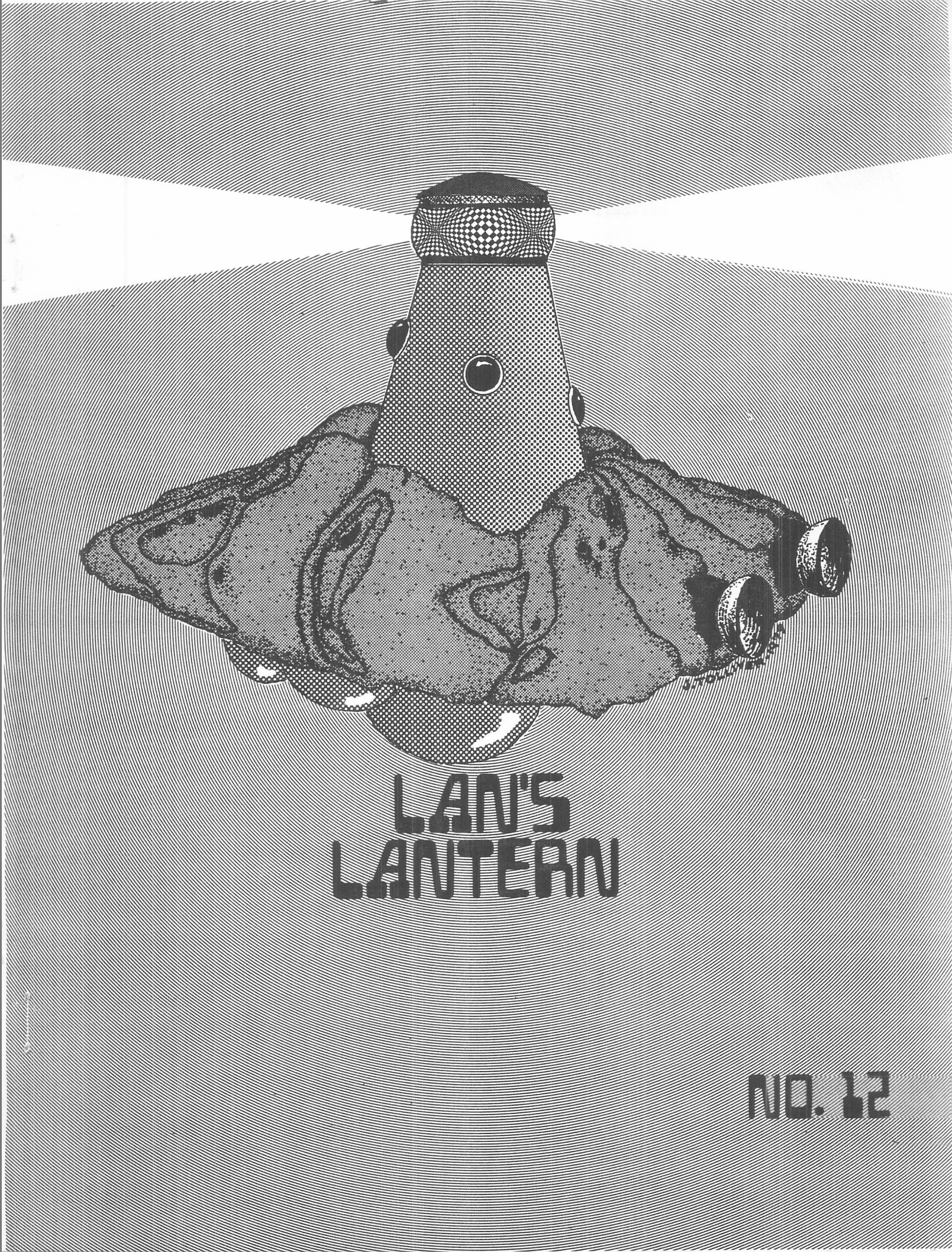
LAN'S
LANTERN
NO. 12

Lan's Lantern 12

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHY YOU ARE REVEIVING THIS

____ contribution

____ artwork

____ Loc received

____ Loc published

____ mentioned (somewhere inside)

____ you wanted a copy

____ a copy wanted you

____ trade

____ this is your last issue of LL unless you do something.

TABLE OF ARTWORK

LAN'S LANTERN #12 is being produced by George "Lan" Laskowski, who lives at 652 Cranbrook Rd. #4, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013, phone: (313) 643-5670. This is LanHI Publication #150, a division of IanShack Press Unlimited. LAN'S LANTERN is available for $1.50, or the usual.

DEDICATED to Maia--friend, lover and wife, who suggested, "Wouldn't it be nice to have an LL done for MARCON?"

from the editor:

Clearing out the Backlog

I think this is an appropriate title for the editorial this time. It has been almost two years since my last issue--the Clifford Simak Special--and I have had a backlog of material from up to four years before that. That's not including artwork which dates back to the first couple of issues of LAN'S LANTERN. So as might be obvious from the title, I am clearing out a number of things that I have backlogged in my files. In fact, I have so much material that I could not fit everything into this issue, unless I reduced everything, and had as many pages as I did for the Simak Special. So the next issue will also have material that I have in my files. And maybe the issue after that as well....

People might ask what I've been doing lately not to have put out a zine for so long, or to have accumulated so many things that I couldn't publish them. Actually, it's not that I haven't wanted to publish anything, it's just that I haven't been completely solvent, and--here comes the usual excuse--I have been quite busy teaching, and moving. You might notice that the address in the colophon is different--I no longer live on Valley Way, but now on Cranbrook Rd. I still teach at Kingswood school in the Cranbrook Educational Community. But you can read about the special changes in my life in my Conreports and Ramblings. That section is short, by the way, mainly because I didn't think people wanted to read about cons that I wnt to four years ago. Besides, I really did not have enough room to put them all in; even a listing of the ones I went to would take up more space than I would /could have allowed this time. I do promise to have some detailed ones in the next LANTERN....Yes, I will continue to publish my zine, and try to become more current. So, don't be afraid to send me art, articles, locs, etc. I will still gladly accept contributions, and I hope to be able to get them into print a lot sooner. At least sooner than three/four years.... I think Joan Vinge is somewhat relieved to see, finally, the interview we did at that MINICON so long ago in print. So am I, for that matter. I consider it to be one of the better ones that happened--and it was more of a happening that me conducting it. I felt very good about it when we got done.

The rest of this--I'll let you read for yourself.

For the lettercolumn, I went back to something I had done in a previous issue of LL; I broke up most of the letters into topics, and grouped them that way. I think this will help in editing the letters down to reasonable lengths--and hopefully avoid repetitions. Do let me know what you think about it.

As I started to sort through all the letters I had received, I marvelled at the number of them. And the more I think about it, the prouder I become. The zine does invoke response, and I am happy to publish as many of those responses--good, bad and critical--as I can.

Thanks friends.

Kim Erickson -71-

CRYONICS:

I read with something of a chuckle the article by Laurie Mann entitled, "How the Cryonics Movement Thawed Out." Granted, there wasn't anything intrinsically funny in what Ms. Mann had to say, but I just couldn't help being struck by the irony of her remark: "By 1973 it was generally acknowledged that the cryonics movement was dying." I find that a bit humorous because as I read that line I sat surrounded by upwards of a million dollars worth of equipment in a nice, modern industrial bay in Fullerton, California, which is totally dedicated to human cryonic suspensions and suspended animation research.

Far from being dead, cryonics has probably never been in better health. We just recently purchased our own electron microscope and we have several vigorous research programs underway. There are ten people on storage in the Bay Area (one of whom, at this writing, is awaiting transfer to liquid nitrogen and is currently on dry ice) all of whom are being well cared for and properly maintained. Most importantly there are several vigorous organizations in California with upwards of 200 people signed up; with all arrangements made in advance to be placed in suspension at the time they deanimate.

Since Ms. Mann obviously took a lot of time to write her article and to research it, I am puzzled that she didn't have the presence of mind to spend 20¢ and write us. She would have found a frank discussion of many of the problems she raises in our literature and she would surely have realized that we are neither pie-in-the-sky dreamers, nor simply naive.

If Ms. Mann has not seen numerous articles about us in the popular press she should not conclude that we do not exist. Indeed, what we may conclude from Ms. Mann's comments on lack of press coverage being equal to lack of legitimacy is that she is another of the many victims of the "if it isn't on TV it isn't real" syndrome. We can only hope that she doesn't suffer from the associated syndrome of "if it IS on TV it MUST be real." Ms. Mann should learn that things can exist outside the media, and that in the Institute's case we by and large consider such an existence desirable. This is particularly true in view of the warped and distorted coverage the media has given cryonics in the past.

No one is pretending that cryonics represents anything other than extreme risk of one's time and money. We understand, perhaps far better than our critics, that the chances for survival of anyone being frozen today are very, very small. We also understand that no progress is being made without a beginning and that a position of optimism is preferable to a position of pessimism. We KNOW we are dying. We are not afraid of "worms or mold," we are unwilling to DIE. Contrary to Ms. Mann, there is nothing more wrong with being afraid to die than there is of being afraid of any other catastrophe, from being blinded to being paralyzed. Death, just like any other personal catastrophe, reduces our freedom to do what we choose and to be what we choose to be. It just so happens that death is the ultimate reduction in freedom.

Cryonicists reject the notion that death is something to be accepted. We are very thankful that men like Semmelweiss, Lister, Morton and Pasteur had the good sense and moral courage to reject the notion that disease and agony were normal consequences of being alive, simply to be accepted, preferably with a wan smile.

Finally, I must comment on Ms. Mann's quoting of Fred Pohl's arguments against cryonics. Fred Pohl wrote a wonderful novel about cryonics entitled THE AGE OF THE PUSSYFOOT. It was a very positive piece about a man who was taken from his own time, place and roots by death and thrust into an almost incom-

COUNTER

prehensible future. The take-home message of the book was that he adjusted; he was flexible and he MADE IT. It is a sad commentary on Ms. Mann's and Mr. Phol's states of mind and courage that they do not feel they have the mettle to make it. My condolences. Someday Laurie Mann and Fred Phol may realize that they are more than the sum total of the parts of their lives, more than the continuity of daily activity, more even than their relationships with loved ones and friends. People have not merely survived with the complete loss of these things (i.e., refugees from primitive cultures and concentration camp survivors who lost EVERYONE and EVERYTHING right before their eyes), they have even managed to prosper. In any event, we plan to make the journey in the company of our loved ones and friends. In the meantime, we are not about to play shuffleboard while the boat goes down.

Michael Darwin, President
INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED BIOLOGICAL STUDIES
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POINT

Thanks for giving me the chance to respond to Mike Darwin's comments on "How the Cryonics Movement Thawed Out."

Mr. Darwin asked why I didn't write to the IABS for information on cryonics. The IABS' position on cryonics had been thoroughly explored in CD Doyle's and Steve Bridge's earlier articles. I wanted independent information on cryonics.

I most definitely do not suffer from the "'if it isn't on TV it isn't real' syndrome." I even admitted in my article that "None of the articles I surveyed on the subject of cryonics mentioned either the Institute for Advanced Biological Studies, Inc., or LONG LIFE magazine, implying that these are either very small or very new." I never said that since I couldn't find out anything about either the Institute or the magazine that, therefore, they did not exist. (I should note thought that according to CRYONICS, the IABS newsletter, LONG LIFE has folded.)

People have different philosophies of death. Though I'm not looking forward to it, I'm not afraid of it either. I'm also realistic enough to know that death is the end of all biological beings inevitably. Since I haven't found any real evidence that cryonics is anything but an expensive wish, I wouldn't waste my insurance policy on it. On the other hand, I firmly believe that people are entitled to spend money on themselves as they wish. If they derive comfort from the notion of cryonics, they are certainly entitled to be frozen upon death.

I would like to remind Mr. Darwin that I didn't say cryonicists were afraid of "worms and mold;" those were the findings of two separate studies that were done several years ago on why people become involved in the cryonics movement.

I don't think that either Fred Pohl or I "don't have the mettle" to readjust to a future society. I think Pohl was questioning if it really would be worth it. While I'm the sort of person who thinks of myself as an independent human being first (as opposed to someone's daughter, wife, mother,...), I'm not too sure if I'd be happy alone in the future.

Laurie Mann

by Edward C. Glaser

In Remembrance of a

Philip K. Dick didn't write science fiction stories, at least not in the traditional sense, in my humble opinion; what he wrote were slices from/of life!!!!

I never knew Phil K. Dick personally, but having read what he wrought, I feel as though I knew him as a friend.

I first heard about Phil's particular brand of writing (if it can be called that) about two, possibly three, years ago. It was late at night, around 11:30 on a local radio program in the Los Angelas area called HOUR 25. This program is devoted to the discussion of Science Fact and Science Fiction, and airs on Friday nights -- 10 to midnight -- on KPFK, the local Pacifica outlet.

The discussion that particular night was concerned with the different styles of writing various science fiction authors use to express a particular slant or point of view in a story, or sometimes to express a political or religious view point. Mike Hodel, the program host and moderator (the program has gone through any number of co-hosts over the years), is himself a fledgling writer with one book (a Sherlock Holmes mystery) to his name. This particular discussion had been preceeded by a long-distance phone call from London, England, where that years WORLDCON was being held, with the caller announcing the Hugo winners for that particular year. (Spider and Jeanne Robinson's STARDANCE was one of the winners, to help the reader place the year in question.)

Somehow the discussion turned to Phil's writing (specifically his having won a Hugo himslef for THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE several years before). After several minutes of discussion and several phone-in comments later (there being no in-studio guest that night -- the program usually has live guest-authors and various other people of interest to science fiction fans, including such guests as H. L. Gold, David Gerrold, Harlan Ellison (a very frequent guest), and Gerard K. O'Neill, to mention a few), the program moved on to other things. I made myself a note to locate a copy of Phil's book, and continued to listen to the rest of the program.

Some months later, while at work where we have a used-book exchange in the medical library of the hospital, I happened upon a copy of the book (you were right, Phil, this thing called life sure works in funny ways at times). GOSHWOW!! I promptly placed the book in my coat pocket and forgot about it for several more weeks (more like months, actually). While going through a stack of odds and ends, my eyes once more fell on the book. I stopped what I had been doing (easily distracted as I often am) and sat down to (finally) read Phil's book.

Stopping for neither food or drink (or bathroom breaks), I finally stopped reading some four and a half hours later; having finished almost the whole book, I made myself a sandwich, poured myself a glass of cold milk, ate and went to bed. After a restless night of trying to sleep (sometimes difficult to do since I usually work nights, but this was supposed to be my day/night off), I awoke the next morning tired but eager to finish Phil's book. I read it in the bathroom; I burned my eggs and toast while continuing to read, and finally finished it.

About three months later (I'm not too sure of the exact time) while shopping at the local Safeway store which had just started to carry pocket books, I came across a copy of THE GOLDEN MAN. This was the the second book of Phil's I was ever to see, read, and own. (I usually don't buy new books-- TOO EXPENSIVE on a limited budget.) WOW! WHAT A BOOK!!! Contained betenn its covers were stories of pain,

Friend's Passing

suffering, and dealing with the human condition on a very personal level. The pain and suffering were not only experienced by the characters in the stories, but by Phil himself. I read most of the book that day. Even now, I often re-read parts of it, during moments of self-pity and self indulgence.

It is said that a lot of what Phil wrote is/was autobiographical. *HELL* the introduction to the book, as well as the introductions to the individual stories, should have been printed as separate stories in themselves.

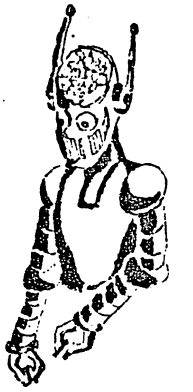
Yes -- even though I never met Phil personally, I think I got to know him fairly well through his writing. ---Now he's gone. Other anthologies and collections containings Phil's stories will probably be published as time goes on, but they/it won't be the same.

GOOD-BYE PHIL.....wherever you might be. We'll miss you...I'll miss you.

* * * * * * *

FOOTNOTE: As I write this it has been announced that John Belushi and Ayn Rand have died within days of each other. While I was familiar with the "works" of each of these individuals, I do not feel the same grief as I feel at the loss of Phil Dick. I hope that those who might be reading this will understand why this is so.

Little Orphan Android



Little Orphan Android
Came to our house to stay.

He washed and broke the dishes
And put them all away.

He vacuumed and the rugs
And hung them out to dry.

All the plants were watered
Until they had to die.

He cooked up every meal
And served it through the smoke.

And when we checked our bank accounts
We found that we were broke.

Father called him dangerous,
Mother called him dumb.

But I don't call him anything
Because he might come.

--Rex Gaspar

AUTHORS RESPOND

((In LAN'S LANTERN #10 I published a review written by Clifton Amsbury on a book called HEROIC FANTASY edited by Jerry Page and Hank Reinhardt. Both of the editors have taken time to reply to the review.))

Normally, the rule is to ignore any review, good or bad. Your publisher will see that the really good ones get published on your next book where they might earn you some extra sales, and the bad ones won't hurt your sales anyway. But Clifton Amsbury's review of HEROIC FANTASY is one of those irreirtible pieces of writing that deserves comment because it is just plain bad: not in the sense that it slams a book of mine, which it does, but in the sense that, for example, P. T. Olemy's novel THE CLONES is bad: the man doesn't know what he's talking about and has no idea what he's let himself in for.

The main point he seems determined to make is that Hank Reinhardt was incorrect in saying that the Romans were remarkably pragmatic about the sword for a nation that was particularly warlike, that, in other words, they had no cult of the sword, as the Japanese had. Amsbury then goes into a discussion of Latin nomenclature and how these Latin words for 'sword' gave us, respectively, the modern names for the card-suit 'spades,' and the flower 'gladiolus.'

The trouble is, a casual reader--and I can't imagine Mr. Amsbury having any other kind--might, in glancing over the review, assume there is some meat to Mr. Amsbury's assertion. There isn't. There is pedantry and pretention, but there is nothing to support Mr. Amsbury's argument.

His discourse on the Latin origins of currently used English words strikes me as irrelevant, except that it does indicate the insecurity of Mr. Amsbury regarding his own argument. Someone--Mr. Amsbury or whoever transcribed his review to stencil--typed gladiolus when, I believe, they should have typed gladius. ((I typed it, and I checked--it was "gladiolus." Lan.)) But the telling evasion occurs in his discourse on spathe. It is true that this word has given us our name for one of the card-suits, but there is a more common use of the word 'spade' which Mr. Amsbury chooses to ignore: a simple digging tool. This is hardly indicative of any heroic attachment to the word. Score one for Hank.

I won't go into the technical mistakes regarding swords that the review contains --I hope Hank will do that. There are a few. But I have to correct some errors regarding the book itself. The anthology was not invitational. It consists of about 95,-100,000 words of fiction of which about half the contributions were sent in cold. (To this Hank and I added another 25,000 words of our own.) Our contract called for 75,000 words, and the advance we were given would have handled 75,000 words much more nicely than 95,000. Hank Reinhardt wrote nothing in any persona but his own, and the statement that he wrote three commentaries is flatly wrong. He wrote one, to which his name is proudly attached. There is no byline to the other commentaries, and as is the tradition, a lack of by-line indicates a work written by the editors, by which I do not mean just one of the editors. Mr. Amsbury indulges in a cheap exhibition of name calling by referring to Hank as 'the lesser of the two editors.' I assure you that he worked on that book just as hard as I did, read every story, and that not once did he agree to anything just because I suggested it. We were equals in this venture.

This review is so badly written, so carelessly thought out, that it's hard to know where to stop. It has sentences like "All the stories are good craftsmanship." Mr. Amsbury is proud of his Latin, but perhaps it might do him more good to consider his English. His grasp of logic and the science and skills of argument are practically non-existent. He goes so far as to grant Hank his major point, that the Roman soldier regarded the sword as a tool and nothing more, then tries to tell us that soldiers weren't really important.

This rewrites a lot of history. He tries to support his argument by saying that the sword was important to the Roman knights. If I recall my history, this term is one that most experts regard as a misleading name for the equites, a moneyed class. He seems to assert (it isn't easy to tell considering his prose style) that this is a hereditary class, and it simply isn't. You were a member of the equites if you were economically well-off enough to be so. If you built the fortune yourself, you were in the equites class, no matter what your father was, and if you lost a fortune, you lost your position--no matter how securely your father held it. Who were the important Romans? From which group did Julius Caesar, Anthony and Augustus rise? (To be fair, they were Senators.) Who were the ones who molded Roman opinion? And there is more: Amsbury says, of Hank, that he is contemptuous of people who "make minor errors like equating mail and armor." To begin with, Hank makes the point that mail is armor, and does not discuss people equating the two at all.

Listen, I know it's hard to get people to write for fanzines, but certainly you aren't so hard up you have to accept reviews from people who can't read. If Amsbury weren't slurring the good reputation of a man who's worked hard in his field, this review would be one of the funniest things I've ever read.

I don't hold you entirely blameless in this matter, Lan. An editor still has to edit, and he still has to take responsibility for what goes in his publication. When you run a review you have to be careful that the reviewer knows what he's doing and that he won't make a fool out of himself. As Mr. Amsbury has shown, that's very easy.

I don't mean to be harsh or insulting, Lan, but Amsbury's review is a mishmash of total irresponsibility. Criticism is the most morally demanding of forms, and therefore the one most easily abused, in the ethical sense. The critic must be capable of curbing his desire to build his ego at the expense of others' reputations. He, above all others, must check and double check his facts. He must attack incompetence, but never out of the simple juvenile desire to show off. Amsbury seems unaware of these facts. I trust he's on his way to learning them.

Jerry Page
193 Battery Pl., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30307

If you would permit me I would like to reply to the review of HEROIC FANTASY by Clifton Amsbury.

Normally I would not reply to any review. Personal taste is personal taste, and each is entitled to his own. Mr. Amsbury's review, however, is less of a review than it is a studied insult. This seems to be his attitude in general. The same issue carried a review of a book by Gordon Dickson in which Mr. Amsbury states that they are "...easier and easier to put down." Odd, I thought a review was a review, not some feeble attempt to inflate one's own ego by putting down another's work.

On top of that, Mr. Amsbury does the very thing about which I complain in HEROIC FANTASY, discusses, in a very pedantic manner, something about which he quite obviously knows nothing.

Due to the above I feel that a reply is needed. There are certain Christian Ethics that I admire and even some I try to adhere to. Turning the other cheek is not one of them.

Mr. Amsbury states that I contributed my commentaries in the persona of the SCA. That isn't true. The commentaries were generally chared, but my commentaries were contributed in the persona of Hank Reinhardt, a serious student of Arms and Armour for over 30 years. I have visited many of the museums in Europe, have amassed a collection of well over 100 books on the subject, plus a small but nice collection of Arms and Armour.

Yes, I confess to being contemptuous of people who camment learnedly on subjects they know nothing about. It is the same contempt that promotes this reply. "...contemptuous of people who make minor errors like equating mail and armour." Mr. Amsbury either did not read the book, or is pointedly lying, either of which is quite contemptible. Mail is armour, and there is no statement like that in the book. My complaints were that people used highly incorrect terminology, and that the

correct information is readily obtainable. The study of arms and armour is generally pretty precise. Failure to use proper terms results in idiotic statements like "muzzle loading fully automatic shotgun with a .45 cal. rifled barrel." Utterly absurd.

My statement regarding the way the Romans looked on the sword is quite correct, and I will discuss it later. First I would like to deal with some of the statements made by Mr. Amsbury.

The term "Roman Knight", although used, is misleading. They had nothing in common with the Western Knight other than that they both could afford a horse. The proper term is "Equites." This was the social stratum below the rank of Senator and was based on wealth. It required a little less than half of the amount required for the Senate. Men in this rank served in both the Legion and the Cavalry.

"Hereditary Officers Caste" Nonsense. Wealth was inherited, but not the rank. A freeman of a lower rank could obtain a higher rank, either by outstanding service or the aquisition of wealth. All could lose it by losing their wealth. Only the higher ranks could hold certain offices, but this does not mean that they were inherited.

I fail to see where the comments on the swords have any bearing on the book, but since they are incorrect, I will comment.

It is true that the Romans had two swords. Actually they had several, but the Gladius and the Spatha were the two most prominent. The gladius was the arm of the legion, the spatha of the cavalry.

The early Roman gladius was a short, leaf-shaped weapon about 19-20 inches in blade length. In the period of the 2nd Punic War this shape was abandoned in favor of a straight bladed sword about 2 ft. in blade length and called the Gladius Hispaniensis. This is the type of sword usually associated with the term "Roman" or Gladius.

Early in the First Century A.D. the Roman Cavalry adopted the Spatha. This was a long slashing sword used as a secondary arm by the Cavalry. Their primary arm was the lance and the javelin. (The lance was used to stab with underhanded. Stirrups had not arrived in Europe, so that couching it wasn't possible.)

