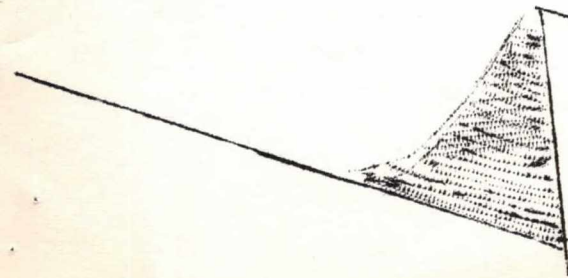
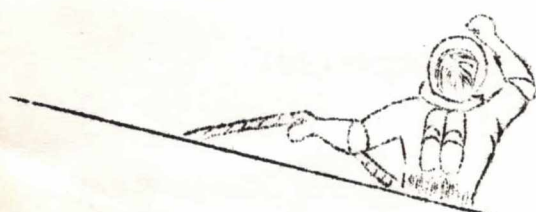
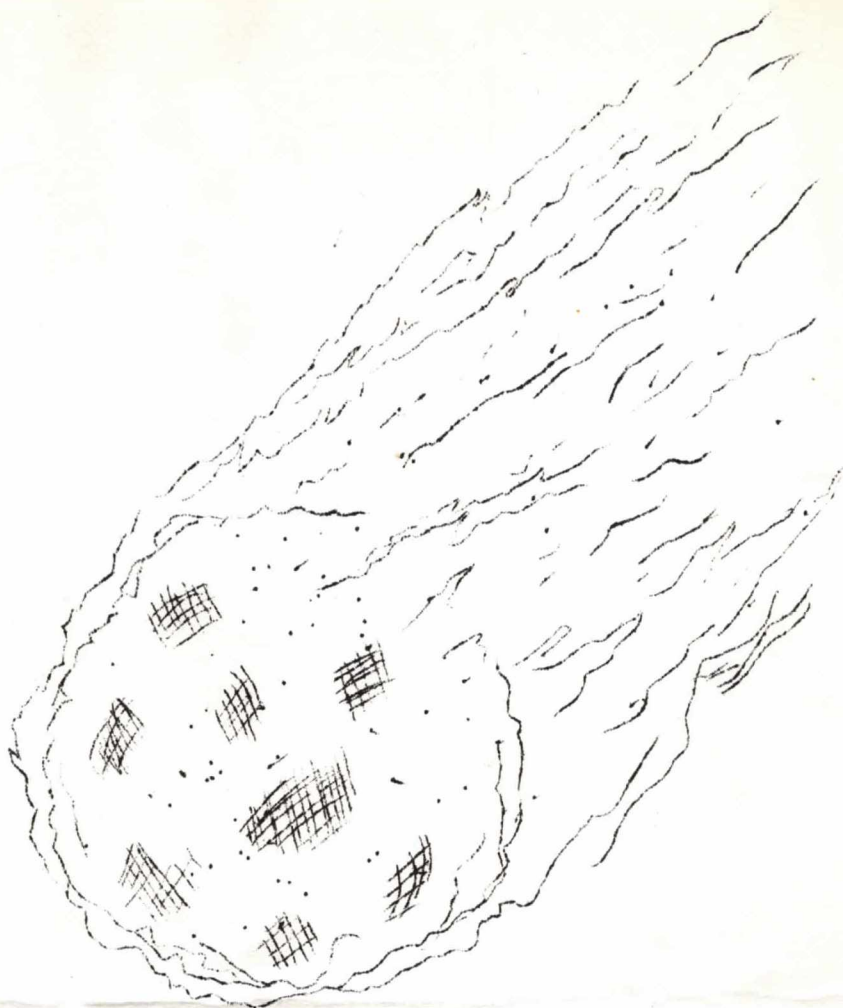


"So it hits me,
so what
I'm insured."



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This is SO WHAT #3 published on August 25 from 3 Ames Street,
Cambridge 39, Mass. for 25¢ or a letter of comment contribution or
really practically anything at all.



editorial

And here we go again.

My classes get out at two, so I run to TCA, that is, Technology Community Association, they have the mimeo, in order to get something done before they close at five. They are closed for lunch, naturally, so I sit down on the steps to wait, with the pages with one side run off already stacked at my side. Then it starts to rain. I haul the stuff inside and run to get a raincoat to cover the papers when I'm finished. When I get back they have opened, and tossed the stacks of paper I had left at their door into the wastebasket. I fish them out but they are hell to block now. I shove it in anyway, and the evil machine goes slur-up, slur-up, slur-up, shh, shh, shh, skrunch. It has swallowed half the paper. I forgot to close the paper clamps. I wipe off the open metal parts and start it up again. There is a streak down the paper now, but it is running through just fine. I resist the temptation to let it go, stop the machine, take out the paper, pull off the paper rack, take out the copper-static remover, crank the drum around, and wipe off the under-roller. Then I put on the tray and the paper and tighten the clamps and all and it is a beautiful run...only it is charged and will not block. I can hardly pull the sheets apart. So I skrunch it together and put it in but I've forgotten to close the clamps again. By five o'clock I am throwing away 200 copies with the back of the page printed upsidedown, while two little kids who have drifted in watch with much amusement and loosen the paperholder to make sure the next run is even more fun than the last. The other kid steals the few good copies that did come through for souvenirs, and the secretary smiles and says, "I'm sowrry, but we hawve to clowse now." So I rip off the wet stencil while I grab the paper while I try to dig the correct change to pay her since the cash drawer has been closed and then I run out. But I have forgotten to get my raincoat and the top sheets of paper have already blown away along with the stencil which I scoop up and run back. I grab my raincoat with the same hand and it gets ink all over the paper when I cover them with it and I still don't know what to do with that wet stencil since I need both hands to hold the paper which is slipping so I stuff it in my pocket and run for it.

Fun and games.

So now you want to know why I sent you SO WHAT #3. Well what do you think. You want I should keep them all myself?

But if you must have reasons, I'll comprinise my ideals and compose on stencil to tell you. Reason A [see back] is that you are a faned who had his zine on the list in TNFF, and this is hopes of a trade. If you won't trade, then TELL ME SO, cause if you don't, then I'll think you are and won't sub which I would if you don't. [Ah, the evil of composing on stencil. Note how confused that last sentence was, compaired with the concise clarity of the first and second paragraphs. Reason B is that you are a member of the Southern Fandom Group and thus inately worthy and deserving. Of course, this does not mean that you are so worthy and deserving that you don't need to trade your zine for this as well. Reason C means that we corospond, and I am so in need of corospondents that I'll do anything to keep them. Well, almost anything. If no reason is checked, that means that you are a member of some minority group, like a contributor, a loc-er, a tablecomma, a subscriber, or something, and know perfectly well why you are getting it. At least you should.

Lest the above paragraphs make you think that I am a pessimist [and optomist is someone who thinks he knows how to spell pessimist], then let me set you streight. We get our kicks. For example:

The society picnic. [stf soc of course] ΔASIMOVA was to be there, but loyalty was greater than honor and since Jay Harrison had brought a car, we rode with him instead of trying to bum our way into the car with the Asimovs. [We couldn't have made it anyway.]

Everybody bounded into the car, and we blasted off. Then suddenly we noticed how crowded the car wasn't. We dashed back up the steps of the main building, and down at the far end of the corridor we could see Osten lumbering rapidly toward us.

Then everybody was in and the car wasn't uncrowded any more and to catch up we tore off at top speed in the wrong direction. Durk finally got the map open and started calling directions like turn right, turn left, GREAT ZOT, TURN AROUND! Jay strove to obey and his Morris-Minor spun around in the middle of the street with cars whizzing past on both sides. Back we went with the map covering the windshield and with the somewhat massive Osten centrifuged to the bottom of the jumble in the back seat.

We were off.

All of us were used to seeing Boston from the underside looking up, via subway, so soon we were in unknown territory, with only two conflicting maps to guide us. We settled back to watch the scenic beauty of one way street signs.

I crouched in the back seat with my legs in the lotus position around Osten's neck, think worried thoughts about us all falling through into the trunk full of books [which we had brought for Isaac Asimov to autograph.

The next moment of real consciousness we broke off our bheer drinking song and looked out at a jungle that was supposed to be our first landmark. [I was somewhat doubtful about its value as such, since Osten and I had spent an hour wandering through it with a pack of books on our backs, hunting for the Good Doctor and the IES outing the day before. We finally gave up around 3:00, and we later found that Isaac didn't arrive until 3:30.] But that is another story... which we proceeded to relate to Durk and Jay. The high point of that adventure was when a little kid mistook Osten for a beatnik. [Well, he is, isn't he?]

This diversion gave us more than enough time to get lost again, and after circling the park once or twice, we zoomed off in some random direction, trying to plot the branches of the side streets against the map. Everyone shouted advice but Durk still came through the loudest and, as he did have the map, we decided singing was a more profitable enterprise...also more likely to drown out Durk's directions.

We went through about ten partly remembered fannish songs like that pausing only to give advice when Durk's choice of a street seemed particularly unesthetic. He didn't get us to the picnic that way, but we did run into a particularly fascinating rock, which we all got out and chipped bits from for our little brothers. Then we piled back into the car and started back the way we came.

Suddenly I muttered exultantly from the back seat. I had recognized the street we were on. and Sarill lived near by. A native guide! We were saved! Sarill had had his status as a quasi-pseudo-proto-member revoked for some minor mundane infraction like assassinating a dean, but we were desperate and in no mood to bother about TECHNICALITIES.

Sarill bounded gaily into the car and fell through into the trunk. The car wouldn't start with his added weight, so we got out and pushed and then ran after the car when it did start. Jay slowed down to let us catch up and the motor died. The car began to roll back down the hill toward us, and we scattered; then began chasing it again.

With Sarill to guide us, we zoomed to the picnic ground in a matter of a few hours, swerved into the road leading up the hill at top speed, came down again without stopping when we found it ended a few yards after the first curve, parked and got out.

"... THE EVENT OF A LIFETIME!"

by Harry R Nelson

And the government continued with its plodding Newton-approved rocket. The Ranger projects had made four landings on the moon. Flying saucer reports either had dwindled or had been suppressed. The Russians had tossed three men around the moon; the capsule came in too steeply and had been vaporized. Their screams, broadcast world-wide (The Russians had recognized and tried to exploit the prestige-gaining tactic as the U.S. Mercury project had started; a tragic first) had resulted in world opinion running against them for their non-humanitarianism, and towards the Americans and English who sent only instruments up.

And one Noah L. Deen worked in the security of a carefully-prepared plot. Back in '58, when word of his work had leaked out, he had pulled a master stroke by having it widely publicized in a prominent science fact & fiction magazine. Important scientists had glanced at the preliminary patent and had had a hearty chuckle. SF fans concerned enough to write had also had a laugh. The SF public had expected nothing more--except maybe an apology--from the region of Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, D.C. Mr. Deen now had peace and quiet in which to theorize and work.

A few of the private industries investigating it had shelved the project, having decided that their scientists were more needed elsewhere. In two of the scarce large industries working on the theory, the same neglect that permitted embezzlement had permitted the research to continue. No one would take the responsibility of ordering it to a halt.

So the high school and college students who had argued for and blustered about and had socially been martyred for the theory found other, less controversial interests, returning to their usual pursuits with occasional healthful diversions like the biweekly burning of Castro in effigy. One group in New England, however, stubbornly continued to collect information and pool findings.

A new sport had replaced zip-guns and rumbles as such in the Eastern cities: toy and model rockets were strengthened, had nozzles mounted on them, and were chemically filled with compressed air. A simple timer released the missile after a predetermined interval and the missile would blast off and fly a mile or so to the target. The lower elements--clods all--used them destructively and had wars, while the shyer elements mounted parachutes and sparklers on them and set them to float down into the middle of a square, disrupting traffic.

The Washington police were not overly perturbed to receive a report of a "suspicious crash" in the suburbs of Washington. A squad car was dispatched to pick up the missile so it couldn't be reused.

The patrolman, arriving at the address (a vacant lot) found a slightly inebriated man flat on his back, staring up at the sky using his hands as binoculars. Asked what the hell he thought he was doing, the man replied: "Ah jush doan know me own streongness. I jesh lanchad me a satellite."

"Look, I hate to bother with drunks. Just cooperate and we'll let you go. Did you have anything to do with a crash around here?"

"I ain' drunk, ' ish as sober as . . . az . . ."

"Look, answer the question or I'll have to take you in."

"Me?"

"Yeah, you. Did you have anything to do with a crash around here, like say

a rocket?

"Me?"

"Yeah, you. Now answer me."

"Well, it was like this"

"Well?"

"Well maybe it was more like this"

"Like what?"

"Well"

"Won't talk, huh. Come along."

"You don't believe me, do you. I bet you doan like me nohow."

"Tell it to the judge."

The patrolman took a last look around. Not far from the spot where the drunk had been lying, there was a small hole in the turf as if a lawn mower had been at the ground. This he would not have remarked upon, but at that time of year the ground was quite hard. Whatever had hit had hit with considerable force, but was not there now. Nor was there any pieces of a model rocket nearby.

Soon, at the courthouse, the judge was hearing the charges. The lush said that had picked up his pay at work and immediately had a drink before the old biddy could get her hands on it. ("Well, maybe it was two beers. . . or maybe even three . . . or maybe four . . .")

"So you staggered out of Joe's Bar about four o'clock," the judge was saying.

"And then what transpired?"

"Then what what?"

"Then what happened?"

"Oh. Well pretty soon thish thing comes splat! out of the sky onto the lawn aside of me. It looked like a long molar motor and some batteries with some radios and lectric motors and crazy hunks of metal all tangled up. It jesh set there humming--not no tune, jesh humming--and I thunk I could sell it for some beer money. I gived it a tap wid me foot to see is it dangeroush and the dang thing clicked at me like a cricket. Well, I'ain't scared of nothing, and I gived it a kick to show it who'se bosh. Ain't no pile of junk gonna defy me!

"And," said the judge.

"Well, the dang thing went shnap like unto it was gonna take me foot off. So I thunk it'd be better if I killed it before I selled it, and I picked up a rock. I throwed it ash hard ash I could at it."

While the lush was orating, the judge had been questioning the patrolman to verify the story. "This character has an imagination. You say there was no sign of anything at all?"

"Ain't you agoona listen to me?" asked the lush. "I ain't got time to waste telling people thingsh what doan listen to me."

"You'll have ten days to tell it if I don't like your story," said the judge. "so make it good."

"Well, the rock hit it good in the side. It must of been hurt, 'cause it went clack! I went in for the kill and darn near got it. It shtarted making with the sparks, and soundin like a lectric motor shtarting. Somethin inside shtarted oss--oshcululat--osicolating and then the whole thing floated up at me. I says itsh it or me and belted it. I shtill got the marksh. (He exhibited a bruised hand) Then it got scared and flew off."

"I see. Would you care to say what kind of bird it was that was so great a fighter?"

"It weren't no bird. Like I said before, it was just a bunch of tubes and batteries and motors----"

"Ah, a metallic beast. Are you sure now, that it wasn't round and a door opened and some little green men fought you? If so, then you've saved Earth from an invasion. You deserve some sort of a reward for that, don't you think, officer?"

The patrolman agreed hesitantly. "But--"

"Well now that I think of it, maybe it were round----"

"I thought as much."

"And my reward?" asked the drunk eagerly.

"My good man," the judge said patronizingly. "I think you deserve ten days for drunkenness plus a week for wasting my time with such a story. However, we'll



"AND JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING?"

HN

keep to the law and make it a week. Take him away, sergeant."

