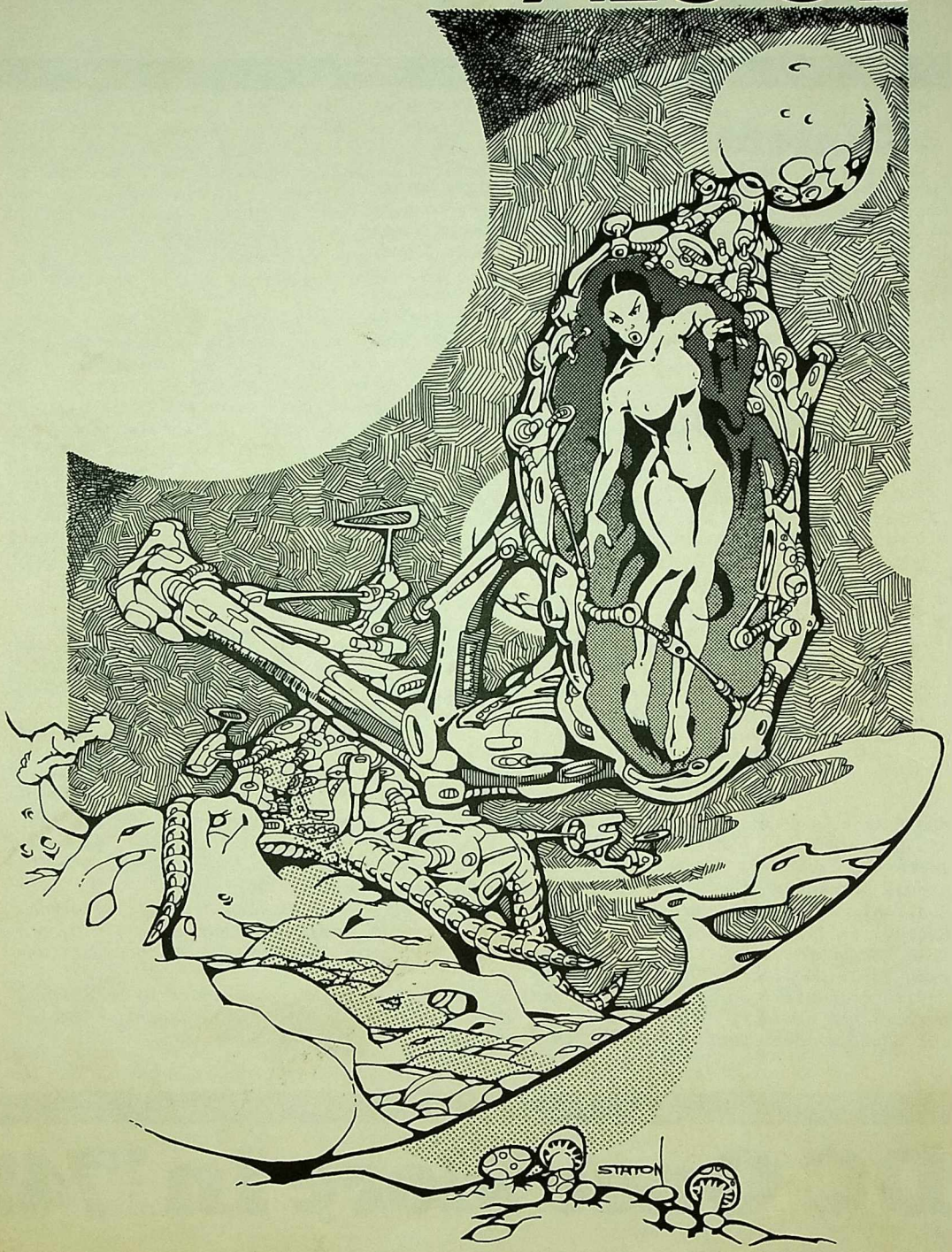
ALGOL



ALGOL 17

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DC Once More In '74!

Beatle-Juice: Editorial

INTROSPECTION FOR THE AGES

After seventeen issues of ALGOL I've looked back at the first sixteen to see exactly where I've been and where I'm going, and to get a little better grasp of where I am today. First, a few statistics: 8 years of publication, a total of 652 pages for an average of 38 1/3 pages per issue. Four separate periods of development, breaking down to issues 1 - 6; 7 - 9; 10 - 12; and 13 - on. It's rather interesting to look over old issues, shudder, and say to myself, "Did I publish *that* stuff?" It's doubly interesting when I realize that what I published several years ago is more than a record of my fanac; it's a record of where I was at, in terms of esthetics and maturity, committed to paper for (perhaps unfortunately) all fandom to see.

I think ALGOL has held up very well, considering all the relatively poor issues I've published over these eight years. Those first six issues were the first gropings of a new faned, published completely on my own with little or no contact with other fanzine fans. They were published on my school ditto machine, and drew on the talents of the people and quasi-fans around me. The seventh through ninth issues reflect my growing knowledge of fandom and contact with fanzine-fans in the New York Fanoclasts, plus the expertise I'd begun to acquire with the weekly publication of DEGLER! (later to change titles and become S.F.WEEKLY). The tenth through twelvth issues reflect a slowly-developing sense of esthetics and approach to fanzine publishing. I can look at those later issues now and still be pleased with the articles, artwork and general level of contents. Which, in a fanzine that has settled down to approximately yearly publication, is something to be pleased with.

THE HIGH COST OF FANAC

Speaking of yearly publication, I believe it was Bruce Gillespie who raised the valid point that a fanzine, like anything else, should be done as well as you're able to do it. He also raised the point that it should be as frequent as possible, a point which doesn't seem to fit ALGOL. My standards are quite high, both in content and physical appearance, and I pay a full price for them. So although I'd like to publish ALGOL three or four times a year, I'm not financially able to. Each issue, between printing and mailing costs, runs about $300.00. To publish more than one issue every ten or so months is something I simply can't afford. When I do publish I try to publish the very best articles and artwork I can. I hope you like the result. (An aside: this issue is coming out ten months after the last, and total monies collected to defray costs, assuming all money coming in within the past 10 months is for this issue, come to only $170.00. And some of that includes long-term subscriptions.)

IS RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY BETTER THAN RATS?

The fannish/sercon arguments going back and forth in various fanzines (though they seem to have died down since the Noreascon climaxed and drained some few fans' energies) are not applicable to ALGOL. I publish what I want to publish, whether "fannish" or "sercon." I publish what I hold to be interesting, in the direction of ALGOL's publishing intents, and not because something fits with a fannish image or is serious and stuffy and will advance the image that science fiction should have. In fact, Doc Lowndes' article in this issue holds the best of both worlds in that it's a serious article on fandom's influence on the course of science fiction. It should thoroughly confuse both those fannish fans and those who classify themselves as sercon fans who would attempt to classify it as one or the other; it's damned fine writing, and a damned fine article. And that's why I'm publishing it.

[Editorial continued on page 43]

The Influence Of Fandom

First of all, I want to define a few terms and state their limitations. What I will mean by "fan" is any person who, in addition to reading SF, does one or more of the following things: writes letters to editors, is in active correspondence with other fans on the subject of SF, is an active member of some fan group, contributes material to fan magazines, publishes fan magazines, attends or participates in conferences, conventions, etc. By effectiveness here I will be discussing the sort of things that fans have tried to get editors to do, and note how successful they have been.

The limitations are that this can't be much more than an introduction, because the subject really needs a book, and it will be confined to American fans and most of it to magazines. I am going to spend a fair amount of time in the early period, simply because there were so many beginnings way back then; and I want to digress and sprawl a bit as I go along. There will be an awful lot of things that I'd like to get in which we won't have time for.

In the last few years, we've found out that there was much more science fiction published in magazines before 1926 than most of us had suspected. Just the same, this takes nothing away from Hugo Gernsback; he still had a New Thing with AMAZING STORIES and his aim was to make this New Thing into a New Wave. He wanted to get established scientists to write SF, so that eventually AMAZING STORIES would be publishing all new material written with authority and providing sound instruction in the elements of science. Further, he wanted to inspire young people; he had nothing against early warnings but these were not his chief goal.

At the start, he had to fill the magazine with reprints, for the most part; and he found that of the few scientists who were capable of writing an interesting and cohereent story, most would not permit their real names to be used. They feared ridicule at the very least.

We know now that Mr. Gernsback did not realize his great dream, and I think that most of us can be glad about it. The Gernsback type of SF *can* be good -- MISSION OF GRAVITY by Hal Clement is a fine modern example. (But you notice that Mr. Clement practices science under a different name?)

It is the by-products of the Gernback experiment that have made him immortal, so far as we are concerned. Listen to this excerpt from his editorial in the June 1926 issue of AMAZING STORIES: "One of the great surprises since we started publishing AMAZING STORIES is the tremendous amount of mail we receive from -- shall we call them 'Scientifiction Fans?' -- who seem to be pretty well orientated in this literature. From the suggestions for reprints that are coming in, these 'fans' seem to have a hobby all their own of hunting up scientifiction stories, not only in English, but in many other languages. There is not a day, now, that passes, but we get from a dozen to fifty suggestions as to stories of which, frankly, we have no record, although we have a list of some 600 or 700 scientifiction stories. Some of these fans are constantly visiting the bookstores with the express purpose of buying new or old scientifiction tales, and they even go to the trouble of advertising for some volumes that have long ago gone out of print."

Robert A.W. Lowndes

Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing, now -- so far as I know -- just how heavy the mail on AMAZING STORIES during 1926 really was. The excerpt above suggests a small number of fans who lived in large cities, or near to large cities, as well as a few who might have built up libraries over the course of years. It also suggests that the fans of those days were somewhat older than the average we would find later.

With the January 1927 issue, AMAZING STORIES started the *Discussions* department, and readers began to read the printed opinions of other members of the lobby. For the most part, it was the scientific content of the stories that came in for discussion, although we do find a few complaints about Jules Verne's stories being too outdated and rather dull. But Gernsback was constantly hammering away at the educational value of scientifiction, trying to get from his readers letters which would spur on discussion and perhaps experiments and inventions.

He had to admit that not all the stories he published fit his ideal. In the July 1926 editorial, he says: "There are few stories published in this magazines that can be called outright impossible." -- which amounts to admitting that he did run some like this. And farther down, he says, "Of course once in a great while an author may take some liberties, as happened, for instance, in the conclusion of *A Trip To The Center Of The Earth* printed in this issue.

"Jules Verne brought back his heroes in a most improbable manner. But this one defect does not detract from the story as a whole, throughout which good science is maintained. It is only when the entire plot becomes frankly impossible, or far too improbable, that we draw the line."

Remember that paragraph; later on, I want to digress and tell you about a story Gernsback published where he not only failed to draw the line, but apparently lost his pencil.

From the very first, Gernsback discussed the magazine and its problems openly with the readers -- or, at least, gave all the appearance of candor. In that same June issue, he asked readers if they would like to see AMAZING STORIES twice a month. In the September issue, he stated that he had received 498 letters urging that the magazine remain monthly, and 32,644 letters pleading for semi-monthly publication. AMAZING STORIES would probably shift to twice monthly publication by the end of the year -- 1926.

It didn't. In the January 1927 issue, which started off the readers' department, *Discussions*, the reply to a reader voting for semi-monthly publication is that this reader is "...one of several thousand readers who would like to see the magazine appear twice a month." That was the first time I heard of 32,000 + called "several".

How well was AMAZING STORIES doing then? Obviously not so well as expected. Gernsback was claiming that 150,000 copies were printed every month, and 25¢ was a high price in those days. Back issues were listed every month, but you didn't see the earliest ones on the list after the November 1926 number; and in this same January 1927 issue he was asking anyone who had copies for April, May, or June 1926 to get in touch with

him; he was out of them.

In the March 1927 issue he urged every reader to try to get another reader; if that was accomplished to a reasonable extent, AMAZING STORIES could go to 150 pages, which would be a 50% increase. In the August issue, he stated in the editorial that the magazine was not yet on a paying basis, and had a coupon which he asked readers to clip and mail in. On this coupon they could write the names and addresses of friends, and a freee sample copy of AMAZING STORIES (from the returns) would be sent to each. He also said that "Not until the magazine has some twenty or thirty pages of advertising will it be possible to realize a profit on the publication." I do not know what he was paying -- if that is the right word -- contributors, but apparently even at the relatively hgih price of 25¢ a copy, he needed bushels of advertising to make out.

In the summer of 1927, he brought out the first and only AMAZING STORIES ANNUAL, and that apparently was a success -- enough so that he would announce AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, there had been letters from readers who had started Science Clubs, and the most important of these was from a young fellow who wanted to launch an International Science Club. This appeared in the October 1927 issue, along with a letter from a John S. Williamson. The Editor's reply was printed in bold face in a special box, urging everyone who liked the idea proposed by Mr. Holger E. Lindgren to write to the Young Men's Science Club, in care of AMAZING STORIES. If enough readers wanted to join, and pay a small fee, AMAZING STORIES would be the official organ of the club, and a page or so would be set aside in each issue for Club news, etc. Nothing came of this, so far as official sponsorship was concerned, though some such clubs were formed eventually. And in these earliest days, they were science clubs, not science fiction clubs.

There is only one instance where we can be sure of where the pressure of the readers in any way influenced Gernsback to do something that he might not have done otherwise. His original plan had been to bring out a magazine titled SCIENTIFICTION. As Sam Moskowitz relates in *Explorers Of The Infinite:* "Except for a freakish circumstance, Gernsback would have issued the first science fiction magazine in 1924. That year he sent out 25,000 circulars soliciting subscriptions for a new type of magazine, based on the stories of Verne, Wells, and Poe, to be titled SCIENTIFICTION. The subscription reaction was so cool that Gernsback did nothing further for another two years, at which time he placed AMAZING STORIES, fully developed, on the stands without a word of advance notice." (Just who came up with the title AMAZING STORIES isn't known. But a young man named Louis Silberkleit, who was working for Gernsback at the time, suggested the title FUTURE FICTION.)

A fair number of letters in the Discussions department were from readers who objected to the title, AMAZING STORIES, and the cover illustrations as too lurid, urging that the title be changed to SCIENTIFICTION and a more dignified sort of cover be substituted. Perhaps some of them were people who had originally responded to the 1924 circular. At any rate, Uncle Hugo's response eventually was to sponsor a contest for a design which would symbolize "scientifiction", and the cover of the September 1928 issue contained the winning design on a white background. I remember seeing it when it appeared on sale, as I was an eager browser of AMAZING STORIES at that time. It was a tremendous disappointment to me; I looked forward to gazing longingly at those lurid covers. Later on, Gernsback would tell the readers, who were still asking for a toning down of the covers, that that issue took a whopping drop in circulation.

The design, which appeared in reduced size on the covers for some months thereafter is now the symbol for FIRST FANDOM.

Moskowitz's chapter on Gernsback tells the story of how he was forced into bankruptcy, lost control of AMAZING STORIES, and started a new publishing corporation which issued new radio and technical magazines and brought forth SCIENCE WONDER STORIES and AIR WONDER STORIES. These were even more heavily slanted toward the instructional aspects of SF. Except for one story by H.G.Wells in the first issue of SCIENCE WONDER

STORIES, and two reprint novels in AIR WONDER STORIES, all the fiction was new. And one of the earliest novels in SCIENCE WONDER STORIES was by Jack Williamson, who was first seen as a fan in the Discussions department, then the author of a short story which copped a cover on AMAZING STORIES. It's certainly possible, though, that a fair number of the new writers who were introduced in this period had been letter-writing fans a year or so before.

