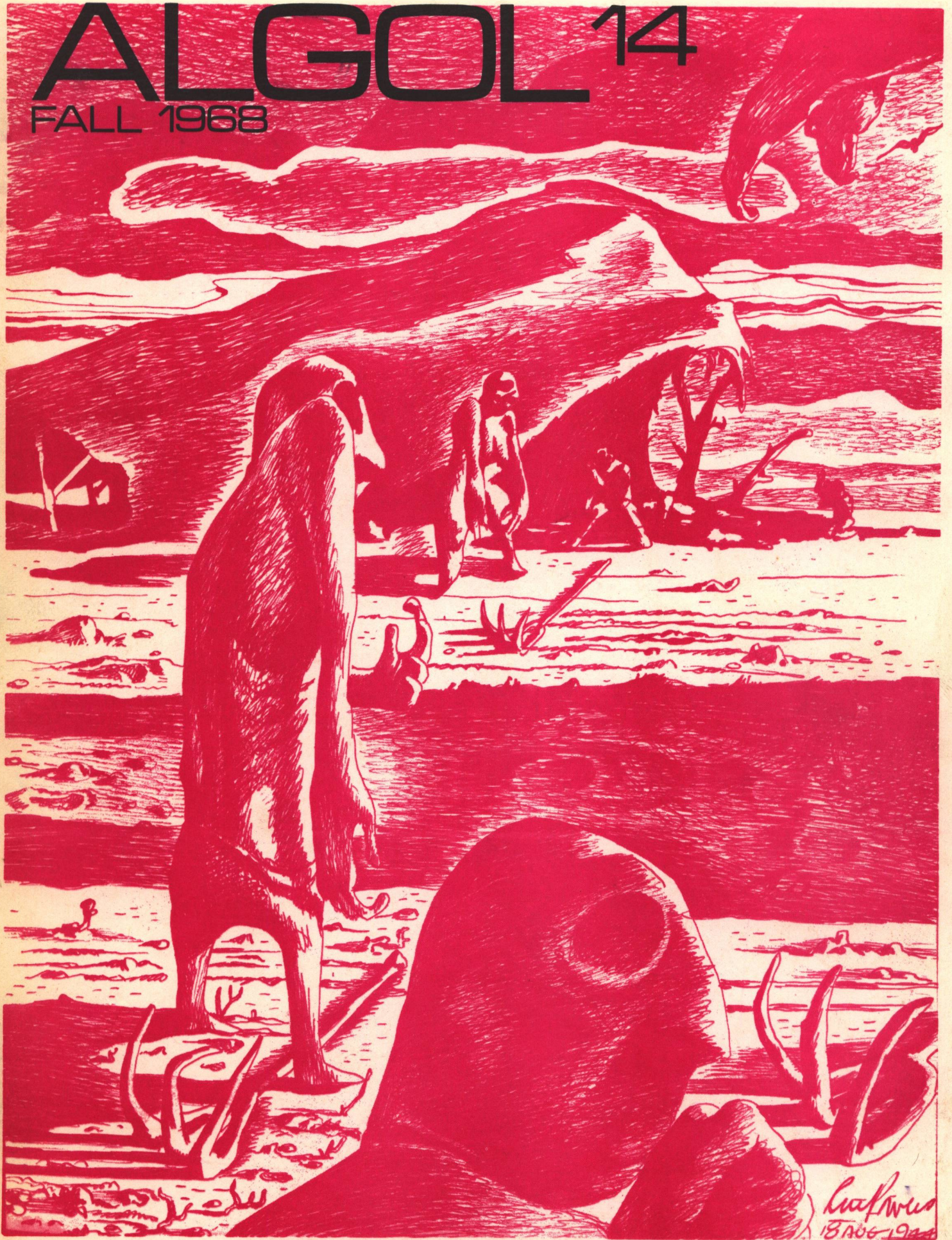


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# ALGOL 14

FALL 1968



W. A. R. W. R.  
1806-1900



# ALGOL 14

FALL 1968 SIXTY CENTS

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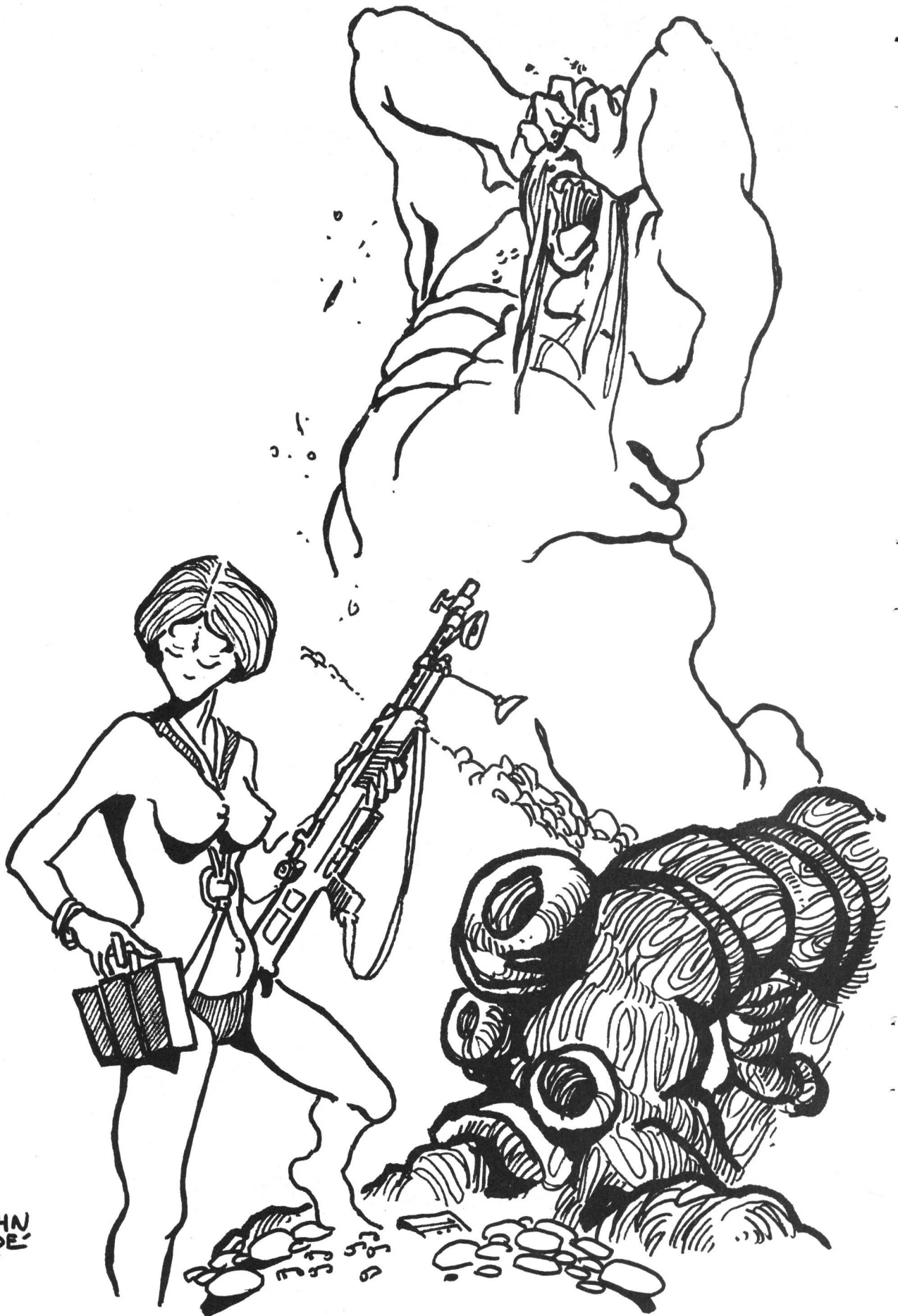
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VAUGHN  
BODE  
68



# ABOUT THE COVER...

RICHARD POWERS

This drawing is a dia/prognostic prophetic delphic haruspical augury-omenic one, done circa 1944. Little did the artist, Sergeant (Sergeant! For maosake! If there were anysueh thing as military justice it would have been he, not Gregory Peck, firestorming Dresden and serve 'em right) Powers realize when he did this surrealist Science Fiction/Fantasy drawing that:

A. he was getting hooked on the most wretched riff in the commercial hack's grisly gig that would eventually produce some 1100 paperback covers (some under the pseudonym Lord Graystroke, or Gaystroke to his enemies);

B. that this simple-minded scrawl would accurately depict the mood of the American public some quarter-century later, waiting for the hemorrhoid that walks like a man, Hon. Richard Nixon, to become president.

But there it is.

How do you account for an unnatural -- make that supernatural -- phenomenon like such, materialists of the dull daylight world?

You can't, that's how, unless...

Macrobiotics?

## COVER REPRINTS

of the Richard Powers cover on this issue of ALGOL are available, without the black overprinting, for 25¢ each, 6/\$1.00. Order them from Andrew Porter,

Box 367, New York 10028





# BEATLE-JUICE

# EDITORIAL

## ANDREW PORTER

This has been a bad year for fandom. In just a few short months, we have lost the brilliance of people like Ron Ellik, Lee Jacobs, Anthony Boucher and others, brilliance that cannot be replaced. Like 1958, this year has become another Year Of The Jackpot. Heinlein's story, ending with the sun going nova, has come to mean any time of disaster in fandom and the science fiction community at large.

Alva Rogers tells me that some 20 plus names will appear in the BayCon Program Book's In Memoriam page. Some of the people listed there are Los Angeles and Bay Area clubfans, never active in the wider world of fandom. But many will be those who have gained fame and international repute as fans, as professionals, and as simply good people.

This world has too few good people to lose some through death. The group who have made this year special includes Anthony Boucher, leasing name in mystery circles and who guided Fantasy & Science Fiction into the channels that made it a respected voice in science fiction; George Salter, who designed F&SF, and whose designs are still the recognized trademark of F&SF; Ron Ellik, who, god knows, had so much to live for; Lee Jacobs, who slipped in his bathtub and, in an ultimate pun on the value of life, had his snuffed out; and the others, including Groff Conklin and Barbara Pollard and Dale Hart. All of their deaths are a shameful waste.

Ron's death hit me particularly hard. I suppose that Ron literally didn't have an enemy in the world and, because he had travelled so much, and wrote so well -- who can forget The Squirrel Cage, or his TAPF report, or Fanac, or any of his achievements in fandom? -- he was known and loved by a great many fans.

On my first trip to California in 1966, Ron gave Arnie Katz, Mike McInerney and myself couch and floor space in his home while we stayed in Los Angeles. And before that, at the WesterCon in San Diego, the shambles that the convention committee and the hotel made of the Con were brightened by Ron's presence.

It was in fact at my first WorldCon, Washington, 1963, that Ron took me under his wing, telling me where the closed door parties were, and, early one morning, after an all-night party in the Berkeley suite, broke the isolation surrounding me, during a trek to a local eatery, by talking to me not as a neo, but as a fan, an equal. The Discon was the best WorldCon I've been at, and Ron helped make it so.

Ron had reached the heights of trufanishness and was finally getting what he



wanted in the big world of life beyond fandom. And then, a few days before he was to be married, his life was tragically extinguished on an icy road in Wisconsin.

At times, the world is such a damned unfair place.

Fandom, the world, our lives continue. We thank whatever gods there be that the incredibly stupid war in Vietnam has not caught any fans in its' embraces. And we can continue to read science fiction, and find some meaning to it and in the world around us.

+++++

Taking a page from John Bangsund, I've been trying to make Algol into an image of myself and of my own interests. (Unlike the narrator in George Locke's story I've yet to succumb to any desire to trade my editorial personality for the power to resist the tides of sleep.) In so doing, I'm trying to master the forces within fandom, to create, through Algol and my own actions, a greater knowledge, understanding, and concept of fandom as an international happening.

Someone told us, "Fandom works; the United Nations doesn't." I hope, naturally, that someday the U.N. will work, as it was first thought of some 25 years ago. Until that time I hope that fandom, in all its' infinite variations, personalities and interests, will continue to work internationally.

I continue to find it amazing (I guess I've still got my Sense of Wonder) that, save for the restrictions imposed by the international idiocies of the Post Office, fandom does very nicely without ideologies, religious arguments, regionalistic tendencies and nationalistic arguments.

Jean Muggoch, a very talented Londoner, has created a fanzine called the European Newsbulletin, or Eurolink, or whatever the final name for it was. The name doesn't matter. The idea is simply that they are doing something that Charles De-Gaulle, the Iron Curtain, provincial thinking and economic barriers cannot prevent: they are carrying on the international exchange of ideas and news for fun, for fandom's sake. This new dimension to fandom -- this international dimension, if you will -- is exactly what I hope Algol will come to represent with future issues. It is perhaps a small and pretentious step. But that fandom can commit itself to no limits on our fannish horizons, to no borders on what we wish to think and feel, and that we can express ourselves to any fan of any nation, bodes well for the future of all of us.

For I believe that if we can make fandom work on an international basis, without rules and confining regulations, then there is true hope for the future, for everyone on this planet.

+++++

In line with our hope of an international outlook, may I remind readers that I am American Agent for the Porter-Bangsund Co-Prosperity Sphere, embodied at this end by Australian Science Fiction Review. This two-time nominee for a Hugo as Best Fanzine costs a mere \$2.40 for one year, or six issues. May I suggest that when readers subscribe to this very worthy journal (you don't have to be Samuel R. Delany to get into its' pages, but it helps...), they remember that copies will be sent to them via an aged sea turtle, direct from the Antipodes (or Australia, as the natives call it) and take a long time to get here. For airmail delivery, add \$3.00 for each year's subscription.

+++++

Readers are advised to send us their letters of comment before the deadline for next issue; said deadline falls in the first part of November.

—Andrew Porter

# THE BACKGROUND OF CHTHON

PIERS ANTHONY

## Prolog: Purpose Of The Author.

I am an ambitious writer. This makes me, as I have been advised ungently from time to time, an insufferable correspondent -- but hardly a good novelist, quality thinker or well-adjusted personality.

I do not believe in obscure writing. A novel should have a clear plotline unencumbered by the artificiality of the so-called narrative hook, unnecessary sex or violence, or arty and impenetrable prose in the guise of style. If a writer is not able to begin at the beginning, tell it as it is, and keep the reader interested -- why then, that writer is a farce, and he would do better to take up some more appropriate pursuit such as politics, glue-sniffing or transvestism, where he is more likely to be appreciated for what he is.

If you agree with me, stay clear of Chthon. It may be the most complexly structured science fiction novel ever written, and the plot line is so devious that I can not refer to it knowledgeably without a chart. It begins -- and ends -- in the middle; opens and closes with narrative hooks; contains arty quotations, 130 lines of free verse, deliberately obscure passages and about as graphic sex and violence as you will find in the field. These are the obvious aspects; the subtle ones are worse.

Why did I do it? Why go against so many of the principles of writing I believe in? I could have told the story in a straightforward manner (and am about to do so here), confusing nobody and entertaining most readers. Why did I consciously set about formulating such a monstrously convoluted conglomeration of notions, so difficult to comprehend that I know of no reader, fan, pro or critic, who has been able to grasp it on his own? Why?

Because I am ambitious. I am not satisfied merely to write without selling (though I did so for eight years) or sell without becoming known (though I have done so for five years) or to become known as anything less than a master of the medium (how many years...?). I do not need the applause of a select minority that



thinks it knows what the field should be better than the readers and writers do, or the fake fame of an award bought by bloc voting. Yet I do want recognition. I know of no legitimate way to obtain it except by doing my utmost in my own ornery fashion.

Thus Chthon: no formula, this, and I will not do it again unless I turn out a sequel. I have written five novels since, and none of them are patterned after it. Any points of resemblance are incidental. They are, frankly, practice novels, by which I have tried to improve my thinking and perfect my styling, so that I can turn out a more impressive work the next time I go all-out. Three have sold so far, and they will probably be more successful than Chthon merely because they are less ambitious; certainly each obtained better purchase terms. One even won a contest.

I am now amidst that second major effort, though it is quite unlike the first. I can not guarantee when where or if it will see print because I mean to be ornery about marketing it. This is The Macroscope, about 150,000 words and exceedingly heavy on the science. If thinking is unpleasant for you, avoid it.

Interlog: Plot, Nuance and Structure.

Here, in grossly simplified summary and in chronological order, is the essence of the Chthon narrative:

Aton Five was born §374, the § symbol representing a calendar dating from man's application of the § drive that made galactic travel feasible. He is raised by his father on Hvee, an agricultural world. His mother deserted the family early, and Aton hates her. At age seven he encounters a lovely nymph in the forest and is fascinated, though it is seven years before he sees her again. At fourteen he has an unfortunate liason with a local girl which enhances his sexual frustration. At twenty-one he goes to space in search of his beloved forest nymph, called the "minionette," who is his ideal of womanhood. He finds her: in real life she is an apparently ageless space executive. She is also, it turns out, his mother.

Aton loves her yet, while hating her. He performs with her an act of incest, then flees in disgust. He tries to recover his equilibrium at planet Idyllia, where he meets and almost loves Coquina -- a sweet girl from home. But he is already dangerously perverted, and throws her off a mountain cliff.

He is adjudged criminally insane and is sent to Chthon, a nefarious cavern prison. There he provokes a series of grisly adventures taking up half the volume of the novel, finally winning his freedom by sheer ruthlessness. He kills, directly or indirectly, more than 200 other prisoners during this quest, and barely escapes the god of Chthon, a mineral intelligence.

