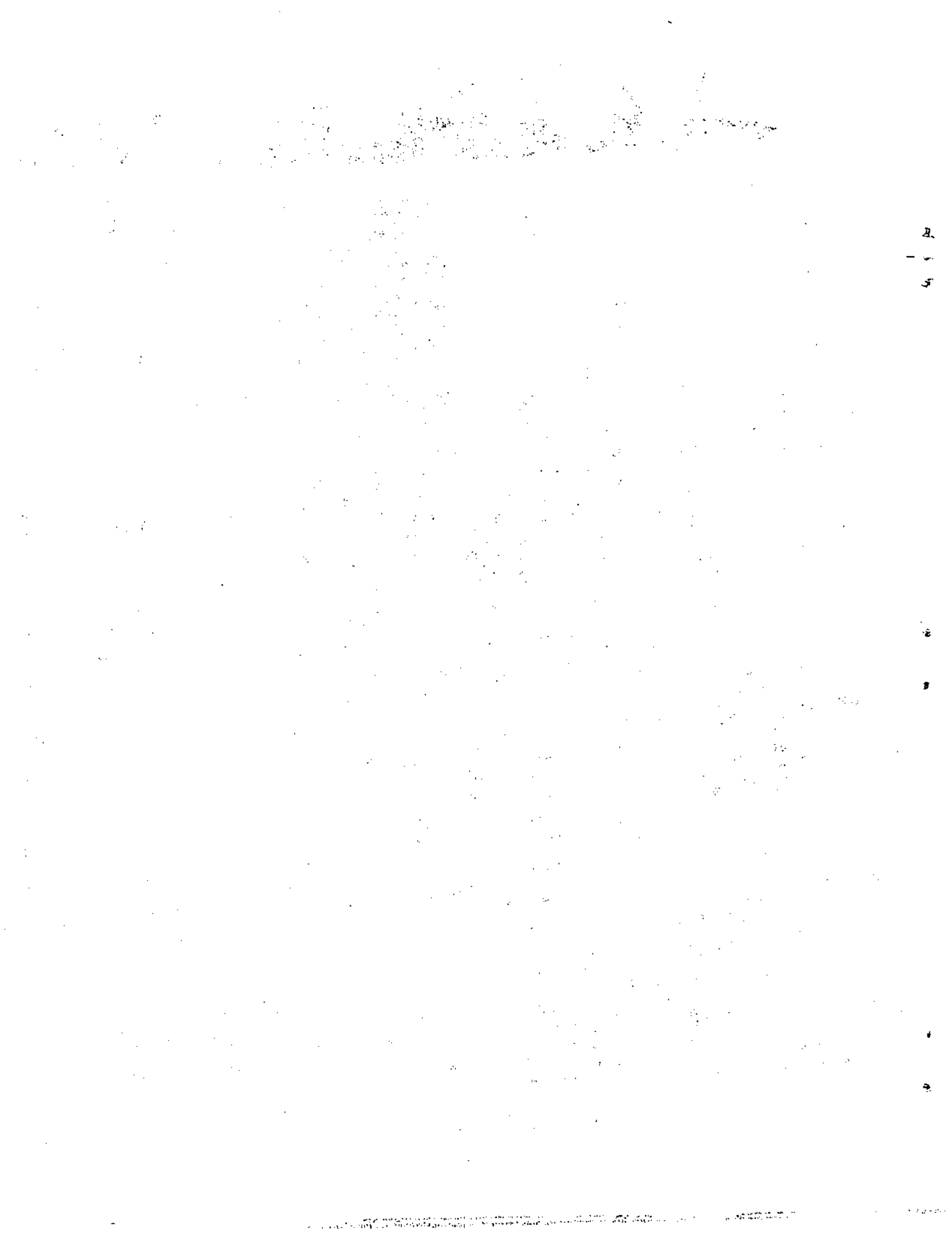


ALGOL 15



SPRING 1969



ALGOL 15

SPRING ISSUE

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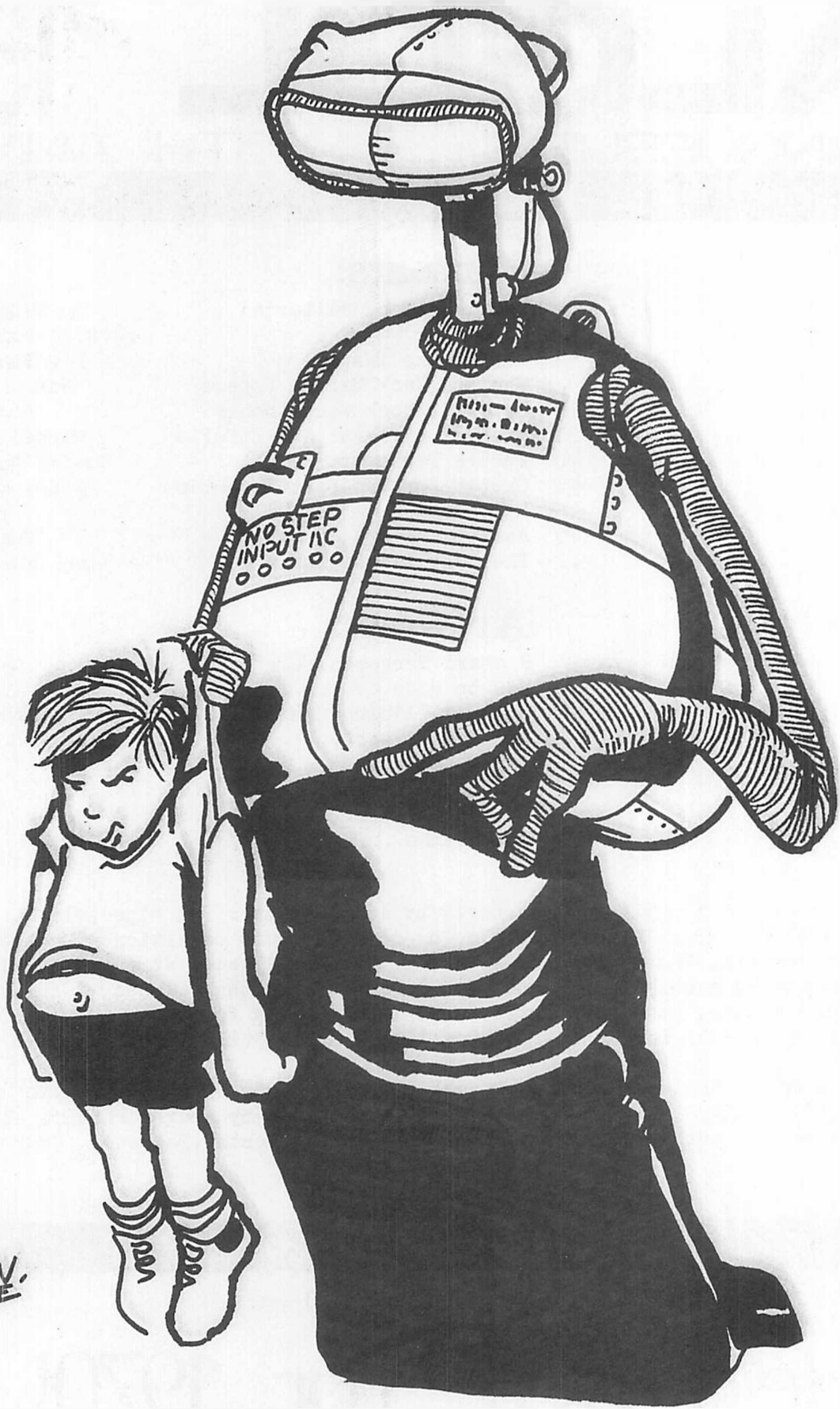
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VAUGHN
BODE
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BEATLE-JUICE

:Editorial

Andrew Porter

Some Notes On International Fandom...

European and all foreign fandoms want the WorldCon now; they want the Hugos now; they want equal rights for their own fandoms now. Thus a controversy rages in American fandom: should the overseas fans receive these things now, these things that American fandom has created and nurtured, free of charge? And, if they should get these things, some fan feel that foreign fans might show some sign of having earned the right to these rather intangible properties. Clearly the foreign support for TAFF does not contribute to the foreign case for equality (only 13 votes from all England were received in the recent race which elected Steve Stiles to the ThirdManCon).

I had originally intended to write an editorial concerning the words in the box below. Since I received Luis Vigil's letter via Jean Muggoch, and wrote a reply which appeared in Ethel Lindsay's Scottishe, I find my feelings have shifted base.

The subject of a national convention was exposed to discussion at the recent Boskone 6. There, a panel of Tony Lewis, Elliot Shorter, myself and Brian Burley, assisted by Charlie Brown, Ed Wood and George Raybin in the audience, succeeded in bringing into the light all the reasons for a true international convention, as well as all the reasons why American fandom isn't willing to part with the WorldCon.

For one thing, the WorldCon was originated by American fandom, and so it is considered, complete with panels, speeches, programs and Hugos, an American institution,

"...about the 'important actions' taken at the Business Meeting of the BayCon. I read about the replacement of the four year rotation plan for a five year one. And my question is: How truly can a group of US fans continue to be called 'world opinion'? You know, this was true 20 or 30 years ago, when fandom outside the USA was unknown, but not now. So, by taking decisions that seem binding to the whole world fandom I think that these fans at the BayCon were more or less taking an 'imperialistic attitude'. That comes because I have been working on some articles for the SF prozine on which I collaborate, about the proposed 1970 WorldCon in Heidelberg (Germany). Well, if it comes true it will be thanks to the co-operation of the fandoms of Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, France, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Spain, etc.

So, when a group decided to take an 'important action' regarding matters affecting so many people who haven't had any vote....how binding are they on those not present? I ask this because there is already talk in Europe that if the location for the '70 Con is not given to Heidelberg it would be good to have an International Con anyway.... I think you can see where this can carry us; to two or more WorldCons every year, to the fractioning of the already not-so-much-united world fandom, and so on.... Is it not enough for the American fans to have three of each four WorldCons, that they want to have four of every five?

Excuse me if I'm being rude, but I love fandom too much, and I have too many friends in your country to accept these matters without trying to do something about them.

Already you are showing too much 'selectivity' in the WorldCons. When giving the Hugos, for instance, you only take into consideration American works and American prose and fans, the only foreigners are from some of the English-speaking countries. I know the difficulty of judging works and authors not translated, but to what extent can the prizes then be called world-wide? When is a Russian or an Italian going to be nominated for any of the writers' prizes, or a Romanian or Spanish magazine for the promag one? These are only some examples of a phenomenon that I don't think has received due thought in the USA: SF, now, is a world-wide literature, and fandom isn't limited by the USA frontiers.

not one to be relinquished to foreign fans more than once every few years. And, too, as I've said in the letter column of this issue, American fans think of world-cons with all the trimmings, and just aren't sure that foreign fans can offer the same kind of convention without somehow changing or bastardizing the whole thing and presenting it back to us as some sort of alien entity.

The problem seems to be one of semantics. The WorldCon has never been a true WorldCon; instead, it has always been a convention organized by North American fandom for English-speaking fans and crowned with the title of "world" simply because when Americans start something, they want to make it big -- and when American fans start something, they tend to think in, if not cosmic terms, then at least worldwide terms (A "World" convention was pretty daring for 1938, with another World War looming on the horizon, and the American political climate centered on Isolationism). Further confusion was caused when the British and Australians accepted the American convention as in some manner theirs as well.

The situation has crystalized in these days of emerging national fandoms with British and Australian fandoms looking to the US Convention as theirs, too -- at the same as they hold their own national conventions. Add to this the complicated thought of the Germans, Scandinavians, Belgians and Japanese, each an increasingly active and vocal force in SF fandom looking to the American worldcon as their rightful worldcon too (and holding their own national conventions, just like everyone except the North Americans) and wanting to host that worldcon, not every five or ten years, but every third year, or even more frequently.

To round out the situation, we come to the problem of the Hugos. The Hugos have traditionally been awarded to fiction from the English-speaking countries. Now, Luis Vigil raises the point that other countries want their fiction to be nominated for and win Hugos, too. Operating under the sytem now in effect, what may happen in the future, when more Germans than Americans join the WorldCon, Perry Rhodan (remember all those Perry Rhodan clubs in the German hinterlands?) is that Perry Rhodan will sweep the award categories.

However, in the midst of the discussion at the Boskone a New Idea sprang full grown into my mind. Simply stated, my plan would foster seperate Hugos for most countries. The German Hugo system is already in existence. The Scandinavian countries, Japan, France, could each award Hugos in their own languages. The standardized statues, made in quantity, could be awarded throughout the world. The Australians could throw their lot in with the British, with whom they share a mutual background and common publishing firms. (Although they share a common tongue with America, English-speaking countries within the Commonwealth operate under different copyright laws. To effect an English-language Hugo, major reworkings of the copyright laws will have to become effective in this country and the Commonwealth nations.)

And, too, our own Hugo would change, to become a North American Hugo -- presented by an annual North American Science Fiction Convention. That title sounds impressive enough, and is far closer to the truth.

The World SF Convention would cease to exist, effective with the St.LouisCon, and the InterCon (InterVention?) would begin with Heidelberg in 1970. The US would go back to a 3-year rotation plan, and the InterCon -- an esteemed title only, not an actual convention -- would rotate among the national conventions by perhaps as simple a plan as alphabetical listing of countries.

It seems to me to be a workable plan, free from a great deal of the inequities which would be created under the five-year rotation plan. It would retain all the national conventions now in existence, without creating a new convention, either in this country to replace a foreign worldcon, or overseas as a worldcon seperate from the national conventions. And it would solve the problems in the present Hugo system.



ABOUT THE COVER—RICHARD FLINCHBAUGH

I was pretty much stumped on what to say so I used a tape recorder and talked and then rewrote parts of the transcript...

I wrote to Billy The Kid on the Fourth of July and he smiled uh that sticky death smile of his and uh replied through rotted teeth that I uh ought to do a stage production so uh backdrops were used which at the same time try to show uh dimension or surface and yet denying these things very flatly...myself, I uh like to interview myself think how many dimensions we have here and I like uh lonely walks along rotted railroad uh beds...

prewar

things you find in the woods...

other facts get confused...

last night on rewrite 34
I started writing stuff like camera click slow motion still photograph which is uh sort of a poem I wrote around the time I did the drawing so uh it seems my drawings are uh really just little parts of my books movies poems...

most are on scratchy 78's.

ABOUT THE ISSUE

Norman Spinrad is the well-known author of such articles as "The Metaphysics Of Rock," and "The Ecology Of Dope," as well as his controversial novel, The Children Of Hamlin. Mr. Spinrad's article in this issue exposes his thoughts and emotions about one of his novels, soon to be a major bestseller.

