

"Smile when you call me horseface, Earthman!"

PSYCHOTIC



# PSYCHOTIC

January '68

"The Pulp Fanzine"

23

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Published on the Psychotic Press, PSY is issued for trades, contributions and 25¢, which is getting your money's worth this time. Next issue has got to be thinner. I hope...

COVER BY JACK GAUGHAN with words by me.  
BACOVER BY BILL ROTSLER

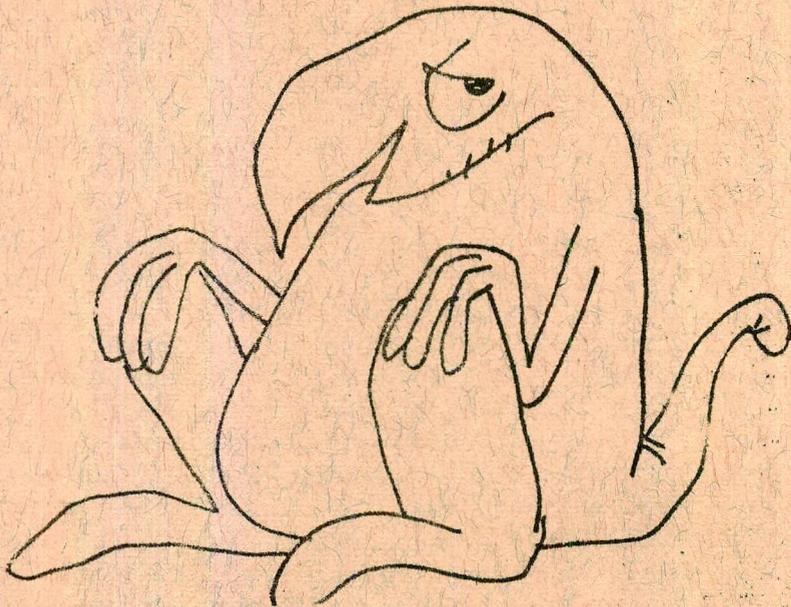
ILLUSTRATIONS BY GAUGHAN, ROTSLER.

PSYCHOTIC is a product of the fevered mind of the mad hermit of Venice.

Richard E. Geis  
5 Westminster Ave.  
Venice, California.  
90291

Remember: no mail addressed to "Psychotic" or "The Mad Hermit" will reach me. It all goes to Governor Reagan.

Tan paper for this page because I had the logo and mascot below already pintnered up.



# IT'S THE COUCH

Where the editor rambles on and on and on

"Alright, Mr. Geis, lie back. You may begin."

"I have nothing to say."

"Nothing?"

"Well...maybe a few thoughts...about STAR TREK for one. The last episode, the one about the tribbles, was a gem, yet it was produced by Gene L. Coon, and a lot of the fans who write me say Coon is No Good. So I'm confused. I only wish I could have forced everyone in the country to see it, the tribbles episode. I'll bet a lot of people write in and ask for a tribble. This format is making me write like a driveling idiot. Forge on, Geis. Doctor, does this show determination or stupidity?"

"It shows---"

"The STAR TREK before that...the WOLF IN THE FOLD...by my friend Robert Bloch...hey, I have a friend in Denver who used to write, for egoboo mostly since he sold only a couple books and short stories, who used to write little notes to editors with his submissions and he'd always, usually, add 'friend of Norman Mailer' in describing himself. So...where was I? WOLF IN THE FOLD. Yeah, a good episode, too, but I frankly croggled a bit at Coon's conception...or was it the director's?...of a planet devoted to pleasure. All he could think of was a middle eastern cafe with a belly dancer! It wasn't until the plot took everyone up to the Enterprise that the story got good."

"But, doc, I got a letter from Bjo Trimble who urges me to write letters to save STAR TREK, and I did, write one letter anyway, urging that STAR TREK be given another time slot."

"Who did you write?"

"Mr. Mort Werner, NBC Television, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10026. And Bjo suggested letters to:

Mr. Herbert Schlosser, NBC-TV, 3000 W. Alameda Blvd., Burbank, Calif.

Mr. Julian Goodman, Pres., NBC, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10026.

RCA, same address as above, and

H.G. Peters & Co., 2421 E. Washington St., Indianapolis, Indiana. (RCA's ad agency).

Plus letters to local TV stations carrying STAR TREK, TV columnists, local and national, plus TV GUIDE.

"Is that all she said?"

"Nope. She said my letter should be neat, sincere, not a form letter, and written NOW, and not put off."

"Do you feel virtucus now, Dick, because you did your duty?"

"Yep. And whatthehell, I like STAR TREK. The letter only took a minute to write."

"Dick, I'm sorry to tell you this, but STAR TREK has been cancelled. The bad news was in the Hollywood Reporter."

"So what? Decisions have been reversed before. Look how many times THE AVENGERS has come back. The Enterprise shall warp again!"

"Very interesting attitude."

"I want to talk about my fanzine now."

"You always talk about PSYCHOTIC. What on earth new can you say?"

"I can announce that TED WHITE will be an irregular columnist in future issues, as will JOHN BERRY...the American Berry. Impressed?"

"Nope. Now if you got someone like little blue-eyed Jimmy Wright..."

"Wha..? Why...you're not Doctor Greenell! Take off that wig! You're... YOU ARE A FUGGHEAD! "

"Right, Geis! My name is---"



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urn, and I'll be here. I'd better be here! With fanzine reviews and a visit with you,  
Doctor, unless this technique for editorials is a total bomb. I have learned to like it,  
though, since that first awkward page. How do you feel about it?"

"I t hink---"

"What kind of accent is that? Besides, who cares what you think? I'm the one who's  
supposed to talk."

Silence.

"Dick, what about the consite bidding controversy?"

"Much as I like to talk I refuse to get involved in that mess! I think it's the  
role of PSY to provide a forum for the airing of views, but, candidly, I don't really  
have any strong opinions. I suspect the old rules will be retained, in the end, and  
no great harm will come to fandom or condom. Hmm."

"Let's not be obscene, Dick."

"I knew you'd say that."

"Do you have any thoughts about DANGEROUS VISIONS?"

"A few. I enjoyed the book very much. I think that beyond doubt Harlan has done  
~~speculative fiction~~ speculative fiction a great service by pushing and fighting to get the  
book published."

"How did you do that?"

"What?"

"That trick with your voice...the /// thing."

"Oh. I dunno. Every trufan can do it."

"Amazing."

"To get back to DANGEROUS VISIONS, I believe it is a new standard for science fict-  
ion (sorry about that, Harlan), a sort of opening of the door into realism and maturity  
and where it'll be at for the genre from now on."

"A breakthrough?"

"No...more like one big step forward."

"Which stories did you like best?"

"Riders of the Purple Wage was by far the best. Just a beautiful job! The stories  
that stick in my memory are Gonna Roll The Bonos by Fritz Leiber, Evensong by Lester del  
Rey, A Toy For Juliette by Robert Bloch and the sequel The Prowler in the City at the  
Edge of the World by Harlan. Incidentally, in fandom, you don't have to say Ellison.  
Just Harlan is enough. Everyone knows who is meant. The other stories I remember from  
DANGEROUS VISIONS are Eutopia by Poul Anderson, Sex and/or Mr. Morrison by Carol Emsh-  
willer, Carcinoma Angels by Norman Spinrad (but I wish he had submitted something more  
"serious" and longer), Go, Go, Go, Said the Bird by Sonya Dorman, and If All Men Were  
Brothers, Would You Let One Marry Your Sister? by Theodore Sturgeon."

"And which was the worst of the lot?"

"Of the ones that stick in my mind, the Sturgeon story. Lousy use of the technique  
chosen, bad construction, bad conception. Good theme. I winced for him as I read it.  
I have to agree with all that Earl Evers has to say about it in this issue."

"I see. Have you read any other books?"

"I've started DUNE by Frank Herbert, and up to the beginning of chapter three I like  
it."

"It's a big book, isn't it?"

"About 255,000 words. It must have taken him a year to write."

"Dick, your time is up. You'll have to make way for my next patient."

"Who?"

"I cannot tell you that."

"Is it Bjo? Donaho? Alva Rogers? Mark Podlin? George Scithers? Earl Evers?"

"There's the door, Mr. Geis!"

"YOU CAN'T THROW ME OUT OF MY OWN FANZINE! I'LL SUE YOU FOR TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS!"  
THUMP! CRASH! BUMP!

"I'LL SUE!" THUMP! WHUMP! "CULTIST!" WHAM! "SIXTH FANDOMITE!" C-R-A-S-H!!

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# WHY DOES IT SELL

Recently I was browsing a copy of Atheling/Blish's THE ISSUE AT HAND, and I encountered the following passage:

...What an editor buys reflects what he likes to read, and what he thinks will sell. Six or eight months later, he may find out that Vol. XXI, No. 9 of his magazine sold very badly, but he has no way of telling which of the eight stories in that issue depressed the sales. If it sells very well, he has the inverse problem...  
/p.95/

How many times have I seen the same general comment made? Blish was appealing for the return of letter-column story-feedback to the prozines---a stand I heartily endorse---but in the process he revealed what strikes me as the single most ignorant assumption to remain at all widespread in our field.

Perhaps Blish can be pardoned; his acquaintance with prozine editing was unfortunately brief (one issue of VANGUARD SCIENCE FICTION). But for a man as well-acquainted with so many other professional aspects of the publishing field, his naivete seems remarkable.

The key assumption he reveals in the quoted passage is that an issue of a science fiction magazine gains or loses sales due to the quality of the stories contained in it.

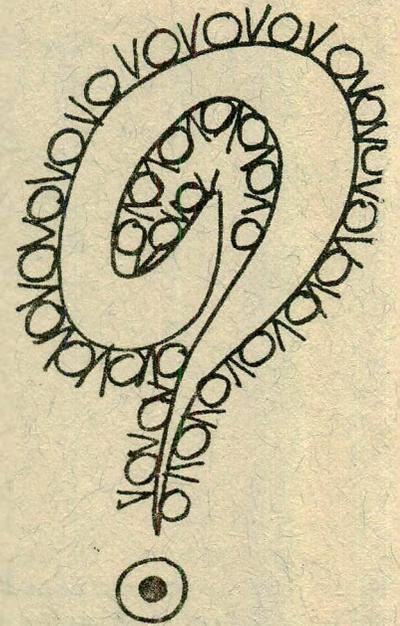
A great many people seem to believe this, including many editors with whom I've swapped shoptalk. "It was a cruddy issue; it didn't sell well." "Let's face it: X's story wasn't up to his usual standards. He cost us sales." Etc.

Yet, a moment's reflection is all that is necessary for anyone to disprove the assumption. Consider: how many potential buyers read an entire issue of a magazine before purchasing it?

It is supremely irrelevant whether or not a given issue is a stinker. The stories in a magazine do not sell it.

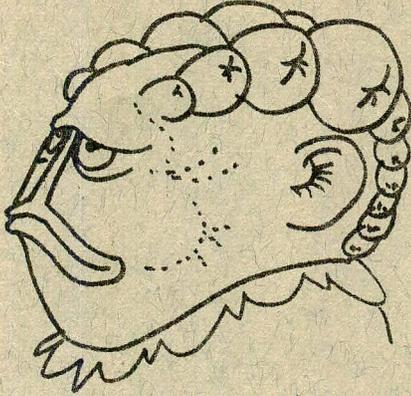
What does, then?

At this point I could prepare a long list, but instead I want to give a concrete example. THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION has, for several years, coasted upon a barely marginal circulation. Put flatly, the magazine makes little or no profit on any given issue, and would have been out of business ten years ago if it were not for two factors: 1) Joseph Ferman is the only true gentleman I have ever met in the publishing field, and I am convinced he remains F&SF's publisher for a gentleman's love of it; 2) those foreign editions and yearly anthologies provide a modest profit margin.



AN  
ARTICLE  
BY

TED WHITE



In the summer of 1963, F&SF ran its last Heinlein serial. "Glory Road" was, in many respects, the worst novel Heinlein ever wrote (although his "Podkayne of Mars," which F&SF rejected, might be considered worse). But the three issues of F&SF in which "Glory Road" appeared steadily gained in circulation. The July issue gained, as I recall, about five thousand extra sales, while the September issue (in which the serial concluded) had increased the circulation to a total of over ten thousand. That's a comfortable gain.

The October issue was the annual All-Star ("all names") issue. Its circulation fell off by several thousand.

The November issue sported a wraparound cover by Hannes Bok that was destined to be his last-published (and many, including myself, number it among his best), as well as Roger Zelazny's much applauded "A Rose for Ecclesiastes." It was the worst selling issue of the decade.

Why?

A combination of factors will combine to win or lose sales for any given issue of an s-f magazine, and the above example hits most of them.

To begin with: A major name among the authors in an issue will almost always help sales. This is demonstrable. Heinlein is one of the all-time biggest draws. I think this may be traceable to the fact that, in addition to his proven ability to tell a fascinating (if arguable) story, he has been breeding his own audience of fans since the publication of his first juvenile, ROCKETSHIP GALLILEO, shortly after WW2. Some fourteen of his juvenile novels are on the shelves of most of the major municipal and school libraries in this country. More than any other s-f writer, Heinlein has brought his talent to the attention of each new generation of potential s-f readers. Heinlein's name prominently displayed on the cover of an s-f magazine will almost always boost sales. (So, I am told, will van Vogt's, if to a lesser extent. I suspect this must be true; I can see no other excuse for the vV stories Pohl has published.)

Secondly, more than half a magazine's readership is what might be called a "floating" readership. It is not made up of people who buy each issue religiously. Instead, this 50% of each issue's purchasers are impulse buyers, picking up a copy at random from the newsstand, thumbing it to see if it interests them, and---if it does---buying it. Each one of these readers may buy no more than four out of twelve issues a year, and the specific titles he favors may vary for any of a number of reasons.

Obviously it is just this floating audience to whom a magazine must address itself if it expects to survive. A magazine must woo each impulse-buyer it gains for a single issue into returning for the next. Toward this end most magazines direct the "coming next issue" blurbs, serials, and many other devices, some more legitimate than others.

Yet, for each casual purchaser who is transformed into a steady reader, the magazines seem to lose an older reader. Statistics suggest that the average cycle for a complete turnover in the readership of most s-f magazines is three to five years (we collectors and fans are statistically insignificant). So the pursuit of new readers is never-ending, and the circulation is stuck on a treadmill, rarely gaining more readers than are lost.

To return to our specific example, let's add several other factors. Well, to begin with, a lot of Heinlein attracted readers stopped buying the magazine when the serial ended. A couple of thousand stayed on, for the next issue, either through inertia or because once attracted, they found more than just Heinlein to hold them.

But that next issue was one of the worst in years. It was an "All-Star" issue, remember? The cover named Azimov, Bester, Davidson, de Camp, Henderson, MacLeish, and Matheson---a rather tepid group of names, all in all. But the contents page was even more disillusioning. The actual stories in this "All-Star" issue were by Richard Matheson, Zenna Henderson, Avram Davidson, P.M. Hubbard, and Alfred Bester. There was "verse" by Archibald MacLeish and Jeannette Nichols, a book-review column by Avram, an article by Sprague, Ike's usual science column, and a "guest editorial" by Fred Brown (whose name was unaccountably left off the cover---perhaps because just "Brown" wouldn't have looked too impressive anyway). For a "special" issue, this issue was particularly disappointing, following as it did on the heels of a Heinlein serial. (The serial might better have terminated in the October issue, thus adding a much bigger name to the lineup.) In addition, the "Star"s weren't at their best, and the Bonestell cover was even more pedestrian than has become usual for him of late.

But still, a lot of people---perhaps three thousand or five thousand more than usual---bought that issue.

Then they read it.

Mind you, the quality of the stories in that issue didn't hurt its sales. It simply destroyed the sales of the next issue.

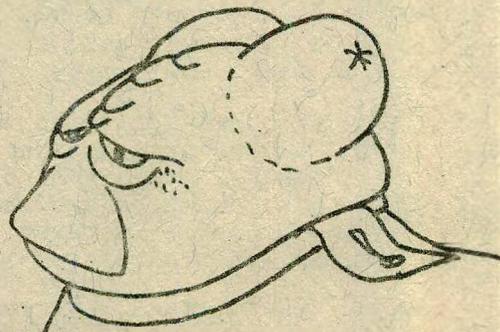
There is no other way to understand the incredibly poor showing of the November, 1963 issue. After all, that issue was the first to add my name to the masthead (as "Assistant Editor"), and that alone should have added at least five new readers to the circulation...

But seriously... Despite one of the most beautiful covers in many years, there was a dearth of Big Names in the issue. The cover named only two: Zelazny, who was then only beginning to develop a following, and "Sir Lawrence Jones," known elsewhere in the issue simply as "L.E. Jones." Other authors, listed on the contents page, were Philip Winsor (whose story I'd picked from the slush pile), Lloyd Biggle, Jr., S. Dorman, Ray Nelson, and Grendel Briarton (with one of the last Feghoots, thank ghod!).

