

Simulacrum 1



simulacrum

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>THE DOWNFALL OF ANTI-MUSH WOMAN / EDITORIAL</i> Victoria Vayne	2
<i>I FEAR I HAVE NO TIME FOR LOVE WITH A STRANGER</i> Taral Wayne MacDonald	9
<i>MUSH, SMUSH!</i> Victoria Vayne	20
<i>STRANGE PLAYFELLOWS / MICROGENESIS</i> Taral Wayne MacDonald	27
<i>THE MARTIN INCIDENT</i> Jaye Stanley	29
<i>THE PARANOID'S PIT</i> Smythe	33
<i>BUT WHAT ABOUT PHOTOSYNTHESIS?</i> Janet Small	35
<i>HUMAN WRITES</i> Bob Wilson	36
<i>INDEX EXPURGATORIUS</i> Taral Wayne MacDonald	39
<i>FOUND IN PO BOX 156</i>	51

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the downfall
of anti-mush woman

The following is faan fiction...be warned!

Faster than the speed of a naughty thought! Stronger than a hundred primitive urges! Able to leap to outrageous conclusions at a single bound! Lurking wherever romance can be found...it's a cop...it's a voyeur...it's ANTI-MUSH WOMAN!!! Relentlessly, tirelessly, day and night, this woman of stone polices the city to root out occasions of mush, in parks, in bedrooms, in drive-ins, and STOP THEM COLD!!! Her vigilance never ceases. Remorselessly, in darkened living rooms, in parked cars, in movie theatres, she sneers and groans at torrid clinches. Deluges of anti-mush literature roll out of her typer and flood from her mimeo. Endlessly she carries on her mission against MUSH.

But in her day to day life, in the privacy of her apartment, Anti-Mush Woman becomes meek and mild and frustrated Victoria Vayne, nascent fan writer and editor. For most of the time she goes about in this secret identity, in order that she might catch couples in the act. Every day has its adventures; this is one of the strangest...

...the feeling that there was mush here came strongly from around the alley corner. Instantly Victoria Vayne went into action. Tucking her glasses securely into a pocket she rounded the corner and spotted the offenders to her stern law. They were sheltered by a stack of garbage cans that strangely enough reminded her of a disguised space ship. Quickly she peeled off her old Queen's University sweatshirt, unmindful of the wrong ideas this might be giving anybody who might be watching. Revealed underneath was another shirt, shining golden, inscribed with DOWN WITH MUSH, while down her back rippled the now free waves of a scarlet cape, emblazoned with the name of her secret identity...ANTI-MUSH WOMAN!

A single shove separated the two mushing parties, and Anti-Mush Woman transferred her attention to each one of them separately. The male she caught by the beard as he rebounded from the wall, and dispatched conveniently. The female eluded her first grasp with a suspiciously unhuman deft twist, but could not escape a second, more determined, grab. Anti-Mush Woman gripped her by a handful of twisted robe and lifted her off her sandalled feet, readying herself for a final blow.

"What the hell kind of get-up is this?" Anti-Mush Woman wondered to herself as she noticed for the first time the fact that both the man and the woman were clad in similar voluminous robes.

But the young man was now struggling to his feet, against all odds for a human. That distracted Anti-Mush Woman. "Who's this nut, Djaniferr?" he asked, "A friend of yours? With friends like that..."

"Damned if I know, Myarrwyn...who needs enemies? I think she's got super-human strength or someth..." Anti-Mush Woman's blow finally arrived.

If the smell of mush drew Anti-Mush Woman, radiating distress brought another participant to the episode. A somewhat (it *must* be admitted) pudgy young man carrying a briefcase in one hand had stopped at the corner. Senses probing the situation, he abandoned caution to the wind and gave the necessary mental command to the mechanism hidden under his skin. He dissolved into greenish fire and became a white-and-blue-furred alien humanoid. A tenth of a second later, Anti-Mush Woman was immobilized in the act of kicking a couple of stray mushing cats.

"What the hell?" she hissed, feeling powerful arms around her. This was perilously close to "mush" itself! "Let me go!" she snapped, struggling.

But the Chipmunk (for so he was) ignored that request and rendered his adversary instantly unconscious by a Kyoris nerve blockage.

To complete the set of outrageous coincidences for the day, at that moment the Bheer Fairy staggered into the alley with his nymph in tow. The fumes from his bheery breath snapped Anti-Mush Woman to, and precipitated an immediate attack. A surprise mental command by Anti-Mush Woman triggered the device under the Chipmunk's skin into transferring him back into his alter ego. For, as the Chipmunk, he was mildly radioactive, and while Anti-Mush Woman did not fear for her genes, she WAS worried about cancers. That menace averted, she noticed that the Bheer Fairy seemed to be holding his nymph much too close. The Bheer Fairy caught a good one in the solar plexus and exploded bheer from his mouth, covering the nymph from head to toe in sticky foam. The nymph, disgusted, belted the Bheer Fairy in the chops, and simultaneously the Chipmunk, human now, brought his briefcase down hard on Anti-Mush Woman's head.

In a daze, Anti-Mush Woman flickered through an assortment of secret identities; she became Victoria Vayne again, briefly she was Chocolate Lady, and some even more secret things, and finally she stabilized as..."Vyala Davis! Omigod, I'm Vyala Davis again! My cover's blown!"

Gone was the frizzie-haired, jeans-and-sweatshirt-clad, skinny and nonshapely, nearsighted weird Victoria Vayne; in her stead stood a strikingly beautiful girl with long dark hair, tall and slender but curved in the right places, dressed in white tunic and slacks.

"Who," the Chipmunk asked, "are YOU?" He decided to stall for time, finding events most confusing and realizing that his transmuting device was hopelessly jammed. The two original victims of Anti-Mush Woman had vanished, but two cat-people were hastily trying out garbage pails for their spaceship.

"I told you the place was insane," one of them muttered.

"If I can find my bloody sword I'll show them who's insane! I'll chop them into fish bait, I will. Myarrwyn, you're a coward!"

The lovely apparition who had been strange Victoria Vayne who had been the sinister Anti-Mush Woman ignored the cat people and spoke to the Chipmunk. "I am Vyala Davis, a biologically and genetically identical clone of a telepathic genius of the Antares Consortium, an organization in a different time continuum from yours. Space-time customs and immigration forbade me to show my real self but my telepathic powers allowed me to appear and operate in different identities such as Victoria Vayne, Anti-Mush Woman, or even that Chocolate joke you must have seen for a second. I've been sent by Antares back in time and across the timelines to this world and century to try to rid it of the scourges of overpopulation and pollution and mismanagement of resources. As Anti-Mush Woman my aim is population control...each of my identities serves as a cover for one or another of my operations. Except for that Chocolate business--I think somebody at home slipped that into my mathematical matrix to be funny. And my head hurts."

A pile of cans in the background crashed to the ground amidst the sounds of much cat spitting and swearing.

The Bheer Fairy snored peacefully flat on his back at the entrance to the lane. The nymph was nowhere to be seen.

"Remarkable," the Chipmunk said. "I had no idea interdimensional travel was a meaningful concept. Could we discuss this in greater depth?" But to himself, he thought, "I still can't transform out of this goddam miserable human form!"

Vyala, struck by an idea and a memory, suggested, "Say, can you try that again, that with your arms? I think I rather liked that. Just don't pinch my nerves again; just the arm part."

"It might be...interesting..." the Chipmunk reluctantly conceded, and complied with the request, also somewhat reluctantly. "How did I get into this?" he thought.

Vyala caught this thought telepathically as she snuggled against him, her arms twined around his neck. "Admit it, you enjoy this. I find that I enjoy it. I think we both discovered something."

"No comment."

Vyala, struck with a new idea, remarked, "Victoria Vayne's apartment that she uses as headquarters is only a short subway ride from here. We could go there."

The cat people had finally located their spaceship. Casting concerned glances at Vyala, they embraced passionately. But they needn't have worried--Vyala Davis was completely oblivious to them. Both cat people shot her a look when they deduced what she was up to.

"This is one weird planet," one of them said. "I'll be glad to get home."

"Yeah," said the other. "Anti-Mush Woman indeed. Hmph."

Vyala Davis and the Chipmunk headed off for the subway, arm in arm. "Antares will just have to send somebody else," Vyala was saying.

The spaceship blasted off, rattling the garbage cans around it. The Bheer Fairy stirred uneasily and bellowed for more bheer, but he was alone in the alley and nobody heard him.

And the two alley cats resumed mushing.

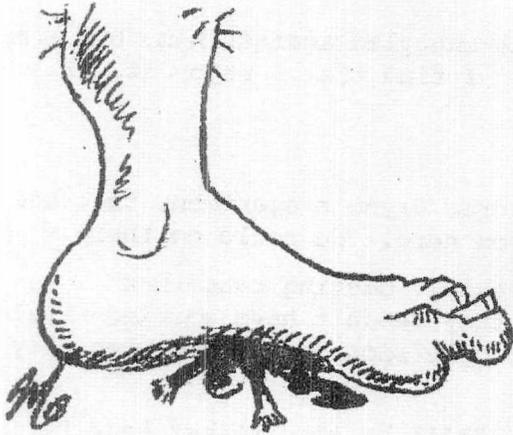
victoria vayne

editorial

...of course, that was not the way it happened at all. Anti-Mush Woman is still very much alive and kicking in Toronto. Still, in the face of ever-increasing difficulty (*the couples are getting downright BOLD around here*), she stalwartly points an accusing finger at sinning couples caught in the act. Anti-Mush Woman is not in the least bit down-fallen.

But admittedly a large part of my Anti-Mush Woman activity arises out of bitterness. I have positively abysmal luck with men. I simply do not appeal. As pointed out in the story, I'm tall and thin and unshapely, my hair is too curly, I wear thick glasses, and I never learned to dress well and now simply don't care. And it's been like this since high school.

I was in love once, at least I think I was. The object of my affections was a classmate, back five years ago when I was twenty and still in school. And this affair was not only unrequited, it was reflected back at me with active dislike.



Imagine waiting in a nearly empty classroom in the morning and HE enters, and you hope for--at the least--a good morning, but he ignores you completely. Imagine seeing a vacant seat next to him, and wishing you were brave enough to take it, but chickening out and seeing some other girl grab it instead. Or having a vacant seat next to yourself and hoping he'll take it, but he never does. Imagine asking for a ride home and having him vanish without telling you while you're waiting hopefully at the door. Imagine offering to take in his assignment to a class you know he'll be cutting and having him snarl at you for interrupting his conversation with another girl. Imagine inviting him over to your place for an evening of TV--which you know he enjoys--and having him announce without a trace of penance in front of your classmates that he "forgot".

What did I see in him? I honestly do not know. He paid just enough attention to me to ensure I remained interested in him, so that he could laugh at me. It ended at graduation. I had moved to Toronto then, he stayed behind, and on a visit to my old college town a month later I looked him up.

"What have you been doing?"

"Oh, I've been taking this girl out."

Followed by reports in letters from one of my girlfriends that those two were always seen together around the campus.

That happened in 1971. It took me three years to get over it.

I have not conceived any mad crushes since then. The closest I came recently was an Interest, of considerably lesser intensity. But also unreciprocated.

I realize, just from feeling one-sided attractions, that a two-way, mutual "being in love" must be a fabulous thing, but I'll never find that out for myself. And so, Anti-Mush Woman battles on...

Like I said, I have abysmal luck with men.

"The Downfall of Anti-Mush Woman" is a joint effort, and incorporates elements of the imaginary worlds created by all three of myself, Wayne MacDonald, and Janet Small, as well as some of our alter-egos. It seemed to me to be an appropriate way to introduce Anti-Mush Woman's Special Anti-Mush issue of SIMULACRUM.

The story actually had its genesis at the Steak 'n Burger Tavern at Sherway Gardens (a Toronto shopping mall) one Friday evening last November. Wayne and I felt that we deserved a steak dinner for a change, instead of fish 'n chips, our usual restaurant fare. And at the steak house, while waiting for our orders to be delivered, he did some sketching on the back of the paper placemat. The drawings consisted mostly of caricatures of Wayne's friends, but among them was the prototype

for the picture facing the story. We didn't finish our dinner till closing time--steaks are special for us, and are to be lingered over--and when the waitress turfed us out, the placemat was forgotten in the hurry. We remembered the drawings halfway back to my place--"Oh, shit," I recall saying--but Wayne recreated it soon afterwards, with considerably more care.

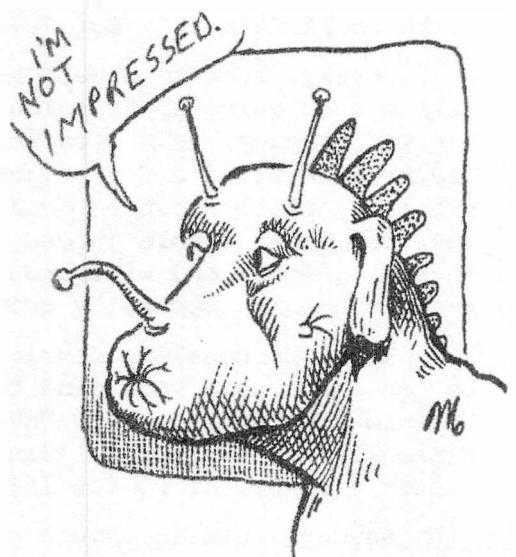
I wanted to use the drawing in my zine, so I set about figuring out an article to go with it. The basic plot came to me while in the process of waking up one Sunday morning, and I remember setting down the outline right away and phoning Janet to find out what she thought. The four of us--Wayne and myself and Janet and Bob Wilson--wrote four different versions from the same plot outline during one of our Weird Dinner Evenings, also back then in November. (A Weird Dinner Evening happens when one of us decides to cook something unusual for the others. We've had some strange things, like Chinese Enchilladas, in recent months.)

Anti-Mush Woman, last fall, was a bit of a joke I carried on during parties. Soon after Discon, Janet and Bob presented me with a yellow T-shirt that read "Down with Mush" which I wore publicly whenever I could. And THAT stemmed from a bet I made at Discon with Janet, that I would be good and refrain from indulging in any mush for a year. It seemed simple enough, although we have since called off the bet for complete lack of excitement and suspense. It seemed to me that taking thirty giant chocolate bars (the payoff) for no effort at all (opportunity for me being limited to say the least) was a bit dishonest.

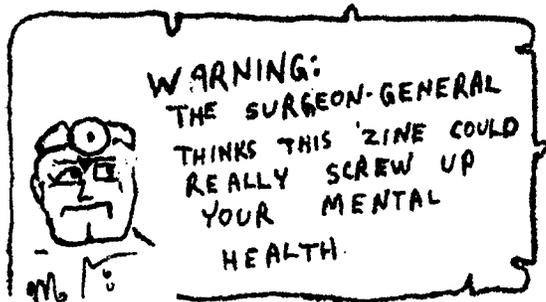
But it is half a year later and such frivolities are past. Anti-Mush Woman has now turned editor, and applied her philosophies to SIMULACRUM 1. A lot of the special features in this issue are in some way anti-mush, whether sarcastic or satirical or just plain unintentionally. I'll tell you what, readers, if ever things go my way and Anti-Mush Woman does get downfallen and changes her mind, I'll produce a pro-mush SIMULACRUM. But until then, this is the way it's gonna be.

A few words in general about SIMULACRUM...originally, back around the time of Discon, when I first got the idea to edit a genzine, it was to be called TESSERACT. But plans that far ahead were still vague then; I was thinking more about (and collecting material for) VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK; and when I found out that there already was a TESSERACT I wasn't too upset. I did have the problem of figuring out another name--I considered TRAVESTY and TOTAL ECLIPSE, neither of which grabbed me. The name SIMULACRUM was a suggestion from Wayne, for which I (belatedly) thank him.

SIMULACRUM 1 is my second zine, the first having been VATI-CON, which was produced for the Ontario Science Fiction Club (OSFiC). (I don't include in that listing a newsletter I did for OSFiC when Wayne, who regularly does it, was sick; or a parody of the regular newsletter I did as a joke on



Wayne.) I have learned a few things in the making of VATI-CON, including things about the writing of sercon fanzine articles, some of which were pointed out to me in the letters of comment or in remarks to me personally. But in all fairness I should mention that although VATI-CON was my first zine, I had a large amount of help from and was able to benefit from the fan publishing experience of Mike Glicksohn and Wayne MacDonald. And these two people are equally to be thanked for their help and advice in the making of SIMULACRUM. I now have an electric Gestetner of my own, so no longer have to impose on Mike for printing, but I still want to thank him for providing the electrostencils. I'd like to extend thanks to the behind-the-scenes gang, who helped with contributions, printing and collating. (As I type the stencil, I don't know who you are yet, but thanks anyway.) There's also special thanks to Wayne MacDonald, who helped in many various ways including major pieces of artwork for this, and printing, and who carried in that heavy Gestetner when I bought it, back in February. And finally, thanks to all who responded to VATI-CON, with LoCs and trade fanzines and encouragement. Your letters appear here, and I hope to hear from you again.



Originally, I planned for every issue of SIMULACRUM (then still TESSERACT) to be thematic, but I gave that up when I realized that it was a too restrictive policy for a genzine. The material for the first issue was already in mind, so I decided on a policy of an occasional theme ish only, with most issues general.

SIMULACRUM 2 will be a non-thematic issue, and I hope to start work on it soon after FANFAIR III at the beginning of August.

(Aside for a plug: FANFAIR III is an SF con in Toronto, at the King Edward Hotel, on August 1, 2, and 3, with guests

Lester del Rey and Cy Chauvin. Membership is \$10.00 either in advance or at the door. There'll be panels, hucksters, art, movies, banquet, and costume party. Write to FANFAIR III, Box 7230 Station A, Toronto M5W 1X8.)

Anyway, back to SIMULACRUM 2...everything and anything goes. Hopefully it will not be quite as frivolous in tone as the first issue. This as you might have guessed already, is a plea for contributions, both articles and art. Art will be electrostencilled and reproduced by mimeo, except for large pieces, which will be offset. Articles can be on any subject, fannish or sercon, and any length up to, say, ten pages single spaced. I'm aiming for about fifty pages per issue as the optimal length; and will probably put out issues as I get enough material and money together, hopefully twice or three times a year.

Wayne MacDonald's fanzine reviews will be a regular feature. If you wish to be reviewed, send your zine to Wayne at 1284 York Mills Road, Apt. 410, Don Mills, Ontario M3A 1Z2. (I show Wayne the zines I get, but he likes to have his own, and generally writes LoCs.) (Zines in trade for SIMULACRUM should be sent to me, Victoria Vayne, at PO Box 156 Station D, Toronto, Ontario M6P 3J8.)

Anyway, this is enough editorial nattering--let's get on to SIMULACRUM 1... we've got a Heinlein satire, a sarcastic look at certain mushy SF books, a story portraying mush among aliens, as well as the regular features, zine reviews and LoCs...

taral wayne macdonald

i fear i have
no time for love
with a stranger
by hobart rhineland

FIRSTUS

Methuselah Smith longed for his freedom, and incidentally a little poontang, but on the receiving end of the poon instead of the other way around. This proving to be somewhat difficult he decided he was bored with having done everything else in the universe several times over.

"Life's tears are salty, drinking at it makes one ever more thirsty."

"Smith, what the tanstaafling hell are you going to do with that electric vibrator?" A mellifluous female voice issued from a cheap Japanese speaker in the cabin wall. "I'm not wired for AC, and if you use that vibrator you'll not only blow the fuses but my mind as well."

"Starships should be seen, not heard, shut up!" snapped Smith.

"So you're going to vibrate yourself to death? It's deliciously sexy, but pretty silly if you ask me. Besides, I don't want my circuits lobotomized, and if you plug that stupid thing in I'll burn your closet full of dresses. You could at least have figured a way for me to get a piece of the action while you're titillating to death. I may not be very adequately endowed, but I have my appetites as well as you, you know. You programmed them in, in fact, you dirty old turd."

"Shut up, Tin Tits. I'm desperate. I've made out with everything in the universe from Albuquerqueans to Zeta Orionians."

"Except me, you old fart--grab my sensory terminals and fondle me!"

"I don't miscegenate with cybernetics!"

"Fold, Spindle, and Mutilate me," Tin Tits crooned. "Manipulate my controls, fell up my flowcharts, blow my input feeds..."

I FEAR I HAVE NO TIME FOR LOVE WITH A STRANGER by Hobart Rhineland
is copyright © 1974 by Taral

"Oh, stuff it..."

"Now you got the idea, right in here!" A convenient access hatch flew open.

"You can't make a silk pussy from a tin wave guide, so batten it! Think Tanks are all alike. Let me tell you how a digital clock on Antares tried to seduce me. I had just fled from a repressive democracy on Cordwainer 3rd before they caught up to certain of my, er, activities..."

"Tax evasion, two counts of assault with deadly weapons on neighbours trespassing, and molesting the local aborigines. I imagine you're rather proud of the latter since they're not only asexual but inanimate as well."

"As I was saying, I had just settled on Aldebaran..."

"Antares."

"If I told you once I told you twice and I tell you three times, that I won't stand to be corrected. I don't make mistakes. So, I had just founded a colony on Arcturus and had been elected to be first postmaster and dog catcher by the grateful settlers. But soon the neighbours grew jealous, and began vicious rumours implying that perhaps there should not have been more votes cast at the election than there were residents on the planet. My chief opponent, who had meanwhile bribed the entire populace to perjure themselves into claiming they had voted solely for him, then pointed out that even if I were to be authorized to print currency, it seemed peculiar that I should end up owning most of it. I countered that I didn't really have that money at all, so to speak, but merely all the backing, and as the town's only banker who would be more appropriate to print the banknotes? And it's not as if I had intentionally ended up with all the backing either, it's just that under free market conditions I exercised my right to be superior to everybody else and through various perfectly legitimate practices managed to corner the colony's working capital."