The Roman Legion did eventually adopt the Spatha. This was in the final days of the Empire, when the Legion was composed of Franks, Celts, Germans, etc. It couldn't really be called Roman. The spatha was adopted, even though it was inferior to the Gladius, simply because the average barbarian Legionaire was more used to this type of sword. The shield also changed, and the scutum was no longer the curved rectangle, but oval or round. This period can be called Roman with the same degree of accuracy that saw the Germans calling themselves the "Holy Roman Empire."

The Hallstadt swords are named for the region in which they were found in upper Austria. They date from approximately 900 B.C. and are notable for being the first iron weapons of any size found in the area. They are all long bladed slashing weapons. Daggers were also found. These are daggers, not swords. The ones I saw in Austria were daggers, the ones I've seen in books are not swords, they are daggers.

To claim that the Gladius is a descendant is to ignore the many peoples who held sway in Italy before the Romans came to power. There are both Greek and Etruscan blades that are identical to both the early Roman Gladius and the later Gladius Hispaniensis.

Many Roman Patricians would have a sword for special occasions. It would be a Gladius. Rarely would a Patrician carry a Spatha; after all,it was a Cavalry weapon, and too much like a sword of the Barbarians for a Roman Patrician to carry. Even if they were Cavalry Officers the Gladius was preferred. The cavalry never was considered very important to the Romans, as it was an arm that was used to scout and harass the enemy. The power of Rome was in the infantry Legions, and they were quite aware of it.

I have no doubt that many of the Patricians had beautifully wrought and decorated sword; I am also sure that their clothes, furniture and sandals were equally well-made. Alas, that is the way of the wealthy. It really has nothing to do with how the sword is regarded.

Mr. Amsbury obviously does not understand that there is a difference between a Military Society and a Warrior Society. This is not the time nor the place to go

into the many details that will fully explain the difference (and I doubt if Mr. Amsbury could understand them anyway). However let me make a few observations regarding the two.

The Romans and the Mongols, to name but two, were Military. The Cult of the Hero was not prevalent in either. Individuals were admired for their skill and courage, but given far greater esteem for their ability to lead men in battle, and to win said battle. The winning of the Battle was far more important than such trifles as Honor, Skill, or Personal Prowess. With such an attitude it is easy to see both how and why weapons were regarded as they were. A master craftsman has a high regard for a hammer, or a saw. But they are still tools. A good soldier has a high regard for a good weapon. It doesn't matter whether it is a horn-backed recurved bow, a sword, or a G-3 Assault Rifle. But it is still a tool used to do a job.

To the Warrior Society the individual, his weapon and his skill at arms are of greater importance. The weapon is no longer a mere tool but of a much greater innate worth. Its mere possession confers power and prestige. These swords are named. Excalibur, Joyeuse, Tyrfing, Iang, the names in literature are almost endless. This is merely the European. One finds the same thing in Japanese, Javanese, and Arabic history. In the Warrior Society, the Sword is something Magical and confers powers that are considered Fine and Heroic.

The Roman Legioniare was a solid, simple man, who held this attitude in contempt. Warriors were just so much sword fodder to him.

The seemingly erudite, but unnecessary botonical references, the equally unnecessary definitions of the words "Hero" and "Hera," plus the misuse of the term "Gladiolas" rather than the correct word, "Gladius," lead me to believe that Mr. Amsbury's vast knowledge of the subject comes from a quick trip to the dictionary. Curiously enough, dictionaries do not list "Gladius," that being a foreign word. Gladoilas is given as sword shaped, which is also the original meaning. Gladius is the root.

If Mr. Amsbury should wish to reply I will consider his reply only if he can furnish me with the following information to back up his claim. Names of Famous Roman Swords and the Famous Roman Heroes who carried them. Legends on how they were forged and the feats they did. The name of the Sword that Mars carried, and the name of Julius Caesar's sword. I must insist also on sources. Saying that "Caius carried his famous sword, Nosebiter," will not suffice.

In the future I would suggest that Mr. Amsbury confine his remarks on Arms and Armour to his circle of SCA friends or to his high school Latin class. I'm sure his fellow students will find them almost interesting.

Let me hasten to add that this is not the beginning of any sort of feud with Mr. Amsbury. Far from it. I feud only with my equals; flies I merely swat.

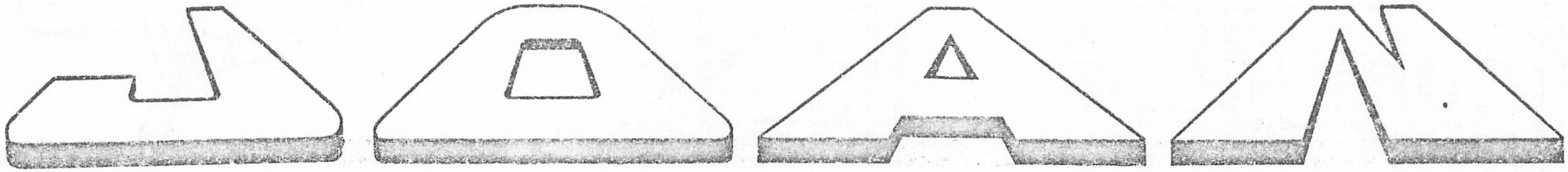
Hank Reinhardt
2579 Drew Valley Rd.
Atlanta, GA. 30319

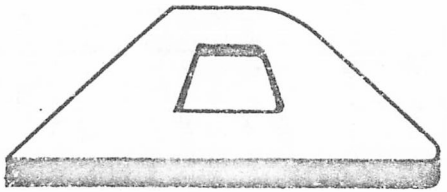
((With each issue that I put out, I get a better understanding of what it means to be an editor. Looking back at the Amsbury review, I can see what you mean by it not being a review. I thought it an interesting approach to a book, but lost sight of the fact that it was supposed to have been a book review. My apologies to you both, and to Clifton Amsbury, for letting this slip by me without me doing my job.))

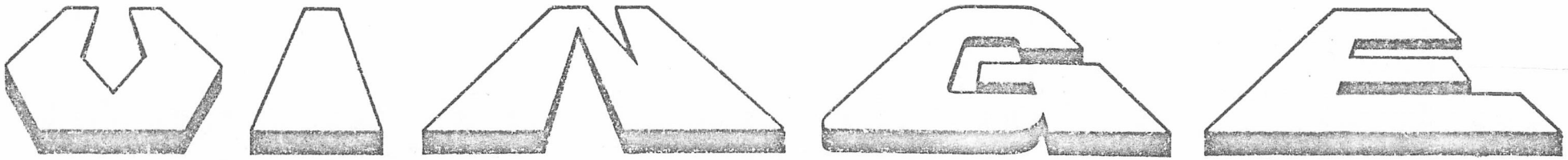
This interview was done in 1979 at MINICON, with Jan Brown assisting me. The following year Joan received the transcription, and mailed it back to me with the corrections. Then, as with many other things that have appeared in this issue of LAN'S LANTERN, it stayed with me till now. Since this was done, Joan has written several more stories, another novel, and the one mentioned in the interview, THE SNOW QUEEN, won the Hugo Award for Best Novel at DENVENTION in 1981. She is also now married to Jim Frenkel, and they have one daughter, Jessica.

AN INTERVIEW WITH

"I want to tell a good story that people can enjoy,
and one that perhaps could make them a better person."







LAN: I have read that you are part American Indian. Could you elaborate on that?

JOAN: Actually, only an embarrassingly small part of me in Indian. I am part Erie Indian, as in Lake Erie, a tribe which lived around the area of Cleveland. My ancestors had moved into the area around the early 1800's -- that is, the European side -- and settled there. The Erie had by that time been assimilated by the Iroquois Nation, which had swept through Ohio and had taken over many of the smaller tribes. So not much is known about the Erie except that they gave their name to the Lake.

Being an anthropologist, my ancestry interested me very much. My mother always took pride in that part of the family, and she always talked about it. It's strange, I think I am the most Indian-looking member of my family in several generations, even though the characteristics -- the high cheekbones and the long face -- have been somewhat diluted. I sometimes fancy myself as looking something like Buffy St. Marie.

LAN: Do you sing too?

JOAN: Yes, yes, but not as well, needless to say.

LAN: Do you have a musical background?

JOAN: Not officially. My mother likes to play the piano, and she encouraged me to play. I never took any lessons, but I like to sing, and it is only recently that I started coming to conventions, where people have been getting together and singing. I've been joining in too, singing in public, something I've never had the nerve to do before.

LAN: It's a common fear.

JOAN: With a lot of other people around singing together, you can sing as loud as you want, and there's less of a chance of someone hearing you.

LAN: You drew somewhat on your musical background for "Eyes of Amber," didn't you?

JOAN: Yes. I like music very much, I like to listen to it, all different kinds. I get a lot of inspiration from Songs. "Tin Soldier" for example is inspired by a song from the early 70's, "Brandy". If you listen to the song and read the story, you can see that there is a great deal of similarity between the two.

LAN: I noticed that -- and you reversed the roles.

JOAN: Something that is interesting is that George R. R. Martin also wrote a story based on that song. I didn't know that at the time. It was written partly the same way, where the woman goes out into space and the man stays behind, essentially the role-reversal thing. I can't remember if George used the slower-than-light travel too, but the similarity ends there. I probably will make more use of in my stories in the future. Music is something you can take personally and empathize with; it starts the creative juices flowing -- "what's the story behind this song?"

It would be quite interesting to have a panel at a convention in which authors discuss how music and the other arts have affected their work. I'm sure it affects a lot of other people than way. I mix media myself; I have a collection of pictures of people who look like characters, not necessarily in my stories, but in stories that I've liked, and songs that remind me of stories. I put them all together, sticking notes inside the book.

> "Among the people I've met, if they are creative in one area, they tend to be creative in another."

Among the people I've met, if they are creative in one area, they tend to be creative in another. The first time I was ever aware of that was in high school art class. The class was quite free, and people used to sing, and I realized that there was nobody in there who could not carry a tune. It seemed that all the people in art had some feel for music. For me, the musical feel is not my strongest thing, but I've always loved music a lot. It runs through me, and I can feel it twitching here and there.

I like art too. Originally I wanted to be an artist. I started drawing when

I was eight; I used to draw constantly. When I got to college I was going to study art until I met the teachers there, the insufferable little-tin-god sorts, who just choked my desire to do art. I felt squashed, like a bug.

> "...there are some cultures on earth that are as alien as anything you'd find in science fiction."

LAN: Then you do know about the amateur art works, like fan art.

JOAN: I know, now. That was the problem for me. I did not have any moral support. I was too young to stand up to these people and say, "Just because I don't draw the same thing you draw doesn't mean that they're not goo." I didn't have the courage, the maturity, to recognize that at the time. This is the trouble with most creative endeavors: they are very subjective. You need either a lot of ambition, or a lot of courage, or a lot of moral support from someone else to overcome the rejection slips, or the criticism. After a while, you get a little tougher. Of course, a little success doesn't hurt. Once a story sells, you forget the pile of rejection slips.

LAN: So instead of going into art, you went into archaeology and anthropology.

JOAN: Yes, strangely enough. I just wandered through various fields in the college, and wound up just about as far away from art as I could get in some ways, although it's very close to science fiction. For me, the relationship between anthropology and science fiction is very close. On the panel today we were talking about SHOGUN, and I believe it was Jim Baen who said that this was the best first-contact story he had ever seen. That is very true; there are some cultures on earth that are as alien as anything you'd find in science fiction. The different points of view that it gives you are really fascinating.

LAN: Michael Bishop does that, transposes exotic alien cultures to alien planets.

JOAN: Yes, I know. He doesn't have an official anthropology background. We were talking and I asked him about it -- he said, no, he was just interested, and his writing showed it. Of course there's Ursula LeGuin, whom I enjoy very much for that reason. Her parents were anthropologists, writers. Her father was a very famous anthropologist; her mother wrote a book called ISHI, THE LAST OF HIS TRIBE, which is essentially a biography of one of the last Indians in California to be assimilated into "modern" civilization, and how he adapted.

JAN BROWN: That was done on television recently.

JOAN: That's right. I asked Ursula one time how consciously she wrote on anthropological subjects, and she said that she didn't do it consciously. It was just sort of osmosis, that it seeped into her work.

LAN: And Carolyn Cherryh....

JOAN: That's right. She's a classics major, the arts, anthropology, archaeology...

LAN: I met her at ARCHON in 1978, and we talked about teaching Latin for a couple of hours or so. I'm a Latin teacher.

JOAN: Oh, I was a Latin student once. I got very involved with what the Romans were like while I was taking the language. I took it kind of out of spite while I was in junior high and high school, because it was the most exotic language they offered. I wanted to take German which was even more exotic, but they did not offer it.

JAN: Have you had much background in linguistics?

JOAN: I have some. I enjoy language a lot. When I got into college I actually did take German, and I also took some anthropological linguistics. I enjoyed it very much, the basic Introduction to Linguistics, then Language-and-Culture. It's just part of writing to us, but there you play around with the words,

how words work together, what they mean, different people's perceptions of them, the use of them. It's very strange, the more I learn as I go along, the more things seem to interlock. When I was in high school, everything that was fed to me appeared to be random bits of information stuffed into my head. As I began to study different things in college, I began to see how one area interlocked with another in terms of a network of knowledge, and how interest in one area can lead you to an interest in another that on the surface doesn't seem to be related to it.

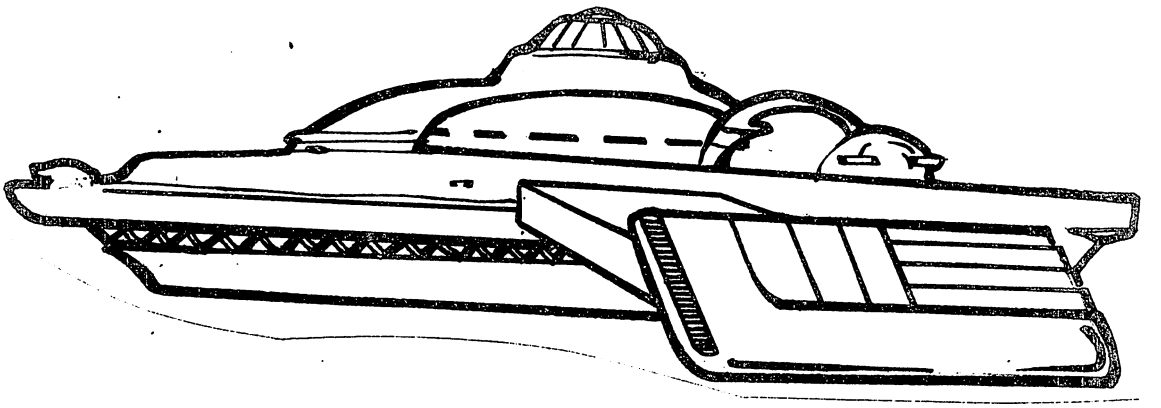
That's the neat thing about anthropology: you can study just about anything. It's the study of humanity, anything people have ever done, or have been affected by. Essentially science fiction is like that too, even more so.

LAN: Did you take any hard science courses?

JOAN: Not too many. I have to confess to a horrible aversion to that. I had the usual brainwashing -- "Girls don't do that." I was okay in math, but I was never particularly skilled in math. I took the line of least resistance. I did take astronomy while I was in college. I got an A in it, and I was very proud of myself. I always like that aspect of science fiction. My father had a telescope, and when I was a kid we would go out into the backyard and look at Jupiter and all the planets. I remember in junior high school being shocked that my friend didn't know the names of all the planets in the solar system, and when she learned them, she didn't memorize them in order out from the sun, but just randomly selected, just stuck together. I thought that everybody knew the names of the planets in order. As a child I also had a puzzle with constellations on it. In 1954 in LIFE magazine they had a wonderful article on the solar system and the stars. There were a lot of still paintings by Chesley Bonestall. My mother ripped it out of the magazine for me, and I still have it. Some of the paintings were really wonderful--craggy landscapes, double suns in the background, things like that. Even when I was a child it fascinated me. I remember learning the word "hypothetical" because that one scene was seeing a double sun from a "hypothetical planet." I didn't know what "hypothetical" meant--cold, or hot, or lumpy. My mother explained that it was an imaginary planet, and I felt disappointed because I'd believed that was how it really looked. I was sure it was out there somewhere, and I've been looking for it ever since.

LAN: They showed it in STAR WARS. *laughter* So you used your knowledge of astronomy in THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT and in the prior story, "Media Man".

"As I began to study different things in college, I began to see how one area interlocked with another in terms of a network of knowledge."



JOAN: I have to give Vernor Vinge, my ex-husband, a lot of credit for that. He was and is my technical advisor, and that particular story happened to be an idea he had created and gave to me to fill out. He's responsible for making a lot of trajectories and time sequences work out right. I respect that very much; if I am going to write science fiction, I am going to try to make sure that it is technically sound. I don't want to make any absurd or incompetent statements. I really can't claim credit for it, although I do understand most of it. I lack the mathematical background to do the actual calculations behind the orbits and trajectories. I enjoy the challenge of having Vernor explain something very technical to me and understanding it enough so I can write it out in a way that I hope is clear to someone else who essentially knows no more than I do. That is a real challenge to someone who does not have a great technical background; you learn a lot in trying to explain it to someone else.

Recently I took some math courses; I went to school part time to fill in some of the holes in my background. Now that I'm in New York, I'm not doing that, but I still try to get out once in a while. Sitting at the typewriter all day tends to make someone go stir-crazy quite quickly. Every now and then I need a break; math is a good way to exercise my mind. I still find mathematics painful, but I derive a great deal of satisfaction from actually figuring out what it is they're trying to tell me. I am definitely not going to be the next Einstein, alas.

> "Every now and then I need a break; Math is a good way to exercise my mind."

LAN: You wrote one collaboration with your former husband, Vernor, "The Peddler's Apprentice."

JOAN: That was actually a story he had started, and sort of bogged down in the middle of it, and couldn't finish it. I had read the first half he'd written and liked it. So he gave it to me to finish. He told me essentially what he wanted to do, so I sat down and attempted to do it. He just had a rough draft, so I went back and smoothed it out, trying to mesh our styles. It seems to have worked, because people say they can't tell where one of us quit writing and the other one started. I felt that it was a real trust in my ability that Vernor would give me one of his stories to finish; I would be hard put to give out one of my stories to somebody else to finish.

LAN: He hasn't been writing. I haven't seen anything of his out in the past year or so.

JOAN: No, actually he's been teaching. He has a PhD in Mathematics, and likes the applications of math in astronomy, in computer science, and such. But he is starting to write again. He's sold a story to Dell for Binary Star #5. He was involved for years with the "publish or perish" syndrome which he really didn't enjoy. Writing is paying pretty well these days, but it takes a while to get back into that. He does enjoy it, so he is currently working on a novel, and he's seen an agent about getting some of his work reverted, like GRIMM'S WORLD, and maybe putting together a short story collection. I'm really pleased that he's started writing again, too. When I go to cons a lot of people ask when is he going to write some more. I kept telling him that, in hopes that it would have an affect on him, and it has.

LAN: I had heard that he was told by his school not to write any more fiction.

JOAN: That was not actually true. He felt personally that it really didn't do him any good and might actually look bad on his record -- the idea that people would say that this guy is writing all this frivilous stuff and he's not being a serious instructor or professor. Vernor has just gotten to the point where he's got tenure, so he's not really worried about that. Anyway, he knows he's doing a good job. Rather than trying to crank something out for the journals, he decided to do something more personally satisfying.

LAN: Stanley Schmidt never had that problem. He taught physics.

JAN: He should give lessons on the care and feeding of school administrations. He had Heidelberg exactly where he wanted it.

JOAN: This being the California State system, the board of governors and that sort of thing are always laying down wretched dictums on the schools, even though the state colleges are supposed to be dedicated to teaching, not publishing. Unfortunately they define publishing as part of your "personal growth". Science fiction does not count as "personal growth" even though I'm sure it's much more broadening, frankly, than writing another article on some little nodule that nobody else has ever covered because it's not worth it.

Vernor is really into computers though. He's fascinated by them and has done a lot of work with them. He has a home computer system which he's using for his writing; it has a text-editor program.

LAN: So he was your technical advisor for "Fireship".

JOAN: Yes, that arose from his interest in computers, speculating on computer intelligence and other things. The scene in "Fireship" where Ring is trying to break into the computer -- I consulted Vernor as to how one does break into a computer, what the technical steps are -- I wrote it all down and he said, "Gee, this is pretty good." He's my consultant for all the hard sciences.

LAN: A friend of mine who has studied computers and works with them mentioned to me that the situation of a human/computer link-up is like it probably would be.

JOAN: Oh, I'm really happy to hear that. I haven't really gotten much feedback from somebody who is heavily into computers. I know there are a lot of fans who are into the field, but I haven't talked to many of them as to what they thought of the story.

LAN: Your first story was...."Peddler's Apprentice"?

JOAN: It was "Tin Soldier"; it came out first. "Peddler's Apprentice" was the second story I wrote, but it was the third one to be published, about a year and a half after I wrote it -- I thought I'd die of old age before it came out. "Mother and Child" was the third story, which was published second. That was one of my best, I thought. It just didn't get any exposure. Most of the people I've been talking to recently mentioned the two books I've had published, THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT and FIRESHIP. "Mother and Vhild" is the second novella in the book with "Fireship". Of the three stories, most like "Mother and Child" the best. I'm very pleased with that; at the time it first came out in ORBIT 16, I was very proud of the story, and it did nothing. It was very depressing for me.

LAN: When we found out at our SFclub meeting that you were going to be at E/c^2 CONFUSION, someone asked if any of us had read the book club edition of FIRESHIP. I said that I was getting to the novella in ANALOG, but had intended to read it in the book club edition. He said, "Good. 'Fireship' is great; 'Mother and Child' is better!" He was right!

JOAN: I was surprised that so many people at CONFUSION had the book club edition -- I guess it had just recently come out. It was nice to see that people got it so quickly and read it. And so many liked it!

LAN: For the price that they pay in the book club, it's almost the same as the

paperback price--and the hardcover book is more durable.

JOAN: If you have room to store them all. ... I just discovered a typo that I consider rather severe in the paperback version of "Mother and Child" on page 182, and I just discovered it's in the hardback as well. It's at the point when Tam is saying to the heroine, "You should hate the king more than anyone for ruining your life." But in the book it has printed "running" instead of "ruining", which totally diffuses the emotional statement Tam is making. I've been correcting it in all the paperback copies I've been autographing. The rest of the book is in pretty good shape; it was just that one error. It should be corrected in the next edition.

LAN: You said that you got the idea for the "Heaven Belt" cycle of stories, of which there are only two thus far, from Vernor.

JOAN: Yes, and I'm working on the third one.

LAN: I noticed that one of the characters, Abdhiamal, at the end of "Media Man", is one of the central characters in THE OUTCASTS OF HEAVEN BELT. He mentions receiving a ring from a husband-and-wife prospecting team, which seem to me to be the two main characters of "Media Man." You are going to join the two stories, aren't you?

JOAN: Yes, that's the third "Heaven Belt" story I'm working on now. A lot of people were annoyed that I left them split up at the end. I figured that I ought to get them back together again if I could. And I assumed that they would, one way or another. This is a strange thing: in general, almost all the women I talked to assumed that they would get back together; the men assumed that they would not. I don't know what sort of sociologocal phenomenon this reflects -- whether it's becasue the woman rejected the man that the women thought they would get back together and the men didn't, or whether there is some sort of world-view difference, or what it is. I don't know why people feel that way; they don't seem to know either. Since I assumed that the characters would get back together, that's the basis of the story I'm currently working on, and that story, a novella, is going to be part of a Dell Binary Star series. I just hope that I do a credible job of getting them back together.

LAN: Are you going to write any more stories in the "Heaven Belt" series?

JOAN: I have no current plans to do so. I'd love to do something about the planet Morningside. That way I get to use all my notes -- and I get to explore the whole system. And I can see other things there too, other possible stories.

I have been trying to do a whole lot of different things with my writing. I have been exploring -- almost every story has been set in a different universe. And I've been trying different kinds of stories, adventure stories, hard science stories, -- "Fireship" was supposed to be a "light adventure" story, a fun story. It is defferent from the "heavier" stuff like "Mother and Child." I tend to write and change style to fit the type of story; I hope I have succeeded, trying out different kinds of things. I also consider that I have the option of working again in any of those universes later on. When the idea for "Media Man" came to me, it fit quite nicely in the "Heaven Belt" universe. Since it worked perfectly in that setting, I put it there, and that's how I inadvertantly started writing a future history around that particular system.

LAN: Well, you have the civil war which would be very interesting to work out; and what happens after OUTCASTS.

JOAN: The potential for all these things is there, which is nice. Hopefully the more stories I write, the more ideas I'll generate, so I don't have to worry about running out.

