

LES SPINCE



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LES SPINGE

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SITDOWN

During the past year Ron Bennett has conducted an insidious one man campaign for the improvement of fanzines...LS in particular. Not that most people would even recognise it as a campaign so subtle is his phrasing. There are no extortions, threats or bribes - merely veiled praise. "How?" asks Ron, "How are you going to improve on this issue?" In view of the unfitting impetus Ron has given we dedicate this issue of LS to him...skinny and paltry as it is...and just let him dare criticise!

Ron is also the unwitting stimulus behind this editorial. In SEYRACK 73 he says in reviewing Tom Perry's fanzine UARD; "Once a decade fardel is fortunate enough to possess a fanzine with excellent mature material and that golden indefinable spark. UARD had it,

INTUENDO had it, and after that build up, it should come as no surprise to read that "QUAK has it, too." This revived an idea I had for an editorial several months ago, an idea which was dropped because I didn't consider myself up to tackling it and because introspection of that type seemed out of fashion. However, timebinding can work miracles, and recently I discovered almost precisely what I would have attempted in Ted White's GAMBIT 34. Here, then, is Ted White discussing, even if only indirectly, that "golden indefinable spark."

"The words 'focal point' are not new to fandom. They date back at least to Bob Silverberg's epochal article in GUARDIAN, in which he brought up to date Speer's 1939 essay on the social order of Fandoms, and in which he unwittingly created a new order, the much-maligned "Seventh Fandom" movement. Silverberg's theory was that each age of fandom - or Numbered Fandom - was best represented by one or two fanzines of its day: the fanzines in which the leaders of fannish thought congregated, and to which other fans flocked for the latest word on fannish events and the creation of new traditions. The fanzine, or fanzines, served as a central point in that Fandom, around which the rest of fandom collected - a focal point.

"This idea has proven validity, in that we can point back to particular fanzines and realize that in their pages were summed up the dominant ideas of the day, and the prevalent thinking. There is always an In Group in fandom which controls it at a given moment, and there is always a zine which expresses the control of the In Group. Most such cliques evolve quite by happenstance - only in the case of the abortive "Seventh Fandom" did a group deliberately attempt to gain In Group status. There are always within fandom at any given moment a few individuals like Bob Tucker, Walt Willis, Dean Grennell - who remain largely outside partisan battles and by their individual talents inspire the admiration and friendship of fandom as a whole. When one of these fans becomes active, and In Group will either form around him (Willis in '50-'53; Tucker several times earlier and again in Sixth Fandom, with Lee Hoffman and Willis, Grennell in '53-'57) or his presence will bring into prominence an In Group (as with the adoption of these fans - particularly Tucker - by various groups, even today). There is nothing undesirable about an In Group; it is the natural eddying of human beings about those they choose as leaders or particularly admire. In Group leaders or catalysts embody likeable or admirable characteristics. Their ascendancy to the throne of fannish public approval should not inspire jealousy, but, if anything, a desire to emulate.

"In fandom knowledge is imparted and communication developed through fanzines. It is largely through fanzines that fandom retains its character and continuity. Although more fans are in personal contact with each other today than ever before, still all rely upon fanzines for immediate news, entertainment and general communication. Thus, with much of fandom cloistered about a particular fan or group of fans, the fanzines in which he/she appear will become natural focal points of interest. Likewise, a really good fanzine, with a close finger on the pulse of fandom (that is, a fanzine which not only prints good material, but does so in such a way as to best communicate its quality to all of fandom) is

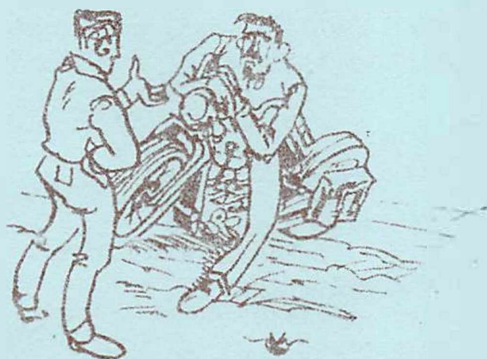
going to be close to the center of fanish activities. A fanzine becomes a focal point either through personality appeal (JEDDY with Hoffman, Willis and Tucker), or an astute editor (PSYCHOTIC, which did not cultivate any great personalities as regulars excepting the sometimes scholarly McCain - but did print 'BNI' material' and whose editor knew what was going on).

"To say, as some have said, that fandom needs no focal points, is ridiculous. It is like saying that the body needs no mind or a large group no coordinator. It fosters anarchy and chaos. A healthy fandom creates its own focal points inevitably. The period following the gradual demise of PSYCHOTIC in which there was no recognisable focal point was a period of fanish chaos in which the few who were left mourned the lack of good fanzines. American fandom took to the apes in vast numbers, and everyone agreed we were in a fanish doldrums.

"Coincidentally, this period marked the rise of British fans and fanzines like BEN, PLOY, TRIODE, ORION and others, most of which vanished or faded perceptibly with the advent of the primarily British OGA.

"Then there are no focal points, there is no clear direction for the newcomer to look towards, a general lack of values and standards which usually lead - and have led - to the creation of separate autonomous fandoms, mutually unaware of each other and sometimes antagonistic to each other.

"This in turn leads to a gradual collapse. When a new fan cannot find any central point in fandom, when all is dilute and diffuse, interest wanes, and fans potentially of considerable calibre and ability begin to drop out of fandom. Eventually fandom has collapsed to the extent that everyone remaining is again aware of almost everyone else; there are too few not to come into contact.



"And what happens then is that differences accentuated by separation become points for dissention, argument and feuding. What happens then is the conflict of 'convention fan', 'collector fan' and 'fanzine fan.' Groups centered around serious amateur sf writing - albeit very poor in quality - come into contact with fanish groups whose forte's are satire, humorous writing and a marked lack of desire in taking things seriously. The trufan mocks, and the serconfan bitterly returns the attack. And another feud is going.

"A centralised fandom is always with a focal point. Miraculously, when one zine dies another is found to replace it and the In Group moves on. But a centralised fandom also has room

for other kinds of quality fanzines. Concurrently with our V.I.E.s, GUARDIANS and PSYCHOTICS we've had our EASY GOING PAPERS, RHODORAGNETIC DIGESTS and INSIDES. And we've also had our SKYHOOKS, SLALTS and RUBS as well. A focal point fanzine is not always the best or most thoroughly representative fanzine of its time, but it somehow, ineffably awakens the greatest interest from most of fandom.

"A concrete example will suffice: probably the focal point of the '58-'59 period was FALAC. Whether it was in itself awakened fandom to new awarenesses, or whether it was a product of that trend (and another factor was the ten year dream of fandom - South Gate in '58 - coming true), it certainly generated more excitement and interest than any other fanzine in the last several years. Fandom as a whole endorsed it, collectors, convention goers and fanzine fans alike. FALAC placed top of its own poll, and won the 1958 Hugo at the Convention.

"Yet, what kind of fanzine was FALAC? Was its material that good? Hardly. Most of it was news and slight columnizing; comments on fanzines received (not reviews either), and parties attended, and none of it in what might be called deathless prose. Indeed, Terry Carr's IMPUDIC was a much better fanzine: the material was not ephemeral, but well done and of lasting interest, and Terry's own editorials were among the high spots of fannish writing for the year. FALAC became indispensable because it was immediate, and like no other fanzine it had its fingers on fandom's pulse. In FALAC we had a fairly comprehensive reporter for nearly any fannish event of importance, as well as those of little importance. We had an easy reference for changed addresses (a note in FALAC to the effect that so&so moved means that whether or not he has, so&so will and must move) and a ready source of news. And coming after a three or so year period of no focal points, the impact was even greater than it would otherwise have been.

"The main point I've been making is this: Fandom's organic structure demands a "focal point" or some form of centralisation - in a word, unity. Focal points usually take place in our microcosm of letters as fanzines. Not necessarily the "best" fanzines, but fanzines which deliver that certain something which excites the interest of most of fandom. Without these focal points (which may exist as a group of related fanzines, each complementing the others), fandom falls upon hard, unproductive times, out of which comes strife and dissention.

"Not only does fandom need focal points, it can't do without them.

-- Ted Nite.

Thank you Ted. As I said before this summed up my feelings of several months ago when I thought fanzine fandom was in a very dissipated state. There appeared to be no fanzines published frequently enough or with enough general interest to become anything resembling a focal point. Particularly there was a dearth of communication over the Atlantic. US fanzines rarely featured British letterheads and vice versa. There was a similar situation with material and artwork. More generally I was surprised by the lack of interest among young Anglofans in American fandom.

And now, several months later, are things all that different? Is there any one fanzine you be specially pleased to arrive tomorrow...any fanzine you'd be excited to read and would recommend to a new fan? Is there any fanzine you wish would publish more frequently or that you would sub to failing any other methods to crack its editor's hard heart?

More specifically, which present day fanzines could be future focal points, which will in the long run have the most influence and which in the long run will be most treasured either by fanzine collectors or in the memory?

One further point. This is not a subtle way of getting egoboo for either Ken or myself!

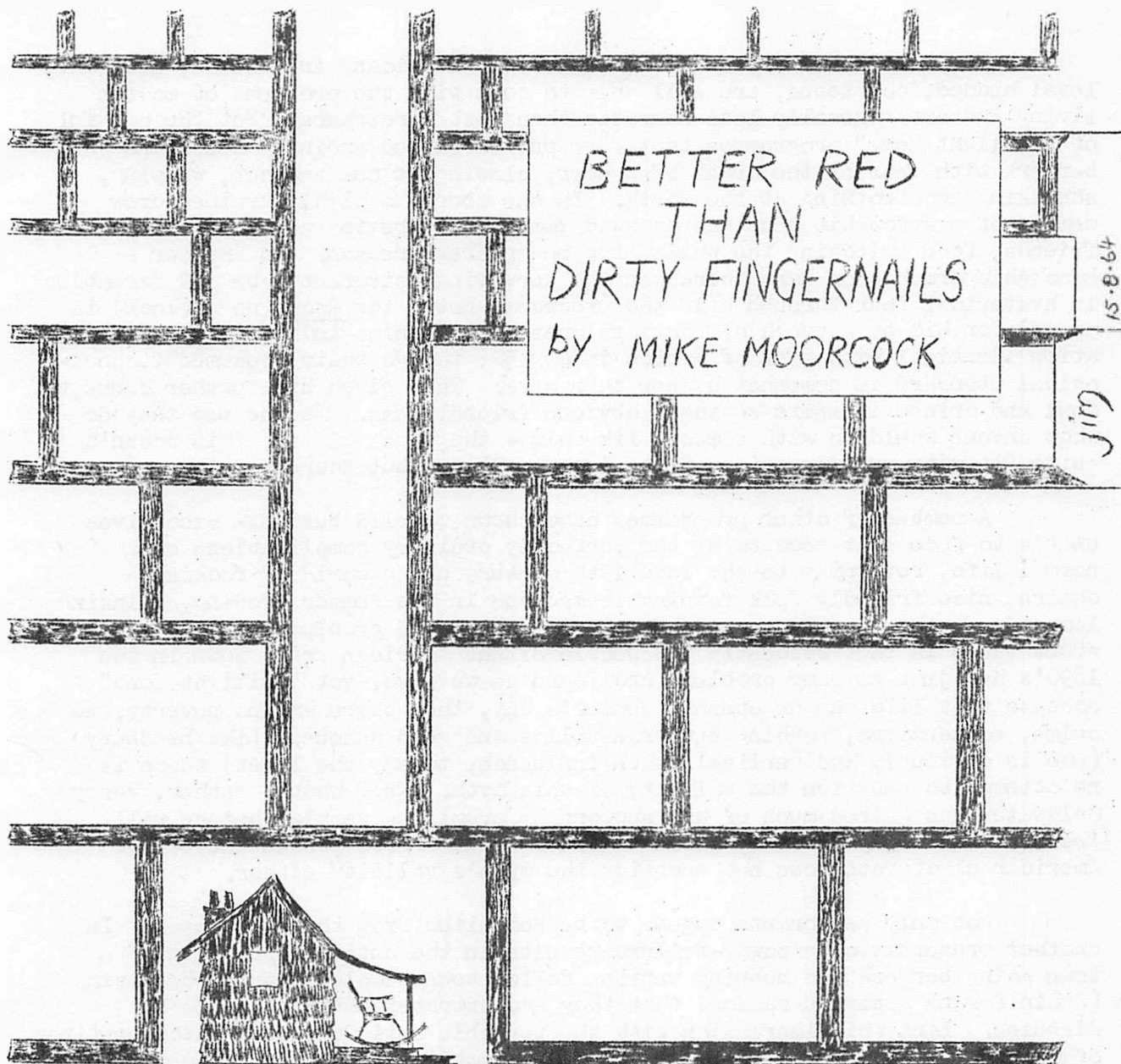
Finally, if anyone wonders why we're not selling this issue, I'll give one clue and say that each one costs around 4/- to produce. OK?

Best for 1965.

-- Dave Hale







I was sorry when "The Twilight Zone" stopped appearing on ITV because it was one of the few television programmes that could get an emotional response out of me. Apart from being able to anticipate every single 'twist' ending, being a trifle surprised that all extraterrestrials are humanoid, wear lounge suits and have a culture exactly comparable to modern America, and marvelling at production costs that must have run into tens of dollars, I was also instilled with mild anti-Americanism, which, I hasten to add, only tended to last about half an hour after the programme ended. The picture of Americans, as presented on "The Twilight Zone", is of a race made up entirely of acute hysterics wallowing in an unhealthy nostalgia for a past that has never existed. An impression that could easily be confirmed, incidentally, by witnessing as I did on TV, the events in San Francisco which led up to the nomination of Barry Goldwater as the Republican Party's next Presidential Candidate.

Now I know from my own experience that Americans are usually pleasant, level headed, courteous, are well able to cope with the problems of modern living and are generally less neurotic than most foreigners. Yet the handful of "Twilight Zone" programmes that were put on showed ordinary Americans going berserk with fear at the creak of a door, clawing at one another, weeping, shrieking and frothing at the mouth. In one story, a highly trained crew member of a spaceship that has crashed immediately begins slaughtering his friends, face twitching the while, for no apparent reason. In another a spaceship crashes on Mars whereupon the surviving astronaut sobs and scrambles in hysterical fear through half the programme until the door (no airlock) is opened for him by a bunch of Martians dressed in tunics indicating a civilisation identical with that of Greece in 400 BC, though their presumed technological standard is somewhat higher than ours. This gives him further cause to mewl and cringe in spite of their obvious friendliness. At the end they do what anyone would do with someone like him - they let him up. This doesn't quite fit with my impression of the laconic Glenn, but there you are.

A number of other programmes have shown worried business executives unable to face what seem to be the perfectly ordinary complications of a normal life, returning to the late 19th century and a world of rocking chairs, nice friendly folk fanning themselves in the summer evening, drinking lemonade on the veranda and possessing absolutely no problems. What irked me about these is that evidently the people of the American small town in the 1890's had just as many problems and fears as we have, yet "Twilight Zone" accepts that life was an eternal summer's day, that there was no poverty, no crime, no tensions, nothing but tranquility and good humour. Like Bradbury (who is obviously Rod Serling's main influence, to say the least) there is no attempt to question the validity of this myth. From what I gather, Barry Goldwater has gained much of his support by promising people that he will 'restore' this way of life, which indicates what a good percentage of the American electorate does not question the myth's validity either.

Not only astronauts appear to be recruited from the nut-houses. In another presentation a power-failure results in the entire population of a town going berserk and mobbing various fellow townspeople in turn, believing (again for no apparent reason) that they are extraterrestrial aliens in disguise. Link this impression with the terrible anti-Communist witch-huntings of the McCarthy era, the wild statements of Ramblin' Barry which appear to be accepted so widely, the violence of gangster and Western films, the stories of corruption in big business, unions, the police force etc. and one tends to get a very odd picture of modern America. It is, of course, an erroneous picture, but a powerful one which was confirmed for many non-Americans when Kennedy was assassinated last year. It is a picture which American export entertainment helps foster and I'm not only referring to TV Westerns, pulp magazines 'for men' or films. Some American sf contains elements showing America as a place where the beliefs of the people are so reactionary they are only surpassed by Hitler's Germany. "The Twilight Zone", I gather, is quite highly-esteemed by most American fans, and probably esteemed for the same reasons as many sf stories. Perhaps there is nothing wrong in escaping, for an hour or two, into a nostalgic myth, but if a lot of people wholeheartedly believe it, it can lead to some pretty horrible consequences, as no doubt we shall find if Bewildered Barry becomes America's next President.

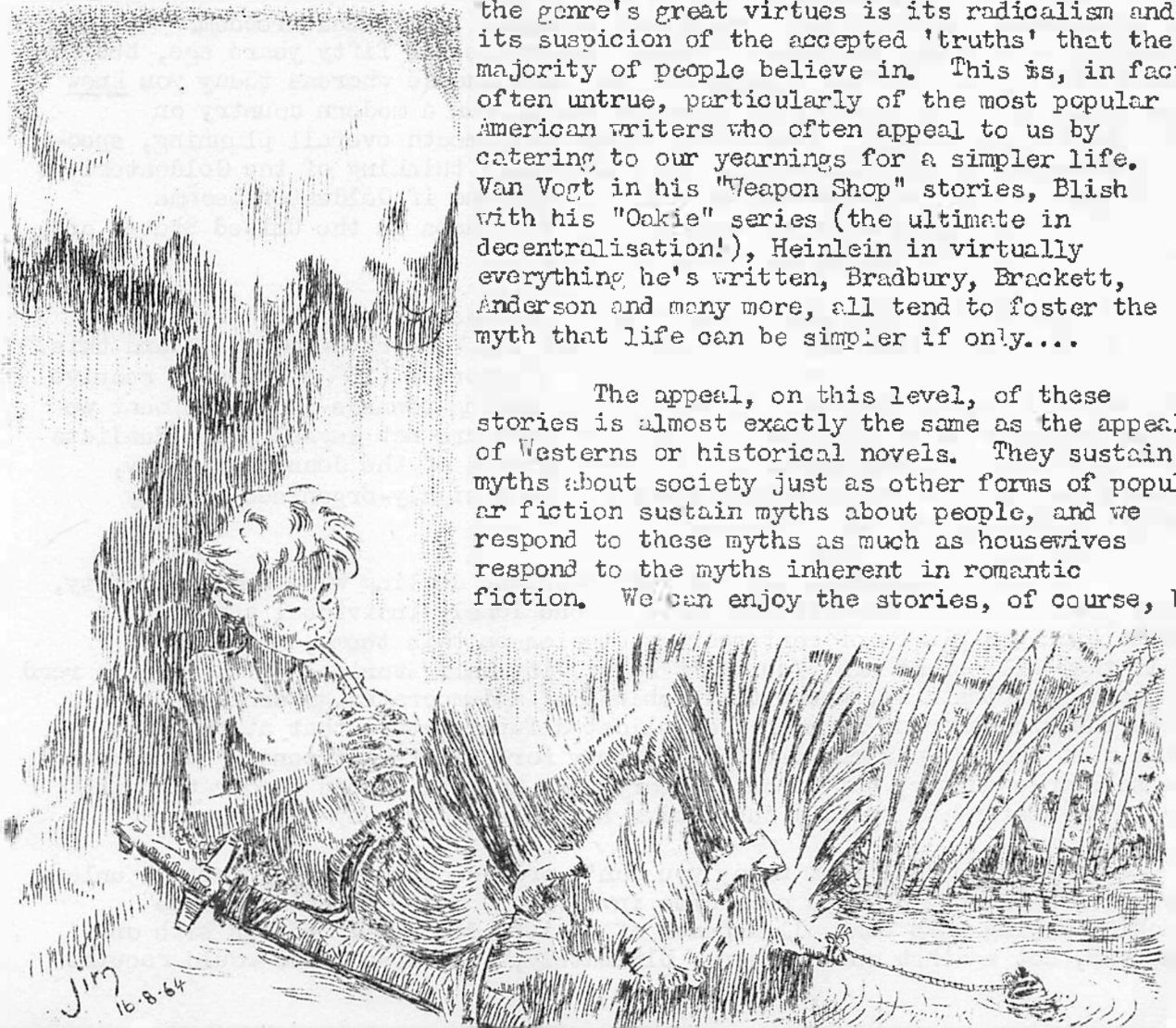
As you'll have gathered, I'm not talking about 'satirical' sf of the Pohl-Kornbluth variety. All this shows is a healthy concern that certain individual forces in the world should not get out of hand. I'm talking about

some of the tacit assumptions made by a number of American sf writers in their stories. Assumptions that there are simple answers to complicated problems and that the simple life is the best life.

There is, for instance, a whole category of stories which I call Huck Finn sf. In these stories a young boy has grown up in a society that has partially survived an atomic cataclysm (sometimes it has developed on an 'outworld' or from the survivors of a crashed spaceship. This society is completely decentralised, consisting of small communities without any form of overall government. The boy leaves his home town, says goodbye to his Mom or his aunt, or escapes from his wicked foster father, and rambles through this society having adventures, eventually discovering that some kind of Project is being planned in which he becomes a Key Figure. This ending is tagged on to justify the story's sf tag. Its main appeal is that it shows a future in which the veranda and sarsaparilla world of the past (mythical as it is) has become a reality. It is a world which has an appeal for many of us. It is, as Patrick O'Donovan described it in a recent OBSERVER article, "the dream of the Happy Valley. It's a place on the frontier where women are pure, men are strong and wholly self-reliant and life is uncomplicated. It's a myth, but a myth that's as potent as vulgar truth."

SF readers often point out that one of the genre's great virtues is its radicalism and its suspicion of the accepted 'truths' that the majority of people believe in. This is, in fact, often untrue, particularly of the most popular American writers who often appeal to us by catering to our yearnings for a simpler life. Van Vogt in his "Weapon Shop" stories, Blish with his "Oakie" series (the ultimate in decentralisation!), Heinlein in virtually everything he's written, Bradbury, Brackett, Anderson and many more, all tend to foster the myth that life can be simpler if only....

The appeal, on this level, of these stories is almost exactly the same as the appeal of Westerns or historical novels. They sustain myths about society just as other forms of popular fiction sustain myths about people, and we respond to these myths as much as housewives respond to the myths inherent in romantic fiction. We can enjoy the stories, of course, by



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suspending our disbelief in these assumptions while we're reading them, but we cannot claim that they make us see things in a radically new way.

Personally I don't believe that there is any fun in leading a Simple Life, whether it is working one's guts out on some homestead or sitting about in some creaking rocking chair, past, present or future. Neither do I see any possibility of the majority of the Western world's population being able to spend their days in easy-going tranquility, sunning themselves on the front porch. There would be a return to land-grubbing, naturally, in the event of an atomic war, if there were any land to grub. But assuming no Bomb, the world's population will increase rapidly in the next thirty years and a political system that is going to cope with this will need to exert its power more and organise on an even more comprehensive level.

Europe, Britain and the Afro-Asian countries all accept this as inevitable, as do a great many Americans, but there is a strong movement, judging by Goldwater's success, in the U.S. which denies it. In the past, the United States has had land to spare, plenty of lebensraum, but this will not be so true in the future. It is a pity of course, but it is a reality nonetheless. In a way I sympathise with Goldwater in everything but his foreign policy, for he seems an honest, earnest man bewildered, like his less fanatical followers, by a world which is, of necessity, driven to greater and greater centralisation of government resulting in a decreasing sense of individual freedom. I don't think there is less individual freedom than there was fifty years ago, but at least fifty years ago you thought you had more choice whereas today you know you haven't. Unfortunately it's impossible to run a modern country on anarchistic principles. Everything depends on smooth overall planning, specialisation and synchronisation. The reactionary thinking of the Goldwaterites goes against the tide, as they say, of history and if Goldwater became President his regime could produce nothing but chaos in the United States and, quite likely, the rest of the world as well.

The fear of too much State control, regimented society, over large and overcrowded cities etc. is shared by all the Western democracies and this fear is mirrored in a tremendous number of sf stories (25% of those I receive are on this theme), but this is what we are moving towards and it is what we shall have unless we are careful. What we need are not Rugged Individualists of the Goldwater variety, but sensible organisers of the Johnson variety, people who work to eradicate the drawbacks on a highly-organised society whilst realising its inevitability.

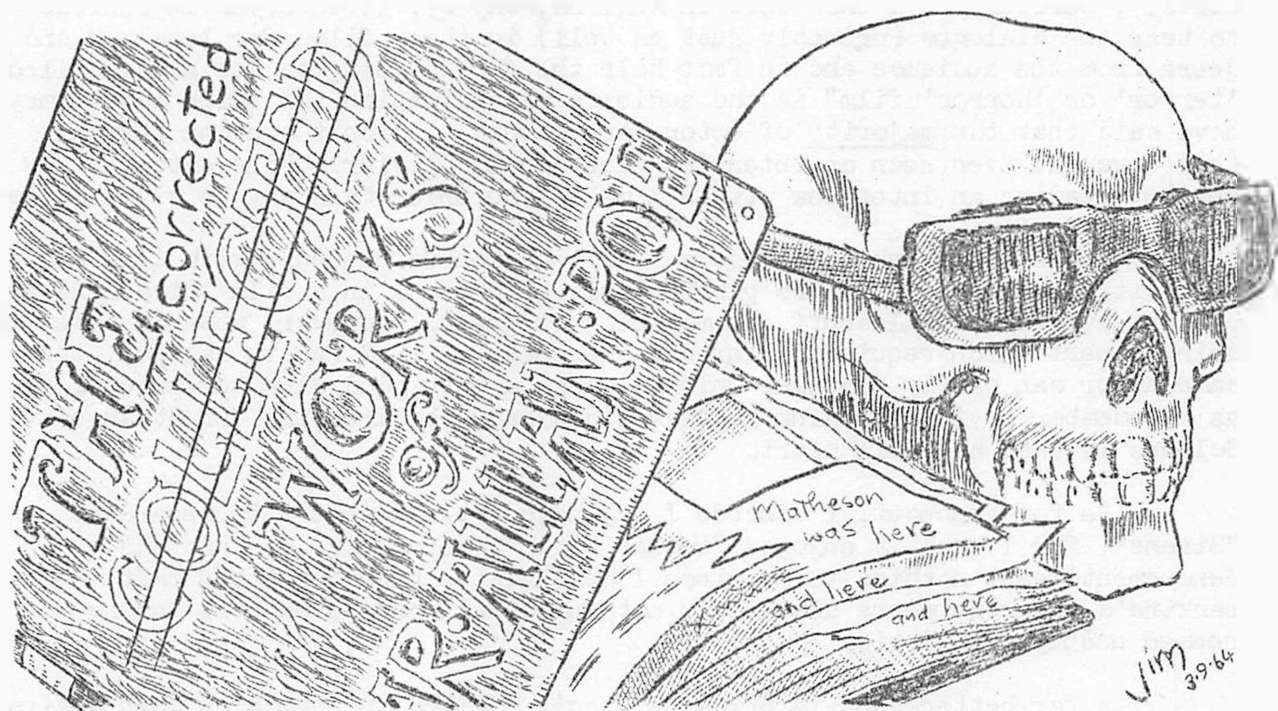
I, for one, should like to read stories, dealing with such a society, that are not concerned with the fight of one lonely individual against The State (you get plenty of contemporary stories on this theme, my boy - I call them all, sf or not, You Can't Fight City Hall stories). I'd like to read a story, for instance, about the problems of a democratic government faced with the situation of running a complicated future state that at the same time must provide maximum personal liberty for all its citizens. There would be no simple answer, but if an sf story came up with a good answer then it would be a story to justify the claims for sf made by many people.

I rather feel that today you can't provide true liberty for all unless you have a tightly planned programme involving a super-organised state machine making sure that all aspects of society dovetail and run with one another, not against one another. Ultimately, of course, this would require

the abolition of capitalism in all its forms. Some would say, I suppose, that I'm advocating Communism and perhaps I am, though I prefer to think of it as Democratic Socialism -- the aim of the British Labour Party.

It will be interesting to see what happens if Wilson wins here and Goldwater wins in the States.

But don't worry, it'll all be over by Christmas.



In an attempt to spur me to further efforts, Dave sent me some comments from readers which referred to my last piece which was called "Convention Report 1964", incidentally, because it dealt with sf conventions (or conventional sf, if you like), which answers Archie's query straight off. So, using the well-tried shuffle-method, I take at random Peter White, famous Candle Watcher's Assistant and White Dress Fancier, who thinks I've been hard on movie actors and Kurt Vonnegut (as does Roarin' Charlie Smith, King of the M.I.). I forget, of course, what I actually wrote, but I stick to my guns, whatever I said. A glance at a semi-pro American sf critical magazine called "Epilogue" (which is an otherwise excellent job) will illustrate what I mean about movie actors. Here Vincent Price defends horror movies with quaint ferocity and a marvellous talent for illogicality.