Now I want to get to that threatened digression to tell you briefly about my favorite example of what can go wrong with the Gernsback approach to SF. Never mind the giant ants. Let A. Hyatt Verrill's *World Of Giant Ants* stand as poetic license in his simple ignoring (not necessarily ignorance) of the square-cube law and its side-effects; his entomology brought forth no complaints whatsoever, and it was a good story. Uncle Hugo had a list of associate science editors on the editorial page of SCIENCE WONDER STORIES, a list which expanded with time, and in the third and succeeding issues, we saw a line in bold type reading: *These nationally known educators pass upon the scientific principles of all stories.*

I've wondered for many years who passed upon the scientific principles of *The Marble Virgin*, by Kennie McDowd, in the June 1929 issue of SCIENCE WONDER STORIES. It goes like this:

Wallace Land is a sculptor who is trying to carve an ideal woman's figure in marble. He's broken up one or two earlier attempts, but now he has his masterpiece started, and he's named this marble virgin, Naomi.

Professor Carl Hushold is a scientific genius, who looks more like a gorilla. He has constructed what he calls an electron-dissolving cabinet. Now, take a deep breath and relax while we learn a little science. Professor Huxhold says: "If by some means or process the number of electrons could be altered, subtracted or added at will, then any substance might be changed into any other substance! I have discovered this secret! The Huxhold Rays, when played upon any substance in my cabinet cause the infinitesimal electrons to split and multiply! And a slightly added strength to the ray dissolves both protons and electrons, destroys the atom and the molecule! The substance becomes as nothing; it goes flying into the ether, seeking the plane of split electrons, because my ray had made it a mass of split electrons itself!" Isn't science fascinating!

Huxhold had demonstrated by drugging a dog, then putting it in the cabinet and making it disappear. Then he told the sculptor to get a leg that was broken off one of his early attempts. This was solid marble, about 40 pounds. Huxhold doesn't bother to drug it, he just stands it in the cabinet, and I quote: "It grew whiter, a faint pink then suffused it, and then -- the knee bent, and I distinctly saw the toes wriggle! A second later it had collapsed onto the bottom of the cabinet, the stump end, where the marble had parted when the statue was broken, *revealing itself as quivering, bloody flesh!*"

Guess what follows! They take the finished solid marble statue and place it in the cabinet, and Huxhold twists some dials to set the rays, and the clock strikes seven as they start to play upon the statue.

"...The clock ceased striking. It was seven o'clock! And the beam of light coming from the horn of the electron-dissolver changed from fiery incandescence to gold. I held my breath. *Transubstantiation was occurring in Naomi!*

"Huxhold whirled a dial, the beam slightly ascended, so that it swept no lower than the bottom of her toes. He was sobbing curses.

"Before my eyes, I saw a delicate something -- like the roseate tinge of an oyster shell -- diffuse what an instant before had been cold marble! A wave of pink flooded her breast and climbed into her face! Her cheeks glowed; between lips suddenly carmine, I saw the gleaming pearls of two white, perfect rows of teeth. Naomi's eyes took color -- blue like that of an italian sky, as the Bay reflects it at Naples! I saw dark

brown hair fluff up on her head, and saw little tendrils of it escape the soft heat at her temples, to waver in a stirring of air! *Naomi lived!*

" She breathed! Her breast heaved! Then the beautiful arm which was half raised before her trembled and fell to her side! Her other arm swung forward, finger wriggling! A foot was lifted, and rubbed softly against the ankle of the other!"

I'm sure you can figure the rest of the story out for yourselves -- providing that you cling fast to the science that you have learned in these excerpts.

I don't think it ever occurred to Gernsback that the vocation of scientist and the vocation of author are not widely different things, but call for widely different talents, and it is a rare instance where one person has both and can develop both. When this happens, it seems to be the creative talent that is developed first, as with our beloved Dr. Asimov, but we do have instances where a scientist or an engineer became a good enough writer, as with our two Smiths, Edward Elmer and George O.

Then at the beginning of 1929, Harry Bates brought forth the second New Thing in SF magazines: pulp action formula stories based upon science fiction plots, ideas, and backgrounds that had already been set up by earlier authors, with a minimum of science in the stories, and no interest at all in teaching anybody anything except how to make money entertaining people.

I saw it on the newsstands early in 1930, but this was a disreputable pulp magazine, with untrimmed edges and crude artwork outside of Wesso's cover; and it didn't look as if there were any science at all in it. How could I justify buying, let alone reading it? (And there was no one I knew who bought it, and whose copies I could borrow.)

ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE dropped the last three words of its title in 1931, and improved the product in a number of ways; by the end of 1932, when the final Clayton issue appeared, Bates tells us, it was beginning to make money -- or at least break even.

During this time, science clubs sprang up, and a printed fan magazine, THE TIME TRAVELER, succeeded by SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST, became a vehicle for a more insistent lobby than individual letters. Some of the letters in WONDER STORIES in 1930 indicate that Gernsback was being forced to alter his policy, and there's no doubt that he felt the competition from Bates as well as from his former title. The two fan magazines listed above were not the first publications published by fans -- there was THE COMET, official organ of The Scienceers, in 1930. But this was a Gernsback type fan magazine; it was mostly concerned with little articles on science. THE TIME TRAVELER and SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST -- the latter publication can't be greatly distinguished from the former -- were true fan magazines, devoted to every aspect of science fiction that they could cover. And a considerable number of people who appeared there later became authors; some became editors; some became publishers of science fiction.

It was at the end of 1933 that we saw a striking and seminal example of the effectiveness of fandom in this early and most organized period. David Lasser was Gernsback's editor for WONDER STORIES. Lasser was about to leave, and Uncle Hugo needed a new editor.

If you read through the letters department in the magazines from 1927 through 1933, you will find two aspects of the evolving readership. First, where the letters published in 1927 and 1928 suggest a majority of readers of college age and older, the age-level gradually comes down to high school and college age. And these younger readers, while dutifully expressing devotion to science, for the most part, are not interested in the classics of literature, not interested in scientific tracts in narrative form. And there is a considerable contingent which wants more romance and excitement, and some of these cite *The Marble Virgin* as an example.

This pressure was effective. Gernsback was still talking about the instructional

value of SF; he was running a department "Science News Of The Month", from the very first issue of SCIENCE WONDER STORIES, as well as "Science Questions and Answers" and a quiz in every issue. This started in AMAZING STORIES in 1927; it consisted of scientific questions, with a page number noted in parenthesis. If you couldn't answer the question, then you hadn't paid attention to the little tidbit of real science to be found on that page. But the stories were really becoming more adventure and less lecture. In 1930, a streamer reading MYSTERY-ADVENTURE-ROMANCE appeared at the top of the April issue of SCIENCE WONDER STORIES, and the word "science" was printed in yellow on white -- which made it nearly invisible until you were very close to the magazine.

My own feeling about this was intense resentment. While, truthfully I didn't learn much science, and wasn't awfully interested in it, just the same that stress upon "science" was my only argument to put up to elders who sought to interfere with my reading and collecting SF. I wrote at least one letter of protest, and there were letters of protest published. Two months later, SCIENCE WONDER STORIES and AIR WONDER STORIES merged into WONDER STORIES and "Science News Of The Month" was dropped; the questions and answers and the quiz remained, and the editorial continued to deal with scientific subjects.

The science fiction magazines were not the first popular magazines to run readers' departments and bring in a steady feedback. Certainly ARGOSY received many letters from readers. But it may be that Hugo Gernsback was the first editor-publisher of fiction magazines to make use of this feedback. If circulation shoots up every time you run a story or a serial by a particular author, then you don't need letters. When circulation falls off, then you do -- and I think that what Gernsback discovered from the over-all analysis of the mail was what sort of reader was buying the magazine and possibly trying to boost it.

My suspicion is based sheerly on what Uncle Hugo did in 1933 when David Lasser was leaving and he needed a new editor. A young man by the name of Charles D. Hornig had started publishing a printed fan magazine which supplemented SCIENCE FICTION DIGEST (which would change its title to FANTASY MAGAZINE later), in that it dealt with the weird and fantasy field entirely. He sent copies to all the editors and the story is that on the basis of reading some issues of THE FANTASY FAN, Hugo Gernsback called Hornig in and offered him the editor's chair of WONDER STORIES. This was the first fruit of organized fandom, for Hornig obtained much of the short stories in his issues from fans.

I believe that he was around 16 -- certainly not much older -- when this happened. But now, except for the publisher's overseership on the matter of science in the stories, one of the three science fiction titles was being edited by a young fan, with the enthusiasm and taste (as well as lack of taste) of a teenager. Horning could talk to the fans in his editorial replies to letters; he spoke their language. He was not what you would call cluttered with scientific knowledge, or fossilized with editorial dignity, and it is doubtful that he had any previous business experience. But Gernsback obviously felt that he could make rapport with the bulk of WONDER STORIES' readership, and possibly did not consider the young man's business innocence as much of a liability.

The Hornig appointment was the foundation for Gernsback's next New Thing -- which was to pick up an idea which had been considered some years earlier, when the time just wasn't right for it. WONDER STORIES was being slanted toward the teenage and college group, and here was where the idealism and enthusiasm of fans might pay off. Actually, despite his shrewd business acumen, Gernsback could never quite suppress his own idealism and enthusiasm. I don't doubt that the main reason for inaugurating the Science Fiction League was to boost the circulation of WONDER STORIES. But I certainly believe that Gernsback felt that it was a good thing in itself. He wanted to get the younger generation interested in scientific careers; he saw SF as a means to that end. He wanted to make the image of science a positive and benevolent one in the eyes of the general public; he saw science fiction as an ideal means to this end.

Speaking for myself alone, I'd say that while his success in the first aim was hardly notable, it was pronounced in the second. While my own personal metaphysics makes me critical of the behavior of particular *scientists*, and at times so sharply that some people may imagine that I am anti-science, I have Mr. Gernsback to thank for the fact that this impression is mistaken. I'm indissolubly married to the conviction that no form of knowledge is evil, no matter what unpleasant results may come from human greed and stupidity as shown in the use that is often made of scientific discoveries and engineering.

And before we go further, I want to thank Uncle Hugo for something else -- something I did not recognize fully for what it was at the time, although I do believe I responded in part even then. It was in the Summer 1931 WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY that I read the first anti-racist novel that I ever saw, anywhere at all. I wouldn't especially recommend it to you; it's a typical interplanetary adventure story of the time, with this single difference. The story is *Vandals Of The Void*, by J. M. Walsh, and our hero is the usual young Earthman and our heroine is a beautiful Martian girl, who could never be mistaken for an Earth girl. Earth, Mars and Venus are working in concert against the mysterious vandals -- but the three worlds have been living in amity for a long time before this menace appears. At no place in the story is the fact of difference between these races of human, each of them notably alien to each other in appearance, customs, etc., made an issue of. And in addition, when you look at Frank R. Paul's very nice illustrations for this story, you find out something else about Jansca (and all other Martians) that no one in the story makes an issue out of: she's as black as the ace of spades.

Racism, to me, is just this one thing: making an issue out of a person's race, making that the most important thing about the person. That is why I call this an anti-racist story, and it is why I call stories which make a tremendous issue about how awful one race is and how wonderful another is -- only reversing colors -- not anti-racist, but phony anti-racist and no less vicious than the most virulent propaganda from the office of the late Dr. Goebbels. If an author wants to express his belief that whiteskin is utterly vile, I believe in allowing him to do so -- there are times when I consider the entire damned human race as loathsome. But I won't stay quiet when such hysteria is labelled "anti-racism".

So end the second and unannounced digression.

The Science Fiction League may have helped WONDER STORIES to hold on for a couple of years, but it didn't save the magazine. In 1936, Gernsback sold the title to the Standard Magazine group, and WONDER STORIES became THRILLING WONDER STORIES. The Science Fiction League continued for a number of years after 1936, but so far as THRILLING WONDER STORIES was concerned, the department did little more than list the names of new members and run a few reports of chapter meetings.

Before WONDER STORIES died, Donald Wollheim had come forth as a Founding Father -- if not actual leader -- of the revolution in fandom which resulted in Independence. If Jim Blish exaggerated last year when he said that Don Wollheim invented fandom, he certainly did not give a false impression. It's very easy to say that if Wollheim hadn't done it, someone else would have -- but that is just one of those things that we can never be certain about in any kind of history. Individuals *do* matter. The common man may indeed be the backbone but it is the extraordinary man who is the brain. Time after time in history we have seen movements fail, battles or wars that seemed lost, because of the disappearance of just one person -- you can make your own list. There's no doubt that someone else would have tried to organize fandom independently of WONDER STORIES or any other professional publication. Whether the effort would have succeeded to the extent it did is another matter.

I was living in the remote colony of Connecticut, to continue my metaphor, when the War of Independence broke out, and outside of a manifesto, in which Don described his and other authors' experiences with Gernsback's unhurried payment practices, I knew nothing about any hostilities within the Science Fiction League until August,

1935, when I picked up the new September issue of WONDER STORIES and read that three League members -- Donald A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, and William S. Sykora -- had been expelled for treason.

The League did not publish a complete membership list -- I myself was member #630, joining in January 1935 -- so there may be a much larger number of members during the Gernsback period who later became authors, editors or publishers of science fiction than you can discover by going through the old issues of WONDER STORIES, as I did. I'll mention a few names which may be familiar to most of you: Forrest J. Ackerman, Bob Tucker, Fred Pohl, Virginia Kidd, Sam Moskowitz, James Blish, and Richard Wilson. Not Don Wollheim, Ray Palmer, Kenneth Sterling, you may ask? No -- they were all published authors *before* the League started.

By now you may wonder if I've lost track of what this article is supposed to be about -- the effectiveness of SF fandom in getting the magazines to do what fans wanted them to do, but I hope I can prove to you that I haven't. Very roughly, there have been three goals: [1] to get a more pleasing package -- covers, artwork, makeup, departments, etc. [2] to promote favored authors [3] to influence the sort of science fiction that was published. The first two goals, as we have seen could be forwarded and were forwarded by unorganized fandom, although organized lobbies could be more effective; the third goal required organization. And that is what the feuds among fans in the thirties, the power struggles within the various fan clubs, were really about. It's true, of course, that you will find personalities everywhere which seek control of a group or organization, just for the sake of power; and certainly this came into the Wars of Independence in fandom and the chaotic period that followed; but the real aim in trying to get all the active fans into one organization -- or a union or federation of organizations -- was the third one: to influence and finally direct the shape of science fiction that was published.

Gernsback's New Thing had been concentrated science fiction as instruction in science, as creating a favorable image of science in the eyes of the general public, as encouraging young people to take up scientific careers. Bates' New Thing was concentrated science fiction as entertainment; he wasn't against stories which might serve the Gernsback purpose as long as they were entertaining on a mass level first. Tremaine's New Thing was concentrated SF as speculation -- although I believe it is pretty certain that he never imagined that it would be possible to bring out a magazine every month which was entirely composed of thought-variants, as he called them. Gernsback and Tremaine were both in favor of as good writing as they could get, but did not insist upon a high level as long as the story fulfilled their objectives. (My impression is that Tremaine tolerated a somewhat lower level of writing in some thought variant stories than he would accept in those which were supoosed to be good SF adventure or whatever.) Bates' aim called for a cut-off point so far as the level of writing went -- a story could be too good, over the heads of his audience in literary achievement.

It was in 1937 that the first activist element sprang up in SF, and while it seems rather primitive -- as in fact it was -- compared to activism among science fictionists today, it was a New Thing in fandom. The idea was simply this: SF fans should engage in activities which will help bring about the sort of society where the wonderful things we've read about in SF can really come to pass. So far as the magazines went, these activities should consist of [a] forming groups which can put pressure on SF editors and authors, inducing them to produce SF which shows how society can be changed for the better [b] getting all known science fictionists to ally themselves with this project [c] encouraging all fans with writing talent to write this type of SF [d] persuading magazine publishers who did not have SF magazines -- which was, of course, most of them -- that SF would be a profitable venture for them, and getting the right fans (one of us, naturally) as editors of such new magazines [e] persuading already existing magazine editors to broaden or change their policies, so that more sociological SF was published and -- perhaps even more important -- all the stories had a progressive touch to them. No more portrayal of any races as inferior, even by implication; no anti-socialist stories; no anti-science stories; down with chauvinism

Speaking for myself alone, I'd say that while his success in the first aim was hardly notable, it was pronounced in the second. While my own personal metaphysics makes me critical of the behavior of particular *scientists*, and at times so sharply that some people may imagine that I am anti-science, I have Mr. Gernsback to thank for the fact that this impression is mistaken. I'm indissolubly married to the conviction that no form of knowledge is evil, no matter what unpleasant results may come from human greed and stupidity as shown in the use that is often made of scientific discoveries and engineering.

