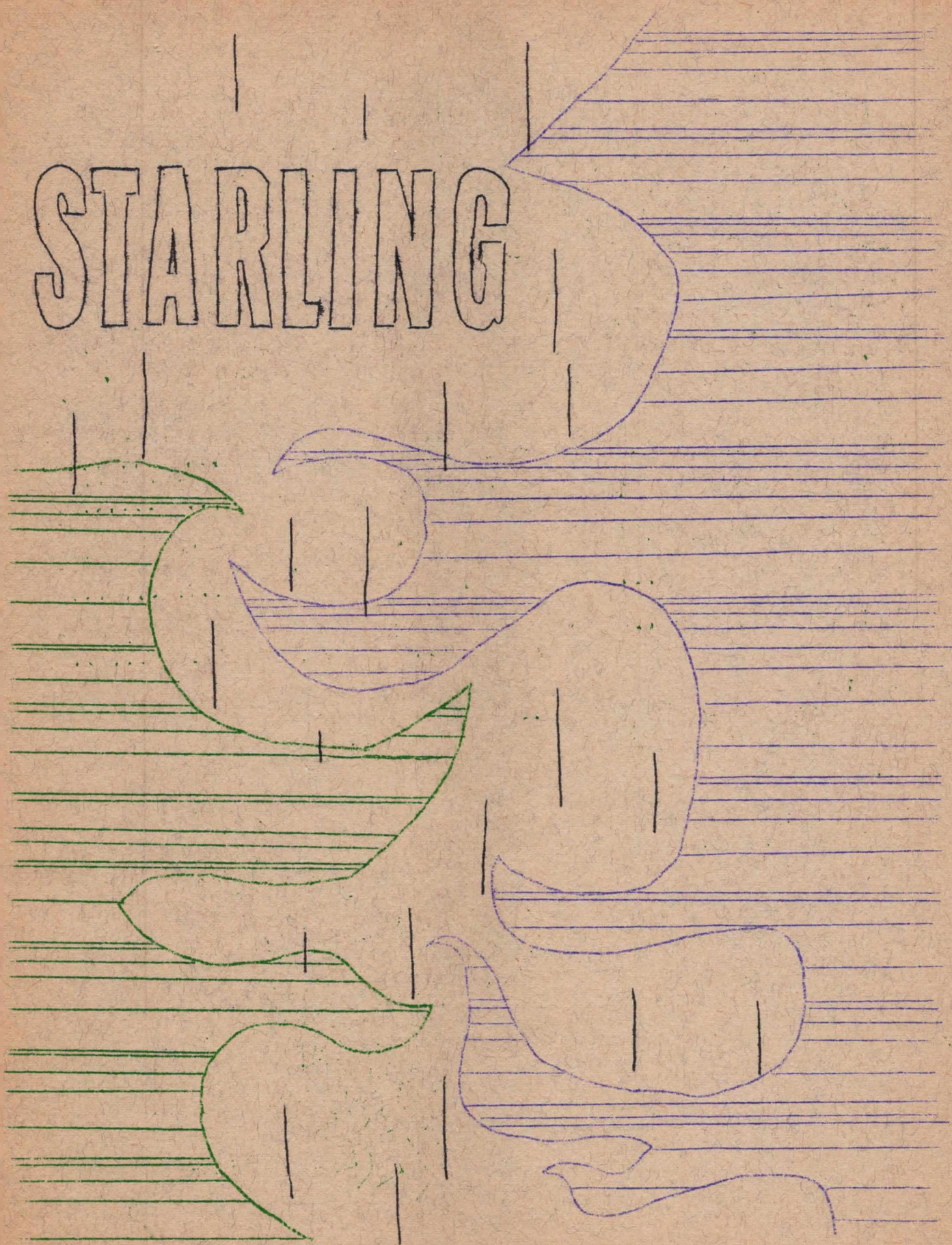


# STARLING



# Starling

SIXSIXSIXSIX

STARLING SIX was published by Hank Luttrell, Route 13, 2936 Barrett Station Road, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122. You can have it for a letter of comment, a contribution of some type: art, poetry, articles, fiction, etc. Published quarterly, or, perhaps more often this summer. And I almost forgot, you can have this thing for 25¢.

## CONTENTS--

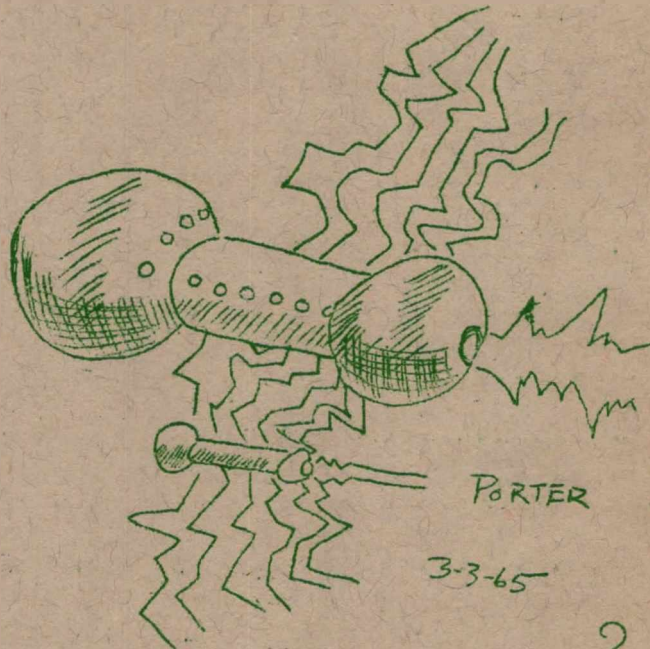
YOUR MAN IN MISSOURI...(editorial)...by Hank Luttrell.....	3
CULTURAL PHENOMENON ...(fiction?)...by Richard Gordon.....	6
WORDS FROM READERS...(a letter column)..edited by Hank Luttrell....	13
FROM THE ISHTAR GATE...(a column)..by David N. Hall.....	25
BEATLES AND BADGERS...(non-fiction that has nothing to do with the Beatles)..by Hank Luttrell.....	28

## POEMS:

Untitled by David N. Hall...page 30  
A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE by Stephen Barr...page 5

## ART:

- 2lettering: Hank Luttrell
- drawing: Andy Porter
- 5 Jurgen Wolff
- 7 Joe Staten
- 9 Robert Gilbert
- 11 Jim Hamilton
- 25 Becker Staus
- 27 Jurgen Wolff
- 30 Liz Riggs



# YOUR MAN IN MISSOURI

by  
Hank Luttrell

With this issue, I'm doing my first experimenting with color; as you might have already noticed on the cover. Last issue's red and black on the cover didn't count; in that case, I did only the black part, and David Hall did the red. This time, all the work is my own.

The results were mixed. The purple wasn't as brilliant as I might have hoped, and was very slow flowing--I guess that's what you would call it. At any rate it forced me to turn the mimeograph drum very slowly, so the ink would be dark enough, and not spotty.

The green was much more successful. The color was very satisfactory, if you happen to like green (I've nothing against it, mind you) and it flowed at least as well as black. You may prepare yourself for various green pages and parts of pages in this and forthcoming issues.

Also, I plan to experiment with other colors which I might be able to get a hold of in future issues. You may brace yourself for that, too. I would have done a bit more this time, if I had had a few more weeks in which to fool around.

This issue is shorter than originally planned by at least two reasonably long pieces. Reason: (and also the reason there isn't more color) I'm trying to get done by Midwestern noon time. . .

May I make a request of some of you collectors? I've compiled an index to the Pyramid books, and I want to include information relative to the original publication of each book. I wonder if any of you out there might know anything about the books of Vardis Fisher, published by Pyramid. I would like to know the original book publisher, and the date published, or, if they had an earlier magazine publication, the name and date (or dates) of the issue(s).

## ON THE NATURE OF EDITORIALS

With this issue, I've more or less decided to make an attempt to make my editorial comments at a little more length. . . which forces me to consider the nature that these comments are to take.

In the world of newspaper editorials, finding a topic to write about is simple. What one is to do with said topic is even simpler--one takes a Definite Stand. Some fans do this.

In professional science fiction magazines, the editorials are sometimes a history of the issue in which they appear, or a forecast of some sort. . . Palmer did this regularly, for example. This also is common in fandom. . . see above. Fred Pohl is forever reviewing books--Roy Tackett occasionally does this, and there may be other fans

as well.

The most common editorial in fandom is sort of a personal sort, i.e., a con report, "the Ford broke down again," "Forry Ackerman popped in on me and we watched a movie. . ." and so on. These editorials are often quite pleasant, but I really don't think my personal life is of any tremendous interest to anyone but me and my Guardian angle.

. . .it occured to me that I might expand on some of the things going on in the letter column. However, this might prove to be even a tighter circle than I want to start. I can't promise not to do something like this in the future, however. . .