Outside, he discovers that the Chthon caverns are within the world of Idyllia (Heaven-Hell analogy). He is picked up by one the former escapee from Chthon, the demented Doc Bedside. They travel to Earth in search of information about the minionette, and obtain it at the sector library. Aton visits planet Minion, a proscribed world, where he learns that the natives are semi-telepathic humans who receive pleasure as pain and vice versa. This explains many of Aton's own dicotomies: he is by birth half-Minion, so has warring human and Minion emotional sensitivity and a genetic bias toward incest.

He returns to Iivee, where he meets and inadvertently kills the minlanette, his lover/mother. This brings him to complete collapse. He recovers a year later to find that Coquina, not dead after all, has been taking care of him. But she has caught the incurable Chill, a galactic disease, and is dying.

Aton is now approached by the god Chthon, who agrees to save Coquina if Aton will serve it. Thus he returns to Chthon caverns -- which are, it is apparent, where he belongs.

Stripped of its structure and symbolism and variable styling, Chthon is a straight adventure novel with insidious undertones, and hardly artistic. No reader of sound mind who comprehends this much and no more should find it particularly appealing. If this summary is not enough to show why I was unwilling to have it published in this format, I can only say that hackwork is not my forte.

There are a number of incidental nicities that the more perceptive reader may appreciate, though I do not suggest that these represent quality writing per se. The story is actually narrated first-person by the Chthon-entity, who speaks for itself in the prolog-interlog-epilog and summarizes thematic and general material that do not fit within the novel proper. There is an integrated framework of names: Aton Five, for example, means the firstborn of the first line of the Family of 5. All his male ancestors begin with A, while his uncle, Benjamin, can not bequeath better than a B. Coquina Four derives from the third line of a higher Family. Jay, Jervis and Jill are far down the line to the low Family of 81.

But apart from this, there is surface symbolism: the lesser characters somewhat resemble the literal meanings of their names. Jay is cheerful, Jervis pugnacious, and Jill is youthful. Inexpensive puns, I admit, but harmless. Coquina's theme of the shell should be obvious, as should the minlanette's name Malice: a term of endearment in her inverted terms.

And of course there are a number of allusions to the Oedipus theme, literal and figurative, and connected irony. Take it or leave it; my point is that none of this was carelessly done. I do wish someone had appreciated my parody of the great particle/wave debate on the nature of light, however, or the relevance to the plot of the quotes I so carefully selected. (Scur grapes? Hell, no grapes at all!)

But my main concern, and the single thing that took up most of my purely intellectual effort, was the parallelistic structure. Chthon was aimed at both the lowbrow and highbrow reader: the plot for the low, the structure for the high. The meaning of the whole is not the sum of the parts. It is set up as two parallel adventures, and the narrative alternates between them: the cavern sequence, and the flashes. This is not mere convenience; those two stories are specifically integrated with a one-to-one correspondence. In fact, they are merely aspects of the same story. The characters change somewhat, the events are superficially dissimilar -- but the primary distinction between theme is figurative. As Chthon explains in the Prolog: "Aton -- while your body dies in prison, your emotion lives beyond; yet both are one: your death reflects your life. Every episode you suffer here parallels your other existence, now and in the past and in the time to come."

The cavern sequence is Aton's death -- which is much the same as his life. Death is literal, direct, objective and conscious: there are few subtleties in the prison opera. The parallel flash sequence, in contrast, is more figurative,



devious, subjective and unconscious. If you wish to personify them, call the caverns Male and physical; the flashes Female and emotional. There are exceptions, as there have to be in a work of this magnitude (given the literary limitations of the author): the nightmare in part 2 (cavern) is far more subtle and significant than the seduction in part two (flash). But in general, this is the pattern. Note that the symbol numbers, 1, 2, etc., apply to the cavern sequence, while the written numbers, one, two, etc., apply to the flashes. This is intended to help the reader keep things straight, and is independent of the chapter numeration.

It was necessary, for the sake of overall artistic balance, to invert the order of presentation of the latter episodes of the novel. Thus it opens prison-flash, prison-flash, prison-flash, and closes prison-flash-prison-flash-prison, flash-prison. This makes sense when you realize that the prison sequence is the present, while the flashes are "back" in the first half and "forward" in the second half; the present, symbolically, must embrace and surround both past and present. This is the way the narrator Chthon sees Aton's life: all contained by his prison-present. We never really leave the present, and neither the past nor the future can change the basic reality of it.

The specific parallels of the twin narratives are carried throughout the novel, with 18/eighteen subsections. I don't believe it is necessary to spell out each one here; anyone who enjoys the intellectual exercise can figure them out for himself. Interpretations may differ; no harm done. In this article I'll cover only a few of the more difficult ones.

For reference, here is the structural chart, with key words and dates identifying the important elements within it.

PROLOG: "We have need of the damned."

#### I. ATON

§400

1. Laza
2. Nightmare
3. Tally

§381

- One. Nymph
- Two. Jill
- Three. Aurelius

#### II. GARNET

§400

4. Mines
5. Hastings
6. Blue Garnet

§398

- Four. §
- Five. Taphia
- Six. Xest

#### III. CHILL

§400

7. Chill
8. Trail
9. Dreams

§399

- Seven. Coquina
- Eight. Shell
- Nine. Love

INTERLOG: "These are not my people."

#### IV. MINION

§401

- Ten. Partner
- Eleven. Library

§400

10. Trek
11. Crevasse

Twelve. Misery

12. Bill

V. MINIONETTE

§402

Thirteen. Spotel

Fourteen. Pool

Fifteen. Climax

§400

13. Monsters

14. Decimation

15. Bossman

VI. CHTHON

§403

Sixteen. Awakening

Seventeen. Bedside

Eighteen. Defeat

§400

16. Myxo

17. Zombie

18. Victory

EPILOG: "How can we condemn you?"

1/One is in detail triparte: in the cavern Aton is introduced to the prison situation, and in the flash to the new world of age seven. In 1 he encounters Laza, who deals physical death to her lovers, and this parallels his introduction to the minionette in One, who represents emotional disaster. The first kills the body, the second the mind. (Remember the literal-figurative complements.) Finally, in 1 he meets the regular people of the prison; in One he meets the regulars of the planet: the children of Family 81.

7/Seven is so devious it appears to have no internal connection, but this is provided by the larger context. In 7 we learn about the dread Chill disease, while Seven is the introduction to Coquina. These two, so different, are brought together at the climax of the novel: Coquina comes down with the Chill, threatening Aton's final framework, and this forces him to reverse his flight from Chthon. This combination also, as the Epilog clarifies, helps settle a long-standing problem of Chthon's, and thus perhaps removes a serious threat to the existence of all life in the galaxy. Coquina and the Chill, therefore, are vitally linked, and this parallel placement of the two is the first suggestion of this in the novel.

See how it works? It is not for the careless reader.

Epilog: reader reactions.

By this time I trust I have the agreement of those still with me that I undertook an extremely ambitious project in Chthon. It remains to be seen what the verdict of time will be. Perhaps I attempted too much for my talent, and so failed. But I'd rather fail because I strained my resources too far, tahn because I never bothered to exert myself. At such time as I find my level, perhaps I'll settle down to it more placidly; until then, I mean to try for the moon as well as the backhouse. I'd like to say that I see many other writers with a similar attitude, but I just don't. Perhaps they are more practical than I am; at least they get the fat magazine/hardcover/softcover/motion-picture contrasts that I do not, and for work that strikes me as indifferent in ambition and quality. Those few who do go all-out seem to have trouble getting the result into print, too; there is at least one important case in point going on now.

But to stick to my own case: Chthon was bounced by three hardcover houses, including DOUBLEDAY, before it connected with softcover for a standard beginner's contract (not an advantageous kind). I had finished it is June, 1965, and perhaps



I was fortunate that it got into print in only two years. That can be the hardest thing to accomplish for a novel of any quality: just getting it into print. The editors hardly scrambled for it.

But how about the readers? I showed drafts of the manuscript to ten people -- family and correspondents -- before submitting it for publication. I received much valuable advice, and was able to improve the novel materially as a result. At the end I announced that I planned to submit it for publication, beginning as an entry in that monster \$210,000 contest of the time, and asked for a frank evaluation: was it a publishable book?

Here, anonymously and edited for brevity, are the replies of three pros and one fan:

"There are some excellent and suspenseful sequences, but they're outnumbered by wordy, cliché-ridden ones, and by much obscure writing...you need several years perfecting your craftsmanship...before you'll be able to get Chthon into a form that will satisfy you, let alone an editor or the public."

"...my general over-all impression is that the novel is getting there as a novel, that it may not be too far from publishable as it is, but that you unfortunately have a light year or two to go before turning this into a competition winner."

"But as far as the Big Picture: I've lost it."

"As to if this is up to the publishable level...well, I'm on the fence. To me it is overwritten, over-complex, and objectionable in many passages from the point of view that they will not print such sex sequences...There is much good writing surrounded like islands by oceans of, shall we say, highly individual prose. However, when we adjust the balance...we have a book that may get into print."

-- Piers Anthony, 1967

## COMING NEXT ISSUE —————>

Norman Spinrad's long article, The Bug Jack Barron Papers, plus an offset portfolio by rising young artist Michael Gilbert, both squeezed out of this issue by space limitations, will appear next issue, out in December. In addition ALGOL will feature an International Section, to become a regular feature, with SFMarkets (from SFWeekly) and articles on foreign science fiction and fandom.

Next issue will see the continuation of Lupoff's Book Week and Ted White's column, entitled, My Column. Ted wasn't in this issue because of other commitments (Ace books pays better than we do). In addition, we'll have an interesting letter column, pretty artwork, and anything else we can fit in comfortably. The deadline for the Winter Issue is November 15th.







# ON PERNOGRAPHY

ANNE MCCAFFREY

Authors and their worlds are fascinating, particularly if you are the author concerned.

Much as I would like to comply with those readers who would assign a mystical origin to the Dragons of Pern, there isn't one.

I was casting about me, like Lawyer Peachum in the Beggar's Opera, for a good execution (of a story) for the next Assizes, and a stray thought dwelt overlong on the subject of dragons. Like Doris Pitkin Buck, I have always felt that dragons suffered from a bad press. It occurred to me to remedy this distressing situation with a well-meant short story in their favor. Some 160,000 words later, I'm still "dragonizing".

It came about in this wise: so dragons fly? Why? And why fire-breathing dragons? Gotta be a reason. A menace? That's it, a menace only dragons can combat. Great. But dragons as big as mine were looming in the authorial eye would be difficult to manage unless...ah ha...telepathic dragons, mind-linked at hatching to men...dragonmen...dragonriders. Now there's a name with charisma in gobs. Ah ha ha! Yeah, but why? Hmm. Dragons flying, breathing fire...think up something that ignites on contact with oxygen...mad dash to science library. Ah ha. Phosphines. Air-borne, telepathic, fire-breathing dragons menaced by what? Something also airborne. Large inimical creatures? Nah, too tame. How about a mindless organism? Again ah ha. Space travelling spores...see Arrhenius. On with the story.

The Dragons of Pern are unusual beasts, constructs if ever there were some: they get 'impressed' on hatching like ducklings, are telepaths, oviparous but their mating is comparable to bees rather than lizards (although I've never observed saurian habits); dragons are carnivorous but can last eight days, when full-grown, on one full meal, like a camel. They have two stomachs like cows, one for comestibles, one for combustibles.

Actually, dragons don't fly: they only think they do which is how they do it. Even with a boron-crystalline exo-skeleton, dragons have too much mass for

their wing-span. They levitate, using wings for guidance, braking and self-deception. True, the fire-lizards from which the Terran colonists developed the Pern dragon could fly: it was their parapsychic abilities that the geneticists strengthened.

Having more or less settled my dragonology, I forget it and build the plot structure around the humans. It followed logically, however, that men who could think to dragons would be regarded with considerable awe by their less talented peers. Ergo, an exclusive confraternity, self-immolating, self-sustaining. (I may well have been reading about the Knights Templar at that point, I've forgotten, but the social structure of Pern is decidedly feudal with occasional modern-child-rearing overtones.) F'lar was the epitome of the proper dragonman.

Now introduce the outsider into the Weyr for observation and comparison. It's more fun to pit the sexes so enter Lessa, in Cinderella guise, with sufficient wit and courage not to need the cop-out of a fairy godmother. (I don't have one, don't see why she should.)

There are several villains, 'cause half the fun of writing is the villain: Fax who is greedy, R'gul who is well-motivated but dense, and the Threads which couldn't care less and therefore are the best variety of menace. (I tend to develop outside influences anyway: I've had enough in my lifetime of nation versus nation.)

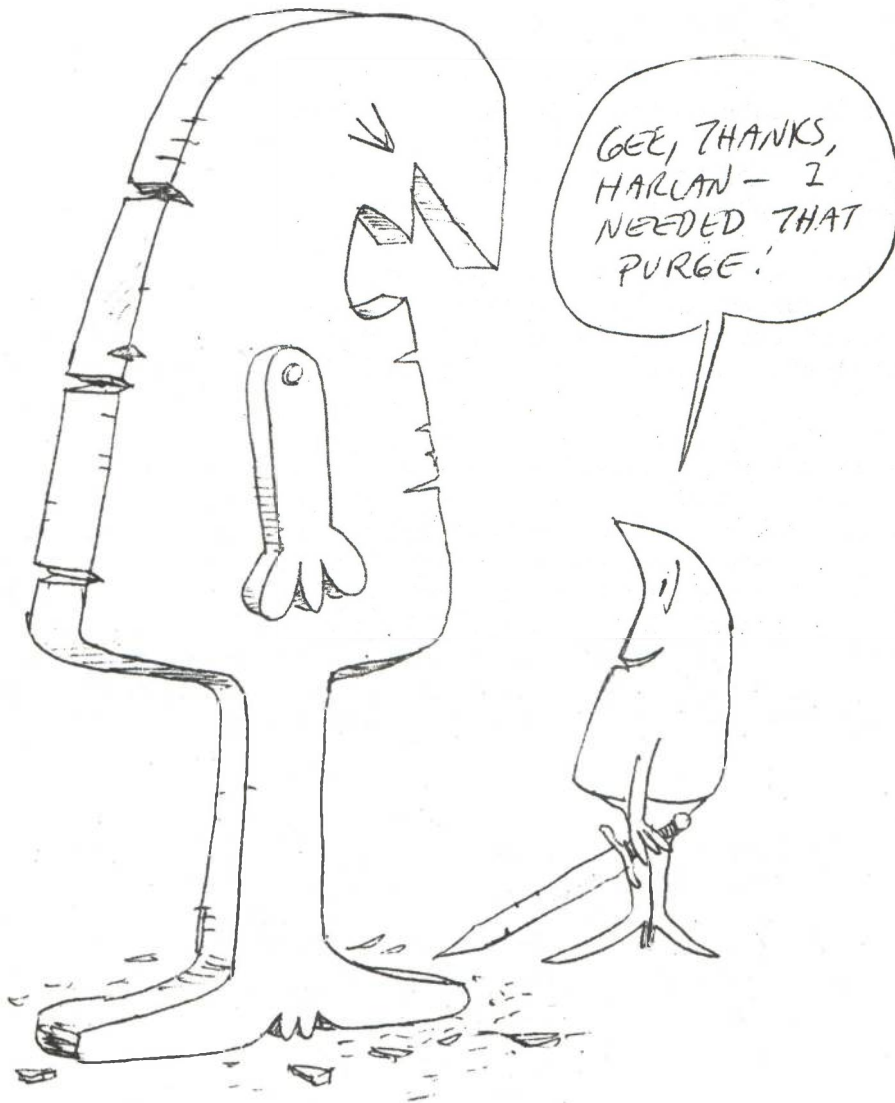
The last ingredient was the timing: the dragons were created (by me and Pern) for a necessity -- remove that necessity from the memory of living man, and see what happens. We've all seen certain customs upended, debased, disregarded, yet at their inception, there were good reasons for them. Why do men customarily place women on their left side? So their sword/gun arm is free...or so they can protect the woman from slops thrown out an upper story window. Swords (and guns, God willing) are no longer de rigueur, but the convention/tradition/custom continues: and modern plumbing takes care of the other hazard that initiated the custom. A simple instance, granted, but valid.

I know a lot more about dragons and Pernese than I'm admitting right now, but I don't want to spoil the upcoming novel, Dragonflight (Ballantine Books, U6124, '75\$). Pern fascinates me utterly: the dragons are, in essence, mature concepts of the imaginary characters that bore me company in my youth. Or an itch which I can't leave alone. I am bedraggled. I'll be glad to answer specific questions on Pernography from those interested.

---Anne McCaffrey

Miss McCaffrey may be reached at her home address, 369 Carpenter Avenue, Sea Cliff, New York, 11579. May we remind readers that an author's -- and mothers' -- time is severely limited. We advise you to keep your queries brief.





# LUPOFF'S BOOK WEEK

DICK LUPOFF

The Human Zero And Other Science Fiction Masterpieces edited by Sam Moskowitz and Roger Elwood, Tower Books, 1967, 60¢, 224 pp.

The title story of this collection is one of the handful of legendary science fiction stories by Erle Stanley Gardner; it appeared in Argosy magazine in 1931, and scientifictional antiquarians like me must thank Moskowitz and Elwood for unearthing this rarity. However, regarding the story as a piece of writing rather than as an antique curiosity, one must concede sadly that "The HumanZero" might better have been left buried.

Based on the rather fuzzy notion that matter reduced to O° Absolute would simply !poof! out of existence, this is an SF detective tale concerning the hunt for an extortioner and his victims. The characters are straight out of the pulp gallery of stereotypes: kidnapped millionaire, mad scientist seeking revenge against the millionaire for refusing to finance his invention (so help me!), greedy banker, quivering male secretary, harried police captain, cleverer-than-thou private detective, and two newspaper types: the wise-guy with the cigarette in the corner of his mouth...and a sob-sister.

