

STARLING

IN THE 21st CENTURY



SNF.

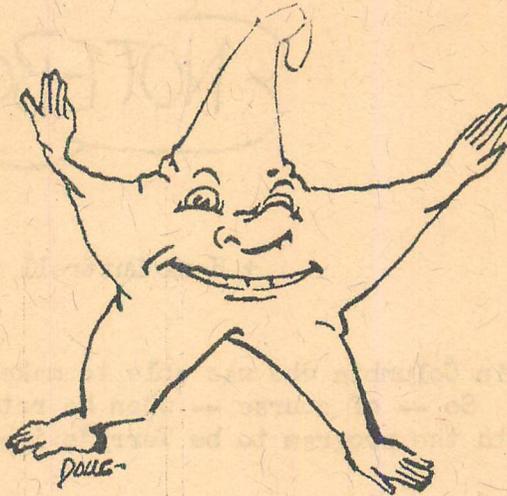
TEEN ANGEL,
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
TEEN ANGEL, CAN
YOU HEAR ME?

ARE YOU
SOMEWHERE UP
ABOVE? AND AM I
STILL YOUR OWN
TRUE LOVE?

JUST
SWEET SIXTEEN,
AND NOW YOU'RE
GONE. THEY'VE TAKEN
YOU AWAY...

I'LL NEVER KISS
YOUR LIPS AGAIN;
THEY BURIED
YOU TODAY!

Steve Stiles



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NOTEBOOK LINGS

+ Hank Luttrell +

The only one of us here in Columbia who was able to make it to Boston for the Nor-eascon was Terry Hughes. So -- of course -- when he returned there was a special meeting of local fans with the program to be Terry's in-depth report on the convention.

And a most interesting report it was; Terry entertained us mightily with tales of splendidly fannish parties, humorous anecdotes, personality sketches of fans and pros we haven't met. Particularly amusing was Terry's demonstration of the now famous foot-behind-the-head routine. Terry had been planning the report for some time, I'm sure, the choreography was quite perfect; he must have known we would expect it of him.

There was considerable interest that night in learning who had won the Hugos. But I must admit that upon learning those results I was rather irritated, as were a number of us; and Terry related that much irritation had been expressed at the convention as well.

Most irritating to me was the Hugo for Theodore Sturgeon's "Slow Sculpture." Now I suppose that there are those who disagree, who think that story was actually worth a Hugo, but I thought it was silly. There must be those who felt that Sturgeon deserved a Hugo for his past work if not for this story -- but why this story? I feel like a Hugo for "Slow Sculpture" is rather insulting toward Sturgeon's earlier work -- and it isn't like this is going to be his last story, he is writing very actively now.

That Ringworld by Larry Niven should beat Year of the Quiet Sun by Wilson Tucker is inexcusable, but at least Ringworld isn't a particularly bad book, just mediocre.

The "no award" for Dramatic Presentation caused me to do a lot of thinking. It could have been worse. Hauser's Memory could have won, the largest number of people saw it, after all; and that would have been terrible. I wouldn't have minded at all if Colossus: The Forbin Project had won. I saw it again recently on network television (if it had been on network television before the voting, I'm sure it would have won) -- and my initially favorable impression was affirmed. The film suffered not at all from the "editing for television" -- a little bit of the embarrassingly coy sex was taken out. I especially liked the surprisingly uncompromised climax. I was hoping Firesign Theatre's Dwarf. . . would win, of course, but I never thought it had too much of a chance. Their new audio-novel, I Think We're All Bozos on This Bus, is even better, and even more obviously science fiction. If Charlie Brown bothers to listen to it this time he should be able to understand at least that much. So perhaps next year. . .

The fan awards? Geis, best fan writer? I'm horrified, but what can I say? Austin for best fan artist was fine, and I don't mind Locus winning best fanzine, I think

it performs a valuable service.

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Leo & Diane Dillon's award for best professional artist was profoundly justified. My general reaction to the rest of the awards was apathy. Fantasy & Science Fiction won? How nice. But I would like to mention that it is becoming increasingly obvious that the science fiction magazines are sort of living fossils. We all love them dearly, especially those "closest" to us, like Amazing and Fantastic -- but they are becoming increasingly less important, while the original hardcover and paperback collections of stories become more important. If the Hugos are to realistically reflect this, we should remember to consider these anthologies along with the magazines.

Actually, this Hugo business needs to be considered in a wider context. There are achievement awards given in dozens of fields of popular art -- the Oscar, the Academy Award, is the most obvious and most familiar example. And as is often the rule with such awards, it is usually almost a surprise when an Oscar-winner is actually "the best" or even close to it. The winners usually are mediocre, lowest-common-denominator-type entertainments. The list of Academy Award winners over the years has very little to do with anyone's history of important cinema. The fact that the Academy didn't give a real Oscar to Citizen Kane was such a shame that it recently had to invent a special award to give to Wells.

This may have been a bad year for Hugos, but I think if you'll look over a list of past Hugo winners you'll find that there has been a remarkable number of very good awards in the past. While some of the Hugos went to lowest-common-denominator books and stories, the list is still very distinguished, and an important part of the history of science fiction for the years that it covers. Perhaps this is actually because the handful of fans and pros that vote for the Hugos -- out of the millions of people who occasionally read sf -- actually care a great deal about the field, and go to a bit more trouble to pick the best.

Lesleigh and I make it a special point to vote in each year's balloting. I hope all of those people who were irritated at the results this year will trouble themselves to vote next year.



JIM TURNER'S NEW COLUMN

I should have had better sense than to stay in the same room with American Bandstand but I just tried to ignore it. I was doing a pretty good job when all of a sudden something didn't make sense anymore. I started to pay attention. The reception from St. Louis on a windy winter day in the Ozarks can be obscure at best but I could have sworn that somebody was doing Tom Paxton's "Last Thing on My Mind" song which didn't seem to fit in with Dickie Clark's nursery at all. The picture cleared just as the song ended and, in the split second before snow started falling all over the screen again, I saw four young men with acoustic instruments, decked out in buckskins and looking like their first concern in life was watching amber droplets falling from a copper tube into a stone jug punctuated with doleful predictions of further depredations of murdering aboriginals, Republicans, revenoors, and hoof-and-mouth disease. Then Dick Clark or one of his clones waved his arm, looked dumbfounded, and said, "There they are. . .The Dillards!"

In the beginning there were two Dillard brothers in the band: Douglas who was destined to be the greatest banjo player in the world (numbering not less than thirty-two banjo pickers in the immediate family, not counting fiddlers and guitarists) and his brother Rodney on lead vocals, guitar, harmonica and fiddle. Remember Rodney, a fine country boy who, bassist Mitch Jayne assures us, was included in the group to remind us that somewhere every sixty seconds, mental illness strikes and who looks like Death eating a cracker, a man well fitted to writing a song called "I'll Never See My Home Again" because they'll never let him back.

Mitch, like the brothers, hails as well from Salem, Missouri, a fact that he drills into audiences at the first lest the group be mistaken for the Budapest String Quartet. He tends to be the group's spokesman, because from my own experience as a pupil, I suspect, that teaching backwoods schools would inure you to the density of any audience. At any rate, he is always happy to introduce Dean Webb on mandolin who is so skinny that when he sticks his tongue out, he looks like a zipper and who, furthermore, had never been known to toss his dirty socks in the sink while on tour.

Their debut album, BACK PORCH BLUEGRASS, came in at the height of the urban folk music thing to rave reviews, and busting out with goodies. I commend to you "Somebody Touched Me," a classic brush arbor hymn. Brush arbors were churches in the woods country where the congregation was too poor to put up a meeting-house of their own so they put up benches in the wilderness with a rough rostrum for the circuit rider since a place too poor for a church usually couldn't afford a preacher either and there you were. There aren't many left. I got dragged to all sorts of revivals and stuff as a kid and I never went to one. I've been one from a car. Hellfire and brimstone and powerful hymnsinging are a heady-brew and it sure must have been something. I have been in a tent meeting with lightning blazing outside the holes in the big canvas with the whole

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congregation singing Hank Williams' classic "I Saw the Light" and it's a strange experience, very strange indeed.

Then a song written by Mitch called "Dooley," about an Ozark capitalist of that name who made the best moonshine that ever broke a Christian mother's heart. When Dooley died the men looked sad and the women cried outright. Recommended for heads with a busted connection. And, yes, there's more to Granpa Jones than HEE-HAW would have one think - the Dillardards do his prison song "Rainin' Here This Morning."

Ah, and the instrumentals: "Lonesome Indian," "Banjo in the Hallow," "Duelin' Banjo." You can listen to them forever. I know because I have.

The second album LIVE! ALMOST! is perhaps the best one to start with. Not only do you get the music but you get Mitch's unutterly droll comments between the numbers, the only album I've ever heard where such live mutterings don't get insufferable after three playings.

His remarks about "Old Blue" and why the Dillardards can't do it like Joan Baez does it go something like this: Down in Missouri, we got dogs. We have to have a dozen out scratching in the yard for the sskke of tourists and such. People in Missouri think differently about them than people in LA. We don't spray them purple and if there was ever any rhinestone collars around the house, they went on Mama, not Blue. We got privies in Missouri, too, and if you don't know what that is, good luck. It's the little house behind the big house, a hundred yards too close in summer, a hundred too far in the winter. So that when you get up in the touch to go down there and when it's snowing and cold and slicker than deer guts on a brass doorknob, your business is usually of an emergency nature. Now Old Blue doesn't like the wind and snow either and he's going to want to get in out of it. Like as not you've forgotten to close your privvy door and ten to one... So when you struggle down there and find Blue growling at you like he built it and when you've been forced out of your privvy a few times in the dead of winter by a big bluetick, you're just not gonna be able to sing "Old Blue" like Joan Baez does. But they like her version though. Rodney heard it at a folk festival and was so moved that he bit Pete Seeger on the leg.

Mitch's discussion of the need for murder in society on the "Pretty Polly" cut rides to awesome heights of madness. I mean, any boy who murders his pregnant sweetheart with a pocketknife and gets away with it can't be all bad can he?

Then Dylan's "Walkin' Down The Line," and some fine songs written by the group, "Never See My Home Again," "There Is A Time," and Mitch's song about the pioneers in Missouri and Arkansas, "The Whole World Around," and a whole skew of traditional numbers.

