ALGOL

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION

SUMMER-FALL 1978

$2.25

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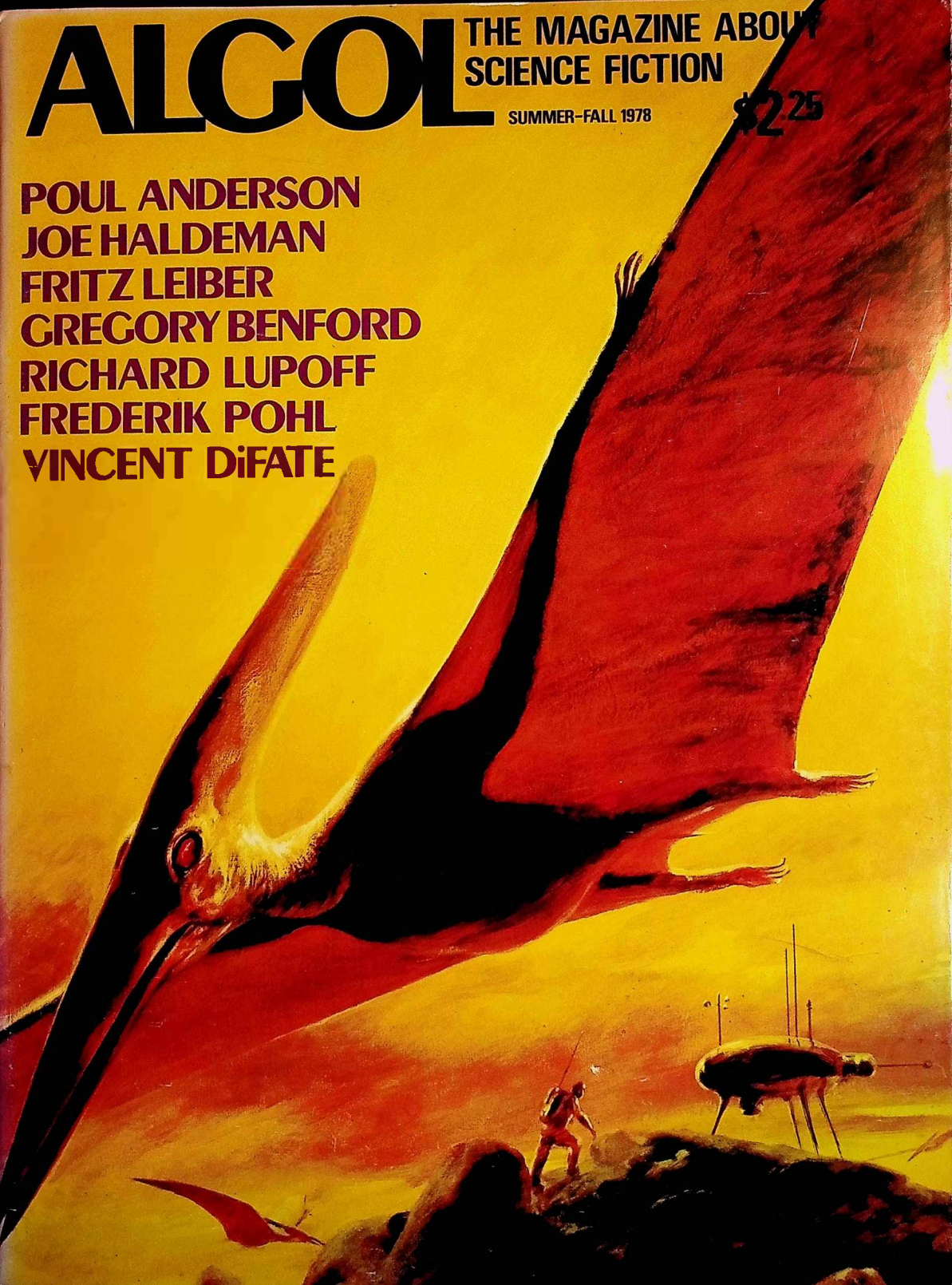

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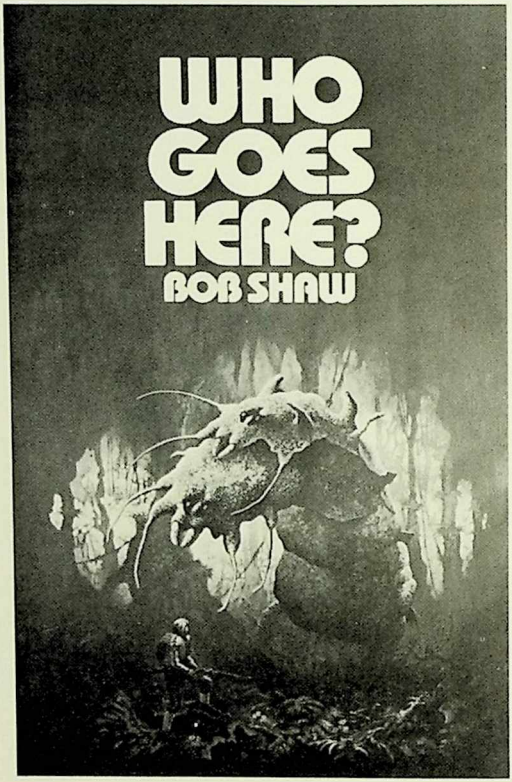

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ALGOL

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION

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THE TRIBES OF CRANE

You, task chief of the Leopard people wandering tribe of Crane, sit in your great wagon awaiting news from your swift searching outriders. Suddenly hoof beats approach. The outriders leap from their mounts to your wagon flushed with excitement for they know full well the meaning of their news. But one sector to the North the great merchant caravan of the Impala people has been spotted. The order is given "To arms . . . to arms!" You snap your orders, "Gather my captains of hundreds. Let all know the tactic will be enfilade right. Now my arms, my mount." You heard that Kate, chief of the Impala people, has chosen a stand and defend tactic twice before, will he again? You know also that the Impala people are fine warriors as are all the people of the many tribes. This will be no raid of the strong on the weak, but rather a mighty clash of the ***TRIBES OF CRANE*** *. . . .*

The **Tribes of Crane** is a unique correspondence game, allowing for interaction between players and the fantasy world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

As a new player you will start as the chief of one of the many wandering tribes of Crane. Perhaps your tribe will be of the Sea people or Caravan merchants.

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The land of Crane is a complete fantasy world with a full range of geography from the permanent ice of the polar regions, to the deserts, and tropical forests of the equator.

Cities dot the continents of Crane providing centers of trade and homes for the powerful Shamans and King Lords.

The creatures of Crane are as varied as its geography. Cattle goats and the caribou are the mainstay of the tribes, depending on the geography. But horses and the great mancarrying war hawks are important to the fierce warriors. Many undomesticated creatures also inhabit Crane such as the Euparkeria, a hugh bipedal lizard that feeds on cattle in the grasslands of Crane.

Interaction between players is very common. Alliance, trade, and combat are always possible. Combat is determined in part by a comparison of tactics used by the antagonists, the relative number of warriors, and the geography.

The games objective is to increase the relative strength and prosperity of your tribe which is measured by different criteria, depending upon the type of tribe, and thus obtain points. Players try to obtain high average points per turn thus placing new players on a par with those who have been playing longer.

The **Tribes of Crane** may be entered for $10.00 which includes the first six turns, a rule booklet, and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter turns are $1.50 each. If dissatisfied after the first turn, you may return the materials for a full refund. A rule booklet may be purchased separately for $3.50.

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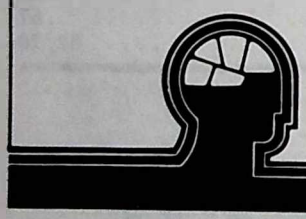

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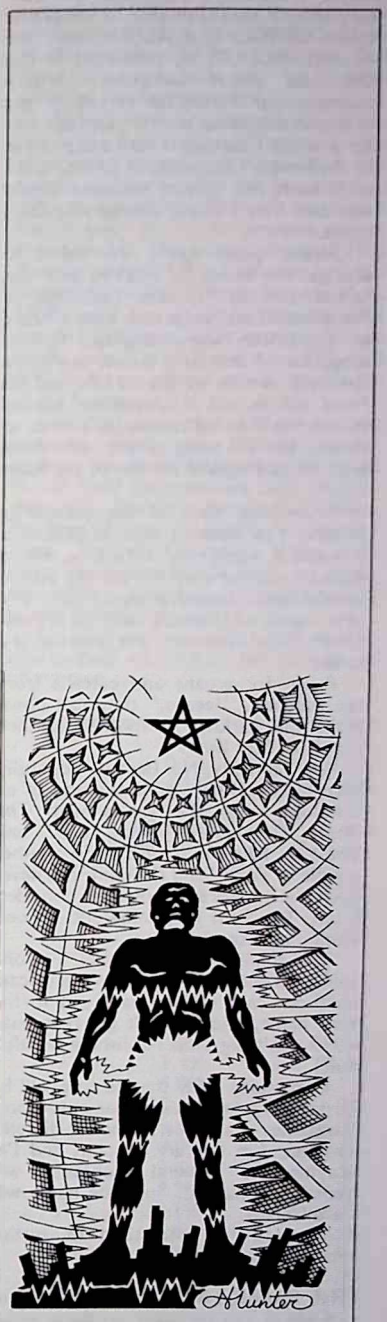


EDITORIAL

IMPORTANT NEWS: For all ALGOL readers is that ALGOL goes quarterly effective with this issue. People have been begging me for more issues for a long time, and the postal increases of Memorial Day weekend—a memorial day indeed!—have put me over the hump, as it were. Eventually this will mean I can get a second class mailing permit for ALGOL and save some of the high cost of postage. There are, of course, many complicated and confusing postal rules governing second class permits, so the thought of more involvement with the people responsible for bungling the delivery of each issue leaves me less than thrilled.

What this means for subscribers immediately is that you'll get whatever number of issues your subscription called for—3 on a 1 year sub, 6 on a 2 year—rather than the full 4 or 8 of the new schedule. Expiration numbers on mailing labels will not change. I fully expect 37 institutional subscribers not to accept this—as they refused to accept the number of issues due when I went from twice to three times a year publication—but That's The Way It's Going To Be.

The amount of advertising per issue will stay about the same. Rather than having wildly fluctuating issue sizes, I'm limiting the amount of advertising to no more than 25 pages per issue, so that no more than about 35% of any issue will be ads. In the industry the usual is a 50-50 ratio, with 60% advertising being the optimal state.

Postal rates have gone up more than I thought they would—an incredible 32% increase on the cost of mailing a single copy of this magazine, a 20% rise on bulk mailing of copies—and so subscription rates are going even higher than I initially planned. This is written by way of apology (of which readers tell me there are perhaps too many in each editorial), and explanation. The rates are high, but so is the quality.

The ALGOL display at the American Booksellers Association convention in Atlanta netted me another 1300 standing orders for ALGOL, which is a very good thing for this magazine. At this point bookstore sales are double the number of subscriptions, and frankly I expect them to keep going up while subscriptions level off, or even decline. Frankly, bookstore sales net a little less money than subscriptions with none of the hassle of keeping up with the typical ALGOL subscriber, who seems to move about every three months. I've heard of being upwardly mobile, but you subscribers are *horizontally* mobile. And filling out those new address masters—and getting purple ditto all over everything—is a very definite pain.

I do want to welcome new readers to ALGOL. Despite appearances, this is very much a one-man operation. That means that the person typing these words—Andrew Porter, Editor and Publisher—is also the circulation manager, art director, paste-up person, promotion and advertising manager, etc., etc. All mail gets answered by myself. All orders are also filled by myself from cartons placed unesthetically around the walls of my apartment and taken down to the main post office (conveniently located three blocks away), where the postal service's gang of cut-throats hangs out.

If I go away for a convention, or am involved in the paste-up of an issue, mail gets delayed. Sometimes, like right now, when an issue is in progress of being pasted up, I don't even have time to take checks out of envelopes and put them in the bank. And you *know* that means I'm busy.

Speaking of bookstore sales of ALGOL, I plan to cut down on the amount of huckstering I do at future conventions. There's nothing more deadly than sitting at a small table after 5 hours of sleep and a warm coke for breakfast (that happened the last day of the '76 Worldcon) waiting for people to walk by so I can sell a copy of the magazine. It's terribly boring and frustrating, knowing that my usual rapier wit is on hold, hearing my stomach holding a protest rally, while my eyelids are trying to go back to sleep.

And of course, Ursula K. Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Kate Wilhelm and Vonda McIntyre are on a panel in the main hall. But I can't go, because I have to hold down the fort . . .

When I began selling ALGOL at conventions in late 1972, no one else was doing so. Few, in fact, had ever heard of the magazine. (My records indicate only 95 copies of the November 1972 issue were sold on a retail basis.) Now things are much different. Every convention has half a dozen tables selling the magazine, so the impetus to keep selling single copies has eased. At the same time, subscriptions, because of problems as detailed above, aren't the most important thing in my life. So you'll see me walking about a lot more in the future, enjoying the convention and doing a little business here and there, in the bar or the pool.

MORE CHANGES: About every two or three issues, I go through my "change is a constant" soft shoe number. This issue isn't any exception. Gradually, over the next year, I'll be changing the name of ALGOL to a more commercial and more science-fictional name. ALGOL was a good name for a fanzine: it had never been used before, it was short, it got reviews at the beginning of fanzine review columns. But several times a week when I call people, they say, "Elbow? What name did you say?"—and after 15 years, I'm getting pretty bloody

tired of people mispronouncing the name of the magazine. I'm tired of telling people no, it's not named after the computer language; that it's not spelled ALGOC, ALGOR, ARGOL, ALGON, ALGO, ELGO, ELBOW, etc., etc; that I don't publish a magazine called COBOL; that ALGOL isn't the ALGOL BULLETIN, published in the UK and about computers—Ulrich's International Periodical Directory got that one mixed up several years ago and for a while I thought I had a subscriber in the People's Republic of China—and I wish both this run-on sentence would end and that I could change ALGOL's name.

Several years ago I was about to change the name to NOVA, but was talked out of it. Bob Guccione of *Penthouse* fame evidently hasn't heard of the British women's glossy fashion magazine of the same name, nor of Al Ashley's fanzine of the 1940's, and his *Nova* will be out in September, backed by a $3-million ad campaign. Unless, of course, the TV series of the same name wins its suit against his use of the name . . .

Meanwhile, back at the publishing empire, I've decided that ALGOL is a wonderful name for a fanzine, but a rotten name for what it's turning into: a widely sold magazine about SF. The new name of ALGOL will be STARSHIP. The subhead will remain the same.

Pause for groans and catcalls from the balcony. "Jeezus," they call down from the darkness, "another damned rip-off of *Star Wars*!"

Well, actually, No. Because hopefully *Star Wars* will have gone the way of all celluloid, into the vaults with *The Thing, Destination: Moon, 2001*, and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, in another couple of years. And the name has never been used before, a powerful consideration. The field is running out of good names, as witness *Cosmos*.

The change will be gradual. For one thing, I'll need a new business certificate so I can cash checks made out to the new name, and I won't get that until 1979 (isn't Big Time Publishing wonderful?).

Continuity with the old title will be strong. Typeface, design elements—some magazines change when the art director changes; I'm the art director, and I'm staying—and general contents will remain unchanged. Just the name will be different.

Besides, I'm also tired of getting manuscripts for *Analog*.

THE PAPER TAX: As I said last issue, a Federal Tax on paper products which would especially hurt magazine and newspaper publishers is still in the works, and has not been defeated. Several states are also considering these taxes, to pay for recycling paper products (here's your big chance to be unAmerican by withholding your collection of ALGOL from the recycling centers). Connecticut has already passed such a tax, and *F&SF* will be required to pay $300.00 a year into the state coffers. When queried by this intrepid reporter about the tax, Edward L. Ferman, publisher of *F&SF*, replied stating, "I'm not going to pay it." It will be interesting to see whether Ed's wife, Audrey, can edit the magazine while Ed is in jail. She could certainly take pointers from Althea Flynt. Perhaps the third generation of the Ferman clan will take over, and a true Golden Age of *F&SF* will flourish under the talented touch of Emily Ferman, the first teenaged SF editor since Charles Hornig . . .

Or, as they say in fandom, Maybe Not.

THE ISSUE: The cover this issue is by John Schoenherr, who hasn't done much in SF lately. That tradition, in fact, is still being kept: this cover first appeared on *Analog* in 1966. It's a tie-in with Vincent DiFate's art column, in which he interviews Schoenherr for the enrichment of you, the readers. Pay close attention; there'll be a quiz next issue.

The ALGOL Interview this issue is with Fritz Leiber. The basic interview has an interesting history. It first appeared in *SF&F36*, a fanzine published in California. The interview itself, despite what it says on the contents page, was a group effort conducted over a luncheon buffet. The editor has asked me to note that the magazine itself is available for $4.00 for 4 issues, from Jim Purviance, 13 West Summit Drive, Redwood City CA 94062. Both questions and answers have been considerably edited for presentation here.

One difference between a fanzine and a professional magazine is the amount of editorial monkeying done with contributions. In a fanzine, which normally doesn't pay for material, one feels uncomfortable in changing the material. In a magazine, which does pay, the amount of editing (or editorial interference, depending on your view) varies. For instance, I very rarely change a word of material from Dick Lupoff or Fred Pohl. On the other hand, the Leiber interview was published originally with no editorial changes. This meant abrupt questions and answers which look bad on paper, the "umms" and "ahs" of verbal speech. Run-on sentences and confused metaphors had to be translated into print, always with the important fact that the author's words and meaning are sacrosanct.

Vincent DiFate's interview with Richard Powers was edited by me, line by line, with Vincent on the phone overseeing the process. Despite Vincent's claim that as an artist he's a poor writer, both readers and Your Editor know better. In fact this issue's column has gone directly from Vincent to typesetter in order to save time.

Now, *that's* trust. I just hope the man doesn't screw up . . .

The material by both Benford and Haldeman will appear elsewhere as introductions to books they're doing. They stand on their own here, I think quite well. At this moment I am frankly unsure whether James Gunn's article will appear in this issue, or if it will be squeezed out by the press of other material. If so it will appear in the November issue.

This issue marks the final appearance of Susan Wood's column, "Propellor Beanie." After several years of its appearance in *Amazing*, and 2 years in ALGOL, Susan is frankly tired of reviewing fanzines. She will be back next issue, though, with a major article about SF.

Fred Pohl takes on Harlan Ellison this issue, with a column that takes a view remarkably similar to one held by Bill Bowers, Fan Guest of Honor at this year's World SF Convention. I'll let Fred speak his own thoughts; you can compare his sentiments with those of Bowers this upcoming Labor Day weekend.

The major article this issue is by Poul Anderson, no late comer to SF. I asked Poul for an autobiographical article, which he never writes. Instead, he came up with these comments on the SF field, preferring to let his SF speak for his personal life. I am indebted to Sam J. Lundwall of Sweden for the translation of the title.

COPYRIGHTS, THE CONTINUING SAGA: Since last issue, the Copyright Office has issued new copyright forms. These are genuinely intimidating, consisting of three pages to be filled out and three pages of instructions. The instructions are only slightly less incomprehensible than the Federal tax forms. I filled out the copyright form for the December issue of ALGOL and sent it in, only to be informed last week that it was done incorrectly. Sample forms and a letter sent back, showing how to Do It Right, seem written by a fan. One form shows how Sewer Publications' "Journal of Needles and Pins" copyrights their magazine, including articles by Betsy Ross ("Stars and Stripes Forever") and Motel Taylor ("Sew What"). The Journal is published at 5423 Threadneedle Road, Stitch-In-Time NH 83644, and printed in Bobbin, Pennsylvania.

Having shown me the error of my ways, I've sent a corrected form back. The author of the material in that issue of ALGOL is ALGOL Magazine, and I

am the authorized agent of the magazine. We shall see whether this is acceptable to the folks down in Washington. One magazine I saw recently, hoping to make clear exactly who owns what, has printed a copyright notice on every single editorial page in each issue. One interesting question is whether material with individual copyrights under the title, for instance the Harlan Ellison articles published last issue, are really copyright by those authors. When my notification of copyright comes back, perhaps I'll check with Washington, and let you know.

NEXT ISSUE: Will appear in November, befitting the new schedule. On line are a major article by Susan Wood on women in SF; an interview with Suzie McKee Charnas, whose *Motherlines* has just appeared in hardcover from Berkley/Putnam; columns by Vincent DiFate and Fred Pohl, and more reviews and over-views of SF by Richard Lupoff. Dick, incidentally, is next year's WesterCon Guest of Honor and perhaps a special issue honoring Dick would be appropriate.

This editorial is already too long, and the material covering the Reader Survey, described in depth, follows. Deadline for letters on this issue is September 15th.

THE READER SURVEY: This was, as I hadn't remembered from the last time I did one, a real bitch to translate into useable statistics. I want to thank Ira Donewitz, local New York fan, for assistance in reading off numbers and making checkmarks.

Total response was 220. Unlike the Locus survey, I don't offer a free issue of the magazine to respondents. Nor, for that matter, was the survey included as an extra flyer: it was a printed, integral part of the magazine. About 40% of returned surveys came in on forms I printed and—at least tried—widely distributed at various conventions and through the two apas I find myself in nowadays.

Where possible, I integrated results from the current survey with those from the one done in 1975. On the whole, I think results are interesting. One question which isn't represented is "If a college student, list major and highest grade currently." Most students, unfortunately, gave completely different majors, and gave a *grade*—A, B, 2.3, B+, 3.9, etc.—rather than the highest *grade*—i.e., 2nd year, third year, etc.—which made the whole question kind of pointless. So much for making myself clear . . .

There are some general conclusions I can make. One, which has had me worried, is that the average ALGOL reader is getting older. This can mean either, or both of two things. Either readers are staying with the magazine, which is good, or they're being attracted at an older age, as the editor gets older. This is bad, because it implies that as I get older the magazine will attract a smaller share of the "typical" SF reader.

Another conclusion: income is going up. In the first survey, a full 50% of respondents earned $10,000 or under. This year, that percentage is down to 42.2%. Similarly, in 1975 only 20% earned $18,000 and over; this year over 27% earned more than $20,000. Some of this can be tied in to inflation, but there is a gradual rise in income reflected in other statistics.

Highest level of education is up; so too is the time reading SF regularly; the number of conventions attended; the number who've taken SF courses; and pass-on circulation. The only area which hasn't gone up is the amount people spend on SF. The average from 1975 is down a lot; and I think this ties into the higher prices for SF books in general. In 1975, very few trade hardcovers went for $10.00; now we're starting to see books going for $12 and even $15, and $10.00 is becoming a standard price for a new hardcover.

I've been informed that the market research people at Franklin Spier, perhaps the major advertising agency in the SF field (representing Dell, Doubleday, St. Martin's Press, Dial Press, Playboy Press, Columbia University Press, Oxford University Press, and other advertisers) will tell me their conclusions, based on this survey. I'll report them to you next issue.

So, here are the results of the survey, interspersed with a very few comments of my own.

AGE	1978	1975
15 yrs	0.9%	2.5%
16 yrs	1.4%	3.3%
17 yrs	0.4%	1.6%
18 yrs	0.9%	0.8%
19 yrs	1.8%	1.6%
20 yrs	4.1%	2.5%
21 yrs	4.1%	2.5%
22 yrs	4.5%	4.1%
23 yrs	2.7%	10.0%
24 yrs	4.5%	4.1%
25 yrs	5.9%	6.6%
26 yrs	6.8%	4.0%
27 yrs	7.3%	9.1%
28 yrs	9.5%	8.3%
29 yrs	3.6%	3.3%
30 yrs	5.0%	6.6%
31 yrs	4.5%	4.1%
32 yrs	2.7%	1.6%
33 yrs	2.3%	1.6%
34 yrs	4.1%	1.6%
35 yrs	2.7%	2.5%
36 yrs	1.4%	---
37 yrs	3.2%	1.6%
38 yrs	0.4%	---
39 yrs	1.8%	1.6%
40 yrs	1.4%	2.5%
41 yrs	0.4%	---
42 yrs	0.4%	0.8%
43 yrs	0.9%	---
44 yrs	0.9%	0.8%
45, 46 yrs	2.3%	0.8%
47 yrs	0.4%	0.8%
48 yrs	0.9%	0.8%
49 & over	4.1%	7.5%
No response	1.8%	1.3%
AVERAGE AGE	29.8 yrs	29 yrs
MEDIAN AGE	28.0 yrs	27.5 yrs

SEX	1978	1975
Male	72.7%	75%
Female	27.3%	25%

OCCUPATION	1978	1975
Student	20.0%	19.2%
Teaching	5.5%	14.2%
Computers/Electronics	10.0%	11.7%
Writer, Editor	11.4%	9.2%
Librarian	5.0%	6.7%
Office, Clerical	10.4%	6.7%
Skilled & unskilled labor	3.6%	5.0%
Housewife	0.9%	4.2%
Military, govt.	3.6%	3.3%
Bookseller	2.3%	2.5%
Research	4.1%	2.5%
Artist	3.6%	2.5%
Medical professions	2.3%	2.5%
Printing	---	1.7%
Law	1.8%	1.7%
Chemist	2.3%	---
Financial	1.4%	---
Salesperson	3.6%	---
Business/Mgmt	2.7%	---
Other	5.0%	1.7%

No reply	0.5%	2.5%

Can the fall in the number of teachers reading ALGOL be correlated with the increase in circulation of *SF Studies* and *Extrapolation*? No other surprises here.

MARITAL STATUS	1978
Single	60.4%
Married	34.5%
Divorced	4.1%
Separated	1.0%
Widowed	---

HOUSING	1978	1975
Own a house	27.3%	29.2%
Live with relatives	24.0%	22.5%
Rent apartment/house	35.0%	36.7%
Share apartment/house	11.4%	10.8%
Own condominium	1.8%	---
Own cooperative	0.4%	0.8%

ANNUAL INCOME	1978	1975
$0-5,999	27.7%	30.0%
$6-9,999	14.5%	20.0%
$10-18,000	---	25.8%
$10-14,999	14.1%	---
$15-19,999	15.0%	---
$18,000 & over	---	20.0%
$20-29,999	18.2%	---
$30,000 & over	9.1%	---
No reply	1.4%	4.2%

Income has gone up rather remarkably. See my comments above.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	1978	1975
High school	10.0%	15.8%
Technical school	0.4%	0.8%
1 year college	6.8%	9.2%
2 years college	10.9%	4.2%
3 years college	11.4%	2.5%
B.A.	25.4%	20.8%
B.S.	10.0%	7.5%
M.A.	14.5%	11.7%
M.S.	3.6%	5.8%
Ph.D.	5.0%	6.7%
J.D.	0.4%	0.8%
LL.B.	1.4%	1.7%
M.D.	0.9%	0.8%
No reply	0.4%	11.7%

There's been a 6% increase in the number of college degrees, also a noticeable decrease in the number of people with only a high school education. Finally, a lot of people seem to be in the pipeline heading for a degree of some sort.

MONEY SPENT ON SCIENCE FICTION		
Hardcovers	1978	1975
Spend money	79.6%	
Spend no money	20.4%	
Average spent	$106.75	
Paperbacks		
Spend money	95.5%	
Spend no money	4.5%	
Average spent	$153.84	
Average spent on "new sf" in 1975 survey (incl. hardcovers & paperbacks)		$191.20
Second-hand SF		
Spend money	73.6%	73.3%
Spend no money	26.4%	26.6%
Average spent	$112.27	$129.86

WHERE PURCHASING IS DONE 1978 ONLY	
Bookstores	57.9%
Mail Order	27.3%
Conventions	7.8%
Other retail stores	6.8%
No reply	0.2%

A substantial percentage of ALGOL readers buy their books through the mail. We've been saying that for years, but it's nice to have some proof.

READING SF REGULARLY	1978	1975
2 yrs	1.4%	4.2%
3 yrs	0.9%	3.3%
4 yrs	2.7%	1.7%
5 yrs	1.4%	2.5%
6 yrs	1.4%	5.0%
7 yrs	0.4%	5.0%
8 yrs	3.2%	2.5%
9 yrs	1.4%	5.0%
10 yrs	7.7%	11.7%
11 yrs	2.3%	2.5%
12 yrs	7.3%	6.7%
13 yrs	3.2%	0.8%
14 yrs	2.3%	2.5%
15 yrs	8.6%	10.8%
16 yrs	3.6%	3.3%
17 yrs	4.0%	5.8%
18 yrs	2.7%	3.3%
19 yrs	2.3%	0.8%
20 yrs	12.3%	5.0%
21-25 yrs	14.5%	7.4%
26-30 yrs	6.8%	2.5%
31-40 yrs	5.0%	6.7%
over 40 yrs	1.4%	0.8%
No reply	3.2%	0.2%
Average	20.2 yrs	14.7 yrs

The ALGOL reader *is* older. That's a substantial jump in the length of time reading SF. It's also another indication that less and less "fans" read ALGOL.

NOMINATE & VOTE FOR AWARDS	1978	1975
Nominate for the Hugos	32.7%	25.0%
Vote for the Hugos	43.6%	36.7%
Nominate for the Nebulas	3.2%	---
Vote for the Nebulas	5.0%	---

MEMBERS OF SF CLUBS	1978	1975
Members	35.0%	25.8%

Among clubs with five members or more answering the survey were the New England SF Association, the Lunarians, National Fantasy Fan Federation, Science Fiction Writers of America, the New York Fanoclasts, and the New Orleans SF Association.

CONVENTIONS ATTENDED	1978	1975
LOCAL		
None	32.7%	39.2%
One	11.4%	17.5%
Two	7.3%	14.2%
Three	7.7%	8.3%
Four	5.4%	6.7%
Five	5.4%	4.2%
Six or more	30.0%	10.0%
WORLD		
None	63.6%	59.2%
One	13.2%	22.5%
Two	7.7%	8.3%
Three (or more, 1975)	5.9%	10.0%
Four	2.3%	---
Five or more	7.3%	---

MAGAZINES READ REGULARLY	1978	1975
Analog	62.7%	76.8%
F&SF	60.9%	80.0%
Locus	53.6%	---
Asimov's	52.7%	---
SFReview	52.3%	---
Galaxy	50.4%	55.8%
Galileo	43.2%	---
Amazing	25.0%	40.0%
Fantastic	24.1%	34.7%
Unearth	21.8%	---
Delap's F&SF Review	21.8%	---

As ALGOL's circulation grows, the percentage of its readership who read all the SF magazines declines. Our circulation has gone up by about 40% in the last three years, and it's beginning to leave the traditional SF markets behind. *Locus* and *SFR*'s strong showings are interesting; I suspect that as ALGOL's circulation continues to increase, the percentage reading these magazines will decrease rapidly. See comments on Rating The Issue, below.

WHERE PEOPLE LIVE	1978
City	57.7%
City under 100,000	14.1%
City 100,000-1,000,000	24.1%
City over 1,000,000	19.5%
Suburbs	30.4%
Rural areas	9.1%
No reply	2.8%

WHO OWNS WHAT	1978
Car	70.0%
Stereo phonograph	79.1%
Tape equipment	60.0%
Typewriter	83.2%
Duplicator	10.9%
Black & white TV	57.3%
Color TV	46.4%
Camera equipment	61.8%
Motorcycle	3.6%
Movie Camera	23.2%

WHAT PEOPLE SMOKE	1978
Total who smoke	29.5%
Cigarettes	12.3%
Pipe	7.7%
Other	11.4%

[Marijuana 3.2%; Cigars 2.3%]

SCIENCE FICTION COURSES	1978	1975
Taken course	22.7%	19.1%
Taught course	7.7%	2.5%

WHAT PEOPLE DRINK	1978
Total who drink	72.3%
Wines	37.7%
Beer	37.3%
Whiskey family	20.0%
Rum	15.4%
Vodka	11.4%
Gin	8.6%
Tequila	4.5%
Bourbon	4.5%
Brandy	3.6%
Sherry	2.3%

HOW PEOPLE FOUND OUT ABOUT ALGOL		
Mention in Locus	9.1%	---
Mention in SFReview	9.5%	---
Mention in other magazine	18.6%	20.0%
In bookstore	17.7%	15.0%
Fanzine review	4.1%	21.6%
Sample copy	3.2%	3.3%
At a convention	15.4%	17.5%
Through advertisement	6.8%	9.2%
Word of mouth	11.8%	9.2%
Local club	1.8%	---
Publishers Weekly	0.0%	---
Ad in Galaxy	4.1%	---
Ad in F&SF	4.1%	---
Ad in other publication	2.3%	---
Library	0.9%	---
No reply	6.4%	---

Many people gave multiple answers, especially in this category. ALGOL's increasing presence in bookstores and heavy convention display show up clearly here. My announcement that ALGOL is a professional magazine has meant that fanzine reviews have practically dried up. I think some people were confused over the difference between a "mention" in a magazine and an advertisement there.

RATING THE ISSUE: One through Ten Ratings

	Rating	%answering
Covers	7.757	88.2%
Advertising	5.317	87.3%
Layout	7.813	82.7%
Editorials	6.989	90.0%
Main articles	8.123	92.3%
Interior art	6.675	84.1%
Interviews	7.467	91.3%
Pohlemic	7.226	82.3%
Propellor Beanie	5.605	84.1%
Fiction	5.426	80.9%
Sketches	6.505	79.1%
Lupoff's Book Week	7.824	88.2%
Letter column	6.552	90.4%
Derek Carter	4.548	75.4%
Conlog	4.827	79.1%

Ads are obviously a necessary evil, though many people like them—perhaps the same people who order their SF by mail? Propellor Beanie ceases to exist as of this issue, not because of reader pressure but rather due to the tides of Gafia, which Susan explains in this issue. The fiction too has ceased to exist. I can offer the unusual or the provocative—as in the poetry by Ursula K. Le Guin, calligraphed by Judith Weiss—but my one six inch gun per issue, to use a naval simile, is easily out-ranked by the turrets of 15-inchers carried by the regular SF magazines. About the Conlog, the half who *read Locus* and find their convention information that way thought it redundant. The other half thought it a very good idea. It's published, after all, specifically for people who *don't* read *Locus* or fanzines and are interested in attending a convention or two.

ASSOCIATED INTERESTS	1978	1975
Star Wars	40.4%	---
Star Trek	36.4%	34.2%
Close Encounters	23.2%	---
SF Films	70.0%	53.3%
Horror Films*	20.9%	---
Comics	23.6%	22.5%
Sword & Sorcery	38.6%	41.7%
Weird Fiction	22.7%	33.3%
Children's Fantasy	24.1%	---
Edgar Rice Burroughs	17.3%	10.8%
Tolkien	45.0%	---
Heroic Fantasy	32.7%	---
Old Radio	11.4%	14.2%
Pulp Magazines	24.1%	13.3%
Feminist SF	30.9%	---
Gor Books	7.3%	---

*included with SF films in 1975 survey

Dear me, strong interest in topics you'll never see in ALGOL! Star Wars and Close Encounters will Go Away, I suppose,

Concludes on page 33

Poul Anderson Talar Om Science Fiction

POUL ANDERSON

Few of us humans are reluctant to talk, or write, about ourselves. Usually the problem is to get us to stop. However, having been asked to do something autobiographical and autoanalytical, I find I doubt whether readers would really be interested in details of this life. The most significant parts of it are nobody else's business anyway, except for kinfolk and very close friends. As for my work, if it can't speak for itself, it surely doesn't deserve discussion. I have observed before now that a good wine needs no bush and a bad one is better off without.

Still, perhaps some remarks about this and that won't be too gross a waste of paper. Rather than a single organized essay, I'll offer you a clutch of miscellaneous facts, opinions, conjectures, crotchets, superstitions, and japes, in no particular order but more or less related to writing—not necessarily mine. Two or three have been expressed elsewhere in different words, but in widely scattered places and none recently. Most are new.

When writers talk shop, it's apt to be commercial (markets, rates, agents, etc.) or personal (gossip, gripes about editors, etc.). Writing itself they tend to avoid as a subject. Some feel it's too intimate, some prefer a respite from the daily problems of their working lives, some figure there's no use trying to change the habits of a fellow old pro, and so on. It is usually amateurs or newcomers who form groups for serious literary discussion and mutual criticism.

This rule has plenty of exceptions. For instance, the original Milford workshops were organized by a respected long-timer, Damon Knight, and attended by similarly well-established people, such as Kate Wilhelm (who eventually became Mrs. Knight), Gordon Dickson, Harlan Ellison, and James Blish, to name a handful of those who made fairly regular appearances. The one time I was there, I not only enjoyed myself, I got some good advice about a chapter that was giving me difficulties.

I was amused to note, though, that of the several stories presented which I later saw in print, none had been revised at all, despite extensive and sometimes acerbic comments. Since then, aside from occasional technical questions, I have seldom solicited the counsel of anyone except my wife Karen (as if I could keep her from giving it!), which is often well worth taking . . . probably because we think very much alike. An extremely small number of readers have infrequently made remarks about something published which caused me to change my ways, in this or that limited area, in later work. But on the whole I go my own way and think probably every real artist does, once he's found himself and gained confidence. (Or she has found herself, of course. In a generalized discussion, I follow proper English usage and employ the masculine pronoun for both sexes.)

"Ah, ha," you are thinking. "Pretty conceited chap, that Anderson. 'Real artist,' indeed."

Indeed. Webster: "artist. . . . 4. One who professes and practices an art in which conception and execution are governed by imagination and taste; a person skilled in one of the fine arts." Surely literature is among these. Then by definition every writer is an artist. He may be a lousy one; the definition says nothing about quality. He may practice on the side, drawing most or all of his income from different activities. But to the extent that he writes, and meets a certain minimum standard, he is an artist. I use the adjective "real" to distinguish him from the ego-tripping fakes and the total incompetents.

What the minimum standard may be is a question to which we shall perhaps return. For a rough preliminary criterion, sufficient though not necessary, let's in the case of writing say, "Publishability." Granted, this makes Perry Rhodan art as well as *The Left Hand of Darkness.* But I repeat, in the sense in which the word will here be used, art can be great, good, indifferent, bad, or unspeakable. At the moment I am more interested in the practitioner than the product.

The lowliest hack, cynically grinding stuff out for a quick buck, conscious of how shoddy it is, must still have a certain professionalism—comprehension—dedication, if only to satisfying his editor. The fakes mentioned above will tell you at length how beautiful the projects are on which they are engaged, but somehow these projects never get finished. This personality type shades into that of the incompetent, who may be pathetically modest. Neither can cut the mustard. Well, once in a great while one of them does manage to, and

then for that brief spell he likewise is an artist; but he has no staying power.

Now the real artists are a much more varied lot, in their own selves as well as in their work. Some are flamboyant and aggressive, some quiet and retiring, some steady, some unstable, some honest, some petty crooks, some hard workers, some indolent, and on and on, including every possible combination. What I would like to discuss here is the variation in their attitudes toward what they are doing.