The writing is on the same crude level:

A siren wailed.

There was a pound of surging feet on the stairs, blue-coated figures swarming over the place.

"He's behind that door, boys," said Rodney, "and he's armed."

"No use getting killed, men," said the officer in charge. "Shoot the door down."

The other stories in the book (the Gardner is 60 pages long) range from astoundingly bad ("The Imaginary" is the worst Asimov I've ever read; "I, Rocket" is the worst Bradbury I've ever read; "The Proxy Head" is the worst Bloch I've ever read) to only one pretty good ("The Cosmic Relic" by Eric Frank Russell from Fantastic, 1961 -- reads like Astounding, 1943).

This book might better have been subtitled "...and other SF Disasters."



The Pulp Jungle by Frank Gruber, Sherbourne, 1967, 189 pages, \$3.95.

Memoirs of the famous detective and western writer promised a great deal of fascinating insight and information into the pulp era, and the book is studded with familiar names like F. Orlin Tremaine, Leo Margulies, Aaron Wyn, Erle Stanley Gardner, Lester Dent, Arthur J. Burks, Donald E. Keyhoe, Dashiell Hammett, Joe Archibald, Ernest Haycox, Cornell Woolrich, and on and on. (An index would have been much appreciated.)

But Gruber delivers little on his promises. There is no apparent reticence about reminiscing, in fact parts of the book are nothing more than a rhapsody to the author's courage, talent, perseverance and innate good fellowship. But when it comes to giving real insights into himself, his works and his working methods, Gruber is notably weak. He does offer an eleven-point formula for pulp writing, but for once the prose is so sparse that neither explication nor examples are provided, and the "formula" is pretty useless.

Gruber does cite one intriguing incident involving a famous science fiction writer, but he coyly disguises his victim. (Ed Hamilton? Don Wollheim?) And the best part of the book -- I could have read several more chapters of it -- details Gruber's acquaintanceship with Frederick Faust (aka Max Brand, George Challis, etc.) Gruber asked Faust how he had become the world's most prolific author -- a million and a half words a year! Faust said "I write 14 pages a day." "Fourteen pages! I can write more than that in a day -- how come I don't write a million and a half words a year?" "Fourteen pages a day every day. That's the critical point."

Well, it's a frustratingly unsatisfying book, but I guess I have to recommend it to anyone interested in the topic of the pulps and the people who made them what they are.

The Butterfly Kid by Chester Anderson, Pyramid, 1967, 190 pages, 60¢.

I think the only mistake Anderson made was to set his romp in an indeterminate fairly-near-future time. It could have been set in the present with no harm and only minor inconvenience to the author.

That minor cavil (and it is minor) out of the way, let me say that this is a wild romping book. Basically the book is a recitation of Greenwich Village Bohemianism (highly romanticised, of course), with a heavy emphasis on the present rock music and drug scenes. A new drug kick is making the rounds and our hero and his pals decide to investigate the source of the new "reality pills." They discover that they are being furnished as the forerunner of an invasion from outer space, by a race of six-foot tall blue lobsters.

Because the only people aware of the invasion are hippies, they figure there would be no point in telling the fuzz, FBI, etc. No one would believe them. They have to fight the aliens themselves. Which they proceed to do. I must say that the aliens are the most totally inept invaders yet devised -- that's the only way they can be beaten. The whole book is done on an elementary burlesque level, but great fun -- especially if you have any fondness for the millieu portrayed.

Picnic On Paradise by Joanna Russ, Ace Books, 1968, 157 pages, 60¢.

Ace Books has always been a congenial market for young SF writers attempting their first novels, and this first novel is doubly blessed by being presented in a very attractive package by Leo & Diane Dillon, and as part of Terry Carr's Ace Special series.

Joanna Russ herself has been appearing in several of the SF magazines for some time now with short stories, and has now begun to work toward the novel. Note that I do not say that she has written a novel; more on this point soon.

Picnic On Paradise is a book with a simple plot, although it is one laid against a more complex background. In an unspecified future year, when interplanetary travel and colonization, and indeed interstellar t & c, are commonplace, mankind has inhabited many worlds. (There is no element of alien influence in the story) A kind of time travel exists, but it is used only by archeologists to dredge up ancient artifacts and geological samples. There are no residnet agents of the future in earlier eras, nor travellers to tomorrow.

Except one. Alyx, a sneak-thief from ancient Tyre, caught and thrown into the Mediterranean bound to a rock, to drown, is accidentally scooped up and into the future. She is clever, independent, resourceful. And she is given a job: A band of men and women must be shepherded across the face of a world, refugees from a planetary war which does not concern them, but which threatens their lives.

She does so, and that's the whole of the book.

It's nicely done. Alyx is herself a breathing, believable, and likeable person. Several of the others -- particularly a withdrawn boy self-dubbed Machine -- are also skillfully handled. But the book is not paced properly. It opens too abruptly: the characters are introduced and set on their way and -- whoosh! -- their trek is in progress. The characters would have been better introduced and the story more gracefully opened with a longer opening section.

And the planet they cross is one giant winter resort. The setting for the entire story is snow and ice. Only the transition from flatland to mountains offers any change, and that offers too little. The characters act and interact -- it is a classic situation, the Grand Hotel technique. There is courage and cowardice, violence and sex and death; the author's style has a rhythm of its own that took me a little acclimatization to get used to, but it is a good style once one is into it.

Altogether it's a fine long novelette. But it isn't a novel.

One further cavil: Terry Carr has complained from time to time about 'fake SF.' Stories that appear in the trappings of science fiction but that are really sea stories, murder mysteries, etc., in clever plastic disguises. The Bat Durston syndrome. Picnic On Paradise is a Bat Durston book. It could just as easily have been set in Greenland in World War II, or in Siberia in 1905, or elsewhere.

Rite Of Passage by Alexei Panshin, Ace Books, 1968, 254 pages, 75¢.

Alex Panshin's previous SF is also in shorter lengths; this is another first novel in the Ace Special series. But whatever one can say about Rite Of Passage, it's undeniably a full, meaty novel. Not only are there 100 pages more to it than to the Russ book, the type is also packed tighter so there's about 1/3 more copy per page.

Alex has recently published Heinlein In Dimension, a kind of guided tour, complete with analysis and evaluation, of the works of Robert A. Heinlein. Panshin is clearly impressed with Heinlein's juveniles like Citizen Of The Galaxy and Have Spacesuit, Will Travel. Rite Of Passage (I am not at all the first to note this) is a complete Heinlein juvenile, complete with Heinlein type characters: the brat heroine, her best pal and her peer - foe, the Wise Old Man, and so on.



There is also the carefully worked out and lengthily drawn background. In this book it's the classical "generation ship." As in Heinlein's "Universe," the people of the ship have substituted a perpetual journeying for any final destination. Unlike the people of "Universe," those of Rite Of Passage know who they are. There are, in fact, many colony worlds operating at generally pre-technological levels. The ships cruise from world to world, trading knowledge for goods.

What we have in the book is the story of one girl, Mia: her coming of age (at 14 in Ship society), her adventures on the Ship, her preparations along with her contemporaries for their Trial -- thirty days planetside -- the Trial itself and her acceptance into (and of) adulthood back on the Ship. Although the book is generally quite nicely done, there are some flaws. One is the garrulousness of the heroine. Since the narration is first-person, I suppose she can't be reticent, but good grief, every time she does so much as go potty we are treated to three pages of anticipatory chatter, and then two more pages of review and evaluation after she's done it. After a while I wanted to strangle poor little babbling Mia.

A trick of Heinlein's that Panshin faithfully apes is the inclusion of little essays in the narration. Unfortunately, while the essays themselves are not badly written, Panshin does not successfully weave them into the story, as he so admires Heinlein for doing. As early as page 11 there's a short one on soccer. Later on there's a longish one on How To Build A Log Cabin. And several on schools of philosophy: "Utilitarianism is..." (page 148). "Humanism is..." (page 166). The interruptions to the plot are annoying.

And a major flaw, I think, is the ethical problem and solution with which the book ends. A kind of neo-fascistic attitude in which the ship decided to wipe out the entire population of a planet is regarded as an acceptable solution to the problem of keeping that planet in technological subjection to the Ship. Of course the decision of the characters is not necessarily the decision to be expected of the author in the same circumstances. In this regard Panshin again emulates Heinlein. Still, it strikes a false and jarring note, and unfortunately it is the closing note of the novel.

Altogether a flawed but generally acceptable imitation of Heinlein. Next I would like to read a book by Alex Panshin in which he is himself!

Of Men And Monsters by William Tenn, Ballantine Books, 1968, 251 pages, 75¢.

Tenn's first novel, Of Men And Monsters is very impressive. No youngster starting out and tackling more than he can handle (one thinks of Mark S. Geston), Tenn comes to the novel mature and prepared to control the form and his talent. He does not fling his characters onto the page, but introduces them gradually, adding dimension as he progresses. He does not splash a single setting and rationale down in chapter 1 and then stay within it for the whole book, but instead exposes his world little by little, hinting first, revealing gradually, working to a climax of emotion and event.

The theme again is a familiar one, as old at least as Wells' War Of The Worlds. Technologically superior aliens have conquered the Earth and mankind survives under the feet and within the massive walls of the giant domiciles of the giant aliens. Man regards the aliens -- the Monsters -- with an implacable hatred. Although reduced to a neo-barbaric state, Man struggles on, not merely to survive but with a burning dedication to strike back at the monsters and to win again domination over the world on which he originated.

A whole new social organization has evolved, with women cast as the preserva-

tors of knowledge and healing, men serving as warriors and thieves. To steal from the Monsters is the young man's rite of passage into adulthood. An official religion has grown up around the idea of regaining Human Science as a weapon and tool to use against the Aliens. It is heresy to suggest using Alien Science against the Monsters themselves.

Further, mankind is divided into many tribes, ranging from the totally bestial Wild Men through the levels of front-burrow tribes and back-burrow tribes, up to the most highly civilized survivors, the Aaron People.

And the attitude of the Monsters towards Men? They are not regarded as intelligent or civilized creatures at all. Not respected foes in a war, but merely vermin, a nuisance to be exterminated. The book is skillfully done, a good adventure story at the least, if you wish to read it that way, with a marvelously telling surprise ending that will leave you wondering.

The Naked Blade by Frederick Faust, Lancer Books, 1967, 272 pages, 75¢.

This one dates originally from 1934, in various magazine, hardcover, and paper-bound editions. The current version, my own introduction to the story, reveals an all-stops-out pulp adventure, full of action, doused in incredible amounts of color and melodrama, populated by shallow but dramatically drawn characters. It happens to be couched as a pirate story, but one could blue-pencil it into SF or western in half an hour. Highly enjoyable light reading, and it makes me wish Faust had written more SF than he did -- his only SF novel, The Smoking Land, is far from his best book but still worth reading if you can get it. Meanwhile, get The Naked Blade and enjoy, enjoy.

-- Dick Lupoff

Science Fiction Inventions edited by Damon Knight, Lancer Books, 1967, 60¢.

This is basically a gadget book. From "Rock Diver," by Harry Harrison, to the sociological results in Catherine MacLean's "The Snowball Effect," on into the result of one invention on contemporary society, as in "Committee Of The Whole" by Frank Herbert, these are all well done stories. There are, of course, two different types of stories dealing with machines: that which traces the effect of the machine or invention on society, or that in which the effect is recorded on the human beings about which any story must concern itself. Isaac Asimov has concentrated on the latter in his marvelously well-done "Dreaming Is A Private Thing."

The effect of the invention -- the wondrous new gadget, common in SF -- has been a good basis on which to hang a world-changing story. Where an invention is introduced, promising great change in the future -- as would an account of early attempts to introduce the automobile -- there is a basis for a good yarn. There is, also, that type of story in which the invention has been introduced, has already changed society and the nature of our daily lives, and in which the characters must move and live, as in Asimov's story. The second type is a great deal harder to write than the first; it's easy to write about something changing our world, because the author can manipulate his world whichever way he wants; It's much harder to write a story with characters acting within fixed limits, and make it meaningful to contemporary readers.

Whatever the basis, Damon Knight has chosen well. These ten stories, from L. Sprague de Camp's 1939 "Employment," to Frank Herbert's 1965 "Committee Of The Whole," are excellent thought-provoking fiction and darned fine writing as well.

-- Andrew Porter

# IN MEMORIAM

MARCEL Ayme  
ANTHONY BOUCHER  
GROFF CONKLIN  
RON ELLIK  
LEWIS GRANT  
DALE HART  
LEE JACOBS  
MAX KEASLER  
ROBERT F. KENNEDY  
MARTIN LUTHER KING  
KIRK MASHBURN  
BARBARA POLLARD  
GEORGE SALTER  
HARL VINCENT  
AARON A. WYN



# NOVA ESPRESSO

by JOHN BANGSUND

OR... HOW I BROUGHT THE NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX IN TWENTY-FIVE HOURS ELEVEN MINUTES

OR... HALLUCINATORY I SAW YOU WITH LAST NIGHT? THAT WAS NO LADY, THAT WAS MY EXPLODING MEAL-TICKET...



GREETINGS, MY FINE-FEATHERED FRIEND! AND WHAT, MAY I ASK, ARE YOU UP TO?  
AH, FEUCHTER - LET ME TELL YOU A TALE...  
I'VE HEARD IT.  
... I'M SEARCHING FOR IMMORTALITY!



AREN'T WE ALL? WHAT ARE YOU DOING - WRITING A NOVEL?  
NO - I'VE DISCOVERED A RECIPE FOR THE ELIXIR OF LIFE. RIGHT HERE - IN "POPULAR SCIENCE"...  
WHAT A NIT!!



TALKING OF MITS - WHERE'S BUNGSCHNOUDT? DIDN'T YOU COME WITH HIM?  
YES - HE'S OUTSIDE, DIGGING HIS CAR OUT OF YOUR DITCH.  
HELL! WHY DIDN'T YOU HELP HIM?  
WHAT? ON THE SABBATH? HERE HE COMES, ANYWAY...



HI!  
HI YOURSELF. WHY DON'TCHA FILL IN THAT HOLE IN YER DRIVE?  
OH, I DON'T KNOW: YOU'RE DOING A PRETTY GOOD JOB OF IT! WHY DON'T YOU LEARN TO DRIVE?



HARDANGER'S DISCOVERED A RECIPE FOR IMMORTALITY.  
HE'S BEEN READING THE BIBLE AGAIN?  
NO - "POPULAR SCIENCE", ACTUALLY.  
HA!



HA NOTHING! WHAT I NEED NOW IS A MANDRAKE PLANT!  
BE A GOOD LAD, BUNGSCHNOUDT: WHIP UP TO WOOLWORTH'S AND BUY HIM ONE.  
THEY'RE CLOSED - IT'S SUNDAY. LISTEN, LET'S POP INTO THE BOTANICAL GARDENS - THEY'LL HAVE 'EM.



... AND SO THREE SEEKERS AFTER IMMORTALITY SET OFF FOR MELBOURNE'S BEAUTIFUL BOTANICAL GARDENS...

Do you think the hallucinatory operators are real?  
More important: do you think William Burroughs is real?  
Get your filthy hands off my ass!



HERE WE ARE, BARON - AIN'T IT LOVELY!

OH, WE ARE THE NOVA GANG, TRA-LA-LA...

SUNDAY DRIVERS! SPEW!



... AFTER HOURS OF PLEASANT TRAMPING AROUND THE GARDENS, STARTLING SWANS, CHILDREN, LOVERS, CAMPAIGNERS-FOR-CHRIST, AND THE GENTEEL PUBLIC...

Well, I think the word REAL is a very ambiguous word indeed. It has often been my experience...

Are you saved, brother? he asks me. Saved from what? says I. Then he says...

Oops! Sorry, madam!



Good grief!



IT IS! IT IS! HERE, YOU TWO WATCH OUT FOR COPS WHILE I PULL IT UP!

What hath God wrought?



... SUDDENLY...

HEY! - THERE'S ONE!  
ONE WHAT?

Foolish youth!



A MANDRAKE PLANT!  
A MANDRAKE PLANT!



DON'T LOOK LIKE ONE...



BOF!!



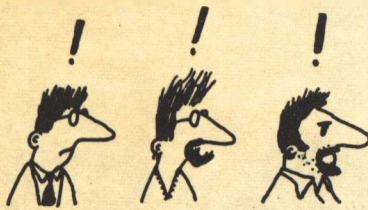
EEEEEEEEEEKHH!!!  
HELP!  
LOTHAR! NARDA!  
HELP!!  
EEEEEEEEEE

TOLD YER IT WAS A MANDRAKE PLANT! DIDN'T I? DIDN'T I?



Am I saved...?

The hallucinatory operators ARE real!!



AAAAARGH... I DIE!



# SPECIAL S.F.W.A. SECTION

BEING SPEECHES BY  
FREDERIK POHL AND  
LAWRENCE P. ASHMEAD  
FROM THE NEBULA  
AWARDS BANQUET,  
MARCH 16, 1968



# Pohl

Tonight I take pleasure in addressing you, because there is a matter which I think calls for the fullest and freest discussion. I can think of no better forum than this, for it has been brought up in the most recent issue of the SFWA Bulletin, in an article by Damon Knight.

The implications of this article are quite revolutionary, even shocking, tending to upset the very foundations of the society in which we live. One is tempted to dismiss it out of hand, but I come to you as a serious investigator, one who wishes to examine all the available evidence and see, on that basis alone, whether this apparently fantastic notion is supported or refuted. The mere fact that the notion is inherently improbable will not sway me in any way in this investigation.

Says Damon: "Science fiction writers are human."