To an impulse buyer, looking for a familiar name or some other good excuse to buy the issue, there wasn't much. And, more important, if he'd read the previous issue, it probably had left a sour taste in his mouth.

Which brings me to White's Hypothesis: The quality of stories in a given issue of any s-f magazine will have a direct effect only on the sales of subsequent issues.

Naturally, there are other factors, most of which I've touched upon. The positive factors are largely elements of the promotional package: the nature of the cover, the appearance of interior illustrations (if any; and for all intents and purposes, only ANALOG has illustrations worth a second glance), the nature of cover and interior



blurbs, and the magnitude of names featured on the cover or contents page. The negative factors are usually either inadequacies of the promotional package (which is to say, a sloppy or insufficient job of promoting what's in an issue), or any residual bad taste left from previous issues bought and read. After all, once burned, twice shy. If a good promotion job cons you into buying a lousy issue, you'll tend to distrust the promotion on the next issue. "Looks good," you might say (if you were an impulse buyer), "but, jeeze, that last issue really smelled. I dunno..." Whereupon you put the s-f mag back and pick up the new PLAYBOY instead. It only costs 15¢ more, and, bigolly, it has nekud gurels. (It even sometimes has wretched s-f.)

What can the magazines do to counteract this sort of occurrence? Good issues sure help. But, as I've been saying for some years now, s-f magazines are in a bind. They are now in active competition with paperback books. And usually one has a better, more sure selection from among the paperbacks, some of which, like ORBIT and NEW WRITINGS IN SF, are really magazines in disguise. Worse, paperbacks enjoy superior distribution, and longer on-sale periods. Undated, they can be reshipped from the warehouse at odd intervals until a much greater proportion are sold. (The figure would be 100% except for the thievery of distributors, who manage to siphon off 10% to 15% for their own profit.

The one way in which magazines are superior to books is in the nature of their periodic appearance---the fact that they are periodicals. Unlike books, even series anthologies like the two above mentioned, magazines have a four dimension existence. A book is a book: a complete entity in and of itself. A magazine is a life-span that numbers many individual issues in its total entity, each issue a three-dimensional cross-section of its four-dimensional totality.

Few editors today are exploiting this advantage, or even seem aware of it. While it is a truism that all magazines go through recognizable stages, from birth, through childhood, adolescence, into adult maturity, and finally develop a hardening of their arteries and gradual senility, few editors or publishers seem either aware of this or concerned about it. Old age in a magazine is far less immutable than it is in mankind, and can sometimes even be reversed. (But look at ANALOG...)

More important, this eventual growth in a magazine's career is both expressed in and a function of, its editorial personality. Magazines have editorial personalities, even though many seem edited in such a fashion as to suppress or hide the fact. Yet, it is just this personality which attracts or repels many readers, and which, properly exploited, can gain steady readers for a magazine. Put succinctly, the major area which editors are shirking is that of involvement. A magazine thrives and survives on reader involvement. When a reader feels caught up in a magazine, concerned for its success, impatient for its next issue, he has become involved in its personality.

Yet, since H.L. Gold stamped his foot on the notion of a letter column for GALAXY, and letter columns lost their popularity among editors (a plight, you'll recall, James Blish was rightly decrying), this single most important facet of reader involvement has been lost. Today, most s-f magazines are just second-rate anthologies, forced by publication schedules and lower budgets into an unsuccessful competition with planned book anthologies of original material. ORBIT is presently siphoning off stories which might otherwise enhance the magazines. Plans are simmering for several other such book publications. If ORBIT were to add interior illustrations of any quality, a letter column, and, perhaps, book reviews, it would outclass all presently published magazines, beating them at their own game.

The answer has got to be the greater involvement of s-f magazines with personality expressions the readers can become caught up within. Editorials which speak specifically to the readers, and say something relevant to the s-f field. Interior illustrations and cover packages which are visually exciting and serve as intriguing hooks to the fiction they accompany. Features (reviews, letter columns, et al) which address themselves to the reader and his service in one way or another.

INVOLVEMENT. Make the reader care about the magazine. Hook more impulse buyers into steady purchases, while cutting down the number of drop-outs from steady readers. During the heydays of s-f, even the second-rate magazines tried to do this. Now not even the best try very hard. They'd better start soon.

# JIM HARMON?

FUNNY YOU SHOULD  
MENTION HIM...

By Arnie Katz

Since it's possible to pick up New York radio station WNBC up here in Buffalo, I usually get to listen to Long John Nebel's all-night talk show. One evening about a month ago I came home about 1:00 A.M. and turned on the show, which was already in progress. They were discussing a book called THE GREAT RADIO HEROES with its author, whose name they didn't bother to mention the first few minutes I listened.

"You know what my favorite radio show was?" the one female panelist of the night asked. Since she'd been fairly silent up to that point, the others inquired enthusiastically as to what was her favorite program, in an effort to include her in the discussion.

"'Dimension X'," she said. A silence ensued while the rest of the people around the table digested the information that the woman dug s-f.

"You know that show was packaged by Galaxy Magazine," the author of the book said, perhaps trying to impress her, "and even though I've sold something like fifty stories, they never picked one to be adapted for the show."

I put down the Pepsi I was guzzling and began to listen more intently. If he'd sold so many stories to Galaxy, I thought, it might be someone I know.

"Why," said Long John, who was obviously as surprised by the author's revelation as I was, "you must know Frederick Pohl, the editor of Galaxy Publications!" Pohl is an extremely frequent "panelist" on the show.

"Sure," the author said, "I know Fred." He knows Pohl, I mused, more interested than ever.

"And how about Lester del Rey?" Long John pressed, suddenly on familiar ground. "He's been on the show a lot, you know."

"Yes, I think we've met. Certainly I know of his work."

"How about a fellow who used to be on the show a lot a number of years back on the other station?" (John used to be on New York's WOR.) "He's made quite a name for himself in California---Hollywood---very successful out there; H\*A\*R\*L\*A\*N E\*L\*L\*I\*S\*O\*N!" Nebel paused triumphantly, having dropped what he considered the Ultimate Name.

"If you mention that name again I will have to leave," the author said ominously. One could sense that he was ready to bolt from his chair at any moment should Harlan's name be spoken again. Any silence on radio is noticeable; a long silence is an eternity.

"Now I'd like to do a little business," Long John finally managed as he hurriedly paved the way for a commercial to take the focus off the discussion, "and we'll get back to Jim Harmon in a minute..."

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GAIT  
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STRAIGHT  
S

"'Due to' should not mean both 'because of' and 'caused by'. This degrades the language, reducing its preciseness. Due to should modify a noun but not a verb. If you can substitute 'attributed to' or 'caused by' you are correct, but if you need 'because of' in the sentence then 'due to' is wrong."

"Grammatically correct, but stylistically it would have been better to put 'really' up near the front, e.g. 'Who really was Abraham the Spokesman of God, broken on the wheel at Nuber?'"

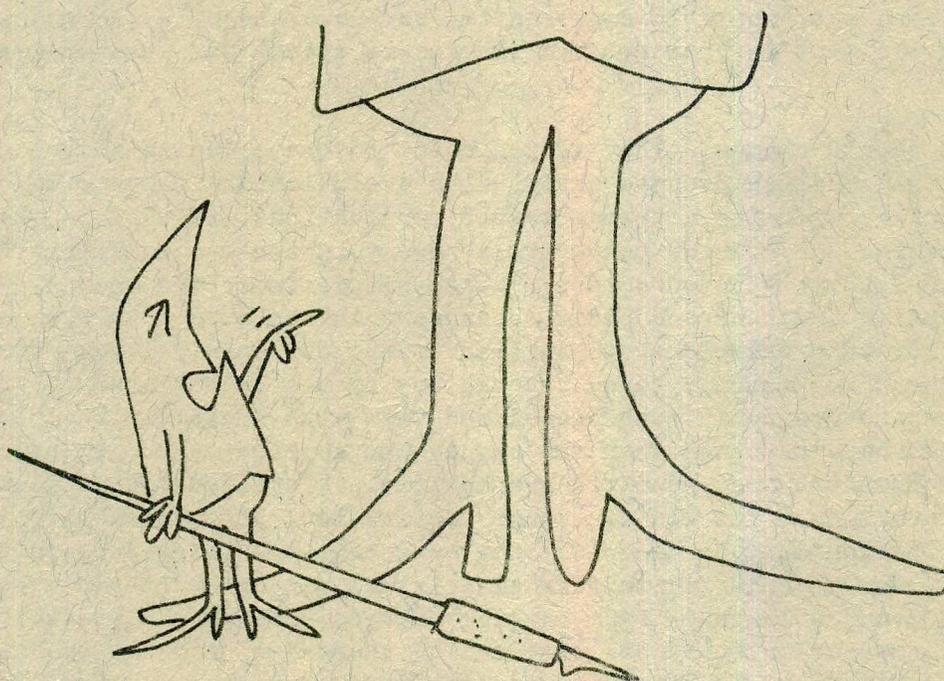
Do they remind you of today or yesterday when a teacher tore apart your little essays or test answers? Are you finding an extra subconscious delight in your fanzine writing and reading, because fanzines are untrammled literary creations where the language isn't confined to rules that someone thought up in spare moments on particularly hot afternoons in the summer of 1896? Then bewail your bad fortune and fandom's tainting of schoolmasterdom. Those are both excerpts from recent fanzines, copied from publications that otherwise are entertaining and in the best fannish traditions, written by fans about whom I know nothing else bad.

I'm not comfortable when I write an article on this particular theme. My regular job in newspaper work is made miserable by reporters who turn in copy riddled with errors of spelling and grammar, and by publicity chairmen who turn in press releases so stylistically contorted that it's impossible to know the meaning intended in some paragraphs. In my wage-earning capacity, I would be horrified to find myself making excuses and presenting justifications for the very same writing faults that I either ignore or secretly enjoy in my hobby capacity as a fanzine reader.

But the contradiction isn't as extreme as it appears at first glance. There are several reasons why fanzine writing shouldn't be subjected to the kind of pedantic fault-finding that is normally bestowed on the writing of journalists, students, or prescription-inscribing physicians.

The first and most important reason why we shouldn't be too strict about the spelling and the grammar in fanzines involves the situation the very name of the thing implies. They're fan magazines. They're done for the love of it, from the typing of contributions to the laborious addressing of the wrappers. They're the work of people who either don't make money out of professional writing and publishing, or people who turn to amateur work as a relaxation from their professional creativity. There are in fandom no highly paid proof-readers, copy editors, and policy setters whose justification for existence consists partly in their decision that the word must always be spelled adviser rather than advisor in this particular firm's magazines. By very definition, no fan publication makes money, and the people who purchase them in cash or through in kind contributions like exchange magazines

AN ARTICLE BY HARRY WARNER JR.



or contributions can't feel that they're getting cheated by misspelled words or interrogative sentences with periods at the end.

And one of the essentials of this fan-amateur-love of it situation is the lack of compulsion. You publish a fanzine or write for it or read it because you want to do it, not because someone will pay you or give you a free meal for this fanac. If there is too much nit-picking when accepted rules of

syntax or word usage get shot down in flames, a certain tinge of compulsion begins to spoil the voluntary, hobby aspect of the creativity. You hesitate time and again as you write even an informal letter of comment, trying to remember just how so-and-so gave instructions nine months ago about the proper use of gerunds. You look up spellings in the dictionary so often that you don't get the stencils finished on time and you miss the apa mailing.

Another point in favor of wrong use of language is tradition. Not the tradition that says you must follow "everybody" by a singular pronoun, but the tradition that the language changes over the centuries and modern conditions have begun to militate against continued change. Stagnation isn't good for any phase of human activity, but there are reasons to believe that the English language might get stuck in its present formulation for centuries to come, the way conformity is taking it over. You'll find newspapers all over the nation adopting exactly the same choices where stylistic matters are concerned, because there are only two main news-providing services, these services transmit their news already punched on tape for running through linotypes, there is no way to change St. to Street without throwing away the tape and paying someone to repunch the story in question, and local news copy is edited to conform to the rules maintained by the news services, for uniformity throughout the newspaper. National television programs are announced by men whose accent is normally neutral, betraying no regional twang. Teaching machines give the same grammar recommendations to kids in New Mexico and in Maine. As we move into the era when machines will do most of the work of ~~looking things up~~ data retrieval, it will be increasingly necessary to settle on certain ways of using the language, for programming convenience.

Of course, a few hundred fans publishing little fly-by-night fanzines can't exercise any perceptible resistance to the overpowering weight of this snowballing consistency avalanche. But why should we knuckle under deliberately? If it's a proud and lonely thing to be a fan (a fact almost forgotten in these years of rapidly changing

fannish slogans), we ought to have the bravery to write and publish sentences in which "however" is used in the sense of "but". It would be fandom's widow's mite, a symbolic even if useless attempt to enshrine in print a brave effort to develop the language that is heard everywhere in conversation but never seen in the publications guarded by those who want to preserve the linguistic status quo at whatever stagnatory cost.

Because languages should change. They should react to the changing environment. I think it's splendid that English dropped early in its evolution the popularity of the second person singular, with its anti-democratic connotations, in nations where democracy took strong hold. Of course, yesterday's heresy is today's immutable rule in the grammar books: President Johnson's inauguration was as incorrect once as President Johnson's inauguration is incorrect today, because this was once a vulgar way of shortening a construction that was clumsy in English. Some day when you have some spare time in a secondhand book shop, glance through one of the 19th century textbooks on good writing that turn up in such places and view with amazement the complexities of usages that were ordained then for anyone who applied pen to paper and are forgotten today by even the most pedantic grammarians. "Terrific" means something today quite different from its old dictionary definition, and the change in usage might symbolize the tendency to marvel at the wonderful new things constantly emerging around us, instead of cringing in fear of original sin or night air. Not even the pedants can prevent a language from getting changes through the acquisition of new words and fandom has contributed at least one of these new words to the dictionaries, *bem*, and is gradually disseminating *fanzine* as a word that appears in mundane magazines. If we can add neologisms to the language, isn't it conceivable that we can conquer those insurmountable odds and bring into permanent published form some of the oral changes in linguistics that are normally confined to conversation?

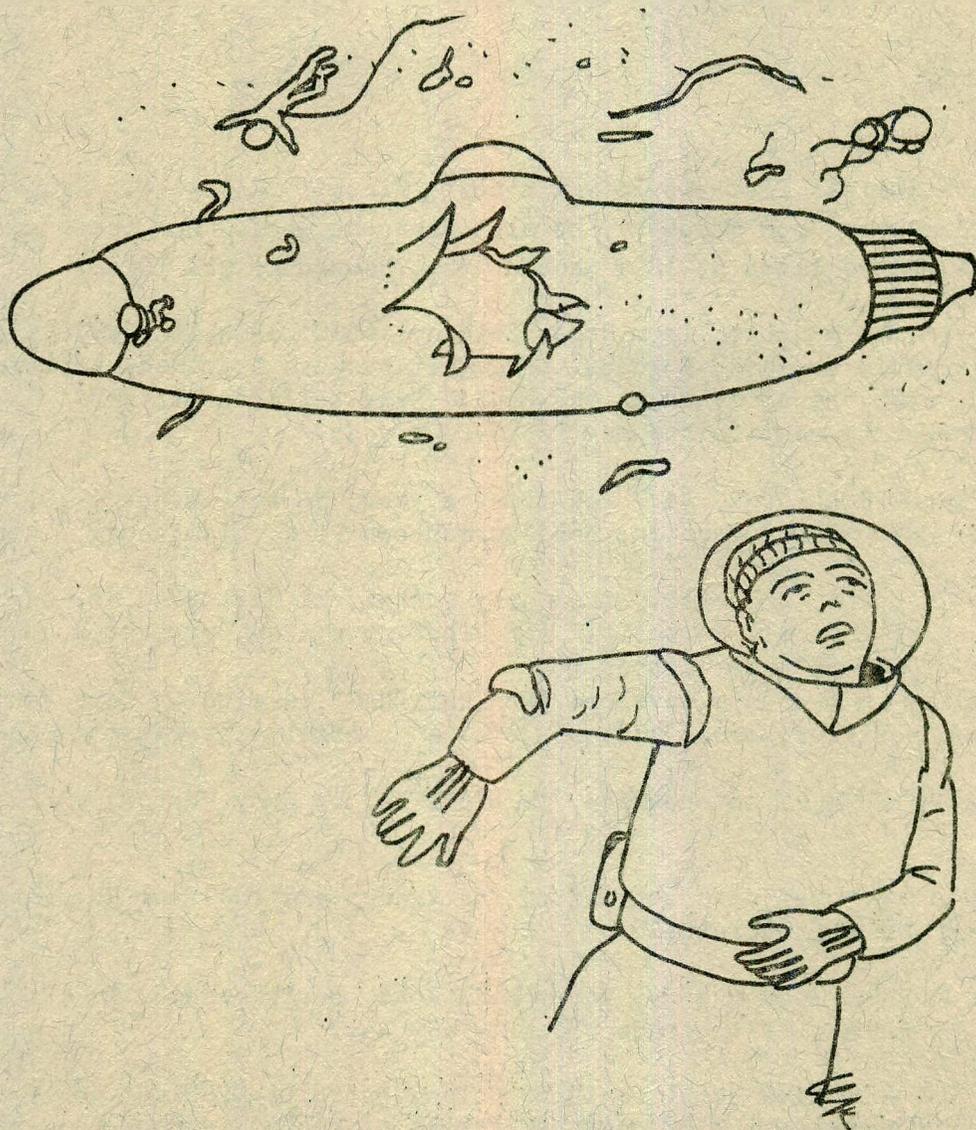
If we aren't too strict about how we put letters into words and words into sentences, we also guarantee the appearance of an occasional nonconformist of genius proportions. Rick Sneary's personal ways of spelling words aren't as famous as they used to be, with his gradual gaffiation that has created many causes for regret. You newer fans out there who rarely or never see a letter or article by Sneary published in unedited form, be assured that his special ways of spelling words gave us time after time new insights into the nature of words and his ways of thinking about them. Then there was Jean Linard, who did much the same for the sentence that Rick did for the word. He was a French fan who learned to write English principally from reading English-language fanzines. I wouldn't bet against the proposition that the day will come when he'll be discovered by the literary world as the most original stylist since Joyce.

