

S. FOX 30
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NIEKAS

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

"The Last-Minute Fanzine" *phew!*

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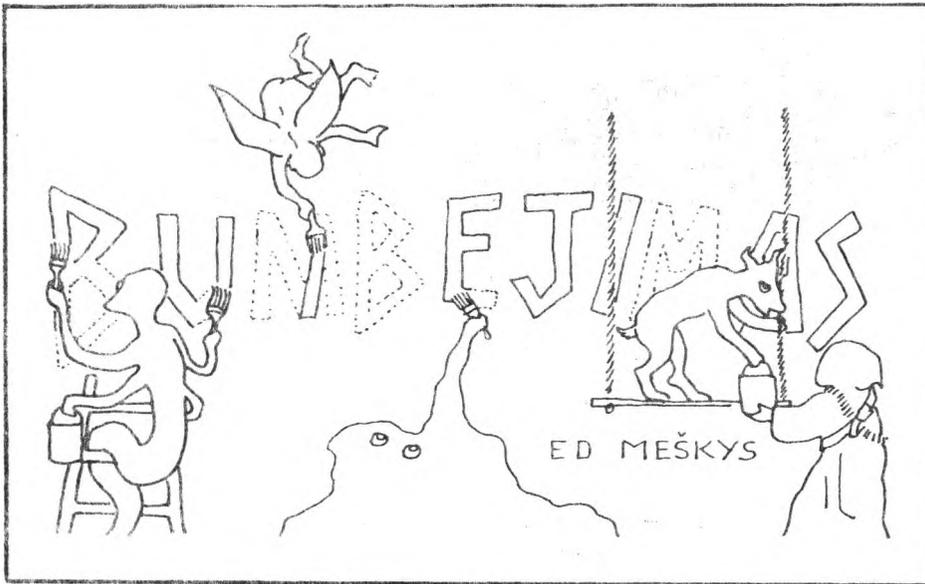
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The Straw Anthem Shrugs

Over the years I have seen numerous references in fanzines to Ayn Rand, John Galt, and Objectivism. Several friends have regarded Atlas Shrugged as one of their favorite books and Margaret Shepard has been a "true believer" for as long as I have known her. She has read and reread the entire Objectivist canon many times and subscribed to the newsletter they published for awhile. I have been mildly curious as to just what has influenced these friends so strongly.

Shortly after I lost my sight, Library of Congress issued as a talking book and early Rand title, Anthem. This falls within the borderline SF genre of revolt against a future totalitarian society. While it had a few interesting points, the book was, for the most part, stupid drivel.

Rand has such an intensive hatred for anything even remotely suggesting collectivism that she has become irrational on the subject. It is just plain dumb to set up such an unrealistic and even silly picture of collectivism and then proceed to demolish it. Anyone not already of her "true faith" would just laugh and I think that the more intelligent of her followers would feel a bit uncomfortable. Her picture of collectivism makes China's "cultural revolution" look sane by comparison. The people are faceless masses with no individuality and who bear code numbers and words instead of names: Unity 257, Togetherness 1532111, etc. They march to work as in the movie METROPOLIS, even the children play by rote as those in L'Engle's world Camezotz (A Wrinkle in Time). All the people are so collectivized that they never speak or think in the

first person singular. The book has the hoary SF plot of the overthrow of a dictatorship by a young leader who has "found the true light." The story is one big cliché.

-o0o-

Recently the Library of Congress has recorded Rand's major work, Atlas Shrugged. This is a far better book than Anthem and is quite interesting. It is also very long: the tapes take over 60 hours to play at the recorded speed. (I read taped books at almost twice recorded speed; even so it STILL took a long time.) Towards the end, a character makes a radio speech which is supposed to take 3 hours; on tape it takes up almost 5 hours. You think Fidel Castro is long winded....



This book was written over twenty years ago and its basic theme is fairly well known (tho' I didn't know the details of it). It has enough gadgets in it to be considered SF of a primitive sort. One character develops a new iron-copper alloy several times stronger than the best steel. Another develops a method to extract the 50+ percent of the oil left behind in current oil wells. Other gadgets include a super motor that derives its power from the electrical potential differences that exist in the atmosphere, a disintegrator ray that uses ultrasonics to tear apart molecules, a torture machine that electrically stimulates the brain, another independently developed disintegrator which will pulverize everything in a room if an unauthorized person enters, and some kind of electronic camouflage which hides a secret valley from aerial view. Several of these devices show a surprising understanding of technical and scientific principles on the part of the author--an unusual thing for a mainstream writer dabbling in SF. But more than any of these technical features, it is the "If This Goes on--" type of theme which speculates about social change and the total disintegration of our society which makes this book SF.

The plot is time-worn. A secret conspiracy is undermining a corrupt society. The heroine works in the "right" fashion within this society but does not see the justice of its cause. Even after she stumbles into Galt's Gulch, the conspirators' secret hideaway, and observes them in action, she refuses to join them. This reminds me in many ways of Skinner's Walden Two. Both books are written as propaganda tracts and both use the same methods to show the ideal society in operation. Of course the hidden valley goes back to Hilton's Lost Horizon and even beyond.

The central character of the novel, Dagny Taggart, keeps trying to survive and function in the "bad old society" rather than helping overthrow it to make way for the new Utopia. You get one guess as to how the book does finally end.

As in Antnem the villains are caricatures designed to be knocked over with a single breath (tho' they are not quite as hokey).

Taggart is vice president in charge of operations at Taggart Transcontinental Railroad. Her brother is president. He is portrayed as a soft-headed liberal who spouts clichés about social responsibility but who is totally incapable of managing the railroad he has

inherited. Dagny keeps the trains running despite supply shortages and other problems; mostly caused by governmental interference. She is a member of an elite class of people who accomplish great things and earn lots of money.

At the opening of the book the whole country is floundering but not quite in a depression--something like the real current situation. Large buildings have been abandoned in Manhattan, crumbling in disrepair. This would imply that many years have gone by since the business downturn began; how long would it take for an office building to develop fissures in its walls?

Dagny's brother had put all of the railroad's maintenance funds into building a new line to a new industrial complex in the People's Republic of Mexico. (Every nation but the US is a "People's Republic.") As a result she is having an uphill fight to maintain service. A dramatic new Railroad expands from Arizona into Colorado and takes away all of Taggart's business. Her brother gets the oligarchy of Railroad Presidents to force it out of business, hoping to get control of its superior track and equipment. However, the owner of the new railroad diverts his equipment, so Dagny must rehabilitate her Colorado line to meet a contractual commitment. The villains always expect the achievers to carry through, but put every possible obstacle in their way and do not give them the freedom to do it the best way. They use oligarchial collusion and governmental regulations to frustrate the achievers.

Her Colorado line is a success but but the country continues to deteriorate. As governmental and cartel practices make business harder and harder to conduct, more and more of the top business people simply abandon their companies and vanish. It turns out that they have taken anonymous little jobs like short order cooks, train conductors, or gandy dancers and spend their vacations in Galt's Gulch where they can be creative. Without them the country really begins to fall apart and Dagny makes a superhuman effort to keep the trains running. She regards the conspirators as her enemy; even after seeing and admiring them during her Galt's Gulch interlude, she remains obstinate.

Rand caricatures some of the sillier excesses of modern philosophy and literature, treating the avante garde as the mainstream. She shows a real hatred of the wealthy who have developed a conscience. Her villains are grotesque versions of Nelson

Rockefeller and FDR. One makes a speech which is a takeoff on the famous "we have nothing to fear but fear itself." Rand only respects engineers and hates pure scientists who develop the theories that engineers need. To her, money has no meaning or value unless it is convertible to gold. In Galt's Gulch only gold coins are used. One inhabitant has a great dollar sign made out of gold suspended in front of his house. The gold dollar sign is ubiquitous. It is the religious icon of the Randist faith.

Throughout the book numerous inequities against the independent industrialists who try to do a good job and make money are portrayed. Some are realistic examples of beaurocratic bumbling but others are impossible horror stories. The government and cartels keep adding restrictions to those already imposed on the industrialists and yet they demand that they keep on producing. At the end of the book when Galt makes like Castro, his speech gives the theoretical explanation of every horror story in the book. It is a complete recapitulation of the events and a statement of Rand's theories.

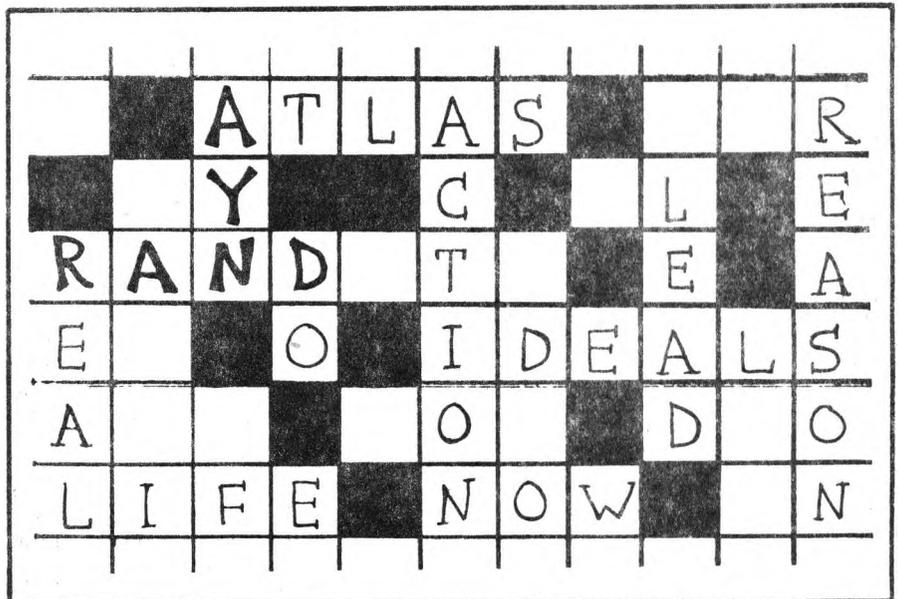
One scene in the book was very corny. Near the climax, Galt has been captured and is undergoing torture on a new machine. When the machine breaks down he shakes up his captors by immediately telling them what is wrong with it and how it can be fixed. Without looking inside or ever having seen the exact circuitry of the device, he can tell them just which of many electrical contacts has developed a spot of corrosion.

Only the very richest and noblest born make it to Galt's Gulch. James Taggart marries a poor but ambitious

girl who wants to make something of herself. She and Dagny share many views but because she is not born into the elite, she must perish. Instead of achieving "salvation" in Galt's Gulch, she is driven to suicide. Similarly, Dagny's childhood playmate, Ed, becomes her assistant at the railroad and helps in her fight to keep it running. But when she sees the light, he does not and dies in the desert when the last transcontinental express, the Taggart Comet, breaks down in the western desert. Everyone else is rescued by horsedrawn wagons but he "goes down with the ship."

There is a lot to admire in this book. Of course in a thousand plus-page novel there are numerous other characters and plot complications. People of independent spirit will read this and react, "Yeah! That's the way it is!" The book has been discovered by fandom several times and now seems to be a strong influence in at least parts of the L5 Society. When I attended a party of the Boston L5 Society a year ago, about half the people there seemed to be discussing Rand and Objectivism. But I guess that is understandable among people who want to industrialize space. There were people there who were REALLY into it, having read all the books, attended special seminars, and the like. I was quite amused to listen to them. It was like a religion. In fact, I heard one pair of people trying to deduce physical laws of nature from Objectivist philosophical principles. This sounds as bad as the Russian hierarchy trying to deduce Lysenkoism from Marxist principles or Christian fundamentalists trying to deduce the history of the physical universe from Scripture.

I wonder just what the connection



between Objectivism and Libertarianism is. I gather that the two schools of thought are very similar but that there are differences. The differences seem to be smaller than those between the Socialists and Communists but I get the impression that the Libertarians and Objectivists hate each other just as fervently as do the Communists and the Socialists. One person told me that the Libertarian Party was founded as the political arm of the Objectivist movement. If this is true there must have been some sort of schism.

From talking to rabid Libertarians like Ed Slavinsky, I gather that their credo calls for complete abolition of government and complete freedom for everyone to do whatever he wants to do. In theory the man with the better mousetrap would start a company which would drive the hidebound old ones out of business. They do not seem to take into account the possibility of the old companies forming cartels and driving out the upstarts by taking a temporary loss and living off their large capital. Rand does seem



to preach against cartels in her book. On the other hand, it takes power to fight power. If there is no government, who will oppose the cartels? Unfortunately, in the real world the governments--including our own--often work with the cartels, completely squashing the individual.

Like so many religious faiths, Objectivism seems to have a number of good ideas which are VERY attractive to a person of the right predisposition. But like so many religious Utopias, I think it can only work in a world where all men are perfect.

Or at least all leaders are.

More on Recorded SF

I have occasionally mentioned in these pages that I am working with other people to produce on tape SF books, stories, and fanzines which are not recorded by other agencies. It was slow getting started but we are beginning to achieve notable success. As of now we have available a total of 13 novels of SF and fantasy, 10 entire fanzines or compilations of material from fmz, newspapers, and other magazines; 3 accumulations of short stories, 2 non-fiction titles, and 2 books totally unrelated to the genre.

Various volunteers have taped these materials for me: John Boardman, Marsha Jones, Anne Braude, Alexei Kondratiev, L. Campbell, Owen Laurion, Art Hayes, Dave Palter, Donald Franson, Diana Paxson, Dainis Bisenieks, Dan Hicks, Valerie Protopapas, Kurt Cochran, and others. These others have promised to tape material but we have not yet set up all the mechanisms and worked out all the details.

Some people record novels of their own choosing, first checking to make sure it is not already available from another source. Others record individual stories, fanzine, newspaper, or magazine articles, etc. which I edit together into anthology tapes and duplicate when I have a total of six hours recorded. Some of my blind friends who have live readers come over and leave their recorders on while being read to and share the results. A few authors, like Don Franson and Diana Paxson, have read their own stories for me to use. Several other writers have promised to do likewise and I am eagerly awaiting the results. By the way, the non-fiction titles are the de Camps' Spirits, Stars, and Spells and Charles Platt's Dream Makers. The two miscellaneous titles are humorous books that friends wanted to share with me and which I am lending out to those blind fans who want that sort of thing in addition to the SF and fantasy that I send out.

I am always looking for more volunteers to tape material for me. And I am especially looking for authors interested in taping their own works. Even if he or she only does a single story, it can be put into one of my all-fiction compilations.

Library of Congress seems to be improving its program. Instead of concentrating on juvenalia, they are beginning to pick up classics like Earth Abides, Mission of Gravity, More Than Human, Last and First Men, etc. And now that GALAXY is gone, they are recording on talking book discs ANALOG and putting ASIMOV'S SF MAG into Braille. I have heard that Norwest Foundation, a private organization, is recording OMNI but I have not heard back from them yet.

The fanzines currently being recorded in their entirety are STARSHIP, SF REVIEW, and NIEKAS. About half of each issue of LOCUS, SF CHRONICLE, and FILE 770 are also being done. In addition, excerpts from many other fanzines are also recorded. I would like to add to the complete zines the other major sercon ones: THRUST, P*S*F*Q, AMRA, THE FANTASY NEWSLETTER,

and any others I did not think of.

The Mad Blink of Moultonboro

I just returned from attending my fourth national convention of the National Federation of the Blind. The convention represented one of the best possible highs. We accomplished more in a few hours than the organized blind movement had in the last 40 years.

The NFB headquarters are in Baltimore and Saturday, July 4th, was given over to tours of the new facilities there. The building was purchased three years ago and the work done on it was very impressive. More remains to be done, but it is a building the members can be proud of.

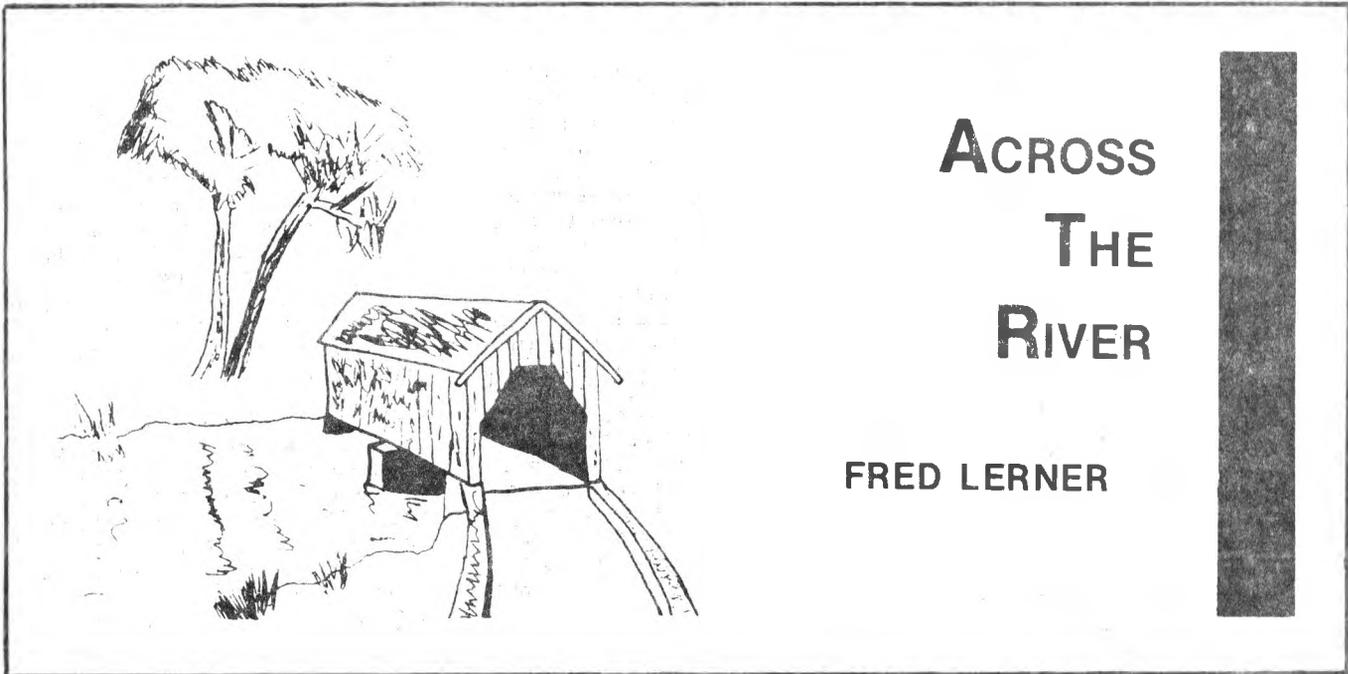
Sunday and Monday were devoted to many special committees and division meetings and a public meeting of the board of directors of the NFB and the huckster room. I really faunched over a paperless Braille output word processor which would also type inkprint copy when you were ready. Unfortunately it cost \$11K.

Wednesday we spent the day in Washington, and as a group met with Vice President Bush, eight senators, and four representatives all of whom spoke to us.

Highlights of the convention were Dr. Jernigan's presidential report on activities and accomplishments of the past year, the trip to Washington, and our meeting with various governmental officials who came to us the following day. We had Paul Simmons, a deputy commissioner from Social Security, Frank Cylke, director of the talking book division of the Library of Congress, and George Conn, Commissioner Designate of Rehab Services Administration, and Fernando Alegria from the Department of Labor. Each spoke to us and during the question and answer session negotiated with our president on our goals. We made more progress towards our goals of equality while dealing with these representatives of a radical conservative government than we had dealing with any past administration.

Chances are good that we will finally get the elimination of work disincentives in the Social Security system for which we have been fighting for 20 years. A full transcript of this monumental session will appear shortly in our magazine BRAILLE MONITOR.

It was a great convention and if anyone wants more details I will be glad to send Xeroxes or dubbings of the MONITOR article when it is published.



ACROSS THE RIVER

FRED LERNER

They're piling up again. And I'll never get caught up. Every time I undertake a major project I get further behind. And there are so many that I don't even get.

I'm talking about magazines, of course. Since the company I work for receives over one hundred titles on a regular basis, and since it's my job as company librarian at least to skim the contents of each of them, you might think that the last thing I'd want to do when I got home would be to read more magazines. But you're sitting there reading this in NIEKAS, which is a magazine of sorts, so you must share my mania to some extent. I shall hope for your sympathy, if not your understanding.

In a couple of days, my wife and I shall be moving back across the river, to a little house on a quiet, tree-shaded street in White River Junction, Vermont. With us we shall be bringing a few pieces of furniture, two sets of dishes, one grey barn-cat, and about a hundred boxes of books and magazines. The books will go onto shelves, and I'll feel a sense of security whenever I look up at them. But the magazines: that is another matter entirely.

After all, a book is a permanent thing. Its very existence between two covers implies that it can wait until our mutual convenience for me to read it. But a magazine is like a loudly-ticking time-bomb; every time I look at the date on its cover I am reminded that I have only a short while to deal with it, and I had better do so lest eventually I

be buried in the rubble of unopened issues.

Magazines come in a devilish variety of frequencies. The quarterlies are probably the easiest to deal with. A quick look through the table of contents, and the issue can be put away for "later." When three or four issues have accumulated unread, they can be put in their proper boxes on the shelf. After all, if a writer had something really important to say, would he consign it to a quarterly? So EXTRAPOLATION and RURAL LIBRARIES and the KIPLING JOURNAL can make their placid journey from mailbox to storage-shelf without much troubling my eyes or my brain.

The weeklies are the real anxiety-producers. There's an air of urgency about a magazine airfreighted every Thursday from London, so I try to finish each NEW SCIENTIST before the next one arrives. I force myself to read the thing straight through: no skipping ahead to the book reviews (last thing I need is more books anyway), and no racing forward to the latest on railway technology. I slog dutifully through unintelligible explanations of enzyme biochemistry and incomprehensible excursions into particle physics. I've been reading NEW SCIENTIST for five years, and some of its vocabulary is beginning to make sense; perhaps in another half decade I'll be able to make some sense out of catastrophe theory and

plate tectonics and the Maunder minimum--and maybe I'll have found out just what a "boffin" is.

The NEW YORKER isn't anywhere as intimidating. Perhaps that's because I don't get it in the mail: instead every few months a friend at work brings me a couple of dozen that he's finished, and I leaf through them at leisure. That's probably a good word to use about that magazine: it seems to be edited for an audience with plenty of time. NEW YORKER writers seem never to have to worry about exceeding their allotted space: they just write until they've said all they want to about their subject. This may be much more than anyone in his right mind would want to read: but for every lady discoursing ad nauseam on psychoanalysis there's a John McPhee on fine dining in rural Pennsylvania or a Thomas Whiteside on the big business of modern book publishing. And one can skip things with a clear conscience.

Monthly magazines are sneaky devils. The new ANALOG or COMMENTARY or OMNI comes in; you read a few choice pieces and put the magazine aside--after all, it's a month until the next one. But that month is up sooner than you thing, and a year's accumulation of largely unread issues bulks accusingly larger on the shelf than a mere four quarterlies. SF magazines excepted, monthlies don't last long at my house. I can

WHEN? NOW. WHEN? NOW. WHEN? NEVER.

think of several titles I've subscribed to for a while, and then abandoned for lack of determination to read them: CONSUMER REPORTS and NATURAL HISTORY, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC and SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN--yes, and OMNI and COMMENTARY.

There has been one exception to this, and it's fading fast. ESQUIRE changes identities every year or so, and a while back they hit upon one that suited me well. Its editors decided that their target audience was the ambitious, well-educated young man in his twenties or thirties--a man beginning to feel some self-assurance in his life, but with a lot of major decisions yet to make. ESQUIRE's writers touched on these decisions: where to live, how to behave, the implications of career choices. They looked into unexpected corners of America, and they offered new approaches to the familiar. ESQUIRE rivalled the NEW YORKER in the distinction of its writers. And as soon as a copy would come in the

mail I would read it from cover to cover.

But there has been a sharp decline in ESQUIRE these past few months. Its editors seem to have redefined their target audience: they are now writing and editing for themselves. The front pages are more self-congratulatory even than they used to be; the clothing feature becomes increasingly a showcase of the expensively bizarre; several pages each month are devoted to an anonymous editor's account of his date with some thirtyish show-business divorcee; and a new "Esquiner" section is devoted to the sort of material a fanzine columnist would write when inspiration failed him. Like a new restaurant that has become complacent in its popularity, ESQUIRE has lost its flavour, and is well on the way to being just another monthly. And you know what that means around my house...

I think I've found one type of maga-

zine whose publishing schedule harmonises well with my reading schedule. Bimonthlies come in too often to be cast into the quarterly abyss, yet they don't pile up in the threatening manner of monthly titles. They don't force themselves upon my attention, as do weeklies--I can let them sit next to the rocking-chair for a while without dreading that they'll be stale when next I take them up. And when I finish one, there's usually at least two or three weeks of pleasant anticipation till the next one comes.

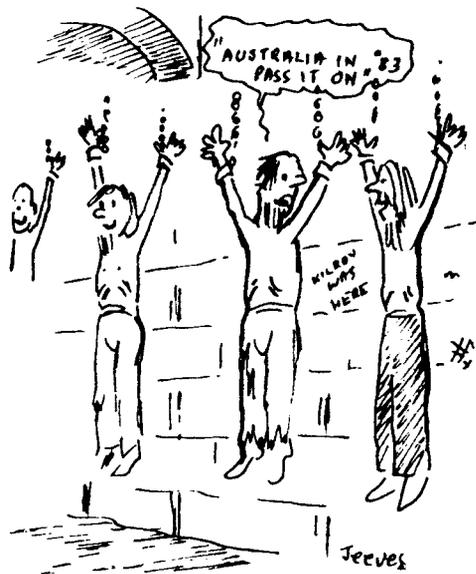
And I don't think I'm the only one who feels that way. A favourite magazine of mine just started a year or two ago--and has done so well that it's changing from a bimonthly to a monthly. Like that quiet little tavern or inexpensive resort, a magazine can be transformed by its own popularity. I just hope that success doesn't put too many of my favourites out of my reach.

DEAD OR ALIVE

Wanted by Terry Jeeves, 230 Bannerdale Rd., Sheffield S11 9FE. UK--copies of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION prior to 1936. Can't pay high prices but WILL offer mint review copies of current SF titles to the equivalent of your price: i.e. you rate your copy of ASF at \$12 and I give you at least \$15 worth of current SF. If interested, drop me a line.

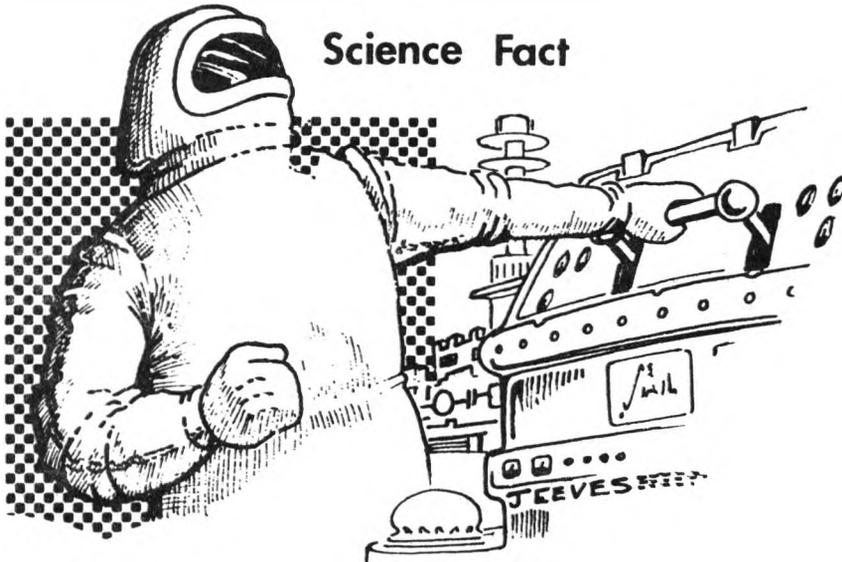
* * *

Over the past few months Terry has been dropping subtle hints that he is in favor of holding the Worldcon for 1983 in Australia. These hints come in the form of propaganda cartoons. The examples below do not indicate this magazine's preference for that site nor any relative artistic judgement of the drawings. [ed.]



Sherwood Frazier

Science Fact



Of Ships and the Like

This is always the worst time of the year to sit down and try to write something. The weather here in New Hampshire becomes beautiful during the months of May and June; one is easily drawn away from any kind of work. I have a passion for certain flowers. This does not help: when I see my roses in distress I tend to shut out the rest of the world. Once I have secured a safe future for my roses it's time to plant my other favorite, the Gladiolus. Stay away world. Now that the Glads are doing well and the wild flower garden is in full bloom I do suppose I must tend to editorial matters.

Recently ABC TV's 20/20 program ran a report concerning the US Navy's need for and use of the super-carrier. Having spent 4 years in the Navy--the majority of that onboard aircraft carriers--I had a particular interest in this show. Having seen first-hand the destructive fire power that can be delivered by a single carrier task group, I'm a believer in the super-carrier.

My tenure in the US Navy ended in 1969; I'm sure that many things have changed. But the basic idea of the carrier has not changed since its proof of need during WW2. Would anyone care to take a shot at predicting what the outcome of WW2 would have been had our carrier groups been at Pearl Harbor? Most naval historians will tell you that the aircraft carrier is what kept the US Navy afloat during the early months of WW2; I mean that literally.

20/20 focused on justification of the cost of carrier task groups

which is in the hundreds of billions of dollars per carrier group. If we must spend this much money for weapons we had better spend it where it will do best. The carrier is the weapon that is the best.

The reasons are many. The biggest in my opinion is the sheer fire power that can be delivered. A nuclear powered attack class carrier on line today can deliver as much fire power on one target as all the allied air attacks of WW2. If defended properly an aircraft carrier can move to within several hundred miles of any coastline to deliver its precious cargo. This mobility is a very important point in favor of the carrier.

As far as vulnerability goes, a missile would be the best bet, and that is very low on the success meter. Aircraft carriers have long-range surface radar, sonar, and some of the most sophisticated electronic detection gear ever devised. They carry surface to air and surface to surface missiles, aircraft that are capable of day and night attacks, aircraft that can detect subs, aircraft that can attack aircraft, and aircraft that can carry nuclear weapons. It can also defend against any sort of attack from land.

If we can look at the waters around an aircraft carrier we will see about 6-8 surface ships that are in effect running interference for the carrier. These ships are specialty ships. That is, they are missile cruisers, anti-submarine warfare ships, and destroyers. Below the surface there is at least one sub and most likely two; try and get them. In essence an aircraft carrier is a military base

that can be moved to wherever it is needed, and, once there, defended.

Natural Laser Discovered on Mars

Investigators at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD, and the University of Maryland have discovered a natural infrared laser on Mars; an observation that could lead to the discovery of new planets in the universe and might force scientists to rewrite their books on general physics of planetary atmospheres.

Despite a somewhat deceiving abundance of man-made lasers, no naturally-occurring lasers have ever been reported even though the extreme variety of physical and chemical environments of extraterrestrial objects plausibly argues that natural lasers must exist.

In theory, this type of laser occurs when atoms or molecules are stimulated to release photons during their transition from higher energy to lower energy states.

Using a new Goddard-developed device called an infrared heterodyne spectrometer and the Kitt Peak McMath Solar Telescope in Arizona, this process was observed in the Martian atmosphere which is composed almost entirely of carbon dioxide. The new spectrometer provided the scientists with the means of determining that a molecular population inversion--in a "normal populations" there are more atoms ready to absorb energy than to emit; an inversion, as implied, reverses this--which is necessary for lasing, did take place.

In the case of this observation, sunlight was absorbed high in the Martian atmosphere by the carbon dioxide. In the absorption process, carbon dioxide is pumped to a higher energy state and builds into a laser state. This discovery gives indication that there can be sizable temperature differences in the planetary atmosphere, whereas past theory has held that there has been a thermodynamic equilibrium there.

The natural laser, discovered on Mars, is identical in physical principle to man-made carbon dioxide lasers used for commercial, scientific, and military purposes. A principal difference between the Martian laser and terrestrial lasers is that the total power output of the natural laser exceeds one million megawatts continuously, a power output equivalent to that generated by about 1000 large hydroelectric power plants. In fact, this power

generation exceeds the total power output of the United States by more than 5 times.

Eventually, it may be possible to extract power from the natural laser and to beam it wherever needed from satellites orbiting Mars.

Shaping, Polishing of Space Telescope Primary Mirror Finished

Shaping and polishing of the 94-inch diameter primary mirror for NASA's Space Telescope has been completed at the Danbury, Conn., facility of the Perkin-Elmer Corp.

The mirror surface has been completed to a perfection that deviates, at any point on the surface, less than one-millionth of an inch from an ideally perfect surface.

The primary mirror is the main optical component of the Optical Telescope Assembly (OTA), a major element of the Space Telescope. The Space Telescope Project is managed by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Ala. Perkin-Elmer is associate contractor for the OTA.

The 12-ton unmanned telescope will be placed in circular Earth orbit in early 1985 by the Space Shuttle and will have an initial altitude of 600 kilometers putting it well above the interfering haze of Earth's atmosphere. It will enable man to gaze seven times farther into space than now possible--as much as 14 billion light-years--and to observe some 350 times more volume of visible space. The telescope will be able to see stars and galaxies which are as much as 50 times fainter than can now be observed from Earth-based telescopes.

To take full advantage of this undistorted view of space, the telescope optics had to be polished to a much higher accuracy than those used in Earth-bound telescopes. Space Telescope's primary mirror was polished to specifications finer than for any previous telescope mirror its size, according to Perkin-Elmer.

The Space Telescope is of an optical design known as Ritchey-Chretien, a folded system with a secondary mirror in front of the primary mirror and the image plane behind the primary mirror.

Manufacture of the primary mirror blank began at Corning Glass Works, Corning, NY, in October 1977. The material used for the blank is a Corning product called Ultra Low Expansion glass and has extremely low thermal expansion properties. The main mirror assembly consists of a front plate about one inch thick



with a honeycomb interior separating it from a back plate, also about one inch thick.

The front and back plates and honeycomb interior structure are designed to eliminate any structural change in the mirror caused by either thermal or gravity stresses. While in operation, the front plate of the mirror will exist at near space temperatures, while the back plate operates at near room temperature of 21 C.

The blank was delivered to Perkin-Elmer from the Corning plant in December 1978. Optical fabrication began with rough grinding of the front and back surfaces and of the inside and outside edges of the mirror shape. This was followed by fine polishing of the mirror front surface, using a specially developed computer controlled polisher and extensive data reduction computer software, which began in August 1980.

In the next stage of fabrication, the primary mirror will have two extremely thin, yet uniform, coatings applied to its polished surface. First, a reflective layer of pure aluminum 650 Angstroms (65 nanometers) thick will be applied and then a protective layer of magnesium fluoride 275 Angstroms thick which will prevent oxidation of the aluminum.

The coating operation will take place at Perkin-Elmer in a specially designed all stainless-steel vacuum chamber constructed by Mill Lane Engineering Co. of Burlington, Mass. It is the largest chamber of its kind in the world and operates at a vacuum near that of space.

The requirements for the mirror call for it to be reflective from the extreme ultraviolet (1216 Angstroms --the Lyman Alpha line for hydrogen) to the extreme infrared (1000 microns). The mirror specifications call for at least 85 percent reflectivity at the neon-red resonance line of 6328 Angstroms.

After coating, the mirror will be installed in the Optical Telescope Project and aligned to the secondary mirror, focal plane, scientific instruments and fine guidance sensors. The completed Optical Telescope Project will then be integrated into the Support Systems Module, another major element of the Space Telescope, being built by Lockheed Space and Missiles Company.

PATTERNS & Notes from Elfhil

by Diana L. Paxson

A Californian in New York

Ed asked me to write a con report on the SFWA Nebula Awards banquet and bitch session. Since he was able to attend most of it himself, I am going to be a little more impressionistic, and cover not only the conference, but a bit of the rest of my trip. Think of this as a series of vignettes or excerpts from a diary...

4/24 Oakland to Newark

This is hardly a classy itinerary, but actually I found World Airways just as comfortable as the more standard brands of airplane, and Newark Airport is certainly more convenient to New York than either LaGuardia or Kennedy.

The Waldorf Astoria

In terms of class, this was something else entirely. The hotel is known locally as the Waldorf Hysteria, and it reminded me powerfully of the Brighton Pavilion. The lobby has a three-story ceiling and is entirely done in royal blue. Once one gets used to the tasseled draperies and the interesting mix of orientalisms in the Peacock Alley bar, the most remarkable object is probably the clock (I will call it a clock for lack of a better title, although as a label it seems grossly inadequate). This erection is about 15' high, crowned with a miniature Statue of Liberty. After some bronze curlicues have had their way, there are four clockfaces. Below this one finds another greenbelt of ornamentation, and the next area of interest is a series of bas-reliefs of famous people like Lincoln and Queen Victoria who preside over scenes of sports and scenic places with no particular rhyme or reason. At this point I got sensory overload, but I have a vague impression it went on from there. It was built for the 1890 Exposition... Even SFWA made scarcely a dent on this ambience.

When I got over my shock I located Ed, who had been patiently waiting in the Lobby, and we had dinner at one of the hotel restaurants which was quite good, but overpriced for what we were getting. It was certainly good to see Ed again,

however-- we seem to be making up for several lean years in terms of communication, what with Noreascon and now this trip.

Cocktail Party

When we had recovered a little from the trip and the setting we girded ourselves for the cocktail party in the SFWA Suite, which as usual was too small, too smoky, but featured an extremely well-stocked bar. Somehow the membership of SFWA always seems to expand sufficiently to fill whatever size facilities we are given.

The parties differ from the rest of the conference in that they are theoretically social hours rather than business. Actually, of course, they consist of several hours of shouting about what one is writing, what one has just finished writing, what one is going to go home and write as soon as all this is over, and who has sold what to whom for how much. There are also the delicate interchanges that take place between ambitious authors and editors who don't want to be openly impolite. An editor at a writers' conference must feel rather like an antelope who has just wandered into the lion's corner of Safari World. Except of course that there are some lions by whom the editors would like to be caught.

When I arrived at the party I was seized with insecurity because I recognized almost no one except the people I had come with (Paul Edwin Zimmer, who has a fantasy coming out from Playboy sometime next year, and Adrienne Martine, whose mainstream novel will be published by Avon this fall, in case you were wondering). Naturally I assumed that this was because I was on the wrong coast and all the familiar landmarks had stayed home. Eventually I talked to a couple of easterners who didn't recognize anybody either, and we concluded that the crowd were all from the southeast and midwest.

I consoled myself with a glass of California wine and set about making my own introductions. I talked to Greg Frost, a young writer from South Carolina, and met Jane Yolen, Lucie Chinn and Terri Windling, who was

showing around the cover for the new AGE fantasy anthology-- a marvelous painting of a wizard. I acquired some vicarious glory to take home to my son Ian by shaking hands with Chris Claremont, who writes X-MAN. I also had a long conversation with Mike Moore of ARES, who was holding forth like the John Campbell of fantasy about possible projects. In the wee hours of the morning I finally staggered off to bed.

4/25 SFWA Business Meeting

The morning after the night before began in a largish room which featured Wedgewood bas-reliefs on a flamingo pink background, framed by the usual sculptured wreaths and punctuated by swathes of pink and gold brocade. When the discussion of the sins of the publishing industry palled one could seek distraction in the contemplation of the scenes from Dante's Divine Comedy painted on the ceiling.

SFWA provided a noble spread of coffee and pastries, which took care of breakfast. I found a seat next to Fritz Leiber, who seemed as glad as I was to find a familiar face. We learned that SFWA is solvent, and got some good advice on checking copyright notices, among other things.

Afternoon Panels

The afternoon was enlivened by some panels, the first of which featured Young Editors-- the assistant and associate editors who (they explained) actually do all the work. This was followed by the blood and guts event-- the Royalties Panel, with SFWA Grievance Committee Chair Barry Malzberg, Alex Berman, SFWA's lawyer, and Richard Curtis an agent who has become a crusader.

Not for the first time, I wondered why I ever wanted to become a writer. From the sound of it your troubles are only beginning when you sign the contract! Most contracts state that royalties shall be paid quarterly as soon as the book has earned out its advance. It would be simple to check this if one knew:

how many copies were printed,
how many printings there have been,
how many copies were shipped out,

how many copies were returned by the booksellers, and how many books have actually been sold!

The typical royalty statement simply states the earnings for the quarter in question, and these days the money is more likely to be paid at the end of the following quarter than when it is due (strangely enough, this tendency has developed at the same time that interest rates have been rising). For all practical purposes it has been almost impossible for authors or agents to get dependable information about sales, and thus there is almost no way to find out if the proper percentage has been paid.

Such a situation is guaranteed to wake the fires of eloquence in any writer's breast, and the discussion was colorful. It remains to be seen what, if any action SFWA can, should, or will take.



Nebula Awards Banquet

The Astoria's banquet hall is large, high-ceilinged, and completely covered in an exceptionally busy peacock patterned cloth. However the food was excellent. This was probably the best Awards meal I have had. The beef was delicately done, the salad crisp and well-seasoned, and the dessert (something whipped with rum sauce) just sweet enough.