I might pick one of the subjects which I'd been wanting to write an article on, and call it an editorial. But somehow, this doesn't seem quite right. I feel like I shouldn't "waste" an idea of this type in an editorial--this feeling perhaps resulting from the fact that I associate editorials with unresearched little babblings, were as, I think of an article as something containing a bit more work and thought. Perhaps this is a false set of values, but I think it might have some meaning. Shouldn't editorials be something, if not better, then at least differnt than articles?

What ever topics I take up here in the future, they won't be well researched, they won't be final, undisputable and all inclusive. I'm going to be making with the "half-baked" thoughts and I'm going to be inviting comment and argument.

I finally decided that perhaps the best fanzine editorials are those which inspire some response from the readers.

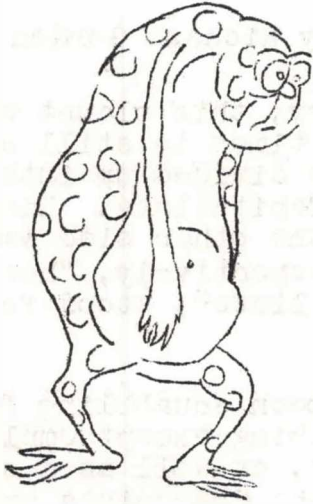
\*\*\*\*\*

I recently read quite a few people's favorite book--THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING. I didn't really like it as well as those "quite a few people." I thought the writing was brillent--and the background of the book tremendously colorful. But--I suppose I'm something of a "surface reader;" I like to see plots develop and come to nice conclusions. I like reading stories.

And though Tolkien is certainly a brillent writer, I'm not sure if his book contains all the elements of good story telling. I'm not talking about the unconclusive ending, I'm quite aware that this was only the first of three books--the climax is certainly yet to come.

This isn't the fault, if fault I can call it. I think my main dissatisfaction with the book came from two other elements, one of which concerns the afore mentioned story telling. The other. . . is something else.

The protagonists of the story arc Frodo, the other hobbits, and the various other people and non-people of the Middle Earth. And, of



course, the antagonists are the powers in Mordor. . . .but always off stage and indistinct. The antagonists is first represented by the Black Ho rsemen, later by Orcs and such monsters, and sometimes by nothing more than a strange acting bird or other animal. More often, there is no antagonist in the plot. To some less extent, the Ring itself proves an enemy. I thought the most effective parts of the book were those in which the Ring provided a specific conflict--as in the last chapter, and the instance in which Gandalf finds a fellow Wizard under the evil influence of the Ring.

I think the main trouble of the book--to me--was this lack of direct conflict between two forces. This type of conflict is the basis of any story, and in most of this story, nothing happens. . . they just walk along, from one minor conflict--not necessarily with the forces of Mordor--to the next.

The other thing I had against this book is a purely personal one. I suppose I must be basically a grim person, because I found much of the book's whimsy uncomfortable. When I mentioned that I thought this was a basically whimsical book to another reader of Tolkien, he protested that it was, indeed, a very grim book, and what are you talking about anyway?

Like, any comments. . . .?

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE  
By Stephen Barr

One of those fannish days  
When a ship, on a bay of brass  
Sat in a fine salt haze  
as if it never would pass  
The Cape; viewed from the stern  
Its single screw achurn  
Braided a wake; and though  
We did not see it go  
Forward, it finally faded.

# CULTURAL PHENOMENON by Richard Gordon

In the early years of the twenty-first century, this planet was near to war. The political situation of the times is still slightly obscure, but it appears that the planet was divided up into two main blocks known as the Communists and the Capitalists. Each of these two blocks apparently considered that the other side wanted world domination, and that the other side, respectively, "heartless bureaucrats", and "war-mongering imperialists", stood for all that was bad in the universe.

However, these are not important. They had been squabbling for the past seventy years without achieving anything except employment for several thousand bureaucrats and soldiers, as well as a stable economy. No, the war has nothing to do with the Communists and Capitalists, but concerned two opposing factions, the lineal descendents of a so-called "cultural phenomenon" that had first appeared in the quiet rural village then known as Liverpool (Lennengrad) in the early part of the nineteen-sixties. This was known as the Beatles--no screaming please--of whom you all have heard. In the course of the next year or so, they virtually conquered the world, and almost rendered political barriers meaningless. But they didn't have everything their own way, by any means. For around the same time, another singing "group" appeared in a town known as London--Wattsville to us. Yes, it was the Rolling Stones.

In the course of five years or so, these two groups toured the world, and gradually built up what only can be called political factions. The space programme was dropped as the situation between Beatles and Stones supporters grew more and more severe, and several pitched battles were fought before the turn of the seventies. You have all heard about the Battle of the Cavern in '69, where the Beatles supporters triumphantly routed the scattered remnants of Stones fans in Liverpool, so there is no need to go into it here.

In '73, the two original groups retired simultaneously, and the politicians sighed with relief, thinking that they could now return to their time-honoured profession of making wars, etc, on a more professional basis. But they sighed too soon. Maybe they retired, but the two groups were enormously rich, and in those days, money meant power, and the nine no longer young men who had caused such a furore had plenty of that. Much of their wealth was also invested in "pop" music, and thus they could not afford to let what they had start to die.

So planet wide talent contests were begun sponsored respectively by the Beatles and the Stones. After extensive throat troubles had put half of the contestants out of action, two more groups were found to carry on the torch which the first two had lit. These were the Creeping Bones and the Meatles, and they were every bit as successful as their predecessors. The politicians sighed once

more and began committing suicide en masse. Britain was declared a first rate power again, and amid great excitement, Prince Charles ascended to the throne after the abdication of his mother, wearing a robe covered with beetles and skull and crossbones. His first act was to make the two original groups life peers, a master-stroke which ended the rivalry between the still faithful fans.



But there were the new groups to contend with. Eventually; they, too, had to retire and the torch was carried on by yet more groups, chosen from the holy cities of Liverpool and London. In forty years, the world went through a quick succession of Featles, Peatles, Eatalls, as well as Bowling Moans, Screaming Stones, Mossy Rocks, Etc., ad nauseam.

At the time when the crisis occurred, in 2019, the two groups were the Creapers and the Strolling Moans. It occurred when the Moans recorded a song entitled--erhum--I WANNA BE YOUR MAN. Ardent fans of the house of Beatle dug back to the early years of Beatledom, and proved that this classic had been a Lennon and McCartney composition, and not an original Jagger, as the Moans had supposed. Beatledom lawyers stated proceedings to sue the Moans for plagiarism. Frantic Moans' fans made the startling discovery that in 2003, the Peatles had recorded an original Jagger, called CAROL, without any sort of acknowledgement. The Moans immediately sued the Peatles estate for five million stones, the peculiar form of currency that they employed then. In any case, this was a number one crisis, and meant war. Supporters of both sides hurriedly began mobilising all over the world, and quite a few lynchings took place. Both groups were burnt in effigy. The fortunes of both the Beatles estate and the Stones estate were turned over to the coming war. At a high level conference held in the Cavern Palace between delegates of both factions, it was agreed that atomic weapons should be banned, but anything else was allowed.

Perhaps it is worth a brief diversion to describe just what these weapons were. They show the ingenuity of man, if nothing else. Thousands of machine guns were manufactured in the traditional guitar shape, and burst of fire was produced by strumming the multiple strings, each being a trigger. These fearsome weapons each fired 100 specially hardened pellets made from old records of the "pop" singers from the pre-Beatle era, and were specially treated to produce a wierd shriek, akin to "yeah-yeah-yeah. ." as they rushed through the air. Both sides produced grenades which looked much

like stage microphones, and were operated in much the same way. They automatically exploded five seconds after a breathed "yeah" activated them. There were also terrible weapons which catapulted steel discs through the air at advancing troops, to slice deep into them with their deadly sharp edges. And there were many others.

But this is not the concern of the lecture, for the war never came about. It was at the famous Cavern Talks that the Galactic Empire stepped in.

It is slightly obscure who we of the thirtieth century have to thank for contacting the outside universe, thus leading to our present greatness. But a general consensus among experts is that we must acclaim one Fred Q. Boil, a weary and bored astronomer and technician of the early 21st century, as the saviour of mankind. For it is known that he was serving at the great radio telescope at Podrell's Shanks on the night of January 21st, 2002. Now it must not be thought that pop music had destroyed every other form of activity on our planet. Not at all. There were still some scientists working to discover the secrets of life, though nobody paid them any attention any longer. At the same time, several intrepid astronomers were engaged in trying to contact alien life forms outside the solar system by means of pulsed radio-waves sent out from the radio telescope. They had been at it for nearly forty years, and Boil for twenty of these years.