Let's begin by dismissing the out-and-out hacks, who know they are producing trash to a formula. As a footnote, however, let's admit that many of the top talents have occasionally been reduced to that, from Cervantes on down. Let's also admit that these have often smuggled enough quality into their trash to raise it a little above its own standards. Let's finally admit that hackwork isn't always done out of financial desperation; it may merely be what's called for. Robinson Jeffers expressed that well, in the opening lines of "Shakespeare's Grave":

> "Doggerell," he thought, "will do for church-wardens,
> Poetry's precious enough not to be wasted,"
> And rhymed it all out with a skew smile:
> "Spare these stones. Curst be he that moves my bones—
> Will hold the hands of masons and grave-diggers." . . . .

With those qualifications, we can go on to consider the artist, specifically the writer, who by and large tries to do his best. How does he feel about it? The answer is that there is no single answer.

Once I heard a well-known pro explain a change in his habits: "The doctor told me I could either give up smoking or give up writing, so of course I threw away the cigarettes." His phrase sticks in my mind. He did not say "give up living" or even "screwing," he said "writing." This convinced me he really means it, does not merely put on a self-advertisement, when he talks of his profession as demanding total commitment, which he often does. Oh, yes, doubtless a certain ostentation is there, but beneath it must lie a basic sincerity.

And yet—sincerity. . . . Once when my daughter was in grade school, she showed me some homework from English class, the usual silly questions about a piece they'd read, including: "What do you think the author's purpose was in writing this story?" Said she, despairingly, "I *know* what the author's purpose was, but how can I tell the teacher?" I found her the appropriate quotation from Sam Johnson, but did not suggest she use it.

Myself, I started out to be an astrophysicist, drifted into writing, and today, if I had my druthers, would be sailing and diving with Cousteau. If a wealthy critic offered me a million tax-free dollars on condition I never do another word for publication, I might well jump at it. That's uncertain, and the contingency will scarcely ever arise; at most, someday I'll retire, though even that seems unlikely. The point is, I give to my work everything that is mine at the time to give, the same as my aforementioned colleague. I simply don't consider myself any kind of priest. I'd give up writing long before I gave up screwing, or numerous other pleasures.

It would be improper, because unauthorized, to name people who've made the same admission to me when it got drunk enough out, but believe me, they include quite a few top-rankers. For that matter, Shakespeare quit when he'd made his pile, and appears to have been a frustrated actor anyway. Dostoyevsky churned out much of his fiction as newspaper serials; sometimes the editor had to snatch copy right off his desk in order to get it to press in time. Robert Graves regarded his brilliant historical novels as potboilers, which supported him so he could compose poems that I, at least, find stodgy. One can multiply examples, also in other arts; for instance, most of Bach's music was done to order.

The moral is that we should never judge a work by its creator's personality, nor by what he says about it, but strictly on its own merits. This looks childishly obvious. Nevertheless, I keep being amazed at how many people, in and out of academe, can't imagine it.

Pause to shift gears.

To a limited extent you can, if you wish, use the work as a clue to the creator, what he has felt and experienced and believed, what kind of human being he is. That's quite unessential; in fact, it smacks of nosiness. However, ours is an incurably nosy and gossipy species. Besides, graduate students are always in need of thesis material, professors and critics in need of anything whatsoever they can get into print.

For God's sake, though, if you're going to play that game, play it right!

In the first place, while a writer does necessarily draw on his own experience of life, that experience includes people entirely different from himself, as well as reading, conversation, drama, introspection, dreams, and endlessly much else. None of his characters, their psychotypes, habits, beliefs, morals, need have anything to do directly with him. Indeed, most fiction writers make an effort to avoid self-portrayal, or the portrayal of any living person, even under a changed name. Characters are normally syntheses. To give a personal example, I am not a woman like Donya of Hervar, a Catholic like Nicholas van Rijn, a warrior like Skafloc, a royalist like Prince Rupert, a Communist like Arne Torvald, a bisexual like Iason Philippou, a puritan like Joshua Coffin, a drifter like Skip Wayburn . . . etc., etc., confining the list to those whom I have treated sympathetically.

In the second place, for the sake of a story writers often set forth an idea which they do not believe in. As an elementary example within science fiction, Isaac Asimov has used faster-than-light travel and L. Sprague de Camp has used time travel, though they are on record as considering these to be utter impossibilities. More significant may be concepts of human relationships. For instance, in "No Truce With Kings" I suggested that feudalism is the highest form of social organization of which man is capable for any length of time, and we ought to accept this and make the best of it. In real life, I don't maintain that. It may or may not be true; we do not have any evidence which is scientifically meaningful, and perhaps we never will. It was just a thought which intrigued me and which I saw as the basis for a narrative.

A writer may even depict a society or a relationship between individuals of which he disapproves as one which nevertheless works and whose participants feel reasonably well off; *vide* various stories by Jerry Pournelle. (I mention him because he has said this in print. For that matter, interested though I am in "heroic" eras like the Homeric and the Viking, I'd be the last person who'd want to see them revived. I have similar suspicions about many colleagues, and certain knowledge about a few, but do not feel free to specify becuuse they themselves have not publicly done so. It's enormously annoying to be told by somebody else what one's opinions are.)

In the third place, many people change their attitudes and beliefs in the course of time. If they have been writing for publication meanwhile, this may well be reflected in the product. Only compare the poems of the early agnostic T.S. Eliot with those of the later Christian Eliot.

In the fourth place, it is far too easy to read intentions into something which were never there. Remember the joke about the two psychiatrists who met in a hospital corridor; one said, "Hello, how are you today?" and passed on, while the other stood staring after him and muttering, "I wonder what he meant by that."—In the area of literary criticism, and returning to Eliot, for decades it was taken for granted that "The Waste Land" is about generalized existential despair and salvation through religion, and countless learned papers

were done on this topic. Then lately evidence turned up that he really wrote it about the failure of his marriage and, furthermore, Ezra Pound gave him substantial help in working it into the form which we know. So much for the critics. Why not simply appreciate the poem for what it is?

This is not to say writers never put in symbolic overtones. Frequently they do. I just wish to point out the hazards of elaborate interpretation, and suggest that the proper meaning is highly personal to each thoughtful reader. A great deal of it may be quite nonverbal and nonverbalizable.

In the fifth place, a given approach or life style at a given time may result not from profound philosophical insight but from an accidental circumstance which influences a person's whole feeling about the universe. For instance, we now have pretty good reason to think that Melville's moodiness, Poe's self-destructiveness, possibly Mark Twain's deep pessimism in his later years, resulted not from *Angst* or "demons" or any such lit-crit entity, nor even from personal tragedies, but from chronic depression—a clinical condition which, today, we are becoming able to cure. Needless to say, if this is true it does not reduce in any way the intrinsic worth of works created in that state or any other state. I merely bring it forth as one more example of the danger in trying to reason from the words back to the author.

As for the words themselves, no doubt someone like Joyce or Cabell requires a good deal of study for full appreciation. People who are interested can help each other track down sources, unravel puns, and the like. Moreover, an intelligent, *simpático* commentator can point out things in stories on a less exalted plane, including science fiction stories, which else might escape the average reader.

I say "*simpático*" because nobody, not Shakespeare himself, speaks everybody's language. You may dislike a particular piece by a particular author, and express your dislike at length, but unless you resonate in some sense with his work as a whole, you are no more qualified to discuss it than a color-blind man is qualified to discuss Monet vs. Renoir. If you happen to have a good ear, you may claim a right to compare Beethoven and Schubert—yet still be capable only of nonsense when you come to Biederbecke and Morton.

One well-known fan critic, one of the extremely few for whom I have respect, has told me that she won't write anything about Samuel R. Delany, not because she doesn't admire his talent—she does—but because he's too alien to her: too Pelagian, for instance. How pleasant if more of her kind showed an equal intelligence, objectivity, and integrity! Hardly any do, though.

Rather than grumble about critics, I'll go on to the more general and interesting subject of taste, as exemplified within science fiction. Please understand, what follows is not in any way a complaint. I feel entirely cheerful about it, especially because getting a new idea is always a bracing experience, and simply wish to share that pleasure with you.

A year or two back, Harlan Ellison published an essay in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* in which he included his list of the ten best science fiction writers now practicing. Frankly, for reasons which follow, I consider this a silly game, and don't intend to play it here. However, for amusement, I drew up a corresponding dizaine of my own, omitting myself as Harlan had omitted himself. (Else we would doubtless each have had eleven names.) The intriguing part of the result was the one on whom we agreed: the pseudonymous James Tiptree, Jr.

False modesty is the worst kind. Harlan obviously has good taste in literature. So do I. Then why the variation? Does it indicate that taste is purely arbitrary? Surely not. There *are* objective standards for all the arts, even though people might argue about their exact nature. Here I want to offer a suggestion as to what that objectivity consists of.

Let me first continue for a bit in a personal vein. I gave "ten best" no further thought until recently, when by chance a conversation turned for a while onto my own work. Believe it or not, this is very far from my favorite topic. After all, I live with it year after year; meanwhile a whole cosmos lies out yonder, full of things I know much less about. So I changed the subject as soon as possible. Nevertheless, a remark that had been made started a chain of reflections, and suddenly something popped into my awareness that I hadn't consciously paid any particular attention to until then.

A lot of fanzines reach my mailbox, and I usually give them at least a glance. (By the way, I hardly ever respond, and regret that ungraciousness, but the sheer volume makes it impossible.) Now I have never studied them in any systematic fashion, so all I have is an impression—a pretty strong one, though—that, with two or three exceptions, fans who review books don't particularly care for my stuff. Mostly they seem to ignore it, when they don't pan it or, at best, rate it fair to middling. The same appears to be true of English teachers in high schools and colleges. I am not among those who are normally studied.

One cannot say that the fanzine fans and the teachers are oafs, because the writers whom they like do, in fact, range from good to excellent: Delany, Dick, Herbert, Le Guin, Silverberg, Tolkien (if you want to consider him One of Us), etc., including, naturally, Ellison.

Then am I subliterate, along with fellow workers who appear to be in the same boat, such as Jack Vance? I know this is not the case either, and need no outside assurance. However, you can fairly ask for some supporting opinion. Therefore, aside from editors, let me mention commendations, public or private, from Isaac Asimov, the late James Blish, A.J. Budrys, Lester del Rey, Gordon R. Dickson, Sterling Lanier, the late P. Schuyler Miller, Theodore Sturgeon, A.E. van Vogt, Jack Williamson, and more. This is definitely *not* to imply that any of them has liked everything he had seen of mine, only that they're expressed a favorable view of much of it. They can't all be wrong!

Besides, fans who don't publish but who do attend conventions show a strong tendency to come up and say they like my work. This cannot be entirely selection. Of course no civilized person will gratuitously sneer in a writer's face, "Your stories stink." But no one is required to be sycophantic, either. As said, I don't solicit comments, and indeed prefer to talk about something else, so if you don't care for what I publish, the subject is easy enough to avoid. Nevertheless, people go out of their way to make kind remarks. The same is true of many who aren't fans at all, who don't even go to conventions, but who are readers and make contact in person or by mail.

Their good taste is shown by what they have to say about the whole of literature and the arts in general. Their honesty is shown by the fact that they seldom hesitate to tell me when I have disappointed them. Their interest (as opposed to casual politeness) is shown by questions, observations, and suggestions which prove that they understand what I have been doing, over and above telling stories.

By no means am I unique in this situation. I belong to a whole clutch of writers of whom the same thing is true—but will leave the taxonomy to whoever wants to do the necessary research.

So here we have two human classes who react entirely differently to the same writer. In either case, they are persons of education and discrimination. What distinguishes them? I think it is their individual psychologies. Certainly, cutting back for a moment to the "ten best" business, Harlan and I are almost as unlike as it is possible for twentieth-century white American males to be. The discovery which I may have made here is that there exists a

statistical personality difference between the type of fan who does reviews and the type who simply attends conventions. Readers who do neither are presumably divided along similar lines, but Harlan and I would have to compare our mail to prove or disprove this.

The observation does not, repeat not demonstrate that the goodness or badness of art is a mere matter of subjective reaction. We can talk intelligently about it; we can learn to appreciate subtleties, symbolic structures, all kinds of elements from which we get nothing on first exposure. I shan't go into an elaborate theory of esthetics, though be warned, I have one of my own. Let me simply propose to you that the essence of art is communication—of an insight, an emotion, a perception, or oftenest all of these and more besides. The more full and powerful the message, the greater the work of art.

But . . . as I remarked before, Monet is lost on the color-blind, Beethoven on the tone-deaf.

I respect the artists on Harlan's list, and often enjoy reading them. It's merely that nine of them don't speak to me as clearly as do the nine of mine who don't speak as clearly to Harlan. Make what you will of the one we have in common.

And if somebody is looking for a master's thesis project in psychology, how about running multiphasics on fanzine fans versus the other kind?

Although the artist's work must in the last analysis stand alone, and will in the last analysis have a unique meaning to each individual, still, he was its very first percipient. What does it mean to him? That question had two parts: What was he trying to do, and how close to the mark does he think he came? This seems interesting to me, though for lack of information about others (or, in a few instances, lack of permission to quote things told me in private), I will have to stick more closely to my own case than I really wish. Please bear in mind that it *is* only my own case, and doubtless that of every colleague is different in many ways.

Certainly this is true of conscious intent. Some artists proceed in a kind of frenzy, unheeding of what they are about until the project is finished. This is not necessarily bad. A numbe; of our finest works have been created thus. No two makers have identical methods. Of course, if he's any good, the headlong artist has all the skill and understanding that he needs; they just operate less on the conscious level for him than they do for most people.

At the opposite pole we find the completely cerebral person who plans everything out beforehand, takes careful note of what he is doing while he does it, and afterward goes back to ponder over each smallest detail and revise until he is satisfied. People of this kind also produce their share of greatness.

Now actually these two extremes are fictitious, because nobody is 100% emotional or 100% intellectual at any time in his life, including his working hours. Shakespeare's poetry seems to have welled out of him as he wrote—at least, it's obvious that he seldom if ever bothered to check his facts or to rewrite—but you know full well that he was a master of the language and its techniques, plus being a damn good craftsman of theatrics. Pope would spend years polishing his verses to a coldly classical perfection, but the drive to write them in the first place, and no doubt even most of the word combinations, came from a primal interior source much deeper than his awareness. You can multiply in-between examples indefinitely.

Speaking for myself, I think I alternate between emphases as a job progresses. A basic idea or approach originates gradually, God knows where or how; but then thinking about it not only gives it clearer form, but stimulates more flow of raw material from beneath. I'll decide that such-and-such a type of character is needed, because that is the logical type to get into the sort of mess that the story will involve, and sit down to write his biography; but that writing soon becomes a kind of reverie in which the person almost seems not to be invented step by step, but I step by step get acquainted with him. Likewise for associated background information. A huge stack of notes has accumulated on my desk before any first draft gets started.

Yet I have learned not to outline the narrative in detail. For me—not necessarily others—that would be a waste of effort, or an actual self-imposed handicap. Instead, I know in a general way how the story is going to go, in part because the characters have told me. I scribble down a one-line notation of what I think each chapter will deal with. This is subject to change as things develop, and usually gets it. For I keep making surprised discoveries about my imaginary world. Still more do its inhabitants keep surprising me.

For example, a certain novel was getting so long that I thought a good way to save some words would be to tell one chapter entirely from the viewpoint of one character who was a close observer, but icily detached; thus it could be a kind of synopsis. However, right in the middle of it, another character walked in and told the first, in effect, "Look, you're killing yourself, working straight through the way you've been doing. You've got to eat this sandwich and drink this milk, and then you really ought to let me give you some physical therapy"—and what followed was a brief but psychologically crucial scene. I went along. They were on the spot, not me; they knew best.

As a rule, dialogue comes easily to me. I don't claim that mine is the most convincing in science fiction. (That's the province of Avram Davidson, with L. Sprague de Camp or G.C. Edmondson probably second.) Still, various people including a TV producer whose business it is to know, have told me my dialogue is all right. No surprise; the characters supply it.

For me, the hard part of a story is generally the descriptive. Sometimes I'm lucky and hit the mother lode and everything is gold and gravy. But oftenest I'll spend many minutes searching for an exact right word or phrase. More on that later. Suffice it to say here that this is still largely happening in Dream Time. I know when I've found the right word because that's how it *feels*.

Or I'll believe I know. Disillusionment frequently follows. Toward the end of a day I'll have done my chapter, or whatever the unit is. (The length depends on how well or badly things went, but 3000 words is a pretty fair guess at the average.) Next comes the conscious part. I read it over and think, "Judas priest, this is awful. How could I ever spew out such garbage?" So I trudge across it word by word, making pencilled changes, and changing these changes because something further on demands that, and at last decide it isn't too terrible . . . After all that scribbling, nobody but me can read the manuscript. Having taken a break, I'll go back for a third time, and the stuff looks better yet, though corrections are needed here and there. By then the hour is likely to be rather late.

Tomorrow will witness the same cycle, and so on until the story is finished. After a few days to gain perspective and catch my breath, I read the whole thing through, finding more alterations necessary, though these are mostly the straightening out of small inconsistencies. Then it gets as long a cooling off period as deadlines allow. Then I read it through again, making a few more improvements. Then I type up a clean copy, making additional changes as they occur to me, mainly minor, occasionally important. Then, after another cooling off period, I go through it a couple of times again. By now, revisions are so slight that they can be done in ink on the page. To be sure, if possible I want to see the copy edited manuscript before it goes to press, and I read galleys. . . .

This study and rewriting are (I think) almost totally conscious. At most, I'll let my inner ear decide if a given sentence is euphonious and has the appropriate rhythm. Otherwise it's a

matter of taking what came out during Dream Time and trying to refine it according to well-established rules: which are not mechanical rules, but a distillation from the experience of centuries.

So much for one writer's working method. It would be interesting if others would relate theirs.

Why are we writing? Again, this varies. I've already confessed that I myself write not for the sake of writing, but to have written, in order to be free to go traveling or sailing or whatever else I really want to do. Yet I have also admitted to a sense of workmanship, a desire to do my best. How? To what end? What is the writer as a writer actually trying to accomplish? This is not irrelevant to his finished product, because he'll tend to employ that set of techniques—that style, if you wish, though there's more to technique than style and more to style than technique—which best suits his purpose.

Once again, I wish this piece could hold less vertical pronoun. However, I cannot speak for anyone else, and therefore must use myself as the test case if the matter is to be discussed. Many colleagues have different things in mind, every bit as valid.

Basically, then, in my fiction I seek to entertain by telling stories. Both these predicates require a little expansion.

"Entertainment" need not be mindless time-killing. On the contrary, I take the word to mean, "That which engages attention and arouses interest, including emotion." In this sense, the most lofty tragedies of Euripides and the most rarefied thought of Einstein are entertaining . . . to some of us, who may find the TV sitcoms a crashing bore. My hope is to entertain people who enjoy thinking.

This can be done through nonfiction, of course, and sometimes I have had a go at that medium. Mainly, though, I use fiction, in the form of stories, i.e. narratives in which events move from one situation to another. Needless to say—a code phrase meaning, "I am about to say"—that does not imply slam-bang violence. Some of the best stories ever told have taken place almost entirely in the heads of the characters. In our genre, Fritz Leiber is a special master of that approach, as Karel Capek was before him. On the other hand, I have nothing but contempt for the academic snobs who insist that the whole purpose of literature is the sensitive analysis of character. That would exclude quite a lot of people, from Homer on down, who will still be remembered long after the busy little critics have moldered away in silence.

The balance of the physical, mental, and spiritual in a given story depends entirely on what it is about.

You see, every good story is about something. There is more in it than just the formal plot or even the characters. Take, for an enduring example, the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. Overtly, these are corking good yarns; they are full of marvelously realized people; taken as a whole, they give us an almost Dickensian portrait of a milieu now vanished. But in addition, further down, we find the implications, the philosophy if you will—for instance, the taken-for-granted assumptions that good and evil are real; that honor and dignity matter; that man is not a *tabula rasa* on which society inscribes whatever it chooses; that he owes a duty to the land which brought him forth, though he should not be the mere creature of whoever happens to rule that land—Ah, well, no reason for going on. They'll tell you in the schools how hopelessly obsolete such notions are: except they'll use stronger adjectives, like "fascist" and "racist" and "sexist," because these antique prejudices stand in the way of that glorious era to come "When all men are paid for existing and no man must pay for his sins" (Kipling) . . . The point is, the Holmesian canon makes a statement, too subtle and complex to spell out in its entirety, about the real world. You may or may not agree with that statement, in whole or in part, but it is there. Something of the kind is present in all worthwhile writing.

I too attempt to put it in. This is seldom done by calculation. Readers don't want sermons and, for that matter, I don't usually want to preach. Nevertheless, sometimes I'll see a thing of mine when at last it is in print—things always look different in print—and think with a slight shock, "Lord, did I really say that?"

Occasionally a theme is present by intent, though only because it happened to be the spark that ignited the whole story—a hope, a fear, a love, an anger. In other words, I never construct a story as a tract, but in certain cases I am more than normally aware of what it is about.

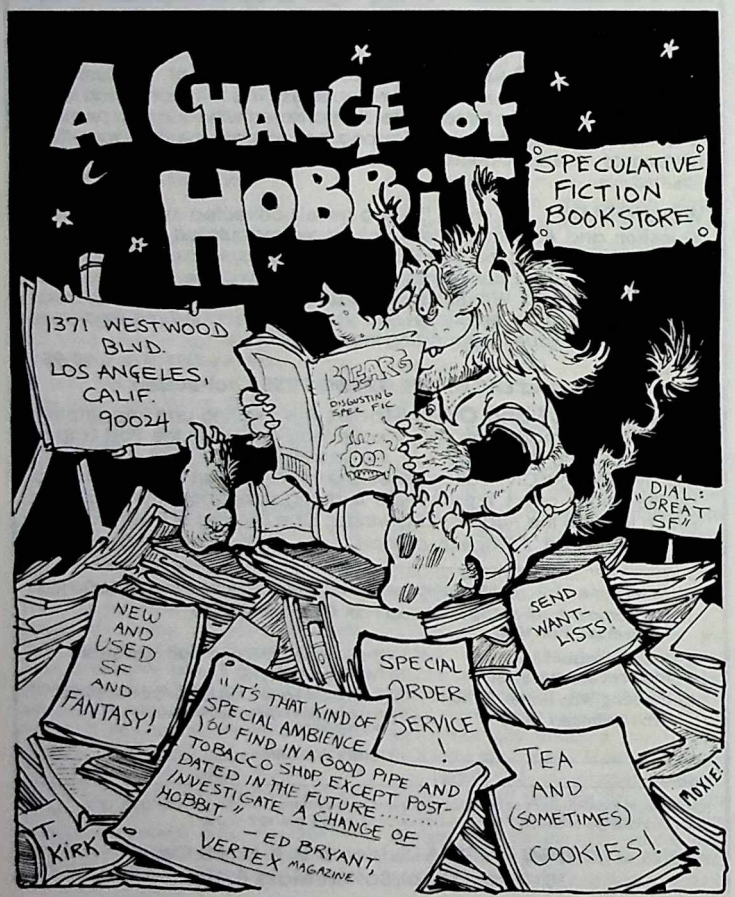
For instance, John Campbell suggested to me the plot idea of "The Pirate." Suppose a nearby supernova irradiated a humanly habitable planet so heavily that the intelligent beings thereon were wiped out. Their buildings, the entire physical apparatus of their civilization, would remain intact. What a commercial opportunity for someone! But the moment I started to plan that novelette, I saw that it had to turn on the question, "What are the rights of the dead as against the living?" Of readers who have commented to me, those over 40 or thereabouts have clearly seen that this was the motif, while younger people have been a little puzzled as to what all the shootin' was fer.

Similarly, Avram Davidson, then editor of *Fantasy & Science Fiction,* suggested to me the notion of a space privateer, and out of this grew those tales which became *The Star Fox.* Searching consciously for what would motivate characters to such an action, I heard out of my subconscious the statement, "Some wars are justifiable." This would hardly have been controversial in 1943, but I was writing two decades later, and God damn it, somebody besides Heinlein had to speak out against the peaceniks! I hope the result was not a rant but an entertaining narrative, with its inner meaning reserved for those who had eyes to see.

Years afterward, at Campbell's instigation, I got into a lengthy correspondence with Hal Clement, in the course of which we designed a planetary system for the use of us both. I am still waiting, impatiently, for his story or stories, but mine was *Fire Time.* I set it in the same future history as *The Star Fox,* partly to enrich the background for those who had read and remembered the earlier book, but chiefly to make the point: "Some wars are not justifiable."

These are rather specific messages. The basic and ever-recurring themes are diffuse, expressed more as a set of assumptions than anything else. Perhaps for me they amount to: This is a sheerly magnificent universe, full of unlimited marvels and opportunities, and we ought to get out into it; life can be cruel, and is ultimately tragic, but mostly it is wonderful, or would be if we'd allow it to be; freedom is good, unfreedom is evil, no matter how noble-sounding your official reasons are for enslaving the individual; freedom does, though, entail responsibility—Enough. It's foolish to spell such things out, because they don't really lend themselves to overt expression.

Besides, a generalized observation is by itself too abstract to make a story. You, the reader, want incident, character, background; you want an illusion of reality; you want the language to give pleasure in its own right. How can this be offered you?



There are no simple or single answers. Not only do they differ from writer to writer, they differ from story to story. Much of what one does originates far down in the psyche. However, certain techniques, consciously used, are helpful and worthy of mention.

For instance, good prose has at least as much metrical structure as free verse does, oftimes more. Elementary books on the subject declare that short, choppy sentences are suitable for fast action, while long, rhythmic ones are for more peaceful episodes. But this is, at best, a half truth, with countless exceptions. Thus Hemingway could do a poignant farewell scene in short sentences or phrases which might comprise their whole paragraphs—whereas Homer could evoke the violence of man, or Conrad the violence of nature, in words that flowed together by the score. The writer's only real guide is his inner ear.

The choice of the individual words is likewise important. In English, most of those which deal with the basic experiences are Anglo-Saxon—love, birth, life, death, dawn, sky, man, woman, child, fire, weapon, wound, heal—though of course we get many interesting exceptions—age, time, space, battle, pain, redemption, pregnant, parent. . . . I do tend to pick Germanic words for certain purposes, especially for a sense of immediacy. They are also, by and large, the onomatopoeic words—clang, crash, roar, whisper, creak, groan. . . . But since English is about half French, it would be ridiculous to confine oneself to such a vocabulary. In fact, no language except, maybe, a few left over from the Neolithic era, has failed to incorporate a number of Greek and Latin roots. (Have you heard the story about a pair of American tourists walking around in Moscow who got hungry and wanted to find a restaurant? They checked their little Russian-English dictionary, stopped a passerby, and puzzled the hell out of him by inquiring for a pectopah.)

For a science fiction writer, Greek and Latin are especially valuable as a source of readily understood neologisms. My wife, who is a bit of a classical scholar, coined the words "Polesotechnic" and "sophont" for me; I introduced them, and the latter word, meaning "intelligent being," seems to be catching on, to my great delight. On my own, I came up with plant names like "glycophyllon" (sweetbranch), animal names like "spathodont" (swordtooth), and geographical names like "Oronesia" (Mountain Islands), whose meanings are self-evident to a reasonably well-read person and should not unduly confuse the rest. To be sure, English-derived names convey an image more readily—e.g., "copperbark," "braidwood," "crownbuck," "flittery," "twyhorn," "Mount Lorn," "Mistwood," "Stormgate."

The word in its context should sound right. Sometimes, for instance, because of meter or whatever, it is better to write "crepuscular" than "twilit" or "dusky," even though Anglo-Saxon is more often preferable for a piece of physical or emotional description. Such judgments are usually subjective, unconscious or semi-conscious, though the conscious mind should always review them afterward.

Another thing to bear in mind is that we have more than one sense. In fact, we have much more than five; hunger, equilibrium, and temperature are a few of them. Following Flaubert, I try to invoke at least three in every scene. It doesn't take many words.

As an almost random example: "Gray whitecaps blew in, beneath a pale, whistling sky. When they withdrew, the rattle of pebbles sounded like a huge quern. Gulls flew about, mewing. On the sands were strewn brown tangles of kelp, that smelt of the deeps and had small bladders which popped when trodden on. Beyond those dunes and harsh grass was a moor, wide heathery reaches and a bauta stone raised by folk long forgotten." ("The Merman's Children") Now I do not claim that this passage will ring down the ages. The

ages themselves will determine that, and probably we today would be surprised if we should suddenly learn what will be remembered and what will not. I merely submit that it is a competent description of a chilly beach on the island of Bornholm. Mostly it uses vision, but you also get hearing, scent, and tactility (the popping bladders, the harsh grass), as well as a suggestion that people have been around here since time immemorial. As a fifth sense, you get temperature, by association with the wind and the wan heaven. If you care to mark out the prosody, you will find a metrical structure too, which I hope contributes something to the mood.

Repeat: I am not telling you how glorious this is. That's for you to decide, and if you decide it's junk, I shan't be at all offended. *De gustibus.* I am only giving you a concrete example of how one writer has tried to get one effect.

Incidentally, by "you" I mean "reader," not "critic." With two or three notable exceptions, the critics of science fiction are style-deaf. Well, very hard of hearing, at least.

Therefore I don't bother trying to please them. Besides, even if they had perception, to become their jackal would be no fit career for anybody. I make my living not off the critic or the fan—fans are a negligible portion of the total readership—but off that anonymous thousandfold guy who keeps buying my books.

Still, an artist does have to have feedback. Otherwise he becomes totally egocentric, surrounded by a clique of yes-men, and loses touch with the realities of writing as well as the realities of life. With sorrow I have seen more than one go down that particular drain. (Mixed metaphors here, but what the hell. Hell, indeed.) On the other hand, he who automatically embraces whatever is currently saleable is a hack . . . and likewise he who automatically embraces whatever is currently fashionable among the intellectuals. You must follow your own star; yet you need some guidance to tell you how far off course you may be.

(Note: As said earlier, I do not scorn anyone for doing an occasional potboiler. We all do that—not always for the money. I only ask what the general nature of an artist's career is going to be.)

In my opinion, the useful feedback comes from those readers who are not only articulate, but in a certain resonance with a given writer. They understand his basic intent and approach, and can therefore talk meaningfully about his work. He may not invariably agree with them—if their judgments are negative, chances are that he won't—but he does well to pay close heed. This is the nearest thing to a genuine, responding audience he will ever get.

John D. MacDonald, who is deservedly far more popular than me (frankly, I consider him one of our half-dozen most important contemporary writers by any standard) has remarked somewhere that the process of writing is like dropping feathers down a well. A person in this business must cherish whatever faint echo he can get . . . but it has to be in his own language.

Style and such aside, we come back to the matter of theme, what a story is supposed to have said or advocated or whatever. Give a dog a bad name and hang him. Give a writer a label and stop thinking about him.

Thus Ray Bradbury is called, rather vaguely, "poetic," or else he is taken to be a sugary sentimentalist, though in fact he has done some of the grisliest horror stories ever printed—along with much else, of course. Robert Heinlein was called a fascist and warmonger and what-have-you after *Starship Troopers* came out, though in fact the world of that particular novel offers more freedom to the individual than our own does. Then *Stranger In a Strange Land* appeared, and suddenly the hippies were beating down the door of this courtly, old-fashioned gentleman.

Would that more readers were as sensible as a French friend of mine. Shortly before *The High Crusade* was due out, I wrote to him saying, "Look, in the nature of the case, this thing being laid in the time of the Hundred Years' War and told from the English viewpoint, you're going to see uncomplimentary remarks about the French. Believe me, I am not responsible for the opinions of my characters." Replied he, quite cheerfully: "Oh, that's okay. My ancestors were Burgundians, who looked on the French and the English alike as barbarians."

On occasion I've been called many nasty things, including fascist—that by people who haven't the faintest idea what "fascist" really means. (The word refers to the kind of corporate state which Mussolini tried to establish in Italy and which the liberals have just about finished establishing in our own country.) The body of my work ought to make plain that I am a small-l libertarian. But you can't expect the average critic to see this.

What is interesting these days is an image that I am told I have acquired: the ultimate Male Chauvinist Pig. Strange. Of that slender percentage of readers from whom any writer gets continuing feedback, a startling proportion of mine are women: and a couple of these have said that the typical Anderson heroine is so competent that she gives them an inferiority complex. This female type of mine is nothing new, either. You can find her in books copyrighted in the 1950's. She's there because I have, in real life, known several like her and immensely admired them.

Then why am I labeled MCP? Is it because I usually write from a masculine viewpoint? No, probably not. So do most male writers, and some female ones, such as Leigh Brackett. In my own case, I do this largely because I understand the masculine psyche a little better than the feminine. (For similar reasons, I seldom have a viewpoint character who is ethnically very different from me—unless the story is far enough in the future that one can assume that cultures have changed in unpredictable ways.)

The likeliest reason I can think of for my having gotten this name is twofold. First, I have not leaped to embrace the feminist ideology, any more than any other ideology which becomes fashionable. But that's probably minor. A writer is still allowed to remain neutral, at least in his pay copy. My debates with various ladies have generally been private and always civilized. Moreover, they have opened my eyes to things I had not been aware of before, inequities which are perfectly real, and I have told them so.

Second, however: Once upon a time Joanna Russ published an essay in the now defunct magazine *Vertex*, deploring the MCPism in science fiction. I ventured to publish a mild reply in the same place, arguing that science fiction had, if anything, long been in the forefront of egalitarianism, and that the relative dearth of women characters in it prior to about 1960 was due not to prejudice but to the requirements of the kind of story that was mostly being written in those days. Never mind whether Ms. Russ or I was right, or in what degree. My guess is that the simple fact that I dared to disagree with her in print was enough.

Nota bene: never, directly or indirectly, have I heard this from Ms. Russ. She having made her statement, I having made mine, she appears to have been as content as I am to let the matter drop and go on to more useful things. I cannot read her mind, so perhaps this does not represent her attitude. It does represent my distinct impression.

Be that as it may, I suspect that because of my response, the large-L Liberationists promptly designated me The Enemy and have never since stopped to think. No matter. That type of mind, whatever the cause it has embraced, never does.

From my friends, including women friends, I continue to learn. It's unlikely you'll ever convert me to a complete feminist ideology, because history has convinced me that crusading ideologies —including masculinist ones—enslave

and kill people. Not even individualism can be absolute without that result. Still, we can argue about lots of details. For instance, would the Equal Rights Amendment really serve its avowed purpose, or not? I'm willing to have my mind changed. Out of the totality of such details may come a program which accomplishes something desirable.

At the moment, my attitude remains what it has been throughout my adult life, that a woman who really *is* a woman is the highest thing that evolution on Earth has thus far come up with. This doesn't mean she should stand passive on a pedestal. No, she ought to be down here with the rest of us, doing whatever she as an individual does best.

But . . . what most women do best may not be identical with what most men do best. Maybe. I don't know. Nor does anybody else, in any way that makes scientific sense. Certainly in my own field, writing, quite a few women have proven themselves equal or superior in talent to all male practitioners. But, to name a single example, why have there been so few female composers of music? Lack of opportunity? Perhaps; perhaps not. I don't oppose the removal of artificial barriers. How could a libertarian? I do reserve the right to raise a few questions about what the ultimate results may be. After all, doesn't science fiction pride itself on being a branch of literature—not the only one—which raises questions?

If this refusal to join a Movement, in either direction or any, gets me denominated an MCP or a fascist or whatever, okay, so be it. I'll continue to listen to those people who understand what I am trying to do, and learn from them, including the women among them. The fanatics can go to hell. As a citizen, rather than a writer, I am mainly concerned to see that they—fanatics in any cause whatsoever—don't take the rest of us along with them.

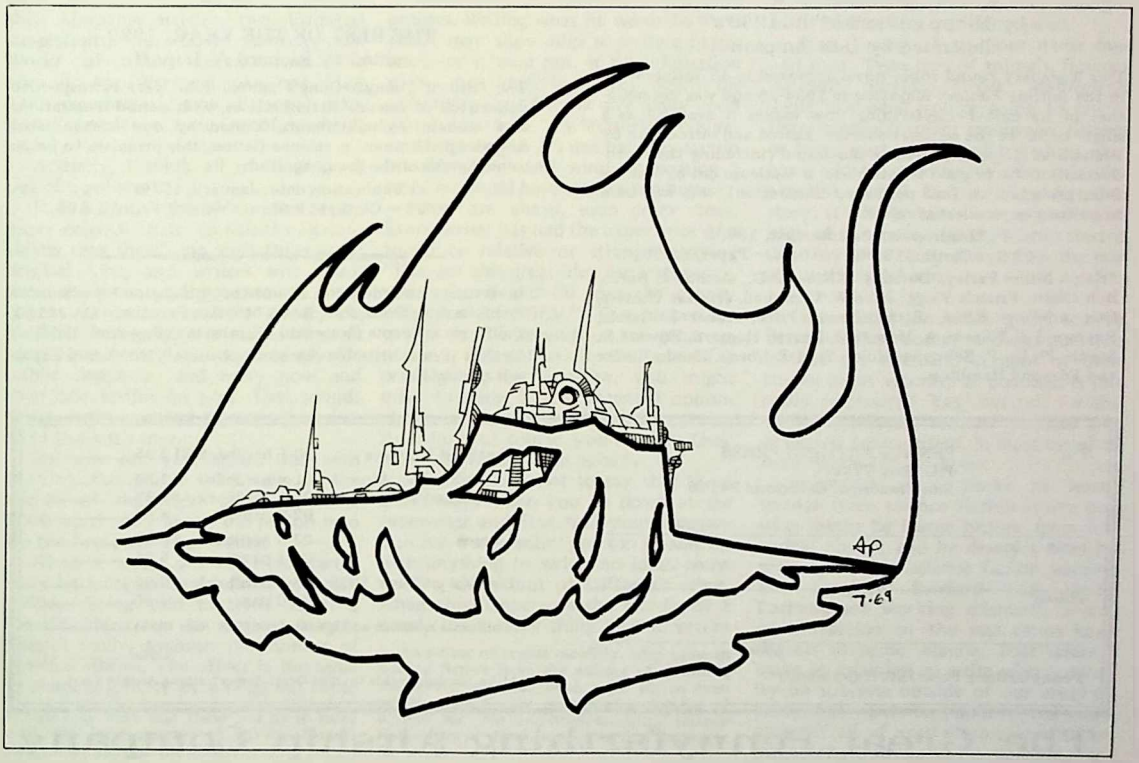
That would be a rather depressing note on which to close, and a quite unnecessary one. The fact is that the overwhelming majority of people are good and sensible. I myself have had an extraordinarily fortunate life, am still doing so, and plan to continue thus for long years. It might have been more satisfying to be an astrophysicist or an oceanographer, but maybe it wouldn't have, and in any event, there is ample satisfaction in writing, plus ample leisure in which to do other things. At seventh and last, as they say in Danish, I owe my thanks for this to the readers. To you.

