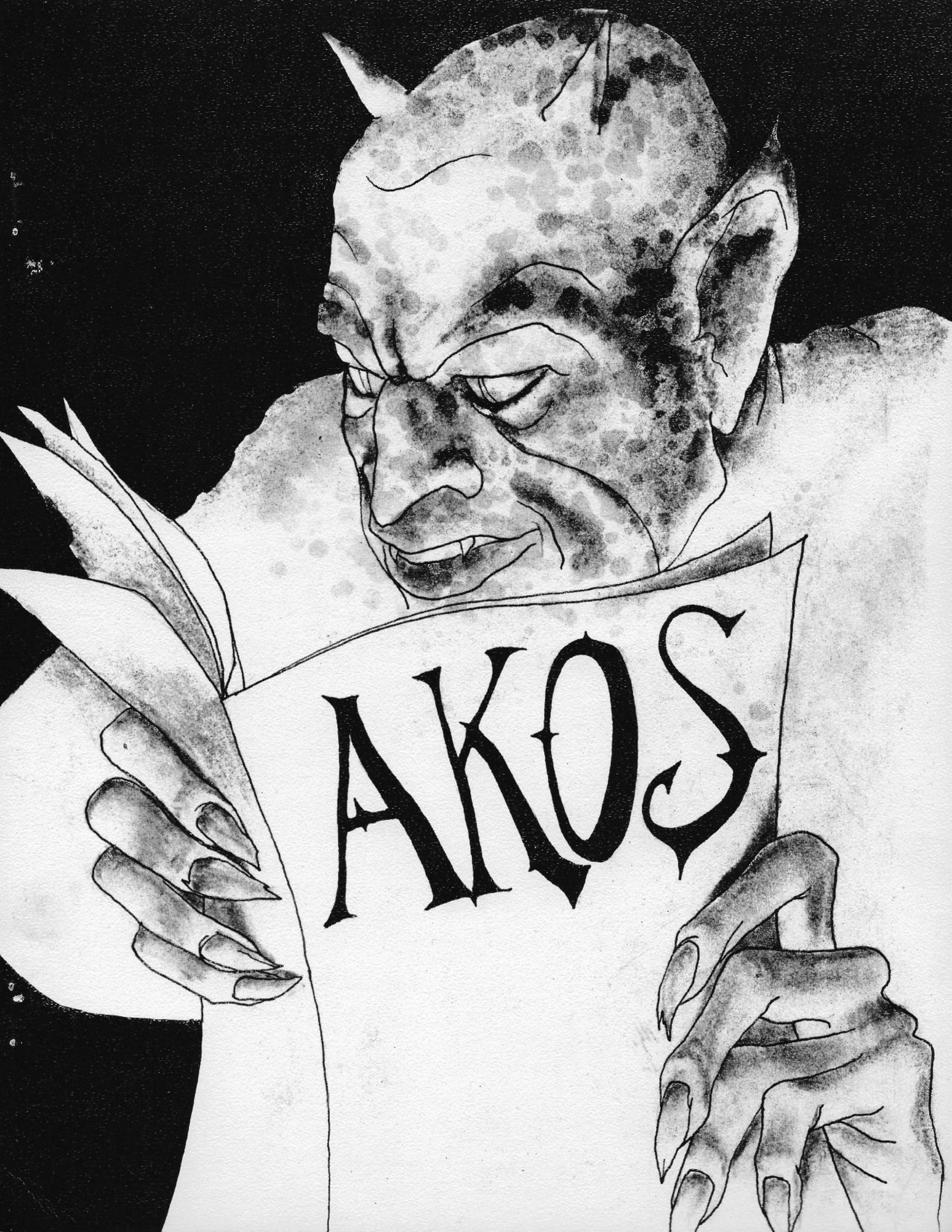
AKOS

AKOS 1

May, 1969

AKOS is the magazine of the Fantasy and Science Fiction Society of Columbia University (FSFSCU), published (hopefully) quarterly. It is available to dues-paying members of FSFSCU, and for trade, LoCs, contributions, or 35¢ (3 for $1.00).

The address is:
AKOS
c/o Janet Megson
321 West 105th Street, Apt 5C
New York, New York 10025

Eli Cohen and Janet Megson, Editors-in-Chafe
Joseph Gerver, Science Editor
Yarik P. Thrip, Mome Rath-in-Residence

FSFSCU Officers:
Fred Lerner, Grand Marshal
Eli Cohen, Petit Marshal
Joseph Gerver, Acting Seneschal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TAENIASIS by Eli Cohen, being an editorial page of sorts.....p. 2
MIND-KIPPLE by Janet Megson, being an editorial column of sorts p.3
GRAYSON GREENSWARD I by Yarik P. Thrip.....p. 5
TWO BOOKS ON TOLKIEN review by Fred Lerner.....p. 6
POEM by Frances Yorke.....p. 8
INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL, PART I: NO, ARTHUR, THERE IS NO SANTA CLAUS by Joseph Gerver. The impossibility of FTL travel....p. 9
ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE THROUGH THE ILLUSTRATED MAN review by Barbara Shear.....p.11
MEPHISTOPHELES MEETS MARYJANE, OR: WHAT'S A NICE GIRL LIKE YOU DOING IN A JOINT LIKE THIS, fiction by Eli Cohen.....p.12
FRIBBLING FOR FEN, trivia.....p.15
THE STRANGE FLAWS IN HEINLEIN'S STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND by John A. Lawson.....p.16
POEM by Joseph Gerver.....p.19
TRIVIA ANSWERS.....p.23
ISAAC ASIMOV, WE LOVE YOU, PART 1.....p.24
ISAAC ASIMOV, WE LOVE YOU, PART 2.....p.25

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Joseph Gerver, p. 15

TAENIASIS

by Eli Cohen

"The only individuals who should refer to themselves as 'we' are kings, editors, and people with tapeworm."

For those who didn't read the title page: This is the first issue of AKOS, the magazine of the Fantasy and Science Fiction Society of Columbia University. There is such comfort in collective responsibility. We don't intend to tie the contents to mere Columbiana, or in fact to any specific area. The only rule we have agreed upon, temporarily, is to remain aloof from campus politics in order to avoid undue dissension among the staff. Unless of course said politics becomes relevant to fantasy or science fiction. If any derogatory remarks have been made about any individuals in this magazine, we hope they will respond with more derogatory remarks.

Speaking of names (well, pay more attention next time), we are now officially opening the Name the Fantasy and Science Fiction Society of Columbia University in a Simple, Elegant, and If Possible, Humorous Manner Contest. Anyone who has attempted to pronounce FSFSCU will immediately realize the reason for the contest. The present, official name is vaguely descriptive, but has no other saving graces. The ordering of the fantasy and SF components was decided by the toss of a coin. Bob Foster (a person rather active in Tolkien fandom) tossed the coin, and by a peculiar coincidence fantasy came out first, but we would not wish to question the randomness of the selection. Nevertheless, a nickname would be highly convenient. We therefore offer one genuine brass thigmigee with bronze oak leaf palm to the winner of the contest. Entries must be postmarked no later than January 1, 2001. A quorum of the FSFSCU will meet shortly after the deadline to choose a winner. (A quorum, according to our oral constitution, is defined as one less than a majority of those present.) Entries received become the property of FSFSCU and may be published, if sufficiently clever or if we need material very desperately.

In our reading, we recently came across a line from the Golden Age of Science Fiction that encapsulated an entire world view so beautifully and concisely that we feel we must bring it to the attention of a wider audience. The quote in question is from Danger Planet (Introducing Captain Future), by Brett Sterling, copyright 1945, p. 65, and we think it speaks for itself:

> ..."Sure, it would be easy," said Otho. "Venusians and Earthmen are both white-skinned races."

* *

Yarik P. Thrip dissents from the above editorial.

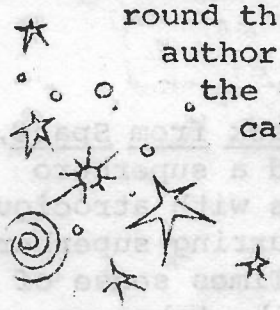
MIND-KIPPLE

by Janet Megson

Resentments and ramblings on the death of John Beynon Harris and others;

Multi-pseudonymous writers often find themselves in the curious and perhaps uncomfortable position of having schizolectic fen who genuinely prefer the writings of one "author" to those of "another." Being such a fan, I find myself in the equally curious position of resenting the death of John Beynon Harris because he has taken John Wyndham with him. Ungrateful, I call it, remembering a cover blurb which reads: "John Wyndham introduces The Secret People by John Beynon Harris." Rationally, I appreciated the joke; irrationally, I would have liked the book better if it had been written by John Wyndham. I'd had my fill of incredible-secret-and/or-lost-races-as-yet-undiscovered-by-civilized-man (in this case, sub-Saharan) by about the third book in the Edgar Rice Burroughs Mars stories. But Wyndham wouldn't have written this book. John Beynon Harris tends to write books dealing in gimmicks, while John Wyndham sets up a situation and lets his characters react to it. Even the Troon stories fail to reach the level of true Wyndham. Schizolectia rampant, I maintain that this is because they were written in collaboration with Lucas Parkes.

