FARRAGO STORIES

NO.17 JUNE 1954

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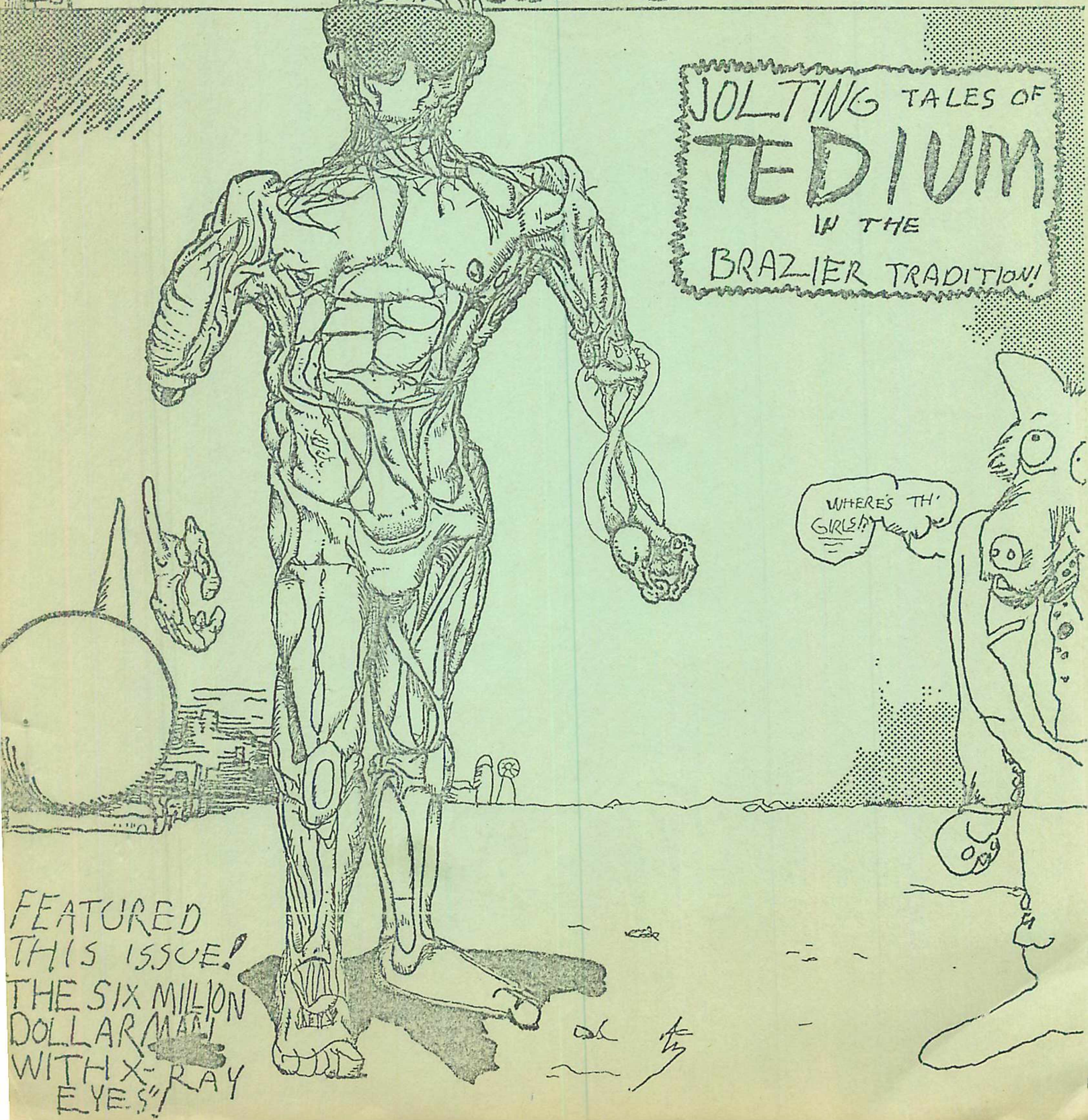

FEATURED THIS ISSUE! "THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN WITH X-RAY EYES"!


FARRAGO
#2

DONN BRAZIER, EDITOR OF FARRAGO, ISSUE THE SECOND, APRIL 1976, PRESENTS IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE, THE FOLLOWING CAST OF CHARACTERS.....

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richard s shaver died in late 1975 shortly after this piece was printed... in view of the subject, richard, somewhere, is chuckling ironically.....

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CLASSICAL DUST : ADVENTURES

BY

PAUL WALKER

How can you tell a classic? Call your local library and ask for four books. The same four over a period of months. The one that remains on the shelf consistently is the classic. A second test: wipe each of the four books vigorously with a slightly damp cloth. The one that will not come clean, the one that seems to have been printed with dust imbedded in its binding, is the classic. It is re-bound, its pages yellow, its *date due* slip at the back showing that although it has been in the library for ten to twenty years it has never been taken out more than three times in a single year. And the last time it was withdrawn was a year or more before you opened it. If your *classic* contradicts any of these characteristics, it is probably a *modern day abridgement*.

Who takes these books out? I love to study the *date due* slips and calculate the chronological chasms that divide readings and wonder who the readers were and what they did with the books. Someone has made notes in the margins. Sarcastic exclamations. Enigmatic question marks. Someone has underlined words or passages in pencil. I am amused by the latter. There is a kind of mind that turns every book it reads into a text. The former irritate me. The kind of mind that has the patience and conscientiousness to read with a dictionary always at hand fills me with guilt.

Someone once said that all best-sellers are not masterpieces, but all masterpieces are best-sellers. We assume, of course, that every classic is a masterpiece, but we know that all best-sellers are not read by the people who buy them. How many of the thousands who bought *Doctor Zhivago* or *1984* actually read them? How many who have bought handsomely bound sets of the classics have ever actually read one of them? And if they did, why did they? For self-improvement? Curiosity? At the nagging of a parent or relative or teacher? How many read for pleasure alone, and of those who did, how many were pleased?

What does the term *classic* mean, anyway? Thedore Bernstein says, "It would be well if *classic* were reserved to mean of the top-most class or standard." But *classics* are not all of the "top-most class or standard" by any class or standard. Some are more of historical val-

ue than aesthetic worth. Others were such popular books in their day, and may still be in certain lands, that they have acquired the label through longevity, becoming associated with worthier books by inclusion in mass-market classic libraries, or simply by confusion with other old books. Books once thought of as outstanding literary masterpieces have, in time, descended the aesthetic scale to be considered only classics for children, most readily available in children's editions, and cheaply printed with bad illustrations.

Even those editions designed for adults are rarely suitable for a comfortable reading. The best, as from Heritage Press, resemble prayer books. The worst have squeezed books once printed in three or more volumes into seven or eight hundred pages of eye-straining print with bindings that crack painfully upon every opening. It is no wonder people think these works boring when they open one and see page upon page of virtually unbroken small print relieved only by an occasional illustration of historical interest, but otherwise as uninformative and dull as the staid binding. Scholars will be appalled at my complaints. A book should be judged by its content, not its physical appearance. Fans and publishers will understand. They know the value of artwork to enhance, or diminish, the appreciation of the book.

Classics are not like other books. Despite their multi-volume mass-marketing appearance, each classic is a singular work that transcends whatever genre it may be associated with. However many gothics have been written as the result of *Rebecca*, there has never been another quite like it. In fact, *Rebecca* contradicts all the rules of its own genre, as all classics do. Where other gothics are action-packed, it is leisurely. Where other gothics are melodramatic, it is philosophical. Where other gothics favor definitive climaxes, it ends with all its questions not fully answered.

Perhaps that is one reason why people are suspicious of the classics. Having been urged to read them as children by elders whose tastes they have learned to distrust, they have acquired a complacent prejudice about them. They have read and been told so much,so often, about them that the classics seem completely predictable. Even whatever pleasure they might derive from them has already been recorded in polygraphic detail by a generation of scholars. There is nothing new to discover, no special insights of their own. But having once read a classic, they experience a disillusionment so discomforting that they retreat immediately into complacent prejudice. People do not like discomforting surprises, the everyday is bad enough. They look to books for solace, for reassurance. Every reader would like every book to be the same as the last he or she enjoyed so much. To read a book that contradicts one's long held conviction of the predictability of a particular genre alienates rather than encourages them to read another like it.

No matter how much you have read, been told, or seen through the golden eye of Hollywood, the encounter with the classics remains always unique, unexpected, and personal. No literary critique or film version can quite be the same as the original. Rarely, it might be better. I prefer David McLean's film of *Oliver Twist* to the book. But it is never the same thing.

The classic exists by its own rules, and unlike other books, it has

to be taken on its own terms. One of these is that thou, reader, shalt know boredom before pleasure. This is not simply another reason why people avoid the classics, it is *the* reason. The most persuasive contradiction to all a reader's convictions about what is and what isn't a good book. Good books are *never* boring. Most all classics are to some extent. How can one reconcile this? Someone once said of Shakespeare that the secret of his greatness was that he was not afraid to be boring; and therein lies the secret of all great classics. They take their own sweet time.

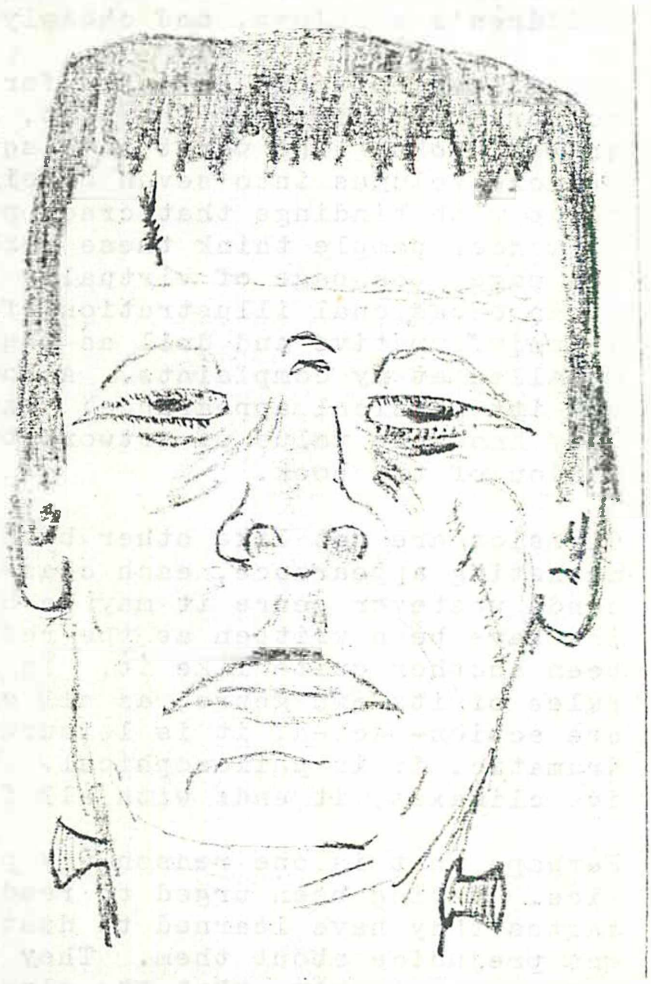
It takes time to do the thing only classics can do. But is it worth our time, our pain in some cases, to discover those things? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. A reader has to decide that for himself.

The purpose of this irregularly appearing column is not to exhort you to read the classics, but to share with you my own experiences of some of them. Some more wonderful than I imagined, some more dull than I feared. To share my own experiences and to invite you to share your own with me. Hopefully, we will persuade one another to read books we might otherwise have missed.

((Next issue Paul Walker continues with OH, MY DUMAS, TO ME YOU WERE SO GRAND!))

IN SEARCH OF FRANKENSTEIN BY RADU FLORESCU, NEW YORK GRAPHIC SOCIETY, 1975, PAGES 236

A REVIEW BY LOAY HALL



For more than 156 years there has been controversy over the true authorship of the novel, FRANKENSTEIN. Opinions are divided into three schools. The first accepts the belief that Mary Shelley, then the 19-year old mistress of Percy Shelley, wrote the novel as her contribution to a ghost story contest proposed by Lord Byron on a stormy night in June of 1816. The second school, the one I agree with, argues that, although Percy Shelley was not the actual author, he was in fact a silent collaborator and the real genius behind the novel. The third school theorizes that William Godwin, Mary's father and perhaps the most influential philosopher of his time, wrote the novel to explain some of his revolutionary ideas.

It was this argument of authorship, and the discovery in a Geneva book store of a copy of FANTASMAGORIANA (the book Byron, the Shelleys and John Polidori, Byron's personal physician and a minor poet, read that famous night that FRANKENSTEIN was given birth), which enticed Radu

Florescu, co-author of IN SEARCH OF DRACULA, to delve deeper. He began by retracing the steps of the Shelleys and Claire Clairmont, Mary's half-sister and Byron's mistress, from London, when Mary and Percy eloped, to and across Europe via foot, mule, horse and carriage, vanoe and boat.

It was during the latter stage of the journey, Florescu speculates, while traveling down the Rhine that Mary first heard the legend of the Barons of Frankenstein and their castle and the alchemist Johann Philipp Dipple. The Frankensteins were a real life royal family whose castle was built along the German border between Mannheim and Mainz. Because of their defiance to the Protestant church, the family was cursed by the Landgraves of Hesse. Dipple was born at Castle Frankenstein and throughout his alchemical career his greatest ambition was to own the castle. In the latter years of his life he tried to exchange certain 'alchemical secrets' to the Landgrave of Hesse for the castle, but he died before the dream could be realized, shortly after announcing he had found the secret of living for another 150 years. Florescu suggests that these legends had been locked away in the back of Mary's mind until they were released by that stormy 1816 night.

The Shelleys later rented a villa for the summer of 1816 in the Montalegre section of Cologny, a suburb of Geneva. Byron and John Polidori had also rented a villa, just a short walk from the Shelley's. Here the friends spent their time reading and writing or sailing the face of the lake, Bellerive.

The evening of June 16 was a foul night: rain slashed in torrents, lightning danced on the lake and thunder growled. By the light of a fireplace, the friends read chapters from FANTASMAGORIANA and chilled with terror. Inspired by this sensation, Byron suggested that they each write a ghost story to thrill each other. It was agreed. That night Shelley awoke from a terrifying nightmare, and later Mary suffered one of her own, inspired, she says in her introduction to a later volume of FRANKENSTEIN, by their discussion of death, artificial life and immortality. It was from this that FRANKENSTEIN was born.

The doubt about this inspiration comes because it is known that Mary and Percy visited the site of Castle Frankenstein and were familiar with the legends. Moreover, the character of Victor Frankenstein, the scientist who sought to play God by creating artificial life, is modeled completely after alchemist Dipple. It seems a little far-fetched to say that the stormy night and subsequent nightmare alone produced FRANKENSTEIN.

As for the novel itself, Florescu deals very lightly with it; he gives only the vaguest idea of what the novel contains and skims over the characters, only revealing who might have influenced their creation. This is a major flaw in the book; FRANKENSTEIN deserves a more in-depth study.

Florescu also goes into the film and stage versions of the book,and does an admirable job. His filmography covers the years from 1910, the Edison version of FRANKENSTEIN, to 1974, ending with Brooks' YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN.

But while IN SEARCH OF FRANKENSTEIN has many fine points, perhaps

its most outstanding feature is the story of the controversy-- new to me -- regarding the authorship of FRANKENSTEIN.

Will the real Frankenstein's monster stand up, please?

That Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley possessed the literary abilities to write the novel there can be no doubt. Her parents-- Mary Wollstonecraft, the feminist, and William Godwin, the philosopher and novelist-- were intellectuals of the first water, so it is not surprising that she iniherited some of their talent. Her early writings, prose and poetry, show definite promise, and a bent toward the supernatural.

As for the belief that Percy Shelley was a silent genius behind FRANKENSTEIN, it is well known that he helped revise the manuscript of the novel extensively. Originally the novel was no more than a novelette, but Shelley felt it had more promise as a novel. He suggested areas where it could be expanded and even helped with the rewriting and wrote a preface for the first edition. Yet, Mary, in later introductions to FRANKENSTEIN, denies that Shelley had anything to do with the novel. Moreover, it was Percy, not Mary, who sold the novel for publication. And lastly, the descriptions of the arctic are purest Shelley; Mary admitted in her journal her distaste for the wintery wilderness, and that Percy found the greatest beauty in Nature's virginal whiteness.

The weakest of the three schools, however, is the one that says William Godwin penned FRANKENSTEIN, because of the so-called Godwinian philosophies which make up much of the novel. This is easily explained: Mary Shelley was an avid reader of her parents' writings and read and reread Godwin's book throughout the writing of her novel. Another criticism is that a girl of Mary's age-- nineteen--could not have grasped the fundamentals of chemistry, physics, biology, medicine, anatomy and psychology, sciences used extensively throughout the novel. Therefore it is presumed that a scholarly man, such as Godwin, could only have written FRANKENSTEIN. However, Mary was an extraordinary young woman, with a fine taste for science, as her science fiction tales prove, and she had the help of another scholar, Percy Shelley.

As for my opinion: I most definitely believe that Mary Shelley wrote FRANKENSTEIN, aided by Percy Shelley. Florescu is a knowledgable researcher and a cogent writer, and his arguments are hard to dismiss. While the title of IN SEARCH FOR FRANKENSTEIN is misleading --it is not a search for the real Frankenstein family--it is indeed a remarkable book, and is most highly recommended!

COLLABORATIONS

PAUL DI FILIPPO

The process of collaborating on a work of fiction, says Harlan Ellison, is a mindfuck.

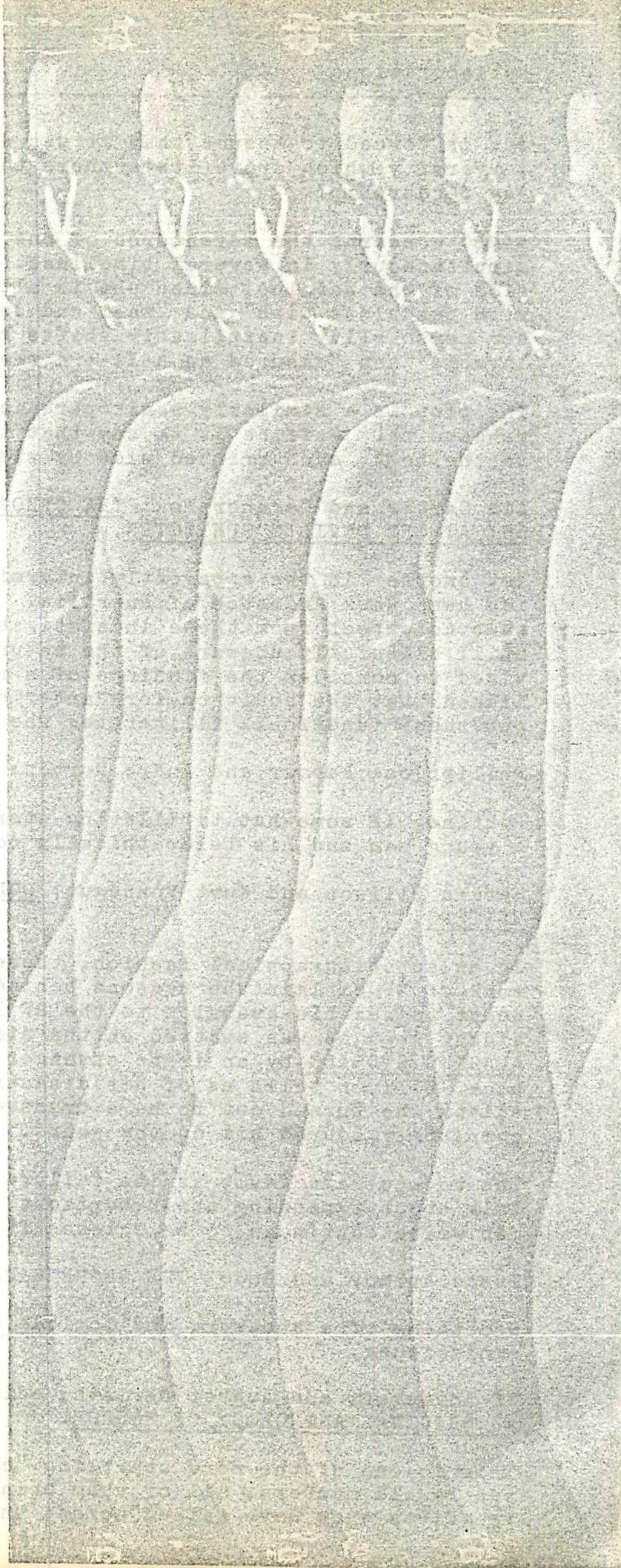
This is an intriguing analogy. If we extend it a little further than perhaps its originator intended, we are forced to an inescapable conclusion. Namely, that there are bound to be a number of times when the act of joint-authoring is ridiculous and absurd, bungled and ungainly, awkward and embarrassing, not to mention extremely ludicrous to the disinterested observer.

