

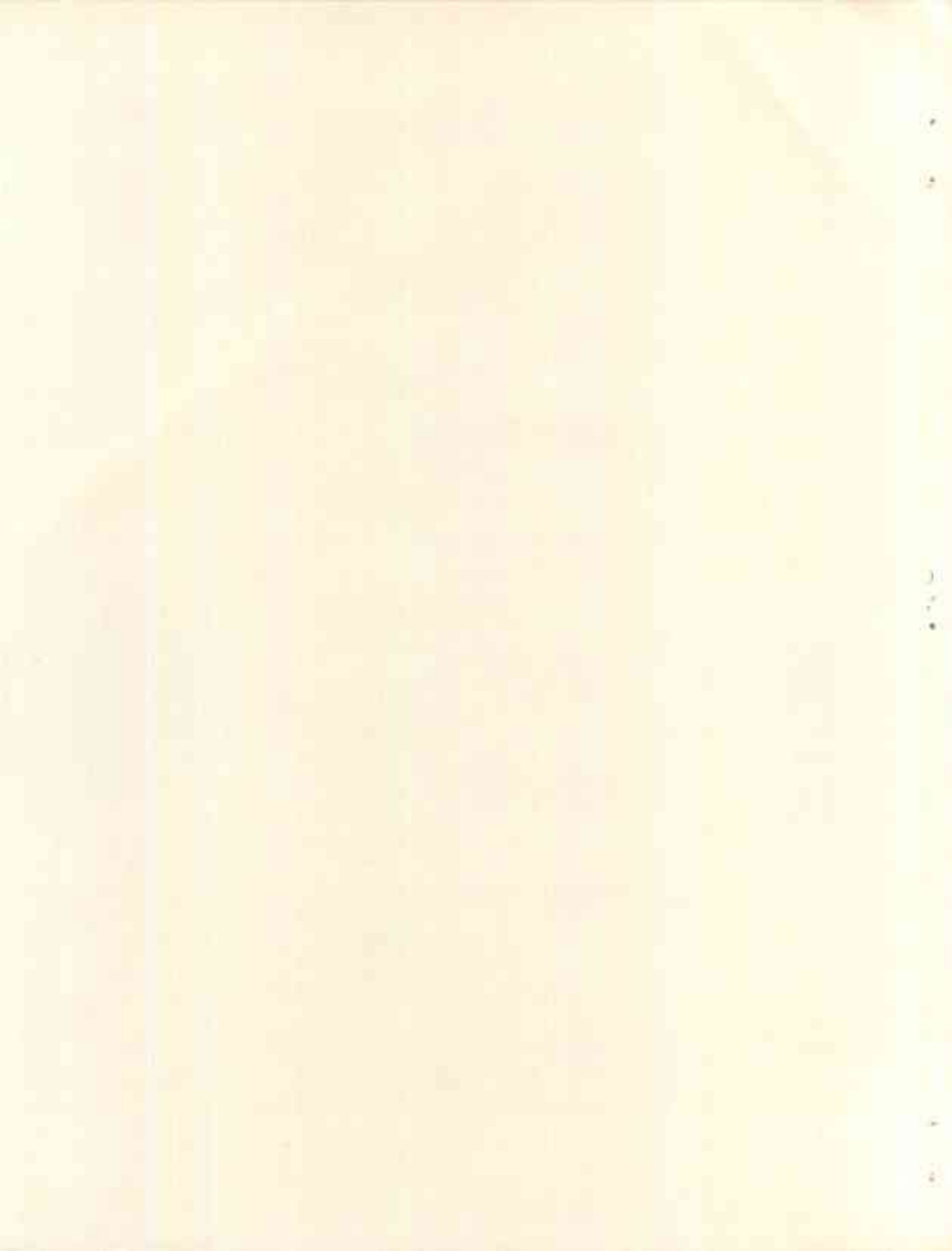
KHATRU

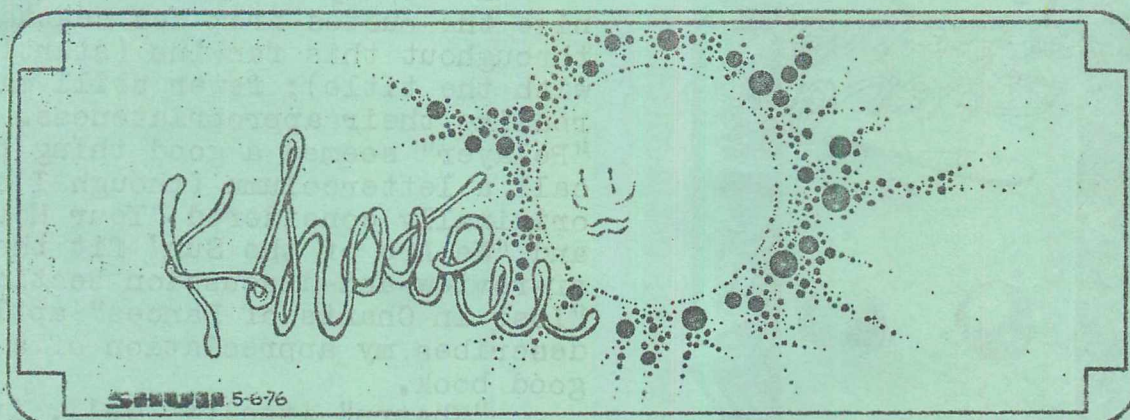
DON'T STARE
AT ME LIKE
THAT.!

HAVEN'T
YOU SEEN
A SERCON
FAN
BEFORE?

AND WASH
YOUR
HANDS.!

notale





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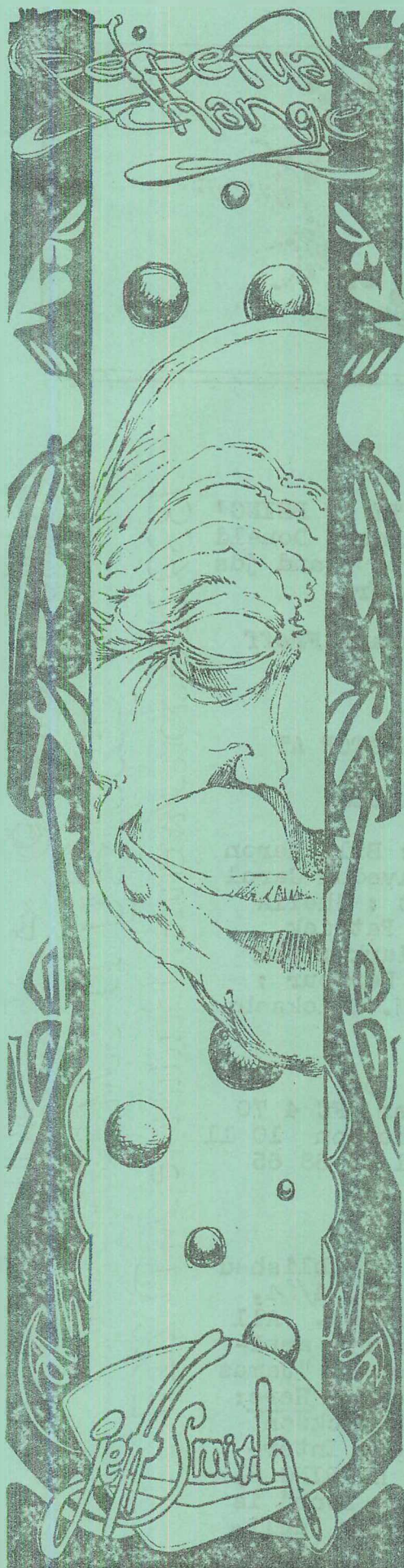
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1339 Weldon Avenue, Baltimore MD 21211

JEFFREY D. SMITH

KHATRU 3 - APRIL 1977



I daresay few people recognize the quotes from Yes scattered throughout this fanzine (starting with the title); fewer still may realize their appropriateness. "Relayer" seemed a good thing to call a lettercolumn (though I had originally considered "Your Move"); and "We Are of the Sun" fit the sf-review-and-discussion section. "Lost in Chants of Dances" aptly describes my appreciation of a good book.

"Khatru" itself? Well, it's from the Yessong "Siberian Khatru," and the only time the word is used is in this typically obscure Jon Anderson lyric:

Hold down the window
Hold out the morning that
comes into view
Warm side the tower
Green leaves reveal the
heart-spoken khatru

Anderson told MELODY MAKER that "Roughly translated, 'Khatru' means 'Do as you wish'--in South Yemen." Okay.

But the most appropriate of all is this "Perpetual Change" heading. As a fanzine editor since 1969, I have probably changed the direction of my publications more often than I've gotten issues out.

When one puts as much work into something as publishing a fanzine entails, one obviously wants the final product to resemble the initial plan.

And with almost all fanzine editors, and me particularly, the plan changes often.

What I'm saying, of course, is that what I now want KHATRU to be is not what I originally wanted KHATRU to be. I had been hoping that I could publish a quarterly journal of sf criticism...but it's too much of a strain. A year has passed since KHATRU 5, simply because I lacked the energy to publish. I can't guarantee that it won't happen again, but I'm trying to see that it won't.

To begin with, I dropped my satellite fanzine, KYBEN. KYBEN was supposed to be small, frequent, and about anything that struck my

fancy. But production on that has slowed way down, too. So the two fanzines have been combined into one. This one.

Official Policy, for now (remember, "perpetual change"), is this: KHATRU will appear irregularly, 60 to 80 pages, whenever I can, hopefully about three times a year. Science fiction in general, and sf criticism in particular, will remain its primary concern, but anything goes. Specifically, I guess, evidences of my interests in mysteries and music will litter these pages. But I'll attempt to keep a "proper" balance.

Anyone dissatisfied with this "new direction" can certainly cancel his subscription and receive a refund on the unused portion--but I really don't think there'll be that much of a change. It's still going to be a Jeff Smith fanzine, and I haven't changed terribly.

One rather obvious difference this issue is typeface--specifically, there's a mixture of the elite type I've been using for KHATRU and this pica face that I've been using in KYBEN. I suppose I could try to explain the incongruity away by saying it's a byproduct of the coalescing of two fanzines into one, but that wouldn't be true. I wish I could keep using the elite, and in the future I might be able to return to it, but this issue...

The pica is mine. It's an old typewriter (a Royal) and it's holding up pretty well for its age. Nonetheless, the capital letters are kind of sad, and certain others (like the q) are quite variable. Also, the bell warning me of the approaching right-hand margin is gone, which is why there are some cramped words over on the side of some of the pages.

I've been renting an elite Royal whenever I've published a KHATRU before; I can generally stencil 60 pages in a month with only minimal difficulty. This time, however, I had the machine for two months...and you can see how many pages I completed. So, since it seemed silly to keep putting the money out for nothing, I returned the machine and used mine whenever I forced myself to stencil a few pages.

This issue was a chore. When I look at it now, though, it doesn't appear to be near as bad as I thought it was going to be. The problem is that the material is not fresh. Of the contributed material, only some of the reviews of the Tiptree novella have come in in the last few months. Other material--that originally scheduled for KYBEN--the Tiptree and Sabella columns, some of the letters, the Ayres piece--seems ancient. But it's all interesting...and I'm SO glad it's all in print and not hanging over my head anymore.

I've still got material that I've been sitting on for ages, particularly a piece by Cy Chauvin that I'm sure he expected to see in this issue, since it got squeezed out of last issue, too. Sorry, Cy. I will be using it sometime this year, promise.

Forthcoming: some sort of special James Tiptree issue, and the type of run-of-the-mill issue that John Campbell said you can only have when your mill runs better than everyone else's: articles and other goodies by all the wonderful people who normally take time out from whatever they're doing to write for me. I did this once before, with PHANTASMICOM 11, and I think it was a huge success. I hope that we can pull it off again.

I suppose you were surprised when LOCUS broke the story of James Tiptree's real identity before I did. Well, no more so than I was. I've been sitting on the story; Tip didn't want a

YOU DIDN'T TELL
ME A GIRL WAS
IN THIS FANZINE!



general announcement made until late this year. It was becoming increasingly evident; however, that too many people weren't able to keep information in confidence. I confess to considerable irritation that some of these people--who well knew that Tip wanted her identity kept secret--couldn't refrain themselves from showing off by displaying their knowledge. I also dislike the fact that LOCUS ran the story at a time when Tip was out of the country--not only could she not verify the story, but she had no idea that she was going to come home minus her secret identity.

For those who haven't heard, James Tiptree, Jr., is really Alice Sheldon. She is 61 years old, married, and has led a life which she doesn't consider terribly interesting but which has been a lot more full than most of the rest of

us will experience. She is also Raccoona Sheldon, a fact which surprised me--I'd been in contact with Raccoona. There will be a whole lot more on this in the next KHATRU, so don't let your subscriptions run out.

In the meantime, reread the "Women in Science Fiction" symposium.

For the record, and to dispel rumors: I did not break the story to LOCUS. (First people thought I was Tiptree; now they're thinking I blew the whistle on her.) I told two (count 'em) people. One was Freff, because I wanted his help on my special issue. The other was Don Keller--and Don I didn't even tell until just before the story broke, so you know I was keeping it under wraps. Seeing as how Don was my co-editor when I first made contact with Tiptree, and has been in contact with the pseudonymous Ms. Sheldon himself, I'm sure I could have told him earlier with a clear conscience.

But it's all academic now.

Since I'm adding a fair portion of the KYBEN mailing list to the KHATRU mailing list, I'm giving away more copies than ever. So, brace yourselves, here comes the plea for money:

I've mentioned before that the only way I can possibly publish fanzines anymore is by putting very little of my own money into the project. Well, relatively little, at least, compared to the vast subsidizing I did when I had money to burn. (Those were the days * sigh*) I've been doing pretty well with KHATRU, I admit, but things like the very expensive covers to the last two issues have pinched a bit. (I have a very nice Phil Foglio cover coming up that I can't send around the corner to El Cheapo Press, either.)

What I'm asking for isn't much, really. I just want you all to own complete sets of this wonderful fanzine. Many of you are getting KHATRU for the first time this issue. Well, I still have copies of all the earlier ones, even a few of the Women in SF double issue. At this point only, I'm going to sell these back

issues for 50¢ each. If you want all five earlier issues, they're yours for \$2.50. (I am not willing to sell the double issue alone anymore; just to people who want complete KHATRU runs.) Those of you (there are many) who don't have the first two issues, how about sending me a buck? I want to unload these things.

I also have a few (very few) copies of PHANTASMICOM 11, the last issue of the fanzine I was doing before KHATRU. Because of its scarcity, I'm keeping the \$1 price tag on that, first come first serve.

So, is KHATRU now the sole Phantasmicom Press product? No, I am in two apas. Apas, for you novices, are Amateur Press Associations--loose aggregations of fanzine publishers who send their (generally small and informal) zines to an Official Editor, who periodically bundles up a copy of each zine to send to each member.

Most apas consist of extended conversations about any number of topics--whatever seems to be interesting to the members at any given time. The two I belong to are specialized: DAPA-EM, for fans of mystery and detective stories, and APA-LP, for music fans. My own zines, respectively, are RED HERRING and OLIAS (another Yes reference). If you have uncontrollable desires for either or both of these little zines, you have two options: you can send me a couple bucks for postage so I can send them to you directly, or (more desirable) you can join the apas.

Belonging to an apa is very easy--the only requirement is that you be able to type fairly legibly. You must contribute four pages every four months (to these apas; rules vary from apa to apa, of course), which is hardly difficult. It's best, of course, if you can contribute printed pages, so if you own or have access to a mimeo, ditto, xerox, etc., you're in fine shape. But the OEs of both these apas will gladly arrange with you to print your zines if you send them in on stencil. (And if you can type on paper you can type on stencil.)

If you're interested, write to the OEs:

for DAPA-EM -- Art Scott

1089 Tanland Drive #103
Palo Alto CA 94303

for APA-LP --- Nick Polak

1781 Riverside Drive #5F
New York NY 10034

A sample issue of APA-LP is free; a sample of DAPA-EM is \$1.00. (DAPA-EM has 19 members and the most recent mailing was 100 pages. APA-LP's most recent was 73 pages with 18 members, among them KHATRU-contributors Don Keller, Freff and Judith Weiss.)

If you think you'd enjoy this kind of activity, take the plunge. If you're interested in apas from this brief plug, but not in mysteries or music, drop me a line and I'll try to get you in touch with some of the more general apas.

Another kind of activity I'd like to encourage is Sending Artwork to Jeff Smith. I'm running real low now, which is one reason why there's so little in this issue. (Other reasons: the larger type and hence less wordage per page, and the voluminous amount of material I wanted to try and squeeze in here. I really would have preferred a sixty-page issue.) You can get an idea from what's in here what I like in the way of art. I prefer it half-page or smaller, serious stuff for the body of the fanzine and cartoons for the lettercolumn, no solid black areas since my mimeo refuses to print them, and I'd like to have some material

relating to mysteries and music, since there will be mystery and music discussion in here now.

Love to hear from you.

I have something I have to share with you. I work as a clerk/typist/lab technician in the Biology Department at Catonsville Community College outside Baltimore. Recently one of the teachers gave a very simple quiz to his Biology 101 students--and some of the answers were just incredible. The quiz: 1) List five organs which are part of the digestive system. 2) Name the cavities in which the following organs are located: heart, kidney, pleura, pancreas, spleen. 3) List three organs of the reproductive system. 4) List two structures which are a part of the urinary system. 5) List three structures which are part of the respiratory system.

Now for some of the answers: Most people seemed to know their way around the digestive system (though a couple digested with their kidneys). The highlight of this part of the quiz, however, is the spelling: duobuem, esphogus, glau bladder and gallblatter, kindey, livir, pancrease and stomach.

Nobody seemed to know what a body cavity is; many people confused them with organ systems. Various students had their hearts in their puavenacava cavity, pleural cavity, and in their circulatory and respiratory cavities. Kidneys are apparently in back cavities, dorsal cavities, pleural cavities, intestinal cavities, digestive cavities, respiratory cavities, urinary cavities and reproductive cavities (now there's a cavity worth filling *nudge nudge* *wink wink* *you know what I mean*). You can find pleura in the bronchial cavities, and, of course, pleural cavities. Also urinary, digestive and stomach cavities. Your pancreas might be in your respiratory, reproductive, digestive, intestinal, pleural, throat, chest or stomach cavity, better check. And spleens repose in our old friend the pleural cavity, in digestive, intestinal, stomach and chest cavities, and, incredibly, in the skeletal cavity. Which must mean that the spleen is either bone marrow or gray matter.

Reproductive errors were mostly misspellings (ourvureys, penius (a small penis?) and pensis*, scrcum, and that old favorite, virginia), but one guy who must be either gay or Greek answered "rectum." Yeah.

"Ureter" must be a difficult part of the urinary system to spell, seeing as how we got several uterers and urethers. Some people need their small intestines and caecums to perform this function, and one poor guy urinates out of both his inbelikel cord and his anus.

As for respiration, it's apparently been proven that you can't do it without using your kidneys, gall bladder, heart and arteries. Misspellings: trachera, trecha, plurea (which was written out for them in question 2) and the fascinating term ecophagus.

I've saved the best for last. There was one paper so bad that I didn't include the answers in the above summary. Under the woman's name in the upper right-hand corner of the paper appears the cryptic phrase "(just 'cause think)"--we could never come close to figuring out what that meant. There are only six answers on the entire sheet, only one of which is really right.

She listed three digestive organs: stanit, liver and intartive. The instructor gave her credit for these because he

don d'ammassa donald g.
keller jeff clark douglas
barbour jeffrey d. smith

EXAMINATIONS INTO 'A MOMENTARY TASTE OF BEING' BY JAMES TIPTREE, JR.

originally published in THE
NEW ATLANTIS, Robert Silver-
berg, editor, Hawthorn, 1975

DON D'AMMASSA

There is a well established truism that any story can be made to sound silly if its plot is recounted in the wrong fashion. THE PUPPET MASTERS is, after all, a story about smart worms from Titan. Similarly, there are a few very good stories whose plots sound ridiculous no matter how much care one spends in describing them fairly and accurately. One such story is James Tiptree Jr.'s "A Momentary Taste of Being."

Rather than expend an elaborate effort on a lost cause, I'll just state the plot baldly. An interstellar expedition encounters an alien lifeform, and as a result of this contact, we learn that humans are the sperm stage of some unspecified superior species, and the aliens are the eggs. Sounds pretty absurd, doesn't it? The only reason that even as fine a writer as Tiptree is able to bring this off is because of the depth and diversity of his characters.

The protagonist is Dr. Aaron Kaye, chief medical officer for the interstellar ship CENTAUR. Dr. Kaye finds his loyalties divided when the only person to return from a lifeship probe of a possible colony world is his sister, Lory. On one hand, he feels a strong attachment for his sister, his feelings complicated by their incestuous relationship as youths. These feelings are so strong that he later abandons his mistress Solange in order to rescue Lory. At the same time, he is convinced that there is something wrong with her report of what happened on the planet's surface. There are parts of her story that seem to contradict some aspects of her personality.

Most of the characters in the novella suffer from similarly divided loyalties. Lory Kaye believes that the transformation caused by the union of human and alien is the only hope for a race forever doomed to suffer self-destructive impulses. Captain Yellaston, commander of the CENTAUR, has to balance his responsibility to the ship and crew against his alcoholism. Various subsidiary characters are forced to decide between their loyalties

to their individual national governments back on Earth, and their theoretical goal of finding a solution to the worsening problems that face everyone on Earth.

Even the subsidiary characters are well drawn, stronger in fact than the plot. I'm particularly fond of Bustamente--the solitary, would-be king of a new world--who sulks in his exotically decorated quarters plotting and planning for his new civilization. There are as well Frank Foy--the too-earnest young officer whose personality grates on everyone he encounters; Coby, the crew's only criminal, tolerated because there is no way to punish him; and others.

With the help of these characters, Tiptree weaves a plausible account of rather implausible events. The crew--with the sole exception of Aaron Kaye--succumb to the alien siren call and eventually "die," faded husks depleted of their "essence." Tiptree wisely leaves the particulars of the transformation vague, because to do otherwise would only attract further attention to what is essentially a plot device, and not a very strong one. The novella doesn't really deal with the nature of the alien contact, but with the decision-making capacity of the various characters.

The uncomplimentary portrayal of human civilization is not something new in Tiptree's fiction. As the 1960s became the 1970s, the tone of his fiction deepened and became more sombre. Tiptree seems to have lost some of his admiration for the less savory side of human nature. In "Your Haploid Heart" (1969) one character proclaims that "Sheer orneriness and ego--that's what saved us, son, not altruism or love of science."

In many ways, "A Momentary Taste of Being" is reminiscent of "On the Last Afternoon" (1972). Both stories feature alien menaces. In each, the protagonist has to decide between personal immortality or immortality for his culture. In the earlier story, the protagonist must decide whether his own continued existence is worth more than the survival of a colony beset by giant lobsters (remember, any story can be made to sound ridiculous). His lack of decisiveness leads to the loss of either choice. Similarly, Aaron Kaye must decide whether to continue his personal existence as a sperm or move on to some superior state of existence by merging with the alien. He too loses both choices. As the sole surviving human, he cannot maintain the ship and eventually dies in near madness.

I suspect that the title refers to the post-human state, that Tiptree is in effect creating a form of afterlife for humanity, a state of being not beset with the evils of human existence. There was a foretaste of this in an article Tiptree wrote for PHANTASMICOM 11 titled "Going Gently Down." Tiptree muses aloud on the subject of old age and the capacities of the human mind, then speculates about how to transcend the limits of one's own ego. He suggests that we should try to "let everything go and smell the wind, feel with your dimming senses for what's out there, growing. Let your resonances merge and play and come back changed...." I think that's the mood he's trying to imply in the disembodied fetal stage of the superbeings.

As strong as the characters are, however, I found "A Momentary Taste of Being" to be a disappointing story. The plot is not a particularly strong one, and many of the characters are wasted, particularly Bustamente. The best developed is Lory Kaye, although even in her case, I found her easy acquiescence to the alien order unconvincing. It's an entertaining story,

much more polished than a lot of Tiptree's other work, but still somewhat disappointing.

DONALD G. KELLER

My first impression of James Tiptree's "A Momentary Taste of Being" was that it was weirdly conventional. Instead of the usual strange Tiptree story, maddeningly oblique and "told from the pancreas" (his phrase), we have a straightforward, pure science-fictional narrative with no real quirks...until the ending (I'll get to that later). True, it is told in the present tense, but unlike the oppressive, attention-grabbing style Silverberg and Malzberg have made us used to, it is smooth and understated; it fits the third-person limited point of view like a glove. The whole story flows so naturally that it effaces itself (again unusual: Tiptree's style tends to distance the reader and make it-self felt) and plunges us directly into events. It gives the (somewhat erroneous) impression that it was written as easily and rapidly as something by Asimov or Clarke or any of the transparent stylists.

Similarly, the characterization is far different from Tiptree's usual. In most of his stories, the characters resemble those in Lafferty's or Cordwainer Smith's stories: bright apparitions that serve more as symbols or vortices around which the story whirlpools than as real people. Here he creates people very like those we meet every day: it is almost as if he has not created them but introduced them to us. They are fully rounded, with their own unique, utterly natural habits (no funny hats here) and their weak or evil sides. A flaw is that some of them are national or personal stereotypes (the nationalistic Russian, the aging old captain), but then stereotypes are based on actual people; besides, Tiptree's are handled with such three-dimensionality that they breed conviction.

As I said above, this is a very "normal" story--the plot (unlike many of Tiptree's) is as old as science fiction. We are presented with the Centaur, crewed by sixty people, ten years and 26 trillion miles into a journey to seek colonizable planets for overcrowded Earth. After years of failure, the perfect planet seems to have been found...and we have the paradise-motif (as old as fiction) with its usual disquieting ambiguity.

