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Algol
twelve

ALGOL

12



THE ELLISH

5	Beatle-Juice: editorial	Andrew Porter
	THE ELLISH	
9	Introduction.....	Andrew Porter
11	"How Harlan Ellison Came To Be So Honored,.."	
	William Rotsler
16	Harlan Ellison.....	Lee Hoffman
17	Harlan Ellison--.....	Ted White
21	The Jet-Propelled Birdbath....	Robert Silverberg
24	Books And Words.....	Harlan Ellison
25	A Time For Daring.....	Harlan Ellison
35	En Garde!: column	Ted White
38	Reply To Ted White	Stephen Pickering
43	Lupoff's Book Week: books	Dick Lupoff
51	Fatman: A Narrative Of The Underground	
		John Boardman
59	Neither Rain Nor Snow	Andrew Porter
63	Random Factors: lettercol	The Readers
72	The Penultimate Truth	Contributors Page

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65, 67.....	Colin Cameron
51, 54, 55, 56.....	Ross Chamberlain
14, 48.....	Jack Harness
35.....	Lee Hoffman
4, 47, 62, 69, 72.....	Andrew Porter
11, 12, 13, 14, 15.....	William Rotsler
5, 10, 42, 57.....	Steve Stiles



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BEATLE - JUICE EDITORIAL



This is a special issue of Algol. To a large extent, it is concerned with Harlan Ellison. In all these pages you will find cartoons by Bill Sienkiewicz all about what Harlan Ellison was doing at this year's Westercon in San Diego, and what he is doing in this issue. You'll also discover what Lee Hoffman, Ted White and Bob Silverberg think of when they think the name "Harlan Ellison." And you will find the speech that Harlan gave at the Westercon, a speech that I'm sure will be used for years to come as an example of the type of dynamic thinking that Harlan Ellison has urged on the science fiction field.

But that is not what makes this a special issue. What makes this issue different is that it has been edited by a fan who has a different outlook on life. With each issue of Algol, I've been trying to create a fanzine that is twice as good as each previous issue. I've been trying to create a fanzine that in one way will become a forum for fandom, a combination of fanish and sercon voice that people will listen to whether they be an Ed Wood or an Arnie Katz in attitude. And I think to some extent I've succeeded; I've created a fanzine that people listen to, a fanzine that draws responses from all sides and all levels of fandom.

But I've been publishing this fanzine now for over 3 years, and my fanish ideals have changed. Here I once wanted recognition by fandom, I've found that such recognition is no longer enough. And here I once wanted to become a teacher, occasionally sneaking some of into the courses I taught, I've found that that dream is no longer enough. Just before I published the 9th issue, I dropped out of college because I saw that wasn't what I really wanted, either.

Recognition by fandom is no longer enough, I discovered, shortly after the last issue of this fanzine. Not recognition as a leading fan and fanzine publisher mind you; I've not yet received that honor and I felt that I've still got a way to go before I could accept such recognition with anything but guilt because I was "putting something over" on fandom.

SEE PAGE 6

The cryptic remark "See Page 6" will be explained here. This page is being written some 6 months after the previous page. It is now late November, and the meaning I had sought to express in the words on the previous page has shifted and lost the emphasis I was searching for. Or, in words of late November 1966, it no longer applies to Andrew Porter at this time and place. Therefore I am not going to continue that editorial strain.

+ + + + +

I am sending back money to people who send it to me for subscriptions, as I've decided not to accept them any more. Algol comes out to infrequently for me to burden myself with the necessity of keeping track of a multitude (trap? trap? did I say trap? Freudian Slip --- please excuse) track of a multitude of subscriptions. The draft is looming large in my legend, if I may paraphrase the Beatles, and this fanzine may very well cease publication for a period of 2 or more years, or else it may become a Canadian Humour-zine, although the humor of the situation will be lost on a large number of government officials.

This issue sees the price go to 50¢. If you don't want to pay the price, I would suggest you write something for a future issue. If you are a poor starving college student like Joe Staton, a few illustrations of nekid girruls will get you the next issue, posthaste.

Arnold Katz, editor/publisher of half of Quip, which is a college humor magazine, has suggested that I write out my editorials before I type them onto the masters. Rather than take the advice of one who is, admittedly, vulgar and ostentatious (guilt through association, y'know), I type these immoral words directly onto master. Let the typos fall where they may.

+ + + + +

There are several things that have been squeezed out of this issue (he said as he squeezed still more out); they include an article on "The Cattle Wars," which hasn't been written yet, by Pat Lupoff, plus an article, "Are Femmefans People?" by Robin White, who is most admirable in her own right, both as a person and an object... Ah, yes. And a poem by Jerry Knight, who thought it would be published when he gave it to Bob Lichtman six or so years ago. And lots of other things, including an article by Samuel R. Delany. And lots more things that I don't have yet...

+ + + + +

Another interesting thing that has made this page rather out of date is that New York has won the bid for the 1967 25th World SF Convention. I'm Secretary, and thus don't expect to see much of a great rebirth as far as my general fanac or the schedule of Algol goes. We are aiming to put on a good, original worldcon, and I pity the convention that will follow ours, for they'll have a long way to go to top us. Between September 1st 1965 and September 1st 1966 I personally traveled nearly 10,000 miles attending conventions. I met a lot of people, and I made a lot of ~~grrr~~ friends. New York won the convention against strong opposition, and if you want to join, send your \$3 to NYCon III, P.O. Box 367, NY, NY, 10028. This issue has been a long time in coming out. I hope to have another issue by the time of the NYCon. It's rather odd; I was just thinking. New York in '67, L.A. in '68, St. Louis in '69, Baltimore in '70, Seattle in '71, Birmingham, U.K. in '72, Chicago IV in '73, and... New York once more in '74?!?!? The mind boggles.

Andy P.

MORE BJI

Since I first began to type the masters and stencils for this issue, some nine months have passed. There are a few details which must now be corrected, in order to assure the proper flow as the reader reads this issue.

Last summer Stephen Pickering was at the height of his career. He was known throughout fandom, and provided a most satisfactory target for such as Ted White, Ben Solon, Bob Coulson, and others who found his ungrammatical, unorganized, and blatantly anti-fandom articles ample planks on which to sharpen their claws.

Thus, Ted White's column in this issue deals with Stephen Pickering in a manner designed to utterly reduce Pickering to the state of a blithering idiot. This has since proved unnecessary.

In December of 1966, Stephen Pickering was a house guest of Forry Ackerman, one of the finest and most respected men in fandom.

After Pickering had left his house, Ackerman noted several items of his vast collection missing, and, together with Walt Daugherty, drove to Pickering's house where he found several thousand dollars worth of his collection, which Pickering had stolen.

Faced with these facts, Pickering, in the pages of Degler! (a newszine which I publish) countered with the argument that he had "made a mistake", and also that these acts of thievery should not be judged without learning about Pickering's political activities beforehand.

These arguments, as in most of Pickering's articles, were completely ridiculous, full of fallacy, and generally laughable.

Within the space of a month Pickering has been ostracized from fandom; no more of his articles have been printed, nor has he submitted more of his writings to the fan press.

Forry Ackerman has not pressed charges. Forry Ackerman, who has helped and given precious amounts of his time and energy to helping countless fans, has refused to press charges. The amount of items stolen (pressbooks, original Bradbury mss., countless stills from motion pictures, rare sf books, etc.) qualifies Pickering for the charge of Grand Larceny. His actions alone show that Pickering is badly in need of psychiatric help; yet Forry has refused to press charges.

Thus it is that Ted's attack on Pickering is badly dated. Yet it is still fascinating, and I'm sure that the readers will be interested in it. In the light of subsequent events, in fact, it's fascinating.

The slant of Algol will be changing again, I'm afraid. I'm seeking articles on the present state of science fiction, as well as indicative trends on where it is

going, and why. I think fandom is vitally concerned with this stuff called science fiction, judging from the response the speeches and panels have had at the various conferences and conventions in the past year.

And there is, of course, the excellent example of Chapter 2, Verse 2 of Bill Donaho's zine, labakkuk. labakkuk did two excellent articles dealing with science fiction, and got a hell of a response. Overwhelming, in fact, if I'm any judge of response to fanzines. Greg Benford and George Locke certainly did push a few buttons!

+ + + + +

The last issue of this monstrosity came out nearly a year ago. Since that time, the apa has suffered a distinct setback. Many of the small, newly established ones are gone. OFIA, an older apa is gone also, but seems to have been replaced by Publishing And Distributing Service, or PADS. The age of the Apa, or the era of start-it-yourself, is distinctly over.

Within the past few months such worthy fanzines as Nyarlahothep from Ben Solon, Niekas from Ed Reskys & Felice Rolfe, labakkuk from Bill Donaho, Lighthouse from Terry Carr, and Hippocampelephantocamelos from Fred Hollander have done much to dispell the thought that nobody is publishing a large fanzine anymore.

On the British scene the facts are a bit more discouraging. Britain, formerly Queen of the seas and standard of a vast empire, is sinking deeper and deeper into military and economic decay. The rise in postal rates in that country is doing much to discourage large, hefty fanzines. We should all thank Ghod (and the USPOD) that 3rd class and Book Rate still exist in the United States. Arnie Katz, publisher with Lon Atkins of Quip should feel especially thankful. The 5th issue of that fanzine is 102 pages, and would cost a few cents sent first class.

That large fanzines are once again being published is a good sign. It shows that fandom is once again curious enough about the world around it to support a large fanzine together with all the topics and thousands of words of discussion that it takes to fill a fanzine of more than 40 pages.

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Steve Stiles Dept.: The TAFF race this year will set an American fan down on British soil to attend the British National Convention in 1968. Steve Stiles, well known fan-about-town is running. I think it is the duty of every thinking fan to vote for Steve Stiles, because I think that he's the best candidate for TAFF. Now, I've been thinking about this rationally, and what I've been thinking is pretty much summed up in the previous sentence. Steve has been nominated by Walt Willis and Arthur Thomson in England (or the UK; pardon me, Walt!), and by a whole bunch of worthies here in the US. I really don't know who all these worthies are because Terry Carr isn't home for me to call and ask him, but I'm pretty sure that they're all fine and upstanding worthy-type pillars of ~~life~~ their respective communities, and everyone who reads this should go out and vote for Steve for Taff, else I'll hit you all with a pillar myself. Thank you.

+ + + + +

I publish a newszine entitled Degler! I think it would be a wonderful thing if everyone who reads this sends me a dollar for a 15 issue subscription. On second thought if all you've got is a dollar, vote for Steve Stiles and send Terry Carr your dollar; ghod knows Terry, Steve and TAFF need it more than I do.

The above paragraph was designed, drafted and constructed by the Society to Fill Up The Bottom Of The Page. Not a religious organization, and thanks for listening.

— Andy Porter

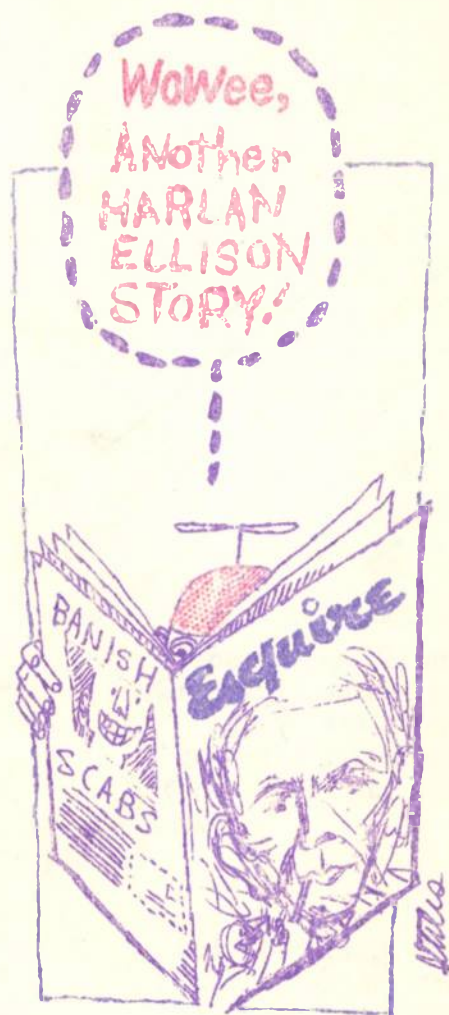
THE ELLISH

Harlan Ellison first burst on the scene in the early 1950's, and he has been with us ever since, save for a short hitch in the army. As a fan, Harlan was known for insane schticks and for being the first of the Loud neofen.

Since 1955, Harlan has been known as a professional writer; as a writer, in fact, to Be Watched. And watched he was; his fiction was criticized by those whose measures were that of fandom rather than of professional writing, and Harlan himself is still thought of as a fan first, and only incidentally a writer.

But writer he is, and a dynamic one. Harlan is no longer a wet-nosed neo, brashly putting people down at conventions. He is, instead, a fully professional writer with an impressive list of credited books, stories, and tv and movie scripts to his name. There are many who disagree with him, including myself over many points. But not to realize that Harlan Ellison is one of the most dynamic forces in modern sf is sheer folly. This special section is published in tribute to, and possibly in spite of, his many talents.

Andrew Porter

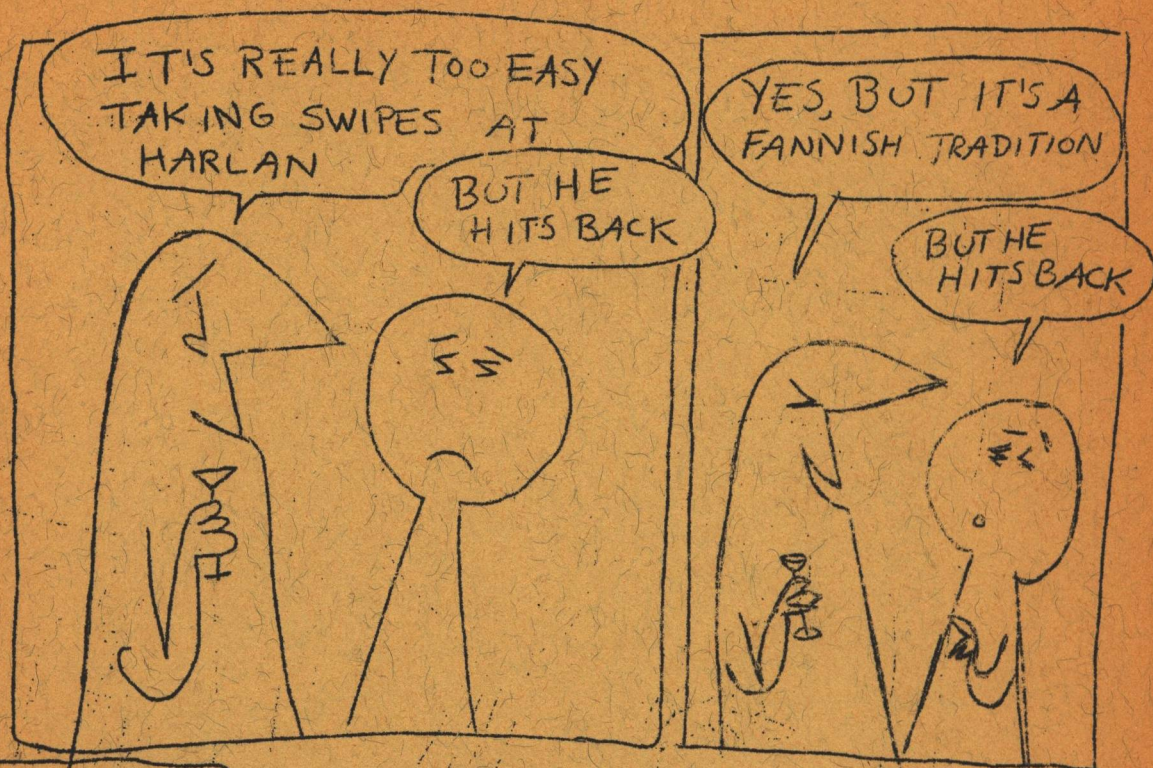


HOW HARLAN ELLISON

BY

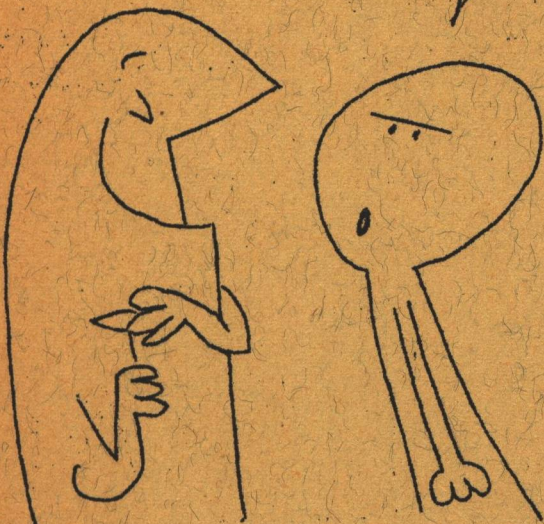
CAME TO BE SO
HONORED BY THE
LORDS (ETC.) OF
FANDOM....

WILLIAM
ROTSLER



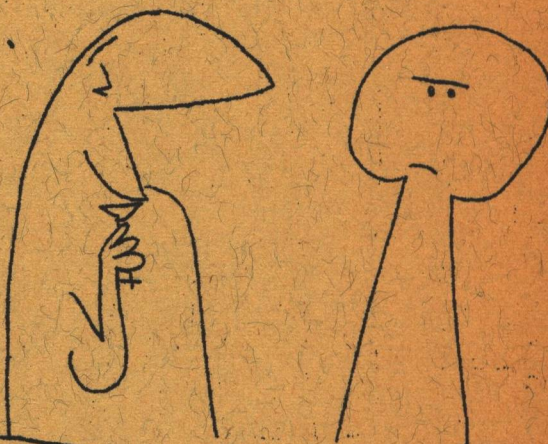
AND ANOTHER THING - IT
FEELS SO GOOD TO TAKE
A SWIPE AT HARLAN

BUT HE
HITS BACK



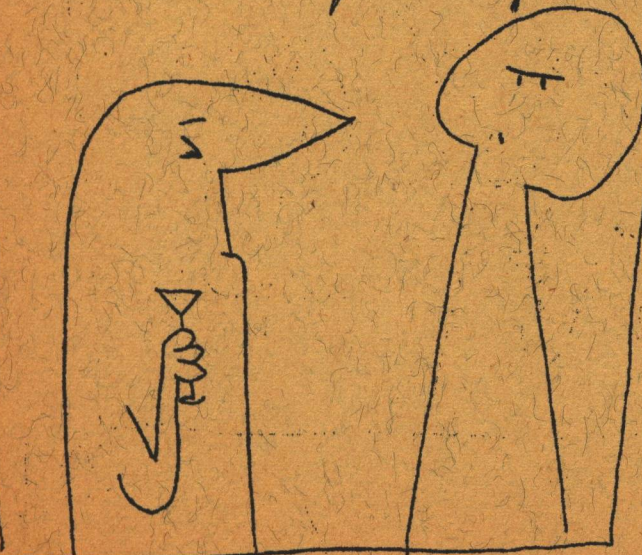
IF THERE WERE NO
HARLAN ELLISON TO
TAKE A WHACK AT
IT WOULD BE NECESSARY
TO INVENT HIM -

BUT HE -

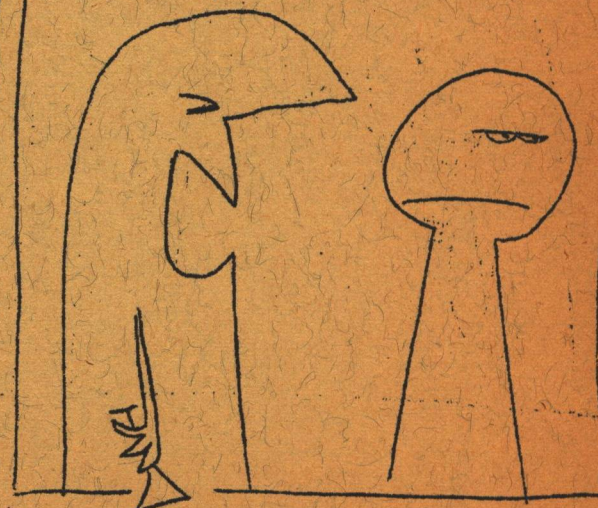


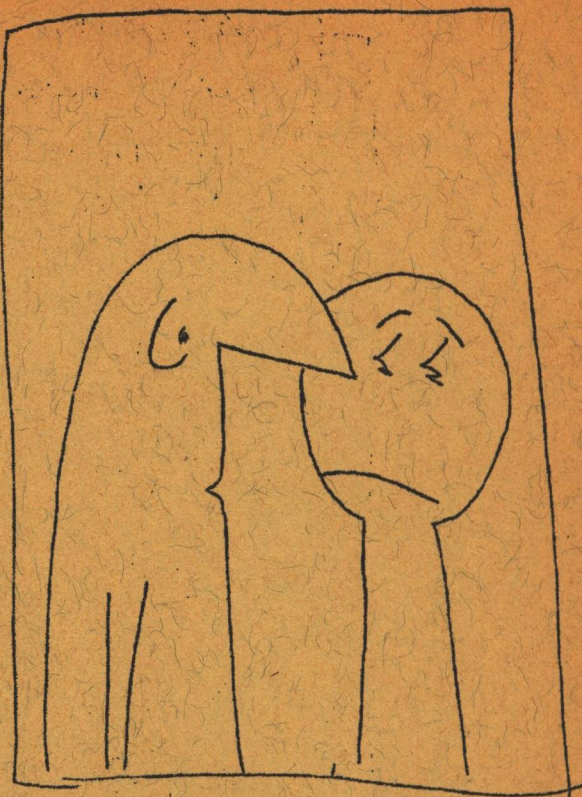
WHICH SOMEONE DID,
I MEAN, HE CAN'T
BE A NATURAL
PHENOMENON

BUT -



WHAT TO DO ABOUT
HARLAN ELLISON IS
THE QUESTION THAT
FANDOM MUST ANSWER
IF IT IS TO SURVIVE





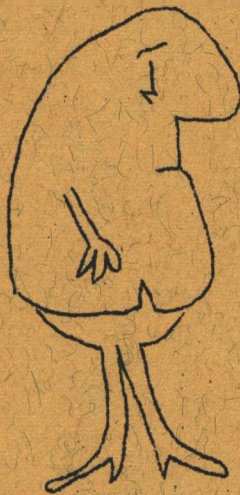
SAY, MAYBE WE COULD
MAKE HIM A GUEST
OF HONOR AT SOME
MINOR CON OR
OTHER

SAY!

