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THE ALIEN CRITIC

an informal science fiction
& fantasy journal

"THE LITERARY DREAMERS"

BY JAMES BLISH

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRITZ LEIBER

BY PAUL WALKER

Number Five





COVER and INTERIOR ART by TIM KIRK
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THE ALIEN CRITIC

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THE ALIEN CRITIC, as was SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, is a lot of things, but mostly it's supposed to be a service-zine, an ego-trip, and eventually a small source of income.

It also is supposed to give my life a direction and me a role. (Oh, I think these things through)

To that end (said he, pondering two ends and pointing tentatively) I have bribed Tim Kirk to do a lovely departmental illo for "The Archives."



In those mouldering depths are gathered the books received during the previous three months.

I have organized "The Archives" (a solidly packed seven feet of books, by the way) to help me and you keep track and to save my bleeding conscience.

At first it's lovely to have two or three publishers send books for review. You can handle that many. No sweat. But then, as your magazine becomes known (and as you greedily let it be known), more publishers send more books. And more. And MORE!

And at first exhalation! "Lookee all that lovely reading!"

But then you fall behind (so easily, so quickly) and perhaps you find yourself (as I did) struggling to finish a novel with a deadline attached to it. You have to cut reading for review to a minimum.

Then come the screaming Guilties and the shouting Obligationals with pitchforks a-prodding.

And the books-for-review pile up here and there—on the Quasar, on the floor, on the desks, on the bed...on the conscience. So in sheer desperation you fall upon the device of a "Books Received" list—THE AR-

CHIVES.

Whereupon, rushing in from an unsuspected crevice in your mind, scimitar swinging, is a creature called Idealist or Completist, or some idiot name like that. He wants you to list every story in every anthology and collection, too! And he even hisses the idea of listing the contents of all the sf magazines! Even...even fanzines!

With bulging, fear-crazed eyes you beat him back. (A quick calculation has told you such a project of madness would run at least 20 pages.) But his insane wants linger in your mind...and you wish you could do that for the sf world, too.

HOWEVER— What you see in this issue is what you gonna get, unless (a) somebody adds a \$200. subsidy per issue to the coffers; (b) advertising reaches the equivalent of about eight full pages per issue (which would finance an extra 16 pages); (c) I inherit a fortune; (d) IAC reaches 15,000 paid circulation each issue.

Of the above, only (b) has a chance of coming true.

Now I've got to organize myself a couple more bookcases. At approximately 25 feet of shelf space needed per year (conservatively) that runs to...

I'll run out of basement, attic and house, which is what happened to Forry Ack-

erman and is happening to Harry Warner, Bruce Pelz, and many, many sf collectors over the world.

Well, I'm walking that road in good company. All together now...

tramp tramp tramp tramp tramp tramp tramp...

THE ARTFUL DODGER

Ron Goulart's latest tongue-in-cheek s-f spy-mystery is A TALENT FOR THE INVISIBLE (DAW UQ1037, 95¢).

In the year 2020AD, Jack Conger, agent in the Wild Talents Division of the U.S. Remedial Functions Agency, is sent out to track down a mysterious underworld person known as the Sandman, who is reviving important, recently dead men.

Jack has the wild talent for invisibility. It helps a lot if you're a spy. In this formula adventure he meets and falls in love with Angelica, an operative for a rival U.S. spy agency, the National Security Office, and battles the agents of the Agrarian Espionage Force of China II.

Goulart's 2020AD world is flimsy, all plastic, with impertinent, fallible, "human" robots and androids.

Ron places intriguing narrative hooks at the start of almost every chapter. He loves to mock our liking for mechanizing human activity...and for humanizing mechanical activity: a begging machine in Old Lisbon, a talking picture frame that insults the potential buyer, doors that act like officious detectives, home entertainment units that become petulant if not used, etc.

Everything comes under Ron's satirical knife in his fast-paced stories. He even mentions a lovely black princess from Third World Temporary Country #6.

Entertaining, amusing. (But I didn't believe a word of it.)

LETTER FROM PIERS ANTHONY

"Robert Moore Williams sent me a sheaf of papers that I think should interest you. He heard from the Scott Meredith Literary Agency that they had sold two of his old novels to an outfit named Stride Publications for a hundred dollars apiece, and the money was enclosed. SM had taken no commission because Steve Biondo of Stride had paid an over-rider.

"Now this was interesting on several grounds, not the least of which was that SM does not represent Williams. Who ever heard of selling a full novel for \$100? This was not porno crap of your ilk, understand, but regular SF. And what is an override commission?

"Well, it seems that in some cases a commission is not deducted from the author's share, but is paid extra, direct to the agent.

"Sounds like a good deal for the author —except that it sets up this possibility: an unscrupulous agent can shop around, trying a piece on several publishers until he receives a firm offer. Then he can buy the piece outright from the author and resell it to the publisher, keeping the differential.

"The author does not know the true sale price. It might be \$2500, of which the author receives only \$1500 and the agent pockets the rest. Or perhaps the author receives as little as \$100, as in this case. Maybe Stride paid \$110 per novel, and SM received what amounted to a ten per cent commission; maybe it was \$200, and SM kept 50%. We just don't know.

"As far as I know, there is nothing illegal about the practice, and if the authors are satisfied, why raise an issue? It is merely a convenient way of doing business.

"Williams was not satisfied. He wanted to know the answer to questions such as I have raised here, and he felt the price was too low.

"It turned out that Stride is a new, small (one man, I'd guess) outfit that plans

to reissue some two hundred old books of all types, paying \$100 apiece to the authors.

"Williams felt that \$750 apiece would be a fair price, and said so. The response was fast: SM canceled the deal and stopped payment on the check.

"So Williams wrote the New York State Attorney General, Consumer Frauds Division, describing the situation and enclosing the correspondence. And he wrote to the Federal Trade Commission, pointing out that a flood of 200 reissues, cheaply priced, would damage the offerings of every legitimate publisher in the country, and hurt the prospects for the sale of new material by the writers reprinted. That could be a most expensive \$100!

"He urged that a Federal grand jury pursue an investigation of this and similar practices in the publishing field.

"The Commission replied that though they did have authority to take action, they would not do it unless a pattern of such practices became evident. So—no action, for now.

"If there should be a rash of documented complaints, showing that pattern, there could be action. I think this is worthwhile for writers and fans to ponder: is there such a pattern, and is it worth complaining about? If so, you know what to do.

"Myself, I believe that writers always have had the fecal end of the stick, and that several publishers would be driven out of business in a hurry if the government really investigated and exposed them. But as far as I know, Robert Moore Williams is the only one to even make the attempt to achieve such action. He's got more guts than the rest of us combined."

"I see you had planned to collaborate on a fantasy novel with a 'well-known pro.' Now I wonder who that could be? You sure do like to tease us with omissions and X _____ names!

"And that bit about Zelazny with his guardian ring of mirror-sunglass fans at a

convention—appalling. Not that I need to worry about anything like that, having no fans, but I think if I ever attend a convention (I never have), I'll go anonymously.

"And I was interested by Brunner's comment on B-complex deficiency; I have experimented with vitamins for years, and mean to do a series in which the SF assumption is that all claims made for all vitamins are accurate. Recently I have tried B-6 for diabetes, and E and magnesium. Conclusion: these things have no effect on that malady.

"Interesting to see Robert Lowndes' respect for astrology. Actually, I have respect for it, too. I don't believe in it, but I guess I respect it. I regard it as about as much of a science as psychiatry, and it has a larger body of research behind it. A lot of people misrepresent it, then condemn it for the wrong things; even Asimov has done that.

"I had it in mind to comment on your REG #3 novelet, but see in #4 so many other comments that I doubt you need mine. So I'll just say that I was intrigued by your eater snake, such an obvious representation of anal fornication, and feel you should have done more with it. The fact that it had to be vicious, consuming the innards of the victim, suggests that despite all your protestations you regard this sort of intercourse to be offensive, perhaps sinful, and so must show in the best traditions that it leads surely to an awful demise. Now I would have had that snake an eater of fecal matter only, harmless to the host; its body could exude a slippery oil that stimulated the bowels to paroxysms of rapture. Thus every potential bowel movement would become, through the intercession of eaters raised for this purpose, an orgy of sexual bliss."

LETTER FROM ROBERT A. W. LOWNDES

"I see from your quotes from "Time Killer" ((by Dennis Etchison, FANTASTIC, Oct. '72)) (which I shan't bother to read, most likely) that you respond to clever writing. Well, I do myself. The quotes are colorful. However, I find that the fiction I

return to most frequently (aside from fantasy and sf) is not at all cleverly written. It presents all the elements in good English, and may or may not present a highly individual style, but clever I would not call it. I'm thinking of such favorites as Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky in the 19th century, and Herman Hesse in the 20th. (My favorites, of course; not everyone's.) Nabokov is marvelously clever, and if you want to find out how sparkling his prose can be, I recommend ADA. PALE FIRE is excellent, but the poem is not bogged down in cleverness, while the notes (which really add up to a novel) are hilariously so.

"There is a difference between richness of style and cleverness, and richness can come through a very simple style like Hesse's. (Of course, such values are mostly wasted on porn readers and all too many science fictionists.)

"I agree more or less with your grotch against archaisms in present-day fantasy tales, although not 100% so. I'd say that Avram Davidson and Sprague de Camp know how to do it, but very few others. Part of knowing how to do it is knowing when not to do it."

THROUGH DARKEST ELLISONLAND—An Iris-Eyed
Piecemeal Commentary on AGAIN, DANGEROUS
VISIONS

What I'm going to do is a running review of this second monument. Read a few stories, put down my thoughts, read a few more.... Perhaps after a few months I'll have read and discussed all 46 stories.

But right off the bat it's obvious that AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS is a case of the packaging being as interesting as the contents it encloses. The packaging is Harlan Ellison and his Introduction to the volume, his Introductions to the stories and the biographical material each author includes, and the authors' Afterwords to the stories.

In the end—when he has wrapped up THE FINAL DANGEROUS VISIONS one of these years—the three dynamic collections Harlan has imploded may well be remembered and valued

more for their informality, their personal information and their impact on the sf field, than for the superiority of their fiction.

He may have begun a kind of Cult of the Personality in sf anthologies, so that in the future editors and anthologists must "humanize" their books by being chummy with the readers, giving personal anecdotes and inside information about themselves, about each writer, about the publisher....

What of the fiction? Sometimes the fiction is the bread between two slices of roast beef.

The 'keynote entry' of A, DV is "The Counterpoint of View" by John Heidenry, and is an extension of the Introduction. It is an academic fantasy of the Absurd, and ends by asserting (I think) that the writer of it is the tool of the reader. An interesting and provocative angle. Looked at that way...some writers are damned stubborn, rebellious tools, some break down, some wear out very quickly, some perform erratically.... Only a few do what they're supposed to do.

Harlan led off the "real" fiction in the book with "Ching Witch" by Ross Rocklynne. He maintained this is a strong story, but for me the Introduction and Rocklynne's life story embedded in it are meatier and more absorbing than the story that follows. "Ching Witch" reads as if Rocklynne wrote it while high or drunk, perhaps an experimental style change for him for a special submission. It seems flimsy. The off-hand, rather cute phrasing signalled instantly its "unreal" don't-take-me-seriously message to the reader.

A few hours have passed. Now I'm re-considering the story—looking for Significance and Symbol and Message, but I can't see any beyond the obvious one that even a Gifted fool and his freedom are soon parted.

+++

"The Word for World is Forest" by Ursula K. Le Guin is the work of an excellent writer. All the elements of a fine story

are in it, meshing, humming smoothly, enveloping the reader in that forest world, in Selver's dreadful struggle against the progressive homicidal paranoia of Davidson and the less obvious racial and cultural insanity of mankind itself.

The idea that mankind—we 'yumens'—are insane because we cannot dream properly, because we are largely cut off from our subconscious by perhaps a flaw in our brains and cannot become whole and sane because of this...is woven into the story with the forest society and culture of an alien yet human-stock race on a distant, exploited planet, New Tahiti.

The 'yumens' are logging the forests and shipping the precious wood to Earth. The natives, called contemptuously 'creechies', are used and abused.

The story is the story of the white man and the Indians, the story of the white man and the Asians, the story of the white man and the blacks.

Only, in this story, the natives win... but maybe in the process of evicting the 'yumen' intruders they are tainted by the sickness—they have to learn to hate and kill.

Selvers, the small, furred Athshean hero is a tragic figure, emotionally wrecked by his wife's rape death, by hate, by having to become a God to his people, someone Different.

The intriguing concept that an altogether different alien race seeded both New Tahiti and Earth with the basic human life-form, millions of years in the past, is mentioned in passing. This deserves more development in another story, perhaps a conflict between Man and his maker, with Mankind's ego and pride demanding the death of the alien 'master' race....

You can't tell another author what to write, but I'd love to read Ursula's treatment of that idea.

"The Word for World is Forest" is Hugo-quality science fiction. One of the year's best stories.

+++

These long, informal story Introductions by Harlan, with their author-written biographies and Afterwords become inevitably subject to review/reaction also, with the stories. Because they're personal and revealing there is a temptation to comment. In this Andy Offutt segment what pops into mind is the different aspects of ego shown by Harlan and Andy.

Harlan's ego-trip is huge, well-fondled and is saved from being boring and irritating by his massive talent and free-wheeling non-fiction style, by his gritty honesty and engaging informality. He writes with a disciplined casualness that draws upon everything, everyone who has contact with Harlan Ellison. It's all available to illuminate the subject at hand, whatever or whom—ever it may be. His ego is a great fuel—may it long feed his fire.

Andy is subtly irritating (to me, at least) for his narrower, more intense, more selfish, probably unconscious self-centeredness, which surfaces most disagreeably as adroit but obvious bragging. There is an element of affectation, too, with that lower-case first-person 'i' and a kind of too-clever cuteness in his non-fiction. But I'm drawing on impressions received from numerous Offutt fan articles and letters over the years. He hasn't written much for the fan press in the past year, and the biographical/personal writing in this Introduction is old, too. His style may have changed by now. He may have changed. His fiction has improved. His recent novel, THE CASTLE KEEPS, is pretty damn good.

Okay, Andy, take a shot at me. Right in the old breadbasket. Go ahead, I can take it! Zing one in!

SLUG! "Ooooff!" "...
... get...me...to...a...hospital...."

What? Discuss Andy's story, "For Value Received"? Well, it isn't science fiction. It is a speculation, a notion, a kind of dangerous vision and as such fits in the book.

A hospital would not really consent to hold a newborn child hostage because of an unpaid bill—for 21 years—would it?

Basically a slight story, but worth the time (and the writing) and it provokes a smile.

People do hate hospitals and doctors, don't they? A recent episode of MAUDE on TV proves that, as does the delight audiences exhibit when Alan King, for instance, smites the medics hip and thigh with irreverent, cutting humor.

.....

SEX, ORGASMS & TECHNOLOGY or *GASP* DARLING YOU PUSHED THE WRONG BUTTON *PANT-PANT*

In RICHARD E. GEIS #3, I described an Owl Products artificial flesh (plastic) vagina and how it provided me with cheap, near perfect orgasms.

In the underground press and sex papers there now is being advertised a device called Auto-Suck, which plugs into the cigaret lighter outlet in a car and which encloses a penis in a soft, slick plastic mouth/vagina while vibrating and sucking...till orgasm is achieved. The car driver's delight. Highway heaven. (But slow down when you come.) What to do when your girl gets out and walks home.

Other sources—mail-order firms, porno shops—have other artificial mouths/vaginas for sale. A horny man doesn't need a woman to experience a pure, high-intensity orgasm. Technology has liberated the alienated, inhibited, ashamed, embarrassed, inadequate male from the degrading, sometimes boring, time-consuming, money-consuming bother of scoring, of finding, feeling, fucking, and forgetting. Private, exquisitely satisfying sex is now available. No humiliating failures—a hunk of plastic could care less about your virility or sex fantasies.

But, of course, a real live woman can make sex a supreme moment, unbeatable, if she and you are just right for each other, if you two are in love, and if you are both skilled and talented in bed.

Alas, too often a woman you may love for her personality, character, body, mind ...is a klutz when it comes to making love. That kind of fact of life can doom a mar-

riage, or prevent one.

Now look at it from a woman's angle. In the past few years technology applied to sex has brought forth all kinds of artificial penises and vibrators and combinations of the two to facilitate female masturbation. Also, an incredible array of sexual aids—scented gels and lotions, "french ticklers", clitoris-caressors to be worn by the male.

I recently bought a film showing a woman using an electric fucking machine; a long-armed device which penetrates the vagina (or anus!) with an artificial penis, adjustable as to depth of thrust and speed. Quiet, dependable, untiring.

And the other day I received a brochure from a company offering what it calls a 'Woman's Coitus Love Aid.' It is an 'erotic probing unit' which straps between the woman's thighs. It has a control arm sticking up from the base. The company describes it thus: 'Self operative unit—with rubber penis-like probe. Fits and fastens between woman's legs. Can be inserted just a little or deeply—can be motivated in erotic in-out motions. Automatically returns—quickly or slowly—"whatever turns you on".'

How many women complain privately or publicly of husbands and/or lovers who are only good for a short time in the saddle? How many women have given up on a satisfying sex life because their husbands are inconsiderate dolts as lovers?

Which is better—sex with a selfish clod (who may be a fine husband in every other way) or sex with a more satisfying (orgasm-producing) electric or manual device? Are they mutually exclusive?

What is the future of these devices? If they become 'accepted', what is the future of man-woman relationships?

Will there develop a sophistication in our society which will recognize the inadequacies of "raw", old-fashioned sex between most men and women? And will a time come when a couple will begin making love with "natural" foreplay and then without embarrassment prepare themselves for a mu-

tual orgasm by inserting/fitting a special sex device which will stroke them both simultaneously as they lie in each other's arms, kissing, caressing, murmuring? Will this personalized device have a monitoring capability which will bring them to simultaneous, splendid climax?

I'm sure some couples do now use existing sex devices together, perhaps because of physical handicap reasons, perhaps for purely sensual reasons.

And I'm sure as this practice spreads and gains underground and then overground cultural respectability (it is a way of avoiding pregnancy), it will trigger all kinds of cries of 'inhuman, mechanical sex' alarm from conservative moralists.

But technology sails on and changes society in its wake. If technology can satisfy a need, and if a profit can be made, the machines will be created and used, and society will adjust, will accommodate the new "cultural" phenomenon.

POSTCARD FROM BOB BLOCH

"Here, as I warned you, is a green card. While the color-change was going on, we went to the West Indies, a new year began, and a war ended—or did it?

"One thing for sure, REG has a new name. I applaud your reasons and reasoning here—and I also very heartily second your sentiments about soft-pedaling or avoiding fanzine listings and/or reviews in future. This sort of thing can be found in many other 'zines, but there's only one TAC, and you have too many goodies to fill its pages with—so why waste the space, unless of course there's a special reason for you to note a particular item in a particular issue.

"I sympathize with you regarding Oregon weather—after the years down here I can't believe I lived through 41 sub-zero winters in the Midwest! Take care—and many thanks for TAC.

"Defensively,
Bob Bloch"

SF NOTES

I'm mildly snitted at Poul Anderson for writing an obvious translation in "The Problem of Pain," his novelet in the February, '73 F&SF.

The science fiction elements—the aliens, the alien planet—seem essentially extraneous, gimmicks to dress up a basic religious question which has been bugging mankind since we first needed to create a god.

The story of two men discussing religion, the flashback story of tragedy by one of the two—his wife's useless, agonizing death—could have (and probably has) been written in here-now terms for thousands of years.

The question: If God exists, why does he permit/require tragic, pointless death? That's a faith-tester, that is.

The answer: Poul doesn't know, either.

Possibly he used this sf-decorated question to bore another hole in the existing swiss cheesy generalized lip-service belief in God prevalent in America (granting a shrinking minority of true believers).

The story is made interesting by the winged Ythrians (who are hunters) and their custom of giving God a conscious battle in the face of certain, imminent death, by the cultural misunderstandings inevitable between species, and the narrative of island survival after a shipwreck on the largely unexplored planet.

Yet at the end the reader has been had, gently, intellectually. He holds an empty Bible. But he's probably thinking hard about the question, and perhaps about the necessity for the question.

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRITZ LEIBER
By Paul Walker

Leiber: Facts, facts, facts. Yes, indeed, I do lament all the facts there are to learn and how little time I have to learn even a few of them. But of all the facts I have learned, which one disturbs me

the most?

At the moment my greatest disturbance with the USA and other democratic-demagogueries is that the highly dubious demand for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are being joined (or will soon be joined) by the demand for superstar beauty and genius for everyone. The politicians will make their promises and the scientists and such will be in a pickle.

This is nothing new. Heinlein's "Me-thuselah's Children" was based on a similar militant popular demand for immortality.

Incidentally, Heinlein is my favorite sf writer by several lengths, with real goodies like Wells, Herbert Best, Joanna Russ, Stapledon, Sturgeon, and Kornbluth trailing. At least, judging by the number of times I reread books, Heinlein is way in the lead.

Now, that's really odd, since many of my stories are pacifistic, anti-establishment, and pessimistic, whereas Heinlein's are outstandingly optimistic, especially about the powers of man. Maybe he is my anti-figure, forever reminding me of the opposite position. Or perhaps he has become a kind of kindly Father Figure, whom I analyze and criticize forever, but never harshly. I even found I WILL FEAR NO EVIL better than practically everyone else in sf —though it is surely his poorest book.

The one fact that most influenced my life was that I was born the son of two Shakespearean actors. I think I was lucky to hear while I was still a small child the language of some dozen of Shakespeare's plays repeated over and over, while my parents rehearsed and performed. I'm told I learned most of the part of Hamlet while my father was learning it. I was four years old. And I still know most of MACBETH "by heart." I think I was lucky to have had such a good early influence on my style, much as many writers have profited from an early familiarity with the language of the BIBLE. Also I think a practical knowledge of the dramatic form, from my early familiarity with the stage, has helped my writing.

Speaking of luck, I was also lucky to correspond intensively with H. P. Lovecraft

during the last eight months or so of his life. He helped instill in me the need for honesty, conviction, care and polish and scholarship in writing.

What fact most excited my imagination?
SEX.

(After a childhood concern with German submarines, Christmas, the Fourth of July (in the days before firecracker control), the Norse Gods (ever since third grade). Of course, all changes.)

Now, sex is more apt to seem to me God's crudest and funniest joke. But German submarines—No!—though I have a weakness for bathyspheres and the NAUTILUS (Nemo's, naturally.)

I don't know how the Norse Gods took hold of me, interested, and convinced me (even when presented in children's books and before I'd read the Eddas and some of the Sagas) more than the Greek or Hindu ones, or even the God of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. (Again, we get this element of pessimism in the picture of the world tending toward a final universal destruction in Ragnarok. See my short story, "Myths My Great-Granddaughter Taught Me.")

Yes, pessimism. I grew up with the conviction that WWI had been a dreadful, stupid, needless man-killing business, and that anything was preferable to another. And it wasn't until the evidence of German genocide against the Jews that I came to fully believe that WWII had been necessary. But I was never an active pacifist, no more than I'm actively anti-establishment. The latter boils down to the commonplace of being equalitarian, worried about pollution and the over-complication of life by the creation of artificial needs. And I shared the common fear that atomic war would destroy humanity and the world, just as I now share the feeling that we seem able to "live with the bomb."

My pessimism grew out of these things but obviously I'm not as pessimistic as I was. The stories in NIGHT OF THE WOLF, "Coming Attraction," "Poor Superman," THE GREEN MILLENNIUM, and "The Creature from Cleveland Depths" express, among other things, my changing views.