Without dropping in long indigestible passages of pseudo-scientific garbage, Tiptree also manages to make the Centaur live and breathe as strongly as his people do. He pieces the ship together detail by detail, as the plot makes each one necessary, so that we absorb the information by osmosis as we read, and without realizing it we have a strong picture of what the ship is like by story's end. Some of it is not described fully, but we fill in the rest from previous sf reading.

In short, Tiptree does a model job of integrating all the necessary elements of story (plot, character, background) into one seamless narrative that goes down smooth. As an example, here are two short paragraphs from page 127 of the Science Fiction Book Club edition of THE NEW ATLANTIS:

"Good." Aaron bites the delicious peach, delighted to hear that old Yellaston's hand will be on the button. "Jan, I want a clear understanding that no part of that thing is taken into the ship. Beyond the corridor, I

mean."

"Oh, I entirely agree. We'll have a complete satellite system there. Including mice. It will be crowded." He swabs his server with cellulose granules from the dispenser, frowning harder. "It would be unthinkable to harm the specimen."

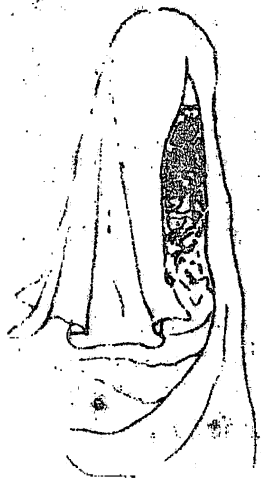
This exemplary sf narrative is used, not for its own sake as a golden-age writer would have done, but as a sort of carrier wave for a story of mystery, both in the whodunit sense (what really happened when the scoutship touched down on the alien planet?) and in the brooding Lovecraftian sense: the protagonist Aaron Kaye (ship's doctor, a Nabokovian character who thinks a lot about his own problems and understands little of anything or anyone else) keeps having foreboding Freudian dreams which (as it turns out) are a remarkable foreshadowing of the strange ending. Also, the plantlike alien the scoutboat has returned with makes its presence felt strongly throughout (it apparently causes the dreams in Kaye and hallucinations in others) although it does not actually appear until the story is almost over.

The third and penultimate chapter is mostly concerned with the opening of the scoutboat to make a xenobiological examination of the heretofore alien specimen, and we get pages of technical (but not uninteresting) reportage on the complicated setup. Then the hatch is opened...and very gradually the story begins to drift from its moorings. At first we get the kind of motiveless action and confusion to be found, say, at the site of an assassination. But instead of settling down so that we can find out what happened, things get progressively stranger. The characters act like they have lost their minds, first figuratively, then literally. The chapter ends, and the story could have, with the ship unmanned and in chaos.

The first time I read the story, it seemed like a reasonably normal sf story with an inappropriately bizarre ending. Because I took so long to write this piece, I have read the story several times (incidentally, it's easy to go back through), and each time I have been more impressed with the way the story is put together. The ending is not weak or tacked on; as I said above, it is well-prepared for in advance with strong hints and symbolic foreshadowings (though it is so unusual that I doubt anyone could guess it in advance--this is a story made for multiple readings). It would have been just as strong without the coda-like fourth chapter, but it is no weaker with it. The vagueness of the last twenty pages is not a failure on Tiptree's part, but a calculated

effect, letting us see through the eyes of a man who, first confused, later drunkenly trying to forget, is reacting to forces completely beyond his comprehension which discard man as of very little significance. Stapledon is the great master at this, and few others have managed it as well as Tiptree does.

It also drives home the speculations that Tiptree sowed through the rest of the story: What is humanity's destiny and purpose? Are men better off with or without their animal drives? Is the promise of paradise good for mankind or not? Does man know anything about what goes on in the universe? Though some answers and explanations are offered, little is



actually resolved, because the facts are beyond man's perception and understanding. It is a tribute to Tiptree's talent that he hands this to us without making us feel insulted.

Is this one of Tiptree's best? I'm not sure. It is so far from his usual stories that I can't really judge it against them. It is certainly as organic and coherent a story as you could ask for. But it is at once such an ordinary and a strange story that I can't react to it in a normal way.

GEFF CLARK

James Tiptree, Jr., has applied considerable talent and craft to "A Momentary Taste of Being." But the story, though not bad in the sense of "awful," is nonetheless a failure.

What if man is a sperm... I mean, really?

This is the sort of conceit which, with the application of a little imaginative English--might be directed through whimsy or sobriety. Preferably both--thus producing, we hope, a sense of wonder.

Earnest consideration of this conceit--I mean, "really"--doesn't necessarily involve making it literal, though. But this is the course Tiptree opts for. Proceeding on the assumption that it ought to be made literal, turned into a concrete speculation, the best way of establishing it as such is, of course, through a science fictional context.

So we get a story, a dramatic narrative, in which the conceit/speculation becomes a revelation, properly placed at the climax.

This, I say, is the source of Tip's problem: his form. What he wants to convey cannot be done through the traditional narrative. The revelation becomes--willy-nilly, like it or not--at best the cosmic punchline of a cleverly manipulated anecdote. This sort of revelation is so hugely engulfing (we are all of us tools) that it makes anything and everything about life seem devastatingly ironic at will. And Tip's particular pattern of irony then appears rather gratuitous, his story rather loaded despite how skillfully he may attempt to handle it. In the present case, I feel the motive conceit skews things even so far as to affect author and reader in process of writing and reading. That is, the dissatisfaction with the work isn't just in retrospect: it's brewing all along the way, more or less.

The reader must consider the conceit's implications in earnest, but it's better to effect this by making it dramatic to him, directly--not by offering it at a remove, in a narrative where it is sprung dramatically on fictional characters. The story doesn't add plausibility or conviction in this case, it only filters and strains what should be a more fluid relationship between the conceit and the contemplating reader.

It seems to me that John Barth has already accomplished the job in a ten-page story called "Night-Sea Journey." His starting points bears resemblance to the best of Tip's work, those final taped ruminations of Dr. Kaye. In effect, he works with first-person discourse alone, letting actual "story" atrophy.

Barth's narrator is apparently a sperm. He never actually identifies himself as such. But then, why would a sperm do so when confessing or speaking to--for whom else could he be speaking to?--other sperm? (Which in a playful way nonetheless comes to mean us, though. That is, if the speculation of our sperm's philosophical friend is correct, that there may be

cycles within cycles, whether finite or infinite: for example, the "night-sea," as it were in which Makers "swam" and created night-seas and swimmers like ourselves, might be the creation of a larger Maker, Himself one of many, Who in turn etcetera....

For then by reference to the next highest sphere of being in this scheme, we ourselves are "sperm." Thus "sperm" may be addressed by sperm. We've got here, really, a tiny treatise on the "plausibility" of the situation. So much for my could just above! So much for the "justification" which Dr. Kaye's crooked confessions--coming as they do after eighty pages of contextual establishment--seem now to reek of!) The difference, then, is that Tip asks "What if a man were a sperm?", while Barth asks "What if a sperm were a man?"

From his own point of attack, Barth develops the conceit through sheer invention, his only concession to the empirical involving the biology of the matter, which gives that invention form and impetus. He of course has an eye for affinities between the lives of sperm and man, but in effect permits the reader to mull and spin out the little ironies on his own. Barth leaves unsaid what Tip tells--an entire fictional story to fix and display more specific ironies. What the reader can provide for himself, with some direction from Barth's verbal and mental gymnastics, is richer than any particular insight Tip can hand over, I think. The reader is freer to participate dramatically in the conceit made earnest, beguiled into building ironic bridges between his own world and the metaphorical one, thus investing the latter with all the conviction and status it needs.

Barth's story isn't exactly science fiction, of course, but in this case the mode adds not much of value to the "radical perspective" being sought. Come to that, in once more turning over the whole matter, I think this is an idea that would've been better served by one of Tip's own not unmarvelous essays.

DOUGLAS BARBOUR

Some of the praises heaped on James Tiptree Jr: professional, perfectionist, good ideas, a pleasure to read. Robert Silverberg, in a fine Introduction to Tiptree's second collection of stories, WARM WORLDS AND OTHERWISE, quotes Tiptree on his abhorrence to being bored, or boring, & adds: "Tiptree's stories don't bore. They are lean, muscular, supple, relying heavily on dialog broken by bursts of stripped-down exposition." Tiptree has only been on the scene since since 1968; he has already won both the Hugo & Nebula awards--for different stories. And he continues to extend his range, to grow in profundity, to become a Writer.

His early stories are fun, are good standard magazine sf. But look back even as far as 1969 to "The Last Flight of Doctor Ain" & you find a story which kicks, even if it still has too many flaws. Only two years later, he begins hitting home. I think the first Tiptree story I stumbled across (I don't tend to

read the magazines) was that stunning shocker, "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side." Jesus! I said to myself, who is this guy? It's still one of my favorite Tiptree stories, & it is a precursor of the novella which is, at this point, his longest &, possibly, best fiction: "A Momentary Taste of Being."

"And I Awoke" is a chillingly believable reading of the dark human soul, of the kind of desires which can make an unbearable life bearable. The title reveals something most of the stories point up: Tiptree may be a professional in any number of fields but, unlike many younger folk, he is also well-read. I would say his work further proves just how strong the Romantic spirit remains in these Post Modern times.

(Time for a slight digression: "Post Modern" is the term used to designate the literature of the post-WWII period. The Modern period is over; Pound, Eliot, & Joyce are among the masters of Modernism. In poetry, which most interests me, such writers as Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Gary Snyder, bp Nichol in Canada, Ian Hamilton Finlay in Britain--to name just a few--are Post Modern. I further believe that the sf which has emerged with, or concomitant to, the "New Wave" of the 60s is Post Modern in a way the earlier sf could not be. For the writers who emerged then, as well as the best of those of the 70s, have studied the Modern masters of literature & applied their techniques to sf themes. It is because they utilize both the literary paradigms of Modernism plus the extrapolative paradigms of sf that their works can be labeled Post Modern, I think, for the result of this happy miscegenation is a new & different sf. What is so good about this sf--leading me to say the Golden Age is now & the years to come--is that it has kept the raw energy of earlier sf while adding depth after depth of literary "presence" to it. Therefore, for me the Old Wave is usually a slight swell compared to the billowing breakers of the New Wave, which just knock me out. Tiptree's style, his sense of literary antecedents & his almost terrifying energy--the electric surfaces of his stories flashing across felt profundities--reveal him as definitely a writer of Post Modern sf. Now the Victorian, fin-de-siecle, Georgian, Modern & Post Modern periods are all Post Romantic periods as well, thus leading back to my citation of the Romantic spirit above. End of academic digression.)

Robert Silverberg quotes Tiptree's description of his "basic narrative instinct" from PHANTASMICOM 9: "Start from the end and preferably 5,000 feet underground on a dark day and then DON'T TELL THEM." The result of such an approach? A feeling of being there, in the midst of inchoate human desires & dreams & rationalizations, there where life happens, right now, chaotically, & just possibly (if we're lucky) barely under control. Tiptree tells exciting stories, but he does not concentrate on nifty plots; the excitement arises because he reveals, in action, the emotional chaos that is a human life being lived.

In "And I Awoke" he presents us with a rationally understood emotional & moral breakdown that--& here is the horror--keeps on happening, & provides a man with his reason for living. The kicker, of course, is that it is the man suffering this life-long breakdown who rationally understands it. The further kicker is that his explanation argues utter despair in its implications:

"...Man is exogamous--all our history is one long drive to find and impregnate the stranger. Or get impregnated by him, it works for women too. Anything different-colored, different nose, ass, anything, man has to fuck

it or die trying. That's a drive, y'know, it's built in. Because it works fine as long as the stranger is human. For millions of years that kept the genes circulating. But now we've met aliens we can't screw, and we're about to die trying...."

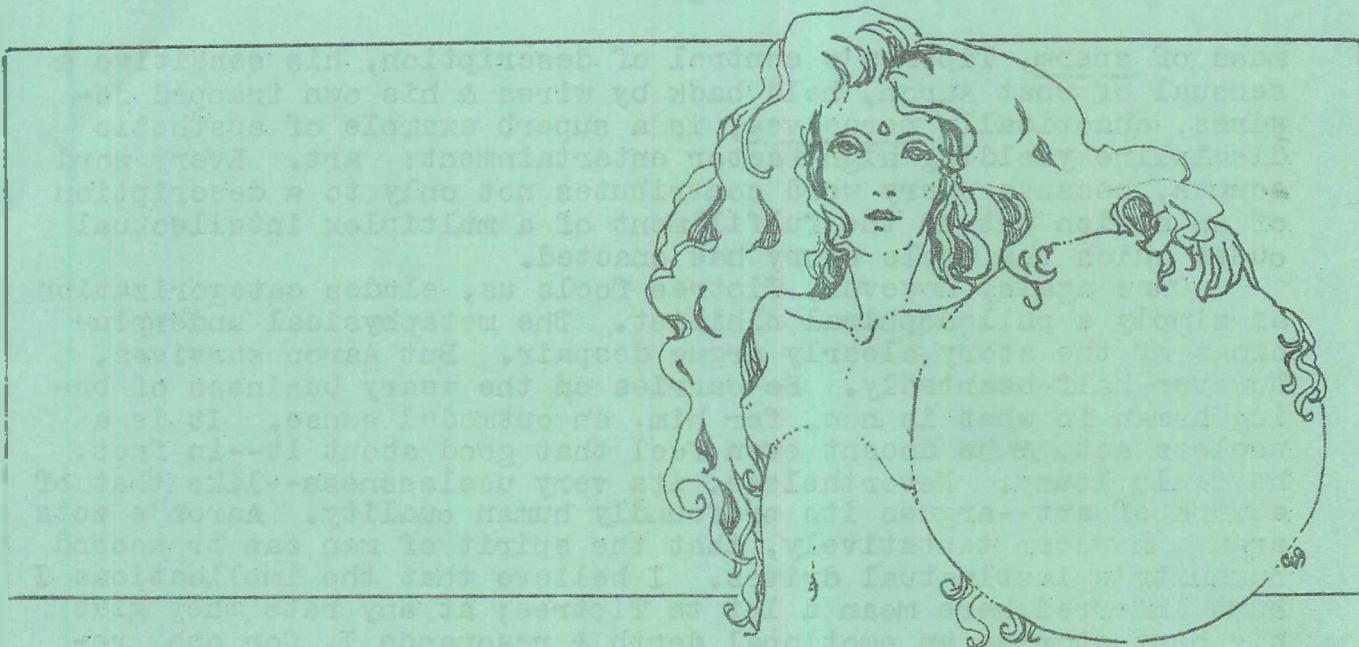
I think this story is terrifying because it strikes home: well, I can believe that explanation, anyway. But Tiptree often gives as he takes away. It is the man who is utterly debased by his alien desires who also understands what is going on. He is heroic precisely because he is still able to analyse the situation & give a warning to the world. Of course, the final kicker is that the warning comes too late, as the last paragraph of the story demonstrates.

"A Momentary Taste of Being" presents another such heroic individual, & offers another terrifying "explanation" of man's place in the cosmic scheme of things. But here Tiptree has taken the space--93 pages of text--to develop the vast array of character-relationships which fulfill the process that is an exploration-starship. The story is definitely not boring: it moves, inexorably & with utter emotional intensity, always moves to its dark conclusion. From the very first paragraph, a highly sexual dream-sequence, words & images occur & recur which subtly evoke the revelation towards which the narrative drives.

Dr. Aaron Kaye is the unlikely "hero" of this story, a rather weak, apparently incourageous, highly thoughtful ship's doctor, & the man who both figures out what is happening &, for painfully personal reasons, withstands the deeply ingrained urge which completely overwhelms all the humans on the ship when, finally, the alien life-form from an apparently "safe" planet is exposed to them. He is only one of many fascinating character studies in the story, however; Tiptree makes his United Nations' ship work as a social process, a happening situation in which a which a myriad cultural traditions collide & adapt to one another within the people who bear them. The story takes so long to reach its necessary climax because Tiptree is making all these different people real to us. It gets there so quickly because he never tells but continually shows this social process through the often tense interactions of the crew, especially as they attempt to discover the truth about what has happened on the planet from which only Aaron's sister (out of a crew of 4) has returned, with an alien thing welded into the cargo hold of the scout.

Tiptree has a sure sense of dialogue coupled with an ability to suggest the manner of the thinking process in truly thoughtful people, like Dr Aaron Kaye. Furthermore, his writing is tremendously kinetic: articulate motion, the inchoate mingled perceptions of mass movement. There are too many interesting & exciting aspects of his craft in "A Momentary Taste of Being" for me to even mention them all. Besides I have not reread the story enough to grasp all the facets of its craft. All I can do is suggest a few of the truly good things in it, & to further argue that it is Tiptree's very real artfulness which makes his stories so damned exciting to read. He obviously feels, what Samuel R. Delany once argued ("Forward," QUARK/3), that

the problems of entertainment are aesthetic problems. If the definition of "entertainment" is allowed to include the emotions, the intellect, and the pure pleasure we take in form, then all aesthetic problems are problems of entertainment. Aesthetic discipline is that which makes most accessible all the substance of



a given work. The writer who declines to make use of the full range of aesthetic discipline in deference to entertainment is cheating the reader of the entertainment he claims to be concerned with.

Well, Tiptree doesn't cheat his readers. He is a writer who cares about the act of writing well. That care emerges in the very motions of his prose, adding to the reader's enjoyment of his fictions (mine, anyway).

Tiptree writes well all the time as far as I can see, as his letters & articles show. In the article in PHANTASMICOM 9, he talks about the mystery & incredibility of existence, the sense of which underlies all his best stories, most certainly "And I Awoke" & "A Momentary Taste of Being":

Life plunks you amid strangers making strange gestures, inexplicable caresses, threats, unmarked buttons you press with unforeseen results, important-sounding gabble in code...and you keep sorting it out, understanding five years later why she said or did whatever, why they screamed when you--

Aaron Kaye is a specifically Tiptree character because he is always "sorting it out." Because his mind is curious, sensitive & always alive to what is happening in the context of what has happened before, we are both entertained & held spellbound by its devious & integrative speculations. He is one of the glories of this story--not because he is a superstud/hero who performs adventurous acts but because he has the mental & emotional courage to think everything through to the (bitter) end.

If you have read this story you will know that the climactic revelation gives mankind a reason for existence while simultaneously stripping all glory, all transcendental or existential validity, from all humanity's strivings--from the invention of fire, say, to the leap to the stars (& including all philosophy & art). Oh, Tiptree knows only too well the taste of ashes; what is so exciting is his ability to project such a feeling onto a racial plane rather than simply the personal one.

During the long, almost phantasmagoric, scene in which the whole crew of the starship become an instinct-driven, mindless

mass of sperm, Tiptree's control of description, his sensitive & sensual of what Aaron, held back by wires & his own trapped desires, chaotically perceives, is a superb example of aesthetic discipline yielding high-factor entertainment: art. Every word counts, because every word contributes not only to a description of an action but to the fulfillment of a multiplex intellectual quest which the whole story has enacted.

Once again, however, Tiptree fools us, eludes categorization as simply a philosophical nihilist. The metaphysical underpinnings of the story clearly argue despair. But Aaron survives, however half-heartedly. He carries on the weary business of being human in what is now, for him, an outmoded sense. It is a useless act, & he doesn't even feel that good about it--in fact, he feels lousy. Nevertheless, its very uselessness--like that of a work of art--argues its profoundly human quality. Aaron's acts argue, however tentatively, that the spirit of man can transcend humanity's instinctual drives. I believe that the implications I have inferred here mean a lot to Tiptree; at any rate they give his best stories an emotional depth & resonance I, for one, respond to.

Many of Tiptree's stories are depressing, even despairing, in theme, yet I am not depressed, neither do I despair, when I read his work. This is a difficult thing to talk about in any useful fashion, but I shall make a small attempt. Why is Tiptree such an exhilarating writer, even in his bleakest stories? Because the intensity of his vision, the extraordinary tensions he gets into his stories & the incredible energy he invokes through his prose, the emotional & mental activity which his stories demand of the committed reader, all these processes & more are dynamic. We are changed by the charged experience of reading him (as we are by all good writers--& I can name a number in sf as well as out; Tiptree is not alone, though he is an original). I am happy James Tiptree Jr is among us, to provoke & excite us with his profoundly entertaining fictions.

JEFFREY D. SMITH

In PHANTASMICOM 9 (February 1972), James Tiptree expressed part of his writing (and reading) philosophy in an article entitled "Do You Like It Twice?"

What I really dig is the story that's like being plunked down in an alien scene, the future or whatever, and the strange stuff comes by naturally. Like watching unknown life through a peephole. You understand just enough to get into it and then more and more meanings develop as you go, until at the end you suddenly get this great light on cryptic bits right back to the beginning.

This is obviously the author of "A Momentary Taste of Being." "Taste," however, is not what I would consider the best use of this type of story-telling. There is a great deal of very fascinating information presented in this novella; nearly every line is excellent. But all the lines together do not present as attractive a whole as they should.

This was the first Tiptree story of this length, over twice as long as anything he had previously written. Tiptree had never taken the room to stretch out, to prow into this many corners and crannies of a story. His prior work had been distinguished

by its compactness, even by its compression. Very unlike this loose, rambling narrative.

Later, Tiptree was to write "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?", two-thirds the length of "Taste" and his second longest story. In both of these, space crews sit around discussing what has happened and wondering what will happen. There is a bit more action in "Taste," but "Houston" is much easier to read.

In "Houston," a three-man American rocket circles the sun, and when it comes around from the blind side finds itself in the future. The men are taken aboard a ship in the new time and are surprised and discomfited to learn that society is dominated by women. Thus the basic change (though, to be sure, not all the details) is introduced early in the story, and the reader can relate the dialogue throughout the piece directly to the main thrust of the narrative. The climactic revelations thus hit all the harder because the reader has been in touch with the story all along. This does not detract from the rewards to be had from reinvestigating the early parts of the story, but there are also rewards to be had on the first reading.

That's where I think "Taste" fails. Here we have the very standard starship-looking-for-colonizable-planet, and the innocent-appearing-alien-about-which-we-know-we-don't-know-enough. This is all we can perceive as plot: what happened to the scout crew on the alien planet? And so, for some thirty thousand words, we wait to see what will happen. There is no real story development; we just have to wait for Tiptree to tell us what did happen, and he doesn't until the end. (This is not to say that nothing happens in those thirty thousand words--lots happens--but very little that directly relates to the resolution of the parts of the plot we can see. There are just more and more unexplainable events, until the end.)

On rereading, the riches are revealed. The writing is so resplendent with ideas, the characterization so interesting...

...Aaron hasn't heard so much chatter in years. The hall seems to be growing hot with so many bodies bouncing around. He isn't used to crowds any more, none of them are. And this is only sixty people. Dear god --what if we have to go back to Earth? The thought is horrible.

...yet all this was missed because the first time through was spent floundering around looking for a plot-line to guide us through. By the time the man-as-sperm idea is introduced it has lost some of its power because the reader is so hungry for any explanation that it really didn't matter what it was.

So, while I certainly agree with the Tiptree desire to put lots of information into a story, so that one reading is not sufficient to get it all out, I feel that the basics of the story should be a bit easier to appreciate. If "A Momentary Taste of Being" had not been bylined James Tiptree, Jr. (or some equally notable name), I wouldn't have felt I got enough out of it the first time to go back and reread it.

And it is worth any time you might want to spend on it.

A word about the above: these were independently-written articles, not a round robin discussion. The participants refrained from discussing the story with each other until the various pieces were written. I think the experiment proved quite interesting.

THE 20 MILE ZONE

JAMES TIPTREE, JR.

I BELLA COOLA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 29 AUGUST 1974

Aah-h-h, I made it. British Columbia, that is. Life-long desire finally fulfilled. Moreover, now I've found it, I don't really need to go to New Zealand, since I'm told they're very much alike except for marsupials and araucaria trees.

British Columbia starts with Vancouver, which must be one of the sweetest cities in the world to live in. You'd have to stay there a month to begin to see it, too; my lady taxi-driver told me she had been exploring it for six years and was still getting surprised. Picture a city sprinkled around on islands in the mouth of a great river, filled with the greenest greenery you ever saw and surrounded by dazzling snow-clad mountains. With the sea mixing in everywhere among flowers and skyscrapers and wildernesses and enough beaches so you can still find empty ones--there's even one for nudists--and Chinatowns and a great zoo-forest on a special island (it has kissing-tame killer whales, if you want to kiss a killer whale) and polite sturdy people of every national origin and denomination, and a coastline wandering off to infinity in fjords and inlets, boating such as you wouldn't believe. And the hotels have the kind of service I thought had gone down with the Titanic, heavy silver and snowy napery and delicious food. ("Does the coffee suit, sir? I'll be glad to brew you another pot.")

Oh, my.

There is, of course, a cautionary note. It is said to rain there (hence the greenery) although it never did for me. And the sea carries the cold Japan Current, which makes for hardness. More on that later. And...the service ain't free. Tiptree's wallet started going down like the Titanic before I got out to the wilderness. But, ahhh, while it lasted!

Now that wilderness! The British Columbia coastline is what is called "drowned," which means that the sea comes halfway up the mountains with incredible arms and inlets wandering right through the Coastal Range. (How they ever got it explored is a story you should read--elsewhere.) So the settlements are where rivers come in, and they're surrounded by walls of snowy peaks. You can get to them from the East over some fairly hairy roads or you can take the coastal steamer. I flew North on a small, informal airline which wanders around delivering newspapers and taking children to the dentist. My fellow passengers were other fishermen and two young Bella Coola Indian girls going home to Bella Coola, which was where I was headed too. Bella Coola is a famous settlement of a few hundred hardy souls including a reservation town, and is

where Alex MacKenzie finally came out when he made his great trek overland seeking the Pacific.