LAN: You mention that you have all these "variety" types of stories. Essentially there is one common thing running through all of them: you are very sensitive to the characters; your characterizations are your strength in writing.

JOAN: Thank you. That's what I really try to concentrate on; I'm glad it shows. I really like to read about people, and the idea of people reacting to a situation, and how it affects them. I enjoy reading about interesting characters, and at one point I almost quit reading science fiction because it seemd that everything I read had these awful cardboardy characters in it. Fortunately there has been a renaissance in the field, and a lot of people who write today are very sensitive writers who write about real people reacting in identifiable, if sometimes alien, ways. I enjoy that sort of thing, and I was trying to do it. I have thought from time to time, should I be writing science fiction if it's the characters I'm really interested in? I realized that it is putting the characters in the alien situations, and watching them react, that I enjoy. I would be bored writing about people doing the day-to-day things -- going to the grocery store things -- that they do in the real world. I see that all the time. It's the exploration of something that hasn't happened before that I like doing, especially in terms of capturing an emotional effect, having something to say about human relationships.

LAN: Like in "The Crystal Ship."

JOAN: I don't run into many people who talk about that particular story. It was one of the hardest stories to write; it got out of hand a lot, and it didn't turn out exactly the way I expected it would. I had intended to write a somewhat philosophical story dealing with death.

LAN: And immortality.

JOAN: It's not widely available right now; I know that it is going to be reissued in a collection of my short stories. I would be interested to hear people's reactions to it. I found that the end of the story was left much more open than I had intended. I had meant for people to know that the heroine came back in the end. It is in the story, but it is very subtle. Only about one person in ten I talk to realizes that; the rest of the people assume that you don't know one way or the other whether she come back. I was a little disappointed in that. I meant to be subtle, but turned out to be too subtle. It's one of the pitfalls of writing.

LAN: You can continue the legend of Tarawassie with that. I got the feeling that, yes, she should come back, but you really don't come out and say it. It's hinted at, and the story is open for that.

JOAN: The very last line was supposed to give it away. It was being "shown", and if she hadn't returned, there wouldn't be any "showing." It's probably not being "shown" among Moonshadow's people, but if it weren't for Tarawassie the story could not be transmitted this way. When it comes out in the short story collection, I'll have one more sentence at the end; I hope it makes more sense then. I'll find out -- people will come up to me and say, "Did she ever come back?"

LAN: In the edition I have here, the last line reads: "So was shown the legend of Tarawassie and Moonshadow."

JOAN: That was supposed to clue you in.

LAN: *pause* Oooooh, right. The word "shown."

JOAN: I think part of the trouble was that the last paragraph was such a downer, with Moonshadow dying and all. So people don't even notice that it is an upbeat ending.

LAN: And that's the key word, "shown." (to Jan) Since you haven't read it -- "to show" means to establish a telepathic contact with a person and mentally "show" what you mean. But this must happen through a physical contact. The beings on the planet are marsupial, and by placing your hand into the pouch of your partner a telepathic rapport is established along the nerve endings. Each person has his or her ancesters as living memories in their mind, and they "show" each other their ancestors through this telepathic contact.

I had to sit and digest the whole story after I finished it. I really could not do much else after reading it. There's a lot in there.

JOAN: It was a strange story. Someone asked me if I were particularly depressed

when I wrote it. I hadn't thought about it, but I was actually feeling rather downbeat at the time, and a lot of negative feelings came out in that story. A lot of things were bothering me about humankind. It's funny. I have emotional reactions about my own stories after I've written them. I have sort of an omniscient separation from the story --like playing god -- when I write the story, but when I look back on it, it seems as though it's someone else's story. When I look back on "The Crystal Ship" it reads like such a sad story; when I read "Tin Soldier" it is easier to look back one because it is essentially a happy story in the end. I don't always like to read sad stories, or write them, bit sometimes I do. Still, I am proud of that story, even though it's not the happiest story I've ever written.

"I have emotional reactions about my own stories after I've written them. I have a sort of omniscient separation from the story -- like playing god -- when I write the story, but when I look back on it, it seems as though it is someone else's story."

LAN: It looks as though you start your stories, as the classicists would put it, "in medias res," in the middle of things. The reader doesn't know what's going on, as in "Eyes of Amber." Through the first scene we find ourselves on an alien planet -- all the clues are there. Then the setting changes.

JOAN: Yes, quite a radical change.

LAN: The the reader has to change gears. "What has she done here?" Time to re-align things. Thereafter you shift back and forth between scenes on Titan and Earth, paralleling action on both worlds, until both conflicts are reconciled. In re-reading it, the story becomes richer.

JOAN: I'm glad -- I'm glad there's that much in it. It's a kind of a story that when I look back on it I tend to forget all the things that are in it.

LAN: The detail that you've put into that one, and "The Crystal Ship" -- in all of them, for that matter -- is amazing.

JOAN: It takes me an awfully long time to write a story because I'm really a slow writer. If some sort of richness comes out of that, I'm grateful. There's some repayment for the fact that it takes so darn long to write it. I've worked at trying to write faster, but I haven't had much success in it. If I can't go for quantity, I have to try for quality.

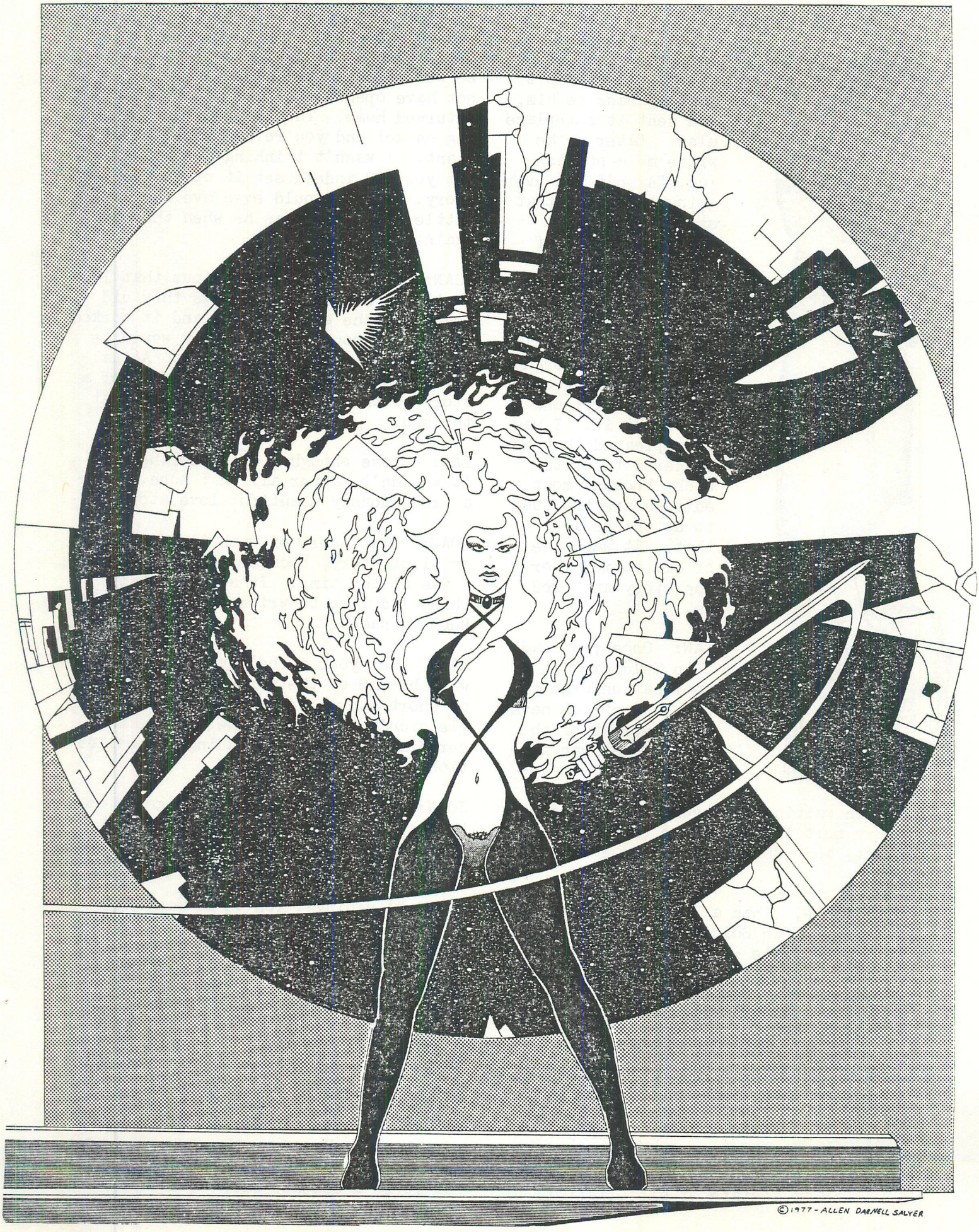
LAN: You have done that. In the eleven short works and the novel, there is such a richness in there it is amazing. And only two of them are realted -- the rest are individual, unrelated stories, unique in their own way. They speak of human nature and human experiences.

JOAN: Thank you. That makes me feel good, because that's what I hoped people would get out of them.

LAN: Since we really haven't covered it yet, I'll ask my standard beginning question: how did you get started in writing?

JOAN: I used to tinker around with it, playing with writing for many years, making up stories with my friends and such. I never did take it seriously until after I was married. Vernor was writing his fiction, and he knew I wrote, but I was afraid to show it to him. He encouraged me to write seriously: if I was going to write, finish it; don't just piddle around. I had this tendency to start things, not knowing where they were going, and stop in the middle. From the people I've talked to, that seems to be a common occurence.

"Tin Soldier" is actually the first story that I got the idea for, sat down, and, not knowing if I was going to finish it, did indeed finish it. I gave it to Vernor who read it and said, "I think this will sell." He made some suggestions for changes, and it eventually did sell --to Damon Knight, who was the second person I'd sent it to. He had sent it back with a big long letter saying which parts he didn't like. I felt hurt, that he really hadn't understood what I meant, things like that. I was absolutely crushed by his letter. I should have known that it was actually a very good letter, to get that much personal response. It was a positive response.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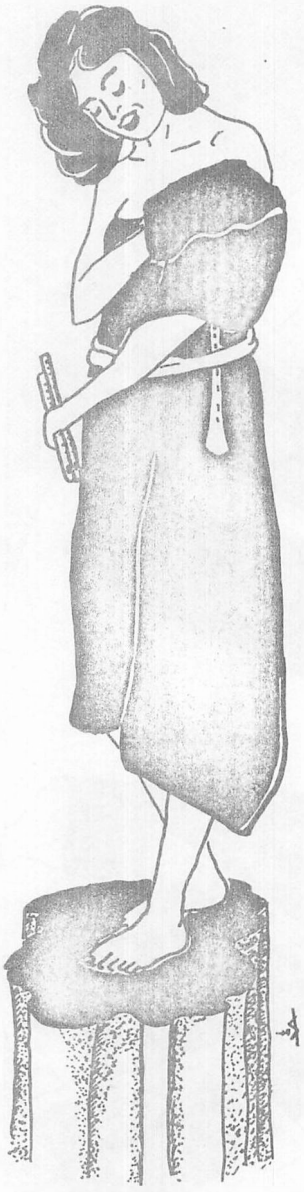


But I was naive, and felt very wounded by it all, so I didn't send it back to him, and sent it someplace else. Later on he wrote me a not asking, "Aren't you ever going to revise that story? Give me a half or a third of what I asked for?" And I realized then that he liked it. So then I took the things in his criticisms that I thought were valid and revised the story, and he bought it. I was very pleased that he bothered to write back, because most editors are too busy to do things like that. It was nice of him to remember the story and prod me.

LAN: Once you read "Tin Soldier," it's somewhat unforgettable. First you have the reversal of the traditional man/woman roles -- man going into space and the woman waiting is reversed, the woman in every port is changed to the man in every port, and never taking the same lover twice.

JOAN: I know, I had a lot of fun with that story. "Tin Soldier" seems to be everybody's favorite -- the first story thing which has happened with Isaac Asimov and "Nightfall". I don't mind if people continue to like that story -- it's one of my favorites too.

LAN: You should have seen me at the airport yesterday as I was getting near the end of it. I read the line which said that Brandy had died, and my mouth just dropped. "No! You couldn't have done that!" My eyes just glided over the pages following. I was in a state of disbelief; I couldn't believe that you had killed her off. I identified with the Tin Soldier; we were feeling the same things. I would not have opened the bar; I too would have returned home. Then you spring the ending on me! and you reveal what "died" meant. I wasn't thinking at that point, but you had indeed set it up in the story. Brandy would even hve been a little bit older than he when they met again.

JOAN: I had all these various that I wanted to happen, the things they did together, the experiences, and it worked out to be enough so that they would be about the same age at the end. Actually, I was fortunate to have enough of a story so that their ages would mesh at the end.

LAN: Close enough. With prosthetics it wouldn't matter all that much. It's a tremendously beautiful love story.

JOAN: Now I sort of wish it hadn't been my first story, because nobody knew who I was at the time. It's the sort of thing I'd like to write now when people know my name.

LAN: When your anthology comes out, it will be one of the strongest collections of short stories ever released. If people didn't know your name before, they certainly will after reading the collection.

JOAN: Well, "Tin Soldier" is going to be the last story in there.

LAN: WOW! What a way to end it!

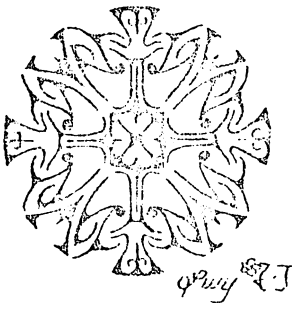
JOAN: *laughing* You've made my day.

LAN: We've already talked about some of the works in progress -- the sequel to "Media Man," and you mentioned that you eill probably do more in the "Heaven Belt" series. What about SNOW QUEEN?

JOAN: If I get started on that we might be here forever. Jim Frenkel and I both think it's the best thing I've ever done. It's a very long novel, over 500 pages, very loosely based on the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale "The Snow Queen," but it is a science fiction story. I

also read THE WHITE GODDESS by Robert Graves just before I wrote it, so there are some mythological allusions should you care to look for them.

It takes place in the far future, after the fall of a galactic empire, and the rise of another smaller one which climbs up out of the rubble. It also features a black hole which is used for transportation, around which this solar system -- where most of the action takes place -- orbits. The system's perihelion and aphelion to the black hole determines the weather on the planet where the Snow Queen lives. It's a fairly cold planet normally, and the people live near the equator. When the system reaches points close to the black hole, the sun flares from the gravitational effect of the black hole and the planet becomes quite warm. The people then migrate to the northern latitudes --there's not much except water in the southern latitudes. The seasons are pretty much just summer and winter. The power structure of the planet in complicated, and there are off-worlder visitors who come through the black hole "stargate" during the winter. They intermingle with the natives, but don't allow them to develop their own technological base. There are several reasons: the main one is the prospect of immortality from rare creatures on this planet which were a biological creation of the old empire; the gate is only open during the winter, because the closeness of the black hole in the system makes the gate inoperable during the summer, and the visitors do not want to be challenged, and maybe defeated, by the natives who might then withhold the immortality serum derived from this rare animal.



The story takes place when the winter season is coming to an end; there's going to be a change on the planet. The Snow Queen, who is immortal thanks to the serum, doesn't want the usual thing to happen: the planet falling back into anarchy and primitivism. She wants somebody there to carry on, to build up what she has gained thus far with the natives. She has had a clone made of herself, who has been raised among the primitive summer people so to understand them, and she is going to have her clone carry on her beliefs and keep the natives working together. Things don't work out exactly as she plans. The heroine of this book is this clone, and the Snow Queen is essentially an evil person corrupted by power, while her clone is not. There are similarities in their personalities, but they are different. There are some interesting conflicts which result between the two of them.

There is also a Sibyl network, to which the heroine, Moon, is linked -- that is, if you sak her a question, she goes into a trance, and "the goddess speaks through her." What it actually is is part of a communications network set up by the old empire when it was collapsing to preserve culture and knowledge -- by establishing somewhere a computer storage center, and putting people on different planets who are human ports for the computer. They pass along an artificial "infection" which enables them to receive the transmission of this faster-than-light information storage system. When they go into this trance, either the computer answers through them, or another Sibyl who knows the answer will answer. Moon has this going for her, even though she doesn't really know what it is.

In the fairy tale, the little girl goes in search for her true love who had been captured by the Snow Queen. In this case, Moon goes to the city Winter in search of her true love as well, however the circumstances are somewhat different. Since the "infection" takes hold depending on whether or not the personality make-up is correct, Moon was accepted to become a Sibyl, while her true love was not. Sparks becomes disillusioned and runs away to Winter where he does eventually become the consort of the Snow Queen. When Moon finds out what Sparks did, she goes off to the city to find him, gets involved in a lot of different adventures, and gradually learns more about herself, as well as what is actually going on in the world.

It is really a complicated novel, and when I was about halfway through I wasn't sure I was going to be able to pull everything together at the end, that I might have to throw out all this labor. Fortunately, it did all come together into a cohesive

ending. It's difficult to explain the whole thing....

LAN: It's easier to read the novel.

JOAN: Yes, it is.

"I do honestly make a conscious effort to write about women who are strong, confident, and yet, hopefully, human and believable. They have recognizable fears as well as recognizable strengths."

LAN: Is there anything else in the offing?

JOAN: I'm starting to work on the first fantasy I've tried to do. I have written a novelette which is the first part of it, which is going to be in an anthology edited by Ellen Kushner called BASILISK from Ace. The story is called "The Hunt of the Unicorn," and it is just the beginning of the novel.

LAN: It will be interesting to see what you do with fantasy.

JOAN: It is something I haven't tried yet. I like fantasy. This story involves a were-unicorn, a person who turns into a unicorn.

LAN: Wow, that sparks the imagination.

JAN: I've noticed that you write women very well; they are believable as women, and as strong characters. Some other authors' women are stereotypes or imitation men, and mostly written by men. And the best any man seems to be able to do is what somebody called a neutral heroine, which is essentially a rather sexless person with a feminine name who goes out and does the job and is a strong person, but isn't a woman.

JOAN: I think that most of the women writers now probably write about believable women fairly well, having lived that way.

JAN: I'm not sure that's true; I haven't seen too many female characters who stand out quite like yours do.

JOAN: I do honestly make a conscious effort to write about women who are strong, confident, and yet hopefully human and believable. They have recognizable fears as well as recognizable strengths. It's very important to me to portray women well, and to make the likeable and believable, because I know that there is such a strong element in the readership who think, "Woman writers, ugh! Woman characters, ugh! Why don't they stay in the kitchen where they belong." My determination is to make those people read that book and like that book, and say, "Gee, she wasn't so bad." Then if they hopefully meet a person like that in the real world, a real woman, a liberated woman, they will realize that there is nothing to be afraid of, that they are real people -- neither a mouse nor a roaring tiger, but merely a human being like they are. And I am also about women who read my work, that they have good role models; especially teenage girle ....

JAN: There is a shortage of that.

JOAN: Oh yes, I know. When I was a teenager and started reading science fiction, I read a lot of Andre Norton just about the time she started writing women into her books -- which had not been there much before. When women were there, they were very strong characters, although they were not part of the main plot.

JAN: There were several books of hers with matriarchal characters.

LAN: ORDEAL IN OTHERWHERE.

JOAN: Yes, that was the first one to have a female lead character, and that was in the early 60's, before there was any "band wagon" sort of thing at all. She was a liberated woman, she came from a society that had sexual equality. It was really neat, and ha made a good impression on me; I wished the real world were like this. The idea that someone might be reading my work and be affected like that is really thrilling.

I read "View from a Height" on a radio show one night -- it was two o'clock in the morning, but there were actually some people listening to it -- and some man called up to say that, even though he didn't usually like SF, he liked that story, it was a good story. I thought, good, the next time he reads something maybe he won't have a preconceived notion that it won't be any good. I can see that there is some good that can be done through writing, to change people's conceptions and preconceptions. I think especially that science fiction can do that. I want to tell a good story that people can enjoy, and one that perhaps could make them a better person.

Celebrating

Twenty Feet

of

SCIENCE FICTION

by Lloyd Biggle, Jr.

ANALOG, SCIENCE FICTION SCIENCE FACT --formerly ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE, formerly ASTOUNDING STORIES, formerly ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION--ANALOG is fifty years old.

Half a century of a magazine measures more than time. Its years may be counted in millions of words or thousands of stories and installments of novels and science articles. Or they may be calculated in shelf space--about twenty feet, depending on how tightly the issues are packed. The lucky collector with a complete set who has this problem isn't going to pack them. Those fragile early pulp magazines that cost 20¢ on the newsstand in 1930 now are worth dollars. A copy of Volume 1 Number 1 may bring one or two hundred, and up, depending on its condition and how avidly the purchaser wants a complete set.

The most significant measurements are not tangible. ANALOG/ASTOUNDING has been a significant factor in the education of generations of bright young people and a springboard to soaring flights of imagination that will endure in their memories for a lifetime. It also has been the most significatn influence on the phenomenal growth of American and world science fiction--a growth that now achieves annually, in the United States alone, more than twice as many printed words as ANALOG/ASTOUNDING has accounted for in its entire existence.

The cornerstone of such an enduring edifice should be laid with appropriate ceremony and only after careful planning. ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE came into being as a technilogical accident and an economy measure. Clayton Publications, proprieter of a chain of pulp magazines, owned thirteen titles that spanned the entire range of such publications. Its printing press had a capacity to process sixteen gaudy four-color covers simultaneously. The three blanks were a production extravagance that had to be eliminated, so editor Harry Bates proposed a new publication in imitation of a trio of fledgling magazines that offered stories about fantastic machines and improbable monsters. Their contents so defied classification that one of them actually called it "scientifiction," but the potential for attention-grabbing cover art was infinite. Every pulp magazine tycoon knew that covers sold the magazines.

ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE was born at the end of 1929, shortly after the stock market crash, with the January, 1930 issue. Surely no edifice ever had a more uninspired and badly timed cornerstone laying.

But from the first issue, there was a sense of mission. Bates editorialized, "Your children--or their children--are going to take a trip to the moon. They will be able to render themselves invisible. They will be able to disintegrate their bodies in New York and reintegrate them in China--all in a matter of seconds." Astounding, Bates declared, but not impossible. After all, television would have been almost unthinkable a mere ten years earlier.

The early cover blurbs described interplanetary and interstellar adventures, but the tone for the cover art was set by the giant beetles displayed on the first

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issue: Earth-like settings with a pronounced predilection for wildlife. There were enormous insects, giant octopuses, apes, mutated crocodiles, the entire zoo. It may be no coincidence that the next new magazine Clayton Publications launched, filling one more blank space in that array of pulp covers, was JUNGLE STORIES.

The Clayton Empire collapsed in 1933. Another pulp chain, Street & Smith, bought ASTOUNDING STORIES and returned it to the stands after a brief hiatus, marking the beginning of a spectacular success that changed and matured all of science fiction. The new editor, F. Orlin Tremaine, mixed awesome fantasy with his science fiction, and he also brought serious science articles to the magazine, expanded it, and attracted the best-known writers--all for the original price of twenty cents, which was a nickel less than the competing magazines charged. In a mere six months, ASTOUNDING had outdistanced its competition in quality, quantity, and circulation.

Tremaine's greatest contribution to ASTOUNDING came in 1937, when he was promoted. He hired as his successor a brilliant and popular young science fiction writer named John W. Campbell, Jr., described by Isaac Asimov in THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL MEMORIAL ANTHOLOGY as "tall, broad, light-haired, crew-cut, bespectacled, overbearing, overpowering, cigarette-holder-waving, opinionated, talkative, quicksilver-minded." What has been called science fiction's golden age was dawning.

". . . the other magazines paled beside the mind-blowing impact of ASTOUNDING," Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison recalled in the introduction to their anthology, THE ASTOUNDING-ANALOG READER. "Every issue was sought, read, coveted, reread, treasured." Damon Knight says, "I haven't felt the same way about any magazine since. When Campbell hit his stride in 1939. . .he was publishing single issues of the magazine that compare very favorably with best-of-the-year anthologies now." Readers waited eagerly for each new issue. When Street & Smith changed ASTOUNDING's publication date from the second Wednesday of the month to the third Friday, an alarmed young Isaac Asimov made a special trip to the editorial office to find out what had happened to the magazine. To many readers, ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION provided the most colorful experiences of their youths.