Then, also, I began chiefly as a writer of supernatural horror stories which is largely a pessimistic form, since it deals with dooms or at least with people getting dreadfully scared; at best, in such stories, people dodge their dooms rather than facing and solving their problems, as in much, and perhaps the best, science fiction.

My sf stories have tended to be of the warning, prophetic, "If this goes on..." variety, rather than the problem-solving sort. My Change-War stories, such as THE BIG TIME and "No Great Magic," are essentially pessimistic since they picture an apparently pointless cosmic war. Of course, my stories such as the Fafhrd-Mouser saga, are of a sort to which the pessimism-optimism question does not apply.

What fact would I most like to know?

Most difficult because there are a googol to the googolth power of facts I don't know. For tonight, I'll settle on: is there ESP?

Walker: You mention "the overcomplication of life by the creation of artificial needs." What do you mean by that?

Leiber: The artificial needs for written records, such as for income taxes, cheques, receipts, credit cards, copyright renewals, etc. The parking of cars by their number, limitations on urban parking space, overgrowth of cities, etc. The whole "manufactured to obsolescence" racket, instead of manufacturing clothes, etc., that are intrinsically beautiful, functional, and made to wear for a lifetime. Along with this, the game of artificially changed styles, which I try to ignore.

Walker: Aside from that, you cite the wars, the Bomb, over-population, etc., as sources of your pessimism. You seem to have been a self-proclaimed pessimist most of your writing life, and before that. I wonder if you were always given to brooding over the morning paper; if you did not pride yourself on your pessimism? I wonder also if your wit is more a reflection of your pessimism than of a genuine sense of humor?

Leiber: Yes, I've always been something of a black humorist. And in third

grade I was somehow smitten with a kind of true belief in the Norse Gods, which I've mentioned already. A lonely, only child; the sensation of "on the rim of the pit" felt by many between the two world wars; an H.G. Wellsian faith in science and education which more and more obviously was not going to keep the peace—disillusionment. A shying away from extroverted, "square," or self-seeking people of my own age, plus a liking for the unhappy. A desire to hear other people's troubles—my first and still foremost method of social contact. A natural melancholy—"Let's sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the deaths of kings," (RICHARD II). Very early close knowledge of HAMLET, MACBETH, OTHELLO, etc. Confronted suddenly by real danger I tend to laugh—sometimes. Things like war get so ridiculous that what can one do but protest from time to time, and chuckle in between.

Walker: Someone once said that a predilection for classic fantasy (Lovecraft, Dunsany, etc.) expressed a desire to control time; to harness the present, to escape the future, to return to the past. Why do you think supernatural horror stories appeal to people?

Leiber: Supernatural horror stories, seriously written, contain as many valid human insights as any other sort of fiction. A desire to control time? Yes, a factor, but only one of several. A desire to escape? This is true of all fiction, bar none; all fiction is fantasy, from Proust to Edgar Rice (and William) Burroughs. People like to be scared when they know they're really safe—it's like a taste for drugs or sex (real or voyeuristic). Incidentally, speaking of "classic" (a much too easily used word) fantasy, I'm a better writer than Lovecraft and more versatile than Dunsany...and always damn serious.

I should add that only second- and third-rate writers consider sf, supernatural horror, sword-and-sorcery, etc. as genres—word games to be played in idle moments at half-speed creativity and care. Consult, say, Ted Sturgeon, Heinlein, or Philip K. Dick.

Walker: Speaking of valid human insights in supernatural horror stories, in your own work, especially in "The Hound" and "The Warlock" you include a number of very interesting insights. In "The Hound" you speak of our new environment for horror: "All sorts of inhibited emotions are accumulating. Fear is accumulating. Horror is accumulating. A new kind of awe at the mysteries of the universe is accumulating. A psychological environment is forming along with the physical one..." And in "The Warlock" you speak of a new kind of inhabitant of this new environment, a "carrier of insanity" who infects others.

Were you, are you still, serious about this?

Leiber: In my teens and early twenties I was attracted not only to all the sciences and math, but to many of the quasi-disciplines on the fringes: ESP, astrology, the Charles Fort books, and so on. From there on I became more and more of a skeptic about the fringe stuff, because of eight years, 1924-1932, at Lake View High School (on Chicago's Northside) and at the University of Chicago, where most of my courses were science, math, psychology, physiology, and philosophy; because of the influence of Lovecraft, very much a materialist and champion of scientific approach; and because of books like Martin Gardner's very fine *FADS AND FALLACIES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE*; and, too, because of the fact that I had no supranormal experiences of my own, though I hardly ever went out of my way to seek such.

I do not at present believe that there are demons, imps, and spirits which affect the ways of man; though I do believe that we don't know a billion billionth of what is going on in the cosmos. So there is room for speculation, especially in the realms of creative art. A story or novel may be based on a premise in which the author does not believe in his everyday life, but if the characters are ones the author can believe real and three-dimensional, and if he throws himself wholeheartedly into his material as he writes, then he may hit upon as many valid human insights as any writer of any sort of fiction; all these insights are not different in kind. So the

idea of each age evolving its own supernatural is not a metaphysical but a psychological or sociological insight—at least to me, now.

Walker: Although you've written some fine novels, you seem to have had your greatest success with shorter lengths, such as "Space Time for Springers" and "Ship of Shadows." Have you a special preference for shorter lengths? And if so, why?

Leiber: Of course it's very difficult to maintain the mood of supernatural terror to novel length; one can hardly think of any really successful examples. And since sf is concerned with ideas, opinions, and speculations (and the making real of some very unreal situation) it too is mostly suited for shorter length fiction, though not as much as supernatural terror.

Then, toward the middle of my writing career I became concerned with compression in my writing. Novellas like "The Creature from Cleveland Depths," "The Night of the Long Knives," "Poor Superman," and "The Silver Eggheads" to mention a few had enough material for novels. (I did expand "Eggheads" into one.)

But I had this bug for telling stories in as few words as possible, and also I'm deficient in the time-table sort of long-range planning needed in novels. I discovered this when I tried to write a detective novel, a form I enjoy but can't (apparently) write. Of course, detective novels have a greater need for a good time-table than most other novels.

Walker: In *THE SILVER EGGHEADS* you wrote of writing machines and an oaf that very much resembled Hemingway. Thinking back on that book it seems to me that it was done to satisfy a grudge you had against the fiction of the time. Was it? What was it about?

Leiber: No, definitely not! All the union writers (really wordmill-attendants) in *THE SILVER EGGHEADS* picked combinations of the names of famous writers for themselves. Homer Hemingway, who did not resemble Hemingway, did not represent, either. I have no more grudge against Hemingway than I

have against Homer, nor against any of the hodgepodge of other authors named—say the Ibsen woman; Ibsen being one of my most beloved dramatists.

I relish Hemingway's *THE SUN ALSO RISES*, *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*, *A FAREWELL TO ARMS*, etc., and many of the short stories; they tend to center around the theme of a man proving his courage, but that's a valid theme and H's bag, and he was probably very sensible to stick close to it.

No, *EGGHEADS* grew from the combination and interpenetration of two notions: the rather Bradbury idea of creative writing being assigned entirely to machines, and the day of judgement when the flesh and blood writers destroy the machines, only to discover (hardly a Bradbury finale, it's too ironic) that they've forgotten how to write, or never learned how in the first place.

This is clearer in the original novelet which was published in *FS&F*.

If I am taking a slap at anyone here, it is those fatuous people who have never done any creative writing, but who believe they'll be able to "when their unconscious happens to open up"—without study, pondering, practice, and apprenticeship. And the idea of wordmills programmed by a publisher or editor to write accordingly is also a bit of a swipe at editors who expect a writer to hew exactly to a plot they have given him. There is also the amusing thought of how such editors would love it if they had writers' brains in cans and could plug 'em in to dictate a story and then—back into the file cabinet again! The idea of brains in cans with three plug-ins came from Lovecraft's "The Whisperer in Darkness."

Walker: What were your intentions in *THE WANDERER*? Was it a satire? You really seemed to go all out on that one. Why? And to what ends?

Leiber: *THE WANDERER*? Never a satire! As for humor, I believe in always keeping that with me whatever I write and I try to direct it at my materials, my characters, and myself impartially, but *THE WANDERER* was no satire.

I wrote it with great care and, for me

at least, much research. The reason it's long is that, encouraged by my short novel—et, "Deadle Moon" (which is its germ), I wanted to do a piece of hard science fiction at length. I wanted to make that intruding planet real, hence I needed flesh-and-blood observers spotted all over the Earth. I spent considerable time on the astronomy of the thing and a great deal more on the tidal effects, making out tidal charts for each place mentioned in the book. (Two years before I finished the manuscript I had published an article in *SCIENCE DIGEST* "The Mighty Tides," drawing from my preliminary research.) However, I decided to make almost all my points of view "little people", avoiding scientists, engineers, public officials, etc. The story is told in terms of individual and small group efforts at facing up to a (for the Earth) cosmic catastrophe. Also I wanted to make the strange planet as emotionally real as possible. Hence, the slow, atmospheric build-up, the device of Tigerishka (who turns out to be a relatively unimportant person), the Earth spaceman's almost entirely speechless visit to the Wanderer, etc. I thought it would have spoilt this if I had tried to use the viewpoint of a master of the Wanderer even for a moment.

No, my intention was simply to write an experience of catastrophe, as simple or as complex, say, as Jack London's "To Build a Fire."

Walker: Cats have played a large part in your stories. Have you always kept them?

Leiber: Yes, I've had lots of cats, even two since my wife Jonquil died, and I swore never to take on another. But then there came Gummitah, last of a starved litter, standing on his dead siblings and snarling at the world. He was, of course, the cat is "Space Time for Springers." And last, so far, Psycho, tormented to madness by a group of (shall we say) experimental human children. Milk, vitamins and an improved environment cured the situational psychosis in about thirty-six hours. I had quite a time finding a home for her. Finally found one with a friend in Palmdale

in the High Desert, in close companionship with a quite larger dog named Charley. Her name is now Ginger.

My next-door neighbor has two Siamese, a twelve-year-old mother, Fatimah, and her five-year-old son, Kim, who is anything but The Little Brother of All the World, more like your Gray Mouser with his sudden claw and fanged ankle attacks.

Walker: Did your wife have much influence on your writing?

Leiber: My wife had lots of influence on my writing. Our shared interest in the literature of the supernatural was one of the things that linked us; along with most English literature, especially the Elizabethans and the Romantics. We were also in small ways history buffs: popular exploration, the Civil War, the Restoration, Edwardian times, Rome until the end of the Empire.

She was a talented writer but kept encountering difficulties in reconciling her English youth with life in America. She was beginning a biography of Abbot Kinney, founder of Venice, California, where we lived then, when she died. Now she lives in the same cemetery where Kinney is buried.

PERSONAL MESSAGE TO THE ANONYMOUS EXPEDITOR

Thanks. May Bloch smile upon thee. Fandom is a way of life.

YET AGAIN DANGEROUS VISIONS CONT.

Oh, boy. Reviewing a Gene Wolf story is often to me an exercise in masochism. And here are three of them under a covering title name of "Mathoms from the Time Closet."

It did me no good to look up 'mathom'—not in the dictionary.

Gene writes well—very well—and editors are unable to resist his pieces. (He could probably wave rejection slips, but they would be fakes.) He has a secret powder he sprinkles on the ms pages.

1. "Robot's Story." Tantalizing puz-

le about a time-traveling robot who tells stories; this story about a space scout and his self-demeaning deal with a lovely, ageless girl on an idyllic planet. When a second scout lands decades later she goes to the new man, explaining to the old, 'I'm going to get myself a new fool.'

2. "Against the Lafayette Escadrille." A mood piece about a man who has built an almost perfect replica of a WWI Fokker triplane. While flying his plane one day the man sees a Civil War balloon and in the basket a lovely girl dressed for that period. They wave to each other, he circles for as long as possible, but eventually must return to the airport. He looks for the balloon and the girl again and again but cannot ever find it. If...only...he had made his Fokker exact in every detail to the original—would that have made a difference?

3. "Loco Parentis." Ironic comment on alienation and snobism and identity, with a flashforward to a twist. Devilishly difficult to describe without quoting the entire 700 word story.

Gene Wolfe infuriatingly insists the reader make up his own mind what Gene Wolfe stories mean. What, me think?

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You, too, can time-travel, maybe, in your head, with your hangups for enduring company, if you swallow a psychedelic substance, autohypnotize, indulge in your sexual fantasies and trigger it with a good hot handjob (or fingertickle, if you're female).

So sayeth Ray Nelson in "Time Travel for Pedestrians," a trip into his past lives as witch, goat tender, hunter of heretics, a young musician, a scribe in first century Alexandria, angel killer....

Fascinating, because Ray is so open about his desire to be a woman and be pierced, fucked.... There is brutal realism and naked honesty in this story. I ate it up.

All hail to Harlan for printing it and forcing s-f a bit further out of its maiden

aunt womb.

A COSMOLOGY TO END ALL COSMOLOGIES

Letter in NEW LIBERTARIAN NOTES #19

"Dear Samuel Edward Konkin...who will burn forever and ever and ever with all them jews and nigras:

"I object most angrily to your forthcoming interview with your to be aforementioned 'Satanic Objectivist'. Without even a necessity to read the piece first, one must come to the sad conclusion that you have sold out your birthright for a pot of bulls. One can no more be a Satanic Objectivist than a relative absolutist; one can not equate the basic anarchism of Objectivism with the a-kissing, running dog statism of Satanism; and any such terminology must a priori be branded for the B.S. (Blatant Sophistry) that it is and be met with the same rejoinder voiced by Socrates as he was offered the cup 'If you - and the horses you come on.'

"Too many people have been taken by the celestial-industrial complex.

"Don't!

"The animosity shared by Heaven plus hell is about as convincing as the 'split' between Russia and Yugoslavia. We must come to realize that baptisas plus black masses come under the same I.O., that there are no viable alternatives; and that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost would never throw the Devil out of Heaven as long as they still need him as a fourth for bridge.

"Satan is the creator of the social security commie pinko welfare state that takes care of you to the grave and beyond. Hell is regimented. Hell is bureaucratized (ask C.S. Lewis), and they probably don't even let you smoke grass much. God is no better, but leave him alone; no one has ever accused him of Objectivism.

"The issue is survival. The issue is freedom. Our very souls are at stake! Nothing can be accomplished by sticking slugs in crystal balls, and other such rip-offs

that are the mark of the Mickey Mouse Bak-uninist.

"Our choice - Hell, where you're always getting flayed? Or Heaven, where you're never getting layed?

"Or?

"Violence is justified. We have been attacked; being born is both the first strike and the last straw. Be not afraid; I am your leader; we shall overcome.

"Reread Genesis. Why was God forced to guard the Tree of Life? Flaming swords? If Mr. Adam and Ms. Eve had eaten, couldn't he have zapped them anyway? Why didn't he 'liquidate' Satan?

"BECAUSE HE COULDN'T! OCCAM'S SWITCH-BLADE.

"God and all his agents, as well as the rival gods, are merely Atlanteans who, having eaten of a fruit that created a biostatic immortality, have used the long centuries at their disposal to nurture their latent psi talents.

"We must raid Eden, blitz the angels guarding the place and grab those apples (or whatever).

"Clone them.

"Distribute them to all humanity (with a few negligible turncoat exceptions!)

"We shall convert Heaven! Unionize it all! Re-educate Purgatory! Reinstate the wandering Jew. God shall be cast into the same pit as Satan; to be filled up with feces, urine plus vomit; and the hole closed with thermonuclear fire.

"How can even the united crimes of Heaven and Hell stand against the entire host of Earth, 3½ billion immortal maniacs plus f-ups; led by Moshe Dayan singing 'Onward Roman Lions'?

"We must stop them before they destroy our culture! Join me at our rally at Gol-gatha, to be held after Star Trek Con or send contributions (tax deductible) to the U.L.C., affiliated FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST -Motherfucker. C/O Reverend Superstar

Mike Moslow/ Rm 411, Times Square Motor Hotel, Manhattan.

"ARE YOU AN UNCLE JOB?
"Sincerely yours,
"The Count of Monty Hall."

What a s-f novel that would make! Norman Spinrad—are you interested?

BURY IT DEEP—A Review of CEMETERY WORLD

Suitable for public library shelves everywhere...but lacking in adult (in the best sense) seasoning.

A dissatisfying novel, this, by Clifford D. Simak, an old war-horse s-f writer, who seems to alternate between innocuous (neutered) semi-Juveniles and more mature, philosophical s-f.

This is what I have to call a kitchen-sink adventure—he threw everything in and to hell with credibility. Dictum One: For immature readers keep the wheels spinning and make the sand fly. Dictum Two: pretend nobody ever gets horny.

No, no, I'm not condemning Mr. Simak for writing this type of s-f. I sigh and recognize it has a place, it sells, it is read and liked by many. I whine and complain a lot, I drop-kick books across the room, I curse and stick pins in dolls, but I do accept publishing realities.

So be it known that CEMETERY WORLD is the story of Fletcher Carson, artist, who has skimped and saved to come to Earth to capture the spirit of the birthplace of mankind in a "composition"—a total artform incorporating music, drama, dance as well as the 'plastic arts'. He has with him his powerful, ancient, robot friend, Elmer (who is 10,000 years old, sentient, a galactic citizen, a Free Robot), and his 'compositor', a multi-legged robot/computer which doesn't have too many smarts and is as big as a horse upon which and with whom he creates his works of total art.

Earth, in this far future, has become a glorified forest lawn for nostalgic, status-seeking humans who wish to rest in peace on 'Mother Earth' (as the ads and corporation

propaganda encourage).

Fletcher immediately has trouble with the administrator of Mother Earth, Inc., meets young, pretty Cynthia Lansing (who has been waiting for him; she is a special kind of noble treasure hunter) who has spent her last sou on camping equipment and supplies for them all.

They all enter the wild, unused sectors of what we know as North America. They meet some of the remnants of Earth's original inhabitants—Ozark-type farmers, avoid a rampaging super-tank (a maverick war machine still roaming 10,000 years after the planet-ravaging war that sent mankind fleeing to the stars), see ghostlike entities called Shades, brush with a mysterious creature, shrouded, who floats over the ground and is known as the Census Taker, fight a band of graverobbers, are hunted by steel robot wolves (one of which becomes their pet) loosed by Mother Earth, Inc., are time-shunted by the Shades to a period soon after the Final War, meet the war machine they had seen earlier, make friends with it/them, are time-shunted again, this time to a period far beyond their original time, learn the answers to puzzling questions....

Oh, I tell you... So much happens, Fletch and Cynthia do so much running and fleeing, and have so little privacy, it's no wonder sex doesn't cross their minds.

The book is written in action-description commercial style. It is fantasy science, basically incredible and inherently implausible. You may enjoy it. I did, and I'm ashamed of myself. (Putnam, \$5.95. Recently serialized in ANALOG.)

LETTER FROM DAVID B. WILLIAMS

"To a point I heartily agree with your disgust for archaic language forms in Sword & Sorcery and similar stories. It is, of course, a device used, like the loinclothes that so often accompany it, to add the proper flavor to the formula. However, there is nothing wrong with the language per se, it's the guys who write it. They are counterfeiting, and it shows.

"Ah, but take a look at E. R. Eddison's use of the same device in THE WORM OUBOROS (which I betcha haven't read—or did someone send you a free copy?)."

((You win—I haven't read it—and won't until I get a review copy...or a loan of it. (To all you collectors: I am not hinting.)))

"Edison could turn archaic sentence structures and words into vehicles of power, something the S&S hack can't do. Eddison can na rrate violent action, tender sentiments, gross insults, and subtle flattery that comes through, and draws real strength from his style, something the authors of BASH THE BARBARIAN and his literary twins find beyond their arts.

"I'll tell you another place that this attraction to deformed form plays large, and that's in titles. An example (because Ted White has said in print that he thought it had 'class') is Ted's BY FURIES POSSESS-ED. Now all this means is possessed by furies, and where's the class in that?

"I think that the real failing of S&S and related forms, aside from the use of curious phrasing to substitute for exotic invention in background and thought, and aside from the characters' lack of need to take a crap, is economics.

"Let's face it, everyone has to make a living somehow. The omnipresent serf-peasant doesn't need much explaining, but all these warriors, sorcerers and decadent lordlings ought to be naked and starving for all the economic support the typical S&S author provides for them.

"If they live off the income from estates, is it in goods and services or money? Who produces the fibers for their clothing, the jewels and metals of their gauds? And then there's even more basic economics. In the latest Lin Carter adventure, THE QUEST OF KADJI, the nomad horde (where are their livestock???) comes upon a village in the middle of the vast steppe, a village of log houses. Aside from the question of why a sedentary community exists here (probably lives off the caravans, but what service

does it offer?), just where did they get all the timber? Sod, mud, felt, or stone I'd believe, but the economics of logs is too incredible, at least without some explanation.

"I think that the writers enjoy the S&S form, but have little true respect for it."

A FLOP BY ANY OTHER NAME....

There's a new s-f magazine on the stands—but probably not for long. Its name is VERTEX (which sounds like some kind of new building material) and it is subtitled The Magazine of Science Fiction.

I understand the original title was VORTEX, a respectable s-f word, but it was learned that title had been used (in England, I think) a few years ago. Titles cannot be copyrighted (only protected as a TradeMark, according to my reading), but the decision at Mankind Publishing Co. in Los Angeles was to change the o to an e and proceed apace.

Boiled down to a grainy nitty-gritty, the reason VERTEX will fold after two or three issues is that it is a 75% science-fiction magazine trying to razzle-dazzle the world into paying \$1.50 a copy.

No way.

Oh, it comes on strong with a big red-outlined-in-black logo, and has provocative topics and Names on the cover, but...

And it has a busy, busy layout inside, ping-ponging the eye of the reader to here, there... Lots of large, uncrowded, excellent illustrations by George Barr, Alicia Austin, Monte Rogers, Tim Kirk and others, and a display of the impressive s-f painting of Albert Neutzell. But...

The fiction is highlighted by Harlan Ellison's shocker, "Bleeding Stones." More on the fiction later in this review. Bill Rotsler's "Patron of the Arts" has provoked some thoughts.

But...

There's an interview with Ray Bradbury, up-beat, and the text of Robert A. Hein-

lein's Guest of Honor speech at the World Science Fiction Convention in Denver in 1941. But...

Feature articles are interesting rehashes—Have aliens visited us? asks Gregory Benford (he's getting stiff and formal now; it used to be Greg) in "The 2001 Hypothesis," and James Sutherland puffs the space shuttle in "The Truck That Flies," and Ed Bryant fixes us with a hypnotic stare (with a hyperdermic in his right hand and a pill box in his left) and intones "You Are in My Power, You Will Do What I Tell You," in a dire warning about what the chemists are up to in mind control and emotion modification, and Larry Niven discusses "The Theory and Practice of Time Travel" and decides it can't be done, but never mind, it's a good s-f plot device.

But...

For all its slick 8½ x 11 100-page format, with all the Names and art and hype... a buck-and-a-half is still too much. Upon that prickly price the magazine will likely bleed to death.

Speaking of bleeding... Harlan may be doing a bit of that when the critics get through with his 'most controversial story ever,' "Bleeding Stones."

It is Harlan warning mankind again. That's okay, it's just that mankind has been warned since a Year One man said, "Hey, people, don't shit in the creek!" and people have kept on shitting in the creek, ever since. What bothers me about "Bleeding Stones" is not redundancy of message but the attempt to make the oil and water of fantasy and science fiction mix.