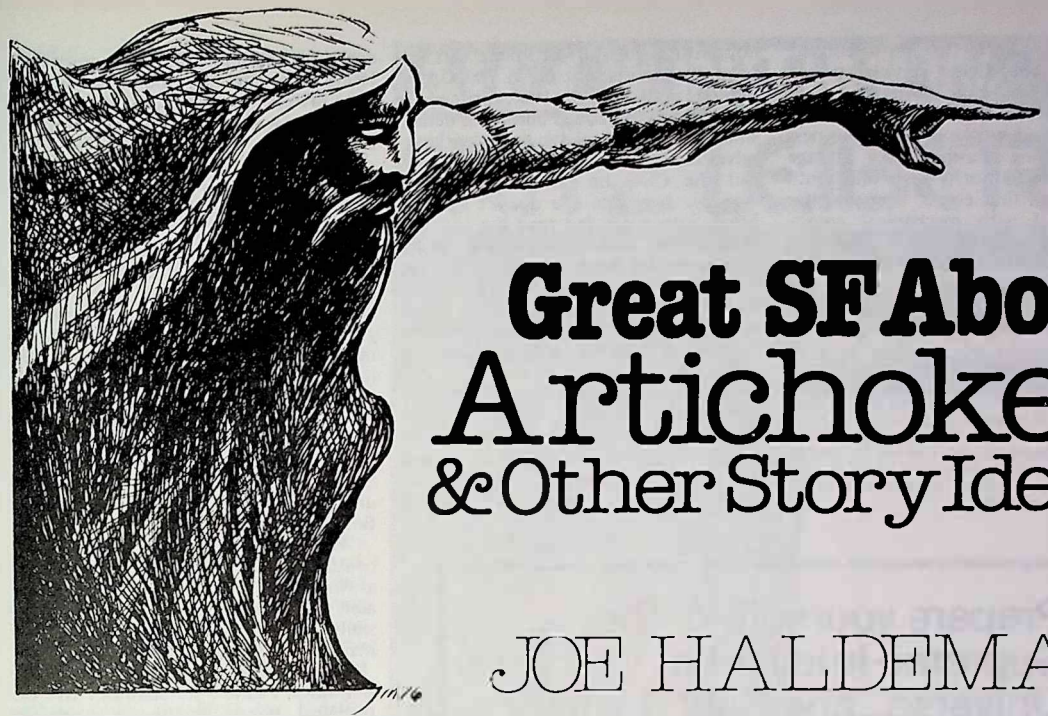
Oh, yes, you—enough of you—buy the books not to help me but because they give you your money's worth of entertainment. It's a fair exchange, with no gratitude due on either side. Nevertheless, a lot of you have graciously expressed appreciation. I'd like to return that. After all, you don't just give me your money, you give me your time, and a ration of time is the only treasure that we humans have ultimately got.

Although even in science fiction one never hears a word from most of the readership, still, our field is unique in the high degree of contact between the producers and the consumers; and the distinction between them is apt to get blurred. This is excellent. I think it helps account for the ongoing vitality of science fiction. Those readers with whom I have been directly in touch have ranged the whole way from Nobel laureates to itinerant odd-jobbers, but with a few unimportant exceptions they have been intelligent, aware people who have been the friendships, ranging from casual to more-than-brotherly close, not to speak of the outright love relationships.

Yes, it's a great business to be in, a great life, and again I thank you and hope that I may continue to please most of you by what I write. □

—Poul Anderson





Great SF About Artichokes & Other Story Ideas

JOE HALDEMAN

Where do you get your crazy ideas? Well, if we tabulate the assertions made in the introductions to the stories in my collection *Infinite Dreams*, it goes like this: Magazine articles, two. Editorial suggestions, four. Cover painting, one. Works of other writers, two. The weather, two. Personal joke, one. Stylistic experiments, two. Personal emotional experience, two. Out of nowhere, two.[1]

Actually, I think all of them came out of nowhere.

R.A. Lafferty, than whom there is no more original writer in science fiction, claims that there's no such thing as an original idea, and writers who think they sit down and go through some rational process to arrive at a story are kidding themselves. He claims that all ideas float around as a kind of psychic public property, and every now and then one settles on you. That sounds dangerously mystical to me, subversive, but I think it's true.

So how can you square that with obeying the editor who calls in the middle of the night and asks for a 4000-word story about the person who ate the first artichoke? Easily.

When a writer sits down to start a story he faces a literal infinity of possibilities. Being told to write about a specific thing, or to a given length, doesn't really diminish the number of possible stories. The effect is the same as dividing infinity by a large but finite number: you still have infinity. Obviously, a writer who figures out his own story idea and then proceeds to write it is duplicating this not-really-restrictive process. Writing what he wants to write about may allow him to write a better story—or it may not, if his infatuation with the idea interferes with his objectivity—but I think any really good writer can take any editorial requirement, so long as it's not patently stupid or offensive,[2] and wind up writing a story he would have written anyhow.

Ideas are cheap, even crazy ones. Every writer has had the experience of a friend or relative—or stranger!—saying "I've got this great idea for a story . . . you write it and I'll split the money with you fifty-fifty." The proper response to this depends on the generous person's occupation. In the case of a prizefighter, for instance, you might offer to name a few potential opponents, and only demand half the purse. An editor, of course, you humor. They rarely ask for as much as half.

All of this is not to say that there aren't days when you sit down at the typewriter and find that your imagination has frozen solid; you can't come up with anything to write, no ideas come floating down out of Lafferty's ether. When this happens in the middle of a novel, it's a scary thing. But if you're just facing a short story that won't get itself started, there's an easy way to cope with it, a trade secret that Gordon R. Dickson passed on to me, saying it hadn't failed him in twenty years:

Start typing. Type your name over and over. Type lists of animals, flowers, baseball players, Greek Methodists. Type out what you're going to say to that damned insolent repairman. Sooner or later, perhaps out of boredom, perhaps out of a desire to *stop* this silly exercise, you'll find you've started a story. It's never taken me so much as a page of nonsense, and the stories started this way aren't any worse than the one about the artichoke.

One restriction most good science fiction writers accept without question is that the scientific content of their stories be as accurate as possible. Is this really necessary? Yes, but not for the obvious didactic reason. We are not obligated (or qualified, in most cases) to *teach* science to anybody.

A person who thinks he learns science from science fiction is like one who thinks he learns history from historical novels, and he deserves what he gets. Some few science fiction writers, like Gregory Benford and Philip Latham, are working scientists, and a good fraction of the rest of us have degrees in some science. That doesn't make us qualified to write with authority on subjects outside of our areas of study, but we do it; you'd have a short career if all of your stories were about magnetohydrodynamics or galactic mor-

1. You may note that these add up to more than the total number of stories. I can't balance my checkbook, either.

2. An editor of recent memory, who came to science fiction from the editing of wrestling magazines, and has since gone on to even greater things, once petitioned a number of writers for "an anti-homosexuality science fiction story." None was quite that desperate for work.

phology. So we try to be intelligent laymen in other fields, staying current enough so that our inevitable errors won't be obvious to other laymen.

Any fiction writer is in the business of maintaining illusion. Like a stage magician, his authority lasts only until he makes his first error.[3] Every writer has to deal with mechanical consistencies like making sure the woman named Marie in Chapter One doesn't turn into Mary in Chapter Four. He also has to be careful about routine details, not letting the sun set in the east (as John Wayne made it do in *The Green Berets*), and so forth. If he writes in a genre, he has an added burden of detail, since most of his readers consider themselves experts. Mundane esoterica: Spies call the CIA the Company, not the Agency. A private eye doesn't have to break into a car and read the registration card to find out who owns it; he jots down the license number and sends a form to the Department of Motor Vehicles. A cowboy normally carried only five shots in his sixshooter; only a fool would leave the hammer down on a live round.

One reason science fiction is harder to write than other forms of genre fiction is that this universe of detail is larger, more difficult of access, and constantly changing. I wonder how many novels-in-progress got thrown across the room in 1965, when scientists found that Mercury *didn't* keep one face always to the Sun, after all. I wonder how many bad ones got finished anyhow.

Nobody can be an expert on everything from ablation physics to zymurgy, so you have to work from a principle of exclusion: know the limits of your knowledge and never expose your ignorance by attempting to write with authority when you don't really know what's going on. This advice is easier to give than to take. I've been caught in basic mistakes in genetics, laser technology, and even metric nomenclature—in the first printing of *The Forever War* I referred time and again to a unit of power called the "bevawatt." What I *meant* was "gigawatt"; the only thing "bev" means is billion-electron-volt, a unit of energy, not power. I got letters. Boy, did I get letters.

The letters are humbling, and time-consuming if you feel obligated to answer them (I do, so long as they aren't abusive or idiotic). But the possibility of being caught in error isn't the main reason for taking pains.

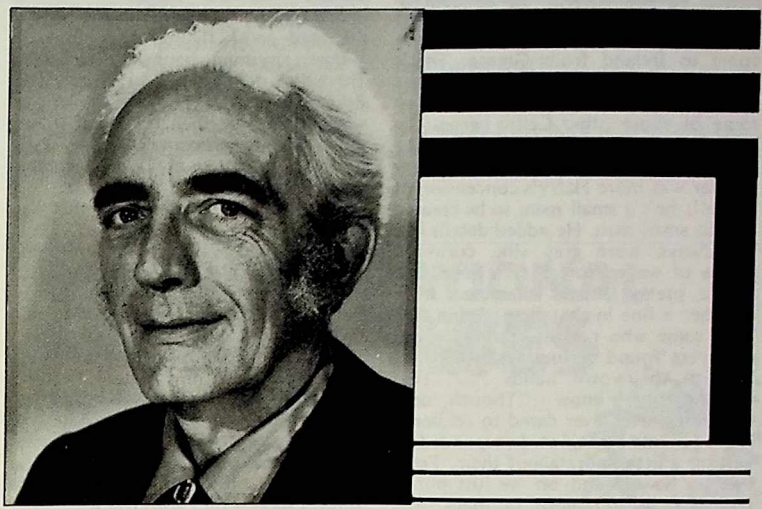
When I finish writing a science fiction novel I have a notebook or two of technical notes, equations, diagrams, graphs. Even a short story, if it's a hard-core-science one like "Tricentennial," might generate a dozen pages of notes. Not one per cent of this stuff finds its way into the story. It may even be naive science and weak mathematics—but it will have served its purpose if it has made a fictional world solid and real to me.

Because this business of illusion works both ways. For a story to succeed, the writer must himself be convinced that the background and situation the story is built on make sense. Ernest Hemingway pointed out (though I think Gertrude Stein said it first) that the prose of a story should move with the steady grace of an iceberg, and for the same reason an iceberg does: seven-eighths of it is beneath the surface. The author must know much more than the reader sees. And he must believe, at least for the duration.

Which brings us back to Mr. Lafferty. What I'm really doing with all these equations and graphs, I think, is putting myself into a properly receptive frame of mind. Other writers draft endless outlines to the same purpose, or sharpen pencils down to useless stubs, or take meditative walks, or drink bourbon. And through some mystical—or subconscious, or subrational—process, where there was white paper there's a sentence, a page, a story. Finding the proper words is not at all a mystical process, just creative labor. The ideas that serve as scaffolding for the words, though, they come from out of nowhere, and serve you, then return. □

3. I saw an act in Las Vegas where the magician exploited this sentiment by deliberately introducing mistakes, which grew more and more outrageous until his act degenerated into slapstick, and it was more entertaining than any straight sleight-of-hand. Good surreal writers like Brautigan, Disch, and Garcia Marquez also succeed by deliberately manipulating the consensus of illusion we call reality, but that's not the kettle of fish we're discussing here.

ALGOL INTERVIEW:
FRITZ LEIBER



INTERVIEWED BY
Jim Purviance

ALGOL: In all your stories I've read, your women are either very, very good to the point of inanity, or very bad to the point of delicious evil. Is there a particular reason why the women are either protagonists or not important at all?

LEIBER: In the early Fafhrd and Grey Mouser stories I didn't feel any obligation to bring in any love interests, let alone sex, so the women are really at a minimum in those early stories in the second Fafhrd and Mouser book, *Swords Against Death.* And the women certainly don't play an important part in any of those stories at all. Then, by the time I was writing Fafhrd and Mouser stories for *Fantastic* in the 60's, times had changed enough so at least there could be some sex. The women mostly got in as mysterious and frequently evil creatures.

ALGOL: Why?

LEIBER: It's hard to say. If you really want to get at it, it probably goes back to a feeling derived from childhood and adolescence that there was something forbidden and mysterious, evil and delightful, about sex. A result of the times, in a way. My own approach, and my lacc of experience. But it is a problem. Now, in *Rime Isle* I deliberately introduce a couple of heroines who are employing Fafhrd and the Mouser. These two ladies appear and they hire Fafhrd and the Mouser to each collect a band of twelve men like themselves to come aid in the defense of this island, Rime Isle, against an invasion of the Mingols. The Mingols had always been horsemen and were obviously based on the Huns. There were also the Sea Huns. These ladies hire Fafhrd and the Mouser and they're deliberately a couple very feminist types, obviously feminists. They'd become the Secretary and Treasurer of the Council of Rime Isle: the way to power for a woman.

ALGOL: They hold the money and the words.

LEIBER: Right. It was recognition of both the changing times, and the fact that women hadn't been important in the stories. Somehow, with a lot of sword fighting and adventure, it's just easier to put women in who play the part of being lures. You know, they see a beautiful woman and they want her, so they mess around and get into a lot of trouble. That sort of thing.

ALGOL: When exactly do your stories take place—our middle ages, somebody else's middle ages, somebody else's dark ages? Are you thinking alternate Earth, this Earth, or another mythological structure?

LEIBER: Well, I think it has to be enough like our Earth so that I can use things like horses and dogs and the moon without making any changes. I'll tell you a little about them in a little more detail. It is sort of interesting and at least it will explain about Fafhrd and the Mouser and maybe get at the other questions. This is also how I got started writing.

I was going to the University of Chicago and I had some ambition, among other things, to be a writer. But it never led anywhere because I had never done any writing. A couple of times I tried to write a story and never got to the bottom of page one because I overly simplified and couldn't think of any way to make the story last or to spin it out. So, at the University of Chicago, I met another man about my own age named Harry Fisher. He was just up there for a weekend visiting a friend of his, who had become a friend of mine. We got together, Harry and I, and we found in the course of a couple of walks that we liked each other and that we had a lot of imagination in common. He would write me long letters; I'd never written a letter that was more than a page long, mostly duty letters to my father and mother. You know, "Dear Mother and Father, I am having a fine time in Chicago . . ."

Harry was going to the University of Louisville and was very precocious as far as his reading and writing went. He was reading everything, and his writing was very fluent. So I began to write long letters. And then we began to include fragments of stories, fragments of fiction and satire. We wrote about some characters called the "Elder Gods" that were partly from Norse mythology and from James Branch Cabell's *Jurgen* and *The Cream of the Jest.* I remember that trolls were involved, so that must have had some Norse mythology. Then we invented a family named Wischmeier who were middle European genius' in all sorts of areas. We did this because we met a friend of Harry's who had read Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West,* and we hadn't read it. So we said we'd read a commentary on it by Herman and Adolf Wischmeier, and we used to quote this commentary. They were psychoanalists of history—students of Freud. We made them fairly real, actually. I remember some psychologist heard about them and said, well, yes, they were students of Freud but didn't amount to much. But he took them

seriously, you know. So we fooled around with the Wischmeiers—just in fragments, though.

Then once Harry wrote me this letter introducing, in about two pages, Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. I didn't invent them in the first place: Harry did. He was reading Celtic mythology at the time. I remember they rode into a city of the Tuatha De Danann, the first people who were supposed to have come to Ireland from Greece. That's one of the theories of how Ireland was populated. Fafhrd was like Conan or some of those other Celtic heroes: he had a wrist thick as a hero's ankle, and a complexion of milk-white. The Grey Mouser was more Harry's conception of himself: he's a small man, so he created a great small man. He added details like he always wore gray silk, curiously coarse of weave; sort of like tweed. He was a pretty sinister character. I remember a line in that first section that "... some who profess enmity to this one were found curiously strangled—as if with their own hands ..." That detailed, you know. "Though only drunken bravos ever dared to challenge him ..." and what not. I responded by writing a little more about them. For a year or so off and on we just put in fragments of reference to them. And then finally I began to catch up with Harry, at least as far as the length of the stuff I wrote. And we did get serious to the point where we had both begun novels about them. We hadn't completed one short story, but we were going to write a novel!

We both had the same experience. Harry wrote about ten or fifteen thousand words of a novel called *Quarmall*. I don't think it had a title then. And that eventually, through me, got into print. But then he abandoned it. He wrote the beginning of the novel which started off in Quarmall and it was still at a stage where somebody was going to send off emissaries to get Fafhrd and the Mouser and bring them to Quarmall. That all had to be done, still. And he never got any further than about 15,000 words.

I was the same way. I wrote about 15,000 words of a novel called *The Grain Ships* and it kept spinning along. I had all these characters to get into the novel, and finally I realized I had about 100 pages and really nothing had happened yet. I'd just been introducing more and more characters. So that got abandoned. We'd been unrealistic, really. We'd gone no further than sort of figuring, well, a misty past. And yet we hadn't tried to copy Irish folklore—we hadn't tried to make them a direct part of it. Lankhmar came from some similar name in Irish mythology but I think I misspelled it, or I forgot how Harry had spelled it and began spelling it a different way and—it got changed.

Then, about four years after we had invented the characters, I did get ambitious enough to write the novel *Adept's Gambit*. Fafhrd was some kind of Northerner and the Mouser was some kind of not-defined Mediterranean-type and it all happened in Solucia in the Hellenistic Empire. I made it that way because I couldn't find out much about Solucia and the Hellenistic Age—it didn't figure prominently in any history I'd read—so I figured I could have almost anything happen back then. Then that didn't sell. I submitted it to *Weird Tales* and Farnsworth Wright, who was editor then, said that it was much too experimental. At any rate, though I'd gotten a couple favorable comments, I couldn't sell it as a short novel either. The situation was that way until *Unknown* came along in 1939. It was published by Street and Smith and edited by John W. Campbell. I thought I might be able to sell some sort of Fafhrd and Mouser story there if I could *finish* a story and give it a plot. So I borrowed a device that had always fascinated me from Bulwer Lytton's *The House and the Brain*, about a house that was motivated by a theosophical or alchemistic apparatus set up in a secret room in the basement. At any rate, at one point in this story they break into this room and find a dish of quicksilver with crystal rods floating in it, and a magnet and other stuff. So, I thought of somebody setting up a stone house like that that is alive and basically a trap. All the villain wants to do is lure people to go and look for the treasure there and be killed by the house. A typical nasty villain. I knew there had to be sword-fighting in it so I had two rivals who had also found maps leading to this treasure and who were bound to come into conflict with Fafhrd and the Mouser because they were both hunting for the same thing. That's how I wrote the story that was originally called "Two Sought Adventure." Later I changed the title to "The Jewels in the Forest." That was the first Fafhrd-Mouser story and it was also the first story I sold and got paid for and published.

ALGOL: I'll bet that felt good.

LEIBER: It went to my head 'cause I'd had a $25-a-week editorial job with some cheap encyclopedia that was sold by clipping coupons in the newspaper. You got it for a dollar a volume that way. The story was 12,000 words long and I got about a cent a word, $125.00. My God, five weeks' salary for one story. I thought I had it made. All I had to do was sell one of those a month. It was about a year until I sold another one. I actually quit my job. I was going to be a full-time writer. Finally, a month or so later, I got the job back again.

That first published story emphasized fantasy in sort of imaginary ways. I knew it was going to take place in light medieval times, roughly, as far as costumes and the fact that it used swords and crossbows. That was really as far as I went because it took place in a wilderness setting so I didn't have to decide on much detail. There wouldn't be a lot of people turning up in this story and they wouldn't be in a civilized area where I would have to have more background on architecture and so on. And I wanted to make sure that the reader knew it was fantasy—knew it was exotic. I think it starts off: "It was the Year of the Behemoth, the Month of the Hedgehog, the day of the Toad." It just sounded exotic. I may have realized that a similar system was the Chinese. I used animals that I'd never heard of on the Chinese Calendar. So that was the way I began it. I'd gotten to the point of drawing maps, and so had Harry and his wife, of Lankhmar and the lands to the North. Still, we hadn't taken up the question of history. So, the best way I could describe where it takes place is in a parallel or alternate world. It is like our own in many respects—it shares a lot of its culture even—but it's not supposed to be in any exact historical period. It's not historical.

When I finally put all the stories together and gave them a chronology, which I didn't do until Ace published them as books, then I figured that I'd really have to have a chronology if I was going to do that. So then I wrote some of the first stories: the one about Fafhrd's youth called "The Snow Women," and "Ill Met in Lankhmar" about how they met. I wrote them deliberately, much later than the earlier stories, just in order to give shape to the adventures. I deliberately, very premeditatedly, had them have young romances and great loves and then managed to kill off both the women.

ALGOL: I was very angry.

LEIBER: The reason I killed off both the women was to explain why they were apparently just palling around and women meant nothing to them. They weren't important. So I figured I'll have a great tragedy and for a long time they won't be seriously interested in women. That would explain why they go around together without making them homosexual. With modern liberation that had become a possibility. So that's why I handled them that way.

ALGOL: You *really* killed off those women. You really did a number on them.

LEIBER: It was dreadful, I agree. I became very conscious of this thing in my writing and so the first new piece I wrote in the Fafhrd and Mouser stories, about three years ago, was in *Fantastic*, called "Under the Thumbs of the Gods" in which they re-encounter all the women they'd known in the past and get put down by them. It's a very artificial sort of story, just a series of

put downs. Then I did *Rime Isle* where the women are hopefully more mature.
ALGOL: You mentioned John Campbell. Did you work with him very much?
LEIBER: At the very start I did, on the first two novels I wrote. I sold the novel *Conjure Wife* to Campbell's *Unknown* and then in the same year I sold him *Gather, Darkness!*, my first science fiction novel. One reason I was able to sell them was that we were into the war and several of his writers had quit writing immediately. Heinlein and de Camp were in Naval Research and then they pulled Asimov into it. He got drafted and was out in the Pacific, and they managed to get him out and get him into the research end of it. As far as the magazines went they had fewer writers. I was one of the people who came along and in a small way filled in. Before *Unknown* folded, Campbell encouraged me to try something in the science fiction line. And I wanted to write science fiction but I had problems working out plots. So I thought of this idea of a fake priesthood, a fake religion, that was built around scientifically performed miracles. I got the idea from Heinlein's story "Sixth Column"—now "Revolt in 2100." I made a couple of additional assumptions in order to get a new story. In "Sixth Column," just at the point that these six army scientists make an amazing breakthrough in physics that will open the door to advanced technology, and a simplified power source, and so on, America is conquered by a sort of Asian Invasion. How do they apply this super-science they've got? They decide to set up a fake religion. A typical sort of idea that *Astounding* and Campbell used to go for. Then, when the revolt was successful, they will call off the religion and return the country to the people.

I thought, if the scientists and army guys set up a religion it would be too tempting to hold on to power and not let go. There would have to be a revolt against that. And what form would it take? Well, it would be witchcraft based on super-science. I don't know how logical it was but it was very attractive. It allowed me to do the war between the angels and the devils, having it all science fiction. So, that's how I came to that novel. Campbell in that case sort of approved my very rough outline.

In the case of both *Conjure Wife* and *Gather, Darkness!*, after I'd done about four chapters, about a fifth or sixth of the book, I sent them to him and he read each and sent me back a long letter giving me suggestions. Nothing terribly specific of how the plot should develop or anything like that, but he was very good. In *Gather, Darkness!* he pointed out that I was beginning to satirize the villain—make him a little ridiculous—and I think I was. I actually did *use* that satire more in things like *A Spectre Is Haunting Texas* and *The Green Millenium* and *The Silver Eggheads*. No villain thinks of himself as a villain: he thinks he'd doing what he has to do. And that is useful in motivation. It makes you realize that no matter how monstrous an individual is, he thinks he's doing the right thing. Campbell certainly helped me there. And he helped me on one of the Fafhrd and Mouser stories, I think it was "Thieves House." It was rather badly constructed and he got me to rewrite parts of it and change the structure of the story. So, I worked rather closely with him for about a year or so, at that time, during World War II. That was really about the only long contact I had with him. And then, for various reasons after those first few things, I didn't write a great deal for the next three or four years. I got this job with *Science Digest* magazine, and my wife and I were expecting a baby, and we were buying a house, and somehow I seemed to be written out of science fiction for the next three or four years.
ALGOL: Did you work through an agent after that?
LEIBER: I didn't work through an agent at all at that time. What happened was when I got back into writing again around 1949, Fred Pohl, who was then with the Dirk Wylie Agency, was my

first agent. It was the first time I had an agent. By then, I had this full-time job with *Science Digest*. Fred did manage to sell three or four stories of mine that had been unsaleable up until then. He knew all the markets and they were having a big expansion around 1949. Then, a couple years later, it blew up. There were thirty or forty magazines on the market at the same time. Suddenly it was reduced to half a dozen magazines.

ALGOL: Where did you get into animals? You have so many animal references and analogies . . .

LEIBER: Well, I don't know. The first animal stories I remember reading and having read to me were about some character named Peter Rabbit. The animal book I like the most now is *The Wind in the Willows*. Moley and Ratty, Mr. Toad and Mr. Badger—they're a great group.

ALGOL: What about *Winnie the Pooh*?

LEIBER: As it happens, I just missed *Winnie the Pooh*. I read the *Oz* books, a lot of them.

ALGOL: You seem to place your animal references in your fantasies in a *much* more sophisticated manner than *Winnie the Pooh* or Mr. Badger.

LEIBER: I've always liked animal stories—I certainly missed a lot of them.

ALGOL: In Nehwon you came up with this very metaphysical philosophy of the creation of this world—how it was a spot on the bubble of the Cosmos. Where did that come from?

LEIBER: Well, it was partly the theory where the earth was hollow and the sun was at the center. A whole inner world. Edgar Rice Burroughs borrowed it for his Pellucidar novels. Partly I was playing around with that idea, and partly the idea that suppose the whole universe were water, and the worlds existed on the inside of bubbles. Rising through the water, the continents floating on the inside of the bubble . . . It sounded really sort of far out. Ridiculous, sort of. But I just wanted to have something very different.

ALGOL: It was. I was really impressed by it. Do you use San Francisco much in your books?

LEIBER: Oh, yes. In *Our Lady of Darkness* I used San Francisco a lot. It's set in modern San Francisco. Oh, I did have something I wanted to say. The last story I wrote and finished a couple days ago is one more Fafhrd and Mouser story. This won't be in *Swords and Ice Magic*, but it will be the start of a seventh book—if it ever gets there. In order to keep my writing going I have to try to set myself new problems, and set my characters new problems. For instance, I got along toward the end of *Rime Isle*, about two-thirds of the way through it, and one thing that was boring in on me more and more was there's a lot of stuff going on in this story and in the end Fafhrd and the Mouser and the other people of Rime Isle repel the Mingol Invasion. But, darn it, nobody ever really gets hurt much. It doesn't seem real for that reason. Maybe because killing off people is very easy to do, in one sense I mean. And because I'm awfully conscious of the books and movies in which there is an emphasis on violence in which you kill off eight or ten characters just to prove that the villain is dangerous. There's a whole feeling that unless a major catastrophe is involved it's hardly worth writing about. Well, I sometimes react very strongly against that. In fact, one of the things I've always been proud of about *Conjure Wife* is it's a witchcraft novel and a lot of poeple have said it was frightening. It's been made into a movie a couple times. And yet, in my novel, nobody is killed off. In fact, the only thing that's killed off is one cat. I was sort of stuck on myself because if you just *threaten* to do something but don't do it, it generally can be more terrifying than carrying it out, as long as you can keep that feeling of a threat in the background. But I got two-thirds of the way through *Rime Isle* and I said, somebody's just got to get hurt. Some of our historical characters—look at Nelson—lost a leg, or an arm, and an eye. I said that I'd do something like

that to Fafhrd or the Mouser. So, in this story, Fafhrd does lose his left hand. So, from now on, he's going to be a crippled hero, with a hook for a left hand. That was why I did it. Also, I think somebody had asked me the question, "Have you written a story in which Fafhrd and the Mouser get killed, to be published after your own death?" In the first place, that would seem like sort of bad luck. And then, I'd hate to write something and not publish it while I was alive! But, I said to myself, I can satisfy that by having one of them get badly hurt.

ALGOL: What about letting them die and then bringing them back? You're working with fantasy.

LEIBER: Well, yeah. But, then I wouldn't believe in it myself. Or I could have him lose a hand and have him regain a hand by magic. No, I don't want to do that; I want to have this continuing problem. And it's been helpful. In this new story I wrote, that is about half the story: Fafhrd working without a hand. He has, of course, a wood and leather stall on his left arm, and he's got a socket in that in which he can fit different things. A hook. A knife. A *bow.* He's got to be able to shoot a bow. It gives me something new to think about. The basic problem of not having a hand. What happens? How do you feel about it? How do you practice?

ALGOL: Is he right or left-handed?

LEIBER: He's always been right-handed. The story, in fact, starts and ends with him doing archery practice. Here's something I meant to bring up. This is the first story I've actually finished this year. During the past four or five months I've really been in a state of writer's block. I haven't been able to do anything. I had several stories that I planned to write and I couldn't seem to make any headway. And I realized what had happened was—I bring this up because it is involved in the problem of how you write a story. In the Spring of 1975 I was committed to write a number of stories. I'd finished the first version of *Our Lady of Darkness* in February and then in the next three months I wrote *five* stories. Two short stories and a couple of novelettes, and then one long novelette. Gee, I thought, nobody can stop me the way I feel now. I can just write anything. Sure enough, although I did other things for a while, they got fewer and further between and there were a couple I just sort of piled up on and couldn't make any progress. What I think had happened was I had these ideas and I just really didn't want to work on them. I got the germ of what sounded like a fascinating idea and then I resisted carrying on with plotting it. For instance, you know I write some stories about cats, and I got the idea of another animal story about witchcraft, involving an animal hospital. It's a veterinary hospital in which a discovery is made that some of these animals they're treating are witches' familiars, from a coven of elderly witches. They're getting old and their familiars are getting old.

ALGOL: An old witch home.

LEIBER: That idea just sent me, sort of. I refused to plot it out because it was just so fascinating to *dream* about this without making a story out of it. And, in order to make a story out of it you have to picture a series of incidents that somehow have a legitimate beginning and end. It's at that point that I think I sometimes get into difficulty. I won't say to myself that I've got these characters; you've got to think about the actual, believable motivation of each character. You have to get something that can be written down. As I say, I'm just plotting this story now and will probably begin it tomorrow.

ALGOL: Do you re-write much? Do you have a regular schedule of revision?

LEIBER: Not a great deal. I've almost never been able to do this business that some writers—especially play writers—seem to take for granted. They write three or four versions. Complete. You just keep writing the same thing over. I've never been able to do that, prob-

ably because I tend to write rather slowly.

ALGOL: Do you use outlines?

LEIBER: Yes. I do an outline. Then I write—well, it's a very good day if I write as much as 800 or 1,000 words. At least now that would be a very good day for me.

ALGOL: Do your characters ever take *you* away? When you're writing, do you find that the characters sort of write themselves?

LEIBER: Yes. The way that happens with me is that I get ideas while I am writing that I couldn't get while I'm outlining. When you start to write a story, you begin to live through it, generally, in at least one character and possibly in several characters. You're actually living through it and really trying to say what would it feel like and just sort of make yourself go through it that way. And at that point you do, occasionally, discover things that you wouldn't have ever thought of while you were outside the characters and sort of looking at them as if they were puppets you were manipulating around.

ALGOL: Do you ever find it hard work just to try to think? You know what you want to do. You know where you're going. And some days it's just plain hard work . . .

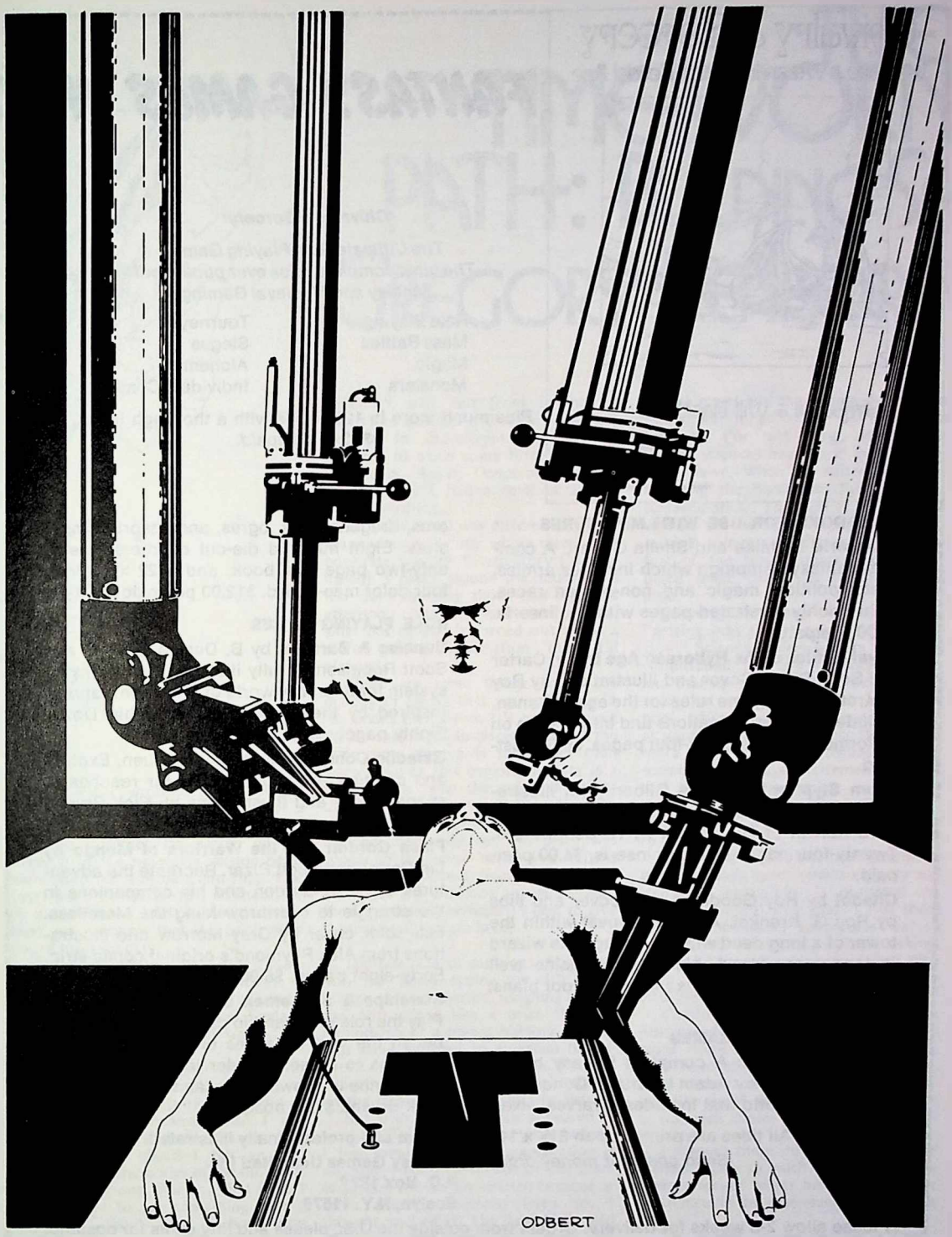
LEIBER: It's hard work. Oh, sure. Most of the time, I'd say. Most of the time it's just hard work. Robert Bloch once said to me that what so many people don't understand is it's exactly as hard to write the hundredth story as it is to write the first story. By and large, they don't get any easier. In general, I agree with him. And again, I think you have to live through the incident. And it's always work to live through something; it doesn't get any easier. Unless you've just managed to somehow repeat yourself completely.

ALGOL: Do you ever get the feeling that everything has already been written before and whatever you come up with is not a new idea?

LEIBER: Not too often I've had that experience. See, when magazines of science fiction started in this country, for the first five or ten years a writer could be in a position of having literally read everything that had been published up until then. There were only 75 or 100 stories involved. And even when it got up to 300 or 400 stories it was not an impossible task to have read and remembered them all. Under those circumstances, well, he's done that idea and you could always find somebody who had done something close to that. In practice, I imagine, three or four writers could write the same story, take the same general idea, and the stories would be completely different. They wouldn't necessarily repeat each other. It *is* an advantage if you get something that seems like a new idea.

ALGOL: It's been pleasurable, and quite enlightening, having you come speak to us. Thank you.

LEIBER: I thank you for inviting me. It's been an enjoyable afternoon. □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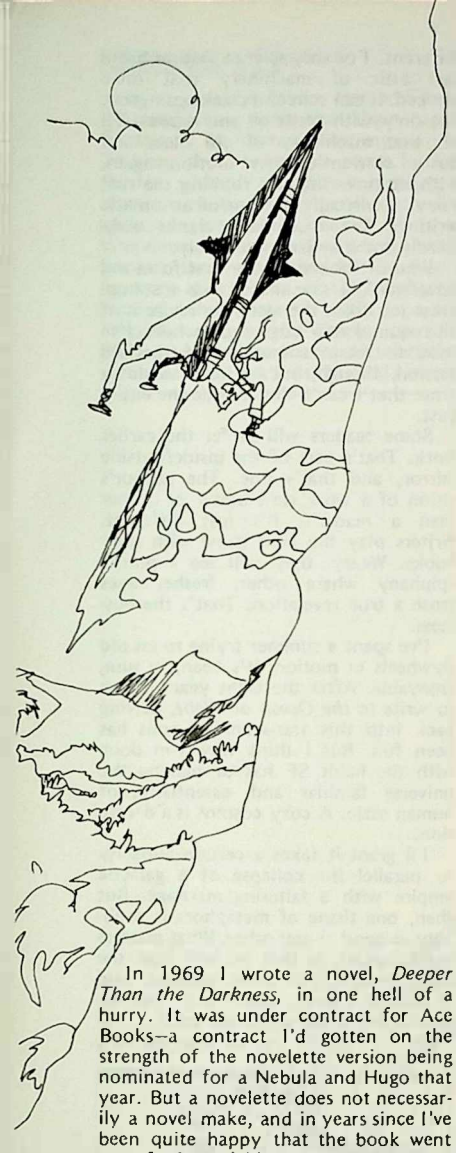


THE TIME-WORN PATH: BUILDING SF

GREGORY BENFORD

In 1969 I wrote a novel, *Deeper Than the Darkness*, in one hell of a hurry. It was under contract for Ace Books—a contract I'd gotten on the strength of the novelette version being nominated for a Nebula and Hugo that year. But a novelette does not necessarily a novel make, and in years since I've been quite happy that the book went out of print quickly.

But, as described below, David Hartwell at Putnam revived my interest in that old novel. I'd put it together under a deadline; I was leaving for England that summer of 1969 and wanted no unfinished business.

So I took the summer of 1977 to rewrite the thing completely and, as with most writing projects, found it tougher than it looked. When I was done with the first draft—unaware that two more lay ahead—I felt an odd tugging at my memories of the old book and the new one. For the first time I felt a desire to say something to the readership about why a book was written. This was something of a change of heart for me. I usually feel the author shouldn't walk out from behind his props and artifices and begin explaining himself. In anthologies where I was required to make some fumbling after-comments (*Again, Dangerous Visions, Epoch*, etc.) I had a devil of a time saying anything.