The flight was eye-popping. We headed up the scenic straits between the mainland and great Vancouver Island (on which the city of Vancouver is NOT located), laboring higher and higher. And then the little plane turned and took off over the snows and crags of the Coastal Range, with glaciers and peaks going by the wings and no, but absolutely no place to land whatever. Gulp. I had just finished reading about the Uruguay soccer team who had crashed in the Andes snows and survived by eating their dead, and I couldn't help casting an eye on the potential toughness of my companions. (I am very stringy.) And then we dived into a gorge on the far side and kited down and around a huge glacial valley--and suddenly there was a salt sea arm meeting a pale-blue river, and a cluster of roofs, and forests. And we and the newspapers had arrived at Bella Coola.

Immediately I got out I realized I was on the inland side of the mountains --it was a glorious dry day. On the sea side they get like 150 inches of rain a year, inside they get eleven. Summer is one endless cobalt blue sky and the sun on the snows above.

The next thing I saw was the scale. You've heard of giant redwoods. Well, there are giant Douglas Firs. I mean giant. What I thought was a normal forest was a staggering cathedral of these great firs and cedars, with the mountains looking down at you over their tops. Unless you put a human figure in your snapshot you don't appreciate the scale of everything. You see a simple log bridge--and when a human being wanders out on it you realize the logs are waist-high lying down. Some are as big as Sequoias, there is a drive-thru Fir in Vancouver. And the mountains--it's a land of stupendous triangles, triangles of blue blue sky pointing down, triangles of peaks poking up.

I took another even smaller plane up to a wilderness lake full of cutthroat trout--with a glorious 1300-foot sheer falls at one end--and spent two weeks just breathing. Also swatting. It is, unfortunately, true about northern bugs. Some days it pays to be constipated. But other days the wind takes them off and out on the lake is clear. Specifically, it's black flies and mosquitoes and various brands of carnivorous deer flies up to one called the Bulldog which is said to take a bite out of you and sit on a limb munching it with blood running out its jaws. I did not meet the Bulldog. But I did meet some quite large mosquitoes; one is rumored to have landed at Fairbanks and taken on 15,000 gallons of aviation gas before being identified.

For what it's worth, however, my bites didn't swell. Nothing like Virginia bites. (No, I do not mean Watergate.)

I went back down to the valley to stay awhile and clean up. Down there is river life from time immemorial. Crowds of hump-back salmon churning up, crowds of trout ditto, looking for salmon eggs. Coming downstream was a Bella Coola phenomenon: I was on a sandbar and suddenly here comes song and orange plastic, turns out to be a group of guys sailing wet-arse down the river in inner tubes, drinking wine and singing at seven miles per hour plus rapids in the rain. Turns out it's a Sunday sport, they repeat all day in batches up to thirty. Very festive they looked--offering wine to all encountered. I reluctantly refused because I was on the far side from them, difficult to cross. (That is fast water.) But god, their butts must have been cold. That stream is fresh out of a glacier. And so is all the water around, which is what I mentioned earlier. I saw Indian kids snorkeling for hours in a clear lake that was so cold my scalp lost consciousness--along with my feet up to the hips, and my ribs contracted so I breathed in short screams. But the kids played on like otters.

The Bella Coolas are rather a mystery tribe, everybody gives you a different story, including that there now are no Bella Coola Indians--or that there are nine tribes. The mystery is partly because they look exactly like Polynesians. Softly rounded, full curved lips, right at home in the grass-skirt and flower-behind-ear bit. (The girls look great.) Thor Heyerdahl came through and pointed out that a raft could drift on the current from Bella Coola to Hawaii very neatly, but not, of course, come back. So maybe Hawaii is full of Bella Coola Indians.

The other tribes around them are more the aquiline Plains types; out on the coast live the Kwakiutl people, whose custom of holding Potlatch feasts you may have been exposed to in Ethnology IA--even as me. Some of the survivors of all the tribes are doing a little writing; I read one marvelous book called POTLATCH by a Kwakiutl who witnessed, as a child, the last of the great feasts. Among the competitive courtesies extended to the guests arriving in canoes was to dance in silent formation down to the shore and while guests posed statue-like, you stuck poles under the huge canoe, guests and all, and hoisted the whole works up shoulder-high and "floated" them into the hall....Made me thankful it's not obligatory to haul in your dinner guests in their VWs. (Mine would take to bikes. If they wanted to eat.)

In and around Bella Coola you meet a few nice foreign types come for the hiking and fishing; back-packers. One lad comes in every year to follow grizzly bears around in a friendly way. A few adventurous camper-drivers with tales of the road. How Bella Coola finally built its own road to get out of its mile high pocket and "join Canada" is a real Heinlein adventure yarn. Government failed; they did it themselves with two old cats and blasting powder. It's over a mile of rock straight up; sometimes they had to chain the cat to the cliff and ride it--hanging in air! The day the cat from below met the cat from above the town went wild. The powder main nailed his hat and boots to a tree, bottles popped from top to bottom, and everything in the town that had wheels went jolting up and out in a honking procession all the way to Anahim, which had to be nearly rebuilt when Bella Coola went home.

For hikers who are interested, there is the Rainbow Range, a whole continental upthrust of gorgeous colored minerals, even flying over it is unbelievable. Trails are just getting marked out. I talked to the ranger, who like everybody surviving there is built like a Saturn stage and has just about the power. What he had to say about the new trail "littered with little brown piles and lavender toilet paper" I won't repeat. Suffice it to say that this is a Provincial park, where you can be thrown out for Disturbing a Park Object. They don't have to see you litter. When they catch you at the end of a trail of plastic or little brown piles they point out that you are "disturbing" the park grass by standing on it, and out you go. Great.

The name is Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, and for any of you who want a look at Eden, go. Go now, go quick. Bring your bedroll and be prepared to buy your own eats at the incredible new Bella Coola Coop. Lodges offer bunks and cooking pots and stoves. Don't let the bug tales scare you, Cutters keeps them off. And--

No little brown piles, hear?

It's so damn beautiful.

II McLEAN, VIRGINIA, 27 SEPTEMBER 1974

Yeah, I know the British Columbia thing was impersonal. That was because of this free-floating depression which had struck me (lifting now) so that if I

had put personal stuff in it would have come out as a sort of supine wail, Stop it stop it, I can't stand any more. ...Sometimes I get so that all the pain and misery in the world seems to be tied into my nervous system and hurting together. I heard long stories about the ghastliness of the white man's treatment of the Indians--giving them smallpox-infected blankets among others--and instead of fading out, all these and so many others just seemed to add up and build until I wanted to get out of the planet or out of the species, or out of my own malfunctioning nervous system. Nightmares, nightmares...I'm a kook, Jeff. When I was a kid I almost killed myself when I heard what happened to Carthage. And the burning of the Alexandria library. And the R.C. Church's destruction of the 3,000 Maya codexes. (Only 3--3--escaped.) ...Life seems to be just one long flinch. I am very tied into the natural world, you know, and every bulldozer hurts me personally. Now we're about to stripmine three states there's a permanent block of ice-splinters in my left kidney, day and night, especially nights....

Well, let's not get everybody bawling.

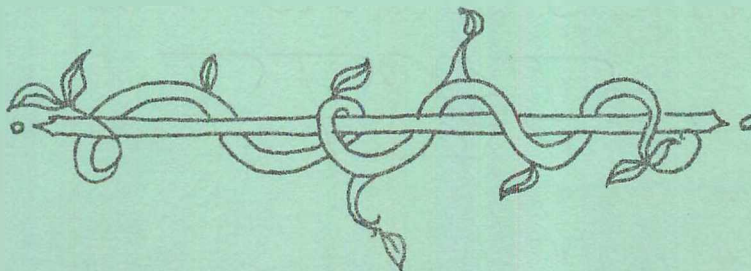
III BOCA PAILA, QUINTANA ROO, 1 FEBRUARY 1975

No travelog this trip; I'm disgusted. In five years this place has changed from a quiet Mexican wilderness to a roadstop full of campers. Well, not quite, but they're on the next ranch. Individually nice people most of them, but the impact is lousy. So this is now in the public domain, and the hell with it. Of course the people are still here, still friendly and living their lives with equanimity; maybe all this is good for them in the long run. It's just that I preferred the empty starlit nights to Coleman lanterns, stereos blasting out pop, beerbottles, yelling infants, and divers shooting up the reefs. A beautiful big sea turtle washed ashore, still living despite a cruel shaft in its throat....Well, Maya dinners.

I did have the chance to buy a marvelous little wet-bent called a Royak from one Oregon man. Now I can go out diving somewhat more safely as befits my grey hairs. (You do not have to turn over in a Royak. That's a Kayak.) And he played chess. And he also had a book you might like to mention, the best travel thing I ever saw. For freaks who are serious. THE PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO MEXICO, Franz, from John Muir Publications, PO Box 613, Santa Fe NM 87501. (\$4.35) It has stuff you will NOT find anywhere else, will save you \$4.35 in the first day. Of course it's got a few things I'd disagree with, but what doesn't. It's huge, too.

Well, aside from the above complaints and items like that L'mus--remember the Maya Puro?--is still making it with the redoubtable Gregoria, in fact they building a house together in Libre Union. And he has two younger brothers working here now; one of them (15) just damn near totalled the truck, after rising meteorically to mechanic and electrician. He's still getting over the shock of finding out what can happen.

Aren't we all.



THE DOCK FRANCES INTERVIEW



OR, GUESS WHO YOU'RE PICKING
UP AT THE AIRPORT

TRUFF

It all started with Jeff Smith, the man responsible for the magazine you are holding in your hands. He was the one ballyhooing Dick Francis, after all, and who thus sparked my curiosity so that I read a second one. And then another. And--well, the pattern is transparent. Shortly thereafter we could class ourselves as Complete Dick Francis Freaks, a distinction I later found to be shared by many.

So one day Jeff calls up and says, "Hi there, guess what? I was browsing in a library and I never read PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY but this time I did and it says that Dick Francis will be appearing in Washington May 11th. But it doesn't say where." All right, all right...I could put my own hounds on the trail, and find out the rest. So I called them up in their kennel and barked out the orders. (They were actually Dan Wedge, who runs an sf/mystery bookshop called Moonstone Bookcellar in DC, and Cynda, the Dell pb rep in the area.)

Time passed. Nothing could be found out. The Harper & Row and Pocket Book reps could not be located. Finally, the morning of the 10th, I called Dan and Cynda with hope in my heart that something had been discovered. But nothing.... So we took the final, drastic, but logical step of calling the Harper & Row office in New York. What's the small matter of a phone bill weighed against passion, hey?

They called, they got through, they got answers. "Mr. Francis will be arriving on such-and-such a flight and staying at this hotel...." This is when Cynda--who after all is experienced in these things--got her glorious idea.

So at 7:30 PM, there we were, Dan and Cynda and Amelia Sefton and me, holding up Francis hardbacks prominently so he couldn't miss us, though he ended up doing so anyway. And that's how we met Dick and Mary Francis, who are splendid people. Though he was a bit ill (having just come from Cleveland) he gave me this interview at Moonstone the next morning, both for Smith to publish and for my own article work. (I had lost no time in selling a piece on him to CELEBRITY.)

Amy and I were married that day because of the two of them, but that is, after all, another story....

FREFF: I have read THE SPORT OF QUEENS, which is about your career as a jockey, so what I would like now is more information about your transition from rider to writer.

DICK FRANCIS: It started gradually, really. My agent, John Johnson, got an introduction to me about two or three months after the Devon Loch episode, and he asked me if I had ever thought about writing my autobiography. He said I had a wonderful peg on which to hang it, so why didn't I do it? (S(Francis was riding Devon Loch to victory in the 1956 Grand National when the horse mysteriously fell. It got up and finished the race, but didn't win. The reason why it fell was never determined, though Francis offers a convincing explanation in the autobiography.)S) "Oh," I said, "I couldn't do anything like that." I'd written long letters home from the Middle East and Africa during the war, and a few short articles about how people should ride, but never any real writing. He said, "We'll get over that--we'll get you a ghost writer." He did get a ghost writer to write to me. I can't remember now if it were a man or a woman, but the conditions he or she laid down were so ridiculous--she or he wanted to come live with us for weeks on end, almost sleep with us. Mary

and I said we couldn't have that. Then Mary said, "Well, why don't you do it yourself? You're always writing long letters." I have an uncle who is a great racing enthusiast (my mother's brother, married to my father's sister), and I used to write long letters to him telling him how races went and how they developed. So Mary said, "Go on, you do it." She, of course, is a University graduate, and she said she could help me with the spelling or any words I couldn't find, so I started.

I'd done about half of QUEENS by January of 57. I was having a few falls that season and they were taking longer to get over, and the bumps were taking a bit longer to recover from, although at this time I was still leading the jockeys' table for the season. The last fall I had--which was nothing serious, but I was pretty sore for a few days--and a very great advisor, Lord Abiginny, who was at that time the Queen Mother's racing manager, called me over to his place and said, "Dick, in a few years' time you are going to have to give up. I'm not saying that you must give up now, but if I were you now is the time to give up, while you're still at the top of the tree, rather than slide down and become a nonentity." It was a terrible decision to make. I walked back across Hyde Park, thought about it all the way, and then told Mary what he said. After much thinking about it I did get out. I announced that I was going to retire. By this time I was getting about, going to race meetings, but still not riding--I wasn't well enough for that. I'd broken my wrist and almost fractured my spleen--I hadn't, but it was bruised very badly. Anyhow I went to races and I was interviewed in the studios in London when I made the announcement that I was getting out. The press and the radio and the television all were there because I was the Queen's Jockey and the leading jockey at that time; it was big news in the sporting world. "What are you going to do, Dick?" "Are you going to train?" Well, I hadn't made any preparations for training and I didn't really want to. I didn't want to give fellows a leg up on horses to do a job I felt I was probably capable of doing myself. So I made the announcement that I had half-written my autobiography, and I'd probably finish it off and see what developed. This appeared in the papers and the sports editor of the London SUNDAY EXPRESS asked me to write half a dozen articles for them. Well, those half a dozen articles went on for sixteen years' continuous employment. After I'd done two or three they wanted me to become part of the permanent staff, but I wouldn't. I didn't think I was a newspaperman. They kept on upping the price, the wages they were offering me, so it was probably a good thing that I refused. It wasn't until the following October or November that I did sign on the dotted line as a member of the staff.

In the meantime the autobiography was published. I forget how many they printed, three or four thousand, but it was sold out in the first week and they had to reprint it before Christmas that year, in a great sort of emergency. It's done all right. They've always kept it in print. And then two-and-a-half years ago they republished it, and I brought it up to date, adding a chapter about my newspaper work and the books. That isn't in the US edition.

Life as a newspaperman was not quite as lucrative as life as a successful jockey, and Mary and I didn't want to lower our standard of living, and we had two boys to educate and a few holes in the carpet....We used to love going to the theatre. In fact, we had permanent seats at the Oxford Theatre, which is a

noted British theatre. Every week. Because racing, when I was riding, always took place every Monday and Tuesday up on the mid-lands and we used to go up for these meetings and come home Tuesday evenings and always stop at the theatre. We loved the theatre, and we enjoyed the films, especially the thrillers. And I always enjoyed reading them, too. So Mary said, why don't you follow up on THE SPORT OF QUEENS with a novel? So that's how I did DEAD CERT. I suppose I did it in 1960, 1961, but it was published in 1962 by Michael Joseph, chiefly because it was in the contract for QUEENS that for any future work I did they must have first refusal. They took a look at it and published it straight away. They didn't even ask for one thing to be changed.

FREFF: There were some things you tried in DEAD CERT that were odd and daring for a first novelist--for instance, the timing of the ending.

DICK FRANCIS: Well, the races themselves end so funnily, don't they? Look at the 1956 Grand National, how that ended....

MARY FRANCIS: That was the end of the story, in the middle of that race.

FREFF: Definitely, but it wasn't the standard timing.

DICK FRANCIS: I've had remarks about HIGH STAKES: "Why didn't you finish it with Energise winning?" That's not right to finish it with the main character coming out on top. I know it happens in a lot of books, but those things don't happen in my books regularly, do they?

CYNDA: One of the things I've always liked is that you can never count on the boy getting the girl at the end.

FREFF: So there you were, writing a novel when you never had before. Was it difficult?

DICK FRANCIS: It was difficult. There are a lot of autobiographical parts to the story. Many of the characters are similar to those who had taken part in racing with me. One or two of my friends said to me, "Oh, I know who..." There was one particular character in DEAD CERT who was very similar to the actual chap who beat me in the 1956 Grand National, Dave Dick. A really happy-go-lucky fellow. And people halfway into the book would say, "That's Dave Dick!" And I would say if you read on a few chapters you'll find he has quite a few characteristics that Dave hasn't got.

NERVE, the next one, was autobiographical, too, because at this time I had a lot to do with television race course commentators.

FREFF: I've heard that most of the things in your books you have one or the other of you directly experience.

DICK FRANCIS: In IN THE FRAME Mary has done a lot of research for me. The main character is a painter. Mary started painting last year. And we spent a lot of time with a painter in Australia, a fellow called Michael Jeffrey. At that time he was a great help, and I'm glad he's a Dick Francis enthusiast, too--Pan Books has already sent him the manuscript for him to read and

put right any painting errors I have made.

FREFF: The polio...

DICK FRANCIS (looking at Mary): Well, there wasn't much research that went into writing about polio, was there? We still know a lot of the polio patients, those that are still alive.

FOR KICKS, which was about the silent dog whistle, if you'll remember: When I was racing there was a meeting up at Cartmel in Lancashire and it was a great sporting little meeting, crowds of people went there. It was only held once a year. Before racing began--they've stopped it now, the jockeys' club stepped in and told them they mustn't do it--they used to run hound trails, with the sheepdogs of the area going for miles over the hills, and the shepherds would be standing in the middle of the racecourse blowing their silent whistles at them. And after racing they ran a puppy trail. When I was thinking about what to do in the second book I remembered this, and I had a couple of ponies out in my backyard, and I wondered if horses could hear silent dogwhistles. So I went out and bought one. I would blow like mad and Mary couldn't hear the whistle but the ponies could; every time they'd hear it they'd look up. I didn't, of course, subject them to any torture--if I had, they would have been most displeased to hear it--but that gave me the idea that if a horse can hear this whistle, subject him to torture just afterwards, and you'll condition him to go mad any time he hears it.

The next one, ODDS AGAINST: Mary and I were driving the car along towards Kingston in Surrey. And on one side of the Thames was Hurst Park race course, and on the other side was Kempton Park. I won a lot of races at Hurst, and Mary said to me, "Isn't it a pity that that course is closed down?" It had been sold as building property. I said, "Yes it is; let's hope it doesn't happen to the one on this side of the river," Kempton Park. It suddenly clicked on me at that moment: what if I write a story where the fortunes of racecourses are being forced down so that they have to sell to meet all their financial problems? That gave me the idea for ODDS AGAINST. I went to the Newbury racecourse--which is very close to us at home, only about seventeen miles away--and the manager there was a great help, showing us all over the bowels of the racecourse, the heating system and so on. That's where the rat came from. It was just wonderful.

The next one, I think, was FLYING FINISH, wasn't it?

FREFF: The ending of that was oh so huge, and at first frustrating.

DICK FRANCIS: That novel developed because I thought it would be a good idea to write a story about flying horses around the world. This was before it was really done to any extent.

MARY FRANCIS: That story was written and into the publishers before the first hijack. And Harper's said flatly that it was impossible, that no airplane could be taken like that. The first one came just two weeks later.

DICK FRANCIS: They're happening nearly every day now.

Mary and I flew out to Italy one day with a load of horse. We flew from Gattwick to Milan--oh, it was a hell of a day. We got up about four to catch the plane at six. Well, we got to the airport at six o'clock, and at that time the horses were just



arriving. It was an ordinary passenger aircraft, a DC-4, and they had taken all the seats out, put the horses in, and built a compartment around them as they put them in. It carried nine, I think it was. Mary came along and I asked the pilot if she could take a few photos and things, and he said yes. I went to the British Bloodstock Agency to see if I could arrange this and they said, "Yes you can, but you'll have to work your passage." So I went as a groom, holding horses' heads during takeoff and landing. And Mary was there making herself useful, because I couldn't jot down notes; I was too busy. We had three cups of coffee in Milan and we walked all over. The horses were unloaded the other side of the airport and they didn't have any sort of customs problem. If you wanted to smuggle something in you'd have had no trouble at all. The horses were just loaded into their horse boxes and taken straight off the airport. When we had the coffee there was a girl in the trinket store...what was her name? ...and she was very like Gabriella, the character in the book. We flew back to Gattwick that afternoon with another six horses,

and by the time we unloaded them we were pretty flaked out. The chaps who unloaded them put the seats straight back in, because the DC-4 was going off as a passenger plane the next day.

BLOOD SPORT: We spend a lot of time on the river, and as you know the book opens on the river. That book was a lot of our own experience because in 1966 when we were over here, and wanted to see America, we went all over it on the Greyhound buses. We stayed on a dude ranch in Wyoming and it was terrific. They knew that I rode, and I used to go out in the morning with the wranglers, about half past four, to round up all the horses for the dudes. I was in the saddle all day and by the end of the day I couldn't walk at all.

FREFF: You've been married twenty-nine years? How did you meet?

DICK FRANCIS: At my cousin Nestor's wedding. Mary was a schoolmate of Nestor's. I was best man.

FREFF: Mary, tell us something of your background.

MARY FRANCIS: I had a very ordinary childhood, a very happy childhood. I went to London University and took a degree in French. Then I took a course as a draftsman and had a job for four months in an aircraft company, drafting, which I found very boring. Then a year as a schoolteacher; then, while we were engaged, I worked as an assistant manager in a repertory company. When I left that we got married. There I was, marrying a jockey. From then on it wasn't exactly ordinary.

FREFF: How about the polio?

MARY FRANCIS: We'd been married two and a bit years, and I was pregnant, and I got polio. It was a common time to have it, apparently. I did have it very badly. I was in an iron lung, paralyzed from my neck to my knees. I was one of the very lucky ones in that I recovered, more or less completely. I can't lift my left arm all the way up and I have difficulty breathing sometimes, but that's about all.

FREFF: But it didn't stop you from learning to fly.

MARY FRANCIS: Well, that was a good deal later, of course. It took me about fourteen years to get back to where I am now. Actually, it took me fourteen years to be able to play tennis again. I love playing tennis.

DICK FRANCIS: I could never beat her before she had the polio, and for a number of years afterward I could, but I can't beat her again now...she just makes me run around. She hits wherever she likes. I do all the running.

MARY FRANCIS: I still can't serve properly because I couldn't get my right arm to go up for years, and I still haven't got any strength in it. I really haven't got my strength at all. There are just...stupid things I can't do, like putting a suitcase up on a rack. It sounds so daft to ask someone to do something like that for you. I used to get awfully embarrassed about it, but I don't anymore.

FREFF: What's happening in the near future? Are there any movies or other special projects in the offing?

DICK FRANCIS: A couple years ago a British company made a film of DEAD CERT. Tony Richardson directed it. I saw a lot of it being made and we saw a lot of the pre-released runs, and we thought it was going to be great. In fact, all the racing stable scenes were shot at Josh Gifford's yard down in Worthing, and the company didn't know when they went there to do this that Josh Gifford's assistant trainer at that time was our eldest son, Merrick. They thought it was wonderful, so they made him horse manager, responsible for getting all the horses and jockeys they needed, and he did a good job on it. We saw the preliminaries and the thing was very good. The film started with horses being brought out of their boxes, being walked around, jockeys getting on their backs, riding out. And then the main character being a bit late; he was in the house having it off with the trainer's wife. A lot of the facts of the story were told in that sequence. Then they had a royal command premiere in London, Princess Anne went, and we thought it would be great. But Tony Richardson, for some reason we don't know, thought it was ten minutes or a quarter hour too long, and he cut off all the first ten minutes! When these parts of the story were being told...but the time was just the same because instead of having the credits over the scene, he just put all the credits on a black screen that went on and on...and it started after that with a race. The scene was very good, but somehow it didn't get the right reception. Apparently any film that Tony Richardson makes these days, since TOM JONES...they've all had bad reviews. He is very much against the press, and they know that, and they don't meet.

That was the first time. I sold the film rights to FOR KICKS to Sir William Piggot Brown, who was a very good amateur jockey when he was younger...but things are very bad now, creditors are after him left, right and center, and nothing ever developed with that film.

But all the books had film options sold. In fact, we educated the boys on the options. But nothing has developed, except for FORFEIT, the one I got the Edgar Allan Poe award for. I sold that to Columbia and they came over 2½, 3 years ago, with great intentions of making this film. Ernest Tidyman, who did the film script of THE FRENCH CONNECTION, came over to work on it and stayed in our village. I took him racing a number of times, introduced him to people, and got everyone--racecourse managers and so on--lined up to help him. And it looked like it was going to go ahead until the Columbia org came over in a blast of publicity for LOST HORIZON, which flopped in our country, and they all went back to America with their tails between their legs, Ernest Tidyman included. I thought, well, that's had it. But about six weeks ago Tidyman came back to England. He has bought the film rights to FORFEIT from Columbia, and he is now working with a Canadian-British company. By the time we get back from here they will have started their shooting over in England. They were hoping to get Sir Ralph Richardson to play the elder character, not a big part, but if they do approach him they might have a bit of luck because he is a great Dick Francis enthusiast. I've had letters from him saying how much he enjoyed the books.

But those were the only actual film news....Oh, I believe a Norwegian film company is making SLAYRIDE.

