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May also had for
"The Usual" (Trades,
etc.)

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ARTWORK

Cover by Jeff Schalles

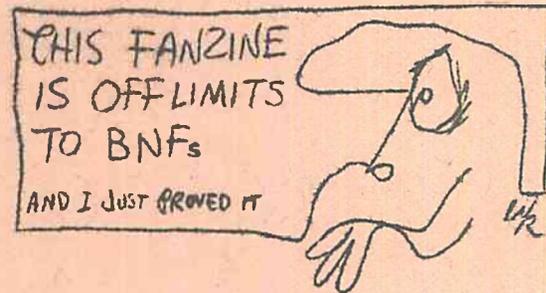
Terry Jeeves: page 5, facing 60.

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-----Editorial notes-----

Hmmm..... Like an echo from the murky, sequestered recesses of the past, arising like a horrible malignancy, festooned with a panoply of eldrich apparitions and loathsome, disgusting droolings and slobberings, comes this bewebbed, mildewed fanzine -- er, amateur journal -- barely discernible through the thickening, mold-caressing mists as SF ECHO number 26, actually Annish 8-9.

My apologies, especially to the creators of the material herein, for the lateness of the issue; the stuff should've been published long ago. And items scheduled for nextish (like an article by Ben Indick) fall into the same category. Plans are to start stencilling the latter before thish reaches most of you, but there has to be a reasonable delay prior to completion of the stencilling to allow for the receipt of some Letters of Comment, if any.

This issue is stapled instead of being bound with cement to make up a tiny bit of the lost time. The strip of paper enclosed may be glued over the spine if the recipient feels particularly ambitious.

I attended 1978's Chambanacon and met John Miesel who is everything his "defenders" note in their LOCs elsewhere herein. He of course needs no defense. He was ap-

parently treated rather viciously (at the Midamericon business meeting) when proposing the Hugo-ban. Consequently, when reading my piece re the Hugoes lastish he thought it was more of the same. It was not (see pp. 61-64). I also met Sandra Miesel, who made a point of mentioning that she was still right about something. Only thing is, I don't know to what bone of contention in this fanzine's sordid past she was referring; could have been any one of several things, I suppose.

Carolyn Doyle actually induced me to go to Chambanacon. She has the talent to go far and has been warming up by attending cons over a wide area. And I finally met Rob Chilson, writer and fan. No doubt he will recall the young lady from St. Louis who repeatedly exposed, at point-blank range, a well-formed and no doubt succulent objet d'art.

I saw Sam Long again and met Mary for the first time. Now that they live in Springfield I hope to see them again soon. (Although for me lately, anything within a year is "soon.")

I'd guess that there were at least 250 attending the '78 Chambanacon. It is not publized very extensively, possibly lest it become too gross.

Also thanks to Phil Farmer for giving me an update for what I wrote on page 61. But first, since his OLD address is on page 52, here is his NEW address: 5617 N. Fairmont, Peoria, IL 61614.

Farmer's PLAYBOY story was 1977's December issue. Another PB short will be in a 1979 emission. The novel JESUS ON MARS is done & to be out before the end of 1979, with an abridged version coming soon in Isaac Asimov's SF Monthly magazine.

Ballantine will publish a somewhat revised edition of THE LOVERS in hardcover in April 79. Scheduled for the May 79 issue of the Magazine of Fantasy & S.F. is "The Freshman." For late 1979 an approximately 142,000-word novel, DARK IS THE SUN, is to appear from Ballantine. (By the time this is mailed it'll probably be long out.)

Anyway, as soon as he finishes the fourth Riverworld novel -- THE MAGIC LABYRINTH -- (which will undoubtedly be the case by the time you get this) Phil tells me he is going back to working on RAMSTAN, then to a third Ancient One book.

Jackie Causgrove's address on page 51 is no longer right. By now, you all must have her correct one, so I won't give it....

Never again will I wait so long to finish an issue. Since I left this typewriter the shift-mechanism has tightened up (completely frozen at first), likely due to lack of oiling.

Has Tom Collins moved from 338 W. 19th St. in NYC? (To where?) Anybody know what happened to Cathy McGuire, and RAPS?

Hmm...I have here an interesting note about the May 76 Science Digest; the first letter in their Local is from a Luis Mar-

den, who calls the word "Venusian" a "barbarism" and cites its origin in early SF pulp, calling Venerian correct. The editor notes that according to Dr Franklin of the Hayden Planetarium, etc., neither term is correct: "right" is "Venerial". Also "correct," from the Greek, is "Cytherean". (I'll continue as a user of barbarisms.)

(The following is continued from page 72 and concludes the Local....(Meantime, I've corrected the typewriter problem.))
JODIE OFFUTT (concluded): daughter said she met a girl at school who had her locker covered with Star Trek posters and was carrying a Star Trek book around in her purse. "You're a Trekkie!" Scotty said. The girl was amazed, said Scotty was the first person she'd ever met who knew that word. Scotty told her that her dad wrote science fiction. The girl was overwhelmed, and went into fits of uncontrollable unfinished sentences, and other gestures and noises that teenage girls are wont to do.

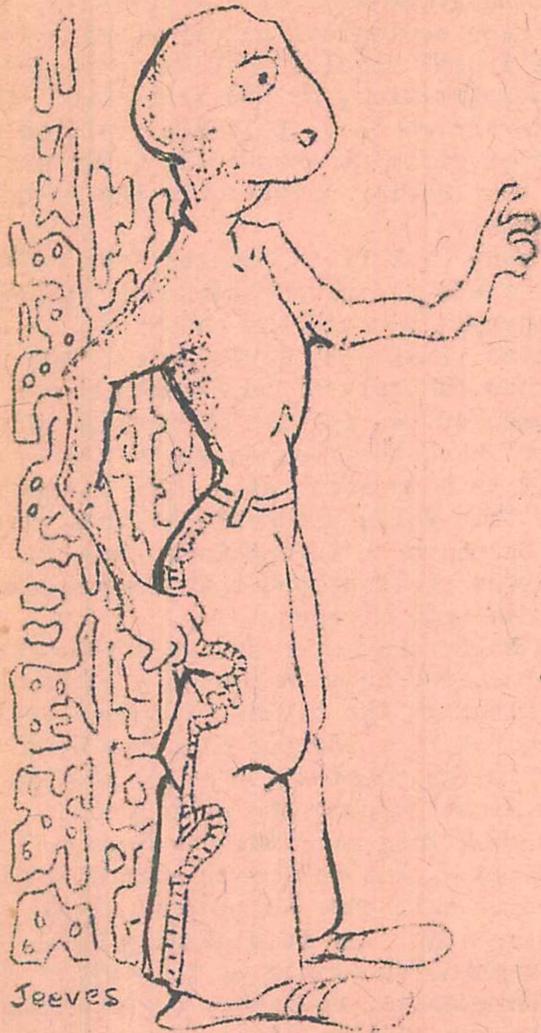
Ben Indick's "Pilgrimage" was marvelous. How kind of him to share it with us. A beautiful job of writing, too. I was right there with him most of the time.

"Walt's Wranglings" are funny as hell, as usual.

WAHF: Dave Piper, John Thiel, Anna Schoppenhorst, Bob Pavlat, C.C. Clingan, Jeff Schalles, David McGirr, Steve Simmons, Jr Cruttenden, R. Barrett, Sheryl Birkhead, Brian Ouzman, David May, Ken Faig, Larry Williams, Wm. Denholm III, Alexander Yudenitsch, etc....

WHO'S AFRAID of GENE WOLFE

BY ROBERT WERNER



In the spring of 1975, Harper and Row issued a volume incorrectly labelled a first novel. The author was far from a novice: in the science fiction field he had written two novels and more than fifty shorter works -- vignettes, short stories, novelettes, novellas.

Gene Wolfe's PEACE has suffered the immediate fate of most books -- oblivion, from which it may be rescued. PEACE is a work quite worthy of attention, in its way counterpoint to Joseph Heller's grim and superb SOMETHING HAPPENED and its hero scrutinizing the minutia of his life for the factors that have made him what he is. In PEACE, the emphasis is that someone lives. Alden Dennis Weer reviews an unexceptional life, but what emerges is more magical than anything in his affectionately remembered fantasy stories read during boyhood: a family Christmas, his independent Aunt Olivia and her suitors, a love affair, an encounter with an engaging fraud.

As are characters in Wolfe's best stories,

Weer is philosophical and acutely aware of the wonder, yet insignificance of individual existence:

...the stars that seem to ride our winds cause them. Sometimes I think to see huge faces bending between the stars to look through my two windows, faces golden and tenuous, touched with pity and wonder; and then I rise from my chair and limp to the flimsy door, and there is nothing.

His quest for knowledge of self, his identity, spurred by intimations of mortality dissolves toward novel's end. There is no absolute knowledge, certainly not about what one really is, but people seem instinctively to labor like alchemists toward this unattainable product. Weer does recognize the impossibility (or one of the impossibilities):

...it may be that the only reason childhood memories act on us so strongly is that, being the most remote we possess, they are the worst remembered and so offer the least resistance to that process by which we mold them nearer and nearer to an ideal which is fundamentally artistic, or at least nonfactual.

Wolfe is one of the least "relevant" writers in science fiction. His concerns

are personal and universal -- the individual's inner life and perception of reality. Although several of his short stories have ecological concerns and "Hour of Trust" handles politics with high sophistication, he has little to preach to the reader. Illusory truth is the most significant issue; the indifferent and bewildering universe is the ultimate tyranny.

In many of Wolfe's stories, the protagonist feels a profound sense of unease, often conveyed through the author's introspective first person viewpoint. They do not know themselves: some don't know their names or (as in "The Fifth Head of Cerberus") have their names stolen; to others it is a useless datum, and to communicate this Wolfe withholds it from the reader. Appearance is nothing. In several stories it is stated that characters do not look into mirrors.

One Wolfe character is far different from the others, as much mentally as physically although the title, "The Headless Man," accurately describes him, his eyes and mouth being located in his chest. The story is first person; the protagonist does not look into mirrors; his name is never stated -- but in some manner his struggle for existence in society gives his life meaning. He is perfectly willing to function according to the assumptions, the guesses, he makes, leaving him, along with the captain of "Alien Stones," an exception.

Wolfe occasionally indulges a taste for archaic words and meanings, as in titling one of his best and most intriguing stories, "The Changeling." The perplexed narrator is a turncoat; perhaps he fits the other meanings of the word -- an imbecile and an exchanged child. His life is strangely linked to a playmate of his school days, a Peter Palmieri, who had suddenly appeared one day in the Palmieri household, and was accepted as a son and never aged. The boy's father and the narrator are the only ones ever to have noticed anything unusual.

The narrator, without family or prospects of any sort, knows his life is broken and wished to examine the only piece he retains. He returns to his home town of Cassonville, from which an acquaintance says, "nobody ever leaves." He begins to vanish: facts he retains about the town are wrong or dubious and he finds it difficult to recall simple things. There are not even any records of his existence to be found. Peter Palmieri, who suddenly appeared, gained an identity; the narrator dissolves into the landscape by story's end.

"The Fifth Head of Cerberus" is Gene Wolfe's crowning achievement to date and has something of great power to say about the human condition. While in most fiction the message, once perceived, can be separated from the story, here there is organic unity: the statement is the story and the story the statement; efforts to

cleave the two would cause both to perish.

The story moves fluently. One would have to quote pages to transmit the full effect, but here is a sample of prose which has grace and performs various functions -- moving the story, establishing setting, revealing aspects of a society, developing characters and, as it turns out foreshadowing future developments:

For a long time this route to the library was the only part of the city I knew. Three blocks down Saltimbanque Street where our house stood, right at the Rue d'Asticot to the slave market and a block beyond that to the library. A child, not knowing what is extraordinary and what commonplace, usually lights midway between the two, finds interest in incidents adults consider beneath notice and calmly accepts the most improbable occurrences. My brother and I were fascinated by the spurious antiques and bad bargains of the Rue d'Asticot, but often bored when Mr. Million insisted on stopping for an hour at the slave market.

This story is a reminiscence by a thirty-year-old man of his bizarre and terrifying childhood. The action transpires in the corrupt human society existing on an insignificant colony planet called Sainte Croix, originally settled by Frenchmen. The

narrator (unnamed, but self-described as having been a pale brown-haired, brown-eyed boy) writes in the same dormitory room he shared during his youth with his brother David, now gone from his life, who was blond, athletic and had literary interests. The address is 666 Saltimbanque in the city of Port-Mimizon. The house is an elaborate brothel known as Maison du Chien because of an iron statue outside the entrance of a powerful dog with three heads -- one snarling, one grinning, and the center one having "a look of tolerant interest."

Cerberus, the three-headed dog of mythology, guarded hell's entrance as the statue does the narrator's personal hell. There has never been any familial warmth: he has no mother; even from earliest recollection his father, the proprietor of the establishment, has been a fearsome and distant figure. He now subjects the boy to strange experiments involving drugs which drive him "progressively further from reality and the mode of consciousness best suited to preserving the individuality of thought." Even his name is taken, his father calling him "Number Five."

At approximately the time of puberty, the narrator becomes the greeter of patrons at the house and recognizes that he now is assuming what was the symbolic function of the iron dog. But there is a more profound correspondence which emerges, another monstrous growth like

the heads of Cerberus. He learns that he is a clone of his father, in turn a clone of the original personality which is simulated in the robot, Mr. Million. David and the narrator's Aunt Jennine are offspring of other clones -- outcrossings. So after his father, Mr. Million, Aunt Jennine and David, the narrator is the fifth head of the title.

The story fragments as the narrator's torment increases: one entire season is lost to memory, as well as the monkey he has adopted as a pet; he recognizes other clones in Port-Mimizon, but is startled by the sight of his own reflection. Afraid of finding himself a beggar or an old man, he murders his father.

The narrator fails in his attempt to impersonate his father. Apparently the clones do have their little variations. But do they? Was the plan impossible, as the narrator believes? After nine years in prison camps, and three years restoring the decayed establishment, he seems identical with his father, conducting the same business and the same quest for self-knowledge. But it all seems useless, since much of his past cannot be recalled. The narrator can deduce just a little. He discovers a little pan pipe he played as a boy. This furnishes a scrap of information, but it is useless as a touchstone to stimulate any more memories.

Even the impetus for this search is indeterminate. In the words of his father: "And one of the questions whose

answer we seek is why we seek." A circular conundrum.

At story's conclusion, the narrator reveals himself carrying on experiments on his own subjects. But time is short. The final line is a fine grim epitaph: "Someday they'll want us."

The 1972 Scribner's volume, *THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS*, contains two other connected stories, which concern the explorations of John V. Marsch, an anthropologist who appears briefly in the title story, for the truth about the aboriginal natives of the sister planet of Sainte Croix, Sainte Anne. These Annese are believed extinct, but were according to legend mimics and shape-changers. The prose is well up to Wolfe's best level, but the dramatic tension of the first story is lacking. Considered as a whole, however, the book is one of the most mature and sophisticated works to emerge from the science fiction category, and it contains one classic story.

Of the search for reality outside of one's self, Wolfe is scarcely more optimistic. Things are not what they seem. In "It's Very Clean," a woman impersonates a robot: "The Toy Theater" has machines imitating people. The police commissioner of "A Method Bit in 'B'" deduces that he lives on the set of a "B" movie and asks the reader, "How do you know we're both not in one."

But the author goes beyond this middling-level Philip K. Dick approach in

several striking novelettes.

One rich and strange story is "Alien Stones," in which the hoary science fictional elements of the derelict alien space ship and the space navy vessel with its stolid commander all undergo a sea change. The puzzle of the vividly imagined craft and its vaguely perceived inhabitants is unresolved. There occur the death of a human explorer and his eerie resurrection by the aliens. But the oddest questions remain about the human ship -- its organization and enigmatic computer. There are strange undercurrents about some of the crewmen -- including the captain -- involving computer-generated pseudo-personalities. The most sensitive one of the crew, a female cultural psychologist, is frustrated by unanswered questions as well as bereaved by the loss of her overly-inquisitive husband. The captain, a very controlled individual named "Daw," though seemingly with his own strange secrets, manages to be the calm at the center of this tempest of enigmas. He makes reasonable and practical decisions, and doesn't bother himself with other than answerable questions.

The title character of the surrealistic "Forlesen" (Emanuel is his first name) at first calmly accepts the new reality -- perhaps an afterlife -- which he awakens to one morning. Mark Twain once offered an explanation for the existence of pain in the world -- God is really not

a pleasant fellow at all. By something close to that reasoning, Forlesen's universe is one huge corporation. Valhalla is the higher stories of a Great Office Building; the gods constitute a board of directors. In short, the universe is run by a committee — a deficient one.

Forlesen discovers that he is married, has children, works at a vaguely defined job, and lives in reasonable middle-class comfort. Outside of work, his life is totally regimented by books that abound — it is living by instruction manual. One has a long list of prohibitions for drivers, the last of which is driving to "improper destinations." Another says that if he can't find books, he should "just live like everyone else." All is not well: errors and poor planning abound, weird logic rules on the job, food is low in quality, but there is manic production of the superfluous (cars have urinals, defecators and beverage dispensers).

Time is telescoped. By the end of the day, he is retired from his job and has a coffin waiting for him at home. Bewildered, he can only ask a string of questions before the end, the last being whether all he has suffered has been worth it. An attendant answers, "No. Yes. No. Yes. Yes. No. Yes. Yes. Maybe."

Another noteworthy story is the peculiar "Tracking Song." Ostensibly it is the quest of the amnesiac protagonist

for his culture on a planet with an arctic climate. But with its startling tableaux, improbable events, stunningly abrupt changes in pace and the instant of unassimilated revelation at the very end, the story seems like a dream. Whose dream we cannot guess.

Actually, much Wolfe has the distinct flavor of Borges and his speculative stories. In "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" alone there are several passages which are intriguing clues to Wolfe's work. One, an imaginary encyclopedia's entry on a heresy, seems particularly pertinent to "The Fifth Head of Cerberus": "The visible universe was an illusion or (more precisely) a sophism. Mirrors and fatherhood are abominable because they multiply and disseminate that universe." What happens in that Borges story may be happening in various Wolfe stories. The idealist (in the philosophical sense) world of Tlön infiltrates and destroys our reality.

If the so-called academic ravishment of science fiction continues, Wolfe is one fine writer deserving treatment by an equally fine critic.

Meanwhile, Wolfe should and will be read for pleasure. He is now an accomplished writer with a fine prose style. I cannot recall a single patch of purple in anything of his I have read. He has broad themes, not crotchets. Wolfe's best books should be ahead of him. One

needed now is a collection of his stories — which would be his first. This situation is difficult to understand. The science fiction book field includes two collections by Charles E. Fritch.