But this book was different, since it spanned virtually my whole career (the novelette was the fourth story I'd published). I paced around the house for a few days thinking about that and one afternoon found myself rattling out what lies below. It turned out to be a more general rumination than I'd planned.

There are some things about the making of books that you can't say in the books themselves. It's hard to avoid the aw-shucks public persona, and at the same time silence is sometimes even worse. Maybe this occasional note is a way to rub away the rather dry gloss that gets in the way of what happens between writer and reader. I'm undecided about whether this piece will appear in the novel—which I've retitled *The Stars in Shroud*, since it's not really much like the old book any more—and, for the moment, perhaps it's best to give it some passing place here.

The last acts of pushing a book out into the world—typing the title page, boxing the manuscript, weighing it in at the post office like a prize fighter—remind me of a parent bidding a reluctant child forward to entertain house-guests at the family piano. For all concerned it's probably best simply to let the music begin and see who listens.

But with a book which appeared in vastly different form nine years before, I feel some toe-scuffing explanation is necessary. The first version of *The Stars in Shroud* was hastily written because of other pressing matters. Even so, I thought well of it. The paperback sold adequately and went out of print. By then I saw the book had most defects of a first novel and then some. I began to remember it as a bit of unfinished business. For one thing, advances in several sciences had made many of my ideas naive. When an editor suggested reissuing the book my dissatisfactions surfaced anew. To begin at all on a new version of the book demanded that I rethink things, and figure out why so few of the fragile images I'd remembered made their way to the printed page.

Hemingway described novels as "getting into the ring with Mister Tolstoy." Science fiction writers have been conditioned to have no such dreams, and that's probably for the best. But it's true that you often write your first book while looking over your shoulder at your ancestors. In science fiction that more often than not means a fuzzy memory of teenage excitements, of vast and sweeping imagination, and of pill-sized ideas, easily digested. This book was originally designed to lay that ghost to rest in me.

Rewriting it, I found that time-worn path of gaudy space operas slippery and well-nigh impassible. It bothered me that the central eye (and 'I') of these fondly-remembered adventures was so certain, so cocksure. I kept asking, where did these heroes come from? Who were their parents, to have such impossible children?

I'm not saying heroes don't exist. I'm just wondering whether, once they've come home from their galactic romps, they have any small talk. (And if so, what does it sound like? Should it be just like ours? Whether you answer yes or no, each choice has interesting implications.)

I suspect these puzzles don't bother readers nearly so much. Those occasions when a writer meets his readers—often by chance, in my case—seem to bear this out.

The reader comes bearing a fresh, colored, outside impression of a tale the

writer recalls from the inside. We have to live through these worlds of ours, over a period of months or years. The reader gobbles them up in hours. To us a gray fog has settled over the work. We remember a blurred intention, some grand designs which now appear as ruined battlements of a distant castle. We recall moments of zest and—more often—troughs of uncertain drudgery, when the fingers fumbled for the thread we once thought was a firm rope, capable of carrying limitless freight.

After our long march through the manuscript, there's that weighing in (with the post office, not with Mr. Tolstoy), the quick note from the publisher followed by a blank silence, then the sudden eruption of a flock of galleys. Then a curious rectangle of paper and ink arrives, a box of words with some remnant of you inside it. You lived through the events described in there, making finally about 75,000 words concerning what you saw. Once the box arrives, you spy 75,000 decisions that need rethinking.

The reader has had the same outside experience of the jacket copy—a peculiar brand of literature seemingly always written by dwarves—and the inevitable reviews, but his sense of these things is different. For me, science fiction has a vast attic of machinery that once worked. It can spin and clack again, too, but only with fresh oil and repairs. To set that machinery of old ideas and dusty conventions in motion again, without tinkering and rubbing the rust away, is virtually a form of automatic writing. The machinery clanks awkwardly and may jam up entirely.

When I looked at the first form my novel took, I saw that it was a stamp-press job from the attic. To revise it at all required new cogs and rachets. I've tried to retain something of the old version, though, out of some shadowy sense that I can't chuck aside the entire past.

Some readers will prefer the earlier work. That's part of the inside/outside mirror, and that's fine. The author's vision of a work isn't better or deeper than a reader's, it's just different. Writers play the God game with their books. Weary, they will see a plastic epiphany where other, fresher eyes sense a true revelation. That's the business.

I've spent a summer trying to set old flywheels in motion; it's been, in sum, enjoyable. After the eight years I took to write *In the Ocean of Night*, delving back into this star-spanning opus has been fun. But I think now I'm done with the habit SF has of making the universe familiar and, essentially, of human scale. A cozy cosmos is a deception.

I'll grant it takes a certain audacity to parallel the collapse of a galactic empire with a faltering marriage. But then, one tissue of metaphors is probably as good as any other. What matters most, reader, is that we still have the faith to set out on paths together. And if science fiction means anything, we should prefer the unmarked trails. □

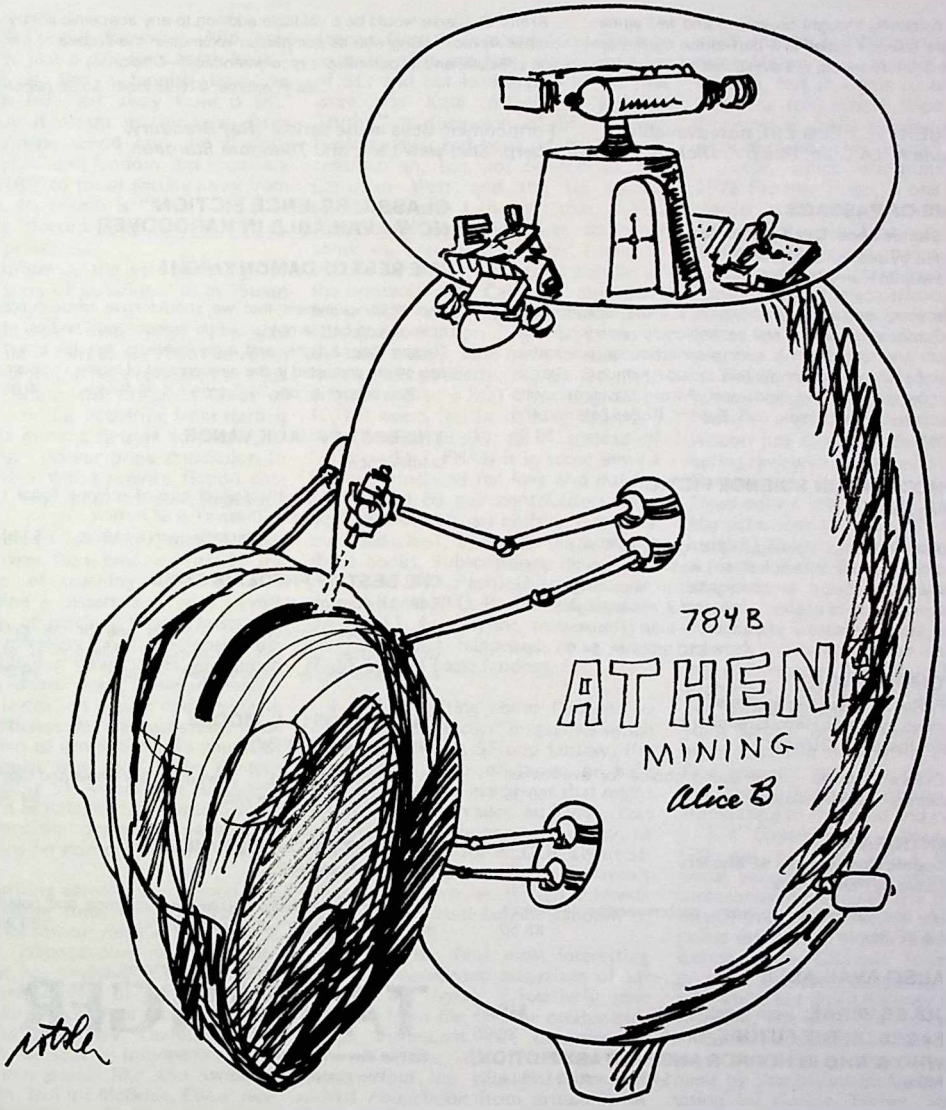
—Gregory Benford

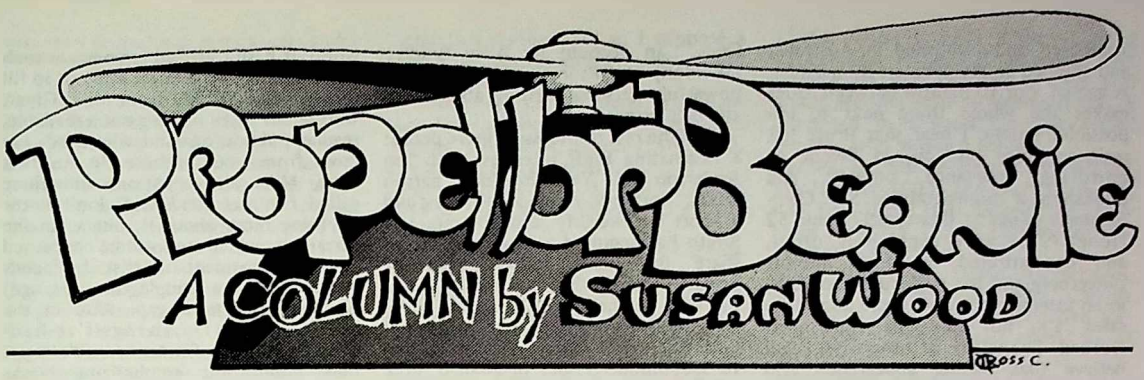
Continued from page 9

merging into SF Films. Horror Films, comics, Edgar Rice Burroughs have more than their share of forums. Children's Fantasy is an interest after my own heart—we shall see . . . Tolkien: there is an epic poem by Tolkien, unpublished in the US, which I have been attempting, on and off for the last seven years, to get for publication. Perhaps it's time to try again . . . Interest in feminist SF is no surprise. There are interviews with two major woman writers upcoming . . . not because they're women, but because they're good writers. And the Gor books—if I'd listed people who want them banned, who wrote in epithets on their survey forms—are certainly a Wonderful Thing. I've seen them advertised in B&D catalogs passed around Lunarian meetings; they make a nice profit for DAW Books; and I even (blush!) ran an article about them once. But once was enough . . .

PASS-ON CIRCULATION	1978	1975
None	50.9%	56.6%
One	31.4%	28.3%
Two	7.7%	10.8%
Three	3.6%	2.5%
Four or more	6.4%	1.7%

Continuing to grow nicely. As in the '75 survey, ALGOL's library circulation is not represented here. Libraries that carry ALGOL range from small town collections to those in New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, Vancouver and Toronto; from small secondary schools to the University of California and the State University of New York. I will continue to count the ALGOL readership at three people per copy, as I have in the past. □





"Gafia," said fanwriter Aljo Svoboda, "is just a part-time death hoax."

Gafia is also a fannish term, an acronym for "get away from it all." Originally it meant getting away from the mundane world into the glorious realms of SF and fandom, but it quickly shifted 180° to mean getting away from fandom. Its cousin is "fafia," the state of being "forced away from it all" by outside pressures.

To gafiate is the verb meaning "to enter a state of gafiation," as in "Susan is gafiating."

In the past four years, I've said everything I want to say about fanzines. Instead of just writing reviews, I've tried to talk about the different kinds of fanzines and fan activities, from starting a general-interest fanzine to participating in an amateur press association to attending a world science fiction convention. I'm about to start repeating myself.

In the past four years, too, I've been forced away from fandom: first by the pressures of teaching full-time while completing a dissertation; now by the pressures of teaching bigger classes at a bigger university, with responsibilities for developing new classes and supervising graduate work, while administering an 18-section course *and* trying to write criticism. My fan activities, these days, seem to centre around a couple of apas, regular trips to visit the Western Pennsylvania SF Association Northwest branch in Seattle, and convention activities, especially organizing panels and discussions on nonsexist futures and the like.

My writing activity, and a good deal of organizing time, is going into *The Pacific Northwest Review of Books*, a monthly 20-pages-plus newsprint tabloid that has singlehandedly destroyed the fannish careers of John D. Berry, Loren MacGregor, Paul Novitski, Suzle Tompkins and Jerry Kaufman. (Like vampires, we seek to infect others, and have gotten people like Aljo Svoboda, Eli Cohen, JoAnne McBride, Elinor Busby, Bill Gibson, doug barbour and Jeanne Gomoll involved too.) Because so many of us are fans, we review a lot of SF; and our lead article in the first issue was Kate Wilhelm's "Relative Truths," a discussion of SF. We run book reviews, and book related features centring on, but not limited to, the Canadian West and the US Pacific Northwest; and I thought that, if you like books, you might like to know about us. Free plug. Besides, I have to explain why I've gafiated. I handle all the contacts with Canadian publishers for PNRB, assign review books from Canadian publishers (I got 24 books in the mail today), send out tear-sheets of reviews, do publicity, dig up facts and photos—and do a LOT of writing, about 10,000 words for the coming issue. I've been reading books, again, instead of fanzines! Still, PNRB is in some sense a fanzine, produced for love and not for money (we do pay contributors 1¢ a word, but editors get nothing but glory and headaches), by people enthusiastic about books. Subscriptions are $7.50 a year from The Pacific Northwest Review of Books, P.O. Box 21566, Seattle, WA 98111, for anyone who wants to find out what happened to a large chunk of west coast fandom.

I started writing about fanzines by reviewing the "sercon" magazines which review and discuss SF and fantasy. I'm still reading some of those, or have returned to them—magazines that might interest the SF-reader audience that buys ALGOL. (I hope, by the way, to continue to write for ALGOL about SF rather than fandom. Maybe I haven't gafiated so much as shifted interests slightly, away from fanzine fandom to other activities.)

For me, the four most interesting serious, *non-academic* magazines of SF criticism are: *Janus*, a relatively new magazine from the US; the established, though infrequent, *SF Commentary* from Australia; the recently-revived *Khatru* from the US; and the also-revived *Foundation* from Britain (with Quebec's *Requiem* right up there if you read French.) (*Mythologies* also contains Meaty Articles and Lots of Discussion, but it seems to be getting less and less frequent; I hope editor Don D'Ammassa isn't burning himself out with all those hefty issues.)

Janus, which was nominated for a 1978 Fanzine Hugo, is one of the most regular, attractively produced, and interesting of the new fanzines I've seen. Its feminist orientation makes it stand out—but so does its crazy-Madison-fandom humour, and the experimental graphics of art editor Jeanne Gomoll (also nominated for a Hugo for the first time this year.)

The current issue, #11, served as the Wiscon programme book, and hence contains a great deal of material about Wiscon pro GoH Vonda McIntyre (including reviews/analyses of her new novel *Dreamsnake* by Jeanne Gomoll and *Janus* editor Jan Bogstad, emerging as a Marxist-oriented critic of considerable insight.) There's also, amazingly enough, a piece *by* the Wiscon Fan GoH, who happened to be me (and that's another reason I didn't answer my mail in February). There's fiction and poetry, artwork and cartoons, the usual interesting film reviews by Diane Martin and Richard S. Russell, and a long, interesting critical article on John Varley by John Bartelt, who has emerged in *Janus* as an excellent new critic. I sometimes find Jeanne's layouts a little cluttered; but the magazine is always fun, and stimulating to the mind and eye.

S F Commentary, edited by Bruce Gillespie, has acquired a little more visual pizzazz by going offset; but unfortunately it's become less frequent. A former Hugo nominee, it used to be a prime intellectual forum in the SF field. Editor Bruce Gillespie forfeited that position to some extent by getting a job, which cut down his busy publishing schedule. The difficulties of carrying on a discussion/debate in print, over a novel by Philip K. Dick, a pronouncement by Stanislaw Lem, or an interpretation by George Turner, are exacerbated when that debate is being

assembled and published in Australia, and shipped to the debaters by sea mail. A gap of 9 or 10 months between issues makes the whole thing next to impossible. Lately, I hear that Bruce has resigned from his job, in favour of enduring free-lance poverty and publishing a mimeographed *S F Commentary*. Issues 51 (March 1977) and 52 (June 1977) were expensively offset, and concentrated on single authors (Silverberg and the neglected Compton) in an attempt to attract more bookstore sales. I'm not sure the experiment worked, financially or otherwise; I still believe that regular appearance, and legible but not Extremely Fancy reproduction, combined of course with intelligent writing and editing, are what attract and hold good writers and responsible readers. Still, the Compton issue, a year old as I write this, won't "date." The issue also contains George Turner on the 1977 writers' workshop held in Melbourne (led by Turner, Christopher Priest and Vonda McIntyre), with interesting observations on the art of SF writing and the teaching of same; lots of reviews; and the heart of *S F Commentary*, "I Must Be Talking to My Friends," the lettercolumn interspersed with Gillespie's life and thoughts. I hope the magazine can get back on a regular schedule without bankrupting or exhausting its editor; nothing else has taken its place, with its strange mixture of passionate critical discourse and personal writing.

. . . except, perhaps, *Khatru*. For as long as I've been in fandom, it seems, Jeff Smith of Baltimore has been editing or co-editing fine genzines, folding them, gafiating, returning, starting something more-or-less the same under a new title, suspending publication, returning, falling silent . . . After burning himself out on the giant Women in Science Fiction symposium, *Khatru* 3-4, he published two more issues at lengthy intervals, and vanished. But he had good material, good letters, and a long history of publishing "James Tiptree, Jr." 's witty, observant and quite wonderful fanwriting. So when Alice Sheldon revealed that she was, among other personas, the mysterious Tip, *Khatru* was reborn. Issue 7 is centred around "Everything But the Signature is Me," by James Tiptree, Jr., which begins: "How great. At last it's out." Alice Sheldon describes the birth and life of Tip with the warmth and humour we've come to expect; when she talks about "this business of really loving the SF world," that love comes across. This is one nice person, whatever the pronoun; and I hope the hints of—possibly—more writing come true. Complementing this account are Jeff Smith's fine article, "The Short Happy Life of James Tiptree, Jr.," and a Tiptree/Sheldon bibliography; and a real find, "The Lucky Ones," an account by Alice Bradley (Sheldon) of DPs in Germany in 1946: powerful, personal writing about pain and helplessness.

For the rest of the issue, more praise: a fascinating Freff interview with Jon Anderson of Yes, *Khatru*'s patron saints; average-to-very-good reviews; and a short but weighty lettercolumn. Jeff Smith has acquired a new co-editor to share the load: Jeffrey Frane—of Seattle—a move that indicates a touching faith in the North American postal service. I sure hope transcontinental editing proves possible, because I'd like to see slimmer issues of *Khatru* more often.

Foundation, the journal of The Science Fiction Foundation, is a somewhat more scholarly publication than the preceding fanzines. It's not "academic" in the pejorative sense, since the British seem less afraid than North Americans to admit that they care about books and ideas, and less prone to separate criticism off in universities, away from writing. It does, however, contain less reader-and-editor presence, and more critical theory, than fanzines. *Foundation* 13 is something of an exception, in that outgoing editor Peter Nicholls goes into the details of why the issue is so late, which centre around problems with the Science Fiction Foundation which resulted in his resignation; these have been resolved, and *Foundation* will (everyone hopes) appear more regularly under its new editor, well-known British fan Malcolm Edwards.

Foundation 13 features a special section on the late James Blish, including "William Atheling, Jr." theorizing maddeningly on SF, Brian Stableford offering a thoughtful discussion of Blish's ideas as evident in his fiction. The rest of the issue has Christopher Priest's personal account of his career (the latest of *Foundation*'s valuable personal-account series, "The Profession of Science Fiction"); Aldiss, Cowper and Disch on "Problems of Creativeness" in the useful "Forum" section; some letters; and lots and *lots* of reviews in tiny-but-legible type. *Foundation* is not only thought-provoking in itself: it offers North Americans a useful contact with the British SF world.

Finally, there are some regularly-appearing newsletters I'd like to recommend. *Locus* bills itself "the newspaper of the science fiction field." If you're a would-be SF writer, you'll find it indispensible for the market news. If you're a reader, you'll enjoy the people-news in our little field, news of books and movies, reviews (which seem to get squeezed out a lot), columns (currently "On Writing" by Algis Budrys) and convention listings. A first-class subscription is worth the money.

Locus covers the professional SF world; it hasn't carried fan news as such for some time. The latest attempt to fill this gap is *File 770* from Mike Glyer, who seems to be putting out a readable, regular publication—and who needs fan news from you-out-there. In his first issue, Mike also mentions something called *Fan Art Review;* I don't know anything more about it, but a fanzine for artists, which seems to be concerned with the treatment of artists by faneds (a sore point a couple of years ago) would fill quite a gap. Also in the category of things-I've-had-recommended is *Fantasy Newsletter*, a new publication emphasizing books available in the field. I am familiar with, and recommend, *Fantasaie*, the monthly newsletter of the Fantasy Association, which features reviews of new books, and excellent articles on various fantasy-related topics. Where else would you find a detailed, and interesting, comparison of various editions and translations of the *Mabinogion*, a kind of buyers' guide?

I'd like to end this column with a couple of quotations I've had kicking around in my files. The first is from a critical book called *Science and Fiction* by Patrick Moore, published in London by Harrap in 1957. It typifies perfectly the outsider's bemused (and a little bit condescending) attitude towards fandom. (He didn't like space opera and adventure SF in the magazines, either.) Moore's chapter on "The Modern Magazines" includes fanzines, which he considers to be largely training grounds for would-be SF writers (as indeed they have been and are, though Clarion and similar writing workshops have taken over a large part of that function in North America, at least). He explains, to his non-fan audience:

> Readers of [pulp] science fiction are, above all, clannish. They meet, they talk, they exchange ideas and publications, and now and then a new fanzine is born. What generally happens is that it is launched on the crest of a wave of enthusiasm, survives for a few issues, becomes irregular in appearance, and then dies. The career of a fanzine is not unlike that of a may-bug, which has its period of underground preparation, enjoys its brief hour of glory, and suffers a speedy decease. Each fanzine depends largely upon its editor, partly because he alone is the selector of material, and partly because he usually ends up by writing most of the fanzine himself.
>
> As usual, the standard is variable. I recently read through one fanzine, published in Gateshead, and came to the last page without having gathered the faintest notion of what it was all about. On the other hand, fanzines sometimes discover a new, young, and potentially first-class writer, and for this reason they are always worth looking at. Moreover, they are harmless. There may be offensive fanzines, but I have not encountered them myself.
>
> . . . . Of a dozen fanzines sent to me recently, four were practically illegible, while the rest included a number of typing mistakes, mis-spellings, and other obvious faults. Yet the standard of literature in at least three of them was remarkably high, and the stories

were more original than in the average professional publication.

As I say, I rather bristle at Moore's tone; but his observations, especially about fanzines being born out of enthusiasm, seem valid enough. (I *have* encountered offensive fanzines, as well as illegible ones; I give both kinds to the BC Science Fiction Association, as negative examples for would-be faneds.)

Moore was an outsider; and what he only suspected about fanzines, the enthusiasm and good nature that goes into them, is evident to an insider like Creath Thorne. He produces *The Hog on Ice* for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, and a few friends; my room-mate got a copy of issue 6, August 1976, and I latched onto it for some enjoyable personal writing, and a section which began "Why write a fanzine?" Creath Thorne came up with four answers:

1) It's fun. Or should be. Which is not to say that writing is always a totally pleasurable process. Putting the right words in the right places can be a torturous process. But if one doesn't take pleasure in constructing a firm argument, in capturing a scene or person in a telling bit of description—then, one probably shouldn't be writing fanzines.

2) It can be a means of guiding one's thoughts. As with most people, an internal dialogue (or, at times, an internal monologue speaking to my receptive self) is often going on inside my head. When I transfer those words to paper, the very nature of that internal speech seems to change. It's guided and shaped by its objective representation which lies on the page before me. Writing, then, can be a means of meditation.

3) In writing a fanzine one creates an artifact. As Samuel Delany has said, one can write to create those books (or fanzines) that one wants to read but cannot find. One of the particular virtues of fanzines is that they are so clearly artifacts created by one person, down to their design and production. . . .

4) Writing a fanzine can be a means of self-expression. By this I don't mean anything as trite as expressing one's inner self—which seems to be the rationale lying behind, for instance, the "creative writing" courses one continually runs across. Rather, I mean that it is a means of expressing one's public self. In fact, for introverted and shy people, it can be a more satisfactory means of such expression, for it's both detached from the kinesics and paralanguage that accompany face-to-face encounters, and also can be composed quietly at one's leisure, thereby diminishing the necessity of quick response and self-composure necessary in everyday encounters.

Creath Thorne lives at Rt. 3, Box 202, Savannah MO 64485, and would like comments on, or additions to, his list. Actually, I think "It's fun" sums up just about everything I've been trying to say about fanzines . . . so now I can wrap up this column. □

—Susan Wood

EDITORS AND ADDRESSES:

Fan Art Review, ed. Allen J. Desmaretz and Terry Whittier, 307 Tradewinds #3, San Jose, CA 95123, USA. Glyer says "send two stamps . . ." so I suppose a couple of quarters and a request would be fine too.

Fantaslae, ed. Ian M. Slater, The Fantasy Association, P.O. Box 24560, Los Angeles, CA 90024; monthly; $6/yr US, $8 Canada, $10 elsewhere.

Fantasy Newsletter, ed. Paul C. Allen, 1015 W. 36th St., Loveland, CO 80537; 50¢/copy.

File 770, ed. Mike Glyer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342; 4/$1.50.

Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction, ed. Malcolm Edwards, The Science Fiction Foundation, North East London Polytechnic, Longbridge Rd., Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS, U.K. 3 issues (1 year): UK£3, US/Canada surface $7.50, airmail $12.00

Janus, ed. Janice Bogstad and Jeanne Gomoll, c/o SF^3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701; $1/copy or the usual (contribution, letter of comment, trade).

Khatru, ed. Jeffrey D. Smith, 1339 Weldon Ave., Baltimore, MD 21211, and Jeffrey A. Frane, Box 1923, Seattle, WA 98111; $1.25, 4/$4 or the usual.

Locus, ed. Charles N. Brown, Locus Publications, P.O. Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119; monthly; $1., 12/$9 second class, 12/$13.50 first class; overseas 12/$9 sea mail, 12/$18 air mail.

Requiem, ed. Norbert Spehner, 1085 St-Jean, Longueuil, Quebec, Canada J4H 2Z3; $1, 6/$5 North America, 6/$7 seamail overseas.

S F Commentary, ed. Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia; 5/$5 Australia; in North America, 5/$6 from Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell, 525 West Main #1, Madison, WI 57303.

Also recommended

Ashwing, ed. Frank Denton, 14654-8th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98166; reviews, fiction, poetry; the usual, or send Frank a dollar.

Knights, ed. Mike Bracken, 1810 Ramada Blvd., Collinsville, IL 62234; genzine; $1.25 or the usual.

Mad Scientist's Digest, ed. Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd. #207, Detroit, MI 48219; personal/genzine; 75¢ or the usual.

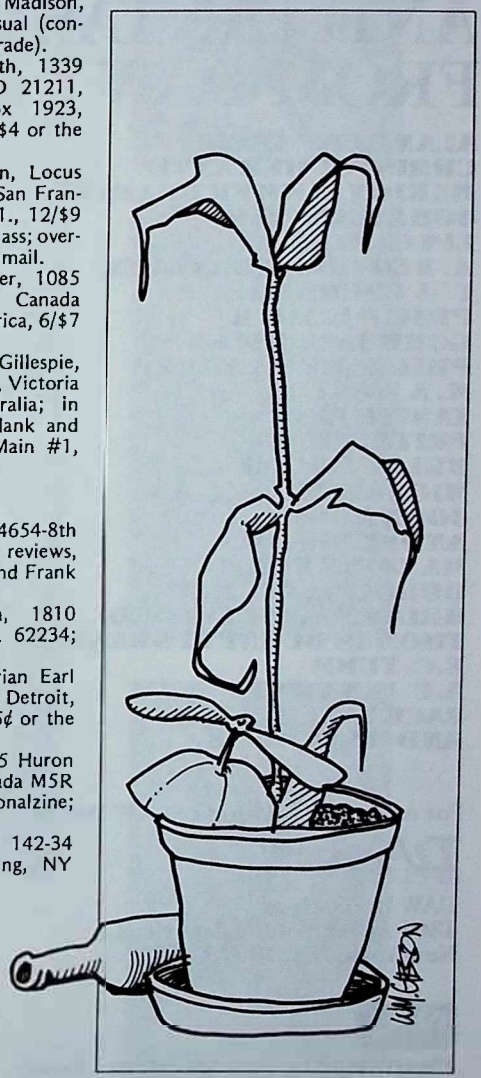
Orca, ed. Jennifer Bankier, 485 Huron St. #406, Toronto, Ont., Canada M5R 2R5; mammoth genzine/personalzine; $2 or the usual.

Placebo, ed. Moshe Feder, 142-34 Booth Memorial Ave., Flushing, NY 11355. This is really a *very* belated notice that *Placebo 5* appeared last summer; if you deserved a copy and didn't get one, write to Moshe. If you're interested in a good fannish-oriented genzine, send Moshe a dollar.

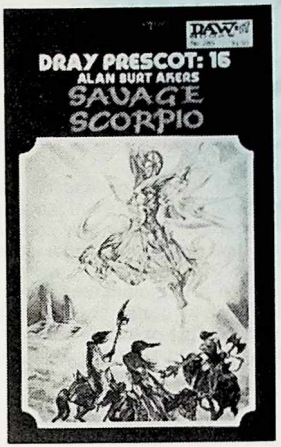
Raffles, ed. Stu Shiffman, 880 W. 181 St., NY, NY 10033 and Larry Carmody, P.O. Box 1091, 1001 Second Ave., New Hyde Park, NY 11040; fannish fanzine; $1 or the usual.

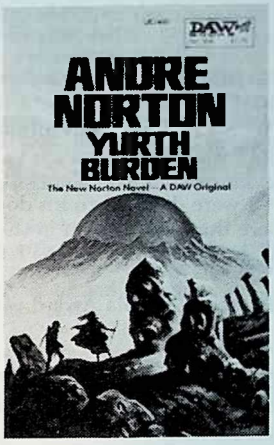
White Space, ed. David Vereschagin, 8833 92 St., Edmonton, Alta., Canada T6C 3P9; genzine, with attractive format, offset—artists please note!; $1.50 or the usual.

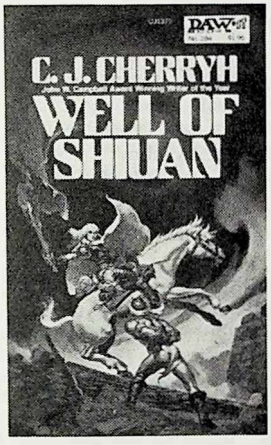
Wild Fennel, ed. Pauline Palmer, 2510 48th St., Bellingham, WA 98225; personal/fannish writing, humour, fiction and poetry; $1 or the usual. □

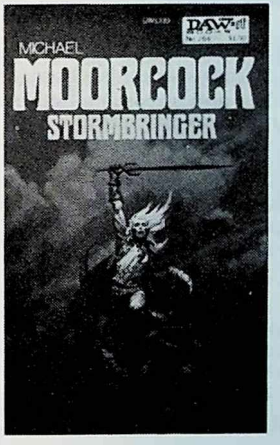


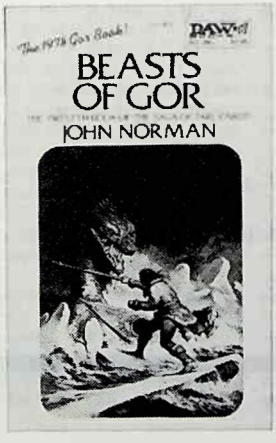
The Exclusive Science Fiction and Fantasy Line Selected by DONALD A. WOLLHEIM

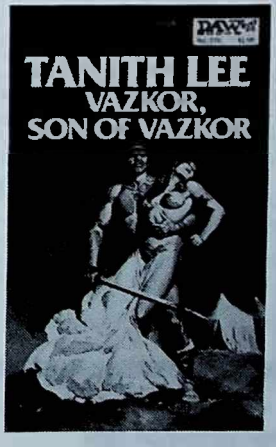












Behold The Second Coming

MIDNIGHT SUN

Nominated for the World Fantasy Award

Has Risen Again

MIDNIGHT SUN, along with WHISPERS, has virtually shaped the semi-pro magazine field. And because of MIDNIGHT SUN's past efforts, it was nominated for The World Fantasy Award at The Third World Fantasy Convention in Los Angeles. In the previous four issues, MIDNIGHT SUN has:

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SKETCHES: VINCENT DIFATE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN SCHOENHERR

I met Jack Schoenherr for the first time at Noreascon, in 1971 and we have been good friends ever since. There is a unique honesty about him, an earnestness, which preempts any possibility of quarrels or misunderstandings. He is a man, though born and raised in New York City, who has found his place in the simplest of earth's environments. He is a creature of the wilderness, and, like the animals he so magnificently paints, his personal needs are as basic as the needs for food and shelter.

When we met at Jack's twenty-four acre farm in Stockton, New Jersey, where he lives with his wife, Judy (one of the most precious and caring beings ever to walk this green earth) and their two children, Jennifer, 14, and Ian, 11, Jack was not quite the same man I'd met seven years earlier. Oh, he was still earnest and humble and hard working, but he had grown. And while that growth is a good and positive thing, he has chosen to forsake science fiction and to seek out a more immediate reality. If I've not told you this before, let me say it now; to my mind there has never been a greater artistic talent to devote his time and energies to science fiction art than Jack Schoenherr. Perhaps as good, but none greater. Perhaps . . .

The time may come when he'll return, but in the meantime, his absence, for me at least, dims the diamond luster of science fiction, and makes me wonder if it's not time for me to grow up a little bit, too, and move on.

ALGOL: There is no question that you have ceased to be a science fiction illustrator in any large measure. You've reached a plateau, a realization that there's something about science fiction or there's something about doing commercial art, that rattles you, and what I'd like to get without this being a scathing exposé is a really up front evaluation of what you think of SF art, what you think about SF, as a literary genre, and your motives for going on to different things.

SCHOENHERR: With very few exceptions it's really fourth rate, as far as art goes and third rate as far as commercial art goes. I think it's pretty abominable stuff. The reason why I left was because I found my work was starting to go down to that level, one of the reasons among many, and I just couldn't stand it. There was not enough money in it to do a really good job and many of the people involved with it really kept you from doing a first rate piece of work. So okay that's what I think of science fiction art. The only artist that really turned me on, when I was reading the stuff avidly, was Dick Powers. I would enjoy the stories that he did covers for because he just set a tone, a sophisticated air about the whole book, no matter how bad it was, that I enjoyed. Just like Ed Cartier's black and white illustrations, they're terrible compositions, but he could give a personality to an amoeba.

ALGOL: Were you ever impressed with any of the more straightforward attempts at realism, like Bonestell . . .

SCHOENHERR: Oh, Bonestell was not even an illustrator. I always classified that as astronomical *art*, which had really little to do with what I was dealing with. It was definitely science fiction because of the period. It was very interesting and I liked it. I still like a great deal of it.

ALGOL: You mentioned Powers as being one of the illustrators whom you really admired. Thinking back to when I was a kid, there was a sophistication to his work that lent another dimension to what you're about to sit down and read. Often the sophistication exceeded the contents of the book.

SCHOENHERR: There was always the hope that what had turned him on to do a good painting would turn you on to a good story and at least his covers didn't look trashy, let's put it that way.

ALGOL: I can think of several Schoenherr covers of your early period, from about 1958 to about 1964, not consistently but every now and again, where there would be a John Schoenherr that I would initially see and expect it to be a Powers. There was a very strong influence.

SCHOENHERR: That would probably be on paperback covers. Okay. I was very much influenced by him. I think—I never knew exactly how he worked, he seemed to use a lot of mediums, but a very nice way of working then was with designer's colors, gouache.

ALGOL: There's something about them that is distinctly you though. Once you see them in the context of your later works, particularly the *Analog* covers you did in the mid 60's, they're reminiscent of Powers but there's a kind of individuality to them, and also you had the personal fortitude, the brains and the drive and the skill to go beyond it, to not just simply emulate but to expand, because then you started getting into very representational things also which combined the mood quality of Powers in a more representational way. Paul Lehr had done a similar thing, only he became more systematized in his approach. You remain more flexible.

SCHOENHERR: Yeah, but Paul was doing entirely paperback covers and I had also the influence of working for several of the magazines which demanded a more illustrative type of thing, instead of a symbolic approach, which carried over. As much as I admired Powers I didn't want to be a little Richard Powers. I like his stuff. I like Degas, Hokusai, Vermeer—and a whole flock of other people, each of which has influenced me in some way.

ALGOL: I want to talk about influences in general. Surprise me.

SCHOENHERR: Okay, it even surprised me as far as an influence goes. At Pratt I did study with Meltzoff, Fred Castilano, various other people. One instructor whose paintings I never appreciated at the time, was a major influence, Richard Bové, who is an abstractionist basically, or semi abstractionist from what I'd seen. Some of his admonitions were extremely general and extremely good and I find myself listening to his voice in basic deyelopment. Things of empathic feeling which I got from him and say, Will Barnett, the stuff he was doing back in the 40's, when I was studying with him. I don't even think I can say what they are, but it's just a basic approach to painting.

One thing, for instance, was that he tried to get all of us to use a technique where you could completely change the tone of the picture easily, or the feeling

This early Schoenherr painting strongly reflects the influence of Powers and Yves Tanguy. The essential difference in Schoenherr's treatment is its clarity. As the artist developed his own unique style, this need for clarity became secondary to environmental and atmospheric considerations.

of it or the composition. As you worked at it, it would evolve, because you very often get better ideas as you proceed. I'm just realizing this. I'm painting and I start out with a charcoal drawing or something and very often it comes out entirely different from what I had originally started out to do. This is probably also one reason why I'm not doing very much commercial work, because they need something that sticks to a sketch or original concept. If you bring in something entirely different even though it evolved from it, they're somewhat upset.

ALGOL: I'm going to try to tie you and Paul Lehr into the column in such a way that the common ground is the surrealist influence. Obviously you're much more of an artist than just simply a science fiction illustrator, or a surrealist, because your work varies from gadget paintings to paintings of aliens; a broad spectrum of illustration. I see the influences of Powers, I see the influences of other surrealist painters, people like Tanguy for instance.

SCHOENHERR: Tanguy especially. He's one of my early heroes.

ALGOL: On certain levels you and Paul Lehr have similarities in the way you approach a situation. It may have something to do with Pratt, it may have something to do with a mutual interest in surrealism or symbolism or whatever term you want to put on it. Do you have any special philosophical attitudes toward what you were doing as a science fiction illustrator?