Samuel H. Delany, Hugo & Nebula-award winning author, was born in New York and wrote his first piece for a fanzine here as well. In between he wrote a lot, got married, traveled extensively, and won a couple of awards worth lots in prestige with no cash grants (but that's scientifiction for you).

Ted

White is the well-known husband of Robin White. He writes books, too.

Dick Lupoff is the author of powerful new and old wave fiction. His fanzine's title, Xero, was stolen by a major business conglomerate.

Mike Symes lives too far from New York; Steve Stiles is a Dirty Pro in creepy circles; Vaughn Bode is the Jules Feiffer of the 70's; Doug Lovenstein is in Ohio, Jay Kinney in college; Mike Gilbert an Arty Fellow; Dick Flinchbaugh is a refugee from monster fandom, and Richard Bergeron is a hermit who works in midtown Manhattan.

The Editor is a well-known Yippie who splits his work-week between downtown Melbourne, Australia, the Magazine Of Fantasy & Science Fiction, Cahnners Publishing Company, and suburban Brooklyn Heights.

His Foreign

Agents do not live in the U.S., but instead, Far Away.

— Andrew Porter

2000 A.D.

Man is trapped in the
machinery of his own
making. Sterile. Plastic.
Alive... yet not living...

Beware!



JAY M.
KINNEY

THE BUG JACK BARRON PAPERS

NORMAN SPINRAD

When Andy Porter asked me to do him a piece for ALGOL on BUG JACK BARRON, he couched his request with three questions: how did I come to write BUG JACK BARRON? what urged me to do it? how do I hope to continue writing sf while bugging editors?

Yes, those were three very good questions. The fact that I had never asked myself the last question until Andy put it to me seems to be part of the answer to the first two questions. Had I felt the cold breath of some ectoplasmic editor down my neck while writing the book I doubt I would've written the book I did. The question of whether I should've written the book I did I leave to posterity; but in my heart of hearts I know that I wrote the book I wanted to write and the sense of fulfillment I felt when I typed "The End" at the bottom of the last page of the final draft was the greatest personal reward I have ever gotten in my career as a writer.

Cred-it where credit is due, that beautiful moment I owe to Lawrence P. Ashmead. THE MEN IN THE JUNGLE was my second novel and the first I did under contract to Doubleday. I was not ready for the treatment I got on that book from Larry Ashmead and all through the writing of it I kept pinching myself to make sure Larry Ashmead was real. Larry Ashmead was parsecs away from the kind of schlockmeister sf editor with whom sf writers so commonly deal. I realized that MEN IN THE JUNGLE was going to run over the standard 60,000 words. I timidly asked Larry whether I might not have 75,000 words. Larry replied that I might have all the space I required but please would I keep it under 100,000 words. Explicit sex scenes were required for certain plot reasons, and before I wrote each one I self-consciously asked Larry if I could do that in a Doubleday sf book. Each time the answer was "why not?"

It took a long time for me to realize what Larry was trying to tell me -- because it's just not the kind of editorial advice you get very often in the sf field. Larry was telling me to wail, do my thing, worry about artistic problems and forget about editorial problems, write the book I wanted

to write the way I wanted to write it. All along, I secretly anticipated trouble; it was just too good to be true. But lo! when I turned in the final draft of MEN IN THE JUNGLE there were no problems. I had learned something every serious writer has to learn -- tell it like it is (or like you think it is) and not how your editor will want it to be. And I had learned the lesson from an editor who obviously was as concerned with the book as with the buck.

So naturally, I wanted to reward Larry Ashmead with the best book I had it in me at that time to write. I had been carrying the basic story of BUG JACK BARRON (untitled) around in my head for years. So when I went to New York for the 1966 Milford Conference, I had lunch with Larry and verbally outlined to him the book (still untitled) that I wanted to write. Basically, it was the story of a power conflict in the US of the 1930's between a television star who had achieved a strange kind of political power, and a paranoid multi-millionaire who had accumulated vast economic, social and political power through a monopoly on cryogenic freezing and the promise of immortality. I had optimistically hoped that Larry would give me the go-ahead on the usual portion and outline and that when I had written that, I would get a contract to complete the book. I was utterly astounded when Larry offered me a contract over dessert.

I went back to Los Angeles with a glorious sense of freedom; I had a contract for the book from an editor who had given me my head and who I knew, from my previous experience, was a man as concerned with artistic integrity and quality as with mundane packaging considerations, a man with whom I had done a book which broke many of the restrictions I had been accustomed to thinking of as surrounding the sf novel. If I could not write my book under these ideal conditions, I could not write it at all.

But I sat before a typewriter for a whole week unable to write a word. I had a story, but I had no title and, strange as it seems, I could not get into the book until I had a title which would coalesce the material into a gestalt within my mind. Finally, after much agony, it all came to me in a flash. What should be the name of the television show in the book? Well, the format consisted of people with problems bugging my main character, Jack Barron, and Barron then bugging the power structure on their behalf. So the show could be called something like...Bug Jack Barron...

Click! Those three words broke the logjam. Sure, the title of the show had to be the title of the book: BUG JACK BARRON. And wasn't that what the book was about in a largersense too -- a constellation of personal and social forces bugging Barron, a man who had sold himself out, till he is finally forced into reaffirming the idealism of his youth.

As soon as I had those three words on paper, I began writing the first chapter, flat out, and it all poured forth without a single block till seven months later when I had completed the book.

From the opening chapter, the book wrote itself. Everything grew out of the imperatives of the material. I soon realized that a major part of the book dealt with the dual nature of the reality of television: the reality experienced by the performer in the act of creating an artificial reality and the reality experienced by the viewer via the phosphor-dot pattern of the television screen. I had just finished reading McLuhan's UNDERSTANDING MEDIA and it seemed to me that McLuhan had posed a problem

for the writer of prose that had peculiar relevance to BUG JACK BARRON. Television is experienced directly by the senses of the viewer whereas prose is experienced second hand, mediated by that complex of memory, subjectivity, hopes, fears, drives and expectations that we call the mind. How then was I to give my readers the direct experience of television-reality, limited as I was to prose? It needed a total rethinking of the nature of the reading experience. It dawned on me that a novel had its reality not as ink on paper but as a series of experiences in the mind of the reader created by those abstract marks on paper. So the book had to be written inside-out; I had to imagine what I wanted to happen inside the reader's mind, then make the marks on paper that would to the best of my ability cause the reader's internal vision to correspond to my own.

Thus, conventional considerations of grammar and punctuation were irrelevant. "Correctness" didn't count. Even "consistency" didn't count. I developed my own system of punctuation, using the various punctuation marks as "musical notation", as a means for controlling the rhythm with which the prose was read. A grammarian would consider my punctuation "incorrect" and even "grammatically alogical". Only a musician might grasp the logic of my seeming inconsistency. But it seemed to work in the only way that counted -- the reader would experience the reality of the novel in the rhythm I intended.

Further, by controlling the rhythm, the relative speeds at which the reader read various passages, I could actually make use of subliminal effects. Using punctuation to make a reader read a particular paragraph at breakneck speed, I could get him to read faster than he could absorb so that when a period and a paragraph-ending brought him up short, the stuff that he had absorbed piled up in layers in his mind, and he could experience simultaneously (as in the visual media) events and emotions that prose must portray linearly.

So too did the content of the book unfold the demands of its development. The existence of a show like Bug Jack Barron would inevitably have complex political ramifications; it became necessary to extrapolate the politics of the 1980's. Living in three realities -- everyday flesh and blood reality, the reality projected by the cathode-ray tube, and the reality of being the conscious manipulator of "television reality" -- would have complex effects on the psychological reality of Jack Barron. It became necessary to delve deeply into the sexual and emotional psychology of my character. The conflict between Barron's New Left past and his "show-biz" present required that I touch upon the deeper nature of "show-biz" and the New Left.

One thing led inevitably to another, and when I was finished I had written a 100,000 word novel that, while hewing closely to the original storyline, had expanded both inward and outward, to become an attempt to integrate the political, scientific and social reality of the 1980's with the most internal and subjective wellsprings of my characters' psyches.

Which of course is nothing revolutionary but merely what every serious writer tries to do. But the application of this commitment to a science fiction novel resulted in several things that would, in the sf context (and only in the sf context) cause certain eyebrows to be raised.

There were explicit sex scenes -- because Barron's involvement with

television and politics was complexly bound up in his feelings about his estranged wife. He saw her face in every woman he made love to (and chose the faces accordingly) and there was only one way to develop this theme.

There was free use of four-letter words. I use the word "free" precisely. I tried to give the reader the experience of being my characters, getting all the way inside their heads. Since they were the kind of people who would naturally use obscenities, at least in the privacy of their own minds, the words had to be on paper if I was to tell it the way it was.

From the viewpoint of conventional grammarians, the prose and punctuation was "inconsistent" for the reasons outlined above.

But when I typed "The End", I was confident that I had pulled it off. It wasn't a perfect book, but the prose and the style had built-in redundancy, back-up systems, so that the whole did not have to stand on the perfection of any one of the parts. It was a frankly experimental book -- the important thing was whether it worked, not whether it worked perfectly.

I was particularly elated that I had written a book I was proud of for Larry Ashmead. Selfishly, I knew that Larry would bring to this unconventional book a greater sensitivity and perceptivity than I could expect from most other sf editors. I had a perhaps somewhat naive certainty that he would dig it.

And I felt that I had given Larry a bonus, a book better than I had sold him. I was glad to be able to reward him for the faith he had shown in me. For despite subsequent events, BUG JACK BARRON would not have been the book it was without Larry Ashmead. I had come to him as a writer who had blithely added 10,000 words and changed the name of my lead character in my first novel on the demand of a paperback editor, and he had helped liberate me from the hack mentality to the point where my only thought in writing BUG JACK BARRON was to follow the imperatives of the book where they led me and damn the torpedoes. For this, I would always be indebted to Larry Ashmead. When I sent off the manuscript, I kept the first page behind, feeling that it would be improper to send it along until the formalities were concluded and the manuscript accepted. I didn't want to put Larry in a peculiar position.

For, ironically as events were to prove, that first page read:

"Dedicated to:

LAWRENCE P. ASHMEAD

Prince Of Editors".

So it really blew my mind when Larry Ashmead rejected the book. It would be pointless to try to enumerate the changes my feelings went through; better to sum up the place I came to after I had spoken to Larry months later, in New York, after the Milford Conference had put together the pieces of my shattered self-confidence.

Larry Ashmead loathed the book, there was no escaping the fact. He hadn't understood what I was trying to do; he was as certain and sincere in

his subjective opinion that it was a bad book as I was in mine that it was a good book. Neither of us would ever convince the other. I was (and am) certain that he made a serious mistake. Larry's rejection of BUG JACK BARRON was to result in a year of frustration and writing block for me and I would be less than honest if I did not admit that I felt hurt and confused and more than a little resentful. Because of what I still consider Larry's honest error, I had an unsold book on my hands, a book that I considered a quantum-jump upwards for me.

And yet, I had to acknowledge the fact that if it hadn't been for Larry Ashmead, that book would never have been written. It is still difficult for me to come to terms with this paradox. I owe Larry Ashmead the book as it was written, and from my point of view, that is a heavy freight of gratitude. But Larry-rejected the book he had enabled me to write. Every boost of the book has, by the inescapable dynamics of the situation, become an indirect rebuke to Larry for rejecting it. That is the exact opposite of what I had intended when I wrote that dedication page. If the book is a good one, Larry deserves as much credit for enabling it to be written as he does deprecation for not publishing it. Two things seem to be involved: taste and judgment. One cannot argue with a man's taste; if he doesn't like a book, you can't convince him that he does. Judgment is another matter. Larry judged the book to be "unpublishable" in its original form as far as he was concerned. Subsequent events would seem to have proven this judgment to be questionable. The book was serialized in New Worlds and taken by Avon Books with aspecific provision in the contract that it would be published in its original form. So, objectively, an error in judgment on Larry's part. And a disagreement in taste between Larry and myself. But although this particular decision of Larry Ashmead's cost me dearly, and although it would seem to be an error, I still believe that he is one of the finest editors in the sf field, one whose serious intent elicits from writers their best books, and a man of integrity. To complete the paradox, BUG JACK BARRON, though he did reject it, stands as a tribute to the sense of artistic freedom he instills in his writers.

Nevertheless, his rejection of the book did leave me in terra incognita. I had an unsold sf novel which had been rejected by what I considered the most "liberal" house and the most open-minded editor in the sf field as unpublishable on their list. It seemed that my only alternative was to go for broke: major, mainstream, hardcover publication.

But after half a dozen rejections from major mainstream publishers, my self-confidence began to crack. I still believed in the book, but I felt a need for a wider body of opinion than Larry, myself, and cult notes from mainstream editors.

So I submitted the first 10,000 words of the book to the 1967 Milford Conference for criticism. In the state of incipient paranoia that I was approaching, I expected that the younger, hipper writers of the so-called New Wave would probably dis the book and that the "Old Thing" people would probably agree with Larry. I was crammed to the ears with "Generation Gap" garbage.

But I learned that there was no Generation Gap in science fiction. The book was understood. There was not one single objection to the four-letter words. Everyone there knew perfectly well why I had used them. It put the lie to all the whispers about how the "Milford Mafia" destroyed

young writers. I went into that session abysmally depressed, wondering if I would ever write science fiction again, and a dozen or so writers ranging in age from Jim Sallis to Jack Williamson gave me back my belief in myself and my work.

Milford gave me the confidence to go on for the next six months and finally place the book, its integrity intact, with Avon. Mike Moorcock dumbfounded me by running it in New Worlds. In my wildest dreams, I had never imagined that a book which was called "unpublishable" by a hardcover house could be published in a magazine!

But there was something greater than my own personal bowl of egghoo at Milford. For a realization seemed to coalesce among us at Milford, perhaps precipitated by BUG JACK BARRON as a supersaturated solution will suddenly solidify around a single added grain of solute. Any grain will do if the potentiality is there.