Wolfe's stories are a delight because they are not the solipsistic tedium lesser writers with similar concerns would produce. The author has a vivid imagination, a fine gift for physical description, and considerable knowledge of technology (he is an engineer).

His leavening of humor shouldn't be overlooked. "How I Lost the Second World War and Helped Turn Back the German Invasion" is possibly the most charming of all treatments of the parallel worlds theme, though stories by Avram Davidson and Philip José Farmer are certainly in the running. "The Fifth Head of Cerberus" and "Alien Stones" contain neat jokes about science fiction and its personalities — which unfortunately will be missed by many readers. Conan Doyle's and Rex Stout's characters receive fine humorous treatment in "The Rubber Bend" and there are other science fiction jokes, the best of which involves a future literary society which endeavors to prove that Charles Sanders Peirce and Damon Knight (one of whom, incidentally, Bertrand Russell declared "the greatest American thinker, ever") were actually the same person.

All would be close to nothing without the warm humanity of Gene Wolfe's

fiction, which receives its strongest expression in PEACE, where Alden Dennis Weer realizes that the background in a painting of his father's dead brother is not a fantasy land, but a Tuscan garden. This inspires a rich meditation on how the garden seems for him the "core and root of the real world," and how America, "this forlorn land at the edge of everywhere," is only at the periphery of "an infinite galaxy, dizzily spinning." Gene Wolfe's fiction is a lot like life; what little we learn only leads us to consider deeper mysteries.



GENE WOLFE
BIBLIOGRAPHY
1966 - 1975

This bibliography should be worthwhile, since it shows where to find a lot of Gene Wolfe stories. It may also be fairly complete, although I have missed his first story, "The Dead Man," which was published in a minor men's magazine in 1965.

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*-Published under the blanket title,
"Mathoms from the Time Closet."

-----Robert Warner.

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Editor's Note: The paperback edition
of THE FIFTH HEAD OF CERBERUS was
published June 1976 by ACE (#23500 -
\$1.75).

Published November 1977 and well
worth looking for is the paperback
THE DEVIL IN A FOREST, by Gene Wolfe,
ACE (#14288-5, \$1.50). This is
blurbed as "A superior and beauti-
fully told fantasy," and I am largely
in agreement with that sentiment.

---E.C.C.

Crimmon, Monteverdi, Beethoven. iii) Not interested in performers. iv) No.

FLOYD, TERRY: Yes, I'm quite fond of classical music, ever since I realized that most of the modern stuff is patterned after the labours of the original classical composers. ii) I would certainly include Shostakovich with Bach, Beethoven and Strauss. iii) Performers...John Williams and Chet Atkins on guitar...and Rubenstein on the piano. The only instrument I can play at all is the slide trombone.

CHAPDELAINE, PERRY: I love classical music. Beethoven, then most anybody. Used to have Minneapolis symphony as favorite performer, but leader ((Dimitri Mitropoulos--E.C.)) is long dead ((1960.)) I honk away at harmonica, and was in...piano lessons until piano gave out....

AYRES, DON: Yes. I do not have three "favorites," but dozens. Carl Nielsen, Leos Janacek, Shostakovich, Vaughn Williams, and Barber will do for this century. Conductors Thomas, Ozawa, Szell, Solti, Bernstein. I do not play.

BRAZIER, DONN: I might like some if I knew what to listen to.... What I've heard is too long, too repetitious, too "hokey," and has too many violins sawing away. I play a saxophone and clarinet, and dabble on the piano and organ with chords. I'm really anxious for someone to steer me toward some classical music I might possibly like.

JEEVES, TERRY (U.K.): Yes. Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Borodin. Play harmonica.

THIEL, JOHN: Yes. Beethoven, Schubert, Bach. Performers Van Cliburn, Liberace. I play sax.

FLYNN, GEORGE: I like it, but my taste is too undeveloped to be specific. I don't play.

WARNER, JR., HARRY: Yes. Pass. Pass. Yes, piano.

MEADOWS III, JIM: Like some...not as deeply into it as rock or folk. Composers -- baroque, late 19th c. French (Ravel, Widor, etc.) and melodic 20th (Brittin, Copland, Menotti). ...lapsed piano student.

GLYER, MIKE: Yes. Beethoven, Liszt, Bach.

D'AMMASSA, DON: Yes. Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Ravel. Van Cliburn. No.

It appears that most respondees either like classical music or, if not very familiar with it, are interested in expanding their knowledge; it is, after all, of great scope and probably most neophytes are aware that some particular composer or work might very well satisfy -- even profoundly -- expand their appreciation of music. I venture to guess that the fans who are particular devotees of the classical will take pleasure in learning that so many of their fellows have also imbibed. --E.C.C.

Question 2: Do you like opera? What are your favorites? Have you ever been to see a professional production? If you don't like opera -- why not?

WALKER: Boris Goudinov by Mussorsky, altho I am fond of all the standards I have heard. I did once go to see Tosca at the old Met.

TACKETT: Have taken in a number of professional operatic productions as I have attended a number of symphonic performances. I enjoy them but I am really not "into" them (as the modern generation might say).

SCHOPPENHORST: I am not overly fond of opera, perhaps because much of what I've seen was totally pointless and not well performed. I've never seen a professional product live.

KRING: I detest opera for one reason, and one reason only: the singers. I cannot stand the sopranos and tenors that blare across the stage. The stories are okay, and the music is usually excellent (esp. Wagner's Ride of the Valkyries from whatever), but as far as liking it as a whole, NEVER! (PW -- the Ride is from The Valkyrie. I know the problem you have, Mike. I still have it to some extent. Your ear is not accustomed to the sound of the operatic voice. The trick in liking opera is to so accustom your ear to it that you can hear the music, the singer, and the

narrative simultaneously. Only then does it all make sense. And it does not take years of practice, either. The reason so many people are suspicious or hostile to operatic singing is that their only experience of it has been to hear various arias sung on tv or radio (many by non-operatic singers). An aria is not a tune like "Wouldn't It Be Lovely" from a Broadway show. It has to be appreciated in context, and if sung separately, the listener has to be familiar with the context. The same is true of ballet.)

BRIDGET: Never seen a production. I think I'd like to see Don Giovanni, and that is about the extent of my interest.

WALLACE: The human voice is an imperfect instrument, though listening to a coloratura soprano play chase with a flute is enjoyable entertainment, vocal gymnastics of high order.

GILBERT: No, boring and too formal.

CARLSON: I like opera less than classical. Only one I've seen was Bergman's film of the Magic Flute.

RESNICK: No. I have been to the Lyric and Met. Why don't I like it? As above, I was ordered to like it.

KEN JOS: I don't like opera. I find the voices annoying. In almost any type of music I prefer unobtrusive vocals.

WHITE: I don't know enough about it, but I am insane about Gluck's Orfeus and Eurydice. My favorite musical composition in the world is Offenbach's Orpheus in

Hell. This light opera is now unavailable for love or money anywhere in the Western world, and when I have worn out the local library's copy I don't know what I shall do. (PW -- there was a PBS production of that on tv not long ago.)

CHAMBERLAIN: Yes, opera is inspiring. I saw some unusual ones -- Jewels of the Madonna, Manon -- a few Wagnerian operas.

SWEEN: Favorites -- The Magic Flute, Carmen, Faust. I've been to the Met twice.

FENDRICH: The only opera I have seen was on tv. I hated it.

LOCKE: Can't stand opera. Why not? For the same reason I don't like grits, lima beans, or ochra: I just don't like it.

PUGMIRE: Faust, Madame Butterfly, Hansel and Gretel. Yes, a few times.

DORNEMAN: Wagner's Ring cycle. Never been.

INDICK: Tales of Hoffman, Wagner, Wozzeck. Yes.

BLNHEIM: Parsifal, Der Rosenkavlier, Hansel and Gretel. I've seen some --

SHOEMAKER: Wozzeck my very fav. Pagliacci, Britten's Curfew River, Midsummer's Night Dream, Peter Grimes, Gianni Schicci, Madame Butterfly. Yes I've been.

PIERCE: Oddly, I have little taste for opera as compared to orchestral music -- usually, and especially in Italian operas, the music doesn't seem dramatic enough. But I like Boris Gudonov and The Flying Dutchman.

CHILSON: I do not like opera because it's too artificial. Never seen a professional production.

DOYLE: The closest to opera I have been is the "Bohemian Rhapsody."

BURGER: I am indifferent to opera.

BOWIE, JR.: Mario Lanza, yes, Opera, no.

GIBBS: I have never seen an opera nor do I really care to.

FRIERSON: I like the music, but not the singing. I saw Tosca in Rome.

HARTER: I don't particularly not like it. I just don't listen to it.

PARKS: Operas remind me of Rice Krispies commercials.

ANDRUS: No, but I can't say why. Never seen a production.

HUBBARD: If I am in the mood, yes. Anything by Wagner. Never seen a production.

CONNOR: I have many favorites. Attended several performances of the NY Met (Faust, La forza del destino, etc.)

OFFUTT: No. Never seen a produc.

GILSON: No, I find it incomprehensible.

SNEARY: Yes, but not an awful lot. Carmen, Don Giovanni, Figaro, etc. I prefer instrumental pieces.

SALMONSON: Mainly I find it insufferable, because I do not understand most of it. I have seen some amateur and one professional prod.

MCGIRR: La Traviata, Wagner (Ring series), Porgy and Bess. Yes.

SHARP: I enjoy opera, but know nothing of it. I have seen two prof. prods.

BIRKHEAD: Never seen an opera, but I doubt I'd like it as I could not understand what was going on.

MACDONALD: Most opera bores me...is not very good. Wagner intrigues me. Why do I dislike opera? What I've heard so far seems technically inferior to symphonic music. Only excerpts really stand out as equal to symphonic music.... Someday I may also listen to an opera all the way through and be sure I know what I'm talking about.

WELBANK: Probably not. iii) No. iv) Have not seen enough to say, but prob 'cos songs break up the story.

ROGERS: Some. ii) Mikado, Carmen Jones, R----. iii) No.

WAREHAM: No. iii) Not of an opera. iv) I don't understand them.

GRUTTENDEN: Some. ii) Parts of Aida, parts of 1 or 2 others. iii) No.

LIEBSCHER: Yes. ii) Without a doubt "The Taming of the Shrew" by Giannini, Turandot by Puccini, and on, and on.

FERGUS: Generally hate it, altho I do have a mild tolerance for occasional Puccini & Bizet.

ALDERSON: Yes. ii) Humm, this would be splitting straws. iii) Yes.

FLOYD: I like a few operas, especially Humperdink's "Hansel and Gretel." even though I can't understand a word of it. ...listen to opera on the radio for the music...I've never "seen" a professional production.

CHAPDELAINE: Usually do not like opera, other than some comique, and Marx brothers, and some standards where the music stands

by itself without knowledge of meaning of words. Best is Gilbert and Sullivan. No. Have never been to professional production. ...foreign languages not my bag.

AYRES: Operas tend to enjoy have strong orchestral sections: "Boris Godunov," "Tales of Hoffman," etc. I rather like "Das Rhinegold." Never seen pro prod'n.

BRAZIER: I've never been to an opera. What little I've heard on radio or TV seems silly as farce to me.

JEEVES: No, I don't like opera. Do not care for vocalists (except Robeson or Bing Crosby)...usually in Italian...cannot understand. I suppose if I like any opera, it must be "Faust".

THIEL: Yes -- Aida, Barber of Seville, Fra Diavolo, Porgy & Bess, Pagliacci, Carmen.

WARNER: Yes. ii) Pass. iii) Yes. ((In his accompanying Letter of Comment, Harry notes that some of the questions are discriminatory (he's been reading and listening to music for a half-century, so it's unfair to ask him to pick all-time favorites! Most of the readers need only think over about 10 yrs. of such experiences....)))

MEADOWS: Like when understandable. Favorites...Menotti: "The Medium," and Weber & Rice: "Jesus Christ Superstar".

GLYER: No. None. No. The music is often tedious, and since the lyrics are in a foreign language the music's complement in drama is sacrificed.

Opera as usually presented to us seems to suffer mainly from the language problem. On the surface this appears to be a valid excuse for disinterest; one can imagine how much satisfaction one would get from watching the average foreign-language movie on TV — if it were with the original language instead of having one's own dubbed in/voiced over.

The opera buff, of course, may her/himself have little or no knowledge of the languages involved, but has become familiar with individual operas through, quite possibly, the librettos. One can read a resumé of the story in English, say, and thus follow the stage action with surprising facility. The individual will realize, surely, that this language problem is nothing new; note, if you will, the resúmes given at intervals during televised performances — if you are really paying attention you should immediately absorb enough info to at least follow the plot.

However, a great deal of improvement (i.e., enjoyment for more viewers) would result from using English in operas in this country. No doubt this point has been argued for a long time; re-

taining the language in which an opera was written has enormous "snob appeal" in certain quarters but genuine popularization of the medium can only come from language translation (except for, say, various arias). —E.C.C.

Question 3: What is the funniest sf story you have ever read? Do you regard "humor" as serious literature?

WALKER: Any number of William Tenn stories have made me laugh, but the one that most sticks in my mind is "The Servant Problem". Also, I still tell a few of Fredric Brown's vignettes as jokes, especially the one about the master computer who when asked if there was a God replied with a stroke of lightning: "Now, there is a God." Is "humor" serious literature? I don't know. That's why I asked the question.

TACKETT: Oh, hell, Paul, define "sf story." Most attempts at humor in science fiction seem to fall rather flat. Perhaps sf writers don't really have the talent for humor or perhaps sf isn't readily adaptable to it. If we can go to a related genre, fantasy, then almost anything by Thorne Smith...hmmm ..OK, make that "Rain in the Doorway" which is an alternate world story. Sure "humor" is serious literature, Thorne Smith (again) is just as funny now as he was 40 or 50 years ago.

SCHOPPENHORST: "...And he Built a Crooked House" by Heinlein. Well done humour I regard as serious literature. Things by Bill Keane, Nancy Stahl, or Erma Bombeck do not qualify.

KRING: I can't remember, but as far as regarding humor as serious literature, well, I dislike anything that has literature on it. Literature usually comes to mean "art". And "art" is usually terribly dull and boring. I love James Thurber, but I doubt if you could classify his stuff as "serious". I don't understand the question. Define your terms. You've got a lot of slippery words floating around in your surveys, you know. (PW — I survey a lot of slippery customers, Mike.)

BRIDGET: Anderson's EARTHMAN'S BURDEN. Humor is serious literature, when you count HUCKLEBERRY FINN. Unfortunately not enough people take it seriously. Washington Irving, O. Henry, and John Kendrick Bangs are examples.

WALLACE: ??? (PW --- ???)

GILBERT: Kuttner's Robot stories. Yes.

CARLSON: Fredric Brown's one about mickey mouse? Yes, if it's good enough.

RESNICK: Probably Scheckley's DIMENSION OF MIRACLES. Possibly, "The Swordmen of Vardis". (This doesn't take Thorne Smith into consideration as he wrote fantasy.) It's a lot more serious than most sf criticisms seem to realize.

KEN JOS: Gordon Dickson's "Computers don't argue". (PW — agreed, a riot.) If you include fantasy, there's a few things by

De Camp, the "Fallible Fiend" for instance.

CHAMBERLAIN: I can't remember reading any humorous sf. Time has much to do with what could be called funny. Concepts are stepped up and what is funny today will be merely insipid tomorrow.

SWEEN: Lloyd Biggle's Monument. Certainly humor is "serious".

FENDRICH: A Bad Day for Sales by Leiber. BEYOND APOLLO by Malzberg. NO.

LOCKE: Most anything by Vonnegut, Farmer's VENUS ON THE HALF SHELL, Brown's Martians, Go Home; Russell's The Space Willies; MacDonald's THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH, AND EVERYTHING. My own feeling is that good humor is as hard, or harder, to do well than any other kind of writing. Top calibre humor requires more talent than most top calibre serious writing. By its very nature "humor" is not "serious" literature. But it should be taken seriously.

PUGMIRE: It's All in Your Mind by Bob Bloch. Of course it is! Is there not humor in many of lit. great classics?

DORNEMAN: Any of Asimov's Thiotimoline stories or Kuttner's Gallagher stories. Definitely. Man is the only animal that laughs.

INDICK: Brown's StarMouse. Good ironists are Bloch, Schekley, de Camp. Serious? Very much so.

BLENNHEIM: Kffinger's In the Bran Foundry. I think of it as a work of art.

SHOEMAKER: Kuttner's Gallagher stories.No.



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PIERCE: Russ' "Useful Phrases for the Tourist." Sometimes.

CHILSON: Impossible. Some of those in ROBOTS HAVE NO TAILS; the earlier Retief; Anderson's Makeshift Rocket; Peter E. Abresch's Hi Diddle Diddle; and many by Christopher Anvil.

BURGER: The Proud Robot by Kuttner.

GIBBS: Offhand, The New York Review of Bird by Harlan Ellison. Of course humor is a serious form.

FRIERSON: Anything by Brown, Sheckley. Humor undoubtedly has its place in literature.

PARKS: Hung like an Elephant by someone in a David Gerrold anthol. Anything is serious lit. as long as it is taken seriously.

ANDRUS: Eric Frank Russell's Wasp and Space Willies. Serious.

HUBBARD: Some of Kuttner. Serious.

CONNOR: Possibly something by Kuttner. Yes.

OFFUTT: Of course, I think humor is serious literature!

GILSON: Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers by Harrison. Not serious lit.

SNEARY: Put me down for The World is Mine by Padgett/Kuttner; Thorne Smith. Serious.

SALMONSON: Jack Vance's DYING EARTH, or something by de Camp. Serious.

MCGIRR: The Glorious Pool by Thorne Smith. Serious.

SHARP: I don't think I've ever read an sf story that I could call funny, as in ha-ha. Perhaps Anderson's Virgin Planet

would qualify. Humor is serious, slapstick not.

BIRKHEAD: Perhaps some Retief stories. Serious.

MACDONALD: "Pandora's Planet" by Anvil in original short form was pretty good, and Richard Grey Sipes'... "Of Terrans Bearing Gifts" that I thought was hilarious. Of course humour is serious literature! Otherwise where would Swift, Twain, Voltaire and, for that matter, Shakespeare be?

WELBANK: Say "Alamagoosa". ii) No, in general.

ROGERS: No idea. ii) Yes and no.

WAREHAM: "What is this thing Called Love?" - Asimov. ii) Yes & No - depends on the intent.