FREFF: Are you just going to keep on writing a book a year?

DICK FRANCIS: Well, I suppose I will. Michael Joseph, in London, are very keen that I keep turning one a year in, saying if I continue to do that they will keep them all in print, all the past novels. Which they have done. I would probably like to make it one every two years; it wouldn't be quite so rough then. But they say, "Oh, no, one a year is the thing." So I'm thinking hard now what the next book will be about.

FREFF: Are you ever tempted to try any other kind of novel?

DICK FRANCIS: I am tempted, but my publishers would prefer me to stick to the sort of theme I'm in now. They say, "You've made your name in that theme, and people might see a Dick Francis book and then be disappointed because there is no racing in it." But IN THE FRAME has a bit of racing in it, when the main character goes to the Melbourne Cup, but all one hears about the race is a description by the race-caller. It doesn't really have anything about racing in it except that the main character, the artist, is a horse painter.

FREFF: Do you now own a horse?

DICK FRANCIS: Only one. A very nice big horse, very like the one I used to ride for Lord Bicester. He needs a bit of time. He's run once.

FREFF: Do you help with the training?

DICK FRANCIS: No, I leave that entirely to my son. I wouldn't have had a horse, because it's rather an expensive hobby, if it hadn't been to try and help him out, to give him another horse to train.

FREFF: You are how old now?

DICK FRANCIS: 55. Two sons, one is a trainer and the other, Felix, is a schoolmaster. Teaches science in London University.

FREFF: How old were you when you quit jockeying?

DICK FRANCIS: 36.

FREFF: When did you begin riding?

DICK FRANCIS: I went into racing seriously in October 1946. I went as an amateur jockey, secretary, assistant trainer, general dogsbody to a trainer named George Owen. I was with him for eighteen months and riding a lot, getting a lot of experience. Not riding good horses, because he didn't have very many good horses at that time, but I rode nearly all of them. In fact, in March of '48 at one meeting the stewards had me in and said, "Look, Francis, you're taking the bread and butter out of professionals' mouths--there are only four professional jockeys who have had more rides than you this season. Have you any objection to turning professional at the end of the season?" I said, "No, I haven't; I don't want to turn just yet because I have some good rides at the military meeting at Sandown next week, and I've got

some good rides in the Foxhunter Chase in Liverpool in a fortnight...." So they said, "Wait outside for a minute please," which I did, and when I went back in they said, "Well, Francis, we think if you've no objection to turning professional at the end of this season you'd better turn professional at the end of this week." So my amateur days were over from that moment.

FREFF: What are your sales figures?

DICK FRANCIS: My agent and I just over eighteen months ago did a rough count. Worldwide, about five million then, all together. Now it's getting on to double that because there has been a big campaign. They are published in fifteen languages: Japanese...the last foreign language deal I signed, in fact, was Turkish...Norwegians read a lot. Czechoslovakia--they are all published there, but the number is very limited. When they are published they are all sold out before the following week. They can only publish one about every three or four years.

FREFF: Thank you.

DICK FRANCIS: Thank you.

THE FRANCIS PLOT KEY

pun (unintentional) by Jeff Smith,
recognized by Freff

The biggest problem in keeping track of Dick Francis's books is remembering which is which, since the titles are fairly nondescript and the plots rather involved. The following is a collaboration between the two of us (jds and Freff) in an attempt to shed some small ray of light on our own confusion. If it helps you, too, there will be a nominal fee.

1--THE SPORT OF QUEENS (1957, 1963, 1969)

An autobiography, though it's at least as much a book about steeplechasing as it is about Francis. There's no problem with this title, since at the time of his retirement Francis was the Queen's Jockey.

2--DEAD CERT (1962)

Protagonist: Alan York, trader and amateur jockey. The horse Admiral was a "dead cert" to win the race, so a small "accident" was arranged--a neat stunt with a tripwire that resulted in the death of the dead cert's jockey. This one is also notable for a fleet of killer taxicabs, and an ending with uncommonly ambitious timing for a first novel.

3--NERVE (1964)

Rob Finn: jockey. This title reference is an easy one. The

careers of several leading jockeys are being destroyed by vicious rumor-mongering. The public is told so often that these jockeys have lost their nerve that the jockeys believe it themselves; the book opens as one of them, in disgrace, commits suicide. It is the first of a type that Francis likes quite a lot, where the mystery is not what is going on or who is doing it, but what the hero can possibly do about it.

4--FOR KICKS (1965)

Dan Roke: Australian stud farm owner, fledgling undercover man. Somebody has come up with what looks like a horse-drugging scam--but it can't be detected until too late. Roke is picked as the unknown factor, the man most likely to find the answer if dumped in the right place. And he does it...not for the money, but for the simple need to get away from a set of crippling responsibilities at home. Something to do for kicks.

5--ODDS AGAINST (1965)

Sid Halley: ex-jockey and private detective. This title doesn't mean much of anything, though Jeff links it to the book through a farfetched trick: Halley was injured in a fall off a horse, so that he has an odd number of good hands. Treff prefers to think that it just means bloody near everything was stacked against Halley from the story's start. The real original title was DEATH OF COURSE, which makes sense because the plot concerns itself with the attempts of a land concern to wipe out racecourse finances so it can buy the places up for housing projects.

6--FLYING FINISH (1966)

"Henry Grey," Earl of Creggan: bloodstock transport, traveling head groom, commercial pilot, amateur steeplechase jockey. And determinedly displeased with his lot in life. This is not the only Francis novel involving flying, but it is the only one that actually ends in the air, hence the title. (Jeff, at least, wishes it had ended about one chapter later.) The ending is legitimate for all its abruptness, a grand, crashing, almost Wagnerian flourish of plot elements.

7--BLOOD SPORT (1967)

Gene Hawkins: British spy, and son of a horse trainer. This is a depressing one. Hawkins is ready to commit suicide--if he could only work up the interest and energy to actually do it. To try and keep his mind from dwelling on his unhappiness while he's on his mandatory vacation, his supervisor asks him to take on an investigation as a personal favor: a friend's prize stallion has been stolen. The title derives from both the elaborate game of falsifying bloodlines that is going on, and from the game's ultimate permanence. As this--like all Francis novels--is told in the first person, the whole thing exudes Hawkins' black mood.

8--FORFEIT (1969)

James Tyrone: racing writer for the Sunday Blaze. As usual, multiple meanings. Horses are being pulled from races just

before starting time, thus playing twisty with the odds. And in the course of the book Tyrone runs close to forfeiting a lot himself--his integrity, his job, his life, his marriage to a polio-crippled wife, her life, and an unexpected but glorious extra-marital affair. In Freff's opinion, this is the only one that can compare to NERVE.

9--THREE TO SHOW (1969)

Omnibus volume of DEAD CERT, NERVE and ODDS AGAINST

10--ENQUIRY (1969)

Kelly Hughes: jockey. Hughes is accused of throwing a race, and officially barred after a proper enquiry. But the real enquiry is his own, in a fight to get his license back and reveal the enemy who tried to destroy him. The core of the plot is seamy in a way only the British can be seamy...or, at least, they seem to have first claim on it.

11--RAT RACE (1971)

Matt Shore: jockey's pilot. This title is even less representative than ODDS AGAINST. In fact, it can be remembered as the title that has absolutely nothing to do with the book it's attached to. Shore is new to the racing world, struggling to pull himself and his career back together after getting himself kicked out of the commercial aviation field. Intricately woven into the background is a very smooth insurance swindle and some terminal disease. There is one hell of an exciting air chase, and, unfortunately, because of the first-person narrative one crucial scene takes place off-stage.

12--BONECRACK (1971)

Neil Griffon: somewhat reluctant horse trainer, and specialist in the cure of dying businesses. Lots of bones are broken in this novel; one before the book starts, even. A stable-owner is hospitalized, and his estranged son returns to manage the business until his father is able. There is also a powerful gangster involved, who is determined to grant his son his wish to overnight become one of England's top jockeys--through our hero's stables. Bone-cracking is a favorite method of the gangster for getting things accomplished. The obvious parallels between the two sets of fathers and sons are delicately and tastefully drawn, and the story is smashing.

13--SMOKESCREEN (1972)

Edward Lincoln: actor. This is one of the least racing-oriented novels--the horsey stuff is token and incidental. Lincoln is filming a movie called MAN IN A CAR under a sadistic director, who keeps retaking a long scene in which Lincoln is handcuffed to the steering wheel of a car and left out in the Spanish sun. He's miserable, and for the cameras acts like he's even more miserable. At the end of the novel, it happens for real in South Africa, and he finds out how miserable he should have acted. Smokescreens? Well, there's one big one hiding the real villainy behind a smaller ripoff, and a neat and extremely painful smokescreen in the hero's

trap for the "mastermind." Not a book for claustrophobes.

14--SLAYRIDE (1973)

David Cleveland: official investigator for the English Jockey Club. The title is a pun; the novel takes place in Norway. This is easily the weakest book, though still worth reading. However, there does appear to be a large, jagged hole running up the middle of the initial premise. The story? Cleveland is sent to Oslo to investigate the disappearance of a British jockey, and the day's proceeds from a race track that vanished with him.

The order of the next two is not certain in our minds. Jeff thinks that ACROSS THE BOARD was published in America only, and that KNOCKDOWN was published before it in England but after it in America. This uncertainty bothers him. Freff doesn't give a damn.

15--ACROSS THE BOARD (1974)

Omnibus volume of FLYING FINISH, BLOOD SPORT and ENQUIRY

16--KNOCKDOWN (1974)

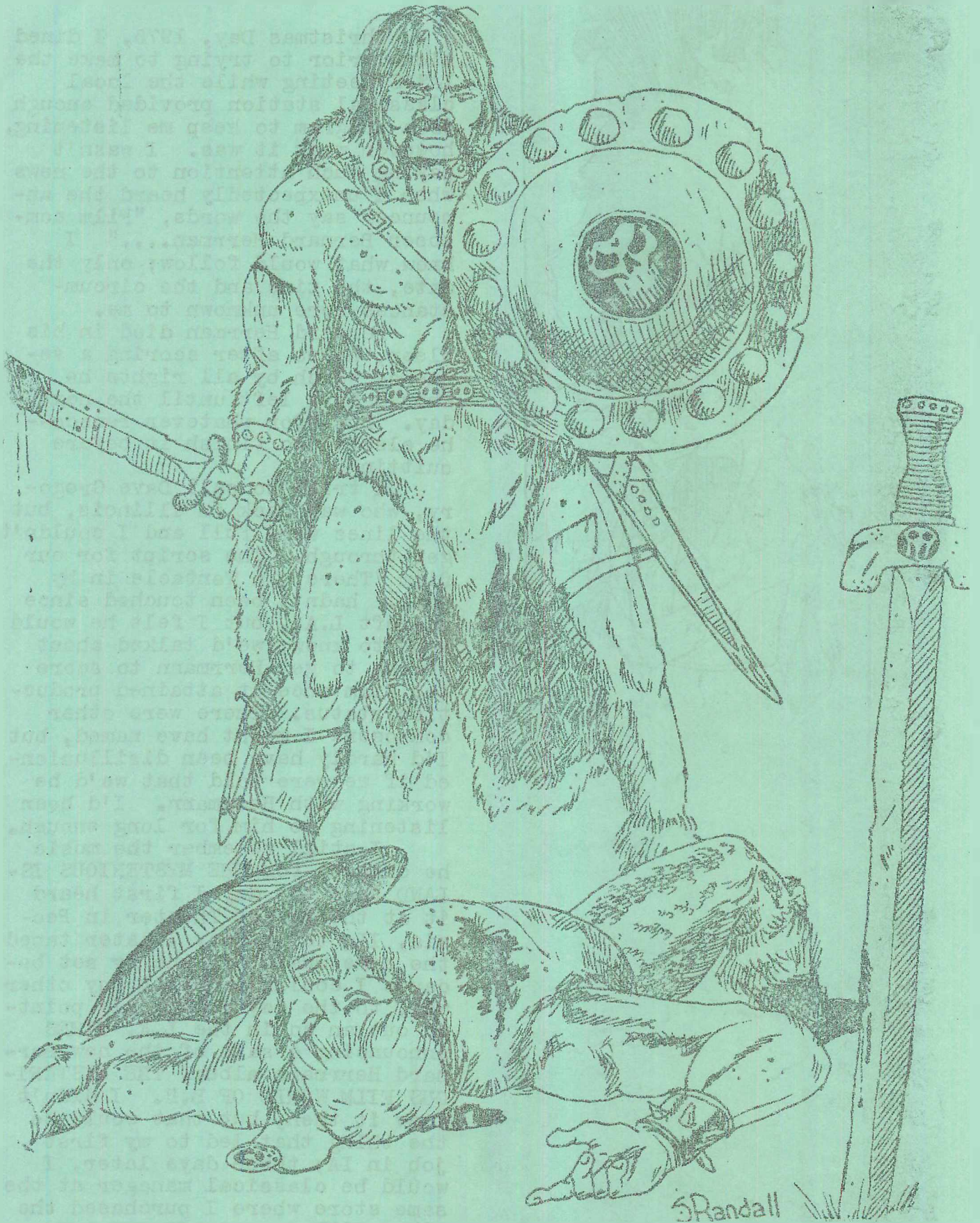
Jonah Dereham: Horse buyer and ex-jockey. "He had invaded the bloodstock game with gangster ethics. Invaded Vic's life and business as a dangerous ally. Invaded mine as a destroyer." This one, like NERVE, is the story of a total war, as in "knock-down drag-out." The problem is, Dereham refuses to get involved in a kickback scheme, and is attacked every possible way imaginable--physically, through his business, through his friends. A vicious and very good step back up from SLAYRIDE.

17--HIGH STAKES (1975)

Steven Scott: toy designer and horse owner. Also, a victim of an elaborate money-gouge by his trainer and various criminal elements. Somehow or other the situation gets considerably worse when he takes the obvious steps to end it, and what follows is fitting to the clockwork genius of Scott's imagination. It's a MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE plot done lightyears better. It is also a little more upbeat than the usual Frahm novel, and so might be a good one to start with for the squeamish.

18--IN THE FRAME (1976)

The protagonist is a horse painter in Australia. Since the book has just been released in America, we haven't read it and don't know what the plot is. We do know, though, that "in the frame" is a racing term which refers to the first three horses to cross the finish line...and the art pun must have been too good to pass up.





DON AYRES:
BERNARD HERRMANN

Christmas Day, 1975, I dined alone prior to trying to make the LASFS meeting while the local classical station provided enough of a program to keep me listening, however weak it was. I wasn't paying much attention to the news when I unexpectedly heard the announcer say the words, "Film composer Bernard Herrman...." I knew what would follow; only the date, the time and the circumstances were unknown to me.

Bernard Herrman died in his sleep, hours after scoring a sequence which by all rights he should have left until the next day. But--for whatever reason--he elected to finish it before quitting.

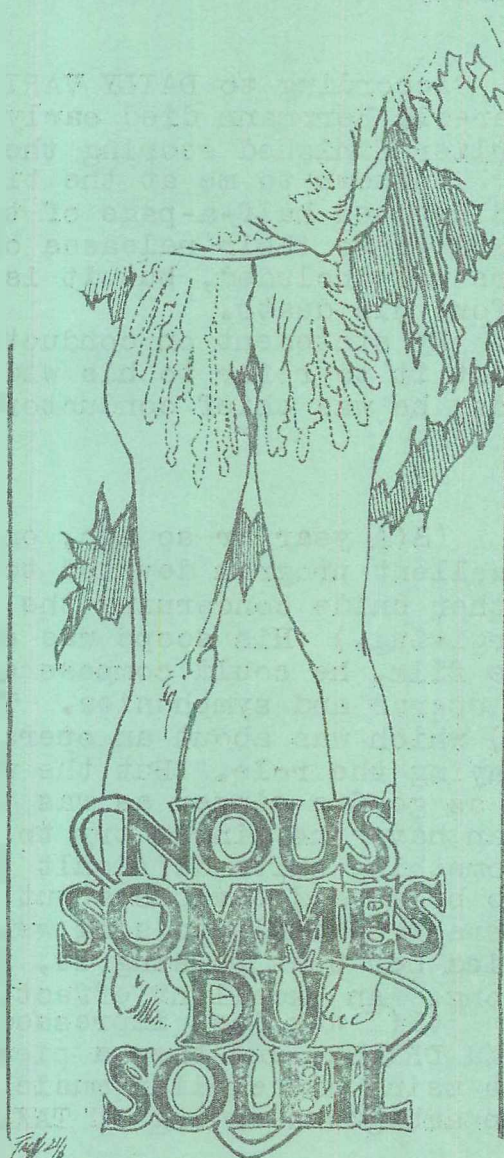
I tried to call Dave Gregory, who was back in Illinois, but the lines were full and I couldn't get through. The script for our film "There's a Tentacle in My Soup!" hadn't been touched since he left L.A., but I felt he would want to know; we'd talked about trying to get Herrmann to score the film once it attained production status. There were other composers I might have named, but I'd hardly have been disillusioned if we were told that we'd be working with Herrmann. I'd been listening to him for long enough.

I still remember the music he created for THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND from the day I first heard it at the Palace Theater in Peoria, IL, to the day I later taped the same music off the tv set because I couldn't get it any other way, to the day I joyously pointed out an ad in the L.A. TIMES announcing a sale of the new Bernard Herrmann album, THE MYSTERIOUS FILM WORLD OF B.H. I didn't know it then, but that would be the thing that led to my first job in LA; three days later, I would be classical manager at the same store where I purchased the album with composer's own new rendition of the score for--you guessed it--MYSTERIOUS ISLAND.

I never met the man, but I know him. I know him, as do so many others, from the countless scores that enriched an enormous number of films, even when I didn't realize that it was Herrman behind the scenes cueing the effect of the scene: THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, A JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, CITIZEN KANE, PSYCHO with its hideous dissonances....There were many others. Herrmann's was one of the first film composers' names I would learn, along with Elmer Bernstein and Dimitri Tiomkin--and, much later, Jerry Goldsmith and John Williams.

But Herrmann was always different from any of the others. There's a lot of strength in his music, and nobility. It is clearly music for the cinema, and the delight in hearing it again is at least partly because of the strength of the bond between the music and the image, whatever the merits of the music itself. And the music was always Herrmann, even when I could smile as I noted influences of Bruckner or Wagner or some composer known almost exclusively to the classical listener.

Herrmann wasn't much for sitting still; after leaving the realm of radio with Orson Welles for CITIZEN KANE, he later added to his activities as composer by becoming a conductor of not only his own works but also of others, including Holst, Ives, Satie, Milhaud, Raff (the only available recording of the "Symphony #3") and others. As a conductor, his tastes leaned toward the symphonic repertoire and music of the last two hundred years, and he also tended toward slower tempos than I usually prefer for my listening. The "Prelude" from "Mysterious Island" is noticeably slower than that used in the film; and the recording of "Mars --the Bringer of War" may be the slowest in the catalogue (a percussionist friend commented that he changed the tempos from that



of the score), but it still manages to elicit an effect. What can I say? These are obviously the way the composer wanted his scores remembered, divorced as they are from the dramatic requirements of the films for which they were composed or the manner in which most conductors render the works: they are particularly Wagnerian in this sense.

I say I knew the man and I feel that this is the case. I knew him without meeting him, and I mourn his passing, as does Dave. He called me tonight and asked if I'd heard; Herrmann's name was never mentioned in the entire conversation, because we both knew what the subject was.

Herrmann's name will never have an opportunity to appear as the composer of the music for "There's a Tentacle in My Soup!"

He was at least granted one boon before his death; London Records had issued many of his film scores under his own conductorship and had offered him a far freer hand at interpretation of others than had Unicorn or any of the other companies. With the release of MYSTERIOUS FILM WORLD, they were beginning a massive ad campaign for both his own compositions and those he only conducted.

Herrmann lived to see this.

I'm glad.

And I'm going to miss the lost opportunity to know him in person.

***12/29/75

According to DAILY VARIETY for December 26, 1975, the 64-year-old Herrmann died early in the morning of the 24th. He had earlier finished scoring the film TAXI DRIVER.

Unknown to me at the time I wrote the piece, Unicorn Records had devoted half-a-page of their ad in the December SCHWANN CATALOGUE #1 to their releases of Herrmann's music; several titles were not included, but it is gladdening to know that he saw this before his death.

My statement on conducting is a trifle misleading, as I meant it to refer to his widening interest in conducting on records; he was chief conductor of the CBS Symphony in the 30s.

***1/28/76

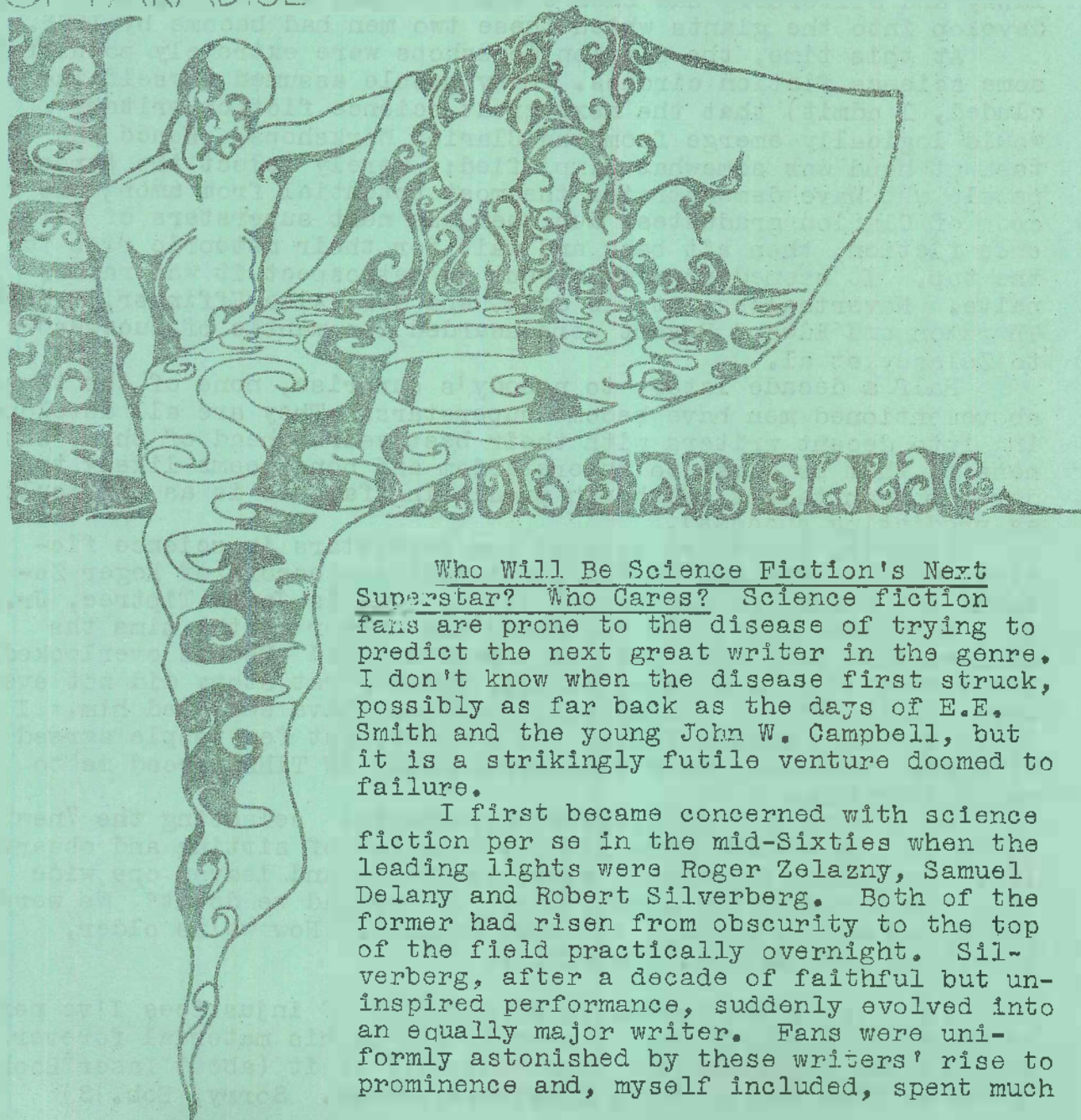
(S(A year or so ago, on the tv show CAMERA THREE, I saw an excellent program devoted to Herrmann and his music. (It was rather snide concerning the fantasy films he scored, but I can be forgiving.) His scope was enormous; according to the needs of the film, he could compose anything from piano or saxophone solos to operas and symphonies. There was one film (the name escapes me) which was about an opera singer, and they had an opera singer playing the role. But the woman in the film was not supposed to be as good a singer as was the woman they had play her. Rather than have the singer try to subtly lower the quality of her voice (something quite difficult to do, I would imagine, without getting too broad and obvious about it), Herrmann wrote her part in the opera impossible to sing well. Consequently, when the singer tried her best to sing it, it sounded good but just a little bit wrong. An excellent effect.

(S(I was most impressed, though, when they ran the end of TAXI DRIVER, and then a piece from PSYCHO--to show that Herrmann was using his earlier music to make a personal statement about the ambiguous ending of TAXI DRIVER. By using a three-note

pattern that in PSYCHO was used to foreshadow murders as the last three notes of the TAXI DRIVER score, Herrmann was able to deliver his opinion about the ending, even if director Scorsese chose not to disclose his own feelings.