I wish I could be as enthusiastic about the afterdinner speeches. The keynote speaker was Barbara Marx Hubbard of the Committee for the Future, who set everyone's teeth on edge by explaining that she knew all about conventions because she had been to a Star Trek Con once. She then proceeded to burble for far too long about how space age technology was fulfilling all the biblical prophecies. It is hard to imagine a more unfortunate choice of topic and approach for this particular audience, and I'm afraid people were less polite about it than they might have been. I didn't walk out, but I did go rather glassy eyed while I worked out a plot for a short story. Marc Chartrand of the Space Museum Marvin Minski of MIT, Isaac Asimov and Harlan Ellison were both witty and brief and Harlan, despite considerable provocation from Norm Spinrad, was very restrained.

Eventually we got around to the awards. Fritz Leiber was given the Grand Master, to great acclaim, and Nebula winners included: Greg Benford for *TIMESCAPE*, Suzy McKee Charnas for her novella "Unicorn Tapestry", Howard Waldrop for "The Ugly Chickens," and Cliff Simak for his short story, "The Grotto of the Dancing Deer." I had voted for one of these, and read two of them, so I felt reasonably virtuous. Dave Hartwell was grinning broadly because almost all of the winners have been or will be published by Pocket Books in one form or another.

4/26 Aftermath

Although Paul and Adrienne appeared quite willing to spend all day in the Astoria bar, I was getting claustrophobic and hauled them off to the Metropolitan Museum where Paul looked at paintings and Adrienne and I goggled at the exhibit of Chinese costume. The embroidery was truly breathtaking. At the end of the afternoon we sent Paul off to catch his plane and Adrienne and I each went off to stay with friends in the City.

4/27-4/29 The Singles Scene and Publisher's Row

The next three days were less intense. I stayed with a friend of a friend who has a studio on 2nd Ave. She has been doing free-lance journalism but just got a job, so I learned a lot about the life of a young single woman in N.Y. It could be very nice-- if the weather always stayed as mild and sunny as it was that week! One evening we went out for a quiet drink in the neighborhood singles bar-- very cozy.

My purpose in staying in town was to visit various editors. At AREAS I discussed possibilities for articles and got some games for my son (now if only I can figure out how to play them. At Pocket I found out that despite the fact that the Associate Editor who was working with my manuscript had just quit, she might be able to free-lance

edit it for them. If they like the revisions... We'll see.

I had a nice lunch with Don and Elsie Wollheim (at least I have now sold stories to some DAW anthologies, which makes me feel better about being their guest so often, even if I haven't yet come up with a book that will take Don's fancy!). Later that day I had a drink with Sharon Jarvis of Playboy, who has gotten to be a good friend although (or perhaps because) I'm not trying to sell anything to her at all.

In addition to the editorial circuit, I had dinner with Susan Schwartz, who bought a story from me for *Hekate's Cauldron*, and was honored to hear I'll be in company with people like Tanith Lee. Susan told me about the neat stuff she's writing now, which I hope she'll soon let me see.

On Wednesday I went to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine to see Madeleine L'Engle. She works in their library, and since the Cathedral is the setting for her book *THE YOUNG UNICORNS*, I was eager to see it. It takes only a half hour to get from the East Side to the Cathedral, but Harlem is a different world. The Cathedral itself is enormous and very English. It has a spectacular rose window over the entry. Madeleine was her usual gracious and unassuming self, and as usual, excellent company. Just like her books.

4/29-5/1 Long Island

That afternoon I made yet another major shift out to Patchogue where my father's family populate half the town. New York seems alien and impossible there. I wonder what will happen if my book gets published and my family reads it? Will they wonder how I know about magic and battles and love? (What kind of person could write about that...) How can I explain that it's all imagination, when at the same time I have to be able to identify with all my characters or they won't ring true? Eventually you have to decide whether to be true to the book or to other people's sensibilities.

5/1 Beltane in New York

I spent my last day in the East quite on my own, wandering around the Museum of Natural History, whose gem collection is truly overwhelming (colored diamonds too big to seem real, boulders of amethyst, etc.) Afterwards I had an exquisite, surprisingly reasonable dinner at a little place called "Nanny Rose" where the tables are covered with butcher paper and jars of crayons are set out with the condiments. Chortling with glee I sketched the Aphrodite of Columbus Avenue, scattering May flowers...

Varlak the Wizard

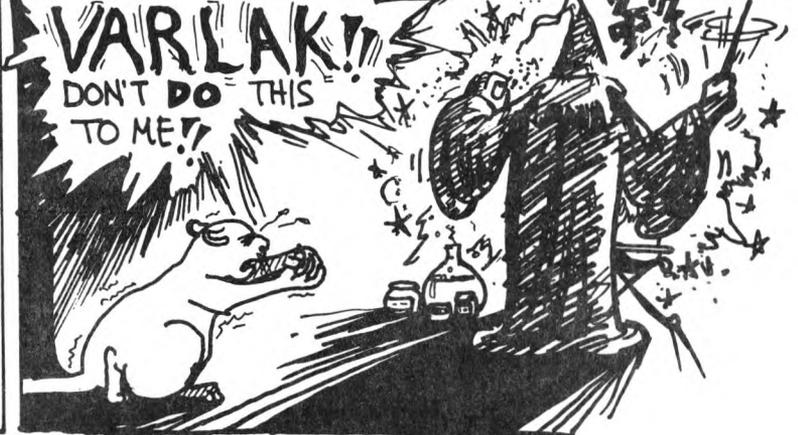
by Jane Sibley
© 1981

OH GOD, HE'S ACTUALLY GONNA DO IT! I MEAN, HE'S ACTUALLY GONNA DO IT! DO IT!

I'VE TOLD HIM AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT HE'S GONNA WIND UP AS A FROG AGAIN... OR MAYBE SOMETHING WORSE...



IF I HAVE TO LIVE WITH A BOGGIE, I'LL KILL MYSELF!



HE'S GONE! GONE! ... KAPUT... ... NADA... VAMOOSÉ... ... COMPLÈMENT DISPARU... ?SNIF?



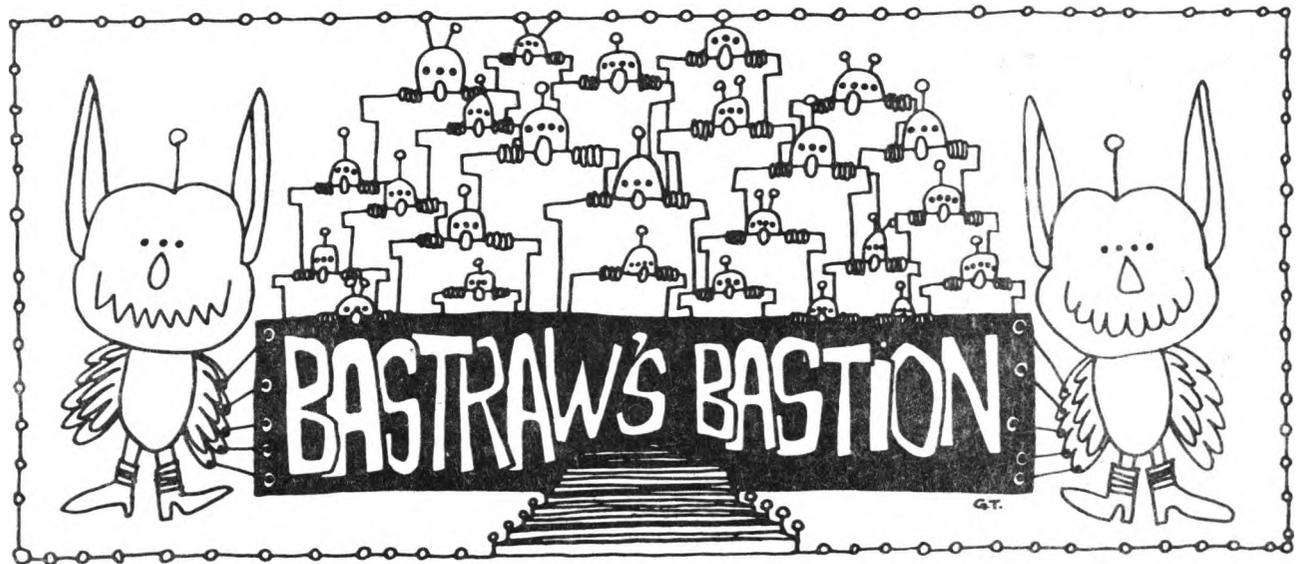
HE DIDN'T EVEN SAY "GOODBYE" TO HIS LONG-SUFFERING FELINE COMPANION AND LIFELONG FRIEND ?SOB?



EUREKA! TIME TRAVEL!

DON'T EVER DO THIS TO ME AGAIN...





Nothing turns me on more than to see something in real life that you would swear only existed between the covers of a book. Now, if this is a positive sort of things, the world seems a better place and I can hope that similar occurrences materialize from out of the inkprint. If negative --and you know how much SF and F is based on that what terrifies--I pray it stay on the paper where it can't hurt anyone.

I have seen insanity and come away with a profound sense of disquiet. This malease comes from a combination of factors, I suspect: the knowledge that there are people in this world who are missing out on a section of life others enjoy simply because they can't comprehend, knowing that mental illness can strike someone well after their birth, and the fact that one day (assuming that Braude doesn't get me with one of her lethal letters) I will probably succumb to a marked deterioration in my mind as a natural consequence of aging. These are all things most of us have probably given at least a passing thought to over the years.

But I have also seen the face of insanity: incarnate. From that, I came away with a sense of real fear. Terror beyond anything I've found in print, on the screen, or in real life--gut-level panic.

The face of Charles Manson.

Up until Sherwood and I viewed the Snyder interview with Mr. Manson, I had only the most peripheral of knowledge about this convicted murderer. I never did read Helter Skelter nor did I delve at all into any of the contemporary newsprint accounts of the bizarre goings-on. As we started viewing the dialogue between Snyder and Manson, it dawned on my small but succulent mind that, as Sherwood put it, this fellow has

but one oar in the water and that one keeps falling out of the oarlock. This man is not stupid, loony, or spaced-out.

He is insane; dangerously so. Somewhere along the way he has lost track of the rest of us and the world and everything. How can anything he does be bad--to him. We are just players in this nightmare that is his life.

I know what I'm talking about. On two separate occasions I've worked in an institution for the mentally deficient. It wasn't until my second tour of duty that I was actually involved with the day to day care of some of the "worst" cases at the center. I mean, one ward I worked on, the "kids" didn't even know enough to dress themselves, go to the bathroom by themselves, or even stop

banging their head off the wall after awhile.

But, no matter how feeble, they almost universally were mild-tempered (though some of this is drug-induced) and seemed to understand love and understanding shown them by the attendants, visitors, and fellow-residents.

This is only half the story. The other half comes second-hand from another state facility. This is the Alcatraz; this is where they send all the "bad apples". Herein reside those who, even under medication, are violent, suicidal, or homicidal. I never worked there and never wish to. I have heard stories that I tell myself can't be true. (One involves an attendant who let his guard down and was cut up for it; you can scale the rest down from there, I hope.)

Maybe if I had worked there I would have met a Charles Manson. I'm glad I didn't.

Tom Snyder was quoted as saying after the interview that he thought it would get Manson another 10 years to serve. Trial by TV goes on all the time and you're crazy if you think otherwise. It's not right but it happens. In this case, I suspect that the fan mail will vindicate Snyder's stand.

It was all very fascinating to watch and I use that term with the meaning that Anne brings to our attention in "Instruments of Darkness" in mind. It is the fascination of a cobra over its victim; the dentists drill just before it bites in.

Last year I read Stephen King's six inch length of two by four masquerading as an 800+ page paperback called The Stand. It is an ultra-detailed account--allegorical



and otherwise--of the fight between Good and Evil in a United States decimated by one of its own biological weapons. Evil was represented by a character called The Walking Dude. This demon in human skin just couldn't do enough rotten things to get him through the day; he always planned ahead and wasn't content unless he was able to convince others to do bad likewise.

"Go forth and be nasty as Hell...."

I could not help thinking that King could have based this character on Charles Manson.

When such an impression can come across a TV screen and zing right into my mind, I have to take notice. Maybe it comes right down to the fact that Manson is unique to most people's experience. Rarely is only the negative side of a person apparent. That side of a personality will always fascinate whether it is Capt. Kirk split into bad-Jim and good-Jim, the two sides of a Force in a Galaxy far, far away, or a certain physician and his hirsute alter ego

We just can't let it hypnotize long enough to strike.

* * *

When was the last time you went to a convention at a cost of only \$48 for the whole weekend--the price including registration, room, and meals?

I never had until I attended Necon II at Roger Williams College in Rhode Island this July.

This was essentially a horror/fantasy convention with a single track of programming including panels, GoH dialogue, films, a celebrity roast, and autograph session. Other features were a by-invitation-only art show headed by artist GoH Rowena Morrill, dealers room, and a game room.

The scheduled events were satisfactory though not too exciting. What made the whole weekend for me was meeting all the people who also showed up for the con. It's impolite to start arguing with a speaker while he is performing and definitely bad form to stand up in the middle of a movie and sound off about its relative merits or demerits but you can always buttonhole some poor unfortunate and babble wisdom and Truth at them.

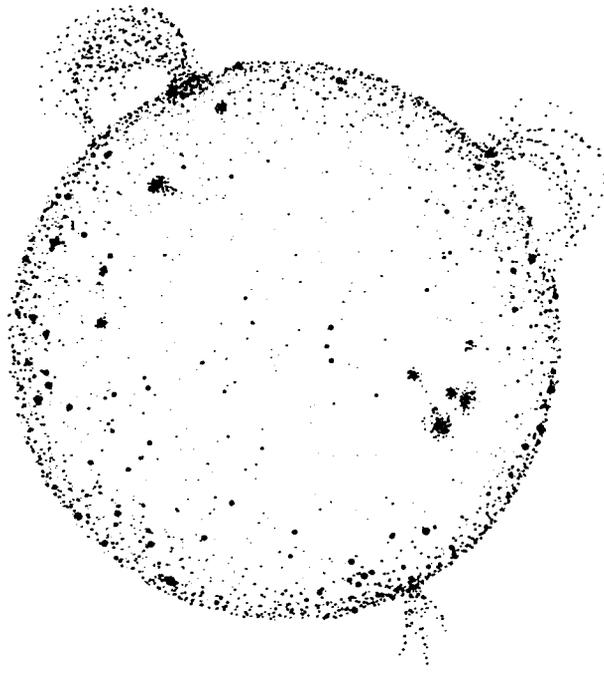
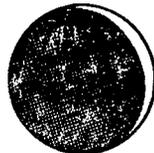
One of the best films at the con also came from the ranks of the officially uninvited. A young artist-filmmaker by the name of Pat McCormack brought along a little 8 mm piece he put together called THE TWINKLING. You won't get three guesses as to what pro movie it parodies. While the production values might not have been up to those of the original, I still think he paraded out some interesting variations on the themes. I particularly liked his changing the venue of one scene from a hedge-maze to a scruffy/eerie stand of brush surrounding a fire plug. And the substitution of an electric can opener for the fire axe at the climax was inspired. How can anyone miss the symbolism?

I do wish to formally apologize for inflicting upon the convention body one of our party (no, Tad, I'm not going to tell them it was you) who loves to argue almost as much as I do. He is harmless and not a bad sort as bad sorts go.

This is one con I will definitely hit next year.

Darkling winter died today
Hellspawned summer here to stay
Withered branches shriveled grass
Soon the beach will turn to glass
Perish too the works of man
Escape he tries but never can
Sings your songs recite your odes
Our time is past

the sun explodes



words and art by DAVID WAALKES



Buttercup wars

marsha elkin jones

Eddie Jones

The title of my column this month and for as far into the future as it takes me to think up a title I can be happy with is in honor of a mistake. I grew up in New York, which might just as well be called Concrete City, and as a result I know just about nothing about gardening. Or, at any rate, I knew nothing about gardening three years ago when Eddie and I bought a house, complete with garden. Eddie grew up in Bootle, which is also pretty well concreted over and knew just about as much as I did on the subject.

Three years ago we had a piece of lawn in the back garden. We also had one (count it, one) buttercup on that lawn and in my ignorance I left it there because I thought it was pretty. What I didn't know about buttercups was that they reproduce at least in part (I assume they also produce seeds) by sending out runners which send down roots and make new buttercup plants. They're rather like strawberry plants in that respect but the results aren't nearly as pleasant. I now have a plot of buttercups with a few blades of grass struggling for survival among them. I also have a lawnmower that has packed up in disgust, though hopefully only temporarily, one small garden fork, and weak wrists. So, as of yesterday, chemical warfare was instituted. A large test patch of buttercups was duly drenched with a properly diluted solution of some stuff that is supposed to wipe out buttercups and other garden undesirables. I'm skeptical but still hopeful. Day after tomorrow I get out my gardening gloves and fork and see if they've been discouraged enough for me to start making a dent

in them. If this doesn't work I suppose I can always transplant a couple of wild strawberry plants and the anonymous persistent stuff that are fighting it out for possession of the rose garden in the front and let all three fight it out for possession of the ex-lawn.

And yes, I did say wild strawberries. I don't know how we acquired them because we certainly didn't have them the first year we were in the house and no other house on the block seems to have any, but we found a couple of wild strawberry plants in the corner of the front garden purporting to be a rockery during our second summer in the house. I made the mistake of leaving them alone and they made several wild strawberries (much smaller and not quite as sweet as the tame variety) and lots more strawberry plants. By the end of the summer they had engulfed one rose bush and I decided that come spring I would have to DO SOMETHING about them. Unfortunately, the next summer was incredibly wet and cold and what I did was just about nothing. So when gardening weather set in a couple weeks ago and I went out and took a good look, I was appalled. The strawberries had taken over about one third of the rose garden and were fighting for possession of two more rose bushes which I had thought had gotten out of hand. The anonymous persistent green stuff had taken over the rest of the ground around the roses and at the interface the two plants were happily intertwining. I've gotten rid of most of the a.p. green stuff (though this may not mean much because it comes back quickly) and Eddie hacked the lavender back to

manageable proportions while pruning the roses, so all I've got left to cope with at the moment are the strawberries out front (with roots almost as persistent as the buttercups) and buttercups in back. Useful advice would be welcomed.

* * *

One of the interesting things about living in England is the BBC (or the British Broadcasting Corporation or simply "the Beeb"--that last is the way it is pronounced though I've never seen it actually written that way). The BBC doesn't have commercial, not on radio or TV, except for things like road safety commercials and anti-litter commercials and other public interest stuff. Instead, all TV owners have to buy an annual license (£34 for color TV and £12 for black and white sets). The money from this and from selling shows abroad supports the TV programs on BBC 1 and 2 and the programs on the four radio stations that are heard nationally (Radio 1, 2, 3, and 4--how's that for originality) as well as quite a number of local radio stations.

There are also an increasing number of local commercial radio stations (complete with commercials) and one commercial TV station, ITV. Independent Television is actually made up of a number of regional TV companies which show programs that they have produced, have bought from other ITV companies or have bought from companies in other countries. The different areas choose their programming to suit the people in their areas (or to humor the people doing the selecting) and we are

fairly lucky in that Granda, our local company, is very big on science fiction. Friends of ours in the Midlands are forever complaining that where we get SF, they get Westerns.

What is particularly nice about the BBC (apart from the lack of rather commercials) is that they've been reasonably strong on SF for years and have, not unexpectedly, gotten even stronger on it recently. The BBC has the longest running SF series in the shape of DR. WHO, which has just completed it's 17th series. (I might be low by one series, but I think I've gotten it right.) In addition to being the longest running SF series, it also has the distinction of being the second longest running series on British TV altogether (unless you want to count things like THE NEWS AT NINE). It is remarkable in my eyes for two reasons. One is that it has maintained a remarkably high standard on what I have heard described as a budget that wouldn't keep a budgregiar in bird seed for a year. The other is that they've found a way to make the transition from one actor in the role of the Doctor to the next actor seem reasonably plausible.

And those of you who are watching DR. WHO in the U.S. may be interested to know that Tom Baker has, with the last episode of the series just completed, come to the end of his role as the Doctor. He's been succeeded by Peter Davison, whom you may have seen in the TV series ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL as Tristan, the scatter-brained younger brother. I'm skeptical about him as Dr. Who but willing to be convinced, since I was just as skeptical when Tom Baker replaced Jon Pertwee.

As a sort of companion series to DR. WHO (mostly considered that by me because of the props that get shifted from one series to the other with a few cosmetic changes to disguise them) we have BLAKE'S SEVEN due to start its fourth season shortly. This has a somewhat more standard format with one episode equals one adventure with an overall background for the series. In this case it is a group of freedom lovers against the Servalan. The last series managed to be conducted in the absence of Blake with the crew of "Liberator" looking for him. The crew, including Blake, had to abandon ship until "Liberator" could repair itself and get the life support systems running again after a particularly nasty battle in which "Liberator" and crew were temporarily allied with the Federation against an outside enemy. Zen, "Liberator"'s friendly computer, managed to retrieve most of the crew

plus a couple of additions, but Blake was one of the two missing members. (He went missing to the Royal Shakespearean Company for a year or so, I believe). At the end of the third season Servalan has revealed that Blake is dead (but she lies a lot), the "Liberator" is being destroyed by an alien glitch and the crew are marooned on a rather hostile planet with a damaged ship which may or may not be repairable as their only hope of getting off the planet. It will be interesting to see how they manage to sort these problems out at the start of the new series.

* * *



Watching the growth of a cult is a fascinating thing. And I've been watching with a great deal of fascination the growth of a cult around a radio series. The name of this peculiarity, in case you didn't see it on your Hugo ballot in '79, is THE HITCHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY. It started off quietly enough with the six episode series being broadcast on Radio 4 at 10:30 on a weekday evening. This is one of the traditional time filler slots on which programs are normally broadcast once and then disappear into the mists, never to be heard from again. Those of us who heard the first episode told our friends who listened to the second and then did likewise. Those of us who'd taped it played it back for friends who hadn't gotten the word or who'd missed the first couple of episodes. Only a few months later the series

was rerun, but this time on a Sunday midday time slot. And a while later it was rerun an unprecedented third time. The BBC decided that it wanted a second series but Douglas Adams didn't have enough time to do it quickly as the BBC wanted. So as a sort of compromise a bridging episode was run to tide people over until the next series could be produced. (Among other things, Douglas Adams was doing script editing for DR. WHO about then.) The bridge episode was a great success and I suspect it was run a couple of times but since we've taped it I stopped paying attention to reruns and just kept an eye out for the second series.

The second series finally appeared (preceeded by the first series and the bridge episode, just in case anyone had forgotten what had gone before) and was an immediate success.

And in the meantime, a record album containing the first four episodes of the first series appeared. At first this was to have limited sales by mail; only that didn't last too long. And then the book The Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy appeared in paper, covering more or less the first four episodes of the first series, and was tip of the paperback best sellers list for a couple or three months. And then the record album covering the next four episodes came out and the second volume of the book The Restaurant at the End of the Universe came out in paper and did best seller business. Somewhere in this period Hitchcon 1 publicity started appearing. I don't remember when it was due to happen and haven't heard anything about it recently but I expect I'll get details at Eastercon.

Saving the best for last, a month or so ago saw the end of the TV series of HITCHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY, which covered more or less (but not quite the same more or less as the book) the same material as the first radio series. And yes, for those who've heard the radio series which I know has gone out on some U.S. radio stations, Zaphod does have two heads and three arms, all of which function. And the sperm whale and the bowl of petunias were included. I was expecting to be very disappointed in the TV series after enjoying the radio series so much, and was very pleasantly surprised indeed. The fact that the TV series was not absolutely identical to the radio series probably helped to make it so enjoyable. If the letters in RADIO TIMES are anything to go by I don't think there is any doubt that the second series will eventually be televised too. And since the second series does leave an opening

for a third series, who knows were it will all end?

The rather fascinating variations between the radio series, the books, and the TV series have aroused a certain amount of controversy as to which bits of which versions are best. But the neatest thing of all was the explanation cooked up by a friend of mine to explain the variations. Brian is of the opinion that Douglas Adams is unconsciously tuning in on several closely related parallel universes and that the variations between radio and TV series and books can be explained by the variations between these parallel universes. I can't quite swallow it as a serious explanation but I do like it a whole lot.

* * *

Every once in a while I run into something which makes me acutely conscious of how rapidly technology is changing these days. It doesn't surprise me to read a space opera written in the 30s and to find the technology laughable at best and probably wildly inaccurate. But it does come as a bit of a shock to pick up an SF book that was probably written after I started reading science fiction (mid 50s at a guess but the copyright page is missing so I can't be sure) and to find that the author, while cheerfully considering interplanetary colonies and force fields, has totally missed out on something which is absolutely commonplace today.

The book was *Outpost of Jupiter* by Lester del Rey and I picked it up from the used bookstall in the local market for 5P because I generally enjoy all of Lester's books, whether juvenile or adult, and I didn't remember having read this one.

I was quite happily reading through it when I suddenly ran into something that made me stop and take notice. Our Hero, who was enroute from Titan to Earth, has suddenly and somewhat unwillingly been forced to become a member of the Ganymede colony and since he isn't trained to do any other necessary jobs there he becomes colony clerk. The office contains "a battered typewriter and an ancient hand-operated calculator that could only add and subtract." It is made fairly obvious that this incredibly simple-minded calculator is also pretty large and heavy. Luckily for our hero, he has his portable computer along and is able to run things much more efficiently. It doesn't sound as though his portable computer is anywhere near as bright as a modern micro and maybe not as bright as a decent programmable calculator.

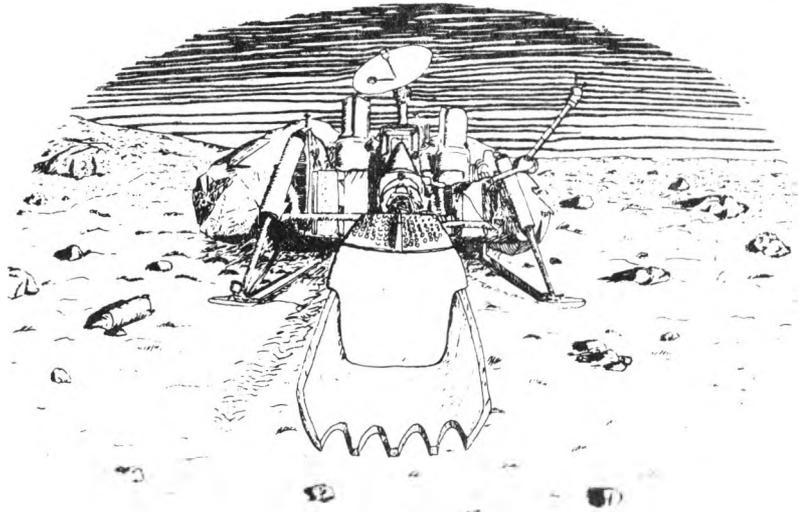
When I compared this version of the

future with my rather simple pocket calculator which only goes as far as square roots, is an alarm clock and stopwatch, and provides a changing calendar each month, and with Eddie's calendar cum digital wristwatch, I was a bit shocked to discover how quickly something I had been taking totally for granted had come about. The only reference to the miniaturization of something moderately sizeable I can recall was the wrist recorders in Heinlein's *Double Star*. If anyone writing in the 50s did include pocket calculators

with complex functions as part of their vision of future technology, I certainly don't remember reading about it. Admittedly, this doesn't prove that it didn't happen since my memory, while good, isn't infallible. I'd be curious to know if anyone reading this does remember any mention of such a device in any science fiction of the 50s.

[Any chronological oddities are due to the fact that this was to be included in the last issue. ed]

VIKING



WANTS YOU

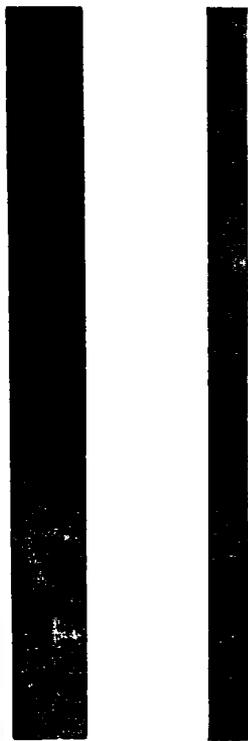
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MATHOMS

ANNE BRAUDE



Criminal Conversation

In an interview published in NIEKAS 23, Lloyd Alexander suggested a comparison between science fiction and detective fiction: to wit, that both involved a play of the intellect rather than an appeal to the emotions. This is of course a gross oversimplification--as Lloyd would undoubtedly be the first to agree--but it contains a solid kernel of truth. As a long-time mystery addict, I intend to pull that kernel out and share it with you; after which I

shall ramble on in my usual fashion about some particularly interesting books in the mystery field which even the non-addict might enjoy.

The central fact about a mystery story is that it contains a mystery --a problem to be solved. The problem is usually, as the genre's nickname suggests, "Who done it?"; and the story ends when the detective has determined the criminal's identity. The mystery story is one of the few contemporary fictional forms that demands a definite conclusion to the action. In an amusing and perceptive essay, "Aristotle and the Detective Story," Dorothy L. Sayers demonstrated that mystery fiction is about the only contemporary literary type that meets the canons of Aristotle's Poetics.

A second characteristic, which developed almost accidentally, is the notion of "fair play," or "challenge to the reader." This principle, which has the force of law for the genre, requires the author to provide the reader with every fact and clue possessed by the detective, so that--if he is clever enough--he can come up with the solution before it is revealed by the sleuth. This happens in the story which is generally acknowledged as the first real detective story, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter," though not always in Poe's other "tales of ratiocination." Nor is it invariably found in the stories of the first series detective, Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, who often produces a vital fact out of his deerstalker cap at the last minute. But almost all twentieth century detective stories of any merit observe the rule. The author's goal is to insert the clues in such a way that the reader will overlook or misinterpret them. In a classic example from the all-time champion at this endeavor, Agatha Christie, a butler is being interrogated by the detective about a certain date. He goes over to the calendar, examines it, and asserts positively that the matter in question occurred on a Tuesday. The reader makes a mental note ("Aha! Tuesday!")--but the real clue is that the butler is nearsighted! The murderer turns out to have an alibi supported only by the butler, who was some distance away; it is of course faked.

There are other conventions of the genre: the detective must not turn out to be the murderer; the narrator must not turn out to be the murderer; the crime must not turn out to be the work of a passing tramp or lunatic instead of one of the suspects, and so on. But these are less intrinsic than the fair-play rule and have all been violated in one or more classics.

(And it is of course perfectly proper to write a mystery with a homicidal maniac as the killer--if he is a Jack the Ripper-type serial killer. In such a story the problem for the detective is to work out the maniac's motivation and identify the next victim before the murderer gets to him. Sometimes the principle on which the maniac chooses his victims is obscure and must be deduced; and sometimes the murderer is crazy like a fox, killing randomly chosen victims in order to cover up the one murder for which he has a rational motive.)



Non-addicts of the genre may tend to think of mystery fiction as a kind of literary Kleenex; once you know whodunit, the book has no further interest and may be discarded. Dr. Samuel Johnson was once visiting a gentleman who had just had the grounds of his estate landscaped in accordance with the popular craze for the "Gothick"; he led Johnson through the gardens, proudly pointing out this or that surprise confronting them at every turn--grottoes, faked ruins, and the like popping up where least expected. At the end of the tour, he asked for his guest's opinion. The Great Lexicographer, with his usual adamant common sense, inquired, "Pray, sir, what if one walks through your garden a second time?" The point applies equally well to fiction: if the only interest presented by the story is surprise, is it worth a second reading?

The answer is of course that a really good mystery novel will offer its readers much more than a puzzle; it will offer characters, settings, style, wit, human interest, drama, and the like--just what any other novel will provide. Some authors, like Erle Stanley Gardner and Agatha Christie, do offer little more than ingenious plots. They are among the most popular writers in the field, but I question whether their readers reread their books--



unless they haven't read them for so long that they no longer remember the solution of the crime. When intellectual types like W.H. Auden and Jacques Barzun are asked to justify their "lowbrow" taste for detective fiction, they usually point to the authors who do in fact provide more than plot. The best modern mysteries need not shrink from comparison with the mainstream novel.

Mystery fiction is not limited to the whodunit. The form encompasses many varieties, including the "howdunit," which describes events from the criminal's point of view (e.g., the "caper" story); the "whydunit," a psychological exploration of the criminal's mind; the police procedural, which follows the activities of a detective or team of detectives in a realistic fashion; and the Gothic, satirized as the "Had I But Known" school of fiction, which often features a heroine who conceals vital clues out of muddleheaded loyalty and who sneaks off in the last chapter to a lonely rendezvous with some character that a purblind cretin would recognize as First Murderer. But the dominant form remains the traditional detective solving a crime puzzle in the last chapter. In a later column I will discuss some favorite sleuths.

The average science fiction story, like the average mystery, is one of problem-solving. The problem in question may be technological, personal, societal, or political, but it normally occupies the main portion of the plot, which comes to an end when the problem is solved. A number of sf writers are equally well known in the mystery field; Avram Davidson, Isaac Asimov, and Anthony Boucher, to mention only the most noted. And Alfred Bester's The Demolished Man is not only a classic of sf but a "pure" detective story--fair play and all--as well.

While the solution of the crime

closes the mystery story, the science fiction novel usually has more threads in its tapestry, some of which may be left hanging until knotted up in a sequel. While a mystery story may have as a sequel only a new and different crime for the detective to solve, the sf story generates a secondary universe which may be ongoing, allowing for new characters and problems to emerge as well as for the original characters to have further adventures. For example, Anne McCaffrey's Dragonflight offers two problems, one social and technical--how is Pern to be prepared to cope with Threadfall after an extended Interval has left the dragonriders weakened and without authority--and one dramatic--the relationship between Lessa and F'lar. At the end of the book both are resolved; but the solution to the primary problem--Lessa's bringing the Oldtimers forward to her own time--itself creates the central problem of the sequel, Dragonquest, which turns on the difficulties resulting from the Oldtimers' inability to adjust to the ways of modern Pern. There is a new set of characters with personal problems to be resolved--F'nor and Brekke--and a continuation of minor plot lines from the first book which are further developed, such as the attempt to recover the technological relics of the original settlers, which provides one of the main plots of the third book, The White Dragon. Mystery stories do not usually offer this depth and complexity, although we may follow the fortunes of a favorite series character through courtship, marriage, and raising a family. Mystery stories may present fascinating secondary worlds, but they usually last only through one book, except for the police procedurals, which may bring us into Scotland Yard or the L.A.P.D. on repeated occasions, so that we come to feel at home there. I am partial to stories with settings in which violence is particularly incongruous, such as exclusive



seminaries for young ladies, cathedral closes, and research libraries. Dorothy L. Sayers provides a number of these, and is one of the few authors to work out something more than a mystery plot in her books. In four of her later novels, she deals with the relationship between her detective, Lord Peter Wimsey, and detective novelist Harriet Vane. In Strong Poison, Peter first sees Harriet: she is in the dock at the Old Bailey, on trial for murdering her lover. He falls in love with her and sets out to prove her innocent, only to find when he has done so that she wants no part of him, being too scarred emotionally by her



relationship with her dead lover. In Have His Carcase, Harriet is on vacation when she comes upon a corpse. Peter turns up to solve the mystery. Their relationship alternates between amicable detecting in tandem and violent quarrelling (on her part) when matters become too personal. In Gaudy Night, Harriet has come to the point where she realizes that she must either marry Peter or put him out of her life completely. Trying to postpone the decision, she returns to her old college at Oxford to help the dean solve a nasty problem involving poison-pen letters. She is also attracted by the supposedly cloistered atmosphere of a women's college. She finds that Oxford is not the escapist paradise of dreaming spires that she had imagined; and when Peter shows up here too, seeing him against this different background causes her to re-examine her ideas about him and about their relationship. The story ends with a final proposal by Peter --in Latin, to suit the locale-- which is accepted. Gaudy Night is a novel of ideas and ideals as well as of crime, and it has been called one of the best novels of academic life ever written. It also demonstrates that a good mystery story doesn't require a murder to maintain

interest.

In Sayers's last mystery novel, Busman's Honeymoon, Peter and Harriet are honeymooning in an old Tudor farmhouse they have bought, when they find a corpse in the cellar. The novel deals not only with the mystery but also with the attempts of what another character once called "two independent and irritable intelligences" to live together without tearing each other to bits or forcing one to submit unwillingly to the other's domination for the sake of harmony. The issue comes to a climax when Harriet, who has happily been detecting in double harness with Peter, discovers that all the clues seem to be pointing to someone she sympathizes with and wants to protect. The resolution--and it would not be unfair to call it the author's moral--is that no real and lasting relationship can be built without an underlying commitment to truth.

Dorothy L. Sayers is the favorite



author of some mystery fans (myself included); others detest her. I don't think anyone is neutral. It depends on what you want from mystery fiction--pure puzzle, or a story set in a vivid secondary world

in which ideas and values are interesting and important. Those who like their detection straight are inclined to praise her earlier novels but condemn the ones I have discussed; frequently they accuse the author of falling in love with her hero. These people have their counterparts among science fiction fans in those who want only rocket ships and intergalactic warfare and are put off by too much psychology or exploration of alien cultural patterns. But I think such readers are rarer among sf fans than among mystery fans--which may be why the former genre has not remained mere intellectual play but has gone on to become far richer and more flexible than detective fiction.

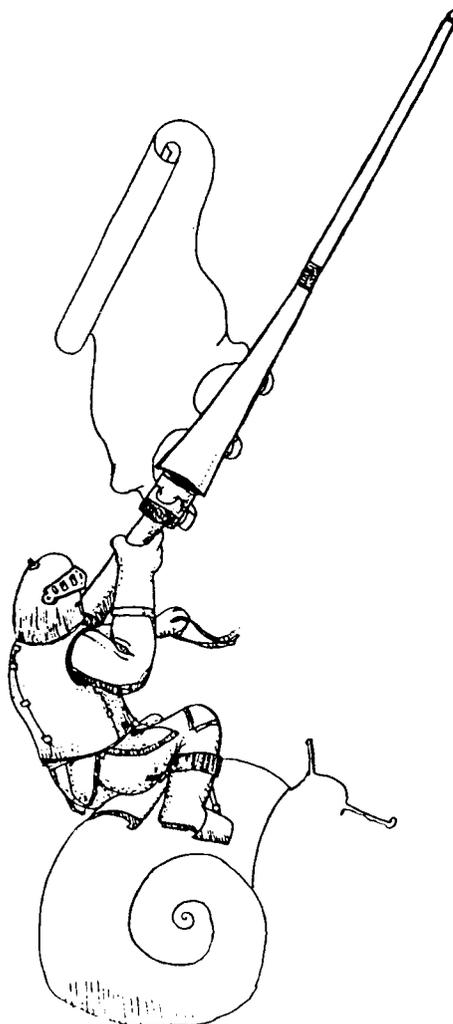
(In later columns I'll have more to say about Sayers and other individual writers, plus a look at some clerical sleuths and such-like items of interest.)

The Importance of Being Metric

by John Boardman

Every other nation in the world has faced, and succeeded, at the task Americans are now being asked to undertake--the conversion from a medieval system of weights and measures to a metric system. Other nations, too grumbled about it. Prince Giuseppe di Lampedusa's 1958 novel The Leopard is placed in Sicily during the unification of Italy in the early 1860's. A politician on the make, who reminds an American reader of nothing so much as one of William Faulkner's Snopes family, refers to an estate "of 644 salmi, that is 1010 hectares, as they want us to call them nowadays".

On 1 April 1978, Canada made the Celsius (centigrade) temperature system official. A few days later, New Yorkers learned on the radio that a Mets game in Montreal had been postponed on account of cold weather. The Montreal temperature was given as six degrees. A Fahrenheit temperature of 6° would be unlikely in April even for Montreal, but apparently no one in America had realized that Canada was now on the Celsius scale. Six degrees Celsius corresponds to 43°



Fahrenheit--which is still cold for baseball but a little more reasonable for Montreal in April.

The American unfamiliarity with the metric system once got the Central Intelligence Agency into a bind. Sandoz, the Swiss firm in whose laboratories LSD was first synthesized, was approached by the CIA in 1953 and asked to sell them 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of the psychedelic drug. (The CIA was conducting experiments on mind control, using LSD. About a decade later, the drug supplies got out of the researchers' control on some college campuses, thus creating the famous "drug culture" of the 1960's.) Sandoz was astonished: 10 kilograms would have been enough for 100,000,000 "trips". Total production in the 10 years since its discovery had only been about 40 grams (1 1/2 ounces). But, according to former CIA agent John Mark's book The Search for the "Manchurian Candidate": the CIA and Mind Control, the CIA finally found in 1975 where the misconception lay. "The U.S. military attache in Switzerland did not know the difference between a milligram and a kilogram. This mix-up threw all his calculations off by a factor of 1,000,000".

The United States government is still making mistakes in the metric system. The NASA press kit for the Voyager 1 approach to Saturn has, on its last page, a conversion table. It instructs readers to "multiply centimeters by 4.7244 to get feet". The actual number should be 0.032808.

THE HAUNTED LIBRARY

by Don D'Amassa



THE Literature of the supernatural has experienced a rise in popularity in recent years that was previously unknown in the United States. Although ghost stories have been a standard form in Europe for generations, the entire genre of horror writing has been remarkably unsuccessful in this country. There have been occasional exceptions, of course, starting with Edgar Allan Poe and, until recently, achieving their greatest moments with H.P. Lovecraft and WEIRD TALES. But there had not, to my knowledge, been a significant American novel of horror (in terms of sales volume) until the days of Rosemary's Baby and The Exorcist.

