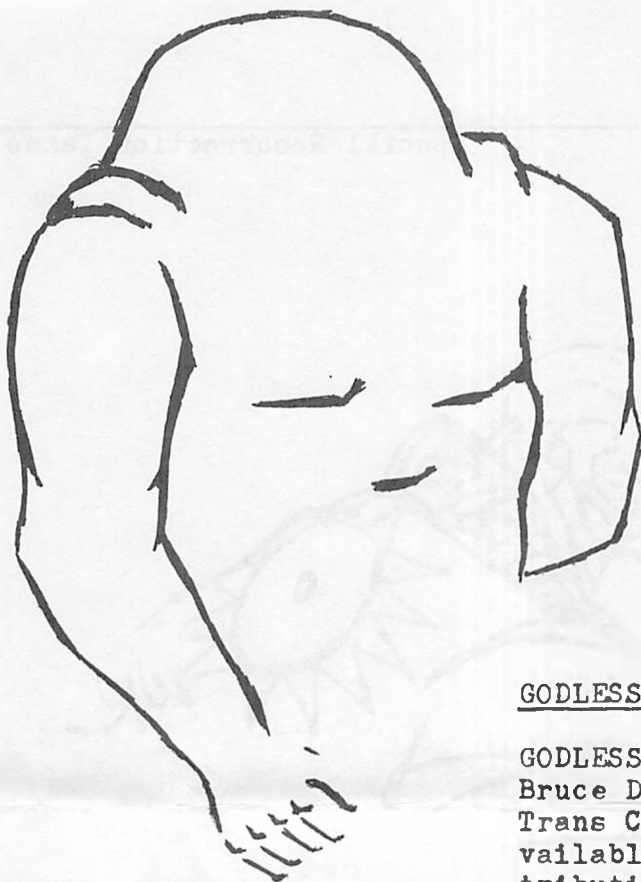


GODLESS

Special Resurrection Issue





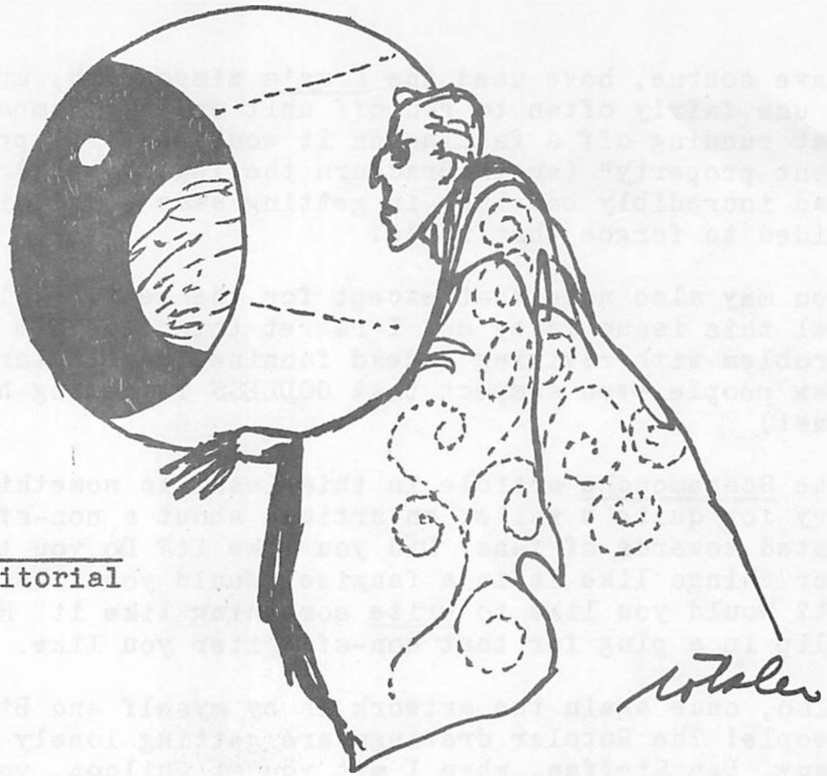
GODLESS

Number Three

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ARTWORK:

Bill Rotsler cover, 3, 12, 16
all other drawings by the editor



The King in Plural

editorial

"Well, I'm back."

And with that exciting introduction, GODLESS rises from its grave and walks the earth once more, searching for the Meaning of Life, True Love and Romance, and a good 5¢ cigar.

How has the Army treated me? That depended on where I was. Fort Campbell, basic training: fair. Fort Monmouth, AIT: good. The 416th Signal Company, Fort Lee: I don't like to think about those two months. They were too horrible, as if I'd suddenly been placed in the violent ward of an asylum for the criminally insane. To put it simply; I was on the verge of suicide twice, always on the verge of desertion (I kept my car always gassed up, with food, water, and a sleeping bag in the back, ready for a quick dash to the Canadian border), and I was once desperate enough to consider burning down the building and everyone in it. But I don't like to think about those two months. The 57th Transportation Company, Fort Lee: good. But after the 416th, even basic training again would seem good.

So, with a lot of free time on my hands now, I'm back to publishing again. I've been promising various people that for about nine months, and it's finally happened. This is the Special Resurrection Issue of GODLESS. I'd hoped to have this issue out by Easter, so I could savor the pun, but right now it appears that I may actually have it done before then! There's a fannish tradition blown to hell.

