

HYPHEN

NO. 24,

MARCH

GPO

1960



"It says that this new fan group will have no bickering and a friendly atmosphere....the rest is obscured by bloodstains."

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WALT

WILLIS

INSIDE COVERATE

Atom

It may not have occurred to the average reader, bewildered by successive Hyphens flashin' by him like 1960 British Con-sites, that there is a cool calculating mind directing this great torrent of publishing activity. But here, amid the gleaming pencils of the Oblique House control room, Willis the

master-mind controls the energy released in each Hyphen with micrometer precision. You may have thought that the imperfections in Hyphen were the result of carelessness. Tch tch, much naive. But excusable...way, even the trained analytical minds of some fan reviewers, their eagle eyes noting such subtle nuances as a reduction of size by 50%, have suggested that Hyphen is slipping. As if all these things were not governed by the Secret Master Plan.

There are two objectives, the first indicated by the fact that my researches disclose that there are only three things a fanz can do — get better, stay as it is or get worse. But if it keeps getting better it finally vanishes in a blaze of glory and unfunded subscriptions. If it just stays as it is, people cease to notice its existence. No, the only way it can stay alive is to follow the same cycle of expansion and contraction as the Universe itself...though of course on a smaller scale. The other objective is based on another natural law of fiction I've discovered: the Conservation of Egoboc. This states that the amount of egoboc due to any one act of fiction is predetermined and cannot be lost: it's there in London somewhere waiting to be discovered. In the old days for instance, Chuck and I used to do our little pointed nuts to produce the ultimate in fanzines and nobody paid much attention. But now, all this latent egoboc is pouring in. Why, only the other day some nostalgic reader actually mentioned the old back cover ad! (Oct. on p.10)

THOUGHT FOR
TODAY

"Reality—the obnoxious
uncle of the arboreal
senses." —Kestner

Walter A. Willis, 170 Upper M'Ards Rd., Belfast 4, N. Ireland. Art Editor Arthur Thomson, 17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London SW2. Associate Bob Shaw, 26 Beechgrove Gardens, Belfast (new permanent address). Grateful acknowledgments to volunteer stencil-cutters Alex Morrison & David Tucker. 1/- or 15¢ per copy (US coin or notes payable and acceptable. Exchanges welcome).

BUNGO the RABBIT & the DEAD TRAMPS

By

MAI

ASHWORTH

We ought to do something, said my brother Vernon.

For the good of Mankind ?, I asked.

There are none, said Vernon. For the good of us.....
like making money.

How would we do that ? I asked.

I don't know, he said.

I know a guy who made upwards of £20,000 by writing one story, I said.

Even that would do to be going on with, said Vernon.

Why don't we all three try and write something ? suggested Sheila. We could pool our resources and write lots of stories and things.

That isn't a bad idea, I said, - we could turn out four or five stories a week between us, and in times of plenty maybe even six and seven.

I'm going to write a children's story, Sheila said.

I think I might try my hand at a heart-squaring drama of human passion and romance for a women's magazine, said Vernon.

Of course, I said, you realise that we shall have to jettison all our ideas of writing as an art, that we shall have to throw overboard all our literary and aesthetic principles, that we shall have to renounce all our ideas of writing for writing's sake, and write for the masses, and for editors with the minds of retarded three year olds ?

Yes, said Vernon.

Well, I said, having settled that, I think I shall start with a slick, natty little story with a snazzy ending for a large-circulation weekly.

I'll see you next week, Vernon said, and we can compare notes then.

I'll get somebody started on a garage for your Bentley the week after that, I said, you won't want to leave a new car outside.

Thank you, said Vernon.

* * * * *

Well, I said, let us hear what you have written, Vernon, that is going to wring sighs and tears from the hearts of a million women all over the country.

Hum, he said. There was a 1,500 word competition in one of the women's

magazines, with a First Prize of £200, so I started on a story for that.

That's fine, I said; if you win it will be as much as we should earn in two weeks - maybe even two and a half weeks - writing at normal rates. We will all be able to live in clover. Read us your story.

It isn't completed, said Vernon.

No matter, I said, read us what you have got anyway.

It hasn't got a title yet, said Vernon.

That's all right, I said, just miss out the title and go on to the next bit.

Well, said Vernon, it... Oh, all right.....

"Mad John Bigrat" he read, "had just gunned down two hundred defenceless women and children when he first set eyes on Agatha Eltenstein Badlouse. He knew, of course, that Agatha Eltenstein Badlouse was married to the Count von Eltenstein Badlouse, Gully Brennan Bagban Goodfriend, but since the Count von Eltenstein Badlouse, Gully Brennan Bagban Goodfriend, was amongst the five hundred crippled old people Mad John Bigrat had murdered the week before, he wasn't too worried."

That's all there is, said Vernon, I got a little stuck around there.

I don't see why, I said. I think the story has everything necessary so far. It has pace and action, you have brought the hero and heroine into it right away, there should be no difficulty with reader identification, it has just the right amount of tenderness about it where you mention the defenceless women and children, and the style is quite beyond criticism. I do not see where you can go wrong. I suppose it will all turn out to be a Terrible Mistake in the end, and actually it will not be Mad John Bigrat but somebody else who has done away with all those people?

Yes, I suppose it will, said Vernon. Then he went on: Yes, that's it; you've got it. Of course, it must be someone other than Mad John Bigrat who has done all the dirty work. I will disclose in the final sentence that it was really Agatha Eltenstein Badlouse.

That would certainly solve it, I said.

I don't think I like that story, said Sheila.

Well he hasn't finished it yet, I said, give him a chance. What did you come up with anyway?

I haven't written a proper story yet, either, she said, but I've created a character. I call him Bungo and he is a rabbit who gets into all sorts of adventures. I am going to centre a whole series of stories around him.

That sounds good, Vernon said. Tell us about him.

Well, said Sheila, in the first story it's winter time and poor Bungo is freezing in his burrow, without anything to eat. He goes to visit all his relatives in turn - of course this can be made to spin out quite long - to see if any of them have any food to spare but they are all as badly off as he is. Poor Little Bungo goes sadly back towards his own burrow and, suddenly, not far from home, he spies a whole big stack of turnips in the corner of a field. He slips under the fence.....

.....And gets caught in a ghastly agonising trap that spews his guts over half a mile of the snow-covered countryside?, I guessed.

That wasn't how I had it planned, said Sheila. And anyway this is only the first story in the series. What about the sequels if that happened?

Why, said Vernon, you could call the next one "Decomposition" or "Worms in the Winter" or something like that, and follow it up with "Mould and Decay".

I don't think it would go over too well in SUNNY STORIES, Sheila said. I'll think about it. What did you do, Mal?

I seem to be the only one who has actually written a story, I said. That is what comes from studying one's market. My story is slanted at popular weeklies such as REVEILLE. Or maybe TIT-BITS. I did the sensible thing - I bought several issues of each of these and read the stories thoroughly; I studied them assiduously. I isolated just what the editors want.

And what do the editors want? Vernon asked.

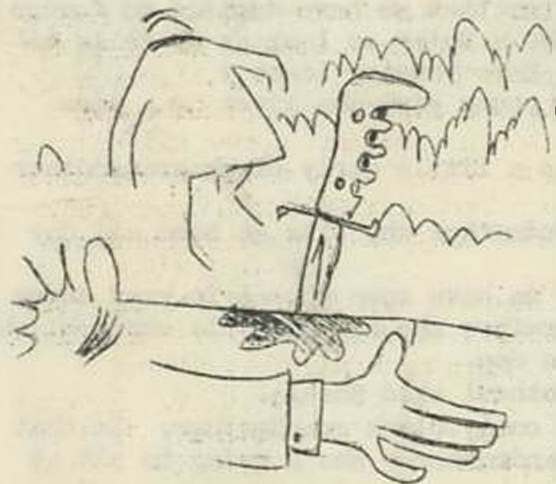
Are you asking my opinion, I said, or do you mean what do they want in a story?

What do they want in a story, he said.

They want Recrimination and a Twist Ending, I said. Without either one you are lost and you may as well pack up and go home and play Ludo. If you do not put Recrimination into your story, and a Twist Ending on to the end of it, then you are a mere hack in their eyes. In addition, I said, the stories have to be short and they must be slick - you know, fast-moving and sophisticated.

Well, let's hear it, said Vernon.

I have called it - just to let them know I haven't forgotten the Recrimination - "Retribution", I said. Here it is:



"Harry had thought, as soon as he saw the filthy tramp beating a shopkeeper to death with a gatepost in the village that afternoon, that the fellow was probably up to no good. Nevertheless, it came as something of a shock to him when he was leisurely carrying his company's £3,000 payroll up a deserted country lane at three o'clock in the morning, and the tramp jumped out from behind a tree and twisted a knife round in his ribs. The shock was too much for Harry and the tramp took the £3,000 payroll and made off up the lane with it, leaving Harry for dead - which he was.