John Wyndham was "born" with the publication of "The Eternal Eve" in the September, 1950, Amazing Stories--if one may believe Sam Moskowitz. (Come to think of it, who believes Sam Moskowitz? He synops plots very strangely. Case in point: "A six-toed girl thus finds herself in deadly peril until she finds she is one of a new telepathic race which is slowly evolving." Oh? Funny, that doesn't sound like Re-Birth. SaM, the six-toed girl, Sophie, is not telepathic; nor does being telepathic keep David out of "deadly peril" once his telepathy is detected. Well, the book deserves re-reading, anyway....) Wyndham wrote Re-Birth, a splendid example of the telepath vs. "normal" genre (with some lovely side touches like the homey little proverb "Watch Thou the Mutant); Day of the Triffids (from which was made the disappointing movie of the same name, in which the Triffids are finally me lted away by sea-water, making them first cousins to the Wicked Witch of the West, I guess (said movie's saving grace is the terrifyingly realistic scenes of the newly-blinded population groping around the city)); and Chocky, written not by an omniscient author, but by a father whose son is trying to cope with the viewpoint of an alien. Only a few--mentioned because they are personal favorites.



John Beynon Harris was born July 10, 1903 ATM (According to Moskowitz); John Wyndham died March 11, 1969. So long, John Wyndham--you'll be much missed and much re-read.

On the Rottenest "Sci-Fi" Movie of All Time:

By "rotten," I mean so bad it becomes good--especially if the viewer is Stoned. My nomination for the Lost in Space Award for Superbly Rotten Whatthehellisit of the year goes to Creation of the Humanoids--a movie so incredibly bad that I've already seen it twice on the g-d noisy box.

This splendid piece of work opens with visions of mushroom clouds, lots of mushroom clouds, while an off-screen narrator (hopefully on Ground Zero) intones pompously (perhaps it's The Voice of God) (would you believe, Spiro Agnew?) about how nobody knows who started it, but by the time it was over umpteen percent of the population was dead and the remainder was becoming sterile, etc., and man had created the humanoids to do his work for him. The humanoids, I suspect, are really androids in disguise; and they have decided to Save Humanity. They are in the process of replacing humans who have died accidentally with R96's (4 points below being actually human, because they can't reproduce). Said R96's do not know they are robots and have the complete memory of the human they have replaced, thanks to Dr. Raven and his "thalamic transplant."

The plot concerns a high muck-a-muck of the Humanity First Association (a KKK-type group devoted to doing all kinds of nasties to "keep the Clickers in their place") who is being a general bastard about the whole thing--and particularly about the fact that his sister is "in rapport" with the robot Pax. And, meanwhile, he meets this girl....

The amazing thing about the flick is that nobody but nobody shows the slightest inclination to even attempt acting. And there are some beautiful lines:

"Oh, sorry I didn't recognize you--all Clickers look alike to me."

and:

"Ready to proceed, unless you are contra-circuited."
"My circuits are not offended."

and:

"How'd you R96's like to pick up 4 points?"

This movie comes complete with a message from Dr. Raven directly to you, the audience. And we all Click happily ever after.

If your head sits this way, I recommend you watch Creation some time--especially if it comes on at 2 or 3 in the morning and you happen to have a lot of limp bodies lying around your apartment for some reason.

On a Runner-up for the Lost in Space Award:

While I'm at it, I might as well mention Attack from Space, a dubbed Japanese flick with Caucasian villains and a superhero named StarMan. (I am informed by informed sources with atrocious taste only equalled by mine that StarMan is a recurring superhero who appears in several "sci-fi" (in the New York Times sense of the term) flicks.) The appeal of StarMan is that he takes on, Bare-Handed, literally hoards of The Enemy--at least 200 of them

in one scene--and karate-chops them all down. He never actually touches them, but evidently the powerful breeze created by the chopping motion makes The Enemy perform some fancy twists, turns, and leaps to avoid it (my...you'd almost think The Enemy was recruited from out-of-work acrobats!). StarMan has no muscles, but he often flexes those in his arms as he poses before a large group of The Enemy and laughs good-naturedly. He tends to get entangled in his cape, too.

Best of all, StarMan is the only superhero I have ever seen that will actually take a ray-gun away from The Enemy and shoot him dead with it. (Have you ever seen Superman shoot Lex Luthor? Never. Lex Luthor is usually foiled by the product of his own Evil Genius, or simply by the Wholesomeness of Superman.) StarMan shoots 'em down and leaves the bodies scattered around behind him...who knows? maybe they even rot!

* * * *

GRAYSON GREENSWARD

I

Despite the fall of Mordor and the loss of most of his powers, Sauron still lived. He wandered the earth for eons, and eventually, with the development of interstellar travel, left it in an attempt to gather new forces from other worlds. The world of Dapdorf, where he finally found what he sought, had two races living on it: The humanoid Drelbs and the rhinoceroid Utods. The latter, in a curious symbiosis, lived off the Drelbs' excrement. Sauron corrupted the Utods and made them his servants, choosing four as his chief lieutenants and Ring-Wraiths. He then proceeded to systematically exterminate the Drelbs. The poor humanoids were finally reduced to one strongly fortified city, which, however, was cut off from supplies by Sauron and his Utods. The Evil One had thoughtfully stockpiled large quantities of dung to feed his army, and it looked pretty bad for the Drelbs. In desperation, they radioed Grayson Greensward for help. With the courage and selflessness for which he was renowned throughout the galaxy, Greensward instantly flew to Dapdorf and (at great personal risk) parachuted into the beseiged city. Calmly taking charge, he announced that the people had nothing to worry about, that Sauron would be destroyed very soon. The Drelbs could do nothing but wait and believe. They watched Sauron and his Ring-Wraiths taunting them daily, while Greensward relaxed and partook of their meager provisions. And then, two weeks after the hero had arrived, the people were amazed to see Sauron's four lieutenants turn upon him and tear him to shreds. The Drelbs were freed, and the amazed populace demanded of Greensward how he could possibly have known. With his characteristic modesty, the great man replied, "It was obvious, since the Four love new manure."

Yarik P. Thrip

TWO BOOKS ON TOLKIEN
REVIEWED BY FRED LERNER

Tolkien: A Look Behind The Lord of the Rings, by Lin Carter. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969). 211p paperback, 95¢.
Understanding Tolkien and The Lord of the Rings, by William Ready. (New York: Paperback Library, 1969). 96p paperback, 75¢.

The Tolkien fad has abated. One seldom sees a "Frodo Lives" button any more, except at a science fiction convention. The graffiti in the IRT station more often mentions Mark Rudd or Grayson Kirk than Sauron or Gandalf. But Tolkien has left his mark: The Lord of the Rings has not been forgotten. Allusions to the novel may be found in many contemporary books and articles; and several writers, both within and without the fantasy field, are showing a marked Tolkien influence. While Tolkien was a fad, the newsmagazines and Sunday supplements chronicled the business; but now that his work is beginning to exert a less sensational, but more permanent, influence on literature, more serious students are attempting to study the Tolkien phenomenon.

William Ready and Lin Carter both imply by their titles that they will explain The Lord of the Rings. Since the only man on Earth qualified for that task is Professor Tolkien, such an attempt would be either a triumph of misplaced ingenuity or a disastrous and presumptuous failure. Ready's book is a little bit of both; Carter avoids the issue.

The first third of Ready's skimpy book is an unauthorised biography of Tolkien, based on interviews with him and with former colleagues and students. Ready takes pains to explain the life of an Oxford don, and other aspects of British life with which Tolkien's American readers are mostly unfamiliar; and he quotes from many peoples' reminiscences of Tolkien.

After a brief precis of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, Ready proceeds with his interpretation. "The Hobbit is Man's own daring admission of himself as he really is." He questions the reason Tolkien is popular on the campus: "Maybe they would like to be Hobbits; if so, they were born too late: it's for Sauron or Strider now." The never-ending dilemma of man, his eternal need for vigilance against the Enemy, can be asserted only in fantasy: for in the real world petty day-to-day distractions keep our minds off the danger. Thus The Lord of the Rings is a warning, and few of its readers are heeding it.