AND THAT IS THE STORY
BEHIND THE STORY OF HOW
HARLAN ELLISON CAME
TO BE SO HONORED BY
THE ASSEMBLED LORDS
AND LADIES OF
FANDOM

SOMETIMES
HE
KICKS

WR



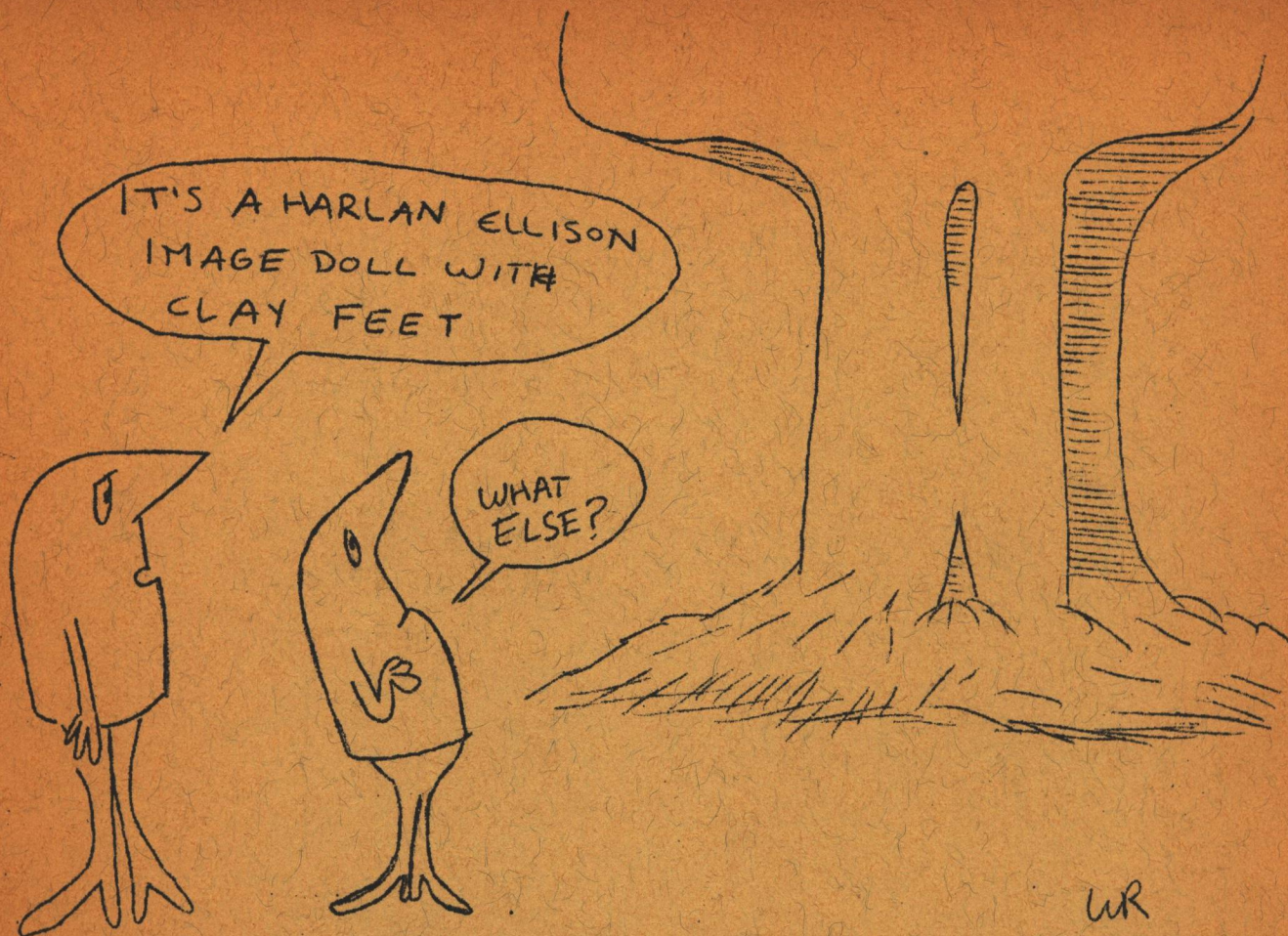
IT'S AN INSTANT
HARLAN ELLISON
IMAGE DOLL. JUST
ADD WATER, RUN
BACK 30 FEET,
PUT IN YOUR EAR-
PLUGS, AND
LISTEN

RH *



WR

*caption by Jack Harness



HARLAN ELLISON

by Lee Hoffman

How can one begin to describe Harlan Ellison? To say that he is a human being is like saying that lightning is a meteorological phenomenon--it's true and elemental, but it is far from adequate. One might say that each is a brilliance that lights the field of vision, present long enough to impress the senses profoundly but gone from sight before one can completely focus on it. When I visualize Harlan, I imagine his face--sharp and intense--but trailing images of itself like those open shutter photographs of headlights on a highway at night. An impression of Harlan is not a static thing--motion is an essence of the subject. Motion and energy--one might start to describe him as pure energy compacted into human form.

Harlan first blazed across my field of vision nigh fifteen years ago at a Midwescon. Engulfed in a cloud of pipe-smoke and a patter of monologues, he was a sharp-featured, quick-tongued young fan who could charm his audience and cut deep at his victims. Harlan made friends quickly in those days--and enemies equally quickly. He was outspoken and direct, opinionated and never afraid to speak his mind.

When I saw him at the Westercon this year, the haze of pipe-smoke was thinner, the patter of monologues more polished. Harlan charmed and entertained his audience with the skill of a professional. Still outspoken and direct, with a wit more fine-honed than ever, he is probably still as capable as ever of making quick enemies. He is still opinionated, still unafraid to speak out. But now his opinions are more considered and his arguments more matured. He has a lot to say--a lot which is well worth listening to.

Harlan is a seeker after truths. He storms battlements and attacks subjects with such force that occasionally members of his audience are dazzled by the pyrotechniques and miss the points--the goals he's striving after. And then there are some members of the audience who still think of Harlan Ellison as the brash young fan he was almost a decade and a half ago--who know him only by an image which has been perpetuated through the wealth of Harlan Ellison Stories still in circulation. (Harlan himself tells these stories with masterful artistry.) To accept only a superficial and distorted image of Ellison--to shrug off his statements without consideration is not only unfortunate, it's intellectual blindness. One may not always agree with his conclusions, but the ideas deserve a damned lot of thought.

Harlan's speech at the Westercon banquet, where he was guest of honor, brought down the house. It was a masterpiece of speechmaking and in one way I feel sorry for those people who will only read the printed words without being able to see and hear

Harlan himself. But on the other hand, making the speech, Harlan was also overwhelming his audience with the intensity of his own personality. It will be easier to give studied consideration to his ideas when reading the words than it was while listening to him speak them.

Despite his dazzling displays of humor, Harlan Ellison is an intensely serious young man. He has always written "from the gut." He lives the same way--with a depth and intensity of emotion. He experiences life and environment with the whole of himself. And from his very beginnings as a writer, he has struggled to express this depth of feeling in his work.

Financially, Harlan is a successful writer. Artistically, he's been acclaimed by readers, critics and fellow-writers. But yet, in a very important sense, he has not yet succeeded. He is still an experimenter with ideas, still a seeker within himself as well as in the world around him. And there is an essence of Ellison which is still untapped.

I feel that when the day comes that Harlan finds the way to express that essence in words, you're going to see the bright lightning of genius on the printed page.

--Lee Hoffman
July 1966

HARLAN ELLISON

— — — TED WHITE

The 1957 Midwestcon was my first. I had been to two worldcons, and was a fairly active, well-known fan. But I was not too familiar with many of the fans who made up the Midwestcon Bunch at that time. So to some extent, I hovered on the fringes.

There was a big gag making the rounds. Harlan Ellison was in the Army, and someone had brought to the con a book about the Army. It was passed from hand to hand, and everyone signed the endpapers and scribbled a note. By the time the book got to me, it said things like, "Hey Harlan, this'll make a man out of you!" and "How'd a runt like you make it into the Army?", and "Where's my sub money to DIMENSIONS, you bastard?" and other epitomes of wit and wisdom.

I joined in the game, scribbled an insult and my name, and passed it on to my neighbor.

I have regretted that, felt a deep embarrassment for it, ever since.

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I first came into contact with Harlan in 1953. Early that year, I'd drawn a cover for Joel Nydahl's VEGA, and Joel, who was a flash-in-the-pan BNF, suggested to Harlan that he get in touch with me. Harlan was then publishing a fanzine called SCIENCE FAN*

TASY BULLETIN; it had previously been the CLEVELAND SCIENCE FANTASY BULLETIN, a club-zine. By now it was averaging sixty to eighty pages an issue, and every page was crammed with art and material by most of the top names in fandom, and many name pros.

Harlan wrote me and asked if I'd care to illustrate some stories for SFB. I was flattered, and accepted. Later, he sent a story. I don't recall the author--it might have been Bert Hirschman--but it was concerned with space travel in some fashion. I did three or four wretched drawings in india ink (which I had no mastery over), and that was the last I was asked to do for SFB.

Time passed. SFB became DIMENSIONS, and had two more issues, close to a year apart.

Then it was 1955, and the Clevention, my first con. I was with John Magnus, who was a buddy of Harlan's, so I tagged along as Harlan led a bunch of us to a department store to buy ties for Roger Sims, or maybe George Young, pausing on the way to give directions to a man working on a light pole, and causing a total commotion in the department store.

I had almost no opportunity to talk with Harlan during the con, but I managed to tag along on a number of occasions. At one point, we were walking down the stairs from the mezzanine together, and I told Harlan that I liked the way he dressed--I was only becoming conscious of good clothes then, and Harlan was as much then as now a sharp dresser. On another occasion Harlan was trying to sell a subscription to DIMENSIONS to another fan. I was passing by, and he halted me, saying, "Here's Ted White. He'll tell you what a great fanzine DIMENSIONS is. Is it worth subscribing to, Ted?"

"Sure," I said. "I'd sub to it if you weren't sending it to me anyway..."

I'd brought a super-leightweight portable typer with me to the con. I was sharing a suite with John Magnus, Harlan, and the Detroit boys (I think I shared a bed with Fred Prophet, but my memory is a little dim now) and I recall Harlan shaking me awake to say, "Hey, that neat little portable of yours--wanta sell it?" He gave me some money down and said he'd send me the remainin' amount later.

Next year it was the NYCon II. Harlan was married now, a selling writer, living on the upper west side in Manhattan. Several of us dropped over to visit him before the con. I didn't have much more chance to talk with him than before, although I did ask him about the money he owed me. He told me he'd have it for me shortly.

So when that book came to me, at the Midwestcon the following year, I wrote something like "Did you escape into the Army to avoid paying me?"

+ + + + +

Harlan in the fifties cultivated kookiness. He did schticks, but in a more improvisational sense. He might be walking down the street, and suddenly stop us all, walk up to a total stranger, and launch into a schtick which convulsed us all in total helpless laughter, while the stranger grew more and more puzzled by this crazy man and his friends.

That was the on-stage Harlan, the Harlan on display in public. That was the Harlan who, at the 1958 Midwestcon, in driving us to the banquet, nearly caused the heart-failure of all his passengers with his insane driving, pausing in headlong flight to drive onto the sidewalk and corner a hapless pedestrian for directions, muttering, all the time, "We're late -- I'm the toastmaster, and we're late..."

I was part of the Public, an admiring member of the audience of dull people who were enlivened by this energetic performer in our midst. I saw Harlan exclusively in his Public facet. I heard his explanation, with running dialogues, of how LOWDOWN Magazine had printed his picture as "Cheech Beldone," a juvie hood, and butchered his article. I watched with something close to awe, as he took command of a fancy expensive restaurant. Harlan was the Swinger in fandom. The Rest of us were Clods.

But not everyone appreciated this fact. Many were jealous of Harlan, and more were rubbed the wrong way by his mannerisms, his usurpation of the spotlights. When the subject of Harlan Ellison came up at parties, there were two kinds of Harlan Ellison stories that would be told. On the one hand, there were the funny things, the 'What-a-gassy-thing-happened-the-last-time-I-was-out-with-Harlan' variety. But there were also the cruel ones, the ones about That Bastard Ellison, and How I really Screwed Him Up, which, in the right company, would be greeted with howls of glee.

I never enjoyed those stories. An adolescent underdog myself, I didn't get much kick out of the stories of How I Shat On Harlan. I had as much reason as any of them to dislike Harlan -- it was years before I got the rest of my money from him -- but somehow I'd never been able to work up a good hate against him.

When Harlan moved back to New York in 1960, I was living here. And, to my surprise, he looked me up. As a matter of fact, he ended up staying in my apartment until he ~~could~~ could find one for himself -- one which turned out to be in the same block. He'd broken with his first wife, and turned his back on an editorial job with Bill Hamling in Chicago, and now he was back in NYC, freelancing.

It was in this period that I got to know Harlan as a person, to see him with his defenses down, the Private and real Harlan Ellison.

+ + + + +

There were a few stormy moments between us. Harlan is such a totally volatile person that there had to be. But I will say this here and now: if I liked Harlan Ellison before -- and then it could only have been the attraction of the glamor he attached to himself -- I liked him better now. Harlan was a good friend. Although 3,000 miles separate us now, and we see each other infrequently, I would like to think that we remain good friends. Each of us was in the other's debt more than once, during the time Harlan lived in New York; we did a great deal together. We drove all over the city in Harlan's Austin-Healy -- I was one of the few he would trust to drive it for him -- we visited editorial offices together, took in concerts, jazz clubs, restaurants. It was an exciting period for me. And a valuable one. Harlan taught me a lot about writing, directly and indirectly, and was responsible for my first sale to ROGUE.

+ + + + +

It was during this period that the Affair of My Typewriter was resolved.

Harlan had never finished paying me. His problem was that he had enjoyed almost no use of the machine. He had taken it home with him from the Clevention, and almost as soon as he was back in NYC, Ken Beale had borrowed it. Ken hocked it, and lost the ticket. So Harlan had no typer, and no means to get it back.

1960 was the year of the PittCon, and also the year Eric Bentcliffe won TAFF and Joy and Sandy Sanderson left Inchmerry and emigrated to the US -- specifically, to the Bronx.

New York fandom got together to have a party for Eric on his arrival. Belle Dietz suggested it be at their place. When we all got to the party, it turned out to be more in honor of the Sandersons. And when Harlan got there, he found Ken Beale in attendance. Harlan spoke a few threatening words to Ken, suggesting that Ken pony up the money for the typewriter he had virtually stolen, so that Harlan could pass it along to me, whom he still owed.

Ken allowed as how it was all water five years under the bridge. Harlan, indignant at this calilier attitude, and feeling guilty for having owed the money to me for so long, became angry, and suggested that Ken had better rethink things. He put it more strongly than that, actually.

He must've scared Ken, or at least impressed him. Ken told the story to Calvin Thomas Beck and Mama Beck, and the latter apparently acted true to form.

A few weeks later, on a Sunday afternoon, two cops from the narcotics squad raided Harlan's apartment.

Now Harlans' only vice is smoking. He does not drink, and his attitude toward drugs is actually puritanital. Harlan was badly shaken that he should be raided by the narcotics cops. To him their very presence was a slander against him. He volunteered to let them conduct a thorough search.

They found no narcotics, of course.

But they found something else. They found a box in which Harlan had a small, .22 revolver, a switchblade knife, and a set of brass knucks. These had been tucked into a closet, and were souvenirs of the days when Harlan had pretended to be "Cheech Beldone," in the slums of Brooklyn.

They arrested Harlan for a violation of the Sullivan Act, the harsh New York State law on the possession of fire-arms and concealed weapons.

Harlan's mother was in town that weekend. Monday I drove her and Linda Soloman, a girl who lived in Harlan's building, down to the criminal courts building in Harlan's car. It was a rainy, gusty day. A hurricane was hitting New York City, the last one we've had. Theron Raines, Harlan's agent at that time, met us. This was the arraignment. The judge droned on in a bored voice, and without giving Harlan a word edgewise, set bail, and moved on to the next case.

Harlan was home the next day, on bail. He was shaken. The conditions in the jail, The Tombs, had disgusted and upset him, as well they might. He speny half an hour telling me about them, his voice tense and occasionally breaking. The strain had been a hard one.

"Harlan," I said, "You might as well try to get something out of this. Why don't you write it up for the VILLAGE VOICE?" He was then a contributor to the VOICE. "Write it up, tell people about it. If you're outraged, this is one way to communicate it in a way that might do some real constructive good."

"You're right, Ted," he said.

A couple of weeks later, the VOICE (a weekly) came out with a banner over the masthead: "BURIED IN THE TOMBS: HARLAN ELLISON."

The progression of events after that was steam-roller-like. The wire-services

had run an item on Harlan's arrest; his doorman had tipped them off. Early versions made it sound like Harlan was a gun-running junkie. Various fans picked up the item and some of them made gleeful noises -- boy, Harlan had sure gotten his, now!

The charge was eventually dismissed, but in the meantime Bill Hamling had seen the Voice piece. He wanted Harlan to do it over as a book. Harlan had remarried. He needed steady employment. That fall he and his wife moved back to Chicago, and Harlan launched the Regency Books line under Hamling. The sixth book released was the one the idea of which had been responsible for the line: Memos from Purgatory, by Harlan Ellison.

On the back of the title page is a note: "NOTE: Brief passages from BOOK TWO: 'The Tombs' appeared in The Village Voice...as 'Buried In The Tombs,' and are used here in greatly expanded form."

But, on the facing page -- "When the dark begins to close in around you, a friend can be identified by the candle he carries. So this book is dedicated To TED E. WHITE."

That's the first and only time a book has been dedicated to me. And as Harlan mentioned at the Westcon this year, "I don't dedicate books lightly, you know, Ted."

I appreciate that.

And, more important, I appreciate Harlan Ellison. To me it is less important what he is -- be it science fiction writer, tv or movie scripter, or just a bombastic and dynamic fan -- than who he is. Who he is is Harlan Ellison, a good and valuable friend.

-- Ted White, 1966

the JET-PROPELLED birdbath

by

*R*O*B*E*R*T S*I*L*V*E*R*B*E*R*G*

I first met Harlan Ellison at the 1953 world s-f convention, in Philadelphia. Our previous contacts had been by mail and telephone; but I spotted him almost the instant I had entered the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel. He was the little guy in the center of the crowd, doing all the talking and obviously holding the audience in the palm of his hand.

"Ellison?" I said. "Silverberg."

He said something snide, and a deep and strange friendship was born.

Two Ellison episodes of that 1953 convention stand out clearly. One took place on the final night, in the hotel lobby. A certain New York fringe fan named Joe Semenovitch had taken offense at some remarks of Harlan's, and had come to the convention that Monday to "get" him, bringing along two anthropoid goons. The three hoods -- as

sinister-looking as you can imagine -- converged on Harlan in the lobby. Any sensible man would have dissappeared at once, or at least yelled for the nearest bell-hop to stop the slaughter. But Harlan stood his ground, snarled back at Semenovitch nose-to-nose, and avoided mayhem through a display of sheer bravado. Which demonstrated one Ellison trait: physical courage to the verge of idiocy. Unlike many tough-talking types, Harlan is genuinely fearless.

The other episode occurred at the banquet of that convention. The toastmaster (Bloch? Asimov?) announced that Harlan and a quondam fan of great gifts named Dave Ish had sold a story to Tony Boucher's F&SF. A beaming Harlan confirmed the revelation: the story was called "Monkey Business," I think, and was 2500 words long, and the payment had been \$100. As a fledgling neopro myself, I felt the tinge of admiration well mixed with envy. But the announcement was in error. Harlan and Dave hadn't quite sold "Monkey Business" yet; they had merely submitted it. In due time Boucher read it and rejected it. It had only seemed, to Harlan's eager imagination, that a story so good was certain to be sold. Which illustrates a second Ellison trait: a hunger for literary success so powerful that it dissolved the distinctions between fact and fantasy.

For a long time, Harlan's literary triumphs were of the same illusory order. In December, 1953, he came to New York and visited me at Columbia, where I was then in my sophomore year. My roommate was out of town, and he stayed overnight with me. In a pizzeria on Amsterdam Avenue we discussed our future plans for professional success. In my case the future had already begun, for I had sold a couple of stories and even a novel. Harlan, too, had "sold" a novel: a 27,000 word juvenile called STARSTONE. Gnome press was going to publish it, he told me proudly. Only it wasn't so. Harlan was anticipating reality again, and reality ultimately failed him.

He went back to Cleveland, and I didn't hear much from him for over a year. I pursued my writing career with indifferent success, scratching out a few sales to Bill Hamling and Bob Lowndes. In the Spring of 1955 Harlan reappeared in New York, this time to stay. He rented a room on the floor below mine, and set up a literary shop. I am still awed by the fastidiousness of his room. Everything was in its place, and stayed there. And everything was tasteful, down to a little leather hassock that I bought from him when he felt the pinch of cash, and that I keep in my office to this day. He took a job in a bookstore during the day, and wrote s-f at night.

The summer of 1955 was a long, hot, brutal one for Harlan. He didn't sell a thing. There was the famous time when he reported that he had a crime story "90% sold" to Manhunt -- for so an editor of that once-celebrated magazine had told him. But the editors of Manhunt were pseudonymous myths, the stories were bought en bloc from Scott Meredith, and Harlan's story was in the mailbox, rejected, the next day. Getting the last 10% of that sale had been too much.