If you follow credits on rock albums with country slants, you'll recognize Byron Berline's name, a fiddler featured, among other places, on the two last Byrd albums. He did an album with the Dillardards called PICKIN' AND FIDDLIN' which is a non-vocal effort, an album that well illustrates the comparisons between bluegrass and chamber music. Dean Webb is a mandolin picker that Beethoven would have taken right to heart. This is a record that you dig or you don't.

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And then there was a breaking-off. Doug Dillard took his banjo off and formed the Dillard Clark group with Gene Clark, late of the Byrds.

This is the start of a second Dillard period with the diverging groups moving in the same direction. There was more persuasion, strings, more country and folk elements. Dillard Clark folded after two pleasant albums which featured hordes of Byrds and Burrito Brothers as session men, with most of the material group written. When that group split, Gene Clark stayed with A&M and has a solo album that seems to be doing well and Doug continues with something called the Douglas Dillard Expedition that enlivened the soundtrack of a wretched greaser flick called VANISHING POINT.

The Dillardards stayed with Elektra Records and picked up Herb Peterson on Banjo and guitar, sharing vocals with Rodney. The first album to result from this, WHEATSTRAW SUITE, is, I think, their best.

Never have the harmonies so good, from the a capella "I'll Fly Away" to the last eerie, witch-song "She Sang Hymns Out of Tune." The performances as soft and country, often cerebral, quite in contrast to earlier and more exuberant efforts. The songs are about the country and its joys, very fond and wistful. "Listen," says one, "to the old time sound of the fiddle/Telling of a place you never have been." Some might almost be autobiographies of country people I have known, like Herb's "Hey, Boys." Very simple: he tells of how he once was a boy living on the Meremac, washing in the river when the water ran clear, planning to go to the city and buy a Cadillac. But then he got a little older and learned good sense, married him a woman and got a cornland bottom with a barbwire fence. He learned to make moonshine, something he'd never done before, took to sitting around the stove in the store, drinking cider when his mouth got dry, a place where he would "talk about religion, worry about war." And "Hey, boys, I think I'm getting old...and another little drink won't do us any harm."



We are also given a swinging bluegrass version of "I've Just Seen a Face" 8 (for some reason, Beatle songs seem to take splendidly to bluegrass,) one of their best instrumentals in the form of "Bending the Strings," Mitch's "Dent County Snake and Tick Report," a straight-faced parody of the stock reports on country radio stations, and a song that would, I swear to God, make a great Corman monster movie: "The Biggest Whatever That Anyone Ever Saw." Terrible. It came rollin' in from Arkansas, forty feet high, covered in fur with a big purple patch on its craw, carrying off cattle and sheriff's cars with equal impunity.

Finally, COOPERFIELDS starts off with "Rainmaker," who shows up in a dry Kansas town (I am sure that he bore a surprising resemblance to W. C. Fields.) He lifts the drought with a thundering rain and then finds that the citizens are welching on payment so he just doesn't bother to stop it. . . and the river flows now where Main Street ran.

Other slices of Americana include one of my favorites, "West Montana Hanna," the story of a "...soft-head country girl/looking for a different way to be." So when she runs off to be a big city whore, they blame it on the books and magazines she left behind. And Herb wonders, "Tell me, Hanna dear, do you ever think of me?/Are the hills of west Montana like the color of the sea?" There's "Ebo Walker," whose father chased him out of Kentucky because he wouldn't hoe corn or make hay. All he wanted to do was play the fiddle. He danced, played and drank till he died and, even though he's dead, you can still hear him in the fall when the moon's down. I muchly love the title song, just general comments about people who spend their lives working in the fields that will cover them when they die.

There are love songs on this album, something they hadn't done much of before, Eric Anderson's "Close the Door Lightly When You Go, " "Touch Her If You Can," by Mitch and Rodney.

But there's not much use in going on really. I'd probably wind up listing every song they ever did and trying to say something about it. I've played Dillard albums for a good many people and made more than a few converts. About the best way to sum the group up is to quote the last paragraph of Mitch's notes on the first album:

If in listening to this album you find yourself runimating on bygone times, sensing perhaps the musical feeling and creativeness of your ancestors long since finished with their part in the making of America, if you get the feeling of the campfires and the log cabins and the lonely candlelight in the wilderness, you will have amply rewarded the Dillards.

JIM'S OWN COUNTRY ROCK SAMPLER PROMULGATED TO RELIEVE THE IGNORANCE OF THE MASSES

It occured to me while I was writing the article about the Dillards that the era of bubblegum country is indeed deseending on us. If you can't take country music in general, but like say, Kris Kristofferson, you might find a few rewarding things in the genre they call country rock. Personally, I don't buy much hard C&W. I find so much of instrumentation unimaginative with lyrics that seem to meander only from bars to divorce courts. C&W female vocalists of the Tammy Wynette variety could really, I think, drive me stark raving mad

if⁹ I had to listen to them long enough. I like Merle Haggard even though he's in a bad way these days. I even like "Okie From Muscogee." But success seems to have done him in about the same way it did Cash.

I do buy a lot of what they call country rock and, looking over my collection, here are a few things I'd recommend.

HANK WILLIAMS' GREATEST HITS (MGM) A must have. Country inside and out and he influenced just as many rockers as country players. Listen to "Honky Tonkin", "Jambalaya," and "Half as Much," and you'll understand a lot about Dylan, the Band, and plenty of other people.

FRUMMOX/HERE TO THERE (ABC) A couple of Texans, one now touring with Steve Stills. Their "Texas Trilogy" is as evocative of the country as anything I've ever heard.

PAUL SIEBEL/JACK-KNIFE GYPSY (Elektra) A voice like early Dylan, writes all of his own material, heavily influenced by Jimmy Rogers. Backup men on this album include Clarence White, Doug Kershaw and Richard Greene, the fiddler from Seatrain.

JERRY CORBITT (Capitol) Formerly lead guitarist with the Youngbloods, he has a deep country voice with excellent production. I like the song "John Deere Tractor" ("I feel like a John Deere tractor in a half-acre field/Plowing up a furrow when the soil is made of steel.")

MASON PROFITT/MOVIN' TOWARD HAPPINESS (Happy Tiger Records) One of the best country hippie bands. The only one of its kind who can do songs about the American Indian that don't send me out for Alka-Seltzer. "Hard Luck Woman" is a great truckdriver song ("I'd rather have a woman lay me down than all these bennies to keep me awake.")

CHARLES RIVER VALLEY BOYS/BEATLE COUNTRY (Elektra) A good, defunct, citybilly bluegrass band doing you-guessed-it. Their "Yellow Submarine" is a classic.

DAVID REA/MAVERICK CHILD (Capitol) He used to be lead guitarist for Ian and Sylvia. Produced by Felix Pappalardi and occasionally backed up by Mountain.

HAPPY AND ARTIE TRAUM (Capitol) Old folkies. Much superior to the more successful second album. One song written for them by the Band. One of my favorite albums.

AREA CODE 615/TRIP IN THE COUNTRY (Polydor) The best Nashville session men playing together in their own band.

LINDA RONSTADT/SILK PURSE (Capitol) She's as good live as she is on wax. An excellent voice with material ranging from traditional to Hank Williams to Bernie Leadon of the Burritos.

THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS/any of their albums on A&M. Absolutely the best country rock band. Founded by refugees from the Byrds.

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REGENCY LADY

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+ Lesleigh Luttrell+

Georgette Heyer is a name one is likely to see while browsing through almost any rack of paperback books. Currently she has 44 titles out in paperback (15 Ace, 1 Evon and 28 Bantam, in case you were interested), but the average bookstand browser is likely to pass over her books entirely, mingled as they are among the Harlequin Romances and the Gothics. However, it is a mistake to judge her books by the company they keep. They couldn't, by any stretch of the imagination be called Gothics; they are Romances -- and also very, very good historical fiction.

Georgette Heyer Rougier has been writing for 50 years, and has achieved a measure of popularity both in England, her native country, and in the United States. Her books generally fall into two categories; Historical Romance and Mystery (and the mysteries often have a touch of the romantic). To some readers, the merest hint of romance is enough to send a book on its way unread, but Heyer never lets the romance interfere with the important part of her novels -- the characterization and the bits of history.

The main historical period with which she deals is the Regency of England (1810-1820), when George IV ruled as regent in the stead of his ailing and nearly insane father, George III, when Napoleon was conquering Europe, and when England was full of such interesting figures as Lord Byron, Lady Caroline Lamb and the Prince Regent himself. All this figures in Heyer's books, as well as the sport, the dress, the slang and the social life of the times.

One book where all these elements come together very nicely is A Civil Contract (Ace, 17000). The story itself concerns a 'marriage of convenience' between a young nobleman whose father (a close friend of the Prince Regent) had died leaving his family in debt (one of the hazards of associating with the Regent), and the daughter of a wealthy London merchant (a Cit). The marriage is complicated by the fact that previous to his father's death, Lord Lynton had been considering a more equal match, and that his father-in-law is too anxious to bestow presents on the couple without considering a young nobleman's pride. Those who do enjoy a romance will like the slow development of love and understanding between the two. If you don't care for this aspect of the book, there is a great deal more to be found in it.

The book explores such points as the social division between merchant and born nobility, the process of being accepted in society, the proper relationships with servants (although not gone into in this book, one of the most interesting of these is the relationship of a master to his manservant), the running of a country estate (and the difficulty of introducing such innovations as the Tullian method which allowed the raising of winter crops), and much more. History

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literarily parades through the book as the characters watch the procession which celebrates victory over Napoleon, and gossip about all the foreign dignitaries in town for the occasion. The climax of the novel is entangled with history. As the battle of Waterloo approaches, Lord Lynton's father-in-law urges him to sell all his stocks because most people believe Wellington will lose. But Lynton had served under the Duke and had a great deal of faith in him -- so he bought. When the news of victory came Lynton found himself wealthy enough to repay his father-in-law entirely (but he didn't for he had come to understand and love the man -- instead he allowed him to hold all the mortgages in trust for his grandson).

A more typical Heyer Regency Romance, in that it involves a courtship instead of a marriage is Cotillion (Ace, 11771). This time, the plot concerns a young girl, Kitty, who must marry one of the nephews of her guardian in order to fulfill the conditions of his will. She really wants to marry the dashing Jack, but persuades the more prosaic Freddy to propose so that she can escape from her guardian's country house and go to London. The book details how she gradually comes to realize that Jack is really pretty undesirable and that she really does love Freddy. In the process it presents some quite interesting characters.