There is some merit to Ready's view (if I am interpreting it correctly). Tolkien certainly is a conservative, and we are, as always, in an age of Good and Evil. It is fashionable to deny that Evil exists; this denial is Evil's strongest weapon. Perhaps Tolkien did write The Lord of the Rings to remind us that the Enemy is at the gate.

But Tolkien disclaims any such purpose, and who is to know a man's motives better than himself? The first part of Ready's book is useful--though it is painful to see a master of prose discussed in such abominable English--and the latter part is merely ingenious. Still, any writer who can write a sentence like: "Williams fascinated Lewis, above all, who used his friends almost like ice floes in a dark and deep stream, his life, that he had to cross," has no business writing about J.R.R. Tolkien.

After reading his articles on Fandom in IF, I expected to find in Lin Carter's Tolkien: A Look Behind The Lord of the Rings another collection of dubious statements flippantly made. What I did not expect to find was an entertaining and informative account of the development of Heroic Fantasy as a literary genre, complete with a useful annotated bibliography. Carter has done for Heroic Fantasy what Sam Moskowitz has done for science fiction; while less detailed, his prose is also less pedantic in tone.

The first third of Carter's book reviews Tolkien's life story and the plot of The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings. It takes Carter only eight pages to dispose of the idea that Tolkien was writing satire or allegory; he cites Prof Tolkien as authority, and proceeds to use the same unimpeachable source to define just what The Lord of the Rings is. Having concluded that it is "epic fantasy," Carter spends 100 pages exploring the genre from the classical epic to modern times. He points out possible sources for many names found in Tolkien's books, and then concludes with an all-too-brief look at some contemporary fantasy writers whose works show Tolkien's influence.

Carter carefully avoids reading theology or moral philosophy into Tolkien. He has read widely in heroic fantasy, and knows what he is talking about. What is needed now is a full-dress history of the genre for its own sake; Mr. Carter is the man to do it.

Now at this space-time intersection
Dreaming a newborn clockwork christ
One hedgehog ego curls in pointing darkness.

No mental pilgrimage beyond dejection
Treading one light-year-lost far time
Finds kinship pattern, or the homeward starway.

An alien ocean, with a neutral rhyme
Seething at strange unmeeting rhythms, now
crawls to consume the traveller with horrors.

Turns of time's lens provoke distorting mirrors
Screaming with laughter as the glass reflects
Pain's dark response, but does not even splinter.

Frances Yorke

NO, ARTHUR, THERE IS NO SANTA CLAUS

by Joseph Gerver

In 1941, the Canadian astronomer, J.W. Campbell (!) calculated that one million tons of fuel would be required to launch one pound of payload out of the earth's gravitational field, thereby proving space-flight impossible. At the time when this sort of thing could be published, virtually no one outside the field of science fiction (and very few people in the field) would have dared to predict that men would be orbiting the moon in twenty-seven years. Yet all the basic technology for interplanetary flight was already being developed; the first electronic computer, ENIAC, had been built just that year, the transistor had been invented a few years earlier, and Goddard's first liquid fuel rocket had been launched in 1926.

Project Apollo required no major technological breakthrough that had not been made by 1941; it merely required time and a lot of money. Interplanetary rockets operate on the same principles as did Goddard's; they are simply larger, more complex, and use more efficient fuels. But the theoretical properties of all these fuels, liquid oxygen, atomic hydrogen, even nuclear fuels, were well known in 1941.

Of those few science fiction fans in 1941 who believed that men would orbit the moon in 1968, most took it as an article of faith. Almost no one, with the exception of Arthur C. Clarke and the members of the British Interplanetary Society, (and of course Goddard, Oberth and Tsiolkovsky) had any idea how men would travel to the planets (that is to say, almost no one in 1941 had a rational reason to suppose that men would orbit the moon in 1968), despite the fact that this information was readily available to anyone with a little intelligence and foresight.

Today, we are almost at the same point with respect to interstellar flight. The basic technology necessary has either already been developed (most of it in the last ten years), or the lines along which it must develop are clear. And, as in 1941, everyone is saying that interstellar travel is impossible in the foreseeable future, with the exception of a few science fiction fans who accept it on faith (this time, unfortunately, including Mr. Clarke). Nevertheless, it is perfectly possible to talk about interstellar travel intelligently at this time. The purpose of this series of articles is to examine a number of proposals for interstellar travel in light of modern physics and technology, and to draw some intelligent conclusions about them; in short, to summarize everything presently known about interstellar flight.

The most popular devices used for interstellar flight in science fiction have employed faster-than-light techniques of one sort or another. These include inertialess drives, hyperspace, time warps, instantaneous matter transmission, and space currents, and all can be discarded in one lump. Faster-than-light travel is impossible and always will be (Gerald Feinberg notwithstanding),

a fact that has been known since 1905. So much nonsense has been written about this recently (with all due respect to Arthur C. Clarke) that I am going to devote the rest of this article to relativity.

The theory of relativity predicts, among other things, that the following two effects should be observed in a physical system moving at velocity v relative to an observer:

1) The length of the system in the direction of motion will be observed to be multiplied by a factor of $\sqrt{1-(v^2/c^2)}$, where c is the velocity of light in a vacuum.

2) The system's time will be observed to slow down by the same factor. These effects have been confirmed experimentally, directly or indirectly, for velocities well over 99% the speed of light. Together they imply mathematically that if it is possible to send a message faster than light, it is possible to send a message backwards in time. This is true even if it should turn out that relativity breaks down at velocities greater than 0.99c.

A more detailed mathematical discussion of this result follows.

One consequence of our formulas (the reader can verify this mathematically for himself) is the following: If two events are separated in space by a distance Δx_a and by time Δt_a from the point of view of an observer A, and by distance Δx_b and time Δt_b for an observer B, both observers moving at constant velocities, then

$$(\Delta x_a)^2 - c^2(\Delta t_a)^2 = (\Delta x_b)^2 - c^2(\Delta t_b)^2$$

Note that this equation is almost identical to the equation for transforming coordinate systems in space; if x and y and x' and y' are two pairs of orthogonal axes, then

$$(\Delta x)^2 + (\Delta y)^2 = (\Delta x')^2 + (\Delta y')^2$$

Indeed the two equations would be identical if it were not for the minus signs and the constant c in the relativistic equation. These can be eliminated if one defines units of time as imaginary units of space. Then, for example, one second is defined as 186,000 i miles (where $i = \sqrt{-1}$), and the equation becomes

$$(\Delta x_a)^2 + (\Delta t_a)^2 = (\Delta x_b)^2 + (\Delta t_b)^2$$

with the Δx's and Δt's all expressed in the same units. Our universe, then, can be viewed as a four dimensional vector space, with distance in one of the dimensions measured in imaginary units.

(continued on page 20.)

We hear Columbia students are demanding the right of passage...

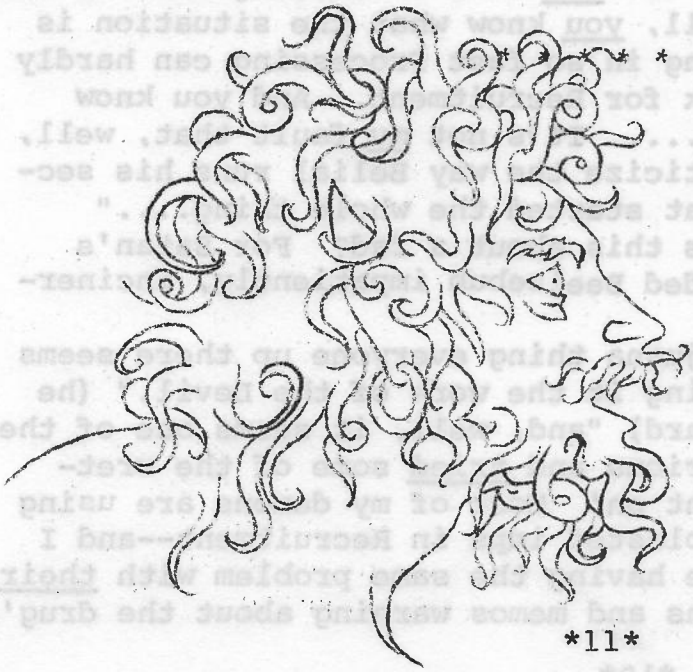
ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE THROUGH THE ILLUSTRATED MAN

by Barbara Shear

If anyone can be convincing as an authoritarian-personality hobo, who is tatooed with surreal skin illustrations that come alive, Rod Steiger can. It isn't difficult to portray a young American hitch-hiker who sees these gruesome visions, but Robert Drivas can't. And Claire Bloom is suitably mystical as a tatooing Circe, who has the audacity to appear in her own spells, though neither the performances nor the visual artistry can overcome Ray Bradbury's fundamentally naive premise that it is dangerous for man to see beyond his own time.