A few weeks later he swaggered into my room and declared, "You'll be glad to know I hit Campbell today, Bob." I had visions of the towering JWC sagging to the floor of his office, blood spouting from his nose, while Harlan stood above him stomping his sinus-squirter into ruin. But no: all Harlan meant was that he had sold a story to Campbell. He hadn't, though.

So it went for him, one imaginary sale after another in a hellish summer of frustration and failure. That I was now selling stories at a nice clip did not improve Harlan's frame of mind, for our friendship always had a component of rivalry in it. When Randy Garrett came to town and moved into our building, he began collaborating not with Harlan the would-be writer, but with Silverberg, the successful new pro. The summer became a daze for Harlan; jeered at from all sides, he clung somehow to his goal and banged out an immense, bloated, preposterous novelette called CRACKPOT PLAN-

ET. He sent it off to If, and then went back to Cleveland to visit his family.

Now I had read most of Harlan's stories that summer, and many of them seemed of full professional quality to me -- one called "Life Hutch", another called "Glowworm". But "Crackpot Planet" struck me as a dog, and I told him so. He shrugged. A couple of weeks went by. Then I went to his mailbox downstairs to collect his days mail and forward it to him, and there was a letter from If. They were buying "Crackpot Planet", all 17,000 absurd words of it.

It was not Harlan's first sale. Larry Shaw had bought "Glowworm" for his new Infinity, and an expose-magazine had picked up something by Harlan about kid-gang life. (But that's a story in itself, as Harlan will agree. Eh, Cheech?) But those two sales had been to friends of Harlan, and so perhaps were tainted by personal sympathies. The sale to If had been coldly professional: a story sent off to a strange editor, an acceptance coming back. Harlan was in.

There was no stopping him after that. By the end of 1956, he was selling at least a story a week, and in the succeeding ten years he's never had much difficulty persuading editors to buy his wares. His early work was awkward and raw -- a weird compound of Nelson Algren and Lester del Rey, in which he managed to absorb the worst features of each, meld them, add liberal dollops of Hemingway, Walt Whitman, Ed Earl Repp, and Edgar Allen Poe, and top off with a wild melange of malapropisms. But there was a core of throbbing excitement within all that nonsense, and the inner power remained within him as the outer junk sloughed away with maturity.

For the last few years we've lived on opposite sides of the continent, keeping in touch fitfully. I regret that, because Harlan's recent successes in Hollywood and in science fiction have eliminated that residue of envy that often tinged our friendship in the 1950's. There are things I have that Harlan still covets, but professional success is no longer one of them. And, as he knows, there are some things for which I envy him. So old wounds are healed and old debts cancelled.

Not long ago I happened past 114th Street, where Harlan and Randy and I lived that blistering, tense summer twelve years ago. The place looks the same from the outside. I wonder how long it'll be before they put the commemorative plaque on the door.

::Robert Silverberg, 1967::

BOOKS BY HARLAN ELLISON:

Rumble
The Deadly Streets
The Man With Nine Lives (The Sound Of A Scythe)
A Touch Of Infinity
The Juvvies (Children Of The Gutter)
Gentleman Junkie & Other Stories of the Hung-Up Generation
Memos From Purgatory
Rockabilly
The Crackpots
Don't Speak Of Rope (with Avram Davidson)
Ellison Wonderland
Paingod & Other Delusions

WORDS BY HARLAN ELLISON:

The vagaries of the human spirit, particularly in times as debilitating and sorrowful as these, seem almost to stack the deck against lasting friendships.

I have the feeling it is necessary to know what a writer stands for, in what he believes, what it takes to make him bleed, before a reader should be asked to care about what the writer has written.

I have the unseemly habit of going naked into the world.

"How did you come to write this story?" I am frequently asked, whether it be this story, or that one over there, or the soft pink-and-white one in the corner. Usually, I shrug helplessly. My ideas come from the same places yours come from: Compulsion City, about half an hour out of Inspirationsville.

...I fear for the safety of my country and its people from this creeping paralysis of the ego.

Trends knock me out, frankly.

There is an unreality here that superimposes itself over the normal continuum, effecting a world-view much like that observed through a dessert-dish of Jell-O.

...this is the real thing, we all go splat a week from next Wednesday.

-- from Paingod & Other Delusions & Ellison Wonderland

A
TIME
FOR
DARING

HARLAN
ELLISON

edited
by

TED WHITE

A fancy EDITOR'S NOTE:

When the transcription of Harlan's speech was handed to me, it was a mess. The typist, a commercial secretary with no knowledge of sf or fandom, and, I should guess, not much experience with transcriptions, had strung together long paragraphs with a few commas and dashes, had arbitrarily punctuated the rest, and generally made the work unreadable. Andy Porter went through the ms and checked it against the tape and made corrections. He sent it to Harlan, who was quite busy at that time, and who took one look at the thing and threw up his hands in disgust. Harlan gave it to me at the Tricon, saying that he thought it would require a lot of work, because so much of it was full of casual speech patterns: the extemporaneity of the occasion which reflected itself in "You know"s and "I mean"s of which nearly every freely delivered speech will have a quota.

I have dawdled over the editing, and I accept the responsibility for this delay, because when I got home with the speech and read it, I felt much as Harlan had. The opening portions, anecdotal in nature, are the worst in that respect, especially since it begins (in the ms.) with "VOICE: ...and I said, I've reached a point now," etc., which implies that the tape did not catch the opening.

I have edited most of the redundancies and false starts out. But I haven't tried to change the speech into a written article, with all the formality which that implies. I think that is unnecessary and self-defeating. This was a speech, given by the guest of honor at the 1966 Westercon. It is not a tightly written article originally intended for publication and the scrutiny of each sentence and word. It was extemporaneous, and thus to an extent spontaneous. (I cut an exchange when Harlan suggested it was too hot for jackets and doffed his.) It should be read as such. Harlan was addressing a live audience. It was a warm and responsive audience (I was there), and while it argued later over the issues Harlan had raised, it did not quibble that he named only two of the "three warring coteries" he mentioned, or that, in response to a train of thought, he might veer into a digression for a time.

As a matter of fact, for an unrehearsed speech, for a speech not read from a cleanly typed sheaf of papers, it was amazingly well structured. I haven't tampered with its structure at all. I don't agree with all his points — Harlan warned that I wouldn't — but I think he presented them forcefully and well, and the speech was certainly well received by the whole audience.

— Ted White

A TIME FOR DARING

HARLAN
ELLISON

I've reached a point now where I don't mind people who've known me for like ten or twelve years who come up and hit me with a shot: I don't mind that at all because I know where they're at. They're consistent. But people that I've met for the first time who think they have the right, the audacity to come up and --bam! bam!-- give me a real zinger, and I'm supposed to stand there and say, "ha ha, you're right, I'm an imbecile..." As I told Lee Hoffman, I've just about had it. I resent it and they don't really know who I am, or where I'm at, or what I do. All they know is that thirteen years ago I was a snot-nosed kid, and I'm not snot-nosed any more and they resent it. And Lee said, "They're never going to forgive you for starting where they started and going further and then rubbing their noses in it." It set me to remembering -- it set me extrapolating, and to drawing some conclusions. The conclusions that I've drawn are all inextricably involved with the work that I've been doing and which I hope some of you like.

Many of you may remember stories that I wrote seven, eight years ago, that I wrote for money, and wrote because, as I said elsewhere this convention, and Ted Sturgeon has said very kindly, I have to keep working. I have to keep my muscles limbered, and if that means writing garbage from time to time, okay, I'll write whatever I have to write to keep working.

But the conclusions that I've drawn, I am sure are going to offend you. And the offense is going to be greater for those of you who have known me for a long time, who've known me for years. It's certainly going to infuriate Ted White and Al Lewis, not to mention that staunch coterie who still contend that Doc Smith, God rest his wonderful soul, is the highest pinnacle of excellence any science fiction writer can attain. I knew Doc Smith and admired him vastly and would be a snot-nose again if I denegated him. His work is something else.

So, I have to build a solid groundwork for these insults, and that requires telling a couple of stories.

Now, I suppose that generically, these are Harlan Ellison stories, because they're about me, but in a sense they're apocryphal. First a footnote:

A year or so ago, I did a television show that I liked a lot, and when I knew it was coming on I sent out some post cards to people saying, Please watch this thing. Everybody interpreted it as log rolling for a Hugo nomination. They were saying, You dirty huckster you, you swine you! Like it was terrible that I'd said, "I did a nice thing, would you like to look at it?" They all said, That's not right; you're not supposed to mention these things. So I suppose this part of my talk will be considered Log rolling again for a Hugo and if so, Vote, kids. It's stiff competition.

Ten years ago the first Milford Science Fiction Writers Conference was held by Damon Knight up in Milford, Pike County, Pa., a nice idyllic spot. I wrangled myself an invitation. I think I had about eight or ten stories published, and I was living in the same building with Bob Silverberg, and writing furiously ten thousand words a night. Most of it was not really worth reading. (I had written at this point the story that James Blish called the worst single story he ever read in his life...He's right! It's awful!) I went up there, for the conference, and I had some very firm ideas about what I believed a science fiction writer should do. I had not at that point realized

that I was not a science fiction writer, I was a writer, and one is not the other.

So, there I was, this little guy who had not published very much, and I was surrounded by Sturgeon and Algis Budrys, and Charlie De Vet, and Cyril Kornbluth, for God sakes, and Fred Pohl, and Damon Knight. I stood around and God, it was like being at Mount Rushmore.

And they came down on me, man, like Rutley Quantrell's army. They wiped up the floor with me. If I opened my mough and said, "Uh," they said, "What do you mean, 'Uh'?" Everybody's a critic. "Uh"? What is that?" I had brought along my typewriter. I bring along my typewriter everywhere. I had it up in the room up there and I would go up and I would peck out a few paragraphs, a few lines, and they were saying, That smart-ass--what is he doing with a typewriter, trying to show us up? What is he, a wise guy?

I could do nothing right. They made me feel like two and a half pounds of dog meat.

I never went back to the Milford Conference. I couldn't hack it. It really took something out of me. I went back to New York and brooded like crazy. I didn't know if I was any good. All I knew was that I knew how to put down words on paper and people bought them. But at that time, I thought maybe that was the end. It isn't, and I learned that shortly thereafter.

Last year, I went back to Milford.

They have this Writer's Workshop and through the seven days of the conference everybody lays out a story on a big table and then everybody discusses it. But only those who've laid out a story, who put it on the line, can talk, can make a comment. No wives are allowed, no girlfriends, no chicken flickers, nothing; just the workers.

This workshop table is filled with stories, and they change them every day; they have a list of who is going to be talked about on that day. There were bits and pieces of stories that hadn't sold, short stories that were rejected maybe ten, twelve times and they couldn't figure out why, maybe a portion of a novel in work and they wanted some comment on it, things like that. Well I don't have any of those. I sell what I write, everything I write. So I went up to the Tom Quick Inn, which is where I was staying, and I sat down and wrote a short story, which I had been thinking about for some time, and I put it on this table, and the procedure is that you sit here and they go around the room from the left of you. Everybody comments once, what they thought of the story. They've all read it the night before and they lay it on you, you know; they really come on. There was a pretty sizeable bunch of people there, like Keith Laumer and Norman Spinrad, and Larry Niven; Damon Knight was there and his wife, Kate Wilhelm; Tom Disch -- a bunch of professionals -- Sonya Dorman, who's a marvelous writer; she writes under the name of S. Dorman. (Please look for her stories; they're excellent. There is one in the new Orbit collection that Damon Knight published.)

I laid this story out with a couple or three carbons, so everybody could get a chance at it the night before.

Point: When I sat down to write this story, I said, I am going to write a story that is going to knock them on their ass. I'm going to write a story so good that they can't ignore it. I'm going to write a story to get even for ten years ago -- that's how good that story's going to be, and it's going to be a prize winning story.

So, anyhow, they started talking about it and there's a coterie up there composed of Damon Knight, his wife Kate Wilhelm, their current fair haired boy, Tom Disch, who couldn't write his way out of a pay toilet if he had to, a few other people; they're all on one side of the room. Keith Laumer, and Norman Spinrad and Larry Niven are on

the other side of the room and there's a bunch of other nice people sitting around, It started off with Damon.

Now, Damon was putting together the first Orbit collection, and he was looking for stories, so I said, "I'd like to submit this to you, Damon, if you like it." So he read it the night before, and it was Damon who set the tone. He said, "This is... I don't know what you're doing here, Harlan, I really don't. I don't understand this story, I don't know what it means, I don't know what you're going for." And I don't say anything. I'm sitting there, quiet. I'm cool.

Next, it's Kate Wilhelm. "You know I was reading this last night and I'm forced to concur with Damon's opinion. I find this story derivative and unappealing, and stupid and dumb and badly typed and everything, you know..." Man, I type the cleanest first draft in the world, baby.

So, we worked our way through the friends of Damon Knight Society and we got around the other side of the room. Keith Laumer said, "This is one of the most brilliant stories I've ever read. It's fantastic; I love it. I think it's great." Then we hit Walter Moudy and he said, "I think it's a classic. I've never read anything quite like this. It's new, it's fresh, it's different."

One half of the room despised it; it was awful. Damon, needless to say, rejected it from Orbit, and the other side of the room loved me. So Fred Pohl was coming up for the last day, and before Damon could get to him, I hit him with this story and asked, Do you like it? He read it on the spot, and he said Yeah, I'll give you a top rate in Galaxy for it. I said, Thanks a lot, and he bought it. That story, "Repent Harlequin, Said The Ticktock Man," was in Fred Pohl's Galaxy, it was picked by Terry Carr and Don Wollheim for the World's Best Science Fiction: 1966, and it won the Science Fiction Writers of America Nebula, which Damon had to give me.

And as if that weren't insult, we added the injury because Doubleday is publishing the SFWA Nebula award anthology, and it's right in there, and Damon's got to edit it and say something cool about it. And now it's up for the Hugo and it's gonna lose to Zelazny naturally, but I don't mind, because I've proved my point.

I'm going back to Milford this year and I'm going to give them another chance.

It seems incredible that a field as small as ours could support as handsomely and with as much room as it does, three warring coteries of writers. I'm not sure many of us are even aware of it, because we take what is given to us in science fiction magazines and since we have a limited number of editors we get pretty much what they like. But we're in the middle of a vast upheaval in the science fiction field. And I would like to try and really go into it at great length and bore the ass off you.

The three coteries, to begin with. First of all, there's Damon Knight's group, which I like to refer to as Damon Knight's group, and which will hereinafter be referred to as Damon Knight's group. These are the people who accept only that which they like and they have positions of a certain amount of authority--Damon's an editor at Berkley Books, and his wife Kate Wilhelm is a writer and Damon edits Orbit -- there's this whole thing going there. They get people like Tom Disch published, and since Judy Merrill is also in that in-group, she writes a laudatory review of The Genocides in F&SF. The book is not a very good book, to be nice about it, and from her review we'd have thought we had a new Nathaniel West in our midst.

Then on the other side, we've got Al Lewis' group. Now Al Lewis believes that stories of science fiction...I realize I'm putting words in your mouth, and you'll be able to shoot me down later, but since this is my group, baby, you'll have to sit there and put up with it. Al's feeling--and I'm sure that this is not exactly precise--his

idea of the man of the future is standing on this sidewalk going through future time and he looks around and says, "look at this fantastic world that we live in, isn't it incredible, I say to you, Alice of the future 20432209, isn't this a grand world in which the buildings rise up a full screaming two hundred feet into the air, isn't this a marvelous sidewalk that's going at 25 miles an hour, and we have one over there that goes at 35 miles an hour, and another one right next to it at 45 miles an hour, to which we can leap, if we want to..."

Al believes that technology is the single motivating force in our culture and Al is wrong, but I'm not about to argue with him on that point. I think this field is big enough to support all kinds of dumb things. That isn't important. We sitting here are the last of the fastest guns in the west. We may find it a little difficult to understand.

For, I don't know how many years I've been kicking around, about thirteen or fourteen, something like that, but Christ, Forry Ackerman, you've been what -- 35 years in the field?

VOICE: Forty.

Forty. That's even more frightening. All right for 40 years science fiction fans have been saying, we're not Buck Rogers. You know, like we've got some substantiality, we've got things we can teach you. We're going to the moon. "You're going where?" "We're going to the moon." I've got a copy of an article that was written in the Cleveland News back in '52, when I was in the Cleveland Science Fiction Society, and they sent this reporter down to laugh at us, and he came down and he did a whole nice big thing, and you know, "the room tilted at full momentum as these people decided that we were going to the moon." I mentioned to him about Heinlein's sliding roadways. You know, we could use them for conveying freight and things like that and you know he did this whole article with just this kind of tongue in cheek kind of crap that you've seen a million times after a science fiction convention or some magazine will write thinking they're very cute and clever and not realizing that they are 40 years out of date.

But we've always said, respect us, look at us, we've got something, for Christ's sake, we're over here, you know. Ignore the western, ignore the detective story, and forget Salinger for a minute, we're over here. Right? Well, baby, I hate to shake up your nervous system, but that's been happening for about ten years. We are no longer way out there in the back eddy. The big boys are coming to us and they're looking at what we're doing. A couple of days before we came here, Theodore Sturgeon and I -- we're both working doing scripts for the Bob Hope Chrysler Theatre--Ted had gone up there to see Gordon Hessler, one of the Producers, and met Gordon and sat and talked to him for a while. I went up a couple of days later, and I walked in and Gordon came out from behind his desk. He's a lovely charming man and he said, "Hi, Harlan; I want you to meet John O'Swarz, who is from France," and this little guy, this little intense dark, electric cat leaped out of his chair and came over and grabbed my hand with both of his and pumped it like crazy and said, "Monsieur Ellison I'm overwhelmed, I do not know what to say, to meet you, to find out that you are alive, that you exist, you are...In one week to meet Theodore Sturgeon, and Harlan Ellison in one room is fantastic." He said, "We know your work over there, every story of yours. We know you more than Salinger, more than Hemingway, more than Steinbeck, we know you and Sturgeon." We're underground heroes over there. And it scares the crap out of you when someone comes from way over there...and it also annoyed me because I haven't gotten one dime from reprint money over there.

We are accepted. We're there. Stop pushing. (That's a good line from me. I'll have to remember that.)

The man sitting here: Digby Deal from Los Angeles Magazine. He's doing an article on us. He doesn't say anything, he just comes and sits, and he does. Stanley Kubrick is doing a picture with Arthur C. Clarke. He called for Arthur C. Clarke, and he said, "Look, I want to do this science fiction picture in Cinerama and I want you to do a book and I'll do the screenplay and we'll exchange bylines, me on your book and you on my movie, and we'll do a whole thing." Yeah, that's cool.

Isaac Asimov gets Fantastic Voyage in the Saturday Evening Post. He doesn't get a dime for it. That's another story. That's power politics.

The ABC Project '67 series: They go and get Robert Sheckley, and Robert Sheckley does a show for them. An hour original.

Gene Roddenberry of Star Trek: When he started the project he had his staff compile a book of the top 1000 science fiction stories, which he sent out to all the writers who might possibly work on the series, with this admonition: "These are the best; we want better, we want different. Don't try to cop these ideas, because we know where they're at, right?" That's Roddenberry, he goes and he hires top TV writers like Adrian Spees, and John D.F. Black, who just won the Writers Guild Award, and Barry Trivers, who won it a couple of years ago. But in addition he hired Sturgeon and he had Phil Farmer working for him and he had A.E. Van Vogt writing for him, and I'm writing for him and Robert Bloch is writing for him and Jerry Sohl and Robert Sheckley...anybody he can get hold of who knows anything at all about writing for the visual medium, who is a science fiction person. He wants to do it right. No more giant ants, or plant aphids that eat Cleveland, none of that. This is the real scan.

Every month you go in your bookstore and there are new books--in paperbacks, in hardcovers. What do you think all this is? Chopped liver? I mean, they know who we are. But we don't know who they are. We're still fighting the Civil War, friends. We're still back there screaming help, help, we're not dumb, we're not dumb. They know we're not dumb. And the more we argue about it, the more they cease to hear us, because we've now reached a noise level where no one's paying attention.

What I'm trying to say is that the main stream has accepted us, but we haven't accepted the main stream. We're still back here playing power politics. All us little fans are still doing our little convention thing and having our little internecine warfare and we're afraid. We're petrified to go out there and stand up and maybe get a belt in the belly.

Now this fear and terror by fandom of being assimilated is like the same thing that every ethnic group has in its ghetto, like "you're gonna marry him, he's a goy what is that?" Right? Or "I don't wanna see our race mongrelized." That's exactly what it is. We're afraid to get into the big stream. Somebody like a Herman Wouk will come along and do "The Lomocome Papers" -- you all remember that garbage-- and we'll say Well, see: that's what's going to happen to us. But we ignore Cat's Cradle and we ignore White Lotus and we ignore Clockwork Orange and we ignore Only Lovers Left Alive and all of these pure science fiction books, which are done by people outside the field, who have taken the ideas that we've put forth, who have used all of these tremendous concepts that we spent 35 years developing and they're using them; it's a matter of course for them. They say, "Sure these guys have proved it already; we don't have to. We can go ahead from there."

Now, what I'm trying to say is that we've become important to the mainstream. Truly important. This is steam engine time for science fiction. It's science fiction time. Science is passing us by. We're on the moon and we're doing the freezing the bodies thing, and Time Tunnel comes on TV this Fall (it's a piece of crap, but it comes on, and people will know what it's all about, going back in time; they'll be able to understand that.) So it's our time now, friends.

Now is when we catch the gravy.

Now is when everything pays off for us.

Now is when a man like Sturgeon is going to collect what he's been due for all these many years. You know: like writing penny a word and two-cent a word stories for the Pulp; now all of a sudden he's going to get 3, 4, 5, 6, \$10,000 for a television script, for a book. This is what we deserve. We paid our dues...it's time for us now.

