

ASHWING 11

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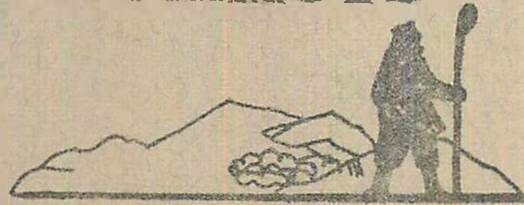
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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO DORIS "THE ELDER GHODDESS" BEETEM

ASH-WING is published (I promise) quarterly from now on. It usually arrives a little less painfully from the bowels of the habitat of one Frank Denton, Boy Science Fiction Fan, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. Letters of comment, reviews, articles and art work are welcomed with open arms. Layout this time by Griselda Goatskin and stamp licking by Priscilla Pineywood.

THE FREE COMMOTS



Well, I've just put "Eric Clapton At His Best" on the hi fi and that is good for four sides or a total of about an hour and fifty minutes and I'm going to try to pound out this column. I can't think of a nicer guy to be going on inside my head while I try to do this. I've only recently purchased a set of headphones because Anna Jo has been going nuts from the amount of music that gets played in this house every night. I think it all came to a head when she began to prepare reports for parent-teacher conferences and decided that it wasn't very easy to listen to loud rock and do a decent job on the conference reports at the same time. I allowed as how I couldn't do without the music when I work in the evening and that maybe I'd go out and get a pair of headphones. Which I did posthaste, find a good pair at a sale price. I bought a pair of Koss HV-1 which seem to work just super. They do demand just a shade of compensation with the bass and treble controls of the receiver, but that's no big problem. So here I sit with the headphones on, and that is why I said that Clapton was going to be going on inside my head. I wonder if that means that I am going to ask Clapton to share the blame for what rolls out in this column.

I've put off this column for one heck of a long time. I think the reason for such procrastination is that I have been dissatisfied with what has happened to Ash-Wing.

Not that I haven't had a lot of compliments for the past ten issues. And this issue may be one of the better ones and may receive even more rave notices. But a number of things have been happening to it that have made me be unhappy about it. It has gotten longer and longer and if anyone cares to go back over the preceding issues, you just might notice that for the last five issues or so I have been talking about, wishing, fantasizing, about getting the page count back to some sort of reasonable number. And each issue I have failed to do so. More good material comes in, more stories from writers who want a little exposure, more book reviews. And, quite frankly, one of my problems is that I have a tough time turning stuff down. I've been accused more than once of not being an editor at all. That's not exactly true. Part of my problem is that I don't just like to send material back and say that I can't use it. I turn critic and expend a lot of blood, sweat and tears trying to tell the person why I am returning it, what I think the weaknesses are and how I would attempt to fix it up. Well, that expends a lot of time and energy. But that's an aside, really.

I mentioned back there somewhere that I wasn't satisfied with A-W. What's the problem as I see it? Well, mostly that it doesn't communicate to others very much of what's going on inside my head at the time. It doesn't seem to let anyone know what kind of a personality I have, what I like to do with my spare time, how I voted and lost in the election, what my tastes in music are, what I enjoy, what makes me mad, what I think a lot about. Oh, oh!! I can hear the murmurs out there now. Here comes another personalzine. Yep, might as well confess right off the bat. That's what I've got in mind. More than one person has commented to me that I do ramble nicely. Lots of you haven't seen any of my rambling writing. You're getting your first sample here. I belong to several apas, not as many as I used to, but those of you who are members of those apas are some of the people who have told me that I ought to let myself out more in A-W. And I guess that's what's going to be happening from now on.

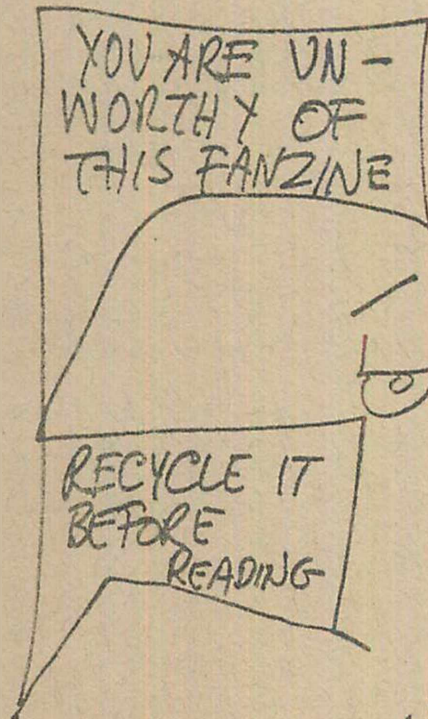
I should put in a little plug here for another zine that I have begun doing. It goes by a different name each time and it looks as though it will be coming out every two months. The first issue went by the ungodly title of "The Greatest Sensation of the Century - Swale's and Forrest's Grand Stud of Racing Horses and Flying Cockerels", but it really was Occasional Paper #1. It doesn't go to everyone on my A-W mailing list, but to a selected number of people whom I have met in person or with whom I have had a longstanding correspondence and for whom I have developed a real liking. Those of you who have received it know who you are. Those of you who didn't receive it, don't feel too badly. You've been getting Ash-Wing for a while, depending upon when you first contacted me. OP #1 allowed me to ramble about whatever was on my mind, and I've noticed that it makes me think a bit more about what I've been involved in and what is going on around me. Well, if you didn't find yourself in the Select Circle and feel that you just can't live without it, drop me a dollar and that will be good for the next four issues. It is quarter-page size and runs precisely 40 pages. Funny how that worked out. I can send it for one 8¢; isn't that a good reason?

There are a couple of other reasons for changing the format and approach to A-W. Just one of them rolled into the house the other day. I took one look at it and wanted to throw up my hands at this whole business. I am speaking of REALi 5. This is a production by Ed Romero, ably assisted by a number of other people, including Jeff Ilay, whose "Hookhand" stories have appeared here. It's a nicely done zine, and I haven't for the life of me figured out how Ed can offer it for the price that he does. 75¢ will get you a copy from Art Nouveau Publications, 2000 N. Grant Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65803. Get ahold of a copy and take a look at the layout, the material, the fine stories, the excellent graphics layout and production, the great Darrell Anderson portfolio and then you'll have one of the reasons that I begin to wonder at the time, energy, and money expended on past issues of Ash-Wing. There isn't any way A-W can compete with a production like that. The last couple of issues of Tom Collins' IS give me the same feeling. I wish all these fellows the best of luck in their future productions; I, for one, will be standing in line with my 75¢,

\$1.25, or whatever it is they ask, to be able to handle such a fine production and store it away with others of their ilk. And I don't mean to slight any of the others that produce zines of this nature. Trumpet may be going back into production; Eternity is well worth buying; Jan Strnad's Anomoly, Phantasmagoria, I could go on and on.

Coupled with the super-zines that have arrived lately has been the arrival of some zines that have just tickled the hell out of me. And I've been analyzing them a bit to see what there was that I enjoyed so much. A couple of weeks ago I received a zine entitled "B.C." I don't have it at hand right this instant, but as I recall, it ran about 17 pages. I devoured it when it first came in the door, and later went back and re-read it. I read some of it aloud to Anna Jo. I guess you could say that I was really turned on by that zine. It's the product of Railee Bothman and Leigh Couch. What does it have that I enjoyed so much? Just some good writing about some very ordinary things that were happening to these two gals. An uncommonly nice several pages of what Leigh had been reading lately. Not long and analytical reviews, but just a few lines about the content and her reaction to the book or magazine, and, as I remember, a couple of records that she had bought. Just plain nice. 17 pages can be read in one sitting. I have rather a suspicion that the 50 and 60-pager issues of Ash-Wing have, in a good many cases, been set aside until there is a little more time to go through them. They are put on a shelf, and the following day a few more zines of lesser length come in. They are gobbled up mostly because they can be read over a cup of coffee. Gradually they get put on top of A-W and that's probably the last chance it has of being read. This isn't anything new, and I'm not blaming anyone but myself for it. How many times did I do the same thing to Frank Lunney's Beabohema? Sorry about that, Frank, but you went a heck of a lot further with BAB than A-W ever did, and evidently you got over it a lot more quickly. Because BAB has folded and been replaced by, you guessed it, a smaller and more personal zine. Before I wander off to the next topic, let me slip in an address for B.C. It's probably not quite as good as I have blown it up to be, but I really dug it and maybe you can convince the gals to send you a copy. They'd like trades if you pub; if not, stamps would be nice. Railee lives at 1300 West Adams, Kirkwood, MO 63122 and Leigh lives at #1 Cymry Lane, Rt. 2, Box 889, Arnold, MO 63010. Future issues of Ash-Wing will mention other zines that are like this that I have liked a lot. Zine editors always like to have appreciative readers, and a good number of A-W readers are appreciative. Some are not so appreciative; you had better respond occasionally or you will find yourself no longer on the mailing list. You don't have to respond every time, of course. I don't expect that, but there are people that I haven't heard from for a long time. Golly, I can't leave this paragraph without mentioning Alpajpuri's Peculiar, Greg Burton's Abberation, Eli Cohen's Krato-phany, and the latest to wend its way into the house, Nathan Beastie, done in tandem by Freff and Tom Whitmore. They are all of a kind, short, sweet, personal, and I love 'em.

One last mention should be made of the finances involved in putting out a large zine to a large list of subscribers. Perhaps that's one of the problems, there weren't really any subscribers. Lots of people trade their zines with A-W, and that's what most fanzine editors prefer. But I never have had a price on A-W and I



WR

don't want to start now. But it does cost money and time to put out. I've been afraid to count the number of hours spent in cutting stencils. I know that a couple of times I have stood in front of the mimeo machine for a solid eight hours and another eight collating and stapling. Addressing envelopes will run two or three hours. That's just time. Last issue cost me about \$15 in paper costs, as I recall. Envelopes ran about \$10, stencils \$6, and postage ran about \$32.



THAT FLYING
PENNANT MEANS
HARLAN IS IN
RESIDENCE ???

That helped to take the fun out of a big zine a little bit. Postal rates have risen since the last issue and I'm not looking forward to what it's going to cost to mail this baby. Well, enough of that; that's my problem and just one more of the reasons that I'm getting out of the big zine.

And when did the last issue come out? July, 1972. At the rate I've been going, I might as well join Lee Hoffman with her Science Fiction Five-Yearly. Frequency is what makes a zine a tool of communication in the world of fandom. And if A-W has been anything, Frequent it has not been. It started out sometime in 1968 with the intention of being quarterly. Somewhere it fell off to thirdly, and more recently it's been worse than that. Before the issue last July, the previous one to that was December of 1971. No more. The schedule is going back to quarterly with the next issue. I can't say for sure when that will be. This beast looks like it will run around 40 pages and should be out sometime the first part of January. I will aim for March as the first of the new Ash-Wings, #12. I'll look for some comment on it sometime after that date.

You'll find that there will be less fiction during the next year. There are stories which I have promised various people that I would use and I will be using them at the rate of one per issue until they have been used up. In a sense I am going to be sorry that A-W will no longer be a showplace for budding authors. It served as a good vehicle for that, I think. You saw one of Lisa Tuttle's stories here early on and now Lisa is selling professionally. Hopefully others that have appeared here will follow in her footsteps. A lot of people skip over the fan fiction and I don't think that's quite fair. But, fair or not, it's the truth. And it's hard to type and format stories of the length that I have run. Jeff May's stories have run around 15 pages. It's tough to work on them when you know that a good portion of the readership is skipping over them. Such is life, and I apologize to all the good short story writers that I am depriving of a place to see their work. I'm sorry, guys and gals, and I hope that you continue to write stories, submit them to the pro mags and sooner or later start to sell. Most of you know that I'm into that bag, too. A couple of stories are going the rounds now, two more are in the typer at the present moment, and that takes a lot of time and effort. I, also, would like to see my name in print someday.

Well, I've bent your ears long enough about what's in store for A-W. Now you know what to expect and I hope that you will enjoy the new look as much, perhaps even more, than you did the old A-W. I know for a fact that I will enjoy laying a little gentle rap on you more than just being a typist for lots of other people. That doesn't sound very nice, does it? It sounds as if I want to turn off all contributors, and that's not true. I'm hoping that Leon Taylor, newly returned from somewhere afar off, will continue to lay his new column on the readers of A-W. And red-headed, bushy-haired Greg Burton, living down along the Washington coast, has a lot to say to us. I hope you find both of their columns entertaining this time. The bulk of this current issue has the text of a speech given by Philip K. Dick at the science fiction convention in Vancouver, B.C. almost a year ago. The convention was held in February and Phil told

me that this was the first speech that he had ever given and that he spent a lot of time on it. I allowed as how it ought to see a bit more exposure than just the convention and the group of students at the University of British Columbia to which he had delivered it earlier in the week. He allowed as how he wouldn't mind it if it were to be read by another 250 people who happened to be on the A-W mailing list. And that's how it came to appear here. Phil, I'm sure that you've long ago given up on me and thought that it would never see print. Having heard it delivered, read it over after I got a copy of it, and re-read it as I typed it, I'm of the opinion that there is a lot of food for thought in it. I hope that you aren't overwhelmed by the length of it, and that you will give it a quiet half hour and a careful reading. And thank you, Phil, for being the kind of nice, crazy, story-telling guy that you are. I really appreciate being able to run this speech a lot more than you appreciate having a few people have the opportunity to read it.

You'll notice that there isn't a letter column this time. I just haven't been able to crank up the energy to do the ten or twelve pages that it would require. Nor even the energy to cut the letters that I received down to a decent size so that I did feel like handling them. For this I'm sorry. Don't be afraid to write in the future. I expect that what I write and publish won't attract the same kind of commentary as in the past. I don't expect great gobs of egoboo. Just let me know what you like or dislike about it. I suppose I am going to continue to cut the mailing list in order to cut down on expenses a bit. But you people who trade fanzines with me have nothing to fear. You're going to get it whether you like it or not. Those of you who don't publish need only to let me know that you received it and would like to continue to do so. That's all it takes; a gentle reminder to ye olde ed that you got it and read it.

Well, I guess that's enough flap about what I've been thinking about Ash-Wing. Believe me, it's been a time of soul-searching as far as my publishing activities go. I've gone through the big build-up of pages and the big mailing list and I guess I could continue on doing so, but my heart just wouldn't be in it. I think that my heart will be into a new kind of zine and that I'll enjoy the activity a lot more. I think that's what it's about; FIJAGDH. Til nextish, stay loose and look for a much more slender issue of A-W around March. By the way, I considered a new name for the new format, but couldn't bring myself to it. Ash-Wing has been a nice name; owls for the covers will continue to be a trademark, so if you are artistic and haven't done a cover for me before, you're welcome to submit. Dan Steffan has departed a bit more this time with the owl in the shoulder patch of the astronaut. Sort of gives it the Playboy Bunny approach to covers and may start a whole new trend. But, please, for covers hide an owl somewhere. I'll appreciate it and so will Anne Cox. Bye for now.

Frank

THE ANDROID
AND
THE HUMAN

PHILIP K. DICK

It is the tendency of the so-called primitive mind to animate its environment. Modern depth psychology has requested us for years to withdraw these anthropomorphic projections from what is actually inanimate reality, to introject -- that is, bring back into our own heads -- the living quality which we, in ignorance, cast out onto the inert things surrounding us. Such introjection is said to be the mark of true maturity in the individual, and the authentic mark of civilization in contrast to mere social culture, such as one finds in a tribe. A native of Africa is said to view his surroundings as pulsing with a purpose, a life, which is actually within himself; once these childish projections are withdrawn, he sees that the world is dead, and that life resides solely within himself. When he reaches this sophisticated point he is said to be either mature or sane. Or scientific. But one wonders: has he not also, in this process, reified -- that is, made into a thing -- other people? Stones and rocks and trees may now be inanimate for him, but what about his friends? Has he not now made them into stones, too?