I don't intend to urge a deliberate attempt to write bad English or to spell words against the dictionary's advice. Nor do I think most fanzine editors should leave undisturbed the mistakes that they find in the prose and poetry submitted for publication, although a very fine fanzine, *VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION*, thrived for years on a strictly *sic* policy. Most of all would I be dismayed to find any fan mistaking my intent and turning out incomprehensible pages in what he imagines will be the English of six centuries in the future.

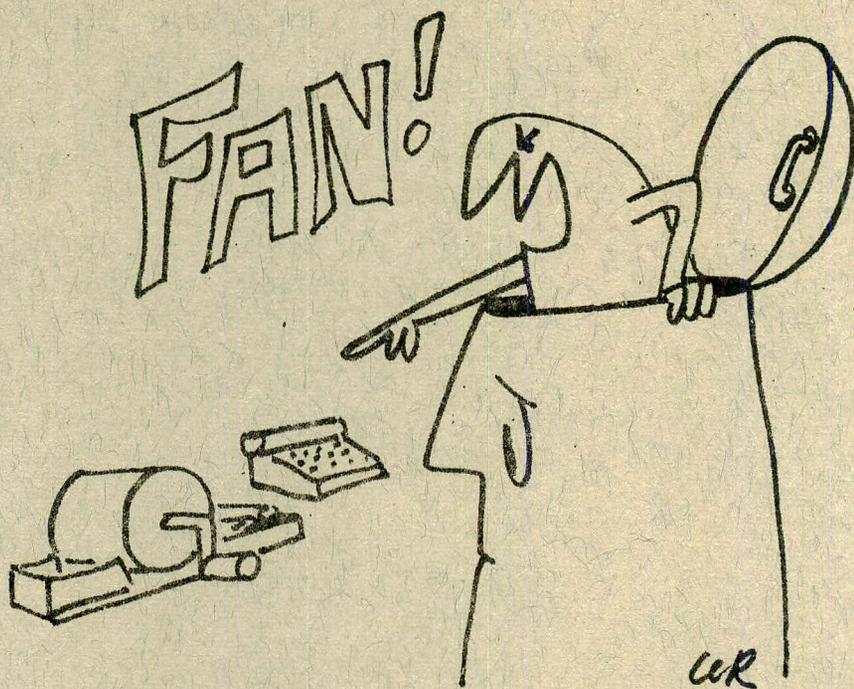
But I would like to plead for a leavening of relaxation instead of a grim determination to maintain the standards required for a straight A average in college writing courses, lest a fun hobby become a deadly bore. I'd like to see fans who have modest amounts of spare time utilize the scanty supply by creating a good volume of writing or publishing, instead of a microscopically small puddle of stylistically perfect creativity. And let's not fall into the old bigoted belief that a writer who breaks the rules is ignorant. Mark Twain once claimed that a man who always spelled a word the same way was lacking in imagination, a much more humane way of looking at

the situation. If the spelling is so bad that it slows down my reading rate, or the construction of the sentences is so mixed up that I can't comprehend the meaning, I'll scream much more loudly than Phil Bridges complains about "due to" or Jack Speer admonishes a wandering adverb. I won't complain when a fanzine editor breaks up my longplaying sentences into lots of normal length sentences before he puts my prose into print. There's lots of room for common sense, between the extremes of pedantry and illiteracy.

Meanwhile, why haven't the people who devote so much time to finding fault with fans' grammar ever organized a campaign to improve the title of a frequently anthologized science fiction story? "And Then There Were None" breaks a rule. But Eric Frank Russell wrote it after he had stopped being a fan so it stays the same in reprinting after reprinting. We don't hear so much these days about the double standard for men and women. Who wants to be the first to lead a crusade against the double standard for fans and pros?



# THE VIOLENT WARD



## Would You Believe Fanzine Reviews?

OMAHA #1. Steve Stiles' fist (would you accept 'first'?) FAPazine. Steve writes well and should make a Good Memeber. He also cartoons Good. How about some cartoons for PSY, Steve? Steve lives at 1809 Second Ave., New York, NY. 10028.

SFWA BULLETIN #14, bi-monthly, from Roger Zelazny, 4920 Westhills Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21229. Not available to fans, I guess. I get it because I joined, believe it or not. (Alright, stop the comments in the back! Sexy s-f is still s-f! Why am I so defensive?) Forgot to mention the mag is \$4.00 a year.

PULP ADVERTISER AND COLLECTOR, #4. Ten times a year, \$2 for issues 4-10, and 40¢ per copy in stamps. From Rusty Hevelin, 6594 Germantown Pike, Miamisburg, Ohio, 45342.

S.F. WEEKLY #s 207, 208, 209, 210., from Andy Porter, 24 East 82nd St. New York, NY, 10028. Costs 12/\$1 and well worth it. All kinds news; fan, pro, book, mag, movies, tv. Good, fine, I wouldn't be without it.

Tagging along in the same envelope is FIRST DRAFT, a zine by Dave Van Arnam, which deals with politics, drugs, hippies, etc. in a highly interesting manner. A bonus-zine.

Also with S.F. WEEKLY on occasion, is SFCRITIC, by Andy Porter, chock full of... reviews....

COGNATE #8, no price, jes' a personal-zine for trades and fun from Rosemary B. Hickey, 2082 West Estes, Chicago, Ill 60645.

HORIB #8, from Pat and Dick Lupoff, Merry Hill Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603, for FAPA and friends. Enjoyable. I'll trade for this any day.

RIGGER DIGGER #1, from Dick Schultz, 19159 Helen, Detroit, Michigan 48234, for 40¢, LoC, trade or contribution. A 32 page admiration of Diana Rigg and the AVENGERS. Bad repro. Probably be a second issue since THE AVENGERS is back on tv.

God! SELAKEJUHEUALEHEPAOTREUPAHR #1 I'm sorry, I can't accept that. It's from Fred Patten, 1704-B South Flower Street, Santa Ana, Calif. 92707, and it is a publication of the LOS ANGELES IN 1972 Fan Club. They list 69 members, a fine perverted touch. But I think, with a title like that, they have made mistake #1. That damn title will alienate a lot of faneds.

Now with the L.A. and the BAYCON groups both girding up already for the '71 bid confrontation, things are going to be interesting! Those seconding speeches ought to be masterworks of pyrotechnics. ZAP! POW! HARDELL! "We promise dancing girls in every room!" "Free booze!" "Free autographed pictures of Raleigh E. Multog!"

Lots of luck.

JDM BIBLIOPHILE #8, edited and published by Len and June Moffatt, 9826 Paramount Blvd., Downey, Calif. 90240. In exchange for trades and letters. Info about John D. MacDonald and his writing. This issue is of particular interest because of a long letter by JDM Himself who discusses the confusion that resulted before Kenneth Millar agreed to change the pseudo "John R. MacDonald" to "Ross MacDonald", and his favorite dead writers, publishing some of his older stories, etc. Fascinating.

OSFAN #31, edited by Hank Luttrell, 49B Donnelly Hall, Blair Group, Columbia, Mo. 65201 The house organ of the Ozark Science Fiction Association. 10¢ per, 8 pages, and the format I'd use if I were going to put out a small one-manzine. There are fanzine reviews, news of books, magazines, tv. Not bad.

FANTASY NEWS #5, from Harry Wasserman, 7611 N. Regent Rd., Milwaukee, Wisc. 53217, for 35¢, 3/¢1. There is a great deal of news and reviews in this zine, and interesting comment, but two things bring it down in my eyes---amateur fiction and a lack of a one-line break between paragraphs. Think this is nit-picking? Sorry, but large unbroken globs of type put me off, and I'm sure put off a lot of readers. This is especially true, I think, of pica type, because the lines have a crowded look.

PLAK-TOW #1, a "Save Star Trek" zine, ten issues for \$1. Hmm. I guess saving STAR TREK is envisioned by the editor, Shirley Meech, as a long-term labor. She lives at or in Apt. B-8, 260 Elkton Road, Newark, Delaware 19711. But, seriously, folks, PLAK-TOW is a newsy STAR TREKzine. Interesting items and comment inside.

FANTASM #'s 2 and 3. Irregular, photo-offset, 40¢ per, from Mark J. Podlin, 1878 Derrill Drive, Decatur, Georgia. Mark needs 500 subbers, he says, to justify the costs of photo-offset repro. That's impossible, I'm afraid, for a comic fanzine with an editorial titled "I'm a Nigger...I Want a Nigger Super-Hero".

Mark Podlin, it seems is a racist of the worst type, judging from his comments in this editorial, in FANTASM #3. Let me quote: "Of course niggers have the right to request black super heroes with which to identify... ..because niggers will riot if they do not receive nigger super-heroes... Therefore, the poor, suffering black bastardswrite to the companies ... How many Caucasians do you think will buy a magazine filled with the fantastic adventures of a Black Panther? It might draw readership at first, but who will tolerate that nigger wiping white criminals all over the streets?... Who will care about the love affairs of the Black Panther and some nigger woman?..."

And so on.

I assume Podlin will garner all his subs from the deep south. He's lost me as a trade. AND he's earned himself the PSYCHOTIC FUGGHEAD AWARD.



It is possible this reviewer is one of the very few devotees of speculative fiction who has not as yet devoured (or allowed himself to be devoured by) Frank Herbert's DUNE.

I have attempted to read the book several times, and one day I shall overcome the lethargy that assails me each time I undertake the chore, and get it read. Until recently, my inability to read Herbert filled a corner of my critical mind with guilt. One knows there are things one should read, if one is to understand the genre fully, if one is to be able to speak with lucidity and a sense of history on the problems and trends current in the form. One knows one should read van Vogt's WORLD OF NULL-A, Doc Smith's Lensman series, Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD, J.T. McIntosh's ONE IN THREE HUNDRED or Poul Anderson's first van Rijn novel, WAR OF THE WING-MEN.

But the reader coming to these books already having been convinced they are "important" is opening himself wide to a paralyzing shock of realization. These are not only unimportant books, they are---frequently---badly-written books, ineptly conceived books, characterless books, little more than polemics or problem postulations and---most unforgiveable of all---they are dull and boring books.

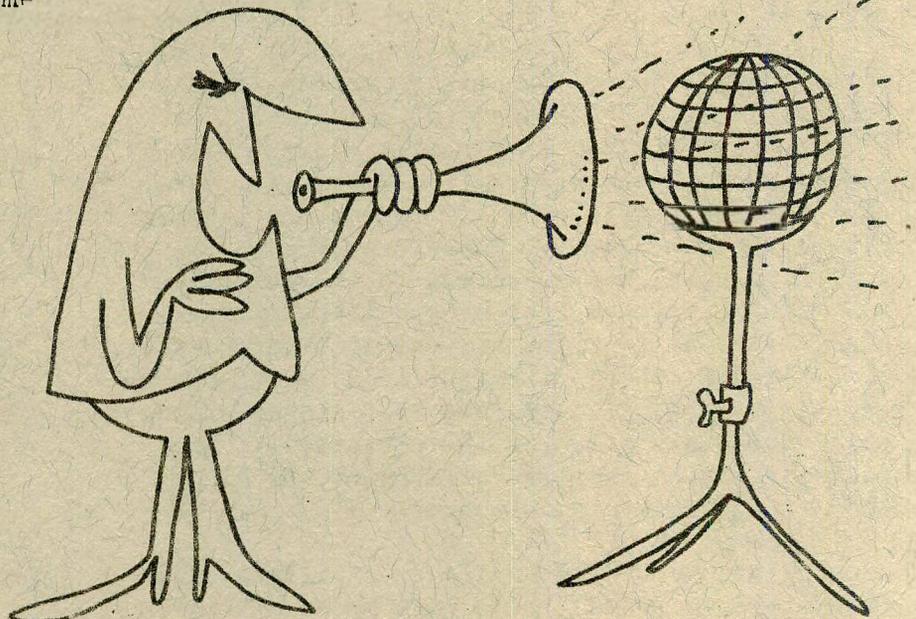
My fear of finding this to be true of DUNE may be what it is that keeps me from wading through "the first 30,000 dull words to get to the really great stuff beyond" of which others have apprised me. I hope all of this sensed tragedy is groundless. I want very much to enjoy a book so many people have assured me is "important". But oddly enough this is a repetition of an experience that occurred once before with a Herbert book; tagged "important" by all who read it, I was unable to get past the first few pages of the first installment when it ran in ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION as "Under Pressure" in 1955-56.

I speak, of course, of the fully novelized version of that "classic" novel of men under stress in a confined artificial universe under the ocean, THE DRAGON IN THE SEA.

# A VOICE FROM THE STYX

A  
COLUMN  
BY

HARLAN ELLISON



Now, twelve years after its initial appearance, I have applied enormous gobbets of stick-to-it-iveness and have read Frank Herbert's "important" book of 1955-56.

Reluctantly, my instincts of over a decade ago have been proved well-grounded.

It is seldom a readable book; it is never a good book; it is frequently an appalling book.

The critic coming twelve years late to his subject risks (possibly deserved) obloquy from not only the author, but from readers and fellow critics. He has all the benefit of hindsight and none of the responsibility of adventurous opinions. He can be cited for heating yesterday's hash, he can be reviled for attacking a hallowed institution, he can be discounted as merely trying to establish a reputation for critical analysis on the merits of his betters whom he seeks to attack for personal gain. Knowing this is front, I still feel compelled to dwell briefly on THE DRAGON IN THE SEA; to open a closed file, a dossier stamped FINALIZED, in an effort to isolate a literary embolism that even today causes discomfort in the bloodstream of speculative fiction.

(And in all fairness, aside from my admiration for Herbert the Man, my carp is more with John W. Campbell than with Herbert the Writer. And since the editor is the more influential of the two, it is his millstoneage upon which I will center the force (such as it is) of my arguments, thereby preserving my friendship with Herbert.)

THE DRAGON IN THE SEA, it seems to me, is a painfully precise example of the immolation which results when Campbellian technocracy writing is allowed to carry itself to its final extrapolation of style and content.

To refresh the memories of those who encountered the plot some time ago, simply put it is the story of a four-man crew of submariners in the not-too distant future, on a mission to the oil fields of the Enemy Power, to effect the pilferage of enough tonnage of vitally-needed oil to fill the mile-long "slug" their subtug tows. There is a spy on board. There has been frequent "shattering" of subtug commanders. A psych man trained as an electronics officer is put on board the subtug Fenian Ram by Security with the dual mission of locating the spy and finding out how it is the Enemy Powers are able to blow up so many subtugs with such methodical precision... and to telemeter the psyche of the Ram's commander, Sparrow.

"Long John" Ramsey, the electronics/security/head thumper encounters 1) the totally-unexplained murder of a Security inspector, 2) the sabotage of the atomic pile, 3) the hostility of the crew, 4) the suspicion that he himself is the spy, 5) rampant religious fanaticism on the part of Sparrow, 6) the presence of an Enemy beaming system on board, 7) the breaking-loose of the manual control damping arm in the pile room, threatening to dump the atomic pile on its side, 8) loss of ballast in the slug, 9) constant pursuit by EP subs, 10) assorted paranoia and psychosis and 11) everything else.

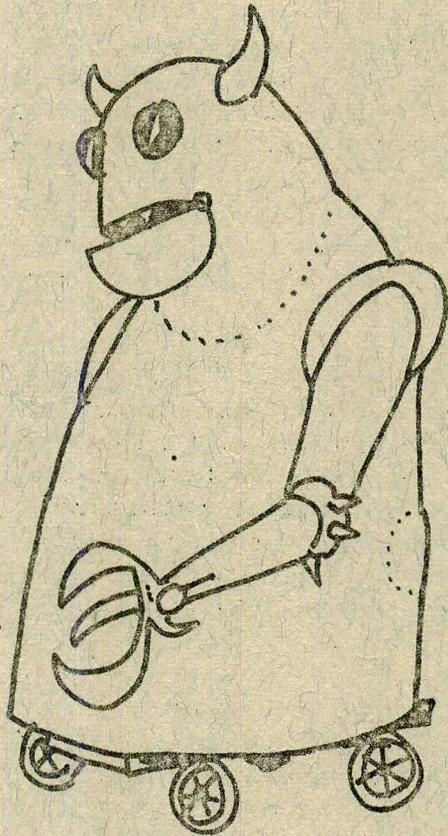
Despite all of this, there is substantially nothing happening in this book. Four men in an enclosed space should be expected to interact in a highly emotional and dramatic manner. The nitwittery that occurs down below in the Ram is about as dramatic as Jack and Jill's ascent to fetch the pail of water. Everything is happening inside them, and if any of it manages to get out, it is most actively demonstrated by the instance of First Officer Bennett's beating the crap out of Ramsey for some reason not sufficiently explicated by Herbert to make it matter much.