(S(I've got one of Herrmann's albums, THE FANTASY FILM WORLD OF.... It has suites from JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (much more listenable than the Wakeman version) (which, I hasten to add lest you become confused, has nothing in common with the other), THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL and FAHRENHEIT 451. While the music remains true to its genre in that it's better suited for background sound than serious listening, the fact that each film is represented by what is in essence a new piece of music, the highlights of the score recombined into a ten-minute-or-so suite, makes the album much more interesting than the usual soundtrack--in which the main themes are replayed over and over throughout two sides of an album.)S)

OF PARADISE



Who Will Be Science Fiction's Next Superstar? Who Cares? Science fiction fans are prone to the disease of trying to predict the next great writer in the genre. I don't know when the disease first struck, possibly as far back as the days of E.E. Smith and the young John W. Campbell, but it is a strikingly futile venture doomed to failure.

I first became concerned with science fiction per se in the mid-Sixties when the leading lights were Roger Zelazny, Samuel Delany and Robert Silverberg. Both of the former had risen from obscurity to the top of the field practically overnight. Silverberg, after a decade of faithful but uninspired performance, suddenly evolved into an equally major writer. Fans were uniformly astonished by these writers' rise to prominence and, myself included, spent much

of the next several years praising their various achievements.

But stars frequently dim as quickly as they rise. Delany went into near-total eclipse after 1968. Silverberg's work continued to improve, but not nearly as spectacularly as his initial jump at mid-decade, and people began taking him for granted. Zelazny went full-time and produced superior works that lacked the brilliance of those he wrote as a part-timer.

Many fans deserted their former idols and began searching for replacements, new superstars who would generate the same excitement as the original trio. It would have been easy to discover who the newest superstars in science fiction were: merely sit back and observe who was creating the largest waves. At the turn of the decade, that would have been Ursula Le Guin, R.A. Lafferty, perhaps Larry Niven. But that was too easy for the fans. Besides, Niven was too old-fashioned and both Le Guin and Lafferty were too old for the distinction of "new" superstars. What the fans were searching for were the "next" superstars, young writers who were at the same level of development that Zelazny and Silverberg had been circa 1963 and who would, hopefully, develop into the giants which these two men had become by 1966.

At this time, the Clarion Workshops were extremely popular in some science fiction circles. Many people assumed (myself included, I admit) that the next great science fiction writers would logically emerge from the Clarion Workshops. Hence the task at hand was somewhat simplified: merely select the three people who have demonstrated the most potential from among the crop of Clarion graduates, dub them the next superstars of science fiction, then sit back and wait for their meteoric rise to the top. It seemed so simple, but in retrospect it was rather naive. Nevertheless, it was done, and Geo. Alec Effinger, Robert Thurston and Edward Bryant were awarded the mantle of successors to Zelazny et al.

Half a decade later, to nobody's surprise, none of the three abovementioned men have become superstars. They are all developing into decent writers with their best years ahead of them, but none of them is close to superstardom and none seems likely to develop such talent (although predicting failure is as difficult as predicting success).

However, there are several new superstars in science fiction, writers who may be the legitimate successors of Roger Zelazny and Samuel Delany in the 1970s. One is James Tiptree, Jr., who, coincidentally, was beginning his career at the time the Clarion trio was "destined for superstardom." He was overlooked. The second star is Michael Bishop, whose first story did not even appear until 1970. Nobody could possibly have selected him. I liked to think Gordon Eklund was a third, but few people agreed with me. Then his Laser disaster SERVING IN TIME forced me to reconsider him.

So I return to my original hypothesis: selecting the "new" stars in a genre is quite simple, a matter of sitting and observing. Selecting the "next" stars is futile and leaves one wide open for Monday-morning ridicule. So why did we do it? We were young and eager, perhaps somewhat foolish. Now we're older, hopefully more mature. Hopefully.

(S(This is the latest in a long line of injustices I've perpetrated on Bob Sabella. I seem to sit on his material forever. This column is at least a year old; half of it (about Laser Books) I had to toss out as being hopelessly dated. Sorry, Bob.)S)

BAILLEY ELLARD:
DOES THIS PROZINE STOP AT 82ND STREET?

In most serious discussions of modern science fiction prozines are given scant consideration. This is unfair considering the major influence they still exert on the field. It has become too easy for so-called critics to dismiss the quality of prozines without bothering to give them serious thought.

When you consider the pressure created by the monthly deadlines, the average quality of the three major American prozines is not bad at all. Naturally there are the occasional stories which are total duds, but they are not that common. The typical prozine story is always readable, frequently is quite enjoyable, and shows at least a minimum of talent and creativity. More importantly, every few issues a story appears which is genuinely outstanding and more than worth searching for. Is the average quality of an original-story anthology any higher? Perhaps slightly so, but they have anywhere from three months to a year to collect submissions. An annual anthology culled from any of the three major prozines would pale any original anthology in quality.

Another frequent cliché is to compare the prozines with the paperbacks and find them lacking. That is not necessarily valid when you remember Sturgeon's Law: 90% of all paperbacks are bad. At best they equal the quality of an average prozine. Since the average science fiction reader is a browser who seeks only escapism and bases his selection on title, cover art and blurbs, it is fair to estimate that 90% of the time that person would be better off paying his \$1.00 (or \$1.25) for a prozine than for a paperback. He would certainly come out ahead financially.

I realize that the readers of this magazine tend not to be browsers. We make our selections based on past performances of the authors as well as keeping abreast of reviews of newly-published books. However, there is a second, probably more important reason why prozines are valuable. No form of fiction can thrive solely on novels. Many ideas can best be treated at short story length. If everything must be fitted into novel form, they are likely to become watered-down pabulum. Consider mainstream fiction where the only short story outlets are those occasional magazines which still publish fiction. For the amount of mainstream fiction which is written each year, that is sparse outlet indeed.

Science fiction is much luckier. Besides the three major prozines (which publish from 33 to 36 issues per year, depending on how many issues GALAXY skips), there are the minor magazines (9 to 12 AMAZING/FANTASTICS and several issues of whichever new magazines appear each year) and the dozen-or-so annual anthologies which have survived. That is quite a thriving market for short science fiction.

There is a third reason why I personally enjoy buying and reading prozines. Much of the superior short fiction which appears in prozines does not see paperback publication for many years. Like the Tiptree stuff. Michael Bishop's short fiction has not been collected yet. Lafferty waited years before his short fiction was collected into book form, and then only a fraction of it. Early Zelazny waited several years. So did Le Guin's short stories. Now we have John Varley who has not yet written anything other than short stories, many of which are quite good indeed. Who wants to wait years to read such stuff

when we can read the original appearances in prozines?

In conclusion, prozines are both viable and worthwhile. Their quality ranges from the abysmal to stories which are quite exciting and very worthwhile. In future articles I will be considering both the good and the not-so-good in prozines. Stay tuned.

JEFF SMITH:
LOST IN TRANCE OF DANCES

I'm very embarrassed to admit it, but in the year since KHATRU 5 my science fiction reading has been very minimal. Also completely unorganized--short stories from here and there (I may have been most impressed by Lisa Tuttle's "The Family Monkey" in NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE FICTION, a book I intend to finish and review in full next time). The only things I've read in full have been a few magazines (when I thought it might be possible to keep up with F&SF and read a few other things along the way) and two early Heinlein books: REVOLT IN 2100 and SIXTH COLUMN. I'd never managed to get around to reading the latter before, and it's been a long time since I'd read the former. Neither is among Heinlein's best books, but I enjoyed them both.

Then there were a few fantasies: a rereading of CONAN THE FREEBOOTER (and almost the entire run of Marvel's CONAN comics); skipping through the three Robert E. Howard paperbacks of Solomon Kane, trying to read the first half of the stories in chronological order (quite pleasant stories they were, too); and Michael Moorcock's ELRIC OF MELNIBONE--I'm debating the feasibility of reading the entire Eternal Champion 21-book cycle.

Mostly, I confess, I've been reading mysteries. And more mysteries. And even more mysteries. Lots of mysteries. And if you might be interested in reading some mysteries, I'll tell you about some of the good and bad things I've read recently.

First off, I should mention Dick Francis. For years I avoided Dick Francis because I had no interest in horse racing or jockeys. This was a mistake. Francis writes some of the most exciting, suspenseful, interesting novels you're going to find. Too much of what I might say about them would merely repeat what's elsewhere in this issue, but if you would like some specific recommendations, some of my many favorites are ODDS AGAINST, RAT RACE and HIGH STAKES. But, outside of a slight caveat placed against SLAYRIDE (it isn't a bad book except in comparison to all his others), I just urge you to read and enjoy. (Well, one other caveat. All his heroes manage to suffer through a great deal of explicit pain. This makes some readers quite uncomfortable. But don't let a little pain get in the way of all the pleasure ahead of you if you become hooked on his novels.)

I also discovered Dorothy L. Sayers and her Peter Wimsey books, inspired by a) the adaptations on MASTERPIECE THEATRE, which I just started being able to watch when a new PBS station opened in Annapolis, much stronger than the one outside Baltimore, and b) the members of DAPA-EM (the mystery fans' apa, remember?). I've read the first six Avon paperbacks, and enjoyed them tremendously. The first is WHOSE BODY?, which is actually the weakest of the ones I've read, and I came close to not bothering with the rest of the books. I just couldn't seem to coalesce the eccentricities of this crime-solving British Lord and his daffy family into any sort of coherent frame. The dialogue seemed to shoot in and out from all directions, the plot seemed pretty mundane, and while I was enjoying the book, the enjoyment was quite mild.

However, as soon as I hit the chapter in which Peter worked himself into nervous exhaustion and started reliving his war experiences, with his manservant Bunter trying to see him through, Sayers had me. I knew then I was dealing with a real writer, one whose books would reward the reading.

The second book, CLOUDS OF WITNESS, is excellent. This one involves Peter's brother, who is accused of murder and who refuses to help clear himself. Since the Duke of Denver is on trial, the whole country is interested, and Peter must again stretch himself to his limits to try to discover what really happened. The interplay between the characters (particularly the family members) is fascinating, and Peter's personal involvement in the case gives it an extra dimension.

UNNATURAL DEATH is more minor, but very pleasant, and good both as a mystery and a novel of character. Critics have complained that Sayers' England was a fantasy world, and her characters often caricatures. Nonetheless, we know that even if true such charges are irrelevant. These people have their own reality, and their emotions ring very true.

In THE UNPLEASANTNESS AT THE BELLONA CLUB Peter must solve the murder of one of the people belonging to one of his clubs. Unfortunately, he knows and likes most of the suspects. The rift between Peter and his policeman-friend Charles Parker is excellently handled, and is what makes this novel most worthwhile--Peter has a lot of trouble turning his evidence and theories over to Charles, Charles understands the reasons but dislikes the omissions, and the two have to struggle hard to maintain their friendship. Very rewarding.

The fifth book is LORD PETER VIEWS THE BODY, which as a collection of short stories I expected to be a minor diversion. To my surprise and delight, this turns out to be perhaps the best volume yet. These stories are superb, and (a great surprise in a book of stories about the same detective) all different, too. "The Man with Copper Fingers" is primarily one of those clubby tales in which one man relates a weird thing that happened to him that he never understood--and when he's finished then Lord Peter explains all. It's beautifully done of its type, but I was really afraid the whole book would be like this. "The Article in Question" is almost unsolvable for the reader (the clue, well buried, looks like a typographical error), but immensely entertaining for the interplay of the characters. "Uncle Meleager's Will" is a stunt, a minor piece done for lovers of British crossword puzzles (quite different from the American variety, more difficult and much more satisfying to solve). "The Cat in the Bag" is pretty standard, but opens with a great automobile chase. "The Practical Joker" is a minor but excellent work, with Wimsey after a blackmailer, a case that must be solved discreetly. "The Bone of Contention" is the longest and one of the best stories in the book, very complex in its way. This would make an excellent little film, with its full cast of characters, its countryside setting, and its "supernatural" goings-on. "The Footsteps that Ran" is a clever howdunit; I don't think anyone would be surprised at whodunit. "A Matter of Taste" would be very difficult to film--the problem is: which character is the real Lord Peter? ("I know! I know! The one played by Ian Carmichael!") I'd read this ages ago, before I had any idea who Wimsey was, and it's a pretty good story, even though it's somewhat contrived. "The Dragon's Head" is superlative. Lord Peter is babysitting his ten-year-old nephew, "Gherkins." There are some great lines here:

They hear burglars in the flat...

Gherkins, who had always regarded his uncle as a very top-hatted sort of person, actually saw him take from his handkerchief-drawer an undeniable automatic pistol.

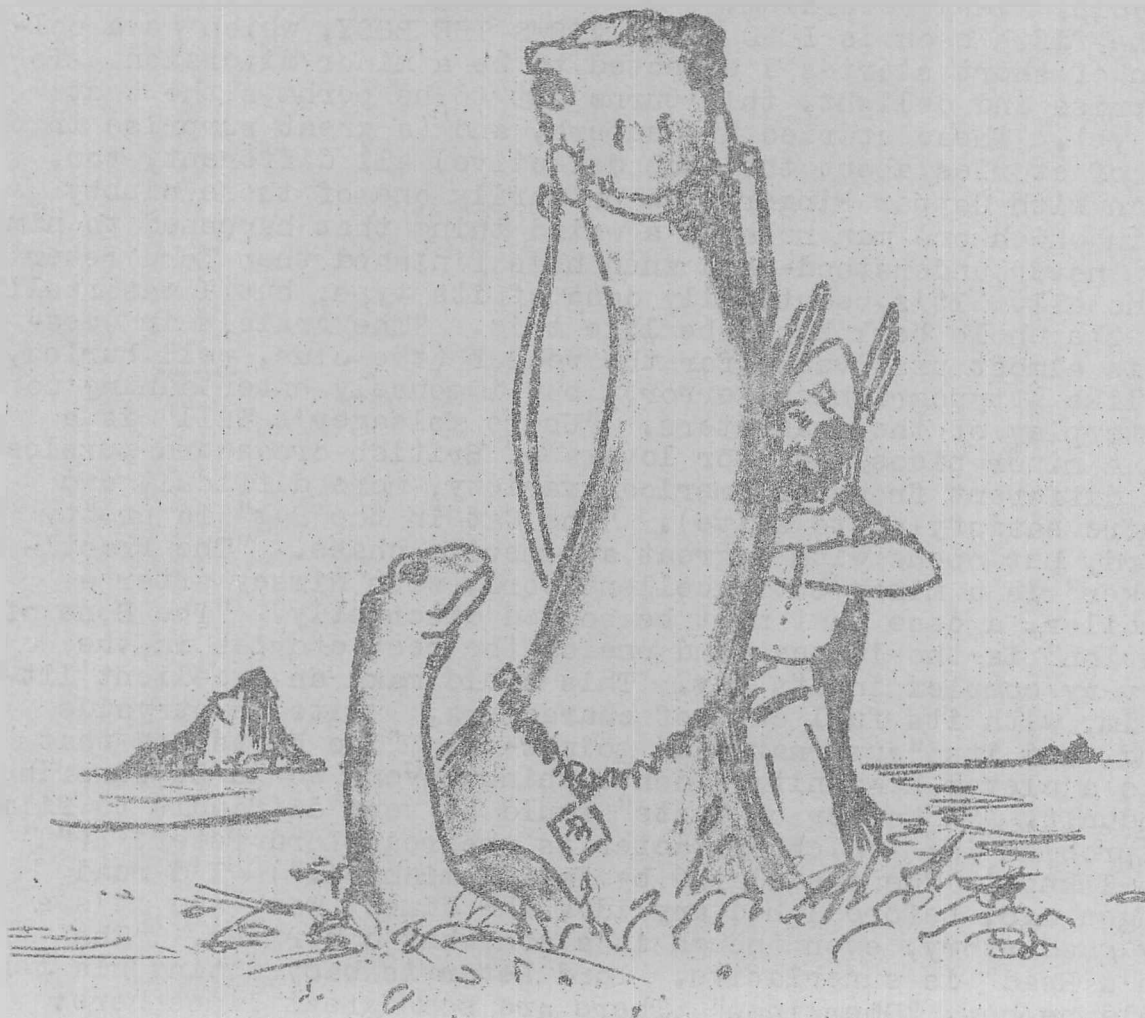
It was at this point that Lord Peter was apotheosed from the state of Quite Decent Uncle to that of Glorified Uncle.

The next morning, after lots of excitement...

...the viscount was seated at a very late breakfast in his uncle's flat, after the most glorious and soul-satisfying night that ever boy experienced.

All told, a marvelous story! "The Stolen Stomach" is another fairly obvious one, but amusingly readable nonetheless. "The Man with No Face" deserves to be a detective-story classic, a very pretty piece of detection. "The Cave of Ali Baba" seems apocryphal--the Lord Peter of this story has very little in common with the Lord Peter of all the other stories I've read. I daresay I would have liked the story considerably more if it had been a non-series story, but as it is it sort of makes the collection end rather flatly. Nonetheless, LORD PETER VIEWS THE BODY is one of the best books I've read in years, literally. A great pleasure.

The most recent one I've read (I'm trying to space them out and make them last a couple years or so) is STRONG POISON. This excellent book opens with an incredible two-chapter charge to the jury in a murder case. Sitting as a spectator is Peter, who falls



in love with the defendant, against whom the case is very strong. After a hung jury, Peter has his chance to prove mystery novelist Harriet Vane innocent. The first time he sees her face to face is when he goes to her cell to try and find out more about the case. In the midst of some typically excellent Sayers dialogue Peter says to her: "...when this is all over, I want to marry you, if you can put up with me and all that." It takes him several years, but he does, much later in the series. For now, though, STRONG POISON is delightful, and I look forward with great relish to the remaining nine volumes.

After years of being singularly unimpressed by Agatha Christie, I was suddenly struck by Christie Fever last winter and read 28 straight Agatha Christie paperbacks. I won't bore you with a run-down of all of them, but I thought I'd make a few recommendations for those of you who might have entertained thoughts of reading a Christie mystery or two:

Among the Hercule Poirot novels I've read that I thought were exceptional were the two tours de force THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD and THE ABC MURDERS, both remarkable mysteries that I have no hesitations about suggesting even to people who dislike the Poirot character. (The gimmick to Ackroyd is widely known, but even if you know whodunit, the howdunit is still interesting.) PERIL AT END HOUSE is one of my favorite Christies, and MURDER IN THE CALAIS COACH (also known as MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS) and DEATH ON THE NILE were also quite enjoyable.

I've only read a few of the Miss Jane Marple books, and they were somewhat above average mystery novels. The best of what I've read was the first one, THE MURDER AT THE VICARAGE.

A couple of harder, more serious non-series novels were the justly famous AND THEN THERE WERE NONE (TEN LITTLE INDIANS) (surely you know the plot: ten people stranded on an island are killed off one by one, knowing that one of the ten is the killer) and ENDLESS NIGHT (a character study which is crimeless until way into the book, then gets quite sinister).

And her light romances are wonderful. These are novels in which a charming young girl (or couple) gets involved in all sorts of intrigue. I've read most of these that she's done, and wish she's done a lot more (though I never would have thought I'd enjoy this type of book this much). THE BOOMERANG CLUE, THE SECRET ADVERSARY, THE MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT, MURDER AT HAZELMOOR (and, similar except they're mysteries rather than adventures, THE SECRET OF CHIMNEYS and THE SEVEN DIALS MYSTERY) are perfect light reading.

There were also a couple short story collections that I found quite admirable. One was PARTNERS IN CRIME, a neat little book well balanced between serious stories and humorous ones. Tommy and Tuppence Beresford, hero and heroine of the above-mentioned SECRET ADVERSARY, are set up in "business" as detectives, and try to model themselves after the great detectives of fiction, from Holmes to Poirot. THE MYSTERIOUS MR. QUIN is a really superb collection with more than a touch of fantasy. The stories should definitely be read in order, as they gain progressively darker overtones. The first several are quite innocent, but they grow less so, and the last story is nicely chilling.

A new discovery is Robert B. Parker and his detective Spenser. I'm indebted to Frank Denton for suggesting I read these books. (Frank was also one of the ones urging Francis on me; the man has good taste.) These aren't perfect books. For

one thing, the gimmick of never referring to Spenser's first name is rather wearing. For another, the plots aren't as strong as they might be. But complaints are rather irrelevant. These are fine books. A quote from the Boston GLOBE:

Spenser is Parker's, and perhaps Everyman's, fantasy of the complete man: social critic, gourmet cook, physical fitness freak, sculptor, and, of course, unabashed participant in a non-destructive sexual relationship. Spenser is the single most likable hard-boiled-type private eye I've ever read about. The guy is great! Outside of an unending series of genuinely funny one-liners, there is a great and soothing sense of intelligence in the first-person narration. These books hit all the bases: exciting enough to satisfy emotional needs (Parker writes the best fistfights I've ever read), literate enough to make you feel like you haven't wasted your time, serious enough to give you a little food for thought, and witty enough to give you a good time. Like a few quotes?

Outside the room the corridor was crowded with people. Two uniformed cops kept them at bay. As I shoved through, someone asked what had happened in there.

"It was a lover's quarrel," I said, "with the world."

I wondered what I meant.

The man from the DA's office wants Spenser to look like he has a job at a certain place. The owner is not pleased, but under strong pressure realizes he better cooperate:

"You can trust me, Lieutenant. I won't say nothing to nobody. Don't worry about it." He looked at me. "You're welcome to stay around all you want. My name's Vinnie. What's yours?"

"Nick Charles," I said. He grabbed my hand.

"Good to meet you, Nick. Anything you need, just holler."

In a gay bar, after describing the provocative clothing worn by one of the customers, he adds: "Be still, my heart."

And most of the bits work even less well out of context. In context, though....read one and see. The titles are THE GODWOLF MANUSCRIPT (in which a library treasure is stolen), GOD SAVE THE CHILD (a kidnapping) and MORTAL STAKES (in which a baseball player is blackmailed). I wouldn't recommend running out and reading these all together at once, but I definitely recommend reading them.

Another definite recommendation is the latest and perhaps best book by one of my long-time favorites, Donald E. Westlake. The book is DANCING AZTECS, one of the funniest capers ever written. A priceless Aztec statue and fifteen copies are shipped to New York, and a horde of con men and assorted characters go chasing around the city looking for the real one. I don't think Westlake has done better than this, and I've enjoyed a lot of Westlakes over the years.

Another good recent one of his has been BROTHERS KEEPERS, the story of a group of monks in New York trying to keep their monastery from being torn down. It's not really any kind of mystery, or even a crime novel unless you stretch a point, but its warm humanity mixed in with the monks' antic schemes makes it a definite winner.

On the other hand, Westlake's TWO MUCH was a great disappointment. A totally amoral "hero" pretends to be twins so he can marry twins. It sounds like the setup for a lot of slapstick, but Westlake stacks the deck so that there are very few situations in which the brothers are supposed to be anywhere near each other. The protagonist is thoroughly unlikable, and by the time he decided to settle the problem by murder...well, I couldn't care less.

Westlake has another amoral hero whom I can accept much easier. This is the criminal Parker, about whom Westlake writes under the pseudonym "Richard Stark." These are serious caper novels; the general pattern is a job comes up, Parker assembles a gang, and the job is attempted--usually successfully. The jobs can be as large as knocking over a whole town (KILLTOWN) or taking on the Mafia (THE OUTFIT) to mundane activities like robbing armored cars (SLAYGROUND). These books are generally short and fast-moving, and I always find myself rooting for Parker--he isn't much of a "nice guy," even as criminals go, but he's better than anyone else in the books.

I called these "serious caper novels." Westlake, of course, has a series of comedic caper novels, the first two of which have been made into movies (THE HOT ROCK with Robert Redford, and BANK SHOT with George C. Scott). (Several Parker novels have been made into movies, also with never the same person starring as Parker, and sometimes with Parker's name changed. I wouldn't swear to it, but I think we've had playing Parker Lee Marvin, Jim Brown, Robert Duvall and a woman in some French film. Westlake has remarked that the film industry can't seem to agree on a coherent image for his character.) The third Dortmunder novel is JIMMY THE KID, and in it our gang--which seems to get more inept with each volume--reads a (nonexistent) Richard Stark novel in which Parker's gang kidnaps a child for ransom. Using the novel as a blueprint, Dortmunder tries the same thing, and fails abysmally. At the end the kid (a child genius) makes a film about his adventures--and Richard Stark, as a character in the novel, tries to sue because it's so obvious that the kid's movie follows the plot of the Stark novel--and worse, burlesques it. Westlake apparently had a lot of fun with this one.

There's been more, much more. I will spare you the complete rundown. A few of the higher points, though: An obscure 1947 mystery by Z.H. Ross called OVERDUE FOR DEATH is a genuine Good Read, the kind with a attractive young girl heroine, her rich and mildly eccentric aunt, and the protective police lieutenant. Nothing special, but very pleasurable. Isaac Asimov's MURDER AT THE ABA is acceptable if unexceptional as a mystery, but quite entertaining for his detective ~~Harlan Ellison~~ Darius Just. With the Ellery Queen tv series on, Ballantine brought out a bunch of Queen novels. The cancellation of the program seemed also to cancel Ballantine's publishing effort, but they got some good books back into print. Of special interest to sf/fantasy fans would be DOUBLE, DOUBLE, which features a character who is named after and who takes after Rima from GREEN MANSIONS, and AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY, about an Eden/Utopia Ellery stumbles across in the American southwest desert. And I recently read my first gothic, Barbara Michaels' AMMIE COME HOME. The first chapter is pretty awful, but it picks up considerably from there. And despite the fact that the characters get themselves into situations they should have been able to avoid with a little (just a little)

thought, it's a highly engrossing book that I sat up late reading. I admit, too, that it played on my nerves a bit, and the wind outside my bedroom windows seemed a bit colder than usual. Real ghosts in this one, not pranksters, and even though you see them (the scariest horror film of all time has to be THE HAUNTING, in which you never actually see anything) the whole thing is pulled off very nicely.