Now, Boil was a loyal member of Beatledom. He also yerned after Stonedom as well, but he couldn't admit this, as it would have been the ultimate social disgrace, for to like both factions simple wasn't done. Thus, in view of later facts, it is safe to surmise that on that night of January 1, Boil suddenly got tired of sending out coded radio messages, and instead broadcast a careful selection of the two dominant groups, the Peatles and the Screaming Stones, through the powerful transmitters of the worlds largest radio telescope. This was almost certainly the only instrument capable of such a feat, and it was certainly and it was almost certainly about this time that the messages were sent out. And it is well for Mankind that they were.

Ygg'drasil was sitting at the ether-radio post pointed towards Earth on the 29th of September, 2017, Earth time, and GE5,584,904:10/7 Galactic Empire time; on the empire outpost on Altair, 15.7 light-years from Earth. The outpost had been at it for nearly forty years, Earth time, ever since radio signals had been observed from the planet Earth, and he, Ygg'drasil, had been at it for twenty years, and was quite as bored as Fred Q. Boil had been some years earlier. He knew quite well that Earth wouldn't develop interstellar flight for a good century yet so as to be eligible for membership, but he knew equally well that he'd be on this outpost hole for at least half that time. For the thousandth time he wondered why he'd been so stupid as to make eyes at the daughter of the Capellan President. If he'd kept his head, he wouldn't have been out here, waiting for those damn stupid terrans to get a move on and get into space. Of course, he didn't know that the damn stupid terrans had had their scientific development artificially arrested--he said as much later.



Anyway, as I have said, Ygg'drasil, unconscious of the fame that was to come his way, was sitting at the ether-radio installation waiting for the end of his shift, when suddenly an entirely unexpected blast of noise roared through the amplifiers trained on Earth, fifteen point seven light-years away. He fell off his chair in surprise, which wasn't very surprising. Fifteen old light years didn't do much for the Peatles voices, which were pretty raw at the best of times. And their particular version of SHAKE AND SCREAM was wilder than most.

But Ygg'drasil was no fool, as later events unmistakably proved. He quickly saw that this untoward development was the first novelty to emerge from the transmitter in thirty-nine years, and so he recorded it. It nearly broke down when it encountered the Screaming Stones, but eventually the little concert was over, and our future was in the balance as Ygg'drasil began thinking hard. He didn't tell his replacement what had happened, and went to the computer to have it analysed.

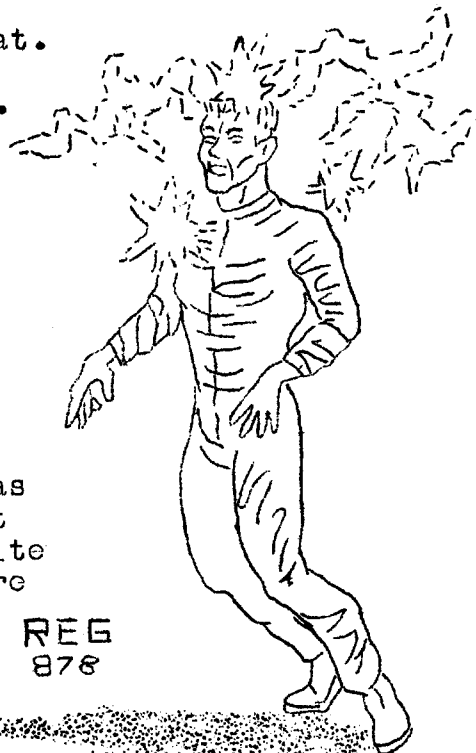
To his amazement, the computer said it was music. However, twenty years of isolation had freed his mind somewhat from the decadence of the Galactic Civilization. Make no mistake about it, the Galactic Civilization was decadent. After all, it had been around for over five and a half million years, and all invention and inspiration had died out. There was no need of it.

However, even a decadent society will welcome new diversissement, as the Romans of ancient Earth proved on the advent of the Christians. Ygg'drasil, having something of a business mind, clearly realized that. And he still lusted after the daughter of the Capellan President.

So one night he turned the transmitter in the general direction of Civilization, and after a brief introduction in which he carefully mentioned his name several times, he broadcast his capture of the night before.

The response, as they say, was ATOMIC. The next "day", the ether was filled with puzzled questions as to just what that--that NOISE--that had come out from Altair--was. Quite a few bored teenagers in the centre of the Civilization had heard this racket as well, and began to feel a strange excitement deep down inside them.

Soon the trickle of queries became a flood, as a satiated galaxy demanded just what the Hell all this was about. So smug Ygg'drasil, fortune and Cappellan President's daughter assured, condescended to explain before the whole Galaxy on Vidcast.



The President saw him and wondered whether he might have been wrong in his estimation of this clever young man. The daughter saw him and blushed amid her secret dreams. The next day, Ygg'drasil arrived at Capella through the expensive Teleport, and became lost to subsequent history.

The galaxy was in a ferment. Hastily forgetting rules and regulations, ships moved into Pluto and the Solar system, setting up receiving and transmitting stations, and for a while the Galaxy was satisfied with a flood of immortal music which poured forth from the magic planet of Earth. But people being people everywhere, this was not enough. They had to see their new idols, the Creapers and the Strolling Moans. In person. The universal Creapers' fan club and the Universal Moans fan club decamped outside Galactic headquarters on Beta Orionis and refused to move until contact with Earth and their gods was authorized. The politicians, as usual, were in an absolute dither. This was irregular! Rules and Regulations said that no race could be contacted until it achieved Interstellar Travel. Cultural Imbalance, etc. To Hell with Cultural Imbalance, said the Galaxy. We want the Creapers and the Moans HERE. Headquarters, for whom this was the first crisis in half a million years, submitted weakly. Not that that made any difference, for two shiploads of fans, one for the Creapers and one for the Moans, were already on route for Earth. They refused to travel together--fans of one group had been slightly rude to those of another, and in a super-civilized galaxy, this was unheard of!

Well, as you know, they arrived just in time. At the Caverns, the delegates were beginning to hurl records at one another, and the atmosphere was becoming rather heated. It got decidedly more heated when the ships containing the Creapers' fans arrived in Beatle Square outside the Caverns and in fact, quite a few people got incinerated under the landing jets. The ship didn't really need them, but it had been decided that they should be used to impress the natives.

Well, at first the natives weren't impressed at all. What right had a bunch of silly squares to come and bust up the meeting? So what if they did come from Mars or somewhere?

For a moment, the issue was in the balance, before the President of the Universal Creapers' Fan Club had a brainwave. Braving the shower of rotten fruit through the open door of the ship, he placed a loudspeaker on the top step of the entrance, fully fifty feet from the ground. And through the loudspeaker blared the Creapers' latest hit--WE LOVE YOU, YEAH, YEAH, YEAH! Anyway, this masterstroke completely brought round the crowd, almost entirely belonging to Beatledom, to their side. The Stonedom delegates managed to slip away to London in the confusion, where they found similar scenes surrounding the Moans fan ship.

The Universal Creapers Fan Club members descended, and were ushered inside that holy of holies, the Cavern, that astounding amphitheatre which is believed to have seated over two hundred thousand people at once. They felt a great presence, and fidgeted with their leather (simulated) jackets, and their jeans, in silence. Then they were introduced to the Creapers, and according to customs, the thirty-five

girls of the party promptly screamed and/or fainted. The five male members stared as if they had seen a Great Vision. Then, they, too fainted, and were all reverently borne away to a place of rest.

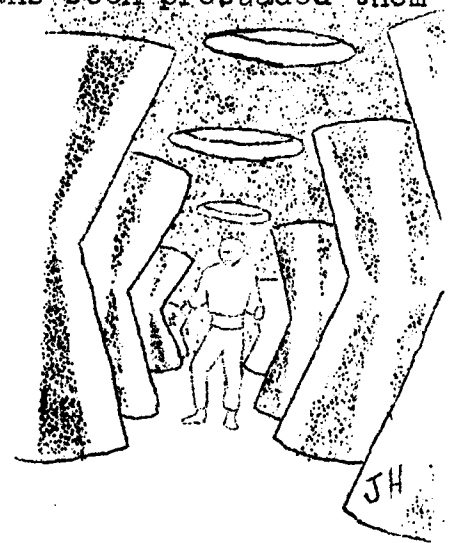
The news traveled fast. The Prime Minister of Great Britain, shooting grouse in Perthshire, was in Liverpool an hour later. The President of the United States ahrived from a ball game half an hour later, while at the Moans headquarters in London arrived Comrade Bodbug, the Secretary of the ~~---er~~ USSR, who had been haranguing a crowd of cynical workers about the dangers of Beatledom. The Secretary of the United Nations, always late, didn't hear about it until the next day.