"You hornswoiggled the townspeople and malappropriated the treasury."

"Of course not! I was just *sharper* than they, and merely made a loan to myself to finance my bank so that I could loan needed money to them. Besides, imagine getting so upset about a treasury with only a couple of sacks of seed corn, a rake with two bent tines, and a box of dogeared men's magazines in it."

"No doubt it was the latter that caused most of the commotion. You still thumb through those magazines when you're horny and you've been a while without. Did anyone ever tell you that you lie charmingly, in bed or out?"

"I didn't hear that, fortunately. So there I was checking out of town about three one morning when the daughters of that old Chink cook from the local hash house, Hip Swing and Hip Slung Lo, saw me beating it. I pulled up my pants as quick as I could but they saw it anyway, so I took 'em with me. I could use them anyway since the flora and fauna of the place I had in mind to hide out in tended towards being covered in spines. There was a good deal of danger travelling at that time of the year. The heavy rains made the countryside as firm as my granny's bosom, and about as appetizing. It was touch and go in spots but I made it to the place I had in mind without losing more than one of my captives in a particularly deep stretch."

"Well, turn my crank, but I think Hip Swing later told me that you'd *thrown* her sister in a bog so that you could crawl over her to the other side. You leave out the details, Lover."

"Where are the good ole days when a man could buy a good tape recorder and

not be interrupted by nymphomaniac numeric devices? Hip Swing and I lived a good life up in them hills; I fishing and hunting for wildlife when I felt the need, and picking fruit when I wanted something to eat. She was as happy as I in our idyllic life, tending only a few acres of staple crops, mind-ing and expanding our little log cabin for new arrivals, and of course, giving birth to them; nature's most exquisite of gifts, my children..."

"Boss? Lover lips?"

"A woman is the womb of the world, bringing forth delight, and children too. Suck-ling the little darlings, seeing that they are kept clean and well-behaved for when I want to see them. There were fourteen of them in my mountain retreat, and it seemed that the five minutes I spent with them a day was hardly ample..."

"Hot hips?"

"We added many free and independent citizens to our society to serve us better, and worship me as the direct and indirect ancestor of everyone in the universe who's worth anything..."

"You crusty, horny old bastard! We're..."

The sound of thousands of boxes of crackers being walked upon by a parade of elephants followed the lurching of the ship violently to the right, far right. The reverse movement was just as sudden, just as violent, and left the ship shuddering with a sighing noise. The cargo bay full of crackers was already smashed.

"...being stopped by a Starship Trooper," finished Tin Tits, while Smith extracted himself from the still open access hatch. The radio broke in, cutting off Tin Tits' next words.

"...arrest in violation...in the act...(crackle) with minor...(sputter) actions..."

"Quick! Where's my vibrator, Tin Tits, they'll never take me alive!"

"They're boarding me! Ooooh, it feels good! Oooooooooo. Oh! Oh! OH! It's coming! It's coming!"

* * *



DEVIANTS ON A THEME

"...and all we found was a grossed out computer and some twit in drag just about to mount an electric socket. We confiscated his vibrator, and sedated him with a book of classical porno art. You never know what you'll find when you stop someone for defective running lights or some other minor infraction."

Smith looked up from grokking a particularly arousing Bode print to see the Trooper Captain bearing down on him. If only he had been quick enough to have reached the socket he might now be blissfully dead instead of in deep shit with the cops. Fortunately the rap had only been running without the regulation system of blinking red lights. The violation would probably only cost him five points and a medium heavy fine. So long as they didn't find out he didn't have a license, that is. Or that Tin Tits used to belong to a certain Evangelistic outfit and had been transferred to Smith's ownership without either record, or the knowledge of one G. T. Armstrong the Third. To complicate the latter, corrupting a ship's computer was a very serious offense.

"Mr. Armstrong? We've checked your ship's registration numbers and we see that your license expired on this vessel two years ago, and in a sector under another jurisdiction. I think you'd better explain just what you've been doing all this time. But first I must warn you that anything you have to say may be held against you when the opportunity comes. So if you're going to lie, keep it simple, we'll be questioning you again, and your ship as well. Let's not have any embarrassing discrepancies in our stories, shall we?"

Think fast, Smith, thought Smith, he's mistaken you for that fool preacher who owned Tin Tits before you eloped with her.

"Praise God for an honest man, Sahib!" Smith began his spiel. "As you might know, by the mercy of our LORD, I have been CHOSEN to deliver his WORD among the unenlightened. I have preached his word among the cybernetics (*that should get him off the hook for tampering with Tin Tits*) of many WORLDS, whose SOULS have long enough been neglected by MERCenary sinners whose duty it first was to see that these poor COMPUTERS should be exposed to God's LOVE."

"Shouldn't He have seen to it Himself if it was so important?" the Trooper Captain asked as he removed his ticket book from his hip pocket.

"God's LOVE should not be mocked. His love MOVES mountains. (Hesperonis 2: 14). And He will MOVE your SOUL to Hell, straight away, if thou chooses to disbelieve in Him. (Mercedes 22: 11)." Smith was beginning to warm up to his subject. Aiding him was his old training as a circus con artist on Mars, where he waited out the draft for WW 4. "His messenger, one of HIS Angels, gave a MISSION to this poor SERVANT to COME to the SALVATION of those whose souls are still DAMNED! I have travelled as His SPIRIT DIRECTED me, from each star as His Spirit CONQUERS to the next NEEDFUL World." Smith could hardly believe what came from his mouth, and struggled to keep a straight face. "Would you have me DISOBEY His commands and turn back from my HOLY MISSION, keeping from His LOVE a little LONGER each Soul that could be SAVED? The Lord loved the Universe enough to give His ONLY SON! (Australians 54: 40). I should give less then to break the law; so that I may FULFIL God's Law?"

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. (Matthew 22: 21)," rejoined the Captain. "This is going to be a long one," he said only to himself, having just about ticked off every offense on the citation form. Aloud he added, "Take him away; use one of the padded cells, we don't want him to hurt himself."

While Smith was being dragged away, he dropped the long citation that had been pressed into his hands. The Captain bent over to retrieve it, and absent-mindedly ticked off the box next to "refusing citation". The adjutant next to him made a conspicuous-making noise in his throat to attract the Captain's attention.

"You're going to jug him? What gave him away as a phony?"

"Talked too much about love, and didn't once ask for money."

COUNTERBALANCE

On the ship, meanwhile, Tin Tits was being electronically third-degreed by a crack team of memory bank tappers. The Trooper Captain had arrived and wanted to know what, if anything, had been uncovered.

"Three of the technicians so far. That ship's got the hots for anything in pants, and removes them as quickly as she can. It took us five minutes before we could work our way into her innards to pull her plug. She almost had an orgasm before we were through."

"I shudder at the thought. But if you've got her higher functions turned off, just what do you suppose you'll be able to get from her in the way of information?"

"Mostly dirty limericks, I'm afraid. Whoever programmed this mother must of used a Japanese Pillow Book as a text. This way there's nothing we can coax out of her, and we can't trick her into spilling anything. All we can do is manually demand information from the outputs, bit by bit, and without selection. It will be slow. If you order it, we can reactivate her conscious functions, but I don't recommend it. I saw Johnson getting goosed by a 500 volt conductor, and I personally don't want to collect a disability pension that way."

"Will she respond to spoken questions?"

"Sure. But give it a try and see what you get."

The Captain faced the whirling tape reels and addressed the computer in a firm voice. "You, computer. What's your designation?"

"Temple of God the Creator," replied Tin Tits in a voice one normally associates with prim maids from the Salvation Army. "Serial number R A la-30."



"Why is your registration two years out of date?"

"And the Lord said, Because of the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." As Tin Tits read, her voice melted into its usual fluid tones and ended with an abrupt stiffening hiccup. "Genesis 18: 20 and 21, (giggle)," she added as an afterthought.

"Errr...what is your owner's true identity? Does he legally hold possession of your papers?"

"And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. And Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begat Pelag; and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. And Pelag lived thirty years, and begat Reu. And Pelag..."

"I think that's enough. She isn't doing this deliberately?"

"...lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and ..."

"Not as far as we can tell. It's random. She's in conflict between two basic schizoid personalities, and we get whatever chances to come out whenever we phrase her a question. What we ask has a small influence on what we get, but not much."

"...begat Serug; and Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years..."

"Can't we turn her off?" the Captain moaned, as the genealogy rambled on.

"...Sarae was barren; she had no child...poor baby (giggle)."

"She's off, sir." A vital power lead newly removed from the speaker dangled from the technician's hand.

INTERRUPTION

God moves in mysterious ways unless you watch him closely. He's entirely predictable by a sharp card player. Just watch your hand and keep an eye peeled to see that your life isn't dealt from the bottom of the deck.

Sex should not only be enjoyed by minors, but by lumberjacks, longshoremen, foundry workers, and steeplejacks as well.

Never make a face over sour milk, it may be somebody's yogurt.

Democracy is the theory that everyone is as good as me; come again?

Dictatorship is the theory that *someone else* is better than me; that's even worse.

It's every man's right to object to his fellow man, and enforce his objections if he's able.

Some people come here to sit and think, others come to shit and stink.
(Cribbed from a toilet stall on Ejectus.)

Freelance writing is a soft touch. It is. What you have to do is to follow these rules, every one of them, every time, without fail. First: You must write. Second: You must *finish* what you write. Third: You must refrain from rewriting

except to editorial order. Fourth: You must place it on the market. Fifth: You must keep it on the market until sold. That's all. That's a sure-fire formula for getting anything--anything at all--published.

Always keep nitroglycerine in a cool quiet place.

TANSTAATS--There Ain't No Such Thing As A Trite Saying.

SECONDUS

"God, whoever would have thought a lousy Captain would go for such a high price. He cleaned us out."

"How much did it take to bribe him to let us go?" asked Tin Tits.

"Like I said, he cleaned us out. Every cent we made selling my last porno *ON THE MOON WITH A FRIGID MISTRESS* at \$1.95 a copy, a hundred thousand copies. Plus our entire profits from that cargo of troublesome flat-cat dolls and I Grok Spock buttons, that box of mens' magazines that used to be under my bed, and incidentally, the dirty limericks from your memory banks. He's one slick operator. He immediately knew my value, and wouldn't sell my hide for a cent less than it was worth. I was going to trade him you, but he already know about your nymphomania and broke out laughing when I suggested it to him. Right after he turned white. What did you do in there with those jerks after they boarded you?"

"Relax, Boss, they're all still virgins, but what's this about my memory banks? I...oh, shit! Didn't miss even one of them! I wish you *had* traded me to that Captain. He was handsomer than you, what with your bulbous nose, and I bet less prudish about making out with me."

"I should have such luck," groaned Smith. "Now where's my vibrator, or am I going to have to tell you another one of my anecdotes until you tell me where is is?"

"The Troopers confiscated it, remember? Why do you need that dirty old vibrator anyway? What does it have that I don't?"

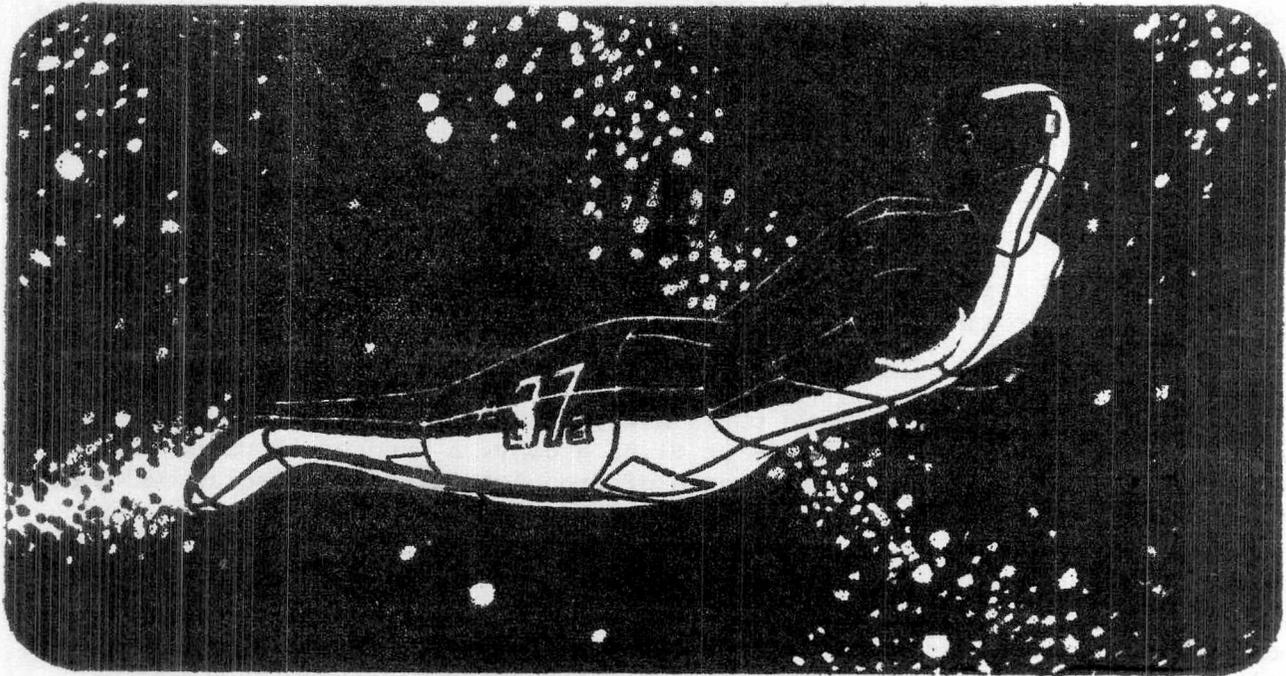
"A cord to make a noose from. You know very well why I want that vibrator, so let's not go through that again! Dammit! What am I going to do without that vibrator?"

"You could open the airlock and decompress the ship," Tin Tits coldly pointed out.

"Uh, that's not quite what I had in mind. I'd rather leave the universe pleasantly if you don't think that's asking too much."

"So why do you have to leave at all, especially since I'm still virgin. Look at my gorgeous bod, why can't you go horny over *me*?" An exterior view of the ship that was Tin Tits appeared simultaneously on every screen aboard. She was a silvery sheened, and narrow waisted vessel, with shapely curvilinear lines about her ingress hatch amidships, and her forward cargo bays. Long rigid propulsion booms trailed behind the main fuselage at one end, and the oval main compartment halloed by filementary antennae preceded the other. "All yours for a kind word and a few minutes with your apparatus."

"Did I ever tell you about my old school days before I went into the Navy on Earth? I always was a lazy son of a cuss as a kid back in Kansas, and I very early made up my mind I couldn't cut the mustard as a farmhand. Nor cut the hay, wheat, corn, nor nothing else either..."



"You've changed the subject again. And you've started lecture number 214; I've heard it before."

"...so I thought I'd get a berth in some soft cushy spot like the Navy. Nothing to do there I thought except smell the sea air and ball a lot of chicks when I got ashore. Wasn't quite as simple as that, I found out, in fact rather more difficult than being a farmer..."

"Of course not. Every now and then you'd be asked, kindly at first mind you, but insisntently, to polish up the railings, stoke a furnace, swab a deck, or raise a sail or something like that."

"...so I entered the academy thinking to become an officer *myself*, and give all those dirty assignments to those other slobs while I lazed around as I was cut out to do..."

"...the academy was more trouble than even being a sailor, but for a commis-sion and latter ease, it'd be worth it, and you managed alright. Occasionally the senior students would razz you with questions like how many minutes and seconds until graduation, but you devised a simple equation, $t = 2(a^2/b^2-1) \cdot \sqrt{4ab/c} + \cos 6k/2$ that you could work out in your head in about twnty minutes, or on paper in five, so you could usually answer correctly now and again..."

"...but even as an officer I was still not having it as easy as I figured, in fact there may have been some loss of ground, and I was worrying more. I next thought of becoming captain of the ship. There I could lay the administration on the other officers, and in only a few years I had realized this ambition..."

"...somehow though, work got harder, not easier, so it became necessary to start thinking about becoming Admiral to improve my position. Since I had only been a junior officer a couple of years ago I needed to do something outstanding

and perversion possible to a man, and the only thing left I can't be for all the dresses I've got stashed in my secret closet. I'm going to miss half the universe and I can't do a thing about it. So I want out!"

"Goddam it, Lover Lips, Boss, you keep saying that, but there's one thing you've never done that you can do, and that you refuse to do. You've never yet made love to me. How can you say you've done everything when you've never knocked me up?"

"I don't miscegenate with cybernetics."

"You said that earlier, and you have so, there's that digital clock you started to tell me about once and never got around to finishing."

Smith grew hot around the collar, blushed, and began to stir his pants. "I said I was almost seduced, not violated by it! And how the hell am I supposed to do you when you're an engineered eunuch?"

"If you can buy a contraband vibrator on some obscure planet-fall, then I can have certain extras installed when you're not sober. What do you prefer? Male, female, neutral, hermaphroditic, Sirian third gender, trans-Vestian fourth gender, amorphous comingling, or Trxx?" The appropriate appendages displayed themselves from various opening receptacles as she listed them off. "And if that isn't sufficient I can wire your brain into sympathy with the entire ship's central nervous system and we can really have a blast. Which do you want?"

"Aiiiiii..." Smith was saying, seeing himself trapped. None of the cabin doors would budge an inch. "I can't!"

"Why, for Foster's sake?"

"Uh...what would I do after that? Then there would really be nothing."

"That's a lame excuse, and you know it! Give!"

"I...I kinda...well, I suppose it's...uh...oh...well, I kinda like you, a little." Smith was blushing even more intensely than before, and could hardly be heard above the sound of the shaking of his knees. He was desperately trying to turn his bulging crotch out of sight of Tin Tits' lens.

"You...like me? Then for God's sake let's get at it!" Appendages began waving and erecting and inflating furiously.

"But what about after? I'd still have to end up using that vibrator to kill myself."

"Bother it, Boss. Uh, can you trust me to fix things up for you? You see, you haven't experienced half the universe at all, only a third at best. Leave it to me and let's get busy. I want to try the amorphous business first, then the female, then the..."

"You're sure I can trust you?" Smith was now thoroughly aroused and helpless, but distrusted the electrode cables thrusting out to embrace him. The ends were sharp and biting into the skin of his scalp.

"Absolutely, Boos, darling!"

"All ri....~~oooooooooooo~~umph! Org! Ai! Oh! Ooooooooooooo! Uh! Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh...."

"Ooooooooooooh! Ee, ee, eee, eeee, eeeee, ahhhhhhhhh..."

* * *

EPILOG

"Mr. Smith?" an officious young gentleman asked.

"No, I'm sorry, not exactly at least, but you can call me Tin Tits if you like. That's Boss, or rather Methuselah Smith, over there."

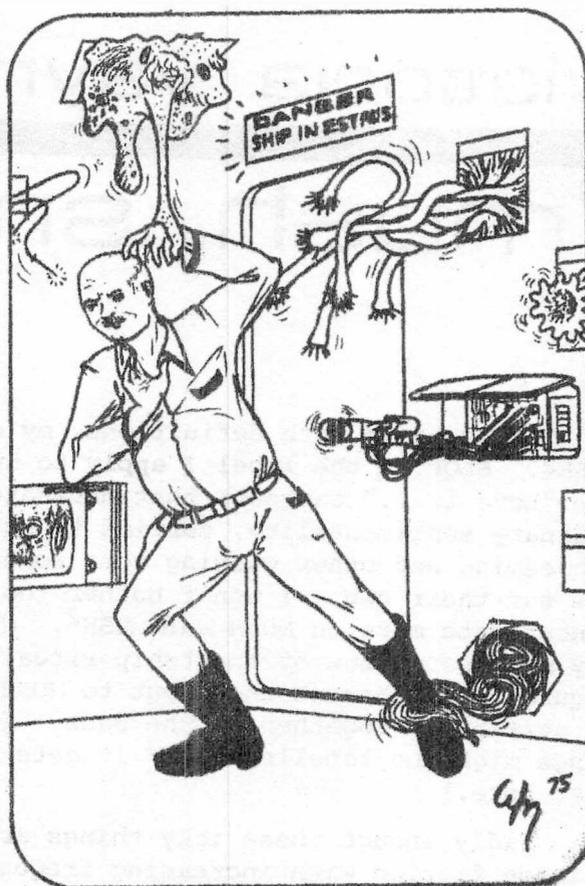
"But that's his ship, and besides my warrant definitely stipulates that Smith is human. Are you sure?" He looked as confused as if he had suddenly discovered his mother had been one of those "strange" Russian female atheletes. He slowly returned the warrant for Smith's arrest for bribing an officer to his pocket.

"Ask him. I'm off to see the Universe. Bye, bye, nice man!"

Once the sick look left his face the officer hurriedly ran to the ship and boarded, feeling very much as if he had been had. "God, by a fairy too!" he muttered. "Hey, you, ship!" he shouted. "Are you Methuselah Smith? You'd fucking better be or I'm in awful hot water!"

The only reply reply he got was "Shit!" accompanied by an obscene gesture with a rubber testicle hanging caught in a closed panel.

"Oh," he said, and walked away, tearing up the warrant.