I've received quite a number of odds and ends for review--novels from both hardback and paperback publishers, lots of fan and semi-pro publications. Unfortunately, I haven't read more than a fraction of them. I will make an earnest attempt to read some of the review books real soon. (After all, I enjoy reading them... whenever I get around to it.)

For now, I'll mention some of the less conventional publications, things you might not have heard of.

DOUBLE ECLIPSE by Neil Kvern and Rhonda Boothe, \$2.50 from Neil Kvern, Box 258, Cataldo ID 83810 -- this is a little book of short stories and poetry by the two authors, with good artwork by Randy Mohr and photographs by Jon Etherton. I have never, unfortunately, been much of a fan of poetry, so I can give you no idea how good or bad the poems in this book are; I did enjoy reading through these, which is all that really matters to me. The stories I can judge, and I judge them quite acceptable. Their plots aren't too strong, but the words are fine; they have uncommonly good styles for writers so young (18 and 19, respectively). (This, though, explains why sometimes I felt like I was reading a highschool literary magazine.) Neil is well into his third novel at this point, and I shouldn't imagine it will be too long before he'll have other people printing his work for him. For now, you could do worse than read this little book; I enjoyed it.

EXPERIMENT PERILOUS: Three Essays on Science Fiction by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Norman Spinrad and Alfred Bester, \$2.50 from Algol Press, Box 4175, New York NY 10017 -- This is a 34-page booklet consisting of three lengthy articles originally published in Andy Porter's fanzine ALGOL. The longest is the one by Bradley, written in 1972 and surveying the damage left by the crash of the Old and New Waves. Bradley has never been (and certainly wasn't five years ago) one of the more literary-minded sf writers, but she treats both sides with intelligence and even compassion in a very stimulating article. The Spinrad piece is the oldest of the three, about the writing of BUG JACK BARRON--and an exuberant piece on the glories of the New Wave. The Bester essay is more minor but no less interesting: about the writing of THE DEMOLISHED MAN. The price tag is steep, but the booklet is really excellent.

PHILIP K DICK: ELECTRIC SHEPHERD edited by Bruce Gillespie, \$6 from Norstrilia Press, c/o Fred Patten, 11863 West Jefferson Blvd #1, Culver City CA 90230. This is an excellent book, I highly recommend it, and I don't think I've ever liked anything I've read by Philip K. Dick. (Yes, I realize what poor taste I'm exhibiting, but I'm always honest with you people.) Most of this consists of articles reprinted from

Bruce's fanzine S F COMMENTARY, going back to its first issue in 1969. The book (and this is a book, not a booklet; 106 pages, 7½ inches square (!), double columns of text) contains an introduction by Roger Zelazny, articles on Dick by Gillespie and George Turner, a very controversial attack by Stanislaw Lem on Western sf except for Dick, and some letters and a speech by Dick himself, plus bibliography. This is all excellent material (or it would never have appeared in SFC in the first place), and put together like this it constitutes what may be the best book yet published about a single modern science fiction writer. Buy a copy, and subscribe to SFC by sending six more dollars to Hank and Leleigh Luttrell, 525 West Main, Madison WI 53703.

WHO WAS THAT MONOLITH I SAW YOU WITH? by Michael Goodwin, \$3 from Heritage, Box 721, Forest Park GA 30050 -- This is a book of comic strips about a starship with a strong resemblance to the USS Enterprise. It is not, however, exclusively a STAR TREK parody. Its subject matter is quite varied, and the cartoons are generally quite amusing. I don't know if it's worth three bucks, but I found it funnier than a lot of the paperback humor books available. (In fact, those of you who run bookstores might be well advised to stock this.)

THE MIDDLE-EARTH SONGBOOK edited by Rith Borman and Ken Nahigian, \$5 from Ken Nahigian, c/o the ABC Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, 8111 Rusch Drive, Citrus Heights CA 95610 -- This is a collection of Tolkienesque songs (words and music) ranging from Tolkien's own songs through serious compositions by others right on down to pure parodies ("Smaug the Magic Dragon" and "Hello Frodo," among others). There is also a nice cover by George Barr and lots of interior art--including a few Tim Kirk illoes uncredited but originally commissioned by me and published in PHANTASMICOM.

"Perpetual Change," continued from page 6)

figured she meant stomach, liver and intestine, and decided she was close enough. She also said the heart was in the "veab the ma." I think that means "the abdomen." (Even if it does, it's wrong.) The pleura (are you ready for this?) is in the "vanbat." The what? And the spleen is part of the "addom system," whatever the hell that is.

We are an open enrollment school--no one is denied entry. But sometimes you really have to wonder if we should be taking money from people like this who are simply incapable of performing college work.

But...there's nothing I can do about that. I only work here.

I'd intended this to be an 80-page issue, but I didn't have time to type eighty stencils. So, I cut the last six pages off the lettercolumn, and managed to get the issue done in time for Balticon. (My schedule was thrown way off when Don Keller showed up on the east coast, without warning. But that is one of the nicer ways of falling behind schedule that I can think of.)

It will NOT be a year between KHATRU 6 and KHATRU 7.



DON D'AMMASSA 1/11/76
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MiGod, do you have any idea what you have done to us? Reading KHATRU 3&4 through from cover to cover, attempting to follow all of the various discussions, points, arguments, discourses, and what have you took me from 9:30 this morning to just an hour or so ago, and it's now early evening. I am so thoroughly wrung out on the subject of sexism and its ramifications, I almost don't want to write this letter. But if I don't, if I wait till tomorrow, I'll find an excuse to put it off even further. And there are a few points I want to respond to.

First of all, it is obviously true --as all of the symposium members said-- that society is structured to the detriment of women. Sf, as an instrumentality of society--a fairly conservative instrumentality at that--reflects and reinforces that structure. "Andre Norton" and "Andrew North" are symptomatic. Alice Mary Norton was forced to give up her sex in order to be a successful writer of sf adventure stories. In fact, it is only relatively recently that her novels have begun to feature

(S(While I'm not sure, I think I could have run an entire issue of letters. I have locs on KYBEN 9, KYBEN 10, KYBEN 11, KYBEN 12, KYBEN 13, and KHATRU 3&4 backed up unpublished, as well of course as all the ones on KHATRU 5. I have winnowed the whole thing down to parts of 41 letters that I'd still like to print, dating back (this is ridiculous) to October 1974. We will start with the KHATRU locs, then squeeze in as many of the KYBEN locs as possible. I've done one thing a little different from the Approved Standard Form; since many of these letters will deal with comments you've either forgotten or never read in the first place, I've reworded some of the letters slightly to let you know what they're talking about. The Accepted thing would be to insert myself editorially and explain, but it would have to happen too often. This way is a lot smoother, and no changes are made in the contents of the letters at all. In fact, if I hadn't told you, you'd never have known. Well, time to dig in:)S)

women as the central character (ORDEAL IN OTHERWHERE, DREAD COMPANION, YEAR OF THE UNICORN, etc.).

I think we also have to accept as a given that men are also victims of the stratification we are talking about. Obviously women are getting the short end of the stick, but that doesn't necessarily imply that the other end of the stick is particularly long. When I was a child, I always resented the fact that I wasn't allowed to play with dolls and dollhouses, because those weren't the kind of toys that boys played with. Later, of course, I discovered toy soldiers and toy forts, and found that they really were the same toys, disguised to make them acceptable to parents. GI Joe is just as much a doll as Barbie, and serves just as strongly to enculture roles into our children. My son, incidentally, has dolls and dollhouses.

The third point I think we have to accept is that there is a real gap between the sexes, something that acts in the overwhelming majority of cases as a concrete barrier to contact. Just as it is difficult for a white man and a black man to develop a strong personal friendship, so too is it difficult for a man to become a close friend to a woman. We pretend in most cases that man and woman, married, have transcended friendship, but that really isn't true. Even if we accept that husband and wife are friends, what about the rest of their respective opposite sexes? How many men can enter into a deep bond of friendship with a woman other than the one to whom they are married, and vice versa? Assume that in a given marriage, both individuals are adults, both are selflessly aware that the other has close friends of the opposite sex, and that both are completely confident of their personal marriage bond. One would think that all barriers to extra-marital friendships would be removed, wouldn't one? It doesn't work. If one of these two should approach an acquaintance with obvious designs for a closer relationship, the reaction would be instinctive suspicion. Is he/she seeking a sexual liason? Do I want to get involved with another man's wife/woman's husband? Even assuming the selflessness of this individual, the fact remains that there would be a barrier of societally imprinted unease, that there would be an element of fear working to turn what was de-

signed to be a close friendship into something else, something quite possibly unpleasant. Okay, we'll posit another barrier removed. Mr. and Mrs. A are perfectly selfless and intelligent. Mrs. A is a close friend of Mr. C, who is also intelligent and receptive to the entire situation. But what about the rest of the community? Even those of us who like to think we are above the petty intrigues and suspicions, the ingrained customs and inhibitions of society, find that we have to bow to it. The rumor mills, gossip factories (and men gossip every bit as much as women) and such apply enormous amounts of pressure. It is the rare person indeed who will not give in. Again, if the couple decides to persevere despite the acrimonious glares of their friends and neighbors, an element of resentment will enter their relationship, poison it.

I think the part of sexism that bothers me most is that half of the human race is effectively barred to me. Many of our mutual friends are forever closed to me. And I suspect that it is even worse for Sheila, because the need for women to compete for men acts to inhibit friendships even within the sex.

But all of the above doesn't mean I agree with everything said in the symposium. For example, Delany's assertion about the alleged suppression of the solution to the Ripper murders strikes me as off the mark. Had the Ripper killed six ditch diggers, the effect would have been the same. Delany asserts that the aristocratic murderer was protected because his victims were worth little in society's scale. It wasn't only women who counted for so little.

Delany is correct however when he says that we are all sexist, just as we are all racist. Our sexist tendencies are more ingrown because we have to interact with women constantly, where we only interact with other races in more specific situations. We are all products of our society's conditioning. Sexism and racism are not different phenomena, they are the same phenomenon with different targets. As Joanna Russ (among others) points out elsewhere in the symposium, it is not useful to feel guilt about what is beyond one's control. The onus is on us to refrain from conscious prejudice of any sort, and to do our best to overcome unconscious prejudice. But we're never going to eradicate it in ourselves or in others, and if we try to pretend differently, we'll be getting a great deal of exercise of futility in our lives. We are none of us perfect, shouldn't expect to be, and shouldn't feel guilty because of it. The Christian precept that we can sin unconsciously has always struck me as cheating; no putative God should instill us with mechanisms that force us to perform an activity for which he could justifiably punish us.

As a point of interest, Delany is wrong that there is no sf novel in which the second command is a woman, with a close female friend from the lower ranks, which deals with the politics of sex. And surprisingly enough, the novel is Poul Anderson's TAU ZERO. Not that Anderson was really concerned with the fact that she was female, particularly, but I've noticed in many of his works that he seems to be attempting to portray his female characters as real people, and as real women.

I was glad to see Chelsea Quinn Yarbro mention the preeminent position of female writers in the mystery genre. Within the school of detection (as opposed to tough detective heroes, gothics, police procedurals, etc.), they have dominated the genre nearly from its inception--fine writers like Christie, Carolyn Wells, Moyes, Rendell, Sayers, Tey, Bell, Marsh, Armstrong, Joan Fleming, Wentworth, Phoebe Atwood Taylor, Rinehart, etc. But, naturally, mystery writing is a field that is now respectable for women to write in. I've wondered at times if this was because the common wisdom is that the woman is the treacherous sex.

Enough, Jeff. I am temporarily overloaded with thoughts about sexism. There is a point of consciousness of a situation at which it becomes impossible to function in that area without a rest. I'm at that point.

The rest of the issue was entertaining as well, though it had a good deal less impact on my emotions. I notice that Sheryl Smith seems to feel that we all take sf criticism too seriously. Well, I can't speak for Jeff Clark, or Don Keller, but I've never taken any of it seriously. Criticism is a game I play with the author. I've been doing these things for a long time, and I was

doing them originally for my own files. When I discovered I could get lots of free fanzines by sending copies out, I indulged myself, and the consequent gob-bets of occasional egoboo were very pleasant. But if fandom tomorrow were to fold up its mimeographs and silently slink off, I'd miss it, but I'd keep right on doing my little articles. They are a way to discipline myself in my reading habits, to force myself to coherently (I hope) explain my reactions to a piece of fiction. I hope that coincidentally they provide some amusement/enjoyment/information to others along the way. But take it seriously? That would take all the fun out of it.

CHRIS CALLAHAN 6/12/76
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I got a KHATRU 3&4 at Balticon this year and just recently finished reading it--and underlining it, and making notes in the margins of it. Fascinating! I'd love to get into a face-to-face discussion with the participants.

I did find Tiptree a bit too patronizing, but I agree whole-heartedly with one statement he made (on page 17)--"Down with Yin-and-Yang thinking." Delany was quite acceptable, though he lapsed occasionally into "understanding" that rang a little loudly for my taste. Russ--God, how I'd love to talk with her! (I did have a chance once, but the conversation had nothing to do with feminism, or even much with sf; she's a fascinating person to talk with--love her!)

So many of the comments made by the women reminded me of my own childhood or adolescence or college days--or the very recent past. The feelings they described, of anger and rage and frustration, are feelings I live with and know well.

Thanks for organizing the symposium, and thanks to all those who took part. By the way, where was Marion Zimmer Bradley? Having read most of the Darkover books (still need two), including THE SHATTERED CHAIN, I'd be very interested in what she'd have to say. (S(This presents me with a good opportunity to again plug Amanda Bankier's excellent feminist fanzine, THE WITCH AND THE CHAMELEON. Bradley is a major topic of conversation therein, and she has contributed long letters herself. Subscriptions are \$4 for three issues, and the complete run of back issues, 1-6 is \$4.50. Amanda's address is 2 Paisley Ave. South, Apt. 6, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.)S)

BILL HERON
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I thoroughly enjoyed KHATRU 3&4. I didn't get angry or anything because it's not a subject about which I have very strong feelings; however, I did think it was all rather one-sided and irrelevant. There is an opposition view to feminism and I did not see it presented. Also I did not think the discussion was particularly concerned with science fiction.

I would have been interested in seeing comments by some of the other women writers. I generally tend to prefer women writers to men writers because on the average their characterization is better; however, except for Le Guin, I don't regard the women in the symposium as being the best of the women writers. I wonder if I am reacting subconsciously against their militancy? Le Guin is always presenting something in her books that I disagree with but I still enjoy it because it is presented on a rational rather than an emotional level. I learn instead of merely reacting. If the other women writers that I enjoy (Kurtz, McCaffrey, Bradley, etc.) are militant, I have been missing it in their writing. I am sure I saw some feminism in Bradley's SHATTERED CHAIN but it was presented very well; Bradley didn't let her social comment interfere with the story. It was integral to it. (S(As I mentioned last issue, the symposium was not designed to be a debate on feminism, pro and con. I wanted something a little more intelligent.)S)

CY CHAUVIN 1/10/76
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It is depressing to discover that--no matter what good intentions you may have--that you, as a male, will probably act unconsciously sexist toward a female. That's why I tend to agree with Joanna Russ: the women writers should talk among themselves. Better for me to just listen, at least when it comes to sexism, and women in general. So I'll only comment on a few things closely related to sf:

I think it's being rather extreme to call any sf anthology that doesn't contain a female writer a "ghetto." I don't believe sex is used as any sort of criteria in selecting stories for sf anthologies, or magazines; there are simply more men at the moment writing sf than women. (The attitude that sf is for men only is sexist, but it is one caused by society, not the individual editors compiling anthologies.) "Tokenism," etc., I think, comes when you start selecting stories (or anything, for that matter) not on their intrinsic worth, but on who wrote them. It would be far better to complain about the fact that anthologists pick many of the same old names over and over again, whose stories have been anthologized to death, rather than pick stories by newcomers who are equally as talented. Or the habit of anthologists of reprinting third-rate stories by themselves (and I'm afraid that even Carr and Silverberg do this, as much as I respect their immense talents otherwise).

The exchange between Jeff Clark and Brian Stableford was of extreme interest to me. Re your own comment about two different kinds of readers: I think there are some people for whom reading is a major pleasure in life; for others, it is something to be done while riding the bus, waiting in the doctor's office, etc.--i.e., "when they have nothing better to do." This obviously affects what they read and what they get out of it, if only because it is more difficult to concentrate in, say, a bus, than your bedroom at home. (I tried reading KHATRU on the bus to work one day, and gave up, and turned to an apamailing I brought along instead.)

I do, as you might guess from the article I sent you, sympathize a great deal with what Brian Stableford says. I think that he is exactly right when he says that sf "is selling a perspective...strategically different from that of mainstream literature." You can argue that while intelligent people, who get high scores in the sciences, may like trash it doesn't mean anything, because they don't know anything about literature: why should we take their word on what sf makes good reading, when we certainly wouldn't take an (otherwise intelligent) English professor's word on what makes for good science. Such a person might find the science in SPACE:1999 entirely convincing, but would that mean we should have to re-examine science from some sociological approach, to see if the basic tenets of the whole thing are wrong?

The trouble is, science has a purpose (to explain the working of the physical universe) while fiction (as Jeff argues) has none, other than aesthetic satisfaction. But if a reader can get aesthetic satisfaction from A PRINCESS OF MARS, well, it's hard to say that his satisfaction is any less than that Jeff might get from THE DISPOSSESSED. (If you believe fiction does have a purpose, then, of course, this changes the whole argument; because if something has a purpose, it can be judged as to how well or poorly it achieves its intended function.)

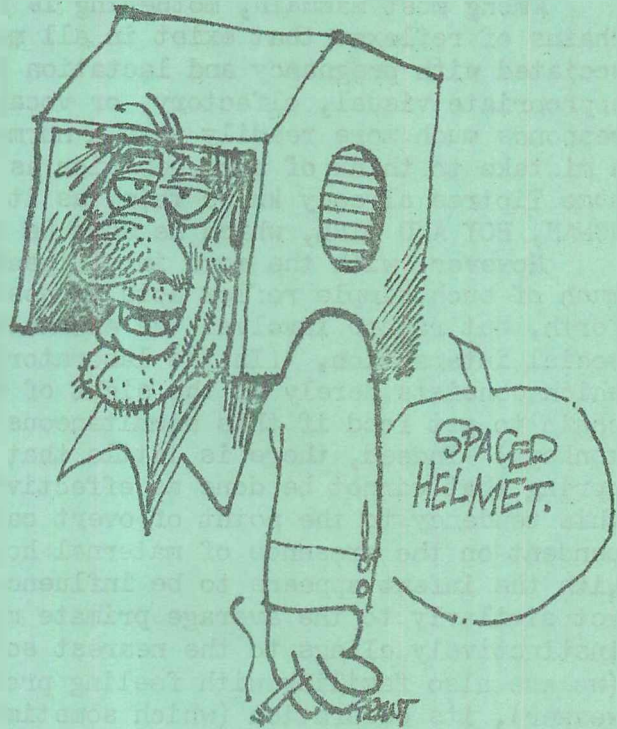
The discussions of optimism/pessimism/etc. turned out very well. I think Jeff Clark is looking on the dark side, too, but then the whole joy/pain syndrome is relative: after going through a great trial, you can be very happy, even though your life is objectively no better than before this trial occurred. On the other hand, it's not unusual to be depressed after a particularly happy occasion; it's all like the movement of an elevator. One of the satisfying things about a novel can be the relief, the "catharsis" or purging of emotion you go through--so that a very dark novel might leave you feeling very happy and lucky afterwards. (Maybe.)

Really, though, there is nothing wrong in being pessimistic, or writing

downbeat fiction, which is why the comments and objections of some writers being called such is bewildering. The only thing I object to is the idea that one viewpoint (optimism or pessimism) is superior, or more "realistic," than the other.

Your offhand comment about "message stories" is really worth doing a whole article/editorial on. Maybe people object to "message stories" because they are not subtle? I do know that I prefer non-message novels to ones in which the meaning is just clothed by the story--THE FEMALE MAN, for all its interesting bits, was not as "enjoyable" for me to read as some of Russ's other works. (But the question keeps cropping up--Aren't you just objecting to it because of the message? Yes!: there's too much of it! I didn't like Dick's "The Pre-Persons" in F&SF either, though the message was one quite the opposite of Russ's, I'm sure.

(S(I had wanted more time and space to expand those comments. I'm beginning to think I read differently from most people, and get different things out of books. I know I'm not terribly perceptive, but I'm always aware of the writer behind a story. I see "messages" in most everything worthwhile I read; a good piece of fiction has a lot of the writer in it, and opinions spill over. Even Edgar Rice Burroughs filled his books with his opinions--his attacks on organized religion in THE GODS OF MARS and others make for delightful reading. Problems can arise when the story becomes subservient to the thesis, but not necessarily. I am of the firm opinion that a good writer can, with effort large or small, transcend any limitations of form--thus that a writer who wanted to make a point and tell a story could make the point in the context of the story or hang the story around the point equally successfully. I don't think either way is inherently better--it depends on how well the author does it, either way.)S)



GEORGE FERCUS 7/11/76
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I'm not sure that your arrangement of the Symposium worked out too well, with thirty or more pages often separating a question and its reply. In retrospect, it might have been better to arrange all comments by topic. Or by author. This mixture of the two may have been the only way you found you could do it, but seems too disjointed. (S(My naive early plans called for a simple format that could have easily been outlined: Question A, everyone's reply to Question A, comments from those who wanted to reply to those answers; Question B, replies to B, comments of replies; etc. Very straightforward. But the whole thing fell apart very quickly, and I ended with masses of letters. Some participants wanted the letters run straight, with no reordering. (I did this for the book manuscript, though I don't like it at all.) I tried to get all answers to the same question together, and whenever possible I severed portions of letters and placed them closer to their direct antecedents. I worked a long time on the ordering, and was fairly pleased with the final result, despite some impossible situations here and there.)S)

I'm not surprised that no one responded to James Tiptree's question about

what prompts maternal behavior, after all the nonsensical ranting he did about the Mother Principle. Still, I suppose it is only fair to enlighten him as to the mysterious satisfaction the mother chimpanzee or the mother opossum gets out of it. And there is no single answer to that question.

Among most mammals, mothering is purely instinctive behavior, composed of chains of reflexes that exist in all members of each species. The hormones associated with pregnancy and lactation increase the mother's sensitivity to the appropriate visual, olfactory, or vocal stimuli from her infant so that she responds much more readily than a normal animal (male or female) would. It is a mistake to think of such behavior as "motivated" in the human sense. (I assume Tiptree already knows this, as it is covered in Money & Ehrhardt's *MAN AND WOMAN, BOY AND GIRL*, which he says he read.)

However, with the more intelligent primates, maternalism consists not so much of such simple reflex acts as nest-building, licking, retrieving, and so forth, but rather involves the enhancement of the normal desire for gregarious social interaction. (In the laboratory, a monkey will work hard for a "reward" which consists merely of the sight of another monkey, and will avoid pulling a chain to get food if this simultaneously gives an electric shock to another monkey.) Indeed, there is little that the primate mother does for her offspring that cannot be done as effectively by playmates. The enhancement of this tendency to the point of overt caretaking behavior does not seem to be dependent on the presence of maternal hormones. The mother's desire for contact with the infant appears to be influenced by its behavior (we would probably react similarly to the average primate mother in the situation where an infant instinctively clings to the nearest soft, warm thing for reassurance), its size (we are also familiar with feeling protective of companions that are smaller or weaker), its coloration (which sometimes resembles the bright red coloration of the "sexual skin" that is an attractant in adult sexual relations), and its strongly sexual stimulation of the mother by suckling. In humans, on the other hand, one may find the most powerful and long-lasting factor to be "If I don't take care of these kids, who will?" Interestingly, for those species in which males and females are very different in size, protective feelings can be bound up with sexual feelings to produce harem-forming by males that is hard to distinguish from mothering.

I notice that the only people who tried to factually discuss this question of maternal behavior were men. Is it true, as Joanna Russ suggested, that men inevitably bring up such arguments that distract from the real issues? Actually, I hope that the men's arguments are not typical of what passes for biology and ethology among contemporary sf writers. Their factual errors almost make one long for the good old days when there was science in science fiction! Shall I give you a run-down?

It was bad enough that Tiptree couldn't seem to write more than two successive sentences about primate mothers without assuming something that wasn't true. But then Chip Delany opened his critique of Tiptree's biology by attacking one of the few things Tip got right--that humans have 46 chromosomes! (Chip must have some old textbooks--the old belief in 48 chromosomes was disproved twenty years ago.)

Delany goes on to speak of the "many species of rhesus." This is untrue. There is only one species--*Macaca mulatta*. Of course there are various subspecies, and Chip may feel that the distinction is minor--until I start talking about blacks and whites as different species of *Homo*. (Do you suppose that, in the spirit of feminism, we ought to change genus *Homo* to genus *Persona*?)

He then asserts that some female rhesus monkeys form "harems of males." Untrue. The closest any primate comes to this, that I am aware of, is among gelada baboons, where the one in essential control of the male's harem is the senior female, and among anubis baboons, where the senior females lead most activities.

Chip says that among some "rhesus and leaf monkeys" care of infants is carried on for the most part by males (with the exception of actual nursing). Untrue as stated. Such behavior does occur among more than half the species of

New World monkeys (including marmosets, tamarins, and some cebid monkeys such as the titi and the owl monkey). The male also helps the female in a number of other species when infants are born in close succession or as twins. It does not occur in the rhesus, nor among the langurs and colobus monkeys (which I assume are what he means by "leaf monkeys").

Chip also asserts that caring for offspring is the normal behavior of the male lion when the female is out hunting. Untrue. When the female goes hunting, the cubs are simply left abandoned in an out-of-the-way place.