Just as in the more conventional kind, you see.

CONSIDER A FEW SUCH INCIDENTS . . . . . .

Michael G Coney and Joanna Russ: THE LIBERATED BIMBO

This novel is more of an unfinished patchwork than a seamless synthesis, and



one is forced to assume that it was either lack of cash or sheer perversity which drove its authors to foist it upon an unsuspecting readership.

BIMBO concerns the adventures of one Anna Jo Carioca, who exists simultaneously in several timelines. We never get a clear impression of the heroine, since she is alternately described as "petite with pendulous tits" and "tall and domineering-- an Amazon", while her personality inexplicably shifts between "dumb and helpless, but lovable" and "assured as hell-- a real ballbuster".

The plot is a similarly schizophrenic mishmash, and does not bear rehearsing. Suffice it to say that there are two separate endings to the book, each printed side by side on the final page.

Lin Carter and Gardner Fox: THE CHRONICLES OF HAWK ANDRETCH. NUMBER 65: AT THE DEVIL'S SPHINCTER.

Yet another in the apparently interminable series about the barberian hero Hawk Andretch of Puerilia. Readers of the series know what to expect from these indefatigable authors. Those who are still blissfully unaware of the nature of these volumes might be advised to consider the findings of a recent LOCUS poll which established that the audience for Carter and Fox is comprised of prepubescent functional illiterates who plan a career in TV or politics.

Philip Jose Farmer and Andre Norton: IMAGE OF THE BEAST MASTER.

Routine, if somewhat titillating story of the sexual adventures of a young man and his telepathically controlled team of animals.

Harlan Ellison and Kurt Vonnegut: DON'T CALL US SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS.

In an autobiographical fashion, these two headlights on the grillwork of SF explain the reasons behind their oft-repeated plea. Vonnegut traces his aversion to the SF label to an early childhood incident when he was swatted on the side of the head with a copy of AMAZING STORIES by an irate stranger who happened to be Hugo Gernsback. Ellison tells us of his disastrous marriage to a female SF editor who turned out to be a transvestite and how the experience completely soured him on the genre.

The book's main fault is its failure to explain why, after all the talk about expanding their horizons, the major part of what these men write continues to be science fiction.

Isaac Asimov and God: THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE.

Something of a shocker. The logical extension of Asimov's literary omniscience.

HP Lovecraft and August Derleth, editors: FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE: AN ORIGINAL ANTHOLOGY OF HORROR.

This is one of the more startling "concept" anthologies. New stories by old masters, all of whom bring to their work the fresh perspectives they have gained"across the pale",form the substance of

this collection. And with a title page featuring names like Clark Ashton Smith, Poe, LeFanu, and Bierce, the reader is assured of quality. This is the first book to include a "divine rights" clause in the copyright data.

Robert Silverberg, Frank Sinatra, and Richard Nixon: THEY WON'T HAVE US TO KICK AROUND ANYMORE.

Each man discusses his retirement, and why he can't ever seem to make it stick.

James Tiptree and Michael Bishop: **** ** *(Untranslatable)*

Both of these *soi-disant* luminaries have been praised for their realistic depictions of alien life. It should come as no surprise, then, that their first joint effort is written completely in an alien language and alphabet of their own devising, to achieve what a cover blurb calls "the ultimate in alien atmosphere." Although this novel will open many interpretations, it cannot fail to be an utterly convincing portrait of nonhuman thoughts and emotions.

Robert Heinlein and Alexi Panshin: THE ANNOTATED TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE

At last, anxious readers can have their questions about this masterpiece answered. What did the music scores mean? Who did what to whom, sexwise? Judiciously padded with footnotes, this novel now runs twice its former length.

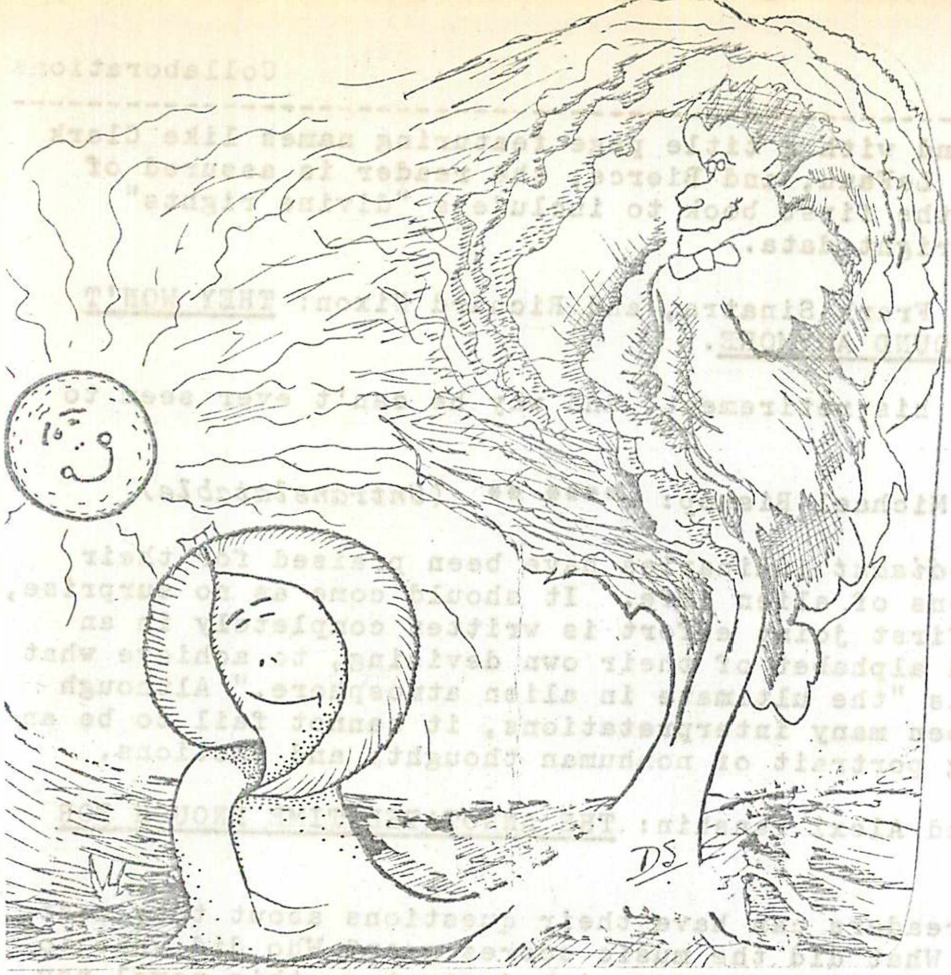
Arthur C. Clarke, Poul Anderson, and Larry Niven: THE STARS PAY WELL, or ALL THE GALAXY A GOLD MINE

The three deans of hard stf come together to prove that an author can still write as if nothing had changed since 1920 and be wildly acclaimed. The book tells of likable Biff Goodsoul and his female companion, Ina Huff, aboard their ship, the EESMITH, as they cross and recross the galaxy, never once pausing to piss. STARS comes in two volumes, one of fiction, the other with all the scientific explanations, a compromise sure to please almost everyone.

Samuel Delany and Roger Zelazny: ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT DREARY, AS I PONDERED, WEAK AND WEARY, OVER MANY A QUAINT AND CURIOUS VOLUME OF FORGOTTEN LORE

With their longest title yet, they have come forth with their masterwork, fulfilling the promise they both showed separately some years ago. MIDNIGHT is the story of young Comet Jo Corwin, a wealthy mutant superman of royal parentage. In the ravaged city of Amber, Corwin wages battle against a group of Hindu-Egyptian immortals who would block his efforts to learn his identity and save the universe.Stylistically, the best attributes of both writers are combined. Half the 1100 pages are blank, or are marvelous examples of connect-the-dot typography. Midway in the book is a reflective piece of tinfoil, forcing the reader to confront his own face, a disconcerting novelty.

In an afterword, the authors explain why they have such remarkably similar names, and what effect it will have on the future of science fiction.



THE DEATH-RITES OF VARJANEL A STORY BY GAIL WHITE

ILLUSTRATED BY DANNY STRELKOV

Dispatch #1

Arrived w/ Judson at 0:00 on schedule. The surface of the planet is covered with a soft cottony cloudy substance. This is why it was so hard to determine its identity for so long. Judson observes the substance is plantlike but has no roots. Under the cloudy plant the ground is cold and smooth and marble-hard. The surface has absolutely no projections or unevenness of any kind. There are a number of round holes leading underground. As we had no idea of where we were, we were obliged to assume we were in the right place and await our contact.

At 0:11 an inhabitant came from behind us (apparently from a hole) & informed us that if we were the visiting masters of *anvropoloji* from *eorva,* he was our guide Paranji. We then introduced ourselves.

Description of Paranji: of less than middle height, very slight in build and of very white complexion. Also has white hair falling to shoulder length, resting there in a light wave; very keen blue eyes, straight nose, high cheekbones; cast of face oval, with fine features, especially lips. Quality of voice high and clear, like singing; cannot pronounce th, which is evidently missing from the language. Dressed in white robe, ankle length, wrist length, neck high (not particularly fine hands, much used for gestures); dress is evidently made of the cottony rootless substance. Note esp: Paranji appears of indeterminate sex, though inclining to masculine.

Dispatch #2

Life underground. Paranji's house. Everything very smooth, no sharp edges. Furniture seems to be cut out of the natural rock (*varjan*) with tools of the same. How they get the tools is a mystery. There is a myth that a strong hero named Loakar broke up some of the rock with his hands centuries ago and so made implements of it, but this is unverifiable.

The lack of substances other than the cotton (*varjan-i*) and the rock is puzzling. We have difficulty eating & request food to be sent. The inhabitants seem to draw their substance from the air itself, which is in fact heavy to us and of an ambrosial smell.

Note: Paranji has a mater (their word is *marien* in a strange similarity to English) whose name is Elave. Though Elave is of more rounded face & figure, & altogether more feminine, we persist in believing that Varjanel people are bisexual. Elave weaves the cotton into cloth with a needle made of the rock. During this occupation a song is chanted to the effect that Tranquility follows labor as it follows rest, or something philosophical of that kind.

Judson says this Tranquility (*matori*) seems to be the basis of their religion. In fact we have as yet witnessed no hostile actions or enmity among the inhabitants we have met so far. They accept the *matori* as being all around them and innate in them, and do not pray, except that they sometimes chant a verse that means apparently:

> *O blessed Tranquility in-dwelling, all thanks,*
> *all thanks, divine peace.*

This is sung, especially at the beginning or end of social gatherings, by what seems to be a professional singing class, often extremely beautiful.

Dispatch #3

Have been studying the language. Very simple really - most nouns & verbs being based on the substance *Varjan* which occupies most of their life. Judson remarks that he has witnessed all the social rites except dying, about which the native people are secretive. Questioned on this, Paranji says "*Ka lo-sia varjan-lo*" (It's not the dying season.) So we are left hanging.

Later - not easy to keep track of Varjanel time: we have been here perhaps 7 months. The big news is that the "sickness" (they only know of one) has struck the planet. Paranji's mate, Elave, seems to have it. Judson is elated.

Dispatch #4

The great ass Judson decides to intrude on the deathbed instead of decently spying. He says Elave lay stretched out, Paranji standing at the head of the bed & people standing about chanting. He says that death was very tranquil & after some hours Elave was carried up through the hole - he could not see what was done above ground. His effort to observe the carry-out was discovered. On this, Paranji and Rhyvaa (one of their wise men; one might say governors)

became very grave and had conversation he could not follow, but they let him go in peace.

Paranji arrives this evening and says, in effect, that Judson will inevitably catch the varjan sickness and die, as no alien can live in the presence of varjan death. Terror of Judson, who nevertheless attempts to brazen it out. I suggest decent suicide - he has pills. Suggestion repelled with laughter.

Later: Judson grows observably weaker. Paranji says when he dies I will have to leave, which is welcome enough. So I will witness the burial rite after all. Judson says, "There's no irony like God's irony." Thinks he's witty, but must be quotation from someone else.

Dispatch #5

Death of Judson, very tranquil, this morning. Lying in state. Paranji says I may escort his funeral cortege to the surface. Apparently I am to escape the contagion, as Judson is not a native.

On leaving, I see Judson is to lie near Elave, who lies quite exposed on the ground. Paranji says, *"Varjana seleva marnaveh"* (varjana plant flourishes) - then in a play on words, *"Varjanah-se vamarna"* (corruption advances).

The body of Elave, as it decays, gives off the tendrils of the varjana that will be woven into clothing. The cycle of their life is complete.

Something is going to happen.
Something big,
to the whole human race,
all at once.

MAYBE IT'S GOING TO RAIN

by

NEAL WILGUS

Maybe it'll be the change
to a higher form
of evolution
when we've passed
childhood's end.
Maybe the spontaneous outbreak
of prace
(but I wouldn't count on it).

(Reprinted from TITLE #38)

Perhaps it will just be
the next century
arriving on schedule
with exploration
of the space frontier
on the one hand
and mass starvation
on the other.

Maybe it
will just be
the end.

PROCEDURE

BY JEFF HECHT

The hex key is fitted gently into the head of the bolt. It is tested, then slowly turned to the left, loosening the bolt one turn, two. The metal plate relaxes outward a few microns.

WHAT PROCEDURE ARE YOU ATTEMPTING? the voice asks.

The key is removed from the bolt. For a few moments there is only the looseness on the one corner of the plate. Then the key is fitted into another bolt on the opposite corner of the plate. The hands test it in the socket. Then they turn the key, loosening the bolt one turn, two. And there is looseness in this corner of the plate, also. The key is removed from the bolt.

PLEASE IDENTIFY YOURSELF !

A left hand frames the area around the bolt on a third corner, put-

ting very little pressure on the plate. The key is gently inserted into the head of the bolt. It fits at once, firmly. The framing hand is removed. Force is applied to the key, but at first it cannot turn the bolt. The force builds slowly. The metal tenses. The spot of seizure yields, and the bolt turns slowly. As the turning becomes easier, the force on the key is lessened. The tensions in the metal have become heat, and the heat is dissipated swiftly through the metal. One turn, two. Then the key is removed. The plate has shifted slightly outward.

YOU ARE NOT PERFORMING A VALID PROCEDURE FOR YOUR AUTHORIZATION CATEGORY.

The key is fitted into the fourth bolt. It is slightly off-angle when it first touches the bolt, but quickly slips into the socket. The bolt yields easily, two almost quick turns to the left, and the key is removed. The entire plate has relaxed outward from the frame.

YOU MUST PROVIDE YOUR AUTHORIZATION CODE.

A hand presses the plate gently against the frame. The warmth from the hand begins to diffuse through the metal. The key returns to the first bolt, and fits smoothly into the head. The bolt is turned, slowly at first. It turns easily, once, twice, moving out from the frame. The turning speed is increased. Three, four, five, six, seven, eight turns. It is a forty thread/inch half-inch long bolt. The next ten turns are quick, sure, but the final two are slower. When the bolt is free from the threads in the plate, the key supports it. Then it is lifted away.

PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR INTENDED ACTIONS BEFORE PROCEDING FURTHER.

The key is fitted into the second bolt. There is a slight awkwardness, the key first bumps the bolt from an angle toward the side. The hand resting on the plate is realigned, moved to face the second bolt. The turning begins. The key is slightly loose in the socket, force is being applied down its shaft. The turning is slower. After fourteen and three-eighths turns, the key is slipped out of the socket. The bolt is slightly loose. In a moment the warmth of fingers comes to the head of the bolt, and begins to diffuse down the bolt. Four quick turns follow, and the bolt is removed.

PLEASE SUPPLY YOUR AUTHORIZATION AND IDENTIFY ITS SOURCE.

The hand on the plate is shifted to face the third bolt. The pressure on the plate is increased slightly. New patterns of heat and a slight pattern of strain diffuse through and across the metal. The average temperature of the plate rises. The key is fitted into the socket of the third bolt. The turning is still slightly sticky, dirt has penetrated into the threads and is now being rubbed away. Adhesions break, and the sliding of the metal surfaces becomes much easier. The slight heat from friction dissipates into the bulk of the metal. Ten turns. The key fits the socket tightly, there is no hint of motion within the socket. The bolt is turned all the way out, the last two turns becoming much slower. The bolt is drawn away from the plate.

PLEASE IDENTIFY YOURSELF, ANNOUNCE AND EXPLAIN YOUR INTENDED ACTIONS, PROVIDE YOUR AUTHORIZATION CODE AND IDENTIFY ITS SOURCE.

The pressure on the hand changes, shifting its direction. It eases somewhat, and the hand begins to turn. It focuses toward the last bolt, turning the plate a few minutes of arc as it does so. The pressure on the plate is increased, and the full flat of the hand comes against the metal. With more contact area, the heat diffusion covers a wider area of the metal, the calorie exchange rate increases. The key is fitted into the socket of the fourth bolt, but does not go in smoothly. The key is wiggled slightly, the turning begins. It is slow, there is some friction, but the heat is produced slowly and dissipated easily. Seven, eight turns. There are twenty and a small fraction threads on the bolt, matched 99.8% with the threads in the supporting frame.

As the sixteenth turn is passed, the pressure on the plate is increased, and holds the plate to the frame without need for the bolt. The bolt is held by the key and slips out easily. In a moment, a second hand touches the plate near the position of the last bolt. It moves to the edge of the plate, the fingers gripping the edge and the thumb still on the plate. The first hand moves in the opposite direction. Its fingers grip the opposite edge, the thumb rests lightly on the plate. The fingers press in from the sides, the plate is lifted away. A hand returns, touching the black bakelite handle of a circuit breaker inside.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

The hand pulls the handle down, against the tension that holds the circuit-breaker on.

Quickly.

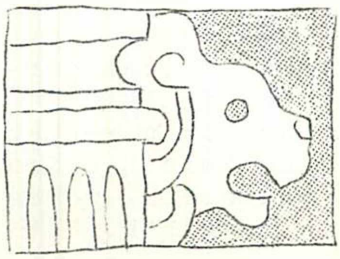
STARSONGS

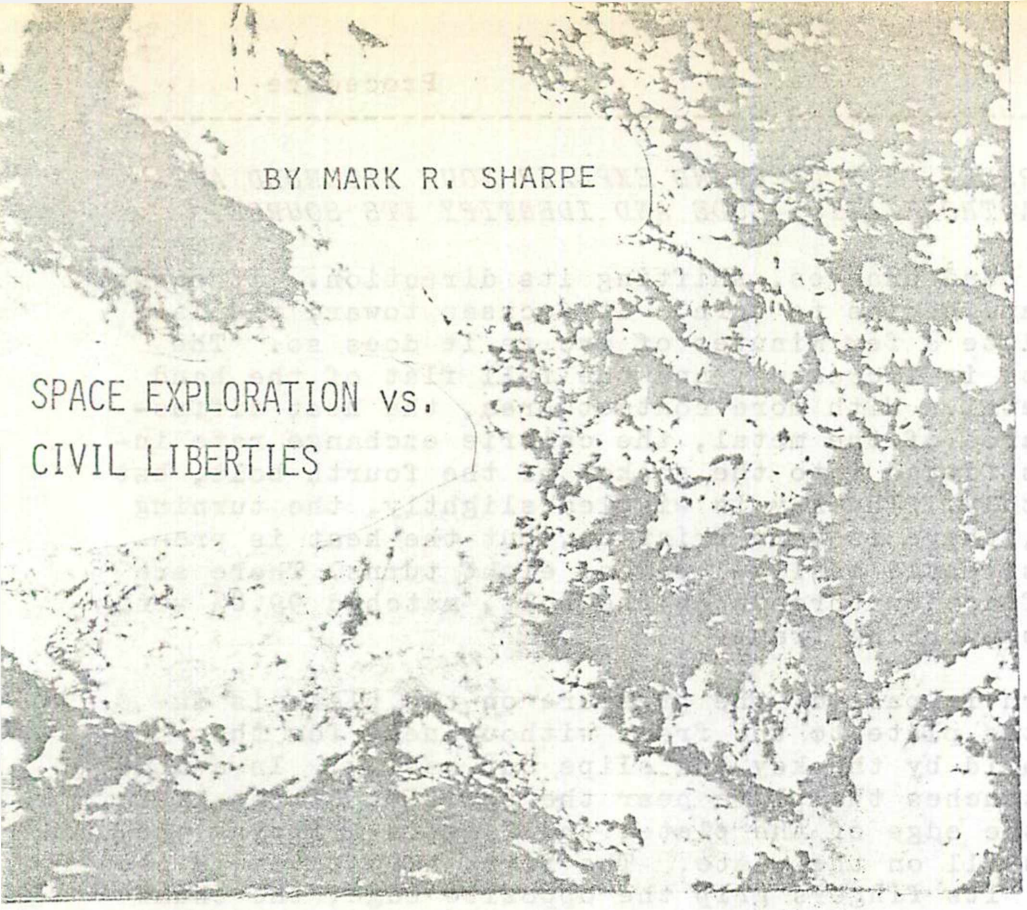
by

RICH BARTUCCI

Jewels in deep velvet, dancing,
 Sing to me your discords;
Static cantats, rondo and carol,
 Cool, faraway waltzes, playing,
Over some far Spican Danube, glistening.