The Illustrated Man is empirical scientific proof that the whole may be considerably less than the sum of its parts. When misty-eyed Will meets the scary illustrated man somewhere in Marlboro Country, there is a suggestion that it is a crude plot device, designed to tie together Bradbury's Twilight Zone visions of the future. Of the extra-dimensional meanderings, the finest was a journey to an unidentified planet of torrential rains. This adventure entailed the search for a "sun-dome" to ensure the survival of a stranded crew and raised serious questions of human emotion, commanding officers, and the origin of a planet of green muck. A flicker of political optimism shone through the downpour, for the crew was of "The Unified States of Earth."

In spite of occasional brilliant devices (an environment-screen which is analogous, roughly, to walking into a television picture), moral inversions ("The room will hate you if you kill it."), and a parable of the end of the world (seemingly based on a Romeo-Juliet interpretation of love), The Illustrated Man fails to have a coherent suggestion for the present or view of the future. For a message of morality, truth, and hubris, a tatooed man is a poor medium.



Hare Seldon
Hare Seldon
Seldon, Seldon
Hare, Hare...

Mephistopheles Meets Maryjane
Or: What's a Nice Kid Like You
Doing in a Joint Like This?
by Eli Cohen

"Psst, Azie, c'mon over here."

The demon gave a damned soul one last stab with his trident and walked to the railing surrounding the punishment pit.

"What do you want, Gorm?" The flames in the center cast flickering shadows over the other's face. "If the boss devil catches me goofing off, I'll be demoted to Maintenance!"

"I just wanted to tell you--come over to my place tonight. Some really good stuff just came in from Topside."

"Gee, Gorm, I don't know...."

"Aw, come on; you'll have a great time."

"Well..." Azie considered for a moment. "Okay," he answered unenthusiastically. But having committed himself, he continued, "Yeah, sure Gorm, why not?" And then more eagerly, "Læt time was really, uh, groovy!" He displayed the word triumphantly.

"That's the spirit. See you!"

* *

"I tell you Dagon, you can't keep on in this manner. Production has fallen off in your section, sick calls are up, and insubordination has become intolerable! Why, just the other day one of your demons handed me a can of DDT!" (Beelzebub was very sensitive about his name meaning "god of flies.") "Now I know you normally run a tight ship, heh, heh...."

The former fish-deity winced.

"But you've been getting too slack, much too slack. What ever happened to 'Double the Agon' Dagon?"

The devil shuffled uncomfortably. "Well, B.B., it's not really my fault. It's this, uh, new...fad that's catching on. It seems the demons in Recruitment...well, you know what the situation is like Topside, with souls pouring in so fast Processing can hardly handle them, and almost no work for Recruitment. And you know what they say about idle hands.... It's not my fault that, well, I mean, I wouldn't want to criticize the way Belial runs his section, but it was his demons that started the whole thing...."

"What whole thing? What's this about a fad? For Satan's sake, get to the point!" exploded Beelzebub impatiently, incinerating his cigar in his fury.

"Well, uh, it's this marijuana thing everyone up there seems to be using. People kept calling it the work of the Devil," (he cast his eyes reverently downward) "and, well, it seems one of the lower-echelon demons became curious and tried some of the wretched stuff. And now it's caught on! Most of my demons are using it--it's smuggled in by those blasted imps in Recruitment--and I understand the other devils are having the same problem with their demons. I've been posting signs and memos warning about the drug's

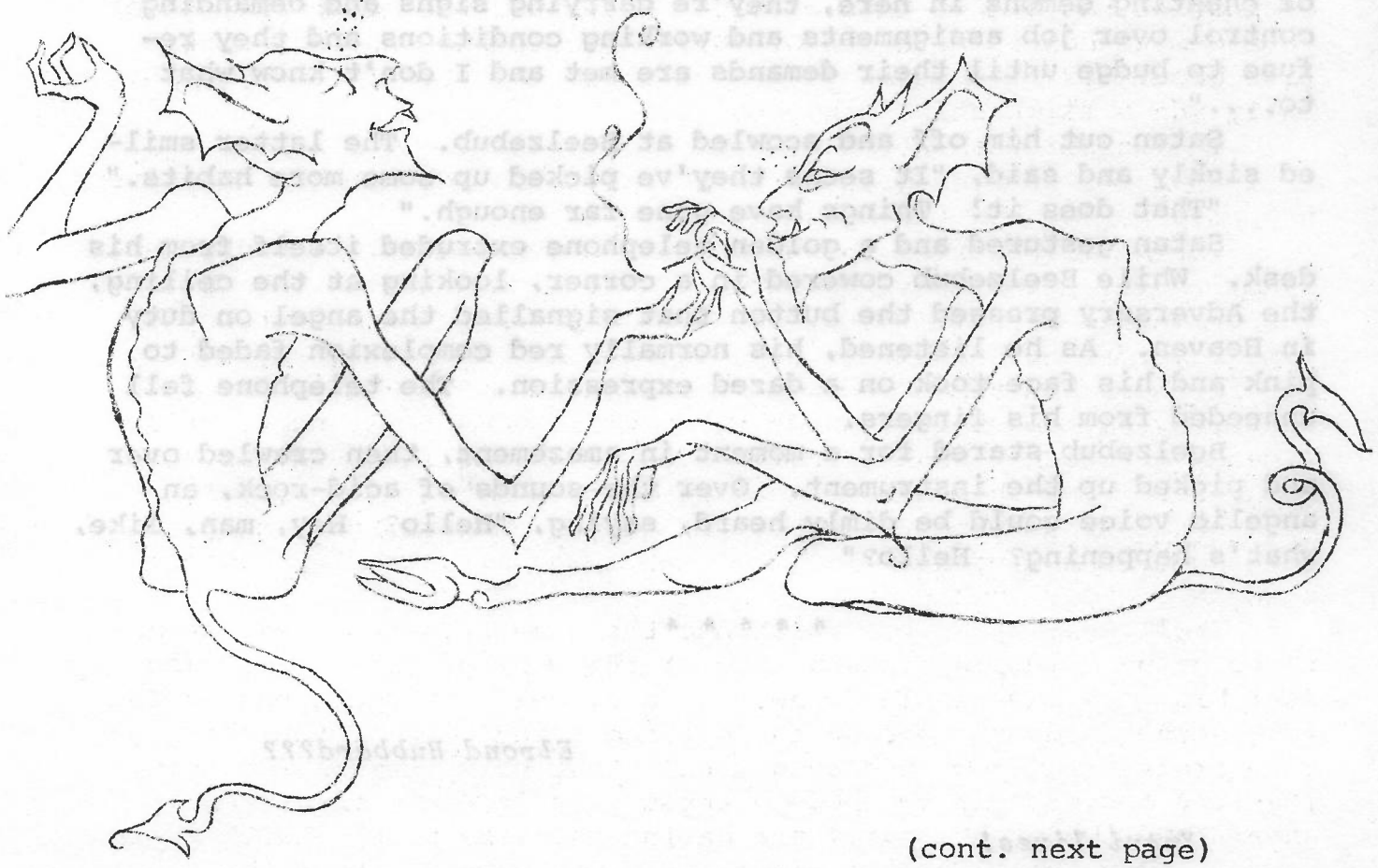
horrible effects, but nothing helps! I don't know what to do... nothing works...a perfect record for so many millenia, and now this...." Dagon's voice trailed off into a self-pitying murmur as he massaged the palms of his hands, an old nervous habit.

Beelzebub looked at him, and said in a suddenly tired voice, "Get out. I guess I'll have to handle this myself."

It must be admitted that he tried. Since the offenders were demons, the worst that could be done was to imprison them, now that the normal sanction of demontion had lost its effect. But no one seemed to care, and every pot smoker couldn't be imprisoned--not even a very small percentage. The habit just spread and spread. Agon output was down by more than two-thirds, and what remained was of definitely inferior quality--the demons just didn't seem to care any more about torturing, except for a half-hearted poke every once in a while. There was even one case of a stoned demon offering a damned soul a joint. (The soul, a properly brought up Christian, of course refused.) It was rumored that some of the lower echelon devils were joining in.

Things began to deteriorate. Musical styles changed, as "Danse Macabre" was replaced by "Light My Fire." The whole social structure was toppling.

* *



(cont. next page)

"So you see Chief, the system is really falling apart."

Satan glowered across his desk at his second-in-command while Beelzebub squirmed. "Punish them, then."

"We tried, Chief, but nobody cares. That's the worst thing--they don't care anymore about the important things, not about getting ahead, not about torturing; no one has any pride in his work. All they do is sit around listening to that horrible music and get high. And they keep saying there's nothing wrong with it! Not only that, but that rumor about your having invented it...."