You may have noticed that this issue is photo-offset. There are two reasons for this: 1) This is a special issue, so I felt the urge to splurge. And 2) it was the only method available to me. I kid you not, in the entire Tri-City area (Petersburg, Hopewell, and Colonial Heights) there is not one print shop that offers mimeography service. I could,

have course, have used the Army's mimeograph, up at Battalion HQ, which I use fairly often to run off unit orders, company rosters, and such. But running off a fanzine on it would be "misappropriation of government property" (saith Bradburn the legal clerk) and since I've always had incredibly bad luck in getting away with things like that, I decided to forgoe that route.

You may also note that except for the letter column, all written material this issue is by me. I regret this, but I'm afraid it's a natural problem with reviving a dead fanzine, particularly since only a very few people even suspect that GODLESS is coming back. (Surprise, everyone!)

The Scaramouche article in this issue is something I've been wanting to try for quite a while; an article about a non-sf book in a fanzine oriented towards sf fans. Did you like it? Do you think there's a place for things like it in a fanzine? Would you like to see more things like it? Would you like to write something like it? Here's your chance to slip in a plug for that non-sf writer you like.

Also, once again the artwork is by myself and Bill Rotsler. Come on, people! The Rotsler drawings are getting lonely with only me for company. Dan Steffan, when I met you at Philcon, you said that GODLESS "wasn't really very good." How about helping me improve it? How about the rest of you?

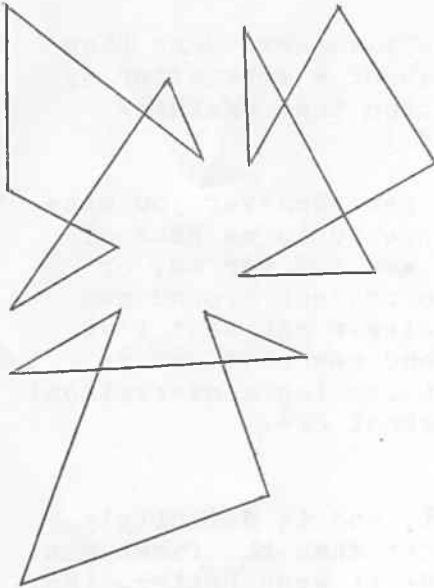
Since I got stationed on the East Coast, I've been going to a number of cons; Philcon last November, Balticon in February, and am planning to go to the Disclave in May. Philcon did not impress me too much, possibly because of my unfamiliarity with cons (I'd only been to one before, and that wayyy back in 1967). Balticon, however, was great fun. Highlights were Joe Haldeman's playlet, "The Moon and Marachek" starring Gardner DoZois in the title role, and the "Australia in '75" promotion film. Disappointments were the banquet (the people at the banquet were served fairly on schedule, I understand, but people without tickets, like me, who ate in the regular dining room, had to wait up to three hours to be served), and the GoH speech recording, which was to be played the next day, turned out to be inaudible.

If the last few lines look rotten, it's because my typewriter just broke and now refuses to space between letters, so I have to pull the carriage along by hand after typing each letter. Fortunately, I'm almost done, having only this page and the colophon left to do.

If you wish to receive the next issue of GODLESS, I must get some kind of response from you; loc, trade, contrib, review, money, etc. Thank you.

Bruce D. Arthur





Mindspeak

letters

TSgt Douglas K. Howard
PSC Box 3421
Fairchild AFB, WA 99011

Last Thursday, your GODLESS 2 caught up with me. I thank you most sincerely for mailing it. It was a pleasure to read. I'd often wondered what the fanzines were like; it has been an eye-opening experience. One of these days I'll get the address of some of the others, and sample all of them. Too bad that you had to quit on GODLESS. From all appearances, it had great promise. If you go ahead with your plans on another, let me know. For a feller like me, reading and trying to write s-f and sp-f (speculative fantasy), I'd say that the fanzines were a must. A couple of the prozines mention fanzines from time to time, but don't mention any other data, such as addresses. Most annoying!

Gafia, fanzine, prozine, Flawol...good grief, you fellows have your own and original dialect, don't you? I'm still trying to digest some of them, so give me time. MGISFF...My God, Isn't Science Fiction Fun?

Since I don't know the fanzines, would appreciate it if you could give me a rundown on the better known ones, and your opinions of them. Incidentally, if you start your fanzine back up, I truly feel that you should stick with the GODLESS titlehead, as you're already "identified" with it. ((Well, all you fanzine editors out there? Should we submit this poor unsuspecting fool to the Deluge?))

Talked with an author (for real) the other day. He wrote historical novels. In the course of our conversation, I mused on wondering how many people that talked writing actually buckled down to do it. Charles answered that it was about ten per cent. Makes those of us trying to write, or having actually been published, sort of exclusive, don't it? L. Sprague deCamp, in his Science Fiction Handbook, (1951) remarked that there was nothing like seeing your name in print, or being badgered for autographs. It was a great boost for the ego. I'll readily

admit that I'm as vain as the next person, probably vainer. More than likely I'll be a bit difficult to live with for about a week after my first story is printed. (I'm going on the assumption that ~~anything~~ something I submit might, just might, be accepted.)

