

THE
Crystal Ship 2

Gumbo's Variations

THE CAPTAIN SPEAKS

Hi there, and welcome to the second voyage of the Crystal Ship. This edition is about a month later than I'd actually planned, but as at one point I even doubted that I could get it out at all, that can't really be too bad.

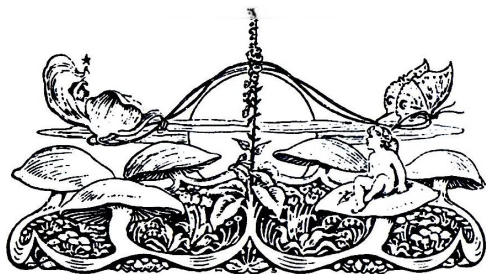
The contents are very much the same as before, with the addition of a letter column, and a few other changes, like an expanded review section. The size of the 'zine has gone up by 20%, (makes it sound a larger increase than just four pages), and hopefully the text is much clearer as I have used an electric typewriter. The larger typeface has necessitated a slightly different layout to get the same amount on a page as last time.

One setback that did occur during the initial run-up to CS2 was a burglary during early July, where the thief helped himself to a weeks' worth of mail on the way out, (the burglary occurred while I was on holiday). So if you wrote to me about that time and didn't get a reply, please don't be offended, because I'm not snubbing you or anything, but would like to hear from you again. And, as I promised in CS1, all letters will get an answer.

One of the things I have received a lot of is fanzines, all of which have been read and digested, (though not necessarily agreed with). One thing I don't intend to put into CS is a regular fanzine review column, mainly because it would probably be better done by someone more firmly entrenched in fannish activities than I am, and partly because it tends to become a bit incestuous, (I'll mention you in my 'zine if I can be in yours, etc.). If I come across new fanzines worthy of encouragement I will probably comment, and if there is anything that bugs me in a fanzine I read, I'll write a letter to the editor, rather than join the internecine warfare that seems to exist in some quarters where entire fanzines are locked in battle with other 'zines.

This issue is crammed full of my own writing again, (did I hear a loud boo from somewhere?), and quite frankly it's got to stop. I mean I'm only human after all, and with the diverse range of CS, you'd have to be Schizoid to keep up this kind of output forever. So I'm open to offers of articles, mainly in the SF, fantasy or general books sections, though any other articles of interest will be considered. And as for artwork, well, it would be quite embarrassing the way I'd be slobbering in gratitude over the first person to come up with artwork for CS3. I mean, copy-right free illustrations can only take you so far. So if you would like to see real improvement in the artwork of CS, then lets see some action from the silent majority out there.

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Arcadian Driftwood

THE DERYNI WORLD OF
KATHERINE KURTZ

One of the many fascinating aspects of reading fantasy is that one sometimes comes across authors who are so well versed in history that their books, though distinctly belonging to the fantasy genre, have a very authentic historical ring about them. One such author is Katherine Kurtz, whose 'Chronicles of Deryni' books detail astoundingly a society very similar to Medieval Wales, although it must be admitted it is a Wales free of such interfering neighbours as the English were at the time. After reading the four books that make up the Chronicles to date, it comes as no surprise to find that Ms. Kurtz did in fact study Medieval English history at the University of Miami.

As a result of the detailed knowledge of medieval times that she possesses, Ms. Kurtz has successfully drawn an exciting parallel world, filled with entirely credible characters, whose motives and actions are consistent with their environment. The addition of the psi powers of the Deryni gives the whole series its necessary fantasy element, as well as providing a rich source of plot material. The consistency of Ms. Kurtz's plotting is matched by her exquisite sense of timing, leading to a taut, suspense-filled tale in each book, as well as good development of the overall scheme.

One of the major themes of the first three books in the Chronicles, (all three of which detail the ascension of Kelson Haldane to the throne of Gwynnedd, and his subsequent first years reign), is the religious persecution of the Deryni by the Church. Indeed, the Church figures strongly in the whole series, and this is consistent with the parallel situation that existed in Medieval Wales. The historical background to the Church's paranoia is well documented in the Chronicles, and is a logical occurrence given the kind of fear and bigotry that existed amongst the populace, which could easily be played upon by misguided or unscrupulous priests. In the same way as the English church had a great deal of political power, and never hesitated to use its spiritual leadership to further such ends, so the Church of Gwynnedd follows suit.

At the time of the assassination of Kelson's father, the more militant members of the Archbishops' Council were already agitating for action to be taken against Alaric Morgan, Duke of Corwyn, and the King's right-hand man. Morgan is a half Deryni, and is not afraid to use his powers, although only for the good of Gwynnedd. But for the Church, even the use of the power is an abomination, and they seize the opportunity of King Brion's murder, and the ascension of the under-age Kelson, to bring Morgan to trial. They are helped in this by Brion's widow, who has a consuming hatred of all things Deryni. It is this persecution of Morgan, and the Duke of Corwyn's efforts to prepare Kelson psychically for his kingship, that forms the basis for the first book, 'Deryni Rising'.

This obsessive persecution continues in 'Deryni Checkmate', culminating in the excommunication of Morgan and Duncan MacLain, his cousin. This, combined with the emergence of Warin de Grey, a Deryni-hating rabble-rouser who forms a band of men to suppress the Deryni wherever they could be

found, completes the almost total encirclement of the Deryni lords by the ecclesiastical powers.

'High Deryni', the third volume in the series, finds Kelson faced with the twin perils of civil war between the king's followers and the by-now-split Church forces, and the threat of outside invasion from the army of Wencit, a Deryni king. Wencit is almost the epitome of the Church's worst fears about the Deryni, but blind to the last, the rebellious Archbishops refuse to budge from their obstinate opposition to Morgan, ignoring the greater peril from outside their borders.

This, the final volume about Kelson's reign, is a complex, suspense filled book with superbly handled twists and turns in the plot, culminating in a masterful turning of the tables on the powerful villains, from a totally unexpected quarter.

The fourth volume in the Chronicles, 'Camber of Culdi', goes back in historical time to two hundred years before Kelson's reign. The book tells the story of the re-establishment of the Haldane line of kings to the throne of Gwynnedd after a series of Deryni monarchs have progressively ground down the population. The instrument of this restoration is the Deryni lord Camber, who realises the unsuitability to rule of the last Festillic king, Imre. Fortune provides Camber with the identity of the last surviving member of the Haldanes and from there his path is set towards the re-establishment of the Haldane line, and the deposition of the tyrant Imre.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of reading Ms. Kurtz's work, besides the obvious attractions of such good stories, is the impeccable characterisation. All of her characters are as human as can be, and there is little sense of any one of them being stereo-typed or cliched. The chief characters in the Kelson trilogy are the young king himself, (a first rate portrait of a youth on the brink of manhood being thrust into a position of authority and finding from somewhere the necessary power to sustain himself there); Lord Alaric Morgan the King's Champion, half Deryni and a cool-headed politician and general of great charm, and Morgan's cousin Duncan MacLain, a secret Deryni and man of the church, whose personal struggle between the Church's attitude towards the Deryni and his own duties towards Kelson, (which require him to use his powers), is extremely well handled. The secondary figures are equally good, with the two Archbishops, Loris and Corrigan, as the leaders of the Council who excommunicate Morgan and MacLain; the young Lord Derry, Morgan's aide, who plays an important role in the trilogy; and the tragic pair of lovers whose story is told in 'Deryni Checkmate', Bronwyn and Kevin. There are many others, both major and minor, all of whom move through the stories with a humanity achieved by very few writers.

Perhaps the best, though, is reserved for the latest volume, 'Camber of Culdi'. Here the story of the monk Benedict, who is kidnapped from his monastery and persuaded to make his claim as the last of the Haldane line still living, is extremely moving. For Benedict has a genuine urge towards the spiritual, and it is only after a great deal of pressure and persuasion by Camber and his colleagues that the poor monk agrees to relinquish his beloved cloisters and become Cinhil Donal Ifor Haldane, true king of all Gwynnedd. The anguish that his decision causes him is apparent in the book, as is the darkening effect of the need to force this gentle man into such a position on the other characters, like Lord Camber. Camber justifies his action as the only way to save Gwynnedd, and that is where his true allegiance lies, with the people of his land. Well supported by such excellent characters as Rhys Thuryn, who discovers the existence of a Haldane heir in the first place, and Joram MacRorie, Camber's second son, who takes up the task of finding the man, the whole story is an advance on the excellent achievements of the Kelson trilogy.