Delany gets high marks, though, compared to Tiptree, who talks about the "female primate endlessly, tirelessly, lugging her infant." Misleading. It is the infant who clings to its parent's fur, and stays put whether she is tired or not. Most non-human primates could not manage to get around at all while "lugging" anything in the human sense (although this is less true of the gorilla and chimpanzee, who often use one arm to help support an infant).

Tiptree tells us of her "food-bringing and sharing." Untrue. No non-human primate brings food to any other individual, either infant or adult. Food begging and sharing has been observed only in situations where it comes from an unusual and exclusive source, such as when a primate kills another animal for food, or when it is provided by humans.

His description of the mother's "nest and shelter-building" is similarly untrue. Primates take their offspring with them, and so do not build nests for their young in the way that other mammals do. Some species do assemble rudimentary individual "nests" for sleeping, but these are usually abandoned after a single night.

He goes on to characterize the monkey mother as "gazing into her baby's eyes and untiringly guiding its little hands." Untrue. I suppose all this anthropomorphism is just a writer's hyperbole, but fixation with the eyes is generally a threatening gesture among non-human primates. Even the most intimate social contact--grooming each other's fur--involves studious avoidance of looking at each other's faces. The infant generally clings to its parent in such a position that gazing into eyes is rather difficult. (A similar situation applies to male-female interaction--they have a hard time looking deep into each other's souls while copulating from front to rear.) The only situation normally involving frequent eye contact is when infant and parent are separated by some distance. And the mother then obviously can't do any guiding of its little hands--whether tiringly, untiringly, tirelessly, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, or prostrate with exhaustion.

Tiptree refers to the primate mother (sigh) tirelessly teaching and training her infant. Untrue. Primates learn mainly by observation and by playing with other infants. The mother sets an example, in a not particularly deliberate way, and sometimes plays with her infant, but so do the infant's peers. Indeed, a monkey raised only by the mother, without peer contact, will grow up psychologically disturbed and hyperaggressive, whereas an adult male will serve as a completely adequate mother-substitute.

Tip asserts that mothering and other extended relationships between animals are "totally outside the male repertory." Untrue. Almost all male primates form social groups of some sort. (In fact, Lionel Tiger, author of *MEN IN GROUPS*, makes ridiculous assertions of the opposite stripe--that such "bonding" is characteristic of human males but not of females!) The degree to which males develop relationships with infants is directly dependent on their on their degree of involvement with the mother. For polygamous species with promiscuous sexual activity, no evolutionary advantage is gained by a male becoming involved with any particular infant, which may or may not carry his genes. But for monogamous family-forming species, it is advantageous for there to be instinctive male interest in the individual offspring. Also, even in a promiscuous species such as chimpanzees, brother-brother, brother-sister, and son-mother attachments have been known to last twenty years.

Tip further suggests that the male copulatory pattern "shares the neural pathways" and involves "the same equipment which serves aggression and predation." Untrue. Penile displays, for example, are related to aggression and

social dominance not because of the sexual function of the penis, but because of its function as dispenser of urine. As evolution has enhanced the importance of visual compared to olfactory cues, the scent-marking of the home territory by urination (which still persists in some primates) has generally given way to signalling by display of the bright red penis and bright blue scrotum in males (and similarly colored structures in females, when both sexes engage in territorial behavior). The full male copulatory pattern, on the other hand, often serves as an indicator of non-aggression in greeting and play.

The other characteristic Tip mentions--predation--is very uncharacteristic of primates. It occurs only in a few species and (except for tamarins) only under special conditions. Also in this regard, it's a bit hard to figure out what he means by "the same equipment." Does he figure that a baboon knocks a gazelle senseless with his penis? That he runs after it on the same four feet he uses when walking over to a female?

Also, both males and females practice aggressive dominance behavior. Males of various species become more successful at it in relation to how much bigger and toothier they are than females. Among those species with little or no sexual dimorphism, there is little difference in aggressiveness between the sexes. In some species, aggressive interactions occur only between males and only during the breeding season, whereas in others success in mating is uncorrelated with success in aggressive encounters.

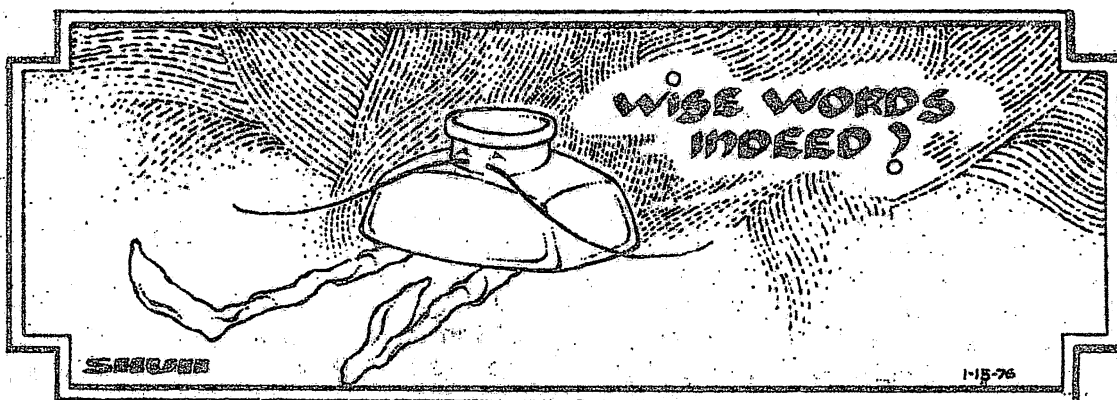
By the way, Tip also fears that if we become able to determine the sex of our children before birth, a gigantic wave of male births will occur, to the detriment of society. Let me reassure him somewhat. In technologically advanced countries, the great preponderance of couples who want the first child to be male want the second to be female. It all apparently tends to even out in the end.

Now we pass on to KHATRU 5 and from the Ashley Montagu-ism of James Tip-tree to the Robert Ardrey-ism of Robert Blenheim.

Blenheim, in the letter column, advises us all to read about sex differences as described in Ardrey's "three great books" because he is a "non-fanatical, much-respected anthropologist" whose theories are obviously "inarguable." Untrue. Ardrey is a white supremacist, male chauvinist, and glorifier of war, who has no more training in anthropology than I do. (He took a couple courses in college.) His occupation, before he became infatuated with the behavior of extinct apes and male baboons, was as a Hollywood playwright.

Ardrey is "respected" only by those who are not anthropologists (among them, Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke). What do respected anthropologists say about Ardrey? Edmund Leach calls his books "noisy and foolish...mines of scientific-sounding misinformation." Kenneth Boulding calls them "scientific humbug." Sherwood L. Washburn, former president of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, whose field research provided us with most of our basic knowledge of baboon behavior, dismisses Ardrey as a "popularizer of data he does not understand." According to John H. Crook, "...Ardrey ignores most of the experimental ethological literature...."

The only near-anthropologist I know of whose thinking was in tune with



Ardrey's (before Ardrey demonstrated that one could make wild speculations in the popular press and get away with them) was South African anatomist Raymond. A. Dart, a fellow white supremacist. But Dart wasn't an experienced writer of fiction, like Ardrey. Despite his fame as the discoverer of the first *Australopithecus* fossil skull, his views on the subject could not find publication in any reputable scientific journal. (Ardrey's own credits are restricted to a collaborative effort in *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*.) Dart's successor as head of the department of anatomy at a Johannesburg university, Philip Tobias, repudiates the prehistorical theories of Dart and Ardrey, after examining the same bones.

Ardrey himself is apparently being forced, bit by bit, to acknowledge his interpretive errors. In *AFRICAN GENESIS* he spoke of his "overwhelming body of incontrovertible proof." In *THE TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE* he acknowledged having made "a wrong guess or two." Now he's gotten cautious to the point where his latest book merely describes his theory as *THE HUNTING HYPOTHESIS*.

But Ardrey is still gaily fitting unjustified assumptions and half-truths together to add support to his tottering thesis as fast as others take it away. One of his latest unjustified assumptions, just to give an example, is that primitive man must have had the same gastrointestinal characteristics that he does today. He concludes from this that our ancestors could not have subsisted to any significant degree on the scarce vegetable food available at the time, not yet having invented fire with which to cook it. Therefore, he concludes, man had to be an aggressive, predatory, even cannibalistic hunter in order to survive. But he's fallen over his own feet, this time. According to his set of assumptions, the early men he has invented whose diet came exclusively from hunting would have weakened and died from scurvy. He also apparently hasn't bothered to find out about the wide variety of plant foods that present-day hunter-gatherers manage to wrest from the Kalahari Desert and eat raw. Nor about the problems that a diet high in saturated animal fats causes for our metabolism, which is geared to handle unsaturated vegetable fats.

Blenheim quotes a specific example of one of Ardrey's half-truths--that "a human baby at birth today has all of the instincts complete and intact that a baby had at the very beginning of Man." Although this is probably untrue as a generalization (for example, gestures of appeasement or reassurance such as presenting the rear or smacking the lips occur in the repertoire of all the Old World monkeys, and thus presumably of early ape-man as well, but are absent in man today), it is no doubt true with respect to quite a number of reflexes. However, this may be as irrelevant to adult behavior as the fact that we all have gills at one stage of fetal development is irrelevant to our adult physical form. (The clinging reflex is lost in humans shortly after birth, and a number of other early reflexes disappear if not continually reinforced by experience.) In addition, even if one grants for the sake of argument some "instinctive norm" of male or female behavior left over from long ago (that child psychologists have somehow failed to note), there is considerable room for doubt about what that norm may have been. (For example, take the characteristic that differentiates all males from all females--sexual behavior. Women differ from all other female primates in that they do not undergo a period of sexual "heat" for a few days each month. When differences occur in such fundamental behavior, what can be assumed to remain constant?)

Ardrey bases all his statements about these male/female norms on the behavior of ground-dwelling baboons, the most ferocious and most sexually-differentiated primates in existence (and of certain similar species of macaques). He simply ignores those species of baboons and macaques whose behavior doesn't fit his theories. He also ignores all the living species of great apes, which (1) generally fail to manifest instincts such as aggressiveness and territoriality, and (2) do exhibit many of the characteristics that Ardrey says could have arisen in humans only as a result of the hunting way of life. Ardrey's rationale for ignoring our closest living relatives, he says, is that they are meaningless "evolutionary dead-ends" who can teach us nothing. But he bases his conclusions about the behavior of early ape-men entirely on his own unique deductions about what "must have been" the behavior of *Australopithecus Africanus*,

which recent finds by Richard Leakey and Donald Johanson in Africa have confirmed to be a deviant from the main line of evolution to man. Australopithecus appears to have died out in competition with Homo some one million years ago! But for Ardrey's purposes, extinct "evolutionary dead-ends" are more useful than living ones.

If Blenheim insists on reading fanciful, sensationalized speculations in pre-historic anthropology, he should at least try Elaine Morgan's THE DESCENT OF MAN to get a view different from (though no more believable than) that of the machismo cult. If he would like to read some serious, informed criticism of Ardrey without resort to specialized publications, I suggest Ashley Montagu's anthology MAN AND AGGRESSION (1969), Alex Alland's THE HUMAN IMPERATIVE (1972), Robert Claiborne's GOD OR BEAST (1974), or Joan Marble Cook's IN DEFENSE OF HOMO SAPIENS (1975). I doubt that such recommendations will do any good, since no one gave any indication of having read the references (like Naomi Weisstein's article) that were cited by Joanna Russ.

What Vonda McIntyre said about male chauvinism in anthropology is still true, I think, only for the academics (who are typically a decade or so behind the times anyway). Anthropologists who are active in field studies have become enlightened about paying attention to women as a result of such things as the 1971 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, which was entirely devoted to such consciousness-raising. This has not shown up in introductory college texts, however, where it is still clear which sex is being referred to when they talk about "early man." A recent (1974) such volume makes no mention whatsoever of women until page 233, where the following statement appears: "The dog probably was the second animal domesticated by man, if we accept the proposition that the first was woman--who still might best be classed as in a semidomestic state."

Sorry, Jeff, to have injected science into your fine literary publication, but I have seen so much distortion of the facts lately that my exasperation is tending to get the better of me, and I have to let it out. (S(No apologies necessary; you're welcome back anytime.)S)

AVEDON CAROL 5/1/76
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(Deep breath; OK, here goes, and I hope this is the last time I have to do this:)

Look back over a few thousand years of history written from the point of view of The Other Side and tell me how one lousy symposium on Women in SF is "one-sided"!

"...the male lion, despite OVERWHELMING DOMINANCE, abdicates certain sexual prerogatives to the females of his harem..."--love it. I can just see this lion (pipe in mouth, newspaper in his lap?) looking over at a female and thinking, "Gee, I ought to let her do something important, too." In other words, the females don't do those things as a part of their natural role; they do them because the male makes a conscious decision to let them. I don't suppose you could call Ardrey one-sided for crediting lions with sentience just to prove male superiority, could you?

Actually, arguing with someone who bases his arguments on Ardrey is like arguing with someone who says "N-----s is related to apes." I may have all of the empirical data on my side, but if that sort of thing were going to influence him I wouldn't have to tell him in the first place. (I just thought I'd get it out of the way so no one else would have to waste her time.) Ardrey, of course, is probably the most discredited man in the field, but that won't stop the R.E. Blenheims of the world from quoting him.

Of course, for any theory on the superiority of either sex, you can find an example in the animal kingdom to support that theory. You can find more examples, in fact, than there are theories. Like:

Chickens have only one orifice for reproduction, defecation, and urination.

Men have a separate orifice for defecation, but still only one for urination and reproduction. Women have a separate orifice for each of these functions, and yet another distinct organ for sexual gratification. I submit, therefore, that women are on a far higher level than men on the evolutionary scale--and men are related to chickens.

or:

We can see from the example of the black widow spider that, outside of his sole purpose as an agent of fertilization, the male is entirely unnecessary, and probably better gotten rid of as soon as he has completed this function.

Certainly these arguments have just as much validity in justifying the subjugation (or extermination?) of males as do Blenheim's and Ardrey's for the other side. The point is, of course, that human beings are quite different from fish, lions, and even the other primates. In fact, even among primates the differences are great enough to negate each other. But we are the only animal that requires alarm clocks, which ought to tell us something about how much we can depend on other animals as a cue to how we ought to behave. We are not lions or chimpanzees. Nor did Mother Nature ever evolve a culture in which it took nearly thirty years of television to be able to say the word "pregnant" on the air. Humans are also the only animal who think that nursing one's offspring is too dirty to be done in the company of others--a fact which has been far more responsible than actual biology in keeping women out of the job market.

It is Man's (and I use the word fluently) refusal to accept the total reproductive process as Human, rather than Female, that has played the greatest role in the oppression of women.

(Think: Put daycare centers in the workplace. Now you have this building. The women who work there range in salary, age and class from the Equal Opportunity beneficiaries at the top, and the high-level secretaries and assistants, to the new female shipping clerk, the woman in the mail room, the clerical workers and "girls" in the typing pool, and even the president's wife may leave the kids there. Now, those women could be nursing their children together, the high-level exec sitting right next to the woman from shipping with their babies at their breasts. And talking to each other. How long do you think the current class structure could hold out against that kind of cross-class, woman-to-woman communication? Something like this could be a monumental force in rending the structure at its seams. And those kids would be growing up together, too. I may sound optimistic, but surely there is more potential in this idea for real change than all of the little male-type revolutions which have never amounted (and never will) to anything more than a bunch of coups d'etat.)

I'm completely amazed by the statement, "Oh, to come to the conclusion that women didn't evolve there/the oppressed state/ naturally, but were held down by their men, is to say that females are actually as dumb as men are accused of considering them...."

Really? If someone who is bigger and stronger than you comes and pounds you to a pulp, is that proof of your stupidity? If I come to your house and chain you to the radiator, will that prove that I'm smarter than you? What you are saying, Blenheim, is that women are naturally stupid. Ah, but that's what biological pre-determinism is all about. The same rubbish that has been used to justify the oppression of blacks. We wouldn't be oppressed if we didn't deserve it.

And to further state that, "if that is so, their role, if one of slavery, might have been monumentally correct," obviously means that we have the right to take as slaves anyone who is less intelligent than we are. In which case I have "correct" claim to your utterly worthless being, boy.

Contrary to Blenheim, Ardrey, and even a few more sympathetic voices, there is proof that conditioning/environment play a major role in determining sex-role behavior, which in fact overrides any biological potential. Neill's work at Summerhill is a perfect example. The children at Summerhill, growing up quite apart from these cultural influences, exhibit so few gender-identified characteristics that observers have found themselves identifying those children

as "people" rather than as "boys" and "girls," and often unable to tell the difference! At Summerhill there is no "latency" period, nor do these kids suddenly turn into the frantic, groping parody of adulthood that characterizes adolescence here in the "real" world.

And: "Can't the people in this symposium conceive the simple fact that men, too have gotten the shaft from Mother Nature?" Well, we don't have to "conceive" it--it's been said and said and said already. Where the hell were you in the 60s when we were objecting to male sex roles? What do you think all of that long hair and counter-culture stuff was about? Men do not have to kill strangers in a foreign country, get ulcers to support the wife and kids, refuse to shed tears, or dress like stiffs to remain Men. That's what we were saying, remember? Around 1967 there was a song by the Yardbirds that had lines like:

Can you judge a man by the way he wears his hair?

And call a man a fool if for wealth he doesn't strive?

Can you say that men for King and Country all must die?

Well then Mister you're a better man than I.

All of us sweet chicks were all ready to support the boys in their fight for freedom from sex-role definition. When a boy got thrown out of school for long hair, or David Miller burned his draft card, or a teacher was fired for not wearing a tie, the women were in the front lines of the demonstrations. We worked and supported our men when they couldn't get jobs from employers who said they looked like faggots--or worse still, like "girls." (We didn't understand then why it was such an insult to accuse a man of being a "girl.")

But then when we came home from a hard day at work to find the place a mess, wall to wall cigarette butts, beer bottles, roaches, ZAP COMIX all over the place, your Man and his buddies passed out on the floor, the catshit in your boot because he didn't comb out the fur or change the cat box (and it's his cat), the first time you asked one of these guys to clean up the beer he spilled he tried to rape you ("I ain't afraid to hit no chick")--it occurred to you that maybe your role wasn't so hot either. And when women began to reject that role, did the boys come to our defense the way we had for them? Hell no. Men suddenly had an innate inability to wash dishes, and we were a bunch of dykes for even suggesting it.

At the same time, we were getting pretty uptight with the fact that our men, with their new expanded consciousnesses, still hadn't learned to cry, to love, to feel the way they were now allowed to. "Can any woman really understand the sheer agony a man goes through when he loses a job..." asks Blenheim. I've seen that "sheer agony." I'd judge it to be on a par with the kind of panic I feel when I can't get my car to start. But it doesn't come close to the painful sense of rejection and failure I feel when I lose a job. And losing a job still rates pretty low on the scale of pain-causing events. (How come men never lock themselves in their rooms and cry for a couple weeks, can't face people, can't get interested in dating for a couple weeks, the way women do when we have broken hearts, or abortions or miscarriages or all of the other things that hurt like hell. Men claim to suffer as much, but they never show the signs.) So my question is: Does any man really understand what "sheer agony" is?

And as to the question of why women haven't equalled the productivity of men in the arts: Don't you think that--maybe--the fact that for a long time we were not permitted even to learn to read or write, or that only males were allowed to apprentice to the "great masters," might have had something to do with it? If women, indeed, are innately incapable of artistic creation, how do you explain the fact that, when those restrictions are removed, we do it? Despite the fact that they have husbands and children to care for (or resist), the M.Z. Bradleys, the Betsy Warriors, the U.K. Le Guins do exist. That they do not exist in the numbers that men do is irrelevant. They exist!

Of course, most of the people involved in the symposium are already aware of these things--it's like first grade feminism, and the rest of us are in college by now. I should just have added to Joanna's reading list--for beginners (like yourself), THE DESCENT OF WOMAN by Elaine Morgan might be good. Maybe

Chesler's WOMEN AND MADNESS. But an Ardrey freak should start way back at the beginning--with Bachofen. (For those who have made it to college I recommend Dworkin's WOMAN HATING and THE FIRST SEX by E.G. Davis.) Oh, and Blenheim, please don't utter another word on the subject without first covering Money and Sherfey on the determination of sex roles.

Most of what I would have said, had I not been sidetracked by Blenheim, is said a lot better by Robin Morgan in her brilliant poem, "Monster," which I recommend to you all.

The real problem we encounter, as revolutionaries, is that, coming as we do from our present cultural context, our vision can only take us so far. (Freud pointed this out long ago, but his disciples have conveniently ignored it.) We will have to continue this dialog until the revolution carries us beyond our vision.

I would like to thank you, Jeff, for trying to get something started in the pages of KHATRU. And now I hope the rest of us can reconvene in THE WITCH AND THE CHAMELEON.

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY 5/7/76
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I suppose Robert Blenheim's letter is the sort of thing you have to expect, from the ritualistic denial of male chauvinism to the abusive tone and the appeals to supposed scientific authority. But sticking a "male chauvinist pig" label on Blenheim doesn't help. I'd rather try to see what is of value in an argument I basically disagree with.

Some people hate genetics. Faced with the idea that competitiveness, territoriality, or individual differences in intelligence are things that we are born with, they ignore them in the hopes that they will go away. (We all know how well that worked with Mainland China.) Others have said in so many words that such ideas should not be discussed, even though they may be true, because their consequences would be evil, which may be what the Pope said to Galileo.

Then there are those who love genetics. Any genetic tendency is taken as proof that all blacks are less intelligent than whites, that all women should find fulfillment as wives and mothers, that our natural competitiveness finds its highest expression in what passes for free-enterprise capitalism in America today.

Ardrey does seem to have a piece of the truth, but before we conclude that there is a "real instinctive norm," a One Right Way for us all to live, I would like to look at two counterarguments.

1) Genetics does not absolutely determine destiny, any more than anatomy does. I agree that we are all, in Blenheim's mixed metaphor, "getting the shaft from Mother Nature." But human beings have some power to change their environment and thus be less enslaved by nature's dictates. For instance, if we were completely ruled by nature, women's only options would be childbearing and chastity, and they would have less freedom. Now that women can choose to be childfree, they have a greater variety of possibilities.

2) The genetic differences between men and women, if any, are statistical, not absolute. There are women who score high in any supposedly male trait. You can say that they are "the exception that proves the rule." (What does that phrase mean? Would a rule be no good if it didn't have exceptions?) You can label such women as "unfeminine," which may simply mean that they do not behave in the manner that you choose to associate with women. Or you can say

that any supposedly "masculine" quality, from physical strength to writing good sf, is something that individuals have, and at worst males are more likely to have it.

The other side of this coin is that the statement "men oppress women" is also a statistical truth. To Delany, marriage is pure male dominance; to Blenheim, woman is the power behind the throne. Neither is the whole truth. A closer approximation seems to be that the standard-brand American male-female relationship is a setup where the men are more likely to come out winners, but there are many women, from those who really do henpeck their husbands to high-priced hookers (some of whom have long-term contracts known as marriage licenses), who are winning, and even some relationships where both partners are winning. The answer is not to "smash" monogamy or create some new standard-brand relationship, but to provide more options.

JEFF HECHT 7/9/76
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I trust you received the appropriate egoboo from KHA TRU finishing fourth in the LOCUS poll, led only by zines with MUCH larger circulation. (S(Yes, I was most gratified. Considering my circulation (which is really under 200), coming in where I did--it was fifth, behind LOCUS, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, ALGOL and OUTWORLDS--felt pretty much like winning. After these results, I had some hope of getting the fifth spot on the Hugo ballot, but I didn't quite make it. Nonetheless, I want to thank all of you who nominated me for both awards--it made me feel real good.)S)

The letters following up on the symposium were interesting, though somewhat homogeneous. I don't think that was your selection--there seems to be a certain common ideology that runs through much of fandom, and I was not surprised that most people were basically receptive to the ideas discussed. I, too, was disturbed by the few women participants in the lettercol--I know it stirred up significant interest in the literary types (who happen to be largely female) contributing to AFA:PI.

It's a shame Robert Blenheim got distracted by the question of instincts (which is virtually impossible to deal with intelligently). I will assume that he has received ample castigation from elsewhere, and note that he seemed to be trying to discuss the impact of biological differences between male and female. It's a shame he didn't concentrate on physical differences (e.g., size, and the nature of the reproductive process). I think there's some interesting speculation there.

Susan Wood's letter raised an interesting point that obviously draws deeply from her own experience; your situation is obviously similar to my own, though I am far less active in fandom. Lois, for example, read much of the symposium, we talked about it, and she thought about writing a letter. She didn't; she really isn't inclined that way, another relic, perhaps, of her schooling. (By the way, folks, if you think our educational system does nasties to middleclass females, you should see what happens to workingclass women--and men. If you think being told that your role is "homemaking" is bad news, try having it ground into your face day after day that you're "stupid" on top of it.)

SHEILA D'AMASSA 5/13/76
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Susan Wood's letter raises some interesting questions about co-edited fanzines, and about how much a project of one of a couple can be considered a joint effort.

First, I want to make it clear that I have no idea how much or what kind of work on ENERGIUMEN Susan did or on THE SPANISH INQUISITION Suzle Tompkins

does. But if they were listed as co-editors, it is inexcusably rude for people to assume that they were not editors and to address comments on the fanzines only to Mike or to Jerry.