CRUTTENDEN: E. F. Russell, "Diabologic", "Nuisance Value", "...and Then There were None" and the rest of his humour. ii) Emphatically Yes.

LIEBSCHER: "The Benighted Savage" by Charles Jackson. ii) By all means.

FERGUS: TRANSMISSION ERROR by Michael Kurland. No, I don't see anything basically incompatible in humor with a serious theme. See M*A*S*H.

ALDERSON: Paterson's "Thee Cast-iron Cavanaugh." ii) If you really mean humour, yes, I rate it extremely high.

FLOYD: Goulart's WILDSMITH and Offutt's "For Value Received" in A, DV. Humour, if well-intentioned, can, indeed, be considered "serious" lit.

CHAPDELAIN: Can't remember. Yes...
humor "serious".

AYRES: Can't think of an answer. ii) Think I'd call anybody who said it can't be a fugghead -- or worse.

BRAZIER: Can't remember a really funny SF story, though I know I read some lines here and there by Bloch and Fred Brown I thought were funny. Humor is "serious" literature, yes.

JEEVES: "Return of the Moonman"...E.L. Malpass. Humour a form of literature of equal if not greater value than "serious" stuff....

THIEL: "Ghost V," Sheckley. SF is serious lit.

FLYNN: Humor can be "serious" lit, but usually isn't.

WARNER: Pass. Yes.

MEADOWS: Don't know...since there is little funny sf. Humor is "serious" lit... hard to create, and can create moods and make points as valid as the dramatic.

GLYER: "Slow Tuesday Night" by Lafferty. Some humor serious lit. -- BILL THE GALACTIC HERO among the better sf books.

D'AMMASSA: "The Flat-Eyed Monster" by William Tenn, but there are hundreds of others. Yes.

There is certainly a consensus of opinion that humor IS serious literature. Humor in SF seems to be pretty much of a personal thing: practically everybody finds some humorous stories but

evidently a great portion of the attempted humor is looked upon as unsuccessful.

And Kuttner/Padgett's humorous SF lives on, appreciated after all this time. There is more than a hint here that he might be considered the best all-time SF humorist. (English fans might prefer Eric Frank Russell.) The results will, perhaps, encourage those who have as yet read nothing by Kuttner to get his works and read them. --E.C.C.

Question 11: Of all the sf writers in recent memory, Barry Malzberg has probably taken more critical flack than any other. He is accused of always writing the same story over-and-over, and no one liked the story to begin with. But, appealing to the more broadminded among you, was there not one Malzberg story you liked -- even a little? (b.) Malzberg is said to always harp on the same theme. What, simply, is that theme? What is the idea behind the insane astronauts?

WALKER: I really liked Final War and the short story Gehenna. I admire Herovit's

World altho I despise its view of sf writers. Malzberg is a brilliant talent, although an uneven one, more often bad than good. He hates and fears the dehumanizing influence of technology, and space flight is the ultimate manifestation of that dehumanization. Men in space are man-machines.

BRIDGET: I liked Malzberg's *The Men Inside*, because I could get at Malzberg through it, also "Seeking Assistance" (PW -- there follows a hostile commentary.)

CARLSON: I've liked a lot of Malzberg -- strangely his novels more than his stories -- *Revelation* is perhaps my favorite. I think the idea may be since alienation is on the upsurge as industrialisation continues to proliferate, the space program, being the ultimate in industrial progress, would necessarily produce the most profound feelings of alienation. (Except possibly, Malzberg's subthesis, those created in the sf writer, dealing with fraudulent semi-literature at street vendor prices.)

RESNICK: *Dwellers of the Deep*, and *Gather in the Hall of the Planets*, but only because I enjoyed the basic subject matter.

KEN: I really liked *HEROVIT'S WORLD* and I remember *The Men Inside* as also being very good. b.) Inane critical statement 4,761: the insane astronauts are a symbol of man in general, and their insanity is a reflection of man's inability to move into a future without trying to commit

racial suicide. Collect them all!

SWEENEY: Theme: fallibility and culpability of human beings (?) The idea behind the insane astronauts -- that our most glorious achievement is hollow. (?)

FENDRICH: I thought *BEYOND APOLLO* was hilarious at points.

INDICK: I think he is a good writer, altho I am not a fan.

BLENHHEIM: *HEROVIT'S WORLD*. I loved it. Detractors of an artist consistently accused him of repeating himself and the kind of complaint you insinuate is really off-base. The best artists in every art form have repeated themselves. Sometimes it's part of their own style: they frequently repeat to develop further ramifications in a theme over many years and throughout different situations, and this repetition is part-and-parcel with their own personal viewpoints.

PIERCE: (a) "Gehenna" -- it was a more appropriate setting for Malzberg's usual concerns. (b) *The Evil Hubris of Technological Man*.

CHILSON: I not only liked, I loved "A Delightful Comedic Premise" in *F&SF* some years ago. "Final War" is another I have an unenthusiastic admiration for.

DOYLE: A short story called "Agony Column" in an Alfred Hitchcock anthology.

BOWIE: Even though I said in a loc here that I did not care for his *BEYOND APOLLO* -- mainly because I felt it had no redeeming or sympathetic characters -- I will

admit looking back on it that I did like his idea of insane astronauts. Perhaps I should seek some of his work out again and try to understand him a little more. There is a place for negative sf.

GIBBS: I enjoy Barry Malzberg's work and have bought almost every novel he has written in the last three or four years. (I never cared for his earlier work.) His best is HERO VIT'S WORLD, followed by BEYOND APOLLO. The only theme that is obvious in his stories is an anti-science/development theme, but I can't put my finger on it. The insane astronauts I've always felt were sf writers.

PARKS: I love all Malzberg material. The idea is to see just how much critical flak you can get till you are mentioned in a poll under q. 11, of course.

CONNOR: Yes, in a review an issue or two ago, I called one of his shorts a "classic". It was just about the best thing -- of its type -- that could possibly be written.

MACDONALD: ...three pages of BEYOND APOLLO...I read before giving up on the book. ...although I don't believe I'd like Malzberg, I can't say for sure, and won't discuss his fiction any further....

ROGERS: Yes.

WAREHAM: I think I've read a Malzberg story -- but damned if I can remember it! ii) See part (i).

CRUTTENDEN: ((he lists under "most godawful boring novel read" Malzberg's PHASE 4,

adding: "Didn't finish it." it says in my reading diary.))

FURGUS: I haven't read anything by Malzberg since I found his first story collection pretentiously boring. However, it was not about insane astronauts. ii) Why don't you interview Barry Malzberg to see if he thinks he is writing the same story over and over again.

ALDERSON: Only remember reading SCOP and only finished that because I had to review it. ii) Judging from SCOP, inevitable and miserable failure. iii) Cannot comment.

FLOYD: Of the Malzberg I've read, HERO VIT'S WORLD is my personal favorite. It pulled the reader into the plot structure as few novels ever do. ii) The recurring insane astronaut theme seems to explore the "fear of the unknown" facet of human experience; the idea that humans are too mentally weak to survive outside the comfort and safety of Earth's bosom. I don't quite swallow the validity of this idea because, even though mental fatigue from space travel is inevitable, I can't think of any of our astronauts who've gone totally crackers upon their return.

CHAPDELAIN: I would prefer to refrain from discussing Barry Malzberg, for good or evil.

AYRES: I've read little Malzberg...IN THE ENCLOSURE was an impressive work, but the two short stories I recall were both pretty hideous. No comment.

BRAZIER: After my first Malzberg I've read no others.

THIEL: Barry Malzberg's no good, a pro Simon Agree. His insane astronauts are basically cool, though.

FLYNN: Malzberg stories I liked, sure -- "Final War," Galaxies. "Liked" is perhaps too restrictive: I admired the quality of the writing in BEYOND APOLLO and HEROVIT'S WORLD, for example, though I found the ideas in them distasteful. There's no question that he does superbly what he's trying to do; the question is whether it's worth doing. I think Malzberg's basic theme (or at least the most obvious one) is that technology is dehumanizing or even anti-human, and that traditional SF as a celebration by technology is therefore pernicious.

WARNER: HEROVIT'S WORLD. Haven't read enough Malzberg to respond to properly.

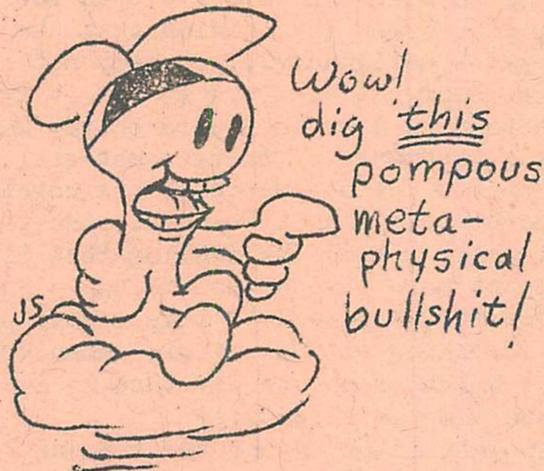
MEADOWS: This is a one sided question. Some people, you should note, like everything, or nearly so, that Barry does. I react coolly, but without hostility to his work, having found some things of interest in a few of his stories.

GLYER: I dispute that Malzberg constantly rewrites the same story. I liked: "Leviticus: In the Ark" or "A Delightful Comedic Premise". Malzberg's usual theme is human impotence and human futility.

D'AMMASSA: I like about 40% of Malzberg's stuff, particularly THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS, BEYOND APOLLO, "The Final War," REVELATIONS, and a few others. I ascribe most of the anti-Malzberg sentiment to laziness

and conservatism and people who think it's somehow to their credit to denigrate someone with more talent/success than they.

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ED'S NOTE RE QUESTIONS/ANSWERS No. 11:

Don D'Amassa has, I think, cut close to the bone with his remark about anti-Malzberg sentiment. There is more to it than that, of course. Laziness and/or conservatism in passing over a specific author's works are not necessarily ingredients in all (or even perhaps in any) instances where a reader is faced with what has become a very, very large mass of books/authors; propaganda of one kind or another may be the prin-

cipal villain. In the case of Barry Malzberg's stories a great deal of negative comment has been written and widely circulated. (I myself was a gullible victim until, as I recall, I got a review copy of one of his books from a publisher. Prior to that, and before I'd seen the thing, I'd formed the opinion that the novel was a malignancy...probably not worth reading. I did read it and it turned out to have a rather outré charm. Since perusing much more of Barry's material I've found that sometimes parts of his novels have more merit than the whole. And I've occasionally gotten the feeling that if he'd spent more time on something -- one more rewrite, say -- he'd have really produced something with powerful, undeniable worth. Which is not to say that he may not have done so already.)

I don't think anyone can reasonably blame the fairly large numbers of SF readers who avoid Malzberg's fiction because they have sampled it and found it not to their liking. Probably they don't want to read about losers -- not repeatedly, anyway. The subtle humor and other clever touches crafted by Malzberg don't appeal to them because they like to identify with the characters in the stories and they fear that in the end they -- the hoppers for miracles that are not going to happen -- are going to be the real losers.

So they avoid the "downers" altogether and select from the almost unlimited

SF, fantasy, non-fiction, etc., now available.

Someday, somewhere, in some situation and frame of mind of society that is just right, this fiction of Barry Malzberg's may be "discovered" and be, uh, elevated to its true level. Perhaps, despite his avowal to stop writing science fiction, he has yet to produce a body of work that will be espoused and appreciated as being in the top 10%, say.

--E.C.C.

NOTE: Malzberg's THE LAST TRANSACTION (Pinnacle, November 1977, \$1.75) may be of interest to some. This opens with a defeated ex-president of the US returning to Peoria, with largely retrospection after that; the campaign manager, Connors, died on page 14. All in all, this book, while written in "typical" Malzberg style, has its own peculiarities.



THE GAGA OF THE SOOS

TART POO

DIE WALKURE

by WALT LIEBSCHER

Well, kiddies, you remember in the past lart, Wotan and his gurrent curl-friend, Fricka, returned to Rainhalla over a valbow bridge.

Evidently Wotan is not ready to dettle sown in coblubial niss, for he mools around with a fortal. As this was before the inn was pillvented, this riddling afound probabed a dewcey. As a fatter of mact there were boo taybies, or twins named Siegmund and Sieglinde. At the betinning of our gale our chew tildren have passed the pube of ajerty. In fact they are gractically prone up. Unfortunately these umpicky leeples were separated bartly after shirth, and due to sirkfull dreadcumstances they don't know each other from an arrel of bapples, to foin a craze.

Anyway, sore Piglinde is tarried to a merrible person, and she gates his nuts.

His name is Hunding, and he has no grocial saces, but he's a favage sighter when he bits into a gattle.

One day a stranger hoes up at Sieglinde's strouse. Sibbing he may be her thinkling, she invites him in to foo the chat. She stells him the tory of a sword, which is in-maj deedic. It seems Wotan, their dalacious saddy, truck the sword into a stee, just in case Siegmund may some nay deed it. And believe me, it really hums in candy, stater in this lory.

For pleasons of the rot, Siegmund is the only werson in the purld who can extra-swate this tord from the cree. Well, to torten our shale, our hero mipples his russles, takes a beep dreath, and chesto prainjo, the hoard is swizz. Jumplinde sigs for joy for at nast she lows this punderful werson is indeed her

barling druther.

After some inshedable creenanigans, and dears of choy, they decide to clee the foop, and seek preener grasstures. When Hunding (Huslinde's sigband) see-alizes this rituation, he follows them in set perhoot.

It seems Wotan, our dildrens chaddy, is obviously a sexually fizzy bellow, for he once had regular holes in the ray with Erda (who you mem remustber is the Girth Oddess). She must have been exfreenly turtle for she bave girth to nine broads known as the Walkure Maidens. One of this nunch of baidens is called Brunhilde. She has a prodigious set of cocal vards, and her trevendous moice can be heard from tim to Herebucktoo.

Wotan asks Brunhilde to keep Siegmund and Sieglinde out of the clurty dutches of Hunding. But, alas, our coo tuds hit the gots for each other and bind up in wed in a recestuous inlation-ship. (These Fods really giddle around.)

Fricka (Spotan's wouse) gets him to munge his chind and sake tides with Hunding. So now our choo tildren are in pire deril. However, Brunhilde, who has a keecrut sush on Siegmund, continues to protect our hallwert steero. But Adda is frickamant and she forces Wotan to

break Siegmund's sword with one swell foop of his spear. Everything now turns into a muddy bless as Hunding kills Siegmund, and Wotan, in a pit of figue, kills Hunding.

Brunhilde, who discovers Sieglinde is impreg deednant, sends her into the forest to await the arrival of her illibitimate jaybee. Wotan is now abso-fury lutelious with Brunhilde and he infects her with a sort of sneeping slickness. He reps her down on a plock surrounded by an imfænetrable ping of ryer.

This infledable concragation can be penetrated only by a bare haired foy with a complete lack of lear. If he fits past the gire, he can awaken Brunhilde with a smashionate pack on the lips. And so, as the sen wuts in the best, we bid a fair fondwall to our bewping sleety. --W. L.



BOOK REVIEWS

SCOP by Barry N. Malzberg. PYRAMID V3895; 128pp.; \$1.25.

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

The beginning of this book sets the tone for what is an appeal to the guts; revulsion, emotional ennui, dyspepsia, etc., are the most likely reactions to this seemingly disorderly hodgepodge. One trouble with this type of presentation, of course, is that the less desirable reaction, boredom, is apt to be galloping around unreined. On the other hand there is the not infrequent bit of humor, often cleverly -- even cunningly -- crafted.

Let's look at the opening lines: Scop. (1995-?) A bitter man with bitter eyes and a bitter mouth set bitterly underneath a bitter forehead that leaked bitterness, glowed with pain. "No more," Scop said bitterly, little flights of saliva dazzling their way free from his tongue, dribbling their absent way down his pointed chin to hang suspended in the stop-time an inch above his highly polished, almost fluorescent shoes. "No more of this at all," and wrenched himself, springing the lever, forcing himself back then to 1963

where most bitterly --

He proceeded to watch and photograph John Kennedy's assassination, jumping quickly to view several other similar snuffings. Seemingly rather incidently after only three full pages of text Scop has committed aggravated battery, rape, possibly sodomy, blackmail, and a few pages later in a routine Malzberg humping scene performs inadequately enough to merit criminal charges (and no doubt would, if legislators were not aware of their own conjugal, uh, shortcomings).

Scop has eventually captured "one by one the frozen moments in which our history itself pivoted." as an illegal act in the hope that the "bitterness" of his own time can thereby be alleviated. He "springs" his "evidence" on one of the "Masters" and finds himself betrayed (Sometimes he only dreams of facing the Masters and "showing them up," but eventually he does face them and gets what he obviously has coming.) By this time the reader begins to understand something of Scop's bitterness.

OK, then; is Scop going to continue his fight against the -- er, establishment? Will he win? Will he, so far an obvious loser, lose? I'll let you know. Meantime ----

Scop obviously believes in the futility of existence, expecting things to go wrong (haven't they always?) At one point as he lies on a bed after rescuing his

"detumescent little organ" from the grip of his late cohabitor he is

...thinking of all the forces of the universe impinging upon him as unnecessarily she tweaks him again and again, a circumstance which he knows will be repeated.

But Scop is working at his plan; he confronts Abraham Zapruder (who took pictures of the motorcade that day in Dallas and caught the JFK death sequence). Pertinent to that dark, as yet unknown plan of Scop's is the fact that Zapruder's

Films will be transferred down the alleys of all the decades and will someday form the Masters' justification for their hideous and illegal acts.

And Scop pleads with Zapruder:

These pictures...will eventually be enshrined as perfect realization of disaster. Fifty years from now people will curse your name for them, a hundred years from now your very name will be unspeakable because of what you have brought to them....

And, later, we see that he believes that:

...the fate of the universe, nothing more nor less is at stake.

And there is the occasional sex scene, with the vague suspicion that -- in, ah, some form or another -- sex just might be tied in with time travel. But no, eventually it peters out. And eventually, also,

the reader is presented with viewpoints of other participants. Scop and bits of events are seen through their eyes. Somewhere -- it doesn't matter just where -- Lee Harvey Oswald is introduced and referred to as Lee Harvey Osborn, his slayer Jack Ruby is Jack-something else. If this point is of deep meaning it escapes me; one can be forgiven for assuming that the different names indicate that either Scop's world of 2040 is a different reality to begin with or that, after all, his frantic and repeated efforts to change the past had a certain -- if inadequate -- measure of success.

In any case Scop loses here and loses forevermore.

We cannot help but note that in actual practice Scop is largely devoid of considerations for the feelings of others. This would seem to indicate that the moral of the author's story (whether he intended it that way or not) is: For the kind of world that mankind has, he has only himself to blame. (Or, if one desires to improve others, first improve oneself.)

