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Writings in the Sand:

Which, as some of you may recall, is sort of a general column title for anything which strikes the fancy of the so-called editor of this "tacky little fanzine".

Every so often I feel...well, not the urge...say, the obligation to pub my ish. Mostly when I realize that I've got to get some pages into either the Fantasy Amateur Press Association or the Fannish Little Amateur Press. So we'll crank out an issue of DYNATRON for old time's sake and not because I feel I have any great message to give to fandom at large--or at small as the case may be.

This issue contains a review by Sal DiMaria, an arkle by Dave Locke and assorted comments by a variety of fen. Anything not otherwise credited is probably by Hort or Roytac or somebody like that.

And here we are in the dread year of 1984. February already and I just checked my television set to see if someone had slipped a camera into it. Suggest you do the same. I had intended to include a few remarks about 1984 (and still may) but discovered Sal DiMaria was reading the book so talked him into doing a review. Ten years ago (that would have been in 1974, I think) some group rented billboards on every major street in Albuquerque to post this warning: "1984. Ten years and counting." I may once have known who they were and what their purpose was but I have since forgotten. How can you expect me to remember things a decade in the past. I can barely remember what happened last month.

I remember that December was the month for holiday parties. The all new (except for Jack Speer) leadership of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society (not to be confused with the few remnants of the old Albuquerque Science Fiction Group which now gathers once a month at a local Village Inn to eat pancakes at eleven o'clock at night) devoted the December meeting to a Christmas party. A goodly number showed up. Why, I don't know.

Alpha Centura (sic), the local trek club did the wine and cheese bit. They bought a box of Velveeta and a bottle of Boone's Farm Strawberry...

Also in December the village of Los Lunas, a few miles south of Albuquerque, reported that some of their water wells were pumping green slime. The Albuquerque Science Fiction society immediately denied any knowledge of the phenomenon. Members of New Mexico Science Fiction Conference, which is responsible for the annual Bubonicon, were not available for comment.

((I suppose I should explain, for the benefit of those who have not attended Bubonicon, that the Green Slime Awards are a feature of that August event.))

Christmas was rather a fantasy affair. My kids presented me with a dragon, a unicorn and a gorilla. Chrys made me a gift of Charybdis and a Monster Maul. With that sort of crew and equipment I'm about ready to embark on an Odyssev. If I could find a boat and if it wasn't 800 miles to the ocean.

Which reminds me of one of the world's oldest jokes found inscribed on a clay tablet at Nineveh: a sailor disembarked at Ugarit, put his oars on his shoulder, started walking east. When he got to Assyria he was asked where he was going with the winnowing fans so he settled down.

I also find it amusing that in the midst of the coldest December on record the Public Broadcasting service's NOVA should run a program on the dangers of the greenhouse effect.

Now that we have reached Orwell's fateful year it is tempting to do some comments on 1984. Around the first of the year 47 television commentators, none of whom had read the book, did just that. Their efforts had all the usual depth of television commentary which is to say the women commentators all looked prettily cheerful while delivering their empty-headed comments with an idiotic smile. The male commentators all looked appropriately serious while delivering their empty-headed comments with an idiotic and solemn scowl through their carefully trimmed moustaches. Whatever any of them had to say is not worth noting.

The Albuquerque TRIBUNE ran a six-day series discussing the various elements Orwell had postulated (but none of these people seemed to pick up on the fact that 1984 was about the USSR in 1948). The writer of the series agreed that we have the technology available, that newspeak and doublethink were in common use by governments. He concluded, however, that we were a long way from Orwell's nightmare. The reason: society is very permissive in sexual matters; we do not have any Anti-Sex League therefore we do not have 1984.

Okay...

Don't bet against 1985,

though.

As Sal DiMaria points out in his review of 1984 the mark of IngSoc was its utter contempt and hatred for humanity. Looking back over the past three years I think that is also a mark of that gang of pirates that has controlled the executive branch of the U.S. government for that time.

A hatred for humanity? You betchum, Red Ryder. Just look around you. Oh, nothing so blatant as police state oppression. That sort of thing may have worked for the Nazis. Their descendants are much more subtle. Sly propaganda and innuendo to turn us all against one another so that our status as proles can be hardened and those who are considered useless--nobody worries about them. Thousands of little old ladies in tennis shoes (of all ages and sexes) applaud the Great Communicator because he is getting those lazy bums off welfare and making them go to work. The Great Communicator fails to mention that there aren't any jobs for those lazy bums to work at. Ah but do not the figures on unemployment show a decrease? Of course, of course. Whenever a person's unemployment benefits run out he is dropped off the rolls so there is one less officially unemployed. Meantime all those little old ladies in tennis shoes (of all ages and sexes) are having their social security and medical benefits whittled away or, if they are working, finding their pay checks growing smaller. ((We gotta lay ya off, Clyde. Come back in three months and we'll give ya your job back at half what you're making now.)) Well, interest rates are down... Really? For business and bankers maybe but not for thee and me.