This is, really, a psychological problem. And its solution, I think, is of less importance in any case than one might think, because, within the last decade, we have seen a trend not anticipated by our earnest psychologists -- or by anyone else -- which dwarfs the issue: our environment, and I mean our man-made world of machines, artificial constructs, computers, electronic systems, interlinking homeostatic components -- all this is in fact beginning more and more to possess what the earnest psychologists fear the primitive sees in his environment: animation. In a very real sense our environment is becoming alive, or at least quasi-alive, and in ways specifically and fundamentally analogous to ourselves. Cybernetics, a valuable recent scientific discipline, articulated by the late Norbert Wiener, saw valid comparisons between the behavior of machines and humans -- with the view that a study of machines would yield valuable insights into the nature of our own behavior. By studying what goes wrong with a machine -- for example when two mutually exclusive tropisms function simultaneously in one of Grey Walter's synthetic turtles, producing fascinatingly

intricate behavior in the befuddled turtles -- one learns, perhaps, a new, more fruitful insight into what in humans was previously call "neurotic" behavior. But suppose the use of this analogy is turned the other way? Suppose -- and I don't believe Wiener anticipated this -- suppose a study of ourselves, our own nature, enables us to gain insight into the now extraordinary complex functioning and malfunctioning of mechanical and electronic constructs? In other words -- and this is what I wish to stress in what I am saying here -- it is now possible that we can learn about the artificial external environment around us, how it behaves, why, what it is up to, by analogizing from what we know about ourselves.

Machines are becoming more human, so to speak -- at least in the sense that, as Wiener indicated, some meaningful comparison exists between human and mechanical behavior. But is it ourselves that we know first and foremost? Rather than learning about ourselves by studying our constructs, perhaps we should make the attempt to comprehend what our constructs are up to by looking into what we ourselves are up to.

Perhaps, really, what we are seeing is a gradual merging of the general nature of human activity and function into the activity and function of what we humans have built and surround ourselves with. A hundred years ago such a thought would have been absurd, rather than merely anthropomorphic. What could a man living in 1750 have learned about himself by observing the behavior of a donkey steam engine? Could he have watched it huffing and puffing and then extrapolated from its labor an insight into why he himself continually fell in love with one certain type of pretty young girl? This would not have been primitive thinking on his part; it would have been pathological. But now we find ourselves emerged in a world of our own making so intricate, so mysterious, that as Stanislaw Lem, the eminent Polish science fiction writer theorizes, the time may come when for example a man may have to be restrained from attempting to rape a sewing machine. Let us hope, if that time comes, that it is a female sewing machine he fastens his intentions on. And one over the age of seventeen -- hopefully a very old treadle-operated Singer, although possibly regrettably past menopause.

I have, in some of my stories and novels, written about androids or robots or simulacra -- the name doesn't matter; what is meant is artificial constructs masquerading as humans. Usually with a sinister purpose in mind. I suppose I took it for granted that if such a construct, a robot for example, had a benign or anyhow decent purpose in mind, it would not need to so disguise itself. Now, to me, that seems obsolete. The constructs do not mimic humans; they are, in many deep ways, actually human already. They are not trying to fool us, for a purpose of any sort; they merely follow lines we follow, in order that they, too, may overcome such common problems as the breakdown of vital parts, loss of powersource, attack by such foes as storms, short circuits -- and I'm sure any one of us here can testify that a short circuit, especially in our power supply, can ruin our entire day and make us utterly unable to get to our daily job, or, once at our office, useless as far as doing the work set forth on our desk.

What would occur to me now as a recasting of the robot-appearing-as-human theme would be a gleaming robot with a telescan-lens and a helium battery powerpack, who, when jostled, bleeds. Underneath the metal hull is a heart, such as we ourselves have. Perhaps I will write that. Or, as in stories already in print, a computer, when asked some ultimate question such as, "why is there water?" prints out First Corinthians. One story I wrote, which I'm afraid I failed to take seriously enough, dealt with a computer which, when able to answer a question put to it, ate the questioner. Presumably -- I failed to go into this -- had the computer been unable to answer a question, the human questioner would have eaten it. Anyhow, I inadvertently blended the human and the construct, and didn't notice that such a blend might, in time, actually begin to become a part of our reality. Like Lem, I think this will be so, more and more. But to project past Lem's idea: a time may come, when, if a

man tries to rape a sewing machine, the sewing machine will have him arrested and testify perhaps even a little hysterically against him in court. This leads to all sorts of spinoff ideas; false testimony by suborned sewing machines who accuse innocent men unfairly; paternity tests, and, of course, abortions for sewing machines which have become pregnant against their will. And would there be birth control pills for sewing machines? Probably, like one of my previous wives, certain sewing machines would complain that the pills made them overweight -- or rather, in their case, that it made them sew irregular stitches. And there would be unreliable sewing machines that would forget to take their birth control pills.

And, last but not least, there would have to be Planned Parenthood Clinics at which sewing machines just off the assembly lines would be counseled as to the dangers of promiscuity, with severe warnings of venereal diseases visited on such immoral machines by an outraged God -- Himself, no doubt, able to sew buttonholes and fancy needlework at a rate that would dazzle the credulous merely metal and plastic sewing machines always ready, like ourselves, to cower before divine miracles.



I am being facetious about this, I suppose, but -- the point is not merely a humorous one. Our electronic constructs are becoming so complex that to comprehend them we must now reverse the analogizing of cybernetics and try to reason from our own mentation and behavior to theirs -- although I suppose to assign motive or purpose to them would be to enter the realm of paranoia; what machines do may resemble what we do, but certainly they do not have intent in the sense that we have; they have tropisms, they have purpose in the sense that we build them to accomplish certain ends and to react to certain stimuli. A pistol, for example, is built with the purpose of firing a metal slug that will damage, incapacitate or kill someone, but this does not mean the pistol wants to do this. And yet here we are entering the philosophical realm of Spinoza when he saw, and I think with great profundity, that if a falling stone could reason, it would think, "I want to fall at the rate of 32 feet per second." Freewill for us -- that is, when we feel desire, when we are conscious of wanting to do what we do -- may be even for us an illusion; and depth psychology seems to substantiate this: much of our drives in life originate from an unconscious that is beyond our control. We are as driven as are insects, although the term "instinct" is perhaps not applicable to us. Whatever the term, much of our behavior that we feel is the result of our will, may control us to the extent that for all practical purposes we are falling stones, doomed to drop at a rate prescribed by nature, as rigid and predictable as the force that creates a crystal. Each of us may feel himself unique, with an intrinsic destiny never before seen in the universe... and yet to God we may be millions of crystals, identical in the eyes of the Cosmic Scientist.

And -- here is a thought not too pleasing -- as the external world becomes more animate, we may find that we -- the so-called human -- are becoming, and may to a great extent always have been, inanimate in the sense that we are led, directed by built-in tropisms, rather than leading. So we and our elaborately evolving computers may meet each other half way. Someday a human being, named perhaps Fred White, may shoot a robot named Pete Something-or-other, which has come out of a General Electric's factory, and to his surprise see it weep and bleed. And the dying robot may shoot

back and, to its surprise, see a wisp of gray smoke arise from the electric pump that it supposed was Mr. White's beating heart. It would be rather a great moment of truth for both of them.

I would like then to ask this: what is it, in our behavior, that we can call specifically human? That is special to us as a living species? And what is it that, at least up to now, we can consign as merely machine behavior, or, by extension, insect-behavior, or reflex behavior? And I would include, in this, the kind of pseudo-human behavior exhibited by what were once living men -- creatures who have, in ways I wish to discuss next, become instruments, means, rather than ends, and hence to me analogs of machines in the bad sense, in the sense that although biological life continues, metabolism goes on, the soul -- for lack of a better term -- is no longer there or at least no longer active. And such does exist in our world -- it always did.

The production of such inauthentic human activity has become a science of government and such-like agencies, now. The reduction of humans to mere use -- men made into machines, serving a purpose which although "good" in an abstract sense has, for its accomplishment, employed what I regard as the greatest evil imaginable: the placing on what was a free man who laughed and cried and made mistakes and wandered off into foolishness and play a restriction that limits him, despite what he may imagine or think, to the fulfilling of an aim outside of his own personal -- however puny-- destiny. As if, so to speak, history has made him into its instrument.

History, and men skilled in -- and trained in -- the use of manipulative techniques, equipped with devices, ideologically oriented, themselves, in such a way that the use of these devices strikes them as necessary or at least desirable methods of bringing about some ultimately desired goal.

I think, at this point, of Tom Paine's comment about one or another party of the Europe of his time: "They admired the feathers and forgot the dying bird." And it is the "dying bird" that I am concerned with. The dying -- and yet, I think, beginning once again to revive in the hearts of the new generation of kids coming into maturity -- the dying bird of authentic humanness.

This is what I wish to say to you here, today. I wish to disclose my hope, my faith, in the kids who are emerging now. Their world, their values. And, simultaneously, their imperviousness to the false values, the false idols, the false hates, of the previous generations. The fact that they, these fine, good kids, cannot be reached or moved or even touched by the "gravity" -- to refer back to my previous metaphor -- that has made us older persons fall, against our knowledge or will, at 32 feet per second throughout our lives...while believing that we desired it.

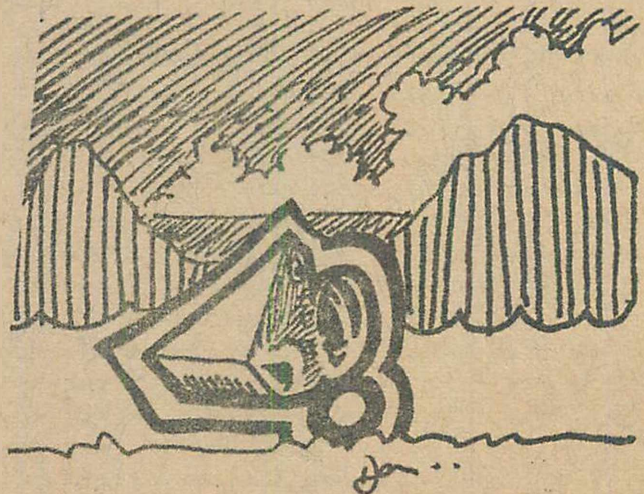
It is as if these kids, or at least many of them, some of them, are falling at a different rate, or, really, not falling at all. Walt Whitman's "Marching to the sound of other drummers" might be rephrased this way: "falling, not in response to unexamined, unchallenged alleged "verities", but in response to a new and inner -- and genuinely authentic -- human desire.

Youth, of course, has always tended toward this; in fact, this is really a definition of youth. But right now it is so urgent, if, as I think, we are merging by degrees into homogeneity with our mechanical constructs, step by step, month by month, until a time will perhaps come when a writer, for example, will not stop writing because someone unplugged his electric typewriter but because someone has unplugged him. But there are kids now who cannot be unplugged because no electric cord links them to any external power-source. Their hearts beat with an interior, private meaning. Their energy doesn't come from a pacemaker; it comes from a stubborn, almost absurdly perverse, refusal to be "shucked," that is, to be taken in by the slogans, the ideology -- in fact by any and all ideology itself, of whatever sort -- that would reduce

them to instruments of abstract causes, however "good." Back in California, where I come from, I have been living with such kids, participating, to the extent I can, in their emerging world. I would like to tell you about their world because -- if we are lucky -- something of that world, those values, that way of life, will shape the future of our total society, our utopia or anti-utopia of the future. As a science fiction writer, I must of course look continually ahead, always at the future. It is my hope -- and I'd like to communicate it to you in the tremendous spirit of optimism that I feel so urgently and strongly -- that our collective tomorrow exists in embryonic form in the heads, or rather in the hearts, of these kids who right now, at their young ages, are politically and sociologically powerless, unable even, by our California laws, even to buy a bottle of beer or a cigarette, to vote, to in any way sahpe, be consulted about, or bring into existence, the official laws that govern their and our society. I think, really, I am saying this: if you are interested in the world of tomorrow you may learn something about it, or at least read about possibilities that may emerge to fashion it, in the pages of Analog and F&SF and Amazing, but actually, to find it in its authentic form, you will discover it as you observe a 16 or 17 year old kid as he goes about his natural peregrinations, his normal day. Or, as we say in the San Francisco Bay Area, as you observe him "cruising around town to check out the action." This is what I have found. These kids, that I have known, lived with, still know, in California, are my science fiction stories of tomorrow, my summation, at this point in my life as a person and a writer; they are what I look ahead to -- and so keenly desire to see prevail. What, more than anything else I have ever encountered, I believe in. And would give my life for. My full measure of devotion, in this war we are fighting, to maintain, and augment, what is human about us, what is the core of ourselves, and the source of our destiny. Our flight must be not only to the stars but into the nature of our own beings. Because it is not merely where we go, to Alpha Centaurus or Betelgeuse, but what we are as we make our pilgrimages there. Our natures will be going there, too. "Ad astra" -- but "per hominum." And we must never lose sight of that.

It would be, after all, rather dismaying, if the first two-legged entity to merge on the surface of Mars from a Terran spacecraft were to declare, "Thanks be to God for letting me, letting me, click, letting, click, click...this is a recording." And then catch fire and explode as a couple of wires got crossed somewhere within its plastic chest. And, probably even more dismaying to this construct, would be the discovery when it returned to Earth, to find that its "children" had been recycled along with the aluminum beer cans and Coca Cola bottles as fragments of the urban pollution problem. And, finally, when this astronaut made of plastic and wiring and relays went down to the City Hall to complain, it would discover that its three-year guarantee had run out, and, since parts were no longer available to keep it functioning, its birth certificate had been cancelled.

Of course, literally, we should not take this seriously. But as a metaphor -- in some broad sense maybe we should scrutinize more closely the two-legged entities we plan to send up, for example, to man the orbiting space station. We do not want to learn three years from now that the alleged human crew had all married portions of the space station and had settled down to whirr happily forever after in conubial bliss. As in Ray Bradbury's superb



story in which a fear-haunted citizen of Los Angeles discovers that the police car trailing him has no driver, that it is tailing him on its own, we should be sure that one of us sits in the driver's seat; in Mr. Bradbury's story the real horror, at least to me, is not that the police car has its own tropism as it hounds the protagonist but that, within the car, there is a vacuum. A place unfilled. The absence of something vital -- that is the horrific part, the apocalyptic vision of a nightmare future. But I, myself, foresee something more optimistic: had I written that story I would have had a teenager behind the wheel of the police car -- he has stolen it while the police officer is in a coffee shop on his lunch break, and the kid is going to resell it by tearing it down into parts. This may sound a little cynical on my part, but wouldn't this be preferable? As we say in California where I live, when the police come to investigate a burglary of your house, they find, when they are leaving, that someone has stripped the tires and motor and transmission from their car, and the officers must hitchhike back to headquarters. This thought may strike fear in the hearts of the establishment people, but frankly it makes me feel cheerful. Even the most base schemes of human beings are preferable to the most exalted tropisms of machines. I think this, right here, is one of the valid insights possessed by some of the new youth: cars, even police cars, are expendable, can be replaced. They are really all alike. It is the person inside who, when gone, cannot be duplicated, at any price. Even if we do not like him we cannot do without him. And once gone, he will never come back.

And then, too, if he is made into an android, he will never come back, never be again human. Or anyhow most likely will not.