The tramp had not gone more than half a mile up the lane when he heard a rustling sound in the trees at the side of the road. He turned to

see what it was and as he did so two more tramps came out of the bushes and broke his skull with coshes. They grabbed the money bag from his limp hand and darted off up the lane, but a surprise was in store for them. They hadn't gone more than a quarter of a mile when they heard footsteps behind them; before they could turn, however, they had been garrotted by four more tramps who took the £3,000 and ran off along the lane with it. A few hundred yards ahead of this spot, eight tramps were waiting in the bushes with guns in their hands..... When P.C. Jones, the village policeman, cycled on his beat the next morning, he was rather surprised to see - in the quiet country lane which he knew so well - nine hundred and seventy thousand, six hundred and fifty three dead tramps.... one of them still clutching a bag containing £3,000."

Err, said Sheila.

Yes, said Vernon.

Don't you like it, I asked.

Yes, said Vernon, I like it. And I should say that it certainly has Recrimination, and without doubt the Twistiest of endings. But I can't help thinking that perhaps it is just a little too short.

Do you think so, I said? I don't really see how I could lengthen it. Unless I increased the number of tramps. Do you think that would help?

No, said Vernon, no - I wouldn't do that. I feel that the story might lose something in subtlety if you carried that idea too far.

Yes, I said, I guess you're right. But I think I have it - when the policeman goes on his rounds and finds nine hundred and seventy ^{thousand} six hundred and fifty three dead tramps, he doesn't report it. He simply slips the bag containing the £3,000 into his pocket and rides on his way.

Oh huh, said Vernon, and what happens then?

Why, I said, the village miller, going on his rounds, finds nine hundred and seventy thousand, six hundred and fifty three dead policemen....one of them still clutching a money bag containing £3,000.

That might do it, said Vernon. You wouldn't have to sacrifice your Twist Ending that way.

Not even my Recrimination, I said.

I'm not too happy about it, somehow, said Sheila.

Oh - why, I asked?

I don't really know, she said, but I just have a feeling that it is not quite right somewhere. I think that it might be best for the time being if we all collaborated on one story - you know, worked out an idea between us and wrote it collectively, sort of.

Well, we can try that, I said. After all, now that we have decided to forgo art for commerce, what does it matter how we write a thing so long as it sells to the editor and goes over well with the masses? Have you any ideas?

Yes, said Sheila. There is this attractive young girl who lives in a nice house in a respectable suburb.....

That's a good beginning, I said, and she has a little curly black grandmother who sits at home all day reviling the dog.

No she has not got a little curly black grandmother who sits at home all day reviling the dog, said Sheila.

Well I say she has, I insisted. You've got to have some appeal in your story for the older people and the animal lovers. Therefore she has a little curly black grandmother who sits at home all day reviling the dog.

She has not got a little curly black grandmother! said Sheila.

OK, I said, OK. So she hasn't got a little curly black grandmother. In that case - if she hasn't got a little curly black grandmother - who's going to sit at home all day reviling the dog?

Nobody, said Sheila, she hasn't got a dog.

Oh, I said, well I guess that squares it then.

Well, Sheila went on, this girl has got to go into hospital for an operation.

That's a good angle, I said, and while she's having her operation the surgeon falls in love with her sexy intestines and isn't able to complete it.

That's it, said Vernon, who had been sitting thoughtfully. But later she forgives him - after somebody else has seen her up again - and she probably even marries him.

And they go to live with his little curly black grandmother, I added.

And buy a dog, said Vernon.

Which the little curly black grandmother sits and reviles all day, I said.

That's it, said Vernon.

You know, I don't think we're going to make quite as much money at this fiction-writing business as we first thought we were, said Sheila.

That's just sour grapes, I said, because we put a little curly black grandmother into your story.

And a dog for her to sit at home reviling, added Vernon.

Well, we'll wait and see, said Sheila.

* * * * *

IN SEARCH OF JUSTICE

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL

Extracted from a letter about "In Search Of Wonder", an anthology of Damon Knight reviews published by Advent Press.

I read it with much interest, much pleasure considerable amusement—and a few misgivings. Damon's indignation has a lot of entertainment value, for me at any rate. But he gives way to it at a risk I wouldn't care to run myself.

In case you would like to know more, I'll say that about two years ago one of our leading Sunday papers asked me if I'd care to criticise sf books for them, at an acceptable fee. I turned the offer down, pleading incompetence. For that, you may call me cracked—but I don't think I am. I refuse to tread where Damon doesn't fear to rush in.

Why? Well, Damon mentions about authors falling into a trap: such as where the hero faces an all-conquering menace and then has to contradict the definition by conquering it. But critics, I fear, also fall into traps and, what is worse, they can't always avoid them even with the best intentions in the world.

The trap lies in that the critic's role is a judicial one. He is set up on a bench, attired in wig and gown, weighing up the evidence and holding (or striving to hold) the scales of justice with complete and visible impartiality. (Remember Lord Chief Justice Goddard's dictum: "It is not sufficient for justice to be done—it must also be seen to be done.")

But the critic just can't do that except in those few cases where he knows the author personally. Where the author is known remotely or not known at all, the critic is a judge forced to pronounce on the basis of superficial evidence which, as often as not, may be largely evidence for the prosecution and sweet f--- for the defence. In such circumstances justice may seem to be done but is not seen to be done.

An illustration of what I'm getting at. Some time back I was looking around an art exhibition in company of its director. He pointed out an oil painting of a riverside scene and asked me what I thought of it. I studied it carefully. The technique was far better than anything I could ever do, but I'm not a painter. There were other pictures in the exhibition that were worse, several that were superior. This picture had a slight touch of crudity that, to my mind, made it no more than mediocre. So I said, quite sincerely, "Not bad."

Director: "That the best you can say about it?"

Me: "I'm afraid so."

Director: "All right. I'll now prove to you that you can look at the same thing twice, see two different things and reach two different judgments."

Me: "If you can do that you're a magician."

Director: "No I'm not." He handed me the catalogue. "Look it up in that."

I looked it up. It said: "No.83. Thames at Sunningdale. by James Machin. Painted by mouth. Submitted by the Home for Limbless Veterans." I stared at the painting which this fellow had done holding the brush in his teeth.

Director: "Well, same opinion?"

Me: "No—I think it's marvellous."

Director: "So do I."

That experience was a lesson to me. Suppose I'd gone through that exhibition with a bunch of the boys whom I wanted to impress with my erudition and wit. I could have picked on that pic, exposed its slight crudity, torn the painter apart to make a Roman holiday. Then how humiliated, how ashamed of myself I'd have felt when later I learned the truth—when later I got the hidden evidence that the judge-critic gets all too rarely.

It's tough being an author, it's damn dangerous to be a critic. I enjoy Damon's work but wouldn't dare attempt it myself. Not seriously. In valueless fun, perhaps, but not seriously. I'd be too sorely afraid of secret circumstances coming into the open and making me feel bad about myself because I'd passed judgment on less than half the evidence and, though unwittingly, been unfair to someone.

For example, anyone with verve, fluency, a vitriolic pen, et al, who chose to write a historical critique of sf, might easily in his innocence pick on and tear to pieces the pre-war stories of once-popular Joe Skidmore. Joe was an author who blew his top, literally. A fellow doesn't commit suicide without going through a long period of mental turmoil first. God only knows what effort it takes to write well enough to please other people when mentally one is heading for the last round-up. Should Joe be flayed for any literary shortcomings? I damn not! It could be done quite honestly, quite sincerely, by a critic denied all the evidence—but it still wouldn't be fair.

Or take another case: a prolific producer of lousy writing was a close friend of mine, Maurice G. Hugi. He got several low-grade sf yarns published in British mags. He tried the US market twenty times and every yarn came back by return of post. (The one published in Astounding, years ago, under Hugi's name, is another story that John W. Campbell knows but I won't tell.) Hugi turned out unpolished, carelessly written rubbish so fast that his main source of income was the lowest grade British crime-story market at \$5 a thousand words. At least, he could do that stuff and something was better than nothing. He got by—just about.

A critic armed with a dictionary of invective could have a wonderful time with Hugi's sf yarns. But since critics, being intelligent men, are basically kind and generous people, I doubt whether he'd do it once given the hidden evidence, the part usually denied to critics sitting and writing at a distance.