Write this on a card and take it with you to the polling both next November: AM I REALLY BETTER OFF THAN I WAS THREE YEARS AGO?

Think about it from all angles. Economic, sociological, psychological. And do a lot of thinking about liberty.

Big Brother is indeed watching YOU.

((You know, HORT, there's one thing that really bothers me about that last page there.))
((What's that?))
((Thinking about all those goddam tennis shoes of all ages and sexes...))

Kay Reynolds, who is, I guess, the new editor of Starblaze Books at the Donning Company, has sent along the January releases. Sort of a mixed bag.

Worlds Beyond: The Art of Chesley Bonestell by Ron Miller and Frederick C. Durant III (136 pages, \$14.95 and worth it.)

Here is a large (8½x11) book crammed full of color, half-tone and black and white reproductions of Bonestell's artwork. Everything from magazine illos to murals. The accompanying text is interesting and illuminating. This is one that belongs on every fan's bookshelves. Don't just sit there, run out and buy it. Or order it from The Donning Company, 5659 Virginia Beach Boulevard, Norfolk, Va., 23502. Absolutely amazing!

Elfquest Book 3 by Wendy and Richard Pini (168pp, \$10.95)

Another large size comic book, pardon me, graphic novel, if you will, full of highly unlikely critters doing improbable things. Not really my cuppa, don't y'know, but I'm sure that those who appreciate this sort of thing will appreciate it.

Hit or Myth by Robert Asprin (128pp, \$6.95) Illustrated by Phil Foglio.

Asprin continues his fantasies in the UNKNOWN tradition in this tale of magicians and demons and the like. Not quite up to UNKNOWN standards and rather more juvenile but it still provides some chuckles. Readable and amusing.

Web of Darkness by Marion Zimmer Bradley (208pp, \$5.95)

As you well know, Ish, I don't read books by Marion Bradley but I'll mention it so you'll know it is there.

Which brings me to the terrible situation of having almost 30 lines to fill on this page and nothing with which to fill them. I could, I suppose, give a report of all of the fannish doings in Albuquerque but I mingle little with Albuquerque fandom so have no idea what fannish doings are in progress or even if there are any.

I can tell you that Bubonicon 16 will likely be held 24-26 August 1984 but not much more than that. At the least meeting of ASFS I attended it appeared that the Bubonicon Committee had yet to hold a meeting to decide on such minor details as hotels, guests, all that sort of thing. Write to:

Bubonicon 16
P.O. Box 37257
Albuquerque, N.M. 87176

If you find out anything let me know.

Later info: GoH: Spider & Jeanne Robinson; Toastmaster: Gordon Garb (who else?)
Memberships \$10 until 20Jul84, \$12.50 after that, \$15 at the door. Art Show, costume affair, huckster tables (\$15 each, includes two memberships) Make checks payable to New Mexico Science Fiction Conference.

Comments

ART RAPP, 282 Grovania Dr., Bloomsburg, Pa 17815

Such eminently readable fanzines as DYNATRON 78 and 79 deserve a prompt response, which of course they didn't get from this ancient fan and tired, but perhaps a belated response is better than none.

Your plug for Bjo Trimble's *On the Good Ship Enterprise (My 15 Years with Star Trek)* combined with my memory of a recent article in the Philadelphia INQUIRER on the declining state of our merchant marine to start me wondering when Capt Kirk is going to have to interrupt his travels around the Universe to haul the Enterprise into drydock (airdock?) and have the space barnacles scraped off its hull. I'm sure you've noticed that as technology of all sorts advances, obsolescence arrives sooner and sooner, and more and more maintenance is necessary just to keep things marginally operating. (The INQUIRER article mentioned that 20 years is the useful lifetime of cargo ships: after that the maintenance expenses tend to outweigh the profits from patching them up and keeping them in operation a while longer. In fact, what most shipowners do at that point is apply for an exception to the seaworthiness requirements of the Maritime Commission, load up with a US Government cargo for Africa or Asia, and claim that once the cargo has been delivered the ship will proceed to the nearest scrapyard. If the ship makes it they've saved several hundred thousand dollars in maintenance costs; if it doesn't, presumably the insurance will compensate for the lost ship and cargo.) The maritime unions, not to mention the ship's officers and crewmen themselves aren't very happy about this, but with 50% unemployment they aren't about to refuse to sail on a vessel just because it's got a few holes in its hull or some leaky boilers. But to get back to the subject: the space shuttles need complete overhauls after each flight--how does the Enterprise get away with not needing major maintenance at all?