And before we go further, I want to thank Uncle Hugo for something else -- something I did not recognize fully for what it was at the time, although I do believe I responded in part even then. It was in the Summer 1931 WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY that I read the first anti-racist novel that I ever saw, anywhere at all. I wouldn't especially recommend it to you; it's a typical interplanetary adventure story of the time, with this single difference. The story is *Vandals Of The Void*, by J. M. Walsh, and our hero is the usual young Earthman and our heroine is a beautiful Martian girl, who could never be mistaken for an Earth girl. Earth, Mars and Venus are working in concert against the mysterious vandals -- but the three worlds have been living in amity for a long time before this menace appears. At no place in the story is the fact of difference between these races of human, each of them notably alien to each other in appearance, customs, etc., made an issue of. And in addition, when you look at Frank R. Paul's very nice illustrations for this story, you find out something else about Jansca (and all other Martians) that no one in the story makes an issue out of: she's as black as the ace of spades.

Racism, to me, is just this one thing: making an issue out of a person's race, making that the most important thing about the person. That is why I call this an anti-racist story, and it is why I call stories which make a tremendous issue about how awful one race is and how wonderful another is -- only reversing colors -- not anti-racist, but phony anti-racist and no less vicious than the most virulent propaganda from the office of the late Dr. Goebbels. If an author wants to express his belief that whiteskin is utterly vile, I believe in allowing him to do so -- there are times when I consider the entire damned human race as loathsome. But I won't stay quiet when such hysteria is labelled "anti-racism".

So end the second and unannounced digression.

The Science Fiction League may have helped WONDER STORIES to hold on for a couple of years, but it didn't save the magazine. In 1936, Gernsback sold the title to the Standard Magazine group, and WONDER STORIES became THRILLING WONDER STORIES. The Science Fiction League continued for a number of years after 1936, but so far as THRILLING WONDER STORIES was concerned, the department did little more than list the names of new members and run a few reports of chapter meetings.

Before WONDER STORIES died, Donald Wollheim had come forth as a Founding Father -- if not actual leader -- of the revolution in fandom which resulted in Independence. If Jim Blish exaggerated last year when he said that Don Wollheim invented fandom, he certainly did not give a false impression. It's very easy to say that if Wollheim hadn't done it, someone else would have -- but that is just one of those things that we can never be certain about in any kind of history. Individuals *do* matter. The common man may indeed be the backbone but it is the extraordinary man who is the brain. Time after time in history we have seen movements fail, battles or wars that seemed lost, because of the disappearance of just one person -- you can make your own list. There's no doubt that someone else would have tried to organize fandom independently of WONDER STORIES or any other professional publication. Whether the effort would have succeeded to the extent it did is another matter.

I was living in the remote colony of Connecticut, to continue my metaphor, when the War of Independence broke out, and outside of a manifesto, in which Don described his and other authors' experiences with Gernsback's unhurried payment practices, I knew nothing about any hostilities within the Science Fiction League until August,

1935, when I picked up the new September issue of WONDER STORIES and read that three League members -- Donald A. Wollheim, John B. Michel, and William S. Sykora -- had been expelled for treason.

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of any sort...you can continue the list yourselves *ad infinitum*.

We were all at that fascinating age when we knew that there was one, and only one, answer to any question about human relationships, political parties and goals, etc. Some people -- as we've seen more or less recently -- do not arrive at that age until rather late in life. Others stay in that age for the rest of their lives, and so it goes. No matter. If any of you approve of current trends toward political activism on the part of science fictionists and of SF which mirrors this sort of thing, then it won't hurt to remember that the New York Futurians took the first step. If you're against it, then, of course, instead of Early Warners, you look upon them as Early Uglies. Myself, I look upon it all now as a vlauable part of one's education, and while there may have been better ways for me to have learned what I learned during that time, there were also worse ways -- and some of those worse ways are very much "in" today.

How effective was this all? It is true that John Campbell published a good deal of sociological SF in ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, but I rather think he would have done so anyway. But a number of Futurians themselves became editors -- and soon learned, if they didn't already know in their hearts -- that they couldn't go as far as they urged others to do. There was actually very little propaganda in their magazines, and what there was was mostly so well disguised that only the already convinced and alert would notice it in the first place. But perhaps there was one real difference -- certain stereotypes were avoided, wherever possible.

In 1941, there was another attempt to organize all fans into one super-society which would not replace local ones, or dictate to them. It still exists, the last I heard, but the National Fantasy Fan Federation was a failure so far as the intentions of its founders and early members were concerned. And that was the last attempt at a SF fan's single party, as it were.

How effective has fandom been, since fans started to organize in their own way, independentIy of any professional magazine or political group? So far as the trivia of the magazines are concerned, the packaging, there has been considerable effectiveness at times. It was fan Ray Bradbury who first sold Hannes Bok to WEIRD TALES and it was the enthusiastic response of fans which spread his work. When fans like Fred Pohl, Don Wollheim and myself became editors, we not only knew that we liked Hannes' work -- we also knew that he had a following. Some art directors resisted and remained impervious to persuasion -- Bok never appeared in ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, for example. Just the same, it was fan pressure that got him on the covers of some magazines which would not have used him otherwise, and it is no fault of the fans that the ruling powers at these magazines sometimes made him appear at his worst. Others used him intelligently. And while Virgil Finlay's market may have expanded without any pressure from fans upon editors at all, some of his appearances are certainly due to that pressure. Much of the same can be said of Edd Cartier, Ed Emsh and Kelly Freas; and this principle can be extended to many other aspects of the physical appearance of many magazines.

When an editor who knew nothing about SF fans, but who was intelligent and alert, like Malcolm Reiss of PLANET STORIES, began to encounter the pressure of fandom, the results could be interesting. PLANET STORIES had a fixed policy in one respect, and the editor was not free to change it -- but how that policy could be bulged out in this way and that! Reiss and his successors managed to make PLANET STORIES a memorable magazine, a starting place for many authors who served apprenticeship there, despite the fact that there are more forgettable than memorable stories in its total content.

This leads me into that wider area of effectiveness, and that is fandom's influence upon authors. In the ancient period, the SF author was something of a god who condescended to come down from Olympus now and then and talk to fans. By the '50s, the percentage of new authors from the ranks of fandom had become so high that the author who lived completely apart from fans, as it were, was more of the exception. Rather

than just occassionally enjoying letters or comments from readers -- and perhaps getting something of value by way of suggestions once in a while -- the authors of the modern period greatly desire this feedback, and miss the oldtime letter departments in the magazines.

Back in the '30s, the Futurians and their allies worked like all get-out to try to convert John Campbell to some sort of Marxian socialistic views. Perhaps we all needed that frustrating experience in order to learn that this sort of thing can't be done -- unless the individual in question is just about in agreement with you to begin with and is actually moving in that direction. Even then, you can't prove anything to him -- but you can help him to prove it to himself. Uncle John has his own missions, but you know it may be that he is really not trying so hard to convert other people as he may appear to be doing. He just does not give me the appearance of a frustrated person, but rather of someone who is scattering seeds and letting them fall where they will and grow as they will. Of course, when he finds someone who wants to listen to him...

What about the effectiveness of fandom upon editors who had been SF fans? There's one thing you need to remember. In some ways, this is like the member of the crew who suddenly becomes captain. He may have more sympathy with, more understanding of, his messmates than the former skipper -- but he also intends to make good in his new job. And he knows all the tricks which worked so well on the former commander -- he knows who the wise guys among the crew are, and how they think. It's going to be harder to manipulate him, and the crew will have to learn brand new tricks. Not only that, he also knows the crewmembers' areas of gullibility, too, and how to appeal to them. That's why some magazines edited by outstanding and capable fans have not always turned out the way some fans hoped and expected -- even though they were very successful financially. What happened, of course, was that a new fandom was built up for things like the Shaver Mystery, and so on.

When letters to the editors came in by the hundreds -- Tremaine, in 1935 refers to something over 80 in one week -- the letter departments were an important part of SF magazines. By the '40s, when suddenly there were a dozen titles instead of just three, the correspondence to particular ones fell off. Part of the reason for this was that many of the most active fans found in-group activities more interesting, another part was that even those who still felt like writing letters didn't have the time or interest to cover the whole field. But the result of all this eventually was the disappearance of letter departments. My feeling is that so long as a magazine has a letter department, the editor is going to get letters -- seeing oneself in print still has its motivations -- but even now when the number of magazines is down to a more sensible number than earlier, I don't believe that anyone gets anything like 80 letters a week.

During the ancient and middle period, nearly all efforts to influence editors and publishers, and to organize pressure groups in fandom which would forward that aim, used the strategy of direct assault and the tactics of loud noise. The record shows that some positions were carried this way, but the really important ones were no more vulnerable than Fredricksburg or Cold Harbor. (You wonder why I didn't say Bunker Hill? Ah, the British finally did take Breed's Hill and drive the colonists out of their trenches -- had the position been actually on Bunker Hill, the story might have been somewhat different.)

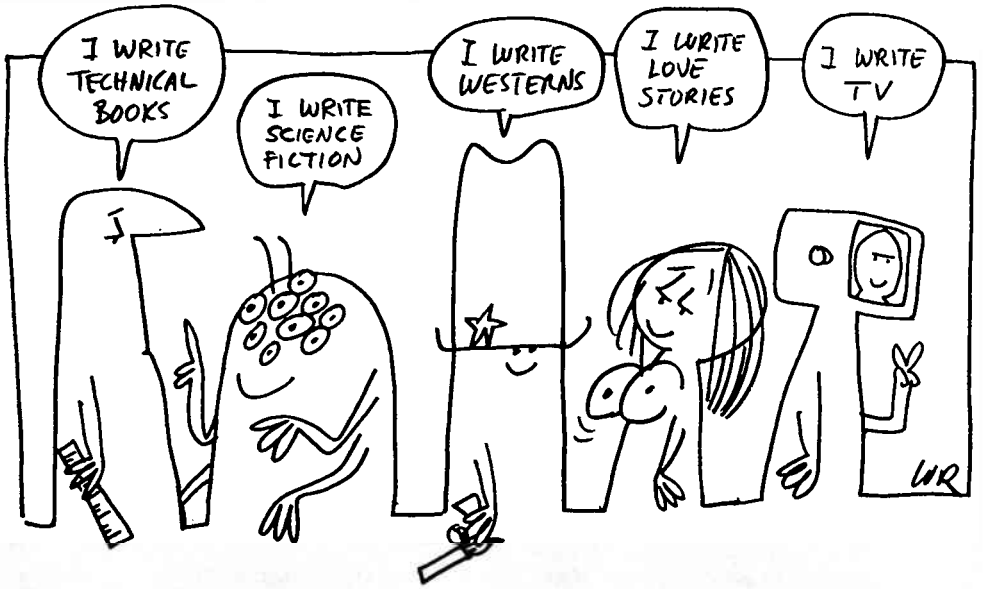
Fandom has arrived at genuine effectiveness with different methods, indirect methods. There is no all-fan organization, in the sense that the Independents dreamed in the '30s, or Damon Knight hoped for with the National Fantasy Fan Federation. But there is an organization which has tremendous influence, and that is the annual World Science Fiction Convention. The Hugo winners accomplish much more than the somewhat impermanent prizes they carry home. And the fact that Roger Zelazny's *Lord Of Light* was the winner in 1968 means much more than that various publishers will compete for the next story that he writes. There's just so much of even a genius like Roger -- far less than enough to go around. So some publishers will be doing the next best thing -- looking for someone who can write the kind of story that Zelazny writes, or in other ways getting on board that bandwagon.

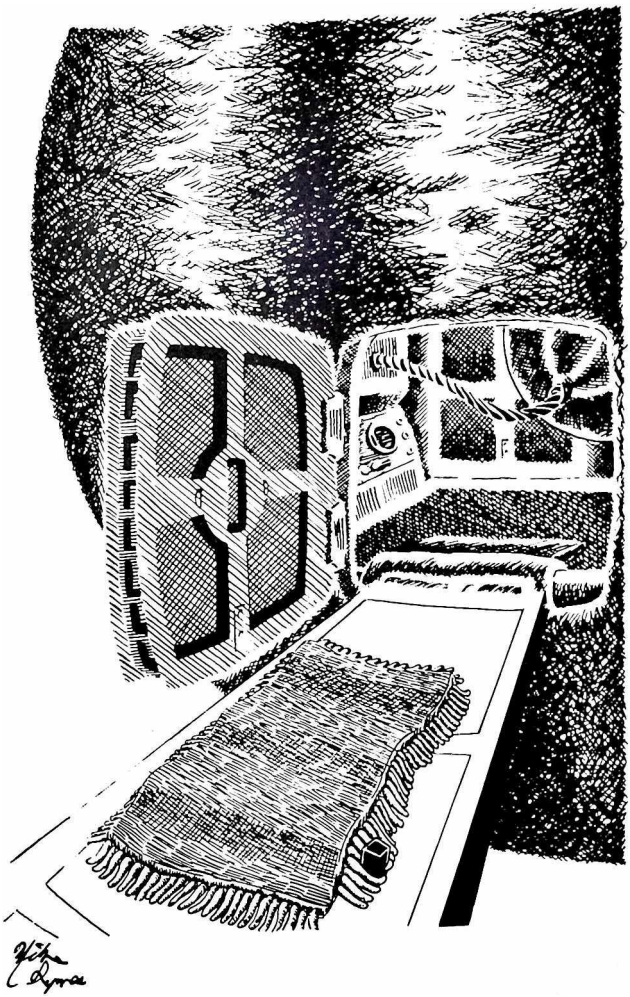
Because the general public is award-happy, and publishers know it. A prize-winning novel, a prize-winning author is a selling gimmick, they hope, and who can resist that sort of thing? Not very many publishers.

Here, then, is where fandom is at the wheel. Your votes for the Hugo winners will have more influence not only on who gets more money for his next novel or shorter length story, but what kind of SF is going to be considered "in". This, ten, is how you have a chance to raise the standards, or otherwise get more out of the sort of SF *you* like. Not by crusades to stamp out the kind you don't like, but by using the arts of reasonable persuasion -- which means you do not antagonize people you want to influence -- in the many fan magazines where current material is reviewed and discussed, so as to build up a lobby, if you can, for the novel or author you want to see as the latest Hugo winner. I believe that this area of effectiveness is going to increase, as softcover SF books and publishers continue to proliferate. Eventually, there will be a minor collapse, at least, because the bookracks are already saturated --they have been for some time. Just the same, it is the strongest which will survive, and a temporary setback will help to give us all an idea about what type of SF does have steady sales value.

Don't mistake me. I did not, and certainly do not, mean to imply that any and every sort of writing or story that happens to win a Hugo is going to be *the* new best-seller. By no means. No one wins all the time, and Don Wollheim hit the nail squarely when he noted what sort of SF has been generally the most reliable seller over the course of a couple of decades.

No matter; however true this may be, it has nothing to do with my point. My point has been to give you some idea of what sort of methods that fans have used, and are using, to get what they want have been effective, and which have been more frustrating than effective. Precisely what the individual *you* wants is none of my business to decide -- it's up to each of you to make your own decisions for yourself, and then accept the responsibility for them and the inevitable consequences, happy or otherwise, that go along with them. All I can do is suggest possibly efficient ways and means -- and if any of you have found (or will find in the future) any part of these comments useful, then I'm content.