He begins by listing noxious elements in the air: aerosols, coal and petroleum fractions...sulphur...sulphur dioxide, unsaturated hydrocarbons, ozone, formaldehyde, acetone, silicates, fluorides, resins, tars, pollen, fungi, etc. He goes into all that air junk and its effects on stone—and adds key fantasy words to describe the action: Alchemy, magic, magic.... And asserts that somehow this atmospheric soup, acted upon by radiation and ultraviolet changes the

stone gargoyles and other carved and cast creatures of Hell that decorate the eaves and spires of St. Patrick's Cathedral, changes them so they bleed on the Cardinal below who is blessing 40,000 Jesus People who have gathered there...and that these stone monsters come alive and attack the crowd, ravage the crowd, rend it, rip it, tear it with a great savage joy of revenge: FREE AT LAST—thank you for fouling your planet so that we can claim it for our own.

Harlan's graphic detailing of that slaughter is (as promised in the blurbs) shocking.

But my craw is still blocked by that premise—those stone gargoyles brought magically to life—given blood, bones, muscles, brains, organs by a hundred years of industrial spew. He tried to make it plausible and it won't plaus. Not for me. Beyond that I'll probably remember the story all my life.

I had heard a lot about Bill Rotsler's "Patron of the Arts" and was happy to get a chance to read it.

Bill is a competent writer—no great stylist or slicker; he says effectively what he wants to say.

I only wish he hadn't used the plot structure he did: I call it The Observer Plot. A story told by an outsider who has second-hand information, who has occasional scenes with the real protagonist. As a result, all the vital, exciting, interesting action, event, emotion takes place off stage, and the reader is told about it afterward.

The quality of "Patron of the Arts" is in the extrapolated new art forms and techniques; the 'sensatron cubes' which incorporate three-dimensional image and subtle emotion projectors are brilliantly developed.

The frustration comes in not being able to be with the artist, Michael Benton Cilento, as he works and as his love affair with the Patron's mistress/lover progresses and as the two vanish—apparently into a sensatron cube of advanced type which shows

an inexplicable alien landscape.

But the immensely wealthy Patron of the Arts tells the story, and it is for the reader like looking into a restaurant when you are starving and have 4¢ in your pocket.

Other fiction: Reprints: "The Dance of the Changer and the Three" by Terry Carr, and "Caught in the Organ Draft" by Bob Silverberg; Originals: "Paths" by Ed Bryant, "Deadly Invasion" by Larry Holden, "We Ate the Whole Thing" by Harry Harrison, and "Kessler" by Herman Wrede.

.....

UHH? WHAZAT? ARRGGH! A COMIC BOOK!
A Review of SPACE FANTASIES #1

It's big (8½ x 11), thick (48 pages, heavy stock) and costs \$1.50. It's set up as a commercial effort, with a full-color cover, sent for review by its publisher, FANTASY HOUSE, a division of Flamingo Press, Inc. (6045 Vineland, North Hollywood, CA 91606).

But ye gods! The artwork is bad; it's in that gray area of Earnest Amateur Effort that characterizes so many of the comics fandom semi-pro publications. Vincent Marchesano has a lot of learning and polishing to do before he can be called a competent artist.

Even so, the stories are action-full, plotted, and show a good degree of disciplined imagination.

.....

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS—The Continuing Review

I can't pretend to review Ray Bradbury as a poet, nor his poem, "Christ, Old Student In a New School."

I liked it when I first read it, and I like it more now after a second reading. His message—his dangerous vision—is an old one:

Man is his own worst enemy, and only man can free himself from these eons of self-torment and go forth to the stars without terrible seeds of war and hate in

his nature.

Jesus on the cross is actually man on the cross—put there by man himself. This leaves God and religion out in the cold, whether Bradbury intended it or not. Probably he did.

In this poem man steps down off the cross after realizing his 10,000 years of foolishness. An idealistic dangerous vision.

In his Afterword, Bradbury subscribes to the dichotomy of the 'Human' in man vs. the 'Beast' in man...the inexplicable schizophrenia which has plagued us ever since we started to say "Me!"

I suggest we could not survive as a species without our intelligence and self-consciousness, nor could we last long without our fang, claw and cock instincts. When will we ever learn to accept ourselves whole? Why must we forever wish to banish, repress, cut away half (or is it 90%?) of what we probably mistakenly think is Bad?

Stop me—I'm getting wound up again.

+++

I shouldn't be writing a review now of Chad Oliver's "King of the Hill." I'm sleepy, grumpy, and sick to death of Message fiction.

The Messages are almost always Right-Thinking Messages—SAVE OUR PLANET, STOP POLLUTING, BE NICE, THE MASSES ARE ALWAYS WRONG.

In this one a sentimental old billionaire in a world of overpop, pollute and welfare spends his fortune secretly constructing and outfitting an automatic spaceship to take altered life to litan for a chance at survival. He succeeds and the outraged pols and cits (who felt he should have spent his money on them) put him away with the crazies after confiscating the last of his assets.

When is somebody going to get published a message story that says pollution is in the long run a good thing, killing our fellows is okay, politicians are admirable

people, and the average citizen is pretty shrewd?

That is a dangerous vision. But I do not think I will hold my breath until it hits print.

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Not my afternoon. I face the task of reviewing Ed Bryant's Right-Thinking warning story, "The 10:00 Report Is Brought To You By..." which is about how TV news departments (in another twenty years, maybe) will be secretly arranging disasters and assorted crimes, cameras in position, in order to beat the opposition and get those big ratings.

The story is well-done, vivid, a tsk-tsk-isn't-corporate-greed-awful tale, and he thinks (with the wide-eyed sincere outrage of the young discovering hypocrisy and greed and lies, and loving the opportunity to be righteous and stick it to society) most people are sell-outs and yield to their low instincts by liking vicarious violence.

Ah yes, and yes, and yes. Were, are, always will be.

Some writers make a career of poking society with a stick and calling it names. (Not Ed Bryant, necessarily. This was his first story. Too soon to assess his direction, said the critic, patronizingly.)

I liked Ed's handling of the story transitions with TV script techniques. But I don't think a TV network or local station would ever try hiring a motorcycle gang to trash a small town, or pay two rapists to do their thing. Not because TV people are noble and pure, but because they'd get caught. Somebody would talk, and the viewers would demand in outrage that they be punished. Punished, not for providing vicarious violence, but because the viewers might be the victims next time!

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Kate Wilhelm's "The Funeral" is quietly one of the more powerful, better stories in this huge volume.

She can inform by indirection; by the simple act of casually (it seems casual, actually, it's cunning) describing a room or a person or a set of clothing she adds to a slowly emerging deduction of terrible repression and fear.

"The Funeral" is a message story, self-proclaimed in the author's Afterword, but I do not yowl in complaint. Why, do you ask, do I not caterwaul as I do after I have read some other message stories? Because Kate Wilhelm makes her message implicit and unobtrusive; it is there for the reader to realize for himself. Her communication seeps into your clothes as you read, and even dry-cleaning won't get it out.

She's a superior writer.

But I'm not saying much about "The Funeral, am I? It is about a future in which the young are strictly repressed, are in effect slaves to the adults and to a ruling class, and are kept ignorant of a horrible past pogrom.

That past is revealed in bits and pieces by the remembered words of a now dead old woman who accidentally survived the first slaughter of the youth and the "opposition" when she was a child. She grew up to be a revered teacher, an educational leader of the new order. In her dying days she spoke in fragments of her childhood, and the girls who attended her, especially a girl named Carla, learned tantalizing bits of truth.

The current rulers of the school are afraid to old woman talked of the past and of her "opposition" family.

I won't tell any more. "The Funeral" travels its inevitable path. You may not enjoy the ending, but you will enjoy the skill and insight in its telling.

"I especially want to read "Tomb It May Concern," although I realize it is just an early version and not the funeral draft."
—Gerard E. Giannattasio

I want this subscriber's head on a pikel

IDIOT QUOTE FROM JOHN BOARDMAN

"As you've probably heard, DEEP THROAT got it in the neck last week. The decision is being appealed, of course. If the judges of the appellate courts can read the Constitution, the decision will of course be reversed; however, on the basis of recent court actions I have no hope in judicial literacy.

"Particularly ironic is the contrast between DEEP THROAT and another recent film, EL TOPO. Both films have acquired a sort of mystique among their fans; for instance, it is a thing to have seen them as many times as you can. (Personally, I've seen them each once.) What porn films are to sex, EL TOPO is to violence. It has scene after scene of gratuitous violence, bloodshed, and death, all to as little point as the alleged 'plot' in the usual porn flick. And there has never been any legal action against EL TOPO, and it draws SRO crowds wherever it appears.

"At this point I am willing to give a rather more sympathetic hearing to the views of Dr. Frederic Wertham, at whom we have all cast scorn for the past two decades. Wertham, seconded by Gershon Legman, complained about kids being habituated to violence by comic books. All of us free spirits laughed at him, and called him a censor. Now the boys that Wertham was worried about have grown up and made the scene at Mylai, Manquang, Xuanggoc, Balangan, and the Manson family. Somehow Wertham doesn't sound so stupid anymore.

"If anything is to be banned, I'd leave DEEP THROAT and its imitators alone, and go after THE GREEN BERETS, EL TOPO, PATTON or CLOCKWORK ORANGE. The trouble with society nowadays is not drugs or sex; it's violence junkies."

—letter, 3-17-73

Scratch a freedom-for-porn man and you find a would-be violence censor. Seems as though everybody reads the Constitution selectively.

NO MAN IS A MICHAEL G. CONEY ISLAND UNTO HIMSELF Reviews of MIRROR IMAGE and SYZYGY

Now, that's a clever heading, nicht wahr? Nicht? Ah, well....

I had noticed a spate of Coneywork in the magazines lately, and then two novels, SYZYGY, published by Ballantine, and MIRROR IMAGE, published by DAW, flopped exhausted into my mailbox after a cross country run (the Post Office makes all 4th class mail trot along beside the freight trains, hoping to discourage it).

So let it be bruited about that Michael G. Coney (of England) is a good, solid, inventive professional science fiction writer who explores his themes and has a tendency to dawdle here and there, or let the pace slacken... He lets the reader off the hook just enough to make him fidget, but not enough to lose him entirely.

In MIRROR IMAGE and in SYZYGY I was impressed by Coney's ability to picture a colony planet realistically, to show the alienness of it and the day-to-day work and grit of survival.

Both books deal with the challenge of an alien life form that unexpectedly rears its ugly consequences. Both books are not simple—there are convoluted and realistic human relationships mucking up the works (as in real life) and all kinds of ramifications involved in the alien life forms.

Coney's main theme in both books is that Mankind is not an island unto Himself and must admit to being something less than Lord and Master of the Universe; we must adapt and we must render unto aliens that which we can't take from them—we must make the best of cooperation with other intelligences...or suffer for it.

In MIRROR IMAGE newly landed colonists under contract to develop a huge steel works stumble on what they call "amorphs"—creatures which change shape in reflexive defense; by sensing the attacker's love object they become that object...or, with a human, that special person.

In addition, it is discovered the amorphs in their new human forms become permanently "set" in that form after a few months contact with the man or woman they have "copied" from. And they become fully complete replicas—down to all the inner organs and plumbing. Which means sex is possible and inevitable...and a new kind of baby.

Further, a "virgin" amorph, without shape, when exposed to a team of humans, develops into a meld of the team—with all their combined knowledge!

At first the amorphs are tractable and make ideal servants and workers. But then the billionaire industrialist who set up the colony arrives with exploitation plans.

—And the book generates power and drive. Coney plots very well; his stories are not predictable. There are always surprises (logical, consistent) on the next page, in the next chapter. That's what kept me reading. And his characters are infuriatingly human.

If there is one major flaw in MIRROR IMAGE it is the amorph's unexplained ability to physically change shape—to perfectly duplicate what it senses from its enemy or close-by dominating human. Coney carefully asserts this ability but does not attempt to explain it or really make it scientifically credible.

The "alien" in SYZYGY is believable, even if its "mind" is not.

I suspect Coney's aliens' attributes are devices to illuminate Coney's statements and beliefs concerning mankind's relationships to man and nature, whatever strange forms nature may take. This is especially true in MIRROR IMAGE as the human-set amorphs rebel and win equality as free humans.

If I had to guess, I'd guess SYZYGY was written before MIRROR IMAGE. SYZYGY seems a bit less mature and it has a distinct British flavor because Coney didn't eliminate the English slang phrases and words (or perhaps because a Ballantine editor didn't "Americanize" the manuscript).

Coney reversed the classic idea from Asimov's "Nightfall" and created a fairly well established colony on a planet with six moons of varying orbits. Every 52 years the moons converge to fill the sky at night—and strange, awful things happen to the colonists, but only to the humans who live on the coasts.

This novel has the same virtues and faults of MIRROR IMAGE: an unexpected alien intelligence, a hero with hang-ups over a past love and a present girl friend, a mixture of flawed colonists, a struggle to understand the aliens and minimize the loss of life due to human stupidity, arrogance and emotionalism.

SYZYGY (Ballantine 03056-7, \$1.25)
MIRROR IMAGE (DAW #31, UQ1031, 95¢)

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"...what do you do when you're up to your ass in alligators?"

—John Carl

"I would get down on my belly, roar a little, walk on my elbows and toes, pooch out my lips and open my mouth as wide as possible, meanwhile trying to look green."

—Vern O'Brian

(From Ed Cagle's KWAHIOQUA #5)

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THE ARCHAIC STYLE DEFENDED, CRITIC OFFICES IN FLAMES, RICHARD GEIS DEAD—A letter from Don Keller

"The thing that really started me off was your putdown of archaic writing; since its main practitioners (Clark Ashton Smith, William Morris, Lord Dunsany) are my favorite writers, I have to defend the practice—and you've heard some of this before, from a letter I wrote re a bad review given ZOTHIQUE.

"I think there is a place in literature for what Marlan Ellison (quoting Joanna Russ) calls a 'statue' story—one you can walk around and look at, which is something that you can be enriched by, can come back to again and again.

"One way of doing this is through language—to create a style that in itself be-

comes a reason for reading. Of course, it must have worthwhile content to back it up, but even a slight falldown there is not so easily noticed.

"You prefer a story you can live vicariously—which is real and vivid, whose action catches you up in it, and you are impatient with anything but the most transparent, clinical descriptive prose. This is okay, but in doing so you prefer the vast bodies of pulp fiction over literature. You are concerned with only the story—the Event, as C.S. Lewis phrases it—and care little for art, except where it enhances the Event. I found the Davidson quote excellent, I read it slowly and savoringly, and now make an even greater resolve to read the book. I can vividly picture you fidgeting while reading it, saying, 'C'mon, Avram, get on with it already!' His purpose is not yours.

"It all comes down to a question of Art. There are other ways to entertain besides a well-structured plot, strong action, all questions answered; other patterns of writing which can give equal pleasure.

"The whole point of BEYOND APOLLO was to leave the reader guessing; the pattern was to show the mind of an insane person. I found it enigmatic, but quite interesting. Joyce, in ULYSSES, gives us the most banal of 'plots'—one dull day in a man's life—and plays all manner of literary games that form a masterpiece. Trying to write a book that will sell is one thing, but there are other games to play.

"The 'pure' writer you speak of must have a touch of hubris—enough to consider himself a god. He has all things possible to him in writing, and he can create whatever he chooses. And in doing so he can follow any conventions he chooses. You follow (and enjoy reading) the pulp/sf conventions, which take their cue from the medieval romance.

"And I ask you: which is worthier? Fantasy, because being so deliberately not of our time, it transcends time. Point: Lovecraft and Smith and Howard have survived for half a century (nearly) and their stories are equally praised and damned as they

were then. But where are the pulp-action sf and stuff published at the same time? Buried in old pulp magazines, deservedly forgotten and never to be resurrected.

"I guess I'm sounding woefully pretentious in all this; but I feel that fiction (sf/fantasy included) should have more at stake than merely passing a few empty hours for the casual reader. It should be something for all time, something that can be savored and read again and again."

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I am a peer group of one.

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IN THE NAME OF SANITY, KILL ALL THOSE SCHEMING PARANOIACS!

The last book of John Sladek's that I read was MECHASM, a black comedy s-f novel, full of warp and wicked woof.

Now I've read the Pocket Book edition of his THE MULLER-FOCKER EFFECT (77622, 95¢) and note that his evil, sarcastic mind has thrown up a complicated multi-threaded story of computer-tape madness and sick humor that chills and fascinates with its ever-present ability to haunt you with this thought: "Jesus Christ, this is more true than false!"

You find in this maelstrom of insane reality, in this caricature of our society and culture: Heffner, PLAYBOY, the Arthype, publishing, sex, religion, the military, motherhood, exploitation, homosexuality, politics, prejudice....everything is mocked and twisted and turned inside out to show the ripe-rotten guts of greed, ego, and paranoid, schizoid, solipsist thinking... until you want to put a twenty-foot high wall around your home to keep Them out.

Every page is good to excellent; the writing is at times brilliant, the effects bizarre, shocking, even sometimes angering. Often funny. But you laugh with a weight in the pit of your stomach.

Sladek is cruel. We shouldn't have to face these things, even disguised by exaggeration and satiric twist. The truth leers from these scenes and makes you

squirms.

Open to almost any page: (161) "The marching was superb, a precise goose-step, and the banners and torches inspired awe. But something was wrong with the singing. Partly this was due to many of the White Shirts relapsing into their childhood versions of the anthem. Yet thousands of bystanders later swore they heard a third version: Ofay can you pee Through the dong's surly blight What you probably inhaled At the toilet's last cleaning?"

The scenes of the massive Washington D. C. riot, the Bibleland mockery, the mile-long computer-created fresco, the endless jape of the military, the skinning alive of the advertising industry... All linger in my mind. And more. More. It's a very full book. Cramped with humanity and its basic San Andreas faults of character.

If you like turning over social and cultural rocks and watching crazy, naked ids scuttle about—this book is for you.

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"People who oppose freedom are always moral."
—Rob Miller

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A COLD NIGHT'S COP-OUT 1-31-73

Last night's ABC 'science fiction' made-for-TV movie, A COLD NIGHT'S DEATH was riveting from beginning to contemptible end. Only the final two minutes were spoiled (and the entire film tainted in memory) by the unjustified, unexplained quantum jump in intelligence of the experimented-upon chimps.

The movie had great atmosphere and tension, however. Robert Culp and Eli Wallach as the scientists isolated in an experimental high altitude station on a snowy, frigid mountain were very fine, very real.

Obviously the author (whose name I have forgotten) was unable or unwilling to play square with his viewers by providing a plausible explanation for the phenomena he imposed on the scientists. To finally assert that the chimps were mysteriously, cun-

ningly retaliating against their tormentors, were giving subtle stress experiments (subjecting the men to "accidental" cold, hunger, physical exhaustion, fear, death) as the men overtly tested the chimps for endurance at high, frigid altitude is an insult to intelligence.

As an aside: how depressing to see so much grizzled gray in Robert Culp's hair and beard. Where is the breezy young man of I SPY? How quickly they/we age.

LETTER FROM HARLAN ELLISON

"MAN WITHOUT TIME is still in limbo, but you'll be pleased to know I've sold a fantasy/occult series that (according to the head of Screen Gems) 'will change the face of television.' It is a combination of LOST HORIZONS, Captain Marvel & the old wizard Shazam, Lovecraft, Dr. Strange, and the joke about 'life is a fountain.'

"The name of the series is THE DARK FORCES and it utilizes videotape as a creative medium for the first time in ways that make 2001 look primitive. I am able to say this, free from being accused of traditional ellisonian hyperbole because we've hired Doug Trumbull, who did 2001, SILENT RUNNING and THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN, as our partner in the project. The pilot, a 90-minute film-for-TV, was budgeted for film and came to eight million dollars (and even then they weren't sure it could be done). Trumbull re-budgeted it for tape and three new tape techniques he's developed for the series, and we came in at \$276,000, which is only one thousand dollars over what NBC gives the studio for a standard 90-minute film. To be able to produce, every week, a segment that looks like eight million, but only costs standard TV seg money, means we will outshine everything on the air.

"It will star Martin Landau as Kraiter, a modern sorcerer, all the forces of magic and the unknown at his fingertips. My writing partner on this, Larry Brody, and I have signed a contract with Pinnacle books for a series of paperback novels based on the series for TV. Piqued with interest? You should be...it cuts anything else that's

ever been done on TV in the area of fantasy /sf."

A CONVERSATION

"I don't like taverns," she said.

"Oh," I asked. "Why not?"

"Because taverns are places where middle-aged people go out for a night, get stone, staggering drunk, and come home thinking they've had a good time."

"Well, gee, I go to taverns where the people are usually loaded on grass or acid, and are just having a drink for the hell of it."

"Oh, well then," she said. "That's different."

—Loren Macgregor,
TALKING STOCK #7

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, the Continuing Review.

A cry in the night—I WANT BUGS BUNNY! Whatever happened to Mister Magoo? And Daffy Duck? Who killed our favorites in the movie houses?

Economics, apathy.... Well, see, the audiences in movie houses now wouldn't mind seeing a good, funny, well-made cartoon, but they'll pay to see the main attraction anyway, so why should a theater manager (or theater chain) rent cartoons, too?

Short of being strung up from a balcony by an outraged crowd of cartoon lovers, the run-of-the-projector executive will heed the profit-loss equation.

So James B. Hemesmith wrote a nostalgic, wishful fragment, "Harry the Hare," and Harlan liked it. (Whatthehell, it's a change of pace!) And Blue Wing films, Inc. does not hold that copyright.

THSPEAKING OF CARTOONS!

"I've been dragged to a number of movies lately by John Guidry, second-biggest film freak in New Orleans fandom.

"Most pleasant was a Bugs Bunny film festival, where eight cartoons were shown

—three by Friz Freleng, three by (yech!) Robert McKimson and only two by Chuck Jones. Following that came a series of six Road Runner cartoons—three each by McKimson and Jones.

"If you're one of those animation freaks who pays attention to the directors of cartoons, then you're probably aware that McKimson's Road Runners were made for TV and are rather insipid fare for mature audiences.

"Chuck Jones, however, is the genius with the incredible sense of timing who created Road Runner and made him into the byword for excellence he is today. Toward the end of the series, there was actually applause whenever the name 'Charles M. Jones' appeared on the screen. (It was only us fans applauding, but....)

"Just for fun I made note of several differences between Jones cartoons and the made-for-TV variety that could actually be communicated in print—differences a little bit more concrete than just saying that the Jones ones are the only ones that are funny.

"This is based on more than just those six cartoons, of course—but those are the ones that inspired me to write these observations.

"ONE—In the Chuck Jones Road Runners, the Road Runner never leaves the road. This may seem trivial, but—well, it's an identifying trait just as surely as 'Beep Beep' is an identifying trait.

"TWO—The Road Runner in the Jones epics has exactly three speeds—fast, faster and stop. He doesn't accelerate, tho the film sometimes varies in speed in the beginning, just after he's identified by species (something else that isn't present in the TV pap). When he stops, he stops short, instantaneously going from top speed to zero, with all the kinetic energy being absorbed in some weird manner by his vibrating. In fact, the only evidence that there's more than one speed of the Road Runner in motion is that occasionally he'll be going along at normal speed and the Coy-

ote will pace him. Then he puts on a brilliant burst of speed and dashes out of sight. The TV version frequently takes longer than an instant to build to top speed, and has even been known to screech to a halt.

"THREE—There are no characters except the Road Runner and the Coyote in the Jones cartoons. Not even a flea that I can recall in all the ones I've seen. Such outside characters are rare even in the McKim-son variety, but there were walk-ons by a fly and a car full of black-clad spies just in the three that were shown that night.

