find out that I am a bastard, just like all the fuggheads have been preaching. How then could you defend me? and still be a nice young lady?

Besides, the last intellectual lady I enjoyed, purely platonically, got my wife upset, no end....

But it all sounds like fun.

...Now normally I wouldn't consider sending out my little literary efforts, especially to...Argentina...but if you can send them back, I'll start with the very first published, and follow up with fanzine comments and unpublished masterpieces, including my most recent quarter of a million word honest to goodness literary effort entitled HOT BUTTERED SOUL!

My write-up on the latter is in Bruce Gillespie's most recent SF Commentary, which I presume you've got by now. Lane Lambert, Rt. 2, Bruce Road, Boaz, Alabama 35957, is

just about to finish a six?-part series on my life (a mini-biog.)....

...I don't believe I've ever had an attacker that turned into a friend. How is it done? My memory stays long, for good or evil, love or hate, peace or war.

Recently my wife and I have set up a retail record outlet where we work about 12 hours per day, seven days a week. Psychedelic room gets the next priority. Old people in the town will hate us, I know....

ANDREW J. OFFUTT
Funny Farm
Haldeman, KY.40329

I realize that some fans of MT are going to find it hard to believe that at the time my article about the improbability of impossibility appeared in MT #6, I had never read anything by Charles Fort. I knew the name and that mention of it could polarize conversational groups of as few as two people. I haven't even read Damon Knight's book about him.

I had read Erich von Däniken's Chariots of the Gods? and a lot of other things, including, years ago, Ignatius Donnelly's old Atlantis, the Antediluvian Continent. It wasn't just that Donnelly was fascinating or sensible. It isn't just that it's mighty hard to pass off Edgar Cayce while still pretending to be a thinking human, and that Cayce said a good deal about Atlantis. It's just that to say "Oh, Atlantis" or "Atlantis is poppycock" is closely equivalent to joining Galileo's pope and the smug British shamans who tried to discredit and destroy Fleming. Stupidity is not limited to the uneducated, or even to the stupid, and a closed mind, unlike a rolling stone, gathers a great deal of moss and little else.

I believe that Ed Connor was as astonished — and pleased — as I was by the resounding response to that very brief article. Connor mentioned another article; I, already flattered and surprised, had already thought I'd do one or two; time passed and I've been hard at work writing things to support by banker and my children's dentists. But here is another article, put together while looking through a stack of 16 books on November 3rd. I warn all of you kind and obviously intelligent people that it will be less mind-blowing, less controversial, and a damnsight less formal and more personal. I am a personal sort of person, and it is very difficult for me to be objective. That's probably why I've never published articles outside fanzines save in SFWA BULLETIN and in Screw, a helluva parlay!

The editor of this august and obviously thinking persons' journal and I appreciate those letters. I see no reason to attempt to answer them — other than to hail Bob Smith (try going into a motel with a girl and signing that) for using capital H for "His" in referring to Man, and to tell him that my motto — and thus the motto of the House of Offutt, since I'm it — is Ad majorem Homini gloriam; or Terry Jeeves: what the hell do I care about challenges, I was only reporting; or Ned

Brooks --although yes, I knew about that inexplicable battery in the Cairo museum and about more biblical references than I mentioned; or Arthur Hayes, who indicated either that I could not divorce my MT writing from my sf writing or that I was primarily responsible for all the inexplicables, I'm not sure which; or Harry Warner, who has read a series of articles in The National Enquirer that I've never seen. In sooth, I have yet to see my first issue of TNE; I just listen to "Firing Line."

I can give you a very good reason why a lot of you liked that tiny article, and that's what this issue's article is about.

I merely laid out a lot of factual but (apparently) impossibles, inconsistencies, certainly implausibilities and improbabilities. The article arrived at no conclusion. I had no theory to sell; I am a cautious walker who seldom leaps, in mind or body. Oh perhaps I suggested, sort of pointed, behind my back, at a far-fetched and quite unbelievable possible explanation or two, but --I gave none. I didn't try to hype you. I posited no posits, preached no preachments, concluded no strained conclusions.