He begins by saying: "It's time that motion picture critics started taking so called 'terror' or 'horror' films seriously -- that is, the legitimate films of this genre based on with r recognised classic or original stories by our leading writers. Two things are sure about these exciting motion picture products - the public and the acting profession take them seriously and enjoy them. As for myself, and I speak for the majority of serious actors, those films based on the works of E. A. Poe present a dramatic challenge to the actor which ordinary films and their superficial 'reality' cannot offer..."

Plunging on with careless disregard for split infinitives and syntax alike, Price says near the end, righteously indignant: "Let those who condemn the thriller and horror picture recall, too, that along with Westerns, this type of entertainment was responsible for the success of our great motion picture industry."

If Price does, indeed, speak for the majority of his horrid fellows then my point is made. I wonder what 'superficial reality' is, or who those leading writers are, or who the audiences are who take, say "The Premature Burial", seriously? I know that in England, anyway, it is often impossible to hear the dialogue (probably just as well) in these films for laughter and jeers from the audience and in fact half the fun is going to see a "so called 'terror' or 'horror' film" is the audience participation. I think that I may have said that the majority of actors are stupid, I didn't condemn them all (but have you ever seen an interview with Sir L. Olivier? Fine actor he may be, but reading an interview with him makes you understand why he gives so few.)

Those who think otherwise may well be confusing sense with sensibility. A sensitive actor need not be particularly bright and in a film which aims at putting over emotional stuff, he may be just great. However, when it comes to doing a part which requires a certain sharpness of mind (as in satire), that same actor can easily flounder unless he has a very good director indeed, and as I remember saying, I think Kubrick did a bad job directing "Dr Strangelove". Sellers is (ha! ha!) all heart.

As for Vonnegut, I concede I may have a blind spot with regard to "Sirens", for I greatly enjoyed "Mother Night", but would add that the denouement meant nothing to me since I have always been convinced that mankind's progress means absolutely nothing at all and Vonnegut's ending seemed unduly optimistic.

A far better book is Brian Aldiss's "GREYBEARD" which at last delivers all that Brian has been promising. Apart from "The Dark Light Years", which fell down for me because of its underdeveloped theme, much of Aldiss's recent writing has seemed imitative in the extreme -- "Skeleton Crew" (in Science Fantasy) was a blatant rip-off from Durrell as I have ever been shocked to find, "The Male Response" was scarcely more than a sexed-up "Black Mischief" (and I found the treatment of sex adolescent) and some other stories have shown other sources. I say this with no great rancour, and without malice, for my belief in Aldiss's talent has survived even these disappointments and my patience has been richly rewarded with "Greybeard". Gone, as they say, are the juvenilities of "Hothouse" with its pun drunk prose and its tummy bellies, gone is the imitative style of "Earthworks". "Greybeard" is all Aldiss; Aldiss at his very, very best, which is very, very, very good indeed. This is Aldiss writing with discipline, intelligence and all his skill. Can I say more except to outline the plot which concerns the Accident of 1981 which resulted in everyone becoming sterile? By the time the book opens (in a village near Oxford) everyone is getting pretty old and lives in the knowledge that they are the last generation of mankind. From there the book develops (there are none of the usual sf cliches, I might add) as it studies the implications of this theme as they are reflected by the handful of characters led or met by Algernon 'Greybeard' Timberlande on his journey down the Thames towards his mouth. Symbolism can be found in the book, and it is good, if you like finding symbols, and the chief symbol is, of course, the river.

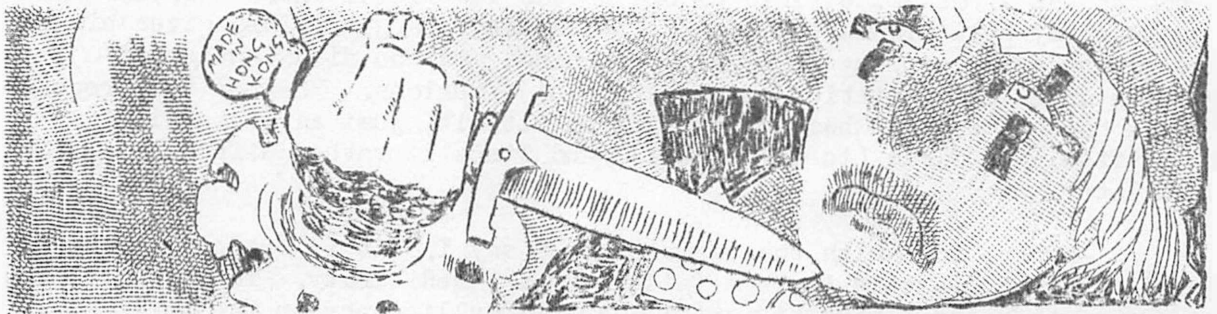
Graybeard thought how tiresome and colourless Charley was, but he answered patiently. "You're a sensible man, Charley. Surely we must think ahead? This is getting to be a pensioner's planet. You can see the danger signs as well as I can. There are no young men and women anymore. The number of us capable of maintaining even the present low standard of living is declining year by year. We --"

"We can't do anything about it. Get that firmly into your mind and you'll feel better about the whole situation. The idea that man can do anything useful about his fate is an old idea. What do I mean? Yes, a fossil. It's something from another period.... We can't do anything. We just get carried along, like the water in this river."

"You've read a lot of things into the river," Graybeard said, half laughing.

Graybeard decides, a short while later, to go down river, towards the sea.

This book is good not only for its theme and its characters but also for its beautiful descriptions of the wild English countryside, reminiscent of the Middle Ages. Here Alldiss shows himself to be, without nearly so many pyrotechnics, at least equal to Durrell or even Lawrence. Why he should catch hold of another writer's shirt-tails when he is one of the finest writers of English prose since the war, escapes me. But it would be petty to look back on a few misfires (or, as I suspect, catch-pennies) when Alldiss shows himself capable of going onto even better things in the near future. From what I hear, "Graybeard" is already being bid for by several major film companies and it should do well both here and in the States. I hope the well deserved riches it should bring will enable him to slow down the production a bit and continue to produce some more like it. He's got plenty of time to do it.



Meanwhile back to the correspondents. Beryl Henley isn't sure that I'm real. To tell her the truth, I'm usually a bit uncertain myself. But, sincerely, Beryl, would you believe me if I told you that beneath this clownish and extrovert exterior there beats an even more clownish and extrovert heart that I am fighting to keep in? But no, no, I shouldn't burden you with my problems. Who cares if I'm a clown who wants to play Hamlet -- in sequined tights? Anyway, I resented that crack about 'larger than life', particularly since I've cut out the bread and potatoes.

All right, Buck Coulson, it's a bet. You get one of your abortionists and I'll get one of mine and let's see who can do the dirtiest job. I stick to what I said until you've got Medicare and legalised abortions. It would be indiscreet to quote actual case histories of the girls I've known who've had successful abortions (at a comparatively low cost, too) but I emphasise that the mental stress involved in havin' one is sufficient reason alone to make them legal. Sterilisation has its points and if people should change their minds they can adopt a kid (1 in 5 kids in London are illegitimate and a large percentage of those aren't wanted by their mothers..or fathers). But child bearing itself, whatever else you may say about it, is good for a woman in that it results in at least one complete spring cleaning of the system, an advantage which a man never gets. Still, there's always Alka Seltzer, I suppose.

Alan Burns voices that tired old suspicion, often expressed about painters, that experimental writers are trying to put one over on the public. It is up to Mr. Burns, surely, to sharpen his own judgement until he can tell if this is the case. However far-out a story (or painting) is, it usually conforms to certain standards applied to conventional writing and they can be judged against these standards at least.

Much, on a more personal note, as I admire Leiber, I'd like to point out that I wasn't trying to do what Leiber was doing in the Elric series which were, as far as I was concerned, experimental. If the experiment didn't come off (and there are only a few who thought it did) then I'll have to try again. Experiments don't necessarily involve 'disconnected' narrative or cyclical themes; they can just as easily consist of an attempt to blend two forms to serve a certain purpose. My problem is that most of the people who like the Elric stories like them because they like Sword and Sorcery and those who don't like Sword and Sorcery blindly leap to the conclusion that the Elric stories are just another set of ERB-Howard-type adventures. I've virtually abandoned this form now, anyway. Not that I think a great deal of anything I've written (apart from one unpublished short story). I'm not anywhere near old enough or skilled enough to write a decent novel yet, as I've said before. I regard the sf magazine field as one of the few fields where a writer can consistently sell his mistakes as he's learning his job. This gives him the advantage of earning while he's learning, and the disadvantage of gaining an early reputation on his youthful effusions. Whether this reputation is good or bad, he becomes identified with it, just as I am still identified with Elric (to my disgust), and finds it rather difficult to live down later.

Anyway, down with the unadventurous say I. It is better to have loved and lost...better to be a failure than a mediocrity. There's too much bloody caution and finicketty critic-careful calligraphy in the world as it is without adding to its awesome sum. Better to sink beneath one's own excrement, when the day of judgement comes, than to be sucked up into Henry James's anus.

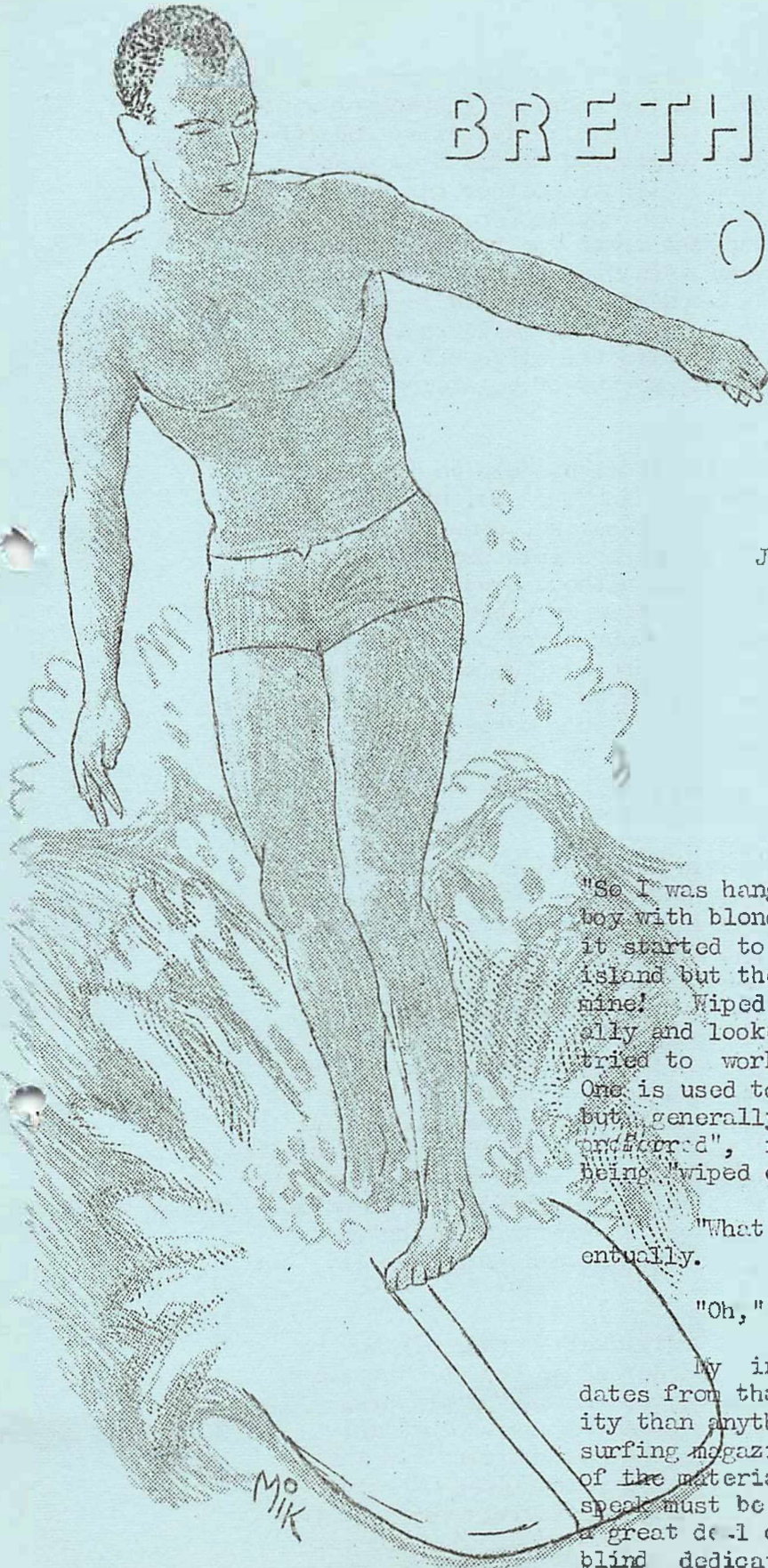
He said, with due care for the criticisms of the postal authorities.

-- Mike Moorcock

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BRETHREN OF THE COAST

John Baxter



"So I was hanging five on this ten footer," the boy with blonde hair said to my brother, "when it started to close out. I tried a standing island but the rail dipped and pow! Down the mine! Wiped out!" Philip nodded enthusiastically and looked admiring, while I for my part tried to work out exactly what had been said. One is used to hearing odd terminology in banks, but generally it deals with things like "5 on the floor", rather than something as violent as being "wiped out."

"What was that all about?" I asked eventually.

"Oh," Phil explained, "He's a surfer."

My interest in the cult of the surfer dates from that moment. More out of idle curiosity than anything else I borrowed a couple of surfing magazines and read through them. Much of the material was as incomprehensible as fan-speak must be to outsiders but I managed to get a great deal out of the magazines. Some of the blind dedication of the surfers rubbed off,

along with the slang and the odd technical terms. The photographs, usually of riders poised on a wave or frozen in the agonised instant of wipe-out, were something new; sporting shots with style, originality and off-beat humour. Everything about the sport interested me and I've spend many hours since following it up. Of course I have neither the build nor the energy to surf myself but if enthusiasm counts for anything, I am as much a surfer as any of them. The current craze for surfing among teenagers, the "surf music", stomping, surf t-shirts etc. has devalued the sport to a certain extent, just as the hot-rod craze devalued legitimate customising during the 50s, but the central core of enthusiasts and its particular ethos remains solid. The real surfers are different people, unconventional, expert, distant and, I think, worthy of consideration as a social group of considerable originality.

Perhaps some comment on the sport itself might help to put the surfers in perspective. To begin with basics, "surfing" is, of course, surf-board riding. It doesn't include surf life-saving, competition swimming, water ski-ing or any other water sport, with the possible exception of "body surfing" -- riding waves on one's stomach, without a board or float. Generally surfers use a 9 ft x 21 inch plastic foam or fibreglass board. Technique varies, but the trick is to manouvre your board out onto the face of the wave and travel across that face in as long a slide as possible. As the wave breaks or "closes out" the rider moves down to the base of the wave, banks around and using the momentum of the turn either moves further down wave or drops out over the back. The first object of the sport is, of course, to stay upright. The second, for experts only, is to "make the wave": ride it from first to last without an error and then drop out, still upright.

Conditions vary from day to day, even hour to hour, and from beach to beach. Every place has its riding spots where the waves are firmer and last longer but all are dependent to a large extent on the wind. If the wind is blowing off shore, onto the face of the breaking wave, the water is prevented from curling over and so the ride is longer and more exciting. On-shore winds result in crushers that can smash boards and riders with ease, although even the hollow waves held up by off-shore breezes can be dangerous. Surfers soon become shrewd judges of weather or they give up. The best possible combination of wind and wave occurs in Hawaii, where the winter wind makes places like Sunset Beach, Makaha, Waiea Bay and Banzai Beach, home of the infamous Banzai Pipeline, perfect surfing spots. Rolling in from the Pacific twenty and thirty feet high, the waves hit these beaches at over 40 mph, providing the best and most dangerous riding in the world. There are good medium to small surfs in the US, at Rincon, Huntington Beach and the Newport "Wedge" in California, in Peru and in Australia, but the experts gather at Hawaii.

Surfing is perhaps the last of the individual sports. In common with most forms of human activity, all sports depend on the participation of a number of people, and on co-operation between a team of players. Even ski-ing, hunting and mountain climbing demand expensive auxiliary equipment that can only be supplied by others, or special services that only trained people can supply. Ski-lifts, guides, suppliers of skis, guns, climbing equipment; all these detract from the individuality of the sports, even when only one actual participant is involved. Surfers are completely alone. They make their own boards, cutting and shaping the

polyurethane foam to suit their special requirements and often using as many as twelve boards a year as weather conditions change. Almost all the major surfers work in board shops; no other employment can supply the equipment and the time they need for their pursuit of the good waves. A few have "feather bed" jobs on the "sporting teams" of surfboard manufacturers or surfing magazines. Some are beach-bums moving from beach to beach, picking up enough in one town to move along to the next. They sleep on the beach or in their battered station wagons and are up at dawn, surfing. Whether they have jobs or not, all surfers remain outside society, forming a tightly knit, highly stratified unit from which outsiders are excluded almost completely by a slang and technical terminology that varies widely even from beach to beach. The only passport is expertise. In the final analysis, nothing matters to any of the surfers but the battle between man and ocean.

The philosophy of the surfers is seldom consciously expressed. A laconic off-hand attitude comes naturally to most top riders as a result of the strong caste system that exists inside the group. But occasionally in conversation or by their actions they betray some of the basic drives that motivate their devotion to the sport. All of the stress, the dedication that a good surfer must have to succeed, his absolute all-consuming interest in the skills needed to ride a wave. In this they resemble matadors, to whom nothing is more important than the particular type of pride and adulation that bullfighting gives to them. This comparison of surfing with the bullfight has been made a number of times by various commentators and is one that, I think, holds a great deal of truth. The two activities are very similar. Both involve the struggle of an individual against a brute force, both require a specialised kind of skill and a complete dedication to its perfection, and both have become highly formalised, with the natural movements imposed on the person being stylised and refined over the years into a ritual on the accurate performance of which a man is rated. In addition, both encourage a curious psychological attitude, and almost masochistic devotion to the activity that ignores all the discomfort and risk that it inevitably brings to the participant. Bullfighting offers death,



injury and disgrace; surfing, though less dangerous, means a wipe-out at the end of almost every wave, being engulfed in tons of water, buffeted, half drowned and perhaps injured. The average wipe-out lasts twenty seconds, but in high surf a man can be forced under for as long as three minutes. Injuries from boards are commonplace. The life of a surfer is seldom pleasant almost always misunderstood. Yet they go back again and again. Why? Perhaps because the pain is as much a part of the attraction as the pride, as close to virtue as the two sides of a coin.

One other aspect of surfing tends to put riders apart from other "normal" men and contribute to their peculiar insularity. Surfing depends primarily on balance. The centre of gravity of these boards is continually changing as the end shifts in and out of the wave and the tail fin catches the current. Slack wire tricks are easy compared with doing a head-dip or hanging five on a fast board. The result is that one of the prerequisites of good riding is grace. A reviewer once compared it with ballet dancing because of the tremendous sure footedness and balance that is required to surf well. In a society where a man's most precious possession is his masculine image, such skills are hard to learn and even harder to exhibit without contempt from others, yet they prefer to isolate themselves from society rather than give up surfing.

One of the most perfect pieces of surfing I have seen is in the film "Surfing the Southern Cross", where the camera follows "Lidget" Farrelly, then World Champion and an Australian, from the moment he catches a wave to the time more than two minutes later when he cuts out of it near the beach. The film, taken in profile with a telephoto lens, shows every tiny movement, every readjustment in balance in a way that no amount of personal observation can do. The image of Farrelly, wrists loose, hands dangling, the arms reduced to balances for the body, his whole attitude that of the dedicated expert oblivious to everything but his task, is one that I will never forget. This complete lack of self-consciousness indicates better than anything else the isolation of these people. One of them observed once "The next wave - or the Bomb. What else is there?" I can think of worse philosophies.

-- John Baxter

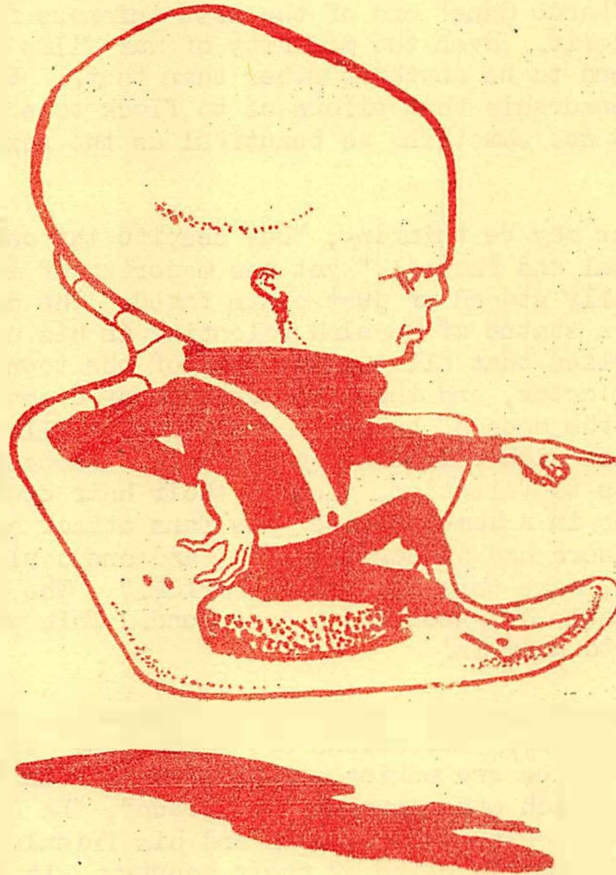
Z is the Zest and the Zip in the fiction
E is the Elegant English-type diction
N is the News about New publications
I 's the Ideas and Inside Informations
T is the Trouble the editor takes
H is his Howlers and silly mistakes

It's a pound
To a pennorth
You're bound
To like "Zenith"

From all good crudstalls, including "Hudson's"

THE FANALYTIC EYE

BY JIM LINWOOD



our noses in the dirt

A religious fanatic pounding his legs with pieces of broken glass....mutilated victims of shark attacks....American women tearing the clothes of Rossano Brazzi....East Indian women being fattened up in cages before they mate with their village headman. These are but a few of the terrible scenes contained in the Italian film "Mondo Cane", directed by Jacopetti, which purports to show the less human side of humanity.

In this review I do not intend to add to the idolatry praise that has been lauded onto this film; praise that has used such cliches as "It rubs our noses in the dirt" and "a truly shocking film". Instead I intend to prove that "Mondo Cane" is a phoney documentary containing sensational material aimed solely at titillating its audiences, protecting itself with a self-righteous commentary by Jacopetti. The film, and its successors "Women of the World" and "Mondo Cane 2", show cameo scenes of nastiness and human weakness taken on

location all over the world. Yet there is no attempt to relate these scenes to geographic order and the commentary makes no attempt to account for these strange folkways. It has a built in subliminal sneer. Aren't we disgusting, folks? But it's kinky, and we all know how much you like watching kinkiness folks.

In the shots of Chinese funeral festivities the narrative doesn't explain the thousand years of social evolution that go into its making, but implies that the death of a Chinaman is the excuse for an orgy and boozeup. This is typical of the anti-human callousness and nastiness for nastiness' sake that makes "Londo Cane" one of the most infamous films ever to pose as having artistic merit. Even the majority of war films which glorify inhumanity never pretend to be anything other than that. One wonders at the mechanics of a censorship that allows us to flock to scenes of revulsion, and yet forbids us to see something as beautiful as the sex act in Bergman's "The Silence".

The reader may be thinking, "But despite the commentary, the scenes themselves are real and factual," yet the majority of material in "Londo Cane" was either carefully staged or just plain faked. The opening sequence shows the unveiling of a statue of Rudolph Valentino in his home town of Calabria. The narrative implied that all the youngmen of the town bear a strong resemblance to the dead actor, and that the presence of a movie camera brought them out in droves in the hope of being 'spotted'. Yet all the youngmen in close up had in fact no ties with Valentino or Calabria. Jacopetti had hand picked them for their likeness to Valentino, glossed their hair down, and shot the whole series of closeups in a Rome studio! The fans attack on Brazzi was obviously staged ("our camera had hidden itself") and one could almost hear Jacopetti saying "OK, girls, make this look real, ACTION!" The credit title shots show a dog being forceable dragged into a dog pound. This was carefully staged to show our cruelty to animals!

The pseudo-documentary industry has become big money for Italian directors and producers. Imitations of "Londo Cane" such as "Taboo" and the "World at Night" series are making generous profits in their largest consumer Britain. Studios which once gave us "La Strada", "La Dolce Vita" and "La Notte" are giving priority to Jacopetti and his friends who can hardly be said to represent the cinematic elite of their country. It is as if British studios turned over to the production of nothing else than James Bond thrillers and Carry On Rubbish.

The worst aspect of "Londo Cane" is that many people have been taken in by it and come away believing they have witnessed a revaluation of human nature, while all they have seen was nothing more than a snob's Candid Camera.

the aliens are among us

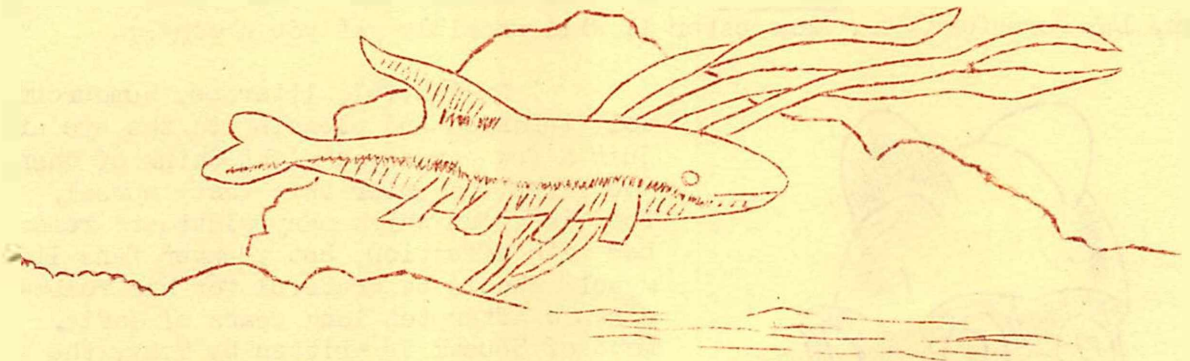
In the latest issue of his flyer "M", Eric Bentcliffe has said "Nuts" to the fan who thought the Alien Group's convention film show was "amateurish and embarrassing". I wholeheartedly echo this invective.

Before the show I felt dubious about what we were to see. I had been

deliberately misled by the advance publicity to expect goshwow imitation horror movies. And so, myself and about a hundred others were pleasantly surprised. The films were entirely unpretentious, outrageously hammed up and most important of all, entertaining. They abounded with many little faults, mainly the timing of gags and overdoing custard pie antics, but the makers realise these only too well and will improve in their future productions. An example of this was in "Son of God illa" where the monster was, as a final resort, shown a photo of author Ted Tubb. Unfortunately this ploy was drawn out for several minutes instead of the abrupt finish one would expect a second after the photo was shown. A good half of the films would have been better if they hadn't displayed obvious signs of being rushed for the con. But I'm nit-picking...

What the critics of the Aliens expected were first class smateur films verging on professionalism. What they apparently didn't want was a group of films made for the heck of it. They got the latter. Under stiffening con-hall conditions fans want their intellect appealed to least of all. It is much more in the spirit of the con to see a film of Mike Moorcock flinging custard pies at Al Rispin or Lang Jones having his fingernails pared by Ella Parker.

I personally think the con-committee acted with great insight in donating a third of the con profits to the Aliens' funds and in commissioning a film for the World Con. With a few rough spots ironed out of their technique and expert help from Eric Bentscliffe and Norman Shorrocks, the Aliens' next production should be something worth looking forward to.



abreast of the times

Mrs. Joan Roe of Toronto had been deserted by her husband and left to care for their three children. For months she had been living on National Assistance and looked forward with dread to the coming winter and the problem of protecting her children against the bitter Canadian cold. But for the moment Toronto was enjoying one of its hottest summers and speculation was rife as to how many of the city's women would adopt the latest American fashion - the topless dress. To encourage this new mode a certain store offered half an hour's free shopping to its first woman customer to expose her breasts. Mrs. Roe was endowed with a certain amount of the

fair sex's modesty, but the thought of stacks of clothes for her children attracted her to the store attired only in the bottom half of a bikini. And so the store honoured its offer by allowing Mrs. Roe to hectically stuff her shopping bag with clothes, almost nude and highly embarrassed.