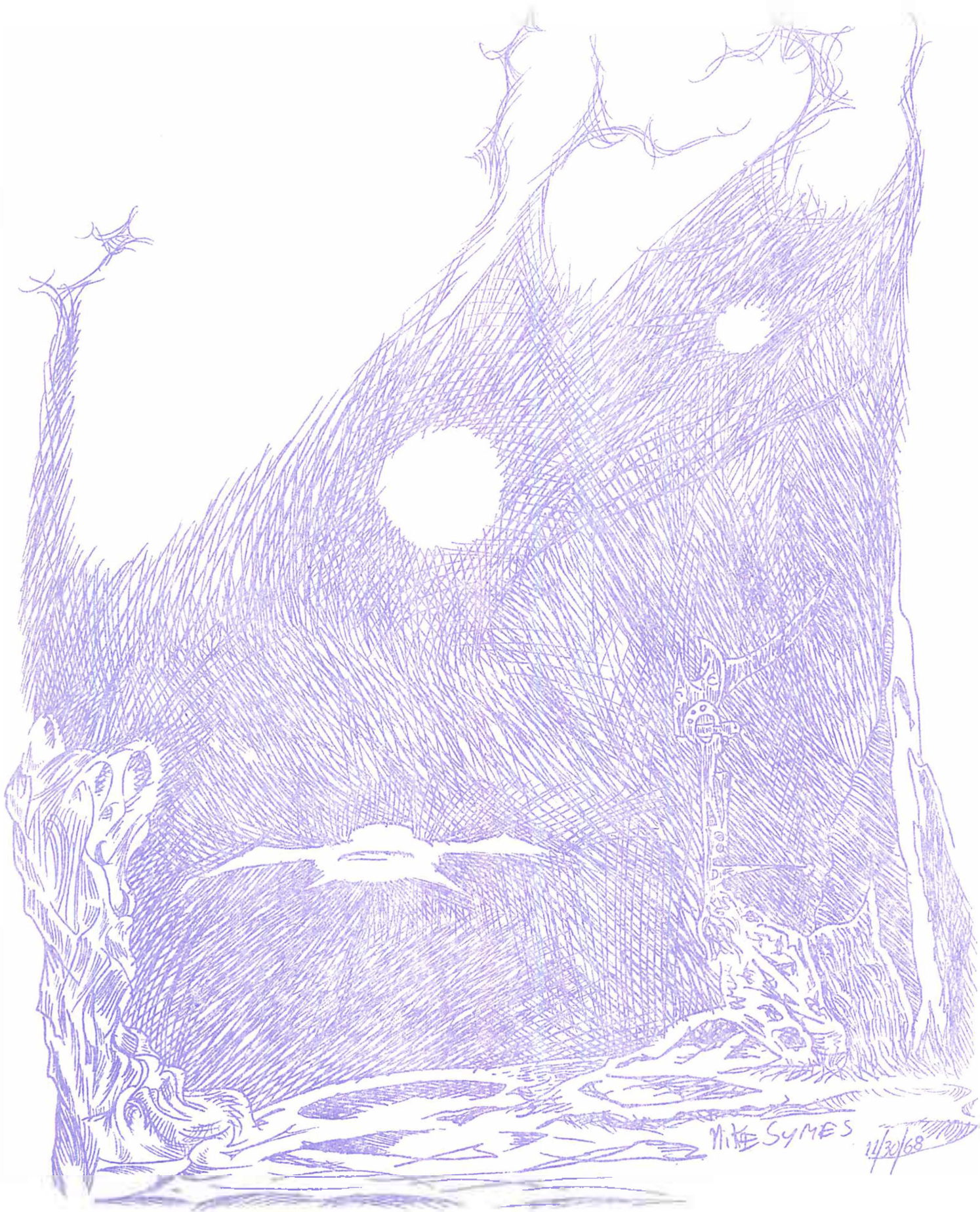
And it was. We came to the realization that we were not "science fiction writers" but writers who happened to choose science fiction as a form. There was more uniting us than dividing us. The New Wave was not a negation of what had gone before but a fulfillment, the next evolutionary step. There was no Generation Gap involved -- whatever your taste, isn't Phil Farmer's RIDEPS OF THE PURPLE WAGE one of the "youngest" pieces of sf around? And Phil is a grandpa.

No, the New Wave is not a revolution in what is being written or in who is writing it but in writers' attitudes toward their work. If you want to know whether a given writer is New Wave or not, ask him: "Do you consider yourself an artist?" If he says yes, he's New Wave. It's as simple as that. There are good artists and bad artists, good art and bad art, good New Wave and bad New Wave. And the tide is turning.

The New Wave is New Worlds risking its existence over preserving the integrity of BUG JACK BARRON...is Harlan Ellison losing money on DANGEROUS VISIONS...is Larry Niven lending money to DANGEROUS VISIONS to buy more stories...is Fritz Lieber suddenly topping the classics of his earlier work...is the British Arts Council saving New Worlds twice...is Larry Ashmead publishing CAMP CONCENTRATION...is a dozen writers contributing material free to New Worlds to keep it afloat...is William Burroughs quoting Henry Kuttner in THE TICKET THAT EXPLODED...is the kind of ORBITS you'll soon see from Damon Knight...is Mike Moorcock apologetically suggesting that a story would be improved if a single "and" were deleted...is Gene Roddenberry bucking the TV Establishment...is Robert Heinlein in Haight-Ashbury...is Avon Books publishing BUG JACK BARRON and THE FINAL PROGRAMME...is Dick Cels' new Psychotic...is the return of Chester Anderson...is R.A. Lafferty...is J.G. Ballard...is Brian Aldiss...is Harry Harrison's MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM!...is myself, Bob Bloch and Harlan Ellison on the Les Crane Show...is Piers Anthony taking seven years to write CMTION...is Ben Sweet's program of sf for young people on KPFK...is Baird Searles on WDAI...is college courses in science fiction as literature...

...is science fiction opening itself up to the world and the world opening itself up to science fiction.

--Norman Spinrad
Los Angeles, May 1968



LUPOFF'S BOOK WEEK

DICK LUPOFF

The Egyptians by Isaac Asimov, Houghton Mifflin, 1967, 256 pp., \$4.

While my back was turned Isaac Asimov started writing histories and, in typical Isaacial fashion has already run up a row of four of the things (the others treat Greece, Republican Rome, and Imperial Rome). Also, the jacket design and blurb-writing in the present volume manages rather well to conceal the fact that the book is intended for juvenile readers. Not tiny-tot, but maybe bright ten-year-olds or average twelve-year-olds.

I am far from the expert Egyptologist myself, but from Asimov's book I infer that virtually all modern histories of Egypt are based on surviving fragments of a king-list and history of the "thirty dynasties" written by the midaeval Egyptian priest Manetho. Perhaps because of the sparsity of contemporary documents, the Asimov leans heavily on dynastic successions, military expansions and contractions, conquests and invasions. The reader receives a fair picture of the military-political history of this ancient nation, and a picture of some of the greatest rulers and generals in history. One is struck by the number and ease of the conquests by which a series of foreign nations came to rule Egypt, and of the Chinese-like ability of Egypt to endure patiently until her conquerors either withdrew or were absorbed.

The overall impression given by the book is that of an almost Foundation-like superhistory, functioning over hundreds of generations, and scores of centuries.

The weakness of the book lies in its failure to provide a three-dimensional feel for the life of Egypt and the Egyptians... for the everyday life, in different eras, of Egyptians of different classes and professions. We are given hints but no satisfaction concerning the nature of the Egyptian economy, art, literature, religion, family structure, social organization, and so on. Of course the book is a history, and with 6000 years of history to get into one book (of over 250 pages) there is a question of how much "color" the author has room to include. Still, I would have settled willingly for a little less of who-succeeded-whom and which-army-won-which-battle, if I could have had this "color" in its place.

One point which Asimov fails to make clear, which I would like to have had explained, was the racial/ethnic background of the "original" Egyptians. The modern Egyptians are of course not the same people at all, but rather Arabs, that is, Semites, whose presence in Egypt is a relatively recent phenomenon. Who, then, were the original Egyptians -- who have now been absorbed into other peoples including the Arabs? Were they black Africans? (We always picture the Egyptians as caucasians.

but...?) enlightenment, an one?

Finally, Asimov gives a capsule coverage of Twentieth Century events in Egypt: the post-Ottoman royal restoration, Foad and Farouk, the British protectorate and German invasion in World War II, Nasser, the Dulles-Aswan-Soviet sequence, and the continuing friction with Israel. To treat the complex and momentous events of these times with the brevity and simplicity that they are subjected to here, I think does more harm than good. Since Asimov was unwilling to devote, say, an additional chapter of 20 pages, he might better have omitted the discussion and/or referred his readers to some good works on recent and current events.

Chocky by John Wyndham, Ballantine, 1968, 221 pp., 75¢.

Of the many literary traditions that have been adapted for treatment as science fiction, two of the least used are the soap opera and the English rural. In the former category Judith Merril's "Shadow On The Hearth" and Zenna Henderson's "The People" series come immediately to mind. If it can be squeezed into the parameters of the category, I suppose Daniel Keyes' "Flowers For Algernon" would have to be accorded honors as the supreme science fiction soap opera.

English rural is a less well-defined tradition, and just about unknown in science fiction (although one thinks of Agatha Christie in *That Other Field*) until L. P. Davies arrived on the scene. In English Rural ("E-R") the setting is a rustic village inhabited by the Vicar, the Doctor, the Young Man Up From London, the Attractive Young Girl, the Sharp Old Lady, and the Curmudgeon. A Stranger arrives on the scene. A crime is discovered. Thereafter nothing happens except the characters' visiting one another and chatting until the crime is solved.

This lengthy lead-in by way of announcing to anyone as yet unaware, that John Wyndham -- of all people! -- has written what I believe to be the world's first English rural science fiction soap opera. To combine the Soaper and the E-R is not as easy as you might imagine. The heart of soap opera is of course tragic emotion, great pathetic blivets of it, while in English rural novels everyone must act properly restrained and stiff-upper-lipish.

Still, Wyndham has done it with a fair degree of success. He has moved his setting to a rural-like suburb of London but otherwise taken a soap opera rather than an E-R cast. Dull English father (he's an accountant), Worried Wife with a large and meddlesome and repellant family. Wife seems unable to conceive a child despite medical examinations proving All Normal (all things medical, and especially gynecological, are Very Big in S-O).

So they adopt a child (no data on his background, thereby introducing the red-herring of all sorts of Unspecified Possibilities). Then Wife does conceive, etc.

Now what this story is all about (you wondered if I'd ever get to that? I wondered the same about Wyndham) is the time-honored First Contact theme. It's telepathic rather than physical, and only Certain Special People can receive the alien telepathic radiations. In fact, the sole contact point is Matthew, the adoptive child. Matthew knows that somebody is there (although he doesn't know who or what) but nobody believes him. ("David darling, you don't think our Matthew could be --" she hesitated and turned away, then in a hushed whisper "Mad!")

("Of course not, Mary, he's just a perfectly normal, healthy boy with a vigorous imagination." I leaned back, lit a cigarette nervously. "Still," said I, "I think I'll have old Doctor Frisbee have a look at Matthew, and if he can't handle

it I'll ask him for a referral to Sir William Drybones-Manderly on Harley Street.")

It takes Daddy 142 count-'em pages to realize and admit that "There's some sort of objective reality to Chocky." But that isn't enough for him, he continues dragging poor old Matthew to doctors while poor suffering Mary weeps and asks, "What does it all mean?" at irregular but brief intervals.

Finally the alien contacts Daddy through Matthew and tells him, in essence, "You've blown the whole thing, I'll find somebody else to work through next time! A wise decision! Chocky, what took you so long?"

The Square Root Of Man, by William Tenn, Ballantine Books, 1968, 251 pp., 75¢.

The Wooden Star, same data, 250 pp.

The Seven Sexes, same data, 236 pp.

The Human Angle, reprinted from 1956 edition, 152 pp.

Of All Possible Worlds, reprinted from 1955 edition, 159 pp.

To celebrate the publication of "Of Men And Monsters," the first novel of William Tenn (Philip Klass), Ballantine Books has seen fit to issue a uniform edition of what must be his complete works. In addition to the novel five volumes of short stories and novelettes are included, three first editions and two reissues, for a total in the six books of one novel, 43 shorter stories accumulated over a span of two decades, one minor article, and several introductions. It is an impressive bundle.

One wonders why Tenn. Not that he is undeserving, but there are so many men in the field who would seem more likely candidates for this treatment: Bradbury, Asimov, Anderson, Heinlein, Vance, Brackett, Elish, Knight. Some are simply too prolific. Others, I suppose, presented copyright complications or other problems. Well, that is as it may be.

The five volumes of short stories cover, as I mentioned, a period of more than twenty years -- from Tenn's first sale, 1946, up to the present. The stories range in quality from rather poor to really marvelous, with some of them falling at the right end of that range; and in approach, from all-stops-out, old-fashioned space opera through the Astounding "idea" school, the Galaxy sociological extrapolative school, to the modern men's magazine ultra with-it, hip kind of SF. There are also a number of pure and/or weird fantasies thrown in.

Rather than arranging the stories in order of original appearances, they are divided more-or-less by theme. One group deals with sex, another with war. I have a feeling that one ("The Square Root Of Man") was intended as a showcase for Tenn's own development as a writer, offering the wildest possible range in the age and tenor of stories. And two of the books are reissues. Perhaps this last is the crucial matter -- Ballantine didn't spend the money to set new type, and so these two volumes had to stand "as-is."

Well, I'll take the books in sequence by their Ballantine serial numbers. "The Square Root Of Man" comes first, and it contains nine short stories. "Alexander The Bait" from ASF, 1946, was Tenn's first published story. It's a typical Campbell story, and I can almost imagine young Klass reading a Campbell diatribe, or perhaps hearing one in person, on Why We Don't Have Space Travel. The idea is that the state of the art -- or arts -- in 1946 was such that we could have had space travel, pretty soon, if only somebody had put up the bucks. (Tenn has industry rather than government doing this.) Problem: to motivate big money boys to want space travel. To want it enough to pay for it. It's a neat, flippant, trivial story, an interesting introduction to Tenn.

"The Last Bounce" is from Fantastic Adventures, 1950. I have a feeling that it was written several years earlier and just took a long time finding a home, because it's actually the most old-fashioned of all Tenn's stories. It's pure old-fashioned space-opera, with the gallant spacemen kissing their gallant women goodbye and (literally) marching off, arm-in-arm, singing the Spaceman's Anthem as they go out to meet peril among the far-flung stars. It's all very bad, and very, very dated stuff, and worth reading only for historical perspective on Tenn.

"She Only Goes Out At Night" is a rather weak vampire story from Fantastic Universe (1956), but another story, "My Mother Was A Witch" (F&SF, 1966), is a pure gem of delight. Set against the author's Brooklyn immigrant background, the story stops just short of being a maudlin dialect piece. As it is, it's handled with complete control of characters, beautiful dialogue, finely balanced plot and pace. It's a delight.