Not that it made any difference. The eightyor so humans from the Galaxy weren't interested in politics. They only wanted to get the Creapers and the Moans into space as quickly as possible. After they recovered from their ecstasy, they settled down to their haggling. The Moans--Pick, Strewth, Bying, Barley the rehabilitated Neanderthal, and Basher, were to tour the Galaxy in roughly the opposite direction as the Creapers. Their only worry was as to the feminine side of the Galaxy, but several of their most ardent fans soon presuaded them that they had nothing to worry about in that direction.

They were to take off for the Galaxy in two days. The Secretary of the UN, which had at last waken up to what was going on, managed to obtain Galactic Membership for Earth by pleading to the Creapers to ask for it, and that was all the politicians did manage to get out of this most momentous event in Terran History.

Thus, on the 12th of October, 2019, Beatle Memorial Day, the two ships departed for the Galaxy with their precious cargo. A few thousand more people were incinerated as the ships left the ground, but this extravagant gesture was taken in the spirit in which it was undoubtedly meant. That night, over fifteen thousand hysterical teenage girls committed suicide, certain that they would never see their heros again. What's more, they were right, as you all know. The two years passed, but neither the Creapers nor the Strolling Moans ever appeared on Earth again.

The reason for this peculiar happening was not discovered until we developed interstellar travel nearly a century later. With the departure of the two groups, something approaching what the ancients mistakenly called "sanity" returned to the human race, and scientific progress began once more. Thus in the year 2106, our first interstellar expedition crossed the gulf of space in our first crude FTE ships, expecting to find a mighty civilization which had paid no attention to Earth simply because she wasn't worth it. They found no mighty civilization--only a whole galaxy wrecked by war.



The reasons for this war were not long in forthcoming, and we didn't need our sociologists and anthropologists to piece together exactly what had happened. Within ten years, we had the complete picture-- also the complete Galaxy. Oh, there was sporadic opposition on one or two planets toward the centre, but nothing more. On most, the survivors had just reverted to savagery. We pinched all their science while we were about it, too.

There's no doubting it, these two groups did a fine job for us.

There was almost a war over them on Earth, only prevented by the kind intervention of the Galaxy in our affairs. The Galaxy, of course, hadn't had anything to get emotional about for thousands of years-- life wasn't worth living any longer. So when the Creapers and the Moans arrived on the scene together. . .

As far as we can tell, the flash point came when they both arrived at Beta Oriens together. Someone made a bad boob there. The Moans were only granted what was reckoned to be second best concert hall on the planet, while the Creapers got the best. Naturally, the Moans' fans objected. So it wasn't very long until the whole administrative centre of the galaxy was in utter chaos. Flare-ups occurred on other planets between the two rapidly developing factions, like on Earth, and it wasn't long before the whole galactic civilization was getting rid of all its neurosis, boredom, and everything which had built up over half a million years of peace, in fighting a completely pointless war. They were human after all.

But what of the two groups? Well, legend has it that they both fought each other to the death at the Creapers' theatre on Beta Orionis with their silver guitars, but this is only legend. No one really knows what became of them, but the legend is a colourful end to a colourful story.

So thanks to the emergence of the Beatles in Lennengrad in the barbarous era of the twentieth century, and of course to their rivals the Stones, the human race is now ruler of the entire galaxy. And which is why we no longer have beat groups of our own--it would be far too dangerous. So instead we have instituted the galaxy wide religion of Beatledom, and you young men and women are going to be the propagators and priests of it. You know know why.

You now have to take your exams in twentieth century pop music, and I wish you good luck.

Blessed be the Beatles, and the Stones, and the Holy Guitar.

Amen.

--Richard Gordon, famous historian.

# WORDS FROM READERS

a letter column

edited by Hank Luttrell

Robert Coulson, Route 3, Wabash, Ind. 46992

Dear Hank, You and Ben Solon ignored one point about the action-adventure stories. In a sense, you're both right--there is a public for the Burroughs-type crud, and Burroughs himself might have one hell of a time getting his stuff published if he started out today. Who'd buy it? Most of Burroughs' early stuff came out as serials in various adventure magazines to begin with. Name one now. The "men's mags" subsist on "true adventures", the stf mags are buying pseudo-intellectual fiction, and damned few paperbacks are originals.

Quite possibly one reason why Burroughs is selling so well today is that he doesn't have much competition. People can't go out and pick up a BLUEBOOK or an ARGOSY full of adventure fiction. (Of course, there are the Ian Fleming novels--but, as much as I dislike Burroughs, I have to admit that he was a better writer than Fleming. And quite possibly one reason Fleming became so popular is that he wrote outrageous, impossible, and thoroughly cormy fiction --and until the Burroughs revival, that kind of fiction was hard to get.)

There is always a market for impossible romantic adventure fiction among younger readers, and a few older readers who never grew up. In a sense, it's a field in which additional craftsmanship is self-defeating, since even a slight regard for logic or the basic principles of writing reduces the "glamour" that these readers pay for. (translation: Poul Anderson will never become as popular as Burroughs.)

The science fiction magazines, however, have all but abandoned the action-adventure story. Only the Ziff-Davis mags have presented more than occasional rare examples in recent years. And other fiction magazines have abandoned action-adventure altogether.

On forming a local club. A big drawback is that the enthusiastic young fans who want to form the club lack the experience which is a virtual requirement for success. (By "Success", I mean a club that lasts for at least 5 years, and survives the withdrawal of one or more of its organizers.) By the time one has been around fandom long enough to have experience with fan clubs, one generally has a definite aversion to seeing other fans too often. (Oh, I've belonged to "local" clubs--at least 4 of them, none of them successful by my defination.)

I assure you, YANDRO constantly gets letters complaining that our articles on space stamps, convention rules, etc., have nothing to do with science fiction. (and in addition, every time I see Ed Wood he complains in person.) You just never notice these missives,

I'll tell you why Wollheim is bringing back these particular old stories--the copyright has expired on them. (He is bringing back some of the STARBUCKING and TWS stories, however; witness Valley of the Flame, The Dark World, The Bird of Time and others.)

Ben Solon

The best thing in STAR #5 is Bill Scheidt's article on Thomas Wolfe. It doesn't have anything to do with science fiction, but who cares? Personally I hope that you'll continue to run material that isn't related to s-f. Can't see why a fanzine has to be devoted to s-f in its entirety and nothing else. Most fans have interests outside of the s-f field and articles on these interests would be welcomed, provided they were competently written, of course. In fact, I'd say that there is something wrong with a person who is interested in a single subject to the exclusion of all others.

The quality of your fiction remains low. "Star High" seems to be little more than a bunch of words tossed together in the hope of coming out with a story. It reads like a poor imitation of one of Avram Davidson's imitators--who had the imitated story rejected.

Perhaps I'm over critical, but I don't think that there is any reason for the poor quality of the current fan-fiction--except maybe laziness. I happen to own twenty-odd fanzines from the forties and fifties, most of which carry fiction. The quality of this fiction varies, but I found, for the most part, the quality of the fiction in the old fanzines is superior to that of the current fanzines. The fan-fiction in the old 'zines isn't professional quality, but the authors of these stories made an attempt to produce a competent tale. And I can't see why the fan-writers of 1965 can't write as well as the fan-writers of the forties and fifties. Maybe fans could tell me.

I disagree with you that a look at the Hugo winners doesn't prove that the general readership of the s-f mags doesn't want action stories. You ask: "What do a few hundred fans mean when compared with s-f readers at large?" I'm forced to admit that they don't mean much, but, for the most part, the stories that have won Hugos have come in pretty high on the reader polls--such as they are--of the s-f magazines. The reader polls aren't restricted to "a few hundred fans" (neither is the Hugo balloting, but that's beside the point.)

//I suppose when you refer to "the reader polls" you mean the poll in Analog. The only other ones that I can think of are in THE MAGAZINE OF HORROR and NEW WORLDS. Does SCIENCE FANTASY have one now? As Robert Coulson said earlier, the magazine don't use adventure stories to any great extent--any readers that might otherwise be pleased with the adventure stories, if they did print them, don't buy the magazines to start with, as they know that they won't find any. HL//

14

the high quality magazines just don't buy space opera or any of thud and blunder yarns anymore. The readers just don't want them. And the only mags that do (or rather did) buy action stories to any great extent--AMAZING and FANTASTIC--have had the smallest number of readers of any of the s-f mags for a good number of years: 35,000 for AMAZING and 28,000 for FANTASTIC. Not much when you consider ANALOGs 85,000 readers, GALAXYS 70,000 readers and F&SFs 60,000. Ziff-Davis has sold AMAZING and FANTASTIC to Sol Cohen because they couldn't absorb the loss any more. If the general readers of the s-f magazines prefer action stories to the literate type, why did AMAZING and FANTASTIC fold?