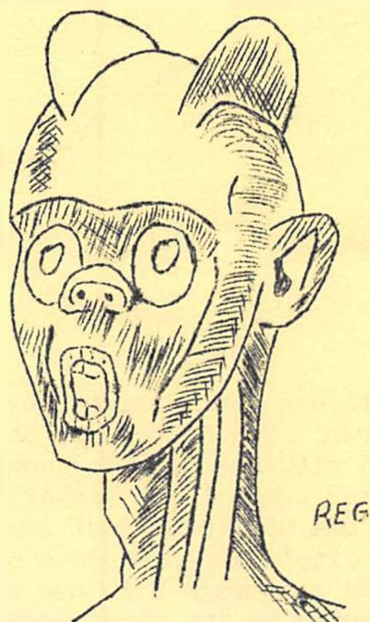
At the same time that Mrs. Roe was making great sacrifices for her children's welfare, a North London used car dealer was having almost identical thoughts to those of the Toronto store manager. In his yard dwelt an old Austin in which no one took any interest, even at a give away price of fifty pounds. And so the offer was made that the car would be sold for five pounds to the first young lady to sit in the car for thirty minutes in a topless dress. An unnamed young lady came forward to fulfill the terms and claimed the Austin.

Now apart from the similarities of these two true stories it is poor reflection on British generosity and fair play. Canadians were willing to lose a few dollars worth of goods for the pleasure of seeing the exposed breasts of Mrs. Roe. Yet Londoners would only offer a 90% reduction on a clapped out old Austin to enjoy the same pleasurable emotions.

As if to prove that it also had a sense of humour to go with its previous generosity (though maybe it hoped to get back some of the lost dollars) the same Toronto store has recently offered topless and bottomless bikinis. Over a hundred women left the store happily clutching their prize - an empty box.

fanzines from all over

SQUEAK 2 (No rates listed, but a nice letter to Tony Glynn, 144 Beresford St., Manchester 14 will possibly get you a copy.)



Delightful, literate, humorous, well informed and pleasing to the eye are just a few words you might think of when you first encounter this tasty morsel. Tony is a fan which many oldtimers remember with affection, but younger fans like myself should be grateful for his reappearance after ten long years of Gafis. Most of Squeak is written by Tony, the only outside contributor is Bob Keys who tells of his travels in the Orient. The rest of the ish has Tony rambling about a variety of subjects; Ireland, Manchester, his hilarious adventures as a cinema projectionist, the Brontes and a powerful review of a book entitled "The Donkey". In the centre of the zine are some charming drawings in the manner of a child's colouring book which would serve this purpose and still be entertaining to adults.

A zine like this is enough to make most faneds give up in despair. But they can console themselves with the knowledge that Wony is a professional writer and that the immaculate production is likewise professional. This is just the sort of fanzine I like to leave around for my non-fan friends to see. Definitely recommended.

GESTALT 8 (1/6 and the usual from Jim Marshall, 32 Millway, Sherriff Hill, Gateshead.)

Another oldtimer, but not on the same level as SMU AF. Apart from the Perry Goon story the only interesting item is the return of Bushy Hedge (anonymity is an advantage when writing material as crude as this) who suggests that LS be retitled F & SF (Filth and Silly Fuckers), which is hilarious considering that the three pages following Bushy's bit are full of childish smut and obscenity! Generally mediocre, but the McIntyre covers alone make it worth the price.

APOLAVE 1 (35¢, LoC or contrib to Joe Filati, 111 South Highland Ave., Pearl River, New York 10965.)

About the biggest, and certainly one of the best, fmz at the moment, filling the gap left a few years ago by the demise of Donaho's HABAKHUK. Joe's editorial is a report of a meeting he attended, at which General Edwin Walker spoke, which is funny even without Joe pointing out how funny are the quotes. Joe also writes in favour of US fans returning their Pacificon 11 membership cards with letters of disaffiliation like his own which he reprints. Bob Tucker has a few pages in which he suggests that wrestling matches between feuding fans and rumbles between poor faneds and poor fmz reviewers should take the place of the usual boring con items. He should have been at Peterborough this year. Other notable items are Ray Nelson and Ted White on jazz. Ray dissects beat music favourably and hints that when intellectuals start digging it it will be as dead as folk music. Buck Coulson, who writes on the folk scene, is not an intellectual trend addict, and in his record reviews doesn't fall into the trap of determining what is ethnic and what is not - an annoying trend with many snobby folk 'experts' over here. Harlan Allison (pro of Burke's Law fame) writes on Harlan Allison and there are many more goodies in this ish which is one of the best publications I've seen for some time.

LOGONA EN-URL 7 (25¢, trade or LoC, but no subs, from Tom Perry, 4018 Laurel Ave., Omaha 11, Nebraska, USA.)

A very personal zine, whose free-wheeling nature is marred by some sobering reflections on the 'Pan X' affair, which is the latest cover name for the Walter Green affair. There is Walt Willis being ambiguous about it in a few paragraphs on page one, but he is so right. Walt is his usual witty self in The Karp., this is followed by a hilarious satire on the reviewing of sorcon fanzines, called The Vice Geis and then the letter col dealing mainly with Pan X. The first letter is from Bill Donaho, and for me to see the editor of a fine zine like Habakuk writing stuff like this and being in the

thick of the affair is a sad disappointment. Joe Pilati inaugurates a new fannish game called Loving Furniture in which one invents sentences like "When I moved furniture for Buck Coulson I learned all about unmitigated gall."

ZENITH 6 (1/6 or trade with larger fanzines from P. R. Weston, 9 Porlock Cres., Northfield, B'ham.)

The new wave's wonderzine and a vast improvement on its humble beginnings. It has all its major faults ironed out yet is still vaguely disappointing after the excellent 10. 5. On the reprint side we have Arthur Clarke on early sf, Fritz Leiber with fiction and snippets of Eney from Spec Review. Original material includes Willis's Panorama captured from Nebula, Ray Peters on Budry's early works and seemingly endless book and zine reviews by Terry Jeeves, Rog Peyton, Deryl Henley and Ed James. Terry's reviews appear to be somewhat harsh, and, although they are justified, I feel that Terry should write more on something he likes rather than be forced to say 'crud' to the majority of present magazine sf. (although he seems to have started something with his Abolish Cordwainer Smith Society.) The lettercol is uniformly drab, apart from a delicious missive from Bill Temple slamming into Terry for a bad review he gave one of his stories. The artwork by Eddie and Atom is among the best currently available and new artist Dick Howett deserves a special mention as new fanartists of his ability are a rarity these days.

LIGHTHOUSE 10 (TAF candidate Terry Carr's Papazine at 25¢, trade or LoC from 41 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, NY 11201.)

A pleasant fmz that brings back memories of one of my favourite fanzines, Innuendo. It kicks off with ten pages of extracts from some of George Metzger's letters, a fair example of which can be found in the lettercol of this LS. Starting in August '63, he chronicles his experiences in the 'zen mine' living with a bunch of whites adopting the Red Indian way of life, and goes on to describe his first few months in the army. To say that Geo is 'one hell of a guy' is a big understatement: his down to earth and unpretentious ramblings are the highlight of this ish. Terry's wife, Carol, relates her experiences as secretary to a 'literary agent' and Pete Graham writes an interesting column as well as some typical Papa mailing comments. Walt Breen talks about Les Swingle Singers and Bach and finally, by way of an editorial, is Terry's Tailgate Ramble, in which he discusses the financial side of sf.

CHARLE VIN (a one shot by John Berry and Arthur Thomson, available from Ella Parker, 43 William Dunbar House, Albert Rd, N' 6 at 2/6 a time and all proceeds go to TAF.)

A glossy 70 page one shot featuring some of the best material from the happy and prolific collaboration of John Berry and Arthur Thomson. Among the many Atomillos are four that at a brief glance appear to be ink originals included specially for oneself, but in fact

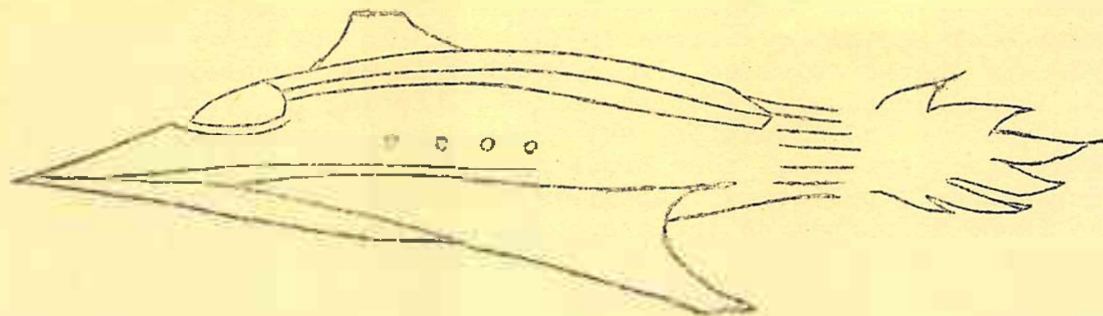
they are Arthur's attempt at a new multilith process where mastering is complicated by not being able to see what you are drawing! Berry's items range through humour, light sf and stories about ATom and Berry.

LINK 1 (from Beryl Henley, 53 The Pearnings, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcs. No rates given.)

At first glance this looks like a revival of FEMIZINE as out of the four contributors the only male is Chris Allerton. Three recent additions to femmefandom share the credits in this hotch-potch of zany humour. Beryl's conversational style of writing saves what could easily have been rather in-groupish chunterings, although she does seem to write as if the fanzine has only a circulation of ten. Mary Reed introduces beat groups into fandom proper and certainly lives up to her mad letter-writer tag. Her style won't suit everyone's taste - but I laughed. "Ringo Fakespeare" has part one of a two part play called "One Hundred and One Unicorns", which brings back a standard of humour lacking since George Locke became Gordon Walters. Doreen Parker defends psi, or at least the title is "A Psionic Defence", but she just mentions novels with parapsychological themes. This is a pleasant little zine with much promise of joining the ranks of such femmedited zines as Orion and Scottishe.

CON 1 (L/6 from Chris Priest, "Seamways", Willow Close, Doddinghurst, Brentwood, Essex.)

One of the best first ishs for many years, displaying a maturity that is usually reached only by the fourth or fifth ish. Everything, except for a short story, is written by Chris in a cool logical style that covers borderline scientific themes, "pop" astronomy and sf developments. The short story is very slightly above the usual rut of fmz sf, and for this alone Phil Harbottle deserves praise. Art by Dick Howett is crisp and original, although he does remind me of Dan Adkins. Both this zine and Link are the first off the SSFA's PaDs (Publishing and Distributing Service) production line and the fears I had about scores of similar fanzines flooding fandom have been quickly dispelled. No two fmz could be as different as these, especially in appearance.



DOUBT 11 1 (from Graham Hall, c/o "Tewkesbur Register", 8 High Street, Tewkesbury, Glos.)

Undoubtedly one of the best of the new wave zines, since the editor relates and admits, his own limitations. It contains some good artwork from Brian McCabe and some rubbish from Mike Higgs. There is a mixed bag of contents in this zine: a humorous piece by Dave Wood that's funny when you consider how it might have been written, and a serious piece from Charlie Platt that's funny anyway. Archie Mercer's contribution "The Thorne Smith Tradition" was welcome enough to me - maybe that's because I think Thorne Smith's writings have been sadly neglected in fandom. There is a reprint of a 1946 Bob Bloch story that was handled by different people both before and after it originally saw publication in a much better manner. The same comments might be made about the editor's piece on the back page where he stretches out to half a page the "take me to your ladder" joke. The laughter raiser of the issue is "A Madness from the vaults" by J. Ramsey Campbell. If this is a sample of the sort of writing we may expect in his Arkham House collection, the book should be worth buying just for the contemptuous laughs you could get out of it. I have never read anything which combines in such a juvenile manner Lovecraft and Howard. Mike Moorcock could have written it before he could read. In a preceeding author's note, Campbell mumbles something about "crystalisers of dreams", the story itself is a crystallisation of nightmare. It could have been handled by a more competent but or in a more realistic manner. Some of the ideas behind the story are quite logical -- but written by Campbell the whole thing, for me at least, falls flat. Apart from all that, DOUBT is well worth a try, and I forecast that Graham Hall will be publishing fazines among the best, one of these days.

-- Dick Ellingsworth

Parafalia 11 (Bruce Burn's fazine from 12 Myber Rd., Wellington, N.Z. or from publisher Ken Cheslin.)

One can get a good idea of the type of personal fmz this is from its first line "Only once have I tried Marijuana...", and the following editorial describes Bruce's experiences without the sensationalism that you might expect from someone writing about his first encounter with narcotics. Bruce prints the results of two fangames based on Gillis's "Enchanted Duplicator" - Jophan's Quest and a new Burn game called Convention Gaga. Pat Kearney has a short column which is rather better than the sort of material he has written previously as it is nearer to the amusing style Pat adopts in conversation. This is followed by a long account by Bruce of his arrival in Britain a few years back and his reactions to the fans who met him - although he confuses characteristics with character in his assessment of them. The issue closes with a story called "Shipping Boy" about the conflict of education and tradition, set during the Kenya Troubles. I've always been surprised that Bruce has never managed to have his stories professionally published, especially when he can write as well as this. The issue is marred by the thoughtless printing of some personal letters to Bruce. One, by Al Rispin, might be fair comment in a private letter, but being circulated like this makes it appear caty and spiteful. Bruce should draw the line between private and fannish lives.

BEYOND 7 (The first omnish produced by Charles Platt, 18E, Fitzjohns Avenue, London N 3, for 2/3 this issue.)

Beyond appears to have made quite a few steps toward maturity over its last few issues, acquiring a social-conscience on the way. In his editorial, despite the for idle title of "Charles Platt dissects Society", Charles blasts off about the pressures placed on the individual to conform to the rest of society and finished by asking the reader if he's worn a topless dress lately. Although it is 30 years since this sort of statement of identity was popular among the young intellectuals, I'm sure Charles feels all the better for it.

Following this we have a selection of colour pages done in different processes, fan fiction, fan poetry and fanzine reviews. The only trouble with these seems to be that Charles is reviewing the editor's personalities and not their fanzines. The lettercol is really alive, all brimming over with youthful over-indulgence. Chief targets for hate are Beryl Henley and Mike Moorcock. I'm pleased to see that several fans have seen through Moorcock's Emperor's New Clothes, but poor Beryl....it must be hard to feel the pressures of society in the Beyond lettercol.

In true Spinge tradition, part 2 of this mammoth issue begins with a conrep from Peter White. He must be an intellectual because he begins "In one of Satre's plays, a man says to another....", and as everyone knows Satre is just about the most intellectual name one can drop at present. What follows is less a conrep and more an essay on how not to write a conrep.

In "henley" Charles Platt visits a mental-hospital and is all sweetness and light about it. However you find a social conscience you're also bound to find Pat Kearney who uses such words in a survey of George Orwell, and is able to twist it so much, that he is able to introduce Henry Miller into the article without raising a prudish eyebrow. But Kearney cannot be forgiven for assuming that Orwell had the same politics as Miller. After Alan Dodd, looking rather lost in here, writing about cartoons on the Jacey circuit, come a couple of pop-sociological essays. One, entitled "Sociology and SP", closes with a piece of smaltz about a man being condemned to live in deep underground cellars, and trudgling the barren surface cropping the stunted nettles of his woe. This type of article is similar to a lecturer, who after a long and boring lecture, suddenly indecently exposes himself.

Boy May, like Alan Dodd, is quite out of place here writing a good piece about the Marvel Comics Group. But after that we are back with Peter White who writes about Amis, making him the great rebel against middle class pretensions. With a better knowledge of his subject, rather than writing his own views around a photo's entry, Peter might have made some more truthful guesses about this pompous old bore.

Beyond is much improved and certainly worthwhile reading, but it lacks that certain snail and humour that distinguishes an excellent fanzine from merely good.

outing the sf in the BA

Taking time out from discussing such controversial and deadly serious problems as tranquilising criminals and the dangers of kissing, the British Association meeting at Southampton University last August had on its agenda and interesting diversion: Science Fiction as an indication of future scientific trends.

Dr. Derwent A. Mercer, Physics lecturer at the University, began the discussion by speculating that an alien space probe has been circling the earth for some time monitoring radio transmissions and sending information back to its home planet. We should, suggested Dr. Mercer, concentrate on sending signals into space rather than receiving them, although we may have to wait for over 50 years for a reply. This space probe, concluded the doctor, might have been responsible for the mysterious delayed radio signals of the 1930's when some radio transmissions were received several months after they were propagated.

Botanist, Professor W.T. Williams, went even further than the Observer's sf reviewer and fan professional, Kingsley Amis, by admitting that PTL and Bug Eyed Monsters are possible, but fell into line with Hell's cartographer by saying that time travel is impossible.

The Botanist continued daringly to postulate the existence of man-like creatures swimming in the oceans of liquid ammonia on Jupiter and Saturn and rock men living on Mercury. Any BE is possible, he said, provided it is large enough to carry sufficient brain. Here he assumed that a BE must have human or more than human intelligence and not be plain stupid as most fictional BEs usually seem.

Dr. Mercer said later in a BBC interview that most scientists are inclined to dismiss sf stories because of a single logical flaw. Yet an open minded scientist with a narrow view of the universe might be shaken by the concepts of sf. It is, he said, the conformity to the present accepted notions of science that makes most scientists unsuccessful writers in the field. Those with a vague scientific education are often the best writers.

-- Jim Linwood

oo o O o oo

For a real smooooooooooth skin -

Always wash with -

SANDPAPER

You'll notice the difference at once!

oo o O o oo

ORDER OF BATH

British Variety by Beryl Henley

A certain doctor, writing whimsically in a national newspaper on the subjects of husbands and health, recommends ten minutes' exercise every morning in the bathroom. This gentleman should be informed of two salient facts: (a) many homes in twentieth century Britain have no bathroom, and (b) in many of the better equipped houses, the bathroom is the coldest, most cheerless room in the place.

One can only marvel at the intelligence - or rather, lack of it - of the people who design these homes. Someone should break it to them gently that the bathroom is the only room in the house where one habitually removes all one's clothes, and therefore, in this often grim climate of ours, it might be a good idea to provide some warmth. Even installing the airing cupboard in the bathroom is better than nothing; the cupboard door can be left open, emitting warm air, and bath towels can, perhaps, be laid on top of the hot-water tank.

A warm bath after a hard day's night is - or should be - one of the major joys of a civilised existence. All too often it is an ordeal. You sit in the bath, assailed by an icy draught through the overflow, dreading the moment when you must leave the fast cooling water. By a mammoth effort of will, you finally get out and stand, wet and goose-fleshed, grabbing a cold bath-towel and wishing fervently that there wasn't quite so much of you to dry.

The Council of a certain Midlands town (and possibly other local authorities do the same thing), rents out small refrigerators to its tenants for a few shillings a week. When asked if she wanted to avail herself of this amenity, one tenant replied tartly: "What do I want with a fridge? I've got the bathroom!" Asked if she was joking, she made it plain that she was not. When she makes a jelly, blancmange or similar dessert, the bowl containing the mixture is placed in the bathroom wash-basin where it always sets quickly and without trouble.

At such times as Christmas, when poultry, meat, butter, eggs etc, have to be bought in larger quantities than usual and kept for some days until required, all these are kept in the bathroom, covered as necessary until needed. "Why not?" she demands. "It's the coldest room in the house!"

In view of the fact that our summers (hah!) are usually the subject of bitter jokes, and our winters are just plain bitter (to say nothing of prolonged), this is a ludicrous state of affairs. Shivering bathers testify with aching nostalgia, remembering the bath-nights of childhood, when mother built the kitchen fire halfway up the chimney, and they splashed blissfully in the old zinc bath by the fire.

Probably the doctor mentioned earlier is as concerned as the rest of his colleagues about the high incidence of chronic bronchitis and allied respiratory afflictions in this country. They all advise that the bedroom should be well warmed before retiring. They make no mention of the rigours of the bathroom.

The Government makes grants to people wishing to install bathrooms in their homes, and rightly so. But, if you live in an old house, and are considering availing yourself of this grant, think carefully before you exchange your kitchen bath for the status symbol of "a proper bathroom." You may be thinking of the amount of work it will save: you may do lore all the business of filling boiler, waiting for the water to heat, hauling out the zinc bath, filling it, emptying it afterwards and cleaning up the kitchen floor. You may be eagerly anticipating the convenience of walking into your new bathroom and simply turning on a tap, and having nothing to do afterwards but pull out a plug.

Well, think again. If you are determined to have a "proper bathroom", make sure that you have also some means of heating it - preferably not electrical (ever heard of winter power cuts?). Otherwise you may, one winter's night, walk into your beautiful new bathroom and, being met by a blast of icy air, retreat hastily into the kitchen, hoping that the old zinc bath is still watertight.

(Remember all the jokes about keeping coal in the bath? Perhaps they came out of an unconscious association of ideas, arising from the memory of those childhood baths in front of a coal fire?)

And, sitting there in comfort, you may wonder why the planners of our homes chose to follow Spartan ideas about bathing, instead of the Roman example. The latter believed that taking a bath should be a leisurely and luxurious pleasure, and not a self inflicted torture. Communal, too, as in Japan? Soft? Decadent? Since when was it either to be clean? And who is going to bathe more frequently - the people to whom it is a pleasure, or those to whom it is a joyless necessity?

One of the most hilarious "Staptoe" programmes concerned Harold's ambition to build a bathroom. "Dad" would have nothing to do with it, and insisted on his usual custom of bathing downstairs in front of the fire. There he sat, wearing his battered old Homberg, keeping his socks on because they, too, needed a wash, and eating his dinner off a tray laid across the edges of the bath. (Dropping the picked onions in the water and fishing for them with a fork stabbing himself in unspecified portions of his anatomy, too...) It was screamingly funny, yes - but "Dad" was comfortably enjoying himself.

I reckon it's all Peter Lind Hayes' fault. "Too much bathin'll weaken yer..." Let him and his ilk be like chilled vodka - cold and strong - if they want to. Me, I'd rather be like British Railways tea. Warm and weak....

-- Beryl Henley



CUTTING REMARKS

J. CAWTHORN

I'll begin with the materials and some of the methods. I use an old mirror laid on a drawing board as a cutting surface. Under the mirror I place the backing sheet of the stencil and over it the waxed sheet. Between the waxed sheet and the mirror comes a single thickness of newsprint or similar paper and directly under the waxed sheet is the pencil sketch. This pencil sketch is usually on cartridge paper and forms the basis of the illustration. I then stretch the waxed sheet as tautly as possible until the sketch can be seen fairly clearly through it and secure the lower corners to the board with drawing pins. If the width of your mirror is greater than the stencil and it is impossible to use pins to fasten the stencil I would suggest using sticky tape. The ideal arrangement, for tracing purposes, is to put the stencil on a sheet of clear glass with a strong light behind it. Here the sketch is just placed between the two stencil sheets. Some fans, I believe, hold the whole affair against a windowpane so that they can trace by daylight, which is ingenious if not relaxing.

After tracing so much of the sketch as can be seen, using a 2B or softer grade pencil on the wax so as not to cut it, I unpin the stencil, remove the sketch, and add to the tracing whatever details have been missed out. I then place a black carbon under the stencil and pin the ends down as tautly as the sheet will bear. Cutting then begins. The pencil sketch cannot give a wholly accurate idea of how the stencilled illo will look, and so I add or omit various things in the course of cutting. My sketches, quite often, are only the bare framework of the completed stencil.

For cutting, and for all shading, I use a fairly thick pointed Gestetner stylus, a fine pointed stylus made by Arthur Thomson and a Gestetner wheel pen. Lethargy has prevented me from acquiring a wider range of instruments, although Gestetner's prices had something to do with it, too. There are a number of surfaces in addition to the standard shading plates which can produce interesting effects (rough sandpaper, for example) though I haven't actually tried them myself. In addition to being lethargic and tightfisted, I am also conservative.

If you'll now turn your attention to the illustration of the facing page I'd like to raise some points about it myself, and also to answer some of the points raised by Dave and Mike Higgs.

The size of the illustration is another sign of my lethargy. It's small to avoid a lot of work.

Framing my illos is largely force of habit, I admit, though in this instance, however, I felt that the decorative, non-realistic treatment required a frame. I find support for this view in "Tree and Leaf", which I read shortly after cutting this illo. Here Tolkien makes the point that

all such work needs a definite boundary. He then qualifies this by saying that he considers fantasy art, in general, to be not a Good Thing. This almost puts me out of a job!

Dave wonders how I work up these crazy ideas. Well, in the preparatory sketches I disregard the medium and go for an effective composition. After this I have to take into account the limitations of the stencil medium and modify the picture accordingly. I avoid large areas of solid black and heavy shading for example. Also heavy lines should not cut across each other. You may notice that the lines of this frame do not quite meet at the corners. I once watched a fan editor patiently ruling off a frame for an article heading only to have the entire rectangle fall clean out of the stencil when he held it up! I'm very wary of this as I'd hate to have to cut this stencil again.

The type of stencil you use depends on the sort of work you want to do. I originally preferred Roneo stencils, considering Gestetner to be hard, unsympathetic and tending to tear. Now I find that Gestetner seem best and Roneo are too soft for really detailed work. Though an artists choice of stencil is usually limited to what he gets sent by the editor.

I don't make very much use of shading plates myself. Though I would suggest that anyone going into fanzines in a big way would be sensible to collect a good range of shading plates and lettering guides. These guides are particularly useful if you find lettering a chore rather than a pleasure. I borrowed a shading plate from Alan Burns when illoing NORTHLIGHT, and put the carbon over it 'gooey side up' without any ill-effect. In fact this may be an advantage as you can see more accurately where the shading is coming and if it's coming at all.

I never use correcting fluid. Small errors can usually be made to look intentional (!) and with really large errors I scrap the stencil and begin again.

I'd like to end on a vaguely pessimistic note. Stencilling was originally a novelty and a challenge; now it is something of a drag. Not because I've come anywhere near covering all the possibilities; I simply want to give more time to working in other media, for Fun and Profit.

-- Jim Cawthorn

Terry Teeves
COMMENTS

Dave has asked me to say what changes I'd have made with this excellent Jim Cawthorn illo if I'd have been doing it myself, and how I'd have maltreated the stencil. I'm not going to try to criticise any point of Jim's art style

I hasten to add, but merely to natter about differences in technique. For the record, I'm a great admirer of all Jim's artwork, and the accompanying specimen is no exception. I know that if I'd have tried the result would have been very different....

This illo is not intended to illustrate anything in particular so I cannot comment on its story veracity. I'll take it as a picture. It is a good illo by any standards, but in this case not up to Jim's top grade as it tends to be over cluttered (not in itself a fault) inasmuch as the detail of monster and aliens tend to merge together.

Where would I make my pictorial change? I'd either lower the alien's left arm (though we would normally think of the right being the sword arm) or body in order to bring all the sword into the picture. As it is, the sword, which should be the focal point, is lacking in eye appeal. As for the rest of the picture, I only wish I could emulate it. The monster is superb and the aliens different, yet believable.

As to stencil and shading technique. I would have simplified the helmet tracery into metallic reflection lines. The flamboyant decoration of the helmet I'd have used for the cloak where I feel it would be more suitable. The rest of the swordsman's figure I'd have left as it is, except for darkening the left hand line of the body more (and lightening the monster slightly) in order to make a clear distinction between the two figures.

The mounted warrior needs no change, but I'd have reduced the shield size, clarified its outline and made the dark design much darker (or linear) to give a better contrast with the standing alien, into whom it tends to merge. The background figure I would have made far lighter to reduce the 'key', to throw the scene back and thus give added depth to the perspective of the scene. My own preference is always for reduced and more positive use of shading.

This then is an idea of what changes I would like to have made in Jim's illo...I'd like to have made them, but I hasten to add that I couldn't, nor could I have produced the illo in the first place. I just haven't the skill.

-- Terry Jeeves

Marjorie Smith CRITICISES

The criticism of a painting or picture is a more nebulous affair than the criticism of a piece of written work. Literary criticism depends to a great extent upon analysis and the appeal it has to the critic is often a secondary consideration. But with visual forms criticism is usually on an emotional level. He likes or dislikes according to his tastes and how these are satisfied by the definitive stimulus given by the picture.

I've made this point to try and show that the notorious 'man in the street' has just as much right and justification to criticise art as the dilettante and collector. And now, disguising myself heavily as that same man in the street (rather difficult for a woman) I'll view with more confidence the prospect of criticising Jim's illo. When Dave first suggested it, I gasped at the idea of me criticising Cawthorn the Great.

The first noticeable thing, and the most pleasing for me, was the helmet and the profile of the main figure. The line of both suggests super-strength, a perfect being. As far as I am concerned, Jim could have left it at just that. The remainder of the picture doesn't live up to this creature and crowds irrelevantly in the background.

As the illo doesn't have any connection with a particular story I can let my imagination run riot. Does the knight like character mounted on his thoroughbred amphibian, have any connection with the hero figure? Does the girl wish the rider would not block her view of this eligible gentleman?