The evidence: Hugi was the only child of elderly parents who were foreigners (Swiss) and were wholly dependent on him. Both parents were semi-invalids. Hugi kept house for them, cooked, shopped, even did the washing when necessary. He never married, never took a girl out on a date because he couldn't afford to, though in appearance and by nature he was the typical family-man. During the war he looked after home and the old folks daytimes, was an air-raid warden night-times, got in his sleep and his writing whenever he could and as best he could. And, Walt, that wasn't the half of it—Hugi himself was under sentence of death. He was a chronic diabetic, kept alive by frequent doses of insulin. His days were numbered and he knew it. But still he wrote stories. As best he could. Within the serious limitations laid upon him.

Towards the end of the war Hugi's mother died. He carried on, taking care of his father. Three years later Hugi himself died, leaving his old man feeble and alone. Bill Temple and some of the London crowd rallied around, searched through Hugi's

letters and carbons, traced money owing to him all over the shop, dunned various publishers some of whom were the shyster type, collected the cash and gave it to the old man and saw him fixed up. It was something similar to what happened when the Chicago fans rushed to the aid of Margaret Weinbaum. If anyone ever asks you: "what's the use of all this bloody af rubbish, what good does it do?" there are two examples. There are times when science fiction takes on the peculiar look of knock-kneed Freemasonry.

But shall anyone pee from a great height upon the ill-scrawled, ill-paid works of Maurice G. Egri? I say that if he does, justice has not been seen to be done.

Stories were written, sold, published, praised or slammed, that were conceived and turned out jumpily, in 30/50 word snatches, during major blitzes when shrapnel rattled on rooftops, shell-caps clattered into the streets, there was that queer rustling sound as sticks of heavy bombs came down from 10/12000 feet, the ground quivered like jelly, fire-squads raced around, anti-aircraft batteries shook and sometimes broke the windows, people died, and the scribbler himself wouldn't have laid a ten-dollar bet on being alive by morning. Stories, or sometimes diaries that became stories, were written on battlefields in Europe and Asia. They have all the shortcomings of prolonged crisis. If asked to sit in judgment upon them I wouldn't dare, even though I've been there myself.

There's a good and wellnigh unanswerable retort to all the foregoing, namely that if everyone looked at things my way it would put a complete end to all forms of criticism and literary judgment. Everything would be praised, good, bad or indifferent.

That's partly true, though not wholly so. I think it would make criticism a milk and water affair, with the critic leaning far over backward to avoid saying anything he might later regret. A good deal of criticism would be hardly worthwhile, the critic feeling himself castrated by humane considerations. A good deal of criticism wouldn't be worth writing or publishing at all—though, of course, there's the fact that a good deal of it isn't worth a hoot in hell already.

Maybe others don't know what the answer is, but I do. It's a selfish one. I lie back in the chair and enjoy Damon on the warpath, scalping all and sundry, taking his chances on tomahawking someone who doesn't and never did deserve it. I'm more than glad to let him run the risk of sometime having to live with a deep regret—because, I assume, somebody's got to take on the horrid chore and I'd much rather it wasn't me. I've seen too much, had too many shocks to my complacency.

Damon Knight comments:

It seems to me that EFR has summed up both sides and left me with nothing to say. Except (this is something I think he knows, but didn't say clearly) that considerations of difficulty can't be accepted in criticism; if they were, every beginner's first story would be a marvel; and a painting is just as good or bad whether the painter did it with his hands, feet, teeth or (as a character in Lady Chatterley says about Renoir) his penis. ("And jolly good pictures they were, too.") I didn't know about Skidmore's instability, he was before my time, but I wouldn't have hesitated to say he was an ass.

(Ctd. from p.2) As the saying goes, cast your bread on the waters and it will return after many days. (The only trouble is, who wants wet bread?) But keep it up fellows—we'll get Chuck back yet.

Meanwhile here's another horrible Hyphen. A crude scrawl by Atom poking malicious fun at the organising geniuses of fandom is followed by stuff by hacks like Ashworth, Russell and Shaw whom you see in every crudzine. Even the misprints are inferior to the standards I set with Funk and Magnalls. These are followed by several pages of

There is one step we can all take in preparation for nuclear war.

Dig a trench in the garden four feet deep and two feet wide and lay brushwood beside it. When the alarm sounds, jump in, pull the brushwood over you and lie flat.

This gives no protection whatever from blast or fall-out, but at least it will leave the place as tidy as we found it.

(Letter in 'Today'.)

your letters from which all the brilliant bits have been carefully edited out and surreptitiously sold to professional gag-writers. This would have been bad enough, but as a result of a lesser-known provision in the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, which set up the partition of Ireland we find ourselves forced to include a contribution from the Republic of Eire. The author of the one in this issue, a Mr McAulay, is a Ph.D who was formerly engaged in post graduate research in atomic physics at Trinity College, and we looked forward to listening him as umpire cleaner to put one over on the CKY, who allow their Ph.D to turn the handle. However since meeting Irish Fandom he has lost the University and is now working in a fertilizer factory. The whole dreadful mess is messily miscoed on the

second cheapest paper I can find and posted in a mailbox with chipped enamel and the initials VR.

You may of course be lucky enough to find some blank pages in your copy instead, because in my unceasing search for imperfection I have stopped checking the completed runs for blanks. I did try to detect them by analysing the aerodynamic characteristics of the pages as they flew into the delivery tray, but the technical data on square aeroplanes seems curiously inadequate. However until I can find some triangular duplicating paper, a fellow I know has sold me a very good insurance policy which pays us both £1000 if you find a blank page. Unfortunately I could only afford the premiums for this one.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"Oft-times is a blarney but a costumed mole".

—St. Alsbear

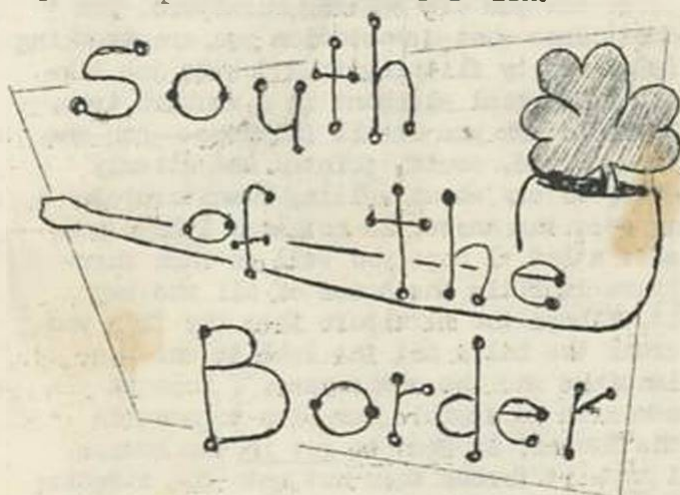
The next issue won't be much better, though we do have a piece by a promising new fan writer called Barry. You may remember we published his first article a couple of years back, and I think he has had some stuff accepted by other fms since. There are quite a few other pieces in the backlog, along with quite a few letters still to be published. I mention this because it occurred to me that there are a lot of old fms around these days who might like to take a fling at fmz publishing again in a way that wouldn't commit them to anything. Anyone like to guest-edit an issue of Hyphen? Tucker? Grennell? Ashworth? Barbee? Clarke? HAROLD??

By the way, though the alternative address I gave will still find me, we're actually still at 170. The purchase deal fell through, closely followed by the sitting-room ceiling. Anyone want a couple of cubic miles of white dust for firing into space? We don't seem to be able to get rid of it any other way.

No Grunch this time, alas, because of illness at Inchmery. // 'Thoughts For Today' this issue by Archie Mercer. Anyone else irritated by mundane calendars or wayside pulpits? // Alex Morrison, 3 Camyle Place, Stevenston, Ayrshire, Scotland would like Stat eside correspondent, swap sf etc.

WE WERE SITTING in the living room of Oblique House, all of us experiencing a sort of post-ghoodminton tristesse and languorously discussing such farnish subjects as the theory of post-deflection acceleration in cathode ray tubes, sex, the application of the Schroedinger equation to positrons in an n-dimensional lattice, pornography, and the spin relaxation effect at low temperatures. This odd mixture of topics arose through the presence of Mr. G.Charters, who persisted in bringing up the second and fourth subjects at my brief pause in the conversation.

Ian McQuay
and
Johnny Hartz



Madeleine had just brought in the tea when we said modestly that we intended to write a few lines for the next issue of Hyphen. A sudden silence descended on the gathering; gratified by this respectful hush, we warmed to our topic and explained how this column would become a regular feature, how it would gradually increase in size and scope (Madeleine was heard to mutter something about thinking it was to be in Hyphen), and how it would eventually relegate the rest of the magazine to subsidiary importance.