//Why indeed. And why don't magazines sell like they did before paperbacks became so important? Perhaps it is fairer to look at the sales of the paperbacks--they, not the magazines must reflect what the general reader wants. You want to write off the Burroughs reprints as nostalgia--which I don't think is really fair, but even if it is--I can still point to the whole Ace line, and Andre Norton in particular. If we are going to allow this thing to go on much further, we are going to have to define your "literary science fiction." Personally, I like Poul Anderson...is he "thud and blunder" or "literate." You can hardly claim anything reasonably well written as "literate" and not this thud and blunder stuff. HL//

I think that I'll stick to my original statement that the paperback reprints of ERB and the rest are doing so well because of nostalgia. But I'd better qualify that: sure a lot of teen-agers are buying Burroughs paperbacks. Why? Because their parents tell them about how much they used to enjoy good old Tarzan when they were young. Or, if they are in fandom, they hear the old fans sing praises of their idols of their youth. And if you tell someone something often enough, he'll come to believe it. The young fans hearing about how great the "old masters" were come to believe it and they tell their friends who tell their friends and so on. If that's not nostalgia (even if it's not first hand), I don't know what is.

Roger Alan Cox "Somewhere in Augusta, Georgia"

Did you ever try to tell a nonfan what a fanzine was without an hour's discourse on fandom? Well, it's pretty hard. I now use this answer, "It's an amateur magazine put out by science fiction fans," and try to center the attention elsewhere to avoid further mundane questioning.

The art this issue was fair to very good (for a neozine), especially that by Gilbert, which fell in the later category. The little piece on the contents page was ill.

In defense of my artwork, I've never seen any of it stencilled decently (except maybe in GEMZINE.4/42), and all of it so far published came from my most abominable sludge. The reason most of the good stuff never appears is because it's multicolored, and virtually impossible to stencil.

Hey, what's with this Thomas Wolfe article? If Scheidt can get away

with a subject as unfannish as that, maybe I can get away with it too.

//Well, yes, as a matter of fact, you can. HL//

Nat's story was pretty good. . .

What's with these choppy pulp articles of yours, Hank? Anyone could assemble disconnected reviews like those in #4 and 5. I could even.

//Yah. Well, right at the moment I don't know what we will have this time, but I think maybe it will have a bit more organization HL//

Look, Gary, so HPL wrote of Victorian horrors. Don't knock it. A background of that type throws an atmosphere of disquiet into the story because the modern reader is not accustomed to it, and is reading in unfamiliar areas. This increases the note of something-is-not-right in the story as the plot develops toward the climax. His imagination may not have been boundless (I'll not back down and concede the point to you), and his stories took on a clearly defined redundant element after awhile, but he still manages to break familiar conventions previously associated with macabre writing, where vague threats and hints of abnormality are given to the reader--where HPL takes his abominations and conks the reader on the head with them, with no attempt at subtlety.

I bet Hubbard didn't know he made a pu when he said, "And out of his mind he created an interesting mythos." After reading HPL: A MEMOIR and the pastiches on him in SOMETHING ABOUT CATS and THE SHUTTERED ROOM, I concluded that he was out of his mind.

Arthur Hayes, P.O. Box 189, Matachewan, Ontario, Canada

No one questions the right of a faned to print any thing he wants, so if he wants to publish some non-sf or non-sf-fannish material, he has the right to, but. . .the reader also has the right to complain or to ignore what he does not like. The reader's rights can be veto'd by the faned, but it does not eliminate them. Now, the Wolfe article, to me, was just plain confusion and as such I found myself unable to do more than read snatches here and there. I didn't even read enough to find out whether it was phychological, SF or otherwise. I've complained. . .but not because it was included in STARLING, but how it was presented and written.

This time, no response initiated by the lettercol, except for Warner and Starlings. I admit them to be pests, but I admire these pests for their adaptability and robustness. I've seen them drink acid water, containing Uranium that killed any others around quickly, and they still seem to thrive. They'll drink liquid glue and other flocculants, and not be hurt. They just can't be successfully and permanently be driven off.

Even though I contributed, I'm a little sorry about the panning that Hamlin is getting with his nostalgic articles. The best criticism made, however, is that Hamlin CAN do better. That is 100% true.



Wish he would. But, there also seems to be another facet to this. For several years, Clay submitted these articles to many fanzines, usually neozines, and they were appreciated. He helped many a faned with these articles. Now, all of a sudden, they are not.

//Not what? Appreciated?HL//

It would seem that his articles fitted the times, now they don't. It would seem that there were a greater number of fans actively interested in the old time stories. Now there isn't. Clay can still be a tremendous aid to the neozines, his real love, but he'll have to adapt to some something else. If he doesn't adapt, his aid will disappear.

Pfc Earl Evers US 51533159, 269 Sig Co (svc) APO 58 New York, N.Y.  
09058

Got Starling 5 today--your repro and art aren't so hot and I still don't like the name no matter who else might, but the contents are really pretty good. Since I judge a zine 100% on contents, you have an excellent fanzine. Keep on like this, especially with good fan fiction and verse, and keep to a regular schedule, and eventually you'll get some recognition.

"Star High" was easily as good as the similar Asimov story in the pros recently. In other words, not bad at all, and this judging by pro standards. Oh there are a couple of rough spots, but they don't hurt the story much. "Star High" is a real credit to Nate Bucklin and your zine.

Your lettercol deserves second place in the issue--it was the second best item after a really good first. You've attracted a lot of good letter writers by printing long LoC's and not trying to play games with your readers by cutting, nit picking, or useless criticism.

"The Good Old Daze" didn't turn me on much--it would be fine if I had the zines reviewed, had ever read them, or expected to read them or get them in the future. But I doubt I ever will. And that's the whole trouble with reviewing ancient prozines. But don't stop on my account, I know a lot of people dig this stuff.

But I as a rule like the stories of R. S. Shaver and Ray Palmer edited material. As for the Shaver Mystery, I don't think you can prove it either a deliberate hoax or a completely erroneous theory. I think some of the ideas and a lot of the evidence is valid. But it's actually a hellishly complicated explanation of the whole cosmos, far beyond summing up in a few words in a fanzine, and I personally consider almost all of Shaver's and Palmer's sumises from their data ridiculous. If you're interested in finding out more about the Shaver Mysteries, you can get THE HIDDEN WORLDS from Palmer for two dollars apiece.

Whatever the Shaver Mystery, Hidden World, really is, it's no simple hoax and it's nothing to dismiss lightly. If any of the readers of STARLING want to discuss the subject with me, just write. I have

a lot of theories, a fair knowledge, and virtually no belief on the subject, and I'm interested in writing my own "Shaverian" stories.

//About the only belief I have on the subject right now is that many of the Shaver stories were very poor fiction. And really, I think that's enough reason to condemn them--at least while they were being presented as science fiction.HL//

"Thomas Wolfe and the Preacher" is well done and doesn't seem out of place in a fanzine. It does read like a school paper, but what's wrong with that? I detest Thomas Wolfe, but I still enjoyed the article. Why don't you have Bill Scheidt do an article on "A Rose For Ecclesiastes" next?

David Hall's poem stank.

But then every fanzine has to have at least one really bad piece of writing in it.

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

There's nothing terrible about running an article on Thomas Wolfe, since fanzines continue to enjoy the status of a free press. The only complaint that might be directed against the article with any justice at all would be to the effect that mundane material in fanzines is more useful when the subject is hard or impossible to find in your public library. For instance, the essays on Fu Manchu or the dissertations on the bellybutton that turn up every now and then in fanzines. There's no scarcity of criticism on Wolfe. But I wouldn't use this argument. It's too hard for a person who wants to find an outlet for the essay, if fanzines won't run it. The only really alternative is to spend a quarter-century building up a reputation as a literary man so that some scholarly publication will take the essay on the strength of the name of the writer.

Anyway, I can think of some associations of Wolfe and fandom to soothe anyone who complains. For instance, this quote from Look Homeward, Angel, about Wolfe in his Eugene Gant disguise: "He liked all weird fable and wild invention, in prose or verse, from the Golden Ass to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the chief prince of the moon and magic." There was a the adventure of the old time fan, Art Widner, who was assigned to a hospital while in the service and saw a wounded man crack up completely when someone left a copy of You Can' Go Home Again lying beside his bed and the wounded man got the notion that this was the symbol of his own fate. Another gaffiated fan told me of the shock he got when his father-in-law died, the ex-fan went into the South for the funeral for the first time in his life, and right in the middle of the funeral he realized for the first time that Ashville was the scene of the Wolfe novels and right outside the window were all the buildings he'd learned to know so well from his fondness for Wolfe. It was hard for him to concentrate on the remaining part of the funeral. In any event, I hope that the good article by Bill Scheidt persuades your younger readers to dive into the Wolfe books. They have a magic for young people that they lose when the reader starts to get old.

Star High has a good start and an excellent final paragraph. Between those extremes are some things wrong with it. Mainly, I suppose, these difficulties arise from the fact that Nate tries to tell about a most unusual environment and race in little more than a thousand words, almost an impossibility to achieve well.

