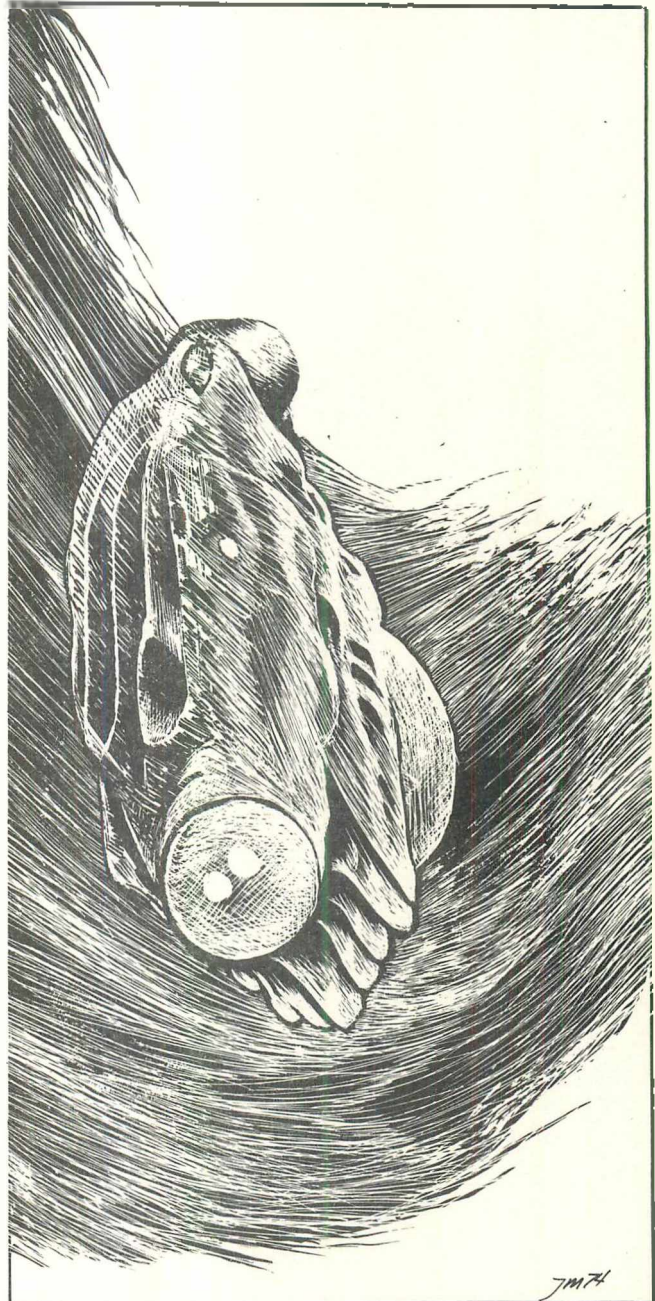


KHATRU 1



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FEBRUARY 1975

JEFFREY D. SMITH/1339 WELDON AVENUE/BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21211 editor

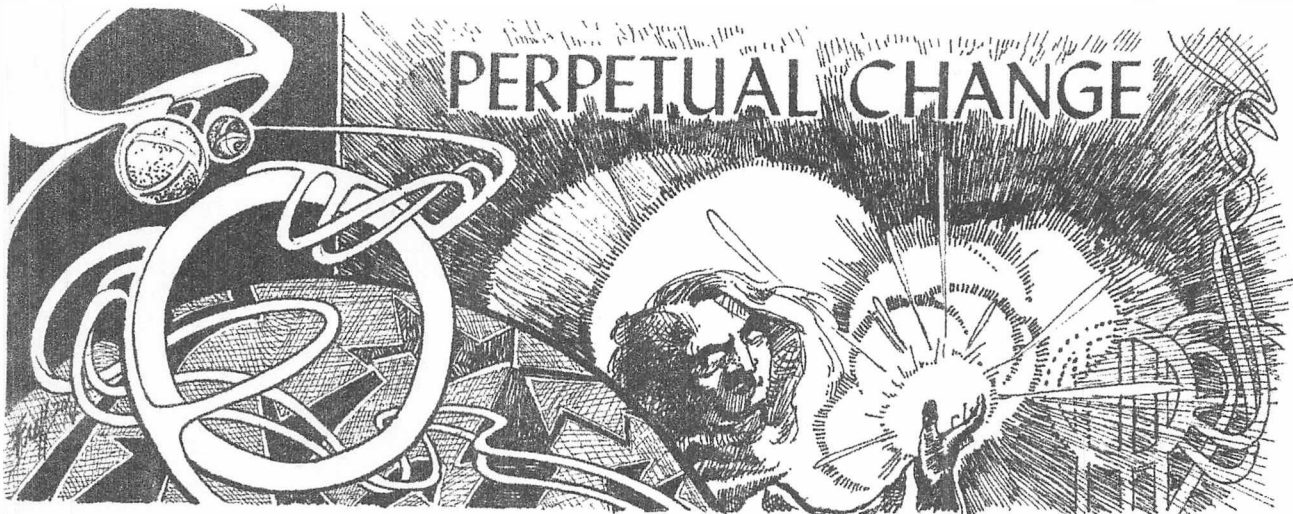
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Nowadays the In Thing is for a fanzine to have a subtitle: "an informal journal of science fiction & fantasy"--"a magazine about science fiction"--"an eclectic journal"--"the typewritten fanzine."

I considered several possibilities before abandoning ship. This might have been KHATRU: A VENTURE. Or KHATRU: THE TOPOGRAPHIC FANZINE. My favorite was KHATRU: BORING ARTICLES ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION. I came very close to using that. Those of you with a taste for the irreverant are free to consider that the unofficial subtitle. The rest of you can sigh in relief.

This fanzine is a major undertaking on my part. As such, I am more than a little reluctant to discuss plans and policy--there must be a limit to how much pretension you will accept from one man. For probably the first time in a fanish career nearing its sixth year, I think I will settle back out of the way, and not explain things to death.

Three points:

Yes, I do intend to write for the fanzine. Lack of space limited me--and others--this first time around.

And yes, this is BLIND FAITH. Not quite what was promised, true, but KHATRU turned out to be a more viable project. BLIND FAITH was still-born, but in KHATRU its soul lives on.

Finally, this is not PHANTASMICOM 12. If anyone wants to start comparisons, to say KHATRU is not as good as PHANTASMICOM, I suppose that is his privilege. I like this issue, anyway. KHATRU 1 is better than most issues of PHANTASMICOM were, at any rate, and certainly better than PHANTASMICOM 1 was; KHATRU will need its time to grow, and evolve, and mature. The future of the world may be dim...the future of science fiction may be uncertain...but the future of KHATRU is very bright indeed.

I hope you enjoy the ride.

--Jeff Smith

Donnybrook #1:

The Ellison of Byronism

Sheryl Smith

Critics call things to your attention--that's all they can do. No criticism can convey the experience of art: you either get it, or you don't, from the work itself. Therefore, the critic is egregiously superfluous.

But, where would the world be if its activities were curtailed by mere uselessness? The literary experience does involve one--including me--emotionally; where there is emotion, there is tension, and where tension, hopefully, outlet. And what more gratifying outlet than one which is also an ego trip--come along for the disagreement! Being a heretic, I will probably stir up your self-satisfied perceptions, as well as impugn your taste, so perhaps you might--should be there.

This isn't the subject I planned to kick off with--if this be indeed a kick-off, since critical prose tends to escalate into such hard work--and I really hate quote-and-comparison papers. But I've been haunted of late by these incongruous similarities between Harlan Ellison and Lord Byron, which I would like to get out of my system so I can stop cackling to myself about them and start cackling about something else. And when we are done we are all going to know, among other things, how to spot a Byronic hero, if we care to. (Personally I find them smashing, glad to see the tendencies are again current. A neo-romanticism is not quite the same without them.)

None of these similarities is always there. I say Ellison resembles Byron, not that he is Byron. And neither Byron nor Ellison is always Byronic, which makes their likeness even more intriguing. Tra-la, it's fun to stumble upon traits in common between a writer of distinctive science fiction (excuse me, speculative fiction) and the heaviest of the romantic poets--keeps down the snobism quotient and gives the S-F exclusivists an inkling of other literatures. (Yes, there was writing before science fiction, and if you're wondering about those 'romantic poets' Byron is supposed to be one of, take your time machine back to 1797 and read through for about 25 years.)

All right, let's go. Similarity #1, a particular qualitative intensity: Byron and Ellison both lay their guts on the line without getting messy. Of course, all writers work out of their own lives and observations--what else is there?--and Byron and Ellison use theirs too in this cooler fashion. But there is a dark power in the Byronic protagonist which seems to stem from an extreme auctorial closeness, an alter-ego trip. Byron and Ellison in these aspects become personal in a more uninhibited way. They mingle the specifics of their lives into their arts with such abandon one can usually spot such material (which is why I won't bother to illustrate it), and they plunge us into their rather messed-over emotions with vulturous relish and wow! Here it is, the raw power of the psyche; b'god, it's even good. (As art and life are different games entirely, that's the big surprise.) And folks, it is hellish-hard to write so personally without extenuating oneself into saccharine sentimentality--a rare gift, this good self-dramatization!

Which brings us around to evil. Even when Byron and Ellison are being personal, they aren't hesitant about being evil in public, about making readers

deeply identify with villainous characters. It's a rebellious villainy, though, this Byronic stuff. The Byronic hero has committed crimes, specified or (usually) unspecified, for which he suffers inwardly. Like a tragic hero, he considers these sufferings deserved and is strong enough to bear them. The tragic hero, however, is the establishment; the Byronic hero is an outlaw/misanthrope and his sufferings are more often deprivation than remorse. His crimes are partially justified by an extenuating passion, and often by an alternative idea of good and right. A Byronic hero has, not a "tragic flaw," but a basically good nature that doesn't fit; his flight into crime is a despairing reaction to society's vice and inequity, and his exile/outlawry expresses his grudge against society for corrupting him. Observe:

"It was a futile, noble idea...Now it is a possibility. Order in the known universe. Worlds linked to worlds by mutual respect and mutual ethic...We have conquered each world in a manner to give Jared's clients possession--but not permanent possession... Each invader will fall, but in a way that will link the worlds in ...a great humanistic structure that will serve all men as individuals and all worlds as entities.'...

"Jared's loneliness is that he knows he must do this job alone... And if he fails, or if he dies in the process, his name will live on in the memory of the million worlds as the greatest villain the universe ever spawned...'

"...Gill took her to him, where he slept. And he left her there, watching him as he turned in his sleep, thinking awful thoughts of death and futility. And she looked at him, not loving him, perhaps never loving him, not really liking him, for she could never like the man who had showed her the sights in the two hundred screens, but willing to stay..."

(Ellison, "Worlds to Kill")

"There was in him a vital scorn of all:
As if the worst had fall'n which could befall,
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring spirit from another hurl'd;
A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped:
But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet
His mind would half exult and half regret.
With more capacity for love than earth
Bestows on most of mortal mould and birth,
His early dreams of good outstripp'd the truth,
And troubled manhood follow'd baffled youth;
With thought of years in phantom chase misspent,
And wasted powers for better purpose lent;
And fiery passions that had pour'd their wrath
In hurried desolation o'er his path,
And left the better feelings all at strife
In wild reflection o'er his stormy life;
But haughty still and loth himself to blame,
He called on Nature's self to share the shame,
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul and feast the worm;
Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will.
Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign his own for others' good,
But not in pity not because he ought,
But in some strange perversity of thought,
That sway'd him onward with a secret pride

To do what few or none would do beside;
And this same impulse would, in tempting time,
Mislead his spirit equally to crime;
So much he soar'd beyond, or sunk beneath,
The men with whom he felt condemn'd to breathe,
And long'd by good or ill to separate
Himself from all who shared his mortal state..."
(Byron, "Lara," XVIII)

(My Byron quotes, incidentally, will all be from his poetic tales, which are at least more comparable to fiction than his lyrics. And if I should quote more Byron than Ellison, well, you've all read Ellison...)

Then there is the joint approach to pain. They revel in it. They epiphany in it. They have a great old time combining physical and mental elements of this most complex of human experiences into image-vivid tableaux of horror/pa-thos/eros/illumination, orgies of transcendental masochism, e.g.:

"Genesis refers to the sin that coucheth at the door, or croucheth at the door, and so this was no new thing, but old, so very old, as old as the senseless acts that had given it birth, and the madness that was causing it to mature, and the guilty scrow--the lonelyache--that would inevitably cause it to devour itself and all within its sight..."

"They trembled there together in a nervous symbiosis, each deriving something from the other. He was covered with a thin film of horror and despair, a terrible lonelyache that twisted like smoke, thick and black within him. The creature giving love, and he reaping heartache, loneliness.

"He was alone in that room, the two of them: himself and that soft-brown, staring menace, the manifestation of his misery.

"And he knew, suddenly, what the dream meant..."
(Ellison, "Lonelyache")

"'T were vain to paint what his feelings grew--
It even were doubtful if their victim knew.
There is a war, a chaos of the mind,
When all its elements convulsed, combined,
Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force,
And gnashing with impenitent Remorse;
That juggling fiend--who never spake before--
But cries 'I warned thee!' when the deed is o'er.
Vain voice! the spirit burning but unbent,
May writhe, rebel--the weak alone repent!
Even in that lonely hour when most it feels,
And, to itself, all--all that self reveals,
No single passion, and no ruling thought
That leaves the rest as once unseen, unsought;
But the wild prospect when the soul reviews,--
All rushing through their thousand avenues,--
Ambition's dreams expiring, love's regret,
Endanger'd glory, life itself beset;
The joy untasted, the contempt or hate
'Gainst these who fain would triumph in our fate;
The hopeless past, the hasting future driven
Too quickly on to guess if Hell or Heaven;
Deeds, thoughts, and words, perhaps remembered not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern Reflection each a crime;

The withering sense of evil unreveal'd,
Not cankering less because the more conceal'd;--
All, in a word, from which all eyes must start,
That opening sepulchre--the naked heart
Bares with its buried woes, till Pride awake,
To snatch the mirror from the soul--and break.
Ay--Pride can veil, and Courage brave it all,
All--all--before--beyond--the deadliest fall.
Each has some fear, and he who least betrays,
The only hypocrite deserving praise:
Not the loud recreant wretch who boasts and flies;
But he who looks on death--and silent dies..."
(Byron, "The Corsair," X)

"This is what it was like in soul limbo.
"Soft pasty maggoty white. Roiling. Filled with sounds of things
desperately trying to see. Slippery underfoot. Without feet.
Breathless and struggling for breath. Enclosed. Tight, with
great weight pressing down till the pressure was asphyxiating.
But without the ability to breathe. Pressed brown to cork, porous
and feeling imminent crumbling; then boiling liquid poured through.
Pain in every filament and glass fiber. A wet thing settling into
bones, turning them to ash and paste. Sickly sweetness, thick and
rancid, tongued and swallowed and bloating. Bloating till burst-
ing. A charnal scent. Rising smoke burning and burning the sen-
sitive tissues. Love lost forever, the pain of knowing nothing
could ever matter again; melancholia so possessive it wrenched
deep inside and twisted organs that never had a chance to function."
(Ellison, "The Region Between," 10)

"The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the Scorpion girt by fire:
In circle narrowing as it glows
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly search'd by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows;
The sting she nourish'd for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang and cures all pain,
And darts into her desperate brain;--
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!"
(Byron, "The Giaour")

Which goes to show that a headful of icky perversions can be a lot of fun
sometimes.

They revel in guilt, too. In fact, Byron and Ellison both bind it up al-
most inseparately with their pains. Guilt: a pain itself and the sense of pain
deserved. Byronic guilts accrue for faults the sufferer is too egoistic to a-
mend and too passionate to restrain. Indeed, if these Byronic fellows didn't
have some internalized sense that their pains stem from their own actions
(though they may ethically disagree with the principles behind such punishment),
their effusive sufferings wouldn't hold water, just treacle: just another inno-
cent victim of outside forces, folks (cf. Merry and Pippin amid the orcs), or at

its furthest extreme, the farcical, faceless violence of spaghetti westerns. Not to mention, on the other end, the psychopathic slaughterer who fights against his punishment because he doesn't feel guilty at all--there is no empathy with him whatsoever he may go through. The mere thrill of brutality in art is not enough to aesthetically justify its use (i.e., it is too soon boring). Byronic pain, conversely, does have aesthetic meaning, and the essential ingredient that supplies such meaning is guilt: the retributory rebalancing:

"And through it all, Trente suffered for his charges.

"What could not be, was. What could not come to pass, had. The soulless, emotionless, regimented creature that the Ethos had named Paingod, had contracted a sickness. Concern. He cared. At last, after centuries too filed away to unearth and number, Trente had reached a Now in which he could no longer support his acts...

"Stopped alone there, in the night of space, his mind spiraling now for the first time down a strange and disquieting chamber of thought, Trente twisted within himself...What is this torment? What is this unpleasant, unhappy, unrelenting feeling that gnaws at me, tears at me, corrupts my thoughts, colors darkly my every desire? Am I going mad? Madness is beyond my race; it is a something we have never known. Have I been at this post too long, have I failed in my duties? If there was a God stronger than the God that I am, or a God stronger than the Ethos Gods, then I would appeal to that God. But there is only silence and the night and the stars, and I'm alone, so alone, so God all alone here, doing what I must, doing my best..."

(Ellisen, "Paingod")

"But never tear his cheek descended,
And never smile his brow unbended;
And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought
The intersected lines of thought;
Those furrows which the burning share
Of sorrow ploughs untimely there;
Scars of the lacerating mind
Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
He was past all mirth or woe:
Nothing more remain'd below
But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunn'd itself--and yet
That would not yield nor could forget,
Which, when it least appear'd to melt,
Intensely thought, intensely felt:
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close;
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows--and cannot cease to flow.
Still was his seal'd-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature hath implanted;
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,
Howe'er our stifled tears we banish.
When, struggling as they rise to start,
We check those waters of the heart,
They are not dried--those tears unshed
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
For ever in its depth endure,
Unseen, unwept, but uncongeal'd,

And cherish'd most where least reveal'd.
With inward starts of feeling left,
To throb o'er those of life bereft;
Without the power to fill again
The desert gap which made his pain;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls all gladness share;
With all the consciousness that he
Had only pass'd a just decree,
That they had wrought their doom of ill;
Yet Azo's age was wretched still..."
(Byron, "Parisina")

"He left my mind intact. I can dream, I can wonder, I can lament.
I remember all four of them. I wish--
"Well, it doesn't make any sense. I know I saved them, I know I
saved them from what has happened to me, but still, I cannot for-
get killing them. Ellen's face. It isn't easy. Sometimes I
want to, it doesn't matter...
"Outwardly: dumbly, I shamle about, a thing that could never have
been known as human, a thing whose shape is so alien a travesty
that humanity becomes more obscene for the vague resemblance.
"Inwardly: alone. Here. Living under the land, under the sea, in
the belly of AM, whom we created because our time was badly spent
and we must have known unconsciously that he could do it better..."
(Ellison, "I Have No Mouth, and I
Must Scream")

"Vain thought! that hour of ne'er unravell'd gloom
Came not again, or Lara could assume
A seeming of forgetfulness, that made
His vassals more amazed nor less afraid--
Had memory vanish'd then with sense restored?
Since word, nor look, nor gesture of their lord
Betray'd a feeling that recall'd to these
That fever'd moment of his mind's disease.
Was it a dream? was his the voice that spoke
Those strange wild accents; his the cry that broke
Their slumber? his the oppress'd, o'erlabour'd heart
That ceased to beat, the look that made them start?
Could he who thus had suffer'd so forget,
When such as saw that suffering shudder yet?
Or did that silence prove his memory fix'd
Too deep for words, indelible, unmix'd
In that corroding secrecy which gnaws
The heart to show the effect but not the cause?
Not so in him; his breast had buried both,
Nor common gazers could discern the growth
Of thoughts that mortal lips must leave half told;
They choke the feeble words that would unfold..."
(Byron, "Lara," XVI)

If you have gathered from preceding hints that the Byronic hero is not terribly trusting, you must've been paying attention. Indeed, the creatures are typically misanthropic and insular, and always shun close relationships with humankind. They aren't portrayed as anti-social from lack of empathy; rather, they are bitter over the stings of past disappointments in the species, of both individual and general origin. Then too, Byronic heroes are cut off from the trust of others by their lone, rebellious natures. As a consequence, a Byronic character's reaction to the world often mingles envy and derision: he suffers

much from an isolation that due to his own persona he is unable to assuage, while his pride plays sour grapes with his normal empathies and he mocks himself for letting the world get to him, viz.:

"...So now they sat in the street cafe and he could not talk to her...he could not explain that he was a man trapped within himself...She needed him to verbalize it, to ask for--if not help, then--companionship through his country of mental terrors. But he could not give her what she wanted. He could not give her himself..."

"...There was a chance, for the first time in Niven's life, that he might cleave to someone and find not disillusionment, derangement and disaster, but reality and a little peace..."

"...Voiceless, imprisoned in his past and his sense of the reality of the world in which he had been forced to live, Niven knew he was letting her slip away.

"But could not help himself..."

"He knew what he had to answer to please her, to win her, but he said, 'There's barely room enough in my world for me, baby. And if you knew what my world was like you wouldn't want to come into it. You see before you the last of the cynics, the last of the misogynists, the last of the bitter men. I look out on a landscape littered with the refuse of a misspent youth. All my gods and goddesses had feet of shit, and there they lie, like Etruscan statuary, the noses bashed off..."

(Ellison, "O Ye of Little Faith")

"...He stood alone--a renegade
Against the country he betray'd;
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand.
They follow'd him, for he was brave,
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouch'd to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will:
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin.
They envied even the faithless fame
He earn'd beneath a Moslem name;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel..."

(Byron, "The Siege of Corinth," XII)

Revolutionary politics: yes. This is only sometimes an attribute of Byronic heroes, but curiously enough Byron and Ellison shared a dilettante passion for the leftist causes of their respective milieus, a revolutionary fervor which imbues lives as well as artworks in both cases. Byron aided and abetted some feeble Italian attempts to shake off Austrian tyranny and helped finance and organize a revolution in Greece against the ruling Turks; Ellison, one gathers, has been active in the Movement as a demonstrator and a lecturer/columnist/propagandist/whatever. They were both, then, into "power to the people" at least conceptually, and were also anti-war (a more unusual stance in Byron's day than this one).

Humor, except unintentional, is not ordinarily the province of the Byronic hero; yet both Byron and Ellison have written much in this vein also, and I fancy often veer towards a similar tone. Where these write detachedly of their heroes, the effect is of poignant irony, facetious playfulness, a surface brittle and colloquial with much underlying tension.

"So they sent him to Coventry. And in Coventry they worked him over. It was just like what they did to Winston Smith in 1984, which was a book none of them knew about, but the techniques are really quite ancient, and so they did it to Everett C. Marm, and one day quite a long time later, the Harlequin appeared on the communications web, appearing elfish and dimpled and bright-eyed, and not at all brainwashed, and he said he had been wrong, that it was a good, a very good thing indeed, to belong, and be right on time hip-ho and away we go, and everyone stared up at him on the public screens that covered an entire city block, and they said to themselves, well, you see, he was just a nut after all, and if that's the way the system is run, then let's do it that way, because it doesn't pay to fight city hall, or in this case, the Ticktockman. So Everett C. Marm was destroyed, which was a loss, because of what Thoreau said earlier, but you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs, and in every revolution, a few die who shouldn't, but they have to, because that's the way it happens, and if you make only a little change, then it seems to be worthwhile..."