As the children of our world fight to develop their new individuality, their almost surly disrespect for the verities we worship, they become for us -- and by "us" I mean the establishment -- a source of trouble. I do not necessarily mean politically active youth, those who organize into distinct societies with banners and slogans -- to me, that is a reduction into the past, however revolutionary those slogans may be. I refer to the intrinsic entities, the kids each of whom is on his own, doing what we call "his thing." He may, for example, not break the law by seating himself on the tracks before troop trains; his flouting of the law may consist of taking his car to a drive-in movie with four kids hidden in the trunk to avoid having to pay. Still, a law is being broken. The first transgression has political, theoretical overtones; the second, a mere lack of agreement that one must always do what one is ordered to do -- especially when the order comes from a posted, printed sign. In both cases there is disobedience. We might applaud the first as meaningful. The second merely irresponsible. And yet it is in the second that I see a happier future. After all, there has always been in history movements of people organized in opposition to the governing powers. This is merely one group using force against another, the outs versus the ins. It has failed to produce a utopia so far. And I think always will.

Becoming what I call, for lack of a better term, an android, means as, as I said, to allow oneself to become a means, or to be pounded down, manipulated, made into a means without one's knowledge or consent -- the results are the same. But you cannot turn a human into an android if that human is going to break laws every chance he gets. Androidization requires obedience. And, most of all, predictability. It is precisely when a given person's response to any given situation can be predicted with scientific accuracy that the gates are open for the wholesale production of the android life form. What good is a flashlight if the bulb lights up only now and then when you press the button? Any machine must always work, to be reliable. The android, like any other machine, must perform on cue. But our youth cannot be counted on to do this; it is unreliable. Either through laziness, short attention-span, perversity, criminal tendencies -- whatever label you wish to pin on the kid to explain his unreliability is fine. Each merely means: we can tell him and tell him what to do, but when the time comes for him to perform, all the subliminal instruction, all the

ideological briefing, all the tranquilizing drugs, all the psychotherapy, are a waste. He just plain will not jump when the whip is cracked. And so he is of no use to us, the calcified, entrenched powers. He will not see to it that he acts as an instrument by which we both keep and augment those powers and the rewards -- for ourselves -- that go with them.

What has happened is that there has been too much persuasion. The television set, the newspapers -- all the so-called mass media, have overdone it. Words have ceased to mean much to these kids; they have had to listen to too many. They cannot be taught, because there has been too great an eagerness, too conspicuous a motive, to make them learn. The anti-utopia science fiction writers of fifteen years ago, and I was one of them, foresaw the mass communications propaganda machinery grinding everyone down into mediocrity and uniformity. But it is not coming out this way. While the car radio dings out the official view on the war in Viet Nam, the young boy is disconnecting the speaker so he can replace it with a tweeter and a woofer; in the middle of the government's harangue the speaker is unattached. And, as he expertly hooks up better audio components in his car, the boy fails even to notice that the voice on the radio is trying to tell him something. This skilled craftsman of a kid listens only to see whether there is distortion, interference, or a frequency curve that isn't fully compensated. His head is turned toward immediate realities, the speaker itself, not the flatuus voci dinning from it.

The totalitarian society envisioned by George Orwell in 1984 should have arrived by now. The electronic gadgets are here. The government is here, ready to do what Orwell anticipated. So the power exists, the motive, and the electronic hardware. But these mean nothing, because, progressively more and more so, no one is listening. The new youth that I see is too stupid to read, too restless and bored to watch, too preoccupied to remember. The collective voice of the authorities is wasted on him; he rebels. But rebels not out of theoretical, ideological considerations, only out of what might be called pure selfishness. Plus a careless lack of regard for the dread consequences the authorities promise him if he fails to obey. He cannot be bribed because what he wants he can build, steal, or in some curious, intricate way acquire for himself. He cannot be intimidated because on the streets and in his home he has seen and participated in so much violence that it fails to cow him. He merely gets out of its way when it threatens, or, if he can't escape, he fights back. When the locked police van comes to carry him off to the concentration camp the guards will discover that while loading the van they have failed to note that another equally hopeless juvenile has slashed the tires. The van is out of commission. And while the tires are being replaced, some other youth syphons out all the gas from the gas tank for his souped-up Chevrolet Impala and has sped off long ago.

The absolutely horrible technological society -- that was our dream, our vision of the future. We could foresee nothing equipped with enough power, guile or whatever to impede the coming of that dreadful, nightmare society. It never occurred to us that the delinquent kids might abort it out of the sheer perverse malice of their little individual souls, God bless them. Here, as a case in point, are two excerpts from the media; the first, quoted in that epitome of the nauseating, Time, is -- so help me -- what Time calls "the ultimate dream in telephone service once described by Harold S. Osborne, former chief engineer of A.T.&T.: "Whenever a baby is born anywhere in the world, he is given at birth a telephone number for life. As soon as he can talk, he is given a watch-like device with ten little buttons on one side and a screen on the other. When he wishes to talk with anyone in the world, he will pull out the device and punch on the keys the number. Then, turning the device over, he will hear the voice of his friend and see his face on the screen, in color and in three dimensions. If he does not see him and hear him, he will know that his friend is dead."

I don't know; I really don't find this funny. It is really sad. It is heart-

breaking. Anyhow, it is not going to happen. The kids have already seen to that. "Phone freaks," they are called, these particular kids. This is what the L.A. Times says, in an article dated earlier this year:

"They (the phone freaks) all arrived carrying customized MF'ers --multi-frequency tone signals-- the phone freak term for a blue box. The homemade MF'ers varied in size and design. One was a sophisticated pocket transistor built by a PHD in engineering, another the size of a cigar box with an acoustical coupler attaching to the phone receiver. So far, these phone freaks had devised 22 ways to make a free call without using credit cards. In case of a slipup, the phone freaks also know how to detect "supervision," phone company jargon for a nearly inaudible tone which comes on the line before anyone answers to register calling charges. As soon as phone freaks detect the dreaded "supervision," they hang up fast.

"Captain Crunch was still in the phone booth pulling the red switches on his fancy computerized box. He got his name from the whistle found in the Cap'n Crunch breakfast cereal box. Crunch discovered that the whistle has a frequency of 2600 cycles per second, the exact frequency the telephone company uses to indicate that a line is idle, and of course, the first frequency phone freaks learn how to whistle to get "disconnect," which allows them to pass from one circuit to another. Crunch, intent, hunched over his box to read a list of country code numbers. He impersonated a phone man, gave precise technical information to the overseas operator, and called Italy. In less than a minute he reached a professor of classical Greek writings at the University of Florence."

This is how the future has actually come out. None of us science fiction writers foresaw phone freaks. Fortunately, neither did the phone company, which otherwise would have taken over by now. But this is the difference between dire myth and warm, merry reality. And it is the kids, unique, wonderful, unhampered by scruples in any traditional sense, that have made the difference.

Speaking in science fiction terms, I now foresee an anarchistic totalitarian state ahead. Ten years from now a TV street reporter will ask some kid who is president of the United States, and the kid will admit he doesn't know. "But the President can have you executed," the reporter will protest. "Or beaten or thrown into prison or all your rights taken away, all your property -- everything." And the boy will reply, "Yeah, so could my father, up to last month when he had his fatal coronary. He used to say the same thing." End of interview. And when the reporter goes to gather up his equipment he will find that one of his color 3-D stereo microphone-vidlens systems is missing; the kid has swiped it from him while the reporter was blabbing on.

If, as it seems we are, in the process of becoming a totalitarian society in which the state apparatus is all-powerful, the ethics most important for the survival of the true, free, human individual would be: cheat, lie, evade, fake it, be elsewhere, forge documents, build improved electronic gadgets in your garage that'll outwit the gadgets used by the authorities. If the television screen is going to watch you, rewire it late at night when you're permitted to turn it off -- rewire it in such a way that the police flunky monitoring the transmission from your living room mirrors back his living room at his house. When you sign a confession under duress, forge the name of one of the political spies who's infiltrated your model airplane club. Pay your fines in counterfeit money or rubber checks or stolen credit cards. Give a false address. Arrive at the courthouse in a stolen car. Tell the judge that if he sentences you, you will substitute aspirin tablets for his daughter's birth control pills. Or put His Honor on a mailing list for pornographic magazines. Or, if all else fails, threaten him with your using his telephone credit card number to make unnecessary long distance calls to cities on other planets. It will not be necessary to blow up the courthouse any more. Simply find some way to defame the judge -- you saw him driving

home one night on the wrong side of the road with his headlights off and a fifth of Seagram's VO propped up against his steering wheel. And his bumper sticker that night read: GIANT FULL RIGHTS TO US HOMOSEXUALS. He has, of course, torn the sticker off by now, but both you and ten of your friends witnessed it. And they are all at pay phones right now, ready to phone the news to the local papers. And, if he is still so foolish as to sentence you, at least ask him to give back the little tape recorder you inadvertently left in his bedroom. Since the off-switch on it is broken, it has probably recorded its entire ten day reel of tape by now. Results should be interesting. And if he tries to destroy the tape, you will have him arrested for vandalism, which, in the totalitarian state of tomorrow, will be the supreme crime. What is your life worth in his eyes compared with a three dollar reel of mylar tape? The tape is probably government property, like everything else, so to destroy it would be a crime against the state. The first step in a calculated, sinister insurrection.

I wonder if you recall the so-called "brain mapping" developed by Penfield recently; he was able to locate the exact centers in the brain from which each sensation, emotion, response came. By stimulating one minute area with an electrode, a laboratory rat was transfigured into a state of perpetual bliss. "They'll be doing that to all of us, too, soon," a pessimistic friend said to me, regarding that. "Once the electrodes have been implanted, They can get us to feel, think, do anything They want." Well, to do this, the government would have to let out a contract for the manufacture of a billion sets of electrodes, and, in their customary way, they would award the contract to the lowest bidder, who would build substandard electrodes out of second-hand parts...the technicians implanting the electrodes in the brains of millions upon millions of people would become bored and careless, and, when the switch would be pressed for the total population to feel profound grief at the death of some government official -- probably the minister of the interior, in charge of the slave labor rehabilitation camps -- it would all get fouled up, and the population, like that laboratory rat, would go into collective seizures of merriment. Or the substandard wiring connecting the brains of the population with the Washington, D.C. Thought Control Center would overload, and a surge of electricity would roll backward over the lines and set fire to the White House.

Or is this just wishful thinking on my part? A little fantasy about a future society we should really feel apprehensive toward?

The continued elaboration of state tyranny such as we in science fiction circles anticipate in the world of tomorrow -- our whole preoccupation with what we call the "anti-utopian" society -- this growth of state invasion into the privacy of the individual, its knowing too much about him, and then, when it knows, or thinks it knows, something it frowns on, its power and capacity to squash the individual -- as we thoroughly comprehend, this evil process utilizes technology as its instrument. The inventions of applied science, such as the almost miraculously sophisticated sensor devices right now traveling back from war



use in Viet Nam for adaptation to civilian use here -- these passive infra red scanners, sniper scopes, these chrome boxes with dials and gauges that can penetrate brick and stone, can tell the user what is being said and done a mile away within a tightly-sealed building, be it concrete bunker or apartment building, can, like the weapons before them, fall into what the authorities would call "the wrong hands" -- that is, into the hands of the very people being monitored. Like all machines, these universal transmitters, recording devices, heat-pattern discriminators, don't in themselves care who they're used by or against. The predatory law-and-order vehicle speeding to the scene of a street fracas where, for example, some juvenile has dropped a water-filled balloon into the sportscar of a wealthy taxpayer -- this vehicle, however fast, however well-armed and animated by the spirit of righteous vengeance, can be spotted by the same lens by which its superiors became aware of the disturbance in the first place...and notification of its impending arrival on the scene can be flashed by the same walkie-talkie Army surplus gadget by which crowd control is maintained when blacks gather to protest for their just rights. Before the absolute power of the absolute state of tomorrow can achieve its victory it may such things as this: when the police show up at your door to arrest you for thinking unapproved thoughts, a scanning sensor which you've bought and built into your door discriminates the intruders from customary friends, and alerts you to your peril.

Let me give you an example. At the enormous civic center building in my county, a fantastic Buck Rogers type of plastic and chrome backdrop to a bad science fiction film, each visitor must pass through an electronic field that sets off an alarm if he has on him too much metal, be it keys, a watch, a pair of scissors, bomb, 308 Winchester rifle. When the hoop pings -- and it always pings for me -- a uniformed policeman immediately fully searches the visitor. A sign warns that if any weapon is discovered on a visitor, it's all over for him -- and the signs also warn that if any illegal drugs are found on a visitor, during this weapons search, he's done for, too. Now, I think even you people up here in Canada are aware of the reason for this methodical weapons search of each visitor to the Marin County Civic Center -- it has to do with the tragic shootout a year or so ago. But, and they have officially posted notice of this, the visitor will be inspected for narcotics possession, too, and this has nothing to do with either the shootout or with any danger to the building itself or the persons within it. An electronic checkpoint, legitimately set up to abort a situation in which explosives or weapons are brought into the Civic Center, has been assigned an added police function connected with the authentic issue only by the common thread of penal-code violation. To visit the county library, which is in that building, you are subject to search -- must in fact yield absolutely and unconditionally -- for possession without the juridical protection, built into the very basis of our American civil rights system, that some clear and evident indication exist that you may be carrying narcotics before a search can be carried out against you. During this search I've even had the uniformed officer at the entrance examine the books and papers I was carrying, to see if they were acceptable. The next step, in the months to come, would be to have such mandatory checkpoints at busy intersections and at all public buildings -- including banks and so forth. Once it has been established that the authorities can search you for illegal drugs because you're returning a book to the library, I think you can see just how far the tyranny of the state can go -- once it has provided itself with an electronic hoop that registers the presence of something we all carry on us: keys, a pair of fingernail clippers, coins. The blip, a rather quaint little sound, which you set off, opens a door not leading to the county library but to possible imprisonment. It is that blip that ushers in all the rest. And how many other blips are we setting off, or our children will be setting off, in contexts that we know nothing about yet? But my optimistic point: the kids of today, having been born into this all-pervasive society, are fully aware of and take for granted the activity of such devices. One afternoon when I was parking my car on the lot before a grocery store, I started, as usual, to lock all the car doors to keep the parcels in the back seat from being stolen. "Oh, you don't have to lock up the car," the girl with me said. "This parking lot is under constant closed-circuit TV

scan. Every car here and everyone is being watched all the time; nothing can happen." So we went inside the store leaving the car unlocked. And of course she was right; born into this society, she has learned to know such things. And -- I now have a passive infra red scanning system in my own home in Santa Venetia, connected with what is called a "digital transmitting box" which, when triggered off by the scanner, transmits a coded signal by direct line to the nearest law enforcement agency, notifying them that intruders have entered my house. This totally self-operated electronic detection system functions whether I am home or not. It is able to discriminate between the presence of a human being, and an animal. It has its own power supply. If the line leading from it is cut, grounded or even tampered with, the signal is immediately released, or if any other part of the system is worked on. And Westinghouse will reinstall it wherever I live: I own the components for life. Eventually, Westinghouse Security hopes, all homes and businesses will be protected this way. The company has built and maintains a communications center near each community in this country. If there is no police agency willing or able to accept the signal, then their own communications center responds and guarantees to dispatch law enforcement personnel within four minutes -- that is, the good guys with the good guns will be at your door within that time. It does not matter if the intruder enters with a passkey or blows in the hole side of the house, or, as they tell me it's being done now, bores down through the roof -- however he got in, for whatever reason, the mechanism responds and transmits its signal. Only I can turn the system off. And if I forget to, then -- I suppose, anyhow -- it's all over for me.

Someone suggested, by the way, that perhaps this passive infra red scanner sweeping out the interior of my house constantly "might be watching me and reporting back to the authorities whatever I do right there in my own living room." Well, what I am doing is sitting at my desk with pen and paper trying to figure out how to pay Westinghouse the \$840 I owe them for the system. As I've got it worked out now, I think if I sell everything I own, including my house, I can -- oh, well. One other thing. If I enter the house -- my house -- and the system finds I'm carrying illegal narcotics on my person, it doesn't blip; it causes both me and the house and everything in it to self-destruct.