I FEAR I HAVE NO TIME FOR LOVE WITH A STRANGER began as a short, off-the-cuff contribution for a one-shot written on a bus bound to Toronto from DISCON II. For the first two or three pages I worked with rubberneckerers firing suggestions over my shoulders, the better ones being promptly incorporated. But the end of the trip came before the end of the satire, and the remaining seven or so pages were written at home to keep from wasting a promising start. If I'd known how long it was to become I would have wadded up those three pages and boosted them out of my fourth floor window... Curiously, just after having *I FEAR* etc. rejected by NATIONAL LAMPOON and requisitioned for SIMULACRUM 1, Tony Cvetko ran a very similar satire by D. Gary Grady in DIEHARD 6. The outcome of my lawsuit is still pending... Meanwhile Victoria pestered me for accompanying illos, to which I complied with reluctant alacrity as befits my station as an emerging BNF fanartist.

Gæilt^læhæilin, Taral.

victoria vayne

"mush, smush!"

Let's begin with definitions, my own personal labels: SLOP, SLUSH, MUSH and MUSH². SLOP is the label I apply to cutesiness, such as is typified for example in the "Love is..." cartoons that nauseate readers of many papers daily. SLUSH is ordinary sentimentality, carried to extraordinary extremes, as for example, the exclaiming and other gushing some women will do over babies, including those that are not their own. I won't bother too much with SLOP and SLUSH here, as I want to concentrate more on MUSH and MUSH². MUSH is an all-encompassing term comprising any manifestations of courtship ritual--from hand-holding and sweet nothings and liquid gazes through the gamut to MUSH², at which point one has reached the stage of getting it together in the sack. (When one gets to the stage that the proceedings might be labelled MUSH³ it gets really hairy and I don't want to go into that here.)

Sadly enough these icky things are encroaching on the once-sacred domains of science fiction with increasing frequency. It is bad enough that in the days of the pulps covers were adorned with partially clad images of decorative women, the purposes of which were left up to the readers' imaginations. In the stories, relationships were chaste enough. Women were sometimes present to serve as a love interest of sorts, generally of the type that could be omitted from the plot altogether with no loss. Admittedly the female could also sometimes be used as a sounding board for the explanation of the theory behind the story, but there were other devices for this, which could and should have been used. Women were mainly window-dressing in those days. There were no sex scenes then, a chaste kiss was as far as they went. And yet there were stories that hinted at far more--Nelson S. Bond's "The Priestess Who Rebelled", for example, in which the priestess in question is urged to leave her matriarchical tribe by a man from a "normal" tribe, who appeals to her basic sexual desires in order to sway her. There is no explicit sex in the story, yet the physical desires between an attractive man and woman are openly alluded to. In this story the "mush" element is vital to the plot, and fortunately is handled in a straight-forward non-sensational manner.

But the question arises whether, for the most part, mush is necessary at all. The love interest certainly has its place when it belongs in the plot, when an event hinges upon it, or when it is essential to character development, or when it provides essential background to the story. In short, when it fits. I do not object to sex scenes in fiction, provided they are not pornographically explicit, as long as they fit.

I would like to discuss at considerable length an example of the lowest of the low, a book that seems to have as its sole purpose the purveying of mush, a book that is all mush and the worst kind too: Heinlein's *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL*. Basically

I WILL FEAR NO EVIL is about a brain transplant, from the body of a man to the body of a woman. Specifically, in the case of this novel, it is a transplant from the body of a dirty old man to the body of a senseless fluffheaded sexpot. To write this article I found it necessary to plow through this dreck a second time...

The sexpot is introduced right at the beginning. Her name is Eunice, to me one of the most odious names in the language. "Eunice" conjures, to me, the image of a plain jane with stringy, shoulder-length and curly blonde hair and a fat round face with thick lips and a rosy complexion. Not a raving beauty. As introduced in *EVIL*, Eunice is on the very first page pictured as dressing in the "current exotic mode"--evidently a man-trap. The "current exotic mode" is in the pages that follow, shown to consist of mostly the absence of clothes.

Eunice seems to be competent enough in her job, but is extremely conscious of her appearance and her effect on men, and dresses primarily to please her boss. Boss, or Johann Sebastian Bach Smith, while still in the old decrepit male body at the beginning of the book, is presented as a level-headed and sensible, although a bit crotchety, person, managing his business well enough.

The novel abounds in mush and cutesy-poo. Eunice near-seduces Smith's assistant Jake Salomon (another dirty old man) in a sick-maker of a scene replete with phrases like "little snuggle puppy". In another scene Eunice and her husband engage in slushy talk, with a bit of sex, a bit of body-painting--all in all a lot of body awareness. Husband paints a phony bra on Eunice, designed to keep Boss wondering.

After the transplant operation, J.S.B.Smith indulges in a spot of recollection, as he is coming to. He lusts after Eunice, wishes he had met her forty years sooner. He reminisces about his early conquests and spends his recovery time thinking primarily of sex. And until the time he finds out his new body is female Smith thinks and talks very much as he did before the operation. Even after the revelation he takes time to make the switch.

But...Eunice's voice--the Fluffhead As Conscience--lurks in the background. Against all scientific logic, the personality of Eunice has remained behind even though her brain had been utterly destroyed. This disembodied twerp takes the training of Boss in hand. Smith is urged to prettify him/herself before talking to Jake Salomon and others. He/she decides he/she likes the custom of kissing hands--the Eunice voice goads Smith into going along with this and the female body evidently



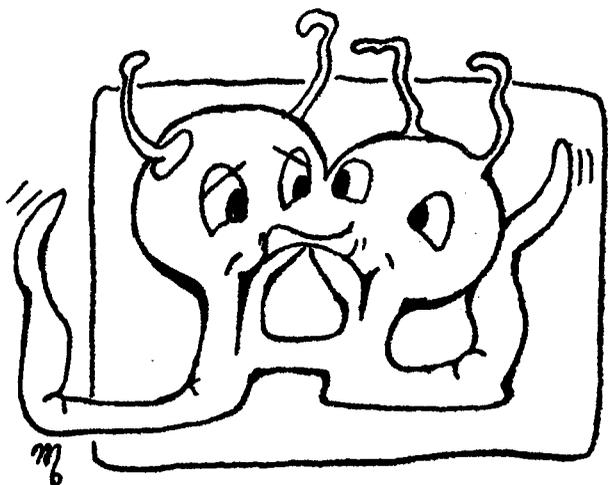
reacts. "To be encouraged," he/she says. It is merely a small taste of things to come.

Soon people start calling the Eunice/Smith construct "dear". Heinlein evidently thinks it is typical for women to be addressed thus. Under the influence of Twithead, J.S.B. Smith goes along with this. He goes along with a lot of what that brainless (literally, too) voice in his head tells him. (And on second thought, perhaps it is not surprising at all that Eunice can exist and speak in the construct's mind without a brain--she couldn't have had any brains to begin with.)

The first mind-to-mind conversation between Smith and Eunice is, naturally, all about sex. That is of course the only thing Eunice was expert in. Will Smith become "actively female"? Apparently so--Eunice can hardly wait--and she will teach him how to be female. There is a lesbian sequence involving a nurse, soon after Smith realizes his new body is female. At this point, and in fact throughout the book, Smith/Eunice is never sure whether he/she is being homosexual when with a female or when with a male partner. And this is as close as Heinlein gets in this book to discussing what should have been a central issue in the novel--the effects of the sex-change. Not the effects as they reflect on the love-making ability or apparatus, but the deep, underlying psychological effects. These are not mentioned at all.

Smith is advised at one point to be "helpless and female". Does Heinlein think the two go hand-in-hand? The object here, by the way, is sex with Jake. In preparation for this and other like conquests, Smith/Eunice takes a bath, and is afterwards made up, perfumed, and so on. She is "enjoying the euphoria of a woman who is utterly clean, scented and powdered, and dressed attractively". This is slush, here, a sort of sentimentality about the body whose sole importance is to attract men, object: mush. ALWAYS Eunice wants to be made up. The fact that Smith, whose brain now runs the body, might have a mind, is apparently totally ignored by the Eunice-voice.

Heinlein makes an authoritative comment about mush: "There is *nothing* more exasperating to a woman than to be ready to give in--then have the matter dropped." There is lots that can be more exasperating: not all women think only of sex, only Heinlein doesn't seem to believe that, here.



There is much mention of yoga. It has been pointed out to me that had the novel been written only a few years later, it would've been kung-fu.

By the time the inheritance matter is taken to court, the Smith/Eunice monster seems to be assessing every male she meets for his likely prowess in bed. After this she sets out to seduce Jake Salomon in earnest. By this time all traces of the once-intelligent businessman Smith was are gone, he/she has reverted completely to the image of the silly young fluff-head. He/she even gets spanked by Jake for being "difficult", likes it, and hopes he will do it again.

There are other occasions of slush and mush and mush² to follow. He/she gets him/her-self impregnated by Smith's original donation of semen; he/she wants to bear his/her own child. After a shopping expedition Smith/Eunice has a picnic with her bodyguards and lures them all into sessions of mush. And when finally Smith/Eunice "gets it", thanks to Jake Salomon, he/she claims that "for a woman it's so much better". *HOW THE HELL DOES HEINLEIN KNOW???????*

Eventually Smith/Eunice does marry Jake, whom he/she has been trying to entrap for most of the book. "It's going to be such fun to be married to you!" he/she gushes. And we all know in what way! (Although I for one can't see WHY--he's in his seventies.)

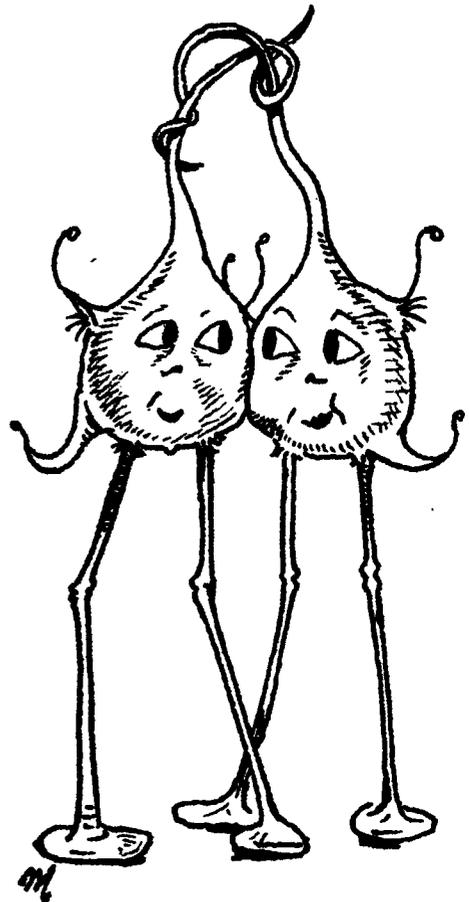
I WILL FEAR NO EVIL has no truly explicit sex scenes, which may be a mercy. But it has a lot of sex. It is possibly the worst book that Heinlein has ever written, and how this could come from the pen of one who has written *THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS*, *DOUBLE STAR* and *THE DOOR INTO SUMMER* is a mystery. The idea of the brain transplant has so many possibilities--even incorporating the sex-change into it needn't have transformed the novel into a mishmash of mush.

But on the plus side, there are SF stories that deal entirely with mush, and which are not offenses to the sensibilities as is *EVIL*. One such story that has the love interest as primary element is Winston K. Marks' short story "Mate in Two Moves". This one is about two doctors' (a man and a woman) discovery of a new virus which affects glands in such a way as to cause the victims to fall helplessly in love, to the point of sickness, which in fact it is. The two doctors themselves fall victim to the virus, against their better judgement and wishes. It's an amusing story, and for all it contains mush, the mush is not at all out of place as the love interest is pivotal to the plot.

There is also Lester Del Rey's "Helen O'Loy". Despite my comments in an earlier article about the rather stereotyped picture of women portrayed here, the story is a good example of one in which mush is in place, integral to the plot. The robot woman falls in love with her creator, he eventually reciprocates, and their coming together is a major part of the story.

There are other examples of "SF Love Stories" in which the romantic or "mushy" element is the central driving aspect of the plot. These include Robert Sheckley's "Human Man's Burden", Frederik Pohl's "Day Million", Theodore Sturgeon's "The World Well Lost", and some of the stories of Philip José Farmer, to mention only a few.

In science fiction movies, however, the love interest is invariably there to titillate the movie public. It often serves no useful role in the plot. In *FORBIDDEN PLANET*, for example, the plot would have worked splendidly without the



love interest, there were enough interesting elements to the story already. The *FANTASTIC VOYAGE* had to have a woman aboard, although in the movie, played by Raquel Welch, she is merely decorative. The book more than hints at a love interest, largely unnecessarily. In *PLANET OF THE APES* the non-speaking girl Nova plays little role in the story, in fact she is an impediment mostly to the astronauts. The plot could have been made to work without her. However, *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY* works very well with no love interest whatsoever.



We come to the matter of explicit sex, and whether this has a place in SF or not. Controversial subjects are no stranger to SF, as for example Theodore Sturgeon's "If All Men Were Brothers, Would You Let One Marry Your Sister?", which examines incest taboos and proposes a society without such taboos. Yet this story contains no explicit scenes; there are hinted-at and off-staged sex scenes but no clinically graphic affairs. But moaning-and-panting-and-sweating medically explicit follow-right-along-with-us instructions, I feel, do not belong in science fiction. I am not against pornography, by the way; if a reader wants to get turned on by such things, I do believe such reading matter should be available. But there is nothing really SFish about new and unique ways to get it together. If the whole point of the story is the explicit sex, it's not SF in my opinion, it's porn, and it should be sold as such. If the story pivots on some mushy element in the plot, fine, by all means have the mush in there, but let's not make it clinically explicit. The fact of the mush being there, not the mechanics of it, is what is important. And if the mushy element is not important to the plot, then leave it out.

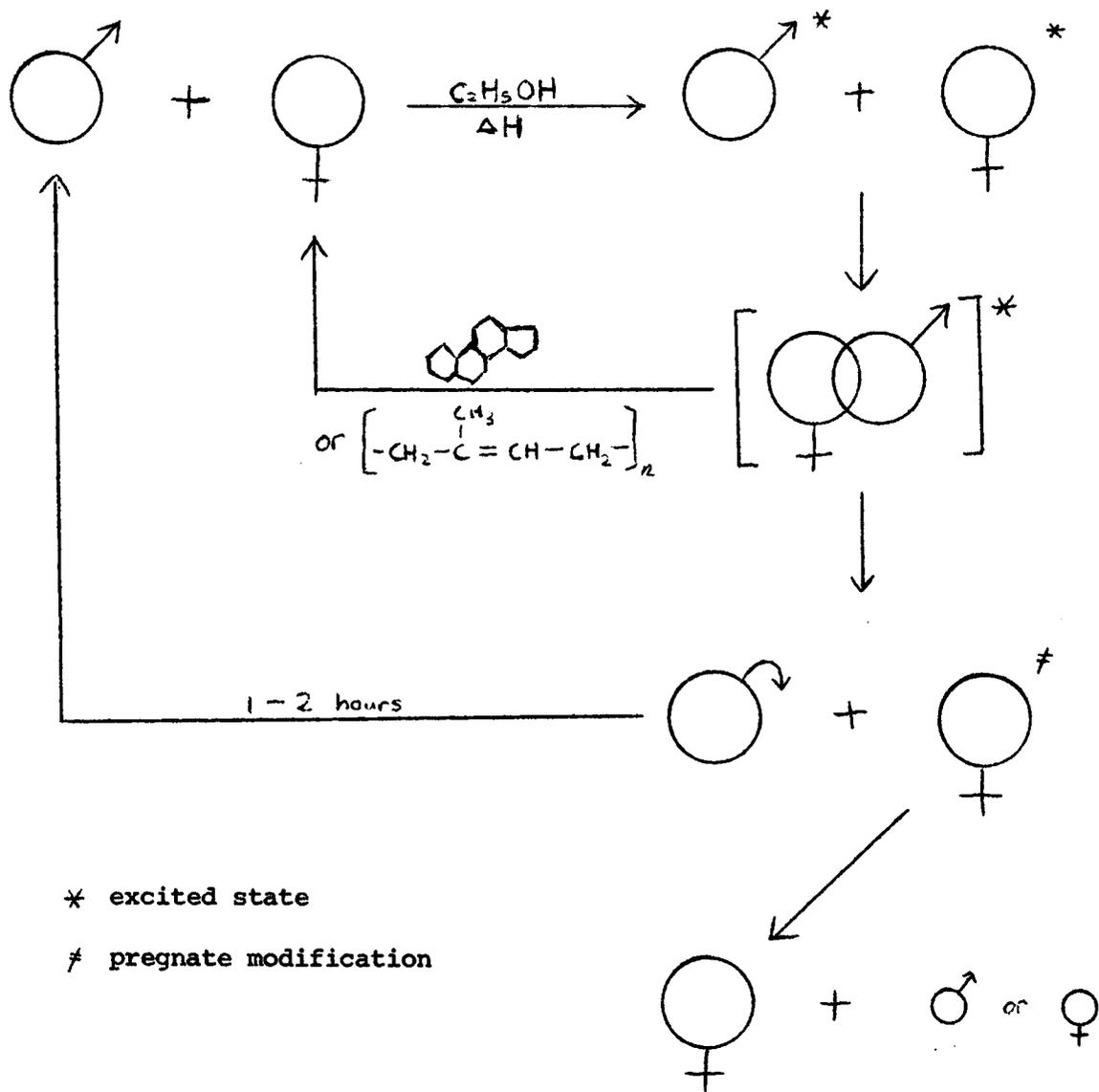
Finally, as an example of stories primarily about sex, I'll run through the contents of Joseph Elder's original anthology *EROS IN ORBIT*. It's an anthology billed as being free from taboos. According to the preface, the number of submissions was "overwhelming". The stories in the book are about sex, all right, but I didn't find any of them particularly earth-shakingly shocking or taboo-breaking. Some of them are more explicit than others, some come close to being porn, but none of the contents seems to be the sort of thing that has to be relegated to the back of adult bookstores in sealed packets.

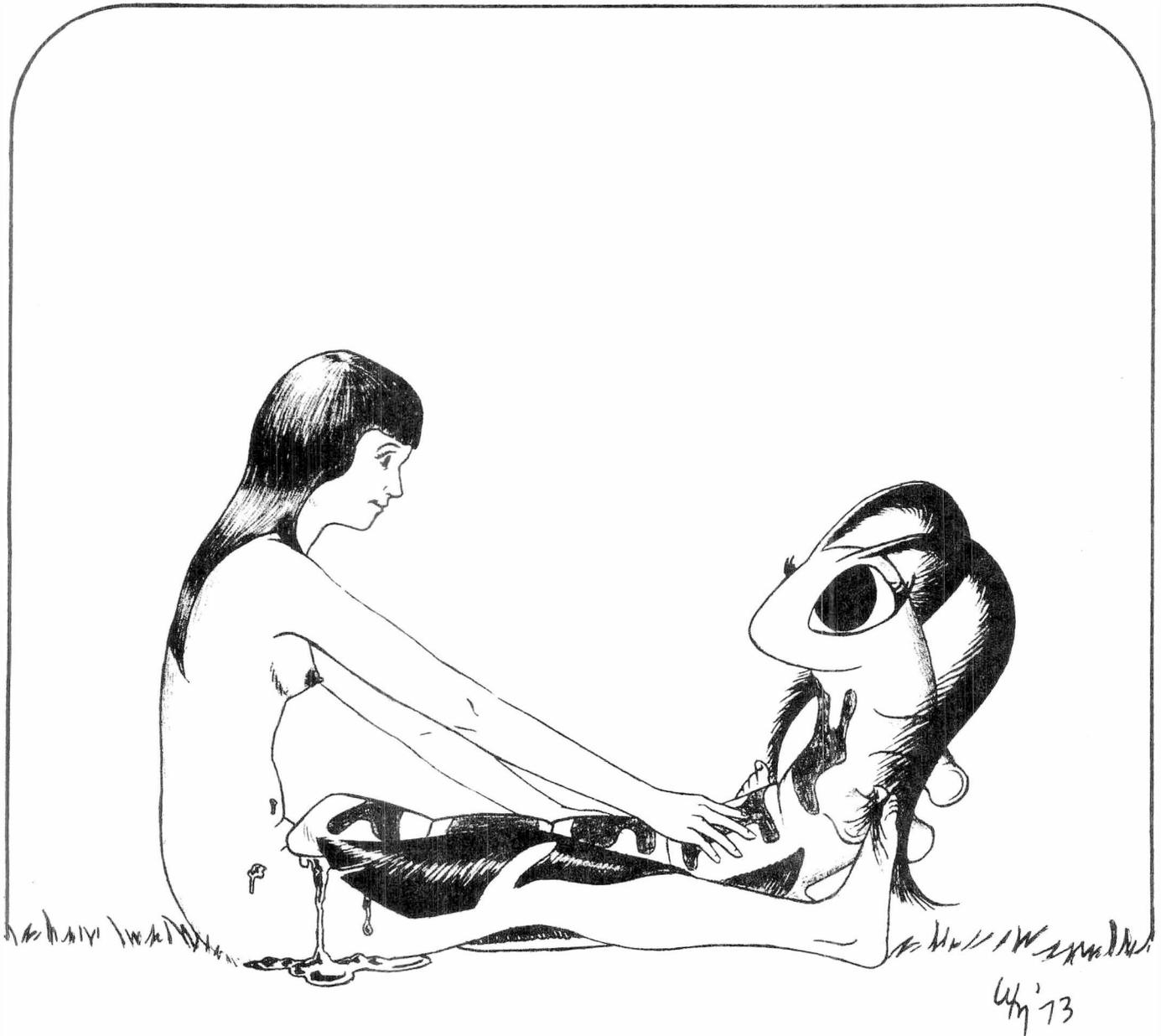
Edward Bryant's "2.46593" is to me plotless and disjointed avant-garde stuff, the sort of thing I don't bother reading. Some explicit scenes seem to be evident but I couldn't get into this story so I can't comment. Gordon Eklund's "Lovemaker" is about a sort of actor who specializes in making telepathic sex recordings the way a musician would make records today. The story is not too explicit but the idea has been handled before. Pamela Sargent's "Clone Sister" is a sequel to another clone story that appeared last year, this time about the clone of three males and one female in young adulthood. It involves incest among the clones, and the scenes are fairly explicit. The sex aspect is necessary to the story but in my opinion could have been done less pornographically. Other than that this story is interesting. Ron Goulart's "Whistler" is a humorous story of a robot designed for use in a sex clinic and I found it enjoyable and nonoffensive. Robert Silverberg's "In the Group" sees a number of people in electronic sympathy for a group sex encounter. One couple does it, the others "listen" in. I found this one more explicit than it needed to be. In Thomas N. Scortia's "Flowering Narcissus" a survivor of a holocaust is regrown in both male and female form. Sex is hinted at, not actually staged; feminists might call this one sexist, but it didn't bother me particularly. Jon Stopa's "Kiddy-Lib" was difficult to get into, and I don't really remember it. Sex seems to be mentioned a lot but as far as I can see is not on-stage. Thomas Brand's "Don Slow and his Electric Girl-Getter" is a humorous entertaining story about a girl-getting device that doesn't quite work as intended. Sex is the object, but is not explicit, and the story does not offend me. I could not get into "Ups and Downs" any more than I can ever follow a Barry Malzberg story, and I generally don't even try. The sex seems pretty explicit from what I could see, though.