A mile or so to the east, a telephone rang. Roger Crowell picked it up. "Hello?"



A sharp voice answered him. "This is Saturn One. Get the hell down here on the damn double. The ghoddam Alphas just plastered us with the ghoddamdest big missile you ever laid yer ghoddam peepers on. Git a'ghoddam weather report on damn local winds and bring the dam Folder. And be dam fast, too."

"Okay."

Roger then pressed the button for a weather report, noted air pressure, humidity, and expected wind shifts, and hit the switch for the taped answering service. Downstairs, he got an inconspicuous fiberglass folder and was soon headed towards the headquarters of the gang known as the "Saturns"

In another part of the city, "Panther Leader" was rounding up his gang--for a slightly different reason. An unidentifiable missile had parachuted down a short distance from the scene of the last, and most disastrous yet, war. His technologist, "Atom" was checking it out: it had an unusually large mass of transistors and wire and servos near a lethal-looking nose cone. None of the gangs listed and described in the File had ever used one, nor did it seem to be evolved from a known missile. If some upstart gang had sided with the Alphas in the last war, it would be worth something to find out who . . .

Atom said suddenly, "Hey! This thing's guided, not ballistic!"

"So there's a difference?"

"Sure. Ballistics just go. Guideds can change course anytime on the way."

"So?"

"This was built to hit a moving target, not just a still house---"

"Like maybe our car?"

"Maybe."

"But why would anyone go to all that trouble just to hit a car? I ain't no technician--that's what you get loot for--but I can see that it'd be simpler to just set up a couple electric eyes and relays to fire a missile."

"I'm not sure how accurate it is. Maybe it could pick off a plane. I check."

In yet another part of the city, "Supernova One" was huddled over his bench picking out the remains of a thoroughly blown fuse. His was an unusual gang. It were no identification except for a small picture of an exploding star on their arm--nothing extreme, like the black vinyl jackets with fiery panther heads like the Panthers. It was not listed in any Folder or File, for it never participated--not openly, anyway--in any of the local wars. It was composed of an esoteric group of intellectuals whose ideal amusement was befuddling other gangs. They alone had successfully managed to duplicate the missiles of each gang to start wars with. They would then proceed to pick off each gang's rockets--in flight! Like other gangs, they had complete descriptions of each gang's missiles, plus coordinates of each gang's headquarters and histories of each member.

The Supernovas, too, had things to ponder. One of the spotters covering the Panther-Alpha war had tracked a strange looking missile with a serpentine flight path which corresponded with nothing in their Folder. An extrapolation of the last curve showed that whatever it was it would hit in a vacant lot between the two gangs' headquarters--if it followed normal ballistic laws. When they got there, however, a cruiser was stopping and there was a stiff on the ground. A member said, though, that he had seen something flying off that didn't look like a bird.

Roger, meanwhile, had reached Saturn Headquarters. There was the missile on the bench, a vicious looking thing of tin-wire-fiberglass construction, and a ring of frost around its base. It was, in his technologist appraisal, a standard vinager-

baking soda-dry ice powered job. The dry ice vaporized, giving pressure. The vinegar released CO₂ in the baking soda and furnished reaction mass. The dry ice also served as timer and plug. Cheap transistors (5¢ a dozen) and equally cheap servos were used as guidance.

But somehow this missile was different; something was not as the Alphas built missiles. "It's the nozzle!"

"You're ghoddam right! Now what the hell is that ghoddam mess?"

"I think it's double--a large one releases the reaction mass. When that is gone, the small one has floated into place, with a smaller hole for releasing the gas."

"Ghoddam sure that ain't ghoddam Alpha work. Too damn sophisticated. And the ghoddam fins ain't very damn straight, either."

"That's for spin stabilization. But the Alphas don't use that!"

"Maybe they got a ghoddam new designer?"

"No, the Folder was verified just last week."

"Someone, ghoddamit, is trying to frame them and get us into another damn war."

The Alphas, too, had things to think about. They had just emerged from a war with the Panthers, and had not fared well. Only two of nine missiles had arrived anywhere near the target. The others had blown up in flight.

The leader, "Alpha Prime", was plotting the results on a Folder map.

"Now the first two blasted off from Hancock Street, same as the others. They appogee'd over the square, here, . . . and hit here . . . within ten feet of target. But the next one took off from the old pad on A Street, appogee'd over the square, and blew up. Then another took off from A Street here . . . and blew about here . . . And the next one here also . . . Hey, there's a pattern! All blew up right around peak over Dapper Dan's!"

"But how come?" asked one called Gamma.

"Well," said the Prime, "That's what you, Beta (the technologist) and Delta are to find out within three days."

By now Atom, Panther technologist, had come up with an analysis and reported to Panther Leader. "These things are accurate enough to have been hitting missiles in flight."

"You mean that these have been responsible for all our losses?"

"If there were enough of them, they could."

"Migod! Those Alphas are so far ahead of us--"

"Wait a minute. I didn't say it was Alphas. This is too advanced for them. Besides, this type of construction isn't even listed in the Folder. I'm sure it wasn't Alphas or any other gang we know. But if this keeps up we'll never own this part of town."

"We'll put a stop to this fast. Make up --oh, say ten of these and we'll give them a surprise next war."

"It isn't that simple. This one had a warhead--a hot one."

"Where'd they get the chemicals? Back when this rocket rumble business started, the cops cut off all sources of potassium, and like that?"

"Well, this stuff is mostly domestic materials--sugar, and like that. I think I can make some more. But it's explosive--we can't use it as fuel."

"How soon can you have 'em?"

"Saturday."

"All right. Let's get some regulars and blast away at the Alphas next Monday--say about 9:00 in the morning."

Two days later, three members--Beta, Gamma, and Delta-- reported to Alpha Prime. "All we could find were three standard pads in the alley by Dapper Dan's."

"Dapper Dan's! That's where we lost our missiles! Was there anyone around?"

"No. And the pads've been there for a couple days--had dust all over 'em."

"Well, there's one way to smoke them out--start another war with the Panthers."

"Good idea. Have quite a few of these ready plus ten or fifteen of the others--say for Saturday morning. We'll start the war then."

"How early?"

"Oh, say--- 11:00."

At Saturn headquarters, Roger and the others were still concerned with the supposed Alpha missile. Someone, to be sure, had reported a rumor that there had been a secret gang interfering with the last few wars, but there was no evidence. Then Roger thought a thought. "Suppose the Alphas are trying to throw us off with a fake? I know, it's hard to change. That's what makes the Folder dependable. But suppose the Alphas deliberately tried to make it look like someone else!"

"Anyone that sneaky ---let's start a war with them!"

"Yeah! We'll have fifteen or twenty missiles ready for Monday. It'll be a slaughter."

At Alpha headquarters, reports had been received that the Saturns and Panthers were stockpiling. For security it was decided to stockpile also, allowing about twenty for each gang plus fifteen "just in case someone else butts in" plus fifteen of the anti-missile missiles. The Alpha Prime assigned two members to prepare pads between three and eight hundred meters from the square where the missiles had blown. "Have the missiles ready for Monday morning about 8:30. And Atom, record the last war and them new missiles in the Folder with a map."

"Willdo."

"This war once and for all will prove the inherent superiority of the Alphas" said the Prime.

Word of other's stockpiling had reached Saturn by a himike (a stoolie, from Hidden Mike) who was the paid source of most of the information in the Folder (Two himikes were employed thus, and stern measures for any discrepancies in reports). Saturn One called Roger. "Ghoddamit, gotta double the ghoddam number of missiles. Ghoddam Panthers and Alphas are getting ready for a ghoddam blast Monday morning at eight in the morning, ghoddamit. They think we won't be ready, ghoddamit. And set a couple missiles to hit that ghoddam alley just in case any ghoddam secret gang tries any ghoddam stunt."

The same himike, having allegiance only to cash, took his info to Panther Leader, who alerted the rest. "Have enough to hit the Alphas good and the Saturns. And have a couple drop around Dapper Dan's---around 8:30 Monday morning."

At the esoteric Supernova headquarters, plans to start another war were already in progress. Supernova One had handmade three supermissiles, many times the normal size, solid fuel powered, to hit each gang's headquarters. That would really start things popping! His underlings were setting up antimissile missile pads in the alley and on nearby rooftops. "You two stand by with the tongs to salvage anything that comes down next Monday. But watch for cops! These things will hit about 7:45 when they're just waking up, anyway."

Across the city, N. L. Deen was putting the finishing touches on Flying model III. This was it. His ultimate. The last of his savings was invested in this. Rectangular, about three by four by five feet, it contained horribly expensive atomic batteries and electric motors. Gears, weights, commutators, masses, relays, servos, solenoids, gyros, crude telemetry, and radio units.

In his lab, instruments. Radio receivers. Telemetry receivers. Computer. Portable telemetry interpreter. Monitors.

After years of ridicule, quiet laughs, and persistent letters from New England demanding progress reports, the payoff.

It was to be tested Saturday; he needed a witness. He called Joe Camball. Camball, who had been stung when he published rumors and a put up story of the Deen Drive, and who had wasted some time with Deen last week, let out an involuntary snicker.

The snicker made Deen's face burn in remembrance of last week. He had promised a demonstration of Model II, a gasoline powered job. He had had the portable instruments set up in his home to monitor the Model's speed, altitude, and direction. According to the telemetry, the gas engine had stalled about a half mile away over a vacant lot. The monitors suddenly registered free fall--the emergency electrics had failed. Then the needles and screens went blank--the crash had smashed the radio tubes. (Deen hated using tweezer-held soldering irons to work with transistors)

When they had reached the vacant lot, they found no wreckage. Dean figured that the shock had unjammed the electric switches and the model was now flying on electric power--but without guidance of any kind. It could be headed anywhere--the river, a dump, or anywhere for miles around. His friends had said nothing And when you look at it from their point of view, it's logical--after all, all they had for proof of his revolutionary theory was his interpretation of some wiggling needles in his lab.

"Well, I'm tied up anyway Saturday. Fact is, I'm tied up all next week . . . except for Monday morning. Even then I've got to be on a jet for New York at 10:00. But if you're sure (again that snicker) you'll have it ready, I could bring some friends . . ."

"Well," Deen thought. "Obviously he thinks that I'm not going to have anything ready. So he'll put me to shame before his friends, eh? . . ." Then he said to Joe "Sure. Bring as many as you like. Meet me at my apartment. I'll make the FM III fly over from the lab. We'll meet it in a field next door. Be here about 8:00."

"Okay."

The moon was full Sunday night. On the roof of his lab, Deen was setting up a large box. A radio signal would open the top, exposing Flying Model #III. For the demonstration, he would set the model to rise to 500 feet, head across town towards his apartment, to descend gracefully into the vacant lot. Outdoors there would be no Lab tricks. His friends could inspect it for rotors and rockets. They would soon be convinced. First he'd collect apologies, then fame, . . .!

A final check, and all was in readiness.. The weather prediction was for clear skies, little to no winds--perfect! Even his horoscope, in which he had no faith whatsoever, but read faithfully, was in his favor. "Out of an unexpected source shall come the event of a lifetime!"

Monday morning, 8:00. Deen and his friends waited in the vacant lot for the FMIII to come in sight. According to the portable instruments, the device had reached 50 feet and still climbing liesurely. (Deen had no intentions of motor overload.)

Supernova One pressed the button that launched the Supermissiles at Saturn, Panther, and Alpha headquarters.

8:01:30, direct hits by three Supermissiles on Saturn, Panther, and Alpha headquarters.

8:02:30, final preparations had been completed, but had not expected attack so soon. Saturns, Panthers, and Alphas desparately launched all-out attack with all surviving missiles at each other. A minute and a half later, they launched all anti-missile missiles for protection.

8:04:30, ground-ground missiles within 75 seconds of targets.

Deen sighted FMIII over Dapper Dan's. "There it is!"

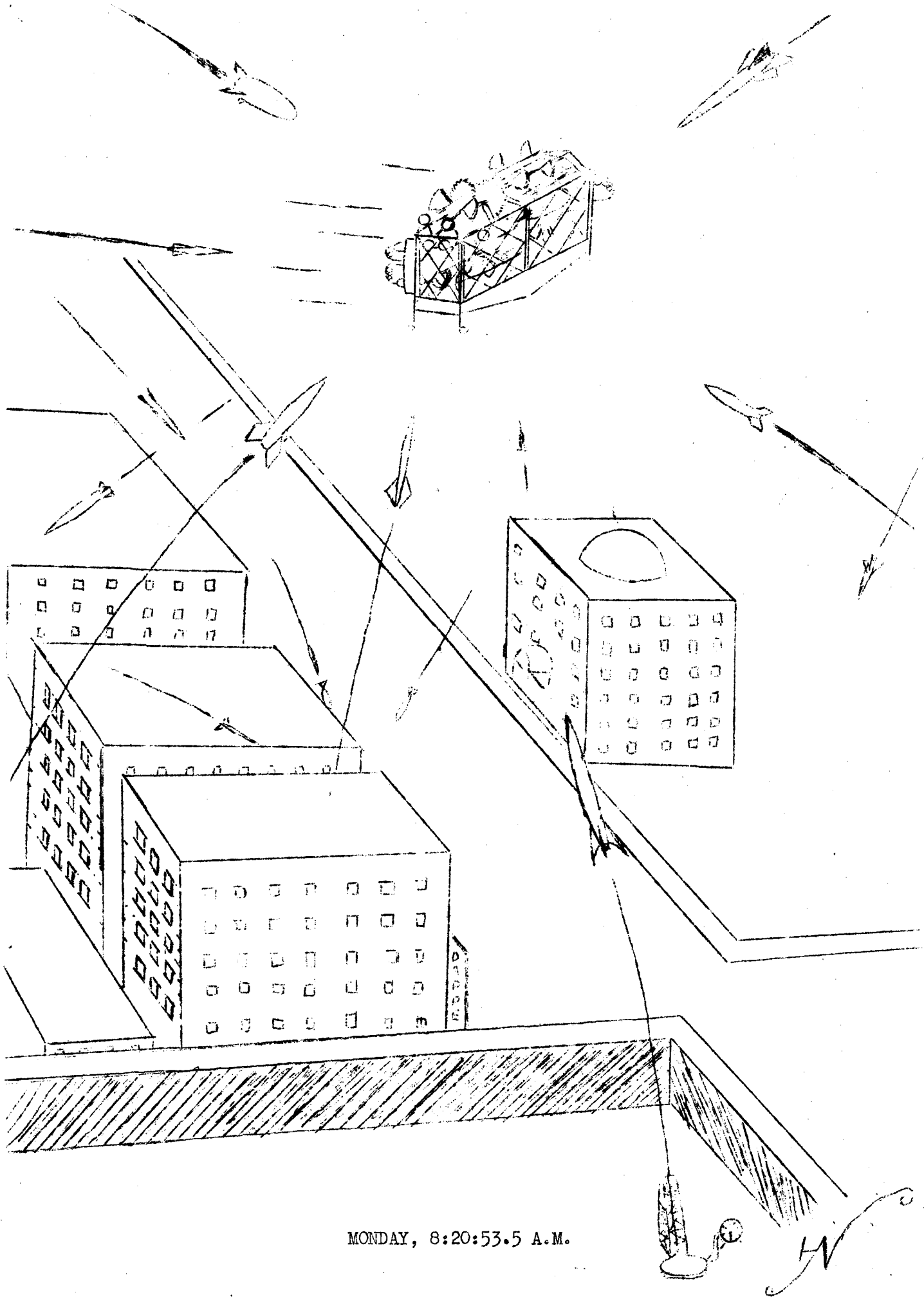
8:05:50 Antimissile missiles found and began computing courses to targets. Two seconds later they had locked on target, and switched off ground control.