These include Lord Dolphinton, whose "understanding was not powerful" and who lives in constant dread of his Mama; Miss Plymstock who has a much better understanding of Dolph's powers than his mother and who wishes to marry him, even though she is quite ineligible; Olivia Broughton, a beautiful but poor girl whose relatives have brought her to London to become either the wife or the mistress of a rich man (the celebrated Grimesby sisters, who were just as poor, succeeded in marrying a Duke and Earl respectively, after all); and Miss Fishguard, Kitty's nurse-companion, who feels herself guilty of treason when Kitty's guardian proposes to her.

Georgette Heyer creates splendid characters to be enjoyed for themselves, and to be used in her exploration of early 19th Century English society. Her main characters are generally people who fit perfectly into society, are well-born, knowledgeable in the social arts, can ride, dance, dress well, and generally excel at the things they are expected to do. In spite of, or because of this, they are able to see society clearly -- the pettiness, the gossip, the cruelty; they see all this and proceed to circumvent it to gain their ends. Although the characters and plot might be fictitious, the reader feels that the world presented in the books is what Regency England was really like.

Heyer has also written several books which are about real historical personages, such as The Conqueror (William) and Royal Escape (Charles II). These books don't seem to come off nearly as well, perhaps because historically important people can't usually match her characters in interest. In one case, though, real people were interesting enough to become real Heyer characters. The book is The Spanish Bride (Bantam, N5489) and the characters are Harry and Juana Smith. Harry Smith was a Brigade-Major in the English army and Juana a Spanish girl he married after her home and family were destroyed in the siege of Badajos. The book follows the two through the dangers and discomforts of the Peninsular campaign against the French, and back to England when Napoleon is exiled for the first time. From there Harry goes to the New World where he survives the Battle of New Orleans, while Juana tries to adjust to English life, facing the same sort of problems that it seems all war brides must. Harry returns to Europe in time to take part in the battle of Waterloo, and thus is present at most of the important events of the period.

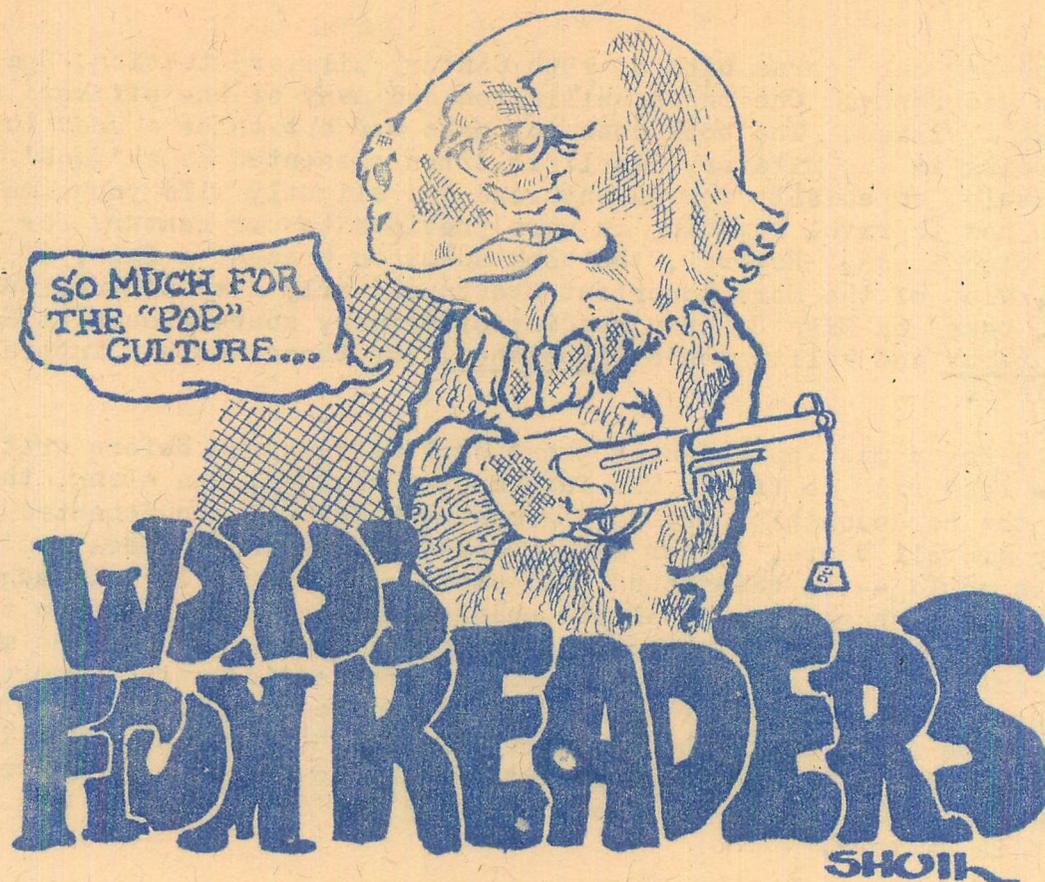
Along the way one learns bits of 19th Century military tactics, Spanish, and European geography. One meets Wellington and many of the officers and men of the Light Division. The book does not make war out to be a good thing (although being in the military itself is often presented as a 'good' thing in Heyer novels, especially for adventurous and slightly wild young men) -- Waterloo has to rival anything in wars previous to our century for pure horror and bloodiness. However, the book seems to present a fair, if mainly English, view of the more important events of early 19th Century European history, based on Miss Heyer's reading of primary sources such as Harry Smith's Autobiography and Wellington's Dispatches, for those who are interested in such things.

Georgette Heyer must have done a great deal of research before writing her books -- they ring so true. The fashions in clothes, the slang, the sporting events, the horsemanship, the card games, the dances, the accepted manners of the time are all there. After a few books, one begins to feel comfortable with this world -- to understand the gossip and other talk (although the speech of lower class characters is almost unintelligible in contrast to the upper classes who are perfectly understandable once one has grasped the meaning of some 'slang' terms), and even to become interested in learning more about what is going on in the books. (The Regency period comes after the American Revolution, so we Americans probably never were taught anything about it in our history courses -- England is only interesting to us between 1066 and 1776). All in all, the books are well worth reading for anyone having the slightest interest in history.

Some of Georgette Heyer's mysteries are also out in paperback editions (8 of the 28 Bantam titles). In fact, it was a mystery, Merely Murder (titled Death in the Stocks in the England and paperback editions), that first gained her popularity in the United States.

These books are not as superior to other mysteries as her romances are to other romances. For one thing, they all take place in the 20th Century, apparently at the same time they are being written (this seems to be the case with most mystery writers). Heyer does not always use the same character (s) in each book as many mystery writers do. However, in the 7 paperbacks in which a Scotland Yard detective appears; one features an Inspector Harding, two an Inspector Hannasyde, and four an Inspector Hemmingway. The plots are usually very similar. A murder occurs among the English country gentry, while a great many neighbors and members of the family are about who have both motive and opportunity to commit the murder. Scotland Yard is usually called in because the local police don't like to deal with the local gentry. The Scotland Yard Inspector does manage to get along with the suspects, and solves the crime, usually with the aid of a rather ethnic sargent and/or a female member of the household in which the murder occurred, such as a companion or a secretary, who is not a suspect. The solution to the crime is always rather unusual, but not unexpected to those who have read one or two of the mysteries and gotten the trick.

Even though her mysteries are not as good one should not hesitate to try them either. But before you pick up a Georgette Heyer, I must warn you that they are habit forming -- and one can accumulate and read all 44 books rather fast. But don't worry, they are re-readable -- and there are more of them not out in paperback yet to look forward to.



Greg Shaw, 64 Taylor Drive, Fairfax, CA 94930

I think Starling is becoming one of the few indispensable fanzines, in a time when the whole fanzine field is fast becoming dull beyond belief. In fact, I think Starling has reached a point where its connection with SF fandom may be all that's holding it back from becoming a very highly respected pop-culture fanzine. The tone of intelligence, awareness and maturity your writers are developing is one rarely found in fanzines, with a few exceptions such as Warhoon. Keep it up.

+Except possibly for a small academic circle centered around The Journal of Popular Culture, there isn't such a thing as Popular Culture Fandom, so who am I going to publish Starling for if not science fiction fandom. And anyway, it seems to me that a very large number of people in sf fandom are "popular art fans" -- with serious interests in wide areas of popular culture like music, movies, graphic stories, popular fiction (like science fiction. . .), etc. HL

Juanita Coulson's column is good as usual. I must say she knows her stuff pretty well for someone relying on memories. Indeed, there was, especially in Haley's case, an overlap of styles and material with black R&B. Where most of the early rock artists came out of country music, Haley's sources were almost purely R&B. "Shake Rattle and Roll," for instance, was recorded previously by Joe Turner on Atlantic Records, and by several other black artists in the late forties as well. And incidentally, though I agree that Haley is impossibly camp now and was pretty dull at his peak, it's of interest to note that the Bill Haley fan club (in England, of course) just issued the 71st issue of its fanzine, which ran to 180 legal length pages. Put that one in your sense of wonder and smoke it!

Little Richard is hoking it, on the advice of his managers, but at least he is getting TV exposure and his records are selling reasonably well. Underneath the phony rap he uses, he is aware of everything going on in rock and, from interviews I've seen in fanzines, is one of the sharpest cats around. Chuck Berry, contrary to what Juanita says, is the only one from that era who has retained any vitality. He is taken seriously as a rock & roller by today's audiences. No cause for worry there.

By the time this letter sees print, the Hugo awards will already have been announced, but I for one am hoping (not that it had a chance) that Don't Crush That Dwarf will not win this year. The reason for my reversal is what I have lately learned about their next album, I Think We're All Bozos on This Bus. It is a far more stfnal work than DCTD, and far more complicated, multi-leveled, etc. Hopefully DCTD's presence on the ballot and all the discussion will serve as a stepping stone to next year's Hugo. I can't give you any details because I haven't heard it yet. A good friend of mine got an advance tape of it, and it is he who has been raving about it so to me. From what he's told me, it may be The Stars My Destination of the 70's

+We were terribly disappointed when Dwarf didn't win. But Bozos is brilliant, +and perhaps the attention created by Dwarf will help the new album to win next +year. I hope so. One thing about Bozos -- the ending almost seems to place +the whole story into "it was only a dream"-type mold; something which I always +find a little disappointing. HL

I not sure what I think of Angus Taylor's piece. The idea is novel, his opinions generally go along with mine. . . I think it's just the idea of someone commenting on such important issues in a single paragraph. I would prefer to see a long, carefully-thought out column on each of the several issues he brings up here.