Have you ever noticed how bright-eyed the ladies get whenever you mention that you write science fiction? This has happened to me several times now. So far, I have not deduced whether it was s-f per se, or just the usual mystical aura that females like to project around men that write, period. Even more interesting, they always ask what I've had published, or want to "come over some time, and see what you've written for future publication." It makes for interesting conversation! It also tends to expand my head and hat size to about 22 $\frac{1}{2}$.

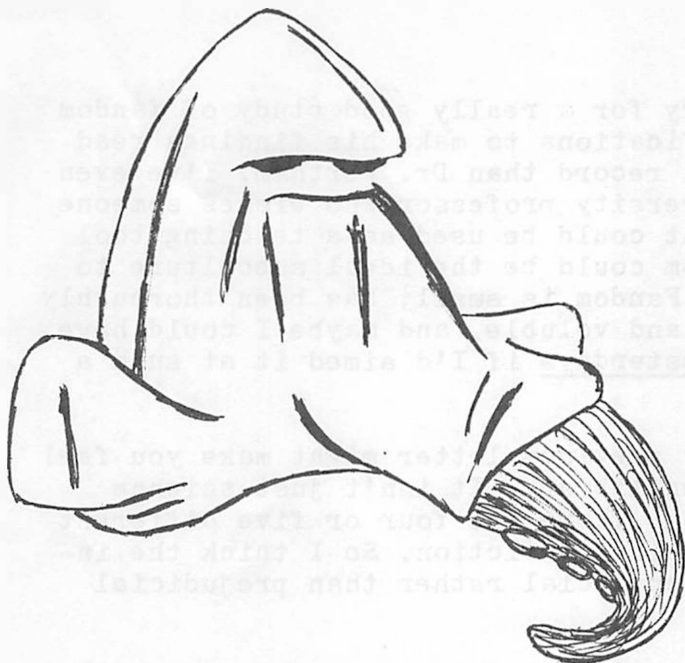
Alex Vittek
4672 Lakeview
Detroit, MI 48215

I received GODLESS in the mail, and it definitely was excellent. Much, much better than the first one. And this time the articles made it even better. (Hm, what was that I said...) Well, the second issue was definitely much better, in all respects. Now, I have a favor to ask. Could you send me a copy of both issues? I will include some postage, enough to cover mailing costs, I hope. I don't know whether I told you before, but I loaned the first copy out, and now it cannot be found. The second copy was lost or stolen. The way I figure it, one of the janitors, or somebody, who was cleaning up the student center thought it was some leaflet that nobody wanted and threw it out. As it is, I now have no remembrance of days past. So, if you can, could you send me a copy? ((Both GODLESS 1 and GODLESS 2 are now sold out. In fact, they've become collector's items. I've heard of people offering as much as an entire dollar for the first issue. Gads.))

Harry Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740

It's a good thing I read GODLESS promptly this time. This gives me a 50/50 chance of getting good wishes on your next couple of years to you before you leave for the service. I hope everything goes as well for you as it possibly can. Don't worry too much about what others tell you of their experiences for good or bad in the service: you aren't the other fellow, you can have some control over your actions in the future while those others can only look back on their actions in helpless retrospect, and you can also console yourself with the thought that life in the army may be reasonably safe for the next couple of years if nothing goes wrong with the dissection of the corpse of the Vietnam adventure. ((Since I came to my present unit last November, one man was robbed at gunpoint and another had his throat cut. In my previous unit, one man hit me over the head so hard he broke his own fist. Exactly what do you mean by "reasonably safe", Harry?))

Alex Vitek floored me right at the start by telling how he went to the Noreascon by older roads. I thought I was the only person under 78 who didn't drive on the interstates very much. (I am under 78, no matter what others may tell you.) It's partly the variety of things to look at which Alex mentions when you're off the superhighways, partly my serious difficulty with road hypnosis which gives me much worry when there's



nothing to do but stay in my own lane, partly the age and delicate condition of my car combined with my ineptitude in things mechanical. If there's a breakdown, it's a lot easier to get help on an old road. Unfortunately, there is one town about twenty-five miles west of Hagerstown which can't be reached except on I-70, without an absurdly long roundabout drive, because of the geography in this narrow neck of Maryland. I also was glad to find someone else saying a kind word for the Prudential Center, which no other con report seems to have mentioned yet as a good example of how future cities may look. But I took particular interest

in one tiny detail of that complex of structures. About a year ago, this county spent hundreds of dollars to build a concrete ramp so people in wheelchairs could get into the courthouse, which otherwise involved climbing three steps. I grumbled to some persons about the expense when a few wooden boards could have created the same access cheap and was told that such a makeshift would be entirely too provincial and smalltownish. So tucked away into an obscure corner of a short set of three or four stairs at one point outside that multi-million dollar Prudential Center what did I find but a wheelchair ramp, neatly manufactured of a batch of old boards?