But, in the final analysis, the thoughts and experiences of most humans have for too long been too restrictive. Too many lives have been, are and will be channeled along paths of limited perspective. New thoughts on subjects old or new meet closed doors or blank walls in too many minds. Worse, many could not assimilate "startling" new information

(even if they wanted to) since they lack the education to fully comprehend. Well, SCOP should not be dismissed as "just another Malzberg downer," or whatever. Give it a careful reading and you just might get a pleasant surprise -- especially if you espouse masochism (as perhaps does the author).
--E.C.C.

ANALOG ANNUAL edited by Ben Bova. PYRAMID A4016, \$1.50.

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

Herein are four original stories, with illoes, plus a factual article, plus the editor's introduction, "Hugo, John and the Magazines." The latter includes a thumbnail history of SF, focusing on the late John W. Campbell.

P. J. Plauger's "Fighting Madness" covers over half the book's 256 pages; it features Dr Hahnemann who, in a 1974 Analog yarn, perfected a method for neutralizing A-bombs. This concerns the aftermath. As a colleague tells Mr H., "I'm talking about war. Not just with the Chinese or the Soviets but with everybody. The Middle East, Western Pacific, Latin America, everywhere we have an interest in keeping things under control. And why? Because you ruined the best deterrent force mankind has ever developed. We knew what we could do with our nuclear strike force and so did the rest of the world...." The war seems rather beside the point, though, in view of the Perry

Mason-like denouement at the end. Nothing spectacular, but good entertainment.

"Malf" by Dean Ing is about a new ilk of giant tree-harvesting machine. A skilled operator uses one to rob and ravage, is caught by a co-worker in a similar machine and the two battle. Boring at first, interesting when the action begins. Spider Robinson's "Half an Oaf" concerns a whacky time traveler and his visit to Brooklyn. I actually laughed out loud while reading this; it would not be out of place in an Unknown Worlds type publication.

"The Tower of Ashes" by George R. R. Martin is a bit of drama occurring on a world that has been only partly settled and explored; excellent. Finally, Dr John Gribbin's "The Climatic Threat" Discusses the pros and cons of Earth's next ice age; one appears certain to come... eventually. This ANALOG ANNUAL is "in character" and is a considerably better than average anthology.
--E.C.C.

GIANTS IN THE DUST by Chad Oliver. PYRAMID 3670; \$1.25.

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

In a future Earth that is crowded with cities, it has become obvious that the people -- in spite of having plenty of food, pleasure, etc. -- are unhappy.

However, a starship has located an Earthlike planet, complete with flora and fauna but no intelligent lifeforms. Pre-

vious finds of this kind have resulted in colonization that was merely a transplantation of Earth's society. Now, it is proposed to plant a colony without including Earth's culture; the volunteers sent will have their memories erased. Varnum, a now rare rugged, independent type, has been talked into leading the endeavor; he alone will be conditioned only enough so that his memory will return gradually after three years and to normal by four. The colony is to be monitored so that the people of Earth can follow its progress.

So it comes to pass; ten groups -- one containing Varnum -- are landed on the distant planet. The story is concerned only with Varnum and his group. Chad Oliver has told it in a remarkably terse, simple and realistic fashion. And eventually, after Varnum's memory is restored and time for arrival of a ship from Earth seems nigh, the leader has made a momentous decision.

The ending is not a "cliff-hanger," yet the promise of a sequel is rich; such a vastly entertaining and superbly written story deserves continuation. --E.C.C.

THE SPACE BEYOND by John W. Campbell, Jr.
PYRAMID M3742, 287pp., \$1.75.

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

This includes an "Introduction" by Isaac Asimov, an "Afterword" by George Zebrowski.

Here are three previously unpublished stories beginning with the shortest, "Ma-

rooned" (an exploratory expedition to Jupiter and its moons), the medium-length "All" (in which Chinese rule the world and a religious war evolves) and the long "The Space Beyond" (in which far-journeying men of Earth encounter a space war, taking sides in a hero-villain dual, winding up manipulating great cosmic forces).

Zebrowski notes that "The Space Beyond" was found in what appeared to be first draft and had to be cut and generally worked over. The other two yarns were essentially finished as Campbell wrote them. "All," says Zebrowski, was the inspiration for Heinlein's novel SIXTH COLUMN (later called THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW), Campbell furnishing him with the background ideas.

These "new" stories by Campbell can be profitably read for entertainment. They reveal the author's use of not only "far out" super-science but scientific ideas soon to be realized (atomic bombs, computers, etc.) In this volume the reader should get just what he expects -- including, I trust, satisfaction! --E.C.C.

DEATH WIND by William C. Heine. PYRAMID A3961; 256pp., \$1.50.

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

This is a disaster novel, one of my favorite categories. Such books are comparatively easy to write; find a new way (or new variation of an old way) to destroy civilization and your survivor(s) can

almost write their own history. A couple of the real classics that come to mind immediately: EARTH ABIDES and GENUS HOMO.

In DEATH WIND a mysterious disease that kills very, very swiftly strikes in the US. Gene Arnprior and family, living in Canada and just accepted for Canadian citizenship, get out fast because Gene guesses what might happen; they go north to an isolated spot in central Quebec.

Within about a week a half billion people in the Western Hemisphere are dead, the only humans left alive presumed to be some thousands of "carriers". The rest of the world remains untouched. US armed forces are attached to Britain, as a pro-tem arrangement of mutual citizenship has been initiated. The nuclear forces available are -- temporarily at least -- successful in keeping the Russian imperialists from overrunning Western Europe.

After three years Gene and his family have survived in fine shape. And then, really quite unexpectedly, things change. Soon, Gene leaves, flying south to the cities, then using cars. He finds groups of survivors, finally entering the US. After various adventures he encounters Russians in the southeast. Later, in Florida, contact is made with an offshore US ship; more conflict ensues. Gene again goes traveling, soon making a contact that results in sustained action that carries the plot through to the end. The author has included all ingredients necessary to show the reader how the plague started, how Russia is brought to book and how the plague problem is resolved. He does his

job with authority: this is indeed a good read. Certain aspects of tragedy in the plot must be accepted philosophically; one can't have everything! --E.C.C.

INHERITORS OF EARTH by Gordon Eklund and Poul Anderson. PYRAMID V4068; 192pp; \$1.25.

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

Ordinary humans, Superiors (with hypersensual abilities, but sterile and prone to attacks of madness) and "others" (mysterious perpetrators of accidents and murders) -- all exist on the Earth of this story. Superior Alex Richmond, designer of Androids, has a wife, subject to the seizures, and an android who seems strangely slow to obey his orders. Also his employer is -- crucified -- by the "others". Alex believes that he is suspected of that murder but the police let him go. Shortly after he is admitted to the Inner Circle of the Superiors. Most members of the Circle gloat over the world's being on the brink of war, although Alex does not.

Alex learns that Astor, the leader, plans to use his soldier android model to create android armies. An atomic bomb -- outlawed on Earth decades before -- is supposedly being built to act as a catalyst for war. Astor notes that no one will win the war except the race of Superiors themselves. When Alex points out that with humanity destroyed and with the Superiors unable to regenerate, they too will be doomed, Astor has a seizure of madness, and thus the meeting ends.

Meantime, a "Messiah" named Ah Tran is proselyting.

In time the reader learns that the "superiors" are not really the top dogs; they are the results of marriages (utilized as protective camouflage) between "Inheritors" and humans. The Inheritors (the "others"), who can reproduce, had been seeded from space into human mothers.

The war begins but is a mere background detail. Alex Richmond is maneuvered into helping Ah Tran reach a higher level of existence; during the attempt the malignant telepathic influence of the most powerful Inheritor, Ford, is about to triumph, setting the scene for the book's conclusion.

The novel has a multiplicity of details which are presented in a remarkably coherent manner. Its style is more representative of a good detective mystery than SF and the story has a certain charm.--E.C.

CRYPTOZOIC! by Brian W. Aldiss. AVON 33415, 191pp., \$1.25. (3rd printing.)

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

Rather difficult to describe this story without going into details about the way people can take drugs and "mind-travel" back into time, seeing everything and actually walking (but unable to touch anything of the past) about in the exact environment of any time they happen to be visiting. Frankly, I was unable to get "with" this story; I got the idea it was more a case of Aldiss writing to please himself by being clever in often outrageous ways, than of him wanting to produce a com-

pletely coherent, entertaining yarn. (So much seems to be irrelevant, and even then one has to wonder, Irrelevant to what?)

But I am not being wholly objective. There is an overall thread of plot, albeit of little significance. Toward the end one group comes into direct contact with another (from a farther future, although it could also be from an alternate Earth), which runs backwards. Thus, one of the characters from there notes that she had to first learn the first group's language "backwards". In that reality (bear in mind that the story is basically about mind-travel, so the interaction is not necessarily "real") time moves in reverse; the dead come to life and grow younger, food comes out of their mouths and onto their plates, animals in the slaughterhouse are put back together, babies return to wombs, seminal fluid withdraws into male organs, etc. There are many very interesting concepts and amusing and thought-provoking passages. Recommended for those who like such offbeat material. --E.C.C.

NINE PRINCES IN AMBER by Roger Zelazny. AVON 27564; 175pp.; \$1.25 (6th printing)

SIGN OF THE UNICORN by Roger Zelazny.

AVON 30973; 192pp.; \$1.50.

THE HAND OF OBERON by Roger Zelazny.

AVON 33324; 183pp.; \$1.50

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

These three books are the 1st, 3rd and 4th of the Amber series (2nd is THE GUNS OF AVALON, noted in SF Echo 22, pp.

54-5); a 5th, and final, book of the set will undoubtedly appear in pb from AVON in due course.

Corey, or Corwin, is an amnesiac as NINE PRINCES IN AMBER begins. It is at once fast-paced and Corwin learns much, capped by his finding a deck of tarot-like cards picturing the "cast" of Amber -- himself included!

Amber is on the real Earth, others being only "shadows" -- this is fantasy, after all; but eventually --*sigh* -- even this Amber is shown to be secondary.

Corwin's first problem is getting from the Shadow Earth where he has been exiled, to Amber. Obstacles aplenty are overcome in the process. Corwin, with help, reaches the spot where the "Pattern" exists. As a prince of Amber, he can, presumably, walk it with impunity, gaining much knowledge. Which is precisely what happens, and he is able to shift immediately to the city of Amber. Almost at once he fights a drawn duel with the present ruler, his brother Eric. He escapes with the aid of another brother, one of several who want the throne. Armies and fleets are raised, battles fought, until finally Corwin fights his way into Amber. There, the last of his force is destroyed and he is captured. And Eric is soon to be crowned king.

In an effort to legitimize the coronation Eric tries to force the manacled prisoner to place the crown on his head, but Corwin gets it onto his own head, pronouncing himself sovereign! This enrages Eric, he crowns himself and has Cor-

win taken away for punishment: his eyesight is painfully destroyed and he is placed in a deep dungeon. From there, the end is not far. Zelazny has, however, prepared the way exceptionally well and the book's conclusion is plausible.

After the essentially brilliantly constructed first volume, THE GUNS OF AVALON was seen as something of a comedown. And so we arrive at book 3: SIGN OF THE UNICORN. Eric is now dead and Corwin is in charge in Amber. (He eschews a formal takeover as ruler because it has never been certain that his father, Oberon -- vanished -- is actually dead.)

This story begins with intrigue; someone has murdered one of Corwin's remaining brothers. His brother Random now tells him of occurrences during the time before his return from the shadow Earth. It seems certain that a mysterious force with power over Shadow is either working on its own to overthrow Amber or is in league with some member of the family to wreak havoc upon the rest.

Much of this book is concerned with trying to identify the enemy...a particularly onerous chore since none of the brothers or sisters trusts each other. However, at Corwin's suggestion, they do all work together in an attempt to contact and "bring back" brother Brand, known to be imprisoned somewhere by someone; the united attempt succeeds, but as Brand is pulled into their midst a dagger is slipped into his back. He lives, but is unable as yet to tell his story.

Later, as Corwin enters his bedroom,

he too is stabbed. He revives on his bed in his house back on the "shadow" Earth of his "exile". He is helped by an old friend who fills in a significant gap in his memory.... Random soon contacts him with the news that Brand is awake; Corwin is drawn back to Amber. He hears Brand tell of the alliance he and another brother and a sister had made in striving for the throne; they had gotten assistance from mysterious entities from Shadow, creatures Corwin comes to realize must be from beyond Shadow. Perhaps...he and the family have been wrong in assuming that they themselves controlled all things in the Shadow Worlds....

And in the end, a strange force -- this one apparently non-malignant -- is manipulating Corwin and others as they seek to ride back to Amber from a special trip; they find themselves in unfamiliar country, their environment strangely changing. Then, abruptly, as they gaze down on an expanse of rock that reminds them of the mountain of Amber with its entire top cut off, they see the "pattern" outlined within it. The pattern is blotted out at one spot.

Corwin has a flash of insight. There, he says, is the real Amber. And so this volume ends.

It is really a necessity for anyone reading SIGN OF THE UNICORN to have the next volume (at least) on hand, because alone this book simply makes no sense. Interesting reading, yes.

THE HAND OF OBERON, however, should hopefully bring a little more stability

and clarity to this heretofore somewhat obscure puzzle. For one thing, it continues exactly where SIGN OF THE UNICORN terminated.

Corwin, his friend Ganelon and his brother Random, ride down to examine the place of the "pattern". A dagger-pierced trump-card (of Random's estranged son, Martin) is found at the blotted-out spot. A test shows that blood of a family member will negate part of the pattern, so it is obvious that Martin has been stabbed through his trump, bleeding out profusely; it is barely possible that he still lives, somewhere.

So far I've barely touched on certain highlights of the plots of these Amber books. There is a great deal more to them. Near the start of THE HAND OF OBERON Lord Corwin thinks over what has happened in the first three books of the series; the resumé covers nine pages! Still, while I personally would have preferred a more streamlined narrative with a greater accent on over-all clarity (which I dare say would have required another complete rewriting by the author), the reader will find much enjoyment within these books, will appreciate the characterization, and can scarcely fail to give Zelazny top marks for the infinite variety of clever touches that inject extra pleasure into what is already interesting and satisfying.

Now, it only remains to say that with THE HAND OF OBERON the pace of the narrative gradually quickens, the element of suspense is used masterfully, and one can-

not tear oneself away from the story until the surprise ending.

Serialization of the 5th and concluding book of this Amber series, THE COURTS OF CHAOS, is proceeding in Galaxy magazine; can a paperback edition be far behind?
--E.C.C.

DOORWAYS IN THE SAND by Roger Zelazny.
AVON 32086; 189pp.; \$1.50.

(Reviewed by Ed Connor)

Zelazny's protagonist (Cassidy) in this book has spent thirteen years as a college undergraduate, cleverly avoiding amassing enough credits in any major to attain a degree or graduate. This is to maintain his income from his cyrogenically-frozen uncle's will.

Contact with the federation of galactic peoples has come in the recent past and a "cultural exchange" has sent the Mona Lisa and the British Crown Jewels on loan to the aliens, with a strange machine and a "Star Stone" (relic of an ancient race) loaned to Earth. The latter is in a museum on the campus inhabited by Cassidy. Its disappearance gets Cassidy involved in trouble, adventure and alien relations. He ends up being awarded a Ph.D. and graduated against his will, with a job that will take him all over the galaxy. In between the reader will find some of the best plotting and smoothest writing that this reviewer has encountered in many years. This tale is quite possibly Zelazny's most perfect production.

There are different levels of superbness; Roger Zelazny has written at one such

level in DOORWAYS IN THE SAND but can and undoubtedly will attain even higher levels of splendiferousness with future works.

--E.C.C.

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Ed's Note: The following jottings by Carolyn "C.D." Doyle precede her review of Piers Anthony's OX.
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Reading Diary for OX.

9/9/76, 12:47. I've gotten to page 56 on OX -- It's supposed to be the third book in a series by Anthony -- the first was ORN. You sent the book at a rather bad time -- I'm writing this in my study hall at my first day at High School. It's called S-----ia, it's Catholic and I'm sure I'm going to dislike most of it. Stupid homework -- I hate it. To top it off, today is a rainy, hot muggy sort of day, and I'm broke, to boot. All of my money is in the bank for Chambanacon. I need to buy a new typer ribbon for Vera, and the reason all this is getting me down more than usual is because I miss someone terribly. And I won't be getting a letter from them till Saturday, at the earliest. If it wasn't for the very bad way this H. S. (and I suspect most) are run, it wouldn't get me down so much...the dean of students has an Adolf Hitler complex. (Don't I sound nice and cherry...?) ((That reads like a Freudian slip -- of course that's supposed to be cheery, isn't it?))

2:30: Some of the chapters in this book are from the viewpoint of an entity known as OX. It's hard to understand these

chapters at least from where I'm at now. Perhaps it will be explained.

9/10/76, 8:15: Just got to school. We have to stay in the cafe till 8:30, when I rush upstairs and try to break into my locker (really! I tried the combination 5 times yesterday, got somebody from the office, and he got it right open!) We have to wear gym uniforms -- I'm a bit scared to ask the administration what the date is. I don't think they know it's 1976.... Yippee! I'm in a much, much happier state of mind today. I may get to see person I miss again next week.

9:00 PM: I didn't get hardly any of OX read today. Elton John's Greatest Hits has just started -- "Your Song". Today seems as if it's not quite real -- I feel very warm -- there's this security I get from long sleeved shirts -- . It's the sort of feeling that needs music playing -- gentle music, harder stuff only if it's a song you like. First period this morning was algebra. (By the way, I found out why it's so hard to get in my locker -- I'm supposed to turn to 3, and I was unconsciously counting 0 as 1, and stopping at 2. Anna nearly went into hysterics when she found out....)

(Here C.D. tells about her problems in one class where the pressure of having to work algebra problems too fast got to her and, what with having poked herself in the eye with a pencil & having a new-type desk to cope with, she ended up the class by bawling...but recovered quickly....)

Things like my crying episode are only to be expected, the way that teacher

(and others) act. Every assignment is a life or death matter, failing is worse than selling your soul.... I've had a whole summer to relax and loosen up a bit, and on the second day of high school they get me so frazzled up I start bawling. (Working in a factory would be more relaxing -- at least I wouldn't have to rush to the bathroom in between (never during) 40-minute class periods.) None of this frantic rush to cover 2 floors clogged with people in less than 5 minutes.... I'd actually have a more relaxed and just as free atmosphere in prison.