I have no intention of attempting to explain the phenomenon; as one who was reading M.R. James, Bram Stoker, and Anne Radcliffe before I ever discovered science fiction, clearly I was an exception. For whatever reason, our national aversion to horror fiction has certainly come full circle, and films and bestseller lists now routinely feature ghosts, vampires, mutant killers, and such.

Science fiction writers have frequently crossed over into the horror genre, often with remarkably good though commercially unprepossessing effect. Titles that immediately come to mind are Conjure

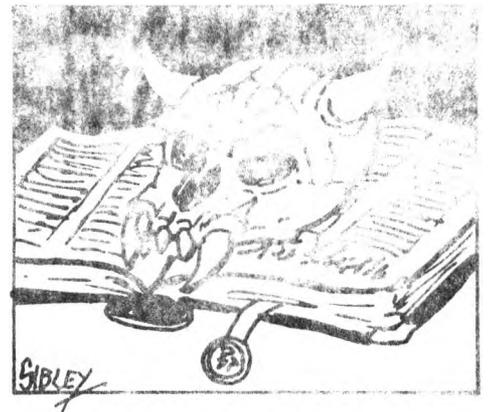
Wife by Fritz Leiber, Some of Your Blood by Theodore Sturgeon, Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury, I Am Legend by Richard Matheson, and a few score short stories. But the new wave of horror novels is written by people who are only vaguely familiar to SF fans, people like Peter Straub, John Saul, Jory Sherman, John Coyne, Michael McDowell, and Sharon Combes. Since for the most part these writers have no following within SF, it is very difficult for readers from the former genre to crossover with more than a random chance of finding the better authors. That's the problem this column is designed to correct.

What I hope to do in ensuing installments is to survey in somewhat random fashion horror fiction published in this country. At this point I expect to concentrate on novels and truly exceptional short stories, but will probably stay away from anthologies as a whole. There is going to be some overlap with other genres, so purists may differ with me at times. For example, William Goldman's excellent suspense horror novel, Magic, contains absolutely no fantasy element, but is nonetheless one of the best horror novels of all time. Stephen King's The Shining is ostensibly a ghost story, but there is psi power involved as well, and mental time travel, and even a mild attempt at rationalizing the psychic phenomena. It remains, as far as I am concerned, the best novel of horror ever written. The Monster from Earth's End by Murray Leinster is a fine standard SF adventure story involving vegetable monsters from Antarctica; it is also an excellent horror

novel.

All of the above notwithstanding, I hope to concentrate on those books which the average SF reader is not likely to buy otherwise, in some cases urging you to do so, in others warning you away. Like any other field, horror fiction is currently dominated by dreck, although the worst horror fiction is not as bad as the worst of SF, possibly because the latter is more difficult to write well. That's another argument I will carefully skirt.

In a column of this nature, it is only fair that I describe to some extent my own criteria for good supernatural fiction. I judge by normal standards, not by the standards of plotting, style, etc. I am not, although there are a few exceptions to these, particularly with regard to the use of a highly technical language or the classical style. The writing style of frequent horror novelists would probably be considered



unacceptably idiosyncratic in any other form, but writers like Lovecraft, Wakefield, and others utilize this style to develop atmosphere.

There are, despite the irrational nature of the supernatural, very rational rules that are not broken easily. There are exceptions to these standards, but for the most part, stories which ignore them are likely to be panned, at least by this reviewer.

First of all, there must be some sort of logical structure to the supernatural element, some limits to its power. Vampires are repelled by the cross, werewolves can be killed by a silver bullet, ghouls cannot stand the light of day, ghosts cannot wander far from their assigned territory, voodoo doctors must have a part of the body of the person they curse. Magic must follow certain laws. As a corollary to the above, the protagonist must have some chance of escaping his or her doom, by taking advantage of the loopholes in the laws of the supernatural.

Second, one must not change the rules in mid-stream. I am reminded of the short lived television anthology series, GHOST STORY, whose menaces were repelled by some device early in the story, but not in the final moments. This is cheap trickery, a deus ex machina in reverse.

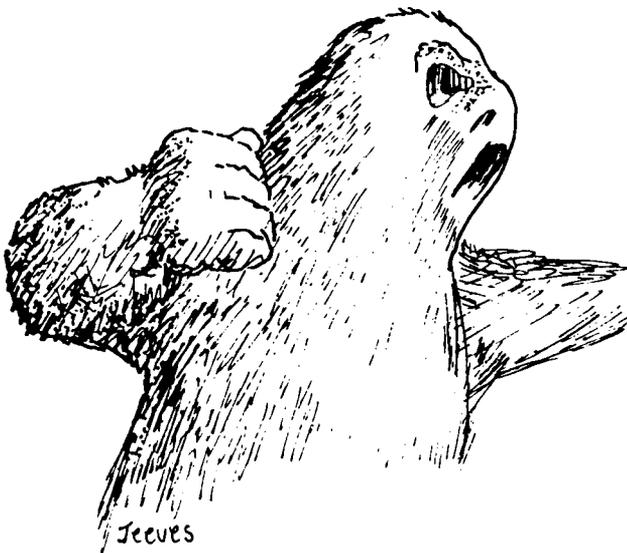
The third rule is one that is not universally applicable. The classic ghost or vampire story is as rigid a form in many ways as the locked

room detective story. There are certain conventions that apply, and the reader expects certain scenes or plot devices to appear. There is no attempt to be original. On the other hand, many horror novels are clearly not written in classic terms, are meant to be taken as new and original works. These books are just as subject to criticism for imitateness as those of any other genre.

Starting with the next column, I will be presenting a number of short reviews of horror novels. If readers are interested in knowing about specific authors or types of books, or have questions I might be able to help with, be sure to write and ask. The quality of writing in the horror genre is, currently, higher than at any time in its history, and readers who shrug it aside are missing some of the best books of our time. ■■■■



"MISERABLE ROTTEN KIDDIE BOOK!"



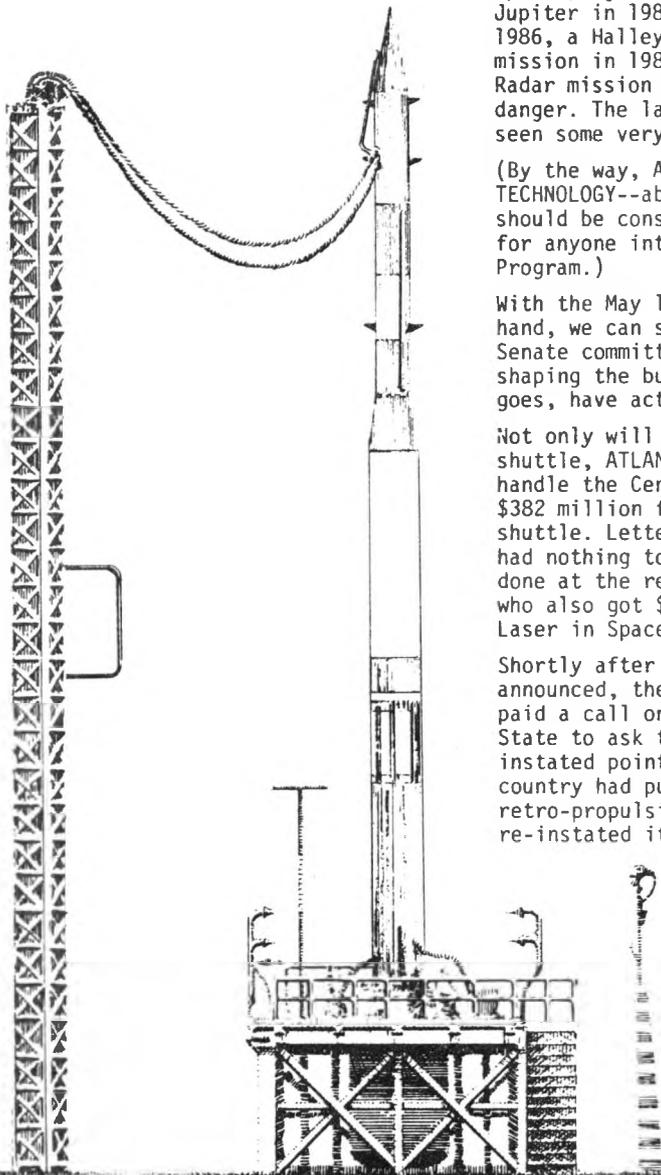
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ON THE SHOULDERS OF

VANGUARD

Harry Andruschak



We Want the Whole Enchilada

The battle over the budget continues in Washington. The future of JPL seems to hang by a thin thread. But as of today, 22 May, I can sit down and type up a column that has some rays of optimism in it.

Last time, if you remember, I mentioned that JPL wanted four (4) space projects funded. Galileo to Jupiter in 1985, Solar Polar in 1986, a Halley Comet Intercept mission in 1986, and the Venus Radar mission in 1988. All were in danger. The last two months have seen some very dramatic turnabouts.

(By the way, AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY--abbreviated as "AW"--should be considered indispensable for anyone interested in the Space Program.)

With the May 18th issue of AW at hand, we can see that the two Senate committees responsible for shaping the budget, as far as NASA goes, have acted favorably.

Not only will we get the fourth shuttle, ATLANTIS, to be modified to handle the Centaur upper stage, but \$382 million for a start on a fifth shuttle. Letter writing campaigns had nothing to do with this...it was done at the request of the Military, who also got \$50 million to start a Laser in Space program.

Shortly after the Reagan budget was announced, the West German ambassador paid a call on the Secretary of State to ask that Galileo be re-instated pointing out that his country had put \$50 million into the retro-propulsion module. The House re-instated it.

As for Solar Polar, all the European nations that are a part of the European Space Agency (ESA) used diplomatic pressure to get the mission re-instated. The Senate committee has listened.

Note, however, that these proposals still have to be worked out on the Senate floor, then survive the inevitable compromise bill with the House. And we still have no definite financing on the Halley Comet or Venus missions. Some of you may wonder why we want those as well as the two programs underway. For that, I want to quote from Bruce Murrey's fourth "State of the Lab" report, given 2 April, 1981. (Murrey is the director of JPL. The Head Man, #1. He runs it, gets money from Congress, makes the big decisions, and has done a very good job of it too. Actually, it should be Dr. Bruce Murrey, but he uses that title about as much as he wears a tie.)

"Let me go thru this quickly. In the deep space area we do not bargain. We are not, nor will we be, interested in giving any credence to people who say, "Would you like this program or would you prefer that one?" The fact is, for the United States to have even an adequate deep space exploration program, all the things we are talking about must happen. And if they don't happen, we will have inadequate programs. If none of them happen, of course it's a disaster.

But we are not dealing with good alternatives--like a Cadillac, a Chevie, or an old used VW. We are dealing with the old used VW, a bicycle, or nothing at all as far as the three options go. So we cannot just go for a middle compromise option. We have to go for the whole enchilada in some fashion, and that's indeed our strategy."

Keep up the letter-writing campaign to your congressmen, congresswomen, congresspersons, congressthings.... I want to keep my job at JPL.

* * *

© DWA

Tom Swift and His Electric Rocket!!

The more alert of my readers will have noted that there is no proposal to use the Solar Electric Power System (SEPS), sometimes called the ion-drive, on a planetary mission. JPL has given up the idea of getting this expensive engine for the next few years. Some money is being funded to continue the basic research, but actual missions are not in the works anymore. Lack of money, as much as anything else.

But someday it will have to be developed. The four deep space missions outlined above can use the Shuttle/Centaur upper stage. So can a few more ideas, such as the SOLAR PROBE, LUNAR POLAR ORBITER, and a few others. But after that, we have reached the limit of conventional rockets. and we must look around for something better.

The Electric Rocket, as I think of it, seems to be the next step, and will probably launch what few missions we get in the 1990's. This is what is needed for the Mercury Orbiter, the Out-of-the-Ecliptic, and for CHRONUS, the proposed Saturn Orbiter with Saturn Atmospheric Probe and Titan Lander. Indeed, CHRONUS will probably be the first mission to use ion-drive. There are no plans for comet and/or asteroid missions at the moment, just a few vague ideas about how nice it would be.

At this point I must digress and talk about Solar Sails. Some you may be aware of the Space Foundation which is trying to launch a private solar sail. I happen to be a member, and in fact have volunteered (old alligator mouth, that's me) to work as a computer technician at the operations center. All this without pay, of course, as this is a 100% wild-ass idea of a group of enthusiastic amateurs.

However, some of you may have read the adverts and wondered, "What is that line about "vicious infighting?" What this is is sour grapes.

In 1978, it was decided to try for a Halley Comet rendezvous with SEPS, not sails, for three (3) reasons.

- 1) SEPS would meet the comet before perihelion, SAIL after. SEPS thus promised greater scientific return.
- 2) We knew now SEPS handled in space. There were too many unknowns about Sails.
- 3) SEPS had better potentialities for future development. Anything the Sail could do, the SEPS could do better, even if it cost more. And while SEPS could handle

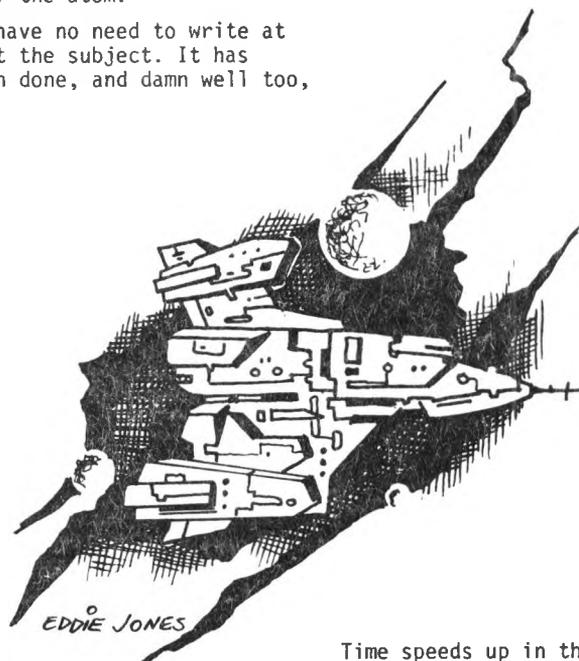
CHRONUS, Sails couldn't.

Still, I paid \$25 to be a member of the amateur solar sail project, and will put hundreds of hours of time in to help man, person, whatever, the control center.

The Sci-Fi Space Drives
by Dr. Shack the Quack, guest
columnist

And just what is there beyond The Electric Rocket? Mr. Andruschak can retire, it is my turn; the turn of the mad scientist, the SF writers, and their whiskey bottles. The next jump in space drives is to release the power of the atom.

However, I have no need to write at length about the subject. It has already been done, and damn well too,



make one assumption that is probably true. All this to overcome the basic objection of space drives. All that fusion power releases only a fraction of the power available in mass. Even the Bussard leaves a track of unused helium behind it.

The assumption involves Proton Decay. Please read the April 1981 issue of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN for details. Assuming that Proton Decay actually occurs, we can harness it using a variation of Larry Niven's Slaver Stasis Box (World of Ptavvs). Only we turn it into an anti-stasis box.

Time speeds up in the box. The half life of a proton may be 10 to the 31st power years in the normal universe. A box that accelerates time will speed up the rate of decay.

So...squirt in hydrogen, perhaps from an on-board store. Turn on the box. Protons disintegrate into pure energy with no matter left over. Lots of energy to move your ship and power the box. Get going fast enough and you can add in ram fuel; but far less and far easier than needed for a Bussard.

Take that, Jerry Pournelle.

Any SF writer who wants to use this idea can--give credit to me, good old Doctor Shack the Quack.

By the way, there is still no evidence that will stand up to support any idea that faster than light travel is possible. FTL is a cheap plot device for lazy SF writers; there seems to be no support from modern physics for the idea.

by Carl Sagan. Most of you have seen his TV series. He has also published a book called COSMOS; \$20 and worth every cent. It shows that while Sagan may have many failings as a speaker, he can give Issac Asimov a run for the money when it comes to writing.

Chapter 8 is titled "Travels in Space and Time." In it, he talks about such things as the ORION project, DAEDALUS by the BIS, and that favourite toy of the so-called "Hard-core Stf School," The Bussard Ramjet. All these projects will involve massive funds not currently available. All are speculative. And all strike me as clumsy and inefficient.

I have thus come up with a space drive far superior to anything else thought of. I stole one idea from Larry Niven (doesn't everyone?) and



Instruments
of
Darkness



ardly anyone takes witchcraft seriously in this day and age. Most people, if they think of it at all, have a mental image of the construction-paper cutout of a hag riding on a broomstick that was put up in the classroom on Halloween, or possibly of the wholesome and well-scrubbed Elizabeth Montgomery of TV's BEWITCHED. One does now and then encounter the fact that some people are in earnest about it: a few years back, Los Angeles appointed an Official Witch (which says more about L.A. than it does about witchcraft); and a couple of modern practitioners of Wicca performed a rite on a recent DONAHUE. In our popular songs, the beloved's appeal is described as "witchcraft, wicked witchcraft," or "it was fascination, I know." (Fascination was originally a term for the Evil Eye.) Five hundred years ago, this would have gotten the beloved burned at the stake. I propose to give a brief unscientific history of witchcraft and to discuss the varying beliefs concerning it that have been held throughout our history.

In pre-Christian times, witchcraft was regarded as a crime; but it was taken much less seriously than in later ages. It was considered a civil offense rather than a betrayal of God. Roman law, for example, lumped it in with divining, judicial astrology, and various other forms of soothsaying. Witches were regarded as a threat because they claimed to be able to predict--and in some cases to procure--the overthrow of the ruler. (It was long a capital crime to cast the horoscope of a reigning monarch.) There was no suggestion that witches were the Fifth Column of some vast and secret supernatural conspiracy of evil; they were simply a threat to political stability. This is not to say that they were treated leniently; the usual penalty was exile or death.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," exhorts the Old Testament

(Exodus 22.18). The Judaic view is exemplified in the story of the Witch of En-dor, who conjured up the ghost of the prophet Samuel at King Saul's behest, by means of her "familiar spirit." All OT references to witchcraft indicate that it was regarded as an illicit form of prophecy--much the same view as that of Roman law. It was presumably of diabolic inspiration; but the specific accusation was not made. (In the Christian era the explanation of the witch's foreknowledge of the future was that it was a gift from the Devil used to tempt men into sin; Macbeth illustrates this view.)

The most notable example of the witch in classical literature is Medea, in whose character we see a number of traits that will later form part of the Christian theory of witchcraft. Medea was a princess and priestess of Colchis, a mysterious realm of dark enchantments. She fell in love with Jason and helped him to win the Golden Fleece; to facilitate their escape she cuts her young brother into pieces which she flung into the path of the pursuing ships. She also brought about the death of Jason's wicked uncle, King Aeson, through a trick based upon her ability to raise the dead. Years later, when Jason fell in love with another woman, Medea murdered her and her own two children by Jason, escaping afterwards in a chariot drawn by flying dragons. Later she married King Aegeus of Athens.

It is today a commonplace anthropological and archaeological speculation that the patriarchal, Sky-Father-worshipping early Greeks conquered and imposed their culture upon an earlier society which was matriarchal in structure and which worshiped the Earth Goddess or the Triple Goddess of the moon in its waxing, full, and dark aspects. The

rites of these deities were carried out secretly, frequently in caves or underground places, and only women were permitted to participate. The purpose of these rituals was to insure fertility. It is equally commonplace that the gods of a defeated religion become the demons of the victors; hence Medea, priestess in a land of darkness, becomes the archetypal witch, mistress of strange magical powers and capable of any wickedness. Another important quality is her knowledge of herbs, particularly the poisonous ones. (Circe also was skilled in such matters, and it was the magical herb moly that protected Odysseus from her spells.) When the witches of the classical world were not claiming to predict the future, they were usually busy selling potions--the more noxious the better. And here we touch on something that cannot be dismissed as superstitious ignorance: herblore very likely did form a part of the secret wisdom of the underground (in both senses) fertility religion. We will come back to this point when we deal with witchcraft in the Renaissance.

The early Church's views on witchcraft were similar to those of the classical world; if you believed that your neighbor had bewitched you, you took her to court rather than denouncing her to the parish priest. One of the few official pronouncements on the subject is a fifth-century Canon Decretal which states that those women who believe that they fly through the air to meet with Diana and Herodias are unfortunate victims of delusions. (Diana is of course the moon goddess, who was the patroness of witchcraft as Hecate, goddess of the dark of the moon. For Herodias, see note 1 at the end of this essay.) This attitude changed radically around the fourteenth century, which saw the first

by Anne Braude

stirrings of the witch-hunting craze which lasted well into the seventeenth century and even cropped up in the eighteenth. Central to this change was the Church's redefinition of the witch; she was no longer a common criminal or an illicit soothsayer but a committed agent of the Devil. (I am using the feminine pronoun because it fits our modern image of the witch; but many thousands of men were accused, condemned, and executed as witches.) More specifically, the witch was someone who had made a pact with the Devil in which she renounced her baptism. This was interpreted as high treason against God, the rightful ruler of the human soul. The pact theory became an essential part of the definition of witchcraft and was apparently universally accepted as true. (A few copies of such pacts still exist, usually executed in rather bad Latin by university students; what else is a poor fellow to do at finals time when he's partied all term and Monarch Notes are still centuries in the future?) Witchcraft was also extended to include ritual magic and even the white magic of healing, which was regarded as a snare of the Devil to entrap the godly by feigned goodness. Although magicians claimed to control spirits, the established view came to be that they were only being deceived by the spirits, who were really the ones in control; the magician was actually a pact-witch without knowing it.

Another important fact to keep in mind is that witch-hunting was an extremely profitable business, as Rossell Hope Robins has pointed out. The property of a condemned witch was forfeit: the Church and the civil authority each took a cut and a share sometimes went to the witch's accuser--this last a principle followed to this very day by the IRS. (Incidentally, a person who refused to plead could not, under English law, have his property confiscated. The legal riposte to this was peine forte et dure: the accused was stretched out on the ground and heavy weights--sometimes of red-hot iron--were piled on top of him until he either consented to plead or died. Some great nobles of the turbulent years of the Wars of the Roses and the Tudors chose this fate to preserve their estates for their heirs when they knew that conviction was certain, either because they were really guilty or because they were on the wrong side politically. In the Salem witch trials, Giles Corey was pressed to death for refusing to plead.) Our notion of the typical accused witch as a penniless, half-crazy old hag is far from accurate;

the victims were often people of considerable means and status.

The best way to understand the mentality of the witch-hunters, and to see how they could have created a mass hysteria which raged all across western Europe for more than four centuries, is to read Kramer and Sprenger's Malleus Maleficarum (Hammer of Witches). This was a textbook of witch-hunting, written in the late fifteenth century at the Pope's instigation by two Dominicans, one of whom, Kramer, was Inquisitor-General for much of Germany. The book dwells with fantastical insistence on the pact theory. The argument runs like this: the witch is a traitor to God; treason is the most heinous of all crimes, and treason to God the most heinous of treasons; therefore, the normal safeguards granted to the accused by civil law must be discarded. These included such requirements as the presentation of evidence or the testimony of at least two sworn witnesses before an accused could be committed for trial, and the ban against torture unless probable cause could be shown. The merest whisper of suspicion meant arrest and torture until a confession was extorted, and that whisper might come from some other hapless victim stretched on the rack and being urged to name anyone he could think of just to stop the pain. Even a perfectly upright and blameless life was no protection: anyone who seemed so remarkably innocent must be hiding something horribly wicked. This is typical of the version of rational proof adopted by the Malleus Maleficarum; before you dismiss it too cavalierly, take note of the fact that exactly the same argument was advanced as "proof" of hidden subversive attitudes among law-abiding and patriotic Japanese-Americans during World War II.

It is also apparent from the book that Kramer and Sprenger were absolutely terrified of witches and believed them to be possessed of well-nigh limitless power as well as limitless malice. The feats ascribed to them range from the absurd to the abominable, and interestingly enough, most of them involved some sort of fertility magic. Witches were believed to be able to cause crops to fail, cows to dry up, women to be barren, and men to be impotent. They could prevent conception and hinder birth, and engage in sexual relations with demonic succubi and incubi (see note 2). Their Sabbaths included not only homage to the Devil and feasting on sometimes nauseous delicacies but also orgies of promiscuity. Their charms and potions were compounded of the flesh of corpses, defiled Communion Hosts, the fat of

unbaptized babies--and poisonous herbs. Margaret Murray quotes an English witch's recipe for a flying ointment; among its ingredients are the only three poisonous plants native to England, one of which (either aconite or water hemlock, I'm not sure which) induces hallucinations of flying when absorbed through the skin. Like Medea, the latter-day witches were expert practical botanists. And the stress placed on the fertility aspect of witchcraft does suggest a



connection with the Old Religion, as witches themselves call it--the worship of the moon and of the Earth-Mother.

The term "witch-hunt" is used today to describe any more than ordinarily hysterical persecution, notably the McCarthyism of the Fifties. The points of resemblance are obvious: the extreme fear of an enemy perceived as uncannily powerful and clever, the disregard of due process and acceptance of guilt by association, and the self-righteous moral absolutism of the persecutors. But there is no comparison of the extent of the two phenomena. McCarthyism lasted about a decade, ruined the lives and careers of several hundred people, and eventually collapsed like a burst balloon when confronted by a few courageous people like Edward R. Murrow and Joseph Welch. Witch-hunting lasted for over four hundred years, took the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, and was able to silence its critics through fear.

And there were critics. Not everyone accepted the Malleus Maleficarum as the embodiment of truth and righteousness. It is one of history's more painful ironies that the era of the witch-hunt coincided not with the Dark Ages but, for the most part, with the Renaissance, a self-proclaimed Age of Enlightenment. But those who would challenge the witch-hunters were silenced by two powerful threats: the accusation of heresy, since the existence of witchcraft is explicitly acknowledged in the Bible; and the accusation of witchcraft itself. If you opposed those doing God's work (i.e., burning witches), you were obviously of the Devil's party; in fact, you had doubtless signed a pact.... Discretion was indeed the better part of valor. Eventually, of course, the hysteria began to die out; Europe was sickened by its own blood-lust, and more rational voices could make themselves heard. Some of them exploited religious passions: Reginald Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft, at the end of the sixteenth century, dismissed the whole business as a Roman Catholic fraud. (Although the Inquisition was the prime mover in the early witchcraft trials, witch-hunting was a non-denominational movement; there were more supposed witches executed in Protestant Europe than in the Catholic countries. See Robbins for more specific numerical data.) The Salem witch trials of 1692 represent a flareup of a dying flame; a few years later, a number of judges openly repented of their part in the proceedings--but not Cotton Mather.

Today practically all advanced countries have repealed their laws against witchcraft, but there are still witches about. Some publicly profess themselves followers of the Old Religion, which they call Wicca.

The Right-Hand Path, or white witchcraft, celebrates the fertility deities and deals with healing and the lifting of curses. Witches of the Left-Hand Path are understandably less open about their doings; but every so often an English newspaper will report the desecration of a church or cemetery, and witchcraft has been blamed for the mysterious mutilation-slayings of cattle that have been occurring throughout the western U.S. for many years. One far from reticent member of the Devil's party is Anton LeVay, founder of a Satanist church in San Francisco. (Witchcraft and Satanism have different origins but have become inextricably confused over the past few centuries.) For some of these, witchcraft is a genuine religion; for others, merely a sometimes profitable hobby. But there are places even in what we laughingly call the civilized world where witchcraft remains a serious, even deadly, business. One of these is the Pennsylvania Dutch country, where the picturesque hex signs adorning barns are not always just for decoration. A little over fifty years ago, a well-known "hex doctor" was beaten to death by three men (actually, two of them were teenagers) trying to cut off a lock of his hair to be used in lifting a spell he had cast. (For a full account of Pennsylvania Dutch witchcraft, see Arthur H. Lewis's Hex.)

What are we, from our twentieth-century perspective, to believe about witches and witchcraft? There are three main theories which prevail. Some people still believe fervently in the views expressed in the Malleus Maleficarum and accept unquestionably the power of the Devil, the malefic power of the witch, the pact, the familiar spirits, Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all. The most persistent and articulate spokesman for this view was the late Montague Summers (see note 3). At the opposite pole is the total skepticism exemplified by Rossell Hope Robbins: he believes that witchcraft not only does not exist now, but never did exist. The whole notion of the pact was invented out of whole cloth by the Inquisition when it saw itself about to go out of business after the success of the Albigensian crusade, and Church and State conspired to persecute supposed witches because of the wealth of confiscated property that this brought into



their coffers. His most radical suggestion is that the witch-mania did not even have a frail factual basis in surviving fertility rites practiced in secret by peasants in remote areas; he believes that witchcraft existed only in the fevered imaginations of the witch-hunters, who put words into the mouths of the miserable wretches that they were torturing into confession. He argues that this theory is supported by the absence of any independent evidence not based on confession under torture, such as would be provided by a raid by the authorities on a Sabbath orgy. It is true that there is no record of such raids, but there is testimony by independent witnesses who surprised witches' gatherings

by chance; just how reliable those witnesses were, it is impossible to determine at this late date, but at least they were testifying of their own free will.

The third view is what has been called the Dianic-cult theory; its best-known expositor is Margaret Murray. This is the view that witchcraft originated in the surviving elements of ancient fertility cults, forced underground when Christianity became dominant but originally was innocent as Maypole dancing (also a surviving fertility rite). Since the Christians identified the pagan gods with devils, the practices of their worshippers began to incorporate elements of malevolent diabolism. There were thus two sides to witchcraft: harmless half-understood superstitions and rituals, whose believers were unjustly persecuted; and diabolical and frequently criminal maliciousness, which included poisoning, desecration, political conspiracy, and even ritual murder.



One such plot was directed against King James VI of Scotland, later James I of England and author of a popular book on witchcraft. The instigator was Francis, Lord Bothwell, who was Master of several witch covens and hoped to claim the throne after the assassination of James. There is considerable historical evidence for the reality of this intrigue.

Which view is to be believed? Personally, I'm not prejudiced: I believe all of them. Certainly some pagan beliefs survived as superstitions and ritual practices--see Frazer's *Golden Bough*, in twelve volumes. Equally certainly, innocent people were victimized by witch-hunters who used torture and extralegal judicial practices, and whose motives may not have been pure--observe the career of Matthew Hopkins, with-finder extraordinary. But as a Christian, I cannot state with absolute certainty that witchcraft is impossible.

My thinking runs as follows: if one believes in a God who is a Person, not a Supreme Substance or a First Cause or a code name for the laws of physics that govern the known universe, who is a spiritual being, and who is omnipotent, then all materialistic bets are off. Once you have admitted at least the possibility of others--including the Devil. You don't have to believe in them, mind you; but you are precluded from denying their existence because of lack of evidence. (Indeed, C.S. Lewis's *Screwtape* suggested that the lack of evidence was the Devil's own device to trick us into a belief in materialism and consequent damnation.) And if there is a real Devil, it is possible to make a pact with him. (It is possible to make a pact with him even if he doesn't exist, and no less damnable, Christian existentialists advocate living as if God did not exist, so that our acts of choice will be truly free and not contaminated by the hope of reward or fear of punishment in the next world; why not a diabolical existentialism, in which one does evil for its own sake? At least it would explain the Holocaust.) There have always been, and probably always will be, those who say with Milton's Satan, "Evil, be thou my good"; whether Evil is actually around in a personal form to accept the offer is a moot point.

The same argument applies to the question of a witch's powers. If the universe indeed was created and is sustained by God, He is not subject to its laws. The reverse is true: He could repeal the law of gravity whenever He wanted. The fact that we have no evidence that He has ever done so, and that reason and

revelation both tell us that He is not that arbitrary or capricious, are beside the point. (For a much clearer exposition of this theory, see *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* by C.S. Lewis.) And if one supernatural Being has supernatural powers, others may also. I am not arguing for a belief in witchcraft so much as a belief in its possibility; I advocate neither the practice of magic nor the revival of witch-burning. I merely suggest that it is rather smug and arrogant to assume that we humans know enough about the divine will and nature to declare categorically what is or is not possible. I know of no positive evidence for the reality of witchcraft--but then, it is notoriously difficult to prove a negative. Witchcraft may be a real possibility or a pathetic delusion: we can only speculate--and perhaps keep our fingers crossed as we glance uneasily over our shoulders on a dark Halloween night.

Note 1: Herodias

Herodias was the wife of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. She was also his niece. Her previous husband, whom she divorced in order to marry Herod, was his half-brother. According to the Bible (Mark vi.16-28), when she was denounced by John the Baptist as an immoral woman, she prevailed upon her daughter Salome to dance before Herod and demand John's head as a reward. She was obviously not the sort of girl you want to bring home to Mother, but there is no reason to believe that she had any association with witchcraft. Proponents of the Dianic-cult theory of witchcraft have suggested that the name should be Aradia, a daughter of Diana who was the patroness of witches. Aradia still crops up in contemporary witchlore, but there is not evidence of her having been part of the classical pantheon; she may have been invented as late as the nineteenth century. My own theory is that the name is a scribal error of Eurydice, who as a denizen of the underworld is more properly associated with Hecate (the dark aspect of Diana). As supporting evidence I can cite the Middle English ballads and romances based on the Orpheus legend, in which the name frequently appears as Herodys--a form midway between Herodias and Eurydice.

Note 2: Incubi and Succubi

An incubus was a demon which assumed the form of a human male in order to

have sexual relations with a woman (usually a witch); a succubus was the equivalent in feminine form. (The form succuba is sometimes used, but this is in Late Latin also meant harlot; succubus always refers to a demon.) Authors of the period spent a lot of time arguing over whether such unions could be fertile (as in ROSEMARY'S BABY): the consensus was that an incubus could only impregnate a woman with human sperm which it had previously received from a man while in succubus form. The offspring would not be demonic but would have the same qualities possessed by a child conceived in the ordinary fashion by the man and woman involved.

Note 3: Montague Summers

The kindest thing that can be said about the Reverend Montague Summers is that he suffered from terminal weirdness. He was a very off-brand Roman Catholic priest--apparently self-ordained: there is no record of the Church doing it--who devoutly believed in witchcraft. He read practically everything that had been written on the subject since the dawn of civilization and translated from the Latin a number of texts, including the Malleus Maleficarum, which he described as "that very great and very wise book." He was convinced of the pact theory, which he extended to include all sorts of occultism, and regretted the repeal of the Witchcraft Act. According to him, witches have been conspiring with the Devil against God throughout history and are responsible for --among other evils--the Spanish Civil War, the vagaries of the English weather, and jazz music. (What he would have said about Kiss and Alice Cooper, one shudders to imagine.) His comments on the Pennsylvania hex murder are typical: it was the witch's own fault for resisting so stubbornly that his right-minded attackers were forced to beat him to death; it would have been far more appropriate to try the victim, had he survived, than the murderers. Summers never actually comes out and says that we should still be burning witches, but he describes the ages which did so with an approval that verges on relish.

AFTERWORD

(Wayne Shumaker was kind enough to vet this piece for the more egregious errors; he also made some of general comments which I quote here.)

The Murray hypothesis has not been well received by specialists, who mostly mention it only to dismiss



it, and certainly doesn't accord with my own views. One reason is that I can't believe "the old religion" survived a millenium or more of Chrisitanity, during much of which, according to Tatlock, in England--and probably in most parts of the continent--hardly anybody lived outside the sound of a church bell, and most peasants went to church every day. Further, in my opinion witchcraft isn't profitably merged with non-Christian religions generally, apparently on the hypothesis that the pagan gods were really Christian devils. Beyond this, the subject is clarified, limited, and made manageable by restricting it, in the usual way, to the notion of the diabolical pact, which is the heart and core of every Renaissance discussion of the subject and has been accepted by most modern specialists.

I don't, however, want to alter your

opinions, to which you have every right. It's just that the typical witch was generally an old, queer, underprivileged, ignorant woman who, because she went about muttering what were taken to be threats or curses, might be held responsible when a cow died or a husband lost his potency. When noble or rich persons were involved, they usually were convicted of using witchcraft rather than of being witches, though an occasional Cornelius Agrippa or John Dee might be suspected or themselves having had commerce with devils. I don't believe in the Old Religion hypothesis but rather suppose that the irrationally animistic part of the human mind is susceptible in every period and culture to a relapse into pre-modern thought-ways.

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MICHAELMAS & ME

Algis Budrys

I went to work for HMH Publishing Co. in June, 1963; I had my choice of becoming one of the editors on PLAYBOY or of running the book-publishing division, Playboy Press, and I chose the latter.

PLAYBOY had hired me the way it hired a lot of people in those days; it had developed a crush on me. That began at Chicon II, as far as I am aware, but may have come sooner. As of September, 1961, I'd been editor-in-chief of Regency Books, one of several arms of William Lawrence Hamling. Regency was a publisher of original paperbacks--one novel and one nonfiction title a month--and that's the kind of job you do as a pilot project, or a demonstration, or a cover for something else; it's a born money-loser, even without the help of the dreadful distributors we had. With four kids all under the age of six, I was in it for the money and the experience; a certain twisted kind of pride came later.

Hamling--the Hamling of AMAZING and FANTASTIC, and later of IMAGINATION--was a former co-worker of Hugh Hefner's and of several key PLAYBOY staffers. They had all worked for a pioneering skin-mag entrepreneur, Fred von Rosen, during a part of their lives that's skipped over in

their official biographies. Almost as soon as PLAYBOY was off the ground, Hamling had started ROGUE and dropped IMAGINATION. Regency Books and other Hamling enterprises came later; Harlan Ellison had been the founding editor, shifting over from ROGUE. In 1961, I took over from him, in a painful episode he tells one way and I tell another. What he got out of it was Hollywood, and what I got was Chicago; I don't see what either one of us is complaining about.

In Chicago, whose publishing world is small and incestuous, we all knew a little bit at least about each other. We tended to travel the same routes, hire the same freelancers, and bump together at parties. When A.C. Sectorsky began interviewing me for the PLAYBOY job, he proved to know a great deal about me that I hadn't told anyone.

Michaelmas began at Chicon II, although I didn't know it. PLAYBOY got a bunch of us together in one room--Phil Klass, Ted Sturgeon, Fred Pohl, Bob Heinlein, me, a few other people--and interviewed us for a panel discussion on the future. The way I read the situation, a magazine piece would result, but the

principal reason for the event was that Hefner and his chief associate, Sectorsky, wanted to pick our brains. Hefner wanted to know what the chances were of research medicine's coming up with something that might offer personal immortality in this generation. Sectorsky wanted to know what communications media was going to be like, since he was the man who had broken the barriers that kept PLAYBOY under the counter. That had geometrically multiplied the magazine's circulation overnight, made national ad sales possible, and turned the enterprise into a goldmine. Sectorsky wanted to know where the next lode might lie. Having read it that way, I played to it. Life at Regency was not that much fun.

Out of the back of my mind came some perfectly valid prognostications on what the communications media would be like as soon as the space program had given us enough satellites and the ancillary technologies that would make electronics super-compact and operational on very small power sources. I threw in some biology I happened to have lying around, and I talked a lot, to specific points, holding the larger philosophical implications to the minimum. I'd read enough PLAYBOYS to know they didn't consider their audience capable of holding any thought more than six syllables long, and wanted to photograph objects, not diagram concepts. I found myself painting a rather graphic picture of the world of 1980 and beyond.

After which PLAYBOY began romancing me.

If I sound cold and not the world's nicest guy, let me tell you how I actually was. I was, in no particular order and not in equal proportions, (A) in a panic, (B) in a rage, and (C) depressed. Not down in the mouth. Clinically depressed.





lunch in 1966, they giggled and snorted approvingly.

I knew what I had. Nobody else did. My agent--Philip Roth's agent, Joseph Heller's agent, Mario Puzo's agent, Nelson Algren's agent, my agent--still hadn't made it plain to me that she wasn't only undesirous of my writing SF, she was deaf and blind to it. Fred Pohl bounced it for GALAXY and perhaps for Ballantine as well; he wanted Plutonian fire-lizards in it. And it just lay there.

Meanwhile, I had started on another one. Same way--only, this time, 100 pages of a Doc Savage/Fu Manchu novel full of exploding wristwatches, wards full of catatonic secret agents, and a wisecracking, utterly likeable assassin.

After that, another. 40 pages. This fellow gradually comes to in the administrator's office at a VA hospital. His name is Captain Richard Lockmaster. He gradually realizes he's being discharged. It's 1965. He has hazy memories of being wounded in combat against Japs and Nazis on the Moon. The VA hustles him out the door with twenty dollars and a medical discharge. It's our 1965. He moves around Chicago, rapidly meeting a few people who seem to be more than they seem. He runs across some kind of plot to hold the world for ransom, involving a device called a radiation choke which will in due course make even a radium-dial wristwatch reach critical mass. Every time he gets beat up, an ambulance scoops him away, the VA patches him up, and hustles him out. He goes on, still largely steered by events, almost inadvertently stopping the plot. The world is normal. Except, once in a while, when he's in a saloon and blue, he starts to feel hot wind on his face, and all the people momentarily turn out to be charred skeletons.

Don't steal it. This article is copyrighted, and I may write it yet, in which case I will write it better than you could. Well...on second

thought, go ahead and steal it. I mean, there's always the one about the guy who's chief of security for a multinational corporation.... And the paraplegic whose bed is a Mach 3 fighter-bomber that he keeps in a cave under a Nevada mountain.... And..what I did was to write the beginnings of a great many books, all of them enormous fun, all of them stored up in my subconscious since 1961, any one of them intended to get me an advance check and start me on the pipeline to happiness.