So you liked it. Because, chickenheartedly if not chichenitzaly, I gave you nothing, really, to give me hell about. Clever of me. And that's what this second so-called Fortean article is about. (Are you a Fortean? Oh? Is the moon 37 miles away from this Earth?)

HARRY WARNER, JR. Mae Strelkov's article is highly amusing and arouses deep sympathy in me. Every time I try to do a good deed, perhaps once 423 Summit Avenue pathy in me. Each year, something proves the truth of the My Fair Lady song Hagerstown, Md. 21740 which emphasizes how important it is not to find your neighbor home when you want to help him. I'm already overdue for an operation which was necessitated by my stupid offer to carry a heavy bag of groceries for a semi-cripple one day when I wasn't completely recovered from the operation last winter. I also seem to have innocently assisted in the breakup of a marriage because I sent the couple a Montgomery Ward catalog, but that's a long story which can't be told in a fanzine to show how my action was really intended as a good deed. On the other hand, when I do something in line with the indifference of modern man to the suffering of others, it usually pays off. Not many months ago, I was wakened by a screaming woman next door, pleading with her husband not to kill her. I looked at my watch, and it was 5 a.m., an hour when murders rarely occur, I looked at the calendar and it was Sunday, the day when the couple usually were fighting drunk, and I neither telephoned police nor ran to the lady's assistance but went back to sleep, and the fight continued so long that other neighbors complained to the landlord the following Monday and he gave the couple orders to move out and I enjoyed much more peaceful weekends after that.

I liked immensely Mervyn Barrett's con report. The scarcity of full-scale reports on the Noreascon has alarmed me a trifle, and this gives assurance that the art of writing the things is not lost. Maybe Boston was such a heavily attended con that everyone is discouraged from writing about such a large cast of characters. I read not long ago a book about a leisurely cruise on British canals, and so I took particular interest in the waterway paragraphs in this item. Nature enthusiasts are now trying to save a worn-out canal that runs only a few miles from Hagerstown, up the Potomac....

Leon Taylor continues to be the most entertaining reviewer in fanzines nowadays on the basis of things like his discussion of the Baxter book. My interest in movies has exploded in recent years and I've been reading an enormous amount about films, but I have yet to find a critic who really satisfies me, so I don't feel too bad about John Baxter's inability to live up to Leon's expectations. The critics and I seem to expect different things from movies. They want perfect films and roar indignantly when they can't find any. I have no hope of finding anything more than perfect moments in films, on the theory that no artwork created by committee has a chance of being superb in every way from start to finish. So I'm quite content when I find one actor I admire doing a good job in an otherwise poor movie, or ten minutes of first-rate dialog in a two-hour movie, or just one five-minute sequence that makes up for Dullsville elsewhere in the movie. These things satisfy me and then the critics jump on these movies-as-wholes and I am unhappy with critics.

I couldn't relate the complete plot of *The Man Who Was Thursday* if two weeks with Kim Darby were the reward for doing so. But it sticks in my mind that there really is a fantasy element in the closing pages of the book, which I haven't read for a couple of decades. I'm happy to know that it's again available in paperback. It used to be obtainable in the British Penguin or Pelican series when I was a neofan, and then I'm pretty sure that it appeared in one of the Munsey reprint magazines about ten years later. Chesterton is definitely a rewarding reading experience, even when he's propagandizing for his religion. *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* is a good book to try after *TWWWT*.

The people who grow rich by jacking up the price on imports aren't all in Australia. The situation is terrible for anyone who is fond of buying printed music, wants to own volumes of it that aren't published in the United States, and purchases from dealers in this country imported editions. Vocal scores of the Richard Strauss operas, for instance, have been selling for just 100 per cent more when purchased from American stores than they cost in Germany where they're published. These aren't new American editions printed from German plates or any other expensive special products, but the very same thing that is sold in Germany, so the importer incurs only the transportation cost.

...The letter section lament over the possible death of the prozines made me wonder how fans will react if they do all disappear. Will everyone suddenly decide it's imperative to start a complete collection of prozines? I get the impression that they aren't very popular with most collectors nowadays, and they seem to cost less than many other types of pulp magazines of similar age. It could be another *Arkham Outsider* and *Others* situation all over again if all of a sudden nobody can buy a prozine from a newsstand. *1*

1 Maybe there're more sf-pulps now because more were collecting them earlier and hence more were saved from the paper-drives of WWII.... And if all prozines folded, I'll bet it'd be only a short while before a new one (or more) arose.