In *EROS IN ORBIT* I found I liked the humorous stories best, but this is personal taste, and has nothing to do with their literary quality, only their entertainment value. I might have expected more pornographically-slanted material in

an anthology of this type, but even in the stories wherein sex is explicit, this does not take up the entire bulk of the wordage. With only a few exceptions, however, this anthology is not my kind of reading.

In general, science fiction is not terribly guilty of pornographic content; and such as this is, it is being foisted off on fandom by avant-garde editors who think there is a market for it. Maybe there is. But porn is not what I'm looking for when I open a book of science fiction. On the other hand, on milder levels, love interests that are merely chaste can still be offensive by their sheer unnecessary. SF is not terribly guilty of an excess of mush or mush², it seems, and redundancies occur mainly in the poorer examples, which are thus also the more obscure ones. Undoubtedly there are examples, especially among novels, that haven't been mentioned here, of either good or poor use of love interest or sex scenes, but I read mainly short stories, and even so have not read everything.



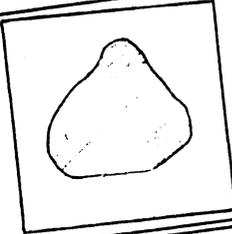


Should there be explicit sex in science fiction? Should there be explicit sex in art? The following is a simple test of artistic tolerance; you are not *required* to write it, but a failure to do so will be taken as a negative response.

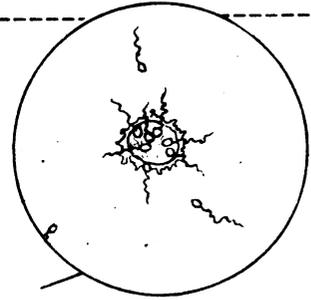
Question 1 - Does this illustration provoke nausea in you? Yes (), No ().

Answers - Q 1; "Yes", you are artistically tolerant but morally loose; "No", you are artistically tolerant and also very likely a prude...

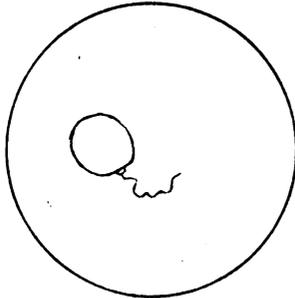
Microgenesis
 a humorous look
 at human origins
 by
 S. Cooper & LM



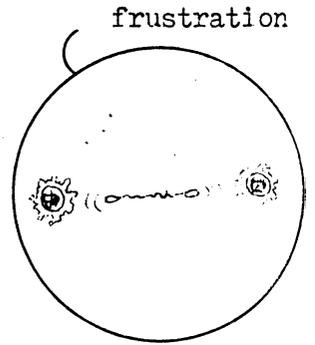
SLIDE # 1



promiscuity



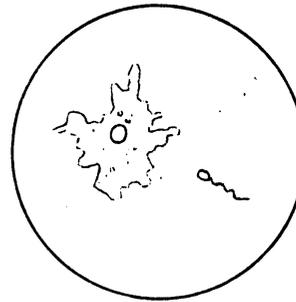
self importance



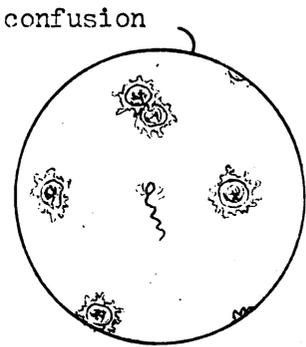
frustration



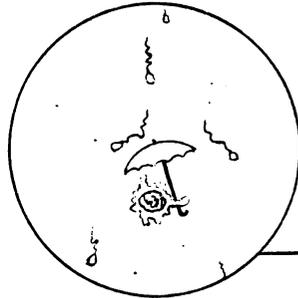
woman's lib



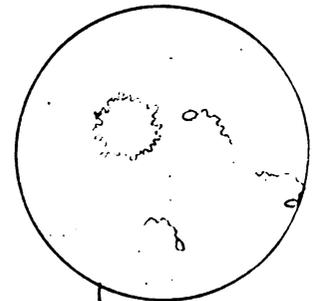
perversion



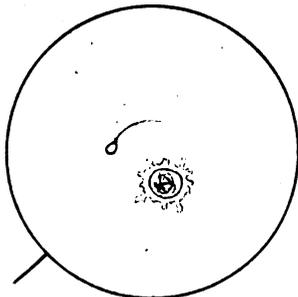
confusion



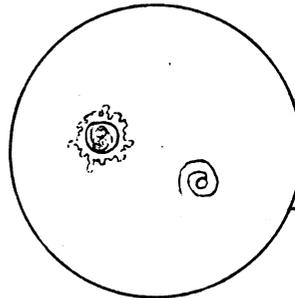
sterility



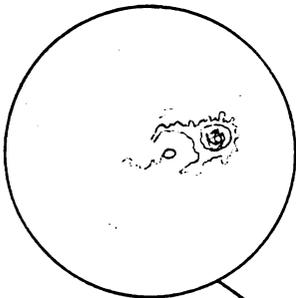
chastity



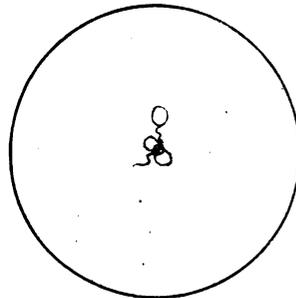
impotence



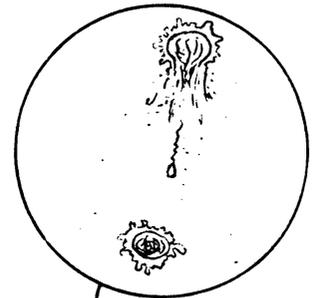
shy



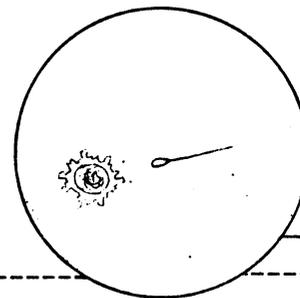
nymphomania



inhibition



infidelity



virility

jaye stanley

the martin incident

(Excerpt from the report of J. T. McKelvie, Planetary Studies)

...care must be taken to minimize the conflicts between their way of life and our own. One example is that of Dr. Martin of my staff, who, though a capable geologist, seems to have had very little training in dealing with aliens. I had been informed of his propensities, but thought he would confine his attentions to the ladies of Terran origin! i.e. the staff of this mission. I had underestimated his misguided ingenuity.

Within a few weeks he had met several of the female natives in the area and narrowed his attentions down to one. When I consulted Dr. Ellsworth, who as a biologist, was the nearest thing at hand to an expert, her summary of the situation led me to believe the problem might cause some embarrassment, in time.

"Arrela? You mean that fluffy little minx with the gray-and-white fur who's been hanging around with the office staff? Oh, great. She's the one girl around who's nearly as dumb as he is."

"You think she's likely to - uh - reciprocate?"

"Well, not now, J.T., for God's sake. You do know the females come into season only about twice in a local year, don't you?"

"Of course I've been briefed on the natives," McKelvie huffed. He thought suddenly of the cat his neighbour owned, back on Earth. The creature frequently howled for days and had to be shut up in the house, where it was serenaded by every tom for miles around. He firmly suppressed the undignified memory.

"Well, then," said Diane Ellsworth, "he won't be able to do a damned thing about it till she comes into season. Of course," she added reflectively, "God help him when she does."

For the next month, the truth of the first part of this prediction became obvious to everyone around Dr. Martin. McKelvie was driven to consult Dr. Ellsworth again. "The young idiot," she snorted. "He's been crying into everyone's beer about it. Sure, he knew what the trouble was, theoretically, but he hadn't a clue what it meant. I tried to tell him myself, but he still doesn't get it. She goes out with him, listens to him, flirts with him, acts as if she likes him (and I suppose she does), so then he tries making passes at her and she belts him. And he's surprised."

"Mph," said McKelvie, trying to look wise. He succeeded in looking even more portly, middle-aged, stuffy and confused than he had before, but she saw no point in letting him know it.

"What worries me," she grumbled instead, "is what happens when she does go in heat. I've asked Niyrr to snoop around a bit (he's the youngster who's been helping out and gathering general data for me) and he says it should start in a few days. And the way Martin's going he's likely as not to start trouble with her boyfriends about it."

A whole panorama of possible embarrassments spread itself gloatingly before McKelvie's eyes. Fights with the natives. Official reports to make to the home office. Oh, God.

"Her - I mean, who -"

"It seems our Arrela has a fairly continuous relationship with a couple of the local boys. Not exclusive, she seems to prefer about four at a time, but for the past year or two the same two are always included, and I don't know how they'd take it if..."

She broke off to show scientific interest in his choking fit.

"Well, what else?" she asked reasonably. "If they only come into season twice a year, it's going to be a damned busy week, isn't it? I don't say they're promiscuous, they usually have a small group of favourite people, but monogamy at a time like that just wouldn't be practical for the species or the individuals. After all, the man would be exhausted. They even have a saying that more or less translates as, 'He's so conceited he'd try to - uh...'"

Impasse. She gazed at his uncomprehending face with an intense desire to throw a custard pie at it. Diane Ellsworth had reached middle age with a very comprehensive vocabulary, but she realized it was totally lacking when it came to ways of getting the point of an off-colour joke across to the chief of mission.

At this appropriate moment a short furry person glided into the office and whispered something in Dr. Ellsworth's ear. She choked. "Oh, great," she said. "The latest bulletin in the Martin case. I - oh, sorry, Niyrr, this is my boss, J. T. McKelvie; call him 'sir' - chief, this is my helper, Niyrr."

McKelvie stared dubiously at the boy, a gray-furred urchin of twelve or so, in the usual native costume - a leather harness supporting several pockets and belt-pouches and the inevitable long knife strapped to his back. Many of the natives showed battle scars, he realized (a proud race, touchy about their honour and fond of fighting, and a great nuisance to deal with if one weren't careful) but surely an eye patch and an arm so badly scarred it was almost unuseable were a little out of the ordinary. And at his age, too.

"Accident, J. T.," Dr. Ellsworth snarled in a rapid whisper. "Where are your manners?"

"How do you do, sir," said Niyrr with an uncertain bow.

"Oh - how do you do; glad to meet you," McKelvie said hastily.

Some of the anger left Dr. Ellsworth's eyes. "As I was saying," she went on conversationally, "the latest bulletin. Our friend here happened to hear Martin telling one of his friends that he's persuaded the young lady to spend the, uh, week in question alone with him. Starting day after tomorrow. And in case you didn't get the point of what I was telling you before, we'd better hope Martin's got more stamina than I think he has. Otherwise, start packing."

"Packing?" McKelvie was hopelessly lost.

"That's right. Because we're probably in for what they call an interracial

incident. Or, just possibly, a massacre."

...as a result, I found it necessary, with her co-operation and that of indigenous personnel, to intervene personally in the matter in order to bring it to an acceptable conclusion...

"Are you sure this is necessary, Dr. Ellsworth?" McKelvie asked plaintively as they left their safe, well-lit headquarters.

"It damned well is," she said. "Why else would I drag you out at this hour? If I know Martin, he's ready to give us all a bad name right this minute. You don't know the trouble we've had to think up a way out of this! Now hurry!"

As they entered the native quarter, as McKelvie persisted in thinking of it, (it comprised the whole town except the area on the outskirts where the Terran mission had set up its prefabs) a small gray figure met them. "Hello," purred Niyrr, looking to McKelvie more disreputable than ever in his own moonlit territory.

"Did you get them?" Diane Ellsworth asked.

The boy nodded, with a feline grin. "I tell them ready for help now," he said. "Not easy. They mad at first, but not now. Say he pretty brave, try at all. Good joke."

She whooshed with relief and put a hand on his furred shoulder. "Good psychologist," she said.

"Arrela still asleep," Niyrr informed them. "First time in two days. I get tired waiting. Dr. Martin more tired."

"Then we're just in time," Dr. Ellsworth said, and as they rounded the next corner she crossed the dusty street and intercepted a staggering figure. "Just as I thought! Back you go."

Martin stared at the motherly apparition before him. "Dr. Ellsworth! What are you - I mean, I -"

She turned him around and steered him firmly back the way he had come, while Niyrr vanished in the shadows. "You can't run out just because she's asleep," she snapped. "You just go right back there. You can take a nap, and her boy-friends will be along in a minute, so with them around you can probably rest some more after she wakes up. But if you dare try running off again you'll insult these people so badly we'll be lucky if any of us escape. And you, personally, will have your throat cut. I promise!"

Martin was too tired to argue. He stood at Arrela's door and blinked at them. "All right," Dr. Ellsworth went on, "in you go, and stay as long as you have to. And don't say anything stupid if you can possibly help it. You know what you have to do. And, Martin -" she shook his hand solemnly - "good luck."

She dragged McKelvie back into the shadows, as Martin went obediently back into the house and Niyrr arrived with two young natives. McKelvie was relieved to hear one laugh as they followed Martin in.

"It's all right now," Dr. Ellsworth said, waving to the watchful Niyrr as she started back to headquarters. "The shock of finding us here ought to make him do as he's told. If not, Niyrr will handle it. It's almost a pity to send him back in there but it's his own stupid fault - and he'll probably learn something, at that."

"I don't understand any of this," complained McKelvie.

"Well, that's why I took you along," she said. "Partly to back me up, mostly so I could show you something.

"Look. These are fierce, proud people. Along comes a big-mouthed Terran and claims he's as good as three or four of them. Or, at least, to them it looks as if that's what he's saying. In fact he just doesn't understand, but try and tell them that!

"Then suppose he sneaks out on her after a couple of days, as if their girls aren't good enough for him. She wakes up and goes frantic with insult and frustration (Hell hath no fury, remember?) and gets her boyfriends, who are already insulted, to avenge her honour. They wouldn't be satisfied with Martin, who'd last about ten seconds; they might rouse the town and wipe us all out.

"He meant no insult by running away, of course - he was just embarrassed because he'd got into a situation he couldn't handle. A perfectly human reaction. But these people aren't human, and remember, they don't understand our race very well yet either...

"Well, that's what I thought he'd do, so I talked to Niyrr, who's a sensible child and thinks we're too interesting to lose. And we set up a plan to watch and catch him. Niyrr came and warned me and so here you and I are, lurking around looking silly at this ridiculous hour. But because of that, instead of getting killed Martin will get credit for at least trying to live up to his boasts - and plenty of ridicule for admitting he needs help. That should do him good, and if he comes yelling for an explanation next week I'll give him one, in words of one syllable, with diagrams."

"He deserves it," said McKelvie. "Putting us in this position...having to come out here and order him to save the mission by...frankly, Dr. Ellsworth, I feel like a fool."

"Oh, so do I," she said, "but that's nothing new. Better us than the natives. And after all, J.T., it does have its funny side."

They walked on toward their prefabs, watching the sun come up; it had been years since either of them had seen a sunrise. McKelvie tried diligently to see the funny side, and found himself remembering why he had chosen this career; the interest in exotic worlds, in people who were so different from his own... Suddenly he stopped, struck by a truly horrifying idea.

She turned to look at him. "What is it?" she asked.

"What if - somehow - he'd managed it?"

I have found it advisable to approve Dr. Martin's request for transfer, and as a result of this incident am considering taking a short course in alien psychology on completion of this mission. Or human psychology. Or both. Or a long vacation.

Editor's note: The above story is only a sample of the world of the cat people which Jaye Stanley has created. She plans further stories and novels set in this world and using some of the characters that appear here. I for one will be very interested in reading further chronicles of the cat people...

SMYTHE

THE PARANOID'S PIT

Ye Editor has decreed that this is to be a short column. Seems that she has run a bit short on space. She also wants it to be on the theme of this issue. She is Ye Editor and thus it goes.

I am not going to write about the presence of sex in science fiction from the usual standpoint. Thus you are not going to see me defend its presence or cry out that it is degenerate. You can see that in the letter columns of the various magazines like ANALOG. There some of the people claim that Bova has ruined ANALOG and that Campbell wouldn't buy those stories. To those people I have a small message: DROP DEAD.

There is nothing wrong with sex in science fiction. It can add to a character and make him seem more realistic. It adds flavour to a story knowing that the hero knows about the birds and the bees; the xees and the xeoes.

It can also cover up a poor story and make it seem better than it is. Since the writer is being paid by the word, it pays off in hard cash to stretch a story with a fuck scene or two. Only thing is: a poor story is still a poor story.

Thus we come to what I think is the only problem of sex in science fiction. It will become a refuge for the hack or poor writer. These types could use a sex scene or two to pad out their plots and make them seem intelligent and moving. We might end up with other sidelines and have a fuck scene a necessity.

I remember seeing one book with a cover blurb that called it the "Lustiest SF Book of the Year". Do we want writers to compete for a blurb like that?

Before you say, "but sex is a part of human existence", let me say, "so is murder." When was the last time you read about a good axe murder in a science fiction book? How about an axe murder lobby, letters for and against axe murders in ANALOG?

Let us take a look at mystery books for a moment. There are three authors that I enjoy reading. Two of them have their hero get laid in every book. It is not part of their plot, just a sideline tossed in. It helps stretch out the action and gives them a chance to do a little moralizing. After a while it gets boring. Back to SF: DO we want SF to turn into something like that? Sex only used to stretch a book or to titillate our senses? I hope not.

Next time you see a book or a story with a fuck scene or two, ask yourself a question or two. Does this really make sense? Does it show something of the character's feelings and character, or is it just to pad out a rough spot? Does it serve another purpose than to titillate the senses of the reader? There is nothing wrong with having one's senses titillated. After a while, however, one becomes bored. It becomes monotonous and stifling.



To combat this I have developed a rule. I call it Smythe's Law.

Whenever you come upon a humping scene imagine it being replaced with an axe murder instead.

After all murders are a part of life. Look at the crime existence. If an axe murder does not look that odd, then the scene is tacked on. If the murder seems idiotic then it probably is.

Actually you can put anything in place of an axe murder. Just use something that does not happen every day. You don't get laid every day, do you?

Now that my rantings are finished for this time, let us go on to other topics.

Have you seen the Star Trek blueprints yet? They are the work of a total idiot. That may be a bit harsh, after all, look at what the poor person had to work with. If you have a set, then you know what I mean. If not, then do not waste your money unless you are a trekkie or interested in the antics of a bureaucratic elephant. If the next issue comes out soon enough, I may take a crack at telling what I find to be wrong with them, that is, if someone else hasn't already.

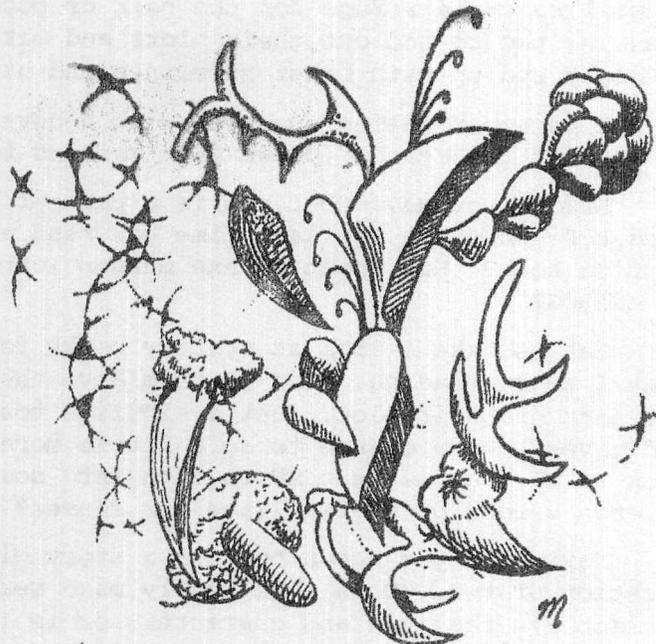
TURKEY ALERT TURKEY ALERT TURKEY ALERT TURKEY ALERT TURKEY ALERT TURK

What, you ask, is a Turkey Alert? Well, it is to warn you about something I feel will be a real turkey. This alert is about a show called *SPACE: 1999*.