The cutoff of ground control assured Supernovas of victory unscathed. Panthers also certain that ground missiles would hit and new antimissilemissiles would assure defense. Saturns now positive of victory; all missiles on target.

In the vacant lot, Joe Camball found a speck in the sky about 400-600 feet up. "He's not kidding; there really is something up there!" N.L. Deen jubilant.

8:05:53 Ground missiles within 5 seconds of targets. Antimissile missiles converging on each other about 500 feet over Dapper Dan's.

Joe Camball exclaimed, "There's more than one up there!?"



MONDAY, 8:20:53.5 A.M.

8:05:53:30, antimissile missiles homing in, contact, .5 seconds

8:05:54, brilliant multiple flash over Dapper Dan's

8:05:58, missiles hit in Supernova, Saturn, Panther, and Alpha headquarters.

8:10, police investigating explosions found two folders which confirmed their suspicions; within a short time had warrants for arrest of all members.

8:30, a very unhappy amateur inventor was admitted to the paranoic ward of the local hospital.

9:00, "the event of a lifetime" was history.

BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN (noise of presses grinding to a halt)

Again showing its alertness and promptness, SO WHAT now scoops all fandom on the latest news on the Dean System Space Drive---also known as the Dean Drive, and other names.

All ye who are fanatic believers in the Dean Drive, rush to the stands and get the September 1961 issue of POPULAR MECHANICS. The author of the above story found on page 131 a story entitled "Engine With Built-In Wings", a complete writcup of Dean and his machines complete with five photos of three different models and three diagrams of how the Drive works and proposed applications.

The next issue of SO WHAT will feature an article by the author (who is authoring this directly on stencil) on his adventures with the Dean Drive. Although SO WHAT is NOT a Dean Drive fanzine, this author feels that the Drive may yet be controversial.

The **PM** article ought to provoke at least as much as, if not more argument than John W. Campbell's articles in last year's ANALOG's.

All those having additional information on the Dean Drive; those having opinions on the matter backed up by proven facts; and those having rumors on the Dean Drive are requested to write to the author. Putting "Dean Drive Information" on the envelope will give it top priority. Address all to:

Harry R. Nelson
44 Spruce Street
Haverhill, Mass.

(This bulletin automatically outdates the ideas in my story. It was stenciled, for you precise ones, 25 August 1961.)

BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN BULLETIN

Well, ye author finds himself with yet more stencil to fill, so it behooves him to find some way to fill it. He stoopeth not to the levels of the lowlifes who would use double spacing, or a crudtoon. No, this author is fair, in addition to being kind, brave, friendly, clean, obedient, reverent, courteous, and all the other virtues which I represent. But since this is already wellknown, I will not bother to repeat.

Well, I yet have space. Almost five lines, to be precise. And fill them I shall. After all, am I not ever approaching this goal with every stroke of the keys?

I could put in an old plea for War Bonds--Buy them, 'till Victory is ours--but there's really no need, for my victory over the forces of Blankness (which seems to be particularly represented Out There!) is so close as to be certain. And Lo! Here it is! Behold my glorious victory! Cheers and Salutations! Clever, no?

how to keep a fenden in order

by Leslie Gerber

Although I have been in fandom for quite some time, writing letters, publishing fanzines, and participating in all sorts of phases of fandom, I have never before organized a system for taking care of my fannish affairs. Incoming letters and fanzines were thrown carelessly on my desk, to be answered in whatever order I came upon them (if at all.) Subscriptions to my fanzines were pocketed with the subscribers' names and addresses tucked under the corner of my desk blotter, and as often as not they were gone when time came to send out an issue and I had to go surching all over the house for them. Finding old fanzines was nearly impossible. They were all stacked in a bookcase in no order at all. Any important dates--the next club meeting, the SAPS deadline, Mercer's day, etc.--trusted to chance to be remembered.

Recently, I decided that enough of this was enough, and decided that I would systematically arrange my room so that everything would have a proper place, every address would be filed, every letter would be stapled together and marked when answered, and in general, I would regulate my fanac. I am going to tell you just how I went about it, and impart to you my secrets for happy healthy, neat fanac. (Neat fanac? Huh?)

The first job was clearing up the fanzines. I removed every single fanzine from the bookcase. Then I divided them into several piles--A to C, D to G, etc. I went through every zine, putting it in its proper place. Then I alphabetized each group and arranged copies of a fanzine in numerical order. When I was finished, I replaced each group so that the fanzines were now all in alphabetical and numerical order.

Incoming fanzines had to be read, commented on, and reviewed in my fanzine review column. Since I have no trouble remembering what fanzine I've commented on (since I comment so infrequently now that when I do it stands out in my mind,) I divided them into two stacks. Those which had not been read were kept on the desk in a small pile (since I always read fanzines promptly, at least.) All the fanzines I had read went on another pile on top of the bookcase, even when they were commented on. Every time I had to do a column, I took these fanzines, arranged them in alphabetical order, and after writing the column, I integrated them with the main body of the alphabetized fanzines. This took care of the whole fanzine problem.

The next problem was my own fanzines. I had no trouble putting the material and cut stencils together in an old stencil carton, but I had more trouble remembering who had earned what fanzine. After thinking about it for some time, I finally decided that file cards would be best. I bought several packs of file cards and on the top of each wrote the name and address of every fan I knew of. I went through the rosters of all the APAs and all the people who had been even mentioned in any fanzine I'd recieved in the past few months. Once this was finished, I got out the lists of people who had received my last fanzine and people who had been promised the next issue. The way the system would work was this: every time I received a fanzine from someone, a review in a fanzine, a letter of comment, or a sub, I would write down the number of the issue or issues the person had earned in the future. Thus, since I had just published METROPEN 4, anyone sending 25¢ would have M7 written on his card. Simple? Of course.

The letters were even easier, although they took quite a bit of

MONSTERS



by Seth Johnson

At present most of your monsters are either in the funny books or some of the movies which cater to strictly juvenile and mediocre tastes. Yet the BEM or Bug Eyed Monster has made a historic contribution to science fiction ever since Hugo Gernsback published Amazing stories. Fact of the matter is, one of the first sf writers, a fellow by name of Homer, made practise of using all sorts of monsters to embellish and render more thrilling the adventures of real or mythical heroes. And quite a few modern writers have lifted their monsters right out of pages of the Odyssey and the Iliad for that matter.

But the first and best monsters I can remember, and those were not monsters in every sense of the word, were in one story Gernsback published way back when. Author was Hyatt Verrill and the monsters were giant ants. Verrill was a scientist in his own right incidentally and something of an authority on insects and their habits. His heroes fell back into this valley of giant ants, made contact with a colony of black ants and started educating them to usage of modern warfare in their battle with the Red Ants, or slave holding ants.

The hero managed to get control of some Army Ants and really had quite an array of insect soldiers to throw at the Red Ant forces. But everyone reading the story couldn't help coming away with a pretty fair knowledge of insect life. Fact is I bet reading it would rouse interest in insects in most teenagers if they were to read it today. As for me, my only regret is that Hyatt Verrill stopped writing science fiction. I think he would have been as good and as fascinating as our top ten sf writers of today if he had stuck with it.

Then another author came out with a book based on ants. This one was set on Venus and had one hero learn the secret of ruling ants and using them as an army against humans. Then there was more than one "Prophet of Doom" story in which the ants simply took over the world and exterminated man. But ants were real popular BEM's in those days.

After the ants got their readers gaffa came the octopusses and spiders. Especially the octopus. That was really your first authentic "Bug Eyed Monster". Every sf mag would have at least four or five lurid covers during the year illustrating some type octopus abducting or otherwise molesting a scantily draped femme. What the heck he would do with her or see in her wasn't explained. Also numerous heroes armed with ray guns, swords, knives and atom pistols and the like doing battle with hordes of octopi. H.G. Wells postulated the Martians in WAR OF THE WORLD would resemble Octopus to some degree.

Then E.E. Smith came on the scene with a new monster on every page. In the SKYLARK series he had a whole race of humanoid monsters with high civilization and no ethics at all. Out to conquer the galaxy and so forth. Later he started with four dimensional monsters and monsters beyond human conception.

But Smith was the first author however, to make heroes out of some of his monsters. like Worzel, the lizard type intelligent creature who allied himself with the Lensmen in their war against Boskone etc. Also one monster, and this one he should have written more about, who could not only read minds, but also hypnotize from great astronomical distances and cause a whole garrison to kill each other effectively and quickly. All

without exposing himself to slightest danger.

And then there were the giant bacteria and amoeba immune to missiles of any sort who merely split into two or more entities when cut or shot. These could grow any type limb they needed and assume almost any form.

But even today almost every monster is created by taking some natural insect or creature and expanding till they were large enough to conquer or menace either the whole world or just the hero and his femme. Modern authors leave out the femme altogether as often as not. Or else they project them to the size of an office building and turn him or it loose on some city or other. But this is more for the movies and such than for the page. In fact some of the movie producers have no other plot of any kind. Simply build a papier mache monster and let him go on destroying cities right up to the last frame. You can practically figure out the plot after the first ten minutes.

But one of the most effective monster stories was one where a professor managed to create a breed of fish that would swim in the air instead of the sea. Almost wiped out civilization before they figured out a way to kill them. But that is and was a terrifying thought to have a shark like creature silently floating through the cities or trees ready to dart down and snap a man or woman in one mouthfull. And with hides so thick only the heaviest calibre rifles could penetrate, and then only when hitting squarely.

Burroughs also had some nice monsters in his Martian tales. Six limbed green men who only laughed when someone was either dying or undergoing extreme torture. Another monster consisting only of head with a symbiotic creature with body resembling man without head. Heads would mount bodies and work them till tired, then discard for fresh body much as a rancher would change horses during the day.

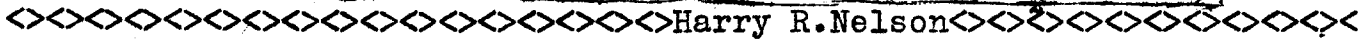
Or a race he postulated that could hypnotize enemies into seeing their long dead armies from the days before the seas of Mars evaporated. They would send these imaginary armies out to defend their ruined cities and kill their attackers. Only for some reason once in a while, one of the illusions came to life and refused to disappear when their masters had no more use for them.

Only wonder why no one thought of using Kali or Siva type eight armed humanoid monsters in any of their stories. What a prize fighter or wrestler someone like that would make. Tie up the arms of opponents with two arms and belabor them with the other six. How could they ... lose.

Another, and this was about the top monster of them all, was postulated in SINISTER BARRIER. First book length novel to appear in UNKNOWN, this one was farming the earth for humans. They were invisible and fed on radiations of fear, horror, pain and death or any violent emotion. They constantly stirred up wars, famines, and threats of war to reap their harvest. Of course any human who could see them was immediately executed before he could tell his friends. The hero got around this by publishing the whole facts and methods whereby the monsters could be seen. They were telepathic incidentally. Also incidentally the author used Chas Fort's clippings from LO as basis for most of that story.

AA

This is progress report #1. I know that it isn't the first one you have come across if you are reading from one end of the zene to the other but it is the first one I have/will type. The zene is rushing madly to completion now at the start, 8 pages in 2 days. The last issue rushed like this right at the end, going very slowly at the beginning. I think this arrangement is going to be better, since it will allow more time hunting for and correcting errors. I've already typed the letter column you are coming to now. It is a good one. Keep it that way and WRITE!!!!



Why doesn't get fouled up every time he does back? Just because we don't have the histories of every tribe and person doesn't mean that that person didn't have a history. If a primitive related how a blue and red skinned creature [Obviously not human: no furs! Indecently dressed!] saved him from a dinosaur [I know, dinosaurs were extinct, so complain to the comics!], we have the makings of a devout religion. Who can predict what could happen? Someone maybe was supposed to see him eaten so he would invent the concept of danger!

As for Green Arrow: he, like all the others in his profession, is a humanitarian. That's why no atom bomb. As for the arrow identity problem, it is my guess that he carries Universal arrows which have a row of buttons down the side. The end button is for Boxing glove, the second for mirror, etc. Or he could anticipate the situation and have the necessary arrows. Or he could check the arrow by its feathers' shape, and then decide which to use.

>>OK faneds, this guy Nelson isn't even a trufan yet...and for no other reason than no one has told him about fandom, I'll bet. Send him your zine, and if you get a LOC like this one, it will be worth it won't it. His address is at the end with all the others.>>

See you in #3.

To the letter first.><This has nothing to do with the fanzine, really, and is in answer to a letter none of you have read, but it is mostly self containing, and is printed, with many editorial comments, in hopes of stirring up a much needed fight in this letter col><

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

Also ask about some supreme court decisions while you're going strong there. The postal system is using censorship. There are books and literature that can not be sent thru the mails, [and yes most of it is classed as immoral literature, but no, only 75% of that classed as immoral is such, if that much, and the principle is the same.]><By that do you mean that they rule out material that obviously isn't immoral, or is it literature that is immoral by their standards but non by yours?-ed><The government has no right to censor literature of any sort, save that which is actively preaching aggressive overthrow of the government by force.><But someone has to do it, who else but the government is in any possision to cut down on pornography?><], on top of that certain types of literature, especially that dealing with governmental systems and cultural patterns may not be sent thru the mails, and if this isn't determined censorship then kindly tell me what is?><To this, I agree wholeheartedly-ed><.

I will disagree with you on two points. First I think that movie censorship programs are so much ----, and I agree in principle with the dictates of the comic code. Now granted that the comics code wiped out a lot of good comics in its time, but look at the good it accomplished. There is presently a company reprinting old comics. It doesn't bear the comics code approval, so they are hard to find. But looking thru them, you will find an over abundance of sex [I'm not kidding in the least], sadism and plain unwarranted inhuman cruelty. Now even if I do not approve of some of the tactics of the comics code, nor of some of their rulings and the results, I still feel that a censoring organization for comics such as the comics code is a necessity. I'll tell you why. The people who read comics are primarily children in the eitht to fifteen bracket, these are young minds, and the horrors of television were nothing compared to the horrors of come comics I might name off. I do not believe the minds of youngsters should be exposed to such raw influences that early in life, later yes, but not at that stage in the game. The comics code succeded in clearing away most of the horror comics, most of the sexy hero comics, and cleaned up most of the rest of them. Today you will hardly see blood gushing from open wounds, or stark necked babes being persued by arch willians or medi-eval torture devices and a brand of spectacular horror being exploited in detail being used in comics. Ten years ago you did, in mass.><Sure a comics censorship group is needed, but this has gone too far. They have done away with all violence, not just the morbid kind. The heros can't be rivels any more. All of the good guys have to be friendly. Which means they have to all be good in the same way, which sure cuts down on character, whereas the villians can be real individuals, and that much more likable for it. Everyone likes Luthor.><

interleniationinterleniationinterleniationinterleniationinterleniation
to the tune of: "Glory how we hate Ray Bradbury."