SCHOENHERR: No, not really in that way because it was more or less an assigned job very often. I tried to make a good picture and an exciting one, something that was strong graphically, that would sell the magazine or the book and also satisfy my own feeling of rightness, what's best. If Paul and I have any similarities it might be because we're both very much concerned with doing it so that we like it. And we were classmates at Pratt. But there was a slight difference in courses, but we knew each other and got along. And Paul and I had different approaches there. I remember him studying illustrations from, I think it was *True Magazine* that was at the top of the men's magazines at the time, covering his walls with, oh, compositional analyses in charcoal. The walls of the rooms would be papered with these things. And guys like Stan Galley, Fred Whitikins and Dean Cornwell who ended up as major illustrators, let's say. He really worked at it. I just sort of looked at things and let it sink in and let it come back out by osmosis.

ALGOL: So you didn't have any consistent philosophical approach to SF illustration. You just did whatever the subject matter dictated?

SCHOENHERR: Oh yeah. That was it. I feel the subject matter should dictate the form. Okay, if there's a philosophical attitude it's that a work of art by my standards has to be consistent within itself. The subject and the form and various other factors have to be consistent otherwise it's not convincing. You might as well work with paper cutouts or something.

ALGOL: This should be true of any kind of picture making, not simply science fiction.

SCHOENHERR: Right. Basically I'm a picture maker. I find that, talking to a lot of authors, I think visually. When I read something it automatically translates into terms of pictures. And very often to illustrate something it's only a matter of picking out one of the stills in my mind and seeing it fully composed.

ALGOL: Do you place any specific value on science fiction illustration as opposed to any other type of illustration? Do you think it has any uniqueness, other than that it's tailored to a particular type of audience? Do you think it has any value in terms of, well, popular culture or technology, man's future . . .

SCHOENHERR: Most science fiction illustration I really feel is so inhibited that it has little to offer anyone. It's inhibited by the editors, fans, other things. It's probably one of the most conservative or even reactionary art fields in general that I've come across. It's an enormous hearkening back to the thirties.

ALGOL: Is that attitude simply something that's being generated at this time because of your personal change? Obviously you've reached the point where you find science fiction art in itself unable to satisfy you as an artist. Was there a time when you felt differently?

SCHOENHERR: Oh yeah or else I wouldn't have stuck with it for so long. I guess I was active in science fiction, really active for about ten years. And that's a fairly long time.

ALGOL: And where would you put that in time?

SCHOENHERR: '58 to '68. And for some reason after that it got boring and I was not happy with what I was doing.

ALGOL: I think what most people don't understand is the fact that as an illustrator in order to make a living in science fiction, you have to really grind the things out.

SCHOENHERR: The first picture I sold was to *Amazing*, for $20.00

ALGOL: I would imagine you would have to have done an enormous number. Now things have changed but they haven't changed so dramatically that the world is radically different for the science fiction illustrator now than it was a decade ago. It's still an enormously difficult field that requires great speed and so forth and you can't really take the time to do superior paintings. There are just so many limitations to it. What about depressions and things of that sort?

SCHOENHERR: You mean psychic depression, not economic.

ALGOL: Yes. We talked about it and you mentioned that you take vitamin

pills. I thought that was fascinating. Tell me about that, John.

SCHOENHERR: Yes, it's a B complex vitamin. They're what they call stress caps and nutritionally they seem to satisfy all the stuff that's needed. That's a hard question.

ALGOL: I'm sorry to be so difficult. Let me put it in a different way . . .

SCHOENHERR: Okay, it's a common problem with a common solution. Stress of any sort, especially meeting deadlines, trying to come up with a winning idea, etc. leads to an awful lot of coffee drinking and staying up late and doing all sorts of strange things. My schedule is still not back to a really reasonable one. I still tend to get great ideas in the middle of the night, which leads to physiological and mental stress. You're under pressure. When you're under pressure you tend to excrete a lot of B vitamins and you need more to replace them. Maybe some people need more B vitamins than others, I don't know.

ALGOL: What's a normal work day for you, John? When do you start working? And when do you stop?

SCHOENHERR: I'm always on, even when I'm doing something else. I don't have any set time to work. I end up being always ready to start, and eventually I do. Sometimes things just happen but I might be thinking about them for three or four days, and then it will fall off the brush. And other times . . . I work a lot.

ALGOL: You generally tend to work more in the evenings, though. You're more productive at night.

SCHOENHERR: There are less distractions. You can't go walking outside too much, you'd fall into the mud.

ALGOL: When you're in the process of executing a painting—you see, that's another thing too which I feel leads to depression, the fact that when you are a painter and you really have a certain amount of spiritual give in what you're doing, you don't really know exactly what you're going to end up with when you sit down to paint. And if you spend four or five days on a painting or six or seven days or a month or however long it takes and of course doing commercial art you don't have months, we're talking about, literally days, and the thing ends up being a real turkey and you're up against a deadline, knowing that, come hell or high water, that thing has to go to the publisher the way it is, no matter how rancid it is, you can get pretty depressed. You can really begin to question your ability and so forth. And I think we are prime targets for nervous breakdowns. I don't think very many people understand the complexities of being professional picture makers, and having to tailor the work to a commercial market. It's rewarding in many ways but it's also extremely trying.

SCHOENHERR: Yeah, it's hopefully economically rewarding. A couple of years ago or so I just came to the realization that if I did not spend every day doing something that at least didn't hurt, and preferably something that I really enjoyed doing, that life wasn't worth living. So I'm luckily finding a market for paintings that I like, and to do them the way I like them I have to originate the whole thing. I'm doing portraits of non-humans still. They happen to be in existence instead of in an author's imagination. Otters and raccoons . . .

ALGOL: How long do the wildlife paintings take?

SCHOENHERR: Oh, one took 12 years.

ALGOL: It's certainly not a profitable venture at that point.

SCHOENHERR: No, not really. Oh, it can take from—gee, I've done some in a day and a half and some, one at least, in 12 years. That would be about the extreme.

ALGOL: Those who don't know your wildlife art don't really know you as a painter, because these are head and shoulders above anything you've ever done. You've done some elegant science fiction art when science fiction was all that there really was in your life, particularly in the mid 60's, particularly for *Analog.*

SCHOENHERR: Oh, that never was. Science fiction never was the only thing in my life. I started out in high school to become a wildlife painter because the subject matter turned me on. The forms of the animals and some of the other things got me there, or got me going

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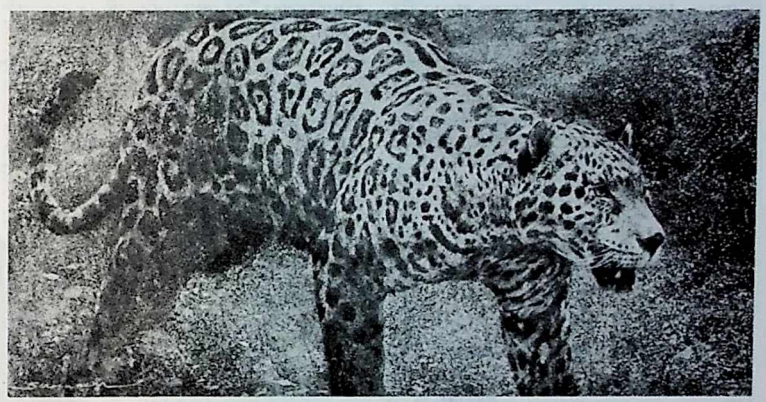
Schoenherr's animal portraits depict the unique character of their subjects in a manner unlike the work of any other artist now practicing in the field of wildlife illustration. He has a special affinity for cats, as these two paintings clearly demonstrate. His special knowledge extends to the minutest details, such as the peculiarities of movement or posture. Despite their apparent degree of finish, there is actually very little clearly defined detail. Much is implied by the use of variegate brushwork and spatter techniques to give the art an air of complexity and completeness.



with paintings. I just wasn't a good enough painter at that time. But a lot of my earlier stuff in Pratt was of animals. I happened to have, I don't know if it's through persistence or just dumb luck, some ability to draw which has always been fairly easy for me. But the wildlife paintings are the continuous thread. They began in my teens and have continued now to where they achieve dominance. I don't know, I may end up with landscapes or something without the animals in them. I like things that are evocative let's say, and I must relate to the animals in a very personal way, or the subject matter. I can relate to rocks as easily I guess . . .

ALGOL: The wildlife art has numerous unique qualities. First of all, your apparent understanding of the subject matter, the understanding of the way they walk, their mannerisms and so forth. The enormous sense of time and place. These are extremely strong qualities in your paintings. But the thread most consistent in all your art, whether it be SF or wildlife or some of the sports things that I've seen you do, is this incredible graphic sense in your compositional approach. It's stunning. I want to talk about your composition. I want to talk about the way you make pictures. Do you have a system that you go by? You talked about a consistency. Certainly I have attitudes of consistency in my own work, with respect especially to composition. Give me some words that have meaning with respect to composition. Is there a particular attitude that you have towards it? You're looking for irregularities in space breakups and so on.

SCHOENHERR: It seems to be a fairly intuitive, let's say informed intuition. Eventually when it feels right it'll work. This can produce a great deal of variety, but it could also produce a great deal of redundancy. Almost all of my most successful paintings have evolved by themselves. In other words, I set an approach. I'm going to paint an otter say or a grizzly bear, and the picture itself dictates its form. Within the four edges you've got this little world that has to work and it has to be different from any other world or it can relate to things but it still has to be separate. I have no basic formal approach to composition. It's one more of evolution, when things fit well, when they adhere to each other and work.

ALGOL: But, John, you do go through the mental checklist of making sure that there are inequalities . . .

SCHOENHERR: Oh that's just basic mechanics for picture making. You don't want to split something exactly down the middle. It's boring. You don't want too often to have just a straight circle. That's boring also. This you can pick up in almost any art textbook on design, in any good one at least, visual balance, you know, dynamic and static . . . It's like learning how to drive a car. Are you going to just commute to work or are you going to start racing?

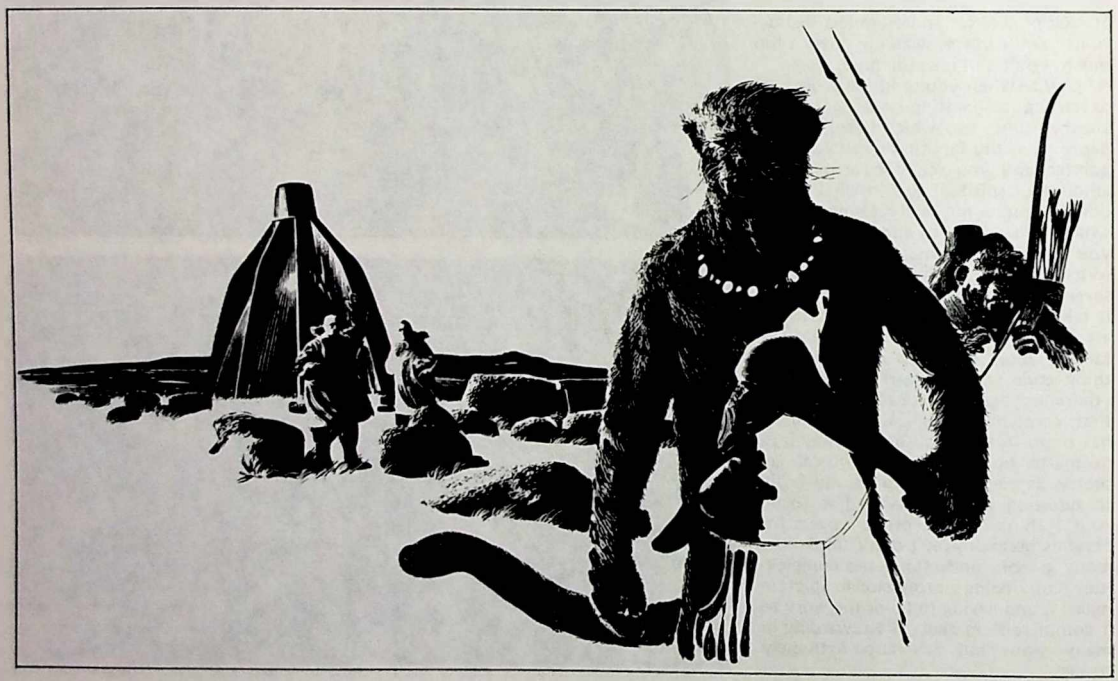
ALGOL: The problem is that there are so many technicians in the illustration business, especially, who don't really seem to have a consistent understanding of composition.

SCHOENHERR: Maybe they're not really interested in what they're painting? I find I really have to identify with something and get very involved with it to make it come out really good. If I'm bored with something it'll come out boring. And this was a lot of the problem with commercial art. A lot of the things I was doing became boring to me, because of someone else's personality imposed on my own. I'm egotistical enough to think that I can do it best.

ALGOL: That's not even egotism. I don't pretend to be a great painter. What I am is a competent illustrator who is very seldom given the opportunity to do a competent job. There are so many people pushing the paint brush that it's really difficult.

SCHOENHERR: Well, a lot of people

His mastery of scratchboard was one of Schoenherr's earliest triumphs. Here we see all the staples of a typical Schoenherr interior: composition, draftsmanship, textural variety, solidity, and yet another aspect (though not as common), humor. The vehicle in which the earthlings have come is a common washing machine agitator.



do the "paint by the numbers" thing. It seems to be that most people think that painting is something you can do with no talent or training and you just pick up a paintbrush and go.

ALGOL: You see there's a bit of danger in using the term intuitive when talking about composition. You and I both know what we're talking about, but the minute you say something like that there's an automatic assumption that there's something arbitrary about picture making and that's really not so.

SCHOENHERR: Definitely not. There's nothing arbitrary about it.

ALGOL: It does become an intuitive thing for the artist who has trained himself in the basics.

SCHOENHERR: Okay, we're talking about informed intuitivism. Let's say after exposure to thousands and thousands of pictures you see as a student you might even subconsciously pick out the stuff that's really good, or the stuff that you really like because there are lots of approaches to it, and this will color your own approach to it. It's certainly not ignorance which a lot of people think this is. Ignorance has very little to do with art.

ALGOL: Good SF paintings have to have a certain kind of content, we both know this, they have to have a certain quality that makes them science fictional. The problem is though, that a great many SF editors have developed some degree of clout, have taken the initiative of becoming part of the creative process with respect to cover assignments and will still insist upon guiding almost to an inordinate degree what the illustrator will do.

SCHOENHERR: I've been contending lately that a good editor or a good author tends to have, or requires, a strong verbal imagination. Well, imagination of a certain type. They have without doubt, as a group, a sweeping statement, the lousiest visual imaginations I've ever come across. They have little idea of what would be exciting visually, which is not at all what the subject matter dictates, if you think of it in terms of words. You can describe the great space battle and it will come out as the lousiest picture if you stick to the facts. You can do something really great and have a little unnoticed incident, which very often you end up doing as a secondary illustration . . . but editors and authors should strictly stay away from defining art—controlling pictures. You need an illustrator with some integrity to stick with the subject matter.

ALGOL: I think when we're talking about science fiction though, we may not be talking in terms of a high level of craft but we certainly are talking about dedication and integrity, because I don't think anyone does science fiction art for the money. They're obviously in this business because they have a special affinity for science fiction.

SCHOENHERR: Yeah, okay. I've had an affinity for science fiction for a number of years and was very poor as a result. The only reason it's part of my salary approach to the field now is because I put in a few of the best years of my life . . .

ALGOL: A decade. A decade of struggle. Poverty gives you all sorts of good disciplines. What was there about science fiction that captivated you in the first place, made you a reader and eventually an illustrator?

SCHOENHERR: Well, let's see, I think I mentioned that one of the first books I remember reading was Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island.* This was the book with N.C. Wyeth's illustrations which I haven't looked at for several years. I remember them as being very helpful. And the book was also interesting. Immediately after that, I had to read *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.* The illustrations there were not as satisfactory. It got me very interested in SF and then I became interested in the first story I read in a science fiction magazine. I think it was by Edmond Hamilton, this goes back 27 years ago . . .

ALGOL: About your early methods, you were quite good at scratchboard.

SCHOENHERR: I liked particularly Ross scratchboard which was made in Philadelphia and apparently Mr. Ross died taking the secret of his formulation with him. There were various ways of making it, but he seemed to have something that he added to the chalky surface, and it was just the right surface to work with.

My feeling is that the basis of all art is drawing and it's a matter of making a mark. As I said, I use anything that makes a mark. A lot of my painter friends don't consider it painting. Drawing in color. I like form, I like the three dimensional quality in most things. I like the stuff to look good in detail and it's still basically drawing so that there's no reason why I can't get into color also. That's just another dimension to black and white.

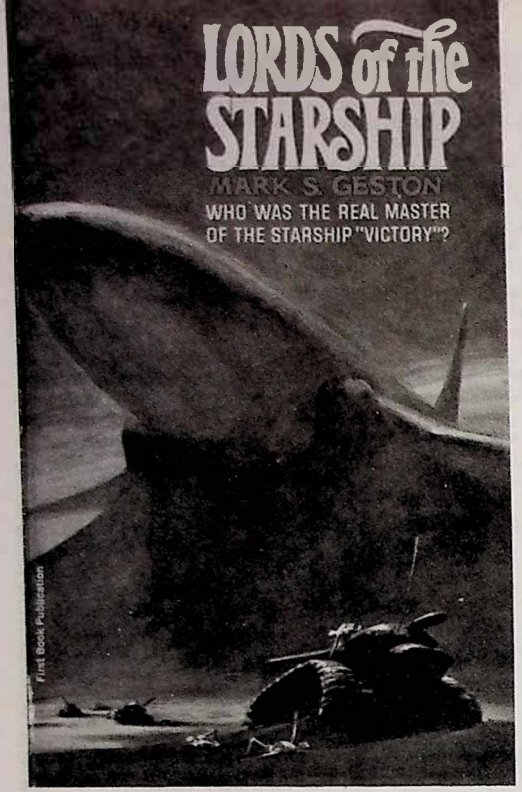
ALGOL: You mentioned Cartier as an influence, especially his black and white work.

SCHOENHERR: Okay, I got the same feeling from him as with Dick Powers. He lent a certain air of alienness but believability. I liked his scrawls, they just struck a sympathetic note, and I really wish he had done a lot more in science fiction. Reading a story that he illustrated made it more enjoyable than if someone else had done it, possibly because of his good craftsmanship and his aesthetics. Not that he was perfect all the time. But his things were just the definitive illustrations for the stories.

ALGOL: What about earlier illustrators like Hubert Rogers, for instance?

SCHOENHERR: Rogers belonged to a different school of course. He was quite good. His drawings were masterly and I enjoyed them. They're not as much fun as the other two but they were fine. But again Rogers did a lot of his work before my time. I only started reading *Astounding* in 1951 or 1952. Most of his work was done in the forties. And before that, science fiction art was pretty tacky.

For some reason I started reading *Astounding* because I liked the tone of the magazine. I really did not like most of the illustrations. Kelly did some marvelous stuff which I enjoyed, even Van Dongen, who mostly drew still lifes. There were some totally alien



Using large, looming shapes, dramatic back-lighting and set against middle-value skies, Schoenherr's subject matter, organic or otherwise, often takes on the characteristics of animal life. Here, perhaps, the starship resembles a shark or whale, especially if the work is viewed in color. Another striking aspect is the artist's special knack for depicting scale, a device Schoenherr used often to great effect.

creatures in some of the Hal Clement stories, *Mission of Gravity*, his illustrations for that are classics. And when he was good he was really quite good. But a lot of the other people I didn't like. They had harsh and ugly techniques for the most part. They would be considered good illustrations. They had all the information, all the details, the right characters doing the right things but I didn't like the looks of the pictures.

ALGOL: Talking about Cartier before, do you make any distinction between his black and white art and his color art? Do you find one was superior to the other or that they were consistent? The covers he did for *Unknown* are classics.

SCHOENHERR: I find them quite consistent, although I've seen very little of his color work. What I remember is the only cover he ever did for *Astounding*, I think. The only one I remember seeing let's say. It was fine. It was definitely Cartier, his own drawing style and I liked it. I thought it was quite superior to a lot of the other, let's say, brighter things. It was relatively subtle.

ALGOL: There were a number of prominent black and white illustrators, Hannes Bok, Virgil Finlay. Bok did some very interesting color work. Finlay, by contrast, did not.

SCHOENHERR: I don't remember a single one of Finlay's color jobs. What I seem to remember is a semi-nude young lady tediously drawn with a cross-hatching or stipple and bubbles and the occasional starburst. It's an aesthetic that I find unattractive. I really didn't like it. And Hannes Bok was not active I guess when I was reading the stuff, or else he was doing work for other publications, which I never got into contact with. I've seen some of his work and it's quite good.

ALGOL: It's got a surrealistic core to it.

SCHOENHERR: Oh, very definitely. So does Miró and Magritte and a lot of other picture makers. But still I don't care for them either. It's a matter of personal preference. It was good but it didn't do anything for me. It did not strike the chord that say Cartier or Rogers did. Rogers was even in the art deco school with big stripes behind heads and things.

ALGOL: Perhaps not deco, but there's a definite post-depression fatness to it.

SCHOENHERR: I don't know, I guess I'm just a classicist snob or whatever, but I like things that are not dated. Vermeer is not terribly dated. I enjoy his pictures. There's a timelessness to them which I find desirable. I really object to bandwagon jumping, okay, jumping on the bandwagon of the classicists is damn hard to do. Not that I like everything that's classical, David, a marvelous classic painter, is totally numbing.

Roger Vanderwiden, if you want another influence, some of his portraits are fantastic. I also go for a lot of cave art which is still very lively. You picked up something that could make a mark, it's basic. Literally, they had no art supply stores. This kind of mud looks reddish and this kind of mud looks yellowish and if you burn some sticks it comes out blackish. That's about as basic as you can get. It's still alive. It's the feeling that's there. The appreciation of the subject matter. So instead of getting into a totally non-objective type of thing I think I'm in a long line of artists dating from Cro-magnon. Especially with the wildlife.

ALGOL: There's that ever-present quality in your work, that sense of place, in addition to this affinity for not only the animals that you paint in the wildlife work, but the alien creatures that you do in your SF art. But there's also this incredible feeling for place, environment.

SCHOENHERR: Okay, well don't forget that I treat everything within the frame of the picture as almost equally important. It has to be right. If it's not right it's a little note that really jars. Maybe I'm more sensitive than a lot of people. I'm showing off. But it's got to be there, it's got to be right, and it has to be a convincing place with a convincing action or subject. I think it's just part of the process. I can't explain why I do it, it just happens.

ALGOL: Perhaps inadvertently, or maybe with a certain amount of premeditated design, almost everything you do has an organic quality to it. The space ships, for instance, the few gadget paintings that you did do for *Astounding/Analog*. I remember hearing one person say, well they're big whales or they're otters, they have that kind of physical appearance of being living creatures.

SCHOENHERR: Well I like living creatures. Why not? It's, let's say, part of my graphic vocabulary to draw organic shapes. Maybe because of my interest in things and a certain empathy that I try to get into my work, it has to come out with a little personality.

ALGOL: As close to the earth as you are, with your interests in wildlife and the environment you've chosen to live in, you're still very much aware of what's going on in scientific realms. You seem to be very interested in aviation.

SCHOENHERR: Okay, I just found out when I was giving a lecture at the University of Wisconsin, what my hobbies lead to. I started exploring caves when I was about 17 or so, went into hiking, camping, living off your feet, I had gotten into cross country skiing, flying airplanes. I've never been really foolish enough to try parachute jumping, but I probably could.

ALGOL: There's time yet, John.
SCHOENHERR: Yeah, there's time. But my bones are getting brittle. But I'd say flying airplanes and driving cars are close.
ALGOL: You relate to machines?
SCHOENHERR: No, I relate to travel. A lot of my traveling is climbing mountains aside from flying commercially and driving cross country. I want to get to wild places. I have kayacks and canoes and all manner of little goodies that will get you from one place to another. It's transportation. And now I think I can get to any place in the world, all I need is the time and money.
ALGOL: Any new projects in the works?
SCHOENHERR: You're just looking at them. I'm still trying to finish the studio. I had to learn carpentry.
ALGOL: You've had to learn a number of things in this frontier wilderness you live in.
SCHOENHERR: Yes. The boonies are great for self reliance. Okay, when we got this place the barn was just a shell. It was an old barn built just after the Civil War. As you can see. The structure is still exposed. I left all that. It made it fairly hard to do but I like it. There are beam posts with oak braces and big tulip beams. It's a standard construction for the period which was very substantial. In fact, the floors have not sagged a bit. Everything is still straight, it's in great shape. I had to learn how to lay a floor and put up the balcony and build railings, work on doors, do all sorts of stuff that didn't relate to making pictures. Now I'm learning how to operate the tractor and farm and adjust a plow . . .
ALGOL: But I think these things actually contribute. Your job is making pictures. That's a manifestation of all of your life forces.
SCHOENHERR: Yeah, okay, well also all these things are not what you would consider precious or artistic. When you think about them they have a go/no/go quality. The building stays up and keeps out the wind and rain or it's a failure. If you're planting things in the ground either they grow and produce an abundance of food or you starve. Not that we have to starve because you can buy things, but there's a certain discipline involved in the things, you plant when it's time to plant. Just using agriculture as an example, you do it the right way or else you get diminished or no returns. I've been trying to get the same feeling with the pictures. They have to work. I don't think there are any real excuses for pictures. I had a lot of excuses when I was doing commercial stuff because of deadlines and they need it Tuesday.

With the paintings that I'm choosing to do I've got, for every painting that comes down, at least two dozen in my mind. And more and more happening every day. But now that they're my own standards and my own schedule, basically, I feel more challenged because they have to work, they have to work for my standards which are pretty high. You can't screw around too much with a picture.
ALGOL: I suspect that your wife Judy has been a major influence in your life. She's the realist.
SCHOENHERR: She's been enormously stabilizing. I think of myself as a realist, but on a higher plane. It's like the old joke, the husband makes the important decisions, like what should be our attitude toward China. And the wife decides what kind of car you should buy. I'm in the fortunate position of having married one of my best friends. I would rather do things with her than with almost anyone else.
ALGOL: Also I don't think very many people realize how tolerant a wife has to be with a temperamental artist for a husband. Neither of us, I think, is especially temperamental. I have met people who consider themselves to be artists who are really sons of bitches. They're absolutely impossible to live with. But I think we've very similar. I think we're both fairly stable people, given to periods of depression, but basically we're not loonies, we're not whacked out. I get touches of the crazies where I can instantly flare up

and become very angry and then expend my hostility on a barrage of obscenities and then it'll fade, it'll be gone, forgotten. Does that happen to you?

SCHOENHERR: Sometimes. Sometimes I carry a secret grudge. No more than three or four years though.

ALGOL: I've never known you to be a grudge holder at all. As a matter of fact, I've never known you to really have an enemy or anyone who's ever done anything but speak highly of you.

SCHOENHERR: Who else do I know but you?

ALGOL: That's true . . . Do you have any self destructive tendencies?

SCHOENHERR: Self destructive? Probably no more than usual, not any more. I like what I'm doing. I'm eager for the next day or the bext challenge because of my lifestyle I guess.

ALGOL: But there was a time that you felt differently?

SCHOENHERR: Yes, the typical adolescent depressions.

ALGOL: Did it end with adolescence? Let's take your early commercial career, did you find that especially trying?

SCHOENHERR: Well, okay, I started out—when I graduated from art school, to work for six weeks in a studio cutting mats and getting coffee. After that I quit and started freelancing and I never stopped. What I wanted to do for awhile was illustrate the science fiction magazines and I did it. After awhile it paled. It's just like doing the same thing over and over again.

ALGOL: Did you ever feel that you were abused, especially in the early part of your career . . .

SCHOENHERR: Now I realize I was terribly abused.

ALGOL: Do you accept it as a matter of fact?

SCHOENHERR: Oh, it rankles, let's face it. You know I wouldn't mind getting back into the field for lots of money. That's what would do it. About the only thing that would do it, really. I've been offered really great stories for peanuts and I suffered for it. it takes away time from doing what I feel is important. My lifestyle is not fantastically luxurious. We got no servants. We have two old cars.

ALGOL: You have a great many acquaintances in the science fiction field. Have you had any really enduring friendships?

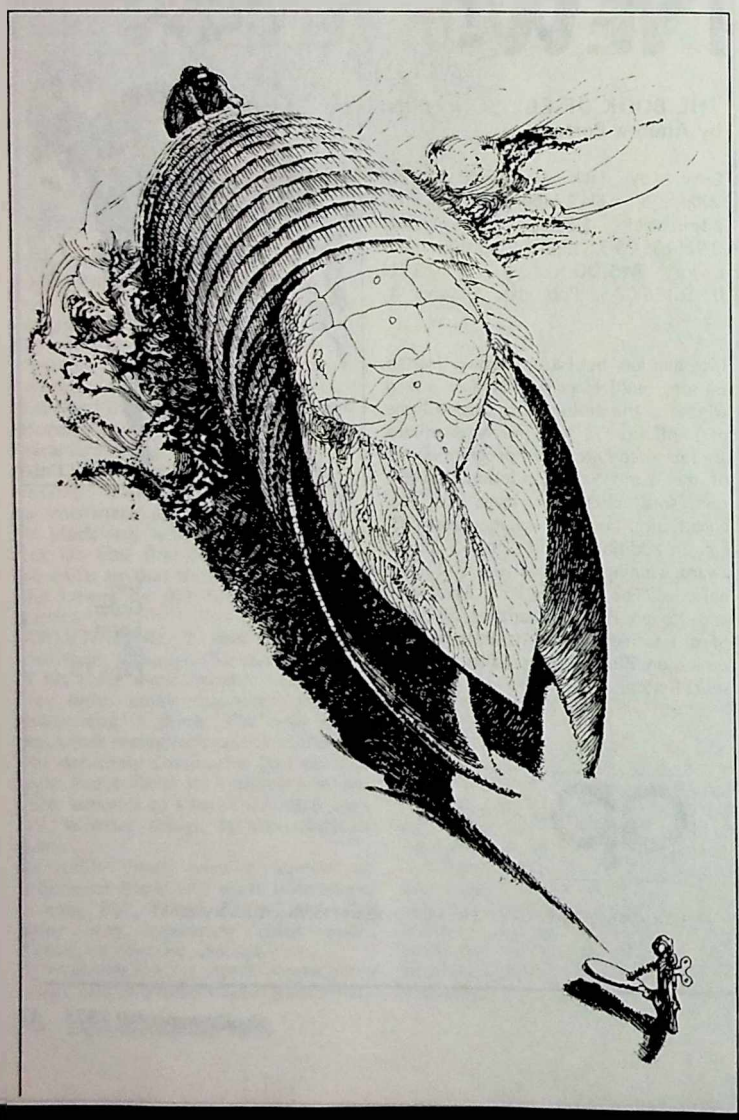
SCHOENHERR: Well I considered John Campbell a friend. Jack Gaughan is. And his wife. They've always been nice people to know. I just like them. You and your wife, your rotten kids. All kids are rotten until they leave home, then they get worse. I don't have that many friends. I find from my earlier days I have four good friends. Two I grew up with, one I met in college and one I married. And we seem to be fairly stable and not terribly flighty. We all get along.

ALGOL: There are illustrators who literally built their careers on their ability to deal with other people rather than on their talents as artists. I think it's a tribute to you that you're so highly regarded, and that you've done it almost entirely on the merits of your work rather than on your public relations skills.

SCHOENHERR: Right, and I think my public relations skills are non existent. Judy and I discovered one of my early report cards from elementary school where I got unsatisfactory grades in "works and plays well with others." When I was about 13 or 14 I was a fat little kid with glasses and at this time the stereotypes didn't allow for that as being a hero type, maybe it colored my early life and it turned me off. I don't know, maybe I'm different. As I recall the last time it was tested I had a rather high IQ. Knowing my own difficulties I never put much store by it. I was all set to become a biologist all through high school and then in my last year discovered that I enjoyed doing the drawings of the dissections and experiments more than doing the dissecting and experimenting. Let's say I'm basically a lazy hedonist.

ALGOL: What sort of work did your father do?

SCHOENHERR: He was a tool and die



In more recent times, Schoenherr devised a technique for working in dry-brush on watercolor paper which rivaled and finally eclipsed his earlier success with scratchboard. Again the basic elements are all in evidence: strong, graphic composition, texture, solidity, drawing and, again, a touch of humor. Some of the artist's more recent interior work for *Analog* executed in this style, is among the best black and white art now being produced

maker. Did some extremely precise mechanical work.

ALGOL: Do you feel that you're mechanical? It's not apparent in your work.

SCHOENHERR: Probably I was reacting against the mechanical keenness of my father. You know, it's just something that never really attracted me. I tried it, naturally, hundreds of times and always flopped. It's probably why I got into the organic end of it, rocks and trees rather than space ships. I like things looser and lively and real, alive rather than constructed.

ALGOL: What about mainstream illustrators? I know that N.C. Wyeth is a favorite painter of yours.

SCHOENHERR: Yeah, he did some marvelous paintings. Probably the one I appreciate most, but there are a couple of them. There was Peter Halk who did fantastic racing cars. Robert Fawcett was a major influence with his fine draftsmanship and good picture conception. Really good.

I came to appreciate Norman Rockwell rather late, mostly because of his craftsmanship but the kind of mawkish sentimentality turned me off for quite awhile. But he's an excellent painter and he doesn't fake anything. It's all solidly constructed, even the shadows and the ripples. He deserves the recognition. Andrew Wyeth is a large influence on me, obviously, with some of the wildlife things.

ALGOL: But you still kept your own identity. That's one of the most remarkable things about you, that you have maintained your individuality.

SCHOENHERR: I like to keep an emotional subjective focus in the picture. Some place that your attention is drawn to and quite strongly.

ALGOL: What do you think of other men generally associated with the Brandywine school—take for instance, Howard Pyle. Now, he comes from an age where illustrators had a whole different function. He definitely comes from the heyday of American illustration but he also wrote a good many of the things that he illustrated.

SCHOENHERR: Oh yes, I've read a great many of the things he's written, *The Adventures of Robin Hood, Men of Iron;* A thing called *Otto with the Silver Hand.*

ALGOL: What do you think of that kind of Renaissance man image of the illustrator as compared to what it is now?

SCHOENHERR: I don't think he was a Renaissance man, I think he was a damn good artist. I love his pictures. Some of them have marvelous abstract qualities to them. My only complaint about his paintings is that, it seems to me like they need a lot more cropping. This may have been the style of the times but his painting is good, everything is really solid and dramatic . . .

ALGOL: And of course his influences are very far reaching, especially in N.C. Wyeth. How did you get started doing wildlife work, John?

SCHOENHERR: I just started doing wildlife. When I was at Pratt, my class assignments, and things I was doing on my own, were of animals. I was doing toads and stuff and being laughed at in class. In fact, in my freshman year at Pratt I failed nature structure which was a course in drawing. And I also failed art in junior high school, I think by not doing what some of the teachers really wanted me to do. But I'm pigheaded enough so that eventually it comes out right. Animals, non-humans, have been a great part of my work. Because I don't really relate well to large numbers of people. I find most animals don't lie. I think I have a strong objection to being lied to and being misled. I want it straight. If somebody needs to say something, instead of hinting, I would prefer they not say it at all. Animals don't do that. Even a dog can't lie. If it's going to bite you, you can tell when he's twenty feet away.

ALGOL: Was *Gentle Ben* the first wildlife children's book you ever did?

SCHOENHERR: No, the first one was *Rascal. Gentle Ben* was I think the second or third.

ALGOL: If I'm not mistaken you had a friend, a wildlife illustrator, who helped you get started.

SCHOENHERR: That was with *Rascal.* The illustrator was somebody I'd never met. He was Carl Baker who had done Shielah Burnford's *Incredible Journey,* which was a bestseller, oh, I guess in the early 60's, made into a movie and all that. And he and I had both been doing some work for the Bronx Zoo, you know just little goodies there, because they were very helpful at the zoo. Getting us sea animals and even occasionally getting little oddball things if they were available. They also paid a fair amount for brochure things . . . Carl was too busy to do this book called *Rascal* and he had just seen some stuff I did for the Bronx Zoo and showed that to the art director. The art director happened to be a science fiction addict, so he knew my stuff from *Astounding* and said oh he does animals? So we got together, but for some reason I always considered doing books a sidetrack. What I really wanted to do was paint them and I have yet to do a book in full color.

ALGOL: How many books have you done?

SCHOENHERR: I don't keep an accurate count. I think about 40. Almost all of them have sold quite well. And it's been rewarding, both emotionally and monetarily.

ALGOL: How long does it take to do a book?

SCHOENHERR: Sometimes forever. Generally two to six weeks . . .

ALGOL: How many illustrations on an average would you say?

SCHOENHERR: Children's books used to be about 48 pages, which would mean, with fly sheets, 22 to 24 pictures. But because of increasing paper costs they've now dropped them to 32 pages which means about 15 to 16 pictures. Other books, let's say, an illustrated type book, still runs about 12 pictures. A dozen is a good number.

ALGOL: Any last remarks?

SCHOENHERR: I got out of science fiction painting because I can't stand mediocrity and for the most part . . . There's no space for anything really good. There's no budget for anything really good.

One reason why I was disappointed with commercial art, is because editors and art directors get in the way. Their job is to sell the book and this is exactly what they want on the cover, something that will sell the book. I find most of the books I've been reading lately have not been worth selling.

I have very high standards and I hate to see them go downhill. There's enough mediocrity, why promote it?

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE NEXT SKETCHES

If you were paying attention last time, you will have noticed that this was *not* the column about the evolution of an SF cover painting as promised. Time, for one thing, prevented me from meeting the deadline on such an elaborate undertaking, but also the immediacy of Schoenherr's remarks made me realize a need to get this interview into print as soon as possible. So many fine illustrators have chosen, in recent months, to turn away from science fiction. It is as if a strange epidemic has swept among our meager numbers and carried away with it the best of our breed. And it makes me question the validity of what we do. Perhaps it will end in a refortifying of the beliefs I have long held, or perhaps I too will be stricken with this puzzling malady, and pass from view with the others.

Should I "survive" to write again in these pages, the next installment of "Sketches" will be of a new and different kind. I shall, as promised, produce the column on the development of SF cover art. It will be the first in a series of highly subjective and, possibly, autobiographical pieces which will appear irregularly, interspersed among installments of a more "historical" tone, which have thus far been the mainstay of this column. "Sketches" needs, at last, to express its "personality" and since I have finally found my voice, after all this time, I am eager to begin that task. —Vincent DiFate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Frederik POHL

POHLEMIC:

Harlan's World

Harlan Ellison has done it again. He has converted ERA into a subject of fannish debate, and made all of us examine our consciences. The Iguanacon committee is striving furiously to placate him and all supporters of ERA; Karl Pflock is demanding equal benefits for opponents of ERA; and the universe of discourse has broadened in a dozen directions: Is ERA worthy of support? Is it right to politicize SF conventions? Is Harlan's way of going about it proper and decent?—and as all of this is obviously what Harlan was setting about to achieve in the first place, clearly it's working for him.

Of course Harlan has a right to do what he did. He's Guest of Honor. The purpose of having a Guest of Honor is to Honor him, which means providing a forum for him to do his thing, whatever his thing may be. Bob Heinlein did his thing at Kansas City and got booed for it—fair enough; it was right that he should say what he wanted to say, and right that those who found what he said repulsive should boo it. Harlan operates in a much more public way, but that's Harlan's style, always has been; the Iguanacon committee knew what they were getting into when they chose him, and if they didn't want tempests and *tsoris* they were out of their minds to pick Harlan as GoH.