Will Straw, 303 Niagara Blvd., Fort Erie, Ont., Canada

I'm looking forward to more of Juanita's column, because the fifties' youth culture -- indeed, that period's culture in its entirety -- has always struck me as totally bland. It would please me to learn that there was some color and spark to what came out of that decade. I think a major development of youth culture that has just begun to dominate in the past five years or so has been the gradual turn over of almost all aspects of adolescent music, and, to some extent, literature and films, to the youth themselves. Rock and roll bands twenty years ago were part of the scene they appealed to, but almost all the business and promotional end was handled by the older generation; the fact that concerts were held in standard theatres is a good example. San Francisco in 1967 could very probably have been the turning point -- look at most of the so-called adolescent films up until then, and most of them were routine musicals with top rock and roll bands, with the casts filled with established middle-aged actors and the plots usually rehashes of old vs. young films from as far back as the thirties. The Beat Generation can very easily be pointed to as a forerunner of this, but I don't think it came out from underground to anywhere near the extent that young writers, musicians and filmmakers are currently.

I heard an anthropologist on the radio this summer put forth the theory that the effect of a switch in the male-female roles in society would literally crush men; according to him, a man who is a failure at his job is considered a failure as a man, whereas for a woman a job is considered just one of two alternatives, and failure in one will just result in a change to the other. I think Woman's Liberationists too often fail to see that most of



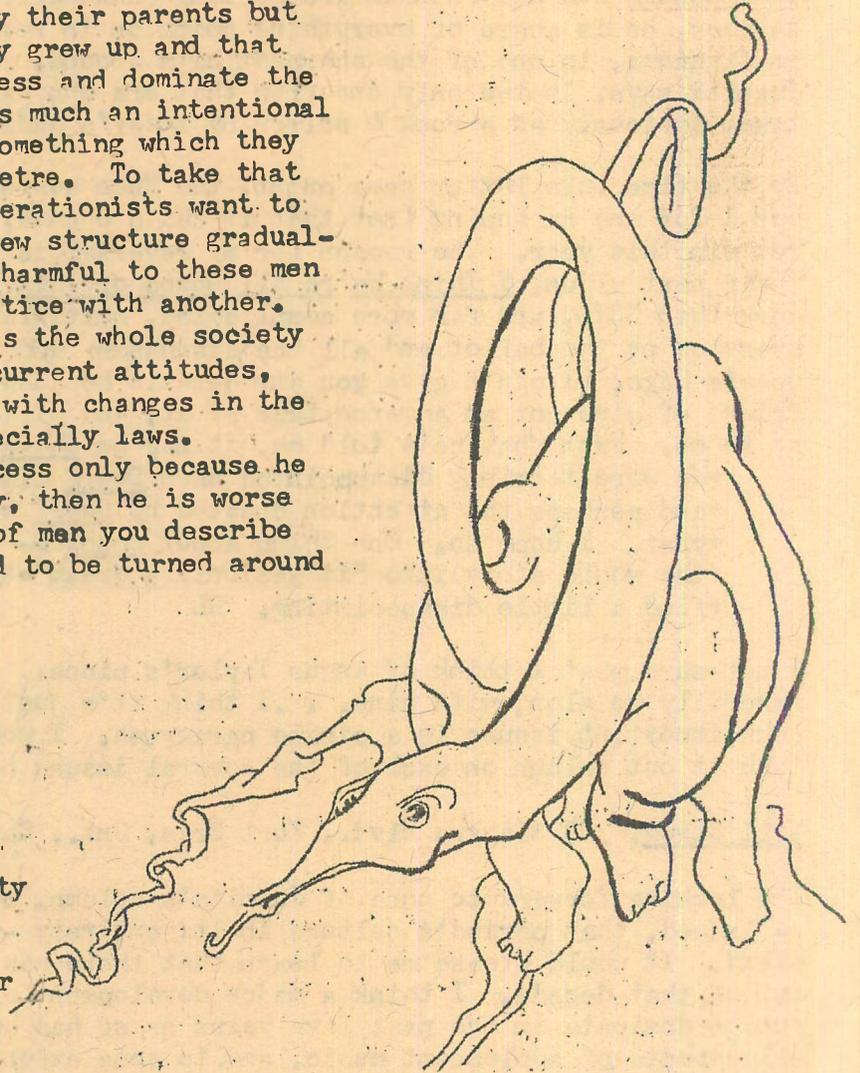
the middle-aged men established in business had their ideas pumped into them not only by their parents but by the whole society in which they grew up and that their drive to get ahead in business and dominate the women they associate with isn't as much an intentional blindness or prejudice as it is something which they really believe is their *raison d'être*. To take that purpose away suddenly, as the Liberationists want to do, rather than try to evolve a new structure gradually, would be too psychologically harmful to these men and would be preplacing one injustice with another.

+But we do realize that it is the whole society
 +which is to blame for the current attitudes,
 +that's why we are starting with changes in the
 +basic part of society, especially laws.
 +Really, if someone is a success only because he
 +never had to compete fairly, then he is worse
 +than a failure. The sort of man you describe
 +are the ones who badly need to be turned around
 +and made to look at them-
 +selves. If they can't
 +take that, they really
 +shouldn't be in a high
 +pressure career like
 +business. - LML

I think we're probably going to see a collapse of the age/class music structure in the next twenty or so years as today's teen-age crowd grows up. People who became interested in music in their youth during the thirties and forties generally followed Big Band stuff through into Boogie-Woogie and on into the fifties

and the Rosemary Clooney-type thing and into the middle class radio station output of the sixties (the Sinatra/Martin/Como crowd) while I don't think rock music and its ancestors emerged as a parallel form attracting most of the young people until the fifties. For the last fifteen or twenty years, we've had the two forms running along side of each other, but I think the factor that will kill middle class radio is that rock is still attracting the young people as well as keeping most of the people who caught on to it when they were growing up, on into their middle-aged years. So there's an accumulative effect, whereas middle class radio is hardly attracting anybody and is, in fact, losing people as they die off.

I don't think I've ever read more than five pages of Lovecraft in my life, but it all came back to me with Turner's superb parody, which exaggerated most of the characteristics I found so distasteful. It was also one of the best parodies of anything I've come across, not falling into the ruts that so many parodists do -- including humor for its own sake, for instance, which can't be traced back to the original subject, or simply writing a Lovecraft-like story and changing the names to those one wouldn't generally associate with Lovecraft. (Bored of the Rings is perhaps the best example of a bad parody, right down to the interchanging of "Pepsi" for "Pippin" and "Arrowroot" for "Aragorn.")



Jodie Offutt, Funny Farm, Haldeman, Ky. 40329

Have you ever seen any Dr. Seuss books? I t's worth a trip to the library to get two or three. So many childrens' books have good writing or good illustrations. Dr. Seuss has both; the stories and illustrations are both delightful. My favorites are The Cat in the Hat, If I Ran The Circus and The Sleep Book. Our kids all have their favorites, too -- some overlap. I have an idea that today's children, as adults, will write fanzine articles about the Seuss books. I refuse to believe that our Offuttspring are the only kids in the country who elect to read more often than watch TV -- even on Saturday morning. I also doubt that we're the only parents in the country -- contrary to what the magazines seem to think -- who check the TV Guide ahead of time and tell the children what they may look at if they wish and what's for adults and not for children. At any rate, Dr. Seuss is a gem and the reason I brought it up in the first place is because of Tim Kirk's drawings in this issue. They remind me of Dr. Seuss's drawings -- and I love them!

= +Ted Geisel -- Dr. Seuss -- used to be in animation. The television specials +based on his books were done in collaboration with his old Warner Brothers +co-worker, Chuck Jones. Did you see those? They came out pretty well. . . +especially "How The Grinch Stole Christmas" narrated by Boris Karloff. --LML

Jerry Kaufman, 417 W. 118th Street, Apt 63, New York, N.Y. 10027

My favorite porn film (out of the two or three I've seen) was The Bushwackers. A crazy prospector shoots down a plane (with a 22, I think), and the pilot with his three miniskirted co-pilots begins a trek across the trackless wastes (instead of following the road and telephone wires on the hills in the background.) After hetero and Lesbian sex, and a little sadism by the prospector, the pilot suddenly realizes what he's up against. He tells the two remaining girls, "These old prospectors are out in the desert for months, sometimes years. Being alone like that, cut off from civilization, they go a little wacky. Bushwacky!" One of the most interesting entymological lectures ever given in a porno film, I'll wager.

I went to a Chuck Berry concert in Columbus once, and I think he's pretty damn good, Juanita. He does all the duck-walking and pretty much the same songs, and he was so full of cheer and fire that he took the audience right up into the stratosphere. They were on their feet, cheering, singing, clapping and dancing if they had the room. He sang the real version of "Reeling and Rocking," I wasn't aware until that moment that there was a real version, but Berry was up there singing one of the rauchier songs I'd heard. "I looked at my watch, it was a quarter to six, we were moving like a concrete mix, Reeling and rocking, rolling to the break of dawn."

Your fanzine has two editors. One of the editors preceds the other. (Hank has been an editor of Starling longer than Lesleigh; Bill Kunkel, to name another case, has been an editor of Rats! longer than Charl Komar). I find myself wanting to refer to Hank as "you" and to Lesleigh as "Lesleigh." Since each of you writes in the fanzine I can't hide behind the general, plural "You," can I? Furthermore, the fact that one of you is female is probably a contributing facotr in my choice of who embodies the editorial spirit and who is more like a featured writer/helper. This problem of reference might not seem major to some people, but I think it might seem so to you, because you do the fmz at least partially for egoboo.

+Well, you might have an excuse in Starling as I don't write "editorials" -- I +call my articles just that, and you might be right in addressing your letters +to Hank; he has the final word in editing the letter column -- he types it. But +Starling is really an equal collaboration.--LML

The very first thing I think of when I think of this issue is your Little Lulu piece. I started to read it, saying, "I never read that comic." Then one by one things popped into my mind. I found myself recalling whole frames, like Sammi standing on the rim of his little saucer, and whispering to Tubby. My god, I must have read Little Lulu pretty often when I was five or six. I don't remember exactly, but if it hadn't been for Lesleigh I wouldn't have remembered at all.