The menace of the EP is a peripheral one, no more omnipresent in the reader's mind than it is on the warning board of the Ram, where it appears as a signal. A

signal, mind you, to which the crew reacts about as forcefully as they might to a splinter in the finger.

Well, then, if there is no menace, if there is no plot, if the interaction of the characters is shallow, then why am I, and why are you, and why is Herbert here? Is it for the richness of characterization? Hardly. Bonnett is Garcia is Sparrow is Ramsey. One and all each is the same one. They are faceless, interchangeable, all sound alike, all act alike, think alike. Artificial identities are attempted, stuck on like putty noses. Garcia (!) speaks with a British accent. Which he loses on a moment's unnotice. And when he has it, it is Herbert's conception of British mannerisms---"bloody heroes", etc.---and is not in any observable way different from the homogenous manner of the other three men.

Ah. I see. So it isn't the depth of character. Well, then, is it some incredibly perceptive insight into the human condition? Some analysis of men under stress, under pressure? If it is, then Herbert has failed dismally; he makes the standard point that war cripples victor and vanquished alike, that war is hell, that war is interminable, and that men need brass bands playing when they go out to make war so they will want to come home again. All of this is cotton candied with some highly specious parlor psychiatry, most of which (though highly dubious) is obvious to the most slack-jawed reader from the outset, yet which is sprung in bits and pieces throughout the book as genuinely eye-opening. On the contrary, it is yawn-provoking.



The simple fact is, the sole reason for the existence of this novel is the gleeful and meticulous explication of the minutiae of hardware aboard the Fenian Ram. This is a gear-and-grommet story. It is an engineer's daydream. It is a chromium gearshift. It is a stainless steel thundermug. It is a guided tour down the gullet of The Machine God. It is not a novel, nor a study of people, nor an attempt to point a moral, or tell a story, or entertain a reader; it is shop talk. It is screwdriver and spanner bull sessions among men who think in micro-fractions. It is anti-story.

And it is bad, as a result.

In any definition of speculative fiction, there is an unspoken corollary: the most effective fiction in the genre is that which touches on reality in as many places as possible while maintaining the mood of speculation. I would have used "sense of wonder" rather than "mood of speculation", had the former not fallen into disrepute through misuse. What I am saying, in effect, is that a kind of magic realism must be established in the story if it is to be an expert example of the best the field can produce. It is a balance, a symbiosis perhaps. The reader must be able to draw the lines of extrapolation from his own experience or environment---the world in which he lives today---through the intervening linkages of logic, emerging at the new place to which the writer has taken him.

When these touchplaces with reality fail to appear, the story suffers. Proportionately, the fewer touchplaces, the weaker the story in terms of the roadiness of

a reader to adapt his thinking to meld with that of the writer.

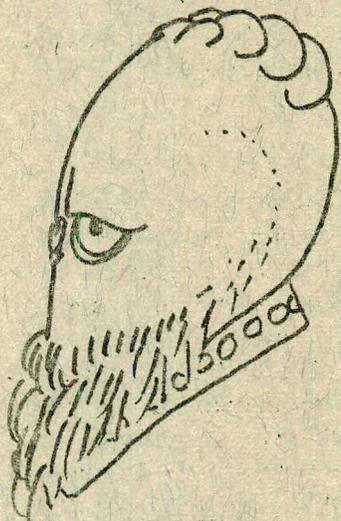
Herbert's DRAGON IN THE SEA contains touchplaces of only the most casual sort: submarines, war, men under stress, primary emotions. These are insufficient to weld the story to "the real world" and as a result, the boredom mounts in direct relation.

One simply cannot care what happens to the stick-men who populate this novel. One cannot believe their war, cannot value their cause, cannot tense at their danger, in fact can involve oneself as a reader in only the most casual way.

It is this lack of the necessity for involvement on the part of a reader that typifies a kind of writing John Campbell has championed in ANALOG (under its various logos and titles). What began as a New Wave in the Forties with Campbell's rejection of the Crustacean Period in speculative fiction, what sailed along smoothly as practiced by Kuttner and Heinlein and Sturgeon and even L. Ron Hubbard, has come far past the end of its passage, and now represents something like a return to the T. O'Connor Sloane image of what a good science fiction story should be.

Now you will notice that for the first time in this discussion, I have used the term science fiction, rather than speculative fiction. There was calculation in so doing. DRAGON IN THE SEA is science fiction, and not speculative fiction, and therein, I contend, lies the nubbin of the problem. For by adherence to the syllogistic logic of Cambellesque science fiction, most of the values of good storytelling necessary to the construction of valid speculative fiction have been lost...or worse, ignored.

The time for science fiction is past. There is more than a self-conscious re-identification in the daily more-frequent use of the phrase speculative fiction. It is a seeking toward more precise definitions. It is quite all right, among ourselves in the s-f fraternity, to point to something and say, "That's science fiction," but for the mainstream which we are rapidly absorbing, the confusion has lain precisely there. We point to CAT'S CRADLE and we point to THE CHILD BUYER and we point to WAR WITH THE NEWTS and we point to a thousand other items, no two even remotely alike, and we are dismayed when the New York Times Book Review Section tells us: A CANTICLE FOR LIBBOWITZ can't be science fiction, because it's good.

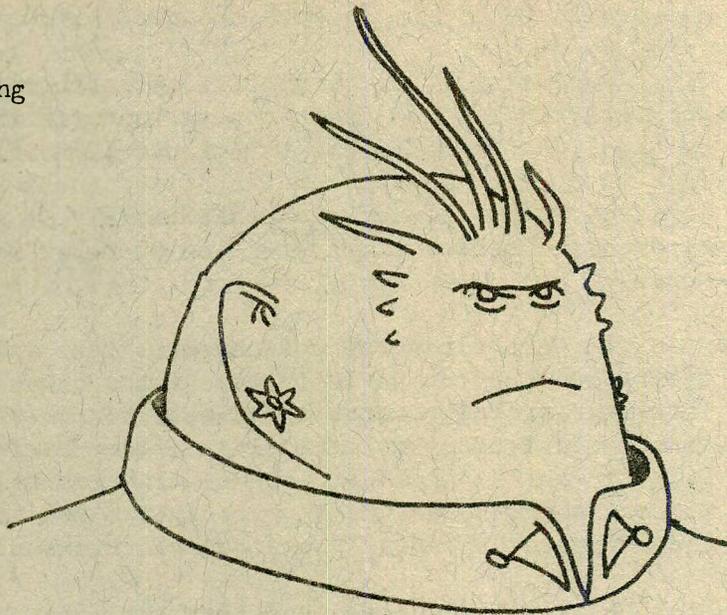


To the eradication of this confusion, I would suffer infinitely greater insults than those leveled by critics who feel the substitution of "speculative fiction" for "science fiction" is a conscious attempt at ostentation.

It seems to me that novels such as DRAGON IN THE SEA, ponderous with the weight of its own science, sluggish with the accumulated gimcrackery of engineering persiflage, foundering under the burden of hardware that can never substitute for story, is one of the reasons why we are today struggling toward a new definition---and a "new thing", if I may be permitted---of the form.

The Campbell heavy-science story as typified by DRAGON IN THE SEA is a sterile art-form to pursue. It is the ultimate descendant of all the things-wrong in the work of van Vogt and George O. Smith and Lee Correy and Hal Clement. It is the usurpation of character and plot to the ends of the engineer. The further into his own

encystment John Campbell has grown, the more immolated have become the novels he publishes. The progression is fascinating to watch in terms of the writers he influences. Hal Clement has progressed from NEEDLE and its highly evocative characters to CLOSE TO CRITICAL which is barely readable. And the important observation is that Clement seldom writes for Campbell these days. The influence goes far beyond the pages of ANALOG the editor controls. In some ways it is even more fascinating to list the important writers of today who have never appeared in ANALOG, nor would they find a welcome there: Philip Jose Farmer, Samuel R. Delany, Roger Zelazny, Avram Davidson, Piers Anthony, to name only a few of the more obvious. Or the writers who have not for a long while written toward Campbell at all: John Brunner, Sturgeon, Knight, Blish, Lieber, del Rey---all of whom at one time or another worked in the Campbell idiom.



More and more, Campbell has leaned toward writers who are not writers; engineers and scientists who have been able to transpose theories and mechanical developments in their certain fields into shallow stories, mere vehicles for the science. It is this exodus of the real writers and the insurge of amateurs that has made ANALOG for the most part unreadable, and removed it yearly from the Hugo competition for Best Magazine. (I submit this is the most telling argument of all that Campbell has passed his time of importance in the field. The fans who vote for the Hugos are easily swayed; their choices are made usually on the basis of trend and loudest word-of-mouth publicity. When an overall trend in the field is felt, it shows up in the broader categories, such as Best Magazine. And ANALOG has not even been in the running for half a dozen years. This, for the magazine which allegedly sells the most copies in America, seems highly unusual, until one considers that those copies are being sold to the other members of the bull session---other engineers and scientists.)

Campbell's disenchantment with the fiction is obvious. Has been obvious for ten years and more. His enthusiasms have ranged through Dianetics to Scientology to the psi theories of the Hieronymous Machine and out the other side into pure engineering concepts. Consider the current issue of ANALOG with its cover and major emphasis on a non-fiction article. And then consider the authors of the stories. With the exception of Anne McCaffrey, who is a writer and not a scientist, the table of contents contains one writer who is employed by AVCO and makes his primary living in science, one pair of writers who win that appellation by the barest minimum standards of craft, and two names who are as much non-entities as the stories they proffer. The first forty-four pages of the issue are pure science fact, and much of the rest of the magazine is the same, thinly disguised as science fiction. For whom are the speculative fiction writers working? Certainly not Campbell. If one wishes to read Clarke, one must go to PLAYBOY. If one wishes to find Sturgeon, one must turn on television. If one wishes to encounter Sheckley or de Camp or Azimov one must buy their books. Campbell has been compelled to turn to the untalented amateurs, for the most part, not because he has been deserted by his writers, but because he has deserted them. When his interest in the fiction fell off, his receptivity to the men who could produce it vanished.

A pause to let the mind boggle: can anyone conceive of Campbell publishing an issue

of "the new thing"?

I'll wait for you to come back.

Long enough?

Okay, let's resume.

Campbell, as champion of hard science, has created an aura about ANALOG that makes even the submission of non-Campbellestique hard science stories unthinkable. (How often have I heard a writer deny he is a "Campbell writer" merely because he has sold him three or four stories; how often have I heard a writer joke he was going to send a certain story to Campbell because it was precisely the kind John did not buy; and how often has John bought stories highly atypical, thereby seemingly dispelling the theory that he is a one-track editor. The last, of course, is a case of a minor lapse in the main drive of Campbell's interest, or the supreme compliment that a non-Campbell story was so well done he was forced to look out beyond his nose to remember his past greatness as a selector of memorable fiction.)

This aura has produced novels of the DRAGON IN THE SEA variety. Clanking, clattering, caliginous catastrophes containing can openers, cliches and case studies not characters.

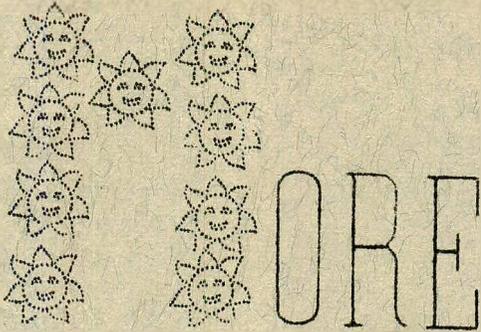
Too often when laymen or non-readers decry speculative fiction, saying, "I can't read that stuff," what they refer to is the Campbell dull-science novel. Without realizing it Campbell has come full circle, and has metamorphosed into T. O'Connor Sloane.

Unfortunately, he has dragged along with him some very good writers. Frank Herbert---at least twelve years ago---was one of them. Those who are reading Herbert now can make their own final analyses.

To all intents and purposes, Campbell has removed ANALOG from the field, it is inaccessible to the bulk of writers currently practicing in the genre. And it is beyond the interest range of much of the audience it once reached.

Or rather, let me say, it still interests readers of science fiction. But what of the growing horde of seekers after that new sense of wonder called speculative fiction?





## FANZINE REVIEWS

SIRRUIISH #5, the official, sorry, AN official publication of the Ozark Science Fiction Ass. It is edited by Leigh Couch, Route 2, Box 889, Arnold, Missouri, 63010. 35¢ this issue, 25¢ regularly. Sixty five pages.

As I page through this issue I am struck by the good repro, good reviews of s-f, and the botching of the Jack Gaughan portfolio. It probably takes a stylistic genius to even come close to tracing a drawing adequately. In this case the Gaughan drawings should not have been attempted.

I wish I had the originals so I could put them on an electronic stencil.

The most interesting and important item in this issue is the OZARKON 2 Guest of Honor speech by Roger Zelazny. He feels s-f is a thing apart because it deals with superior beings, while mainstream writing, even mainstream s-f, deals with ordinary people and non-heroes, and anti-heroes. But the "old-style" s-f is fading out, with its juvenility and taboos, in the face of a new realism and sophistication. There will always be a market for super heroes of the pulp era, but I think the main body of s-f will move more and more into adulthood. S-f has reached it's Childhood's End.

DOUBLE:BILL #17, from Bill Mallardi, 369 Wildwood Ave., Akron, Ohio 44320. 30¢, or 1/9 per copy; 4 for \$1.00. 38 pages this issue.

A good fanzine. There is an inclusion of mundane material...or subject matter... which I question. Should race riots and foreign relations and politics be in a s-f fanzine? I personally feel those areas of interest should be the province of the apas.

I enjoyed the con reports most in this issue, and the letter column, which is long, but didn't seem so. Very interesting.

OOF # 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ , from Mike Ward, c/o Koralek, P.O. Box 5486, Stanford, Calif. 94305. A six page item designed to carry the news of Mike's change of address. He promises lots of published goodies in the future.

HOCP#2, from Jim Young, 1948 Ulysses St., NE; Minneapolis, Minn. 55418. He wants a sub of \$1.25 for five issues. 38 pages, dittoed, on yaller paper. And well done, too, in a purplish way, and I'm attracted to the zine, but I, too, must echo Andy Porter and describe HOOP as a very impressive crudzine. There's an advertising handle, Jim! "HOOP is...impressive..." say Andy Porter and Dick Geis!

But the dittoed art is good and colorful. I liked the cover. I like the layouts and editorial personality.

The fiction--- NO, NO, NO! Better a thinner zine.

ALPHA #20, from Edward R. Smith, 1315 Lexington Ave., Charlotte, N.C. 28203. 20¢ per copy. This zine is, after 19 issues, too sloppy in layout and execution to merit much respect for its editor. I'll trade with you, Ed, but I'd rather you stopped publishing. In fact, you may have already done so. I note that #20 was published in Sept. and I received a copy in 1968, a week ago.

COSIGN #14, the OO of the Central Ohio Science Fiction Society, Inc. 35¢ per issue, from 160 Chittenden Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43202. 36 pages.

A good, interesting letter column, especially the letter by Edward V. Dong, is the highlight of this issue for me. Excellent covers.

THE ANAL SPHINCTER #2, from B. Phillip Walker, 2518 Baily Ave., Chattanooga, Tenn., 37404. 25¢. Poetry. Bad poetry, obscure poetry and impenetrable poetry.

SECTION  
EIGHT



Robert Bloch

Thanks for GEISOTIC #22. It appeared, at the onset of this holiday season, amidst a welter of Christmas cards, appeals for donations to Ozark love-camps, and just plain bills---a rose amongst thorns, to coin a phrase. (Actually it's not my phrase; Bob Silverberg has a book called THORNS and that's where I stole the word from).

Speaking of stealing words, I'm glad to see Ellison's article on plagiarism in your pages. When I first arrived out here, I had a rather harrowing personal experience with this sort of thing---a writer singled out a story of mine used in a TV series as a plagiarization. I was, fortunately, able to refute the accusation completely; there was absolutely no resemblance between my story and the other in plot, characterization or the twist-ending. The sole basis for the claim was that both stories happened to use the same locale---as did hundreds of others! The real grabber is that the writer accusing me had never even read my story to begin with, and had apparently just "heard" that the television adaptation was "similar". But the allegation was made, together with the threat of a lawsuit slapped on the studio, and if I hadn't kept my cool this opportunist could have wrecked my just-beginning TV-writing career. Indeed, in one of the letters sent to the studio, this writer was kind enough to point out that it was understandable I'd steal a story, since I was notoriously weak on plotting.