"Me? Invent that? Why just look at the effects it has--what kind of a world would it be if everyone used the stuff? We had some time of it with those early Christians, but fortunately things settled down." He smiled at the memory, then frowned as he remembered the current problem. "Do you really think I would be stupid enough to let something like that loose?"

"Well then, it must be...Him?"

Satan glanced upward involuntarily. "No, it's not His style. Anyway, if things collapse down here, His whole Divine Justice scheme goes down the drain with us. You know, He likes to pretend He's omnipotent, but confidentially," Satan lowered his voice, "there have been one or two cases where...."

The intercom buzzed raucously.

"What is it?" Satan snapped.

A near hysterical voice answered, "Chief, there's a whole mob of chanting demons in here, they're carrying signs and demanding control over job assignments and working conditions and they refuse to budge until their demands are met and I don't know what to...."

Satan cut him off and scowled at Beelzebub. The latter smiled sickly and said, "It seems they've picked up some more habits."

"That does it! Things have gone far enough."

Satan gestured and a golden telephone extruded itself from his desk. While Beelzebub cowered in a corner, looking at the ceiling, the Adversary pressed the button that signalled the angel on duty in Heaven. As he listened, his normally red complexion faded to pink and his face took on a dazed expression. The telephone fell unheeded from his fingers.

Beelzebub stared for a moment in amazement, then crawled over and picked up the instrument. Over the sounds of acid-rock, an angelic voice could be dimly heard, saying, "Hello? Hey, man, like, what's happening? Hello?"

* * * * *

Elrond Hubbard???

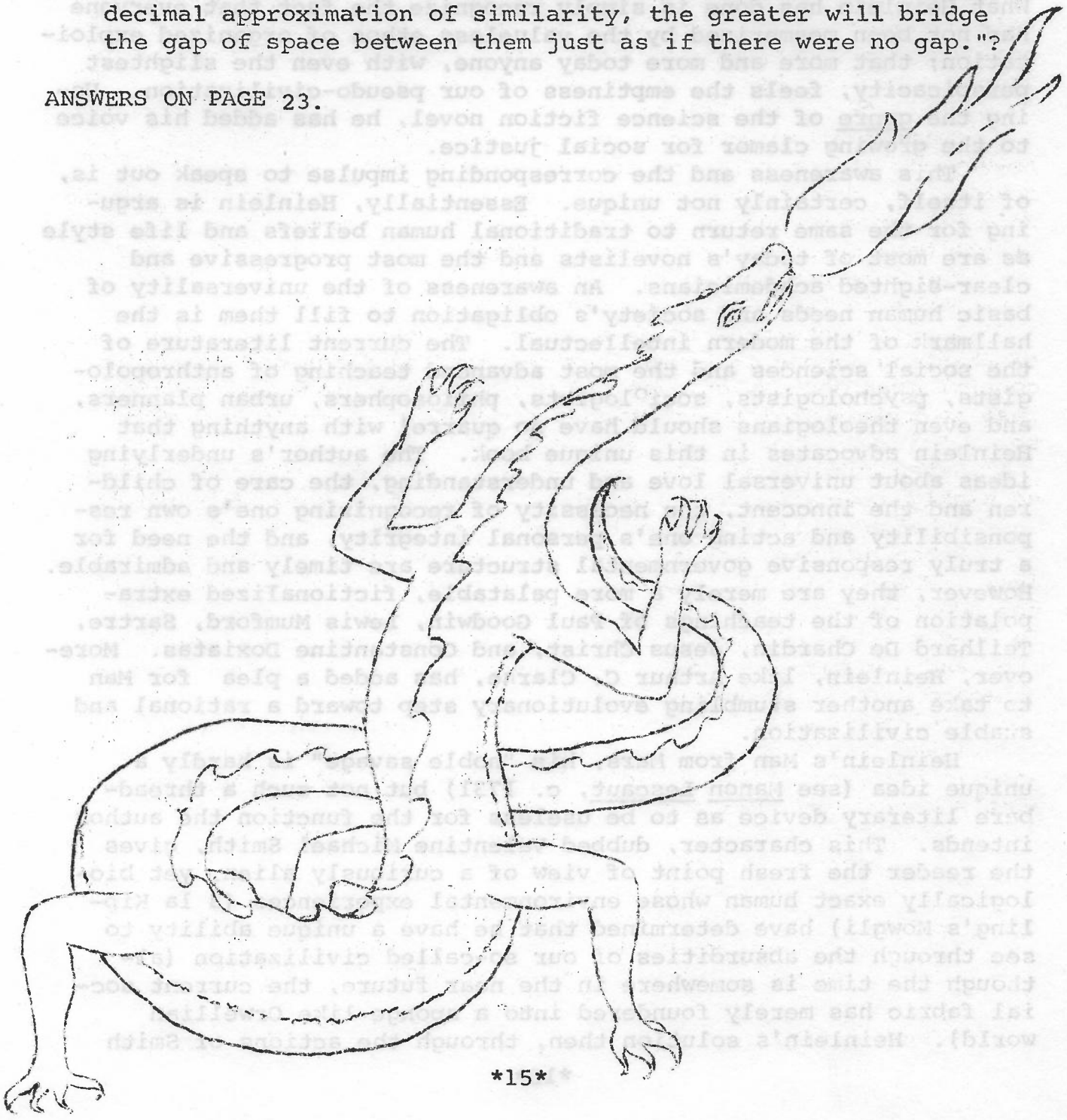
Yngvi lives!

FRIBBLING FOR FEN

Since Columbia is the home of Trivia, it seems only right to include some examples (extremely modest ones) of sf Trivia. Herewith our offerings:

1. What is Andre Norton's real name?
2. When was Hari Seldon born?
3. What was Lummox's hobby?
4. What was the function of Gallegher's robot?
5. Give author and source of the following quotation:
   "Here is the race that shall rule the sevagram."
6. What is meant by "If two energies can be attuned on a twenty-decimal approximation of similarity, the greater will bridge the gap of space between them just as if there were no gap."?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 23.



THE STRANGE FLAWS IN HEINLEIN'S STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

by John A. Lawson

Robert A. Heinlein's incisive novel, Stranger in a Strange Land, now undergoing such a wave of popularity among the young who have taped into the early renaissance of science fiction, deserves much of the praise that has been heaped upon it. It is foolish to for any thinking person to scoff at this generation's idealistic approach to a society which has time and again proven itself incapable of responding, even in the most rudimentary fashion, to the needs of its members (except, of course, the most influential). What Heinlein has done is simply recognize the fact that everyone has not been mesmerized by the valueless ethos of organized exploitation; that more and more today anyone, with even the slightest perspicacity, feels the emptiness of our pseudo-civilization. Using the genre of the science fiction novel, he has added his voice to the growing clamor for social justice.

This awareness and the corresponding impulse to speak out is, of itself, certainly not unique. Essentially, Heinlein is arguing for the same return to traditional human beliefs and life style as are most of today's novelists and the most progressive and clear-sighted academicians. An awareness of the universality of basic human needs and society's obligation to fill them is the hallmark of the modern intellectual. The current literature of the social sciences and the most advanced teaching of anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, urban planners, and even theologians should have no quarrel with anything that Heinlein advocates in this unique book. The author's underlying ideas about universal love and understanding, the care of children and the innocent, the necessity of recognizing one's own responsibility and acting one's personal integrity, and the need for a truly responsive governmental structure are timely and admirable. However, they are merely a more palatable, fictionalized extrapolation of the teachings of Paul Goodwin, Lewis Mumford, Sartre, Teilhard De Chardin, Jesus Christ, and Constantine Doxiatas. Moreover, Heinlein, like Arthur C. Clarke, has added a plea for Man to take another stumbling evolutionary step toward a rational and stable civilization.

Heinlein's Man from Mars, his "noble savage" is hardly a unique idea (see Manon Lescaut, c. 1731) but not such a threadbare literary device as to be useless for the function the author intends. This character, dubbed Valentine Michael Smith, gives the reader the fresh point of view of a curiously alien, yet biologically exact human whose environmental experiences (a la Kipling's Mowgli) have determined that he have a unique ability to see through the absurdities of our so-called civilization (although the time is somewhere in the near future, the current social fabric has merely foundered into a sponge-like Orwellian world). Heinlein's solution then, through the actions of Smith

and his disciples is the spreading of LOVE through the brotherhood of mass sexual congress sanctified by the lunatic sub-culture of fraudulent religious fervor. However, even this is not a radical intellectual or cultural innovation. Communication through intercourse was best advanced by D.H. Lawrence some forty-odd years ago and telepathy, both cerebral and cellular, has not only been conceptualized but is actually experimentally operational (Duke, MIT, and Rand Corporation) although the ultimate beneficence of their implimentation is, by these organizations at least, problematical.