In my small closet, floating,
 In my small mind, dancing,
Over my earphones, sighing,
 Sing me your starsongs, bright ones;
Tatter my mind and shred my soul;
 Render me more than I am.





BY MARK R. SHARPE

SPACE EXPLORATION vs. CIVIL LIBERTIES

This article is not meant to be an encompassing view of the future of humankind but, rather, a specific supposition born from a conversation with District 11 United States Representative Andrew Jacobs. At a party, he and I engaged in a debate about where the future of civil rights will go in the distant, or what appears to be the distant, future when our species might conceivably begin to colonize other planets than our own. He maintained that civil rights for the individual will continue to enter a mild enlightened era and will not fall back into the past at some later date. I argued otherwise. I'm not a history buff so my historical perspective may be somewhat faulty. I trust none of you will bring me to the mat for this lack of knowledge.

The steps we have taken in the arena of civil liberties have been enormous in the past few decades. Judicial and legislative action has increased the rights of the individual ten fold. For the time being, these laws will remain on the books only to be overturned whenever it suits the needs of this government on the grounds of some obscure *higher reason*. But these laws ought to remain a century, at least until colonalization of other planets commences. Even the government has to be cautious when robbing its people of personal rights, for governments have a well known desire to stay in existence, to maintain the status quo.

From the future we must go back in time to gather some historical perspective. In the Bible it was written that man should "be fruitful and multiply." Needless to say, we have fulfilled the author's request and are now shoving each other for precious space. Using this Biblical command, religious and political leaders brought laws and social mores that restricted people from interfering with conception or birth. But as time flowed on, these laws relaxed somewhat until today we have the right to regulate and control births, to enjoy sexual freedom and

equality, along with Life, Liberty and Happiness. What will happen in the future when we are again required to expand -- if you'll forgive the poetics -- to fill the universe with our racial seed?

When the United States was being settled, large families were a requirement for survival; the more children the better your chances with crops and animals. But I regress. We are in a temporary lull before the proverbial storm. When space is opened up for colonialization there will be a need for a mass of humanity. With the current laws that give the individual the right to have abortions and easily accessible contraceptives, the birth rate is substantially reduced. Consequently, the laws WILL change, and just as effective as H.G.Wells Time Machine, we will take one giant leap into Darker Ages. Allow me to offer a theory.

Australia was originally colonized by British convicts. They were sent there to populate a new land. Contrary to some opinion, I feel that space will be colonized in this manner, but to a small degree and in a different fashion. Instead of "jailers" we will have an army of technicians to man the prison colonies, and just as in Australia, escape will be an impossibility-- an airless void instead of a vast sea. When the "prisoners" have become entrenched into their new environment, shiploads of "free" colonists will begin to arrive. The higher the population, the better the chance for survival. A small population will not have enough skills to keep the colony alive; perhaps the reason why several attempts to colonize the American continent failed. Thus, these new worlds will enact laws to limit the civil liberties of their population; mainly the woman.

Will the colonists stand for this treatment? They really won't have much choice. Sailing across vast distances of space -- a stellar ocean -- would be more costly in money and time than would be advantageous. The colonists will, perhaps, accept the restrictions grudgingly, but accept them they will. Any change in the isolation of the fledgling colonies will take centuries, not decades.

What can be done to prevent future restrictions upon the civil rights of our children's children? Absolutely nothing. Nothing short of staying permanently on this planet will be able to stop it. All we can do is turn like a lathe in our graves. Believe me. I doubt there is a lathe in any machineshop anywhere that could turn fast enough to match my own rolling about in the grave.

If nothing more, this has been an interesting article to write. Whether or not anyone agrees with me is unimportant, but I hope someone considers it food for thought. If so, I fervently hope it was bitter; it was meant to be.

-- Mark R. Sharpe
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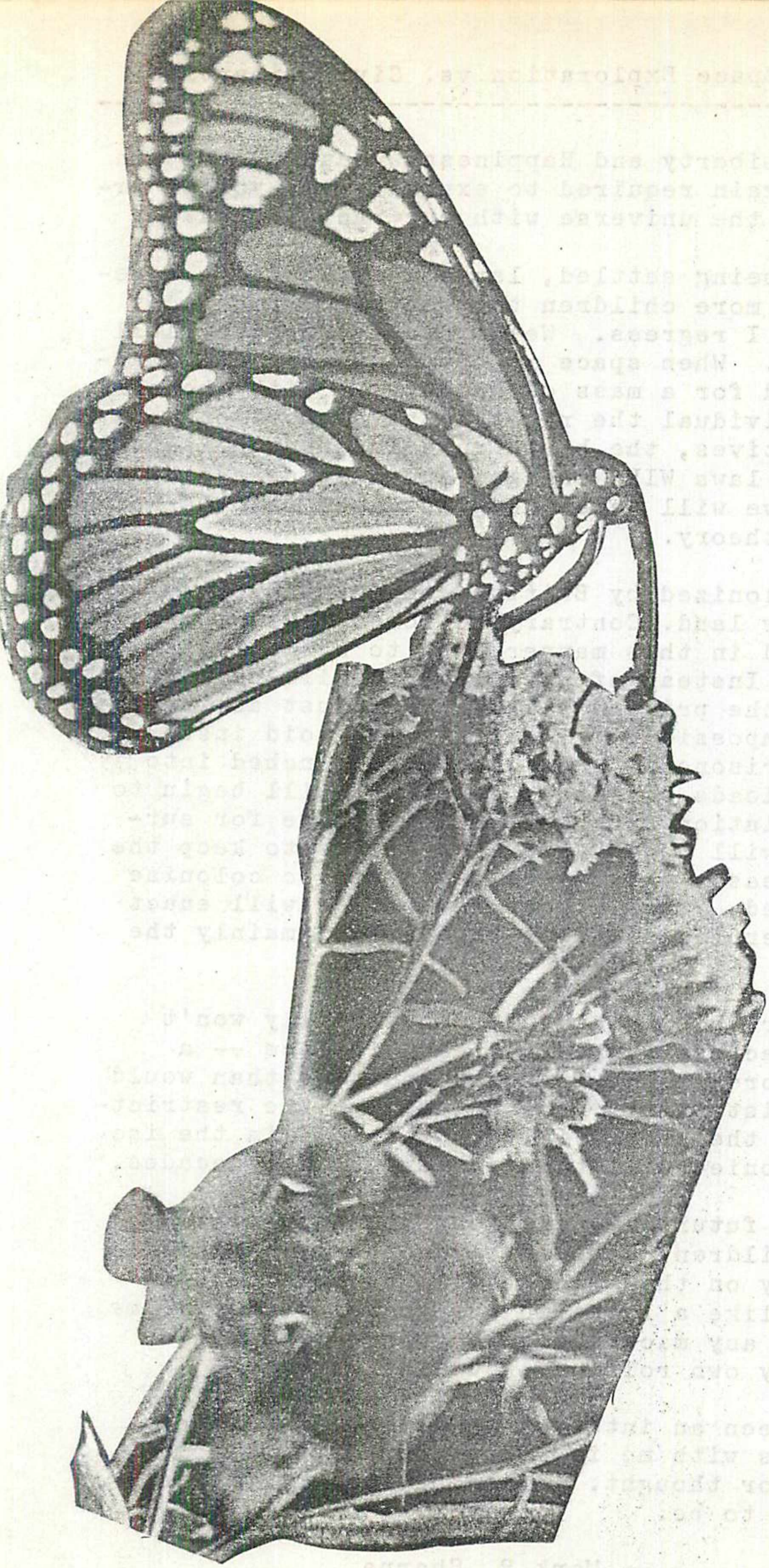


THUNDERCLAP BY

WAYNE W. MARTIN

In preface, I should point out that I'll be throwing off a number of opinions and don't intend to prove anything.

I've had occasion to read Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder" several times. While it originally was and remained, on re-reading, a very enjoyable story, a lot of things in it seem rather unlikely, even in the framework of fantasy.

Granting time travel as the story's element of the fantastic, it remains to examine how reasonable the other elements of the story are under that circumstance.

Thus, we are promptly introduced to "Time Safari, Inc.". Okay, with the normal make-a-buck current that runs through man's nature, this is reasonable. Business would quite likely stick their finger into the pie. From that solid ground, Bradbury develops a story of a group of men who go on such a safari to hunt ole T Rex, the thunderlizard.

Naturally, things go wrong with the trip and in the end they return to the 'present' where things have changed from a rather tolerable world where Keith (a good man) had won the Presidency of the USA the previous day into one where Deutscher (a neo Hitler type) had won the election.

The cause? A butterfly had been killed on the trip.

Another change resulting from the same dead butterfly is a change in the written language. For example, the safari sign changed to "Tyme Sefari, Inc.". That is all acceptable as a conceivable result. Who is to say a minor disturbance wouldn't affect history drastically enough to change spelling ("take you there" becomes "taekyuthair")?

However, if development has been changed that drastically that far in the past, how is it that the same two men (Keith and Deutscher) are not only alive in the new time but are both still the same men with the same political beliefs and both still the candidates for the USA presidency? The mood of the country is such that the iron-man with dictatorial desires becomes the popular choice. Such a drastic change in popular climate, but the identical men running for the same office: it doesn't seem likely. Nor does the language change seem reasonable when all the people are the same people. Every character who was mentioned before the safari still exists after the trip. The voters' philosophies apparently reversed, but the candidates' positions remained the same. To borrow a line from a certain pointy-eared fellow, "highly illogical".

Of course, the time safari people have anticipated the effects of an animal's premature death. Thus the arrangements they've made for killing an animal only moments before it would die anyway. They realize the hazard of changing the past. They thus have this metal pathway that floats six inches off the ground, to avoid coming into contact with the ground.

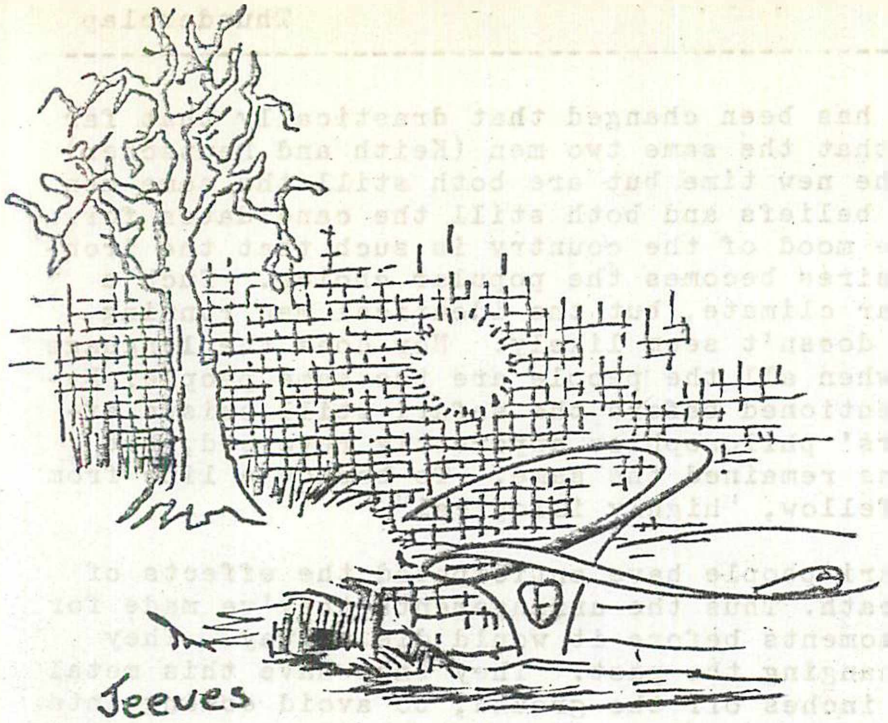
Well, disregarding how the pathway was set up, we are left to consider what such a path would mean. With a delicate balance where the premature death of a butterfly caused the shift described, what would the mere presence of the pathway do? For one thing, any butterfly under it obviously won't be stepped on by a dinosaur. So in order for the pathway not to affect time, no dinosaur should have ever stepped in the vicinity of the path. If a dinosaur did, at the least it would have to change the pattern of its steps. In a situation where trivial alterations lead to such variances, something like a dinosaur having its steps fall in different spots, thus changing the sod it tramples on, would cause some alterations.

Say a dinosaur steps on the pathway. That prevents him from trampling the spot he would have landed on had there been no antigrav bridge. If the dinosaur steps over it, he could smash a plant that shouldn't be smashed. Right in the story, one character explains the fear of an important animal "or even flower" being killed by accident. If they are that concerned and go to these lengths to prevent it, why then would they ignore the obvious fact that the path could easily lead to the same thing? Why do they even permit the pathway? Why not make all the hunters wear antigrav devices on their persons? It would be much cheaper to have individual antigrav packs than to construct a huge floating pathway in the past. Bradbury couldn't do that, of course, because then the guy wouldn't step on a butterfly.

The very shooting of the animal would alter the creature's foot steps. When it fell, it would land on different sod, conceivably destroying the important "flower" the guide expressed concern about.

The concern about making minor alterations doesn't jive with the policies permitted which could easily result in the same alterations. Returning hunters would have already found changes, long before the butterfly incident. Maybe they kept their mouths shut!

Enjoyable, as with most Bradbury, but as is common in his stories: a vivid, exciting world but full of inconsistencies.



THE END OF THE CHASE

BY

RICK WILBER

He was falling, tumbling idly through a void that would never end. The fright was gone. That had ended when once again he had realized that the hole never ended, that he would never stop falling, that the darkness would always be there.

Occasionally a light would go by, some of them pinpoints that flashed by swiftly, and were easy to miss when he blinked. He didn't like blinking because of that. Even though the act re-established a sort of positiveness about his eyes being open and operative, he didn't want to miss those points of light that zipped by.

But there were other lights, the long, slow, painfully bright kind, that he tried, and failed, to shut out. He would close his eyes tight as he felt one coming; but it never seemed to help. Time after time they would start a slow burn and then grow brighter and brighter as their center approached. He would close his eyes, but the fierce glow seemed somehow to burn through. Then, finally, after the glow was almost too much to bear, it would begin to ease, and then, slowly, fade away. He would open his eyes again, and watch patiently for the pinpoints.

They were just stars of course. Somewhere back in that portion of his mind that remembered what he really was, what he really was doing, he knew that. Some, by their size and proximity as the ship flashed

through, ached and glowed. Others, farther away, and dimmer, zipped past. Stars, as the *Centurian* snaked through parsecs of frontier and headed for the Warning Line. Stars, that he would never really see, but now knew intimately. They had burned their way through him as he headed out.

It ended abruptly, as always. Falling, secure in that sense of movement; then, not falling, static, a mattress under the shoulder blades, pressing up, a continuous bonging from the system, fresh air breathing by from the vents. He was in the half of the crew that would not be awakened until they were down and the air outside was checked. He swung his feet over the side and stood up, shakily. "Highpockets," he said to himself, "we are here."

They moved out quickly, and began setting up the sensors first. They were all that really mattered, those sensors. The rest of it, all the paraphernalia to support the two dozen men and women; the power units, the food units, the synthesizers, the communicators, they were all secondary to those sensors. When the attack came, it was the sensors that would find the enemy, probing the heavens to do it. It was those sensors that would claw through hydrogen clouds, glowing suns, magnetic fields, complete planetary systems, for two light years around, to find the enemy. Then, one quick burst of noise to home, a warning that the time had finally come, and the sensor's job was done. No more use for the two dozen, the equipment, the ship.

They would not die, the two dozen. They had shields to surround them, and speed to escape. But the planet they were on, the green ground, the blue skies, the rivers and streams, the deer-like foragers and the big cats that hunted them; it would all be gone. The fleet that was detected by the sensors would know that sensing. The fleet would follow the sensing back to the planet, back to where the sensors had been not long before. They would follow it back and, as a matter of course, destroy the planet. It was, after all, the strategic thing to do.

They were done in a week, the units up and on-line, the communicators tracking to home, the sensors silently at work, the two-dozen mostly bored, working in three shifts and slowly accomodating to the 30-hour rotation of the planet.

He was out for a walk. He had done the morning shift, and was done for the day by lunch. Now, with time on his hands, he strolled through a meadow waist-high with grasses topped with light blue flowers, and headed for a woods a hundred yards away.

They all had their hobbies; you had to in this line of work. One was a botanist, and two more were learning from him. Another was a writer of Shakespearean drama, unpublished but determined. A third was a tinkerer with mechanical gadgets, proud that he never used electronics. Others were others; he was a walker, and a looker.

Six months of duty before relief. Then, as a special unit they would move off to another planet and open another unit. Six months then to relief. It stretched out behind him, as far as he cared to remember, the familiar pattern. He thought about it,

walking toward the woods, noticing the trees were like oaks back home. The pattern, falling, touching down, set-up, boredom, falling, home, falling, touching down, set-up, boredom, ad infinitum. And the enemy never came, the day never arrived, and he was now ten years older, making a little more money, saving most of it since it could not be spent, and tired to death of the whole thing.

He sat down, short of the woods, and eased back against a rock. He was sitting lower than the tops of the bluetopped grasses, and he enjoyed that. He could see the blue sky, not a cloud in it, and he could follow the blue down to the tops of the trees. Then,scanning down, he could see no more than a few feet from the tops of the trees before the grasses cut off his view. It seemed right.

He pulled out the playback and dialed a light tune. He set it on the rock, behind his head, and closed his eyes, letting the music wash him, flowing around and through, easy, enjoyable, and sweet. The song was a teaser; it cruised lightly for a few minutes, then revved up and held a new pace for a few minutes before again easing off. Before the playback could move on to the next selection, he dialed a replay of the same tune. Again, he leaned back and closed his eyes and gently nodded off, reaching that half-awake state that made boredom liveable. The song ended again finally, and he cursed it lightly for doing so, reaching for the playback to start it once again. His groping hands didn't find it, so he, grudgingly, opened his eyes to look.

He opened them, and saw her.

She had no right to be there, that was all he could think. You just don't set up an advance sensor unit on an occupied planet. If the sensors clicked, that was that for this planet, and you just do not do that to sentient beings. She also, he thought, had no right being beautiful, but that was irrelevant.

She was looking in his eyes, and he into hers. Half crouching, like a wild thing, she leaned over him and hesitantly reached out to touch the playback again. He smiled and she froze. He spoke, one low sound, and she edged back, slowly. He sat up to show open, empty hands, and she fled for the woods. The last he saw of her was long hair streaming behind as she slipped into the trees.

"Forget it," they told him. "It's too late anyway."

"What do you mean, forget it?" He hammered the desktop. "You can't just forget it!" He was losing a slow temper, and that surprised him. He'd never lost it before, whu should he now? "What if the sensors pick up something, and we head out? What if that happens?"