I hesitate to carp at an anatomical detail. After all, my sense of wonder should allow me to accept the impossible. Poets are permitted license, so why not artists the improbable? However, for those concerned with body structure, it can be argued that the position of the magnificent head is set too far over on the shoulders. So what! It would be a dull world if all illustrations were of medical text-book standard and I feel I'm probably being hypercritical. Unless a drawing is thrown out of line by the intrusion of the impossible, its use should not really be argued.

I think that had Jim carried on that oblique line started by the crest of the helmet and continued the sloping profile by dropping the sword arm, so that it pointed down, the effect might be less cluttered. Had this been done, the grouping of the knight, his pet, and the girl might have been seen to better advantage.

I've seen Jim sketch. He sketches quickly, precisely, using blocks of light and shade to create accurate and moving situations. I don't think this particular illo is worthy of that inspired genius shown by Jim Cawthorn. His technique of stenciling is experienced and varied, filling one afraid of virgin stencils with awe. As I said, the main figure is good, but there seems to be a lack of balance, no definite line in the composition of the drawing. This may be due to it not illustrating any particular scene.

Thus saying, I take my leave humbly, having derived a great deal of pleasure from that elegant profile, surmounted by the sweeping lines of the helmet, and bearing in mind that it's just a ghoddam hobby, anyway.

-- Marjorie Smith

This is as good a place as any to mention that the artists who have illustrated the rest of this issue would also like some specific criticism. It's not all that difficult to go beyond the 'liked' - 'disliked' stage and give an artist some real encouragement for all the time and effort he's put into his work.



THE MAGIC MAKER

Recently a great deal of interest has been shown in the work of the American science fantasy writer Cordwainer Smith. Many things have been written and said about him, some remarkably wild. Mike Moorcock has said that he is one of the few science fiction writers really worth reading, while Terry Jeeves has stated rather aggressively that his work is sloshy and sick making. Both

An Appreciation of Cordwainer Smith by Peter White

opinions are valid insofar as they are sincere, but it might be interesting to attempt some sort of objective criticism of Smith as a writer, and to make a brief analysis of his work.

In a short introduction to his collection of stories "You Will Never Be The Same" Smith wrote:

"Everyone is a Lear, an Othello, a Desdemona, a Prospero, a Caliban - more wonderful than a moon rocket, more complicated than an H-bomb, more complicated than a tropical hurricane. It is the job of the writer to seize the wonders and let the reader see Mankind within himself."

This is certainly a magnificent sentiment, and one all too rare in science fiction. But in fact this is not what Smith, even at his best, achieves. And his work shows little internal evidence that he has even attempted to "let the reader see Mankind within himself". Theodore Sturgeon is surely the only sf writer who has consistently attempted this, and when Sturgeon brings it off successfully, as in his brilliant cynical novel "Some of Your Blood", it is by seizing the horrors rather than the wonders. Nor does Smith characterise like Shakespeare. In his work there are no Lears, Othellos, Desdemonas, Prosperos or Calibans. There are no people. There is no Mankind.

In fact, Smith is a myth-maker, and the primary appeal of his work is to the unconscious mind. He creates a series of symbolic images that appeal subconsciously, and only in a very superficial sense can Smith be said to tell a story in his work. This symbolism can be detected not only by its effect on us, but because the narrative progresses from image to image in a series of irrational associations only thinly covered by the plot line. Such irrational associations occur whenever there is unconscious symbolism, but in the large body of what one might call "mythological sf" they are obscured by systems of pseudo-scientific conventions. Thus in much sf the real material is weakened by the conventions. Smith's strength is his refusal to allow this dilution. Although his images lack the tremendous psychological power of Ballard's, for example, they are stimulating and enjoyable, and it would seem artistically valid to create them. One cannot help noticing that, although Smith does not deliberately express any philosophy, the general feeling of his work suggests that he is right wing and ultra conservative.

Smith has been compared with Ray Bradbury, and in some ways the two writers are rather alike. Both tend to support their mytho-poetry by evoking nostalgia, usually a nostalgia of childhood. But even in his horror stories Bradbury's imagery is often rather cosy; childhood nostalgia of warm summer nights, autumn leaves, spring morning romps with the dog, warm fire-sides and mamma's cosy old knee. Smith's imagery is both warm and lonely, bittersweet, Romantic in the true sense. Here is the opening passage from Smith's "The Burning of the Brain":

"I tell you, it is sad, it is more than sad, it is fearful - for it is a dreadful thing to go into the Up-and-Out, to fly without flying, to move between the stars as a moth may drift among the leaves on a summer night."

In the image of the drifting moth, cosy memories of security and peaceful summer nights and chilly undertones of darkness, solitude and mystery, come together as a clash of symbols.

But, unlike Bradbury, Smith is a very controlled writer. He uses very little imagery in the actual prose, relying on the emotional power of the scene and images he creates within the narrative. He holds himself in check. Bradbury often loses control completely, his prose becomes wild and sodden with images. He becomes a torrid drummer crashing away on his emotional percussion. Bradbury thumps out terror and hate, horror and ecstasy. Smith, more aware of his own limitations, deals with unease and dislike, distaste and happiness; a quieter and altogether more effective music.

In passing it is interesting to note that Smith has a liking for hyphenates like Up-and-Out and Nothing-at-All. This clearly shows the influence of John Cowper Powys, a writer of fairy tales at once more adult and less suitable for grown ups than those of Smith.

Smith and Bradbury share one annoying fault; they both allow lyricism to turn into sour sentimentality. Take as an example the maudlin ending of "The Ballad of Lost C'Nell":

"I am dying. I must know. Did she love me?"
'She went on without you, so much did she love you.
She let you go, for your sake, not for hers. She
really loved you. More than death. More than life.
You will never be apart.'
'Never apart?'
'Not, not in the memory of man,' said the voice, and
was then still.
Jestacost lay back on his pillow and waited for the
day to end."

Maudlin elements aside, it is Cordwainer Smith's prose style that makes his stories so delightful. His diction is attractively eccentric, far from the contrived archaicism favoured by several Sword and Sorcery writers. Within its rather small limits, his use of words is good. He has a fine, unusual and exciting rhythm, and occasionally, very occasionally, his language contains all the subtleties of the very best writing.



The worlds Smith creates have a strange nightmare quality. A teeming world of people, little more than puppets, is overseen by the all-powerful Instrumentality - a cross between Big Brother and God, as cryptic and remote as Kafka's Castle. Animal men, the homunculi, inhabit the Downdeep-downdeep, working in the underground factories. The relationship between man and homunculus is uncertain; the homunculi are treated as inferiors and yet are often mental and physical superiors. The true men sometimes seem the lords of creation, sometimes mere pawns in the cosmic game of Instrumentality. The Lords of the Instrumentality seem sometimes amoral bureaucrats, sometimes distant gods of fate whose very existence is questionable. The Instrumentality controls everything, even one's memories are altered according to its wishes, and yet the hope and the fear is that the Instrumentality controls nothing, that people are free and lost. Thus the objects in Smith's fantasies are of uncertain identity, they assume the roles of their opposites, black has simultaneously become white. This is the dream logic of the best fantasy.

Their minds always half controlled by the Instrumentality, Smith's characters wander through these zones of terrifying ambiguity, fumbling vainly after concepts they only half perceive. In "Alpha Rappa Boulevard" the Instrumentality has reintroduced the uncertainties of chance into the world, and yet there is the suspicion that it still retains its control of each individual life. The hero searches for an answer among horrors he cannot comprehend:

A walkway littered with white objects, knobs and rods and imperfectly formed balls about the size of my head.

Virginia stood beside me silent.

About the size of my head? I kicked one of the objects aside and then knew, knew for sure, what it was. It was people. The inside parts. I had never seen such things before. And that, that on the ground, must have once been a hand. There were hundreds of such things along the wall.

"Come Virginia," said I, keeping my voice even, and my thoughts hidden.

She followed without saying a word. She was curious about the things on the ground, but she did not seem to recognise them...

"Paul," she said, "isn't that a man's coat on the ground among those funny things?"

Once I had seen an ancient X-Ray in the museum, so I knew that the coat still surrounded that material that had provided the inner structure of the man. There was no ball there, so I was quite sure he was dead. How could that have happened in the old days? Why did the Instrumentality let it happen? But then, the Instrumentality had always forbidden this side of the tower. Perhaps the violators had met their own punishment in some way I could not fathom.

This story with its powerful overtones of the Fall, rebirth and lost innocence, is far and away the best Smith has written, and shows just what he is capable of.

The myth-making artist, such as Smith or Thomas Burnett Swann, is primarily a magician. Although he may exercise intellectual control over his material, he relies on intuitive techniques, on an unconscious creativity. His method is magical. Too much thought is therefore as dangerous as too little and has the effect of destroying the magic. In several stories Smith is too aware of what he is doing, and cannot resist supercharging his images with symbolic clichés. Trying too hard to be symbolic he becomes too symbolic to be true. The self-consciousness has destroyed the spontaneous magic. In "A Planet Called Shayoll" he comes very close to doing this, though here the magic is so strong; no amount of empiricism can destroy it.

At times whimsy also becomes an obtrusive element in Smith's work. In "Mark Elf", for example, it is exciting to imagine a world where a brown bear is telepathic and can converse with a human, but when a bear reaches into a leather bag and fits spectacles "slowly and carefully in front of his tired old eyes" we return to Little Red Riding Hood - lurch into the nursery. This whimsy is only part of a general mock innocence that pervades Smith's work. Sometimes the language is falsely childlike, and often even the method of storytelling affects naivety:

'When he awoke on this particular morning, he had no idea that a beautiful girl was about to fall hopelessly in love with him - that he would find after a hundred or more years experience in government, another government on earth just as strong and almost as ancient as his own - that he would willingly fling himself into conspiracy and danger for a cause he only half understood. All these were mercifully hidden from him by time.....'

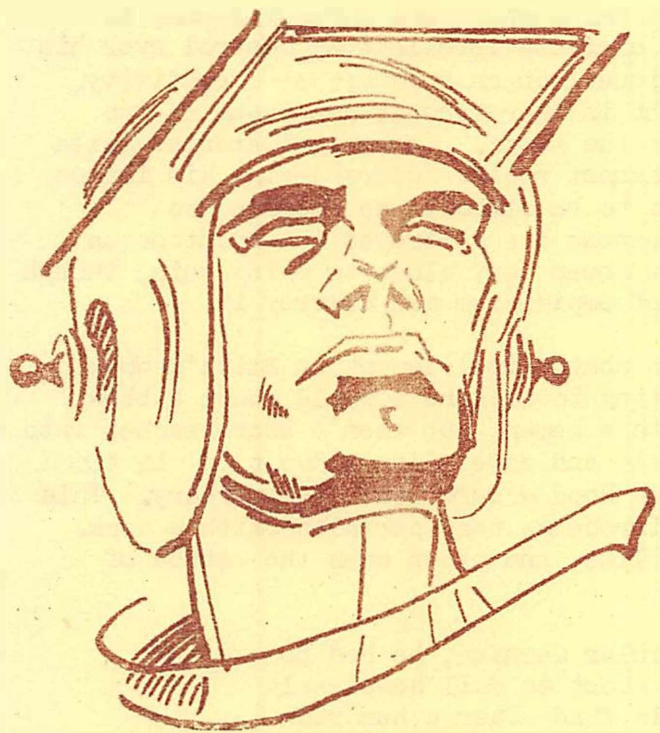
Perhaps part of the attraction of Smith's work is the blend of adult nightmare and nursery sentiment and innocence. But the blend should be so delicate it is hardly noticed. It is more annoying than endearing when childish elements are as raw and raucous as a tin drum or a jingling whistle.

For all his faults Smith is generally a successful writer, and, though Aldiss beats him on his own ground in "Old Hundereth" and "A Kind of Artistry", that is more than can be said for most science fiction writers. Summing up, one could say that Smith was good, and very good in parts.

-- Peter White

Your camels will stay
Young, vital & alert
IF YOU
feed them on new, improved

"OXO".
the new "OXO" is cleaner
and that means -
whiter



A GERM OF WISDEN

by John Berry

American fan Burnett R. Toskey has been a friend of mine for years. I met him first of all at the 1959 WorldCon in Detroit, although we'd been in S.F.S before that. In July and August 1964 he did a 6000 mile long tour of the British Isles and the Republic of Ireland. For three weeks of his vacation he stayed in or near Belfast, enjoying many adventures with the members of Irish fandom. Adventures which I've enscribed for posterity in a number of fanzines.

One of the events I've so far refrained from writing about concerns a very English sport with which Americans aren't usually associated. Before giving the gory details it is necessary to put you in the picture regarding Toskey. He is one of the more intellectual of fans, he is a Professor of Mathematics, a Doctor of Philosophy and has amassed a number of degrees. His main hobbies are classical music, flora, collecting rejection slips from science fiction editors and publishing various theses proving that you can do all sorts of complicated things with cosines.

We had just listened to Brahms' First Symphony, and I saw the sun shining brightly outside. When the sun appears in Belfast there's usually something in the evening papers about a white hot globe seen over the city for several minutes. So I decided to teach Toskey to play cricket...reasoning that a brain such as his would probably discover what's wrong with the game.

He professed an interest in learnin about the game when I told him how complicated it was.

We stood on the lawn at the back of my house looking up at the sun. It was the first time I'd ever seen it in July. I explained to Toskey that the first thing we needed was a team, and I sent my two children on safari for potential players. In ten minutes we had the nucleus of two really cracking teams. I captained one, Toskey the other. Mine included my wife, two of my

protéges, Terry and Ricky, both aged ten, a little boy aged three who'd just learned to do without his nappies (a premature conclusion on the part of his parents) and a little girl whom no one had ever seen before or since. Tosk's team, a little more professional, included my son Colin, one of his friends who wore spectacles with glasses like the ends of beer bottles, two of my daughters little girl friends and my brother-in-law, Terry, who is six feet tall and plays cricket every night of the week.

The only thing which cramped our styles was the smallness of the pitch, I mean, my garden isn't really that big, about fifteen feet square. The wicket was the working part of an old ironing board held up by a brown at at an angle of 45 degrees. The bat I made myself out of a piece of woodworm-bitten door, although I was rather pleased with the handle which hardly left any splinters at all as long as you didn't get too enthusiastic.

I had to be pretty stringent about the rules. You were most definitely out if the ball went into someone else's garden. There was no need to enforce this rule. 'That man' at the garden which again in the air and near the sounds of precricket limbering up, and took his stance at the hedge, daring someone to knock a ball over his hedge. I murmured loudly to Terry about 'Professor Toskey' but the man didn't seem too impressed.

Toskey's team batted first. He put the beer-bottle-eyed player in first, which was a very astute thing to do, because the unfortunate youth had never played cricket before, and actually took his stance behind the ironing board. He had presumed we were using a hard ball. I told Toskey that we really should use one, and he was all for tearing away into town in his limo and buying one, but I managed to restrain him. Bottle-eye was out first ball, as Toskey seemed to envisage, saying he was going to lull us into a false sense of superiority. The two little girls were out without hitting the bucket. Oh, I forgot, we had two buckets, one upturned, one face down. If the ball went into the bucket you got ten runs, if it merely hit the bucket you got five.

Terry, my brother in law came in. I put myself on to bowl, because Terry is really good. He soon ran up a score of seven buckets (or, if you're a stickler for authenticity, 35 runs). He was caught out by the best player there, although I nearly dropped it when the back of my hand hit the rim of the bucket.

Then Toskey came in. The neighbours, who had heard a loud American voice shouting 'HOWZ IT?' after every ball, now lined the fence two deep, and even the chap who swiped the ball when he got the chance seemed engrossed in Toskey's stance. He held the bat, as you can imagine, like a baseball bat.

I used spin. There is a big brown patch at one end of the lawn, at which I'd strategically placed the ironing board. My first ball was slow, but as it hit the hard soil it swung sharply. Toskey missed with his vicious swipe, and knocked the wicket over.

"If you hit the ironing board, you're out," I said firmly. Toskey pointed out that he didn't know this and because I'm a very sporting type I gave him another go. This time I didn't spin, but Toskey's intellect had swiftly considered the law of averages and concluded that it was going to spin. The resulting debacle cannot be adequately conveyed by

were words. I don't think he meant to let go of the bat, I mean, really he couldn't have because I'd been a perfect host. I actually felt it sweep across my hair as I ducked.

I immediately put Ricky on to bowl and he soon caused Toskey to give an easy catch. I was modest there, it was really a damn difficult catch because I had to avoid the bat at the same time. The ball hit me in the pit of the stomach like a bullet and caught in my shirt as I fell. I was throwing up in the bathroom whilst Colin was batting. He got another ~~ten~~ ~~but~~ ~~ten~~ twenty runs, making a total of 55, which I was confident my team could beat.

Toskey put Terry on to bowl, big Terry that is. He was bowling to his sister, and up till then I had always believed the old adage that blood is thicker than water. My wife had to leave the pitch anyway to attend to the little nipper who was supposed to be able to do without his nappies.

Toskey now came on to bowl. Jeeze, he was fast. He sort of curled himself into a ball and let fly. My players quickly departed from the crease and that left me last man in with no score.

I rapidly saw a new Toskey. Gone was the warm humour, the careless but knowledgeable wave of the hand as he discussed the length of one of Mehler's symphonies. His face was now a mask of pure hatred, intent only on precipitating the worn tennis ball with all his strength in the direction of the ironing board. His bowling was so vicious that he couldn't even bribe my son to do wicket keeper. A hush had descended upon the crowd, but slowly I amassed a creditable score of buckets. I didn't put this down so much to my superb technique as to self preservation. I took up the rather unorthodox stance crouching down on my hands and knees behind my bat, and peering, one eye each side of the handle, pushing the bat towards the hornet like missile approaching me at speed.

It had now become a personal thing. All esprit de corps had vanished. No longer did I pour egoboo on Toskey, I was merely intent upon winning the match, which had become an obsession with me. Finally I was out. I told Toskey that I had been playing cricket for 25 years and there was no such thing as 'head before wicket', but he was adamant. Then I remembered that I was the host and he was the visitor, so I forced a smile under the sticking plaster.

I don't think all that much of Toskey's intelligence, though. A couple of days after, we were watching the Fourth Test Match between Australia and England on TV. Toskey watched the screen for a few moments, and then as Dexter hit a proud four to the boundary, he turned to me and asked, "Where are the buckets?"

-- John Berry 1964

Read "BEYOND"

The fanzine with "the blue horizon"
You too can lose you illusions before
most people are old enough to have any.
"BEYOND" will send you ~ Beyond.

A CLOCKWORK WHING-A-DING



The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag by Robert A. Heinlein, published by
Dennis Dobson at 18/-

The theme of every other lead story in UNKNOWN was that of the Universe being something other than it seems. Hubbard gave us several classic variations on the theme, so did Sturgeon and recently Philip Dick gave it new life in "Time Out of Joint", but its best treatment came from a man better known for his clinically precise science fiction.

Heinlein wrote "Hoag" for UNKNOWN in 1942 under a pseudonym when he was making a reputation for his own name in SF, and, like his forgettable "Gulf" it seems to be an experiment into a certain style of writing.

"Hoag" is a blending of the light detective fiction of the forties and the anti-gothic horror of Unknown. The detectives are a husband and wife team straight out of Hammet's Thin Man and one can quite easily imagine William Powell and Myrna Loy in the role of Heinlein's married sleuths. They are consulted by a middle aged nobody called Jonathan Hoag, an ex-mental patient who has no idea of his daytime activities since his release. A doctor who analyses the strange red substance Hoag finds under his fingernails assures him it is not blood, but becomes terrified of Hoag. Mr. and Mrs. Randell, the detectives, can find no trace of the hospital at which Hoag claims to have been a patient...and so on; the familiar chain that eventually makes the hero conclude that he is either mad or the world is not what it appears. A favourite theme, but Heinlein makes it so believable by keeping 'happenings' to a minimum and building up to the final confrontation and spectacular climax in much the same way Hitchcock did in Rear Window. Heinlein strangely foreshadows Cocteau's "Orphee" by seven years by having many similarities of plot; the no man's land beyond the mirror where the forces of

evil lie, the removal of the wife's soul and the conclusions which are effectively the same.

If, in another time track, "Hoag" was submitted as an original manuscript to the present editor of New Worlds, it would be blurbed as a literary masterpiece with strong symbolic undertones. But, of course, it isn't. Nobody thought so in 1942 - but in 1964 everybody is playing the 'hidden meanings' game with stories like this. It is quite possible that at this moment 'literary people' are arguing over its Freudian meanings; the horror land beyond the mirror represents the repressed unconscious, it is entered by the hero thinking he is dreaming and its inhabitants display overtones of sadism and homosexuality. James Colvin in his recent NW story "The Deep Fix" attempted something of the kind. The result was interesting but failed because he couldn't tell his Freud from his Jung.

"Hoag" is a long story taking up approximately half of the book. The following stories show varying degrees of success and failure in Heinlein's venture into fantasy.

"The Man Who Travelled in Elephants" is a failure because it attempts to create a whimsical mood which is both obscure and boring.

"All You Zombies", the best story in the book, is a classic of its kind. It tells of a man who is his own mother and father via time travel and sex change, a theme which authors of lesser stature than Heinlein wouldn't dare to write because of the temptation to explore every little paradox it presents. This is a good example of the sf yarn which attracts 'literary people' and is ideal for playing the hidden meanings game.

"They" is one of those sophisticated punch line pot boilers, in which a man thinks the world has been created for his benefit and, of course, it has - you can see that from the first page. This one falls down because of the unconvincing psychiatrist who tries to cure the hero's 'paranoia'.

"Our Fair City" is a minor piece of Sturgeonesque in which a friendly whirlwind helps a crusading reporter to clean up the town. Good, but incredibly dated.

The final story "...and he built a Crooked House" is downright fascinating and had me thinking about it for days afterwards. An avant garde architect builds a house which is a straightened tesseract and a minor earth tremor makes it collapse into the fourth dimension. The first few pages of the story give a step by step explanation on the building of a three dimensional tesseract using modeling clay and match sticks; I'd like to know how many readers of the story did construct one!

A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess, published by Pan at 3/6

Question: when is sf not sf? Answer: when it is well written, original and by a writer not generally accepted as an sf writer. Anthony Burgess's A Clockwork Orange fits nicely into this category, yet it hasn't the slightest chance of being considered for a Hugo Award. Why? All previous award winners have been writers such as Heinlein and Simac who have evolved within

the genre, and produced material which is unquestionably sf. Most mainstream authors' ventures into sf have been complete failures - Burgess is one of the exceptions, in this novel and "The Wanting Seed."

A Clockwork Orange is a completely original novel, the nearest thing to its theme previously being Kit Reed's "Judas Bomb" in F & SF. It concerns a young delinquent, Alex, who relates three years of his life in the early 21st century. As 1984 was a forboding of trends of the late forties, this novel concerns public attitudes to a disturbing problem of the sixties.

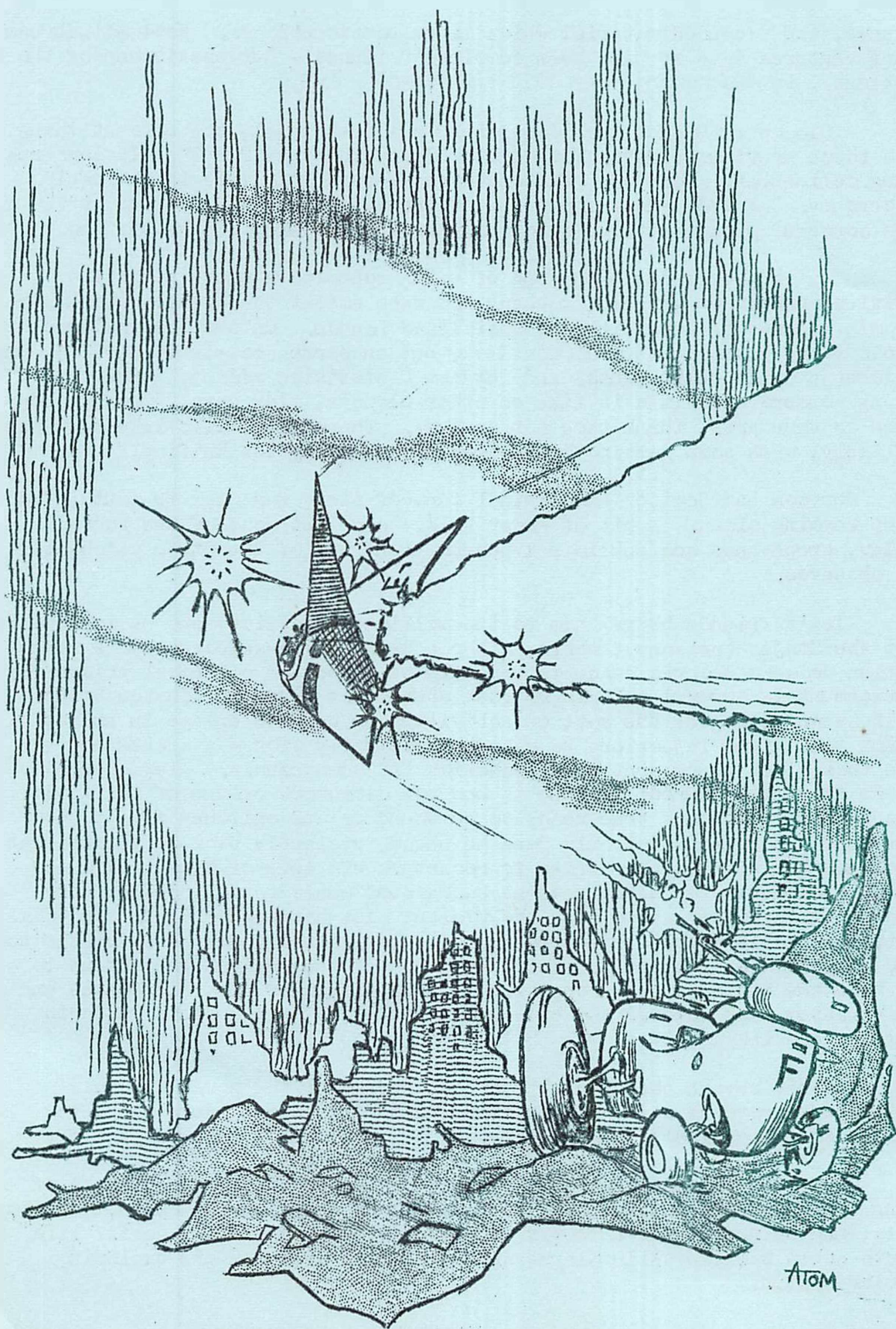
Alex is the leader of a gang of young schoolboys whose nighttime activities consist of assault, robbery and rape amidst the avenues (with names like Amis Avenue) of a rebuilt and socialised London. On the moon science and technology are extending human frontiers, but on earth society is divided into malchicks (juvenile delinquents) and lewdies (television addicts.) When one of his gang wonders what life is like on other planets, Alex says, "Come, gloopy bastard as thou art. Think thou not on them. There'll be life like down here most likely, with some getting knifed and others doing the knifing."

Burgess has devised an original form of slang for Alex to mouth; "Odd bits of rhyming slang. A bit of gypsy talk, too. But most of the roots are Slav, propaganda and subliminal penetration" one of the State psychiatrists observes.

Alex's friends betray him to the millicents (police) and he is sent to one of the Stajas (prisons), where, after a year, he is selected for a rehabilitation process because space is urgently required for political prisoners. The treatment is several cuts in realism above that given to Winston Smith. Alex is shown movies of the sort of activities he used to engage in and at the same time given injections to make him violently sick - a system not unlike that given to present day alcoholics and homosexuals. Alex emerges from the treatment 'cured', but he is now the clockwork orange of the title; an unthinking fruit on a tree ready to be wound up and switched off at the pleasure of the State. Not only does he become violently sick at the thought of violence but also when he tries to recapture his love of classical music (his beloved Ludvig von being used as background music to the conditioning movies). The artistic as well as the violent Alex has been killed. In this condition he falls prey to his previous victims against whom he is unable to defend himself and becomes the pawn of a group of subversives who intend to overthrow the State which is drifting into totalitarianism. Alex makes an abortive attempt at suicide and ends up in the hands of the State which in turn makes him its pawn.

I won't reveal the unusually upbeat ending of the novel and this unfortunately prevents me from mentioning what Burgess considers to be the answer to the so-called problem of youth.

On one level the novel is a damning satire on the crackpot ideas of dealing with juvenile delinquency, both the 'cane 'em' and 'psychoanalyse 'em' schools, and on another is a fairly accurate prediction of what social life on Earth could be like while Clarke and Heinlein's spacemen are exploring the solar system.



Dave suggested I write this trip report as a gesture to show there were 'no hard feelings'. I suggested that he might confirm this by writing me an article - but he smiled inscrutably behind his beard and claimed illiteracy. (Dave Hale is not only persuasive, he's subtle!)

Of course, the main reason for writing this was not Dave, but was a lust for personal satisfaction. Personally I hate trip reports - especially American trip reports, because they're much longer - but they are amusing to write. I just pity any mug who wastes his time reading this one.