This philosophical pastiche is the crux of the problem inherent in Heinlein's book. He has taken all of the most up-to-date, rational, and valid social thought and attempted to present it to a general audience of relatively sophisticated science fiction devotees. No critic can fault a writer for failing to create an absolutely novel metaphysic in every chapter or on each page. Every book written does not have to be, nor should it be, a radical departure from traditional thought. However, it is the duty of every writer to present his beliefs, the distillation of his own mind's unique insight, in a mode suitable for assimilation by the greatest possible number. Furthermore, the author must be aware of the fact that his style, or the lack of it, in turn feeds back into the psyche of the reader, and that this phenomenon determines, in part, how accurate an awareness the reader has of the author's posture. However, it is also valid to say that it is as futile for an author to predict the ultimate response to his work, as it is for a critic to attempt to read, from this same creation, the author's intentions. Could even Shakespeare have known that Hamlet would evolve, four centuries later, into the anti-heroes of Kingsley Amis or Saul Bellow. Therefore, a compromise must be reached. The artist must use some professional discrimination and work towards an essential stylistic unity. A literary potpourri is the mark of sophomoric talent.

I have already mentioned that Heinlein seized upon the eighteenth century's infatuation with the aborigines of the "New World" and Kipling's jungle creatures for his exposition. Okay! Both are legitimate variations on the same theme but does Heinlein have to continue to throw every literary device known to Western man into the stew? The overall structure of the book is an uninteresting version of Elmer Gantry. Heinlein gives endless descriptions of mid-American fascination with the sordid rites of emotionally based religious jingoism. In order to educate Smith to the perversities of this world (a standard bildungs roman) Heinlein launches him on a picaresque journey around the Southwest. Shifting focus occasionally, Heinlein adds a kind of Greek chorus in the person of Jubal Harshaw who is, in turn, a good Eastern Establishment Liberal paradoxically mouthing turn-of-the-century populist platitudes. Except for his lack of eloquence, it is easy to imagine Jubal giving a folks y version of Bryant's "Cross of Gold" speech.

Nevertheless, the author doesn't stop even here. He continues to pile hackneyed technical devices on his already precarious structure. More than halfway through the book, there suddenly springs into existance a nether world of corporate angels and functionaries which has some curious relationship to Man and Superman. What does an imitation of Shavian mechanics add to this book? Why include a sardonic Deus ex machina gratuitously? At this point one could ask why continue a stylistic vendetta against the author? Additional rehashing of Heinlein's habit of "borrowing" would not be very productive. It is sufficient to say that he has overlooked nothing except an attempt to force epic poetry into a standard dramaturgic format and possibly Icelandic runes.

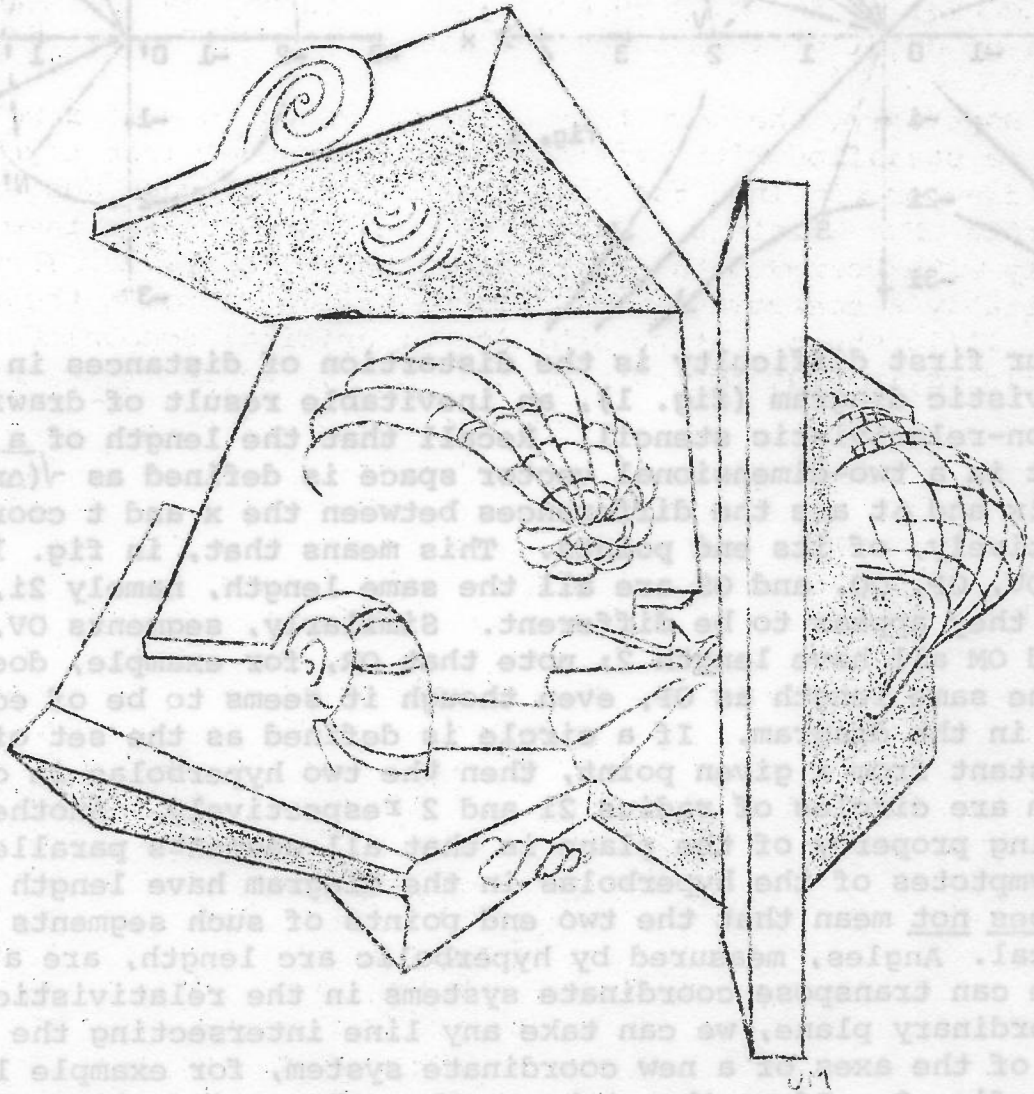
Stranger in a Strange Land is too good a book to be flawed by the author's frenetic attempts to prove his erudition. Heinlein need not have included every known novelistic technique. He should not have wasted his time, and the reader's, with spurious and dated poetry nor with flat characters whose predictable reactions (especially Ben Caxton, the newspaperman) are worthy of the best of Scribe's typecasting. Does anyone remember the names of Jubal's handmaidens and can anyone differentiate between them?

Hopefully, the next time Heinlein wants to make a point he will be satisfied with writing merely one novel, not trying to pack five or six into the same space. Most of your audience is literate, Mr. Heinlein. It is not necessary to beat them endlessly with borrowed talent to keep their attention. That is inevitably a consummate bore. To sacrifice, through thoughtless supercilliousness, the possibility of critical communication with a world crying out for answers is a tragic waste of opportunity.

* * * * *

An imprint of my shell now sits suspended here
In the heavy coffeehouse air of red Silurian shale.
Other rigid images are floating near,
Warping the crystal matrix of this universe of stone.
Our images are crowded close, absorbing every beat
Of the music of the seasons and ages of the earth.
We seem to touch but cannot feel; we will never meet,
For our lives are separated by five hundred thousand years,
While only the image of the surface of your shell
Sits next to mine immobile in this ancient red rock,
Each of us alone in an isolated hell.

Joseph Gerver



NO, ARTHUR, continued from page 16

How does such a vector space look? We can draw a picture of it, but we must be careful how we interpret our picture. To begin with, it will have only two dimensions, a real one (space) and an imaginary one (time). This vector space will still retain all the interesting properties of the four dimensional universe, and have the added advantage of being easier to draw on a two dimensional stencil. Below, then, is a relativistic plane, with an ordinary plane beside it for comparison.