For the future, it could be said that the land of Gwynnedd, with its already detailed history, could be a gold-mine of stories for Katherine Kurtz. I can only hope that she realises that each separate story must stand alongside the best of the Chronicles of Deryni, and not put out anything inferior to that best, in the same way as Andre Norton did with her 'Witchworld' series. If Ms. Kurtz avoids this pitfall, I see no reason why the land of Gwynnedd should not remain as a fertile source of ideas for many years to come.

Jungle Line

DEAN/FRAZETTA/WOODROFFE

The artists working in the SF/Fantasy genre are gradually getting the credit due to them in the form of books collecting their various works together, with at least some commentary on the artists' careers. In the last eighteen months, three books by a trio of wildly disparate artists have been published.

The first is the excellent 'Views', by Roger Dean, published by Dragon's Dream at £3.95. Dean is the doyen of the Rock album cover, and creator of the beautiful images that have graced Yes covers over the past few years.

Dean is a graduate of the Royal College of Art, and is primarily interested in creating an organic form of architecture that expresses the complexities of the human mind better than the slab-sided monstrosities that pass for 'design' in buildings nowadays. As a sideline he got into record sleeve design, and has had phenomenal success in the field. One of his most eye-catching designs was the 'flying elephant' with butterfly wings, used on the first two Osibisa albums, which captured beautifully this African groups origins and image in one go. This book contains all of his best work to date, with many of his architectural ideas too. As an imagination-jolting collection of pictures, it is indispensable.

The second book is 'The Fantastic Art of Frank Frazetta', (published by Pan at £2.95), who surely needs no introduction. This is a collection of work by the amazing American artist, whose strong characters and superb colouring are mind-bendingly alive. The book contains many of the powerful illustrations that he has done for the Conan and Rice Burroughs books, as well as the finest drawing of a hobbit that I have yet seen

Finally, there is 'Mythopoeikon' by Patrick Woodroffe, published by Dragon's World at £3.95. Woodroffe is another British artist who has specialised in book covers, and the range in this volume is from the whimsical to the astoundingly grotesque. Woodroffe's work for Moorcock and Piers Anthony covers, (the British 'Sos the Rope' trilogy), as well as the Futura reprints of Merritt, are all here, and there is a goodly cross section from other sources, including a few record covers and one or two staggeringly original crime book covers. One of the most interesting things about Woodroffe's work is that he always seems to be able to work within the images in the book he is illustrating, unlike many artists, (for example the umpteen million irrelevant Chris Fosse covers that adorn far too many books nowadays), so that a Woodroffe cover can be said to be a fair indication of the contents of the book. There is no doubt that the superb colour sense of Woodroffe, combined with exquisitely fine detailing, makes this book a pleasure to read and peruse, making it a must in any library pretending to cater for the Fantasy fan.

While on the subject of 'Dragon's World' artists, I recently purchased some picture cards by Bruce Pennington, supposedly taken from a book entitled 'Eschatus'. I haven't seen the book itself yet, but any work by this excellent artist is worth having.

CIA/FBI JOINT OPERATIONS GROUP. SUB-SECTION 10(b):ANTI-AMERICAN PROP-
OGANDA

FILE NO: X30 - 1597CK - 97226

CLASSIFICATION: GRADE F3 OR ABOVE ONLY

SUBJECT: TOM ROBBINS, AUTHOR.

FULL NAME OF SUBJECT: THOMAS ROBBINS.(PEN-NAME TOM ROBBINS).

RACE: CAUCASIAN

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BIRTHPLACE: BLOWING ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA, U.S.OF A

LAST KNOWN WHEREABOUTS: SOMEWHERE IN NORTH-WEST WASHINGTON STATE, USA

EDUCATION: COLLEGE, STUDIED ART AND RELIGION

PROFESSION: ALLEGEDLY AUTHOR OF FICTION AND POETRY

PREVIOUS PROFESSIONS: URBAN JOURNALIST

COPY EDITOR

ART CRITIC

ACHIEVEMENTS IN CURRENT PROFESSION: PUBLISHING OF THREE(3) BOOKS TO DATE

- (1). ART MONOGRAPH ENTITLED "GUY ANDERSON, SINGING MONSTER. (1967)
- (2). NOVEL ENTITLED "ANOTHER ROADSIDE ATTRACTION". (1971)
- (3). NOVEL ENTITLED "EVEN COWGIRLS GET THE BLUES". (1976)

REMARKS:- Subject's last two books have concerned themselves with the seditious and perverse activities of the underground 'Counter-culture', which arose as a result of the drug culture of the late Sixties and early Seventies. Subject makes the heroines of both "Another Roadside Attraction" and "Even Cowgirls Get The Blues" into semi-folk heroes, yet both Amanda Ziller, (in "Another Roadside Attraction"), and Sissy Hankshaw, (in "Even Cowgirls Get The Blues"), are guilty of serious civil, legal and moral misdemeanours in the course of their adventures. The elevation of these two dubious characters to heroine status, with the possible emulation of their activities by the young people of America, is an extremely dangerous and potentially traitorous activity, and can only be viewed with extreme disfavour by this organisation.

Subject also represents the legal Establishment of this country in an unfavourable light, thus demeaning the Institutions we are ordered to protect, thereby undermining their authority. In both of the subject's 'Humorous novels', law enforcement officers of all ranks and type are shown to be insensitive, unintelligent and bigoted individuals, causing the reader's sympathies to lie entirely with the law-breaking heroines and their accomplices. This can only have a deleterious affect on the morale and standing of the law enforcement agencies of this country.

In addition to this already serious situation, subject has launched a strong attack on the organised religion of the United States, indeed of the Free World. In "Another Roadside Attraction", the Zillers (Amanda and John Paul) and their accomplice L. Westminster ("Plucky") Purcell cause severe disruption to the Roman Catholic Church's activities, both in the United States and in the Vatican itself. The end result of these adventures is both blasphemous and in execrable bad taste, causing extreme suffering to those members of the clergy who have had the misfortune to read the book. This ridicule seriously endangers the delicate balance that exists between State and Church in this country and is therefore

intolerable to this organisation.

Furthermore, the constant advocacy by the subject of unwholesome un-American activities in his two books is outright sedition, and encourages the already-outrageous youth culture of this country to even wilder extremes. Consider:-

(a). Subjects constant advocacy of the use of drugs in his books. Marijuana, Peyote and a variety of mushrooms, (some of which are certainly of hallucinogenic nature), are constantly used by the novels' main protagonists, and there is no attempt made to emphasise the illegality or danger involved in the use of such substances.

(b). The heroines of the two novels are constantly engaged in a variety of sexual encounters, some of which are unnatural and are illegal in most states of the Union.

(c). In both books, subject emphasises the 'feminist' viewpoints, dangerously downgrading the masculine role as a result. In "Even Cowgirls Get The Blues" especially this becomes a major part of the plot, with such American ideals as the male cowboy being attacked by rabid feminists in a totally crude and inflammatory fashion. This represents a serious blow to the precarious balance of American life.

(d). Subjects constant advocacy of non-material attitudes, showing disdain for the American Materialist way of life, which undermines the efforts of the Great American Capitalist Economy to improve the lots of each American. (It should be noted here that complaints have been received from both Ford and General Motors, pointing out the severe effects on the American Economy if the Sissy Hankshaw Hitch-hiking craze, which is sweeping the States, does not abate. If the younger generation continue to hitch-hike everywhere instead of buying cars of their own, then two mainstays of our economy will suffer severe depression as a result)

In the long-term it is obvious that the subject is a danger to the overall future programme of the United States Government. As has been noted in a number of previous reports, the long term government planning relies on the projection accepted by all economists and sociologists of an aging population for the next two or three decades. Future economic growth relies on this aging process with the slow down-grading of the notoriously fickle 'youth' market and the increase in the more stable 'mature adult' market. There is a far greater economic strength and profitability involved in dealing with the latter market. It is therefore a source of great concern that the subject's books are read by so many people, for this could result in a changed attitude towards 'Consumerism', and the growth of both anti-materialist views and illegal activities in a formerly stable sector of the population. The effects on the future economy of this country could be catastrophic.