But we're being held back...we're being fettered in many respects and torn apart by the conservatives. Now, no offense. We're being hamstrung in the magazines and in the books and by the entrenched power structures -- you know, the Damon Knight gang-- and by the people among us who are short-sighted, who continue to contend that they are the far seekers, that they are the future-seers. They're the ones that still want the stories that were written 25 years ago, for Christ's sake. And everytime somebody tries to do something new, they say, "Whew, where is this cat at....what is he doing?" It's like in the jazz idiom: a man like Ornet Coleman, 5 to 8 years ago started blowing new sounds and a few people picked up on it and said, "this guy has got it...this man is saying something." And everybody else said, "Huh?" They're scared cause they don't know where it's at and they're afraid. They're afraid they're going to get left out in the cold. They're afraid they're not going au courrant. They're not going to be with it, and so they put it down. And that's what is happening to an awful lot of important science fiction.

A manlike David Bunch has been writing for ten years. The only place he could get his stuff published until recently was in Ron Smith's Inside Magazine -- you know, a fanzine -- or a few other places, literary magazines, little places, where he could sneak in and they didn't know it was science fiction. He would say that this was a parable of the future. Now Bunch is published in most of the bigger magazines, and his work is understood and seen because we have caught up with him. You know, we thought Demolished Man was a big step forward...that was a nice story with a lot of interesting typography. The guys who were really writing it -- the guys who were really saying it -- are the guys we have shamefully ignored for years.

It's a time for daring. Now is the time for brilliance and invention. And no one is suggesting that the roots of science fiction be ignored or forgotten or cast aside. Solid plotting, extrapolation, trends and cultures, technology -- all of these things are staples that are necessary to keep the genre electric and alive because that's what we are. That's what makes us not Peyton Place. Okay: granted. But why should we who know and love this medium see it expand its frontiers in the hands of William Burroughs and John Hersey and Anthony Burgess and Thomas Pinchett while we stare back in wide-eyed wonder, because we never considered writing A Clockwork Orange or White Lotus or The Crying of Lot 49 or Nova Express?

Take a look at Burroughs' Nova Express, friends. Now, that's science fiction and it's fresh and it's daring and it's different. And it will beat out any bloody thing that James Blish or Damon Knight have written in the last five years.

Now I don't mean to pick on any single person expressly. There are dozens of writers I could point to. Writers whom you respect and if they were standing up here you would come up and say, "Can I have your autograph?" And you should, because they paid their dues. Mr. Van Vogt was here and I don't know if he still is here -- I would hate to pin him when he isn't here -- but Van Vogt's stuff, in many ways was very daring...25 years ago. But his stuff isn't there anymore. There are new guys who are doing it.

Why should we have to stand back and wince in pain as the Herman Wouks, the Ayn

Rands, the Rosser Reeds demean our literary form? Why should we have to sit there and say, "These guys are doing it because we didn't have the guts to do it"? And have to put up with their bad writing? We're lucky we've gained a few good writers -- writers like Burgess. But we've got an awful lot of schleps, too. And it's a pain that we have to sit here and put up with it.

The tragedy of what we are now is the tragedy of what we've been doing for thirty years. We've been leaching the vitality out of our best writers -- our Sturgeon, our Farmer, our Philip Dick, our Kurt Vonnegut. We've sent them off to other fields because they couldn't make a living with us. They had to write for the "in-group." They had to write for us and please us and pleasure us because God-forbid they should come to a convention and have someone say, "What do you mean -- what is Inside-Outside actually about, Mr. Farmer -- what are you trying to say? What are you doing? Ha?" We've sent them off to the other field. Vonnegut to the mainstream comedy novel; Sturgeon to Westerns, movie adaptations, TV writing; Farmer to white-collar jobs, too many paperback commitments; Phil Dick to the edge of lunacy. This is what we've done to our good writers, because we've been too busy reading the hacks. And why have we been reading the hacks? Because we can understand them; they will give us a nice technological thing that we can play with and toy with and masturbate with and we like that a lot. But when they really demand something of us, when they write something really new and fresh and different and inventive, we don't know where they are. We look at them and we say, "You missed that time, but you'll make it the next time; maybe you'll write Slan next time, baby." We complain that our best men have left us. That they have gone on. That they deserted the ship. And it's precisely the opposite: the ship has deserted them. They have outgrown us. They've gone away because they're bigger than us; they need more, they have to have more. And they find it selling mainstream stories which you laugh at; you say, "Well, you know, if I want to read that crap, I'll read the main stream." I'm not talking about book-of-the-month-club selections, friends; I'm talking about stories that demand inventiveness and demand a bigness; a fullness from the writer that you can't get most of the time out of science fiction.

Because we have literally bound ourselves into a bag that we can't get out of.

For too long we have allowed those of us who formed our idiom to tell us what is good and what is bad. We've allowed them to say, "Well this is a good story, because it's in Analog and this has gotta be a bad story because it's in Amazing. Well, now if it's in Amazing, probably it's because they're reprinting...

These writers have grown too big and too important and too dedicated to their art and that's the operable phrase. Before they are science fiction writers, they are writers, and you can read them in any other idiom, any other genre, and they will be just as sharp; they don't demean themselves. Somebody said yesterday, "He was lost in Hollywood writing for television." Well, I got so lost last year, friends, writing science fiction for television that I won the top award of the Screen Writers Guild. I beat out a Purex Special, a Chrysler Theatre, and the pilot for "Run For Your Life" -- on a show that had a budget like \$1.98. And it was pure science fiction -- it wasn't anything else.

You don't get lost if you're a writer -- if you really work. These people have left us for the very simple reason that they're too big and too talented to be constrained by our often vicious, often ungrateful little back water eddy. They burst into the mainstream and the mainstream has taken notice of them. Sturgeon comes to Hollywood and Hollywood knows it. His name is in the trade papers, and producers want to see him. Alan Arbor used to be the Producer oh "The Fugitive"; he's now doing the new one, "The Invaders". He calls for Sturgeon. Gene Roddenberry wired ahead to New York -- "Have Sturgeon there; I must talk to him. I want him to work for me." You walk on the set and actors who don't know much of anything except what their own faces look like, say "Theodore Sturgeon?" And they know him. This man isn't unknown; no one

who is good is unknown. And yet at the same time, here we sit and you have the audacity to make me a "Guest of Honor" and I'm nothing -- and Vonnegut has never been a Guest of Honor; he's never been asked to be a Guest of Honor. Here's a man that has written a novel that has been one of the seminal influences in our field. Something that almost any writer can look at and say, "Yeah, it's so simple to write like that -- that you can't do it." Great art looks simple, but it isn't. It's like watching Fred Astaire dance -- try it and you'll fall on your ass. Vonnegut is big -- he's important -- and we gave the Hugo to Clifford Simak for a novel that any one of us who write science fiction could have written.

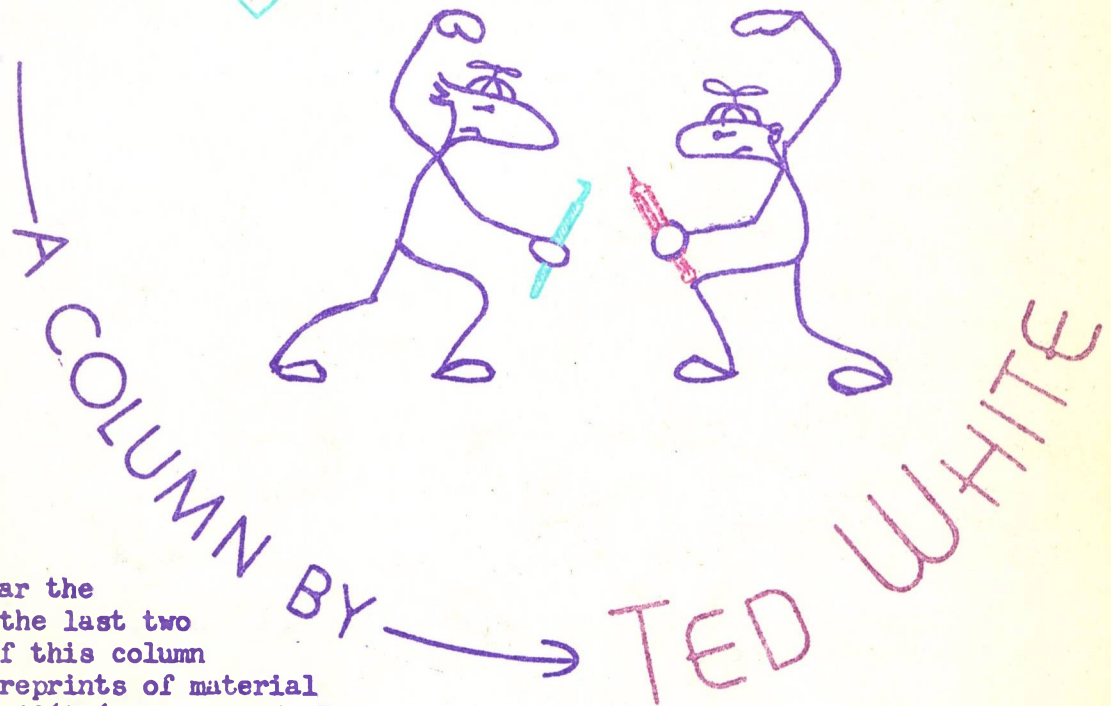
It's a crime.

It's a shame.

And we've been doing it for too long. I stand before you as nothing more, really, than an emissary of the open mind. If you're going to continue to call yourselves science fiction fans -- the chosen people -- we see the future -- the golden ones -- all of that crap we've been swilling down for 25, 30 years, you damn well better be able to see what's in your midst. Because you are losing men that you should have working for you. You are losing men that you are ignoring and laughing at and you're losing men who are going to change your form and put it where it's supposed to be: on a level with all great art.

:: transcribed from a speech given at the 19th
annual West Coast Science Fantasy Conference
(Westercon XIX), July 4th, 1966. ::

EN GARDE!



Let's clear the decks, first: the last two installments of this column were actually reprints of material written during 1964-65 for apa F. I wrote four to six pages (on the average) every week, for over a year, for apa F and apa L. A great deal of it was trivial and dated: mailing comments and the like. Occasionally there were story fragments. But quite often I used apa F and L as a journal in which I set down some of my experiences. The last two columns were reprints of a couple of these. The second BEST FROM APA L includes another, a piece I wrote about my first flight as the pilot of a small aircraft. I think there are a goodly number of other such pieces of what I might call, for lack of a better phrase, personal journalism, still languishing in the limited circulation of apa F and L, and in future columns I will probably return to them, Andy willing.

However this time there is a more immediate challenge awaiting me: the phenomenon of one Stephen E. Pickering.

Those Faithful Readers among you will recall that in the last issue of Algol there appeared an article by Mr. Pickering, titled "A Question Of Skepticism." And, immediately following it, a reply by yours truly, in which I attempted an analysis and refutation of the piece.

The Pickering article was hardly unique; in the last several months, Mr. Pickering has had a number of similar articles published in various fanzines. The majority of them seem to hit the same monotonous theme -- that "fannish fans" are anti-intellectual and just all-around Baaad -- but even those which do not still share the same vices of ultra-serious pedantry, convoluted writing, and a

perilous grasp of the subject matter in question. (For a pair of examples of the latter, his article on religion in sf in YANDRO was well refuted in a recent issue by Diana Paxton; and in an article in DOUBLE:BILL in which he reviewed the Ballantine reprints of the EC comics, he betrayed no awareness of the fact that these were reprints.)

In my reply to Pickering, last issue, I was forced to rebutt and analyse his article almost paragraph by paragraph, since there was so little coherency of thought from one paragraph to the next, and sometimes, indeed, within a single paragraph. I was amazed by his affrontery -- in the baldness of his gall in offering to an audience more knowledgeable than he himself the sort of auddy thinking, pedantic posturing, and execrable prose which abounded in "A Question Of Skepticism."

I concluded my "Answer" to Pickering with "I point to Stephen E. Pickering as an excellent example of exactly what fandom needs least. In proff, I offer his own article as evidence against him."

I have reconsidered.

I think fandom does need Pickering.

Oh, I haven't changed my opinion of either his prose or his subject matter; I could hardly have become enamoured of either. But it is exactly these qualities in Pickering's work which, I think, makes him so valuable to fandom.

Pickering is the most clearcut example of a Genus Primus Fugghead active in fandom in this decade.

We've had our fuggheads before. There've been the "innocents" like Russell K. Watkins and his "Clean Up Fandom" Crusade, and the dangerous paranoic-schizophrenics like George Wetzel and his poison pen campaigns. But one of the most lively, Gertrude M. Carr, more or less retired to the Boondocks (or, "The N3F") after the backlash of her campaign against Willis hit her in the form of the FANAC-sponsored Boycott GMCarr Campaign.

Until she decided to devote her talents to smearing Willis, G.M. Carr was one of the best of the Fuggheads. She had a thick hide and a willingness to make a fool of herself whenever the situation demanded it (which it frequently did). She was always a storm-center of controversy, both in FAPA and SAVS, and although she was usually under heavy attack from both apa's best guns, she weathered it all, gave as good as she got, and guaranteed that there'd never be a dull moment. FAPA hasn't been the same since she was dropped. And I, for one, shall always miss her.

The name of the game is Fugghead Baiting. For the game to be successful, the Fugghead must not be pitiable, not just momentarily weak-willed. He must be the Genus Primus Fugghead, with few if any redeeming values, save one: he must be able to function under fire, and, indeed, to make a continued attempt to draw fire. He must be unremittantly fuggheaded.

Fandom needs this. Fans are argumentative sons of bitches, and inclined to bicker among themselves when there is no common enemy about. If I were to be entirely to fecitious for the subject, I would guess that the Boondoggle was a result of the lack of a real Fugghead to successfully Bait.

And this is Stephen E. Pickering's real value to fandom. To top the list, he is openly contemptuous of fandom, referring to fanish fans as "anti-intellectuals." Then, among his other virtues, he affects a patronizing attitude, as though his articles were words of wisdom to be tossed to the ignorant and unwashed masses (us) to be eagerly devoured. And, far from least, he is totally unable to express himself concisely and clearly, making use as he does of words apparently hastily gleaned and misunderstood from an unabridged dictionary.

In the last few months I would guess that Pickering has received more attention than any other single figure in fandom. I know this is not the sort of thing to be suggested in a fanzine devoted this issue to Harlan Ellison, but I think that fans who think of Harlan only as they think of other fans successfully turned pro, are much more concerned, at the moment, with the contributions Pickering has been spewing out in wild abandon in the fan press, often so prolifically that he has had to resort to transparent pseudonyms.

The letter column of almost any fanzine, following the publication of a Pickering article or letter, is usually scething. A number of articles have been written, either in outright rebuttal, or in an effort (such as the Paxton in YANDRO) to redo Pickering's botched job as it might better have been done. This latter reaction is one of the best and most constructive, of course. I calculate Pickering has caused to be written and published within the last year alone at least five worthwhile articles which would not otherwise have been written.

Pickering is an irritant, and fandom needs an irritant. Ghod created the Fugg-head to bug fankind, so that we might not grow too slothful nor too smug.

That's my thesis. Observe how readily Pickering substantiates it. Contained in a box somewhere within the confines of this column is Pickering's reply to my reply to his article last issue. I'd like you to pause here, if you haven't already, and read this missive. I'll wait.

+ + + + +

Counting his signature, "Stephen E. Pickering, Research Consultant/Teacher's Assistant, Department of Sociology, Bakersfield College," I counted eleven references to Pickering "as a sociologist." Almost every other opinion he ventures is buttressed with the line or the allusion. "As a sociologist," he seems to summarize, "I find Ted White stupid and beneath my notice."

As a human being, I find Stephen E. Pickering a liar. When Andy Forter received this missive from Pickering, he couldn't quite accept Pickering's claims to sociological status, much less competence. "After all," Andy put it, "I had a course in sociology in college myself." Andy made a long distance phone call to Bakersfield College.

His findings: Stephen E. Pickering is a freshman at Bakersfield. "He works on the grounds" was about all the information they could offer.

I hardly need to rebutt the remainder of this amazingly pompous piece, but I have a few comments, and I appreciate the fact that Pickering numbered his paragraphs this time.

REPLY TO TED WHITE

As a sociologist, I find Mr. White's criticism of my article somewhat banal: his criticisms are neither valid, nor completely relevant to my premises as a social scientist. Mr. White has a way of leading one to ultimate antinomies, constructed by abstraction, rather than on operational solutions based on a process of empirical research. His treatment of the subject of "fannish" fans, etc., all involve dichotomies that he makes sharper than what they are in actuality, and force upon us choices which we can't make. Mr. White, as a fannish fan, prefers one side of each of his self-constructed dilemmas, but if I, as a sociologist, simply defend the Other Side, then we are forced into an illogical, false position. The appropriate answer is not to defend the Other Side, but to show why Mr. White's dichotomies are false.

1. I sent Mr. White one letter, briefly explaining my project of continuing Forrest Ackerman's Voice of the Imagi-Nation, under a different title, but with the same purpose of reflecting the most perceptive material obtainable in that subculture known as "fandom." The magazine is nearly completed after two years of research, and one may find a description of it in Donald Shay's professional magazine, Kaleidoscope (available from Mr. Shay at 8 Wintergreen Ave., MD #15, Newburgh, NY, 12550).

2. Frankly, I am baffled by Mr. White's complete lack of understanding if he cannot read a sentence, and ascertain its meaning. Recently, while attending a meeting of fellow sociologists in Los Angeles, I showed Mr. White's comments to one of our country's best sociologists. The reaction: did Mr. White attend high school, and take merely scimming courses, or has he gone on to a university, where stupidity is not a virtue? My point is ostensible; a fannish fan was complaining because Edward Wood's Journal of Science Fiction was not of (he assumed) analogous quality as Quandry, and the reasons the fan advanced were a bit ethnocentric. However, White's own justification for "people who sometimes embarrassingly live out their lives in naked, public print" is a nonsensical statement of equally nonsensical philosophies. I have neither the time (being a research consultant) (and sociologist) nor the desire to show to Mr. White why his arguments are false, re: the ideas of "being yourself," "letting go," etc. are quite prevalent among fannish fanzines and White's bafflement is puzzling. As for their validity: need I remind Mr. White that social psychological research in the area of human development (of what George Mead has called the "self") can easily show that those "fannish fans" who maudlinly endeavor to be "themselves" are merely justifying their own inadequacies?

3. As for my "misrepresenting" Laney's statements: I find Mr. White either anti-intellectual, or, more likely, completely lacking in the ability to think. I have several magazines published by Laney in which he accused Ackerman of being a homosexual. However, my analysis of Laney's denegation of thoughts remains the same; I have a complete set of Laney's Fan-Dango, as well as The Acolyte. Having performed a content analysis of Laney's magazines, and charting these on schematic, statistical charts, one can easily demonstrate that Laney's

STEPHEN PICKERING

spark of originality in a sea of ignorance was flickering, cluminating in the demise of The Acolyte. As a Sociologist, I used my background in sketching the content of Laney's magazines. Four areas were selected: 1. social class; 2. political ideology; 3. "justice" and similar themes; and 4. attitudes toward social structures within American society of the late 1940's. Since Laney often had strong leanings in a conservative direction, my hypotheses were formulated in such a manner that their substantiation would function as a measure of conservatism. My conclusions were what I expected: all four areas were closely linked in Laney's publications, reflecting Iney's desires for a social order favoring his own rural thinking. Often, Laney's ideas seem reflect ~~ing~~ of a middle-class mind frightened in a foreboding world which is incessantly threatened by domestic and foreign enemies.

Should Mr. White not like my analysis, I suggest strongly that he take a few elementary courses in either sociology, or social psychology, and then come to me with his conclusions. I dislike people who have no disciplined training in the social sciences, to come to me and expostulate because my conclusions are based on functional analysis, and not upon whether the object in question was "freshened" with "fannish wit."

4. The rest of White's analysis, while well taken, is totally irrelevant. Since he knows neither who I am, nor that I am a social scientist, he merely hides behind ill-concealed delight in assuring himself that his type of trash is worth a second look. As a sociologist, I find his type of non-thinking columns neither useful, nor indicative about contemporary trends in "fandom."

In short, I find Mr. White's rhetorical reiterations of alleged antinomies unfathomable. He has not shown that I, as a sociologist, have misrepresented "fannish fans." To the contrary, his many discussions and columns show him to be ill-informed and misinformed on not only the content of fandom's modes of thought, but also on life in general.

Stephen E. Pickering: Research Consultant/Teacher's assistant. Department of Sociology, Bakersfield College, Bakersfield, California.

0. In his unnumbered, introductory paragraph, Pickering finds my previous "criticism" of his work "banal": "neither valid, nor completely relevant to my premises as a social scientist," "not completely irrelevant either, I trust. My criticisms were that his facts were either wrong or not relevant to the points he was making, that his arguments were badly constructed, and that he couldn't write."

However, and more important, Pickering says "His treatment of the subject of 'fannish' fans, etc., all (sic) involve dichotomies (sic) that he makes sharper than what they are in actuality, and force upon us choices which we can't make." He also refers to my "self-constructed dilemmas." Reference to Pickering's article in ALGOL #11, however, will clear up the problem of who drew which dichotomies and 'self-constructed dilemmas.'

1. Quite true; Pickering sent me a story and a letter. The story was a submission to MINAC, the fanzine I published at that time. In the letter Pickering lectured me about VOM and what a swell fanzine it was, and how he intended to revive it. I note that he is now finishing an issue "after two years of research," with "the same purpose of reflecting the most perceptive material obtainable in that subculture known as 'fandom'." VOM was a letterzine. I wonder what Pickering's version could possibly be.

However, after receiving this letter from Pickering, in which he said, in 1964, that he was reviving VOM, I received at F&SF (although admittedly not addressed to me, Ted White) another story, equally bad, and a long letter accompanying it which lectured me (F&SF) about Ray Bradbury's humble beginnings, and my/our duty to fledgling sf writers like Pickering, who was, he claimed, destined to be a major star some-day, perhaps another Bradbury. I returned the story with a personal note to the effect that his covering letter only made his story sound worse than it was, and that it was insulting to brag himself up over such a bad piece of fiction.

Later I heard, neither directly or indirectly, that Pickering was now planning the revival of RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, apparently unaware of its 1962 revival.