There are, heaven knows, far too many instances of actual plagiarism out here---and everywhere---but the distinction Harlan draws is worthy of attention. (By the way, those four-letter words he uses are plagiarized---from Norman Mailer).

Great, too, seeing so many other familiar names in your lineup and lettercol. I was particularly interested in Bob Tucker's experiments in trying to see his reflection on liquid surfaces. I wonder if he ever tried it with a glass of Jack Daniels?

Best wishes for '68 --- and PSYCHOTIC 23!

((Okay, Mr. Tucker, you are duty bound to conduct one more experiment! ))

Harlan Ellison

Nice issue of PSYCHOTIC. No time to comment on all the goodies like Tucker's bit o' glee, or Ted's warm little piece or even the Section 8 in which I see

the definite stirrings of all that fannish sludge of yore that made PSY the Center of Controversy it became. Only one thing draws comment. The thank-you from Earl Evers in his letter, about Phil Dick is not quite correct. Earl avers I mentioned Phil Dick turns on to speed when he writes. To be precise, I have no direct knowledge of what Phil grooves behind, though I've always been under the impression (from Phil and others who know him intimately) that he has used LSD as a tool toward doing certain kinds of writing. Acid is the only thing I've ever heard mentioned in connection with Phil and his work, specifically "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch". Earl may have misread my introduction to Phil's "Faith of Our Fathers" in DANGEROUS VISIONS. I quote: "... story to be written about, and under the influence of (if possible), LSD. What follows, like his excellent offbeat novel, THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH is the result of such a hallucinogenic journey." I did mention Dick had done some experimentation with amphetamines, but I have no way of knowing if he writes heavy behind speed. But the thanks are appreciated, in any case.

((Yes, I've just read your intro in my copy of DANGEROUS VISIONS, and you were clear in saying 'experiments'. Perhaps Earl, as fandom's emerging expert in drugs, is tempted to see heads under all beds.))

### Norman Spinrad

I almost got involved in l'affaire Columbus, too---missed only by a fluke of my own forgetfulness. Way back before the Nycon, I got a letter (obviously mimeod) signed by Roger Zelazny, Dannie Plachta and several vague nebulosities requesting that I sign up as an official "advisor" to these nice young kids. Having never been a BNF, or even a Big Time Writer (in fannish circles anyway), feeling that one midwest metropolis is no more dismal than the next, my ego was sufficiently aroused that I decided I would indeed mail the postcard that had been enclosed for signing up purposes. Well, one thing and another, and I didn't send it in until after the Nycon, so by a stroke of luck my name was not involved with this mess.

But maybe an innocent question or two: what is so terrible about the notion of Dannie Plachta being behind the Columbus bid? Is this man a looper or something? Well, I'll stop because I haven't read the Arnie Katz article---though from what I read in 22, this may not necessarily be a disadvantage.

By the way, I believe Earl Evers is in error about Phil Dick. Harlan's introduction in DANDEROUS VISIONS said that Phil Dick uses psychedelics; it never said he was a speed freak. Speed is not a psychedelic. Happened to show the Earl Evers letter to a girl who is not a fan, who has read some Phil Dick, who was strung out on speed for quite a while, who is still at least a fellow-traveller. She opined that Mr. Evers was on speed when he wrote the letter. Maybe Phil Dick does take speed on occasion; a lot of people do, I have myself. But this doesn't make him a speed freak. Speed is an addictive drug. Prolonged and continuous use has serious physiological consequences. If Phil Dick had been a real speed freak from the time he wrote THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE till now, his hair would be falling out, his teeth would be rotten and his brain would be reduced to lime jello. ((But...I've got all those symptoms and I've never taken speed! --REG)) I don't put down pot or the psychedelics at all, but speed is junk when used as junk and true speed freaks are, sociologically and psychologically, junkies. Maybe I'm all wet, too; only Phil Dick can say for sure. But I felt the distinction should be made. Speed does indeed give most people the idea that they have discovered the Secret of the Universe---and that Secret usually turns out to be Speed Itself. All would-be writers watch out! It doesn't work. Friend of mine at Harvard once wrote a term essay on speed. It was brilliant, magnifico...but he flunked. Because this magnum opus which took him two hours to write was all written on the same line.

Having written two STAR TREKS, one of which has been aired, I feel I must jump in

here too. First of all, Gene Coon is gone---permanently gone as producer, though he may end up writing occasional scripts. Gene is indeed a Nice Man, but was responsible for alienating a good many writers---s-f pros---who had given their all for the show. STAR TREK is unquestionably the best s-f tv show of all time. But that is praising with faint damns. A 60 second commercial has a budget of maybe \$100,000. A 60 minute STAR TREK has a budget of maybe \$190,000. That's where tv is at. The trouble with STAR TREK (as with tv in general) is that nobody has any balls, everyone is running scared and playing it safe. This is not really the fault of the people involved---it is the system itself which institutionalizes paranoia and cold feet. Writers are afraid of blowing assignments so they do as the producer dictates. The producer is afraid of losing his job, so he kow-tows to the executive producer. The executive producer who may own a piece of the action knows that he won't make Big Money unless the show runs three seasons, so he'll make any compromise to keep it on the air. The network is afraid of pressure groups. Pressure groups are afraid that anything of substance will pollute their vital bodily fluids. Only a mad genius who can engage in Machiavellian infighting in the service of his ideals on the production level has a prayer of getting anything good out the other end of this sausage machine. No such animal has evolved as yet.

((On another subject Norman comments---)) I've probably had more trouble with censorship and the "sf-as-juvenile-fiction" mentality than any other writer. THE MEN IN THE JUNGLE, my Doubleday novel, has been totally ignored by the American prozine reviewers---not panned, but ignored. Although it got a rave review in Library Journal, library sales were awful---because, at least in my opinion, this is an adult book dealing with an important and controversial problem (morality and methodology of Wars of National Liberation) in an adult manner. An anti-war book which shows the ugly face of war---so naturally, it's considered "too gory". Would that these timid souls felt as strongly that real wars are "too gory". My last book, BUG JACK BARRON, is also considered too hot to handle, although it is hailed as the most important s-f novel since god-knows-when by many writers and critics. It is now being serialized in New Worlds.

F.M. Busby

Wow. Second issue of second incarnation and you're already up to 40pp. Watch it; that way went HABAKKUK. Too big gets to be too seldom, too predictably.

((I'm aware of the problem, but I seem helpless to prevent PSY from adding pages. Too many good letters, too much good material... Ah, well, tis better to publish one good fanzine that curse the darkness... Egotistic and fake-humble as it may sound, I consider PSY now to be a sort of public service to fandom...a forum and outlet and perhaps even a (shudder) focal point that has been needed. It certainly isn't a money-making zine, or even a break-even affair. Nor will it be. All I ask is lavish praise and adulation.))

Do I have this right? The Hump-Humps' bed shares a wall with your bathroom and waken you at 2A.M.? What are you doing asleep at such hours? It wouldn't have happened to F. Towner Laney when he sat all night on the john, reading; Lovecraft neither put him to sleep nor woke him up.

((Clever. No, I don't sleep in the bathroom; the bathroom acts as a funnel and the closed door doesn't muffle the "Oh, God, Jack! OH! OH!" and so on very much.))

Bob Bloch's account of how his script was mangled by Gene L. Coon dovetails nicely with Harlan Ellison's similar narrative at the Westercon last July. Er---Dick, you forgot the time-lag on teevy. When Bob said Coon is out, there still were Coon-

produced shows in the can (and how suitable can you get?). But Mr. Coon's name appeared on episodes through Dec. 8 but was noticeably absent on Dec. 15, when quite a number of new names appeared in the credits. (Now if Dorothy Fontana, otherwise a Good Kid, can just rinse the residue of soap-opera out of her hair, maybe the show can Get There From Here , after all.)

((No chance, Buz. I just got a call from a friend in Hollywood who said the Hollywood Reporter reports that STAR TREK has been cancelled and won't finish out the season. Somebody play taps.))

Shifting along to Harlan's framework in the Golden Goose bit (very well said, that piece is), obviously I'm no pro but neither do I have the amateur attitudes cited by Harlan. (Hey, Harlan! Renfrew Pemberton says you are a Good Man.) I know from experience that "when it's steam engine time" a given idea will pop up with writer X even though writer Y had it first and failed to do it up for submission. And that probably the very same idea had also occurred to would-be writers A through W, somewhere along the line. (As nonwriter B I've had several lovely central-ideas for stories, done naught with them, and later have seen them done up beautifully by writers X or Y who conceived them independently, simply because the ideas were there for the asking, implicit in the status of the genre.) (Good thing, too; I didn't have the good stories to build onto the basic gimmicks.)

On the other hand, a few years ago I had a twist on the "duplicator" story rejected on grounds that it was derivative of a 1953 tale. True, but that one derived from a 1945 item that came from a 1940 piece built from a 1935 job. Well, that's what you get from johnnie-come-lately editors, I guess. NO justice...

#### Alva Rogers

The second issue of the new revived PSYCHOTIC was received and read with pleasure. TEW was enjoyably nostalgic, Tucker was delightfully amusing, and Harlan had some good points and looks promising for future issues. But of particular interest was "Section Eight" which had a lot of good meaty letters in it.

I was especially smitten by Bjo's letter. Maybe smitten isn't the right word; perhaps croggled would be better. Bjo calls me a nit-picker, and perhaps I am, I find it rather enjoyable to pick nits. But Bjo herself is no mean slouch when it comes to picking nits and making with the inmuendos. Like where she says she "took weeks of bugging them (meaning me and Bill) to get Donaho to send us a copy of his HOW WE WON," inferring that we/Bill were loth to do so, when, in fact, Bill did send her a copy on the first mail out, and was not at all reluctant for her to see a copy. ---in fact, he was anxious for her to see it.

Bjo's right, I didn't send her a copy of HOT AXE #3 because it was for the CULT and had a limited press run. I was certain, though, that she would either see the copy sent to Fred Patten (a member of the Pan-Pacificon committee), or get a rundown on it from him. Besides, there was nothing controversial or derogatory to Bjo in the bloody thing, anyway.

Bjo implies that there was some devious reason why I didn't send her a copy of HOT AXE #3, that there might have been something slanderous in it, that I have said scurrilous things about the Pan-Pacificon committee behind their collective backs, but, at the same time, I have "put on a face of being very friendly and so on." Well, shee-it! I have tried to be friendly, genuinely friendly, although it's been awfully goddamn hard, what with the sniping I've received from Bjo, of which her bits about me in this issue of PSYCHOTIC are not untypical.

Another thing that irritates me about Bjo's attitude is her constant insistence

that HOW WE WON is some sort of rationalization brought about by a guilty conscience (guilty conscience about what, for crissake?!) and loaded with dubious "facts." It is John's and Bjo's refusal to accept the fact of losing with reasonably good grace which largely brought about the writing of HOW WE WON. Coupled with that is the baseless inference that in some unexplained way we (the Baycon committee) didn't really win the bid fair and square. I do wish that Bjo would exhibit a modicum of fairness herself and present any facts she may believe she has as to just how sneaky and unfair we were in copping the bid. These constant unbolstered-by-facts accusations are getting a bit tiresome and are a disservice to fandom and to Bjo herself.

Now, don't get me wrong, I like Bjo, but when I sincerely try to maintain a friendly relationship with her in spite of certain differences of opinion, only to find in PSYCHOTIC that I'm accused of "putting on a face" of being very friendly, I begin to wonder if it's really worth trying. I'm too goddamn old and life is getting too fucking short to waste my time trying to be friends with someone who gives every indication of not wanting to be friends.

Which, in a round-about way, brings me to another puzzling facet of Bjo Trimble, which is; her relationship with convention committees, and specifically, concerns composed of Bill Donaho, Ben Stark, and me. As a committee we have gone out of our way to accede to her wishes in regards the Art Show at a convention. At Pacificon II she objected to the size of the room we'd assigned the art show, saying that it was smaller than the huckster room, so we swapped rooms with her. After Pacificon II we passed on to the Art Show the largest amount of money they'd ever received from a con-com up to that date (and I'm not sure that it has been topped yet); and at the Nycon, when they had to scrap some of their display material, Ben offered them \$50 with no strings attached to help offset that loss, with that \$50 not to be figured in the ultimate pass on money after the Baycon. And yet, she continues to say things about both Bill and Ben in print and behind their backs which no one should have to take. And now she takes out after me, the only one on the committee who has, up to now, tried to see things her way in any disputes involving the art show and the committee. As I said, we have always tried to be fair in our dealings with Bjo and the art show, but when she says that they (the Trimbles) "would not trust Baycon as far as we could throw Donaho," then I think the Baycon committee has some justification in taking a less lenient stance with Bjo and the art show than in the past.

I don't agree with Harlan that con bidding is either nonsense or imbecilic, nor do I agree that he is a semi-innocent victim of the bidding backblast. Like any form of politics, con bidding is fun---I wouldn't get involved in it if it were otherwise than fun. But Harlan was a totally innocent victim, etc., and doesn't deserve any criticism whatever for having seconded our bid. At the San Diego Westercon we were witness to the potency of a Harlan Ellison second, and it could be said that I personally was the victim of that second, although I didn't think of it quite in that light. I was making the bid for the '67 Westercon to be held at the Burlingame Hyatt House against bids from LA and the Berkeley-in-Berkeley group. Harlan was already committed to giving LA a second, but just before the business meeting started Harlan asked me if it would be alright with me if he also seconded my bid as a sort of a schtick, you might say. The idea was that he'd give equal emphasis to the seconds. Well, as it turned out, he gave me a good second, but he got carried away in making the LA second and in the end LA won. Immediately after the meeting Harlan came up to me and apologized profusely for having given the LA second more of the old Harlan than he gave mine, and assured me that I had an ob on him which he would honor in any way he could. When it came time for the Baycon committee to choose seconds we naturally thought of Harlan. Bill called him and asked if he would second us, but Harlan said he thought he was committed to the Pan-Pacificon bid. Bill relayed this information on to me and I suggested he call Harlan back, find out if he was specifically committed to seconding their bid, remind him that I personally had an ob on him, and see if that did any good. Bill called him back, found out that nothing had been

said to him about seconding their bid, that so far he was just feeding them ideas for programs, and that if we could get a release from Bjo he would discharge his ob to me and second our bid. So, we called Bjo, Bjo said that it was true that Harlan hadn't been asked to second their bid, and that it was okay by her if he seconded ours.

So, instead of being sneaky and underhanded in seconding our bid, Harlan was meticulously open and aboveboard in every way. I'm reasonably certain that if I hadn't called Harlan on the favor he owed me, and that he'd promised me, we'd have had less luck getting him for a second than we did. Harlan readily acknowledged the favor he owed me and he discharged it handsomely. For this Harlan deserves commendation, not condemnation.

If Harlan remains firm in his declaration of "Never again!" about seconding con bids after he seconds St. Louis next year in Oakland (I guess that should be "this year"), I wonder who we can get as our keystone seconder in our bid for the '72 con?

((It's ob-vious that Harlan is The Secret Master of All Fandom! Ghod, what power this man holds!))

#### Bjo Trimble

It rather tickles me to see Harlan exhort fans in one breath to stop talking about STAR TREK, because it doesn't come up to his standards of literary s-f... and in another breath brag about writing scripts for THE FLYING NUN...!!!

I was sitting in Rick Carter's office a week ago when the mail was delivered. He is Gene Roddenberry's assistant, and I was showing him the letter and info sheet I'd done up for my campaign to keep STAR TREK on the air. He was reading the assorted fan mail (even the stuff marked "personal" or "keep out" addressed to Gene, remarking that he felt evil opening someone else's mail, but it was his job). He handed two letters to me saying, "Friends of yours?"; the letters were yours and the one from Busby. While I read them, he asked why F.M. Busby was so down on STAR TREK that he couldn't even offer constructive criticism, but just name-call. I countered with the question of how many fans sent in scripts that were refused or rejected, and he said they never kept track, but it was possible they'd turned one down from this fellow.

I noticed that Busby is getting his exercise jumping to conclusions, again; he takes Donaho's word implicitly for what happened in the bidding. Owell. It is as strange to me that people who weren't there know all about it, as it is that so many LA fans who had nothing to do with the bid seemed to feel they had a right to scream about it. Actually, most of us who were on the committee haven't had much to say about it all, and certainly not as much as lots of people who don't know what the hell they are talking about. Fred has offered some quiet answers to Donaho's asininites, and that's about all. We've been trying to write a conrep for ages now, and have nothing much to say; even had we won, we'd have to admit that there was nothing about Nycon to make us happy we'd spent all that money getting there. We've settled for an "after-con-report", where we did enjoy ourselves very much.