I was brace and confident. I'd gotten out of the basement; rented floor space at The Totch Company, a very expensive sports car garage and restoration works run by a couple of Second City acquaintances, put in my typewriter, a phone of my own and a file cabinet. When I got tired of writing, I'd get up and help rock an engine back into an E-type. (Not easy.) The world was my oyster. Even my psychiatrist was cheerful.

And the money trickled away.

Bill Hamling was dumping ROGUE to a gang of scavenger beetles and moving west to publish the photo-illustrated Report of the President's Commission on Pornography. Frank Robinson, Dave Stevens, Bruce Glassner, Dick Thompson and I got out the last respectable issue. I wrote the copy for the house ads mocking the "What Kind of Man Reads PLAYBOY?" feature in our cross-town rival, and did the interview with Harvey Kurtzman, under the byline of J.P.C. James, which stands for John Paul Charles James, the middle names of the four kids who were now consuming ten-dollar bills for lunch. And then Frankie and I started our own publishing company, on Frankie's money.

Well, I still use some of the leftover envelopes. The idea was we'd sell our expertise to advertising and PR agency clients. We projected a book for United Airlines, called "Welcome Aboard;" a flossy-looking paperback, full of airborne meteorology, how a 707 works, what training a stewardess

has, etc. First Class passengers would find a free copy on their seats.

That sort of thing. We were talking hard to a couple of ad agencies--including United's--and a couple of local industries. For an outfit called Solar Systems, Inc., I designed the cover of Theory and Practice of Silicon Photovoltaic Energy Converters. Amazingly easy. You take a negative stat, rip it in half, paste it back together crookedly, and there's your lightning bolt.

The bank foreclosed on my house. Frankie went to work as the Playboy Advisor. I analyzed our failure. We hadn't known enough about how advertising and PR agencies work. So I got a job as a PR man. August, 1966. Pickles, Peter Pan Peanut Butter, Butterball Turkeys, macaroni, Michigan cherries, Spanish olives, the International Tuna Fish Association, Church & Dwight baking soda. I loved it. Don't think-write! Create patter for disc jockeys. Build a giant can-opener out of Foamcore, walnut Contac and two bleach bottles on a stick, shoot a picture of a lady in a short skirt attacking a circular horse-trough with the word TUNA wrapped around it. Put a twelve foot pickle on a marble base in Civic Center Plaza--call in the Picklecasso, and get out before the cops quite reach you.

But you don't care about my resume. (Dial 312/UNIFONT, communications consultants; be prepared to be turned down unless you have a very, very interesting problem and lots of money.) What you care about is Michaelmas. So did I. But meanwhile I was writing The Iron Thorn.

The Iron Thorn was a project Fred Pohl had offered me; an IF serial, based on a verbal outline, that had emerged from one of Fred's visits to us while I was doing GALAXY's book column. (We'd kept the house; bought it back from the bank on contract when I got the agency job, eventually converted it back to a mortgage.) In a master stroke of psychology, Fred bought it sight unseen, and, furthermore, began running it as soon as the first installment was written. When I got the agency job, I was in the middle of Part Two. I wrote the rest of it into a tape recorder while commuting; kept all the typist's homonyms that I liked better than my intended words.

I liked The Iron Thorn. I still do. It may be minor, but it's heartfelt, and it helped to heal some of the remaining scars. I don't even care if the same idiot who had called The Death Machine something like Rogue Moon now made me the author--in the U.S. only--of The Amsirs and

The Iron Thorn. One of the best things about writing Iron Thorn was that in Part IV I got to write in some remarks of protest on the shabby quality of the illustrations in Part I.

But I didn't like the fact that Fred was making up for not taking Michaelmas. And I loved the agency business, because I'd lucked out on my boss, an ex-CHICAGO DAILY NEWS rewrite man named John Bohan, who can run the world anytime Michaelmas gets tired of it, for my money. With the exception of Edna, the Mrs. Budrys, he was the first person I'd ever met who trusted me past the first week. I loved it, but I wasn't going to get any writing done. The first week on the job, the SATURDAY EVENING POST published my story, "The Master of the Hounds," which eventually got an Edgar Special Award (that means second prize, folks), and that, except for the PLAYBOY stories and "Be Merry," was what I was going to write, besides the last half of Iron Thorn and a lot of disc jockey jokes about International Pickle Week. I'd go down to my nice new cellar office, which Edna and I built after I moved back from the Totch Company, and riddle the pages. Jesus, it was a good book!

Well, I went from there to being PR director of an ad agency, and from there to the truck account of Young & Rubicam, and then one day I became operations manager of a recreational vehicle consumer magazine publishing company. The master plan was to get to know the PR men for all the light-duty vehicle manufacturers, and eventually go freelance, roaming the country in borrowed motor homes and things, meeting the now-grown kids at crossroads now and then, doing travel articles and vehicle test pieces, and getting back to SF. I had just gotten Woodall Publishing Company all set to do its own computerized typesetting when the Arabs embargoed oil, we lost a hundred ad pages in 48 hours, and, on January 9, 1974, I was set at liberty.

Two days later, Judy-Lynn del Rey called me. DAILY VARIETY said that the people who owned the film rights to Who? had actually done something about it, and Ballantine was willing to attempt a tie-in edition if I was.

Well, I was. Certain gloomy clouds parted a bit. Rand McNally called UNIFONT and offered me a five-figure contract to deliver a 96-page bicycle repair book in offset film. There was a potential four-figure profit in that. Maybe--just maybe--I was off salary for the rest of my life. The fact that Edna

had coincidentally gone back to her career as an executive secretary, two days before I was fired, also didn't hurt.

I retyped Michaelmas, did a new outline, and sent it back to my agent. Soon enough, Chevy Chase's father bought it. When I flew into New York for the usual high-powered editorial conference, Ned Chase shot the entire lunch talking about his kid's face on the cover of TIME.

But we got it out anyhow. Bit by bit. Lots of helpful suggestions from junior editors who knew how to produce a surefire bestseller. Beaten down by surly remarks about this being a science fiction novel, for science fiction readers; no mundane could possibly understand it or like it, despite the fact that it was being published outside the Berkley/Putnam SF program being run down the hall by Dave Hartwell--whom Chase would not permit to speak to me; we had to meet in secret. The next novel would be the blockbuster, oh, yes. This was my baby, and don't you so much as change a comma without permission.

What this turned out to mean was that it came out retailing for a dollar less than any B/P SF title in the same format, and had four crucial typos in it, in addition to getting my name wrong on the cover. It got a small advance than Hartwell would have paid, too. But I am--I really am--hard at work on the blockbuster contemporary novel. Two successive successors to Chase at Berkley have my promise I'm working on it.

F&SF serialized 45,000 words of the original 60,000 "final" draft, and I got a Nebula recommendation, which I asked to be withdrawn. I was blowing the 45,000 words up to 72,000--not literally; I was interpolating new material, doing another draft on some of the old, putting some of the old back in intact--and I wanted the book to go for the award, not the serial. (Rogue Moon was put in the SFWA Hall of Fame anthology series as a novella, and I wasn't having any more of that, though I appreciated the thought no end.)

So the book came out. NEWSWEEK reviewed it. NEWSWEEK! NEWSWEEK loved it. Others who loved it: The TODAY Show, the Washington POST, the New York TIMES, the St. Louis GLOBE, the San Francisco CHRONICLE, and a gang of Canadian papers. A stolen set of proofs circulated in England, rapidly. Who didn't like it? Well, besides Dan Miller of the Chicago DAILY NEWS, every single SF community reviewer with the exception of Charles Platt in SFR. The ending--the ending I thought I didn't have to spell out, point for itsy-bitsy obvious point, because any

halfway knowledgeable SF fan would outrace me through the rationale as soon as I sprang the outlines of the idea--the ending killed it for the SF reviewers. Not for the mundanes; for the SF fans.

Which shows you how much I know. I cleaned the typos out of it for the Berkley paperback, which--except that it insists there's a J. in the middle of Algis Budrys's name--is the definitive edition. One of the clarified typos clarifies one small aspect of the ending, but not part that really needed clarification. I didn't mess with the ending. It is what it is; what it should be.

And I will tell you something about that. When Rogue Moon came out, a lot of people said they didn't understand it, and that it was a major, inexplicable disappointment from the author of that classic, Who? Oddly enough, when Michaelmas came out, a lot of people--some of them the same people--found it an inexplicable disappointment from the author of that classic, Rogue Moon, which everybody these days understands, or says they do. Seventeen years had improved the hell out of the one book. I am willing to wait and see what seventeen more years do for the other.

And I thank you for your very kind attention. The name of the contemporary novel is The Life Machine. Any year now....

* * *

(I've just re-read this and I'm amazed at how readily I fell into the glib, media-mogul phraseology that pervades the agency business and which always makes me squirm when I find it in other mouths. What I had to say was all true, and how I felt about it is all true, but I'm dismayed to find how unkillable the spirochetes are once they have gotten a good hold.)



[Coming up in re: Algis Budrys--an interview in the November AMAZING and a special "Budrys" issue of F&SF probably also in November. ed.]

I met Spider Robinson first at Callahan's Crosstime Saloon in 1978 and enjoyed his style and concepts of the beings at Callahan's place enough that his saloon stories stayed in my mind. I was therefore more than pleased to see Time Travelers Strictly Cash sitting on a shelf in a Mississauga bookstore here in Canada in early April. At the same time, in the same bookstore, I also purchased Robert A. Heinlein's Expanded Universe in paperback.

I must say now that I've never believed in any of the trendy astrological-magical-cum-whatever occurrences. I picked up the two books because I enjoy the two authors.

Due to a time shortage I decided to read the Robinson book first. I profoundly enjoyed the Callahan stories and do not intend to say more about them here. For those of you who've never encountered them before, you have a pleasant surprise coming. The rest of you--meet me at Callahan's!

Spider Robinson did have something to say in the book that caught me. It was headed "RAH RAH R.A.H.!" It's Spider's tribute to Robert Anson Heinlein which was also his Guest of Honor speech at BoskLone 1980 and, as he stated in the book..."it was received with loud and vociferous applause." It is indeed a tribute to one of the "Grand" writers of science fiction.

I'm sure we each have our own list of these favorites in whatever order, but I am also sure that Mr. Heinlein's name appears on most or all of them. The depth of feeling Spider conveyed in this article/speech was great to see. It reconfirmed my belief in some rationale in the midst of these "Crazy Years." Spider rebuts some of the criticism against Heinlein and then leads the reader to Heinlein's Expanded Universe. Spider says..."In this book he [Heinlein] identifies clearly, vividly and concisely the specific brands of rot that are eating out America's heart. He outlines each of the deadly perils that face the nation, and predicts their consequences."

It is easy to see that Spider Robinson has a deep and glowing respect for Robert Heinlein and I'm proud to say so do I. Based on Spider's treatise I would have bought the book but I felt very pleased that it was next on my agenda anyway. As for Spider--thank you and keep up the good work!

In Expanded Universe, Robert A. Heinlein has pulled out all the stops. Here in one book is "How to Be a Survivor" which sent me in

Reality
has
arrived!



search of a compass and a self-evaluation of my own self-competence. In "Who Are the Heirs of Patrick Henry? Stand Up and Be Counted!" he did get me! He explains the force and thought behind the Communist line. He states in the forward that "This polemic was first published on Saturday 12 April 1958" and that the "declaration is more timely than ever." He further states, and I agree, that he is proud to reprint it "and deeply sorry that it ever was needed." This polemic, to use his term, is to remind us all of what freedoms we stand in fear of losing and how it is happening and will continue to happen unless we each do something about it. It is time to stand up and be counted. Well, count me in! Along with this article to NIEKAS goes my letter to the President of the United States. It's way past time to express our concerns and views where it at least has to be read.

I am not a war-monger. I am not a fear-monger. I have very valid concerns and comments to make of the state of the national security, the military armaments program, the

space program, human rights, and the way my rights are being used. I must honestly say that Robert A. Heinlein has shamed me into "standing up." I am now taking action that I should have taken before, on my own. I am an American citizen working and living in Canada for a branch of an American company. My company and my country make it possible for me to grow, learn, and expand my universe. I am proud to be a member of a free people and a cultural descendant of Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson and more than proud to be a fellow American to Robert A. Heinlein.

The book goes on to list the inconsistencies of Russia in a tour chronicled in "'PRAVDA' Means 'TRUTH'" and "Inside Intourist." Then he gets to "Pragmatics of Patriotism."

Yes, "Pragmatics of Patriotism." My Webster's tells me that pragmatism is "a practical approach to problems and affairs." Heinlein is giving us all a lesson. He is a writer and a teacher here and he's giving us all fair warning. You must read it. Spider Robinson said it and I will

MARGARET SHEPARD

repeat it in my own words: it is a necessity for all Americans. Heinlein has reached a point in parts of Expanded Universe where a great deal of what he is saying, clearly and concisely, I read before in a novel seventeen years ago (and have reread each year since). The novel was Atlas Shrugged, the author Ayn Rand. She escaped from Russia for the purpose of getting to a free country and to be able to fulfill her ambition: to become a writer. She has done both. She chose America because it was the symbol of freedom both economically and politically.

Shortly after finishing Expanded Universe I had the pleasure of listening to Ayn Rand at the Ford Hall Forum in Boston. It was not just an honor, it was a privilege. I have heard her speak on two previous occasions. This time my membership to the Forum was a birthday present from a friend who knows how much I enjoy the lady. I flew in for the weekend especially for the event that Sunday night. I was not disappointed. She was excellent! I will not attempt to

quote her here as I would not want to mal-quote. She is now, and has always been, a champion of rational thought and for her, A is A. A thing can not be what it is not. All of what she stands for can be found in Atlas Shrugged. The entire book is a systematic exposition and argument in writing including a methodical discussion of the facts and principles involved in the tenets of living free. It is a book that shows how to actively live in a rational universe. Her hero, John Galt, does not compromise with non-values. Through John Galt's speech, Ayn Rand exposes the concept of altruism and defines the virtue of selfishness. John Galt's oath, mentioned several times in the book is:

"I swear-by my life and my love of it-that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine."

This is also Ayn Rand's code of ethics, it is also mine. Atlas Shrugged was her forum, of her own making. Since she wrote it she has done other books which define her thoughts and concepts in relation to current events and national politics. She has never stopped trying to enlighten readers to the essence of the "enemy" and the nature of "freedom."

She had to escape to be free. Most of us were lucky enough to be born that way. The future is ours only if we are willing to fight to keep it ours.

I have taken you on a small journey through three books to try and make a comment my own way. What you do about it is your own way of making comment.

A IS A

Sources:

Time Travelers Strictly Cash, Spider Robinson, Ace, 1981

Expanded Universe, Robert A. Heinlein, Ace, 1980

Atlas Shrugged, Ayn Rand, Random House, 1957

[see also "Bumbejimas"]

SEX ?

No, just another reminder for you to put a plug in for our Space Program.

Below are some of the people you should contact to make your opinions known. Not included in the list are your state and local representatives. By all means, drop them a line, too. It can't hurt and it might help.

But do it now, OK?

Them To Write To, Now:

Rep. Edward P. Boland (Mass.)
Chairman, House Subcommittee on HUD & Independent Agencies
2426 Rayburn House Office Bldg.,
Wash. D.C. 20515 (202) 225-5601

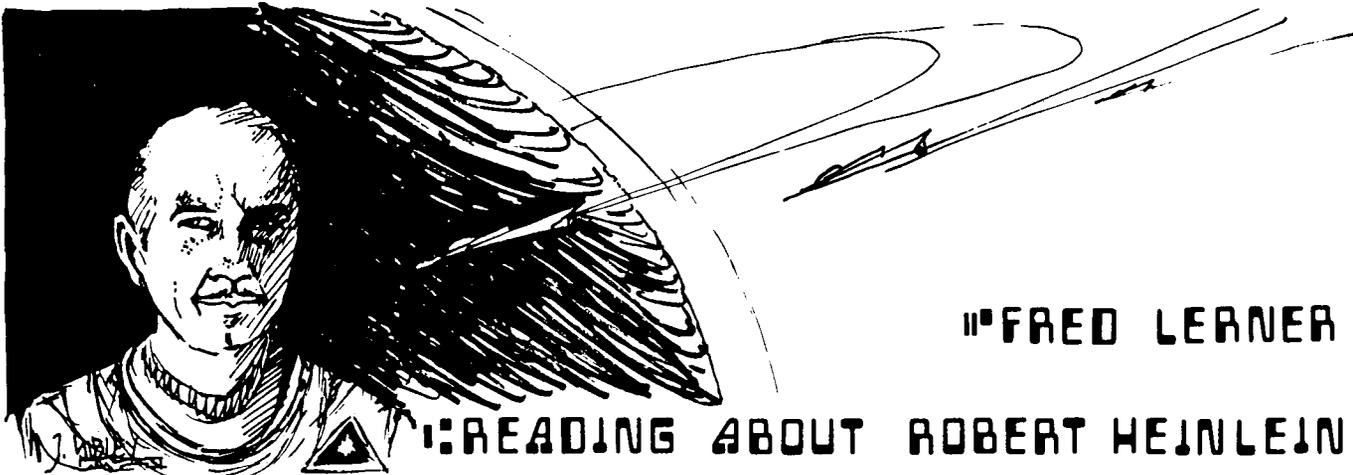
Rep. Don Fuqua (Florida)
Chairman, House Subcommittee on Space, Science & Applications
Room 2321 Rayburn Bldg.
Wash. D.C. 20515 (202) 225-5235

Hon. David Stockman
Office of Management & Budget
Executive Office Building
Wash. D.C. 20503

Sen. Jake Garn (Utah)
Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on HUD & Independent Agencies
5121 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Wash. D.C. 20501 (202) 224-5444

Sen. Harrison Schmitt (New Mexico)
Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology & Space
Room 709-A, Immigration Bldg.
Wash. D.C. 20501 (202) 224-5521

Pres. Ronald Reagan
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Wash. D.C. 20500



"FRED LERNER

READING ABOUT ROBERT HEINLEIN

Anyone who wishes to understand modern American science fiction must come to terms with two men. John Campbell defined what science fiction writers were to do, and Robert Heinlein showed how it was to be done. It was Campbell who first provided a dependable market for good science fiction, and Heinlein who broadened the SF market to the point where a conscientious writer could make a decent living from it. And it was Campbell who established commercial science fiction as a forum for ideas--and Heinlein who exploited that forum.

Surprisingly little has been written about Campbell. But a selection of his letters is being prepared for publication; and over the last five years several autobiographical accounts of SF writers have appeared in which Campbell figures heavily. We can expect some major studies of Campbell to appear during the 1980s.

And we are beginning to see some substantial attention paid to Robert Heinlein and his writings. Articles on Heinlein and his work have appeared in several scholarly journals and essay collections; he has been discussed in nearly every book about science fiction; and at least five publications have so far appeared which are devoted entirely to the consideration of his career.

The most substantial books on Heinlein are:

Heinlein in Dimension: A Critical Analysis, by Alexei Panshin (Chicago: Advent, 1980)

SF in Dimension: A Book of Explorations, 2nd ed, by Alexei and Cory Panshin (Chicago: Advent, 1980)

Robert A. Heinlein, edited by Joseph D Olander and Martin Harry Greenberg (New York: Taplinger, 1978)

The Classic Years of Robert A. Heinlein, by George Edward Slusser (San Bernardino: Borgo Press, 1977)

Robert A. Heinlein: Stranger in His Own Land, by George Edward Slusser (San Bernardino: Borgo Press, 1977)

Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction, by H Bruce Franklin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

The first of these books to appear was Alexei Panshin's Heinlein in Dimension. Panshin did not enjoy the cooperation from Heinlein that David Samuelson (in the Taplinger collection) and Bruce Franklin received; Heinlein's response to the book, both during its compilation and after its publication, was a hostile one. Panshin was sufficiently well-connected within the intimate confines of American science fiction to receive background information from several of Heinlein's friends and colleagues; but Heinlein in Dimension is essentially a critical rather than a biographical study.

More than half of Heinlein in Dimension is devoted to a chronological account of Heinlein's career. Panshin divides that career into three periods. "The Period of Influence," between 1938 and 1942, produced a prolific outpouring of extrapolative stories which (according to Panshin) had a substantial effect upon other SF writers. Following a wartime hiatus, "The Period of Success" (1947-1958) saw Heinlein expand both the science fiction market and his own readership, most profoundly through the creation of a new format for science fiction, the "juvenile" novel. It was in this format, says Panshin, that Heinlein reached his qualitative peak. Since 1959, Heinlein's career falls into "The Period of Alienation," in which his craftsmanship has declined as he has become more interested in ideology than in

story.

The latter third of Heinlein in Dimension examines the construction, execution, and content of Heinlein's fiction. Panshin does a good job of showing what Heinlein does, and how he does it. In his stories, Heinlein uses romantic situations which he treats in a realistic manner. He is a master of creating contexts: rather than telling his readers the facts of life on a planet or a spaceship, he shows them. And he sets his characters genuine problems to solve.

While Heinlein has created a variety of colourful aliens, "there is one unique and vivid human Heinlein character": a composite which Panshin calls "the Heinlein individual." He comes in different ages and stages of experience, but he is essentially a competent man, with "three central characteristics: his strength, his singularity, and his ability to teach himself." (The model for the Heinlein Individual, Panshin claims, is Heinlein himself.)

This Individual is the center of the Universe, its reason for being. Since "the world exists for him, not he for the world," he must enjoy liberty of action; and he (and in some cases an elite group of companions) possesses supernatural powers which confirm his competence in all that he attempts. The solipsism that pervades Heinlein's fiction permits his characters to deny death in metaphorical or even literal fashion.

Panshin concludes Heinlein in Dimension by suggesting that Heinlein's ultimate reputation will be much like Kipling's--and that, like Kipling, Heinlein will be remembered and read more for his juvenile fiction than for the stories he wrote for adults.

My own political tastes run to libertarianism, and I can find nothing in Heinlein's science fiction which is incompatible with a libertarian ideology based upon an ideal of absolute personal freedom and absolute personal responsibility. Practical politics, of course, is an exercise in the adaptation of an ideal to real-world conditions, and Heinlein has offered in his stories several possible realisations of the libertarian ideal. I suspect that those who find the political ideas expressed in Heinlein's fiction inconsistent or incomprehensible don't know as much as they should about libertarian theory.

The Panshins are on somewhat firmer ground when they question the consistency of Heinlein's reality.

Much of Heinlein's fiction, even that published explicitly as "science fiction," is more fantasy than straight SF. Many of his characters are superhuman, which reduces their utility as exemplars: how applicable are the experiences of a Lazarus Long to us ephemerals?

The Panshins' essay "Time Enough for Love" was written before Heinlein's novel of that name was published. This does not pose as much of a problem as one might expect, as it isn't until the fifty-ninth page (of a sixty-nine page essay) that the Panshins get around to talking about Time Enough for Love. Their principal point is that the question of survival pervades Heinlein's fiction--survival of adolescence in the juvenile novels, and survival of death in much of his adult fiction. Heinlein's solution to the survival of the ego takes the form of a mystical pantheism, though he is reluctant to embrace it.

Alexei and Cory Panshin are too ready to base their comments on Heinlein's fiction upon their unsupported speculation about his personal life. How do they know that Robert Heinlein became a science fiction writer in 1939 because "he wanted to know why Robert Heinlein existed"? In both his personal life and his fiction, "time and again, survival is the answer he has settled for in lieu of a larger answer to the meaning of life." One might be able to speak with some assurance of the motivations of an Isaac Asimov or a Harlan Ellison; but Robert Heinlein is a reticent man, and the evidence just isn't on the record.

"The Number of the Beast--," Heinlein's most recently published novel, was an embarrassment to most Heinlein fans--an ungainly, long-winded argument for four voices and continuum craft which concludes with a

self-indulgent assembly of the author's friends and enemies, from our own world and from those which his imagination has created. In "The Death of Science Fiction: A Dream," the Panshins reply in kind: their essay is sprawling and verbose, and ends in a conceit as embarrassingly silly as its original.

For those who, like me, somehow missed reading the obituary notice in LOCUS, it will come as some surprise to learn that science fiction is dead. Who killed science fiction? Earl Kemp once conducted and published polls on the subject, but he needn't have bothered. Robert Heinlein killed modern science fiction, and "The Number of the Beast--" was the murder weapon.

How's that again? It's really very simple, explain the Panshins. Heinlein's Future History stories are "the spinal cord of modern science fiction." But in "The Number of the Beast--" we are shown that the continuum of the Future History is not our continuum, and, therefore, the Future History is not the history of our future. Since the Future History is "the backbone, the life-line of modern science fiction," it's clear that Heinlein has deliberately set out to destroy modern science fiction--and that his mission has been successful.

Two arguments against this notion immediately present themselves. In our continuum, history has already overtaken much of the Future History. While some of Heinlein's pseudo-predictions weren't far off the mark (go back to the early pages of Methuselah's Children and look at those newspaper headlines from "The Crazy Years" of the 1960s), several of his stories were set in a future that never came to pass. Thus it might be opportune to jettison the Future History--if it were necessary to assume that science fiction readers were so small-minded as to render it necessary. Heinlein warned his readers against that sort of thing in his postscript to Revolt in 2100, "Concerning Stories Never Written." He denied any attempt at serious prophecy: his stories were "meant to amuse and written to buy groceries." "The Number of the Beast--" might not have been very amusing, but it did buy a lot of groceries. And it is just a story, one that need bear no correspondence to the Future History or to our own reality.

The space devoted to this non-issue, and the silliness of the Panshins' writing in general (did a grown man and woman really write page 343 of SF in Dimension?), distract attention from some interesting points.

Heinlein in Dimension is written in a rambling, informal style, the loose first-person that characterises fanzine writing. It would have been a better book had the writing been tighter. But it was the first published full-length study of Heinlein, and its impact on subsequent studies has been substantial.

If Heinlein in Dimension represents Alexei Panshin's period of influence as a Heinlein critic, then the essays on Heinlein in SF in Dimension represent Panshin's period of alienation from his subject. Although both editions (1976 and 1980) of SF in Dimension appear under the names of Alexei and Cory Panshin, there is a substantial continuity of viewpoint with Heinlein in Dimension. Two major pieces on Heinlein appear in the first edition: "Reading Heinlein Subjectively" and "Time Enough for Love." The second edition adds an eighty-page essay, "The Death of Science Fiction: A Dream." In addition to the sections on Heinlein, there are several essays on other aspects of science fiction, which we will not discuss here.

In "Reading Heinlein Subjectively," the Panshins maintain that an "objective" reading of Heinlein's stories is impossible, because of the contradictions that abound in them. No consistent ideology can encompass them, and no consistent reality is presented in them. A "subjective" reading is the key to understanding Heinlein's fiction. Several of his stories represent crises in Heinlein's personal life; and in many of his stories the subjective reader will see an attempt at resolving conflict among the Self, the Other, and the Demonic.

I didn't find much of this convincing.

The Panshins demonstrate that several aspects of "The Number of the Beast--" are common intellectual currency in contemporary science fiction. They assert that today's SF novelists are pessimistic about the public future, and concentrate on their characters' survival among the ruins. (They neglect to consider the neo-utopian novels being produced by feminist and libertarian writers.) And they suggest that pattern rather than fact will be the intellectual focus of science fiction during the next two decades, with music (the embodiment of pattern) replacing science (the embodiment of fact) as the genre's central motif.

According to Alexei and Cory Panshin, "the frame of reference of SF has been decisively and permanently altered by "The Number of the Beast--" Just as Olaf Stapledon's Star Maker was the ultimate Victorian SF book, so "The Number of the Beast--" is the ultimate "modern science fiction" novel, and the SF to come will necessarily take it as a jumping-off point. Heinlein's novel "delimits the meta-universe of consciousness that will be the ground of the New Head SF-to-come."

I wouldn't bet on it.

The "Writers of the 21st Century" series, edited by Joseph D Olander and Martin Harry Greenberg and published by Taplinger, consists of collections of critical essays on leading science fiction writers. Most of these essays are written by academics, and in several volumes in this series the overall impression a reader receives is one of misplaced

ingenuity based upon unwarranted assumptions, and interminable speculation on points which could have been resolved by a telephone call to the writer under discussion. The Heinlein volume is better than some others in the series, perhaps because Heinlein is a more complex science fiction writer than Isaac Asimov or Arthur C Clarke.

I couldn't detect any common thread running through the nine essays contained in Robert A. Heinlein; but there are several points which arise repeatedly.

Heinlein's portrayal of superhuman figures, especially in the novels of the past two decades, inspires several suggested explanations. Alice Carol Gaar ("The Human as Machine Analog: The Big Daddy of Interchangeable Parts in the Fiction of Robert A. Heinlein") suggests that Lazarus Long and other characters drawn larger than life represent Heinlein's reaction to man's insignificance in the Universe; while David Samuelson ("Frontiers of the Future: Heinlein's Future History Series") sees Heinlein's retreat into personal dream-worlds such as immortality as his reaction to our society's retreat from the ideal of scientific, technological, and societal progress. Robert Plank ("Omnipotent Cannibals in Stranger in a Strange Land") regards Stranger as a childish fantasy of wish-fulfillment rather than a serious satirical novel; and Ronald Sarti ("Variations on a Theme: Human Sexuality in the Work of Robert A. Heinlein") accuses Heinlein of stacking the deck: his characters' experiences cannot be identified with those of real people.

The social systems portrayed in Hein-

lein's stories are also discussed extensively. Jack Williamson ("Youth Against Space: Heinlein's Juveniles Revisited") notes that Heinlein "often seems unhappy with the sacrifice of personal freedom that a technological culture seems to require," and cites several portrayals in the juvenile novels of the conflict between individualism and the need for cooperation and social training. Philip E Smith II ("The Evolution of Politics and the Politics of Evolution: Social Darwinism in Heinlein's Fiction") observes that since Starship Troopers, which presented "a utopian social system for all humanity," Heinlein's attention has focused on smaller and smaller groups. And Russell Letson ("The Returns of Lazarus Long") finds in Time Enough for Love the linking of individual, family, society, and species, surviving through the instrument of love.

The contributors to this collection raise several interesting minor points. David Samuelson points out that "We Also Walk Dogs--" doesn't really belong to the Future History; and he sees in Farnham's Freehold Heinlein's satire on the spoiled American way of life. Ivor Rogers (Robert Heinlein: Folklorist of Outer Space") offers an argument for Caleb Catlum's America (a 1936 novel by Vincent McHugh) as a model for Time Enough for Love. And Ronald Sarti suggests that Heinlein frequently uses adolescent and pre-adolescent female characters because they are not yet conditioned into subservience to males.

There are some notable errors of judgement in this book. Frank H Tucker ("Major Political and Social Elements in Heinlein's Fiction")



seems to think that Kettle Belly Baldwin in "Gulf" is a "villain." He is also too willing to infer Heinlein's own opinions from the statements of his characters. This mistake is also made by Alice Gaar, who assumes (in discussing "The Devil Makes the Law," aka "Magic, Inc.") that the Universe as portrayed in an UNKNOWN fantasy might be a valid reflection of its author's beliefs!

But in general, Taplinger's volume on Heinlein is a well-balanced collection of provocative and, in most cases, well-informed essays.

George Edgar Slusser doesn't accept Alexei Panshin's division of Heinlein's career into three periods. The forms employed by Heinlein were unrelated to his purpose as a storyteller; they were dictated by the exigencies of commercial fiction publishing. Slusser doesn't see any major changes in emphasis from Heinlein's early years to the present. The basic argument of his two sixty-page pamphlets (Robert A. Heinlein: Stranger in His Own Land and The Classic Years of Robert A. Heinlein) is that Heinlein is really a literary Calvinist, in whose fiction a small Elect is predestined to triumph over all obstacles. His stories are allegories, materialistic parables. Thus "Gulf" is not a tale of action and intrigue, but rather "an anatomy of election." And salvation, in Stranger in a Strange Land, is reserved for those who bear the "inner light"--the ability to grok.

Slusser makes a strong case, and provides an abundance of examples throughout both studies. I wish that he had gone a step further. As a libertarian, I am tempted to draw a sort of ideological sustenance from Heinlein's stories. But ever since reading The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress I've been worried by doubts as to the relevance of Heinlein's fiction to political and social issues. For the Lunar revolution chronicled in that novel has an outstanding flaw: it depends for its success upon the cooperation of an omniscient, omnipotent computer--a *machina ex deus*, if I may be forgiven some bad Latin. The Martian superpowers in Stranger, the immortality of Lazarus Long, and the fortuitous combination of wild talents possessed by the four protagonists of "The Number of the Beast" are all properties which lie beyond the reach--even the generously extrapolated reach--of the people who will be living in future societies. In other words, Heinlein isn't writing about human beings--and that means that the ideologies exempli-



fied in his fiction of the last twenty years are of uncertain relevance to us. We cannot point to a Heinlein-imagined society and say, "we could build such a future for ourselves"; and this damages Heinlein's value as libertarian inspiration. Now, Heinlein has never claimed that as his purpose; and the avowedly libertarian science fiction writers of the last few years have avoided such supernaturalism. Slusser's essays form a useful prolegomena to an assessment of the ideological implications of Heinlein's fictions; should he ever expand them into a full-length book, I hope that he will undertake such an assessment.

The most recent of the books on Heinlein is the only really satisfactory one. Before reading Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction, I would have considered H. Bruce Franklin an unfortunate choice; a radical Marxist seemed hardly the proper critic to discuss a libertarian writer who has often been called a conservative, a reactionary, and even a fascist by those to his political left. But Franklin is eminently fair to Heinlein throughout his book, and though there are places where what I take to be Marx-

ist language poses a barrier between the author and at least some of his readers, in matters of substance Franklin the Marxist does not stand in the way of Franklin the critic.

Franklin suggests that Robert Heinlein's science fiction embodies the spirit of twentieth-century America --"the contradictions that have been developing in our society ever since the Depression flowed into the Second World War." During his lifetime, Heinlein has experienced the most profound period of technological and social change in human history. He has also experienced what no other generation will ever experience: the awesome realization that, unlike his forbears, he will at the end of his days leave a world radically different from the one he entered at birth. In such a world, science fiction is inevitable; and Heinlein is the most popular, most controversial, and most influential SF writer.

Franklin's discussion of Heinlein's career is organized on a chronological rather than a topical basis; political and social issues are dealt with as they arise in Heinlein's work. Naturally, there are places where I would disagree with Franklin's conclusions. I don't think that the female gender of the Venerians in Space Cadet "gives a special psychological twist to this book written for adolescent boys"--it's just another way of emphasizing the alienness of an Alien society. And the fact that Larry Smith in Double Star had to resort to hypnosis to overcome his xenophobia is not a pessimistic testimony to the indomitable prevalence of that sentiment; remember that the Great Lorenzo underwent that hypnosis voluntarily.

And Franklin's politics occasionally get in the reader's way. The vocabulary of Marxist literary criticism may be appropriate when writing for an audience of the faithful, but there are sure to be many readers who don't consider "bourgeois" a meaningful condemnation, and who are not the least bit put off by "a thoroughly non-dialectical definition of freedom." And his distaste for the capitalistic corporation prevents Franklin from noting the contradictory portrayal of such enterprises in "The Man Who Sold the Moon" and Red Planet.

Yet the language barrier and the political myopia are occasional flaws, not persistent problems, in this book. It is in such an area as the touchy question of racism that the opportunity for politically-motivated distortion, conscious or unconscious, is most likely to arise; and here Frank-

lin acquits himself well. He points out that anti-black sentiment is absent from Heinlein's fiction, save for Farnham's Freehold, which he sees as a vision "apparently generated by very specific events in the 1960s." In the 1940s and 1950s a "characteristic anti-Asian racism" exists in many of Heinlein's stories. Franklin doesn't speculate on the reasons for anti-Asian rather than anti-black feelings in a man born in rural Missouri and educated in Jim Crow Kansas City; and he fails to realise explicitly (though he does imply) that Heinlein's anti-Asian sentiments are directed at totalitarian cultures rather than individuals of Asian ancestry.

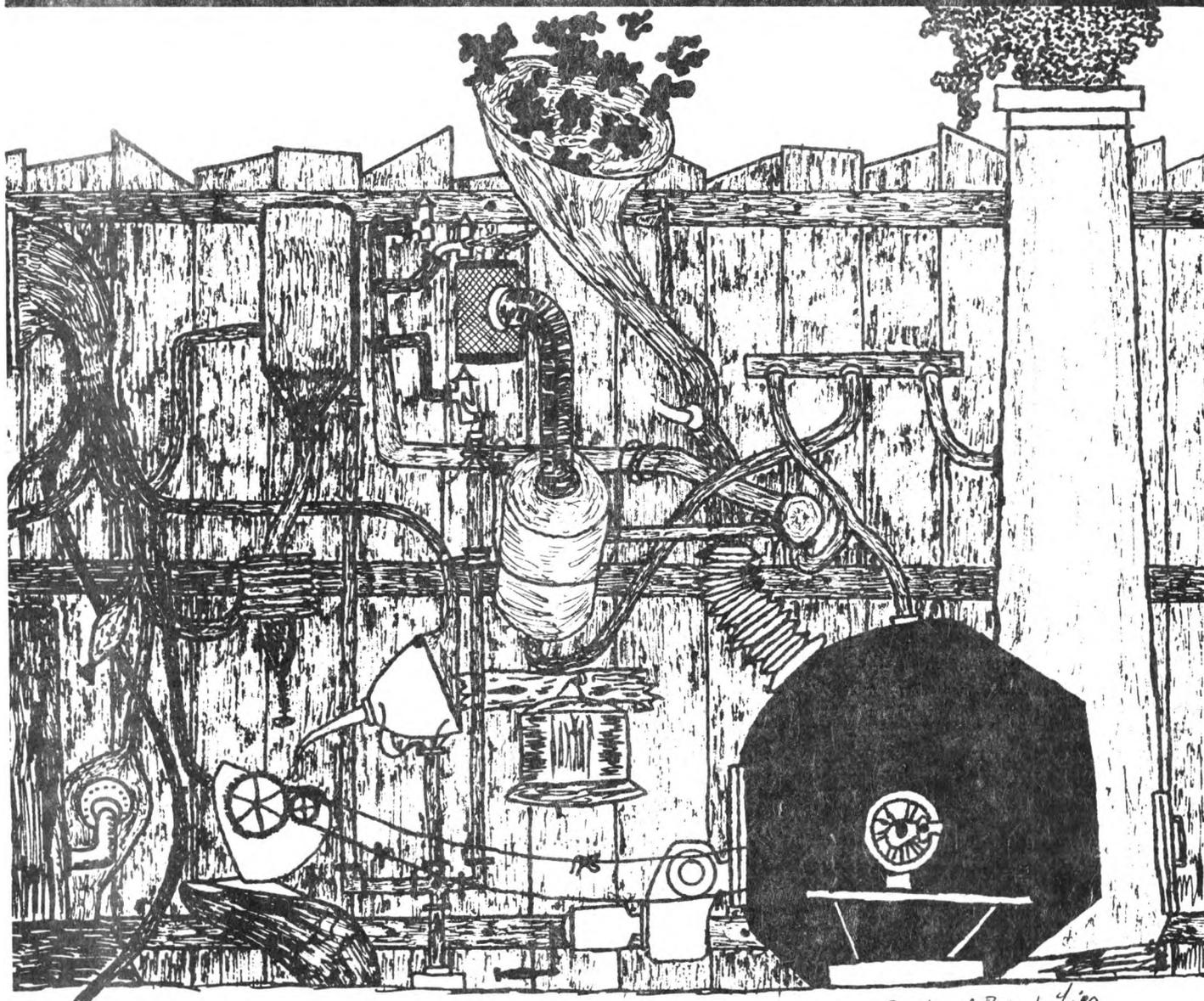
Similarly, Franklin sees a contradiction between Heinlein's juvenile novels, in which he "consistently attacks xenophobia and dramatizes respect--even love--for the kinds of beings we may find in space,"

and the "fear, loathing, rage, and hate" directed at the parasitic slugs of The Puppet Masters. But here he misses the essential difference--respect for thinking individuals regardless of species.

As these comments illustrate, my disagreements with Franklin are minor ones. In a review of Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction, I concluded that this book is "eminently readable, occasionally tendentious, and well documented." Despite the disagreements I have with some of Franklin's assumptions, vocabulary, and conclusions, I'll stand by what I said then: "It is the best critical study of a single science fiction writer that I have seen."

Anyone who undertakes criticism of a

living writer runs a risk: his subject may produce books which render previous commentary ridiculous. I've just heard a rumour that Heinlein has completed a new novel. I hope that any revenge he may be tempted to take upon his critics will be expressed more subtly in it than in "The Number of the Beast--". I shall be watching with especial interest the reviews and critical essays the new novel generates. For despite their weaknesses, Heinlein's critics offer many provocative approaches to the work of science fiction's most influential (and most frustrating) writer. Despite my disappointment with much of his recent fiction, rereading Heinlein is still one of my favourite literary pleasures: and now that I've read what the critics have to say, I'll have a new excuse to reread my favourite science fiction writer's stories.