William Rupp did a pretty good job of analyzing the critical establishment vs. science fiction. There are a couple of other matters that he might have brought up. One is science fiction's special status as a kind of literature that was almost completely confined to pulp magazines in this country for nearly a quarter-century. From 1926 until the paperback market had its vast expansion in the 1950s, only a handful of science fiction books were published annually. This must have had some effect on the kind of science fiction that was written, because a magazine editor is more apt to want a specific kind of manuscript for the special audience he aims at than the book publisher who has both juvenile and adult releases, who publishes prestige books knowing they won't be popular along with books with best seller potentialities. All this must have had repressive effects on science fiction authors that didn't exist for those who wrote westerns and mysteries and historical fiction, all of which were popular in both magazine and book form. Then there's the fact that most science fiction in this country is descended from either the Verne or the Wells traditions, and the Verne tradition comes from books specifically aimed at boys and the youngest of men. So a lot of science fiction down through the decades has been saddled by the no's and restrictions imposed in writing for boys, just because that was

part of the tradition.

I agree most definitely with the cry for a really good study of fandom by someone with the academic qualifications to make his findings read with respect and with a better past record than Dr. Wertham. I've even had some correspondence with a university professor who wishes someone would write a book about fandom that could be used as a teaching tool in sociology classes, because fandom could be the ideal subculture to study for pressures and functions. Fandom is small, has been thoroughly recorded, its members are literate and voluble, and maybe I could have written a best-seller in All Our Yesterdays if I'd aimed it at such a market.

Something I forgot to mention in my previous letter might make you feel a trifle better about the Hagerstown library. It isn't just science fiction that receives a mark of Cain. There are four or five different marks, each signifying a different kind of fiction. So I think the intent and maybe even the result is beneficial rather than prejudicial and segretative.

I liked the layout and general impression made by the front cover and most of the interior illustrations made me wish they were bigger, which must mean that they're pretty good. ((I think that you'll agree that the art and layout have improved significantly with this issue. But I would like to have a larger variety of artists than just myself and Dependable Bill Rotsler.))

There's just one consolation about writing a loc on a fanzine that won't publish another issue for a long while, if ever. The sadness about the end of the fanzine is mitigated by exultation at the thought that my loc won't come back to haunt me in a letter section two or three months from now.

Mike Glicksohn
32 Maynard Ave., #205
Toronto 156, Ontario
CANADA

I feel shattered to realize that through my own laziness I have seriously endangered my chances

of succeeding Harry Warner as Fandom's #1 Letterhack. In recent months I have locced almost as many fanzines as Harry but now my record is destroyed. Through sheer inactivity, I have failed to respond to GODLESS 1 and now you tell us that GODLESS 2 is the last issue! An entire fanzine has been and gone without printing a Glicksohn loc! I apologize for not responding earlier, and while I'm not foolish enough to write a loc on a fanzine that is ceasing publication, I did want you to know that I'd received and read both issues. And I promise to loc the first issue of your next fanzine!

Susan Glicksohn
32 Maynard Ave., #205
Toronto 156, Ontario
CANADA

I reacted strongly to Terry Carr's letter suggesting academics write about sf only as a "publish or perish" thing. Now if I write a letter to you, it may never see print; so could I have your permission to quote the relevant section, with acknowledgements of course, in an editorial on sf and the universities I plan to do for ENERGUMEN? I'd get permission from Terry too, of course. ((As far as I'm concerned, anything in GODLESS may be quoted whenever you wish, though it is a good idea to inform the person being quoted.)) You see, my main field is Canadian literature, a field much like sf in that it has been ignored and disparaged for a long time but now is the focus of much attention. I also am interested in sf, and once organized a free-school sf course after failing to get one on a credit basis. (It's now being taught, 3 years later, at my former university!!!!) The same objections to sf criticism have come up in relation to Canlit - that people are only into it because it's "new", "in", untouched, a great field for getting publishing credits and so on. Sure - but you have to be genuinely interested to stay in it. Of five students, all close friends, who started in the field at the M.A. level, I am the only one left - the others could not maintain interest. The same with sf; the fake critics can't maintain their superficial interest, while the "real" critics seem to be fans who are, simply, delighted that their hobby is being taken seriously. Tom Claeson, the EXTRAPOLATION editor, for example, is a member of First Fandom, thus his interest in sf and sf criticism is much deeper than merely a means to get publishing credits. (And I found this year's Secondary Universe conference, held in Toronto, to be quite fascinating. Or maybe I was just lucky to avoid the dull people.) Speaking personally, I would love to teach a science fiction course at a university. Could anything be better than making your living talking about what interests you most? (Of course, many sf fans don't think talking seriously about literature can be fun!)

To answer your comments to Terry, yes, sf works (in my experience) crop up on non-sf and even non-literature courses. They are used, I gather, as perfect illustrations of literature dealing with contemporary problems (the future of cities, technology, the search for meaning in life). For example, a professor at U of T is using such works as Stranger In A Strange Land and World of Null-A on a modern religion course, to help students re-evaluate their views of religion by examining it in a new context. ((After hearing that bit of news, I'm tempted to exclaim, "Jesus Christ!" but I'm afraid it might be misinterpreted.)) Oh yes, there are no essays; each student is to hand in a new sf story! In "my" course, I found sf was a perfect way of integrating science and literature, and getting humanities and science students to talk to each other!