I MET

Ron Bennett
Colin Freeman
Roy Roy
Norman Shorrocks
Eddie Jones
Dave Hale
Laggie Thompson
and Beryl Henley

AND LIVED

I also met Jim England!

When I met Ron Bennett and his wife Liz, it was a bright, hot Tuesday afternoon in Harrogate. I clutched my wallet warily with one hand and shook hands with Ron with the other, but at that time there were no packs of cards in sight. Instead he brought out several piles of old fanzines for sale. And for the whole of the time I was there, there were always more old fanzines to wade through. It was a mind-broadening and inspiring experience that filled me with fandom shattering ideas about publishing that should be done; but luckily I have now forgotten most of them and with luck after a few more days I will be safely back in a serene state of spathy again.

Besides fanzines I read THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, and in spite of what everybody says about its being excellent it really is excellent. Though it should never be read by a fan of less than six months' standing. (In fact I shouldn't have seen it myself.)

Some time back I unearthed a copy of Colin Freeman's fanzine SCRIBBLE which is remarkable in that it was the first fanzine I ever saw that made me laugh out loud. And during the second day of my Harrogate visit I was

actually able to visit Colin Freeman. (I also lost some money to him at Brag, but Ron did too, which was a great compensation.) In his inimitable fun-loving way, Ron wouldn't say who I was, and it was lotsa laffs watching Colin guessing, trying to identify me. Even after we had broken down and confessed that I was Charles Platt, he still didn't know who I was. ("You're one of the Brummie crowd, then?") But I forgave him for not knowing me and we had quite an interesting conversation together.

That evening, after rushing off to see a cricket match that was Too Good To Miss, Ron gave me precise details on how to hitch-hike to Liverpool, and the next morning we all walked off together, he and Liz taking the baby along to be circumcized.

Following his directions I left them and was soon thumbing busily, under the shadow of the gasworks. A Liverpool ballroom owner in a Mini-Cooper picked me up. As we grew near his home town he grew more and more frantic, and in fact successfully proved that on Britain's infamous three lane roads there is room for a Mini to pass another car, without hitting two trucks coming side by side in the opposite direction.

Having left the sheep infested bleak Yorkshire grasses, we finally reached the world's Beat Mecca (at any rate in 1964) and for me it was a case of love at first sight. True, Liverpool makes a passive partner, but on the strength of looks alone I would be happy to lay with her. We drove past slums overshadowed by towering blocks of flats, with the occasional glimpse of the enchanting surrealism of a solitary black semi-detached unit standing unscathed amidst a flattened wasteland where once lines of such buildings had stood. I have no idea why Liverpool should be attractive; but its force is such that even the uninspired monotony of contemporary architecture cannot suppress it.

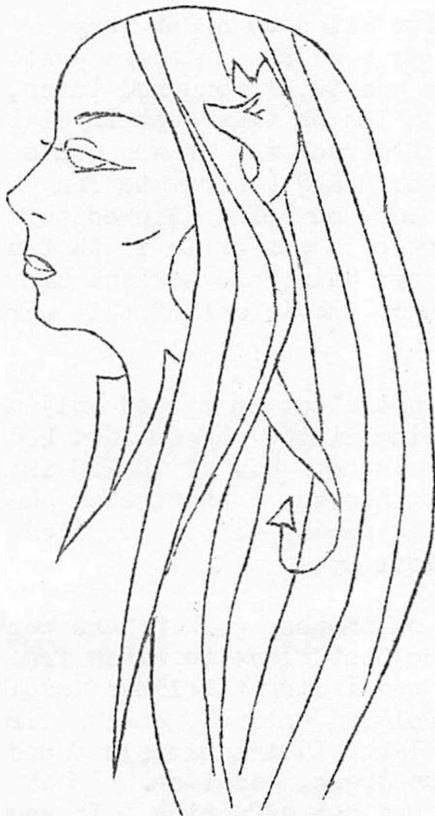
I took a bus to the Mersey and crossed said river to Birkenhead, where I met Roy Kay. Later that evening, after I had dropped a few friendly hints, Roy kindly offered to let me reside on his sitting room floor for two nights, a thick hearthrug insulating me from the icy Birkenhead draughts.

My second day in Liverpool was marked by a visit to the Liverpool Stamp Company, where I met the proprietor, Norman Shorrocks. We hadn't really met properly previously so he was a little taken aback to see me, and our conversation was patchy, in between phone calls from other Liverpool Group Fans. Thoughtfully Norman arranged a convenient time and place, and shortly afterwards I met Eddie Jones. We went off to lunch together, passing the famed Cavern. Sounds of the mid-day beat session mingled with the quaint language of men unloading lorries in the filthy street outside. Pausing only to make a small sacrifice in front of the Cavern entrance, we located a Wimpy Bar. (We bumped into PSE Librarian and part-time funny man Joe Navin on the way, but as he made an unfavourable comment on my beard I refuse to give him a proper mention in this report.)

After a lunch as only Mr. Wimpy can make them, we visited the Liverpool Group's Clubroom. It was strangely touching to stand in a room that has seen so much activity in the past, and I signed my name on the wall with the other signatures with a touch of pride. Soon after my visit, I was told, the room rent was to be doubled; but they would remain there nonetheless as the clubroom was one of the few remaining forces keeping LiG together.

The next day I set off towards Stourbridge and Dave Hale. I know now that everyone stands at the exit of the Jersey Tunnel, but in my naivety I took a bus about three miles out of Birkenhead; and even then counted three hundred hard hearted Northern drivers who passed me, sneering from within the womb-like security of their vehicles, and didn't stop. In despair I travelled three more miles by bus, and got out into the middle of a thunderstorm. After half an hour I got the first of some short lifts, eventually being picked up by a maniac in a Morris 1100, who carried me and a German hitchhiker into Wolverhampton. The German was obviously disturbed at the way the car was driven; the maniac wore dark glasses and peered through his greasy rain smeared windscreen like a blinded owl, sometimes seeing other cars, sometimes not. He preferred third gear to top and changed into it whenever he went slower than 50 mph. Every stretch of road was a challenge. The car doors didn't shut properly because of a prang he'd been in last week, and the way his girlfriend was slobbering over him (I gathered they'd enjoyed a fortnight living in sin up North) I was sure we'd be having another prang this week.

But we reached Wolverhampton all right, here I left my German friend. He was totally lost, didn't know where he was, didn't even know where he wanted to go. I taught him to say "Esso Map" and described where he could buy one, then grabbed a passing Midland Red Bus, leaving him muttering to himself, staring through misty glasses.



About a quarter of an hour later I was informed by a sign at the side of the road that we were approaching Kingswinford. Hastily snatching out my all purpose address book, I confirmed my suspicion that Jim England, famed organiser of the British Amateur Scientific Research Association (61 members strong), member of the BSE for three years and insufferable VECTOR letterhack lived nearby. Hurriedly I fell off the bus and hauled my baggage through the intense humidity of the endless suburbs to Mr. England's front door.

Over an egg and chips lunch that his wife thoughtfully cooked me after I had mentioned that I was starving, we enjoyed an interesting conversation that was broken occasionally when he hurried into the kitchen to check on the progress of a simmering beaker of copper sulphate solution. (He was demonstrating crystallisation to his young daughter.) Our talk was enlivened by the fact that Mr. England was under the impression that my name was Peter White. We talked about Charles Platt - his egotism, his big-headedness, his stupidity. "You'd

hardly think he was only 19, the way he carries on," said 30-odd-years old Mr. England. Sadly I was forced to agree with him.

After lunch he gave me a lift in a rather worn Morris Minor to the bus stop. I didn't have the heart to disillusion him regarding my identity and so have now the satisfaction of having laid the foundation for a lasting friendship between Jim England and Peter White.

I rang Dave Hale at his fiancée Maggie's house when I got to Stourbridge Bus Depot. "You've just got to Wolverhampton?" he asked hopefully. "Oh, you managed to reach Stourbridge, did you? Well, never mind. Look, don't try to go anywhere, stay where you are, we'll come and find you." The suspicions that this sentence gave rise to in me were confirmed throughout the rest of my stay in Stourbridge, during which period I was continually lost. I not only found it impossible to follow the routes we took, I became totally disorientated. Even the sun got mixed up and started setting in the North, rising in the West the next day.

So, I met Dave Hale - above all, mysterious. I couldn't really decide whether he was an introverted extrovert or an extroverted introvert. After tea, we sat, waiting. Dave walked out twice on unexplained errands. I had no idea why we had to wait, or what we were waiting for, but Maggie seemed to know and I felt it would be an admission of gross naivety to break down and ask. When we eventually left I knew that the wait hadn't been in vain and that Time Had Come. And when a pub appeared on the horizon I realised that in fact Opening Time Had Come.

Maggie and Dave forced me into walking five miles to a pub they specially recommended on the basis of never having been. It was pretty awful. I hate modern pubs. What sort of person was it, I wondered later, who could so dominate my will that I walked five miles on flat feet in disintegrating shoes to satisfy his whims? What sort of person was it who could command such awe from lesser fans; such as Lick the Beard (a Brummie fan named Michael who has a beard), who said "Thank You" on being allowed to shake Dave Hale's hand? And, I ask you, what sort of a person is it that can reach his right arm behind his neck, round under his chin, and scratch his right ear? Dave Hale's thumb also has three joints. He is not of this world at all.

At least Dave warned me that Jim Birwood had slept in my bed only a week previously. (Had he, knowing of my forthcoming visit, chosen that bed deliberately?) Forewarned, I was able to shred a handy copy of THE ITN into its component pages, and muttering spells, I sank into the contaminated sheets safely insulated from harm. Soon I slipped into an uneasy sleep, troubled by occasional nightmares about bloodshot famlytical eyes.

The next morning Dave and Maggie took me on another walk (there were buses, but they enjoyed watching me suffer) to the best place to hitch from for Redditch. I still didn't know where I was, and I didn't believe Redditch was where they said it was. I navigated blind, relying entirely on the directions of drivers who gave me lifts, until an hour later I miraculously found myself on the doorstep of 59 The Pearmings, Crabbs Cross, Redditch. I met Beryl Henley at the door, accompanied by husband and two offspring. It seems

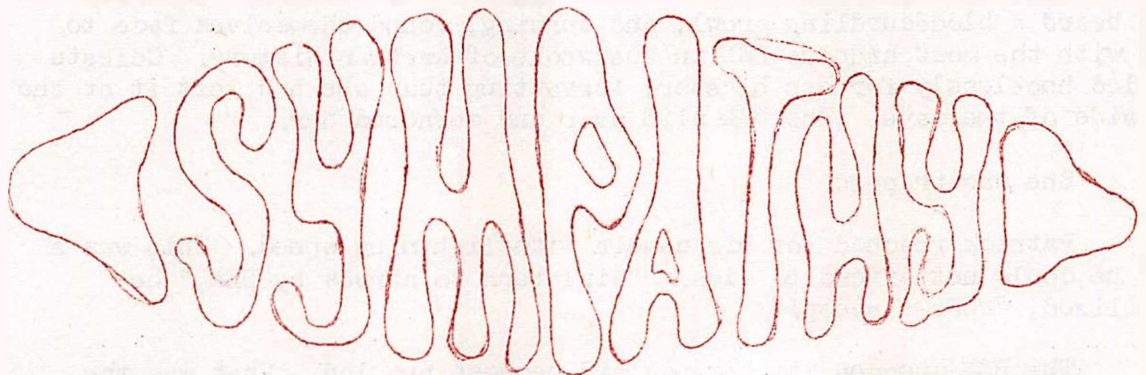
like it was only yesterday. Come to think of it, it was only yesterday. Luckily one of the offspring didn't want his Sunday dinner, so I was able to step in and stop it being wasted.

Through the pleasant afternoon we talked. I dried dishes and cut the bottoms off flatbed stencils while Beryl nattered. She almost convinced me that her theories regarding reincarnation and scientology were Ultimate Truth, as she had done once before. I read two Marvel comics, we half watched a lousy tv play and Beryl showed me where her Zenith book reviews had been amended. Soon I was slipping into a feeling of calm, relaxed well-being that always descends when I visit Beryl's house. The afternoon and the night and the following morning hurried past me, too fast, and before I knew it I had left the house where Frank Russell and Ron Hubbard are gods whose supremacy is only challenged by Ray Bradbury...and I was on the road to Tewkesbury.

When I arrived I called at the residence of Graham Hall and it was there that I didn't meet Graham Hall, (master of the art of not only losing friends, but ensuring he doesn't make any by mistake. A rare gift.) Nor did I meet his friend Dick stone-age Richardson. A note Graham had pinned to his front door told me that financial difficulties had prevented him coming back from his holiday. It was all very mysterious.

Disillusioned and depressed (I had been looking forward to getting drunk that evening) I wrote a postcard to Archie Mercer saying I wouldn't be meeting him the next day at Bristol, and hitched as fast as I could back to Letchworth, covering the 102 miles of deserted lanes in just over 3 hours.

-- Charles Platt



The lonliest Bug Eyed Monster on Mars was an avid listener to Children's Hour. It also liked classical music, westerns and science fiction. Unfortunately, it had only a very limited collection of tapes salvaged from the wreck of an early expedition from Earth and the receiver it had painfully pieced together out of the wreckage of the expedition ship could pick up only the most powerful of Earth transmissions. The creature's education, therefore, was very limited.

The BEM was bored and depressed. It had read and reread all the book tapes until it knew their contents off by hearts (of which it had three).

"I'm getting old," it reflected, sadly, for indeed, it was at least five hundred years old. Its youth was far too distant for it to remember all the stages it had evolved through before it became Mars' most malignant beastie. The BEM's most unique feature was its ability to imitate any life form and maintain the facade for an indefinite period. This attribute could be used to make itself more horrible to the beholder by merely assuming the shape of the worst monster lurking in the unconscious. The BEM was monosexual, and for this was punished by an unbearable loneliness. That was until it found the germ of an idea in a tape book. An idea began to sprout in one of its brains.

"The time has come," it thought, "for me to fulfill the destiny of all BEMS of science fiction."

So saying, it set off to the Earth colony to find a girl.

+ + + + +

Celeste Chaste, though blond and beautiful, was not the classic sf heroine. She was shy and intelligent, hiding her inner sensitivity by acts of tomboyish toughness which made her unapproachable even to the handsome troubleshooter Patrick Kerans (who didn't like women anyway). Their mutual dislike was a focus for do-gooders to get them together. And this was why they were sent out together on a photographic survey of the territory north of Mars Base.

After a four day tramp and two day descent of the polar cap foothills to a camp in a small pressurised cave, Celeste had lived up to her name.

They were resting while Patrick adjusted his camera. Suddenly they heard a bloodcurdling growl, and turning, found themselves face to face with the most hideous BEM in the whole of Martian history. Celeste fumbled hopelessly for her blaster, forgetting that she had left it at the far side of the cave. The BEM slid over and cornered her.

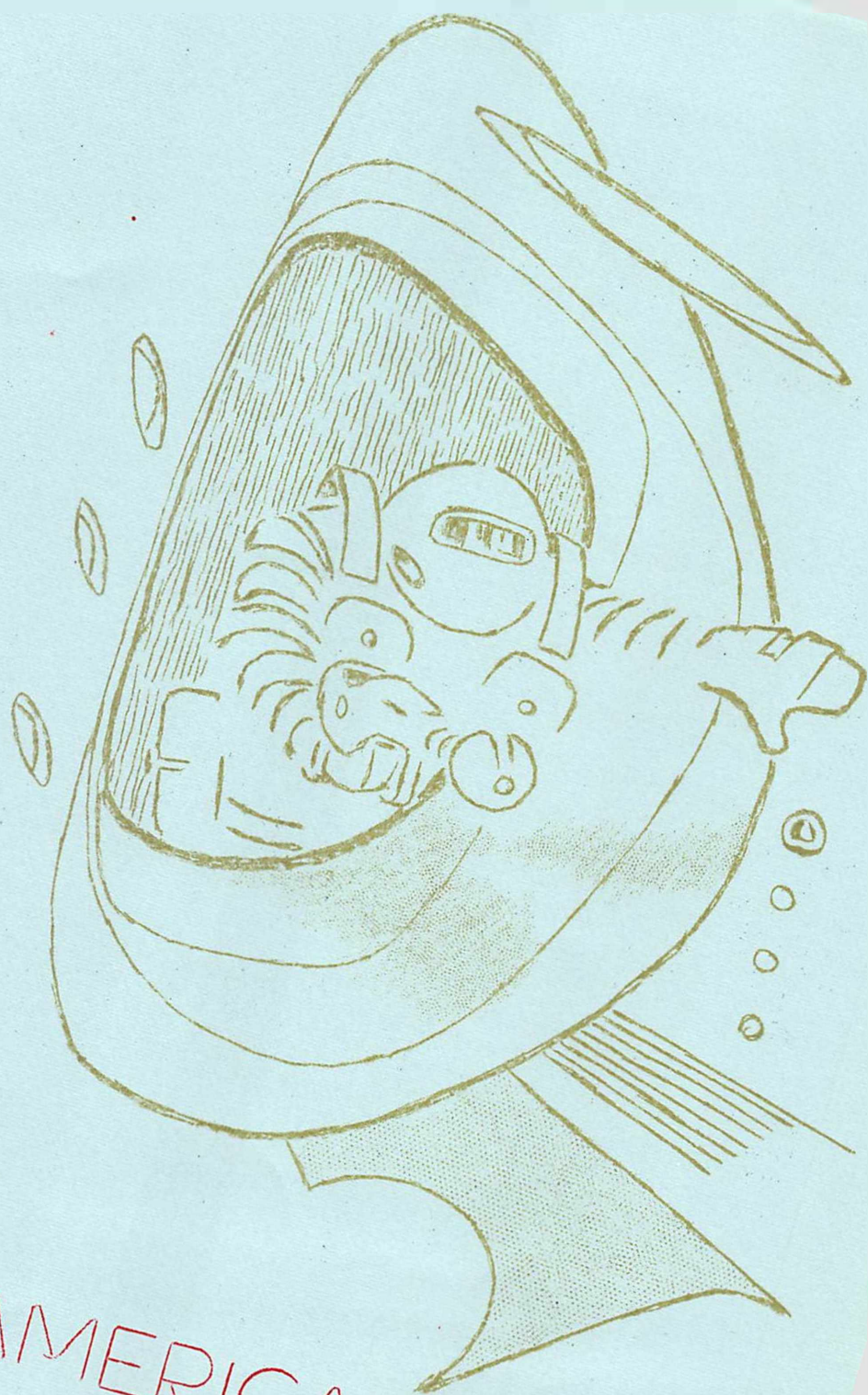
She was trapped.

Patrick reached for his camera with lightning speed. This was a shot he could not afford to miss. "Girl torn to shreds by BEM," he visualised, "What a scoop!"

The BEM stopped its advance and became puzzled. What was the male doing? The BEM was ready to die for the great sf cause at the hands of an earthling protecting his beloved. Celeste was also puzzled; she did not expect much of Patrick, but at a time like this...Patrick was the most puzzled of all, why wasn't the BEM getting on with it?

The BEM was touched; the girl desperately needed help which the man would not give. In disgust it killed Patrick with one slimy oozing tentacle and turned into the blue print of the ideal man Celeste had always longed for.

The girl and BEM lived happily ever after.



AN AMERICAN
IN DEUTSCHLAND

George O. Smith

It all started very quietly. Most things do.

You see, German Fandom may be well organised in Deutschland, but it is neither as vociferous nor as well advertised as the fan groups in the United States. There is (to the best of my knowledge) no periodical magazine publication, and especially not one that devotes space to fan activities. I must hasten to add that there is little space devoted to fan activities in United States magazines, but some does exist in letter columns and an occasional report that gets published formally.

As a consequence, German fandom is barely known to exist.

So our arrival in Frankfurt am Main one year ago was not hailed with shouts of glee, dancing in the streets and signs proclaiming, "G.O.S. Go Home!"

Finding ourselves surrounded by foreigners, we wrote E. J. Carnell, our man in London, who replied that he knew of some science fiction fans in Germany, but none in Frankfurt. He also got a brief note from L. Sprague de Camp, who told us that George Scithers was about to arrive in Frankfurt. He did, and we got together.

But nothing much came of this because of illness, then a recovery period, and the next thing we knew it was spring. With the coming of spring, other low pitched rumblings also began. George Scithers called one evening and said that he was about to attend a gathering of some German fans and would we like to come along. At this clambake, we learned about a German Convention that was going to be held somewhere outside Munich. They had few details, but it was early and we'd be given details when they were better informed.

There were further rumblings. E. J. Carnell wrote that it was too late to join the Film Festival in Trieste, but if I was interested, there was to be a convention outside Munich and Tom Schlueck could supply the details. Then Harry Harrison and family turned up on their way toward something called a "camp site", and said that they might make this convention, too.

Finally, Leslyn Campbell arrived for the summer. We discovered that Leslyn, the daughter of John W. Campbell, had never been to a science fiction convention in all of her 19 years.

Our arrival was fraught with peril and a collision with the language barrier. The girl at the Kertz autovermietung could not be made to understand that my International Driver's License was valid, and she was not inclined to rent us a car. However, my charm prevailed and after I proved that there was indeed a German translation of my New Jersey, USA license and that I carried an American Express Card, which was better identification.

One hour later we were in Marquartstein, a village several kilometres south of Lake Chiemsee, which lies some 70 kilometres to the east south east of Munich.

At the edge of the village, a mountain rises sharply, and clinging to the side of this crag is a rectangular white edifice. Few details can be distinguished from the village, but everybody knows this to be Castle Marquartstein.

Castle Marquartstein is approached along an uphill winding road best suited for mountain goats, gazelles and vicuñas. At the end of this perilous trail, there is a platz park contrived on a slope that leads downward over the steep side of the mountain. With some trepidation and fingernail chewing, we parked the car and continued along the road.

Now, Castle Marquartstein does not face outward over the village. It faces inward over the mountain. One approaches it over a fixed wooden bridge that spans a ravine or gully that is about fifteen or twenty metres wide and possibly thirty metres deep. This operates as a dry moat, and one can imagine that the fixed wooden bridge was once a drawbridge. On the castle side were the usual heavy doors, and possibly room for a portcullis, but that had been removed.

On passing through this arched entry, one enters the courtyard. Where knights had once paid open court, German fanfare was assembled on picnic benches. A dance floor of considerable dimensions was in the nearly finished part of the construction and upon our arrival was being noisily occupied by a Group of Bavarian male dancers, and a full Bavarian orchestra. This celebration was being put on by the fan group and extended as an open house for the people of Marquartstein. This was Friday.

Not long after our arrival, we were introduced to strong drink.

Vurguzz!



The annals of science fiction contain a number of references to various potables. Some of these have turned up in stories, others have turned up in fandom's lingo, but until the Castle Con, no one really invented a drink designed for the science fiction palate.

I was skeptical of Vurguzz at first because it was advertised as 250% alcohol. Having tried a goblet, however, I am prepared to agree with this estimate. Let me explain how this apparent impossibility can be true. The inventor of Vurguzz is Franz Ettl, one of the mainsprings of the Castle Con. He devised this mixture via the following process:

If the upper right point of the "V" is joined with a vinculum or overline extending to the right above the rest of the word, it forms the radical, Vurguzz. If the designator, 250%, is placed above the other point of the "V" it becomes a mathematical symbol that signifies that Vurguzz must be the 250% root. That is, the excess is divided by the square root of minus one, which rotates it 90 degrees counter-clockwise out of the real world -- there to remain in recoverable storage until it is required to satisfy the human palate.

For this remarkable achievement, Franz Ettl is to be made an honorary member of the Smith Association for Alcoholic Research.

Somewhere along about here, there arrived the end of the first evening. Retrieving the automobile was a bit of an adventure and a challenge, but we won. At least, when Saturday morning dawned bright and clear, we were all alive with the usual number of arms and legs, and outside of our hotel, the automobile was in unscratched condition. We can therefore assume that our course down the mountain was via the winding road and not backwards down the slope out of the park platz.

Upon Saturday morning we discovered why there are no good pictures of Castle Marquartstein. The castle is in shadow from its own mountain. As a consequence, we took no pictures.

Saturday morning was spent in a merry mixture of fans in the castle courtyard. There were discussions in German and English, there was beer to maintain the flow of conversation and there were a couple of formal convention sessions inside the castle. As the place was in the process of being converted into a hotel, the kitchens were prepared to serve us lunch provided we all wanted beef stew with noodles.

After lunch there was more of the same conversation and beer. There were arrivals from Britain. Archie Mercer turred up; there was a crew from Liverpool and some misguided character addressed me as "Mr Harrison," because he'd heard that Larry might make it. Saturday was the evening of the usual Con fancy dress ball.

American Fandom can learn a thing or two here. First, there is nothing like the ornate walls of a handpainted Grand Ballroom of an ancient castle - complete with balcony and a formal staircases for grand

entrances - to hold an sf masquerade ball. Second, the orchestra was a professional quartet of fans who dressed in costume and joined the festivities

Early in these proceedings, the reputation that I have been trying to live down refused to go away. I was approached with the question, "George, you probably know how to arm fireworks, can you help us?" With some misgivings, but willing to try to contribute something useful to the festivities, I followed my questioner, Mr Thomas Schleuk, into one of the darker rooms of the castle where he drew the shutters, locked the door, and then having checked the room for hidden microphones, opened a large carton.

This box contained a number of interesting items. There were several small boxes of "Simulators, Booby Trap, Percussion with Flare." There was a carton containing 25 "Grenades, Hand Illumination" and a second containing the same number of "Grenades, Hand, Smoke." The first, the simulators, were fairly harmless, consisting of a mousetrap device that could be hooked up to doors and stuff-that-could-be-moved. When the stuff was moved, a percussion cap went bang and a flare went on for about five minutes. But the grenades were of two types the "Illumination" variety were those used when you have reason to believe the enemy patrol is sneaking toward your position. You heave the thing out and shoot while the light is blinding them. The "Smoke" kind is used when you are stalled in firing range and need a smoke screen. Next was a trio of "Grenade, Hand, Simulator, Missile Impact." This I recognised as one of the things they use in training; it makes like a 105 howitzer shell burst. Happily, there were three boxes of "Fire-crackers" of the kind that are used to simulate rifle fire in a battle exercise.

And so, at midnight, we enacted the Battle of Castle Harquartstein by tossing these firecrackers into the dry moat. This created a sort of echo chamber; each detonation echoed and re-echoed from Alp to Alp. Then as the feeling of revelry increased, the number of fire-crackers tossed into the ravine increased.

We were working through the middle of the third box when we were visited by two gentlemen in a green Volkswagen with a whirling blue light on top. Moving to a more protected position at the rear (that is, beating a hasty retreat) we explained to the Polizei that this was all good, clean innocent fun, and we were sorry that we'd disturbed the Mayor of Harquartstein - and if we found out who the real culprit was, we'd see that he was properly dealt with.

Bollified, the Polizei roamed around the castle for an hour, observing the festivities, and then, satisfied that we weren't trouble-makers at heart, left. Unfortunately, their Volkswagen decided to bolt. Taking the bit in its teeth, it reared up on its hind wheels and tried to jump the stone retaining wall along the up side of the mountain trail. This manouever resulted in one smashed left front lamp and a severely abraded fender.

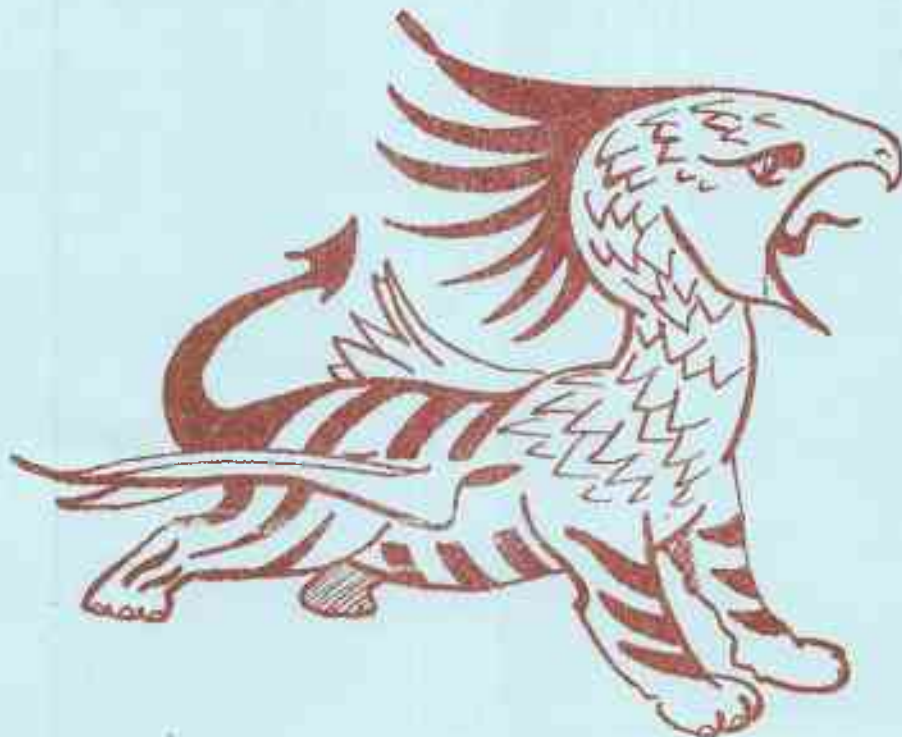
As for the rest of us, we took a round or two of Vurguzz, closed the bar, and went to sleep the slumber of the innocent. And that was the end of the second evening.