Starsword, Mistfire, Dragonwind and Shadowquest

by Terry Jeeves



Prospective Hugo winners can now acquire the long lost secret of the ages...how to win at writing! No, this isn't going to be a short correspondence course designed to empty the pockets of the empty-headed who seek a pot of gold. This is simply an observation on what seems a quick way to overload your bookshelves with those dinky little statuettes and weird contraptions which defy description.

Many long moons ago, A.E. van Vogt introduced Koryzybski's general semantics into the yarns World of A and Players of A. The main idea seems to be that ideas, communications and moods in general have much to do with the use of the "right" words. Some words have "good" connotations, others "bad." If you name the hero of your saga "Poddifoot," most people immediately think of him as a good-hearted, bumbling sort of character who will eventually triumph without anything really nasty happening to him along the way. On the other hand, as soon as Kral Vargaz comes on the scene, he could be no other than the nasty old villain. Given the choice of two planets, Astar and Malgash, the average reader would readily accept the first as idyllic and the second as a place to avoid. When Bongnyaz and Godley encounter the fair maidens Plumpo and Belita, it is a fair bet that old Bongy gets Plumpo while Godley shacks up with the lissome Belita. Think not? Look at STAR TREK. Good old James T. Kirk (which happens to be a Scottish word for "church") are always fighting off nasty Klingons. I also gather that "Uhura" means "freedom" or something like that.

There are certain words (and sounds) which we dislike, avoid, or associate with things unpleasant... probably they remind our ancestral minds of aggressive noises used by one Neanderthal against another. Another group of words and sounds wins our sympathy and support.

Politicians have long known and exploited this effect. When someone declaims, "Anyone saying that Fred Bloggs is dishonest is a downright liar," it may sound like a nice bit of support. Think again, the average listener tends to associate things. In this case, Bloggs becomes associated with dishonesty and being a liar. Keep the treatment up long enough and he'll end up on the Wanted List. One petrol company here in Sheffield never seems to be doing much business. I wonder if their brand name--MURCO--could have anything to do with it?

In essence, words connected with, derived from, or sounding similar to, "good" words, will win our acceptance whereas those derived from or sounding similar to "bad" sources or containing harsh consonants will be immediately relegated to the villain's side of the camp.

Within the SF field, there are certain words which seem to crop up regularly in the various award fields...so much so, that it would seem they possess a strange power to cloud voter's minds. And often, I suspect, a change of name might relegate the opus to a niche in the Hall of Crud. I wonder how Lorna Doone might have fared had she been called Forlorn Doone? If you disbelieve me, look through your bookshelves and see how often the following words or their variants appear somewhere in the titles:

STAR, SUN, COMET, SWORD, MIST, DRAGON, SEED, FIRE, FLAME, SONG, NIGHT, DANCE, WIND, QUEST, SHADOW, TIME, DREAM, KING/s, PRINCE/s, LORD/s, QUEEN/s, SNOW, CRYSTAL, etc.

No doubt you can add one or two to the list. Herewith a few titles chosen at (near) random to illustrate my point:

SNOWQUEEN, DREAM DANCER, STARDANCE, FROSTWORLD AND DREAMFIRE, WINDS OF STORMHAVEN, DRAGONSONG, DREAMSNAKE,

DRAGON IN THE SEA, DRAGON LENSMAN, SEED OF THE GODS, THE STARSEED MISSION, STAR OF STARS, OF MIST AND SAND AND...

Oh heck, you get the picture.

The use of these words may flop over onto some poor unsuspecting character. Quite recently I had the misfortune to encounter a hero with the surname of "Stormdragon" would you believe? And he wasn't a scaly alien.

Ghastly as such name may be, they seem to offer an easy path to fame and fortune. Sit down at your typewriter, permute (purists will say "combine") the words of power, distort 'em a bit here and there, perhaps--just to show your originality--and then throw up (apt word choice) your masterpiece. Remember, used in sufficient quantity these words will bamboozle the reader into the deep, coma-like state which leads him (or her--a double nyaah to ANALOG lettercol feminists) to vote your effort into first place.

One thing, don't use the following as I have 'em earmarked for future epics of my own...

John Starquest in Dragonworld and Frostfire

Ricardo Ap Swordsmith in The Dragonking of Miststorm

While for sequels I have in mind... Shadowsinger

The Firemists of Songhaven

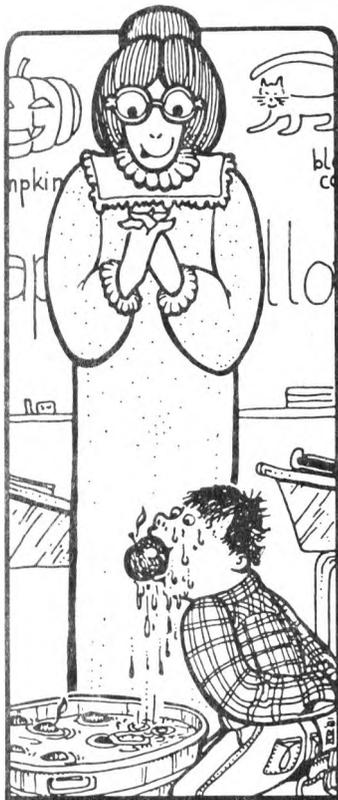
The Fire Dancers of Mithaven

The Firehaven of Mistsong

Then some day I might proceed to Starbop, Starfish and Snowdance, and even Shadowquest of the Dragonking Singer.

Egad, I shall need a new shelf to hold all my Hugoes. But don't let that put you off, there's plenty of mileage left in the magic words.

WHISPERS FROM ALCALA



"EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES"

art by

JOBS

ARE HARD

FOR ME TO KEEP,

I ALWAYS QUIT THE SCHOOL

AFTER I EAT

ONE CHILD.

Frankly, I don't think it's possible (quoting Mike Bastraw) "to draw the line between good free-verse and sloppy/undisciplined writing." My guidelines come about as close as I would care to in trying to define that line from my point of view. In some ways they constitute a mini-essay in how I view poetry. But I have tried to make them as non-prescriptive and flexible as possible.

The history of art has long since demonstrated that if you try to draw a line like that, sooner or later somebody will come along and sit down on the "other" side of the line and make it work anyway. (Not long before Shakespeare's time, for instance, many influential poets and critics were arguing--in despite of Chaucer--that rhyme and accentual meter were not appropriate techniques for serious poetry.)

On the other hand, I had a correspondent intimate to me the other day that "good" poetry had to have rhyme, meter, and rhythm. I responded by pointing out that these are relatively late developments in technique. Classical quantitative verse, Teutonic alliterative verse, and Canaanite repetitive verse don't

use those techniques.

It seems to me that a big problem with a lot of the pro- and anti-traditionalists in poetry is that they operate from the same false assumption; namely, that a definition of poetry proceeds from how it is written. My own feeling is that the definition instead derives from how it is transmitted...or "was", perhaps. That is, poetry was (and still often is) transmitted by memorization and recitation. And in the beginning it was apparently inseparable from music (it was thus not so much recited as chanted or sung). And every poetic technique I know of is mnemonic, musical, or both. And I should add that the content of poetry is essentially mythological, if that term is used in its broadest possible sense and spectrum of connotations (including the Jungian ones).

I say "mythological", knowing how abused the word is these days. We use "myth" a lot these days to mean something which is not factual or is false. But actually the word has nothing to do with content, but with function. The myths of ancient times was always believed to be true, but in practice some myths are factual,

some not, and some in between.

A good example of a modern myth would be "Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin." It's not factually true (Lincoln's birthplace was built of planks rather than logs). But the content of the myth is, roughly, "Abraham Lincoln was born of a poor family in humble circumstances but later became President of the United States." The function of the myth is to promote the idea that any person, no matter what his origin, could rise to the nation's highest office. It is the archetype of the American "social upward mobility" myth.

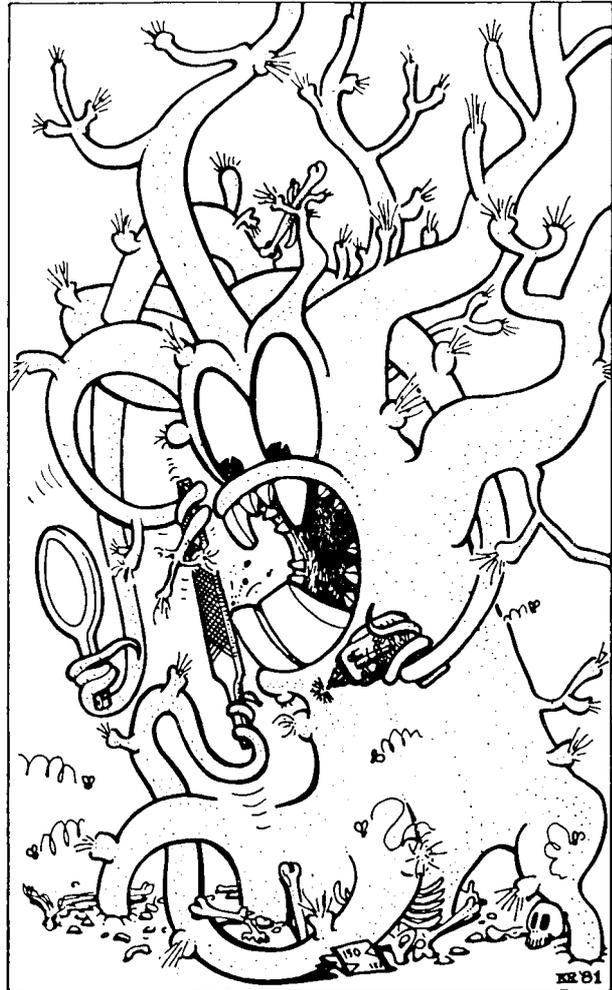
The general structure of a myth is to deal with a large or universal issue through the portrayal of specifics. Poetry does much the same thing, which is not surprising considering that the earliest function of poetry was as the medium in which myths were expressed. A lot of modern poetry, in addition to abandoning the former structural modes, tends to abandon the mythological function as well and concentrate on intimate tid-bits of the existence of the poet or people the poet knows. It's as if we have suddenly come down to the level of TRUE CONFESSIONS.

by
rod walker

kurt reichel

"TOO CLOSE TO NATURE"

THERE
ARE TREES
NEARBY THAT MOVE
WITHOUT A WIND. I WISH
I HAD NOT SEEN
THEIR TEETH.



I feel that the mainstream of poetry has come under the control of the Philistines, many of whom seem to have conceptualized art and content both down into the level of the lowest sort of commonality...while at the same time extolling what is going on in technical prose which is so high-falutin' as to be meaningless. Poetry, like music, has come into the hands of medicine men and snake-oil peddlars.

Alas.

Yes, I am hard to please when it comes to poetry. One of the things that irks me about modern poetry... that is, poetry written by most poets these days...is something very akin to laziness. On one hand, we have the sort of poet who uses technique (usually conventional rhyme/meter) as a crutch to help along poems which are otherwise vapid and uninteresting. On the other hand,

there are a lot of poets who assume that they don't have to bother with any kind of technique so long as they have great (at least in their view) content: turgid emotional outpourings, contempo social consciousness, deepdeepdeep philosophizing (or at least speculating), soul-baring, what have you. But poetry works best when loftiness of aim and earnestness of purpose are combined with sophistication of technique.

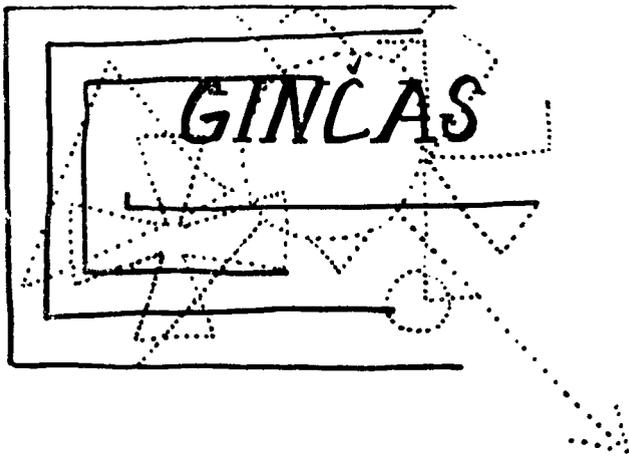
Poetry has fallen victim to the same pseudo-intellectualization which has cut the gonads right off music and art. Or you get jingles written by and for "little old ladies of both sexes" (Fletcher Pratt, *Ordeal of Fire*). The former is what you find in most of the academically-affiliated journals these days.

Even so, there is a lot of pretty good poetry being written. But in

many cases it could be better. What I'm trying to do is to encourage people to write better poetry... especially "better" in terms of technique. You can't teach people to have good ideas or meaningful conceptualizations...either they do or they don't. So I generally devote my main efforts to people who are obviously talented but are using little or no technique.

Poetry these days also fails, in a sense, because it's aimed at an immediate or temporary audience. I prefer poetry that tries to aim at an audience a century or more from now. Most of my own poetry is written with the host of unborn readers in mind.

In any event, I am hard to please.



...One of the many articles I enjoyed in your tome of 'nothing' was the case put forward as to whom should be the patron saint of science fiction. The man duly elevated to this post was none other than Santa Claus. Bloody Santa Claus? With all due respect to the innovators of the said article, there can, nay must only, be one candidate for this post and that is he of the blood shot eyes, he of the inebriated countenance, none other than SAINT FANTONY. There are knights, some of them alive to this very day, admittedly they are getting on a bit, there to defend His glorious and Bacchundian name. So let us hear no more of this treasonable behaviour.

Colin Langeveld

It is true, as Anthony Boucher suggested, that St. Thomas More, as the author of Utopia, is well qualified to be sf's patron saint. But St. Brendan is equally well qualified, and we must be practical about these matters. St. Thomas More is already the patron saint of lawyers, and he must be extremely busy these days, what with Watergate, palimony, and everybody suing the NATIONAL ENQUIRER. I am afraid that if we adopted him as our patron, we might find our prayers being put on "HOLD" almost indefinitely. St. Brendan, however, is not as far as I know the patron of anything or anyone at present, and thus will be able to devote himself full time to our petitions.

Anne Braude

...John Boardman does tend to go overboard in trying to score points against religion. Some clarifications: (1) The prohibition of mule-breeding in Leviticus 19:19 is coupled with

rules against two kinds of seed in the same field, and against clothes of two kinds of material; it thus represents a general taboo against mixing "natural" categories. Dumb, perhaps, but hardly motivated by "opposition to the production of new life forms" as such. In any case, the tulle doesn't seem to have been effectively implemented, since a number of mules appear in the Old Testament, including the one owned by David (1 Kings 1:33). -- (2) To

SF & R REVISITED

Again

refer to "a prelate named Jozsef Pehm, who also used the name 'Mindszenty'" is remarkably tendentious wording. The fact is that the man changed his name in the 1930's, when he understandably felt uncomfortable with a German surname. It is also a severe trivialization to refer to his fight with the Communists simply to the question of evolution vs. creation. He was totally opposed to the Communists and didn't trust them on anything (in particular the running of schools), and the feeling was mutual; nevertheless, most of the actual charges against him were trumped up. -- (3) The Pope may well hold the beliefs that John reads into his October 1980 statement, but you can't prove it by the actual words quoted. Rather than being a "logical fallacy",

to say that "the right(s) of individuals" are a "higher value" than "science" is a mere platitude, with no substantive content to speak of.

Speaking of religion, while you did get a comment from R.A. Lafferty in #25, I'm surprised that nobody in the religion-and-SF discussion seems to have mentioned Lafferty's own work, much of which is permeated with religious symbolism (probably too highfalutin a word). Of course, as he said himself, "religion is very difficult to smuggle into SF"; I guess he's done the smuggling so well that most people haven't noticed. (I grant you that it often takes some familiarity with rather old-style Catholic theology to appreciate it.) -- By the way, the Boucher/Anderson candidate for patron saint of SF is of course Thomas More (on whom see Lafferty's Past Master), not "Moore"; after all, he wrote SF... -- Lynne Holdom writes that "Lucretius wrote that religion was the cause of more of man's inhumanity to man than anything else"; I'd really like to see a citation on that, since I rather doubt that Lucretius's vocabulary contained anything corresponding exactly to what we understand by "religion".

George Flynn

...There is something in [N25] that I am compelled to reply to in the interests of fairness. This is the commentary in "Random Thoughts" by an anonymous author (whom we might reasonably guess to be Mike Wallace) on Scientology. This article makes the very serious accusation that Scn. is ready "to take measures up to and including assassination against their critics." I can't understand why you would print this, when in general you are not so irresponsible as to print accusations of serious crimes which in fact have not been committed. I mean, if I sent you a note, to be published anonymously, stating that Robert A. Heinlein in addition to being a right wing nut has in fact murdered several innocent people and buried them in the lawn of his California estate, you would probably hesitate to print it. But it is almost a fannish tradition to sneer at Scn. I almost think that the SF community feels some obscure guilt at having nurtured LRH in his earlier career. Scn. has and has had for decades many vociferous as well as vicious and ruthless critics who often have themselves committed many crimes in their zeal to rid the world of Scn., yet there is absolutely no indication that any of them have been murdered by Scn. or

by anyone else, for that matter. And if you know of some evidence that such murders have occurred, I urge you to bring it to the attention of the police. If Scn. has been murdering people, there is no reason why your efforts should be limited to besmirching their reputation through the pages of NIEKAS. Besides which, you may be endangering the lives of the four NIEKAS editors--very thoughtless of you.

The truth is that Scn. does defend itself when it is attacked. It does this, in general, by means both legal and ethical. I believe that there have been some lapses from this admirable standard but nothing too serious. Assassination is not thinkable--it would be a violation of the most vital aspects of Scn. itself. One might as well accuse the Quakers of assassinating their critics. So please, unless you are prepared to produce the corpus delicti, spare me these wild accusations. I object to the campaign to destroy Scn. If anyone prefers not to be a Scientologist that is certainly their privilege, to which I would never object. But the effort to prevent Scientologists from practicing their religion is most reprehensible. I urge religious tolerance.

David Palter

I saw a documentary on Scientology on TV some years ago (I wish I could remember precisely where and when, but I cannot, though I have an unreliable intuition that it was an ABC NEWS CLOSEUP) which presented a number of high-level in-house Scientology memoranda that the reporter's source had somehow obtained. Included was a Directive (or some such name) 45 (as in caliber), attributed to L. Ron Hubbard, which did indeed appear to authorize the execution of ex-Scientologists who attacked Scn. It was on the basis of this document (widely publicized at the time) that I said that Scn. seemed "ready to take measures up to and including assassination." I did not claim that they had in fact translated this readiness into action.

I would appreciate documentation of the viciousness of ruthlessness attributed to Scientology's critics, and though Scn. may in general defend itself in a legal and ethical manner, the lapses from such standards have been more frequent and widespread than the writer suggests. The incidents in Clearwater, Florida, described in the CBS 60 MINUTES segment were also supported by evidence, including Scientology memoranda. The most alarming part of that report, to my mind, was the



discussion between the reporter and a number of common or garden Scientology members--not leaders or spokespeople--who in acknowledging the attacks on Scientology's critics (including libel, slander, harassment, and in one case the forgery of letters which were used to frame an ex-Scientologist on the charge of making bomb threats), seemed to see nothing morally or ethically wrong with such actions. They seemed to feel that Scientology was entitled to defend itself against enemies and critics by any measures that would work, regardless of whether such measures were proper or even legal.

It is also documented that Charles Manson became very interested in Scn. during one of his prison terms and in fact used some of its techniques in indoctrinating his "Family"--though of course Scn. itself has no connection with the Manson Family crimes. (Source: Helter-Skelter by Vincent Bugliosi).

I note that the guidelines on the use of confidential sources that are being adopted by most newspapers in the wake of the Janet Cooke Pulitzer debacle basically require (1) that the name of the source be known to the editors; (2) that the source have a legitimate reason for desiring anonymity; and (3) that information from such sources be backed up by evidence. I qualify on all 3 counts, though I do wish I could cite chapter

and verse more precisely on my data.

Anonymous

[a later letter from David Palter:]

...Scientologists are trying to practice a religion which, upon close examination, is certainly no more irrational than any other major (or semi-major) religion. Some people object to this and attack Scn. Scn. then has the nerve to defend itself. This causes immense outrage to such people as Piers Anthony. When Scn. has something critical to say about the mayor of Clearwater, that according to Mr. Anthony is "libel" and when the mayor says something critical about Scn. he is "exposing their machinations." I see just the reverse taking place: Scn. was lit led by the mayor, when they tried to expose his machinations. Piers Anthony reports with horror that Scn. is seeking "to destroy anyone who criticizes them" yet he apparently does not care that these seeming acts of destruction are an effort to defend Scn. from these so-called critics who in fact have launched far more vicious attacks than anything Scn. has done, attacks which moreover are entirely unprovoked. Come on, you are all SF fans; don't tell me that your vaunted imagination does not stretch as far as the possibility that there are two sides to this issue, and that 60 MINUTES has not told all. Is this too much for the mind to encompass?

Arthur Hlavaty is of course quite correct in objecting to your unsubstantiated anonymous attack on Scn., and your reply, "we consider 60 MINUTES a usually reliable source" is rather feeble. Since 60 MINUTES reports unfavorably on Scn. you now feel free to print an anonymous accusation that Scn. will even murder its critics, a claim that 60 MINUTES did not make. Now that you know Scn. is a bad thing, having been told so by that unimpeachable authority 60 MINUTES, all complaints about Scn. are now welcomed with open arms. Now if people write to advise you that L. Ron Hubbard kidnaps children and eats them for dinner, that Scientology is poisoning the water supply, and is responsible for high gas prices, you will buy that also, right? After all, 60 MINUTES said they are up to no good. Tell me, if 60 MINUTES someday does an expose on SF, will you give up reading it? I'm sorry, but I must say that anybody who feels that "they wouldn't put it on television if it weren't true" is horribly naive. Mike Wallace is not dedicated to truth, only to scandal, which he manufactures if necessary. He has never shown any such interest in

presenting a balanced view of anything.

I know what the facts are and I can assure you that Mike Wallace has not told them to you. He has shown you some of the facts, carefully concealing others. What we are witnessing is a well organized, well supported effort to destroy a religion, being done so smoothly that none of you even have an inkling (excepting Arthur Hlavaty) that the freedom of religion that is supposedly a cornerstone of American democracy, is being horribly violated. If anyone would like to know what is really happening regarding Scn., the best book to read would be Playing Dirty by Omar Garrison. Read this book and then tell me about 60 MINUTES, I dare you.

[This will be the third issue that the relative merits of Scn. have been presented in. With your kind indulgence the editors would like to close out this line of discussion basically because it has already endured beyond what we ever intended. Hopefully both sides will be satisfied with the material herein and in the last Gincas.

As I am the copy-typist I have the one privilege of getting the Last Word in on most discussion and I will avail myself of that right now.

No, David, I am not naive. I may still be wet behind my editorial ears but I do not believe everything I read or hear or see; who does? But, like everyone else, data has to be collected from sources; data which must remain many times second-hand at best. Who has the wherewithal to personally check out every news item that comes across the media?

But general trends become apparent and common sense must come into play. Collect, sift, think, re-think; to quote my maternal grandfather "I may be wrong but at least I will be busy."

My interest in Scn. is not profound enough to even seek a transcript of the TV shows in question or to read Mr. Garrison's book. Maybe Scn. is Truth and maybe it isn't.

But I will not have words put into my mouth even by someone who has proven to be a generally clear and insightful critic. mike]

[more thoughts from David Palter:]

Anne Braude tells us that she would like to have an answer to the question "Are we indeed the only species on this planet to which God has vouchsafed a divine revelation?" I have a weakness for answering questions (although you may not always like my answers). According

to my own religious beliefs, the answer must be no. Not only are we not the only species to be blessed in this manner, but we are actually not a species in the first place. A species refers to a specific type of organism, a physical entity which has its own genetic identity. We are spiritual beings, not bodies; we inhabit bodies. The same spirit which inhabits a body of the familiar homo sapiens model, could equally well make its home in the aquatic body of delphinus delphis--and some do. And they are still a part of us.

...I particularly appreciate Anne Braude's review of Inferno. While the book was written with enough inventiveness and skill to hold my interest, I also found it profoundly dissatisfying because of the grotesque and untenable theology at its base. I do not in any way require or expect that any author write from a theological viewpoint similar to my own, but it is possible to select a philosophy so twisted and illogical that it intrudes upon my enjoyment of the fiction. This is rare in SF. The only author who consistently produces work that I consider unreadable purely on moral grounds is, of course, John Norman.

...How come I can never see the "analogies" and "double-meanings" like everyone else? I've never been able to pick out Christ symbolisms, and usages of dark and light. I can't divorce myself from the action of the book enough to really cart it out, I suppose. But I suppose that religions, especially common ones, can provide excellent symbols, ones which would

be well known to most of the audience. Ah, well....

Letty Smith

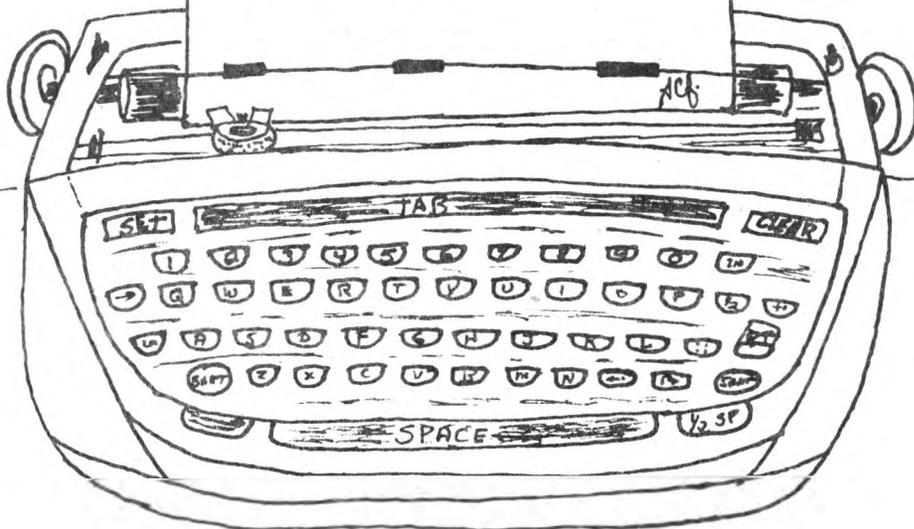
...I can't say that SF and Religion linking brings any great stirrings in my nonexistent soul. I like SF, have done for half a century now, as for religion, I evaluated that and my attitude to it in the forties and decided that religion, like UFO's might have a strong effect on those wishing to believe...but was as difficult to serve up on a plate or microscope slide...i.e. I'm an atheist. I have no objection to SF using religion as one of its perfectly legitimate 'what if' themes...just as SF may use UFO's. It is when people feel it is wrong to use religion...or that religion is real that my hackles rise. I'll fully admit that to believers, religion can be a powerful motivating force and bring much good...but through the ages, more trouble seems to have been caused by misguided believers than by any other single cause....The Crusades, The Inquisition, The Witch Hunts, Joan of Arc's burning etc. etc. To me, 'religion' boils down to this...you either believe in a higher power guiding your destiny...or you don't. Speaking for myself, such a power requires too many incredible assumptions or acceptances...or even rejections (such an omnipotent if deigning to be interested in humans.. would know their every thought, motive and action..thus voiding any free will).

Terry Jeeves





Mike Bastraw
W. Ritchie Benedict
Anne Braude
Arthur Jean Cox
Lisa Cowan
Don D'Amassa
Dennis D'Asaro
Sherwood C. Frazier
Edmund R. Meskys
Nan C. Scott
rod walker



The Year's Best Fantasy Stories: 6,
ed. Lin Carter, DAW, 1980, \$1.95

In the introduction to one of these stories, Lin Carter mentions that this series has frequently been criticized in the fan press for being topheavy with sword-and-sorcery stories. So be it: if you want an anthology of really good s&s--and I do--you have come to the right shop; all these stories, with the exception of Carter's own (about Thongor), are above average. There is a Dilvish story by Zelazny ("Garden of Blood"), a Traveler in Black story by John Brunner ("The Things That Are Gods"), and a Gray Mouser (without Fafhrd) story, "The Mer She," by Fritz Leiber. I'm afraid I no longer share the almost universal adulation of Leiber as the best living practitioner in the field; certainly no one writes better prose, but his stories have become so involved in elaborate descriptions and subtle mockeries that sometimes the plot entirely disappears--a case, perhaps, of an author having too many ironies in the fire. My own favorite of current s&s heroes is Tanith Lee's Cyrion, who appears here in "Perfidious Amber." Cyrion is neither swordsman nor sorcerer (though a dab hand at both if necessary) but an enigmatic adventurer who happens to be six times as clever as anyone else around. There are better Cyrion stories than "Perfidious Amber," but there is no such thing as a bad one.

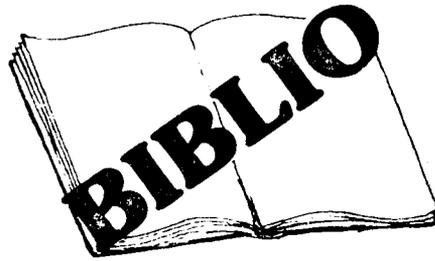
Other authors represented are Paul H. Cook ("The Character Assassin," a title which should be taken literally), Grail Undwin ("Zurvan's Saint," a tale of Faerie), and Brian Lumley ("Cryptically Yours," a story of magic and murder told in epistolary form). My favorites are Orson Scott Card's "Sandmagic," about sorcery and revenge; Jayge Carr's "The Pavilion Where All Times Meet," about a man with no past and a woman with no future; and a second offering from Tanith Lee, "Red As Blood," an ingenious and terrifying inversion of "Snow White."

These are all traditional types of fantasy--nothing wildly experimental or innovative--but skillfully done and enjoyable. Recommended to fantasy fans.

ajb

A Walk in Wolf Wood, Mary Stewart,
William Morrow, 1980, \$8.95

Mary Stewart is undoubtedly known to much of fandom for her trilogy about Merlin (The Crystal Cave, The Hollow Hills, The Last Enchantment); to the reading public at large, she



is recognized not only for these but for her unchallenged pre-eminence in the romantic-thriller field. Surprisingly, not much attention has been paid to the fact that she also writes juvenile fantasy. A Walk in Wolf Wood is her third effort in this genre, and it is not surprising that I am recommending it; Mary Stewart seems incapable of writing a bad book. Wolf Wood begins with two children, John and Margaret, picnicking in a German forest with their parents. When they follow a weeping man deeper into the Wolfenwald, they are drawn back into the fourteenth century, where the man, Lord Mardian, has been turned into a werewolf by a wicked enchanter, who has himself taken Mardian's place, disguised as him, as the Duke's friend and counsellor. The children enter the castle in order to reach the Duke and tell him of the enchantment. The story is more realistic than most of the type (the drawbacks of fourteenth century table manners--and privies--are not glossed over in the usual fashion), and displays Stewart's usual merits of vivid description, humor, and excellent characterization. She tends toward the Lloyd Alexander position of not having everything made too easy by magic: John nearly gets killed as a suspected assassin by the Duke's guards, and Margaret falls into the enchanter's clutches. The ending is a neat and reasonably plausible twist of poetic justice. This is by no means a major work, but it is superbly crafted and thoroughly enjoyable.

ajb

Pilgrimage, Drew Mendelson, DAW,
1981, 220 pp., \$2.25

Here is a promising if not totally satisfactory first novel that is a blend of Brian Aldiss' Starship and Christopher Priest's Inverted World. All of humanity, apparently, resides in one enormous city, a single gigantic building in fact. Work is constant, tearing down Tailend and building at Front End, so that the

city is moving across the landscape. But change is in the wind.

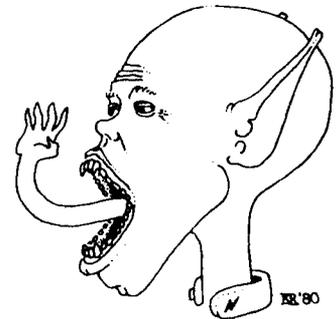
A group of young people are cast adrift when a combination of earthquakes and outsiders disrupt their society. They encounter a race of giants who live within the walls, a villainous mind controller called the Driver, immortal maintenance workers, a subterranean prison colony, robots, and assorted other entities on their odyssey around their world, under it, and outside of it.

For the most part, this is a well told story, though perhaps a bit too reliant upon the coincidence to move the plot along. There is a reasonable amount of characterization and, while the setting is novel, the treatment is pretty conventional. I confess to being rather fond of this kind of story, though, and Pilgrimage kept my attention throughout.

dd'am

Caverns, Kevin O'Donnell Jr., Berkley
Books, 1981, 274 pp., \$2.25

This, the third novel by Kevin O'Donnell, is in some ways better and in others worse than his first two. As a coherent novel, it is far more tightly controlled, better paced, and essentially a more interesting story. The major drawback is that it is, alas, the



beginning of yet another series, not even really complete in itself.

McGill Feighan is, shortly after his birth, ingested for three days by a polymorphous alien studying him for some reason at the direction of a mysterious extraterrestrial who never appears on stage in the book. This, naturally, attracts considerable attention, including that of organized crime--the Earth branch--which arranges to monitor and/or kidnap him several times during the course of the novel. The interstellar syndicate has had dealings with the mystery being in the past, always to their detriment.

Caverns is inventive and interesting, presenting us with a series of aliens and alien settings, the interesting idea of anti-teleportation powers, and a host of plots and counterplots. In retrospect, it is amazing that the author was able to pack so many things into what is really not a long book at all. Whether or not the ensuing books in this series will live up to the accomplishments of the first remains to be seen.

dd'am

Westmark, Lloyd Alexander, E.P. Dutton, \$10.95

A new book by Lloyd Alexander is always an event, and this one more so than most: it is his first non-fantasy novel. This probably will not come as too much of a surprise to readers who have paid attention to the trend of his more recent books, in which he has taken an increasingly bleaker view of magic. In the earlier books, Time Cat and the Prydain cycle, magic is an inherent part of the plot; but characters generally have to rely on their own wits and abilities to solve their problems and gain their ends. Magic is the occasion rather than the cause of the learning and development through which the characters attain increased maturity. This is the case in most of the best fantasy from Spenser to Tolkien, but Alexander has gone further. In The Marvelous Misadventures of Sebastian, the only magic available is evil, and Sebastian's moral education involves rejecting it. In the later books for older children, particularly The Wizard in the Tree, magic is depicted as actually detrimental to personal growth, which consists of learning to do without it as a crutch and to rely on one's merely human abilities. Unreconstructed lovers of fantasy may deplore this development; but I think it is desirable that at least one author is saying this sort of thing to the children who are growing up in the latter half of the twentieth century, when all sorts of people, from the turn-on-drop-out advocates of the drug culture through the gurus of self-actualization to the Moral Majority, are pushing simple answers which they claim will make all the agonies and complexities of our world softly and silently vanish away--just like magic.

Westmark is a mythical kingdom, presumably located in the vicinity of Graustark and Ruritania; but mythical kingdoms, like imaginary gardens, can have real toads in

them. The principal toad here is the king's chief minister, Cabbarus, as sly a hypocrite as ever schemed to seize a throne. With the king sunk in a lethargy of grief ever since the loss of his only child, Cabbarus has a free hand to tyrannize over the people of Westmark. When his censors attack Anton the printer, Theo the printer's devil strikes one down and is forced to flee for his life. He joins forces with the mountebank "Count Las Bombas"--a cross between Paracelsus and the Wizard of Oz, who changes his name in every other chapter--and the dwarf Musket. They later take on Mickle, a street urchin who cannot remember her past when awake but has nightmares about it; and with her gift for ventriloquism they devise a very profitable scam. Theo, who



has rather rigid, bookish ideas about right and wrong, is troubled by his own capacity for lawlessness and by the fact that his fellow con artists are all likeable people with many admirable qualities, while the representatives of law and order are villains. He eventually leaves the troupe and falls in with Florian, leader of a band of revolutionaries, who wants to overthrow not only Cabbarus but the monarchy itself; this only increases poor Theo's moral perplexity. After he has rescued his friends from prison with Florian's help, the troupe falls into the hands of Cabbarus himself. He intends to use them to manipulate the king into abdicating in his favor; but Theo and Mickle have ideas of their own. The story ends with Cabbarus defeated; but we are not promised a happy-ever-after. The problems of Westmark remain to be solved; and Theo, who has begun to live with ambiguity, still has plenty of growing up to do.

The theme of the book is emphasized by a pervading tone of irony. In Alexander's earlier books, the

vices of the wicked are mocked, but the follies of the innocent--or the relatively harmless--are usually more pitied than censured. Here, Theo's muddle-headed high-mindedness is satirized almost as sharply as the hypocrisy of Cabbarus. The satire cannot be called Swiftian--it is not nearly savage enough--but resembles the earlier and milder Mark Twain, as in Huckleberry Finn. Insofar as the book has a moral center, it is the pragmatic, streetwise Mickle, who like Eilonwy and Mallory in earlier books, is strong-minded, self-reliant, and prepared to get the hero's head out of the clouds even if it involves stepping on his toes. Westmark is a story about an imaginary time and place, but it is very (dare I say it?) relevant to our own age.

ajb

People of Darkness, Tony Hillerman, Harper & Row, 1980, \$9.95

This is the latest in a series of excellent mysteries combining the traditions and beliefs of the Indians of the Southwest with very up-to-date Anglo crime. Although Hillerman's usual detective, Joe Leaphorn of the Navajo Tribal Police, is only mentioned in passing, he is replaced with an equally able and likeable protagonist, Sergeant Jim Chee of the same agency. Chee is caught between two cultures: he has applied to the FBI and been accepted; but he is also studying with his uncle to become a Navajo singer (what we usually--and rather inaccurately--call a "medicine man"). While pondering which way of life to choose, he becomes involved in trying to find out who stole an apparently worthless box of keepsakes from a local uranium tycoon. The search leads him to a skein of unsolved murders reaching back over thirty years. The tycoon tries to buy him off; the local sheriff threatens him; and he and the attractive, spunky Anglo schoolteacher who is helping him, become the targets of a terrifyingly ingenious hit man. In the end, both his police skills and his Navajo beliefs lead him to the killer, who has devised one of the subtlest and most horrible murder methods I have ever come across. The Navajo and other Indian cultures portrayed by Hillerman are so unfamiliar to most of us that his books' appeal is comparable to that of an sf novel about aliens. Highly recommended, as are his earlier books: The Blessing Way, Dance Hall of the Dead, and The Listening Woman.

ajb

Project Pope, Clifford D. Simak,
Ballantine, 1981, \$10.95

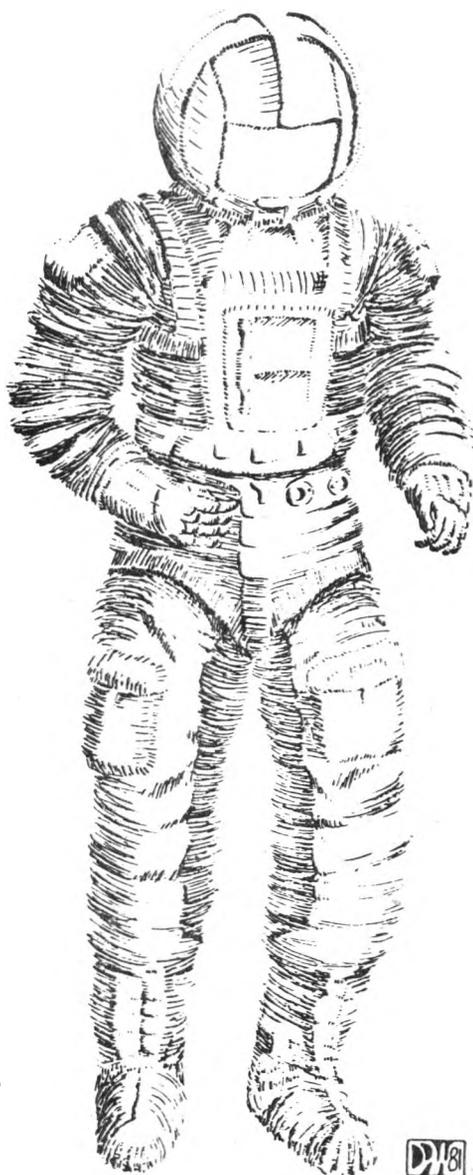
For one of his plot lines, Clifford D. Simak has swiped my favorite computer joke, which goes like this: A supercomputer is built and programmed with the sum total of all human knowledge. When it begins to operate, one of the first questions asked of it is, "Is there a God?" It blinks and beeps for a few minutes, then prints out, "NOW there is."

The Project Pope of the title is not, however, a deity. It is the ongoing task of Vatican-17, a colony established by robots a millenium ago on the remote planet End of Nothing. The original robots were religious refugees from Earth, where, despite their profound faith they were not allowed to become communicants of the Christian churches, who regarded them as soulless. Their task, in which they are joined by some humans, is to build an infallible computer-Pope to be programmed with all possible knowledge, from which it will produce the One True Faith. As they have been collecting data from alien pilgrims and from the psychic explorations of human Searchers for a thousand years, the views of the ecclesiastical Establishment have diverged considerably from the simple piety of the ordinary robots and humans. When one of the Searchers claims to have found Heaven itself, the stage is set for a schism between faith and knowledge that may destroy the project. The principal characters involved in the resolution of this conflict are Dr. Jason Tennyson, a fugitive from trumped-up criminal charges who becomes Vatican's medical officer; Jill Roberts, a freelance journalist who comes to do a story on Project Pope and remains as its official historian; Decker, a hermit of mysterious origin; Whisperer, an alien critter whose powers enable Jill and Tennyson to reach the so-called "Heaven"; Enoch Cardinal Theodosius, a robot ecclesiarch entangled in enough high-level intrigue to keep two Borgias busy full time; and of course the Pope itself. And that's just the good guys.