"This planet will catch it," they told him. "You know that."

"And she'll catch it too, and the rest of her type. We can't let that happen. We have to move the sensors!"

As soon as he said that, move the sensors, he knew he was done. That was imposible; they could not afford the time. They were

working to save billions of lives on dozens of planets. They could not afford to move the sensors to save few when their work saved many.

"Besides," they said, "the sensors showed no sentient life here. She's either a figment of your imagination or just non-sentient."

"I tell you she was human. Human!"

"Then she must have been a Yahoo."

"A what?"

"A Yahoo, read your Gulliver's Travels. Yahoos looked like people but acted like animals. Non-sentient."

He frowned at that. "But she was clean," he said.

"So are cats," they said.

Arguments at a deadend, he went out the next day to try again, carrying the playback and lying in the grass. She didn't come. He kept at it, trying each day. Then, for almost three weeks, he was on the wrong rotation and had to try it in the morning, with the grass wet with dew and the mist hanging. She didn't come then either, but he wasn't giving up. He could not do that, but the others could, and did. They had had their doubts at first anyway, and now, since he had not seen her again, they determined it was him, and not her that was the problem.

Eventually, after a month of effort, he decided to take the weekend off and go searching for her. "Mohammed to the mountain," he told the captain, asking for the extra day. The captain, seeing a chance to end it with this foray, agreed. Three days later he left.

He had packed enough for three nights, leaving after the morning shift. He had three nights, two and a half days, to find her, to prove she existed, to bring her back and prove that they had to leave; and, failing that, to at the least warn her of her possible end, and the end of her planet, the end of those blue skies and grasses topped with blue flowers.

He walked steadily at first, striding over familiar ground until he reached the edge of the woods and the end of the ground he knew. It is a wall, he thought, glancing up at the edge of the woods, a wall of wood. Shifting, moving the pack to even its weight, he stepped into the gloom.

It took him an hour or more to find a path that made the going a little easier. He moved down it, turning up the volume of the playback so it echoed through the trees, bouncing off the full-leafed giants and sounding through the gloom. He whistled to the tune as he walked along.

That night, the dark falling fast under the canopy of the trees, he camped with a lean-to, set up in seconds. He could not decide whether he should leave the playback on during the night or not.The batteries were good for years, but he did not want her coming when

he was not awake. He decided against it, and placed the playback in his pack, next to his right leg as he leaned back and closed his eyes. In the morning, when he awakened, it was gone.

The loss, he decided after a few minutes, was not really that serious. Granted the beeper was gone, and that would make finding his way home a little rough; but he could not be that far away after just a few hours in the woods. And the other stuff in the pack,the food and the playback and all, were easily replaceable once he was back in camp. He shrugged it off and, yawning, stood up to leave. The path, he knew, headed roughly in the right direction, so he moved down it. He used the stick to aid in brushing aside the branches as he walked; the stick had been left behind by whoever had made the trade for his equipment. Probably a fair trade to whoever, he figured, and that means sentience.

He had been walking for almost an hour, by his watch, when he saw some movement off to the side. He stopped, and it stopped. He started walking again, and still noticed movement at times off to the sides, both sides now.

Finally, walking through a small clearing he ran quickly to his left and surprised her. It was her, he was sure of it; he saw her hair, but not her face, as she danced away, running through the trees. He knew he could not catch her. He would just have to wait for the right chance to convince her of his good intentions. He resumed walking.

By noon he was lost. The sky was only rarely visible above, and his bearings were gone completely. He plainly and simply was lost. They would not start looking for him for another day or more. He wasn't even due back until late the next day. He walked on, still looking for her, and, on occasion, catching glimpses of her.

He slept in much ruder surroundings that night. The lean-to had been too much trouble to carry without the pack, so he had left it miles back. He slept under a low branch, fitfully, hearing sounds in the woods and stirring in the trees around him. In the morning, he felt as if he had not dozed at all through the night; but, looking at the time, found his watch was gone. In its place, next to where he had lain, was a rounded stone. "Primitive tool," he said, aloud, to himself. "Stone age but sentient." He repeated that phrase,aloud. Somehow that made it more convincing.

Standing, he assessed the situation. His shoes, thank the gods,were still on his feet, and his clothes on his body. Hitching up his pants, tightening his belt, he moved on.

After an hour's walking, his only certainty was hunger, and no food was in the offing. There was a little gnawing of fear. They might never find him. They could not use the ship-board scanners for sentience until the ship took off, and that would be too late for him. They would have to search for him, and they still had to man the sensors; they could not afford to let that slide, not for just one foolish walker. He cursed himself roundly, thinking of it, and then, cursing again, louder, slumped down against a raised root from a tree, feeling the pangs of hunger. Tired, he looked down at his shoes.

That didn't help. He looked up, and there she was, not more than fifteen yards away, smiling at him. He smiled back, and she grinned openly. He stood up and she began to move off. He followed her, crashing through the same brush that she was gliding through, but barely managing to keep up, crazily chasing her. He could hear her, ahead, laughing out loud, and he gritted his teeth, growing angry. He was trying to catch her, to warn her, to save her, and she was laughing at him. Finally winded, he gave it up and stopped, breathing deeply, head back to fill his lungs, legs shaking slightly from the run, knees weak.

He looked up, and she was there again, smiling. He moved after her, slower this time, and she led him off, laughing and running through the brush he struggled through. It went on and on, deeper and deeper into the woods, he guessed. But now he was committed to the chase. He kept going, near collapse at times, but always on the chase. And she, still light and easy and laughing, led the way.

It was late in the day when he heard the siren in the distance. The siren! The enemy! The sensors had spotted something. They would be taking off within two hours, packed and moving off, and this planet would die hours later. He looked for her, saw her in the distance, ahead, and continued after her, hoping to force her toward the siren. Minutes later, at full stride, it hit him. She was running right for the ship, leading him there; she had been all the time. Sentient, he thought, with a capital "S". She's leading me back home. But they had a long way to go, and he wondered if they would make it. He gave up caring whether he was still chasing her or just trying to reach the ship. Just putting one foot in front of the other was enough to occupy his thoughts.

The siren seemed louder. He could see her occasionally stop and tilt her head, like his dog back home when an interesting sound came. She no doubt wondered just what it was, that loud and searing noise. He kept moving, one foot following another, the minutes ticking away. He could see the end of the woods when the siren changed to a loud bonging. Ten minutes, he thought, and they shut the doors. They're all at the doors now, waiting for me, hoping I hear the bonging.

He reached the edge of the woods by himself, not needing to follow her now. He saw her standing there, rivulets of sweat making patterns past her breasts. He stopped, held out his hand for her to take if she would. She could come along. They could find the room, he knew that; in an emergency takeoff they left a lot behind. He held out his hand. Hesitantly, she took it, smiling at him. Then, suddenly, laughing, she began to run with him, back into the woods.

"No," he yelled at her, and she dropped his hand. "You must come with me. To the ship." She did not understand. The game was for her to run and him to chase. That was all that mattered. He ran for her, and she, laughing again, ran deeper into the woods.

Quickly, quietly now, he gave it up. He turned, one last look, and ran, full on for the ship.

In space, as he was falling, knowing the bottom was there but that

he would never reach it, he saw, instead of lights, points of bright, her face. He saw her face. The pinpoints of light left a residual glimpse of her, and that was a fondness easy to take. He would remember her. The bright, slow, painful ones -- they were her too, and they laughed and pulled at him to leave and head back into her woods; back where the game was on and it was fun. He knew, somewhere, that the fall would end, and her face would be gone. But for now he was falling, tumbling idly through a void that would never end; and her face kept floating by, each pinpoint, each glare. He tried not to blink. She burned her way through him as he headed back.

HOW TO BECOME A GOD BY RICHARD S. SHAVER

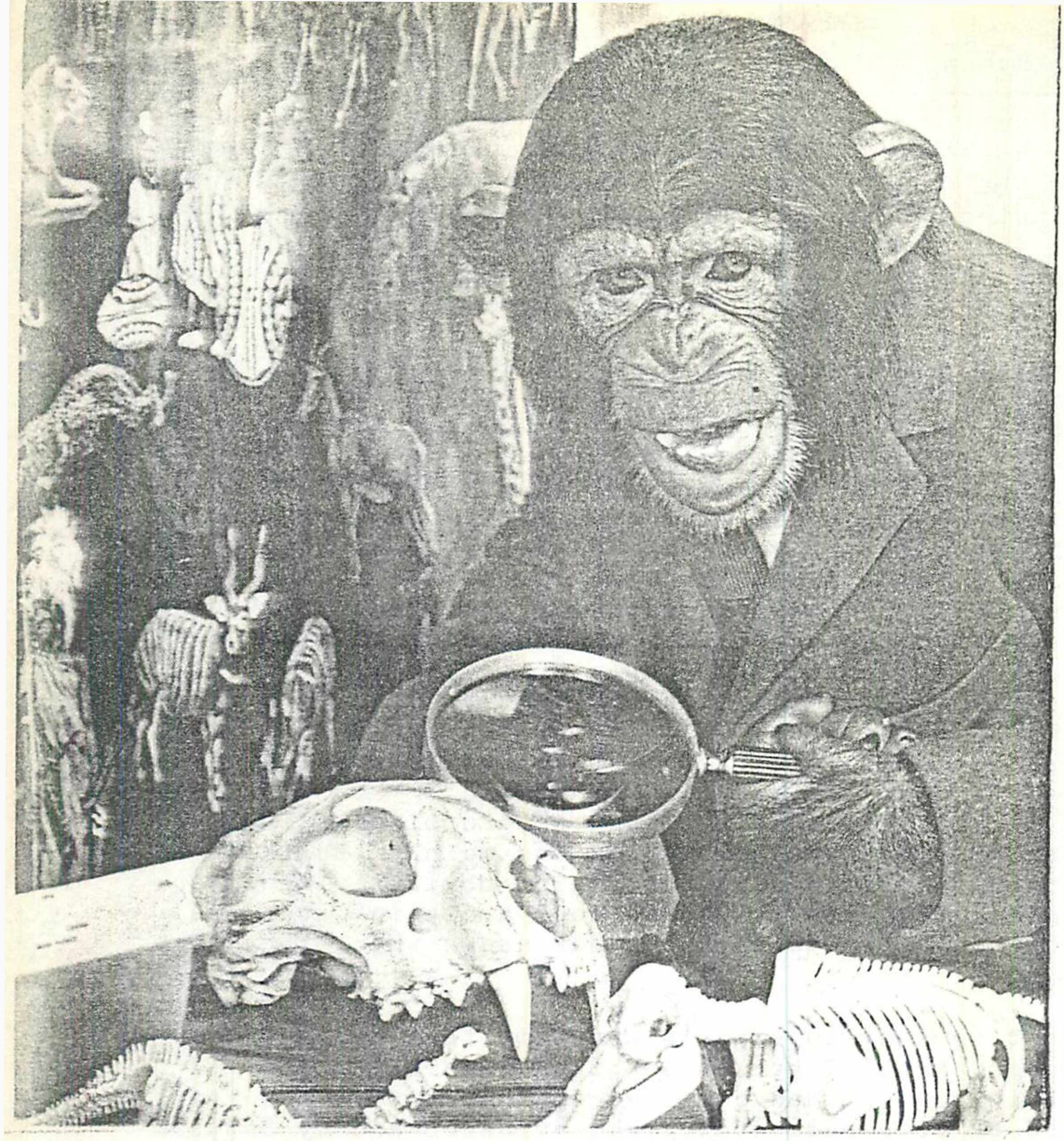
How-to-do-it books are as plentiful as who-dunits. It is time we learned something practical. Let's consider how to become a God in our time. Not much to it except to get over mortality and become immortal. That is, of course, just the first step, but a big one.

All the would-be Gods wind up their affairs and drop with a dull thud into that trap that waits for everyone-- Death. Defeating that trap Death sounds tough, but nobody seems to take a really good look at the problem. Actually, Lindbergh demonstrated very clearly that even a bit of chicken flesh can become immortal just by being immersed in carefully prepared nutrient fluid. He and Dr.Carrel had quite a time and the Press acclaimed their immortal chicken heart, then promptly forgot all about it. Personally I suspect that if you can get two people to agree on what to do next, as Carrel and Lindbergh managed to do, they have achieved the preliminary step toward Godhood, which is practical laboratory work in co-operative two-step time.

So, just take up where Carrel and Lindbergh left off when Rockefeller stopped their funds. Proceed, graduate from chicken flesh to human flesh. And then to the whole human body. It is simple; the hard part is getting somebody like Rockefeller to pay for it. But for the purposes of this article, assume its possible to find an angel.

Or it may necessitate doing something of the kind economically with whatever tools come to hand, as The Curies did when they isolated radium in an abandoned shed with some salvaged iron cook-pots of herculean size. So, if you don't have millions for perfusion pumps, tubing, and centrifugal devices used to separate nutrient fluids into their constituents, why then you will have to look about for an abandoned shed.

The spark of life in the chicken flesh CAN grow on and on if you can manage to separate the poisonous particles from the nutrients. After you have isolated these poisons of death and aging and know how to get them out of solution, you may proceed to adapt the process to your own flesh. That, of course, is the giant step...how to prepare the nutrient and how to absorb it instead of normal poisoned food. It might be possible just to drink it, as Alice did when she grew into such size. Until you learn this, you cannot become a God. Still... it wouldn't be practical to have the world cluttered up with would-be Gods in all stages.



THE GABON REACTORS AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

BY

STEPHEN H. DORNEMAN

A SCIENCE SPECULATION

YES, I DO BELIEVE HOMO SAP WAS AN OFF-SHOOT FROM OUR ADVANCED SPECIES.

Approximately 1.7 billion years ago, in what is now known as the Gabon Republic of Africa, two nuclear fission reactors were assembled. Not by Von Daniken saucerites or Atlanteans, but by random chance and geological processes that combined a lode of unusually enriched Uranium 235 ore and enough hydrated minerals for the water in them to function as a moderator. According to the *Bulletin d'Informations Scientifiques et Techniques* of the French AEC, these reactors have operated on and off at power levels of several kilowatts for more than 100,000 and possibly more than one million years. That is a hellish amount of thermal and nuclear energy being concentrated in a small area over an immense span of time. Have there been no environmental consequences of this?

Gabon, since 1960 an independent Republic in the French Community, lies smack dab on the equator (at Libreville, the capitol, the daily average temperature year around is 86-94 °F). Although very rich in natural resources (not just Uranium), Gabon's major export is wood,

as most of the country consists of practically inaccessible rain forest occupying the basin of the Ogoorė River. Although no archeological expeditions have been mounted to Gabon itself (possibly due to the unfavorable meteorlogical and political climates), along the continent across from Gabon, in the Congo, Tanzania, and Kenya especially, have been made the earliest known finds of *Homo sapiens* and his immediate predecessors.

Michael Geselowitz, at present an electrical engineering major at MIT, first pointed out to me a possible connection between the fossil reactors and the fossil hominids. Could it be that *Homo sap* resulted from a series of reactor-induced mutations in the pongid apes undoubtedly present in prehistoric Gabon? This is not to say that "natural" mutation rates and natural selection forces would not have eventually produced modern man, for the same mechanisms are at work in either case. But the nuclear radiations could have produced a much higher mutation rate in the indigenous species, resulting in higher diversity of the ape population. Coupled with normal selection, this could have resulted in a much faster rate of human evolution. This would also explain the large number of evolutionary spin-offs from the hominid line that never developed -- the evolutionary dead-ends. For the great majority of any mutations, for whatever cause, will be less fit for survival than the parental lines.

There are a few flaws in this hypothesis. Most anthropologists agree that selection pressure driving human evolution was mainly the shift in the environment from rain forest to savannah, which obviously never occured in the Gabon region. But possibly mutations arose in Gabon due to the radiation which then migrated to the other areas where they were more fit.

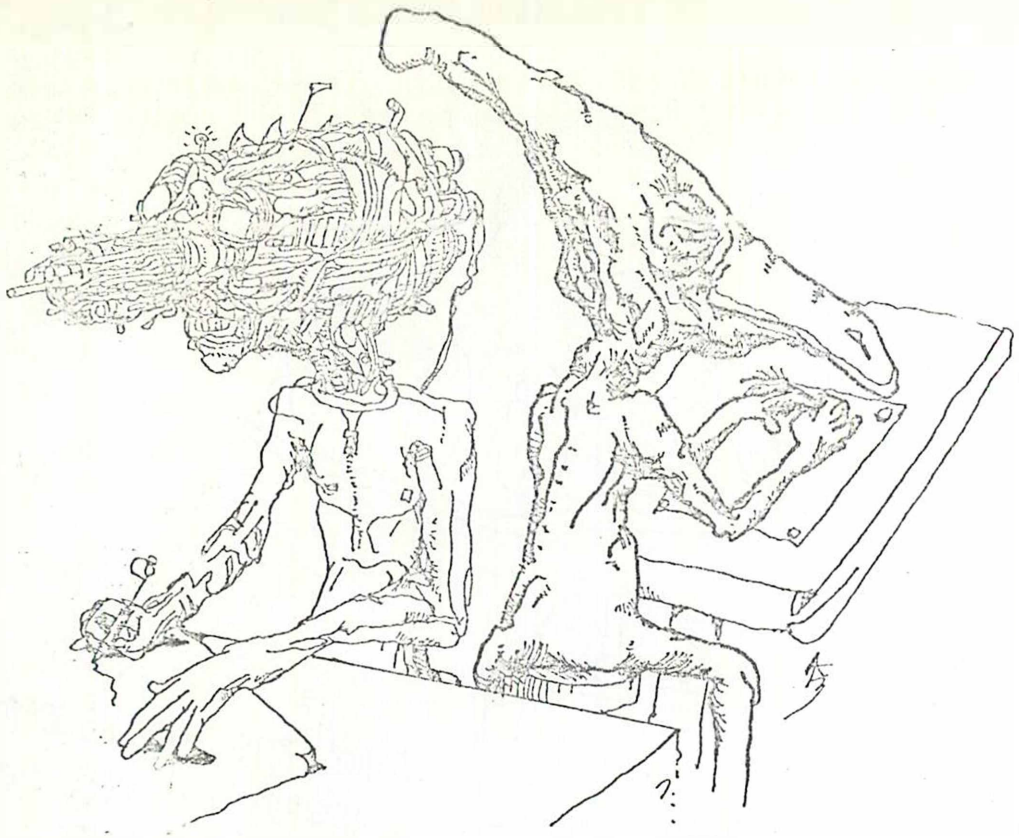
Another problem, one not so easy to explain away, is that while it is true that the evolutionary rate of humans is high compared to that of animals in general, it is not so when compared to the rest of the mammals. (This is measured by both paleontological evidence and by DNA and protein complementary mapping methods.) In fact, rodents appear to be the fastest evolving of all species.

There is some evidence <u>for</u> high primate mutation/evolution in the Gabon area. A number of species are found there and nowhere else, such as the family bands of the lowland gorilla. But the best evidence for or against the theory would come from anthropological diggings in Gabon, an event that will probably not occur in the near future.

If this hypothesis were found to be valid, would it have any importance other than the mere satisfaction of scientific curiosity? Well, for one thing, it might be wise if the hypothesis were true to keep an eye on the Gabon region for the appearance of the next higher evolutionary development (telepaths, super-insects, pollution-proof orchids or what-have-you). And when (if) humanity ever happens to meet a civilization from a similar second-generation star system, we might find ourselves a few million years ahead of them in development.

John W. Campbell would've loved it!


QUICK! BRING OUT THE CAMERA & INSTRUMENTS! I'VE JUST FOUND OUR FIRST EARTHLING!
By Chuck Groth '75



SARDONIC FANTASISTES . . . . . BY BEN INDICK

1 SAKI

((A shorter version of this essay appeared in TITLE #42))

This is the first in a series of essays I propose to do on a group of writers who are among my favorites. The descriptive title above is my own, and includes Wilde, Saki, Collier, Dahl and others. I shall not pretend to undue analysis, a catalog raisonne, or more than remarks which occur to me in the course of amiable reading. However, I shall try to examine the individual lives of each writer and give some idea of their other writings, whether they differ from or expand upon the particular genre which is the basis of the articles.