At the moment I am reading a book by E. C. Tubb, based on the first episode or so of *SPACE: 1999*. The basic idea is that a radioactive waste dump on the moon blows up and sends the moon hurtling away from the earth. Our heroes are on a moonbase which is then hurtling off into space. It passes near a strange planet that just happens to be moving into the solar system area from deep space. Naturally it is not frozen solid. The reason for that is...well, you guess. I may not finish the book. The book is well-written, but the whole idea reeks of something. This may be a bigger bomb than *THE STARLOST*. At least that had a good idea behind it.

The pictures on the book show a little of the planning behind it. My God, does anybody remember a turkey movie that was actually a Western set on the moon? That film even had a company called Moon Fargo. The film was called *MOON 02*. The book cover shots remind me of that with a touch of *2001* tossed in.

When the show does come out, see it. Who knows, I may be wrong. I hope that I am wrong.



JANET SMALL

BUT WHAT ABOUT PHOTOSYNTHESIS ?

Once upon a time a friend of mine was asked to write an article for a fanzine. He chose a topic he thought was properly fannish, and worked like hell to get the light tone he wanted. Any sercon ideas were banished immediately. Frivolity was all. After turning the air sulphurous for hours, he finally thought he was getting the right effect--and then he saw a helpful, conscientious face looking over his shoulder, and heard an anxious voice in his ear. It was of course the editor.

"But what about photosynthesis?" she said.

Wherefore, when I was spoken to about thinking up a regular column for this new and presumably magnificent zine (well, I had to say presumably, I haven't a clue what is going to go wrong between now and collating day but it wouldn't be a fanzine if nothing did) I had to think up a name for it. I needed a title that would have some chance of fitting whatever drivel I might see fit to include in the future, and I'm pretty sure that whatever I mention it won't include photosynthesis.

Anything else is fair game. At the moment I've just lived through a very humid day that should only have been Fahrenheit what it was Centigrade, the sort of day when the corflu will NOT dry and the mimeo decides nobody loves it and weeps ink. Then I finally get something done and what's the verdict? "It's crooked--can't you change the angle of the stencil? So nothing I say will make much sense, I warn you.

Especially when I try to consider the theme of this issue, which (as is excruciatingly obvious by the time you've read this far) is MUSH. Good old all-pervading mush. Right now I'm agin it. What I might think of it some other time, I'm not sure. Perhaps if I managed to get myself all cooled off and cleaned up and de-inked and so on, I might be a lot more tolerant or even in favour of it. On the other hand I probably wouldn't recognize myself...

Hmm, maybe I've hit on something here. Do you suppose there's one of those basic statements to be made out of it, like the-amount-of-work-is-inversely-proportional-to-the-tolerance-of-mush? Is that why the people with the least chores to be done watch the most soap opera? Why the housewives with the most time on their hands read the most Columbine Romances, or whatever? Why people coming home after a busy day snarl at the spouses and friends and offspring who greet them with attempts to divert and console, and get along just fine if ignored? Why mothers who peep into one's room the night before an exam and urge one to take a break run such a risk of having books thrown at their heads?

As soon as the snarler gets a chance to relax these overtures are usually paid back in kind, which is a good thing, otherwise we'd have a lot more misery than we do among spouses, friends, offspring, mothers and other victims. And they don't deserve it. But how come those times when we ought to be happiest to get a kind word or affectionate gesture are just the worst possible times to try and give them to us? Is it just that there ain't no justice, or what?

BOB WILSON

HUMAN WRITES

I've lived in Canada since I was nine, classification Landed Immigrant, which can produce a strange sort of schizophrenia. My pre-adolescent self is Californian, but I've had a strictly Canadian puberty. Still I'm an American citizen; it says so on my immigration card, my social security card --and my draft card.

People have asked me, "Why do you have a draft card if there isn't any draft?" But that's not the way it works, Virginia; there is still a Draft Board, it still registers red-blooded American males; it can still call up cannon fodder at will. The guillotine isn't working today, sir, but please keep your head where it is...

According to some sub-section of some bylaw, American citizens living abroad are required to register for the draft before their 18th birthday. Now, I'm some years past 18, but I still remember the day I registered. It was during the very early Nixon years, and there was still a Vietnamese war with American corpses.

It was easier to register than not; the law was lenient and those of us living abroad from an early age got put on some don't-call-them-up-till-last list. This, however, does not assuage the soul of a nervous 17-year-old who has to go all the way to the American Consulate on University Avenue and Register for the Draft.

The subway ride was awfully long. My trouble is imagination: I'm good at feeding my fears. In movies, when people get drafted they get physicals...would I? Oh, Jesus, would they make me take my clothes off? (The innocent victim huddled in his parka--this was December--and considered physical deformities.) "We can't take this man, Sergeant; his penis is too small! Look at yourself, boy! You call yourself an American?" Still, a 4-F might be worth it...almost...

I got off the subway at Queen's Park station and walked south. My luck, to be born in December. Sagittarius--I don't believe in astrology, though; all us Sagittariae are skeptics. December, like Christ, who was a martyr, which was vastly reassuring. But I'm not the martyr type: if I ever did get wounded in Vietnam it wouldn't be anything heroic--one of those frigging bamboo booby-traps, or maybe a case of incurable Saigon clap. They don't give you medals for clap.

I stopped in front of the steps of the consulate. Should I go in, I asked myself? And I answered, Yes, or stand here getting funny looks from pedestrians. I entered, propelled by social consciousness.



They didn't give me a physical or anything, but it was almost as bad--for different reasons.

First of all I had to fill out a form, which was simple enough. Color of hair ...I tugged at a lock of it, which got me a funny look from the man behind the desk. Hair, brown. Okay. Color of eyes... This was a problem; it's the sort of thing you're supposed to know, but I never remember. And I couldn't exactly ask. Brown? Green? Well, no; I'm disgustingly Aryan; so--blue. It was a good guess and turned out to be right. Height: 6 foot. (5'11", but if you can't look good on paper...) Any disabling diseases or deformities? Unfortunately, no. "Chronic reluctance" probably wouldn't stand up to scrutiny.

They took away the paper and ushered me into the Registrar's Office. Now *this* was an ordeal.

The room was small, mostly filled with an old mahogany desk. On the wall opposite me was a huge framed photo of Richard Nixon, which looked--not evil, not awesome, not ominous, but overwhelmingly silly.

The registrar was short, thin, nearly bald. He was dressed in something oversized and brown. He had one glass eye, which had somehow focused itself on the far left-hand wall; the other eye was focused on me.

Picture this Marx Brothers scenario I had just been marched into: a one-eyed guy in a zoot suit with a little American flag on his lapel, standing under this huge picture of Nixon, saying, "Raise your right hand, please..."

I raised my right hand.

"Do you, Robert C. Wilson, pledge something something protect and serve something of the something in whatever way requested something until death something something United Something of America something something something signify by saying yes."

There is a scene in Huckleberry Finn--or maybe Tom Sawyer--where either Tom or Huck has to keep still and not move, and he starts to itch, and the more he



thinks about it the more he itches.

It works with laughing, too. And being nervous doesn't help.

Laughing at the Registrar is not considered diplomatic.

I bit my lip, I bit my tongue, I dug my nails into my palm--I have to go to Vietnam for injuries? I tried to think about unfunny things--sour cream or dead camels or impotence. It's these little psychic struggles that are the worst, you know. You'll have to stop yourself from laughing at the vicar more often than you'll have to storm a fortress, and it will take skill, and courage, and they don't give you medals for restraint, either.

I won this round: not even a smile. But I can show you the scars.

"Signify by saying yes," said the registrar.

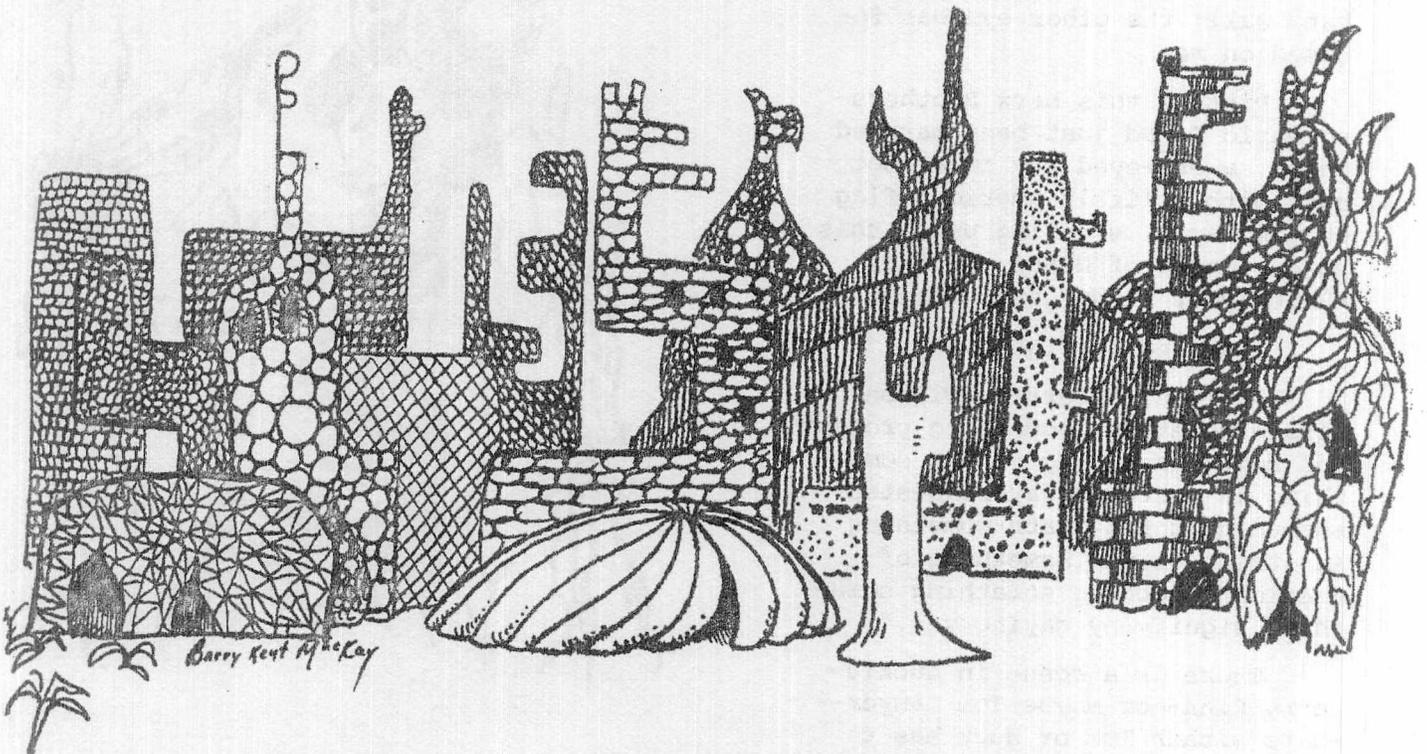
Promises made under duress are not binding... "Yessir, I do. I mean, yes."

So now I carry a draft card.

It occurs to me that if things had gone differently, if the war had escalated, you might be reading something more like Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant" than Wilson shooting the bull. But I think it's a reasonable trade. And, anyway, I'm still draftable; if the worst happens I'll be right up there on the front lines, killing Fascists or Communists--or Martians, God forbid.

But little victories are important, too.

I haven't laughed at a vicar since.



Index Expurgatorius

Taral Wayne MacDonald

Fanzines to be reviewed will first be screened by a panel of jurors who will select candidates on a basis of optimum entertainment value, giving weight to zines that must be reviewed with maximum hostility and disapproval. Those zines selected by the panel of jurors will subsequently be subjected to intense scrutiny by the reviewer and compared against a model fanzine of undisclosed identity (and nature). Rating will be on a 97 point scale with adjustments to the standard of living index made when the score is an odd number, a prime, below 31, or equal to a value of x satisfying the second degree function: $f(y) = y^2 - \frac{1}{2}y + 1$. The results of the completed review are highly confidential and are not available to general fandom. In consequence of this policy ratings will not be printed with the following reviews; you are invited to believe none were made. Thank you.

MYTHOLOGIES 3 - Don D'Amassa; 19 Angell Drive E. Providence, Rhode Island 02914. 28 page, ditto, irregular, available "by editorial whim or for LoC. Do not send money."

If all article and review writers start up their own fanzines then the rest of us non-creative (parasitical) fan editors are going to be up the creek.

MYTHOLOGIES is a personalzine that Don uses for musing in mostly. Occasional pieces are reprinted from older fanzines that Don has been involved with, but I believe that Don's work in each issue is completely original. The reprinted material is mostly by George Fergus and Paul di Filippo according to one letter in the lettercol. Besides musing about such things as chauvinistic female politicians, paranoia among feminists (Men are *plotting consciously and cooperatively* to subjugate female-kind!), male roles, non-conformity and the nuclear family, Don also reviews in length Robert Silverberg's *DYING INSIDE*. Out of love for them, no doubt, Don indulges MYTHOLOGIES with several fegghoots of the worst kind. For those with that sort of bent mind here, at last, is a market for them...

The letter column is long and at times very interesting; my only complaint being that six or seven letters each describing their personal definition of maturity is perhaps too much for a disinterested person to bear. It was for me. Other letters, however, fascinated me, especially those discussing the educational system. It could be a matter of tastes.

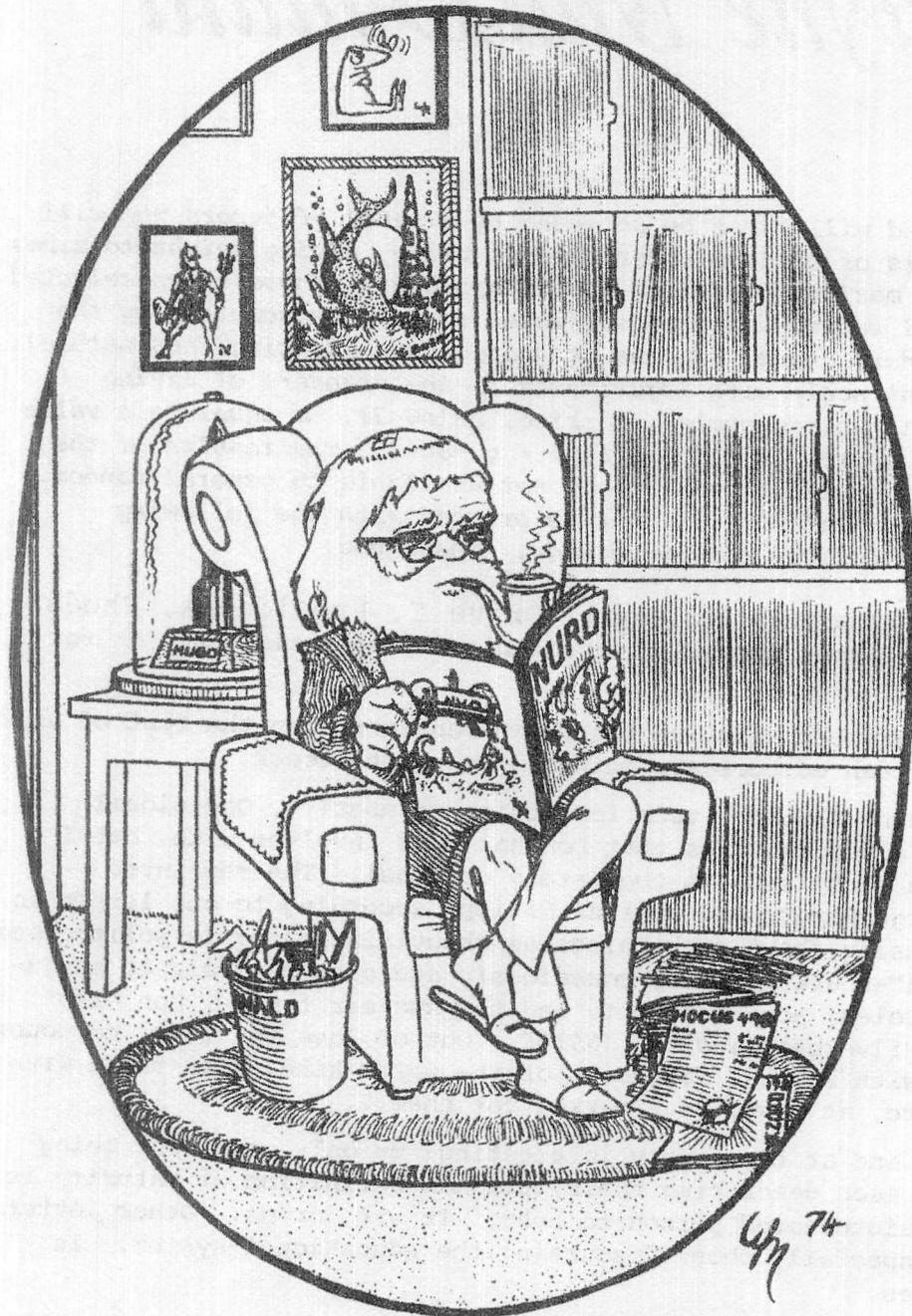
And surely MYTHOLOGIES is to Don's taste; MYTHOLOGIES is a personalzine, after all. If Don will let you have one it is an intriguing zine to read.

NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT 9 - Denis Quane; Box CC, E. Texas Stn. Commerce, Texas 75428. 24 pages, mimeo, irregular, available for sub at 30¢/issue or for the usual.

NOTES is one of those hundreds of fanzines listed by LOCUS that the new fanned hesitates to send one of the few copies of his newest prodigy to. I hesitated, and

I find I have lost by it. When I finally saw a copy I was pleasantly surprised and recommend it now, along with those who already do. It is not OUTWORLDS. But it is, in this day when they are perhaps disappearing, a low production mimeo fanzine of good quality. Most of the existing zines of this type are holdovers from five or more years ago--zines such as YANDRO, STARLING, and GRANFALLOON. When their contemporaries like ENERGUMEN, BEABOHEMA, and HUGIN AND MUNIN died, or like OUTWORLDS, RICHARD E. GEIS, and ALGOL became something completely different, there were few new zines to take their place. NOTES doesn't belong among these distinguished ranks, not at least yet, but it is of their sort and reads well.

The lead article of this issue is by Loren MacGregor, and it is what it is called; A REPLY TO A CHAUVINIST. Loren takes issue



with Poul Anderson's rebuttal to an article by Joanna Russ in the February 1974 issue of VERTEX. Joanna, of course, protested the silly roles assigned to women in most science fiction; Poul defended SF with examples that he felt treated women quite fairly. Loren re-examines Poul's examples and comes to a different conclusion than Poul did. It is hard to disagree with her, but I wonder that if Poul had chosen with more care if the issue would have been so cut and dried. What does it prove after all that one can select a biased sample to support his or her thesis? This is ignored in favour of further quibbling. Perhaps it is irrelevant what one decides is fair or not. Poul gives Chee Lan, a temperamental alien from his *SATAN, S WORLD* and *DAY OF BURNING*, as an example of handling a female character realistically. Loren accuses him of stereotyping her. I don't care. Of all Anderson's characters, mercurial Chee Lan is the most vivid in my mind's eye. She is sufficient unto herself and I have become quite fond of her.

DOES SCIENCE FICTION HAVE A FUTURE is a question asked by Eric Mayer, and after outlining the gloomy prospects of ultra-new wave anthologies taking over the stands he decides that nevertheless there is some hope after all. He proposes that new writers have given up trying for new ideas in SF, and have chased after old literary legerdemain that the mainstream had discarded at the turn of the century instead. But he feels that their jade with hard-science and ideas, (as opposed to "feelings") will not necessarily last. There may not be any new ideas anymore, but it is only an illusion that there ever were. Did Shakespeare worry about originality? He was quite content to rewrite old ideas, but he did it better than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, which is why we remember him and not them. What does that leave? Eric quotes Asimov on that score--"What's left? Only everything." Eric could be right, but writers are annoyingly unpredictable and write pretty much what they please. But I sympathize with him, I surely do.

There are reviews also. As a result of reading them I am anxious to buy *THE NOTE IN GOD, S EYE* but will probably never read *THE GREEN GENE*. This decision was reached from plot summaries only. There is not all that much more to see of what the reviewer thought about what he had read, nor why he may have felt that way. Apart from the reviews there is also a list of other books that Denis has read recently. I see that he has moderately catholic tastes (and approve).

Visually, *NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT* has room for some improvement. Denis has work from some good fanartists; but they are not brilliant fanartists. Unfortunately it is difficult to get the attention of one of the few brilliant fanartists still working in fandom. They have only limited time, and there are so many fanzines...Denis had made a decent job of it all the same. The arrangement is competent, if not inspired. There are one or two instances, though, where a little more care would have helped. The printing fades where there is black, and one illo needed to have corflu applied to margins that were not intended to be there. A proper cover that didn't share the page with the colophon and other particulars would have made a nicer appearance also. Perhaps I quibble too much over details however. *NOTES* is quite neatly printed and has a uniformly higher artistic standard than a good deal of fanzines including some of the better known ones.

A touch that I enjoyed was the scientific flavour *NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT* appropriately gained by such things as a thesis that time-travel was impossible, a problem in wave dynamics, and lettercol talk about black holes and their gravitational properties. This is wholely after my heart, and appreciated after such fannish fare as diaries and recipes.