CONCLUSIONS:- Subject is extremely dangerous to the future prosperity of the United States of America. In the guise of 'fiction', he is promoting ideas which could lead to the collapse of the economic order as we know it, as well as inciting the populace to numerous illegal acts. While there is no evidence to suggest that this is a deliberate, considered act on the subjects part, and equally there is no evidence to show that he is employed by enemies of our Country, there is very little doubt that the subject is a menace

RECOMMENDATIONS:- (i). Subject's publishers should be pressurised into withholding his works from the public.

(ii). All copies currently in bookstores should be bought up and then destroyed. (Funds have been set aside for this.)

(iii). Subject should be quietly eliminated at the earliest opportunity commensurate with suitable, non-traceable clandestine operations. Plans to carry out this part of the operation are in hand, but may take some little time to implement.

One of the most notable trends in popular music in the seventies has been the development of female performers, especially in America, as artists in their own right, rather than as producers' puppets. Whether they are interpreters of other peoples songs, (such as Linda Ronstadt or Maria Muldaur), or singers of their own songs (like Joni Mitchell or Joan Armatrading), the list of major female artists seems to be added to each month, while their male counterparts seem to be floundering in search of inspiration.

One aspect of this trend is that it seems to be self-perpetuating. In the same way as singers in the sixties helped to bring on new talent, (for example, Joan Baez's championing of Dylan's early songs), the established ladies are drawing attention to lesser-known female writers by recording their songs.

Two beneficiaries of this trend have been the Canadian duo, Kate and Anna McGarrigle, who rose from comparative obscurity in 1974, to a position of producing the best LP of 1976 (according to the Melody Maker) with their debut album. And, for once, the accolades were well deserved, for their album is indeed a marvelous piece of music-making.

The McGarrigle sisters are Canadians of Irish descent, and were bought up in Quebec, the mainly French-speaking community in Canada. Since early childhood they have played music and sang together, and have come under a myriad of influences from their mixed background. These influences included the traditional French-Canadian music of their neighbourhood; the Irish heritage of their parents; the religious music of the Catholic nuns of the area, and the added mixture of Russian emigres with their own folk-songs. All of this is overlaid with exposure to American popular music, and classical influences, to produce a fantastic diversity of background, from which the sisters draw in their own writing.

The sisters played together for some time in and around Montreal in the early sixties, and then went their separate ways, Kate heading for the States and Anna staying behind. The breakthrough finally came when a group called Mckendree Spring heard a duo of Kate McGarrigle and Roma Barran sing at Syracuse University. One song in particular, Anna's composition, 'A heart like a wheel', caught the group's attention and they recorded it on an album, (Mckendree Spring 3). By this time Kate had married Loudon Wainwright and was helping him on his own records.

'A heart like a wheel' started the whole show rolling, for Linda Ronstadt heard the song and liked it, as did Maria Muldaur. Eventually Ronstadt recorded it as the title track to an album in 1974, about the same time as Maria Muldaur recorded Anna's 'Worksong', and Muldaur's record company were so impressed that they offered to produce an album of Kate and Anna singing their own songs. The end result was 'Kate and Anna McGarrigle', which came out in the States in late '75, and in Britain in early '76. It contained, among others, the sisters own version of 'A heart like a wheel' (far superior to the Linda Ronstadt version), and the beautiful 'Talk to me of Mendocino', one of the best songs written in the last few years. They were fortunate enough to attract musicians totally in tune with their own ideas; people like Lowell George (of the legendary Little Feat), Andrew Gold (from Ronstadt's backing band), Bobby Keys, Amos Garrett (from Maria Muldaur's band) and many others of similar quality. The result was a huge success, both musically and in the American album charts. Without any real effort, this quiet duo from Canada had leapt into prominence on the music scene.

That first album is still the best thing the McGarrigles have done. Their second album, called 'Dancer with bruised knees', was released early this year and while it is very good, it does not quite match the excellence of the debut. That is not to say that it is a poor album by comparison with others on the market at the same time, for the girls' singing and writing still display the same feeling of beauty and fragility that made their first album so good. The major problem with the second record is that it has not got the standout tracks that existed on the first. There is nothing to compare with 'Mendocino', although there are certainly no weak songs on the album either. It is likely that the second album would have been better recieved if it had been their first album. But it came after the sisters had already given ample proof of how well they could write, and has been found wanting by comparison.

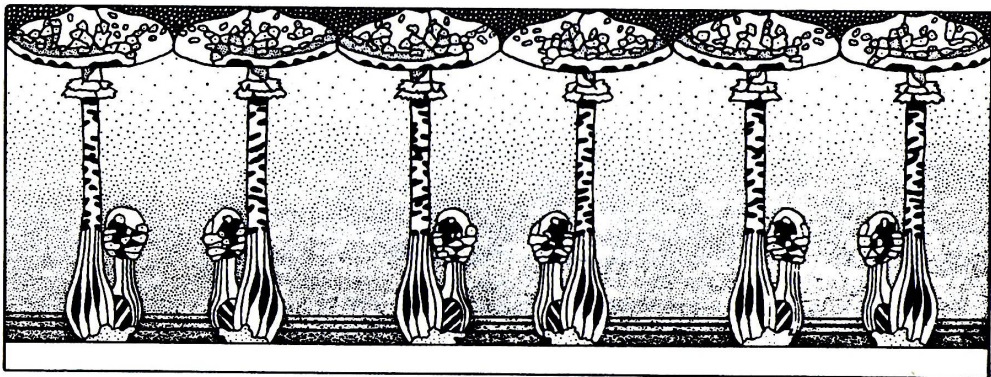
So, if your appetite has been whetted and you want to hear the music of the McGarrigle Sisters, search out 'Kate and Anna McGarrigle' on the Warner Brothers label, and listen to some of the most beautiful music produced in the last few years.

Cadence & Cascade 2

JOHN KIRKPATRICK & SUE HARRIS

I have for a long time admired the work of folk duo John Kirkpatrick and Sue Harris, in particular Kirkpatrick's excellent work with Richard and Linda Thompson, and the duo's contributions to the Albion Country Band on 'The Battle of the Field' album. As a result I was pleased to find an album by the pair released last year which showed just how good they are in their own right.

The album goes by the somewhat cumbersome title of 'Among the many attractions at the show will be a really first class band', and is released by Topic. It is an excellent showcase for their talents, featuring their very traditional singing style, along with excellent accordion work by Kirkpatrick. Sue Harris contributes fine work on hammer dulcimer and oboe to round out the sound. All of the songs and tunes are traditional, except one. This is a reworking of the John Betjeman song, (from his 'Betjeman's Banana Blush' album), about swimmer Captain Webb, called 'A Shropshire Lad'. The story tells of how Captain Webb's ghost returned to his home town, swimming along the canal, and it is the best thing on the album with a really catchy, clever tune. Other standout tracks are, the first track 'The Edmond Men's Souling Song', and 'The Cherry Tree Carol', an unaccompanied piece. Altogether a fine album of traditional music, well recorded and splendidly performed.



Dancing is an area of human achievement that virtually everyone is exposed to at some time. It is an artform and means of communication which ranks alongside various other media such as television and cinema and as such invades all our lives to some degree. Whether the experience is one we pick up from viewing dancers on tv, or by dancing ourselves at balls or discos, or by attending the more formalised performances of the ballet; it is an experience most people share.

It therefore comes as no surprise to find that dance forms and images can be translated onto the written page with some success, for the author is working with images a great many people can easily understand. As a result the use of dance in fiction is quite widespread, and can be found in almost every different genre, including both Sf and fantasy.

Dance's uses are many and it can function as an interesting incidental to the main story, or as a central focal point for the plot. In many cases, especially in fantasy, it becomes a characteristic of certain races or individuals. Where would the world of Faery be, without its dancers, for example? Dance can also function in an allegorical sense, much as modern dance does in real life, furthering a plot while making a statement of its own.