Lefty Feep & I

by Robert Bloch

The postcard read:
"Dear Bob: May I suggest a short, reminiscent article for SFR entitled *Lefty Feep And I*? I'm sure the readers would love some humorous and informative anecdotes about the dear old pulp days, with some idea of the cold hard reality.
Hopefully, Dick."

All right. Now you know who's responsible. If there's to be any bitching in the lettercol, be sure that it's addressed to the proper party -- not to me, but to Hopeful Dick.

As for me, I have no choice in the matter. Rather than risk offending a publishing giant, I will tell all about rhe cold hard pulp days and the dear old reality, or whatever it says on the card. I know enough about psychology not to tangle with schizos who carry on dialogues with themselves in editorials. It's bad enough to have one guy after you, let alone two.

So, now: Lefty Feep and I.

Taking the two of us in reverse order, I was born in 1917. Lefty Feep was born circa 1936, and I was not his father. The little bastard was created by my friend, Harold Gauer, and first appeared in the pages of *Brutal - The Magazine For People*.

Now it is possible that there are those among you who have not seen or read *Brutal*. I am willing to make such allowances because 1936 happened a long time ago, and besides, there was only one copy of the magazine. It was a take-off on the then newly-published *Esquire*, and it was written, edited, typed, photo-inserted, illustrated, bound and gagged by Gauer and myself. I haven't seen the 'zine for many years, and since it reposes in Gauer's library in Milwaukee I can't consult it, but as I recall he invented the name Lefty Feep as a story byline or as the name of a character in one of his contributions.

I do know, however, that Lefty Feep *was* a character, and a prominent one, in a novel which Gauer and I subsequently collaborated on for our own amusement during the following year. This epic, never intended or submitted for publication, was a big step forward from the one-copy *Brutal*, because we not only revised it, but did it with a carbon copy. As a result I do possess the complete manuscript of IN THE LAND OF THE SKY-BLUE OINTMENTS, which features the somewhat Rabelasian adventures of Lefty Feep, Floyd Scrilch, Bishop Shapiro, F. Gregory Coprophalia, and the various delegates to the Sexual Congress who recount their sagas in a Decameron-type fashion. Feep appears in the portions written by Gauer, in the guise of a rather uncouth writer, and aside from his name there's nothing to connect him with his later incarnation in my own stories. But in later years, OINTMENT proved a seminal source for many of the Lefty Feep stories, inasmuch as it provided me with character-names devised by both Gauer and myself. I was never able to utilize any of the plot material save for a single excerpt which I took from my own section, revised slightly for the necessary updating of topical references, and -- under the title, THE TRAVELING SALESMAN -- sold, over twenty years later, to *Playboy*. This is definite proof that [a] I was twenty years ahead of my time, or [b] *Playboy* was twenty years behind the times, or [c] both.

But we were talking about Feep. That is, *I* was talking about Feep and you weren't listening. Quit scratching yourself and pay attention.

In 1941, *Unknown Worlds* published a first-person humorous yarn of mine, A GOOD KNIGHT'S WORK, written in the then-popular style of the late Damon Runyon -- not to be confused with Damon Knight, who is confused enough already. Its sequel, THE EAGER DRAGON, appeared in *Weird Tales* after *UNKNOWN WORLDS* had folded. But by that time I'd already combined the Feep name with the first-person humorous style and started a series for *Fantastic Adventures;* in the face of all this, is it any wonder Damon Knight gets confused?

Now we come to the dear old cold hard reality of the pulp days. Briefly put, a guy could starve to death. Particularly if he wasn't living in New York, where he could get acquainted with editors and publishers and thus obtain information on current market demands plus immediate assignments, to say nothing of cash advances on work as yet unwritten. Virtually all of the successful pulp writers lived in or around New York, and the few exceptions visited the city regularly to fraternize with editors. ("Fraternize" is a word we used in the Thirties which has since been replaced by the phrase, "falling-down drunk").

Like many a marginal Midwestern writer, I bemoaned the fact that no one in publishing circles ever picked up the phone and called to say, "Hey, we gotta 6,000 word hole to fill in the next issue of *Captain Torture*. You wanna knock something out for us by Friday?" On the other hand, like my fellow-members of Midwestern marginalia, I didn't want to live in New York. Particularly since I'd recently married and settled down. Way down, as it turned out, by 1942.

It was then that I bethought myself of Raymond A. Palmer who for several years had been editing *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures* out of Chicago. Ray, a fel-

low member of the Milwaukee Fictioneers, had occassionally nudged me into contributing science fiction yarns in the past, but I'd been recalcitrant about sending material to him. I had a thing about "frater izing", and felt that a personal relationship shouldn't be used for business purposes -- no wonder I was starving!

Anyway, as has always been the case with me, the worse things got the more I felt impelled to write slapstick comedy material; when things got bad enough, I sat down one day and wrote the first Lefty Feep story, TIME WOUNDS ALL HEELS. I sent it to Ray and it popped into print almost immediately. But before that time his response was such that I realized I'd found a new market and a continuing character. What had started out as a one-shot story quickly developed into a series.

I won't attempt to describe the Feep yarns. Frankly, it's been many years since I've read any of the adventures of the modern Munchausen who narrated his saga in rhyming slang. I remember some of the titles -- SON OF A WITCH, THE LITTLE MAN WHO WASN'T ALL THERE, JERK THE GIANT-KILLER, STUPORMAN, GENI WITH THE LIGHT BROWN HAIR, and that's about all. I did a total of twenty-three Lefty Feep stories, the last one being published in 1950, but the bulk appeared during World War II. It was a time when readers were looking for escape and a few laughs -- and that's what I tried to provide. There was never the slightest pretense that I was the forerunner of J.G.Ballard, even though I still believe in my heart of hearts that I was probably just as funny.

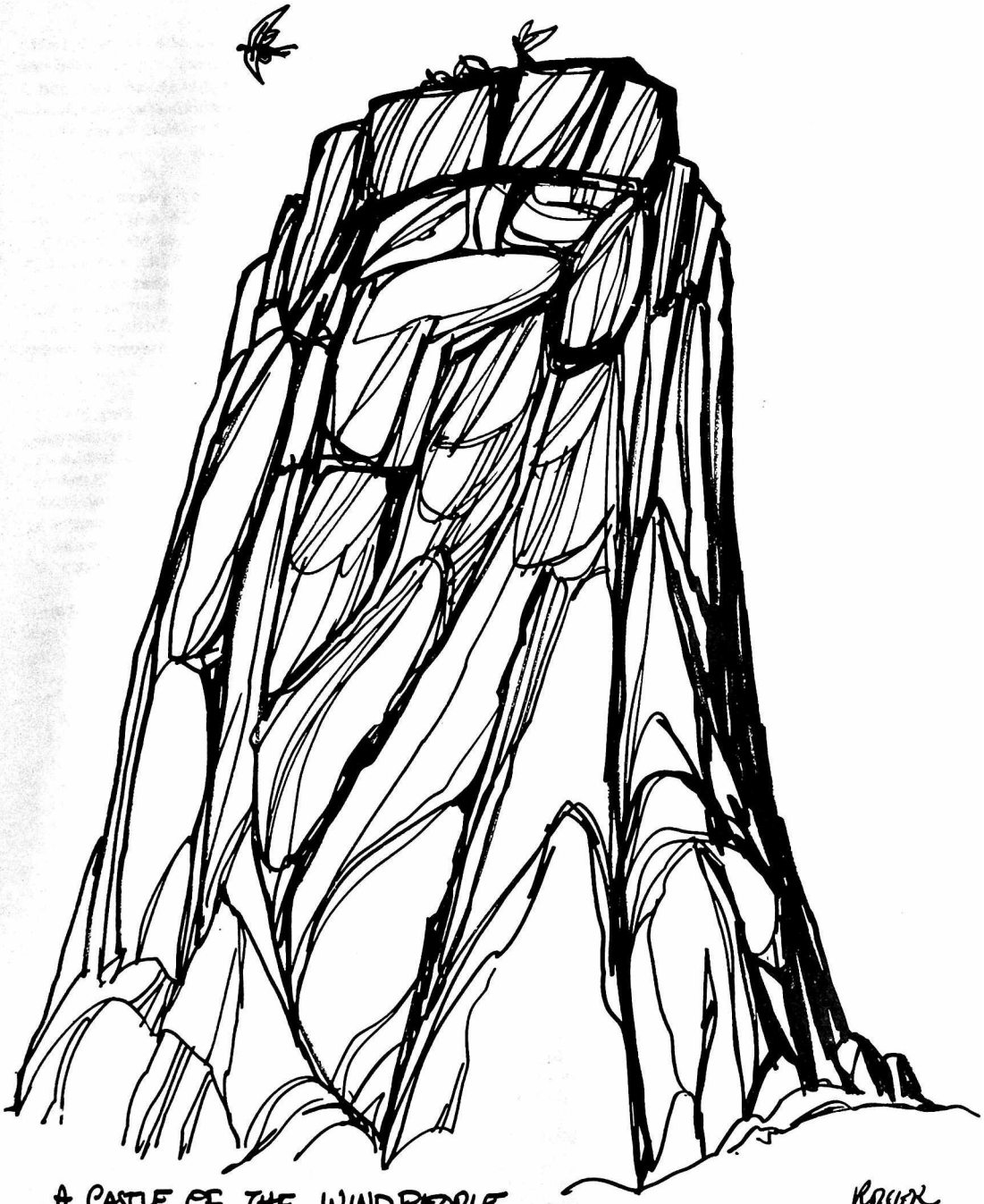
There are no humorous and informative anecdotes about the pulp days. During the time I wrote the Feep stories, and other tales for Palmer's magazines, I got in the habit of making occassional weekend visits to Chicago and became acquainted with the "Ziff-Davis circle" which included, at various times, Howard Browne, William L. Hamling, William P. McGivern, David Wright O'Brien, Rog Phillips, Berkeley Livingston, and others. An all-night poker game was usually in order, or disorder, and the penny-ante stakes kept the play on a strictly social level. I never solicited an assignment for a story and Ray never offered one -- it seemed tacitly understood that I'd just keep on writing Feep whenever an idea occurred to me, and send in anything else I thought suitable. There was no discussion, no intrigue; I never negotiated for a rate-increase or a cover story or byline or an advance; this was still the Midwest, and Ziff-Davis (like the poker game) was a penny-ante operation.

After a time Palmer got hooked on Richard S. Shaver and his "mystery" and I gradually phased out of the Feep series and into suspense stories, science fantasy, and a job as copywriter in a factory turning out fortune-cookies.

Now almost eighty years have passed and Lefty Feep is virtually forgotten by all except chronic injustice-collectors like Dick Geis. In 1968 a Tower paperback anthology, *The Time Curve,* edited by Roger Elwood and someone named Moskowitz, reprinted TIME WOUNDS ALL HEELS. In '69, THE END OF YOUR ROPE ran in *Worlds Of Unknown,* published by those great folks who gave you Sol Cohen. As far as I know, these two yarns, the first and the last in the canon, are the only reprints. And perhaps that's just as well. The cornball puns, the dated slang and topical allusions, the undisciplined and often lunatic plotting -- these ingredients would hardly please today's audience, conditioned as it is to the subleties of an Agnew or a Martha Mitchell.

Harold Gauer, who kindly permitted me to use the Lefty Feep name, is still alive and well in Milwaukee. In fact, he just sent me a xerox copy of *Volume Thirteen (1947)* of THE GOON HISTORY -- a compilation of thousands of photographs, clippings, personal memorabilia and several million words of collaboration covering, in some thirty-odd volumes, our lives from 1935 until the present. But that's another story -- and a far wilder one than LEFTY FEEP. Worse still, it's all true...

NOTE: This article, written originally for Dick Geis' Science Fiction Review, was rescued by your editor with the help of Dick Geis, Ma Bell, and the consent of Robert Bloch. All bitching, as it says in the article, should be addressed to Geis, who can be reached at the St. Fantony Home for the Distressed, Heyworth, Illinois 61745.


A CASTLE OF THE WINDPEOPLE
ROTTLER

LUPOFF'S BOOK WEEK

DICK LUPOFF

ONE MILLION TOMORROWS by Bob Shaw. Ace Special 26938, New York, 1971, 191 pp., paper, 75¢.

ONE MILLION TOMORROWS was serialized in Amazing Stories for November 1970 - January 1971; the book edition carries an outstanding semi-abstract cover painting by Leo and Diane Dillon. Its author, Bob Shaw, has shown in his earlier novels an ability to portray appealing characters faced with concerning problems. Most often, for reasons upon which one may speculate, he deals with disintegrating marriages. The present book concerns one, as have the two earlier books of Shaw's which I have read.

The science fiction premise (or "gimmick") upon which ONE MILLION TOMORROWS is based is an intriguing one: suppose an immortality serum were developed which would leave women permanently free of disease or age and fully possessed of their normal sexuality -- while men, having used the serum, would become similarly immortalized, but would lose both the desire and the ability to perform as virile males.

Shaw does not clearly explain how his serum renders men "cool," but he implies that the secretion of male hormones is inhibited by the serum. (Upon receiving his injection a man has a two or three day "grace period" of potency; with the cooling of sexuality the beard ceases to grow.)

Under these conditions, no futuristic technology would be needed to restore a near-normal sex drive to these men: hormone injections are available today for the correction of glandular abnormalities of this type. This consideration is completely overlooked in Shaw's book, merely the first of a long string of examples of what James Blish has dubbed "idiot plotting," and under the circumstances I must nominate ONE MILLION TOMORROWS for the idiot plotting prize of prizes.

Let's see what Shaw does with his premise. Will Carewe, an accountant working for a drug manufacturer, is called into his bosses' office and told that their firm has developed a new-formula serum which leaves male potency unaffected. Carewe has not yet "tied off" -- taken his immortality shot -- so he is naturally intrigued at the possibility of gaining the prize of immortality without paying the price of his virility.

How is the new formula to be tested? On animals, then human volunteers? No, Will's bosses inform him that they're afraid of loss of the new secret formula before it can be patented. (But surely the men who developed the new formula know about it, and if they have kept engineering notebooks in the orthodox fashion, they can establish a claim for patent whether the formula leaks out before patenting or not.) Will is told that *he* has been selected to test the new formula, which is presented to him in a syringe to be

injected at home, at his leisure. All he has to do is try it out and report back that it works.

Since the experimental subject is going to be wandering around in public, the world's first "funkie" (functional male) immortal, how is the experiment to be kept secret? The obvious way would be for Carewe to take his shot right away but pretend, until such time as the new formula is to be revealed, that he has never tied off. Instead, his bosses tell him, he is to pretend to have cooled it by depilating his chin and by feigning asexuality.

Will goes home and tells his wife the good news that he is to become immortal without sacrificing his virility -- a big hangup in their marriage, as one might well imagine -- and instead of being pleased she simply refuses to believe him. They have a big fight (both acting like idiots) and separate.

Our hero zips off to Africa to volunteer his assistance in *forcing* shots (of the old formula) on tribesmen who feel that their masculinity is more important than immortality, and now Will gets embroiled in a whole series of attempts on his life: his ground-effect car is sabotaged, he escapes its sinking in a river but is stabbed in a native village, he is taken to a hospital and somebody tries to poison him, he escapes but another attempt is made at stabbing, he escapes this and tries to get away by airplane but the plane is sabotaged...

And throughout *this* little sequence Shaw uses that hoariest of paranoid plotting devices: Will *knows* that somebody's trying to do him in but everybody else in the story just tells him that he's being paranoid!

Will finally gets home, escapes still another attempt on his life, and finally confronts the two bosses who got him into all this, only to learn that (beware, I'm about to give away the book's big-big-big shocker) there never was a new-formula serum, he's been injected with nothing but water, and the whole thing was a put-up job to manipulate the black-market price of the non-existent serum!