(Ellison, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman")

"But let it go:--it will one day be found
With other relics of 'a former world,'
When this world shall be former, underground,
Thrown topsy-turvy; twisted, crisp'd and curl'd,
Baked, fried, or burnt, turn'd inside-out, or drown'd,
Like all the worlds before, which have been hurl'd
First out of, and then back again to chaos,
The superstratum which will overlay us.

"So Cuvier says;--and then shall come again
Unto the new creation, rising out
From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain
Of things destroy'd and left in airy doubt:
Like to the notions we now entertain
Of Titans, giants, fellows of about
Some hundred feet in height, not to say miles,
And mammoths, and your winged crocodiles.

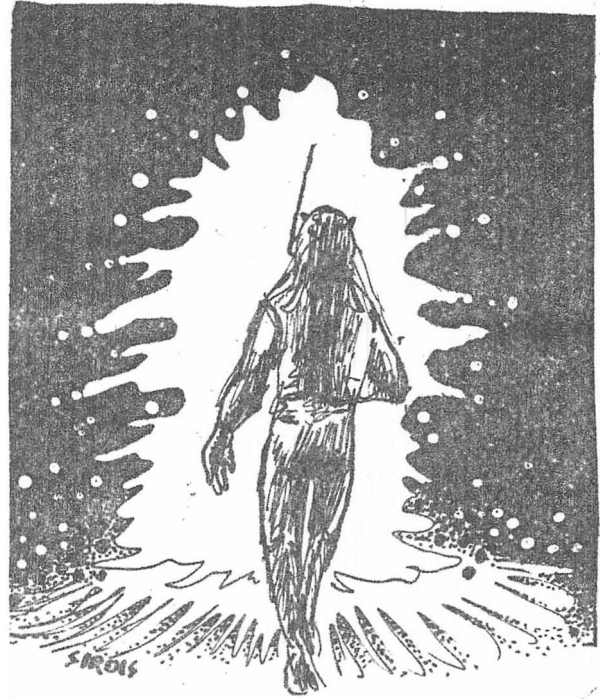
"Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!
How the new wordlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup!
(For they themselves will be but of the least:
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material--
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)"

(Byron, Don Juan, Canto IX, stanzas 37-39)

I had thought to go over the culture-derived, stereotype/derogatory treatment of women common to the works of these two gentlemen and perhaps note how they both used sex to mess up their lives; but I guess it'll suffice to just mention this, in case someone with more militant energy than I would care to

pursue it. As long as identification in art is not sexually exclusive, I can ignore the malignant manipulators and simple-minded kewpie dolls these writers tend to pass off as human women. Indeed, such distortions merit more a snicker than a tirade.

Finally, I would also point out--inasmuch as word-usage in poetry can be compared to that of fiction--a similar tendency in Ellison and Byron to apply most vivid description towards ends almost invariably humanistic; that is, one seldom gets the scenery except as its effect contributes toward characterization, and anthropomorphism is common.



"In a rising, keening spiral of hysteria they came, first pulsing in primaries, then secondaries, the comminglings and off-shades, and finally in colors that had no names. Colors like racing, and pungent, and far seen shadows, and bitterness, and something that hurt, and something that pleased. Oh, mostly the pleasures, one after another, singing, lulling, hypnotically arresting the eye as the ship sped into the heart of the maelstrom of weird, advancing, sky-eating colors. The siren colors of the straits. The colors that came from the air and the island and the world itself, which hushed and hurried across the world to here, to meet when they were needed, to stop the seamen who slid over the waves to the break in the breakwall. The colors, defense, that sent men to the bottom, their hearts bursting with songs of color and charm. The colors that top-filled a man to the brim and kept him poised there with a surface tension of joy and wonder, colors cascading like waterfalls of flowers in his head, millioncolors, blossomshades, brightnesses, joycrashing everything that made a man hurl back and strain his throat to sing sing, sing chants of amazement and forever--..."

(Ellison, "Delusion for a Dragon Slayer")

"Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year...

"Lake Lemman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue.
There is too much of man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew

Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me in their fold..."
(Byron, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,"
Canto III, 59 and 68)

That being that, we have all just lived through the gorging of my enfeebled
urge to quote things; hang the expense, it's easier to lend out books!

THE CREDITS

All quotes from Lord Byron's poetic tales were taken from THE COMPLETE POETICAL
WORKS OF BYRON, ed. Paul E. More (Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1933).

Quotes from Harlan Ellison were taken from the following:

"Worlds to Kill" from THE BEAST THAT SHOUTED LOVE AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD
(Avon Books, New York, 1969).

"Lonelyache," "O Ye of Little Faith" and "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktock-
man" from ALONE AGAINST TOMORROW (Collier Books, New York, 1971).

"The Region Between" from Keith Laumer et al., FIVE FATES (Paperback Library,
New York, 1971).

"Paingod" from PAINGOD AND OTHER DELUSIONS (Pyramid Books, New York, 1965).

"I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream" and "Delusion for a Dragon Slayer" from
I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM (Pyramid Books, New York, 1972).

P.S.--Zealous converts, existent or non-existent, who cannot get enough By-
ronic heros from the works of Byron and Ellison might also check out the follow-
ing: Emily Bronte, WUTHERING HEIGHTS; Herman Melville, MOBY DICK; Fyodor Dos-
toyevsky, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT; and (slightly schlocky) Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe, THE SORROWS OF YOUNG WERTHER. Byronic heros in speculative fiction are
featured in Roger Zelazny's JACK OF SHADOWS and in virtually all of Michael
Moorcock's fantasy works. A complete list of Byronic heros will appear in this
space only if someone else wants to do it.

Responses

HARLAN ELLISON

GORBETT 4 received and noted. With some awe, and not a little stammering,
tongue-tied, toe-scuffling humility, which is not at all my usual form. To be
compared, in any way, with Byron is a bit of a stopper. Particularly in a maga-
zine that prints so many words by Mr. ///////////////, a gentleman who in the past
has indicated an almost pathological need to insult me and my work. In such a
forum, any comparisons short of De Sade, Adolf Eichmann or the Antichrist would
be taken as high praise. But to have a full, critical and well-thought-out es-
say printed that says I have any talent whatsoever, knocks me, frankly, out!

I'm not sure what to say.

That is possibly a first, right there.

Thank you is, of course, mandatory. And goshwow probably apropos. But beyond that, my deepest appreciation and gratitude. I am in your debt, and you all three have free and unlimited call on my good offices, for whatever. In fact, Ms. Smith, would you like to marry me?

As to the actual content of the essay, I'm amazed and just a bit horrified at how on-target you were. It was as though I'd gone to a charity benefit garden party, all set about with booths and \$1-a-kiss stalls, and had been conned into having my fortune told by some society lady dressed in a turban and kaftan ...and had her really chill my spine by telling me all the things she had no way of knowing, and which in my secret soul I knew to be true. I sat here and read the article and realized how much myself were the things you were saying of my characters. It is utterly beyond me to conceive of myself as a Byronic hero, but miGawd! lady, how true-to-me are the characteristics of my protagonists. It has caused me many hours of thought. If that is the intent of good criticism, then you have surely succeeded.

If I have a carp, it is a minor one, and one I'm really not entitled to have. Your passing comment about my attitudes and characterizations of women sting. Like virtually every other male of my generation, I was raised to be an unconscious sexist. Add to that my personal experiences with women, and you have a basis for the attitudes you correctly assess as superficial and frequently insensitive. In my own weak defense, I must advise that the past six years have wrought a great change in me, in these areas. Having been apprised of my attitudes by several feminists whom I admire and respect, I've spent six years re-examining where I'm at in these areas, and I think my more recent work bears a distinctly altered view.

It is my earnest hope that you consider these later works--"The Whimper of Whipped Dogs," "Cold Friend," "Catman," "On the Downhill Side" and "Pennies, Off a Dead Man's Eyes"--in the context of your criticism. However, bear one thing in mind that I think the totality of my work will verify: women are presented in no more unflattering light than the men. My stories, for all your perceptions of the "hero" quality, are concerned not with heroes, in the traditionally accepted sense--and God how that infuriates people like Moskowitz who see Kimball Kinnison and Captain Future as the repositories of the "romantic image" and the "sense of wonder" in sf--but with flawed human beings during that rare and pivotal moment when they do something heroic. It is a not-too-subtle distinction that I demand be considered in any analysis of my writing, because I'll be damned if I'll be tarred with an inappropriate brush. No heroes, only humans who have heroism in them.

My reactions to this particular charge may seem overly livid, but it's one I've confronted before and, sadly, at the mouths of critics light-years less perceptive than you. One of the serious drawbacks of any Movement is that louts who never possessed the faintest scintilla of caring before it became hip, socially acceptable or de rigueur to be "committed," suddenly leap up, strike every-whichway around themselves, seem to have no conception of who their friends are, nor even that those who were once enemies can be converted...and worst of all...do a number reminiscent of ex-drunks proselytizing for AA. I knew Gloria Steinem in New York many years ago, for instance. Gloria did not suddenly spring full-blown into feminism upon reading Kate Millett. Her ideas and views and personal demeanor were "liberated" a decade ago. That she should be found in the forefront of the Movement is only logical: that's where her head was long ago.

But some of the clowns who pillory me for my "sexist views" are the same fifth columnists who, five years ago, were saying the noblest ambition of females should be breast feeding and finding the most viable detergent for irresponsible males' clothing. I would deny my presentations of women are "sexist."

That they may be inaccurate by other people's lights is quite possible, but I can't be responsible for the interpretations put on my work by people who've had their consciousnesses raised twenty minutes earlier. I am not intentionally sexist at any time, and if I do it unconsciously, it is merely a holdover from my unenlightened adolescence.

But, like that recently-liberated lady, I am a recently-liberated man, and it takes careful thinking, particularly when writing a story. Sometimes, I say fuck it! I've decided I won't be bullied into presenting women arbitrarily in a good light, just to win the approbation of a faceless horde, any more than I will to win the plaudits of the machismo freaks who fear for their already dubious masculinities by presenting women in a negative light. I will do what I think an Artist must do, tell it as he or she feels it, as truly as they know how.

But, as an example of how screwed is the thinking on both extreme ends of the question, take "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes." Women have attacked me because Maggie is presented in "an unfavorable way." As if the rigors of constructing a story logically give a shit for the societal demands of pressure groups. Yet Maggie is the strong one in the story; the only character who gets what she goes after; the only one who understands self-determinism in so cellular a way that she is able to escape limbo. The hero, Kostner, is a weak loser. He deserves to be used. And he is. By Maggie. Who wins. So how is Maggie shown in an unflattering light? How the hell should I know? All I do know is that PLAYBOY rejected the story because the female protagonist was stronger than the male.

I'm a bit surprised, actually, at your clip-shooting that "weakness" in my work. That you did it without much vigor leads me to believe that you are as all-encompassing sharp a critic as the essay indicates, that you feel the "flaw" is one easily rectified and, if a sin, more a sin of omission than commission. But, because you've been kind enough to care, be advised I'm working on the problem.

(You do point out, however, that my writing portrays a deep cynicism about human beings, and I only point out in passing that women are as much human beings as men, therefore my cynicism is, by all rights, legitimately extendable to them.)

I make no promises, dear and perceptive critic, but I'm working on it.

In any case, what you've done for my ego this week is not to be discounted. Among all the ///////s and Rottensteiners who dismiss me as a fraud, you have been kind enough to say I'm worth expending a little attention on.

That makes two of us who think that way.

If you don't want to get married, what do you say to fooling around a little? We can dissect Melville.

SHERYL SMITH

Goshwow yourself! I am stunned. Indeed, I had speculated to David Gorman half-jestingly as to whether you would be amused by the article, or whether you would sue for unauthorized quotation of your works; but I was truly not expecting anything like earnest praise from you. Such effusive response may all-too-easily encourage me to take this critic-nonsense seriously (which means I'll do more of it), but the subversion/distortion nonetheless delights me. Thank you.

I am surprised that you are surprised that your personal identification

with certain characters should be noticed, as you yourself make the connection. (Have you read over your intro to "Lonelyache" lately?) Had you not done this, I shouldn't've ventured out on that limb for anything, as I don't believe an artist's personal characteristics can be deduced from his art on internal evidence only.

Please understand I meant no slanderous assertion that your characters are "heroes" of the (awk!) Kimball Kinnison variety. "Byronic hero" is merely the usual designation for such characters, and "hero" in this context is intended to mean just "protagonist." Indeed, yours are not the only Byronic heroes who don't fit the "heroic" mold; how like Kimball Kinnison is, for example, Heathcliff? Yet despite the lofty term, a decent description, or better, the artistic reality of these beings shows they are quite human--very flawed, very aware of it.

(By the way, sir, it isn't really accurate to describe yourself as a Byronic hero, unless you can put your entire life up for a Hugo; but if you want to call yourself Byron's reincarnation, I certainly won't dispute you.)

As for your sexism, I can see you are much concerned about it, since you treat of it far more heinously than I. I am no activist for women's liberation (though I'll do as an example of it), and far be it from me to advocate politicized art: such misplacement of polemics makes me livid even when I agree with them. I drew the parallel because it was there, and did so desultorily because I find political attitudes in art irrelevant when they're not ruinous; as I read few fanzines, I was unaware that other reviewers had been hounding you on the subject. It is testy enough going when a critic must correct an artist's aesthetics; to correct an artist's tenets is beyond proper critical function. As I will heartily tell anyone if I see them doing it.

("Pennies, Off a Dead Man's Eyes" I am familiar with, although I'm not sure I see the non-sexism of it. "On the Downhill Side" I just got hold of in Toronto, and wish I'd had it for the article, as I'd've fudged a quote from it somehow--that is beautiful fiction! The other three stories you mention I've not yet seen, but will take particular note of their women when I do.)

Yes, do continue to portray women as reprehensibly as men--we are indeed human beings, equally capable of evil, and it seems we've a right to that much. My only regret is that you have not yet imbued a woman with really moving reprehensibility. Even your strong women, such as Maggie and the excellently-drawn Salena in "Ernest and the Machine God," are strong at the expense of men in a threatening manner; and they manipulate men, seemingly, just because they're there. It appears you have been unable to assimilate at gut level that a woman might show strength (and evil) in any other way than by manipulating relative innocents, or that she would need a deeper motive than convenience to do this. Which I find something of a loss. Though there is no barrier to my enjoyment of the male characters, it would be nice to see a Byronic female in my lifetime. As no other functioning creator of Byronic heroes seems so aware of sexual inequities as yourself, I do hope it hits you by and by that, emotionally, women are not "them"--just more "us."

As for your proposal (isn't that a strange requital for a fanzine article?) --alas, it seems inadvisable to me for egoists to marry outside their self-religions (you have no idea what an egoist I really am!).

P.S.--By the way, we already met--briefly--at LACon. I was wearing a black and gold cape and I told you you knew your cookies. It's doubtful you would recall the incident as, for con behavior, it was very jejune.

PATRICK L. McGUIRE

I thank you very much for the loan of the Ellison/Byron paper. I'm afraid that Sheryl has pretty well wrapped up the topic, and there is comparatively little I can add. (I hadn't realized it was Sheryl, whom I know from my days in Chicago fandom, who wrote it, before I actually saw the piece. Small world, and all that sort of thing.)

To begin at the beginning, with General Theory before we get to Specific Application, it is not ALWAYS true that "either you get it or you don't, from the work itself." Sometimes (by no means always), the critic can show you ways to look at a work which you would not have discovered by yourself. I came down somewhere between boredom and indifference the first time I read--or started, at least--LOTR. Somewhat later, I did quite a bit of reading on folklore and mythology (which I had gotten only in average doses as a child, but which I now required for a paper I was doing on "The Queen of Air and Darkness"), and when I tried Tolkien's work again, I found this study had enhanced its value. By the time I read LOTR the second time, I had additionally, for separate reasons, done quite a bit of reading on fairly elementary Christian theology and ethics. To my mild surprise, I found that this gave me new appreciation for LOTR as well. Now, this is not directly relevant experience because I didn't derive this new insight from Tolkien criticism. But it is the sort of material that could be brought into criticism, and in fact in the case of Tolkien had been, though I did not discover this until later. (Kocher's MASTER OF MIDDLE EARTH covers some of this ground, for instance.) --And, dammitall, may I parenthetically note here, as the notion keeps popping up (in the Disch speech reprinted in GORBETT 3 and elsewhere) that LORD OF THE RINGS does not have a "happy" ending? Middle-Earth is about as "happy" a place at the end as any region is after the conclusion of a large and destructive war; we already know from the foreword that the hobbits are doomed to dwindling and near-extinction, and from the text that the elves are to be exiled, and so forth. All the "happiness" in the novel is transitory, or at least of significance only in so far as it reflects or partakes of a reality "beyond the circles of the world," of which the characters have only the faintest glimmer. I think many readers, Disch among them, misinterpret their reaction to LOTR's statement that there is order and meaning to life as coming from a simple "happy ending," a misinterpretation which causes them to under-rate the work as mere, if for many of them fascinating, "pleasant reading."

...But I Digress. Another personal example which more directly illustrates the ability of criticism to provide new viewpoints involves my reaction to THE TALE OF GENJI. I had read this on my own, and found it to be entertaining semi-soap-opera. Then I took a course on Japanese literature in translation in which we discussed it. I saw that I had missed important parts of what was going on: e.g., that Genji has all the virtues recognized by tenth-century Japanese court society, and even a few virtues not generally held there (such as a respect for learning), but still is not happy. Which suggests something is wrong somewhere. My whole perspective on that novel (and it is more or less a novel, which is a fascinating fact in itself, when you consider where and when it was written) altered as a result of critical discussion of it.

But on to the Byronic hero: Well, what Sheryl says about Ellison as Byronic is all true; certain people (I among them) had mentioned this in passing before, but Sheryl is the one who went out and proved it. I would only suggest a few amendments to her Suggestions for Further Reading: Go read CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, for it's a good book (and still a very popular one in Russia: When I was in the Socialist Fatherland the summer before last, one of the things they took us on was a Dostoevsky tour. And part of that involved going into a building in Dostoevsky's neighborhood which was probably the one he was thinking of when he described the pawnbroker woman's apartment--isn't exactly as described, but close. Not really as I'd imagined it: Much narrower staircase, for in-

stance), but you won't find any Byronic heroes in it. Raskolnikov has some similarities, but part of Dostoevsky's point is that in the Real World things don't work out so Romantically, and therefore Raskolnikov's divergences from the Byronic norm are as important as the similarities. Instead, for real Byronicism, see Pushkin, EUGENE ONEGIN (a verse tale) and just about all his prose, and Lermontov, A HERO OF OUR TIME. Pushkin is the poet more-or-less responsible for the formation of the modern Russian literary language (Lermontov was important too), a fact which, as it has always seemed to me, must have its consequences for the Russians. Sort of like having Harlan, or at least Byron, in the place currently occupied by Shakespeare.

Now, Shakespeare was not without his idiosyncracies and divergences from middle-class norms, but at least he kept them mostly out of his work. Pushkin, on the other hand, did most of his writing in the early hours of the morning, after coming home from a night of carousing, and to some extent it shows. Now, what sort of a start is that for a national literature? Byronic heroes may be doing a pretty good job of things considering the fact that they are rather divergent individuals to start with, but what sort of a role model do they make for a society as a whole? Or is it merely indicative of deeper problems when a society (or that portion of a society which is literate and literary, which was to say in Pushkin's time, the gentry and aristocracy) adopts a Byronic hero as a model of sorts? Lermontov's title A HERO OF OUR TIME carries with it a suggestion that maybe it would be nice if we could have some other sort of hero, not of our time. From here we could lead into a discussion of the evolution of the "superfluous man" in Russian literature--the other end of the continuum really doesn't look Byronic at all--but that might be wandering too far afield. Besides, I have always held a conviction that fandom should have at least some tenuous indirect connection with sf, and this is getting pretty tenuous indeed. (Russians showed a somewhat spotty and occasional interest in more-or-less sf throughout this period, but you don't start getting it with any regularity until the 1890s or so. Which is also the time when Populism lost favor as a revolutionary ideology, and Marxism took over. Both related to Count Witte's policies favorable to rapid industrial development, I think. So we would have to run through the entire lifetime of the superfluous man before we could connect up with sf on that end.)

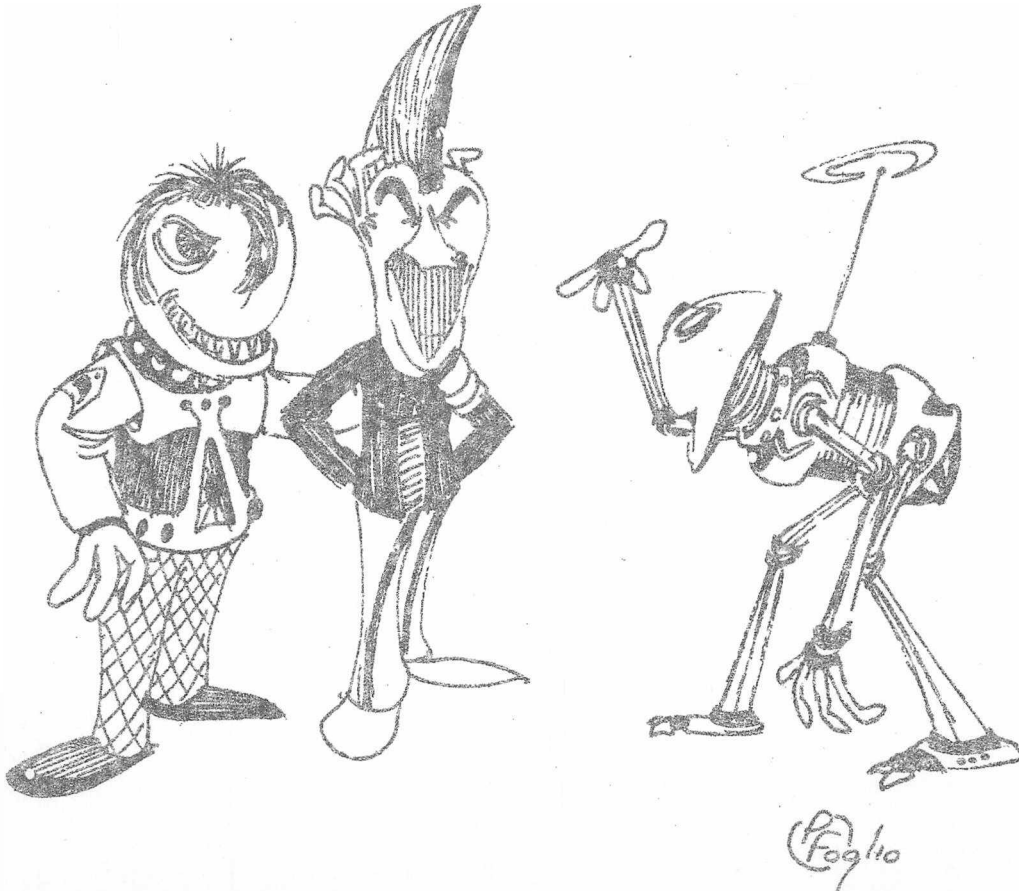
Back to Pushkin and Lermontov, then. Their heroes are very definitely Byronic, and so were the two authors, for that matter. (Both of them got killed in duels. The duel that killed Lermontov was almost exactly like one staged in A HERO OF OUR TIME.) But at the same time, there is a much higher level of ironic detachment in the Russian writers than what you regularly find in either Ellison or Byron. (Of course, if you're after ironic detachment and don't particularly care about Byronic heroes, you need look no further than the abortive --er at least a long time a-borning--Anthony Villiers series of Alexei Panshin. Which deserves a higher rating than is generally conceded it, but that's another story...) This detachment comes, I think, partly from the fact that Pushkin and Lermontov come after Byron, and continually refer to him. Russians usually read Byron in French prose translation (they say that Edgar Allan Poe is better in French translation than in the original; wonder if that holds true for Byron?), but Pushkin knew English, and if memory serves, so did his hero Eugene Onegin, and they were getting the straight stuff. And Lermontov also had Pushkin to be ironic about. The Onega is a Northern river out in the wilds, so Lermontov named his hero Pechorin--after another river, the Pechora, even farther in the sticks. As I have said, the lives and deaths of these authors suggest they weren't so very non-Byronic at heart, but all the ironic detachment you can muster seems entirely apposite when dealing with Byronic heroes. Egotistic little bastards who think their involuted and turbulent Emotions are the be-all and end-all of existence, and certainly the only guide to conduct. (Oh, but they feel Guilty about this, so that must make it all right!) A pex on all Byronic heroes who are not treated with ironic detachment, say I!