Sunday - through no fault of German fandom, it rained. This forced the group that used the courtyard to sit inside for the inevitable discussion and post-masquerade-mortem. Sunday evening was devoted to formal meetings, one of which was held to elect a new President for the local fan group, and the other was held in the Grand Ballroom to determine a good place for next year's German Con. Although my German borders just on this side of non-existent, what these meetings covered sounded exactly the same as their equal in the U.S. For example the meeting to decide next year's location had an attendance of about 160 fans. There were exactly 160 suggestions.

Then early in the afternoon, having had a wonderful time, we left with reluctance, manouvered the car out of the tilted park platz for the last time, and started the trip back to Frankfurt am Main.

Postscript. There were several colour pictures taken during the Castle Con. These, with a suitable running commentary, were handed to Major George Scithers, who promised to show them - with commentary - to the fans at San Francisco. I hope this gesture was worth your vote for Europe in 1965!

--George O. Smith



WHERE HAS ALL THE SF GONE

BY

TERRY

JEEVES

Once upon a time, assuming you could find one, it was possible to buy a science fiction magazine that contained sf. Nowadays, there is an even greater need for the old time fan's built in sf detector. You can find the magazines easily, but finding sf inside them is a far harder proposition. Worse, even the stories are only half there - the endings are usually missing. SF just isn't what it was.

This, of course, raises the ~~old~~ question: what is science fiction? An easy way out is to define it by what it isn't. "SF isn't a Western story up-dated to 1990" for instance. Such negative statements leave a whole load of un-mapped territory, so I'll stick my neck out and give my loop-hole filled definition. Like the camera fiend's exposure meter is intended as a guide and not a rigid rule book. Right then, "science fiction is fiction dealing with (as its main theme) something which hasn't happened - yet. It is speculative fiction based on the 'what would happen if...' theme."

At this point you may think of the cowboy reclothed in a space suit, or alternatively, the fantasy stories stemming from the 'what if magic works' query. Normally, neither story will be sf, but it MIGHT be. Arthur Clarke's excellent "Fall of Gondust" is basically an up-dated account of a submarine disaster. Kimball Kinnison is pretty close to being our future style cowboy, and as for fantasy, only a hardened faith in the wonders of science would claim van Vogt's "Weapon Shops" as other than pseudo science or downright fantasy.

Nevertheless it is very generally true that you don't make an sf story by bringing in a spaceship, anymore than you create a Western by putting your hero on a horse...especially if he happens to be a jockey. Literature, like colour, covers a wide spectrum, and the sooner we face that fact, the better. We can all p int to the pistol packing hero as he wipes the floor with sixteen rustlers and drives off the Indians single-handed and cry "Western". To Sherlock Holmes and Watson as they unravel one more mystery we tag the label "Detective", and as one more

tank churns across the North African desert, we mutter "War". Just as easily, we could (unless colour blind) pick out the colours red, blue, green etc. The arguments start where the colours (or story themes) merge. One man's green is another man's emerald, and a third may even call it turquoise. If this can happen on colour definitions which can be pegged to an Angstrom by the right equipment why waste time haggling over story definitions which can't be pegged at all? If our pistol packing, horse riding hero from Mugwump 9 joins the space marines as a warp technician, and after killing off the red tinged aliens, solves the problem of who killed their leader and started the war...is this a Western, sf, War or Detective...and when his spaceship crashlands in the sea and Bertram Chandler navigates it to shore, does it become a Sea story?

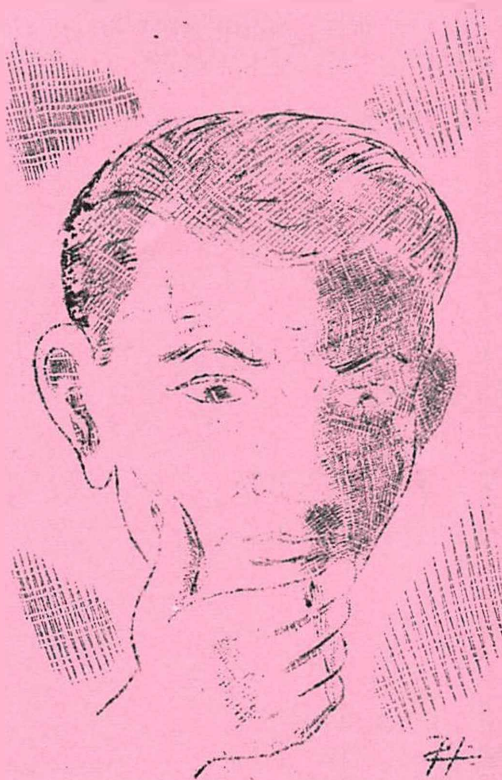
Let's stop haggling. Recent stories such as "Border, Breed Nor Birth" and "Man Who Counts", will never be sf in my books, but they may be to you. Yet my own definition lets them in. It boils down to this, we all know what we call sf. The question is, why has it stopped appearing in the magazines? Very little of the current crop looks like sf to me. No doubt some of it strikes you the same way, but though we differ on just which of these yarns are sf, I'll bet two things. First we agree that a lot of them don't qualify at all, and second, I think we find that we agree in a surprising number of cases on the ones to chuck out.

Applying the elastic yardstick, I'd venture that 80% of modern sf magazines are filled with material which would never have qualified as such in the old days. The old yarns may have hammed happily along, and their science may have fluctuated between textbook didacticism and spectacular inaccuracy - but at least we all agreed that they were sf, and moreover, they always had a plot.

Without trying to define 'plot', let's admit that a good story should have a definite ending wrapped up. Not necessarily on an up-beat, but with a definite termination. Many top notch yarns have concluded on the down-beat... "Death Deputy", "None But Lucifer" and "With Folded Hands" to name a few. Others leave no doubt at all about virtue being triumphant as Kinnison sweeps all before him. In between we have the thought provoking ending... "Campbell's Moon is Hell" makes you sit back and think just how indomitable the race of man can be. Herbert's magnificent "Under Pressure" leaves you with the uncomfortable feeling that only a battle on one level has been won so far. And so it goes. All good stories have one thing in common - the ending is the logical conclusion of what has gone before - even if it means that you stop and wonder about if it would happen that way after all.

Many modern authors rattle happily along until they run out of ideas, then a quick look at the word count shows them that enough garbage has been written to cover the gas bill, so the story is allowed to peter out there and then with a slight hint that something may be done sometime in the future. This technique is akin to palming off the paint rag as modern art. The long haired and effete critics will hail this masterpiece -- the poor Joe Muggins (such as me) will hesitate to cry 'Foul' in case they missed the point and show themselves up as mugs. The age

old technique of "The Emperor's New Clothes" is working again. They were invisible to all but the elite. Well, if any of the elite happen to be around, perhaps they'd point out the plot endings in the following random selection from memory.



"The Boy Who Bought Old Earth" where for little apparent reason the hero winds up converted (for his own good we're told) as a 'cat man'...and then?? Well I admit a sequel appeared, but not only in a different magazine, but so hogwashy I just couldn't read it.

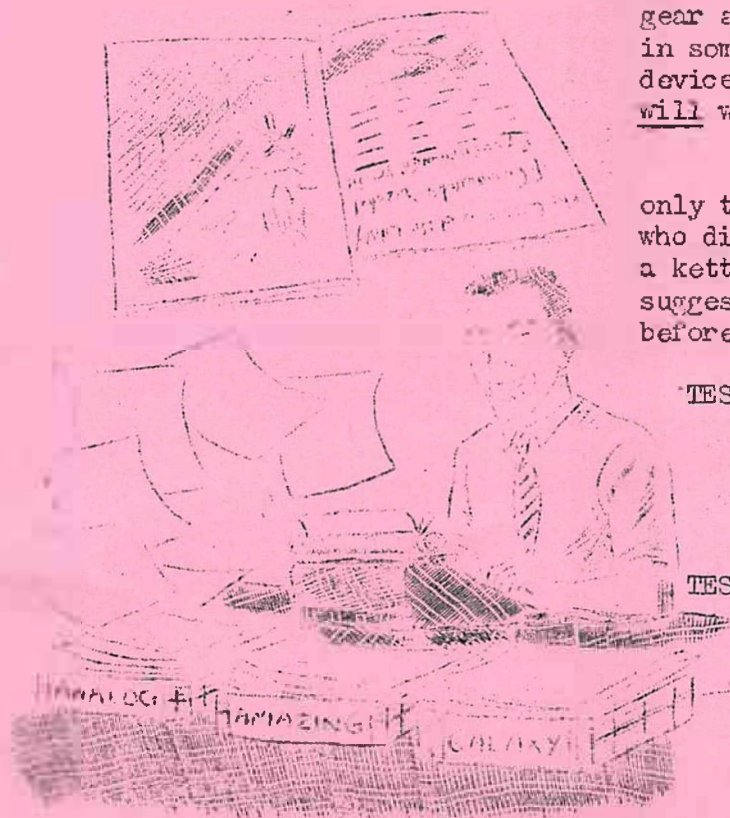
"Storm Wind" by Ballard in New Worlds. An unbelievable wind increases in arithmetical (and unexplained) force until around the 200mph mark it is about to blow a concrete wall down on the hero. By an empty billion to .001 coincidence, the wind chooses to start an equally unexplained (and progressive) drop and the wall slumps back into place and all is well...except for the retching sounds from the not so gullible.

In a recent Analog, John Brunner perpetrated a yarn concerning a pair of atomic device testers who wreck the whole gear and go off on a binge when a visitor in some sort of vibratory dimension device puts it right for them so that it will work. Yeah, so what....and why?

No doubt you can extend the list only too easily yourself. But for those who disagree violently, and have put on a kettle of boiling oil for me, may I suggest that you try the following tests before asking me round for a bite.

TEST 1. Write down as many titles as you can remember from the most recent sf magazine you've read. You're good if you can beat 50%.

TEST 2. Take a mag you read 6 months ago, look at the story titles. Now how many stories can you precis without peeking at the opening paragraphs? 40% is good here.



TEST 3. Try test 2 with a 2 year old magazine, and if you
can precis MORE THAN ONE LEAD NOVEL I'll be surprised.

Fans used to have a Sense of Wonder...but in those days the authors
had a sense of Responsibility. If the 20% who still have could inculcate it
into the rest, then sf would really enter its golden age. Or do you disagree?

-- Terry Jeeves



TALKING FANDOM BLUES

If you want to publish a fanzine let me tell you what to do.
You got to talk your parents into buying a duper for you.
Get some stencils and paper, plenty of ink, t'wont be long.
Write around to all the guys in fandom with you, get some illos
Put 'em all together, call it Les Cringe, you can't go wrong.
Get egoboo in Beyond (maybe!), letters from all over, Willis will buy you
bheer.

It ain't quite this simple, -so-I'd better explain
Just why you gotta ride on the trufannish train.
Becos if you wait to become a big-name-fan
You'll be waiting for your whole life span
We'll all be dead, or BSEF members or something.

When you come to form a club you've got the hardest time
It's no use meeting on the Underground.
You gotta find a pub with plenty of booze
Get some rich members, be careful who you choose.
Maybe get some femmes, forget about sf. Brag anyone?

Way out in Liverpool, here's what they did
And out in Cheltenham here's what they did.
Nottingham and London too, well sorta.
Don't let fuggheads bait you
They'll call you Roscoites, Sadoists too.
Don't let fan feuds break you up -
You'll win - what I mean, take it easy - but take it.

-- Jhim Larwood

SWORD

AND

SAUCERY

by
ALAN BURNS

In the many branches of speculative fiction at present we are witness to a battle: mysticism is fighting for its life. I think the reason for this is that science is coming up with so many wild and wonderful theories that the poor mystic is left behind at the starting post. Truth, it appears, is stronger than fiction. In order to prevent the utter rout of mysticism and the loss of such an important part of human life I would suggest that it is high time the mystic stopped being anti-science. He should drop his pretence of uniqueness and join forces with science for, after all, science is very similar to mysticism.

Science is a closed shop that makes a Union closed shop look like an invitation for all to take a job. Scientists say that science is a closed shop by virtue of knowledge. In reality it is a closed shop because you must be willing to conform - you must believe. Let me illustrate this.

In your earliest science classes you dealt with atoms as if they were nice little balls that played the most entrancing game by virtue of a love-hate relationship. Later these little balls went all fuzzy, as if your mental microscope were out of focus. Instead of being there, as any drunk who walked into a lamppost after a session at the local knows, they were only probably there. At any moment the lamppost could suddenly take off out of the road, but never, it seems, at the time you walk into it. Later still you enter a period where atoms crystalise in a sort of fixed spacial relationship to each other, and even later..... Eventually you have to see whether what you think agrees with what others think. You transfer bones from one graveyard to another, receive your Ph. D. and need learn nothing more. If you don't agree you are sent sadly on your way to become a second Professor Moriarty.

However, a mystic who decides to embrace science is in a far happier position. He need only ask question after question, wearing all the time a look of guileless innocence. This will drive any lecturer to a nervous breakdown, and after working so hard to absorb what they have been told, lecturers in advanced technology are never far from this.

Unfortunately it is also necessary to pass a number of examinations, and these are not amenable to copying because the paper copied may be just as wrong as yours. The only infallible method is a walkie-talkie disguised as a deaf aid - this will be worn throughout the term to allay suspicion. The one method not recommended is to learn what you have to know. There is a terrible chance if you do this that you may remember the very things you are trying so hard not to. In this eventuality you will end as a lecturer at a beggarly £2000 a year and your mysticism will vanish with the alacrity of a chemical precipitate you wish to preserve at all costs. This does not apply to practical exams. It is well worth your while to do these thoroughly as the technique will assist you later. Anyway, your friend on the other end of the walkie-talkie will find it difficult to assist you here.

At last you've passed your exams and interviews and arrive in the closed shop as Senior Chemist of Swindle and Twist Chemicals Ltd. You can now let your mysticism go full tilt. You are expected to submit a report on your progress every so often. This is where your knowledge of speculative fiction comes in. All you have to do is read any sword and sorcery tale - like Moorcock's writings are especially recommended - and switch atoms and molecules around in the place of her and villains. You have a report!

"In the midst of the molecule's division, the atom landed again, detached itself from the carrier atom and possessed of its abnormal energy rushed into the ranks of molecules reacting about itself, invulnerable to all but the strongest negative energy. Energy mounted and a quicker reaction took place..." This is transposed from "Doomed Lord's Passing" in Science Fantasy 64, page 33. You get the idea?

The report ends up on the technical directors desk and because he is usually an "arts" man he curses smart-alec chief chemists and consigns the report to oblivion in the bottom of a filing cabinet. The mystic is now free to sow doubt in the minds of his colleagues. This is very easily done after a brief perusal of the technical journals. You select any article using the word "probably" more than once a paragraph and write a long letter to the journal denouncing this article. You, of course, have to insert a number of ready made differential equations to strengthen your points, but these can be purchased ready made or lifted from maths books. The result will be more letters and the mystic can then retire, happy at the chaos he has induced.

A final difficulty is that the mystic in charge of a lab should have to produce results. This is not insupportable because there is always some nut case in every lab who likes experimenting. You should encourage this soul by constantly giving him jobs requiring him to stay behind after hours. You then institute a practice of looking through everyone's notebooks and copying out any results which look useful.

There seem to be no further difficulties. The future of mysticism is assured. One thing though - my chief chemist inspects notebooks and last night I got some yellow stuff after treating tar with bromophenol blue in the fourth phase of the moon. I think I'll be working late tonight.

-- Alan Burns



Cry
of the
Wild
Ghys

CRY OF THE WILD GILS

Peter White, 75 Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey,

I suppose that Ken Cheslin was trying to make some sort of an excuse for his ridiculous editorial in IS 12. Cheslin seems to be saying that, just as authors do not always hold the opinions that they invest in their fictional characters, we should not expect the opinions he voices in an editorial to be the ones he really holds. Surely the great value of amateur publications of this kind is that sincere opinions can be voiced without regard for audience reaction. If, as I suspect, Cheslin wrote the editorial in order to provoke a response in the letter column, he is reducing the fanzine to the level of the daily press, which will always publish controversial rather than genuinely important comment. Cheslin goes on to say that the average man is stupid. This is nonsense. The average man may or may not be less intelligent than Cheslin, but he is, by definition, average; he is neither stupid nor clever but average. Cheslin, like most people, feels an actual distaste for those he feels critical of. But I think it is important to remember that we must accept people for what they are. All the failings that anger us are human failings. To be stupid, or greedy, or perverted or murderous, is to be a human thing. The pederast and the priest, fool and politician, must all be understood and perhaps cured. But to reproach them for their pathetic humanity would be like blaming a tree for growing leaves or scolding the sea for having waves. The voting public is misinformed; it must be, because the mass media always tend to be in the hands of those who favour the right wing. The voting public values puerile things, money and its country. But people must live, and must have something to be proud of, and it would be hard to imagine what else existed for the mass of people to value in a capitalistic society. But ultimately it doesn't matter why the electorate makes up its mind so long as it occasionally changes it. The value of a democracy lies not in any inherent worth but in the fact that the random variations of public opinion ensure that no government can stay in power long enough to mess things up completely. Also, people's decisions, however puerile and misinformed, are at least effected by ballot and not by bombs.

Although I can't agree with Mike Moorcock when he says that movie actors are pretty dim on the whole, or with his opinion that Vonnegut's "Sirens of Titan" is a rattled-off pot boiler (here I agree with Jim Linwood, though I was sorry to see that he left "Timbo '90" out of his list of literary sf), I was interested in his analysis of the genre as a whole. This re-enforced my support of the 'experiment 1 group' of sf writers.

The convention reports were all tremendously enjoyable, especially Charles Smith's. It is, let's face it, almost impossible to remember half of what goes on at the con. For one reason or another the memory seems to fade after the first day, and it is a great pleasure to read the words of stronger personalities, more ordered brains that can remember all.

It was interesting to see the various objections to the writing of Ballard and Burroughs that appeared in the lettercol. It would seem that many people are so emotionally dead they can only respond to the cliché, whether that of space, horse or soap opera. Unable to grasp the subtle but potent emotional communications of serious writers such as Ballard and Burroughs, they refuse to accept that such emotion exists. Although I would be hard put to argue the case for the ipso facto superiority of sophistication, I think it is a pity that there is so little sophistication of literary taste in sf fandom.

Buck Coulson, Rt. 3, Wabash, Indiana, USA.,

Good editorial. We have the same sort of militant neofan over here -- in fact, until I saw the excerpts from the letter you got I would have said that ours were worse. Not having your sweet disposition, I didn't make such a reasonable reply; after a few argumentative letters I told one of our more obnoxious neos to come back in five years when he grew up, threw his next letter in the wastebasket unread, and haven't been bothered since. He's still going, but he isn't bugging me anymore. Of course, your neos may be amenable to reason; some of ours aren't. It's been tried.

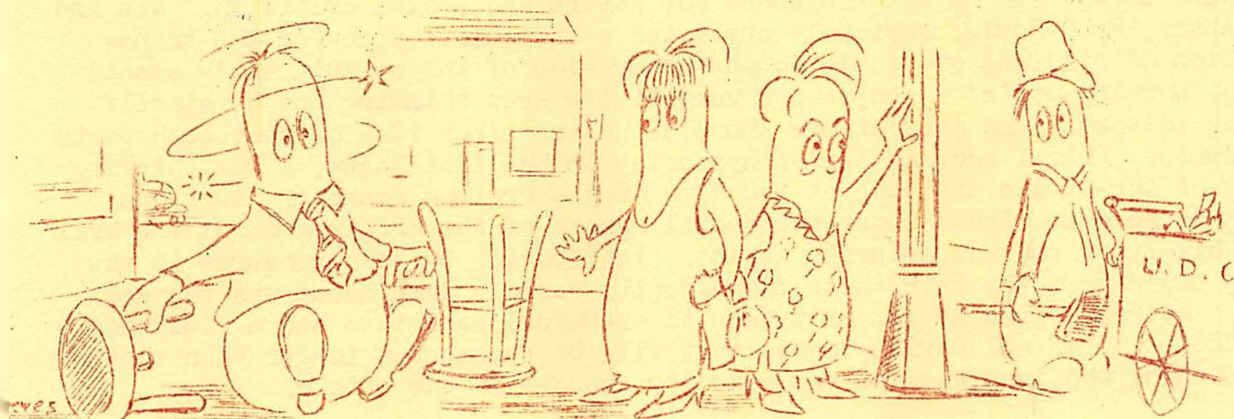
On the other hand, the US is getting a crop of intelligent reasonable neofans, who don't demand that everyone conform to their ideas and who have increased my friendly correspondence to the point where I don't have time to write to fanzines anymore. And it's a lot more fun to discuss science fiction with a new fan than it is to discuss Walter Breen's morals with an oldtimer.

I liked what Moorcock said about authors who want to use some science fiction trappings without bothering to conform to the requirements of the science fiction story. Of course, this isn't new. I recently re-read "The Hopkins Manuscript", first published in 1939. In the new edition it has an insulting little introduction by John Gassner in which he explains that Sherriff wasn't writing "mere pseudo-scientific novelties". This of course is a flat lie; he chose sciencefictional plot elements, therefore he wrote science fiction. The fact that he knew very little and cared less about scientific accuracy merely means that he wrote bad science fiction. The book shows excellent insight into the way people behave; it's a shame he spoiled it all by his scientific failures. I suppose this is on a par with the educators who think that all scientists should be experts in English while English majors need to know nothing whatever about science, even while feeling free to denounce the "literary ignorance" of their scientific colleagues.

Whether or not the voting public is dim witted depends on what one means by the term. Voters have very little knowledge of either the issues or the real ideas of the candidates (as opposed to their 'public images'). Voting in ignorance might be considered just a wee bit dim witted -- or it might be considered as a necessary evil, since in these days of political advertising and government censorship there really isn't any dependable way of becoming informed. One can read up on politics and the candidates, but generally there isn't any method of knowing whether what one is reading is the whole truth, a partial and slanted truth or an outright lie. (Except that the odds are that it's a partial and slanted truth, since most political news comes under that heading.)

Ian Peters is funny. Not his article on the American Indians, which is quite justified, but his pious little proclamation at the end that the good old British Government would have done better. Sure; everyone knows that Britain is the best of all possible countries and people like Jomo Kenyatta, Ghandi, George William Gordon and Father Murphy were just troublemakers. Ian should try reading his own nation's history once in a while. At least the US pretty well kept its injustices to one continent, plus the early Phillipine atrocities. Britain scattered hatred of the white man over the whole damned world.

I wish Archie Mercer wouldn't use phrases like "falling between two stools". It conjures up such a messy mental image. And also about women falling into "broad classes -- what other classes could they fall into?



In the lettercol Moorcock says that the fact that people are inarticulate does not mean that they aren't capable of doing the right thing intuitively. Of course not; but it doesn't mean that they are capable of doing the right things intuitively, either, and I'd like to see something besides Mike's word before I believe that they are. Also, unless British abortionists are better than those in the US, which I doubt, the incidence of death and disease following the operation is quite high, whether Mike has heard about it or not. Mike seems to be saying that if he hasn't heard of a thing, it doesn't exist.

It would be nice if Leon Collins would only write on subjects that he knows about; his misinformation about fandom is remarkable. But then, he only wants other people to write about subjects on which they are informed; none of these reformers want to apply the same rules to themselves that they advocate for others.

Jhim Linwood, 24 Lucknow Av., Mapperley Park, Nottm.,

I'm very impressed by the artwork, particularly Eddie's two illos for my column. Many critics point out that Eddie's work is not original and is culled from film mags. They neglect the obvious fact that Eddie is a GOOD artist. The layout and composition of his two illos gave exactly the sort of impression I was trying for when I wrote the two pieces they illustrate. Eddie's affinity with the material he illustrates is sometimes phenomenal; his "As I See It" and various illustrations of fan fiction show that he has studied the material minutely before picking up the stylus. And this is a great deal more than can be said for the majority of professional artists in and out of the genre.

Your editorial assessment of the new wave seems fairly accurate in view of recent developments. One new waver I've recently spoken to gave me the impression that he considers fandom to be a collection of 'hangers on' to the pros and that fans have no interest in sf. He said that the new wave will get rid of fans when they 'introduce' an element of seriousness into fandom. This indicates failure in both camps to understand each other. I may be sticking my neck out, but I feel that the only thing the two camps have in common is sf. I haven't yet come across any new wave digressions into films, jazz, history or philosophy -- things that help to make fanzines so interesting.

Ken misses a moot point; Aldiss wasn't advocating Emotion Registers in "Minor Operation" nor was Sturgeon advocating homosexuality in "Venus Plus X", they were using both as a springboard for satire and social criticism. Ken and his mentor, Fred Hoyle, seriously suggested a ridiculous plan for the transportation of millions of people to the other side of the world! Ken's assailing of the 'working man's' apathy shows very little deep thinking and he himself in this editorial and many others shows he has no clear idea of what each party represents. When I accused Ken of hypocrisy in the last issue, I was thinking mainly of the public attitude at the time of the Profumo scandal. Everyone trying to be open minded about the sexual aspect of the affair and raising hell about his lying and the security aspect. Yet judging by the exposures in the Sunday newspapers the only thing the majority cared a damn about was the sex angle. Everyone from newspaper tycoon to ex-Oxford satirists had a field day with Keeler, Ward and Davies; names that will be remembered longer than that of Lord Denning who investigated the security aspects of the affair.

Beryl Henley's piece on cartoon corruption wasn't, I hope, dismissed lightly by readers. Children are especially sensitive to suggestion by those entertainments aimed exclusively at them. A few young American homosexuals have admitted that their tendencies began as fans of Batman and Robin. Batman and his boy is the classic homosexual relationship, and variants can be found even in the least objectionable material.

Moorcock did a nice job reviewing "Strangelove", a pleasant change from some of the slush written about the film by pretentious movie mags. Mike commits one error though; Jack D. Ripper was played by Stirling Hayden (not George C. Scott) and Major Turgedson by George Scott (not Hayden). Perhaps the gimmick of Sellers playing three roles was pointless, there being no connection between the three, but everyone was a canco of genius and the best thing that Sellers has ever done. Take for instance the scene where Sellers as Mandrake

humours Ripper; this was a comic masterpiece and made Danny Kaye look the third rate nitty amateur he undoubtedly is.

As a matter of fact I did see the Lustgarten thing Berry writes about. I also saw another where a man sets out to kill the people who failed to rescue his little boy from drowning twenty years earlier. Before each murder he talks to a photo of his dead son saying how he will avenge him -- yet the photo is of a youngman in his twenties!

That a few of your correspondents label Ballard a world-wrecker shows that they haven't read Ballard and didn't understand Mike's article. A writer, it seems, has only got to portray the Earth under a different climate and geophysical scheme to be called a world wrecker.

Leon Collins letter clearly shows that the new wave has yet a long way to go.

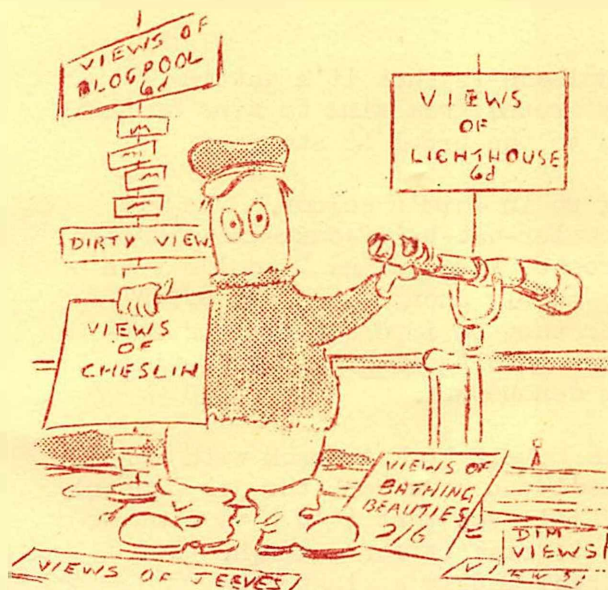
Archie Mercer, 70 Worrall Road, Bristol 8,

"This is Mr. Mercer speaking. I'm sorry I can't come to work anymore this year, but I've just received LES SPINGE 13."