Considered as a theory, this has one grave deficiency. After all, the only function of a theory is to help us make sense of a confusing universe and in this respect Damon's notion only makes the job harder. But let's look at the evidence

I go back to a time almost thirty years in the past, when I was the young, fresh and vigorous editor of a science fiction mag called Astonishing Stories.

Writer X, as we shall call him, sent in a new story every week. They were all completely wretched, so I wrote him, telling him to give up. The very next week, he wrote back, Dear Mr. Pohl, you're the only editor who has ever paid any attention to my work. You've given me fresh inspiration, and from now on I will be sending you two stories a week.

This illustrates the difficulty of communicating with writers. Especially writers one doesn't know. You never know what they will read into what you write them, and so, of course, most editors fall back on the rejection slip in dealing with the slush pile. I take some pride in ours. Just yesterday, Writers Digest wrote asking permission to reproduce it because they felt it was one of the few rejection slips genuinely helpful to writers. Which is interesting. Because not long ago a lady in Connecticut wrote me an awfully ugly letter. I had apparently rejected a story of her husband's with a slip, and she accused me of heartlessly blighting his career by failing to give him a personal reply; and as a matter of fact, she stated that she had photostated the slip and was sending it as evidence of my total villainy in dealing with writers to that spokesman for writer's interests, Writers Digest. Maybe that's where they got it.

Of course, you don't need to say anything at all to writers to get some pretty strange responses. Not long ago I had another rather ugly letter, this time from the writer himself, which went like this: "Dear Mr. Pohl, I know all you editors are crooks, but I didn't know how bad you were until today, when I opened the new issue of If and found that the lead story was a plagiarism from a manuscript of my own. This is a really rotten trick. I would sue, except that I know you fellows have all the lawyers on your side. It would be bad enough if you'd just stolen the idea yourself, but you are a real skunk to steal it and give it to another writer. If you're wondering which story of mine I'm talking about, it's the one I mailed off to you last Thursday."



As you can see, I do get a number of intemperate letters. Some of them fall naturally into classes. There is a large class which goes, "Dear Mr. Pohl, what the hell is the matter with you? I mailed my story to you eight days ago and haven't had your check yet. Needless to say, I'll never write for you again!" Or the other, equally large class, which goes, "Dear Mr. Pohl, my story which I mailed to you nine days ago came back today. Obviously you didn't even read it. Needless to say, I'll never write for you again."

Promises, promises.

Then there is the kind that says, "You've rejected six of my stories, which proves what I have always thought: you don't know thing one about stories, science fiction, editing or common human decency, and that rotten rag you put out proves it." Now and then one of these letters goes far enough to nettle me into a reply, and so once or twice I've written the author to say something like, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

To which I did get one reply, which said: "Dear Mr. Pohl: . . . . . Sincerely."

I've been speaking about the difficulties in communicating with writers one doesn't know. I don't wish to imply for a second that with writers one does know it's much easier. Maybe much harder.

Of course, with pros the problems are usually somewhat different. Quite often they center on that regrettable tendency of editors to edit -- which is to say, to make changes of one kind or another in the writers' stories, or titles.

It seems to me that this function is central to an editor's responsibilities, and that in fact if he abdicates this privilege it is only a step to abdicating the decision as to which stories to print and which to reject. They're part and parcel of the same job, which is to provide his readers the sort of reading that he thinks will keep them pleased.

Not all writers agree, of course. I've had some correspondence with a fellow who takes a dim view of changing his titles. In fact I bought a story from him several weeks ago, and when he got the check and saw that the title had been changed he mailed it back, irately, saying, "I demand that you return my story." So I returned it. So he wrote again saying, "There's one thing I want to get clear. Why did you send my story back?" And I wrote, saying, "Because you told me to."

Another writer saw his story in print and wrote me, even more irately, complaining that I had made changes he didn't like. "You editors think you're God," he said.

That was a preposterous accusation, of course. So I said unto him, "I have to please my readers. I'd like to please you. But if I can't do both, the readers are the people who keep us all in business, and they must be pleased."

He wrote back, saying, "I always thought you were corrupt. Now I know it. You're trying to make money out of this thing!"

I intimated a moment ago that in my view refusing to allow an editor to decide on the final form in which a story will appear in his magazines is just one step away from not letting him decide which stories to print. But you must not think this last step remains untaken. I rejected a story by an esteemed colleague once, and he



called me up -- not in anger; in pure compassion. "Fred," he said, "you've made a mistake. I don't know how to tell you this. But you've lost the ability to tell a good story from a bad one. You've just rejected a great story."

I said, "I'm sorry. Only I honestly didn't think it was great."

He had infinite patience with me. He said, "I understand, Fred. You know what your trouble is? You're so wrapped up in the day-to-day running of your magazines that you can't see beyond them. You get mixed up. You don't have the detachment you need. On this story, you need help. Take an objective viewpoint. Take mine. And print the thing."

Unfortunately, I was too far gone for his efforts to avail. But I still think I was right in turning it down. Anyway, the question of whether the story is good or bad is no longer arguable, because the evidence is in now. The story won a Nebula.

The only thing is, I'm not sure whose judgement is vindicated, the author's or mine.

I hesitate, really, to call into question the criteria of a Nebula award as a mark of excellence of a science fiction story. As it happens, I know who the winners of this year's Nebulas are -- as I suppose at least half the people in this room already do -- and every one of them is a writer for whom, in one way or another, I have a good deal of regard.

The regard, however, is not always for their ability to write science fiction. Speculative fiction, maybe. I'm not competent to discuss that, since I don't know what speculative fiction is. Apparently no one else does either, judging by the impassioned debates among those who endorse it, so I don't feel too badly. But science fiction, it seems to me, is a fairly clearcut concept -- hard to define, but easy enough to recognize. I don't recognize a hell of a lot of it among this year's Nebula winners.

This is a phenomenon that has troubled many of us. I think I have some understanding of it. It seems to me that there are two ways to excell in a given situation. You can either learn the rules and do well under them, or you can change the rules.

It seems to me that the New Wave -- New Thing, whatever today's name for it may be -- is trying to change the rules. That's not an evil, in itself. The rules for science fiction quite properly change every time a writer produces a really new kind of story -- with Doc Smith and the Skylark, with Stanley Weinbaum and Trrr-weel, with Van Vogt, and Campbell, and Cordwainer Smith, and Jack Vance and any number of others.

But I would suggest that any body of rules is wrong when it includes, as rule one, the idea that only the new thing is any good and everything else is slop.

Harlan Ellison, I believe in Psychotic -- that's the title of a magazine, not a diagnosis -- said I don't understand the New Thing, but I print it. In a critical essay I read the other day, not yet printed, some one else says I'm obviously confused, because I don't like the New Wave, but I print it.

It's possible that both these gentlemen are right. But it's also possible that they are the ones who are confused. It seems to me that science fiction has more



strings to its fiddle than either of them are willing to play on. They both agree that only the kind of science fiction they like is any good, and the other stuff shouldn't be printed; they just don't agree on which is which.

I think that all kinds of science fiction are valid, and I construe an editor's job -- any editor's job, particularly my own -- is to select from all the schools the individual stories that are best, regardless of what "kind" of science fiction they are.

And if this means Harlan and the other gentleman must denounce me, then I'll bear up under it -- although I really dread Harlan's next major opus, which is sure to make another effort at my rehabilitation. I happen to know what it's going to be; I've bugged the offices at Doubleday. It's another anthology. They estimate it will be five years in the making -- six thousand pages of type, in eleven volumes. Carrying through to their inevitable conclusion the principles toward which he was groping in Dangerous Visions. Eight prefaces. One hundred and seventy-one introductions, and no stories at all. The working title is The Thought Of Chairman Ellison.

So charge your glasses, ladies and gentlemen. That which unites us is still greater than that which divides. I give you science fiction. It will survive Harlan. It will survive me. It will survive the Nebula awards, the SF Forum, the SFWA... I know this, because look at what it has survived in the past: Dianetics, Dowsing, the Dean Drive and the Milford Writers' Conference, and any number of other transitory cults.

I give you science fiction. With all of our bristly personalities, our little lunacies, our quirks and our follies, we have produced something that's pretty good in itself, and makes the world a little more palatable for a lot of people.

So I give you science fiction. God protect it -- because I'm not sure we can.





# Ashmead

Doubleday has been steadily publishing science fiction for twenty years. When I first took over the science fiction list a little over two years ago we were putting out eight or ten books a year and I was told that the only reason we published science fiction was to supply a certain number of books to the Science Fiction Book Club. It was obvious that Doubleday really wasn't interested in enlarging the list. As I began to get my teeth into the field I realized that there were a number of good science fiction books available and that there was a small but reliable market, and that the science fiction reprinters were anxious to buy paperback rights.

It seemed to me that an increased program of science fiction publishing would pay, so in 1966 I set up a program whereby Doubleday would issue two science fiction books per month for a total of twenty-four a year.

As I look back now I am amazed that Doubleday allowed me to do this. I was a young and relatively inexperienced editor -- I'd been at Doubleday five years as an assistant editor in the science department, and although I had edited a number of books on my own, my image around the company was strictly an assistant editor type. Even more amazing is the fact that I didn't mention to Doubleday that I was going to increase the science fiction list.

Along with the list I had also inherited the privilege of being able to offer a \$1,500 advance without prior approval from our publishing committee. So I signed up eight books and scheduled them for the first four months of the year, hoping no one would tell me I couldn't do it. They didn't; when they realized what I was doing their attitude was, "Okay, let's see if you're right."

Now, two years later, I am at the point where I can safely say it was a good decision. Doubleday doesn't make a lot of money on science fiction, but like most category publishing (mysteries, westerns, etc.) the risk is at a minimum.

Let me give you a quick rundown of just how successful our science fiction books are.

In 1967 we published twenty-four science fiction books, evenly spaced at two per month. (I really should say twenty-three books and Dangerous Visions.)

The average sale of all twenty-four books was 3,460. (From a high point of 5,700 to a low of 1,700.)

Eight of the twenty-four had a Science Fiction Book Club adoption.

Fifteen of the twenty-four had a reprint sale (so far), for an average of \$3,000. (From a high point of \$7,000 to a low of \$1,500.)

Therefore, if we take an average sale of 3,460 at an average price of \$4.00 and a royalty of 10% (author's share) if it was an S.F. Book Club selection and approximately \$1,500 (author's share) if it got a reprint sale, the total would come to \$3,400 and perhaps double, if we consider first serial and foreign sales.



It's also very interesting to note that of the top five bestsellers -- as far as trade sales go -- four annual anthologies were represented. They were from Amazing, Fantasy and Science Fiction, Analog, and Galaxy. The fifth bestseller was the Nebula Award anthology.

Now, these figures that I've given to you present an average picture, but I think it is fairly accurate for most books and most authors. There are exceptions and the better known authors do considerably better -- Isaac Asimov's science fiction books, for example, stay in print indefinitely and go on selling year after year in both Science Fiction Book Club and trade editions -- as well as in paperback. His newest book, Asimov's Mysteries, which he is the first to admit is a rather tired collection, has sold over 7,100 copies in two months and has already gone back for another printing. But as I've said, Asimov, along with a few other writers, is an exception.

Now the whole point of this talk is to convey to you, the Science Fiction Writers of America, my feelings about the publishing future of science fiction at Doubleday -- and this is, of course, not only my personal feelings but also a reflection of how the powers-that-be at Doubleday feel as well as the new editorial mentors of the science fiction list -- Diane Cleaver and Marc Haefele.

Let me assure you that we are pleased with the list and its profit and unless there is a sudden reversal in the science fiction market we will continue to publish twenty-four books a year. I really don't think that the style of our list is going to change very much. If there are any trends, they're away from anthologies and towards more of what is being called the "New Wave in science fiction."

Thank you for listening.

# NYCON 4 or ATLANTICON 1?

32ND WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION BILLING COMMITTEE

LABOR DAY WEEKEND, 1974

ANDREW PORTER, CHAIRMAN

POST OFFICE BOX 367, NEW YORK, NY 10028







# HANG DOWN YOUR HEAD, TOM...

GEORGE LOCKE

It wasn't the first time he'd had trouble with his fanzine. But at least, when the first issue was completely ignored by Fandom, he'd not been losing sleep over the thing. Which was precisely the trouble this time. What with the possibility of a mail ship sinking, and the postman falling off his bike and losing his bag in a snowdrift, the postal authorities taking offence at some seemingly innocent phrase or G.M.Carr starting a feud because a similar innocent phrase could be read two ways, it was surprising Tom hadn't gone insane the first night number two had been mailed out.

A week passed, harmlessly enough. By that time, Tom was a nervous wreck who jumped every time the postman's step sounded too heavy for any but a member of the GDA. He had, however, gone over all the awful things which could happen so often he was becoming bored with them, and even laughed, if a little hysterically. But he still couldn't sleep. One night, he fell to thinking, "What the hell am I lying in bed like this for, neither fully asleep nor completely awake? I could be up and at that typer, cutting stencils for number three, turning the old handle, even letter-hacking for Cry."

It was just before midnight, which, if you happen to be afflicted with fantasy like Tom, is a stupid time to open your mouth. Sure enough, a thing appeared, shambling into the bedroom to the accompaniment of the postman's knock. It was a tall, shapeless, semi-transparent being marked with light-green lines, and resembled a number of HMSO Gestetner stencils held together by Orion 23 stapling. It sang, also, evidently proving itself a full choir. It's hands and feet were made of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " cello tape, and were colored black at the ends. The black tended to drip on the floor and was, Tom could see, slightly lumpy mimeo ink. Pinned round its middle were several sheets of ink-soiled duplicating paper, normally used in hot weather to prevent smearing...

Tom said, "Pardon me, but your slip is showing."

The thing nearly faded away, but decided on second thought that such an effort was better ignored. "Sleep is useless where fanac is concerned," it crooned cheerfully and out of context.

"It sure is. But unfortunately, fans have got to have it."

"No, you're wrong." The creature brought out a little black book and consulted it. "I can...er...sell you Freedom From Sleep."

"So I can work at my fanzine all through the night? So I won't have to abscond from work every time the deadline draws near?"

The thing nodded.

"Bhoy oh bhoy! I suppose, though," Tom went on, doubtfully, "you'll want a very



high price -- like my soul,"

"Good grief, no," the thing said. "What do you think we are? Mundane devils? We are faans, not filthy hucksters."

"But you said sell..."

"A semantic error -- I regret it. We do have, however, a voluntary subscription to our organization -- it is very small..."

"Why sure, of course. Fans aren't stingy. Look at TAFF, and the Berry Fund. What would you like me to give?"

"Well, others usually give, say, their editorial personality..."

"I dunno..."

The thing went on, quickly: "Of course, only the personality as it exhibits itself in their fanzines..."

Tom nodded. The letters on his second issue had been complaining about an over-developed editorial personality, particularly with regard to the business of the aitches, which had been the cause of the first issue being ignored. "I think that would be okay," he said. "And now, to make sure we've got things straight..."

"So long as you are engaged in fanac during the normal sleeping hours, you will not require sleep for the period during which you are so engaged, nor will you need to catch up on it."

"And if you should break your part of the bargain," Tom went on, adding, as the thing began to glare angrily, "accidentally." The glare turned to a glance of reproach and hurt pride.

"You're not inferring that I, a faan devil, am as incompetent as the mundane devils who come to grief in Unknown?"

"No, no. I just wanted to get things straight. If there is a mishap?"

"There won't be. But you'd get your editorial personality back."

"Be careful," Tom said, thinking of the letters. He held out his hand. The thing shook it, and disappeared. Tom looked down at his hand, which felt moist. It was covered with ink. He chuckled. "The thing doesn't have to prove it wasn't imagination with me." And he thought of all the times that fantastic things had happened. "It's these characters in mundane fantasies who require proof, always wailing out loud for it. Me, I've no choice. I get it."

\* \* \*

By no means old and tired, Tom started that night on the third issue. He had most of the material ready, so was able to get on with the stencilling straight away. A couple of nights finished it. The third night he was feeling as fresh as ever, and worked the duper handle as though he'd just come back from a relaxing holiday. By the fifth day, the third issue was stapled and ready for mailing. As soon as it was in the mail, he began collecting material for number four.



Two weeks later, while he was waiting for letters on number three, he was well into number four. Sure, the lettercol would be a bit skimpy this time, but only for this issue. Next time, there would be the bulk of the letters on three and some on four ready to include in five...

By the time four had been entrusted to the dubious care of Her Majesty's mails, a definite trend was appearing in his letters. The zine now, as opposed to number two, lacked any editorial personality at all. The letters went something like this: "Dear Tom. Guess you really took my comments on two with a vengeance. Sure, you had too much personality then, but you didn't have to go to the other extreme. Haven't you ever heard of the middle path?"

And: "Hey, what gives? You trying to imitate Triode?"

Poor Tom. He didn't know whether to be pleased or not. He summoned the thing by intoning the Fannish Word Which Shall Not Be Written until the correct creature showed up. "You called?" it asked, rather unnecessarily.

"I'd like to propse another deal," Tom said.

The thing's eyes lit up, nearly igniting its stencils.

"I figure you must be very tired, wandering round with all the massed weight of the editorial personalities you've accumulated..."

"The thing grinned, sat down at the duper and idly turned the handle. "You want to back out?"

"Oh, no," protested Tom. "I just want to propse a rearrangement, favorable to us both."

"No dice. It stands as it is."

"But -- I'm ruining my faned career," Tom protested. "It's personality which makes a fanzine, as well as breaks it. Without it, I'm lost."

"You should have thought of that before. But -- you're just like the others. You're all short of time. To gain time, you make a deal with me. Most of the others drop out after a few issues. Some turn professional, to start afresh there." The thing laid a kindly hand across Tom's shoulders. "Here, you're a nice kid. If you turn pro-ed, you'll have your personality back -- it's only the fan-ed personality I've taken."