Glory how we hate the comics code authority.
Glory how we hate the comics code authority.
Glory how we hate the comics code authority.
The foe of morbid crimes.

courtseyofthe propaganda ministrycourtseyofthepropagandaministrycourts;
Back to Bob: The movie code is a farce, nothing more. When the string of movies being produced today can be produced with the approval of that self censoring organization, you know damn well that something is rotten in the state of Hollywood. A cartoon I noted in the paper the other day pretty well explained the thing: showed the oscar award and the box office model on a garbage can with the caption, "The highest awards in smut". I do not recommend censoring hollywood

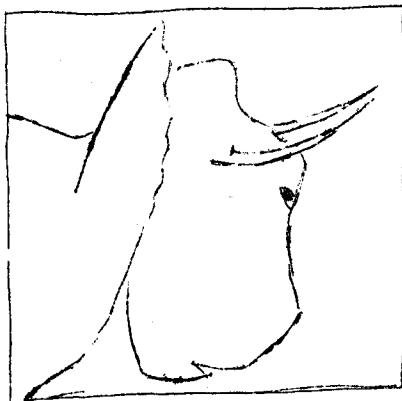
pictures any farther than they are now, I recommend that the people themselves do something. As long as there is a demand in mass for such a business, there will be people who will supply them. If the people themselves will keep their children away from those movies, and if they themselves will boycott them, and perhaps straighten out their own moral standards while going about it, then the need and the demand and the crud being produced will cease.

Usually the advertisements in the paper are the best guide in the world for the type of movie being shown. I've gotten somewhat adept, by the tone and implication of the ads I can pretty well tell what is going to be shown, plot and all. The shows I can't phantom, or happen to appear more interesting than the usual drab run, those are the ones I might go and see.

Crud, I disagree with you again. The idea that pre-teens can be aroused by a book describing the joys of free sex discourages me. MIT has a pretty good library, suggest you go forth and pick up a few reports or medical surveys and read them over. Thses I am speaking of will state that a well balanced person, who has had a careful upbringing and who has been taught that sez ia nwirhwe a dirty filthy thing to be hidden or a thing to be exploited will not be bothered by such reading matter. It will also point out that the so-called literature that will arcuse the enitions><Bob's typo if not intended><generally will not~arouse a person to actual actions; that to the contrary, such leterateure is often a stop-gap, the thing that keeps such persons from going over the deep edge. Also you might be interested in learning that almost all sex-perverts, these characters that feel compelled to ruch right out on the spur of the moment and rape some girl, are generally those who have been brought up in a sort of puritian environment as regards sex. They have been taught that it is a thing not to be discussed orquestioned, something unmentionable. As a result the normal questions are never answered, the mere idea of sex is is ground into them as something disagreeable in the eyes of society.><OK, I'll admit it, I hate resurch, and in spite of my continued belief in the question at hand, I shall continue to call them as I see them, without going into a library on a subject I just don't consider worth the trouble, since the point about sex was just a minor one in the list. What I'm really interested in you answer in the next paragraph...but before I let the goodly readership move on the that, I must pause to implore that someone who already knows some nice arguement in my defence, or even in Bob's defence, tho I need it worse than he does...write. My side on the above question was that non violent crimes but low morals generally were prevoked by the vast quantities of free-sex literature now published and shown.><

I will agree to a degree [rhymes by Ghul], that some stories can bring out hate, fear, joy and all the range of the emotions. I count the writers who can do this fine writers, talented persons. It takes considerable skill to create an emotion on paper. Going back to tests again, I suppose you have heard or read that any emotion in small doses><It's the word any I object to in this statement>< [and these small doses are more likely to be acquired by, say, tenseness before going into a battle, or tenseness before a test one is especially worried about or some such rather than the very mild doses one would get by reading a bit of fiction], is healthfully good for the person. It betters his reflexes, sharpens his brain power, his body is more ready to work and better equipped for any situation. Horror even in large doses is supposed to be good for the adult mind, since it is a proven fact that you sleep sounder after a fright than from any other cause. Most of these emotions, especially hate and self pity, are created on the printed pate by presenting, as you pointed out, a one sided view of the situation. Ig you are effected noticalby by

><That last didn't come out too well so I repeat><If you are effected noticeably by fictional works having strong emotional tinges, the best thing to do after reading them is to go do something else. When I was a few years younger I used to have the same sort of trouble, but hastily turning your attention to some other matter, or listening to music with a sharp change of mood is usually enough to do the trick. After a while the reaction becomes instinctive, a story is a story and usually little else, that's usually not enough of a reason to resort to a hang-over of the emotional experience except as a sort of reference guide to story quality.><In my original letter to Bob I excepted the emotion of horror, which is the main one he mentions as beneficial. I like Lovecraft. I am glad Bob has given me a good reason for making this exception, a point I was doubtful on before. But this does not obscure the problem of other emotions, and both their effect on the reader, which the reader can shake off but might not want to [self pity is above all a pleasurable emotion, in a way], and the problem of what this one-sidedness does to a story. It can make a poor story popular. The worse the story, the more warped, one-sided, harmful, and pleasurable the story can be. Fury, for another example, is an incredibly pleasant feeling. The only solution to such things is extreamly carefully controled censorship. In fact the control would have to be so careful as to be impossible on a large scale basis, but an editor can and should exert such controal, even if it would be censorship of a sort.><



To the zine next. I found the issue of slight interest. The cover was miserable, of course, but the way you inserted your title with the caption had a triffle bit of originality about it. The inside are, save the illo for the Gerber piece, was also miserable. ><You condem our art a bit to casually. Most people like Al Kuhfeld's artwork,



and I consider myself extreamly lucky to have him as a sort of staff artest...of course, I consider myself also lucky to have Bill Sarill around. He did that Gerber illo, as well as providing the Gerber article for me.><

Your editorial was a bit too rambling for my tastes. I skipped over the material until I came to the Gerber piece, which was not specially entertaining either. I wish I'd skipped a few pages more.

I really started reading with hopes of receiving a deviden for my investment of time and effort with Man and Superman. Some varried comments. Besides the business of the giant machines and toys and instruments and the like in Batman, a few other things always bothered me. Like, how in hell do they manage to swing down from ropes all the time? Alla time they come down on ropes, have you ever seen Batman sling a rope? Never...How in hell then is he alla time swing down on ropes, from tall buildings yet. How does he get up there on those tall buildings? You think maybe he's got a catapult built into his car like Green Arrow has...

About the most disgusting thing about Batnan is the stereo-typing of late. The plot goes this way. Some strange evil and horribly fierdish menace will attack Gotham City. Right off, Batman is there [sometimes he's not but not often he's not...], Great Scott??!! what is that thing. Heecheecheechee, the beast/machine/criminal/alien/thing makes off with the loot, leaving a bewildered but determined Batman, ready to fight to the death to save his city. In mere

days later, comic fashion, the Menace strikes again. But ole Batman is there and ready. In a flash he fights with the cunning devils, and manages to recover the loot, tho the criminals or thing or both manage to get away [ever noticed also how heavily populated Gotham City is with hoods just waiting to be neted by Batman and Robin?]. The third round comes up, and the villain did not count on the cleverness of Bantman and Batman captures the criminal and ends the menace with a devilishly daring and clever trick. End Story. Go forth and retch. I used to like Batman because he was an original hero, all the time strange crimes, time machines, weird stories of the Batcave, interesting criminals, strange situations. Remember the one with the Secret of the Batcave? Remember the one when Batman once lost his cape in a wind storm? Remember the Pigion? Remember the caveman in the Batcave? Remember the clever magician who thought he knew Batman's secret? Remember the master quiz master who killed off the contestant? Remember...><Sure I do, and they were great. I noticed the steriotyping myself and am not trying to defend it. But remember the surprise ending to those absolutely impossible adventures and remember "Prisoners of the Dark World", both very recent. Batman isn't dead yet.><

Green Arrow is the most laughable character selling today. I refuse to believe anyone can cram all those stupid arrows into one quiver, and especially pull them out in rapid fire order. Also remember how many of those things he shoots, and alla time he has a full quiver.

I sort of like Luthor, he impresses me. Noticed in the latest Action Comics that the comic writers decided to match Super and Luthor against one another. Both teams are freed. In this one Luthor pulled off the ultimate hist, he robbed Fort Knox, like taking candy from a baby. I mean, how do you follow an act like that? The rest of it looks like mighty small peanuts...But I like Luthor anyway, I hope the writers can make something decent from this latest Luthor-Superman battle.

Kuhfeld has a good point when he mentions that if he had the money to build a Blackhawk villain machine he would use it to go into politics or something. I've often wondered how these villains are able to build those machines, if they have little money anyway. Some of those things, being first models and all would cost a large fortune. Especially the gadgets Luthor manages to whip up on the spur of the moment. Have you ever tried to assemble a die cast machine out of scrap? Or a streamlined, completely encased weapon out of sheet metal? Kinda rough to say the least, but using ordinary wiring and tubing and sheets and pre cut dies and casts just laying around the home lab these people whip up machines that would wreck a world. [As Jim Harmon once said, you can get almost as worried about the safety of the world from reading a comic book as from reading a newspaper]. The Blackhawk machines are a farce. The Blackhawk team was created mainly to fight such evil Villains as the Nazis, the Communists and the like. They were in short, a military propaganda team, before National Comics bought 'em up they fought primarily on a military basis. They never bothered themselves with petty matters like criminals except on special occasions, and invariably the criminals were masterminds for an evil communist plot. I liked the old Blackhawk series, with its communists, deranged Nazis, mad scientists and emperors out to carve themselves a complete empire or destroy the world, but the new Blackhawks under National Comics are one big laugh.

The cape in comic heroes adds a note of mystery and the like. Of course the whole damn mess is adventurous and mysterious, but can you imagine Batman, the sturring avenger against crime in his city, swinging down on that rope without a cape? Loses a touch of the

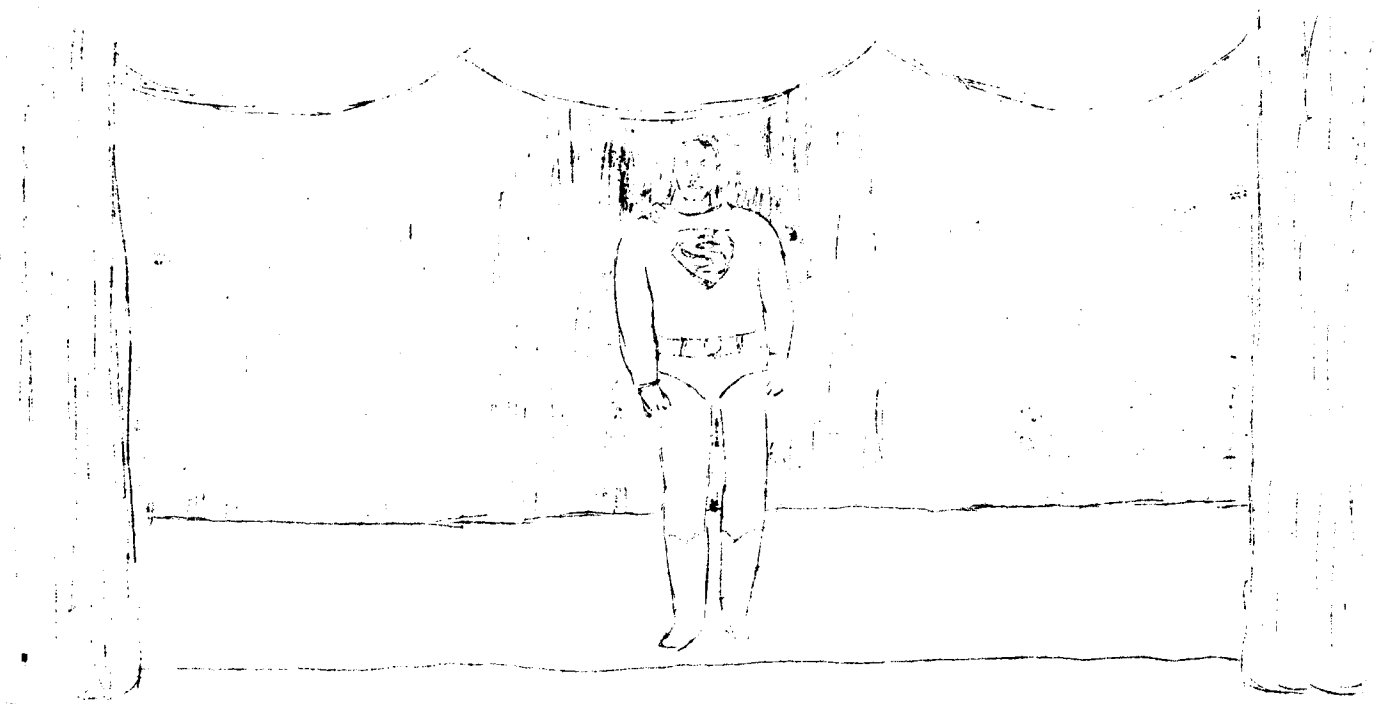
romantic without that cape there. Flash is a notable exception, in scarlet and yellow, with superspeed to boot, he'd be a fool to use a cape. J'onni J'onzz looks like an idiot in that cape, he'd be better off without one, I feel. It all depends I think, on the character's situation. I feel every now and again that Green Lantern would do well to have a cape, to add something to his style. The idea of a cape for Superman is sort of ridiculous [especially when you consider that the whole damn uniform is worn under his clothing, cape and all], but it has been used so much that Super would look sort of ridiculous without one.

I would like to see every now and again a superhero who lost a few rounds every now and again. The comics of today have lost a lot of their spirit. When I read over a past issue of BLACKHAWK, or CAPTAIN MARVEL, or GHOST RIDER or the like, and compare these characters with the heroes of today, today's look more than a bit worn and faded. They lack that old disregard for societies qualms and phobias. When BLACKHAWK and company roared into a rotten communist army holding the valiant Poles in captivity, they didn't worry about stepping on toes, or slowing the action or suspense. When GHOST RIDER carried a hand grabbing villain before the Phantom Court he didn't give a damn that scaring the villain half to death and making him confess on his hands and knees was disgracing the individual... the spirit is lacking these days.

><Glory how we hate the comic code authority [reprise] -all, with even Bob joining in toward the last, prehaps.

Glory, how we hate the comics code authority
Glory, how we hate the comics code authority
Glory, how we hate the comics code authority
The foe of modern dimes.

CURTAIN



Art Hayes

MISTAKEN IDENTITY.. A good short, but, unfortunately, a plot that has been overdone in the prozines. Because it has been overdone, it does not create the interest that it might have otherwise. To me, fan written fiction, and fanzines, are types and places wherein the inexperienced can try out his wings, along unorthodox paths that the other fields, such as the prozines, will neither accept, nor even consider. <[note new style editorial brackets. The ones I have been using left confusion as to whether they were at the beginning of a comment or at the end.] Of course, Art, I knew that the plot of Al's story had been used before, but I thought the way it was written justified its repetition.>>

IT HITS THE SPOT.. In Faan Fiction, the ridiculous is expected, and this one is no exception. Gerber seems to have the talent for Faan Fiction, similar to Deckinger.

BUK REVU.. This is too much of a parody. A parody, to be interesting, must contain more believable matter than this revu has. <<But, Good Grief, if it didn't have enough believable matter for a parody, then think how far short it fell of having enough believable matter for a regular book review, which it was. Really, I didn't intend it to be a parody. Sure, the style was an attempt at humor, but the points I made were serious...I thought, especially the one on Sturgeon. Oh well, maybe I'll do better this issue.>>

MAN & SUPERMAN.. This one I didn't like, and I can't pin down the reason as well [to me anyhow] as I did in and about the others so far. RAVIN, however, does use what I think is a neat trick in his EYETRACK deal, writing a short-short fiction, leaving the reader up in the air, then, in an editorial follow-up, explains the idea he based the short on.

LENNY KAYE and his staple trouble is only fair.

ME, MYSELF & I.. Fair.