All of this adulation centered on a strange sanctum. Frederic Pohl, in his autobiography, THE WAY THE FUTURE WAS, describes a visit to Street & Smith headquarters, ". . . a dilapidated old slum on Seventh Avenue . . . The lower floors were filled with printing pressed, shaking the whole structure as they rolled. The building had a hydraulic elevator. To make it go up or down, the operator had to tug on a rope outside the car itself.... To get from the reception room to any editor's office involved going up and down staircases, squeezing past rolls of paper stored to feed the ground-floor presses, reveling in the fascinating smells of printer's ink and rotting wood." ASTOUNDING finally escaped from that slum in the early 1950s, when, for a time before moving to Madison Avenue, the editorial office was located on East 42nd Street. The atmosphere remained the same. A young author named James Gunn, visiting glamorous New York and the famous editor John Campbell for the first time, had the startled impression that his office was in a warehouse.

ASTOUNDING was exported to England, and copies of some of its early issues survive with a "6d." sticker pasted over the "20¢." By 1939, the overseas following justified a special British edition. During the war years it was slender--containing only a portion of the U. S. issues--and irregular, but it was a breath of fresh air for the reader long deprived of it. Fan Howard Devore remembers, as a serviceman stationed in England, avidly searching second hand book stores for copies.

ASTOUNDING fostered a special fraternity of science fiction writers. Clifford Simak remembers, ". . . in those early days after Campbell took over there was, for me at least, a feeling of fellowship with the other writers, most of whom I had not met--a feeling that we were working together in an effort to develop a literary form that was very precious to me."

Even would-be writers were welcomed. The experiences of the young Frederic Pohl and the young Isaac Asimov may not be typical, but they are indicative.

Tremaine saw Pohl regularly and even took him out to lunch (but never bought a story from him). Asimov describes many conversations--and rejections--before he finally sold Campbell a story. Those who used the mails were likely to receive personal letters with their rejected manuscripts. Damon Knight writes, "I sent [Campbell] a couple of adolescent efforts, the kind of thing that would get a printed rejection slip from any editor in his senses, and he wrote me polite rejection letters signed with his looping scrawl." A young fan named Lou Tabakow submitted a story illegibly hand written and got back a letter explaining the necessity of double-spaced typewritten copy.

Through the letter columns that were a feature of the science fiction magazines, there also developed a fellowship of readers that eventually spawned a vigorous fan movement and resulted in publications, conventions, and all of the related fan activities. The fellowship overlapped. Writers became fans, and it seemed that most fans were would-be writers and that they all knew each other. Long-time fan Dr. C. L. Barrett remembers that in the late 1940s he knew personally 90% of the active science fiction writers.

The 1950s brought vigorous new competition in GALAXY and THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, but ASTOUNDING and John Campbell remained the standard by which all science fiction was measured and the goal that authors strove for. In the early 1960s I heard a young would-be writer exclaim, as he examined a new copy of ANALOG, "I just gotta sell to this magazine!" (He did.) It was a feeling that had been common to the fellowship of young would-be writers for thirty years.

When Campbell changed the magazine's name to ANALOG in 1960, so strong was the affection for the old name that a reader revolution seemed in the offing. Fan Alva Rogers who had been reading the magazine since 1934 produced a nostalgic book entitled, A REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING. Campbell died in 1971, but under his successors Ben Bova and Stanley Schmidt the magazine continued the high standards and strong leadership that Campbell so firmly established.

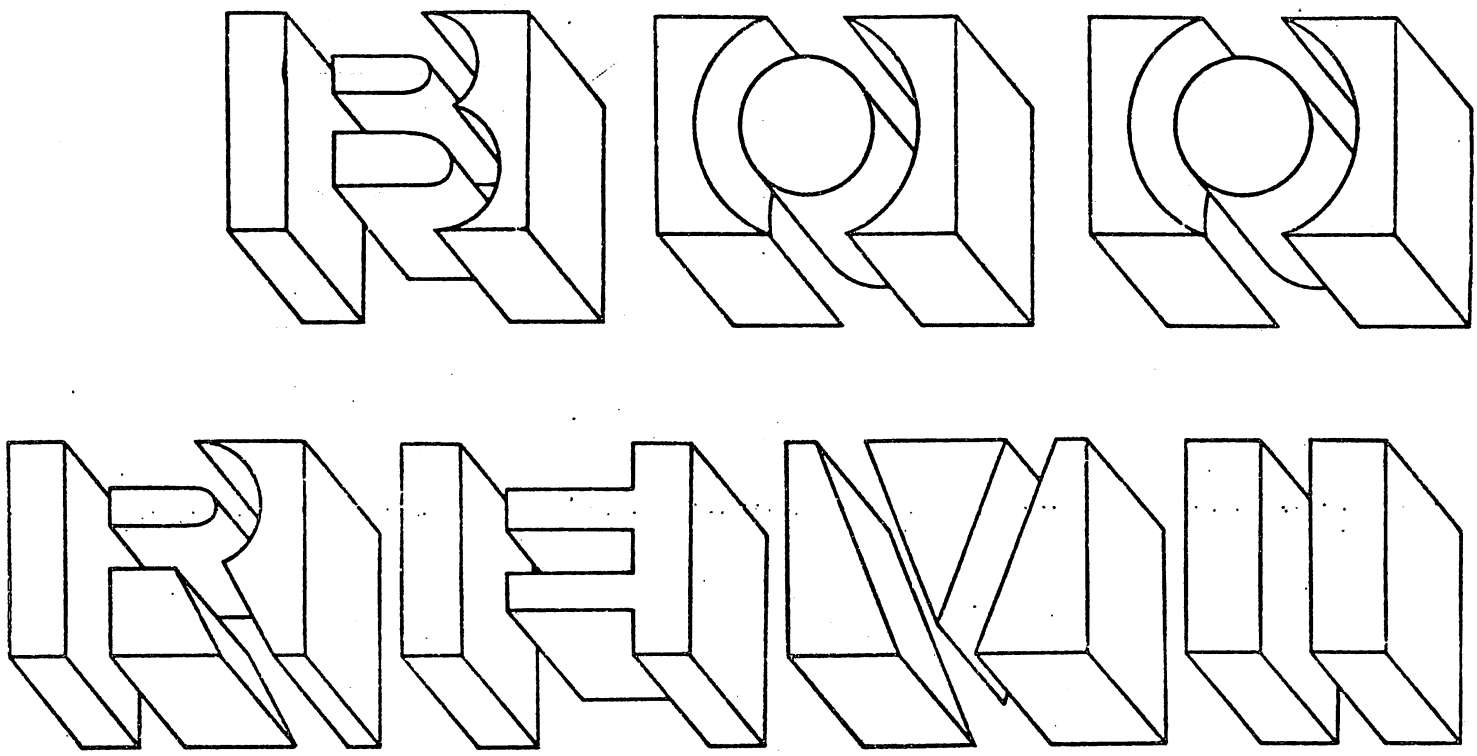
And now ANALOG/ASTOUNDING is fifty years old. I asked a gathering of young fans what this meant to them, and I received answers like, "Oh, wow. Fifty years. That's a long time, isn't it?" These were veterans who encountered ANALOG as long ago as 1972, or, in an exceptional case, 1966. One said thoughtfully, "Hey--I must have missed a lot of good reading."

That is the ultimate measurement of fifty years of a magazine: A lot of good reading. I turned the pages with care as I examined a rare complete set of ANALOG/ASTOUNDING. The paper of the early issues was yellowing and brittle, and for 20¢, even in the 1930s, a magazine could not be bound for the ages.

It was a haunting encounter with one old friend after another in a strange setting. So many of those stories have appeared in anthology after anthology, have been read and reread, have been enumerated among the science fiction classics, that those who did not read the early magazines will find it difficult to envision them there, in pulp magazine format, their presence emblazoned on a gaudy cover of the type that William Clayton wanted three more of to keep his press busy. Here, in orderly ranks, month after month, march the classics of modern science fiction.

The back issues of ANALOG/ASTOUNDING have been forced through the finest of sieves in order to fill the numerous anthologies that are another science fiction phenomenon. The young fan who thought of fifty years of ANALOG/ASTOUNDING in terms of the good reading he'd missed probably has already read much of it in book form. The magazine's best has long been accessible to the modern reader.

It is the experience of being there, of being part of something remarkable, and new, and exciting, that we who came late missed. That can never be recaptured. It belongs only to the survivors of the faithful band of early readers, now graying but young as ever in spirit. Theirs is the fiftieth anniversary.



by STEVE BRIDGE

GATEWAY *by Frederic Pohl; St. Martin's Press*

BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON *by Frederic Pohl; Ballantine/DelRey*

PERSISTENCE OF VISION *by John Varley; Dial Press & Dell Paperback*

TITAN *by John Varley; Berkely/Putnam*

WIZARD *by John Varley; Berkely/Putnam*

WILD SEED *by Octavia Butler; Doubleday*

PATTERNMASTER *by Octavia Butler; Doubleday*

MIND OF MY MIND *by Octavia Butler; Doubleday*

THE CHRONICLES OF THOMAS COVENANT THE UNBELIEVER *by Stephen Donaldson; Holt-Rinehart-Winston*

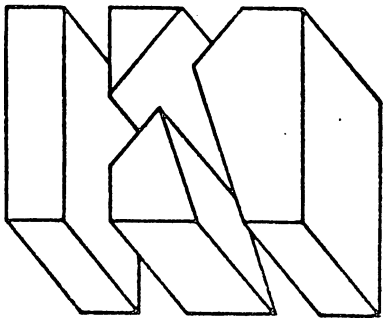
THE WOUNDED LAND *by Stephen Donaldson; Ballantine/DelRey*

TIMESCAPE *by Greg Benford; Simon & Schuster*

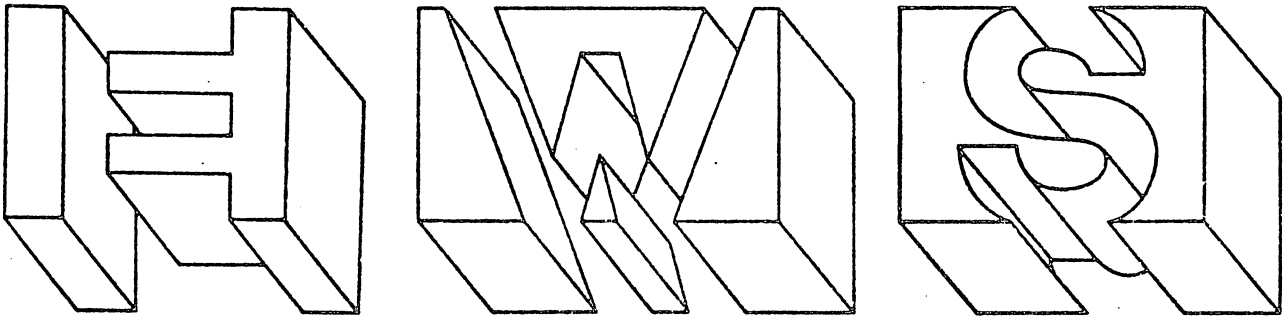
THRICE UPON A TIME *by James P. Hogan; Ballantine/DelRey*

THE ICE IS COMING *by Patricia Wrightson; Atheneum*

THE DARK BRIGHT WATER *by Patricia Wrightson; Atheneum*



When I first started to publish LAN'S LANTERN, *I decided that I would review books old and new, whatever I was reading at the time, or any that fans would send me as reviews. I wonder now if I was subconsciously giving myself an "out" in case I did fall behind in publishing....*



1980 was a very good year for the science fiction and fantasy novel. I have read five of this year's novels that I believe are better than most of last year's Hugo nominees. (As of this writing I have not yet read LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE by Silverberg or SNOWQUEEN by Joan Vinge, both of which have received strong recommendations.) Four of these excellent works are sequels to previously published books. Surprisingly, all four are significantly better than their predecesors.

The first of these is Frederick Pohl's sequel to GATEWAY, a novel which won all of SF's major awards in 1978. The new book, BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON, is superior to GATEWAY in imagination, characterization, thought and plot, and is probably Pohl's finest work yet. The characterization is especially a major step forward for Pohl, who previously has been less known for deep characters than for detailed futures, solid political knowledge and clever ideas. GATEWAY's Robinette Broadhead, filled with guilt over an accident that made him wealthy but stranded the woman he loved at the event horizon of a black hole, was a tentative step in the direction of deeper characterization. However, in BEYOND THE BLUE EVENT HORIZON Pohl has not only made Robin a more fully developed character, but he has also given creative life to several other varied individuals. These include Robin's wife Essie, several members of a family exploration team, and Wan, a human boy born on an artifact of the mysteriously vanished Heechee culture. Pohl has also shown us more of Earth's civilization as influenced by knowledge learned from Heechee leftovers and he has made surprising discoveries about the Heechee themselves.

The boy, Wan, is discovered on a Heechee food factory, found still operating on automatic in orbit beyond Pluto. Robin Broadhead, his guilt about his abandoned lover more or less resolved, has married a computer programmer, Essie. Anticipating an answer to the world's food shortages, Robin bankrolls an expedition to the food factory. The family team not only discovers Wan but also discovers that unmanned Heechee ships are making regular roundtrips to a Heechee outpost, populated by beings Wan calls "the Old Ones." The family proceeds to the outpost, setting up confrontations between two races in space and between economic and political forces on Earth.

This is a superb book which shows Pohl at the peak of his imaginative and

writing abilities. It contains coherent science, excitement, humor, affecting characters and the greatest "sense of wonder" that I have seen in some time.

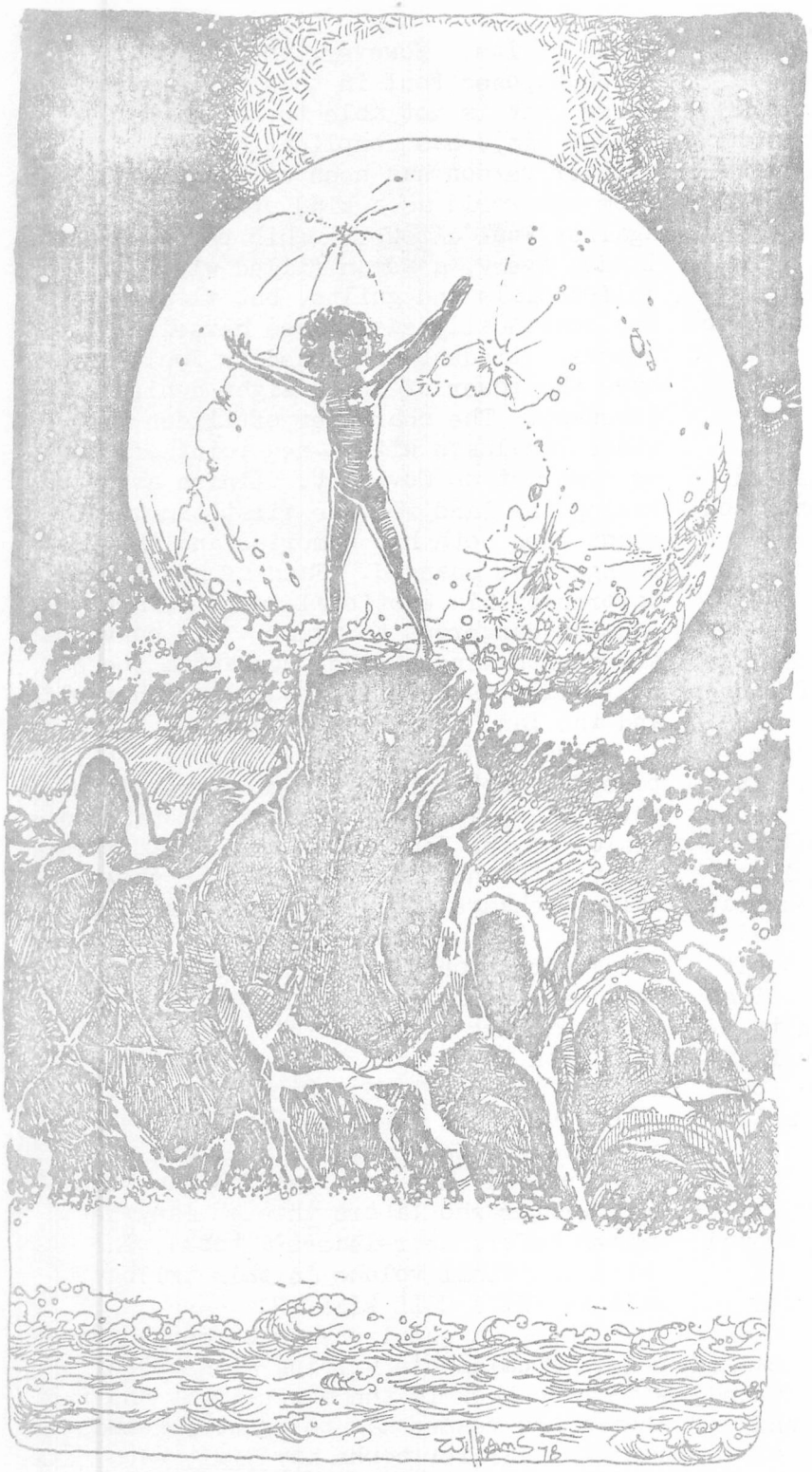
There are very few authors whom I truly hold in awe, about whom I seriously wonder, "How do they think of those things?" One of these authors is John Varley, whose short stories have astounded me ever since his first collection, THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION. His first two novels, though, while competent, did not hold my interest as greatly. Now at last in WIZARD Varley shows that he is able to project his tremendous imagination into novel length. WIZARD is the second volume of a trilogy which began with TITAN, in which the female space captain Cirocco "Rocky" Jones discovers Gaea, the Titan. Gaea is a living world millions of years old, inhabited by the creatures she creates -- a God unto herself. At the end of TITAN Rocky had become Gaea's Wizard and chief representative. WIZARD takes place 75 years later with Gaea having become a famous tourist spot, yet with her mind and body deteriorating. Rocky has become an alcoholic and Gaby, Rocky's closest friend, is plotting Gaea's overthrow.

To Varley's great credit, he has avoided making this novel the sort of travel adventure that TITAN was at times. While the action of WIZARD also takes place during travel, the focus is now on the characters. We not only see Rocky and Gaby more clearly, but Varley has given us other characters to discover and care about. Inadvertantly caught up in Gaby's plot are two young people, suffering from brain diseases and hoping for a miracle cure from Gaea. Chris, a young man from earth, had never taken on friends or challenges, feeling that his disease doomed him to failure at both. Robin, a member of an all-female space colony who is meeting a man for the first time, had reacted to her affliction by becoming tough, independent, and scornful of weakness. Together they face their feelings about courage and friendship as they are forced to depend on each other during their journey through Gaea's most dangerous lands. In addition, Varley has increased the importance of the centaur-like Titanides, especially Valiha, who falls in love with Chris.

Again, this author has improved greatly on his original story. The depth of feeling and the reality of the characters make this a great reading experience. I eagerly await the appearance of the third volume, presumably to be called DEMON. After only three novels and two short-story collections, John Varley has shown himself to be perhaps the most original of modern SF writers, and he certainly has the potential to be ranked among the all-time greats.

While Pohl and Varley are well-known, apparently not mony have heard of the novels of Octavia Butler, if the shortness of the autograph lines at NOREASCON are any indication. (There were short lines for Patricia McKillip, too. What is wrong with the fans?) I will here suggest that you immediately purchase a copy of WILD SEED, Butler's powerful new novel in her Patternist series. WILD SEED is chronologically the first in the series, which also includes PATTERNMASTER (third, 1975) and the fine MIND OF MY MIND (second, 1977). Butler apparently writes in reverse.

WILD SEED begins in Africa in 1690 when Doro, an immortal and the founder of a bloodline of psychics, meets Anyanwu, a very different immortal. The arrogant and ruthless Doro's ability is unique: when his body dies he is able to take over the body of somebody nearby, concuming the "soul" or "mind" of his victim. In fact, to survive he must switch bodies every few weeks to renew himself. This ability, which has kept him in existence for thousands of years, is also used as a threat to keep his "family" in line. Anyanwu, on the other hand, is only three hundred years old. She has remained in one body, but it is a body which che can control completely. Anyanwu can make herself old or young, male or female, human or animal. She can cure her own diseases and injuries on the cellular level. She had been married many times, had been both father and mother to many children and had suffered enough to make her the only person in the world strong enough to oppose Doro. Doro's discovery of Anyanwu begins a 200 hundred year love/hate relationship between the two, as Doro continues to use his people and Anyanwu's



children in his mania to create an independent race of immortal humans.

The characterizations of Anyanwu and Doro, as well as the intensity of the writing, put this novel a rank above most others of the past two years. Butler has the very rare ability of making her story real, of fitting it into the known world without a flaw. Both a science fiction and an historical novel, WILD SEED has also been liked by my friends who do not usually read SF.

After you have read this book, you will then want to pick up the sequel, MIND OF MY MIND. In this novel, Doro is challenged again when one of his children achieves a power undreampt of by Doro. I can hardly wait to see what Ms. Butler will write next.

When is was announced that Stephen Donaldson was working on a sequel to THE CHRONICLES OF THOMAS COVENANT THE UNBELIEVER (LORD FOUL'S BANE; THE ILLEARTH WAR; THE POWER THAT PRESERVES), I was apprehensive. How was it possible to do an adequate sequel to the first set of fantasies I ever put in the same category as Tolkien? I had read the first Chronicles in a week, sleeping very little, with an emotional involvement that few books have given me. I didn't want those emotions diluted by a weak sequel.

Well, my fears were laid to rest by THE WOUNDED LAND, book one of THE SECOND CHRONICLES OF THOMAS COVENANT. THE WOUNDED LAND is even better and more creative than the first books. It gave me as intense a reading experience as I have ever had and was probably the finest novel I read in 1980.

Thomas Covenant is a character unique in literature. He is an American novelist who contracts leprosy. Shortly thereafter, his wife leaves him, taking their child with her. In great bitterness, Covenant takes on the role of a leper, becoming an angry outcast of society. Consumed with guilt and self-hate, he is unable to relate to people at all. In the first Chronicles, Covenant is pulled from this world into a fantasy world where a country called the Land is under attack from the True Spirit of Evil, incarnate as Lord Foul the Despiser. The Land is guarded by a generally benevolent magic known as Earthpower. In the Land Covenant discovers that his leprosy has disappeared and he has become a person of great power. The people of the Land call upon Covenant for aid

against Lord Foul; but Covenant assumes the whole thing is an hallucination of his disease. In his refusal to participate and by his own confused actions, he destroys as much as he saves until he redeems himself and the Land in a final confrontation with the Despiser.

For the sequel, Donaldson was wise enough to realize that it would be pointless to send Covenant back to the Land to confront lesser villians, so Lord Foul has indeed regained power. But at the same time, to prevent a rehash and for there to be a reason for a new book at all, there must be new challenges and hopefully a new point of view. Donaldson has provided these elements with three basic changes: a change in the Land itself, changes in Covenant, and the addition of a new major character.

The action of THE WOUNDED LAND takes place 10 years later in the life of Thomas Covenant. Since time moves at a different rate in the fantasy world, some 4000 years have passed in the Land. In his own world, Covenant has come to accept himself and his own life. He has also grudgingly come to accept the Land itself as being in some way real. After several years of peace, Covenant begins to feel the reality of the Land injecting itself into our world. Lord Foul is attempting to draw Covenant back into the Land to use him as an ironic tool in Foul's final destruction of the Land. When Lord Foul finally succeeds in returning Covenant to the Land, Covenant discovers that the Land has undergone a horrible transformation. Since the Staff of Law which stabilized the Earthpower had been destroyed during Covenant's previous time in the Land, the Earthpower has faded. Fould has been able to overwhelm the Land with the supernatural power of something called the Sunbane. The Land has been corrupted, with mystifying changes in weather and plant growth. The people have lost all knowledge of Earthpower and are forced to do blood-sacrifice even to raise food. The Ravers, servents of Foul, rule the citadel of Revelstone, and the name of Thomas Covenant has become twisted into a symbol of hate and destruction.

Since Covenant has been called back by Lord Foul, he has lost the power to "see" the inner truth of things, a power which was so important to him in his previous visits. However, the spirit of Good which opposes Foul in this fantasy universe (yet is not able to act directly against him), has complicated Foul's plans. Another person has been called to the Land from our world as a kind of "wild card" against Foul's power. This person is Dr. Linden Avery, a woman filled with her own self-denials and guilts, but also someone who continually sacrifices herself for others. Linden, untouched by Foul, does have the power of inner sight denied to Covenant. The character of Linden provides Donaldson with a new point of view as contrast to Covenant. Linden avery is seeing the Land for the first time. Covenant sees both his memories and the way things have changed. Each of his views, colored by his emotional turmoil, are equally dangerous to trust. His conversations with Linden give Covenant a focus on reality as he tries to release himself and the Land from Foul's hold.

THE WOUNDED LAND is an exceptionally powerful book which will give great pleasure to any lover of fantasy. Donaldson's vision of the Land takes on a greater reality with this book, because he shows it able to change and yet remain the Land. The addition of Linden Avery and the other changes mentioned have given Donaldson many new possibilities to work with in the remaining books of this series.