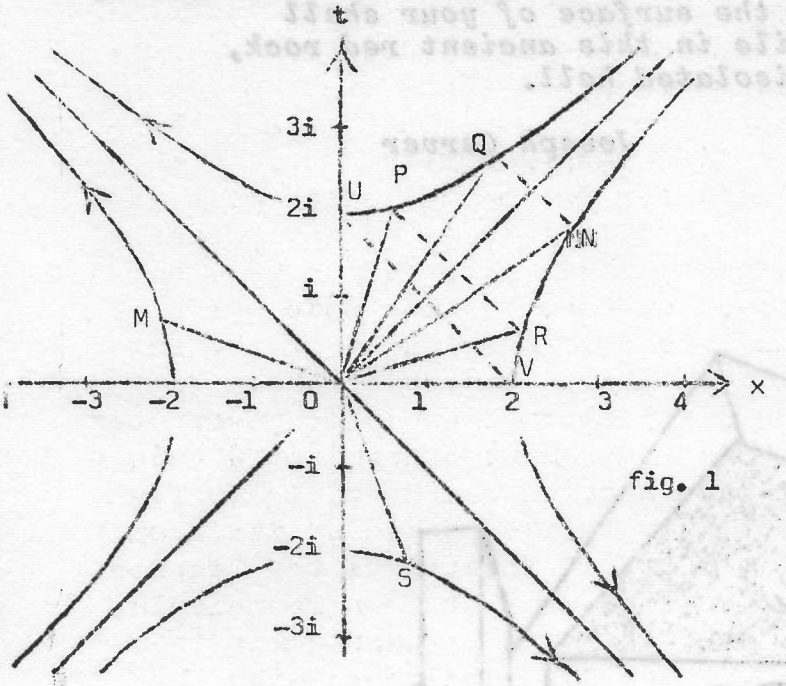


fig. 1

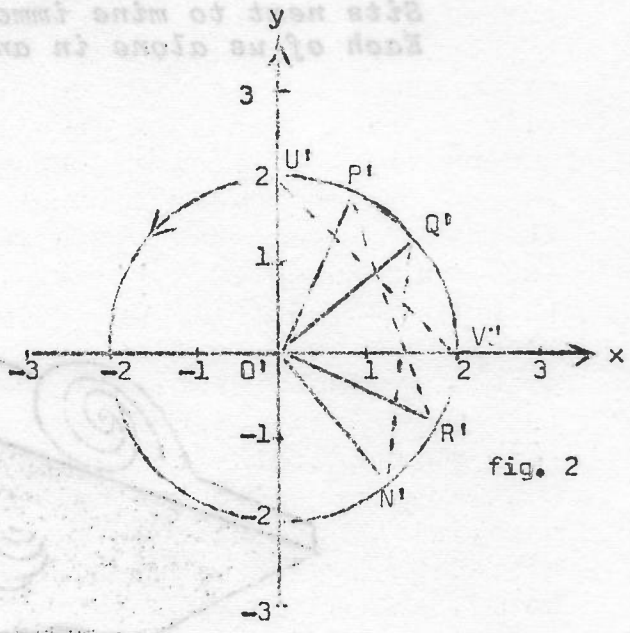


fig. 2

Our first difficulty is the distortion of distances in our relativistic diagram (fig. 1), an inevitable result of drawing it on a non-relativistic stencil. Recall that the length of a line segment in a two-dimensional vector space is defined as $\sqrt{(\Delta x)^2 + (\Delta t)^2}$ where Δx and Δt are the differences between the x and t coordinates, respectively, of its end points. This means that, in fig. 1, segments OU, OP, OQ, and OS are all the same length, namely 2i, although they appear to be different. Similarly, segments OV, OR, ON, and OM all have length 2; note that OR, for example, does not have the same length as OP, even though it seems to be of equal length in the diagram. If a circle is defined as the set of points equidistant from a given point, then the two hyperbolas in our diagram are circles of radius 2i and 2 respectively. Another interesting property of the plane is that all segments parallel to the asymptotes of the hyperbolas in the diagram have length zero. This does not mean that the two end points of such segments are identical. Angles, measured by hyperbolic arc length, are also distorte

We can transpose coordinate systems in the relativistic plane. In an ordinary plane, we can take any line intersecting the origin as one of the axes of a new coordinate system, for example line O'P' in fig. 2. If we then take as the other axis a line perpen-

dicular to the first axis, in this case line O'R', then the distances and angles of the original coordinate system will be preserved in the new, rotated one. Now, we had better be able to do the same thing with our relativistic plane, since a rotated relativistic coordinate system is simply a space-time coordinate system from the point of view of someone moving at a different velocity.

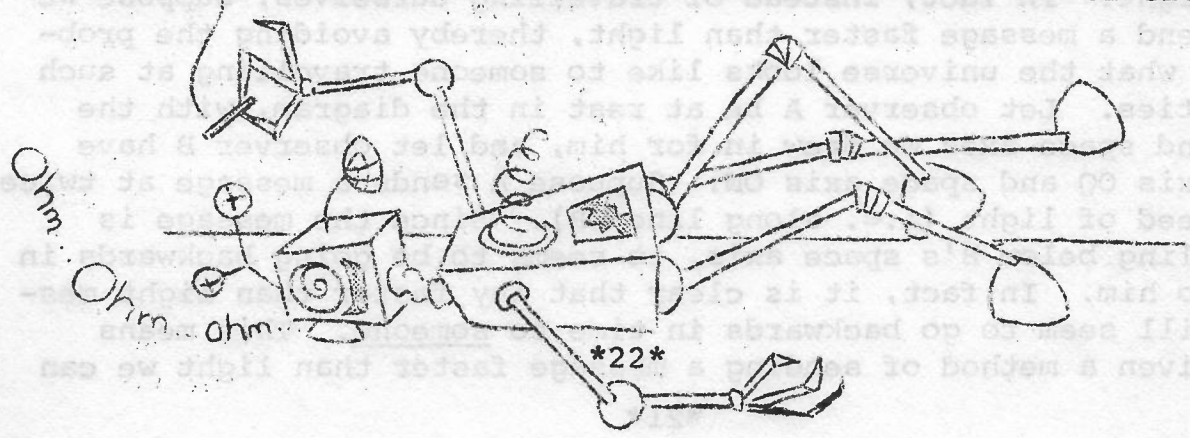
Suppose we take OP as the time axis of a rotated coordinate system in our relativistic plane. What should our new space axis be; that is, what line intersecting the origin is perpendicular to line OP? We cannot define the term perpendicular in terms of angle (as we can in an ordinary plane, where perpendicular lines intersect at an angle of 90^{o}), because the angle between two perpendicular lines (e.g. the original time and space axes, which are perpendicular by definition), is obviously undefined in a relativistic plane. Instead we will define perpendicular by using congruent right triangles. In an ordinary plane the length of a line segment extending from point (2,0) to point (0,2) of any coordinate system must have the same length, $2\sqrt{2}$ (i.e. $\sqrt{2^2 + 2^2}$), a direct consequence of preservation of distances. The same holds in a relativistic plane, only in this case the length of the segments must be zero (i.e. $\sqrt{2^2 + 2i^2}$). Since a segment whose end points are not identical must be parallel to one of the asymptotes in order to have length zero, this requirement determines a unique line perpendicular to each line intersecting the origin. To find the line perpendicular to OP, for example, we extend a line from P parallel to one of the asymptotes until it intersects the "circle" of radius 2 with center 0. Thus we find that OP is perpendicular to OR, and OQ to ON. In short, two lines are perpendicular in a relativistic plane if they seem to make the same angle with the asymptotes (of course they don't really make the same angle since angles with the asymptotes are undefined). The process of rotating the relativistic coordinate system consists of displacing all points on the hyperbolas in the direction of the arrows, just as in fig 2 all points on the circle are displaced in the direction of the arrows. Lines OP and OR spread apart and eventually move into the positions of the old time and space axes. If the reader will think about it a while, he will see that distances are indeed preserved if the coordinate system is "rotated" in this way.

Now we will see what happens when we try to travel faster than light. In fact, instead of travelling ourselves, suppose we just send a message faster than light, thereby avoiding the problem of what the universe looks like to someone travelling at such velocities. Let observer A be at rest in the diagram, with the time and space axes we drew in for him, and let observer B have time axis OQ and space axis ON. Suppose A sends a message at twice the speed of light (i.e. along line OR). Since the message is travelling below B's space axis, it seems to be going backwards in time to him. In fact, it is clear that any faster than light message will seem to go backwards in time to <u>someone</u>. This means that given a method of sending a message faster than light we can

always send a message backwards in time. Suppose, for example we have a tachyon transmitter which can send a message at twice the speed of light. Then all we need to do is put our transmitter in a space ship passing the Earth at more than half the speed of light, going away from and with the transmitter aimed towards, say, Alpha Centauri. The beam of tachyons will then seem to be going backwards in time and will reach Alpha Centauri before it was sent, from the point of view of someone on either Earth or Alpha Centauri. Just in case tachyons going backwards in time are undetectable, the beam could be received by another space ship travelling at the same velocity in the vicinity of Alpha Centauri, and the message radioed to Alpha Centauri itself. There is no paradox so far, because the message must reach Alpha Centauri less than four years before it was sent, too late for it to affect Earth's past. However, there is no reason why the process cannot be reversed, and the just-received message sent back to Earth, reaching its destination before being sent from Alpha Centauri, which you will recall was before it was sent from Earth.