SHERYL SMITH

(Gee Pat, you sure talk a lot more on paper than in person.)

If, indeed, I do believe in the existence of criticism that can enhance one's appreciation of a work--and it is not unreasonable to suppose there might be some--I am not about to admit to it in public. Critics and criticism are too much revered and what they do, even if it is done well (which it frequently isn't), is just not all that important. A work of art is of no earthly use to people who don't experience it for themselves and form their own estimations of it--and it bothers me that folk are inhibited from doing this by prevailing critical judgments. What do critics know anyway?

A slight aside on LOTR: I am one of those who "under-rate" this fantasy and will continue to do so: it is "mere (/if fascinating/) 'pleasant reading.'" I had a basic knowledge of the mythological background before I read LOTR, but a year of concentrated Anglo-Saxon studies--along with a second reading--decreased my appreciation of Tolkien's work, because there is so much more strength in the originals. The "life is fleeting" fatalism of medieval Germanic literature is so bawled by Tolkien's Victorian Catholicism (I mean that philosophically, not sexually). Tolkien does have a happy ending: he saves his people from the destruction of their world as if the (disorder=) evil that ruined it were not actually a part of them, as if the destruction of tainted good were not necessary to assure the new beginning. Tolkien instead cops out ("Relax--the West will provide!") and ends the book in a fit of Victorian heaven-nostalgia, slightly Vikingized: but then this is only a thickening of the rose-colored goo that has prevailed throughout. In the best of the Germanic myth-poetry, per contrast, the bleakness of the world is transfigured without being obscured, and the Christian alleviation, where there is any, comes nearly as an addendum, the extent of its comfort being that God has the power to help you stand life at its



worst. Much better use has been made of this material than Tolkien's, notably: Richard Wagner's music-drama tragedy, a four-night opera, THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG; Christopher Fry's one-act THOR, WITH ANGELS, an intensely Christian play that stays clear of most of the dreck; and John Gardner's GRENDL, A Byronic black-comedy (of all things!) that achieves the experience STEPPENWOLF bores one to death trying for. Next to any of these--especially the Wagner, which is in the Great Art category--Tolkien's work is a slightly-stale pleasantry. (So much for the brevity of my digressions!)

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT is Byronic in its guilt-trip rebellion against society --though the hero reconciles himself to society at the end, whereas the usual (not inevitable) Byronic "solution" (if it may be so called) is the hero's death. But Byronicism lies in the conflict, not its denouement: the Byronic hero is disdainful of his world and disgusted with himself, and fights on both fronts.

As for Byronic heroes as "role models"--I'm sure their creators don't make up these characters for schoolchildren to pattern their lives after! But the depiction of individual rebellion, torn with solitude and guilt (as, one presumes, such rebellion often is in reality), is a compelling one, and does evoke strong chords of identification in many people. What it probably indicates about the societies that favor such characters is that people are feeling the pressure of social conformities and emotional repression, and perhaps that change is imminent. Attitudes on what is socially acceptable are almost always limited and intolerant, but individuals don't have the guts to openly defy the hypocrisy. These will eagerly identify with a character who does defy the strictures, especially if the character feels as guilty about doing so as they might. Byronic heroes are not fanatical rebels who know they're right and society is wrong--they follow their own natures in lieu of the social hypocrisy, but are at bottom convinced they are among the damned for doing so. It is the dichotomy of Byronic rebellion, the revolt-in-uncertainty, that makes it so appealing. Self-righteous rebels, like Ibsen's in ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE and et cetera ad infinitum, are in their serious renderings much less appealing to our half-assed/conformist empathies.

But if you don't like Byronic heroes--maybe you're a whole-asses conformist? (Yes, except for fanatic!) --What can I say? De gustibus...

MEL MERZON

Sheryl Smith's analytic comparison of Ellison and Byron made most interesting reading. The similarities are very real, not simply one person's imaginings, and I compliment Sheryl on an astutely written article. She might have carried the comparison further by attempting to find similarities in the authors' lives, although I suspect that Ellison would vehemently deny any conscious Byronic influence.

I was particularly intrigued by Sheryl's comments (p. 11) on the use of descriptive metaphor: "one seldom gets the scenery except as its effect contributes toward characterization, and anthropomorphism is common." This comment and the example which follows immediately bring to mind some of Bradbury's most vivid word pictures. While "The Machineries of Joy" comes to mind, there are innumerable other stories of his which abound--occasionally to the point of pain--in metaphoric anthropomorphism. Compare this also with some of Thomas Hardy's efforts, specifically THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE, which opens with a memorable description of that brooding, foreboding Egdon Heath, an introduction I shall never forget.

SHERYL SMITH

I didn't get into too much life comparison because (thank God!) their arts can be compared without such peripheralities. (Nor can I see myself trying to assemble Harlan's life-story from his gezillion scattered story introductions and etc.)

Moreover, if Ellison did deny that Byron influenced him directly, I'd believe him. An author's work is influenced by his life, but it is difficult-to-impossible to establish specific instances, unless the author himself makes them known. Do realize I was only demonstrating similarities, not trying to claim that Byron had to be Ellison's influence.

(I would apologize for making anyone think of Bradbury, even inadvertently, except that you don't seem to mind. I was thinking of the other romantic poets with their nature-portraits, for me a more palatable subject.)

Thank you for such well-disposed remarks!

JEFF CLARK

Sheryl Smith's piece on Ellison-cum-Byron strikes me in odd ways. She seems almost...restrained in public print. But perhaps now I will not have to brush up on Byron--she's not only cured herself of quotation-itis, she's cured me: and I vow not to do it again (after and excluding the Malzberg review) until whatever next review requires it. This is an unusual piece: kind of unorthodox and well-matched in its subjects. But my problem is that I'm one of those people who don't care much for Ellison. (I keep buying his books, but I only read the introductions until some special reason arises to read a particular story.) Though it is "hellish-hard" to write personally without being "saccharine sentimental," I don't really find Ellison on the whole to be good dramatization...at least since the last time I read him. I am nothing if not subtle and genteel; and he just often comes on too strong and blatant for my tastes. It's not that I object much to his material and thematic perceptions--just to his hysterical or plain hyper handling of them. His best is not far different from his worst: he treads a thin line. But there is some power to attract all those Hugos... In fact, I've just had a heretical thought to toy with: There seems to be more justification for stating a power exists in Ellison that appeals strongly to the unbridled adolescent in people than there is for Disch's assertion that the people with the same hang-ups as Lovecraft find his work powerful. I wouldn't trust Disch and/or Freudianism too far with that one. Which brings to mind a comment by C.S. Lewis. He once stated in an (at the moment untraceable) essay that if Freudian psychology is correct in the Oedipus complex, then there should be very strong reason for people not wanting to believe in (a) God. Touche. So much for the tracing of origins and the debunking of the ineffable religious experience...

...Even if Sheryl does loathe C.S. Lewis. At least he wouldn't have written a phrase like "colors that had no names." I still say (and when was the last time I said it?) any writer who writes that is just bullshitting for the nonce. There's your "ineffable" expression.... Lovecraft did no worse at his worst.

SHERYL SMITH

"Restrained," eh? Hmmm...I said the same thing about you. Probably it's the contrast between an organized essay and the rhetoric of the mails. Writing's a different game when it's done for The Reader (collective noun), and you

must presume only one chance to get something across to all of him.

With your classicist's taste I can't quarrel. You guys have been griping about romantic indefinite imagery since the early T.S. Eliot era, if not before (though I doubt you've personally been at it that long). And all I can say to you all (you and any other classicists out there raving rationally to yourselves) is...tough twinkies! You're right that the "nameless colors" ploy isn't all that smashing; but the excerpt as a whole (better, the story as a whole), is. It has a grab and a sweep that too often elude more meticulous writers (so there!).

(Someday you will have to explain precisely why C.S. Lewis sees the Oedipus complex as an incentive to disbelieve in God. (Given a choice between fuzzy imagery and fuzzy reasoning...) I mean, sons may not like their fathers, but seldom dispute their existence.)

LELAND SAPIRO

On Byronic heroes--I'd always conceived the Miltonic Satan as the original one, tho' his crimes were definitely not unspecified. As to "evil" (public or private) in Ellison, I quote Phil Farmer's letter from RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY #13: "...if I were to recite his deeds of charity and compassion...it would embarrass him. Especially since he did these with no thought of repayment." In short, there's a distinction between Ellison and the "image" he tries to present of himself. But I thought your article was really A-1 stuff.

SHERYL SMITH

Thank you for being so complimentary. You're right about Milton's Satan; I knew I'd forget some of the biggies, but who would've thought I could miss one as big as Leviathan? On Ellison's (and Byron's) evil: I thought the rest of the sentence made clear at least that I was referring to literary, not personal tendencies; but rhetoric is just no way to communicate! Byron too was known for his personal charity for that matter. But the point I was trying for (and indeed, I quoted art, not biographical data) was that these writers share an ability to draw their readers into very intense identification and sympathy with disreputable, if not villainous, characters. I would suspect power of this type to come from an author's own individual identification of himself with such characters (and perhaps this ties in with Harlan's "image"--Byron also tended to dramatize himself in his case as dissolute, damned and disillusioned); but even if there is such identification--and there's no way to prove from internal evidence that there has to be--it does not follow that the author's moral behavior and constituents are necessarily those of his character or that such can be inferred therefrom. It might follow that the author tends to think of himself, in superficial summary, as a bastard or villain or whatnot, and patterns some characters to approximate this self-image--but the accuracy of the image and the closeness of the approximation cannot be determined and should not be presumed. And even when the author himself associates a work with a specific life-incident of similar content--as Byron often did for his non-dramatic poetry and Ellison sometimes does in his introductions--still this indicates an emotional identification, not necessarily a behavioral or ethical one. True, an emotional identification that produces a Byronic hero is likely to include guilt; but the writer (and anyone else) need not be an outstandingly reprehensible person to have that problem.

(Now, did that clear anything up, or simply splatter it with thicker detail?)

HARRY WARNER, JR.

The best thing in GORBETT 4 is Sheryl Smith's article. I'm not sure that I agree with some of her parallels but I wouldn't dare be specific, knowing perfectly well that she has read more thoroughly both Ellison and Byron than I have. Moreover, my Byron phase vanished forever about twenty years ago, and the only memories of it that are fresh are those kept in good condition by playing the old Beecham lp's of Schumann's Manfred music coupled with a partial rendition of the drama. But even if Sheryl had written about parallels between Ellison and Milton, I think she would have been equally impressive in the finished product. She writes as all the learned critics of science fiction should write, and her avoidance of the scholarly jargon and her renunciation of footnotes are rarities to be greatly treasured in an era when the establishment is moving in on science fiction, bringing bad writing traditions along with it. I'm also pleased that this article refrained from speculating about the personal life of Harlan and how it may have contributed to his Byronic behavior at the typewriter. We've had more than enough of that in Heinlein criticism and maybe it won't spread to other writers if influential articles like this stay away from it.

SHERYL SMITH

There is no more delightful and admirable feedback than comprehending praise (comprehending criticism, as it is only admirable, must take second place); your comments, sir, are #1's and much appreciated.

I don't agree with some of my parallels, either (one of the big, big reasons I avoid this kind of essay except during temporary insanity). Literary parallels seldom seem precise enough, this side of plagiarism. But how flattering that someone read close enough to notice! Really, you should always "dare be specific"--at least if you think it's worth the bother. Literary analysis is a game of associations, at best a backhanded means to an end, like the Zen Koan, and at worst a dry abstractivity as useful as kibitzing at solitaire; in neither case can the pursuit be taken seriously, and in the latter it is morally indefensible, as indeed you seem to have concluded.

Don't ever let a critic awe you (especially me, as I admit my erudition is mostly flip and fudge!). A plain, uncluttered ability to read, such as you possess, is a truer gauge of the literary arts than semi-literate and emotionally-purblind scholarship. Attentive readers can likewise discern through the sacred aura of academia that scholarly procedures and techniques (including all rhetoric) are too empirically simple to deal comprehensively with the personal-human gut experience of art. If enough attentive readers could publicize scholarly irrelevancies in the critical area (ridicule does nicely here), with any luck art-criticism might at last find its proper level of disrespectability (shouldn't critics be as disreputable as artists?). This would eliminate the stuffiest publish-or-perishers from the field as well as those who write for repute and pay more attention to their superior critical stance than to the art they examine--which should up the quality of critique considerably. (Of course there would still be the obnoxious idiots but at least they would be obnoxious idiots who care too much about art to keep their mouths shut.) Better, if it is presumed that criticism is unreliable at best, more folk who adopt some critical viewpoint as they might be thrown upon the resources of their own reactions/opinions where they belong.

See what rational justification can be found even to support the exercise of pure cussedness? I faith it's enough to get it out of your system--and in your case if you yell "false," you will likely be right. Go get 'em!

Austrian Graffiti (1973)

Charlie Hopwood

On the flight home, the plane from Zurich, I decided to play it smart and keep a record of what we had seen and done while the images were still fresh and vivid in my mind--only problem was, I had no paper to write on. Larry, Sue and I scrounged around the plane for some paper--any paper--and all we could come up with was a number of the air-sickness bags thoughtfully provided for each passenger (ain't civilization grand?). I made the best of the dubious situation, and as I scribbled away with gay abandon the stewardesses passing me continuously gave me the fish-eye. I guess they were waiting for me to hand them a bag on which was a request for the pilot to fly us to Havana. And as if that wasn't bad enough, you should have seen the reaction of the customs agent at Friendship Airport when the notes came cascading out of my flight bag; it took a couple moments of in-depth explaining to convince him that I wasn't part of a nefarious plot to overthrow the Republic. Fortunately for the Republic, I am too bourgeois in my tastes and habits to attempt a stunt like that; besides, what would I do with New Jersey?

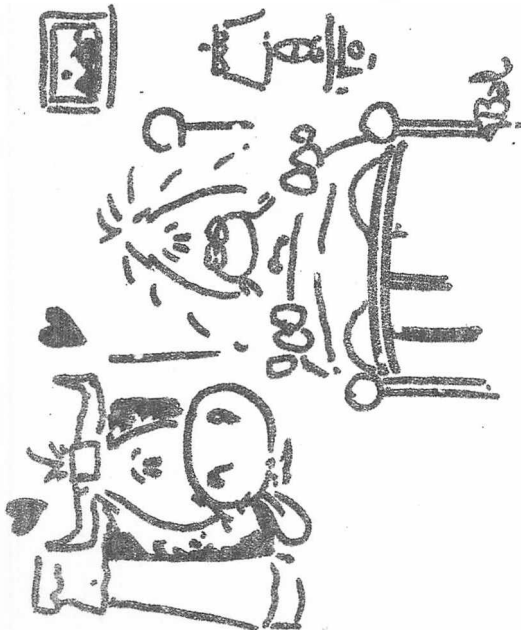
THE FLIGHT OVER: I COULD ALMOST SEE ATLANTIS Our night-time flight across the Atlantic was superb, no doubt about it. All the blandishments civilization can bestow upon the modern traveler were ours for the asking: open bar, good meals, magazines, movies, and a wide choice of listening music, to list a few. What I most enjoyed was the music: just plug in your earphones, make your selection, fiddle with the volume--and voila! Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy. My preference in music tends towards the classics, so I turned on the classical channel and was immediately treated to "The 1812 Overture," which was nice if a bit familiar. All that cannonfire at the end made me feel as if I were on a bombing raid over Germany in the Big One. A little later "Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis" by Ralph Vaughn Williams came on, and this proved to be the highlight of the flight over for me. I had never heard this piece before, and as I listened to it I got caught up in its haunting, faintly sad siren call of time and space and let my imagination fly where it would. I looked out the window at the ocean far below. In the moonlight, it looked like a great expanse of molten onyx upon which eddied and flowed countless rivers and streams of molten silver. How mysterious and beautiful it was! As I gazed and let the music sweep me along, my thoughts drifted to Atlantis, a subject I have a great interest in. As the music slowly mounted to a sad crescendo I could almost see glittering faintly beneath the onyx waters the gilded domes and towers of mighty Atlantean cities forever lost to man. It's hard to describe the emotions and feelings I felt at the time--but I know I will never forget them. A few moments later I was rudely flung back into reality by the volcanic opening of Dvorak's "Carnival Overture"--these of you who have heard this piece can imagine the shock I experienced. Call me a Romantic if you will--I am not ashamed of the charge. Most historians, I suspect, have a little bit of the Romantic in them, and since I had just received my degree in History, I guess that puts me in that company, however tenuous the link may be.

The rest of the flight over was filled with pleasant silliness, lining up

to use the restrooms, breakfast over Paris (my, doesn't that sound sophisticated?), the warmth of being with good friends (a precious thing to me), and the beauty of watching the sun rise from a high altitude. Like last year, we flew non-stop from Baltimore to Munich and landed in the capital of Bavaria in mid-morning. The bus-ride from Munich to Kitzbuhel in Austria took several hours, but instead of it being exciting like last year, we basked in the calm glow of familiar landscapes and memories. Too, we were a little puzzled that nothing funny had happened to us yet--such a state of affairs was quite unusual for Larry, Sue and me. But we needn't have worried. The minute our bus stopped in front of our delightful hotel in the charming mountain ski resort of Kitzbuhel (this is beginning to sound like a tacky travel brochure--must stop that!) our dull good fortune abandoned us mercifully and the fun-trouble-hysterics began with a truly Austrian flourish.

KITZBUHEL, AUSTRIA: COME TO THE STABLES Please don't get me wrong--Kitzbuhel is a pleasant old town lying in a spectacular valley in the Kaiserberg Mountains of the Tirol (Austrian spelling), noted for its two ancient kirches (yes, churches), its skiing, and as being one of the winter watering holes of the international Jet Set. Two days there are n nice--but a week? Forget it. By the fourth day in Kitzbuhel we were going bananas; after all, we didn't come all this way to be bored. Hell, I could have stayed home for that! So, we did what any normal Americans abroad would do--create trouble.

We started right in harrassing the locals about five minutes after we arrived. The hotel we stayed in, managed by a refugee Yugoslavian countess--how art the mighty fallen!--was quite pleasant, one might even be tempted to say grand. Marble floors, crystal chandeliers, Baroque paintings all over the place, spectacular views--who could ask for more? As we piled into the lobby from our buses we collected our room keys and you could imagine how pleased Larry and I were when we found out we were ensconced in room #1. Sue and Sharon had room #23, and since we were nearer to that wing of the building we went to their room first. And what a room it was! A marvelous crystal chandelier--an antique--dazzled the eye, the Beidermeierzeit furniture and a bed that had to be seen to be believed were appropriately opulent, and the walls were hung with colorful Baroque paintings (over the bed was a canvas of St. George slaying that poor dragon, which we found amusing) and interesting old Viennese lithographs. The bathroom had a marble floor and a spacious tub, a bidet (which we told Jack was for washing socks; he did), and other assorted accoutrements. It all looked just like a movie set and Larry and I couldn't wait to get to our room. If this was what #23 was like, so ran our reasoning, what must #1 be like? Suitable for the Kaiser, at least!



So we went looking for Room #1--

--and couldn't find it.

Yes, we checked that whole big building and our room was nowhere to be seen. More than a little confused we went to the countess with the obvious question, "Wo ist zimmer #1, bitte?" She went to the window, pointed to a

building across the driveway and said it was over there. With mounting trepidation we gathered our luggage and went to see what we had been stuck with. The room surpassed our worst fears.

The room was fairly small with one big double bed, an antique Tirolean wardrobe that had definitely seen better days (the last one, I think, was May 16, 1369), and a bathroom several doors down the hall. Over the bed hung a faintly amusing Baroque painting depicting Virtue triumphing over Sin--after all, this is a devoutly Catholic country and they take this line seriously. Sighing, I said to Larry, "Oh well, at least we've got a nice view," and threw open the balcony doors to prove my point to him. We forgot the view, for immediately the room was filled with the unmistakable odor of rotting manure; thus we found out that our building was adjacent to the hotel stables. Nor was that still all! At night, we discovered that the room was right over the hotel garage--and at four in the morning people would come in revving their engines for all they were worth, waking us up.

Needless to say, we were outraged.

We felt cheated, disappointed, and highly insulted; we turned the manure-laden air blue with our swearing. Can you blame us? How would you feel if you suddenly went from Kaiser to Untermensch? And seeing Sue's room didn't help our mood either; over there, she's playing The Great Waltz while we get stuck with Come to the Stables. We created a major incident for the hotel--you want to see outraged Christianity? we'll show you outraged Christianity--but we had to stay in the room because there was nothing else to be had. Isn't life wonderful at times?