2. Okay, let's run it through once more. The original quote, in all its beauty: "Several years ago, in a now-forgotten fanzine, a fannish fan deplored the fact that Edward Wood's masterfully edited JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION should have been like QUANDRY; QUANDRY, the pompous individual smugly announced, was the greatest contribution to fandom since FANTASY COMMENTATOR." Parse that one, fellows. My comment last issue was: "It is meaningless; Pickering obviously did not mean that the fan in question 'deplored' any resemblance between Wood's JOURNAL and QUANDRY." Skipping all the bull about "one of our country's best sociologists," and his supposed opinion of my education, Pickering says that what he meant was: "My point is ostensible: a fannish fan was complaining because Edward Wood's JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION was not of (he assumed) analogous quality as (sic) QUANDRY, and the reasons the fan advanced were a bit ethnocentric."

I like to set these things right down, side by side, where an easy comparison is possible.

3. "I find Mr. White either anti-intellectual, or, more likely, completely lacking in the ability to think." *Sigh* I pointed out that Pickering, in casting F.T. Laney circa 1943 as a fannish fan vs. Forry Ackerman as a sercon was creating,

for the point of his argument, a complete role reversal. (Pickering also charged that Laney, in 1943 "and in this period" called Ackerman a homosexual, and that Bradbury and Oaugherty in refuting him were responsible for the death of Laney's ACCOLYTE. This is a chronology and a sequence of causes and effects which must have evn Forry laughing.) I went on to add that Pickering's "claim that Laney 'spoke with no thought as to what he was trying to say,' proves only that he never read any of Laney's incisive articles. Laney's writing on any topic would furnish Pickering an excellent model for his own sad attempts to express himself."

So Pickering rises to rebuttal. He calls me an anti-intellectual. *Sigh*

4. This one is a dilly. Here Pickering pulls out all the stops. He refers to my "type of trash," my "type of non-thinking columns," and decides that I am "ill-informed and misinformed on not only the content of fandom's often ethnocentric modes of thought, but also on life in general." He also refers to himself as "a social scientist" once, and "as a sociologist" twice.

Stephen E. Pickering is a teenaged college freshman, whose age makes his sophomoricisms understandable, and perhaps forgivable. But it does not, however, excuse his snobbish pedantry, nor his presumptuous chicanery. I resent being patronized by a teenaged know-nothing who has presumed for himself status and titles to which he is not entitled. His exposure to college life has obviously led him only to the convolutions of the pedants at the outer fringes, to the glamor of the "five-buck word" and obfuscatory phraseology designed to impress the even more ignorant. He has neither learned to reason nor to communicate his thoughts cogently. His arguments are almost exclusively ad hominem, and he sidesteps as "well-taken," but "totally irrelevant" (!) every valid point brought to bear against him.

You have to admit, we don't get a Stephen E. Pickering on stage in fandom every day!

— Ted White, 1966

POSTSCRIPT: After writing the foregoing column, I received a phonecall from Stephen E. Pickering. Before receiving a copy of his latest effusion, I had heard about it from Andy Porter, and had written Pickering a letter. In it, I had more or less called him down for several of the remarks he'd made about me, remarks I considered highly uncalled for, and let him know that I knew his little secret and throwing his weight around was not going to impress me.

So Stephen E. Pickering called me on the telephone. I have an unlisted number, and it developed he'd called Andy first.

"I'm very sorry you were upset by my letter," he said. (The piece which I have before me, is not a letter. It is an article, headed "REPLY TO TED WHITE," and was accompanied by a covering letter which began, "Enclosed please find a reply to Ted White's recent attack against (sic) my article...")

"Actually," he continued, "that article was an old article. It was three years old. It doesn't represent my views or anything today. It was tripe, actually."

"That's funny," I said. "It read just like your recent reply."

"Oh. Well, I was a little angry about your reply."

I didn't reply to that. If his previous article no longer represented his

views, I wondered why he'd defended it so staunchly, but I pressed on. I mentioned that I didn't exactly care for his references to me in his recent piece.

"Oh, but I have the highest respect for you as an editor, Mr. White," he said obsequiously. (But he called my fan writing "trash".)

He went on to tell me that all the articles currently appearing in fanzines by him were three years old, and that he'd matured a lot since then. "I was at a LASFS meeting and I was talking to Ted Johnstone," he told me, "and he said he thought I was a lot more mature." I wondered if Ted had seen Stephen's recent stuff, but instead asked,

"If your article in ALGOL was so old, when did you submit it?"

"Oh, three, four months ago. But that was through the N3F Manuscript Bureau. That's why all my old stuff is coming out."

"Well," I said kindly, "if that's the case, and you no longer hold those views -- views which have earned you a pretty bad reputation in fandom, I hear -- you'd best publish a statement to that effect, refuting them."

"Oh, yes, I will. I've changed a great deal. That stuff was all terrible stuff, terrible..."

He apologized for taking my time, and hung up. Then I called Andy Forten. I asked Andy if he'd gotten the article in question from the N3F Mss. Bureau.

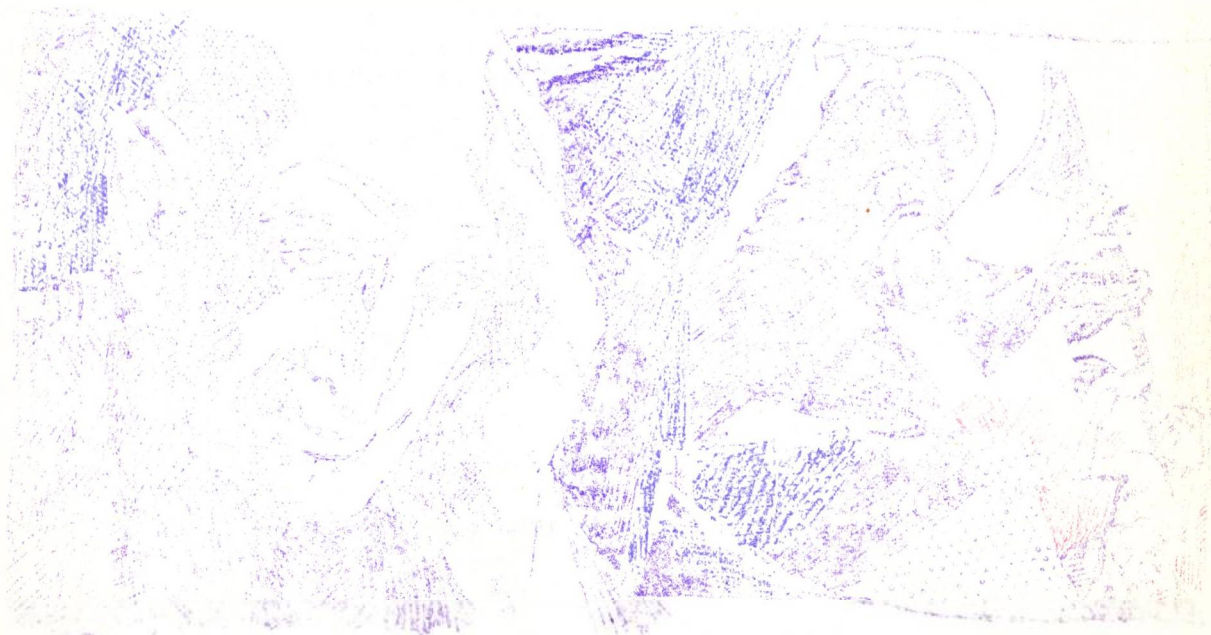
"Why no, Ted," Andy said. "Fickering sent it directly to me."

"That's interesting," I said.

-- Ted White

EDITORIAL POSTSCRIPT:

I have talked to Mike Viggiano, head of the N3F Mss. Bureau, who lives in Brooklyn. He gives permission to quote him: "I never sent any Fickering material to ALGOL or to any fanzine in New York." He also mentioned that he had only received and sent out about 5 Fickering articles; therefore it is safe to assume that the rest were sent out to fanzines by the author, directly. A further note by Fickering to him (he was in correspondence with Fickering) disclosed that Fickering thought Ted White was not really an editor. That's what I call Real Interesting Information. --AP.



LUPOFF'S BOOK WEEK

DICK
LUPOFF

PLUTONIA An Adventure Through Prehistory by V. A. Obruchev, 1924, published in Russian, translated to English by Brian Pearce, published 1957 by Lawrence & Wishart, 319 pages.

This is still another Pellucidar story, which I suggested in ERB:MoA might have been inspired by Verne or Burroughs or Roy Rockwood. At the time I had not actually read the book (although I had looked at a copy), and I now discover to my embarrassment that it contains an author's forward in which he states (a) that he wrote it in 1915, and (b) that it was inspired by Verne's Journey To The Center Of The Earth and Doyle's The Lost World. (Obruchev, by the way, praises Verne but denigrates Doyle).

So much for sources. The book itself contains a description of a rather conventional Symme's Hole at the north pole, through which a Russian scientific expedition sails in 1914. They encounter the usual primitive life within the earth where, warmed by an inner sun, there survive primitive mammals, pterodactyls, dinosaurs, cave men, etc. Obruchev's explorers, a dull and undifferentiated lot, wander around ~~Symme's Hole~~ Plutonia, chip away at geological formations, slaughter the local animals, exterminate some giant ants, capture a cave woman who thinks they are gods because of their rifles, and finally make it back to the outer world in time to have their yacht seized by the Austro-Hungarian navy because World War One has broken out while they were "inside."

It's a very dull book (although far from the worst of its kind). Probably not worth the trouble of reading unless you're some kind of Hollow Earth Completist.

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BORN IN A BOOKSHOP by Vincent Starrett, University of Oklahoma 1965, 309 pages.

One of my favorite pastimes when Pat and I lived in New York (and one which I resume whenever I can on visits to The City) was to hang around the used book stores that still cluster along Fourth Avenue and the adjacent thoroughfares between Cooper Square and Fourteenth Street. And my favorite of all these stores, not only because the humorously dubbed "editorial offices" of Canaveral Press are on the same premises, is Biblo & Tannen's at 63 Fourth Avenue.

One pleasant Saturday a couple of years ago I was startled to hear a customer in-

quire as to the location of the literature section, and after he was directed to it and had made his way there I asked one of the proprietors what Literature was, if it wasn't the entire contents of the store.

Thus I was illuminated to the existence of a whole category of writing, books about books, criticism, bibliography, essays about books and authors and the like. It was a beautiful discovery and literature sections have become one of my favorite parts of bookstores since.

The current book is fobbed off as the autobiography of Vincent Starrett, now in his eightieth year and a novelist, short story writer, poet, critic, Irregular, collector, and all-around bookman. It is, I suppose, an autobiography, in the sense that it gives the usual vital statistics and is written in the first person, but it is really a book by and for booklovers. It is a long rambling essay on the books and authors Starrett has read and met and written in a long literary life.

To start naming the bookmen whom Starrett has known and describes would be silly, because the result would be a ~~mere~~ list of names too long to include here, but in view of my well-known interest in the principal of one Starrett anecdote, I must direct any interested reader to Starrett's description of the last time he saw Edgar Rice Burroughs, in the uniform of a militia captain, leading a parade consisting of two scrawny militiamen staggering under the weight of their rifles, and four proud boy scouts, down the middle of a Chicago boulevard in celebration of the end of the first World War.

Born In A Bookshop is a delight from beginning to end, but it is a book for booklovers and others need not apply.

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KIPLING AND THE CHILDREN by Roger Lancelyn Green, Elek, 1965, 240 Pages.

Among his other achievements Green is an authority on Kipling, a leading light of the Kipling Society and past editor of its journal, and is slated to edit Kipling's side of the Kipling-Haggard correspondence for publication. (Morton H. Cohen, Professor of English at City College and author of Rider Haggard, is handling Haggard's portion.)

Published in the centenary year of Kipling's birth, Kipling and the Children is a good biography of Kipling, and serves incidentally as a clef to the roman of Kipling's autobiography, Something Of Myself, an otherwise puzzling and unsatisfying work.

As a guide to the works of Kipling Green is less satisfactory, although far from without value. Kipling and The Children is essentially biographical, not critical, and what literary guidance to Kipling that appears does so more or less incidentally to the main purpose of the book. The title, by the way, should not be construed at all as meaning that Green's book is intended for children. I doubt that a child would find the book very comprehensible, and certainly not very interesting.

Green's title refers to Kipling's relations with children: with his younger sister, especially when Kipling himself was a child; with his daughter who died in childhood and with his son who was killed in the first World War. Kipling And The Children offers considerable insight and great sympathy for Kipling. As his political ideas, whether right or wrong, become irrelevant in the post-imperialist world, his literary worth will become more clearly understood.

[A lagniappe to Burroughs fans, of whom Green is one, is his discussion, in this book, of the relative natures of Howgli and Tarzan, and of the jungles and laws of the two. Highly perceptive, incisive, and not entirely to the benefit of the latter].

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SOMETHING OF MYSELF for my Friends Known and Unknown, by Rudyard Kipling, Macmillan 1937, 237 pages.

This autobiography was incomplete at the time of Kipling's death, and possibly as a result is a puzzling and unsatisfying one, badly in need of exegesis such as that provided in Kipling And The Children. With such a guide, however, it becomes a poignant work; the melancholy of much of Kipling's life was unknown to me until reading these books.

Born in India, he was returned to England as a small child for his education, a common custom among Anglo-Indians at the time. Unknown to his parents, he fell into the hands of a cruelly puritanical foster mother and her sadistic son, who badgered and tormented the child Rudyard unceasingly. In time his only solace came to be book surreptitiously read in bed by insufficient light, to the point that Kipling became nearly blind! This incident, and many others, turn up in his fiction, much of which is autobiographical (another fact new to me).

A towering figure in modern literature, Kipling deserves the study of any reader interested in the sources of modern fiction. To the science-fantasy fan and the ERB fan in particular, an understanding of Kipling along with other Victorians such as Haggard and Arnold is vital to a true understanding of the works of Burroughs.

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THE SECOND JUNGLE BOOK by Rudyard Kipling.

THE PHANTOM 'RICKSHAW AND OTHER GHOST STORIES by Rudyard Kipling.

WEE WILLIE WINKIE by Rudyard Kipling.

These three books of short stories by Kipling all date from fairly early in his career, and share the common background of British India, a world, as Dave Van Arnam would say, as alien to 1966 America as anything in the pages of science fiction.

Whether writing animal stories, tales of Indian life or of the British Raj, Kipling is at all times the master of his pen. Each word has its purpose, the characters live and breathe, and if the sentiments seem somewhat dated, this proves them all the more in tune with those now departed times.

A word to source hunters: The Elephants' Dance in Kipling's "Toomai of the Elephants" (The Second Jungle Book) is the obvious inspiration of Burroughs' apish Dum-Dum. To reverse the current for a moment, Green avers that Kipling derived "The Finest & Story In The World" (The Phantom 'Rickshaw And Other Ghost Stories) from Edwin Lester Arnold's Phra The Phoenician. That, of course, makes John Carter the cousin, through Phra, of Kipling's Charlie Mears.

Captain Carter, Mr. Mears. Mr. Mears, Captain Carter.

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THE AMATEUR CRACKSHAN by E. W. Hornung, Scribner's 1902, 244 pages.

The memorable Stingaree notwithstanding, Hornung is chiefly esteemed (by those who

remember him at all) for his gentleman jewel-thief A. J. Raffles. The adventures of Raffles were recounted in a series of books beginning with The Amateur Crackswoman, as recorded by Raffles' assistant, cat's-paw and chronicler Bunny.

The relationship between Raffles and Bunny closely resembles that of Holmes and Watson, and although the teams are on the side of the law opposite each other, considerable similarities exist (in part attributable, perhaps, to the fact that Hornung and Doyle were rather chummy brothers-in-law).

Raffles was a sometimes professional cricketer who supported himself most of the time by high-class robberies. Bunny, an old school pal of Raffles', lived also on his share of their mutual spoils. And of course there was the Scotland Yardbird, Inspector Mackenzie, ever on the trail of the pair.

The eight exploits in this first Raffles are all possessed of a marvelous élan; the thrills of the scrapes which Raffles and Bunny get into and out of are nicely leavened with a delightful literateness seldom found (at least in my limited reading) in crime stories, as it is even more scarce in westerns, to which Hornung's Sting-aree belongs.

I wonder if I could find a publisher for E. W. HORNUNG: MASTER OF INTRIGUE. I guess not.

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MRS. RAFFLES By John Kendrick Bangs, Harpers 1905, 180 pages.

I haven't read the later Raffles books, but judging from the present volume Hornung must first have married off, then killed off his gentleman jewel-thief. Mrs. Raffles ("Being The Adventures of An Amateur Crackswoman") assumes a widowed Mrs. A. J. Raffles living in America and, assisted by an ever-faithful Bunny, taking on the bluebloods of Newport summer society with jewel-theft and swindle.

Bangs's pseudo-Hornungian cases are longer on laughs and shorter on thrills than the real thing, but they are ingenious and enjoyable, and the book is definitely worth-while as an adjunct to the doings of Raffles himself.

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R. HOLMES AND CO. by John Kendrick Bangs, Harpers 1906, 231 pages.

Bangs was not only an admirer of Hornung's but of Hornung's more famous brother-in-law. The hero of JKB's Pursuit of the Houseboat, for instance, is the ghost of Sherlock Holmes.

R. Holmes & Co. (Being the Remarkable Adventures of Raffles Holmes, Esq., Detective and Amateur Crackswoman by Birth) assumes that the great Sherlock did marry -- none other than A.J. Raffles' lovely daughter -- the fruit of this remarkable union being the hero of the present book. Raffles Holmes's Watson/Bunny is Jenkins, an impecunious New York author selected by the crackman detective to chronicle his exploits.

The ten adventures in the book are only a partial success; neither Doyle nor Hornung nor, by the nature of pastiche, really Bangs purely, they have their points of interest and entertainment, but are, in the last analysis, of greater interest to the scholar than for entertainment value.

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THE GENIAL IDIOT by John Kendrick Bangs, Harpers 1908, 215 pages.

Another of Bangs' pleasant visits with the Idiot and the rest of the genial boarders at Mrs. Pedagog's boarding house for gentlemen, The Genial Idiot is not the best book in the series but it does contain the best single episode of the series, "He Suggests A Comic Opera."

In this romp the Idiot, the Lawyer, the Bibliomaniac, and the Poet compose a complete Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, "The Isle of Piccolo," featuring this ditty:

I'm a pirate bold
With a heart so cold
That it turns the biggest joys to solemn sorrow;
And the hero-ine,
With her eyes so fine,

I am going to--marry--to-morrow.

(CHORUS)

He is going to--marry--to-morrow
The maid with a heart full of sorrow;
For her we are sorry
For she weds to--morry--
She is going to--marry--to-morrow.

And so on about the heroine Drivelina, the American naval Lieutenant Somebody or Other who is the hero, the sailors who sing:

We are jackies, jackies, jackies,
And we smoke the best tobaccys
You can find from Zanzibar to Honeyloo....

Oh, it's a lovely piece; at his best Bangs was a lovely writer. Jack Biblo keeps predicting a JKB comeback, and if it comes, here I'll be, five years too early as usual.

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THE DREAMERS- A CLUB by John Kendrick Bangs, Harpers 1899, 249 pages.

Another mass spoof, The Dreamers chronicles the proceedings of an imaginary literary club, and its topicality can best be indicated by repeating its dedi-

cation:

with all due respect and proper apologies to
Richard Harding Davis, James Whitcomb Riley, William Dean Howells,
Rudyard Kipling, Hall Caine, Sundry Magazine Poets, Anthony Hope,
the War Correspondents, A. Conan Doyle, Ian Maclaren, James M.
Barrie, The Involvable Club, and Mr. Dooley.

Except perhaps for the final entry, one's enjoyment of this book will vary directly with one's appreciation of the works of the authors cited in the dedication; this leaves me pretty far out

in the cold. But as Terry Carr says of the works of P. D. Q. Bach, it takes an educated audience to appreciate the inside lines.

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COBWEBS FROM A LITERARY CORNER by John Kendrick Bangs, Harpers 1899, 101 pages.

The actual title of the book is Cobwebs From A Library Corner, but it was mistitled in the typing by one Andrew Porter, who I fear grows tired of seeing reviews by authors long dead.

A tiny book of poetry -- the pages are about 6 by 3 inches, and the type is not very tight -- this contains a good many worthwhile stanzas.

I said poetry; light verse is really a more appropriate term. For example:

The poet pens his odes and sonnets spruce
With quills plucked from the ordinary goose,
While critics write their sharp incisive lines
With quills snatched from the fretful porcupines.

There are a couple of serious sentiments too,
but for the most part that's the tone of the book.

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THE WORSTED MAN by John Kendrick Bangs, Harpers
1905, 86 pages.

This "Musical Play for Amateurs" takes place at a sort of earlier-day Grossingers, where a group of frustrated working-girls manufacture a sort of male Miss America Doll (a nickel for the first ID of that one!) and endow it with magical life. About the only noteworthy character in the play is the heroine, Impatience. The songs are set to G & S tunes, mostly from -- right! -- "Patience."

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THE WATER GHOST AND OTHERS by John Kendrick
Bangs, Harpers
1894, 296 pages.

This book contains 8 ghost stories, 7 of them humorous including "The Water Ghost of Harroby Hall," of which Fred Patten and Maggie Thompson are both so fond. And it is a fine, Unknown-type fantasy, and it is a fine Bangs fantasy book, one of his best.

My personal favorite is "A Psychical Frank," really more of an astral projection-psi type thing than a real ghost story, involving the Boston Theosophy Center, and a beautifully worked-out thing it is! The one serious story in the book, "The Literary Remains of Thomas Bragdon," is an unusual and touching sort of ghost story, one, as they say, better read than described. But then that's true of practically anything worth reading at all.

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BIKEY THE SKICYCLE and other tales of Jimmieboy by John Kendrick Bangs, Riggs, 1902,
321 pages.