The ending is just a thin cut above the old "it was all a dream" dodge that should have gone out with Mrs. Aphra Benn; the whole book is littered with idiocies and transparent *deus ex machina* devices that gave me a rush of blood to the head and set my teeth to gnashing. If this book truly exemplifies the work of Bob Shaw, I have to conclude that he is a man of peculiarly configured talents: he writes enviably well but he cannot *think* at all.

SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME edited by Robert Silverberg, "chosen by the Members of the Science Fiction Writers of America," 673 pp., Avon 1971, paper, $1.50.

Here's the paperback of last year's fat and expensive volume; if you didn't pay the freight for the original Doubleday hardcover you must surely have picked it up from the SF Book Club. But if by any chance you didn't, and you are interested in a one-volume compendium of the greatest SF short stories of their era, you can't lick this book. (At $1.50 it's a bargain, too!)

That odd line about "chosen by" refers to the SFWA project to back up to pre-Nebula Awards years (the first set of Nebulas covered 1965); while there was no reason why a member of SFWA couldn't nominate a story from a 1926 Amazing, a 1923 Weird Tales, a 1915 Argosy -- or earlier -- the actual voting brought in two dozen stories of 15,000 words or less, originally published between 1934 and 1963.

The veteran SF reader will find little new here. Still, what fun poring over the volume, remembering the thrill of first reading Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey." And the first time I read Bradbury's "Mars Is Heaven!" The chill of Matheson's "Born Of Man and Woman," the uncanny diagnosis and prediction of Leiber's "Coming Attraction" in an early, early H.L.Gold-edited issue of Galaxy.

The science fiction short story is essentially an art form of *ideas*. I know that's been said many times by many people, but that doesn't make it untrue, and it *is* true. So out of your first ten SF stories you may hit ten exciting new ideas. That's where we get that old saw "The Golden Age of Science Fiction is 13."

By the time you've read some thousands of SF short stories, the hit-ratio for new ideas drops from 9 or 10 out of 10, to something nearer to 1 out of 100. And so I find myself reading few SF short stories and many more novels -- which can be stories of character, not relying on the quick punch of the short story but instead building cumulatively over a span of some hundreds of pages.

For anyone who's been around the SF field long enough to have read most or all of the stories in this book, its main appeal should be one of nostalgia, or possibly a matter of handy reference if you ever want to check out of of these classic stories without having to hunt it down in less accessible places.

I'd have liked a little squib with each story giving the place and circumstances of its original publication, something like Doc Lowndes used to give in his lamented reprint magazines. Maybe not with the overkilling thoroughness of Alva Rogers or the bombast of Sam Moskowitz, but a few paragraphs about the author, the magazine, perhaps other notable stories in that or "adjacent" issues...

What I'm doing is talking about embellishments. The book must become a standard collection for schools and libraries, and the field is certainly well represented by these stories. If you're a young reader (not necessarily in chronological age but in terms of how long and how much you've read SF), and if you care at all about "roots" -- or just damned fine stories -- you can't spend a better buck-fifty. If you're a veteran, you know this material and you can decide for yourself.

MODERAN by David R. Bunch, 240 pp., Avon 1971, paper, 75¢.

Speaking of veteran SF readers, if you were around a dozen years ago when David Bunch's "Moderan" stories started running (one in F&SF, one in Amazing, one in Fantastic), you'll remember the stir they created, both pro and con. Bunch was a sort of premature New Waver. He told stories that were brittle vignettes in some sort of metaphorical nightmare future where metal has replaced flesh to the medically-possible limit, where human intercourse is limited to an eternal and meaningless war of all against all.

The reader's first visit to Moderan is shocking. Perhaps it was more shocking a dozen years ago than it would be today, as we see out world turning, before our eyes, into Moderan. (Just as we can see Fritz Lieber's "Coming Attraction" enacted on any urban thorofare daily and nightly.)

But Bunch seems to be a one-story author. He keeps returning, over and over, to Moderan, to make the same point repeatedly, using the same language of metaphor to make the same statement time after time after time. I suppose this is calculated, and I suppose the author's intention is, by repetition, to hammer his point home. Like a catatonic he gazes rapt at the horror he sees in the future and in the present, and like an obsessive compulsive he keeps pointing out the dreadful facts of our future and present.

But for this reader, at least, the repetition dulls rather than sharpens his point. Bunch had made his statement, I thought, in the very first Moderan story. A few more might round out the corners of the picture, fill in a few details and shades of color which were not complete in the first story.

I regret to say it, because I believe that Bunch is a sincere man with an authentic vision (in this sense, he is much like Lovecraft). I believe also that he is a man of significant talent. But I must say, nonetheless, that as far as I'm concerned, once you've read one Moderan story, you've read 'em all.

There are 46 of them in this book.

ALCHEMY AND ACADEME edited by Anne McCaffrey, 239 pp., Doubleday 1970, $4.95.

I'm afraid that Women's Libbers in the audience -- starting in my own bed -- will take exception to this review, but any honest critic, I think, has to adopt the policy of the classic umpire Bill Klem, who used to say "I never called one wrong" -- and tapping his heart with his thumb, would add -- "from here!"

Anne McCaffrey emerged as an SF writer just a few years ago with a series of novels and shorter stories that can only be described as "ladies' SF." Her lead characters tended to be dewy-eyed virgins half-afraid, half-eager to Give Their All. The scent of lavendar and the rustle of crinolines seemed to pervade every line of her works, and the fact that she promptly started copping prizes (including the SFWA's Nebula award) tells us as much about the electorate as it does about Mrs. McCaffrey's stories.

Not that all of this was really so surprising -- Mrs. McCaffrey was, at the time, a middle-aging, white-haired suburban housewife from Long Island. She has since kicked out some jams and flown the coop for Ireland's writers' tax shelter, and I am considerably curious as to what her later output will be like.

But ALCHEMY AND ACADEME is distinctly a product of the Long Island Anne McCaffrey, from its cloyingly cutesy-poo foreward to the bulk of the 17 stories and 3 poems that fill its pages. The anthology's title is merely a little switch of the similarly alliterative phrase *sword-and-sorcery* that is applied to much of the juvenile-escapist fantasy writing of recent years; for the present book, authors were asked to prepare original stories treating one or both of the topics of the anthology title.

The result is a basketful of such slight stuff as a nine billionth reworking of the old conversation-in-a-barroom gambit, a "snapper" story whose startling surprise is the fact that a young bride's big, bearlike husband is so bearlike that he hibernates in the winter, a slightly faggotty haunted-house story in which a bishop's wife accidentally turns all the plumbing into gold...I'm sure I need not go on. To provide a little balm for those who would call me anti-feminist for these remarks, I should say that over half the authors in the book are men, and some of the worst offences are their stories.

A few are better than rune-of-the-mine. Keith Laumer's "The Devil You Don't" although as fluffy as they come is very deftly done and amusing. The same might be said of Joanna Russ's "The Man Who Could Not See Devils."

R.A.Lafferty's "Condillac's Statue" reflects the pithecanthopoidally reactionary politics of its alcoholic-Irish-Catholic author, but it's damned well written (as is everything of Lafferty's that I've seen). Peter Tate's "Mainchance" is ideologically even worse, and not one-squidgin as well written as Lafferty's story, but it's worth reading as an Awful Example of softheadedness.

The best story in the book is probably Gene Wolfe's "Morning Glory," which in a quiet and unspectacular way makes a telling point about the nature of academic inquiry and the application of the scientific method to solving real problems.

And James Blish's "More Light," although trivial as a story, presents a most amusing *roman a clef* and literary joke for the reader sufficiently into fantastic literature to know all about Blish, William Atheling Jr., Sam Moskowitz, HP Lovecraft and Robert W. Chambers.

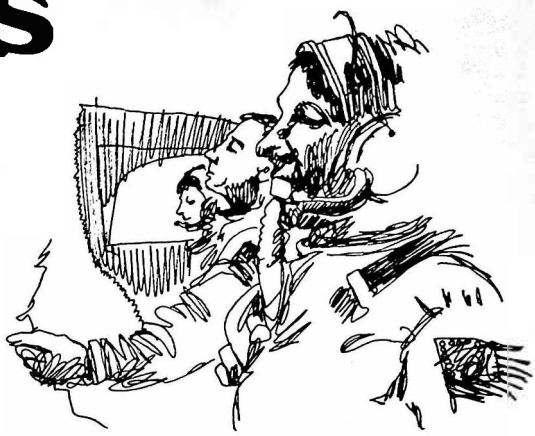
If the better stories in ALCHEMY AND ACADEME were true diamonds scattered through the dross, the reviewer would face a serious problem as to how much dross can be forgiven for the sake of how many diamonds (and of what size and water). It happens, though, that the better stories in this book are really only adequate, and in stronger company would be seen as competent, workaday short fiction only. Considering the whole 239 pages of the book, I have to give it an emphatic thumbs-down.

I sure hope Ireland does Mrs. McCaffrey some good.

-- Dick Lupoff, October 1971

Thoughts While Typing

Greg Benford



Panels on SF writing and the nuances of the literature of the future are a staple of SF conventions ("Ray Gun Scenes: How To"). Fans mill about, clutching their program booklets and trying to memorize the golden wisdom flowing from the dragooned pros (some of whom have sold two or three stories). It's the cliche of SF fandom, particularly in these rancid times: everybody wants to be a pro. After all, in a world denuded of good fan writers, of what value is it to grind out yet another review of the latest feverbright Dean Koontz book? What indeed? Better to spend your time on fan fiction, even if it's muddy and turgid and will wind up in a fanzine published in North Dakota. (And even then, don't despair. IF [the magazine of Alternatives] seems to pick up quite a few stories from those fanzines. I can't imagine where else they find them.)

Ambition is laudable, I suppose. After all, I followed that path myself. Maybe it is a good thing to encourage fans to go into SF writing. Except for one point, of course:

The whole thing is a shuck.

A fake. SF writing isn't the best end of the SF business. In fact, with a few quibbles, I would say it is the dregs. Any fan who consciously chooses writing is opting for long hours and low wages, and more often than not he could have made more money and stayed in the same field.

Consider: SF is in its biggest boom. Novels spew out and are snatched up by a large public. Heinlein is a big name on campus. Clarke and Asimov kibbitz with smiling dullards on late night TV. More and more closet SF writers go overt, writing full-time. Money flows more readily for SF. Paperbacks, hardbacks for the better class of writers, foreign rights, reprint anthologies. On the surface things look better than ever.

But. The standard, working advance for a paperback novel in this field is a monumental, munificent $1500. Few paperbacks earn out that advance, since the author gets either 4% or 6% of the cover price. The paperback house retains rights for usually five years; at any time during those years it can reprint the book, sometimes paying $500 for the privilege, sometimes not. If the novel sells to hardback *after* the paperback comes out, the paperback house gets half the hardback money. (The situation is reversed if the hardback comes out first.)

Advances *do* run over $1500, to be sure. But $1500 is the norm. Piers Anthony sold his first three or four novels for that amount. Larry Niven has. Many others do. Advances of $2000 and up exist, and well established pros get them, and more. The distressing fact is that few writers do get more until they are really Big Names, people who have made an impression on readers (and on editors). In recent years advances have gone as high as $10,000 -- but the only reason one hears about such sums is precisely because they are appearing for the first time. Last year a man who had won a recent Hugo for Best Novel told me he was hoping to get his first advance in the upper four-figure bracket; he has been in the field 15 years.

Maybe this seems pretty rosy anyway. After all, you say, $1500 is a lot of money.

Oh? Is it really that much? The average SF novel is about 60,000 words long. (Fifty years ago a work of that length would have quite routinely been labeled a novella. Novels were *long*: 150,000 words or so. The 60,000 word book is a product of a hurried age and commercial packaging conventions.) You will be paid 2 1/2¢ per word if you accept a $1500 advance.

The magazines pay about the same. F&SF pays 2¢/word to most writers. IF and GALAXY have lately bounced around from 1¢ to 3¢. AMAZING and FANTASTIC run between 1¢ and 2¢, with heavy weighting toward 1¢. Only ANALOG pays 3¢ for long works and 5¢ for short ones (less than 7,000 words). So on a word-for-word basis the magazines pay about as well as books. Of course, books are, word-for-word, easier to write.

But...just how easy is that? How much effort does it take to write a novel? Lamentably, often the answer is: not much. SF is full of writers who can crank out thumb-fingered imitations of familiar themes in minimal time. I'm assuming anyone who wants to pursue a career of writing will try to do more than that. In the long run I think you'll really make *more* money by sticking to your standards than by shrugging them off. Resuming a writer does, how many novels can he write in a year?

Bob Silverberg could probably write about a dozen. Really. Bob is the machine-like craftsman of SF, able to produce good copy and fully-realised scenes on a clock-work basis. In recent years he hasn't literally written a novel a month, though he has come close to that in total output. But Bob is an old pro, hardened by 15 years (no, he wasn't the Hugo winner above) of steady eight hour days, five days a week at the typewriter. There is really no one in the field who can match him.

Novels take work: conceptionalizing, plotting, and the final agony of putting one word after another. Most writers can't write more than one every three months. Until you get advances over $1500, that's $6000 a year. Not very much. There are a lot of writers whom you and I both respect, damned good craftsmen, who make much less than that $6000. Alex Panshin lives barely over the poverty line. Ted White does, too. Until very recently Chip Delany made even less than that. These gentlemen aren't bad writers, they're careful ones. They can't write a book in a month, or sometimes in half a year. Consider as well that they have no security, no sick leave, no paid vacations, no retirement, no reserves. Everything they get must come from beating typewriter keys. Unless a writer has been in this field a long time, he must live on the salary of a rather dull-witted bank clerk, without even the chance to swipe a few quarters for himself. The shortage of money in publishing throughout most of 1971 showed pretty clearly how highly the writer rates, too -- royalties and advances were delayed by as much as six months by some houses, while the editors and artists and other staff were paid.

This money problem doesn't bother me very much, because I'm not a full-time writer and don't ever intend to be. Fans who want to turn pro, sad to say, seldom take a hard look at the economic problems of writing. They like SF, usually know little *but* SF, and know something about writing. But there are far better ways of making a good living and writing on the side when you have time *and* still working within the SF field. People are doing it every day.

Who? Editors. Anthologists. Agents. Publishers.

An editor for a good, solid paperback house makes between $10,000 and $20,000, depending on ability and age. He reads, sets printing schedules, sometimes copy-edits. But mostly he reads. When Chip Delany took over the QUARK anthology and had been editing it for a month or so, he said to me, "God, do you realize this job is just a lot of *reading?* It's like no work at all!" But reading, using one's good taste and knowing the SF field are worth money. A major hardback house recently hired an editor for their SF line who had read a dozen or so SF novels (Wells, Verne, Bradbury...) whilst getting a BA in English. Almost any fan knew more than the applicant and there must be one or two who has decent taste (mustn't there?).

Even if you're busy editing, you can still put together an anthology or two on the side. Anthologists get a $1500 contract for a reprint volume, or more, according to the quantity of original material the anthology is to contain. Of this they take between a third and a half -- usually half -- off the top. This is the biggest steal in the business, since the editor is making as much from reading your work as you do from writing it. But the practice is universal. Editors are in a good position for this because they can sell the anthology to their own publisher (Carr and Wollheim). It helps to be a name (Bob Silverberg), but with the connections you can do it on the strength of a few good short stories (Knight). And the stories don't even have to be that good, either (Harrison).

Agenting is a risky business, but it pays well if you are willing to hustle. And you can write on the side. Same for publishing. Business majors from Ohio State can occasionally walk into New York and get a job with a sound publisher; so could a fan, if he wanted to.