So, after we had settled in, we spent the next couple of days sightseeing, and I came down with a bad cold. Then, on the fourth night, we were all in Sue's room debating what to do that evening. We just puttered about the room while I did my I'm-not-long-for-this-world routine on the bed, and as the clock pushed 11:30, Sharon suddenly burst out with, "Let's catch the night train to Vienna!" I ignored her, pretending to sleep, but everyone else caught fire at the suggestion and dragged me off my wonderfully comfortable bed--and the next thing I knew there we were standing in the snow of the local bahnhof waiting for the 12:10 special to Vienna. It was bitterly cold--and it's sad to relate, but I died right then and there. Finally the train came, and they packed my body and the four of them in one tiny compartment (you should see the pictures we have of that--amazing--). Nobody got any sleep. I had thawed out a bit and propped myself up in the corner with my scarf hanging down over my face to shut out the light and Sue laughed saying that I looked like a Jew praying at the Western Wall. I was so miserable that I didn't even bother to smartmouth her back. But she was right; the picture she took of me does look like something one would expect to see in Jerusalem. All I can say is, thank God this touching scene took place in the Austria of 1973 and not that of 1939--

Contrary to the popular consensus in our compartment, and much to my own surprise, I did make it to Vienna alive. But just barely.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA; WHERE ARE THE HAPSBURGS? Who has not dreamed of going to Vienna? The legendary city on the beautiful blue Danube--now, unfortunately, a dull brown, the Danube never was really blue, but who cares?--immortalized in music by Strauss, in art by the Baroque style, and in world politics by the Hapsburgs and--one hates to say it--by Hitler, Vienna is a delightful city where the glorious past is still vibrantly and warmly alive. Vienna, the City of the Waltz, of Imperial Grandeur, of fabulous pastries that can be found nowhere else in the world, of great palaces and even greater museums; a city that takes nothing serious except culture, refinement, art and good music. Vienna is a living thing--and oh how they

live! No matter where you come from, when you come to Vienna, you are coming home.

But we had a problem: we had only one day to see the fabled city in. We solved that problem quite nicely by taking a three-hour sight-seeing tour for only 100 schillings (oh--about \$3.50-\$4.00 eur money); normally I don't approve of these things, but in this case it was a godsend. If you're only in Vienna for a short time, take this tour: you get your tickets at the Autobusbahnhof Landstrasse (Air Terminal, but use the German name for direction) and the tour departs from there. I guarantee you will see a lot in those three hours! And you are not rushed--our tour took an hour longer than it should have, but nobody cared. That's Vienna.

The first and major stop of the tour was the Schonbrunn Schless (palace), that monstrous-sized royal residence built by that redoubtable Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa, in the (guess?) Baroque style. We toured 45 major rooms--not even a complete wing of the place!--and were enchanted with the dazzling treasures of art, architecture and furniture to be seen there. In one room the walls are papered with Rajput Indian paintings of fabulous fortune, another has its walls decorated with myriad sconces, each one of which supports a priceless Ming porcelain vase--never have I seen so much art and wealth piled together in one place. Everyone's favorite room was the Grand Ballroom, where formal Court Balls were held; with its massive crystal chandeliers, parquet floor, painted ceiling and gilded columns one finally appreciates the beauty of the waltz and Strauss' music. I admit that I have never wished more than then, standing in that room, that I knew how to do the waltz. (One day--) Standing in that room, with its Imperial echoes and distant lilting music still animating the air, one feels kind of sorry that these days are gone forever. But the past still lives occasionally; here in this room the President of the Republic of Austria today hosts formal state festivities for world dignitaries and such.

I guess I could ramble on about the Opera, the Hofburg, Parliament, the Ringstrasse--well, the Ringstrasse deserves mentioning a bit more because of the incident that happened to us there. Vienna, due to its Ringstrasse, is laid out in circles just like Washington, DC, which is charming but creates all kinds of logistical problems. We started to walk back to a restaurant near the Hofburg where we were to meet Jack and Sharon for dinner; I stated we should have taken a taxi, so as not to get lost and to save time, but Larry insisted that he knew the way by foot.

Sure.

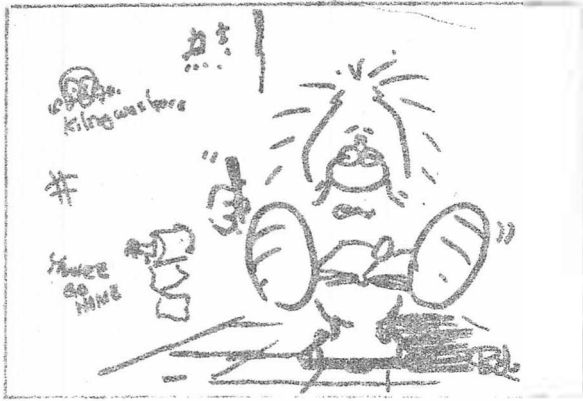
So we walked--and walked, and walked. After a half an hour of schlepping through the back alleys of Vienna (by the way, they're quite interesting), Wrongway Hilde came to the earthshattering conclusion that we were lost. "No!" gasped Sue and I. Not daring to admit defeat, Larry stubbornly insisted we keep on going and so we did. A half an hour later the buildings started to look familiar--and then it hit us. We were on one of the inner Ringstrasse and had walked around the city in a complete circle! I could have screamed, and I let Larry know how I felt in no uncertain terms; even Sue was peeved by now. Chastened, Larry went into a nearby antique shop (my, but they do have fantastic shops in Vienna!) and asked the owner where the Hofburg was. The proprietor gave him a funny look; he thought Larry had asked where the Hapsburgs were, and he calmly stated that they hadn't lived in Vienna for over fifty years! That completely broke us up. We did get back to the restaurant eventually, but on the way we saw parts of Vienna few tourists would be caught dead in. It was fun, really. Try it sometime--getting lost in a European city; you'll love it. It's the only way I really know of to get the flavor of a city, its culture, and its people.

Our fondest memory of Vienna was one of the highpoints of the trip. They have an absolutely delightful and civilized custom known as Jause. Jause is the late afternoon sort of long coffee-break, during which everyone flocks to his favorite cafe or Konditorei for an hour or so to enjoy "Kaffee und Kuchen" and pleasant witty conversation. Naturally, as the clock pushed four, we decided to indulge ourselves in this most civilized custom and pretend to be Viennese, if only for an hour. So, after browsing through a street of bookstores, we looked for the nearest konditorei--

--and stumbled into Paradise. The little konditorei we found in a back-alley was too good to be true. You walk into it through a revolving door and immediately you are greeted by a smiling waiter and the delicious smell of fresh pastries and coffee. You glance in the gigantic pastry case which is of oak and must be about one hundred years old and decide what you want; the choice is hard to make--everything looks so good! Cheesecake, tortes, strudel, cherry tarts, peach cobbler, marzipan, Byzantine fantasies of whipped cream, chocolate, and cake (eat your heart out, Betty Crocker!). Finally you decide (we ordered cheesecake and coffee--a favorite) and your waiter seats you in a semi-circular booth covered in red velvet plush with a little white marble table in front. Light lilting music and the buzz of pleasant conversation floats in the air as you scan the room. It is a delight; the walls are covered in a red and white brocade with large gold-rimmed mirrors and crystal lamps, a plush red carpet covers much of the parquet floor, and a graceful crystal chandelier burns demurely in the middle of the ceiling. Elegant potted palms are scattered in a cunningly casual manner around the place. The atmosphere is warm, congenial, and oh so friendly. We marvel and sigh--and launch into that almost-lost civilized custom known as polite and witty conversation. We are amazed by how truly witty and sophisticated our conversation becomes. Our waiter brings our order and sits it before us: large pieces of cheesecake--the real thing!--and coffee served in small china cups with gold rims. Into this you put, if you so desire, your sugar and whipped cream, which is heavy, thick, semi-sweet, and good. Then you just enjoy yourself in a leisurely manner. A half an hour--an hour--an hour and a half slip by. Who cares? In Vienna life is to be savored like a fine old wine. To rush or hurry is considered the height of vulgarity and bad taste; the Viennese are quite puzzled by the German and American bondage to the clock. Things will get by, eventually, so why rush? In Vienna, life is civilized to a degree that it isn't in this country; we are poorer for this deficiency.

And there is another facet to the Viennese way of life we discovered in this konditorei. We had only been in the place for about a minute when a waiter balancing a large tray filled with cheesecake and cream-filled pastries tripped or the rug and dropped the tray on the carpet. Cheesecake, whipped cream, and powdered sugar splattered all over the place. Did anyone get mad and scream? Did the manager browbeat the poor waiter? Not in the least. The manager smiled and shook his head: these things happen--such is life, so what's the use of getting mad and yelling? Little harm was done and it proved an amusing spectacle for the customers. The waiter, slightly embarrassed, grinned sheepishly at us all and it took only a couple of minutes to clean up the mess. Such is the philosophy of life in Vienna.

Too, in Vienna was the only time I became aggressively American in a most unorthodox way. In the restaurant where we were having dinner I went to the restroom and installed myself in one of the booths. I started reading the graffiti and it was quite educational--Greek, German, Russian, Turkish, French, Italian, Hungarian and Czech were represented, though God knows what it all said --when it occurred to me suddenly, where is English? Indeed, I searched, and this beloved and mighty language of several hundred million people was nowhere to be seen. I became indignant and determined not to let this insult go unchallenged, so I took my pen from my pocket and scribbled several memorable witticisms IN ENGLISH on the door between the German and French (I thought it best to



stay with our allies). So, take heart, Canada, America, England, Australia and New Zealand! You have had your honor upheld in the restrooms of Vienna.

Tired (Ha! Were we tired? Let me tell you--but no I won't; I don't want to bore you--am I boring you?), and with a great deal of reluctance, we boarded the night train back to Kitzbuhel.

Someday, I intend to go back to Vienna--

INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA: LET'S TAKE A SHORTCUT The next leg of our trip took us to Innsbruck, the capital of the renowned Austrian province of Tirol. Our stay in Innsbruck was warm (uneventful, relatively speaking), and we spent most of the time revisiting favorite sites we had found on our trip the year before. Only two situations proved worthy of mention.

About noon one day, Larry, Sue and I were standing at the corner of Universitat Strasse and Maria Theresa Strasse in the midst of shopping, when around the bend in the street came a large group of people about our age waving flags and banners. A parade?, we mused, why, how nice! A few moments later our smiles faded into consternation as we realized that we were right in the middle of a huge anti-Vietnam demonstration with some distinct anti-American overtones by the students from the nearby Franz-Leopold Universitat. The fact that it was anti-Vietnam didn't bother us--we sympathized with them to a degree--but it was one of those situations where it was advisable to maintain a low profile. After all, we were foreigners, and we didn't wish to become involved in the political affairs of another country. So we looked, took pictures, and spoke French. It was interesting to observe the reactions of the older citizens watching from the sidewalks. Many looked scared and shook their heads sadly. Remembrances of things past, perhaps? I'll never know--but that's my theory.

Another day, a Sunday to be exact, we decided to take the bus and cable car to the chateau 'way atop famous Mt. Seegrube for the view and lunch. Well, we waited about an hour for the bus, but for some reason it never came. So Larry and Sue decided we should walk halfway up and meet the cable car. I protested, but the majority voted we walk (how I was sorry then that women had the vote), so we walked. We climbed up out of the suburbs of Innsbruck, saw many interesting sights, and the view was worth it; I got quite a few nice altitude shots with my camera. But the road winds the way many steep mountain roads do--so when we came to the start of another loop, Sue noticed a little cobblestone street that seemed to go straight up to the next level. She mentioned this fact to us and then uttered those immortal words, "Let's take a shortcut." Full of innocence we started up the cobblestone street, turned a corner--and came full face to a steep winding path covered with ice and snow that went through the underbrush. Larry and Sue climbed with ease; they had on hiking shoes with spikes. It was different for me. On my dainty size 8½ feet were my everyday leather short boots with leather soles; I took two steps on the steep icy path and fell flat on my face. Larry and Sue found this hysterically funny; I was not amused. We sort of resolved the problem by Larry taking my hand and pulling me up the tortuous path, and I looked like a demented ice-skater. Sue, damn her, roared with laughter and took a picture of us. Things were going fairly fine until Sue stopped at the edge of a sharp drop-off, screamed, "Ch, look at the view--!", and Larry turned around and accidentally let go of me. This is when I finally went skiing in Austria, I slid down the path a fairly long distance and plowed right into Sue. Fortunately for us both, she was holding onto a

tree, so we didn't go over the edge. See all the fun you missed?

But the climb leveled off and the walk through the mountain forest made our trials worthwhile. Finally we reached the chateau, had a pleasant lunch while gazing through the Brenner Pass into Italy, and went on to other things. Before we knew it, it was time to pack (again) and move on to Munich.

MUNICH, GERMANY: DEUTSCHLAND, DEUTSCHLAND, UBER ALLES? I like Munich. It's a very large city with many ancient structures of note--most are reconstructions due to bombing in the Big One--and a good place to have fun. Beer, of course, is the staple of life here--which is fine by me, even though I loathe the beverage. No visit to Munich is complete unless you visit the celebrated Hofbrauhaus, which we did several times. The prostitutes are friendly, the art treasures impressive, and culture flows as freely as the beer. And, once again, friends, for the second time in two years, we missed the Weiner Symphoniker by just a few days. Aren't there times when you just want to vomit?

The radio in Munich is fun; we picked up Radio Prague on our set and it was the best of all the stations we heard. For some reason, when we heard the local German station sign-off with the national anthem, we were surprised to hear "Deutschland, Deutschland, Uber Alles"; we are so used to hearing "The Star-Spangled Banner" here at home that we forgot to convert our thinking and were listening for the wrong thing. Oh well, you can't win 'em all. I think nothing symbolizes the New Germany more than the present version of this old song that is the anthem of the Bundesrepublik. The version we heard was dignified, stately, and full of honest pride; there was no military bombast to it. It makes a nice symphonic piece and I like it. I think most people would be surprised by it upon first hearing. Yes, there is a New Germany--

But the Old Germany surfaces occasionally, too, and for me it did so in the strangest way. Larry, Sue and I had been out after lunch just shopping and seeing the sights, while keeping an eye out for antique beer steins which Larry wanted to take home to his folks. So we turned into a rather unexciting side street near the Isar Tor which looked like good antique hunting ground. As we hoped, Larry found the stein he was looking for and we were all in high spirits. As we walked down the street browsing in the windows, Sue went ahead of us while Larry and I looked at some more steins. A few moments later she came back to us and said in a curious voice, "Larry, Charlie, you'll never guess what I found in a window up there...." We followed her and saw what she pointed out.

Sitting sedately in the middle of the antique shop window was a two-foot-high bronze menorah that looked to be about fifty years old. It had been neatly polished and gleamed dully in the afternoon light. Larry and Sue shook their heads. For some reason still unknown to me, I became extremely upset and sad upon sighting it. Perhaps the reason why is because as a historian I know full well some of the stories of tragedy and horror that candelabra might speak of if it could talk. I will never forget the sight of that menorah sitting so forlornly in that antique shop window. In a way, it was sort of a prelude to the next journey of our trip. The very next day we went to the ultimate product of hell and madness that the mind of man has yet dared to create--

DACHAU, GERMANY: SILENCE, NOTHING BUT SILENCE The bus ride to Dachau was quite pleasant and comfortable. As I'm sure it did to other voyagers not so long ago, Dachau suddenly loomed before us in all its deceptively bland massiveness. Only the barbed wire fences and tall guard towers stir in one a feeling of uneasiness. We entered as visitors and left an hour and a half later. Far more people entered as prisoners and never left at all--

Dachau, as any encyclopedia will tell you, was not a major camp: only 30-40,000 people were murdered here. A mere pittance compared to what happened in the really gigantic death factories in occupied Poland. We found this of small comfort. In truth, Dachau was the oldest camp set up (1933) and was something of an elitist place. Though many Jews died here, most of the prisoners were Gentiles imprisoned for political reasons--Communists, Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, noisy Catholic and Protestant clergymen and, as Germany overran most of Europe, famous political figures at odds with the Nazis in the occupied countries. Lest we forget, many Gentiles suffered brutally under the Nazis, too.

When you visit Dachau, you will be taken on a tour of an exhibition in the building that used to serve as the place where barbaric and unspeakable medical practices were performed on prisoners. It is quite a good exhibit as these things go: there are many blown-up pictures of horrors and atrocities, display cases of uniforms and torture instruments, and a film about the history of the camp. It is quite informative--a crash course in torture and mass murder. You come out of the exhibition stunned and confused in your thoughts.

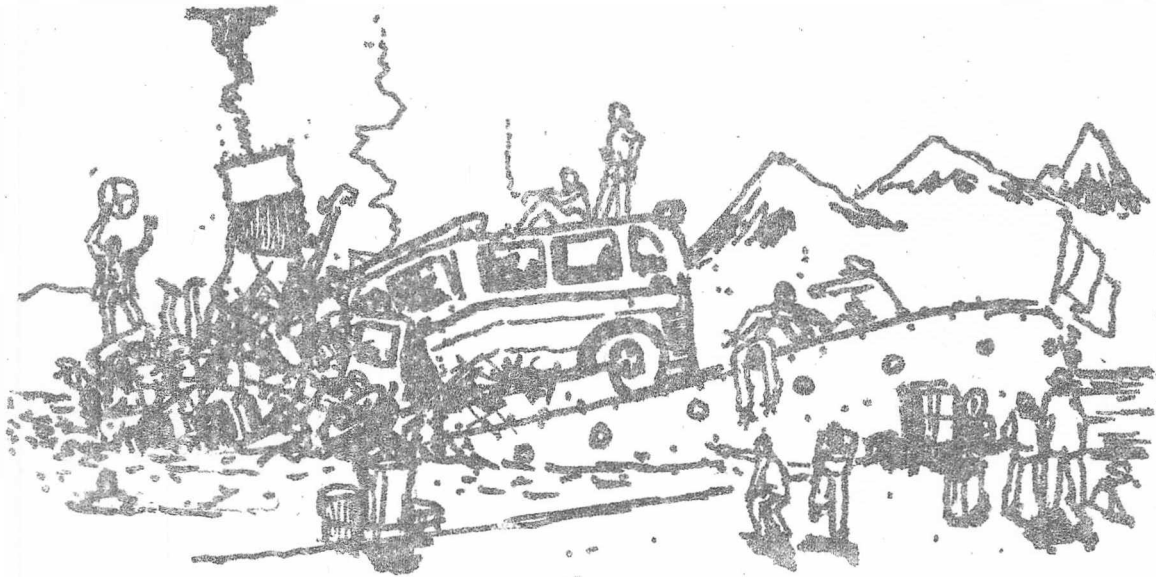
You will next find yourself in a large open area; this is where the barracks of the prisoners used to be; only two have been rebuilt to serve as models and exhibits. When we stood in this enormous area it was late afternoon in a very cold January; the sun was dimming towards night and bathed the snow-covered grounds in a dull orange-red glow. The most moving and emotional aspect of the camp for us was the very fact that there was no movement or emotion to be seen from where we were--only the dimming reddish light on the snow, the penetrating cold, and the utter silence of the place. It is hard to describe and explain the emotions that we felt at that moment. I will never forget the silence-- nothing but silence--

Next stop on your tour is a visit to the Crematorium and Gaschambers. To reach these buildings you cross over a little bridged stream and into a rather pleasant garden shaded by tall pine trees. Here we came upon true depravity, for the buildings of death are located right in the middle of the charming gardens. You go through the Gaschambers, see the Crematorium ovens that so efficiently disposed of the corpses--please take your pictures one at a time, you get better exposure that way, someone says solicitously--and once again return to the gardens. What can I say to all this? Words fail to paint a realistic enough image of what went on here in Dachau. On a monument in the camp one can read the words: "Never Again!"

I think I have said enough on this subject.

THE ROCKY ROAD TO ZURICH Ideally, I should now write, "and after we left Munich we caught the plane home from Zurich and lived happily ever after." Alas, such a statement would not be true to reality. We certainly left Europe in a grand manner--and I hope never to go that route again.

Originally, we were to leave by plane from Munich for Baltimore at eleven in the morning. Fine. Well, the night before leaving our guide accosts us in the Hofbrauhaus around midnight to inform us that our flight has been canceled due to a minor air war between Britain and Germany (how wonderful: we flew an English airlines), with the result that we have to go to Zurich, Switzerland, to catch our plane. Oh, and we have to be up and out of the hotel and at the train station by 6:30 AM. We all immediately staggered back to our hotel and so began some of the most frantic packing I've ever seen in my life. In my alcoholic hurry I suddenly found myself trying to stuff one of the small Persian carpets of our hotel room floor into my suitcase. Fortunately, it was too large and I had to leave it behind; I didn't like the color or pattern anyway. So, after a



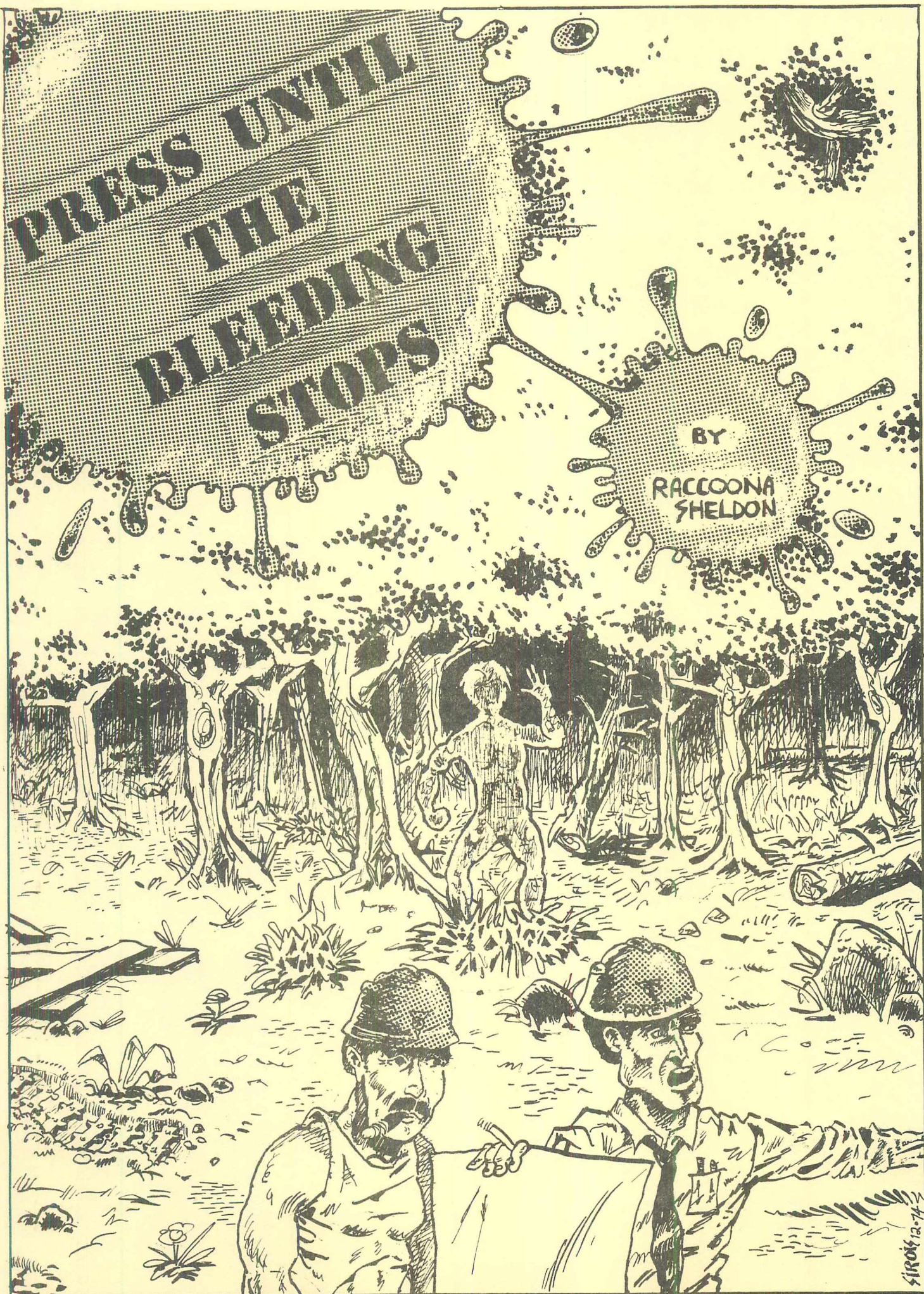
lousy night's sleep, we all manage to get to the train station by 6:30 in the sleety weather with all our luggage--no mean trick! We wait for the train--and the only problem is, no-one bothered to tell Zurich to send us one. As the clock pushed 11:30 we finally got hold of some buses and looked fondly forward to a six-hour bus ride in a snowstorm. We traveled in three buses; ours hit a car at the Austro-German border, another landed in a shallow ditch in Switzerland, and the third got sidetracked on a ferry crossing Lake Constance. Ours must have been the smallest problem, for in Zurich we didn't meet our friends on the other buses till an hour and a half later.