Even my brother took Fahrenheit 451 in high school English. Right up there with the Bard of Avon. They had some good discussions about the power of books, the importance of books to man, and such topics; in this case, a serious approach to the sf work gave the class a greater appreciation of literature as a whole. And anything which could do that for my formerly book-hating brother is pretty remarkable!

Cy Chauvin
17829 Peters
Roseville, MI 48066

Regarding your comments on "bestsellers" to Bob Vardeman - Stranger In A Strange Land is definitely considered as sf. My English instructor decided that we should have an sf novel on the list of books we read and discussed in class, and Stranger was it. The fact that it was sf was also brought up often in our discussion.

And if Dune isn't considered sf, the people who read it must be blind. "SCIENCE FICTION AWARD WINNER" is plastered all over the cover.

Then there's Clarke's book, 2001: A Space Odyssey, which I'm sure was a bestseller, too...((OH, ALL RIGHT! I admit it, I was overemphasizing my argument. Most people do recognize those books as sf. But it's also true that I've seen Dune called an ecological novel by people, despite all those blurbs.))

Ed Connor
1805 N. Gale
Peoria, IL 61604

When I read your piece on page 15 I phoned Farmer. I learned that while in Scottsdale they lived at three different addresses! So he didn't know which address you were referring to. I was going to ask you to send the Moreys' address, so I could let Phil know, but maybe it'd be simpler to give you Phil's address, and perhaps you can phone the Moreys or something, and in case they get any mail for him they can forward it. (I'm just letting you have the address - it's not for publication.) So: Phil Farmer, ((CENSORED)). He has been ill for several weeks, with the flu and complications, so we didn't go into the matter more than superficially. My own feeling is that any mail still going to that address can't be too important (perhaps resulting mainly from the listing in Contemporary Authors), but if you want to convey the info, it's up to you. While abed recently he's been reading (& taking notes on) some of the 181 Doc Savage books; the publisher has commissioned him to do Doc's biography. It'll be shorter than the Tarzan one. ((I await it eagerly.))

Donn Brazier

1455 Fawnvalley Dr.

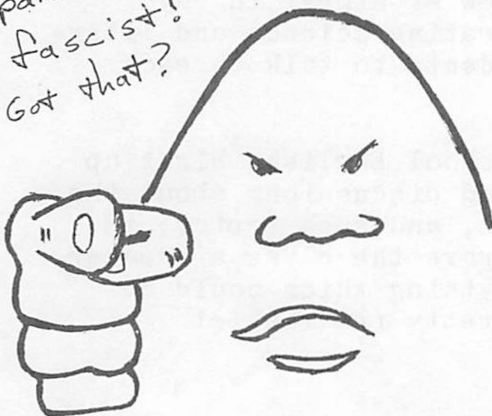
St. Louis, MO 63131

GODLESS 2 arrived and I have read twice.

First, I hope you resume publication.

Second, after reading locs, I wish I had GODLESS 1, also. Third, switch to mimeograph.

*You! You're a
paranoid raving
fascist!
Got that?*



Your cover was excellent. It was neat and decorative, but it had an "otherworlds" aura combining both sf (pure) and outre fantasy with the serpentine lettering of GODLESS 2. ((I myself was not too wild about it. I thought that the lettering was rather hard to read and clashed with the cover.))

Ditto is ok if every page in the run is bright. Some of my pages

were fine; others were dim. I needed bright light and glasses - a function of my age, too. ((Sorry. The last issue was printed on two machines; an old and used ditto and a brand spanking new one. When I tried the new machine, not only did it print dimly, but it *crunched* about 10% of the pages. So I used the older machine for the rest of that issue, and got much better results.))

I enjoyed the serious (but not pretentious) explorations of sf and fandom - and the articles from #1 mentioned in the locs are some I am teased into wanting to read. I hope you won't mind if I quote some parts in future TITLES? Possibly your fmz's name, GODLESS, may have given the wrong impression to prospective readers. Don't think I would have expected the pleasant surprise of not only sf material, but sercon as well. ((I've been toying around with two names that I might possibly rename the zine with. However, if anything, they'd be more confusing than GODLESS.)) Therefore, a few quotes, etc., will give some of your ideas to the people (serious but not stupified fossils) I hope will support TITLE. ((Which I recommend highly. An utterly fascinating fanzine.))

Mike Scott
PO Box 2043
Alhambra, CA 91803

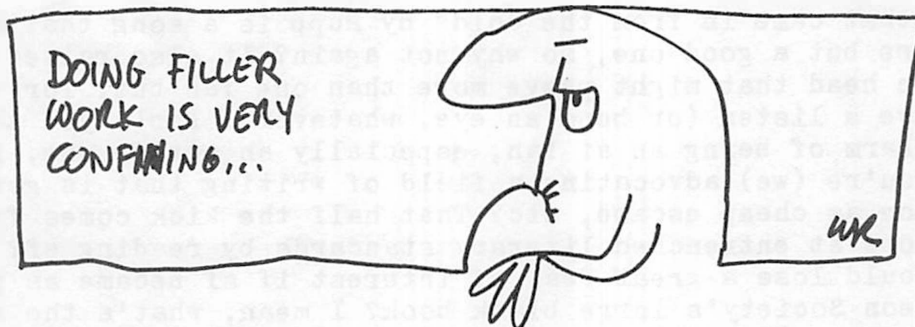
GODLESS 2 arrived today and, smacking my lips in anticipation of some digestible articles & comments, I opened it, read the editorial and went into a short period of black, inky black gloom. Every once in a while a fanzine appears on the horizon that is reasonably well reproduced, has interesting articles, etc. In short, a fanzine that shows promise and is worth the sesterces I would shell out for it. Then, boom! something dark happens. The faned gets gafia, the money runs out, the men in white coats take the ed away, and the army calls. ((Simultaneously?)) Sorry to see GODLESS stride off to the elephant's graveyard of fan mags (somewhere near Pacoima, I'm told), and lay its weary pages to rest.