"I am a faan," Tom said simply, his back straightening. "I am a faan... There's no other way of getting it back?"

"Nope." The thing gave the duplicator handle one last turn, and disappeared.

\* \* \*

It says a lot for Tom that he didn't give up. In fact, he brought out seven more issues of his fanzine, even though it was becoming increasingly difficult to get good material for what was being generally regarded as a crudzine. Unfairly, for Tom maybe lacked editorial personality, but he could still produce a good fanzine. It was just that...editorial personality makes a fanzine.



Then the time came for the EasterCon, and Tom ruefully decided that he would do one more issue -- a ConIsh -- before packing up this side of fanac. The con was held in London over Easter weekend, but Tom, even though living in London, booked a room at the hotel. He intended to enter into the spirit of this Con, unlike at the last one where he had wandered around most of the time looking lost, and had gotten into trouble by his current passion of playing patience. He arrived Friday afternoon, and spent a pleasant time chatting with other earlycomers. By evening the social side of the Con was in full swing. The Cheltenham mob had dug a deep moat around the hotel to keep the police out, but when they started to charge a toll on the drawbridge, the stalwarts of Liverpool, who arrived late, picketted the mundane end of the bridge, stopping anyone from going out to bring in booze.

Tom took careful note of the details of this, and circulated, lending a hand here with the display tables, a willing hammer there with fixing up the amplifiers. "After all," the con chairman said, "we don't want loose bits of wire trailing all over the floor. There is a TAFF Representative coming." He added an idea of his own for the betterment of Pimms 99; and people began to wonder why his mag lacked the personality of this exuberant new con-goer. Then, at eleven p.m., the hustle and bustle of the Con died away briefly, for no reason at all. Tom found himself sinking with relief into an armchair, feeling extremely tired. He felt his eyelids sinking down over his eyes, everything becoming dull and formless...

A jerk at his arm awakened him. It was Bennett, trying to interest him in a quiet game of brag.

"Go to hell. I wanna sleep," Tom mumbled.

Then, suddenly, he sat up. His face beamed, signalling a tremendous triumph. He called the thing. When the creature appeared, Tom grinned and held out his hand. "I'll take it now, I think."

"Take what?" it growled.

"My editorial personality," Tom replied, triumphantly.

The creature carefully undid one of its staples, straightened it out, and began picking its teeth. "And what makes you think I am going to return it?"

"The deal we made, of course."

"How come?"

"You promised that whenever I was engaged in fanac, I should not need any sleep. And if you failed to keep your part of the bargain, I could claim the return of my personality."

The creature nodded, and continued to pick its teeth.

"I fell asleep ten minutes ago, and I still feel tired as hell."

"So? This isn't fanac."

Tom rose to his feet, clutching the thing from the fourth stencil down. As he spoke, he began taking the staples out. "This is a science fiction convention! There are science fiction fans here! I have spent the last few hours helping get the con organized. There is still much work to be done. Fan work. Fanac. Yet, I fell asleep!"



The thing sneered. "This is not fanac."

"And what the bloody hell d'you think it is?" Tom hooted.

Convention attendees are not fans..." But the creature's tone was wavering. It seemed uncertain.

"I see," said Tom, noting this hesitation, but also realizing it might become quite fuggheaded about it. "You are one of those people who think that the only tru-fandom is fanzine fandom. All right. It's no use arguing with those who've no room in their minds to hold more than one idea at a time. I'll accept the technicality. But I put out a fanzine, don't I?"

The thing nodded.

"What would you say was your definition of fanac?"

"Easy. All work pertaining to the production of a fanzine."

"You will be aware, of course, of the contents of the nextish?"

"Dealing mainly with this...debauchery."

"Right. And how do you think I'll be able to give a good account of this con if I don't join in the activities, and observe everything that goes on? I'll certainly miss something if I fall asleep."

"Your logic is impeccable. I agree with you entirely." The thing smiled sweetly. "Thank you for telling me, Tom. You shall need no sleep for the duration of the convention."

"Then I get my personality back?"

The thing was still smiling, but now it bore sinister overtones. "Of course not. The deal still holds."

"But I went to sleep ten minutes ago."

"Did you? Interesting. I was watching most carefully, and I did not see any signs of it."

Tom cast his eyes around the hall. "Bennett!" he yelled, as he caught sight of the school teacher. "Bennett, wasn't I asleep when you tried to get me into the game?"

"Haven't the slightest idea. You should know."

The creature grinned. It started to disappear. "A little difficult to prove. This time, anyway. And there won't be a next time."

Bennett saw it for the first time. "That's a smashing fancy dress outfit you've got." The creature solidified again, seeing a customer. "Where you from -- here, have a drink."

The creature looked at the glass Bennett was holding. "Rather a pale fluid," it said. "Shouldn't think it'd come out well except on black paper. Still, no accounting



for taste. I'll have a glass of dark blue Swallow, if I may. I'm a little tired of black..."

Bennett stared at it. Was this a ploy? "I mean bheer," he said.

The creature stared at him blankly.

\* \* \*

There was nothing else for it, but to enjoy himself as much as he could. At least, he wouldn't lose any sleep the whole weekend. About midnight, the parties started. There was Bennett's brag party, first of all. Tom stayed with it until three, then staggered off to find room 702, where the TAFF delegate was holding a bheer session with absolute alcohol making the bheer more interesting. The corridors were dim, and Tom began to feel slightly gloomy as he made his way along them. Why the hell had he played his trump card before he had a chance to accumulate proof that he had fallen asleep? Why hadn't he waited, say, until some enterprising fan-ed made the usual facetious remarks about the lack of con resilience of some fans, citing Tom's name? And faking sleep at a con would be absolutely impossible.

A number caught his eye. 720. The room. He listened at the keyhole, but couldn't hear a thing. They'd sound-proofed the room, obviously. He turned the handle and went in. The room was dark.

He stumbled over something, landed face down on a bed. There was a grunt, a light switching on, and then a scream.

Tom grinned at the middle-aged female, dodged a wild swing by her half-awake husband, and said cheerfully: "I thought Yngvi the Louse lived here," and staggered out. Further along the hallway a light showed, and a bottle flew through the air, bursting against the wall opposite. He ran towards the room...

\* \* \*

From that moment on, the con became a series of blurred images. Saturday morning gradually arrived, cold and grey and drizzling slightly. After breakfast, he went for a walk in the rain, which cleared his head slightly, but which left him feeling increasingly sick.

But by four in the afternoon, he had almost recovered from the hangover, and was able to appreciate the programme, which lasted till about eight p.m. The parties started again the moment the last speaker in the pro-fan panel had coughed uncertainly for the last time. Tom entered into the revelry of the second night with all his heart. Things may not have worked out, but he would never forget this con!

Then, at two-thirty in the morning, it happened. For several hours Tom had become aware of being increasingly unsteady. Then abruptly, his legs collapsed under him and he fell, helpless, to the floor. Somebody shifted a couple of bottles from under his head, pushed his feet out of the center of the floor, and placed the wine-laden table over him, keeping him out of everyone's way.

Helpless, Tom let them do it. He couldn't move. After a few minutes, when he found he was still wide-awake, and as clear-headed -- if rather whacky-minded -- as usual, he tried once more to get up. He still had no control over his arms and legs, and simply lay there without moving.



"Hell," he swore. "I'm missing all this. Damn this alcohol..." He lay under the table, physically unconscious, mentally awake.

A foot touched him. Sanderson was grinning down at him. Tom groaned, though no sound passed his lips. He could imagine the next App, and the Diary: "Well-known fan-ed passed out at the EasterCon..."

He struggled again to get up, then stopped, cursing himself for his stupidity. This was exactly what he wanted.

\* \* \*

About eleven the next morning, after some coffee and a session of glaring at a piece of toast before deciding it would be better not eaten, he called the thing.

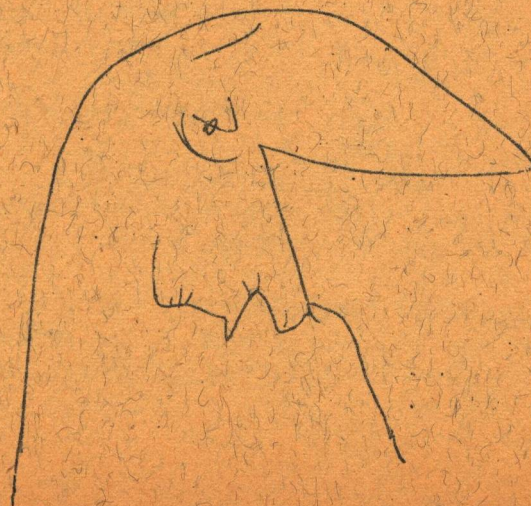
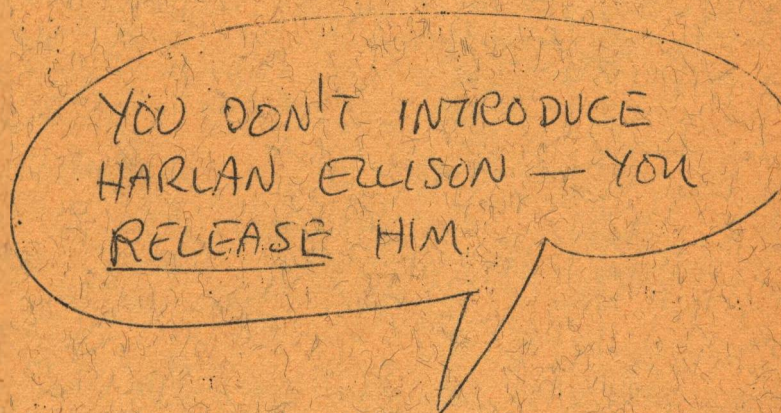
"Morning," he said. He held out his hand; it was almost becoming a ritual.

"I'll take it now, I think."

The unhappy creature didn't argue, but Did What It Had To Do. "I can't think what came over me," it said. "My powers have never given out before."

Tom grinned. Maybe there was a schism between fanzine fans and convention fans. Maybe not. But if it was termed ethanol in the chemistry books, the deman, reared on stencils and mimeo ink, hadn't heard of it.

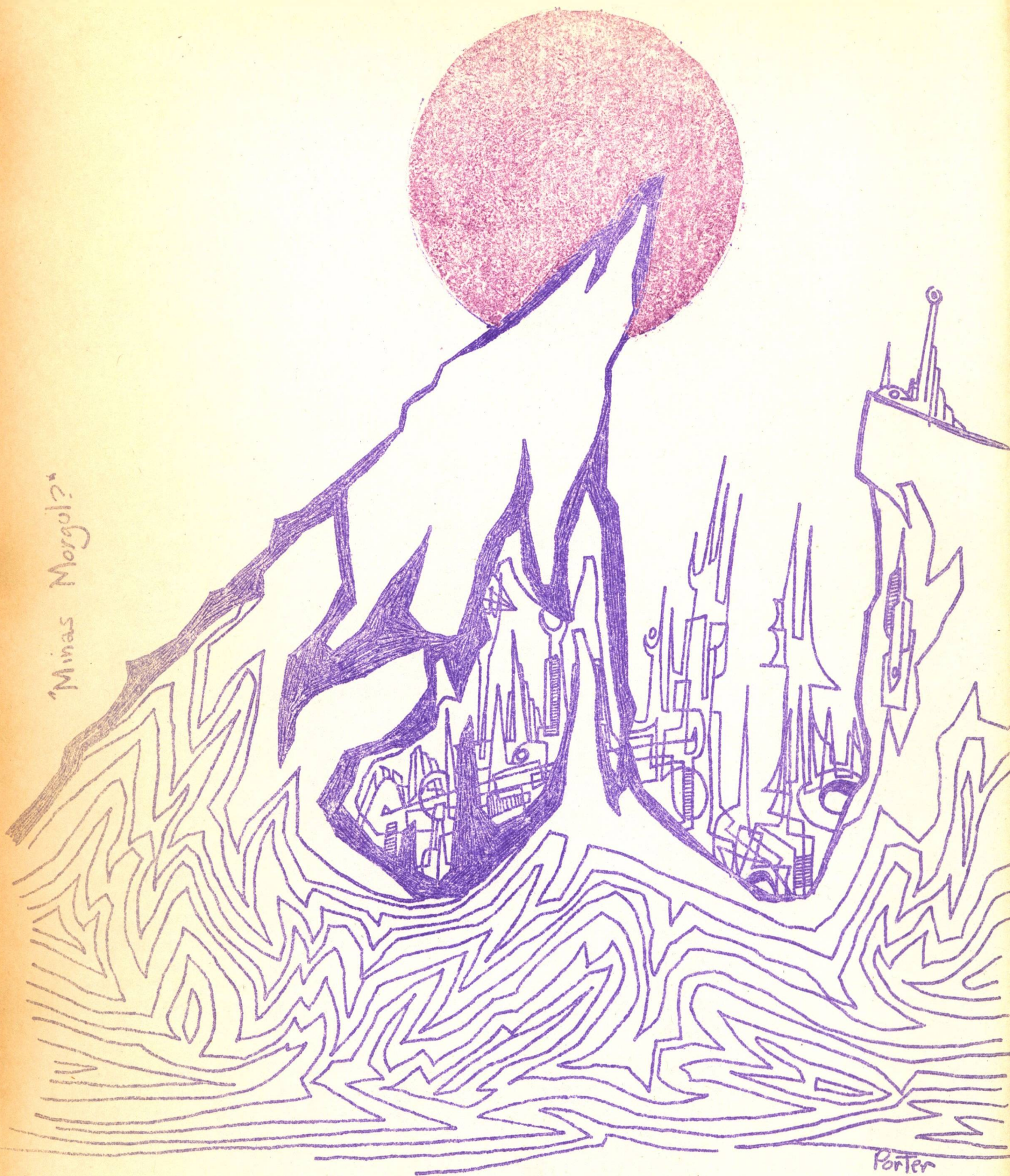
-- George Locke, 1959



*Artistic*



"Minas Morgul?"



Porter



# RANDOM FACTORS

## THE READERS

Ed Cox  
14524 Filmore Street  
Arleta, California 91331

From the lovely two color cover by fantastic Ross Chamberlain to the nicely Gray Morrow on the back (man, I've seen girls that good looking in topless joints where the costume left other parts uncovered) the 13th ALGOL was more than a lucky combination of material and layout. I go along with all them guys that say, hey Andy-baby, howcum you do so good with ditto? It is a purple pleasure to behold.

(( Aw, shucks, folks. It comes naturally. I guess maybe it's in my blood. ))

Re the Worldcon site and voting. I do heartily endorse the ballot-by-mail system and the idea that there be a National Con during that year in which the Worldcon takes place overseas. The rank and file sf fan is not going to be able to afford to go overseas to Germany in 1970 so why should he forego the attractions of a Worldcon during that year when a Natcon (which is, essentially, what we've been having here all these years altho dubbed Worldcon) would serve to attract all those not able to attend the Worldcon in Germany (1970) or Japan, England, Rumania, et al.

Dick Lupoff's Book Week is always of interest. I have the Index To SF Publishers and find it, despite the high price, a valuable work. I was surprised and sickened to find out just how many books had been published by these various publishers. I was buying most of them back in the Old Days, when Fantasy Press, Buffalo Book Co., etc., had started out. Then I was in the army and overseas, and out of the army and not interested (oh the stuff I passed up in the ads from the SF Book Clearance House, or whatever it was called) so missed out buying a lot of the stuff I would otherwise have gotten.

I quite agree re the two books by Francis Ashton. I bought and read the first one in 1947 and was quite taken with the scope and fantasy of it. I have the second but cannot remember whether or not I read it. If I have read it, it is certainly not as memorable as the former.



Years ago when I was reading all the pulpmags that appeared on the two small newsstands in Lubec, Maine, one of the non-science fiction magazines I found but became interested in was Famous Fantastic Mysteries. Naturally, the letter column rhapsodized about old stories in previous issues. Among these were titles that excited my Sense of Wonder, including the Palos stories. I did, of course, eventually buy all the old issues of FFM but by that time I no longer had the time to read them! I suppose if I should read them now, I'd find them much the same as did Dick, as I indeed found the Radio series by Ralph Milne Farley when I read the Ace reprints recently. I guess I'd still have that same sense of wonder or whatever if I looked at the stories in the old FFM's with the Paul illustrations, et al. In its era, in that context, they probably are part of a world of wonder resting in the pages of the old magazines. To read any one of them one must needs suspend late 20th Century context, suspend belief, whatever one has to do to read the Tarzan series, the pulp series heros reprints, and simply enjoy them for what they ~~are~~ were. This may be more difficult with some which, evidently, the Palos series is one. I notice that Dick didn't mention that the Avalon reprints are cut even more than they were in FFM, as almost everything that appeared (novel-length) was. But maybe, in this case, they're better that way...

"In The Ruins" by Samuel R. Delany has everything about it of the old Weird Tales; even the title is WT-like. The theme, of course, is old, old, old but it did, of course, stand up well in this almost fragment-like piece. What impressed me was the unwritten, undescribed world in which Clikit lived. I'd like to know more about all the rest that was hinted. Possibly I'll get to find out if this was a fragment from what may become a novel.

(( This short fragment -- 2500 words -- is part of a longer series including a 12,500 worder and a 20,000 word novelette, all set in the same background and supporting the same cast. Delany wrote it several years ago, and has hopes of unifying it into a sword-and-sorcery novel. ))

Thank you for the doodling space. I shall cherish it. I might even use it...

I think I know what Rich Brown was trying with "A Story For Trufans", but it just didn't come off, at least not for me.