"FOUR—There are never themes or plots to the Jones Road Runners. Each episode is completely independent of those coming before and after it, except in cases where a device from one episode is still active enough to zap the Coyote in the next (and such cases are rare). In those cases you can really figure it to be one episode in two parts. But the three McKim-son cartoons shown then included one where he gets hold of all sorts of spy-type devices (and not Acme spy-type devices, either) from the aforementioned car full of black-clad spies and uses them throughout the cartoon; and one where each gag is dependent on a build-it-yourself airplane he put together. You don't see themes run into the ground in Chuck Jones cartoons.

"FIVE—The Coyote always realizes what is about to happen a split second before it does when Jones is directing. The cue may come as a shadow suddenly falling over him just before the rock strikes, or it may be a sudden biting of the lower lip or it may be simply a downturn of the eyes. But the audience always knows that the Coyote knows what's going to befall him. Not so in the McKim-son travesties. Lightning is likely to strike him out of a clear blue sky.

"SIX—Last and most important is the fact that in the Jones version, whatever baleful events befall the Coyote, he brought it all on himself. He invariably falls into a trap of his own making. The Road Runner may bait the Coyote—may torment the living hell out of him until he slips up—but he'll never take the actual offensive.

The first episode in the second cartoon shown in the Road Runner series that night had the Road Runner tricking the Coyote into jumping off a cliff. Even without the 'Directed by Robert McKim-son' credit, I knew that was a good time to get up for popcorn.

"As for the Bugs Bunny series—all I'm going to say is that after having seen 'What's Opera, Doc?' (directed by Chuck Jones, no less) I'll never again be able to listen to Wagner's Ride of the Valkyrie without hearing Elmer Fudd sing 'Gonna kill the wabbit, kill the wabbit, kill the wabbit (dat dada dah).'

"Come to think of it (that's what happens when you compose on stencil) I do have a couple of words to say on the Bugs Bunny part of the show.

"That is, Guidry and I have been trying for months to convince Dennis Dolbear of the homosexual imagery in Bugs Bunny (how many times have you seen Bugs kiss Elmer Fudd?). That night, we finally succeeded. Seeing Bugs in drag for a Halloween costume was no big thing—he's always walking around in drag, usually for lesser reasons than that, and so is Elmer. But when Elmer Fudd appeared in 'What's Opera, Doc?' wearing a costume that made him look like a male organ, it was all I could do to keep from punching Dennis on the shoulder repeatedly, yelling 'See? See?' And Dennis was three seats away from me."

—Don Markstein, from his personalzine, TANDSTIKKERZEITUNG #1 (And he should drop dead with a title like that.)

QUOTE FROM ROBERT HOSKINS

"I owe Lancer an s-f novel, which will probably be my only venture in that area. I'd like to do a few short stories, but I find that they take almost as much energy as planning a novel. Being essentially lazy, I love free-lancing, but find it hard to force myself to the typewriter.

"Still, when things go well, I can do 30-40 pages a day easily, and have hit 63.

I wrote the last 200 pages of the most recent Lancer gothic, EVIL IN THE FAMILY, in five days, after being blocked on it for nine months.

"But blocking was because commuting in to New York was killing me, after having already driven me insane. Actually, I'd done 111 pages, and run out of story. I threw away the last 80 pages and started fresh with a new chapter three, and it went nicely—even though I hated it. Still, it's my only fantasy gothic to date—the girl's mind is sent back in time, to take the place of an aunt who died young—and might interest a completist fan.

"The greatest joy in my new life style is being able to wake up at 7:30, knowing that I don't have to go into New York that day; I smile, turn over, and go back to sleep. I trust you do the same."

THE FUTURE OF BASEBALL

Peering into my plastic crystal ball last night, I saw the 'national passtime' regenerating itself by following the formula of professional football.

Baseball (in my Lucite vision) switched to platooning, to separate fielding and hitting teams. It speeded the pace by giving a base after three Balls.

Scoring was higher because of hitting specialists, base-running specialists, unlimited substitutions, more bases-on-balls.

Yet, too, defense was spectacular, as the defensive, fielding teams were staffed by the finest glove men and pitchers.

A new dynamics and tension entered the sport, making it competitive with football. Traditionalists moaned, but crowds turned out in ever-greater numbers.

A LETTER FROM DAVID GERROLD

"I was browsing through Larry Niven's copy—hell, I was ego-skimming and stumbled onto your review of "In the Deadlands." I think you're right about the experiment being ultimately self-defeating because it

calls attention to itself as an experiment.

"However, it had to be attempted—and I'm not sure I could have told this story any other way."

MUTANT 59: THE PLASTIC EATERS, a Review

Fast, slick, gripping, plausible; a very good could-be-now s-f disaster yarn set in London. The human element is strong and realistic.

An eccentric biochemist privately creates a mutated bacteria to eat plastic and keep sewage pipes clear. A research firm invents a bio-degradable plastic for use as soft drink bottles, etc. The bacteria is accidentally spilled into London's sewage system. The new plastic turns out to be the perfect food for the new bug. By chance they come together.

The bug EATS! As it multiplies it creates an explosive gas. It eats plastic insulation along the wires of the underground railway, in wires of a submarine, a traffic computer, a transcontinental jet—explosions rupture underground tubes, gas mains, etc. Unless checked, this bug will eat civilization out of house and home.

The novel is by Kit Pedler, who knows his way around experimental biology and who makes the bug and its consequences chillingly real...and by Gerry Davis, a writer in TV and films who makes the story work and work well. There'll be a movie of the book.

A humdinger. Entertaining. (Viking, SF Book Club, Bantam Books—17499, \$1.50)

QUOTE FROM BUZZ DIXON

"Here's a news item for you. They've torn down the Vietnamese villages at Ft. Benning that were used to train troops in guerrilla warfare. Oh, they still teach guerrilla warfare, only they're using a Middle East village now. Guess where we're going next, kiddees."

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, the Continuing Review Continues.

So far, the better stories in this book have been by women. This I would not have credited five years ago if I had been told of Harlan's incredible Visions.

"Hoo de haw haw," I would have snorted and lurched off into the night and fallen into a male chauvinist pigsty, clutching my fifth of xeno and wearing my Sergeant Saturn decoder ring.

But now here I sit faced with "When it Changed" by Joanna Russ, who, like Kate Wilhelm, has written a story both powerful and subtle.

The point she makes with a velvet-covered sledge-hammer is that individual character and personality are 99% of what's important in a person.

"When it Changed" is the story of some people on a lost colony planet one night after a spaceship had landed and four men got out to say, "Hi, we're back!"

The reader is not told of gender until the confrontation by the colony's informal leaders with the spacemen. Until then personality factors and character elements tell of human beings facing problems, interacting, coping in a family and social and cultural milieu. The reader assumes from the context of role and activity and conversation that this person is a man and that one a woman.

Then Russ swings her sledge into the gut. They're all female.

Because all the men on Whileaway had died of a plague many, many years past, and the isolated colony of women had managed to exist and progress without them, even to having children.

The story requires at least two readings—once for the blow to hit, and once for thought and contemplation.

And HAW! After a five-page introduction in which he praises Joanna Russ and expresses all the Wimbly equality sentiments, Harlan must have sent her up the hallowed walls

of Cornell, where she teaches, with his last sentence: "And further, she looks better in a bikini than any of the editors who rejected her novel."

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"The Big Space Fuck" is a joyous tweaking of azure puritan noses and academic ambivalences. Here is a celebrated, bestselling, professorially revered author telling a tale of a time when the glorious U.S. of A. sent off a rocket to the Andromeda galaxy loaded to its nose cone with...freeze-dried A-1, super-quality sperm? NO—with JIZZUM! And when even the President of the United States calls the project THE BIG SPACE FUCK! Oh, yes! Vonnegut, Jr. did that. He wrote it. And Harlan chucklingly printed it and they are causing librarians all over the world to spin.

The story also depicts a time in which it is an everyday affair for a child to sue his/her parents for the crime of imperfect upbringing, thereby causing said child to suffer deprivation, squelched talent, emotional hang-ups.

And the story depicts how much a shit-pile the planet will have become by 1979 and how the lampreys of the Great Lakes, finding those sewers too much even for them, begin coming ashore to devour garbage more to their liking—people.

So it goes. It's in the book.

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HOBBYHORSE #1.

You didn't think I could go a whole issue of my magazine and not comment on the spectacle going on in Washington, DC, did you?

I'm breathless^{at} the way our so-called leaders are trampling on each other in their haste to deliver us into a totally controlled economy—in the name of fighting "inflation."

Jesus—does it stink! These idiots blithely ran up 100 billions of dollars in deficits in four or five years and now get all bug-eyed and astonished when all that

"free" money works its way through the economy, bidding up wages and prices as it goes.

And of course, as the controls "fail", more and more controls and penalties will be required. More 'sacrifices for the common good' will be called for (imposed) in the "emergency."

The "meat boycott" is a farce—a public relations gimmick, a distraction to draw off some public outrage at rising prices—and already there are dark looks at the cattle-men who are selfishly holding back their cows and refusing to take smaller pay...in short for exercising their freedom.

But freedom is getting a bad name...on the lower levels of the economy. It isn't remarked upon when the mega-banks and multi-national corporations force a devaluation of the currency and make hundreds of millions of dollars profit by juggling a fraction of their overseas dollar assets.

Well, hold on tight. These are interesting times.

.....

LETTER FROM H.K. BULMER

"NEW WRITINGS IN SF #22 is due out here in hardback from Sidgwick in April, and I think I've got together an interesting collection of names as bylines; in order: Harry Harrison, E.C. Tubb, Arthur C. Clarke, James White, Brian Aldiss, John Rackham, Donald Wollheim, Sydney Bounds, John Kippax, Laurence James, Christopher Priest.

"Volume #23 due in the autumn also looks good. I'd like some more submissions from good U.S. writers; but I'm realistically aware of the difficulties here.

"We had an interesting Milford over here ably organised by Judy Blish which left me croggled. Next one is due this year and I am going into training for it."

.....

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, The Continuing Review

Science fiction is a what-if medium, of course, of course. But simply laying down

a bare-bones what-if isn't usually enough. Such pure idea stories don't satisfy...and they tend to be implausible.

They are something like idle speculations with an hour or two at the typewriter to add some detail. No major characters, no plot, no real story.

"Bounty" by I.L. Sherred is a prime example.

Problem: Too much crime! What-if a secret Committee placed a full-page ad in a paper promising a \$10,000. reward for the death of any armed robber, and \$100,000. to the estate of anyone killed trying to halt armed robbery (and etc.)?

And what-if the Committee paid off? Every time!

Greed is a wonderful social cure if used properly. Or even improperly, sometimes.

"Bounty is an interesting exercise in what-if, but the sad-despairing Introduction material about himself is of even more interest.

.....

Ten years of rejection slips is nature's way of telling you to stop writing.

.....

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, The Continuing Review.

Barry Malzberg (K.M. O'Donnell) has been for a year or two (and this A,DV story is part of this phase) been shooting down the space program (and making uncomplimentary comments about mankind's ying and yang along the way).

"Still-Life" is the latest story of this individual mode I've read, but may have been among the first written.

Whatever, I'm sick of them.

He puts it all in a thimble after he has the astronaut fire the retro-rockets and head back to Earth, leaving two companions stranded on the Moon.

The "insane" astronaut says to mission control: "I've had it. I won't take it

any more. You cannot program the universe you sons of bitches, there are things going on outside of all of this which you cannot envision let alone understand and there must be an end to this banality: do you understand that? It has got to end sometime. The universe is vast, man is small, you fucking sons of bitches."

Barry wants sf to grow up and plumb the depths, to have its writers examine the implications of their material; to face reality and resist dehumanization. Which is, I suppose, why all of his spacemen and space colonists go mad, kill others and self-destruct.

But, then, I'm a laworder man: I'm often baffled by surrealist writing. I resent it because it is so often what might be called Private S-F; only the author knows for sure what it means.

QUOTE FROM A POST OFFICE INFORMANT IN LOS ANGELES.

"Things are very unstable at the P.O. Very little positive personnel action is going on. The brass is so busy trying to save money that they have done practically no hiring and through attrition have lost over 300 employees alone in this Post Office.

"Multiply that by Post Offices all over the country and you can see that we're suffering a serious personnel loss while the mail keeps increasing.

"They are going to put in lots of machinery and eventually hope to automate the postal operation almost completely. This is great, but takes lots of time - BUT THE MAIL IS JUST A BIG KING KONG and sumpin' better happen in a hurry, before the whole system collapses."

FIRST HE WROTE 'JUVENILIA': A Review of KURT VONNEGUT, JR.: A CHECKLIST

For completists. Compiled by Betty Lenhardt Huggens, this thin book is priced at \$8.50, published by Gale Research Co. of Detroit.

Introduction by Vance Bourjaily. Complete bibliographical descriptions of Vonnegut's books; first book publication of stories; stories, short plays and poetry; articles and public letters; non-fiction books with contributions; book reviews; blurbs; interviews, juvenilia; related material; and references and ana.

Idle info: in 1939-40 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. wrote a column in his high school paper. The column was titled, "Bull Session New Enquiring Reporter."

Ge, maybe someday someone will include in a checklist the astounding information that I wrote a column in my high school paper titled "Professor of Screwloosology." ...I think. My memory....

SAM YOU MADE THE POST-PRANDIAL PANTALOONS TOO LONG—A Review of THE TIME SHIFTERS

My first thought when I took this novel out of the box I had received, full of Lan- cer books sent for review, was, "My God, is Sam still alive?"

It's been six or seven years since I have heard anything about him, and I assumed, semi-consciously, that he had succumbed to a heart attack, stroke, emphysema.... I'm glad to see he's still hacking.

My first contact with Sam Merwin, Jr. was in the good old days of the pulps. I was a kid writing letters-of-comment to STARTLING STORIES and THRILLING WONDER (and getting some published), and he was their editor, having taken over from Sam Mines.

And then, years and years later, I was living in Venice, California, in 1960 during the days of Venice's period as home of the Beatniks, when the Gas House was in its prime, when Big Daddy Nord reigned and Lawrence Lipton was seen on the ocean front walk in his shabby clothes and with his ever present shopping bag.

I lived for a while in the laundry room (about 5' x 10' with two big cement laundry tubs taking up half the space) on the roof of 19 Wave Crest Ave., even then a run-down apartment house (which I later managed for

a year-and-a-half...but that's another set of stories) and I was beginning to sell fiction to ADAM and SIR KNIGHT and ADAM READER and a lot of other girl mags. I lived on fifty or sixty dollars a month (the rent was twenty dollars) and ate a lot of peanut butter.

But enough nostalgia.

I rode my trusty old bike halfway across Los Angeles one day to visit the editorial offices of ADAM, etc. just off Sunset Blvd. I could pedal a bike thirty miles and not be tired in those days. Now...it would wipe me out.

While talking with the editor and assistant editor (Can't remember their names...) the editor mentioned that Sam Merwin was working (writing) downstairs in the 'basement' hacking out fiction and articles to measure. They called him up and I met Sam.

I was in awe of him. Any editor or former editor or successful writer was a STAR to me in those days...and I was my usual inarticulate self. When I met him again, more years later, I don't think he remembered that initial, short hello-good-bye.

And then...in 1963 or '64 we met again when— Well, see, the State of California mounted, in the County of Los Angeles, a weird conspiracy-to-publish-and-distribute-obscene-books-and-magazines case against Mr. Luros (head honcho of Brandon House, London Press, American Art Agency, etc.) and for kicks indicted assorted editors, bookkeepers and writers for news value and impact.

I was one of the writers indicted even though I lived up here in Portland and had never met any of my fellow "conspirators" (not counting Sam, if he was in that initial group, which I don't remember that he was, but maybe).

The result of that case was that the judge threw everything out of court except one or two counts against Mr. Luros...and an appellate court later cleared him, too.

(The State of California and the Federal Government have spent literally mil-

lions of dollars trying to "get" him, over the years.)

But for sure Sam was among the Chosen when the federales (via the Justice Dept.) decided to use a (still on the books) law that says the government can prosecute postal law violations ("obscenity") where the damage is done: thus with the ardent cooperation of postal inspectors (Ah, there Mr. Shoof, are you reading?) who ordered so-called obscene (in those days a relatively decorous crotch shot was actionable) girly mags, nudist mags and sex novels via P.O. boxes in the 'injured' (pre-selected) provincial town of Sioux City, IA, they set up the same case involving the same charges and the same or similar books (mine was THE THREE-WAY APARTMENT, a mild, moral novel by today's standards), magazines and defendants. There was me, Sam, another two writers, a bookkeeper, an editor, a salesman, and Mr. and Mrs. Luros.

It was a long winter in Sioux City. The Federal Government spent millions; ran in dozens of witnesses, huffed and puffed and, much to the judge's discomfiture, won convictions on every remaining count from that rural jury of middle-aged women and old farmers.

Poor Judge Hansen had to let things cool off for a few months, then reversed the convictions of everyone except (as I recall) Mr. Luros (again). A higher court subsequently threw out that conviction, too.

Significantly, the Justice Dept. hasn't tried that trick again. Of course, we had two of the best lawyers in the country representing us: Stan fleishman and Percy Foreman.

But, to the point of this—this is a review?—epic; Sam Merwin and I spent three or four months in company that winter.

Sam is (was then, anyway) fat. Dresses in old, expensive sports coats, shirts, slacks (even in court he wouldn't wear a tie). He has an aura of grace and high education, of having been reared well-born. He was a close friend of Alan Mowbray, actor, who died a few years ago. He smokes non-stop (except in court) and that habit

cause us to fall out a bit—we watched football in my motel room because my TV picture was sharper, and maybe because he wanted company and liked me, but all that cigaret smoke stunk up my room for days afterward and I'm a non-smoker, and I sort of told him he wasn't welcome. He drinks with the best of them, and talks with great erudition in a penetrating voice, a lot, about his life and thoughts and people he has known....

After we all went home after the trial I moved to California (Venice, again, with a lady friend...amid the Venice West Hippie generation) and Sam became editor of Brandon House, to which I had been selling most of my novels.

Suddenly I couldn't sell a novel to Sam. (Brandon House had been taken from Brian Kirby's editorship. Brian was then editing the "class" Essex House line, to whom or which I sold a couple books. There was some in-house politics involved, and I favored Brian. But I suspect that Sam didn't buy my partials partly because I had insulted him in Sioux City. Hell hath no fury like a cigaret smoker scorned. That's what I prefer to believe. It couldn't possibly be because those partials were bad!)

I did sell Sam a book, though, but over his dead body, so to speak. I—with Brian's help—went over Sam's head to Mr. Luros who had another high echelon executive read a partial of mine which Sam had rejected. He, the exec, suggested a small change, and it was then accepted. (I can't even remember the title, now.)

Sam lingered on as editor, then co-editor, of Brandon, for awhile—a year maybe, then left. A series of editors sat in at Brandon, and then Larry Shaw took over, and he's been there about three years now.

Sam continued to write for Mr. Luros—articles, fiction, novels, non-fiction books, for all the magazines and houses, using pseudonyms.

His sex fiction (I have noted) has always had an element of tongue-in-cheek (the wrong place for a tongue in a sex scene).

He really can't take it seriously. And now I see in THE TIME SHIFTERS that element persists in his science fiction as well. It's his basic attitude toward life itself: You're kidding! Because Sam Merwin, Jr. has got a brain on him, he's smart and he runs deep, and has thought all the thoughts and come to all the conclusions. Life is a cosmic joke. And it's on us.

He writes for money. With a cigaret ever in one corner of his mouth, a wry smile, and a drink close by. He's got to be well into his sixties by now.

THE TIME SHIFTERS is certainly competent. It is good reading. It is even educational as to history and social detail, & cultural trivia that lends a patina of realism to his scenes. Unfortunately, he gives verisimilitude with one hand while snatching plausibility away with the other.

It is plotted with a 19th Century fiction cliché: the well-to-do, eccentric, many-faceted uncle brings a startling fact to his handsome, dashing nephew. Nephew becomes involved in the enigma. Enter a mysterious, rich, beautiful woman who entwines him further. Develop conspiracy, danger, intrigue, incredible happenings....

Sam's stylistic mannerisms are interesting. His choice of words, for instance, betrays his sardonic life-view and undermines the believability of his fiction.

For instance: 'Paula moved like a wraith with a hotfoot.'

'When he looked at himself in the bathroom mirror, he discovered that his countenance was wearing a mask of blood.'

'"That," she said, "would be Harry Jack and his minions."'

'His post-prandial engagements had to be reset....'

Subtly mocking, gently tweaking the reader's nose, never giving quite his best. And his choice of names. The hero is Chuck Percival.

Sam is a fallen nobleman fated to use his mind and talent in service to the great unwashed. Well, so be it, but the masses will never have his soul. (Lancer 74776, 75e)

LETTER FROM ROY TACKETT

"Richard....

"I am not sure that I think well of you or otherwise. You may have lain your own ghost (one of them) but you revived one for me. Fine on you, printing a three year old letter and then putting me on the spot by asking if I still hold those opinions.

"Are you sure I held those opinions in the first place?

"In a general way, and from the point of view used in that particular letter, yes, I still feel much the same way these days.

"Let me build a slight defense here. I am, as you know, anything but a newcomer to science fiction. I have been addicted to the stuff for some 38 years now and the number of sf yarns I've read is in the tens of thousands. Yea, verily. I will match my sf credentials against anyone's.

"I think SF has been, for the past several years, the only form of fiction where anything new and vital has been happening. It is, almost, the only place where the short story can still be found. There are now a number of new and exciting writers in the field. There are also a number of new and dull writers in the field—they seem to have gotten their start not in the pulps but in comic books, frghodsake!

"And I still maintain that any writer who thinks of himself simply as a SF writer and not as a writer period is never going to make the grade."

"Reality is a crutch."

—Dick Jensen's toilet wall
(Thanks to Bill Wright)

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, The Continuing Review

"Stoned Counsel" by H. H. Hollis is one of those if this goes on... extrapolations of the drug culture. This time applied to the legal profession.

Given the anti-drug hysteria (certain drugs are acceptable, of course—those adopted by the power structure) in this country, especially regarding the mind-altering kinds, I wonder if it's ever going to come about that two lawyers, joined by a blood mixer, stoned to the gills, projecting hallucinations into each other's mind in a contest of wills and emotions, will settle court cases in that manner to anyone's satisfaction.

But Hollis (a lawyer in real life) makes it seem possible with detail and depth of character; all the trivia of personality and doing the job lends a marvelous reality to the premise—and that is what sf writing is all about.

+++

With some degree of calculation, Harlan went out to get some Names for A, DV. Not necessarily to hype sales, but to bring about a coattails effect; libraries will have to buy the book to get the must-get Vonnegut, the Bradbury, the Bernard Wolfe. And this will help the lesser names and no-names on the contents page.

And, of course, the Names are fine writers, too, and that helps.

Bernard Wolfe comes across to me in these two stories under one heading ("Monitored Dreams and Strategic Cremations: 1. Bisquit Position; 2. The Girl With the Rapid Eye Movements") and in his Afterword as a very bitter idealist who is not yet willing to face the death of his ideals. He's got some ripe, rotting corpses on his mind and it makes him angry. He is, viciously, lashing out at The System (which is basically inherent in man's inherent imperfections) and Those Who Help the System.

That includes most everybody, but especially scientists.

His Afterword is more gripping and involving than his stories...and his stories are excellent.