Then we found out we had another nice six-hour wait till the plane could reach us from Frankfurt--the blizzard, you know. We didn't board the plane home until eleven that night. You may find this hard to believe, but that plane filled with about two hundred college students was about as quiet as a tomb all the way across the ocean. Exhaustion was universal. Oh well, at least I got my passport stamped for Switzerland, a thing I wasn't expecting. See how easy and fun things can be for the modern traveler? Admittedly, our return home was a little unusual--I think. Never did my own bed seem as comfortable as when I hit it that night--

CONCLUSION: AT LAST--! And so ends our travel extravaganza for 1973. Compared to the previous year's little jaunt, this trip was a bit more sedate and a lot more thought-provoking. If last year's trip was for the senses, then this year's trip was for the mind and soul. Yes, I have left out a lot--the tasteless student jokes at Dachau, Larry's fur coat, the gossip about Larry, Sue and Charlie (everyone else on the trip thought the three of us were enjoying sex together; flattery will get you everywhere, folks), and so on. But I think you've had more than enough.

So ended my traveling for a while, too, which lately has consisted of the ride between work and home. Larry, Sue and I had decided to go on the college's two-week tour of England, Holland, Belgium and France, but plans fell through. (Sue had informed me that the only sentence she knew in French was "Qu'est-ce que la Pissoir?", and that it would be my duty to be French guide and translator for us due to my extensive grounding in la belle Langua--which consists of two years of highschool French taken six years ago, and some erratic viewings of Julia Child's FRENCH CHEF.)

Someday...



BY

RACCOONA
SHELDON

When the man who loved the wooded valley awoke and saw the young men carrying gaily painted stakes, he listened. And with some difficulty, because of great horror, he understood. He looked round then and saw that things had gone further than he had realised; this was in fact the last valley. And he went in haste to the people who lived on the slopes of the valley, to tell them.

They are going to drive a huge highway through the valley, he said, and the chain saws are going to fell the trees that give us air and the bulldozers are going to tear the earth and destroy her life and her waters that we drink. And the beauty and the quiet will be replaced by a horrible and unceasing din of machines spewing foul gasses into the barren wind and the lovely soul of the earth that is here in the last valley will be gone forever.

And the first of the people who lived beside the valley replied, Well this is terrible and grievous, thank god you told us, because our son needs to go to medical school and now we can sell our land and send him. And the next people said, This is indeed shocking and we couldn't approve more of what you're doing but it's no use our signing anything because we are leaving for an overseas assignment; here is ten dollars. And the next man said, This is a brutal outrage and I'm so glad you called it to my attention because my wife loves nature and she is in such frail health that the sight of this hideous destruction would finish her; I must get her away quickly and I wish you all the luck in the world. And a woman said, Yes it's just awful and I'd love to sign your paper if only my husband wasn't in the concrete business. And another man said, It's a damn shame to spoil the woods but as they say, if you can't lick 'em, join 'em and my brother-in-law wants me to go with him on a fried chicken franchise. And another woman said, Yes, it's so sad about the trees and all the little animals, but think how happy all the people will be to drive through here and which is more important, a tree or a person? And the two girls who lived at the end of the valley said, That's all middle-class shit, don't you know there are babies burning?

The man saw that the people were going to be no help at all. And he remembered the great horn made from a mammoth's tooth that had been buried in the secret heart of the woods. It was green by age and nature and he knew it had only been blown once before in a legendary emergency. So he dug it up and blew three long solemn blasts, like glaciers creaking. And when he put it down all the animals and every living thing in the woods was looking at him.

Life of the earth, he cried, listen to me! Rabbits, stop munching the green leaves! Foxes, stop preying on the rabbits and birds! Hawks, stop seeking out the voles and squirrels, and all you little birds stop eating the insects! And insects, stop sucking the juices of the plants, and you trees and ferns and creepers, still your feeding roots in the germy loam and listen to me! And you, stag of the forest, and you, raccoons fishing frogs in the stream, and all you frogs and newts and crickets and spiders and moles and mice in your burrows, listen to me and attend!

My brothers the men, he told them, are now planning to blast a road through here! Their giant machines will rip away the living soil and grind up the fieldmice's nests and the bob-white's babies and knock down and crush the tall trees with all your homes and young ones and even the bees in their hives and ram you all broken into a great pile of death. And they will seal the flayed earth under a plain of concrete and the sweet rain will run off into a foul channel and the mold and mulm that was the life of the earth will pour into the far ocean where it will kill the fish. And no water will sink into the earth to refresh it, and even those trees which they will leave torn and cripp-

pled will die and the last of you animals and birds with them. And they will sow the clay with coarse wire-grass and spray poisons and the stink of their burning fuels will fill the air with death. And the people who ride a stream of roaring machines will throw trash and crap unceasing to bring more kinds of death when your young ones eat it. And even you butterflies and winged creatures will end up as squashes on their hurtling metal. Join me and we will fight this thing!

When the creatures heard this they looked at each other and at the man, and they understood, because the horn of legendary emergency had been blown. And the old badger of the cave whom nobody had ever seen before advanced and spoke for them all, saying, Oh Man, we hear and understand! This is truly a time when we must stand together in battle for our life. And we will! Moreover, it will be a sight never before seen, because behind us will arise the dread might and majesty of our mother the Earth, who is also the mother of you mer, though I have never understood why. She will strengthen us to invincible power. Even the soft wings of the mayflies and the very softest moles will take on the fury of our offended Mother. When your killing machines come they will be met by a terror never before seen and the men will know fear at last and flee!

To which the man said, So be it. I will stand with you.

And so one morning when the great yellow earth-gutting machines roared over the horizon into the little valley there stood ready for them all the creatures of the forest. In the forefront the air was filled with moths and butterflies and every flying insect in waves and clouds, and underfoot the mice and the frogs and the turtles in ranks, and all around them even the smallest blades of grass and leaves of the trees were drawn up and hard as spears. And behind them were the armies of woodchucks and squirrels and foxes unsmiling, right down to the raccoon babies unnaturally grim. And in their midst stood the proud stag of the forest with the sun gleaming on his antlers, and the man standing beside him. And every single one of them felt the power of their mother the Earth surging through them, invincible at last, which thing had never been known before. And swooping from the sky came the birds large and small in squadrons dazzling to the eye, and all this took place in perfect silence which is the voice of Earth.

When the first bulldozer driver saw them he yelled through his transceiver, Hey, look at the birds! And the second driver bellowed back, Keerist there's a hell of a lot of animals in there! And the third driver shouted, Look out, maybe they're rabid or something, I can't see anything my glass is all over bugs. And they all lurched to a stop.

But the foreman came tearing up in his jeep, yelling Gimme that shotgun, there's a buck! By god, I haven't shot a rack like that since I was a kid! And the support crew ran up after him and started shooting streams of chemical fog into the sky.

The first bulldozer driver said, I feel sick. If you're sick go home, the foreman shouted, by Jesus I'm going to get that buck.

At that moment the man walked out of the woods and stood before them with his arm lifted, saying STOP! I command you in the name of our dread mother, the Earth. This valley is under her protection forever. Turn and go!

The second bulldozer driver asked, What is that grey thing? Do you hear some kind of squeaking?

The foreman, sighting down his barrels, told him, Nothing but a shadow, goddammit, you seeing ghosts?

When the man heard those words he felt draftiness and faintness. He looked down at his body and saw that the air was mingling through him; he was in fact only a grey shadow. And he groaned and said, Yes, it is true. I am only a ghost. I am dead. Now I remember.

And the foreman let off both barrells crash, blam, straight into the throat of the stag of the forest, and the great horns fell and gored the ground.

The first bulldozer driver jumped out and said Screw you, I'm going home. But the foreman went and dragged the stag and heaved him onto the jeep and climbed in the bulldozer cab himself, howling Hit it! And the line of earth-killers moved forward.

The foxes and raccoons and chipmunks and all the animals bared their teeth and called on the deep power of the Earth, standing their ground bravely around the ghost of the man, and the old badger dipped his heavy claws in the blood of the slain stag and charged. And the birds dived screaming and the baby quail and mice rushed into the treads to jam them and the butterflies and bees rained into the cabs, all calling on their mother the Earth.

But the terrible machines ground forward uncaring and the fearful knives tore into the roots of the trees and tumbled them and the earth and the bones and bodies of the animals into huge windrows, and other machines roared behind, shovelling everything together, oriole nests and badger teeth and mouse eyes and flowers and rocks and the milk of the squirrels all ground into a great heap of death down the center of the valley.

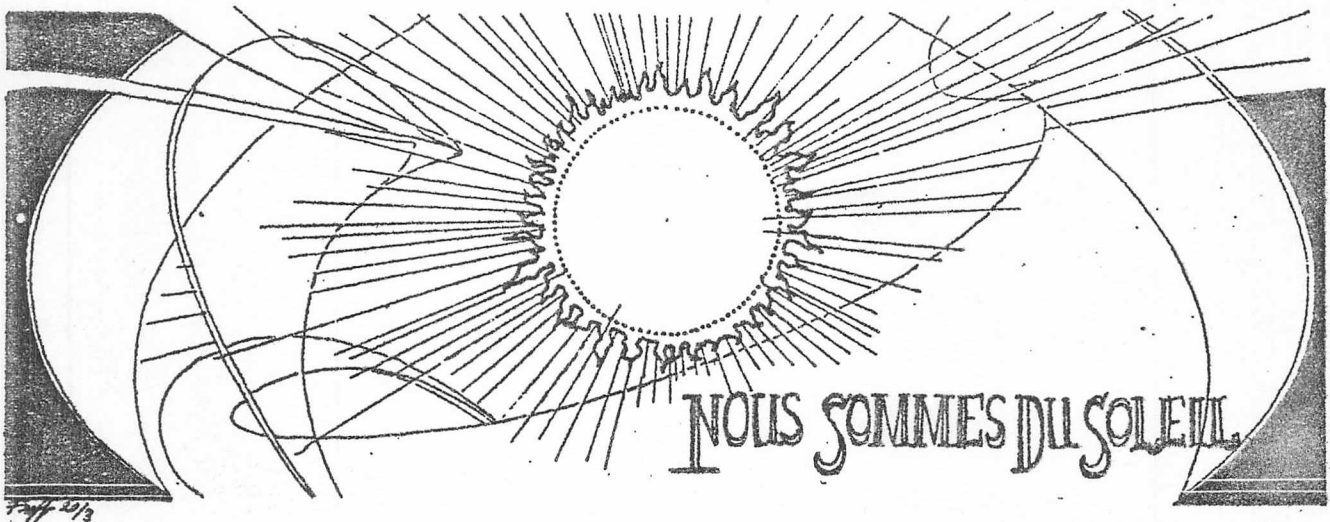
Next came the gravel trucks and the bluestone grinders and graders and the reinforcing rod layers, and they churned to and fro flattening and mangling everything by day and by night, and the rains carried blood and mulm in a torrent to the sea. And presently a perfectly graded ribbon of concrete was spewed over the whole length of the murdered valley. And when it was all done the foreman said, Boys, it's a great job, and I'm going to Florida this winter and sit in the sun and drink beer. Man, you should see how nice those horns turned out, I mounted them myself on walnut veneer.

After the valley was concrete from end to end the landscape crew sowed wire bunch-grass on the dead soil with tar mulch, and the contractor himself came out and said, Now that's what I call pretty.

So the road was opened at last and all the people who had been impatiently awaiting the day started fiercely driving over it exulting in their tremendous horsepower and noise and the speed with which they arrived at the next traffic jam, all the happy people in campers and hardtops and minis and caddies and muscle-hogs and beetles and panels and cycles and ranch-wagons, all air-conditioned too. They only open their windows to cast out paper and plastic and tin and broken glass which nestles in the wire-grass roots to form burning lenses in the smoky sun, and when the rain falls it is carried off in cleverly-engineered sluiceways so that the water dries up in the flesh of the earth and the sea is fouled. And the shining cars rush on smoothly night and day, burning the black secret blood of the mother and sending its smoke upon the lifeless air.

The people are happy in their thrumming cars, on their fine new road. Only sometimes as they zoom through the place where the valley was, their faces become strained and bleak and they have an absurd momentary fear that perhaps they cannot ever stop their engines or get out of their metal shells, but must roar on forever. But they know this is nonsense. Nothing will interfere with them. They will get where they are going.

And when they indeed and finally get where they are going, some among them may have time to ask, Why did we come here?



DAVID MC CULLOUGH:
EYE ON BOOKS

Isaac Bashevis Singer was out of the country when his latest collection of short stories, *A CROWN OF FEATHERS*, won this year's National Book Award for fiction, an award it shared with Thomas Pynchon's novel *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW*.

When Mr. Singer returned to New York I had a chance to talk with him in his Upper West Side apartment. It's foolish to prejudge what an interview is going to be like, but I arrived on West 86th Street assuming our conversation would be much like other Singer interviews I have read over the past decade: about how he came from Poland to America as a young man and how although he writes in Yiddish, he is a truly American writer; about the problems of translating Yiddish into American English; about the sadly ignored state of the contemporary short story; about the probable existence of the devil. Mr. Singer usually combines Old Testament wisdom with impish humor, a foxy Jewish grandpa who knows a dybbuk when he sees one.

But this time, Mr. Singer—who turned 70 in July—had something specific he wanted to say and was intent on saying it: "Too many people are now boasting that they don't read fiction any more. This didn't happen by accident. It happened because they have been disappointed too often by the novels and short stories critics have told them they should read. Too many critics, intelligent men, are calling garbage gold when they know it is garbage. If you need false witnesses for a bad book you can get them by the dozens. In literature and the arts there are more false witnesses than you can find in the law courts."

He went on to say, "The tragedy is that the victims are the good writers. Who cares about bad writers? They always find a way to get ahead. Too many writers are dabbling in sociology and politics, but they can't hold an audience for the length of a book. A good book should have tension and suspense. The fact that there is cheap suspense is no argument against genuine suspense. Poetry has lost its joy these days and its audience. Fiction, I'm afraid, is next. Literature has fallen into the hands of people who are indifferent to literature."

Since Mr. Singer has won two National Book Awards, been nominated for more and has been mentioned by some (Edmund Wilson among them) as a candidate for the Nobel Prize, I asked if this debasement is mirrored in the awarding of literary

prizes. "They usually go to worthless books," he said, because of friendships, politics or the financial needs of publishers."

If all this is true, what should be done about it? "Writers must actively join together," he said, "to organize openly against the commercial praising of junk and to tell readers that they are being systematically lied to about the quality of books. Maybe it can be done through a writers' magazine, I don't know, but voices must start speaking out. If we leave literary criticism to the smearers and false witnesses, it will be a tragedy. Bad taste goes together with bad deeds."

Then with a twinkle in his eye he added, "Of course you must remember that because I speak against smearers doesn't mean I might not be a smearer myself. I used to be on the lookout for angry young men who would speak out, but I've found that they've only been angry with themselves. Now I've decided an angry old man will do."

BOB SABELLA:
SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CURRENT WAVE OF SCIENCE FICTION

When I finished reading NEW DIMENSIONS IV recently it left me with an empty feeling. It was not a bad book; in fact, there were several stories in it which were quite good. The best was Gardner Dozois' long "Strangers," probably the best thing I've read by him and a certain award contender. Still, the overall book did not excite me. Maybe it's me, but precious little science fiction does excite me anymore. It may be I've become more demanding and more critical of what I read, but I do believe that some vital spark has gone out of recent science fiction.

I became an avid science fiction reader during 1966 and that was a very interesting time. Roger Zelazny had just become popular and people like Silverberg and Delany were beginning to show up on Hugo and Nebula ballots. The next few years were controversial in terms of New Wave/Old Wave, but there was a plethora of good material to come out of it. In consecutive years Delany published BABEL-17, THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION and NOVA, Zelazny did THIS IMMORTAL, THE DREAM MASTER and LORD OF LIGHT, Silverberg had NIGHTWINGS, THE MASKS OF TIME, THORNS and UP THE LINE, Alexei Panshin's RITE OF PASSAGE and John Brunner's STAND ON ZANZIBAR catapulted both of them to the front rank of sf writers. There were several outstanding shorter pieces as well, Delany's "The Star-Pit" and "Lines of Power," Silverberg's "Hawksbill Station," Moorcock's "Behold the Man," Farmer's "Riders of the Purple Wage." At the tail end of this brief period came Ursula Le Guin's THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS. Hardly a year passed when there were not several outstanding, exciting science fiction stories.

So what happened? We entered the Seventies with high hopes for better science fiction than ever before and we were hit with such stories as Larry Niven's RINGWORLD (certainly an enjoyable novel, but I felt little of the "sense of wonder" everybody marvelled about), Isaac Asimov's THE GODS THEMSELVES (which struck me as easily the biggest turkey he's ever written), Arthur C. Clarke's RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA (which I liked immensely, but it was a throwback to the Fifties, owing nothing to the whole New Wave era), Silverberg's THE TOWER OF GLASS (a vast disappointment from him) and THE WORLD INSIDE (which I found almost impossible to wade through), Le Guin did THE LATHE OF HEAVEN (enjoyable, but weak) and Zelazny did JACK OF SHADOWS (also very weak). There were a few exciting pieces, particularly Silverberg's DYING INSIDE, but these were few and far between compared to the mid-to-late Sixties. And Delany has been silent for this entire period.

The question, of course, is why? I don't believe the situation is restricted to science fiction. All of the "arts" were alive in the Sixties, a direct result of the mood of the country. In that short period of time people were active in many causes from ending the war to civil rights and ecology. There was much discontent and public outcry and people, mostly young although not exclusively, seemed genuinely interested in improving things. This enthusiasm leaked over to the "arts." Pop music achieved its greatest successes with the Beatles' SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND and ABBEY ROAD, the Stones' LET IT BLEED and BEGGAR'S BANQUET, and several lesser knowns as the Moody Blues' DAYS OF FUTURE PASSED, Paul Simon's BOOKENDS, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix and others. Movies were exciting as well, with a half dozen movies which achieved both critical and popular success and helped push that art form several years ahead of where it had been (THE GRADUATE, MIDNIGHT COWBOY, 2001).

As we slipped around the corner into the Seventies, complacency set in. The war in Vietnam ended and people tired of agitation. No more demonstrations, little public outcry; and yet none of the problems of the Sixties were gone, merely swept under the rug. Nostalgia became the craze as people sought to forget their problems in some mythical euphoria of the Twenties and the Thirties. Neither movies nor rock has approached the achievements of the late Sixties, and science fiction has regressed quite thoroughly to the "hard" science fiction which I, for one, detest.

In a recent GALAXY article Poul Anderson stated that science fiction undergoes a rebirth every twelve years and that it is time for another one in 1974. He exaggerated his statistics somewhat, but he is not far off. By my count, we had major upheavals in 1926 (Gernsback), 1939 (Campbell), 1950-51 (F&SF and GALAXY), 1965-66 (the New Wave). That gives us jumps of 13, 11 and 14 years. If this trend continues we can expect another upheaval between 1977 and 1980. If it's anything like the last upheaval it will be very exciting indeed. I hope so, since science fiction needs it badly.

ANGUS M. TAYLOR:
REACTIONARY IDEOLOGY IN SCIENCE FICTION:
a letter of comment on GORBETT 10

Having just returned from two years in Antarctica on an archaeological dig, I find the sf world aflame with debate over the subject of something called "Thinking Person's Soap Opera." What on earth is that? Frankly, I can make neither head nor tail of the whole thing, and suggest the rest of the world put the subject out of its collective mind. It all sounds to me like the "Paul is dead" business of a few years ago; no doubt whoever dreamt up this nonsense (S(Angus himself, of course)S) was inspired by late-evening fatigue and a momentary annoyance with some story long since forgotten.

But wait! I do detect a glimmer--just a glimmer--of sense here. Inspired by the sounds of Tim Buckley's "Valentine Melody" on the stereo (who are these Osmond sisters, anyway?--I've been away for so long) I will now propound an even more heretical, but hopefully better reasoned, notion.

We've all heard a lot about the awful pessimistic New Wave, whatever it is (everybody keeps arguing its merits, while simultaneously denying its existence) or was (I've been away, remember) and the optimistic Old Wave, or whatever. That's a sterile old debate. Yes, indeed: because people have got things backwards. It's the "old style" writers who are the real pessimists in the field: the Heinleins and the Andersons. (Buckley is singing "It Happens Every Time"--what a great 1967 song--gone, all gone, it's all pessimism today; even the down songs then were up--what happened?) What's sterile and pessimis-

tic about most sf is this: there's no concept of where society is going, no feeling of the progressive liberation of the human spirit. What Heinlein, Anderson, and the rest of them do is transfer present-day human relationships to the future: it's all the same--the same warfare, exploitation, misery. But there are heroes who rise above all that, you say! Yes, but it's only individuals--exceptional individuals--it's all very rugged individualistic. Our hero can carve himself an empire of temporary security and sanity, but the rest is lost, as ever. The universe is always the same; human nature is always the same; the few rise above, the masses sink. Thus is revealed the pessimistic, conservative--nay, reactionary--ideology of most of the sf we read.

At a recent conference on sf at the University of Toronto, Peter Fitting, who teaches an sf course there, referred in a speech he gave to a critic's observation about the avante-garde in literature: the avante-garde is conscious of the emptiness and sterility of bourgeois society, but it offers no alternative; it exposes and reacts to this sterility, but can see nothing beyond. Fitting applied this observation to sf's "New Wave": Ballard and company have got beyond the dead-end of Heinlein and company. At least they have done that, though they may have ended in a dead-end themselves. (Though Ballard's heroes, for example, never feel themselves defeated; in a hostile world they manage to adapt, and push on, undaunted, toward "the forgotten paradises of the reborn Sun.") At least the "new-style" writers are more optimistic than the old; at least grant them that. All those despair-filled novels of Doc Smith and Heinlein: **IMPERIALISM: THE EVERLASTING FINAL STAGE OF GALACTIC CAPITALISM** is the title that subsumes them all.