(( Rich was attempting to show how much rotten usage the slang of fandom has generated. Taking all the cliches of fandom and unifying them into a story brought out the point beautifully. ))

I was sort of fantisted to discover the full-page pic on page 37 was by Frank Wilimczyk. In all the years that I've know (of) him, on and off, an artist was not among those bits and fragments that one learns about other fans sans direct contact.

(( Frank, in fandom since 1940, has been making his living as a top-notch book designer. He ran off my first fanzine, in fact, just some 5 years ago...and has contributed dozens of illos to Algol and other zines. We finally got him to a convention -- the NYCon III -- but as for contributing to fanzines, well, he's a little slow... ))

...The advent of Roger Zelazny on the scene doesn't mean that a Great New Fantastic Discovery has been made about writing. I will admit that a great number of stf writers could do well to go back and refresh on some of the basics of English. But..."How does Zelazny achieve his effects?" What effects? The guy merely



uses "figures of speech". They taught that in school, remember? It's no great revelation! It's...uh...if you'll pardon my brashness...been done before. Once. Or even twice. I even read This Immortal. It was okay. Nothing great. I wasn't even jolted by "Day was starting to lever its way into the world." I mean, it is more colorful and effective than, say, Neil R. Jones, but it isn't startlingly NEW. It isn't all that common in stf writing, but then, a lot of stf that was written, and that shall be written, sets out to achieve something that doesn't always lend itself to this type of writing.

In fact, some of this sort of writing isn't enough, of itself, to carry a whole book. I couldn't get interested enough in He Who Shapes to try to finish the book, or really get very far into it. Enthusiasm for a favorite writer is great and has its place. Anybody who rates enthusiasm like that from anybody certainly deserves the accolades and I certainly won't badmouth him for it. I just simply can't share his enthusiasm for what he is calling, or seems to imply, rather, a stunning New Thing under the sun.

Joe L. Hensley  
2315 Blackmore  
Madison, Indiana 47250

I had a note yesterday from Dave Kyle about Ron Ellik. Damn shame. It brings on something I've been needing to say: Seems to me these days that we fall into argument so easily that we forget our own worth -- that we get into these pissy little conflagrations and forget that the guy on the other side is a pretty decent person also (or at least a misunderstood bastard). There appears to be a tendency to go all out and get the knife in, use whatever means are available, and cut, baby, cut. I think that many times we go beyond the limits of fair comment and criticism. I've read a lot of fanzines recently and I never read so much stuff in which, somehow, the guy on the other side was so bad and the commentator was so completely infallible and so completely, eternally, immortal. I guess it's maybe losing a good one like Ellik that sours me on that sort of thing. Come on people, use your heads, argue rationally, keep your hands out of each others groins. And I don't mean let the fuggheads suffer in silence. Tucker used to be able to laugh them away and we'll all like each other better if we use that way. I'll argue forever that it's the kinder way.

I just read the foregoing paragraph and I think I'm getting old...

Robert Bloch  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90046

Your comments regarding the convention-site confusion are apposite indeed; I think this whole matter in in need of immediate clarification. Like yourself, I've no idea what a convention committee may come up with by way of clarification, nor can I guess the attitude of fandom as a whole. But my personal belief is that while your suggestion of chronology has merit, the overall problem can only be solved by one of the alternatives cited -- allowing the whole convention membership to vote in a pre-convention ballot on their choice for the following year.

Prospective bidders would, presumably, circularize the convention membership with campaign literature some months in advance. While this would entail some expense, my guess is that the cost would be far less than the amount usually expended at present by giving a party at the convention itself or prosletizing votes



down at the bar. It would also remove any possibility of a bid being won solely on the basis of the emotional quality engendered by hoopla and oratory; arguments presented in print can be reread and considered calmly, and the "Let's-all-get-on-the-bandwagon" urge or "Follow-the-leader" pattern would be bypassed.

There's one more fringe benefit to such a procedure which I consider of some importance: if convention membership votes in advance by mail, there's an inducement for attendees to register and send their money well in advance in order to qualify for voting privileges. And the last-minute drop-ins and casual curiosity seekers won't be able to influence the outcome.

I also feel that when bidders are forced to itemize their promises in print, we'll have less of the deception which has sometimes marred past conventions -- where verbal assurances have been casually tossed out by unprepared and poorly-organized groups whose chief worry is to win the con-site and worry about the actual convention afterwards, if at all.

(( There is no doubt in my mind that convention voting must be by mail, and preferably at least two years in advance. The average conference or sales meeting is 200 people. With the arrival of the Giant Worldcon, with an attendance of over 1000, and the possibility of at least 2000 within ten years, plans for the convention must be made years in advance, otherwise hotels capable of handling the convention will already have been booked by other large conventions. Most large conventions book their hotels and convention facilities at least five years, and sometimes as many as fifteen years, in advance. What chance of getting a hotel and convention facilities for a group bidding for 1973, say, when all the hotels with ballrooms capable of holding 1500 are booked up to the year 1980? The problem must be faced soon -- within the next two years -- before it is too late. ))

John Brunner  
Brunner Fact And Fiction Ltd.  
17-D Frognal  
London NW3  
ENGLAND

I read Algol with close attention, and I especially enjoyed Chip Delany's account of the genesis of the Towers books. About the smartest thing I've done in the last decade was to write Chip a fan letter about those books; someone got muddled up in the Ace Royalty statement department and sent me one of his instead of one of mine (not that it mattered -- there wasn't any money due on either), so having his address on hand I wrote to him. Two months later he replied from Athens, and since Greece is my favourite country after this one (in fact I'm simply prejudiced about Britain because I grew up with its faults and they don't obstruct me as badly as some other countries') I promptly suggested he come home via 17d Frognal. Which he did. And both Marjorie and I fell hopelessly in love with the guy.

It is now 18th May. Last we heard from him, he planned to arrive in London on 15th May. If you see him around New York, would you be so kind as to ask him whether he's still using the Gregorian calendar, or something?

He can't possibly be stuck at London Airport because he's lost our phone number...







men who came along; there was this acute sense of male/female opposition. Which is bad. Right now, I can divide the femme attenders at the London Circle into three major categories: those fans who have established their own personalities in the field, like Ethel Lindsay and Jean Muggoch; those who are married to fans or authors, like Pamela Bulmer, or cheerfully living with them, like Ann Keylock; and those who like people generally and don't give a damn if they wind up going home with a stranger they've decided they've taken a liking to. (In this category I decline to cite names. A visiting male fan from New York who has something going for him would presumably discover them inside the hour, and if he doesn't then he hasn't got anything going for him!)

An interesting social survey could probably be mounted on the basis of data like those. I don't propose to make the attempt -- we have to go to the North London Film Theatre tonight to see a programme which Chris Evans is organising on the psychology of the horror film. Excuse me.

Jack Gaughan  
Post Office Box 516  
Rifton, New York 12471

Algol 13 was such a beautiful issue. You glommed onto some good names and came up with that beecootiful Morrow back cover. The layout was superb, Ross's cover was a thing of beauty. Banks was marvelous, marvelous, marvelous. Damn! That's the kind of thing that makes a magazine sing. I must say for all those who, like myself, are uneducated louts, it's durned fortunate that Roger also writes good stories. Mebane's article is also a good argument for his doing reviews professionally. So many of the pro reviewers need a sort of Greek chorus standing beside them to say, "this is what he (she or it) meant by that!" Banks needs no interpreting nor is there any lack of erudition. Oh, gawd help us, there is no lack of erudition. Christamighty! I feel like I wanna go crawl back and read Dick and Jane....something at my level. However, seriously, Banks is not forbidding. More, Banks! Go go go!

Alexei Panshin  
139 Joralemon Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Banks Mebane's extended and extravagant simile, "Gunpowder I" The Court, Wildfire At Midnight", is the most interesting piece I've seen in any recent fanzine. Because it involved a subject I've been thinking about lately, I'd have to say it was one of the most personally provocative articles I've read anywhere lately.

This is not to say that I think Banks proved all his cases -- I suspect that Roger may be excessive more frequently than Banks admits and the quotation from "Circe" and the Capistrano spider-bats are two examples. The article, however, does illumine Zelazny and is a nice general essay in stylistic criticism. I'd like to see more that were this good -- at least a couple fighting with Banks over some of his points. I doubt we will see them, however, because criticism of this order demands background, intelligence and wit and we don't have a lot of people like that around.



Fred Lerner  
98-B, The Boulevard  
East Paterson, New Jersey 07407

It seems to me that the boundary between science fiction and the mainstream is eroding. There is little difference between the "black novel" (Pynchon's The Crying Of Lot 49 and Barth's Giles Goatboy) of the contemporary mainstream and Lafferty's Past Master; and "Final War" by O'Donnell in a recent F&SF reads like a plagiarism of Catch-22.

A story or novel is categorised as science-fiction when its author has previously written s-f; a futuristic piece by an author who came up through the academic and literary magazines is considered a mainstream work. I suppose that, to a large extent, these evaluations are made by the publishing houses, which attempt to place a novel where its commercial prospects are brightest.

Perhaps some of the more literary-oriented of the s-f writers might find it advantageous to submit novels under pseudonyms, to prevent publishers from prejudicially classing their work as science-fiction (that is, as a minority-oriented work). If this were not successful, the novels could then be offered as s-f under the author's known names.

I search in both mainstream and s-f sources for the type of story that I like; and I'd as soon read a good novel labelled mainstream as one labelled s-f.

{{ I would have been most interested to see a novel such as Fail-Safe released as science fiction. ~~What~~ would the sales figures have been? Perhaps 10,000 copies sold, perhaps fewer, or so I suppose. The only fault in your suggestion that well-known writers submit their s-f as mainstream under pseudonyms would be the limiting factor of an unknown name. Death Of A Salesman was submitted, under a different title and with changed character's names (and the author's name hidden behind a pseudonym) to no less than a dozen major producers, who all rejected it. What's in a name?...}}

Rick Sneary  
2962 Santa Ana Street  
South Gate, California 90280

I like your five year rotation plan, but not as an answer to the problem. It only spreads the problem around, and while not really hurting the West -- we couldn't be worse off -- it doesn't solve anything. I personally like the idea of the ballot by mail, possibly at the same time as the Hugo voting. Don Fitch, Dave Hulan, Al Lewis and I talked about such a plan last Fall, but we aren't pushy enough to get anything done.

While excluding no one, this sytem would mean the fanzine fans and regular convention fans would be the major voice as to where the next Con would be. The In-off-the-streeters would be too late. But early joining neofans, as Ted said you had a lot of in NYCon, would be able to vote -- but would have more exposure, and hopefully vote more wisely... Maybe a Con-site Registration party could be given in place of a con-bidders party, by whoever won, with a "Join next year's Convention and get a drink" theme. Much more practical all around...

Robin White's article is interesteing in that it tells me more about her, which I always enjoy about any fan's writings. I take exception to some of her





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views. Firstly, by her own description of herself, she would be technically classed -- on a scale of fannish activity -- as only a fringe-fan, with no clearly independent fan life of her own. She indicates that she did not have a strong interest in science fiction, or a desire to share in fan activities -- but was only interested in the people she met through fannish contact. I don't mean this as a personal criticism, but she doesn't have the personal viewpoint to be able to write from a true femme fan's point of view. For one thing, being a true-fan doesn't end shyness, but it gives something to talk about besides music and cats. It would give male fans a reason to talk to her as something other than an object. Most true-femme fans I have known have been generally treated by male fans as just another fan, with a little extra something going for them...

Fandom, particularly the kind we are engaged in at the moment, has very little to do with the age or sex of the parties involved. Girls that write and publish are accepted as interesting persons. And, as with meeting a new male fan, once a friendship is started on fannish interests (held) in common, it can expand to find the real people underneath. While it is wonderful to have them around, the young fringe-fan femme is going to interest male fans only as a girl until she establishes the fact that she is more than a pretty face.

Your back cover should be a strong point for Morrow as best artist of the year. It was very very good. Though it was about 18 years ago I was first told be a femme fan that that design of costume was impossible, and I've heard it repeated several times since. I'd like to see it tried out, just to see if a girl could wear it. Maybe that is why the girl in the picture has the big ape with her -- to protect her from men who only view her as an object -- or two objects.

Ray Fisher  
4404 Forest Park  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108

Algol 13 has, from the moment I slipped it from the mailing envelope, been a source of comment because of its beauty, and a restorer of my Sense of Wonder because of its text. The cover by Ross Chamberlain was magnificent. I had been impressed by his humorous cartoon covers for That Other Zine, but I don't recall having seen any of his non-cartoon work before. Now, I'm doubly impressed by his dual talent. For that matter, all of the art you used in this issue was very eye-catching. And, your unified layout gives the material a sort of quiet dignity that I find very attractive.

I was especially interested in Dick Lupoff's reviews of the Francis Ashton books. I haven't read The Breaking Of The Seals for so long that my memory is very dusty concerning the story; however, I've always been fond of Alas, That Great City. I'm afraid I can add little if anything about Ashton; I am under the rather vague impression that there is at least one more book by him concerning Atlantis. I do, however, know that Ashton went through at least one brief flare of popularity in this country among the pseudo-religious metaphysical groups who were interested in reincarnation. In the late '50s or early '60s I became acquainted with some people who were interested in this, and who were very impressed by anything even remotely connected with an Atlantean society. Ashton was a special favorite of theirs; his suggestion that the hero and heroine of Alas were the reincarnated egos of Atlanteans won him much favor. And, the placement of the Atlantean counterparts so high in the government especially endeared him to the reincarnationists in that group. (I've never met a reincarnationist who was not the modern-day counterpart of a very noble person. In fact,



I think it's very remarkable that all of the reincarnationists I've met were of such noble lineage. Not a peasant in the lot of them.) At any rate, it's possible that this devotion to Ashton is still being expressed in the metaphysical groups around the country, in which case information about Ashton the man should be fairly easy to obtain ... as well as, in all probability, a colorful run-down of all his past lives, with an explanation of the Karmic Complications, if desired. (In fact, probably even if you don't desire. The metaphysical crowd never expressed any difficulty in understanding the most hairy problems in the universe. However, they did seem to have a little trouble in understanding when a person just wasn't interested in their theories.)

I'm glad that you're interested in science fiction -- and, I'm glad you said it. Actually, I never doubted it. In fact, I'll confess to a certain basic sort of innocence, and admit that, until reading your editorial, I had given very little thought to this matter at all. Years ago, I had reached the conclusion that science fiction fandom was for people that are fans of science fiction -- that actually read the stuff, enjoy it, admire it, wish there was more of it, try to write it, edit it, criticise it ... and who skip night ballgames for the pleasure of it.

But, upon reading your editorial with this seemingly obvious statement, 'I like science fiction', I got to wondering: "Now, why should he make an obvious statement like that?" -- And, I started thinking about it.

Strangely enough (something I only recently recalled, as a result of your statement) the first fan I encountered when I was trying to Get In Touch after my gaffiation, stated "Science fiction? I can't remember when I've read a science fiction book, I mostly just keep up with the fanzines." Hmm. And...in a stack of zines sitting here, waiting patiently to be filed away, I find that the actual number that even mention sf is very limited. That's strange, too.

Is science fiction out-dated?

I don't think so. In fact, I don't think that liking sf is out-dated, either. And, I also know for a fact that the fan who denied ever reading it sits up late at night poring over the stuff. In at least some of the cases that I know personally, these zine-editors who never mention it are seen sneaking out of book stores, with their weeks' allotment of sf reading material -- wrapped in a brown plain paper.

I guess what's out of fashion among the science fiction fans is confessing to being a s.f. fan. Once-upon-a-time, being a science fiction fan was something so unique we could brag about it, be considered unusual because of it, be set apart by it. Now Playboy and the Saturday Evening Post have clothed science fiction in a robe of decency. And, what a letdown it is, after being thought so -- so Dashing -- to be respectable. And so, it's no longer considered the Thing To Do to admit you like s.f. It's become the Thing To Do, among some fans at least, to say "I never read the stuff." Or, at the very least, to leave it unsaid, and to set oneself apart by being a 'fan'. Being a fan is the last refuge of individualism of fandom; when this wall is torn down by fandom's swelling ranks -- who knows what mark of individualism will come into vogue?

Well...I'M With You. I like science fiction, and if that admittance robs me of some 'glamor', than so be it. I read the stuff; I collect it; I spend a hell of a lot on it.



And, as for the rest of it -- well, Truth & Justice & The American Way are wide-open terms. It's possible that we might debate till ten o'clock next Thursday morning about what they are -- but, given each our own definition (if such were granted) I believe we'd all agree that we believe in them.

So, who's Idealistic? I have an idealistic notion that a science fiction fan has to be idealistic to really enjoy the stuff. I'm convinced that science fiction fans are basically romanticists, basically fond of Truth & Justice & The American Way -- however they might define it.

And when sometimes Facts rear their ugly heads to imply this might not always be the case, I argue them back down by saying 'He was a Fake Fan.' I dislike the idea of admitting that there could be such a thing as a non-idealistic science fiction fan, who 'never reads the stuff'. And so, I don't admit it very readily.

My wife's family had a dog -- a very old dog of great dignity. And, the dog hated cats. Now, unfortunately for the dog's peace of mind, my wife loves cats. Fat lazy tomcats, pregnant tabby cats, bouncy kitten-aged cats...didn't matter what kind of disrepair the cat was in, she'd drag it home. Now you might think all these cats around would have caused Grave Troubles, with such a cat-hating dog. But -- not so. Remember: he was a dog of Great Dignity, who hated the cats that ate from his dish, slept in his bed, pulled at his fur, and tried to tease him into combat. He never saw a cat in his life...they were invisible to him... he looked right through them, and ignored their pesterings.

I wish it were as easy to ignore the pesterings of non-idealism in fandom.