"Bisquit Position" is a wipe-out. It rattles your bones. It underscores again, in a vivid, gut-wrenching way, how we can compartmentalize our minds; how we can make

some fellow humans things and thus feel free to burn them alive with napalm or shred them with anti-personnel bombs....and how better to bring this horror home to you than by letting a lovable, innocent pet dog accidentally stand-in for a child or an old woman during a PR Army demonstration of kill-kill expertise on a California proving ground during the late great Vietnam war.

The rabbit shot into view around the corner of a hut, Bisk inches from his heels. At this moment the hut metamorphosed, as by the push of a button, from structure to flame, and at that moment, Bisk metamorphosed. One second running dog, next, standing flame.

She'd skidded to a halt, frozen as in a stop-action movie. Through his binoculars Blake saw how she stood still, puzzled, how she turned to bite the attacker all over her body to find her jaws closing on flame.

She looked everywhere overhead, as at sneaky birds, as she burned. She found no explanations, the big birds in the sky only burred, in a language that to her was only loudness. Burning, she turned her eyes at last toward the bunker, to the one source of all correctives, to all impedings and harrassments, Mari.

Mari moaned, pushed again toward the opening. Blake pressed hard on her shoulders.

"Don't look," he said, forcing his body in front of her to block her vision.

Bisk stood motionless, looking to Mari, a fire with four legs. How she did the only thing she knew to do, when the ultimately wanted was not forthcoming, flopped over on her back in the bisquit position. Paws flabbed over chest, barely in touch, were burning, paws stretched wide were burning.

She begged, she burned, mouth totally open for the ultimate bisquit, a cessation of heat, of being eaten by enemy with no bulk or out-

lines. Eyes still looking to Mari.

It gets more horrible...and your disgust for man's inhumanity to man is total.

But Wolfe doesn't blame this on the one ultimately responsible—God. I doubt if Wolfe believes in a God.

"The Girl With the Rapid Eye Movements" is science fiction. Wolfe asserts it is not sf, because it is concerned with... Hell, let him hang himself.

This is by way of getting it straight that the two stories presented here are not sf. They are fiction, to be sure, about matters that embrace certain scientific considerations, but they are not sf, whose premise is that science embraces all matters and that therefore any sf work, which is about nothing but science or the superficialities of science deftly skimmed off, is by definition about everything. Sf is in the nature of things about things, sometimes disguised as people. A very different kind of fiction becomes necessary when you're interested in people not reduced to things.

The first sentence of his Afterword is as follows: 'I haven't paid much attention to science fiction but the last time I thought about it, 11:43 P.M., October 29, 1948, I didn't think much of it.'

Insulting, ignorant, prejudiced gentleman, isn't he?

But he writes good.

So before I move on to the next review, I'll quote a bit of the ending of "The Girl With the Rapid Eye Movements" to give the flavor of the story.

I had a wobbly picture of Vicki and and myself lying side by side, together in bliss, her unconscious dictating all my books to my unconscious. I thought about her, in some ESP-oriented future, having legal claim to my royalties. Suing me. For plagiarism.

+++
"You're a flinty man, Mr. Rengs.
That's what I like about you."
"You're the sort of lymphy girl
I vastly admire, Vicki. At a distance."

"A gap?"

"Agape."

"I hear The Omen's recording a new
number Ivar just wrote, something called,
Ptomaine in Spain Falls Rainily in
the Plains. Now, Jesus, Peter, Paul,
and Mary, doesn't that prove—"

"My cup runneth over. With a
grateful dead of migraines, a loving
spoonful of cold sweats, a holding
company of grand-mal seizures. I
wish you and your whole generation
well, and godspeed, without traffic
jams. Goodbye, Vicki."

Goodbye, Mr. Wolfe. Don't take any empty
LIMBOs.

"I'm a little happy around the edges."

—Nameless Correspondent

AND NOW—BACK TO OUR REVIEWER WHO IS FEAR-
LESSLY STALKING A, DV....

David Gerrold is a good man. Egotistic,
I've heard and read, but never noted in the
few times I've spoken to him, and his bat-
tery is in the right place.

He wrote a goodie for AGAIN, DANGEROUS
VISIONS: "With a finger in My Eye," and I
cannot help wondering if it isn't a quali-
fied dream story as delineated in James
Blish's article in this issue.

Weird happenings, parts of people and
objects disappearing, insane, literal-mind-
ed conversations, actions irrelevant, dis-
integrating reality...and an everywhere fog
closing in.

Has to be a dream. Surrealism? What,
again? Why not? Anyway, it's done in a
light-hearted tongue-in-fang style. I'm
sure Freud would approve.

+++

Ah, Piers Anthony! The man Ted White
loves to chew on (See OUTWORLDS #15: ad-
dress and price in Unclassified Ads.) for
this dangerous vision—"In the Barn."

This picture of an animal-poor alter-
nate world in which some humans, mostly fe-
males, are from birth deprived of a chance
to use their minds, and who are scientific-
ally denied humanhood—so that they can
be raised as milk "cows" with huge, distend-
ed breasts, enlarged teats....

Ted, in OUTWORLDS, said, among other
things, that this story idea is good, but
fails in execution.

My own assessment is that the graphic,
clinical, detailed procedures followed by
the alternate worlds explorer/agent/spy
(following a suspiciously handy and detail-
ed farm manual—(that was just a tetch too
much, piers)) as he poses as a worker in or-
der to investigate the mysterious, huge barn,
(deep breath) were an excellent idea (yea,
even unto the rectal thermometer) to impale
the reader with the horror of treating a
woman as a domestic farm animal.

But the scenes with the newborn calf
(child) are even more chilling because of
the accumulated detail and of the methods
used to inhibit the development of intel-
ligence.

The San Andreas fault in this story is
in the character of the Earth Prime agent
who investigates this Counter Earth #772.

He's a jerk.

He behaves like an immature teen-ageer
in too many respects, and his emotional
hang-up re his lost love is too convenien-
tly planted for narrative exploitation.

A guy who makes a career of dangerous
alternate world-hopping would be tougher,
cooler, and more in control of himself. He
might indeed experimentally feel up one or
two of those melon breasts, and even get
down in the hay with a young "cow" in heat,
but he wouldn't be so gosh-wow about it...
would he?

Damn it, he just wasn't professional
enough. And he'd have to be sophisticated

and icy to survive more than a few jaunts to a variety of radically different alternate worlds.

So I guess Ted is right. Good conception—faulty execution.

+++

"Soundless Evening" by Lee Hoffman is a powerful little killer of a story. It fits with the Wolfe stories, with Piers' story.. as another snapshot of how we humans are able to make objects of other people; in this case, children.

When you're allowed, as parents, only two children that can be permitted to grow up to replace you in an overpopulated, stabilized world, then it follows, doesn't it, that if maternal and parental instincts are not satisfied with pets, why not have real children—provided they are not allowed to live past their fifth year.

Those are the cold equations. You can't have extra kids and let them grow up, too.

Of course, it's kind of sad to give a sweet, trusting, adorable five year old that lethal glass of milk...but...it did have the five best possible years, didn't it? And we do so enjoy having a child around the house, don't we?

"Soundless Evening" by Lee Hoffman will be reprinted in many, many anthologies in the future. Probably even dramatized for TV. One of these years Harlan will probably sell a DANGEROUS VISIONS half-hour series to a TV network, and he'll use this story in the first month.

+++

Gahan Wilson's... Well, it's titled , and it is an other-dimensional plant blob that skips around the house when you're not watching it, and it grows each time, and it eats meat once it reaches a certain size. In fact, it's a carniv—

+++

Just like Harlan. Clever, cunning editor. Every story placed in the book with special care and much forethought.

That's why this bombshell, "The Test-

Tube Creature, Afterward" by Joan Bernott is separated from Lee Hoffman's story by a very good change-of-pace comedy horror.

Here are emotional implications explored. Here is a man with a pet—the result of a laboratory experiment—who can talk, who has human intelligence and feelings, cat-like beauty and grace....and he's fallen in love with her. Not just master-pet affection. Man-woman love (yet sexless).

And he's trapped.

Does he do something horrible and drastic to get free and lead a normal emotional life with a real woman...or does he yield to his love?

This story is beautifully, subtly, surely told. A small masterpiece.

The women score again.

+++

"And the Sea Like Mirrors" by Gregory Benford is a segment of a novel, I imagine. A slice of future in which alien sea-creatures are colonizing Earth, driving man from the oceans, and having generation-gap problems themselves.

It is a story of survival on a raft by a man and woman after their ship was sunk by the young, aggressive Swarmer variety of the aliens. The Skimmers, the outnumbered "adults" communicate with the two humans on the raft by means of organic message tubes floated near. But the messages are a mixture of words from different human languages.

The woman has regressed to near-mindlessness, and the man has to solve the riddle of the aliens and their baffling messages by himself.

He has also to decide who to trust.

This is superior traditional sf in that it is "hard", it is optimistic, it is inhabited by a Competent Man, and it is written with modern depth and width of knowledge and understanding.

+++

It's a dumb story, I'm sorry to say, at

the risk of demolishing (or even slightly fracturing) a fragile author's ego.

"Bed Sheets Are White" is a ridiculous, if this goes on... knee-jerk Activist anti-Establishment story.

In Evelyn Lief's vision of repression control of the country and the people has reached the extreme of requiring everything be white—roads, buildings, clothes....

Sunglasses have been outlawed and looking up at a blue (or black, night) sky is illegal; it could give a person 'unacceptable' thoughts.

I must confess to unacceptable thoughts as to where Miss Lief should have stuffed this story.

I begin to suspect Marlan has a Liberal-Activist-Relevant button that accidentally gets pushed now and again. It turns off his critical faculties.

.....
I AM THE CAPTAIN OF MY FATE, I AM THE MASTER OF MY SOUL.... *Click* I AM THE CAPTAIN

'A Script for life. The principles of Script Analysis have evolved out of the accumulated clinical experience of Transactional Analysts. We have evidence that, between the ages of three and seven, a child develops a "script" for his future—i.e., a story-line blueprint that determines how he will live the rest of his life—particularly his important relationships, his feelings about himself and his achievements, and the outcome that he will experience as "success," "failure," "I almost made it," or "at least I tried." The Child Ego-State of the grown person maintains the script and, unexamined by Adult knowledge and logic, it pervades the significant patterns of the person's life. When a person feels "lucky" his script probably calls for good relationships and successful outcomes; there is no need for Script Analysis, except perhaps for improving creativity and flexibility. But in (some) cases...nothing short of skillful specific intervention will modify the dangerous and irrational aspects of a script that relentlessly proceeds like a Greek tragedy.'

—Fanita English, "TA'S Disney World"
PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, April 1973

.....

WRITE IT AGAIN, SAM

All hail to Lancer for reprinting Jack Vance's THE DYING EARTH. I'd missed reading it years ago. It was a delight to read a few weeks ago after Bob Moskins sent it along a few months ago. (Lancer 75373, 95¢)

The novel (a linked series of short stories and novelets?) tells of an Earth in the far, far future when the sun is red, dying, and when some of the creatures and plants of Earth are Different...when magic is used (but even that is a remnant from a more glorious past of myriad spells, enchantments, powers) and when a few magicians still quest for knowledge, when love still exists, when evil is pure and bitter.

Jack Vance (some might say) hasn't topped himself since 1950 when this novel was first published. THE DYING EARTH is a classic, and a classic that survives on quality, not historical interest.

The atmosphere of the book is best described by the blurb on the first page of this Lancer edition:

"Strange figures stalk across stark landscapes: adventurers and magicians, humans and non-humans, beautiful women with the powers of eternity and dozens of grotesque beasts and supernatural creatures."

THE DYING EARTH goes into my Permanent Collection. A must-read and a must-keep.

.....

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, The Continuing Review.

Terrify Issue?

Charming, macabre, grotesque...with a social comment or two in there...something to do with, uh, umm, American culture...and uhh, dehumanization...and....

We all know (as James Sallis demonstrates in his "Issue," the first part of which is l: at the fitting shop) department stor-

es are too hard to find things in, even such a simple, everyday item as a Polish Sausage penis for a 15 year old boy (his first).

And in 2: 53rd American dream, how nice to act out in a logical real way our secret symbolic fantasy lives: eat the maid...see mommy dismantle herself...see daddy whip her....

To tell the honest to God truth, I do not know what the hell these vignettes signify. They're interesting and fun to read, though.

+++

"Please, Doctor, my reductio ad absurdum is killing me."

"Think nothing of it, Miss Sci-fi. A satirical disease like that kills lots of genres, especially on Saturday night. How about some brand new Speculum Fiction salve?"

"Can't you give me a pill for it, instead? That salve hurts my conscience."

"Not until you pay your bill of rights for the prefrontal I did on your sister, little New Wave."

Don't mind me, I only type here.

I suppose the concept of Dangerous Visions naturally impells minds into utter extremis in search of something.

Josephine Saxton entertainingly postulated in "Elouise and the Doctors of the Planet Pergamon" that in a land of those chronically ill, diseased, crippled, genetically defective, and worse, the one-eyed doctor is king and the unique person in perfect health is fair game...and likely illegal.

Squeeze a ripe postulate and ugly Message stuff comes out.

+++

Written in swift Hippie-Hip natural, "Chuck Berry, Won't You Please Come Home" is a story of man's inhumanity to a tick.

Fed blood till he was the size of a watermelon, forced to commune with deranged young homo-sapien minds, and finally, unsuspectingly given a drink of a heroin

addict's blood, poor Chuck Berry the tick died and was cremated.

Author Ken McCullough says it is a true story, and I admire him for that. It's an amusing true-life experience.

It is a shame that the plans for a tick-worshipping religion never got off the ground.

+++

A woman, asserts David Kerr, author of "Epiphany for Aliens," is sometimes willing to die for her ideals—no, a woman anthropologist in a story written by a man is willing to give herself, naked, to a savage Neanderthal man in full view of millions via TV, cameras, binoculars, radio...a sacrifice, an atonement for what modern man will soon do to this tiny tribe of stone-age people who have inexplicably survived in France.

She cannot face 'her' primitives' lack of a future.

And so she walks masochistically naked to Oog and he fucks her ruthlessly on a rock ledge and then throws her off into a chasm. (Not necessarily an orchasm.)

Modern man, watching, waiting, outraged, erupts in a spasm of firepower and kills every last one of the Neanderthals in the cave.

They don't make straw men the way they used to. The current set are wearing out. But that's because they're used to beat dead horses all the time.

LETTER FROM BARRY MALZBERG

"Thanks for #4. Fascinating.

"Still writhing over BEYOND APOLLO review but: ok. Damned thing sold 4500 in h' cover, will probably make final Nebula ballot, went paperback for \$6000 so it's worth the ink it's printed on. Anyway. Maybe.

"Sold a story to ANALOG this month. Third-person, past-tense. Psionics. I'm taking you to heart. All right?"

((Now I feel guilty about all the crit-

icisms I've shoveled on your shoes in this issue. I'll look forward to that ANALOG story.

I may as well mention here that I've nominated your short story, "On Ice" (AMAZING, Jan. '73) for the Nebula. A fine story. Coincidentally, I received a letter from Nick Shears, South African fan of note, who wrote in part, "I hope to see comment on Barry Malzberg's 'On Ice' in your magazine. I read it yesterday and thought it superb, yet Sarf African censorship is ridiculously strict, resulting in very little material like this being here legally, and even then it's through overlooking by the censors.")

LETTER FROM LEIGH COUCH

"I was very interested in your comments re Barry Malzberg. I've read him as K.M. O'Donnell also and I don't like the way he leaves me feeling: dumb! I don't like that much. Sometimes I feel that I am pretty intelligent, and well read and perceptive, but other times I feel downright stupid. I don't know which I am. It bothers me some. What you have to say helps a lot.

"Kate Wilhelm's stories leave me feeling dumb. I suspect that she is a big put-on, but then I tell myself that it's because I don't understand her stories, don't even understand what she is getting at.

My most traumatic experience lately was in trying to read Stanislaw Lem. I couldn't get beyond about p. 20; he totally bored me into a coma.

"I tend to agree with you that evil is built in. I've been teaching in elementary school for 13 years and don't talk to me about innocent, pure children!

"I think this is why violence scares me. I don't want to be the target. I want all of society's repressions to operate on those young savages. I have seen too much of their careless cruelty to one another, and I have heard too many horror stories from high school teachers when I go to college in the summer. I do get pretty uptight about violence being spotlighted in

some of the Rock acts. I can't call them bands anymore. ALICE COOPER is a theatrical production, not a musical group."

S-F NOTES

Frank Herbert's PROJECT 40, concluded in the March GALAXY, brought the emerging conflict between the Hive humans and our "normal" surface society to a tension-filled climax. I haven't been so held by a story and its intriguing, realistic content for a long time. PROJECT 40 is top-notch s-f, and be glad Frank Herbert is alive and well.

The diabolic cunning of the man! He constructed his novel so the Hive humans (in spite of their repulsive insect-like social organization and culture) are the ones the reader roots for. Their leader, Nils Hellstrom, is in effect the hero. The villains are our "wild" society, a secret Kafkaesque government agency, and the specific agents who are secretly investigating the surface "front" of the Hive.

A beautiful example of switching story element functions and reverses of effect. Here is a writer experimenting with form, and getting away with it...magnificently.

...

John Boyd's featured short story, "The Girl and the Dolphin" (in the March GALAXY) presents communication, love, intercourse & tragedy between dolphin and woman, but I couldn't believe a word of it...but I don't believe Boyd intended me to take it seriously.

...

It pleaseth me to note that Ed Ferman has found a better printer. (In a note the other day he said of the new printer, "They cost more, but the old outfit was awful, and I'm much relieved by the change.") The March issue of f&SF is resplendent with a wraparound Leo and Diane Dillon cover inspired by Harlan Ellison's featured novel-let, "Deathbird."

Harlan cannot write an uninteresting story—he has some kind of narrative electricity in his fingertips. In "Bleeding

Stones" in VERTEX #1, and now here with "Deathbird," he is into a moralizing period. He has Messages.

(I suppose, come to think, that he has always been a writer concerned with idealism, with presenting a mirror to Man that reflects a true image, however ugly it may be in certain aspects.)

His vision in "Deathbird": The creature we think Evil—the Devil, the Serpent—is actually a Caretaker of Earth; God is insane, always has been, and to worship him is/was/will be a terrible mistake; mankind is better off ignoring God and worshipping himself, loving himself in ways heavy with respect; God worship leads to destruction of mankind and of Earth.

Hatlan hits like a pile-driver. Sometimes it seems to me he strives for shock and outrage for effect, like the farmer who slugs a mule on the head with a club, saying, "First you got to git their attention."

He'll git plenty of attention with "Deathbird."

.....

"When a man is treated like a beast, he says: after all, I'm human. When he behaves like a beast, he says: after all I'm only human."

—Karl Kraus

.....

"Usually people wish to become writers because they think writing is easy. They know that everything else they have tried is hard, and they do not suspect that writing is harder than anything else they have ever done. This type of writer sometimes succeeds; if he does it is because of a latent streak of determination which he hadn't previously suspected. Usually he fails. He fails along about the time he discovers that writing is harder than any other sort of work he has ever tackled. This type of person always plots loosely, because plotting is naturally the hardest part of writing at first.

"This type of person should never try

to plot at all. He should select well worn formulas, and being careful not to steal any of the business that goes on the formula Christmas tree, provide new decorations. Nobody but a complete fool who is trying to write can possibly have any valid modicum of sense behind his wail that he can't plot. He doesn't have to plot. All he has to do is look at the magazines; they have the same plots in them month in and month out, with different ornaments on the tree. To this type of person I say that—in view of that fact, and in view of this book, which contains everything that could possibly be said about plot, more or less impossibly said—I will bash his head in if he ever comes near me and says he can't plot."

—Jack Woodford, "Psychosis in Plot", PLOTTING.

.....

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS—The Continuing Review

The primary output to the discerning reader (That's you and me!) of "Eye of the Beholder" isn't quite what Burt K. Filer hoped it would be when he wrote it.

That may be the best kind of message fiction—the communication unconscious, the signpost unrealized, the handwriting on the wrong wall.

This is a story about how the CIA decided to rip-off an anti-establishment artist rather than tell him the truth about his valuable holographic technique.

The CIA Director hired three of the artist's friends to steal his holographic projector because it held the key (the govt. scientist thought) to an interstellar drive.

But the artist arrived home early, chased, and ran the thieves off a mountain road. They died.

The CIA boss and scientist blackmailed the artist into cooperation by threatening a manslaughter charge.

The artist was required to create a work of art so the scientist could find out how he achieved an anti-gravity effect.

The scientist discovered the vital in-

redient, the CIA Director and the scientist left....but the artist, raped, gave chase again, and that last dangerous curve was ahead.....

There the story ends. You don't really expect a final resolution nowadays, do you? It's much more "artistic" to leave the reader hanging.

And instead of muttering an oath and tearing the pages to shreds, you are supposed to maturely ponder the significance of scientist vs. artist, the influence of technology upon art.

Granted there would not be much of a story without the govt.-artist conflict. But did Filer really intent to tell us in these simplistic, extreme, opposite terms (crude, dirty, rebellious, reclusive, individualist "animalistic" artist vs. disciplined, mathematical, clean, establishment, woman scientist allied with Might-Makes-Right, End-Justifies-Means CIA Director) that this is his understanding of how the CIA (and govt. scientists) operates?

One man shows?

The Director of the CIA takes a personal hand in a caper like this? A leading scientist is isolated without needed assistants because of a need for security?

The story has an old-fashioned scientist-builds-space-ship-in-back-yard feel to it—a discredited, unrealistic pulp premise that won't work in 1972-73. Govt. intelligence and research don't operate that way anymore, if they ever did.

Filer may be living in the past—or he may simply be lazy.

+++

Symbolic. Reader must decide, think, supply answers. "Moth Race" by Richard Hill.

Country under total, subtle dictatorship. Annual race by volunteers in race cars: they must make it all the way around a two-mile track at pre-set 60MPH against odds as walls raise and lower in random patterns, times, lanes.

The nationally worshipped Champion made it seven years previous, no one since. He has lived life of luxury in every respect. But this Race Day, after six volunteers have wiped out, he inexplicably races again. Killed!

The huge watching stadium crowd is stunned. They have no Champion! There must be a Champion or life has no meaning!

Hundreds of men rush down to volunteer. Moth race.

What is the flame? Why is the flame? Is it really so easy to manipulate a population?

Are professional sports today the opiate of the masses?

Don't ask me, I only think here.

+++

"In Re Glover" by Leonard Tushnet is an amusing/interesting/eye-opening look at implications and consequences concerning cryogenics.

It's a Gordian knot, a tangled fishline of legal/moral/financial problems. If a volunteer ever goes into deep-freeze while legally (and actually) alive, and if the cryogenic power-supply is assured... The resulting complexities are of an order to try men's souls.

Tushnet "solved" his fictional problems by cutting off Mr. Glover's electricity by means of a massive power blackout.

The real world may not be so lucky one day.

+++

I'm not happy with "Zero Gee" by Ben Bova. It's a trivial story, outrageously padded, strung out with technical business and indulgent dialog—hung on a dumb idea for a book of this theme.

Detail my complaints, say you?

The story is about an astronaut due to go into orbit with two women, one a no-nonsense scientist, the other a stunning blonde photo-journalist.

He is a playboy and he wants to be the first man to ball a woman in zero gravity. He takes bets.

There is slow-moving joking, jockeying, much technical stuff as he pilots the rocket and makes rendezvous with the research station already in orbit.

The blonde is tough, cynical, materialistic, but inwardly vulnerable and lonely. He is a happy-go-lucky, a sex-for-fun man.