When we paused for breath, everyone tried to speak at once. Walt begged us with tears in his eyes to respect the hallowed pages to which he had devoted the best years of his life; James said, "Begorra, ye spalpeens," and promptly took off his glasses; Bob choked on his fifth piece of apple pie; and Mr G.Charters (we always respect the aged and infirm) inched his wheel-chair forward and complained that his hearing-aid battery was a bit low, so would we mind speaking up a little. When it became clear to the group that we were serious about our projected contribution they were naturally overcome with emotion and their accents became so pronounced that the gist of the discussion became difficult to follow. Words like "scoundrels", "bloody Republicans" and "fuggheas" were heard frequently. We assume that these are used in Northern Ireland as quaint terms of affection and respect.

Shortly afterwards the meeting broke up as the various members of IF suddenly remembered urgent business. James put on his coat (the camel-hair with the fur collar) and went off to send a telegram to the Gorn; this read COME HOME ALL IS FORGIVEN IRISH FANDOM NEEDS YOU NOW. It says much for his excited state of mind that he sent this message reply paid, and we were naturally impressed by the sincerity of his desire to inform his friends of the good news.

Bob was so inarticulate with suppressed emotion that he was unable to address us directly and had to leave almost at once, pausing only to pocket three or four pounds of biscuits. He did say goodbye to Walt, for we heard him say "A man must be with his wife and family at a time like this" as he climbed into his limousine and was driven away. Mr Charters started to bang the table with his wooden spoon

and mumbled "I don't care, I've got them all, every one." After he had been placed at with four pin-up photos and a copy of the Kinsey Report, he relapsed into a condition of glazed stare and Cheyco-Stokes breathing. Walt and Madeleine appeared pre-occupied and silently contemplated the suddenly bright future, so we soon left to return to Dublin. It was odd that we were stopped four times on the journey by groups of men with Sten guns. Each time, one of them looked at us closely and said to his companions, "I wish the Boss was here; these don't fit his description, but you can never tell with fen". Our obvious integrity carried us through these encounters without difficulty, and from the frontier post to Dublin our journey was uneventful.

When a few select members of fandom heard the news about the forthcoming new feature in Hyphen we were inundated with thousands of suggestions (few of them printable), and hundreds of letters, one or two of which were even stamped. We include extracts from two of these below:—

....Thrilled to hear of new Hyphen feature....Bound to be a success with your magnificent talent, brilliant wit and powerful intellect....am judging you both by the one I have met...Will raise Hyphen even higher on the pinnacle. Yours in awe, E.P.

.....Pleased at the news of this great furnish venture...Glad to see your names will be on the feature, as I dislike anonymous contributions...Will undoubtedly become the focal point of 1960... With respect, R.B.

Modesty has prevented us from reproducing the more excessively worded tributes we have received from these and other fen, but we have answered them individually, sending autographed studio portraits where requested.

Well, provided Walt hasn't retired to the mountains to contemplate his naval for the rest of his days, we will see you again in the next issue of Hyphen. Until then, best from Irish Fandom (Southern Division).

MAILED
FOR TAP

TOTO, The Reprint Fanzine. No.13.
(From FIX, Ken Potter. O&PA.)

A Letter from Mal Ashworth

...So now you are selling furniture. You don't know what devastation you are wreaking in my ego by flitting from job to job like the proverbial elephant in a rhubarb tree. What—I ask you in all fairness—can one find barbed, acute, pointed and utterly chic, to say about selling furniture? In my case the answer is nothing; I hope you sell a lot. I hope you sell so much furniture it fills the homes of all who buy it. I hope the furniture they buy from you crams the halls and the lobbies and the landings and the staircases. I hope it makes it impossible for them to move in the houses, or even to get in the houses. I hope it forces them out onto the streets; I hope it follows them out onto the streets. I hope the furniture you sell crams every street in Lancaster, and forces the traffic to a standstill. I hope that as the days go by, furniture sold by you chokes every main road in Lancashire, and in the whole country. I hope the mills break down under the weight of furniture (sold by you) piled on and around them. I hope nobody can even see the fields and the crops for the furniture sold by you. And as everyone sits sadly just off the coast in small rowing boats, gazing with wistful eyes at a Britain piled high with mile on mile of furniture all sold by you. I hope it sinks slowly under the waves, through the great weight, to the tune of 'Land of Hope and Glory'. In my quiet way, I'm trying to wish you success.



THE MAN IN THE GREY

FLANNEL TOWEL

BOB SHAW

ONE EVENING LAST WINTER while glancing through the Radio Times I discovered that the BBC was going to give Julius Caesar the full treatment in about half an hour's time. The discovery of and the imminence of this veritable pearl sent me into a state of near oysteria. I dashed out and purchased two pint bottles of amber ale, got the fire well stoked up, equipped myself with glass, bottle opener, pipe, tobacco and slippers and settled down in an armchair before the TV set. Once that TV of ours gets into your chair nothing will shift it.

The play opened in a rather unfamiliar manner—nothing but grey mist and a strange, eerie silence. I was explaining to Sadie that I didn't care much for the liberties the BBC had taken with the original settings when she noticed that the set wasn't switched on. Once that was done I began to enjoy the show. Everything went well until the third act, then my memory began to stir uneasily, dredging up fragmentary glimpses of the past.....

Suddenly it was all there. Of course. How could I have forgotten the sheer misery of my first and last taste of the footlights' glare? This was the play I had been forced to take part in during my first year at the Technical High School. Gradually the sound and fury of the BBC version began to recede as the events of that ghastly evening came crowding back...

The English teacher in charge of the production was an athletic tweedy man with a square, angry face. His name was Carson and he was feared throughout the first year sections because, according to rumour, he had been known, when enraged, to demolish even the largest boys by applying a sort of wrestling submission hold known as the Corkscrew. This involved putting his left arm round your neck, catching the short hairs of your temple in his right hand and winding them like an old gramophone. Nobody had ever actually seen Carson do this but we all went in dread of suddenly being given the Corkscrew.

Actually I shouldn't have been in the play at all. In fact, the only reason for the whole business was that Carson, like so many short tempered people, believed himself to be something of a humourist. He had written a take-off on Julius Caesar for the end of term social and had realised at the last moment that all the clever bits, such as the assassination scene in which the conspirators used toy guns, would not be appreciated by the rabble. Accordingly he had decided to do the play seriously to show us what the real thing was like, and had cast third and fourth year students in the major parts.

In English class one day I was laboriously making carbon copies of my class magazine, known for some forgotten and unguessable reason as "Le Hibou and Ku Klux Klan Journal", when Carson appeared beside me and saw what I was doing. I covered back covering my temples but to my surprise he took the matter quite well. After a public enquiry into the policies and circulation figures of my magazine, which left the rest of the class in stitches, he asked whether my evident interest in the Arts included any desire to be a Thespian.

I had a vague idea that the word meant something peculiar and mumbled incoherently about being too young.

Carson didn't seem to notice. He handed me a copy of Julius Caesar, showed me my part, which consisted of two lines in Act 3, and told me to show up at rehearsals that evening. Some of the boys who sat nearby almost became ill with senseless laughter—this was going to be something to talk about for years.

As it turned out I only had to attend one rehearsal, due to being conscripted so late, and things went so well at it that I became reconciled with the idea of being an actor. One serious snag was the obvious impossibility of producing reasonable facsimiles of Roman army uniforms, but Carson had got round this by dressing everybody, even Mark Antony and Pompey, in togas. These consisted of lengthy pieces of curtain material borrowed from the art classrooms. An elderly teacher by the name of Miss Anderson fitted them on the boys with safety pins.

There was not enough material on hand to provide me with a toga so I did my bit in my ordinary clothes which at that particular time consisted of shaggy grey flannels and an ex-RAF jacket. Before I went on Miss Anderson provided me with a spear and a circular cardboard shield.

Just as I was ready to make my entrance Carson buttonholed me. "Listen, Sam", he said, "I want you to speak up. Don't mumble. Your part is small but it is important that the audience hear what you say, so speak up. And keep your shield on your up-stage arm to give them the full benefit of your gallant warrior's physique."

I ignored the sarcasm and did all I was told and it felt pretty good. I came off fired with enthusiasm—perhaps this was the start of a new career. Still in this mood I told Miss Anderson that I was going to do away with the circular target, which was most un-Roman, and was going to make a proper semi-cylindrical shield. She thought that would be very nice and agreed rather lugubriously to make me a sort of tunic and skirt to wear. I could see my performance being described as "a little gem" in the school magazine.