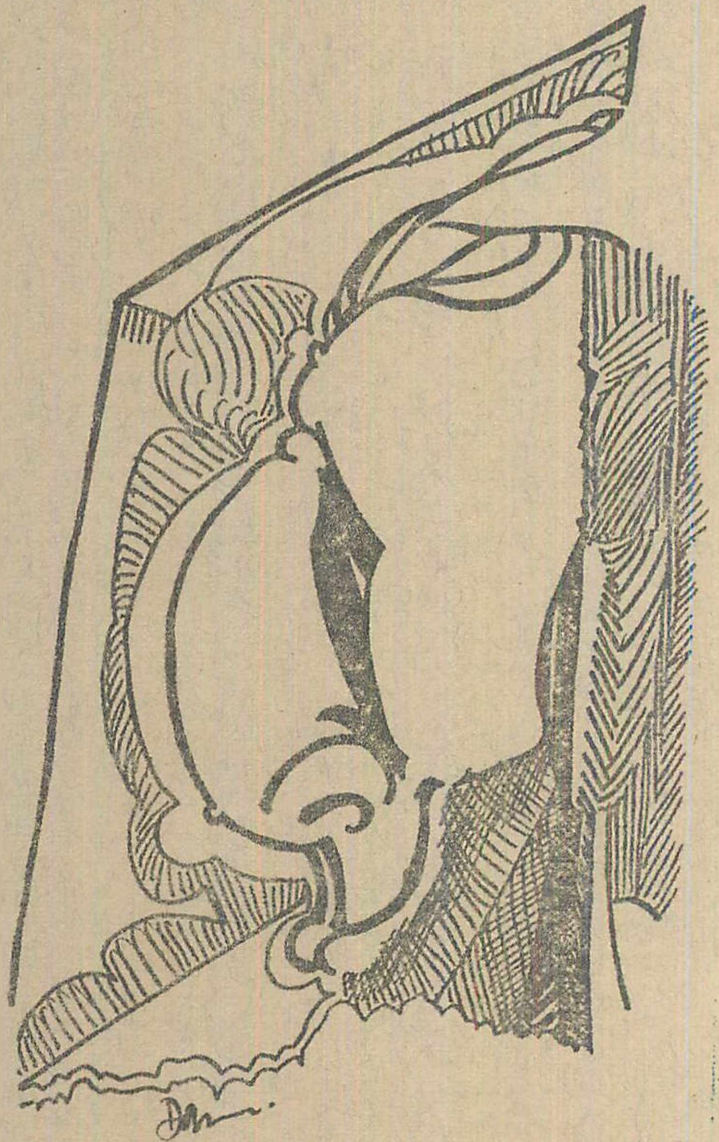
Street drugs, by the way, are a major problem in the area in which I live -- that is, the illegal drugs you buy on the street are often adulterated, cut, or just plain not what you're told they are. You wind up poisoned, dead, or just plain "burned," which means "you don't get off," which means you paid ten dollars for a gram of milk sugar. So a number of free labs have been set up for the specific purpose of analyzing street drugs; you mail them a portion of the drug you've bought and they tell you what's in it, the idea being, of course, that if it has strychnine or film developer or flash powder in it, you should know before you take it. Well, the police saw through into the quote "real" purpose of these labs at one glance. They act as quality control stations for the drug manufacturers. Let's say you're making methadrine in your bathtub at home -- a complicated process, but feasible -- and so every time a new batch comes out, you mail a sample to one of these labs for analysis...and they write back, "No, you haven't got it quite right yet, but if you cook it just perhaps five minutes longer..." This is what the police fear. This is how the police mentality works. And, interestingly, so does the drug-pusher mentality; the pushers are already doing precisely that. I don't know...to me it seems a sort of nice idea, the drug pushers being interested in what they're selling. Back in the old days they cared only that you lived long enough to pay for what you purchased. After that, you were on your own.

Yes, as every responsible parent knows, street drugs are a problem, a menace to their kids. I completely, emphatically agree. At one time -- you may have read this in biographical material accompanying my stories and novels -- I was interested in experimenting with psychedelic drugs. That is over, for me. I have seen too many ruined lives in our drug culture in California. Too many suicides, psychoses, organic

-- irreversible -- damage to both heart and brain. But there are other drugs, not illegal, not street drugs, not cut with flash powder and milk sugar, and not mislabeled, that worry me even more. These are reputable, establishment drugs, prescribed by reputable doctors or given in reputable hospitals, especially psychiatric hospitals. These are pacification drugs. I mention this in order to return to my main preoccupation, here: the human versus the android, and how the former can become -- can, in fact, be made to become -- the latter. The calculated, wide-spread, and thoroughly sanctioned use of specific tranquilizing drugs such as the phenothiazines may not, like certain illegal street drugs, produce permanent brain damage, but they can -- and god forbid, they do -- produce what I am afraid I must call "soul" damage. Let me amplify.

It has been discovered recently that what we call mental illness or mental disturbance -- such syndromes as the schizophrenias and the cyclothemic phenomena of manic-depression -- may have to do with faulty brain metabolism, the failure of certain brain catalysts such as serotonin and noradrenalin to act properly. One theory holds that, under stress, too much amine oxidase production causes hallucinations, disorientation, and general mental breakdown. Sudden shock, especially at random, and grief-producing, such as loss of someone or something dear, or the loss of something vital and taken for granted -- this starts an overproduction of noradrenalin flowing down generally unused neural pathways, overloading brain circuits, and producing behavior which we call psychotic. Mental illness, then, is a biochemical phenomenon. If certain drugs, such as the phenothiazines, are introduced, brain metabolism regains normal balance; the catalyst serotonin is utilized properly, and the patient recovers. Or if a MAOI drug is introduced -- a mono amine oxidase inhibitor -- response to stress becomes viable and the person is able to function normally. Or -- and this right now is the prince charming hope of the medical profession -- lithium carbonate, if taken by the disturbed patient, will limit an otherwise overabundant production or release of the hormone noradrenalin, which, most of all, acts to cause irrational thoughts and behavior of a socially unacceptable sort. The entire amplitude of feelings, wild grief, anger, fear, any and all intense feelings, will be reduced to proper measure by the presence of the lithium carbonate in the brain tissue. The person will become stable, predictable, not a menace to others. He will feel the same and think the same pretty much all day long, day after day. The authorities will not be greeted by any more sudden surprises emanating from him.

In the field of abnormal psychology, the schizoid personality structure is



well-defined; in it there is a continual paucity of feeling. The person thinks rather than feels his way through life. And as the great Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung showed, this cannot be successfully maintained; one must meet most of crucial reality with a feeling response. Anyhow, there is a certain parallel between what I call the "android" personality and the schizoid. Both have a mechanical, reflex quality.

I once heard a schizoid person express himself -- in all seriousness -- this way: "I receive signals from others. But I can't generate any of my own until I get re-charged. By an injection." I am, I swear, quoting exactly. Imagine viewing oneself and others this way. Signals. As if from another star. The person has reified himself entirely, along with everyone around him. How awful. Here, clearly, the soul is dead or never lived.

Another quality of the android mind is an inability to make exceptions. Perhaps this is the essence of it: the failure to drop a response when it fails to accomplish results, but rather to repeat it over and over again. Lower life forms are skillful in offering the same response continually, as are flashlights. An attempt was made once to use a pigeon as a quality control technician on an assembly line. Part after part, endless thousands of them, passed by the pigeon hour after hour, and the keen eye of the pigeon viewed them for deviations from the acceptable tolerance. The pigeon could discern a deviation smaller than that which a human, doing the same quality control, could. When the pigeon saw a part that was mis-made, it pecked a button, which rejected the part, and at the same time dropped a grain of corn to the pigeon as a reward. The pigeon could go eighteen hours without fatigue, and loved its work. Even when the grain of corn failed -- due to the supply running out, I guess -- the pigeon continued eagerly to reject the substandard parts. It had to be forcibly removed from its perch, finally.

Now, if I had been that pigeon, I would have cheated. When I felt hungry, I would have pecked the button and rejected a part, just to get my grain of corn. That would have occurred to me after a long period passed in which I discerned no faulty parts. Because what would happen to the pigeon if, god forbid, no parts were ever faulty? The pigeon would starve. Integrity, under such circumstances, would be suicidal. Really, the pigeon had a life and death interest in finding faulty parts. What would you do, were you the pigeon, and, after say four days, you'd discerned no faulty parts and were becoming only feathers and bone? Would ethics win out? Or the need to survive? To me, the life of the pigeon would be worth more than the accuracy of the quality control. If I were the pigeon -- but the android mind: "I may be dying of hunger," the android would say, but I'll be damned if I'll reject a perfectly good part." Anyhow, to me, the authentically human mind would get bored and reject a part now and then at random, just to break the monotony. And no amount of circuit-testing could re-establish its reliability.

Let me now express another element that strikes me as an essential key revealing the authentically human. It is not only an intrinsic property of the organism, but the situation in which it finds itself. That which happens to it, that which it is confronted by, pierced by and must deal with -- certain agonizing situations create, on the spot, a human where a moment before there was only, as the Bible says, clay. Such a situation can be read off the face of many of the Medieval pietas: the dead Christ held in the arms of his mother. Two faces, actually: that of a man, that of a woman. Oddly, in many of these pietas, the face of Christ seems much older than that of his mother. It is as if an ancient man is held by a young woman; she has survived him, and yet she came before him. He has aged through his entire life cycle; she looks now perhaps as she always did, not timeless, in the classical sense, but able to transcend what has happened. He has not survived it; this shows on his face. She has. In some way they have experienced it together, but they have come out of it differently. It was too much for him; it destroyed him. Perhaps the information to be gained here is to realize how much greater capacity a woman has for suffering; that is, not that

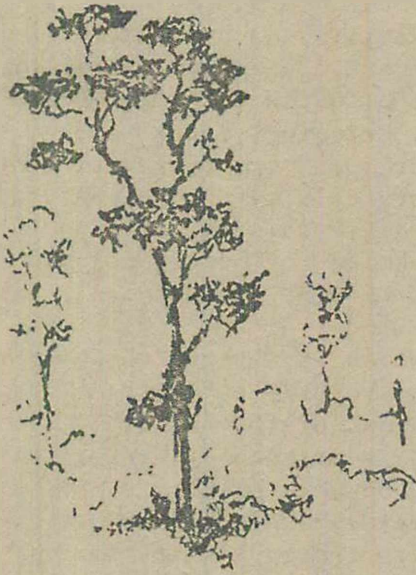
she suffers more than a man but that she can endure where he can't. Survival of the species lies in her ability to do this, not his. Christ may die on the cross, and the human race continues, but if Mary dies, it's all over.

I have seen young women -- say eighteen or nineteen years old -- suffer and survive things that would have been too much for me, and I think really for almost any man. Their humanness, as they passed through these ordeals, developed as an equation between them and their situation. I don't mean to offer the mushy doctrine that suffering ennobles, that it's somehow a good thing -- one hears this now and then about geniuses, "They wouldn't have been geniuses if they hadn't suffered," etc. I merely mean that possibly the difference between what I call the "android" mentality and the human is that the latter passed through something the former did not, or at least passed through it and responded differently -- changed, altered, what it did and hence what it was; it became. I sense the android repeating over and over again some limited reflex gesture, like an insect raising its wings threateningly over and over again, or emitting a bad smell. Its one defense or response works, or it doesn't. But, caught in sudden trouble, the organism that is made more human, that becomes precisely at that moment human, wrestles deep within itself and out of itself to find one response after another as each fails. On the face of the dead Christ there is an exhaustion, almost a dehydration, as if he tried out every possibility in an effort not to die. He never gave up. And even though he did die, did fail, he died a human. That is what shows on his face.

"The endeavor to persist in its own being," Spinoza said, "is the essence of the individual thing." The chthonic deities, the Earth Mother, was the original source of religious consolation -- before the solarcentric masculine deities that arrived later in history -- as well as the origin of man; man came from Her and returns to her. The entire ancient world believed that just as each man came forth into individual life from a woman he would eventually return -- and find peace at last. At the end of life the old man in one of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales "goes about both morning and late and knocks against the ground with his stick saying, 'Mother, mother, let me in --'" just as at the end of Ibsen's Ghosts, the middle-aged man, regressing into childhood at the end of his life as he dies of peresis, says to his mother, "Mother, give me the sun." As Spinoza pointed out so clearly, each finite thing, each individual man, eventually perishes...and his only true consolation, as he perishes, as each society in fact perishes, is this return to the mother, the woman, the Earth.

But if woman is the consolation for man, what is the consolation for woman? For her?

I once watched a young woman undergo agonies -- she was eighteen years old -- that, just witnessing her, were too much for me. She survived, I think, better than I did. I wanted to console her, help her, but there was nothing I could do. Except be with her. When the Earth Mother is suffering, there is damn little that individual finite man can do. This young girl's boyfriend wouldn't marry her because she was pregnant by another boy; he wouldn't live with her or find her a place to stay until she got an abortion -- about which he would do nothing; he wouldn't even speak to her until it was over -- and then, or so he promised, he would marry her. Well, she got the abortion, and we brought her to my home afterward to rest and recover, and of course the son-of-a-bitch never had anything to do with her again. I was with her during the days following her abortion, and really she had a dreadful time, alone in a poor, large ward in a hospital in another city, never visited except by me and a couple of my friends, never phoned by her boyfriend or her own family, and then at my home, afterward, when she realized her boyfriend was never going to get the apartment for them she had planned on, been promised, and her friends -- his friends, too -- had lost interest in her and looked down on her. I saw her day by day decline and wilt and despair, and become wild with fear; where would she go? What would become of her? She had no friends, no job, no family, not even any clothes to speak of -- nothing.



And she couldn't stay with me after she healed up. She used to lie in bed, suffering, holding the puppy she and I got at the pound; the puppy was all she had. And one day she left, and I never found out where she went. She never contacted me again; she wanted to forget me and the hospital and the days of healing and bleeding and learning the truth about her situation. And she left the puppy behind. I have it now. What I remember in particular was that in the two weeks she had been with me after her abortion her breasts swelled with milk; her body, at least portions of it, didn't know that the child was dead, that there was no child. It was, she said, "in a bottle." I saw her, all at once, as a sudden woman, even though she had, herself, declined, destroyed, her motherhood; baby or not, she was a woman, although her mind did not tell her that; she still wore the cotton nightgown she had worn, I guess, while living at home while she went to high school -- perhaps the same easy-to-wash cotton nightgown she had worn since five or six years old. She still liked to go to the market and buy chocolate milk and comic books. Under California law it's illegal for her to buy or smoke cigarettes. There are certain movies, many in fact, that our law prevents her from seeing. Movies,

supposedly, about life. On the trip to San Francisco to see the doctor about getting the abortion -- she was five and a half months pregnant, nearing what California considers the limit of safety -- she bought a purple stuffed toy animal for 39¢. I paid for it; she had only 25¢. She took it with her when she left my home. She was the bravest, brightest, funniest, sweetest person I ever knew. The tragedy of her life bent her and virtually broke her, despite all I could do. But -- I think, I believe -- the force that is her, so to speak the swelling into maturity of her breasts, the looking forward into the future of her physical body, even at the moment that mentally and spiritually she was virtually destroyed -- I hope, anyhow, that that force will prevail. If it does not, then there is nothing left, as far as I am concerned. The future as I conceive it will not exist. Because I can only imagine it as populated by modest, unnoticed persons like her. I myself will not be a part of it or even shape it; all I can do is depict it as I see the ingredients now, the gentle little unhappy brave lonely loving creatures who are going on somewhere else, unknown to me, not recalling me but, I pray, living on, picking up life, forgetting -- "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," we are told, but perhaps it is better -- perhaps it is the only viable way -- to be able to forget. I hope she, in her head, has forgotten what happened to her, just as her body either forgot the lack of a baby, the dead baby, or never knew. It is a kind of blindness, maybe; a refusal, or inability, to face reality.