Your letter section doesn't inspire a lot of comments. This is fortunate, because I'd never get this letter onto two pages if the situation were different. I'll restrain myself to the remark that here is one person who has missed Bob Jennings. He talked me into writing an article for him on short notice and never published it. I've been tempted to redo it for someone else, but there's always the danger that it will bob up in some unexpected place. Or maybe I should ignore it, because after all, my subject matter was a prediction that a Walt Disney fandom would spring up in a matter of a few weeks, and two or three years later, my prediction hasn't come true.

Your reaction to the old prozines is quite sensible, as I remember the general eras. Did you know that there was something very close to a Ray Cummings fandom at one time. A Rochester fan named Larry Farsace was wild about the Cummings stories, named a fanzine after him, and ran much material about Cummings in it by himself and others. But it didn't quite catch on as the Burroughs and Howard fans have bobbed up from small starts. Lowndes' word rates at this time couldn't have been the lowest in the field, because just about this time, Wollheim was publishing a couple of prozines that paid nothing at all for much of their material. Incidentally, the habit of reprinting old fiction that was popular in some prozines during the war got the professional writers so upset that they somehow got a federal ruling that any reprint must be identified as such in large type of the first page. If I were a government attorney, I'd like to dig into the records and determine if that ruling is still on the books. It would make life awfully embarrassing for the publishers of paperback books.

The varying opinions on the Hamilton collection were interesting. A complete edition of Hamilton fiction, like the Burroughs sets that several paperback firms have started, is enough to send the mind reeling into the howling abyss of deep despair. But maybe Wollheim chose those old stories to reprint on the theory that more recent Hamilton fiction has been well represented in other places, not because he's determined to put every world-saver story back into print, starting with the oldest.

//I think I would be happier with a complete Hamilton than I would with a complete Burroughs. HL//

If there is no regulation requiring the identification of old stories as reprints, there should at least be a gentleman's agreement among publishers to put on the contents page the magazine and date of the issue in which the story first appeared. It would make life much easier for the reviewers and indexers.

The illustrations are mostly good. They avoid the hackneyed subject:

matter that usually bobs up in filler illustrations. Your stencilling technique isn't bad as someone charges in the letter column. But it would improve if you could manage a way to get thick black lines as well as the skinny lines.

Gregg Wolford, 9001 Joyzelle, Garden Grove, Calif. 92640.

Somehow, Hank, your editorial sounded like backbiting this time. I mean, why did you pick YANDRO?? Somehow I think it has something to do with the ratings Buck gives you.

//Like, also somehow, I don't see how you came to that conclusion. If anything, I was more or less envious in that editorial. Buck, in his letter, said that I needn't have been, because he gets that letter, too. HL//

. . .I don't care how you justify that Wolfe article--it bored me. And if YANDRO had pubbed it, I would still have been bored to tears. Altho I don't mind non-SF articles, this one bored me. Ugh.

Nate Bucklin's story was only fairly-written, horribly stereotyped, near ridiculous. . .in other words, it was about average for fan fiction.

The next half of this is the best: The letercol. I particularly agree with Gary in that HL is horribly dated (no, not you Hank, Lovecraft.) However, I do not feel that his horrors are as Victorian as his style. It is his style--and style alone--that keeps HPL from being "manifestly terrifying" today. His monsters and such are still frightening by the standpoint of any average movie-fiend, any normal eight-year old boy.

//But the point is that we--rather some of us--are older than eight years. HL//

Gary Neal Hubbard, who has an address, but seeing as how he didn't put it on his letter, you won't find it here..

. . .Nate Buclin's story. . .was very good--possibly the best you've published--, but it was just a rehash of a plot that's been overused in fandom. I read, "When you look behind you and see a pair of wings sprouting from your back, you don't say, 'impossible! You flap.'" And immediately my interest is caught. Then I get down to "Then I knew where we were. (double space) Our home world. (double space) Earth" and the bubble bursts.

//I've got to do something about this typer. You've noticed, maybe, that it has been giving me trouble?//

John B. Gaughan, address withheld at the request of Jack.

Comments re STARLING: P.25, "Jack Vance, who could become one of the most important science fiction writers--" ?? What could? He has long been--science fiction tastes have changed--so that some of his older stories are more acceptable now than when they were first published.

Time was, an idea was a story--before that gimmicks were a story. I am pleased to see that science fiction is now entertaining narrative along with ideas and gimmicks.

This harking back to the older stories is curious and interesting. Even some of the newer stories hark back to older standards of acceptability. That's reader acceptability. Readers are mostly younger people--fans almost always are--perhaps this looking back is my generation's nostalgia for when we were fans and young. I do notice the "intellectual" fans beginning to moan for "concepts" again. --even that is nostalgia--"the good old days of Astounding!"

Its strange that a field of endeavor which by its nature would seem to be given to looking to the future is actually looking back at its own past. Or is it strange? The older stories do exist--they are in my estimation still readable and enjoyable no matter how ludicrous the science. . .and younger readers are eager to read what may be a thing peculiar to SF and perhaps mysteris--a specialized field which has a past--a continuous history--ideas, gimmicks, & concepts, call them what you will, in new stories grown from the old ones and even built on them. To start cold on some science fiction stories takes some doing for a new reader. Perhaps we are looking back to get a perspective on what to look forward for.

--and perhaps thats hogwash.

I've told you before, I'm sure, that as far as drawing is concerned, s.f. tastes are definitely backward. A reader conversant with Klee (whose "modern" work was done c. 1918) or Ranschberg(?) will resent any change in his SF art. I mean resent. Come to think of it, a great deal of art today is nostalgic--

Seeking for our roots?

A fruitless pastime for any but historians, it seems to me--that is unless at sometime--somewhere along the line one cuts the umbilical cord and begins looking within himself and his potentialities for the future.

In sf we've looked for the future in super gadgetry--far-away places --superman day dreams--but I wonder--what's it really like out there? I think most sf editors would like to deal with real people in a speculative situation, but for the moment are looking briefly with their readers.

ANYWAY--about Starling five--and improvement--I particularly liked

the drawings on pp. 9 and 11. Yours, I see! The rest were pleasing, too.

I'm not overly familiar with the problems of mimeographing so perhaps I can't appreciate the technical problems involved in some of the art.

Thomas Wolfe! Oh, Gawsh--you youngsters make me feel ancient. Wonderful stuff.' --gotta go to work now (on a Jack Vance thing, incidentally.)

//The art on 9 last issue was by Robert E. Gilbert. 11 was mine.  
HL//

Paul Gilster, 42 Godwin Lane, St. Louis, Missouri 63122

"Star High" was one of the best pieces of fan fiction that I have read all year. I never knew Nate could write so well. Excellent style, originality, and a good climax make this story a memorable one. I would like to see much more of Nate Bucklin's work in your pages. He seems to try to stay away from stereotyped plots and story lines--to seek the unusual and the different, and this I like.

The usual good letter column. Please try to keep this as long as it is now from now on. Shortening it would detract from the whole fanzine, in my opinion. I find letter columns fascinating. It is interesting to find out what other fans thought of the exact same material. It points out areas of difference and can lead to interesting grounds for discussion. So keep this excellent letter column.

It is too bad that some of the Cox illos in the fourth issue didn't come out right, as Cox remarks in the fifth ish. How can we blame him for being mad? Here is a fellow who just knows that he has the artistic talent of a Rembrandt, the writing ability of a Hemmingway, and the modesty of a Roger Alan Cox. How dare you butcher his masterpiece with your ballpoint stylus! What's wrong with you anyway?

I know Dave Hall can be hilariously funny, because I have seen his MATHOM, so give him more space in your fanzine and let him go wild. I think your readers would like to see an expanded column by him.

"The Good Old Daze" was good, as usual. What a superb illo you had for it, too! More of the same, please.

"Thomas Wolfe and the Preacher" was superb. I think it was the best thing in the issue. Granted, it does not involve sf, but I agree with you. Print what is of interest to you. That article was very well handled and carried my interest throughout.

//an editor, any editor, of any magazine, has no choice but to print what he likes. As this letter column proves, the readers certainly can never agree. HL//

James Toren, 7236 Kellogg Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45230

. . . One thing I like is THE GOOD OLD DAZE, but I wish you'd give a little bit of the outlines of the stories in the old pulps, . . . another thing, you ought to include some of the other pulps, like DOC SAVAGE, THE AVENGER, THE SHADOW, and the like, being a fan of that kind of thing, and being as some of the stories have fantasy overtones, and also because I haven't seen too many articles on these types of magazines in other places. . . .

Jack Steele, 609 W. Kelly St., De Soto, Missouri

. . . I didn't like THE GOOD OLD DAZE at all. . . .