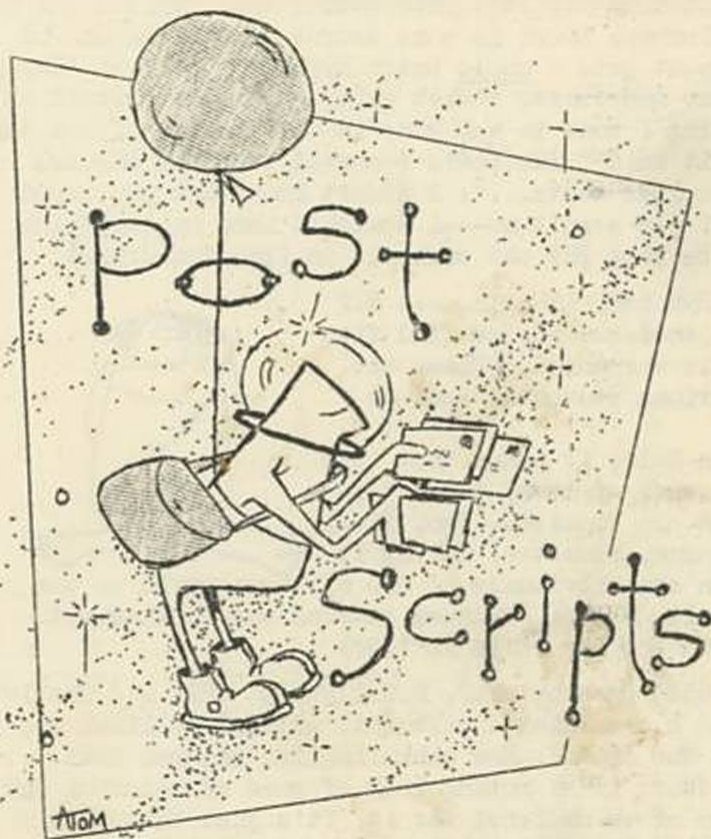
On the big night I got down to the school early and smuggled my shield into the dressing rooms. Most of the other boys were there already wearing their togas and stamping their feet with the cold. It was November and the dressing rooms were like gloomy iceboxes. Our breaths filled the place with a faint fog.

After some enquiries I found that Miss Anderson had left my outfit in a paper bag in a cupboard. I brought it out, took off my clothes and then discovered to my horror that Miss Anderson's idea of a Roman soldier's uniform was a grey silk thing with thin shoulder straps and a plunging neckline. I put it on and found that it came down just far enough to cover my trunks and no more. When the shout of laughter went up from the others I developed a sneaking suspicion that Miss Anderson had given up trying to make anything and had given me an old petticoat. Mark Antony began talking in a high pitched voice, prodding me with his rubber dagger and finally tried to make me waltz with him. I was saved by the arrival of Carson.

"Unhail that maiden, Marcus Antonius," he said. Carson loved to use the old form of words and names—he was a sort of ycleptomaniac. Luckily, as the play was about to commence, he had no time for further comment on my costume and I suddenly found myself alone in the dressing room. I decided not to wait in the wings with the others and slumped down in a corner to wait my turn.

An hour later, when it came, I had turned a mottled blue with touches of burgundy here and there. I was practically unable to speak. Getting through the crush in the wings was easy; I just kept putting my hand on bare arms and the crowd melted before me. It was a bit like the scene where Quasimodo frightens the people going up the cathedral steps.

{Continued at foot of next page.}



JEFF WANSHEL, 6 Beverley Place, Larchmont, NY. == This a cold Saturday morning and yours truly was hard at work, trying to make the electric blanket yield all its strength to help me continue my long snooze. Then a thought gnawed through my frozen mind. Mail. Mail. It was time for the mail to come.

The thought grew in me, a hunger. It swelled until it had to become real.

I had to get the mail.

It was a hot fire in my mind. It grew until it blotted out all else. It was an obsession, like tanna leaves. It was something that had to be done.

I jerked the covers off, lifted my three tentacles clear of the bed and slowly slithered to the floor. With every glob of strength I lifted myself upright and oozed forward. Within five minutes, with ice crystals forming on my ovestalks, I grew aware of the noxiousness of the

door. In my excitement, I didn't flow round a scatter rug and parts of me splattered around the room. But it was got the mail or freeze trying. I raised a tentacle. "Mail," I uttered in my best human scream. "Mail," my voice box/translator sllobbered. I reached through the door, carelessly puncturing a mailman. But it was there. The mail. I disintegrated bills, folders. I crushed boxes, crates. And then I found it. Hyphen!

I tore it open. There. Hyphen. THE--the WHAT? The Saturday Evening Post? TRICKED! I went into the past and destroyed Vulcan, smashing it into asteroids, thereby changing the future. I turned to the rest of the mail. There was the real Hyphen.

This is the amazing, fantastic weird and planet-shaking saga of my first contact with "-". I hope it will not be the last. (Me too. I haven't seen a letter like this for years. Where have you been since Planet Stories folded?)

OVER
PTO

"His subscription to life ran out."

—Thom Perry

→ Somehow I got onto the stage, husked my two lines about the approach of some army, and ran off. I found out afterwards from boys who had been there with their parents that I had carried my huge semi-cylindrical shield on my downstage arm and, as well as not hearing me, the audience hadn't even seen me. Into the bargain I was shivering so much that the flabby point of my spear had almost leapt off the stick.

Back in the throng I saw Carson bearing down me with a look of unbridled hatred on his face. I clapped my hands over my temples, gave a despairing whinger and clawed my way into the dressing room. I threw on my trousers and ARP jacket over my costume and fled through another door.

The next day in class Carson didn't speak to me. Now that I think of it, I don't believe he ever spoke to me again.

10 Wellington Sq., Cheltenham. = It's interesting that HNF has two of 11, he says. I have two of p.13. Perhaps there is some secret one going on, in which eventually some lucky participant gets a whole extra hyphen: a sort of 'Happy Families'. (No, but there may be some undercover racket going on among my staff of collectors. I'll watch it.)...One thing I want to ask you: in the minutes of the SMC Metallic Materials Panel recently, it said "...Mr. Lewis reported that the HNF was conducting limited tests on vacuum salted casts...": I didn't know that you urged metal, or whatever metallurgists do? (It wasn't me—I wouldn't know: an iron mine from a hole in the ground. It must be that HNF who works in an iron foundry..)

Archib Mercer, 434/4 Newark Rd., N. Hykeham, Lincoln. = H22 received and to hand and like that, enclosed please find five bobworth of candid studies of exotic womanhood. (These art studies, in colour, available to serious students. Sent on plain wrappers.)

If South Gate does get it again in 2010, it means that it's taking up a Central year. In which case, at least two inter-pollations from outside North America are required. Two, five, or any multiples of three within reason, plus two. Taking it at two, Wellington at Century's Turn can obviously be one of them; maybe we can get another British Worldcon after all. (Think goodness someone worked that out. Good ol' Archib. But have you allowed for Gay Paris in '63?)



Donald Frinson, 6543 Habcock Ave., N. Hollywood, Cal. = The letter column seemed a complaint department, until I realised you probably cut out the egobots. How unhumiliating can you get?

I don't think there is an actual lack of good sf material for fanzines, or even of an audience for it. It's just that when someone comes along who can write it well, he is discouraged by the clamour of the fans, and instead of continuing his serious or sciencefictional writing, he changes to more fanish stuff.

One good example of this is Bob Lamm; witness his original and controversial article in Inside 52. Then there is the sf minded writer of less experience who will improve if encouraged, but who will never get encouragement from the fans, and so will either turn around and write madman fanish stuff, for which he is not fitted, or quit writing for fanzines altogether. Thus conformity wins. And you have to explain to neofans why there are no sf fanzines, and to fandom why there are no neofans. (You have a couple of good points there, Don, but I wouldn't have thought it was fair to say that serious fan writers are discouraged by the 'clamour' of fans. I'd have thought it was rather by their relative silence, hushed even more in the case you mention by the fact that Inside doesn't print letters of comment. If there is the good material and the receptive audience, the fanish fans are quite willing to let the latter encourage the former: it's the pros and the nonious fans who erect the chromium-plated curtain.)

Andy Young, 11 Buena Vista Fr., Cambridge 40, Mass. = Bob Shaw's letter contained the remark "not made any more interesting by their apparent lack of interest in concubines etc.", which I'd like to have explained. And if there are any extra concubines lying around (if) and going to waste over there, I'd gladly exchange provinces for them—supposing I have any provinces of any interest to the present owners of unused concubines. In fact, the whole thing sounds highly unlikely. I mean, who ever heard of an unused concubine?



Len Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey, Calif. = Shaw said very well, but I don't think the screen faulists, the music snobs, the too-too 'arty' types etc will crowd out the trufen spirits. For one thing they just don't mix as well in the fanish microcosm and, as they have in the past, will fade away & drop out abruptly or mature enough to learn that fandom is a hobby, that hobbies are for fun, and that one can integrate without losing one's personality.