But I have never had too high a regard for what is generally called "reality." Reality, to me, is not so much something that you perceive, but something you make. You create it more rapidly than it creates you. Man is the reality God created out of dust; God is the reality man creates continually out of his own passions, his own determination. "Good," for example -- that is not a quality or even a force in the world or above the world, but what you do with the bits and pieces of meaningless, puzzling, disappointing, even cruel and crushing fragments all around us that seem to be pieces left over, discarded, from another world entirely that did, maybe, make sense.

The world of the future, to me, is not a place, but an event. A construct, not by one author in the form of words written to make up a novel or story that other persons

sit in front of, outside of, and read -- but a construct in which there is no author and no readers but a great many characters in search of a plot. Well, there is no plot. There is only themselves and what they do and say to each other, what they build to sustain all of them individually and collectively, like a huge umbrella that lets in light and shuts out the darkness at the same instant. When the characters die, the novel ends. And the book falls into dust. Out of which it came. Or back, like the dead Christ, into the arms of his warm, tender, grieving, comprehending loving mother. And a new cycle begins; from her he is reborn, and the story, or another story, perhaps different, even better, starts up. A story told by the characters to one another. "A tale of sound and fury" -- signifying very much. The best we have. Our yesterday, our tomorrow, the child who came before us and the woman who will live after us and outlast, by her very existing, what we have thought and done.

In my novel, THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH, which is a study of absolute evil, the protagonist, after his encounter with Eldritch, returns to Earth and dictates a memo. This little section appears ahead of the text of the novel. It is the novel, actually, this paragraph; the rest is a sort of post mortem, or rather, a flashback in which all that came to produce the one-paragraph book is presented. Seventy-five thousand words, which I labored over many months, merely explains, is merely there to provide background, to the one small statement in the book that matters. (It is, by the way, missing from the German edition.) This statement is for me my credo -- not so much in God, either a good god or a bad god or both -- but in ourselves. It goes as follows, and this is all I actually have to say or want ever to say:

"I mean, after all; you have to consider we're only made out of dust. That's admittedly not much to go on and we shouldn't forget that. But even considering, I mean it's sort of a bad beginning, we're not doing too bad. So I personally have faith that even in this lousy situation we're faced with we can make it. You get me?"

This tosses a bizarre thought into my mind: perhaps someday a giant automated machine will roar and clank out, "From rust we are come." And another machine, sick and dying, cradled in the arms of its woman, may sigh back, "And to rust we are returned." And peace will fall over the barren, anxiety-stricken landscape.

Our field, science fiction, deals with that portion of the life-cycle of our species which extends ahead of us. But if it is a true cycle, that future portion of it has in a sense already happened. Or, at least, we can on a basis almost mathematically precise map out the next, missing integers in the sequence of which we are the past. The first integer: the Earth Mother culture. Next, the masculine solar deities, with its stern, authoritarian societies, from Sparta to Rome to Fascist Italy and Japan and Germany and the USSR. And now, perhaps, what the Medieval pietas looked forward to: in the arms of the Earth Mother, who still lives, the dead solar deity, her son, lies in a once again silent return to the womb from which he came. I think we are entering this third and perhaps final sequence of our history, and this is a society that our field sees ahead of us which will be quite different from either of the two previous world-civilizations familiar in the past. It is not a two-part cycle; we have not reached the conclusion of the masculine solar deity period to return merely to the primordial Earth Mother cult, however full of milk her breasts may be; what lies ahead is new. And possibly, beyond that, lies something more, unique and obscured to our gaze as of this moment. I myself, can't envision that far; the realization, the fulfillment, of the Medieval pieta, as a living reality, our total environment, a living external environment as animate as ourselves -- that is what I see and no further. Not yet, anyhow. I would, myself, be content with that; I would be happy to lie slumbering and yet alive -- "invisible, but dim," as Vaughn put it -- in her arms.

If a pieta of a thousand years ago, shaped by a Medieval artisan, anticipated in his -- shall we say -- psionic? hands, our future world, what, today, might be the analog of that inspired, precognitive artifact? What do we have with us now, as homely

and familiar to us in our 20th century world, as were those everyday pietas to the citizens of 13th century Christendom, that might be a microcosm of the far-distant future? Let us first start by imagining a pious peasant of 13th century France gazing up at a rustic pieta and foreseeing in it the 21st century society about which we science fiction writers speculate. Then, as in a Bergman film, we segue to -- what now? One of us gazing at -- what?

Cycle -- and recycle. The pieta of our modern world: ugly, commonplace, ubiquitous. Not the dead Christ in the arms of his grieving, eternal mother, but a heap of aluminum Budweiser beer cans, eighty feet high, thousands of them, being scooped up noisily, rattling and spilling and crashing and raining down as a giant automated, computer-controlled, homeostatic Budweiser beer factory -- an autofac, as I called it once in a story -- hugs the discarded empties back into herself to recycle them over again into new life, with new, living contents. Exactly as before... or, if the chemists in the Budweiser lab are fulfilling God's divine plan for eterna; progress, with better beer than before.

"We see as through a glass darkly," Paul says in First Corinthians -- will this someday be re-written as: "We see as into a passive infra red scanner darkly?" A scanner which, as in Orwell's 1984, is watching us all the time? Our TV tube watching back at us as we watch it, as amused, or bored, or anyhow somewhat as entertained by what we do as we are by what we see on its implacable face?

This, for me, is too pessimistic, too paranoid. I believe First Corinthians will be rewritten this way: "The passive infra red scanner sees into us darkly," that is, not well enough to really figure us out. Not that we ourselves can really figure each other out, or even our own selves. Which, perhaps, too, is good; it means we are still in for sudden surprises, and, unlike the authorities, who don't like that sort of thing, we may find these chance happenings acting in our behalf, to our favor.

Sudden surprises, by the way -- and this thought may be in itself a sudden surprise to you -- are a sort of antidote to paranoia...or, to be accurate about it, to live in such a way as to encounter sudden surprises quite often or even now and then is an indication that you are not paranoid, because to the paranoid, nothing is a surprise; everything happens exactly as he expected, and sometimes even more so. It all fits into his system. For us, though, there can be no system; maybe all systems -- that is, any theoretical, verbal, symbolic, semantic, etc. formulation that attempts to act as an all-encompassing, all-explaining hypothesis of what the universe is about -- are manifestations of paranoia. We should be content with the mysterious, the meaningless, the contradictory, the hostile, and most of all the unexplainably warm and giving -- total so-called inanimate environment, in other words very much like a person, like the behavior of one intricate, subtle, half-veiled, deep, perplexing, and much to be loved human being to another. To be feared a little, too, sometimes. And perpetually misunderstood. About which we can neither know or be sure; we must only trust and make guesses toward. Not being what you thought, not doing right by you, not being just, but then sustaining you as by momentary caprice, but then abandoning you, or a least seeming to. What it is actually up to we may never know. But at least this is better, is it not, than to possess the self-defeating, life-defeating spurious certitude of the paranoid -- expressed, by a friend of mine, humorously, I guess, like this: "Doctor, someone is putting something in my food to make me paranoid." The doctor should have asked, was that person putting it in his food free, or charging him for it?

To refer back a final time to an early science fiction work with which we are all familiar, the Bible: a number of stories in our field have been written in which computers print out portions of that august book. I now herewith suggest this idea for a future story; that a computer print out a man.

Or, if it can't get that together, then, as a second choice, a very poor one in comparison, a condensed version of the Bible: "In the beginning was the end." Or should it go the other way? "In the end was the beginning." Whichever. Randomness, in time, will sort out which it is to be. Fortunately, I myself am not required to make the choice.

Perhaps, when a computer is ready to churn forth one or the other of these two statements, an android, operating the computer, will make the decision -- although, if I am correct about the android mentality, it will be unable to decide and will print out both at once, creating a self-cancelling nothing, which will not even serve as a primordial chaos. An android might, however, be able to handle this; capable of some sort of decision-making power it might conceivably pick one statement or the other as quote "correct." But no android -- and you will recall and realize that by this term I am summing up that which is not human -- no android would think to do what a bright-eyed little girl I know did, something a little bizarre, certainly ethically questionable in several ways, at least in any traditional sense, but to me truly human: in that it shows, to me, a spirit of merry defiance, of spirited, although not spiritual, bravery and uniqueness:

One day while driving along in her car she found herself following a truck carrying cases of Coca Cola bottles, case after case, stacks of them. And when the truck parked, she parked behind it and loaded the back of her car with cases, as many cases, of bottles of Coca Cola as she could get in. So, for weeks afterward, she and her friends had all the Coca Cola they could drink, free -- and then, when the bottles were empty, she carried them to the store and turned them in for the deposit refund.

To that, I say this: God bless her. May she live forever. And The Coca Cola Company and the phone company and all the rest of it, with their passive infra red scanners and sniperscopes and suchlike -- may they be gone long ago. Metal and stone and wire and thread did never live. But she and her friends -- they, our human future, are our little song. "Who knows if the spirit of men travels up, and the breath of beasts travels down under the Earth?" the Bible asks. Someday it, in a later revision, may wonder, "Who knows if the spirit of men travels up, and the breath of the androids travels down?" Where do the souls of androids go after their death? But -- if they do not live, then they cannot die. And if they cannot die, then they will always be with us. Do they have souls at all? Or, for that matter, do we?

I think, as the Bible says, we all go to a common place. But it is not the grave; it is into life beyond. The world of the future.

Thank you.

PROSPECTING

GREG BURTON

It's a quiet evening, rain beats down gently, softly, carressing the windows and roof. Things grow in the rain -- trees and shrubs, spruce and rhododendron -- they are all and only shades of green. The flower colors, the pinks and yellows and blues, must be searched for between the greens. When the rain quiets its surrus there is another sound, surf beating up the beach, pushed by the southwest wind that prods the sand into eddies and small, fleeting dunes. Ocean Park is a strange town, a quiet town, washed and muted by the constant rain. The taverns do well, but then, if you've read *SOMETIMES A GREAT NOTION* you know about taverns and rains and the Northwest coast. Kesey says you have to spend a winter to understand -- the movie-men didn't bother. They filmed on location on the Oregon coast, but in the summer, and you knew they didn't know. So if you've read the book you can understand, but if you've only seen the movie you won't.

Or maybe if you've spent a Vermont winter, not skiing tourist but working when there's work, snowshoeing around the woods with some Malamutes, playing guitar for drunks in a bar ("Proud Mary" nine or ten times a night so they can tell its music, loud so they know they're alive), maybe then you know rain and the coast.

You can't understand if you stay in the cities and big Northwest towns, huddled up with frightened people waiting to turn us into New York or Los Angeles, a happen-
ing place, man, that seings. You can't understand if you come through on vacation in a big shiny motor home, roughing it with the kids for two weeks in a twenty-six foot aluminum and steel womb, complaining about the lousy reception on your four inch color Sony.

And I can't tell you about it. On paper the edges blur and feather, indistinct. If you draw with pen and ink and brush it's called a wash, a little extra water dissolving the hard-edged line. Washes are subtle -- the same grey on the same paper is the steelblue and greygreen of the Northwest, the sundrenched landscape of California. Golden.

Golden. There's a line of poetry somewhere (Yeats?) about golden girls. A color -- soft, muted -- from long leisurely hours on the sand. Aureate aureoles. And hair (platinum, silverstreaked) warm tawny homage to the sun. Apples of Apollo. And mean. And stupid. They are part of Southern California, and Southern California is In The Deadlands.

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We are stardust

billion year old carbon

We are golden

caught in the Devil's bargain

And we've got to get ourselves back to the garden

So we went to Yasgur's farm to get our 'souls free'. Afterwards - Altamont.

Mean, remember?

Half a million people at Woodstock. Seattle crowded into a few acres (no room for streets or buildings) -- a weekend in the country. At night in the mudpit beams of yellow and red light cut through the haze and smoke to the stage, like tracer bullets from towers in WWII prisoncamps. Or Soledad. A girl walks by, swinging a breadbag "Speed, anyone?" following a man with a similar bag hawking downs. Solid flesh a quarter mile behind us, Mountain playing noise too loud to hear, broken glasses: tripping in a Bosch hell come alive in the Pepsi generation. We had a great time.

When we left a mountain of garbage said goodbye.

Stupid, remember?

It's obvious that Joni Mitchell was playing the Garden of Eden theme (we're outside, got to get back to God's good graces, it'll be all right, but "I fell to be a cog in something turning."). To those who readheard about us it must have seemed an escape from real life, a happy golden dream to take their minds away. For those of us who made the trip, Woodstock was supposed to be a garden.

Maybe it was, but 'Woodstock' (the song) consists of naive images from an earlier time. "Child of God", "Devil's bargain", the Garden. Mitchell splits the world in half, plays the machine against the organic. A simple view, a romantic view: maybe too simple, too romanticized.

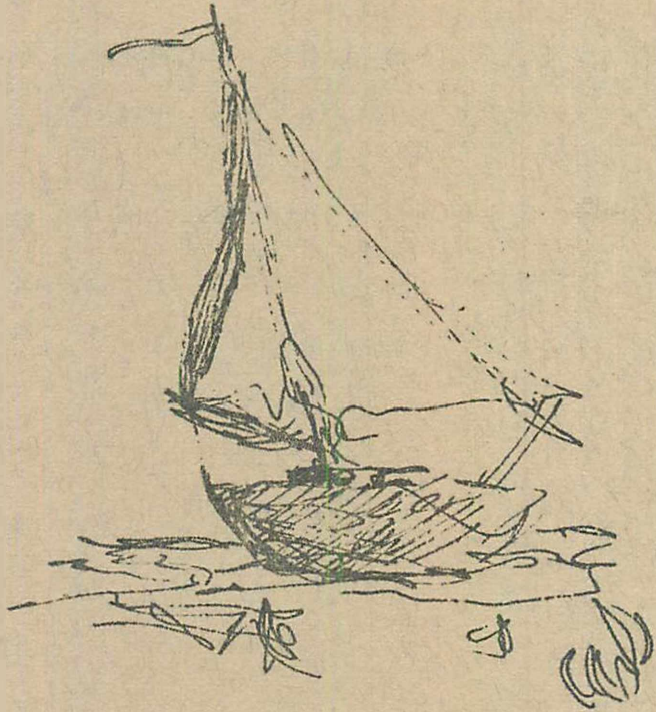
We are obsessed with the garden image, and expulsion from the land of pretty flowers and chirping birds. Idealized, distorted, it is an unconscious racial hallucination of the wilderness from which we have emerged. Preserving the vanishing wilderness, getting back to the land -- these images are as much a distortion of our racial drives as the garden image is of our former state. We are afraid of the wilderness, of nature not to mankind's scale, and we will continue to take it down, tame it, concretize the land with rest areas and scenic viewpoints. Rousseau's noble savage didn't live in a garden -- distortion, mythology. Camping out means staying in a state park with \$20,000 restrooms, cutting wood to heat canned ravioli -- a garden party.

The Garden image is the myth we use to remind ourselves of what we've done, a rationalization for raped land. It comforts us and makes us guilty, and we cleave to it as a repentant adulterer clings to his wife.

The mythology can be useful; it isn't inherently naive. In "Star Pit", Chip Delany works through the same themes of gardens and chosen people, treating them ironically. The similarities between 'Woodstock' and 'Star Pit' aren't surprising; both derive symbolologies from our common cultural heritage (the Bible, gold - Rare, precious, beautiful), both are concerned with the transcendence of commonly held reality. The difference is one of sophistication -- Mitchell regurgitates current myths, Delany

digests them and illuminates his own central concerns.

In Delany's garden everything is functional. Within the mythos of technology, an ecologarium will be viewed as a steady-state machine with living cogs. This is a primary difference between the two views -- everything can be a machine. The Aristotelian dichotomy is exposed as superficial. Further, the ecologarium is technologically enclosed, serving as a referent to human culture circumscribed by a physio/psychological shell (i.e., we are limited to/by what we are.). Viewed from without by the golden, it too might seem a garden.