INCIDENT I found good. The idea presented could be polished up, and it seems to me to hold potential pro qualities. <<Incident was by Jay Harrison, who ye blundering ed forgot to give credit last issue.>>

TECH RR#1.. The main complaints about Story RRs for publication are their length, and the impossible situations each of the participants try to leave the others. But, they are interesting, and this one also of such calibre. In story RRs, I would think it a good idea for such to be submitted to one fair writer, for polishing up. At least, the story has been left in such a position or circumstances wherein the reader has hopes for Jack, since, presumably, he now has one of the Professors witnessing the disappearance act. <<Thats what you think>>

Esther Richardson

Thanks a million for your most interesting SO WHAT..It was wonderful and the article by Lenny Kaye was a masterpiece. I laughed so hard that I cried. It was expecially funny to me because I had just gone through almost everything he mentions opening up SO WHAT.

Cornelious Otis Skinner once gave a monologue that was similar to Lenny's bit about a woman in a hurry trying to open up a cellophane bag of spaghetti. The water was boiling in the pot and by the time the poor housewife finally got the bag opened, the water was boiled down and she was out of the motion and instead of having spaghetti she opened up a couple cans of soup and called it a day.

I expect your editorial was a take off on Ray Palmer's "deros"? It was good.

I agree entirely with Leslie Gerber in regards to "blog". If you are not a SF Fan it will poison you so badly that no one will have anything to do with you ever again. But to a real SF Fan, one swallow sends you beyond the realm of reality to that heavenly place of fantastic delight in outer space.

Thanks again Frederick. Everything was very much enjoyed. Good luck<<and on that very happy note, we end the letter column...at the

TECH ROUND ROBIN/

what has gone before: Jack Hafner, a college student, has seen a flying saucer land in the great court of his institute. There was nothing much he could do about it at the time, but a year later, when he saw a man walk through a wall, he determined to find out just what was going on. In fact, he spends so much time trying to find out that he neglects his studies and almost flunks out. This makes him mad, and after he catches up on his courses, he goes after the Saucerians in earnest. He sets a camera trap for the flying saucer, and after a long wait, gets a picture of it. But then he has trouble getting anyone to believe him long enough to even look at the picture. At last he was reduced to desperation. He went to see his Humanities prof. Wonder of wonders--the prof was a believer in saucers. Feeling that any kind of professor was a foothold in the institute heirarchy, Jack took the professor off to his room to show him the film. He got there just in time to see a man walk through the wall with the film can in his hands.



CHAPTER FOUR -ARLewis

"Stop! Stop! Damn you," shrieked Jack, his voice rising in pitch and cracking on the 'you'. Then, suddenly, he slumped to the floor and began crying. Just at that moment two freshmen passed the door.

"Hey. What gives?"

"You know these physicists. Probably can't get his thesis to work," said the second.

Jack tossed an ink bottle out, narrowly missing them. It hit the far wall with a soul-satisfying thunk, tinkle. Black india ink began flowing down the wall. Jack regarded this new phenomenon with almost hypnotic fascination. Wearily, he got up and went for a mop. He did not sleep well that night.

The next morning following 18.15 recitation Jack headed towards building 14 to tell the sad news to Prof. Smythe-Warrington, the man he had confided in yesterday. The elevator was out of order. "Wonders of technology", he muttered as he trudged up the stairs to the forth floor.

"...and that's the story, sir." said Jack. "It really was stolen by a saucerian. I don't know how they found out about it."

"Jack, I'm surprised that anyone, especially you, would stoop to such a low trick to make me look foolish. I don't think you thought it up yourself because few people know that I have found the Truth. It was Prof. Kendricks [the damned neo-Hegelian] who put you up to it, wasn't it?"

"No, sir. Ho. It isn't a joke."

"I'll agree with you there. It isn't funny; it never was. Now if you'll please leave."

"But sir."

"Leave."

Jack did not sleep well that night. The next morning he went to his mailbox. Maybe there'll be a letter from Jeanie, he thought. There was. Eagerly he tore it open. Quickly scanning the missive, he faltered, then stopped. It was a "Dear John" letter. Essentially Jeanie had said if he didn't care enough to write in four months they were through. Jack looked at the other letter. It was the usual yellow legal-size Institute interdepartmental envelope. He opened it carefully. He pulled it out and unfolded it.

Please report to the Office of the Dean
of Students [Room 7-138] before the end
of the week.

"The shaft," thought Jack.

That afternoon found Jack cautiously entering the designated room.

"Yes?" said the Techretary looking up from her crossword puzzle.

"I'm Jack Hafner and I'm supposed to see the Dean. Is he busy?"

"No. Sit down and wait."

"But, if he's not busy why should I wait?"

"Policy."

After forty minutes the techretary motioned Jack into the inner office.

"Harrumph, my boy," quoth the Good Dean. "We've been getting some bad reports about you. Let me read you this," he said, picking up a General Catalog.

"The Institute reserves the right to dismiss at any time a student whom it deems unsatisfactory for any reason. Students are expected to behave with decorum, to obey the regulations of the Institute, and to pay due respect to its officers. Unethical or undesirable conduct which is inconsistent with general good order, whenever it may occur, is held to be sufficient grounds for dismissal."

"Now, Jack, we don't want to dismiss you and you don't want to leave, do you?"

"No, sir," said Jack.

"Well, if you persist in this ridiculous bit of science-fiction, that's what will happen."

"But, sir. It's true."

"Now, Jack," said the Dean, lighting his cigar and blowing the smoke in Jack's face, "The Institute has a certain moral, i.e. fiscal, position to maintain in the community. Now, if it were to be known that our graduates believed in flying saucers, it wouldn't be good. Now, I think you have an overactive imagination stimulated by overwork. Hmmm, yes--overwork. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, sir," said Jack, as eager as the Dean to find an out. Dammit, he had seen something, but he wasn't going to throw away his career.

"I'm glad that's understood. You may go now." Jack shook hands and left. He felt unclean at what he had just done. Jack did not sleep well that night, either.

It was Friday and Jack was idly wandering through the Institute when he heard loud shouts of laughter. Rounding the corner he saw it was coming from room 1-236. He stepped inside and sat down in a folding chair near the door; it was quite crowded. As his neighbor informed him that this was a Science Fiction Society meeting he turned his attention towards the front. A rather rotund man was discoursing in a loud Brooklyn accent about the sexual aberrations of college students. He looked familiar. Jack remembered seeing his picture on the back of a pocketbook with a small blurb telling of his scientific exploits. Surely, this group and this man must be open-minded. After the "formal" talk, questions were asked from the floor. Jack stood up and confidently asked: "Sir, do you believe in flying saucers?"

"No, and I think anyone who does is a crackpot." Mocking laughter followed this retort as Jack turned and fled from the room. Blindly, by instinct he fled to the basement. There, soothed by the hiss and banging of the steam pipes he calmed down. He started back towards his room in East Campus. Passing through building 10 he noticed that one of the floor gratings was up. "B&P quits at 5 sharp," he thought in a detached mood. "I wonder what's down there." Glancing up and down the corridor and seeing no one, he quickly climbed down the ladder into the hole.

It was dark and damp down there. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness Jack noticed an electric safety light hanging from a water pipe. He switched it on. A door confronted him.

"That's odd," he said, staring at the sign on the door. "Authorized Personal Only". Why should any unauthorized personnel be in this pit anyway?" He tried pushing the door open. It was locked.

"Dammit" he yelled. "I've had enough. Everybody dumps on me--even a door. Why did I ever come here? Tech is Hell!" He leaned against the door. He heard a click, then a whirr. Suddenly, in response to his last utterance, the door slid open and Jack fell down a steep ramp into a long dark passageway.

CHAPTER FIVE - I Court Skinner II

It was dark and damp when he awoke. He could hear water dripping nearby, but could see nothing. He got up and groped around. He was in a cell of some sort which had no obvious exits. He stood there in the darkness wondering if he was still in the Institute, and if not--where. Suddenly, something startled him. It was so vague he couldn't really be sure that it was anything, but he knew his knees were quivering and that he was sweating. As he stood, petrified, he heard a creaking sound and then...

"Wall, I'll be durned if it don't look like our little trap has picked up another of the ornery critters."

Startled, he jumped and simultaneously let out a little bleat. He remembered thinking, as consciousness slipped away, that there was something peculiar about the accent of the voice. The words and the accent just didn't fit...He lost consciousness.

He awoke the next morning feeling more rested than he had for a long while. This didn't, however, strike him as unusual. In fact he took it completely for granted. He felt something tugging at the back of his mind as he awoke but it soon slipped away as he began to grind through the daily routine. Nothing worried him--but that didn't worry him either.

The next morning he remembered upon getting up that he had had a very strange dream concerning a misplaced cowboy riding subways and other nonsense. He had never as far as he knew had a dream in his life before, at least he had remembered none of them. But, of course, this, as did practically everything else except quizzes, lab reports and final exams, also failed to worry him. Then one day as he was heading across the great court for the Coop he noticed a large area in the middle of the lawn where the snow had melted. The area was almost perfectly circular. This registered somewhere in the back of his brain but was forgotten by the time he reached the Coop.

Time passed. He continued to dream. The fact that the dream was always the same didn't seem really very unusual unfamiliar as he was with this phenomenon. He hadn't walked across the Great Court since the last snow. But one day he was walking down the corridor in Building six and noticed something decidedly unusual. It bothered him.

CHAPTER SIX - Durk Pearson

He stood at the open door of a magnet laboratory. A white-jacketed scientist was kneeling by an open floor grating, his head and shoulders invisible. Jack felt strange, as if there were something on the tip of his tongue. He walked on; he didn't want to be late for his next class. Throughout the day, the strange feeling persisted. He actually felt as if something were watching him from under the gratings. Ridiculus.

Just as Jack was falling asleep that night, he knew that something had been wrong. He hadn't even worried about anything for too long. He fell into an uneasy sleep.

Jack sat up in the middle of the night, muscles ridged, covered with cold sweat, trying to scream but no sound coming out. He couldn't remember the nightmare; he only knew that something was wrong, very wrong, with himself, with tech, with everything.

Next morning he saw the school psychiatrist.

"What seems to be the trouble, young man?"

"Something is wrong, Doctor," said Jack, "I don't know what. I've been having recurring dreams for about two weeks, and until yesterday, I just didn't worry about a thing. Then last night I had a nightmare. I can't remember what it was about."

"Make yourself comfortable. Now, what were these dreams about?"

Jack told him about the cowboy riding the subway. He talked for an hour, the psychiatrist mumbling a question now and then. The doctor told him to come back tomorrow at the same time.

Four visits later, Jack said, "Do you have any idea at all yet? You don't seem to be asking any specific questions. I'm sorry; I know that it's rather early."

"I only know what is wrong in a rather general manner," the doctor said, "And as to how long it will take, it is difficult to say. Perhaps ten or fifteen more visits."

"My student health insurance covers this, doesn't it?" asked Jack. "I just want to be sure." Jack leaned slightly to the left so that he could get a glimpse of the doctor's notes.

"Your first two visits are free, young man. After that, you pay the nominal fee of twenty dollars an hour. You now owe the Institute sixty dollars."

Jack left the office in a barely sub-critical state. "Twenty dollars an hour--and for what. 'This young man has a repressed urge to be a cowboy. It is apparant that he came from New York, and sees no way of escaping city life. This is symbolised by his being trapped on New York subways.' Damn him! Damn the Institute!" Jack had spent all his life in Kansas.

He went to the second floor messinine of the Hayden library, and stayed there reading psychology texts until it closed. Missing a commons dinner wasn't much of a loss.

At 2:00 A.M. Jack woke up again. A man holding a box with long wires was reaching toward him. Jack screamed and the man ran through the wall.

Jack remembered. By 5:30 that morning he had remembered everything. As the dim grey light of false dawn filtered through the slats of his window shade, Jack dunked his head into the cold water of his washbowl, and with a throbbing brain, crawled back into bed and went to sleep.

He woke up at four o'clock in the afternoon. He dressed, went to Pritchard Lounge, and came back with four large cokes. By the time he got to commons, it was almost seven o'clock. He had a plan. He even managed to persuade a friend that he was having his room fumigated and wanted to spend the night on the floor of the friend's room.

At 9:45 the next morning, Jack woke up, feeling rather stiff. That floor was hard. But he still remembered the flying saucer. He went to Eli's, a nearby electronics surplus store, and bought an infra red light source which gave a collimated beam, an audio amplifier, and a timer. He went to Central Square and bought one extra large white sheet, one pillow, one gross #5 flashbulbs, fifty small mirrors, and a roll of aluminum foil. He took the subway, then the trolley, and after getting lost only twice, finally found the Radio Shack where he got a cadmium selenide photo cell.

A few hours later, Jack lay down on his bed. As soon as his head touched the pillow, it closed a microswitch, the infra red light went on, its beam bounding back and fourth from the mirrors, spaced a few inches apart on the walls, in a zig-zag pattern across his room. Twenty seconds later, after everything had warmed up, the timer armed the trap. If anything broke the beam, it would set off all the flashbulbs in their aluminum foil reflectors around the room. Jack sat up and the system was instantly disarmed.

"Pretty ingenious," he thought. "If someone or something can walk through a wall by using some sort of gadget, he ought to be able to use it to let rocks, bombs, and bullets go right through him. But he does absorb and reflect light normally-and he does have eyes. No one is going to get away with trying to kill my ego." Jack went off to commons whistling the theme from "The Magnificent Seven".

That night Jack threw the white sheet over his bed, got in, turned off the light, pulled the extra pillow over his head, then pulled the sheet completely over the top of the bed. No part of his body was exposed. The light was going to be awfully bright and hot in that room. He fell asleep dreaming of winning the Nobel Prize for saving the earth.

Jack awoke to a shattering explosion and ringing alarm. The lights in the room had been automatically activated. Through the dust from the flashbulbs, Jack saw the box with wires and EEG electrodes on the floor. Lying motionless next to it was the man, his skin flash burned to a bright red.

CHAPTER SEVEN -Bill Sarill

Jack threw off the bedsheets hastily and switched off the still-ringing alarm. He'd had enough trouble already and didn't want to invoke the wrath of Judcomm.

Turning from his apparatus, he picked up the wire-trailing box, examined it perfunctorily, and threw it on the bed; it would have to wait for later. He bent down to examine the man.

Jack winced. The man hadn't been wearing very much- a pair of tight-fitting metallic shorts and some sort of footgear. Now his whole body was turning an angry red.

Jack sat the unconscious man into a chair, then looked about for something to tie him up with. He realized that tying up a man- if man he was- who could walk through walls, would probably be rather useless; yet he decided to do it anyway, since he had nothing to lose.