((I believe the fact that the Enter-

prise isn't coated with all those silly tiles has something to do with it. RT))

AL-

MOST REALITY #3, the fanzine published by the Nashville SFS, had an article about the Chattacon which just about echoed your comments on Constellation. Example: "The registration table at Chattacon was covered with warning signs. The wall opposite the table was covered with warning signs. The wall behind the table was covered with warning signs. I knew right away they were trying to tell me something." In all fairness, I must mention that after airing their many complaints about the chickenshit rules of the Concommittee, the writers of the article talked to those individuals and were told that because of experience at previous Chattacons the Committee felt that this was the only way to protect themselves and the reasonably well-behaved attendees from the activities of the hordes of juvenile (mentally, if not chronologically) mediafen and fringe-fen and simply curious hangers-on who would otherwise make a shambles of the whole affair. The lesson seems plain that fandom needs to discard the tradition that a con is for anyone who wanders in with the price of admission, and instead find some way of restricting them to genuine fans, if anyone can think up appropriate criteria for separating them from the mundane masses. (For a start, I suggest, there should be less precon publicity about the famous best-seller authors and stars of stage, movie and TV who will be on hand. Groupies have traditions just like stf fans, one of which is that they'll relentlessly track down their favorite culture heroes anywhere or anytime, but why invite them specifically to the cons) (I know why: because lots of them have pockets full of cash, but if that overrides every other consideration in the minds of the con committee, they deserve what they get).

((Presumably that was Constellation's primary criterium but, according to the newszines it ended up several thousand dollars in the red anyway. RT))

One point, if Heinlein overlooked in *Friday* is that genetically altered humans can be made superior to natural-born ones, it would be possible to endow some of them with superior political acumen, and they'd be able to achieve legal equivalency and citizenship by out-

smarting their opponents at the ballot box (tho come to think of it, democracy wasn't exactly universal in the America of *Friday*, was it? (it has been some months since I read the novel, so I'm not sure of some of the details anymore...) I agree with you that it was the sort of stf that keeps you turning the pages to find how it all ends.

I'll have to refrain from comment on the Stableford review, not having read *Journey to the Center* (with a title like that, if I saw it on the newsstand I probably assumed it was a political memoir) As for Peter Rabbit, before he gets into an impossible situation you best inform him as gently as possible that it wasn't a fish costume, it was a real fish. Does he think Harmon was some kind of pervert?

Your bit about the National Pen Co. was interesting. About a year ago I entered their "national sweepstakes" and of course didn't win any of the big prizes, but they did send me a "fun pen" which was a fibertip shaped like the big old Waterman fountain pen. I used it for writing and also for sketching for some months (until the ink ran dry) and was pleased enuf that I'd have ordered some more of 'em if they'd listed them on their advertising leaflets, which they didn't. It's somewhat croggling that they wouldn't fall all over themselves to rectify the error in Chrystal's order, tho.

((Not really. Most large businesses still have a public be damned attitude and consider an order for under \$50 to be more of a nuisance than anything else. In fact I can think of any number of corporations which will not accept anything under \$50. That is their minimum charge. RT))

Computers. A couple of years ago there were a number of SAPS members talking about getting personal computers. Eventually some of them did. As far as I can remember offhand, every one who bought a computer gafiated within a few months. (I think some fans have owned computers for quite a while, tho I couldn't name any if you asked me. Pelz? At any rate, they are not totally incompatible with fandom, but apparently they demand all one's spare time and attention when they first snare you in their electronic tentacles).

Speaking of computers as household helpers, I would like to hear from someone who has one whether the problem I suspect exists has surfaced: the computer can keep track of all your accounts and taxes and like that, but only if all the necessary data is fed to it. Do they work any better than the paper-and-pencil budget systems that usually collapse because you finally decide it's too damn much trouble to enter every little income or expenditure in the blank spaces provided?

Interspecies fertility between chimpanzees and Homo Sap? Don't be silly. In the first place a chimp could never make it up the side of the Empire State Building carrying Fay Wray, and even if he could he'd be too pooped to do anything after he got there. But don't you remember back in your misspent youth when the circuses and carnival side-shows all had at least one apeman in their geek tents? Come to think of it, the antics of some politicians could cause one to speculate about their ancestry...