I have touched earlier upon our obsession with that particular image -- I don't find it accidental that a manifestation Delany uses fits the neck as surely as an albatross.

There is a similar difference of viewpoint of the golden. We, those of us spread across the pages of LIFE, are the golden. Privileged -- we were there. Different -- we can see the beauty. Superior -- we turn bombers into butterflies. Chosen. A pretty picture, airbrushed out of recognition, but it serves the greater culture as it serves Joni Mitchell.

People who want out will contemplate those others, out in the big wide universe they can't find. Maybe it's the golden girls, or the golden hippies of LIFE, or just the golden in intergalactic ships, but they are the dreamimage that banishes here and now, the outlet for the friction that chips cogs. A pressure valve. What is seen is the ideal, a hallucination of happy humanity at play. It satisfies most people.

Some, however, want Cibola enough to search, hoping for tales of the invisible world dimly refracted through the media. Seek and ye shall find. At a price.

As long as they are content to wonder, the dream functions. Wandering, it holds them back -- the quest shatters it. One cannot penetrate the membrane osmotically, the hymen must be broken. Life is the same in the big time -- we're all superstars, says St. Andy. You can do take it with you -- beaches of golden girls glisten under oil-slicks, plants get crushed by escaping people. Just like you. Put a piece of it around your neck, a reminder of your past and what you've done to it. LIFE still prints the pretty pictures, the record is still on the stereo, but the drug has worn off and the image doesn't project anymore. Touch the dream and it changes, says St. Heisenberg -- a needle slips across scratched recordskin, foxing creeps across the page.

And you can't recant.

At sunrise the pines (young dragons all) blot the sky, vindicating the elder Mi.
Full trailer courts, beer bottle beaches -- the tourists have returned for the weekend.
Half the peninsula is barren now -- room for houses, gardens. The clam season closed
a month early to protect the species.

Woodstock may have been a garden, but we trampled all the plants.

The Northwest can't take any more dreamseekers.

Plant your garden somewhere else.

The world's last Dryad

In her forest stood

Iona her name

And redwood her wood

Alone in her existence --

Sad yet free

Until a Man

Came to kill her Tree

She pleaded, she wept, she wailed and she cried

But at long last lovely

Lonely Iona,

The last Dryad,

Died.

DRIBBLINGS

LEON TAYLOR

I don't have anything serious in mind. I haven't had anything serious in mind since someone tried for a fruit cocktail and ended up creating me. Basically this column (not a fifth column. Even tho I approve of fifths, when properly eucholic) is dedicated to the proposition that my mind is about as consistent as an ant gone crazy, and that any attempts on my part to chart out articles to their natural linear deductions will result in some sad geometric shapes. I really am crazy, you see; and in that revelation I have given up all sober pursuits -- maybe I'll just wheel around for a while. Anyway there isn't much you can do about it. Threatening letters won't help, and if you shoot me I'll refuse to lay down. Unless you have a gun permit.

So welcome to DRIBBLINGS, the drip-by-drip journal of my unsteady brain. Squeeze me and I'll just ooze profundity. Luckily I only plan to flit from topic to topic, wherever I can find a bald head, so you'll never be one place deep enough to drown: gurgling a little, now that I can't help. I don't have any pretensions at hand -- not even any post-tensions, which like post-wars are things you have to be careful of. Beware of a writer who bends so far backwards to avoid pretensions that he creates post-tensions. Actually, DRIBBLINGS is designed as a dumping-grounds for Harry Warner Locish ideas -- that is, those trinkets that are nice for bemusal, but pop when you try to expand them into articles. Think of this as a cavalcade of condiments and you'll never regret it.

And anyway, I can't abide writing columns without introductions. There is something capable about introductions: like cigarettes, they settle you by procrastinating what has to be done, convincing you that by ushering you through the back door they have defused the task at hand. The world is made safe for idiocracy! We shall move on.

* * * * *

Have you ever noticed that most people seem in dire need of a carwax? There are attractive shades of dull, particularly those related to Modest Mauve; but the roughshod burnish of average Sams smacks nothing of modesty or attractiveness or any other proper virtue. Quite frankly, it smacks of flat.

And I don't know who to heave stones at. Does the fault lie with the smug listener, a man preening himself each morning on his intelligence and sensitivity, who hear the words but not the electric lines? It may be that we judge a person more by his

vocabulary than his validity, listening more the pretty patterns and clever-set thoughts than for the naked cry always underneath. ---Or then again, maybe the cold-molasses masses are simply shallow. John Doe, processed compnent of a geargone society, alive and functioning, would you like to dial-a-prayer, sir?...the cynics could be, uh, right. Distasteful as the admission may be. People might be cattle and cattle might only be capable of cardboard communication, slipping comfortably into cliches and canasta to while away the while. ("Not enuff for ye?" --- "Wilson was an idealist.").

I'm a bigot, of course, but I find the last assumption so ridiculous that I'd like to out it in a pair of pantaloons. But even clowns can be disturbing...

What brought this squall on was a recent wound of mine, by the way. A fractured right wrist sustained during a particularly ferocious bout of volleyball (not as hard as it sounds, really. I made a high jump for a set shot and landed uncompromisingly on my ass and my wrist. I am proud to say that my coccyx survived splendidly -- nothing in that. Flimsy bones require casts, however, and for the past three months I have been on the college treadmill sporting a shiny new plaster of paris arm. And what do you think people remark to me?

Fast cut to elevator scene including Taylor and nervous passenger (people riding 'vators are always nervous, dartin a furtive glance at their fellow trekkers and then steadfastly fixing their gaze on the little flashing numbers above the doors. Probably the most valuable advertising space in America). On the proverbial way up. Passenger glances at Taylor, glances at Taylor's horror arm, then Here It Comes --

"Say, when are ya gonna get that thing off?"

And Taylor giving a Pavlovian bark: "June 26, 9:35 A.M."

It's not that I mind replying. Hell, I'd rather answer bloodless questions than not say anything at all. But there is the gory question of sanity involved; and how sane can it be for a human being to mechanically ask the same question, receiving the same perfunctory answer, a half-dozen times a day? I'm serious. My puzzlement is furthered by the fact that if it were Johnny Smith armed with the cast, I would Probably initiate the same damn thing.

Nobody's leaving you out, either. Why do you retell the same joke to the same friends when he knows and you know? Why do you ask after the family dog, when not even Lassie could give a hang about the family dog? Why do you knead your cliches and maxims with such loving care, trot them out whenever an occasion seems to fit or threatens to, and then extract the weary routine's response from your companions? Why, in lieu of communication, do you demand conversation -- or in lieu of that, small talk (small indeed! It barely squibbles) -- or, in that final desparate measure where two intelligent human beings are sitting frantically gaping at one another, turn on the TV or radio or anything that makes noise -- why do you? Love's a strange thing.

And the hilarity of the situation is -- for yes, Virginia, there is a hilarity -- that confronted by a sheet of paper as blank as your friend's face, you would not hesitate to scribble it full of brilliant conceptions, fond conundrums, incisive insights into the morass of man, and jubilant poetry to make it all ring. And then you would inquire after your brother's little toe.

Did Thoreau say it? -- "So Maine and Texas now have a telegraphic system enabling them to instantaneously communicate. But it may be that Maine and Texas have nothing to communicate."

* * * * *

I found this book in the supermarket's most deliciously illicit department, the Coverless Book Corner. You know, where all the faded bestsellers of yesteryears get ripped off upon and thrown into a cruel melange including dire textbooks and How-To-

Do-It manuals (HowToDoItism, our most devout religion. It isn't enough that we make spiritualism out of technology, but we also must make a technology out of spiritual matters: How To Win Friends, How To Lead A Better Life...How To Die, I shouldn't wonder. America isn't a nation: it's a boxtop of rules). It dates back to 1952; it's entitled IN MY OPINION, one of those pithy cliches of brusque newspaperment-turned-authors, endeavoring manfully not to be witty; and the author is Orville Prescott, the seventh terror of the barbarian West. Or was, when he was star book reviewer for the New York Times. He was Tough, and there wasn't a chance of you forgetting it.

Anyway, in thumbing through the book, I rather fell across this passage:

"A coterie writer is usually blessed with genuine talents; but he uses them to write peculiar, artificially mannered novels of strictly limited appeal which are extravagantly overpraised by the few critics whose pride is to admire books which lesser mortals don't appreciate. This kind of thing, of course, has been going on since the invention of movable type. The reefs of literature are strewn with the wrecks of deflated reputations, the reputations of authors who once knew a brief hour of transient glory. Some critic intent on displaying his own unusual discrimination "discovered" them. Others scrambled on the bandwagon, pretending that they had been aware of So-and-So's unique importance all the time. If So-and-So's books were written in a Mandarin style of painful artificiality, if they were symbolic or ambiguous or opaque, if they required a major feat of self-hypnosis on the reader's part for appreciation of their trivial merits, so much the better.

"A characteristic example of a coterie writer is James Branch Cabell, a minor writer of lacquered fantasies whose overevaluation in the 1920's was something fantastic. Mr. Cabell was a graceful stylist; but his sniggering sort of wit appealed principally to adolescents proud of the fact that they were "sophisticated" enough to recognize Mr. Cabell's far from subtle indelicacies."

I've never read Cabell, so I'll hold my tongue still. I just thought that it was an interesting phenomena: Prescott, ashen and forgotten, a name to be remembered in the attic, while Cabell is out in handsome new editions from Ballantine Paperbacks. Besides, there is great fun in picturing James Blish as a sniggering adolescent.

One of my profs has remarked that the world's most dangerous occupation is to create ideas. I've decided that it is even more transient to criticize ideas, in recorded fashion -- even with the blessings of the New York Times.

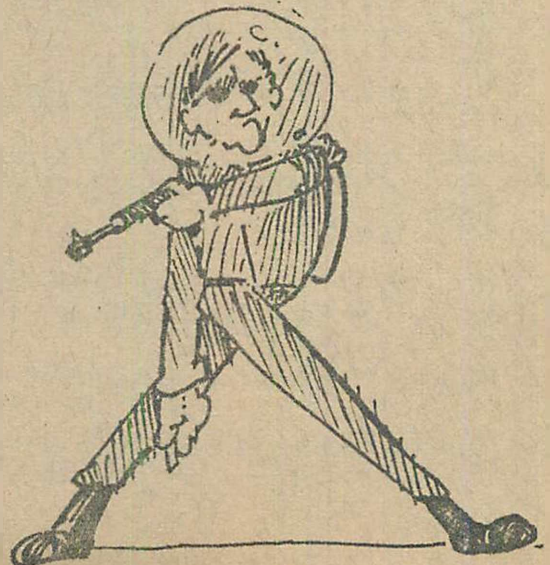
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When the heavens begin showering staples, then you know some damned fanthing is being judged in neglect. And if you think that extracting those silvery buggers out of a fanzine can be painful, try plucking a few out of your groin sometime. Aaugh!!

But meanwhile I got tired of glittering like Liberace and vmet to my faanish altar for Communion.

"oh, great Ghodfather," I cried out like a broken man, my arms aching in supplication toward the crankcase, "Where did I go wrong!!"

"Mainly in Seymour, Indiana," intoned the maj-



estic voice like an overhead light. My Ghodfather in Heaven dresses impeccably in natty sports coats and collects Bronx cheers. He is also rich enough to afford this fulltime ghost writer who comes up with all his great lines.

I munched on a Communion Wafer. "Ghodfather," I said, "lately you've been persecuting me like I was Hitler taking the Fifth Amendment at Nuremburg. Why?"

"Because you've sinned!" the mighty presence thundered, picking his nose with a lightning fork.

"I sin, you sin, we all sin. Even Spot sins. Why am I special?"

"Reginald!" Ghodfather cried, using my beloved whipping-name, "never let me hear you use that tone of voice toward me again! Neos have been arraigned before the Syndicate for less!"

"I'm very sorry, Bobo," I mumbled humbly. Anything to keep the greasy codger happy. "But the truth has still escaped me. Repeat it to me: what have I done wrong?"

"My boy! You Have Not Been Reading Your Fanzines!"

"Oh, that." Relief. "Well, you see, Ghodfather, I've been saving CRAP ON PARADE, just for the savouring, but if you ---"

"No No No!" Buttons pop out of the sky. "I don't mean reading recent fanzines! That is an insult, an inepper, an insugar! Nay, lad, you must get an education. You must read the good ol' fanzine collection I gave you for Christmess. My boy, You Shall Be Saved!"

"Oh, that." Anxiety. "But Ghodpapa, the Real World is clamoring for me and I just don't have time for ---"

"But me no butts! (Unless it's tender ass). Crosschild, you were not always a fan. I pulled you out of the gutters of Hollywood, fed you, bathed you, made you forget that you were ever an actor. But muck can always be slopped back to muck. Disobey me, boy, and I swear that I'll stuff you back into that Sodom of Jezebels, force you to take a leading role in a gangster movie, write a script so explosive that I'll --- "

"No! You don't mean ---"

"Yes! I'll make you a reel you can't defuse!"

When death's around, come on down. What could I do? --- I went to reread my zines.

('Zines'. It even sounds like a disease.)

Mainly what I got out of it was a cricket in my neck and a pair of eyetracks fit for the Indianapolis 500. I also gasped up with one thought (one thot for seven hours. My familiar quota).

Because this is a family magazine, I cannot show you my sore neck or my outraged eyes. Watch Godzilla sometime. However, I can bequeath you with my thot.

It is this: whatever happened to the good ol' fen of 1969?

People like David Malone, Banks Mebane, Al Snider, Dave Burton, Dave Lewton, Bill Guy, Joe Pumilia --- where'd they all kiss off? They weren't WARNOON, but they were

worth a warwhoop, and I miss them sloppily. The ol' Bang Gang.

Look what they've done to our throng.

Of course, some of them wade back, by vice or spice. Bob Stahl re-emerged under the aegis of CEPHEID VARIABLE. Lisa Tuttle closed up shop at MATHOLI but hurriedly moved into the collegiate TOMORROW AND.... Dave Gorman philosophizes in, philosophizes out. Blessed be the name of Gorman. But mostly, the fanned are making careers out of being missing persons.

So I want to propose a mission for all you asshunters out there. Let's make coercion a good thing again and drag the misguided back into our fold (if failing that, then our spindle or our mutilate).

First, we need committees. One to write form letters ("Help preserve our national fanlife"), one to fake stamps, another to psychically deduce the correct addresses (retired fen seem to have an unnatural instinct to migrate south --- and I mean South America, Venezuela if possible). Then we'll have a secret police (no organization is truly secret until someone suspects it), and they'll carry all sorts of groovy sterilizers, just to be sexy, but their primary duty will be to delouse the penitents. Mundanity is a contagious thing, from the ground up. Also, we need an alibi for impressive uniforms --- it seems that, next to fanzines and cannibalism, the fan's greatest love is costumes. Scratch a fan and you'll peek a frustrated clown.

But anyway, the Main Problem (every organization must have a Main Problem) is how to rope 'em back. We don't have enough femmefans for sex lures, and veterans of the Staple War 9 the big one) are hard to torture.

This hauls us to money: the substance which, if it cannot stop insanities, can at least start them.

Bribery is what I have in mind, in fact.

However, we are talking about corrupting rust. How can we proffer a hypnotic incentive to the Well-Traveled Fan, when he has already treated himself to every temptation known? Our Main Problem is quite a Problem.

Has anybody thought about this? Once a fan leaves our happy circle, adequately satisfied, what can we dangle to bring him back? Or, for that matter, what does the Great Unwashed dangle to lead him there? It would seem that, having voluntarily left both possible worlds, there is nothing in either that the honorably retired fan needs. Which frees him to concentrate on his wants.