So that part's clear enough. . . .

But the rest of it not so clear, at least to me. Let's explore it a little.

Start with two commandments: "There are evils in this world, and it is everyone's duty to strike at them wherever found. Conversely, there are goods in this world, and it is everyone's duty to lend them a hand."

Hardly anybody will argue with those statements. The arguments hit the fan when you try to say which is which. We had a painful lesson in this a decade or so ago in science fiction, during the Vietnam war. Some of you may remember what happened: About fifty SF writers (plus a few ringers) paid for ads in the prozines demanding that the U.S. get out of Vietnam. About forty other SF writers (again plus some ringers) paid for counter-ads demanding that the U.S. *stay* in Vietnam.

What struck me as fascinating and terrible in that particular debate was that I knew just about everybody on both lists, and as far as I could tell there was not a dime's worth of difference in their ultimate objectives for humanity. If you mapped Bob Heinlein's ideal vision of a 21st-century world against, say, Judy Merril's (or against my own) the shapes at the core of the blueprint would have been just about identical—peace; freedom; culture—and only the fringes would have shown much individual variation. And maybe not a hell of a lot of that. What divided us was not goals but strategies for getting there.

It is my personal opinion that it is not much different with ERA. At least, I think that if you were to map Harlan's notion of the ideal condition for the average woman against Karl Pflock's there would be a lot more substantive similarities than differences; both would say that she should have the right to choose her own destiny, and not be unfairly held down in the pursuit of it. The question reduces itself to a difference on whether ERA is a bridge to that optimal goal, or a barrier.

What about ERA itself?

For what it's worth, my personal opinion is that ERA is indeed a bridge, but not the bridge of choice. ERA occupies a place on that large list of causes that I favor, but not very much. It is not at the top of my personal list of priorities. I doubt that it makes it into the top hundred, in fact—maybe somewhere just above gay rights and a little under the cause of the Native Americans. I am in favor of them all, but they don't come within miles of, say, the right to abortion or freedom for smokers, and they are nowhere at all near those top sine qua nons, freedom of speech and freedom of thought and freedom of press.

It isn't that I don't feel passionate about causes. God knows I've bled and died for any number, and no doubt will again. I gave up grapes because of Cesar Chavez; I've stopped eating tuna to save the dolphins; I don't buy Schick products because they use part of their profits to subsidize loonies; because Technicolor does too, I have once or twice insisted on a clause specifying they would not supply film in movie contracts. ERA does not command that much glandular flow in me. It is a cause I am willing to vote for, but not to die for. Its objectives seem worthwhile, but the way it proposes to achieve them is by adding one more damn law, and one additional damn Army corps of bureaucrats to administer it, and one extra damn forest slaughtered to provide the paper to print the forms to see that it is carried out; and, dear God, friends, we are already drowning in far too many of all of these. I don't want more laws. I want *fewer* laws. I am a Schumacher liberal. That government is best which governs least, and small is beautiful. The conservatives are all assholes, but so are the big-government liberals.

The trouble with being a Schumacher liberal is that we don't live in a small society. Far from it. We live in a grossly overinflated *huge* society, and power is not concentrated only in government. So, while I am in favor of dismantling the Feds, I am also in favor of first dismantling ITT, General Motors, Ma Bell and everything else on *Fortune*'s list of the top 400 corporations, and probably most of the next 40,000 as well. Big Public Power (e.g., big government and big unions) is assuredly an atrocity; but, evil as it is, it is the only thing that protects you and me from Big Private Power, which, as history proves, would do us all in in a hot minute if they were given half a chance.

(And about the best thing Jimmy Carter has done—maybe the *only* thing that has made me proud I voted for

him—was to tell those quintessential Big Private Power concentrations, the lawyers and the doctors, to their faces that they were bleeding us dry. Right on, Jim boy!)

However, I digress. Let's get back to conscience and agitation.

Harlan doesn't hold the Iguanacon committee personally responsible for Arizona's failing to pass ERA. He uses them as symbols.

We all do symbol-thinking. I've performed a lot of symbolic acts. For a long time I had moral objections to a lot of countries. I would not visit Spain while Franco was alive. I stayed out of Germany and Japan because I had not forgiven them for World War II. I could not condone the brutal suppression of freedom in the Soviet Union or Brazil. And after some years of upholding this moral principle it occurred to me that if I stayed out of all the countries whose governments had done things I thought morally reprehensible there would be damn-all countries I could set foot in. Including my own.

A cause which has gored my own ox is that of smokers' rights. I am not so lost to reason that I think my right to light up a cigarette when I feel like it is as important as, say, a woman's right to receive equal pay for equal work. But it isn't trivial, either, at least not to me. I would not for a moment compel anyone to endure the presence of a cigarette smoker, but I don't want to accept the compulsion of being in a place where I can't smoke, either. On a personal basis, this problem is easily enough resolved. Some of my dearest friends—Ian Ballantine and Isaac Asimov, for two—don't permit smoking in their homes. That's fine, as long as I don't have to enter their homes. (When occasionally I do, we work something out.)

But when it is a matter of public law. . . . Ah, there are problems for you! Minnesota and New York have passed laws prohibiting smoking in public meeting rooms. After that, I turned down about a dozen speaking engagements in Minnesota and New York—until I found out that no one seriously intended to enforce the laws anyway. My local commuter bus service abolished its smoking section a few years ago; since then I use the train. The only veterans' organization I have ever been willing to join, the American Veterans Congress, passed a law that smoking would not be permitted at its conventions. Well, I hadn't been attending the conventions anyway, but a principle is a principle, so I quit AVC. Now the airlines are showing every sign of getting ready to lose one of their best customers, namely me. By decree they have provided 65% of seats on each flight for non-smokers. As more than 35% of passengers are smokers, the result is that I usually sit cheek-by-jowl in a sort of airborne ghetto, while there are acres of empty seats in the non-smoking section up ahead. (Of course, there would be a simple and sane solution to this problem if anyone concerned were really worried about the need for separate accommodations. Few are the routes where there are not a number of flights at about the same times. If, on the 6 PM flight from LaGuardia to O'Hare, say, TWA and United prohibited smoking throughout the planes while American permitted it, there would be no possible conflict. I would simply fly American. This will never happen, of course, because the effect would be that American would switch to 747s, while TWA and United would be lucky to fill Piper Cubs. . . . Candor makes me admit I have slightly exaggerated this case. But not much.)

Now you see where some of my own passions lie, and I bet a lot of you are about as sympathetic as if I were trying to talk you into Rosicrucianism. I'm not trying to talk you into anything. I don't ask you to join me in this crusade. But I am getting mighty touchy about it.

As you can see.

But let me tell you about another issue that confronts every one of us, which is quite analogous to Harlan's troubles with ERA, and of direct concern to every person who cares about reading, writing, publishing or just plain freedom. It has to do with the state of Tennessee.

Tennessee is a state I like, and that most science-fiction people ought to like, because it has one of the best regional cons, the KublaKhan. I was GoH one year, liked it, want to go back when I can. Tennessee is also a state that has just passed one of the worst laws of recent history. It is ostensibly an anti-pornography statute, but its definitions of pornography are so worded, and its penalties for violation are so capricious and severe, that it threatens everybody. If that law stands, I would not dare work in a bookstore in Tennessee. If I sold a book that someone deemed obscene, I could be fined $300 and go to jail for a year. (I might be willing to take my chances on *owning* a bookstore, because then it's only a $50 fine—does that make any sense at all?) I'm no big fan of pornography. It wouldn't blight my life if *Hustler* went broke and Harry Reems spent the rest of his days in the slammer. But I have to oppose this sort of law for two reasons: because the right to a free press transcends any objections to whatever gets printed on it; and because *I don't trust anyone to define what is objectionable.* I don't even trust myself.

So the Tennessee law is not merely an enormity, it is a direct and clear threat to one of the top priorities in my personal hierarchy, the freedom to say in print whatever anyone wants to say, any time. It simply repeals that right. You could go to jail for selling *Dhalgren* in Tennessee. You could even go to jail for selling the most recent Heinleins, and probably for selling this issue of ALGOL—because I used the word "asshole" a few paragraphs back, and the Tennessee law says that the work need not be considered as a whole. If any *part* of the work can be held unfit, the whole thing is damned.

So if I personally were going to make any con committee my whipping boy, I don't think I woul; fool around with the Iguanacon. It would have to be the next KublaKhan, not to mention the World SF meeting in Dublin (who can give support to those depraved animals, the IRA?); not to mention, for one reason or another, just about every other con in every other place there is.

And I'm not prepared to do that, or any of it, and I'm not too pleased with myself for having done things like it before.

It's a frustrating world, full of wicked people you can't get at, but it doesn't very satisfactorily relieve my frustrations to take a punch at a symbol when I can't hit the real thing. Iguanacon didn't turn down the ERA; KublaKhan didn't pass that pornography statute; Lunacon and Minicon didn't create the no-smoking laws; Harry Harrison does not support terrorists, Tetsu Yano didn't bomb Pearl Harbor, Tom Schlück didn't put Hitler in power. Iguanacon doesn't deserve to be a whipping boy.

Nobody does.

Of course, as a practical matter, Harlan isn't really whipping them. And Iguanacon isn't complaining. If all this commotion has any effect at all, it is to publicize the con in more emphatic terms than it could have achieved on its own—and Harlan, who is a world-class master of hype, knows this as well as I do.

It isn't the politicizing of worldcons that I object to, it is the politicizing of the world. If every act becomes a political statement, if every relationship between people becomes a confrontation of symbols, what becomes of humanity? □

—Frederik Pohl

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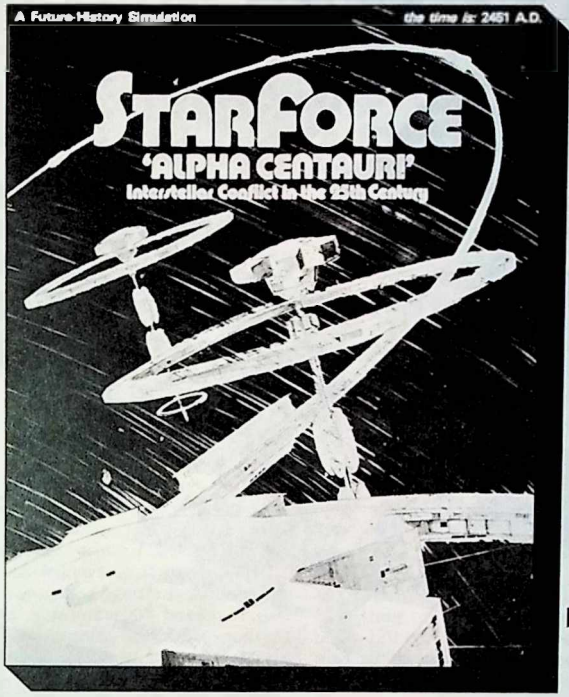

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LUPOFF'S BOOK WEEK

BY RICHARD LUPOFF

PREFATORY: A number of readers have raised the question of why I review so many small-press books and other off-beat productions, rather than sticking with the main stream of this month's outpourings from Ace Ballantine, DAW and the other high-volume publishers. This is really a limited case of the broader question: How does a reviewer decide which books to feature, which to mention in passing, and which to ignore.

As an author myself (that's my other hat, gang) I've been very interested in that same question, coming at it from the other side. When *I* write a book, I like to see reviews of it; even pans are better than being ignored. And having produced a number of books in past years to a deafening lack of response, I engaged a while ago in a three-cornered correspondence with Lester del Rey and Algis Budrys, two of the more influential reviewers in our field.

Budrys' and del Rey's statements as to how they select books for review were astonishingly similar, and upon reflection I've come to believe that my own rule is very much like theirs. There is no formula of hardback versus paperback, veteran versus newcomer or other such choice. Each of us—del Rey, Budrys, myself, and I suspect other reviewers—pick through the stacks of review copies that we receive, just as we would pick through the shelves at a bookstore. Very rarely do I go to the stack of unread volumes thinking, Today I want a good snappy space opera, or, Today I want a solid, meaty sociological SF book, or, Today I think I'll look for a promising first novel.

Much more often I'll simply browse. If a particularly intriguing or attractive cover illustration catches my eye, I'll pick up the book. If the by-line of a favorite author pops out, I'll reach for that one. It might be an intriguing title, an arresting blurb on cover or jacket, a book with some unusual feature of format or design.

If a given publisher has a known track record of producing high-quality and/or intriguingly offbeat books, I'll sometimes pick up a book just on the basis of the publisher's logotype . . . and if a publisher has a record for producing trivial and/or crudely written books, I'll sometimes shy away from something of theirs.

This can produce undesirable results. It can be unfair. If a publisher with a poor record happens to buy a book from a new author, and package it unattractively, it has almost no chance of getting reviewed. Well, it just *might* be a brilliant book! But—one cannot read all the stuff that comes along. It's simply impossible. There simply aren't the hours in the day, quite aside from the fact that one has other obligations and interests.

I do try to give new writers attention—thus, a lot of first and second novels make it into Lupoff's Book Week. And I do lean toward small press volumes for a couple of reasons. One is that small-press publishing intrigues me, and I'm just more likely to pick up a small-press book than a typical mass product. Another is that, I figure that more of my readers will be exposed to the latest outpourings of Ace Books, or Doubleday, or . . . well, you get the idea . . . than they will to the productions of Tim Underwood, Gerry de la Ree, Donald Grant, or other, even smaller, presses.

In short, Random House doesn't really *need* me, thanks all the same, and even if they did, there isn't really that much that I can do for them. But if I can turn a few thousand readers on to the books of Dragon Press or Fax Collector's Editions . . . and out of those few thousand readers there emerge a couple of hundred actual customers . . . I think that it makes a significant difference to those publishers.

And I'd like to see them survive, and if possible, prosper.

All of which doesn't mean that I'm going to *boycott* the big houses or the big names. Next Heinlein novel from Putnam's, I'll surely read it and almost certainly review it. I can't think of Heinlein writing a book that won't provoke me to say something about it, pro, con, or mixed. Whereas the next adventure of Brak the Barbarian, Jandar of Callisto, or other such stuff, I'm pretty certain to ignore.

But in marginal cases, the small-press book will get the benefit of the doubt more often than not.

But I'm sure as hell glad that I'm not the only reviewer out here. I'd hope that, with enough of us trying to cover whatever we find coverage-worthy, we'd kind of plug the gaps in one another's coverage. Maybe Barry Malzberg will review what I overlook, or Joanna Russ will review what Gahan Wilson overlooks, and in the smaller magazines and journals somebody at *Unearth* or *Galileo* or *SFR* or *Delap's* or *Locus* will catch the books that the rest of us miss.

This is all kind of hit-or-miss, of course. Nobody sits up there in a catbird seat parcelling out the books, saying, "Okay, Drew White, you take the new Silverberg; Walker, you get the new Le Guin," and so on. Each of us picks his or her own subjects (at least, that's how I *think* it works) and that means that some books will get multiple coverage while others will get none at all.

It's hardly a perfect system, but somehow it works.

DREAMSNAKE, by Vonda N. McIntyre. $8.95. 313 pp. 1978. Houghton Mifflin.

Vonda McIntyre's novelette about the future medic Snake and her therapeutic serpents won a Nebula five years ago; here is a full and generally satisfying novel which takes that story as an opening incident and builds it into one of the more unusual and more rewarding books to appear in quite a while.

The world against which the novel is set, is the earth of an indefinite future. As in many other books, there has been a nuclear war, civilization-as-we-know-it has ceased to exist, and a sort of semi-feudal, semi-barbaric society has developed, comprising a number of autonomous city-states separated by wilderness areas inhabited by nomadic tribes.

There is also a hint of prior contact with an alien civilization: sealed domes appear here and there on the earth, and among the healer's standard kit is a triad of a cobra, a rattler, and an alien "dreamsnake" not of terrestrial origin. The healer travels from tribe to tribe and from city to city, practicing her art. The medical art of this society is intriguing: the healers are highly adept at biological manipulation. Their snakes are themselves apparently mutated; given, for example, a tissue culture from a tumor, the healer mixes it with a mutagen, feeds it to her cobra or rattler; the serpent's metabolism processes the sample into a serum. The serpent then bites the patient, injecting the serum, and shortly the tumor is metabolized away.

It's all extremely convincing! McIntyre is a trained geneticist, and her science is both astonishingly original and thoroughly convincing. *Dreamsnake* is far from the Niven-Clement type of hard-science novel, and yet it can be viewed as a hard-science book and emerge with straight-A grades.

On the human level, the book is equally impressive. The healer Snake is herself very well realized; the obvious comparison for this book, among the various "medical" SF books produced over the years, is L. Ron Hubbard's *Old Doc Methuselah*. Old Doc used to blast around the pages of *Astounding*, from planet to planet, curing poxes and plagues, and imposing his medical judgments and his personal and political power trips on the local residents by threatening to quarantine their worlds and squeeze them into submission.

Vonda McIntyre's Snake travels on horseback from settlement to settlement, offering her services for little or no payment, and truly driven by a burning ambition to heal. She is a thoroughly humane figure, and yet in one little exchange she echoes Hubbard's Doc almost to the word:

"Anyone is free to refuse payment to a healer," Snake said. "We carry weapons only for defense and we never make threats. But we do not go where we are not welcome."

"You mean you boycott any place that doesn't please you."

Snake shrugged.

We have a world, in *Dreamsnake*, that is largely barren, yet in a strange way unforgettable and even beautiful. The characters are believable, mostly likeable; even "bad guys" are motivated and realized in such a manner that one feels sympathy and understanding for them. The writing style is pleasant and unobtrusive, the book is a definite quality product. This is science fiction as it should be written.

Which is not to say that *Dreamsnake* is a perfect book. It is only McIntyre's second novel, and is an achievement of such a degree that I can scarcely imagine what she will be doing two or three or five books from now. There *are* a few things that bothered me in *Dreamsnake*, and I list them for the record.

For one, the book is not as solid structurally as I'd have liked. The original novelette is necessarily incidental, and it is followed by a series of other incidents, each comprising a more-or-less complete story in itself (again, like *Old Doc Methuselah*). The incidents are not totally sealed off from one another, though. McIntyre keeps picking up plot and theme elements as she moves from incident to incident, and by the time she gets to the last hundred pages or so, the book has built an awesome momentum. But the episodic structure keeps the first half to two-thirds of the novel from showing the impetus that would have made it stronger.

For a second, while the characters are thoroughly believable and humane, and while Snake truly empathizes with her patients and their families, and suffers with their suffering . . . I found the book marked with a bit too *much* unrelenting *angst*. Some moments of joy would have given relief and variety—and there are distinct moments of joy in the book, in terms of plot events. It would have taken only a different mood in the narration of these events, to do the trick.

And finally, there's a delicate matter of balance in which McIntyre attempted something wholly admirable, and brought it off—but not quite to perfection. We're all familiar with the regrettable assignment of personality characteristics by gender, in most traditional science fiction. All of the dynamic, intelligent, and effective characters in (to be absurd) a typical Doc Smith novel, would be men. All of the passive, emotional, and dependent characters would be women.

That this kind of stereotyping would be offensive to Vonda McIntyre is natural, and that she should attempt to distribute various characteristics more equitably among her characters is also not only natural but obviously desirable. For contrast, one need only recall the anachronistic characterizations of a recent (or somewhat recent) novel like *The Mote in God's Eye*.

But I'm afraid that McIntyre has overcorrected to a degree, and in *Dreamsnake* there's a tendency to make all of the dynamic, intelligent, and effective characters women; all of the passive, emotional, and dependent ones, men. The object, I think, was to correct a historic imbalance by establishing a more equitable balance. The effect, unfortunately, tends toward the *reversal* of the imbalance rather than its removal: things are tilted as badly, or nearly as badly, as ever—the tilt just runs the other way.

But none of these flaws are fatal to the book, or anywhere near fatal. I still think it's the best science fiction novel I've read in months; I commend it to you most highly, and I will look forward eagerly to Vonda McIntyre's next. ■

IN MAYAN SPLENDOR, by Frank Belknap Long. 66 pp. $6.00. 1977. Arkham House.

It's been my belief for some time now that a number of writers from our pulp period are due for rehabilitation. Murray Leinster is one such, and his reputation seems to be rising daily; certainly the recent publication of two quite different "best of" volumes in the United States and Britain will contribute to this rise. David H. Keller is another such writer, and Frank Belknap Long is a third.

In each case there is some reason; or, in Long's, three.

First of all, Long was the first member of the "Lovecraft school" to break into print, and remained Lovecraft's closest friend for the rest of Lovecraft's life. As a result, Long's independent worth has long been shadowed by his identification with Lovecraft.

Secondly, Long's fiction covers a matrix of both short stories and novels, and both science fiction and weird/fantasy/horror tales. I think for the most part that his very best works are his weird short stories; his least rewarding, the science fiction novels. As with Leinster, it takes time for the lesser works to wash away, leaving the pure gleaming nuggets of gold to be appreciated.

Thirdly, while Long has for many years commanded the admiration of a loyal audience, he has never quite achieved the breakthrough to really massive acceptance—and financial

success. And more's the pity, for many an author of lesser merit has achieved greater fame and fortune. At any rate, under the pressure of financial considerations, he has turned out some low-paying potboilers—again, like Leinster—and these, too, will have to fade away before Long's greater works are appreciated.

In any event, the present volume from Arkham House reveals still another facet of Long's talent, that of romantic poet. It seems to have been taken as a matter of course that leading fantasy writers of the *Weird Tales* school would write poetry as well; Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, and Clark Ashton Smith—the three leading lights of *Weird Tales*—all did so. And so, also, did Long.

Long's very first book, *A Man from Genoa* (1926) was a slim collection of verse. He produced another such, *The Goblin Tower* (1935), which was printed from type in part set by Lovecraft himself.

The present Arkham collection contains the contents of both those volumes, plus a memorial poem to Lovecraft, that Long wrote for *Weird Tales* in 1938, the year following Lovecraft's death.

The poems are passionate, youthful, occasionally gauche but more often powerful and most often quite beautiful. The book itself is beautifully printed on lovely, heavy, enamelled stock. The jacket design by Stephen Fabian is most striking, and five full-page illustrations match perfectly the romantic mood of the poems.

I think this is the finest book that Arkham House has produced in years: a credit to publisher, poet, and illustrator.

FAFHRD AND THE GRAY MOUSER, complete in 6 volumes, by Fritz Leiber. $45. 1977. Gregg Press, 70 Lincoln Street, Boston MA 02111.

RIME ISLE, by Fritz Leiber. $10. 186 pp. 1977. Whispers Press, Box 1492-W Azalea Street, Browns Mills NJ 08015.

NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS, by Fritz Leiber. Berkley Medallion. 276 pp. $1.75. 1978.

SWORDS AND ICE MAGIC, by Fritz Leiber. $1.50. 248 pp. 1977. Ace Books.

Writing of Frank Belknap Long, I mentioned that some of our most deserving writers sometimes fail to attain the success they deserve, whether from the critics, the broad reading public, or the people in the fancy offices who write the checks.

Fritz Leiber has been around since the reigns of Farnsworth Wright at *Weird Tales* and John Campbell (if not quite Orlin Tremaine) at *Astounding*. Yet for years—in fact, decades—he labored in relative poverty and obscurity, only in the past five years or so beginning to achieve the recognition he has so long deserved. I do not know if the flow of dollars toward him has increased proportionately; I certainly hope this is the case.

Leiber has written some fine science fiction and a broad variety of fantasy, but his most popular creation seems to be the world of Newhon, a strange fantasy land where the barbarian Fafhrd and his diminutive companion the Gray Mouser live out their adventurous lives, frequently encountering beautiful wenches and fearsome creatures of supernatural nature, singly or in combination.

This sounds like a natural for the bloody-ruffian tale of the type most typified by Robert E. Howard's Conan the Barbarian: a sort of crudely vigorous but essentially brutal and nearly mindless fantasy that soon palls on all but the least discriminating reader.

Such is not at all the case with Leiber. His tales of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser are filled with wit, irony and whimsy. They draw far more heavily upon the tradition of Lord Dunsany than upon that of Robert E. Howard, and their trappings of swordplay and pseudo-medievalism are regrettable only in that they mislead both publishers (in packaging the books) and readers (in making their selections and establishing

their mind-sets) into thinking that they *are* mere skull-bashers and gut-spillers.

Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser first appeared in the pulp magazines of the 1940s. Their first appearance in a book was in Leiber's Arkham House collection, *Night's Black Agents,* in 1947. There are only two of these tales in the book, but rather than detracting from the interest of the book, the variety of its contents adds to it. Berkley has put *Night's Black Agents* back into print (it is, of course, fabulously rare in its original version, although I believe that a facsimile edition is in print in Britain). And, according to Tom Whitmore, a leading bibliographer of modern SF and fantasy, the Berkley edition actually contains *more* stories than the Arkham House book.

The others are for the most part modern, urban, "realistic" horror-fantasies of a sort to foreshadow Leiber's recent novel *Our Lady of Darkness.* Between *Night's Black Agents,* the DAW *Book of Fritz Leiber* and *Second Book of . . .,* and the Ballantine *Best of,* a broad selection of Leiber's short fiction is available again, and most welcome it is!

Rime Isle is the most recent Fafhrd and Mouser yarn, a short novel that was first serialized in the ill-fated *Cosmos* magazine. Stuart Schiff's Whispers Press has produced a beautiful edition of the novel, containing also its introductory novelette "The Frost Monstreme," and packaged with a lovely wraparound jacket painting and numerous illustrations by Tim Kirk. The drawings are a bit on the cute-cartooney side for my taste, but unquestionably attractive and amusing. *Rime Isle* is actually a little closer to the traditional adventure mode of most s-'n'-s fantasy; I don't think it's the very best material in the Newhon saga, but it's good, solid story-telling with frequent flashes of the wit and mood that Leiber attains at his peak.

Ace's *Swords and Ice Magic* contains the contents of the Whispers Press book (although without the illustrations), plus six more previously uncollected Fafhrd and Mouser stories. The additional stories total only about 75 pages in a book of nearly 250, but they are witty and definitely worthwhile. I'd recommend the Whispers edition for your collector's shelf, the Ace for a reading copy.

The Gregg Press editions are primarily based on the Fafhrd and Mouser collections that Ace has been bringing out over the past decade. They contain, in six beautiful hardbound volumes, the complete Fafhrd and Mouser series—at least, as it exists to date. They come complete with such paraphernalia as maps, introductions by Leiber himself, previously-unpublished drawings and the like. Some of this material is fascinating; for instance, the information that the first Newhon story was completed away back in 1936, and vetted for Leiber by Lovecraft—Lovecraft's notes are included. There is also Leiber's unvarying courtly bow to his old friend Harry Fischer who co-conceived Fafhrd and the Mouser and shared in some of the early writing.

These books are a treasure. Of course, $45 is quite a wallop, even by today's inflated standards, but if you buy the set that works out to only $7.50 a volume, and that's *cheap* for a hardbound book nowadays! ■

AND HAVING WRIT. . . by Donald R. Bensen. 224 pp. $8.95. 1978. Bobbs-Merrill.

Don Bensen has been around the science fiction field, mainly as an editor, for decades. He did fine work at the old Pyramid Books for years, then moved on to Berkley Publishing Company, to Ballantine/Beagle for a while, and has most recently been associated with the Dial Press "Quantum" SF series. In the last capacity he's also done consulting work for Dell, where Jim Frenkel is the SF editor.

Although Bensen has written some other things over the years, *And Having Writ. . .* is his own first SF novel, and it's a book that requires at least two looks.

For starters, *And Having Writ. . .* has one of the worst first chapters I've ever read. A group of spacemen are coming in for a landing on a planet they've never seen before. Something malfunctions in their ship and it looks as if they're either going to burn up from atmospheric friction or crash and die.

As they struggle desperately to achieve at least a survivable crash-landing, they get involved in a philosophical discussion of the nature of reality. Ten pages later they're still zooming down through the atmosphere, still facing the prospect of imminent death, and still discussing the nature of reality.

Starting with chapter two, things take a turn for the better. Much better. I risk giving away a plot surprise (sorry 'bout that, but I don't see how I can discuss the book without doing so; if this upsets you too much, please skip the rest of this review) by telling you that the planet they land on is earth and the year is 1908.

From here on the spacemen become involved with earth politics, and the novel turns into a delightful alternate-world yarn involving Teddy Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Thomas A. Edison, William Randolph Hearst, the King of England, the Kaiser, the Czar, and various other historical personages including John Barrymore and the mad monk Rasputin.

It's all treated in a lightweight, tongue-in-cheek manner, it's all grand fun, and while I don't think this book is going to move anyone to great heights or depths of feeling, it's a very readable, very enjoyable piece of summer fluff.

Now, about that first chapter.

I can understand how Bensen wrote it. He was feeling his way into the book, apparently uncertain of himself, attempting to establish a basic rationale for an alternate-history which we all know did *not* happen. One way to write alternate-world stories is just to write 'em—*wham!*—and let the chips fall where they may. A more conservative method is to set up some sort of framing device or establishing rationale for the "world-of-if" gimmick.

For whatever reason of his own, Bensen chose the more cautious of the two methods, and that is of course perfectly legitimate. Unfortunately, it led him to write that truly abominable opening chapter, which I expect is going to turn away a great many people who might otherwise find themselves reading this book with relish. Already, I asked one person who received pre-publication proofs of this book for review, what he thought of it. He told me that he'd given up before finishing the first chapter. I advised him to take another crack at the book—I don't know whether he's done so.

It seems to me that Bensen's editor at Bobbs-Merrill, whoever that may be, has to bear at least part of the blame for this glaring flaw. Not that an editor has the right to dictate the content of an author's book—but he (or she) does have a duty to pick up such truly horrendous missteps, and bring them to the author's attention, and ask the author (for the mutual good of himself *and* the publisher) to fix it. If the author refuses . . . well, that's another matter.

In the present case, I think both Bensen and Bobbs-Merrill are going to take a black eye over something that could have been fixed rather simply. Maybe, when the book goes into paperback, Bensen's paperback editor will encourage him to revise that first chapter. I sure hope so!

An odd sidelight on *And Having Writ. . .*

I mentioned that Don Bensen works for Dial Press and sometimes lends a hand at Dial's sister-enterprise, Dell. In the summer of 1977, I submitted a proposal (a chunk of a novel plus a brief outline of the rest of the book) to Dell. It was for a parallel world story called *Circumpolar!,* and in the course of his duties, Don Bensen had occasion not merely to see my proposal but to discuss it with me at some length.

Now it happens that the main narrative of my story takes place roughly twenty years later than Don's. But the historical background or parallel-world rationale, is astonishingly similar to that of *And Having Writ. . .* I am not for an instant suggesting that Don swiped anything out of my proposal. For one thing, the timing would have been all wrong. By the summer of '77, Don probably had a first draft completed or nearly completed and was polishing up his manuscript. It would have been too late for him to swipe from me.

But—and this is more to the point—I have known Don, and we have been friends, for something like fifteen years. I can think of no person in the entire publishing industry whose standards of personal honor and professional ethics are higher than Don's. There is simply no way that he would steal ideas in that fashion.

This has to be one of those bizarre coincidences—and, in fact, I'd have hated to be in Don's shoes last summer when he did see my proposal. He must have been faced with a terrible dilemma, and I think that his solution—to say nothing about his own book, but simply to proceed with his involvement with each project, quite separately from the other—was absolutely correct.

In fact, *Circumpolar!* won't be delivered to *my* publisher until near the end of 1978, and won't be published until well into 1979 at the soonest. I'll be happy to see comparisons of the two, but I just hope that nobody thinks that Don Bensen stole his ideas from mine (or vice versa). ■

A DOUBLE SHADOW, by Frederick Turner. 252 pp. $7.95. 1978. Berkley/Putnam.

Here's a first novel, but it does not come from an inexperienced writer: Turner has previously published six volumes of poetry, one of translation, and one of criticism (*Shakespeare and the Nature of Time*). His novel is a very unusual one which shows flashes of beauty and creativity alternating with clots of artiness and self-indulgence.

The basic notion of the book is itself most intriguing. Turner starts with a brief, rather hard-edged sequence in the fairly near future, when Mars has been colonized to a limited extent and workers are performing heroic deeds to terraform the planet so it may become a comfortable home rather than a hostile environment.

In this context an author sets out to write a romantic adventure novel set in the remote future of Mars—as seen from the viewpoint of the age of terraforming, rather than our own. In other words, Turner is attempting to write a science fiction novel as it would be written centuries hence, by the inhabitants of Mars! It's a breathtaking undertaking, and while the result is far from an unqualified success, it's still a considerable achievement.

The main sequence of *A Double Shadow* takes place in a remote time when Mars is not merely comfortable but so thoroughly settled and arranged that human society has moved into an era of rococo elegance and decadence. The people move through their days and nights in the fashion that we used to ascribe to a class known as "the idle rich." There is no need to concern oneself with substance, for all substantial problems have been solved. Therefore, all effort is bent to style and dalliance.

Competition is fierce, but is a matter of prestige rather than one of power or wealth. It's something like opening night at the opera, when all of the wealthiest society matrons turn out decked to the nines, competing to see whose new gown, jewels, or coiffure draws the most eyes, elicits the most gasps, and is most discussed in the society columns of the following day's newspapers.

As in such a decadent society, much

energy is devoted to coupling games and all of the attendent ploys and maneuvers that these entail. On this future Mars the complexities of sex are further complicated by the existence of recognized androgynes. There is the further complication of the presence of gods and goddesses—a strange touch of poetic fantasy and archaism, this; these are not "the gods of Mars" as in Edgar Rice Burroughs, but the literal beings of classic myth. In so sexually-obsessed a society as Turner's, Venus, the goddess of love, plays a strange and ambiguously passionate hand in human affairs. The notion of goddesses living at Nix Olympica (itself a nice conceit), placing telephone calls and using bathrooms, is very reminiscent of Zelazny's *Lord of Light*. And *A Double Shadow* shows other influences: Delany, Vance, and most emphatically Moorcock. There's even a touch of George du Maurier's old novel *The Martian*. But Turner makes these diverse materials wholly his own.

Where Turner fails is in those moments when he forgets to keep the spotlight focused on his characters and his story, and turns it upon himself. Every now and then he insists on stepping onto the stage (or having his near-future-Mars-colonist do so for him), reminding the reader that this is a novel, and explaining the esthetic point of whatever he's doing at the moment. At best this interrupts the mood and tempo of the novel; at worst it represents an egotistical annoyance.

There's an entire chapter (pp. 137-147) in which Turner stops the novel and (through a mouthpiece-character) lectures the reader on the nature of art. This is dull, intrusive, and grossly egotistical—Turner even lists memorable poets of the past and coyly includes himself in the foll.

Boo! Hiss!

Still, things start rolling again, and with a convoluted series of detours, side-trails and byways, the book moves inexorably to its end, a protracted aerial duel above a sort of Martian Grand Canyon.

I don't think that anyone will find *A Double Shadow* a wholly satisfying book, but I must praise Turner for his creativity and his courage. There's never before been anything quite like this book in science fiction, despite its visible derivations; it's a refreshing experience to read *A Double Shadow*, a mixture of delights and annoyances that works out, on balance, to delight far more often than it annoys.

Turner deserves credit for the book; Berkley/Putnam deserves similar praise for having the perception and courage to bring out so unusual a first novel. I recommend the book to those readers who seek more in their reading than simple adventure and escapism, and I hope that Turner will give us another soon. ■

HASAN, by Piers Anthony. 190 pp. $3.95. 1977. Borgo Press (P.O. Box 5789, Van Nuys CA 91409).

This fantasy novel first appeared in *Fantastic*, where it was serialized in 1969. I was vaguely aware of it at the time but happened not to read it, and when the book never appeared separately I gradually forgot about it, until Robert Reginald's Borgo Press brought out this very handsome trade paperback edition.

Borgo generally issues scholarly monographs—their output of fiction has been very limited, and the Anthony book was a bit of a surprise. Upon reading, it turns out to be a most delightful fantasy, of the Arabian Nights variety, and I am all the more puzzled at the book's never having found a home with some standard commercial publisher. Especially in recent years, with the boom in fantasy and the issuance (or reissuance) of so much drab and derivative material, it's astonishing that a deftly-executed and off-beat effort like *Hasan* isn't in every bookstore that carries any fantasy at all.

The ingredients are not all that unfamiliar, of course—we have the innocent youngster apprenticed to a metal-craftsman in the bazaar, his scolding but well-intentioned mother, the wicked foreign magician, and the wondrous travels upon which the boy is launched. There are beautiful maidens, a giant roc, a lovely bird-girl, and the expected full compliment of djinni, monsters and afrits, and of course the inevitable happy ending.

I suppose anybody who ever saw *The Thief of Bagdad* as a kid is irresistably imprinted and a hopeless sucker for this kind of yarn; at least, I found myself tumbling helplessly into it, and absolutely wallowing in pleasure, and—rarity of rarities, for this reader at least—wishing that the book would go on after it ended.

The Borgo Press edition is further enhanced by a breathtakingly gorgeous, delicately-executed, wraparound cover illustration by George Barr, and a number of interior illustrations. The only detraction is a scholarly afterword provided by Richard Mathews. This is your typical turgid academic symbolic analysis and "Appreciation," in which Mathews explains to us the "real" meaning of the book. I.e., as Hasan proceeds through his adventures, when he climbs a mountain he is rising in moral awareness and spirit, when he descends to earth he is descending metaphorically as well, and when a volcano erupts at the climax of the book Anthony is symbolically destroying the natural order by elevating the base and lowering the elevated.

Cow-pies, Mathews!

When Hasan climbs a mountain, he's climbing a mountain. When he comes back down on the other side, that's because that's what you *do* after you climb a mountain. And when that volcano goes off it's because the dramatic structure of the novel was set up that way, it's one hell of a bravura show and a grand climax to a fine, lightweight fantasy.

Three cheers for Piers Anthony, for writing this fine bit of entertainment. And three more apiece for Ted White for running it originally in *Fantastic*, and for Robert Reginald for bringing it out from Borgo Press. If you're sick of all the pseudo-Tolkien and pseudo-Howard fantasies that have been inflicted on readers these past few years, pick up *Hasan* and get ready for some hours of pure reading pleasure! ■

MARIE LAVEAU, by Francine Prose. 342 pp. $8.95. Berkley/Putnam. 1977 (Paperback edition: Berkley Medallion, 1978).

For openers, a personal note: roughly ten years ago I was researching a story that eventuated in a novel published just this year as *Space War Blues*. One aspect of the book is a revival, in the future, of voodoo rites as a cover for a kind of zombie-soldier project. In the course of researching voodoo I learned a fair amount about Marie Laveau, a creole woman who reigned as the voodoo queen of New Orleans in the first half of the eighteenth century.

She was a fascinating woman.

Francine Prose has written a book about her, and it has been published as a novel. I think this designation is a problem—the book attracted little notice in its hardcover edition but now that it's available in paperback I hope that more people read it, as it has considerable merit.