"The Jester" (TWS, 1951) is a madcap, Kuttner-type tale of a super-robot running wild, banging its head on the floor to further addle its brains, etc. It's mildly amusing, but overdone. "Confusion Cargo" (Planet, 1947) is another space opera, better than "The Last Bounce", and "Venus Is A Man's World" (Galaxy, 1951) is about as close as that magazine ever got to space opera.

"Consulate" (TWS, 1948) is a typical "super aliens swooped down and told us we were being tested for the Galactic Federation" story, and pretty ignorable. Which leaves only "The Lemon-Green Spaghetti-Loud Dynamite Dribble Day" (Cavalier, 1967). This one is hardly a story at all -- just an idea, and it has to be carried by imagery and general quality of writing. Rationale: what if, as has been suggested, somebody laced the New York City water supply with enough LSD to turn on the whole city for a day? (It wouldn't take much.) Well, people wander around doing weird, psychedelic, tripped-out things. The story's narrator, along with a few others in the city, happens not to have touched a drop of water since the phenomenon began, so he sees it all with a normal eye. I wonder what the story would have come out as if the narrator, too, had his dose. Hmmm.

That's the book, the William Tenn showcase. It isn't an attempt to put the best stories in one volume, but rather to show where he started...how he developed...where he is now...and (maybe?) where he's going. I think it's the key volume of the five volumes of shorts, and I'll cover the others much more briefly. If you're interested in Tenn, though, but don't want to tackle the whole six books, take the novel "Of Men And Monsters" and "The Square Root Of Man" and you've got Tenn pretty well.

"The Wooden Star" is blurbed as a pacifist collection, and it, too, contains stories ranging from Tenn's earliest days well up into the '60's. The opener, "Generation Of Noah" (Suspense, 1951) is a classic grim warning-against-the-Bomb type story. I remember reading it at the time and being dully impressed. The story itself holds up -- it's as good as ever -- but somehow we've all got so accustomed to living with The Bomb that such stories don't hit us any more.

"Brooklyn Project" (Planet, 1948) as a gorgeous time-paradox story. It's another that I read many years ago, and it's one that stuck with me with great vividness. But I could have sworn that it was by Theodore Sturgeon. I mentioned that "The Jester" was Kuttner-esque. "Brooklyn Project" is like something out of Sturgeon. I could have sworn that Tenn's "Betelgeuse Bridge" was by Ross Rocklynne, and I was certain that Tenn's "The Flat-Eyed Monster" was by Robert Sheckley! Is it that Tenn every so often falls under the spell of another writer, and (perhaps unconsciously) writes a "Kuttner story," a "Sturgeon story"...or is this phenomenon purely in the

eye of the beholder? I'd like opinions...

Still in this volume, for instance, is "Eastward Ho!" (F&SF 1958) which I was certain was by Fritz Lieber! Anyway, it's an effective and ironic examination of what we did to the Amerind, cast in a future world in which the US is slowly deteriorating and being taken over by the resurgent Red Man. "Bettelgeuse Bridge" (Galaxy '51) is that little classic about the aliens who arrive and flim-flam mankind out of his wealth. In a way it's a rewrite of "Alexander The Bait," and a considerable improvement. Similarly, "The Deserter" (Star SF Stories '53) is a kind of distant reprise of "Generation Of Noah." And "Brooklyn Project" echoes in "It Ends With A Flicker."

On the whole "The Wooden Star" is probably better (although less widely representative) than "The Square Root Of Man."

"The Seven Sexes" is the last new book in the group, and concerns itself largely with inter- and intra-personal relationships. No space-wars here, no gigantic wide-screen action. Just people. The opener, "Child's Play" (ASF '47) is another enjoyable vintage piece in which child's "Bild-a-Man" kit from the future is accidentally delivered in the present. The result is a kind of "Four-Sided Triangle" situation, played for laughs and with a sharpened stinger in its tail. "The Malted-Milk Monster" (Galaxy '59) is a chilling, highly effective picture of the inside of the dream-world of a neurotic child. It's a humorous story with a terrifying horror-story conclusion. The rest of the stories in the book are rather minor, with "Venus And The Seven Sexes" (no magazine version) an interesting failure. Tenn tries a 7-way sex farce and it doesn't come off.

The remaining two volumes in the set are reissues of old books, and their contents are likely familiar by now. If not, they should not be missed, for this vintage Tenn includes many fine stories. I found myself remembering earlier appreciations of "Down Among The Dead Men" (a "Heinlein story"), "The Liberation Of Earth" (an anti-war fable), "Project Hush" (a little classic with a snapper ending), "The Discovery Of Morniel Mathaway" (another time-paradox), and others. You'll have your own favorites, of course.

I think that Ballantine Books has done a substantial service to science fiction readers by collecting and issuing these six books of William Tenn. As a writer he's always been well received and appreciated, but somehow never given the attention that these books should bring him.

The uniform packaging is attractive and the cover paintings are colorful and eye-catching, although they do not sustain detailed examination very well. I wonder, though, if the books don't look too much alike. Perhaps uniform design but greater variation in color would have made them more easily distinguishable. Well, too late for that now.

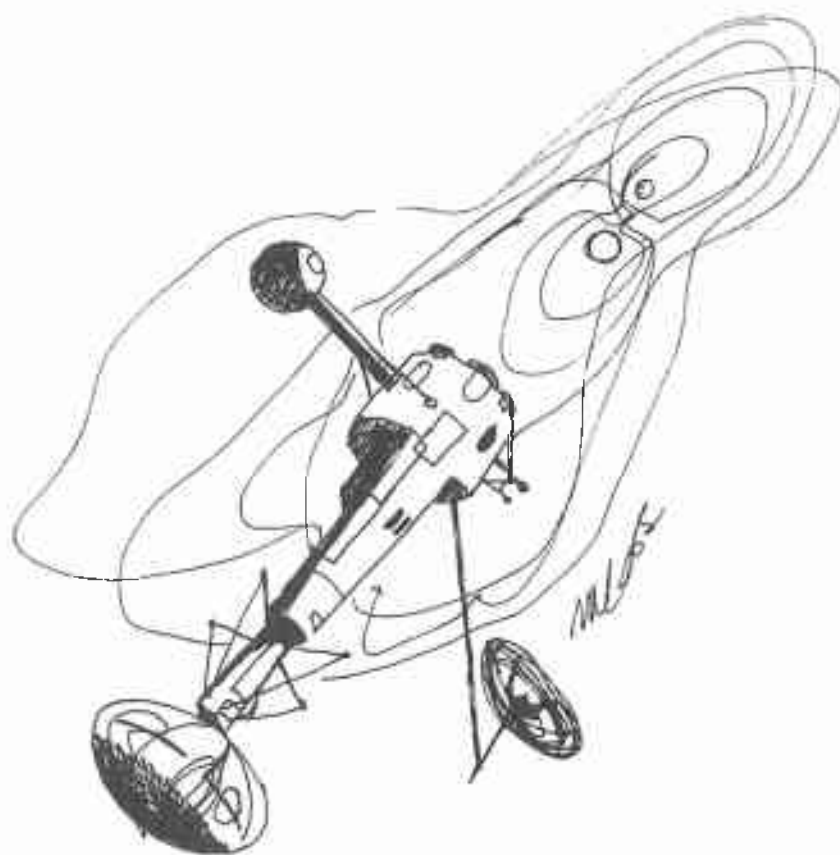
Again, an outstanding set. If you want a good gift set for, say, your young cousin whom you're trying to interest in science fiction, rather than the Lensmen series, I'd suggest these six by Tenn. With all due affection for the late Doc Smith and joyous remembrances of reading his works, Tenn far more effectively depicts the science fiction of the modern era.

In conclusion, I have one small question:

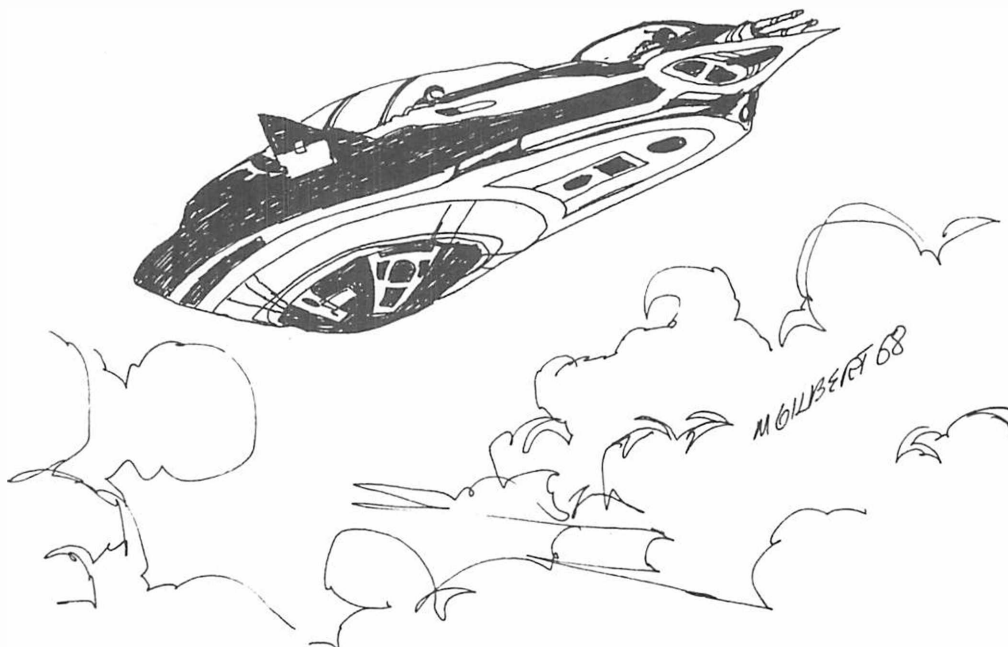
Where's "Firewater"?

Michael Gilbert:

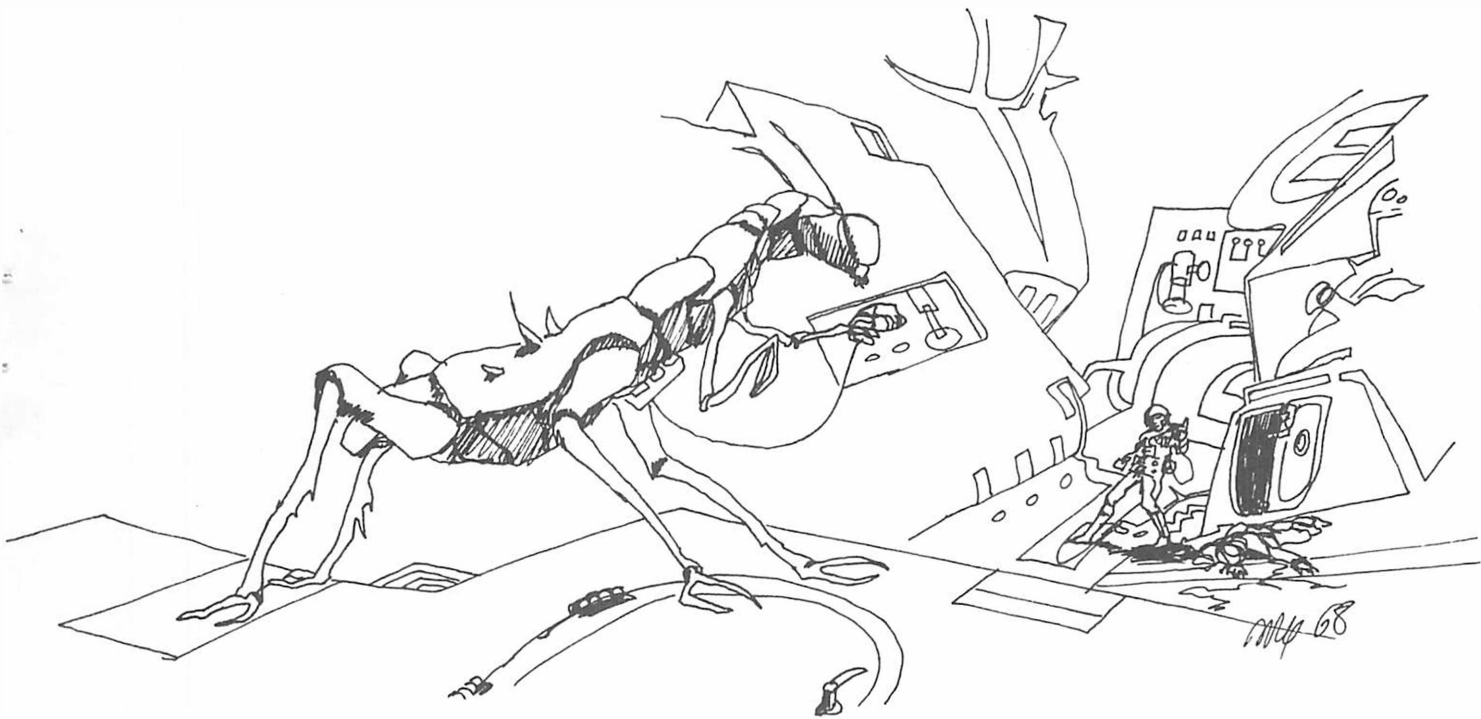
A Portfolio





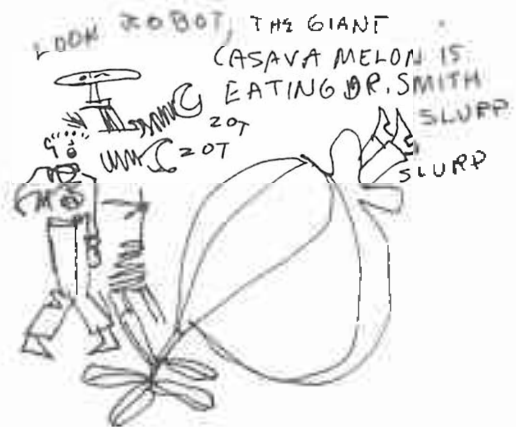
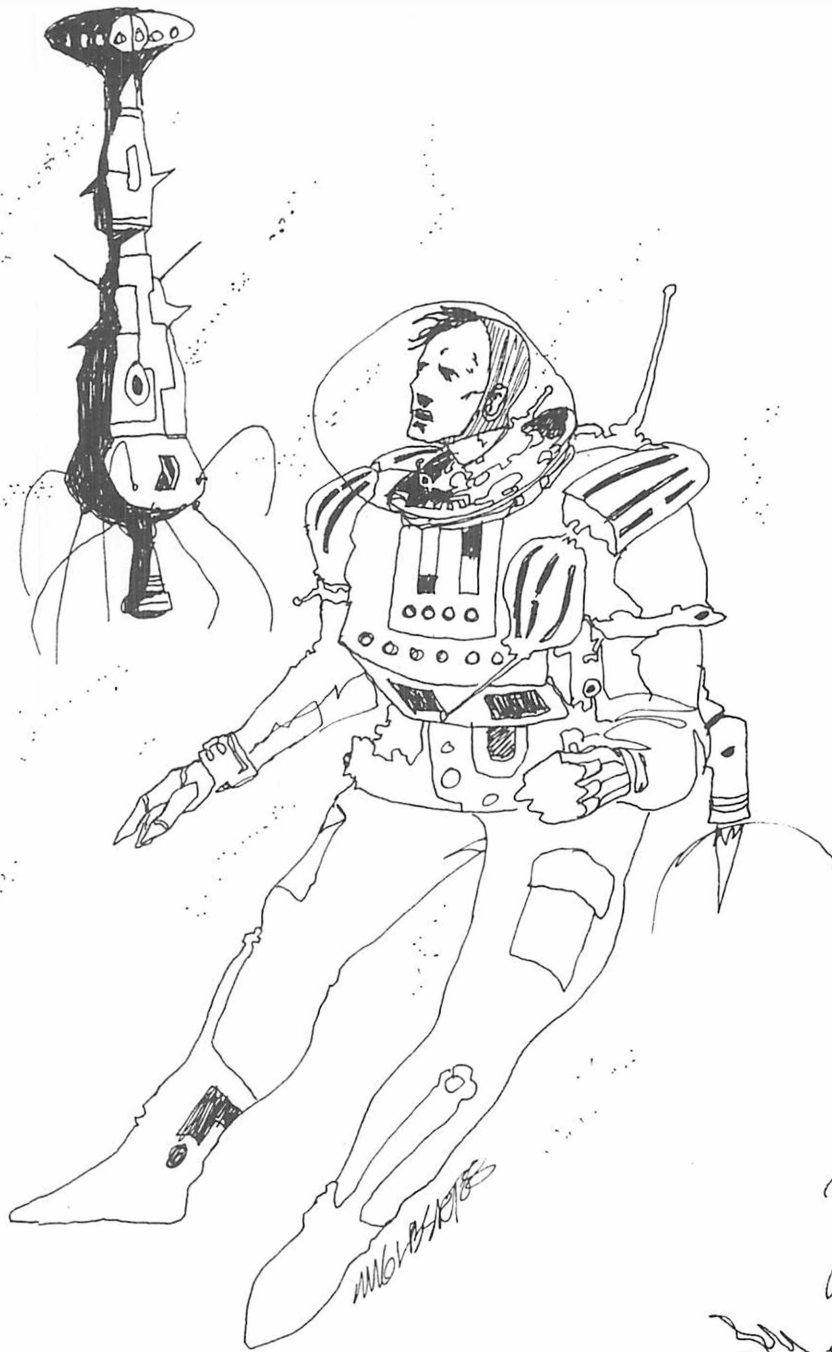


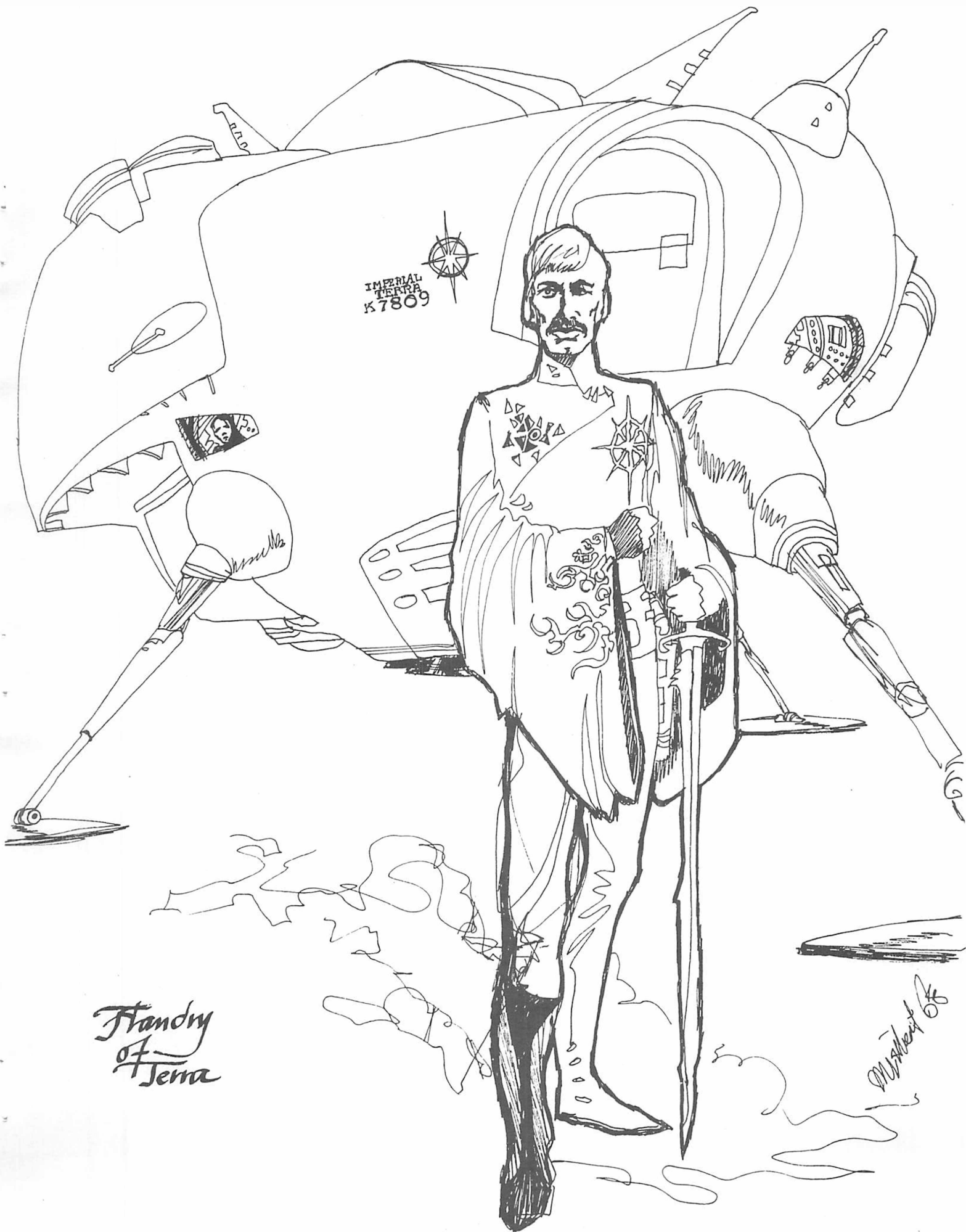












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FUTURE TENSE

Future issues of ALGOL will be produced by photo-offset. I've found that the process has reached the stage where it is less expensive to run 300 copies of a 40 page fan-zine by offset than to attempt to produce the same number of copies of a 50 page issue using the spirit duplicating process and 24 pound ditto paper, a very expensive commodity.

Artwork for future issues should be of two types: full page size ($7\frac{1}{2}$ " x 10"), or small, wide fillers ($7\frac{1}{2}$ " x up to 4" high). I intend to continue to keep away from the haphazard use of artwork throughout the contents. Rather, I plan to continue the theme of full page artwork, usually unrelated to the contents (artwork, not illustrations). I hope to couple this with filler-type artwork at the bottom of articles or, now, in headings. I'll be making extensive use of Press-Type for headings in the future (witness the contents page and editorial heading in this issue). There are a lot of things you can do with an effective type & illo heading.

Contents will, hopefully, be of the same high quality. Upcoming next issue is Dean R. Koontz's "Socking It To 'Em In SFVille" plus our genuine Long-Awaited International Markets report. I have one other article on hand, and will be printing some of the speeches from the 1969 New York Nebula Awards Banquet in the near future.

But I need more articles if I expand from publishing one to two or three an issue. I've had a few writers committed since as far back as 1965, and if the articles ever get written, I'll have a few more in my backlog. But I need articles that will hold up under re-reading after six months -- and those are the hardest kind to get.

The next issue will be published in July -- or so I hope. Although I'd like to keep to a quarterly schedule, I prefer publishing a good issue rather than a poor one that's simply on time. The deadline, then, for the next issue is June 15th -- but a letter of comment mailed a week or so afterward still stands a very good chance of being published in the summer issue.

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Algol is published quarterly by Andrew Porter, 55 Pineapple Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201, USA. It is available for letters of comment, contributions of articles or artwork, or for 60¢ per issue, five issues for \$2.50.

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SKETCH FOR TWO- PART INVENTION

SAMUEL R DELANY

These comments are from discussions on science fiction I have listened to this year:

"Science fiction is the only heroic fiction left. Mainstream fiction today is enanistic and defeatist. It posits that Man cannot change. Science fiction posits that Man can change."

"Mainstream fiction is like looking at a mirror. Science fiction is like looking through a door."

"Science fiction has liberated the content of language, the way Froust and Joyce liberated language itself."

These statements contain much truth. The reader who has always examined science fiction intelligently can go directly to it; but the reader who does not already take science fiction seriously is bewildered, or finds such comments pretentious. Writers, editors and readers have recently been demanding a critical vocabulary for science fiction that would bring it the dignity accorded mainstream work, yet no one has yet been able to define the relationship between the fields of writing which will yield this vocabulary.

A symphonic composer has the variation in timbre, dynamics, and color of the full orchestra. A composer of string quartets works with two violins, a viola and a cello. In amount and variety of sound, the string quartet is the more limited form. But the classical string quartet, like the symphony, is in four movements, lasts twenty to thirty minutes, and follows the symphony closely in structure. No musician could suggest that the quartet is a less valid form, cannot stand up to the same analysis, or is less abundant in musical and emotional material.

From the old days of Weird Tales, people have realized that there is too much in science fiction to dismiss it with "a fast-paced adventure story set in the near/far future." What in the last twenty years has demanded this finer criticism?

There are the stories and novels of Bester and Sturgeon, with such polished surfaces and bravura effects that our first reaction is, why analyse them at all?; they seem perfect. But later we discover the light from these tales is more than reflection from an effect carried off. It is internal, it lingers; we look back, look back again.

More recently there are the creations of Cordwainer Smith and J. G. Ballard. Often we finish their books and stories, moved or dazzled, but wondering what the intended effect was. We look back here; sometimes we find the technique is faulty, sometimes ill-conceived. More often both the effect and the methods to gain it lie where no writer in any field has touched before. The readers must learn.

Most recently we have writers like Disch and Zelazny. In whatever landscape they construct, they are concerned respectively with evil and beauty. Disch bludgeons the reader again and again with near-comic understated violences. Zelazny dazzles with a dozen voices that harmonize within the same work, paragraph, sentence. Both set their subjects ringing with overtones that define new octaves, octaves that cannot be reached in mainstream writing.

Yet very few people will write of these authors structure, verbal texture, technical and thematic development. Is it embarrassing to deal so analytically with such a limited form as science fiction?

String quartets began as light music. They were played while people ate, talked, wandered around the room, did everything but listen. They were turned out rapidly, in huge numbers, and provided a living for a competent musician. During this time most of the conventions developed that have stayed with the quartet till today.

The ornamental conventions (transportation, from rockets to matter-transmission; communication, from video-phones to telepathy; the psycho-physiological, from mutant to alien; the socio-economic inventions, from the totally invented world to the casual solar credit; as well as the miscellaneous time-machine, the after-the-bomb, or wonderful gadget story) of science fiction, as well as the more important convention of attitude are some of the things that limit science fiction. (And I do feel that it is a limited form.) However, a limiting convention can be artistically productive, and lead writer and reader to harmonies unplayable by other instruments, as well as resound with the sympathetic vibrations among the situations of everyday life that make art meaningful. The attitude of the science fiction writer, the most important convention, has nothing to do with "writing down" to the reader. It has to do with maintaining the clearest, most direct line between idea and dramatization. The science fiction writer must use everything he knows to be vivid and concise; evocative when description must color a story, moving when the heart must make the point, and precise when using technological examples. But the science fiction writer must use all this to construct one effect, one idea at a time. Several effects may harmonize to produce a story, many to produce a novel. But in the best science fiction each is developed in turn, linearly. The technical conventions, used properly, must facilitate this linear development.

"Dismiss the rocketships!" say many of the people seriously concerned with science fiction. But a rocketship is a shorthand way of saying, "This character is traveling between two points which, in the cultural spectrum we know, cannot be bridged by bus, boat, or plane." Roughly, this is what all the transportation conventions signify. What will make the story significant is what the writer

tells us about these cultural locations and the people who move between them; what makes the story a good one is how clearly he tells us. The description of the rocket itself may inform us about the world that produced it and the world where it will arrive. It may even tell us about the people aboard. But only as it tells us about worlds and men is it important. As it facilitates telling us, it is useful.

There is a frenzy among concerned critics to make science fiction resemble mainstream as much as possible in its conventions or lack of them. This is to blur the excellence that made it a separate form. We must analyze what is there; then, demand change. The analytical method to the significance of artistic statement is the same whether the statement is musical, graphic, or literary. It is a dissection of form, a consideration of balance. The elements of the statement must be isolated; then the pattern in which they combine must be defined. The vocabulary comes from the exigencies of the medium in which the statement is made.