Richard E. Geis  
Post Office Box 3116  
Santa Monica, California 90403

Most of my books are sex-problem books -- a chick or a man with a hang-up. Could be nymphomania, lesbianism, voyeurism, or even a girl (The Punishment) with a scar on her face and extreme self-consciousness.

I create the characters first with only a vague idea of where the plot will go, then do the first three chapters and try very hard to set the people, make them come alive, and make the problem vital. A chain of events is set in motion by something happening...some pressure forces in action, a meeting brings a character to an emotional crisis...

This is standard plot goop. The book flows along with illustrative sex scenes, scenes that do more than merely show sex going on. A sex scene, properly written, can show more characterization and personality and basic motivation than any other kind of scene. Also, it holds the reader's interest and he absorbs more of the information I feed him.

A character change is forced at the end of the book. People resist change and sometimes it takes emotional dynamite to blow them into a different pattern of living. I really dig writing emotional blow-off scenes, which is odd in a way, because in "real life" I avoid scenes -- shouting and surface hate, fear, lust... I cringe. So I let it come out in my books through my characters. There's a lot of self-therapy in writing.

I'm not much of a plotter at all. All I try to do, instinctively now, is write



each scene with conflict. Sparks should fly.

I think this carries over into my fanzine editing. Action-reaction, I don't pick fights or cater to feuds. I'm still amazed at how that little editorial in Psychotic #21 triggered the controversy it did. It's just that a lively zine is an interesting zine, so I'll publish assertive, provoking, but not vicious, articles and opinions. And informative stuff, too, as with Ted White's article, "Why Does It Sell?" and "A Primer For Heads" by Earl Evers.

{{ One of the troubles with publishing assertive material is that certain people feel you've got to be all for them or all against them. And when you run articles and commentary opposed to what they think to be the truth, you lose them as contributors. By the way, when is Cheech Beldone's next column appearing?}}

Jackie Harper  
812 David Drive  
Chula Vista, California 92010

I was very impressed with the wonderful appearance you get with mimeo -- it's the best printing job I've seen in that style. All my previous contacts with fanzines have been in the comic book area, though I have read a copy of Amra. I was disappointed to find that not much is written about science fiction in SF fanzines. In comics fanzines I can expect to find researched articles on such things as comparisons of 1940's comics with 1960's comics, histories of particular companies, characters or groups, etc. Science fiction fanzines seem to concentrate on personalities and the fans themselves, such as your "Are Femme Fans Human?" and heated discussions over whether fans read SF. This is a very rare thing in comics fanzines: fans are discussed only when conventions are held or when they do something spectacular, like get hired by Marvel.

...I found the following to be utterly worthless to me and of very dubious relation to science fiction: Ted White's column; "In The Ruins"; "A Story For Trufans"; Grüt, Robin White's thing, and the letters.

{{ The basic difference between comics fandom and modern sf fandom is that the comics fanzines are at the stage sf fanzines were twenty-five to thirty years ago. There are fewer areas to cover in sf because of the vast number of articles written about various things over the years. And, invariably, as you become more familiar with fans and fandom, you become interested in fans as people, and in the communication of ideas, thoughts, and feelings. If you found "In The Ruins" of no value, then I doubt whether you've ever heard of Weird Science and Weird Fantasy, both of which used the basic plot many times during the heyday of the EC line.}}

Greg Benford  
874 Juanita Drive  
Walnut Creek, California 94529

By far the best thing in the issue is Mebane's analysis of Zelazny's devices and styles. This is precisely the thing fans should write, when they have the knowledge and training to do a good job. I'm sure most of fandom isn't familiar with the roots of Zelazny's success and impact. Although they like his work, without the vocabulary and background Banks Mebane provides they would remain ignorant of the nuances and subtleties in Zelazny's prose.



It's interesting that when Mebane shows Zelazny's use of pace, multiplicity of images and thoughts, piling on of detail and feeling, he uses much the same language that Ellison employs to describe what he tries to do in several of his own pieces. (For one, "Repent, Harlequin!") It's a bit croggling to see how two different writers, with much the same ineht, can follow such completely different paths to realize their goal.

I too thought the passage from "The Keys To December" starting with "Quick, a world in 300 words or less!" was overly self-indulgent. (But I still liked the work enough to nominate it for a Nebula.) This is an occupational disease with writers who use as flamboyant a style as Zelazny, but in the wake of his success others seem to be taking up these "tricks" as the substance of the craft, rather than as some unwelcome barnacles. Example: R.A.Lafferty's Past Master. In the span of four pages describing a faster-than-light journey, Lafferty writes things like:

"But it wasn't all heavy vital stuff encountered in the Passage Dreams. Some of it was light and vital stuff. Also still drifting in deep space is every tall tale ever told.  
"Hey, here's one."

And a little later:

"Twenty thousand of such little dreams! Hey, here's another one!"

And then perhaps the worst joke in recent stf:

"Odd things happened to pilots and passengers during Hopp-Equation travel. During the period of cosmic disappearances, Paul always became left-handed. In addition, there was always an absolutely fundamental reversal in him. He knew from the private jokes of other pilots that this total reversal happened to them also. There was more sniggering about this than about anything else in space lore, for Hopp-Equation travel was very new. But it happened, it happened every time: the total reversal of polarity in a person. Man, what a reversal of polarity!"

"Oh well, it's the only way I can sing soprano," Paul would say; and he often did so when in this state."

In fact, Past Master is full of examples of bad writing.

Robin White is interesting and insightful while talking about femmefans. On the other hand it all holds an air of unreality for me, for I've never paid much attention to the whole elaborate ritual of courtship in fandom and consequently its subtleties are beyond me. I will say, though, that I've never regarded Robin White as an object.

Joyce Fisher  
4404 Forest Park  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108

...I married long before I entered fandom. However, the situations Robin describes are not confined to fandom. There is frequently a tendency for a male to think of a woman as only a sex object if the woman thinks of herself in this way. However, Robin struck at the crux of the matter when she pointed out that, as soon as she ceased to think of herself in this manner, there was no difficulty in obtaining the privilege of being a person. I agree completely with this; in or out



of fandom, I've seldom had any difficulty in getting this fact established. Further, I'm also of the opinion that, given the opportunity, most men would much prefer to think of a woman as a thinking, individualistic person with ideas, opinions, facts, to be contributed to any discussion.

(( If you're wondering, Joyce, what ever became of the other 10,000 words you wrote on this subject, they will be incorporated into a special section, with material by Ethel Lindsay and others, in the forthcoming issue of South Norwalk, published for the Southern Fandom Press Association. Subscribers to Algol can get a copy by sending me 25¢. ))

Ted White  
339 49th Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11220

Glancing over some of the Letters of Comment on the last Algol, I notice several people took the quote attributed to me in Robin's "Femnefans" article seriously. Which is to say, some people seem to think I really think femnefans are objects.

Folks, that quote was uttered (while driving west to the Westercon in 1966) in sarcastic irony, and it was quoted by Robin in the same tone (go back and read the anecdotal style in which she told it, replete with vintage Burbeeisms). If I really thought Femnefans Are Objects, I doubt I'd have gotten to know any well enough that I married two, and became (just) Good Friends with a number of others.

But I think I uttered a truism in terms of general fannish attitude -- most Love-Starved Young Fans (copyright, Mountain Movers, 1958) do regard femnefans as Objects, and thrust them whenever possible on Genuine-Wrought-By-Rotsler pedestals. Some femnefans like that. Some don't. The ones who do are objects. So there.

Redd Boggs  
Post Office Box 1111  
Berkeley, California 94701

I liked much of your material this time, including Ted White's "column" of reprints of casual reports of things he did in 1965 -- apparently he's done nothing interesting since then; Samuel Delany's "Some Architectural Sketches..." which makes him sound like a pretty good bed indeed, even though the little yarn, "In The Ruins," you print in this issue lost me completely, and I've never been able to force myself to finish Eabel-17 (my only Delany novel to date); Jerry Knight's pleasant enough poem; and Lupoff's book column. The latter piece is inadequate, in its review of J. U. Giesy, in telling whether the novels were badly cut by Avalon. No doubt they were: hence Lupoff might have informed readers that it might be best to find the Giesy novels in their reprints in FFM and Fantastic Novels in the 1940s. Lupoff also astonishes me by trying to trace back the use of the "astral projection" idea in science fiction and proto-science fiction. More to the point would be the use of such an idea in occult literature, where fantasy borrowed it.

(( Dick Lupoff replies below:

Redd raises two valid points concerning the Giesy books. With regard to their having been cut for the Avalon editions, they may well have been. I was called, correctly, for reviewing the Avalon/Ace editions of some O.A.Kline novels a few years back, ignorant of their being cut versions. However good or bad Kline may



have been in his own right, he deserved at least a reviewer's note that the then-current editions were abridgements.

I do not have the FFM/FN versions of the Giesy stories -- although it is a fact that Mary Gnaedinger also cut a good many stories that she ran in those magazines, so for a for-sure valid version we ought really to go back into the pulp pages of half a century ago.

For the record, though, my comments on any of these recent reprints are based on the new edition unless otherwise noted, and if that edition is not complete and authentic then the comments should be viewed with suitable reservations.

Regarding the astral projection theme, Redd is undeniably correct in stating that SF borrowed the concept from fantasy and that fantasy used it as the embodiment of a serious belief among occultists. Two readily-available books that come to mind are Flourney's From India To The Planet Mars and George du Maurier's The Martian.

Flourney describes a "medium" who "travelled to Mars" in a state of trance. The book was reissued just a few years ago by University Books. du Maurier (father of the author Daphne du Maurier) uses the theme in a novel, and although the book is long out of print, I have seen many copies on Fourth Avenue, fairly inexpensively. Undoubtedly there are many, many other books treating these themes. But my point in tracing Giesy's usage to Burroughs and further back to Hallan is that this is the context in which Giesy used the theme. I am convinced, on the basis of internal evidence, that his inspiration, his market, his audience, all fit into the framework of the scientificfictional "interplanetary romance" most perfectly epitomized by A Princess Of Mars. Not into the framework of pure fantasy or that of serious occultism.

...Most of the interest I felt in Algol #13 rested rather precariously on two articles, Robin White's "Are Femme Fans Human?" and Banks Mebane's essay on Roger Zelazny. These two items are really fascinating, even though they are not very good: the one is merely pathetic, and the other thoroughly ludicrous.

Robin White's protest against the notion that "Femme fans are objects. They are symbols" is a good and valid objection -- and why limit the protest just to femme fans? But then she proceeds to demonstrate that she herself has bought the idea completely -- so completely that at least one of its basic tenets, that females are interested only in Love and Marriage, is swallowed whole. She is so cleanly {{ Cleanly? }} brainwashed that it apparently has never entered her head that women can be anything but Wives and Mothers.

She starts out with a spirited protest against male fans pawing and propositioning female fans, then describes how Ted White, because (he says) he had been put off by her "all-knowing smile and/or smirk," didn't attempt to make her when he met her one time, but -- surprise -- talked about cats. One might interpret this scene by saying Ted didn't think she was worth propositioning, but she is flattered, or at least gratified. She accepts his story about her "all-knowing smile and/or smirk" and humbly tries to get rid of it, and his protest that she hung around with "little boys" when there were "so many men" (including Ted, no doubt) around, without even a quiet murmur of "So I liked those "little boys"!"

A girl's role, according to Robin's ideas, apparently, is to seek "male companionship," and that's the only role she talks about: she is full of women's magazine talk about boyfriends, popularity, and going steady ("going with a guy for four years," she says, was "virtual hibernation" -- and this with a straight face!). And then she becomes Ted's girl friend, and later his wife, and what do







you know! People start talking to her instead of trying to make passes! "It was as if I had suddenly been born a real human being before their very eyes. They talked to me." What has Robin done? She's gotten married -- that is, she has become a sex symbol that belongs to someone. That's the only way she can conceive of to become "areal, living, feeling communicating person" -- through the agency of some male and her relationship with him!

No doubt many women are willing to become the property of some man just to keep other men at a distance, and not have to go through the chasing and the pawing that Robin describes. But it is certainly pathetic that Robin and others seemingly think that that's the only way a woman can become a "human being." She doesn't even mention other femme fans, most of whom wouldn't paw her, or at least not so embarrassingly as male fans, and would probably accept her as a human being. She doesn't seem to have considered doing anything but look for "male companionship." Yet femme fans like Lee Hoffman and Bjo Trimble have little trouble, I should think, in convincing people that they are "a human being," their sexual and/or marital roles aside. It's painful to have to say this, but it sounds as if Robin White might have solved her problems easier if she had published a fanzine instead of marrying Ted White!

Banks Mebane's article achieves the near-impossible: it makes Roger Zelazny sound even worse than he probably is. One ends up a little embarrassed for Zelazny, who appears to be better educated than most fans and writers and, perhaps rightly, wants to impress us with his erudition. But is this sufficient reason for the amazing adulation that he has received? In a field where much of the writing is sub-literary, it may be impressive to run across a reference to Dante or Walt Whitman, but Zelazny does not write very well as yet. David R. Bunch, Robert F. Young, Roger Zelazny! He is more consciously "arty" than most of writers, and Mebane succeeds in emphasizing Zelazny's pretentiousness so much that one longs for a straight shot of Nat Schachner.

Mebane's examples of "good writing" in Zelazny's fiction are sometimes pretty eye-popping. "...her right breast moved up and down like a moon in the sky." Sure, moons always move up and down like a bobbing breast. And of course the verb "move" makes it sound as if the breast were on a muscle being moved voluntarily. "The rocket dropped to the rainbow desert like a red-stemmed flower growing back to seed" is -- as Mebane admits -- pretty silly. Zelazny is inept enough to confuse the reader with this image: after all, a flower growing to seed is a flower putting forth seeds itself, while apparently the author means this flower is descending to the seed from which it sprouted.

Zelazny's "Quick, a world in 300 words or less!," quoted by Mebane on page 42, reminds me of a typical fan creating on stencil: "Well, here I am sitting in front of this blank stencil, and I have to get eight pages done and sent to the OE by tonight or I am O\*U\*T of this apa. Let's see if I can do it." And the result in Zelazny is nearly as disastrous as it is with the fan that drools onto stencil. This description from Zelazny is so diffuse, unfocused, and thick that I find it nearly impossible to read. As for "I felt like Ulysses in Malebolge -- with a terza rima speech in one hand and an eye out for Dante," it's a confused image in the first place, and inaccurate (unless justified by context -- which is doubtful) in the second. Ulysses in Malebolge did not have "an eye out for Dante." Quite the contrary, he did not notice him and would not have answered him if Vergil had allowed Dante to speak to him. Ulysses speaks by conjuration, his speech reeling off like a tape recording. Alas for pseudo-erudition.

All this brings me back to "Beetle-Juice," your editorial, where you say, "I



like science fiction, I guess. Somehow, Truman Capote doesn't turn me on quite as much as Lester del Rey or Roger Zelazny do [sic]." Your meaning is obscure. Is it your point that you like some trash more than other trash, or what? To clarify, you should substitute for "Truman Capote" a more illustrious name: Shakespeare, Dickens, Melville, Twain. "I like science fiction, I guess. Somehow, Leo Tolstoy doesn't turn me on quite as much as Lester del Rey or Roger Zelazny ~~do~~ does." A statement like that would give us a better measure of your addiction for sf, as well as the lack of literary appreciation in you, than any safe little remark about Truman Capote.

44 Hey, Boggs, you don't know when to quit, do you? After lambasting myself, Ted White and Forry Ackerman in The Nehwon Review (FAPA 120) for beating up on poor defenceless Stephen Pickering, you turn right around in Bete Noire (FAPA 121) and print a quote from a review I did and title it: "The Esthetically and Scientifically Naive Critic Department." What's wrong, Redd? Why are you claiming "Are the New Yorkers these days so naive?" as you did in that same issue of Bete Noire? Is it because we've heard the rumors that Gretchen Schwenn writes all your material these days and we actually believe it? Can it be because we're 3000 miles away and you don't have to insult us to our faces?

Your diatribe against Roger Zelazny is childish and ludicrous. You admitted "I've never been able to force myself to finish Babal-17 (my only Delany novel to date)" and then go on to say about Banks Lebane's article "It makes Roger Zelazny sound even worse than he probably is." Why probably, Redd? Don't you bother to read an author's books before you attack him? Later on, you quote me writing about Truman Capote's writing as opposed to Roger Zelazny's and Lester del Rey's. Then you ask "Is it your point that you like some trash more than other trash, or what?" Such childishness, Redd. Equating Zelazny and del Rey with trash is not done; you know that. If you want to impress us by dissecting the writings of an author you haven't read, you shouldn't show your immaturity by attacking his and another writer's outputs as "trash."

But perhaps I can make you understand my feelings by quoting something which seems to have gotten through to you once before. Buck Coulson said it: "Of all the collections of garbage and innuendo I have encountered in fandom, this is one of the prizes." By the way, Redd, Bill Warren talked to the doctors at Camarillo State Hospital while Pickering was still there. They had given up using shock treatments a decade or more ago. Pickering was lying, hoping to gather more sympathy. Just thought you'd like to know, sucker.

And now, back to sweetness and light.44

Harry Warner Jr.  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

...I still feel that the whole notion of a worldcon which is almost always in the United States is all wrong. I would still favor my more radical suggestion of a national con, rotating from East to Midwest to West as the WorldCon has done for years 44 It's the other way around, Harry44 over the Labor Day weekend, and a separate annual worldcon which would rotate at the outset from United States to Great Britain to Europe's continent, later spreading out to Japan or other areas if fandom's spread justified it. The national con would keep most of the traditions that the worldcon now possesses; the new worldcon would build its own, such as recognition of writers in non-English languages, perhaps more emphasis on films, the annual St. Fantony ceremonies, and things that are just now unthinkable to me. The worldcon would occur in the spring, when overseas travel is not as hectic.