The point is to get into the publishing business and learn the ropes. There some real changes can be made: better presentation for SF, fewer books bought from hack has-beens, etc. These things can and should be done by people who know and love the field, not by drudges who handle SF and westerns and romances as though they were the same piecework. For the big lesson most fans have never learned is that the people really running the machinery that changes a typed, final draft into a book -- these people are the weakest link in the process. They are generally slow-witted, hidebound, given to cronyism and fads. Any reasonably intelligent fan who can stand to live in New York City can make his way through them.

The classic situation obtains: the artists who actually produce the novels and stories, the men and women who founded and continue this field -- they are on the bottom of the economic heap. They don't matter much. This society of ours values people by how much they make, and it's crystal clear that writers don't count for much. Since they don't, I think a young writer should insinuate himself into the field easily, at a good salary -- and leave his craft for only his best ideas, his weekends, his inner light. Starvation has seldom improved anyone's prose.

-- Greg Benford

LENARD the ATOMIC WHALE MEETS
FRED-THE RIVERKING!
CAST OF THOUSANDS
SPLASH
zinc plated
contemplation
circum-straction
MARINATED
here there betwixt...
THERE Goes The Sun

JOHN W. CAMPBELL AND THE MEAT MARKET

By John Bangsund

This morning, 27th July, I had an odd dream. "Who Goes There?" had just won the Hugo; this had been decided by a panel of overalled and bloodied workers at the meat market, only one of whom, a dark, long-haired, bearded young man, looked like an SF reader; and everyone I telephoned to discuss this news turned out to be Robin Johnson, who became more annoyed with each successive call.

When I awoke, about midday, I wondered vaguely if the dream meant anything, made some coffee and listened to Prokofiev's "Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution."

That was an hour ago. Whirling around in my mind right now is a strange vision of John Campbell and the triumph of technocracy and the proletariat; Robin Johnson and meat-workers; an Apollo launch and Jules Verne and endless lines of animal corpses; fleeting glimpses of scenes from "Alexander Nevsky" and a government official in a dust-coat, his left hand dripping with red stuff which is not blood. And there is more, some of it from the dream, some from events of the past 24 hours or so.

Let's see if we can sort some of this out.

Begin at the beginning: it sometimes helps.

"In the beginning, God..." and then, some considerable time later, John Campbell. Two years before I was born, he was appointed editor of a magazine called Astounding Stories. I am now 32. Eight weeks ago I found myself out of work. Yesterday I got a job, and Apollo XV was launched. In between, on 11th July, John Campbell, still editor of the same magazine, died.

It could be fairly convincingly argued, I feel, that my being out of work, and the launching of Apollo XV, and a myriad other momentous and trivial things, can be traced back to John Campbell. It could also be fairly convincingly argued that everything can be traced back to God, but I've served my time in that sort of argument, that kind of tracing, and when I got back as far as I could go I didn't find anything you could put the name "God" to. Campbell is easier, if only by a small margin, because you can at least finish up with a man: a man, and his ideas, and his work, and his influence.

He influenced me, whether he or I liked it or not, by doing what he did for SF. What he did someone else might concievably have done, but he did it, and SF flourished. Australians read SF and wrote it, and one of them, Lee Harding, got me reading SF, too. Not only reading it, but talking about it and writing about it and, eventually, publishing a magazine about it.

The writing and the publishing started releasing something in me that most people who have known me have vaguely felt or suspected or known was there, and is there. It's

something unique and universal, and what exactly it is I don't know. It scares me a bit, sometimes it scares me a lot, but I want more and more to get it out, and so do a lot of people, good friends, who know as I know that I am 32 and lazy and this thing inside me waiting to get out.

How lazy? In more ways than I care to mention, but here's one example: I publish a magazine about SF, but I don't know the field, have not read 5% of the standard works known to most SF readers, and am doing nothing about it. I love SF, but I do not love it the way most SF readers do, certainly not the way John Campbell loved it.

Anyway, yesterday I rang up about a job as a clerk at the meat market, and I went for an interview at 11, and at 3:30 rang again and I had the job. Hours 4 am to 1 pm, don't wear good clothes, and someone will find you a dustcoat when you come in.

Somehow I didn't feel the excitement, the relief, I had expected to feel when I got a job at last. I had a drink with Carolyn and Sandy; officially a celebration, but we talked of other things. Then I slept for an hour or so before setting off for another kind of celebration. My birthday was 3 months ago; Diane had rung during the day to tell me the birthday present she had ordered months and months ago had finally arrived and would I like to come around for dinner? Dinner was excellent, as usual. The present was Prokofiev's "Cantata for the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution", composed in 1937 and not performed until 1966. I had not heard it before. The very pretty record sleeve depicts the 50th Anniversary celebrations in Red Square, and this is rather tactful since it is a Russian recording and there's a face that used to be familiar to us missing from the banners. (The face of a man who flunked out of theological college, as I did, who strutted his little hour, and so much for Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili.)

We watched an episode of "The Persuaders". (Diane doesn't have a record-player.) Roger Moore, Tony Curtis, Stalin and Diane didn't make it into my dream [remember the dream? -- that's what this is mostly about] so I think I've digressed a bit there, too.

I came home and tried to sleep, and I failed.

After an hour or so of tossing about, I turned the light on, lit up my 50th or 60th cigarette for the day (I lose count), and wondered what to do next. In five hours I was due to start work at the meat market. I started thinking about John Campbell, and what I could say about him. I decided that no one could say anything about John Campbell that could be of interest at all who had not even read the man's most famous work, "Who Goes There?".

What had George Turner said? "In this story he reached his personal perfection... one of the most dramatically effective stories in science fiction." Something like that.

(George slaved over that article all last Sunday, denying himself alcohol -- the ultimate dedication? -- to say exactly what he wanted to say. I told him, that night, "This is the most beautiful thing you have ever written for me." He said, "That's what it was meant to be." Then he demolished a large can of Foster's and two and a half bottles of Victoria Bitter: such was the virtue that had gone out of him.)

So I padded out into the living-room, found the Healy & McComas anthology in the dark, and brought it back to read "Who Goes There?"

Now I've looked again at what George said about it, and I agree with him: it's harsh, much too soulful, brash, and one of the most dramatically effective novellas in the genre. I didn't find it very frightening as a story: there have been lots and lots of alien beasties in books and on the screen since that story was written. But, although the melodrama of Campbell's "three mad, hate-filled eyes" blazing up "with a living fire, bright as fresh-spilled blood, from a face ringed with a writhing, loathsome nest of worms, blue, mobile worms that crawled where hair should grow," fails somewhat to convey now the intended horror, something else gets through.

I can't believe in the bronze McReady and the steel Norris, and can't imagine rooms stiffening abruptly, and detest writing exemplified by: "Are you sure that thing from hell is dead?" Dr. Copper asked softly. "Yes, thanks Heaven," the little biologist gasped.

And yet... And yet, something gets through.

Particularly to me, at this moment.

You will recall that for the first half of the story all of these metallic gentlemen debated ceaselessly 3 alternatives: Do we let this Thing stay entombed in its block of ice? Do we destroy it absolutely? Or do we thaw it out and see what happens? (And a fantastic debate it is, too. This is real *science* fiction, and even if the characters fail to convince, the ideas are tremendously exciting.)

• The way this story got through to me last night -- the level on which it got through to me, if you like -- was frightening, and ironic.

Frightening, because it brought into focus some of my private fears and hopes. Ironic, because it was written by a man who professed to despise what he called "litterateurs", who championed the straight old-fashioned "story", and yet -- as far as I am concerned -- wrote this masterpiece of symbolism.

Make of that what you will. We haven't got to the meat market yet.

The place stank. No, I expected it to, but it didn't. After finishing the story and thinking about it a lot, I typed a few pages of Scythrop 23, drank a lot of coffee, and at 4:02 am walked into the meatmarket -- not in old clothes, but in my normal clothes which are a bit dirty at the moment anyway.

The place -- the Metropolitan Meat Market in North Melbourne -- looks, inside, like one of those marvels of Victorian engineering you see in books of Victorian engineering and hardly anywhere else these days. There is an immensely high ceiling, supported by flying buttresses, and the columns are decorated with cast-iron heads of cows and things. There are poky little offices, dingy little staircases leading god knows where, and miles and miles of carcasses. Dead animals on hooks. I'm sorry, but that's how I saw them, and that's how I kept on seeing them, and it revolted me.

There's a network of overhead gantries, with switching devices at the junctions. Each carcass is slung on a kind of upside-down T-bar which hooks into the gantry, and the workmen push the carcasses along the gantry to the section where they are weighed. Lambs, sheep, calves -- 10 at a time, usually. Pigs, 1 or 2 at a time. Then there are special hooks for the odd bits and pieces -- hindquarters, sides and parts I couldn't identify.

The man I met first was doing everything -- weighing, recording weights and brands and purchasers and prices, and, most expertly, cutting bits and pieces to order. I think his name was John. Everyone seemed to be named John, or Jack.

I had never seen a pig cut in half before. I don't think I ever want to see it again. Not through the middle, you understand, but right down the centre, from tail to snout. John did it quickly, energetically, efficiently. The two halves weighed almost exactly the same when he weighed them a moment later. For the next couple of hours he performed many operations like this, but I didn't watch. The pigs, I think, upset me most, because they were complete, heads, tails and all. And the large box of calves' heads about 4 feet away from where I was standing.

The second person I met was Jim, a young man who looked after the offal. I watched him do his job for about 40 seconds.

Then a second John turned up, and took over the weighing and recording from John. This John was a young Greek, Australian-born from the sound of him, with long, unruly

hair and bushy sideburns, and stitches in his forehead. By this time, about 4.30, the place was full of movement. Refrigerated trucks backing in every few minutes, drivers in greasy, bloody, blue and grey boiler suits with little floppy caps to match, loading, unloading, pushing things up and down, back and forth; animal corpses flying past on the gantries, stopping for a few seconds to be weighed and recorded, then on again, and seconds later more flying back in the other direction. I realized why they wore caps then. The blood I only became aware of after a few minutes when the impaled things started dripping slowly on the concrete floor.

During all this, Greek John talked to me about the job and about himself. He smoked incessantly, despite the large NO SMOKING signs all over the building. So did others I saw. "You don't smoke when the inspector's here," he said. "There's a $40 fine. Contaminates the meat." I wondered about the contamination. Especially seeing the trucks, dozens of them, backing up to the gantries to load and unload, belching exhaust fumes everywhere.

"How do you know when the inspector is here?" I asked. "You'll see him. Bloke in a dustcoat, with a torch. And when Mac sees him he starts singing, so we know." Shortly afterwards, Mac starts singing, loudly, and John puts his cigarette, still alight, in the drawer of the weighing desk. The inspection takes 5 minutes.

Later, another council inspector did his rounds. This inspector went up and down the lines of carcasses, stamping everything in sight with a rubber stamp. He held the stamp-pad in his left hand, and the red ink was running all over his hand, up his sleeve. He didn't seem to mind.

About 6, Greek John said I could go out for coffee any time I wanted to. Coffee? At 6 in the morning? Sure, he said, several places open -- one just over the road. So I went out for coffee.

I can't describe the place. I don't think I've ever been in such a bare, un-shop-looking shop in my life. Three or four truckies were there, in their dirty blue boiler suits and caps, having breakfast or lunch or dinner; no way of telling, really, since some of them drive through the night from places like Albury and Yarrawonga. One of those salt-of-the-earth-type middle-aged ladies with names like Florrie or Connie asked me gently, "What would you like, love?" and I ordered coffee. It was instant coffee, made with boiling water from a kettle on the gas stove in the corner, and it was delicious. At this point I began to experience a weird sensation of unreality, of being in the middle of a dream. The shop was unreal. The customers were unreal: at least, they were real enough until they started talking, and then...

Well, on the counter there was a copy of the morning paper, with a shot of the Apollo XV launching, and these men started talking about it. "You know," said one man, "my old man used to read Jules Verne to me when I was a nipper, and he used to say, 'one day you'll see these things happening, son', and I never would of believed him, but..." "Yeah," said another man, "things are sure happening no one would've believed even a few years ago." Then a third man said, "You know, years ago I used to read a magazine -- Astounding, it was called, or something like that -- and there was this bloke who used to write about this sort of thing, and I used to think it was all a lot of bull-dust -- you know? -- I mean, it was all right in stories, but he talked about things like they was going to happen -- and, god, he was right, you know -- it's all happening like he said."

I finished my coffee quickly, thanked Connie/Florrie, and left. Everything was getting a bit beyond me.

I went back and stood around and watched and kept out of the way of men and things, for about an hour or so. An older man, named John, replaced Greek John on the weighing desk. There was constant activity, if anything speeding up. I felt, still, nauseated. Almost literally. I could not see myself becoming accustomed to this place and this

job. But -- oh, hell! -- the conflict went on, and I got more and more uptight about the whole thing, and finally I said to John, "I'm sorry. I can see I don't really fit in here. I'm going home." He understood, perfectly.

I went home, went to bed, and started dreaming.

* * * * *

What is all that stuff doing in an article supposedly about John Campbell? Do you find it, perhaps, irrelevant, inappropriate, in bad taste?

If you do, I can only say: this is the John Campbell I know. A massive influence: affecting my life right now; reflected in the conversation of working men in a tea-shop opposite the meat market at 6.00 on a freezing morning in Melbourne; relected on the front page of every newspaper this morning. An influence: massive, pervasive, incalculable. And it... he... will go on, and on, and on -- way on into the future he loved so much, the future which men will one day perhaps realize he invented.

* * * * *

As an editor, I know this piece should stop here. As a writer, I know it shouldn't, because there is more to be said. Loose ends to tie, unresolved thoughts to be straightened out. There is, for example, the business of Prokofiev and Stalin.

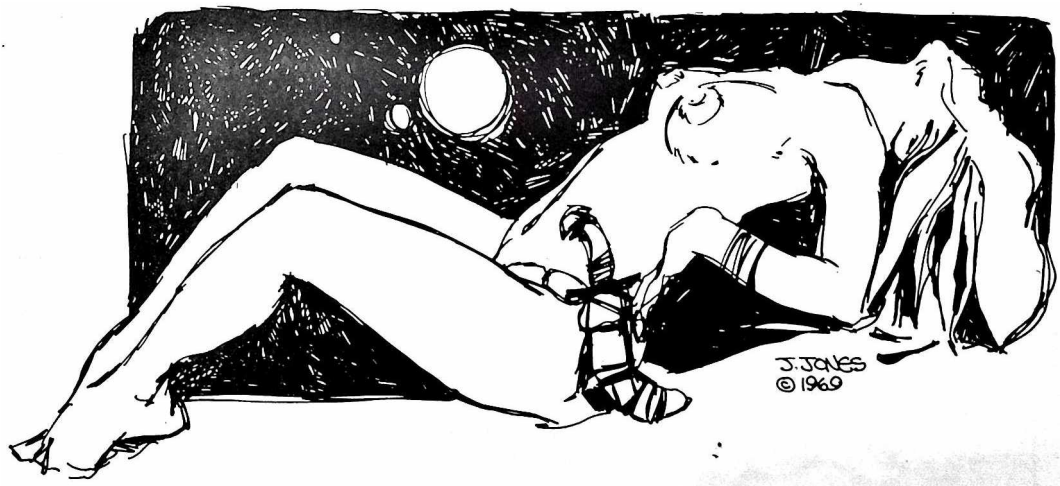
Stalin saw the future very clearly, too, and loved it, and shaped it. Dead, he will not disappear from man's memory as quickly as John Campbell will. He will live on in the future which *he* invented.

Campbell's future and Stalin's future, I think, are ultimately the same: a future where the scientist and the engineer and the technician and the working man who gets things done run the place, in fact if not in form. (And there's another irony for you -- if you agree with me -- that two men as widely opposite as John Campbell and Josef Stalin in ideology should point to the same future.)