Book two of the Second Chronicles will be THE ONE TREE, which will deal with Covenant's quest to replace the Staff of Law. The book may be published sometime in 1981; but Donaldson is a meticulous writer who labors through many rewrites before he releases a book. The third and final volume in this trilogy will be WHITE COLD WIELDER.

There is one irony to be mentioned here. Donaldson's writing gets better with each book in the series, yet the fact that a new reader has to backtrack and read the earlier books may limit each new title's possibilities for winning awards. One simply cannot pick up THE WOUNDED LAND without having read the First Chronicles. Still, this new title has my vote for the Hugo Award; and readers of fantasy are advised to take the time to read all of the books.

This review is actually a comparison of two recent books which, possibly for

the first time in science fiction, take a realistic, "scientific" view of time travel. These books both assume that while it is impossible for us to personally travel back in time, it may eventually be possible to send messages to the past, and action which could be used to change history. The inspiration for this plot device is the recent hypothesis that there may exist a sub-atomic particle called a tachyon, which can exist only at speeds faster than light. Einsteinian physics hints that anything moving faster than light would move backwards in time. That would mean that in order to detect a tachyon, you would have to look for it before the event which will create it. If this begins to boggle your mind a bit, you are not alone. This may mean that the notion of time as fluid and the possibility that reality is alterable are not just science fiction excuses for a story.

In TIMESCAPE, by physicist Gregory Benford, it is indeed discovered in 1990 that it is possible to send tachyon messages back through time. The problems involved in whether or not reality can thereby be alteres remain theoretical until the world is threatened by biological catastrophe. The oceans are dying, poisoned in a particularly nasty way by a class of chemicals developed in the 1970's. A research team discovers a way to send a desparate message to a researcher at U Cal-Berkley in 1962. The researcher does receive the information but no one will believe him. Benford proceeds to give us a multilayered story of humans at work as scientists, with as believable and fully developed characters as have ever been seen in a science fiction novel. The tension builds dranatically both in the past as the lone researcher fights to be heard, and in the future as the research team struggles to keep the Earth alive.

I was very impressed with this book; but a biologist friend said that he thought, except for the undeniably vivid characterizations, TIMESCAPE was garbage, with vague science, sloppy plotting and an incomprehensible ending. What I should really read, my friend suggested, was electronic engineer James Hogan's new book, THRICE UPON A TIME. This book also deals with sending tachyon messages back into time to solve a crisis. The problem this time is a double one, with the spread of a strange new plague and a malfunction at a fusion power plant which has created several black holes inside the earth. In this book the messages can only be received on the machine that sends them, so messages can only be sent back to the beginning of this particular tachyon research. (Fortunately the experiment began before the crises.) Hogan manages a much more complex and interesting plot than does Benford, with the future (or is it the past?) being changed several times to Benford's once. However, Hogan is not nearly as good a writer as Benford. While Hogan's plotting is clearly superior, his characters could only kindly be called cardboard, with even less individuality than those "bright young scientists" of the SF novels of the 50's. Also, his plotting is frequently bogged down in interminable descriptions of hardware.

An interesting aspect of these two books is the different but equally complex way they handle the nature of time. TIMESCAPE especially devotes extra space to the philosophy of time. What happens to all of those people in the original futures after they send the messages which change history? In Benford's story, alternate futures are created, with the originals remaining intact. Hogan, however, plays with the notion that a change in the past simply eliminates the previous future so that it never occurred, like straightening the wrinkles out of a bedspread. He gets a couple of clever plot twists out of this device.

Some reviewers have recommended TIMESCAPE for Hugo Award consideration. Before you vote for it, your might want to read THRICE UPON A TIME for comparison. My preference between the two is still for TIMESCAPE, but the Hogan book is quite clever. If you like hardware and fast-moving plots more than discussion and characterization, you will likely prefer the Hogan title. Either book will stretch your imagination in its treatment of the nature of time.

With these two books, THE ICE IS COMING and THE DARK BRIGHT WATER, Australian children's author Patricia Wrightson has begun creating a fantasy series comparable to those of Susan Cooper, Ursula LeGuin and Patricia McKillip. The books

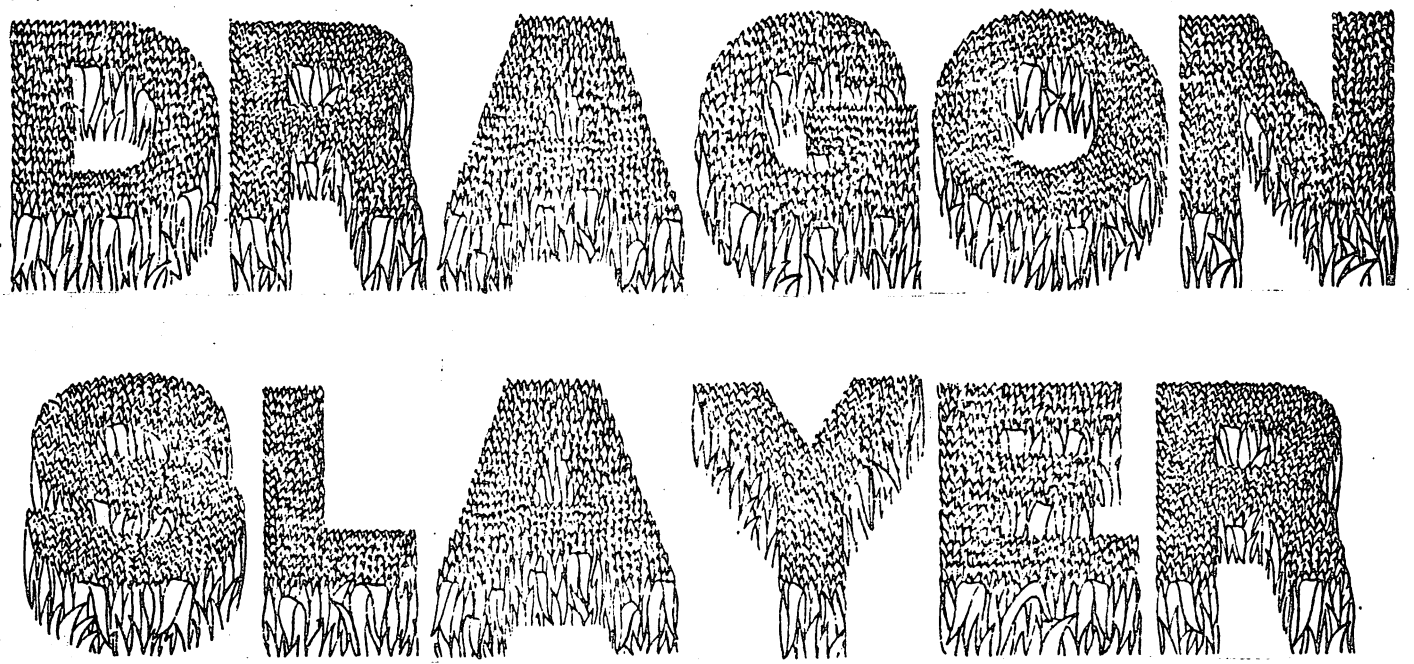
are most similar to Cooper's "The Dark is Rising" series, in that they show the modern world in conflict with the legends and myths of older days. Wrightson uses as her base the unique and largely unexplored mythology of the Australian Aborigines. The power and depth of this world are made evident in these two books which feature Wirrun, a young Aborigine boy. The series' world is that of modern Australia -- the Land; and the point of view is that of the Aborigines -- the People. The white residents of the continent's interior are called Inlanders, while the whites in the coastal cities are called the Happy Folk ("They live for happiness; it is their business and their duty.") Then there are the earth-spirits, legendary creatures of many strange shapes and kinds, who inhabit rocks, trees, and rivers, who rule ice, or fire, or wind.

In THE ICE IS COMING, strange cold snaps are hitting the eastern coastal regions of the Land. Wirrun discovers that these changes are being caused by the Ninya, ancient ice creatures seeking to assert dominance over the Land. A guardian of the Land, seeing that Wirrun has the ancient vision, gives him a Power and sends him against the Hihya. With the help of the People and some benevolent earth-spirits, Wirrun is able to drive the Ninya back to their underground prison.

In THE DARK BRIGHT WATER, Wirrun has returned home to his city by the eastern shore, a Hero to the People, although the Happy Folk know nothing of what has happened. Wirrun finds that he cannot escape the name of Hero when, a year later, men of the People seek his help. Earth-spirits are wandering far from their own lands into those of neighboring spirits, creating great unrest. To find the cause, Wirrun and his friend Ularra travel to the center of Australia and then literally ride the wind far to the northeast where the trouble apparently originated. Wirrun is also haunted by a mysterious love-singing which compels him to this place.

The explanation for the trouble turns out to be simple, even trivial, when compared to the Ninya -- there is one lost water-spirit, out of place and creating political problems in the underground spirit world. But the working out of these problems is definitely not trivial, since the real focus here is not on the spirit conflict, but on Wirrun's conflicts within himself as he resists the responsibility given to him by the Land. Tragedy forces Wirrun to confront and accept his fate as Hero. He overcomes guilt, grief and anger in pursuing his duty to return the water-spirit to her own land, and turns tragedy into happiness in a surprising climax.

This is an exciting series, with an abundance of the colorful Aussie and Aborigine language and customs. Wrightson has a haunting style and, especially in THE DARK BRIGHT WATER, creates a very moving character in Wirrun. THE DARK BRIGHT WATER was a 1980 World Fantasy Award nominee, and subsequent titles in the series should widen Wrightson's audience further. Wrightson's fans may also want to read the earlier THE NARGUN AND THE STARS, a lesser though still entertaining work set in the same world, but not directly connected to the stories of Wirrun.



A Film Review by James Mann

Most fantasy films have had one of two drawbacks. They have either existed almost solely for the special effects, or they have been too cute, too much of a children's fairy tale. Most of Ray Harryhausen's movies are examples of the former; most Disney fantasies are examples of the latter. This is not to say that these movies are not good. Sometimes they are very good. Yet there are too few fantasy films that are serious and more than effects-shows. Fortunately for fantasy fans, Paramount and Disney have teamed up to create one of the best fantasy films ever made: DRAGON SLAYER. It is a serious, well-made, adult fantasy.

The plot of DRAGON SLAYER is a classic fantasy plot: A country is being terrorized by a dragon. To placate the dragon, the king sacrifices young virgins to it twice a year. The commoners, tired of losing their daughters, go to a wizard, seeking help in slaying the dragon. It is a simple, effective plot, which moves quickly and keeps the viewers' interest. The characters are very well drawn; the audience cares about them and what happens to them. Characterization has been a weakness of many fantasy films, such as the recent CLASH OF THE TITANS, in which no one cares what happens to the human characters. The characters in DRAGON SLAYER are real people to whom the audience can relate.

One of the movie's strongest points is its mood, which is brought about in a large part by magnificent camera work. Much of the movie is filmed in grays, black, and other dark colors, which sets the tone of the fantasy which is taking place. The sets which also make use of this shadowy/gray effect, also contribute to this mood. The events further set the tone. In so many movies, the viewer feels safe with the characters, knowing from the start that nothing bad is going to happen to them, that they will still be alive and well come the end of the movie. This tends both to lesson the tension in the movie and to make it less realistic. Not so in DRAGON SLAYER. Several people are killed in the movie, and the audience is never

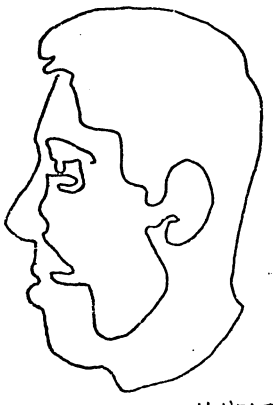
sure that the main characters will make it through the movie. This mood is sustained throughout the movie; again, unlike so many other movies of this type, the mood is not broken in the last segment of the movie to lighten things for the audience.

The effects are good. The dragon is well done and is at times spectacular. The dragon is shown mostly in dark surroundings, which heightens the effects. A similar technique had been used in the original KING KONG and in the first GODZILLA movie; there it had also enhanced the effects. Keeping the monster in the background and in shadow is an effective way of heightening its realism and making it more frightening. Things which, if exposed to the full light of day, might look somehow unreal, look fantastically real in the shadows. Thus, we see the dragon outlined against the darkened sky, flying over a burning village after dark, and moving through its cave-lair.

DRAGON SLAYER will certainly be considered for a Hugo. Even in a very strong year which has already given us OUTLAND, SUPERMAN II, AND CLASH OF THE TITANS, only one movie has been as good as DRAGON SLAYER: RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. It will be interesting to see which of these two fine films wins the Hugo in Chicago.

Thinking of Solutions

by Michael Sestak



By all appearances there is a gasoline shortage in this country. Why? Government regulations, oil company hoarding, scarcity of a dwindling resource, or is it due to a combination of all of these, perhaps? No, it is none of these at all. The gasoline shortage is but one part of a much larger system which is no longer functioning in its old supposedly reliable mode. When a change occurs in one part of a system, the system reacts as a whole to achieve a new equilibrium. This is one of the most fundamental rules of systems and must always be considered when thinking about systems. If a system changes in all its parts in response to a change in any one part, then changing just a few parts cannot work as a solution to repair the effects of the first change. The whole system will just shift to yet another new equilibrium condition. Doctors learned part of this lesson not so very long ago. Treating the symptoms of a disease is not enough. The human body is a vast and complicated system and often the effects of a problem in the system are several times removed from the cause. More than just symptoms are treated these days. Causes are sought, and in many cases of severe illness, the whole body is treated to improve its ability to fight disease. (Sadly, this is less often the case for milder afflictions. This is sad when one really considers what grandma's cure for the common cold is and how much a systems treatment it is in view of the level of medical knowledge from which it was developed. Catch me at a con sometime and I'll be willing to talk about how to improve on grandma through modern science and systems thinking. Remember, an ounce of prevention...)

Our bodies are the systems with which we are most familiar, but there are others which surround us nearly as closely. Anyone who is at all aware these days will immediately think of the ecosystem. This is a huge system composed of numerous snaller systems (few realize how large this system is, for in some sense or other it encompasses the entire Earth, the Sun, the planets of this solar system as well as meteoric and cometic debris and all the stars that can be seen, some that can no longer be seen and some as yet unseen, for all have, are, or will affect life on the Earth, and that defines the ecosystem). But what about manmade systems such as the power grids? Change the flow in one line and it ripples through the whole system. Thus may brownouts be created or alleviated.

Or, to meander back to the beginning of this article, consider the system of exchange of goods and services. This is an exact and complete description of that entity, the economy, which the politicians make speeches about and your neighbor curses (yourself I know to be devout and abstentitious of such vile habits). To treat even the entire energy situation in general as separate from inflation, unemployment or corporate profit levels is foolish when it is all part of the same system for exchanging goods and services. One could go a step further and consider the economy as merely part of the system of human social interactions, but as we haven't even taken the first step properly, that exercise I leave for the more ambitious (and knowledgeable) folk of the future (after all, though one cannot learn everything from a single frog, but must study frogs as a species as well, nonetheless a great deal can be learned about frogs from the single frog system).

As an individual I cannot solve a situation created by a system of billions of interacting individuals, however I can indicate the systems technique for approaching such problems. An example may help. The general circulation of the atmosphere

has been studied to the point where it can now be modeled in its large-scale features, using the most sophisticated computers available today, in effectively real time. That is, it takes 24 hours of calculation to make a 24 hour forecast. Thus one can just keep up with reality. Long term prediction, on the other hand, is far less accurate. On a three point scale of above, below, and near normal for temperature and precipitation, for a 90 day forecast the National Weather Service does about 10% better than chance. (A rival at Scripps may be doing better, but with a much shorter record to go on, it is hard to say.) Now I am willing to bet that the atmospheric circulation is a more complex system than the economic system, especially in terms od purposeful modeling. My main reason for this is because we have but trifling effects on the weather, even when we know we should be having some effect, whereas humankind created and rearranges the economy constantly. The Club of Rome has tried a couple of forays into this area of modeling, but not very successfully, and I quarrel with them on two important counts as well. One is scope. If the Department of Energy spent as much on valid attempts at economic modeling as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration does on general circulation models, we might not only have an idea of what is going on (remember, the weather people have made it to real time; just ask, no one really knows what the current state of the economy is, but three months ago...), but we should be able to find some real guidelines to help us get where we want to go (remember the 90 day forecast; no so-called economist can tell whether the economy as a whole will be up, down, or level in three months with anything better than chance odds). In limited areas, there are people today who can say what segment of the economy will do getting chance plus accuracy, but all of these people in one room is not enough. It is the interactions among these various sectors which produces the general economic trend (and throw off the predictions of the sector-watchers) and it is exactly these interactions which we cannot now predict. The second point is that of technique and validity. The Club of Rome mixed variables from economic, social and biological systems, but did not model anything like the entirety of any of these systems. The result is a attempt to model an open system. There can never be a finite number of solutions to an open system. To model the economic system, the exchange of goods and services is the only system that should be considered. A different model would be needed to study population growth.

There is a lot more to the application of systems thinking to the prohlems of progress than this short article can even hint at. A good general reference might be AN INTRODUCTION TO GENERAL SYSTEMS THINKING by Gerald M. Weinberg from Wiley Interscience (which means it's expensive) of one can dig for the numerous articles scattered about in the ecological, engineering and computer literature. Meanwhile, the next time you sit in a gas line, the time should be more than used up by considering how much of the economy that situation is affecting. Service station employment, refineries, diesel users, crop transport, farm operation, home heating oil, auto manufacturing and sales, mass transit, with people spending more time near home, whole areas of personal budgets will shift from other areas to home expenses, et cetera, to arms and munitions for that hot-headed fellow behind you in line who doesn't like being told you're the last one for gas, today.

Myth/Legend/Science/Fiction

by
Clifton
Amsbury

C.J. Cherryh's ARCHON II speech, printed in #10, fused some ideas I've been accumulating for decades. She points out the kinship of science fiction and epic, of romance and fantasy, of magic and technology. She also decries literature of despair (which indeed often invades science fiction and includes the entire field of horror-fantasy). And she points out that the development of "modern" science fiction parallels the growth of "mainstream." Oddly enough this latter growth exactly parallels the development of the paradox in modern society: the development of creative science and the clamping down of business and industrial discipline upon both the productive and the cognitive activities of people. The latter falls in my field, the others overlap its edges.

It was over twenty years ago that I wrote a long paper on the comparative natures of myth and science. The essence was that mythic literature and the literature of science fulfill the same finctions in their respective societies. They are what Malinowski called the "charters of legitimacy" for the respective world views and social practices. Therefore indeed epics bear the same relation to myth which science fiction does to science, and which our fantasy bears to our relict literature of magic and submythical legendry.

To more fully understand these ideas, it is necessary to know exactly what the various words actually mean. Two of the words I'm going to beg off on. All I can say is that science fiction and fantasy are defined only be the acceptances and intentions of their writers, editors and readers. (Publishers are something else. If they are not themselves included as readers or editors, they rate only as businessfolk.)

Myth is a sanctioned version, something we are supposed to believe. Science has a difference. It is both a search for knowledge and the present status of knowledge attained. But what makes it science is that you are not supposed to believe it, just keep working on it. Technology is entirely different in this respect. Where science is a search for what may work, technology is a body of techniques, of methods, of know-how. Therefore, technology is a cause-and-effect body of methodology. Magic and religion also use cause-and-effect thinking. Science thinks in terms of process and search.

So Cherryh is correct about magic being a technology. You do certain things and get certain results. If you don't get the results, either you didn't do it right or a counter-influence has gummed the works. Similarly with worship. In religion you are dealing with powerful personalities and they may be contrary or thoughtless at times. Often the disrupting influences against an act of magic are also powerful personalities also dealing with causes and effects. Thus Gilgamesh, who ruled in Uruk (Erech) almost exactly five millenia ago, was constantly opposed by magic and divinity, which he had to counter by magic and (semi-) divinity of his own.[1]

The craft of the epic is also a technology.[2] Over a great area of Eurasia, centering in Siberia, heroic tales were sung as epic poetry. Those old ones we now have, from Gilgamesh to Beowulf, were ones which were current when their people became literate, and which were written down by scribes. In the last century more recent ones were recorded from Finland, Wales and Yugoslavia. Epic poetry did not crass the Arabian deserts, so the Egyptian Horus Cycle was written in prose and the Greek theatre under Egyptian influence was mostly in prose, but Shakespeare's plays were in blank verse following the Northern tradition. His writings were for the Tudor aristocracy which had one foot in modern times. (Or at least one toe.)

From the late eighteenth century on, the English speaking world has been living in a world increasingly created by science and by business. For the last century these forces have been ever more dominant, culminating in the military-industrial-research complex. As Cherryh pointed out, literature kept pace. As I noted at the beginning, each social force nurtures and abets the forms and contents of a literature appropriate to itself. It is not merely, nor even primarily, that violent art engenders violence, but that violent societies demand violent entertainment.

One other point she made was about "the literature of despair." One especially common variety of this is often found in science fiction and fantasy. This is

the cycle of degradation story where the protagonist must be beaten into the mud over and over again before a win is allowed. It is to the great credit of both Hugo Gernsback and John Campbell that they were not interested in losers and hence ran fewer cycle of degradation stories than other editors. They were interested in winners and in problem-solvers and set a great example in this matter for all of science fiction.

I'm glad science fiction is the literature appropriate to me. Aren't you glad it's appropriate to you too?

NOTES:

1. Books on Gilgamesh:
   Sandars, N.K., editor and translator. THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH. Penguin Books, Inc., Baltimore: 1960.

   Tigay, Jeffrey H. THE EVOLUTION OF THE GILGAMESH EPIC. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia: 1982.

2. Whitman, Cedric H. HOMER AND THE HEROIC TRADITION. The Norton Library, 1965.

Conreports & Ramblings 12

In LL #10 I left off with my conreports at MIDWESTCON XXX in 1979, with a nice tantalizing line about a certain neofan named Mary "Maia" Cowan. Those of you who have kept contact with me since then know what has happened. For those of you who have been waiting for the conclusion and end of the mystery, let me stretch it a bit further.

I'm not going to go into detail about the many conventions I've been to since then. It's been almost four years, and I really don't have the space to go into all of those many wonderful cons--but I will mention some highlights.

For both CONCLAVE IV and V I wrote the program articles for the Pro GoHs--A.E. Van Vogt, and Joan D. Vinge-- and introduced them at the Banquet. This was one of the high points of my fannish career. I was also asked to write the program book article for Clifford Simak when he was Fan Guest of Honor at MINICON in 1982. And coming up are two more high points: being the toastmaster at a small relaxacon called INCONSEQUENTIAL .5555, hosting such notables as Dave and Carol Yoder, and Howard DeVore, and at MARCON XVIII, I am the Fan GoH. That will probably top what I have done before in fandom. I do feel this to be my biggest honor in fandom. MARCON has been a good/favorite convention of mine, and I was delighted and proud to bechosen as the GoH. (Can't wait till the weekend of May 13 this year--it is going to be an egoboo weekend!!!)

During these past nearly four years that have gone by since the last conreports I've written in LL, some people have become more importnat to me thanothers. A few fans who were very important have become less so, but are still friends. The biggest change however was my relationship with Maia.

When we met, she was still married, but that changed by the end of the year.

We kept company for a couple of years after that, spending lots of time together at conventions; on non-convention weekends either I would visit her in Columbus, Ohio, or she would visit me, and spent money on long-distance phone calls. During my Spring Break in 1981, while I was spending it with Maia, she came home from work disgusted, and wanting to go back to school to learn to do something else. After hashing out various plans, we figured that going to school in Michigan would be nice, and living with me would be nicer. Unfortunately cohabitation would not have sat well with the administration at school, so we decided to get married--an idea which pleased both of us no end (and thus it still pleases us). We decided to wait to tell everyone (except for a few select friends) till a few months before it happened.

So, on July 23rd, 1982, Maia and I were wedded in the Columbus Courthouse, with good friends Chris and Pat Swartout as the witnesses.

((I will pick up with real conreports and more ramblings in the next LL.))

EMPATHIC POST SCRIPTINGS

Arranged by topics as it was easier to edit this way. Enjoy!

EDUCATION

LESLIE DAVID: I'm a product of the public school system, my only contact with private schools being the American School in Campinas, Brazil, which I attended at the start of my education. Between kindergarten and second grade I was taught to read and write (in cursive only) both English and Portuguese. I truly regretted having to return to the States for the third grade. Luckily for me, most of my schooling took place in New York, which has a fairly decent public school system. The different levels of education became obvious immediately after each transfer among the U.S. Schools. Each school was more advanced in Math than the one I'd been attending. Because of this I grew up with an extremely weak Math background, it taking hours and hours of work with my parents and a tutor to get me through classes it was the school's responsibility to teach.