Stephen Barr, Box 305 Nocona, Texas, 76255

. . . THE GOOD OLD DAZE was pretty good. Altho not up to par with some others it was a fine one and I'm glad to see you doing this sort of thing. Now I wish you would get around to some ASTOUNDINGS & Weird Tales and run thru them. For one, I don't know anything about the Shaver mystery of hoax or whatever and would like to be filled in. . . .

Michael Viggiano, 1834 Albany Ave., Brooklyn, New York 11210

. . . GOOD OLD DAZE is a good column, but since most of us don't have the magazines you mentioned, we are not really interested in your abstract comments such as, ". . . the cover. . . was very good." without describing it.

//Isn't that clever of me, the way I can comment on all of that at once? I don't know if I'll be doing much more of the reviews that were in the last two issues. I'd rather, I think, write about, say, one author, or one editor, or one magazine, and thus give the thing a bit more organization. Maybe not, though. If I did, would you people want me to give short plot outlines, etc.; in the past I've tried to stay away from that sort of thing. And to you, Jack Steele, baby; anybody that can live in a house as full of old pulps as that thing of yours, and not grow up with a proper love of them . . . I can't understand. HL//

((back to Michael V.:))

I have been saying the same thing for the last few issues, please write longer editorials. Your Man In Missouri column isn't worthy of the title editorial.

Your lettercol has continued to be the best item in STARLING. But I don't want to comment on any letters because I feel STARLING is not that type of fanzine (i.e. TIGHTBEAM). But your letters seem to provoke more comment and discussion than the other features in your zine.

//Well, STARLING isn't a Tightbeam, certainly, but as long as the letter column stays within about 15 pages or so, I don't see why it shouldn't become something more than a place to comment on the rest of the issue. Certainly, this is one of its purposes, but only one--I would be happy to see some discussions start in these pages. HL//

Becker Staus, 302 Tenth Street, Crystal City, Missouri

Hall certainly had a very interesting column this issue. My, but he filled up a whole page, and said nothing what so ever. And the way he said it. . .this was truly an accomplishment, even for Hall.

And your editorial was almost as bad.

You know what I think about that Wolfe article? Quite aside from what the author's name sounds like, I think you are publishing school term papers. You know what. . .I don't think anybody could have a name like that. . .I think Bill Scheidt is a hoax, and you use him to fill up a few pages of your thing with trash you wouldn't publish under your real name. Or maybe Bill Scheidt is your real name, and you made up the silly "Luttrell" because you were ashamed of the real name? I don't suppose it really makes much difference anyway, as I didn't read more than the two first pages of it.

Tell me. . .was that poem by Hall a joke?

And you don't need to tell me about your DAZED thing. I know it had to be a joke. . .

I'm glad I dropped in at your house a couple of days ago. . .otherwise I might not have never read all those letters you got with, "Becker Staus sounds like a nice guy," in them. I hear from Hall that you most likely will cut those parts out. Too bad. Wit like that should have large audience.

\*\*\*\*\*

Also heard from were Liz Riggs, Jorgen Wolff, Seth Johnson and a few others demanding copies of STARLING.

I suddenly realize that I've typed the whole letter column without one illo. A terrible thing to do, and I have plenty of art which I could have used, too, which compounds the crime. Tell you what, I will try to make up for this error in the rest of the issue. I promise.

24



EPITAPH FOR A LEARNED POET ( OR, in other words, a poem devoted to that one in STARLING 5 on page 31 by Hall)

by Stephen Barr

One night he never hid:  
he knew for all to see  
what poems ought to be.  
I wish fannish poems did.

## FROM THE ISHTAR GATE

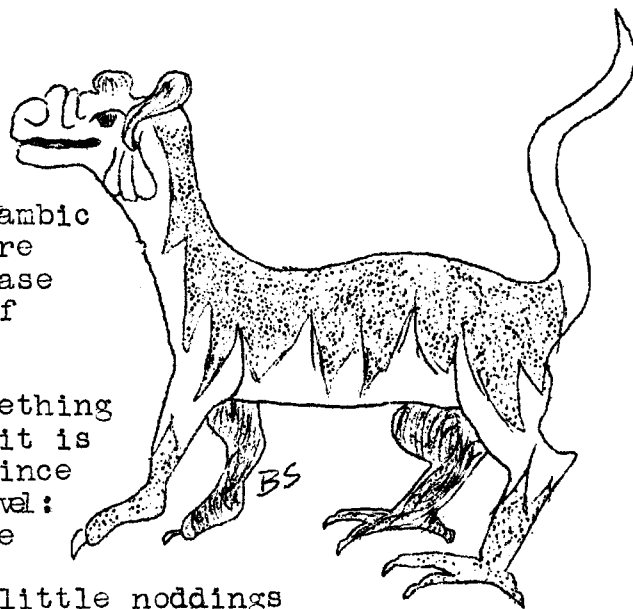
a column by David Hall

IN ANSWER TO MY CRITIC OR, CROSSING THE BARR.

I've this poem, and read it well;  
I've even read the lines between.  
My only answer is a frustrated,  
"Hell!  
What in Ahriman does it mean?"

Shall we have a poetry battle? Iambic pentameter at fifty paces? Or were those lines favorable--in which case I apobgize. It's all a problem of semantics, friends.

This is From the Ishtar Gate, something new in STARLING. Well, that is, it is not exactly new; I've been here since ish 4 (sounds like a pseudo sf novel: ISH 4) but this is the first time I've been billed as a practicing columnist. The others were just little noddings of genius written because I happened to be at Luttrell's house. And they showed it, let me assure you. This time Hank and I both agree that it should **have** a little more meat to it than "Bucklin is not spelled Buklin." For the vegetarians it can have a little more fruit. That's a private joke, reflecting my dislike of vegetarians. It isn't that I object to their philosophy, especially religious groups of ancient and honorable background such as Jainests, it's just that I can't see how they can live a life without meat. I don't see what the purpose of a life without meat is. For myself I'll eat anything meat; venison, steak, ham, fish,



french fried ants, and I'm indifferent to most fruit and hostile towards all vegetables. Vegetables are a crime; America would not have so many aspirins and vitamin tables if we ate more meat. ("If everyone chewed their meat properly, we wouldn't have all these wars.") Can you picture Conan eating anything but meat, and he was notoriously healthy. As I told my mother, on being told to quaff down half a dozen multicolored vitamins with my meal (vitamins I didn't need, incidently): "I'll bet Conan's mommy never made him take vitamins." To which she replied, "Who's he? One of those science fiction writers?"

It is reported that the famed explorer Roal Amundsun returned from the Antarctic and told breathless science that the eskimoes ate nothing but meat. They told him he had dropped one, because if you ate nothing but meat you would soon wither away and fall like golden little autumn leaves. Amundsun determined to prove he was telling the truth, and that it could be done, and so he and an assistant, carefully watched by the scientists, ate nothing but meat for seven full years.

At the end of that time they were hale and hearty and ready to eat the scientists, who were now strangely silent. After that Amundsun returned to eating vegetables and died. Were the sinful roots the cause of his extinction? Seeing as how he was lost in the icy wastes trying to rescue a fellow explorer. . .

For my next trick, I will. . .

Becker Staus is sitting on my bed, happily reading the High School Yearbook, and which I, as a happy journalism student, helped to create. It is incredible. The majority of the pictures are of the journalism class (excluding me, because I was unco-operative.) and the text is next to unreadable. Bob Hansen once told me that "You can always tell how intelligent a person is by his photograph. If it looks like him, just stopped for a moment somehow, then he is an intelligent person." How he can come to that conclusion I'll never know--his mental processes frighten me--but it lets me in, for my picture is as unflattering as could be. In fact it looks like I'm amused (as I was) by the fact that I am wearing an ordinary coat and a loudly striped tie while all the others are in razor-lapels and solids. Staus looks even more mischeiveous. Only he could manage to look mischeiveous in full dress. The only interesting thing in the whole book is a picture of me in the local pool hall. About ninety percent of the students in the school spend about ninety percent of their time in that pool hall, and whose picture do they print? Mine. I've been in there exactly once.

Maybe I'll send a copy to Buck Coulson to review. . .

Just in case somebody is going to ask (you know somebody is; there are whole breeds of people with nothing better to do.), the title of this column has no real significance. There is an Ishtae Gate, of course, and the bestie that Staus scribbled there appeared on it. He is a sirruish, also know as a mus-russuand and as a

Prachtschlange. In case you are wondering where I got all those names, I got them out of a book by Willy Ley, and in case you are wondering what I am doing with a book by Willy Ley, I got it from the library so that Staus could see what a sirruish looked like so he could draw it. Actually sirrmish is properly spelled sirrush, but what difference does it make? It is a translation of old cun-iform symbols, and it might as well be sirruish (which looks better) as sirrush.

From the Ishtar Gate we get both the sirruish and the unicorn of legend, the re'em, which was actually only the now extinct Urus . . .but enough.