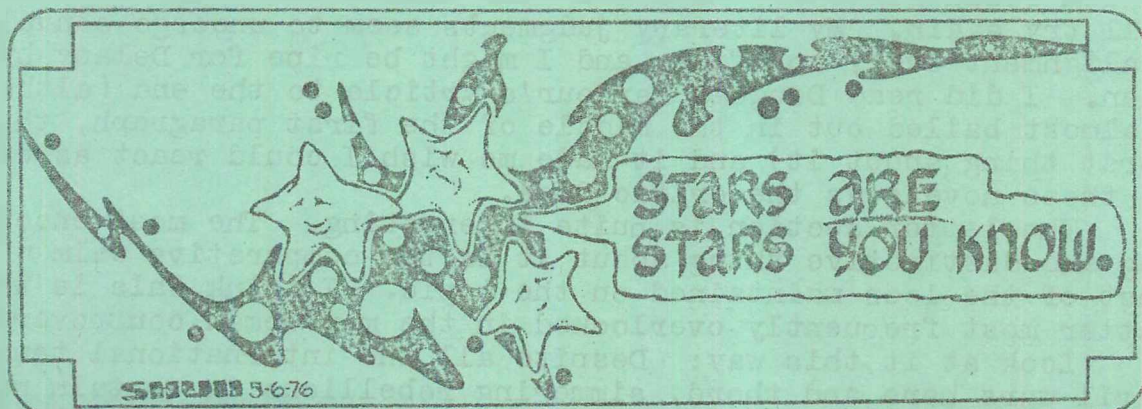
However, I agree with Terry Carr that a person should only be listed as editor if he/she edits--picks out material, arranges it, comments on it.

MYTHOLOGIES occupies nearly as much of my time and attention as it does Don's. I run the mimeo and maintain it. I order and pick up paper and supplies, get the artwork electrostencilled, have the cover printed, type some of the stencils; I help collate, staple, address, and mail. I like doing it; I'm proud of what I do. I am credited in each issue with what I do: production. But I do not edit, and I am not listed as co-editor, and I don't want to be. I do not want credit for something I do not do. I would consider it patronizing and unfair. MYTHOLOGIES is an expression of Don's mind and personality. I have my own mind and personality, and I express them in my own fanzines. If I want to say something in MYTHOLOGIES, I write a letter of comment.

I get very prickly on the subject of joint projects. Too many people assume that, because one of a couple is involved in a project, the other must be too. Some of our friends have begun to assume that, since I am working on APPLE (a new apa Jon Singer and I have started, to talk about food, gardening, and handcrafts) that Don is also involved. People ask me if we have this or that sf book; I don't know--collecting sf is Don's project, not mine. I get very annoyed when people compliment Don on my tomatoes, or assume that he runs the mimeo, or when people comment on MYTHOLOGIES or Don's articles to me. We spend a great deal of time asserting our separateness--we did not merge our identities and interests when we married. We collaborate on some projects: cleaning the garage, collecting mysteries, camping, raising our child. But not on everything! And I cannot emphasize this enough.

In order to collaborate successfully on editing a fanzine, it seems to me that two people would have to share to a nearly impossible degree the same opinions, ideas, priorities, and idiosyncrasies. Don and I couldn't do it--while we agree on the important things like what to have for dinner (except for an impasse about asparagus), who takes out the garbage, and whether the windows should be open at night, we have major differences about the minor things that come up in fanzines--Zelazny, socialism, the state of the universe. How do people who co-edit do it? We'd have to split the lettercol, or print two answers to each letter. We'd need separate editorials, and the articles would be printed with endless disclaimers--"This article selected by Don over Sheila's vehement objections..." or "Sheila liked this, but Don thinks it's badly organized and completely inaccurate..." The mind boggles, though it might be interesting at that.

Susan talks of Squashedness, and the trashing women like her are subjected to. Anyone who gets Squashed into a role or lifestyle that's wrong for her, whether it's done by others or, worse, by herself, must build up a lot of un-



certainty and hostility...it's not really surprising that it gets unleashed on those not also in her mold. Of course, this resentment is not only in one direction, from squashed-domestic woman to career woman; women like me who have chosen a domestic profession are sometimes subjected to incredible hostility by women Squashed into a mold marked "Liberated Career Woman" and inwardly uncertain about their choice. The really free people are those who recognize that, while Susan and I lead very different lives, these lives are free choices, and that we are no threat to each other's role or self-worth. Only a very vain or a very frightened and uncertain woman would assert that hers was the only possible Best Way to Live.

HARRY WARNER, JR. 5/6/76
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James Tiptree's article was a bit unsettling to a person who feels the blind, unreasoning terror of hospitals that I do. I managed to calm down my subconscious panic in time to enjoy it immensely. It is remarkably image-forming. While reading it, I was in that strange little hospital, seeing the things around him almost before he had described them. It also formed a good supplement for some other things I'd learned about Mexico. A former mayor of Hagerstown was at my table during a dinner meeting recently and surprised me by revealing that he goes to Mexico every winter, just as other semi-retired people go to Florida in the winter. He stays far down inside the nation, not within running distance of the border. He seems to take much the same attitude as Tiptree, acceptance of Mexican circumstances which he can't get enthusiastic about. The local man is definitely unhappy about one thing, though: the behavior of the transitory United States tourists who spend just a day or two in the area where he makes his winter home, managing in that brief stay to do everything that could disgust and alienate the Mexicans.

I can't say too much about the hunk of this issue devoted to Delany. I've decided that Sam falls into the same category as Jane Austen for me. (S(A delightful conceit!))S) In each case, I can't find pleasure in reading their fiction even though I can understand the excellent things in their writings, and I cheerfully admit that the fault is probably mine, not that of the novelists. After I read BABEL-17, I decided that it was sort of silly to continue to read Delany out of a sense of duty when there is so much fiction that I want to read before I die. Maybe if I'm still alive and equipped with vision ten years from now, I'll try again. My literary judgments seem to undergo convulsive realignment every so often, and I might be ripe for Delany by then. I did read Douglas Barbour's article to the end (although I almost bailed out in the middle of the first paragraph, the worst thing about it) and it made me wish I could react as well to these novels as the critic does.

The letter section is quite interesting. The most encouraging and distinctive thing about it is the comparative calm which most of the locs maintained on the topic. I think this is the matter most frequently overlooked in the man-woman controversy.

Look at it this way: Despite all the international tensions, civil wars here and there, simmering rebellions in certain nations, we've pulled through more than thirty years without another world war, half again as long as the intermission between the

first two world wars. One nation has gone to another heavenly body and has landed individuals on it without claiming it as that nation's property. Racial segregation has been fractured and chipped and made wobbly in this nation in such a thorough fashion that it'll probably be destroyed completely after a couple more generations, with more violence in newspapers and magazines than in actual confrontations. Even the fundamentalists no longer feel impelled to smite down neighbors who happen to have different religious beliefs. With these and many other encouraging portents in mind, is it really necessary for men and women both to get so het up about women's rights? Couldn't more be accomplished if everyone keeps calm? Such behavior would undoubtedly ruin everything for the people who have seized upon the topic as a good excuse for unleashing their native nastiness but I think it would speed the arrival of the time when most people will recognize their built-in prejudices for what they are, accept the changes that will come when those prejudices are no longer mistaken for invariable laws of nature.

Freff's front cover strikes me as charming, making me wish I could have one or more of these animals as pets. His back cover is unsettling, a bit repulsive to me. Those are natural reactions. Intellectually, I know that I'd be better off around a huge praying mantis, which would hardly have human flesh among its food preferences, than in the vicinity of what appear to me carnivorous animals. It's prejudice at work, because insects big or small are so alien to me, can't be befriended in real life, while I get along well with dogs and I've loved some pet cats. I never had a sister, I've never had a wife, all my bosses have been men, boys and girls usually played in their own groups when I was growing up in Hagerstown, and there's no way I'm ever going to feel as comfortable and at home around women as around men, in the non-sexac relations. But I can feel contempt for the minority who use the man-woman problem as a field for violence and meanwhile try to do the best I can in a peaceful way to understand and act properly. It's all very well to run around shouting "Fight cancer!" but I think the cancer problem will end when non-hostile people calmly study it until they find a quiet but effective remedy.

PATRICK McGUIRE 5/6/76
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It would be nice if Angus Taylor, who seems to have devoted his life to proving the proposition in logic that if you start off with the wrong premises you may or may not get the right answer anyhow, could once get through a letter of comment without mentioning Karl Marx. Preachy, preachy, preachy. The Communist countries are called the Communist countries (preferably, admittedly, with a capital C) because 1) we cannot call them what they call themselves, "socialist," because we consider non-Communist countries such as Sweden to be more or less "socialist," and 2) they are dominated by "Communist" parties. These parties, in turn, are called Communist because that's what they call themselves, just as we speak of Democratic or Labour parties or the Orthodox or Episcopalean churches without passing judgment on their respective democracy, devotion to workers, orthodoxy, or valid episcopal orders. As I suspect Taylor damned well knows when he's not trying to score debating points.

Anyhow, the Soviet Union claims to be more than merely

"socialist," even if it's not quite small-o "communism" yet. I think "highly advanced socialism" is the latest catchphrase.

Anyhow, the right conclusion that Taylor gets with his wrong methods is that there exist two approaches to man's relation to nature. The "Marxist" position is much older than Marx--"linear" conceptions of history first appear among the Jews at 1000 BC or earlier, and were applied to secular history in about the eighteenth century, and I'm not sure how well Marx himself really fits the category: for Marx, you're trying to abolish alienation and get back, albeit on a higher plane, to an early "natural" state. Poul Anderson has spoken of the division as one between "rational-technical" and "biological" approaches. Actually, there is quite a lot of literature, and science fiction, on this whole business. I rather expect that some sort of reconciliation of the two positions is possible, but in the short run I see nothing dreadfully wrong with Western civilization's basically "linear" approach. Even if we blow ourselves up in a war tomorrow, or if the world suffers an ecological breakdown, it's hard to see how the population and cultural level could be reduced below the point they were at in, say, the second millenium BC, when the "ecological" approach had the field to itself, just as it had for the preceding several million years. The curious thing about Le Guin's work is that she seems to assert that she is trying to get a pure Taoist approach, while her characters are shown trying to form a synthesis between the "rational" and the "organic" approaches. (Oh--yes, I know that even in the second millenium BC, people were doing lots of Bad Things like breathing the air in their smoke-filled huts--must have been worse than modern air pollution--and overgrazing with their goats. Point is that you have to be rational enough to figure out that those are bad things, which I don't think you learn by following the Tao.) Well, anyhow, it's lucky for us that Le Guin writes better than she theorizes. Maybe one of these days she'll realize the implications of her writing and improve her theories.

I never had the misfortune to end up in a Russian hospital while I was in the Socialist Fatherland (for that matter, the only times I've been in American hospitals was for being born, for visiting people, and for one medical test--knock wood), but Tip-tree's account of the Mexican hospital sounds very much like the way Soviet ones work, down to your dependence on friends for food and even medicine. The non-industrialized or partly industrialized parts of the world seem to be similar in a lot more characteristics than one would expect a priori. It seems to suggest that there are only a few "traditional" ways of doing things, no matter what your non-modern-Western culture. Truth-telling and non-bribe-taking as ethical norms seem much more highly valued in the West (often violated, but valued) than among the Lesser Breeds Without the Law. Also a somewhat higher value on human life (bemoan modern wars all you will, but I'll bet that war-caused deaths per thousand of population are still lower than they have been at most times and most places) and certain other norms. (I like to believe the American Supreme Court would let themselves be lined up and shot before they pulled a stunt like the Indian Supreme Court just has. (S(Remember, this is a last year, state-of-emergency in India letter.)S) I suppose it's the need for this thorough reorganization of values that makes industrialization such a slow business.

I didn't get your women-in-sf issue so I can't comment on the lettercol comments thereon. I haven't liked much Delany

since NOVA; for me, either his characterization doesn't work, or his 'heroes' seem little more than disgusting to me. Clearly Delany's brain doesn't work the way mine does. This is one vote against him on the tote board of history, since Great Art allegedly communicates to all or nearly all minds, but it's hardly a very serious business. Since I'm not competent to speak on Delany, that wipes out most of the rest of your issue. David Ketterer simply asks himself completely different questions about sf than do I, and I don't find his answers very interesting. I will comment that his definition of "apocalypse" is so contrived and so far removed from ordinary meanings of the word that it's no wonder he confuses people, not excluding even Le Guin. I rather think I agree with Donald Keller on Lupoff, but the trouble here is that for one reason or another I'm behind on my reading, and haven't got to half the books he mentions.

Which is why this is the extent of my comments.

DOUG BARBOUR 5/23/76
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i think paula & don are very interesting on TRITON. certainly I agree that one of the finest aspects of the novel is the complexity & completeness of invention which delany brings to the creation of the 'other world' which is the future he has painted therein. I think another little note is needed (many are, as Don noted): TRITON shares, with DHAIGREN, a slowness, a deliberate slowness, of pace that Delany's earlier work did not. you arent as involved in the story as plot/narrative/movement; but each particle is enjoyable as you take it & savour it, as you must if you are to be prepared to move ahead to the next part. in terms of sf as a literature which at its basic level is conventional, the dead giveaway in TRITON is the fact that an interplanetary war is essentially peripheral to the main action, the philosophical action, of the novel. altho bron is touched by the results of interplanetary diplomacy & the upcoming war, he is in this average: he doesnt really know what the fuck is going down. yet his experiences in prison or whatever help to push him to his foolish change. one of the things i liked best about TRITON was delany's ability to show us doublethink in action: yes, it was straightforward, not stream-of-consciousness at all (if that means anything, here): but think about your own thought processes: i suspect delany is correct to imply that it is precisely when we 'think things through "consciously"' that we are building elaborate lies to ourselves: & he shows this happening in bron's thinking. beautiful. & altho ive seen a few reviews suggesting the appendices are to be left alone, i found them as exciting as anything else in the book. delany, for me, has the rare ability of making anything he writes appeal as both thought and entertainment.

JEFF CLARK 5/11/76
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I almost feel guilty that Tip's article was so enjoyable on such a subject--so real, so funny, so uncomfortable. Verily, he has realized (and been through) what I consider the archetypal hospital experience.

I fear I've made an inadvertant impression where Alexander Wallace is concerned. My comment about bad taste and crude people

YES?

NO!

maybe?

was supposed to be related to my immediately prior words on cultural elitism and its alleged posturings--not meant to be taken as my own sentiments. But I do very much agree with his observation on "trash" (S("I am inclined to argue that 'trash' has no content and therefore can communicate nothing at all; it is all form and no substance.")S)...though I'd rephrase it somewhat and say it lacks significant "informational content" (as well as qualify the use of the term "form," so we don't get into those hoary and dubious form/content dichotomies again). As a general rule, it's true enough that the more popular a work is, the less likely it has anything worth communicating. I wouldn't say it communicates nothing at all--just very little, and that well enough. But Wallace is right on the head if we evoke the reductio ad absurdum: the only message which everyone will get is the one whose informational content is zero. It was William Blake who once said (and I paraphrase, but just slightly): "Anything that can be made comprehensible to an idiot doesn't interest me." What lies behind that is not a heartless elitist attitude, I'm afraid--only reality, given the nature of the universe.

Doug Barbour's Delany article is admirably thorough as usual. Once again, however, he's chosen to deal with work whose familiarity to me is minimal, at least in recent years. But he has sent me off to read a bit more of William Gass (he seems so fond of the man), whom I've perused fitfully in the past. I agree that the novelist offers a metaphorical model of our own world, but might extend the observation (with a nod to Robert Scholes) so it takes in sf more comfortably: that is, what we're offered through fiction are metaphorical models of reality. Certainly not, as Scholes points out, descriptions of it. No one's got a corner on that market, no matter how hard he feels his eyes have seen the glory.

DON D'AMMASSA 5/10/76

Brian Earl Brown may be convinced by Cy Chauvin that DYING INSIDE is not important, good sf, but I'm not. Brian implies that there is a different set of judgmental factors in sf than in the mainstream. Poppycock. The central fact in Silverberg's novel is Selig's possession of telepathy. Now, it's altogether possible that Selig could have been presented in a book totally non-sf. But so could any other human characters in sf. Basic

human situations do not change; they are only manifested in different ways. DYING INSIDE is as inherently sf as, say, THE DOOR INTO SUMMER (a novel about revenge), or DOUBLE STAR (a novel of political intrigue. And as a peripheral point, Selig's telepathy does not impair his ability to get along with people. Telepathy is the scapegoat that Selig uses as an excuse for his own personal shortcomings.

(S(That concludes the KHATRU lettercolumn; now we really get into timebinding. We begin with a two-and-a-half-year-old loc on KYBEN 9:))S)

SHERYL SMITH 10/24/74 11/22/74
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I can't really say much about Michael Carlson's "Travels with No One," since I was unable to get into, much less get through--the piece. The gentleman maunders too much--a generally insurmountable fault when the subject is one's everyday existence--and though his prose style has much to recommend it, it isn't striking enough to prevent the reader from noticing that nothing happens.

(Do you want to read someone who could really write well of everyday existence? Try Boswell, preferably his LONDON JOURNAL or his JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES. And you could do worse than to read his LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, the creative purpose to which Boswell's own life came to be orchestrated. I have a fond admiration for Boswell, who perhaps "lived his art" more truly, and at greater cost to his own stature, than anyone else ever has. He frequently effected displays of Johnson's wit by making himself the butt of it (nor was this the limit of the guerrilla theater tactics he used while getting his subject to "sit" for a biography!); and he does not hesitate to record incidents that cast himself in a poor light, if they cast Johnson in a good one. And Jesus, how often the man would sit up late in some stage of drunken debility, recording the evening's converse before he forgot it! All this is to his credit, plus the invention of modern biography--which to me is the literary stand-out of the whole Augustan era--and there are still Johnson scholars who are so dense as to take Boswell for a diletante and worse, for a not-too-bright hanger-on basking in Johnson's reflected glory! As if Johnson would've been memorable at all without Boswell! Dr. J's own writings are mostly unoriginal, abstract moral tracts written in highly Latinate sentences of sixty words or over (flawless rhetorical control but he sure wasn't saying much)--but oh, what a conversationalist! The extent and vitality of Johnson's literary survival are all Boswell's doing.)

Tiptree's long letter is an example of the kind of style that does make one's mundane existence interesting: the exotic Mexican setting helps, but it is mere gravy. What marvellous imagery the man can afford to "throw away" on correspondence!

But I beg to differ with Mr. Tiptree on his classification of women--me among them, perforce--as "the real aliens we have always looked for." I realize there is something complimentary in that, per Mr. Tiptree's avowed fascination for screwing "the other"--but no thanks just the same, the "alienness" of women just ain't so. It is a fiction espoused most prominently by middle-age Southern gentlemen, whose own experience with women has

been limited to those most conditioned to please men; and believe me, such women are easily empathetic enough to psyche that Southern gentlemen would rather have them "different" than honest! But the ability to assume such a pleasing "alienness" itself presupposes a lack of alienness in its perpetrators: "real aliens," whose understanding of men were exterior rather than innate, could scarcely be so pleasing in their differentness. My own experience, on the other side of the fence from Mr. Tiptree, has constantly taught me that, contrary to my own cultural conditioning, men aren't very different from me at all (except--quite pleasantly--on the outside). I am forever realizing that even the most admirable individuals of the male sex are motivated at bottom by a range of emotions quite similar to my own, and that even when men's responses to a situation happen to differ from my own, these responses still remain "human" enough to be quite comprehensible to me. And indeed, if this were not so, Mr. Tiptree's own art could hardly reach me--and assuredly, I have been moved by it quite often.

Besides, if the sexes were "real aliens"--who's to say that women might not be the norm here, and men the interlopers? In fact, were Tiptree's proposition true, it would have to work both ways--and he, too, would have to be one of "the real aliens we've always looked for." And I know damn well he feels no more "alien" than I do.

(Now I feel better!)

DOUG BARBOUR 11/17/74

if cy chauvin is correct in KYBEN 10 in accusing darrell schweitzer of saying in PHANTASMICOM 11 that THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION is not sf (let's be easy, & not say science fiction, tho i would defend that, too), then darrell is surely missing whatever point there is left in even attempting definitions. i tend to feel that delany & russ's attempts to define sf in terms of "subjunctivity" is pretty good, & certainly TEI would pass on that, but we are almost always driven back to damon knight's terse, "it means what we point to when we say it," which has been somewhat updated by norman spinrad in his anthology MODERN SCIENCE FICTION, but remains essentially the same. we--all of us, i mean--shall never agree on what exactly we mean by sf, but we know pretty well, & can even agree that we are more or less talking about the same thing so long as we dont try to define it too closely. & that's a sign of its vigour, because it wont be pigeon-holed.

SHERYL SMITH 11/23/74

Re Cy Chauvin's differentiation between the imaginative elements of sf and fantasy, his differentiation of these on the basis of scientific (sf) vs. mythologic (fantasy) origins has a good deal of validity. But actually, sf is not so much drawn from "science" as based on the 20th century "truth" of materialism/factualism: in sf the most outre effects, things that per current science are at the extremes of improbability, are acceptable if there is some material cause for them. Fantasy, conversely, does not lay a material ground for its marvels: magic just works, y'know, don't ask where the energy comes from or how it functions. But though the elements of fantasy are not--or are no longer--materially credible, they maintain enough symbolic

force to affect modern audiences, if used in such a way that they take on psychological meaning and/or emotional effectiveness (preferably in more than a nostalgic sense--but I am a cranky old spoilsport).

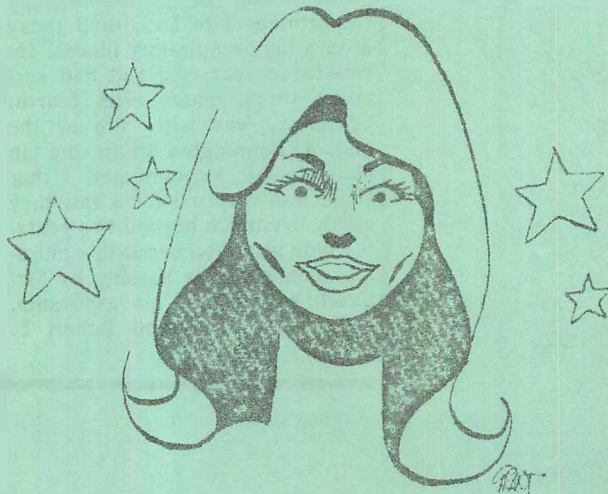
DON D'AMMASSA 11/15/74

Harry Warner seems to feel that multi-leveled stories are not worth the effort of puzzling through. I've always believed that one only gets out of any endeavor what one has put in; the more effort expended, the more rewarding the results. This is particularly relevant with regard to Gardner Dozois in my case because I have been attempting to write an article about his fiction for quite some time. Every time I think I have come to valid conclusions about his stories and their implications, I type up the article anew. There were eleven published stories the first time I reached the typing stage; there are now sixteen and the latest, "Strangers," has blown all my theories, and I'll have to now retype it for the 7th or 8th time. Arthur Hlavaty indicates that Dozois' desire "to make the reader think" implies the story will be obscure and symbolic, a deduction I fail entirely to follow.

I find the constant insistence on interior illustrations in fanzines very strange. After all, how many novels have illos to break up those solid blocks of print? The constant insistence on something to relieve the monotony of line after line of words strikes me as the result of the increasing laziness of people in this country to respond to the printed word. McLuhan may have been right. We may yet live to see the printed word become an endangered species. But before leaving your discussion of fanzines, I've got to quote a well-known Australian fan, who asked me once: "Why do all American fanzines look like they were published by the same person?"

MIKE GLICKSOHN 11/28/74
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Liked your answer to Bob Sabella's putdown of layout. (I'd disagree with him that layout was ever considered "all important in fanzines," by the way. There were a few proponents of the importance of layout, but even they stressed the primary importance of the written content, and most fans ignored the whole matter.) The obvious difference between a magazine and a record cover is that the record cover is mainly there to sell the contents, not to enhance enjoyment of them. Layout in any printed matter is there for the very important purpose of making the material more accessible to the consumer. Excellent



material can overcome poor or non-existent layout, sure, but it can also be improved by good layout, in that good layout will encourage more people to read it. The material hasn't changed, of course, but the reaction of the reading public might have. Even in fandom, it's pretty obvious that a lot of people have to be encouraged to read things.

(S(One thing that people seem to get confused on is the difference between good layout and flashy layout. The terms are not synonymous; they are overlapping categories of layout. I find many things influencing my reading of various texts--typeface, type size, number of words to a page. In books, the color of the cover can affect my reading. I've found that I tend to read books with light-colored covers faster than those with dark covers. I don't know why--all I can think of is that I'm somehow associating the colors with "light" and "heavy" reading. I also read large print faster--and sometimes I would prefer the print be smaller so I would be going slower.

(S(Lest you think I've really gone over the edge, realize that these are not absolutes. I will still read a small-print, dark-covered Edgar Rice Burroughs faster than a large-type, white-covered William Burroughs. But all these aspects affect, in small ways, the way I read. This is why good layout, appropriate to the text, can help.)S)

(S(And now I have to stop. I still have twenty locs on KYBEN that I didn't get to. Next issue I will print what I can and throw the rest out. I'm so heartless. Bye for now.)S)

4/8/77

ABOUT THE BACK COVER

In Memoriam

Clyde, the super-stud sire of just about every rat in the Biology Department Life Lab, died today after a long respiratory illness. He was three years old and had survived three mates. His fourth, Christina, was with him at the end. R. Pennington Smith, the lab technologist, commented that three was very old for a rat; they rarely live much beyond two years. Clyde was discovered this morning soon after his passing by Mr. Smith and two of his assistants, Jeffrey D. Smith and Robert L.

Hudson.

No autopsy is planned, but his testicles will be enshrined, a spokesman said. A simple burial on the Nature Trail will follow a brief rite.

In addition to his mate, he is survived by three sons, Clint, Elric and Groucho, who will carry on his business. His grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, and great-great-great-grandchildren are innumerable.

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