A juvenile book (of all the Bangs I've read to date, there have only been two such) composed of a dozen dream adventures, this is only a partial success. The title story is one of JKB's few interplanetaries (Olympian Nights is another); Jimmieboy and an intelligent bicycle go to Jupiter, with amusing and sometimes stfish results.

The best story in the book is the final one, "The Stupid Little Apple Tree," a perhaps over-sentimentalized fable about (of course, of course!) life and death. Oversentimentalized or not, I found it quite touching and perhaps even profound, something that Bangs almost never was.

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TREASURE ISLAND by Robert Louis Stevenson, 1883; 1965 edition, Whitman, 254 pages.

Within the memory of living man there was a time when Dick Lupoff had not read a single book by Doc Smith, nor Edgar Rice Burroughs, nor Rudyard Kipling, nor L. Frank Baum, nor H. Rider Haggard, nor a good many more. Ray Bradbury I had read, and Robert A. Heinlein, and Arthur C. Clarke, and ~~John Vondra~~ ~~King~~ Clifford D. Simak. I had read Arthur Conan Doyle's The Lost World but never a word of Sherlock Holmes. Of Stevenson, I had read Dr. Jeckyl and The New Arabian Nights (the former is stf, of a sort, the latter fantasy) but never his famous Treasure Island.

Why the strange lacunae? Partly because I was a dedicated reader of Modern Adult Science Fiction (a magazine of the time), partly, I suppose, for the sake of one downmanship. In the past few years, twixt and tween the more obscure works of Habel Fuller Bodgett, Fenton Ash, James Edison Northford, and Harry Prentice (and others of their unrecalled ilk) I have attempted to fill in some of the gaps by reading the books that "everybody" has read but that I hadn't.

Treasure Island is a leading candidate for the title of All-Time Best Boy's Book, and it's a pretty good simple adventure story for adult readers too, providing they don't mind the boy's book conventions of the adolescent hero ~~mf~~ and asexual-ity of the book. Jim Hawkins is a pretty good boy hero. He is by turns brave (but not unbelievably so), frightened (but justifiably so), capable (but not unrealistically so), etc.

The romantic setting of Treasure Island is fully as appealing as Vincent Starrett says it is in Born In A Book Shop, the famous characters Blind Pew, Captain Flint, Squire Trelawny, Ben Gunn and the rest are all as good and as vivid as their reputations claim...and if Long John Silver isn't the prototype of Blacky Duquesne then their similarity is one of the greatest coincidences of literary history.

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THE TERROR by Arthur Machen, McBride 1917, Norton edition 1965 with a new introduction by Vincent Starrett; 190 pages.

This strange book (subtitles simply, "A Fantasy" but issued as the first volume in Norton's new "Seagull Library of Mystery and Suspence") tells of a strange series of occurrences in rural England during World War I. Mysterious disappearances, brutal and apparently senseless killings, "accidents" that challenge credulity yet admit of no patterned explanation...the whole hushed in wartime security and two men trying, in the face of official denials and opposition, to establish a pattern and find a meaning in the strangeness.

The Terror is a fascinating and frightening book, rendered thoroughly unsatisfactory by its own (perhaps necessary) episodic quality. The reader, like Machen's

protagonists, strives helplessly to see meaning in the terrible, inexplicable events of 1915. And the solution, tentatively reached by the "detectives" in the book, is neither convincing nor satisfying...although it too, is frightening and intriguing. The Terror is a strange, difficult and unsatisfactory book, certainly not for every reader...but as a very offbeat work bordering on science-fantasy, it rewards the requisite effort of its reading.

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THE SHADOW OF THE ROPE by E. W. Hornung, Scribner 1902, 1908; 377 pages.

This is the first Hornung novel I've come across (both Stingaree and The Amateur Cracksmen are books of interconnected short stories) and it is a treasure. All the paperback houses are going in heavily for the neo-Gothic mystery-suspense-romance-terror books lately...here's one sixty-three years old but written with no element of the formula missing. Get this:

Heroine accused of her husband's murder, her trial, the mysterious stranger, the heroine taken to an exotic villa in the country, the slow-dying foreigner, a secret panel, an old portrait of the murdered husband, and so on and on.

It is all, as Chris Steinbrunner would say, too beautiful. A book with more laughs I haven't read in a long, long time. Unreservedly recommended -- for pure fun reading! (Somehow I do not feel that E.W.Hornung would be pleased.)

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PRINCE OF DARKNESS an anthology of Witchcraft, Satanism, Sorcery and Lycanthropy edited by Gerald Verner; Rider 1946; 250 pages.

This collection has a most interesting plan: each of the four related themes is treated alternately in non-fiction and fiction selections by Montague Summers, Cotton Mather, Margaret Irvin, Algernon Blackwood, John Buchan, Sax Rohmer, Dorothy L. Sayers, Saki, and F. G. Loring.

The selections, unfortunately, seldom live up to their distinguished authors. Montague Summers, that pompous old fraud, gets a bit too much by the third go-round (Verner must have got a copy of The Geography of Witchcraft and cribbed for all he was worth), Cotton Mather's archaisms too are quoted far too long, and the Rohmer, from his very rare The Romance of Sorcery is a major letdown.

The Blackwood story, Ancient Sorceries, is the best of the John Silence stories (although too wordy too) and the Loring story, The Tomb of Sarah, is an excellent, albeit obvious, vampire tale. They are the best things in the book.

--dick lupoff, 1966

FATMAN

A NARRATIVE OF THE UNDERWORLD

BY JOHN BOARDMAN

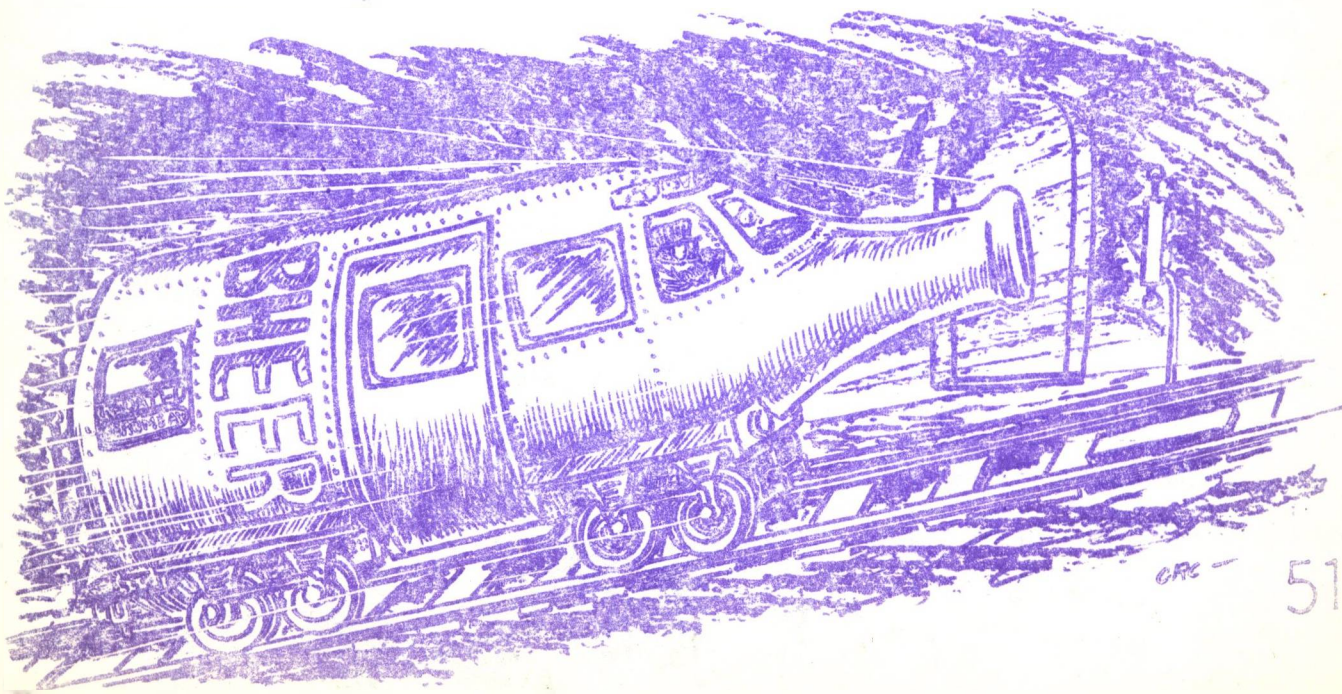
The steady chatter of the typewriter halted momentarily. "Gra-ace! Would you please bring me another beer?" the stocky, crew-cut man called out.

"Just a minute, Bruce," Grace called from the kitchen. "I'm pressing your spare costume."

Presently Grace, a lithe blonde in her late teens, came in with an open quart bottle of beer. Bruce took it, and raised it to his lips. As he began to drink, he noticed a strange sight through the upper panel of the window by his desk. A circle of light illuminated a cloudbank, and on the circle was outlined a huge beer-bottle.

"It's the Fatsignal!" he said. "There's work for us tonight, Thrush!"

For, though only three people knew the secret, mild mannered writer Bruce Van White is actually Fatman, caped crusader against crime on the subway. And his beautiful girl assistant, Thrush, is actually Grace Dixon, who shares his apartment in the Bronx ("None of that 'ward' crap," Fatman says. "We're shackled up.") Nor is the apartment house in which they live what it seems to be. In Peter Stuyvesant's time it was Kadath, the mansion of the Van Weit family in the thinly settled Bronx. Now it has been remodeled into an apartment house, and it's secret is known only to the Dynamic Duo and to the house's Super, Old Alfred, who has been a faithful servant of the Van White family since 1660.



Fatman and Thrush hurried into their costumes and slid down the brass rails (salvaged from Tex Guinan's speakeasy when repeal forced that institution into liquidation) into the Fatcave. Here, far below the surface of the Bronx, Fatman keeps all his equipment for his role --the spy eyes that wander the subway tunnels, the lighted map that shows at a glance the location of every subway train in New York City, and most important, the Fatcar, a private subway car by which Fatman and Thrush can patrol the hundreds of miles of subway tracks. As they plummeted into the Fatcave, old Alfred stepped out of the Fatcar with a rag in his hand.

"It's all set to go," he told the Caved Crusaders. "I've just finished fixing it up from the time you disguised it as a New Lots express to catch Supermustache, who was pasting peace stickers on subway trains all over Brooklyn. I had to erase 57 L.A.M.F.s from the walls."

"Off on a new adventure," Fatman said. "Thrush, will you see that the beer chest is full, while I call the Transit Authority and find out what's up."

Fatman picked up the brown phone, which connected with a direct wire to the office of Transit Commissioner O'Golducci. "Fatman here," he said laconically.

"Thank goodness you've called," O'Golducci replied, so agitated that he forgot his usual accent. "Fatman, some fiend is trying to ruin the new East River Tunnel. Phoney blueprints are being given to the construction crew and the tunnel is going off in the wrong direction!"

"Wrong direction! In what direction?"

"Straight down!"

Fatman slammed down the phone and leaped into the motorman's seat of the Fatcar. With one hand on the steering handle, a bottle of beer in the other, and Thrush on his lap, he drove the Fatcar out of the Fatcave, through a clever plastic facade, and onto the downtown tracks of the IND D-train.

It was late at night, so in less than half an hour Fatman and Thrush reached the site of the East River Tunnel construction work. The place was deserted, except for a solitary watchman.

"Watcha want?" the watchman yawned as the Fatcar ground to a halt.

"We're here to investigate the misdirection of the tunnel," Fatman said. "Have you noticed anything suspicious around here?"

"Naw. Won't be anyone here until the work crew comes on at nine. Damn'cafers gotta union contract for a seven hour day. 'Twaren't like that in gran'pappy's day. I wouldn't be jest a nightwatchman, 'cept that he lost all his money when them bleedin' hearts innerferred with his business and put through that there law that made his workin' men so uppity."

"What law," Thrush asked. "The Wagner Act?"

"Naw, the Thirteenth Amendment. Gran'pappy was a slave dealer."

"Look, Thrush!" Fatman called. "Here's a clue. A bottle cap!"

Thrush bent over the find, straightening up again when the watchman tried to cop a feel. "Holy Cola!" she cried. "I've never seen a bottle cap like that before!"

"Very few people have, Thrush," Fatman replied. "It's from a bottle of Gekapi-Cola, a Singapore beverage which blends ancient Oriental brews with modern western soft-drinks. Our man is a half-breed. Our next stop is Chinatown."

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Fatman and Thrush parked the car on a disused spur just off the Canal Street station and ascended into Chinatown. It was past three am, but a few Chinese restaurants were still open, catering to after-theatre crowds. The Dynamic Duo avoided these, and headed to a dimly lit cellar on Boyers Street. A bearded Irishman, apparently a door guard, was sprawled in the doorway reading old comic books. Under their insidious spell he lay in a stupor, so the Duo stepped over him and into the dimly lit interior. A sickeningly sweet smoke hung over them, and they looked about at figures sprawled over couches.

"Holy Rohmer, Fatman," Thrush whispered. "I didn't know places like this still existed."

"This, Thrush," the masked man told her, "is the headquarters of the dread Si Fi Fan, a sinister organization dedicated to making people dream so much about the past and the future that they will ignore the Si Fi Fan as it takes over the present. Observe these poor wretches, who have sacrificed their brains to this mind destroying conspiracy."

Thrush looked around the room, and saw that the minds of most of its inmates were indeed gone. In one corner a slim, bearded youth chanted an unceasing, "Never. Never. Never." In another, a dissipated Southern Belle muttered, "First was 1952, then 1957, then 1962. By 1967 --never fear-- it will come agin!" A gigantic black man mixed a vat-full of some unknown brew. A little girl, no more than nine years old, did horrible things to a rabbit, while a bearded man rolled on the floor at the sight and whimpered "I remember Lemuria!" A blonde woman, naked save for two band-aids and a cork, chanted "They're all immature. They're all immature but me!" Another woman, a brunette, came stealthily up behind her with a second cork, and the two pitched into a hair-pulling brawl.

"These are just poor devils on the outskirts of the conspiracy," Fatman whispered to his young mistress. "The real master of this menage is in back." They dashed through the inner doorway and into a room whose elegant decor contrasted sharply with the squalor outside. There, a burly man in armor sat, twirling the hilt of a sword in his hands.

"Why have you come to invade the sanctuary of Dr. Dee?" he snarled at Fatman.

"Holy H.P!" Thrush exclaimed. "Dr. Dee lived four hundred years ago!"

"True," said the burly man, "but he left a son, offspring of an unhallowed union between him and Ngo Man Ngo, daughter of the Vietnamese magician Ngo Dam Gud. The lineage of magicians that sprang from his loins culminates today in the greatest mage of East or West, Dr. Dee Kee Nee!" And now, for disturbing the sanctuary of Dr. Dee Kee Nee, you die!"

The burly man rose to his feet and raised his sword. "Holy Patriarchs!" Thrush said. "Your sword is out!"

"Your eyesight is commendable," their foe said sardonically. "How could you think otherwise, when it is here ready to be cooled in your blood?"

"No - er - I mean - your sword is out!" Thrush blushed, and pointed.

"Oops, sorry." The burly man dropped his sword and zipped up his codpiece. While he was thus occupied, Fatman and Thrush fled into the outer room.

The Dynamic Duo were just about to escape from the den of the Si Fi Fan when a malevolent, monstrously ugly figure came in the door and gripped one of them in each hand. He then looked at the Burly Man, as if to ask what to do with the intruders.

"Good boy, Gib-Gib," the Burly man said. "You fools, your doom is sealed. Gib-Gib is a monster created by the genius of Dr. Dee Kee Nee, who took the body of a man and put in it the brain of a cop. Gib-Gib, drop these meddlers down the chute. Leave them to the gentle mercies of the Omnifut!"

At this dread name, the denizens of the Si Fi Fan hangout gasped, and even the horrendous Gib-Gib shuddered. "I wish you the joy of your acquaintance with the Omnifut," the Burly man went on. "He will not kill you; you will merely wish for death. Perhaps you are familiar with Shakespeare, Fatman. Then you may know what I mean when I say that 'he cares not what mischief he does, if his weapon be out: he will foin like any devil; he will spare neither man, woman, nor child.' I wonder which of you he will take first. Farewell, Fatman and Thrush!"

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Gib-Gib flung the Dynamic Duo down the chute, and they landed heavily on a mattress. Picking themselves up, they discovered that they were in a great underground vault, dark save for a little candle.

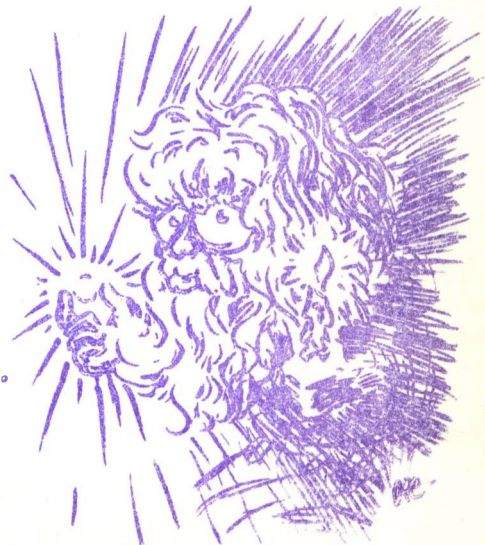
They cautiously moved toward that light, prepared for almost anything but what they found. A shaggy gnome sat at a table, using the candle to examine carefully the gold coins that were spread before him.

"Good evening, madam and sir," he greeted them. "Please excuse my not rising, but I am not in the best of health."

"But - where is the Omnifut?" Fatman asked.

"Oh, the terrible Omnifut?" the gnome laughed. He held up a tiny sliver of gold to the light. "Very interesting item, this. It's a 25¢ gold piece."

"Holy Keynes!" said Thrush. "What was it used for?"





"The early gold-hunters in California had no silver for small change, so they used these," the gnome replied.

"But the Omnifut --" Fatman said.

"Oh, that? The Omnifut is supposed to be me," the gnome laughed. "Dee Kee Nee and his henchmen have been telling that story for so long that they've begun to believe it by now. I suppose you're looking for the way out of here. That door leads into the kitchen of the Chopauyeyside House, on Pell Street."

Fatman and Thrush left into the greying dawn. As they re-entered the Fatcar, Thrush said, "So the sinister Dr. Dee Kee Nee is behind this. If we only knew where to find him."

"There is only one place where he could possibly be," Fatman replied. "Dr. Dee is leader of an underground group called the Yellow Muslims. They plan to take over the world, so that it may be ruled by the superior Mongol race. Dr. Dee has a bitter contempt for all whites, and wishes to see them humiliated. Knowing this, I am sure there is only one place he could possibly live."

"You mean --"

"Yes. We will find Dr. Dee in Bronxville."

+ + + + +

Despite the civil rights movement, the Metcalf-Baker Act, and several exposes in Commentary, Bronxville still glorifies in its distinction of being the only it lily-white Christian town in the East. Thither Fatman and Thrush went in the Fatcar, via a spur line of the IRT which was built in 1916 and abandoned in the following year when all the people who knew of its existence went down in the Lusitania. The line ended in the basement of the mansion occupied by the Nelson brothers, Ray, Seymour, and Derek. These three elderly recluses busied themselves with their eccentric hobbies, being scarcely seen on the streets of the town. Ray attempted to reach satori by inhaling the smoke of burning missals, Seymour was trying to invent a third magnetic pole, neither positive nor negative, and Derek was composing a manifesto designed to save the world from the Christian-Communist-Liberal conspiracy.

The Dynamic Duo took two of Derek's extensive stable of motorcycles and rode directly to Dr. Dee's home. The headquarters of the Yellow Muslims was not difficult to find; it was the only home in Bronxville which had live dacoits instead of Negro-like plaster hitching posts by the driveways. Fatman and Thrush announced their entry by the usual method: by breaking open the windows with beer bottles, and clubbing Dr. Dee into insensibility with the same weapons when he appeared to investigate the racket. ^

When Dr. Dee recovered, the Dynamic Duo had him tightly bound. "Your plot is

foiled, Dee Kee Dee," Fatman informed him. "What was the idea of trying to make the subway tunnel go straight down?"

"I - love - subways," Dr. Dee gasped. "They are the one facet of western culture worth saving. But my own country Vietnam has no subways, I wanted to give her one. So I had the blueprints changed, so that the new tunnel would go straight through the earth, and come out in my native town of Quic Buc. You have foiled me, you round-eyed villain!"