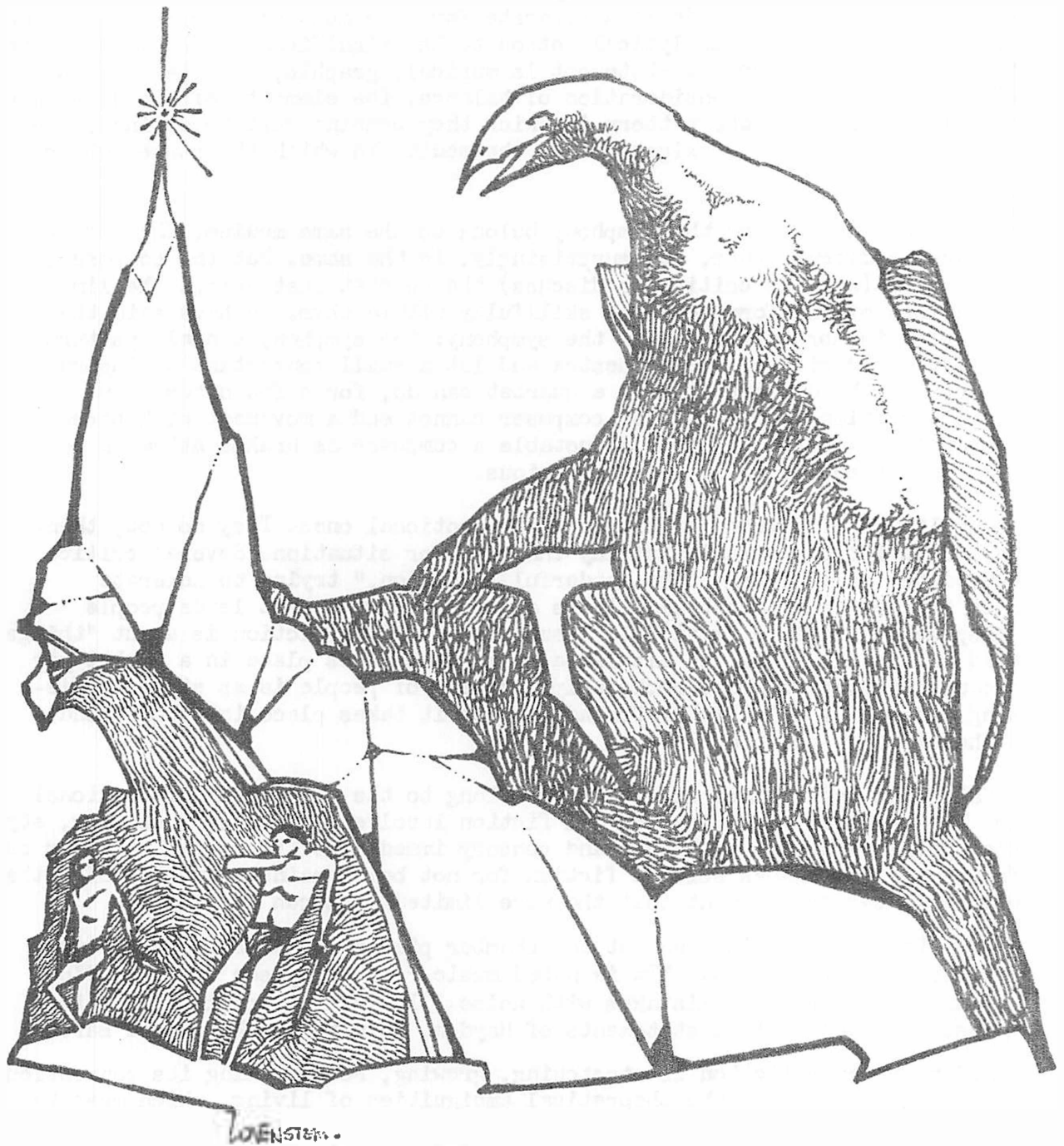
The quartet and the symphony belong to the same medium. The vocabulary to discuss them, not surprisingly, is the same. But the composer, to write (and the critic, to discuss) the quartet must accept the limitations of the form and work skillfully within them. We have said the quartet is more limited than the symphony: the symphony can always turn off the majority of the orchestra and let a small concertant of instruments do the delicate things a quartet can do, for a few notes or a whole section. But a quartet composer cannot end a movement with three crashing chords. When even so notable a composer as Brahms attempts to do so, it sounds silly and pretentious.

The limits of science fiction are not emotional ones. They do not, themselves, restrict the humanity of any character or situation. Several critics have used the special term "The Wonderful Invention," trying to separate science fiction from mainstream. It is a useful term, but it leads people ill-disposed to science fiction to assume that science fiction is about "things" instead of "people." Now, to dismiss a story that takes place in a rocket per se because it must be about rocketships instead of people is as silly as dismissing a novel of Melville or Conrad because it takes place in a boat, and must therefore be about boats.

Mainstream and science fiction both belong to the medium of fictional prose. The critical vocabulary of all fiction involves characters, setting, style, psychological veracity, emotional and sensory immediacy. The critic, amateur or professional, who blames science fiction for not being mainstream will miss the beauty of linear development that the more limited work can display.

Today the string quartet and chamber pieces in general are the composers' proving ground. "It is naked music," one composer told me. "You cannot disguise your mistakes with noise." It is the repository for the most profound musical statements of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Bartok.

Modern science fiction is stretching, growing, re-examining its conventions. It is trying to approach the theoretical ambiguities of living, which must be solved before the practical ambiguities can be dealt with in mainstream fiction. We are now nearing a point where we can judge science fiction's best opening attempts a success. If it will go on to higher excellences -- that is left to the writers to write, and to the reader to demand.



MY COLUMN

TED WHITE

Guess Who I Saw On TV The Other Night? I had been debating watching the program. It was titled, "If You're Appaled By My Texas, I'm Bewildered by Your England." It promised to contrast England and Texas all in sixty minutes, minus time out for commercials. It was a CBS Reports program, on Tuesday evening, March 28th, 1967.

I tuned it in largely because of boredom -- or, to be more accurate, boredom with every other excuse I had for not writing the book I was supposed to be working on.

It wasn't a bad program in many details, but the idea -- a Texan reporting on England, an Englishman reporting on Texas -- demanded at least twice the time it received, and most of the reportage was necessarily skimpy. Oh, sure, it was nice to see that in London the miniskirts were as short as shorts were, here, a few years ago. And I enjoyed some of the wilder Texas scenery. I was reminded at many moments by the film footage of the times I've driven through Texas, and of my week in London.

But the comparison was superficial and without any justified conclusions. The differing educational systems were both attacked, but without rebuttal or defense. (I writhed to tell the priggish Englishman -- Dimbleby, no less! -- that Texans were not compelled to attend the mass-production Texas universities, and that the brighter ones undoubtedly didn't.) Vague comments were made on class. Both reporters seemed to feel that traditional British class structures -- the enemies of growth in that country -- were perhaps breaking down a bit, especially in the younger generation, but the English reporter appeared fascinated and charmed by the evidences of class structure he found in Texas. The Texan was convinced that the new, Mod generation in England is apathetic and without social conscience or concern -- he passed over without comment the fact that this generation is predominantly lower-class and breaking out of its class-barriers to sample middle-upper-class pleasures and pursuits -- a situation quite unlike the New Bohemia of America's Mod generation, which is striving downward from the comfortable affluence of the upper-middle-class, and away from the dollar-orientation.

Dimbleby missed this entirely, of course, and not surprisingly, since the

picnicals, and we planned to work up an appetite paddling up to that point, eat, and then go further upstream until tired of the whole thing -- whereupon we would turn and make our way back downstream to the canoe's owner and the car.

The first part went off without a hitch. I discovered that this paddling was harder than I remembered, and John proved once again that he is a deceptively excellent sportsman on or in the water. John did most of the work, paddling upstream.

Once docked, John disappeared into the woods and reappeared in swim trunks. We'd brought our suits as well, but the day was a cool one (not over 70) and we decided against swimming. John disported himself porpoise-like for a short spell, surprising a canoe-load of girls who rounded the bend heading downstream, and then we set about eating. I fixed up a fire (no paper, one match), and we unloaded the goodies: hotdogs, potatoe salad, olives, pickles, a bean salad Robin had made (which turned out to be much better'n the boughten salad), RC's and a half-gallon of A&W rootbeer. I kidded John about eating three hotdogs, and then surprised myself by eating four. It was a pleasant, liesurely meal.

After a spell of sitting and digesting, we struck out once more in the canoe, this time with Robin up front and me in the middle. We rounded bend after bend -- there are few straight spots in the stream -- passing by trees which angled out over the water, and some of which even grew out of the water near the banks. Overhead all was green and spotted gold from the westerly sun. Every so often we would pass a house; the stream is actually privately owned by the house-owners in the area.

At one point a tree had fallen over the stream, offering perhaps two feet clearance above the water. We barely managed to duck under it. And that was perhaps our undoing. Not more than four bends further upstream, suddenly and without warning, we capsized.

One moment I was feeling very happy, contented (and pleased not to be paddling) -- and the next I was watching almost as a detached spectator as the boat tipped to the right, turning under me, pitching me out. Then I was standing shoulder deep in the water, and frantically pulling myself up the bank before my pockets with their contents should be soaked beyond saving.

We were all thoroughly soaked. We couldn't help laughing at ourselves, but we were also cold -- the sun was settling lower in the west and a breeze had come up. Robin already had a cold. We emptied and righted the canoe, and squished our way back into it. I took the bow, and we hurried back downstream to the site of our picnic. The going was much easier, but I wasn't in the proper mood to fully appreciate it. My hands, for some reason, were quite chilled.

As soon as we got back there, we rekindled the fire ("Lucky the matches didn't get wet," John said. "They were in my breast pocket.") and began warming ourselves up and drying our clothes out. The sun was getting pretty low now, and after John had gotten most of the damp out of his clothes (and a good quantity of smoke into them), he took the canoe downstream. It would be dark soon, and that would make the stream impossible to navigate. He would pick up the car and bring it back with him.

It was completely dark, and our clothes still felt damp, when the lights of my car poked their way into the clearing. "I just barely got there in time," John said. "I really pushed it along. Several times I was sure I'd missed the shortcut, and the last five minutes, there, it was pretty close to dark."

"Did you tell them about our spill?" I asked.

John smiled. He'd lived with these people off and on all his life. He'd grown up canoeing. "No. I told them we'd gone up to the bridge and then turned around and come back." He laughed. And so did we.

-- Ted White, 1965



Stiles

RANDOM FACTORS

THE READERS

Harry Warner, Jr.
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The cover is a stunner, in the best sense of that word. The beckoning gesture of the figure on the left is the perfect fillip. You wonder at first glance if you're unnecessarily scared of a scene that the artist intended humorously or impartially, and then you see that index finger and you realize that you were right after all, because that's obviously the prelude to some very evil intention. Who was it that first proposed a listing of the whereabouts of original professional artwork? There's obviously quite a job ahead for those Powers cover originals. One of the few items of professional fantasy art that I've ever wanted badly is the cover for the Ballantine edition of Clarke's Tales From The White Hart, but I imagine that a lot of those other covers must be enormously impressive in larger dimensions.

{{ It's funny you should mention that specific cover. At last year's LunaCon, at which Powers had a show and sale of some of his covers, Arthur C. Clarke was also in attendance. The cover you mention was up for sale. When I asked Clarke whether he would be interested in buying some of the original covers from his books he rushed into Powers' room, met Powers for the first time, and bought the White Hart painting on the spot. It seems it had always been the favorite of all the covers that decorated all his books..

I myself am the proud owner of -- at the moment -- 11 cover paintings, of which 8 are Powers. They are, if you're interested, from The People Maker (Knight); Not This August (Kornbluth); Fury (Kuttner); The Tide Went Out (Maine); The Star Of Life (Hamilton); an unknown (I think from a Berkley anthology); Dark Dominion (Duncan -- also used as the cover of Clarke's The Challenge Of The Spaceship); and The View From The Stars (Miller). Other covers are available, I'm sure, for sale.}}

Will we ever learn the truth about how much cutting has occurred on the older science fiction classics? It wouldn't necessarily help to compare the Giesy novels in their Avalon and pulp magazine appearances, because editors chopped manuscripts even in the idyllic Munsey magazine era, before putting them in print, and I suppose that Giesy might even have been forced to do his own cutting while writing, on instructions from an editor on how much space he'd give to this particular novel. I did a small amount of comparing book versions with Famous Fantastic Mysteries and Fantastic Novels appearances, years ago, and found an objectionable amount of stupid nibbling, in addition to some large cuts. Some of the changes were obviously the result of sheer ignorance on the part of Gnaedinger or one of her assistants, like a reference to the City of London in book form that had been changed to city of London in the magazine. In Three Go Back, the stranded men and women weren't

Even allowed to huddle together for warmth while they slept, in the magazine version.

I found the Ashmead talk surprising for the sales figures it lists about hardcovers. I hadn't realized they were quite that low. If you allow for the big libraries that buy virtually all new fiction and the small libraries that buy part of all new fiction, over-the-counter sales must be pitifully small. Eventually, I suppose, the hardcover book will be abandoned in favor of original appearance in paperback with hardcover editions later for those rare titles that seem destined to continue to sell steadily for years. That would be the most logical way to do it, anyway; permanence is the only virtue of the hardcover book, and that attribute shouldn't be wasted on novels that only ardent collectors will want to preserve.

George Locke's story was fascinating. I was scared that he was writing just another of those routine, formula narratives where man makes pact, man figures a way to cheat on the pact, and man either wins or loses. There is a real story here, complete with some developments and a great deal of inadvertent nostalgia for an older, happier era in British fandom. How could anyone think of a lot of British fanzines today to namedrop so impressively?

I share your suspicion that most fans read more science fiction than they admit. I'm one of them, except for an odd circumstance. Almost all of my reading involves older books and magazines. I'm trying to catch up after a lengthy period during which I really didn't read much science fiction, and I'm even further back on professional stuff than on loecing prozines. So I find it a trifle hard to strike up conversations with some one who has not just completed reading for the first time Man Of Many Minds, for example, or Fawns Of Null-A.

Almost all of the artwork is at a level between fine and superlative. If I have a favorite, it's the back cover, I suppose. This is what I consider an inspired variation on an ancient theme.

Jerry Lapidus
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A national con has major points in its favor and major points against it. I'll wager that a good national con, one with "most of the traditions that the worldcon now possesses," would keep a good number of fans from attending that year's real worldcon. When you get over 1000 people at the last two worldcons (and no sign of any letup), you can pretty well assume that there are enough fans around to get together and charter a couple of planes (and it's not that expensive with a fully-chartered plane) and jaunt off to Germany or wherever. How many of these would change their minds if there was going to be the identical thing (except for Hugos) 200 miles away? On the other side, of course, there are the large numbers of American fen who simply can't afford the worldcon; must they miss it entirely? Well, not really, because there are numerous regional conventions in this country, several of which have many of the same things as the worldcon. I feel that with the swift emergence of large-scale foreign fandom, the rotation plan will soon have to be changed again -- this time to allow for a foreign con once every three years, or even once every two. When and if this becomes a reality, perhaps then we could consider a national con. I don't think we need to or should until then.

44 think we should consider the problems that a national con would create now, instead of waiting until the problem is forced upon us. If we wait too long, the situation will be reality -- and we'll be completely unprepared for it.))

John Foyster
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To some extent your fanzine joins with others in reeking of professionalism, and I am not suggesting this in a complimentary way. It came to me yesterday as I was musing on *Algol* and favourably comparing the movie I was watching (*Invasion Of The Neptune Men*, 1963) with a couple of the Hugo-nominated episodes of *Star Trek* that there must be a reason for the sudden decline in the critical faculties of SF fans. And *Algol* presented the answer.