I was working on certification myself before I went on active duty, but in a way I jumped at the chance to go into the Army and get out of education. Why? Because I couldn't stand all the meaningless bullshit that the College of Education tried to ram down my throat. I love English, and someday I would love to teach it, since I think there's no better instructive aid than enthusiasm. But I'm put off everytime I think of all the crap I'm going to have to swallow before I'm judged "qualified" to teach. I was put off by teachers who went "by the book" in high school and I'm repelled when taught the same thing in college. Somewhere along the line the education system has to change. I do believe in the "Back to Basics" idea in teaching; reading and writing skills are the most important tools a person can have to succeed.

Teaching responsibility is the key to becoming an adult. I see this everyday with the AIT students here. Somewhere along the line, either in school or in the home, they were never taught to be responsible for their actions. For the average 17 year old in the Army, it comes as quite a shock when they find that they are responsible for their actions.

LAURIE MANN: Not only is public school avoiding encouraging responsibility in students, amny are also avoiding encouraging them to think! Moral Majority types are making inroads in favor of censorship and teaching religion as science in public schools. There are 3700 private Christian schools that are teaching "Jesus as the heart of Geometry" and that only people who share in their beliefs are "saved." It's one thing to hear this stuff in church, but to hear it every day in school? Teachers for those schools are selected by local church pastors. No sort of higher education or teaching certificate is needed. One has the impression that the teachers are hired on the basis of their devoutness, not their intelligence, or their ability to teach. It's depressing.

Public schools seem to be generally better in the North than in the South, and generally better in the suburbs than either in the city or the country. I had a friend who attended school in Massachusetts and New York. As soon as she moved down to Georgia, she skipped a grade. Although I used to live in a town of about 18,000, the school system can definitely be viewed as a country one. One former science teacher told me that they were forbidden to discuss either evolution or sex education. Maybe that's why the locals are scientifically illiterate and experience nearly a 25% teenage pregnancy rate.

Recently we've been hearing more about how inner-city schools are like armed camps. More and more security guards have to be hired to patrol the schools and education suffers as a result. I have "a modest proposal." Why not divide city schools at the junior high and high school level into two sections--an area for people who want to learn, and a section for kids who are marking time. The "marking time" section would have hardened teachers and guards, and would serve more as an area for babysitting. The "learning" section would have students who do want to learn and make something of their lives.
(((What then do we do with those who are "marking time" when they get out? Would they have been taught marketable skills? or vocational skills? I don't think our society could stand many more people on the welfare dole. An interesting proposal, though.)))

DIANE FOX: Cranbrook/Kingswood sounds superb, obviously a school for teaching and learning. Only too often the hidden rationale behind public schools is, I suspect, (1) a place to lock up the kids until it is legally possible to shove them into an office or factory somewhere --(a jail or prison camp would probably do the job better, but be a little too obvious!); (2) processing--making the student into a component that will fit precisely into the system. The myth of Procrustes comes to mind here (lop off the ends of the tall ones, stretch the short ones on the rack until they're the same size).

Naturally, under such a system, any dedicated teacher is bound to get the same crushing/frustrating treatment as the kids.

JAN BROWN: One thing I found missing from all the moaning and groaning about what an awful job the schools are doing is--where are the parents in all this? I'm afraid I have to lay the blame for the decline in educational standards squarely at the dorr of two generations of parents who stood by and let it happen. People who wouldn't dream of hiring a plumber to unclog a drain without watching every move he makes, think nothing of blindly sending their child off to school every morning, never once asking him what he learned, never once asking for a conference with his teacher (no news is good news!), just complacently looking at marks on a report card (if the school still issues anything as antiquated as grades).

By the time a child is old enough for school, his attitudes toward learning have already been formed. If the parents foster a love of learning, the child will learn. It doesn't matter whether the parents themselves are well-educated. Thousands of immigrant families, many illiterate in their own native tongues as well as English, saw education as their children's path out of poverty and discrimination, and saw to it that their children learned.

With a favorable home environment, poor teaching -- even antagonism on the part of the teacher -- can be overcome. Concerned parents should know their children's teachers. They should attend School Board meetings--not leave action to religious fanatics who are terrified their little darlings might learn to question their indefensible values. Above all, they should become involved in teaching their children.

MAIA: Your emphasis of student responsibility is an important point. All too often in my school days I saw children (up to the age of 18) who simply didn't have to suffer (and weren't able to enjoy) the consequences of their own actions for ill or good. Their parents took care of any troubles with the school authorities, and they themselves didn't care about bad grades or poor attendance records. It didn't seem to have any relevance to their lives at all; they were incapable of realizing that they'd have a whole adult (?) life ahead of them, the success of which could very well depend on the way they learned to handle responsibilities in school.

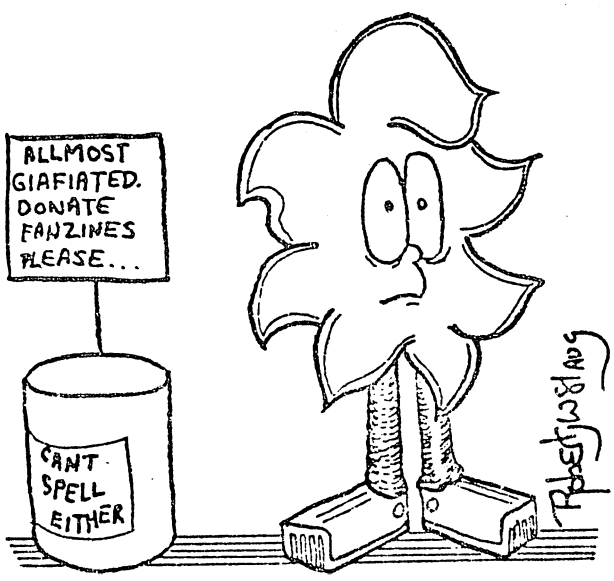
Mommy and daddy wouldn't be able to persuade the phone company not to disconnect an unpaid account.

I remember my own high school days. Too many teachers were more interested in going up to the teachers' lounge for a smoke than in sharing knowledge with the students. I saw academic achievement virtually ignored while sports were deified. In grade school I was "punished" for doing work before the teacher was ready to present it to the class. In college, I had too many teachers who didn't know anything about the subject they were allegedly teaching us. This is education? Altogether, almost no encouragement of independent though or learning for the enjoyment of it. And those few teachers who did emphasize creativity and personal achievement were often considered persona non grata by the administration, which was more interested in keeping the students "in line" than in providing an intellectually stimulating atmosphere. Yes, I do exaggerate the grimness of the situation, but not by by much. Schools are being run like assembly lines, with the result that creativity and intelligence are almost actively discouraged, and too many of the people who come out of them are scarcely human.

SALLY ANN SYRJALA: Everyone has their pet theory of what is wrong with the schools today. I happen to think the lack of discipline is the major problem. The standard subjects are ignored. It doesn't matter if Johnny can read or add or subtract or be able to tell what is going on in the world. What counts is the students being able to "do their own thing." This without the evil of discpline creeping in to upset the apple cart. Teachers aren't allowed to say a thing to upset the poor child. If they did, the parents would be on the school board's back.

I think my main objection to the education system as it is set up is the fact that it tends to make all people come out as one mass product. No thought is given to individuality. If it does exist at all, it is such a novelty that none know how to deal with it.

The idea behind schooling should be learning. The ability to think, no matter what the subject taught, should be top priority. If you can think and reason out material, you can teach yourself almost anything you want to know. It does help to have a teacher, but it is not absolutely necessary. Look at how many children can teach themselves to read and write merely by observation. Children are much more able than people give them credit. To have all that originality turned into mediocre mush seems to be what the school systems have in mind. Maybe it is merely the practical way to achieve a nation of sheep.



JOHN PURCELL: I was reared in a Roman Catholic family and attended Catholic school very early on. It ended in the third grade, though. It sticks in my mind to this day because they enforced a very strict regimen of schooling and prayer; you eaither did your work like the good Christian boy (or girl) you were, or you got stuck in the confessional and paid your dues. One thing they taught you about education--or life, for that matter--was that you had to take it seriously or else you would really hurt yourself.

I think that may be the basic problem with public education. Nobody seems to take the subject seriously. It is also possible that school boards don't take their work seriously. It is obvious that private schools (faculty and administration) do; the result speaks for itself. The conservative swing in the last major elections (1980) might be a harbinger of Things To Come in this regard; a return to stricter and more rigid educational guidelines could result in higher SAT's, PSAT's and National Merit Exam scores. We can only hope.

HARRY WARNER, JR: Your editorial discussion of public education and the material about teaching in the Ben Bova canversation didn't produce quite the same reaction within me that would have occurred before December, 1979. That was the month when I became a student again for the first time in decades. I spent a week in a class of newspaper employees learning how to live with the terminals which were replacing typewriters. I regret to say that I was a bad student, so now I feel less inclined to snarl at high school and college students in 1981 when they react as I did to instruction. Maybe it is something in the air, maybe it's the general state of the nation, but whatever it is, something has made a lot of us less docile under instruction than we used to be as recently as I was in public school (and before that in a private school). The week spent on full-time learning about a computer terminal impressed me as almost completely wasted time because I knew that most of what I was supposed to learn were techniques and procedures which I would never use. I could have learned everything my job requires me to do on a terminal in about a half-hour if someone had sat down beside me and answered my questions. Something of the sort may be at the root of the educational problem: school kids think they'll never need more than a small fraction of one percent of the knowledge to which they're exposed in school, and they just don't believe the philosophy about the importance of learning how to learn.

ERIC LINDSAY: The thing I most regret about school was that I never did learn how to study. I did reasonably well (more a matter of others doing poorly, I suspect), but still find myself unable to learn a new topic with ease if I am not already interested. (If interested, I tend to simply read so much material, typically from 30-300 books, etc., that I am bound to get at least a reasonable background, no matter how poor my study habits...and I am convinced that my habits are poor, since the reading is almost all that I do.) Certainly have to agree with Bova about the brightness being kicked out of kids at school.

CAROLYN CD DOYLE: A few things you describe as happening at Kingswood--"sometimes three tests in a day being thrown on you at a moment's notice"--sound to me more like trying to trick the students than getting them to learn. I experienced teachers seemingly trying to "trick" students a lot in high school. I don't know if the teachers even realized it--but in a kind of misplaced zeal to do their job, they'd ask questions that were definitely the "tricky" kind, not the kind to see if you've learned anything. Even in my classes here at Indiana University, I don't come to class every day with full knowledge of everything we've studied up to that point. Some days before an exam, I go back and review. I think surprise quizzes, unless they're used just to see who did do the assigned reading for that

day, are dirty pool--I tend to skim assigned readings to get the general idea, then when I go to class the next day, I can see what the teacher thinks is important to remember about what I've read. If I were asked details about the assigned reading, I don't think I'd do well.

(((A lot of teachers tell students that they are going to have a test on the day before, rather than a couple of days in advance. This is when a crunch could happen; I try to avoid this by estimating where I will be and about when I will be done with material sufficient for a test. Once in a while I give a pop-quiz, but usually announce quizzes in advance. I NEVER give a pop-test. I think you can see some perilous combinations of things that could happen: one teacher announces a test three days in advance, so the student feels she has time to study for it, and the day before it is given two other teachers announce tests for the next day. // At times I have asked things which were tricky unintentionally--which is why I keep revising tests and quizzes every year. At timss I intentionally ask tricky questions, but usually warn the students that they have to think, and put information together to solve the problem. This usually does separate the good students from the better ones.)))

STEVE STANLEY: As a product of the public schools, I well recall that the only time I learned anything was either before or after class. During the 55 minute periods, most teachers were too busy meeting their lesson plans to pay appropriate attention to intelligent questions and comments. The bright students were left to occupy themselves while the slow ones and those who didn't give a damn were taken by the hand and led (dragged) through material they could have worked on before class. The teachers who were really interested in their subjects usually shone when I'd drop in for a bull session on their free periods or following school.

DAVID PALTER: Your description of the advantages of private schooling as opposed to public education is essentially accurate, I have no doubt. One of the things you say does make me uneasy, however. You point out that a key factor is the student's assumption of responsibility (true) and also illustrate this by pointing out that "If a student decides not to do the reading in a particular class, s/he might be skirting possible disaster in terms of a possible failed pop-quiz." To my way of thinking, fear of failing a quiz is quite a different thing from responsibility. The central question is, does the student want to learn the material, or is s/he learning it merely because s/he is threatened with some sort of "disaster" if s/he doesn't? And why is failing a quiz a disaster, for that matter? Some people fail quizzes, classes, and school itself, without a qualm. To put this another and possibly clearer way, if a student is studying for the purpose of passing tests and getting good grades, that is a poor purpose. Such a student may very well pass the tests and get good grades, and after doing so, the purpose of his/her education is fulfilled and s/he may subsequently be seen to do nothing else with that education, and indeed to forget the supposedly learned material quite rapidly (often within days of the test). Obvious the real purpose of education is not to enable students to pass tests. Education must have some applicability to living in a broader sense, notably involving such things as employment, self-understanding, and effective management of one's life.

A student who truly understood the value of the education s/he was receiving and had assumed responsibility for acquiring it, would not need to be threatened with disastrous test failures and indeed would not need to be testsed. Actually, Spider Robinson's anecdote about the teacher who proposed to give A's to

everybody who wanted them, and to direct his teaching only to those who were genuinely interested in the subject matter, makes this point perfectly. Real education has little to do with getting A's. I would go so far as to say that to the degree that students have to be tested in order to insure that they are learning, to that degree the educator has failed to obtain the agreement of the student to learn in the first place. And the great bulk of the difficulties found in education can be traced to this lack of agreement. If a student is studying only because of being forced to do so, look out, you've got trouble. That is why public education is in virtual collapse in this country. The whole thing is run on coercion, not agreement.

(((Saying that failing a pop-quiz was a disaster was pushing it a little far, but I have encountered students who have looked at it that way. As Carolyn Doyle said above, "pop-quizzes" should be given to see if the assigned reading/work had been done. I have tried in my classes on occasion to go long preiods without any form of testing on material; then the students ask for a quiz, just to make sure they understand it. I have also found that, when given a choice to practice some problems or not, most students take the not. I would like the ideal setting you've put forth, David, but after several years of teaching I've become too realistic for that. I can dream, though.... Besides, we teachers are held accountable for what our students have and/or have not learned. And testing is a nice way of finding out.)))

MIKA HENRY TENHOVAARA: The interview with Ben Bova much annoyed me, mainly because he doesn't have the slightest touch of my views. I think he is rather harsh. It's extremely easy to say, "I am an A Student; are you an A teacher?" if you are bright, and if you've got A's, but shouldn't we have a BIT of understanding for the people who aren't as clever as one's self (I don't say anything about my own possible brightness)?

Ben Bova seems to think that all that matters is getting straight A's. The world is NOT goinf to be better with straight A's. We could have a world all filled with people who had straight A's from school, but who were Nazis and all that kind of stuff---had we a world with people how had nothing at all from any kind of school, but were peaceful and loving, now that's the kind of world I'd like to live in.

We have but one life--do you want to waste it away with getting straight A's? What matters is inner light, peace, and understanding. What the HELL does it matter if you have straight A's when you die? But it matters if your have enjoyed the only life you've got.

JAMES MANN: I totally agree with your editorial on education. The same deficiencies that you noticed in kids coming from public schools are also present in those coming from parochial schools. When I was teaching at Central Catholic, most (about 98%) of the students came from Catholic grade schools. Nearly all were weak in math; some couldn't add or subtract, most couldn't multiply, and nearly none could divide. And try to get them to use fractions or decimals.... Another math skill that was lacking in nearly all of the kids was the ability to estimate. Given the problem 3.4 X 5.1, and given the answers 17.3, 1.7, 173, 1730, nearly all of the kids would take a long time to answer. The idea of approximating the right answer and picking the only one close was foreign to them.

Math skills were not the only thing that they lacked, either. Most were poor readers; a few were, for all intents and purposes, illiterates. A five page reading assignment was a multi-hour project. And none could ever be quizzed on what they read; it had to be explained in class first. Reading assignments were, therefore, useless. I encountered further problems when I asked questions that required thought, that required the kids to extend what they had learned in class. They only wanted questions whose answers could be found in black and white in notes or books(a marked difference from most of the students in the history class you mentionn).

The sad thing about the above is that Central Catholic is one of the best (if not the best) high schools in Pittsburgh. Granted, I was teaching the average chemistry class (instead of Chem-Study,which was what the very best students took) and junior/senior general science. But in a school with Central's reputation, I had expected students who could read, write, and do simple arithmetic. To show that this was true in the advanced classes, the same types of problems were also experienced by the guy who was teaching physics. None of his students could do simple math without a calculator, many were poor readers, and none liked problems that required thought. (Actually, none is going a bit far. Three of his students did like such problems and could do math. Interestingly enough, two were in my SF Club.) One of the reasons that I left teaching was that it was turning me into a pessimist.

(((I have been waging a small battle with many of my students about using calculators, especially on tests and quizzes. The trust that they have in calculators in phenomenal. Because the answer is there, it must be true. Like you, I have found too many students who are unable to estimate answers, and thus see why the distance from the earth to the sun cannot be:

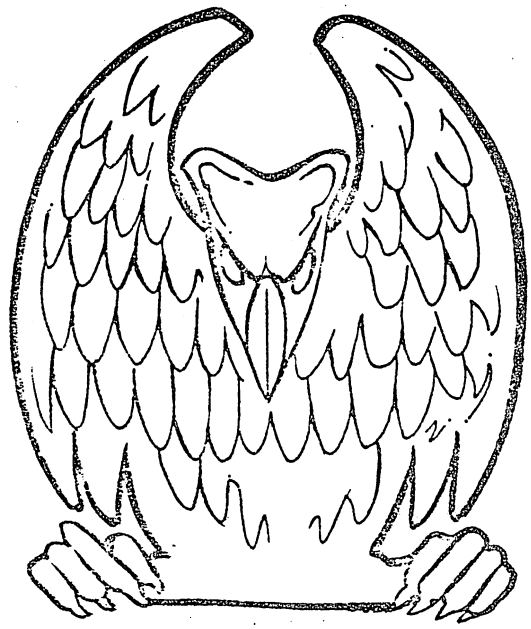
$$9.3 \times 10^{-6}$$

"That's what my calculator told me!" And when I used this example in class, one person always says that s/he couldn't see why it's wrong. It's a fight to get them to think.)))

A CONVERSATION WITH BEN BOVA

JERRI SWINEHART: Frankly, I don't think solar energy and its surrounding technologies should be allowed to fall into the hands of any one group or power bloc. Being pro-Israeli, I most certainly wouldn't want the Arabs to have control of the sun!

When it comes to moaning and groaning--the trend in this country seems to be to talk, but not to do. Three Mile Island is a case in point. When we lost 3 astronauts to a fire in their space capsule, we didn't cancel the space program or sit around and talk. Instead we found out why the tragedy took place, found ways to make our Apollo craft safer, then went on. Seen anything similar in the Three Mile Island case? No! The people talked for months--buckpassing and hemming and hawing. The whole nuclear industry is at a standstill. If we were to follow the example of the Apollo fire, we could well be on our way to safe nuclear power. Considering the state of energy resources even nuclear power is needed.



DIANE FOX: On the subject of the oil shortage-- I have heard that the oil shortage is not only due to the Arabs, but to the greedy and monopolising Oil Companies. Once an industry grows large and powerful, it becomes no longer a part of its parent country, but a law unto itself, owing allegiance to nothing.

I loved the beautifully ironic bit about the accurately predictive novel written in 1949/50, and about it failing to be published due to the patriotic prejudices of the time -- a microcosm of art versus censorship.

MAIA: In reading his description of a work in progress, "Scientists finally get definite, unequivocal proof that there is life, intelligent life, elsewhere in the universe, and every major political, social and religious group tries to keep it a secret and use the information to its own advantage," I realized that one could substitute "here on Earth" for "elsewhere in the universe" and that sentence would be a pretty good description of lots of things that go on.

(((That does explain a lot! // Ben Bova's newest--well, the novel he talked about in the interview, -- novel was called VOYAGERS. I did read it, and it was good.)))

MARY LOU SHERRED: Ben Bova has been cloned. Proof:

He writes; he edits; he gives interviews; he gives speeches---conflicting speeches. In LAN'S LANTERN #10 he used several pages for cheap-shots at teachers; when he spoke at a teachers' meeting at Eastern Michigan University a few years back, we were really nice people.

Curious: Which is the real Ben Bova?

THE STAR TREK NOVELS

JIM MEADOWS: The first thing that leapt out of the issue at me, such is my ego, was my converted loc on the Star Trek Novels. They do march on, with quite a few books published since I wrote that original loc. Bantam is no longer the sole publisher. Pocketbooks has now put out two that I have seen around, a novelization of STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE, and a novel by

Vonda N. McIntyre. On the strength of McIntyre's book I have hopes for any future realeases from them. Her book is not the work of a greater talent as much as it is one of a writer working with loosened editorial restraints (character development is allowed along with the space opera) and putting more care and time into the work than I expected.

Of course, if she just dashed this one off in two weeks, then I'll be very interested in her more important work.

DON D'AMMASSA: Jim Meadows should have read Vonda McIntyre's THE ENTROPY EFFECT. I found most of the Star Trek novels to be even worse than he did, and I was not looking forward to the McIntyre addition. Much to my surprise, it's a genuinely good novel, with fine character development (largely attributable to several characters not found in other books), a good plot, and genuine fondness of the people involved. The death scene is extremely well done and quite touching.

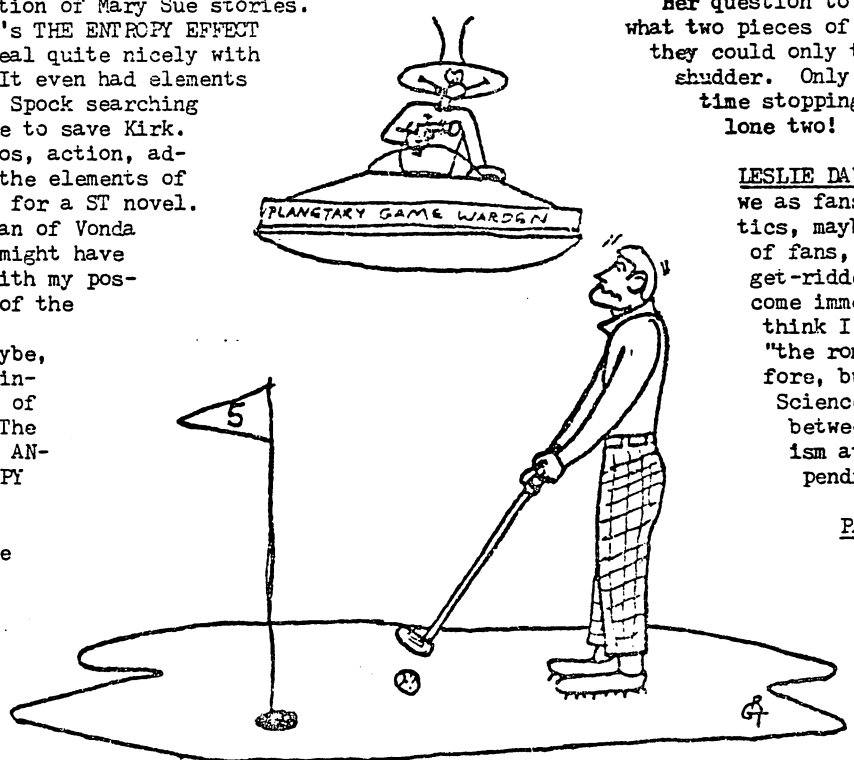
SALLY ANN SYRJALA: I love to rip the pro Star Trek novels. The reason I find them so dreadfully awful is because they have the characterizations all off. If they have one character in character, they fail to have the others in their proper attire, or fail to have the relationships in proper order. The fanfiction is much, much better in this respect.

My favorite character is Kirk. Most writers cannot write Kirk the way Kirk should be written. They see Spock as the major character and think he is the Captain of the Enterprise. Kirk is, and Spock is not. Kirk has the leadership capability that Spock lacks. So many of the pro novels have Kirk as some idiot who couldn't pilot a row boat, much less a starship.

There has been a favorable trend in the pro ST market lately. Kathleen Sky's DEATH'S ANGEL had Kirk in character and did not get into the Mary Sueism's she displayed in her earlier Trek novel. In ANGEL, the romantic interludes were on a much more adult level than they were in VULCAN!. Even the cover of VULCAN! was enough to send thoughts running in the direction of Mary Sue stories.