Brian Jordan, 86 Piccadilly Rd., Burnley --+ Ro the remarks on noofoen understanding the more esoteric mags: I had some trouble at first but a few helpful letters from Teacher Bennett soon had me on the Tru Path. And as most other friends don't mind doing the same thing for an interested noo, the only problem is, are the noos going to be interested? Well in a recent letter from one of the young BSFL intro's, I found "...I was amazed to find a serious theological discussion in one of the magazines". And while several have commented on the lack of af in fmz, all of them have also added that it didn't detract from their enjoyment of the mags. Indeed one potential friend didn't think much of MuFu, but found the less serious zines interesting and attractive etc.... I was horribly disappointed to find that 'gafic' had such a mundane origin. I'd had the impression that it had just appeared out of thin air, like Archie Mercer at the Brumoon (he seemed to crop up everywhere, but everywhere). (Thin air? Archie?)

Robert Bloch, Box 362, Weyauwega, Wisc. --+ Lately I find myself suffering from insomnia, especially in the daytime.

As a result, I resort to all sorts of devices for lulling myself to sleep—taking laudanum, hitting myself over the head with a hammer, reading Hyphen etc. Sometimes I go to bed and count sheep, but the damned things keep wriggling all over the pillow. Usually it's easier to just make up mental catalogues; 43 movies starring Buster Keaton, 1712 motion pictures and tv plays in which the sheriff or detective, after capturing the villain, turns to his aides and says, "Take him away, boys"—or simply a list of the 10,000 fans I hate the most.



The other night, or day, as the case may be (I forgot to tell you that for some time now I haven't opened my eyes at all, because there's nothing to see anyway but tv or bills) I got back to an old notion of mine...doing a casting job on an imaginary film which would celebrate some of the highlights of British fandom. I could see it so clearly with my eyes closed—and, come to think of it, that's the viewing method I'd recommend to any audience if the film were ever produced.

First, of course, there'd be a flash of that big naked alob—I assume he's Arthur Rank's brother-in-law—taking a whack at the big gong with a ghoddminton bat. Then the title, filling the screen; OLD MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE WHEELS OF IF, or I WAS A TEENAGE GEORGE CHARTERS, or whatever seems like a box office lure. Then, naturally, comes the cast lineup. Tentatively, mine read something like this:

Walter A. Willis.....	Sir Alec Guinness	Arthur C. Clarke.....	Ernest Thesiger
Madeline Willis.....	Kay Kendall	Shirley Harriott.....	Hermione Gingold
The Willis Kids.....	The Marx Bros.	Ken Bulmer.....	Peter Ustinov
	(in drag, of course)	Pamela Bulmer.....	Peter Ustinov
Chuck Harris.....	Richard Harris		(he's very versatile and likes
Bob Shaw.....	Dennis Price		challenging roles)
Sadie Shaw.....	Sonia Dresdel	Ron Bennett.....	Laurence Olivier
Eric Frank Russell.....	Wilfred Hyde-White	George Charters.....	A.E. Matthews
Tod Tubb.....	Robert Morley	Norman Wansborough....	Noel Coward

So far, so good. But the trouble is there are so many Anglofans I've never met nor seen in clear photographs. Perhaps you can cast Joy & Ving Clarke and Sandy Sanderson (in a scenario I did for Immundo I've already suggested for these three Deborah Kerr, David Niven and Sir Cedric Hardwicke), the Ashworths (Herbert Wilcox & Anna Neagle?), James White (Norman Wisdom?), Sid Birchby (George Sanders?), Bobby Wild (Tosia O'Shea?), Eric Bantcliffe (C. Aubrey Smith), Terry Jeaves (Eric Blore?), Norm & Inc Shorrocks (the Lunts?), Paul Anover (Bernard Miles?) and a smaggle of others.

Naturally, when I had brought matters this far, I began to consider an American film and the cast began emerging....

Bob Tucker.....Lee J. Cobb
 Don A. Grumell.....Tab Hunter
 about this time I realised that these actors, while very competent in their roles,
 were simply not box office. So in a fit of commercialism, I added:
 Sam Moskowitz.....Rock Hudson
 Gertrude M. Carr.....Brigitte Bardot
 Forrest Ackerman.....Kermit Lynn
 Carl Brandon.....Little Richard
 Dave Kyle.....David Niven

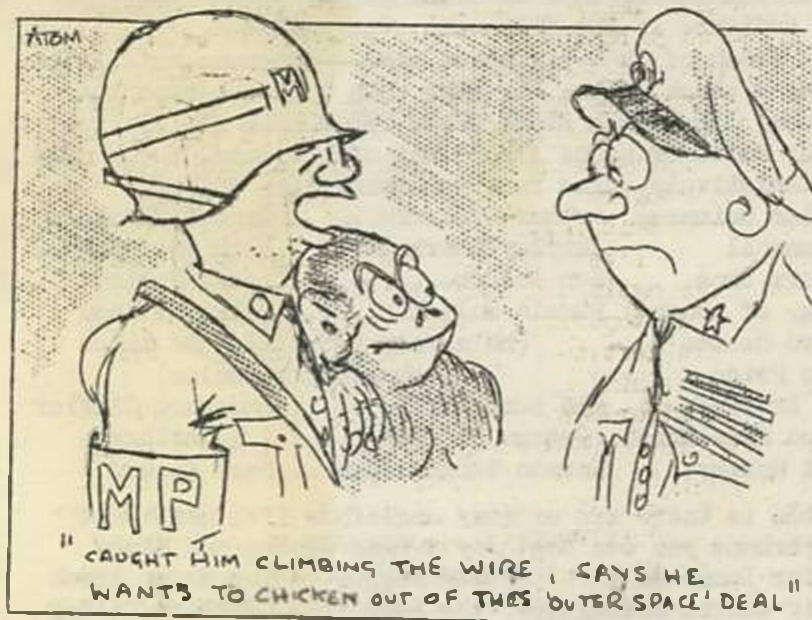
This of course necessitated some changes of plot. Originally I'd thought of using the WSFS hassle and feud, pointing out a sort of historic parallel to the War of the Roses. But as it now stands, the whole story revolves round the efforts of a group of dedicated and heroic fans to build a tower of used contraceptives to the Moon. (The Eiffel Tower?)

If you have any ideas on the subject I'd much appreciate your keeping them to yourself. Meanwhile, thanks for Hyphen and remember to support your local chapter of the IRA.

(Any other readers with casts in their eye might see their way to suggesting actors for other roles, such as Boyd Raburn, Terry Carr, Ron Ellick (er, Mr. Disney?), Bob Leman, etc., including that of Robert Bloch himself. (whatever happened to Bela Lugosi?))



Harry Warner, 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Md. += This Hyphen finally put into my mind the name of the humorist whom I'd been thinking anonymously about whenever I read something by Bob Leman. It's Ring Lardner. Now all I must do is figure out why Leman reminds me of Lardner, because there are few obvious points of resemblance: Bob doesn't indulge in dialect or hide swagery behind the surfacing of humor or write about real folkay people who live next door. Guessing, not analysing, I'd say that it involves similarities in the way the sentences are put together, the common habit of writing even the briefer items in plot form, and an imposing ability to capitalise on the effectiveness of the understatement.



If South Gets Again In 2010 says alive through the years it might turn into a gruesome thing. Most of us will be between 70 & 90 by that time, except those who have died in the meantime, and the first few years of the century will see a grim race against time and death as we attempt to stay alive long enough to see the Second SG Convention. But it might keep alive a lot of fans who would otherwise have died content because their previous life ambition—seeing nbn reach the planets—had been accomplished sooner than anyone had foreseen. Matter of fact,

when I thought I was dying back in February from a hard attack of flu, I could think just one obsessing thought, that it was a pity I couldn't live just the few necessary years to see space travel come into reality. And only ten years ago, I would have thought I had only a 50-50 chance of still being alive and non-senile when that event occurred

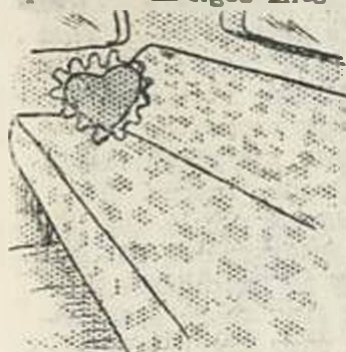
Chuck Harris, 'Carolin', Lake Ave., Rainham, Essex ==
 There was no check mark in the little box to invite me
 to comment, but you'll get my crude untutored opinions
 anyway. I have a complaint to make. Hardly have I turned
 my back on fandom before the jackals are befouling the
 shrine. "Chuck Harris is Obadiah Bep", bleats Terry Carr
 (Piffle and poppycock, every trufan knows I never had a
 carol.) (I don't get this: who was speculating about your
 sex life?) "Chuck Harris is Penelope Fundergast", screams
 Bobbie Wild (and Kyle would have sued her for far less.)