He makes his moves—strikes out. But finally breaks through to her soft core and for an hour they meet as two people who need each other. He scores.

But once back on Earth she is the hard-shell bitter careerist again and he is a bit sad and not so happy-go-lucky anymore. He won his bets, was the first man to make love in orbit, but it is an empty triumph, somehow.

Awww..... *sniffle*

What we have here is a set of slick clichés decked out in pounds and pounds of technicalese mummy-wrapping. It's like opening a big, fancy Christmas present to find a 5¢ candy bar.

And this isn't even, strictly speaking, science fiction. Because the rocket flight and the sex act at zero gee aren't crucial to the story.

The characters could have been mountain climbers and he could have bet he would be the first man to screw a girl on the top of Mt. Everest for all the difference it would make. Same dialog, same action could have been used (with a change of technical jargon).

So hide your head, Ben Bova. And you, too, Harlan, for accepting this as a dangerous vision.

.....

'Mysterious Phenomena. If the essence of psychological healing is the restoration of morale, a disquieting possibility arises.

'The main determinants of therapeutic outcome may lie in phenomena that research-

ers systematically avoid because they do not accord with the scientific world-view and they resist traditional research methods.

'For example, perhaps there is a quality of "healing power" that characterizes the gifted therapist. What accounts for the unusual abilities of the leaders of healing cults?

'Scientists dismiss them as charlatans, but empirical study of a contemporary Emil Coue (the therapist who taught us to begin each day by saying, "Every day in every way I'm getting better and better") might well illuminate the process of psychological healing.

'Similarly, there is evidence for mental telepathy that is every bit as convincing as the data on phenomena we accept as true.

'Freud and many others have believed that telepathy may play a big role in therapeutic rapport, yet it has received scant attention from researchers in psychotherapy.

'Finally, we know very little about the determinants of "Kairos," the auspicious moment in which a person is especially susceptible to therapeutic influence.

'It seems related to the state that precedes religious conversion, which can have more powerful therapeutic effects than any conventional form of psychotherapy.

'Conversion characteristically follows a period of severe demoralization: the person despairs because his customary means of coping, his group ties and his traditional beliefs have all failed him.

'At such a moment he becomes especially accessible to a new belief system linked to new group allegiances and new ways of behaving.

'We have barely begun to explore the mysteries of psychotherapy. The demoralization hypothesis shifts our attention from bewildering claims of unique methods to therapeutic forces that transcend differences in technique. Such a new direction may help to bring some order into the chaotic

ic field of therapy.'

—Jerome D. Frank, M.D., "The Demoralized Mind", PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, April, 1973.

...

Comment on the above: wouldn't the demoralized mind theory—failed social and cultural structures, discredited traditions and beliefs—apply also to whole nations or civilisations?

THE LITERARY DREAMERS

an article by James Blish

In an Author's Note to a neglected novel called SMIRT, James Branch Cabell declared his intention of following "the actual and well-known laws of a normal dream"; laws which, as he saw his predecessors, only Lewis Carroll had previously followed (given two small exceptions) with "scientific exactness".

Scientific exactness about dreaming was unattainable in 1933, let alone in 1862, for there was virtually no scientific knowledge available about the process before 1953.

Up until 1899, the most respected authority was the ONEIROCRITICA of Artemidorus, who lived in the second century A.D.; he was a close observer who recorded dreams which are still common today, explaining their meaning by association on the theory that a skilled diviner ought to be able to make more of a given dream than the dreamer could.

Cabell, like most modern Classical scholars, seems to have encountered Artemidorus through Burton's ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY.*

*Cabell's JURGEN has its title character appeal to an "Artemidorus Minor" (Ch.8) for whom James P. Cover's NOTES ON JURGEN offer three Artemidorii; but surely it would be the dream authority to whom Jurgen, himself in the grip of an elaborate dream, would appeal here. In Ch. 32 of the same novel, the priest of Sesphra cites five other authorities in a row straight out of Burton, as Cover later points out.

Burton evokes Artemidorus twice in his discussion of sleep and dream; he also has an alchemical theory of his own to propose, which seems quite incomprehensible now, but was the standard product of its age, a good long time after Artemidorus.

Popular dream-books aside, Nothing further in oneirology of scientific importance occurred until 1899, the year of publication of Freud's THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS.

Like Artemidorus, Freud interpreted dreams by association; but unlike the Daldian, Freud handed back to the dreamer, rather than the interpreter, the job of divination.

The explosive impact of this book needs no documentation; but it is not often noticed that Jung and his followers continued to cling to the Artemidorian method, in that they imposed the meaning of the dream upon the dreamer rather than vice versa.

For the Jungians, dreams are particular expressions of Platonic archetypes, which are supposed to reside in a "collective unconscious".

No scientist, as Weston La Barre has observed tartly, knows where the collective unconscious might live in the physical brain; but it is worth pointing out also that Freud's Super-Ego, Ego and Id have never been localized, either.

#

Up until the 1800's, it was also possible to argue whether or not dreams come from God, like the prophetic dreams of the Old Testament.

Aristotle firmly maintained that they did not, with his usual cool common-sense.

The medieval Schoolmen, though they were united in believing that prophetic dreams were divinely inspired, were also equally divided on the source of what Cabell (who believed in magic) calls "normal dreams".

The question seems to have been resolved by Albertus Magnus—in his time a much more

influential figure than his pupil Thomas Aquinas—who came down on the side of Aristotle.

The moment was well chosen, however inadvertently. The ban on the teaching of Aristotle at Paris in 1210, which was directly responsible for the founding of Oxford University, was lifted gradually from 1241 to 1244 while Innocent IV was too busy hiding from the Emperor Frederic to give much thought to papal matters like curricula.

Thereafter, Aristotle's opinions on virtually every matter reigned supreme until at least 1600, the year of the burning of Giordano Bruno.

Even Kepler, whose cosmology replaced Aristotle's and is still alive today, was expressing his earlier radical notions in Aristotelean terminology in 1596.

As one result, the main literary tradition of the dream became its use as a vehicle for the exposition of otherwise unacceptable ideas, including, of course, political satire.

A type case is Kepler's own *SOMNIUM*, which describes a trip to the Moon which Kepler well knew to be impossible then. (Kepler played it safe three ways: He wrote of dreaming not of the trip itself, but of reading an account of such a journey by another man—and *SOMNIUM* was published posthumously in 1634.)

This tradition persisted well into the 19th century, as witness George du Maurier's *PETER IBBETSON*, in which a potentially adulterous affair is carried on only in dreams.

What Cabell calls naturalism in the fictional treatment of dreams is thus a very late development in a field previously dominated by mysticism on the one side (e.g., John Bunyan) and editorializing on the other.

It was to be expected, too, that the Artemidorus/Jung approach would be preferred to Freud's by subsequent artists; Jung's influence is everywhere apparent, for example, in *FINNEGAN'S WAKE*, surely the most

important of all dream novels, and in the fiction (*SEVEN DAYS IN NEW CRETE*) and the theorizing (*THE WHITE GODDESS*) of Robert Graves.

The reasons for this are apparent; it is a case of one predominately artistic construct supporting another. As C.S. Lewis observes, Jung explains the effect of stories of the marvelous by producing "one more myth which affects us in the same way as the rest". (He adds mildly, "Surely the analysis of water should not itself be wet?")

Lewis Carroll's dream tales are not based upon any visible psychological system, have no mystical content, and seemingly have no moral to drive home by allegory, though they contain much implicit criticism of how affairs are ordered in the waking world.

In this sense, then, Cabell is right in calling them naturalistic; they resemble real dreams captured by a close observer, and do not exist for some more important literary or philosophical purpose. Cabell notes the correspondences:

"These books alone did preserve the peculiar, the unremitant movement of a normal dream, and the peculiar legerdemain through which the people one meets, or the places visited, in a normal dream, are enabled unostentatiously to take visible form or to vanish, quite naturally, without provoking in the beholder's mind any element of surprise; just as these books preserved, too, the ever-present knowledge, common to many dreamers, that, after all, they are dreaming..."

Its deliberately hypnotic cadences aside, the description is as matter-of-fact as Aristotle's, and as closely observed.

Cabell goes on to fault the Alice books for including the senses of taste and smell, which, he believes, are always absent in dreams; at present there is no evidence for or against this stricture except introspection and testimony.

Cabell adds some other observations of his own: His dreamer's vision was circumscribed: "...a sort of mistiness pervaded

matters, driftingly, unpredictably. And besides, at times, one or another visual detail would seize upon the attention, ob-
serving it, somewhat as though, from a
shrouding fog, this particular detail...had
been picked out by a flashlight. In conse-
quence, you did not ever obtain a liesure
and complete view of any person or of any
place... Moreover, there was in his dream
no perception of time... Everything hap-
pened, as it were, simultaneously, now that
events, and many persons too, merged swift-
ly and unaccountably, into yet other events,
or yet other persons...and space did very
much the same thing. He did not often go
to any place in this dream, for the suffic-
ing reason that the place...came to him."

(Later, in AN EXPERIMENT WITH TIME, J.
W. Dunne was to maintain that the dreaming
mind was in fact liberated from time and
space. Dunne's 1953 book, currently a fast-
selling paperback in England, is a fascinat-
ing non-fiction exercise in introspection.)

SMIRT conforms throughout to these con-
ditions and restrictions. In addition, it
includes a preoccupation with the dreamer's
waking affairs which is also visible in the
Alice books (as it is in FINNEGAN'S WAKE),
and some matters they do not include which
nevertheless are often met with in dreams
—for example, a sense of dread, a feeling
of uniform hostility against the dreamer,
the sensation that he is about to be sup-
planted or to die, and some moderately ex-
plicit sex scenes (all also present in the
Joyce novel).

Furthermore, SMIRT went on to become a
trilogy called THE NIGHTMARE HAS TRIPLETS,
whose central volume, SMITH, shows the
dreamer as little more than an observer;
the adventures happen to his imaginary sons.

The final volume, SMIRE, contains the
most powerful suggestions that this is all,
after all, "only" a dream, and the concomi-
tant awareness on the dreamer's part that
he is about to wake up.

The outside volumes also include con-
siderable consciousness of a clock in the
dreamer's bedroom, plus several of its oth-
er fixtures.

(Again, similar features are present in
the Joyce work; however, I shall not pursue
the comparison further, since I have already
done so elsewhere.)

We must not suppose that Cabell knew
anything more about the nature of "scientific
exactness" than he did about the atmos-
phere of the Moon; he employed both meta-
phorically.

However, he had thought long and hard
about the virtues and vices of naturalism
(as is particularly evident in his BEYOND
LIFE), he was a careful reporter when it
suited his purposes, and insofar as the
scientific knowledge of 1933 went, his ac-
count of the underlying conditions of dream
is quite as good as anyone else's; nor does
it contradict the very few introspective
records of previous writers on the subject
or testimony collected by them, Freud in-
cluded.

Hence I do not think it unfair to com-
pare his observations—and by implicit ex-
tension, those of other literary dreamers
—with present scientific knowledge.

#

Beginning in 1953, Nathaniel Kleitman
and Eugene Aserinsky reported a series of
researches showing that dreaming is invari-
ably accompanied by rapid eye movements
under the lids of the sleeper.

Their studies further showed that dreams
keep almost as regular a schedule as do
railroad trains. They are preceded by fif-
teen minutes of relative wakefulness, dur-
ing which reveries or phantasies obtrude,
and then by a deep sleep of about ninety
minutes. There then occurs a dream about
nine minutes long. After another ninety
minutes of slightly less deep sleep, a dream
nineteen minutes long obtrudes; after an-
other ninety minutes come twenty-four min-
utes of dream; and ninety minutes still later
comes the nearly-waking dream, which lasts
some twenty-eight minutes.

Only the final dream is at all likely
to be remembered unless the sleeper has been
forcibly awakened during an earlier one;
and it is this dream which is close enough

to waking reverie to provoke, occasionally, deliberate attempts to prolong it.

Self-awakening nightmares, such as those discussed by Burton, occur earlier.

Subsequent studies of sleeplessness by Richard Dement show further that either the repeated interruption of dreams, or prolonged deprivation of sleep, leads to psychotic states.

Burton had foreseen this, too; he said, in fact, that sleeplessness prepares "the body, as one observes, to many perilous diseases... Waking overmuch is both a symptom and an ordinary cause" of melancholy (by which he appeared to mean pathological depression; the present evidence indicates that schizophrenic symptoms are much the more likely to occur.)

This much is thoroughly established experimentally, and buttressed by studies on the effects of hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD*

*A good popular account of all this work is THE SCIENCE OF DREAMS by Edwin Diamond, who was for years the editor of the "Space and the Atom" section of the magazine NEWSWEEK. A more condensed but at the same time less well organised version is distributed through Brian W. Aldiss' semi-autobiographical THE SHAPE OF FUTURE THINGS; this version has the advantage of having been passed upon by Dr. Evans. Mr. Aldiss's book also suggested the present essay to me.

Upon these foundations, plus considerable direct experimentation with the memory functions of computers, Christopher Evans and Edward A. Newman have evolved a theory of the function of dream which has the unique virtue of being founded upon hard information.

Briefly, Dr. Evans compares sleep and dreaming with the removal from service of a computer in order that its programmes may be revised and cleared in the light of new events and experiences.

According to this model, sleep is a process whose chief function is to allow us to

dream, with as little interruption as possible from the outside world, which otherwise would interfere with the clearing process, and eventually with sanity.

Dr. Evans adds: "The content of most dreams...is probably trivial, since most of our experiences are of the useless variety. At first thought, this seems to conflict with one's own subjective impressions. The apparent significance of much of our dreaming can be understood, however, when we remember that we are talking about interrupted dreams in this context, and it is dreams with great effect, and provoking autonomic bodily reactions, that are most likely to wake us up. The vast bulk of undisturbed dreaming, in fact, will probably consist of very drab, routine material—the bread-and-butter experiences of the previous day being fitted into the programme system. Occasionally we become aware of this boring rubbish when a fever brings fitful sleep. Then we see the core of dreams for what they really are: endless sessions of counting; reading nonsense; attempts to solve weird problems; driving vast distances; and so on. To slightly misquote an acknowledged expert on the topic, this is really 'the stuff of dreams', and we should be very glad that we normally sleep through it all."

It must be borne in mind that the Evans theory is at present only a simile; it does not propose that the brain is a computer, but that in certain important respects it seems to act like one.

Like all such models, its validity must now be tested to destruction, and Dr. Evans himself proposes six unconfirmed consequences which, if they do not follow, will be destructive of the model.

They are, in his own words:

1. "...Many gross psychological disorders are due to a dysfunction of the dreaming process; confusion, loss of touch with reality, paranoid symptoms and persecution complexes are symptomatic of experimentally dream-deprived subjects, and also of schizophrenic states."

2. "If the latter is true, then a crash

programme of research should be instituted by the pharmacological research organizations to develop a drug which allows the maximum amount of dreaming to take place during sleep. Such a drug might have dramatic therapeutic effects on chronic schizophrenics."

3. "Barbiturate sedation might act by depressing the central nervous system so much that the dream process itself is inhibited, for at least part of the night. Thus, though apparently sleeping like logs, nightly barbiturate takers could be gradually depriving themselves into a state equivalent to that of chronic sleep deprivation."

4. "The hallucinations characteristic of schizoid conditions, and of advanced alcoholic addiction, might be waking dreams forced into action because of the dysfunction or suppression of normal dreaming at night. Grim warning for all experimental and joy-riding takers of hallucinogenic drugs, including LSD: the long-term effect might be to permanently interfere with the dream mechanism..."

5. "The more new material processed in the course of the day, the more programme revision and updating required. Therefore the younger one is, the more dreaming one will need. Old people who put down very little new material, and who have in general a very constant environment, will need substantially less dreaming and thus less sleep. Should they not be taught to accept without worry their natural tendency to sleeplessness, and learn to make use of the bonus hours they have gained?"

6. "Sleep learning is out. It might work, but only at the risk of muddling vital programme clearance activities. Not quite, but nearly as dangerous as LSD."

Some of these ideas have obvious applicability to the recorded dreams and hallucinations of drug users such as de Quincey, Coleridge and James Thomson.

Others apply less directly, as for example the relationship, more complex than it first might appear, between Idea Six and Huxley's use of hypnopaedia in *BRAVE NEW*

WORLD (and Huxley, it will be recalled, later joined the ranks of those to whom Idea Four might apply).

More generally, we may understand better the annoyance of a Coleridge or a Byron—or by most of the rest of us—at being unable to finish a dream, or a dream-record, of obvious inner importance.

In the light cast by the model, moreover, it would appear that the literary dreamers for the most part have been constructing their works around the last, and longest, dream of early morning.

Since virtually everyone has four dreams per night and remembers only one of them, it seems logical to suppose that the immensely consistent dreams written about by everyone from Kepler to Cabell—granting for the sake of argument that these writers were trying to write naturalistically, to a major extent, about dreaming itself—cannot encompass four different dreams experienced at four different levels of sleep.

Dr. Evans' Idea Three applies with peculiar vividness to the reports of de Quincey and Thomson. In both the *CONFESSIONS* and *THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT*, the most agonising hallucinations were those experienced in nocturnal sleeplessness produced by a previous opium trance: "As I came through the desert thus it was..."

All the literary dreamers agree with the model—and with Aristotle—that most dreams, even the most fantastic, consist of reshuffling of commonplace daily concerns.

Kepler thought constantly about the problem of the planetary orbits, and his dream (which is heavily loaded with footnotes) is a fantasia upon the best knowledge—his own—of his time about actual conditions on the Moon.

Bunyan, a divine, remoulds theological matters in his literary sleep.

Walpole testified directly that *THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO* began with awakening "one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which, all I could recover, was, that I had thought myself in an ancient cas-

tle (a very natural dream for a head like mine filled with Gothic story)..."

Ann Radcliffe, in a direct reversal of Burton's prescription against nightmares, ate "hard meats" before bedtime to induce them, her own head full of *THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO* and its successors, the results being *THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO* and its successors*.

*It now appears that digestion has nothing to do with dreaming—but what one has previously read may be highly important.

Lewis Carroll brooded over little girls and logical paradoxes awake, and these in his dreams become erected into operating principles.

PETER IBBETSON is a pre-dream or early-morning sexual fantasy of an easily recognizable sort, buttered over with conventional literary sentiment.

Joyce's dreamer dreams about his family imbroglio and, in the process, about Joyce's own family, books and critics.

Cabell's dreamer is a Virginia novelist who dreams about books, criticism, myths, magic and family, all things which were constant waking concerns of Cabell himself.

As Dr. Evans says of his Six Ideas, "The reader might care to amuse himself by adding others to this by no means exhaustive list."

All these matters are very close to the surface of the waking mind, and in the books and poems have undergone little of the process Freud called "secondary elaboration", the process of turning the basic concerns of the psyche into logical or semi-logical constructs.

On the contrary, the waking material seems to be the stuff of these dreams, with not much serious transformation from what might be thought of—in the Freudian sense—as fundamental, deeply buried concerns.

Nor do the Jungian archetypes play more than a superficial, imposed, literary role, even in *FINNEGAN'S WAKE*, which is most suc-

cessful as a book of dream where it particularizes the ongoing dream itself and allows the archetypes to fend for themselves; *FW* fascinates most readers through its word games, which are particular to Joyce and Carroll, and moves most readers by means of the naturalistic novel which lies beneath them; the archetypes and other recurrent figures, like the numerology, are relatively sterile ground.

The nightmares of interrupted or fevered sleep, the dreams which occur earlier in the night when we surface from the abyss for nineteen or twenty-four minutes, are less well represented.

It can be seen, however, that *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* is a blacker—as befits an earlier—dream than is *THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS*; the trial scene, with its atmosphere of fear, rising to Alice's sudden denunciation—"Who cares for you? You're nothing but a pack of cards!"—and the cards' attack upon her, contrasts rather sharply with the later, little more than petulant shaking of the Red Queen down into a kitten—"And it really was a kitten, after all."

The ninth chapter of *FINNEGAN'S WAKE*, immensely long and dense and menacing, culminates in a mass attack upon the dreamer by his customers and a growing mob, from which he can escape only by turning his tavern into a houseboat and putting out to sea; it is followed at once by a short, disjoint erotic dream in which the dreamer seems to be only an observer, and then by a whole series of increasingly shallow trial scenes during the last of which the dreamer may actually have awakened for the course of several pages.

Overall, furthermore, *FINNEGAN'S WAKE* is divided into four sections which both in length and in content prefigure the four stages of dream which have since been observed by Kleitman, Aserinsky and their followers.

Finally, the three books of Cabell's dream-cycle, as I have mentioned above, include a central one in which the personal-

ity of the dreamer is almost obliterated, only returning—as in Joyce—as sleep lightens and morning threatens.

It may be untrue to maintain, as Oscar Wilde did, that Life imitates Art; but the naturalism of the literary dreams from Kepler to Cabell is notable for its faithfulness to and prediction of current scientific fact and theory.

It will be interesting to see what subsequent artists will build upon the facts and models now in hand...or in what way they will reject them in favor of some newer model only more centuries can test.

Thus far, they have been well ahead of research in the field—which may not justify Wilde's dictum, but does suggest that Ezra Pound might have been right to believe that "Artists are the antennae of the race."

SF NOTES

I PLUCKED A RODDENBERRY OFF THE TV VINE AND IT WAS SOUR I refer to his new series, GENESIS II, the pilot of which was recently shown (March 23 on CBS).

Roddenberry called the TV Editor of the OREGONIAN to promote publicity for the show. He is reported to have said: "GENESIS II will be the story of the Earth 154 years in the future.

"It opens in 1979 when a young NASA scientist, played by Alex Cord, is shown in a pressure chamber deep in Carlsbad Caverns, experimenting in suspended animation as a means of sending man to the moons of Jupiter and Saturn.

"There's an earth tremor which buries him in a rock slide. He only ages one day every five years. Some strangely garbed people open the chamber and find him lying almost as a mummy."

His discoverers are the chief scientist of a country called Pax, and a beautiful woman.

During the intervening century and a half, the world has almost been destroyed by a giant conflict and man has fragmented into a thousand small civilizations.

"I've always been a student of history,"

Roddenberry continued, "and the time between civilizations has seemed to me the most interesting of all, the so-called Dark Ages. In GENESIS II, the smog is gone, the skies are blue, the water clear."

Is this pilot anything like STAR TREK?

"Only in this way. In STAR TREK we brought in top writers and let them invent anything they wanted. I've contacted all the writers who used to create scripts for STAR TREK, and the great majority of them have consented to write for the new show if the pilot is sold. They are as excited as I am about returning to epic adventure stories."

Will STAR TREK be revived as a TV series?

"We're going to put an animated version of STAR TREK on the Saturday morning cartoons next fall. There's also the possibility of a STAR TREK movie, either for TV or regular motion pictures. I'd love to feature the same characters, although we have no firm commitments.

"The kids loved STAR TREK. You know, kids are much smarter than most people realize."

And so, as I spit out the sour Roddenberry because of the unctuous aftertaste of hype which always ruins my disposition, I report that I watched part of GENESIS II, and as I watched, my thumbs had an irresistible urge to turn down.

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FROM HARLAN (10 Feb 73): "after my last letter I was informed that 20th/8BC had liked my series concept so much, they decided they didn't want to do just an 8-part mini-series—a novel for TV—but wanted to make a full 26 segments. I may have to go to London off and on over the next six months to script a minimum of 10, storyedit the series and maintain creative control."

FROM HARLAN (31 March 73): "Emergencies! My second submitted television series has sold. It's on the NBC schedule in September."