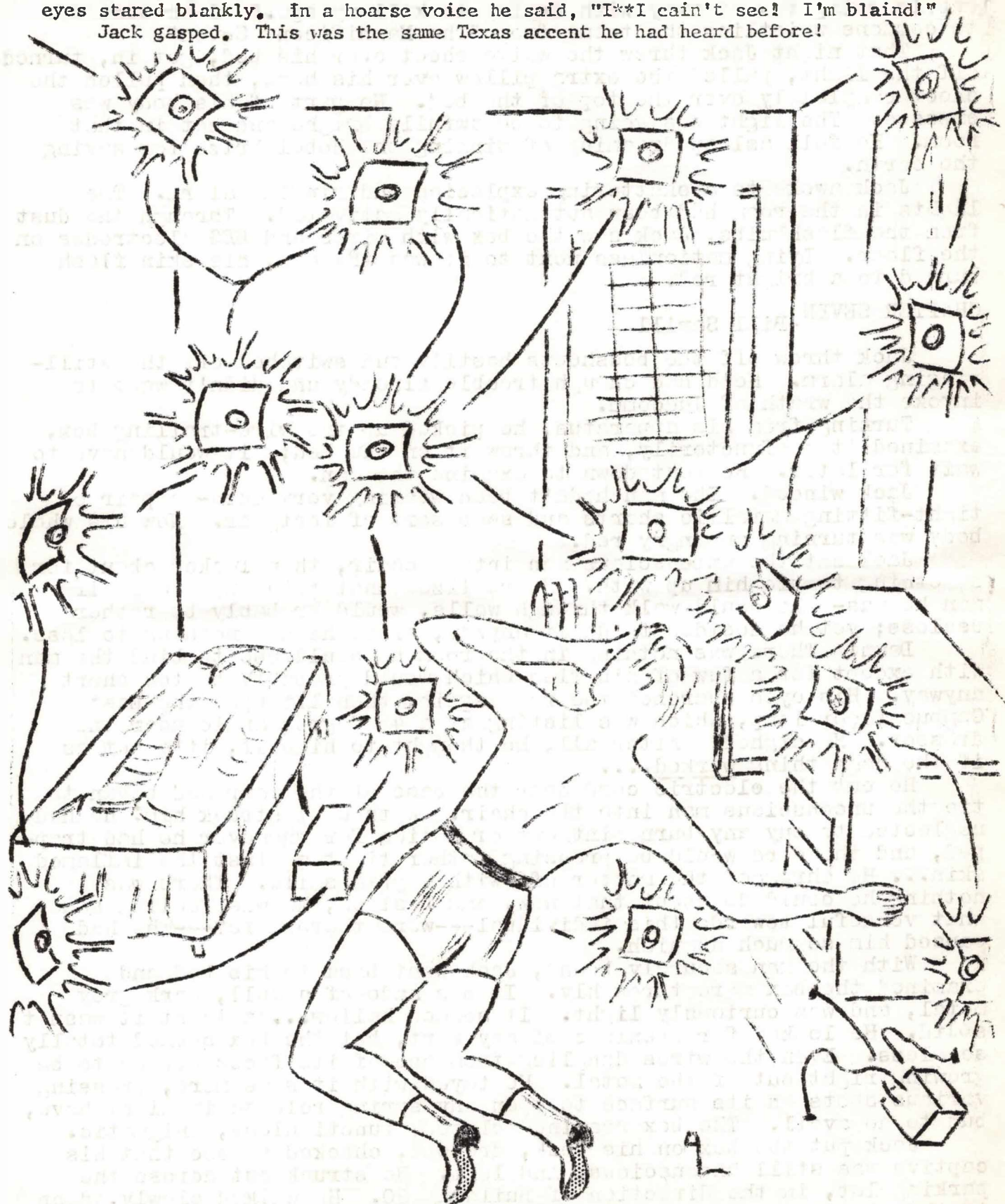
Damn! There was nothing in the room he could use to bind the man with except for a few of his ties which would probably be too short anyway. His eyes searched the room again, then lit upon the East Campus floor lamp, which was listing at a 45 degree angle near the dresser. He sighed. After all, he thought to himself, it's not as if the damn thing worked....

He cut the electric cord near the base of the lamp and began to tie the unconscious man into the chair. A thought struck him: he had neglected to buy any burn ointment or lotion for whomever he had trapped, and the cord would be pressing rather tight against the inflamed skin... He shrugged the matter off with a grim smile. There was nothing he could do about that now, and besides, he was feeling somewhat vengeful towards this individual---were there more?---who had caused him so much anguish.

With the man securely bound, Jack went back to his bed and examined the box more thoroughly. It was made of a dull, dark grey metal, and was curiously light. It seemed hollow...at least it wasn't solid. He looked for openings of any sort, but the box seemed totally seamless. Even the wires dangling from one of its faces seemed to be growing right out of the metal. He toyed with it some more, pressing various spots on its surface to open any spring release it might have, but to no avail. The box remained closed, functionless, enigmatic.

Jack put the box on his desk, dressed, checked to see that his captive was still unconscious, and left. He struck out across the parking lot, in the direction of Building 20. He walked slowly, deep in thought. About twenty minutes later, he returned to his room with a few cokes. It was going to be a long night, and he knew that cokes contain caffeine- probably more caffeine than that watered-down, machine dispensed stuff the Institute called coffee.

It was six hours later, about 8:30 A. M., that his prisoner first showed signs of awakening. The man moaned deep in his throat, moved slightly against the constricting bonds, then moaned again. His eyelids fluttered, then opened wide. His eyes stared blankly. In a hoarse voice he said, "I**I cain't see! I'm blaind!" Jack gasped. This was the same Texas accent he had heard before!



TO BE CONTINUED

THE ~~creation~~

by LENNY KAYE

Dan Farley was considered one of the smartest men alive. So when he announced that he was going to build a time machine no one was surprised. Many thought he was kidding. But Dan Farley wasn't fooling the nation. He was dead serious. He began work on it during May of 1998. He didn't finish until July of 2000. Finally there it stood. A mass of steel and wire mesh. And Farley was going to make the trial run.

He had always wanted to see how the creation was done. How it looked. That was where he was heading. He climbed into the machine.

He started sweating. His hand quivered as he put it on the lever. Then, with a sudden decisive move he pushed the lever back as far as it would go.

There was a roar of motors. This built up into an ear splitting scream. Suddenly it appeared to grow darker, then lighter, and then everything merged into one and a dull grayness. He was going too fast to see a thing and that dull scream made his ears ache. He blacked out.

He awoke. There was only blackness about him. The time machine had stopped. He saw a lone sun near him. "That must be Sol," he thought. The solar system hadn't been formed yet. Then he realized his size in relation to the sun's. He was gigantic.

He thought about it. Why?? Then he realized it. "That's it! The theory of the expanding universe. Astronomers have proved that stars and galaxies are flying away from each other.....all matter is expanding so, in all this time..." Why he was almost as large as the sun!

"Phenomenal," he thought. Suddenly his body was wracked by pain. He twisted and turned. His teeth ground together. The pain..... He felt himself falling apart. He was desolving. He disintergrated...

And if Someone was watching, they would have seen the nine little blobs of infinitesimal matter start revolving around Sol.

/ / / / / / /

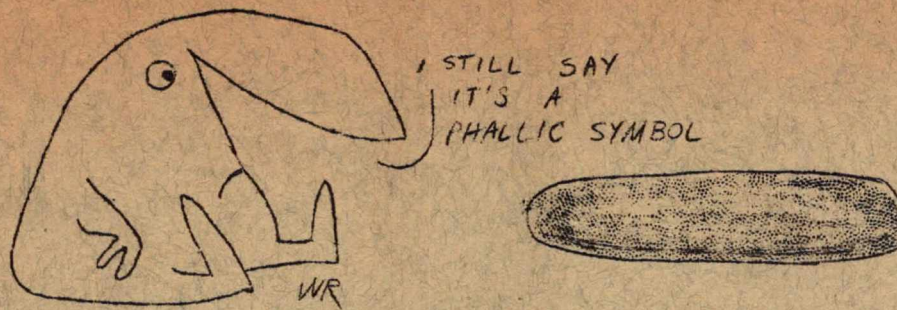
NOW you have all seen the contest stories in which you send in as many errors as you can find and if you find the most you win a years sub to the mag. You used to see them in Ray Palmer's Amazings back in the Good Old Days. However this contest is somewhat harder. Here you must accept the story as the gospel truth [aren't they all?] and explain as many apparent errors as you can list. An explanation is worth five errors and the prize is the same. Goshwow, huh? A years sub to So What. What a way to regain your sence of wonder.

UNNECESSARY EXAMPLE [all the contests have them]:

Out in space Farley couldn't tell that the sun was small relative to himself. There is no way to judge distance in space. But if he was really large enough, his three demensional vision might tell him how far away the sun was since his eyes would be far enough apart. OF COURSE this explanation leads to other contradictions, since the underlined words number among the understatements of the year. So then you give error and explanation within your revision. They count 2 and 4 points, respectively. And so on ad oem. And don't mistake this for one of the rash of fake contest gags running around. This is for real. Don't you like to hunt for errors????????????????

by LARRY RAY

In the interests of discovering once and for all just what this thing called "fandom" is, I have examined several of the leading fanzines, such as Habakkuk. These gave me such a clear insight into the true meaning of fandom that I was inspired to publish a special section in imitation of the ideal set forth by these typical fannish publications. Thus on the following pages you may see examples of fannish fact articles, then fannish fiction, and then fannish humor, in hopes that they will demonstrate to you what the true interests of fandom are, and what a real fanzine is like, lest while reading the previous science fiction you might have forgotten.



RYE BREAD

by A.R. LEWIS

You can't get good rye bread in Boston (or Cambridge). At least, I've never been able to. You know the kind of rye bread I mean: the kind you get in (isolated) bakeries with the hard crust and the soft inside and the white flour on the bottom and the kummel in great profusion scattered throughout. When I say rye bread, I don't mean that fake stuff that has a soft crust. You can buy THAT in Boston (or Cambridge); but, my God, it's wrapped in cellophane. I mean, that just isn't rye bread. Maybe I'm spoiled, but I was brought up in New York on real rye bread (not that ersatz mass-produced crud) and nobody is going to tell me that rye bread is wrapped in cellophane. Rye bread comes in brown paper bags (or sometimes white paper bags). Not only that, but rye bread is not bought sliced. It's just not done. Anybody who would buy sliced rye bread would put sugar in tea. Aside from ethical considerations, there is a more practical reason for not buying it sliced. "Aha," says the philistine (editor) from under his damp rock, "it goes stale. Hah. Rye bread stinks." Well, let me tell you that even stale rye bread tastes ever so much better than that bleached, soggy, characterless white bread that the notso-supermarkets foist off on you. If you let the assassins place your loaf in that damned automatic slicer—what becomes of the ends? There they are—thin slices, like potato chips, which more often than not fall into the clutches of that humming machine. Thus, you lose the best part of the bread, the heel (or craichik) of the bread.

Take a loaf of rye bread (unsliced, of course), and cut about four or five inches from the end. Stuff the heel with thick slabs of butter (NOT margarine) and then eat it. You start by tearing away pieces around the edges (with your teeth), then the soft center which is left exposed, then around the edges again. Continue this until it is gone. Then do the same with the other end. Cut a central slice about 5/8" thick. Hold it in one hand (after buttering) so that the floured side is down. Now, beginning at the right where the flour ends, eat the crust in a counter-clockwise direction until you again reach the flour. Now, eat the soft white inside, being careful not to eat that portion of the crust covered with flour (and kummel). Now, slowly, eat the last bit of the crust savoring every nibble. Ah! Heaven.

But, as I said I can't get it in Boston (or Cambridge). You can get it in New York (of course) and Tel Aviv and probably Accra and Miami.

I also like cornbread and pumpernickel.

everyone knows a cop is a kind of criminal but is it known that a criminal is a kind of cop ... money wouldnt exist without crime government wouldnt exist without crime crime and its brother, law enforcement, hold society together — j green "newspaper"2

SUBWAY BEAT

BILL SARILL & LARRY STARK 3RD

It was a bad night at Coney Island. Rain dripped down steadily, the crowds were small, and most of the concessions had closed down early. The "D" train slowly moved into the station, groaning and spitting as it rounded the sharp curve of the tracks. It ground to a halt, shuddered in an inertial spasm, and flung open its doors to the small masses of damp and dispirited people.

The cars filled slowly. Rain dropped onto the car roofs with a cushioned, far-off tattoo. The car shuddered again, shaking off occasional drops, and started an intermittent, high-pitched whining. People listlessly mopped water from their faces, shook their coats, ran damp-sticky fingers through their damp-sticky hair. The whining ceased, and only the patter of the rain broke the silence. People sagged wearily in their seats, burdened with ennui; most had their eyes shut, a few clenched their jaws--not in anger, not in any display of active emotion, but with resignation.

Many of them were high school or college kids; some of them were older--working-men, with their wives or girlfriends. All of them had come to Dreamland, seeking one last big kick before the weekend was over and the drudgery of the new week had begun; all of them had left disappointed, dreamless, dead on their feet. They had come to escape reality, but, as they discovered, it is difficult to live a dream in a damp amusement park. The rain they had hoped would spare them was falling, after all.

The doors slammed shut and the train ground out of the station. Gusts of cool, damp-laden air blew in through the partially-opened windows, and clashed with the streams of hot, soporific air rising from the heating-vents. The train rumbled on through the night, rocking, swaying, clacking with a dull, monotonous beat.

Beat. Throb. Rock. Sway. The pulses of sound and movement began to work their way through the fingers of LeRoy Holmes. Almost unconsciously, he began to tap the pair of bongo drums between his knees, first softly, and then louder, as he realized what he was doing. A few people turned their heads, then turned away, but the beat drew them back. The smooth feel of the skins and the insistent clacking of the wheels filled LeRoy's mind. He improvised, wove a pattern of sound through the throbbing of the train.

It began to affect people. Some began to smile; a few were sufficiently aroused from their stupor to tap their feet or fingers. The beat filled the car, contagious, waking the seeds of excitement in dormant but receptive minds. The whole car began to stir; the beat rose in volume.

The train slowed and moved into a station, but LeRoy continued the beat in the sudden silence so skillfully that when the train began to move again, the two rhythms, train and drums, coincided perfectly.

At the other end of the car, Liam Clancy felt the rhythm spreading from his tapping feet to his fingers. Clumsily he struggled with the plastic cover of his guitar, finally stripped it off. With the ease of long years of practice, he tuned the guitar,

softly strumming a few chords. Satisfied, he picked up the beat, improvised, blended his smoothly-growing sound with the rhythm of the drums, the train, and the rain. The sound was soft at first, then louder, then filling the whole train. LeRoy flashed a big smile at Liam across the length of the car.

They fitted themselves together like polished professionals sitting in with a strange combo. The clacking, regular rails lay the foundation of a solid bass-beat. The bongos underlined and illuminated it, twisted it into new shapes, and fed it to the guitar ready for accenting, phrasing, melodic suggestion, color. The music ran the gamut from simple improvisation, through jazz and old familiar folk-songs. The people loved it. They laughed and sang and hummed and clapped and stamped their feet.

The entire train seemed alive with joyous music. At each stop the sudden silence clamped down, but never quite quenched it. People left, smiling. The car filled with bewildered, wondering faces, and then lurched into regular, growling noise, and the subway beat broke free and clear, rollicking again.

As the train continued on up the island and as the crowds began to thin, the singing gradually faded, became isolated to small, dwindling groups of people. And then, as the train neared the 59th Street crossover stop, most of those left rose to their feet, already faceless denizens of the city, already free of the music's magic ...but here and there, the merest remembrance of a smile remained. The car shrieked and groaned, and as it shuddered to an unwilling stop, guitar and drum snapped out a final, clinching cord.

From opposite sides of the almost-empty car, the two musicians stepped onto the platform. Self-consciously, LeRoy glanced down toward the figure wrestling with his guitar case. He cupped a cigarette into flame, and walked toward him.

"Man, you sure play a sweet set of skins," said Liam, as he approached.

"It was fine, man, fine. I'd sho' like to play'th you some mo'."

"We sure swung, didn't we?"

LeRoy hesitated, dragged on his cigarette. "You...goin' uptown?"

"No, man..... Got a pad on Christopher Street."

"Well..... I got to be gettin' home." He hefted the drums self-consciously and turned to go.