"Chuck Harris looks like Robert Bloch," says Joy Kathleen Clarke, (a vicious lie if
 there ever was one: the truth of the matter is that Robert Bloch looks like me).

Mind you, I am not protesting. I stride away proudly into the sunset and ignore
 the jackals. My mum says "sticks and stones will break your bones, but names will
 never hurt me," and none of this carping scum were ever immortalised in THE VERGO
 SLATTEN MAGAZINE (Vol.1, No.3) like I was.

But this latest attack by EFR is a different matter. Slur me and I won't even
 protest, but watch your mouth when you talk about my Ford Anglia. "A mobile latrine"
 says Eric (or Little Belittle) and if there was any justice in this world it'd be
 raining thunderbolts like crazy in his rural slum right now. This poor bloody pro-
 vincial wouldn't recognise an automobile without a man with a red flag walking
 ahead of it and, when it comes to driving prowess, ask him why his overloving wife
 insisted on a hassock in front of each passenger seat so that the victims can make
 peace with their maker (no pun intended, Eric's getting old) before he shuts his
 eyes and changes into top gear.



The Anglia, I'll have you know, is no ordinary heep. This
 is a real enthusiast's car. Sure, the acceleration isn't
 all that wonderful, and the springing and brakes leave some-
 thing to be desired, but when it comes to essentials the An-
 glia just can't be improved on. Every single one of them
 comes with a superb bunch-type snog seat in the rear (oclot
 covers are extra, but they're well worth the expense) that
 has never been bettered by Rolls Royce, Mercedes Benz or
 anybody. As I said, an enthusiast's car. No arm-rests, no
 ash-trays, no flower-vases, no picnic trays: just a snog
 seat with ocelot covers.

You were saying Eric.....?

"Anti-Social Notes" was the best Temple I've seen yet, and the aptest titled.
 Ego, incidentally, is back from Damascus again. He surfaced briefly in The Globe
 last Thursday, but is off to Ceylon again tomorrow. I wish now I'd spoken to him &
 touched the hem of his garment before he left us—but you know how brief that
 swarming slip is, and I don't really know him quite that well.

Ian R. Macaulay looks promising. "SF Whither Now" indeed!

EFR made me laugh out loud twice before I even got to the carol, but it would
 have helped if he'd told the rest of the story too...Nancy Wako was in charge of a
 group of international partisans in the South of France. During the evenings it be-
 came a sort of tradition that the various nationalities would get up and sing for
 the rest. The British sang "God Save The King", the French "La Marseillaise", the
 Dones "Lunderber Kopenhagen" etc etc. Two Americans were dropped to join the group
 but, unfortunately, neither of them could remember what came after "the rocket's
 red glare", and they had to stay mute during the singsongs. After some time they
 put their heads together and found they did have one song in common. That night, and
 every following night, they waited their turn and then stood up, snapped to attent-
 ion, and gave their all to "Uncle George and Auntie Mabel", whilst all the rest of
 the group (apart from the British contingent) believed it to be the American anthem.

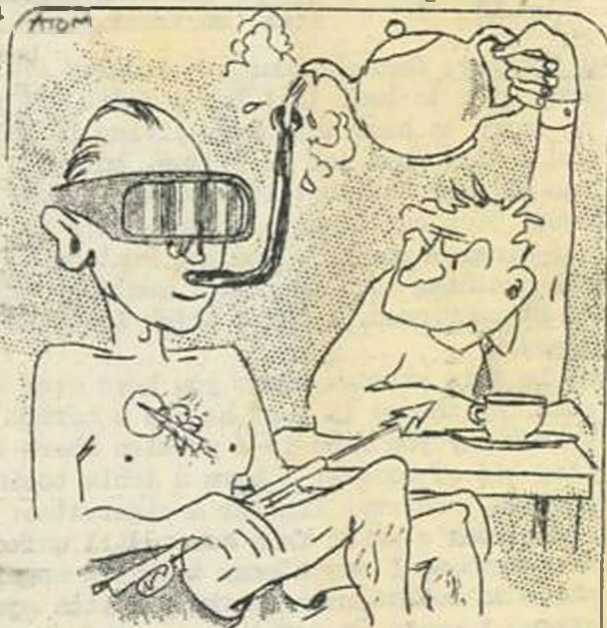
To me, it's Americans like that who make up for Gert Carr and General Horstad.

Alan Elms, Rte 1 Box 159, La Center, Ky. == Maybe it was just the letter column that ruined it all, and maybe you can't help that. Why must people get so serious about things? You're being infiltrated by people who give a damn, and that is bad, especially for people like me, who didn't give a damn when I was interested in the entirety of fiction, and really don't now that I maintain no contacts except reading Hyphen. Maybe I shouldn't look for you to supply me with a general satire and puns and scintillating letter-column magazine, but I do...I just don't like it when people start getting concerned about each other, or about whether science fiction is literature, or whatever. (Look who's giving a damn now...and, hey, what's this?)... I can remember times when I got profoundly angry at a Saturday Review or Ladies Home Journal writer who said insinuating things about the level of writing in sf. In the last three or four years I've found them amazingly correct. I tried reading Sturgeon's 'Bianca's Hands' last week, and could hardly withstand its crudity to the end. I don't think this is due to any innate literary superiority in myself; I just wonder whether some of the people who defend sf as literature have tried recently reading Dostoevsky or Proust for reading's sake—or, more recently, James Agoo's 'Death In The Family' or even Kerouac's 'The Dharma Bums', ridiculous as it is in spots. People who can write have, in general, better things to write about than science fiction; or else they write it so that it isn't sf any more.

(Alan, meet Vin Clark. Does anyone think that if I got more letters like Bloch's I wouldn't print them? I wouldn't argue with you about Bianca's Hands, which was I seem to remember rejected by most of the magazines (and quite rightly too) until it unaccountably won a contest in the British Argosy. In any case it wasn't sf. But who are these people you scorn for representing sf as great literature? I would have thought the whole point of sf is that it doesn't have to be literature to be good of its kind—it can have the same enthusiastic sincerity as a travel or mountaineering book written by an unskilled hand, and if you happen to be interested in adventure that for you is a Great Book. Sf is a sort of intellectualized adventure fiction, using adventure in its full sense, and for those who like intellectual adventure old van Vogt, who can't 'write' for toffee, is better reading than old Eyodor and Marcel rolled into one. (and there's an interesting collaboration.) The whole trouble with the field nowadays is too much pseudo literature or machine-made slickness and not enough get-up-and-go. 'Restrained' writing is all very well, when there is something there to be restrained.)

John Grogan, 54 Barrymore St., Ewerton Pk., Brisbane. == Anti-Social Notes was very good even if I don't believe a word of it. I had Clarke here for tea and the usual etc and all he did was read through my stack of fanzines. So phooey to W. Temple Esq. He stretches the truth, or it just could be that he never want the right way to keep ACC quiet. Tell him to try keeping a stack of fanzines just inside the front door where ACC will fall over them. They must be recent issues, he scorned anything over six months old. Do you think I should patent this?

(So that's why Arthur goes to Australia!) Will have to knock off now to memorise that EFR epic to the tune of Hark The Herald Angels, for our forthcoming Sunday School concert. It should be quite a success, only hope my voice will do it justice.



.... I HAD CLARKE HERE FOR TEA....

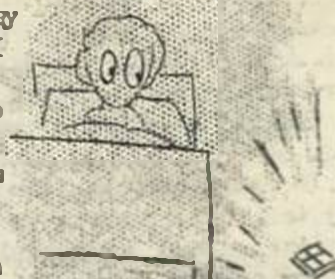
is Frank Russell, Cheshire == As a 5ft tall 100lbs bulwark-
 "Cheer up, you bastard—we're all approaching bloody dissolution". I resented this at the time because the diminutive warrior had just filled his britches by way of anticipation.) Underneath the mad laughter I detect a long and solid streak of sadness running steadily thru H22 from back to front. Or maybe it's from front to back. No matter—it's there just the same.

Inside Coverage makes a hell of a fine start by staring at me with the hurt eyes of a castrated spaniel while indulging in maddlin middle-aged mumblings about what-used-to-was and what-might-have-been. Shaw's return—possibly a major catastrophe—is greeted with the sentimental relief of an aged spinster recovering her lost tenant. Bob Leman's piece is a reprint—must be because I done read it before. (He did—I sent him the KS after stencilling it in the hope of getting a printable reaction. Other pros note the effectiveness of his counter-play.) JVC climbs up to the mark and then lapses into sadness as he contemplates NY litigators. Shaw gives loyal support as he ort. With exceptions here and there, the letters have a sad or serious ring, lacking the crisp crackle of a fandom happily unaware of economic crises, H bombs, locust swarms, people from South Dakota, rural privies and other hazards of existence.