A particularly common use is as an incidental to the plot, fleshing out a scene to a brighter, more powerful image. One excellent example of this occurs in Thea Von Harbou's 'Metropolis', (on which the famous Fritz Lang film was based). The mad scientist Rotwang's plans come to fruition and the beautiful Maria, darling of the city's workers, is replaced by Rotwang's robot simulcra. The robot incites the workers to march on the city centre and cast down their masters. The robot leads the mob, dancing the dance of death, until she finally stands before the Heart machine, the governor of the city's pulse. Then, 'with a hand more delicate than glass', the robot accelerates the machine beyond its safety limits. The essence of the plot demands the march, but the dance is the extra which gives the whole sequence the sharp edge that embeds it in the memory for many years.

Another example of the incidental use of dance occurs in Victor Hugo's 'Notre Dame de Paris', in the scene where Esmeralda dances round the bonfire in the Place de Greve, with its beautiful images of light and dark as the gypsy girl performs. This piece also establishes the character of Esmeralda, being almost a stereo-type of the Romany beauty dancing round the campfire.

Even Tolkien has used dance as a characteristic of two of his most original creations. In 'The Fellowship of the Ring' Tom Bombadil and Goldberry entertain the hobbits for a few days with stories and songs. With the 'grace of Goldberry' and the 'merry and odd caperings of Tom', which in some fashion seemed to weave a single dance, neither hindering the other, in and out of the room and round the table'. To dance, to move together in harmony, is a characteristic of this marvelous pair and no other image could really do them justice.

In other stories it is possible to find instances where the use of dance acts both as a characteristic of the people in the book, and as an integral part of the plot. In James Stephens' "The Crock of Gold", the beautiful girl Caitilin falls under the spell of Pan's music and dances in among her herd of goats and cows, and even the cows 'break into awkward gambols' to the magic sound of the deity's pipes. And the book ends in a celebratory dance of the Shee, after Angus Og has won Caitilin away from Pan. They dance through the towns to rescue the Philosopher from prison,

and carry him off to the land of the gods.

In Hope Mirreles' book, 'Lud-in-the-Mist', where the town of Lud is threatened from the outside by fairy fruits, the plot is advanced a long way when Faery strikes in the heart of the town at the young ladies academy run by Miss Primrose Crabapple. With the appointment of a new dancing master, Professor Whisp, who brings with him a fiddler, 'a queer wizened old man, all mopping and mowing with a fiddle and bow under his arm.' And so the Crabapple Blossoms (as the young ladies were called) were charmed by the magic in the violin and the dancing of Professor Whisp, and were induced to run away from their homes to Faery.

Charles Harness has taken the use of dance in Sf a stage further, for in 'The Rose' he uses a ballet as a major focal point of the plot and the final part of the story, where the ballerina Anna dances the Nightingales death dance, is simply marvelous. The ballerina absorbs into her mutated body, (transmuted into a higher form by a strange disease) the deadly Sciomnia rays of her rivals' machine, and then broadcasts them back as heavenly music while she dances, only to die from the effort in a superb finale.

Similarly, but from a much earlier story, Catherine Moore created a wonderful story in 'No Woman Born'. The tale of a beautiful woman whose body is destroyed in a theatre fire, but whose admirers build for her a fabulous new body from metal, in which to house her brain. The scene where Deirdre makes her comeback to the stage is pure magic, with a carefully crafted description of her dance, which capitalises on her 'inhuman' appearance, then shatters the illusion with a peal of oh-so-human laughter.

But, for me even Deirdre fades into the background when Roger Zelazny's creation Braxa takes the floor. The heroine of Zelazny's award-winning 'A Rose for Ecclesiastes', Braxa is a Martian girl who dances for the Earth poet. She performs a flame dance, as elusive and transitory as the leaping, burning flames themselves. With the dance, she both fixes the poet's somewhat short-span attention on the Martians' problems, and also eventually solves them by seducing him. It will be years before I shall be able to see a candle or match-flame without conjuring up the image of the beautiful Martian, shimmering in her red dress in the dim light of the temple.

Dancing can also be used in an allegorical way, not necessarily with people involved, but as everything is a part of the Dance of Life - or Death. In George MacDonald's 'Lilith', it is precisely this encounter with Death that occurs when the hero lies down to sleep in an old ruin. He wakes to find that the former inhabitants are all around him in a ghostly image of the hall's former splendor. But they are all skeletons, although correctly attired for the ball. Into this steps a woman, perfect in form, and the company freezes. But the woman is already marked with death and before the assembled company, she literally falls apart, until only another skeleton remains to join the dance.

Perhaps the greatest use of the allegorical dance was C.S. Lewis' Great Dance, from 'Perelandra', the second book of his 'Cosmic Trilogy'. After the defeat of Weston by Ransom, and the great assembly of beasts before Tor and Tinidril, (the Adam and Eve of Venus), Ransom is shown the Great Dance, which is nothing short of the whole vast, interwoven, ever-changing plan of the universe, with every strand of life represented in a dazzling array of colour and pattern. Truly, it could be said that this is indeed a Great Dance.

It would be easy to find many other examples of the use of dance, for even the smallest mention can spark off a whole chain of images. Dancing, along with all other media, is so inter-active that the writer who ignored this particular facet of life would be much the poorer for it.



Earthworks

THE GOLDEN BEES OF DAEDALUS:
CONCLUSION

Polikrates awoke to find that night was falling. There was no sign of the bees. He sighed with relief, realising that they must have returned to the hive. He struggled to a sitting position, wincing as pain lanced through his body. He looked down at himself. His tunic was torn and bloody from his wounds, and bruises were already starting to form where he had struck himself in his headlong flight through the forest.

With some difficulty, and not a little pain, he struggled to his feet, and looked around him. The forest stretched away on either side of him in the moonlight, and there was no part of it that Polikrates could recognise. He had gone even deeper into the forest in his haste, and was now completely lost.

Polikrates shivered, for it was still early spring and the nights were cold. He had to find some kind of shelter for the night, for the Gods only knew what prowled in these dark woods in the hours of darkness. He guessed at an approximate direction which might bring him out of the forest, then set off slowly, hauling his battered body towards what he hoped would be safety.

He had not been walking for more than half an hour before he realised that something had crept up behind him and was following. For every step of his own he could hear a second, fainter footfall. He stopped, and the noise behind him stopped a moment later.

Polikrates hesitated for a moment, afraid to move. Then curiosity got the better of him and he turned and looked behind him.

Among the black and silver tree-trunks there stood a pale figure, of medium height, not more than twenty paces from where Polikrates had halted.

"Who are you?" stammered the terrified boy, for the figure stood unmoving in the shadows, staring at him from a hidden face.

The figure stepped forward into the full light of the moon, and then Polikrates caught sight of the horns on the brow, the hairy goat's legs, and the smiling mouth of the satyr before the boy collapsed forward onto the ground in a dead faint.

The satyr knelt down beside the boy, and quickly examined his wounds. Then he picked the boy up in his strong arms and melted back into the forest.

When Polikrates regained his senses he found that dawn was just breaking. He was lying in a rough bower built in a small clearing. He sat up and the movement awoke the satyr, who had fallen asleep sitting by the bower entrance.

"Ah, you are awake boy," the satyr said. "It was as well I found you last night, for there are wolves and other creatures about in the forest who would not be averse to a juicy meal of human flesh for a change."

Polikrates could do nothing but stare at the satyr. "So it wasn't

a dream after all."He groaned.

The satyr laughed, a dark gruff neigh of sound that surprised Polikrates. "No, I am no dream image, boy, I am real and my name is Eland. Who are you?"

"My name is Polikrates," said the boy, reassured by the satyr's smiling face and dancing brown eyes.

"I see you had a meeting with O'Crich and his bees," Eland said, rummaging around in the bower. "I have a little ointment here somewhere that will help take the sting out of those wounds. They are not deep, but will be a bit painful for a while." He finally found a small earthenware jar wrapped in leaves and handed it to Polikrates.

The boy sniffed at the ointment. It smelled of herbs and grasses, and was green in colour. "Is this any good?" he said suspiciously.