JACKIE FRANKE ...Leon Taylor's remarks about SF IN THE CINEMA seem confused. Box 51-A RR2 From the various criticisms, I assume the book is personally Beecher, Ill. 60401 biased, inaccurate and full of drivel -- yet worthy of being purchased. What for? A listing of films with SF content and no more? Sorry -- if a list is what I wanted, I'd buy one, not one wrapped about with excess wordage, at least if the "quotes" are any accurate sampling of the nature of the unfolding material. Baxter's dislike of *Star Trek* -- or abrupt dismissal of same makes me suspicious as it is (though I did like *Outer Limits* too--).

Pauls' review of Norton's *DARK PIPER* should be commended -- for making me even mildly interested in reading one of her novels if nothing else. Space adventure was thrilling *Way Back When*, but haven't cared for that sort of written SF in ages. Good to see Norton is apparently reaching for another level. Heinlein manages to write juveniles and "higher" SF -- don't see why Miss Norton can't. The ability certainly seems to be there....

DAVID WM. HULVEY ...Jackie Franke, don't tell Ed, but I read *MT* for the lettercol, Rt. 1, Box 198, as there are all these neat fans I've never heard of in it from Harrisonburg, such far away places as Leon, Kansas (Taylor was there too, huh?), Va. 22801 Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain and Kenya (or was it a guy named Kenya from Afghanistan born to Argentinian parents? Really, the most swell moments of my perusal of the zine come as I trip lightly through the lettercol.

Schalles' loc bears comment. I've met Jeff on two occasions, for his PghLANGE and the *Worldcon*, and let me say to you wonderful fen that he is really a nice weirdo.

Yas, JJ Pierce did peer at the young femmefan with lust. He did indeed grab her with evil intent. I saw it. Ghod, I was mortified. Do they really do things like this at cons? Cheesus Chrise, Coulson is right about the moral decadence of fandom. Well, I'm glad Jeff saved the girl as he and I were too drunk later on to save much of anything. Didja haveta drink so much of that roseate or

whatever that neat red winelike stuff was? I mean, I coulda used more of it than I did. And Jeff, I got to the point that some idiot took a picture of me and Brian Burley and others whose names escape at the moment in a state of drunken dissolution on the floor. Lord, where does our sensibilities go at cons? I fear they are a bit inhibition loosening. But that's ok. As for the Worldcon, didja ever get any of the Mike McInerney Memorial Pipe's fine drug? Geezo, I was really far-out watching Bhod Steward do his foot-behind-the-head stunt under the influence. And Burbee didn't even have to tell the watermelon story....

BEN P. INDICK 428 Sagamore Avenue Teaneck, NJ.07666 ...I cannot make any sage comments on the zine, other than to praise you for a pretty hip journal which casually and confidently goes its own way. Your tastes, judging by articles, are relatively eclectic, but there is a preponderance of personal stuff, such as the Wolfenbarger ZEPPELINS, Taylor OSTRICHES, Glycer, Billy Ray, etc, etc. This is probably to the good, for the zines are a fine method of self-expression. Hell, their local newspapers would not only refuse the stuff, but, in some instances, call the authorities.

Personally, not having gotten involved in fandom in decades, and reading much personal philosophies by other young folks in VILLAGE VOICE, etc, I apologize to them, but I prefer straight fiction, articles, and such interviews as Paul Walker's cogent piece about Pohl. An editor no doubt would be delighted to have such material at all time, and especially such a charmer as TERRY JEEVES' PSI NO MORE, but such stuff doesn't grow on mailbox trees. Anyway, I hope you can elicit such material more often, and somewhat less blathering, for us old codgers who have a sinking feeling we've read it before. Shall we say, no more than one blather an issue? And, if Fandom will save the world, very good; however, such a miniscule portion of this world's pop is not too likely to do so, and it behooves us to start at home, in situ, with ourselves. We'll show examples, like the lady says.