If you had only thirty or forty copies of a fanzine to trade, I certainly think it would be worth sending one of them in trade for *NOTES*.

ASH-WING 15 - Frank Denton; 14654 8th Ave. SW Seattle, WA 98166. 48 pages, mimeo, irregular? available for the usual.



Another of the vanishing breed, the good-quality low-production mimeo zine, ASH-WING is a good way to spend an hour or so of restful reading. Its fifteenth issue had none of the spectacular contents that appear in the major offset productions, but that would be unfair comparison. What ASH-WING 15 *did* have was chiefly good writing, of a personal nature, and some enjoyably informal book reviews. The letter column was talkative, varied, and entertaining. The editorial and one of the articles dealt with the author's travels; to British Columbia and Ohio. A letter by Keith Roberts in England, an article on cartoonists by Dainis Bisenieks, and fan fiction by Tom Hart complete the issue. None of these, I repeat, were spectacular, but all (but the fiction that I routinely skipped) were worth reading.

A liberal use of illos by Canfield, McLeod, Pearson, Rotsler, and many others successfully brightened the pages, but also bore evidence that the needle on the electrostencil cutter used needed replacement. ASH-WING 15's cover was much less interesting than that on the previous issue, which had been a nicely rendered owl by Jim Garrison (even though the feather pattern would not have fooled an ornithologist). One or two of the lettraset titles were inserted into the stencils crookedly, and should have been handled with more care. And again betrayed the worn needle on the electrostencil cutter. Backcover was by Bill Rotsler.

ASH-WING 16 will likely be the last large format zine that Frank will be editing. According to his thoughts in the editorial, Frank has become more interested in a smaller, more personal zine much like the present BY OWL LIGHT that he also publishes. Editorials are seldom reliable but one grieves at the potential loss of still another genzine.

BREAKTHROUGH 5 - Henry Eitman; Box 968, Azusa CA 91702. 30 pages, irregular, mimeo, available for the usual LoC, trade, or contribution.

BT is a zine I have been getting since its beginning, and I have watched it grow from a largely editor-written zine to something quite a bit more sophisticated. One peculiar trait BT has kept from its first issue is Henry's interest in printing fan fiction. This is usually a death kiss for a fanzine, but Henry has had the wisdom and luck to have printed only *good* fan fiction, and to mix it with reviews and articles. The fiction in BT 5 is by Eric Vinicoff and Rayna Charles, Jon Inouye, Steve Sneyd, and Henry himself. Not having read any of it carefully I will not pass judgement. "A Case of James Blish" by Don D'Amassa is a re-examination of James Blish's *A CASE OF CONSCIENCE*. Don has no new insight into the novel, but he writes an interesting introduction for those who have yet to read it. The letters mostly discussed odd points that emerged from the minds of writers when they had read the fiction. Henry's presence throughout the letters (a controversial technique at best) helps in a way to give the lettercol a personality of its own.

Artistically BREAKTHROUGH has undergone a self-breakthrough. Its early issues suffered from too little art, and art by the editor. Although BT 3 had an unusual cover by Sheryl Birkhead, BT 5 is the first to print contributed illos. Beyond

mentioning Sheryl again, and Scott Cooper, modesty forbids any further comment. The cover, by Al Sirois, is one of the best covers I've seen on a fanzine in 1974 if one ignores the elaborate covers that OUTWORLDS and ALGOL are able to attract.

Printing fan fiction is a kiss of death in one other way besides a lack of response from readers. It fails to involve the editor enough in his own zine to continue the work. Henry, I fear, has expressed failing interest in continuing BREAKTHROUGH and confesses that he may stop publishing beyond the next issue or two. After all the preparatory work of publishing his first few fanzines, gaining experience all the while, it seems such a shame for him to just give it up!

DIEHARD 5, 6 - Tony Cvetko; 29415 Parkwood Dr. Wickliffe, OH 44092. 42, 51 pages, irregular, mimeo, available for 60¢, 4/\$2.00, or the usual. If there was an "X" in that space () then that was your last issue unless you did something.

DH is a modest fanzine, and perhaps one of my favourites. The fifth issue was badly mimeod, but the problem was mostly conquered in the sixth. Taking each issue individually, and somewhat quickly, the fifth contained an invigorating spread of interests. Articles ranged from faanish fiction, "First and Last Fen" by Olaf Stapleclip (Ben Indick), through romanticism "In Search of Living Myth" by Mae Strelkov, to politics "Three Unsolvable Problems" by D. Gary Grady. The last provoked wide reaction in the lettercolumn of the next issue. DIEHARD 6 continued Mae's article from DH 5, and completed her thoughts on South American mythology with a decidedly von Danikenesque atmosphere. Don Brazier adds his stream-of-consciousness type of writing to a column, "Barbequed Bones", that Tony hopes will become a regular feature. Loren MacGregor wonders where the science went in science fiction anthologies with her article "Dear Ma, Come Quick! Someone Stole My SF Content!", and complains about deceptive anthologies that are labelled SF but include unwanted, undisguised mainstream. Then Don D'Amassa does his famous thing with book reviews.

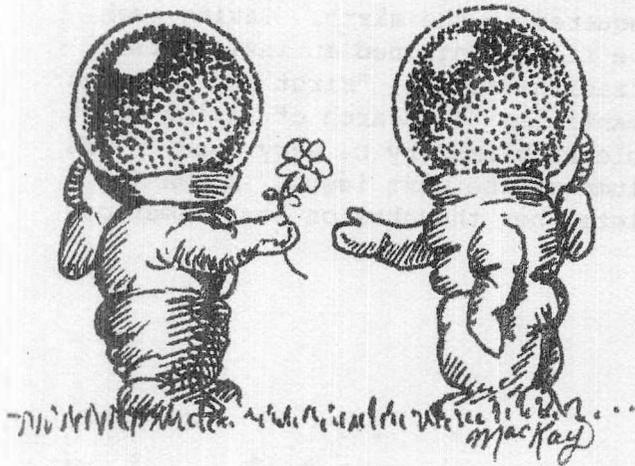
One particular item in DIEHARD 6 caught my attention more than most. This was a satire of *TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE* by D. Gary Grady, called "Time Enough to Read It". I hated it! But no, I am not a defensive Heinlein fan. Worse, I am a forestalled writer who wrote almost exactly the same sort of thing, called "I Fear I Have No Time for Love With a Stranger", only instead of having it pubbed fannishly I perhaps foolishly attempted a pro sale. "Time Enough to Read It" hurts by being published first. Ouch; but it is good and funny.

DIEHARD doesn't use a lot of interior art, but what it does use is normally good. The worst work used is by two artists



whose names I, from mercy, will not mention. The best is by Al Sirois and Sheryl Birkhead. There is a piece by another artist, who for reasons of modesty will remain nameless, that was originally published in the defunct OSFiC newsletter, NOR. Ain't bad if I say so myself... The cover on DH 5 was by Sheryl, and is one of her better ones, but still similar to many others she has done. Sheryl's lack of conviction of her own talent is sadly restricting her. The DIEHARD 6 cover is an excellent piece by Al Sirois depicting an alien lakeside scene that I like enormously. With the cover on BREAKTHROUGH 5, it too is one of the covers I most admired in 1974. Two good covers in a row is too good to last; choose carefully next issue, Tony.

Reed Andrus leaves us a parting word from the last DIEHARD: "Yog-Sothoth Saves!"



CHECKPOINT 57 - Darroll Pardoe; 24 Othello Close, Hartford, Huntingdon, PE18 7SU, England. 4 pages, roughly 8½ by 6 inches, offset, monthly, available for 5/\$1.00, trade, or printable news, free sample on request.

Neat and informative, CHECKPOINT is an English LOCUS, but short. North American news is largely drawn from sources available to fans in this continent already, but its British news is useful. Fanzines are also given short reviews in some issues. For maintaining an awareness of British fandom, CHECKPOINT seems to be about the best British newsletter to read.

INSTANT MESSAGE 164 - Jill Eastlake; NESFA Box G MIT Branch PO,

Cambridge MASS. 02139. 6 pages, mimeo, monthly, available by sub \$5.00 annually, or the usual...I think.

This is the newsletter of the New England Science Fiction Association. The first thing I was impressed with was poor printing, but this may have been my copy and not typical. The second thing I was impressed with, when I had finished reading it, was impenetrability. It is very much a club-oriented newsletter, and its references to non-club members are often obscure. The major issue in this issue was post-Boskone business, accounts, and reports.

FANITY FARE - Ted Peak; 1556 Detroit #1, Denver CO 80206. 16 pages, mimeo, quarterly, available for the usual with a prompt cut-off for non-response.

A list of contents is simple: an interview with Fred Goldstein (Fred Goldstein?), an "obscure Analog writer" review by Don D'Amassa, a short editorial, and several letters. This issue is not very meaty, but really didn't read badly. Ted also managed to get a bit of decent art, though not much, one of the illos by Sheryl Birkhead and another by Chris Offutt. Ted did a fair job on the cover himself.

DESTINY OF SCIENCE FICTION 1 - Bob Sourk; 2050 Ulric St. #6, San Diego, CA 92111. 11 pages, offset, "published on a regular schedule every so often", available by sub at 5/\$1.00, or the usual.

I hesitate to review a zine badly, usually soften the blow when I have to, and perhaps should not review at all in these cases. Reviewing DESTINY badly may be doing the editor a favour, however, it looks expensive to print and I think Bob is wasting his money. Much of his material is reprinted from what seem to be local and school newspapers, and are largely drivel. Articles on UFO's, Star Trek, and crackpots are what he has chosen to reprint. The juvenile level of these can be indicated by one that tells of how ST fans are publishing "fansies" (sic). The only original material in the zine is a listing of San Diego clubs, S.T.A.R. chapters, Friends of Klingon, the Mythopoeic Society, the SCA, and a couple of crank groups. There is also a short list of nearby cons and a few fanzines that Bob has received.

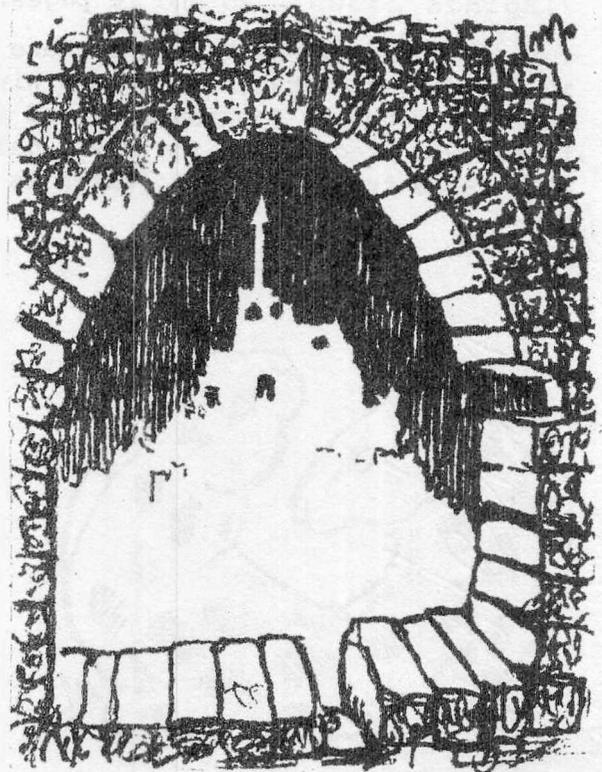
SCIENTIFRICTION 1 - Mike Glycer; Department of Popular Culture, BGSU, Bowling Green OH 43403. 16 pages, mimeo & ditto, one-shot?, not generally available?, to become a FAPazine if and when Mike is admitted into the Inner Circle?

This is one of Mike's umpteen titles that appear and vanish so enigmatically. SCIENTIFRICTION appears to have been published as a surrogate Christmas card, and just because Mike likes to do a zine whenever the urge strikes him. The contents of his "Christmas card" would feed a genzine: "The Zineophobic Eye" by Mike Glicksohn, a review of Silverberg's ALPHA FIVE, and editorial, a con report, and LoC's. (What does he do when he publishes a fanzine? PREHENSILE!)

Another of Mike's publications seems to be officially dead, but he neglects to inform just which one. Possibly ORGANLEGGER, since the expired is a newszine.

REQUIEM 2 - Norbert Spohner;
455 Saint-Jean, Longueuil, Quebec
J4H 2Z3. 23 pages, offset, quarterly?, available for 75¢, sub 6/\$4, and trade.

This one I'm reviewing without even reading! Mainly because I can't, I speak no foreign languages, and REQUIEM is entirely in French. But it looks good. It's neatly printed and uses many photographs. Graphics are effective, and the little illustration there is doesn't detract from its appearance. I can just make out enough French to know that the main concern of REQUIEM is films, television and books. I think that Norbert would like to print fannish items too, but Quebec's fandom is well isolated from the rest of fandom by its language, and doesn't, I don't think, exist in the sense that we conceive fandom. The Montreal in/en 77 effort (now defunct) made a strong advertising stand in this issue. Other Canadian fanzines are favourably reviewed in REQUIEM 3.



GEGENSCHHEIN 17, 18, 19 - Eric B. Lindsay; 6 Hillcrest Ave. Falconbridge NSW 2776 Australia. NB. Australia is pronounced *Orstrælyya* by those in the know. 18, 20 and 20 pages, irregular, mimeo, available for the usual I think.

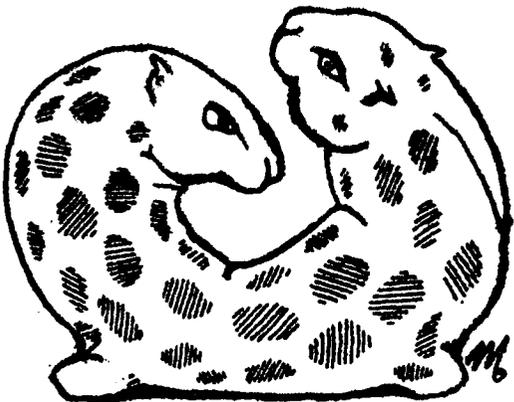
Not your usual zine to say the least, Eric publishes one of the shortest zines around and tends to send them in bunches. Taken any two or three together GEG makes a well-rounded fanzine, but singularly they seem as if the last few pages had torn loose in the mail. In spite of this awkwardness, it is an easily enjoyed fanzine whose contents vary from light fannishness to light sercon, avoiding either extreme. Artwork is scarce, but mostly rather good, the only complaint I have being that the repro of the portraits in GEG 17 was poor enough to make me think that the electrostencils were made from pencil sketches. One note of warning: look twice at the spelling. It's not typos you see, but SR 1, a spelling reform current in Australia.

KOSMIC CITY KAPERS 4 - Jeff May; Box 68, Liberty MO 64068. 17 pages, mimeo, irregular, available for the usual LoC, trade, contrib, or whimsey.

I'm not quite sure why I liked KiCK, but I did, and it has a good reputation among reviewers. Perhaps with further issues I will understand its charm better. In the mean time, if you have a zine to trade send one to KiCK for a sample. Jeff's zine suffers from two drawbacks that I can see, he has little art worthy of the name, and with my copy at least had a dickens of a time with fade. With the fade problem licked, though, Jeff should have no trouble attracting fanartists in future issues. The future is somewhat ambiguous, however. Jeff may modify KiCK, perhaps drastically. Whatever results will be interesting to see.

IT COMES IN THE MAIL 12, 13 - Ned Brooks; 713 Paul St., Newport News, Virginia 23605. 20 and 16 pages, mimeo, irregular?

This is a what-in-heck zine because I assuredly don't know what-in-heck it is. It is a rambling diary interspersed with news and fanzine reviews. All of its components are equally fascinating, and the reviews make it a valuable reference for faneds who need advice for their mailing lists. Ned uses no art in his fanzine at all, aside from the cover, which is a shame since the printing is done well enough to reproduce art acceptably. The justification is, of course, that using no art makes layout much simpler, and there is little enough egoboo in a zine like IT COMES IN THE MAIL to support what Ned is already doing. When IT COMES IN THE MAIL comes in the mail, try to drop something in the mail for Ned. He deserves it.



PHOTRON 12 - Steven Beatty; 1662 College Terrace Dr., Murray KY 42071. 39 pages, mimeo, irregular (actually, what isn't these days?), available for 40¢ or the usual.

Last issue Steve said PHOTRON would fold, so here it is back again? Editors are an unreliable group, and it's just as well because while PHOTRON isn't the best zine I've read there is no reason it should be ended. Its chief strengths were Mike Glyer's article on

satire as an influence on SF's origins, and a Sheryl Birkhead cover. Its chief weaknesses are interior artwork, and letters broken up into comments under separate topic headings. I hope PHOTRON continues, and improves, but most of all continues.

STARLING 29 - Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell; 525 W. Main, Madison WI 53703. 35 pages mimeo, irregular, available for 50¢ or the usual or "anything else you can convince me is worth publishing".

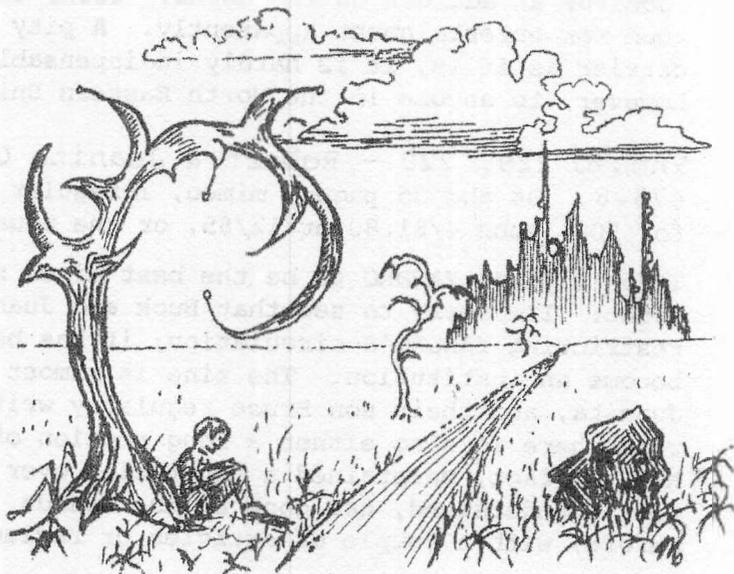
A most peculiar cover by Ken Fletcher starts the issue. It is most peculiar because it shows two "beings" of animal cast who oddly reminded me of two fans I know here in Toronto. Even the cats on the cover are appropriate. The art in STARLING is actually little

short of remarkable when compared to the range of art available to most mimeo zines. There were only one or two illos, of many in this issue, that I disliked, and that, for me, is unusual. One drawing, by Al Sirois, amused me enormously. Perhaps Al thought no one would recognize it, but I at least did. He had copied a tiny and obscure figure from the back-ground of a painting by Hieronymous Bosch. Very funny, Al...it was only luck I noticed it. Other work of note in the issue was by Canfield (in co-operation with Jay Kinney) and James Schull. Art is not all that makes STARLING one of the best mimeo zines around, the articles are uniformly excellent.

My favourite was "How to Write Swell" by Rick Dey, an article about Wycliffe A. Hill's "Plot Genie". Using the formula this old hack used, Rick comes up with bizarre plots to demonstrate the absurdity of the "Plot Genie" and like devices. Not at all strangely, Hill's writing career principally consisted of writing books about plot generating gimmicks. The other articles in this issue consisted of mostly music oriented subjects: "We're in the Music" by Lesleigh, "Several Things or Another and Liner Notes Too" by Jim Turner, "Dance to the Music" by Juanita Coulson, and "Electrolux Music" by Leigh Edmonds. They all interested me once I made up my mind to read them, but are not my usual reading fare. But I would mislead you to imply that STARLING carries only music articles. Past issues have had notable articles about comics, especially Disney, and about things that are simply faanish. Each issue has also a talkative lettercolumn, good reviews, and an engrossing editorial. What more could you want for your money; or for your zine?

SON OF THE WSFA JOURNAL 167-8 - Don Miller; 12315 Judson Rd, Wheaton Maryland 20906. 22 pages, mimeo, monthly as a rule, available for 25¢, 10/\$2, or for the usual etc.

SOTWJ 167-8 is a double catch-up issue and is twice or so as thick as normal. Which makes an awful lot of information to swallow, for that is what SOTWJ is: solid information packed into about half a page too little to contain it. It contained

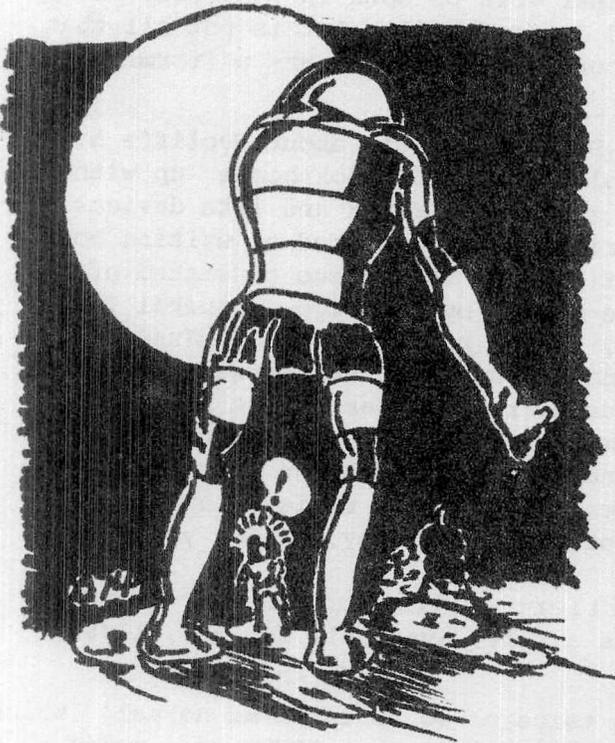


9 pages of book releases, 7 pages of fanzine listings, 2 pages of club minutes, 2 pages of news, and two pages of movie reviews, all in one issue. There is scarcely room for an address on the cover. SOTWJ is definitely all business, and has little room for entertainment apparently. A pity really, since as good an information carrier as it is, it is hardly indispensable as such. I strongly recommend it, however, to anyone in the North Eastern United States, as the area's best newszine.