Roy, would you concede that it's possible to be anti-technology without being anti-science? I'm all in favor of the scientists learning all they can about how things work and why they work, but I'm often against the idea that just because a new way of accomplishing something has been devised, the perfectly satisfactory existing way has to be scrapped. Back in the Fifties critics were deploring "planned obsolescence" but now it's so universal it's taken for granted. Does a 1984 automobile get you to where you're going any more quickly or comfortably or economically than a 1954 model did when it was new? And with the '54, when it did develop mechanical troubles you could cure a lot of them yourself with a pair of pliers and a screwdriver; now you have to take it to a mechanic because there's so much plumbing under the hood you'd have a hard time finding the carburator, and when you did you'd find it was sealed to prevent adjustment anyhow, so the only cure is to pull it out and put in a new one. That's progress?

Or, to use an example you mention a couple pages further along, take shoes. Up until about 1950, when your favorite pair of shoes developed worn soles and heels, you could go down to the dime store and get a replacement set of soles and heels and put

'em on the shoes and get a good deal of additional wear out of them. (Or if you were affluent enough, you could have a shoemaker do a professional replacement job on them). Then Dupont or someone came up with Corfram and now shoe soles, for the most part, NEVER wear out. Only the uppers fall to pieces, and even professional repair shops can't do much when that happens. That's why shoe repair shops are disappearing as the elderly shoemakers retire or die off -- there's not much they can do any more in the face of the shoe industry's planned obsolescence.

Bah, humbug.

((You aren't going to get me to disagree with you completely. There is technology and there is technology and it depends on how it is used. I will agree that, from my point of view, all of the new technology involved in automobiles hasn't done anything to improve the car. Even the mechanics are complaining that they have to now take courses in electronics to fix the silly things. You and I, though, are in the minority in America in that we look on automobiles as a means of transportation whereas most of the people seem to think of them as some sort of object of worship and the more junk on them the more there is to sacrifice their money to.

Agreed the 50s cars were great but they filled the air with poisonous gases and lead. All of that plumbing is for the anti-pollution devices which American automobile designers grafted onto the same old engines. The Japanese, on the other hand, not having all those years of experience the Detroit people are so fond of bragging about, started from scratch and built a whole new engine which eliminated the pollution without sticking all that other junk under the hood. It isn't the technology that is causing our problems so much as it is the out-of-date technologists who are unwilling to go for anything really new.

7

HARRY WARNER, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue,
Hagerstown, Md., 21740

I've begun to wonder if there was a worldcon in Baltimore over Labor Day. I'm typing on Sept. 22 and I haven't yet

received any fanzine which refers to ConStellation. Usually some newszine or local club publication arrives a week after the worldcon's conclusion with a list of Hugo winners and the basic facts on attendance and quality. I don't regret not attending. I calculated that there would be at least a hundred fans in Baltimore whom I'd love to see and talk with, and that I would find not more than ten of them in that mob during the entire weekend, and that I would be able to talk at length with only two or three of those ten because of distractions. I kept a mental catalog of things I accomplished during that weekend which I would have missed by going to Baltimore. It was surprisingly long and included such goodies as finding a hardcover copy of the HPL biography for a quarter at a yard sale, continued videotaping of the complete Brideshead Revisited on its rerun, was relieved to find a friend safely recuperating from an operation, gobbling up several long-wanted records cheap like the Jean Arthur Peter Pan lp with music by Bernstein, and assorted short subjects.

((The main thing I've seen reported about ConStellation is that it apparently ended up several thousand dollars in the hole. Me-thinks the committee envisioned an sth convention as what it ain't. RT))

If a

minor mutation in DNA created humans from chimps, why didn't it happen much sooner and why hasn't a similar mutation increased the intelligence of many other animals?

((Now hold on, I say hold on there. You are falling into the old journalistic habit of reporting things that were never said. No-where did I make any suggestion that humans were mutated chimps. I said the mutation could have occurred in pre-sapient humans. I'm not sure I believe it either but think it is as good a theory as any other to account for the emergence of Homo Sapiens. RT))

I once wrote a newspaper column which sought to prove that the dollar is the concept that divides the generations. When I grew up, one dollar bought several items like movies or paperback books or pounds of candy or meals at a quick lunch counter. Now it takes several dollars to buy just one of those items. The dollar is an awe-inspiring thing to older persons and it's an incomplete item of little value to those growing up in these inflationary times.