More than ever before it is now the case that science fiction writers are working the fanzines to flog their properties: the articles by Piers Anthony and Anne McCaffrey, evaluated realistically, are simply advertisements, are they not? This sort of explanation, which in many cases (and I'm not pointing to Anthony and McCaffrey in particular, but to the phenomenon as a whole) is flagrant advertising, is just not indulged in in other fields -- with a few exceptions (like Norman Mailer, who is a trifle more honest about it).

The effect seems quite clear. Science fiction fans are taking the view that because Snurdley & Co. are explaining how serious they are, how much work has gone into their latest short-short, this much (self-) acclaimed product must have more content than the stories of authors who have not so indulged. It may be the case that Snurdley's stories are better, but wishing (and flogging yourself in a fanzine) does not make it so. The thought crosses my mind, ever so briefly, that probably the best authors are too busy working to have to write puffs.

Now Piers Anthony knows, I am quite sure, that all the guff printed on pages 9 to 14 has absolutely nothing to do with whether *Chthon* was a good or a bad novel: explaining jokes destroys humor, and explaining art (?) destroys beauty, meaning, etc., etc. Of course the critic may have a bash at explaining a book (he has less to lose), but the author who describes his efforts at length in the public prints has, I think, resigned from the area within which his work may be taken seriously. Anne McCaffrey's piece is pretty talk, interesting background, but nothing more -- apart from soft-sell.

What's more, flopping past the book reviews (I am in the middlingly comfortable situation of not having read any of the volumes reviewed) I stumble over Fred Pohl's whine about the responses he sometimes gets to rejection slips. And surely this does nothing more than embarrass the readers, who, if their temperament is anything like mine, gave a hearty sob at the thought of Fred Pohl being subjected to such outrageous barrages of nonsense that, stopping just a moment to fling the coin into the till, he fled off to the SFWA and poured out his heart (leaving him with none, of course). I have never received a rejection slip from Fred Pohl.

I'm glad that you used Sanger's cartoon: this shows the real Bangsund, as opposed to that fake Bangsund who publishes ASFR. I recall now that you listed me in the back of *Algol* as 'unmentioned', but there I am in *Nova Espresso*, and in just as many panels as anyone else. That I do not have a beard is a comment in itself, for I gave up wearing mine (a Harding model) about the same time as Harding's grew to maturity.

44 I think you misunderstand the basic reasoning behind the publishing of what you've read. Certainly the articles in this or any other issue, by any author,

can be construed as advertisements for themselves. However, so, too, can the records that a disc-jockey plays be construed as advertisements, and, for that matter, the books that Dick Lupoff reviews. Lupoff, after all, receives free copies of the books; why should he feel duty-bound to give them truthful reviews? And by printing your letter, I advertise that I am openminded about some topics, so perhaps you might contribute to the next issue.

The basis for what I hope to publish here is rather simple: in most cases, the worlds that an author creates in order to tell a story are left unexplained. The backgrounds for Burrough's Martian stories have been fully and carefully researched by devotees of Burroughs. There is, I feel, much more imagery and thought caught up in the background to Leigh Brackett's Mars stories; in Fritz Lieber's Gray Mouser tales; and in Heinlein's Future History than has ever been exposed to the light. It is this background that I feel can and should be illuminated, and what better guides do we have than the authors themselves?

And if Piers Anthony wants to explain how and why he wrote a particular book, then that too is interesting; learning more about the how and why of an author can hopefully tell us more about the author and his writing, and help us empathize with the author as well as his characters. Besides, what kind of fanzine did you expect from the Assistant Editor of F&SF??

George Fergus
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Piers Anthony's discussion of Chthon last issue simultaneously enlightened and disappointed me. When reading the novel, I appreciated the ingenious dual structure of the narrative but was unable to figure out a justification for it. Piers' revelation that all is told from the non-human viewpoint of the Chthon-entity (in whose mind the past and future are intertwined with the present) puts many of the strange aspects of the novel into proper perspective, but still leaves the parallelism seeming rather contrived for effect.

I fail completely to understand the reason why every pair of parallel sections in Chthon is time-reversed. In most of these, Aton is involved in an experience in one episode that causes him to have a strong reaction to similar events in the later episode. But because each pair is in temporally reversed order, one always reads of Aton's strange reactions before one discovers their psychological roots. This makes it all too easy for the reader to miss noticing the cause-and-effect relationship at all, and to assume that Aton is just another of those Van Vogtinn characters (from The World Of Null-A) who have no discernable reason for half the things they do.

The "present embraces the past and future" idea could have been preserved by reversing only the first and last of the 18 pairs of episodes. This would insure that the novel begins and ends in the present, and would also provide a first prison episode as a good narrative hook. The rest of the episodes should have remained in proper order so as to produce better reader understanding.

I feel that quite a bit of blame must go to Piers Anthony for creating unnecessary stumbling blocks in the path of author-reader understanding, although I don't see how any fan could have called the novel "unpublishable." Perhaps if fans tended to re-read a work several times in succession, as students of literature are supposed to do, then some of the important points in Chthon might have penetrated to them. Personally speaking, I've never met a book that I could bear to start over

again from the beginning right away. Instead, for books with internal feedback loops like Chthon that are difficult to understand with one linear reading, I've found myself madly flipping back to re-read portions of earlier chapters. (The last somewhat cryptically arranged book I can recall is Past Master, which I eventually gave up trying to coax much unity and coherence out of.)

Piers admits that he put "deliberately obscure passages" into Chthon. What he thinks this achieved is beyond me. Apparently he was just feeling contrary. I wish I could say that I appreciated all the elements he took such pains to include, but I found the irony tiresome and the Oedipal allusions and choice quotes pompous and unnecessary.

What disturbed me most about Piers' comments was his attitude that, stripped of its structure and symbolism, Chthon would be nothing but unappealing hackwork. Granted, the structure is one hell of an achievement, and a fantastic amount of concerted labor must have gone into it. But, from the average reader's viewpoint, the structure is a relatively minor part of the book's total worth. In fact, as I indicated above, the restrictive structure distinctly hurt the clarity of the book at several points in the narrative where the normal considerations of good development were overruled by the author's obsession with "overall artistic balance."

Piers also places a great deal of stress on the symbolism in Chthon. He apparently believes that people behave according to the literal meanings of their names. He probably also subscribes to the rest of the esoteric fancies of the literary establishment in word-symbolism: night means death, a star signifies hope, etc., etc. Personally, I find symbolism of this sort so divorced from what I see of reality that I cannot understand why otherwise rational authors endorse it. The symbolic hallucinations Aton experiences in sections Fourteen and Fifteen would be interesting only to a clinical psychologist or to someone who delights in malfunctions of the mind. In fact, most of the literary devices that mainstream authors have been using for the last several centuries seem to have been grabbed out of some never-neverland which has no relation either to the actuality of people's lives or to their aspirations. Why must authors concoct obscure allusions, contrived irony, and confusing allegory instead of coming out in a straightforward manner with what they want to say? Are they trying to put simple philosophical viewpoints in such obscure terms that the reader will think he has discovered something important and profound because he's worked hard to discover it? Something which has to be studied like an archeological find (and then, in many cases, still has to be interpreted by various "Authorities") is the work of some one playing games rather than trying to communicate ideas and feelings. I feel that almost all such "literary devices" hinder rather than help dramatic fiction, and I'm very glad that SF has so far been relatively free of them.

I am thankful that Piers Anthony has not succumbed to the rampant naturalism that's been invading SF in ever-increasing ripples via the "new wave." These "literateurs" seem determined to convince everyone that life is not worth living by inventing what Poul Anderson has called "more and more complicated ways to feel sorry for yourself." (Ballard was an early starter and has found more paths than anyone else in this headlong race to oblivion, but Berkely Books has discovered lots more catastrophe-worshipping authors in recent years.) Why are most "new wave" writers and their mainstream forbears so much more interested in a man's failures than in his achievements? What's wrong with having sensitive protagonists who are also fairly rational and competent? I'm not exactly sure what "sense of wonder" means, but it's supposed to be a prime ingredient for science fiction, and I doubt that these authors have it.

Ellison's "I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream" did succumb. It screams a lot without actually coming to grips with anything. I can hardly believe that modern society makes Harlan feel like a mouthless blob of jelly. I might suggest that he use his literary mouth to really get down to the "nitty-gritty." He might do well to write more realistic non-sf (like "Battle Without Banners") instead of composing such fantastic allegories of frustration. What good is a gut-wrencher if it's a cop-out?

Metaphors I don't mind, if they make sense. (Lots don't, as Alex Eisenstein pointed out last issue with respect to Roger Zelazny's work.) Zelazny's fire "flapping its bright wing against the night" is pretty, even if it doesn't contribute much to the dramatic worth of his fiction. Most of it seems to serve about the same function as costuming in a film. I'm fond of Zelazny's style for other reasons more directly concerned with the development of the tale than figures of speech. There is often a certain flamboyant but economical directness to his SF that highlights essentials of the work rather than digresses into description of scenery. The only time I can recall simile and metaphor being important to a story was in Budrys' The Amsirs And The Iron Thorn, which opens with some beautiful imagery that later reappears on the novel's final page to drive home a point. That book was curiously uneven, switching back and forth from adventure to philosophy, but I found it quite worthwhile in both respects. Incidentally, if you like unusual figures of speech, try "The Moon hung in the sky like an undescended testicle" from Brian Aldiss' Beacon Book The Male Response.

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Your "In Memoriam" page was the first many of us had heard of the death of Max Keasler, and added more sadness to the list. It was a hard time. It seems the loss of Ron Ellick has been the single saddest blow Fandom has ever felt. Undoubtedly because Ron was something special to each of us. This came through to me at the Rosery...we got there late and sat in the back...with a good view of heads. I started thinking of Ron in connection with each of the persons there...and realized to each there was some special and personal reason for missing him. Ron was liked by all, because he seemed to like everyone; but he was loved by those of us lucky to know him well, for the things we shared. And in the loss of Tony Boucher, we have lost the only truly urbane gentleman I've ever known.

Your cover, while impressive, is not my cup of Earl Gray...I don't care for the nightmare creatures of the cover -- and I have written to Geis just yesterday that I'm voting Vaughn Bode the most unpleasant new artist of the year. His firm, black/harsh lines may be simplistic style showing great talent, but I have already tired of it, and his one tracked mind. Rotsler and Atom have filled pages of fanzines with alien warriors -- and they are fierce, barbaric and splendid. Bode's are cold killers with an unpleasantness about them that makes me turn away -- and certainly never think of hanging them on my wall. From his writing, I assume it is a form of protest against too much violence -- but he thinks he may protest too much.

((Unfortunately, Bode has permanently left the sf field, primarily due to the influence of Galaxy publishing, which first used his covers and then suddenly dropping him with an explanation that they thought his artwork didn't "sell." I believe Bode's delineation of violence is an outlet for one who in person is remarkably non-violent. Too, the cold-blooded unhumanity of his creations merely highlight the cold-bloodedness of war, which can be neither fierce



nor splendid. Bodé's work is much more detailed in, for example, a set of ten children's books, which he illustrated with hundreds of black and white illustrations and 10 color plates in each. Knowledgeable people who have seen these books -- as have I -- say that they are examples of some of the most original innovation in children's illustration. But Bodé will not be doing any more in the sf field -- nor in the fanzines -- primarily because of Galaxy. It's not everyone who can claim to have told one of the most important new innovationist artists where to go.}}

I would agree with Ray Fisher that fans are idealist and Romantics. At least I figure I am, and so are most of the fans I have known well. SF as we know it was also idealistic and romantic -- you can throw in a big hunk of naive, too. Trouble is, in this world today it is might hard to be any of those...

When magazines were the main source of new stories it meant that everyone who was active in the field was reading the same stories at the same time. Even if you didn't feel like reading a particular issue at just that time, you felt you had to, so you could be "in." Now with so many paperbacks, and such poor distribution, a much smaller percentage of any fan group will be likely to have read any story under discussion. It is less interesting -- getting less response -- it doesn't remain "in" to be up on things, because no one can be. It's too bad -- things were simpler then. When I started in fandom it was estimated that there were maybe 200 Actifans in the country. There probably aren't many more than that by my definition now, i.e., Act-I-Fan: one who spends all his spare time on fanac -- but there are many times that number of regular fans, and it's hard being "in" with such a large In Group.

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Piers Anthony's Background of Chthon article left me rather limp. I really didn't like it at all. He says "I do not believe in obscure writing." I didn't particularly find Chthon obscure until I had read this article, and then I wondered if perhaps I had liked the book more than I ought (and I did like it). Mr. Anthony also seems rather unhappy that Sos The Rope didn't sell to Irwin Allen for motion picture production, though he has stated publicly that Sos is not what he considers one of his better works. He's quite entitled, I'm sure, to his own evaluations and opinions, but this article's excessive negativism and hard put-down of struggling readers was very annoying and rather cruel. Did you really mean to strike this chord, Mr. Anthony?

Had Joanna Russ opened her Picnic On Paradise with the extra length Dick Lupoff asks for, the slam-bang interest-catching beginning might easily have opened boring as well as graceful. Lupoff states that the characters are "skillfully handled", so why the emphasis on the book's pacing? Rather good for a first novel, I think, and definitely sf.

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You mention the international ties of fandom. Uh-huh. Sure. With Britain and Australia to a great extent. We have some contact with German fans and a rather tenuous contact with fans in Sweden and Japan. We are aware of the existence of fans and developed fandoms in other parts of Europe but contact is minimal. There

seems to be a well-developed fandom in Argentina but our contact with it is negligible and we are in the dark about the rest of South America. Fandom in East Europe? Africa? Asia? Who knows? We could probably find out if we developed more fully our contacts with Japan, Germany and Scandinavia. Those parts of the world have normal contacts with what is to us Terra Incognita. I would very much like to see some sort of international fanmish clearing house -- a place/club/publication where we could get information on what fans are doing in the rest of the world. It would entail a great deal of work and a great load of expense and if you are inclined to point Algor in that direction you'll certainly have my support for whatever its worth. I think what would be more successful than anything else would be a not too large, frequent, newsletter.

{{ I don't know where you've been the last year or so, but you seem to have been left behind by the sweep of events. Jean Kuggoch, mentioned last issue -- and perhaps you might have read my editorial -- is the publisher of such a newsletter. True, it is concerned only with the events of anglo-european fandom, but it is a start. As far as I know, you've limited your own contacts to the Japanese scene, and have apparently been left far behind in the flights into new and unknown territory. Contact has been established within the last year that did not exist before 1967; Michael Barnes in the N3F; Ed Reed and his bilingual fanzine; my own small contacts gained initially through the international aspects of SFWeekly; and lastly, the international news-gathering team that has sprung up around EuroLink.