The author's research is excellent, her writing in beautiful, and she makes her characters vibrate with a dark flame that is altogether appropriate to the subject. The book's single major flaw is that it's really a novelized biography rather than a real novel. As a biography, it takes its structure from Marie's life, following her from her birth through her school days, her years as a belle of old New Orleans' unique multiracial society, her apprenticeship in the voodoo arts, her rise to supremacy and her long reign as voodoo queen.

As Marie herself emerges as a complex and thoroughly real person, so do various others, most notably her three mentors, the Christian Father Antoine and the voodoo Marie Saloppe and the astonishing figure of Doctor John (namesake of the contemporary New

Orleans-based musician).

Strictly speaking the book is a fantasy, for various voodoo deities and supernatural powers are treated as literally real; whether Francine Prose "really" believes in such things, or whether she decided as a literary device merely to assume so for the purposes of the book, I do not know. (In similar fashion, James Blish once remarked that he was personally a religious skeptic, but for the purpose of writing books like *A Case of Conscience, Black Easter* and the like, he "became" a Roman Catholic—reverting to his customary skepticism as soon as the book was done.)

But whether True Believer or Mere Artificer, Francine Prose manages to invest such sequences as Marie's magical duel with her mentor Doctor John, and a later scene involving a meeting after death, with overwhelming power, conviction and beauty.

The book's only major shortcoming is its structure. Not truly a novel, it lacks the focus of a novel. Everything does *not* relate to and contribute to a central problem or struggle; the only "beginning, middle and end" in the book are Marie's own birth, life and death. In a biography, of course, this would have been entirely appropriate. Life doesn't have all of the neat little dramatic unities of fiction.

But real life, with its sloppy tendency to present us with uncounted problems, profound and trivial, some of which are clearly resolved, others of which just vaguely fizzle out, and still others of which are still hanging around when we die, makes poor art. The slice-of-life fiction of the 1930s and 40s made its point and then faded away for the very reason that, while it *was* certainly true-to-life, it didn't make satisfying story-telling.

I think if you read *Marie Laveau* with the advance knowledge that it doesn't have the dramatic unity of a proper novel, but is in reality a biography of a fascinating figure of "non-fiction fantasy" (that phrase courtesy of Lin Carter), you'll find it an excellently rendered and most rewarding book. At least, I did. ■

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY, compiled by Donald H. Tuck. Volume II. 244 + vi pp. $25. 1978. Advent: Publishers, P.O. Box A3228, Chicago IL 60690.

Here is the long-awaited second volume of Donald Tuck's magnificent encyclopedia, and I think that of all the reference works that have appeared in recent years, dealing with science fiction, this has to be rated as the very best.

Tuck is a lifelong devotee of science fiction, and from his home in Tasmania he has devoted decades to the slowly evolving encyclopedia, issuing it first as a rough mimeographed "Handbook," later expanding it to a projected three volumes plus supplements, all of these planned for issuance by Advent.

The first two volumes are devoted to "Who's Who" entries; Volume I, which appeared several years ago, covers A-L; Volume II, M-Z. The entries are thoroughly researched, and provide invaluable biographical and bibliographical information about everyone in the field from Anthony Abbot to Stanley Zuber. More to the point, Tuck covers just about every science fiction author and editor from the earliest surviving times up through his cut-off date of 1968.

Of course the amount of detail that Tuck pays to different personalities varies greatly—partially, I'm certain, because the amount of available information varies, and partially, I surmise, because he simply considers some figures as more worthy of space than others. Thus, two author-editors in the "W" section, Don Wollheim and Farnsworth Wright.

Wollheim has of course had a long and influential career in science fiction, as fan, author, editor, and most recently publisher. Tuck offers a single long paragraph of biography and evaluation, then almost two full pages (and these are *big*, double-column pages) of bibliography, dealing with Wollheim's magazine stories briefly, then his books, and finally his anthologies, listing not only

every edition but the complete contents of each anthology. I don't know how many readers really will *care* about the title and author of each story in some minor anthology that Wollheim put together in 1959. But for those who do care, here's the info.

Wright, on the other hand, receives a single, rather short paragraph of biography and no bibliography at all. Yet, in my opinion, he was one of the most important (and most overlooked) editors in the history of fantastic literature. He took over *Weird Tales* from Edwin Baird in that magazine's second year of publication, and guided it through fifteen years of publishing an astonishing amount of memorable fantasy and science fiction.

But I'm quibbling.

The point here is that we have here in two volumes the most comprehensive reference work on the field of science fiction and fantasy as yet published.

And while volumes I and II are devoted to personal listings, I eagerly await volume III, which is to contain histories of the science fiction magazines and similar information. Since Tuck will be talking about editors and publishers, I hope that he will devote an appropriate amount of space to SF *book* publishers as well.

And then there will need to be those supplements. A major problem with the two volumes in print, is the cutoff date of 1968. I don't say this in any condemnatory sense—there *had* to be a cutoff date or the books could never have been published. But the fact that the information in the books is ten years old cries out for supplements. Perhaps there could be a ten-year supplement to bring the books up to 1978, and then annuals until enough time has elapsed to justify a general revision of the encyclopedia itself, incorporating ten or fifteen or twenty years' worth of updating material.

I don't know if Tuck will be willing or able to undertake this task, or whether Advent will be in a position to back it. I certainly hope so, though. Meanwhile, it seems to me that the two volumes presently available should be absolutely indispensible for any institutional library that claims to provide a research facility in science fiction. That's simply all there is to it: without these books, any such library is fatally flawed.

As for individual collectors, scholars, researchers or fans, $50 for the two-volume set must represent quite a wallop. If the books are available through a library, you may wish to use that money for something else, like buying science fiction books instead of buying books *about* science fiction. But anyone who can afford the cost will be making a good investment in these books. ■

Robert Weinberg has been mentioned in these columns previously. He has done considerable writing about the pulps.

Our immediate concern, however, is with his series of facsimiles and compilations from the pulps, and his reference works, issued in association with his wife Phyllis Weinberg.

In the first category are facsimiles of complete issues or selections from *The Green Lama* (by Kendall Foster Crossen), *Wu Fang* (by Robert J. Hogan), *The Octopus* (by Norvell Page), *The Scorpion* (also by Page), *Dr. Yen Sin* (by Donald E. Keyhoe), and *The Whisperer* (by "Clifford Goodrich"). Weinberg's compilations include a selection from the *"Spicy's"*, *The Bride of Osiris* (a sort of do-it-yourself collection of yarns by Otis Adelbert Kline), and a series called *Lost Fantasies*, largely though not entirely drawn from the pages of *Weird Tales*, and including works by Munn, Whitehead, Pendarves, Howard, Long, Hamilton, Worrell, and others.

Finally, Weinberg has issued *Gangland's Doom* by Frank Eisgruber Jr., a 64-page guidebook to *The Shadow* complete with reproduced covers, and *The Weird Tales Collector No. 1*, the first number of a periodical devoted to *Weird Tales* esoterica of all sorts, memoirs by surviving contributors, checklists, indices and the like.

Just a word about these widely varied publications. They are usually produced in limited editions that sell slowly, thereby placing their publishers under severe financial strain. Their profit-loss position may be okay and the editions *will* sell out in time, but right *now* all their capital is tied up in inventory and they're bled for cash. As a consequence, many such projects wind up on the rocks.

Of course, once the facsimiles are out-of-print, their prices rapidly escalate to the point where they're sometimes nearly as expensive as the publications of which they are facsimiles!

Okay. If you are interested in this kind of publication, don't wait until it's o. p. and you have to pay a premium price for a used copy. Buy the books *now*, either from a dealer or directly from the publisher. Address:

Robert & Phyllis Weinberg
10606 S. Central Park
Chicago, Illinois 60655

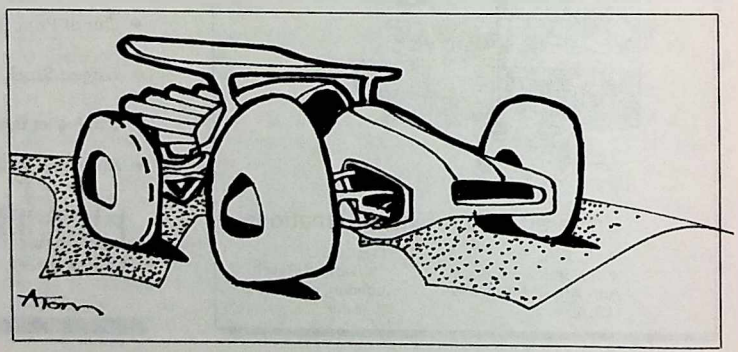
A similar series of pulp facsimiles come from Odyssey Publications, under the joint editorship of William Desmond, Diane Howard, John Howard, and Robert Wiener. To date I have seen eight facsimiles from Odyssey: *Spicy Adventure*, *O'Leary's War Birds*, the legendary *Oriental Stories* featuring the first published Margaret Brundage cover, the scarce *Golden Fleece*, the almost-never-seen Tarzan imitation *Ka-Zar*, *Strange Tales*, *Spicy Mystery* and *Mystery Adventure*.

The lineup of authors in these magazines reads like a pulp hall of fame: Price, Empey, Kline, Keller, Quick, Howard, Bedford-Jones, Quinn, Williamson, Cave, C. A. Smith, Ernst, Hamilton, Bellem, Tooker, Hubbard... ... and also some intriguingly obscure names: Lew Merrill? Clive Trent? Hung Long Tom??? Clyde B. Clason? Anatole Feldman? Morgan Lafay?

Anatole Feldman??? Morgan Lafay???

A lot of this stuff is hard to take seriously, and some of it is plain hard to take—tiresome hack stuff ground out by the yard. But other stories still retain some of the verve and zing that they had forty years ago, and others are of at least historical interest. These are beautiful little facsimile books, bound in stiff pictorial wraps and printed on fine paper. There *is* one word of warning, however. I have heard that the Odyssey series has been lax (to say the least) in seeking out surviving authors and/or heirs for the payment of royalties. Much of the material here is in public domain, of course, so no one has committed a crime. But it seems to me a matter of ethics to pay for material used—especially when the author is still alive. I have written to the Odyssey staff and inquired as to their policy in the matter, but have received no reply. Address:

Odyssey Publications
P. O. Box 71
Melrose Highlands, Massachusetts
02177



BRIEFLY NOTED:

Michael Moorcock has been an astonishingly prolific and astonishingly versatile writer of fantasy and science fiction for the past twenty years or more. *Sojan* is a collection of some of his earliest professional writings; the title character is a Conan-type about whom Moorcocc began writing at the age of 16.

The adventures of Sojan appeared in a British comic book of which Moorcock was editor in the late 1950s; they have been gathered and issued in an attractive trade-format paperback by Savoy Books, 3 Whittle Street, Tib Street, Manchester, England. I doubt that you'll find this book in any general bookstores, but a number of science fiction specialty shops have imported copies into this country.

Of course the stories are totally shallow and crudely written, but it's interesting to see what Moorcock was doing at an early age. There are also several essays in the book, written *much* later, discussing Moorcock's experiences both with the development of his characters Elric and Jerry Cornelius, and with the editing and publishing of *New Worlds* magazine. ■

Otto Penzler's *The Mysterious Press* has issued *Asimov's Sherlockian Limericks*, 66 pages, for $7.50. There's a *lovely* frontispiece, in color, by Gahan Wilson. Unfortunately, I can't say much good about the limericks: they're not very good examples of the form, in terms of scansion or rhyme; they're not very funny; and they're not particularly interesting Sherlockiana.

But I know there are people who collect Asimov books, and if you are one such, you'll need this. (Box 334, East Station, Yonkers NY 10704). ■

When Tom Reamy died last year, he'd completed two drafts of his first science fiction novel, *Blind Voices*. Reamy had sent the manuscript to his agent, she had delivered it to his editor Dave Hartwell, and the book is here now from Berkley/Putnam ($8.95).

I think it could have used some more work, but I respect Hartwell's decision to publish it as Reamy sent it in, rather than turn it over to someone else to tinker with. It reads a lot like a cross between Ray Bradbury and Charles Finney. The setting is a sunny Kansas town one summer shortly before the Great Depression. Everybody is incredibly healthy and normal and sunshiney until a travelling Wonder Show comes to town, featuring all sorts of odd freaks. And then. . . .

It isn't awfully original, but it's done with skill. Reamy had a real talent, and his sudden death was a real loss. There'll never be another novel from him; read this one and think about where he might have gone! ■

Gerry de la Ree (7 Cedarwood Lane, Saddle River, NJ 07458) has issued a number of lovely SF and fantasy art books. His earlier Edd Cartier volume may still be available; if so, *definitely* pick it up. His latest is *Fantasy by Fabian* ($15) and it is a lovely, large-sized book.

Fabian's style is rather old-fashioned and reminiscent of some pulp illustrators; he is unquestionably influenced by the late Virgil Finlay and the present book contains a graphic tribute to Finlay, among other works. There are a number of theme sections in the book, largely reprinted from earlier appearances: a series of nudes based on fantasy stories, a set of illuminated capitals based on themes from Lovecraft, and illustrations of various recent stories.

I think my favorite in the book is a full-page illustration from "The Sleeping Beast," by Chandler. A great, dark, brooding, massive spaceship hangs in darkness, waiting. . . .

Fabian's work is not what one would call fine art—it's illustration, pure and simple. But it bears looking at, it holds up, evokes moods and scenes and characters. Of its type, it's fine. ■

Howard DeVore, longtime SF fan and bookman, has recently got out new editions of two valuable reference works, *A History of the Hugo, Nebula, and International Fantasy Awards*, by Don Franson and himself, and *Science Fiction and Fantasy Pseudonyms* by Barry McGhan. The titles are pretty indicative of the contents. The awards book lists the winners of all categories for all the years these three series have existed: the IFA's, 1951-57; Hugo's, 1953, 1955 - date; Nebula's, 1965 - date. Information on nominees and runners-up is given where available. There is also an excellent index . . . that sometimes gives you more information than you expect. I couldn't resist looking myself up, and discovered that I've been nominated for one or another award (Nebula or Hugo—the IFA's were too early for me) *nine times!* And the only time I ever won one was as a fan.

McGhan's book on pseudonyms will tell you hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of who's *really* who in science fiction. You can look up the pseudonym to find the real person, or vice versa. Grand fun for the browser, and a valuable reference for the researcher.

DeVore keeps getting out updated and expanded versions of these two books every few years. He's certainly due our gratitude—if for no other reason than the astonishingly low prices he charges for them. ($3 for the awards book, $2 for the pseudonyms book, from 4705 Weddel St., Dearborn, Michigan 48125). ■

The name of Robert E. Howard keeps coming up in this column and regular readers know by now that I am not a fanatical admirer of Howard's most famous creation, Conan the Barbarian. But Howard did a lot of other work, some of which I like a lot. I think his western tall tales (the Breckinridge Elkins stories) are marvelous; I enjoy his tribute to Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu, *Skull-Face*, and had a grand time "collaborating" with Howard on a sequel to that yarn, published a while ago by Fax and paperbacked by Berkley. ■

And I think the weird adventures of Solomon Kane, Howard's "dour puritan" swordsman, occupy a unique spot in the annals of fantasy. Donald Grant (West Kingston, Rhode Island 03892) gathered these and issued them in a modest hardbound volume ten years ago. He has brought out a new edition of the book, *Red Shadows*, with newly set type and extensive illustrations by Jeff Jones—endpapers and wraparound jacket as well as color plates. At $20 it's a bit of an investment, but still a must for the Howard collector, and definitely worthy of its price. ■

Malcolm Willits of Collectors Book Store, 6763 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood CA 90028, has got out two booklets to accompany film series—one on science fiction, one on fantasy. They're very handsomely produced little pamphlets (roughly 6.5" x 3.5") with movie stills and commentary, introductions by George Pal and Ray Harryhausen.

They come with eight official "first day of cover" envelopes, bearing special indicia of SF and fantasy film stills, and carrying the Postal Service's special commemorative stamp marked "50th Anniversary Year of Talking Pictures." The cancellation is dated October 6, 1977, Hollywood.

You can order the complete sets—both booklets and a total of eight "cover" envelopes with stamps and cancellations—for $17.50. Now, I don't really know anything about stamp collecting or stamp-collectors' values, so I don't know whether that $17.50 is a tremendous bargain, an outrageous rip-off, or a perfectly standard price for such a package. Stamp collectors will have to form their own judgments (and they'll certainly be more valid than mine would have been).

They *are* very nice little booklets, and the envelopes look like nice collector's items. You folks take it from there, hey?

(Willets also tells me that the sets are limited to 3000 and are numbered.) □■

—Dick Lupoff

Stephen Goldin
13175½ Bromont Avenue
Sylmar, California 91342

In both the Summer-Fall and the Winter '77-78 issues, Dick Lupoff takes some swipes at the way Pyramid (now Jove) is marketing the Family d'Alembert series. I have no wish to get into any feuds with Dick, but I would like to clarify a few points.

I personally have no control over the billing. (I suppose I should consider myself fortunate that my name is on there at all.) Since, as we all know, us writers are creatures with enormous egos, my own preference would be to have my name writ large across the cover, with perhaps a passing reference to the late Dr. Smith. His name, however, does sell more books—and that's the business Jove is in. (I'm working on becoming as famous as he is, but it may take me a little while yet.)

Is the practice justified? In the first book, at least, unquestionably so. That one is a collaboration according to most senses of the word. Smith wrote the original novella; the entire plot, the background universe, the history, the situations and most of the characters are his; I fleshed out the novella and brought it up to full novel size, expanding in spots where Smith himself was sketchy. *Imperial Stars* may be the work of two people, but Smith's was the guiding hand.

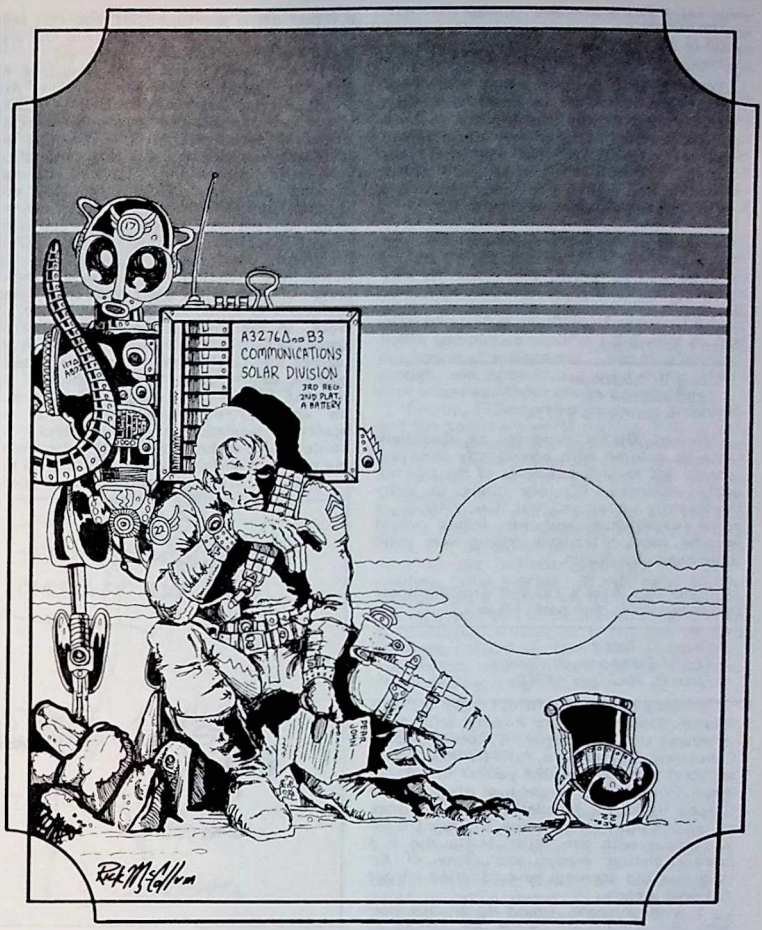
The gray area comes when we begin discussing the subsequent books in the series. Smith left behind a reasonably detailed history of his universe and some notes on the characterizations, but no further plot outlines; I've been working entirely on my own there. Is it fair to keep his name on the books? (As a technical point, nowhere does it say "by" E.E. Smith, except in the phrase "created by." The covers merely list "E.E. 'Doc' Smith with Stephen Goldin." The "by" may be implied as hell, but nowhere does it *say* he wrote those books.) Do I hear cries of "Nitpicking! "?

I think it's at least reasonable that his name should be there. The reader familiar with his work knows that it is associated with a certain type of adventurous story—and that is what I've been trying to do, to keep the flavor of his stories. I make no attempt to copy his writing style—if I tried, it would probably end up looking like bad parody, and that is not the intent. The stories I tell within the Family d'Alembert series are markedly different than the stories I write on my own. In that sense, at least, Smith's name on the cover tells the reader he is not getting straight, unadulterated Goldin. (Whether or not that's a virtue is up to individual tastes.)

As to whether readers will be disappointed that they're not getting pure unadulterated Smith—well, as Lupoff said, that's for individuals to decide. I got one letter from a reader in England who thought I was betraying almost everything Smith stood for, and who told me so at great length. Other people seem to like what I'm doing. The editors at Jove, at least, are happy enough with it that they want me to continue writing them. Personally, if there is any question of cheating, I think that any single reader can be cheated only once. If he picks up one of the books from #2 on and doesn't like it, he won't buy any more. If he does like it, then what does it really matter whose name is on the cover?

And speaking of covers, I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize to everyone for the monstrosity that Jove has perpetrated on the cover of #5, *Appointment at Bloodstar*. After four beautiful George Barr covers, they switched, for no apparent reason, to an artist named Stanislaw Fernandes, who was apparently a first-year dropout from a third-rate art school. I had no say in that decision, but I had plenty to say about it after the fact.

Seriously—if any readers do feel cheated about the series, I'd like to know about it.



Random Factors LETTERS

Jack Gaughan
P.O. Box 241
Rifton, New York 12471

Just because I moved a little North of the streetsfull of garbage bags, loose detritus, pimps, prostitutes and dog dung doesn't mean I'm "retired." I may have *retreated* from the uncivilized pressures and conditions of that center of civilization but I'm far from retired. Would to god I COULD retire. I'd like to paint for me instead of Mammon and his attendant IRS someday. Would you call designing, art directing and single-handedly pasting up every blankin' word in *Cosmos* retiring? Well?

I may have retired (I still prefer retreated) from all those public appearances and pleasant little speeches but that was because I was beginning to think myself some sort of small potatoes celebrity and was neglecting my work. Nosir! I'm very much alive and tho I'm not working as much or as often as I like I'm still working at it and one of these days I'll get it right.

You city chaps think anyone who moves to the outskirts has fallen off the edge of the world.

[Gee, Jack, I was just joking. Though there is a pretty steep drop off the edge of Washington Heights . . . Okay, this is the true story: Jack moved up to Rifton, a hole-in-the-wall near Kingston, NY, so he could paint in peace, without pollution or threat of imminent Fanoclast meeting to disturb him. There, linked by direct phone to the offices of the media-capital's leading art directors, he lives an idyllic life, just steps away from the volunteer fire department and O'Connor's bar.]

Jim Huang
66 N. Virginia Ct.
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

While I find nothing wrong with your asking Vincent DiFate to keep his column short, he's got to stop thinking that he can't say what's on his mind as well as he seems to think we expect. He can. "Sketches" has become one of the most consistently interesting and readable features. DiFate is a fine writer, as well as an excellent artist.

[The truth of the matter was that although Harlan gave me a word-count for his articles of some 12,000 words, they came to only about 10,000—and plans for a very tight issue suddenly had a two page hole in them. I keep telling Vinnie he's a good writer, but the guy doesn't believe me.]

Craig W. Anderson
1890 McPeak Ct.
Tracy, California 95376

Vincent DiFate produces an absolutely fantastic column with one slightly annoying aspect: not enough examples of the artwork being discussed. It's one thing to write intelligently about art, but it is, after all, a visual experience and his points would become more effectively telling were there more examples shown.

[I hope this issue's column provides some better examples than past columns.]

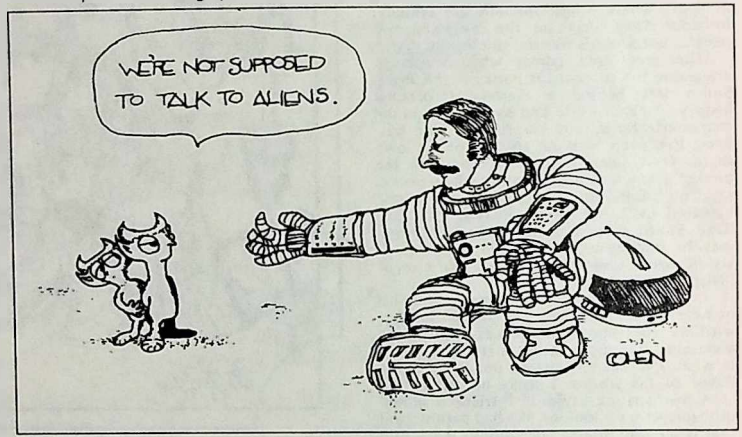
Gregg T. Trend
16594 Edinborough Road
Detroit, Michigan 48219

Working in a related field, I enjoy DiFate's column. One of Richard Powers' influences, as strong as Yves Tanguy, is Roberto *Matta* Echuarren, Chilean-born, Paris-trained, former architect turned surrealist painter in '38-'40. When Powers had a one-man show at the Chicon III in '62, he admitted this influence to me in a short conversation. I'm sure DiFate is familiar with this artist. Matta also is a science fiction reader and many of his paintings and drawings have admitted science fictional themes.

I wish someone would do an interview with Ed Emshwiller, while not strong an influence on any of today's illustrators—perhaps, for having been relatively inactive in the field for more than ten years—his views would be interesting, explaining, I would hope, why he turned more and more to film.

I'm sorry, but I see nothing remarkable in James Bama's work. Many illustrators (particularly in advertising, where time is at an even greater premium than editorial illustration) have used photo references. Access to a "Lazy-Lucy" or similar device can produce photo-realism of any degree. And, the imitation of photographic techniques, while sometimes high craft, is rarely good illustration. If Bama had to spend any great deal of time painting or drawing those Doc Savage covers or the Western or mystery covers he did, he would have spent his time more profitably, elsewhere in advertising. However, I must confess, that as a young teenage art student I was fascinated with this sort of thing, 'til a trip to a commercial art studio faded that illusion. Norman Rockwell used a similar method for the last forty years (or fifty—I forget when he switched from live models to photos—in the '50's he actually admitted to tracing photographic images because of his work-load.) I prefer those illustrators who appear to work strictly from their imagination, like Powers and the Dillons. Since most readers of SF are "Objective" in their general philosophy (tho, those preferring pure fantasy seem to like Frazetta, who derives *his* style from Pyle, Wyeth (N.C.), and that school: funny, Frazetta imitators are imitating a style twice removed), hence prefer a rather literal approach. But who ever said they could appreciate or understand fine art, much less good illustration and design?

There haven't been any innovations in editorial illustration since the heyday of Art Deco; all that has been repeated in recent years. Even the so-called "new-style" work of Bob Peak, Bob Potter, etc., in the early- to mid-'50's, was merely a slicked up, simplified version of Impressionist and Art Nouveau drawing and watercolor techniques, and Oriental and photo-composition influenced design approaches. I'm sure DiFate knows all this. I hope he doesn't think that SF/F illustrators are doing anything new or innovative. Bonestell had to use his knowledge of the effect light has on varying surfaces and astronomical data to create his work. In the introduction to *Conquest of Space*, he says that he learned this from an art teacher who taught him to paint reflections in mirrors and textures of materials, and to visualize objects from imaginary angles. But his approach was essentially that of an academic landscape painter influenced by photographic techniques, or rather the resolving power of the camera lens, rather than the human eye. This is highly understandable when you consider the effect of the photograph on human perceptions in a technological society: "Gee, he (she) doesn't look like his (her) picture. That photo doesn't look like you." Etc., *ad nauseum*. No, it looks the way a camera lens (with a certain optical length and resolving power) changes your 3-D self into (onto) a 2-D surface, flattening planes, etc. And that's the problem with working from photographs: they can only be second-hand imitations of the actual thing. I'm glad DiFate has decided to interview Schoenherr, one artist/illustrator attracted to SF who seems to have rejected the photo orientation of most figurative SF illustration. SF seems to attract the mechanical illustrator-type like Mel Hunter, Rick Sternbach, etc., more than the figuratively-oriented, like Michael Whelan or Darrell Sweet, and Barr and Fabian, whose work is rooted in older styles of illustration. The editors of *Ariel* seem to be encouraging some figurative artists, tho about half are comic-book stylists. Ah, well, as in the case of any commercial endeavor, the better talents always end up in the better paying markets or out of editorial illustration and into the galleries.



Robert Bloch
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So many items deserve comment, but I suspect Uncle Harlan's remarks to the SFWA will draw the most response. As far as I'm concerned, everything he says is true (except the amount I got for *Psycho*, though he's not that far off) and I agree with all his conclusions. The spectacle of SFWA abolishing a drama award in a year which brought us *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters* is simply ludicrous.

Especially so when, as usual, such awards will by happily bestowed for pretentious little bits of artsy-craftsy "speculative writing," which will be dutifully printed in the Nebula Awards collection and then—in most instances—disappear forever. The notion that writing for films or TV or radio is "demeaning" is absurd when it comes from people who have no qualms writing comics or porn to augment their incomes, as many SFWA members have done and/or still do. While I dearly love a large number of my colleagues, I must sorrowfully conclude that their thumbs-down vote on drama awards is inspired by sour grapes.

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After reading Harlan Ellison's SFWA resignation speech I almost wished that this issue of ALGOL had been lost. Harlan Ellison was for many years a voice of reason in a land of those who would not hear. Granted that not every writer can make the transition from novelist to screenwriter but not to make the attempt is the mark of the imbecile. The financial freedom that could result from writing for television and/or movies would give the novelist the literary freedom to write only what he wants, not writing for money but for the best reasons—to entertain, to provoke, to imagine, to teach and so many others. But Harlan Ellison is right in that the SFWA is a group still living in the past; isn't it better to write for money to live on and reap the great financial rewards bestowed by television and the movies in order to devote the rest of your time to writing what you want to write? It is certainly better to write one good novel a year than to bang out three trashy ones merely for survival. Not only would this improve the quality of novels but if some of science fiction's greatest writers started writing for the screen it could only lead to an improvement of the quality of what we see on television or in the movies. Or are science fiction's leading writers content to let their art form be judged by the standard of "shit like *Man from Atlantis*" to quote Harlan. I only hope that Harlan's resignation will jolt some of the members of SFWA out of their apathy towards screenwriting in particular and television and movies as a market for their works in general. Please God that they come to their senses in my lifetime

for I am eternally tired of poor science fiction in the visual media.

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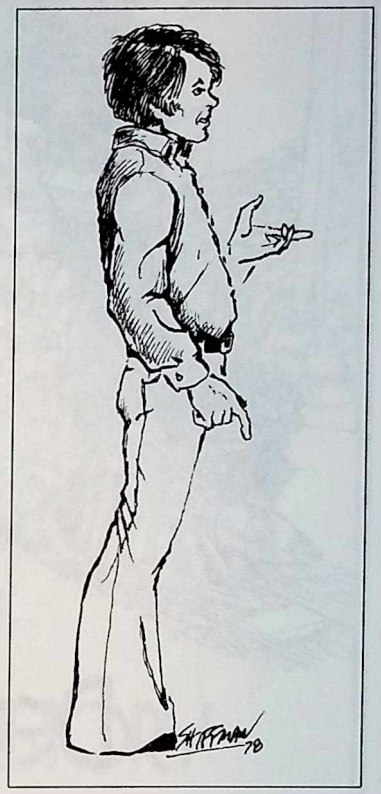
Turn Derek Carter loose on the GPO, and ask him to find out what they're doing with all the undelivered mail from before World War One—since they can't destroy it they must hide it in some out of the way place. Carter's view of the Bumavenger incident was priceless. He captured perfectly the atmosphere of dedicated chaos that flows through any military organization. As someone who has done a lot of research into the early days of the Canadian Navy, I appreciated the utterly fantastic illo that Carter drew, since it placed the period and the utter frustration of the project into an easy to appreciate form. The cross between Victorian superstructure and the rocket shaped airships perched high above the paddle wheel was super. More of his lesser known details in Canadian History please!

Harlan Ellison's speech excited me as well. Although I often violently disagree with what he has to say, I think his resignation speech captured perfectly the state that SF is in compared to the Hollywood slicks. Not everyone who writes for TV and movies is prepared to handle the pressure that a producer, desperate for renewal or a pilot concept can exert. I first heard about the speech in Westercon 30's bar, where several fan and pro types were discussing the event. Most of them had had some contact with the industries concerned, and they agreed with Ellison, telling many a sad tale about the rapacious Hollywood company versus the innocent SF author. A lot of people are going to get angry at Ellison, but I think that shorn of the usual comments and remarks that he puts into every speech (such as the remarks about cons being Valhalla to Certain People because "terminal acne cases come and stroke you") lays it on the line bluntly. SF sells well, and unless SF writers and interested people on our side of the fence start to wisen up, the industry writers with no sense of what SF is and isn't will destroy the TV/movie side of the genre. How many more *Damnation Alley*'s can SF afford?

Darrell Schweitzer seems to have stirred up almost as much heat as Ellison with his comments on Gernsback. I spent a weekend in the deepest levels of the University Library reading some of the things he mentioned in the article. At the same time, I looked at what the magazines then were publishing as well. I think that Darrell has some good points, but he ignored the most important one in my mind. Gernsback, for all the faults that may be laid at his door did regularly publish SF in a form that most people could afford to buy. Certainly a lot of it was of lower quality, but then so were his rates, and he did pub some damn good stuff too. Like Malcolm Willits, I don't mind having a hero with clay feet, because this particular hero made SF available and inspired a lot of people to write it as well as reading.

The interview with Dickson was good, and I enjoyed it very much. But, like Susan Wood's column and DiFate's column it was too short. When Harlan arrives he seems to overwhelm almost everything—and three of his pieces in a row can exhaust almost anyone. Still, I would have liked to hear a little more about Dickson's conception of female characterizations.

Chandler's article left me scratching mentally at the end. He covered his early period very nicely, and I could see where much of his Rim Runners material was drawn from, but his years as a captain-writer seem painfully thin. Did you edit or was this all he wrote? Pohlemic was much more substantial, and very practical. His comments about limiting the size of a SF reading list were very appreciated, as a few years ago I was forced to race through more than twenty novels and anthologies in less than four months. If you want to delicately sample the ideas of any author and think about them a while, you just can't equate pages read with understanding.



Doug Barbour
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A. Bertram Chandler's reminiscences recreate a time of his personal past and most of his readers' historical past as exotic, today, I suspect, as the Rim World fantasy-futures he's written about. The Gordon Dickson interview was meaty and far more interesting than most such because Sandra Miesel so obviously knew the man's work and had thought about it. Unlike some interviewers Sandra had done her homework; that she's also opinionated in fact makes for a far more interesting *conversation* than many of the interviews you've printed achieve. I must say I hope Dickson's wrong about Neo-Puritanism, but the alarming success of the Anita Bryant hordes suggests he's not; alas for us all. I would be interested to see how he managed in the essay form, however; yes, that would be intriguing indeed.

Frederik Pohl continues to harangue us poor englit profs and teachers of SF, but I have to go along with him and applaud the ideas he brings to bear on the three very interesting choices he made for study-texts. On the other hand, can he be sure he's always right in *applying* his categorizations? I think not, tho the categories themselves are marvelous inventions. Sometimes # 1 will be right, for the people making the arguments *and* their listeners. In the case of # 2, it's often *necessary*, *pace* Pohl here and people like Geis all the time, to use special terms because they are the only words which can say clearly what you mean to say: I point to Delany's often stunningly intelligent and provocative essays on SF as an example.

I found Lupoff as much fun as ever; right as rain on *In the Ocean of the Night*; especially intriguing in his comments on why Damon Knight may have gone astray in *The Futurians* (his personal fannish knowledge helping him as the lack of it for most of us hinders), for there is no doubt in my mind that although *The Futurians* is compulsively readable it is also a failure, and a surprisingly badly written book for Knight. On the *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant* Lupoff is interesting because his criticism comes purely from his writerly side, as far as I can determine; after all a lot of readers find the books compulsive reading. I did want to find out how it all worked out; I was disappointed, though, and agree that a good editor would have winnowed those books a great deal.

Finally, Ellison. His speech is a good one, and the points are worth making. Yet, oh yet, I have some doubts I must express from the safety of the sidelines as a non-professional SF writer. It strikes me that so long as Ellison's message is "work for them for a few months for the money then get out and live on the earnings to write the real stuff," he's right. But be careful about giving the movies your already written good SF. The most exciting "new worlds" of SF exist in the *language* of, the style of, the best SF novels, the very substance of the medium that cannot be translated. Written SF is different in kind from visual (film) SF. Don't lose sight of that, you writers who truly care about language. Please don't lose sight of that.

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The word going about nowadays is that Dickson is not really what we had thought him to be and that his attitudes towards life are revealing themselves in surprising guises. The interview constitutes an attempt to support that word. But I think we should all pause to ask ourselves if there actually is something new happening here. What had we thought Dickson to be, anyway? Has he been a hard-line militarist and worshiper of the strong domineering hero? I would hardly dare to claim that I have some special power to read Dickson's mind and tell what he really *means* when he *says* this or that. But the fact has forced itself upon me during the course of my short-so-far life that *most* people who start off glorifying the will to survive, or campaigning for the need to be willing to stand up and fight, or praising people by comparing them to wolves, *usually* end up using phrases like "national security" or "law and order."

Of course, there are many exceptions to this rule. Dickson may be one of these exceptions. I notice that he claims to be writing about "evolution"—his word. We are intended to take this for a new idea. In fact, this notion is quite an old one, and is called Social Darwinism. In its original form, the application of evolutionary theory in the social sciences was a doctrine espoused by such thinkers as Bagehot; it went on to give indirect rise to the theories of Nietzsche and Hitler. Now, the idea that we are evolving towards some higher form of man is not necessarily so horrible in itself, but I find repugnant (as I hope many of your readers do) Dickson's apparent idea that the higher form towards which we are evolving is the ideal man of war.

Enough of carping and criticizing. I was favorably impressed by Dickson's closing statement anent the harm done by the misuse of a great talent. I back him wholeheartedly

on this one. Someone who has the power to write great science fiction and uses it instead to churn out haccerei is harming himself in a definite way, as well as harming us, his potential readers, through depriving us of the chance to read what he otherwise would have produced. And this statement gains particular spice through your having deliberately juxtaposed it with Harlan Ellison's statement of opinion to the contrary. (And you thought we'd all think it just came out that way by accident, dincha, now.)

So now comes time to carp and criticize at Ellison. I'm sure the thought has already crossed the minds of many of your readers that he might have had the time to get *The Last Dangerous Visions* out if he had spent less of it working on Hollywood stuff. So I choose to dwell instead on the image of Ellison luxuriating by his pool on a chaise longue, dressed in Bermuda shorts and aloha shirt, a margarita near his left hand. And all his friends call him Harlie-Baby. All this, says Ellison, can be yours if you write fiction the same way Rockefeller drilled oil wells.