This is what used to be called a didactic novel, meaning that the characters spend a lot of time sitting around arguing about ideas. If you are uninterested in the subject of debate--here, religion, knowledge, and the psychological hangup of robots on humanity--you probably won't care for it, as there is much more talk than action. The plot does take a thriller-like turn at the end, when they get to

"Heaven" and find it not only decidedly uncelestial but downright dangerous; in fact, an unseemly amount of plot development is crowded into the last few chapters. I haven't read all that many of Simak's books (I'm not sure why, as The Goblin Reservation and Enchanted Pilgrimage are two of my all-time favorites), so I can't make any valid comparisons between Project Pope and the majority of his work; he does exhibit here his talent for creating sympathetic characters both human and non-human, though there are not as many of the latter as I would like. I would say that anyone who found the special NIEKAS issue on science fiction and religion to be of interest would probably also enjoy this book.

ajb



Unfinished Tales, J.R.R. Tolkien,
Houghton Mifflin, 1980, \$15.00

The Lord of the Rings offers its readers two distinct (but not necessarily separate) pleasures. The primary pleasure is that of Story; considered purely as narrative, it is probably the best story of the twentieth century. The secondary pleasure--and Tolkien's primary interest--is that of Lore: the fascinating ramifications of the subcreation Middle-earth beyond and outside the story of the One Ring. Readers interested only in Story are invited by the author to skip the appendices; those interested in the Lore not only read the appendices but delight in adding to the data given by Tolkien in articles of their own in fanzines. Most of us fall in the middle, taking pleasure in both but fanatical about neither. In The Silmarillion, the emphasis shifts: Story and Lore are of approximately equal prominence. While the Quenta Silmarillion itself is a story, and the Ainulindale a poetic myth, much of the other material is primarily informational: chronicle and essay rather than narrative.

Unfinished Tales presents yet another shift. There is only one real story: Aldarion and Erendis, a Númenorean tale. There are brief narratives that expand on episodes on the earlier books and a longer piece about the children of Húrin. The rest of the material, compiled by Christopher Tolkien from various notes and essays of his father, is Lore, ranging from the history of Galadriel and Celeborn and an essay on the Istari, which are surely of general interest to all lovers of Tolkien, to data on philology, Númenorean linear measures, and the operation of the palantiri, which will appeal only to the most devoted specialists. But, by virtue of the very fact that these tales are indeed unfinished, the book offers a new and fascinating interest: a look into the mind of the creator. From the various scraps of material collected here, we can see how Tolkien developed and sometimes radically altered his world and its inhabitants. We see, for example, how his conception of the character and motives of Galadriel kept on changing even after the publication of LotR. It is impossible to read Unfinished Tales, in which we are given glimpses of Tolkien at work on his subcreation for over half a century, without being awed by his creative powers. It is commonplace to compare his work with Malory's Arthurian tales and Wagner's Ring Cycle, but both these authors were working with material that had been enriched over many centuries by the imaginations

of countless poets. Tolkien created an even richer and more varied world single-handedly, and if not completely *ex nihilo*, at least by changing the materials he borrowed from his sources so extensively that the result is an authentically new creation. As creator, Tolkien is about as close to God as a mortal can come.

I am also extremely impressed by the work of Christopher Tolkien as editor. He has put material that is fragmentary, diffused, and frequently illegible into coherent and comprehensible form; and the tone adopted in his editorial interpolations is exactly right: neither fulsomely reverent nor pompously pedantic. He has, of course, a unique relation to the work; not only is he the son of the author, but he has been involved with Middle-earth in an increasingly intensive relationship, from naive audience, as one of the children to whom the stories were first read, to collaborator, as mapmaker and editor. The work he has done here merits at the very least his name in larger print on the cover. It is to be hoped that some day he will give us an account of his own lifetime experience with Middle-earth--it should be fascinating as both Story and Lore.

ajb

Dark Is the Sun, Philip Jose Farmer, Ballantine, 1980, 405 pp., \$2.75

No matter what the genre or type of book, there are some authors who definitely inspire unilateral allegiance. That is to say--either you love'em or you hate 'em. Some examples are Harlan Ellison, Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, or Ursula LeGuin. However, there are others who are not so easy to categorize due to their willingness to experiment with different forms. Some examples of the latter are Robert Silverberg, Philip K. Dick, and Philip Jose Farmer. This is as it should be as it prevents a writer from having his flow of ideas dry up. But it can play hob with his fans who never know what he will be up to next.

Mr. Farmer is perhaps best known as the man who "introduced" sex into science fiction or as the creator of the Riverworld series. Others (such as myself) will know him best as the originator of the Lord of Tiers series or the historian of Doc Savage and Tarzan. In this new book he is attempting something new--a Tolkienesque quest which combines elements of all his earlier books but yet is something fresh and unique. Certainly, the setting of



this book, being billions of years in the future has the scope of Riverworld. The fact that the main characters are members of a tribe resembling American Indians bespeaks his fascination with the tribal and the primitive. The character of the plant man Sloosh and the end-of-the-world that is coming echo his science fiction stories.

There are also traces of the Lord of Tiers with the concept of gateways between worlds. In other words this book has something for everyone. Speaking personally, my tastes lie somewhere in the middle ground between nuts and bolts technology and pure fantasy. Saying as much, I was prepared to overlook this book, but it is written with such consummate skill that I must admit that my prejudices in this matter do not hold.

As mentioned previously, the plot concerns a member of the Turtle Tribe many thousands of milleniums in our future. One of the talismans that is valued most highly by the tribe is the Soul Egg--sort of a psychic indicator which reveals the emotions of the wearer by means of its color. It is also the key to any existence in the hereafter; so when

young Deyv has his stolen, he is almost prepared to lay down and give up. Only his overwhelming need to recover it propels him forward, along with his companions Sloosh and Vana who have their own reasons for tracking down the thief. Hanging over them all is the imminent and permanent end of their world; and it is a race against time in more ways than one to reach their destination and contact the one being who may be able to help them escape.

The inhabitants of this future earth, as alien as they are, still can be related to some of our present day animal life. I do not think it conservative to imagine them this way though we do have species alive today that have changed very little in millions of years. Certainly they are fascinating to read about. The world as conceived by Farmer has an internal logic all of its own which is how the best of science fiction and fantasy should be done. Many writers do not have the time or the patience to put in details which are consistent with the plot. That is the reason why these writers will remain second-rate while others such as Farmer and Silverberg are in the top rank.

I think this book will appeal to a wide readership and even if you feel it is not your cup of tea, you should nevertheless give it a try.

wrb

Fantasms 2.1: A Bibliography of the Unpublished Fiction of Jack Vance, compiled by Kurt Cockrum, Daniel J. H. Levack, and Tim Underwood, published by Kurt Cockrum (309 Allston #16, Boston, MA 02146), approx. 285 sheets, unbound, photocopied mostly but not entirely from a computer print-out, \$11.50 in U.S., Canada, and Mexico, elsewhere \$15 surface, \$20 air

Here is the most comprehensive bibliography of the writings of Jack Vance yet published. It supersedes two previous bibliographies of more or less the same title (Fantasms and Fantasms 2) compiled by more or less the same persons; but it itself is not likely to be superseded for quite some time to come. Although the loose-leaf format makes it awkward to handle, it also makes it possible for additional sheets with new information, or substitute sheets with corrected information, to be inserted, and it is this that will count most with your true bibliographer and collector. And it is promised by the publisher of Fantasms 2.1 that updates will appear from time to time in a non-professional periodical bearing the

rather enigmatic title, HONOR TO FINUKA (altho' devotees of Vance of course will remember that Finuka is the name of the diety of a local religious cult in what is possibly that writer's best novel, Emphyrio).

The present work is divided into three sections: books, stories, and references, the sources of information conscientiously indicated in the last section. As far as I can determine, all English-language publications of Vance's work have been listed, including a fanzine appearance ("Seven Exits from Bocz" in THE RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, 1952), two untitled pieces in a college periodical (THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN, 1940! and 1941!), a radio dramatization of "The Potters of Firsk" (DIMENSION X, 23 July 50), and the titles of some six CAPTAIN VIDEO AND HIS VIDEO RANGERS serials that Vance scripted or co-scripted in 1952-53, as well as his numerous printings in now-defunct pulp magazines. Of course the big problem is the foreign editions and re-printings, so many of which are unacknowledged or illegitimate (i.e., pirated). Here, completeness is unlikely and perhaps impossible--the task can only be approached (as the compilers say, borrowing a term from mathematics) asymptotically.

The classification system is at first glance rather cryptic but, on investigation, one finds that it is easily understood and really very simple. Each printing is meticulously described for identification purposes and, in addition, information is given as to translators, introducers, artists, manuscript titles (where those differ from published titles), awards won and nominations received--I suspect that many readers will be surprised by the number of these last. I am tempted to quote an entry in full, to show the kinds and wealth of information provided; but that would be practical only with one of the minor pieces, so I will content myself with simply mentioning that the material on THE DRAGON MASTERS

(with the title in 'caps': i.e., as a book) is spread over four pages and contains 22 entries, including editions and printings in Italian, Dutch, German, French, and Japanese. The material on "The Dragon Masters" (with the title in quotes: i.e., as a story in a magazine or anthology) covers another very full page and lists 14 separate printings.

It is difficult to see how this laborious task, so carefully done, could have been any better done. I have combed through the pages minutely, looking for things to complain about, and have come up with points so minor that I am ashamed to mention them. I note the phrase "a entry" on p. ii, but no other error of a grammatical or typographical nature. For some reason, British rather than American practice is followed in the matter of punctuation in conjunction with inverted commas: that is, the commas and periods are placed outside the terminal quotation marks rather than inside--you see to what small points I am reduced!--but that may be policy rather than a mistake as such. I found only one "substantive error," and even that is not terribly...well, substantial. The title of Item 81 in the Story section is given as "Sabotage on The Sulfur Planet," but the story itself, in the June 1952 STARTLING STORIES, bears the title, "Sabotage on Sulfur Planet," without the definite article. And then too, to dredge up the only remaining possible objection, it might have been helpful to someone--to an uninitiate, say, browsing through the Story section--if it had been indicated that "The Overworld" (F&SF, Dec 65) and "The Sorcerer Pharesm" (F&SF Par 66) had been incorporated into The Eyes of the Overworld (1966); as it is, he might think that these very readable pieces had had no further printing history.

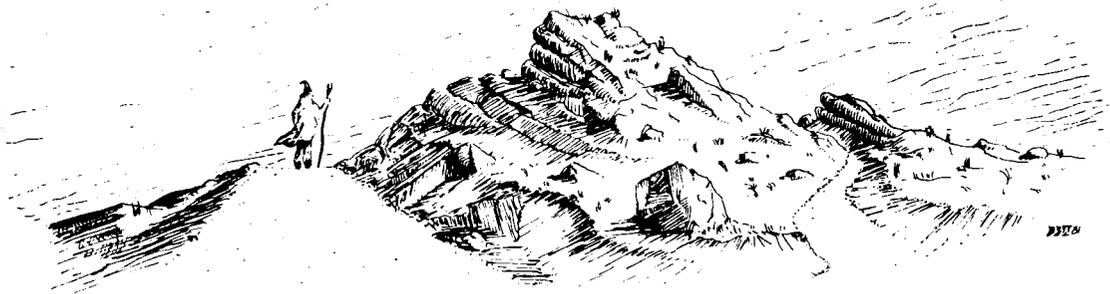
I find that I am not myself a collector of Vance. I had thought that I was and that that very large carton, bulging at the seams, in my closet gave unambiguous proof of it.

I know better now...for not only do I have only a fraction of all the domestic and foreign printings of Vance listed here, I find (on severely examining my conscience) that I am deficient in that iron-willed determination to possess them all that your true collector must have. No, like most others who 'follow' Vance's writings, I am only a reader and admirer; but, even so, Fantasms 2.1 affords me a great deal of interest...and a reader new to Vance should be delighted with it, as it not only provides the titles and sources of stories he easily could overlook, it gives much esoteric information. Pseudonyms, for instance. Considering the volume of his work, Vance has used very few (or so it would seem: perhaps he has kept some in reserve?), but these have included not only 'Jack Vance' (for his 'real' name, of course, is John Holbrook Vance) but 'John Holbrook,' 'Peter Held,' 'Alan Wade,' 'John Van See' and even 'Ellery Queen.'--for three of the many books published under this well-known nom de plume are by our author. Manuscript titles are another item of interest. One notices that they are nearly always superior to the published titles, though perhaps not always as 'commercial.' It seems that the manuscript of The Four Johns, one of the Ellery Queen novels, bears the title, Strange She Hasn't Written...and it's also strange that such an evocative title wasn't used. Bad Ronald was, originally, Something Awful--a brave title, indeed! As one would suppose, the author's title for "New Bodies for Old" (TWS, August 1950) was "Chateau D'If"--and why, incidentally, hasn't this novelet, which I remember as one of his better early stories, been reprinted?--but there is not indication that the 'true' title of To Live Forever was, as it must have been, Clarges. A few forthcoming printings, mostly foreign ones, are mentioned, and even one bran-new work: Suldrun's Garden (Putnam-Berkley, 1981), the first of a new trilogy.

In short, this is a production which every serious Vance collector and science fiction completist will have to have, and which even more casual readers for whom Vance is a favorite will find well worth having... although the mere having of it (if you will allow me one final self-indulgent remark) does leave me with a small personal problem: which is, How in the devil am I to get this 8 1/2 x 11 x 1 1/4" publication into that already-bulging carton?

ajc





The Atlas of Middle-earth, Karen Wynn Fonstad, Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1981, \$14.95

I have remarked, here or elsewhere that Middle-earth is one of the fantasy worlds which is already over-mapped. (Narnia is another; perhaps the only other.) Of Middle-earth and its various parts and ages there are maps in Tolkien's books, there are maps in other books, there are poster maps, there are repros in An Atlas of Fantasy, there is a peculiar, twisted version in The Dictionary of Imaginary Places, there are maps with all sorts of professional and amateur wargame versions, and...well, a lot of maps.

So now we have an Atlas! A waste of time? Needless duplication? No way! This book, believe it or not, is definitely worth buying if you are strongly into Tolkien... and maybe even if you're not. It's done by a lady whose professional training is in cartography, who has read all the sources and knows and understands them, and has devoted considerable care and intelligence to producing the final result.

The Atlas is attractively printed in brown and black, has 208 pages of maps and text, is thoroughly footnoted, and possesses a good index. The maps are generally done with three-dimensional effect and are supplemented by cross-sections, insets, and tables. Every battle, every locale, every city about which enough information exists, is shown in considerable detail. Ms. Fonstad draws extensively on Tolkien's drawings, as well as his text, to produce her representations of Minas Tirith, Hobbiton, Helm's Deep, Edoras, Mt. Doom, Henneth Annun, Lake-town, and so on (and on!). Included are some political maps, linguistic maps, climatic maps, and other maps on generalized subjects. All the information available from all of Tolkien's published works (including that in Unfinished Tales) is here, so it's absolutely up-to-date. I can't recommend this book too highly.

(Side Note: Ballantine Books has also brought out a sort of atlas by

another author [Journeys of Frodo: An Atlas of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, Barbara Strachey, 109 pp., \$7.95. ed.] . It's sort of a half-size book (much wider than it is high). It has page after page of detailed maps of Middle-earth (Third Age) with all the routes and timings thereof of characters in LotR (and perhaps also The Hobbit; I don't recall). Fonstad covers the same material in her own book, in a very few pages. At this point I see no sense in laying out eight bucks for this redundant book (no matter how meritorious it might otherwise be). For less than twice the price you can get a beautiful hard-bound volume with about the same material plus a near-infinite of other material. If you are considering buying the Ballantine book, check out Fonstad's Atlas first.)

rw

The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction, Ursula K. LeGuin, ed. Susan Wood, Perigee Books, 1979, \$4.95 pb.

LeGuin is one of the most honored writers in the sf and fantasy field (four Hugos, three Nebulas, a Newbery Honor Book citation, a National Book Award, and counting). She is also--and this does not follow as the night and the day--a perceptive and articulate commentator on the nature and uses of both genres (or are they one? Read the book and see) and on the craft of writing. And she is a committed feminist, a position which informs not only her fiction (especially The Left Hand of Darkness) but also several of these essays, notably "American SF and The Other," "Is Gender Necessary?" and her introduction to James Tiptree, Jr.'s Star Songs of an Old Primate. Some of the essays originated as articles, some as speeches to conventions or writers' workshops, and some as introductions to her own or others' books. All reveal the mind of a writer who never stops thinking, who is aware of all the elements besides thought that go into the creation of a work of art, and who is always trying to reach

the limits--of genre, of conventional thought, of her own skill--and to go beyond.

She sees fantasy as an exploration of the inner psyche, an articulated dream embodying a quest for the integrated self. The book includes essays on the writing of fantasy, on the great fantasists such as Andersen and Tolkien, and on style in fantasy (in the well-known "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie"). In discussing science fiction, she is concerned with finding images and patterns adequate for today's realities and for tomorrow's possibilities, and with the necessity for the genre to encompass the complexities of reality, especially of human nature, in the manner of the mainstream novel ("Science Fiction and Mrs. Brown"). The comments on writing range from the necessity of technical craftsmanship and sheer hard work to the perception of art as play, as dream, as "feigning" ("Fiction writers, at least in their braver moments, do desire the truth: to know it, speak it, serve it. But they go about it in a peculiar and devious way, which consists in inventing persons, places, and events which never did and never will exist or occur, and telling about these fictions in detail and at length and with a great deal of emotion, and then when they are done writing down this pack of lies, they say, There! That's the truth!" --Introduction to The Left Hand of Darkness). Her feminism is neither shrill ideologizing nor militant us-vs.-them activism, but a serious and powerful exploration of the role of The Other, whether defined as women, blacks, or aliens, in society,



and of how such relationships can be dealt with emotionally, politically, and artistically.

LeGuin is as good a critic and theorist as she is a writer, and I think this is a far better book than Blish's or Damon Knight's, to which it is bound to be compared. I recommend it very strongly to anyone who is interested in science fiction, fantasy, writing, or simply in being a human being in the second half of the twentieth century.

ajb

Reflex, Dick Francis, Putnam, 1981, \$11.95

When I was in college, those of us pursuing a liberal arts curriculum tended to take a rather lofty view of ourselves. We were the custodians of the cultural heritage of Western civilization, the Keepers of the Flame, and we tended to patronize (in a kindly manner, of course) those of the lesser breeds who were studying engineering or veterinary medicine. Our attitudes towards "the jocks" was even loftier and less kindly. It is therefore with a frisson of exquisite irony that I point out that the best writer of thrillers in the English language today--and arguably one of the better contemporary novelists--is not the product of a course in Creative Writing or an English Lit graduate, but a man who left school at the age of fifteen to pursue a career as a professional jockey. Who says God doesn't have a sense of humor?

Dick Francis was a champion steeplechase jockey who rode for Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and almost won the Grand National at Aintree on one of her horses, Devon Loch. (The horse's sudden collapse in the final stretch is one of the great real-life sports mysteries.) When he retired from racing, he became a newspaper columnist and started writing mysteries. To date he has published nearly a score of first-class thrillers, all of which deal in some way with the racing or breeding of horses, though the connection may be remote: one of his heroes is a painter, another a secret agent. His plots are taut and fast-paced, his heroes interesting as well as sympathetic, and his prose magnificent--lean, understated, precise, and vivid. You may have seen the dramas based on one of his novels, the miniseries "The Racing Game" on PBS's MYSTERY!--but except for the first one, they are written by others and a pale shadow of the real thing.

Philip Nore, the hero of Reflex, is

a quiet man whose life is simplified to the point of barrenness. His only interests are his career as a steeplechase jockey, at which he is a moderate success, and his hobby of photography. He finds himself involved with two separate mysteries: the search for a sister he never knew he had, at the prompting of the arrogant, dying grandmother who rejected him before he was born; and the deciphering of puzzles on films left behind by a brilliant but unpleasant photographer who seems to have dabbled in blackmail on the side. (Philip winds up dabbling in it too, and without becoming unsympathetic.) In addition to solving mysteries and nearly getting himself killed a couple of times, Philip finds his own life and his view of himself being altered, both by his own changing perspective and by his meeting with the clever and attractive Clare. (The women Francis's heroes get involved with are not sex objects but people.)

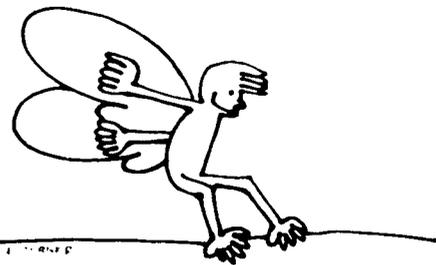
There is only one thing I don't like about Dick Francis's novels. Sooner or later there is a scene of explicit, and usually pretty devastating, violence. My objection is neither moral nor aesthetic but subjective: I am squeamish. His scenes of violence are not sadistically gratifying in the Spillane tradition but humane: they are depicted from the victim's point of view and produce an emotional reaction that is strongly anti-violence. The one criticism that reviewers have consistently leveled at his books is that his heroes are ready for action again far too soon after such encounters to be believable; but reading his autobiography, The Sport of Queens, makes it clear that very hard knocks, including broken bones, are business as usual for professional jockeys (as opposed to those who review books for a living) and are taken in stride.

This is one of Francis's better books (I think that the very best are Dead Cert, Flying Finish, and Enquiry). Try it, even if you never read mysteries and horses give you hay fever; it is, as the British say, a smashing read.

ajb

The Erotic World of Faery, Maureen Duffy, Avon/Discus, 1980 (1972), \$3.50

This book purports to be a study of faery beliefs and their use in English literature from early Anglo-Saxon times to contemporary science fiction. It contains much interesting material and some persuasive insights but is marred by



doctrinaire Freudianism, an oversimplified view of history and literature, and plain old errors of fact.

Duffy's thesis is that the realm of Faery is an imaginative projection of the unconscious mind, parallel to the world of dreams, where infantile fears and taboos, such as castration anxiety and Oedipal yearnings, are acted out in disguised form. This is undoubtedly a partial truth, but Duffy insists that this is all Faery is--a singularly unconvincing reductio ad absurdum. The whole point of Freud's theory of psychoanalysis is that when the dream is unriddled and the nature of the symbolism made clear, there will be a shock of recognition--"So that's the real truth!"--leading to healing. This may be true for analysis, but I find when elements of Faery are reduced in this way, there is for me a shock of disappointment--"Is that all there is?"--leading to either rejection of the interpretation or loss of interest in the original story. The phallic elements of the dragon, for example, are obvious once the suggestion is made--the shape, the association with treasure in caves, the preying on young maidens, etc.--but the dragon cannot be reduced to just-a-phallic-symbol. However we try to explain him away, there is still that wise and malevolent eye winking at us from the mouth of the cave. It's not that easy to get rid of dragons.

Ursula K. LeGuin, in the volume of essays I have reviewed elsewhere in this issue, also examines Faery in psychological terms; but her approach is Jungian, as is the approach of most creative fantasists and of scholars and critics with a real love and sympathy for the genre. (Duffy's bias is made clear by her reference to "the perversion of the observed, clinical insights of Freud into the neo-mysticism of Jungian pseudo-psychology.")

I found Duffy's theories alternately amusing and appalling, and not always consistent. She claims that the incest-taboo is on the one hand so urgent and so terrifying that it must lie concealed beneath all the lais of Marie de France; on the other hand she admits that it was treated openly in the well-known

story of Appollonius of Tyre (source of Shakespeare's Pericles) and the Mordred theme in the Arthurian material. Her discussion of the conscious mythologizing of Queen Elizabeth I as the Faerie Queen for political and nationalistic reasons is viable, but her suggestion that Paradise Lost is "really" about Milton's childhood jealousy over the birth of his brother Christopher (not to mention his subconscious desire to have a child by his father!) is preposterous. In her discussion of nineteenth-century literature, the case she makes for Kingsley's Water-Babies as a tract against masturbation is plausible, but I find it hard to believe that Grahame's Rat, Mole, and Toad, as well as Kipling's Kim and Mowgli, are just a bunch of penis symbols. (She also claims that Grahame's "Piper at the Gates of Dawn" chapter fails, while I believe that it succeeds superbly.)

She sees modern sf as part of the same tradition, the projection of tabooed unconscious desires into the future to evade guilt. To her the vision of a future Earth contaminated by pollution or radioactivity, as in Arthur C. Clarke's "If I Forget Thee, O Earth," can be reduced to simply the image of "the wicked mother polluted by evil men who have left her disease-ridden.... The emotional power of the story comes from thoughts about mother's adultery, real or imagined, the bad woman of East Lynne." Ms. Duffy does not seem to have noticed that writers do have conscious minds, too.

Although I found the book interesting, in an appalling sort of way, it is so riddled with errors and perverse theories that I hesitate to recommend it to anyone who is not already thoroughly grounded in the material she discusses (which would seem to leave out everybody except Diana Paxson). Fans might be amused by her reference to sf historian "Sam Moskotch," aka "Moskovitch, S."--but what can you expect of a "scholar" who states that Eleanor of Aquitaine was the mother of Henry III?

ajb

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Douglas Adams, Harmony Books: NY, 1980, 215 pp., \$6.95

Mighty good value in this age of over-sized, over-priced, over-indulgent novels is the first American edition of Douglas Adams' The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Reminiscent of the early Vonnegut of Sirens of Titans, it is fast, funny, and enormously inventive; the perfect escape for a wilting

summer day.

Adams' novel is less complex, less serious, less satirical than Sirens or Brian Aldiss's The Fifty-minute Hour, another first-rate novel its humor recalls; but it offers more than just a romp, and its ultimate explanation for the existence of Earth and human society doesn't place mankind in a position much loftier than the one offered in Sirens.

The story begins when Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway. Arthur Dent, a human, is plucked off the doomed planet just in time by his friend Ford Prefect, a Betelgeusian roving researcher engaged in up-dating a new edition of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (or How to See the Marvels of the Universe for Less than Thirty Altairian Dollars a Day); and together they are off on a mind-boggling trip through space in an extraordinary experimental spaceship stolen by the two-headed hippy president of the Galaxy and staffed by a depressed robot and an insufferably cheerful, smarmy computer. Also aboard are Trillian,

an Earth woman, and two very important white mice.

Adams has contributed material in the past to MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS, and anyone who enjoys early Vonnegut, Aldiss, Alan Coren, or The Pythons will also certainly find this book a delight.

ncis

The Singer in the Stone, John Willett, Houghton Mifflin, 1981, 86 pp., \$6.95

This short novel is labelled quite explicitly as a book for young people. It is set in a very distant future where an unimaginative society is rocked to its foundations when a young girl encounters a dreamer out of the ancient past, locked in suspended animation of a sort within a stone tower. She sets him free to change her world.

I am very uneasy about the separate existence of teenagers' fiction, because it seems to me that by then youngsters should be and usually are able to handle adult situations. Clearly, however, there are some advantages--both financial and

ALAS, POOR XLYPPFRT!!



artistic--in writing to a specific audience. But Willett's book suffers from what I consider the chief drawback; he has a tendency to write down to what he assumes to be his reader's level. Again, there may be some validity to this approach, but I find it hard to believe that any reader simple minded enough to be enthused by this pedantic, over simplified, moralistic tale would be likely to finish it in any case. There is no subtlety, no balance of ideas, but a straight dissertation on the importance of imagination and art to balance reason and fact. While I sympathize with Willett's position, I cannot believe his novel will do anything to advance it.

dd'am

Skyclimber, Raymond Z. Gallun, Tower Books, 1981, 240 pp., \$2.25

This is the best new Tower title to appear in several years, the fourth novel from a writer who appeared in the magazines with some frequency in the years past. His latest is set, for the most part, on the planet Mars, where two members of the first manned expedition have been marooned and must somehow survive until a rescue ship can reach them. They do so, and a chain of events is set off leading to a larger, permanent colony of the red planet.

Into this world is born Timothy Barlow, orphaned almost immediately, but raised by the other colonists. His lack of peers warps his outlook somewhat, but he is still able to develop and grow. While still young, an atomic war on Earth endangers the entire expedition, and only his personal actions cause the rebuilding nations of Earth to consider salvaging the colony. And Barlow has only begun to affect the course of human history.

This is an above average adventure novel from a publisher that has not distinguished itself particularly in this genre. Hopefully this is a sign of some improvement in that line, which did bring into print some deserving titles in their earlier years. It is also good to see a familiar name appear once more, as Gallun was one of my early favorites.

dd'am

Transfer to Yesterday, Isidore Haiblum, Doubleday, 1981, 188 pp., \$9.95 (previously published as a Ballantine paperback in 1973)

This kaleidoscopic novel has enough turns and twists to be worthy of van Vogt. The world has dissolved into a number of warring, color coded

factions. James Norton, formerly a docile member of one such, has suddenly changed his position, and is now declared a heretic, an outlaw. As such he is denied the protection of the guild he formerly served. A linkage through time awaits him, one that would reflect back down through the years to the 1930's, where a private detective is discovering that he is involved in a very different type of caper.

Haiblum has written sporadically over the years, always entertaining but never really striking it big with any one novel. It is somewhat surprising therefore that Doubleday would select one of his early paperback originals and do a hardcover edition of it, apparently unrevised as well. It's a competently done adventure story with credible characters, and probably deserves a more permanent edition, but there are any number of other novels that do so also.

dd'am



A Quiet Night of Fear, Charles L. Grant, Berkley Books, 1981, 183 pp., \$2.25

Charles Grant has been writing less and less science fiction in recent years and spending more of his time creating a respectable body of above average horror novels. Relying on suspense rather than gore, his work is generally softspokenly impressive. This latest book, blurbed for some reason as "fantasy horror" is straight science fiction, a mystery story set in the nebulous future.

In a small resort town, a female investigative reporter is attempting to enjoy her first vacation in years. It is marred, however, by a series of particularly brutal murders, and the suspicions that alight upon a young boy/android, an artificial construct. The nature of the murders is such that he is a natural suspect, particularly since humans have an unreasoning fear of pseudo-intelligences in any case.

The sequence of events is fairly

standard, almost a formula murder mystery under its trappings of science fiction. Unfortunately, the novel doesn't work well for me. The suspense never really generates any momentum, and the surprise ending became obvious to me about half way through. The relationship between the reporter and the local police inspector is interesting early in the novel, but never deepens. The afterword mentions that this was written originally as a treatment for a possible television movie, which may explain the superficialities of character development, but it still robs the novel of much of its impact.

dd'am

Imram, William Barnwell, Pocket Books, 1981, 261 pp., \$2.75

This is the second volume of a trilogy started with The Blessing Papers, an after the holocaust novel that wanders over the border into a fantasy on occasion. The second volume is very much in the style and mood of the first, though in some ways less ambitious than its predecessor.

Turly Vail returns, having outsmarted the monks of the evil Order of Zeno and the rapacious agents of a foreign power. Turly continues his wanderings around the land of Imram (Eire) pursued by his old foes, and enmeshed in the intertribal and interpersonal complexities of that land. In company with a poet, he falls into the clutches of the Ennis, a primitive people who initiate the two into their tribe after a series of bizarre rites.

The Ennis live in fear of the Gort, a northern people of peculiar habits who are in some slight way allied with the Order of Zeno. What's more, the villains have an agent among the Ennis who is keeping tabs on Turly. Dermot, leader of Zeno, is personally determined to avenge himself on Turly, an inducement even stronger than his order's belief that the younger man knows the whereabouts of the Blessing Papers, legendary documents from before the fall of civilization.

As you might expect, there is much chase and escape and capture and what not. None of it is tremendously novel, though it is certainly competently done. It is virtually a cliché that the middle volume of trilogies are generally dull, merely prolonging the story until the final volume, but that seems to be what has happened here as well, with an ending that is merely a lull and not a conclusion. You probably should

wait and read the trilogy as a whole.

dd'am

House of Another Kind, William Fritts, Tower Books, 1981, 238 pp., \$2.25

Invaders at Ground Zero, David Houston, Leisure Books, 1981, 208 pp., \$2.25

Neither of these two imprints (Tower and Leisure) are numbered among the major publishers of science fiction. Although they occasionally release a notable volume (usually reprint), the bulk of their output varies from boring to imitative to outright bad. As a consequence, most are never even reviewed. The two volumes above are exceptional, not because they are particularly good, but because they are at least interesting.

House of Another Kind is a near future political thriller that assumes that an indestructible extraterrestrial copy of a human dwelling is discovered in a remote Florida forest. Because of its unique properties, the country is polarized and brought to the brink of revolution. Fritts does make some attempt to deal with the intricacies of the situation he establishes, but unfortunately he cannot write well enough to satisfy us. For most of the book, almost nothing happens, other than the development of a distinctly peculiar love affair between the protagonist and a rather kinky prostitute.

Invaders at Ground Zero is the novelization of a TV script for an anthology series called TALES OF TOMORROW, of which I have never heard, even though it says that they did adaptations of works by Wells, Verne, Clarke, and Sturgeon. It appears from this episode that they were very much like the late THE OUTER LIMITS.

In theme, this is similar to the Fritts novel. An alien spacecraft appears at the test site of the atomic bomb, and is investigated by a team of isolated scientists. They discover a humanoid body inside, inhabited by apparently sentient microscopic life forms which soon infect the terrestrials as well. Houston is another competent but uninspired writer who is frankly more entertaining when he is doing his own novels. This latter volume is profusely illustrated with badly reproduced stills from the movie.

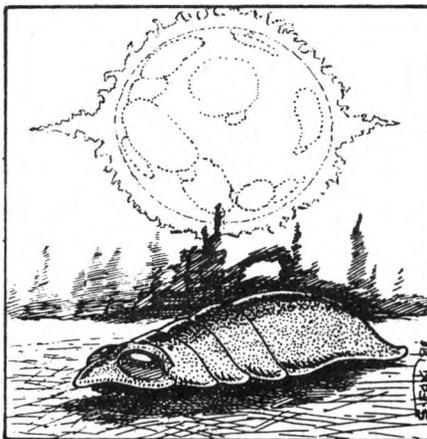
dd'am



Heroes and Horrors, Fritz Leiber, Pocket Books, 1980, 240 pp., \$2.25, edited by Stuart Shiff)

This collection of nine stories by Fritz Leiber concentrates on fantasy and horror, drawn from both recent and early stories. Although not demonstrating the full range of the author's talents, they are fairly representative of his supernatural fiction. The two fantasies, "Sea Magic" and "The Mer She", are both very weak additions to the ongoing adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser.

The supernatural stories are far from weak. "Midnight in the Mirror World" is fited with a relentless progression of horror as an apparition moves slowly through a world of reflections. "A Bit of the Dark Wolrd" is nearly as good, wherein three people in a remote cabin catch a glimpse of another kind of existence.



"Richmond Late September 1849" is an effective evocation of the world of Edgar Allen Poe. In "Midnight by the Morphy Watch" a chess player acquires a watch that provides preternatural ability at the game. A sedate, bigoted man succumbs to the horror of Nazi Germany within his mind, and is asphyxiated by his own terror in "The Belsen Express."

The two weakest of these are "Terror from the Depths", an unexceptional Lovecraft pastiche, and "Dark Wings", a low keyed story of a treacherous twin. Even these are of fairly high quality. As a whole, the collection is one of Leiber's best. Leiber rarely seems to attract the attention he deserves, for he is certainly one of the most versatile writers in the genre.

dd'am

Best Science Fiction Stories of the Year; 8th Annual, edited by Gardner

Dozois, Dell Books, 1980, 412 pp., \$2.25

Although 1978 wasn't the best year for short stories in the field, Dozois has collected here eleven that prove it wasn't a total loss. The most famous and possibly best story in the collection is John Varley's "The Persistence of Vision", a story with an unsettling examination of perception and its effect on human society. Rivalling the Varley story for top honors is Michael Bishop's "Old Folks at Home", in which a group of elderly men and women participate in an experimental marriage group, and Chris Priest's "Whores", a brooding, almost repulsive story of the aftermath of war.

Among the other outstanding stories are Bernard Deitchman's "Cousins", a very effective story of prehistoric time, Joan Vinge's "View from a Height", Gene Wolfe's "Seven American Nights", and Greg Benford's alien contact story, "In Alien Flesh".

Isaac Asimov, Thomas Disch, and Phyllis Eisenstein have above average stories as well. James P. Girard's "September Morn" is very enticing, but seems to lack a clear ending. The stories are preceded by a very thorough summary of the year in science fiction, and followed by a substantial and worthwhile list of honorable mentions. All in all, this is at least as good as any rival "best" collection for 1978, and the nonfiction material probably lifts it a step above.

dd'am

The Eyes of Sarsis, Andrew Offutt and Richard Lyon, Pocket Books, 1980, 207 pp., \$2.25

This is the second volume of three to cover the War of the Wizards, a duel of magic and swordplay set in a rather standard fantasy world. The protagonist is Tiana, a beautiful pirate leader who is that rarity of sword and sorcery, the competent female. Tiana first appeared in the first volume, The Demon in the Mirror. Now she returns to set out of a quest to find the missing daughter of her king, an innocent pawn in the rivalry between two powerful sorcerers.

Tiana sets off with her crew and is immediately drawn into a conventional series of adventures involving monsters, ensorcelments, and swordplay. The narration is competent, though not as fluid as in the first volume. In due course the immediate menaces are neutralized, although the two sorcerers are left intact,

presumably for the final volume to come.

The inherent problem with stories of this type is that they are all so much alike, it is hard to distinguish anything except the very good or the very bad. This is neither; it is a competent, traditional sword and sorcery novel whose only novelty is its female protagonist, and she would be more convincing if she wasn't so frequently musing about her own great beauty. This is recommended for what it is, but if you're not already inclined to like this sort of thing, you won't like this one either.

dd'am

CommuniPath Worlds, Suzette Haden Elgin, Pocket Books, 1980, 348 pp., \$2.75

This volume brings together the first three novels by Suzette Haden Elgin, each featuring her telepathic hero, Coyote Jones, in his adventures amid a future interstellar society. The first novel, The CommuniPaths, centers on a religious group, one of whom has given birth to a telepathic baby of unprecedented strength.

Coyote Jones is more prominent in Furthest, in which he is sent to a backwater world to investigate their secretive society. Because of the peculiarities of interstellar politics, the delegate from Furthest is slated to become the most powerful political figure in human society, and the existing power structure is concerned that some monstrous plot might be hatching unbeknownst to them.

The third, and best, of the novels is At the Seventh Level, which incorporates the excellent short story, "For the Sake of Grace". Abba is a planet where females are considered little better than animals and men dominate all aspects of society. The highest honor in Abban society is to be a poet of the seventh level, and for the first time in its history, the planet has a woman in that category. When it becomes evident that a plot has been laid against her life, no resident official can deal with it, because of the difficulties of treating with a woman (inferior) poet (superior).

All three novels have been out of print for some time, and all three deserve more attention than they have received. Although Coyote Jones is frequently more of a caricature than a character, the societies that Elgin creates are fascinating, and distract our attention from other considerations.

dd'am

Father to the Stars, Philip Jose Farmer, Tor Books, 1981, 319 pp., \$2.75

Here collected for the first time are the complete adventures of Father John Carmody, murderer and social outcast turned priest. The collection includes Night of Light, a short novel set on Dante's Joy, the planet where spiritual forces may really exist, and allow the unconscious to fulfill its every desire. Here Carmody faces the truth about himself, and never thereafter does he demonstrate his callous side, though his unsavory past surfaces from time to time.

Two directly linked stories are "A Few Miles", in which a giant intelligent bird attaches its egg to Carmody's chest, and "Prometheus", which conveys Carmody to the home planet of the sentient avians, so that he can midwife the birth of an entire intelligent civilization. The latter story in particular is one of Farmer's best pieces ever.

"Father" is another short novel, this time with Carmody and his ailing Bishop shanghaied by an immortal being to a planet where death is only temporary, and the power to resurrect is offered to mankind, but only at a terrible price. Carmody personally must determine whether or not the offer should be accepted. It is another of Farmer's finest works. The volume concludes with a relatively minor but still entertaining piece called "Attitudes", wherein Carmody rescues an obsessive gambler from the fruits of his own shady dealings. If you don't have these stories elsewhere, this is a golden opportunity to acquire them. If you already do have them, this is a golden opportunity to re-read them.

dd'am

Systemic Shock, Dean Ing, Ace Books, 1981, 298 pp., \$2.50

Dean Ing steadily improves as a writer. His early works struck me as competent but low key, undistinguished, but as time passed there are scenes that recur, particularly in the latter stories. This, his third book, a relatively long novel about World War Four, is an improvement in several respects.

In the first place, the main sub-plot concerns Ted Quantrill, a fairly average young boy at first, matured during the course of the book by the hardships he faces with the collapse of much of civilization. The main plot is the war itself, a gradually unfolding conflict with the United States, Europe, and Russia on one side, China, India, and much of the

third world on the other, with the Islamic states waiting to one side to see what profit they can make out of things. It's a view of the world that I first encountered in some of Brian Aldiss' work, and one that seems at times frighteningly possible.