I guess the trouble is that the veteran Actifan has already seen all the exegeses of sf/fantasy he can stomach already, and cannot be less interested in the discovery someone has made that one writer has or has not been influenced by a medieval ms or some subway graffiti. Whereas, those of us who take our sf or leave it, when we decide to become enthusiastic (often a passing fancy) want ONLY words about our newly regained beloved.

So it takes all kinds to make horseraces, and, since your magazine manages to balance itself with some aplomb, you may be serving up to everyone his own best of all possible planets. I particularly admire the unforced way the zine swings, and unselfconsciousness....



MAE STRELKOV ...If you wish to confide in me ((Mae is addressing Mr. Chapdelaine.))
Argentina. I am perfectly capable of galloping into the ranks of the mighty on my dragon chanting "Excelsior" and disgracing you, but if you're game, my lad, well that's your lookout, and it might be fun!

One thing, life has not downed me and I'm a grandma of two and a half little boys (maybe of course No.3 will be the gal they want). As for children, we have seven. As for the danger of falling for me, it would be very silly of you. No, you won't. Wipe it out of your head. If you must be entranced, love my dragon, by name the T'liung-Ma of China, and the Tshreng-Tshreng of Trapalanda (Quetzalcoatl's Tlapallan?), a mystery-land formerly in Patagonia.

The dragon may or may not be the devil feared by the Faithful. I think it is not, but that's a moot point. Furthermore, there are even worse Lares and Penates you'd have to contend with... I presume you didn't read the recent CRYS before it ceased to appear. You'd better read my letters in them before you stick your neck out and trust me. I'm in "league" with something, I'm not quite sure what or which. So? I'm as honest as my beliefs, which are "unstable" from any orthodox point of view. Leave it at that....

In short, science-fiction, and science-fantasy also — these are things I live, not just "read". As for writing them? I've tried and been a flop. I CANNOT WRITE SCIENCE-FICTION AS THEY WANT IT AND I DO NOT TRY.

Okay, now, we will see what you said, point by point. What are the ages of your tensome? Ours are: George, thirty-odd. (Vadim, my spouse, is 57, and I'm 54, haw! as any fan knows, from way back. I never did hide the date I entered life, 1917. I just don't grow old, yet, somehow. Not that that is particularly a virtue, for skittish old ladies pretending to be young are a dime a dozen and creeps.) Next son: Robert, nearly 30 (29, actually). Third? Danny. Recovering nicely, thank God, from nephritis; 26. Fourth? Ed, 24. Studying geology in Cordoba and working in a government office on a geological project simultaneously. Next? Alice and Sylvia, 19 and 17. Beautiful blonds — ravishing kids and as sweet as toys with their heads screwed on the right way. Last child, Tony, eleven. He taught himself Pitman's shorthand in a week, once, when feeling bored, and can take Spanish-language songs down over the radio. Lovely kids, all, as far as I'm concerned, though I am sheepish to have had more than two. But it was before we realized how awful the population problem's become! Now give your list. Our kids might correspond though mine here loathe letter-writing.

...Argentina as a place...as a former native land of true loveliness and wise living (once)...is very dear to me, and I like the present population, I mean THE SIMPLE FOLK, who throng by the hundreds of thousands, summers, here, to hear our favorite "folklore quartettes" singing the spirited old songs that still preserve an old native lilt.

How come attackers don't become friends to you? "How is it done?" you ask. By laughing, showing them you do not feel it worth the fight. True, there can be lifelong, deadly enemies, and only God can fix that. But they should not be in the majority. I should think only in special cases (family ones, for example), can deadly enmity develop through repeated, lifelong betrayals. I have in mind in this case personally, two pitiful, elderly souls I am so sorry for I cannot really hate, yet their capacity for spreading misery was unbounded. I mention this to explain I am not a pristine Polyanna loving-all-mankind. I have a capacity for hatred that can be strong too. But I try to keep it in check, usually. Indignation is better than hate, if you must feel something strong. Indignation over injustices, etc., that sort of blanket-approach. Hating the sin and not the sinner as some might phrase it. It's a pity your memory is long. Mine is short, very. I do not like to remember yesterday nor think of the morrow. I am interested in states of minds, philosophies, ideas, symbols and that sort of thing. But not in slogans, mottos, etc. Catchwords of parties. In that, I liked what Dave Hulvey wrote in a recent Moebius. He can't join any side, he finds, because they all think you should "die-or-fight-for-the-party", not for the ideal. No! one CAN'T TAKE SIDES! But one can feel close to all humanity in the old "heathen" way that, say, an Australian aborigine would understand, who feels at one with all creation, past, present and future, and can even identify with a kangaroo or an ant. (Clifford Simak had some books