9/13/76, 8:10 AM: Got to school early again -- I only have a couple more chapters of OX to read -- read most Saturday, staying up till 12, and missing "Saturday Night". I could have read it all, but I know I wouldn't have been able to type the review after that, so I left a little unread. 'Bye.

2:20 PM: Finish OX. I'm in my 2nd study now, last period, and will try to write the review here. OX is a good book, but Piers should have tried to make many things a little clearer sooner. Some people might just give up on this good story in the middle -- because so many parts are mish-mash till the end. As long as you don't skip anything, the book is very good.

OX by Piers Anthony. AVON 29702; \$1.50.

(Reviewed by Carolyn "C.D." Doyle)

This is the third book in what I assume to be a continuing series by Anthony (though the back cover did refer to it as a trilogy. I hope this isn't the end),

its predecessors being ORN (1.25) and OMNIVORE (1.95), also published by AVON. Unlike many series, it makes perfect sense even if you haven't read the preceding volumes (which I haven't). The end is the sort that just faintly suggests another volume. (Considering the high quality of this book, I'll certainly buy the next one when it comes out.)

The story mildly confuses one at first; some chapters deal with Cal, Veg, Aquilon, and later Tamme, but others are slipped in from the viewpoint of an entity known as OX. I suggest reading these, even if you don't understand them; things fall into place later. Skipping these chapters would be cheating yourself out of an important part of the story.

Cal, Veg, and the female Aquilon, have been placed on another world. An agent, Tamme (a veritable superwoman whose former life, just as that of all other agents, has been erased), soon appears there too. The three remain distrustful of her for $\frac{1}{2}$ the book, though Veg becomes trapped with her in a series of alternates they finally manage to get out of -- but not before Tamme's sight is impaired by an incident on one alternate. This, plus her general weariness, results in her losing a battle her and her double fight (the other Tamme originally existed in another alternate). She manages to survive, and Veg transports them all back to another previously visited alternate, where beings there help nurse her back to health. She suffered a severe blow on the head, and remembers all the missions she was ever

on -- and, her former life. By this time, she and Veg have found out just how much they need each other; for you see, Tamme is now human enough to need.

Cal and Aquilon are still on the first alternate, and attempting to solve the alternate problem. (Anthony goes into a scientific game with dots that I cannot grasp from his explanation.) They, too, are discovering a romantic sort of attachment for each other. But there is a long time when we hear nothing about them, and Anthony devotes many uninterrupted pages to Veg and Tamme escapades in venturing through the alternate worlds, trying to get back to Cal and Aquilon.

There are several little mysteries here and there, all expertly resolved in the end. (If the end seems to wrap things up a bit much, well...so be it.) Anthony's descriptions of the various worlds are captivating, and I could picture all in my mind readily. He involves emotions such as love, concern; somewhat adequate, but I wasn't affected nearly as much as I have been with other books. However, toward the end, I was wondering what'd happen to Veg and Tamme, Cal and Aquilon.

OX's main fault (and it is big enough to be considered) concerns Piers' OX chapters. Many people get annoyed, reading through $\frac{1}{2}$ of a book, and not being able to figure out what many of the chapters mean. Waiting till the book is nearly over may not appeal to some, and they'd miss out on a good story. (A slightly similar approach was used with THE EXILE WAITING, by Vonda McIntyre (an

excellent book, better than OX). But there the reader could put the pieces together much sooner than with this book.

The only other work I've read by Piers was "In the Barn" (A, DV, vol. 1), and it impressed me greatly. He's lived up to my expectations with OX -- though not written in the same powerfully human and emotional style, for those with a little patience, it makes good reading.

.....
---Carolyn "C.D." Doyle

"C.D.'s" Reading Diary

11/4/76: Ah, another AVON fantasy, in another glorious wraparound cover. I think I like this cover a tiny bit better than the one for the GRAY PRINCE. I must commend AVON on their recent covers -- the spines of books are usually the only part you see, and their wraparounds are refreshing -- and very pretty. DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE looks better than G.P. By the way, I'm no longer turned against fantasy, ever since I read (*sigh*) THE FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF ELD, also, I believe, by AVON. Yet another lovely cover. The story was at least as good as the cover, too.

11/5/76: Ed, I am sitting here listening to an FM radio station while babysitting, and having the time of my life. Few things could be better than this -- I suppose making love would be one. Whatever they're playing, there are violins, not even the sort that I usually like, but they're beautiful. I just put the kids to bed, it's dark, and it's quiet, except for the soothing, beautiful music....

(Carolyn tells about the work she's been

doing, at home and at school, where -- among other things -- she has been wrestling with Spanish.)

11/9/76, 12:40: I'm in religion class. Just got done taking the test. I knew more about it than I had to, and did all of the Extra Credit stuff, as well as sticking in little things. The teacher probably thinks I'm a saint! (She'd better not ask my opinion on all those little "Right to Life!" posters, and gorey pix of pitiful aborted kids.) DWELLERS is quite good -- I have a friend I may lend it to....

11/12/76: I'm just about to type the good copy of the review, for you. I did the last $\frac{1}{2}$ of it at school today, and read it to a couple of friends. One said the book sounded dumb because "there was no purpose to it." Another said it was too confusing when I read it aloud, but understood it when she read it.... ---C.D.

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DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE by A. Merritt.
AVON 30494; 222pp.; \$1.50.

(Reviewed by Carolyn Doyle)

First, I'd like to commend AVON on the fantastic wraparound covers they have been using recently; the last 4 books I've gotten from Ed have had them, and the covers on this, and THE GRAY PRINCE were especially spell-binding. Since, most of the time, the only part of a book you see is the spine, the nicer it looks, the nicer your bookshelves look....

Leif Langdon, while in Mongolia on a mineral survey earlier in his life, experienced something that has haunted him

up to the beginning of the book, when he is relating his story. He had a gift for learning languages, and was soon unofficially appointed as diplomat for the entire team, learning the languages of the many different desert tribes they encountered, and getting on a friendly basis with them. One day, Leif was visited by a tribe he had only heard of before, the Uighur tribe. One man from the tribe came every day to teach him the Uighur language, while several other tribe members, armed with spears, stood guard over the two, to make sure they were not disturbed. There was no explanation of why this was being done; just the lessons. After the lesson for the day was done, the men would ride off, never showing themselves until the next day. Leif and the crew decided it was harmless, and rather than cause waves, allowed them to continue; but Leif was puzzled as to why he was picking up this language so remarkably fast; almost as if he had merely forgotten it over the years, and that learning was being awakened.

After he had mastered the language, his "teacher" came by one day, making it clear that Leif was to come with him and the guards, to where the rest of the tribe waited. All of the Uighur men treated him with much respect, and addressed Leif only as "Dwayanu", an ancient warrior of the tribe who had remarkably resembled Leif. Seeing that the tribe could nearly massacre the small survey team if Leif resisted, he went with them, thinking he could escape if things got rough, or wait till the team brought back help if they didn't.

Once he gets to the stone ruins where the rest of the tribe waits, an old priest starts to instruct him in the old rituals Dwayanu used to perform. He is given a ring depicting the tribe's most important god: Khalk'ru, the destroyer. All night, he goes over what he is supposed to say the next day, with the priest; Leif isn't worried yet. Not until he caught himself saying the incantations with ease, after hearing them only once or twice, did he begin to suspect there might be more to this than just a depressed old tribe, finding hope in the looks of a stranger.

The next day the whole tribe comes out, with banners, to lead him in a procession to the Uighur temple. There he starts the prayers and callings, still not knowing what they mean. As he performs the rites as the priest had taught, he is shocked to realise he is actually summoning Khalk'ru, who is appearing right before him! An octopus-like thing, with double the tenacles, it reaches out and claims the young, pregnant girl in the center of the temple; then both are gone. Leif, who had been performing the ritual as if in a daze, realises what he has done, and flees, but he had managed to keep the ring with him.

As the book begins, Leif is telling this to his Indian friend Jim. It is night, and they have just been awakened by the sound of drums, and anvils, toward the north: Uighur drums, where no Uighur drums should be. They're camping out in a lonely forest and decide, at last,

which direction to head the next day: north. Accordingly, Leif goes, followed by Jim.

There, they discover what they think is a mirage; once stepping inside it, they discover a land struck right out of Indian folklore. A land inhabited by golden pygmies, called the Little People, and also by their enemies, Lur the Witch-woman and the others that inhabit the city known as Karak. Enemies, yes, but people who awaken strong memories in Leif. Memories of a being living in Leif, yet not a part of him: memories of Dwayanu. Leif tries to stay with the little people and gets married to the woman they all adore, Evalie. But, only a few days afterward, he gazes upon the city of Karak and, so strong do the ancient memories and urges become, Dwayanu takes over Leif's body. He goes to Karak, is acclaimed as the leader, and leads the Witch-woman and all the rest into war against their enemies, the little people, against Jim and even against Evalie, who remain with them.

Once Leif leaves, Dwayanu, who has become supreme in Leif's body and remembers nothing of Leif's past or recent life, performs the same rites Leif started in the Mongolian desert: rites and sacrifices that always precede a war. Dwayanu loves the Witch-woman and together they take on the little people. Leif does not return to consciousness within in own body until Dwayanu has killed Jim; he then recognizes his friend's face. At that point Dwayanu is cast out of Leif's body, we

hope for good. Jim believes Leif, as he tells him the story of his "possession", and then dies. But the little people hate Leif; they do not understand. Even Evalie has a hard time believing him.

It's a beautiful fantasy, and not too complicated, either. A. Merritt's detailed descriptions of the Uighur tribe and of Karak are colorful and interesting, never draggy -- he's hit that ever-so-fine line between too much detail and not enough, quite squarely, and manages to tell a captivating story in the bargain.

Whole-heartedly recommended, for anyone who can read. --Carolyn Doyle.

MEMOIRS FOUND IN A BATHTUB by Stanislaw Lem. Translated by Michael Kandel and Christine Rose. AVON 29959; 192pp.; \$1.50

(Reviewed by Wayne Hooks)

In regards to Stanislaw Lem, there are two schools of thought. One school hates what he does, the other school worships him. Whichever school you happen to belong to will determine your reaction to MEMOIRS FOUND IN A BATHTUB; it is classical Lem. The setting is the future, another culture is trying to reconstruct our society. This is very difficult due to the scarcity of records. Our society collapsed when a space probe brought back a virus which destroyed paper. Overnight, the entire world was without the written word and civilization collapsed. Now, these future archeologists have found the lower levels of what was the Pentagon. In

bathtub, there was a skeleton and a manuscript. The manuscript which is presented here, is a chronicle of the misadventures of a young man lost in a self-contained bureaucratic world. Only in the lower levels of the Pentagon has paper survived and here a peculiar species of paper shuffler has evolved. Through this maze, the young man wanders, from one misadventure to another. However, as with madness, which this book is, there is an internal logic and consistency. Lem is at his best here. He is brilliant. He is satiric, mercilessly pillorying the establishment, weaving fantasy with just enough reality. However, as with other good things, there is too much. The book is much too repetitive and halfway through, becomes boring and is too dragged out. Still, MEMOIRS FOUND IN A BATHTUB is extremely amusing and may be recommended to anyone who enjoys parody and satire. If you are a Lem fanatic, you'll love it.--W.H.

THE PASTEL CITY by M. John Harrison. AVON 29637; 157pp.; \$1.25.

(Reviewed by Wayne Hooks)

One of the most popular motifs combining science fiction and pure fantasy is the ruined earth story where technology has collapsed and civilization has regressed to a feudal system. This is a pretty handy idea. It is packaged as science fiction, but has to contain little or no science. It is this basic idea which M. John Harrison attempts to explore in THE PASTEL CITY. The time is the far future. Almost all technology has collapsed except

for remnants. The machines which survive are war machines. tegeus Cromis is the main character, but aside from a very few comments by the author about his being dark and gloomy, there is almost no characterization. The characters are flat and lifeless. There is action throughout the book but somehow, the action remains static. The conflict is between two queens for one throne. tegeus Cromis supports one and opposes the other. The woman he opposes, who is the villainess and dies, reactivates doomsday machines of the long vanished civilization. In the end, the doomsday weapons consume the villainess but tegeus Cromis contrives to defeat them.

Michael Moorcock, Ursula Le Guin, and Philip José Farmer are all quoted in blurbs as praising THE PASTEL CITY. However, very much depends upon individual taste and the individual reviewer. Much of what constitutes good writing is largely a matter of taste. Any review is a matter of prejudice. In the case of THE PASTEL CITY, it has been done many times before and much better. --Wayne Hooks.

FLIGHT TO OPAR by Philip José Farmer. DAW Books. #197/VW1238; x+212pp; \$1.50.

(Reviewed by Don Ayres)

FLIGHT TO OPAR is the second volume in Farmer's history of Hadon of Opar (the first being HADON OF ANCIENT OPAR) and picks up exactly where the first left off.

Divergence one: that first volume dealt with 19-year-old Hadon's victory in

the Great Games at Khokarsa and subsequent deprivation of the crown and hand of Awineth by the actions of Minruth. Hadon is sent on a wild goose chase for three people who have seen the time-travelling god, Sahhindar, but he succeeds; his return and subsequent escape with Awineth and the rest of his party forces Minruth's hand.

Thus the second novel opens with the kingdom in a revolutionary period as the followers of the Sun God, Resu, try to supplant the goddess Kho and the matriarchal system which places the real power in the hands of the priestesses of Kho rather than with the kings. Hadon has remained behind Queen Awineth and her fleeing party with the injured woman he loves, Lalila. He hopes to gain time for them by holding a pass.

This ending of the first novel ("He leaned on his sword and waited") is ideal: a proud ending for a hero repeatedly thwarted of everything except honor, if another book were never written; yet an ending which begs for a sequel.

After his valiant stand at the pass, Hadon must attempt to consolidate his party once more and to secure the position of his queen, Awineth; this is the subject of the first section of the book. The rest of it concerns Hadon's flight to Opar so that Lalila may have her child there.

Farmer has woven an exciting narrative which suffers only the most occasional element of boredom. Hadon is a well-drawn character who dominates in spite of the spectacle and the supporting characters do not suffer in comparison — not

even the walk-on appearance of a familiar face in chapter 14.

There is sufficient detail and background to make the story enjoyable without having read the first book.

Okay, I've given the novel 'excellent' for plot and character: the next question is, 'Does it mean anything?' Like ZORBA THE GREEK or Homer's ODYSSEY or THE ROOTS OF HEAVEN? My immediate reaction is to answer 'no', but let's keep the question in mind a moment more.

Divergence two: The "Hadon" series represents adoption of Burroughs territory. Allowing for the fact that the Tarzan books are virtually my only weakness in Burroughs' output, how does the Farmer product compare with Burroughs? First of all, there is no problem with mistaken identity: Farmer isn't Burroughs and the two write differently. There is also a definitely greater verisimilitude with Farmer's characters: Hadon, particularly, changes far more than I recall with any of ERB's characters (appropriately, since the period described ranges from the hero's 19th to 25th year, when a certain amount of maturation is to be expected). Farmer's heroes are also more likely to deviate from socialized codes of behavior than Burroughs'. (The defense of the pass at the beginning of FLIGHT is a case in point; ERB's hero wouldn't have broken the code.)

But we have still the same intricate attention to social customs, ritual, and detail that was one of the great strengths of ERB's writing. There is not just the

detail of adventure (Joe Millard does a nice job of this for the "Man With No Name" westerns), but the distinctive flavor of the exotic permeating these works as they marbled ERB's. To what extent Farmer has adopted the Master's descriptions and what he has created himself, I do not know. It doesn't matter. The society that forms the background for these adventures is alive and plausible; it exists just around the corner for all its strangeness.

Partway through the Great Games (HADON OF ANCIENT OPAR), I was ready to swear I was reading ERB, though certain touches rendered the theory impossible. Which brings us to:

Diversion three. I asked above if there was anything 'serious', anything 'literary' about this and said that my immediate reaction was that there was not. But then I said that Farmer recaptured the mood of ERB at times. I cannot estimate the full effect of Burroughs on my own attitudes, but I learned much from him. Some I have had to throw off, while other attitudes seem wholly honorable approaches to life. Perhaps there is some confusion with the impact of Homer's ODYSSEY, clearly the most important book in my own psychological makeup. That latter work, though, is nothing if it is not a documentation of a culture and its values and of coming-of-age in that culture. If we allow for the fictitious origins of the Oparian society Farmer writes about, the description above describes this work as well.

I wonder if Homer's contemporaries felt he had a masterpiece on his hands, or if they just regarded it as I might regard this work (allowing for its origins of course). Are we, as SF readers, seeing them created in our midst for cultures which never existed outside one man's mind? (How else do you describe THE DEMOLISHED MAN or LAST AND FIRST MEN?) Or are we seeing the ODYSSEYS of the 20th Century etched here as surely as they are in the works of Nikos Kazantzakis or the bloody symphonic conflicts of Carl Nielsen and Dimitri Shostakovich? ----Don Ayres.

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((Ed's Note: Book reviews on hand from other contributors will appear next ish; my apologies for the delay. Reviews of books rec'd from publishers took precedence this time.--E.C.))

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A FEW FAIRLY RECENTLY RELEASED FANZINES

First, though, may I say that due to the lateness of this production certain fanzine issues (unfortunately long obsolete) are not noted here; there may have been later issues (not received) of the same zines. As usual, not nearly enough room was available to even begin to review these sterling pubs; my apologies to the editors (particularly to the editors of the omitted T.A.D., who now, it seems certain, have advanced to bigger and better things prodomwise).

DREAM VENDOR: #2, 24 1/2-size pages, reduced

offset. (Quarterly?) 6/\$1 or usual. Con & travel reports, Locs, seeing Ellison in London, etc. Fine. Alan C. Sandercock, Lehrstuhl B Anorg. Chemie, Pockelsstr. 4, D-3300 Braunschweig, W. Germany.

MAD SCIENTIST'S DIGEST - #3, 46pp, mimeo; usual or 75¢. Good variety by Brown, Chauvin, Avedon Carol, Victoria Vayne, etc. From Brian Earl Brown, 55521 Elder Rd., Mishawaka, IN 46544.

FANZINE DIRECTORY - #1 (1976) - 60¢ or T. Worldwide listing of items published: SF, Fantasy, Comix, Games Fanzines. Reliable & interesting. From Steve Beatty, 303 Welch #6, Ames, IA 50010.