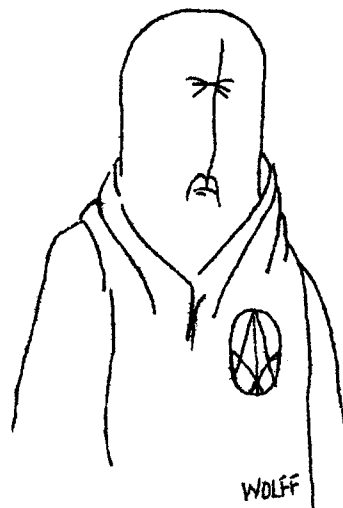
Have you ever see a column typed by a cat? Our cat, Cleopatra Rhonda Cthulhu Trotsky, happened to wander by so I grabbed her and brutally tried to force her to push down the keys. The experiment was not successful; once she got the hang of it she sat down and typed two reams of fanzine review columns, several pages of mailing comments (which is pretty ridiculous; she isn't even in an apa) and TRUMPET. A most stupid cat. She is the same one who sometimes sits in the window during the summer, and has to be severely watched or she will go into ctapleptic fits of ecstasy and fall out into the yawning cellar just below the window. . .she is the cat who gets beat up by squirrls. Her likeness graces the back cover of my fanzine , Mat-  
hom; Staus caught ner, put her on my dresser and tried to sketch her but she ran away, and he did it from memory. My impression is that he hasn't a memory a heck of a lot better than her's. . .

A pearl of wisdom, gleaned from my files, and then I shall go:

"The grave is a fine and private place,

But none I think do there embrace."

DnH



27

# BEATLES AND BADGERS

by Hank Luttrell

"Brill Street was a cul-de-sac of pleasant residential property which opened out on to Etruria Road. Etruria Road itself was part of the A53. Angelina's daily route to her office took her along Etruria Road, across the Junction of Snady Lane and Albert Street and over into King Street. Passing the station on her right she crossed over Hanover Street, over the roundabout that was the centre of Nelson Place, and then down a few steps around the corner took her into Church Street, and then one more corner, a swift left turn, into Lower Street, saw her into her office. . ."

Well. . .how did that grab you? Perhaps it effected you differently, but I thought that paragraph was rather boring. I thought the paperback it was taken from was supremely boring, the work in question GODS OF DARKNESS by a Karl Zeigfreid.

SUPERNATURAL STORIES is published monthly by John Spencer & Co., Ltd., under the trade mark, "Badger Books." The format is that of a paperback book, but in most other ways, it is more a magazine. The series alternates issues made up of short stories and novelettes with issues made up of a single novel. If you want to read any of the stuff I'll be talking about, you can order them from Bradford M. Day, Denver, New York.

From what information is available to me, it seems that this series of books, or this magazine, depending on how you look at it, is written by a small group of authors, using pen names by the score. For instance, a fellow named Robert Lionel Fanthorpe (maybe; that might even be a pen name, who knows?) writes under the names Bron Fane, Leo Brett, Trebor Thorpe and no doubt others. And I mean writes, in the sense that he puts a truly amazing amount of words one after another. In one of the short story issues, Mr. Fanthorpe wrote all the stories, under his real and pen names. I should think that the other writers, on whom we don't have any information, contribute a similar amount.

Which would be just fine if it was readable.

No one element in the stories seems really more or less terrible than the other. The writing is ridiculous at best and suffers even more from some of the most unashamed padding you will ever encounter outside of Hollywood. For instance, that little bit I started this article out with might not be bad if it were the only such thing in the book. However, every few pages of the Zeigfreid thing, GODS OF DARKNESS, the author starts telling you things like that. A new minor character is introduced--we are told where he lives, in just such a fashion as above. The two private detectives jump in their "gargantuan 8-litre engine. . .pre war sports special" and go someplace. . .we receive a blow-by-blow account of the route.

The plots, one area in which you might expect some relief, if just with simple, ordinary stereotyped affairs. . .aren't even at this level of

competence.

Once more we can look at GODS OF DARKNESS as an example. The plot, if you can call it that, is laughable. An elderly couple is brutally murdered and their adult daughter is kidnapped. Before the monsters drag her off, however, she is able to call up the too famous psychic investigators, Don Hamilton and Eddy Knight, who get on the job at once. In attempting to solve the case, they call on a long series--too long--of fortune tellers, seers, etc. Finally, through no skill of their own, certainly (though the author is always reminding you how skilled they are) they find out where the girl is being kept. They roar over in their sports special and blunder around for a while, getting themselves caught as well.

The girls and the detectives are finally rescued by a poacher who happens to be around that general area, with a big cross that glows in the dark. The End.

The themes are interesting. In all of the short stories I managed to read, the hero or one of the other main characters always gets done in at the climax of the story. Not once was the evil defeated. Apparently they are trying to say that evil will win out over all. . . but then, I guess not. Maybe the editor feels that it's much scarier when somebody gets done in--a fine climax, thinks he.

Or maybe it's because it's much easier to write a story in which the ending is nothing more climactic than killing off the good guys. Consider; the average "good" story of the supernatural is plotted along these lines: 1.) Problem first suspected, 2.) Trouble increases and problem--ghosts, or what have you--clearly recognized, 3.) Problem becomes much more involved and dangerous--all things point towards defeat of protagonists, 4.) Protagonists defeats ghosts, etc., solves problem and triumphs. In the Badger stories, number 4 becomes "Protagonists loses." Much simpler to write. You don't even need an idea about the story when you start--just pick your supernatural element: "Now, let's see, the editor wants a 7,000 worder. What shall I do it on? Werewolves? No, I did my last novel on that. . . I know! a weresnake! Weeee. . ." And off he goes.

If the writing wasn't enough to condemn the Badger publications, they also suffer from the worst typesetting I've ever seen on a British publication. (No snide comments about our typesetting, we are Amateurs, sir, and not British besides.) Not only are words misspelled (which I wouldn't even notice), but they sometimes leave off the first syllable or two on some words. They mix up the lines, so one has to scan down the page to find the line that should be next, then go back to the one that they placed next. This tends to make the prose even more unintelligible than is usual.

The covers are pretty fair, all of them drawn by some guy who signs his work  
Fox  
H. •

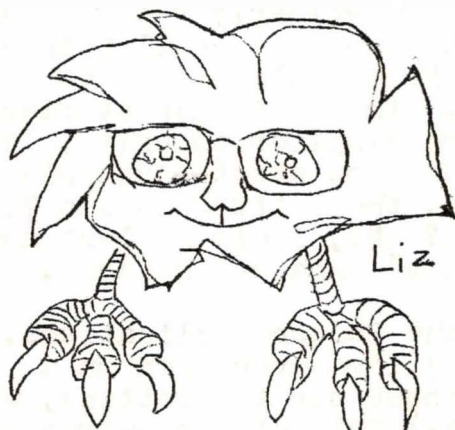
As some of you are aware, the supernatural stories series isn't the only disservice Badger does for fans of Science Fiction and Fantasy.

They also have a series of science fiction novels, written by the same bunch of hacks. I haven't read enough of these to really say anything much about them--though I would be surprised if they were any better. The only one I did read was John E. Muller's THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED. The plotting was slightly better than the average in the supernatural line, however, it was still terrible. The padding wasn't quite as much in evidence, but the writing was just as bad.

Much to the credit of American publishers, a Californian pornography publisher--Vega Books--recently branched out into science fiction--and, recognizing the definite appeal of the Badger books, stated reprinting them, right down to the Fox covers--which don't seem to come out as well on the American editions, by the way. They haven't gotten around to the Supernatural Stories yet, as far as I know, preferring to stay with the numerous science fiction titles. I wonder if their reprinting of the Badger line might have anything to do with the fact that John Spencer doesn't seem to go to the trouble of copyrighting the books. . . ?

Badger also publishes a large line of War, Crime, "Hospital Romance," and Westerns. The patterns seems to become clear. Apparently, the whole line is aimed at teenagers and younger, and nearly illiterate adults. One might argue that the "simple" plots, "simple" prose, and the "simple" themes are made necessary by this. One might also argue that this line is the very "crude magazine" that is talked about constantly around here.. A step from the Superman Comics to the latest issue of Analog. I don't think I have to use too many

words to make the point that there is a limit to the amount of crudeness allowable in the "step up," and that just because something is intended for young readers, it needn't be bad. This has been proved by everyone from Hienlien to Hugh Loftings.



YOUR FRIENDLY EDITOR

Badger is a big pain in the shelves for completists.

-----  
\*The information on pen names came from Al Ewis's INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES, 1963.  
-----

Poem by David Hall

Let the mountain shiver!  
I come to tear them down!  
Let the valley echo!  
I come to build a Town!  
Beware, for my heart is a volcano,  
Spouting flame and searing heat,  
The man who could stand against me  
Is a man that I shall never meet!