on that sort of empathy between "aliens," I considered gems.) So you work like hell, your wife and yourself. Why? To make money? That's permissible. You have our sympathy. Otherwise, why? Relaxing is SO MUCH MORE FUN. Trouble is money is necessary, so one works! Sigh...

((A later LoC to M.T.)): ...Heavens knows why anybody should ever take me seriously when I don't take myself that way. I take certain issues at stake in the world terribly seriously, yes, especially (don't laugh, Ed), that horrible doctrine of "Eternal Hell for the majority" as Taylor Caldwell praises in her very orthodox DIALOGUES WITH THE DEVIL, and over which issue I left the Catholic Church when an editor publishing my stuff then warned me I must pray for the humility to see the justice in it. I still cry sometimes when I think of it. I don't know whether it's true, if it is the Universe-and-its-Creator is HORRIBLE. If it's not, the humans who cling so arrogantly to that dogma to increase their own power are HORRIBLE and it makes me cry all the same. Perhaps it is the only thing I cry about by now, but I have only to think about it (be reminded by somebody's cruelly arrogant behaviour conditioned by that dogma from childhood as they are), and I dissolve all over again into a puddle of grief.... As for Perry, he sounds a dear, he delighted me with his seeming earnest naivete, but I have no interest in slamming nasty remarks to and fro and you saw I told him so. I am interested in learning how nice he may be, I would defend him for his niceness, not for the other's nastiness, in which anyway I don't believe, for the only nasty people in my estimation are the deliberate obscurers of facts and purveyors of false dogmas labeled GOSPEL TRUTH, and the self-righteous who sit home and send kids to war. I may be informal, but most of what Jesus taught remains my ideal in "how to live" . . . be gentle, meek, cheerful, optimistic, childlike, etc.

MIKE KRING Fandom not for egoboo? Surely Mae Strelkov jests! That's all
P.O.Box 441 fandom is! Just one huge mass of egos thrashing about in an
Castroville, Tx. 78009 (I hate to say it) almost sterile vacuum. (Let's face facts,
99.99% of all stf is just as rotten as mainstream stuff, if not
worse. And just like mainstream literature, there are a few gems in the stf field.)
Tons of fanzines produced, tons of locs written, and tons of correspondence done.
It makes one wonder. Yes, indeed. But to say fandom is not for egoboo is ridiculous.
Why am I bothering to write this? Merely in the hope it'll be printed and to also
put in my two cents worth just to show I DO exist! As for the friends we make in and
around fandom, that is beside the point. Friends, after all, can be met everywhere.
Why, some of my best friends are mundanes.... *1*

1 Hmmm...but do they know what you are?

NORMAN HOCHBERG ...I imagine that, for once, more people will be stirred
Benedict College, Rm.E013 by Leon's "definition" of the new wave than his excellent
S.U.N.Y., review. Though I disagree with him on the book's merit I
Stony Brook, N.Y. 11790 am fascinated by his style. He does forget one thing: Bax-
ter's book is a book of opinions; nearly all of Leon's
quibbles are on questions of taste.

I'm against Wolfenbarger's desire to review old stories. Fans may be collectors of old stuff, personally I am not, but there is simply too much old stuff to adequately review it. He'd be reviewing stories that relatively few fans would have access to. And I'm not sure that anybody would actually buy an old zine on his review along....

MARK MUMPER ...Leon Taylor has done a great job of exposing Baxter's book for what
(again) it is. It has all too many counterparts in many other fields besides
film criticism....

Taylor has also brought to light an interesting question that I've been tossing around lately — that of the non-existence of cinema zines, sf-oriented/produced or otherwise. Of course, ya see, fellas, I'm totally in the dark when it comes to magazine production, so I consider myself in a well-protected position to ask the question. If anyone out there decides to start one, or knows of one in operation

(CINEFANTASTIQUE just came to mind), send me a line and I may drop some material on your heads.