"Yeah, see you around, huh?" Liam turned and walked toward the downtown-cross-over underpass. Damn sweet set of drums, he was thinking. Jesus, if he wasn't black, I'd of bought him a beer!

from Superliminal Note by Philippe Dumarçay in EVERGREEN REVIEW 13

Reflect on these events for a moment. The ultimate manifestations of competitive industrial society, of international statesmanship, and of science are sheer 'Pataphysics. No other single perspective could assemble them as anything more meaningful than symptoms of collective hysteria or boredom. In reality (a word I shall henceforth have to dismiss), they manifest the final stage of 'Pataphysics practiced unconsciously before it mutates into the higher, conscious stage. Such events as these reveal the desperate measures of men starved for a new science; they need no longer go hungry.

WRY BREAD

A TALE FOR DOWNBEAT THINKERS

by Mike Dillinger

At first it wasn't too bad but then I got older and began to see the things in the world that people don't see because they don't want to see them.

There was this little kid—just a little kid who'd never hurt anybody—standing innocent and alone beside a broken-down bicycle. He couldn't have been more than ten or eleven years old—just a little kid. And he was crying with hunger. Lying there in the street crying with hunger, hunger in the mind, hunger in the soul, hunger in the belly. You could see hunger in every line of his bruised, dirty knees, you could tell it was hunger from the way his legs pathetically, protectively clutched the battered bicycle. And his mother just stood there, watching him cry and starve out there alone in the middle of the street.

Then there was this man, running. Just running for the sheer joy of running. He was happy—full of life. You could tell from the way he held his head high and from the way his strong good hands clutched a brown paper bag to his side. And then came these two cops. These two fat Irish cops. Trying to arrest him. Just because he was running, bounding gaily down the street. Is there a law against running, now? God! There must be; there's a law against everything else. The cops were running too. But they weren't enjoying it so it was all right for them to run. And those tough, beefy cops caught up with that poor happy man, and arrested him—just for running. Migod, they arrested him and locked him away just for running and being happy.

And then there was this man in church. Migod, he was sitting in church, praying. And when he came out he met this big, fat ugly man who hadn't even been in church. The big, fat, ugly man was smiling in a big, fat, ugly way. You could tell he was rich. The fat man had a briefcase, a cold hard briefcase, as cold and as hard as his heart, and he pulled some papers out of it. And he said that the papers proved that the other man was a cheat. He called this poor, hardworking, God-fearing man, who had just come out of the church, a cheat. And then, with the man practically down on his knees, begging for a chance, the tough businessman stuffed his cold impersonal papers into his briefcase. And he was convinced that the poor man was a cheat even though he had just seen him come out of church.

So then, my heart swelling with innocence and humility and faith, I raised my eyes and looked up at the sky, the clear blue sky, and talked to God. I told Him about the little kid and the happy man who had been running and the poor man who had just come out of church. "God," I said, "make these things right. Don't let things like this happen, and then I'll believe in you." And there I was, standing in the middle of the street and telling God how He could make the world a place really worth living in. Me, who always tried to be nice to everybody and who actually half-believed in God, almost, standing in the middle of the street and talking to God. And then, by sheer chance, by an incredibly indifferent quirk of fate, a bolt of lightning came down and damn near killed me.

So that's why I don't believe in God anymore.

GREGORY GABBARD's

WHAT a PIECE of WORK is an EPIC

1
Invocation of the Professorial Muse
(bravura)

My avowed purpose here is in some manner to contrive a definition of the noun "epic". In consequence I find myself involved with a problem which, though more literary than strictly linguistic, possesses a quite sufficient set of particularly thorny aspects. The landscape presents to the baffled eye a steaming morass of difficulties. On every side I seem beset with impassable tangles, dimly glimpsed through the mist, which doubtless conceal pockets of quicksand. Therefore, to paraphrase General Grant, I propose to hack it out along this line if it takes all winter. Not having, however, that much time or even a handy machete, I find a rapid marshalling of resources necessary. I propose to drag into the discussion any fact related, however distantly, to the central problem. And I propose to continue doing so until the problem is solved, in which case I will stop; cut down and limited until its significance approaches zero, when I will throw down my pencil in disgust and pronounce it insoluble by my methods; or so hopelessly obfuscated by deadwood as no longer to be visible, in which case I will--yet again--stop, and hope no one will notice: after all, as I may then point out, it will be patent that I shall have, at least, got rid of the problem--if only by covering it up to remove it from casual view. Thus, with an host of furious fancies, odd notions, out-of-the-way facts, and miscellaneous items culled from the accumulated trash of a sluggish and misguided brain--with these, each carefully embedded in a convoluted style branched and leafed with digressions and other verbal excrescences to match the jungle which surrounds me, I advance to ferret out the essence of the epic. Let us hope to discover it, tiny and trembling, cowering like a rabbit at the center of some spiky copse.

11
The Reason Why
(virtuoso cadenza)

Why do we need to define the epic? Suppose I take a well-known nursery rhyme and recast it:

THE SHORT LAY OF SIXPENSE

Lo, a song is sung of the Saxon kings,
of pennies six and a servant's pocket
rank with rye.

Cynlac the carle took four and twenty,
baked them in batter for Beowulf's banquet;
produced he the pie, a goodly pasty,

Now Beowulf waits at the wassail-board;
first on the field of the tooth-fight was he,
great was his mouth and mighty his gut.

Now the succulent pudding is set on the plank. Glutton's eye glittered; he gripped his glaive, struck without pity the steaming pie.

Crumbled the crust, and the singing crows
loosed lay of thanks to their liberator.
Doughty the birds; a dainty dish!

Now the king of the Saxons counts his cash,
summing his booty of silver bowls,
gloats over heaps of glittering gold...

and so on. Now if extended to sufficient length, would this slight production form an epic? Obviously not. Yet if you asked me why not, I would be at a loss for an answer. I might reply testily that since I wrote it, I should know what it is and is not. Of course, you would immediately point out how unlikely it seems- even, I would be forced to concede, to me- that Homer, for instance, ever had even the least idea that he was writing epics. I would then have to admit to having no semblance of a reasonable answer to your eminently reasonable question. This would be too bad, as it would embarrass me and surely would not enlighten you to any extent.

111
Test Cases
(Andante)

Whenever anyone mentions the "epic" of Bulldog Drummond or John Carter, we can say with some conviction that he uses our word in the sloppy popular sense, and quite incorrectly, to denote a long series of novels concerning the adventures of one heroic character. That word "heroic" is also used carelessly because of the vagueness of its root word, "hero" -now principally used to indicate that protagonist who is one of the "good guys". However, in this connection I myself believe that the exploits of John Carter, at least in the first three books of the series, might qualify him as a peculiar kind of epic hero. I propose to use these three books, grouped under the heading JOHN CARTER, as a test case.

Yes-- unfortunately, it will be necessary for us to examine a number of test cases. There are more difficult ones than the Bulldog Drummond type, however, I have before me at this moment two historical novels: THE GREAT CAPTAINS by Henry Treece and THE VIKING by Edison Marshall -- retellings respectively of the stories of King Arthur and of Ogier the Dane. These two test cases are almost certainly not epics, but why not? And while on the subject of novels, we had better include in our survey at least one of those works which have appeared in the main stream of Anglo-American literature, only to be accused of hiding an epical nature beneath the accoutrements of a novel. Let us take MOBY DICK and also TOM JONES, which has been called a comic epic. [This, of course, raises the further complicating question of the existence of "comic" epics.]

Even more baffling examples of the confusion surrounding the word "epic" appear in what we may call the middle ground of this

tortured expanse. Here we find odd products of deliberate or unconscious literary tinkering -- the stories which were written as, or in imitation of, epics, and those which were accidentally given something of the form of an epic. Such are Wagner's RING OF THE NIBELUNG and Ibsen's THE VIKINGS AT HELGELAND, both based on the VOLSUNGASAGA; some of Lord Dunsany's longer tales, for all of which THE SWORD OF WELLERAN must do service; JOHN BROWN'S BODY, and others.

Moving onto slightly firmer ground, we encounter objects generally called epics, but which just may turn out not to be genuine after I get through with them; things like THE CID, THE FAERIE QUEENE, HYPERION, THE DIVINE COMEDY. Beyond these, naturally, lie the real articles, tales so solidly entrenched by force of custom on epic ground that not even the U.S. Marines could dig them out.

Our data may be tentatively tabulated thus:

YES	PROBABLY	MAYBE	NO
Gilgamesh Iliad Odyssey Aeneid Beowulf Song of Roland Volsungasaga Morte D'Arthur	The Cid Divine Comedy Faerie Queene Hyperion	John Brown's Body John Carter Moby Dick The Ring of the Nibelung She The Sword of Welleran Tristan and Iscalt The Vikings at Helgeland The Worm Ouroboros	The Great Captains Tom Jones The Viking

But be not dismayed by the seeming arbitrariness of this table. I choose all these particular examples, not because they are necessarily most typical of anything, but because some are well-known and others are obscure -- exceedingly so -- and, perhaps mainly, because these are the ones I happen to have read. I omit the Hindu epics as not in the Western epic tradition and as having been available to me only in an inadequate translation. The arrangement is, as I say, fairly arbitrary, but is also irrelevant; in the course of this paper the items will be shifted -- in fact, most of those in the three right-hand columns will be discarded and the survivors moved into the YES column. But we have far to travel before that triumphant conclusion.

IV

Reports

[adagio-allegro]

The table bears witness to the fact that we are able definitely to say of some things that they are epics and of others that they are not. Unfortunately, this instinctual perception works well only at the extreme edges of the field -- in the YES and NO columns of our table; but we obviously do have some hazy notion of what an epic is. Our problem is the formulation of a precise statement of our knowledge, which can be used to clear up the confusion in the center of the field. In order to do this, I propose that we analyze all the works in the YES column, which we know positively to be epics, discovering the characteristics they hold in common. We need only find a starting point now before setting to work.

Let us go to the lowest of low sources, Webster:

epic, n. A narrative poem dealing with heroic action and written in elevated style.

For comparison, let us consider two definitions from encyclopedias:

EPIC is a poem which tells...a story of heroic characters and deeds, mythical beings, and miraculous events. A true epic needs a dignified subject developed in an orderly manner without emotional stress, except in statements of the characters.

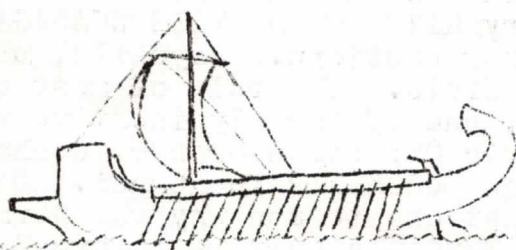
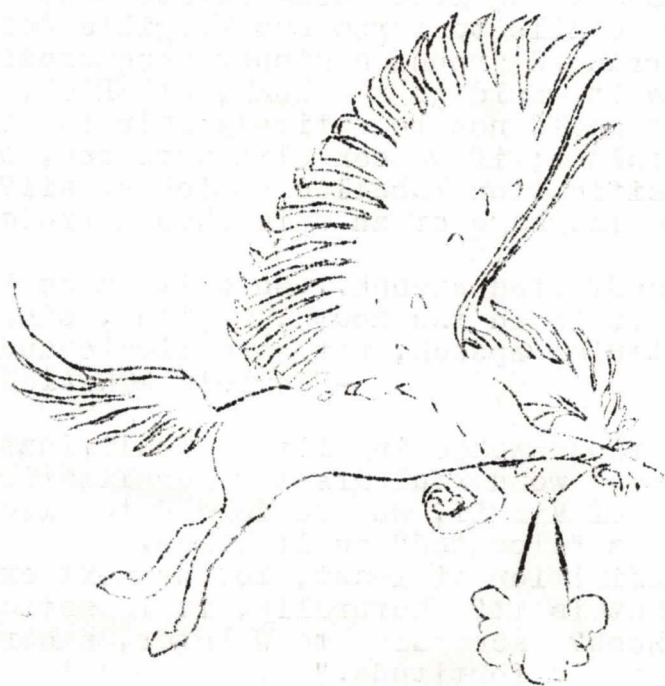
-World Book

EPIC, a poem of the narrative kind. Some authorities restrict the term to narrative poems written in a lofty style and describing the exploits of heroes. Others widen the definition so as to include not only long narrative poems of romantic or supermatural adventure, but also those of a historical, legendary, mock-heroic or humorous character. Epic is distinguished from drama in so far as the author frequently speaks in his own person as narrator; and from lyrical poetry by making the predominant feature the narration of action rather than the expression of emotion.

-American International
Encyclopedia

Already we see that these three definitions agree in several particulars. If we believe them, an epic is at least a narrative poem dealing with heroic action and written in some "elevated" manner. This is wrong, of course, on at least one count. The MORTE D'ARTHUR and the VOLSUNGASAGA, two of our indisputably epic productions, are in prose- although translators Magnusson and Morris call the latter "an unversified poem", and Sir Edward Strachey tried to prove Malory a poet. We may state as a first principle the very obvious fact that an epic is necessarily a narrative, adding that it really should be a poetic one, but that we are willing to be open-minded about that part of it, as a sop to the editors and translators who seem generally to accept poetry as indispensable to any epic, even if they must weasel out of this limitation when working on a favorite book which they just know is an epic even though it does happen somehow to have got itself set down in prose. We must also adopt the third definition's distinction between epic and drama- a corollary of our first principle so obvious as hardly to need stating, for certainly no true narrative can be drama. Immediately Wagner's RING and the Ibsen play can be transferred to the NO column. We progress, albeit slowly. However, the category of prose narrative includes novels, stories, tales and histories; and looking over the field of narrative poetry, we find on our overworked hands such diverse items as SIR PATRICK SPENS, THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN, THE RAPE OF LUCRECE, TAM O'SHANTER, THE EVE OF ST. AGNES, and THE SIOUX CHIEF'S DAUGHTER. Much further limitation is clearly necessary.

We shall go on to consider the elevated manner. Certainly many epics have been written in high-flown or magnificent language. Of the four doubtful ones in our MAYBE column, HYPERION and THE FAERIE QUEENE appear in glittering and elaborate armor, while THE CID wears the plain but servicable harness of a Castilian knight, and the COMMEDIA the austere robes of a medieval monk. Pardon my metaphors; I refer to Keats' romantic verse, Spenser's "arty" archaism, the economy and simplicity of the Spanish poet, and Dante's severity of style. But these may not be true epics after all. What of Virgil, who writes in a very consciously ultraliterary manner? He is definitely an exponent of fine writing in the epic. Supposedly, he imitates Homer; but Rouse insists that Homer's language is basically ordinary, everyday Greek, quite often even colloquial. Although we have nothing with which to compare the idiom of GILGAMESH, we do know that translator John O'Hagen calls the SONG OF ROLAND "simple almost to bareness in style, without subtlety or high imagination." BEOWULF and the VOLSUNGASAGA are written simply enough. And while the language of Malory may seem exotic to modern readers, it is really plain for the fourteenth century, except for the occasional Gallicisms he lifts



W



from his sources. The prose of THE WORM OUROBOROS resembles that of the MORTE D'ARTHUR- is, in fact, less archaic; yet we call Eddison's language "elevated", while I say that Malory's is not. Why? Simply because Eddison died in 1945 and Malory before 1500. The archaism of the WORM is a literary artifice. On the other hand, Malory wrote in the way most natural to him; his archaism is natural, not "elevated". We see, then, that most well-established epics are not really as stylistically lofty as those who judge solely by the AENEID believe. I am tempted to stipulate something like "non-elevatedness" as part of our definition in order to be able to throw out Virgil's despicable patchwork of plagiarisms arranged around a cipher masquerading as a hero- were it not that with it would go the WORM, HYPERION, and THE FAERIE QUEENE. Besides, it would not be entirely fair to attack any of the entries in our YES column; if we can eliminate one, why not all? Why have any literary classification labelled "epic" at all? We had better say quickly that the language of an epic should preferably be

...a natural, simple and unaffected speech...so written as it is spoken and such upon the paper as it is in the mouth, a pithy, sinewy, full, strong, compendious and material speech, not so delicate and affected as vehement and piercing.
-Florio's MONTAIGNE

But we must add another of those weaseling little qualifications that always hand onto the tail of a wonderful great generalization such as this and spoil it. Because of Virgil, we are forced to allow epical language to get just about as "elevated" as it likes.