Let's do Ken first. "I would suggest," he would suggest, "that few people seriously believe that the habits or philosophy of the central characters in a story reflect the author's own views." I'm not so sure. Trying to put myself in the author's place, I think I'd sooner write about somebody who was "my type of person" than about somebody who wasn't. Furthermore, when one author creates character after character all holding similar views, one can be forgiven for suspecting that the author's own views are not all that far away. However, I may have got lost somewhere but I don't see that this is particularly relevant.

Nobody, surely, is disputing the right of an author to put his own views in a story. Ken is upholding the contributors right to put his own views in a fanzine. One's own views may, in either case, be so radically different from those set before one that one recoils in horror. The resultant conflict of views is in itself of interest, let alone what has gone before.

Then Ken gets on to politics. I used to attend boarding school, and I remember the master making some remarks to the effect that a group of intelligent teenagers such as ourselves knew far more of politics than did the man in the street. And I remember feeling smugly pleased that this should be so. Not so long afterwards I found myself in the Army, and I soon realised how utterly nonexistent my previous knowledge of



politics really had been. Then, however, came the end of the war, everybody was demobbed and could spend his time going to football matches again - and I guess Ken isn't so far from wrong after all.

Now this Profumo thing. I'm entirely with Ken here. I have no objection to my rulers having a satisfactory sex-life, wherever they get it from. In fact, inasmuch as a frustrated Minister is liable to work his frustrations out on those over whom he rules I'd rather that they were enabled to have satisfactory sex-lives.

Everybody seems to have missed the point of the "lying in Parliament", though. In the normal course of events MPs are understood to be telling the truth, and a direct accusation of telling a lie is automatically out of order. Every so often, though, somebody rashly says something which turns out to be demonstrably not so. In that case he simply apologises for having made an erroneous statement and everybody carries on as before. Where Profumo's case differs from the ordinary is the circumstances under which he told the lie. He told it in what is known as a "personal statement". When an MP feels the need to clear the air about some matter in which his name may have innocently been mentioned, he can arrange with the Speaker to make a "personal statement" next time the House is sitting. By tradition this "personal statement" is limited to facts, and represents the truth. Therefore, as distinct from ordinary parliamentary speeches etc, it is not subject to any form of debate or cross questioning and is allowed to stand exactly as it is.

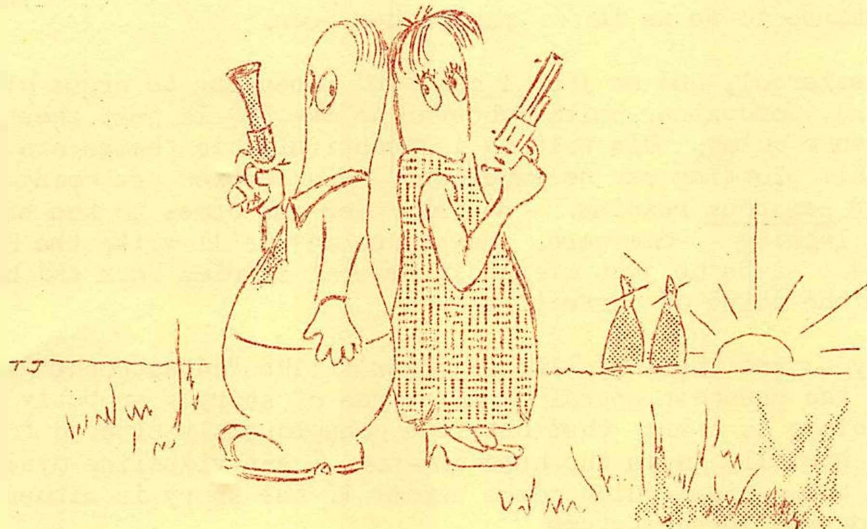
It was the deliberate misuse of this specific formula to mislead the House and the country that Profumo was guilty of. The "personal statement" is an extremely useful device so long as it is given absolute respect by all parties. Therefore when he was discovered to have been abusing it, he was quite properly for the high jump.

It has just occurred to me that the exemplary treatment meted out to him may, in fact, have strengthened the respect in which the parliamentary "personal statement" is held.

My only particular comment on Walt's episode is that it's getting a trifle bewildering following the Willis family around from zine to zine on their travels. First class material though, well up to the usual IS standard.

For a wonder I can't find much to pick up in Jhim's column. The bit about Londoners perhaps. In my opinion, the bowler-hat-brief-case-and-umbrella clad brigade look a bunch of utter Cherlies dressed thusly, and I wouldn't be seen dead in such a rig-out. And I like being safely anonymous. The office-workers are bad enough elsewhere, but in London they're impossible. For respectable conformity, I mean. I suppose I must be agreeing with Jhim this time. Still very good stuff though, with a hilarious denouement.

A couple of pages later I suddenly find myself back to back with Beryl Henley. This I call a dirty trick. Why couldn't you have done the job properly and put us face to face? Yes, I know - she'll tell you that it'd have sent me screaming. Nevertheless I'd have been willing to risk it for a laugh. But I guess I'll just have to make do with rubbing lasciviously against her posterior for now.



Precisely what connection Mike Morcock's column has to do with a convention report escapes me for the moment. ~~[[A report on the literary conventions of 1964 etc...as few people realised.]]~~ It's interesting, though frequently difficult to grasp just what precisely Mike's looking for. It'd possibly be easier if one were in the least inclined to read some of the stuff that Mike praises (which unfortunately I'm not).

Sheila's conrep was short and sweet. It's a pity it didn't appear in "Beyond", actually - it serves as an excellent counterweight to Chas. Platt's reaction. Charlie Smith's is long and sweet, putting mine to shame. It's not, perhaps, written in the most polished of styles, but it's eminently readable and makes pleasant reading. I think there must be a natural law about conreps - unless one happens to be named Willis or something, one's earlier specimens tend to have something that one's later attempts lack. Partly, I suppose, it's the atmosphere of I-didn't-realise-that-life-could-be-this-fun-before. Later on, one comes to accept this as a natural concomitant of cons, and in fact one may show disappointment to find that it isn't always the case. Be this as it may, Charlie's brought out the having-a-wonderful-time-I-should-have-started-going-years-ago atmosphere very well, and has a particularly keen eye for the humorous aspect.

I'd like to have a word about the "keep the foreigners out of the BSFA" thing at the AGM. There's no question of overseas residents "sponging on us" as Charlie puts it - they are, in fact, giving the Association more than it can possibly give them. For that reason I have never been in favour of deliberately trying to recruit overseas members, but the Overseas category of membership exists and if any overseas fan wants to join the Association for any reason the Association has always been pleased to have him in its ranks.

I seem to remember that Ken Slater was the main one to speak up against admitting Continentals to full membership (with its attendant library privileges). This, I think, makes sense - and Ken has in his time done as much as anybody to foster fandom in its international aspect. There is, I'm therefore pretty sure, no question of his wanting to "keep the foreigners out" altogether.

Anyway, I trust that the BSF attitude to overseas members and potential members will continue to be as it always has been.

To the lettercol, and at last I can find something to argue with Jhim about. To my mind, Cordwainer Smith (whoever he may be) is just about the most disappointing author going. His writing is beautiful, his themes are outstandingly original and his plotting can be excellent. His stories are among the few that deserve slow sensuous reading. And yet, when one comes to the end, there's always something lacking - somewhere. Maybe one day he'll write the Perfect Story - just once. Maybe he just missed it several stories back and has now developed beyond the point of perfection.

I'm sorry to see that Sid Birchby doesn't like "catastrophe" stories. To me, they have the greatest appeal of all types of story - probably because they deal with things as I know them but in a conspicuously altered form. And, starting as they normally do in the here-and-now, I can visualise myself co-existing with the action, which comes harder if the story is either an out-and-out fantasy or set in the future.

And that's yer lot, as the saying goes. I could probably do better than this by way of comment if I really set myself to it - LES SPINCE now rates very highly indeed on my scale of excellence - but I think this is enough - otherwise LS 14 will be 200 pages!

Charles Platt, 8 Sollershott West, Letchworth, Herts.,

As usual my complaint is that LS could have been cut in half. This time, of course, it was; but like the Greek monster myth, name of which I can never remember, having chopped one head off two grew in its place; each half of your magazine looks even bigger than one copy of 12.

Archie's report I found entertaining, useful, interesting...all the things an article should be, except controversial. This is a pity, but at least it had other factors in its favour: it was the right length, well written and so on. More that I can say for the "book" that followed it.

This will achieve fame if only because it is longer than any other conrep. Certainly it will not achieve fame any other way; unless perhaps because it is more boring than any other conrep. Seriously, it isn't necessary or desirable to record every tiny incident, every word, every trivial event that seemed hilarious at the time, but now, in print and free from an alcoholic haze, is simply embarrassing. There are some interesting parts in this report, and some -- a few -- are amusing, but these are outweighed by the majority of the report which is plain boring. Partly because the events themselves can only be really amusing to someone who has personally lived them, and partly because Mr. Smith somehow lacks a light humorous touch, although he could probably write a good straight article. Twenty pages is much, much too much, even in a fanzine.

Your lettercol was, I thought, better this time; some of the letters seemed to have been cut more, though others were allowed to get out of hand, mostly whenever they started on one of your "controversial" topics, which, I'm

afraid all left me yawning. If everyone writing these letters was an eminent and brilliant authority on their subjects, also endowed with a gift for glittering prose, I might have read one or two. But even then I'd be forcing myself.

Worcestershire Sauce is a little depressing. I'm afraid that even with my limited knowledge of politics I can criticise Ken for knowing very little about what he says. The generalisations and widely held assumptions pile up upon one another, reinforced by sweeping statements and misapprehensions, and the whole mess doesn't really mean anything. Ken is much more coherent and sensible when talking about fandom and such like, although his assumption that new wave fans will like "lien" because it is concerned with SF is rather short sighted; one might as well say that someone who enjoyed one sf book will enjoy them all, since, after all, every one is sf.

And his prediction of a slump in quality as the boom in paperback sales and new readers continues was handled previously in an article in Vector by C. P. McKenzie: "Tew Road Maps to Chaos", Vector 20.

"A Day in San Francisco..." was very Fannish. The only part I liked was the pun on frankfurters. Walt Willis should miss out all the connection wordage in his articles and just leave the jokes; although several parts were very well written. My main argument with an article like this is that there is not quite enough interest to keep the reader reading; he should be compelled to read, not asked to.

Mike Moorcock's section was a lot more readable than his article in LS 12; although I do disagree entirely with him over Sellers' role in "Strangelove". The fact that he was playing three parts was only annoying if you looked for it; if you treated his portrayals as three completely different people his characterizations were so complete that his three part act was not at all obstrusive. To me, his acting was in complete accord with the comic horror of the film, and I found Dr. Strangelove himself not only brilliant but believable. The film, without Sellers, would not have been half so rich in talent.



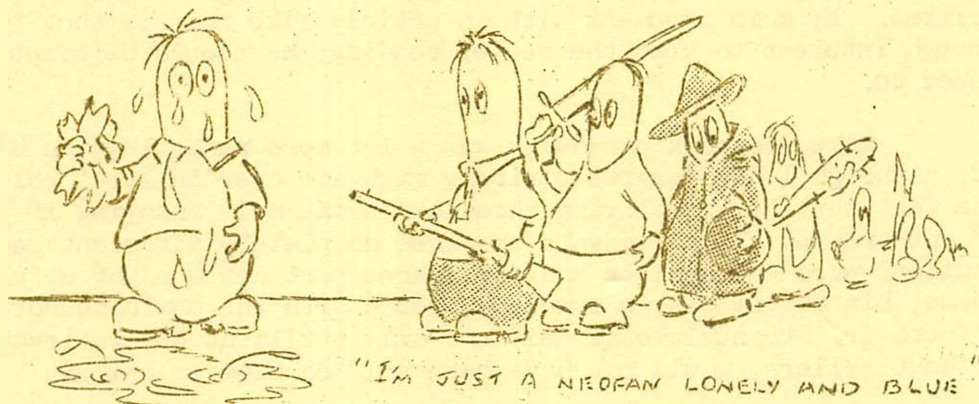
John Berry's piece was a little better than "The Goon", but not much. All the way through I was wondering why he was making such a fuss when it was obvious that the sort of outlandish script he was describing is the type seen every day on television. When I got to the end I found out why; without making such a fuss over purely trivial points, the plot of the tv play he was criticising, while bad, would not have been the slightest bit unusual. This was rather an unnecessary and laborious piece of work. I felt somehow cheated after reading it.

With regard to the production of the magazine, I do object to reading, or trying to read, green print on yellow paper. Last issue made quite intelligent

use of ink colours and paper tints, but this issue they got in the way of reading the magazine.

The pieces of Eddie's work show up the rest of the art. But they looked rather peculiar stuck at the bottom of white pages like that, also completely disconnected with the subject matter of the surrounding text. The rest of the art was occasionally good, and I enjoyed the covers. The Tomillos in the Willis article and for that matter all this artist's illustrations in this spinge were very poor. Harry Douthwaite's illos seem to have escaped from a comic strip.

This issue of LS was amusing where I saw my name mentioned. It seems that all one has to do in fandom to get talked of a little is make a few honest statements of opinion. The way some people carry on would imply such statements are not all that common outside controversial topics. I'd be interested to know what my reputation is that Charles Smith thinks I didn't live up to. He talks as if I'm non-human or something. I can see him thinking, "funny...seems quite normal to me." I've been criticised for taking too much notice and making too much noise over a certain review; but the people concerned are just as guilty when they take too much notice of an innocent honest neofan who only found out what fandom meant six months ago.



Harry Warner Jr., 423 Summit Av., Hagerstown, Maryland 21740, USA.,

If you plan to turn into a tradition this delightful innovation of publishing doubledecker issues, you might include instructions on how to go about reading LS for your stupider readers - like the one at the typewriter. I read the wrong half first. However, my blunder did no perceptible harm to my enjoyment of both sections, and I imagine that it was caused basically by the girl on the cover, some evidence in favour of those who think that a fanzine should use a cover for the same propagandistic purposes as a prozine. However, I might be prejudiced in this particular case by my feeling of kinship for the young lady. Her complexion is remarkably close to mine.

Ken dismisses too abruptly the question of whether science fiction needs fandom. Obviously there would be no need to ask the question if only the immediate circulation value were considered, and it is equally clear that there are enough individuals trying to sell fiction to fill up the prozines and paperbacks, even if no other fan sullies himself and becomes a pro. However,

it isn't quite that simple. First of all translate fandom into fans, because fandom is merely a convenient way of referring to fans that has unfortunate connotations of government and 'total is greater than the parts' that doesn't apply in this case. Then think over the history of professional sf in both the US and England during the past two or three decades, and try to imagine how it would have changed if there had not been the tiny proportion of readers who were so interested in this type of fiction that they became fans, and from fans turned into pros. Is it likely that England would have had prozines during most of the past quarter century, without the activity of Gillings and Carnell, (Of course, publishers who wanted to put out prozines could have found editors elsewhere, but would publishers have wanted to put out sf magazines without the persuasion of these two, and would men inexperienced in the sf field have produced magazines that lasted more than six months?) Would sf have as much status as it possesses in England without Arthur C. Clarke? The case isn't quite as clear cut in this country, but I believe that sf would be in an even worse state over here without Bradbury, Pohl, Wollheim and a half dozen other fans-turned pros. I don't mean to imply that these individuals wouldn't have become successful pros without first being fans. But I do contend that sf is too unpopular and specialized a type of fiction to survive in the commercial publishing world without the efforts of men who have both talent and the extreme enthusiasm for the field, two qualities that nor ally create the fan.

Jhim Linwood's shout that "sex dominates our press" reminds me of the local prudes who go around talking of nothing but the shorts that more and more women wear daily on the streets of Hagerstown during warm weather. Most of us glance at the women no more than we would if they were wearing conventional dresses, except when a particularly impressive or preposterous form is partially inside the shorts. The few who are preoccupied with it and claim it is a demonstration of the degeneration of the times tell more of their own character than they do of the times. I imagine that Jhim would say that the press is dominated by the football scores, if he were trying to keep his money from vanishing into the pools. My own impression is that the press is dominated by politics, and I have no interest in politics whatsoever, so I am apparently the victim of some kind of authority complex that causes me to bristle whenever I encounter an item about someone who might someday be a congressman or some such nasty person.

Ella Parker thinks I'm a sadist and maybe I shouldn't reveal my pet method for solving the problem that Alan Burns poses, that of making the punishment fit the crime. My panacea would consist of work, hard work as the law is for the criminal to pay his debt to society. Most individuals with a record of frequent infractions of the laws seem to have a common desire to avoid going to the necessary pains to live legally. It's most obvious when a fellow breaks and enters or robs or shoplifts to obtain money or good without taking the trouble to earn money. In a more complicated way, it holds good for the man who is hauled before the judges because he won't support the wife and child whom he has left (he would have less himself from his labours) or the driver who keeps breaking the speed limits (he dislikes as much as most of us the amount of time and effort that are involved in getting from one place to another, and does something about his dislikes). I don't favour Georgia type chain gangs for everyone who is picked up for petty larceny. But I believe that repeating criminals would stop repeating if they were forced while serving time to do extremely dull work that requires muscular effort and provides none of the satisfaction that a man can get from doing skilled work well.

It's curious how the sympathy for the wrongs done the American Indian has faded away in this country in recent decades. About 50 years ago, there was pretty nearly as much effort to give the Indian his rights as exists today for the negro. Moreover, the Indian held a couple of generations ago the negro's current place as the creator of the true American arts. You saw Indian designs in floor coverings everywhere and small totem poles were inescapable and several quite good American composers devoted most of their efforts to attempts to assimilate Indian melodies and rhythms into classical music. (I'm not quite old enough to remember all this but it's obvious enough from the magazines of the time, some reminiscing of older persons, and various other sources.) I feel as strongly as Ian does about the injustices to the Indian, but I hardly think it can be blamed on any one simple matter like the outcome of the American Revolution. It's just another example of man's inhumanity to man. Today I read his article. Yesterday I was in my home town, Chambersburg, Pa., which the Confederates burned to the ground 100 years ago during the Civil War because it could not pay an impossibly high tribute that the troops demanded; nearly six hundred buildings were destroyed. Last week I visited the Enoch Brown School site where 200 years ago a party of Indians slaughtered the teacher and a dozen small boys without provocation. I imagine that the Indians would have been just as hard on the white man, if the Indians had possessed the sufficient numbers and weapons. I'm all for decriing instances where inhumanities have been done, but I don't think it's possible to set up any race or nation as immune from the urge to commit them.

I can think of quite a few closely reasoned arguments in fanzines, even if Buck Coulson can't. Several times in recent issues of Warhoon there have been things which would qualify, particularly some of the contributions to the discussions on "La Dolce Vita" and the interaction of letters from fans and the writing of filthy pros. There have been two or three lengthy Walter Breen articles that deserve the title, particularly the one on censorship. I believe that the efforts to convince us that mescaline should be a legal drug have been superbly written, even though I'm still not convinced. There has been one closely reasoned argument running through fanzines for the past 20 years, somewhat adulterated with nonsense on the same topic, that of Lovecraft's fiction and its place in the general literary world. My real point, of course, is that it's not fair for the editor to interrupt repeatedly what a letterhacker is trying to say about an article which the editor printed without interjecting his own opinions.

Graham Hall, 10 Barton Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire,

This is, I guess,

an answer to your scathing editorial. Someone said you were a psychology student....

It seems rather pointless to say that you are not attempting to publish an imitation of a prozine. LS is essentially an amateur publication. Obviously a fanzine should try to cater for those that are not catered for by professional 'zines - those mags that have to appeal to a wide audience to make a profit and thus don't specialise enough for the few fans around. Some fanzine 'zines are excellent. LS I like too, though I don't know why. It is self-assured and catty, and does drip with snide, mostly in the lettercol and Linwood's lot.

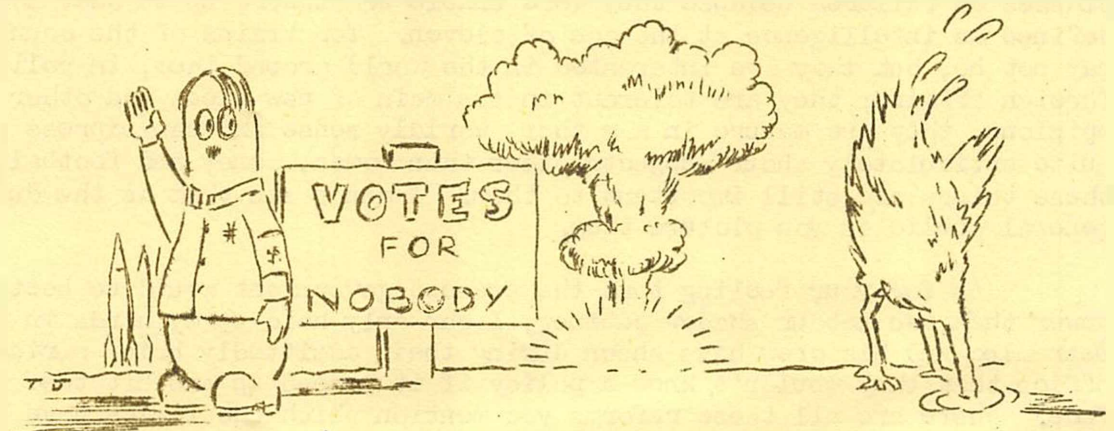
I like a 'zine that sets a policy and sticks to it; like "Alien" and "Hyphen" and even "Beyond". When a zine raves madly about being an attempted copy of a prozine, like "Zenith", and then goes out of its way to be a fanzine, it leaves me cold.

Your "group loyalties" are, to me, non-existent. I don't associate myself with the so called new wave, which from all accounts, consists solely of Pete Weston and Charles Platt. Pete Weston and myself have a minor feud, and between Charles Platt and myself there is a type of friendship which breaks down because he associates himself, either groupwise or personally, with Pete Weston.

I do wish Linwood wouldn't generalise about the Press. There are both good and bad papers. It's just that the bad papers sell more. Linwood is so self-assured, though I daresay intentionally. He tends to be LS's mouthpiece, even more than the editorial, and one gets the impression that he is speaking on behalf of LS. His column is provocative as well, but far from well-considered. He tends to criticise without thinking, or to give that impression. Some of his sweeping statements are absolutely unbiased.

I agree wholeheartedly on this voting lark. Democracy just doesn't work. Not everybody should get the vote and I'd include myself in that. I don't want the responsibility of voting for or against the bomb. Of course, if I had my way, Profumo would have been proud to tell Parliament that he'd shackled up with Keeler. To quote from King Lear, "Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile".

The three conreps, especially Charles Smith's, made up for any grudge I might have had against LS, brought about by Linwood's unbalanced generalisations.



Charles Smith, 61 The Avenue, Ealing W 13,

I'd seen one or two other issues of LS and I'd always considered it one of the most impeccably produced fanzines. This issue really outdid the others. It was a fantastic issue - there was so much in it. For the first time, I think, I really lingered over a fanzine, savouring every morsel - it tasted great too. All the covers were simply marvellous (and if I'm not very careful this is going to get a wee bit repetitive) especially the Cawthorn. I felt that possibly you took something from the Tom cover by painting it afterwards. I preferred the pure black

and brown tints of Cawthorn's opening cover. That's a hell of a range of artists you've got there, by the way. Most people would probably be satisfied with just one of those. All were appreciated both by me and by Marjorie who knows rather more about it than I do.

You expressed the issues of the sercon versus the fannish fanzines extremely well and with a great deal of tact. It's a great pity that such issues should ever arise at all. It's pretty obvious that two factions have grown up in this country over the past year with a great deal of intolerance on both sides. I consider myself pretty much of a newcomer still in fandom and maybe I was lucky in the type of fanzine I started reading. After an initial failure to grasp what on earth fanzines were about - I couldn't reconcile budgies with sf - I persevered and gradually began to appreciate the freedom that fanzine publishing allows and the wide diversity of interest contained therein; and I wouldn't have it otherwise. I can still enjoy articles on sf, but, just as my reading is by no means limited to sf, so I prefer my fanzines to provide articles and stories over as wide a spectrum as possible. The few fanzines that are published in this country that are limited to articles on sf I've found to be vaguely immature - not a criticism, this - and far too limited in outlook. Long live the spinge type, offering a wealth of varied material, I say.

Not having statistics, I suppose I can't take issue with Ken Cheslin over the intelligence of the general public who have certainly allowed themselves to be conned by the present government over the past twelve years into thinking they had a real government (for the people and by the people and all that jazz). Still I must say that I've been very impressed with the general thinking of the youngsters (makes me sound about fifty) that I teach at school. Now this is no grammar school; I teach children that society classes as failures because they were unable to measure up to what society has defined as intelligence at the age of eleven. Top brains of the country they may not be, but they are interested in the world around them, in politics, in foreign affairs; they are tolerant in the main of new ideas and other people's opinions; they are mature in a rather worldly sense and can express themselves quite articulately about subjects other than women, money and football, though these things are still important to them. I can't see them as the dull general public as you picture them.

As for your feeling that the present government would be better in power than the Labour shadow cabinet, I can only hold up my hands in horror. Dear Alec and his crew have shown during their admittedly brief period of office that they wouldn't know a policy if it jumped up and hit them in the face. Where are all these reforms you mention which the Tories have been egged into by the opposition? I haven't seen any. Come to think of it, I can't think of anything any of the Tory governments during the past twelve years have done that I can look back on and say, "Well, at least they passed such and such a bill, that was a good thing for the country." All I can remember them for are the various Washes and scandals, the rise in cost of living, the growth of gambling and property speculation, the rise in prices of all property, and, of course, Henry Brooke. You may be right in your estimate of George Brown, I have little sympathy for him myself; but I think Wilson is going to make an excellent Prime Minister. I can't see them trying to do too much in one go; they're economists, they're going to be able to judge what the country can afford. They've got some excellent men from whom they can



choose their cabinet. If I really thought that the Tories would get in again at the next election, after their past record, I think I'd emigrate.

I enjoyed Willis's brief travelogue but wasn't knocked out by it. I can't usually stand this kind of thing - especially in the cinema, where I consider them an offence to any kind of intelligence so the fact that I was able to read it with some enjoyment shows how good the writing must have been to have got over the initial barrier.

Cheers for Jhim Linwood in his musings about our free press. I echo everything he said. The majority of the papers, especially the Sunday papers, are simply appealing to the lowest common denominator. Give the public another expose of the vice rings in Soho, another story of how someone watched millions of his fellow prisoners die, with a few whippings, a couple of weird surgical

operations thrown in for titillation. And they say it couldn't happen here! I'm sorry Jhim found London so depressing though. Many of his sentiments I share on this, however. It is a cold and friendless place sometimes. I have to admit that I'm ready to leave now.

I can't share Mike Moorcock's dismissal of actors as an unintelligent breed; many of them show a great deal of intelligence in their performances. Most of the new group of young actors that have arisen in this country over the past few years have shown real care and thought in their performances: Albert Finney, Peter O'Toole and Tom Courtenay for example. I agree with him about Sellers though; he completely ruined Strangelove for me.

All right, "Sirens of Titan" isn't as good a book as "Catch 22" - come to that, how many books are? It's still one of the few books in the field of sf that has made me laugh. I feel Mike is taking it too seriously; the whole thing is one gigantic spoof on the sf novel and humanity itself. The reason given for the whole of man's progress on this planet is enough to endear the book to me for ever.

Much as I enjoy Westerns as films, I can't share Ian Peters' great interest in the backgrounds and the true facts of the old West. I much prefer the West of the cinema which has developed into a kind of mythology, much as the age of chivalry did; in fact, there's probably a great deal of similarity between them. It's probably why I enjoy them both so much, although I know they are both false as can be. The Western, if you like, is a kind of new folk opera, full of cliches and blatant tamperings with history, but nonetheless exciting for all that. I don't think there is any kind of film that gives me quite the kick that a really well made Western does. Like "Shane", "The Magnificent Seven" and "Gunfight at OK Corral". I'm a little boy at heart, still.

Sid Birchby, 40 Parrs Wood Av., Didsbury, N/C 20.,

It's difficult to know where to start commenting on a spinge of such grossness. I am charmed by a remark in Charles Smith's con report. "Someone came rushing past me screaming that Charles Platt had been sick as if this was great news." Such a sentence sums up completely a certain aspect of every convention that has ever been. The air of screaming meemie-ness that seems to grip every fan at some stage of his career. Me too, of course. It's not that I'm being snide about it. I've done my share of rushing up and down corridors in nameless hotels. I don't pretend to be better than Charles Platt. Just older.