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John Brunner's "Who Steals My Purse" in the March 73 ANALOG is a cultural wish-it-were-true switch story that is incredible on its face, which it falls flat on.

He tried to make it work by using the withheld information device, but 99% of the readers will guess the obvious (the U.S. is not going to bomb the hell out of those primitive Asian people with real bombs, it is going to deluge them with tools and farm supplies, medicines, etc. and avenge the 'insult' and save our 'honor' that way).

The President is shown to be taking a terrible chance, receiving criticism for acting as he has, but what he has done is not revealed until the ominous bombing fleet unloads all the goodies.

That kind of plot rarely works.

I'm surprised John wrote this story... because it fails for such obvious reasons.

I'm hostile to 'relevant', 'with it' science fiction. It dies on the vine very quickly—as fast as the latest orchestrated do-good fad or cause. We are overkilled so much by the papers and TV and magazines ...why do we need to be hit over the head and told our liberal duty in science fiction as well?

"Who Steals My Purse" is rational, idealistic, unbelievable. But it makes most readers feel good, I suppose, as the wish substitutes for the deed and covers over the real horror of our Vietnam bombing with a whitewash of fictional American generosity.

+++

I made a few notes on THE HORROR AT 37,000 FEET, a made-for-TV movie on CBS a couple months ago on a Tuesday night. The blurb in the TV GUIDE said: "...an unseen force in a 747's cargo hold that is emitting strange voices, freezing cold—and an unearthly headwind holding the plane motionless in the sky."

Some fine performances (they played it dead serious) by William Shatner, Roy Thinnes, Chuck Connors, Buddy Ebsen, Tammy Grimes, Will Hutchins.

They portrayed stereotypes cut from the finest cardboard and by skill and personality made the premise and story come alive.

The plot: A rich young man (Thinnes) is hauling in a chartered 747 an old English chapel (every stone) to the States to grace his estate.

Passengers-of-opportunity are a rich, selfish older man (Ebsen), a witch of sorts (Tammy Grimes), an alcoholic ex-priest of too little faith until the end (Shatner), a tough pilot (Connors), a spoiled pop singer (Hutchins).

The chapel includes what used to be a pre-historic Druid altar, and the Old Ones don't want it to leave England.

THEY—on this night which is coincidentally the Summer Solstice—cause tremendous headwinds (any direction the plane turns!), rip open the altar container in the belly of the jet, unleash sub-zero cold, kill a pet dog, a co-pilot, nearly claim a stewardess....

Some of the passengers panic, take a cue from the witch, demand a human sacrifice to appease the Old Ones....

The story worked its way to a hoary formula ending, yes, but it was directed and acted so tautly, with such fine tension, pace and suspense—all the age-old sure-fire story elements used with such skill—that the movie was actually fine entertainment and had a few pertinent (if clichéd) things to say about human nature, religion, honor.

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TWO FINE SERIALS IN A ROW. GALAXY is coming on. Just completed Frank Herbert's PROJECT 40, and now Ejler Jacobsson is feeding us THE DOOMSDAY GENE by John Boyd...a Boyd sf written "straight" in his best style.

How would you feel if you'd been created by a top-secret government genetic project—and had been cobbled together from the genes of two or more people now dead and that your development was programmed to bring you to a very valuable scientific achievement and then to suicide?

+++

AND in the April FANTASTIC is the first installment of THE SON OF BLACK MORCA by Alexei & Cory Panshin.

This is (so-far) a traditionally structured sword and sorcery novel—but done so well! It's as if the Panshins, disgusted with the S&S they saw, decided to show everyone how it should be done.

So far, too, the time-place of this novel is in a limbo, unrelated to Earth here-and-now. I do admire the Panshin's blending of their created world's terminology with the "medieval" terminology used in depicting primitive life.

MORCA will probably be a Nebula and Hugo contender along with PROJECT 40, DOOMS-DAY GENE, the Silverberg released in 1973, and others. This year is starting out as a rich year for sf and fantasy novels.

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS—The Continuing Review

Dean R. Koontz is getting better and better; the more he writes, the more he matures and deepens his skills. I like that. Too many writers reach a certain proficiency and stop there, frozen with their skills, talent—and faults locked into cement. They write their way through life at that level.

(Of course that individual level may be the optimum and no further improvement may be possible. We all got different potentials.)

"A Mouse in the Walls of the Global Village" is about a man (one of a tiny minority) whose brain couldn't use the Empathy circuits implanted to make him telepathic.

The world had been revolutionized by the circuits—peace at last, a time of utopia!—except for those Stunted unfortunates who have to talk. They're not really human anymore, are they?

So they're shunted away to live lives of quiet desperation and madness.

And this story is what happened one night when it snowed and the fan-shuttle

bus stopped in the street outside for the last time...and the last hope died...and the screaming had to continue.

It's a memorable story. A downer. Maybe a bit overdone.

+++

James Blish's "Getting Along" is a delicious stylistic tour de force; nine letters (each letter in a different style, patterned after a well-known writer) by a sweet young thing describing her adventures with strange relatives...patterned loosely from FANNY HILL.

I didn't/couldn't identify the A. Merritt and Victor Appleton way-of-writing. I "suspected" correctly H.G. Wells. It's impossible to miss the H.P. Lovecraft.

"Getting Along" is pure fun. Even educational, behind your back.

+++

A. Parra does a job on the readers they'll promptly forget, since most people banish unpleasant experiences...which is a defeat for Parra's purposes.

He did it deliberately, with malice aforethought, to make the reader "feel the frustration first hand, to feel screwed, exploited, manipulated, and to feel helpless to do anything about it, just as powerless, say, as a prisoner."

(Except a reader can stop reading. A prisoner cannot stop being a prisoner.)

Parra tempts the reader with promised porno and sado-maso violence...and then hands him an empty promise.

Isk. I've got news for A. Parra: his dangled bait wasn't all that tempting.

Somebody should write an article someday for THE ALIEN CRITIC on the theme of "The Writer as Sadist—the Reader as Masochist."

Personally, as a reader, I don't much like being obviously experimented upon. Nor do I like the inherently patronizing attitude of the writer who is intent on teaching me lessons.

+++

Thomas M. Disch explores the psyches/culture of a group of newly-made immortals in a newly launched explorer starship, the Extravert.

The immortals are all outstanding in their fields, all intelligent, sensitive. One of their customs is to wear elaborate, hand-made masks in "public", to reserve the bare face for private, intimate moments.

The masks have uses even in private, however.

The story is told in journal format by ...by... I can't remember. At the moment I'm too lazy to hunt through the pages looking for his name. I suspect it isn't important, and that a journal written by any of the crew would be as interesting and revealing. Because what can an immortal do on a starship on a long trip except indulge in not-too-serious amours and play games with your subconscious?

There is a lot more to this story than meets my eye, I suppose. I'll even so stipulate. Disch writes deep, subtle. Ok.

The thing is, immortals don't get worked^{up} very often. Their emotional life flattens out (part of Disch's comment/observation, I suppose) and the appeal of the story is more to the intellect than to the gut. There is no plot structure.

Disch, in his Afterword, eschews writing the 'standard' sf story types (which he lists, keenly, satirically) because he writes slowly and can't make enough money in the field, and because he has no desire to write the 'standard' sf story.

+++

"With the Bentfin Boomer Boys on Little Old New Alabama" is one hell of a writing performance.

And the awful thing of it is that Richard A. Lupoff, very talented and skilled (to the extent of making many other writers green with envy) isn't superhuman or a genius, and it would take an artist on that order (if it could be done at all) to make

the savage caricature of most of this novella mix with the excellent straight sf of the other parts.

New Alabama is mocked with a satirical scalpel so effectively as to leave it a dismembered societal corpse.

The narrative style is so overwhelming that it simply cannot meld with the normal, straight sf narrative of the New Haitian viewpoint sections and the sheer brilliance of description of the alien life and civilization of the water world, N'Yu-Atlanchi.

The sum of this novella is less than its parts. But, wow, what parts!

The basic storyline is simple: New Alabama and New Haiti are planets stupidly at war; their huge spacefleets battle it out and bleed their planets dry in the process; the New Haitians discover the intelligent amoebic life in the shallow, warm seas of N'Yu-Atlanchi which can be implanted in dead soldiers and made to fight and die yet again—as zombies; with the zombies the New Haitians win the war and occupy New Alabama; the conquerors act as conquerors always have, as do the conquered; the N'Yu-Atlanchians die as their zombie bodies (often sewn together from salvaged parts) eventually reject the alien life...and disintegrate.

It is New Alabama (the quintessence of the southern red-neck culture) which dominates the novella and it is through Freddie, a space marine, that most of the story is told—his graduation from boot camp, his entre to an after-hours night club where all the core sores of New Alabama character are exposed and observed, his first space battle (incredible, by the way: hand-to-hand combat in space suit with battle-axe), the defeat of New Alabama, the anarchy, the occupation, and the humiliating accommodation, the final surfacing of his culturally implanted homosexuality and sado-maso character.

Here's a sample of the New Alabama style:

'So who ever said commencement was supposed to be fun anyhow tradition

is what it is. & N'Alabama is strong for tradition good surn tradition all the way from O'Earthtime days before the furgem Jewrabs conquered the world when O'Alabama was an independent damn O'Earth nation bajeez with independent damn allies: O'Miss O'Ja-ja O'Boerrepublic the nigra knew his place then you bet basaintgeorge.

'Well he stood there attention he was a good gyrene raring to get into space into war and fight the good fight for god and planet and little baby heads of shiny golden curls (that would grow up to be a piece you follow? a piece) who ever said he needed—who ever said anybody needed—a commencement speech to tell him to blast the damned uppities out of black space to their stinking N'Haiti till the papadocs learned their place again...'

"With the Bentfin Boomer Boys..." fails, too, because New Alabama is too warped to exist as a functioning civilization; it is a vehicle for Lupoff's anger at what he has seen and knows of the ugly side of American (not just red-neck) culture and society.

By themselves, the New Alabama sections are awe-inspiring. Combined with the other sections they become an oil that cannot mix with water.

I note that the Hugo nominations are out—and "Bentfin Boomer Boys..." isn't going to be on the final ballot for Best Novella. Harlan thought it would. By themselves, I think the New Alabama sections would have made the Best Novelet list of five.

.....

LETTER FROM JOHN BOARDMAN

"Asimov's THE GODS THEMSELVES is physically plausible, given as a 'willing suspension of disbelief' a universe with a different coupling constant for the nuclear force. The notion that the alleged 'universal constants' may be slowly varying functions of time has obtained a good deal of interest among theoretical physicists, but no real experimental proof.

"But if the strength of the gravitational field was markedly different in the distant past (measured in billions of years) geological evidence should exist, and is being sought now.

"I am personally curious about another aspect of it. Any popular book on biology will say that the condor is the largest bird capable of flying. The remains of condors are, as one would expect of a carrion-eater, plentiful in the La Brea Tar Pits, dating back a few tens of thousands of years. But along with them are the bones of an even larger relative, the teratornis.

"It is difficult to believe that in so short a time either the Earth's gravitational field or the mean density of air could have changed significantly, but the bones of a flying bird larger than the condor are unarguably there. The situation calls for some interdisciplinary brainbusting among a general relativist, a gas dynamicist, and a paleoornithologist.

Ike's extraterrestrials are better than anything he has tried in that line – but aren't the 'parentals' rather close to the stereotypical 'Jewish Mother'? (Not to get ethnic, since to be a 'Jewish Mother' one doesn't have to be either Jewish or a mother, or for that matter female.) There is in general a wide difference between the 'book Asimov' and the 'convention Asimov', but this discovery is scarcely new.

"He has frequently been criticized for being unable to handle sex, or emotional relationships generally, but 'consider the alternative'. As Sprague de Camp mentioned once in AMRA, referring to the marketing of THE RETURN OF CONAN:

"Neither Björn Nyberg nor I belong to the school that holds that one cannot sell a story unless that story, at least once, describes the act of mammalian fertilization in fine detail, from first stroke to final gasp.' (Vol. II, #15, p. 3)

"This was anent the difficulties he had encountered in getting the hard-cover edi-

tion to press with several of Conan's lectual exploits described. Martin Greenberg, then running Gnome Press, was able to exercise Conan's exploits with the Queen of Vendhya and with a Khitan peasant girl. When the book was paperbacked years later as CONAN THE AVENGER, Conan's sex life was restored.

"So an author is hung up on a dilemma. If he treats a character's sex life as realistically as he treats, say, his table manners, the censors come out. (Remember when Dean Koontz wrote about the boob that objected to THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER?) If he does as Asimov does, he gets sniped at as a prude. Personally, I can't think of an Asimov book where the addition of sexual scenes would help the plot any."

"The dynamics of enjoyment are as important as the dynamics of creation, and no less obscure.

"The differences between people who remain on a plateau either as creators or as audience, content only with minor variations, and those others who have always to press on to something beyond is crucial and puzzling. Henry James conveys it, with the muted irony that allowed him to be almost honest and yet keep his friends, when he replied to a letter in which W. D. Howells had reported on his own prolific productivity:

"I have fortunately broken ground on an American novel, but when you draw my ear to the liquid current of your own promiscuous abundance and facility—a flood of many affluents—I seem to myself to wander by contrast in desert sands. And I find our art, all the while, more difficult of practice, and want, with that, to do it in a more and more difficult way; it being really, at bottom, only difficulty that interests me. Which is a most accursed way to be constituted. (31 December 1903)"

—D.W. Harding, from his review

of THE DYNAMICS OF CREATION by Anthony Storr (NEW YORK REVIEW of Books, 12-14-72)

AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS, The Final Sprint of Reviewing.

Sired by Keats out of Beckett and Dali. "Lamia Mutable" by M. John Harrison is a trip to read but not to understand, since it is '...an allegorical illustration of a philosophy...' '...as a piece of grotesque comedy relevant to certain 20th Century obsessions...'

I enjoyed it for the strange, grotesque images—the skinless woman who fatally danced her hallucinations...the man with a window in his stomach...the ash-flats of Wisdom....

+++

Well— I usually like a story by Robin Scott Wilson. But what he did in "Last Train to Kankakee" was put a small-time con man in suspended animation, wake him far into the next century, bore him to suicide in a society he couldn't rip-off, deny him final rest because he had actually died once before in 1970, and spread his molecules and atoms to the four corners of the universe... which, once accomplished, signified that the essence remaining had to take the place of God, who was very glad to get rid of the job.

Count the sf cliches. Observe the switch in and out of fantasy (pure and metaphysical). Note the "artistic" authorial Greek chorus, such as:

'...0 Great Chained Being...0 fresh pollutant in the stream of time...0 infinite distribution and recession...0 pantheism and eternal pantheism...and the Gold Watch of Time is furnished as a retirement gift for the Old Chairman of the Board...'

This is purely a disappointing hash. Shame, Robin Scott Wilson, shame.

+++

I pick up a tag. It says "Surrealism."

I pin it on the story. The psychotic author, in an iron mask, rises up. The sun goes nova. The fire spells out "Empire of the Sun" by Andrew Weiner.

You have to read the Afterword to know what this story "means". Weiner explains it as best he can, but he's obviously reaching. That's what happens when you let the subconscious write a story.

He says it's a 'tribute to the comic books, the literary level below science fiction.'

+++

Terry Carr writes infrequently, but well. "Ozymandias" is a story of treasure hunters dancing their way superstitiously through mine fields decayed by time, praying to be saved from automatic defenses that after thousands of years are erratic, mostly dead...and looting "forbidden" chambers of food, tools, machines stored for the awakening of still hidden humans in suspended animation who are, perhaps, fleeing an atomic war, a Time of Troubles....

But the rest of humanity has reverted to savagery and ignorance, and to them the once-rich vaults are places of diminishing danger and increasingly hard to find treasures.

"Ozymandias" is also the story of a non-conformist, a tribal rebel, who dimly understands the function of the vaults and with great courage and intelligence activates the automatic machinery of Awakening in one of the vaults.

A giant from the past is revealed and brought imperfectly to life—a feeble, helpless naked creature—and the savage genius bashes in its brains...to get at the newly exposed valuable metal and wires.

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings. Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair."

Sure, Ozy. Mind if I melt down your nice, bronze coffin? It'll make me rich and famous.

+++

The last story in this unending volume (You can't fool me, Harlan. There are fifty-six stories hidden in microdots on page 830, aren't there?) is "The Milk of Paradise" by James Tiptree, Jr.

It is about the imperfect reconditioning of a young man's mind, to make him human again after he had been raised by aliens. He remembers them as utterly beautiful, perfect, godlike, and their planet as a heaven.

He cannot be content with mere humans. He wishes to return. But the memories are part of the reconditioning...and the reality of the aliens and the planet where he survived as a child after a spaceship crash is shockingly opposite.

Yet...

Beauty is only skin (and mud) deep. And you can go home again, sometimes.

Harlan thought this story one of the best in the book. Not I. Good, yes. But not prime Tiptree as demonstrated since this one was written.

+++

Harlan finished AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS with a tribute to Ed Emshwiller, who illustrated each and every story excellently (some magnificently).

I've always admired and appreciated Emsh's work. His efforts in A, DV add a vital dimension to the book.

+++

NOW for the final comment, the overview.

I'm awed. What a package! What a hell of a lot of work this is/was. What a smorgasbord of speculative fiction; a rich variety of good, bad, wonderful, lousy.

A wonderland. Many hip, relevant, right-thinking visions/dreams, but all interesting in one way or another, and a few stunningly different, some provocative.

Not a dull story (well, maybe one or two) and much to argue with. This book prods and pulls, makes you react, judge,

decide, think.

I do believe the majority's concern with current social...my god, why am I writing in stuffed shirt? Too many of the writers got the galloping Deep Thoughts and a common young writer's disease called Aggravated Littrachoor. But, again, Harlan knows his onions and got the cream of the crop.

Anyway, AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS is a monument to Harlan's guts, vision and professionalism..and it's biodegradable.

I await FINAL DANGEROUS VISIONS with a good deal of eagerness and anticipation.

I think every sf aficionado should have these volumes.

I think I'll go lie down.

OUR SECRET MOTTO:

"Do not adjust your mind.

The fault is in reality."

—Bill Wright

LETTER FROM PAUL WALKER

"My novel is off to my agent. finished in one month. An ordeal for me. I kept true to my outline almost to the end, then about pg. 170, I realized I was running out of plot. for three days, I tinkered and schemed and prayed, and on the fourth day wrote twenty pages, then finished it the next day. I did some revision, rewriting, etc.,but I've come to believe (and may soon be proved wrong) that unless you've got something solid in that first draft, all the fussing in the world won't save it. But if you have got something solid, then all the sloppiness and crude spots and unpolished prose won't kill it.

"Well, that's exaggerating a bit, but not much. Readers are instinctive editors; they edit you as they read, praising you for the good, forgiving you for the bad, as long as you make the trip worth their while. It's amazing what they'll put up with.

"See you laced into Malzberg for BEYOND APOLLO. I haven't read it, but you're real-

ly sticking your neck out when you guess at a writer's motivation. I've been told by a few that I am 'very perceptive' but I have never yet been told I had guessed right about a writer's motives for doing this or that, and nine times out of ten I've been cussed for it.

"I would advise against such speculation unless you know the writer, and have tested your opinion in conversations with him. I suspect that a majority of writers have no idea why, or how, they do what they do; or if they possess such knowledge, it comes to them afterwards: 'By God, that's why I did that!'

"I suspect this is so because regardless what you intend to do when you begin, you end up doing it differently; sometimes radically so.

"Of the writers I know who work from outlines, only one outlines meticulously and he admits that he always makes a false start, and sometimes two or three. His most successful novel, which he worked out for three months and wrote in only three weeks, was to be a serious one, and when he had the first few chapters, he realized he was writing a comedy, and went back and changed everything.

"I don't think writers always know what their own books are about. That is, they know what they think the book is about—what they want the book to be about—but the fact is that the book has a life of its own, and it is always about what the reader thinks and feels it is about.

"That's something some writers don't appreciate. Writing the book may be creative, but reading it is re-creative.

"The writer who 'writes for himself' is misunderstanding the whole point. Writing, at the practical level, is magic. It is creating the illusion of reality; illusory thoughts and feelings expressed by illusory characters. And, of course, the writer is the magician. The writing is the set-up. Words, phrases, scenes, etc., are arranged to create effects, to produce thoughts and

feelings.

"Regardless of how quickly, how spontaneously the writer creates he must be aware of what he's doing; he cannot be totally deceived by his own artifice—that's the novice's hangup.

"So the writer cannot experience his own illusions. At best, he can only try to step back and imagine himself in the reader's place, imagine how the reader is feeling now.

"And the whole idea is that you begin with a thought and translate it into feeling. The intellectual, thematic structure of the book must have its emotional, sympathetic parallel—so when you finish, you think the author is right because you feel he is right. At least, theoretically.

"Most s-f is built the other way round: feelings first; thoughts second. In other words, excitement first, the theme being implicit, and usually simple. Except in some ANALOG cases, where the theme is nothing more than a speculation stated in blunt terms without any real emotional appeal. On a higher level, the emotional appeal of bluntly stated speculative ideas may be the sense of wonder—consider this notion...or 'what if?'

"The writer who 'writes for himself', and all novices do, cannot visualize the reader beyond the page. Technically, he is not creating at all, for creating is 'making', and the creative work is one which is perpetually re-made, or re-created, for every reader who reads it.

"The self-indulgent writer is really intent on duplicating the appearance of what he conceives of as Literature. He has read the Great Books (probably few of them, but he's had courses and knows the words) and he is sure he knows what Literature looks and sounds like and what it ought to do. First, and foremost, he wants to be a Creative Writer and he has learned from English-101 what a Creative Writer is supposed to behave like, how he is supposed to write, etc. It is most important to the budding Creative Writer that he emulate the image

of the literary lions; it doesn't matter what kind of story he likes, or is capable of doing. He knows his audience, and it is himself multiplied by a dozen or so who will appreciate him for the realism of his posturing. He knows that his audience is less concerned with the story in itself than for the attitude of the writer. The story must in some way flatter them, by allusions, or by some semblance of subtlety, or simply by its studied prose style. It is not important to them to 'like' or 'dislike' the story in itself; you see it is a test for them. They have been taught to recognize the cues of Hemingway, Updike, etc. They know when they are supposed to feel one way or another; when they are supposed to think, and precisely what they are supposed to think, and it is unnecessary for them to do either. As long as they know the cues they are automatically sensitive and perceptive.

"But this is a young writer's game, and I suspect it is rare in s-f. [Editors have the same problems as writers: they have to imagine what the reader will think and feel—or 'what they want.' Probably the best editors are guiced mostly by their own judgement, but I doubt the best are blind to the readers.

"I'm not sure that this applies to Malzberg. I didn't mean it as an attack on him."

SF NOTES

I happened to be in a drug store down at 30th and Ainsworth the other day, paying the phone bill, when my eyes were trapped by a time-machined magazine on the nearby racks.

WEIRD TALES! Summer 1973. A cover by Virgil Finlay, stories (reprints all) by Bradbury, Howard, Chambers, Wm. Hope Hodgson, A. Merritt, H.P. Lovecraft, and others.

Sam Moskowitz is editor of this revived old pulp (and it is in the old pulp format, too, with trimmed edges) and the publisher is Leo Margulies.

It is quarterly, from 8230 Beverly Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90048. 75¢.

The old numbering is continued. This is the Volume 47, Number 1 issue.

Future issues will have original stories.

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People keep remarking upon this typewriter. It's an Olympia standard, with a 17 characters per inch tall micro-elite type-style. I think it's exclusive with Olympia.