...Jeff Schalles gets TWO Mumper Egoboo Awards this time around, for his brilliantly stony letter and his hilarious cartoons. Someone keep him supplied with beer.

FREDERIK POHL
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Red Bank, N.J. 07701

Thanks for sending me the copies with the Paul Walker inter-view. I notice several of the comments seemed to downrate Paul either for asking antagonistic questions or for other sins. I would like to express myself on his side. He did ask rude questions, but that was the best way I know to get non-superficial answers, and I think if I came out looking good it was in some part because Paul was doing his job very well.

I note, looking over the interview, that I predicted that at some future time conditions might materialize to make editing attractive to me again. Good prediction, eh? They did so materialize. I think I've had about as much fun as I can have, and done about as much as lies within my power, with sf magazines, and now I look forward to finding out just what can be done with sf books, at Ace.

BILL BLISS
422 Wilmot
Chillicothe, Ill. 61523

...Been busy as a one armed paperhanger rolling a cigarette in a whirlwind. One reason for that is there are fewer tv shops all the time. The handwriting on the wall for them now reads: "Cable tv (and radio too no doubt) is the next commercial evolution — good article in a back ish of Ramparts — and no doubt the cable companies will also supply all the receivers and do all the repair. Telephone companies as well as Howard Hughes Inc. are more than slightly interested in cable media, and Gen'l Tel. already owns the Sylvania...company." Maybe someday repairmen will, like early Otto Scherlingers in TIME OF THE OTTOS ((Bliss' unsold opus)), have to hang out a shingle that says, ANTIQUE REPAIRMAN. Incidentally it is cheap and easy to have those Orwellian tvs (1984) that can look in on the viewer with cable tv. There is one sole real reason for general use of cable tv. It is more profitable....

...Could be Dova is a best choice for Analog editor. If the zine is to go along in the old groove it requires an editor highly hep scientifically. Jack Wodhams: Gloom & Doom! Psychic depression can be caused by the body chemistry having the fantods. Also by the mind not finding or thinking of enough stuff that is positively interesting. Or too much input is negatively interesting. The world does seem to be overstocked with that, but there is a natural law of compensation — it can be the basis of humor....

...Bob Smith: I was a projectionist for nine years in the US Navy. The equipment and circumstances were far from ideal. Then a LST (the 711) I was on returned to the states and I was put ashore at Yokuska and was assigned base movie operator. For long I had envied civilian projectionists with their ideal setup with perfect running precision expensive machines and automatic electric rewinders and good film. Some aging movies the Navy had had to be seen to be believed. The Ampro 16 mm with three tine claw handled them with the best luck. I dashed over to the theatre; a dream was come true. It was an old antique Japanese theatre set in a Japanese hospital which had earthquake proof modern architecture. I opened the projection booth door with joyous anticipation that died instantly.

There on two old wooden tables sat a pair of worn and notorious portable 35 mm De Vry projectors. They ran fairly dependably if noisily, but they had worrisome excentricities. Knocks, rattles and hums and growls and chatters came and went sometimes as they ran. By the last reel of a long flick they usually settled down to their operating optimum and if the movie was long enough the last reel had a piquant, different sound. The first night I ran them I changed over from the short (the change-over mechanism was two shingles nailed onto a wood rod slide on the booth window-sill) and the projector tilt-mechanism failed and there was a helluva crash and the title to Boris Karloff in THE BODY SNATCHERS was shown on the ceiling. I grabbed two cans of war surplus Japanese silent 35 mm army training film and shored it back up onto the screen just as the title ran through. Changing over involved leaping about to flick the exiter lampswitches and flipping the shingles over, and making one

last final grab for the spent reel since the left hand machine had a nasty habit of spilling film in the bottom large square magazine which wasn't a very good feature in case of fire. Then checking focus of the new reel since storage conditions for film weren't exactly ideal either and lots was shrunk a bit and warped....