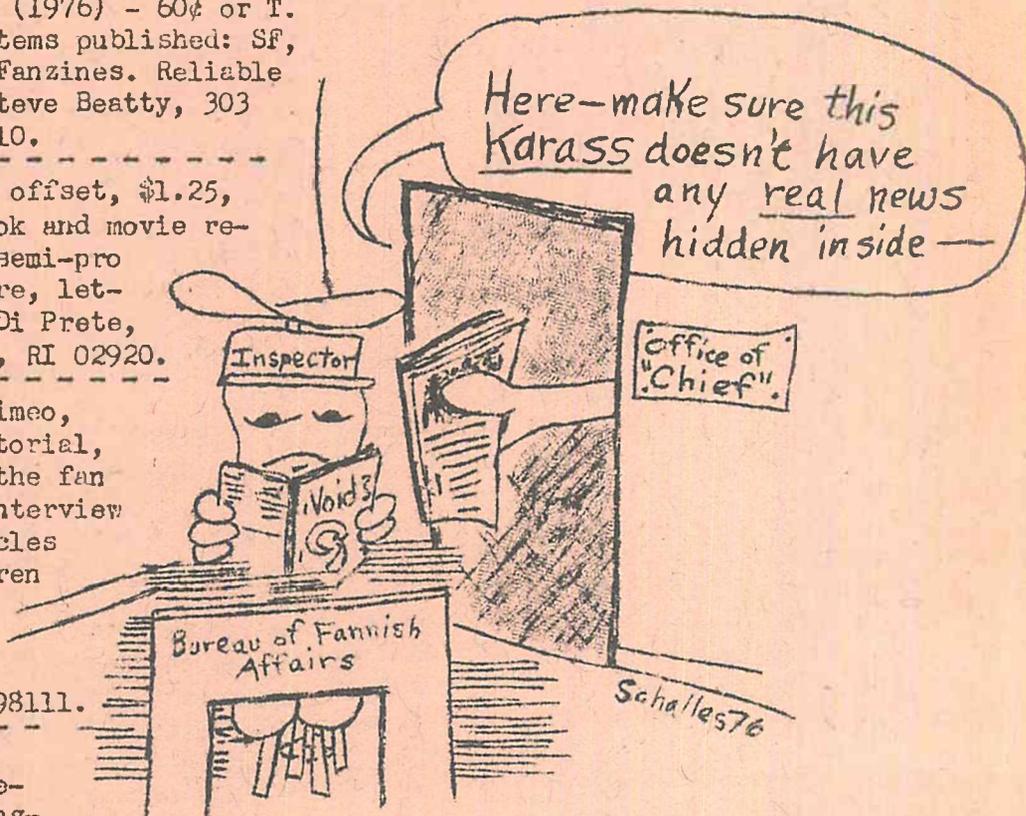
BLACK LITE - #3, 36pp, offset, \$1.25, Quarterly. Fiction, book and movie reviews, a checklist of semi-pro markets, cartoon feature, letters, etc. From John Di Prete, P.O. Box 8214, Cranston, RI 02920.

HEDGEHOG - #1, 32pp, mimeo, usual or \$1. Nice editorial, including comments on the fan Hugoes; Kate Wilhelm interview and bibliography; articles by Denys Howard and Loren MacGregor, reviews, etc. Excellent start. From Jeff Frane, P.O. Box 1923, Seattle, WA 98111.

DURFED - #2, 38pp (for usual or money); (infrequent); articles on Ringworld, Scheckley interview,

Locs, etc. From Kevin Williams, 9 Whitton Place, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland NE25 0BJ, Great Britain.

NEW VENTURE - #5 - Special Art issue - 122pp, \$2 (and well worth it). Over two dozen artists contributed, and their autobiographical sketches are included, as is an interview with George Barr. Magnificent cover by Kelly Freas. If you don't have it, hope that copies are still to be had. From:



Steve Fahnstalk, Rt. 2, Box 135, Pullman, WA 99163.

GOBLIN'S GROTTO - #2, 12pp, reduced offset, for usual. Includes a debate re Delany's DAHLGREN, Locs, etc. Pleasing content and appearance. From: Ian R. Williams, 6 Greta Terrace, Chester Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR4 7RD, U.K. of Great Britain....

RESOLUTION - #1 (50¢ or 5/\$2); 32pp. Miscellaneous contents, including adventures in moving, Locs, etc., all of absorbing interest. From Jackie Causgrove, ~~25840 Oak St. #11, Lomita, CA 90717.~~ ^{see page 4}

ANTARES - #1 (Fall 1976), 39pp, \$1.25 or the usual. (Projected as a Quarterly, but I don't know if any other issues have appeared.) This ish has a nice variety including material about Logan's Run, A. E. van Vogt, etc. Pretty good start. Antares, P.O.Box 1740, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

ALTAIR (& Fan Art Review) - #3 - 16pp and 16pp - reduced offset (available for occasional postage); Half artwork, half misc., including reviews, an article by Donn Brazier, letters, etc. This 5½" x 8½" fanzine hasn't enough printed material in proportion to artwork (a statement a few readers will no doubt regard as asinine, but understandable to those who like good articles in their zines), and I never did approve of printing part of a book or fanzine upside down. Still, an

overall quite nice issue. From: Terry Whittier and Kim Bulot, 3309 Meramonte Way, North Highlands, CA 95660.

KIPPLE - No. One - Feb. '77, 45pp. (Price?) Contains an interview with Michael Coney, several pieces of fiction, an editorial, a quotation from Philip K. Dick regarding "kipple", reviews, and a lot of other stuff. From David Wingrove, 4, Holmside Court, Nightingale Lane, Dalham, London SW12 5JW, England.

FARRAGO - #6. While this fanzine has been around for some time, this is a very recent issue and easily obtainable. As a matter of fact, #6 and ALL BACK ISSUES of FARRAGO are still to be had, at 75¢ the copy.

Issue number 6 has 46 unnumbered pages including the covers. It contains quite a few interesting Locs, an article on Raold Dahl by the erudite Ben Indick (one of a series; John Collier and Saki were done in past issues), the inimitable Carolyn "C. D." Doyle's "The Little Neofan who Could (or a Bud in the Hand is Worth two in the Rosebush)", poetry, fiction, etc., by Paul Walker, Burt Libe, Brazier, Gail White, Wayne Hooks, etc.

FARRAGO can be had from Donn Brazier, 1455 Fawnvalley Drive, St. Louis, MO 63131.

March 9, 1977

Philip José Farmer
4106 Devon Lane
Peoria, IL 61614

REPLY TO WAYNE HOOKS' REVIEW
in S F Booklog, No. 12, Nov.-
Dec. 1976

of
FLIGHT TO OPAR, Philip José Farmer,
DAW, UWL238, \$1.50.

Dear Ed:

This letter is sent to you for publication since SF Booklog prints only short complimentary comments from writers, editors, etc.

Usually I ignore reviews or criticisms unless they contain something worthwhile, such as pointing out a technical error or plot discrepancy. I've found that unjust and incorrect reviews are forgotten by the readers. The work lives on; the review sinks into limbo. Occasionally, however, I become aroused when a reviewer is, to put it charitably in this case, much mistaken.

To begin, Hooks says, "Many publishers are reviving popular characters whose authors are deceased. Andrew Offutt is reviving Cormac MacArt, a character originated by Howard. Farmer is recreating Opar of Edgar Rice Burroughs fame."

Actually, Opar is a city, not a character. Hooks doesn't make this clear, leaving the reader unacquainted with the series with the impression that Opar is

a living being.

"The most unfortunate aspect of this revival is that Phil Farmer, attempting to remain true to Burroughs, has also retained the racism inherent in many of Burroughs' works."

As I'll demonstrate, Hooks is wrong on two counts in this statement. I'm not attempting to remain true to ERB, and I've not retained the supposed racism of ERB.

Hooks goes on to remark that the heroine is blond (I would have said blonde) and white. "Hadon, the hero, is darker in hair and complexion, but he is more Mediterranean than Negroid. However, the setting is Africa, and, as usual with Burroughs, no blacks allowed except as extras and casualties fighting against the white men. In FLIGHT TO OPAR blacks are excluded, which is preferable to the stereotyped cannibals and savages of Burroughs' other works."

It's necessary to describe the background of the series to refute the above charges.

The background of the Opar series is the Khokarsan Empire. In my historical fantasy it's the first civilization, preceding the Sumerian by approximately 8600 years. It arose around the northern shores of a great lake, a small sea, in Central Africa. The most readily available evidence for this is in Willy Ley's Engineer's Dreams. (I am speaking of the central sea, of course, not the Khokarsan Empire.)

The first Khokarsans came to the

northern shores of the northern sea around 12,000 B.C. This spread over what is now Chad and neighboring regions, the last remnant of which is Lake Chad. To its north are the Tibesti and other mountain ranges. The lower sea drowned what was to be the Belgian Congo and French Equatorial Africa. The seas may have been connected by one or more narrow straits. I assume in the series that one did.

These two great lakes, or small seas, existed in late Pleistocene times, during the Ice Age. The water level was highest around 25,000 B.C. As the climate took a turn for the dry, they began to evaporate. They may also have drained out when a cataclysm formed a channel in the mountains, permitting the water to flow down into the western Congo region.

At the time of the Khokarsa culture, the Sahara was still a well-watered, green area. It was populated by great herds of elephants, hippos, antelopes, and other animals, and very small tribes of Old Stone Age peoples roamed its extent.

Both Opar books (HADON OF ANCIENT OPAR and FLIGHT) are provided with maps which show the situation at a glance. HADON details the environmental background and one of its appendices outlines the history of Khokarsa, starting in 12,000 B.C. The events of HADON begin 10,011 B.C.

Hooks objects that the Central African characters in FLIGHT are all white. However, as I stated in HADON, anybody in this area would probably be Caucasian, unless they were brought in from West Africa. According to what I've read, Negroes

were confined at this time to that area. It wasn't until around 10,000 B.C. that Negroes began to move out into other areas of Africa. The migrations were slow and did not end until the Bantus (Zulus, Khosas, etc.) reached South Africa in the 17th century A.D.

There they met the Dutch, who were coming into the extreme southern region of South Africa at the same time. However, the Bushmen and Hottentots preceded both, only to be slaughtered first by Bantus and then by the Dutch.

There is some evidence that at one time Bushmen and Hottentots lived in North Africa but were pushed south by the Caucasians and then even farther southward by the Negroes. The physically smaller, less numerous, technologically inferior peoples had to live in the deserts, just as the pygmies (and their Asiatic counterparts, the Negritos) were driven into the rain forest by their larger, more numerous enemies, Negroes and Mongolians respectively.

The Negro claim that they were first in Africa may not be valid. From present evidence North Africa was always the domain of Caucasians (discounting temporary invasions by Sudanese blacks into Egypt). Negroes apparently first appeared in West Africa.

The area in which Negroes originated is unknown. It's a puzzle which the anthropologists have not yet solved. In ancient times Negroes were in two main widely separated groups. One was in Africa; the other, in New Guinea and the

Melanesian Islands. (The Australian aborigines are not Negroes but are generally classified as archaic Caucasians.)

The problem is: If Negroes originated in Africa, how did they get to the New Guinea area? Or, if they originated in New Guinea, how did they get to Africa? The distance between the two areas is tremendous.

The most widely held opinion is that they originated in southern India. Over the course of many millenia, some groups made their way to Africa and some to New Guinea-Melanesia. Still, though some skulls with Negroid characteristics have been found in south India, these are not clearly those of Negroes.

Did Negroes originate in India and then spread out in two directions? Were they pushed out by the Indian Caucasians?

The Negroes who went westwards would have had to travel through India, Iran, the Fertile Crescent, across the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and down into the area of West Africa. Presumably, they would have liked to settle down in desirable areas but were pushed on by Caucasians. The process would have taken many thousands of years.

The Negroes ousted from India eastwards probably did not cross the Bay of Bengal to Burma or Thailand. At that time the paleolithics did not, as far as we know, have sea-going craft. They probably followed the shoreline up India but were driven on by the Mongolian tribes of southeast Asia and eventually ended in

the unoccupied areas of New Guinea and Melanesia. They could have island-hopped or even crossed on land bridges, since the oceanic levels were lower then.

The distances traveled seem very long for such primitive peoples.

However, another race (or subrace) traveled even farther. Consider the Amerindians. Originating in Siberia or Central Asia they migrated across the Bering Bridge to Alaska. Thousands of years later some reached the southern tip of South America. Thus, such long-distance migrations are possible.

I am assuming in my series that the ancestors of the Khokarsans migrated, over many millenia, from Central Asia to Central Africa. I intend to describe this probability in an appendix to a future Opar novel. This will also describe (in outline form) the Khokarsan language. It will suggest that this might be related to the Algonquian languages of North Amerinds.

Why would Caucasians be speaking a distant descendant of proto-Algonquian?

For one thing, the proto-Amerinds seem to have been a hybrid of generalized Mongolians and archaic Caucasians. This mixture of genes took place in Central Asia and Siberia perhaps 200,000 years ago. Perhaps even earlier. It can be presumed that some of these more-or-less distinctly Caucasian and Mongolian progenitors shared a common language, though they spoke different dialects.

Consider the Ural-Altai peoples (Turkics, Ugriks, Finns, Huns, etc.).

Though many if not most of their languages are unintelligible to each other, they did originate from a common tongue. (Just as English, Russian, Italian, Greek, Hittite, and the Central Asiatic Tokharian sprang from a common speech.)

In fact, linguists have recently claimed that Japanese is related to the Ural-Altai languages. But its antecedents are so ancient that only a linguist who's made a detailed comparative study of Japanese and Ural-Altai could "prove" a relationship.

Note also that the anthropologist, Robert A. Hall, Sr., has suggested that the language of the Ainu (originally a Caucasian people) might be related to Algonquian. This is only a suggestion, springing from very little evidence, but he does want some qualified linguist to look into this hypothesis. We do know that the Ainu lived in Siberia before migrating to the Japanese Islands. At that time the Mongolian Japanese tribes were living in a much warmer climate, probably south China or southeast Asia. After the Ainu had occupied the islands, the Japanese migrated, invaded the islands, and drove the Ainu into the remote areas.

So, I'm postulating that the Khokarsans originated in Central Asia. They spoke a language which was related to the proto-Algonquian tongue. They would have picked up some Mongolian and Amerind genes. Then they wandered over a long stretch of time to North Africa. Eventually, some tribes crossed the mountains

to the south of what is now the Sahara Desert and found the northern Central African sea.

Given the examples noted above, this is not beyond the bounds of probability.

There the Caucasian Khokarsans found no Negroes. The latter had not started the series of migrations that would end with their occupation of sub-Saharan Africa. The Khokarsans did find the shores occupied by the last of the Neanderthals. These had been pushed south by the North African Caucasians, were diverted southeastward by the blacks of West Africa, and settled down to make a miserable living on the Sea of Khokarsa. But the Caucasians then found them, perhaps fifty thousand or more years later, and pushed them south again. Hybridization occurred, so that the tribes along the western shore of the upper sea, the Klomgaba, were half-Caucasian, half-Neanderthal.

The only "pure" Neanderthals left were those which had migrated to the southern sea. Not until gold and silver were found in this area did the Khokarsans enter in large numbers. And, as was the universal custom of ancient civilizations, the numerically and technologically inferior people were enslaved.

If Hooks had read HADON, he would have known that Negroes were not in Central Africa at that time. However, I can't expect that the reader should know all previous books in a series. And I should have described Hadon in the detail covered

in the first book.

But it never occurred to me that someone would seize on the "whiteness" of ancient Central Africans and make a racist argument from that.

On the other hand, what if there had been black Africans in that area? Why should Hadon especially notice a black unless he or she were involved significantly in the story? Most blacks would have been slaves in Khokarsa, just as they were in ancient Egypt, Rome, etc. Slaves are just part of the background to the masters. If they're not in the action there's no reason to comment on them any more than there is to comment on the hundreds of white slaves who formed part of the background in FLIGHT.

To reprint the foreword and the appendix of HADON in each one of the series would make the page count too high. Especially when the planned appendices would also be attached.

One of these appendices will describe the plants available in Central Africa in 12,000 B.C. It will point out that the lack of certain plants would have prevented the rise of any civilization there. But this difficulty was overcome when Sahnindar brought in the needed food plants from North Africa and the Mideast. Sahnindar is the supposed God of Time, Bronze, and Plants in the series. Actually, he is Gribardsun, the time traveler of my TIME'S LAST GIFT.

The above should remove any charge of racism. I will point out that, as noted in HADON, some expeditions from

Khokarsa to West Africa had captured some blacks who were then brought into the cities as slaves. However, the majority of slaves were white. Moreover, the Khokarsans, free of color prejudice, had a system whereby slaves, black or white, could buy their freedom. A freed slave was permitted to marry whites or blacks, and the children were automatically free.

A freeman, a mulatto, beat Hadon in a race during the Great Games. He was mentioned because his role in HADON was large enough for comment.

The Opar series is not just another slapdash jerrybuilt series of ancient days in which a brainless mighty-thewed superman swordsman hews his way through countless foes. It's a carefully detailed, well-researched construction of what was not but could have been -- given the presence of the time traveler, Gribardsun-Sahnindar. Every aspect of the cultures of the two seas has been considered. These include prehistory, history, economy, religion, languages, writing, drama, philosophy, science, technology, agriculture, sociology, geology, botany, zoology, architecture, etc.

Hadon is somewhat introspective, and his character develops as the series progresses. In the first two books he is a very good swordsman but not yet the greatest. Towards the end, he becomes middle-aged and his strength declines.

It's a complicated series in both the personal and political situations, and there is always a sense of doom in the air, thickening as the peoples of the two seas

head for the destroying cataclysm.

I'd also like to note that the series should not be included in the sword-and-sorcery genre. It's an achronic story in which it is assumed that magic doesn't work but science does. If magic seems to work it is only because it's a delusion.

Anyway, if Hooks is as familiar with my books as he claims to be in his review, he should never have accused me of racism. From the beginning of my writing career I've made evident that I loathed racism of any kind. Need I list THE LOVERS, FIRE AND THE NIGHT, MY SISTER'S BROTHER, the Riverworld series, many more stories, and yea-many anti-racist statements and references in my works.

Under no circumstances would I retain ERB's supposed racism in the Opar series.

I say supposed because the case against ERB is so ambiguous. There are remarks in his works which can be construed as racist. On the other hand a student of his works knows that he also excoriates whites, the Caucasian civilization as a whole. He does have "noble" blacks and a "noble" Jew. I refer Hooks to THE MOON MAID for the latter.

Hooks is wrong when he speaks of the "stereotyped cannibals and savages" of ERB's works. He forgets that there were just such cannibals and savages, that these stereotypes did exist in the period covered by the Tarzen novels.

Nor were all the blacks in his

works just "extras and casualties fighting against white men." Consider Mugambi (THE BEASTS OF TARZAN), the Waziri tribe, and the hospitality and compassion given lost and starving Jane and the baby by a tribe of blacks (BEASTS).