"SF: the genre that came in from the cold" by Rupp is a song that's been heard before but a good one, so why not again? It also raised some points in my own head that might peeve more than one fan but, for what it's worth - give a listen (or bend an eye, whatever). Don't you think that half the charm of being an sf fan, especially an active one, is the idea that you're (we) advocating a field of writing that is generally frowned upon as cheap escape, etc? That half the kick comes from thumbing your nose at entrenched literary standards by reading sf? That many fen would lose a great deal of interest if sf became as popular as the Gideon Society's large black book? I mean, what's the excitement of doing something if everyone does it? And I'm not speaking of pseudo fen that keep their copies of GALAXY, F&SF, ANALOG, etc. under the bed and blush if they're caught reading an Ace double-decker but mean the active fan. The one that carries pbs around and shoves them at mundanes in recruiting new fans; the one that writes or draws for fmz, the one that attends cons, the one that pubs - the active fan. Isn't half the thrill the knowledge that society in general looks down at your hobby (for that, let's face it, is what it is - fiiawol is a genuine seething crock of buffalo chips) and believes your a bit crack-ers because you like it, and, for God's sake, actually read it? Could that be half the tang a fan gets out of fandom - the urge to rebel against established forms of literature? Would be interesting to see what other fen think about it.

Another thing that Rupp's article sparked was the question of Why? Why are fen so rabid and eager for recognition by the mainstream? Why are fen (myself included) so adamant in the belief that on some sunny day sf will merge into the mainstream bringing a Utopia of realistic and stunning sf. Will it really? Or, more likely, will sf lose its punch, appeal, "glamor", when everyone hails sf as the most compelling, forceful, modern branch of literature to be devised? (Which, by the way, it most assuredly is.)

Your own "SF Fandom as a Deviant Subculture" was a good short history of the ridiculous things that fandom brings about and what it appears to mean to many people. I've read of Wertham's so-called expose of fandom. The man is...((Mike, while I largely agree with your opinion of the good doctor, I wouldn't like to take the possibility of a libel suit, so I'm excising most of this paragraph.)) Then again, the crumb might surprise us with something good to say, but heavy doubts there.

The rest of the zine, letters, reviews, were all good. Well written stuff and I say again that it's a shame to cease pubbing. Perhaps you may turn it over to a trusted local fan? But that's doubtful as the editor gives a zine its flavor and that "something" would be missing. Ah, well. ((Phoenix fandom is at present divided into two warring camps; the ultra-sercon OAFS and the faanish Cosmic Circle. Both of them sling insults at each other in their own zines, and I would prefer that GOD-LESS keep away from such behavior. So it's still my baby, and will remain that way.))



THE SCENE is in a long low room, with natural lighting coming from the windows. THIRTEEN MEN are seated at a food covered table. For some reason, they are all seated on one side of the table. They are dressed in long, flowing robes. The man sitting in the center of the table is the first to speak.

CENTER MAN: One of you will betray me.

ANOTHER MAN: Good heavens! Whatever makes you say that?

CENTER MAN: That's what it says in this fortune cookie I just opened.

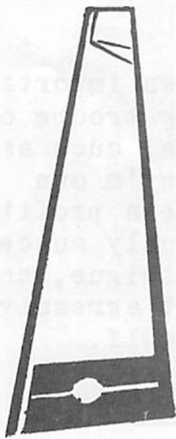
RAFAEL SABATINI'S SCARAMOUCHE

Rafael Sabatini's Scaramouche is, to quote its subtitle, "A Romance of the French Revolution." It is very much the historical novel, a genre that has dropped in popularity in recent years. Although quite popular when it was first published in 1921 (my copy is the sixteenth printing in slightly over two years from the first edition), it has largely dropped into obscurity today, and is popularly available only in a paperback packaged toward an adolescent audience. It deserves a better fate, for it is exceedingly well written and has a moral that is especially apt in today's world.

Like many historical novels, the plot is astonishingly complicated, enough so that a summary here would leave little room for comment. Grossly simplified, then, the novel tells of Andre-Louis Moreau's quest for vengeance against the Marquis de La Tour d'Azyr, for the killing of Andre's friend. Over a span of years, he becomes fiery speechmaker, fugitive, actor and playwright, master swordsman, and politician, all these actions motivated by his desire for vengeance. At the climax, when Andre-Louis has it in his power to turn the Marquis onto the streets, to be hunted down by a mob, the Marquis is revealed as Andre's true father, and Andre's principles force him to give a safe-conduct to his own worst enemy.