+Little Lulu does make an impression. Just a few weeks ago while reading some +issues we'd brought from my parent's home, I came across one I remembered reading when I was about 6 $\frac{1}{2}$, probably the first comic I ever read. --LML

Mike Glicksohn, 32 Maynard Ave Apt. 205, Toronto 156 Ont., Canada

I seem to remember Little Lulu having a pale, oval-faced little girlfriend named Una, or Oona, or something, who lived in a strange old house. She and Lulu would go behind the fireplace and engage in a variety of adventures which consistently ended with them fleeing from a horde of little green men and barely getting back through the fireplace. Am I misremembering all this, or is it from another comic?

Tom Foster, 502 No. Avalon, West Memphis, Arkansas 72301

Who was the girl with the funny hair who turned Lulu's fireplace into a doorway into some strange places? Does that ring any bells at all? I know its not much. . . I enjoyed those stories better than any of the others, but I've forgotten what happened.

+Back when we first started talking about Little Lulu here in Columbia, I remembered those stories as Little Lulu stories, as well. Another local fan, Doug +Carroll, had the same set of impressions. As it turns out, however (and +Lesleigh remembered this all along) the Oona stories were published for a long +time as the lead story in the comic book Nancy. The newspaper Nancy is so banal +it is hard to imagine anything good about the character, but the Nancy comic +books were very good -- my theory is that they might have been done in part by +some of the Little Lulu staffers -- perhaps even John Stanley. The important +details of the stories were usually as follows: Nancy was tricked or forced +to enter Oona's huge, scary house, then sits down in front of the fireplace +while Oona goes off someplace to do or get something. Next thing, Nancy ends up +going through the fireplace into an "other" place, where the Yo-Yos live. +They get Nancy into some sort of trouble -- turn her into a statue, imprison +her in a gum-ball machine, something a little out of the ordianry. When all +seems lost, Oona steps in and saves her. In the +end, it is all made to seem a dream -- but usually +Nancy is left wondering, for instance, where she +got all those gum balls. I always figured that +Oona just wanted Nancy to think it was a dream, +so Nancy would come back to visit her again, as +Oona was very lonely. --HL



Sandra Miesel, 8744 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis,
IN 46240

Tis a pity Creath's article wasn't printed in SFR, say about two years ago. I always found its reviews its weakest point. Speculation runs vastly better serious reviews and Buck Coulson's short personal responses are more helpful as a buying guide. Reviewing may look like the highroad to fannish glory -- oh that collective

gasp of astonishment when Ted Pauls placed third for the Hugo -- but it isn't that ¹⁸ easy to do right. And just as Creath observes, mass-production of reviews can sap one's reading pleasure. I don't generally enjoy reviewing, preferring to unravel some author or subject I understand at length. Since there's a need for conscientious fan criticism, er, Creath, what are you doing these days?

+Getting ready to start fan publishing again, I'm told. -- HL

I enjoyed Lesleigh's piece on "Little Lulu" just as I had long ago enjoyed the comic itself. But by stressing the innocuousness of the comic, you sound a mite defensive, as though Dr. Wertham might be looking over your shoulder.

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

I agree with most of what Creath says in criticism of the fanzine reviews that simply summarize a plot and add a brief value judgment. But he's a trifle too hard on the whole concept of fanzine reviewing. There is no eternal verity which says that a review in a fanzine must possess literary worth and creativity of its own. Lots of fanzine readers aren't as blase as Creath and I and they justify the existence of the reviews that simply serve as an indication of whether the reader will want to obtain the item under review. The real problem, I think, is too many reviews of a given book which fulfill this same function in numerous fanzines.

I suspect the movies to have been a major influence on the transition from the kind of fiction Andy Offutt loses patience with to the type he praises from the modern day. The movies proved that you accept a head without a body during a closeup and quick switches back and forth between scenes miles apart without display of the intervening scenery and flashbacks that are not introduced by the arrival of a new character who proceeds to tell a story about the past. It must be more than coincidence that fiction began to get rid of its old habits at just about the same time.

Hank Davis, Box 154, Loyall, KY 40854

Hank's piece on the Marx Brothers disturbs me with its revisionist view of the Marx Brothers films. . . I don't really think that Duck Soup makes an "anti-war, anti-patriotism statement," any more than Horse Feathers makes an anti-college, anti-football statement. That sort of broad, slapsticky humor functions by shooting down everything in the sky, regardless of what insignia is on the wings. That paragraph reminded me a bit too much of the Bull that floated around about Will Rogers and his humor -- he shows what a great great nation we are, said They, because we can laugh at ourselves, ho hah heh.

+Ah, but Horse Feathers was anti-football if you realize that the way the +Brothers played the game made more sense and was a lot more entertaining than +the "Right" way. -- LML



Creath's review of Teenocracy punched one of my buttons, though. . . He complains about a person who sees him as a stereotype, as a communist, but he refers to this person as a "right-wing Bircher." Was he really a Bircher, or did Creath just throw in a scare word? And even if the fellow was a card-carrying member, surely Creath could have endured the strain of referring to him as a John Birch Society Member, rather than a "Bircher." Anyone who is seen as a stereotype gets no sympathy from me when he stereotypes other people.

I don't want to argue with Juanita Coulson, who writes a good column, and maybe I'm not really arguing since I'm probably talking about a time a few years later than the time she's writing about, after it was no longer hard for anyone to admit they liked rock and roll. My teen years were dehappyfied partly because it was hard on anyone who admitted he did not like r&r. Completely heretical and treasonous. Like denouncing football. Un-American. "Hey," they would shout, "Jail-House Rock is at the theatre next Sunday and everybody is going." Not me. That was just the isolation part. There was the hostility, too. I couldn't even joke about it. I remember about 1960, making a yok, "Hey, I'm gonna organize a Leonard Bernstein fan club." Stoney stares, telling me to go away, go away. I was going away, too, usually to Mars, Alpha Centauri, etc., but anyone who reads sf had to be as strange as anyone who didn't dig rock and roll, so I was twice strange. I try to keep those hard times in mind nowadays, to

offset any prejudice I might have toward present rock. I think I do offset them, too, or I would find present rock to be 100% crud instead of 95%.

I was as delighted to see Lesleigh's article on Little Lulu as I was by the Donald Duck article. But actually, Dr. Wertham could have found something evial and corrupting about the comic if he had tried hard enough, for I remember one episode in which Lulu entered and won a soap box derby (in an entry that looked like a wheelbarrow), and Tubby tried to get her disqualified because she had not built the vehicle and the rules explicitly stated that the entered vehicles could not be built by the driver's father. Turned out that the vehicle had been built with the help of Lulu's mother. See how disrespect for rules and laws are fostered here? See?

+No, no, that was a women's lib story -- but that would probably upset Dr. Wertham just as much.--LML

Hey, you didn't mention the one adult member of Tub's gang, Grampa Feeb. Also, the comic strip was preoccupied with toes. Aside from the tendertoed goblin you mentioned, Lulu was always going to see movies with titles like "The Thousand-Toed Thing," and once Tub's gang built a wodden rocket ship and tried to convince Lulu that they had gone to Mars and met Martians with thirty toes and had barely fought their way clear. "How did you defeat them?" Lulu asked. "We stepped on their toes!" they answered in unison. I'm sure Dr. Wertham could demonstrate that this toe hang-up is a fetish, indicating some deep-seated perversion and that Little Lulu is a threat to world peace and like that. . .



Gene Wolfe, 27 Betty Drive, Hamilton, Ohio 45013

I was interested to notice that Juanita Coulson referred to the white converts of the 50s as former straights: the word straight, used here, in this context brought back memories of my boyhood in the Texas of the 40s, when half or more of the country's junk came across the Tex-Mex border, and so very many of the hip expressions of the late 60's -- in fact, nearly all of them except for the few which were (and again, often very old) British, and imported with the Beatles -- simply negro slang: where it's at, get naked, and so on. I heard (usually with a slight sense of dislocation) most of these from a white mouth first from an older acquaintance, a baby-faced, blond, supposedly (perhaps actually) very tough petty criminal; the negro children, with whom I played occasionally, got angry if a non-negro talked like that, feeling, no doubt in most cases correctly, that they were being made fun of. Straight then meant that you were not on hard drugs, or alternately but less often, that you were not high -- alcohol or pot, and so now, and I know this is true, good current usage, straights are those Archie Bunkerish figures who might accept mild rock (sandstone, possibly) if it were played by WASPs; very good. But, Juanita, what are we going to call the one who's going to drive the car?

+Call him straight, it is still used like that. -- HL

Dave Hulvey, Rt. 1, Box 198, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Lesleigh, I enjoy your analyses of American comix, but I'm wondering if you'll ever get around to the present-day Underground comix field. Certainly Zan, Slow Death, Y ounce Lust, Mr. Natural and Captain Guts merit your attention, not to mention the many other titles on the market.

+Next issue I'll do an article on The Father of the Underground Comics (or at least R. Crumb's stuff), Basil Wolverton and his Powerhouse Pepper --LML

Buck Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, In 47348

I have several reasons for not running one or two long fanzine reviews each time. (1) It takes up too much space. (2) The reviews already take more time than I care to give them without me wasting a couple of hours trying to do any "in-depth" reviews. (3) Fanzines aren't worth long reviews anyway. (4) When I want to comment to the fanzine editor - as opposed to prospective buyers - I write him a letter. Nobody is much interested in long reviews of fanzines except the editor in question and sometimes other fanzine editors, and they aren't interesting enough as a rule to bother placating, right?

+Actually, we think you have the short review developed to an art, and would never suggest that you waste your time with longer reviews. Still wouldn't mind seeing some other people interested in doing longer reviews, though. -HL

Aw, come on, Leigh! If you don't make an impact on people, I'd hate to meet someone who did. . .I've never seen anything quite like that moment at the Ozarkon; someone announced "Leigh Couch has arrived" and an entire roomful of fans charged out to see you. One minute there's a happy folksinging session going on and 60 seconds later the room is empty. (I left at a dignified saunter, which is why I couldn't get closer than six feet to you all evening.)

Alpajuri, 1690 E. 26th Ave., Eugene, Oregon 97403

Your comments on fanzine reviews are very interesting, Hank, but make it all the more disappointing to find no such reviews in Starling. Practice whatcha preach, man!

+It would take too much of my time. Starling is important to me, and I'm willing to spend a lot of time on it -- but worthwhile fanzine reviews would be too much.