7

BRIAN EARL BROWN, 20101 W. Chicago, #201,
Detroit, Michigan 48228

Mike Kring may like Stableford, but he's not too hot on Stableford's bibliography. The *Cradle of the Sun* was Stableford's first novel, also an Ace double. The *Blind Worm* was second. To *Challenge Chaos* was the third novel written tho it didn't appear until after the *Deus Irea* trilogy. Since then Stableford has written various series of space opera and a few unrelated pieces inbetween. As a pot-boiler hack writer, Stableford shows considerable and growing strain. His best work was *The Halcyon Drift* and it's been downhill ever since. He still has considerable ideas to his works, more so than most current Sf writers, but his stories have gotten really lame, and *Journey to the Center* is no exception. Worse, it sounds like a re-working of his *Optiman* novel. ((Never having read anything by Stableford I'll have to pass. As for "hack writers", though, (and some of my best friends are ...) it is an honest profession which pays the bills and then some. RT))

And, gee, I wasn't that impressed with *Coils* either, tho I do love both Zelazny's and Sabers-hagen's work. The problem is that the Hero is too much the archetypical Zelazny hero with superpower, amnesia, etc., and Vernor Vinge did much the same idea in his *True Names* only much better.

The idea that intelligence might have come from a virus picked up by neolithic apes is not so far-fetched. In David Brin's novel *Sun Diver* (great book) he postulates that all intelligences except one mysterious first race were "uplifted" by other intelligent species. Maybe some benefactor race seeded Earth with a virus that, like you suggest, settled in our DNA and caused an expansion of the cortex, leading to intelligence and civilization.

((Von Daniken rides again! That particular suggestion seems to me to simply be a shift of the traditional religious point of view. Instead of God reaching out with his finger to endow mankind with life and intelligence (and it seems appropriate that God would give all true believers the finger) vonD and his followers would have mysterious beings

(gods) from outer space coming to Earth to muck about with the local lifeforms with much the same result. Why do you suppose it is, Brian, that so many people are unable to accept the idea of man doing anything on his own without outside interference? RT))

On the extinction of dinosaurs; did you catch the article in *SCIENCE NEWS* which suggests that there are periodic extinctions of the biosphere every 26 million years? I can believe that something stresses the biosphere occasionally, but what could be doing it every 26 million years? Could it be an undiscovered binary companion to the sun with a 26 million year period? No, I'd think that anything with an orbital period that long would wander away from the sun so quickly as to not really be a binary companion. Maybe 26 million years is just the average time between meteorite impacts. The real question, of course, is just when was the last extinction? If it's 26 million years ago then I'm going to start worrying...

I didn't live through the depression as you did but even so I can't adjust to the prices of paperbacks today either. But then, when I started buying paperbacks--almost 20 years ago in 1964--Ace was still doing a few 40¢ titles with 45¢ and 50¢ the norm. \$2.95 to \$3.50 for a pb is out-RAGE-ous.

((Agreed. I just passed up the paperback edition of Martin's *Fevre Dream* because of the price tag. The only way I know to combat the constant price increases is to refuse to buy. RT))

I have to congratulate my Bozo dog, Ides, on his taste. For Christmas he gave me a bottle of Bombay Gin. Merely the best there is.

JACKIE CAUSGROVE, 6828 Alpine Ave., Apt 4,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

I didn't find the "Artificial Person" concept in Heinlein's *Friday* to be much of a Big Deal. It could be that I'm just different from most people, but I consider people who have human genetic backgrounds to be human, regardless of whether their genes were monkeyed around with. ((look!)) As with the brouhaha about "test-tube babies" (petri dish" would make more sense), my outlook must be askew since I fail to see

what's so wonderous about it all. Now if the A.P.s had been genetically constructed out of human and some other sort of being, say a chimpanzee or orangutan, then I could see the point in at least thinking over the matter of "humanity (i.e., is a person Human if their genes aren't fully). As for Heinlein's "mastery as a story teller"...again, I can't agree. There was nothing in the plot of *Friday* that pulled me along: I had to push myself to finish the darn thing.

Dave Locke and I saw *Wargames*, too, but didn't get the "underlying message" that you did. Have to agree that there seemed to be another message besides the main one, though -- only the one I got concerned how fine it is to bilk Big Corporations out of services (e.g. phone service). The kid, who was the hero relied on technology (little science was in the film), and it didn't come across as Evil--only able to be misused by Those In Authority.

I dunno, Roy. In your drumbeating against anti-science stories--or at least the anti-science content which you claim to see in various sources--I'm wondering if you don't seem to be placing a Mantle of Priesthood about anyone and everyone who works in fields of scientific research. Scientists and researchers are human, just as thee and me and we, and are quite prone to fall victim to the same weaknesses that inflict the rest of our species. They can make mistakes, they can rush foolhardily into areas that can bring about utter chaos if explored without sufficient watchguards. There are people who, while not denying that we should and must expand our knowledge of what goes on in this Universe, feel nonetheless that pausing every so often to cast a bit of light before us to see where the hell a certain path is leading, rather than dashing heedlessly and recklessly into the night, makes sense. Some researchers are so damned anxious to be First, to clear up whatever problem it is that they are working on, that they ignore any danger to themselves or to the rest of the world. ((There are some things we are not meant to know, Frankenstein...RT))

More than one hot-shot researcher has been found to have doctored his/her results, without consideration for the fact that other researchers would use his or her data to incorporate into other work--which could

possibly lead to further complications up the road because false bases were used. GIGO--but the last "G" could blow up in our faces. I can't see how any sensible person could not insist on safety-minded, double and triple checking safeguards and restrictions on research into new fields. To view any and all such restrictions as a barbarian reaction against misunderstood Magick is just as reactionary and totalitarian ^{as} those who would figuratively or literally burn all scientists at the stake.