The subplots are numerous and intertwined strongly with the main action, the most important the love that both Andre and the Marquis bear towards Aline, the niece of Andre's godfather, Quintin de Kercadiou, Lord of Gavrillac. A further complication is the actress Climene, whom Andre loves until the Marquis takes her for his mistress.

The background of the story is France from,



if I have done my research properly, November of 1789 to August of 1792. At this time, the king had lost much of his influence. The true power rested in the hands of the nobility, or Privilege. The nature of the revolution had changed from Privilege fighting Government, to one of the Third Estate, the mass of the populace, combatting Privilege.

With this in mind, the main characters can take on symbolic identities. The Marquis de La Tour d'Azyr is Privilege. He is cultured and educated but amoral, seeing commoners as inferiors by mere reason of birth.

Andre's murdered friend, Philippe de Vilmorin, is representative of the Third Estate. Although his beliefs are sincere, they are somewhat ill-founded. Andre points out that much of the populace is mere rabble, being influenced and driven to revolt by the merchant class, which envies and wishes for the power owned by the nobles. Philippe refuses to listen, claiming that Andre has been prejudiced by his education.

Andre, by his unique position and because he is the protagonist of the novel, deserves a longer study than either the Marquis or Philippe. His position is neither with the Third Estate or with Privilege. By his bastardly birth, a foundling, he belongs to the Third Estate. But his adoption and education by de Kercadiou, a member of Privilege, has given him insights into the nobility. Thus he is neither and both at the same time.

This position allows him to see the faults of each position, making him refuse to align himself with one side or the other. When he does align himself against Privilege after Philippe's murder, it is not because his beliefs have changed. It is because he sees it as the best way to destroy the Marquis, to remove his power, to bring him down, to obliterate his superiority.

His support of the Third Estate is a mask, an act. And this is Andre-Louis' most important characteristic: his ability to mask his true feelings and express others in their place.

It is here that the title of the book, Scaramouche, becomes important. When Andre is in hiding from the law, he joins a traveling troupe of improvisers who base their performance on stock characters, such as Pantaloon, Rhodomont, and — Scaramouche. When the company's own Scaramouche feigns illness, then makes off with the troupe's profits, Andre is pressed into the part. He finds himself miraculously successful in the role, for Scaramouche "...has a gift of sly intrigue, an art of setting folk by the ears, combined with an impudent aggressiveness upon occasion..." a character that is much like himself.

It is this acting ability that makes so dramatic the scene wherein he confronts Climene after her tryst with the Marquis. Likewise the scene where Andre, as a member of the National Assembly, calmly announces in turn that he has killed or wounded four members of Privilege that had challenged him to duels, and the climactic scene, where he learns that he is the Marquis' son, the product of an affair between the Marquis and Madame de Plougastel when she had been a young girl, possess great dramatic power.

Scaramouch is divided into three books; "The Robe," "The Buskin," and "The Sword," each of which tells of a different phase in Andre's career. In "The Robe," he is the lawyer, the speechmaker who inflames the people of Rennes and Nantes before he is forced into hiding. In "The Buskin," he is Scaramouche, the actor, the playwright, who again inflames a crowd, this time directly against the Marquis de La Tour d'Azyr. In "The Sword," he becomes a master swordsman and, as a direct result, a member of the National Assembly, where his activities are directed against the spadassinicides, Privileged who have been challenging members of the Third Estate to mismatched duels similar to the one in which Philippe de Vilmorin was killed by the Marquis, who heads the spadassinicides.

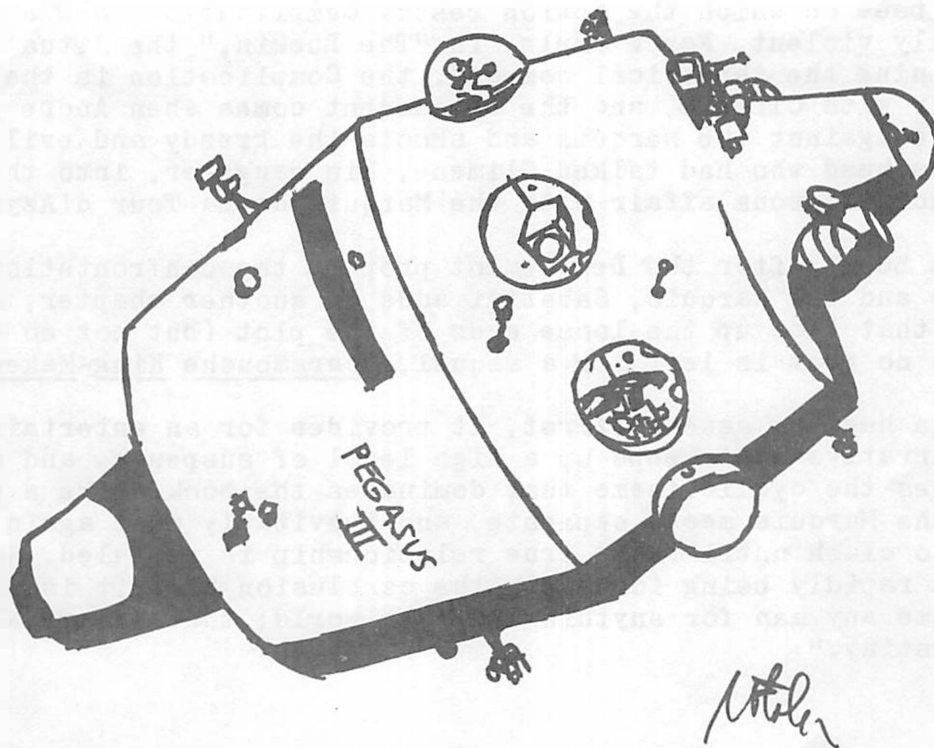
The books themselves can be divided into three major parts; the Situation, the base on which the action rests, Complication, and a Denouement, usually violent. For example, in "The Buskin," the Situation is Andre's joining the theatrical company, the Complication is the Marquis' affair with Climene, and the Denouement comes when Andre inflames the audience against the Marquis and shoots the greedy and evil Binet, the troupe's head who had talked Climene, his daughter, into the potentially advantageous affair with the Marquis de La Tour d'Azyr.