Vonda McIntyre's THE ENTROPY EFFECT also managed to deal quite nicely with the characters. It even had elements for the K/S fan. Spock searching through space/time to save Kirk. It was good: pathos, action, adventure-- it had the elements of ST. That is rare for a ST novel. However, I am a fan of Vonda McIntyre so that might have something to do with my positive impression of the book.

Maybe, just maybe, there will be an increase in quality of the pro novels. The last two--DEATH'S ANGEL and THE ENTROPY EFFECT--have been fairly good. I think there is one more due out in the fall. I always hate to read those books, yet I am always drawn to them. I know the great majority of them I will dislike, but they are TREK and I do like TREK. And there is the possiblilty that this one might be different from all the rest, so....



I HEARD GOLFS WERE BEING SHOT ON THIS PLANET, AND THAT'S ILLEAGLE IN THIS PART OF THE GALAXY!

C. J. CHERRYH

JIM MANN: I think that C. J. Cherryh's speech contained the best observation of mainstream critics' view of SF and romantic fiction. It has always been puzzling to me as to why these people are often called humanists. They all so often find the human race to be a horrible group and the creations of the human race to be monsters. In part, it's the trait of disliking what you don't understand; most of these people know nothing about science and therefore look on it with contempt; they take the attitude, "I don't want to know anything about it." The other part of the attitude is just fadishness. Not liking science, protesting technology, and the like, are the "in" things to do.

The influence of these literary critics can even be seen in the name they've given to their favorite genre: realistic fiction. According to this group, writing is realistic only if it's gritty, only if it shows the human race as somehow "fallen." I don't feel fallen or debased, nor do I think that, despite its problems, the human race is either. The narrow definition of realistic fiction is a product of these pessimists. The real human race is more complex than the one perceived by these critics. Reflections of it are found in both romantic and realistic fiction. It is pleasant to know, however, that most people prefer the former. Romanticism is the literature of optimism, the literature that inspires new things; we'll need that in the future.

By the way, do not take the above as a condemnation of so-called realistic fiction. I like both romantic and realistic (as well as other types of) writing, although I confess that I usually prefer the former. Yet BEYOND APOLLA and BUG JACK BARON--two very depressing books--are among my favorite SF novels. This type of fiction is a necessary part of literature. I just don't like critics who look on it as the only type of good fiction.

Her question to her students involving what two pieces of fiction they'd take if they could only take two books made me shudder. Only two...I'd have a horrible time stopping at two hundred, let alone two!

LESLIE DAVID: I had no idea that we as fans had become such romantics, maybe because when I think of fans, for some reason, the gadget-ridden stories of the '30's come immediately to mind. I don't think I'd ever heard the term "the romance of the machine" before, but it is quite appropriate. Science fiction seems to move between realism and romanticism at a moment's notice, depending on the author's style.

PAULA LIEBERMAN: Interest-speech, although I don't agree with some of the premises. Samuel Richardson's PAMELA was supposedly the first realistic book and possibly the first novel. I tried to read the thing and couldn't. I had slightly more success (meaning that I managed to get further into, but not finish) Fielding's SHAMELA

which satirized the former book. James Watt did not really have the first steam engine, but it usually takes several steps of different types, including sociological, before an invention becomes culturally acceptable. Many cultures, specifically Tibet and others like it, have had wheels for centuries but relegated them to religious use only until culture was overcome by some revolution.

What people read tends to reflect either what is familiar to them and comfortable, or interestingly exotic but not threatening personally. To someone in a drab mechanical existence, reading about people like oneself can, in a sense, legitimize and make that dull existence more bearable. In a different sense, so can romantic literature--but only if the romantic literature does not cause the reader to be depressed by the contrast. It's safe to dream about what one can do, what one can vicariously do, but not what is just beyond one's reach due to circumstances one can't change. It's much too close to brooding on the "might-have-beens."

I'm bothered somewhat by the thought that "the popularity of STAR WARS may be related to that 1957 crop of students coming of age" --the Moon Landing, despite its unsuitable time for watching by the vast majority of TV owners in the world, ocurred before that coming of age, and age made little difference to the make up of the audience. Actually, the revitalization of Romantic literature came much earlier than that--the role of the scientist as hero arose out of the discoveries of modern physics in the 1920's, which foretold of a limitless future based on the application of modern science. Predictions were made of new materials, new sources of power, machinery to free people of drudgery and noisome task, riddance of the huge piles of horse manure which had been characteristic of the pre-automotive era... Much of the promis has come true. In the mid to late 60's, there was actually a spate of very downbeat novels, primarily from Great Britain headed by J.G. Ballard, which was not terribly romantic. The novels reflected, perhaps, the state of thought of such things as the world situation, which didn't look particularly good with the US engaged in its "police action" in VietNam, the increasing arms race, and a large shake-up of post- WW II values everywhere. The New Wave later struck the US, though it was not the same as the catastrophe stories which preceded it.

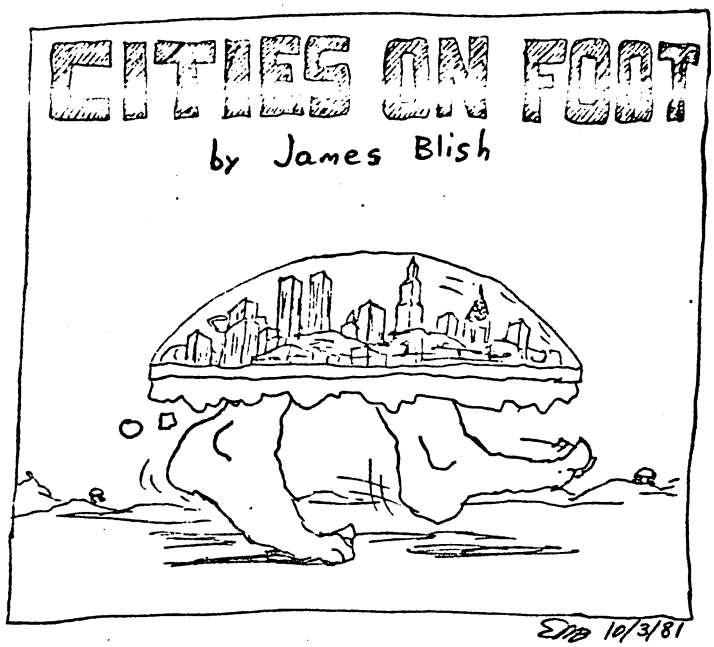
HARRY WARNER, JR: Recently I ran across a passage written by Zane Grey, of all people, which seems remarkably apposite to what C.J. Cherryh said in the [illegible] after World War I:

> In this materialistic age, this hard, practical, swift, greedy age of realism, it seems there is no place for writers of romance, no place for romance itself. For many years, the events leading up to the great war were realistic, and the war itself was horribly realistic, and the aftermath is likewise. Romance is only another name for idealism; and I contend that life without ideals is not worth living. Never in the history of the world were ideals needed so terribly as now .... People live for the dream in their hearts. And I have yet to know anyone who has not some secret dream, some hope, however dim, some storied wall to look at in the dusk, some painted window leading to the soul. How strange indeed to find that the realists have ideals and dreams! To read them one would think their lives held nothing significant. But they love, they hope, they dream, they sacrifice, they struggle on with that dream in their hearts just the same as the others. We are all dreamers, if not in the heavy-lidded wasting of time, then in the meaning of life that makes us work on.

Curiously, that passage occurs in his forward to TO THE LAST MAN, one of Zane Grey's grimmest and most realistic stories, a fictionalization of a genuine feud in Arizona.

LAURIE MANN: If I could save only two books from the books-burners, which two would they be? I don't have the slightest idea--it might take me a year or two to think that one through. If I could hide a small box of books away, I'd include some textbooks in astronomu and biology; several history books; an Almanac; THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, GONE WITH THE WIND, THE JOY OF COOKING, DANGEROUS VISIONS, and any other books I could squeeze in. But I categorically would preserve as many books as possible. I'm extremely anti-censorship, but feel that we could live in a FAHRENHEIT 451 society if we aren't careful.

BUCK COULSON: The Industrial Revolution not only brought problems for authors to write about, it also brought highspeed (compared to what had gone before) printing and leisure time for people to read about the problems. There couldn't be a "popular" literature [illegible] because the public mostly couldn't read and had no time for reading if it could. I suspect that one of the reasons that romantic fiction was decried was simply that it was popular. Any small group tries to consider itself superior (look at fandom) and looks down on the entertainments of the larger society. Academics are no different from any other group in that respect.

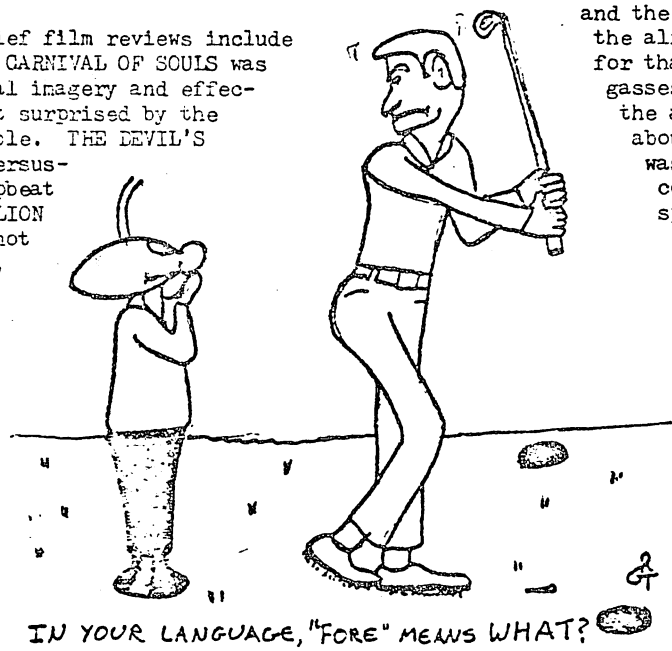


BOOKS AND MOVIES

BARNETT NEUFELD: Clifton Amsbury's review of THE FAR CALL is disconcerting. My first impression is that the article is unfinished. (His last, one-sentence paragraph invites us to expect he has more to say.) Nor does he give much of a feel for the book. He tells us that he reread severla other books while involved with THE FAR CALL. This would suggest (to me at least) that the book has trouble holding a reader's interest, something I did not find true when I read it myself.

DAVID PALTER: A brief comment on the review by David Albrecht and Nathan Sefcik of THE SWORD OF SHANNARA. While the review makes no inaccurate statements about this book, it does neglect to observe the most important aspect of the book, which is that it is a blatant plagiarism of LORD OF THE RINGS.

DIANE FOX: Mark Leeper's brief film reviews include some old favorites of mine. CARNIVAL OF SOULS was a small-budget work of unusual imagery and effective eeriness. I too was not surprised by the ending, which I felt inevitable. THE DEVIL'S BRIDE is a delightful good-versus-evil tale with some of the upbeat quailty of STAR WARS. 5 MILLION YEARS TO EARTH intrigued me not only by its SF inventiveness, but by its subtle use of Christian imagery (usually religion, if used at all, is slobbed on with a bucket and trowel--like the overblown endings on THE SHRINKING MAN and WAR OF THE WORLDS). 5MILLION YEARS lightly touched on ideas such as original sin (and the sine being planted by "demons"), and "evil" being a submission to this implanted "sin" (mob violence, etc.). There was also a Christ figure, the archaeologist, who simply didn't feel the impulse to mob violence, and who dies saving the world. And notice that the steel crane he used to destroy the projection of "Satan" was somewhat cross-like in appearance. (Incidentally, I think there's a mention of demon locusts in the book of Revelations--possibly this inspired the storyline. Lovely grotty green greeblies.)



A nice piece of synchronicity--I saw HOLOCAUST 2000 last night on TV. I too was annoyed at the mass-media like depiction of anti-nuke demonstrators as bizarre gnats. Whenever a demonstration is held, the cameras are always focussed on the oddest-looking characters possible to see, not on the plainly-dressed majority. It's a very ordinary horror film with a few marvelous images--the Beast/Powerplant rising from the sea was excellent. If the rest of the film had been maintained at this level, it would have been a classic. Alas, no!

JIM MEADOWS: Mark Leeper is right--there is a book out on the 50 worst films of all time. It's by Harry and Michael Medved entitled THE 50 WORST FILMS EVER MADE or something similar, and has spawned a sequel, THE GOLDEN TURKEY AWARDS. For the Medved brothers, the worst film ever made is PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE. I saw the final 2/3rds of this flick on TV recently, thanks to the baseball strike, and I have to say that it is the worst movie I have ever seen. It is bad in so many ways, from acting, to plotting, to dialog, to sets and special effects, to simple idiot technical mistakes. And, it is science fiction, with the climactic scene being a semi-intelligible rehash of the old SF cliche of aliens attacking us because we're barbarians and would eventually spread and poison the galaxy. The crowning bad point of this film lay in the director/producer/writer's audacity in taking some footage of an aged Bela Lugosi from an earlier project (left unfinished due to Lugosi's death) and grafting it into the film by the use of a double who looks nothing like Bela lugosi.

The amazing thing about this movie is that it is not boring. Most bad films get not so much unbearable to watch, but just dull...your mind wanders. But I was riveted to PLAN NINE. It is so bad, in so many ways, that one is simply continually being amazed and stupefied with each scene.

PAULA LIEBERMAN: On the ALIEN article by Maia, "Warmth (through a spacesuit)" --yes, spacesuits radiate warmth. I saw the movie once, and it was quite a while ago, but I don't recall any poison jets -- I thought Ripley opened the spacecraft up to vacuum, and the pressure differential pulled the alien out. (((She did, but befor that, she tried a mixture of gasses to see if she could poison the alien first.))) One thing about ALIEN that impressed me was that it actually used a couple of the real terms for space-stuff--particularly the "injection into orbit." The contrast to such things such as STAR WARS, which would seem to violate spatial mechanics, was very stark to me.

LAURIE MANN: I definitely agree with Maia about the movie ALIEN. Not only did it scare us, but it also made us think. Like Maia, I was particularly impressed by Sigourney Weaver's excellent performance in the movie. She was terrific! It's a shame that superb performances in SF movies are often overlooked, since SF movies traditionally have had mediocre acting.

SALLY ANN SYRJALA: I did view ALIEN as mor of a political statement. I like SF that deals with present problems in sapects that props those problems up for display in different settings. Sometimes it lets you see them more in their proper perspctive and the points drive themselves home in a more graphic way.

ALIEN seemed to be taking once more the aspect of individuality into focus. We all have our pet themes. That is one of mine. I am not overly fond of large corporate settings. I have been in the spot of having management consultants trying to make me and therefore the people I was supervising into their image. I knew their image was wrong and refused to let myself be lured into it. This, of course, cast me as an evil person. All people who don't agree that the corporate profits are the most important product are looked at in this manner.

The fact that you can generate more corporate profit by working in more productive ways escapes their notice, but....

There is also the concept of manpower meaning little. The types of companies my relatives work for during the depression years and just after were like this. You saved the machines and used the men as much as possible. After all, machines cost money to replace, but men were cheap and could be found with little or no effort.

This dehumanization and sacrifice of the individual to the corporate system is what ALIEN speaks there-

of. But then, it is also of which A.E. vanVogt's VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE also brings to mind.

That book having to do with people needing to gain a little knowledge of all things so they would not be dependent upon the specialist/expert who was given all power in their own field. Specialists are fine, but they see things from only their own field and their own angle. To get the full picture you need someone who can see more than one aspect of the whole. The film did remain true to the book in that aspect, as well as those which won van Vogt his settlement with the film people.

JAN BROWN: The novelization of ALIEN clarified some points that probably ended up on the cutting-room floor. The Company apparently was deliberately looking for the alien--they wanted it as a weapon. With that in mind, Ash probably was a deliberate plant, or at least was standard equipment (now why did I think robot science officers were standard on Company ships?) programmed to get the alien back at whatever cost to the crew. Artistically, Ash is the other side of the Mr. Spock stereotype.

Why blow up the ship? Okay, you're heading toward civilization. Loose aboard your ship is an unconfinable, unkillable creature that doesn't need others of its kind to breed. (They did cut a scene where Ripley discovers the alien has laid its eggs in Dallas and Dallas is still alive...like a wasp in spiders.) You can't get the alien out of your ship. What would you do?

Why a cat? Humans, being humans, do tend to adopt mascots. A cat would be logical aboard a spaceship, for the same reason that cats traveled with Andre Norton's Free Traders. Crawlies do tend to sneak on board with the cargo, and a cat is the most efficient thing yet invented for searching out and destroying things that scuttle and gnaw. (Explains the raid on the food supply, too. The alien had to grow fast. I've seen the remains of too many squirrels in my back yard not to know what a cat can do to something that size.) I'm just surprised that Jones was as docile as he was when everything was going to pieces around him. Most cats woul be hiding in the least accessible place they could find.

MORE ON CRYONICS

DIANE FOX: Laurie Mann's Cryonics article was somewhat maddening. It's depressing to see hopes die. I'd never go in for being frozen myself--I've read too many stories of corpsicles chopped up for spare parts, or used as quick-frozen food by starving barbarians after the Holocaust, or even simply tossed out of the fridge to rot when the money runs out. I don't trust people. Then again, I heard a perfectly ghastly detail--"If we can't afford to freeze all of you, we'd just freeze the brain." To be implanted into an organic computer-bank later, (cf. DONOVAN'S BRAIN) or worse. Yucckk!!

MAIA: It is possible that the proponents of cryonics are terrified of death, which is a bad thing; it is also possible that they are fascinated with science-for-the-sake-of-"objective"-knowledge, i.e., scientific research divorced from the rational and ethical implications of the result of that research. The cryonics people seem to have given little thought to the impact of the technique on the people "frozen", on their family (having to live with the idea of a relative dead-but-not-really), and on society as a whole. This is even more a Bad Thing. I suspect, moreover, that if you suggest to one of the advocates that they test the validity of their beliefs by being frozen and rethawed, they'd react with less than overwhelming enthusiasm for that notion.

In reference to Jan Brown's comments on immortality, I can remember several SF stories in which achieving immortality removes humanity's "drive" to transcend our mortal limits--and effectively eliminates creativity, artistic greatness. So much of our great works are produced in an effort to "leave something" behind that this may be a very real possibility. Why do anything important today, or this year, or this century, if we're going to have time the next?

JAN BROWN: Too late for Laurie to mention in her article: a court recently disposed of a pile of lawsuits resulting from the collapse of a cryonics outfit that went bankrupt and allowed its corpsicles to thaw. So now there is at least a small body of case law dealing with corpsicles.

JIM MANN: I tend not to like the cryonics movement for more philosophocal reasons than technical reasons. I believe that someday we'll find a way to bypass light speed and colonize the galaxy. I have great faith in the human race. So I think that someday, maybe in the near future, we'll find a way to freeze and defrost humans. However, if we were all to freeze ourselves, we'd place a tremendous burden on the future. What if, in 1500, forty or fifty million people had had themselves frozen when they died. And what if we right now found the cure for what they had died of. Could we afford to defrost them? I think not. There are already enough untrained, unemployed people in this world without adding 50,000,000 more. We'd be left with a horrible moral choice: we either don't thaw them out, which, if we really could dure them, is equal to a death sentence, or we thaw them and place a huge burden on our world, and probably condemn many other people to starvation or a lower standard of living. I don't want to force a similar choice on the future.

HARRY WARNER, JR: I was particularly interested in how many individuals dislike the cryonics form of life after death because they wouldn't want to revive in a world where everybody was a stranger to them. Unfortunately, this happens to anyone who attains old age, even before death. Consider my case: In 1943 I went to work full-time for the local newspapers. Today, only two of the nearly hundred employees who were there in 1943 are still employed, almost all the publishing equipment like linotypes, stereotyping machinery, and halftone engraving gadgets has changed into something radically different, we occupy a different building in which the only things that were on hand in 1943 and survive today are, as far as I can figure out, a few books in the library (even the bound volumes of back issues are gone, replaced by microfilm), none of the owners or corporate officials remain, and news-gathering procedures and philosophies have changed beyond recognition. Only three of the scores of relatives in my family during my boyhood are

alive today. I've moved several times since I was a boy, but if I still lived on the North Prospect Street block where I grew up my neighbors would have undergone a 100 percent turnover since then, while on Bryan Place where I lived from my teens until 24 years ago, only two or three families reamin within a one-block radius. How many fans who were active in 1938 when I published my first fanzines are active today? A half-dozen perhaps, unless you count those who are best known as pros today. Outliving one's world applies even to inanimate things. Many of the buildings which were important to my early life have been razed. The Bible I learned to know and love has been retranslated. Radios which gave me my first real knowledge of the world outside Hagerstown no longer offer anything in particular but records and news. In a few more years, the way things are measured and weighed in Hagerstown may be changed to metrics. All the four-letter words I was taugnt to avoid when I was young have become acceptable and the only forbidden one today was permitted in polite society in my childhood, "girl". I could go on and on. But this summarizes a probably reason why old men are willing to undergo freezing at the point of death without concern about entering a future full of strangers.

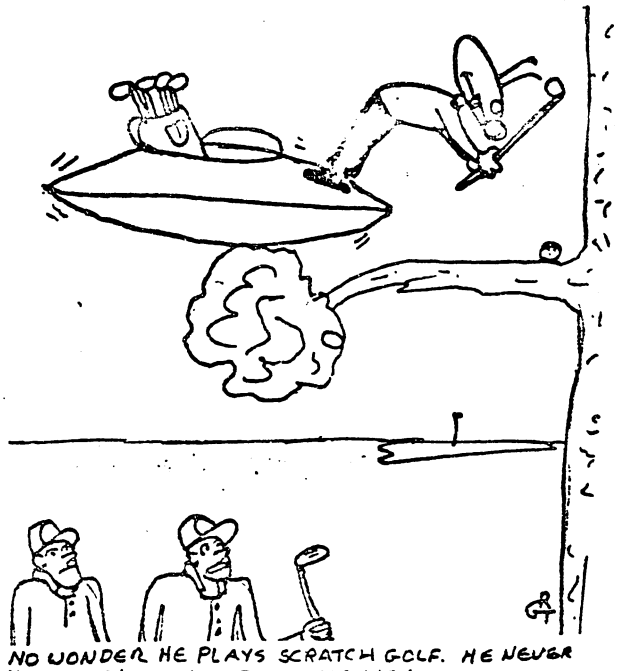
MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES AND LOCS

JIM MEADOWS: Your mention of being depressed after a colleague gave you his impression of your reputation at the school where you teach hit a nerve with me; I know I would have been depressed as well when put in that situation, and I wouldn't have been ready with any comebacks myself...I just would have listened, and let it eat away at me. My first thought is, in just what manner did this colleague of yours present the comments to you? And my second later though is, after the depression had passed, was your picture of yourself on the job any different or more 'accurate' than before? These aren't questions that I have any right to receive the answers to, but they did occur to me.

(((The colleague was female, and we had gone out on a couple of dates, and, of course, seen each other several times during the week as part of the regular routine of teaching. She presented everything as a friend, almost mother-like (as I recall), but quite openly. After I 'recovered' from the depression, I avoided her for a very long time; it has been only a short time (relatively speaking) that I've been having regular conversations with her. I am still guarded with whatever I say, however. // My own image of myself changed slightly. I was/still am friendly, but selective as to the favors I do. My work is the most important thing that I do--that is, the teaching in the classroom. I have become a true "Dorm Dad" for the boarders, spending long hours either in my classroom or in the dorm itself (the school and dormitory is one large connected building). Frankly, the opinion of my colleagues pulls very little weight with me nowadays; that I help the kids to learn math, and some of the other things I'm fairly good at, is what is more important. And the administration knows this --and they are the only others who matter.)))

PAULA LIEBERMAN: I suspect that 50% of the people out there haven't heard of any writers--among literate types, very few people haven't heard of Asimov. But supposedly the average American reads one book per year---amazingly enough I ran into somebody like that at LASFS last year, who was reading her book for the year!

BARNETT NEUFELD: I have one small correction to Lee Pelton's loc. The lady I accompanied to Kelly Freas' party at MAC was Patia von Sternberg. I met her in the hotel lobby after the Hugos, and we were both in search of a good party. Someone mentioned Kelly's to

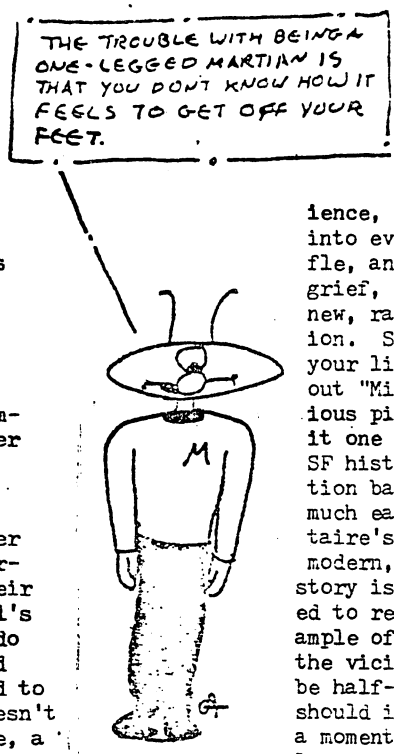


her, and since she knew where to find it, we decided to check it out. Yes, the party was wall-to-wall people (pretty hard in a suite that size), and yes, the bar was short of booze when we arrived. But it was a great party! (My favorite memory of it was seeing Polly stretched out on a bed at one point, apparently exhausted, with her arms draped lovingly around the big plastic display bottle of Tullamore Dew given them by the Dorsai. I was mightily pissed that my camera had run out of film.)