By sardonic fantasy I do not necessarily mean comic, humorous or even farcical writing, per se. These may be likely elements, but the sardonic includes an element of the macabre; the author is enjoying a game at our expense, for our ultimate delectation. We are never entirely certain of his motives or his intention; it may be fantasy or grue, or simply a writerly trick. Often, the story is decidedly nasty, perhaps even immoral, and, since we are taking the role of the protagonist, it may even be uncomfortable. Nevertheless, because we know it is only a story, and not reality, we can laugh at ourselves and gladly go along with the author. Since most of these authors are urbane and witty, it is, in some secret compartment of our mind, a compliment to us to join them. We read "The Chaser", "The Visitor",

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"The Interloper"; we label the author a mean bastard! *and..... we ask for more. The sardonic approach is a highly personal view of life, seemingly trivial on the surface; yet, it often disguises deeper truths -- recognition of our own weakness, of the effect of selfishness, of the triviality of certain desires. It is not, clearly, a genre of ennobling thoughts, but it offers its own truths. And it is most entertaining!*

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In 1912, Saki, who took his humour seriously, wrote: "The great delusion of you would-be advanced satirists (is that) you imagine you can sit down comfortably for a couple of decades saying daring and startling things about the age you live in...(but) whatever other defects it may have, (it) is certainly not standing still." Saki could well qualify as a critic of fellow-satirists, for his own ironic and satiric style arose from a keen observation which grew more acute as it grew darker.

Hector Hugh Munro, who found his pen-name in Omar, was born in 1870 in Burma, but was living in rural England by his second birthday. His writing skills came with his adult life, and were demonstrated initially in light, brief sketches satirizing society and politics. They appeared in magazines and demonstrated immediately his easy command of a prose rich in expression and much given to the epigrammatic style so prized by fin de siecle writers. His political satires, collected as *The Westminster Alice*, after the magazine in which they appeared, and the Carrollian format he chose, are clear and direct satire, although a contemporary reader would require extensive footnotes to understand the objects of his topical barbs.

In his short stories, which began to appear simultaneously and subsequently, the characters were invariably those of the high society of London of his time, occupied with the rituals which defined Life to them. These stories remain graceful and charming. If his characters are carefully circumscribed, the characterizations ring true. He delighted in the ironic bon mots by which they lived: when told that a man "must be a success by the time he's thirty, or never", his alter-ego, Roderick, replies: "To have reached thirty is to have failed in life." Of a woman who valued her possessions too highly, he writes: "...a group of Dresden figures of some considerable value had been bequeathed to her by a discreet admirer, who had added death to his other kindnesses." Nevertheless, there was, beneath the banter and light malice, an inherent pride and even a bitterness which would emerge powerfully in his last writings, two novels which are regrettably unnoticed today.

His first two books, the "Reginald" books, so named for their observor-protagonist, are primarily sketches of the brittle society in which he participated. With his third collection, however, *The Chronicles of Clovis*, the macabre element by which he is best remembered today, begins to enter, and the tales assume a more diverse and fully-rounded form. It is in this book that his familiar "Sredni Vashtar" appears. A fourth collection appeared during his lifetime, *Beasts and Super-Beasts*, with the inimitable "The Open Window". Two further posthumous collections are interesting if less memorable in content. His sense of irony, already clear, would be expressed most fully in his two novels.

Civility and urbanity characterize his people regardless of situat-

ion, although they do not always protect them. Pity poor Amanda in "Laura" when the latter announces her imminent death, and the likelihood of her reincarnation as an otter, or, perhaps, a small brown Nubian boy. Laura *does* die, and almost at once an otter is suspected of killing some prize hens. Amanda is "scandalized". She says, with some pain, "I think she might at least have waited till the funeral was over." To which her Uncle-in-law replies: "It's her own funeral, you know. It's a nice point in etiquette how far one ought to show respect to one's own mortal remains." Amanda, distraught over her friend's possibly uncivil return to life, takes a trip abroad to recover. Unfortunately for her, she chooses to vacation in the Nile Valley. The result is as unsettling for her as it is delightful to us.

If one of his loves is urbane gentlemen, and another is class-conscious ladies, a third is surely the precocious child. Most famous of these is Vera of "The Open Window" (and several successive but less successful stories), surely the most ingratiating liar in short fiction. The vengeful Conradin of "Sredni Vashtar" is another, and Matilda, who evens a score against adult party-crashers in "The Boar-Pig" is a rival to Vera. These stories are by no means always fantasies; indeed, most of Saki's stories are not fantasy. However, it is the possibility of fantasy which makes them unsettling or amusing, as the case may be. In "The She-Wolf", a noblewoman is apparently converted into a rather docile wolf as a trick on a pretentious devotee of the supernatural. Saki's adults are as able liars as his children, whether in duels of wit with potential money-borrowers or with club bores. He may lose patience with them: in "The Music on the Hill" his prototypical Englishwoman, at some odds with her dour husband, as his females often are, is made distinctly uncomfortable when she leaves her natural site of London for the country estate of her husband. Pan still exists in the wilds, and she pays a dreadful price for this discovery. The author, nevertheless, is genuinely fond of his subculture, with its scapegraces, fortune-hunters, insufferably rich, as well as with its occasionally genuine individuals. If he satirizes its lifestyle and its mores, in few of his stories is there condemnation of anyone other than as humbug or bore.

He wrote several plays, of which the most polished, "The Watched Pot", a collaboration, is an elaboration of these Londoners. It is a succession of often brilliant bon mots which any of the characters are capable of delivering. In spite of an abrupt and all too easy ending, it should still play well, in the mode of Wilde's brilliant comedy, "The Importance of Being Earnest". Some quotes: "Granted that woman is a bad habit, she is a habit we have not grown out of... No one can be agnostic nowadays. The Christian apologists have left nothing to be disbelieved.... Let's talk about ourselves; that's always interesting.... There are some people whose golden opportunities have a way of going prematurely grey."

As a potential dramatist, he was considerably annoyed by the already major figure of George Bernard Shaw: "The whole of the Sherard Blaw (Shaw) school of discursive drama suggests, to my mind, Early Victorian furniture in a travelling circus. However, you will always have relays of people from the suburbs to listen to the Mocking Bird of yesterday, and sincerely imagine it is the harbinger of something new and revolutionizing." He belabors Shaw on other occasions; at

a firstnight of a play, "a buzz of audience recognition heralds the arrival of Sherard Blaw, the dramatist who had discovered himself, and who had given so ungrudgingly of his discovery to the world." An onlooker remarks: "They say the poor man is haunted by the fear that he will die during a general election, and that his obituary notices will be seriously curtailed by the space taken up by the election results." His title *Beasts and Super-Beasts* is likely a parody in title of Shaw's *Man and Superman*.

Saki's rather spiteful remarks on Shaw have been to a great extent sustained by Time, as only a few of the latter's plays, written over a near centenarian lifetime, retain their stage strength; however, these are jewels in the Theatre's diadem, and like Saki's prose writings, justify all the rest. One can only wonder whether the fledgling playright, vouchsafed a longer life, would have been able to triumph on the boards. Possibly, however, he might have suffered the same fate he dealt to Shaw in a short story, "The Infernal Parliment", which takes place in Hell. It must be quoted. The hero, Bidderdale, is being shown one of the "special Hells" reserved for certain people.

> "This one (says the Fiend) is designed for one of the leading playwrights of your nation. You may observe scores of imps engaged in pasting notices of modern British plays into a huge press-cutting book, each under the name of the author, alphabetically arranged. The book will contain nearly a half million notices, I suppose, and it will form the sole literature supplied to this specially doomed individual."
>
> Bidderdale was not altogether impressed. "Some dramatic authors wouldn't so very much mind spending eternity poring over a book of contemporary press-cuttings," he observed.
>
> The Fiend, laughing unpleasantly, lowered his voice. "The letter 'S' is missing."
>
> For the first time Bidderdale realized that he was in Hell.

Perhaps Saki's finest book is one which best expresses his sense of irony, from its title, "The Unbearable Bassington", to its scintillating prose, so rich in sparkling epigrams that the reader dare not skim a paragraph. Nominally a realistic novel (within his customary milieu), here too there is for one moment the presence of fantasy which he uses to hint at unsettling and even decisive events. The persona are no different than those who flit through his short stories: the widow living in a mansion, with her treasured possessions, on sufferance of a will which will award the house to a young woman in the event of the latter's marriage; the widow's son, unbearably rude, prolifigate, selfish, doomed to self-destruction without even caring; a rising young politician, whose cleverness in Parlimentary debate does not conceal his essentially shallow mediocrity, of which he is, however, quite aware and content to measure his ways; an honest young heiress, attracted to each of the young men. The mother hopes to marry her son to the heiress, and young Bassington would appear to hold the winning hand, but through his own foolishness, as well as the clever restraint of his opponent, he loses the girl. In a moment of pique, at the loss of her hopes, the widow has a post in an African colony offered to her

son, Comus, one which his situation must force him to accept, in the futility of any other financial resources. Lost is the marriage that might have enabled the mother to remain with her treasures, particularly a great old painting, but each knows within the deepest part of the heart that what they both wish is to reach to each other. "You needn't look so tragic," he says, instead; "you're going to have your way. I'll go out to that West African hole."

At a farewell party, itself an unhappy failure, in which one of her prized china cups is broken, and champagne spilled on a tablecloth by the unhappy mother, Comus is accepting best wishes at the door. A noblewoman, herself insightful and unhappy, mentions to him that she had not known he had a dog.

> "We don't," said Comus, "there isn't one in the house."
>
> "I could have sworn I saw one follow you across the hall this evening," she said.
>
> "A small black dog, something like a schipperke?" asked Comus in a low voice.
>
> "Yes, that was it."
>
> "I saw it myself tonight; it ran from behind my chair just as I was sitting down. Don't say anything to the others about it; it would frighten my mother."
>
> "Have you ever seen it before?" Lady Veula asked quickly.
>
> "Once, when I was six years old. It followed my father downstairs."
>
> Lady Veula said nothing. She knew that Comus had lost his father at the age of six.

It is the only mention of such an apparition, but it is telling.

Comus is sent to Africa, where he is unhappy and bitter. His mother, at home, rues their relationship which had prevented an exchange of the love they genuinely felt. He falls ill, and she learns of it only when he is already in extremity. She awaits unhappily the fateful, final cablegram. In the meantime, her brother has invited an art-writer in, to view the painting as an addition for his forthcoming book. She receives the cablegram, sits forlornly holding it, even as her brother enters. "I have bad news for you, Francesca, I'm sorry to say," he announces. "Had he heard, too?" she wonders. Instead, he tells her that the painting is a forgery. He talks on and on, trying to comfort her, that forgeries of Old Masters are not uncommon, that they may even have some value of their own, and so on and on. But *Francesca sat in stricken silence, crushing the folded morsel of paper tightly in her hand and wondering if the thin, cheerful voice with its pitiless, ghastly mockery of consolation would ever stop.*

The ironies are many; young Bassington, so apparently "unbearable" is, in spite of his faults, human; his mother, ignoring moments when sentiment might have bridged their differences, chose to love

inanimate and all too perishable objects; the gaiety of the dialogue contrasts with the somber undertone to produce a profound and lasting effect.

The bleak irony of "The Unbearable Bassington" was to reach, in Saki's final novel, beyond irony into actual condemnation at last. The wry and witty obseror is still writing of Londoners in "When William Came", but he now mistrusts the people whom he had loved and satirized so long.

By 1910, he was beginning to feel they were too interested in immediate social pursuits and inadequately conscious of the dangers a peaceful nation might face from subtle and hostile nations. He grew increasingly bitter, and it emerged in this remarkable prophetic novel. The "William" refers to the German Kaiser, with the implication that what a William had done a millenium before could be done by another. In a short story, "The Toys of Peace", Saki had satirized the disinclination to give war-like toys to children; now, in the novel, he presents a fait accompli. The protagonist, away in Russia, returns to find England occupied by a well-prepared German army. To his disgust, he finds that those of his own upperclass set, including his wife, are meekly cooperating and playing up to the conquerors, partly for gain and partly in the delusion that ultimately the "superiority" of their own culture will win the enemy over to their own ways. The hero eventually gains a bit of hope when a parade of British Boy Scouts, scheduled to honor the visiting German monarch, utterly fails to materialize. It is the youth, the common peple, and not the smart and intellectual set of London who offer a hope of eventual rebellion.

Saki's prediction nearly came true within a year of the publication of his novel, as war commenced, and, as he feared, his nation was ill-prepared. He could have obtained an officer's status, but he chose to volunteer as an ordinary soldier. His literary career was tragically terminated by a bullet in the muddy trenches of France in 1917.

Interestingly, there is unintentional irony in "When William Came" which the author could never have realized. England never considered surrender, and, three decades later, inspired by a politician active when Saki was writing, would hold out courageously against a vastly superior and more ruthless enemy than the courteous, if supercilious, conquerors of whom Saki had written. However, the essential truth of his prophecy was seen instead in France, reacting as had Saki's Londoners, abjectly, pretending that there would emerge a mutual German-French society in which traditional French values would prevail.

Saki, a man of aristocratic and traditional British upperclass leanings, mirrored the prejudices of his time. He was annoyed by a rising Jewish class of merchants and professionals, themselves immigrants into England only a few generations before. In "Bassington" there is a characteristically amusing exchange:

> "You are not fond of the Jews," said Elaine.
>
> "I've traveled and lived a good deal in Eastern Europe," said Youghal.

"It seems largely a question of geography," said Elaine; "in England no one really is anti-Semitic."

Youghal shook his head. "I know a great many Jews who are."

Again, in the same novel, in a sophisticated Parisian restaurant, the same couple notice the presence, along with some vulgarly loud Germans and some gauche Americans, some "stray units of the Semitic tribe that nineteen centuries of European neglect had been unable to mislay."

In "When William Came", however, the Jews play a slightly larger role, as companions in conquest with the German overlords. Apparently, the author considered them, if not quite identical to Germans, then at least brothers-in-law, and equally untrustworthy. Here too lay an unintentional irony, which would befall those German Jews who, in the halcyon days of the first decade of the 20th Century, thought their freedom in Berlin betokened a new Golden Age.

Another example of unknowing irony with reference to the Jews appears in a Clovis story published before 1911. The humor of "The Unrest-Cure" lies in the preposterous notion that the bishop of a small village would seek "to massacre every Jew in the neighborhood." The victim of Clovis' joke protests that "there aren't thirty Jews (and) Sir Leon Birberry is one of the most respected men in the country". Saki could imagine such a massacre inasmuch as newspapers of the late 19th Century carried accounts of Russian pogroms. In summarizing the reaction of his hitherto-phlegmatic victim of Clovis' cure for a too-restful life, Saki unwittingly states the verdict of history on the mid-twentieth century, as poor J.P.Haddle expostulates: "This thing will be a blot on the Twentieth Century!" For reminding me of this choice tale, I am indebted to Paul Di Filippo.

Saki's sister, Ethel M. Munro, in a gentle reminiscence, wrote that "the softer, sympathetic side of his nature never, I think, appeared in his writings." She allows for a possible exception in a Wilde-like fairy-tale parable, "The Image of the Lost Soul", in which a worn and inconspicuous statue atop a church, ignored by the pious and even by the pigeons, is beloved by one "sweet-voiced bird." When one babbling pigeon tells another that the little bird has died, the statue falls to the ground. The church bells intone: "After joy....Sorrow."

Here, too, the quintessential irony of his consciousness pervades. It would be expressed eventually in bitterness and pain, but it is still his hallmark, the shining element which makes his work particularly his own.

-- Ben Indick, September, 1975

NIGHTMARE IN WHITE

BY RICHARD BRANDT

Heep and Roger stood looking over Mike McAffee who lay piled up in the corner of the Salome Bar and Grill. Bits and pieces of Mike McAffee had been dragged in from under the bar, next to a floor table, and various corners of the room. Heep threw the sheet back over the remains and took the cigarette from his mouth.

"What do you think?" he asked Roger.

"I never saw anything like it." Roger's face was blanched white. "I've been looking over stiffs for four years and I've never seen anything like it."

"Yeah. Same here." Heep took a final drag and dropped the butt in a shot glass. "What do you think did it?"

"I don't know." Roger stared at the impossible pile in the corner under the sheet and shook his head. "It looks like some wild animal ripped him apart."

"Yeah. Ain't that something, there."

Roger turned and stared at his partner. "Which means?"

"Well, we held the customers here - all that hadn't run out after the assailant left the scene - seems no one left while the act was in progress, all too scared." Heep turned and walked away from the corner, towards the door. Rog took a last glance over his shoulder, blinked, and followed his partner into the night air.

"Yessir," Heep was saying, "we took a statement on the spot, every customer who was there while the act took place. Everyone said the same thing, more or less." He stopped under a street lamp .

"What was that?"

"Ape."

Roger waited for something to hit him. "Ape?"

"Ape. Big, hairy white ape."

"Big, hairy white ape." Roger tried to picture a big hairy white ape crashing into the Salome Bar and Grill. It didn't scan. "Where'd it come from, just run in off the street?"

"Nope. Strange thing. Nobody noticed where it came from. A couple swear they saw it leap out of the wall, back of the dark tables, just popped in and out of nowhere, like. After it was finished,ran into the kitchen and vanished. Just like that. Must have run into the back alley. But could have come out of anywhere, gone anywhere."

Rog chewed on that for a second. "How about the zoos?"

"Had the station call them. Nothing."

"What do you think? Hysteria, hypnosis, something?"

"I don't know, Rog." The pair walked on for a moment.

"Hey, Heep. Where're we walking to?"

"Little place on the corner. Called in a professor, from the City, anthropology. Took a long close look at McAffee and said he wanted to drink. Didn't want to hang around the place for some strange reason."

Rog gave a little humorless laugh. "Yeah, I remember the first time they called me in on a freezer case. Fancy high rise. Beautiful green-eyed redhead, beautiful girl,on the floor, slick blue dress. Only there was a sheet covering her up. And all these beat guys were standing around, lifting the sheet and arguing over what did it and where it went in, and I started yelling at them to cover her up. And these guys staring at me like what the hell was I into."

"And now you don't see people lying there on the floor anymore."

"I don't know. I see something like in there. . ." He shook his head.

"Yeah, I know. Listen, you stay on long enough, you don't see people lying there. Just another bill of goods someone damaged. Nobody kill-

ed anybody, they just stole the merchandise. That's all." Heep glanced towards the row of storefronts. "This is the place."

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(Prof. Fryer is sitting at a table against the saloon wall, basking in the glow of a phony red gaslight. He is holding a drink in his hand, visibly shaking. He makes the following statement.)

"Yes. Well, I looked over the remains, and I heard what the people said. Yes. Of course you realize that white apes are rare animals, very rare, and I suggest you assume the witnesses were mistaken. Funny thing, those wounds... I don't suppose anyone else has looked closely yet...but they are definitely tooth marks. Not like the teeth of any animal I've ever studied, though, and they certainly aren't human teeth either. Aside from the fact that human teeth aren't capable of. . . Well, you know. Strange thing is, the rows of teeth are alternately sharp and blunt. I mean, a blunt molar-like tooth here, then a sharp tooth, like a canine, here, then another blunt tooth, then sharp, and so on. *(Long pause.)* You know, there is a legend...funniest thing...there is a legend, Mexican originally, from the Indians... a Great White Ape figures in some of their legends, an avenger sent by some fearsome gods to obtain sacrifices from the unfaithful. Half-man, half-ape, you know, which is the funny thing about those teeth... *(Pause.)* You know, some of those blunt teeth could almost come from a large adult male, I mean a man, human being, but there are those sharp teeth all between... like some kind of missing link... I don't know, you might have some special kind of animal on your hands, but I don't know anything about it. I don't think anyone does. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry. That's all I can help you with. I suggest you assume the witnesses are mistaken... maybe the dim light, I don't know... *(Muffled, in the background:)* Bartender?"

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Roger opened the door of his apartment, stepped in and switched on the lights. The brightness hurt his eyes. Heep entered behind him and closed the door, saying, "Listen,pal, I'll just fix one myself, you sit down. You want something?"

Rog fell into the chair. "No, God, I'm tired." He covered his eyes and listened to the ice and glass colliding. "I've been wondering about what Fryer said, about the missing link." Heep was silent. "What if it really was.. What if there was this animal so close to being a man, and still so much of an ape that it never was either one? I mean, something that could walk around like a man and you'd never notice it, then all of a sudden, wham! Big hairy white ape standing right in front of you. Fangs and all."