Also, there is more enmity in Donaho's li'l active imagination than there is between LA and the Bay Area. For one thing, there really is no "Bay Area fandom" per se, any more than there is one LASFS group; and even in the Little Men group, there are inner groups. Don't believe for one instant that all the fussing is more than one or two people raising lots of dust; Donaho is proud and happy when he thinks he is causing trouble, and he sincerely hopes he is starting a feud between the two areas of California fandom. Actually he isn't doing nearly as much damage as he hopes, because too many people are double-checking things he says, and laughing at his being so stupid about the whole thing.

Of course, as Secret Master of Fandom (points West and Azusa) ((You, too?)), I know everything that is going on, and lots more besides, which is a help in everything but being friends with Harlan Ellison. I hope nobody takes him up on his offer of letting readers take him to task with passion; I've done it without passion and gotten myself thoroughly taken apart for same. You either love Harlan completely (i.e.; agree with him completely) or you hate him forever (i.o.: disagree with him on something). So far, Harlan won't believe I can love him completely (I do, but without passion) and still find him wrong on some points. It makes for a rather difficult relationship, and one which I find myself avoiding instead of trying to straighten out, as I guess I should. But even Secret Masters of Fandom (ask Donaho; the Shadow knows...) get sort of upset about facing angry Harlans.

And, on the con-bids; granted that our presentation was not right. It was a mistake, and we paid dearly for it. We are still paying for it, thanks to Donaho, but our feelings are not nearly so angry (even at him) as more or less resigned to 20/20 hindsight and all the "we shoulda done's" that we've come up with in the past four months. Harlan is up tight because I took him to task for selling the Bay Area (as an area) without even checking on which convention would be a good idea; he was called on a favor and sold the bid for them. He is unhappy because I plainly stated that anyone, anywhere, anyhow who wanted to get a convention need only get Harlan to bid for them; no other work involved. I don't know why he's angry, because that's stating the bald truth. Now, too late to help us, he's gotten "involved" with which side should win or not. Oh well. That's the way the fanzine collates, I guess.

How is it, Dick, that you come back from Nowhere, put out one stinkin' fanzine, and get all kinds of BNF's to write letters? Could it be that you are really the Secret Master of Fandom? ((Heh heh heh...)) No, that couldn't be, or George Scithers would be worrying about whether or not you were going to put on the art show next year or not, wouldn't he?

Listen, John just read my letter and laughed his ears off, saying I'd beautifully bugged just about every buggable fan in sight. I didn't mean that, but on rereading, I guess he may be right. I know you'll get a letter from Harlan starting out something like, "...if Mrs. Trimble thinks, which I doubt, that she..." and going on in great bellows and huffs. I always get called "Mrs. Trimble" when fans are mad at me.

Harlan has one of the finest examples of the 19-ought-16 Huff in existence, by the way, matched only by the excellent High Dudgeon that Robert Heinlein owned until it slipped its tether one night and hied over the hills, taking with it 20 yards of leash, the family insurance papers, and its freedom. The Huff, you will remember, was based on the same general principles as the Snit (only without the wire wheels and striping along the chassis) and while there are many common varieties extant, such as the well-known TEW Huff, I'd say for the collector of the species, the Ellison Huff is one of the best. It is rather well-known around Hollywood.

But Dean Grennell could tell you much more about these things, as is his wont, since he writes up life items like this for GUN WORLD, and if you've not seen his dissertation on the killing of the last Sporting Chance in the world, you've missed something. We got our three-wheeled Snit from Dean, who, with six children, was beginning to feel a need for something larger and more impressive (I believe he was considering a Towering Rage, but decided it used too much fuel, among other things). For our needs, which are more modest (by comparison, surely), the li'l MesserSnit, with Bulletin type, is jes' fine.

((Dean has a Yamaha RowerBazzle with muted muttering and automatic adrenalin injection, now, for his personal needs. I use a plain old Grouch, which I've learned to hold an incredibly long time. It's all in the overlapping gripe.))

Bill Donaho

You're hitting your stride and it looks as if you'll have the first fannish focal point in ten years or so. INNUENDO, VOID, et. al. were very good, but they never became real focal points. But in just two issues (of your revival) you've Made It.

Re your editorial about "walk-in" fans, I too had thought that there were a large proportion of neo-fans in attendance at the NYCon Business Meeting, but Ted White and others tell me that there were not, that people from out of town assumed that all the strange faces belonged to neo-fans or non-fans, but that actually they belonged to long-time New York club and convention fans. So I guess this does in another of LA's rationalizations.

Actually, however, I rather favor the idea of selling Advance Memberships in the next con and letting only fans who buy these memberships vote. (As long as the people bidding have to sell them, not the people throwing the current con.) It'll raise a lot of money fast for the next committee and raise money they wouldn't otherwise get, too. But you know this will not solve the difficulty it is supposed to solve; bright, eager neos are much more likely to rush up to buy memberships in the next con, even if they haven't much hope of attending, than would blase old fans. Memberships would be a hell of a lot easier to push to neofans, too.

Harlan and Tucker and Ted White were all interesting, but naturally my main reactions are about the BAYCON/Pan-Pacificon bid fuss. Amusingly enough everyone's reactions were predictable in advance---except Ted White's. I was a bit surprised at his. For one thing Ted himself has hardly ever hesitated to say exactly what he thought of every situation and the fans involved in it. And for another Ted has had much experience himself with the Long Knives of Bjo and Co. and should realize by now that you can't appease them: they'll take what concessions you offer and push on for more.

Andy Porter is wrong of course. Alva approved both the rough copy and final draft of HOW WE WON. Ben was out of town at the time, but he said after reading it "very sensible." I think this is a valid judgement. I had thought of it as "necessary" myself, but on second thought this seems to be too strong: "sensible" is just about right.

I think HOW WE WON was very successful. I bugged all the people I meant to bug, effectively defended friends and allies, effectively put down enemies, and entertained most of the onlookers. That's pretty good in any league.

Whatever the fans in L.A. may have thought of HOW WE WON, after it's publication their letters to us abruptly got much friendlier and much more rational---as did their comments in fanzines. Bjo even Shut Up for awhile. (But no one expected that to last of course.) To date we've received a host of approving mail on the issue and only one letter (not from L.A.) criticizing it. Of course some critical people wouldn't bother to write, etc. but I am very pleased with the response.

One reason HOW WE WON was as successful as it was is that this is hardly the first time Bjo has gone striding off to the wars or been involved in a little fracas. She's been an active fan for over ten years and during that time there's hardly anyone who's been around whose toes she hasn't heavily tromped upon. She's annoyed more people than anyone else in fandom. Ted White may have offered her some competition at one time, but Ted grew up. Bjo's gone from strength to strength. Among other things, she's quarrelled strenuously with most con committees of the past eight years.

Of course many of these people still like Bjo (Hell, I do myself; she's an attractive woman who can be very charming and interesting.). They don't wish her any harm. But they're not likely to be taken in by the idea of "poor abused Bjo" either.

Actually Bjo is a pretty nice person. She goes out of her way to do things for

people. And I'm sure she'd never do anything consciously unethical or mean or vindictive. But the trouble is, Bjo is very subjective. She's the most subjective person I've ever met and I've seen some outstanding candidates for the title. It's very pleasant being friends with Bjo as long as you don't threaten her ego or her interests or her plans. If you do, watch out.

Long experience has taught that there are only three ways to deal with Bjo. (1) Resolutely stay out of every project, plan, committee on which she is active. (2) If circumstances require you to work with Bjo, be prepared to graciously yield 90% to her ideas and be prepared to have the remaining 10% not-so-graciously eroded out from under you. (3) If you do stand up to her, be prepared for much noise and harrassment. And you'd better fight back with whatever fair means is available, because what Bjo can't get one way, she tries to get another. But fighting back isn't all that difficult: Bjo is actually a Paper Dragon; she's far too subjective to fight well. But she can sure stir things up!

So I think that George Scithers and Andy Porter and even Ted White are Wrong. I gather that they think that after a week or so of screams Bjo and Co. would have settled down and all would have been forgotten or at least peaceful and serene. Bullshit. Bjo never forgets. The loud screams had already died down. But instead we had a stream of one-liners, snide references and throw-away lines all brim-full of their interpretations of what went on in New York and of us and our allies. Before long we would wake up and find it the generally-accepted interpretation. No, that sort of thing has to be nipped in the bud. As George and Ted at least should know.

Bjo's letter shows her to be as usual living in a world of her own. I sent her a copy of HOW WE WON when it was first mailed out. I know she got it, because I enclosed it with a letter she commented on to me. (No, I don't think she's lying, but I can well imagine she's not interested in Donaho fanzines and the letter may well have taken her mind off any fanzines.) And the "weeks of bugging" didn't take the form of any requests for it to me. When Alva told me she "hadn't got it", I sent her another one. I think Bjo should know by now that I make a point of telling her exactly what I think of her and her goings-on. For one thing I refuse to go along with her theory that she is the only person in the world entitled to shoot his mouth off. As I figure it, those who shoot their mouths off can expect to be shot at in return. But no doubt Bjo thinks she is just speaking her mind, or making things clear, or showing where she stands or whatever.....

As for Alva, since he had already written Bjo lengthily on the subjects discussed in HOT AXE #3, it would seem sort of redundant to send her the zine which merely repeated what he'd written her, in substantially the same words. ((That's hard to swallow, Bill. Common courtesy in fannish matters requires a copy to be sent.))

Obviously we don't trust Bjo and Co. either, though oddly enough we don't think they would intentionally cheat; however, we'll be very careful to have all agreements and arrangements, etc. about the Art Show or whatever in writing to eliminate all "misinterpretations". Fortunately a large part of fandom has had dealings with Bjo & Co. and with us and will know how to evaluate the two positions.

((I'm curious about this "& Co." you talk about. Who are you including?))

Actually we're rather relieved that we'll be facing different personnel in the '72 bid. People who are aware of what they're doing, who know when they're going off their reservation, are much less dangerous than people who are Rigorously Virtuous up front, but can twist circumstances to suit their needs. The latter kick you in the groin far sooner. And harder. ((Careful, Bill! Getting kicked in the groin (by mad dogs) is Harlan Ellison's schtick. He'll sue you for \$200.))

Bjo seems to have the idea that to avoid being hypocritical I should kick her downstairs or something every time I see her. I dunno. Most of the time I feel perfectly friendly toward her, though I wouldn't want to be friends, or course. Particularly at a party Bjo is an asset; she's one of the most interesting monologists in fandom. ((A wicked thrust of the knife!))

Besides, we have mutual friends and it costs me no great effort to be friendly, or even obliging, once every six weeks or so. And I think it oils the wheels of social intercourse and all. Fortunately we don't meet very often; we move in completely different circles. Bjo isn't much interested in the Berkeley bohemian crowd or even in Berkeley fandom, moving mostly with the Tournament crowd and the circles don't overlap much, though several fans are active in the Tournaments and many of the Tournament fans come to cons. But mostly the twain never meet. And, frankly, we're grateful as hell for the Tournaments; they keep Bjo out of our hair.

((Fans! Be sure to get the next Thrilling Issue of PSYCHOTIC! Will Bjo Reply? Will She Counterattack? Will this feud go on forever???)

Harry Warner, Jr.

Another splendid issue of PSYCHOTIC, so fine that I'm reluctant to admit one reaction. I think the most wonder-inspiring thing in it was your brief and passing reference to the movie company at work in Venice. This impressed me mightily with realization of how things come full circle, and how the world is not completely alien from the world as it used to be, and some other things about which I'd be even less coherent. You see, I have always had the wish to see and perhaps own in 8mm form an early Chaplin movie, Kid Auto Races in Venice. The desire comes partly from the fact that this is a Chaplin film that I've never seen or owned, partly because of its reputation as the most quickly created of all the Chaplin films. According to legend it was filmed in just 45 minutes by using real kid auto races as a backdrop for the clowning of the comedian.

I don't care to get mixed up in specific bids for worldcon sites. But maybe it's safe to risk a comment on the proposed change in choosing procedure. Wouldn't this produce the danger of large-scale vote-buying by the city which has the best financial resources? The walk-in fans would learn that they would get free copies of pre-convention publications and the right to vote on Hugos and fan achievement awards and then a program book from the next worldcon, if they would accept a membership bought for them by the bidding group. Why would they refuse? My own preference for a change would consist of distributing the ballots for site voting a couple of months before the con and giving votes at the con meeting only to those who bring along their ballots. This would eliminate the voting by walk-ins who know nothing about the real merits of bidding groups, and it would reduce greatly the possibility of vote-buying, since any membership purchased for this reason would be useless to the bidding group, unless the individual took the trouble to attend the con.

Ted White can't possibly be based on the same time scale as the rest of us. Here's a fan who is not yet 30. But he's been around for what seems like an eternity. He has gone through the complete fan-to-pro evolution. Simultaneously, he has evolved from an editing to a writing type of pro. Meanwhile, he has become a major authority on jazz, then has undergone changes in his attitude toward jazz. There have been several other careers involving him. And he's still not 30. I'm sure I'd be on social security by now if I'd done all the things Ted has done.

Damon Knight probably has polarized eyes. If you put a polarizing filter over the lens of your camera, point the camera at the proper angle to the direction from which the sun is shining, then turn the handle on the filter a certain distance, you'll

take pictures in which even the face of Bob Tucker will not be reflected from certain substances. This reminds me how difficult it would be nowadays to take pictures of vampires, with or without polarizing filters. Almost all the modern cameras are reflex types nowadays, depending in one way or another on a mirror to reflect the image to the eye of the photographer as it peers into the viewfinder.

Bob Bloch's letter is an excellent example of why we shouldn't be too hopeful that the best writers of science fiction will soon be creating better science fiction dramas for television. Any television production for the commercial networks is such a joint venture that one man's abilities are badly diluted before the production is actually shown. Maybe there is hope for essentially one-man creativity if educational television makes more progress. Under present circumstances the plight of the television writer makes it rather silly to complain that Gold or Tremain insisted on changes in a novelette before it was accepted for a prozine.

The puff from Bjo was unexpected and gratifying. I hope, however, that it won't cause neofans to jump to the conclusion that a letter from me is proof that nobody else found their new publications readable. It probably isn't something from my earliest fanhood that impells me to write lots of locs nowadays. Instead it's partially my isolation from fans, which causes me to communicate in this manner as often as convenient; partly the accident that I can type quite rapidly and have had lots of practice at finding comment hooks in fanzines, so a loc from me doesn't represent the time and effort it must cost lots of other fans; partly the discovery that writing letters of comment has saved me from too many requests for contributions of formal material that requires lots of research and more careful, slower writing.

Should we really give an author credit for accomplishments because we know the circumstances under which he wrote? Earl Evers seems to assume that, when he suggests keeping in mind the handicaps that a drug allegedly imposes on Dick's writing. I can't feel easy about this: it sounds too much the way a writer will ask an editor to look more kindly on his manuscript because the children haven't had anything to eat for three days.

((I'm not sure Evers thinks of speed as a handicap. More a tool.))

#### Ted White

I'm tempted to devote an article to the subject of Why LA Lost It, and Bay-Con Won It, and, in fact, I did. I gave it to Arnie Katz for his superior fanzine, QUIP, three months ago. When I last saw Arnie, I asked him what he thought of it. "I sent it to Lon Adkins," he said. "Lon's co-editor, you know."

"What's he going to do with it?" I asked.

"Well, he's, you know, in the LA area, and I thought maybe he should check it out..."

"What's that mean?"

"Well, he's co-editor of QUIP, after all."

I have no idea what this means, whether the QUIP boys will find the piece "acceptable", or when, if it is, another QUIP will appear. Which is the penalty, I guess, for writing dated pieces for irregular (and infrequent) fanzines. Basically, I analyzed the pre-LyCon LA publicity and the convention bid itself, and, without resorting to personalities (I think) showed why the bid failed. Boiled down to one word, it would be: Ignorance. They didn't know their audience, and never once made any attempt to either know or appeal to them.

I'm annoyed about this "walk-in fans" jazz, too. From where I sit, it's a plain case of sour-grapes and little else.

I found out at my first con (Cleveland; 1955; 300 attended) that there is a sizable body of regular con-goers whom most fanzine-oriented fans never hear about. I would say that the names of perhaps two-thirds of the attendees at that relatively small con were unfamiliar to me. And, as of that time, I knew not only the names of all the fanzine fans of the period, but of the previous ten or twenty years as well (I was an early student of fan history). Why, even the Falascas and Ben Jason were unfamiliar names in fanzines then, and they were putting the con on! (The Falascas started putting out fanzines three years later.)

The NyCon had less advance publicity in the mundane press than any other World con of this decade. And, when you consider that it was in New York, the media center of the nation, you may appreciate the fact that this took some doing. I understand station WBAI is still annoyed at us for muzzling them. I spoke to no reporters from newspapers, and the entire committee actively discouraged publicity of any sort which would bring in off-the-street curiosity seekers.

(Oddly enough, a prominent LA fan---one who has squawked about "walk-in" fans---was berating us before the convention for these tactics. What he didn't know was that before the con, over eleven hundred members had joined.)

Our only publicity outside fanzines, in fact, was in the prozines, which I consider a legitimate source for publicity. (Even there, Miller scolded us for not knowing he had a lead-time of three-quarters a year in ANALOG!)