YANDRO 228, 229 - Robert & Juanita Coulson; Rte 3, Hartford City, IN 47348. 34 and 35 pages, mimeo, irregular, "As often as we can manage", available for 50¢, subs 4/\$1.80 or 12/\$5, or the usual, but picky with trade.

I don't judge YANDRO to be the best mimeo zine, but it is among the best without a doubt. I'm sorry to see that Buck and Juanita are taking the seclusion route and restricting YANDRO'S circulation; it has been around so long that it has practically become an institution. The zine is almost a diary for the Coulson family, and Buck, Juanita, and their son Bruce regularly write personal columns each issue. As a rule there is also either a long section of book or fanzine reviews by Buck. YANDRO has, in fact, maintained a reputation over the years for its frequent reviews. This too, I understand, has gone by the boards. Still, YANDRO may continue much as before, with a couple of articles or reviews along with the personal material.

The outstanding articles in issues 228 and 229 were the "Minnieska Incident", Lovecraftian fan fiction, by Glenn & Philip Rahman, and "The Canadian Swept Down Like A Wolf On the Fold" by Sandra Miesal. The former, though straight, was still somehow humourous--an unusual and I felt refreshing treatment of the Cthulhu bit, in fact I wonder just how straight it was. The latter was certainly not serious, and delightful. Sandra foretells Canada's conquest of the U.S. under the reign of Pierre Ashurbannipal Trudeau. One wonders whether Sandra is in need of Exorcism.



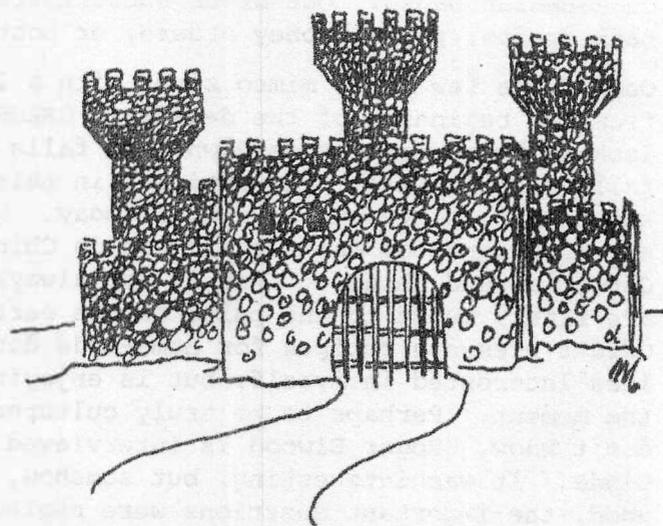
In an earlier review of YANDRO I panned the artwork, yet I believe that it has improved in the latest issue. Modesty (and prudence) intrude before I can comment on any of the artwork specifically, but my belief in improvement is reached without considering anything of mine. The difference is due largely to some excellent illos by ATom and Gilliland. Which is odd since it was largely the Gilliland cartoons that I disliked in earlier YANDROs.

Whatever the future may bring for YANDRO I await the next issue with continued expectations.

CAP'N RO'S WHIZZ-BANG - Ro Nagey, 1115 Granger, Ann Arbor MI 48104. 40 pages, offset, published five times yearly, available for 50¢ or the usual arrangement.

Ro's zine has the grating distinction of being the one whose title has the largest

number of typeshifts of any I know. Hence I will avoid using its title whenever possible in this review. It is published for the Stilyagi Air Corps, an Ann Arbor club, and benefits from the talent of the other local club, the W3F. Contributors in this issue include Cy Chauvin, and Randy Bathurst. Also Don D'Amassa, who isn't local, but should be mentioned anyway. Book reviews are provided by Ro's landlord, Jim Martin. Ro himself furnished a long Discon 2 report. The zine read well, but looked disquieting, and it was hard to put my finger on what was wrong. I have concluded that the fault lies with the layout. It is typed in impeccable Selectric versatility, but with enormous wasted spaces between



articles, along margins, and around illos. Properly and miserly laid out the zine would have been a quarter shorter than it was. The artwork, though excellent, also had an alien feeling. It had that unmistakable offset fade that made the old OSFiC magazine of Peter Gill so famous a few years back. A different fanzine is CAP'N RO'S WHIZZ-BANG, (my self-respect demands I type it at least once more), and worth exposing your prejudices to.

KARASS 9, 10, & 11 - Linda Bushyager; 1614 Evans Ave, Prospect Park, PA 19076. 18, 14, & 14 pages, mimeo, monthly, available for sub at 4/\$1 or the usual.

In trade for a quarterly GRANFALLOON we get a monthly KARASS instead. The only drawback to this is that GRANNY could be reviewed without being outdated as easily. A KARASS review is outdated almost automatically because of the monthly schedule. The only defense is to review several issues at once. In general KARASS is the most interesting newszine presently in fandom, not even excepting LOCUS. On the other hand, KARASS's news runs to fannish items mostly, and I prefer this out of personal taste, you may not agree. The most interesting feature of recent issues has been Linda's extended discussion of the future of WorldCons, and a future issue promises to print readers' reactions to her comments. Now a regular feature, Bruce D. Arthurs reviews fanzines (review copies should be sent to him at 920 N. 82nd St, H-201, Scottsdale, AZ 85257). Other material to be found in KARASS includes short articles, con listings, minicon reports, and CoAs.

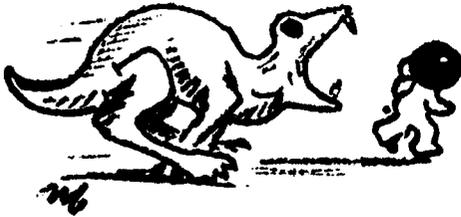
Artistic standards in KARASS are high (Linda has consistently returned my artwork...) and some outstanding work has appeared in it. Issue 9 had a cover by Shull that can easily be one of the best that year. Issue 10's cover was by Pearson and was almost as beautiful. Number 11 had a cover by Kinney that in spite of a dislike for Kinney's work I rather liked. Interior work regularly exhibits Shull, Canfield, Gilbert, Freff, Steffan, and almost every other artist of good fannish reputation, who is still approachable, and some that aren't.

By all means get KARASS, even if you have to give up that other newszine to do it. (You can always read someone else's LOCUS after all...)

GRANFALLOON 19 - Linda Bushyager; address above. 44 pages, mimeo, "a yearly basis or so", available for \$1, or the usual. "Please do not send personal checks on Canadian banks. Out-of-US subscribers please use international money order, bank drafts, postal money orders, or postal reply coupons. Thank you."

One of the few large mimeo zines with a low print run and budget that has survived from the beginning of the decade is GRANFALLOON. It is the winner of the ENERGUMEN look-alike contest hands-down, and falls very little short of it in quality, if it falls short at all. The articles in this issue gather together some of the best known writers present in fandom today. Mae Strelkov writes "The Stereoscopic View", a reminiscence of Mae's childhood in China and the oddly clashing impressions of Christian and Chinese. Mae is not always reasonable in her ideas, but her senses are finely tuned to the pulse of the earth, and her prose is almost poetic. Jodie Offutt presents recipes for home-made donuts, and wine, something I could hardly be less interested in myself, but is enjoying a growing interest among mature fans at the moment. Perhaps to be truly cultured one *should* appreciate cooking, though. I don't know. Roger Elwood is interviewed for the umpti-umpth time, this time by Linda. It was interesting, but somehow, like most other interviews of Roger Elwood, the important questions were neglected. I am curious whether Roger thinks

he is diluting SF or not, or whether he thinks he may cause the bottom to fall out of the market as some writers do. Don D'Amassa reviews another little-known author, this time T.J. Bass, author of *THE GODWHALE*. *THE GODWHALE* may be a nominee this year, so perhaps Bass' obscurity will come to an abrupt end. At least I hope so; I greatly enjoyed *THE GODWHALE* and seem to be in accordance with Don on that. Linda's editorial, "The Call of the Klutz", some faanish fiction by Frank Alviani, a scathing book review of *ASTOUNDING: JOHN W. CAMPBELL MEMORIAL ANTHOLOGY*, "An Exhumation for Astounding" by John Curlovich, and a long



lettercolumn complete the list of contents.

I have seen few portfolios in the last year, in fact I can't remember any offhand. GRANNY 19 has one of the best I've seen in years though, a folio of full-page art by Terry Austin. Reading down the list of artists one finds many of the best artists in fandom: Sheryl Birkhead, Randy Bathurst, Terry Austin, Grant Canfield, Mike Gilbert, Jim McLeod, Dan Osterman, Bill Rotsler, Jim Shull, Dan Steffan, Joe Pearson, and others. This one GRANNY uses up enough art to maintain a lesser zine in artistic heaven for several issues. There ought to be a law, if it wasn't so beautiful. But not even brilliant art will save a zine with bad layout. GRANFALLOON is so neatly printed, and well laid out, that it could almost do without the art. Adding the two results in a whole greater than the sum of the parts. GRANFALLOON should be had and seen.

Editor's note: Wayne will be reviewing fanzines regularly for SIMULACRUM and also in his own zine, DELTA PSI, forthcoming later this year. If you wish your zine to be reviewed, send a copy to: Wayne MacDonald, 1284 York Mills Road, Apt. 410, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3A 1Z2. He usually writes LoCs, and once his own zine is ready, will likely trade.

found in
P.O. Box 156

Now it's your
turn to write!



As I already mentioned in my editorial, *SIMULACRUM* is my second zine. The following letters were received in comment on my first, *VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK*, published in January of this year. *VC3PB* had as its theme religion in science fiction and featured a Frederik Pohl/Judith Merril/Father Gibson discussion on world problems and solutions, as well as a survey on *SF* and religious themes, and short humorous pieces.

I begin this lettercol with a bit of egoboo received shortly after completing the zine, from

MIKE GLICKSOHN
141 High Park Ave.
Toronto, Ont. M6P 2S3

While *VC3PB* does not inspire me to a loc, it would be mean-spirited indeed were I to allow so momentous an occasion as the loss of a fellow Toronto fan's publishing virginity to pass by uncommented on. Especially when what is usually a traumatic and painful experience for all concerned is this time accomplished with such style and aplomb. Few fans that I can recall have produced so attractive a first issue as you have, and you are to be congratulated on the skill and care that have gone into the conception and production of your first solo fanzine. If you live up to the potential hinted at here, then *SIMULACRUM* may well become a major fanzine indeed.

Whereas I'm delighted with the appearance of the issue (except for one badly smudged page and two with various degrees of off-set caused by missed slipsheets--the inevitable result of hiring the handicapped for this sort of mind-numbing labour--and a couple of poor electrostencils) I can't say that the nature of the material itself appeals to me all that much. At least not for a theme issue. That's mere personal preference, though, and not intended as a criticism of the fanzine.

For enjoyment, the highlights were Jim /Allan/'s review of *LORD TYGER* and Jaye /Stanley/'s Twain pastiche, both of which were well-written as well as thoughtful.

Your own article was a good beginning, but too slight for a topic of this depth and magnitude. The tape transcript was a sound idea (such as I read of it, I confess) but seemed to me to show that panels don't read anywhere near as well as they sound. I'm sure all three participants would have appreciated the chance to clear up some convoluted syntax and clarify some murky expressions of their ideas.

Three kudos for Wayne /MacDonald/ for the bacover--which exceeds the front in both concept and execution as far as I'm concerned--his FanFair ad, and the illo in your article. Three of his best works, I think: and note that they are all in cartoon style. That says something about me or about Wayne or maybe about both of us.

The Webber piece is amusing, the McGarvey doesn't hold together, the Armstrong simply is, and the Argasinski is embarrassing, especially after the Armstrong, since the juxtapositioning makes them both seem like put-ons. Don't you just love these in-depth perceptive criticisms?

All in all, though, an impressive debut. With tighter editorial control over what gets published, a wider range of artists and writers to draw on, and the same good equipment used on this issue, you'll soon replace Wayne as Bright Light on the Canadian Fanzine Scene. Congratulations, and keep it up on future fanzines!

This one made me feel reasonably good, although Wayne wasn't exactly elated over the prospect of being "replaced". I should mention that even though Wayne and I are in a sense major rivals in the Toronto fanzine scene, he has been extremely helpful in the preparing of this issue, with his contributions, custom-made artwork, and his help in printing. A lot of credit goes to him. As far as the "good equipment" goes, VC3PB was printed on Mike's SSScotch Press. SIMULACRUM is being printed on my own machine, the Vagnity Press, a Gestetner of similar model and vintage to Mike's. Typer is the same for this and VC3PB, except that I've lent out some of the golf balls and don't have quite as many to work with right now.

The next letter came in a decorated envelope, and struck me as highly amusing, so I will print it in its entirety...

Rich Bartucci
Box 369, KCCOM
2105 Independence Ave.
Kansas City, MO 64124

Gentlefen: I got your VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK yesterday. Since naught in the Why You Got This was checked (not even the "You babble in tongues"), I am at sixes and sevens in determining what elicited the thing. I don't think I'm an OSFIC member. At least, I don't remember joining. I have these lapses of memory, you see; last time I woke up with a wife and three adopted Biafran children in a house in Addis Ababba. Very confusing.

As a dyed-in-the-cassock former altar boy and Jesuit-trained Fascist for Father Church, I must say that I found your production not without a certain merit. Besides the fact that it used heavy paper and black ink, there was your interview with God, a very hard-to-talk-to gentleman. I know; I had a couple of articles and a con report published in his now-defunct genzine THE BIBLE. He told me that he thought fandom was becoming too sercon just before he gafiated.

The demise of THE BIBLE--even though its reprints get a lot of attention--piled on top of the fact that the old boy doesn't even get a cut of the profits proves that fandom isn't all that warm a place. The mercenaries will cut your throat here as they will everywhere else.

I remember the artists and writers in THE BIBLE; Mike Buonarroti, Leo DaVinci, the

fantastic Raphael (they all went pro after the zine shut down), as well as Matt, Mark, Luke and John, the finest stable of fan writers any editor ever had. The whole thing was topped off by Paul of Tarsus' LoCs, some of the best work of their kind in fan history.

My pile of original BIBLES is getting old now; twilltone doesn't stand up well over more than two thousand years. Still, I sometimes thumb through 'em, remembering ... Oh, by the way, your readers mightn't know where I can lay hands on THE BIBLE 4, do they? I need it to complete my collection of volume 1.

I'd seriously suggest that you follow up this program book with another, for *DEMONICON II*. I hear that the program included a thorough introduction to the black arts in a series of panels as well as a roistrous public debate between Screwtape and Wormwood, with the loser being eaten by the winner. The guest of honor was Shaitan, Lord of Darkness (a real nice guy, but I hear that if you wanted him to sign your program book, you had to supply the blood), while the fan GoH was Dr. Faustus. It was a hard con to crash, too; they had Brink's Guards and a legion of imps at every door. Ken Keller was there, and he said that "There's a lot here that we can incorporate into MidAmeriCon."



Ah, well; thanks again for the Program Book, and good luck to you in future. Meanwhile, I have taken up the worship of Shiva, the Destroyer (as opposed to New Jersey, the Battleship). All it involves is a brief ceremony where they give you a silken cord, a digging implement and a random name out of a bowlful of victims. You're supposed to find the victim, dig a suitable grave for him/her/it (one poor guy got Elliot Shorter, and he still hasn't finished the hole), whereupon you sneak up behind him and, with a loud yell of "Kali!", tourniquet the old blowpipe. All very relaxing, y'know. By the bye--you don't happen to have Eli Cohen's new address up there in Saskatchewan or wherever he is, do you? I think I've got the damn thing dug deep enough, but I'd like to be sure of the measurements.

What can I add? This has got to have been one of the best letters I've seen anywhere. DEMONICON has possibilities...contributions on the theme, anyone? Perhaps for a future theme issue of SIMULACRUM.

Rich got his VATI-CON for being a person of interest. I did not have a mailing list for VC3PB, and had put one together from friends' recommendations as to people who traded or wrote good LoCs, lists from LOCUS, and so on. In this case I was certainly not disappointed. Most copies of VC3PB, since it was an OSFiC-financed zine, went to club members; I retained about 70 copies to send away on my own. SIMULACRUM is privately-financed, and I have nearly 200 copies to send away this time.

The following letters will be in comment on one or another of the articles in VC3PB, starting out with one that covers nearly everything in the zine, front to back, in such a way that readers who haven't seen VATI-CON can still get an approximation of the contents...

Sam Long
Box 4946
Patrick AFB, Fla 32925

You seem to have mystified a bunch of people with your zine, to judge from the reviews of it I've read; and I must admit that I was puzzled at first too; but once I realized what you're up to, I enjoyed the zine thoroughly. Repro, artwork, &c, were first class: I congratulate you.

You'll have to admit, tho, that some of your contents were a bit heavy-handed and/or sophomoric at times. I'm thinking especially of the program on pp 2-3. But...to think that PLAIN TRUTH inspired a fanzine...well, fannishness is found in the strangest places.

The Merrill-Pohl-Gibson interview didn't turn me on. As is not uncommon in such conversations, there seemed to be a lot of blathering on about nothing in particular. And writing "Fred" and "Judy" but referring to the priest as "Father", took away from the effectiveness of the interview. You should at least have given "Father" a name: "Father Gibson". Otherwise, the fact that he's a priest is not kept before us. In fact, his very existence as a personality is threatened, because we--or I at least--do not automatically connect the word "father", capitalized or not, with a religious office unless some name is put by it. So you see what I mean?

I'm going to gripe a bit about Bob Webber's article too, but only because it, like most legends about Columbus, misrepresents the chap. Statement 1: it had long been known that the world was round. Columbus' idea was to get to the East by sailing West--an obvious idea--but one not attempted before because it was thought the distance was too great for the little ships of the period. Columbus, by a great deal of miscalculation, showed that it should be possible, gained support, and sailed away. He ran into America about where he thought Japan should be. If the Americas had not been in his way, he'd never have made it to the East; it is, or rather was, much too far for 16th century sailing ships. Statement 2: the Queen (Isabella) only offered to put a few small jewels in pawn. In the event, she didn't have to. Statement 3: almost the entire crew of Columbus' fleet were honest and respectable sailors and experienced seamen. There were a few jailbirds in the crew, but not many; and there were strong "turn-back" murmurs among the crews. I know all this because (as you should have read in QWERTYUIOP 8) I've just finished reading Adm. S.E.Morison's book on the European voyages of discovery. Only statement four is completely true. But, taking Bob's statements at face value, I thought his send-up of Saucerists was one of the best, funniest, and most enjoyable articles I've read in a long time. So ignore my corrections, as I did, and laugh.

Your own article on Religion in SF was rather complete. No, perhaps I oughtn't say that. It was a view of the best and best-known books and stories of religion (in a broad sense) in SF. Only Don D'Amassa could make you a *complete* listing. You chose well, and synopsised admirably. Good on yer. But, you neglected Robert Graves' *WATCH THE NORTHWIND RISE/SEVEN DAYS IN NEW CRETE*, which, to my mind, is one of the best religion fantasies I've read. A poet is evoked into the distant future where the Triple Goddess rules--the same goddess as Hera-Aphrodite-Hecates, or as Our Lady--and the land has become a utopia. But a flawed one: it lacks flavor, tartness. Religion permeates society, but it's become passionless. The Goddess decides to change all this, and causes her poet to be evoked so that he may bring evil back into the world. The book is highly poetic, very attractive, and--except for one or two passages--entirely believable.

I got some chuckles out of the Interview with God. And...Sock it to the Germs!
You parodied G.T.A.'s style right well.

But...is Argasinski serious or not? Mythologically, it makes perfectly good sense to create vegetation before creating the sun. Tuesday is sacred to Mars, who was at first a rustic deity of trees and plants; and Wednesday is sacred to Mercury, god of wisdom, who knew the secrets of the stars. Thursday is sacred to Jupiter, the oak-god, son of the sea-goddess; so it is entirely reasonable for sea-beasts and birds to be created on that day. The sea itself was created on Monday, sacred to the moon, who rules the sea. It's all how you look at it.



Bible quotes: did you know that the word *piss* and its elegant variant *pisseth* occur no less than 7 times in the Authorized Version of the Bible?

Jaye Stanley's bit was rather good, if not very original; but I was most intrigued to find in your letter column a reference to the British Isrealites. Did you know that His Late Majesty King George V was a follower of that absurd belief, or so it is said? Certainly he named his eldest son David, but David became Edward VIII, a highly un-Israelite name.

Back to the Bible. Deut. 21:18 has an excellent way of decreasing juvenile delinquency...and Deut. 25:5 describes one of the strangest ceremonies I know of. Have you read Asimov's Guide to the Bible? A very useful pair of books.

I wrote a reply to Sam when I received this letter, in which I made some excuses for myself regarding the things I did in VC3PB. The taped interview was typed over from an incredibly badly spelled original transcript; I left the names the way they were in the original. The Argasinski piece, for those of you who have seen VATI-CON, was perfectly serious, and I do not happen to agree with it at all. I included it because VC3PB was a clubzine and the author was a club member.