Rog lifted his hand from his eyes and peered across the room at the couch where Heep was sitting. He sighed and shut his eyes.

"Yeah, well let's worry about that tomorrow, okay?"

He sat listening drowsily to the empty night.

"You know, Heep, you've got the strangest smile."

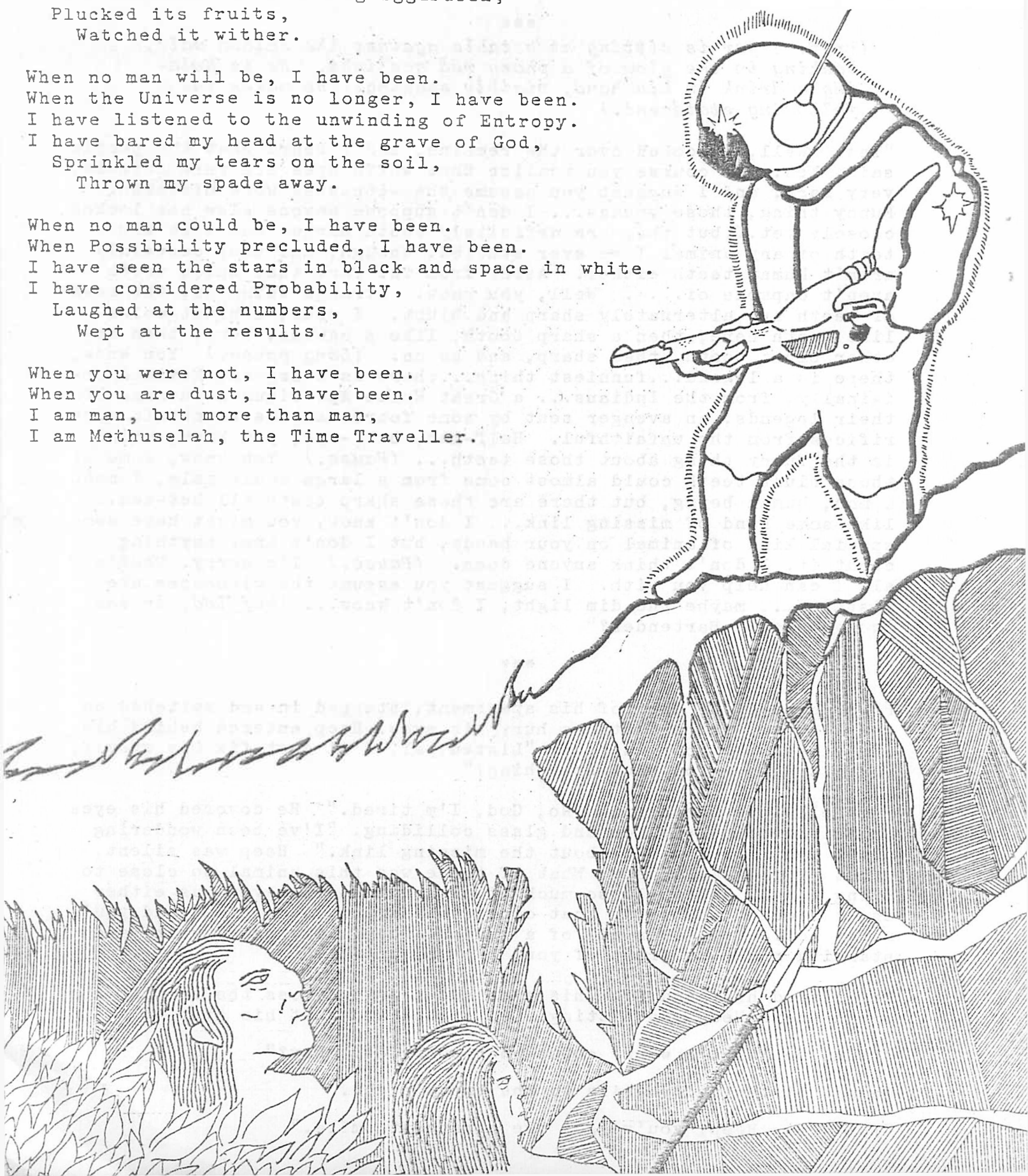
TIME TRAVELLER BY RICH BARTUCCI

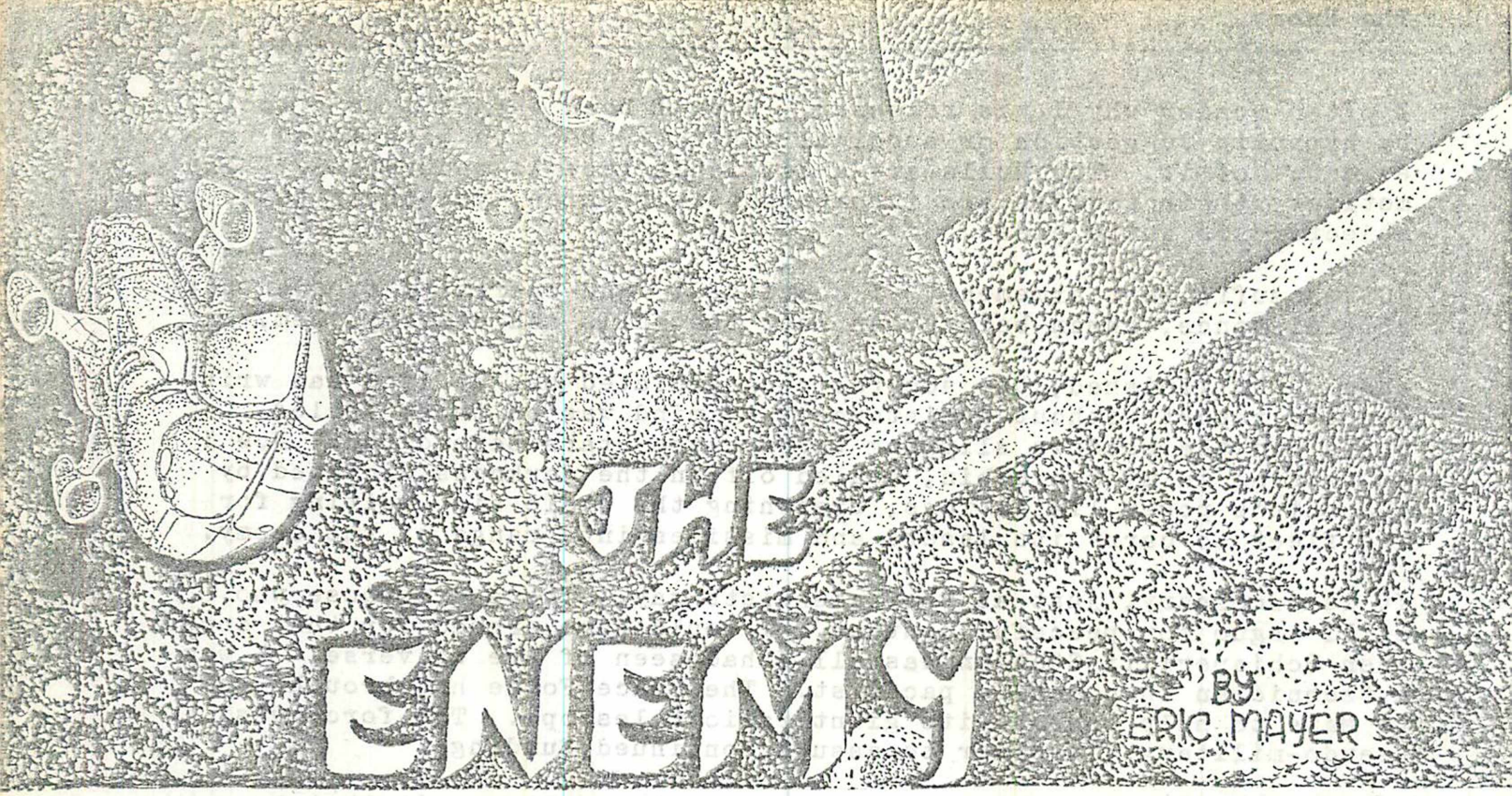
When no man was, I have been.
When the earth was not, I have been.
I have coasted Gondwana and sailed the Tethys Sea.
I have watered the seedling Yggdrasil,
  Plucked its fruits,
    Watched it wither.

When no man will be, I have been.
When the Universe is no longer, I have been.
I have listened to the unwinding of Entropy.
I have bared my head at the grave of God,
  Sprinkled my tears on the soil,
    Thrown my spade away.

When no man could be, I have been.
When Possibility precluded, I have been.
I have seen the stars in black and space in white.
I have considered Probability,
  Laughed at the numbers,
    Wept at the results.

When you were not, I have been.
When you are dust, I have been.
I am man, but more than man,
I am Methuselah, the Time Traveller.





THE ENEMY BY ERIC MAYER

A STORY ILLUSTRATED BY VIC KOSTRIKEN

I have just delivered my final report to the admiral. The words tasted stale and metallic. Maybe it was only the air, endlessly recycled through the converted research ship whose internal systems were not designed to cope with conditions in interstellar space.

"Despite the confusing effects of enemy weapons which, we have determined with certainty, operate on principles unknown to science at this time, it is the consensus of those involved in the Action that the Nulls represent a grave threat to mankind - an opinion supported by my own experience as a captive. In view of the vital information no doubt obtained from me during my captivity, it is imperative upon us to intercept the enemy scouting party before it returns to its base of operations."

My attention wandered. My eyes were drawn to the blind ports, welded shut now against the universe. My mouth continued a recitation that seemed little more than a fossil impression of things past remembrance.

Since my experience I have been haunted by the feeling that I am observing reality through innumerable filters of distorted recollections and baseless imaginings. I have been assured this is merely a lingering side effect of whatever process the Nulls used to blank from my mind virtually all memory of my captivity. It has not prevented me from presenting to mankind a detailed picture of its enemy.

The Enemy

I often wonder why I was released. Have I been turned into a tool by hypnotic suggestion or surgical implant? Doctors have found no evidence of it. The Nulls are a difficult race to understand. Their motives, their tactics are incomprehensibly alien, yet their basic objective is quite clear.

"Given sufficient armament," I concluded, "and operating from a suitable distance, human beings can meet the Nulls and destroy them."

When I had finished, the admiral congratulated me, as if I had written the report without assistance. My mind was on those sealed ports and the shadows slipping through the stars beyond them. Now I am waiting in my own cabin, sealed off in the darkness dictated by the ship's power limitations, breathing the stale air, waiting for the fleet to carry its lasers and missiles into range of the enemy.

It is necessary, just as the scientists say. There are those who still argue for peaceful contact. I would have argued for that once, when Schiaperilli Station was all I had seen of the universe. I was a technician then, and a pacifist. The Space Force had brought me to Mars to help operate its giant radio telescope. The force was pseudo-military, in order to assure continued funding.

My roommate wasn't happy with this situation. It wasn't that he wanted to turn Mars into an American territory or wipe out the Asian Bloc. He objected on theoretical grounds. Drake contended that man was a "violent animal". His arguments were filled with terms like "aggression", "competition" and "survival instinct". I'd counter with "the proven futility of war". You've heard the argument. I knew nothing then. I'd crossed half the solar system without escaping my own skull.

The day I arrived on Mars I set my foot in the dust of an alien wasteland 30 million miles from the planet where I was born and had to pretend to be awed. "It's incredible," I said, so as not to disappoint my companions. What was Mars to me? A big desert the color of a rusted tin can.

So Drake and I argued. We got along well enough. We shared a technician's faith in science. Before the Nulls came I had not realized how scientists shore up the tottering structure of modern physics with increasingly bizarre struts and braces, like Ptolemy tacking epicycles unto his reality. By now they have amended enough theories, advanced enough hypotheses and cited enough "localized effects" and "tentative findings" to fit the Nulls into their reality. The invaders were "impossible" at first. Transmissions from one of the force's trans-Neptunian robot observatories revealed a number of cryptic light sources all displaying solar spectra. Either the objects were type G stars a mile in diameter or better than perfect reflectors.

We had been observing the Nulls for weeks before we knew what they were. Only the unaccountable variations in their velocity gave the invading craft away. Their radio silence was not regarded as threatening, at first. It was disconcerting. So was the fact that they were coming straight down the ecliptic like ball bearings rolling down a table top. Coming straight in from the ends of the universe. Not following any kind of curve - straight, as if the universe still believed in Euclid.

It was evening at Schiaperelli. In the early hours of the morning an orbiting satellite had fired off a series of radar pulses. The rotation of the planet carried the telescope dish into line with the Null fleet. I was monitoring the instruments from my usual position. Through the window in front of me I could see the quicksilver cobweb of the dish and the antenna slipping spiderlike along steel cables high above as last minute adjustments brought the telescope into precise alignment.

At 8;17 the radar pulses, at the speed of 186,000 miles per second, would complete their round trip, be picked up by the dish and relayed to computers which would sort the faint echoes from the cosmic static. Analysis of the echoes would reveal such vital data as the exact size and shape of the invaders, we thought.

I waited. At 8:17 the stylus of the recorder did not jump. No fluctuation appeared on the roll. I rechecked the panel. There was nothing wrong with the equipment. Nevertheless, the signals did not return at 8:17 as predicted by natural laws. They did not return at all.

The air was clotted with quiet panic. For myself and the other technicians bent over our indicators, there was a sense of something gnawing at the underside of reality. I began dialing through the entire range of frequencies. Suddenly the room was filled with the 21 centimeter hiss of the universe - the primordial hiss of interstellar hydrogen.

Here in the dark, I might be floating in space. Perhaps I should play back my recording in order to check for any errors that might have crept in. In my fatigued state, I may be recalling, unconsciously, some of the baseless doubts which beset me as I floated in the darkness outside the Null vessel. But I am in my cabin now. Reaching out I can feel in the cool metal walls the faint pulse of the ion rockets. We will make contact soon.

"My God!" I remember Drake exclaiming. "My God, look, it's....."

I have completed that sentence in my nightmares. Drake never had the chance. At times he is simply referring to an indication of some malfunction on the instrument panel - a danger light, an errant dial. Usually he is alerting me to a sudden anomaly in the Null vessel directly ahead of our ship, something I have somehow missed - an extrusion of some kind, a weapon. At other times he has caught a glimpse of one of the Nulls.

"My God, look, it's...." As I recall his exclamation I imagine it is less a curse than a prayer. No doubt the experts are correct. He was reacting to the danger posed by some recognizable weapon. My own conclusion must be based on solitary brooding and nightmare visions rather than reality. It was over in a second.

Then I was tumbling in space, beyond the orbit of Saturn. As far as my inner ear was concerned, I might have fallen off a chair. I regained my equilibrium and looked for the wreckage of our ship. Oddly, there was no debris. In a moment I saw why.

Contour seats, control panels, bunks, storage lockers, engines lay exposed to the endless vacuum. The ship had been turned inside out

like an exercise in practical topology. Through one port I could make out the exhaust nozzles and identification numerals on the outer hull. Drake had not been expelled from the ship. He was obviously dead.

I probably imagined all this. The wreckage has never been recovered and a man will experience shock at finding himself in such a hopeless predicament, stranded between the planets with no chance of rescue by the scattered and outgunned Space Force.

Stunned, I allowed myself to drift, expecting the Nulls to turn their weapons on me, praying for the approach of a friendly ship. Nothing moved among the stars. My breathing was unaccountably labored. I feared I would suffocate if I did not will each new breath. I turned toward the enemy vessel. It looked like nothing imaginable. A form darker than the surrounding space, spherical in that the edges appeared equidistant from the center - only the edges and center kept shifting like the afterimages you blink back onto your retinas as the images drift out of sight. At random intervals, stars showed through the otherwise featureless darkness. It occurred to me that we might have damaged the enemy with our lasers as we bore in. Why would the Nulls have allowed me to live otherwise?

I feared my lungs would come up empty with each new breath. Desperate, I chose to place my life in the hands of the Nulls. I must have had romantic visions of finding myself allied with the aliens aboard a crippled ship - man and alien joined in the brotherhood of intelligence, fighting to survive a hostile universe.

Using my emergency propulsion unit sparingly, I brought myself within armslength of the Null vessel and began searching for an entrance. Where the hull should have been was only a deep darkness revealing no hint of texture, no glint of starlight off metal or any other substance. Perhaps some cloaking mechanism was at work. The darkness seemed to be bent at odd and unrelated angles. Through what otherwise seemed to be shallow concavities, I could see stars. I reached out. My hand passed through the dark, finally striking some ambiguous surface well behind what I could see.

I began a circuit of the invader. Several times it seemed to vanish entirely for a moment, reappearing much changed as though I had rounded a corner when, in fact, I had barely moved. Once or twice I plunged toward apparent breaks in the hull only to find myself on the opposite side of the vessel.

The air in my helmet tasted stale and metallic. I lost hope. Then. suddenly, I was inside - an open area, limits delineated by walls devoid of light, yet not dark. A modulated buzzing was in my head. I could not gauge its direction, could not be certain whether it was mechanical or organic, or even whether I was hearing it with my ears. The space around me was filled with drifting opalescent spheres.

I started to talk. I addressed the spheres, the walls, the buzzing in my head. The words remained trapped in my helmet. By that time I must have been completely delirious. I turned, and found myself outside. Again I struggled to gain entry. It was easier this time. Apparently my body remembered the correct movements. I discovered, after several more expulsions, that I could survey my surroundings by turning slowly to my left, no more than 30 degrees at a time. Any

movement to the right, any swift or prolonged motion somehow carried me out of the vessel.

Moving carefully, I managed to see the whole interior. There was nothing to see but the floating spheres, some solid, others gaseous, all shining dimly. By experimenting with the sun shields in my visor I was able to determine that the spheres were emitting light which constantly shifted in polarity. Whether this indicated something or was merely the accidental and meaningless result of a process I could neither perceive nor understand, I do not know.

I realized that my air had run out. There was no sign of the Nulls. Nothing in my surroundings looked organic. I made gestures I knew would be meaningless to whatever was observing me. I was filled with hatred for these invisible aliens so impossibly removed from everything human. I thought of Drake killed in such an incomprehensible manner for no discermable reason, like an ant stepped on by a child on his way to school. I remembered his defense of man's violent nature and I knew he'd been right. All the bloodshed of human history had only served man's instinct for survival, had prepared mankind for its final battle against a race so alien that it posed a threat by its mere existence.

As my senses failed, I felt a sudden presence. I think I prayed but whatever it was, was more remote than God.

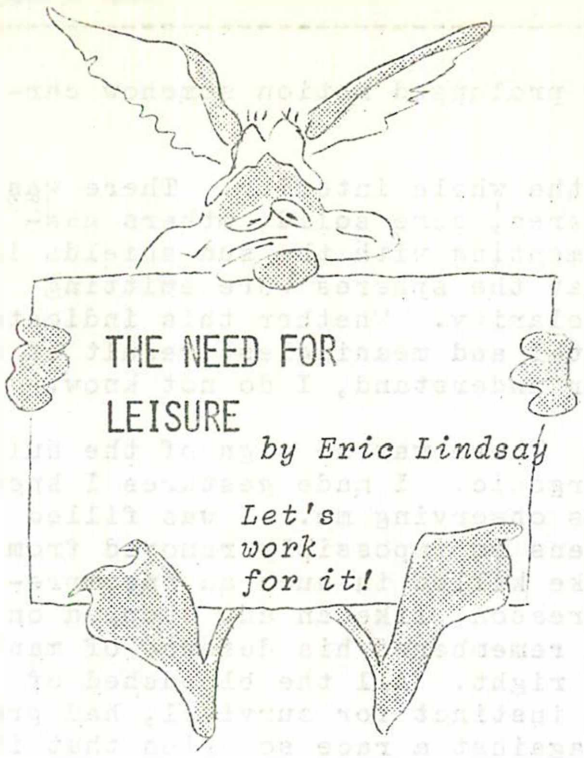
Two months later I was picked up near Mars by a troop ship enroute to Schiaperelli Station. I choose to believe the scientists' explanation that I was held captive, my memory of those months wiped out, my recollections of the Null vessel distorted. I choose to believe that what Drake saw as we approached the invader was nothing more than a weapon which the Nulls used to destroy our ship. I choose to believe that our radar probes were foiled by sophisticated jamming devices.