"Of course it is," the satyr exclaimed, "I made it myself, and I have skin like yours, in need of a little soothing now and then. There's a spring in the clearing, so go wash yourself and salve your wounds while I get some food for the pair of us."

Polikrates smiled, deciding that he was in no danger from the satyr, but he was still wondering why Eland had rescued him from the forest. He rose and left the bower to find the spring.

After he had washed and anointed his hurts with Eland's ointment, Polikrates settled down to the breakfast Eland had provided. It was only then that he realised that he had missed two meals in the last twenty-four hours, and he ate in silence, intent on making up for his loss. The satyr smiled and plied him with more food. Then, when the meal was complete and washed down by spring water, Eland sat down again beside the boy.

"Now, Polikrates, we must discuss our mutual problems."

Polikrates furrowed his brow in perplexity, not knowing what problem he could possibly share with the satyr. He said as much and Eland laughed. "There is only one problem on this island at the moment, and that's the lepracaun. Yes, O'Crich is as much a menace to me and my people as he will be to you in the future. We have little use for gold, only using it for the occasional decoration, but all we had the lepracaun has stolen. Also, he is such a thorough nuisance, playing tricks on all of the wood-folk until they are quite ready to leave the island unless he goes first. But that is not the main danger. O'Crich will raise the wrath of you humans with his thieving, and if they begin to comb the woods for the thief who steals their gold, then my people will be driven out of their homes at the same time."

Polikrates sighed, "I fear you are correct, Eland. I am sure that my father will be searching the forest near my home for me already. Once he knows about the lepracaun, he will tear the forest apart to find him, even though he will not prevail against O'Crich, for the little man has too much power."

"That is why I brought you here, Polikrates, for I believe that between us we can strip the lepracaun of his powers." The satyr frowned, "That is provided you are a good swimmer. You are, aren't you?"

Polikrates nodded, though he was totally confused by the sudden question. "I can swim well, for I ~~was~~ taught from an early age."

"Good," said the satyr, "Then follow me and I shall explain to you as we go." Eland got to his feet, picked up a coil of thin rope, and strode off into the forest, followed by the puzzled boy.

As they walked through the woods, Eland explained that the source

of the lepracaun's magic was his crock of gold, much as he had intimated to Polikrates. The little man never kept the gold close by him but always hid it in the woods somewhere. Eland explained that he had followed O' Crich recently and discovered where the lepracaun had hidden the crock, but could not recover it himself, for the gold was hidden at the bottom of a deep pool and no-one among the wood-folk could swim well enough to recover the crock.

"And that's where you come in, Polikrates. If you can dive down and fasten a line around the crock, then I can haul it out of the pool. Once the gold is removed from the crock and passes into someone else's possession, O'Crich will be helpless."

Polikrates' eyes sparkled at the thought of revenge on the lepracaun. "As long as it's not too deep, I'll be able to reach it, Eland. I have dived in the shallows before now with no difficulty."

"Good, now keep quiet, for we are near the pool and the lepracaun sometimes comes here early in the mornings." Eland slowed down and moved quietly forward, motioning Polikrates to follow.

Soon the satyr stopped and crouched down, pulling the boy down beside him. "Look, through that gap in the undergrowth. You can see the pool and O'Crich is there."

At the edge of a wide pool fed by a small waterfall sat the lepracaun, cross-legged on the grass, with an earthenware pot in front of him. He had both hands inside the pot and Polikrates could hear the musical jingle of metal as the little man ran the gold pieces through his hands.

Suddenly the lepracaun laughed out loud, and a fountain of gold shot up out of the crock. The gold fanned out and hovered over O'Crich's head, shining like a gilded cloud in the early morning sun. The lepracaun chuckled and laid back to admire his treasure floating in the air above him. Then he set the cloud of gold in motion, spinning it over his head, and sending streamers of gold pieces arching out over the pool and back again.

"Gold, lovely gold," the lepracaun cried. "The most beautiful thing in the world, and the most powerful. Only gold can make a lepracaun happy, and I have more than any lepracaun has ever had before. Sun's Blood and my heart's desire and all mine to play with."

Eland looked at Polikrates and whispered, "The little man is mad with power, for I have never seen him behave like this before." Polikrates nodded, awed by the sight of the flying gold in the sunlight.

Soon the lepracaun got tired of his games and directed the gold back into the pot. Then the crock itself took flight and travelled through the air to the centre of the pool, where it was gently lowered into the water until it disappeared from view.

Eland whispered in Polikrates ear. "Keep down and still now, my friend, for if he suspects there is anyone here, then he will discover us in a second." Polikrates took a deep breath and sank his head down onto the grass, trying to make his mind a blank.

A minute later Eland nudged him. "It's alright, he's on his way back to his valley. He suspects nothing."

Polikrates could just hear the lepracaun's voice, faintly singing in the distance as O'Crich his way back to the valley, until finally it diminished to nothing.

"Right," said Eland, "let's see what we can do about getting the crock out of the pool."

The satyr rose and walked across the clearing to the pool, carrying the thin rope he had brought with him. Polikrates followed apprehensively

realising that he had the major part to play in the task.

The pool was round and about fifty feet wide. At one side it was fed by a small waterfall spilling over a low cliff, and on the other side a chuckling stream flowed away towards the sea. The spot where the crock had gone down was only a few feet away from the waterfall, and was almost certainly the deepest part of the pool.

Polikrates slipped out of his tunic and stepped into the pool. "I'll locate the crock first, Eland, then we'll see whether it's possible to haul it up."

Eland grunted in reply. "Good luck, human," he said, and Polikrates was surprised to see lines of concern corrugating the satyr's face.

A moment later he washed away the thoughts as he slipped fully into the water and struck out towards the waterfall. The water was cold, but crystal clear, and he was able to see the bottom easily. He reached the centre of the pool, took several deep breaths, then dived. The bottom here sloped away steeply, eroded by the waterfall, and the backwash of the falling water buffeted him as he searched the floor. He surfaced for air and realised that he had drifted away from the area where the crock had been last seen. Shifting his position again, he dived once more, struggling to prevent the current from sweeping him away downstream. This time he caught a glimpse of gold ahead of him and then the crock was there before him, seated at the bottom of the slope, almost below the fall. He surfaced and waved to the satyr. "I've found it, throw me an end of the rope."

Eland's grim face broke into a flashing smile and he uncoiled the rope from around his neck and threw one end to Polikrates.

It took the tiring boy two more dives to fasten the rope around the crock, then he told Eland to begin hauling in the line. Soon the crock had been dragged into the shallows, and the satyr was able to get his strong arms round it and lift it up. Polikrates floated on his back in the pool, exhausted but exhilarated at having achieved his task.

Eland carried the crock ashore and then turned the pot upside down to pour the gold out. But nothing happened! The gold stayed where it was inside the crock, and no amount of shaking would dislodge a single piece. The astounded satyr was wondering what to do next, when an all-to-familiar voice sounded from beside the waterfall.

"You won't get anything out of a lepracaun pot, thief. They always have a magic seal on them to keep the gold from harm. You'd have to break the crock to get at the gold." O'Crich stood with his arms folded on the opposite bank of the pool, and there was a most wicked look on his face.

Eland furiously flung the crock away from him, hoping to smash it on the ground, but the lepracaun was too quick for him, and his magic took over to catch the crock and float it up above the satyr's head.

"Thieve from me would you?" said the lepracaun. "I'll show you what happens to creatures like you." And the crock swung down to deal a blow at the hapless satyr, who could only duck and dodge, as the heavy crock swung with skull-cracking momentum at his head.

And that would have probably been the end for the satyr, if it had not been for Polikrates. When the lepracaun had appeared, the boy had been as surprised as Eland, but he quickly realised that the lepracaun's attention was fastened solely on the satyr and the crock. Quietly, he slipped below the surface of the pool, and swam round behind the waterfall, where he surfaced and took stock of the situation. The lepracaun had moved close to the pool's edge, eagerly watching the satyr on the other side.

Polikrates saw his opportunity and quickly dived once more.

O'Crigh was beside himself with glee, for he had got Eland cornered against a tree and was playing with him before finally crushing him with the crock. He swung the crock around once more, and threw his head back to laugh heartily at the terrified satyr's expression, when suddenly a cold, wet hand grasped his ankle and dragged him bodily into the pool, pulling him into its deepest part.