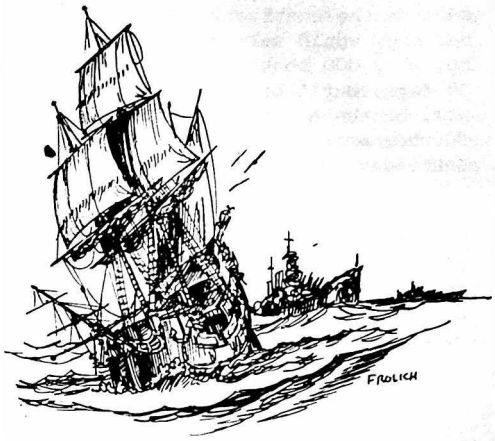
The Campbell/Stalin technocracy looks pretty frightening to me, and pretty inevitable.

Almost as if, somewhere back along the line a bit, someone found a Thing in the ice, and thawed it out, and it got away.

-- John Bangsund, July 1971



RANDOM FACTORS
THE READERS



Avram Davidson
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Thanks for sending me the neat, very black and white looking [ALGOL]. So far I have merely flipped through it, except of course for Dick Lupoff's review of my book, THE PHOENIX AND THE MIRROR, over which I merely flipped. I think it may refer to a different space/time continuum than the one I am now living in. Dick says that my book was not Science Fiction, though thus labelled by Doubleday, whose edition, rather than the Ace paperback he evidently had before him. Or had had before him. Well, of course it isn't Science Fiction; neither is it what Dick says it is, "an historical adventure novel." That is, it certainly isn't "historical" in the history of the world we live in. Dick Lupoff must be the only person who read it and didn't get the point that it refers, not to the "historic" Vergil, Vergil Poeticus, but to the Vergil of popular belief in the Dark, Medieval, and Renascence Ages, videlicet Vergil Magus. He says, "It's hero is the Roman poet Virgil [sic], identified by Davidson as a magician as well as poet." Nonsense; the distinction is made clearly in my AUTHOR'S NOTE. And if he read the whole book, as I think he did, and still thinks that it is "historical" and refers to "the Roman poet," then I have labored in vain.

I may have labored in vain, anyhow. Dick says that "...it is bruited around the industry that Doubleday has enough standing orders from libraries to guarantee, virtually, the success of every SF book it publishes. [...] a tidy, profitable operation," he says. Well, I suppose it depends on one's definition of success and profit.

In February 1970, when I was in the Veterans Hospital in San Francisco, and slightly out of my mind from pain, drugs and toxicity, I was informed by Doubleday: that 3,000 copies of an edition of 5,000 copies of PHOENIX had been sold; that after this figure sales tend to drop off and it isn't worth while to keep the book in print; that the Ace edition was out that month and so further sales of the hardcover would decline anyway; so they were declaring the book out-of-print -- i.e., no royalties, kid -- but they were sending me 20 free copies of of the kindness of their corporate heart. And from another source I learned that they weren't even going to remainder the edition, they were going to pulp it. "Chop it up," is how they put it, in a subsequent letter. Does this sound to anyone like a success? A profitable, tidy operation? From whose point of view?

As it happens, I had never trusted them anyway, and had insisted on a remainders clause in the contract; so, dopey as I was, I knew that I had 30 days to buy up the remainders...and Doubleday insisted that in order to obtain the books at cost, as it

said in the contract, I had to buy *all* the books, all 2,000 of them; any lesser number they would sell me at a discount, but not at cost. Did any of you ever try to buy up 2,000 books, 3,000 miles away, from a hospital bed? It can hardly be done, in 30 days, but I had a helpful agent (Virginia Kidd), I had my half of the remaining half of the Ace monies (D'Day got the other half). Three other SF writers lent money, further money was borrowed -- and so the remainders were lawfully purchased from Doubleday, who kicked and screamed and bit and clawed the whole way, almost.

I now have circa 1800 copies, mostly lodged in an eastern state, and some of the other 200 were sold via notices in fanzines and some (very few) via a classified ad in F&SF, and some I have given away, and some I be goddamn if I know what happened to them. At this rate it will merely take me another 20 years to dispose of the others. (Terms: $2.50 p/c, plain, $3.00 with personalized autograph, for orders of ten or more, $2.00 plain; other types of orders subject to negotiation. Adv.)

"A tidy, profitable operation," Dick? For whom?

Perhaps word got around to the libraries that PHOENIX wasn't really SF, and so they didn't order enough. Or--oh, the Hell with it. There were supposed to be sequellae, and D'Day has the usual option on the next. Including the magazine sale, my share of this book, minus commission, came to $2710, spread over a number of years. Considering what I paid out for the purchase of the remainders, I would have been more in pocket if I had sold the novel to Ace for the $2,000 which is what they pay me for originals. I had had, however, this naive notion that it was a good book, would be an outstanding book, would win awards, etc etc -- so I held out for hardcover publication. And I got something hard, alright, in addition.

However, this untidy, unprofitable experience is merely a conspicuous example of what is happening to me as a professional writer. And no doubt it serves me right because I take time to type letters to fanzines, complaining, instead of simply sitting at the typewriter and *working*. Well, I do try.

I wonder why?

Poul Anderson
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I cannot understand why the fansies get so indignant over something they have read and disliked, as if the author were some kind of criminal. There may have been some reason for it back in the doldrums of a decade or so ago, when the percentage of imitative and idiot work was dismayingly high. And as a matter of fact, the writers themselves were a good deal more vocally unhappy over the situation than the fans who were ready to castigate them; the pages of PITFCS bear ample witness to this.

Anyhow, if SF looks utterly corrupt, then people who would like to read good SF have some grounds for anger. But the truth of the matter today is that a lot of new blood has come in, a lot of older writers have been revitalized -- perhaps as a direct consequence, since nobody can work well in a creative vacuum, regardless of how earnestly he may try -- and there is good work being done in a wider variety of ways than ever before.

The variety is, in fact, so very wide that it can scarcely please everyone in all its range. So okay. A reader who finds distasteful what Norman Spinrad does, or Ray Bradbury, or R. A. Lafferty, or Chistopher Anvil, or Poul Anderson, or whoever, is not required by law to read it. He has plenty of other places to go. I certainly avoid those varieties and authors of SF that bore me; but it does not follow that I condemn them or would want to see them abolished.

Shucks, I wouldn't even advocate the suppression of fanzine reviewers. I am not

required to read them either. (Of course, two or three are good, of those I've seen; as for the rest, their pomposities are harmless.)

It does seem to me as if various theorists, also among writers, are being rather totalitarian in condemning all themes and emphases except those they happen to like. My own opinoin is that the so-called public issues are more important than the so-called private or "inner space" ones. How much room would the spirit have left in the event of, say, a worldwide Communist victory or a worldwide thermonuclear war? (Or name your own catastrophes.) Thus I find myself repeatedly trying to deal with such matters in a symbolic way. But it does *not* follow from this that I condemn anyone else taking a different attitude and approach. On the contrary, a] it is refreshing to read, and b] there is no real dichotomy between the two kinds anyway, as long as one does not completely leave out either aspect of reality.

Jack Wodhams
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[Greg Benford's] discourse did sound somewhat terribly, terribly, and in my experience 'dallying in random fields' for a few pages is one certain way to ensure that a novel is screwed. As for knowing characters, nobody knows acquaintances 100% sure, but hell! if a man can't know his own invention inside-out, then he's like to turn the handle and get 'Moo!' instead of 'Chuff-chuff.' True, in real life she is extremely unpredictable, but if she slaps the hero down when the writer wants him to make time, then plainly there is something wrong somewhere. Great bulging bosoms, fancy a man losing in his dreams as well!

And Greg gases here about only 'the pursuit of a mere well-balanced SF novel, not an item that will win the Pulitzer.' This would seem to infer that to create SF a brain need work only at half speed, no sweat. In reality, to write *anything* well demands exclusive application. To aim to be less than the best is to anticipate excuse for the personal production of crap. Lord love us, even laboring mightily an output can be made trash through the simplest human error.

There is no waste in time in writing for 55-year-olds, because next year the replacement 54-year-olds become eligible. And, because the number of mature readers exceeds the number of juvenile readers, there is bound to continue to be a demand for the more mature and practical SF as supplied by some of the more thoughtful publications.

Our sense of wonder does not last for ever, you know. When a youngster sees the sea for the first time, he might not speak for a couple of days afterwards. Like the atom bomb is awesome, incredible, dumbfounding, a battle to grasp at first appraisal. But we cannot goggle indefinitely, and there must come some relating of the conception to *living,* to ideas, and speculation and inspired extrapolation -- to think the unthunk thought and to write the wrong rite before it happens -- 1984, and all that, plus, happily, some less sober diversions. To Greg, old lad, we say writing is not a hobby. It is a cunning disease that can gull victims by *seeming* to be a hobby in the beginning -- but to write from the gut, baby, the gut has to squirm and *feel,* and be in knots screaming. Fun, fun, fun, oh yay.

David Piper
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I have a few reservations about your editorial... To be frank it jars with the rest of the written material. It reads as though you're bored stiff and really cheesed off. There's no enthusiasm or enjoyment there...and it's sad as I seem to recall that

last time you were much more enthusiastic and less cynical sounding. In fact, I even recall you were talking about big plans for ALGOL: going quarterly and winning a Hugo and all that bit.

Ted White's column is pretty much of a horror story and from what I can gather the situation is very prevalent Over There. It's pathetic, really, of course. The Smothers show, from the bits I made the mistake of watching, was lousy and the idea that it could offend anyone is laughable. Some of the stuff, regular stuff, on our channels over here would probably give Middle America/Spiro Agnew/And The Rest heart failure. I've recently read Harlan's book and that's Ted's column in spades. Most of the USTV our channels buy is crap.

[[You're quite correct about my editorial, and just one of a number of people to comment on it. Frankly, when I wrote it I wasn't in the best of spirits. At times fandom tends to wear me down and that was one of the low points. My bold plans to begin publishing quarterly have gone down in flames, and now I content myself with one or maybe two issues a year. And, too, personal plans change as the seasons do. If my current plans come to fruition I will join the ranks of expatriate New Yorkers. And as I type this in mid-July, Maybe Not.

[[Jack Wodhams misses one aspect of sense of wonder. Rather than the impact caused by something new, you can regain that S.O.W. by looking at something old through new eyes, with a new attitude. It works for me; it can work for others.]]

Jerry Lapidus
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I'm very pleased that you've kept [the graphics] portion of the magazine clear, straight, and simple. Some editors, notably Jay Zaremba with THE ESSENCE, seem to be playing around with graphics too much as a single, separate item, to the extent where it has become flowery, complex and even at times in the way of the material itself. But ALGOL has remained very simple (I could even say a little too simple for my taste), with graphics and content working together, rather than at odds with each other.

I refuse to get into yet another argument with Pierce; I've done it time and time again, both in person and via letter, and I'm sick and tired. The constant unproven assumptions, the constant ridiculous generalizations, the total lack of logic in most cases -- other people have recorded these in all of Pierce's tirades, and I can only add that all are present here in large amounts. Perhaps the prime example is the paragraph on page six:

> "Knight's ambivalence is shown in other places, too. For instance, he praises Heinlein's characterization at one point. Yet on page 135, he applauds the anti-heroes of John Bowen's "After The Rain" thusly: 'Nearly all these people are marvelously real and undramatic. They are unsuccessful, resigned, faintly comic people.'"

Am I reading this wrong? I see no connection whatsoever between praising Heinlein and praising Bowen, certainly no "ambivalence." Somebody want to tell me what the hell he's talking about?

Ted's article, in perfect comparison, is excellent, logical, backed up with both thought and available facts and quotes in context. An excellent analysis of a situation which has seemingly been talked to death. It now remains interesting to see what will happen to "All In The Family," the new sitcom about a bigot. Will the vocal minority cause another effort at bitting satire to bite the dust.

I don't think I understand Jay Kinney's illustrated song/story. It is, nonetheless, most interesting...not to mention weird as hell.

Harry Warner, Jr.
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Science fiction critics are tending more and more to behave like the mainstream literary critics, in that they devote much of their attention to criticizing criticism, instead of criticising fiction. Most of the good SF critics happen to be individuals who have sold large or small amounts of fiction, but J.J.Pierce is clearly writing mostly about the things that Kornbluth, Bloch, Knight and so on have written about fiction, not about their fiction or the stories they are criticising. Pierce can write lucidly and tellingly when he isn't trying to propagandize and we need people with such abilities to turn out genuine criticism of SF at a time when almost all the people praised as critics in the fanzines are actually writing synopses plus a sentence or two announcing whether they liked the book in question.

Gian Paolo Cossato is most interesting. But, like all the other articles I've read on the lack of SF magazines in non-English speaking nations, it leaves unanswered the natural question: was the lack of SF magazines until the early 1950's a unique lack in Italy's magazine publishing field, or was the nation also without parallels to the American and British magazines devoted to western, detective, love, and other kinds of fiction?

Rick Sneary mentions a Forester book which tells how he wrote the Hornblower novels. This causes me to half-remember the only book known to me which is basically a description of how the author wrote a science fiction novel. And I can't remember the writer's name for certain, or both the titles. I'm sure of one title: "Sugar In The Air." I suspect that the author was E.C. Large, but this may be wrong. Both were published originally in England in the 1930's, and I'm not certain whether they ever saw American editions or reached paperback editions. But the thinly fictionalized volume about the writing of the other volume was brilliant.

Someone really should start a series of articles on British SF of the 1930's and thereabouts. Almost none of it is ever mentioned today, except for Wells and Stapledon works, but some of it was quite adult in theme and treatment, and some of the novels don't deserve the obscurity they've acquired through wartime paper drives and failure to get serialized in the prozines.

The illustration in this issue are splendid, beautiful, professional in technique and amateur in spirit in the best sense of the words.

[[Alright, Harry, it's been a long time since you've been in ALGOL -- nearly five years without an article. I propose one to you, or to anyone else interested in the subject.

[[I agree there are too few really well-based critics in the fanzines. Certainly people are getting nominated for "best fan writer" around Hugo-time on very thin ground indeed. The mass of fanzine book reviews turn me off, which is why I choose to stay with the efforts of Dick Lupoff, who must certainly qualify as a highly competant writer and reviewer of SF.]]

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Some of J.J.Pierce's references to my essay in "The Science Fiction Novel" could stand correction.

ITEM: Instead of "resenting" the heroes of what Mr. Pierce calls traditional SF, I said, "But note this well: I'm not decrying such heroes, as such. I'm not ridiculing lofty motives, or the device of allowing a conformist character to rebel

against what he discovers to be a false system of values." Clear enough?

ITEM: Instead of "resenting" (again!) the "primitive and immature" heroes of Asimov and Heinlein, as Mr. Pierce would have it, I said, "Isaac Asimov recently pointed out that science fiction heroes are permitted to be intelligent. This is admirable. And yet, emotionally, most of them are primitive and immature." I fail to see in this statement either an indication of resentment or a criticism of the heroes of Asimov or Heinlein, *per se*. Indeed, further references to these two authors include the following words on my part: "Men like Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and George O. Smith have demonstrated great ingenuity in portraying the potentials and possibilities of our immediate futures. Robert A. Heinlein is praised, and rightly so, for his abilities along these lines." I also quoted an earlier review of a Heinlein bookin which I took issue, not with his hero, but with his ideology -- and ended that quote with a note of unmistakable praise and the observation that, "In subsequent correspondence with Heinlein concerning this book and his SPACE CADET, we made the mutual discovery that our basic sociological views were not as far apart as we had first imagined." Again, clear enough?