DON D'AMMASSA: Graham England's letter implies that Robert Holdstock writes the "berserker" stories authored by Fred Saberhagen. For US readers, it might be wise to point out that Robert Holdstock writes a series of fantasy novels about a berserker in the historical sense under the pseudonym of Chris Carlsen, and that these are what Graham is referring to. (((Thanks for the clarification--I was puzzled too.)))

DEIRDRE MURPHY: Jan Brown's article "DeGafiation" roused some questions that have been sitting in my mind for a while now. There really does seem to be a palpable acceptance and welcome in the air at most cons and gatherings of fannish (and realted) groups. But is this peculiar to those groups? Are fen really so much more welcoming than other groups? Or is it that I'm a member and members of all groups get treated the way people do at cons? I don't know. But somehow I think it's not only that. But then what's the difference between fen and mundanes? Part of it, I think, is in the nature of their fears. All people fear things that they believe will affect them adversly. The vast majority of people connect that fear with what is unknown--they define a world that they can live with, and that is the only right way to look at reality because it is the only way they do not admit a "bogeyman" into their world; if he is real, he can harm them. These are mundanes. Anything different scares them because it means their nice safe little world might not be all there is. Most of the fen I've gotten to know well fear the known far more than the unknown. Often the known is the world of the mundanes, who cannot accept anything different. Thus fen, in a fannish setting, are much more willing to accept people as what they are. But in a mundane setting, many fen are too defensive or afraid to appreciate the people around them. Which kind of brings me back to the question, is it the con that is allowing us to behave differently, or is it our different behavior that makes the con what it is? Are so many of

us lonely in mundania because the mundanes won't let us be ourselves, or because we're too afraid of the mundane world to let the mundanes be themselves with us? It's probably a mixture of both, one of those circles that turned one way is horribly vicious, and the other way endlessly rewarding.



MAIA: Since Mike Glicksohn discusses the subject of "How to become a BNF" I'll throw in my own observations, for what they're worth. It seems to me that those who are termed "BNF" and are well-known through any segment of fandom, are those who are completely uninterested in personal power and glory--they're in ti for the fun and the people, and their enjoyment simply adds a "touch of class" to whatever they do, which attracts other people. Conversely, those who desparately desire to become "BNFs" (by their own definition) don't have a snowball's chance in hell. They try too hard, do things for all the wrong reasons, and ultimately push other people too hard to praise and glorify them. It just doesn't work. I actually listened to someone, a few conventions ago, who was wondering how many cons he should attend, how many fanzines he'd need to publish (and who to send them to), which fanzines he should loc, how he could contrive to get on a panel or two, so that he could come to the "right people's" attention and accumulate anough points to achieve Big Name Fan status. He was even considering which "schtick" he should adopt--sercon publisher, lady's man, utterer of quotable witticisms; should he buy a funny hat? It was pathetic.

I agree with Laurie Mann's assesment, and offer the following criterion: A BNF is someone who denies being one when confronted with the accusation. A self-proclaimed BNF never will be.

WILLIAM BARNES: Your inquisitive visage passed before my eyes yesterday as I was relishing numerous brief philosophical parables by that 18th century social critic of France, Voltaire. Among his collection of highly inventive fables spiced with moral exaltation and histrionic excess (CANDIDE, ZADIG, THE PRINCESS OF BABYLON), I discovered what might be termed loosely a tale of science fiction, namely "Micromegas". It bears a dim, distant comparison with Swift's GULLIVER, but embodying a superior comprehension of known scientific laws. You are doubtless well-acquainted with the era of "Enlightenment", moreover that leading men of letters in that reknown epoch fancied themselves less well-rounded if they had not as familiar a grasp of science as of literature. Voltaire, chief among them, was a manysided talent. In addition to being an accomplished poet (in an era infamous for the scarcity of lyric poetry, his was predictably non-dramatic), playwright, and novelist, he was a social rebel and a political agitator. Needless to say, his stories feature a corrosive satire of an inflammatory nature. In one sense, commentators believe he helped construct the climate which warmed to the French Revolution. At any rate, he attuned his vivacious, brilliant mind to attack the organized, official orthodoxy of privilege in whatever sphere it dominated, social, political or religious.

It's amusing and instructive to note the brief subtlety and glimmering elegance with which he reveals the cruelty and folly of mankind. He raises questions of time-honored significance, perceives a paradox, allows the insistent passions their due, maintains propriety at the cost of death, exile or banishment, then attempts to solve it rather too simply or too vaguely, but he is penetrating, shrewd and wickedly observant. The French seem to 'play' with profound issues more casually than we do; it seems their historically verified duty and avowed purpose. Conversely, however, Americans are all too apt, out of impatience, haste, waste and mental lethargy, to slide into evangelical fervor over some vain, trite trifle, and then discard it tomorrow, to languish in grief, lamenting for the instant appearance of a new, racier novelty or entrancing momentary fashion. See if Voltaire's shorter works are not in your library and you might be rewarded by seeking out "Micromegas," not to mention his other precious pieces. Eighteenth Century, that would make it one of the first of that genre, no? (((Some SF historians trace the origins of science fiction back to the epics of Odysseus and Gilgamesh, much earlier than the 18th century, although Voltaire's story could be one of the earliest of the modern, so to speak, science fiction era.))) The story is in the public domain, so you may be tempted to reprint it in LAN'S LANTERN as an early example of what was later to become more refined in the vicinity of Science Fiction. We should only be half-surprised, really, that such an artifact should issue forth from the "Age of Enlightenment", a moment in time when science had begun to challenge the educated mind. "Micromegas" of course is a moral caution against 'hubris', inordinate pride over that which we don't understand. Pride in accomplishment is one thing, but arrogant conceit over the lightly grasped virtues of aliens is another.

CAROLYN CD DOYLE: I need the opinion of someone who bakes bread. When my husband David kneads the dough, he yells odd words, jumps up and down, and makes models of Prince Charles' face, which he then smashes. Tell me, do all bread-bakers do this? --Confused.
(((Not all of them would make models of Prince Charles --I make models of Nixon, Reagan, several people at school I can't stand, and smash them. Sometimes I yell odd words, but they are probably not the same ones the David would yell--he's British, you know.)))

JAN BROWN: *Blush* No one ever dedicated anything to me before. Thank you.

THE CLIFFORD SIMAK SPECIAL

DAVID PALTER: Many thanks for LAN'S LANTERN #11, which is averitable monument among fanzines. You boast that it is your best effort, which I can well believe; I doubt that anybody could have done better. (Yes, not even Sam Moskowitz.) Perhaps the most impressive thing about this special issue is the sheer number of notable people from the fields of writing, editing, and fandom, who have contributed to it, along with the wealth of truly beautiful illustrations. I am most impressed by Jim Gray's illo on p.87, and Arlie Adams' on p. 77; severla others are also excellent. Algis Budrys' reminiscences are exquisitely poignant and true; Ross Rocklynne is amazingly funny. John Thiel's exercise in surrealism serves to extend still further the range of moods with which Simak is contemplated. There is no doubt that Cliff Simak is a great writer and one of the key people who have made SF what it is, and you have produced a great tribute to him. (((I'm blushing)))

If I must find something to criticize, it would be that the book reviews submitted by your pupils would have benefitted from a little editing. In comparison to the polished writing elsewhere in the fanzine, their own occasionally faulty prose stands out.
(((Live and learn--I am still learning more and more about editing...and writing too.)))

LOLA ANDREW: Simak's books have been among my favorite SF in the twenty years I've been reading it. WAY STATION is the one I love best. I enjoyed Linda Leach's drawing on p. 50. It is a scene from the book where Lucy heals a butterfly, a passage I think is beautiful, and Linda does it credit.

Your interview shows you've read a great deal or perhaps all Simak's books. It was interesting and informative. It must have taken a lot of work to do so well.

(((Whenever I do an interview, I try to read as much of that author's works as I can beforehand so that I will be able to ask intelligent questions. It takes a lot of work, but it is worth it.)))

ANDERS BELLIS: I have held a firm belief that Simak is the greatest author ever to appear inside the science fiction field (and one of the greatest ever anywhere, come to think of it). I was delighted to see a special Simak issue of a fanzine.

I must be honest, though, and confess that my delightment gradually disappeared as I began reading this big chunk of a fanzine.

I have one major point to make in regard to this Simak issue; the thing to do when preparing an appreciation issue of this sort is not to include all contributions you get, but the good ones. It is not much of an honor to Simak when articles such as "An Impersonal Remembrance" (which is without doubt the worst piece in the issue; man this thin is downright insulting, and as such, unworthy of inclusion in any fanzine), 'The Trap of the Frontier," the reviews of his books by kids, and so forth, are included in an appreciation issue.

(((John Thiel's view of reality is much different from most people's, and I did struggle with myself as whether or not to include it in the issue--since it shows what Clifford is not (think of some other writers who do fit the description?), I put it in. /// The other pieces I thought were good; the student reviews might have been stretching it a bit, but young and enthusiastic readers are what the field needs now more than ever, and a good impetus is to be published in an internationally circulated fanzine.)))

I also find it a mite strange to include reprints from various sources, the worst of them being the piece reprinted from Asimov's books--quite honestly, did you print this because it was good, or because Asimov wrote it? (((Both!)))

You shouldn't have devoted all of this issue to Simak, because even as fanatic a fan of his as I get tired of reading material about one person over and over again for a hundred pages. Now, I wouldn't mind a thick and good fanzine about Simak at all, but even that I think would get slightly boring after awhile --one simply needs a little variation, especially when reading a thick fanzine-issue like yours. There is no variation in LAN'S LANTERN 11.

(((There wasn't supposed to be anything else in LL #11 except material about Simak. That was the purpose of that issue--a collector's item all about Clifford Simak in honor of his Golden Anniversary as a Science Fiction Author.)))

DON D'AMMASSA: I've always thought Simak was a good novelist and an excellent short-story writer, so I have not been happy to see the growing predominance of novels in his output. On the other hand, Simak is one of the few of the major authors who has not seemed to have lost the ability to write as his career progressed, and I am almost always entertained by his books.

HARRY WARNER, JR: Cliff should be very happy with both the expressions of love and respect from so many of his peers and with the energy and good editorial judgement you put into this issue. It's so nice to see publications like this coming into print while the central subject is still alive and able to enjoy the egoboo. (Have you given serious thought to producing a third special issue of LAN'S LANTERN along these lines? I don't know who might be next in line as far as longevity as a science fiction writer is concerned. Heinlein, maybe, but you might have more difficulty getting cooperation from him. Van Vogt, Sturgeon, Bradbury, even Bob Tucker come to mind as possibilities.) (((In addition to those you mentioned, I am also considering the very underrated talents of Andre Norton, who, although not writing as long as the others, is probably older than most of them. Sandra Miesel suggested her, and the more I think about it, the more "right" it feels.)))

It was a particularly brilliant idea to reprint "The World of the Red Sun." (((The idea was Don Franson's--I agreed and did it.))) Would you believe that this is so old that even I didn't buy the magazine containing it off the newsstand? I was still a couple of years away from discovering the prozines in 1931. At a guess I would conjecture that half of the people who receive this issue will experience for the first time what it was like to read a story in the old large-sized prozine format. Almost every fan and pro has seen those old prozines, there have been collections reprinting their illustrations, many of their stories have appeared in reprint form with type reset, but how often today does anyone except a devoted collector get a chance to sit down and read a copy of a 1931 WONDER STORIES?

Strange that you started on COSMIC ENGINEERS as a Simak fan. I probably read other fiction by him before that novel, but it's the first story that made a big impression on me. I asked him in Boston why he didn't go on after writing that novel and become the next E.E. Smith. As I remember his reply, the time just wasn't right for large-scale space operas so he didn't write any more novels in that style.

ROB CHILSON: I thought you might like to know that ANALOG has accepted "Walk With Me", my Simak pastiche. (((High praise indeed, to write in the style of another author and dedicate it to him. And it was a good story.)))

LAURRAINE TUTHASI: The balance between discussions of Simak as a person and his works was just right. There were some good analyses of the interrelationship between the writer's character and his writing.

Many of the articles enabled me to understand Simak's writing better. I've read enough of his work to know that I enjoyed some of it and not others. Now I know why I enjoyed the parts that I did. I think I'm better equipped now to understand all of his writing.

There is one article I didn't understand, however. It seemed to me that John Thiel was insulting Simak. I imagine he might have been using some kind of subtle humor that went right over me. (((See my comment to Anders Bellis--previous column.)))

I also have a disagreement with Rob Chilson. It seems to me he's gotten his political philosophies

mixed up. He wrote, "Strange that so few writers in our genre share his feelings for the human race and its ability to govern itself; stranger still, when one considers how many SF writers are professedly liberal." It seems to me that it is the liberals who historically haven't believed in the individuals. It's the liberals who want social security, welfare, and other forms of government handouts. The conservatives are the people who consider the individual important, who believe in rugged individualism and every man for himself. And I don't mean that conservatines don't give a damn for anyone else. Charity is fine, but it should come from the heart, not at gunpoint or because of some other threat. Government charity erodes individualism.

PERRY GLEN MOORE: Brilliant! There are not too many writers today who deserve or merit the attention that you gave Simak, but in his case it was something long past due.

I especially enjoyed the tribute by Stanley Schmidt. I was also pleased to see that "Grotto of the Dancing Deer" won both awards this year. I seem to enjoy his shorter works so much more that I enjoy his novels. I believe he puts more force into the shorter works, whereas the longer ones tend to draw on and on--but that's just my opinion.

GARY DEINDORFER: I have always liked Simak's writing and have read a good bit of it in my time. As pleasant and well-crafted as it is, it doesn't stick in my mind enough for me to be able to make really probing critical comments on it. So it was a help to have this fine Simak issue to jog my memory. So much of Simak's fiction deals with similar ideas and moods that it is easy to confuse one story with another, one novel with another, especially if you haven't read any Simak in some years. The last Simak I read was four years ago.

Clifford Simak reminds me that it can be good enough to be areal craftsman and storyteller, without having the pretentions of being a Great Artist. Clifford can never be accused of being pretentious and overvaluing his talent, which may be greater than it seems: his prose style is unobtrusive, the story flow always moves right along.

There is another thing about Simak fiction: It is poetic without straining for any of the special poetic effects. I think this is because Clifford has the soul of the true poet--in tune with the natural environment and the forces of the seasons more than many people who fancy themselves poets. Once again his unpretentiousness is a factor. Without especially trying to be poetic, his deep, natural feeling for people, animals, plants, mountains, valleys, rivers, etc., comes through what he writes.

Understand, I am making these observations without specific stories in mind. After all, I have been reading Simak on and off since I began reading SF in my early teens. Since I am in my late 30s now, that is a long time.

Simak has a special place in SF for his warm feeling for humanity and all of life. There seems to be something almost oriental and mystical about this feeling he has for the cosmic flow of things. Once again, his unassuming personality and use of his imagination rescues him from pretentiousness. Who knows --Simak may be one of the truest ancestors of some of the more new-fangled, new-wavy writers, without his or their realizing it that fully.

He seems to have been a pioneer in doing what Wells said was a secret of writing believable SF: taking every day people and themes and moods and submerging his SF idead in that ordinariness. Thus, of course, making it all that much more effective.

Dave Wixon has a lot of intelligence and critical insight in everything he writes. I enjoyed his article when I first read it in RUNE, and I enjoyed rereading it here. Very good point about Simak's mastery of "the narrow focus." It is the opposite of trying to get everything into the story including the kitchen sink, which often leads to complete nonsuspension of disbelief, because such stories tend to end up as anything-goes stories. And as someone or other once said, when anything can happen, nothing is interesting. Wixon makes me realize what a powerful tool the narrow focus technique can be. Simak seems to have been a trailblazer in its application.

Ross Rocklynne's article is amising, seemingly fannish in the style that was especially big in the early days of fandom, in the 30s and 40s. Benford's tribute seems especially good, probably because of the similar backgrounds of Greg and Clifford.

The interview is great. Simak makes a lot of sense. Indeed, he seems to have common sense to quite an uncommon degree. It is also clear that he is a very tolerant, easy-going man, but nonetheless entirely devoted to writing. There should be more writers like him, especially since writers seem to tend to be an envious lot. A lot of writers dissipate their energy by engaging in jealous mindgames with their peers. It seems that Simak has never done this. Goethe once advised the artist to shut up and create. Simak clearly has followed this dictum. He has sat down and written, for decades, not wasting time engaging in envy relations with other writers. With some writers, you feel that there is a great discrepency between the man and his work. It appears from this interview that there is very little discrepency between Simak the man and Simak the writer.

Chilson's article reminds me that Simak's feeling for ordinary people is a much needed corrective to Heinlein's elitist contempt for them Heinlein seems to think you're scum unless you have at least six Ph. D's, especially in math and science. Simak questions all that, pointing out indirectly that ordinary people may not always be as ordinary as we intellectual types like to think.

I especially liked Budrys' words. A lot of sense and truth there.

John Thiel's piece is obviously one of his rough-edged, freaky put-ons. He always seems to be putting himself on more than anyone else. I think your tribute issue would have been better off leaving out this screwed up article.

Let me mention some of the illoes I like in particular: the two Linda Leach drawings for WAY STATION; Pamela Whitlark's drawing of a warmly smiling Clifford; and Jim Gray's very striking drawing for ALL FLESH IS GRASS (he has a very original style).

MAIA: If anyone deserves this sort of tribute, it's Cliff Simak. It was worth all the time and effort and expense ~~and edition~~ just to know that Cliff was so pleased with it. I'm happy to have been even a small part in the issue's creation--if nothing else, it meant that I read som Simak fiction that I hadn't encountered before.

I know so little about layout and editing that I hesitate to say anything about it. However, I do have to agree with some artists' comments that the artwork could have been better; and I question your decision to include the John Thiel article. It was, well, weird. Seemed to me to be a tongue-heavily-in-cheek description of everything Cliff is NOT. Seen this way it could be amusing, but only to those who have met Cliff and know how humble and lovable he really is. Otherwise it's just confusing, and perhaps off-putting as well.

But the rest of the issue was just delightful. I could read and re-read the interview in which I participated (did I really talk that much?), just for the memory of how much I enjoyed talking with Cliff.

Your paper on Millville seems even better on rereading than it did the first time I read it. You should be proud of yourself. (((I am!)))

DENNIS JAROG: I just finished reading PROJECT POPE, which is as far as I'm concerned Simak's best, an utterly fascinating novel and I think it likely to be a nominee, perhaps even a Hugo winner in the coming year. He has already shown his skill at creating robots--Jenkins is an endearing intelligence and the robots of the Vatican are excellent as well. They are pusruing a task that no human could undertake--the search for a factual base for God. And despite their nature, they show the same pedantic, agonising and hopelessly emotional outlook as those that created them. It seems that the robots of Simak not only desire a creator to venerate but also emulate humans over the course of time. The pastoral theme as expressed in many of his works is here; Vatican is the kind of place where man and robot works in concert with the world about him, each respecting the other, taking only at need and replenishing for the morrow--the kind of place where one would enjoy life instead of fearing acid rain and the like. Cliff is not gettin older; judging by PROJECT POPE, he is getting better.

A few comments on the interview. The reason that many people have "boxed themselves into their faith" is that for most contemporary religions the magic has been lost, replaced by a reverence for ritual, be that a literalist view of the Bible or a meaningless ceremony. The Catholic Church removed the magic from the Mass and ignored its real problem which was that for centuries it was geared to frighten ignorant peasants and had no way of working with an intelligent congregation. Similarly the Moral Majority seeks to repudiate the complexities of the present with cries of devil-span--sad to say that it works with all too many people. Thus many of the Moral Majority refuse to make decisions for themselves; instead they follow a lemming like Jerry Falwell.

BEN INDICK: The Simak issue was splendid, both in an amateur as well as a professional way. It allowed your students a forum to discuss the work of a science fiction master, but also had writing of both professionals and good solid fan writing at its best.

I was especially happy to see the facsimile reprint of Simak's first story. For younger readers this could well be their first experience with Gernsbackian "scientifiction." It will seem naive in editorial, fictional and artistic senses. It is, of course, but, oh! how exciting it was back in those days when there was simply no SF at all, outside of Wells, Verne and such. I speak with a slight presumption, as I was only 3 or 4 years old when AMAZING first appeared, but a dozen years later it wasn't all that different, even with a dozen or so SF zines on the newsstands.

In spite of the naivete, Simak's story already showed awareness of the human experience: a super technology which was all too capable of fault; human aspirations which could be dashed to failure; fear of an uncertain future. It should be pointed out that Simak in these was perhaps unusual, for the average pulp SF of the era would often have its young scientists all too ready to come up with a super-invention wherewith to save a fearful humanity--or a fearful young woman, as the case might be. The bleak future he portrayed was obviously derived from the pessimistic young H.G. Wells (who would later blossom into Hope). The living brain itself would have had an illustrious trail in SF; it was a concomitant of Gernsbackian SF, but later would find variation in futuremen who would be spindly-bodied and copiously-brained (the finest example, and still a delight, being Harry Bates' "Alas, All Thinking!"). Later Siodmak's "Donovan's Brain" made a thriller of the genre, and most recently it was parodied in Raold Dahl's short story (whose name I forget) wherein a henpecked wife took revenge on the living-brain which represented her late husband.

And menawhile, how Simak himself blossomed into a writer of insight and human understanding. A grand man!

WILLIAM WILSON GOODSON, JR: There are always some stories/imaginary worlds I would enjoy visiting--or even living in. Some I would never desire to be a part of.

I love reading Dr. Smith'sLensmen Series, but I do not want to visit their universe. Not that I accuse his government of being fascists like so many readers; simply, in his universe the very best of humanity is barely surviving. H. P. Lovecraft I also love to read, but I would pay cash to be excused from a world in which such 'incidents' as he describes can occur.

The point I am getting to is that Clifford Simak has written about several such worlds I could visit with enjoyment. I might turn into a Ben and wander off on Jupiter, or settle down with some Robot servants in a country house. But more than any other science fiction novel, I would enjoy visiting the Earth portrayed in GOBLIN RESERVATION. A pastoral earth mostly given over to universities and museums; to be able to meet with ghosts and talk to goblins without soul-staining magic; to have an efficient technological society with pollution and poverty phased out. There must be blemishes on this world, but only two show in the book: petty bureaucrats, and some possible enemies, but they don't seem too efficient.

CLIFFORD SIMAK: A writer--any writer, I would suppose--may wonder at times whether there is anyone out there listening to what he, or she, may have to say. This often has been the case with me. Intellectually I know there are people out there, but writing, at best, has to be a lonely business, and there have been times I have held the feeling that I might be writing into a great emptiness.

Your special edition of the LANTERN hereafter will make it quite impossible for me to wonder further. For it is solid evidence that there are a lot of friends who bear me more good-will than I can possibly deserve. To read what they had to say of me is a humbling and heart-warming experience. Old softy that I am, there were times, in reading what they had to say, that there were tears in my eyes.

Let me say I appreciate more than I can ever tell you the work and planning that went into the special edition, and thank you, most of all, for the thought of doing it.

Will you please convey to Maia my thanks to her, as well, for the part she had in it.

My love to both of you.

(((And thank you, Cliff, from both of us. We could not have done it without you.)))

In addition to all those letters I've printed, I also heard from the following people (and probably more, either on the phone, or at conventions):
Harry Andruschak, Allan Beatty, Robert Bloch, Algis Budrys, Donn Brazier, Bob Ewald, Kurt Erichsen, Paula Gold Franke, Ed Glaser, Jim Gray, David Govaker, Joseph Green, Clinton Hyde, John & Lynn Harris, Capt. David Heath Jr., Naomi Konoff, Steve & Denise Leigh, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Mary Manchester, Charles Molson, Jim Meadows, Margaret Middleton, Dan Martin, Mike Rogers, Paula Smith, Bruce Schneier, Vince Tuzzo, John Thiel, Robert Whitaker, and Jeff Wilcox.

Thanks to all of you for writing/commenting.

Try it again--I'd love the feedback.

"SURE, SUE, IF YOU FIND A JUNIOR WOODCHUCK'S GUIDEBOOK BE SURE TO LET US KNOW!