My contacts include people in England, Australia, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, and a couple of local municipalities. And what are you doing for the sf scene?}}

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I enjoyed myself reading Algor 14. It has been quite interesting to learn something about Chthon's background. But there have been a few very certain parts in that fanzine I was really delighted of: First your well-done editorial, especially in the part about the new international dimension of fandom. You said exactly what I tried to explain to other American and Japanese fans in the last letters I wrote them. Second the good proposal concerning the institution of a real worldcon Harry Warner, Jr., made in his letter of comment. That's indeed the logical choice! Thinking of sf's international world-wide meaning, sf fandom seems to be predestined to unite itself as one of the first international societies without any political aims (not interests) in a real pan-internationalworld organization. This is, however, a far away aim of world fandom.

For instance, the United Stars Organization, an international sf association (founded not long ago), I belong to, is fighting for such an aim.

But the first step on the long and hard way to accomplish these aims is the institution of an annual international sf convention which is not only called a worldcon but really is one. You certainly know, however, the development of completely new ideas and intentions is difficult, even within sf fandom, though it is supposed to be an association of open-minded people (I'm sometimes wondering why). An international committee should be founded which would be responsible for the publication of this intention, for arranging discussions at each convention to be held in the next few years, for working out an around-the-world rotation plan in consideration of the gravity of the respective national fandoms, and at

last for making the proposal at one of the next worldcons. It's only words -- but I do think it's enough words for now. Act now! ~~##/ ##/ ##/~~ Everybody who is interested in helping -- please contact me. It is true: if fandom cannot work on an international basis -- who can??

44 After we get the problem of a truly agreeable and international rotation plan squared away, we have another problem -- that of the Hugos themselves. For several years the annual German awards for sf have also been called Hugos -- And when a worldcon is held in, say, Germany, how are American members to vote on German novels and prozines? Having little or no distribution outside their own countries, not to mention the language difficulties, it seems to me that a new system of Hugos will have to be instituted. With the cost of the statues themselves no longer a barrier to their production, a set of international criteria will have to be established, including foreign awards. Otherwise, it is quite conceivable that some future worldcon will have many more foreign members than American, resulting in no nominations from the US.))

Dan Goodman
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Piers Anthony's article is useful -- to anyone who intends to write a book with the same structure as Chthon. But anyone with that much ambition would do better to evolve his own structure.

I liked Anne McCaffrey's dragons, but I still think Tolkien is right when he says such magical creatures should not be rationally explained.

The explanation is rational only on the surface. Telepathy and levitation are magic, even if you call them psionics. So is hyperspace travel, but it's modern magic. Telepathy and levitation are timeless; dragons are a magic which does not belong to our era, which to my way of thinking makes Dragonflight sword-and-sorcery.

Keeping one's right hand free for using one's sword sounds like a custom with a good reason; but it was partly based on a wholly irrational custom -- the custom of forcing the lefthanded to use their right hands instead. Even today, there are probably more people in this country who believe that the lefthanded are inferior than believe that Negroes are inferior. In the case of swordplay, it's particularly absurd; in Western Europe, for some centuries (how long I'm not certain) lefthanded swordsmen have been considered superior to righthanded.

Lupoff is wrong; The Butterfly Kid couldn't have been set in the present, because the characters and setting belong in the past. It was an accurate reflection of the current scene when it was written a few years ago, but the scene has changed greatly since then. The anachronisms are less glaring in the future than they would be in the present.

The decision to blow up a planet in Rite of Passage is both less and more immoral than Lupoff realizes. Less, because a large minority of the Ship's inhabitants vote against the decision; a minority that, we are led to believe, will someday be a majority. More, because it's not only the humans on the condemned world who will die; the Losels, who may be intelligent, will also be wiped out. The entire species, not just part of a species; and one of the sins for which the men of that planet have been condemned is exploitation of the Losels.

"A false and jarring note?" No; we're told almost from the start that the Ships do this sort of thing; that there is an internal debate on this subject which is one of the most important issues in Ship politics.

I agree that science fiction editors should concentrate on science fiction as Fred Pohl says; that prefaces and such should be minimal. And when is Fred Pohl going to stop setting up groups to solve the Southeast Asian situation, and using his editorials for other non-stifnal purposes?

The rank and file sf fan can't afford to go overseas in 1970. Neither can he afford to publish a fanzine, smoke, drink, buy a television, own a car, or attend regional conventions inside the United States. It's a question of how you want to spend your money. I earn, currently, \$46 a week; I plan to go to Heidelberg. Anyone now in fandom who can't make it to the next overseas WorldCon after that, in 1975, has to be exceedingly poor. Figure out the least you can conceivably save; divide it by the number of days in the five years you have in which to save for that trip. It comes to a few cents per day. And five years gives you plenty of time to search out the bargains. (Someone going from California to Heidelberg, for instance, would likely do best by getting to New York and then taking Icelandic Airlines to Luxemburg for \$319.00 round trip, then another \$15.00 or so round trip rail fare to Heidelberg -- rather than taking a plane from Los Angeles or San Francisco directly to Europe.)

Alex Eisenstein doesn't seem to realize how many fans there are outside the United States, and how well-organized they are in some areas. There's far more chance that there'll be no bidder for a Midwestern worldcon than for an overseas worldcon. And if the tacit agreement that only one city in each country shall bid for a non-U.S. con ever breaks down, there may someday be twenty or more bidders for an overseas worldcon.

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At one time I was going to write you a letter about some of the fine old fan magazines, such as Rhodomagnetic Digest -- but my files of such things are not in order, and when I looked into them I never got back to your letter.

Later, I was hoping to see you at the BayCon, and maybe buy you a beer, but...

I enjoy the fan magazines -- such as Leland Sapiro's Riverside Quarterly -- that are devoted to more or less serious and informed critical comment on science fiction. Usually, only a few of them are alive at any one time. I have only a limited tolerance for the magazines that are mostly devoted to personal feuds, unless I happen to know the people involved. In Algol I was especially interested in the items by Delany and the Lupoff book reviews.

Piers Anthony
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I always thought less of stories that had been written around covers, as though the magazine were cheating in some way, yet in retrospect it seems as reasonable to base fiction on the cover as the cover on the story. It would not be hard to build a story on this cover... A major part of my erstwhile fascination with science fiction used to be the manner it transported me into an alternate framework, one

more interesting than my own -- and of course a picture can do the same, as this one does. (My fascination with science fiction is less now than it used to be, partly because I am older, partly because, as a writer, I have had to come to grips with the mechanics of writing it, and that can spoil the simple uncritical pleasure the innocent reader may have.)

I read Picnic On Paradise, enjoyed it, and considered it (as I do everything I read in the field) for a Nebula nomination. But it didn't quite click, for a reason I couldn't pin down. Now Mr. Lupoff has made it click: the novel is a transposed mainstream adventure. And this, serendipitously, tells me something important about Terry Carr's editing of the Ace Specials series. I have had two novels bounced for that series, and one accepted, so my interest is that of dollars and cents among other things. I appreciate the insight.

On the other hand, I did nominate Rite Of Passage for a Nebula, and here I take issue with the review. Remember when people used to claim that Russian space science was almost entirely derived from German V-2 scientists captured in WW II and military secrets filched from the US? That was very comforting -- until Sputnik. The fact, then revealed, was that those Russian scientists did not need to copy either from German V-2's or US devices; they were ahead of both. It may have been patriotic to insist that the U.S. was and always would be first in science, but it was also suicidal. Now it may be fashionable to discount Alexei Panshin's accomplishment by suggesting that he copied it slavishly from Heinlein, but I believe this is foolish for a similar reason. He has done a better job with his subject than did Heinlein. You can do an inferior job by copying, but hardly a superior one.

Geis' method of writing is different from mine; sometime I must read one of his books and discover whether it shows. But on sex: he says "A sex scene, properly written, can show more characterization and personality and basic motivation than any other kind of scene." Interesting statement, and I do not take issue with it, but it tied in with something I noticed about sex writing that I wonder about. I, like all writers, prefer to make my scenes as effective as possible in conveying whatever mood or notion I wish to convey. After some experimentation (at the typewriter, please understand) I concluded that the truly effective sex scene was not the direct description of the act, but the dialogue that preceded it. This, perhaps, is one thing that separates pornography from realistic writing. A situation can really come alive in dialogue, and the sexiness and desirability and growing willingness of the partners, and this is, really, the characterization Geis is speaking about, I believe. On the other hand, imagine a sex scene that read like out of a marriage manual: "The male organ was inserted into the vaginal tract, and emission followed." That's plenty specific -- but just how exciting is it to the reader? The truth, I conclude, is that good characterization and personality and basic motivation are what make the best sex scene, and all other types of scene too.

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Thanks for sending me the copy of Algol. I enjoyed it very much, particularly Ted White's account of the Kerista Institute. Also was interested in Dick Lupoff's review of the old "Palos of the Dogstar Pack" stories. I read most of those stories in the old Munsey magazines when they first appeared. Most of the "different" stories of those days I was mad about, but the Palos stories gave me exactly the same impression as Lupoff got from them.

There isn't much to say about my present Starwolf series at this point, except that it must be obvious that these stories are highly nostalgic star-adventure stories. I was doing this type of story forty years ago, and it's a type I've always loved. I've gone through any number of science fiction "revolutions", but they have not shaken my fondness for the adventure yarns. The difference in Starwolf is that, along with the young Chane, we have another protagonist...the much older John Dilullo. The Hamilton of four decades ago writes Chane, but the Hamilton of today writes Dilullo.

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It was a very pleasant surprise receiving Algol in the post the other day, since I'd thought I'd become the compleat gaffiate. The only fanzine I've seen for years is the JDM Bibliophile. It was an even bigger surprise to see a piece of mine in it. Well, I enjoyed reading it, and thought it had come out a lot better than I thought my stuff of eight or ten years ago would. Anyhow, apart from a couple of faint memories, I have no real recollection of the piece at all, and the whole plot development and twist at the end came as a surprise to me. Must be getting old or something, for my memory to fade away like that.

Among the rest of the material, I was especially taken with Powers' remark about his cover illo depicting the mood of America waiting for Nixon to become President. I feel intensely cheered by the prospect myself of Nixon becoming President. He fills me with great confidence -- confidence that the world is going to continue getting worse for a few years before it starts to get better. Trouble is, I can't think of anyone else on the American Presidential scene which inspires me with any more confidence. And I have the same feelings about our own lot, over here. So, if we did hoof Wilson out on the next election, which I'm all infavor of, who do we get? Heath. Gawd help us! What England needs, I suspect, is a leader like De Gaulle. And would I be wrong in suggesting that the US could use one, as well?

Pohl's speech was interesting -- as fascinating as I always find reminiscences in the writing and editing game. But probably for me, the most interesting piece was Piers Anthony's account of the background to Chthon. Frankly, I find a large percentage of science fiction these days unreadable. I get to about page 20 and come to a grinding halt. Chthon fascinated me. I don't pretend to have dug it completely. It's a difficult book to read -- to get the most out of it, anyway. But I thought it was very rewarding, which is more than I can say for many books which pride themselves on their experimental writing. Chthon was experimental -- but it still had a good story behind it. The flesh of the experiemtn, as it were, had a skeleton to hang onto. Not so a lot of this New Wave stuff. But then, I guess I'm just a reactionary.

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Admittedly PaDS under the Mercers (God Bless them!) led to an unfortunate similarity in the fanzines that it produced, but it had the great virtue of bringing a whole load of young new fen into British fanzines who would never have had

the facilities to produce fanzines of their own. Some of us were discussing the state of British fanzines over Easter. When compared with U.S. fanzines like Trumpet, Odd, Niekas, etc., it makes one wonder what is wrong. About the only British fanzine that can compare with the American ones is Speculation. At the recent con everyone dressed in very casual clothes, and then in walks Pete Weston in smart bluish-grey suit. We thought for a moment he had walked into the wrong convention. That proves, something, I suppose.

Perhaps it is because American fan have the money and facilities, which most of the PaDSzines or the fanzines that PaDS spawned have not. The greatest difficulty is duplicating, which few British fanzine editors seem to have access to. Second money, for since many of them are students, that is not a commodity in rich supply either.

[[It seems to me that an idea based on the example of the LASFS might prove feasible over there. The LASFS Rex Rotary is owned by the club with various members owning shares in the machine. Might not a bunch of fans on your side of the Pond pool their resources and buy a good duplicator? Working out publishing schedules would keep fanzine publishers out of each others' ways, and if and when one shareholder ceases publishing, another person could buy his share of the machine. Each party to the agreement would only have to furnish his own ink and stencils and paper -- and would be a proud part-owner of a nice efficient and hardworking mimeograph. In this way the owners could avoid all their fanzines looking alike, and be the masters of their own particular ideas of layout, etc.]]

We also heard from:

Steve Lewis, Ted Tom, David C. Piper, Jean Muggoch, Gianfranco Battisti, Ed Reed, Neal Goldfarb, Mike Gilbert, Dean R. Koontz, Dick Flinchbaugh, Bob Bloch, Dainis Bisenieks, Edward Berglund, Satoshi Hirota, James Juracic, Vaughn Bode, John Millard, Noreen Shaw, Jerry Kaufman, Ethel Lindsay, Redd Boggs, and Joseph Siclari.

THE PENULTIMATE TRUTH

a final word or two...

- () You contributed to this issue. () We trade on some irregular basis.
- () Your letter of Comment appears herein. () You're mentioned; care to comment?
- () You're an unwilling member of the Lindsay-Porter-Bangsund Co-Prosperty Sphere.
- () Your artwork will be produced here with clarity; for details see page 7.
- () Your contribution would be greatly appreciated; a personal note will follow.
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- () You're not mentioned in this issue, but a topic you might find interesting is.
- () This is the last issue you'll receive unless you respond; be warned.
- () A book published by your company or written by you is reviewed in this issue.
- () You really don't fit any of the above categories, but checkmarks are Traditional...

We apologize for a couple of goofs in this issue. First, the art folio was designed as a 10-page backed-up affair; when the printer ran it off, it came out as 10 sheets. Consequently, layouts designed to bleed into the gutter or aimed out from the center didn't; our apologies. Again, the bottom part of Bergeron's excellent back cover filled in, perhaps from excess inking on the part of the printer. We do not apologize for the omission of a letter by Bill Kunkel, which was one of the most interesting things we have ever seen. Kunkel came very close to a lawsuit when he decided to write a 'funny' letter of comment.