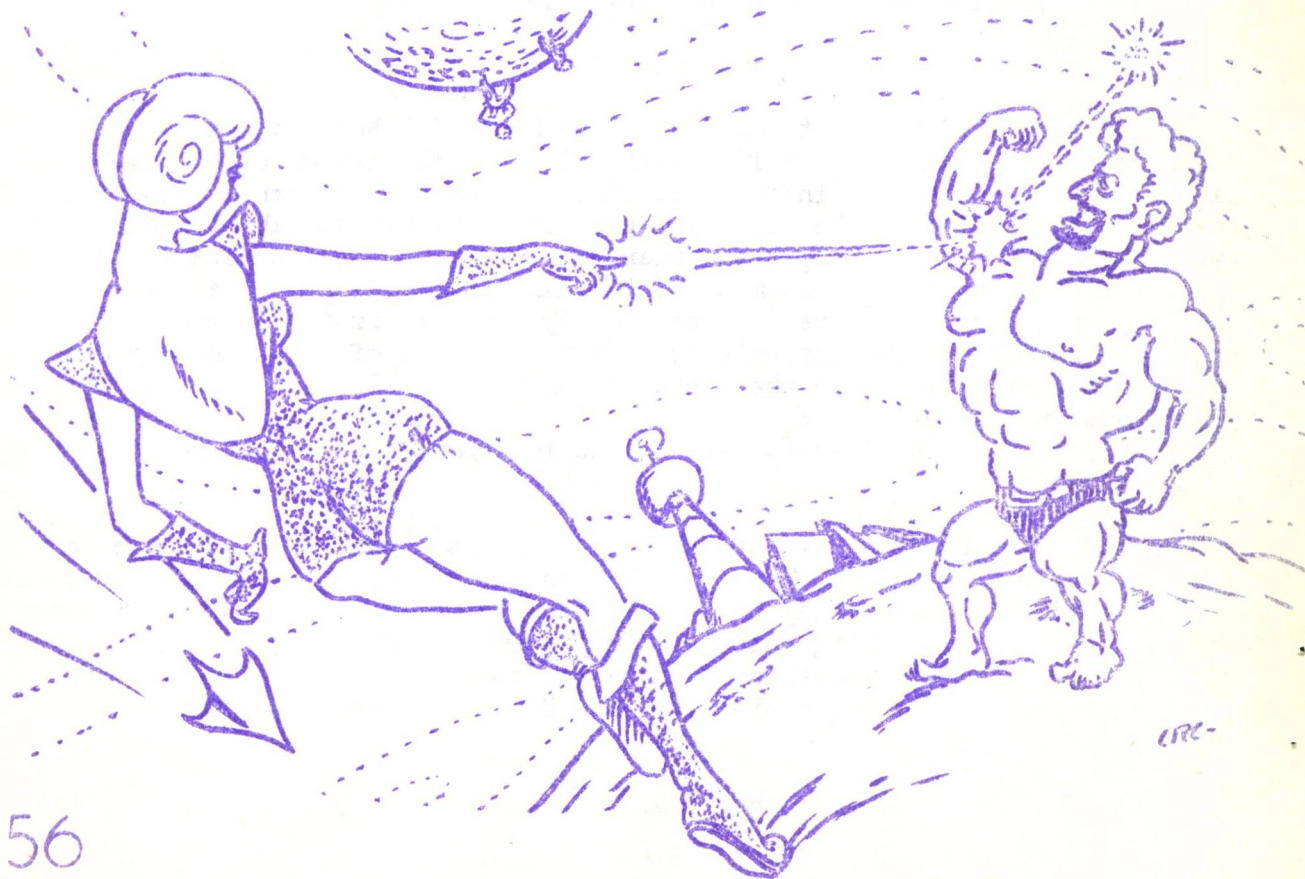
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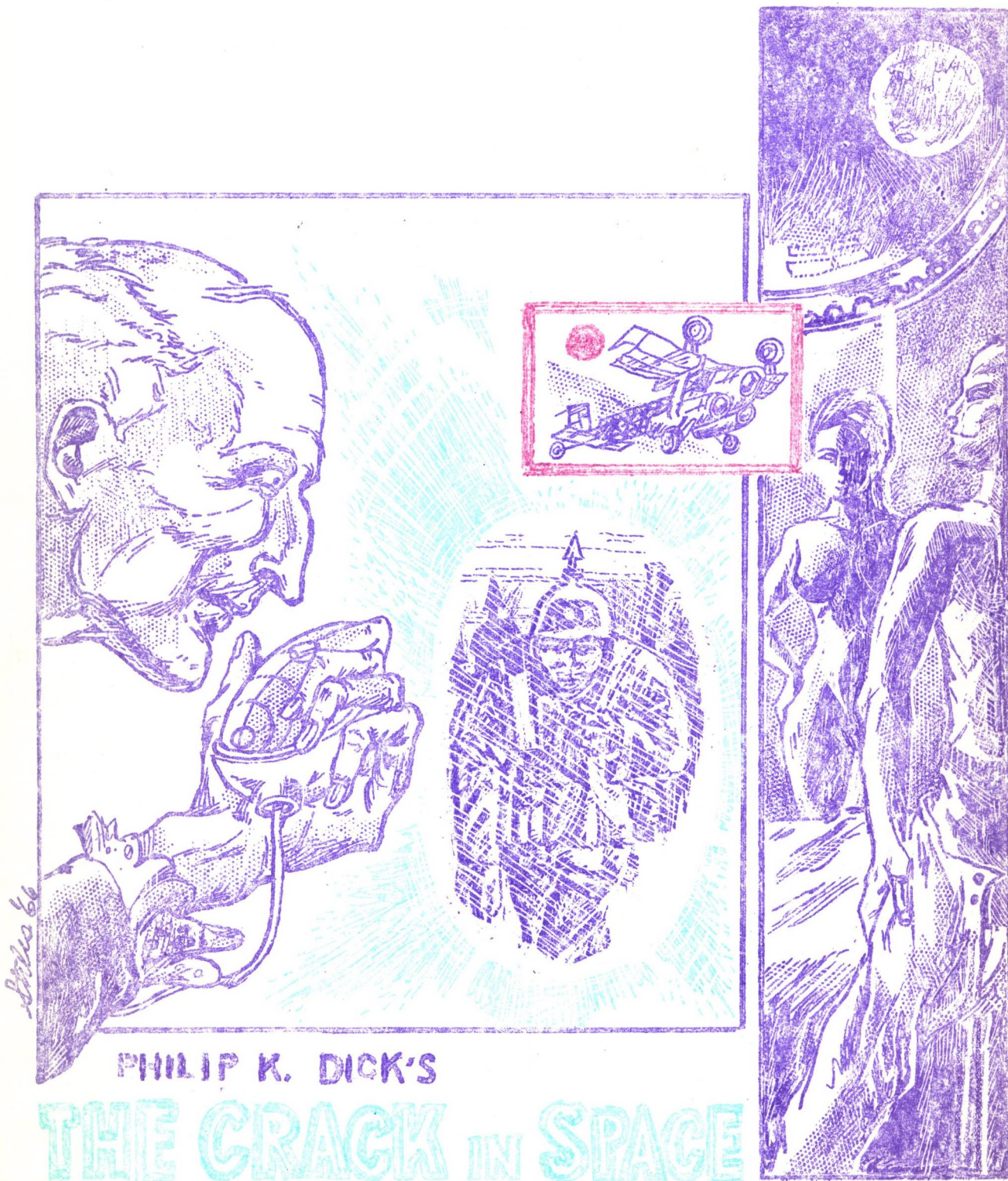
Back in their apartment, Bruce Van White and Grace Dixon were discussing their adventure with Dr. Dee and the Si Fi Fan over a fresh quart of beer. "There's only one flaw in this latest adventure, Grace," the writer said. "This time we have no souvenir for our collectoin in the Fatcave."

"Well, there is one souvenir," his aide replied, "but it's nothing we can put on a shelf." She raised her skirt to show Bruce the unmistakable mark of a pinch. "That Omnifut wasn't quite so harmless as he said he was."

— John Boardman, 1966

[A note from the editor: Those who read this with the light of innocence in their eyes will read a funny story which requires a slight familiarity with New York to fully understand. The more weary among us, however, will recognize several well-known fans who have been heavily satirized. Let it be known that this story was originally intended for the Cult, and withhold your comments to the author to those circles, if you will.]





NEITHER RAIN NOR SNOW

The idea of an article on the gentle art of editing is neither new nor original. Ted White has covered the subject rather well in his numerous articles on the slush pile at Fantasy and Science Fiction. However, Ted is no longer in charge of the slush at F&SF, and I, as the new management, have a few things to say.

When I first took over, I saw in the pile a chance to read more science fiction than I'd ever seen before, and get paid for it at the same time. Needless to say, before the first week was out I'd discovered what Sturgeon's Law really meant, because I was getting a thorough slice of the junk that passes for science fiction in the minds of many people.

To those of you reading this, mostly fans, though there may be a few reading this who've picked it up at a convention, I've a few points to make.

There is a definite limiting factor to what must constitute a good story. The points that I will try to make follow.

1. The type of story which is a mere incident, with no beginning, middle, or end, but is simply a happening with no direction in which to go is not a type of story that will be accepted by any editor. Yet this is the most common type of submission, and there's nothing that can be done about it, unless the editor wants to waste time by writing a note to the author, which usually only spurs that individual on to new and worse masterpieces.

2. The type of story in which there is action and some type of plotting, but in which the entire thing is told as a narration without character involvement is another common type. This shows that the author simply can't handle people, which are the most important part of any story, unless you're Olaf Stapleton, in which case you can get around this. This inability to handle characterization is a ser-

THE GENTLE ART OF EDITING

BY ANDREW PORTER

ious handicap; without an interplay between the characters, there is little chance for the reader to become involved in the story, and less of a chance for the story to sell because of this. Even if the involvement is between a man and a computer, there must still be some life, some interplay to establish this mood of interplay.

3. The third type is the story in which there is plot, there are characters onstage, and there is dialogue. Unfortunately for the reader, the author has become so involved in his mastery of dialogue that that's all that ever happens: the characters simply sit around and tell each other, in the most prolix language, exactly what they're going to do when a situation comes up. It's like a fisherman sitting around and telling others fishermen what he's going to do when he gets that giant fish on the line. He never gets to do it, he merely tells what is going to happen.

4. The story in which there is action, dialogue, and character involvement, and in which the story moves right along has all the earmarks of a successful story. However, the writer has so carefully plotted out the story that he has over-plotted it. This is a fault which some writers never learn about, even though they are selling at the time they do this. If they learned what they were doing, they would be able to write better than they are doing, and correspondingly enter more markets.

The trouble is simple: the characters move without any reason for their actions. This can be seen best in many of the later books of Andre Norton, who it appears has little feedback from other writers, except through the hazy channels of Nickas, a fanzine that has few other writers in its stable of contributing professionals.

In Key Out Of Time, Miss Norton's characters construct a time machine under water, and are catapulted into the main course of the plot when a seaquake or a disturbance causes the machine to break down and precipitate the characters into the story. The manipulation by the writer in this case is obvious: why did the Time Machine have to be built underwater in the first place? If it were built on the land, then no disturbance of the sea could have affected it, and the story would never have happened. And thus Miss Norton would never have received her check for \$1500 from Ace Books.

Ted White plots out his books, writes a sample chapter, sells the book, and then writes the remainder. This formula has worked for him to the tune of 3 published books and another half dozen more which have been sold and are currently being written. Because of the formula Ted uses, I find the character involvement in some ways inadequate. The characters are involved because they've been pushed into situations by others, and not by their own creation of the circumstances. They are being manipulated by the author; this is quite clear in Android Avenger, where the hero is set into several situations because he is, fundamentally, an android, and under the control of another. He is reacting to the twists of the plot, and never creates a situation of his own choosing until much of the book is past. In Phoenix Prime, the hero, Max Quest, is set into another world by the maneuverings of The Others, who steer him from one scene to the next all through the beginning of the book.

I find the type of plotting used by writers like Lee Hoffman to be better in many ways. For one, when I asked Lee what was happening in one of her novels-in-

progress, she said, "Jee, I don't know; I just killed my main character off, and I don't know what's going to happen next!" Needless to say, something must have happened, because Lee just sold that novel, a Western, to Ballantine Books.

I like that type of plotting in a novel or short story a great deal more than what Ted uses. I admit his system works, and it works pretty well, but I think that the type of plotting that Lee and other writers use works better in most cases.

5. The last category really has two endings. There is one in which the story has all the ingredients needed to sell, until you reach the ending. The ending in one type is usually either a rapid summation of events and loose ends that could better have been taken care of in the body of the story, or else is an ending in itself, a summation by one character to another of what the story was about. This type of ending has been used with success only by Arthur Conan Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes books, and even then he used this summation to tie up loose ends that had been mere hints in the story. Few other authors have been as successful as he at this sort of thing.

Where slush pile authors (if I may coin a term) have a character stepping in from stage right and explaining away the ending, using this as a device, the story becomes ineffective. If the author has to sub it to this device, what is the point of developing the story?

The other type of ending is the punchline effect, so called because the entire purpose of the story is aimed at creating a shocking line or two at the end of the story. This is varied by some, who attempt sly humor or a miserable pun in place of a proper ending.

Either way, it's not an effective conclusion for a story, and certainly not worth the effort of plowing through the rest of the manuscript.

+ + + + +

These then are the general types of stories that I read the most frequently. Out of nearly three hundred stories, only one will be published. This is what the beginning author is up against, and this is why he must meet all these hurdles I have written about, if he wants to see his name in print.

This isn't to say that it's completely impossible to get a submitted story accepted and published; after all, even though there are 300 mss. with one publishable story in the entire bunch, I read better than 100 per week, so there is a fair chance.

There are, of course, a number of Editorial Taboos. These are things which just aren't done.

The first type is among the mechanical. If your story is addressed to the editor in crayon or pencil, naturally he isn't going to be impressed by you. You must impress on the editor that you are a Heat Type who knows the In's of dealing with the Editorial Mind. The appearance of the manuscript has a great deal to do with whether the story will be accepted or rejected. This is one of the great problems that Norman Kagan had; on the whole, his mss. are messy, ridden with typos, and generally completely ungrammatical. I would imagine

that he had a hard time getting published, originally.

You don't want this to happen to you: you want to impress on the editor that you're with it. Likewise, a giant ms. crumpled into a tiny envelope is no joy to see, or unfold and read. The best way to send a manuscript into a magazine is in a large size envelope with the same size envelope enclosed inside, with return postage already pasted on (you'd be surprized how many authors don't bother to include a S.A.E., or postage with their story.).

Now that the mechanical details are past, please Do Not Write A Story About:

a) A Deal with the Devil. b) Flying Saucers, nor c) the Hero actually being Adam in a clever plastic disguise...

These are subjects which most science fiction magazines have no interest in, Fantasy and Science Fiction among them, because they are themes which have been done into the ground, and it's very doubtful whether you'll have anything new to say in these territories.

Read and compare stories; if you think yours can compare with what's currently being published, then by all means submit it to a magazine. Not necessarily F&SF: there's Id for pulp-type action, Analog for science-fiction (and for Campbell fiction, too), and all the rest of the magazines.

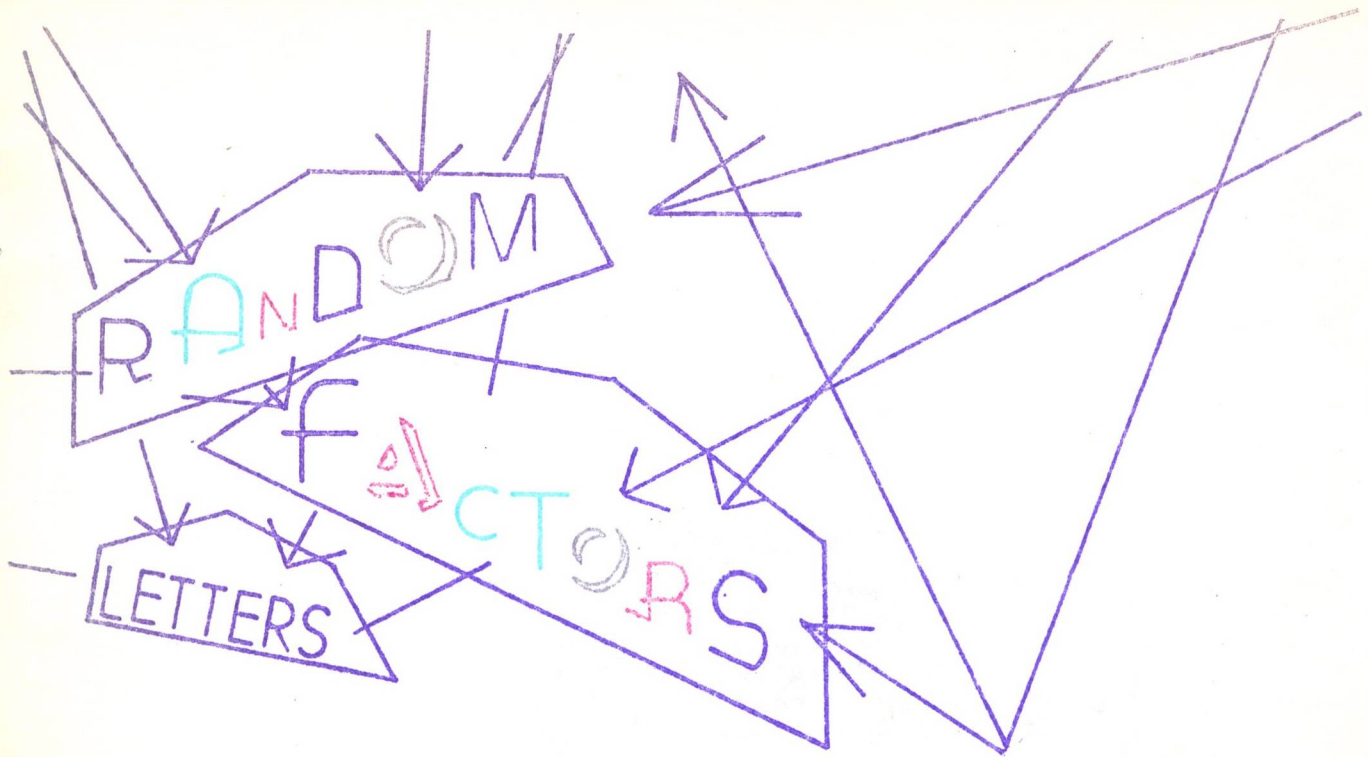
This article has covered a lot of ground. Needless to say, Poetry is an entirely different matter than the Short Story, so I've not covered it here.

In conclusion: appearance counts, so submit a neat manuscript; I'll assume most of you are familiar with the mechanics of submitting. A good book to study for beginning writers is Elements of Style by Strunk and White; it's available in paper from Macmillan for 95¢, and gives invaluable rules on good usage in writing.

Avoid overstepping editorial policy in the ways I mentioned above. The rest will be up to the editor; don't assume he doesn't know something about writing that you do. Keep submitting, even if you don't receive a personal note from the editor, and who knows? Perhaps one day you'll grow up to be Harlan Ellison.

---Andrew Porter, 1966

STEVE STILES
FOR TAFF!



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

This may or may not be the longest or the most favorable letter or comment on the 11th Algol. But it must be the latest.

Ted White continues to amaze me beyond the power of words to express. It's easy to imagine someone enduring all the slings and arrows of outraged Newport policemen for the sake of hearing the jazz he loves, but his willingness to put up cheerfully with these troubles at a folk music festival where he doesn't expect to find as much pleasure—! Someday, Ted will be recognized as the modern Thoreau.

The most interesting part in the Lupoff column this time was his resurrection of the non-fiction Merritt item. There can't be many readers of Algol old enough to remember what The American Weekly was like when Merritt was editing it. The best thing in it was the occasional big front page spread on some speculative science item, with a full color illustration sprawling across half the front page. I was too young even to look for the name of the artist when this sort of thing was in its prime but the blindingly colored pictures and the vivid text about how men would colonize the moon or some similarly fantastic topic tied in nicely with the prozines that were then new to me. I've never even heard of the ardent Merritt collectors possessing copies of the fantasy-slanted things in the Sunday supplement, and I imagine that they would be unobtainable today for all intents and purposes, except via microfilm copies.

Banks Mebane was interesting on a topic that reveals one of my mental blind spots. Any of the hobbies connected with automobiles--collecting old ones, racing expensive new ones, rehabilitating worn-out ones--leave me completely indifferent. Almost any other popular hobby that I encounter sparks mild interest in me and the strong suspicion that I'd better get away from here fast or I'll find myself engaged in another time-waster. But something, maybe the fact that I grew up in a family that didn't own a car, prevents me from showing interest in motor vehicles

for anything other than utilitarian purposes.

Bob Tucker might be right about fishing for telepaths. But I can cite one major difference between the situation today and that just before the first atomic bombs. Then, the newspapers got secret instructions mid way in World War II from important people in Washington, warning about the necessity of not publishing anything at all concerned with potential energy or military use of the atom, radioactivity, and related topics. No such instructions have come out in recent years involving the telepaths or any other topic, for that matter. Of course, this could be the result of the absence of an official state of war today and the difficulty of enforcing censorship.

I'm starting to get tired of Stephen Pickering's efforts to build dissention and to create dividing lines between sercon fans and fannish fans. It's bad enough that we must try to wipe out racial prejudice based on obvious and existing differences in skin colors; it's idiotic to risk the formation of a prejudice based on non-existent differences, because there are really no fans who are all-sercon and none who are all-fannish. I respect Ted White for his efforts to make some sort of sense from this essay, which I found totally incomprehensible except for the occasional assurances that Steve doesn't like fannish fanzines. But it might be better for fannish fanzines to stop running this sort of thing; at least until Steve publishes that sercon fanzine that he's been talking about publishing for years and years.

The chance to re-read The Adversaries was welcome. The story didn't leave me as enthused as it did many fans, when I first read it and I was curious to see if a half-dozen years would change my opinion. My reaction this time remains about the same. I admire Kent's narrative skill and the peculiarly fannish episode that causes the climax of the story. But today, just as long ago, I didn't feel comfortable to find real fans and fictional fans mixed into the same story, and I feel that if Kent had lived, he would have redone the last half-dozen paragraphs. Something else is needed to finish off the story. The failure of all the important characters to be changed in any apparent way by the climactic event makes the reader wonder if the near-brawl was as important an event as it seemed when he read about it.

You're right in the letter column about the cause of the trouble with professional science fiction today, of course. I still believe that the only salvation for the prozines is advertising. Those thick, slick paper, lavishly illustrated magazines on specialty topics like photography and high fidelity don't sell many more copies per issue than the prozines. They are profitable because they meet most of the production costs through the advertising, and they wage aggressive subscription campaigns to make possible circulation guarantees to potential advertising customers. I think there are enough well-known characteristics of science fiction readers to create an advertising market for a first-rate prozine, if someone with enough contacts and persuasiveness could find a publisher willing to sink a pretty good sum into launching it.

If the artists aren't willing to criticize the work of other artists, we're going to be awfully short of comments on artwork because lots of us artists say very little about pictures because we don't know enough about art to speak intelligently, and when we do risk a comment, we usually end up in a strenuous effort to spit a foot out of our big mouth, like me in the case of that ATOM drawing. Actually, we've gradually scrapped the old convention that prozine authors shouldn't

CRITicize other writers' fiction and I'd be awfully happy to hear how the good artists react to the work of other artists.

Charles Brown learned an unfortunate truth about editors when he talked to Mary Gnaedinger. Too many editors don't know the difference between editing and meddling. I once compared paragraph-by-paragraph some of the Gnaedinger reprints with original book xversions and was shocked to see what petty changes had been made in the magazine, apparently for no reason other than the conviction that an editor should make changes at least every 500th word.