The crock, suddenly released from O'Crigh's control crashed into the tree-trunk above Eland's head, and smashed into a thousand pieces, showering the startled satyr with pot shards and pieces of gold.

O'Crigh was totally shocked and partially drowned when Polikrates finally dragged him ashore. The lepracaun could only lay on the grass, coughing and groaning.

Eland still sat under the tree, with a pile of gold in his lap, and Polikrates laughed to see the expression on the lepracaun's face, when it finally got through to the little man that his power had been broken with the shattering of his crock.

"The gold is returning to its rightful owners, O'Crigh." Said Eland. "And without its power to protect you, I cannot guarantee you any safety on the island. Your past activities have made you too many enemies among the wood-folk. I would suggest you leave at once."

"Splinter and crumble you, satyr, for I hope that the sky falls on you for this." The lepracaun was shaking with shock and anger. "Just you wait until I've obtained another crock and filled that with gold. Then I'll return to repay you for this ignominy. And you needn't stand there laughing, you snivelling brat," he snapped, turning on Polikrates. "I should have finished you off when I had the chance." Then, seeing Polikrates move towards him in anger, the little man leapt to his feet and scuttled away as fast as his little legs would carry him, still cursing and swearing as he headed for the coast. Behind him the two friends laughed at the sight of the be-draggled lepracaun in full flight.

"That's O'Crigh settled with, Eland. Now how do we deal with the bees?"

"They will be my responsibility, my friend. Without the lepracaun's influence, I can explain to them just why they must not steal gold, but wait until it is freely given. You can help in that by informing your father of their existence, and by making the valley a shrine to Daedalus, with regular offerings of gold to the bees." Eland laughed, "and it also makes it possible for you to come back and see me again. After all, we are in each others debt now, having both saved each others life."

Polikrates smiled at the laughing satyr. "I need no such excuse, Eland. But what a tale I have to tell my father. I fear he will take some convincing that it is true." And the two friends knelt beside the gold and began gathering the pieces up.

Dumbo's Variations

Yes, well-um, I always was a believer in making your mistakes early and getting them over with, which is just as well when you consider the ghastly bloomer I made in CS1. After severely flagellating myself, and having wrote out a million times 'I must not spell Gandalf with a U' one would expect forgiveness even from hardened Tolkien fans, yes? So how come there is still a party of orcs outside waiting for me every night? Come on Tolkien Society, call them off, they're frightening the wife.



Starsailors

WHITHER NOW, FARSTAR & SON?

One of the phenomenon of Sf in the past few years has been the burgeoning growth of the series production; books all maintaining the same central figure(s) over a lengthy series, very much like sword and sorcery heroes. Although this is certainly not an entirely modern occurrence, the incidence of new series coming onto the market has certainly risen in the last few years.

One of the most recent has been the series published by Ballantine in the USA of stories by Bill Starr. Going under the general heading of 'Farstar and Son', there have now been two novels produced in the series since November '75, and the obvious intention is to continue the series for at least a few more volumes

The series is based on the adventures of Ranger Farstar and his son, who rejoices in the name Dawnboy MacCochise, a youth bought up upon the prosaic world of Apache Highlands.

The basic theme joining the first two novels, (and presumably underlying the rest of the series), is that Farstar's wife is in a state of suspended animation following a ghastlyspace accident, and the father and son team are working to amass enough credits to pay for the necessary research to return her to life and health. Around this is woven the individual plots of the two books, though with a fair degree of overlap present that makes it really necessary to read them in sequence.

The first book, 'The way to Dawnworld', brings the pair into conflict with an old adversary of Farstars, with serious results for the crew of the spaceship 'Gayheart', although they do manage to turn defeat into a partial victory in the end. The second novel, 'The treasure of Wonderwhat' (do I detect a hint of the Larry Nivens in Starr's names?), has the duo chasing after a legendary treasure ship caught in the tail of a comet. Both stories are generally exciting, with interesting and amusing settings although there is a tendency towards unevenness in the plotting, which is almost Doc. Smith-like in places.

The basic problem seems to be that Bill Starr has no clear idea of who he is writing for. Sometimes the dialogue would seem to indicate that he is writing for children, and the next moment that he is aiming at the adult market. His style is far too cliched, despite passages of occasional brilliance (such as the opening chapters of 'The way to Dawnworld'). The characters, however, are very good, both interesting in themselves and in the life-style in which they function, though there are a few obvious steals from other writers.

The unevenness of the plot, and poor overall style of writing are a great pity, for Starr's ideas, settings and characters are very good, with some extremely original touches, and Starr has obviously thought long and hard about the basic structure and systems of the universe in which his heroes

work. This leaves him with a great deal of scope for further adventures. But instead of capitalising on these excellent foundations, he seems to be throwing away his series by simply not correcting the flaws that exist in the first novel, and which he has carried through into the second. I like the books, especially for the excellent leading pair of characters, but feel consistently let down by Starr's inability to get the best out of what could be an excellent, exciting series.

Ripples

STUART CLARK, 14 Guston Road, Vinter's Park, Maidstone, ME14 5QL.

...Crystal Ship 1, for a first ish it is very good indeed. The print is clear, legible and minus the usual first ish typos... The internal logos are excellent. Perhaps the lettering on the internal titles, good though they are, could be larger?... The content is good and I am sure that a lettercol will improve matters tremendously... Finally- and I've saved this to last- GandÜlf????? My LotR says GandAlf! I hope that you didn't type it! ((I cannot tell a lie, I did. See Dumbo's Variations elsewhere.))

JOHN FEARN, 260, Warwick Road, Carlisle, CA1 1LH.

The arrival, unheralded, of Crystal Ship at Port Carlisle, came as something of a surprise, albeit a pleasant one. There was a rich variety of cargo in her holds, much of which I found to be to my liking...

The extrapolation on Gandalf, I enjoyed- the spelling was so consistent that I began to wonder if GA&U and perhaps even JRRT himself had made a mistake...

Several weeks ago now, I was lucky enough to see and hear the remarkable Bob Pegg at the Station Folk Club in Ilkley. Mr. Fox was a great band, and Bob Pegg is still in the top-class as a solo performer. Of the songs he did at Ilkley, I especially liked 'Wild Man of the Hills'. Certainly 'Leaving the Dales' and The Gypsy have lost nothing in their transition to solo pieces... One folk group that you may not have come across is 'Plexus'. One of their songs is JRRT's 'Song of the Ents' - it certainly provides a contrast to Donald Swann's setting of Tolkien songs.

I hope that the Crystal Ship avoids much of the stormy water which so often swamps ships on their maiden voyage. It would be nice to think that the crew will be fit to tackle another voyage amongst the perilous ice-floes of this, the far North.

DARROLL PARDOE, 38, Perrins Lane, Stourbridge, West Midlands. DY9 8XP.

...I see you hope for more books from Peter Beagle. I share your hopes but it's a bit unfair on him. I'm sure there is nothing more frustrating for an author than to have lots of fans clamouring for more. Some authors only have one good story in them, and even those who don't probably find that there's a certain tension between the new ideas they're thinking up, and the expectations of their fans for 'more of the same'...

I enjoyed 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance' too, but contrary to your statement, it does have a great deal to do with both Zen and Motorcycles. Admittedly it's neither a textbook of Zen nor of the internal combustion engine, but it's permeated with the Zen attitude to the world, and anybody treating his machinery in the way the book recommends would go far.

...My interpretation of the difference between Gandalf the Grey, and Gandalf the White, is that Gandalf actually died after his encounter with the Balrog, but was sent back as a replacement for Saruman, who had

proved incapable of performing the task set for him, but had defected to the enemy instead. Thus the 'new' Gandalf was in fact given the authority which Saruman had formerly, and this authority was removed from Saruman. This accounts for the quite different result when Gandalf and Saruman met subsequently, than that of their first encounter. Tolkien does mention somewhere that the Wizards all had great powers, but were forbidden to exercise them. ((I agree that the interpretation given above is a valid one, and that it agrees with the books, but my original point was that Tolkien had to change Gandalf, and that the above explanation was merely the means by which he was changed.))