ITEM: Nowhere in my essay do I state, as Mr. Pierce would have it, that SF should be "reminding readers that the atomic bomb makes all science a Bad Thing," *nor* that "science fiction is a 'primitive' and 'immature' genre that reflects the worst in contemporary culture", *nor* that "It's readers are mostly perpetual adolescents driven by sadistic compulsions -- and possibly the desire to become mad scientists and go around blowing up everything with atom bombs." What I *did* say -- and what Mr. Pierce chooses to distort for purposes of his argument -- is that science fiction in the late Forties and early Fifties attempted to restore a faith in science

which had been exploded by the explosion of the atomic bomb -- that some science fiction, and by no means all, appealed to the adolescent through fantasies of revolt.

ITEM: In discussing my essay, Mr. Pierce asserts, "SF could use more 'real' characters, he feels (like a motel operator who carves up women guests in showers, perhaps?)". What I actually wrote is, "Where is the science fiction novel with the ordinary family man as hero...or the teacher...or the creative artist...or the philosopher? Where is the science fiction novel that contents itself with showing us the everyday worId of the future, devoid of Master Spies and Master Technicians and Master Psychologists and Master Criminals?" I do *not* state that the latter characters are in any way "unreal" or that their use in science fiction is unjustified: my thesis is that a literature devoted solely to the exploits of super-heroes and super-villains could well be balanced by a certain number of stories concerning the common man. Just what this has to do with my use -- some time after the delivery of this essay -- of a murderous character in a *mystery* novel, rather escapes me. Unless, of course, Mr. Pierce, in his zeal for what he arbitrarily defines as "honest science fiction" and a "rational world view" is at times prone to abandon both the "honest" and the "rational" approach in his criticism.

Let me make one statement, which I hope will be clear to all, including Mr. Pierce. I am not disputing his position, nor his right to maintain it. But no end, however laudable it may be in the mind of the one who pursues it, is justified by the wilful or careless distortion of facts. As a matter of fact, such methods are just plain unscientific!

[[Out of one approach to a problem, however poorly done, other approaches are sure to be found. Marion Zimmer Bradley has given us a long and interesting approach to some of the questions that J.J. Pierce raised in his article last issue. A sort of stfnal "technological fallout."

The world of the ordinary man is a hard one to write about; it takes a darned good writer to make such a world interesting to the reader, and so an economically viable proposition for a publisher. To put it another way: A.E. Van Vogt is writing terrible stuff nowadays, but put his name on the cover of a magazine or paperback and sales soar. As far as a novel about ordinary people in the mileau of an ordinary world, I suggest Bob Silverberg's THE WORLD INSIDE. Bob is a darn good writer, and his novel about ordinary people really works.]]

Franz Rottensteiner
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There is some grain of truth in much of what [Pierce] says, but taken as a whole, especially in connection with his chosen examples, his views are puzz'ling, sometimes annoying, but most of the time only amusing. The quarrels between the old SF and the "New Wave" are especially notable for their sterility. I think that I'm a completely objective and impartial observer, since I think both sides worthy of one another, both displaying an equal amount of incompetence, with the exception of rare birds such as J.G. Ballard or Brian W. Aldiss.

...Mr. Pierce's article was written some time ago; perhaps now Anthony is in greater favor with him, for surely MACROSCOPE is banal, intellectually vapid and superstitious enough a piece to appeal to even the most hardened dinosaur of science fiction, displaying the same sort of dullness one has come to expect from writers like Isaac Asimov, E.E.Smith, Lester del Rey or any number of that bunch.

Again, Mr. Pierce's standards: I must agree with his opinion of the vision of science and that it implies a rational world-view. But then one is astonished to get offered Larry Niven or E.E.Smith as examples. Larry Niven, with his gambling, boy-

ish, immature heroes and his breeding of people for "luck" (as in RINGWORLD)? Is this the "victory of intelligence over brute matter" he speaks of? "Luck" as a highly esteemed intellectual quality? Or the imbecilities of an E.E.Smith, whose fascism is harmless only because of his monumental incompetence? Emphasis on ideas and ideals well and good -- but it would help a lot if the writers Mr. Pierce puts up as examples did get around at least once in a while to ask themselves what ideas and what ideals and why they should be believed in, for the ideas and ideals presented by his favorite writers are as obsolete as the dinosaurs.

John Foyster is right, I think; the presence of authors in fandom is only a hindrance to good standards of reviewing. This can be seen that the level of reviewing is much higher in England than in the USA, and in Australia again higher than in England. If there really were in SF what authors claim to have put in their work when they write about themselves, then SF indeed would be a most respectable branch of literature.

I don't think that authors are in fandom primarily for commercial reasons; the small group of fans doesn't account for much in the way of sales. But there authors can get the recognition denied them by the public. Reviews in the press, if they appear at all, are still very short and superficial; but in fandom, authors can have the feeling that they are being reviewed by "specialists" who understand something of the matter, and with the lack of commonly accepted standards, there is a good chance that even the lousiest book will get acclaimed as a masterpeice. If it's bad enough, it may even win a Hugo or a Nebula or both. All that talk about SF getting better is just a big noise to deceive; SF is just as mediocre a genre as it ever was.

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I understand your publishing philosophy. I have, also, arrived at the idea better little but good, than much bad. I have also more or less gafiated; or better, I have gone professional. Now, I use so much time on my prozine NUEVA DIMENSION that it's impossible for me to make any more fanzines. *Sigh!*

Here, we are still fighting against the same odds. We have a very little print run, and we are always obsessed with the word money. And, there is also so censure thing... For the moment, we haven't had our trial. Usually, the Ministry likes to have things like this hanging over publishers' heads, in order to make them behave. If they don;t, then down comes the trial.

Another thing was the impossibility of making Hispanacon 70, the Spanish National Convention, that was to be in Madrid, last December. The Police said NO. It was during the basque people trial and the country was more or less on a curfew, so no meetings -- even of SF fans.

G. P. Cossato
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Calle Fontana
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You mention URANIA's artwork. The artist is Karel Thole, a dutchman who has been living in Italy for quite a number of years. He is doing a lot of work for other magazines than SF including the Reader's Digest. Apparently Heidelberg got him a contract or two with your paperback houses so that you might shortly see some of his work in the states.

Going back to my article, just to complete the picture: Europa Domani never materialized, Active Fandom Movement is dead, Malaguti has left Galassia but is now

running successfully NOVA and two hardback series (available through the mail only), Galassia has improved once again both in quality and quantity (25,000 copies per issue according to Mr. Vitali, the publisher, against an alleged 18,000 for URANIA) and is now run by a combine of old Italian fans among whom are Curtoni and De Turris.

The SF Book Club has been restarted by the publisher of Galassia, more SF hardback editions have been pouring into the market, noticeably the complete Tolkien's Lord Of The Rings in a completely new excellent translation after a previous one of the first book by a different publisher failed to satisfy the readers. Oltre il Cielo has disappeared again mainly because of distribution problems.

As for fanzines and fandom there is only CCSF left and we hope to get some real boost through Eurocon. Heicon has already received a great deal of publicity in Italy, some of unfortunately belated. One of the things which upset us most was an ad we managed to get in the magazine Urania for free (as Urania does not accept any kind of publicity it was in itself an achievement) just two weeks before the beginning of the con. Of course it was too late. We found more than 200 letters of people wanting information on the convention after we came back from Heidelberg. The best one was a mistake in the Italian edition of Planete. They called it Mao-Con; we figured a million Chinese might have attended just as a token of respect for their leader.

When the special envoy of the Italian state-controlled Radio and Television broadcast direct from Heidelberg, an Italian SF reader working in the town came to the convention hall because he had been listening to the program. Now we are organizing Eurocon and we hope something good will come out of it. Supporting membership in EurCon is $4.00, attending membership $7.00; cheques or international money orders to be made payable to EUROCON 1, and money to be sent to EUROCON 1 c/o CCSF, Casella Postale 423, 30100 Venezia, Italy, or our agent in the US, Tony Lewis, 33 Unity Avenue, Belmont Massachusetts 02178.

[[Karel Thole came to the World SF Convention in Boston, and displayed much of his artwork in the artshow. For a man who began SF illustration as simply another branch of commercial art, he has been caught up in science fiction, and now admits to reading the stories as well as illustrating them. I think he is amazed by the attention devoted to SF by both professionals and fans, and especially amazed by the fan organized activities like conventions, fanzines and fanartshows. He promised me that he'd attempt to make the L.A.Con, though I'm not sure he was quite aware of the promise after talking all night in the coffee shop. But certainly a fascinating individual and an artist to rank with anyone we have in the United States.]]

Susan Glicksohn
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The Steranko cover is, to my mind, superb. In addition to the superb detailing and the rather subtle use of black areas contrasted with frey and white -- the draperies and hair, for instance -- the drawing has a dynamic quality I don't usually find in mythic-figure art of this kind. It *moves* is what I think I mean, and therefore is more appealing to me than staic perfection.

Phoenix is -- by my definition, anyway, sf -- mostly because Vergil though regarded as a wizard *sees himself as a scientist*. Hence, most of the "magic" -- the talking brazen head, or the mirror, for instance -- are presented as *scientific* creations. Even "mythic" elements, like the Phoenix or the Cyclops, are again given semi-rational explanations in that, *in Vergil's world,* they have a basis in fact. If we can accept the idea of spacewarps as scientific, why can't we accept a virgin speculum? Maybe it's an alternate world story, maybe our world. I'm waiting for the rest of the trilogy. Meanwhile, wasn't it Damon Knight was said, "Science Fiction is what we mean when we point to it"? I must object to dismissing the book as mere "gallup-and-togas fiction." That's

sort of like saying T.H.White's Once & Future King is good "if you care for this sort of sword-and-sorcery fiction." It's so much more than that. But then, I feel that The Phoenix And The Mirror has been badly treated, not least of all by the poor slob who got shoved into the menial position of heading up Doubleday's science fiction ghetto.

Hank Davis
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Loyall, Kentucky 40854

I don't agree with your being silent, except in the editorial. It results in no personality for the zine, like trees falling in a forest with nobody around to listen.

Greg Benford's column was interesting and irritating. It's been about five years since I read EMPIRE STAR, so I'm not sure that the flaws he cites in that novel can't be defended. Even if they can't, *I didn't notice them the first time around.* There are writers who can carry the reader along so that he doesn't notice such flaws -- or so that, if he notices them, he does not *care*. Delany is such a writer.

Does Benford really think that James Michener wrote EXODUS? I'm certainly glad he doesn't think things are "that simple" when he considers the proposition that "the audience for that sort of thing [Analog] has to die," since I'm part of that audience and I'm only 26, and I'd kinda like to stick around for the rest of my three score and ten if it's alright with everybody. But if Greg doesn't like Christopher Anvil stories (which I wouldn't call "puzzle" stories), why does he write Christopher Anvil-type stories like "Nobody Lives On Burton Street" and (with Laurence Littenberg) "The Prince Of New York"?

I thought that Joanna Russ' PICNIC ON PARADISE was the best SF novel of 1968 and I can't see Lupoff's contention that it is a disguised mainstream yarn. Yet, Terry Carr's contention that the Ace Specials are *not* mainstream stories in disguise is a little hard to take, particularly since I read his letter at the same time I was reading Gordon Eklund's THE ECLIPSE OF DAWN, and a couple of weeks after I had forced my way through Compton's THE STEEL CROCODILE, and boy! are those books ever mainstreamy. It's not at all nice to say this, since Terry sent copies of them to me for free, but transposed mainstream books is what they are and nothing but. Eklund, at least, held my interest. The sign of a good writer (but not of a great writer) is that he can write about nothing and make it interesting. And Eklund does. Compton's opaque prose just bored me.

I can't agree that BUG JACK BARRON is a John Carter novel switched to New York, 1975, as Lenny Kaye says. I'd say it's a Doc Savage novel switched to New York, 1975.

[[Agreed about editorial content in the lettercol and elsewhere. The period during which I was doing the lettercolumn was one of advanced exhaustion, and replying to letters in the usual witty and urbane style was definitely a strain. So, I left my comments out.

I suspect we won't get too much comment from Terry about the continuing saga of the Ace Specials now that he's left Ace Books' bed and board. His original taste in choosing the Dillons as cover artists was vindicated by the fans, if not the readers at large, when they were voted the Hugo as best pro artists. However, what's good is frequently not commercially viable, as the Dillons and commercial television clearly show.]]

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Leigh Brackett; Robert J.R. Whitaker; Mark Mumper; Mary Rosalind Oberdiecz; Kim Gibbs; Terry Jeeves; K. Vincent Gibbs; Leo J. Murray Jr.; Murray Moore; Charles D. Schreck; Robert Bloch; Robert Silverberg; Randall D. Larson; Isaac Asimov; Rick Stooker; Paul Anderson; David Hulvey; Terry Hughes; and Sandra Miesel (Gee, Sandra, I *told you* at Noreascon that a letter of comment written now was too late. But thanks anyway.) And a few last comments: eleven months between issues, that's not too long at

all. Some year now I'll break even on ALGOL, just you wait and see. In the meantime, an issue a year is about all my pocket can afford. (It was all I could afford when ALGOL was a combination of mimeo, ditto, and offset, but now the excuse is more impressive.)

BEATLE-JUICE [Continued from page 3]

(If you're all fired up over the significant question of which *is* better, RQ or RATS, I'd say that RQ is a fanzine which, given the advantages of offset, fails to use them, while RATS works within the limitations of mimeo and improves each issue. RQ simply fails to learn through past experiences; that it doesn't is the mark of its editor.)

ABOUT THOSE ENTROPY REPRINTS

Terry Carr's series of "Entropy Reprints," adopted enthusiastically by fandom where Terry's own ENTROPY, a fanzine dedicated to the same thing, met little enthusiasm, shows that coupled with lively commentary and editorial skill, fandom is just as eager to learn about its roots as the few ultrafannish-types who want to bring back the good old days (remember the New York Futurians' plans for a tower of beer cans to the top of the Woolworth Building? No? Well, ask Harry Warner about it...). However, ALGOL won't be joining the ranks of those fanzines publishing Terry's reprints, primarily due to the press of material within a 44-page format. This issue, in fact, I've been forced to curtail the editorial/art format used in the last issue because of the over-abundance of material. Ted White's column was forced out of this issue due to lack of room. Next issue, I have a long (26 manuscript pages) article by Marion Zimmer Bradley, plus articles by Richard Wilson and others; ghod knows where I'll put everything. If I ever do go back to reprints, my Very Own reprint editor, Rich Brown, has first crack at a selection. In the past ALGOL has reprinted several fannish classics including Portrait Of A Fan; The Golden Halls Of Mirth; Terwilleger The Fan Machine; and Kent Moomaw's The Adversaries.

THE PENULTIMATE TRUTH

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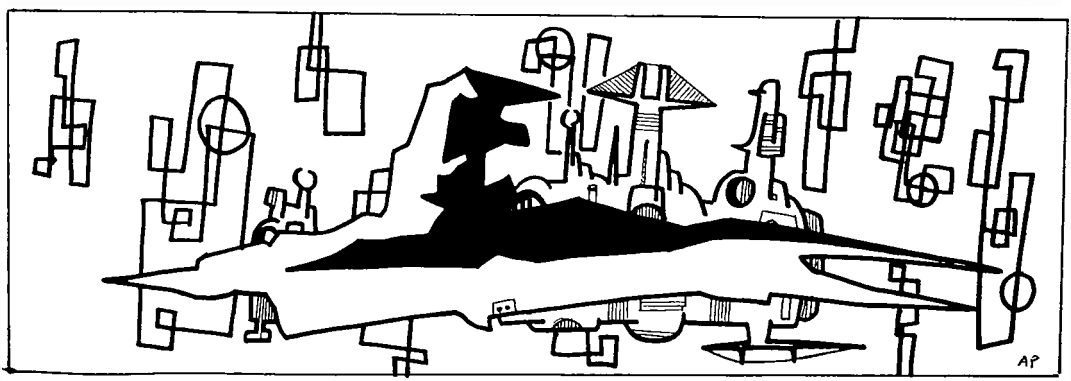

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