I liked both covers and most of the interiors in this issue but I'll be darned if I'm going to embark on another learned dissertation on influences and intentions of the artists.

Yrs., &c., Harry Warner, Jr.

////////////////////

David G. Hulán/P.O. Box 422/Tarzana, California, 91356

Got Algol 11 today and thought I'd make a few comments while the iron was hot. Artwork, layout, etc. are as usual excellent. Spots of bad duplication here and there on my copy, but that's almost inevitable with ditto - you do well to get as consistent repro as you do (he said, who has Problems with his own ditto...)

I personally think Asimov's Foundation Series, or rather the whole Trantorian series, from The Stars, Like Dust through Second Foundation, is the standout for "Best All-Time Series," though I don't know if enough people will share my enthusiasm to get it on the final ballot. I nominated Lord Of The Rings for Best

Novel before the ruling of the Tricon Committee. I think it's obvious-ly a novel and not a series. There is no resolution at the ends of the first two volumes; they're no more novels than a serial installment is a novelle. But you can't fight City Hall, I guess.

Banks Mebane's article on sports car fandom was interesting; I've always had an interest in sports cars, though I've never owned one or driven one. One of these days, though, when I get the MicroBeast paid for, I'm going to get a Tri-4 or something like that. One of these days...

Did Pickering know that you were going to print his article and follow it up with a hatchet job by Ted White? ((No, I don't think he did; it was a spur-of-the-moment decision for me.)) While I agree pretty much with all that Ted said about Pickering's writing, I'm not sure that publishing an article and a reply to it in the same issue doesn't smack of dirty pool, unless the author is aware of this intent and agrees with it. As it is, your publication of the article is obviously a set-up for Ted's axe job. ((I'll confess that's what

I had in mind when I asked Ted to do a rebuttal in the same issue; I was getting a little tired of Pickering ranting on and on, with no one bothering to stop him.)) I'll confess that upon seeing an article with the Pickering by-line I wondered to myself "Has Porter lost his mind?" Your editorial taste is better than that, I was sure. A quick look ahead revealed the purpose of it all. Which, to say, strikes me as somewhat dubious in this arrangement, but Maybe Not.

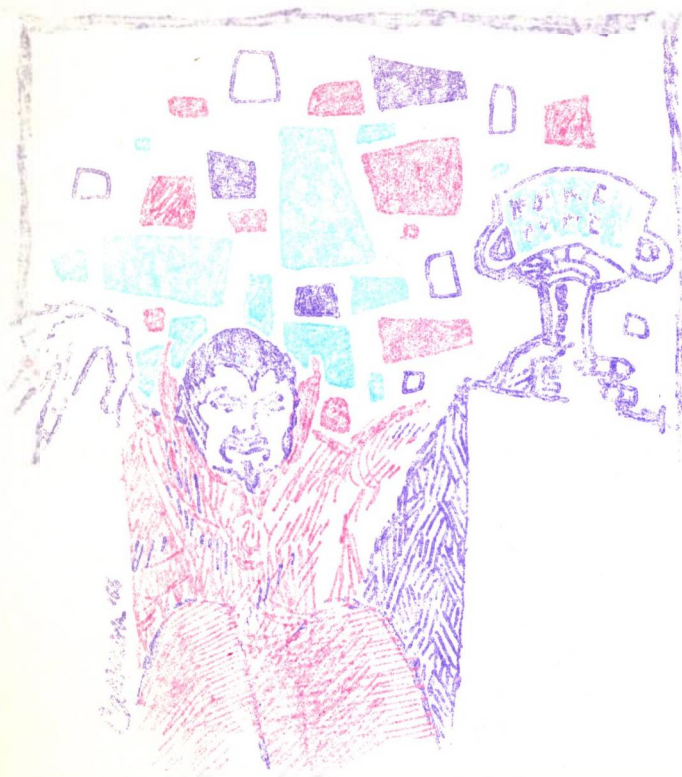
It might be germane to the issue, though, to point out that Pickering is only about 17, and that his personal contact with fans has perforce been pretty limited. ((Dave, right here I'm not going to print the rest of your beautifully constructed paragraph, because I think you should be aware of several things. On receiving the reply to Ted which is printed in this issue, I called Bakersfield College and asked about the collegiate status of Pickering. Dave, I think you might be interested to know that Pickering is 19, and a sophomore at Bakersfield. he is not a sociologist; that's a lie on his part. He is a teacher's assistant, which is not a teaching assistant. Further, he called me and told me that these articles were written when he was 16; yet the reply in this issue was written less than a month ago, and he still holds the same views. He later spoke long distance with Ted, and told him all the articles were written when he was 16 and were then submitted to the NBF manuscript bureau, and that I must have gotten the articles from there. This is a lie; I've never gotten any material from the NBF manuscript Bureau; I'm sure that other faneditors who've received Pickering

material have received it from the author, and not from the NBF. I think that Pickering is pretty damn immature for 19 (If you want to see a fan who's a mature fan at 15, look at Steve Pratt), and that he's a first class phony to boot. And I'm sure that his professors would be very interested in him, were this material to come into their hands (which I hope it won't; this is a matter for the people in fandom to handle). Any more questions, and I'll be delighted to answer them for you.))

To good Ol' Charlie Brown - having just finished re-reading The Black Galaxy, in which Leinster writes the Skylark plot, I would have to say that he should be included with Campbell as one who describes gadgets that make you wonder why no one has built them. In fact, if anything he's better than Campbell, possibly because he doesn't go so far out in the things he invents. Or maybe this is just one measure of his success - that he doesn't seem to be going too far out. I wd say that Leinster would have to be considered the top all-time gadgeteer among stf writers, when it comes to combining plausible gadgets with halfway decent writing. Campbell is the only one I can think of who comes close. Smith had a lot of imagination, but except where it concerned explosives there was generally no plausible explanation for any of the super-science in his stories. George O. Smith did some pretty good extrapolation of science in his stories, too - he was better at it than EE.

Though don't get me wrong - I enjoy the Lensman series more than anything Campbell, Leinster, or GOSmith ever wrote. But the strength of Doc Smith wasn't in his gadgets, or his characters - it was in the sweep of his universe building. Only two or three authors stand out who have ever equalled him there - Asimov in the Trantorian Universe, but others escape my mind. The gadgets in Smith's stories are there basically to make the stories possible, but they aren't the stories themselves, which is what they tend to be in the works of the others mentioned. It's what they are in the Skylark series, for that matter; which is why the Skylark books are bad, and hold up very poorly today, while the Lensman books are still good reading. And maybe that'll stir up the natives a bit.

A son of Loki, Dave.



Buck Coulson/Route 3/Hartford City
Indiana, 47348

Belatedly I notice a few check-
marks in the back of my copy of Algol.
No, I won't contribute. A couple of
years ago I rashly promised articles
to Bill Danner and George Scithers, &
they've been hounding me ever since.
The trouble with writing material for
a good fanzine is that one must take
a little time in the writing, and
perhaps do a bit of research. And I
don't have time for that sort of
thing; if an article can't be written
off the top of my head, it doesn't
get written.

But what about all the fanzine
reviews you do, Buck? I had
assumed all those were written
"off the top of your head..."

I'm either Ghod, Bob Tucker,
or a moral crud. Hmm...I'm not
Tucker, so I guess that gives me a
B-X choice.

Ted White's rebuttal to Pickering's article isn't going to help Steve any. His major objection to fannish fans is that they criticize his writing; having one of the big names of "faanish" fandom tear it to shreds will simply make matters worse. Partly it's because Pickering has not the slightest interest in writing style. He is interested solely in content. He rejects criticisms of pompous style because he personally can't tell, and isn't interested in telling, pompousness from sophistication. Fannishness doesn't appeal to him because a good share of it has little or no content. Fannish fans, on the other hand, are less interested in content than they are in cleverness. Pickering is only interested in what is being said; the prime interest of many fans is in how it's being said. (I can see both sides and I don't fully agree with either; my interest is in material that is both cleverly written and says something. But if I suppose I had to choose I'd pick a Ted White con report over a Leland Sapiro dissertation. I might even prefer an Arnie Katz con report to Sapiro, though it would be a tough choice).

And for the best piece in Algol, it's a tough choice between Lupoff and Tucker. I don't think I'll choose.

— Buck

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Dick Lupoff/Merry Hell/Toughkeepsie, New York, 12603

Just a brief note to congratulate you and Steve Pickering on one of the grandest coups of recent years in fan publishing. I refer, of course, to Pickering's writing (and your obtaining for Algol) of his article in the latest issue.

And my added congratulations on the risky -- but successful -- ploy of sending the article out for a reply in the same issue, instead of waiting for replies in

the form of letters-of-comment.

It was certainly one of the funniest pieces of straight-faced humorous writing that has ever appeared in a fanzine, or perhaps anywhere. I am tempted to say that it is the greatest piece of nonsense-writing since the great works of Lewis Carroll or Edward Lear.

And, for that matter, my congratulations also to Ted White, whose straight-faced "rebuttal" maintains throughout the illusion of Ted's having taken Steve seriously. As I read through his paragraphs I kept waiting for the break in which Ted would acknowledge the humor of the whole nonsensical article he was "attacking," but he kept his self-control to the hilarious end.

Once more, congratulations to you, to Ted, but mostly to Stephen Pickering. Long may he rave!!!

Best regards --Dick

~~~~~

Cuyler Warrnell (Ned) Brooks, Jr./911 Briarfield Road/Newport News, Va., 23605

The Gaughan cover of his is the best I've ever seen. Melazny is "stewed" when he writes? I don't believe it! Maybe you meant it as a joke.

(( It's fairly common knowledge among pro sf circles that Roger writes at his best when a six-pack or other refreshments are at hand. ))

I read the first page of Stevens' "Motif Index" with great glee, in anticipation of telling him about Cameron's system; I was dissappointed to find that he already knew of it. The trouble with the Cameron system is that it is too complex to be unique. That is, no two people could possibly arrive at the same code for Stapledon's First and Last Men, independently. The point of a system like the Dewey Decimal System is that it is simple enough that most librarians assign the same code to the same book.

As for Cordwainer Smith, you did not read my comment on your comment very carefully before you commented on it!

((You've described the problem rather exactly, I'm afraid...))

As for writing you an article on Smith, I will give you first chance to reject it!

((Permit me to mention that as I type this, it is a week since Smith (alias Paul Leinbarger of Johns Hopkins University) died of a heart attack; should you do an article on him, it could very well be the definitive one, if you put enough research into it.))

That multicolored illo by Steve Stiles on page 58 was really something. You'll be up with the old TWIG soon. TWIG was before my time, but I have one that I got from Phil Harrell.

((I'd like to think that I've passed the old TWIG. TWIG ILLU'ED is another matter; I think I've done it as far as contents go, tho there's a long way to go as far as the artwork is concerned.))

I was glad to see from your fanzine reviews that you did get Collector's Bulletin #4. I realize that there's not much you can say about such a zine, but you might have mentioned the Bok Illo Index; there might be some readers who wd like to help us complete it.

Best, --Ned

((If you are interested in completing the Bok Index, or have any large collect-



ions that might contain any artwork by Hannes Bok, contact Ned at the address above; I'm sure he'd appreciate any help you give him.}}

~~~~~

Robin Wood/P.O. Box 154/Amador City, California,

Thanks for Algol 11. It arrived when I was unable to do anything but read, so it was welcome. It got here a few days after I had a minor prang going through a muddy detour between here and Sacramento. It's a real mess -- five miles of clay, dirt, and dust where they're widening highway 49, and they have these water trucks that go over it and hose it down, to keep the dust down. While this works excellently as far as keeping the dust down, it makes a death trap out of it for somebody on a motorcycle. I had about fifty

feet to go, could see pavement ahead, when I hit a patch of greasy mud. The rear wheel fish-tailed and the bike fell over to the right, nothing I could do to right it, so I stepped over the gas tank and went rolling asshole over teakettle through the mud and dirt and rocks and stuff. I must have landed on my shoulder because it stiffened up the next day and the day after that I could move my arm about 2 inches without screaming. However, it's now loosening up.



The covers for Algol 11 were excellent, especially the front one. I have a feeling I've seen the back cover in Galaxy recently.

Not a chance; they were original pieces of artwork, done especially for me.}}

Monk and Pingus on the same gig sounds like a gas, tho I find it hard to believe Monk could play a so-so set. There's something about Monk that grabs me--when I first heard him he sounded all wrong, now everybody else's piano playing sounds off key.

Is the N3F a CIA front? Has Amazing Stories been taken over by THRUSH? Ah, yes, Tucker exposes nearly all. But what of value could a secret agent glow out of fandom? And even if he did, how could he translate

it? There are more initials (like BEN, ENF, GAFIA, etc.) kicking around in fandom than in a military or government report... Hmmm, come to think of it, there is a definite similarity. Is fandom a government plot? Isn't this paragraph a pile of foolishness?

ESP as a secret weapon? But, why? It's so damn common. The come to think of it, I've heard there are plans for using LSD as a secret weapon; just drop it into the enemy's water supply and when everybody trips out bop on in and take over. Dunno how that'd work, but it sounds like a damn fun way to fight a war.

So that about wraps it up. Algol continues to be interesting, but I can't think of too many worthy comments. Milt Stevens' last paragraph takes the words right out of my mouth, on any comment I might make on his article. Tucker, White, and Lebane were all interesting. Those cartoons in the first half of the zine were pretty terrible. Especially liked the illo on page 40 -- is that as hard to do as it looks, or is there some special trick to it?

Robin Hood

((You mean to say you don't like Garry Deindorfer and Steve Stiles cartoons? Shame on you, fella... That illo on page 40 was done by shading in a solid dark area and then scratching out the illo in the area. This isn't hard to do in spirit dupping, but it will be hell working in mimeo, I guess.))

~~~~~

Arnie Katz/98 Patton Boulevard/New Hyde Park, New York, 11043

If the truth be known, your report of our phone conversation in the last Algol partook greatly of that surrealism for which you are infamous. I was not at all shocked by your statement that most of your fanac was done directly on-stencil or on-master. After all, most of my fanac is done directly onto master or stencil. I did express surprise that you didn't feel your material for Algol was worth an extra draft. The time needed to do a first draft is slight compared to your over-all investment, and the results would undoubtedly be worth it. You have a tendency towards incoherence and lack of organization, Andy, and a rewrite would keep such proclivities under control.

(( Yassuh, Mr. Pickering, yassuh!! Seriously, taking in mind what you said, I tried to first-draft my editorial this week. Needless to say, after 4 attempts I gave up. I find I need the last minute definitiveness of the master in front of me to make me produce that essence commonly known as Andy Porter in all my glory. And it might interest you to know that these comments to the letters are all being done first-draft directly onto the master. You can't teach an old frog new schticks, as they say... ))

"The Adversaries" was an ideal choice for an Algol reprint, in that it mentions rich brown several times. Seriously, I enjoyed it in the White edition, and I enjoyed it again in Algol. Naturally, I have a Gripe about the story, or rather your present t ion of it. I think you should have gotten some illos or something to justify its printing in a ditto'd format. The story, of course, stands well by itself, but some classy ditto'd artwork would have enhanced the story, and made your edition different than Ted's.

(( Unfortunately for me, does Chamberlain, who was scheduled to illustrate it was also to do a play at Sarah Lawrence when I was typing it up, and the play got the preferential treatment. There was one illo scheduled to go into the large oblongs on the title page, but even that one Never Made It. ))

Greg Benford's idea about the reason for the scarcity of excellent genzines is interesting, but only part of the story. Besides the lowered egoboo quotient, there has been a growing tendency for neofans to accept criticism with poor grace. Further, many seek to avoid further criticism by avoiding the critics rather than by making an effort to improve their fanzines. Apa 45 is an ape that exists for nothing other than to shield sensitive little minds from objective criticism.

But Greg really only talks about one side of the coin. The publisher of a genzine is in a real bind. He can either cater to the slobbs and the uncritical fools, in which case he will receive dozens of semi-illiterate letters about Burroughs, Sword and Sorcery, and the N3F, or he can make an honest attempt to



put out a quality fanzine. There are currently in fandom perhaps 150 people capable of appreciating a good fanzine. Unfortunately, most of these people as the genzine publisher soon realizes, haven't the courtesy to even send an acknowledgement or a postscript. There just isn't much egoboo in publishing a top genzine these days, Greg. Things are starting to change a little but for every Greg Benford who writes an interesting LoC there are \$ ~~of \$~~ ~~left/~~ several fans who never even think of responding to a good fanzine. I would list them for the edification of Algol readers everywhere, but some of them may be Faanish heroes, and I would hate to disillusion the people reading this.

(( Actually, if anyone sent me a letter that mentioned the N3F, Burroughs, and s&s in the same page, I wouldn't even bother to list it in the We Also Heard From (unless it was Lin Carter or Tucker); I'd simply throw it away. Editorial Policy: this fanzine has no interest in the N3F (they never even sent me all the publications when I was a member), Burroughs (an amusing story-teller, but certainly not Ghed, even if Dick Lupoff sometimes mentions him; Lupoff is Harmless...), or Sword and Sorcery (except if it's in a book by Dave Van Arnam which he's finally sold to Ace Books...). We have certain standards, we does we does...))

A good issue, Andy. I even laughed at Pickering and the ~~article~~ article he wrote, so it wasn't a total loss. I hope you do get out another issue before the TriCon (( so do I...)) There aren't too many other genzines besides ~~the~~ Algol that I really look forward to, you know.

Faanishly, --Arnie Katz

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And so we end another letter column. A number of letters got squeezed out, so:

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: ((People what got squizzed out of the lettercolumn this "ish"))  
Bill Donaho: "Algol 11 received and enjoyed." Jean Berman: apa I discovered Ross Chamberlain, Artist, and, uh...Andy Porter, Editor (blush, blush). Tom Dupree: "I'll be in Chicago in November, and look forward to attending many wonderful orgies there; Chicago fans please note." These young fellas sure get around, don't they? Creath Thorne: "Images in the Margins of Gothique Manuscripts" is one of the fascinating topics Creath covers in this letter which I wish he'd turn into an article for me... And lastly Alan Shaw turns in a wonderful LoC full of delightful faanisms that Alan has proolly cribbed from A Sense of FAPA; smart little rascal, that Alan Shaw. I hear tell he's Larry Shaw's little brother, or was it Bob Silverberg's?...

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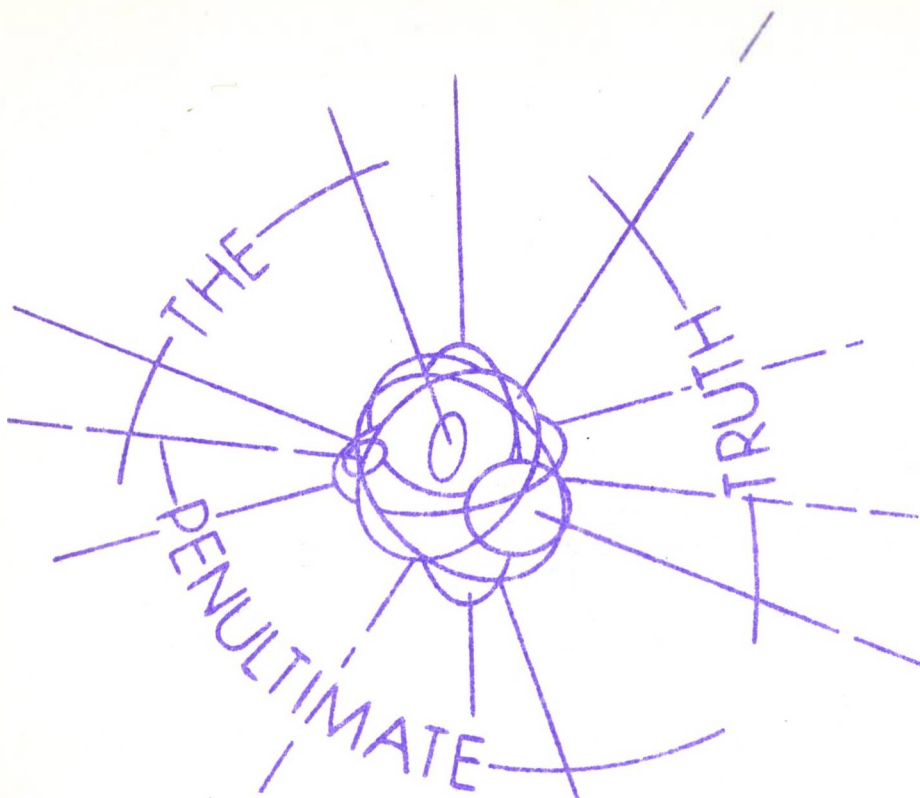
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The reason(s) you are receiving this issue are checked off below. I'm sure there must be a category for you somewhere.

- ☐ You contributed to this issue.      ☐ You contributed to this issue, but your contribution got squeezed out.
- ☐ You subscribed.      ☐ You sent me a letter of comment; its mangled remains are in the letter column.
- ☐ A mangled letter of yours expired on the editing table. Thanks anyway.
- ☐ We trade on a very irregular basis.
- ☐ You're mentioned in this issue; care to comment?
- ☐ You're not mentioned in this issue, but you'll get the next issue if you send me a letter of comment.
- ☐ You are Ghod, Bob Tucker, or Stephen Pickering.
- ☐ You are known far and wide for your articles; please grace these pages with one.
- ☐ You are a famous fannish artist; I can offer you good reproduction here.
- ☐ This is the last issue you will receive, unless you send me a letter of comment.
- ☐ You sent for this issue, and I have your sticky quarters in hand.

The Deadline for next issue is June 1st, 1967. Material on hand includes a column by Robin Wood, an article by Robin White, and Poetry by Jerry Knight. The rest depends, my good readers, on you. We are particularly receptive, may we add, to good solid articles on the new wave in fiction, dissections of the current fiction, and other items of a similar nature. Next issue will be, as is this, a mixture of spirit duplicating and mimeography. Artists may pre-stencil their artwork, if they wish.

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Steve Stiles for TAFF!!!

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