It's true that there were many black villains in the Tarzan novels. But there were also many white villains, and by no means were all of them non-American and non-British.

Surely Hooks doesn't think that all African blacks are noble types? If he does, he's a racist.

A minor quibble before I get back to the main criticisms by Hooks. He says that the girl on the cover illustration of FLIGHT has ample breasts but no nipples. I suggest he take a closer look or get a new pair of glasses. The nipples, though in shadow, are obvious.

Next, Hooks says that the "unremitting violence nearly kills it." By "it" he means the novel. "Outnumbered by more than thirty to one, he (Hadon) wipes out most of his attackers. Continually he fights dirty, yet he is continually postured as being noble. As a hero, Hadon is brutal, cruel, and violent. There is very little admirable about him."

For the sake of those who've not read FLIGHT, I'll reconstruct the fight he refers to. Minruth's forces are chasing Hadon and his band. This consists of Hadon, two women, a child, a dwarf, a bard, and a middle-aged warrior. The band has reached a narrow pass at the top of a mountain. Lalila, one of the women, has

sprained an ankle. She can't go on. Hadon makes the others leave.

If he can hold Minruth's soldiers and their dogs long enough, all but Lalila and himself may get to a safe refuge. Lalila climbs a tree, hoping to be unobserved.

Hadon, though believing that he'll eventually be killed, stays behind to make sure the others get away. He is sacrificing himself for the child, her mother Lalila, and his empress, Awineth. (Even though Awineth hates him.) If the others are caught they'll be tortured and then killed.

So, he fights "dirty." That is, with every trick and all the strength and swiftness he can muster against an overwhelming force. And he uses everything available, rocks, boulders, etc. instead of standing in the pass and fighting until he's worn down.

Yet Hooks reproaches Hadon for not fighting according to the Marquis of Queensbury rules. If Hadon had performed a similar feat in modern times, he'd be given a Congressional Medal of Honor or the highest medal for valor of whatever nation he happened to belong to.

That the two women and the child would have died horribly doesn't seem to bother Hooks. He just wants Hadon to fight according to nonexistent rules for combatants in war.

Is Hooks a male chauvinist? His sympathies are obviously on the side of Minruth, who wants to destroy the ancient equality of men and women in Khokursa and

establish a male-dominated pattern.

As for Hadon not having all the humanitarian values of moderns, I'll plead guilty. Guilty by reason of realism. This is a historical series (pseudohistorical, anyway), and I'm trying to be realistic. Ancient peoples did not have the viewpoint of moderns. (I should say, the lip-service viewpoint of moderns.)

As a whole, the ancients were more bloody-minded, vicious, brutal peoples. In short, even the "civilized" were tribal peoples. An enemy was a person to be used as a slave or killed. It was normal for the conquerors to slay every living being in a city, including the animals. See the ancient Hebrew treatment of their victims in the Old Testament, a quite candid account. And these were the good guys. All ancient cultures of the civilized variety, and most of the preliterate variety, acted similarly.

Moreover, their concept of justice just was not modern.

So, to be realistic, my Khokarsan characters will be more brutal and bloody-minded than your average liberal, conservative, or reactionary of the Western world. Nevertheless, even in ancient times there were exceptional individuals, people ahead of their times. Hadon is actually more humanitarian than most ancients and so are some other characters.

As for Hooks' assertion that the Opar series is based on Burroughs, he is about one-fifth correct. It is also based on H. Rider Haggard, Robert Graves, and Longfellow. And on Farmer.

Just as Oper is a lost hidden colony of the ancient empire postulated by Burroughs, so are some other lost cities described in Haggard's Allan Quatermain series and in SHE. These were either survivors of the cataclysm which destroyed Khokarsa or founded by refugees from the cataclysm. Except for Kôr, which will be founded by Hadon's son.

In addition, Lalila and Pag(a) are derived from Haggard's ALLAN AND THE ICE GODS. At the end of this novel these two were in a dubious situation. They might or might not survive. I rescued them and brought them down from the Europe of the Ice Age to Khokarsa. This was done by the intervention of Sakhindar. Since Haggard didn't chronicle their further adventures, I thought I would.

A part of the Khokarsan culture is based on Robert Graves' concept of the pre-Indo-European, pre-Semitic Mediterranean cultures. (See THE WHITE GODDESS and other works by Graves.)

Also, there is, at least in the character of Kwasin and Kebiwabes, some of Longfellow. Kwasin is based partly on Kwasind, Hiawatha's strong-man friend. There are also elements of Hercules and Gilgamesh in him. Not to mention Rabelais' Gargantua. Kebiwabes, the bard, is obviously based on Chibiabos, Hiawatha's singer friend.

But, overall, Khokarsa and its peoples are Farmerian.

Hooks states: "Farmer is too aware of Burroughs. He is unable to transcend the shortcomings and flaws of ERB.

Much social change has transpired since Burroughs wrote. By adhering so closely to the original, Farmer severely dates this book..."

As I've shown, I haven't "adhered" to the original. And how could a work realistically dealing with the ancients be "dated." A writer of historical novels doesn't (or certainly shouldn't) portray his characters as 20th-century contemporaries. He or she tries to think as they thought, show them as they were. Does Hooks consider THE ILIAD and THE ODYSSEY, the epic of Gilgamesh, Malory's MORTE d'ARTHUR dated? Would he want them rewritten to portray Achilles, Odysseus, Lancelot, etcetera as moderns?

What does social change in the 1970's A.D. have to do with the goings-on of 10,000 B.C.? For that matter, what does it have to do with the worlds of Roland and Oliver, King Richard III, d'Arctagnan, Roderick Random, David Copperfield, or even Huckleberry Finn?

(A point against Hooks I just remembered. Burroughs' heroes would never have had the sexual freedom of Hadon. Burroughs would have considered Hadon's attitudes as quite reprehensible. So, one more element in which I did not adhere to Burroughs.)

However, it's now time to consider an objection by Hooks which might be valid. Two, in fact. Hooks states that he was confused by the introduction of some characters. He wasn't clear in his mind (where else?) about just what they were doing in FLIGHT. I think he was probably

confused about the gray-eyed stranger who appeared in a marketplace in a certain area. Then he dropped out of the story.

FLIGHT is only the second in a series that will probably include ten or twelve volumes. The gray-eyed man, whom I took care to hint was Sahhindar, the supposed god, will appear in a minor role in some sequels.

Since it's obvious that FLIGHT is part of a series, Hooks could have considered this. And he could have said to himself, "Well, the gray-eyed stranger will probably show up in other books." He might even have been curious enough to read the first book. If he had, he would have been illuminated on various points.

Hooks also objects to my cliff-hanger ending. Actually, it wasn't really that. FLIGHT ended with Hadon having reached Opar, his major enemy in Opar conquered, and the birth of La, his daughter. Obviously, his adventures will continue, since there is the big problem of Minruth to be overcome.

But Hooks has a valid complaint. It would be nice if each book of a series did have a seemingly conclusive ending. I've ended many of my books in various series with cliff-hangers, and the only ones who object strongly are in a very small minority. Other writers have done this, so why should I be singled out for criticism?

On the other hand, why not? I've been the most guilty.

This is because I regard my series as being not just fantasies. I try to

make them realistic. That is, as near real life as possible considering their outré environments. In real life people enter one's life, stay a while, then drop out, perhaps reappearing later, perhaps not. It's the essence of a series that it's like the flow of life, not ending until the protagonist dies or has conquered his major enemies, himself, his opponents, social forces, Mother Nature's rages, or whatever problem is the mainstream of the series.

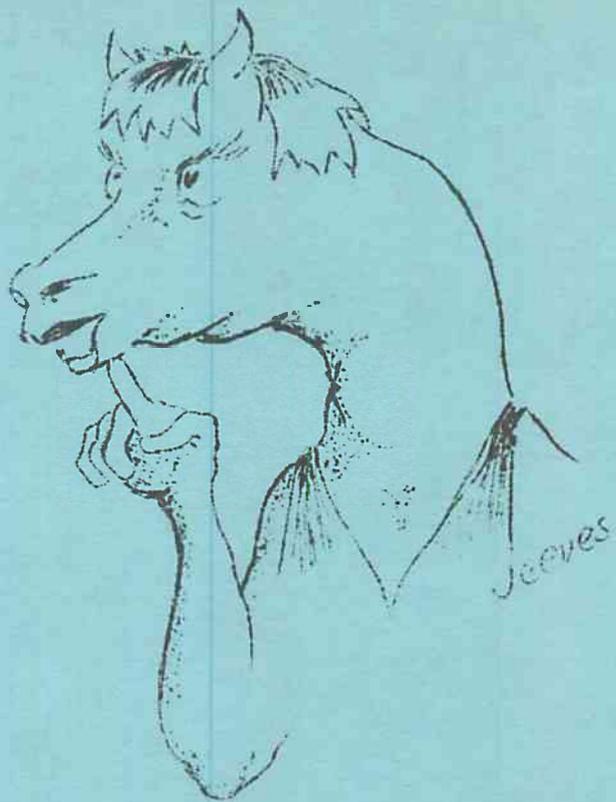
In every story, of course, self-inclusive or part of a series, no character should appear who doesn't have something, major or minor, to do with the story. So, if one of my characters does appear only briefly, if he seems to have no relevancy to the story, don't believe it. He or she will show up later, probably in a larger role.

Most of my readers have gone along with my series, waited for the next in line more or less patiently. These know that down the corridor, around the bend, sooner or later, they'll come to the end. No more doors marked TO BE CONTINUED.

Like life.

----Philip José Farmer

ED'S NOTE: Regarding Phil Farmer's "World of Tiers" series, many readers will be aware that the last few months have had re-issuance by ACE of the first four of the set. In December a fifth World of Tiers book, THE LAVALITE WORLD, has been issued (ACE) for the first time. With the recent



lent me their copies of your fanzine for this reply.

The worst of your errors is your attempt to picture me as the front for certain sinister elements. I am certainly doing this on my own and for my own reasons. To be sure, I have discussed the whole problem of the sad state of the fan Hugoes with a variety of other fans at a number of regionals so these concerns are not just my own. I volunteered to actually make the motion to abolish the fan Hugoes since I am not connected with any other group, zine, or awards which might suffer from being drawn into such a controversy. It is childishly ridiculous to accuse "pro" elements of being behind my motion.

Second, I resent being labelled an "obscure" fan. I have been in fandom for nine years, been to over twenty regional cons and to five Worldcons, and nominated and voted for the Hugoes since finding fandom. I may be quiet but not "obscure". Anyway you trumpet the fan Hugoes as being so much more open than the Fan Activity Achievement Awards. Then surely, even an "obscure" Hugo voter can make proposals about their composition.

Finally I want an apology for your characterization of me as a coward of some unknown category. If you had been at the MidAmerican business meeting, you would realize your picture of me as Machiavelli leading a vicious conspiracy was in reality Daniel in the Lion's Den. Despite the hostility that has arisen, I intend to continue my drive to abolish the

fan Hugoes. From some of your comments you apparently also see their defects but are more optimistic about correcting them. I feel my pessimism is the more accurate since an attempt at the business meeting for a modest amendment to the fanzine definition met equal hostility and was badly defeated. I had hoped my action would spark discussion of these problems not just attacks. If you want to discuss this rationally retraction of your inaccuracies would be a good first step. (One trusts that after your Midamerican ploy and its philistinistic reception, you are no longer "obscure" (even in the wilds of L.A.). // Your name was not deliberately misspelled as you imply, altho I'd be willing to bet that you deliberately spelled mine wrong on your envelope & letter both. Normally, that happens all the time (KARASS does it regularly) & I ignore such obvious inadvertent usages. Your name is misspelled wrong quite often, I note. As an example, the spelling is "Meisel" on literature offering the Microfilche cards of Sandra (re Poul Anderson), from the U.K. Most such errors can't be stopped, as possibly you've found out by now.)

ROBERT "BUCK" COULSON

Every so often I begin to wonder if maybe fans aren't really a little superior to the general population - it's an insidious feeling, probably stemming from reading the claim once too often. But every time I start thinking it, I run across a piece of really drooling idiocy which restores my faith in fandom's essential unim-

portance. Your editorial in #25 was my latest restorative.

You know, I read that thing three times, trying to find a clue to show that it was all a put-on? I mean, nobody could call an attempt to end the fan Hugos a "heinous proposal" and mean it seriously. A bill in the Senate to burn down the Library of Congress might be a heinous proposal; nothing in fandom needs that adverb. But if you did mean it as a put-on, you concealed it well, so I'm responding as though you meant it seriously, overblown fulminations and all.

Since you seem to be out of things, maybe I should mention that John Miesel is better known in fandom than you are. Not in your branch of fandom, probably; but yours is not the whole. In fact, you're pretty damned isolated, since you don't attend cons.

Why are you so intent on preserving the Fan Hugos, anyway? You're never going to win one; your circulation isn't big enough. All you need to win a Fan Hugo is a fanzine with a minimum of 1,000 circulation (more would be helpful) which is easy enough if you're willing and able to do all the required work involved. And all you need to win the Fan Achievement Awards is to join the Awards Committee; I have no idea how difficult that is. So what's so damned wonderful about either one of them? I realize that fans are desperate for adulation, but there ought to be a few limits. As for all the "Machiavellian machinations" you're worried about - they all stem from your imagination and the fact

that you're off in a corner and don't know what's going on. The fact that Linda favors an act doesn't automatically mean that the act is wrong. (I admit it's an indication, but not enough to scream about until you possess a fact or two.)

(~~E~~Your outrage at my use of the word "heinous" is highly excessive. What if I had used the word "atrocious" instead? The latter has seen such overusage that most persons would look upon it as a mild term. Yet, my WEBSTER'S "Collegiate" has this to say about the two words, both synonyms of "outrageous": heinous implies being so flagrantly evil as to excite hatred or horror; atrocious implies merciless cruelty, savagery, or contempt of ordinary values. I submit that both of these usages are no longer accurate in everyday usage; certainly I did not intend the above-listed meaning of "heinous" any more than someone terming the latest Yandro cover "atrocious" would mean what is noted above.

No need to waste space on a long-winded dissertation on who might or might not know more about what's going on in fandom. Such a point can never be anything but moot, in view of the present-day complexities of the fan medium.

However, there is one point you bring up which might be aired. It is doubtful if you really believe in "fandom's essential unimportance." If what you actually practice -- by action, reaction, etc. -- is to be believed (and I rely on such appearances) you hold to just the opposite. Yes, with all the time, work, money, etc.,

you've expended on fandom over quite a few years, with all the friends, enemies (?), etc., you have in fandom, I think you really do consider it of great importance (but just can't bring yourself to admit it).

Verily, it can be proven that (aside from an elaborate, decades-long hoax), some of the biggest promoters of FIJAGDH are the biggest practitioners of FIAWOL.)

MARK R. SHARPE

...Your editorial was, well, interesting at any rate. I'll be interviewing John at the next ISFA meeting about his proposal to drop the fan Hugos. I agree with him, the fan Hugos should be dropped.

...I also resent your name calling of John. He did not engage in "Machia-vellian" type activities. He asked Linda to tell her readers what he was planning to do and I have heard there were a lot of people at the business meeting that ordinarily aren't there for that very reason. He was rather loudly yelled at and the vote was postponed (IE - there was no vote on the proposal) so we shall be hearing the merits of his proposal, or lack if you feel the other way, for at least the next year. You are also an ass for calling, or hinting, that John is not his "own man" and that he was influenced by others who want the fans purged from SF. First I doubt there are any pros who feel this way since we make up a rather sizeable percentage of the SF market and secondly John is a very independent soul and at least doesn't resort to immature verbal

attacks. Come on Ed, you're a better editor than that.... (Aside from what have already been noted as misapprehensions, I can only note that I wax bug-eyed at your lack of knowledge of the many facets of prodrom....)

PETE E. PRESFORD

...many thanx for S.F.Echo 25. You will see I have included the cover of the packet that contained the zine.

I take it that it must be true...and that Echo 25 did reach me via Australia. ((Pete lives in Wales.)) The date from your end looks like the 2nd Sept. 1976. Then we have the 3rd Dec 1976 biro-ed on by someone in...Australia??? It arrived in Buckley on the 28th Jan. 1977. This makes a travelling time of 6-months. And a milage of some...strew, the mind bog-gles.... (Wow. And the kind soul in Australia added, "Try Clwyd Nth Wales" & it got started in the right direction. It could have traveled some 25,000 miles instead of less than 5,000. I suspect it reached our P.O. with a bunch of Aussie copies & the P.O. clerk didn't know what "U.K." or "United Kingdom" means. I'll try to use "Britain" in future.)

MAE STRELKOV

...In a sense my values have changed or been transformed with Danny's going. His presence in the Afterworld switched the focus of my thinking there for months after it occurred, till I felt more "there" than "here", but now I am back in the here-and-now and with you all anew, and

yet my experience has changed me with the familiarity of "what's there", too....

The Universe has widened for me, its Depth become somehow "realler", I am more at home with it and in it than ever I was even before....

I am very grateful that I could have the trip to the U.S.A. to meet so many of you in person, in 1974, for the memories are vivid and do not fade, and what's on paper (fanzines, letters, from you all now), take on flesh-and-blood too as I read them, helped by the memories from that time. It makes the experience of keeping in touch come alive! (I'll try to get more of your letter into #27, which I hope to get started on soon. Also some parts of Locs from other readers... since I haven't room to use as much as I'd like this time.)

GEORGE HAY

...I'm glad to announce that the new sf shop in Piccadilly, 'The Einstein Intersection' of which I am Managerial Consultant (whatever that means!) has now been open several weeks, and business is picking up well. The point I want to emphasise — and again, I'd like your readers to know about this — is that the proprietor, Brian Ouzman, and myself see this both as a broad-spectrum sf shop, carrying both 'normal' sf hardbacks and paperbacks and also academic, fan, bibliographical and related material. All fan editors are very welcome to write Brian on sale-or-return terms (or whatever else they suggest) for their zines. Further, we want the place to serve as a newscentre

(plenty of room for wall display of posters, newsletters and the like, including artwork) and a place where fans and pros can get together for discussion. Seating and coffee-serving arrangements are in hand! So, if anyone just happens to be passing through London, we hope they'll drop by. THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION is to be found in the basement of PICCADILLY RARE BOOKS, 31 Sackville Street, London, W.1. Tel: 01.437.2135. Just ask for Brian Ouzman. Queries on book and magazine sales to Brian, queries on public relations and general matters to me at my home address ((38B Compton Road, London, N.21, England.))