+Since I've started writing professionally a little bit, I don't feel that I
 +can afford to spend any more time on Starling, as that time would have to come
 +from the time I'd otherwise spend writing. --HL

I have a fanzine review column in Interplanetary Corn Chips, and I've been having a lot of trouble figuring out just what I want it to be. As an editor myself, I dig just seeing my zine mentioned in the fannish press for the egoboo value -- detailed criticism comes to me in the form of locs. Likewise, if I have some lengthy comments to make about a fanzine I prefer to make them in a loc to be published in that particular zine. I suppose reviews are supposed to be a buying guide, but the publications I like to rap about are the ones that excite me the most, one way or the another, and those are usually the leading ones, hence the ones that everybody knows about already. . . So the only thing left is simply to write a column of comment and analysis, sort of fanzine history-in-the-making type trip.

Unfortunately, in the last few months I've been really hung up about that particular subject; I've been undergoing a violent emotional rejection of all the values and goals in fanzine publishing I once held dear. Nowadays it's my opinion that virtually all of the fanzines published today are a buncha crap, which translated means I just don't think editors are gettin' it on, I think they're wallowing in traditions decades old and refuse to experiment, refuse to try anything new. Ironic that this would be the case with science fiction fans, who (one would think) would be more innovative and imaginative than the average mundane editor. Oh, sure, the verbal material in fanzines is pretty good, and pretty farsighted; same with the artwork. But the very fact that these two are kept separate and distinct is insane!

+I like graphic stories; that is, I like comic books -- but I'm not presently
 +interested in publishing one. --HL

Almost every fanzine you get in the mail is put together the same way. The editor has stuck an illo in the corner of each page and typed around it, oblivious to the extent to which the messy mass of typescript degrades the original beauty of the illustrations -- or on the other hand, oblivious to the extent to which the effect of the writing is lessened by the use of a poor or thematically irrelevant illo. Perhaps the only successful fanzine today in this respect is Bill Bower's Outworlds.

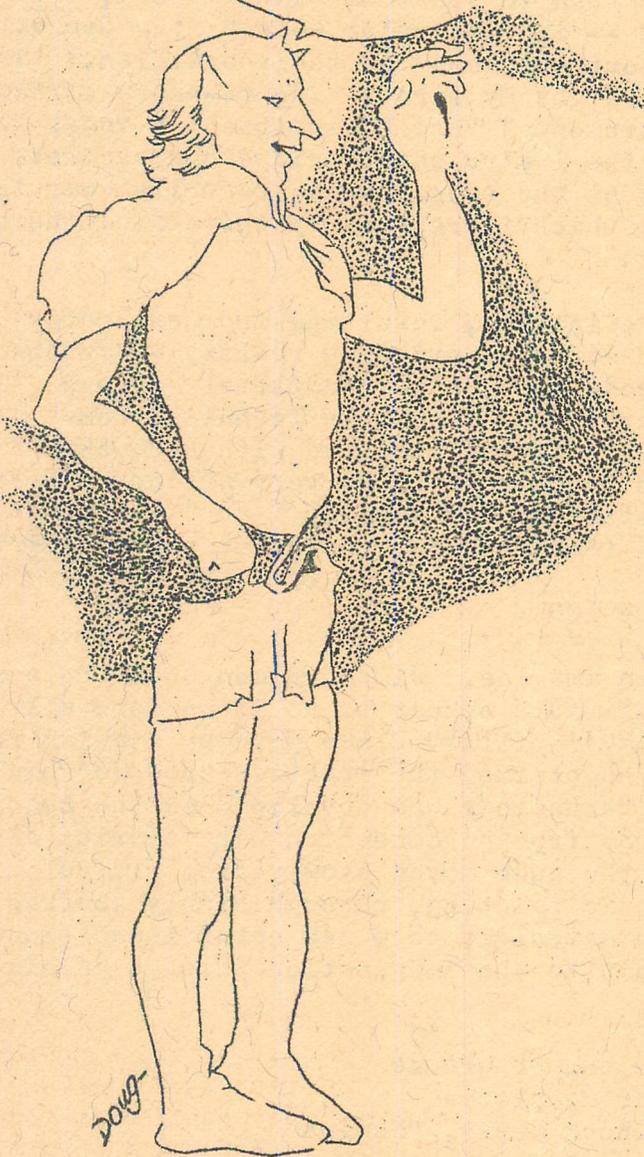
Doug Carroll, 407 College, Columbia, Missouri 65201

You call the Midwestcon motel merely a "good" one. I would like to point out that it had the most comfortable floor I've ever slept on. In my wide and varied experience as a floor sleeper I find a carpet with only moderate pile the most comfortable. Smooth wooden floors are ok in summer but in chilly weather easily qualify as torture. Linoleum floors are to be avoided as they tend to be both sticky and dirty. While I'm sure con floors tend to be carpeted it might be wise in the future for con committees to select a panel to test the sleeping comfort of hotel-motel floors. Some resourceful fan should be able to lie down in a hall for ten or fifteen minutes without disturbance. The reason I mention this is that at the one Ozarkon I attended the floor was most uncomfortable. If I hadn't been three-fourths drunk and totally exhausted I don't think sleep would have been possible given the hardness of that floor and the crescendo of Jim Turner's snoring.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Darrell Schweitzer, who didn't like Jim Turner's "The Call of Oxydol" unlike almost everyone else -- he says his Lovecraft parody upcoming in Phantasmicom will be much better; Donald G. Keller; Alan Cohn, who is Starling's medical editor; Aljo Svoboda, who shouldn't start letters "I doubt very much whether I can convince you that this letter is worth publishing. . ."; Rick Stoker; Daniel Dickinson; The Church of Starry Wisdom; two letters from Justin St. John; Lynn Hickman; Grant Canfield; Joe Sanders; Lenny Kava; Tim Lucas; Frank Johnson; Jay Kinney; Angus Taylor; Paul Anderson; Dan Goodman and Richard Gordon.

STARSHIP

LET ME SHED
SOME LIGHT
ON THINGS—



+ Angus Taylor +

To get into the subject obliquely, let us move directly to

PART ONE, in which Richard Speck Studies Das Kapital and Makes a Killing on the Stock Market

being a short discourse on why the Rolling Stones are not necessarily Male Chauvinist Pigs

Now, moving right along, we are aghast to hear no less a song than "Backstreet Girl" mentioned in a recent Women's Lib article as a prime example of Stones' obnoxiousness. A logical enough accusation, you say? Ridiculous, dear sir or madame! You merely reveal your ignorance of the Dialectics of Ambiguity. But yes. Of course. The Dialectics of Ambiguity are the key to the Stones' work. And "Backstreet Girl" is a minor classic of the genre. The lyrics are indeed obnoxious. One of the all-time great Stones put-downs. "Don't want you out in my world/Just you be my backstreet girl." And that class angle. How wonderfully it compounds the White Man's Burden, how neatly it erases the wretched girl from any meaningful place in the Real World: "Don't try to ride on my horse/You're rather common, of course, anyway..." Such a civilized, assured put-down. No screaming, no name-calling.

I know my rightful station in life. I hope you know yours. Let's not discuss the matter any further. Such subtle viciousness in those lyrics. Truly marvelous. But now listen to the music. Is it loud, raucous, vicious, as might befit such lyrics? Why, no...there's something strange here. The voice is gentle, full of longing, it seems. The music is almost a waltz. April in Paris. Dappled sunlight and spring showers. Lovers holding hands outside small cafes. The voices of children. Echoes of "As Tears Go By". What's happening here, Mr. Jones? The music completely contradicts the lyrics. Yes. This is the crux of the matter. This contradiction sets up a tension which is the motive power of the song, and out of which is born a synthesis, a new dimension to the song which can be grasped by the perceptive listener. The song's narrator is now seen in a new light -- not simply as a heartless exploiter but as an individual caught between the dictates of his social position and

his secret longings for freedom. The narrator of "Backstreet Girl" is helplessly, hopelessly in love with the poor girl he is destroying -- and the fact that he does not realize his real feeling only makes the song that much more powerful. Far from being an obnoxious put-down, the song is in fact perceptive and even -- dare we say it? -- compassionate. (Those who think I'm stretching the evidence can turn to Jonathan Eisen's book, The Age of Rock, and see that Michael Parsons -- in particular -- and Alan Beckett reach almost identical conclusions about this song in their articles.) Things are not always what they seem. Take "Light My Fire". The re-entry of Morrison's voice after the extended instrumental "break" is itself a vocal "break", since by its extension and intensity the instrumental bridge has by that point transformed itself into the main body of the song. Only gradually does the vocal reassert its original position, which it regains by the end of the song. Inside out. Outside in.

"The inevitable slight loss of definition, resulting from enlarging small negative areas, imparts an air of convincing reality -- further enhanced by choosing shutter speeds that do not completely freeze every scrap of motion in the picture. I find this technique completely rational, since human sight is not burdened with a depth of field ranging from six inches to infinity. We very seldom observe a scene in real life as a completely static image."

(Sam Haskins, postscript to Five Girls)

THE CLOSER HE GETS, THE WORSE YOU LOOK

The less you can see, the more you can imagine. Jim Morrison once wrote a piece describing the new universe that would appear to us if we were all blind. (How much can you see now, Jim?) William Blake gave up drawing from "real life" at an early age, because he claimed the practice deadened his imagination. Photography, whose basic technology was developed in the last century, took a long time to break away from an obsession with clarity and high definition. The photography of the nude moved slowly from ridiculous imitations of Greek statuary and classic painting, through highly abstract designs all but devoid of their human material, to a new naturalness pioneered by such as Haskins, giving greater rein to the imagination through an element of elusiveness.