We mentioned earlier that the theory of relativity has only been verified experimentally (in cyclotrons) for velocities less than 99% the speed of light. But if it were discovered that at velocities very close the speed of light, the two principles of relativity no longer hold, this would not change our conclusions at all. The universe would still look like a relativistic vector space except that the lengths and angles of lines very nearly parallel to the asymptotes would be modified. A message sent at twice the speed of light would still seem to be travelling backwards in time to someone moving in the same direction at two-thirds the speed of light. If relativity holds only for velocities less than 99/100 the speed of light, then it might conceivably be possible to send a message at 100/99 the speed of light, but no faster. This is not much of an improvement.

We can conclude then that if you believe in faster than light travel, you must believe in time travel; and I don't mean parallel universes or anything like that, but genuine, paradoxical, thiotimoline type time travel. Not that there is anything wrong with believing in time travel; at least one editor of this magazine does. But you should be consistant: If you don't believe in time travel, you shouldn't believe in FTL travel either.



ANSWERS TO TRIVIA

1. Alice Mary Norton. Score half credit for Mary Norton. If you thought Andre was his real name, deduct 10 points.

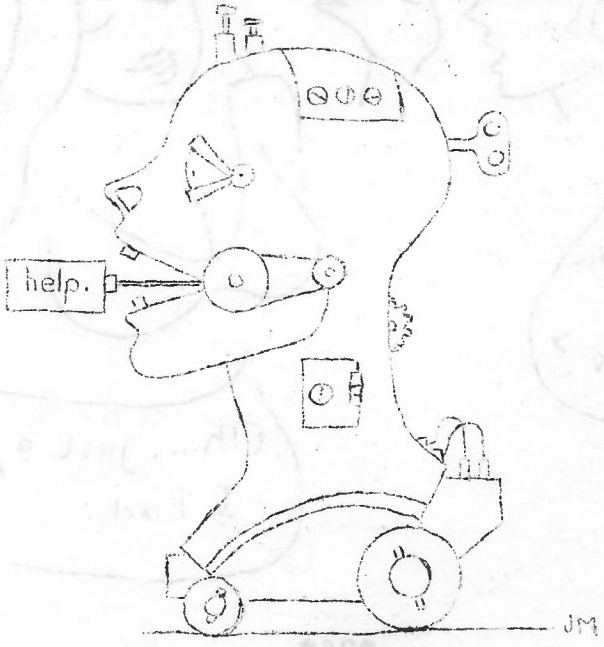
2. There are two conflicting sources for this information. The ENCYCLOPEDIA GALACTIA entry under Hari Seldon gives his birth as 11,988 G.E. (Galactic Era), death 12,069 G.E., or -79 F.E. (Foundation Era) and 1 F.E. respectively. However, at the beginning of the chapter in 2nd Foundation dealing with the start of the Kalganian War, the author has a short dissertation on dating systems. He gives the start of said war as: 11,692 G.E., 419 A.S. (from the birth of Seldon), and 348 Y.F. (from the establishment of Foundation). The astute reader will notice a slight discrepancy between the given G.E. dates for the two events, which place the Kalganese War some three centuries before Seldon's birth. One also sees notational discrepancies between Y.F. and F.E. But even ignoring the G.E. dates, acceptance of the fact that 419 A.S.= 348 Y.F. implies that Seldon was born in -71 Y.F., another contradiction with the Encyclopedia. Faced with these two sets of data, it seems to us that the prestige of the ENCYCLOPEDIA GALACTIA and its well known reputation for accuracy necessitate our ignoring the remarks of a fallible author.

3. Raising John Thomases. See Robert Heinlein's The Star Beast.

4. This magnificent, intelligent robot was designed by Gallegher in one of his fits of drunken genius as a can opener. See "The Proud Robot" by Lewis Padgett (Henry Kuttner).

5. A.E. van Vogt, the last line of The Weapon Makers. Score half credit for the correct author. If you thought it was written by Harlan Ellison, deduct 25 points and read "The Proxy Intelligence" 3 times.

6. If you can answer this, award yourself 100 bonus points and see a psychiatrist. Or possibly a scientologist.



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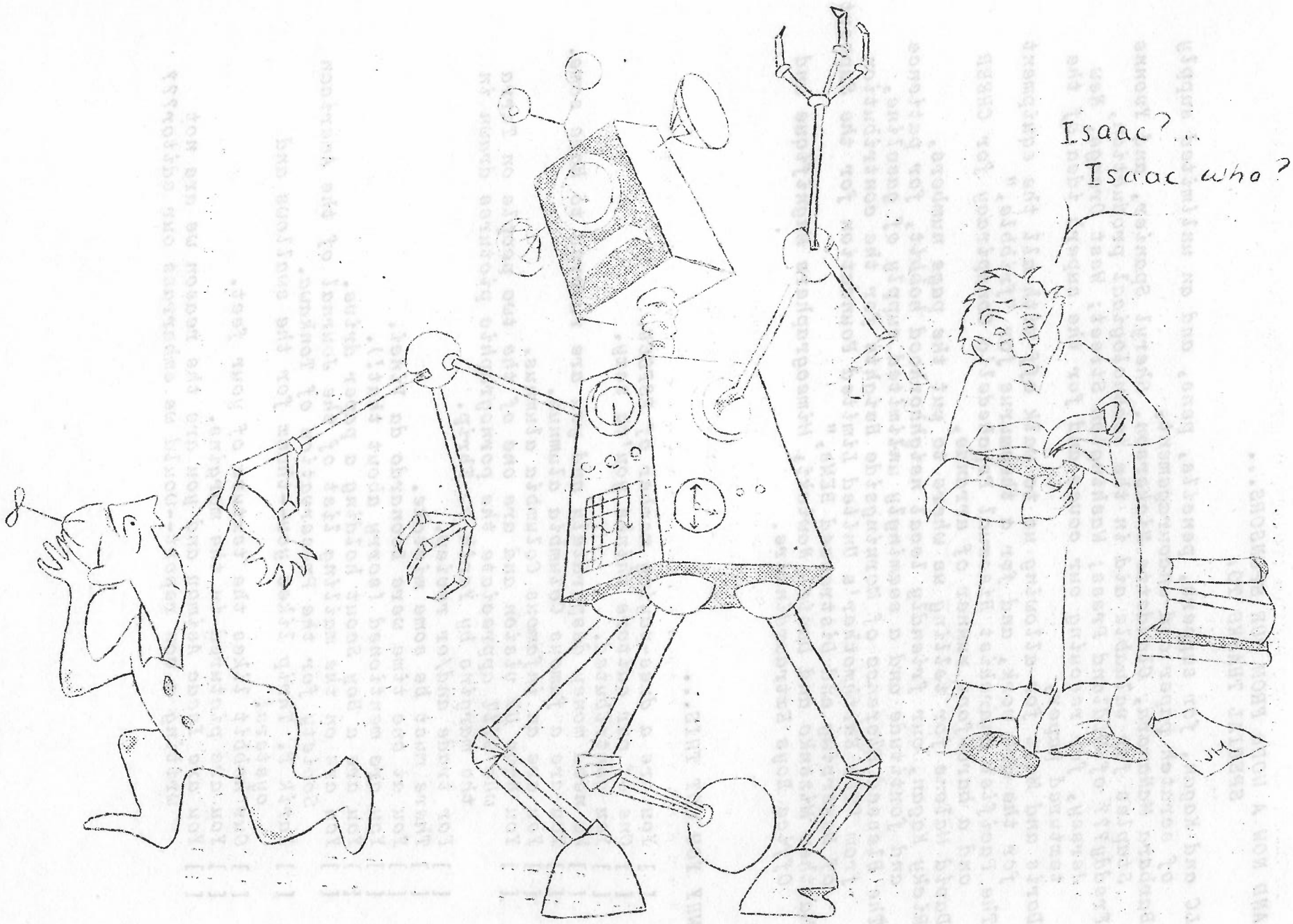
Isaac?..
Isaac who?

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS...
SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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[ ] *You are mentioned (sorry about that!).*
[ ] *You are a Boy Scout holding a paper drive.*
[ ] *You are on the mailing list of the Journal of the American Society for the Preservation of Tonkawa.*
[ ] *Yarik P. Thrip likes you--thanx for the swallows and oysters!*
[ ] *Our hobbit likes the texture of your feet.*
[ ] *You are pictured in the margins.*
[ ] *You are Isaac Asimov and you are the reason we are not writing a con report--would we embarrass our editor???*