In the last book, after the Denouement proper, the confrontation between Andre and the Marquis, Sabatini adds on another chapter, a final denouement that ties up the loose ends of the plot (but not so thoroughly that no room is left for a sequel, Scaramouche King-Maker).

This formula has two assets; first, it provides for an entertaining and exciting narrative that keeps up a high level of suspense, and second, it reinforces the cyclic theme that dominates the book. Like a pavane, Andre and the Marquis meet, separate, and inevitably meet again. They are fated to clash until their true relationship is revealed. As Andre says, "I am rapidly being forced to the conclusion that it is impossible to blame any man for anything in this world; that we are all the sport of destiny."

It is this last sentence that brings into focus the moral of Scaramouche: that attempting to change destiny is a futile task. This is seen in the lesson of the Revolution; the tyranny of Privilege was only exchanged for the tyranny of the mob, and not all the good wishes or genius available could have avoided this fate.

-Bruce D. Arthurs



Walking back to the barracks from the Post Library one day, I intersected the path of Starbird, who was in the same company as I (it was I Company, in fact). Starbird resembled nothing so much as a perverted chipmunk crossed with a Mexican bandit. It turned out that he was returning from the Photography Craft Shop.

"What do you think of this?" he chortled, pushing a photograph under my nose. "This" was an 8x10 glossy of a naked blonde kneeling on a bed, her private parts exposed.

"Why," I answered, "Why, I think it's underexposed, your contrast is too low, and it's out of focus to boot."

* * *

One day Starbird and I hitchhiked to Asbury Park, about five miles from the fort. To be more exact, we tried to hitchhike. After all, a lot of people might pick up a fairly decent-looking person, unless of course he was accompanied by someone who looked like a cross between a perverted chipmunk and a Mexican Bandit. No chance, brother.

"The Boardwalk" in Asbury Park is a constant carnival midway, with rides, hot dog stands, and games, games, and more games. Starbird borrowed five bucks, changed it to dimes, and started chugalugging them into a machine. I stood, petrified, as the pile of silver disappeared in the space of several minutes. I had never seen anything like it before. How could someone waste money so fast on such a useless thing? It was fascinating.

Naturally, Starbird borrowed another dollar from me.

* * *

Sitting on my bunk one morning, before starting out to my classes, Starbird swaggered by in his dress uniform. I knew that his Still Photographer class only rarely wore anything except fatigues.

"Why are you all dressed up, Starbird?" I asked.

"I'm going to take President Nixon's picture." he replied.

I smiled at the thought. "You're full of it, Starbird."

"I'm going to take President Nixon's picture." he replied.

"You?"

"Why not? I'm a good photographer."

"You're even more full of it than I thought, Starbird."

"No, I really am."

"And why would Nixon come to Fort Monmouth, of all possible places?"

"Oh, he's just stopping here on his way to Fort Dix."

"And what's he doing at Fort Dix?"

"He's catching a plane there, for those Moscow talks, you know."

"Why doesn't he use Air Force One?" I asked.

"Huh?"

"His own private plane."

"Yeh, see, they had it up at Fort Dix for repairs, and..."

"Starbird, this has gone far enough!" I shouted, "First of all, the Moscow talks won't start till May 22nd, and this is only the 16th. Second, if Air Force One needed repairs, they'd do them at the Washington airport. And if they couldn't do that, they'd take it to some Air Force base where the mechanics would have half an idea what they're doing, not to Fort Dix. Thirdly, they wouldn't send you to take Nixon's portrait, they'd probably lock you in the cellar till he left. And most of all, if Nixon was coming here, all the E-5s and above would be running around screaming their heads off and we'd be having haircut inspections every five minutes!"

"Yeh, well, I almost had you fooled," he snickered.

* * *

And the final segment of the Starbird saga: he flunked out of his Still Photography class. People, nobody flunks out of that class. It's designed for people who would be kept in a closet in civilian life. That Starbird managed to do it is a monument to his incompetence.

Because Starbird couldn't be trusted. He was careless with his equipment, dropping it, dragging it along, swinging it like a yoyo on its straps. So the Army got Starbird out of that course. Starbird couldn't be trusted to take care of valuable Army equipment...

...so they made him a medic instead.

- Bruce D. Arthurs
(and the son of a
bitch never paid me
back my six bucks!)

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