Oh, blast, it's a nasty letter from that chap Josephus Nickelass!

JOSEPH NICHOLAS, 2,Wilmot Way, Camberley, Surrey. GU15 1JA.

Thanks for sending me the first issue of Crystal Ship...Quite pleasing when people actually take notice of you and send you fanzines from out of the blue...it is likened unto manna that falleth from heaven.

But,that said, there's not a lot that I can actually say about the fanzine.. And what I do say is not likely to be very complementary.

I think I'd be safe in saying that you haven't had much contact with fanzines before this. If that is in fact the case, then it shows - but then that's a common failing exhibited by any new faneditor - the desire to do something without having a clear idea of what anyone else is doing or how they're doing it. The repro and the size of Crystal Ship are fine, but it's the way you've typed it that ruins it...

Layout is the key when using litho. Those who use litho must have the sensibilities of an artist and the imagination of a stylist or it's money down the toilet. Look at Rob Jackson's 'Maya'; con back issues out of him if you can, study them diligently and learn How It Is Done...

And so on to a grouch about contents. You spelt Gandalf wrongly, and hasn't this particular aspect of LotR been gone over so many times that we can practically see the footprints on the typefaces by now? While you are demonstrating how an author practices what Colin Wilson preaches,(and there can be no more noxious and despicable activity than to practice what Colin Wilson preaches), you're also providing nothing more than a precis of part of the book, which is hardly riveting reading. Far better for those subjected to such a precis to read the piece for themselves, and consider the totality in context of Wilson's remarks, than to have synopsisised chunks thrust at them piecemeal.

Your book reviews are a bit empty, and even that's an understatement. If you're going to review something, then do it exhaustively, as you seemed to be trying for with your commentary on Robert Pirsig's work. Brief remarks of the kind you offer in respect of 'Orbitsville' are worthless to all concerned; they say no more than the blurb on the back of the book. And if you're going to review then for God's sake don't synopsisise; your article on Tanith Lee consisted of nothing less than a pair of plot summaries. And who the hell will want to read the books if you've told them the plot in the baldest fashion possible?

Fan Fiction. I didn't read your story, I'm afraid; I don't have enough time to keep up with my normal reading, never mind fanzines. And when I've got several favourite authors languishing on the shelves, why should I read a piece of amateurish fiction by a complete unknown?...Thus runs one argument against fan fiction. Certainly there's nothing wrong with writing; many writers started out as fans. But to write solely for the purposes of fanzine publication- what's the point? Critical reaction is minimal, sloppy writing and story construction predominates, and some fanzines are so hard up for material that they'll take anything that comes along... This is easy to shoot down, but the prejudices remain against

fan fiction, no matter how well the story in question happens to be written, or how original the themes. Once tagged as fan fiction it will be forever ignored, forever unread, sneered at by all and sundry.

...I never heard Mr. Fox when they were first around...but I'm glad to hear that the two albums they made are still available; there's a comment on the band in the Dallas/Denselow/Laing/Somebodyelse, ((Robert Shelton, actually)) book "The Electric Muse; the story of Folk into Rock" that reads, very succinctly, "Terrible band, great record" with reference to their first album...

...Coming to the end now...I hope I haven't sounded too nasty; granted that I am an associate Ratfan, but I do have me nicer side. If only I could remember where I left it!...p.p.s.I'd like to see another issue.

Ouch, ooh, aah, whimper, cringe, has he gone away yet, and can I come out safely. I mean it's a bit much, innit. Here I am doing me best to be bright and breezy, entertaining the assembled multitude, when along comes Josephus with his carving knife and unleashes a rain of vitriol on my poor innocent head. (At this point everyone should go 'AAH', in the time-honoured fashion). Never mind, and chin up Owen. Remember the best form of defence is attack, so go for his jugular.

Most people who have commented, either in person or in writing, have been pleased by the clarity and neat layout of Crystal Ship 1, with no objections raised to the typing, etc., though I did make a number of errors which have been corrected in this issue. For the most part I agree with the majority and not Josephus, and anyway, the points he raised are mainly a matter of taste. You're lumbered with my taste when you read my 'zine I'm afraid.

Did Joseph really read the Gandalf article? It could hardly be called a precis of part of the book. In fact, taking selected and isolated facts from a total of four books in an attempt to prove a point is completely the opposite to a precis. I like the idea of 'synopsised chunks' though. It sounds like a pretty good thing to feed the dog, if I had one!

The book reviews were put in as fillers at the last moment and, as you can see from this issue, have been expanded into a more worth-while length. I see no reason to review exhaustively everything I want to spread the news about, in fact I couldn't get much else in if I adopted that criteria. Reviews can be short and sweet, (ie buy it 'cos I did and liked it), or long and detailed, (as per the Pirsig piece in CSI), or middling length with some comment, as I've done in this issue. I could even use all three if I felt like it, for these three methods are those frequently used in yer pro' publications like The Times etc. , so it can't be wrong really can it?

The fan fiction argument is one that I bumped into at greater length in 'Wrinkled Shrew 7'. I didn't think too much of it then, as it wreaks of a peculiar kind of double-think or double standard, call it what you will. The main basis of the argument revolves round the tenet that it's alright to emulate the pros in fanzines as long as it is only non-fiction that you are writing - but fiction? Nah, you are only an amateur after all! Of course, as much bad non-fiction finds its way into fanzines as bad fiction so what's the difference? Nuff said.

After all that the lad floors me with a request for issue 2. It must be some use after all, or is it good for Origami, Josephus?

Other comments were also recieved from Simon Musk, (good luck with no. one of your own 'zine, Simon), Ian Bryant, Pam Boal, Andrew Muir, Hartley Patterson, Phil Noskeau, Liz Whitelegg, Patrick Holligan and Dick Sharpe. Thanx also to Keith Walker for the good review in Fanzine Fanatique.

Recent Reads

FLETCHER PRATT : THE WELL OF THE UNICORN. (Reprinted by Ballantine 1976)

This is a strange, powerful novel, telling of the rise of Airar Alvanson from poverty to a position as the leader of his people; all of which takes place in a fantasy world of great originality.

The story is extremely well written and beautifully paced, with a series of superbly handled battles that are the equal of any I have ever read. The plot twists and turns, and the hero has to withstand a great deal of adversity before finally triumphing over his enemies.

Yet for all the excellent writing that Pratt pours into the book, it is a vaguely unsatisfactory piece of fiction; it has not got that really magic spark that sets it alight. I cannot really put my finger on the exact reason but I feel that it may be that there are very few characters in the story that one can actually like. As a result the general impression that I get from the book is one of hollowness; even Airar the hero is a colourless, naive character who goes through all the necessary actions of heroism, but without outwardly showing any sign of emotional involvement. The whole book therefore seems to lack heart, and fails to gain the readers empathy.

Curiously enough, I found the same fault in Pratt's 'The Blue Star', for much the same reasons. It is a great pity for he is an excellent, very competent writer but for this strange flaw.

C.J.CHERRYH : BROTHERS OF EARTH. (Orbit Books 1977)

The second of C.J.Cherryh's books that I have read, 'Brothers of Earth' is a worthy successor to 'The Gate of Ivrel', (also available in Orbit Books).

'Brothers of Earth' is a superb story, filled with subtleties unusual in this type of writing. The tale of a human forced down onto an alien planet, who finds that human beings are regarded as 'barbarous' by the humanoid natives, the nemet. The acceptance of the human into full nemet society, and the results of that acceptance, make up the major part of the novel, and it is here that Cherryh succeeds in conveying the vital differences that must exist between two races with differing evolutions.

The end result is a taut, beautifully written novel, brimming over with genuine tension. The book also includes some of the best drawn characters in current SF; characters who drag the reader into the story in a way not normally associated with SF, where cardboard cut-outs subordinated to the technological marvels were the norm until quite recently.

On the strength of the impressive writing displayed in 'Brothers of Earth', I would say that C.J.Cherryh is improving by leaps and bounds with each book she writes, and I look forward to her future works with a great deal of relish.

GORDON R. DICKSON : THE DRAGON AND THE GEORGE. (Ballantine 1976)

A gorgeous, rollicking tale of Fantasy, which is both absurdly amusing and tremendously exciting at the same time. Based on a novelette entitled 'St.Dragon and the George' which Dickson first published in 1957

this book has been re-vamped and extended into a full novel of great originality.