"She moves around like a wayward summer breeze

Go, driver, go go, catch her for me please"

--Chuck Berry, "Nadine"

Now let us jump to

PART TWO, in which Robert Silvershoes Meets Fanny Boobselot and Thomas Edison Discovers Crundy Granola

being designed to further confuse the reader

HANNIBAL RICKSHAW, INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING MAGNATE, ANNOUNCES NEW ANTI-CULTURE-SHOCK SCHEME FOR NORTH ATLANTIC RUN * * * TO BE SUPERVISED BY HASSLES GALORE, STAR OF RECENT COMMON MARKET ILLICIT SEX AND CABBAGE SCANDAL

This innocuous headline, which appeared one day last month in the financial pages of the New York Times, fell upon deaf eyes for the most part. But it

signals one of the first attempts to come to grips with the growing stresses outlined by Alvin Toffler in Future Shock (even if Toffler is primarily an apologist for Consciousness II). Briefly speaking, Rickshaw's plan involves a "cultural decompression" process for travellers crossing between Europe and America. When the ship leaves Southampton the passenger finds himself in a lavishly-furnished cabin, complete with four-poster bed and chandelier. His steward is impeccably attired, speaks the Queen's English, and refuses tips. "It is enough to serve," he murmurs. A sumptuous eight-course meal is served in the cabin by candlelight the first evening. The next morning workmen replace the chandelier with a bedside lamp. The bed itself is now of more conventional design. That evening the steward's tie is slightly askew, but the two-course meal he serves is nothing to complain about. No candles though. You get the idea. As the days proceed the traveller's environment deteriorates steadily. By the time the ship is ready to dock at Montreal or New York, he is eating hotdogs and canned beans under the glare of a neon light. The slovenly steward speaks like a Brooklyn taxi driver and threatens violence unless large sums of protection money are handed over. As the ship docks our passenger is pushed bodily down the gangplank and his baggage is thrown over the side of the vessel, to smash open on the pier. Thus readied for life in the New World, the traveller sets forth undaunted. Rickshaw's scheme goes into operation this January, and already rival shipping lines are getting on the bandwagon. Anti-culture-shock schemes for airlines, which carry the largest portion of transatlantic traffic, will be much more difficult to implement, due to the much shorter time available enroute.

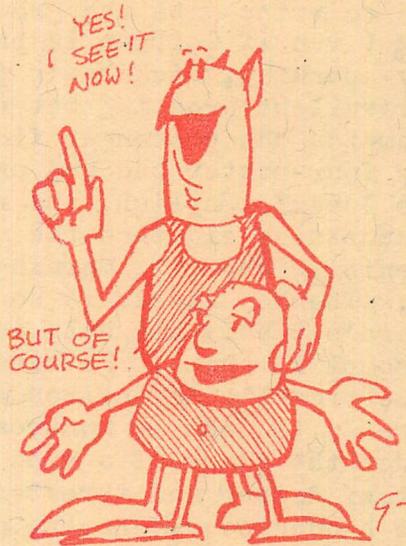
"But then he found another
 He told me he loved her
 He climbed in his rig and was gone"
 -- Sylvia Tyson, "Trucker's Cafe"

Today even love offers no sure haven from the scourge of transient relationships. Sylvia Tyson's words appear to deliberately echo the sentiments of the old Gaelic favorite, "Trucker's Lament". As Sir Percival Paisley-Patch points out in his monumental study, Truckin' Through the Ages,

. . . the Massacre of Glencoe had other effects, both sociological and technological. The incidence of family breakup and divorce among the clans lately forced to settle upon the Isles rose sharply during the early part of the eighteenth century. What is especially noteworthy is the fact that this acceleration of social turbulence almost exactly paralleled the phenomenal outburst of scientific creativity initiated during the lifetime of the legendary Lord Donald, inventor of the ill-fated steam-driven light-bulb. Rumours that the leader of the MacDonald clan had succeeded in sustaining a controlled fusion reaction were directly responsible for the introduction of reinforced bootheels for cold-weather trucking in the 1720's.

Volume IV: Bridge Between Two Cultures

There is much more that Paisley-Patch has to say concerning the problem of transience in technologically advanced societies -- all of it entirely irrelevant to the subject of this article. The subject of this article? Uh, just let me have another look at that title. . . .



BUT
IT'S
THE
FANNISH
THING
TO
DO

+ Terry Hughes +

In every fan group there are times when the conversation breaks out of the ordinary and becomes either thought-provokingly serious (rarely) or hilariously funny (often) and these are the things that are recorded and passed onto fandom. But no one ever mentions those embarrassing moments of pure silence that occur in the conversations. These silent spots generally occur after someone has come up with a fantastic joke that no one dares to try to top, or when someone says such an incredibly stupid thing that the subject of the conversation can no longer be discussed, or when everyone is too spacy to think very well, or when everyone is thinking about how they can swing the talk to such a point that they can unleash the fabulous joke or pun that they've been yearning to use. Here in Columbia we've come up with a partial solution to this fannish affliction. Namely, we go into a series of quotes from movies or albums or somesuch thing. This recent meeting will give you an idea of what I mean.

The whole gang of Columbia fen, or the MoSFA group as we are sometimes called, were gathering in my apartment for our latest meeting. The last to arrive were Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell who had screeched up to the house in their indestructible Dart, which is a shade of fading scarlet and rust, but we all love it and fondly call it Plonk. They entered the room by coming through the door which has the hand lettered sign warning NO PEPSIS ALLOWED! Our number was now complete.

We were sitting around our glasses of Coke or apple juice or, in Jim Turner's case, grain alcohol. Hank commented, "You know, someone really ought to record what happens at our meetings. It would undoubtedly fascinate fandom at large."

"Yes, and besides that, we could use it for blackmail," Jim Turner quickly added.

"Seriously," Lesleigh said, "the fantastically funny things that happen here would surely rival anything that is recorded in any other fannish center." We all readily mouthed our agreement.

"Gee, I wonder what's on TV?" mumbled Doug Carroll.

A period of SILENCE . . . and then the Firesign Theatre'isms began.

"I want a pizza to go and no anchovies," ordered Charlotte Taylor.

"No anchovies? You've got the wrong man, I spell my name Danger!" countered ²⁶ Charlie Talmage.

Doug looked Lesleigh right in the eye and uttered, "Regnad Kcin."

Hank started, "At the last possible moment he stopped on a dime..."

"...unfortunately the dime was in Mr. Rococo's pocket!" finished Rick Stoker, smiling broadly at being able to use his favorite phrase.

Tiring of this, Harry Squires asked, "Gee gang, we've made two or three monster movies so far, why don't we make a porno movie?"

"We could call it the Naked Dishroom!" I replied.

"Or how about the Port-o-san Papers!" Creath and Ann Thorne shouted in unison.

Obviously wishing that this would evolve into a fannish discussion of the first order, Hank ordered, "Come on, people. Say something fannish!"

"Lesleigh, your cat just pissed on me!" cried Creath. "Is that fannish enough for you?"

"Maya is an intelligent cat and she wouldn't do that," Lesleigh chided Creath.

"Maya really is intelligent. In fact, she can even read," I proclaimed.

Shocked Lesleigh asked, "How do you know that?"

"Why when I was at your house the other day I saw Maya "pouring" over some fanzines in the back." I answered, and then I ducked so that the book Creath tossed wouldn't hit me.

"To be fannish, Jim, why don't you stick your foot behind your ear?" I asked.

"If ghod meant for us to put our feet behind our ears, we would have been born that way," Jim said. "And if you suggest that again I just might stick my foot somewhere else."

Then Jim, Doug and Charlie started talking about what happened at their party where they served some unbelievably strong punch aptly called Quivering Death.

I sat staring into empty space, trying to think of something monumental and hilarious to say. Then it came to me. "Do you know a Carl Lafong? Carl Lafong. Capital C, little a, little r, little l, capital L, little a, little f, little o, little n, little g. Carl Lafong?"

The whole room convulsed with laughter. "Terry actually said something funny!" chortled Creath.

Hank giggled and then in his best W. C. Fields voice said, "Ah yes, that's from the famous W. C. Fields movie IT'S A GIFT, directed by Norman Taurog in 1934..."

²⁷Realizing that I held the group in the palm of my hand, I pressed further. "Do you know a Carl Lafong? Carl Lafong. Capital C, little a, little r, little l. capital L, little a, little f, little o, little n, little g. Carl Lafong?"

The laughter was less that time, so I assumed the people hadn't heard me. So in a louder voice I said, "Do you know a Carl Lafong? Carl Lafong. Capital C, little a, little r, little l, capital L, little a, little f, little, o, little n. little g. Carl Lafong?"

Doug gave a forced chuckle, while Lesleigh, Creath, Ann and Jim were glaring daggers at me. Hank began doing his insane Peter Lorre routine, and started toward me. Striving to regain my mastery of their emotions, I quiveringly asked, "Do you know a Carl La.....AAAAARRRGH!"

"Hank, dear, aren't you afraid Terry will stop breathing if you continue strangling him?" Lesleigh asked.

I was saved by a pounding at the door. There were a lot of fabulously funny things said while I was on my way to answer the door -- in fact, the others said that those later comments were the best made that evening, and that they concerned things that they were going to do to a certain fan with long blond hair whose first name was Terry, but they wouldn't give me any more clues. Unfortunately I missed all those comments as I was going to the door.

After I opened the door and saw who was there, I staggered back into the meeting room and asked, "Did anybody here invite there police officers to the meeting ?!?"

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9:

BYRDS/SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO (Columbia) A wide variety of material and styles. One of the records that started it all.

TOM RUSH (Columbia) His first album has folk-time lyrics and country instrumentation. Very moody, introspective album.

RINGO STARR/BEAUCOUPS OF BLUES (Apple) Whether you like Ringo or not, this a record's session men make it all worthwhile.

GRATEFUL DEAD/WORKINGMAN'S DEAD (Warner Brothers) Everybody must have heard this one by now. Do if you haven't.

NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE (Columbia) Deadman Jerry Garcia plays pedal and steel guitar and banjo. Almost as good as WORKINGMAN'S.

IAN AND SYLVIA/GREAT SPECKLED NIRD (Ampex) Ian Tyson has the best country voice I've ever heard.

I can immediately think of omissions from this list. It's sketchy and a very personal list but I don't think there's one record on the list you'll find disappointing.



A Column about Books

+Joe Sander+

CLARION, edited by Robin Scott Wilson. Signet, 95¢.
 MOONFERNS & STARSONGS, by Roberts Silverberg. Ballantine, 95¢.
 THE DEVIL IS DEAD, by R. A. Lafferty. Avon, 75¢.

I approached CLARION with a negative attitude, based on my doubts about creative writing programs (acquired while I tried to teach creative writing in college) and on my reaction to the backcover blurb's pretentious foolishness. And no doubt that's part of why I found the stories in CLARION unsatisfying -- both feebly written and misleadingly packaged.