I think the current (and seemingly never-ending) controversy about nuclear power stations is a case in point. Here we had a new technology that offered all sorts of benefits, as well as dangers, to society. On the one hand we had a bunch of go-go Pro-Science (really Pro-Technology) people who wanted to get this New and Improved method of obtaining electricity into operation. On the other had we had a bunch of Anti-technologists who wanted anything developed since the time of Jamie Watt to be stuck into a dark hole with a great big rock set above it. Radical middle of the roaders only wish the two extreme camps would shut up long enough to make sense of it all. In the case of nuclear power, it is obvious that in some cases plants were built without enough knowledge of what the hell we had to cope with--metal crystallization under great heat, changes in they physical components of the plant itself after some years, various glitches have turned up that make some of our power plants a lot more dangerous than they should be. ((I'm sidestepping completely the point about what the hell we do with nuclear waste--the problems with the physical plant itself are bad enough.)) The technology was simply pushed into production too soon--proper, working safeguards were not set up, unprepared companies were allowed to perform work they were not set up to do, and now we have to live with what's left. The problem seems, to my mind at least, to be more the fault of people and corporations who want profits so badly they'll push something into production before we're fully acquainted with it. ((Bingo! You have answered your own argument. The fault lies not with scientists and technologists who have counceled caution but with the politicians and businessmen who ignore them.

If I come across as placing a Mantle of Priesthood on scientists then maybe

I had better fall back and regroup for that is not my intent. I am well aware that the scientific community is full of people who are as fallible as anyone else not to mention that it has its share of fools and charlatans. No, I have no desire to ascribe priestly attributes to scientists. (There are some that do, though. See K.C. Cole's essay "By the Numbers" in the January 1984 issue of DISCOVER in which he describes mathematics as a sort of mystical language of science which is really not intelligible to the poor uneducated layman. I am reminded of the Holy Rollers speaking in tongues. Bah!) I am simply trying to point out that there is a tide of anti-science and anti-intellectualism running and we had better be on guard against it. RT))

DAVE LOCKE, 6268 Alpine Ave., #4,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

I found War Games not to be anti-science or anti-technology, but it was definitely pro let's-keep-people-in-the-loop. Like all fiction it warped reality a bit, and I wasn't too pleased with the character of the programmer (more myth than character) but I enjoyed the film.

The beauty of science is that it is self-correcting. Man may obfuscate some matters for years (is there a kid, especially now, who has never--for example--looked at a dinosaur skeleton and wondered if they really got the right parts together?), but over the long haul the truth will out. The problem with science has nothing to do with science and everything to do with people. Anything that can be abused or screwed up will be abused or screwed up, but sooner or later the scientific method shows that it is inexorable.

((Arthur Hlavaty will probably tell us that all reality is warped anyway. Arthur Hlavaty, however, professes to find truth and beauty in the works of R.A. Wilson. Arthur Hlavaty, that being the case, wouldn't know reality if it stopped him on the street and asked for a match.

Sometimes they don't. Get the bones together right, that is. It was in 1982 that someone took a good look at a protosaurus skeleton in the museum of natural history and said, "We've got the

wrong head on that sucker." Or words to that effect. The resultant rebuilding caused six different changes in the classification of the old bones. So it goes. RT))

MARTY HELGESEN, 11 Lawrence Ave., Malverne,
N.Y. 11565

Dave Locke refers to you as a certified button pusher. I wonder if your comments about ConStellation were intended to push the buttons of con committee members. ((If so, there was no response. But I don't imagine those people read these tacky little fanzines, anyway. RT)) Unlike you, I did go to ConStellation, and your speculations had little to do with reality. To go through them in order: I did wander around and do whatever I wanted to do. I was not aware of any efforts to prevent me from doing so and have no reason to think any existed. I don't know why the Committee wanted the legal names of fans who use "fannish names", but I suspect it was to protect itself from possible legal problems. Many large conventions, not just science fiction cons, require that people who want the convention rate book their rooms through a convention housing bureau. I always list my first choice as the main party hotel, because that's where I'm going to be late at night and I don't want to have to go outside to return to my room, and I've always gotten it. I was in the Hilton at Baltimore and I am Joe Fan, not anybody special. People could have parties wherever they wanted. However people giving bidding parties and other open parties prefer to have them all in one hotel so fans who party-hop can drop in easily. Therefore, the Committee usually designates one hotel as the main party hotel when the con is spread over several hotels. The reason the Hyatt wasn't chosen was that the Committee thought its corkage fees were exorbitant. The fanzine room and the fan programming ites were on the same floor as the other programming tracks.