Know what I think? ---Those ex-fans may be the world's happiest citizens. When one chooses to live with mediocrity below him, then one must have a strong inner pole. One can ask for little more from living.

--- leon taylor
box 89
seymour, indiana
47274

THE RED BOOK OF WESTMARCH

REVIEWS

Pstalemate by Lester del Rey. G.P. Putnam's Sons. \$4.95

After too long a hiatus on his part from the corps of producing science fiction novelists, it is cheering to see this new novel by Les del Rey; particularly cheering, since it is a cracking-good novel, a well-told and convincing psi-fi effort. In candor, lest I'm later accused of misleading anyone as to the merits of Pstalemate through an overly benign review, I freely admit to having long held Mr. del Rey's fictional manufacturing abilities in high regard; furthermore, I'm a bit of a sucker for the psi-oriented type of tale. Nevertheless, making every allowance for biases on my part, I'm still led to contend that this novel is to be ranked among the top half-dozen or so of those I've read in last year's science-fictional crop.

In essence, the novel is the story of a man's discovery and confrontation with the shattering fact that he is the possessor of rapidly burgeoning extrasensory powers, a mutant with both telepathic and precognitive faculties. The telling of how Harry Bronson, a young and talented automotive engineer, first awakens to the curse of his wild talents, how he goes about trying to cope with his outreaching psyche and to seek the nature, origin and meaning of it in order to avert the madness that it seems to be leading to, how he reacts to his social milieu as a result of his psi-powers and interacts with the novel's well-sketched subsidiary characters - both psis and non-psis, all combine to make a fascinating, hard-to-lay-down book.

The author is enough the hard sciencefictioneer that he has done his research; the descriptions of the psychic phenomenon that occur in the story are plausible, and the ruminations upon the likely origins and character of psychic phenomena seem soundly speculative and extrapolated from a solid grounding in today's genetics, parapsychology and psychobiology. He is enough the writer, schooled in the demanding classroom of the "grab 'em and hold 'em", plot-emphasizing, pulp-writing era, that he holds the reader completely from chapter to chapter, conflict to conflict, from climax to climax. (This knack for reader-grabbing plotting is a technical expertise that this old pulp-hound wishes more of the younger sf-writing fraternity would attempt to emulate.

We seem to be getting more and more of poetic imagery these days in the genre, but it seems to become increasingly more rare to encounter involving, moving, suspenseful and entertaining stories.

The human element is extraordinarily strong in this story; that is, I think del Rey has appreciably surpassed the dramatic norm of the sf genre in creating some truly living, in-depth characterization and handling the more emotional scenes with keen sensitivity. A particularly poignant highpoint of the story is a scene in which Bronson, having finally overcome an amnesiac conditioning of early boyhood, recalls the traumatizing tragedy of his near death in childhood at the hands of his deranged mother and confronts the precognition of his own descent into psi-induced madness. This revelation drives him into an infantile psychic regression. He has collapsed into a fetal posture upon the floor of his apartment and has urinated all over himself, returning in mind to a disturbing sexual experience of childhood: he is masturbating and groveling upon the kitchen floor when Ellen, his lover in the story and a fellow esper who has telepathically sensed his condition, enters and through psychological and sexual ministrations lovingly nurses him back from his abject infantilism. From the typewriter of a careless or emotionally inept author such a scene would become grossly pornographic. (One shudders to think of the pointless carnality with which Bug Jack Baron fraternity of boy-sf-authors may have endowed such a scene.) It is a tribute to the author's humane sensitivity, psychological perceptivity and command of verbal description that he projects this situation with great tenderness and evokes an overpowering empathy and understanding from the reader rather than nauseous revulsion. This adept handling of the human element is present throughout the work and contributes greatly to the impact and vividness of what may well be del Rey's finest novel.

Pstalemate is a singularly mature and positive novel. It emphasizes the admirable side of the human creature, his stubborn lashing out for survival against both the perversities and crabbedness of the physical cosmos and the darkness and mystery of his own interior psychical microcosmos. It's too bad that this novel hasn't yet appeared in a paperback or bookclub edition. The reviewer suspects that most Hugo voters and nominators buy their sf in those more economical forms and that to date this Putnam edition has received little reading in fandom at large. In the interim, in case this novel doesn't achieve publication in cheaper form, you could do much worse than to spring five bucks for this hardback.

--- Reviewed by ~~EL \$w44pp~~ Bill Marsh

Note to editor: At those points in the above review whereat the reviewer recognized that he might be becoming excessively idiosyncratic or prejudicially opinionated, he has isolated such remarks in parentheses. The editor has permission to delete such portions from the published review, in interest of sweetness and light and a universally beloved fanzine. /What? And spoil all your gut reaction? The readers will pick on you, not me./

The Day Before Tomorrow by Gerard Klein. DAW Books. 95¢

This novel opens with a portrayal of a thirty-fifth century in which humankind has attained a near mastery over time and space. The major portion of the Galaxy is governed by the Federation under the dictatorship of the Arque, a despot who pushes the stability and endurance of his galactic empire to the nth degree. With only the minutest of exceptions, everyone in the Federation has his place in the galactic order rigidly prescribed and proscribed. It is a civilization of specialists, caste-ordered-- a true "law and order" existence. One exception is the time exploration and action teams. These are time and space commandos; scientific and technological generalists in contrast to the reigning specialization, who are on spatiotemporal patrol and assignment to assure that the galactic hegemony of the Federation remains eternally sovereign and unchallenged. The story is basically one of the experiences of a seven-

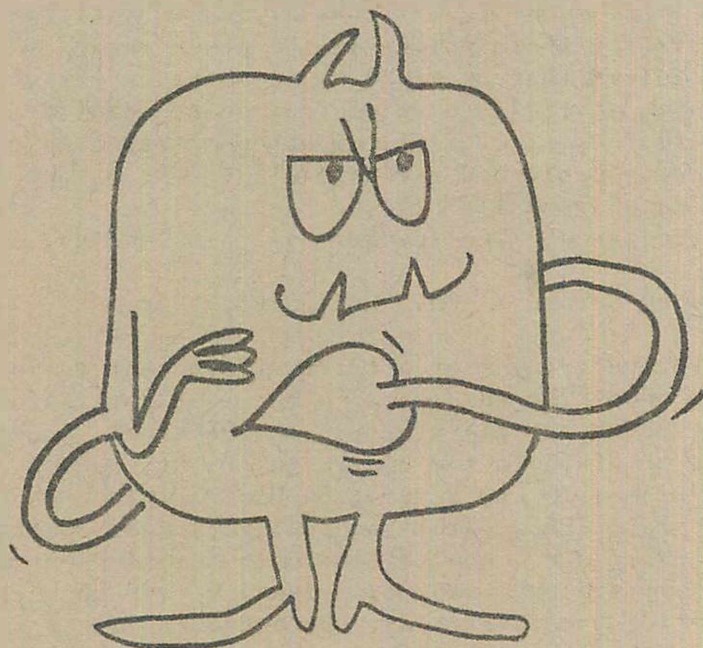
man team launched through time and space to what is assumed to be a primitive planet. Their mission is to change and influence its history and development, to see that it can never threaten the Federation.

Arriving on Ygone in the Sphinx Constellation, two hundred and fifty years in their own past, the team is met with frustrating bafflement and frightening mystery. Their ultra-sophisticated survival gear and weaponry, their time-spanning mobility, all the technological wonders with which they had cowed and subverted so many other obstreperous planetary civilizations developing inimically to the Federation prove useless. Some surreptitious adversary has foiled them with a superior, godlike control over space, time and matter. They are helpless and stranded on Ygone two hundred and fifty years in their pasts. Their assignment has become a true mission of the impossible!

The remainder of the novel portrays the adventures, both physical and psychological, that the group undergoes in discovering the nature and identity of the strange and dauntless force they have come up against. Concentrating upon the character, Jorgensen, the leader of the team, the author convincingly limns the cultural shock and moral and philosophical reappraisals that torment and remold the seven as a result of their confrontation with a force incomparably greater than their theretofore assumed omnipotent Federation.

The setting fluctuates boldly through time and space and the author makes it all come off with imaginative and entertaining lucidity. Of all the colorful inventions with which this novel is strewn, the forest city of Dalaam struck this reader as the most vividly exciting. This setting, its gentle and wise people and their symbiotic relationship with the forest, the forest itself which constituted both the structural city and furnished most of the physical wants of its inhabitants, all were almost Vancelike in the ingenuity, clarity and detail of fictional construction.

It is a short and spare novel -- forty-five to fifty thousand words, perhaps -- but packs a wallop despite its brevity. The blurb on the back cover says that the author, Gerard Klein, has been called the "Ray Bradbury" of France. It further identifies him as the best of the modern Gallic sf writers. I see no validity in this alleged likeness to Bradbury. Rather, I would describe Klein's sf -- somewhat riskily



based upon reading this one Klein novel -- as more of a meld, combining the technologically speculative power of a Poul Anderson or Isaac Asimov, the socio-historical and philosophical musing-range of a minor Stapledon, and topped off with a peppery dash or so of the unrestrained psychological probings and metaphysical imaginings of a Philip K. Dick.

This is reportedly the first translation of Klein's work into English. It reads remarkably well for a translated work, better than too large a bulk of the sf that is written originally in English. If The Day Before Tomorrow is at all typical of the calibre of Klein's normal sf, then all those who really enthuse over sf which is far-ranging, fearlessly imaginative, yet retentive of a poignantly human focus should be writing DAW Books and other publishers in the field asking for further translations of this excitingly competent author's work.

This novel is one of the finest entries to date in what has been an estimable list from DAW Books. Get it and read it, and if you don't find it a grabber you are not a true aficionado of the genre.

--- Reviewed by Bill Marsh ---

20 Years of Analog/Astounding Science Fiction-Science Fact 1952-1971 by Jan A. Lorenzen. Locomotive Workshop. \$2.50

This is an index of the fiction, editorials, cover symbols, articles, cartoons and artists that have appeared in ASF in a period stretching from 1950 (if that's not an error) to 1971. Fiction and articles are arranged by author, and within each author, by date; a similar system is used for the artists. I find this system very useful in the series indexing that I've been doing for the Collector's Bulletin, but aside from that, it's fascinating, despite several errors (possibly of fact, possibly through typing, and in at least one case, of omission), and I recommend it highly.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Android At Arms by Andre Norton. Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, Inc. 1971. \$5.75

I have the feeling that Miss Norton got half-way through this book before she decided that she either didn't like what the story was turning into, or didn't know what to do next. Just so it wouldn't be a total loss, however, she shifted two of the main characters into an alternate world, leaving loose ends worthy of van Vogt. The end result is a very confused story, not bad as such things go, but certainly not up to her usual level of performance.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Cloak of Aesir by John W. Campbell, Jr. Lancer Books 75333-095 95¢

This is apparently a paperback reprint of a hard-cover book of the same name that came out from Shasta in 1952. The book contains either 4 or 10 stories, depending upon how you count, and is both revealing about Campbell, and disappointing. As Asimov says in his introduction, Campbell was a man with some strong biases, and these show up, often to the detriment of the stories. If you, like me, have been reading for years about Campbell's classics as a writer, I think that this volume will disappoint you; there is only one story that is good enough to be printed today ("Forgetfulness"). The rest, including the title story, are interesting representatives of an era now past, but no great shakes as anything other than adventure stories with a gloss of psuedo-science...if that much.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Timetracks by Keith Laumer. Ballantine SF 02575-X-095 95¢

This is billed as an anthology of parallel world stories (plus one of the funniest

deal-with-the-devil stories ever written), all of which are supposed to be Laumer at his best. Leaving out the excellent science and sorcery story previously mentioned, there is one ("The Other Sky") that has been anthologized too many times already, one ("The Time Thieves") that formed part of the background for one of the better books in Laumer's Imperium series, one ("The Timesweepers") that's just plain good (if you ignore several loose ends), and one ("Mind Out of Time") that I just plain can't stand. Oddly enough a generally excellent book.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Deryni Checkmate by Katherine Kurtz. Ballantine Books Adult Fantasy 02598-9-125
\$1.25

This is the second in the Deryni series. This book skillfully adds on conflict where it appeared there was room for none, and does an excellent job of broadening our view of this world. Unfortunately, Miss Kurtz has chosen to end the book just where things start to happen, so that the book is, despite its excellence, woefully incomplete.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

The Hieros Gamos of Sam and An Smith by Josephine Saxon. Curtis Books 502-07197-075
75¢

I presume that this book is intended to be an allegory, mainly because that's the only way the story makes any sense. It starts off like a poorly written after-the-disaster (apparently a plague) story and goes downhill all the way. Howcum a boy who hasn't seen another human since he was four years of age can read? And why does he pay so much attention to the color of his tie? If you can answer those questions without gagging on the answer, you might enjoy this book...but I doubt it.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

The Doomsday Exhibit by Paul W. Fairman. Lancer Books 74782-075 75¢

This book is labeled as being "in the chilling tradition of H.P. Lovecraft." That's a crock...Paul W. Fairman is Robert Nathan in a clever plastic disguise, which I personally think is a very ghod thing! Nathan is a top fantasy writer whose stuff is almost unknown to fantasy fan, which is a pity. Fairman does a very good imitation of Nathan, and in a length which Nathan himself apparently ignores, the novelette. I like this book, and I'm eagerly awaiting Fairman's next. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Swordsmen and Supermen. No editor listed. Centaur Press. 75¢

This is an oddly uneven book. The cover starts off with a Finlay-like illo which is attributed to Finlay in the book...but signed 'Porgil 37' (it's good, so why say it's Finlay if it's not?). Inside, the contents are equally different from the usual s&s anthology. The first story is "Meet Cap'n Kidd" by Robert E. Howard, which tells the story of how Howard's genial, if somewhat homicidal cowboy hero, Breckinridge Elkins, first got his horse; a tall tale it is, good it is, even fantasy it is,.... but swords & sorcery it is not. The next story, "Death of a Hero" by Jean D'Esme, apparently is a chapter from a 1924 lost-race book called The Red Gods, and while there is a fair amount of blood-letting, too much is lost in the lack of the background material that appeared in the previous chapters, not to mention a heroine about to consent to undergo a FATE WORSE THAN DEATH if only the not-too-noble savage will rescue her boyfriend/brother? from the evil priests, etc. "Wings of Y'vrn" by Darrel Crombie is really the only first-rate story in this book. And excellent blend of science and sorcery (he's one of the few writers I've seen who could do it convincingly), this fast-paced adventure is quite well done, and only slightly marred by the fact that he's screwing around with mythology (read the last line and see what I mean). "The Slave of Marathon" by Arthur H. Howden Smith is part of a 1920's serial about a sword

that makes its possessors nearly invincible and its effect on history. This particular historical event is the Battle of Marathon, and though this is a great idea for a series, if the rest of the stories were as second rate as this one, I'm afraid that it was wasted. Last comes Lin Carter's "How Sargoth Lay Siege to Zaremm", a good imitation Dunsany marred by a poor ending. This is really a very minor anthology...but it is interesting in that there are two writers in it who have not already been anthologized...indicating, perhaps, that the mine of readable s&s isn't quite played out after all.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