In the dark of my cabin I close my eyes and watch the afterimages of exploding suns slide out past the periphery of my vision. Beyond the blind ports, hydrogen seethes in the abyss of the universe.

I believe it is all just as they have explained it. Reality must be more than the order our minds impose upon a universe of random and intrinsically meaningless wave/particle occurrences. Or else we have to live as if it is.

The universe is not the enemy. The Nulls are. We can meet them on our own terms, and destroy them.

end



Introduction:

It is probably impossible to show an absolute need for leisure in the sense that sleep, or food and water are needs. Our knowledge of the physiological needs of man is advanced far beyond our knowledge of his psychological needs. Yet in the widespread rejection of Western society by the young of the middle classes, we have an acceptance of needs other than the physiological ones our capitalist society fulfills so magnificently. (*I am aware that some people consider that physical needs remain unfilled in the West, but hunger is now rare here, while it is widespread in the developing world. In these terms I consider it just to call the achievements of capitalism magnificent.)*

Psychiatrist Abraham H. Maslow discovered a hierarchy of needs, running from physiological,through security needs, to love and belongingness, to self-esteem and the esteem of others, and beyond these to what Kurt Goldstein called *self-actualization* -- the need to become everything that a person is potentially capable of. Maslow claimed that these are *instinctoid*, but easily extinguished, and were to be found at their peak in those people judged the best the human race could produce. Room is insufficient to continue on his ideas, but those interested are directed to the posthumous collection of his papers THE FURTHER REACHES OF HUMAN NATURE, which is available in a Pelican paperback. I personally found them an inspiring reading experience.

A need for leisure probably partakes of two forms -- a rejection of present activities because of a sense that they are meaningless and trivial, and a wish to act in a more creative manner. The existence of the former may not lead to the latter, and if creative activities are not pursued may lead to a rejection of the meaning of all existence.

Evidence of the Desire for Leisure:

That there is a widespread desire for leisure can be shown by statistics. Nobel Prize Winner Dennis Gabor points out in his book, THE MATURE SOCIETY, that while strikes in the developed countries lose 0.1% of the total working hours during a year, unofficial absenteeism -- Mondayitis, etc. -- involves a loss of 5% to 6.5%. In more arduous occupations, like coal mining, the absenteeism rate can reach 20%. It would appear that a day spent in the uninspiring bleakness of a Welsh mining town is preferable to the trip down the mine. Detroit car workers know better than to buy a car assembled on Monday, when absenteeism ensures that insufficient time and skilled labor is available to assemble a car correctly. It must, however, be admitted that car plants, with their 200% per year labor turnover, are obviously unsatisfactory for human beings.

The desire for increased leisure is not new. In A PECULIAR PEOPLE -

THE AUSTRALIANS IN PARAGUY, Gavin Souter reports that by 1896 the working week in the utopian commune of Cosme had been reduced to four and a half days.

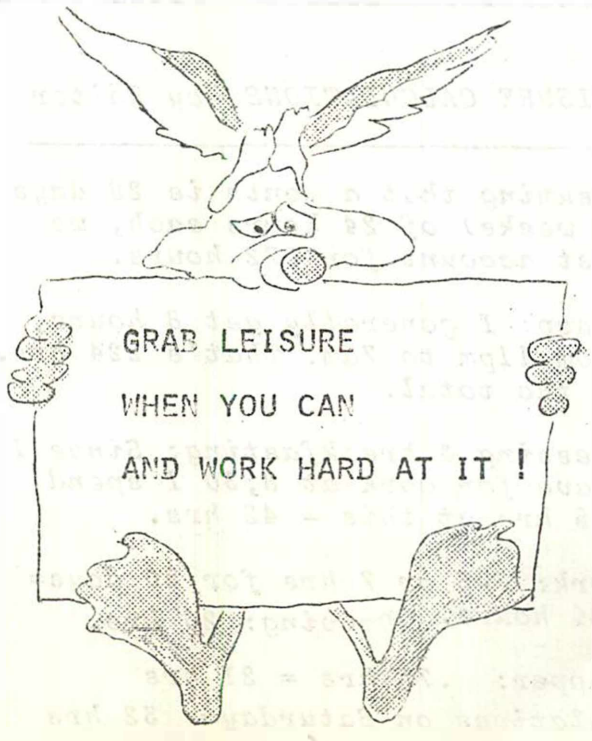
When George Orwell wrote DOWN AND OUT IN PARIS AND LONDON, the tramps he described numbered relatively few - their successors, the beatniks, hippies, commune dwellers, dropouts of all sort, number in the tens of thousands, and are spread all over the world. More important, however, is his view of the meaning of work. Writing of the career of a dishwasher or waiter in Paris, he questions the purpose of most jobs people are forced to do, in terms that still make the utmost sense when applied to most present jobs.

In the United States 50% of the college age population do go to college, despite a 50% failure rate. Naturally the majority do so for status and career reasons, but one factor mentioned in surveys of student attitudes is the increased leisure associated with college life as compared to work.

Exceptions to the Trend

Despite the overwhelming evidence of a demand for leisure, there are exceptions - the dedicated physician, the self-employed, the highly placed executive, the hobbyist who makes a living from that hobby - in short, those who find their work fulfilling. These alone do not demand more leisure. However, the majority of people - on the assembly line (where sabotage is a recurring problem), in clerical jobs, etc. - do not find work fulfilling or meaningful.

It is noticeable that despite material improvements and an increased variety of consumer goods, workers often have less leisure now, despite shorter work hours. (Actually the decrease in work hours is negligible - the 40 hour week was in existence many years ago, and is hardly below that now.) Before the widespread existence of a road network and cars, many workers lived near their jobs. Industry was located close to ports, in industrial suburbs. Increased city populations, personal transport, inflated land prices and so on have driven workers from the heart of the city into suburban belts 30 to 60 miles from cities. Many workers commute between 2 and 4 hours a day from dormitory suburbs on overcrowded roads or by inadequate public transport. The suburbs themselves are empty during the day, just as the cities are during the night, leading to a waste of resources.



Disposable Time.

The real measure of leisure is what I call "disposable time"

The Need for Leisure

(taking the lead from the economic concept of "disposable income"- that left over when you have paid those bills you are committed to paying). In the case of disposable time we can take a typical work week, and subtract from this the time spent at work, sleeping, commuting to and from work, eating essential meals, unavoidable housework, shopping and similar tasks that cannot easily be avoided. That which remains is often only a few hours a day. Even weekends may yield only 20 hours or so of disposable time.

The Uses of Leisure.

The question of what leisure should be used for is one that has entertained a variety of utopian writers. Considerable disapproval is directed at such popular activities as watching TV, spectator sports, and socializing at the local bar. I consider it reprehensible to put forward views on this matter without admitting that such views are moral rather than scientific. They are determined mostly by what we consider a person should do with their time - and if we accept that others have a right to tell an individual what to use time for, then we may find that their disapproval is directed against the activities we find important.

Examples of different uses abound. Bertrand Russell, as a young man, was exceedingly unhappy, and was kept from suicide only by a desire to learn more mathematics -- such a desire may well drive the average person to suicide. Author Colin Wilson, in his autobiography JOURNEY TO A BEGINNING, related that he took to sleeping in a field with only a sleeping bag for protection, so as to be able to spend his time writing in the British Museum Reading Room.

Whatever the aim, leisure from the demands of society and its petty tasks is usually required to reach that aim. Such leisure should increase the happiness of the recipient.

end

LEISURE CALCULATIONS by Editor

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How much leisure do you have?
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Assuming that a month is 28 days (4 weeks) of 24 hours each, we must account for 672 hours.

Sleep: I generally get 8 hours, from 11pm to 7am. That's 224 hrs. of the total.

Dressing & breakfasting: Since I leave for work at 8;30 I spend 1.5 hrs at this = 42 hrs.

Work: 9-5 or 7 hrs for 20 days= 100 hours. Driving: 20 hrs.

Supper: .75 hrs = 21 hrs
Relatives on Saturday= 32 hrs

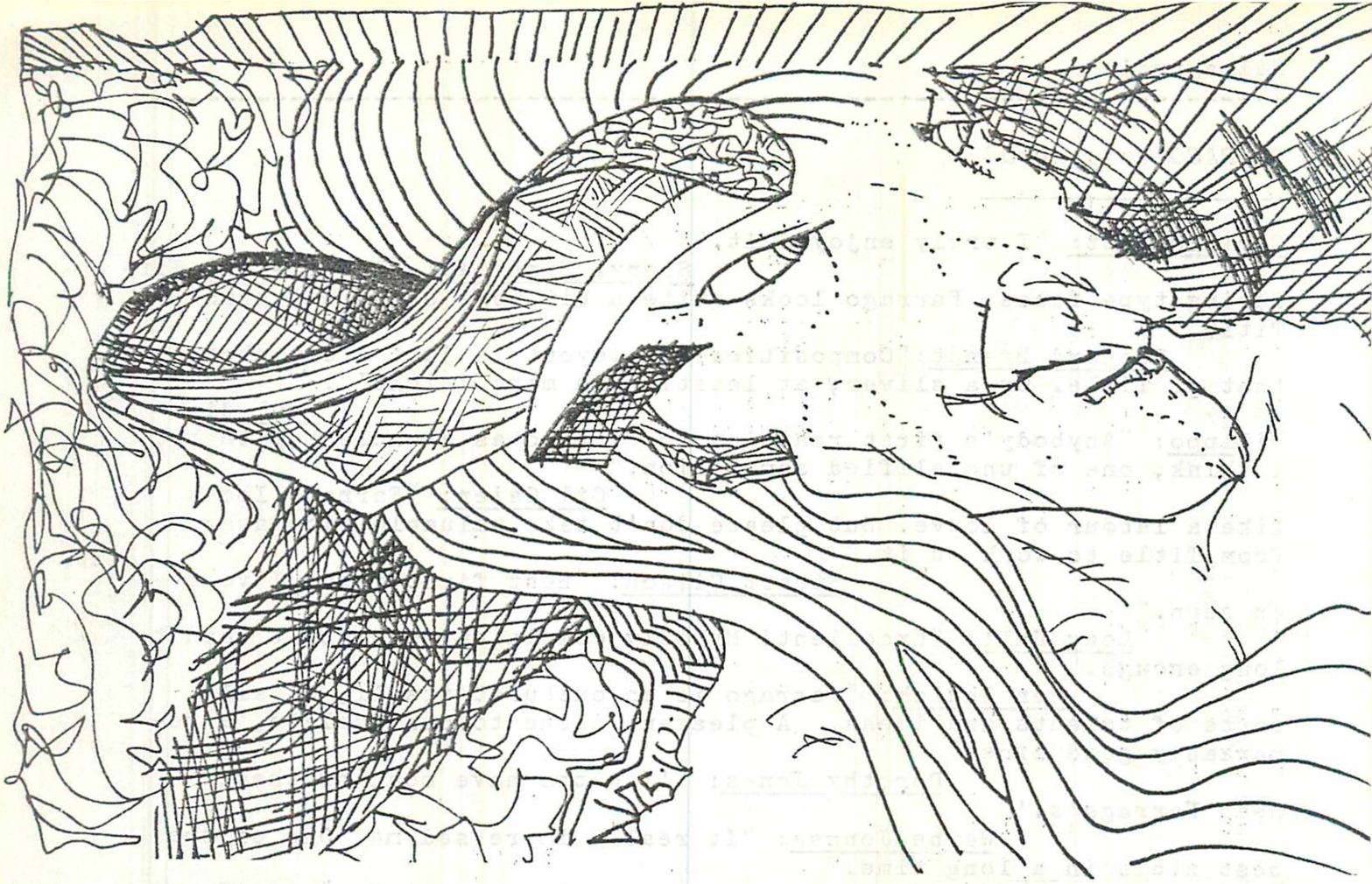
House & yard work: 12 hrs.

Car servicing: 1.75 hrs.

Business on evenings: 16 hrs

Adding these unavoidable tasks, I arrive at 468.75 hrs. This leaves a balance of 203.25 hrs to fool around in-- an average (which is misleading because most of this leisure time occurs on Sunday) of 7.25 hrs/day.

If I ate lunch for an hour every day my leisure time would decrease by 28 hrs; so I skip lunch.



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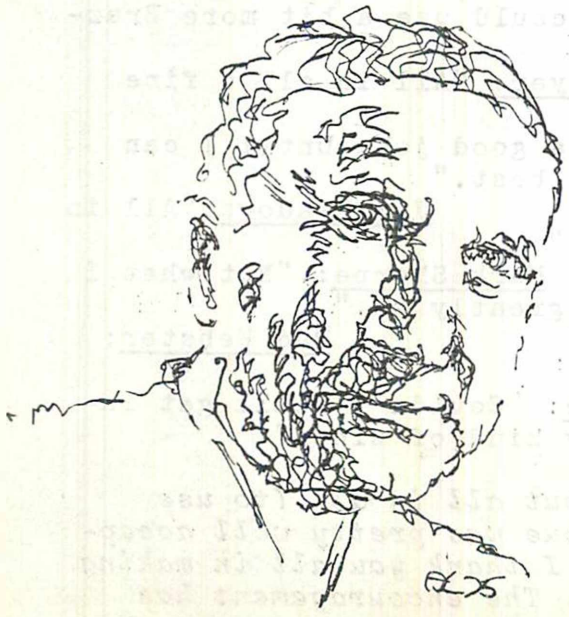

SAL'MA-GUN''DI *(F. salmigondis)*

1. A MIXED DISH, AS OF CHOPPED MEAT AND PICKLED HERRING, WITH OIL, VINEGAR, PEPPER AND ONIONS.

2. HENCE, A HETEROGENOUS MIXTURE; A MEDLEY; POTPOURRI.

FARRAGO in general:

Carl Bennett: "I truly enjoyed it."

Sheryl Birkhead: "Despite the differing type faces, Farrago looks quite a bit more organized than Title."

Richard Brandt:"Composition and layout is just a cut above that of Title. Or a sliver, at least. Much more 'tight'".

Paul di Filippo: "Anybody's first reaction to Farrago as a whole has to be, I think, one of unqualified admiration."

Gil Gaier: "Farrago looks like a labour of louve. But please don't take valuable time away from Title to work on it."

Stuart Gilson: "Best first issue I've ever seen."

Loay Hall: "Excellent! My only complaint is that it wasn't long enough."

Ben Indick: "Farrago is an outburst itself, of all sorts of talents and ideas. A pleasant issue to contemplate, a remarkably good zine."

Dorothy Jones: "'I gotta have moah of these heah Farrago's.'"

Wayne Joness: "It really impressed me. One of the best zines in a long time."

Ken Josenhans: "I thought you said Farrago was going to be ugly and drab - it's one of the most attractive I've seen. You're not giving yourself enough credit."

Dave Locke: "I haven't any interest in FARRAGO. Feel it better that you not waste any future issues by sending them my way. Just don't dig it nohow, no way. Can't understand why you'd want to diddle around with a shoebox effort. But that's your business. Have fun with it."

Sam Long: "Viewed against Title, Farrago was a bit of a disappointment. But I'd have to see another ish or two before I make any concrete judgement."

Wayne Martin: ""Impressive. It could use a bit more Brazier, but otherwise it's excellent."

Eric Mayer: "All in all a fine first effort."

Cathy McGuire: "All in all- a good job. Until I can find a zine that measures up, yours is the best."

Jim Meadows:"All in all, this first issue is pretty promising."

Mark Sharpe: "Not what I had expected. I was disappointed, but not greatly so."

Bud Webster: "Enjoyed greatly- all of it."

Laurine White: "Couldn't reall get interested in the contents. Title is more my kind of zine."

Donn Brazier: You can't please everyone, but all in all (to use that recurring phrase) FARRAGO's first issue was pretty well accepted. And for the work that went into it, I thank you all in making it seem, let's say, about 75% appreciated. The encouragement has spurred me on to do a second issue.....

FICTION IN GENERAL:

Alyson L. Abramowitz:"I wish I could be as complimentary as you were on AlVega #1. I guess the thing I didn't like was the fan fiction, but then I don't usually like it. Frank's 'Rhaethail' wasn't bad though."

Robert Briggs: "Had I known that Farrago was mostly fan fiction, I might not have subscribed. Less fiction next time, please."

Chester Cuthbert: "An excellent forum for fan fiction,and some writers show promise, but the study of texts on fiction writing would assist them in understanding that there is a reason for standards set by professional editors."

Don D'Ammassa: "A major shortcoming-- one can't really say much about fan fiction, even good fan fiction."

C.D.Doyle: "Full of good fiction, which is a rarity, I'm told. I like fiction, but so much of it in fanzines is so bad."

Jane Fisher:"I enjoyed Farrago greatly-- I like fanfic you see. I like to compare my own scribblings with other fledglings.A common trait of all us frustrated would-be authors."

Gil Gaier: "I am not partial to short stories in general or fan fiction in particular. Thus, the majority of contents had an uphill battle with me. But so did TITLE at first, huh?"

Sam Long: "I'm not a great fan of fan fiction. This is not to say that the fanfic was bad. By no means. It was competent fanfic, but I can't get enthusiastic about it. Too slow."

Jim Meadows: "I took my time in getting around to reading Farrago, fearing the worst of a zine that used amateur fiction. All for naught, the stories weren't that bad, actually. I'm generally pretty harsh to the fiction, which is not to say that I hated it."

Mark Sharpe: "The fiction was not as good as I had expected it to be. Try to get better fiction."

Victoria Vayne: "Fanfic is not normally my favourite fanzine fare, but Farrago has some very good examples."

Donn Brazier: Again, you can't please everyone; some people selected certain of the fiction as the best in the issue. However, I do recognize a rather generalized negative attitude toward fanfic, rather like a prejudice in its 'blanket' concept. To neglect fanfic entirely is to neglect a major interest segment of fandom. I was a little heavy, perhaps, in devoting 29 pages to fiction,about 56% of the total number of pages (52). This issue is not so heavy but THERE IS STILL FICTION! I have written an article for Bill Breiding's STAR FIRE which attempts to analyze the prejudice against fanfic. My thesis is that fiction (and especially fanfic) is a poor vehicle for the amateur & professional alike in communicating. Some professionals may surmount the barrier, but amateurs cannot get across a theme with clarity, dispatch, and excitement. Faults are not so gross, so noticeable in articles even though an amateur article is usually poor when compared to the professional piece.

NOW GOING THROUGH THE FANFIC:

Richard Brandt: "Frank Balazs' story had a spot near the beginning where detail about the Talker was just vague enough to give it an air of true mystery; the rest of the story didn't maintain that aura but its descriptions of the far-from-commonplace were worthwhile."

Robert Briggs: "Rhaethail was too thin."

Paul di Filippo:"'Rhaethail' struck me as a unique blending of two sub-genres of SF: sword-and-sorcery and end-of-the-world. I don't think this has been attempted widely. I can only call Michael Moorcock's Storbringer to mind. I thought Frank handled the story with real sympathy towards the travelling troupe, and particularly liked the little touch of bringing the father on at the end."

Jeff Hecht:"Of what I read, Balazs' story was the most striking, with Eric Mayer's drawings capturing the mood very well. The ending seemed weak, but overall the story was well sustained."

Ben Indick:"I do not find 'Rhaethail' serenely confident, but it does not disturb the promise of Balazs either. The use of the Eliot quotation is an authorial intrusion which manages to remove any suspense; better to have used, if he needed a theme poem, something a little more innocuous as a headpiece."

Eric Mayer:"Rhaethail is enjoyable - a bit muddled toward the end, but fantasy is so damn hard to bring off. Frank does a much better than average job. My gripe here would be that the setting is not very original."

Cathy McGuire: "I liked 'Rhaethail'. It got a little hazy at the end, and I'm not sure I understood it."

Jim Meadows: "Frank was trying to tell us something with Rhaethail, but I'm not quite sure what it was. His basic problem was too little room and a vaguely spelled out theme. It's hard to come up with a really memorable sword and sorcery story."

Harry Warner: "I liked Rhaethail more than any other fiction in this issue. It doesn't seem to be an imitation of anything in particular, and it has a lot of novel bits of action and ways of describing events. I'm not sure that I understand the ending; I fail to see the significance of what happens in those last paragraphs, unless Frank didn't intend this to have any more than an emotional impact."