Next a letter concentrating on two articles in the zine; my own survey and the Pohl/Merril/Gibson discussion...

Angus Taylor
(presently at:
Fleerde 34
Amsterdam (Bylmermeer)
Netherlands)

Just thought I'd comment on your VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK. Very nice reproduction and layout--it reminds me a bit of ENERGUMEN in these respects, which is high praise indeed! I found Peter McGarvey's Interview With God most pleasant and informative--almost like something Robert Sheckley would do (see *DIMENSION OF MIRACLES*). But I want to comment on a couple of the other articles.

First, your own brief survey of religion in SF. You've divided stories into categories of "theistic" and "atheistic"--by which you seem to mean conforming-to-the-traditional-Christian-view-of-God-or not. Thus you can, for example, label Clarke's *CHILDHOOD'S END* "atheistic" when the novel is very much concerned with the question of gods, religion, and man's place in the scheme of the universe. So I'm not sure how useful your categories are. And you've omitted several of the better-known religion stories in SF--among them Blish's *A CASE OF CONSCIENCE*, C.S. Lewis'

OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET trilogy, and--the most notable omission--Stapledon's *STAR MAKER* (which is undoubtedly not only the most remarkable work of SF ever written that deals with religion, but is quite likely the most remarkable SF novel ever written on any subject.) Then there are certain other stories that come to mind, like "The Fire Balloons" by Ray Bradbury and "Faith of our Fathers" by Philip K. Dick.

At one point you say, "Questions about the origin of the universe, the workings of nature, and the evolution of man, can be answered more logically by science than by old-fashioned religious theories. And with progress in the social sciences questions about the origins of religion and belief in God can themselves be answered." Well, so much for old-fashioned religious theories--but what about new-fashioned religious theories? If science is fulfilling much of the role of old-fashioned religion, doesn't that imply that science has become a religion itself? I think that your implicit definition of religion is too narrow. My Random House dictionary defines religion as "concern over what exists beyond the visible world, differentiated from philosophy in that it operates through faith or intuition rather than reason, and generally including the idea of the existence of a single being, a group of beings, an eternal principle, or a transcendent spiritual entity that has created the world, that governs it, that controls its destinies..." So we're really talking about mythology, about the basic world-views of societies that mediate between them and the raw universe. And all groups, all societies have their mythologies. The scientific outlook is one of our main mythologies today. Science has its own world-views, which keep changing (see Thomas Kuhn on *THE STRUCTURE OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS*, and then have a look at *WHERE THE WASTELAND ENDS* by Theodore Roszak). The idea that science allows us to see the world "as it is", without any distortions imposed by human thought or perception, is pretty silly. Our views of the world are always mediated by our social being and our world-views. Whatever we take for granted is our mythology--our religion, in its broad sense. Since SF is sociologically/mythologically oriented, maybe all real science fiction is about religion. Maybe that's why people like Father Arthur Gibson are attracted to it. VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK protests a bit too much, methinks. But you can't get away from the subject: like the Hound of Heaven, it follows everywhere.

Also fascinating are political mythologies. Gibson, Pohl and Merril lament the terrible problems of places like India and the fact that only the Four Horesmen will solve these problems. There is another solution, but none of them seems to see it, because presumably it lies outside the bounds of their political mythology--That's the kind of solution that seems to be working pretty well at the moment in China: a complete restructuring of the society along socialist lines. Today in China everyone has adequate food, housing, education, medical attention, work--and the rate of population increase is dropping toward 1% per year (see *NEW SCIENTIST*, 9 January 1975), while other underdeveloped countries remain stuck at 2.5%, 3%, or higher. Ms. Merril talks about the need for "changing the minds of millions of people in mainland China as well as other places", but, Judy, it's not the Chinese who need to learn anything from us--it's we who need to learn from them. It's all very fine for us *intelligentsia* to sit back in our easy chairs and urge our fellow human beings to be more ecology-minded, to have more respect for each others' humanity, etc., but that's not going to have much effect when most of the world's political systems are oriented towards entirely different goals. As Robert Heilbroner has pointed out, the nice western liberal intellectual tradition is about to be phased out of existence, whether we like it or not, about to become as irrelevant and little-lamented as the plush court life of the 18th century aristocracy at Versailles.

The question for all of us now, is: will we adapt our mythologies to the coming

age--or drag as much of the rest of the world as possible down with us?

A few excuses for myself--I have not read A CASE OF CONSCIENCE thus could not comment on it in the article. There are other gaps in my reading life--I have tried to make the article as complete as I could, but I am primarily a short-story fan.

I agree that science can be subject to distortions imposed by human thought, as mentioned in the letter above, but all in all I do think that beliefs based on proven, experimentally verified postulates are more "reliable" than those based on pure faith. Basing entire sets of beliefs on what probably were primitive "best-possible-in-the-light-of-their-limited-knowledge" theories, as do many of today's popular religions, seems crazy to me. Science may not be an absolute--there are lots of things yet unproven--and for that matter neither can I be entirely positive that there is no God--but in my opinion the odds are in favour of the "scientific" viewpoint of the universe being correct. Maybe that makes science a "religion" to me, but as stated in the letter, there's no escaping.

I do not know enough about, or follow, politics and political systems to be able to comment on the comments Angus makes about the Pohl/Merril/Gibson article--perhaps someone among the readers...?

Back to my missing certain religiously oriented works in my survey--the following points out some more, from someone who has probably read more than anyone else in fandom...

Don D'Amassa
19 Angell Drive
E. Providence, RI 02914

VATI-CON etc. is undoubtedly one of the best looking one-shots ever. Even the material is, on the whole, pretty good. The high point of the issue was probably Jim Allan's piece on LORD TYGER, with the incidental humor being runner up.

Your article on the use of religion in SF might have been a lot better than it was had you limited yourself to a few titles and covered them more thoroughly. As it was, it appears that you were trying to show that SF is predominantly atheistic in effect, though I'm not certain if this is exactly what you had in mind. I have two quarrels with this.

First, you selected Boyd's *THE LAST STARSHIP FROM EARTH* and said it was atheistic because it did not include the classical version of God. Now I'm not an atheist, but my view of God is far from the classical, and falls within no organized religion that I know of. But by your definition (implied) I'm an atheist. Which is not the case, since I believe in a "god" (first principle, source, whatever you want to call it).

Second, with the exception of Del Rey's "For I am a Jealous People", you chose lousy examples. Most of the stories deal with religion as an incidental plot element. You ignored stories that deal directly with religious matters, like Farmer's *NIGHT OF LIGHT*, Koontz's *FEAR THAT MAN*, Aldiss' "Heresies of the Huge God", or even *DUNE* or *GATHER, DARKNESS*. Worst of all, you ignored James Blish's *A CASE OF CONSCIENCE*, which is perhaps the most Christian of all hard SF novels, and C.S.Lewis' trilogy *OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET, PERELANDRA*, and *THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH*, which are pure Christian allegory.

I have already made my excuses for not having read all the relevant works prior to writing my article; and Angus Taylor sums up my definition of "atheism" as I used it in that article much better than I could. Anyway, Don has offered to write an article on, perhaps, religion in SF, more complete than I could, for *SIMULACRUM*,

and I certainly hope to take him up on his offer.

Now, another letter with some comments on nearly all the articles in VC3PB...

Wayne W. Martin
4623 E. Inyo, Apt E
Fresno, CA 93702

Your editorial was interesting and too short. I found myself wanting to hear (figuratively speaking) about that "Sleepless Six" bunch. They sound like a good bunch. On Friday nights I'm often up till the Saturday morning cartoons greet me --unfortunately, I'm often alone by that time.

I find myself in agreement with your "arrgh" about Super Friends, but I kind of like Yogi Bear. I also get a kick out of Winnie the Pooh. I guess I'm just a bear nut.

That recorded conversation was fairly intriguing. I don't think I want to get into any of the points brought up, however. For that, I'll settle for being an observer.

I think you misanalyze the Clarke story "The Star". The priest does not really doubt the existence of God because of the ruined race, but rather doubts the actual benevolence of the God in whom he still believes--and isn't that a bigger kick in the pants than his mere non-existence? What if God is agin us --like in the Del Rey story "For I am a Jealous People"?

The definition for atheist you use is wrong. For what you're doing, you may find it better, but it isn't accurate. Atheism is the belief that there is no God. The belief in a non-classical God is not atheism. Buddhists are not atheists. Moslems are not atheists. And a story that depicts God as being something other than the normal Christian concept is NOT from an atheistic viewpoint. That is a chauvinistic attitude and a completely wrong one. Your purpose in seeing if SF stories involving religion give a classical picture of God or not is one thing, but labelling anything that doesn't as atheistic is pure crud.

I found the "Interview with God" to be slightly amusing. It was silly in many spots, but a little silliness never hurt anyone. "Postscript from the Earth" was the real high point for the issue, though. I got a big kick out of that.

Again, I refer Wayne Martin back to Angus Taylor's letter for an explanation of what I meant by "atheistic" in the article. I agree, here, that I should have explained it better. As for the other comments in the above letter, the "Sleepless Six" referred to in the VC3PB editorial is no more; the group is more like that referred to in the editorial in this issue.

Next a letter that contains among other things a suggestion I sort of wish I had followed when putting together VATI-CON, that is a set of articles based on the program items listed in the front of the zine, as comprising "Vati-Con III". Also some further comments on the Pohl/Merril/Gibson discussion...



Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

The basic idea of your one-shot is rather amusing and the program listing provided a chuckle but it would have been better if you had followed through with the thing as conceived. Consider the effect if you had published the guest of honor's speech instead of McGarvey's sophomoric "Interview with God". The debate between God and Nixon would have provided more laughs than did the one between Merrill, Pohl and Gibson. Come now, have you no imagination there in Toronto? Or were the Sleepless Six too bushed to really follow through? Certainly the writing of the material to fill the one-shot would have been more constructive and entertaining than watching television and reading comic books all night.

In re: the excerpts from a recorded conversation. There was discussion of how to motivate people. There is really only one motivation and that is fear. So long as mankind has a full belly, shelter, beer and amusement, he/she is not going to be moved.

The few environmentalists in the U.S. put up a good fight. They were afraid of what continuing pollution would do. They managed to get some of the lawmakers moving-- out of fear that the environmentalists might actually control some votes. Business quickly retaliated by painting a black picture of the results of energy shortages and the like and scared the bejesus out of the bulk of the citizenry and the environmentalists and their programs were quickly buried.

Fred Pohl dreams of a disaster which will force action. And that is what it will take. If a killer smog settles into the Los Angeles basin and wipes out 50,000 people then California and maybe some of the other areas which contain megalopolises will take action. The smaller population centers will fight all the way because, after all, they don't have that sort of problem.

Gibson asks if we think the human race ought to have a future. The answer, obviously, is yes, but not the future we are currently rushing into.

Unfortunately, true. There's been a lot of ecological disaster SF recently, much of it exaggerated, but underlying it there is the message similar to that given above--that business will fight any measures, and that smaller centers won't care because they are not as greatly affected.

Now another letter with a bit of advice to me on "survey" type articles, as well as comments on some of the rest...

Cy Chauvin
17829 Peters
Roseville, MI 48066

You have really great reproduction and design! I envy your production. I don't care for Wayne's cover (the aliens in particular look very bad, out of place) but his back cover is very nice.

Your program listings are simply delightful, and fit well. The W3F once had an idea of putting on a spoof con like yours, too, Pornocon, but it never got any further than a mad idea at a dull meeting. Which is perhaps just as well. Of the honour in the fanzine, the only piece that hit me very well was Peter McGarvey's "Interview with God". Perhaps my funny bone is simply not as sensitive as yours!

Of the more serious pieces, the recorded conversation and Jim Allan's article were most enjoyable. (Though they didn't match your "theme" all that much, but I could

see that you weren't sticking to it all that seriously anyway.) I think Fred Pohl, Judith Merrill, and Father Gibson all reflect my own views on the subject they discuss. I sometimes feel guilty about indulging in fanac, at times, when I get the impression that I should be out Saving the World...someway. What can a lone individual do? With the energy crisis, it's easier to see what one alone can do, but when you broaden the problem like your three conversationalists do, it becomes much harder. I must admit I lack the motivation to form a small social group to change society, like Fred Pohl seems to advocate; like Judith Merrill, I can only go so far as to change myself.

I think Pohl's right that there's not much point in writing more SF stories about overpopulation, pollution, etc.; there's enough in circulation already. Pohl did a different, and rather different, form of propaganda (I don't really mean that strong a term; it's just the first that comes to mind.) in his story in the Special Frederik Pohl issue of F&SF in 1973. I felt that he had thought a lot about the problems of present-day society, and wanted to suggest a few answers. My favourite is his suggestions that tax-payers be able to allocate (on their income tax forms) how their tax money was to be spent, what percent for defense, education, research, etc. I think that's a great idea (although I'd like to see it tried out in a state first, before adopted for the whole country). But on the other hand, I'm not sure if this is really what fiction is for; I think SF is about the impact of these ideas, the future, technology, on people--and not about these ideas in and of themselves. Perhaps we emphasize SF's sociological aspects a bit too much.

As I said above, I really enjoyed Jim Allan's article. He does a good analysis; I've heard of the book he mentions, but I've never seen anything written about it. I'm not sure that Jim's article will motivate me to read *LORD TYGER*, but, well... I'm not all that much of a Tarzan buff anymore. (I'll probably buy it if I see it, though.) This is the sort of thing I'd like to publish in *SELDON'S PLAN*--which I envision as a very sercon zine, for better or worse.

I feel as though I should comment on your article, though I hope you won't take what I say too hardly. The article is too much of a listing, a story by story review, rather than a comparison/contrast analysis...which I think would have been more effective and interesting. I think it would have been wiser to take three or four of the stories mentioned and write at length about them, rather than do the many short plot summaries that you did. These aren't interesting, or helpful, since many of the ones you mention are very well-known stories. If you wanted to mention them all, a short bibliography might have been the answer.

A comment on your idea of allocation of taxes...all fine and good, but what if some "cause" the government deems important isn't getting enough allocations from the taxpayers? Well, Uncle Sam will just take a little bit here, a little bit there...allocation might make the taxpayer feel a little better about forking over, but the government will likely stick to their budget nonetheless.

Next, part of a long letter from Jim Allan. I would like to print it all, but most of it is a critique of the Argasinski article in VC3PB which had as its premise that God couldn't have created the universe, it couldn't have come about by itself, so there must have been outside (Von Danikenesque) interference. I don't buy it myself, neither does Jim. Here is all of the letter except for the detailed analysis of Henry Argasinski's arguments. Space prevents me...I only have so much lavender paper, I promised I'd work the FanFair ad in, and so forth.

Jim Allan
133 Lauder Ave.
Toronto, Ont. M6H 3E4

I am sure you have received many flattering comments in your VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK, and justly so. Religion is such a mirky area into which to venture, even in a rather frivolous way, that you might so easily have fallen on your face, with a zine full of nothing but supposedly humourous theist hate literature. Instead, at your con banquet, you gave us quite a varied menu, of both serious and comic, and one piece which tried to be the first, and unfortunately ended up as the second. I refer to Henry Argasinski's "The Gospel According to Computer on Genesis" which it was almost cruel to put in the same issue as Bob Webber's "Saucer Freaks: Just in their Cups?" which so exquisitely parodies the same kind of thinking in which one starts with a theory, and then forces the facts to fit.

...I have nothing, I might add, against the hypothesis that at some time in the past there was a contact between Man and some extraterrestrial culture, but God damn it, until there is some real supporting evidence, not merely ignorant interpretation of old stories and quite ordinary architectural feats, and a few extraordinary ones, it remains only one of any number of unsupported hypotheses. Personally I prefer the hypothesis that the universe was created by an entity named Fred Derf in the year 1952 C.E. with, of course, an imaginary past created along with. I suggest Henry read Bob Webber's article again, and try to understand something about the nature of both evidence and logic.

I enjoyed the rest of the issue. The Merril/Pohl/Gibson discussion was an interesting conversation--at least as much so as most of the conversation on late night talk shows, which is about all you can ask from a panel. Your own article on origins and uses of religion was a good summary, if a bit jumpy, and lacking in any final analysis. Maybe it could be the basis for a larger article showing how various themes are developed, such as--shades of the above--the God-was-an-alien theme, and the new-prophet theme, and the interstellar missionary theme etc. I was rather surprised, however, to see you left out C.S.Lewis' Space Trilogy, three of the most celebrated religious SF novels ever written, and justly so.

Peter McGarvey's God interview was rather silly, and succeeded because of it. It was quite illuminating also, as much so as the average celebrity interview, which it so well parodied.

Your own parody of Garner Ted seemed, I am afraid, to lack somewhat. Maybe you should hold off on these until you can more fully develop an idea. The misinterpretation, by Granite Head, of one single text, was not quite strong enough to support a whole short article. Also, I'd suggest quoting the Biblical texts, not just referring to them. Most readers won't go to the bother of looking them up, and I think it is an imposition on them to expect them to.

Jaye Stanley's article had a little something to offend everyone, and I think you will have got at least one or two letters finding something therein in bad taste. I'm perverted enough to have enjoyed it.

Again, I've already made all my excuses for my own article in comments to other letters...the defense rests.

WAHF...Sheryl Birkhead, Steve Beatty, Bruce D. ~~Arthurs~~, Susan Wood, Gil Gaier.

Thanks again to all who wrote concerning VATI-CON, and I hope to hear from many of you again, concerning SIMULACRUM...

I received the following zines in trade for VATI-CON III PROGRAM BOOK and for LoCs written...OUTWORLDS 21/22; NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT 9, 10, 11; MYTHOLOGIES 3 and 4; GUYING GYRE 1, 2, 3 and PHOSPHENE 1; THE e-STARIAN EXPLORER 1 and 2; REQUIEM 4; QWERTYUIOP 8; TILL THE COWS COME HOME 3; KABALLAH 7; SELDON'S PLAN 37; EGG 9; ANOMALY 2; INFERNO 7; MOEBIUS TRIP LIBRARY'S SF ECHO 21 and 22; KNIGHTS OF THE PAPER SPACE SHIP 11; GODLESS 9 and SOLAT 2. If anybody sent me any other issues than these, then I haven't received them and the Post Office can be blamed.

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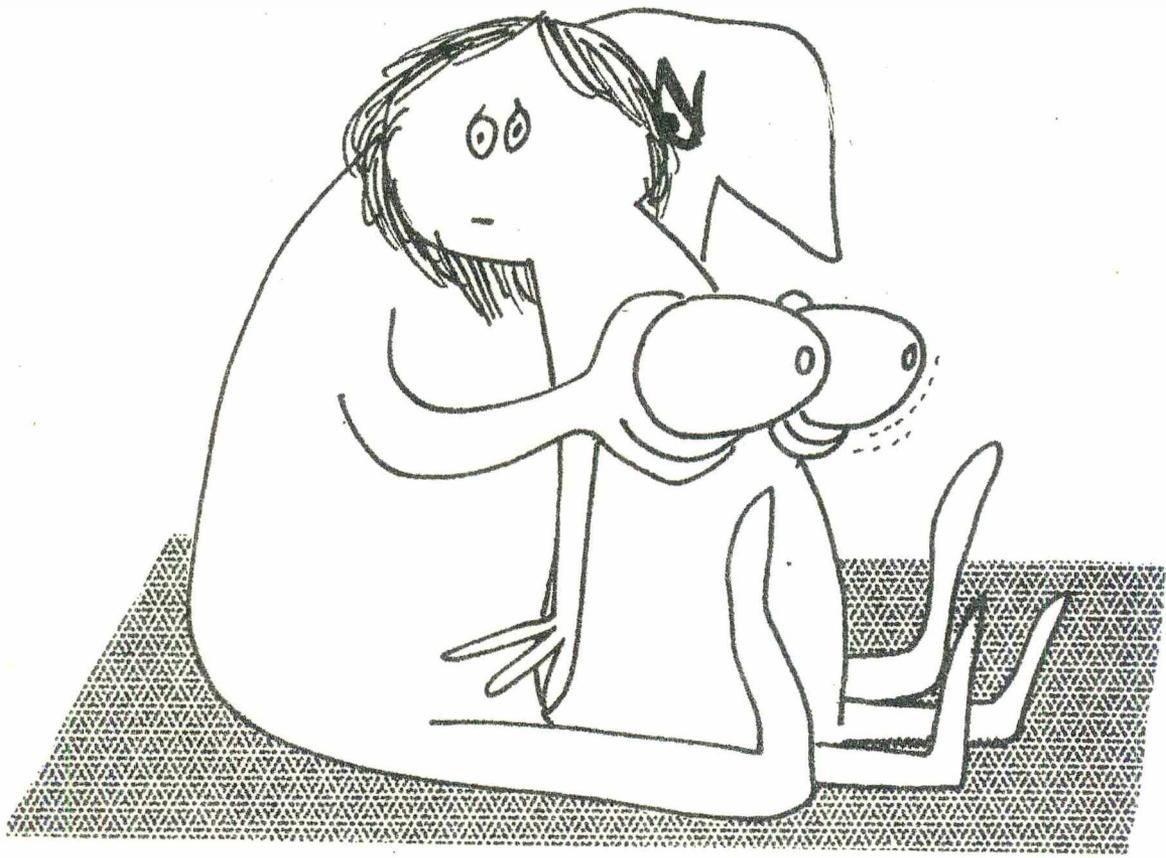
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