The fans at the con were not walk-ins. There were indeed horror-movie fans and comics fans, but these congregated in the huckster room and rarely entered the Grand Ballroom where the program was held. Considering the total attendance of over fourteen hundred, I think the number of voters at the consite selection (less than six hundred, if memory serves) was a reasonable number. Not many less voted last year at the Tricon, where only eight hundred or so attended. Clearly, we had only the relatively hard core for whom such an event had interest.

The fact that some fans from the west coast wouldn't recognize an old-time New York fan like Art Saha if he bit them all in the legs does not make Art a "walk-in" fan. And there are scores of Art Sahas in this area, most of whom were at the Ny-Con3. Like I said, to me all this "walk-in" jazz is just so much sour grapes. If the LA bidders had just once made a decent presentation of their "Pan-Pacificon" idea (never explained), or mentioned it had been almost ten years since LA'd had a World-con, or dropped a hint to the effect that the Baycon committee had only three years earlier had a con, and Plunged All Fandom Into War...if LA had done anything visible to NyCon3 attendees, perhaps they might have garnered some votes. The fact is, they botched their bid, and that's the plain and simple of it.

You'll be pleased to hear that after one issue of WHODUNIT? and BEYOND INFINITY, Doug Stapleton and his crew of incompetants bowed out of the publishing field. The stories in BEYOND INFINITY, by the bye, were, in the case of recognizable names, rejects long on the shelf at the Scott Meredith Agency, or (in the case of the others, as you surmised) written by the editor. And my, wasn't that cover awful?

To judge by Bob Bloch's experience, as well as Harlan's, STAR TREK's producers make a habit of rewriting scripts. Perhaps the scorn I've heaped upon the credited scripters (in private conversation) is undeserved. But if so, the scorn I've expressed for the producers (publicly) is the more deserved.

I wasn't aware Bjo wanted us (the NyCon3) to pay for the stolen piece from the artshow. We did make an offer to replace the stolen hanging, when it was taken, but weren't taken up on it. I'm sorry Bjo considers the NyCon3 "the world's lousiest con

so far," but I'm afraid my sympathy for her decreased a little bit as her own public expressions of self-sympathy increased. Most people have disagreed about the con, anyway, so I don't feel compelled to accept her judgement of it.

Rich Brown

PSYCHOTIC 22 is a delight to the mind as well as to the beholding eye of this fan, what was weaned on the devil-may-care "layouts" of CRY OF THE NAMELESS. You obviously put more work into it than they ever did, but the end product gives the same air of relaxed informality: after reading, this PSY leaves an after-image of a wholly friendly crew gathered about for good conversation. I get the impression of a fan party two or three hours underway; old friends and friendly faces gathered about to have a beer or two, a few laughs and maybe a rousing argument or two. Just how this impression is fostered in mimeograph form, I can't say; but it's certainly there.

I'm not in favor of Dick Lupoff's suggestion, quoted here from Fred Patten: turn consite bidding over to those willing to buy memberships beforehand. ((You mean voting, I think.))

Two reasons. One, what Fred calls "a lot of talk about walk-ins 'overriding the will of fandom'" amounts to, in my opinion, is two, or possibly three, members of the PanPacificon bidding committee, who would rather grasp straws and spread rumors than face a few simple facts.

I voted for Los Angeles. Because I thought they'd put on a better convention and because I did not (and do not) trust anything connected with Bill Donaho. But I knew in my heart that LA would lose and lose badly, and not because of any "walk-ins", but simply because LA made a thoroughly rotten presentation, whereas Berkeley made an absolutely beautiful one.

My second point of opposition to Lupoff's suggestion is that, if there were a lot of walk-ins; this would not stop "shady" convention site bidding, but only aid it: put this proposed change through, and you can buy a convention for \$300. Or \$600 max.

Larry Smith has written one of those delightfully self-defeating letters; I haven't laughed so much since I read John Phillip Sousa's comment, "Jazz will survive so long as people listen to it with their feet instead of their brains."

You were speaking, Dick, of female writers and of the female-point-of-view in RESTOREE. I agree in that I couldn't finish that particular book. But there is one female writer who handles both male and female point-of-view, and does so quite convincingly. She even has a letter in this issue of PSYCHOTIC: Lee Hoffman. Pick up on her TELEPOWER, which is doubled up with the poorest thing I've seen from Harlan Ellison in a long, long time. (So poor, in fact, I've forgotten the title. While I've heard it was something he wrote years and years ago, that's still no excuse; I liked a lot of things he wrote years and years ago, and I can't understand someone of Harlan's stature letting garbage come out under his name.)

I don't know what to say about Harlan's "Voice From The Styx", not being a professional s-f writer mineownself, but I do note that the beginning of his letter of comment to PSY #21 is very similar to the beginning I had planned for my letter to PSY #21, and so I'm suing him for \$200 because I'm sure he can afford it.

((I understand there is a new fanzine coming out soon titled NEUROTIC. Of course I'll sue, but only for \$100.))

Annie McCaffrey

I am compelled to go on record over this matter of the hero's name in

RESTOREE. (Sorry about this, Harlan)...but I chose 'Harlan' by the expedient of opening an old New Jersey phone book and letting my finger fall on any likely block of names. This happened long before my first encounter with the inimitable Mr. Ellison. (Does anyone else realize that his initials also stand for the Army's High Explosives?) Although I had met H.E. by the time I received the galloys on RESTOREE, it never once occurred to me to alter the hero's name. No one will ever believe me. Sic transit gloria mundi!

((I like to transpose characters' and actors' names from the TV GUIDE as a source for my own character names.))

#### Bob Coulson

It's amazing how much---and how suddenly---Harlan's opinion of STAR TREK changed after Roddenberry had the temerity to edit Harlan's script. (The fact that he improved it 100%---and yes, I've seen large sections of the original, tho not all of it---seems to have added fuel to the flame.)

#### Kay Anderson

It might be cheaper to buy plain old acetone, which is what nail-polish remover is, to thin correction fluid. But then again it's probably a lot easier to buy nail-polish remover. ((I imagine! I can just see the druggist's suspicious gaze. "You gonna sniff it, mister?"))

Bloch and Ellison certainly have a Thing about Jack the Ripper. I've read two Bloch and one Ellison story about him in the past month, and Bloch's "Wolf in the Fold" script on STAR TREK seems to be another about old Jack, and now Harlan has a teleplay about him. That's more about Jack than I care to know.

((Yes, I can see where The Ripper would turn off a lot of women. In revenge some female writers should write about Sally the Slasher---the chick who goes around dark streets cutting off the genitals of "sinning" men. But I somehow don't think many male publishers, editors and tv producers would like the stories.))

#### Dick Ellington

I heard you were at the Westercon Costume Ball but I was busy meeting Dean Grennell for the first time---he was easy to spot because I knew what he looked like---and I never did get around to trying to find you. Oh well, maybe in another 12 years or so... ((Good thing you didn't look. I wasn't at the Ball. But, I, too, met Dean Grennell for the first time---when I met Harlan Ellison for the first time... and I cut Dean dead! Yes, my sin... Harlan introduced us and I didn't catch Dean's name (he was just another guy with a camera). The guy took my picture, though, and I couldn't understand why... Then, when Dean in a letter mentioned he was the man behind the lens....I died! So I go through life, goofing on my merry way.))

I'm quite firmly convinced that money considerations aside, the real reason Phil Dick writes his books is the personal enjoyment he gets from seeing reviewers get apoplectic trying to pin down his meanings---or "meanings". I've given up myself---they're a lot of fun without having to decipher the "Higher Content."

#### Al Andrews

Whether STAR TREK is good, bad or indifferent as "tru-sf", it certainly has had the merit of stirring forceful comments pro and con in fandom about the show.

For example, I personally find William Shatner's portrayal of Captain Kirk insufferable at times. Especially when a crisis or situation would seem to call for more expression than Shatner's awesome repertoire of two: one, an amused, self-conceited idiot; and two, stolid stupidity. ((Come on, Al, Shatner's a damned good actor. I've seen him in difficult scenes in STAR TREK that required some exceedingly fine shadings of emotion which he expressed beautifully.)) (In these moments of misery I usually solace myself with the hope that there will soon be a shot of the beautiful-bodied Nichelle Nichols /Uhura/, who is equally beautiful of face. And who, I might add, has impressed me as being almost able to play her part without revealing the inherent self-knowledge that she is a negro actress performing in a predominantly white society.

#### Bill Mallardi

I talked with Bjo at NYCON, and she told me that the reason the Second-in speeches by her and Al Lewis were so dry was because they were so damned TIRED after all the work they'd done there---especially Bjo, working on the Art Show, Fashion Show, etc. And they did look worn out, too...many can attest to that fact. And it's a fact that no-one can do their best when they're beat like that....

I also learned that the reason she was mad at Bob Tucker was because (she said) he had promised to second LA originally (in a letter, I presume) before the con, and then instead switched to SF's group. I found that hard to believe, myself, and Bob denied it in PONG...but like Harlan and Tucker agreed: "Something got fouled up somewhere; a lack of or confusion in communications." I too, doubt if the matter will ever be completely resolved to everyone's satisfaction. I must also align myself with those against Donaho and his HOW WE WON foofawrah. That was uncalled for.

#### Ted Johnstone

Every now and then I get to feeling like an old faan and tired---when I look around the LASFS at all these neos with only five or six years of fandom behind them, and think about all the old gang I used to run around with, or when a straight line cues up a reference that no one else remembers, or when I find my first SAPSzine on the bottom of a pile of junk.

And then something happens like an issue of a zine from somebody who died about the time I was born dropping into my mailbox with a contemporary date on it, and with a lettercol full of doddering ancients who make me feel like a newcomer. After all, twelve or thirteen years in fandom isn't such a long time, is it? Considering that Geis and Rotsler and White and Tucker and Ellison (and Bloch and Grennell and Warner and Hoffwoman and Sneary and Reamy) have at least a couple of centuries shared out among them, it isn't. Why, everyone of those above-mentioned was a nearly legendary BNF when I read my first fanzine... Well, Ellison was more of a running gag, but that only goes to show that some things never change.

And now look at all the pros! Geis is writing dirty books, Rotsler is making dirty movies, White is writing s-f, Tucker is writing mysteries, Ellison is writing diatribes (as I said, some things never change), Bloch is writing tv scripts, Grennell is editing a real magazine, Warner is editing a real newspaper I hear, Hoffwoman is writing fannish westerns. Hell, even I'm writing paperbacks.

Even so, the whole thing makes me feel vastly better about the state of fandom. The LASFS, frankly, is dying on its feet; there are three major cliques and a swarm of splinters---though there aren't intranecine feuds, there aren't many shared interests any more. Parties are for playing cards, there hasn't been a one-shot in something like four years, and SHAGGY died (for the fifth time) about that long ago.

Do you suppose you are might be something like Barbarossa or Arthur, sleeping somewhere under a mountain until fandom has need of thee? PSY came to me as a breath of pure cool air blowing across the Desert of Indifference from the Golden Tower of Trufandom. Although it appears unlikely to fan the fading embers of LA fandom into a renewed blaze of fanac, perhaps a new generation of publishing fen may see it and take heart. Goshwow---like I said, I feel young again!

((Yes, as a matter of fact, Bloch Himself touched my forehead and intoned, "Go and fanac again. The Time is now."

Those were your exact words, weren't they, Bob? Bob? Mr. Bloch, sir?))

#### Greg Benford

It sure as hell was a shock to see PSY. You may remember that I caught the last four issues of PSY and the SFR's that followed, so I'm doubly glad to see an editor of a monthly appear who has both experience and ability. We needs 'em....

Actually, a thorough rereading of the PSY file (acquired over the years) has convinced me that your first success was due to dogged determination more than anything else. The ability to con material is important, but every fanned has to put out a few issues to show he's serious about publishing (almost exception: Cliff Gould). The first 8 or so issues of PSY weren't all that much, because it seems to have taken fans that long to decide you were for real. ((Hmmm!))

It seems to me PSY was good for just two reasons: your own ability to garner material, and (in the second half of its life) your own fmz reviews. I wish you'd drop considering half a dozen or more fmz at a time, and concentrate on and devote at least two pages to each one. ((Yeah...twenty pages of fanzine reviews!)) I think that technique and approach was something of an innovation by you in 1955 or so, and Ted White carried it on in his reviews. It's much the superior format.

((Hopefully next issue I'll have a chance to do something of that nature. But I do want to publish a record of all fanzines received, too.))

It seems obvious, given the paucity of ~~books~~ good, frequent fmz, that PSY will become a highly successful venture. Your editorial personality doesn't seem to have wavered an inch (which isn't totally an asset---fandom is much more sophisticated today, remember), and the field is ripe for your approach.

((You mean I should use four letter words? Wow.))

#### Dick Ellington

Ted White's article had a nice sense of time-binding about it. I like it. And Tucker---heavens, I'd almost forgotten about Jerry Sohl. I suppose he's running a Chicken Delight Stand in San Gabriel with Sonny Tufts by now.

And I liked Phil Dick's reference to Lincoln and pataphysics. I'm currently reading Sandburg's Lincoln and I am becoming convinced that he definitely has a pataphysical view of life.

Geo, I don't know about Karl Olsen and Aimee Semple Macpherson and all of Harlan's other contemporaries, but John Magnus was teaching English up at Univ. of California at Davis a couple of years ago and got his fannish comeuppance by finding Redd Boggs in his class one day, which sort of destroyed him. As he put it with a Lovecraftish look of horror, "Can you imagine me teaching English to Redd Boggs?"

Fred Patten

THE ESKIMO INVASION didn't impress me as much as an onion novel as it did as a train novel, going from one compartment to another. To my taste, the compartments were too dissimilar; one plot thread would suddenly be broken off short and another would appear without warning. The book originally appeared as a series of short novels and stories in GALAXY, and I'm afraid it still shows where they were put together. I'll give Mr. Howard an E for effort in trying something spectacular, though, and I'll be looking forward to seeing what he does next.

Allow me to join the St. Louis bandwagon. The difference between the people in the two '69 bidding groups was quite apparent at the NyCon, and the St. Louis fans generally came out on top of the comparison. Here's an example: after the LA in '68 bid lost, there seemed to be so much sympathy for us (people kept coming up and saying, "Too bad; I voted for you!") that we decided to take advantage of it, and organized an L.A. in '72 Fan Club to start lining up support for the next West Coast World-Con. Among the people I asked to join were the Fishers and the Couches, of St. Louis fandom, and Larry Smith, of Columbus fandom. The Fishers joined the L.A. in '72 Fan Club; the Couches said they'd rather not commit themselves this early, before seeing how all the '72 bids will actually shape up---a perfectly sensible attitude. Larry hit me with a counterproposal: if all the individuals who were on the now dead Pan-Pacificcon Committee would agree to support the Columbus bid, we could have all the Columbus fans on our L.A. in '72 group. Otherwise, we wouldn't get a single supporter from the Columbus bloc. The basic offer---a fair trade of support---seemed reasonable enough, but the manner in which it was put just didn't make it seem worth while.

Howard DeVore

Recently Dannie Plachta came in, head held high and voice booming, "Make way for the Black Prince, Secret Master of Fandom," and then he proceeded to tell me how he was pulling the strings and making the dolls dance.

This isn't the first thing of this type published, all of them glorifying Dannie and leaving me out in the cold. My feelings have been hurt. Why can't I get credit for being a Secret Master? I was an early supporter of Columbus in '69. ((You'll have to get on the Waiting List. The Secret Master Guild is full up at the present time.))

None of us (Columbus supporters) have been promised ten percent of the gate and nobody is bankrolling them. I once gave Columbus fandom an old bottle of stale whiskey to help out at a party and I've been doing free printing for them...something I've done for various people and groups for ten years. Such things are not "bankrolling".

One other item; The Columbus group, Danny, myself and various other supporters maintain excellent relations with St. Louis fandom. Despite efforts by individuals to drive wedges we want to keep it this way. St. Louis fandom has not descended to mud slinging and character assassination.

We'd rather leave this sort of thing to children. When I speak I do so for myself and I direct myself to an individual. Arnie Katz, using your own particular logic, you couldn't find your own rear end, using both hands to hunt with!

((Gee, Howard, you sure have a youthful outlook.))

Bill Conner

This letter is in reply to Arnie Katz' defamatory article "Damn The Ethics ---Full Bid Ahead" which is a put down of the Columbus in '69 bid for the World con.

In PSYCHOTIC 21, Arnie charges that the Columbus group is "too young and too neofannish." As many fans have no doubt heard by now, the Columbus in '69 bid is no longer associated with the Central Ohio Science Fiction Society. The new committee members are: Larry Smith, chairman, and members John Ayotte, Bill Conner, Ben Keefer, Paul Filio, Robert B. Gaines, and Robert L. Hillis.

Admittedly there are some neofans on the committee, but I suggest that they are more than offset by other members who have been around a few years and in the case of myself and Ben Keefer, for quite a few years. While I don't consider myself old at 33, I'm not a kid anymore. And another member of the committee, Ben Keefer, has been around long enough to be a member of first fandom. I got started in fandom actively in 1954 and was reading the stuff long before that.