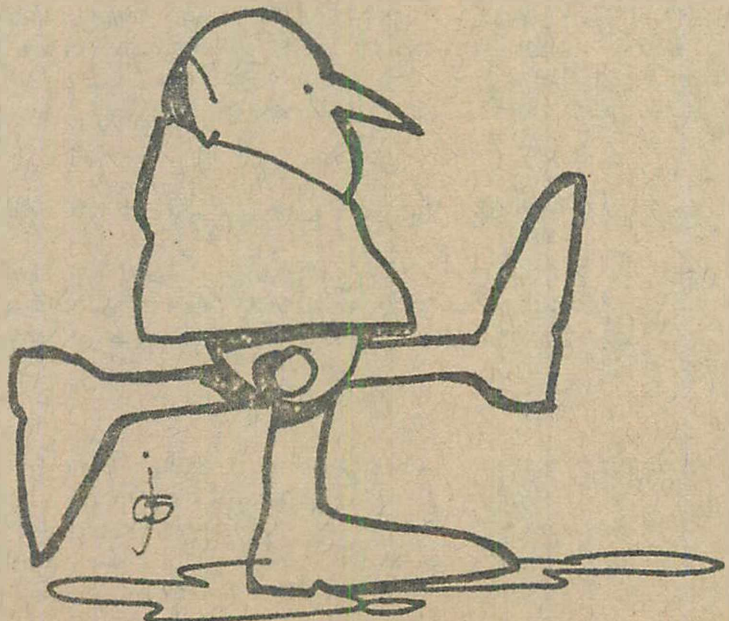
Gods From Outer Space by Erich von Daniken. Bantam Books Q7276. \$1.25

Unlike his previous book (Chariots of the Gods), von Daniken has come up with a loser this time. In his last book von Daniken attempted to prove that Earth has been visited by extra-terrestrials who taught man. His case was weak, though he did present some facts which (if correct) would seem to indicate either that he was right, or that this isn't the first high-technology culture that Earth has produced. This time, with only one or two exceptions, he has presented a mass of legend which he admits he accepts uncritically as garbled truth, and I think also some doubtful translations of various such documents into English. There is only one item of real interest: a reputed translation of some stone tablets (found in conjunction with a burial that may be humanoid rather than homonid or human, and some ancient Chinese/Tibetan legends) which, so the translator claims, contains the records of a group of E-T travellers who crashed on Earth some 12,000 years ago and who were wiped out by the local humans due to their "great ugliness", according to the ancient legend. However, since von Daniken got this story second or third hand from a Russian and apparently made no attempt to check the story, I find even this suspect, since: a) the story might be the Russian's idea of a joke, and b) translating documents without some sort of referent language is notoriously imprecise, and may give as many translations as there are translators. If you, like me, find this area of speculation interesting (even if you also disagree with the conclusions and doubt the "evidence"), get this book.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Blue Face by G.C. Edmondson. DAW Books #17. 95¢ (Original Title: CHAPAYECA)

In one of his poems, L. Sprague deCamp comments on the fact that the heroes that we read about in fantasy and science fiction are always healthy, never suffer (or, if they are suffering, still manage to function quite well) from broken bones or internal disorders or anything else that would put most of us in the hospital for weeks. Well, here's a hero who is functional...but almost nothing works right. He doesn't cause events, he is carried along by them, and (worse for him) by the end of the book, he is nearly immortal and effectively invulnerable to any weapon on earth (up to and beyond an A-Bomb blast). This being the case, he sets out to conquer the world so that he can eat without getting



gas pains...which may sound like a non sequitor, but makes perfect sense in this weird, funny and quite interesting book. In general, I'd say that this is above this author's "Mad Friend" stories... and very nearly up to THE SHIP THAT SAILED THE TIME STREAM. RECOMMENDED.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

The Day Before Tomorrow by Gerard Klein. DAW Books #11. 95¢

I found this book to be rather disappointing. A translation from the French, either the translation is entirely uninspired, the book is as dull in French as it comes across in English...or both. I find only one redeeming facet in the entire book: the concept of a society of people who share memories with their cognates in alternate worlds (yes, I know about Leiber's CHANGE WAR stories; the memories there weren't of actual co-existing parallel worlds but of might-have-beens that had been retroactively undone.) Even the cover is dull...Josh Kirby cannot compare with Kelly Freas.

Genius Unlimited by John T. Phillifent. DAW Books #16. 95¢

Take two INTERSTELLAR SECURITY Corporation agents who wear uniforms that compare favorably with Heinlein's Mobile Infantry armor (but look like skin-tight body-suits), one female police agent who has to stay better than half-soused to keep from being deafened by telepathic static from the people around her, and a society of anti-social geniuses, and you come up with a top-notch adventure story, fast and interesting. RECOMMENDED.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Dinosaur Beach by Keith Laumer. DAW Books #21. 95¢

This is an expanded version of the short story "The Time Sweepers" which I enjoyed very much in the August, 1969 issue of Analog. As a result, the expanded version comes across as the same short story with a lot of padding. Don't get me wrong... the expansion is well done, I'm just too familiar with the short version, which is two major characters and well over 100 pages shorter. However, if you haven't read the original (or if you have and aren't bugged by expanded short stories) this is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

Sleepwalker's World by Gordon R. Dickson. DAW Books #28. 95¢

As usual with Dickson, the hero of this story is Superman without his red, yellow and blue long-johns, and that's about the only thing I have against it...it's another one of Dickson's goddamn Superman stories. It's a good story, of course; Dickson is good in this field...but I wish to God he'd expand his repertoire. RECOMMENDED.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

The Regiments of Night by Brian N. Ball. DAW Books #19. 95¢

This is a confused and confusing book about a bunch of people who dig their way into a thousand-year-old military establishment run by a bunch of insane computers who are still fighting a war that's been over for centuries. Fast and engrossing. RECOMMENDED.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

The Dreaming City by Michael Moorcock. Lancer Books 75376. 95¢

The Sleeping Sorceress by Michael Moorcock. Lancer Books 75375. 95¢

These two books expand the known history of Elric. The Sleeping Sorceress tells of part of Elric's fight with Theleb K'aarna, while The Dreaming City tells how he lost control of Yyrkoon and thus of his throne. Unfortunately, this series is beginning

to pall. We know, after all, how it will all end, and Moorcock has been so busily writing of all the various Avatars of the Eternal Champion that this one simply has not the interest he had when he was the only one. One amusing note on the otherwise quite excellent covers is that they portray the beardless albino as a bearded Negro. All in all, these are good, but nothing to get excited about.

--- Reviewed by Ken Scher ---

//I thought you might like to compare what Ken had to say about the Elric stories with what I had written before I received his reviews. //

The Dreaming City by Michael Moorcock. Lancer Books 75376. 95¢

Elric Is Back! That's what it says on the cover, and indeed he is. I was a little leary of starting a new Moorcock venture into the realm of swords and sorcery after having plodded through that last trilogy, Knight of Swords, Queen of Swords and King of Swords. I had gotten quite tired of being whipped back and forth through the fifteen planes, and Michael is bound and determined to use planes in his books. He's hung up on them. This novel is more straightforward than many of his works, however, and provides a pretty good adventure for Elric, Emperor of Melniboné. His adversary is a prince of the court, Yyrkoon, and Elric is in love with Yyrkoon's sister, Cymoril. Yyrkoon's attempt on Elric's life, his taking of his sister and going away from Melniboné to make preparations to win the throne from Elric, provide the basic conflict of the story. There are some nice sorcerous touches: The Ship Which Sails Over Land And Sea, The Tunnel Under The Marsh, and The Pulsing Cavern. One of Moorcock's more interesting characters is Rackhir, Warrior Priest of Phum, who aids Elric in the last third of the book. Sequel is also on the market; it's entitled The Sleeping Sorceress. Recommended only for S&S freaks or Moorcock lovers.

--- Reviewed by Frank Denton ---

Darkover Landfall by Marion Zimmer Bradley. DAW Books #36. 95¢

I'm a sucker for the Darkover stories. I've said that before, and it looks as though this won't be the last time I get a chance to say so. Marion has a good thing going and I think she knows it. Here she's backed up to the very beginning. Let me quote the last two lines of the novel: "A century later they named the planet DARKOVER. But Earth knew nothing of them for two thousand years." Most of us are used to the Darkover stories in which the planet is a sort of crossroads in the galaxy with a huge spaceport, but the people have a fierce pride in their own culture and traditions and there is little interchange between the Darkoverans and the outsiders. In Darkover Landfall we have the story of the very first people to land on the planet; by accident a group of colonizers crash and discover that they will not be able to repair the ship and continue with their flight. Essentially the story is of the colonists getting on with the business of living, exploring, discovering, beginning the basic tasks needed to insure life. Yet there are strange things which happen on the planet, notably the ghost wind which blows a riotousness and a seige of debauchery which upsets the thinking and morals of the colonists. There is also the first inkling of the power of the strange blue stones which are so important in the later stories, and the first meeting with the strange creatures of the high forests. Highly recommended if you are Dark-



overan by adoption or your last name is MacAran.

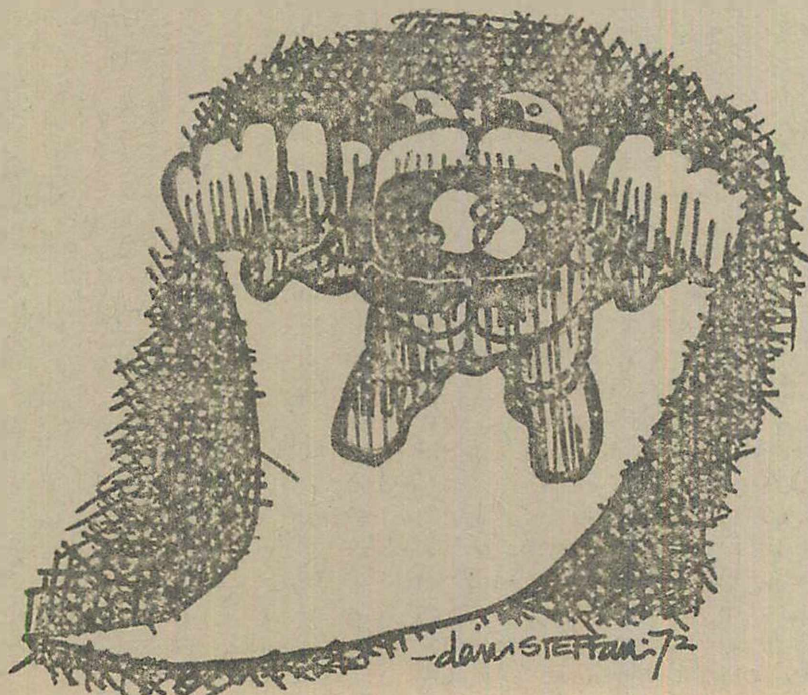
Transit to Scorpio by Alan Burt Akers. DAW Books #33. 95¢

Shades of Edgar Rice Burroughs. It's nice to know that people can write this kind of book and still have it published and bought. It has a lot of hokey stuff in it, but if you like things in the Burroughs tradition, you'll probably like this. You see, this guy has a fascination with scorpions, and then he gets hooked on the Constellation Scorpio and then the Star Lords or some such take him there, just as he's about to be burned at the stake because the ship on which he was serving was broken up in a gale and he was washed ashore and captured by slave traders. Do you get the idea that a lot of things happen in this book? You're right. That's only one chapter. Well, there's a lot of fun in this book if it's your bag. Far Antares has a number of different peoples and cultures to play around in and Dray Prescott gets to play in a lot of them. And just as he's found and married his lady love, Delia of the Blue Mountains, he's dumped back to Earth by the Star Lords or whomever. Aw, shucks! Well, another book, maybe. There's an awful lot of wordiness in this volume and some terribly stilted sentences, but the story moves right along regardless.

--- Reviewed by Frank Denton ---

Under The Green Star by Lin Carter. DAW Books #30. 95¢

Well, Lin Carter has done the same kind of thing as Akers did in the above book, but he does it one hell of a lot better. He transports a fellow to another planet (not by Star Lord's command, but by astral projection) and puts him in another's body. Well, the usual sorts of adventures take place, but the setting is a forest of trees which grow miles high and cities are located along the branches. I probably should have done this review first, because this is a much better book than the Scorpio. I'd assume that Lin has a lot more experience at writing than Akers does. Everyone likes to poke fun at Lin's books, but this one is well-written and enjoyable. The sub-genre is not a popular one with the bulk of sf's readers, but for those who like this sort of thing (I'm one, obviously. I chose to read it, didn't I?), this is a pretty good one. Lin leaves the ending hanging, with a sequel obviously in the offing. Nice Tim Kirk cover and interior illos on this one, as well as on the Akers book.



YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN. Gh, that's a stupid title for parting remarks. I might make a good title for a novel though, come to think of it. Anyway, I've just about had it with this zine. It's amazing how disgusted one can get with oneself (notice how easily I slipped into that impersonal so it didn't smart so much) when one has not published a zine for over six months? So I'm feeling none too clever at this point, and mostly just want to get done with it.

LETTERS came in by the batch in response to Ash-Wing 10; in droves, well, a gaggle or a pride, would you believe? One.... As a matter of fact, there were quite a few letters, but I have chosen to dispense with them. Not everyone gets a dispensation every day, do they? So consider yourselves lucky. I did hear from a lot of people for which I thank you all. I hope that some of you are not disappointed because you don't see your names here in egobooish lights. But the zine would go on for another 10 or 15 pages, and I'm just not about to do it this time. Besides the letters are so darn old that they wouldn't make much sense any more. There will be a letter col again next time, but probably excerpted judiciously just a bit so as not to be overwhelming. I know that I had letters from Bill Patterson, Marci Helms, Bob Presson, Terry Ballard, Randall Larson, Darrell Schweitzer, Ken Scher, Bob Vardeman, Bill Marsh, Mike Horvat, Norman Hochberg, Sheryl Birkhead, Joe Siclari, George Wells, Mark Francis, Harry Warner, Ben Indick, Dan Goodman, Mike Glicksohn, Rose Hogue, D.Gary Grady, Bob Gersman, John Robinson, Loren MacGregor, Jeff May, Clifford Wind, Sean Summers, and Sand Meschkow. Ghod Gh, that's quite a list. That makes me feel a lot better already. With this thing back on some kind of a schedule, I'm hoping that you will forgive me this one time and drop me a line now and again. I suppose we'll get less into the criticism of the stories as we have in the past and will get into a bit more of general natter.

KEN AND TERRY have done it again. By the time you read this they will have put out a collection of the Ken and Terry stories that have appeared here and delighted quite a few people, if I can believe the letters that I have received over the past few years. You remember, Ken and Terry and Conan. They are calling it BLUNDERING BLADES and it will be available for \$1 from Terry Ballard, 3219 E. Earll Drive, #7, Phoenix, AZ 85018. They intend to print only 75 or 80 copies so if you want one, it might be a decision of wisdom to hustle a dollar bill off quickly and have one mailed to you posthaste. I know for a fact that there are only 77 copies left. Who knows what kind of a collector's item this might become?

THEN THERE'S THIS CRAZY GUY OUT IN KANSAS. You see, there isn't much to do out there in the pararie (I like that typo; leave it in) and he's got this crazy idea for a fan-zine. It's called - can you imagine - Kwalhioqua. That just goes to show you how crazy he is. He says it translates as "a quiet place in the woods." Well, I don't know about that. I can't imagine that such a weird thing could come out of the gentleness and placidness of a quiet place in the woods. It's mostly printed insanity. Anyway, his name is Ed Cagle and he does indeed call his zine Kwalhioqua and he says that you can have it for letters of comment or contributions of written material. I would suggest that you send him a quarter first and get a look at the thing before you try to submit written material. It's just plain loony. But 25¢ will do it, at least for one issue. Ed Cagle, Route #1, Leon, KS 67074. But don't say that I didn't warn you. Oh, yeh, he says he's going to do it once a month. How long can that last? Hi, Ed. One more thing. In the second issue Ed disdains the lowly staple and sews the damn thing up on a sewing machine. Some kind of weird!

THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION just arrived on the stands today. Buy it. Turn to page 58 and read "Dollburger" by LISA TUTTLE. Lisa has written stories which have appeared in the pages of Ash-Wing and I'm delighted to see her beginning to appear professionally. She has previously appeared in the anthology Clarion II and I look forward to seeing many more of her stories. It's nice to be reassured that you have good taste once in a while.