((Sigh. That's the way it goes in the propaganda game. You just get a good line going and somebody has to come along and tear it down by telling the truth about it all. Next thing I know someone will tell me he had no trouble finding any of his friends amongst the mob. I going to have to start pubbing more frequently. I'm losing my touch. RT))

Fandom is Just a Tire Swing

by

Dave Locke

FIJATS, a little-known fannish philosophy which sprang from my frontal lobes after input of Jimmy Buffett's song *Life Is Just A Tire Swing*, appears self-explanatory even without recourse to the element which inspired it.

You might think for a moment on the idea that fandom is just a tire swing, turning the concept around a few times to get a feel for it. There is likelihood of coming away with the impression that FIJATS is the product of someone incurring successful surgical removal of the brain, with subsequent stuffing of the empty cavity using twiltone and "do not disturb" signs. Then again you may examine the concept and feel some warmth toward it, and if this happens you may help to spread the news. Others may also be partial to the thought, and obviously it would be cruel to deny them exposure. As we know, it's natural to pass along a good thing, and unlike many good things we find much of FIJATS's endearing quality is that it needn't be refilled.

Think for another moment on what we've got already, which is Fandom Is A Way Of Life and Fandom is Just a Goddam Hobby. FIAWOL and FIJAGH are an interesting pair of answers provided you have some reason to raise the particular question which asks for them, or can even think of it. No, it seems of more importance to be guided by the truism that the purpose of fandom can only be defined in terms of the person who is seeking purpose, and formulate a "Fandom Is" concept more representational of style. Fandom Is A Part of Life is a recent effort which isn't bad, and is true, but like FIAWOL it seems too serious to be adequate in labelling whatever it is that we're labelling, which is our approach. FIJAGH is true, also, but the words "Just" and "Goddam" are editorial hyperbole on the basic concept of Fandom Is A Hobby, and reflect nothing but negative reaction against FIAWOL. So neither term is really all that suitable or apt or appealing if you consider the option exists to choose something else.

, Theoretically we could each generate our own "Fandom Is" concept. We each have the capacity to define and synthesize, and if prompted can chug out an acronym housing our very own personal fannish motto. It remains only to ponder why we would want to do this and what we would choose if we did, and we might pause to wonder what some of the other fans might come up with. Harry Warner, Jr., for instance. What would he come up with? I don't know but I'm always willing to guess. I'll guess that Harry would settle on "Fandom Is A Hot Typewriter", but I might be wrong. Ted White might adopt "Fandom Is Just A Warm Color". I could envision Dave Langford picking "Fandom Is A Defective Ear Trumpet", couldn't you? And what might John Bangsund choose if not "Fandom Is Just A Gas"? "Fandom Is Just A Long Digression And A Cold Beer" sounds right for Denny Lien and at least a few dozen more. No doubt rich brown might opt for "fandom is living in lower case", and I wonder if Theresa Nielsen Hayden would embrace "Fandom Is Waking Up On Twiltone"? Buck Couleon, of course, might pick "Fandom Is A Recipe Book For Neos" just to be ambiguous, but fool no one. The possibilities come fleeing out of my own suggestibility, and no doubt you have already generated possibilities of your own, even if for no particular reason. Who knows, this might catch on.

If it doesn't, how many fans do you know who wouldn't like to be in a tire swing? To drop in and relax and have fun and get your feet off the ground, and swing high once in a while.

Fandom is Just A Tire Swing.
Pass the word.

DAVE LOCKE

Nineteen Eighty Four

by

George Orwell

A review by Sal DiMaria

George Orwell's *1984* is, perhaps, one of the most frightening books I have ever read. Evil truly wins here, and wins completely. But, perhaps, it isn't so much evil as it is madness. For in this society, postulated 36 years after its writing, the reason for living has been lost.

The social system in effect, called IngSoc (for English Socialism), is fueled by a senseless hatred of humanity, of everything that humans cherish. There is oppression for oppression's sake. The only goal of the State is to destroy the human spirit.