The alternating story line from the general war to the specific character of Ted Quantrill almost provides a pair of novels, both of which are worth reading, though neither can really stand independently. It is also a frequently discomforting book; Ing has no illusions about the survival of ethics and morality in the face of the world wide conflict. This is squarely in the tradition of the future war novels that used to be so popular in Europe, but written far more competently than most of those.

dd'am

Universe 11, edited by Terry Carr, Doubleday, 1981, 192 pp., \$9.95

This is easily my favorite anthology series, the last of the original wave of a few years ago. Although not every volume has been first rate, I've rarely encountered a story in Universe that I did not enjoy at least on some level. This volume seems one of the better, including two particularly good stories, one at each end.

The opening story is Michael Bishop's "The Quickening", wherein the entire population of the world wakes one day to discover that they have been suffled about. Immediately factions begin to form by language group, but clearly this is a superficial effect that will not endure. Readers seeking clear cut answers will be disappointed, but I enjoyed this very much. Equally impressive is Michael Swanick's "Mummer Kiss", a post-collapse story about which I refuse to tell you much except that it is one of the most impressive stories I've read in a while. Swanick appears a likely Campbell award candidate.

Another fine story is "Venice Drowned" by Kim Stanley Robinson, a brooding nightmare of a story in a setting that is amply described by the title. Josephine Saxton, William Gibson, and Ian Watson have first rate stories as well, and there are competent but lesser pieces by Nancy Kress, Carter Scholz, and Carol Emshwiller. Don't wait for the paperback; there are Hugo contenders in this book.

dd'am

Strange Seed, T.M. Wright, Playboy Books, 1980, \$2.25 (reprint of 1978

hardcover)

The Woman Next Door, T.M. Wright,
Playboy Books, 1981, \$2.50

Stephen King speaks very highly of T.M. Wright in his non-fiction work, *Danse Macabre*, apparently on the basis of *Strange Seed*, apparently this author's first published work. Released last year in paperback, *Strange Seed* is a competently told, moderately suspenseful story about a young couple who take up residence in a remote house in a forest. There they hear enigmatic stories of previous residents, who suddenly adopted strange children who died shortly thereafter of wasting diseases, following which the parents committed suicide.

Paul and Rachel are typical dumb protagonists, however. When a naked child appears in their home, they not only take him in without question, despite their growing animosity toward the child, but they also fail to contact the authorities, and then bury the child secretly when he dies quietly one night. Stirred to attempt escape, they find yet another young, dead child, which mysteriously causes them to surrender to the inevitable, and they return to the house for another run of mysterious visits.

If all this sounds vague, that's exactly the atmosphere of the novel. Wright was apparently striving to achieve just this dreamy atmosphere, but I suspect it was a failure of artistic vision. The characters are so powerless to make concrete moves that we become frustrated with them and fail to care what they may face. The menace itself becomes so formless and unstated that we cannot even mentally fill in details of our own. For me, the suspense and the horror are virtually flat.

This is not true of *The Woman Next Door*, a much more complex and involving novel. Christine is a young wife also, and similarly has just moved to a new home, this time in a well populated historical neighborhood in the process of restoration. Christine is crippled from the waist down, the result of some incident in her infancy connected with a singularly repulsive babysitter. Christine's next door neighbor, Marilyn, is a domineering, obsessive older woman who co-opts Christine's friendship.

But Marilyn's life is beginning to come apart at the seams. Her young son is visited by a mysterious companion; her husband has been seeing another woman. It gives nothing away to tell you the manifestations are linked to Christine, and any reader who doesn't know within the first few

chapters whom the babysitter has grown up to be should be ashamed of himself or herself. Fortunately, that doesn't spoil the book's effect at all, because the central focus is the growing disintegration of Marilyn's life. This still isn't a world shaking novel, but it does give you your money's worth.

dd'am

Under the City of Angels, Jerry Earl Brown, Bantam Books, 1981, 291 pp., \$1.95

Keeping Time, David Bear, Popular Library, 1981, 222 pp., \$2.25
(reprint of a 1979 hardcover)

Here are two first novels by authors neither of whom have appeared in the genre previously in any length. Brown's is the more conventional SF novel; Bear's owes at least as much to the tough detective genre as it does to SF. Both, however, are set in future Americas that have developed into lawless societies on the skids, with the economy worsening, the government growing increasingly corrupt, and life in general becoming more and more of a burden.

In Brown's novel, a disastrous quake of mysterious origin has caused most of the West Coast to be destroyed, much of it sinking beneath the ocean. The government has outlawed diving to the ruins for salvage, ostensibly because of a radiation hazard, in reality to preserve secrets it does not want the public to be aware of. Mad Jack Kelso is an outlaw salvager, his life shattered by the loss of his family. Kelso is employed, virtually shanghaied, by a beautiful young woman and her two bodyguards for

some highly explicit salvage work. Unknown to Kelso and the girl herself, she is actually an alien from another world, programmed to prevent humanity from learning too much.

Bear's novel is a detective story, featuring the last (possibly) private eye in the world. Jack Hughes is hired to discover why five cassettes have been stolen from a time vault, a place where rich but bored people can store moments of their life for use later. As his investigations proceed, Hughes finds that murder is involved as well, and that even his employer has some skeletons he'd rather keep hidden.

Under the City of Angels is fairly well written when set on Earth, but the scenes set in space are dreary. The pacing is rather bad at times; the reader keeps waiting for something, anything, to happen, but some of the underwater sequences are quite good. Keeping Time, on the other hand, is extremely well done, with pacing and characterization handled very well indeed. Don't be put off by the hokey time storing device; its function has virtually nothing to do with the plot, in fact, Hughes suspects all the time that it is just a clever con game, and we never see anything to disprove this theory.

dd'am

Cassandra Rising, edited by Alice Laurence, Doubleday, 1978, 206 pp.,
(recorded as talking book RC 12114)

This is part of the growing field of collections of SF stories by women authors. There is no feminist theme to the book except for the fact that



all of the stories were written by women. I found most of the stories fair to good, with just a few strike outs. The story I cared least for is "Last One In Is a Rotten Egg", by Grania Davis. This was suppose to be an allegory with a surprise revelation at the end, but I suspected her point only a page into the story. It was really very weak. My favorite of the book was "The Vanilla Mint Tapestry" by Jacqueline Lichtenberg. I gather this fits into a series she has been writing, but it is the first story I have read. The funny thing is that this was the most traditional and masculine story in the book.

erm

Jules Verne, Inventor of Science Fiction
Peter Costello, Charles Scribners' Sons, 1978, 222 pp., (recorded as talking book RC14287)

Of the two writers of SF who were working around the turn of the century, I have read very much by H.G Wells and very little of Jules Verne, I had been very put off by the long descriptive passages in Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea. I found the descriptions of sea life as viewed through the portholes of the "Nautilus" tedious. The only other story I ever read was a novelette called "The Eternal Adam" which Don Wolheim had published in the short-lived SF magazine called SATURNE. I found this biography of Verne very interesting, and the descriptions of his books have aroused my interest. I want to try more of them. Unfortunately, according to the biographer, most of Vern's books were issued as juveniles and were given very careless translation. Large portions of original material were deleted by the translators, who added other passages, scenes, and sequences of events not found in the original. These variations were generally inferior to the original and destroyed the flow of the plots. This brings up the problem of which editions are best to read, and which of these have recorded. I wish the author had included an annotated bibliography of translations of Vern. He did include in appendix a list of trips around the world chronicled by Vern by various means taking from a half year to five days. I am surprised he did not include Yuri Gagarin's first orbiting of the earth. I remember an article in POPULAR SCIENCE or a similar magazine in the late forties about such trips, ending with the comment that in another fifty years base stations would be doing it in two hours. At that time I did not understand the principal of orbiting satellites and was confused by that section.

The author of this book seemed to have an axe to grind on the matter of Vern's religious beliefs. Again and again he made the point that Vern's family after his death insisted that he had been an orthodox believer, but that it is evident from his books that he accepted Darwin and materialism completely and was only a nominal Christian. After he made the point once I did not see why he kept returning to it. It is interesting how attitudes have changed. Last century, religious authorities were almost as violent in their rejection of Darwinism as they had been several centuries earlier in regard to the heliocentric model of the universe. Today all but the most rigid of fundamentalists, such as Ronald Reagan, have no qualms with evolution. While scientific evidence towards evolution is compelling, the scientifically illiterate do not know what it is. At the mention of evolution these (as John Boardman calls them) "funnymentalists" froth at the mouth.

erm

The Crock of Gold, James Stevens,
MacMillan Publishing Co., 1912,
228 pp., (recorded as talking book
RC 14644)

I first read this in a new trade paperback edition about fifteen years ago. The only other Stephens book I read, about the same time, was Dierdre, a straight historical novel with no fantasy.

I assume this is based on Irish mythology. It is set today (that is, the author's current time) and involves leprechauns, the great god Pan, and the Irish god Angus Oag. As in so many tales, the whole story begins when the natural order of things is disturbed and complications keep occurring until they are set right again. In Evangeline Walton's The Virgin and the Swine the Foot-holder loses her virginity. In Wagner's Ring the Rheingold the gold is stolen. Here the leprechaun's gold is stolen. Retribution follows retribution, involving the dieties, until by accident the gold is restored by children at play. However events have progressed beyond recall and in a eucatastrophic ending several mortals join the gods on another plane of existence. The behavior of the philosophers and their wives are so zany and off the wall that the book is wildly amusing. Most of the book takes place in timeless rural Ireland. It is a bit jarring when the twentieth century is dragged in by the leprechauns



who send an anonymous note to the police telling them that there are two bodies buried under the philosophers floor. There is a true mythic quality to this book and the narration of the talking book by Michael Clark Lawrence is perfectly suited to the text.

erm

Dragonsong, Anne McCaffrey,
Athenian, 1976, 222 pp.,
(recorded as talking book
RC14311)

I only read the first two novelettes in ANALOG magazine about two decades ago which were to later make up three quarters of the first Dragon book. Several of the six books published thus far have been recorded, and this is the first that I have received. This one is a juvenile about a fifteen year old girl in an out of the way "hold" who has a natural talent for music. The mores of the society prohibit female "harpists" and much of the book is about this adolescent girl with a talent being hampered by a sexist society. After reading this I can see why the Dragon books have an almost cult following. This is a fast-moving story that held my attention. I kept returning to it despite other obligations until I finished reading it.

Even though this book was written late in the series, I had little trouble following it. There is an excellent summary of the previous action at the beginning of the book.

Dragonsong is strictly science fiction, set on another planet in the far future. This world has lost contact with, and probably even memory of, its colonizers. The only fantasy is psi... telepathy teleporation, and time travel...which

have three sequels in my inkprint book collection. The young borrower girl befriends an invalid boy living temporarily in the house. He helps them until a vengeful maid discovers the situation and is determined to have the rat catcher find and destroy them. They escape to live an almost-comfortable life outside the house.

erm

Horn Crown, Andre Norton, DAW, 1981, \$2.95

The newest Witch World novel is the earliest yet in point of time: it deals with the first human settlement after the vanishing of the ancient inhabitants. These people enter the land they name High Hallack through a Gate, losing in the process their memory of why they are leaving their homeland. Elron of Garn's House, a young warrior, is exiled from his clan because his dereliction of duty has resulted in his lord's daughter being ensnared by the magic of a Moon Shrine. He sets off to rescue her, in the unwilling company of Gatheia, a Wise Woman's Handmaiden, who seeks for herself the magic she feels has been stolen by the lost Lady Lynne. Both accomplish their quests, but the ending is not as either had expected.

The magic in the Witch World novels has always been like granite outcroppings in a grassy field--clearly parts of a single whole, but with the connections, and the nature of that whole, obscured. Here Norton deals in some detail with the roots of that magic, drawing on traditional myths and rituals of the Triple Goddess, the Earth-Mother, and Herne the Hunter. The borrowings are obvious but naturally integrated into her own cosmos, so that they do not seem like hoked-up footnotes jammed into the story as is too often the case in would-be mythopoeic writing. The Mysteries have always been women's secrets, as they are here even though the protagonist is male; power, sexuality, and the integration of Yin and Yang all have their place in the story: the resolution is Jungian, as is typical in Norton's work. This is one of my favorites in the series because I find the mythic material so interesting; it is also one of the better stories. Highly recommended as a matter of course to all Norton fans; an excellent introduction to the Witch World for those lovers of fantasy who have not yet explored it.

One small cavil: it seems that either Andre Norton has lost track of her geography/cosmography, or I have. (Three guesses which...) The setting, High Hallack, is at one point

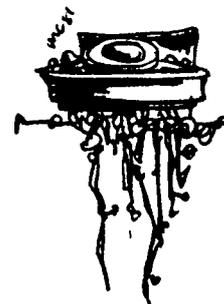
referred to as "Arvon" by an Old One. The Jargoon Pard is definitely set in Arvon. Yet when the Were-Riders and their brides returned from High Hallack to Arvon in Year of the Unicorn, to which The Jargoon Pard is a sequel, they passed through a gate, which would seem to indicate that each is in a different cosmos. I am confused: can anyone out there lend me a Fodor's Guide to Arvon, or even a battered copy of Witch World on \$5 a Day?

ajb

[...concerning the geographical divisions of Witch World--Arvon bears the same relationship to the Dales which are along the eastern coast of the West continent as Escor bears to Estcarp on the Eastern continent. The Old People, for some reason, were in exile, or were forced to withdraw from the coasts--they went beyond the Waste and the Mountains of north westward and established their own place which they then protected by various safeguards of illusion and "gates" as that the Wereriders passed.

They had gone from the Dales at the coming of the Dalesmen but at that time their safeguards were not as tight since the land to the sea was largely uninhabited--except for some straying peoples. From the Dalesmen who were able to be drawn into their company they recruited various new stocks who came because of inclination and affinity then into Arvon and became a part of the former dominant race.

...In regards to Jargoon Pard--it's relationship in the series is a loose sequel to Year of the Unicorn. The Crystal Gryphon, though laid in the same country and at a time not too far removed has different characters--the sequel to it--Gryphon in Glory--has just been published by Atheneum in a hardcover edition. The Witch World books skip around in time and some ((as stated before)) are laid on the eastern continent and some on the Western--the main characters in some appear at an earlier or later date as minor characters in another book...andre norton]



is generally accepted as part of SF anyway.

In this story a girl helps recover a number of rare "fire lizards", the small animals from which the great dragons were selectively bred centuries earlier. She also finds that her musical talents are not only tolerated but welcomed in the world outside of her own "hold". I enjoyed the story very much but I can also see where the travails of a misunderstood adolescent girl could put off some readers.

erm

The Borrowers, Mary Norton, Voyager Book of Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963, (recorded as talking book RC7809)

This has become a minor classic of children's literature. It is a fantasy of "little people" who haunt homes belonging to normals. The creatures "borrow" things that they need for survival as well as luxury. Their style of life is upper-middle class British and are human in every way except for size. Their life-span, strength, and everything else being normal, makes the story very much a fantasy. The author probably did not even want to think about the natural consequences of something being that small.

Their lifestyle is cutesy. The daughter lives in a cigar box modified into a bedroom. They have stolen a wristwatch to use as a wall clock, they use dollhouse furniture and artistic miniatures, etc. I would gather they are about the size of mice. When the story takes place this particular house is haunted by only one family of three borrowers though in the past many had lived there. In places the story gets a bit precious but on a whole it is enjoyable. I had not read any of them before tho I

A History of the Hugo, Nebula, and International Fantasy Awards, Donald Franson and Howard DeVore, Misfit Press (4705 Weddel St., Dearborn, MI 48125), 141 pp., paper, \$5.00 postpaid

The title says it all. The history, rules, and a complete listing of these awards are provided. I assume the accuracy of this work based on spot checks only as it is definitely not my idea of light reading.

Sections worth ingesting in their entirety, however, are the history of the Hugo awards by Franson and the corresponding supplement for the Nebulas by DeVore. They are certainly informative--as is only expected--and interesting--as is hoped.

These listings include not only the winners in the different categories but all nominees and recommended works. This edition is complete from 1951 through 1980 with a separate insert covering this year's Nebula awards.

Legibility is high with black ink on gold paper. Photos of the awards are passable and the cover design functional.

This is definitely a recommended reference source and argument quencher.

mb

Nightworld, David Bischoff, Ballantine, 1979, \$1.75

When a friend recommended Bischoff's short stories to me I immediately did the obvious: I read one of his novels.

The planet Nightworld has for centuries been plagued by a skein of monsters from Terrestrial fiction: griffins, werewolves, vampires, dragons, and etc. The cultural level of the planet is that found in Victorian England. Contemporaries of that period would certainly expect such things to fly, slither, and skulk through the night--as do the people of Nightworld. The twist to this tale (yes, Anne, I'm going to pass that one by) is that all these creatures are mechanical in nature, cyborgs to be exact.

Maybe Bischoff's strength is in his shorter works. It is that format where good ideas by themselves can sometimes make it.

But as James Blish pointed out, ideas by themselves are sometimes fragile. The old saw about having only one string to your bow comes to mind. It takes ideas about ideas to make a lasting piece of art. Many times it seems as if the author took the

obvious route (obvious at least to this jaded reader) with the predictable result of frequent predictability. The dialogue often suffered accordingly with the characters often talking out their actions rather than the context of the story making these movements apparent.

But SF is the literature of ideas and Mr. Bischoff seems to be full of them. He has come up with a unique background from whence he can spring many a surprise. It is a background certainly worth pursuing; which he does in Vampires of Nightworld.

The sequel is remarkably better though the ending was left a little too open for my personal taste. But it does show that he learned something from his first outing into the Nightworld.

Inexperience is curable and the evidence is here somewhere between these two books.

mb

The Making of Doctor Who, Terrance Dicks and Malcolm Hulke, Target, 1976, approx. \$2.75

I've been threatening to introduce you to Doctor Who for the past couple of issues. Now, I will let this book make the introduction.

It is ideally suited to this task. The authors take you from the very first show, aired in 1963, right up through the Doctor's fourth incarnation in the person of Tom Baker (probably the most well-known version to the American audience in addition to having the longest stint on the show).

Background material on the characters and actors portraying them are all included along with a roll call of the various villains who have appeared through the years to threaten and amuse. A chronological program guide is also included which provides a thumbnail history of the Time Lord's adventures.

I found the segment on the actual production of a typical episode particularly interesting. I had no idea that so much was shot actually in sequence, moving from one set to the next with no breaks.

Well-reproduced black and white stills from some of the later shows are provided which show the four different Doctors as they appeared in the series.

This is possibly a bit much for anyone who is not inclined toward a show of this nature but I think that anyone willing to take a chance runs a definite risk of contamination.

mb

Del Rey Books has announced that they will be publishing Arthur C. Clarke's sequel to 2001: A Space Odyssey in 1982. Clarke has received "a seven-figure advance" for 2010: Odyssey Two which he has already completed.

UNREVIEWED NEW RELEASES

Ace

Paratime, H. Beam Piper
To Sail the Century Sea, G.C. Edmondson
Storm Over Warlock, Andre Norton
Strange Seas and Shores, Avram Davidson
Lost Dorsai (trade), Gordon R. Dickson
Proteus, Voices for the 80's, Richard S. McEnroe, ed.
The Shape Changer, Keith Laumer
Moon of Three Rings, Andre Norton
Empire, H. Beam Piper
Tactics of Mistake, Gordon R. Dickson

Tomoe Gozen, Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Combat SF, Gordon R. Dickson
Octagon, Fred Saberhagen
The Purgatory Zone, Arsen Darnay
Citadels on Earth (Flash Gordon, book 6)
Casca: The Barbarian, Barry Sadler
The Flame Knife (Conan), Robert E. Howard and L. Sprague de Camp

Ballantine

The Long Result, John Brunner
Hidden Variables, Charles Sheffield
The Wooden Star, William Tenn
Their Majesties Bucketeers, L. Neil Smith
Stellar #7, Judy-Lynn del Rey, ed.
The House Between the Worlds, Marion Zimmer Bradley
Merlin's Ring, H. Warner Munn
Up the Line, Robert Silverberg
More Than Human, Theodore Sturgeon
Martian Time-Slip, Philip K. Dick
Space Doctor, Lee Correy
Dragonslayer, Wayland Drew
The Seven Altars of DuSarra, Lawrence Watt-Evans
Elidor, The Owl Service, Alan Garner
The Space Merchants, Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth

Warner

Dead & Buried, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro



MAGIC LANTERN REVIEWS

2-2-1981

To the Disney Studio:

I want to take issue with you over several points of your movie, THE BLACK HOLE, which I have just seen. Please realize that my purpose in writing to you is constructive, that the points I am going to discuss seem important to me, and that I am hoping you will send me a real answer with your reactions

- 1) Your advertising has been misleading.

The television ads show a computerized animation sequence in which the point of view travels with exciting momentum across grid lines presumably representing normal space and then down a funnel representing a black hole. The newspaper ads say something like, "The Journey Begins Where Everything Else Ends."

These things suggest to me that the movie will concern itself with a trip through a black hole, and with whatever is to be found beyond.

In fact, that animation is the title sequence and is not part of the story; and the descent into the black hole does not take place until the last five minutes of the film. The bulk of the screen time is actually concerned with the efforts of the heroes to escape from the fortress of the villain, and what you have here is not essentially a space adventure movie at all.

- 2) The science in this movie is offensively bad.

Much of it, to be sure, is fantasy science, where the effects are tailored to the dramatic needs of the script, i.e., when one wants the characters in danger one inserts the line, "There's an immense gravity field here!" and when one wants them to be safe, the danger is cancelled by, "The gravity field doesn't seem to be operative in the vicinity of that spacecraft!" This sort of thing is okay--that is to say, it's permissible in science fiction co

have effects that only have labels, not explanations--but only if it's done with internal consistency, which it's not, here.

In one scene, for example, where the gravity has just been declared to be "on," some people are climbing a ladder obviously in free fall. At another point, the small spacecraft is standing off from the large craft within the "no gravity" zone, yet when the decision is made to dock, the small ship approaches with its main thrusters blasting forward in every appearance of landing under heavy gravity.

This could be "merely" bad editing, except that it goes on and on until by the end of the picture you have people floating in vacuum without pressure suits yet with no signs of discomfort.

Mistakes are one thing, flagrant disinterest in verisimilitude is another. I would like to use some maybe non-Disney words to relate how I feel about this. "Slop" is one. "Crap" is another. When my reason is offended to this degree, I feel that the studio has said of me, "He's an idiot. He'll pay money to sit in front of anything we care to grind out onto the screen." That offends me to the point of anger.

Another in an endless series of points: you label some of the creatures in the film "humanoid robots" and go most of the way 'round the mulberry bush not quite explaining what they are. Apparently, however, they are human beings who have been modified into partial robots. There is an established word for that, which is "cyborg" (from cybernetic/organic). Moreover, by convention, a "humanoid robot" merely means a robot with a human shape. (Max is a more-or-less humanoid robot). There is no reason for you not to know these words and to employ them appropriately

The real shame, though, is what you

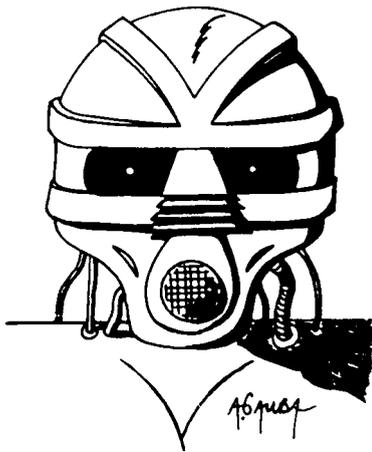
didn't do. Your depiction of a black hole, artistically and scientifically, seems to me to be superficial, non-specific, and not generally in keeping with what I have read of such objects. Black holes are fascinating. Quite apart from the plot, you could have spent forty or fifty very entertaining minutes doing with black holes just what you did with atoms twenty years ago in OUR FRIEND THE ATOM.

There are copious resources in all these matters. There are scientists who can describe black holes, hypothesize their appearance and properties, and speculate upon the different things that might be "beyond" them. There are fiction writers who are practiced at making up stories employing such facts and speculations. And there are people who are familiar with both science and science fiction and can tell you by looking at the script or the rushes what stinks and what shines.

To all appearances you employed no technical consultants--not even a "sensible consultant" to tell you the obvious things. This is unbelievable! Can you explain?

- 3) Here is the skeleton of what anyone would expect of a Disney movie called THE BLACK HOLE:

An expedition consisting of scientists, teenagers, a talking computer, and a dog sets out to explore a black hole. On the way there, the scientists and the computer explain black holes to the teenagers and the dog, using mixed media including a cartoon in which Donald Duck tries to do his spring cleaning while a mini black hole sucks up his livingroom furniture. The expedition arrives at the black hole and passes through it to Somewhere Else (consult scientists) where Exciting Adventures (consult SF writers) happen, all with fantastic visual renderings (consult scientists and writers, and Disney takes it from there). The teenagers



save the expedition from peril and everybody passes back through the black hole and heads safely home. Voila!

Do it well and you may have another classic Disney film. (I think of it as FANTASIA crossed with 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA.)

Why didn't you do that? Everybody expected it and everybody would have gone to see it. And you could have extracted the explanatory parts for one of your TV shows.

Instead, you made...

4) ...a gruesome, violent picture. Some scenes show:

---a character getting a foot-wide hole drilled in him (just off-screen, to be fair) by an evil robot

---another character (the same robot, but I don't think that mitigates the point, because he has an established character)

---helpless people, in form-fitting trays on a conveyor, being operated on by mechanically controlled lasers.

---a character crushed under falling debris, and calling for help which is denied him.

There are half-dead, half-alive cyborgs spooking all about the set. The horror of their victimization and dehumanization is verbalized by other characters effectively and more than once; finally they are blown around like tennpins in the disintergrating spaceship.

A character is blown up in another spaceship, storm trooper robots by the dozen are exploded by laser fire, a good robot is killed by the evil

robot, and finally the villain and his minions go off to some Dante-like inferno.

There is an incredible amount of death in this picture. Of a cast numbering ten characters and some dozens of supporting figures, only four remain alive at the last frame.

And this: near the end there is a shot of the evil robot descending upon the villain in what looks like the approach to a threatening act of copulation--rape, that is. So help me, that is what that scene suggests to me. Screen it again and see what it looks like to you.

My God! This is Disney? I know, it says PG. but who looks? It also says Disney. and kids are going to flock to it. Maybe this sort of thing doesn't bother kids these days. I remember how I felt and it would have upset me for weeks--mainly those poor, horrible cyborgs--but I was over-sensitive to such frights. Still, it doesn't strike me as a good way to build a movie--an entertainment--for children.

With interest, I await your reply.

Sincerely,
Dennis D'Asaro

[Of course, there never was one.]

Dragonslayer!

Darkness. A flame in the night; a torch, several torches, a band of somber peasants journey through the night to the ancient castle of Cragganmore where the last of the great wizards, Ulrich, lives. Ulrich, silver bearded, sits bent over a flaming pot in his darkened stone chamber, seeing visions yet undone. Thus begins the film DRAGONSLAYER.

If one were to create an epic set in a mythical kingdom long, long ago, they could do no better than Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins did in their original screenplay, DRAGONSLAYER. This movie, a cooperative effort of Paramount Pictures and Walt Disney Studios, brings together the best of fantasy, myth, and adventure, and keeps them in perfect balance.

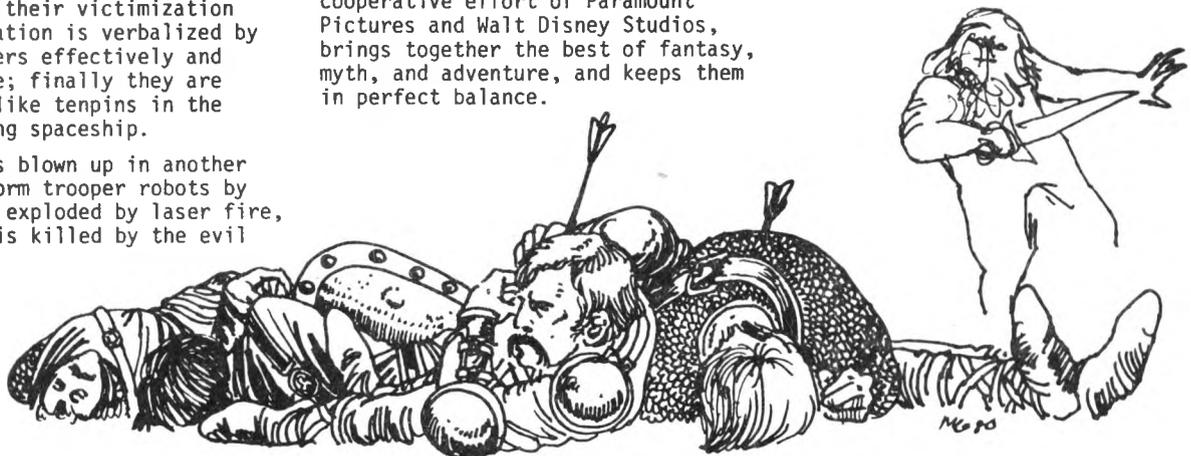
The story is the quest of young Galen Bradwardyn, apprentice-sorcerer, to rid the kingdom of Urland of the great dragon, Vermithrax Pejorative ("worm of thrace"). Just as Frodo Baggins, and Luke Skywalker were thrust into their roles as hero by "fate," or "The Force," so Galen (played by Peter MacNicol) is brought to his by the strange, and untimely death of his teacher, Ulrich, played by Sir Ralph Richardson.

But Ulrich leaves Galen a magic amulet to aid the boy in his deadly task. The task at first seems all too easy when Galen, after journeying with the Urlanders to their land, examines the rocky mountain lair of Vermithrax. A simple magic-induced avalanche to seal in the monster seems to solve the problem. Or does it?

Galen soon finds that dealing with a greedy king, his evil henchmen, and a very old and very powerful dragon is no easy task at all. He finds help from Valerian, a bold and gallant peasant maid, played by Caitlan Clarke. She has spent all of her young life disguised as a boy to escape the king's lottery which twice each year selects a virgin maid to feed to the dragon. Their path together takes many a perilous turn, pitting their courage and magic against King Casidorus' evil champion, Tyrian, and the dreadful might of the dragon.

DRAGONSLAYER is definitely not a "cute medieval castles-in-the-sky" film. As writers and producers, Barwood and Robbins said: "For DRAGONSLAYER we rejected the traditional medieval conceptions--our film has not knights in shining armor, no pennants streaming in the breeze, no delicate ladies with diaphanous veils waing from turretted castles, no courtly love, no holy grail."

"Instead we set out to create a very strange world with a lot of weird



Attention!

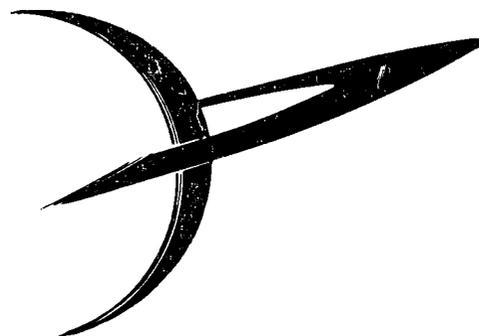
NIEKAS Publications is now accepting stories for an unusual sort of chapbook. The working title for it is Fifty Extremely SF* Stories (*Short Fiction). How short? Fifty words or less--title not included--with a ten-word-or-less bio. by the author. Themes can deal with SF, fantasy, horror, or the bizarre.

Each tale will be illustrated by an artist gleaned from the NIEKAS clan.

Each published person will receive two special contributor's copies of FESF*S and several ounces of dry egoboo.

Send submissions to 70 Webster St., Laconia, NH 03246. (Multiple entries accepted.)

SLINGSHOT through the rings of Saturn
-speedglitter flashingfast- --past-- --- -
HEAR the hypnotic thunder of the speedsound
A billionbillion glinting jewels
:the buckshot of the aods.



words and art by DAVID WAALKES

values and customs, steeped in superstition, where the clothes and manners of the people were rough, their homes and villages primitive and their countryside almost primeval. so that the idea of magic would be a natural part of their existence."

Their mythical world was envisioned in the wild mountains of North Wales, the Isle of Skye, and Pinewood studios, England. The settings and sets are vividly real, as real as the dragon. And Vermithrax is real--all forty feet of scaly golden-brown body and ninety feet of naked wings. This fantastic monster was designed by Industrial Light & Magic, (noted for the STAR WARS special effects), and built by Disney Studios. Brian Johnson (ALIEN effects supervisor) brought the creature to life. And live this dragon does, and breathes fire, and fly. Oh does she fly! Smaug would have loved her!

She is no Puff, this evil lady of mythical skies. The film makes no outright statement of her sex, but only a mother dragon could have roared with the kind of anguish and anger at seeing her dragonlets dead, killed by Galen. The audience, however, does not share her grief

for the hideous, slimey, hungry baby dragons. Patterned after a banana slug, the ugliest creature the ILM designers could find, these little ones are truly gruesome.

This movie was made with care, with research, with precision. DRAGONSLAYER is a film that should hold anyone spellbound, but a lover of myth and fantasy will come away truly enchanted.

lc

SUPERMAN II "The Turkey"

As the title suggests, I was very disappointed with the second Superman movie. It took me a while to get around to see the first movie as I didn't feel that anyone could bring to the screen visions of the Man of Steel that I had. Surprise! The first movie was close to the way I would have done it; Superman was all he could be in our primary world and all that he was supposed to be. I felt good after the film and looked forward to Superman II.

"Turkey, turkey," was my first impression when I came out of the theater after seeing the sequel. I

was very disappointed. It was everything I feared the first film would be. Why did they mess around with a winner?

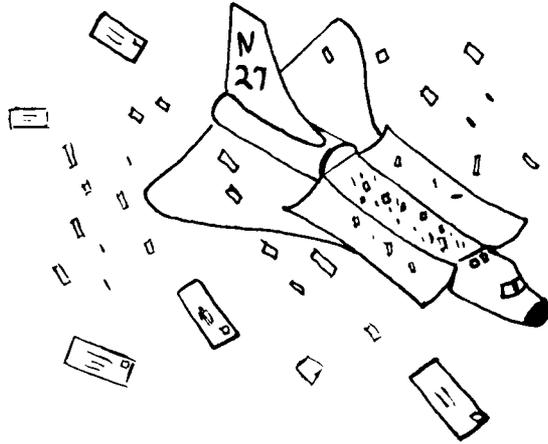
Initially, it was the flatness of the settings that bothered me. In S I, Krypton was an impressive site--it gave one the feeling of awe which is so very important to the eventual image of such a character. In S II, even the Fortress of Solitude appeared dull; missing were the vistas of America's plains; gone was the hideout of Luthor: the most sinister of all sinister geniuses.

And speaking of character assassination: who was Margot Kidder trying to portray? It certainly was not Lois Lane. She started out OK but somewhere along the line she changed and ended up coming off like a soap opera queen. I don't think she enjoyed the role as much this time around; she always seemed tired and bored.

For me this movie was a waste of time. If you also remember Superman as a superhero this movie is not for you.

scf

LAISKAI



Anne Braude
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Scottsdale, AZ 85257

I am very flattered that you saw fit to dedicate a whole issue of NIEKAS to me, and I also want to thank Various & Sundry for their kind words. (Fortunately, Ye Editors are much too busy to notice that those letters, with return addresses ranging from Cornwall to Texas, were all postmarked Scottsdale, Arizona....)

You were also too generous in bestowing a doctorate on me. I am not a Ph.D. but an ABD (All But Dissertation). UC Berkeley actually has a formal degree equivalent to this, Candidate in Philosophy, but it is rather obscure; if you were to refer to me as Candidate Braude, people might assume I am running for office and send campaign contributions. Alternatively, they might try to find out who/what I am running against and send contributions to him/her/it. And if you were to abbreviate it to Cand. Braude, this would put off those who only buy fresh or frozen. The problem may be resolved soon, as I have hopes of being awarded an honorary Litt. D. by either Miskatonic University, Mandeville College, or the University of Southern North Dakota at Hoople.

As for the Nan/Anne business: I spent my childhood under more aliases than an international terrorist. On all official documents, like my passport, I was Anne. At home, I was Nanette (from my infantile attempts to pronounce Anne Janet). And at school, I was usually told by my teacher, "We already have several Annes, so we'll call you Janet." (This was not discrimination; I was usually a midterm entrant after the class roll had been made up. As an army brat, I attended twelve schools

in twelve years.) I couldn't make everyone call me the same thing, as my teachers refused to use Anne; I couldn't use Janet at home because it was my mother's name; and I hated Nanette. When I entered college, I tried using Nan all the time, but found that everyone assumed my name was Nancy. Eventually, on my thirtieth birthday, I officially went back to Anne, which I had always liked best, for all purposes.

On Dungeons & Dragons: I have run across several fantasy novels that are supposed to be based on the game, but the only one I have read is Andre Norton's excellent Quag Keep. I find D&D intriguing, but have not yet come across anyone in my immediate vicinity who plays it.

Minor corrections: in Mathoms, the South Dalemark earldom in which Drowned Ammet is set is Holand, not Holland; and the hero of Joan Aiken's The Shadow Guests is Cosmo, not Cosmos (there is such a thing as being too enthused about Carl Sagan, you know...). Joe Christopher is right about a line being missing from my quotation from Dorothy L. Sayers; it should read: "When I was a girl, G.K. Chesterton professed belief in the Resurrection, and was called whimsical. When I was at college, thoughtful people professed belief in the Resurrection 'in a spiritual sense,' and were called advanced...."

I should also point out that "Avalon" appears by the kind permission of Ruth Berman, who published it in one of her fanzines about ten years ago. For those who are curious about where writers get their ideas, as per Diana's excellent-as-usual column, when I was a senior in college, doing research for a history thesis on Geoffrey of Monmouth, I came across an article by J.S.P. Tatlock,

the famous Arthurian scholar who wrote The Legendary History of Britain. In tracing the legends of Avalon, supposedly an island in the North Sea where King Arthur was taken after his last battle, he found that it was sacred to the Celtic Apollo and noted for its grove of sacred apple trees and for the amber washed up on its shores. This immediately inspired me with the desire to write a poem with a lot of A's in it; and "Avalon," many years later, was the result.

My favorite item in this issue was Rod Walker's haiku and the accompanying illo by Kurt Reichel. The haiku is a lot harder to write than it looks, as I know from sad and unpublishable experience.

Anne Etkin's use of the methods of Giddy and Howling, or whatever they call themselves, to prove that LotR is actually derived from Peter Rabbit is ingenious; but I am afraid that she has missed the true significance of the work, which is of course a Marxist allegory. Using a variant of G&H's system, it is clear that the characters of Frodo and Sam represent the rejection of capitalism by the proletariat. (FRODO = FORD O: the name of the archetypal capitalist coupled with the symbol of worthlessness; SAMWISE = WE MASS I: we, the masses, are one.) The inhabitants of the Shire are the potential employees that the symbol of capitalism, Sauron, wishes to exploit (SHIRE = S.-HIRE[lings], or those to be put to work by him). Those already exploited by him are the workers (WORCKers; it is strange that no one seems to have that Orcs and Hobbits are actually identical, as Sam's name proves). The author clearly makes a personal statement of rejection of the American political and economic system by choosing to name his principal

villain SAURON (= USA NO--R.); you will note that Tolkien uses his middle initial to indicate that this is his own view: now we can understand why he called his fictive word "Middle-earth." This symbolism is derived from either the more rarefied forms of Cabbalistic numerology or from Tolkien's personal fascination with the game of Bingo. (After all, he was a Catholic, wasn't he?) The Destruction of the One Ring symbolizes FDR's abandonment of the gold standard; the eruption of Mount Doom is either the Manhattan Project or the rise of the prime rate to over 20%, or both. At the end the victorious heroes return to the Shire, representing the meek inheriting the earth (SHIRE = HEIRS). One of the major subplots of the book is the downfall of Saruman, who is of course Richard M. Nixon. (SARUMAN = M. RAN USA; again the significant middle initial.) Finally, we may note that the central object in the tale is the One Ring. (1 RING - I GRIN, signifying the author's intention to have the last laugh on all of us.)

As for the sexual relationship between Frodo and Sam, in all its polymorphic perversity (HOBBIT = BOTH BI), the topic is not really suitable for discussion in a family magazine like NIEKAS....

I must close, as I have become a mole as planned; and it is both difficult and painful to type with one's snout, even on an electric typewriter. I can appreciate now what poor archy went through (the cockroach, not the Mercer).

Moleblessings...

Amy Chase
89 Museum Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

...Ed - in your comments on books & games (the recent craze it seems), I notice Niven's new book--Dream Park--wasn't mentioned and may not have been out when you wrote the article. In any case, it was definitely based on D&D and similar games. The most amusing thing was the way it portrayed the gamers. My own friends (hard-core gamers) take their own 'deaths' and other traumas just as seriously as those in the book. I haven't decided yet on whether this is harmful or not; it's too easy to debate either way! Being a sometime gamer (of all sorts) I enjoyed the book from that angle, but found the plot very loose--almost as though it was an afterthought to the gaming angle! However, I recommend it to anyone who enjoys fantasy or fantasy role-playing games.

P.S. Recently received a note from

G.A. Effinger (seems to be doing well) and would be interested in hearing from any other admirers of his writing.

[I did a review of Dream Park but it went to another 'zine. It does present interesting insights into the gaming mentality. mike.]