There exists a book by Agnes Smedley, entitled **THE GREAT ROAD**, and subtitled "The Life and Times of Chu Teh." I recommend it highly to every sf critic. It's the story of a poor Chinese peasant, born late in the nineteenth century, who grew up to become the great military general of the Communist revolution. And it's a story that puts to shame all the epics invented by Moorcock, Robert E. Howard, etc., etc.--in its variety, its richness, and its strangeness. A story about teeming populations, about wars, and warlords, about roads winding off toward fabled lands, like the land "South of the Clouds"--about strange sciences, and foreign devils, and mercenary armies laying waste the land, about peasant uprisings, and concubines, and cruelty beyond comprehension and valor beyond understanding, and long marches over snow-clad mountains and through deadly swampland, about strange tribes at the edge of the world, and bandit chieftains and their bandit kingdoms, about treachery and heroism, and opium smokers and secret societies, and more and more...

...Sleeping in the open at night and riding hard from the earliest dawn until black night fell, the refugees finally reached the River of Golden Sands but could find no ferry crossing into Sikang Province where they could shake off their pursuers. The party split in two to search for a ferry crossing, riding along the high and treacherous mountains with the torrents of the river crashing through black chasms far below.

Chu Teh's group found the ferry first, sent guards back to guide the others, and crossed. The rest came up and began crossing. All but six leaders and a few guards had made the other bank when the enemy battalion overtook them. There was a short, desperate battle, and all of them were either killed or taken captive.

The first group were now in Sikang Province, yet the enemy also crossed the river and continued the pursuit. This territory, however, was ruled by a bandit chieftan, Lei Yung-fei, whose small kingdom reached from the river to Huili in the north, a five or six days' ride. The refugees met Lei's border guards almost at once and explained to them that they were refugees on their way to meet their chieftan. Jealous of their own territory, the guards told them to

send outriders in advance to talk with Lei while the rest followed more slowly. The guards themselves would drive back the invading troops.

Two days later the refugees saw a body of armed horsemen riding down on them from the north and could distinguish their own comrades among them. They dismounted and waited. When the horsemen came up, a short, wiry man in his thirties dismounted and strode toward them. Chu Teh and his comrades waited with mingled fear and hope. The man approached, bowed and welcomed them with Old World courtesy, saying that he, Lei Yung-fei, considered them his guests.

Suspecting that this man might be a member of the ancient Ko Lao Hui secret society of which he himself was a member, General Chu, in greeting him, uttered a few words and made gestures by which such blood brothers could recognize one another anywhere. Lei's eyes gleamed as he returned the greeting and gave the awaited sign, and from that moment onward the refugees were doubly safe....

After leaving Lei's territory, Chu Teh and his comrades took new names and gave their occupation as merchants traveling with an armed escort, as was necessary through such dangerous territory. Riding up over the snow-mantled mountains, they crossed the wild Ta Tu River where the Taiping Army under Shih Ta-kai had perished sixty years previously....

The brief description which General Chu reluctantly gave of his week in Chungking sounded like some scene lifted from the page of a medieval tale. There was a continuous round of banquets and mah jong gambling parties replete with sing-song girls, shrieking hu-chins, and flowing wine, everything enveloped in the fumes of opium. Neither of the warlords smoked, yet they offered Chu the customary opium pipe and expressed surprise that he had given up the habit.

Over their cups the three men talked as feudal lords once talked. Reviewing past battles, they recalled just what each had done at such and such a time, praising each other's brilliant maneuvers while belittling their own. Not one word was uttered about the soldiers who had fallen like leaves in autumn, not a word about the suffering peasants or the crops trampled under the feet and hoofs of the opposing armies. Above all, nothing was said about Sun Yat-sen and the fate of the Chinese Republic....

Four and a half hundred pages of this large slice of true history is enough to make all those sword-and-sorcery epics and all those crumbling galactic empires seem born of unimaginative minds, poor shadows of the real thing. But above all, what infuses this great non-fiction story with vitality is, gleaming, now dully, now brightly, through all the chaos, the currents, the ups and downs of the years and the vast spaces, a sense of process, of unfolding, of something definite taking shape--a sense of the progressive movement toward a new world.

Art does not stand aside from the real world. Art cannot be "detached," despite the pretensions of the Nabokovs of our time. We do not stand aside from life and society. We make the world we inhabit; our existence guarantees our participation. Even passiveness is a form of action; in ways, a particularly strong form of action, for by masquerading as inaction it tends to reify the social world and lend it a false appearance of being beyond individual control or modification. All literature is ideological. We cannot decide--the writer cannot decide--whether we wish to involve ourselves in politics; we can only decide, or have decided for us, what kind of politics we are to be involved in. What ideology we are to accept, or propound. What kind of world we are, by nature of our existence in it, to make. Day by day. Minute by minute. By each action we perform or fail to perform.

Science fiction is propaganda. For this politics or that politics. For this world. When the Red armies liberated a town from the control of Chiang Kai-shek or any of innumerable warlords, one of their first acts was always to open the jails and let out all the prisoners. "Crime is a class question," Chu Teh said. Nothing happens without a context. Nothing happens in a vacuum. "Ideas do not drop from the sky," wrote the Italian Hegelian-Marxist Labriola in the last century--a phrase that inspired at least one man who later made history. Sf critics who do not recognize this, who bury their heads in the sands by not attempting to see the works they are criticizing in their political contexts--these critics are wittingly or unwittingly the ideologues of liberal capitalism. They are the apologists for the existing socio-economic system. If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

The vast bulk of modern sf, then, is reactionary in its basic assumptions. It is pessimistic and despairing of the ability of human beings to constructively shape the world they live in. The only "progress" it preaches is the expansion or extrapolation of present trends in space and time--which is not really progress at all, but stagnation and regression. It is not good enough to explore "the internal make-up of the human head," or "the slice of life wherein the climax or ultimate moment of the character's life, existence is met"--that is, it is not sufficient. Beyond this we must be led to understand the link with external politics, so that we see that "ideas do not drop from the sky."

The sf writer who in recent years has most brilliantly dealt with the politics of inner experience--or, perhaps to be more specific, the sociology of knowledge--is Philip K. Dick. The links with external politics are everywhere implicit in Dick's stories; where I think he can most legitimately be criticized is that these links are often obscured: they are not explicit enough. Recently, though, he has reversed his field. As Peter Fitting has nicely noted in a review, Dick has in FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID switched from schizophrenia to paranoia, and while this is in some ways a healthy trend, his fiction has suffered, for it is schizophrenia in all its aspects and connotations which is his forte. The abandonment of schizophrenia for paranoia is also evident in his most recent short story (F&SF, October 1974). Hopefully, in future a balance can be struck, in the sense that Dick will return to his concern with the sociology of knowledge while retaining a more explicit delineation of the links with external politics.

The two best novels to appear in the past year are THE EMBEDDING by Ian Watson and THE DISPOSSESSED by Ursula K. Le Guin. Both deal consciously with politics and go beyond the reactionary position of the old-wavers and the dead-endism of the avant-garde. In particular, THE DISPOSSESSED presents us with "an ambiguous utopia," holding out the promise of a new world that can be created by humans who assume responsibility for their own lives. Whatever the merits or deficiencies of Le Guin's particular blueprint, her novel stands as a rare example of truly progressive and optimistic science fiction.

Karl Marx wrote: "Philosophers hitherto have only interpreted the world in various ways: the point, however, is to change it."

Sf writers and critics should learn from that.

DONALD G. KELLER:
YEAR OF THE NOVELLA...AGAIN

It has often been said that the novella is the ideal length for science fiction, and for the last three years (as well as several earlier ones) the awards have been proving it, with the toughest competition coming in the novella category. This was particularly true in 1974: the novel was again rather weak,

with Le Guin's THE DISPOSSESSED the only worthy contender; and the Elwood Syndrome seems to have diluted the quality of the short fiction. The best reading I found the whole year was in the novellas; and the five I want to examine here are the ones I consider likely to be in contention for the awards.

Probably the most anticipated novella of the year was Robert Silverberg's "Born with the Dead" (F&SF, April 1974), his first major work in almost two years. His novels prior to this had been following a steadily rising curve of literary excellence, culminating in the brilliant DYING INSIDE; as the next step in his literary evolution "Born with the Dead" seemed to hold much promise.

Unfortunately, upon reading it proved a rather fragmented work. It is made up of a number of incidents, experiences, and set-pieces which fit together like a jigsaw puzzle--but, to pursue the analogy, they are merely the puzzle-border: the center is missing. It is a curiously oblique story which I never quite got my bearings in. Several of Silverberg's recent stories have been for me powerful emotional experiences, but this one left me cold and bewildered.

But perhaps that is the point of the story. Very briefly, in the Silverberg Standard Future people who die are "rekindled" and go out in the world as "deads," forming their own closed societies and ignoring the "warms" whenever possible. One man whose wife is a dead chases her around the world because he cannot bear to give her up. If the story's elusiveness is deliberate (and with Silverberg's obvious mastery of technique it almost has to be), it would seem that it was meant to put across the abstracted, bleak society of the deads. This is perfectly legitimate, but somehow I think that part of the feeling is incompleteness.

The problem that Silverberg has tackled here is a complex one, and probably should have been handled at full novel length. There is just so much left out; for all Silverberg's reputation as a traveler, none of the settings are described strongly enough to come alive; the characters are similarly sparsely described, motivations are not well established, and we never see any of the all-important relationship of Jorge and Sybille except its beginning and end. In brief, everything is drawn with quick, rough strokes so that what we end up with is a sketch for a deeper work.

It is a very "experimental" story in the sense that Silverberg is playing games throughout. He uses both conventional past tense and his favored present tense, and both European and "normal" quotation marks, but a lack of consistency renders them of little effect. Each of the nine chapters opens with a quote, from sources like Eliot and Laing and Shakespeare, all more or less (but obliquely) appropriate: one is from TEACH YOURSELF SWAHILI, and I have the uneasy feeling (my copy not being to hand) that it is a series of translation exercises, but it is as portentously meaningful as the rest. There are several flashback scenes, a hallucination scene (of dubious purpose), and a long hunting scene (led by a hunter named Gracchus), obviously symbolic, where the quarry are all resurrected extinct beasts. Throughout, there is a lot of live/dead symbolism. It seems as though Silverberg is trying to make his points by way of allusions, associations and symbols rather than by straightforward plot/character development. In this light, the most brilliant stroke, frustrating though it is in terms of story, is the climactic scene when Jorge finally meets up with Sybille, and all she talks about is a marvelous Arabian Nights-like incident from Zanzibar history--which turns out to be completely false. I think this is the philosophical nerve of the story, and one major reason for thinking that the thrust of the story is elsewhere than in the plot and structure. The ending is fairly obvious, but the denouement is as strange as the rest of the story.

I'm not sure that this jagged, intentionally incomplete story is one of Silverberg's best; another reading might change my mind. It is interesting as

an example of his mature technique, and important as his reemergence, but as of now I don't find it a satisfying piece of fiction.

Gardner Dozois' 45,000-word "Strangers" (NEW DIMENSIONS IV) stands head and shoulders in many ways over his previously distinguished work, but is nevertheless naggingly imperfect. Too often a story which is quintessentially told in novella form is bloated out to a disappointing novel, but in this case we have a novella which is too compressed, and needs the breathing room of a full-length novel (which it may yet be).

Dozois' previous work has always been stylistically powerful, at times brilliant; no one, not even Delany, works more carefully at getting his prose precisely right with all the proper levels of symbology. There is always more than immediately meets the eye in his writing, and nothing is there that is unimportant. Conceptually, though, he has been somewhat limited; when he does not come very close to mainstream ("A Kingdom by the Sea"), he contents himself with reworking fairly hackneyed sf themes and breathing new life into them ("Chains of the Sea").

It comes as a considerable surprise, therefore, to find that he is a master at creating a complete alien world, as good as anyone in science fiction. The world of Weinunnach in "Strangers" is visibly influenced by Burroughs and Vance and Le Guin, but only the latter at her very best has done it better. Lin Carter has made noises about how world creators should invent whole new sorts of races and creatures as well as landscapes; the point is granted, but it is so often done badly (particularly in Burroughs and his imitators) that it almost seems better not to do it. Dozois, however, does it, and superbly. The flora and fauna of Weinunnach are very different from that of Earth, but they are nonetheless exactly right and totally believable. His hominids (which, like Le Guin's, are a bit too much like Orientals) come in more than one race, even: the vignette about the marsh-men is one of the most striking moments of the story.

The culture of the Cians is made up of a web of seasonal and life-cyclical ritual as old as their race. The rites and their attendant customs are evoked with a power and an attention to detail that is astounding. The early scene at the Alantene, the winter-solstice ceremony, is one of the finest things I have read in a long time.

Into this ancient culture, stagnant by human terms but vigorous, Dozois introduces the Earthman Farber, one of his catatonic characters who cannot comprehend or deal with his surroundings. He bulls and blunders his way through the story, so fixated in his preconceptions that no weight of evidence will change his mind; and when decisive action is needed, he becomes so indecisive that he cannot do anything but stand dumbly by and let events happen. His actions are so thoroughly wrong-headed that it is painful. His characterization is my least favorite part of the story, partly because Dozois has done it before several times, partly because it jars with his marvelous world-creating; but it is so central to the story's theme that I can't see any way around it.

With the exception of Liraun, the Cian woman Farber falls in love with, the remainder of the characterization is done in cameos, briefly tipped in where necessary. Some of them (particularly Jacawen) are very successful, others are not. Liraun comes across very unevenly, due largely to the story's major flaw.

Dozois' greatest asset as a writer is his obsessively close focus: the reader is given every minute detail of emotional state and setting. This works extremely well in the short story form; but in "Strangers" Dozois has a large canvas and a fairly long period of time to convey, and since he set out to write a novella and not an epic novel, he perforce had to skip over uneventful time.

He unfortunately does not do this well, coming perilously close to synopsis at times, ending up telling rather than showing. These places, strangely enough more common in the first half than in the second, weaken the story considerably. What suffers worst is the all-important early relationship of Farber and Liraun. The scenes between them, particularly their meeting, vie with the expository passages for power; but we do not live their falling in love, rather we are told baldly "They fell in love." Liraun remains throughout a vague and enigmatic figure; true, Farber never understands here, but the strongest way to show this would be to allow the reader to do so, at least partly.

There are other much more minor flaws: the science is at times well thought out and extremely plausible, but at one key place it is more fast talk than extrapolation, and is therefore weak. The writing is mostly outstanding, but Dozois lets one of his favorite tricks, the one-line paragraph, run away with him. And I am unsatisfied with the ambiguity of the final sentence.

I am aware of a certain hypersensitivity to these flaws; I am such a fan of his work, and so amazed by this story in general, that I am unwilling to ignore flaws I might in a lesser work. With the exception of Farber's character, which is built into the story and indispensable, there is nothing I find wrong with it that could not be fixed by revision. If he does it right, a novel version could be nothing short of a masterpiece, an instant classic on the order of THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS.

The most romantic and conventional of the newer writers is George R.R. Martin, and he puts his talents to excellent use in "A Song for Lya" (ANALOG, June 1974). As with his last year's award nominee, "With Morning Comes Mistfall," what is noteworthy is not the fairly standard situation, but the sensitivity of the writing, Martin's great capability for infusing his stories with strong and real emotion. We have seen the basic elements of "Lya" many times before: the future settled galaxy Man shares with a few alien races, the mystery that only psi-talented troubleshooters can solve, the pastoral non-violent civilization thousands of years older than Man's, and the morbidly fascinating, concrete alien nirvana. Furthermore, Martin's handling of these elements, while sure and graceful, is far from extraordinary. The background and inconsequential detail are sketched in lightly and matter-of-factly, with no flash, and there are some nice touches and some disappointments (the names, for example, are only competent).

But as I said, the strongest aspect of the story is the writing. Always visual and descriptive, it is also emotional (without being sentimental) and poetic. Indeed, the opening of the story has the same feeling as the best heroic fantasy, and sucked me into buying the magazine it was in when I had not intended to. It is a prose well-suited to bringing across real sense of wonder, and that is exactly what Martin achieves with it.

The interaction of the telepathic central characters is also first-rate. They are married and very much in love, and every emotional reaction they (and the other characters) have rings true. The cynical may object that the love scenes are overlong and too sentimental, but to me (an admitted romantic) they seemed right out of real experience. And the discussion, central to the story, of the extra closeness of telepathic lovers came across as powerful and legitimate.

The theme of the story is a double one: God and Love. Most religious people will tell you the two are identical, so this can be seen as examining the same question from two different angles. The God part goes like this: if you were confronted with a way of truly reaching paradise, eternal happiness, what would you do? Tiptree alone among sf writers would say Embrace it; the general consensus has been to equate it with the perils of Elfland, and flee it. With

a couple as main characters, Martin can play it both ways, simultaneously not taking sides and exploring the philosophical implications of both answers. The Love part is that the alien nirvana is a group-mind of ultimate love, and how this compares with mere human love. So Martin is exploring the ultimate questions of the universe and human experience; if he is unsatisfactory with his answers, it is because anyone would be.

"A Song for Iya," then, is ambitious of them, powerful of emotion, conventional but competent in background, and very well-written. It is old-style science fiction as good as it can be done.

Michael Bishop is my own personal hope for the future: he has all the tools to be one of the really big ones in sf. Like Gordon Eklund, he is immensely ambitious, but not yet in complete control of his material. But whereas I am not fond of Eklund's stuff, I love everything Bishop does, even when it fails. What impresses me most is the breadth of his imagination: when he conceptualizes a story, he not only considers plot, idea and theme, but style, structure and character. Paradoxically, even though he usually has trouble making everything cohere, there is still this sense of gestalt in his thinking about a story. Each one, however imperfect, is an organic whole different from its fellows.

His most complete success to date, "The Windows in Dante's Hell," is a procedural story set in a hivecity future; "Death and Designation Among the Asadi" is an anthropological report from another planet; "The White Otters of Childhood" involves politics and surgery in a Stapledonian future Earth; "On the Street of the Serpents" is an autobiography extending into our near future. Four different stories, each with milieu, style and idea peculiar to itself; but each bears the unmistakable stamp of Bishop's thought.

The MARAT/SADE-like subtitle of "On the Street of the Serpents" gives the story's argument: "The Assassination of Chairman Mao as Effected by the Author in Seville, Spain, in the Spring of 1992, a Year of No Certain Historicity." Its two major motifs, inextricably entwined, are autobiography and the nature of time. The surface structure has a symmetry I find pleasing: there are three sections, one each set in past, present, and future, the latter by far the longest. I am really curious to know if Bishop has read Stapledon; a number of things in his work suggest it. Here, it is the idea that, as Moskowitz notes, Stapledon searches the future instead of the past for his philosophical answers; Bishop, in his search for self, does the same.

The first section is a series of minor incidents of major impact taking place ten years in Bishop's past. Apparently it is genuine autobiography; in any case, the feel is strongly authentic. And, despite the inconsequentiality of the incidents, Bishop nevertheless transmits their importance to him--and for later. The second section is a series of musings from the time Bishop wrote the story--on politics, the birth of his son, and suchlike. It sets up the thematic basis of the story, which is combined with the setting/characters of the first section and jumped forward twenty more years...and this is where the story really begins.

The astute reader will see a similarity here to Panshin's "How Can We Sink When We Can Fly?": a combination of story and the material from which it was drawn. In Panshin's case, the "story" was only about a third of the piece; with Bishop it is three-quarters, and a case could be made that he would have had a stronger and wholer story without those first two sections. But it would not have been nearly as interesting or profound a story. Brilliance and perfection are not necessarily adjuncts.

What Bishop did was take the exact same setting and all the major charac-

ters (plus one character, marvelously mentioned in passing, who becomes crucial) he used in the first section and project them into the future. The resonance thus set up concretizes and realizes his future to an astounding degree--one believes in it utterly. This also sets up a curious double reaction to the one speculative element: because it is brought into the story almost matter-of-factly, one accepts it as one accepts the characters; yet, though the reader has doubtless met the idea before, in the near-palpability of the scene it seems as strange and unbelievable as it does to the characters. I have rarely run across a story with as strong a feeling of actuality to it. Even the melodrama of the plot (as opposed to the character-story) is not out of place.



Since he portrays his future self as an assassin, it is tempting to psycho-analyze Bishop, or prattle on about art as exorcism, but that is not really the critic's province. What there is to praise in the story is the overall conception, the imaginative use and extrapolation of his material, as well as the sensitive, eloquent, barely short of overwritten prose which added much to the story's enjoyment. Not so praiseworthy is the slight overcautiousness before his bold idea, which led to a few stutters in the form of intrusions in the narrative, designed to explain (unnecessarily) just how he was playing with time. The mere juxtaposition of the three sections was enough. And the second section meanders more than it should.

In the final analysis, though, "On the Street of the Serpents" (SCIENCE FICTION EMPHASIS #1) is a powerful, affecting reading experience, another feather in the cap of a career that bears watching. I am especially anticipating his first novel, A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE.

Most sf readers will likely tell you that Norman Spinrad's work has been uneven; certainly his reputation among them has been. But for myself, I seem to have a curious affinity for his stuff, because there are few stories of his that I have not liked immensely. I was pleased to find that "Riding the Torch"

(THREADS OF TIME) is no exception.

As Jofe D'mahl enters his party at the story's beginning, so we are plunged into the universe he inhabits. It is an excellent example of a technique that can be difficult: presenting a new society without explaining anything, leaving the reader to get his bearings as he goes along. Spinrad manages it effortlessly, and the society is fascinating, all flash and bright colors (somewhat reminiscent of Ellison and Delany), a world of total control of matter and energy, of total access to information and other people (via brain implants), a truly future society with its own vocabulary. It takes place on torchships (shades of Heinlein!) searching endlessly for new planets after fleeing ruined Earth. Opposed to this jetset society are the voidsuckers, the austere crewmembers of the scoutships. This contrast is the tension that makes the story. The big question is: Is Man the be-all and end-all of the universe, or just a lucky accident?

Probably Spinrad's strongest asset is his incredible grasp of media, both in how they are created and how they work on the experiencer. Thus he was able to write his brilliant essay on STAND ON ZANZIBAR, "The Novel as Film"; his expertise with TV made BUG JACK BARRON; and the purest example is "The Big Flash." He comes as close as print can come to actually making you see what he is describing. In "Riding the Torch" he has two complete "sensos" by Jofe D'mahl, the greatest artist of his age. They are the standard all-senses works of art (experienced by "tap"), but they work beautifully, both within context and in and of themselves. Spinrad shows how they could be both representational and fantastic, with a wider range of possible symbology, and he makes you feel them.

The major drawback of the story is a quality that has been to Spinrad's advantage in the past: he writes to be read practically at light-speed, which allows him to carry you on past loose ends and extravagances and mistakes. However, there are no really obvious flaws in this story, and though the usual Spinrad energy is very much there, it does not slop over, but is carefully controlled and channeled. It seems as though Spinrad is learning to harness his talents without stifling them: this is a much more mature work in many ways than his previous stuff. But the problem is that there is so much to savor here, and the pace of the story causes everything to go by so fast that it does not have the impact it might. In particular this applies to the idea of the voidsuckers' going out alone in space and communing with the Infinite. This should have been a profound and mind-blowing experience, but without a lot of time devoted to it it becomes merely fascinating.

On the whole, however, "Riding the Torch" is a considerable success, full of good writing, and I am glad to see that Spinrad is capable of tackling a major piece like this and be in total control.

As for my own personal choices among these, I would have to vote Dozois and Bishop a close one-two for ambition, however partially realized; then Martin and Spinrad to solid slightly lesser achievement, and Silverberg bringing up the rear (but fifth best, remember). I will probably be embarrassed to find I've omitted some important story from this survey, but for me these were the year's outstanding stories.