The origin of such a system cannot be traced to known roots. The two closest examples, Nazism and Soviet totalitarianism, are similar, but not truly antecedents of IngSoc. Nazism practiced the hatred and elimination of particular groups of people, but not a hatred of all. It was (and is), basically, a philosophy governed by fear and arrogance -- fear that outsiders would invade, pollute, violate the "master race". The Soviet philosophy also leans heavily on fear -- fear of invasion and attack. There is a sense of paranoia and extreme mistrust. These fears, not new to humankind, have, at least, a basis in history.

IngSoc also has these fears -- of rebellion, of being exposed. But it goes far beyond this by its fear and loathing of human nature itself. Merely killing off deviants would suffice for security purposes. Yet, those in charge seem to need the constant assurance that they can destroy people's minds, brainwash them, crush their spirit utterly. People become worthless as a result, but that is no matter to the Party.

The world political situation in 1984 mirrors the social system. The world is divided into three superpowers, all constantly at war with each other. However, this chronic war is "fixed" -- no one superpower gains or loses. Essentially, an agreed upon situation or permanent stalemate--and permanent madness--is in effect.

These social and political systems are extremely delicate, though. They could be upset dramatically by relatively straightforward, violent events. If one of the superpowers were to be driven to sufficient desperation it might really decide to win. In a world where sanity is on its way out -- and losing ground more and more each year by design -- there is no guarantee that one power will not "go for broke" and begin an all-out nuclear war. This, of course, would lead to world-wide ecological disaster and the destruction of the social order. (This is something that Orwell would not have known in 1948. Indeed, he postulated that the world of Big Brother came about partly as a result of nuclear exchanges. There was no problem with long-lasting radioactive contamination, it seems.) Even a less drastic approach would wreak havoc. The Party's control over the people depends heavily on electronics means -- telescreens for eavesdropping, electronic rewriting of newspapers, sophisticated communication systems for the diffuse network of Thought Police, even highly technical means of torture and brainwashing. This highly centralized control system would be vulnerable to various forms of sabotage.

But who would have the presence of mind to initiate an attack of terrorism or sedition, you ask? Good point. Orwell, remember, painted a picture of perfect control, yet fully 85% of the population, the "proles", were not within the controlled system. At best they could be organized for special rallies and the like, but in their day-to-day activities they were relatively free. They were written off as insignificant, uneducated, and uncaring. This is a highly bigoted attitude. Not all proles would be the way Orwell

depicted them. Many would be at least moderately educated. Many would and could resist and fight. Even in Nazi Germany there were dissidents. In the Soviet Union and other totalitarian countries there is active resistance. I think that the threat posed to the rigid order by virtually all of the possible antagonists in the society could and would disrupt the system.

Yet, the overwhelming feeling generated by this book is hopelessness and gloom. If such a world could develop, surely it would signal the beginning of the end of the human species. No more strivings for understanding, for freedom for exploration and knowledge. Just a senseless, everlasting descent into a greater and greater misery to end, ultimately, in species extinction.

Not a happy thought. Fortunately, I do not see that occurring. Despite all the wars and oppression in the world, there are times and places of hope. The future of humanity is still viable. We still have a fighting chance.

SAL DIMARIA

X

Terry Carr, who just a couple of years ago was a pink-cheeked youngfan in the Golden Gate Futurian Society, somewhere along the line grew up to be one of the better science-fiction editors. For a long time he edited the Ace Science Fiction Specials which brought out some of the best-written stf around. Now the Berkley Publishing Group has revived the Ace Science Fiction Specials and wisely selected TC for their editor. Good show.

Terry's first selection is *The Wild Shore* by Kim Stanley Robinson (\$2.95), a thoroughly enjoyable first novel marked by good writing, a plausible story, excellent characterization and action.

Briefly, the U.S., or what is left of it, some sixty years after the nation was destroyed by the explosion of a thousand neutron "car bombs" in all the major cities. None of the characters in the book knows who did it (although there is a lot of speculation) and there was no retaliation. The U.S. is down and kept that way by a U.N. quarantine which specifies no exit, no entry and no rebuilding. Any attempts at putting things back together are quickly spied out by orbiting satellites and knocked out by space-platformed lasers.

The story is set in what remains of San Onofre in Southern California where a handful of farmers/fishers struggle to keep alive. The big city to the south, San Diego, has a population of a thousand or so. Orange County to the north is populated mostly by scavengers. Only an old-timer here and there remember the way it used to be and try to instill a sense of history in the younger generation. There is an underground of sorts with ideas, also of sorts, of rebuilding but some folk don't want any part of it. They know the world is out there but are scared of it.

The Wild Shore is a serious, studious, plausible science fiction story. Highly recommended. Roytac

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