C.M. Lynch
5738 Kentucky Ave., apt. #6
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

...I was delighted to see "A Structural Analysis of 'Ring Around the Rosy'" in print--and I was amazed how its implied protest against that sort of criticism fit into the controversy over The Shores of Middle Earth which had a good bit of space in this issue.

Although I enjoyed the whole thing, Anne Braude's pieces and Ruth Berman's observations on Shakespeare in children's literature were highlights for me. And the letter from Anne Etkin on page 37 was GREAT!

Lloyd Aldexander
1005 Drexel Ave.
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

...Not only did I find something of interest in NIEKAS 26, I found all of interest.

Best yet, the issue is dedicated to Anne Braude (not overlooking Fred Lerner), which is recognition well deserved.

I'm sending congratulations to Anne; and, to all at NIEKAS, as always, praise from...

Lloyd

Lola Andrew
1220 Walnut
Webster City, IA 50595

I just got my copy of NIEKAS 26. I liked it even better than 25 which was my first NIEKAS. There was so much of interest in it! First I was happy to see Anne Braude promoted to contributing editor. I loved her work in 25 so much I wrote her a letter. I even got a reply. That was a pleasant surprise [I'll bet it was sent with postage due. mike].

Ed, your story on the beginnings of the SCA were fascinating. I am not in it myself but I have several pen pals who are. I should see if it is active in Iowa. It is times like this where "Great American Desert" fits this state only too well. It is a good thing World Con is rotated or it would probably never get to the mid-west.

Anne, I have seen The Spellcoats in

pb but none of the other books. I will have to keep looking. Your Avalon poem was just beautiful. I too loved Split Infinity by Piers Anthony. I hear the sequel is called The Blue Adept but it may take a while to come out in pb. I was happy to see Madeleine L'Engle has a new book completed. I too like a book because of the characters who live in them.

The book reviews are what I like best about NIEKAS. There are so many of them! They are also on books that are just out. This means I may not have them yet. It is nice to get someone else's opinion on a book before you buy it. It is no small favor with book prices as they are today.

Terry Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Rd.
Sheffield S11. 9FE.
U.K

[NIEKAS 25]...T E R R I F I C,
moreover, slightly S U P E R B and
G R E A T !

To be specific, and go through things in order...which I know, is considered the mark of a neofan... but it still seems to me that an editor is interested in comments on EVERYTHING in his zine, not just one item...so here goes.

Cover...very striking, and very well reproduced...unsullied by lettering and a most unusual piece of artwork...but why 'Seven'??? [read "A Cosmic Vision" again. ed] Pholio '80 was also great..the two Lloyd Alexander illos reminded me strongly of Hoffnung's work...are they copies or originals? [they are by LA. ed.] My favourites of the lot are the Forbes illo and the one by Eddie Jones... Eddie's in particular telling a story in one picture. Other artwork ranged from just one or two clinkers to a whole raft of really excellent material...David Heath, Jr. in particular. There is no illo that I wince at, and what I like most of all...PLENTY of it. Full marks on the front once again.

I shuddered on reading your opening remarks on the ZIP code numbers...a further FOUR numbers, egad. It is criminal...how long will it take me to remember a nine figure ZIP?

The Sherwood Frazier article on Saturn is one of those things which I drool over...and casting my mind back to the mid thirties...I can't help wondering what we gosh wow fen of that era would have said on being offered such a piece in our monthly dose of ASTOUNDING (the other magazines wouldn't have touched it with a barge pole at that time).

Enjoyed Lerner's run down on/of New York...I felt the same way whenever I visit London...that is what comes of living in a friendly northern city where people are friendly. London always seems scruffy, brash, and everyone pinched and hurried... and not interested in you. In contrast, the people we met in Boston couldn't have been nicer...so it isn't just city size that does it.

Letters are excellent as ever, with plenty of thought-provoking and arguable comment therein. Nicely illustrated and a joy to behold...

* * *

[NIEKAS 26]...A superbly drawn cover, terrific bit of artwork, but I wasn't so happy about its shape not meshing with the shape of the magazine. It gave me one of those disquieted feelings of 'something not quite right'...no complaints about the illo I emphasize...just its shape relationship to the cover. You know how a picture slightly tilted can get on one's nerves, well that's the way with the cover...pity, cos I liked it.

On the whole, the artwork throughout was topnotch, but I can't say I was too keen on Gauba's work which was very amateurish. Not to worry, the other illos were all excellent... bacover great, Sibley's cartoon of professional standard...as were Waalkes, Leach, Geisel, and Paxson to name but a few. No doubt about it, NIEKAS is a great artist's showcase.

On written material...I naturally scanned my piece...haven't got my carbon handy, so don't know which of us boomed...but as no doubt umpteen LOCers will have already told you...somehow, Lovecraft got credited as an artist instead of Finlay...oh well, those who care will realise what was wrong...those who don't care will not notice and that leaves only the nitpickers.

Was interested in the comment on Conventions as I have just returned from our annual Eastercon...where I was saddened...along with quite a few others at the decline in programme items...the quality and variety thereof. We got together and deplored the high priced routine of...panel... speech...panel...interspersed now and then by some obscure film. At one point, Val accused me of the old nostalgia kick..."it was always better in the old days" so when we got home I dug out my programs and proved my point...gone are the Fannish 20 Questions, the audience participation skits and games, the fannish "This is Your Life", the plays, the tape operas, the St. Antony ritual and the ensuing "Battles in Arms" (full scale pitched battles), the free fannish

huckster tables in the main hall, the numerous competitions, the amateur film competitions, etc. etc. etc. No need to worry about falling numbers...the modern programs will bring 'em automatically.

Was as usual interested in Frazier's NASA news...although I now get their handouts so there is no longer such a desperate craving for space news. ERG 75 has quite a bit of Shuttle coverage...plus a cover on same... due out in a month...I hope. Didn't care for the heading though...maybe I can draw you a new one if I can find the time from my latest love...

A Sinclair ZX81 computer with 16K in RAM...which has got me programming at every odd moment...right now I have just cooked up a 'Dungeons and Dragons' maze...which is a piece of cake to construct on a computer... you only need a relatively few lines of program to keep the maze runner going for ages...and falling into (and out of, if you're kind) various pitfalls. Once I have the thing polished I'll run it in ERG.

I applaud your listing the Congressmen's addresses and suggesting that people write about the space program...I'd make a suggestion that they do NOT say "I'm writing because of an article in NIEKAS"...simply because any such public figure will probably automatically discount any obviously organised group of letters...whereas if each letter seems to have been one spontaneous idea of its writer with no organised collusion, he will be inclined to think..."Hmm, thirty letters...more than usual on that topic...must be a pretty general feeling...better do something." In the same area I often feel that the handing in of a googolplex of petition signatures is of less value than either a local protest march... or a flock of all different letters of complaint.

[These points you bring up are valid, obvious to me, and (I hoped) obvious to any of our readership. Besides, I ran out of room. mike]

Noted that Boardman referred to Frankenstein as being written by a teenage runaway...this may be true... but it seems more interesting to hear that it was written as the result of a bet with other writers...who failed to come up with their tales. I heartily agree with Mr. Boardman on his riposte to the Pope... that science has enriched man. Oh, I know that the critic will say... "Do we need TV, fast transport, space programs, Hi Fi, and so on..." I would admit that much science is perverted...i.e., we the people find stupid uses for marvelous discoveries...but my answer to such moaners is simply to ask if they would prefer

to live in an age when 'flu was a killer, the life expectancy around 40, their teeth rotting in their heads, a broken limb set without anesthetic and left to remain stiff and warped...etc. etc. etc. ANY human discovery has the potential to be used in a variety of ways...no use blaming the scientists when humans pervert their discovery. A hammer makes it much easier to knock in a nail...but can be used to kill. Nobel invented dynamite to aid peaceful mining...but it kills... heck, even the peaceful ploughshare made from an old sword can be used to knock someone over the head... 'taint the scientist...it's human nature that needs coring out.

Tolkien...zzzzzzzzzz! Great illos on pp. 21, 22, 23 [Diana Paxson]. Poetry likewise sends me to sleep...and the fannish variety is even worse in this respect. I call it 3P...pointless, pretentious, and prissy.

Thoroughly enjoyed the reviews, comments, and letters...now to knock off and find time to read the rest...

Andre Norton
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Winter Park, FL 32789

...No, it is difficult for me now NOT to sell an s-f or fantasy. Once in a while I do do a historical gothic--just to change and so I won't get stale. But those require so much heavy research and are so demanding that I cannot do many.

As I grow older I find it more and more difficult to write and it has become a matter of making myself work.

The NIEKAS articles are most interesting and I save the copies you send for a special treat. I do not read any fantasy or s-f--unless for a publisher when I am working on my own books and that limits me a lot--but there are several new writers whose work I find very interesting--I have just read in ms. an excellent tale which Ace is going to bring out--Water Witch by two new writers--one is Felice--it has the most sprightly heroine and a very interesting plot. Sometime back I was sent another hardcover one by a new writer--Belden--Mind Call--which I considered excellent. It is a relief to find books which do not depend on kinky sex.

Tom Purdom
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Philadelphia, PA 19143

Like everybody else, I think your stuff on what it's like to be blind is some of the best stuff I've ever

seen in a fanzine. Blindness is probably a major, if unstated, fear almost anyone who reads or writes a lot, I suspect, and you're making an important statement, it seems to me, merely by writing and putting out NIEKAS. I think Isaac Asimov once told an interviewer blindness was one of his worst fears. As I remember it, he even admitted to a worry that had occurred to me. How would he know that he had really sold and published something and that people weren't just being kind?

Are you aware that there is now a computerized reader for the blind that can actually read anything in print? There was an article on it in one of the science magazines--either SCIENCE 81 or SCIENCE 81--about two months ago. The hard thing, apparently, was the design of a program that described each letter of the alphabet in a way that would be true of call type faces. What do all capital B's have in common, all small a's, and so on? The scanning devices already existed, and so did the devices for turning printed material into speech, but a program like that was a real challenge. Once that was done, it was possible to tie all the hardware together into a mini-computer. There's one in the Library of Congress, if I remember correctly, and more in use elsewhere. The system is still expensive--several thousand dollars--but I think the article said it's available for lease purchase at something like ninety a week.

Anne Braude's review of COSMOS [in #25] interested me because it's the first thing I've seen by someone who felt they learned something about science from it. Most of the people I know felt it was too elementary and I felt the same way at first. Then I realized Sagan wasn't really trying to explain science to the general public; he was trying to present a worldview. Over the last thirty years or so, our knowledge of biochemistry, the evolution of life, the structure and development of the universe and so on has given us a coherent picture of the universe and our place in it, and has provided us with a history of the universe that includes our own origin and development. It's a picture that has a lot of beauty and grandeur and that gives us a sense of just how everything in the universe is tied in with everything else, and I think the series did a good job of presenting it to a general audience. (A limited audience, of course, since no PBS presentation really hits a mass audience. But it's the limited, "educated" audience that really counts.)

He also managed to capture the drama of science and the general

pursuit of understanding and knowledge. Some of the stories--like the story of Kepler--may be very familiar, but they're worth retelling, and I think the visual medium added new overtones to them. When I saw the first program, I didn't think Sagan was using the medium; since in many cases he didn't use all the visual effects available to make a scientific concept clearer. But then I realized that he was using the medium in other ways. In the Kepler program, for example I was particularly moved by the way narrated quotations from Kepler's Somnium were juxtaposed with films of the Apollo landings. You see Kepler walking along beside his cart at the end, and you hear the quotes from his imaginary lunar voyage, and as the quotes go on, with the description of the shining island in the sky, and the strange craft that took him there, you see the Moon as Apollo's approached it, and the lunar module descending to the surface, and so on. I, too, like most people, felt Sagan included too many shots of himself staring into space, but overall I found it a very moving series.

I think I first heard of Carl Sagan in a footnote in one of Asimov's pieces in F&SF. It was an article on the possibility of life on Jupiter, and I think most of the ideas came from one of Sagan's early papers. Later on I heard him give a talk at a Nebula banquet, and since then I've watched him slowly rise to his present eminence. One of the peculiarities of the middle age, guess, is the way you find that you have watched whole careers from their beginnings. I had a similar experience with Freeman J. Dyson, who first came to my notice in slightly offbeat articles on nuclear policy in the BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS in the early 60's, and then gave us the concept behind Ringworld, and seems to have been mentioned in almost every book on space travel--and in a number of other works--I've read over the last fifteen years, and now has finally written a book of his own, Disturbing the Universe. I grew up reading Clarke and Ley and wondering who was going to replace them, and now I know. First it was Asimov who picked up the torch, and now here come Sagan, Dyson, Bova, and some others.

My wife came up with a joke that I thought was genuinely funny, and which I understand is already circulating through fandom. I know it's hers, since I saw her make it up, and I hope you will print this so she gets proper credit. If you haven't heard it--How many science fiction characters does it take to change a light bulb? Two. One to

change the bulb and the other to say, "As you know, Sam, at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, Thomas Edison...."

David Palter
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Hollywood, CA 90028

...I am most impressed by NIEKAS 25. The covers are exquisite and the art and production in general are superb. The contents are genuinely interesting, instead of the fannish blather which wastes so much space in so many fanzines that I read. (This is not to suggest that it is bad to be fannish, only that if one wishes to write fannishly one should do it well. Fannishness is not an acceptable substitute for having something to say.) I really liked the editing, which is done with intelligence and taste, again in contrast to much of what I read. Everything considered, NIEKAS is one of the world's truly great fanzines and you may well take pride in your accomplishment.

...I also tend to disagree with Ed Meskys' incidental observation that "The whole women's rights issue has gotten sidetracked by peripheral issues like lesbianism and abortions..." A substantial portion, if not a majority of women in fact do not desire to engage in lesbianism or to have abortions. Nonetheless there are many who do want either or both, and for these women, the right to do these things free from the interference of others, is of enormous importance. If we are going to consider women's rights, surely these are important rights. This remains true even though not everybody will want to exercise those particular rights. (Right-to-lifers will now raise the plaintive cry, "What about the rights of the unborn child?" This, of course, does have to be considered. The point remains that these are not peripheral to women's rights, but are important, even though some grounds exist to argue that women should not be allowed to have these rights.)

...I had not been aware of the abuses of the so-called "Sheltered Workshops" and so was shocked by Ed's report. When these organizations go to the extent of using electric shocks to prod blind workers who flag at their labors, well we obviously have the modern equivalent of the overseer with his whip. This is slavery, it is criminal, and it should not be tolerated. People who are doing this should receive lengthy prison terms.

[on #26]

Dr. Wayne Shumaker's review of

Madeleine L'Engle's books shows an understanding of the material being reviewed, but also shows some very strange literary biases which I must take objection to. Dr. Shumaker objects to the use of telepathy and time travel in these books because these things are, so he feels, impossible, and thus by writing about impossible things this book "...may seduce...people...to believe that man, the world, and the universe are what they are not." Of course, he also makes clear that it is not just writing about these things that he objects to; it is OK to write about them as long as they are "fairy stories" and hence in no danger of being believed. Unfortunately Madeleine L'Engle writes persuasively and with a feeling of reality, so the readers may be deluded. Now in fact the possibility of telepathy and even of time travel cannot yet be ruled out, in spite of the skepticism of Martin Gardner which has so impressed Dr. Shumaker. I personally am convinced that cases of telepathy do occur, and that at least some forms of time travel are theoretically possible. That is not the main point, however. The whole essence of SF and fantasy, as opposed to other literary types, is the freedom to speculate, to write about things that may not be possible or even that we know damn well aren't possible. And writing persuasively and with reality is, of course, a vital ingredient (perhaps the most vital ingredient) to make the writing enjoyable or even enlightening in some way. We readers are not so easily deluded. I loved Asimov's robot stories but I don't believe that robots with "positronic brains" will ever be built and neither does Dr. Asimov, for that matter. Fools who believe whatever they are told, if it is told persuasively, will be swallowed up by one or more of the many delusional systems epidemic in our world, long before they have a chance to be lead astray by persuasively written SF. If we take Dr. Shumaker's bias to its logical extreme, we could suggest that all fiction, of whatever type, should be abolished; after all, there is always the possibility that someone reading any work of fiction might believe it is true. If we print only the facts, then people can never be lead astray by what they read, right? But without imagination our knowledge of facts will in the end avail us little. There are some truths that non-fiction does not teach nearly as well as fiction.

Some of the very best and most interesting works (and most persuasive works) of SF have involved the elements of telepathy and/or time travel. These books

would be undiminished in value even if it were certain that both telepathy and time travel are absolutely impossible. These topics provide avenues of exploration of human thought and of dramatic and plotting possibilities which are unique. There is no reason to give them up. The question of the degree of possibility or impossibility of these phenomena bears only on the question of whether fiction dealing with these subjects is more properly classified as SF or fantasy. And being fantasy rather than SF is not a literary flaw, either. (Nor can you be so sure, in any event. There was a time, not too long ago, when any fiction which featured a man landing on the moon would be regarded as the wildest fantasy, and unwholesome reading matter as it might lead impressionable minds astray.)

Kathleen Taylor
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General comments: looks very good--I only found one typo (and I can't remember where that was)--I should only type so good. Eddie Abel is out of business already--maybe he will start printing after the summer, I don't know, but he sent back my review of Dragon's Egg (but since I'm pressed for time, I'm going to use it in SFN this time, along with a little gem called 101 Uses for a Dead Cat). The art is good--I really liked the ALTERED STATES pun.

OK--specifics: I have to comment on Wayne Shumaker's "A Review of Madeleine L'Engle's Time Trilogy"--ah, you knew it was coming, didn't you? (as an aside I liked the Linda Leach illustrations) I truly think Mr. Shumaker was reading too much from the books. I read A Wrinkle in Time first about 20 years ago (and once a year or so ever since)--and not once did I get the impression that Ms. L'Engle was telling me that there would be guardian angels to smooth the way. Quite the contrary--I got the distinct impression that though there might be mysterious beings sprinkled throughout my life to provide guidance and support (you know, much like those mysterious beings called parents), that I was basically responsible for finding my own solutions and strengths and using them. I also got the message that I shouldn't expect one person or happening to make "everything all right" (as Meg thought the finding of her father would be, and found out differently). Both quite useful points to make (and not the least mystic or supernatural). And, o.k., o.k., I was only 8 or so and I also learned that handsome high school

boys might someday like me a little (even to the point of kissing me) even though I was a little out of the ordinary. I identified to strongly with Meg and loved her "realness"--something not too common in any book, either for children or adults. I am not as highly enthused about the other two books in the series (again, it might be because I was 20 years older and I had already learned that love does not conquer all)--but I would still not condemn them. Besides that, fantasy means never having to worry that esp is probably not real.

Gincas: Oh how I hate to admit it, but I never did finish reading LotR (even though I have a lovely boxed set)--so I can't comment in a literary fashion on the new controversy. I can say, however, that I do love to see unfounded arguments (except my own) trounced upon. Though you're not likely to have a lovely controversy like that one drop in your lap again, please handle it the same way (having many people comment) should you be ever again so lucky.

I must find A Ring of Endless Light--any book that is supposed to be better than A Wrinkle etc. has to be something. I do not gladly suffer the toppling of my favorite book (or at least not easily--but then again, I do not gladly or easily suffer anything--being something of a pansy). I was pleased to see the review of The Wonderful Flight to Mushroom Planet--not because I had never heard of it, but because I read that the same time I read A Wrinkle and only remembered the bare plot outline and not the title (my own kids are about the age to appreciate such lovely nonsense and I wanted to buy some of the books I liked as a child).

I was intrigued by the second look at THE SHINING, the movie. I just saw it on HBO and was thoroughly disappointed in the movie. I did expect to be frightened by the movie because the book upset my sleep for weeks (it was months before I looked behind the shower curtain unnecessarily). I do agree that it (as a movie) is a good psychological thriller--but it would have been a better thriller (psychological or otherwise) if we had seen more of Jack Torrance's childhood and early married life--as it is, those not familiar with the book are not likely to see why Jack turns into such a rotten person--there is none of the struggle over whether to lose his job and leave the Overlook for the safety of his family or the influence of his father (that he tried vainly to suppress throughout his life)--and these kinds of scenes could have

added much to the story background without costing exorbitant fees because no special effects would have been required. Also--there were too many bits and pieces of the book thrown into the movie without explanation (for example--just one scene with the man in the dog suit and the costume party wasn't even mentioned). I would dearly have loved to see the hedge animals (I am in awe of King's terrifying power in how he handled those scenes). Last, and not really least, I wish that Torrance's character had been "redeemed" in the end as in the book (where he let Danny go of his own free will). Still, if I had not read the book, I may have liked the movie--but I can't wipe the book out enough to see the movie objectively.

[your last statements certainly ring true; I have yet to read a review of the movie where the book was not brought in for comparison. mike]

Kathy Godfrey
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...I think you were a bit misinformed on Boskone. I believe attendance was closer to 1700 than 2000. And as you may have heard by now, Boskone and the Sheraton have come to a parting of the ways. Exactly where Boskone 19 will be is still up in the air. [It will be held at the Sheraton-Park Hotel (the old Statler Hilton) as of this date. ed.]

I was much more disappointed than you by Boskone 18. In fact, I was so unimpressed that I left the convention for the last time at 6 P.M. on Saturday. Between the crashers, the costume freaks (you, Ed, were spared the 300-pound Wonder Woman) and the general aura of poor programming, I simply couldn't face another day. You know something's wrong when 900 people are making so much noise in the film room that the 50 people attending the main program across the hall can't hear what's going on. Although I wasn't there for the Goh speech, I'm told the problem persisted even then. I agree with you that the film program fills a definite purpose in giving neos a place to go. It also gives the tired and/or bored a place to sit while waiting for an upcoming program item, if they've no one to talk to. However, this goal can be achieved without programming blockbusters that are virtually guaranteed to draw many of the kind of people who make the convention less enjoyable for others. Was it necessary to show STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE at all, let alone twice? There were

hundreds of Boskone 18 attendees who never left the film room. Every year, during the same weekend as Boskone, a local movie theater shows a "sci-fi" movie marathon. Boskone may be seeing some of the overflow from that. My own feeling is that the film program should feature films that the attendees might enjoy that they have had no chance to see. This includes recent films (like the Pogo movie, which was never released nationally, or OH HEAVENLY DOG, which vanished almost instantly) and older ones (such as PORTRAIT OF JENNIE, based on Robert Nathan's novel).

[I agree with you 150%. One of the things I enjoyed most about the last Boskone was the fact that they ran those films that just don't make it past the "blockbusters" and TV stations don't run. This is the void which conventions should strive to fill. mike]

Speaking of films, Ken Johnson and I seem to be alone in thinking that SUPERMAN II is a turkey. Considering the faulty logic of the plotting and the horrible characterizations (that just wasn't Superman!) I'm stunned at its success. But it seems everyone else loved it, except one reviewer for the Washington Post. Are we truly alone? [see Magic Lantern Review]

I do agree with everyone about RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, and can recommend DRAGONSLAYER as well. An acquaintance of mine took RAIDERS rather literally: When Indiana Jones said, "Close your eyes," she did--and didn't open them again until he said it was safe!

Is this where Tolkien found his stories? No, but it's certainly where Giddings found a silly book to peddle to his publisher. I agree with Susan Schwartz.

Thanks to Anne Braude for introducing me to a new author. Based on her article, I'm going to track down and read Ms. Jones' books. It's unfortunate that a lot of good fantasy is overlooked (literally as well as figuratively) because it's marketed as juvenile.

Ruth Berman's article is the kind that should grace all fanzines: informative, well-written, and interesting. I hadn't thought of Puck of Pook's Hill in years, but I enjoyed the book immensely when I was 7.

The illo on page 51 was a neat visual pun. But I can't agree with the accompanying film review. About 30 minutes before the end of ALTERED STATES, I had already guessed the worst--that Love would Conquer All. I was no more impressed by this sound

and light show than by the one in 2001. Worse, ALTERED STATES was louder. The lead character bears an uncanny resemblance to the title character in X--THE MAN WITH THE X-RAY EYES, and the whole film was a remake of MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS. The scientist was a nut, plain and simple, and a creep as well. I could neither identify nor sympathize with his attempts to dope out the Truth.

Algis Budrys
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...I'm not much of a letter-writer, because I enjoy it so. If I let it, nothing would get done.

Speaking of "nothing," I have to tell you I think NIEKAS is a lousy, mock-diffident title for something as useful, and demanding of your effort, as it is. I kind of feel the same



way about "Bumbejimas." But suit yourself, as the actress said to the bishop.

Your various discussions of reading systems and other aids to the vision-impaired have been particularly enlightening. A few years ago I made friends with Sammy Skobel, a former Roller Derby star who's been legally blind since the age of four. He can perceive shadows and bright areas. Was a track star for Crane Technical High School in Chicago; ran cross-country, too, with friends leaving white towels on the ground to mark the turns. Had three college athletic scholarships cancelled when they found out he was blind, so went into Roller Derby for twenty years--"Slammin' Sammy Skobel." Anyhow, Sam runs a hot dog restaurant in Mount Prospect, a Chicago exurb, riding a bicycle to and from his home, and is president of the American Blind Skiing Foundation. Absolutely refused to go to "special schools" as a kid, and was treated by his delicatessen-owning parents as someone who nevertheless had to put in a full day's work in the store. All of this freed him from many

dependencies and life-distortions. The only device he faunches for is some sort of reading system that puts one letter of a book or newspaper on a TV screen at a time. At present, he reads one letter at a time through a compound ocular. The tip of his nose is constantly smudged with ink, and he's getting tired of it.

...also, Heinlein never killed his computer in The Moon is a Harsh Mistress. It's alive and well. All it's done is discarded some of its prosthetic devices and, presumably, substituted others. Since the novel is told from the point of view of one of the discarded devices, and it--Manuel, the guy with the prosthetic arm--can't tell us any more than it knows, we can't be sure what the computer is up to. But we can be less psychologically blocked than Manuel is; we can realize what the situation must be, if we put our minds to it, even if our human egos do make it a little difficult. Frankly, the more I think about it, the more I believe that Heinlein deliberately went back to his Man Will Conquer All style for Mistress just to underscore the irony of the point, which is that Man will soon be nothing but a tool used by computers, if he isn't already. This will not bother many people, since they are the sort of hammer who thinks that when it goes back into the chest, the Sun has winked out. This may be why Heinlein went right back to play-novels after Mistress. He may feel his point has actual truth to it as well as logic. I would quarrel with him there, but I would be quarreling with an individual who has never been wrong on any major point of historical prediction.

George Flynn
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...The impressions Ed got about Boskone planning were somewhat distorted. The problems with the Sheraton-Boston management were quite severe, and about the first decision we made was not to go there next year. A planning session (two weeks after Lunacon) reached the consensus that we'd prefer a somewhat smaller convention out in the suburbs. However, the Radisson Ferncroft (in Danvers, not Danville) had problems of its own when we were there for Boskone, and was never very high on our list. (Except for poor service at the restaurants, these problems were almost invisible to the attendees, but very hassling for the committee.) Unfortunately, our first-choice suburban hotel turned out not to be available when

we wanted it next year; maybe the year after.... After going round a bit, as of this writing we seem to have settled on a downtown hotel for next year, but a different one. Basically, there just wasn't enough time to implement our full preferences this time; but it should be a good convention anyway, and planning is already under way to do better the following year.

I think the New York '83/'86 situation is more complicated than you indicate, but I've never been able to follow all the details myself. One point worth noting, however, is that it is possible to have an overseas Worldcon without a corresponding NASFIC; it takes a 3/4 vote (of the Business Meeting or whatever) to do so, though.

Re: Diana Wynne Jones: The Spellcoats is also now out in paperback (Pocket, Dec. 1980, \$2.25).

The Shores of Middle Earth may for all I know be as bad as it sounds, but it seems remarkably foolhardy to devote this amount of critical attention to it on the basis of a single newspaper article, which will obviously concentrate on whatever is sensational about the book, whether or not it's out of context. Come to that, a number of your commentators have distorted what the article says (example: the quotes from Giddings are presumably from an interview, not from the book--which I imagine uses more formal diction).

...It's too much to hope for absence of typos, of course, but at least try to get authors' names right in reviews: it's Pronzini and Malzberg.

With regards to the continuing dispute over the film of The Shining, the central question is whether it matters that it isn't faithful to the book. I think it does. No matter how good the film may be in its own right, i.e., considered in a vacuum, the fact is that it uses the characters of the book and trades on the book's reputation. The crucial effect of this is to make it impossible for the foreseeable future to have a film that is true to the book, and I don't think it unfair to call this literary betrayal.

The illo on p. 51 is a very cute visual pun.

Fred Pohl's letter is interesting, since just today I read in LOCUS that he has signed a contract for the third "Gateway" book.

Ruth Berman
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...Have you enjoyed SUPERMAN II? I

went to it a few days ago and enjoyed it very much. The plot has unreasonably large holes in it. (Possibly they mean to explain them in number 3, but I thought the holes in number one would be explained this time round, and they weren't.) But the characters are delightful. They're nice people. (Even the villains are nice, as villains go.) And Clark has an endearing awareness of the comedy of his bumbling persona. Kind of an odd distinction, it occurs to me. Having the character know he is funny seems as if it ought to be close to having an actor who laughs at his character--but the one is very enjoyable and the other very irritating, and the difference between them in practice is obvious.

Evangeline Walton Ensley
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...I am particularly glad to have Diana Paxson's articles because I know her personally. I first met her at the Mythopoeic Society Convention the year I won--or rather, Song of Rhianon won--the Society's yearly prize. My first award, and a great thrill. At present both Diana and I are waiting hopefully for contracts from Pocket Books. She isn't sure about hers yet, but my agent 'phoned yesterday that mine should come through within a week. So next year I should get a new series of novels launched. First will deal with the romance between Theseus and the Amazon; following Euripides or, to be exact, fragments of one of his lost plays, I place that before the Cretan adventure. I had a Theseus trilogy ready in first draft when Mary Eenaault's first Theseus books appeared, and so I had to postpone mine for twenty odd years. Deal with Pocket Books will indeed, if all goes well, be the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream.

I am very glad you enjoyed the Mabinogion novels--they had to wait a long time to get into print, but not as long as the Greek project has. Other things of mine that are in print at present are Witch House, a little occult thriller which never has done much at a time, but somehow has managed to roll along for the last thirty years, and two short stories in Dr. Kenneth Zahorski's Fantastic Imaginations II and III (Avon). I now think "Above Ker-is" in Volume II much the best, though in my teens "Mistress of Kaer-mor", the one in Vol. III, was my pride and joy. My taste seems to have changed a bit in the too long time since then.

Next fall Ace will bring out a third

of these Breton folklore short stories in Elsewhere, its new anthology project. A tale less powerful than "Above", which was, I now think, my best story, but prettier and less would-be terrifying than "Mistress". Ms. Terri Windling of Ace was kind enough to call it a lovely, haunting story.

Letty Smith
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...I'm really impressed with the book reviews [in #26]. They were accurate and fun to read, especially Anne Braude's. I must admit to only having read a few of the books you reviewed, mostly because there are no good bookstores within a forty-mile radius, and I have a Scot's inherent dislike for buying anything through the mail that I haven't seen. But I have read the Time trilogy, and I agree with Anne entirely.

I also agree with the overall reaction to The Shores of Middle Earth. It was what he did, not what he did it with that was so remarkable. Or, hopefully, unremarkable, as I believe that most closely detailed analysis of novels tend to lose perspective. Let's enjoy Tolkien, not examine him to death.

One little tidbit. About "A Structural Analysis of "Ring Around the Rosy"": although C.M. Lynch is probably aware of it, it may be possible that some people do not know that it is a poem about the Black Death. Posies were put in pockets to ward off the plague. In this light, "Ashes, ashes, we all fall down" takes on a different meaning. "Ashes" was the burned corpses of the plague victims, and "we all fall down" is fairly self-explanatory.

Cute little poem.

...I would like to mention in response to Felice Maxam that THE CRAWLING EYE is also good for a few laughs if you watch the Creature Features.

Anton Lien
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Norway

...I have more or less lost touch with Norwegian fandom (I am not quite sure it still exists), but I still enjoy reading Science Fiction, and subscribe to 3 of the major American magazines. I am also very much interested in Space and Astronomy. I am a member of the World Space Foundation, and have been planning to join the L-5 Society.

To me human conquest of space is the most important issue today. It will bring enormous benefits in the long run, and might just be the only way to ensure survival of our species. Therefore it is saddening to see all the anti-space and anti-technology propaganda in the media today. I sometimes must wonder if people have stopped thinking.

My taste in Science Fiction is varied, and I also read Fantasy. My all time favourite SF book is Voyage of the Space Beagle by A.E. van Vogt. I read it in a cheap Norwegian translation when I was just a kid. It was one of the first Science Fiction books I ever read, and it was just wonderful. I am not so sure that I would find it so wonderful if I read it for the first time today. Because so little SF is published in Norway I did not get really into the field until I learned to read English around 1960, and I still think I have some catching up to do. There are still important SF books I have yet to read. On the other hand I find it increasingly difficult to keep up with the books now being published.

Roger Stewart
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I will give The Moon is a Harsh Mistress credit for being one of the best books by Heinlein I've read to date. That is where I got the impression of where Heinlein's were coming from...not fascistic but just a belief that everybody ought to be able to do their own thing. Sort of Libertarian I guess, tho from what I've heard of a lot of Libertarians,

I wouldn't enjoy myself in their world. They want to get the government out of the way but only to let the big business establishment take over. I certainly don't like that. I'm a person who believes that small is beautiful. I don't want big business or big government to run my life. I want to do it myself; get your ass out of my way, OK? That's what I say to anything that is too big and wants to tell me what to do or sell me anything. I wouldn't make a very good communist either. I'd probably be one of the first to go to Siberia if not to the experimental laboratory.

Colin P. Langeveld
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...At present Tolkien fans are able to listen to LotR which is being broadcast on BBC. Radio 3. As with the musical or visual representation of something as personal as LotR I at first found difficulty in identifying the images or in this case, the voices of the characters to what I had visualized when I had read the book. But after the first few episodes (there will ultimately be 26) things soon fell into place. Some of the criticism has been strange to say the least, for instance it has been said that the Hobbits sounded too middle class. I think they just sounded middle earth. Over here middle class is not seen to represent the common man. If you want a good example of a middle class accent, listen to Julie Andrews. No, if you want to hear your real

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REG
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common man, go and see Robert Newton as Long John Silver, have a chin-wag with a Cockney or, better still, share a plate of pigs trotters and black pudding with a Lancashire lass. Does tha' knows what ah means?

Astryd Hoeschstetter
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When I read Wayne Shumaker's "A Review of Madeleine L'Engle's Time Trilogy", I thought, "Oh good, someone's going to write good stuff about these books." As I read further though, I began to wonder if we had read the same books.

I am not sure who started the rumor that the Time Trilogy is SF. When I find out, I am going to have a discussion with them. It could be that the publisher decided it was SF, and we all know how accurate & informative publisher's classifications are.

A Wrinkle in Time, A Wind in the Door, and A Swiftly Tilting Planet are not SF. They contain some elements of SF, but they are books of fantasy. As fantasy, they are viable, legal, kosher, and pretty damn' good.

In fantasy, it has always been acceptable to assign good and evil attributes to everything in the tale, often to base the entire plotline around these attributes. Magic is kosher, as is the

assumption that creatures and things (other than those which we have come to accept as sentient) may be sentient.

Miss. L'Engle follows all the rules, and I find her works a lot easier to stomach than C.S. Lewis' children's fantasy.

Dr. Shumaker drops a hint of why (possibly) he did not like A Swiftly Tilting Planet when he states that he was unable despite strenuous efforts, to become interested in the Welsh legends and Indian lore upon which the story relies heavily. Would you like The Wizard of Oz if you didn't have much of an interest in Dorothy, and didn't give a damn if she never got home?

It's awfully difficult to give a neutral or good opinion of a book if you think its basic premises are silly or dull.

I find Welsh legend to be fascinating, and am therefore perhaps prejudiced in favor of fantasy which fits into the Welsh tapestry, but I also like good writing. Sure, the Time Trilogy has weaknesses, (some of which even I find irritating) but as a whole, it is of a higher caliber than 80% of the other works of "children's fantasy" on the market today.

Finally, (and I don't want to start any fights, but) I find Dr. Shumaker's "my metaphysics is better than your metaphysics" to be just a

wee bit offensive.

As a merely chemical organism myself, I am aware that what I don't know far outweighs what I do. So until proven otherwise, I will continue to assume that the Universe, which certainly does have a bunch of definite measurable physical characteristics, sings.

But I'm not sure about the Universe next door.

Peter Shulin
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Washington, PA 15301

Oh, NIEKAS, a little stirring,
Making known to all, you're striving
A little clinch here, a grasp at that,
Each struggle, a means to surviving.

Thou were once Nothing, NIEKAS,
Then, out of darkness came the Word,
Enlightening the minions of Sci-Fi,
And many others, that you are heard!

You're not now, NIEKAS, you're superb,
Reach for the very stars, outer space-
You're now VISKAS, all, par excellence,
Ready for the open market, the Rat-Race.

[you're check will be in the mail this week, Peter...]

JAMES GUNN is now working on volume #4 of The Road to Science Fiction and we have word from a usually reliable source that ROBERT HEINLEIN has just finished a new book.

THE LAST WORD

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"Isn't It Romantic" by ANNE BRAUDE/
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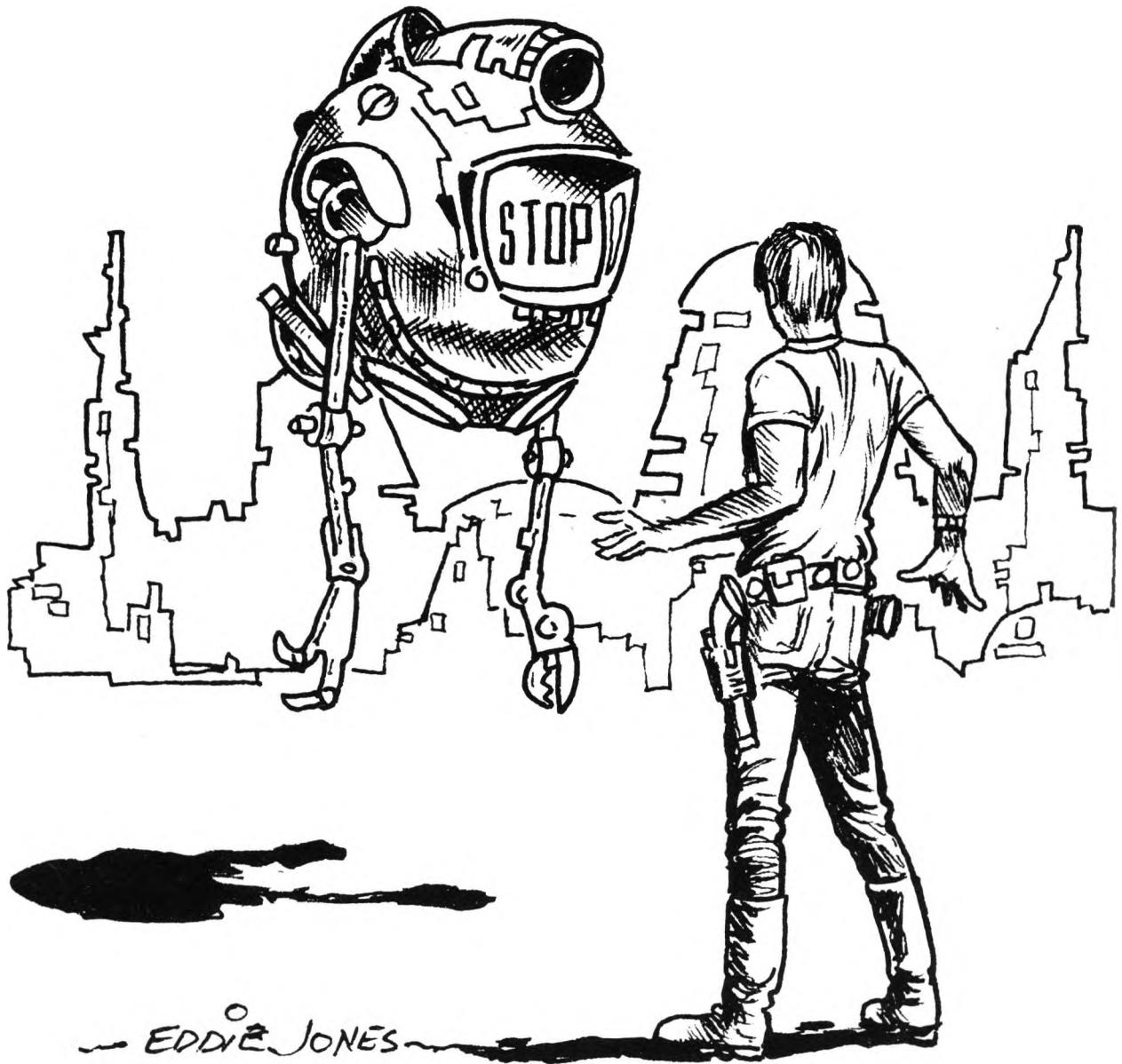
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foreign air

single issue: \$3.75
one year : \$15.00
two years : \$29.00

Send money to 106 School St., Laconia, NH, 03246. Everything else goes to RFD 1 Box 63, Centre Harbor, NH, 03226



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