To exhaust the first definition at least, let us next examine the phrase "heroic action." What is it? Naturally, it is action performed by heroes. And what are those? According to Webster, a hero is "a person of distinguished valor or fortitude." This is not much help, but what do we expect from Webster? W. Jackson Knight has something to say about it in the introduction to his translation of the AENEID:

... 'heroes', that is people who are in some way stronger than ordinary mankind but below the divine level.

I think this is a good enough definition if cleared up by substitution of "superior to" for "stronger than". Since most epics are products of more or less barbaric cultures, the hero is almost invariably superior in warfare, meaning, in effect, stronger. But the abstract concept "hero" includes both hero and heroine; and only in the case of an Amazon can we say that a heroine is such because she is stronger than ordinary mortals. Penelope is the heroine of the ODYSSEY because of her superior virtue and intelligence, Brynhild of the VOLSUNGASAGA because of the super-human strength of her emotions. Brynhild, unfortunately, is rather exceptional in this field. The role of most epic heroines is just that of Penelope, i.e., one of largely inactive virtue. Women in the Classical Greek and chivalric Christian eras were chattels, playthings, or ivory statues to be set on pedestals in donnei. Considering Brynhild and Gudrun, we see at least one reason why the Germanic stories are more vital than others- the Teutonic writers regarded women as people, and made them active characters. A little of this attitude seems to have seeped into the final section of the MORTE D'ARTHUR, though certainly Guenevere as a female character does not come up to the standard of Brynhild.

But all this is by the way. We shall consider only male heroes, since heroines in western epics are so generally unimportant. Now a "heroic" action is not just any action performed by a hero; it must be done in accord with his heroic nature. Even a hero will make little slips on occasion. Odysseus' mistakes, such as waiting in the Cyclops' cave, are not heroic actions. Nevertheless, even the errors of a hero

can be heroic. We feel that Aeneas acts badly in killing Turnus, but we must admit that the act concludes a heroic fight. But are Aeneas' actions heroic because he is a hero [Virgil says], or is he a hero because he performs heroic actions? [I am getting myself into a muddle, not [[thank God!]] being a philosopher.] Referring to the definition above, we see that the distinguishing characteristic of a hero may be restated as being larger than life, i.e., larger than ordinary humans. This is quite logical. The hero is stronger because he is larger; and because he is larger, by simple extension of the characteristic from physical to mental, his emotions are also larger and stronger than usual. Very well, then, must we say that anything done on a super-humanly large scale is heroic? Let us meander on, and if this assumption thrusts up no obstructions to make us stumble later, we may fairly regard it as justified. "But," you will say, "anything?" Why not? Consider how Gargantua drowns the Parisians:

Then, with a smile, he undid his magnificent codpiece and, bringing out his john-thomas, pissed on them so fiercely that he drowned two hundred and sixty thousand, four hundred and eighteen persons, not counting women and children.

Is this not a perfectly heroic urination? Surely we cannot deny that Gargantua is a hero by our definition. This is not to say that GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL is an epic, even a comic one, as I hope I shall remember to point out later. No, we may state that heroic action is only one of the elements of an epic. [This being so, we may ignore safely the definitions of "hero" formulated by Campbell and Lord Raglan, who work from myths rather than epics.]

All is not epical that is heroic; but all that is not heroic is not epical. Let us now turn to our table and commence gleefully to scratch off casualties. Immediately we see that the novels in the NO column must go, for no realistic author would shatter his structure of verisimilitude by introducing larger-than-life characters. [But we knew long ago that this would happen, you complain. Of course; and now we know why.] We shall discard the NO column completely and move on to the MAYBE section. The WORM and THE SWORD OF WELLERAN feature major characters who are indisputably heroic; John Carter, as an impossibly good fighter who never ages, qualifies as a hero by our definition; Haggard's immortal, super-passionate Ayesha is one of the few real "heroines" in English literature, Tristan is a hero, if only because his love for Iseult is a heroic emotion. We are left with two doubtful cases. I think no one will deny that Ahab is a heroic character carrying on a heroic search. But can a mere mortal, though superior to others, become a hero? Or must a hero belong to some class between the human and the divine? Examining the established epics in our table, we find Gilgamesh to be two-thirds god, Achilles the son of Thetis, Aeneas a son of Venus, and Sigurd a descendant of Odin. Odysseus and Beowulf belong to the inherently heroic upper warrior classes of their societies; Roland and Arthur are members of the royal class of the Middle Ages, which was often regarded as made up of semi-divine beings. Of course, this immediately throws out Ahab and the generals of JOHN BROWN'S BODY. You may say that the idea of inherent heroism, or superiority of any kind, is alien to modern democracy [although I hope my readers possess sufficient intellect not to use such cliches]. Pfui! We seek a definition of an antique literary form, and we had better be prepared to find some antique elements in it. Only allowing this qualification to be added to our definition of the hero, we may eliminate MOBY DICK and JOHN BROWN'S BODY. Moving cautiously into the PROBABLY column, we perceive that the DIVINE COMEDY contains little or no really heroic action. Respectfully but firmly, we remove it. You perhaps catch a vicious gleam in

my eye as it falls now upon the Cid Campeador. Really, I insist, the Cid is not of the heroic class; he is only an upstart Castilian knight. But, you will say, he is much more highly born than his foot soldiers. True; at any rate, fear not for the old gentleman. Having trimmed the Cid's beard, I will allow him to cling to his epical status while I sharpen up another knife for his throat. And as for HYPERION, the fact that its heroic characters are often at the divine level is nearly a technicality; if you want to be technical about it, we may in fact say that they are not truly divine, having been, for the most part, dethroned before the action begins. [I see that my change of subject has not diverted you; you think that this whole paper consists of a carefully stacked deck to be dealt against the Cid until he loses even his precious beard. Not so! I bang away at him whenever I get a good shot, but it is all clean fun and incidental to the main course of the paper.]

Taking up the second definition, we can say that "a dignified subject developed in an orderly manner" is mostly doubletalk designed to impress the kiddies. What subjects are dignified? Long, bloody, and often dreary battles must be dignified, since most epics deal with them to some degree. And consider- after ten years of such battles, a man wanders around the world trying to get back home. He blunders into various potentially fatal situations, but each time extracts himself with a whole skin and fewer companions. He avoids death, but not a fate worse than death; in fact, he ends up sleeping with almost every female he encounters on the way- though it must be admitted in all fairness that they are mostly vamps who are attracted by his irresistible sex appeal. The only exception to the rule is one who, though she wants to marry him, is young enough to be protected by whatever statutory rape laws there may have been then- and you can bet our hero would know all about them, because he is that type of fellow. At long last come safe home, he finds a crowd of local bullies lording it over his household. No one mentions his honor or good name or anything of the sort; they worry themselves sick because the gluttons are eating him out of house, home, worldly goods, financial reserves, and credit. Well, our boy did not become the J.P.Morgan of his little isle through stupidity. He sneaks around in disguise until the setup is just right, springs a trap, and completely massacres the moochers. Then he runs in and jumps into bed with his wife. "At last! After twenty years!" Do not misapprehend my attitude: I like Odysseus and the ODYSSEY. But, summarized in objective language, does any of that sound dignified? As for the rest of the phrase, and work of art should treat its subject in an orderly manner, though, considering the messiness of the MORTE D'ARTHUR, the VOLSUNGASAGA, or BEOWULF, we realize that strict order is not really necessary to an epic. Indeed, a plethora of orderliness can often render a work less effective-- as occurs, for instance, in the SONG OF ROLAND.

The World Book says also that, besides heroic deeds, an epic should concern "mythical beings and miraculous events." Since few fantastic events can be strictly miraculous within a system containing mythical beings, we shall reduce this to "mythology of some kind." Looking again at the table, we find that every work in the YES column contains some element of the mythical or fantastic. In every case but two, the story itself could do well enough without that element [assuming the Holy Grail story not to be the main one of the MORTE D'ARTHUR]. The two wild cards are the most primitive epics, GILGAMESH and BEOWULF, and even in them the mythical components are less important than the human ones. Beowulf's youthful search for fame and later death in defense of his people, and Gilgamesh's friendship with Enkidu would be significant storywise if nothing of the mythological entered into them. An epic, then, should feature some mythology or fantasy, but should not allow it to dominate the story. What type of myth or fantasy?

Observing that most of our established epics have quite different mythological backgrounds, and considering the greatly different manifestations of that background in two epics sharing the same one- the SONG OF ROLAND and the MORTE D'ARTHUR, both Christian- as well as the remarkable variety of fantastic episodes included within the small scope of four books in the ODYSSEY, we must decide to allow great leeway in this direction. Even, you ask, to the inclusion of mythologies made up out of whole cloth? If a disembodied intelligence in a vacuum compared the sparse and confused myth systems of BEOWULF and of THE WORM OUROBOROS, he could not possibly decide, thus a priori, which is "genuine." We adopt, then, this criterion. Really, it is an almost useless one, for exponents of a particular work can twist words and quibble until it seems that any non-scientific system of thought is a mythology of sorts. I say that the mythology of JOHN CARTER is that of science as most people understand it, i.e., as miracles explained by impressive-sounding gibberish. True, science itself is not a mythology. But the use of nine different kinds of colored "rays" in "buoyancy tanks" to keep "flyers" afloat is not science, and anyhow the very odd old woman in the first book, with her "copper vessel containing...greenish powder," and her skeletons strung up on rawhide, belongs to some mythology or other. Nothing of it appears in the following volumes, except in the hero's continued ability to transfer his mind to what is apparently an astral body on Mars, but there it is- even though it may have no objective existence outside the author's mind. TRISTAN & ISEULT has a few mythological elements- some small magics, a dragon, and a "fixed" trial by ordeal. THE SWORD OF WELLERAN has its own mythology, another contrived one. As for SHE, no one who has read it would say that the odd spiritualistic system involved in the personality of the central character is as important as the love story of Ayesha and Kallikrates. I see now that the Cid is foaming at the mouth and getting spittle all over what is left of his beard. He anticipates another foray, and he is right! There is no mythology in THE POEM OF THE CID, since Christianity as the religious system of a story cannot be called a true mythology unless it produces at least one minor miracle. This should be sufficient to throw him out of the table entirely; but, having shaved the old boy chin and pate, I feel indulgent. Let us allow him to remain, supine and bleeding all over the PROBABLY column until I can lay my hands on a pair of football shoes with which to stamp upon him before discarding his remains at last.

To finish up the second definition, we must look at the final phrase: "without emotional stress, except in the statements of the characters." Herbert Read, in ENGLISH PROSE STYLE, supports it:

We find the best narrative prose in ages when the epic spirit has prevailed, that is to say, in writers who have been more conscious of their theme than of their own feelings and opinions. The narrative is essentially addressed to an audience: it is not a self-revelation or a self-expression. It is accurate reporting. It is therefore devoid of comment and the only point of view it represents is the point of view of an interested observer.

Can we verify the existence of this "epic spirit"? Certainly. Read has described perfectly the attitude displayed by the writer of every one of our established epics. Using this criterion, we can eliminate anything written strictly in first person, i.e., narrated by a major character who is deeply embroiled in the action. We must banish SHE from consideration and remark in passing that the poet of THE CID, far from being merely an interested observer, is positively enthusiastic. He stops short of dragging himself into the story itself- but only just. He is always there to pin epithets of adulation onto "his" Cid, to lick the boots of his hero until the Andalucian plain

is flooded with saliva and Moorish blood. To admire the hero is all very well; Homer admires Odysseus quite as much, but he keeps his distance as a respectful servant should. Thus, observing a certain absence of epic spirit, I think we may finally drop THE CID into limbo. But we are not yet done with the epic spirit. It is absent not only in first person narratives, but also in that type of literature where the sentiments of the author in his own person can be felt, drowning the sentiments of the characters which should make the story. One voice, the story-teller's, is heard in such a tale, and his theory of the characters must do duty for the characters themselves. Who on our little list fits this description? Why, Spenser, of course! There he was sitting comfortably, half-dozing perhaps, in his almost-safe niche in the PROBABLY column, and now we have suddenly and rudely evicted him. No doubt he is angered, but we cannot help that. THE FAERIE QUEENE must go out.

V

A Magic Trick [espressivo]

I am now going to pull a rabbit out of my hat. I am going to say that one of the foremost characteristics of an epic is its unclassifiability. We cannot call an epic anything but an epic. It is not tragic, comical, historical, pastoral, romantic, phantasmagorical; it is all or many of these at once or by turns.

Here is the trick: this is not really a rabbit at all, nor did it spring from a hat. It arises quite naturally from the last point we made. Writing in the epic spirit- i.e., in the impersonal, objective manner of many modern authors- produces what Percy Lubbock in THE CRAFT OF FICTION calls "dramatic" narrative. It is not the same as drama, but has some of the same feel. It means simply what was stated above: the narrator stays out of the story, does not comment on it, but merely presents his characters and lets them generate the story. Homer uses it most perfectly.

Homer is the only poet who knows the right proportions of epic narrative; when to narrate, and when to let the characters speak for themselves. Other poets....tell their story straight on, with scanty passages of drama and far between. Homer, with little prelude, leaves the stage to his personages...all with characters of their own.

-Aristotle's POETICS

The dramatic method, implying a certain interest in the characters on the part of the author, is responsible for the epic's comprehensive variety. The author who knows his characters and makes them lively and various, cannot adhere exclusively to one type of scene or sentiment. If even only one of the characters be "round" and the remainder flat, the three-dimensional fellow will demand a considerable variety of moods and scenes for his full expression and development. We see that all our epics of the YES column show such variety, even the simplest- for the SONG OF ROLAND is historical, religious, tragic, and even comical in the old sense that the villains lose in the end. Now we may dismiss the third definition with the remarks that the last sentence quoted nearly restates the necessity of the epic spirit, and that poems dominated by any one aspect such as the supernatural, historical, comical, etc., will not fit our definition because of its lack of balanced variety. There is no such thing as a "comic epic"- not even GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL.

Coming into the homestretch, we see that TRISTAN & ISEULT is too dominated by the tragic-romantic mood of love to survive application of our last criterion, and that THE SWORD OF WELLERAN is too short to be sufficiently variegated. HYPERION, however, begins pastorally and goes on to be tragic, warlike, and fantastic; THE WORM OUROBOROS has variety enough for three epics; JOHN CARTER is by turns warlike,

romantic, humorous, fantastic [to say the least], pseudo-historical, and occasionally other-worldly pastoral. These three, therefore, have survived every gun brought to bear on them. We shall move them to the YES column as, respectively, an epic fragment, an epic, and a peculiar minor epic.

VI
The Product
[coda]

We have, now, a definition of the epic which may be stated thus:

It is a narrative, preferably poetic, dealing with heroic action [as previously defined], written in language preferably not too high-flown and in a manner distinctly impersonal and dramatic, and including within it many sentiments and modes of writing, one of which must be the mythical, and none of which may dominate the others.

Having tacked together this fine mess of words, which fits all our established epics and, futher, allows me to call epical three favorite works as well as to exclude from the field of the epical many which I dislike, I think- I really think- that I had better stop while I am ahead.

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