WAHF: Robert Weinberg, Ian Maule, Shayne McCormack, Florence Jenkins, Dave Nee, Henri-Luc Planchat, Mike Gilbert, Art Hayes, Donn Brazier, Sheryl Birkhead, etc., and Rose M. Hogue (a long LoC which just arrived & which may be quoted at a later date)

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The telephone co. is pushing the TV-phone combo, which is known as the "Picture-phone." Two of the last three months Ill. Bell's "Telebriefs," sent to customers with their bills, have contained stories of this device. I quote one passage to illustrate how the TV phone has specialized uses: "Picturephone service means reassurance to patients and their families at Edgewater Hospital." (A relative may see & talk to a patient from a lobby set.) Also, "The hospital's medical staff sees Picturephone sets differently...as tools. Sets link the office, radiology, cardiology, pathology, two surgery rooms, and a recovery room. A doctor in surgery can ask radiology to put an X-ray on a Picturephone screen. Doctors at remote locations can look in on patients in recovery.

"P-phone service is catching on.... In the heart of Chicago, customers can order a service that lets them make video calls to each other. The implications are wide. Businessmen can show products & packages to each other. Engineers can look at drawings. Even 'Telebriefs' used it. We called our printer to see final proofs and make changes." (Evidently such promotion is taking place in other large cities.)

Another story notes that in 1878 the first Chi directory, the "Telephone Journal," listed 291, with today's book having almost a million. And since the Picturephone service is now subscribed to by 23 customers (who can make see-as-you-talk calls to each other), they will soon be entered in the phone directory in both the white & yellow pages. I quote their extrapolation: "Can't you visualize the day when Picturephone listings will outnumber ordinary phone listings? The plain phone may join the horse & buggy. And so may the directory. Some dreamers say the man of the future will use a control on his P-phone set to obtain a listing, which will appear on the screen.... He'll dig into a world computer directory bank." Personally, I feel that's kid stuff. I look forward to the day when teleportation points (booths) will be as numerous as phones are now. Don't knock it -- your girl friends will probably have extensions in their bedrooms. Every body will be as near as the flick of a switch.

#

The other night I found some tear-sheets from a 1953 "Pageant," covering 4 pages in re Albert Robida, whose book The Twentieth Century was put out (in France, apparently) in 1883. He predicted certain strange inventions and drew pictures showing how they'd look & be used. Needless to say, he was labeled a madman, with many of his ideas called ridiculous and preposterous.

Television, of course, was depicted, and tabbed the "Telephonoscope" (with life-size screens for home viewers). This was to follow the development of radio, which he called a "talking journal." He also showed helicopters and aerial traffic cops. And to top those, he envisioned bacteriological warfare, showing aerial torpedoes being loaded, by masked scientists, with an infectious cargo. (He dated the torpedo model "1954.") This was only a year after the discovery that microscopic germs cause disease. Robida appears to have been a much superior prognosticator than Hugo Gernsback. As you know, Hugo used to send out yearly booklets at Christmastime, with "forecasts" for the future. I uncovered his 1952 pamphlet. He notes that his predictions are all practical and possible, some being already in the patent office. The previous year, he featured: Thermo-Furniture, Multi-Televisors, Anti-Collision cars, & Noise Neutralizers. Forecast 1953 featured (well illustrated) "Exploitation of the Moon," "The Menisol" (mind concentrator), Magnetic Tape TV Recordings for homes, "Pipeline Fisheries," a "dream recorder," and a complex of machines to take one's "Sex Quotient." Hugo made it all interesting.

A LOOK BEHIND JEFF SCHALLES' BACK

—OR—

THE PLANGENCY OF THE APERS.

Recently three individuals have done spoofs of Jeff Schalles' cartoons. What is especially remarkable is that the three did their bit in total independence of the others or without Jeff's or my knowledge. And each inhabits a different continent....

SAY, AREN'T YOU A
MIMIC
CHARACTER?



HOW D'YOU
GUESS?



DS

SOMEHOW, I KNEW
JEFF SCHALLES WOULD
LOOK LIKE THAT.....



KIRK

Above, by
DAN STRELKOV
of Argentina.

Below, by
JOHN PIGGOTT
of Great Britain.

WHO IS THIS
JEFF SCHALLES
GUY, ANYWAY?

Above—
another classic
by TIM KIRK.



All of which perhaps tends to prove something or other, like that Schalles' characters at least are sticky, that great minds concur, etc., etc.....

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