JEFF SMITH:
SENSE OF WONDER IN THE MUNDANE WORLD

Although I work in the Biology Department of a community college, I really am not a biology fan. I've picked up some interesting tidbits in my year-and-a-half here, to be sure, but I've yet to be inspired to sign a lifelong contract with the field.

The most fascinating item I have run into is a book, THE SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPE by C. P. Gilmore, published in 1972 by the New York Graphic Society. As might be guessed from its publisher, the book is primarily a compilation of photographs taken through a scanning electron microscope--a device so powerful that some of the pictures are of objects magnified over 50,000 times.

If you should be able to check this book out of the library (or be able to pay \$15.95 for a copy) you would learn all kinds of interesting things, like these:

A bee's stinger is barbed, like the arrows of the bad guys in jungle movies. It makes a bigger hole when you pull it out than when the bee put it in.

When you breathe in dust, you also breathe in ugly little house mites. Really, you might be better off not seeing the pictures of these, which look like the armored-car version of beetles. Uch. "Sometimes two to three hundred mites live in /an area/ hardly bigger than a pinhead." I may give up breathing.

Salt is shaped in cubes. Pepper looks like a meteoric sponge.

The difference between new and used razor blades is enough to make you switch to an electric shaver. The difference between a beard shaved with a razor blade (cleanly sliced)&an electric razor (hack hack hack!) is enough to make you give up shaving entirely.

A dentist's drill does not taper down to a point. And it's studded with diamond chips in such a way that it looks like the mites have been cutting their teeth on it. It's hideous! Just have a friend pull out your teeth with a pair of pliers.

The difference between a guinea pig's ear normally and after it was exposed to high-intensity sound is...shattering. Turn down the stereo! No more concerts!

Record grooves are fascinating. I've always been of the impression that Superman could "hear" a record just by examining its grooves with super-vision.

The tongue of a rat at 2600x has to be about the ugliest thing I've ever seen. I wish it didn't look so much like the skin of a human at 1000x. And as for psoriasis...

If you saw what I saw you'd never bleach your hair again. It looks like it's been through two or three world wars. (Chemical warfare, I suppose.)

There are also photos of bacteria, pollen, minerals, fabrics, a six-page history of slime mold, and much more. An incredibly mind-boggling book.

JAMES TIPTREE, JR.:
LOOKING INSIDE SQUIRMY AUTHORS

Last night I was reading an SF series that I cannot figure out why in the name of the Jolly Green Giant everybody doesn't read. Or at least borrow and talk about. It's so interesting. For years now I've been reading the series and I haven't yet heard anybody mention it or seen but one tepid review that missed the point. I refer to the AUTHOR'S CHOICE series that Harry Harrison has been stubbornly bringing out to the accompaniment of deafening silence for 10 these years. It's now at No. 4. No. 4 is a specially good issue 'cause it contains old Guess Who but I felt just the same enthusiasm for Nos. 1, 2 and 3. Here's why:

Are the stories all masterpieces? OF COURSE NOT. (Although there's quite a few, like Brian Aldiss' "Old Hundredth," that made me go Oo-oooh.) But masterpieces is not the point. The point is, each story is the author's private pet--and therein lies the tale. Moreover, Harry made everyone write a piece saying why he picked that story, and when you read those, man, the tails really begin to hang out. Fascinating. I've said it before, when an author opens his mouth about his stories, he or she usually blurts out more than you may want to know about his or her self. Can't help it. Embarrassing, don't look--but let's be honest, I love it. There they are, squirming and shell-less. Some of them so earnest and hopeful you want to pat them; some puffed up like blow-fish peeking at you over their engorged egos; some quietly, monomaniacal, going on about how the story fits into Phase 3 Subsection 4 of My Early Style, you know, MY WORK which has become the universe. And some--well, you've never seen so many people in weird poses. Anybody with a jigger of snoop-juice in his blood has to love that series.

(And what pose, you may ask, did Tiptree get into? Don't ask. Froze up self-consciously and talked at great length--poetically even--about the thing which had made me angry enough to write the story. Which dammit I believe--but it was a cop-out. Uh, sorry... Doesn't that tell its own story too?)

One more thing before we quit this: there's a kind of beautiful thing about the series too, as well as the pants-down revelations. All of us dream, you know. Clown-writers dream of tragic poetry, destructo-writers dream of a gentle world--sometimes. And their pet stories are often their pets because a bit of the private dream comes through. And some of them are, well, beautiful...

Read.

(And don't say I didn't warn you; what is old good-guy Tiptree's dream? Killing everybody, that's what. Uh, sorry again.)

A BA-A-A-D IDEA

Encouraged by the howling non-success of Harry's AUTHOR'S CHOICE series, I have an idea for an anthology which everybody dammit OUGHT to want to read. Especially everybody who wants to write, which must include about ten million souls. Anyhow, it includes me, I'd buy it: BAD STORIES BY GOOD WRITERS. An antho where everybody you like sent in their worst published stories, together with a short piece on What's Wrong With This Floop.

By using published ones you'd get the stuff that is just tantalizingly almost okay, the kind where you can really learn something about technique. Every writer has got a cookie or two like that. Lord knows I have: a turkey called "Happiness Is a Warm Spaceship" which I thought was buried for eternity until a good, thorough reviewer named Don D'Amassa dug up its embarrassed bones. I re-read it, marvelling. The bloody beast has everything--plot, relevance, jokes, fights--everything except what makes a story...that intangible known as pacing or timing, that mystery known as shape. By the time I really know what makes that story so boring I just might know how to write. And eh how I would love to see the different sins of others, and hear them explain why the rocket fell. Man, would I buy that antho!

Wouldn't you? And you? No?

Dammit...

We are alone.

Barry
Gillam:

Looking
Backward:
the f&sf
film in 1974



I ended my last year's survey (S(in PHANTASMICOM 11)S) with an optimistic note about forthcoming productions. That has been fulfilled to the extent that the only two films worth seeing this year were better than the corresponding two from 1973.

The trend that this year's genre films display is a determination to look back on past glory. Remakes, parodies and homages are the forms that 74's films most often take. The science fiction film has not unnaturally caught the seventies' keynote of cultural timidity and its search for some answer to where we are going in where we have been. This may help to explain the bewilderment and uncertainty that the films themselves are subject to in 1974. Writers cannot tell stories and seem undecided as to whether they should. Directors try to hide their own perplexity in a dazzle of technique or a poker face of inaction. The actors, understandably, are more on their own than ever before and are also at a loss as to what to do with this unwelcome latitude. The distributors were no less subject to the zeitgeist (and the arbitrary hit or miss box office patterns) and some films have suddenly and inexplicably vanished. Others were held up for months and, like THE LITTLE PRINCE, seem to have been cut down from the major projects their budgets suggested.

All was not gloom, however. The best genre film of the year was Mike Hodges' THE TERMINAL MAN, which changed Michael Crichton's cheap, fast thriller into a meditation on the techniques of modern medicine. Hodges even makes a virtue of the sensationalistic plot, which pits a computer scientist suffering from psychomotor epilepsy (i.e., he goes berserk periodically) against the hospital computer and staff, who are trying first to cure him and later, when he escapes, to find him and stop him. Picking up the semi-documentary flavor of the book, Hodges creates tour-de-force operation room and cranial node testing sequences. Unfortunately, these canny juxtapositions of man and machine are flawed by Crichton's simplistic anti-science statements, which Hodges should have known better than to keep. The low point of the film is doubtless the cross-cutting between the delicate, probing node test and a group of orderlies out in the hall who are telling and vastly enjoying jokes about the handicapped.

In the novel Crichton mentions that one of the surgeons finds the playing

of Bach soothing when he operates. Hodges takes this as a guide and conjures the entire score from The Goldberg Variations. The photography is a match in its chilly elegance: THE TERMINAL MAN is a black and white film photographed in color. Such is Hodges' skill at variation, though, that one is hardly aware on first viewing that the dabs of color in each frame are so few: a rose, a blond wig, a flesh tone. The film features a series of stunning black and white sets, including all the apartments and private homes. Just before a stripper meets her gaudy end, she is painting her nails black.

The funereal packaging is only appropriate to writer/director Hodges' deterministic vision, which his first two films, GET CARTER (1971) and PULP (1973), also expressed. The impossibility of communication between any two people or groups is unrelenting: at the center, Dr. Ross, the psychiatrist treating patient Benson, cannot seem to get through to him; moving outward, she cannot entirely convince herself or her colleagues that the still experimental electrode implantation is the correct procedure; the doctors and the computer men do not speak the same language; neither do the doctors and the police, or Dr. Ross and the surgeons. Scriptwriter Hodges is rather more careful with his words than novelist Crichton. Where the novel describes Dr. Ross repeating some childhood catchphrases for a microphone voice level, Hodges has her reciting Eliot: "I think we are in rats' alley/Where the dead men lost their bones...."

The photography is just as bleak. Whenever possible Hodges cross cuts between his actors instead of allowing them the companionship of a frame-sharing two-shot. Moreover he often tends to mask the image in a Griffithian manner so that only one face is visible. During the implantation the camera placement, shooting between actors to catch a single surgeon's concentration, denies the manifest group effort of the operating room. The electrode stimulation sequence isolates Benson and Ross against the white walls of the room, Benson on the right half of an empty frame, Ross on the left. When a sex impulse is triggered, Benson impinges on Ross's space and the viewers feel the unnaturalness of this most natural urge as Benson's arms reach into the formerly safe, empty buffer zone of Ross's frame.

If this sounds too deterministic, note that Hodges eschews Crichton's facile, pessimistic and hermetic circle of a plot and adds a rich, ironic mordancy. Benson, the computer expert obsessed with the idea that machines are taking over the world, is the inhabitant of a film that is a virtual ode to technology. THE TERMINAL MAN is a metallic, interior movie until the very end, when Hodges relents and opens up on a luxurious green vista--Forest Lawn cemetery. At the same time, the failure of THE TERMINAL MAN to be much more than the sum of its brilliant parts is due to its weak characterization. Hodges clearly cast George Segal against type. But this doesn't explain how we are to accept a bantam-weight graduate of romantic comedy as a Frankenstein's monster. Joan Hackett is good as the well-meaning Dr. Ross, her tense, opaque face and short brown hair telling us all we need to know about the character. Hodges' principle with the other casting seems to have run along these lines. Dealing with Crichton's non-entities and what may well be his own ability to create characters, Hodges selected physical types. They are adequate but not a great deal more than adequate.

For each demerit, though, the film has at least two pluses. The action that has sustained GET CARTER's reputation is also one of the highlights of THE TERMINAL MAN. The murder and attempted murder (of the stripper and of Dr. Ross, respectively) are dazzling, the first for its sensuality, the second for its dramatic tension.

Hodges often delivers his message just as stubbornly as Crichton but the forms he chooses tend to have greater emotional validity. Periodically through the film the black screen lets in a ray of light from a peephole. An eye ap-

pears and voices are heard: two orderlies are discussing the case they are looking at. For all its self-consciousness, this accusation of the audience is in the great tradition of Samuel Fuller's SHOCK CORRIDOR and of Ezra Pound, who said: "All America is a lunatic asylum."



There are more than a few moments in ZARDOZ when one wonders if the film's screenwriter has not escaped from an institution. A sort of pan-mythological melette, ZARDOZ describes a future world ruled by intellectual immortals who use the titular diety as their honcho to the barbarians. Sean Connery, as Zed, a barbarian capable of thought, comes among the esthete immortals and reopens the barely-closed wounds of this odd social structure. Taking up different sides of the debate are old friends Charlotte Rampling and Sara Kestelman, who provide two of the strongest women's performances in sf film.

ZARDOZ is like the film Godard talks about which is good because it makes you think of everything else. Except that the "everything else" is actually in ZARDOZ. Connery enters the room of one of the immortals to find it crammed with bricabrac ranging from a Magritte painting to a jack-in-the-box. The hodgepodge attic of influences depicts the confusion of Boorman's own mind. As a screenwriter, he's a mess. But as a director he has learnt to trust in his images and his images here are splendid. (Geoffrey Unsworth's photography displays a fruity luxury.)

The film is a visual roller coaster and perhaps for that reason one remembers vividly many bits and pieces even though you aren't sure how they fit together: the thundering attacks of the barbarians; the awesome, gravity-defying stone godhead; the green Irish valleys; Rampling, like a scrawny Valkyrie, riding after Connery; the eternal's use of a birdlike language of hands and gestures as opposed to Connery's center of expression, his blunt trunk of a body; the mock Egyptian costuming which extends to the stylized facial hair, etc.

ZARDOZ is quite nonsensical but a lot of fun all the same.

A friend of mine described Stephanie Rothman's TERMINAL ISLAND in roughly those terms but I'm not sure how far my agreement extends. In an undefined day-after-tomorrow setting all the convicted murderers in California are put on an escape-proof island. There they are faced with that stalwart sf theme: how to build a new society in the wilderness.

This ostensible subject is bypassed in most of the film for a running battle between an established community and a group of outcasts. The spoils in contention are the food and the women. I would like to say that the film parodies the mass idea of Hollywood actresses but Rothman shows little sense of humor. My friend called the movie a "great sado-masochistic fantasy" and that about sums it up. The women have long, glossy hair and tender, clear skin even though they work alongside the men in the community projects. And Barbara Leigh is pure wish-fulfillment: a mute, willowy beauty who ends up bound and whipped as a decoy to lure the guards to their doom.

There is a good deal of violence, centering on guerilla action with home-made hand grenades and improvised weapons. Some of it, especially the personal revenge, is quite cruel, but it is all treated rather coolly. This is not the visceral, empathic, gut-clinching violence of Sam Peckinpah but a voyeur's variety. The same approach to the characters renders the trashy stereotypes ambivalent. Rothman keeps her action in middleground, leaving the audience unconcerned for their fates.

The best things in the film use this distance creatively. The opening TV

documentary on Terminal Island is quick, witty and effective in establishing the background and introducing, via mug shots, the characters. The sequence with Leigh staked out on the beach, in which she is both object and subject, also shows an understanding of what Rothman's medium and long shots convey emotionally. As for the rest of it, I really can't say.

If you're wondering why you haven't heard of this film, the explanation is simple. I caught it during its several week run on 42nd Street (on the bottom half of a double bill with JOHNNY TOUGH, the black 400 BLOWS). It was never "opened" and never reviewed. The copyright date is 1973 but as far as I know its first New York showing was in summer 1974. Rothman is simultaneously one of the least known contemporary directors and the most prolific woman director in America. Her first film was THE VELVET VAMPIRE: some others are WORKING GIRLS, STUDENT NURSES and GROUP MARRIAGE.

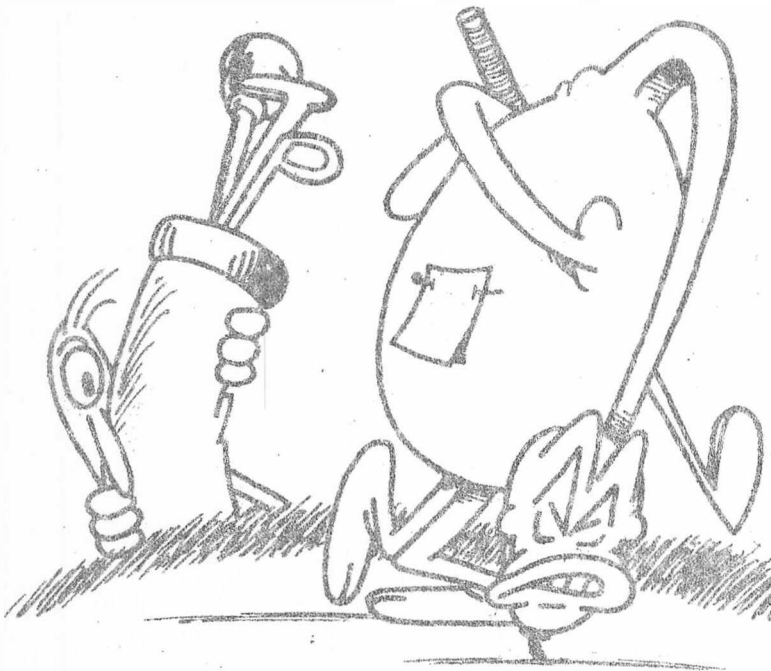
THE TERMINAL MAN, ZARDOZ and TERMINAL ISLAND all make extensive use of the treasury of past sf films. Mike Hodges' quote of THEM on a television set is an acknowledgement of his much wider employment of the vocabulary that has already been established. What separates THE TERMINAL MAN, ZARDOZ and even TERMINAL ISLAND from the rest of this year's films is that they make imaginative use of the conventions of genre movies. The two new Frankenstein films provide an object lesson in how not to parody a genre.

ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN alternates between camp conceits and horror cliches as writer/director Paul Morrissey wanders through the Frankenstein mythos. Morrissey's updating and deliberate anachronisms include a wide range of perversity from incest to necrophilia. As the Baron tells his assistant: "To know death, Otto, you have to fuck life--in the gall bladder." Unfortunately, he proceeds to do so onscreen. Morrissey's Baron is a megalomaniac bent on creating a race loyal to himself. The hitch, of course, is that not a single member of his family or staff bears the slightest feeling of loyalty toward him.

The use of the 3-D effect is at once the only point of interest and the ultimate failure of the film. The shock effects (bats and bloody organs flying out into our faces) are just as tawdry as the bordello sequence in which huge breasts are thrust toward the camera. (The new 3-D process still produces a blurry image, ghosts and a headache, by the way.) Morrissey does realize some of the potential in the less frenetic scenes, where the depth of field is used dramatically to indicate the distance between his characters. (As in Hodges, there is a total lack of contact between people.) Perhaps the best things of this kind are the dinner scenes in which both widescreen and 3-D take the place of Morrissey's former moving camera (in TRASH, especially) to describe an emotional wasteland.

Given the deadpan wit of TRASH, one constantly hopes that Morrissey will make more of his material. If he had the sense to cast Joe Dallesandro, the Warhol Factory's sexual zombie, in a Frankenstein film, why didn't he make more of what is now a simple and all too easy symmetry: the Baron humping his corpse and the Baroness with Dallesandro. Morrissey's updating is most interesting in his treatment of the children, who are no longer the helpless victims of the original thirties versions but cruel little adults, spying on and copying the behavior of their dissolute parents.

Mel Brooks and Gene Wilder have been much more reverent in their YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN but equally as boring and inconsequential. YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN is two films in one: visually a homage and verbally a parody. The sets are excellent replicas of the James Whale-directed FRANKENSTEIN (1931) and THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935). Against this sleek, expensive surface, Brooks plays his usual sophomoric gags, which are even less funny than in his previous films.



Gene Wilder is Baron Frankenstein's grandson, who returns to the ancestral castle and takes up the fateful experiments. This gives Brooks a chance to parody several specific scenes from the Whale films although his anything-for-a-laugh style adduces KING KONG (1933, for the scientific presentation), DRACULA (1931, for the non-Whale cobwebs and scurrying creatures on the sets), NOW VOYAGER (1942, for the two cigarettes the monster lights), etc. The only scene that I felt any warmth toward (and then for the subject rather than the execution) was the white tie and tails song and dance duet that the Baron and his creation present. The

closest Brooks gets to humor is the casting of Marty Feldman, who does as much as one can with the limp one-liners.

As I have noted, Brooks is not overly fastidious with his tribute and the allegedly thirties film style is a hodgepodge of silent film irises, thirties wipes and even an occasional use of a Whale-like moving camera. This would not matter greatly except that it is an indication of Brooks' merely passing acquaintance with the Whale films. Although FRANKENSTEIN is a real Gothic dud of a movie, I find it hard to believe that anyone who has seen THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN could consider it a stodgy, stuffed-shirt target for parody. In fact, Whale's wit and mordancy animate the heavy Gothic sets with bizarre lighting effects, askew camera angles and a sardonic humor. I suspect that it is only the relative unavailability of Whale's masterpiece, THE OLD DARK HOUSE (1932), that relegates these horrific comedies to a status of dusty antiques and low camp.

If this basic misunderstanding weren't enough to sidetrack the film, there is also the matter of the fine cast (Madeleine Kahn, Gene Hackman, et al.) being cramped by the caricatures they are forced to impersonate.

I have never been enamored of Brooks' world, but YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN reveals a trend that I find even less palatable than usual. Early in the movie, young Dr. Frankenstein demonstrates a point about the nervous system to his class. His subject, an old man, loses all control over his body when Frankenstein pinches a nerve in his neck, cutting off the link to the brain. You see, he tells his class, without the brain he is just so much broccoli. YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN is filled with numb, mechanical people: Kenneth Mars' town constable with a Dr. Strangelove metal arm, Madeleine Kahn's fiancée with her untouchable make-up, Feldman with his moving hump, Gene Hackman's blind man standing in for the automatic feeder from MODERN TIMES, even Wilder, who stabs himself in the leg with a scalpel which sticks out as if embedded in wood, and, of course, Peter Boyle's monster.

I hardly think I would object if any of this were funny. But because there was so little to enjoy or think about in the movie I inevitably considered the way of life that Brooks presents. His reduction of human relations to a matter of male and female electrical leads is only one more example of his paucity of imagination.

The same problem, both in its limits and its one track view, is the bane of FLESH GORDON, a softcore spoof that features a similar urban verbal humor. Granted that it is technically incompetent, atrociously acted and wretchedly written--but does it have to be so boring? When someone tries to start a spaceship with his VW key, you know what you're in for: names like Dale Ardor, Flexi Jerkoff, the planet Porn, the Emperor Wang, etc. Bjo Trimble gets some kind of costuming or makeup credit (I wasn't going to sit through it again and check) and I only hope she was well paid for her trouble. The best of the movie, much better than the sex (what little there is left of it after being cut down from the original hardcore version), is the model animation, in particular a praying mantis warrior and an excellent satyr who takes the place of King Kong and paws the heroine. The quality of that work is so superior to the rest of the film that I wonder what the poor animator thought when he saw the mess his film creatures had gotten themselves into.

Jack Cardiff probably also wondered where he had gone wrong when the former director of such a prestigious project as SONS AND LOVERS (1960) found himself confronted with THE MUTATIONS, a loose science fictional remake of FREAKS. The sf half of the story features mad scientist Donald Pleasance, who wants to turn people into plants, and plants into animals. (He mutters something about solving the world food crisis.) Securing human specimens for his experiments is the work of Tom Baker, the facially deformed co-owner (with Michael Dunn) of a sideshow. This nonsense wouldn't be so bad but for the film's insistence on all its most unpleasant aspects. The movie is especially odd in its juxtaposition of the cheaply-costumed plant-people and the authentic freaks. The best and worst of the film is the freak show--because it is the most moving and the most depressing thing that the movie has to offer. The drama played out there, with Dunn and the freaks in the thrall of bullying Baker, has a certain validity and makes appropriate use of the FREAKS incantation: "He's one of us. We accept him."