"In The Ruins" gives me reason to believe that Samuel R. Delany isn't as difficult as I'd been led to believe. I've been shying away from his professional work because of a months-long mood in which I don't want to devote too much intellectualism to fiction. At the same time, this story would probably be worth some detailed digging. I sense a lot of symbolism, behind the obvious action: the sand with which the hero fills his cloak for hostile purposes, for instance, must be a key symbol, that of time via the manner in which sand trickles through the tiny opening between the upper and lower halves of the hourglass. "A Story For True-fans", on the other hand, seems as single-intented and concentrated as any fan-fiction I've read in a long while, and it makes a splendid effect for that reason, even though it is not exactly an effect that makes one happy about fandom. You've probably driven two or three people out of fandom completely by publishing it, making them suddenly see clearly some of the naked truths. If an individual likes fandom only because of the unanimity with which these fannish cliches have been given lip service, this story should do it for him.

Banks Mebane is absolutely brilliant about Zelazny. If I'd read all those Zelazny stories and if my critical apparatus were as well-oiled and smoothly functioning as Banks', I might try to advance the theory that the Preraphaelites are the people who have provided the most direct literary ancestors of Zelazny's writing. But as things are, I'm content to be half-convinced with the 17th century derivation theory, and to enjoy these snippets, and finally to promise myself again that an order will be going off this week to Witter for some of the books I've missed. Zelazny is the only new prozine writer in the last five years whose work impresses me as capable of continuing indefinitely on this level of quality, simply because it isn't one-track writing which will eventually tire the reader after it has wrung another half-dozen variations on the same groove's basic idea.

It's too bad that Francis Laney can't come back to fandom for at least a little while. He'd be so happy to find first Jean Berman and now Robin White writing about the problems a girl fan undergoes among boy fans. Fran might like to take some of the credit for having seperated the men from the boys.

The letter section discussions of plotting techniques were fascinating. When I wrote those stories for the prozines a decade ago, I found the most comfortable way for me to do it was to get some basic notion as a theme for the story, like a world where extreme longevity tired out people so badly that they deliberately exposed themselves to disease, then to think up some kind of effective climax in which this theme would be an essential ingredient, then try to work out the plot as I wrote the story with that climax and theme in mind. My very first published story had the most vivid climax of them all: wolves chasing the heroine across icebergs. I had been trying to sell it to the prozines, on and off, for years without success. So one day I decided that I would write a story with the most melodramatic and familiar climax I could imagine. I once chose as a model a scene from Uncle Tom's Cabin, even though I knew the book only from reputation, not from actual reading. I don't know if the climax was responsible, but Lowndes bought the story and it was named the most popular story in that issue. Lowndes commented when announcing that fact that he bet I was as surprised as he was. I was.

Ruth Berman  
5620 Edgewater Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417

...I suspect there's a grain of truth in (Ted White) saying that femmefans are status symbols to him. Perhaps it explains why I have never been friends with him, even though I have often felt friendly towards him when I was in his company



along with enough of his friends for him not to notice me as someone he ought to impress. Fortunately, Ted's type is rare in fandom. Most fans have always treated me like a human being. In fact, when I was a teenager, two of the most comforting things about fans, as opposed to my classmates in school, was that they treated me like a human being...and like a girl. Adolescents, of course, generally have rotten manners, except when deliberately trying to impress someone, but when I was an adolescent I wasn't aware of that; I only noticed that a fan (who respected me because I shared his hobby and was knowledgeable in it) would hold a door for me, and no one else ever did.

Adults are more tolerant, and I've become at ease in the outside world, more or less.

But I wonder. Fans have treated me like a girl -- never like a girl. I have never had to cope with an embarrassing train of jealous young fannish admirers, as Robin (and my sister Jean) did. It's annoying. While I wouldn't care for the problem, it hurts to be made to feel that I must be especially unattractive not to have that problem when the poor girl-starved fans go wild over all the other femmefans. Actually, it's probably chance (and vanity) that has brought into print the "Are Femmefans Human" side of the question. It could equally be asked, "Are femmefans female?"

But I'm not going to ponder it. It is probably equivalent to the old "Are sf fans necessarily neurotic human beings" and, if so, "Are fans any more neurotic than anybody else" questions which have been debated in fandom past all hope of making sense.

Looking over these paragraphs, I think I've been much too good humored. I want to call you a fool, because I didn't enjoy anything in Algol 13 except "Lupoff's Book Week," and because I am in a bad humor tonight. I started this letter intending to let off steam. But...I can see I'll have to look for some other way to get back in temper...

@@ Do you always exorcise your anxieties and bad feelings on your correspondents, Ruth? It may work great for you, but it must be hell on anyone you write to...@@

Alex B. Eisenstein  
CNR Box 291 36th CSG  
APO New York, New York 09132

You have something of a point about the disadvantage to the East Coast in the new 4-year rotation plan -- however, you exaggerate its effects by considering only the theory of the main provision of the plan. After all, in actual practice, a foreign WorldCon every four years is very unlikely; more like every twelve years, or perhaps once in eight years. The usual net effect would be that of the 3-year rotation plan -- the East would have the con in '74 if no foreign bidder materializes, as you duly noted (and then duly forgot). And if no foreign bidder appears in 74, then the order will change -- because 74 will be the year of the Eastern convention, after which comes the Western (1st year), Midwestern (2nd year) Eastern again (3rd year) and then foreign (4th year, 1978). If no foreign bid is ready for 78, then the West Coast will have the con, in accordance with the 3-year rotation plan. And the West, in this instance, would be the "victimized" area if a foreign bidder did take the 1978 Worldcon. In this manner, the misfortune of following a foreign Worldcon would probably befall each area eventually. Only if a successful foreign bid copped the con every four years could the East Coast follow a foreign worldcon every time, and this is highly improbable.

44 Unfortunately, unless the plan is changed this theory will become fact. Melbourne, Australia is bidding for the next foreign slot. They are very nice about going along with me under the assumption that the rotation plan will be changed -- the watchword is Australia in '75 -- but unless it is changed now, I'm afraid that what I've predicted will come to pass.44

Banks Mebane never quite distinguishes the crucial difference between meta-physical figures of speech and the ordinary kind. To me, the metaphorical treatment of Conrad's super-dog ("his eyes were glowing coals and his teeth buzzsaws") seems little different from the fire that is "flapping its bright wing against the night..." I disagree that the mythic Phoenix is evoked, for the fire is "a jolly fire...warming us." Hardly an association appropriate to the terrible, self-consuming Phoenix. And though the novel occasionally alludes to ancient myth, with several mythical mutants and a mechanical "golem" inhabiting Conrad's world, the "context of the story" is hardly "saturated with mythological references." The classically mythical elements are all in minor-key and are incidental to the story per se, quite unlike those in Samuel R. Delany's The Einstein Inter-section.

To my mind, the figures in most of Zelazny's earlier fiction are usually overblown and pretentious, sometimes quite embarrassingly self-conscious -- "The Doors Of his Face, etc." and "A Rose For Ecclesiastes" are prime offenders, as the quotations from each story show. If one attempts to follow the meaning beneath the metaphor (especially the geographical sense) in the second paragraph of "Doors" one encounters a vast and vague confusion. Where (or what) is Cloud Valley in relation to the continent of Hand? Where is the Hand itself -- below the baitman? And how does the sight of the planet's surface shock the baitman after he presumably has fallen through the cloud-covered globe from high in space -- he certainly can't perceive the planet itself as a "silver-black bowling ball" rushing at him as if down an alley; once he reached the uppermost fringe of the cloud layer, Venus would no longer present a round aspect.

The description of the sacred dancer from "A Rose For Ecclesiastes" lacks even the specious unity of the passage criticized above. I can accept "a spun weather vane," but what is "a feathered crucifix"? And where is the tenuous thread that connects the latter two images to "a clothes-line holding one bright garment lashed parallel to the ground..." I can picture a girl as a weather vane and even as a crucifix, but a clothes-line? The lack of continuity (even more so, the interrupted continuity) is infuriating, not to mention the intrinsic inaptness of the specific concrete metaphors.

Many of Zelazny's figures contain poor word choices. It's not that he picks the wrong word, but often he uses a rough or clumsy word or phrase. That he doesn't choose the best word is probably attributable, in the final analysis, more to hasty composition than to a faulty acquaintance with the language, for often the miscast words are auxiliary words. The line, "Day was starting to lever its way into the world" might be better formed as "Day began to..." There are other signs of hasty writing: "High overhead, the night was a tarp...torn with a jagged crescent of a tear." Surely "torn" and "tear" create an uncomfortable (and avoidable) redundancy? "Torn by the jagged crescent of the yellow moon," or some such change, would be a definite -- and simply made -- improvement.

Mr. Mebane does present one rather acute observation on Zelazny's style -- the matter of his use of simplified figures of speech in his fantasy, as opposed to the more breathtaking imagery which he reserves for his science fiction. The reasoning behind this dichotomy, as Banks describes it, sounds valid to me --



if Zelazny has been consistent (and this I cannot judge, not having read much of his out-and-out fantasy), it might be interesting if someone asked him whether it were a conscious effort on his part.

Ursula K. Le Guin  
3321 NW Thurman Street  
Portland, Oregon 97210

1. "How do you write your books?" I sit at a desk in the attic. I stare at the Crab Nebula or the Orion Nebula (courtesy of Mount Palomar and Natural History Magazine) or out the window at the forests of Oregon. I make a lot of false starts. I conceive of various waethers, gravities, levities, times, events, and characters. Once a year or so I conceive of all these things joined together in a whole large enough to include a novel. I write the novel, revise it, revise the revision, and then try to sell it.

In City of Illusions I was trying to write a novel called The Two-Minded Man. It was to be the story of a literal search for identity. I wrote a novel, but not quite the one I intended. The matter of Truth and Lies kept creeping in and confusing the plot. I didn't like the novel I wrote as well as the one I didn't write. The publisher {{ Ace Books. }} changed the title, but that's all right, since it's a different book anyway.

I like your magazine, though I wish it had more book reviews and critical writing. The picture on page 37 by Frank Wilimczyk is very beautiful; I wish Mr. W could illustrate my next book, which I call The Left Hand Of Darkness, but will the publisher?

{{ This letter was pieced together from various comments I made to the author, hoping to get an article from her. Although Frank Wilimczyk has illustrated books, he has never done anything in the paperback field, to my knowledge. }}

Sonya Dorman  
Crickettown Road  
Stony Point, New York 10980

Algol was a pleasant surprise. Most of the reviews and letters were interesting and only one seemed little more than lint-extraction from a juvenile's navel. I thought the artwork was very good, too.

I started reading sf years ago when I was working as a dancer in Miami Beach, and bored during the daytime because I couldn't find a place to rehearse and the beach was full of creeps (they were called creeps, then). I found that if I wrapped the bright red cover of Marx's Das Capital around my copy of Galaxy or Fantasy & Science Fiction and read it while sunbathing on the beach, I was left entirely alone. I quit dancing long ago but am still hooked on science fiction. I wish I wrote more of it; maybe I will in the future.

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WE ALSO HEARD FROM.....

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Creath Thorne, Don Wollheim, Piers Anthony, Leigh Edmonds, Waldemar Kunning, Roy Tackett, Bill Kunkel, Dick Flinchbaugh, Ed Reed, Jerry Kaufman, Marvin Green, Brian Hill, George Fergus, Joanne Burger, Mike Gilbert, Alexis Gilliland, Jan Slavin, Anne McCaffrey, Kay Anderson, and Harlan Ellison. Don't forget, Kay Anderson and Ethel Lindsay will appear in the special Female Issue of South Norwalk, available from me for 25¢. Order a copy today -- act now; act without thinking!!!

# THE PENULTIMATE TRUTH

## A FINAL WORD OR TWO

Looking back over this issue, I can see some innovations that will continue in future issues. One is the merger of mimeography and spirit duplication on the same sheet of paper. This will continue in future issues with the possible addition of color, either in mimeo or ditto, to the illustrations.

Then too, there is the seeming failure of the illo on page 15. I remind myself that no master can stand up under a 265 copy press run. Future illos will either have to use long run masters or duplicates of the same illo.

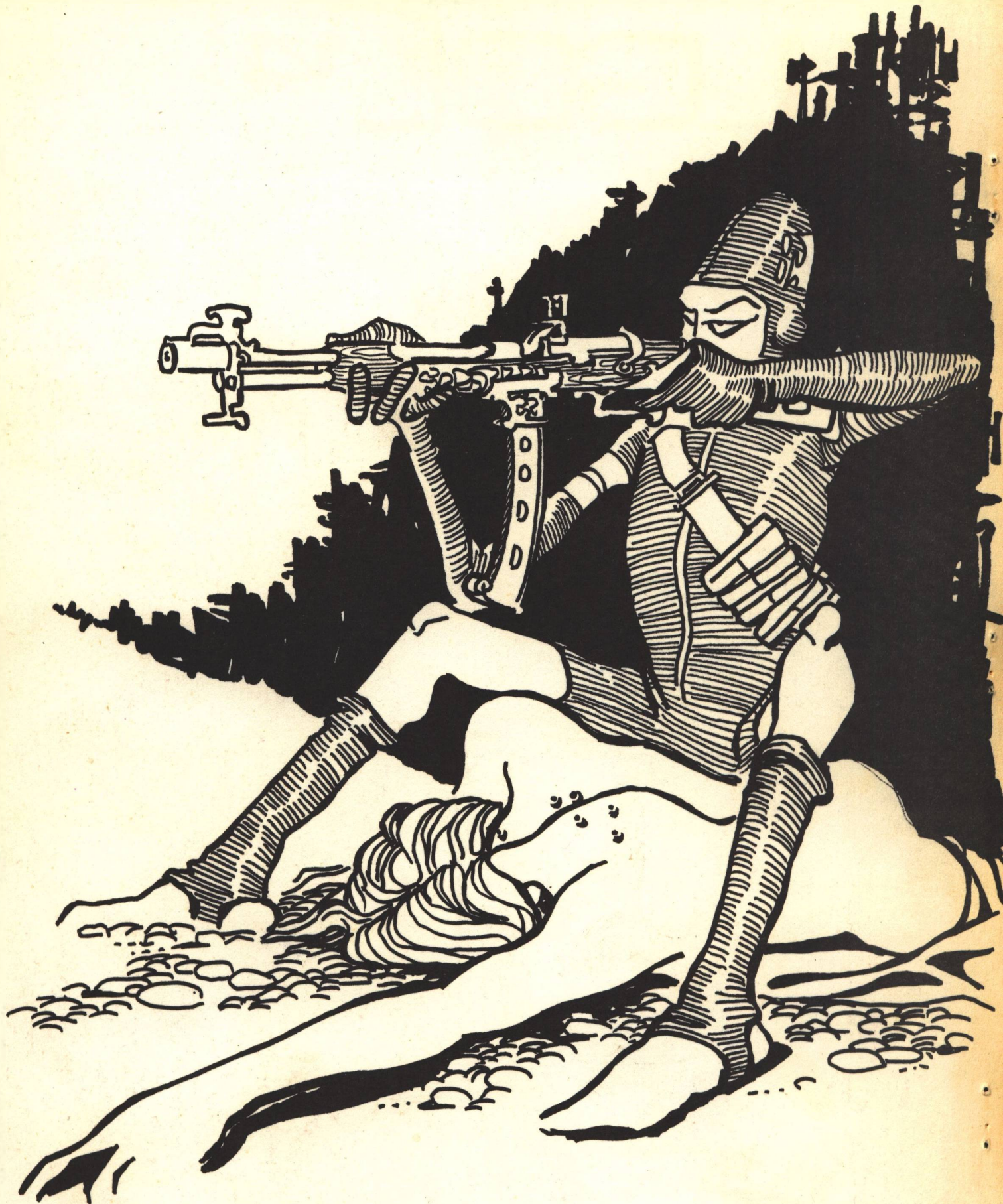
I am very happy with the response to last issue. However, I'm still very much in the market for long articles on science fiction, especially the New Wave stuff, and the genre of science fiction in the international arena. Authors are welcome to contribute articles on the why and how of their writing; artists are invited to express themselves on paper as to How They Do It; and fans are invited to write about why they thought Robert Moore Williams' latest book failed as a novel, but succeeded admirably as a modern tale of morality (or any such topic as you feel inclined to write).

The threat expressed in neatly checked boxes last issue to cut off anyone not responding in some way has eliminated a great deal of deadwood. But you, my dear readers, should know why you are receiving this issue.

- ( ) You contributed to this issue.
- ( ) Your letter of comment appears herein.
- ( ) We trade fanzines on some irregular basis.
- ( ) You're mentioned in this issue; care to comment?
- ( ) You are an unwilling member of the Porter-Bangsund Co-Prosperity Sphere.
- ( ) Your fabulous artwork will be reproduced here with clarity; please contribute.
- ( ) Please contribute an article ( ); faan fiction ( ); some fabulous Wit ( ) to Algol.
- ( ) You're not mentioned in this issue, but a topic you might find interesting is.
- ( ) You are a subscriber; unless this box is checked, / your sub hasn't expired.
- ( ) I am trimming my mailing list; this is the last issue you will receive unless you do something. Act now; act without thinking (too much)!
- ( ) You are a femmefan; can you prove by contributing that you're not an object?
- ( ) Dick Lupoff has reviewed your book; any outraged comments?
- ( ) You really don't fit any of these categories, but checkmarks are a fannish tradition, so Here You Are...

Ed Cox, Guess What:





VAUGHN  
BODE  
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