By this I don't mean H22 smells like a 4-letter word. No, no, not at all. I mean it's different, suddenly, obviously, identifiably and undeniably different. Its funniness is now underlined by a sort of ecclesiastical solemnity like that of an archbishop straining on his thundering. (You have the advantage of me, sir.) Somewhere back of all this, I suspect, is a realization that tempus is fugging along like Harris's Phord. There's a touch of, "We are old Father William. Our subscribers are bearded and toothless. Our readers are bald and paunchy. Our funny fons are mamas and soon to be grandmamas. Old pleasures have become chores, while former chores are now pleasures. Hyphen rolls inexorably on to—but, O God, where will it all lead to, where will it all lead to? Eh? Tell us that!" (Nothing worse than the expiration of their subscriptions, we trust.)

Ethel Lindsay. Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey
 == Very glad to hear that Bob & Sedie are ruming to you. I was so sorry to hear they were living in Bolton. I was once offered a very good job in B lton, but when I mentioned it to Frances (Evans) she shot it down in flames. "Bolton!" she screamed, "You can't go to Bolton, it's full of dingy streets full of dingier people", and she kept on repeating "Bolton" in such scathing accents that I mentally cringe now whenever I hear it mentioned. I don't think I'd even dare pass through the place.



What is this strange power you have over Mr. F. Temple? He writes for you and no one else. My theory is that he has a morbid delight in your purring abilities. . . I don't know why you find it a problem where to put bits of chocolate. In a tin beside the bed of course! I have a table beside the bed. It contains my viroless, bed-lamp, clock, ashtray, lighter & cigarettes; on the shelf below is the chocolate tin, last week's paper from home still unread, a pile of fmz to answer, a pile of Feiffer cartoons I can't bear to throw away, a torch in case the lights fuse, a telephone to let me know if the hospital goes on fire and a Primer of Public Administration. I could say, there are other things to do in bed besides sleep, but man what you could do with a line like that! (You still haven't explained how to find the chocolate in the dark without knocking it onto the floor. I've finally decided that what we need is luminous (or floorism't) chocolate.)

Edmond Adams (yes, the Edmond Adams), 433 Locust Ave. SE, Huntsville, Alabama. -- I note that I was one of the few especially asked to write a letter. Golly Gosh Gee now Golly, Sir, if I may. I also note that I was one of the few specially checked off as having a dead subscription, too. Golly Gee God Damn Wow Crap, Sir.

Guess that means I'll have to send some more dem ole 'Merican dollars, Hoo Boy. Or one, anyway. I'll try to scumpe one up to send along. I'd really think that you'd want to keep sending me your little zine free, I mean since after all I am Ed Adams, author of The Enchanted Duplicator and The Harp Stateside and All Time Big Fella and like that; your zine's pretty good, I mean, kid, but only after years can one come up with something like ROCK, like. Tch.

I hit strange streaks these days. It's this burning tropical sun, and the slow tropical drip-drip of Ed Cox blanking (Read Brillig if you're out after thrills, boy. I go in for Fun For The Family type clean entertaining wit. Nobody seems to like it much.)

Johnny Houtz, 'Mona Vanna', Cultrin Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland -- The other day the BEC 'Tonight' team were in Bray; as I scootered up the main street I waved to somebody whom I thought I knew very well. One hundred yards later I braked with a frown—some people have hub brakes, some have discs, but frowns are more reliable in wet weather—the gentleman to whom I had waved was Alan Whicker, roving reporter and man about Hawaii dancing girls, who didn't know me from Adam. (I usually wear a fig loaf on my scooter.) I knew him so well and yet the relationship was one-sided.. In more or less the same category, as a humble member of the teeming millions of Ad-
dass, I'm starting this first letter to a ENF..



Those seven Slants and 18 hyphens you lent us were an eyeopener to what we had been missing in the years when we only read prozines. This letter, by the way, is being written with my left foot (a footnote?) because I had to leave two arms and a leg as security before Ian would let them out of his grasp. And he rings up from time to time to make sure I am not using slices of bacon as a bookmark. (What could be rasher?) I'm not sure whether fandom is a ghoddamn hobby or a way of life, but it seems to me a type of mind which likes the offbeat. My former room-mate in college is a keen ornithologist and gets fan magazines about birds: no, not L' Vie Parisienne, things like The Mating Call of the Lesser Spotted Globe: but they seem to be all screen efforts.

and my young brother gets lots of books on angling and aeronautalling but they all take themselves very seriously. I think fandom may be compared with the Russell paradox of the class of all things not a member of a class—fans are the class left over after the screen types have started collecting Romanian matchbox labels of the 19th Century et alia... One good thing about fandom is that communication is not so difficult as it is in normal life. One of the reasons, I feel, that there have been so many angry Young Men recently, is surely that they are dissatisfied with their society, but they cannot communicate their feeling to the great mass of the population—the glazed-eyed fifteen million reading their News Of The World. Fans may not be so revolutionary in spirit, but at least they can communicate with kindred minds fairly easily. (Which seems an apt place to reproduce a quote from Aldous Huxley sent me by Thom Perri: "Within a few years we may expect to see co-operative societies of unpopular authors, mimeographing their works and selling them by mail to the select few who take an interest in artistic experimentation and are not afraid of 'dangerous thoughts'".)





HYPHEN 24
March, 1969

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EAVESDROPPINGS

EMERGENCY! THIS IS THE ROBOPERATOR - IN CHARGE OF CHAPTER ENDINGS. THIS PLANET WILL BE EXPLODED IN EXACTLY FORTY THREE SECONDS!.....HE SAID UH-HUH AND WE TOOK HIS ASSENT FOR GRANTED.....ANYONE WHO ISN'T CONFUSED DOESN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION.....AT TIMES I GET TO THE STAGE WHERE LIFE SEEMS EMPTY AND POINTLESS—THEN SOMEBODY MENTIONS SMOOKER.....I WANT A SOUVENIR BUT THE DAMN THING WON'T BREAK... ..IT'S EITHER STOP SAYING 'YOU WAS' OR LEAVE OFF THAT MONOCLE.....HE PATRONISES THE ARTS, LIKE HE DOES EVERYONE ELSE..... I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HAVE WARNED YOU THAT I'M A DIFFICULT FELLOW TO FLATTER BECAUSE ANYTHING YOU SAY ABOUT ME, NO MATTER HOW FAR FETCHED YOU MAY TRY TO MAKE IT, ALL TOO OFTEN TURNS OUT TO BE THE SIMPLE AND UNADORNED TRUTH..

....LUXURY IS A NECESSITY.....I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN SIGNING YOUR NAME TO ANONYMOUS LETTERS AGAIN... WE'RE LEARNING ABOUT WORLD HISTORY AND ALL THAT JAZZY STUFF THAT HAPPENED BEFORE THERE WAS A FANDOM.....IT WAS SAD TO SEE CARPHELL GANCING UP ON THOSE FIVE PANELLISTS.....I DON'T SEE WHY EVERYTHING CAN'T BE EXPLAINED CLEARLY IN SIMPLE ONE-SYLLABLE WORDS, WITHOUT OB- FUSCATING THE ISSUE.....YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DROP A SLIDE RULE? YOU KILL A FAIRY WHEN YOU DROP A SLIDE RULE.. I'M GOING TO TELL GALT LIEBSCHER ON YOU.. ...SURE I'M A GOOD SHOT. WATCH ME GET THAT ALBATROSS.....I'VE SEEN IT IN COLOUR- ING BOOKS AND COLOURING BOOKS DON'T LIE.. ...DON'T BOTHER ME ABOUT A DOG IN A SAT- URDAY, I'M READING ANDY YOUNG'S THEORY OF RELATIVITY.....WHAT'S THE USE OF A MONEYCOIN WHEN YOU'VE LOST YOUR SENSE OF WONDER?.....I'M GOING TO MARCH RIGHT UP TO HIM AND POUND ON HIS GLASSES.....IT TAKES GUTS TO ADMIT YOU'RE A GALAXY ARTISTI WAS ONCE THE YOUNGEST PERSON IN THE WORLD.....f.m.bushy, wew 3, ed murrow, chuck harris, brian jordan, ted ray, curtis d.janke, jim coughtren, rick sneary, paul anderson doc barrett, ron alik 2, eney 2, efr 2, carl brandon, d.v.