If Dannie Plachta is "the Secret Master of the Columbus World con bid", then the NYcon III committee members are the Secret Masters of the St. Louis bid.

And as for Arnie's charge that Columbus made some mistakes, I would remind him that we're all human and make mistakes---none of us are infallible. Why, even New York fans make mistakes---even such BNFs as Ted White. (In his case BNF means "Big Name Fugghead.") Fortunately for the NYcon III bid, Ted made his biggest mistakes after New York had won the bid. I refer to the incident at the '67 Midwestcon this past summer and the notorious Hugo-Pong fiasco.

The Zelazny guest of honor bit was a mistake made by Larry Smith, who didn't know, due to inexperience, that this Wasn't Done. Ted White did something that Wasn't Done, also, but he had been around fandom long enough to know better. At least Larry had an excuse.

I don't think anyone is trying to use the Columbus committee to "fullfill their political fantasies," as Arnie said. For one thing, I think Dannie Plachta likes Larry Smith and the Columbus group and just wants to help us get the Worldcon we want. That's all. Nothing sinister about that, is there?

((I dunno. You gotta watch them Secret Masters.))

END OF LETTERS. Now a whirl through those I couldn't quote in depth for lack of space.... MILTON F. STEWENS says I am a nastier than average fanzine reviewer, there haven't been many in recent years, because "most fanzines were such weak entities that a harsh word might cause them to wither and die." And I thought I was being easy-going and mellow! --- RAY FISHER buttresses the image of the St. Louis fan group with a rundown of their capacities and experience as fans, con-goors and holders. Very impressive. I'm inclined their way, myself. --- JERRY KAUFMAN feels that if STAR TREK is so weak it needs yearly all-out campaigns to save it--let it die! That's cruel, Jerry. --- LYN VERYZER has a problem. She says, "While I was having my picture taken with Gene Roddenberry (at the NYcon) a redheaded man with a camera and notebook took my name and address and gave me his name and address which I promptly lost. He asked me to do illustrating for his fanzine. I said I'd let him know. Unfortunately this was impossible due to my carelessness. Now everytime I get a fanzine I wonder, is this the mysterious Mr. X?" So, red, if you're reading this, you know what to do. --- DOUGLAS O. "DOC" CLARK disputes Larry Smith and recites his own vast convention experience as further proof the St. Louis group is capable. I believe you, Doc, I believe you! --- JAY KAY KLEIN sent me a photo of the audience of a panel discussion during the Tricon and identifies the panelists by the back of their heads. Now I'll recognize Dannie Plachta, Roger Zelazny, Norman Spinrad, Randy Garrett, Hal Clement, Jim Blish and Harlan Ellison if I'm ever behind them. Thanks, Jay!

AND thanks to ARNIE KATZ for his loc, JOHNNY BERRY for his comments, and to BOYD RAEBURN...and anyone I've missed.

# A REVIEW OF DANGEROUS VISIONS

DANGEROUS VISIONS is one of the few s-f collections that comes anywhere near realizing its author's intentions. Ellison set out to put as much as he could of the "Best of the New Wave in SF" between two covers, and he's done it. But what he's produced, really, is a "valuable" book instead of a "good" one. The thirty-three stories sum up recent trends in the s-f field quite well, but the entertainment value is quite low.

Of the dozen or so fans I've talked to who've started the book, not one has finished it. I read every story through mostly because I hate to review anything unless I've actually read every word of it. (If I fudge I always skip over something that gives the lie to one or more of my conclusions.) But I really had to force myself through about 450 of the 520 pages. Most of the writing is heavy as a purple velvet curtain and dull as a wad of wax chewing gum. Ironically, the 70-odd pages I found most interesting comprised the stories with the least idea content.

But for all of that, I think the Baycon Hugo winner for short fiction is in the book, and I can't even tell you exactly where.

All of the top writers of "New Wave" s-f are represented, and most of the top old-timers who are trying to keep up with the field are there, and all of them obviously contributed a piece of their "best" work---meaning stories they've put in the most work on, serious themes they've always wanted to tackle but never dared because of taboos; in other words, pretentious stories written for a pretentious book.

Harlan Ellison told the writers to "pull out all the stops", and a lot of them took him at his word. The result is a bunch of examples of "high failure"---about half a dozen of the writers picked themes and treatments that only a literary genius could get away with and found them too much to handle. But in a field that puts as much stress on sheer grandeur of concept as s-f does, this has a certain merit of its own.

OR

There's Something in the Mirror You're Looking in that's Scaring You... And that's a 'Dangerous Vision' for you, Harlan Ellison.

BY EARL EVERS



This book is definitely "where the field is at" these days, and anyone who wants to find out what kind of stories and ideas s-f writers are striving for should read it. I even think it deserves a Special Award of some kind at the Con. But I didn't enjoy the book, and I don't really think much of either the goals or the achievements of the "New Wave" in s-f. But Harlan Ellison deserves credit for producing the first genuine "Summary of the State of the Art" collection in modern s-f. Even if he did do a piss-poor job of the actual editing.

Critics have said, "Harlan Ellison's personality permeates the book." Actually, it doesn't---it just hangs in a very low-grade suspension in all the chinks and cracks. His lengthy introductions to the stories detract from the book because they make no attempt to tie the stories together into a whole. If he'd left well enough alone, and skipped the introductions in favor of an appendix of biographical and bibliographical sketches of the authors, the book would hang together much better. Right now, the s-f field has more coherence than it's ever had. (This time there does seem to be a definite "movement" afoot.)

But Ellison feels he has to dominate the whole scene whenever he sets out to write or speak. (I've heard him "speak" several times, but has anyone ever heard him just plain "talk"? If he were paranoid, he'd imagine people were following him around with tape recorders, taking down his every word. If he suffered from delusions of grandeur he'd imagine exactly the same thing, only for different reasons.)

Everything he writes or says makes some little intuitive censor inside me jump up and start screaming, "This guy is nothing but a bullshit artist. Everything he says is nothing but a damn good lie, and he's only putting us on to see how much we'll swallow." I'm not saying that all or any of his "Ellison Stories" are untrue or even distorted, it's just that he's trying so damn hard to put his own personality across that his descriptions of the authors are all murky reflections in the mirror of Harlan Ellison. But at least this doesn't mess up the stories---that Ellison merely encouraged the authors to do for themselves.

First, he said, "No taboos, boys, write as dirty as you want." So of course some of the writers packed their stories full of shit for shit's sake. Some writers can talk about fucking and shitting and so on in so many words without being repulsive about it, and some can't. Phil Farmor can, in fact, he's almost as funny as Henry Miller when he describes sexual adventures, (I'm still laughing over the incident concerning Chib and Benedictine and the pressure-can of vaginal foam.) but most s-f writers use "dirty words" as if they were actually dirty and aren't liberal enough about sex to write about it freely without getting either self-conscious or repulsive.

When Robert Silverberg "pulls out all the stops", he really turns me off: having your "hero" stomp a pregnant woman to abort her baby is basing your story on shock-value, and very cheap shock value at that. If this sort of thing is "the literature of the future" I'll stick to the National Enquirer.

Poul Anderson, on the other hand, lets his obvious prudery against homosexuality ruin a good idea and an excellent background. His hero is from "Eutopia" on a time-line where the civilization of Classical Greece survived and dominated the world, and he gets into trouble on a Viking time-line for seducing the young son of some minor king. Told straight, (Is this a pun or an antipun?) an excellent story could be built around this idea, but Anderson seems to be afraid to do the necessary detailed descriptions and justifications of boy-love, so he cops out by revealing the sex of the hero's lover as a surprise ending.

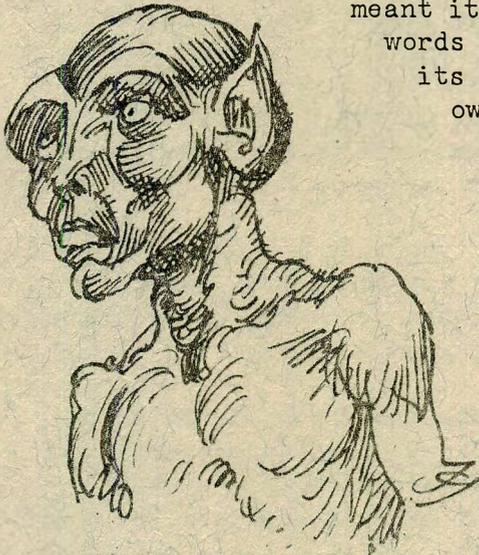
Ted Sturgeon falls into a similar trap (And it's the first time I've ever seen him do it.) by choosing incest for his theme and then limiting his whole story to a

long, philosophical discussion of the subject. In fact, his characters reciting long paragraphs of history and philosophy and biology recall the scientists of the Gernsback Era quoting huge passages ripped whole from physics texts. He's writing about incest but he never gets around to writing about people, human relations, or sex. I'd like to see the Sturgeon who wrote "And Their Fear Is Great" tackle this theme; that sort of talent could really get inside the nuances of such a relationship. But if "If All Men Were Brothers..." is the best Sturgeon can do these days, I don't blame him for not writing s-f.

Chip Delaney sets out to invent a brand new perversion for the space age, but never gets around to actually doing it. He gives the practice a good name: "frelking" (The word strikes my ears as magnificently obscene.), and does a pretty fair job describing society's reaction to the practitioners, but he doesn't describe the act itself, which robs the story of its basic reality.

All told, the book isn't improved by the lack of taboos. The only way to write with the taboos off is to pretend they've been off for twenty years, and most s-f writers haven't learned to do this yet. But it's high time they started learning, and Harlan Ellison deserves real credit for encouraging them.

So give the editor a gold star, and now chalk up a black mark against his name for letting the authors spoil the after-taste of all their stories by appending their own second thoughts to confuse the reader when he should be forming his own impression. If the story doesn't say what the author meant it to say in thousands of words, then a hundred or so words of "afterword" won't help. And if the story stands on its own, who needs an afterword? Having the author ram his own reactions down my throat strikes me as invasion of emotional privacy.



For once, the introductions (by Ellison and Azimov) serve a good purpose. In fact, they do a good enough job of telling what "the New Wave" is that I don't feel a need to recap it, except that I feel there actually is such a movement. It's obvious that the writers are consciously making an effort to improve the field of imaginative literature, and that enough of them are going about it in the same way to constitute a "movement".

Of course, a lot of the goals of the movement are vague, and a lot of the stories that result when an author tries to "join" this movement are bad because he ends up crabbing his natural style of thinking and writing.

For instance, the idea of describing a future or alien society at enormous depth, touching on all phases of life and thought, is basically a good one. But it often leads to overly complex writing and thinking. Phil Farmer's "Riders of the Purple Wage" is the best story in the book, but it still suffers from over-complexity and mis-handling of details. While the details and the overall concepts of Phil Farmer's future are very good, and are the sort of thing I read and say, "Yes, this may very well be what it's actually going to be like.", he's still not James Joyce. Now I don't like Joyce's writing, but I'll concede he's a literary genius. And I do like most of Farmer's, but I'll have to admit he isn't. All I'm saying is, if you can't write FINNEGAN'S WAKE, don't write like FINNEGAN'S WAKE.

The same goes for the half dozen or so New Wave writers who are trying to imitate William Burroughs. Half the time, not even Burroughs himself can get away with his cut-and-paste techniques and so on. I'd much rather see mind-croggling concepts presented in a straight-forward style than humdrum ideas presented in a mind-croggling style. The British members of the New Wave are by far the worst for this, though their stories in DANGEROUS VISIONS seem to represent an improvement over some of the stuff I've seen in the British s-f mags.

In style and tone and writing, the whole New Wave could take a clue from Fritz Leiber, whose "Gonna Roll Them Bones" is my choice for second best in the collection. Leiber employs the same style and approach to writing he's been developing and polishing for twenty years, and the result is not a "New Wave Story" but simply a Fritz Leiber story, and a damn good one. Yet there's definitely a New Wave influence there, too. While Leiber writes his usual brand of fantasy on a usual Leiber theme (a crap game with the devil), he gets deeper into his characters than he's ever gotten, and in doing it, analyzed all of us as well. He's really said something about the qualities of the human soul, yet it doesn't come across as obvious allegory. It just comes across, and that's Very Good.

Oh yes, the book has a lot of stories that just don't make it. Most of these are pretty entertaining, but they're not Dangerous Visions. Like Robert Bloch's latest Jack the Ripper Lives story---in comparison with the depth and sensitivity of most of the other stories in the collection, it's shallow, and contrived, and it definitely doesn't belong in the book for just that reason. Actually, it's a perfectly good horror story, and in an average issue of any fantasy mag would really stand out. But it's no different from what Bloch was doing five years ago, and it's obvious he's not keeping up with the field. Ellison rubs our noses in this fact by writing a mediocre New Wave story as a sequel. (Fannish revenge? In this setting, Bloch looks quite a bit less than "superb".) But Ellison will Get His when most fans say they prefer the less pretentious, "old-fashioned" stories.

Then there are a few tour de force stories of the type that's been prominent in F&SF starting about three years ago. The sort of story you can't even extract a plot summary from. You may like them. I don't. If that's what you want, Larry Eisenberg, Jonathan Brand, and a couple of others will give you a good dose of it.

And there's what reads like a New Wave Shirley Jackson story by Sonya Dorman. And a typical piece of bad GALAXY fiction called "The Happy Breed" concerning the Computers Taking Over and Making Everybody Happy. And Lester del Rey is still saying "God is Bad". (He was saying this ten years ago and it came across a lot better then than it does now in the age of "God is Dead".) I'm pointing these stories out mostly to show that not all the stories are the pretentious, lots-of-work-to-write-and/or-read type New Wave stuff. Not all, just most. But the very contrast seems to show that a definite movement to improve the field is a Good Thing, even if it introduces problems of its own.

The only really disappointing story for me was Phil Dick's "Faith of our Fathers". I read some of the introductions before I read the book, (Actually, a friend called me over and said, "Hey, Harlan Ellison's calling Phil Dick a speed freak!") so I read the piece and was looking forward to Dick's attempt to capture the psychedelic experience in a story. All he did really, was to take one tiny moment of paranoia from a trip and use it as a plot idea. Even though the characters are all supposed to be permanently on psychedelics slipped into their drinking water by their communist dictatorship government, none of them act like people do tripping. And the idea itself is nothing mind-croggling---the hero manages to Come Down, courtesy of some stellazine slipped to him by the Friendly Local Underground, and he sees the Dictator as a mechanical monster. He continues his investigation on trances and finally learns from

a face-to-face encounter that the Dictator is really God. Ghod!

The nature of God and the horrors of future societies are the two main idea-currents in the book. All the God stories are bad, though the one by Joe Hensley almost comes off---a Westernization of the Kalki prophecy, relating a couple of incidents from the childhood of a Sturgeonesque idiot/genius/telepath who the author blandly states is going to grow up into a major messiah who will "ripen angry".

Why writers inside and outside the field should concentrate on horrors whenever they write about the future, I don't know. I'm used to it by now, so as long as I can identify with the horrors, I'll consider such a story good. Of course, I'd rather have someone show some of the good things that might happen, however unlikely they are. Not even Sturgeon managed to write a love story for this collection. Farmer's story came as close as any, but he was concerned more with the totality of life and society.

Dangerous Visions can be happy visions, too, but we didn't get any this time. I hope this volume sells well enough so Ellison can do another one in a year or so. Maybe by then a lot of the New Wave writers will have finished searching around for styles and approaches and begun to develop their own. And maybe by then Larry Niven will be able to conceive of a future where immortality by organ-transplant is possible without putting people to death for traffic tickets to get enough organs.

DANGEROUS VISIONS is an enormous book with a wide variety of material, but there's far from "something for everyone". For instance, there's none of the "Solid Science Fiction with a stress on every word, the kind of story typified by Robert A. Heinlein" that F&SF used to advertise for in the markets columns of WRITERS DIGEST. Doesn't anyone think that's got a future, too? Well, maybe Phil Farmer and some of the others who've done it before will bring that type of s-f into the New Wave. No reason why straight survival-on-alien worlds, contact with aliens, et cetera couldn't be included in the new type of s-f. Depth of treatment would be difficult, but I think it would be possible.

If I have any one major complaint about DANGEROUS VISIONS, it's that all the stories stick too close to home. Almost all of them are portrayals of the naked insides of the human mind and human society. (The ones concerning various types of little anthropomorphic gods are some of most typical.) There isn't a single really alien alien in the book, except the one that lives inside of us all. Doesn't anyone think that you can show the latter by working with the former as well? It tends to make the whole thing concrete.

And if I have one word of praise for the authors of DANGEROUS VISIONS, it's that a lot of them are trying to Live Hard and write accordingly. They're attempting to see and to feel and to communicate with the same intensity with which they observe. In other words, a lot of them write like groovy, turned on people in the sense that has nothing to do with drugs or subcultures. The hell of it is, most of their work has to be attacked as avidly to be read as it was to be written, and that's going to scare off a lot of fans. But it might bring a lot of the current Turned On Generation into fandom, or at least get more of them to reading s-f.