Far-fetched, this image? I don't think so. The entire article is imbued with a worshipful attitude towards just such ideals of modern California-oriented America. Indicative of this attitude is, for example, Ellison's lengthy passage on the virtues of air-conditioning. Out of all possible elements of the current WASP American Way, he had to choose just this one to write about. The air-conditioner, which is one of the two greatest energy-wasters known to man (the other being, of course, the private automobile). Which dooms all of us to spending our summers surrounded by refrigerated air. Which dumps hot air out into the street and has raised the average summer temperature of such cities as New York by uncomfortable degrees. Which has set us all to sniffling and sneezing as a result of constantly passing from sweltering streets to chilly buildings and back again. Which makes us live under the constant threat, and occasional reality, of power failures.

Why does Ellison feel so driven to achieve this sort of life style? Psychoanalysis is risky, but I feel a guess may be hazarded. Although one would not think it from his name, it is a secret to no one that Ellison is Jewish. Being of the same persuasion myself, I know a little bit about where the man came from. Granted, I grew up in Brooklyn, where we used to say that Christians look funny because they have odd-shaped noses. But we all learned just enough about the way things are in other places to enable us to participate to some small degree in the common Jewish experience. Cleveland may not be Dachau or Damascus, but I imagine that Ellison lived through a childhood that was worse than a hell out of Bradbury.

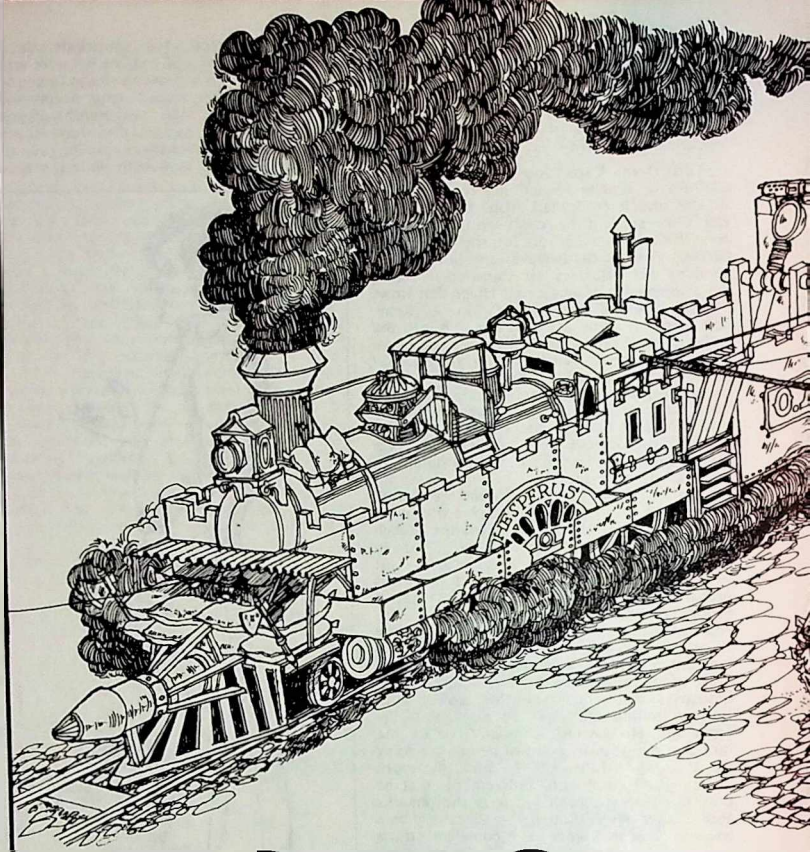
A desire for revenge is entirely natural. And Ellison has certainly accomplished his revenge. He's shown all those WASPs who used to torment him. He's beaten them at their own game. He has more money than most of them. He has beautiful women at his beck and call. He is rich, admired, and respected. He is, in short, a success. He says he's happy.

Who is Harlan Ellison? Lord Byron? Or Sammy Glick?

What makes Harlan run?

[Gee, Steve, living near the Gowanus Canal has obviously caused strange vapors to seep into your brainpan. Harlan doesn't smoke or drink, so you'll have to change that image to one of him sitting there drinking an orange Nehi. And I don't think his friends have called him Harlie-Baby lately, at least not since Harlie was one . . .

I would hardly expect a diatribe against air-conditioning from you. After all, air-conditioning is what keeps one's children from waking you in the middle of the night for a drink of water, and the beneficial heating of the air is but one way in which we stave off the impending ice-age. Why, sir, you attack the very basis by which we keep the glories of western civilization from crumbling beneath the icy onslaught of nature! Surely it were better to take a few discomforts into account than risk the collapse of an entire way of life! That's the trouble with you people living out there in Carroll Gardens— when you don't have the benefits of our glorious civilization you want to make damned sure that no one else does, either. Didn't you learn anything at Queen's College?]



DEREK CARTER'S

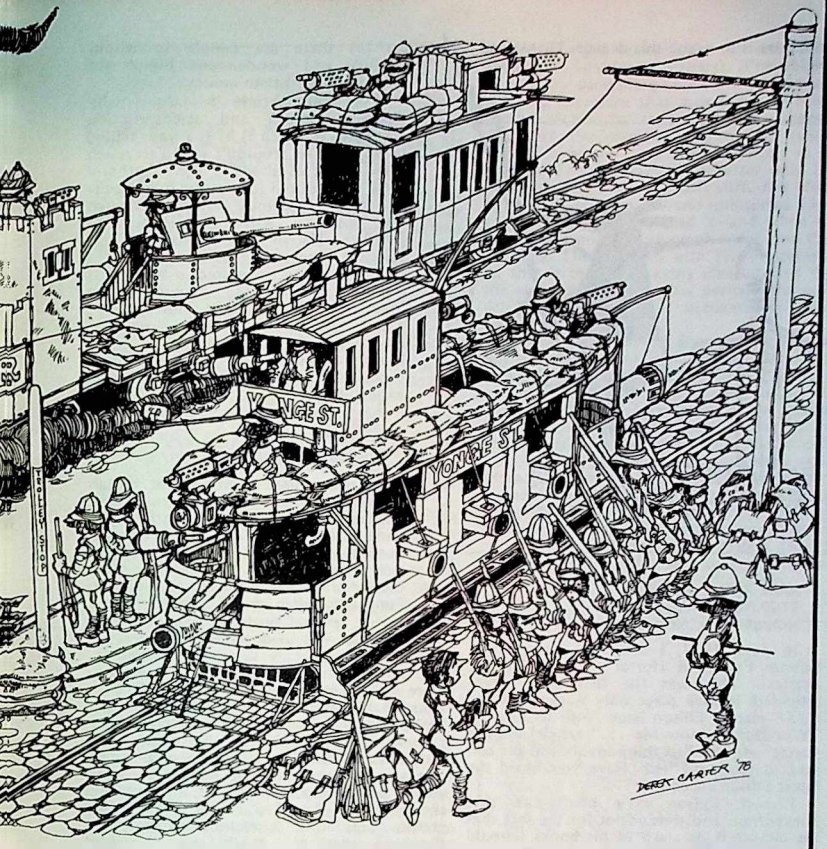
The original Intelligence report on the Boer battleship seeped, or leaked out of Intelligence into the Press with alarming speed. The Boers, who were having a hard enough time finding materials to build cannon and rifles let alone a warship, vehemently denied the rumour. Perversely this denial served only to intensify and expand the tale until it became a story of Boers *invading* Canada.

This rumour took its usual convoluted course before it reached Intelligence who thought it such a grand joke that they shared it with the Military. The Military took it at face value.

As his solution to observing Boer activities on the coast seemed to be proving itself in that it had uncovered the proposed Boer invasion, the designer of the "Bumavenger" decided to turn his mind to solving the problem of a defence system to meet this new Boer threat. He envisioned a flexible system which could attack the Boers no matter where they landed even though he was of the belief that they would land fairly near one of the existing railroad systems.

Thus he suggested that the Government armour a train while those townships that possessed them should armour several of their streetcars.

Intelligence, upon hearing of these grandiose plans, valiantly tried to explain that the Boer warship had now turned out to be no more than a rumour and the invasion even more so. This attempt to quash both the rumours and the extra government expense was foiled by the reported appearance of an armed Boer



CANADIAN HISTORY

band in Central Ontario.

The authorities immediately went into a panic, seizing and acting upon the designer's suggestions, embarking on yet another spending spree that resulted in an armoured train patrolling Ontario while several armoured streetcars rumbled around Toronto scaring loyal old ladies out of their waspish wits. Two days later the armed band was discovered to be a party of innocent farmers out on a duck hunt.

Intelligence duly reported this to all concerned. But by this time the Government had to save face and opted to retain the armoured vehicles in service, having spent the money to get them there. To this end they issued a statement declaring that as they had proved "that we can move with alacrity in an alarm (albeit false) we can easily do so in an actual situation and, indeed, may do so with greater dispatch if the vehicles are maintained in a constant state of readiness."

So the train continued to puff contentedly around Ontario and the streetcars rode with impunity in Toronto for the duration of the war. At its conclusion the streetcars were renovated and returned to normal passenger service. But strangely enough of the locomotive there is no trace . . . as yet.

—Derek Carter, Toronto, June 19th, 1978

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Your check was much appreciated. It promptly went down the septic tank. Really. Our plumbing started acting up the day the check arrived. The amount of it was exactly equal to cleaning the septic tank.

Thank you for the compliments in your editorial. "As forceful as Harlan" has to be one of the nicest things ever said about me in print. It ranks right up there with "secret mistress of prodom." Curiously enough, Harlan is the only writer in the past ten years who actively discouraged me from writing anything about him. I had quite quite an elaborate study in mind, too. It was to be called "A Scream of Compassion" and tricked out with taglines from the *Aeneid* like "Easy is the descent to Hell" and "Anxious, his reeking entrails he consults." But Harlan was going through one of his anti-fandom phases and reacted with such hostility I gave up the idea and have put it out of my mind completely.

There's an unfortunate typo in my first question at the top of page 34. It should have read "*I* would be more the unconscious/conservative half of the argument." For indeed I am and I find Gordy fascinating precisely because he's so positive and optimistic.

Since the interview was completed last year, Gordy has made good on his resolution to improve his depiction of women. *Time Storm* and *The Far Call* are immensely better in this respect than anything he wrote in the previous 25 years. One could never have predicted Ellen in *Time Storm* or the several sympathetic and skilfully rendered women in *The Far Call* on the basis of his earlier efforts. Not that he'll get the slightest credit for this, of course.

The Chandler memoir was the perfect counterbalance to Harlan's entries in this issue. Chandler's calm and mellow reflections on genuine perils are a refreshing change from the bloodcurdling screams that pass for debate in fannish and SFWA circles about topics far less vital. (I've done my share of that screaming so I have a perfect right to say this.) If Mr. Chandler were only among us more often, who knows what pacifying influence he might exert upon the US science fiction community.

Richard Lupoff
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Ellen Kushner raises a good question when she challenges my buttressing of my comments on Joanna Russ, with a "supporting witness." This is a problem which puzzles and somewhat distresses me, and Kushner's charge that I'm really just using the old "Some of my best friends are. . . ." line, is quite well taken.

The problem, for me, is an expectation (I hope misplaced) that my negative response to Russ's polemic will be discounted *prima facie*, on the grounds that "Well, of course, he's a man, it takes a woman to understand a woman's viewpoint." This argument also bears some weight. It is the bane of the white liberal in trying to deal with problems of blacks or other racial minorities in our society. ("Well, of course, you're white, it takes a black/asian/latino/etc to understand a nonwhite viewpoint.") Or, for that matter, the classic case of them all, that of the sympathetic liberal Christian in dealing with the problem of antisemitism. ("Well, of course, you're a Christian, it takes a Jew to understand the Jewish viewpoint.")

The response of the liberal male/white/Christian to this argument may well come out sounding an awful lot like "Some of my best friends are. . . ."

My purpose in the "very good friend" citation was to cast my objection to Russ's material in the light of humanists-versus-oppression, which is in my opinion the proper light for it. And to avoid having it cast in the light of women-versus-men, which is, I think, both an innacurate and a pernicious interpretation.

But—sigh—I have to concede that Kushner has a very strong point. Unfortunately, I seem to find myself in a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation, as regards this matter. There is a third alternative, which is either to ignore the record altogether, or to review it from a purely non-ideological angle. But its ideology is so vital to its existence, I think that would have been a complete cop-out. So I guess I'll go ahead and say my piece, and take whatever flak I have to take.

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I have to chastise Richard A. Lupoff for his review of part of the *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*. I don't feel he has the right to pan a whole trilogy on the basis of the first 169 pages. People say that Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* also got off to a slow start. I never noticed that, but then again the leisurely pace of *Lord Foul's Bane* didn't really bother me. I found enough action/conflict in all those pages of walking/sailing to keep me interested. Lupoff managed to read all of the *Sword of Shannara*, but refuses to finish even the first volume of a work with much more merit.

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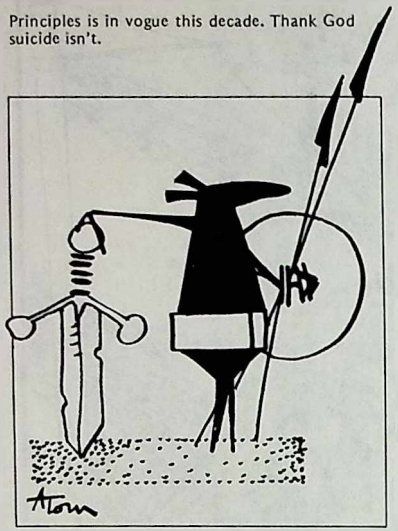
It's kind of a shame that Richard Lupoff didn't read past the interminable journeys in *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever*—because he missed the best fantasy work since *Lord of the Rings*. True, the first sections of the book were repelling; but instead of stopping, Lupoff should have skimmed. Because right after the point where he stopped, the book picks up and never lets the reader down again until the end of the third volume.

Where Tolkien's characters were cardboard most of the time (and Terry Brooks's were faint silhouettes, to strain the metaphor), Donaldson knew every person he was writing. They acted from independent motivations, and each acted from a valid (for him) worldview. Evil was not mindless; those who screwed things up were not usually evil; and in Donaldson's world the greatest evils were wrought by good people who just don't know what they ought to do next, who feel helpless and desperate, who would sooner destroy what they love than see it defiled.

In other words, Donaldson not only spins a good yarn; he also weaves it into a cloth far stronger than those individually good sentences that Lupoff praised, much better than the mechanical world-creating indulged in by less-talented fantasists. Perhaps one of the reasons I'm so pleased with Donaldson's work is that he has ignored the temptation to succumb to the Heroic Fantasy temptation. HF is hard to do well, of course, but Epic Fantasy is even harder, if only because the length is unwieldy. In a way, in fact, Donaldson has had to cheat a bit. The three volumes are discreet, and the fantasy sections (as opposed to the frame) can be read independently with no great loss to the reader. Despite the discreetness of the fantasy sections, however, the frame (Covenant in the modern world) was remarkably strong—I've never seen another frame story done so well. And when volume three's fantasy section ends, I'm still eager to find out how the frame section ends, as well—and it puts a grand *amen* to the whole work.

A word about Ellison: it's fine to denigrate SF writers' tendencies to be insulated and deplore the money it costs them—but unless one already has an "in" to the movie and TV writing world, a person's gotta get a name *first*. Otherwise, there's the normal vicious circle—nobody'll hire you to do a script until you've got the credentials; the only way to get credentials is to do a script. However, that doesn't change the fact that Ellison's speech was brilliant and needed to be given.

It's just too damn bad that so many writers feel that the only way they can really prove they mean what they say is to resign from SFWA in protest. If the most knowledgeable professionals leave in high (or low) dudgeon, then only the unknowledgeable remain, and nobody is helped. But resigning for High Principles is in vogue this decade. Thank God suicide isn't.



Anne Ashley McConnell
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In June 1977, I attended the Fantasy, Science Fiction & Horror Expo in Tucson, Arizona. This was the first con I ever attended; it took place only weeks after the *F&SF* Harlan Ellison issue (with its pointed "You Don't Know Me . . ." article) hit the stands; and the first thing anybody at the con said to me was, "Hi! Have you heard the latest Ellison anecdote? "

I met Ellison very briefly at that convention, and were it not for the fact that his picture is on most of his books I would have been convinced that I was talking to an imposter. I do not know Harlan Ellison and he does not know me, but he was friendly, polite, and remarkably tolerant of a nervous neofan who was asking dumb questions and was fully expecting to be vaporized any second just on general principles (and considering the questions, it might even have been justified).

Friends of mine who have never met him but have read his articles and books suggest that perhaps he was sick that day. I suspect that what I saw was what you call "the personal side." And if any of us presume to judge any one else, certainly that should be in the scales, too.

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I'm not surprised by Harlan's resignation. He's perfectly right about SFWA nitpicking, and we all know that Harlan resigns from something at frequent intervals, anyway; he was bound to get tired of leaving fandom and pick some other target sooner or later. I was a little bemused at his picking Fritz Leiber as an example of the veteran writer, though, because, taken in context with Harlan's speech as a whole, it leaves only two conclusions to be reached about Leiber. Either (1) Leiber is too stupid to follow Harlan's reasoning, make his mint from Hollywood and live happily ever after, or (2) Leiber's reasons for writing are completely different from Harlan's, and he isn't interested in achieving the results that Harlan tells us can be achieved by any veteran writer. But (1) is insulting to Leiber, whom Harlan otherwise praises, and (2) invalidates all of the scathing comments that Harlan heaps on SFWA for not following Harlan's lead. Just perhaps there are people to whom nobility and wonder and honor are more important than money. . . .

For that matter, if Harlan really despises fannish and science-fiction accolades as much as he is always telling us he does, he wouldn't spend so much time telling us about it. Piers Anthony used to be noted for writing long letters to fanzines explaining how he was much too busy to write long letters to fanzines. Harlan spends hours of his valuable time telling us that his time is too valuable to be wasted in helping us out of our misery. Do you suppose the joke about fandom being addictive isn't a joke after all? I sincerely hope that Harlan *can* kick the habit, and enjoy himself on higher planes, but his lack of success so far doesn't leave me with high expectations.

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A resounding Right On for Harlan Ellison, who delivered his message with unusual restraint (unusual both in the sense that it is not his forte, and unusual in that, as the facts stood, he could have well gone further into asperity as a matter of justice to the issue). I have no familiarity with marketing SF, but I know from general business principles that one is a fool not to go where the lucrative markets are—especially when the "spin-offs" can be so useful to the creative talent (i.e., more money, more free time). By and large, it seems that SF writers are enthralled with their lordly status in a narcissistic literary subculture, reinforcing the SF ghetto mentality by implicitly limiting their sphere of operations *to* that ghetto. When Ellison tells us to get off our butts and Go For It, he is uttering the true test of will and ability. SF is not ghetto fare; it is a plenum of powerful literature that can reach out to wider audiences in virtually any form of expression. My only regret at Ellison's severance with the ghetto Guild is that it may now be more difficult for the more venturesome writers to learn how to break out into reality. I would hope that Ellison would be in a good humor toward those who heed his words, and lend the guiding spirit that is needed.

I usually enjoy the writer interviews, but There Are Things That Have A Smell . . . and the Miesel/Dickson collaboration was one of them. I say collaboration because it is quite evident that Miesel enjoys her fawning, and Dickson enjoys it too. Thus, they sit, and Dickson talks up his duodecalogy in a grand manner—overpassing its current segments by the acknowledgement that everything will have to be rewritten before the true gold will shine through. Under such circumstances, I am not surprised that Miesel lets Dickson off the hook regarding the character of Melissa Khan in *Tactics of Mistake*. I remember Melissa quite well; she it was who restored my disbelief right in the middle of that novel, for I simply couldn't believe in a world where supposedly central (or near-central) characters were so two-dimensional. (That's hyperbole; there wasn't enough of Melissa Khan to say she had much more than an autistic personality.) And it is this feature of Dickson's writing—his unerring habit of stripping characters of a personality for the purpose of grinding a melodramatic axe—that caused me to lose interest in him after more than a few books. This is too bad, for I'd rather it be otherwise. But, when Dickson receives his strokes for novels that totally subordinate characterization to axe-grinding, I can't blame him for thinking he's on the road to a literary breakthrough. In any case, it is poor form for the interviewer to make of the interview a gushy cuddle of congratulations.

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Sandra Miesel is seen by many as one of the leading interpreters of Dickson and his work (the paperback reprint of *Allen Art* has an essay by her as an appendix) so I was surprised to notice that she is so wrongheaded about Dickson. Let us begin with the manner of the interview, and then proceed to the substance. Miesel cannot conduct an interview. Darrell Schweitzer, for all his faults, at least let the writers talk about themselves. Miesel cannot even do that, as she is so busy wallowing in the grandeur of her own opinions that she barely gives Dickson a chance to speak. She draws conclusions instead of asking questions, and it is all Dickson can do to let Miesel know that he understands her Immortal Sentences.

Miesel also gives what I consider to be a faulty view of Dickson. Dickson is not a philosophical writer *per se;* what philosophy there is is mostly subliminal. Miesel subrogates content for form; for her, as for Spengler, *"Alles vergangliche ist nur ein gleichnis"*—all life is symbol alone. She cannot understand why Dickson writes the sort of stories he does, why he condones writing mere adventures. If one starts hunting for symbols, of course, one inevitably finds them; and this Miesel does, blissfully ignoring the real meaning of Dickson's work.

I see Dickson as the last Victorian, the last defender of the (British) imperial faith in a changing world. It would be misleading to call Dickson an imperialist; besides the vulgar Marxist connotations of that word, it implies that his search for values is practical instead of theoretical. What Dickson is doing in large measure is researching the nature and nurture of the public-school ideals, trying to see what essences can be saved from the ruins. Look at the writers Dickson quotes in his stories; was there any other author who puts such large helpings of Kipling and Matthew Arnold before the reader's plate? I also suspect this is one reason Dickson enjoys writing about the military; as it is with military stories that he can explore and contrast the changing nature of order and authority, of testing under pressure. (After all, a large measure of the public-school codes were quasi-military in both form and content.)

Although Miesel is wrong about Anderson and Dickson being completely different—they do have similarities, as any two writers from a particular generation who write in the same sub-genres of fiction would have—she does make an interesting point about cataloging Dickson as one particular type of writer. What bothers me are the people that argue that because Dickson, Jerry Pournelle, and Joe Haldeman all wrote series about mercenaries, they all can be grouped in the same category of SF writers! *That* is the way to madness.

Jeff Hecht
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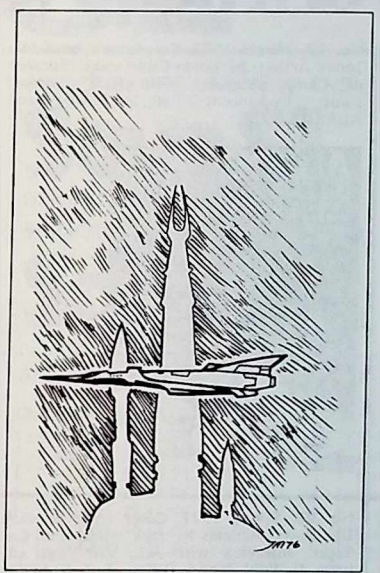
Auburndale, Massachusetts 02166

Harlan Ellison made some good points in his resignation speech, but I can't help but feel he overlooked others. Perhaps he is (as many of the rest of us are) just a little too contemptuous of the skills required to write mass-market television scripts. Just because it's easy for him doesn't mean the task is inherently easy. Harlan is a gifted and intelligent person, but he may have forgotten how much he needed to learn before he got where he is now. One question pops into my mind when I see Harlan talking about people knowledgeable about SF in Hollywood: why don't some of them come out and recruit SF writers? Isn't there good money to be made in marketing other people's writing skills? Someone in the right position could—if Harlan is right—make a lot of money for themselves (and for SF writers).

Is there something about the very idea of teaching literature that automatically brings boring works to the minds of potential teachers? I've read (or tried to read) two of the three books Fred Pohl mentions in his column. *Triton* I gave up on after only 150 pages because I was BORED stiff. *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* I found uninspired 15 or so years ago when I read it—and when my tastes were much more omnivorous than they are now. The problem with *Triton* seems to be that it throws so many ideas around that the story gets lost—is that perhaps the same process that makes it academically interesting?

Having read much of Damon Knight's *The Futurians,* I concur in large part with Dick Lupoff's comments. But Dick didn't mention one omission that seemed glaring to me—the absence of any real treatment of the fiction. Writing is—as Damon should know—an integral part of a writer's life, yet the only mention of writing is who published what when. All we see are personalities—*People* magazine with tragedy thrown in. Yes, at times it's powerful and fascinating. But it's a lightweight book, not a mature one; a study of surfaces, that one might expect from a youngish fan, not the deep analysis that one would hope for from such a solid critic.



Robert A. W. Lowndes
717 Willow Avenue
Hoboken, New Jersey 07030

I was fascinated by Dick Lupoff's review of *The Futurians,* by Damon Knight. I could not possibly review it myself, because there's no such thing as someone who was as close to the subject matter as I was having the ability to be as objective and reasonably discriminating as a well informed outsider—outsider, so far as the FSNY is concerned.

It's interesting that, first, Dick says he found the book "utterly enchanting reading"—then stands back and makes such a case for what he considers wrong with it as to wind up far from what seemed to be a recommendation. Not that there's anything amiss with being "enchanted" by what one decides later, after careful thought, is a bad book. What discriminating reader hasn't had that experience? One winds up acknowledging that one find this or that book enchanting, even though full of faults.

I do not mean by the above to agree with Dick that it's bad; I only mean that I have at least some idea, from his very well presented reasons, why some readers could consider it so. To repeat: I don't know. Rereading it is, for me, living the past—both the past I remember from first hand experience, and many parts of it of which I had only heard fragments (some of them incorrect) at the time; and Damon tells me much I never knew at all, although I find what he relates convincing, because it is certainly in character with those I knew well or reasonably well.

I cavil at one point only: the proposition that we have all been victimized by Damon. (The suggestion that Damon was taking revenge on us for real or imagined—and there were indeed real—slights after all these years is somewhat like Sam Moskowitz's deciding that Damon's analysis of what was wrong with Sam's first published story—good reading for what it was, even if flawed—really came out of personal dislike. Well, we were all very young and that is the natural reaction of a very young person, not to mention of a writer (many of whom never grow up) to criticism, valid or invalid. Some of us, Sam included, get to know a little better as time goes by. Yet, that Dick could be so moved by what he read as to impute a rather absurd motive for Damon's work, is really a tribute to the book. A poor job, the sort of hype that one sees in other fields, as well as our own, could arouse indignation, but not the enchantment Dick affirms.

I cannot speak for any Futurian other than myself, and would not accept a request to do so were it made. One thing we had in common was articulateness; anyone who feels victimized can express his or her sense of outrage far better than I could do it for him or her.

There is nothing about me in the book that I did not see at least twice before publication, and in each case with ample time in which to make corrections. What did I correct? Trivial errors for the most part, wrong dates, sometimes confusions between just who said or did what then. Had they not been corrected, I'd have been annoyed, and, to me, they would have represented real flaws. But I must admit that the general reader would have found nothing wrong, except where dates were impossible and a little addition would have proved it.

Did I enjoy every opinion or report that my fellow Futurians had to make about me? No. Nor was it always comfortable to tell Damon the truth in a few instances where I could have spared myself by just saying nothing. I am not now, and never have been, either a saint or a hero; I'll leave it to the reader to decide whether any of the rest of us were. And I admit that, in one instance, I let a widely-incorrect anecdote relating to me go as the teller remembered it, because I prefer the legend to the fact in that instance.

As to those of us who are gone (and I still find it hard to believe that Jim Blish is no longer with us; I defer not a hair to Dick in my love for him), there's no getting around the fact that Cyril, John, and Jim had no chance to make corrections or objections. Yet, I don't think that the James Blish I knew would have tried to cover up any of the personal frailties that are revealed here—not in this context where the portrait shows somewhat unsightly warts on all of us. We were all egoists and perhaps overestimated our virtues and minimized our faults, but Blish was not the sort of man to blench at the sort of revelations presented here. He was always concerned with "getting the past straight" as he put it, and had a normal enjoyment of gossip. There is much, indeed, that the public has no need (or right) to know; but it doesn't

seem to me that Damon has gone over the line into pointless or sadistic invasion of privacy. We know what Jim and some of the others became; we know that the honor they received, and are still receiving, was well earned. No amount of amusing peccadillos can detract from that, and I do not believe that Damon intended to write a book that would so detract or that he did it "subconsciously." (Only small children are horrified to learn that George Washington was an expert liar.)

I shall be grateful to Damon for the rest of my days, and will very possibly reread the book not a few times more; I appreciate what he put in about me—and, sometimes even more, what he left out.

Tad Markham
2919 N.E. 13th Drive
Gainesville, Florida 32601

I was just flipping through a copy of ALGOL when I leaned in close and sniffed your magazine. It was a recent issue and it smelled great!

I suppose you're thinking this some sort of kinky inclination of mine. Well it is and it isn't. I do love the smell of certain books and magazines. (I consider issues of post sixty-five and pre-seventy *Playboys* to be truly vintage, from an olfactory point of view. The visuals ain't too bad either. The same can be said for most of the old *Doc Savage* paperbacks and a sixties edition of *Something Wicked This Way Comes* by Bradbury.) However, I do not make a hobby of it. It is something I do but it is not a major pastime. I don't bestow this honor on many publications so rest assured this is a compliment.

Uh, er, I don't know what came over me, umm. Well, I just thought I'd mention it.

[And so this letter column ends, as Gerald Kersh might say, on an odd note . . . I guess there's a whole Ink Fandom out there somewhere, publishing fanzines about the new Interchem ultraviolet setting inks; the passing of natural gas drying from the American scene; the glory of the ink-jet printer; and much more than you wanted to know about the black stuff that comes off on your hands. Are you aware that the demise of the stapled magazine may be close at hand? Seems there's a process being developed that will mesh the surface molecules along the edges of paper sheets without glue or other fasteners, when the sheets are exposed to UV after printing. Within ten years we may see the end of the staple, and a revolution in binding to match that in the typesetting field.

Ten years ago, who could have foreseen digital wristwatches, the pocket calculator, home video games and recorders? This is a science fictional age we live in, and where it will end only the ghost of Gernsback knows. —And he's not talking since I ran that article by Darrell Schweitzer . . .]

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Darrell Schweitzer, David Govaker, Tom Perry, Fred Jakobcic, Alan Bosco, Mark R. Sharpe, Frank Nagy, Garth Spencer, A.D. Wallace, Oswald Train, Mike Glicksohn, Marshall Massey, Frank Eck, Alan Hunter, Dallas Legan, Joseph Lewandowski, Ted Koppel, Rich Mann, Marjii Ellers, Kim Smith, Tommy Carrasco, Jane Hawkins, Noah Stewart, Mary Jane Yunker, Jessica Salmonson, Gretchen Rix, Bill Bridget, Allen Varney, and Clinton Hyde.

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ALGOL's CONLOG

Aug. 30-Sep. 4, 1978 IGUANACON. 36th World Science Fiction Convention. Hotels Adams and Regency Hyatt and Convention Center, Phoenix AZ. GoH: Harlan Ellison. Fan GoH: Bill Bowers. Toastperson: F.M. Busby. Registration $20 attending to 7/1; then $25. Write: Iguanacon, P.O. Box 1072, Phoenix AZ 85001.

Sep. 29-Oct. 1. PGHLANGE X. Marriott Inn, Greentree PA. GoH: Rick Sternbach. Fan GoH: Phil Foglio. Registration: $8, $10.50 at the door. Write: Barbara Geraud, 1202 Benedum-Trees Bldg., Pittsburgh PA 15222.

Oct. 7-9. NONCON. Four Seasons Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta. GoH: Marion Zimmer Bradley. Fan GoH: Grant Canfield. Registration: $7, $9 at the door. Write: NONCON, Box 1740, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 2P1.

Oct. 13-15. 4TH WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION. Sheraton Hotel, Ft. Worth TX. GoH: Fritz Leiber. Artist GoH: Alicia Austin. Toastmaster: Gahan Wilson. Registration: $15 to 9/15/78, then $20. Attendance limited to 750. Write: 4th World Fantasy Con, 1309 S. West St., Arlington TX 76010.

Oct. 27-29. UNREEL. Winters College, York Univ., Toronto ONT. GoH: Rick Baker, Chris Steinbrunner, Judith Merril. Registration: $7.50, $10 at the door. Write: UNREEL Convention, P.O. Box 6711 Sta. A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Nov. 3-5. CONCLAVE III. Metro Ramada Inn, Romulus MI. GoH: Theodore Sturgeon. Fan GoH: Elizabeth Pearse. Registration: $5 to 10/1, then $7. Write: Mary Mueller c/o EMU SF Society, 117 Goodison, Ypsilanti MI 48197.

Nov. 3-5. NOVACON 8. Holiday Inn, Birmingham UK. GoH: Anne McCaffrey. Write: D.J.R. Holmes, 1222 Warwick Rd., Acocks Green, Birmingham UK B26 6PL.

Jan. 5-7 1979. CHATTACON 4. Sheraton Downtown, Chattanooga TN. GoH: Alan Dean Foster. Registration: $7, $9 at the door. Write: Chattacon 4, P.O. Box 21173, Chattanooga TN 37421.

Jun. 29-Jul. 2. WESTERCON 32. Sheraton Palace, San Francisco CA. GoH: Richard Lupoff. Fan GoH: Bruce Pelz. Write: Westercon 32, 195 Alhambra St., #9, San Francisco CA 94123.

Aug. 23-27 1979. SEACON '79/37th World Science Fiction Convention. Metropole Hotel, Brighton, UK. GoH: Brian Aldiss (UK), Fritz Leiber (US). Fan GoH: Harry Bell. Registration: $5 supporting, $7.50 attending to 3/31/78; then $7.50 & $15 to 12/31/78. Write: SeaCon '79, 14 Henrietta St., London WC2E 8OJ, UK.

Aug 30-Sep 3. NORTHAMERICON. Galt House, Louisville KY. GoH: Frederik Pohl. Fan GoH: George Scithers. Registration: $10 to 6/30; $15 to 12/31/78, $7 supporting. Information: NorthAmericon, P.O. Box 58009, Louisville KY 40258.

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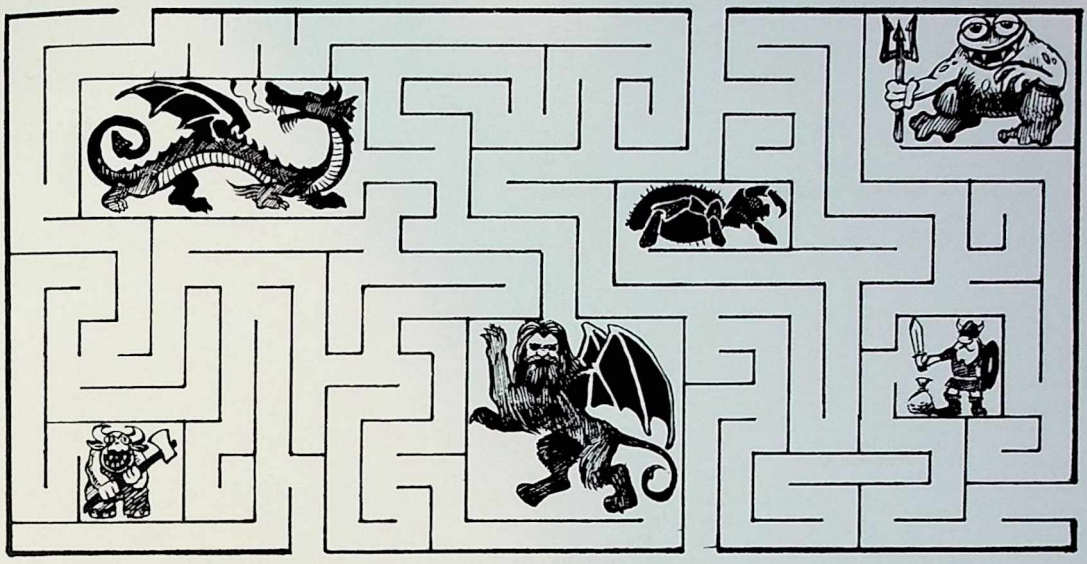

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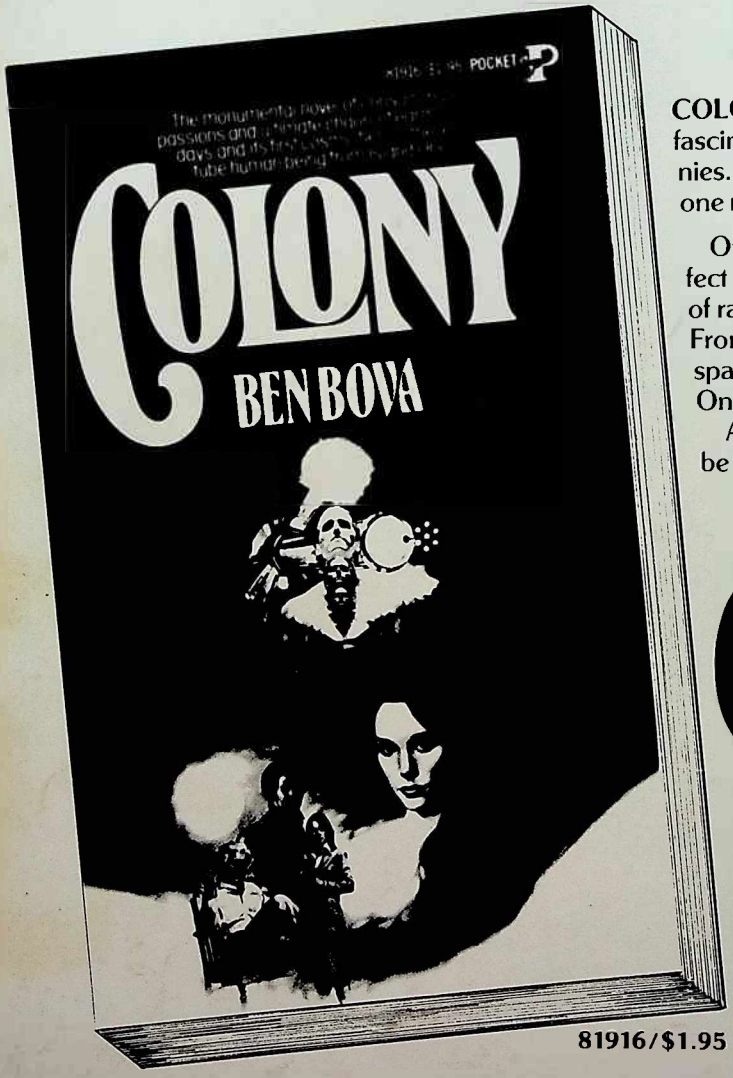

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