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ARCHIVES
OVERSIGHT DEPT: I didn't list CAPTIVE OF GOR by John Norman. I read a few pages of it, saw it was a woman-in-chains soap-opera type story ("Oh, the humiliation!") and put it aside. When a fan expressed interest, having been unable to find a copy in the area, I lent it. The resulting comment: "You're right, it's not too good, but exactly the sort of Mindless Reading I need sometimes after 'heavy' reading and studying."

Sorry about that, Betty.

+++

I see by LOCUS #139 that the John W. Campbell Memorial Award begun by the Illinois Institute of Technology for the Best SF Novel of 1972 went to:

BEYOND APOLLO by Barry Malzberg.

That's funny! Not because I disagree, but because Campbell must be churning the worms in his grave as he rotates. Choosing an anti-science, anti-space exploration, New-Wavish novel in his name is incredible.

But observe the judges: Leon Stover, Thomas D. Clareson, Harry Harrison, Brian Aldiss, and Willis McNelly; three college academicians and two writers known to favor avant-garde sf as editors.

First prize was \$600.

Second place went to THE LISTENERS by James Gunn. Third place to FUGUE FOR A DARKENING PLAIN by Christopher Priest, which was judged best British SF Novel of 1972.

A special trophy for excellence of writing was given Robert Silverberg for DYING INSIDE, for 'its symbolism of the present change in Western mentality.'

IRVIN BINKIN MEETS H. P. LOVECRAFT
By Jack Chalker

It was a day like all days, filled with events that didn't add ~~anything~~ but ~~nothing~~, and I was relaxing with an afternoon cup of coffee, when the phone rang.

The guy on the other end of the phone sounded like a stereotyped Jewish clothes merchant from Brooklyn who was partly deaf.

"Jack Chalker?" he shouted, pronouncing it "Chaukan".

I admitted that I was.

"You write that bibliography of H.P. Lovecraft?"

I admitted that I had indeed done so.

"Well, I got everything in it plus 50%."

At that point I spilled the coffee.

The man on the phone was Irvin Binkin, a legend in his own time, who was not quite a stereotyped Jewish clothes merchant from Brooklyn who was partly deaf.

Quickly I followed up the rather astounding statement he'd just made, and discovered that it was true. This fellow had the largest collection of H.P. Lovecraft and Lovecraftiana in the entire world.

Irvin Binkin is a legend in his own time. For over 40 years he's run Irvin Binkin Books just off Red Hook in Brooklyn, always over the counter, never by mail. But if there were a Gutenberg Bible around in somebody's trash dump, Binkin would be carting his own trash down to the dump that day and spot it. He has the incredible knack to always be where the fabulous buys are—and his off-the-street clientele for a dingy little bookstore in a rotten ghetto neighborhood is composed not only of the usual drifters but some of the most astute book collectors scholars and social types in New York and vicinity.

He is known to the book buyer for Parke-Bernet/Southby's, and many others—indeed, he has dinner with them in a little Arabian restaurant every Friday.

He is, I would judge, in his mid-70s, divorced, living with an astounding collection of stray cats and dogs both at home and in his store.

One day he happened to note an auction sale of miscellaneous stuff, including books, and so he wandered down. There, sitting in this old Brooklyn house, were hundreds of cartons of No-Cal soft drink—although the cans had been replaced with books and papers. He bid \$269.00 for the lot after glancing through it.

The lawyer handling the auction for the estate had listed the bulk of the collection as being on "Love and Lovecraft", not exactly in Binkin's line, but after a few minutes of looking through the stuff Binkin discovered that it wasn't sex stuff but a collection based on somebody named Lovecraft—and he knew that anyone worth collecting this much stuff about must be somebody important, even if he hadn't personally heard of him.

The lawyer wasn't anxious to sell after seeing such an eager client, but he sold most of the collection.

There were a few boxes of photos and letters which the lawyer wouldn't release, however, figuring that they were personal effects of the deceased and should be held, at least until an heir could be located.

The fellow who'd died was like the old fabled hermits you hear about—living in squalor under tons of rotting newspaper, only to find thousand dollar bills between each sheet after he died.

Only this fellow had stacks of No-Cal boxes, and it wasn't money, but Lovecraftiana. I have seen this enormous set of boxes and can only conclude that, if the boxes were full when he started, he must have died of malnutrition.

The man's name was Philip Grill, known to fandom as Jack Grill, and he was by far the world's greatest collector of H. P. Lovecraft. His collection is far larger than Derleth's, and, indeed, is larger than Derleth's and Brown University's put together.

It was to Grill that Derleth came for letters, for the old glassine photographs and negatives of the baby HPL for MARGINALIA and the like.

If my bibliography listed three copies of a book handbound in sharkskin by R.H. Barlow, two out of the three were there. There were four copies of THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS, three of them in excellent shape with jackets, the other near-mint but without.

As Binkin poured over the contents of each box, he suddenly came across a photo of Lovecraft—and recognized him! When living in Brooklyn during his marriage, Lovecraft had often dropped by Binkin's shop. Binkin remembered him clearly—even what he bought, although Binkin keeps no real records and the visits were 40 years gone—"because of the odd name," he says, "and that jaw—longest jaw I ever saw, Chalker, honest to God."

As Binkin unloaded, he started to read some of the things in the collection—including Grill's own correspondence with other Lovecraftians. He was astounded. He knew he had an incredibly important collection. He went back to the lawyer, and, after upping the price a bit, got the other photos and the letters the lawyer had filed—they weren't Grill's, they were Lovecraft's!

Soon Binkin was reading the whole collection, calling up and trying to reach Lovecraft fans as he came across their names or publications, which is how he reached me. Also, Binkin became fascinated with Lovecraft. He didn't care for the stories all that much, but, as Derleth found to his profit, Lovecraft was a tremendously fascinating man in and of himself.

Binkin became, in one reading, one of the world's greatest authorities on H. P. Lovecraft.

Binkin offered me the job of cataloging the collection, something which geography and job prohibited, but I immediately thought of my old partner, Mark Owings, now

working in New York. The next weekend, Mark and I went up to Binkin's to see what the fabulous collection really looked like.

It was unbelievable.

First, Binkin's shop is in the middle of the dingiest, slummiest section of Brooklyn, on a tiny little side street which, by conspiracy or accident, you just can't get to—all the streets run the wrong way.

Once you thread the maze, you find yourself outside a four-story shop with huge iron grates on the outside, and, upon entering after telling Binkin who you are (he is perpetually closed, it seems, except to his friends—a minor mystery) he swings open the gate and four dogs start a racket.

Binkin picks up strays—he once was written up for having 44 of them at once—and those four are the ones he kept.

The building's other stories contain large amounts of old books, magazines and the like, in no order, rhyme or reason, as well as a separate batch of stray cats.

Walking back, we were introduced first to a huge quantity of Mo-Cal boxes containing the bulk of the collection, and, in a hidden dumbwaiter, a huge number of pages of Lovecraft's letters and some manuscripts—including the original handwritten manuscript for "The Cats of Ulthar"!

Reaching into the boxes was like going into a time machine—copies of HOME BREW, a 1918-1919 pulp, so crisp and new—and white—they looked as if they'd just been picked off the newsstand. It is doubtful whether more than six or seven HOME BREWS survive in any condition—here was the set, mint. Right at the beginning it revised a bibliography entry—"Herbert West—Reanimator" was not Lovecraft's title for the HOME BREW series, but ran as "Gruesome Stories I," "Gruesome Stories II," etc.

If my bibliography said that there were only two copies of something, at least one was in there. Fanzines—almost a complete file of Lovecraft's THE CONSERVATIVE, plus many other fabled fanzines of the teens and twenties. From 1912 was Lovecraft's earli-

est fanzine, THE RHODE ISLAND JOURNAL OF ASTRONOMY, a little hektographed quarter-sized zine which must, surely, be the only such left in the world.

All but one of the books were there, some in duplicate, triplicates, and even five OUTSIDERS. Only one book was curiously missing, something which I am certain is the fault of the lawyer not finding all the stuff rather than Grill not having it—the 1936 Visionary Press SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH wasn't there. Binkin will pay an enormous price if you have one to get rid of, by the way.

Binkin then took Mark and me out to dinner—"It's on H.P. Lovecraft," he said, and then we got to talking about cataloging and publication. A deal was struck in which Mark would catalog and I would publish the catalog under the Mirage Press imprint.

Over the months, and particularly through the summer and into the fall, Mark and Binkin cataloged the collection. During that time they also received a large number of visitors from colleges and universities, a lot of fans and dealers, and even L. Sprague deCamp, who wanted to go over the collection for the biography of HPL he's writing for Doubleday. Binkin gave him access—for a price. The catalog will have an introduction by L. Sprague deCamp.

Binkin has a great deal of admiration for Mark Owings, the only man he ever met who was more fanatical about books than he was. At one point he just about offered Mark a share in the business, but Mark turned it down.

On the other hand, Mark prowled through the store and through the collection. He's so single-minded on some things that Binkin still likes to relate the almost 100 degree day when Mark showed up for some cataloging and went down into the cellar, which must have been about 120 degrees and started working for hours. Mark also went with Binkin to meetings and dinners with NYC bookmen, and made a lot of acquaintances and contacts.

UNCLASSIFIED ADS

But there's so much fuss been made by so many people over the collection, and Binkin has achieved such overwhelming notoriety that, in the past year, he has started adding to the collection himself and building it up. The result is that, at a dinner meeting with me a few weeks ago, he told me that the catalog will be just a catalog of the world's largest collection of Lovecraft—he's decided that owning the world's largest collection of Lovecraft is better than collecting the huge sums he could sell it for (he's already turned down \$30,000).

So I have seen and Mark has cataloged the largest collection of Lovecraftiana ever. It is still there and intact, and it might not be sold until Binkin himself is dead.

One wonders what provisions are there if he did die—his ambition is to eventually see it intact in some university library under the combined Grill and Binkin names.

The catalog will be out in a few months and it will contain a lot of material—RHODE ISLAND JOURNAL OF ASTRONOMY, possibly a previously unknown Lovecraft article, photos of HOME BREWS and the like. But the Irvin Binkin collection is still where it was, and is not for sale.

But Binkin now basks in the notoriety he's never before had, and will have the only thing he's wanted to have—a certain amount of immortality in the catalog. Now he'll have something to show the Parke-Bernet man when they go to dinner....

—Reprinted from VIEWPOINT #1 (Feb. 1973), written and published by Jack Chalker, 5111 Liberty Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD 21207.

SCHEDULED FOR NEXT ISSUE: HARLAN ELLISON'S UP-DATED, REWRITTEN WESTERCON SPEECH OF A FEW YEARS AGO:

COP-OUT, SELL-OUT AND SELF-RAPE—THE EXPLOITATION OF SPECULATIVE FICTION BY ITS WRITERS, ITS FANS AND ITS APOLOGISTS

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WANTED: Issues of Fate Magazine for 1948-1958, also Sir Mgz 1939-1945, Doubt and True Mystic Science, any issues. METEOR RESEARCH SOCIETY, BOX 24, RYDER STATION, BROOKLYN, NY 11234.

NEW LIBERTARIAN NOTES—monthly anti-statist magazine. 45¢; \$5./12 issues, #21 features Murray N. Rothbard, an interview with John J. Pierce. All moneys, cheques to Samuel Edward Konkin III, 635 E. 11th St. Apt. 24, New York, NY 10009.

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SPECULATION #32 features Larry Niven's Eastercon speech, excellent reviews, a fascinating letter column and a postscript to Stapleford's critical article on Robert Silverberg. 50¢, 4 for \$2. Peter Weston, 31 Pinewall Av., Kings Norton, Birmingham 30, UNITED KINGDOM. U.S. Agents: Charlie and Dena Brown, 3400 Ulloa St., San Francisco, CA 94116.

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The Archives

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Aiken, John. *WORLD WELL LOST.* Novel. 1971. Doubleday. \$4.95.
- Alderman, Clifford Lindsay. *A CAULDRON OF WITCHES.* Non-fiction. 1971. Archway (Pocket Books) 29558. 75¢.
- Aldiss, Brian W. *BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD.* Novel. 1969. Ace 04758. 95¢.
- Anderson, Poul. *ENSIGN FLANDRY.* Novel. 1966. Lancer 75374. 95¢.
- THERE WILL BE TIME.* Novel. 1972. Doubleday. SF Book Club. Signet 451-05401. 95¢.
- Akers, Alan Burt. *TRANSIT TO SCORPIO.* Novel. 1972. DAW UQ1033. 95¢.
- Arbib, Michael A. *THE METAPHORICAL BRAIN.* Non-fiction. 1972. John Wiley & Sons.
- Ariosto, Ludovico. *ORLANDO FURIOSO: The Ring of Angelica, Volume I.* Translated by Richard Hodgens. 1973. Ballantine 03057-5. \$1.25.
- Asimov, Isaac. *THE EARLY ASIMOV.* Short story collection. 1972. Doubleday. \$10.
- TODAY AND TOMORROW AND...* Thirty-two science essays. 1973. Doubleday. \$6.95.
- OF TIME AND SPACE AND OTHER THINGS.* Seventeen science essays. 1972. Lancer 33023. \$1.25.
- BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE UNIVERSE.* Twenty-three science essays. 1966. Lancer 33024. \$1.25.
- Bach, Marcus. *INSIDE VOODOO.* Non-fiction. 1952. Signet 05330. 95¢.
- Ball, Brian N. *THE REGIMENTS OF NIGHT.* Novel. 1972. DAW UQ1019. 95¢.
- PLANET PROBABILITY.* Novel. 1973. DAW UQ1040. 95¢.
- Barbet, Pierre. *BAPHOMET'S METEOR.* Novel. 1972. DAW UQ1035. 95¢.

- Bayley, Barrington J. COLLISION COURSE. Novel. 1973. DAW UQ1043. 95¢.
- Bova, Ben. (Editor.) THE SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME. Volume Two A. Eleven science fiction novellas chosen by S.F.W.A. Doubleday. 1973. \$9.95.
- HALL OF FAME. Volume Two B. Eleven science fiction novellas chosen by S.F.W.A. 1973. Doubleday. \$9.95.
- THE WEATHER MAKERS. Novel. 1966-67. Signet Q5329. 95¢.
- THE DUELING MACHINE. Novel. 1969. Signet Q5328. 95¢.
- Bradley, Marion Zimmer. FALCONS OF HARABED-LA. Novel. 1964. c/w THE DARK INTRUDER AND OTHER STORIES. Collection of seven stories. 1964. Ace 22576. 95¢.
- DARKOVER LANDFALL. Novel. 1972. DAW UQ1036. 95¢.
- Bryant, Edward. AMONG THE DEAD. Collection of seventeen stories. 1973. Macmillan. \$5.95.
- Budrys, Algis. THE FALLING TORCH. Novel. 1959. Pyramid M2776. 95¢.
- Burroughs, Edgar Rice. AT THE EARTH'S CORE. Novel. 1914. Ace Q3322. 75¢.
- Campbell, John W. ANTHOLOGY: THREE NOVELS. 1973. Doubleday. \$9.95.
- THE BEST OF JOHN W. CAMPBELL. Collection of five stories. 1973. Sidgwick & Jackson. (U.K.) 42.25.
- THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE. Novel. 1935. Ace 53151. 95¢.
- Carnell, John. NEW WRITINGS IN SF—9. Anthology of eight stories. 1972. Bantam S7245. 75¢.
- Carter, Lin. (Editor.) GREAT SHORT NOVELS OF ADULT FANTASY. Volume two. 1973. Ballantine Q3162-8. \$1.25.
- Chandler, A. Bertram. THE HARD WAY UP. Novel. 1972. c/w THE VEILED WORLD. Robert Lory. Novel. 1972. Ace 31755. 95¢.
- Clement, Hal. NEEDLE. Novel. 1949-50. Lancer 75385. 95¢.
- ICEWORLD. Novel. 1953. Lancer 75422. 95¢.
- Coney, Michael G. SYZYGY. Novel. 1973. Ballantine Q3056-7. \$1.25.
- MIRROR IMAGE. Novel. 1972. DAW UQ 1031. 95¢.
- Cook, Glen. THE HEIRS OF BABYLON. Novel. 1972. Signet Q5299. 95¢.
- Darlington, Clark. THE THRALL OF HYPNO. Perry Rhodan novel. 1972. Ace 6599. 75¢.
- de Camp, L. Sprague. THE FALLIBLE FIEND. Novel. 1973. Signet Q5370. 95¢.
- del Rey, Lester. GODS AND GOLEMS. Five short novels. 1973. Ballantine Q3087-7. \$1.25.
- Dick, Philip K. THE BOOK OF PHILIP K. DICK. Collection of eight stories. 1973. DAW UQ1044. 95¢.
- Dickson, Gordon R. THE STAR ROAD. Collection of nine stories. 1973. Doubleday. \$5.95.
- Disch, Thomas M. (Editor.) BAD MOON RISING. Original anthology of twenty-one stories and poems dealing with political science fiction. 1973. Harper & Row. \$6.95.
- Dunsany, Lord. THE CHARWOMAN'S SHADOW. Novel. 1926. Ballantine Q3085-0. \$1.25.
- Eklund, Gordon. BEYOND THE RESURRECTION. Novel. 1973. Doubleday. \$5.95.
- Ellison, Harlan. (Editor.) AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS. Forty-six original science fiction stories. 1972. Doubleday. SF Book Club.
- Farmer, Philip Jose. THE OTHER LOG OF PHILEAS FOGG. Novel. 1973. DAW UQ 1048. 95¢.
- Ferman, Edward L. (Editor.) THE BEST FROM FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION—19th Series. Fifteen stories. 1969-70-71. Ace Q5458. 95¢.
- Fort, Charles. THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED. Non-fiction. 1919. Ace Q7062. 75¢.
- Foster, Alan Dean. BLOODHYPE. Novel. 1973. Ballantine Q3163-6. \$1.25.
- Galouye, Daniel F. THE INFINITE MAN. Novel. 1973. Bantam N7130. 95¢.
- Gardner, Martin. SPACE PUZZLES: Curious Questions and Answers About the Solar System. Non-fiction. 1971-72. Archway (Pocket Books) 29549. 75¢.
- Gaskell, Jane. A SWEET SWEET SUMMER. Novel. 1973. St. Martin's Press. \$6.95.
- Gerrold, David. THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF. Novel. 1973. Random House. \$4.95.

- YESTERDAY'S CHILDREN. Novel. 1972.
Dell 9780. 95¢.
- GENERATION (Editor.) Twenty-four story
anthology of new writers of 'specu-
lative fiction'. Original. Dell
2833. 95¢.
- Gordon, Stuart. TIME STORY. Novel. 1971.
DAW UQ1047. 95¢.
- Goulart, Ron. A TALENT FOR THE INVISIBLE.
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- SHAGGY PLANET. Novel. 1973. Lancer
75420. 95¢.
- Gunn, James E. THE LISTENERS. Novel. 1972.
Scribner's. \$6.95.
- Gutteridge, Lindsay. COLD WAR IN A COUNTRY
GARDEN. Novel. 1971. Pocket
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- Haiblum, Isidore. THE RETURN. Novel. 1970.
Dell 7395. 95¢.
- Harrison, M. John. THE PASTEL CITY. Novel.
1972. Doubleday. \$4.95.
- Harrison, Harry. THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT
SAVES THE WORLD. Novel. 1972.
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- BEST SF: 1971. (Editor, with Brian W.
Aldiss.) Seventeen stories, poems.
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- THE ASTOUNDING-ANALOG READER. Volume
One. (Editor, with Brian W. Al-
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- Hartl, Harold W. THINGS...AND OTHER THINGS.
Collection of five stories of super-
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\$4.50.
- Herbert, Frank. THE GOD MAKERS. Novel.
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95¢.
- Hoch, Edward D. THE TRANSECTION MACHINE.
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- Hoskins, Robert. (Editor.) STRANGE TOMOR-
ROWS. Five short sf novels. An-
thology. 1972. Lancer 78713.
\$1.25.
- Hudgens, Betty Lenhardt. KURT VONNEGUT, JR.
:A CHECKLIST. Gale Research Co.
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- Jakes, John. MENTION MY NAME IN ATLANTIS.
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- Klein, Gerard. THE OVERLORDS OF WAR. Novel.
Translated by John Brunner. 1971.
Doubleday. \$5.95.
- Koontz, Dean R. A WEREWOLF AMONG US. Novel.
1973. Ballantine 03055-9. \$1.25.
- WARLOCK. Novel. 1972. Lancer 75386.
95¢.
- Lafferty, R.A. ARRIVE AT EASTERWINE. Novel.
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- Laumer, Keith. NIGHT OF DELUSIONS. Novel.
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- THE GLORY GAME. Novel. 1973. Double-
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MAN & ANIMAL PHYSIOLOGY. Non-fiction.
1970. Dover 0-486-22586-0. \$2.50.
- MacApp, C.C. BUMSIDER. Novel. 1972. Lanc-
er 75421. 95¢.
- MacDonald, George. EVENOR. Three fantasy
stories. 1972. Ballantine 02874-
0. \$1.25.
- Macklin, John. OTHER DIMENSIONS. Thirty-
three fact-stories of paranormal
phenomena. 1972. Ace 64255. 75¢.
- Mahr, Kurt. MENACE OF THE MUTANT MASTER.
A Perry Rhodan novel (#18). 1972.
Ace 65988. 75¢.
- Maine, Charles Eric. ALPH. Novel. 1972.
Ballantine 02904-6. \$1.25.
- Mason, David. THE SORCERER'S SKULL. Novel.
Fantasy. 1970. Lancer 74628. 75¢.
- Mason, Douglas R. THE PHAETON CONDITION.
Novel. 1973. Putnam. \$5.95.
- Meredith, Richard C. AT THE NARROW PASSAGE.
Novel. 1973. Putnam. \$5.95.
- Mervin, Jr., Sam. THE TIME SHIFTERS. Novel.
1971. Lancer 74776. 75¢.
- Moorcock, Michael. AN ALIEN HEAT. Novel,
Volume One of a Trilogy. 1972.
Harper & Row. \$4.95.
- THE LORD OF THE SPIDERS. Book Two of a

- Trilogy. 1965. Lancer 74736. 75¢.
- THE DREAMING CITY. Book One of a new Elric series. 1972. Lancer 75376. 95¢.
- THE SLEEPING SORCERESS. 1972. Book Two of the new Elric series. Lancer 75375. 95¢.
- Morgan, Dan and John Kippax. THE NEUTRAL STARS. Novel. Ballantine 03086-9. \$1.25.
- Moskowitz, Sam. (Editor.) WHEN WOMEN RULE. Anthology of nine stories. 1972. Walker. \$5.95.
- Necker, Claire. (Editor.) SUPERNATURAL CATS. Anthology of forty-five stories. 1972. Doubleday. \$6.95.
- Norton, Andre. ORDEAL IN OTHERWHERE. Novel. 1964. Ace 63822. 75¢.
- GARAN THE ETERNAL. Novel. 1972. DAW U01045. 95¢.
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YES, I MAKE MISTEAKS ALL THE TIME...

In THE ALIEN CRITIC #4 I called Roger
Zelazny to task for what I thought a boo-
boo in THE GUNS OF AVALON.

I complained he had used the word
'shoot' to a citizen of a 'shadow' world
where guns do not exist.

Gene Wolfe acidly pointed out that shoot
applies to bows, arbalests, etc., too.

Yes. I hang my head. Don't shoot, Rog-
er.

(I would have quoted Gene directly, but
I can't find his letter!)

He also said I am obtuse.

All uncredited writing in this issue is
mine, do you hear? Mine!

—Richard E. Geis