Sheryl Birkhead: "Wilber's piece rates top of the issue."

Richard Brandt: "Richard Wilber's story deserved professional print. It ranks with some of the prozine crop, especially where he started waxing nostalgic at the end."

Paul di Filippo: "'Dodgers and Dancers' is the most professional story in the issue. It was tightly constructed and it showed the neat strength commonly associated with the slicks, as opposed to fanzines. I think fanfic authors seldom take time to work and rework their stories to the point where everything extraneous is pared away. One complaint about the logic of Wilber's postulated society. The inside ghettos are completely disassociated from the rest of the country's economy. With what, then, do they pay for the merchandise that the gangs bring back? If they barter for it, this leaves the gangs no working capital to buy more merchandise. I just

don't see how any sort of transaction could exist between these two self-contained worlds, unless the gangs stole the merchandise, which they clearly do not. Once this assumption was granted, though, the story flowed smoothly and excitingly."

Stephen Dorneman: "Even though I'm not big on fan fiction, I truly enjoyed Wilber's story and see no reason why it should not have been submitted to a prozine. The society in "Dodgers & Dancers' was reminiscent of an Ellison view of the future, but painted much more subtly."

Ben Indick: "Wilber's piece has to be the standout successful fiction in the issue, in spite of its debts to Burgess' famous Orange, and perhaps because of its sly variation on Heinlein's 'The Roads Must Roll'. It is, withal, very well done."

Wayne Joness: "My favorite story was 'Dodgers and Dancers'. Very impressive writing."

Eric Mayer: "Wilber wrote 3/4 of a fine story. As I started reading my thoughts were, 'Ouch...I hate this style and the premise is preposterous.' But in a few paragraphs I forgot these misgivings and was totally caught up in the conflict. I was really wondering about the outcome of the duel between the two gangs, and I think Rick made a mistake by tacking on that rather mundane ending. The flooding of the inner cities with poison gas seems to have very little relation to the preceding events. If only he'd just gone ahead and worked out the conflict between the two gangs and the different characters, it would have been a topnotch story. Not that it was bad as it was. I often dislike the endings of stories."

Cathy McGuire: "My favorite story was 'Dodgers and Dancers' because it was so believable. The writing was so smooth that the story never seemed strained or incomplete; my idea of a professional story. It really was better than some stories in the prozines."

Jim Meadows: "Wilber's piece made me think of a mediocre GALAXY story. I couldn't quite swallow the explanation of how things got that way, and the characterizations were neither deep nor fresh. However, there's an interesting idea there."

Steve Sneyd: "Isn't there a logical flaw in Wilber's ending, ie the cop allowing 4 'insiders' to survive the massacre and know what happened? Surely witnesses would be the last thing the government would want? Such a good taut story, this illogicality really nagged me."

Victoria Vayne: "Wilber's story I liked very much; that one could probably easily be published professionally."

Harry Warner: "Dodgers and Dancers doesn't quite live up to the promise of its first couple of pages. My dissatisfaction is

concentrated on the final page. There hasn't been anything to prepare the reader for the callous way in which the narrator will accept the destruction of the ghetto and his ability to adopt such a different way of life after his freakish survival."

Paul di Filippo: "'Disturbia', a pattern poem more than a story, but I'll read anything Wilgus does, and with pleasure! He's always able to put his finger on the more disturbing aspects of our society."

Ben Indick: "Wilgus not only tells a story, in a way, but does it with the aid of typography. Very funny, and I can see those split levels regularly marching across the landscape, bearing Megalopolis with them."

Eric Mayer: "DISTURBIA is a delightfully perverse little bit of humor."

Jim Meadows: "Disturbia was a nice trick, but Wilgus didn't do anything with it. It just sat there."

Pauline Palmer: "Wilgus' 'Disturbia' struck my weird sense of humor."

Alyson Abramowitz:"Eldon K. Everett's piece is typical of U.S. bureaucracy."

Robert Briggs: "Plague from Pluto was good enough for a prozine but has been done many times before. After I read it, I would just as soon not have."

Paul di Filippo: "The alien plague has been so overdone that it really needs a unique twist to be successful today. "Plague' just didn't have it."

Wayne Martin: "'Plague from Pluto' all too appropriately shows just how such an incident would probably conclude. Very enjoyable."

K.Allen Bjorke:"'The Universe and Sam Kurtz' was good, except that the ending wasn't quite up to the standard the rest of the story set."

Richard Brandt: "Walker's story is mildly interesting, but I'm bothered by the ideas behind it. Paul doesn't take any issues headon. The story seems merely an attempt to justify the abrogation of responsibilities (in this case, those of a universal force). More concisely,wishful thinking. Pleasant in its own way, but inside the story's empty."

Paul di Filippo: "Paul's story, being set in the past, gave it an antiquated air, as if it were some Heinlein piece that was written circa WW II. Also, some of the language struck me as inappropriate. The Compassions were anything but compassionate; Kringo was a name with too many comical connotations. That soul-snatching machine went a little beyond credibility; not a bad story, but more fantasy than SF."

Gil Gaier: "Walker's story was oddly interesting but too dense for its size."

Ben Indick: "Paul is not Jewish, but he has a genuine sense of the Jewish liberal mind, particularly as demonstrated in the emancipated and assimilated German Jew who was unable to realize what was happening in the early '30's. Most failed to flee and were overwhelmed, including Walker's 'Sam Kurtz'. What is one to say of the story, then, in a universe where a God was disposed to be kindly? I regret to say, in spite of the obviously kind and optimistic intentions, that I am unwilling to accept it. You see, no matter what the intent, no matter how kind, these dead souls simply cannot be used.Not

even the brilliance of an Elie Wiesel dares do it; the souls can only relive, in fiction, their death, not a resurrection. Their dignity demands the knowledge of their death. The apotheosis of those dead (who, as human beings, transcend nationality and faith) is seen most clearly and devastatingly in Schwartz-Bart's searing LAST OF THE JUST, and, in fiction, more cannot be added. This is not intended as criticism of the writing; there is much that is fine, and nowhere more than in the story's first paragraphs. Paul Walker, whose polls and interviews have demonstrated one of the sharpest minds in Fandom, must continue fictional work, for he will have much to say."

Dorothy Jones:"The only piece that confused me was 'The Universe and Sam Kurtz'-- I got LOST half way through."

Wayne Martin: "Paul Walker can handle fiction and one day we may see him filling the prozines, if his energies get seriously channeled in that direction."

Eric Mayer: "Walker's story was fun, but horribly mixed up and difficult to follow in spots. (Whose fault? --Not mine, Eric, for I made no changes-db) It was so unremittingly weird that I liked it. One far-fetched premise after another. It reminded me of old time pulp SF with the author often daring the reader to disbelieve what he was writing."

Jim Meadows: "Of the fiction, Walker's was the best. Good enough for a professional sale. You were lucky to get hold of it, Donn."

Harry Warner: "The Universe and Sam Kurtz had trouble getting through my declining reasoning ability. Anyway, it seems like a pro-level narration."

Robert Briggs: "'Farewell Dream'? It was either quite good or rather poor, and I don't know which."

Jeff Hecht:"Jon Inouye's story suffers from the same problem that afflicts so many similar stories -- it communicates well to the author (presumably), but it doesn't work that well for other people."

Cathy McGuire: "I liked 'Farewell Dream'-- very poetic for a prose piece."

Jim Meadows: "Farewell Dream balances between the deeply poetic and the rather silly. Don't quite know which side it teeters closer to."

Dave Reagan: "Nothing much new from Jon Inouye who's using the same writing technique that he did in Brad Parks' WART many moons ago."

Harry Warner: "I don't understand at all Jon Inouye's story. Do all these things flash through the child's mind as he actually falls to his death? Or is this symbolic of a normally long life, using a dream of falling as a symbol of the inevitable end of that life?"

H.P.LOVECRAFT and/or ALGERNON BLACKWOOD

Ed Connor: "The Blenheim piece proves only that he is incompetent, unqualified to write about either Lovecraft or Blackwood. A statement like 'Lovecraft is a small step above comic books' proves only that Blenheim is intimately familiar with comic books. Possibly he is crazy over comic books. However, assuming that he considers them to be juvenile tripe, it is obvious that he is trying to belittle a writer whose work he does not like or comprehend. Perhaps he is also

trying to belittle readers and admirers of Lovecraft. It is obvious that Blenheim is a sorehead, and his outburst accomplished little."

Paul di Filippo: "I have always enjoyed Lovecraft's fiction, while recognizing its inherent weaknesses. It's not quite fair to castigate him as severely as Gilson and Blenheim do. HPL was an amateur,Blackwood a pro. Naturally, the latter's stories exhibit more technical expertise. The two men just didn't write with the same intent. HPL only wished to please his circle of friends, Blackwood to please a mass market. Lovecraft's stuff is colored by his Apa background, and shares much of the weaknesses of fan fiction. Blackwood was more of a sophisticate, more subtle. A comparison between the two writers is almost impossible (or, at least, inappropriate) because they are so disparate, not in quality alone, but in basic substance."

Stuart Gilson: "I've always found Lovecraft's lack of tact and sophistication more than compensated for by the sheer overpowering influence of his imagination, whereas Blackwood expounds upon accepted psychical concepts, HPL strikingly portrays convincing alien theology. Now I'm not underming Blackwood because of this, for he is undeniably the more literate writer. Lovecraft's importance to the genre cannot be disregarded merely because of the frequently laughable structural flaws in his writing. The most conspicuous errors are largely limited to his 'hideous, gruesome' tales in the Cthulhu Mythos canon. By far his best work is in the Randolph Carter adventures, in particular 'The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath' and 'Through the Gates of the Silver Key'. These are meticulously structured 'dream-fantasies' of breath-taking beauty. Indeed, whereas the conventional Lovecraft is redundant and awkward, in his Carter tales he approaches Dunsany. In my experience, many of HPL's severist critics have not even read his less characteristic, secondary cycle of tales, those, ironically enough, at which he was most proficient.

I share Blenheim's dislike for some of HPL's gruesome tales, for the horror evoked by these is temporary and artificial. Blackwood possesses an almost magical talent for juxtaposing terror with beauty, and thus gives rise to a fear of a universal, psychological kind. It's dismaying to see much of Blackwood's better stuff doomed to inexposure while Lovecraft enjoys an unprecedented popularity in both popular and academic circles."

Loay Hall: "Blackwood is too uneven a writer to be compared to HPL who is consistently excellent. When Blackwood is good-- as in THE WILLIOWS -- he's brilliant; but HPL never loses his greatness, even when using a theme beaten to death by others. That, I think, is the mark of a great writer, and something which Blackwood could not continually achieve. Nevertheless, I found the discussion excellent!"

Ben Indick: "Gilson and Blenheim don't really present HPL 'vs' AB; it's all VS HPL. Well, some folks like apples, some like oranges. Me, I like both. DeCamp didn't like the leisurely way HPL commenced his stories; when I read them, as in 'The Dunwich Horror', I am entranced by an intriguing mind laying out the map for me, wheedling me into his world. This does not mean I must enjoy another writer less."

Dennis Jarog: "I once said that any of HPL's stories could have been written on a 3x5 card."

Randall Larson: "I feel quite strongly against critics who consider their own opinions to be the only valid ones and whoever doesn't agree is way off base. The tone of Blenheim's article seems

to reflect this viewpoint. I wish opinionated critics like Blenheim would say that HPL (or whoever) is of no value to them. Why can't we recognize that people have varying tastes and appreciate what we will, without having to go out of our way in an attempt to prove that somebody else's likes are worthless?" ((As editor I must share some blame, for I requested Robert Blenheim to write an opinion of HPL/Blackwood after he had read what Stu Gilson wrote-- db))

Eric Mayer: "HPL is a truly individualistic author whose style, awkward as it may be, fits perfectly with his peculiar, somewhat neurotic but compelling world-view. His stories strike a very basic chord somewhere deep inside my psyche and I wouldn't want to discard a single adjective. HPL is unique. Perhaps not an author to be appreciated by everyone but certainly one who has a great deal to say to those on the right wavelength."

Dr.Dirk W.Mosig: "The HPL vs Blackwood piece is a statement of opinion. Everybody is entitled to his opinion, however asinine it may appear to others. I suspect Gilson or Blenheim (or both) have read Penzoldt & were influenced by his rabid and uncritical exhaltation of Blackwood. No one would deny that THE WILLOWS is a superb tale-- HPL called it the best weird story ever written. But Blackwood was a highly uneven writer, and THE WILLOWS is the exception in his work, much of which is crudely & clumsily written. Personally I would place THE COLOUR OUT OF SPACE above anything by Blackwood-- including THE WILLOWS. The average Lovecraft tale is far superior to the body of Blackwood's stories, in terms of the writing, the care for details, the atmospheric buildup, the suspension of disbelief in the reader, and the overall emotional and intellectual impact. It is simply not true that HPL uses over-explanatory writing in all his tales-- he often suggests and hints at the soul-annihilating horror, and does it better than Blackwood. But perhaps Blackwood's greatest weakness comes because he is a 'believer' in the supernatural, and consequently makes assumptions about what his readers are likely to accept,which often turn out to be erroneous. HPL, as an unbeliever, is in a much better position to write an affective 'supernatural' tale. HPL appeals to the rationalistic and skeptical mind of the modern reader, while Blackwood appeals to those with different, perhaps more gullible frames of mind. Stylistically, HPL is also vastly superior. The reading of several Blackwood tales in succession is a sure cure for insomnia, but HPL's narratives read smoothly and gain upon each successive rereading. HPL was a perfectionist, a master craftsman, while Blackwood was a moderately competent writer who occasionally produced a piece of some value. But a comparison between the two is pointless-- each apple & banana has its own flavor, and its fans. No sense arguing about it, anymore than it would be sensible for the steak-lover to denigrate the taste of the shrimp-addict."

Harry Warner: "Lovecraft has been done a disservice by his best friends. Their missionary work has caused an annoyed reaction from some who might have become admirers, if so much hadn't been claimed for it and if so many fragmentary scraps hadn't been fleshed out into synthetic Lovecraft stories. My memory of Blackwood is that of a most uneven writer who could be superlative or a colossal bore. I think it was THE PROMISE OF AIR that annoyed me particularly."

Neal Wilgus: "HPL shouldn't be given such a beating. I've been rereading HPL and a number of his stories are minor masterpieces of SF horror."

SELECTED COMMENTS ON OTHER NON-FICTION:

Alyson L. Abramowitz:"'The Conduits of Lust' was cute and my favorite of the ish. So being five feet tall makes me unhuman, huh?"

Mike Glicksohn: "DiFilippo piece was sparkling and original, and the Shoemaker piece was a fascinating peek into an alien world."

Stephen Dorneman:"Shoemaker and DiFilippo best parts of the zine. Is Di Filippo to be a regular columnist? (I hope so.)"((I do too, db)).

Dorothy Jones: "Who IS Paul DiFilippo? Let's have 3 cheers for his sense of humor."

Don D'Ammassa: "Short people aren't human!? Let me set Mr. Di Filippo straight. As Potemkin proved in his treatise, 'The Relation Between Mentation and Stature as Shown by Performance on the Stamford-Bidet Intelligence Test', there is a definite relationship between height and intelligence. Potemkin pointed out a bell-shaped curve of intelligence that directly mirrors heights for the same sample. The mean was 5'6". Let me also call this gentleman's attention to Samuel Subaritsu's MORALITY AND MASS: AN INQUIRY INTO VIRTUE (Pseudosmart Books, 1974 NYC). Dr.Subaritsu's studies of 25,000 subjects provide strong circumstantial evidence that generally speaking the smaller the mass of the individual's body, the better he measures in social comparisons. He found that a mass of 115-130 pounds signified, and I quote, 'an individual of excellent social conscience, an honest individual with a well-balanced, rounded personality. This individual is usually highly successful in his personal life, content with his lot, respected by his neighbors, and admired by all.' Clearly, then, Mr Di Filippo's scurrilous attack can be seen for what it is -- a ¢#¢!$% ¢%#&¥!%!$% weightest elitist statement designed to dehumanize his betters. Adolf Hitler started that way too."

Paul di Filippo: "People like Mike Shoemaker make me realize just what lousy shape I'm in, and just how miraculous the human body is. I write this as my duff slowly spreads beneath me and guilt fills up whatever small amount of me that is not adipose tissue.... I was very grateful to Eric Lindsay's review for alerting me to the writing of DeTocqueville."

Jim Meadows: "Shoemaker's running career has always interested me, and as long as he can keep writing interestingly about it, I'll read him... DiFilippo's piece was excellent. Reminds me of a fake advice column I've done in the college press under the guise of 'Dr.Otis Peabody'. Paul does a much better job. Could this be a regular feature?... The poetry was not as bad as I feared it would be."

Pauline Palmer: "Best of all was Shoemaker's fine 'Fire and Ice'; a fascinating subject -- the way some people can and will (apparently must) push themselves to the very limits and even beyond. To me, hurting is a signal to stop.... Cathryn Gebhart's poem is quite fine."

Richard Brandt: "I take exception to Roger Sween's remark that except for Ellen Burstyn, all of the performers 'play themselves' in ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE. Roger either has an unclear idea about movie acting, or he hasn't seen these people in too many movies. Diane Ladd played a low-key role in CHINATOWN, and I hate to think that Harvey Keitel was 'playing himself' in the movie when he played a violent psychopath....Let's see more covers by Sheryl, eh!"

Harry Warner: "If the book THE STEPFORD WIVES has any points in common with the film (which I didn't see), I'd say the most probable reason why the Stepford husbands took the rather extreme step could have been their desire to keep them from turning into less appealing females as they grew older. Levin might be saying: so many females have dehumanized themselves in this particular social and ecnomic position in today's USA that they might as well be robots. My interpretation might be supported by the difficulty the heroine has in being sure whether her friends really have been replaced by robots. Her friends were so predictable, so conforming, so concealed physically behind makeup, deodorants, wigs, and such that there really wasn't much apparent difference between woman and robot.... I enjoyed Shoemaker's article about the race that meandered through my general area, even though it made me feel a bit worried about potential sadism to experience that reaction to so much discomfort. Incidentally, the Kennedy race sponsors have switched the race from spring to autumn since Mike froze up, in the belief that there will be less danger of bad weather then."

Eric Mayer: "Mike Shoemaker's piece is fascinating. I wouldn't have made it two miles. It is absurd, though, to torture oneself physically in order to run an arbitrary distance, or to torture oneself mentally in the production of an arbitrary construction one can call art. And yet one has to admire the sacrifice."

Victoria Vayne: "Why do people do this to themselves? ((Yes, Mike, why?)) Shoemaker's piece was interesting to read, in the comfort of one's bed with a lot of blankets piled on and a mug of hot chocolate to drink."

THE ART & ANY MISCELLANEOUS FORMAT COMMENT:

Laurine White: "Nice Birkhead cover."

Loay Hall: "Sheryl's cover is nice; she has a simplicity I find refreshing in fannish art."

Gil Gaier: "I liked the back cover better than the front."

Steve Sneyd: "Reckon the back cover would've made a better front cover."

Richard Brandt: "The artwork is as good as I've seen in any fan fiction zines, though the title lettering still has that ole TITLE touch. Ought to be set up in typeface. That back cover illo from an interior story reminds me of the old prozines!"

Dorothy Jones: "Any zine that starts off with a Sheryl cover HAS to be good."

Donn Brazier: No use printing the comments of the people who liked the autobiographical/photo section at the front of the zine; everyone seemed to like it. I had planned on the same thing for this issue, but already I'm too far behind. People are beginning to write to me: "Hey, what's holding up the second issue?" They might better ask: "What's holding you up, Brazier?" Now and then I get the "hairies"-- a feeling that my hair is covering my eyes and getting into my ears and that I'm being sucked into a mimeograph with a crazy rock-and-roll waltz beat. It is then I take a beer and for five minutes I gafiate. But the mimeo machine drips black tears in pathetic silence, and I find myself once more pushing its buttons.

" HE LOOKED UP, AND SHE WAS THERE AGAIN... HE MOVED AFTER HER...AND SHE LED HIM OFF, LAUGHING AND RUNNING THROUGH BRUSH HE STRUGGLED THROUGH. "

THE END OF THE CHASE

BY RICK WILBER