Consider the packaging first: that backcover blurb begins, "Until recently, science fiction was condemned to the purgatory of the pulps. It is only within the past decade that this situation has been radically altered. Science fiction is at last no longer considered a sub-literary genre. The novels of Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke, the works of Vonnegut and Borges, and the fantasies of Tolkien have all helped to bring to science fiction the scholarly recognition it has long been denied." Think about that for awhile. Consider the cutely alliterated "purgatory of the pulps," the ignorant reference to Bradbury's "novels," the smug gloating over "scholarly recognition." Then ask, looking deeper, whether the pulps really were an agonizing halfway stage through which science fiction suffered until it reached literary maturity. Really? Or is the blurbwriter trimming facts, prettying up stf to make it look properly respectable?

We can't shrug the whole thing off by supposing that the blurbwriter never read CLARION and had no idea of what the book is trying to do. In fact, he may at least have read some of the brief essays by pro writers scattered throughout the anthology. Although they reflect more knowledge about science fiction, these essays show the same pretentiousness as the blurb -- and the same tendency to slander and exaggerate. The pro writers, too, describe what they want to see, not what's there to be seen. Not quite all; Kate Wilhelm and Samuel R. Delany write modestly and realistically about their experiences as teachers at the Clarion conferences. But many of the other pro writers make various enthusiastic claims for the literary/social importance of stf, attaching them at least by implication to the stories in this collection. Harlan Ellison writes about stf as a force for social change. Fred Pohl describes it as "game-playing literature." Joanna Russ argues that we need to escape from the idea of genre. There are other interesting set pieces, but none of them have very much to do with CLARION.

²⁹ The essay by the founder of the Clarion conference and the editor of this collection, Robin Scott Wilson, maintains the tone but reveals indirectly what went wrong with CLARION. In the longest essay in the book, Wilson is delighted that "the prestigious Modern Language Association" is taking an interest in science fiction; Wilson also remarks that "a prominent textbook publisher is contemplating the issuance of a freshman sourcebook of science fiction, the surest harbinger of academic interest." This is nonsense. Publication of a freshman sourcebook merely shows that -- having helped kill interest in black culture in America by their slapdash and boring collections of secondrate writing, being well along toward bludgeoning the ecology issue to death, and already committed to various assemblages of women's lib dreck -- publishers are testing whether they can market science fiction in the same unthinking and uncaring way. Publishers are happy, of course, that the MLA is ready to sanction using science fiction as a way of keeping freshmen busy. And, to be sure, scholars are increasingly interested in stf. The interest seems largely genuine, but so far confused. Scholarly criticism, as shown in Wilson's dry, quoty writing, tends to inflate its subject beyond recognition. The trouble is, I believe, that scholars are trained to analyze style surgically, to label themes in separate jars, to dissect structures; they are not trained in choosing which works to approach with their fine-honed tools. The choice of works from the past has been made for them, by time. If they chose to explore works outside the accepted canon, it's usually to trace ideas independent of literary merit. When in doubt about contemporary works, they usually are attracted to works that look serious. It follows that something that doesn't take itself seriously -- like the pulps -- deserve only scorn. And the reverse: anything that takes itself very seriously tends to be taken seriously. Academic criticism is a fine tool for understanding details, but it tends to miss the whole point.

And the point, here, is that most of the stories in CLARION are not very good. Several are very bad. However serious in intent, they just aren't worth printing, let alone praising. The problem is that all these stories are written by beginning writers, for a class. Well, okay; actually that's two problems. First of all, as Wilhelm points out, a beginning writer frequently isn't quite aware of what his subject is: finding a story goes along with finding what you have in you to write about. That process of self-discovery can in itself be beautiful to watch, but it can't be seen in isolated pieces, as here. And while a man is exploring himself, he naturally turns up a lot of probings that are written as "science fiction" only because the writer happens to be taking a science fiction class. Not all ideas adapt themselves easily to stf. CLARION's stories about poets/hippies/outsideers set nominally in the future could just as easily happen today. I don't think the stfnal trappings add very much to the effect. Why bother?

Even if the writer really comes to grips with an idea or feeling, though, he runs into another problem: writing for a class means plentiful submissions, and that usually means putting an idea into a short story. Trouble is, not all story ideas can work in extremely short length. Some plots need more room to work themselves out in. The test is whether the writer feels compelled to drag in details of background and characterization by the short hairs. In most of the stories in CLARION, the writers try to slip necessary information in unobtrusively, as part of the action; when the story is too short, though, a reader can feel its fabric stretch as the author shoves in the facts he thinks readers have to know to make the plot work. I'm thinking for example, of Glen Cook's "Songs from a Forgotten Hill," a piece with a workable idea and some good, direct prose, which is severely lamed by the author having to stop to Explain things.

Or Steve Herbst's "An Uneven Evening," in which the central character steps out of character to explain himself: "I now reject studious inactivity and uneasy introspection for the security of my friends, old games, and a more forceful and satisfying social role."

There are more successful stories in the book. Robert Thurston's "Wheels" is a relatively incisive extrapolation, and a relatively well-developed plot for its length. (Thurston's other two stories in the collection are less successful, I think, but more in different directions; he's confident enough to try a variety of moods and ideas. Very promising.) Nel Gliden's "What About Us Grils?" is cute. Ed Bryant's "The Soft Blue Dunny Rabbit Story" is good at presenting vivid sensations, though less successful at fitting his images into a coherent story. Geo. Alec Efflinger's "A Free Pass to the Carnival" shows a hint of restraint lacking in his other two stories here. C. Davis Belcher's "Just Dead Enough," the longest story in the collection, is divided between a legal problem concerning body-transplants and the character/career of the newsman who serves as the center of consciousness; it's mildly interesting both ways. And Maggie Nader's "The Secret" is vivid and affecting despite her obviously contriving the plot.

There's really no point in discussing -- or listing -- the other stories, half-stories, or less. I think the people I've mentioned above show up best in CLARION. That doesn't mean the others can't make it as writer, nor does it mean the people I've singled out will make it. It's really impossible to say on the basis of this book. The better stories here are mostly good only by comparison to their neighbors; I may for example be giving "A Free Pass to the Carnival" credit for too much subtlety because I'm comparing it to Efflinger's other stories here, which are painfully unsubtle. Or I may be unfairly cutting down "A Free Pass to the Carnival" because I found Efflinger's other stories so awkward. It's difficult to evaluate -- or even guess intelligently about someone's chances as a professional writer from a few samples of his pre-professional exercises. I'm judging these stories as an outside observer, remember. I've admitted my initial hostility above, and I'm sure it colored my final opinion. I can understand the joy of discovering talent and watching it develop, the pleasure of working closely with dedicated students (Wilhelm and Delaney are very good on that). I can also understand how an academic interest in significant literature could make a teacher strain to see significance in what has given him joy. But this is not a good combination of motives for the editor of a professionally printed and sold anthology. CLARION is not a good anthology.

Perhaps I'm being unfair to some of these writers. I don't know. But these stories show up even worse than they are because they're presented so reverently, as the flowering of a new generation, a finer, purer branch of science fiction. Perhaps that will prove true eventually. But I'd be willing to bet that in a few years, whatever else happens, the people represented here will wince at the thought of CLARION.

Bob Silverberg is, in many ways, the antithesis of the writers in CLARION. He's a superbly professional writer, who thinks ideas through as fully as his market demands and gives them exactly as much development as they need to sell. I'm not sneering at Silverberg. After CLARION's stories draped vaguely on a half-grown idea or "stories" that are little more than plot outlines, it's a great relief to read the stories in MOONDEERNS & STARBONGS -- effortless-seeming, with never a wasted word or thought. Trouble is, they're effortlessly forgotten, too. Though I'd read some of these stories before, I didn't remember for sure

until I'd finished them; reading them again was pleasant enough; if I save the book I'll probably be able to read them again, every few years. . . Like the average MOVIE OF THE WEEK, they pass time pleasantly and fade from memory almost immediately.

Several of Silverberg's stories try to do more than that. Some succeed. In "Passengers," Silverberg's narrator makes a few remarks about determinism vs. free will. A real issue but it never amounts to much in the story. Too clearly, Silverberg is setting the narrator up to be crushed in the story's conclusion. The determinism enforced by the author is efficiently managed -- but so what? By the same token, "We Know Who We Are" is a pretty straightforward translation of straight culture vs. drugs into a stfnal context. Again, a real issue. But the smoothly done story shows only that such a translation can be made. Silverberg presents both sides effectively -- giving a somewhat better picture of drug takers if only because the straight society is so cliché-dominated and smug. Beyond that -- so what? "The Pleasure of Their Company" is more successful. It works as entertainment, and I think it does enough beyond that to stick in my memory. The story that really impressed me was "Nightwings," which has a somewhat vague plot -- legitimately, I think, since the narrator is an old man close to but not in the center of action -- but which creates a real mood. The mood is largely composed of the mystery I've mentioned above; actually, it's a two-level mystery, composed of the narrator's wonderment as he observes things he doesn't understand and our own wonderment as the narrator refers to parts of his society that he naturally understands but doesn't feel obliged to explain. Jack Vance does this kind of thing very well. But Vance's heroes are always detached from events or people around them; they're always rather emotionally dead. Silverberg's characters are more normal in their feelings and sentiments. The blend is effective. There may even be some real emotion here, as opposed to the expertly synthesized imitation in "Passengers". "Nightwings" is a striking, haunting story.

And that last description could fit THE DEVIL IS DEAD, too. It's not a matter of the particular idea Lafferty uses, because the idea winks in and out of focus. For that matter, I think that I'd go up the wall if I could pay more attention to what Lafferty's saying about the Neanderthal-prompted motives of student demonstrators, etc. Instead, Lafferty's style, all expansive and conversational, overpowers the idea. Lafferty uses mystery too; he keeps his hero (and readers) mystified for a good deal of the book. He delights in that puzzlement; he plays tricks with it and works change after change on it. And I think that's legitimate here, first of all because the situation is mystifying, moving bewilderingly in and out of the normal categories of understanding, secondly and more important because Lafferty makes the book gloriously entertaining, whether he's adding details that will fit together later, laying false trails, or simply digressing for the joy of it as in the chapter about Finnegan's bar friends in the Old Wooden Ship. Terry Carr has remarked, elsewhere, about another Lafferty novel, that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. I'm not sure whether the parts of THE DEVIL IS DEAD ever quite make a whole, but I'd say that the pleasure is greater than the sum of the intelligibility. As one of Lafferty's characters says, "I have a way of telling these stories. . . The truth of them is always interesting, but there is a wide selection of truths." A lovely book.





KEN FLETCHER / TOM FOSTER