What else? Well, as Chairman of the H.G.Wells Society I've got four of Wells' sf novels into print this year -- 'The World Set Free' and 'A Story of the Days to Come' has come out from Corgi Books, and 'Men Like Gods' has come from Sphere Books, with 'The Food of the Gods' still to come from the same firm. Sphere will also be producing before the end of the year the pb version of my "The Best of John W. Campbell" -- not to be confused with the Ballantine Book of the same title -- not that there's any competition, because the two complement each other.

SF ECHO 25 is a fine issue: I found the material from de Camp, Budrys and Lafferty especially fascinating....

CAROLYN DOYLE

...Paul's interviews: I especially enjoyed Kelly Freas and his letter; I'm sure many have wondered how sf artists do their

work, at least us lowly little neofen. And Kelly is one of my favorite stef artists as well....

Ed, I think the first entry for 2/-28/76 in my reading diary ((in the last ish)) should say "sister" not brother. I must have made a mistake. Sorry. Wouldn't want anyone thinking some of Vance's characters were swishy.... I have gotten all three of Barry Manilow's albums, including the one that contains "Mandy"; I won them on a radio contest at the beginning of the summer....

Oh; about the "sometimes I'm a rainbow, or a typer, or a gumball machine" thingie in my reading diary; before any of the readers accuse me of fooling around with poetic license, let me say that "feeling like a typer" to me, means being very busy and active; pleasantly so. Rainbows and gumball machines have nice bright colors, all the colors of the spectrum, and I think the spectrum is fantastic....

How do fen open their envelopes? I usually tear off a little of one of the ends, all the way down. Anna splits hers at the top.... (I open most of mine the same way you do. Hmm..I know you're not lowly, and after considerably more than 2 years as a fan it would appear that you are no longer a mere "neo"-fan.)

MIKE CLYER

While it will be no surprise to you that I disagree with your editorial, it does surprise me that a fan of your years and experience in matters fannish would misunderstand so many points crucial to

your discussion.

First, for years the rules governing Hugos specified that the award for fanzines was for "Best Amateur Magazine." This wording is quite sufficient. Its intent is clear. Nobody needed to revamp the award. However none of the worldcon committees had the guts to kick the semipro and professional fanzines out of the competition. The administration of the award was a mockery -- and no amount of business meeting haggling could have stiffened the backbone of the committees. Now the current WSFS constitution (they change these constitutions like laundry) has little to say about Hugos, except that the number of categories may not exceed ten; these categories are neither named nor defined. There is no longer an amateurism standard, and I personally see no point in reinserting it when the committees ignored the original rule. // Second, your effort to connect the motion to eliminate fan Hugos with the FAAn awards movement is petty vindictiveness -- it certainly is not based in reality. John Miesel has no connection with the FAAn committee -- he did not vote for the 1976 awards, nor for that matter did Sandra Miesel. As it happened, the motion did not pass; as I heard tell, it did not even come to vote, though this may be misinformation. I didn't attend the business meeting. // One question I'd like you to answer -- what do the fan Hugos stand for any more? Tim Kirk, whose fanart was negligible last year, still received a fan-artist nomination and won his fourth(?)

straight Hugo. The appearance of "no award" as the third-highest vote-getter in the fanwriter category suggests profound ignorance on the voters' part. Are D'Am-massa and Don Thompson undeserving of a Hugo? Or are so many voters familiar with Wood and Geis only from professional magazines that they cast ballots in ignorance and confess it by putting no award third? You say, "The Hugo Awards have the outstanding virtue of devolving from eclectic voting -- every con member can nominate and vote for them." I was not aware that eclectic was a synonym for ignorance. Yet consider: there are not more than three sf fanzines (amateur or pro) which every worldcon member could get even if they wanted to, no others have the circulation. (I don't believe that there was anything in my brief comments last ish re Hugoes that indicated misunderstanding; lack of elaboration due to lack of space was probably the main culprit. Actually, if you had not apparently read more into my words than was there, most of what you say would indicate that we agree almost totally.

What you subsequently say has always been well known. The Fan Hugo Awards were seen (well in advance -- see certain past Moebius Trips, etc.) heading exactly where they've come to. I thought some years back that someone might take the hint and face reality (and find some way for like-minded fans to take the bull by the horns), but no. Now, I realize that in such matters Fandom has reached a great pseudopolitical "maturity": We have an

"Establishment" -- a great, shadowy, do-nothing, impotent Establishment, for which no one individual alone is to blame. And, yes, I suppose we all are.

Perhaps the FAAn power structure (without of course compromising its own award system) could be induced to attempt to revive -- from scratch -- the Fan Hugoes. Start by covering every conceivable point, such as one seldom (if ever) mentioned in the last several years: An amateur pub can only be considered if most of the work of production has been done by the publisher(s). In time, when an apparently viable plan has been achieved, presumably with the backing of numerous prestigious fans, it can be tendered as a replacement for the present degenerate mockery. b)

RICK SNEARY

...Re: the reviewer saying your art work was very poor. I would guess that C. Clingan is overly impressed by fancy litho art, as posed to the bold but rougher technique of mimeo. Your art, even the fine DEA and Rotsler, do not look as professional as the stuff in MAIA, that came today, but it is not bad art. And, for years I've expressed the opinion that much fancy/expensive art is a waste of the time/money involved, in relation to the amount of time and pleasure is given the readers. Yours is graphically well suited to your zine, and provides enough of a brake to be attractive. // ...The letter by C.D. Doyle can only be described as charming..and fills me with envy and nostalgia.. Ahh, to

be young, and just starting out in fandom, and life.. A nod to you too, for what is undoubtedly a good editing job.---But I could hardly read a paragraph with out feeling some personal cord touched...as with her embaressment to admit she read her own stuff first.. Heck, that is what I did too ---but after 30 years, I'm not as embaressed.--- Ahh, and finding Edward Gorey, for the first time... One of the brighter things of life.. the little ones we oft forget about, unless we are reminded, by new eyes.... (More of this Loc next ish, I hope)c)

WALT LIEBSCHER

First thing: I am...back to my own apartment. My address is: 732½ N. Robinson, Los Angeles, CA 90026.

I feel much better now, and I drive my own car, and can get around O.K.

Second thing: I want to express my thanks for all the fanzines your readers have sent me. Please, please, keep sending them to me. While I don't have much money, I hope your readers will still send them to me. After all I always will be a fan. // Third thing: I want to thank Robert Chilson & Gene Wolfe for sending me copies of their books. Thank you from the bottom of my heart....

JESSICA SALMONSON

Taral's review is so wrongheaded and silly that it barely merits comment, but since you somehow thought it merited printing, I'll set YOU straight if not the reviewer. Joanna does not hate men; THE

FEMALE MAN does not indicate a hatred for men. The word is Rage. It is not a bitter novel. It is a novel of rage. Keep that word in mind when you read THE FEMALE MAN. And if you want reasons for such rage, consider yourself in the following dilemma: (There follow dozens of examples of man's mistreatment of woman, including everything you can think of & lots more, the thrust being, How would you feel in these situations?)c)

(Yes, such things happen frequently. I might add that similar-type males treat males nastily also. I insist on drawing a line, though, between the naturally-evolved lust of the two sexes for each other and the "rape intellect". Religion is mainly to blame for debasing the natural proclivity of humankind to fornicate and this "heritage" has screwed up our lives.)c)

D.GARY GRADY

...By...golly, where were the Carolyn Doyles and Anna Schoppenhorsts when I was in high school? With new fen like those two coming up, the future of fandom rests in excellent hands. I enjoy reading pieces by such obviously enthused, intelligent people. And nary a bad attitude expressed. Perhaps it is a "proud and lonely thing..." but with these young ladies around, it seems a lot less lonely....

TARAL WAINE MACDONALD

(Taral types 1½pp re the Hugo-no Hugo shenanigans -- all erudite, witty, etc. (ha!), but space dwindles & the subject has already become something of a battered baby.)c)

...An excellent issue, Ed. Although I enjoyed the previous one, this far transcended it in the amount of interest it evoked from me. Especially enjoyable was the poll (or whatever) of authors that Paul Walker conducted. Although long, it was just plain more interesting than the poll of fans last issue. (Writers get paid, so have to be interesting, or someone more interesting would successfully displace them in a competitive market. Quality becomes a habit with them. Fans, on the other hand, are not interesting people just because they can finger a typar into disgourging prosaic thoughts onto paper to inflict on other easily pleased fans.)

ERIC LINDSAY

...On Ted White's interview, I had a postal debate on professionalism with Lee Harding, which only revealed we had totally different views on the value of professionalism. Hell, I don't buy Ted's zines for the stories, because he just can't compete on equal grounds there at the rates he pays -- I get them because his editorials & features hook me first.

STUART GILSON

...For a while I thought the Faan Awards offered a possible alternative to the injustices (a term I use advisedly) of the Hugos -- I still feel they can. As sound as they seem in principle, however, there is a danger fans will attach more significance to the Faans than they deserve. The idea of extending voting privileges only to those qualified to

judge in a certain area of achievement is a fine thing in itself; I only hope the Faans don't come to symbolize mutual backputting by being taken too seriously. (Unfortunately with only 70 or 90 or so voters for the Faans, an "outburst of enthusiasm" from one country, or one heavy fan concentration, can just about carry all the awards for local favorites.)

JACK WODHAMS

(From Australia, Jack pens a 2-page ethnological article--Loc which may be printed in toto in a later issue unless I hear from him to the contrary; an excerpt: b)

...The effects of culture shock numb the Aborigine still, and here they plea for their rights, their ancient rights, their superceded rights, being pathetically unable to identify with the White Man, committing themselves to retrospective nostalgia rather than to an earnest effort to intermarry, to be swallowed, to come to belong and be accepted by the greater community, to survive....

TIM C. MARION

...Attend a Hugo Awards Ceremony again, and know that sinking, sickening feeling inside when Outworlds and Don C. Thompson don't win Hugo awards, and instead "relatively obscure" people do. Think back on all the years Grant Canfield has been nominated for Best Fan Artist. Has he won it yet?...

ROBERT CHILSON

...Speaking of Wodham's comments way back in #23-4, as a number of readers did:

do you remember tight sheath skirts? They got so tight just before the mini came in that the wearer couldn't separate her knees by more than a palm's breadth. Not recommended for most of the women who wore them. But for those built to bear the exposure, they were a delight. They gave them (and us) an action no miniskirt ever provided.... (That opens up an area I haven't space to get into here, but I've sure given it a lot of thought.)

DON D'AMMASSA

...Let me second Terry Carr's comment that Joe Sanders is the best (though possibly least known) critic in the SF field.

...Why does Carolyn Doyle consider THE GRAY PRINCE a fantasy? Just because the blurb writer at Avon doesn't know any better doesn't explain her error....

MICHAEL T. SHOEMAKER

...I am shocked to see so many people asking that Paul's poll results be summarized. The nature of his sample precludes statistical validity and thus renders such a summary pointless. The interest of his polls is in the specifics which are brought to light and of observing the accumulated answers of certain people. These polls provide an excellent insight into the personalities and minds of the fans involved.

KIM GIBBS

(Kim uses a page of typescript to discuss the Fan Hugoes in an objective manner, then concludes:) ...I would prefer the categories to remain as they are. There are problems but I think they can be lived

with. If fans begin to fight over the Fan Hugoes then I fear many people may use the opportunity to get rid of them.

ALEXANDER DONIPHAN WALLACE

...The interview-letters to Paul Walker were exceptionally interesting and entertaining. Poul Anderson's "All good writing deals with aspects of the real world." and his comment that Hal Clement was writing about courage, perseverance, the excitement of discovery and accomplishment, should nail the flag to the mast. But there was no reason for the pejorative implication concerning the "mandarins" of English departments. The phrase from Algis Budrys on the necessity for in-focus characterization, logical plotting and satisfactory resolution belongs in the same place as Anderson's remarks, at the top of the list!...

MARK MUMPER

...But Paul does have one interesting and probably valuable sociological question: his last, about Barry Malzberg. Malzberg has been a significant phenomenon at least, and attitudes and opinions about him & his work should have some application to where readers, or fans mayway, are at. It would be worthwhile to gauge where the current sf reading public (not necessarily just fans -- and everyone knows fans don't read sf anyway) stands in terms of the fiction -- whether they primarily want entertainment, extrapolation, literature, etc....

JOHN J. ALDERSON

(John types a whole page about the morals

morals of Victorian England, showing that "Sex was used relentlessly as a means of domination." He concludes: b)...Victorian men did not have double standards. They were successfully conditioned to be sinful and to have an extremely bad conscience and an inferiority complex as a result. Remember Pavlov's dogs!

You know in Australia our mothers still condition us.

ROBERT BLOCH

You've got some nerve, calling S F ECHO #25 a fanzine! That lineup of writers on your contents-page is superior to any found listed in a prozine during the past ten years!...

HARRY WARNER, JR

(In 2/3 page, Harry discusses Huges, some things that have happened & what could happen under certain setups. He notes: c) ...Efforts to redefine the fan Hugo rules strike me as doomed to failure. ... // ...Carolyn Doyle again stars in the book review section. She has this wonderful ability to convey the enthusiasm for science fiction and fandom that all of us feel in our first years of contact with the fields. I'd give anything if I could recapture that old zing....

TERRY JEEVES

...For me, the best thing in the issue was without doubt, the symposium. I always get a kick out of reading how a pro goes about his work...although I usually switch off quick when the interviewee bogs down in the usual banal questions.... Your

(well, Walker's) symposium avoided this Q and A jazz by allowing the participants to wander at will across the area in which their interest lay. Well done....

BILL BRIDGET

...I hate competition. I thrive on it, but I hate it. And Echo & Karass/Granfalloon are at the top of my list of hates... you are so good it's disgusting. Granny has one weakness, however, it was in the contents...it seemed like if anything got printed in that issue it had to be by a SOMEBODY or it was centered on Granny itself ...Echo, your own, is a superb product as a fanzine, and your repro...is A-#1...but you had one fault, that spine of yours.... (Bill sends an example of some spine-binding tape, but I'm sure it's too costly.)

MIKE KRING

...Ben Indick's trip report to Jerusalem was very odd. I liked it, but it was different from most trip reports I've seen. A lot of philosophy and deep thinking went into the report, obviously, and it evoked a lot of deep thinking in me. I still find it a little croggling to think people would live in a state of perpetual readiness....

BILL BLISS

...I think it would help if zines were sold to the retailer like other goods instead of being on consignment. It would get a lot of dogs off the stands that have high return rates. // ...The July 76 ish of Galaxy featured 12 phalli and one twatt, ..on the cover. Ages ago popular criticism of Sf included the observation that all of

those rockets on zine covers were pecker symbols. Did that actually help sales?...

TERRY FLOYD

...Strange that one of the few books you panned, BEHOLD THE MAN, is one of my token favorites of the late '60's....

DON HUTCHISON

...One of my pet peeves right now is those glossy fantasy fanzines which are charging \$4.50, \$5.00 and even \$6.00 for a single copy. Aaaargh....

ROBERT E. ELENHEIM

..."C.D." displays real emotion in reviewing books, the single most-ignored part of most book reviews, and her reviews transcend the mere agreeing-with-the-writer-or-not-agreeing-with-the-writer into really specially composed pieces....

As for the move to eliminate the fan awards from the Hugos, I am strongly opposed to it. Any problems in the past have come from the misuse of the fan Hugos, not from the fact there ARE these categories....

JIM MEADOWS III

...Ben Indick's account of his pilgrimage to Israel -- wow, what can I say, Ben has done an enchanting job....

I couldn't help noticing the paragraph mentioning the Baha'i faith, being a Baha'i myself. That "exquisite little mosque" he mentions isn't a mosque at all, but a shrine (only Moslems have mosques). In it lie the remains of the Bab, the martyred prophet who was the herald of the Bahdi faith. Ben's reference to my

religion as an "ethical faith" interested me. Are other religions unethical?...

RAY BOWIE, JR

...I felt that Carolyn Doyle should read or try more than one of his books before she judges Jack Vance, but she is certainly entitled to feel the way that she does. It's just that sometimes one book or story or poem is not enough to judge an author on. // I do however agree with her on George R.R. Martin. He has really developed into a fine writer. // And she needn't apologize for the way she comes across. I remember being affected by "Feelings" on the way to U-MASS-BOSTON one morning, then in Fred Wiseman's documentary HIGH SCHOOL hearing Simon and Garfunkel's "Dangling Conversation" plus thinking about my own high school days at the Industrial School for Crippled Children... (Thanks for the copy of your essay.)

GEORGE FLYNN

You've probably already heard that the proposal to eliminate the fan Hugoes (as well as the one to disqualify zines that pay contributors) was defeated. As a matter of fact, the vote was fairly overwhelming - maybe 4 or 5 to 1. But while I voted against these proposals myself, I think they do represent a legitimate concern. I think there's little question that many of those voting on the fan Hugoes are simply ignorant of some of the nominees....

JODIE OFFUTT

Last night at the supper table my
((Concluded at Bottom of Page 4.))

JOHN J. ALDERSON
REED ANDRUS
DON AYRES
SHERYL BIRKHEAD
ROBERT E. BLENHEIM
RAY BOWIE, JR
DONN BRAZIER
BILL BRIDGET
JOANNE BURGER
MIKE CARLSON
ANN CHAMBERLAIN
PERRY CHAPDELAIN
ROBERT CHILSON
ED CONNOR
ARTHUR CRUTTENDEN
DON D'AMMASSA
STEPHEN H. DORNEMAN
CAROLYN DOYLE
ROBERT FENDRICH
GEORGE FERGUS
TERRY FLOYD
GEORGE FLYNN
MEADE FRIERSON III
KIM GIBBS
MIKE GILBERT
STUART GILSON
MIKE GLYER
MAURICE HARTER
GARY HUBBARD

BEN INDICK
TERRY JEEVES
KEN JOSENHANS
MIKE KRING
WALT LIEBSCHER
DAVE LOCKE
TARAL WAYNE MACDONALD
DAVID D. MCGIRR
JIM MEADOWS III
JODIE OFFUTT
BRAD PARKS
JOHN J. PIERCE
W. H. PUGMIRE
MIKE RESNICK
MIC ROGERS
JESSICA A. SALMONSON
ANNA M. SCHOPPENHORST
MARK SHARP
MIKE SHOEMAKER
RICK SNEARY
ROGER D. SWEEN
ROY TACKETT
JOHN THIEL
PAUL WALKER
DR. A. D. WALLACE
PETER WAREHAM
HARRY WARNER JR
MARGARET WELBANK
GAIL WHITE

P O L L A N S W E R S F E A T U R E D