Set in a crazy pseudo-medieval England, the novel tells of an American whose girlfriend has been shipped into the past by an erratic astral-projection machine. Jim Eckert follows, only to find himself in the body of a dragon. Accepting his lot he decides to carry on the quest for his missing fiancée.

In the process of his adventures he teams up with a knight, (who is straight out of Conan Doyle's 'White Company'), a very cynical wolf, and the craziest wizard on record. Carolinus is the magician's name, and he suffers from a stomach ulcer which gives him a vicious temper. With the aid of his 'accounting department', which keeps tally of the magical debits and credits, the wily magician ends up giving Eckert the correct advice, which enables him to complete his quest. But he only succeeds after a great battle before the villains' castle, in which all of Eckert's companions take part.

The whole story is wrapped up in a beautifully crafted Dickson plot, (with all the careful integration that means), and after this book I can only hope that Dickson turns his attention to fantasy more often, for he certainly has the touch for it.

JOHN BARTH : CHIMERA. (Quartet Books 1977)

"Roll up, roll up, roll up, Ladies and Gentleman. See the amazing John Barth forsake his home shores of Amerikky and take on the myths and legends of the ancient and mysterious East. Read how he comes to grips with the beautiful, sensuous Scherezade and her gorgeous sister Dunyazade, and aids them in their thousand-and-one nightly toils. Thrill to the true story of bald Perseus, and how he learned to forsake his past prejudices and to love the gorgon, Medusa. Shudder to the sad tale of brave Bellerophon, whose past heroism haunts him with uncertainty. Did this middle-aged wreck really kill the chimera, or was he deluded by the wily shape changer Polyeidus, the Machievelli of Corinth. Gasp at the shatteringly lithe, superfluously inventive language of John Barth, master of the New Revised Syllabus; laugh at the teasing absurdity of his heroes' and heroines' predicaments. All human life is enshrined within these pages."

Seriously though, 'Chimera' is a very amusing book, as are all Barth's creations. But it is also very much a transitory piece of writing, dragging Barth out of his own personal doldrums and back into productive work. And this transitoryness shows, for there is nowhere near the amount of linguistic acrobatics that Barth has shown himself to be so good at in the past, especially in the superlative 'Giles Goat-Boy'. But, even at this half-throttle pace, Barth is still a better writer than others of the same ilk, such as Thomas Pynchon. If you've never read Barth before, sort out either 'Giles Goat-Boy', or 'The Floating Opera'; if you are a Barth aficionado, then buy this book.

MERVYN PEAKE : LETTERS FROM A LOST UNCLE. (Picador 1977)

For all Mervyn Peake fans, Picador have added another of Peake's minor works to their catalogue. This is the 1948 book "Letters from a lost Uncle". But this is not another prose novel like 'Gormenghast' or 'Mr. Pye', for in this book Peake has put together a crazy patchwork quilt of pencil drawings, type-written passages and hand-scribbled notations that combine into a very amusing and original book.

The book consists of a series of illustrated letters from an explorer to his nephew. The lost Uncle is searching the polar regions for the fabled

white lion , accompanied only by his faithful companion Jackson, a dog-turtle. The pencil illustrations form the main bulk of the book, and they show the adventures of the explorer in a beautifully suitable style, very humorous with an excellent amount of detail.

The incidents in the story range from the sublime to the extremely ridiculous. The explorer has a pegleg made from a sword-fish's bill, which he keeps sharp, putting a cork on the end when he travels. The leg-spike comes in useful several times in the course of the story, for killing wolves (which he thrusts through in a manner suggestive of an amalgam of D'artagnan and Kung-Fu), and for anchorage during blizzards (when Jackson screws him into the ice). The explorers companion, Jackson, is equally eccentric, being a turtle used as a pack animal with nails driven into his shell to hang all the equipment on.

The overall effect of the book is one of great charm . The whole idea is excellently conceived and splendidly executed. Peake's drawings have a delicacy of touch, (mainly because of the soft pencil lines), that blends in well with the whole concept. A very good book suitable for readers of all ages, provided you're not too cynical about the whole thing.

RICHARD BACH : ILLUSIONS. (Heinemann 1977)

Follow-ups to highly successful books are notoriously hard to write, especially when the earlier work is such an enormous success as Richard Bach's "Jonathan Livingstone Seagull". Bach admits in his introduction to "Illusions" that he had no particular thoughts about doing a follow-up at all. He had settled in his own mind that he had said all he had to say in "Jonathan Livingstone Seagull" and could not see the possibility of any form of follow-up. But, such is the nature of things, a particular idea struck him, while he was on one of his periodic trips round the States in his own ancient biplane, and he was forced back to the writing desk to produce another book, one equally as startling and original as his first.

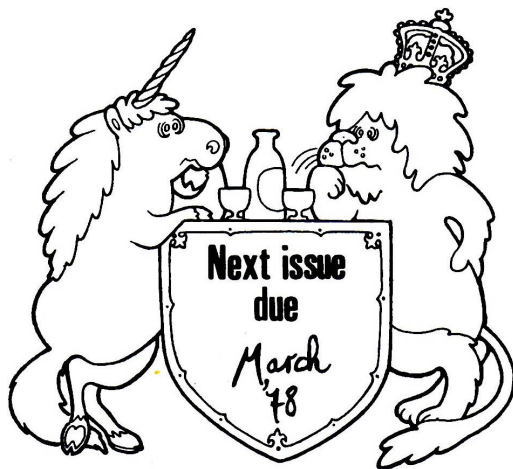
There must be something about piloting old piston-engined aircraft that brings out the spiritual feelings in certain people. Both Richard Bach and Antoin St. Exupery, (author of "The Little Prince"), are (or were) solitary pilots, and both seem to exhibit the same grasp of the essence of spirituality; that force which impells humans into accepting religion and the existence of outside influences in their lives. In both of his books Bach has shown a startling awareness of this force's influence on the human mind, and as a result has drawn a powerful picture of a drop-out messiah, on the move around the States in order to minimise the automatic responses of the population to him

The main basis of the book is the dialogue between Donald Shimoda, the Messiah-figure, and the narrator, Bach himself. They meet one day when Bach spots Shimoda's plane sitting in a field in the Mid-West, and lands his own biplane out of curiosity. Shimoda takes Bach on almost as a disciple, and they barnstorm for a while around the country together. Shimoda teaches Bach the essence of his own thoughts, (with the aid of the Mess-



iah's Handbook, a brilliant invention that always falls open on the correct page for the occasion) until Bach finally understands that the 'real' world that we live in is indeed full of 'illusions'.

The book is as full of humour as "Jonathan Livingstone Seagull" was, and although very short (a mere hundred and forty-odd pages, and not crammed full pages either, though extremely well designed), manages to convey a superb sense of knowledge and understanding of the basic problems of human life and thought. In many ways, the conclusions Bach comes to are distillations of the basic spirit of both Christianity and the Eastern religions. Bach has produced in "Jonathan Livingstone Seagull" and in "Illusions", a pair of very 'Zen-nish' books; ones which the old Zen masters would have hailed as masterpieces of understanding.



And that's about it for this issue. All that remains is for me to thank all those of you that wrote in and commented, or who sent fanzines, and to warn all those who didn't respond to Crystal Ship 1, that this issue may be their last, because I've gradually accumulated names of other people who would, perhaps, be interested in the Crystal Ship. Copies will be going to them instead of current recipients who do not respond. So you have been warned!

Seriously though, one of the nicest parts of producing a fanzine is when the postman delivers the feedback, preferably in sack-loads, (some chance!), even if it is only from Joseph Nicholas. So please take the trouble to put pen to paper, or finger to typewriter, and let me know your reactions to "The Crystal Ship".

Contributions are also welcome aboard, for as I pointed out in the editorial, I can't keep up the pace, and it's got to stop before I go Schizoid. If anybody does feel they can contribute to Crystal Ship 3, then let me know as soon as possible so that I can start planning the 'thing', (and there are times when I believe it is a 'thing', taking on a life of its own, parasite-wise).

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