CHOSEN SURVIVORS is another film drawing on archetypes and mythic resonances to suggest dimensions its own story lacks. Eleven people living in a New Mexico bomb shelter after a thermonuclear war find their clean, modernistic corridors of light invaded by vampire bats. This underground BIRDS takes its morality tale too far and the little power it possesses is derivative. The echoes of Ulmer's THE CAVERN only augment one's sense of the film's inferiority. CHOSEN SURVIVORS is just as dumb as the other disaster movies but lacks their polish and actors. Neither Richard Jaeckel nor Diana Muldaur, both of whom are capable of better work, shows much interest in the proceedings, which are suspiciously reminiscent of a made-for-TV movie.

THE LAST DAYS OF MAN ON EARTH is a film that really ought to be more interesting than the rest of the trash I find myself wading through as I get down to the bottom of the year. However, the only surprise in this retitled and delayed American release of THE FINAL PROGRAMME (which doesn't mention Moorcock's novel in its credits) is its ability to almost totally waste an exceptional cast: Jon Finch, Jenny Runacre, Patrick Magee and Sterling Hayden. (Hayden appears in what looks like an improvised homage to DR. STRANGELOVE; as Maj. Wrongway Lindbergh, his entire role consists of one scene in which he sells a Phantom jet to Jerry Cornelius.)

THE LAST DAYS is basically a confused, forgettable movie based on a confused, forgettable novel. The movie has a definite edge in that Moorcock's bland prose can only suggest the allure of Miss Brunner while Jenny Runacre can embody that appeal and acidity vividly. Writer/director/designer Robert Fuest has played down the violence and emphasized the bizarre locales, the extravagant melodrama and the theatrical gestures of the characters. Set design seems to be the distinguishing feature of his style (he did the Dr. Phibes films) and his pictorialism is oppressive. At one point we see the formula that everyone has

been fighting over: it's gibberish, but pretty gibberish. Some of the scenes (notably the opening funeral pyre on the barbaric plain) are cut from whole cloth while others are radically changed (e.g., the ending, where Moorcock's beautiful hermaphrodite becomes a Neo-Neanderthal). The mode of both book and film is "pop-apocalyptic" (as Jerry Kaufman likes to say), an appropriately hot-air word for such pretentious nonsense. Moorcock's simplistic pastiche of writers like Edgar Rice Burroughs and Adolf Hitler is eclipsed by Fuest's shot of a Nazi eagle with Jenny Runacre's head taking the place of the swastika. Like the rest of the film, that is more striking than revealing.

Set design and location shooting have come to be two of the few pleasures one can expect from the regular James Bond films. *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN* looks like an entry in a bad serial whose producers have too high a budget. The gist of this one is that James Bond meets Kung Fu, Evel Knievel and the energy crisis. Even the lush Hong Kong and Thailand locales can't quite distract one from the fact that a still photograph of stonefaced Christopher Lee is more expressive than two hours of Roger Moore. This chapter in the continuing saga of the Bond macho comedia substitutes a midget and a man with three nipples for the previous gay, black and oriental villains and for obvious reasons is not quite as offensive. I still groan when the villain caresses his mistress with his "golden gun" and I get tired of every threat or physical assault being directed at the groin. The action is perfunctory and the car chases have long since degenerated into demolition derbies. The spirit of the Bonds is more fantasy (i.e., wish fulfillment) than sf but this edition boasts the usual hardware. Lee's confession that "science was never my strong point" goes, in spades, for the film itself; and the carnival metaphor confirms one's suspicions that the final, DR. NO-like set is just another, bigger funhouse.

It would be nice to be able to say as much for Disney's *THE ISLAND AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD*, which is meant to be an ingratiating Jules Verne-like adventure. It makes its intentions clear enough with its 1907 London opening, its Maurice Jarre score, and its zeppelin expedition to the North Pole. As Donald Sinden declares to a reluctant participant: "I can offer you nothing but danger and hardship--except for your place in history." The story even drags in a lost race of Vikings, speaking the Norse of the Sagas. But this set designer's dream is seen only in the painted backdrops used for the glass shots, the back projection is sloppy and the killer whales look like beach balls.

Bringing up the rear this year was Saul Bass's *PHASE IV*, a movie about rampaging, supposedly intelligent ants, guided by sinister extraterrestrial forces. I expected that someone with Bass's graphics background would at least produce a handsome film when he started directing, but this is a mess. Its only virtue is to remind one of *THEM* and Edward Gorey's *THE INSECT GOD*. For that matter, the ad logo (ants crawling out on the palm of a hand) is taken from the Bunuel/Dali *UN CHIEN ANDALOU*. The waste of the desert location shooting and the possibility for suspense is criminal.

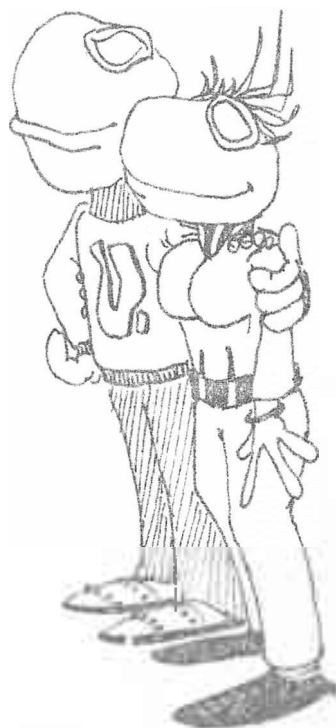
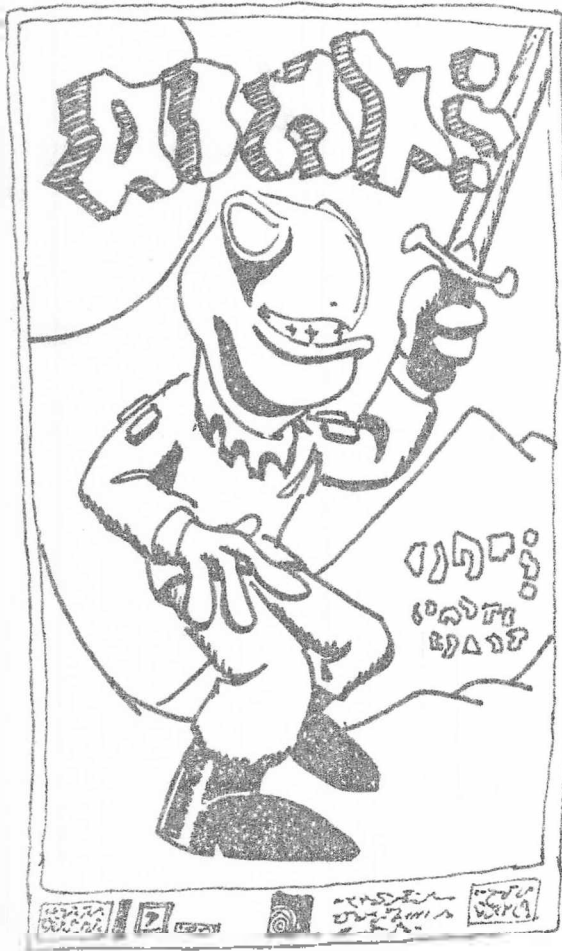
There was also something called *UFO: TARGET EARTH* (about a college student investigating UFOs) that was so abysmal I don't want to talk about it. Double-billed with it was an even worse film, *THE DEVIL'S TRIANGLE*, a "documentary" on the Bermuda Triangle that has claimed so many ships and planes.

The fantasy and horror films in 1974 were more plentiful than the sf but I saw far fewer of them. Among those I missed were Brian De Palma's *THE PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE* (continuing the remake trend), *SHANKS* (with Marcel Marceau in a double role), *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD* (notable for the presence of Ray Harryhausen and Miklos Rosza), Frank Perry's *MAN ON A SWING* (which combined a murder mystery with a psychic puzzle), *CRAZE* (with a homicidal Jack Palance), *DERANGED* (the stills outside the theatre made it look like a ghoul's smorgasbord) and a double bill of Hammer films: *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER* and *FRANKEN-*

STEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL. And despite Lou Stathis' urging, I couldn't quite bring myself to go see THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, which, incidently, is based on the same incident that Robert Bloch used for PSYCHO. VARIETY also liked the film but their praise ran along the lines of "There's this scene where they hang a girl up on a meat hook and it's very well done." No thanks.

The best fantasy of the year is either as yet unreleased or consists of bits and pieces in non-genre films. The latter are Bertolucci's PARTNER (1968) and Bellocchio's IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER (1971). PARTNER features Pierre Clementi doing a series of takeoffs and impressions, the best being those of Jerry Lewis and of Max Schreck in NOSFERATU. Clementi's Schreck is all shoulders and straight lines, a Cruikshank figure at odds with the modern decor. One of the servants at Bellocchio's boys' school fancies himself, both awake and in his talkative dreams, a character out of THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL. He repeats the "alien" catchphrase from the Wise film and is obsessed with machines taking over all work. Still better (and the best thing in the film) is the riotous play the boys put on, a sort of shaggy Faust story in which the devil is a huge dog and a great, white-bearded, patriarchal God (based on a school mural) puts in an appearance at the end.

The unreleased film I mentioned is Jacques Rivette's CELINE AND JULIE GO BOATING (1973), which was shown at the fall New York Film Festival. Although a proper review will have to wait, I am discussing it now because when and if it is released commercially it will probably not be around for very long and I urge you to catch it. The 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ -hour film is a change of pace for the usually serious, introspective Rivette (THE NUN, L'AMOUR FOU, OUT ONE/SPECTRE, etc.). No one expected a comedy and such a whimsical, charming comedy was a pleasant surprise. Juliet Berto and Dominique Labourier are a magician and a li-



Foglio

brarian who get involved with the mysterious goings-on at an old house in an uncared-for garden. In the process of rehearsing their experiences for each other, they evoke the delight of telling and listening to fairy tales in such a way that we participate in their enjoyment. Labourier and Berto are superb. Among the many virtues of the film is its status as the perfect answer to the male-buddy movies. Celine and Julie go on an adventure but their approach is totally feminine. (Labourier says she laughs when she's frightened.) The film refers to other great fairy tales, from Lewis Carroll to Feuillade. And Rivette's use of Paris is, as usual, excellent. He not only makes it lovely but also mysterious and seductive. He makes us want to enter this wonderful world with a real yearning for the easy comradeship of Celine and Julie and the casual, sensual life they lead there.

CELINE AND JULIE is in a class above everything else I am discussing in this article. And comparing the year's releases to it is, of course, damaging to the new movies. 1974's prestige item in the fantasy line was Stanley Donen's THE LITTLE PRINCE. Although the musical would seem the right genre for Saint-Exupery's wisp of a fable, the filmmakers haven't been able to find anything to film. The result is a mass of embellishment trying to hide the little bits of story they have extracted. There are fish-eye lenses, zooms, superimposition, animation and the little prince's home planet is managed in an updated and rather smoother (though much less entertaining) version of Fred Astaire's dancing on the walls and ceiling in Donen's ROYAL WEDDING. The Lerner and Lowe score is pleasant and pleasantly reminiscent of other things they have done, but it doesn't have a chance to be judged on its own under the technical onslaught of the film. The characters in this vest pocket CANDIDE are rewritten to the point where a historian uses the word "inoperative." As one critic put it, THE LITTLE PRINCE is the first cruising film for children. The only salvageable sequence is the opening period piece, in which the camera observes a lush, benevolent Edwardian world with the eyes of a child.

THE LITTLE PRINCE's premiere was held up almost a year while ad strategy was debated and it was recut down to its present 88 minutes. There were even rumors last summer that it was going to be shelved permanently and allowed to die a quiet death. Such was nearly the fate of a 1972 British musical version of ALICE IN WONDERLAND (which was produced, I kid you not, by a Mormon film company). Since it was played off on a weekend kiddie matinee in New York, I have my doubts that it has yet "officially" opened in this country. It must have sounded very good as a project: stars including Peter Sellers, Ralph Richardson, Flora Robson, Dudley Moore and Spike Milligan, music by John Barry and photography by Geoffrey Unsworth. Perhaps the problem with the film is right there in its "production values": it is a producer's movie and not a director's. Once all the people were assembled (the producer's job), there wasn't anybody to tell them what to do. Even on the budget level, the movie is cockeyed: they skimp on the sets to pay for the stars and then they encase the stars in makeup and masks that render them unrecognizable. Being British, the actors are much more adept at giving "radio" performances than Americans would be, but only Goon Show graduate Milligan (as the Gryphon) takes advantage. Richardson is a lordly caterpillar and Sellers is heavily made up as the March Hare. He has little dialogue but his eyes burn out of his mask with the cold fire of madness. There are one or two moments when this Alice (Fiona Fullerton) looks more like Carroll's than Tenniel's but I doubt that was intended. The photography is shown off to best effect in the opening and closing sequences as the Liddell sisters are rowed by Carroll all on a golden afternoon. The less said about the music the better.

Also opening in kiddie matinees were new live-action films of SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARVES, KINGDOM IN THE CLOUDS, THE WISHING MACHINE and RUMPELSTILTSKIN. Paramount's releases were apparently a series of cheap foreign pickups. The only one to get an extended run was a shoddy German RUMPELSTILZCHEN of

indeterminate age. It eschewed not only all special effects, but most of the resources of film itself. The incredibly prosaic treatment featured a Rumpelstiltskin with terminal arthritis. Or maybe he was made of straw and that is why he never moved his mouth. As if possessing some sense of shame, the print had no credits.

Among the many films receiving delayed release this year was the 1973 Canadian movie THE PYX. This is actually the "theological thriller" that THE EXORCIST was labeled. Christopher Plummer is a Montreal cop investigating a murder that leads to a devil cult. More involved than she'd like to be is prostitute Karen Black. There are inevitable echoes of KLUTE: the film is mainly a character study of Black and her problems, which include religion and smack. The songs, co-written by Black, are of the Judy Collins type. I'm pure and innocent because my soprano voice turns all the words into one unintelligible shower of sound. The Black character is pretty messed up to begin with, but when the occult steps in she just goes to pieces, and the integrity of the film makes it unpleasant to watch. The integrity, unfortunately, has nothing to do with skill and the movie goes on forever.

I'm not sure how many black occult films there were this year, but I only saw one, SUGAR HILL. (ABBY, a black EXORCIST, opened in December.) This is a low budget AIP item whose ads trumpeted: "Meet SUGAR HILL and her ZOMBIE HIT MEN." Sugar's fiancé has been beaten to death by gangsters trying to take over his nightclub and she enlists the occult with revenge in view. Baron Samedi (Don Pedro Colley) has a good laugh but a stogie-smoking bum isn't my idea of a king of the dead. The zombies are covered with cobwebs, wear skeletal body paint and have silver spheres for eyes. They'll have to do a lot better to compete with Tourneur's excellent I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE or even with the Bond voodoo movie, LIVE AND LET DIE. The revenge plot is tedious and the movie lingers too long on its tortuous deaths. At the center of the film is a strikingly pretty girl--Marki Bey. I kept wishing the camera would return to her and forget about the silly story.

My lousy film of the year is another AIP trinket, MADHOUSE, which features Vincent Price in what might better be called "Son of TARGETS." Price is an aging horror film star who finds his alter ego, "Dr. Death," committing crimes out of his old movies. To fill up the running time, I suppose, there is a tribute to Price every ten minutes, using clips from old Corman films like THE HAUNTED PALACE and THE RAVEN. But nothing is ever made of all this. The fiery apocalypse is Corman-esque all right. I'm just surprised I was awake to see it.

That has been the story with all too many of the f&sf films this year: they're more entertaining to write up than to watch. I've spent more time thinking about old sf and fantasy films while watching the 1974 crop than I have in years. The only conclusion or moral I have after seeing all these films is that hope springs eternal but my eyes are getting tired.

BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT

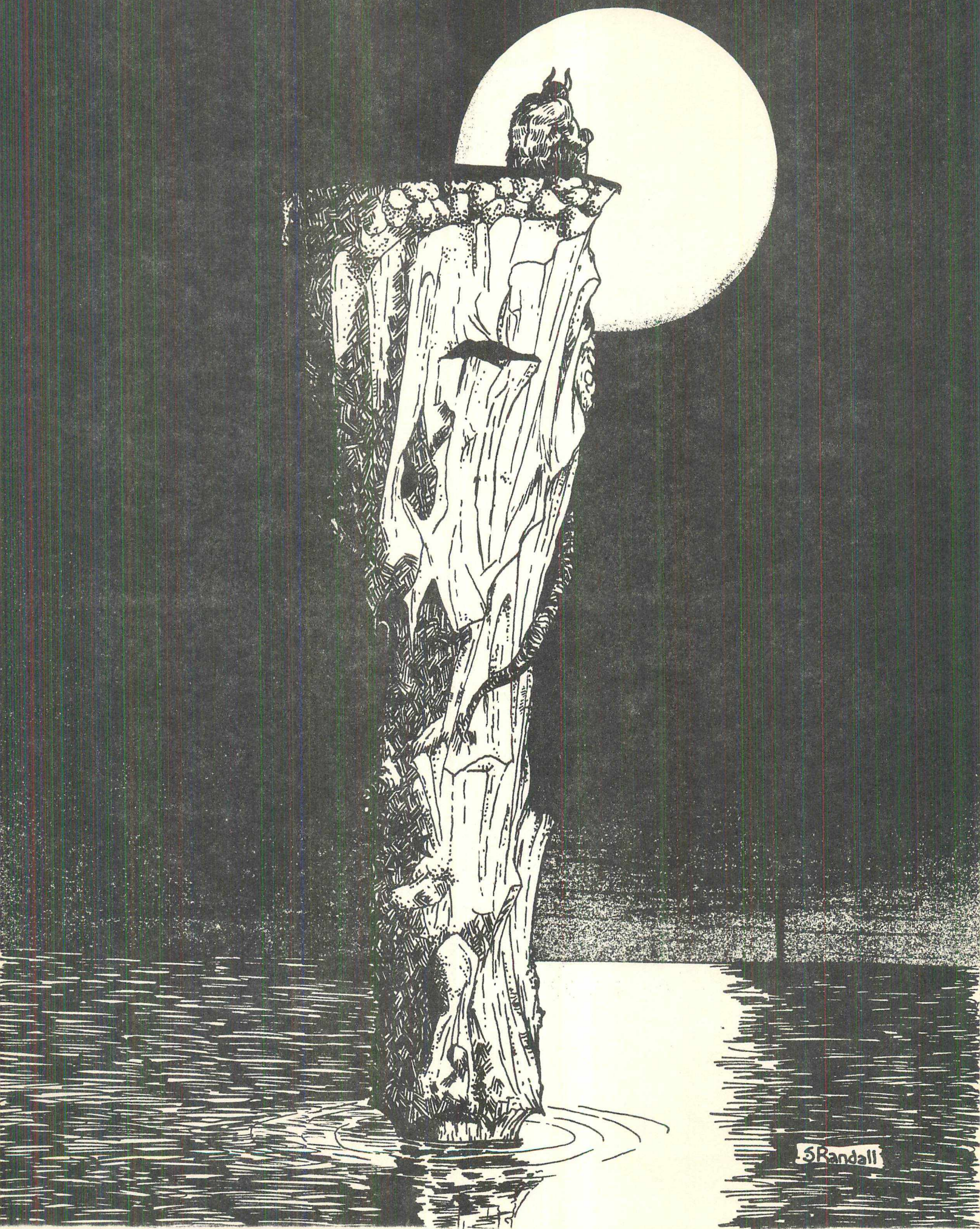
Obviously, since this is the first issue there are no back issues of KHATRU. However, I do have some scattered copies of PHANTASMICOM and KYBEN--most with articles by KHATRU writers (all, if you count me). Since most issues are in quantities of two and three copies I'm not going to bother listing what is available. My offer is this: for one dollar I'll send you a pound of fanzines (somewhere around 175 pages, I believe), and for two dollars I'll send you one of everything I have. Glad to be rid of 'em. Take me up on it, okay?

Contributors

BARRY GILLAM has received his MA in English and is currently engaged in the "looking-for-a-job" ritual. His original fannish occupation was as film critic for Bruce Gillespie's S F COMMENTARY. He even edited one issue. CHARLIE HOPWOOD at least has a job, but in selling shoes does not really employ his BA in History. He is the only person who arrives at local parties later than I do, hence his appreciation of the Viennese way of leisure. He has two-and-a-half novels of an Atlantean trilogy, unpolished and unsubmitted. DONALD G. KELLER founded PHANTASMICOM with Jeff Smith back in 1969. He has since edited two issues apiece of DYLANOID RELIC, HOLWE LOND and THE EILDON TREE (the latter for The Fantasy Association). He moved to the Los Angeles area after Discon II, and was recently one of 35 applicants for a bookbinding job. DAVID McCULLOUGH writes an interesting column for the Book-of-the-Month Club NEWS, and I should have asked them for a little information about him. BOB SABELLA attended a Clarion Science Fiction Writer's Workshop, which he wrote up for PHANTASMICOM and THE ALIEN CRITIC. "Much of my free time is spent writing science fiction, still chasing that elusive first sale." I don't know how he has any spare time, since he teaches both high-school and college mathematics. RACCOONA SHELDON is the only person I know of who exists in both of James Tiptree's worlds--the one he lives in and the one he writes in. An old friend of Tip's, her first professional story was published in IF last year (and illustrated by KHATRU-artist Freff). JEFF SMITH is the author of this page. SHERYL SMITH is no relation (nor is Bob Smith, though S. Randall is). I asked her to "sum up your existence in two sentences, thank you" and received in reply the following update of a GORBETT 4 note: "Semipiternal Chicagcan...Caseworker by trade and verse tragedian by religion...Used to be an English major but recovering nicely...Lifelong aesthetics junkie with primary dependence on the word-and-sound artforms (of which, however, I do not take more than 25 ounces a day)...Managed to read sf for twelve years without getting mixed up in fanac (what am I doing here?); and have a unique intention to NOT write science fiction, ever (despite which I am now finalizing an S&S novella--'one more cobble for the road to Hell, Dr. Johnson!')...Hi there!" Followed by: "Well, it's not much longer than it would be if it actually were two of my sentences." ANGUS M. TAYLOR lives in Canada and donates the fanzines he receives to the Spaced-Out Library. However, he is planning to spend the spring and summer in Europe and his plans after that are uncertain. His favorite color is blue. JAMES TIPTREE, JR.'s second collection, WARM WORLDS AND OTHERWISE, has just been released by Ballantine. The introduction by Robert Silverberg would have been excellent even if it hadn't mentioned me. (Well, at least it would have been very good.) Tip recently underwent bone surgery on his hand and flew down to the Maya jungle to heal. Guess where he caught the bone disease in the first place?

Forthcoming

"Women in Science Fiction," a symposium, contributed to by Suzy McKee Charnas, Samuel R. Delany, Virginia Kidd, Ursula K. Le Guin, Vonda N. McIntyre, Raylyn Mocre, Joanna Russ, James Tiptree, Jr., Luise White, Kate Wilhelm and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, currently at 124 manuscript pages and hopefully ready by the third issue ++ Douglas Barbour: "Multiplex Misdemeanors: the figures of the artist and the criminal in the sf novels of Samuel R. Delany" ++ Cy Chauvin: "The Two Sides of Ursula K. Le Guin" ++ Don D'Amassa: "Gardner Dozois: Dark Optimist" ++ Don Keller's annual survey of the year in fantasy ++ and maybe some stuff by Jeff Smith, too..



SRandall