For example, last month I was in London on an overnight visit and decided to have bed and breakfast at the Bonnington Hotel, Southampton Row. It was at this hotel that the 1952 (I think) con was held...yes, the one with the roof party. It was in the bog there that I found myself standing next to "New Worlds" author "Alan Barclay" and realised that he had been one of my lecturers for three years at University. It was in the lounge at that hotel that L. Ron Hubbard, then on the run from the States over alimony, I was told, made his first and last appearance, very reluctantly, as a con attendee. In fact, fannish history was made there. But nowadays, the place has changed. They charged me, bighod, 52/6d for B&B. What is more, they wanted me to pay in advance. Do you think they knew me?

However, please don't think that I despise Charles Platt. From what I saw of him at Peterborough he seemed a very earnest young man who had taken the trouble to think constructively about sf. One does not have to agree with him, but at least he has shown the effort.

Among the many other good things in this spinge (a pair ofspinges?) is Mike Moorcock on books, films etc. Solely on his rave review, I went out tonight to the local library and borrowed "Catch 22." (You don't expect me to buy a copy merely on his recommendation, do you?) I also got out two Heinlein juveniles, "Time for the Stars" and "Red Planet", seeing that Heinlein was filed next to Heller. Between the three of them, I consider that I have hedged my bets adequately.

Beryl Henley, 59 The Fearnings, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcs.,

Regarding what you said in "Sitdown" about new fans and zines. I was at Ken's last Sunday, and this topic cropped up in conversation (conversation she calls it! Ha!) between Ken, Rog Peyton, Mike Higgs and myself. It occurred to me that I'm in a somewhat unique position as regards this matter. I'm 38 and have been reading sf, on and off, for about 20 years. This makes me something of a veteran, possibly to be classed with the older inmates of fandom. On the other hand, I didn't discover fandom (sob!) until last year and have plunged in enthusiastically. This seems to make me, also, some kind of neofan. Actually, I do feel like a kind of halfway house, and can see both sides of the matter.

Lang Jones says, in his conrep; "However, there seemed to be a strong sercon element at this con, which was large enough to be disturbing, to me, at least. By sercon, I mean the "science fiction is all" type. Maybe if things

keep their present direction we shall see a split between the two groups." Why the hell should there be a split? Isn't fandom supposed to be big enough to hold both types of fan? Any why should Lane have found it "disturbing"?

If a fan wants to talk sf with me I'll talk sf. Won't I Charles Platt? If somebody wants to talk horse mythology, I can cope with that too. Can't I Ken? Archie? And war time aircraft - eh, Tony? Pop music and general maddery - squashed any good Beatles lately, Mary? Television - will somebody kindly fish Roy Kay outa the Jersey? My last letter wasn't that bad, surely? Philosophy, Charles? Harry? Pigs 'n' unicorns, Julia?

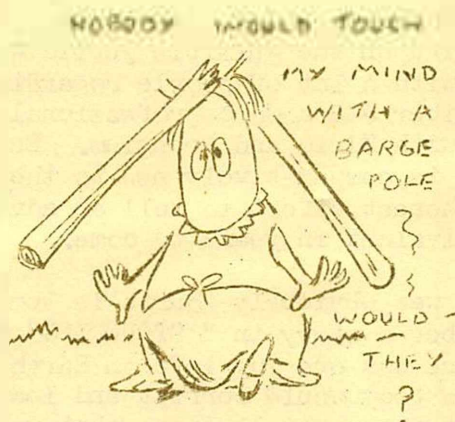
What is more important is that I find I can learn something from everybody I meet in fandom. The day I decide that there's nothing left to learn, I might as well go and pawn myself - then lose the ticket.

Anyway, I tend to agree with what you say about the responsibility of the new BSFA officers. I'm not one of them, but I am a member of the Brum group, and anything I can do to mesh the two factions, I'll do.

Ken: of course you're a crank, luv! You summed it up yourself last Sunday: I said, "Just how peculiar am I?" and you replied, "Not very, by fandom's standards. By mundanity's standards, though, you're way out on your own." AREN'T WE ALL? Would we be in fandom if we weren't? Ne! mind. Have a look round at the self styled "normal" people. Isn't it nice to be a crank? My sister recently told a friend of hers that I'm "plump and petty". Which is the best 3 word description I've ever heard of myself!

I think I'll skate gracefully over Mike Moorcock's bit. Mike turns up larger than life in everybody's conreps - so much so that I now have the weird feeling that he isn't real at all. (Are you, Mike?) However, if he is a figment of somebody's (powerful? lurid? paranoiac?) imagination, may I congratulate the solipsist concerned? You Have Done A Grand Job!

Archie's conrep: referring to the Brummies, he says, "And some of the best ones, I hear, didn't turn up at all." He means US Girls, of course; Margaret, Janet, bow nicely with me to the nice man! He'll retract in a hurry in his next conrep of course...snigger...ERU in '65!



I also agree with, "If an sf yarn entertains me - which is all I ask of it - that's quite enough." The converse applies here, too - if I don't like an sf story, I don't care how many people have lauded it to the skies, or who such people are.

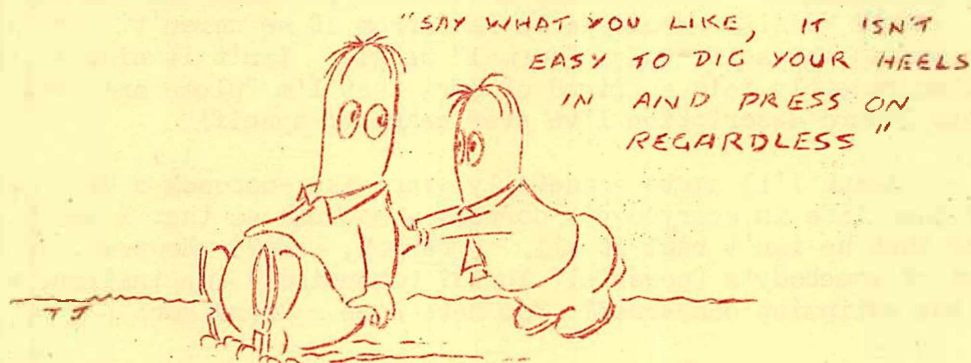
See, Archie - I have got a mind of my own an all. "Nobody else would touch it with a barge-pole" - so who needs barge-poles? It takes a mind to touch a mind, surely?

Ron Bennett: Pete Weston will probably clobber me for this, but I'll say it anyway. "Zenith" was scheduled as a one shot and nothing else. When the first issue came out, it was so well received that Pete found himself involved in getting out a second issue almost before he realised it. From being a strictly individual platform, "Zenith" turned into the official zine of the BSRG almost overnight. Which is a bit ironic, because now, so few of us have time to contribute to it!

What I'm getting at is - to crib from Stinker Murdoch - it would seem that "Zenith" Filled A Long-Felt Want. It's my guess that the same applies to the Plattzine "Beyond", though I don't know as much about that. It sticks out a mile that if fans didn't want it is kind of zine, they wouldn't be as popular as they are, in fact, they'd probably have folded by now.

I read what Jhim Linwood said about them - he sounded like a tired old cynic, but, not having met Jhim personally, I'll reserve judgement. In my experience, anyway, occasional New Brooms are a damn good thing. They stop the Old Brooms from stagnating into becoming tired old cynics. (Down with inertia.. let's try apathy instead!)

Seth Johnson: don't worry too much about the neofaneds - not these particular two, anyway. They're both pretty stubborn; criticism only tends to make 'em dig in their heels and press on regardless.



Alan Burns, Goldspink House, Goldspink Lane, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2,

I venture to think that occasionally pros write an experimental story, not to try out a new idea, but to see what they can get away with on the gullible public - to feel out the market. This is why I disagree with a lot of people regarding the Elric stories. Let's be honest, Fritz Leiber did a more professional job with his Fafhrd and the Louser than Mike did with Elric and Moonglum. But, whereas Leiber's been writing for years, Mike is comparatively new to the scene and accordingly I like Elric because it's an honest effort to tell an adventure story. I look forward to Elric or its equivalent in years to come.

The piece de resistance in this issue was obviously "Earth is Womb Enough". It contains a lot a truth. I remember a story in "STOUNDING" many years ago that was based on the fact that there was one guy left on Earth. He made for the sea and dropped in so that his body would corrupt and leave life. It ends "and his dead eyes looked up at the constellations that would not take on their familiar shapes for another million million years."

Moorcock's report I note, though I take issue with him about his easy dismissal of "Sirens of Titan". I thought it was far and away more amusing than "Player Piano". Vonnegut's attitude could only be appreciated by people who laugh at Grock trying to push a massive piano to a stool rather than move the stool to the piano. I suppose you could call it divine impracticability - or something.

Terry Jeeves, 30 Thompson Rd., Sheffield 11,

One word covers the size, duping, paper and cover stock - FABULOUS! You have a superlative job all round.

Sitdown. I felt rather hurt at the implication that the BSFA hadn't been doing its job. For my own part, I doubled as secretary and editor of "Vector" in my first years, piloted (and produced) the New Worlds Checklist along with Eric Bentcliffe, got the Galaxy Checklist organised and onto stencil for which I got no credit at all, even the intro letter from H.L. Gold went missing. I also served further terms as Vice Chairman and Chairman at a time when the library folded and had to be found a new home. I helped organise the Doc Weir Award, the Round Robins, the Welcomittee, etc etc etc. All this is my trumpet, and all ex committee members could write similar credits, as you both know. So, in view of the fact that we were all more or less pushed into these jobs because no one else wanted them (or would do them) I feel as I said before, rather hurt that all we got was adverse criticism.

As for people who tell you what to print and what to do - nuts to 'em. In my book a faned should print what (and how) he wants within the normal limits of decency. If you wouldn't use a certain word (as elsewhere in LS) to your girl friend, then don't use it in a fanzine - but, there again, that is just my own preference.

I thoroughly enjoyed the sundry conreps. Much more than the contemporary - and ill tempered - Platt report. Only two items in the conreps struck me adversely. Friend Smith's continued reference to "Lang this" and "Lang that"...almost a Lang report rather than a conreport. I was also much tickled by his complaining that "amateurs" had not been spelled correctly - and then misspelling the word "apparently". Reminds me of that tag about people in glass houses...otherwise...great report.

Geo Metzger, US 56367066, Ho Btry, USAAC, Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, USA.,

I've been a bit silent in the fannish scene for quite some time. College, the pursuit of it and of the life wrapped around same has tapped most of my time and interest. I still love getting 'zines in the mail, but... I just don't get so goshwow enthused over them as I once did. My interests have been pretty spread out over a lot of things...somehow, various and sundry papers and midterms, various and sundry preprant acquaintances, no rent money, no food money and a wire tap on the telephone seem to crowd things out of one's life. The things that usually got crowded out were fanzines because you really just couldn't get interested and bills because they just can't be paid.

Now of course, all that is over with. Now I have plenty of freedom. I have the security of a job I won't be fired from and a steady, assured income. I am in the M'fk'n army in the middle of M'fk'n Nowhere doing M'fk'n nothin'! Bhoy, do I yearn for the good old days of insecurity.

I'm not sure what you expect in way of comment. I can tell you that the mag LOOKS better and neater than I remember it doing. Maybe it is, or maybe my mind is croggled. The army does that to you. 44 years of college and then, in a few months I'm a gibbering moron. I have patience so it probably won't be until many more months that I become a gibbering alcoholic moron like most everyone else here. Some people come in that way. Oklahoma is the place to do it. It's nothing...flat dirt all the way from up in Kansas to the Gulf, and that takes in Texas. The town outside the post gates is supposed to be the third largest in the state. Really it's a small hick town. It's hard to find anything that isn't a basic. Certain books and magazines I find unknown here... good movies are nonexistent. The first time I saw this town was at midnight and gawddamned ifin it didn't look like Tijuana, Mex. All garish lights and bars and drunk sojurs and ugly broads. Hideous. Since I have been in this state I have not seen one really goodlooking, sintellating, woman. The broads you're most likely to meet are "bar-maids" and are downright ugly and know nothing except elephant jokes. Quite horrible. They water the beer here and have funny laws regarding its sale. I think the people are watered down too. I have never seen so many tired, pale looking women before. I'm losing my taste for beer quickly. I've been drunk only once in the 8 months I've been in. And again, the women are disgusting. This's like celibacy. After 45 years in College I have a job that requires not much more than being able to read the alphabet (I'm a file clerk).

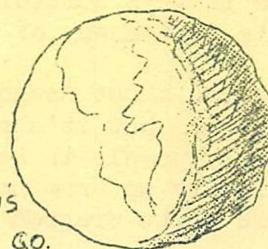
So I lead a minute existence. I read voraciously. I have read damn near every sf book in their library, even if I know the story practically by heart already. I buy pb's by the ton and digest'm at a couple a day sometimes. But I'm lethargic, or however you spell lazy. I don't feel like doing a goddamn thing, mostly since summer is here and it's too hot to think even. I was doing some artwork but I just lost interest. I bought a rifle but'm too lazy to gather up a bunch of beer and wine bottles to shoot at.

About the only thing I do is to write a few letters here and there. Sometimes, at work, I'm not at all busy, so I roll a sheet of paper in, usually off some form or other, and type out a letter, trying to keep track of the people in my immediate-scene-that was back in California. It ain't easy. Some only write occasionally, some not at all and one or two fairly regular. They are mostly in the process of disappearing. There won't be much of anyone left after two years.

Maybe the lettercol will give some inspiration for comment? Like things like abortions. I suppose there is a bit of a difference in abortions as you say "backstreet abortions" in London versus "how to get an abortion if you're in California". I have heard of people contracting something after an abortion. The case I'm thinking of had inflammation and swelling of veins on the insides of the thighs near the crotch. The doctor could tell with only one look that the girl had had an abortion recently. I have heard of people just plain getting screwed up to the point where they never do have any children. Usually this results from operations taken in Mexico where you can get an abortion for any price. So it's not in the abortionist's interest to perform

a sloppy operation? Faugh. If he doesn't think he's getting paid enuf he's just going to run thru it and bring on the next customer. If you get took there's not a hellova lot you can do about it. One girl I knew went down and couldn't locate the abortionist recommended to her. So she took another who tried to charge more. They didn't have the money so he (I believe) trimmed off a few edges. Anyway, the girl woke up before he had started. Whatever he'd given her didn't quite work. Instead she had hallucinations of a fashion... she sat up and saw all these instruments sticking out of her and tried to pull them out. A friend and the doctor had to flatten her out to get on with it. She had all sorts of delusions about what they were doing to her. She could feel nothing but could hear scraping noises. She has sworn off THAT. The after effects here were mostly mental. Another chick I know had an operation several years ago and has had a tremendous fear of doctors ever since. She was a bit screwed up anyway so you didn't notice much. When I knew her she was using Enovid, the birth control tablet, which works quite well if you aren't allergic to it or if you don't forget to take it once in a while. Breaking the schedule sometimes is pretty disastrous. She broke it. Mainly she took the pill in the mornings..well, she is very hard to wake up. Very, I lived with her for 7 months steady and she could sleep through damn near anything. Ergo, there were skipped periods. Not sticking to the schedule seemed to make her more fertile. She got knocked up again. This time she was afraid to go to a doctor for an abortion. She went on and had the kid. She arranged with an adoption agency to take control of the child. A family was preselected so that they could take the child into the home as soon as it had been removed from the hospital. The whole pregnancy period was terrible on the nerves. She had, of course, unusual cravings. If it wasn't too far into the wee hours I'd go downstairs to where some old roommates of mine lived (we were once an embryo motor cycle gang) and get them and we'd fire up the motorcycles and see if we could find dates or figs or, most commonly, chocolate cream pie.

After a fashion, I suppose it was quite humorous, but it was quite a tear on the nerves. She had the baby towards the end of the summer. She was a little late, by about a week. I had been spending the summer on the road and on the Indian scene up in Nevada and I hitch hiked into town thinking it'd be all over. It was not. I arrived just in time to go to the hospital with her. They stuck me in the waiting-room with all the real-live daddies, the kind who paced and worried and chain-smoked and made phonecalls. I sat around with my feet up on the Good Housekeeping magazines and wove Godseyes with some Mexican yarn. The doctor who attended her was pretty cool. He had her give birth under hypnosis. It took 15 minutes. She was remarkably healthy and was out after 2 days. It was a catholic hospital and was not prepared for the way we decorated her room with vrs and sundry Indian things hanging from everything. The nuns thought it was quite cute. They also thought it was anti-Christ. However...



"FOR CHUS
SAKE DON'T GO
ROUND THE OTHER SIDE - IT'LL MAKE YOU SICK"

When she was out and everyone was rejoicing ol' Uncle George (Pappa-san) was off to Nevada again. He comes back. Idiot chick was pregnant again in remarkably swift time. She goes back to the doctor. He is about to give up. However he supplies her with some pills. The effect they have is to induce labour - contractions of the uterus. A do-it-at-home abortion. The night she took them there was quite a crowd over, guitars and wine, everyone crowded around to keep her company. We read Winnie the Pooh to her in shifts (between spasms). It worked quite neatly and a day later, after resting, she was back at her job.

It's a bit ironic, but when she became pregnant (and didn't get an abortion) she was part of a committee trying to get abortion laws changed in Calif. The committee was trying to get laws passed so that abortions could be had under certain circumstances...cases of rape, welfare cases where one more is just too damn many, I forget them all. The TV and press didn't give them too good a time. TV was worst, as I recall. They could interview someone, have them state their case and then turn round and misstate the whole thing. Anyway, it was rather humorous for us to note that during the major part of the campaign this friend of ours was quite pregnant.

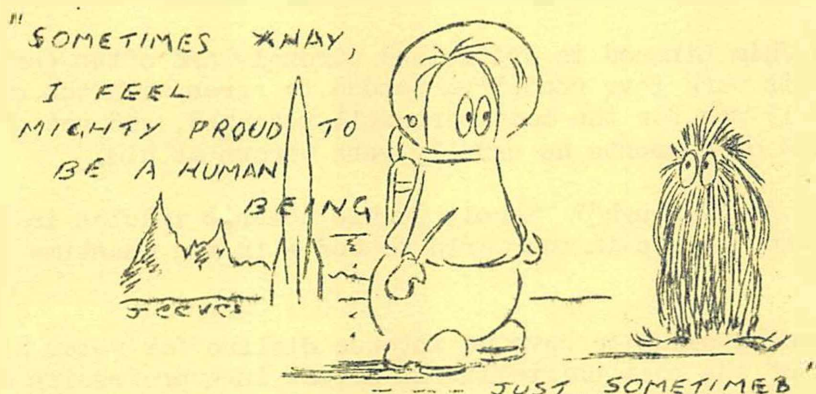
I suppose too, I could mutter something about sex, pornography and the crudely written variety of the same which floods newsstands in many places (like bus stations). These cheaply produced pbs are quite prominent around an army base, dammit. Mostly they are pathetically funny. But some people even have trouble reading them. Get some pretty clod-type people in a big pot like the army. If you spend three years in the services you probably know what types can be found. The average dull clod is pretty exasperating. I'm surrounded by thousands of them. The main subjects of conversation are drinking and Doing It. It's all quite another world, very distinct and removed from the real world. The real world to me is something I've lost and am never going to quite recover again. I suppose that once I'm OUT and have time and distance between the army and me it will seem more like a great joke, something to laugh about. But now it's a pretty stupid joke. While worse things could happen to me they did not, so this is the worst thing I have to bitch about.

Yesterday I was sitting with an acquaintance and BSing. He was a Ranger once. Rangers go around making commando-type raids and suchlike. Though all the raids I've ever heard about from him were on Marine barracks to steal jockstraps from officers and raids on the Navy sinking a ship at the pier. However, all this training seems to be going to a lucrative end. Our army doesn't pay much, nor does any real army, but there are other "armies". This fellow was telling me how several old ranger friends of his had hired out as mercenaries, if that word still applies. Now they raid Cuba. They went off to Yukatan and are paid a couple hundred a week and something like a bonus of \$500 a raid. Supposedly, they are readying right now. Now that I think of it, a friend of mine about 5 or 6 years ago, an ex marine vet of Korea had remarked how guys once they got out of the war felt so completely lost they hired out to the highest bidder in S. America. I dunno if it's something left of romanticism and goshwow movies 'r what. Mostly it's just a way of life.

I'll tell you about Nevada and the injun scene there. Not that there's a lot of injuns in it, but it's a way of life, a different kind of GAFIA. To illustrate: the only people in Nevada who live in tipis are whitemen. The ones I met were principally up from Arizona and very much up in the ways of the Indian. They were quite wrapped up in Indian art, mythology, beliefs and

philosophy. They had a small tipi as they're only a small family (with a 1 year old child). When the child was only a few months old it took terribly sick and they took it to the whiteman's hospital in Tuscon. There they took the water drum and the rattles and sat upon the cold antiseptic floors and gave chants and sang ritual songs and gave invocations until the child passed out of danger. And there's a second older family, also up from Arizona. They have a larger tipi, mainly for sleeping in. They have tables scattered around their hill in various places, one for each meal, location depending upon where the sun is. Their kids are well into school age and have known little else but this.

I just heard that the chick I was writing about a few paragraphs back just got married. Which would explain why I haven't heard from her, and probably won't. A couple of my friends in the office, about the only guys I get along with, managed to get sent overseas, by the narrowest of margins. They thought they were going to Germany but it appears they are going to Sweden. It is an artillery group of around 40 men, 30 are officers. What they are doing in a neutral country I dunno. Won't know for certain till they get there and write me. Then we'll both know. But I think they've hit a pretty good thing. I realise, too, that if I hadn't been so lethargic I might have wrangled my way over too. As it is, I'm stuck in this miserable spot with some of the most ignorant assholes in the world. And all the old friends back on my old scene are vanishing off more and more. Two people write...and that's about all. I can't admit any great writing sprees myself, not really. Everything here's too....well, you just don't feel like doing shit.



Pete Singleton, Ward 2, Whittingham Hospital, Preston, Lancs.,

At the risk of sounding two-faced, I feel disposed to support your opinion regarding sercon fanzines even though I admit to being thoroughly guilty of sending what can only be described as words of praise and encouragement to this sercon-fixated New Blood of Fandom. You see, in spite of my fondness for faanish fnz, I also manage to find "Beyond" and "Zenith" enjoyable to some extent and both of these actually contain entertaining amateur sf - a feat I would have considered impossible prior to the advent of the New Wave. This does not mean that I am comparing this amateur sf favourably with the pro variety! The attitude of the ignorant neo who actively dislikes faanishness and dismisses it out of hand never fails to irritate me. Neos should realise that it takes a bit more than a swift glance to absorb and be in a position to comment on the various aspects of fandom. I had the sense to realise this without having to be told when I first

came into contact with fandom and my first fanzine ("Orion" 2) at the age of thirteen.

At the same time, one can't help but have severe misgivings when a seasoned faan flares up at the slightest hint of a sercon neozine. I find that both extreme attitudes are very distorted, and equally so when viewed objectively. As I can account for the neo's attitude as being due to inexperience and a failure to realise his inexperience, it seems to me that the wrathful attitude of certain established fans towards these new wavers is merely the result of intolerance. They should be patient and give the neos a chance to see the light.

WAW's "A Day in San Francisco" gets my vote for the best item in the issue. This is one of the most polished items I've ever read within the pages of a fanzine. Walt's impression of San Francisco (and my impression of Walt's article) were heartily backed up by a Staff Nurse who has spent two years in California.

The illo on the opposite page to the tail end of the Willis piece is very disconcerting because the vampire, apart from the fangs, looks exactly like one of my favourite pop singers - Jerry Lee Lewis!

26 Coningsby Rd., Liverpool 4,

After seeing this copy of
LS my only regret is that I haven't been a regular reader before.

Although Jhim Linwood is criticised strongly and often (and from the small amount of his work I've read I've tended to agree with the criticism) his column in LS 13 was for the most part well-reasoned, and not at all deserving the kind of comments he usually gets thrown at him.

"Earth is Womb Enough"? Surely Archie doesn't indulge in fantasies where he takes every female in the world to bed - in the meantime disposing of all competition?

Mike Moorcock seems to have an intense dislike for Peter Sellers... "undoubtedly one of the most unintelligent actors in a profession not noted for its brainpower." Surely this extremely versatile actor is one of the best things to happen to the British Cinema in years. Admittedly his portrayal of Mandrake was a bit pathetic in places, but in his parts as Strangelove and the President, he does a brilliant job. I went to see the film on the first Sunday it was shown in Liverpool - and viewed it as a comedy with serious undertones - not the other way round. The audience on this occasion found the film moderately amusing, but when I went to see it again on the following Thursday (yes, I thought the film was that good!) the audience hardly ever laughed - they seemed to be taking the film much too seriously. Were the jokes too subtle for most people, or have I got a weird sense of humour? It may be the latter, because while Moorcock was "terrified" by "The Day of the Triffids", I thought it was the biggest helping of (censored) the film industry has ever shovelled out at the cinema-going public. I just couldn't help laughing at the absurdity of the film, whereas the original novel at least gave a few believable reasons for the growth and spread of the plants/animals/things.

Seth Johnson, 339 Stiles St., Vaux Hall, E.J. 07088, USA.,

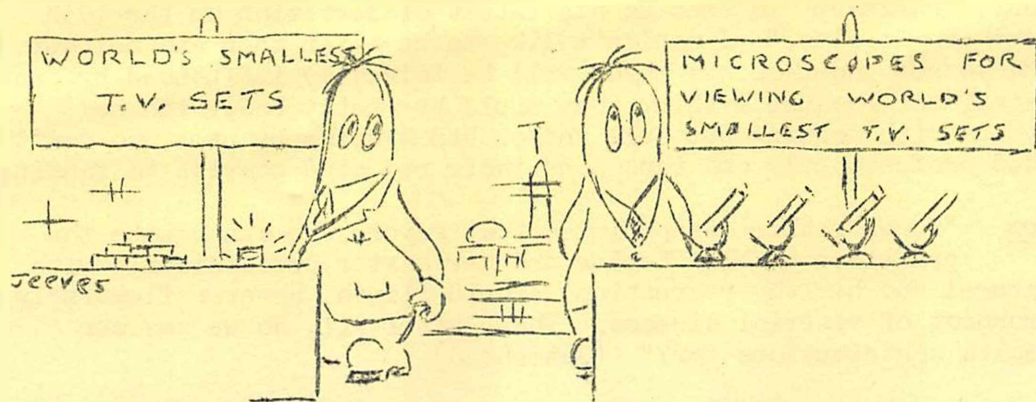
It seems to be a fanish tradition when writing about a convention to say absolutely nothing about the public events and offerings at the con. Yet the articles on room parties, the train and tram journeys and meetings in cafeterias, railway buffets and the cuisine at local Chinese Restaurants are of little interest to any but those who know the names dropped in that particular article. Yet there must be so many fans, especially those who cannot attend cons who would be just fascinated to know who spoke and what they said rather than a blow by blow description of a drinking bout that possibly only happened in the author's imagination.

I'll agree with the editorial comment on my last letter that fanzines might get rather dull were my advice to go easy on neofans and keep criticism constructive and so forth strictly observed. But at the same time it might not be a bad idea to soft pedal this criticism of neos till they have at least grown wings and learned some of the protocol of fanning.

I was really impressed with the dissertation on the Amerind. However, if Britain had held on to her colonies over here I suspect we would still be confined to this side of the Appalachian Mountains with possibly a series of trading posts scattered over the rest of the continent for furs and the like. You would never have seen any kind of an industrial power emerge in North America under the old British colonial policy.

For those Britons who plan to visit the New York Worlds Fair I will guarantee one thing - SORE FEET. Tell them to come equipped with heavy shoes and heavy socks and possibly even pack a change of stockings in their pockets. Also brings lots of money. Meals run from \$3.50 up and up and up. Frankfurters on roll the American national dish is 35 to 40 ¢. Transportation runs from 25¢ to five dollars and is vastly overpriced. It's the trailer cars with white pennants that ride for 25¢ by the way. Ride no other till you learn what you're gettin' into.

Actually most of the national exhibitions at the fair resemble department stores rather than representing the culture and followings of the nation represented. Isn't that because the fair is not 'official' and is thus not supported by governments, only by commercial interests? Japan for instance has a most magnificent display of tiny transistor television sets about the size of a cigar box. I don't know what they sell for but they are certainly the smallest things I've seen in the way of television sets.



Dr. Antonio Dupla, Po. M 5, Agustin 9, Zaragoza, Spain,

I very much enjoyed the San Franciscan chapter of Willis's travels, but it seems to me that the publishing of his memoirs is following a rather laberinthic way between this and that fanzine. It's going to be very difficult to collect all the instalments, if not impossible.

This is only the second article by Jhim Linwood that I've read and I found him violent but full of interesting opinions; readable to the highest degree and with a touch of good writing. Only, I ask him, if possible, to further develop his ideas about the obsession of the Medieval Church with sex. I don't follow this as clearly as Jhim.

Ian Peters deserves a special comment. It is true that pages as dark as this can be found in all history and surely both your and my countries have skeletons just as bad in their cupboards. But, this aside, this article is one of the best things I've ever read - in any fanzine.

John Henri Holmberg, Morrskopsvagen 8, Stockholm k, Sweden,

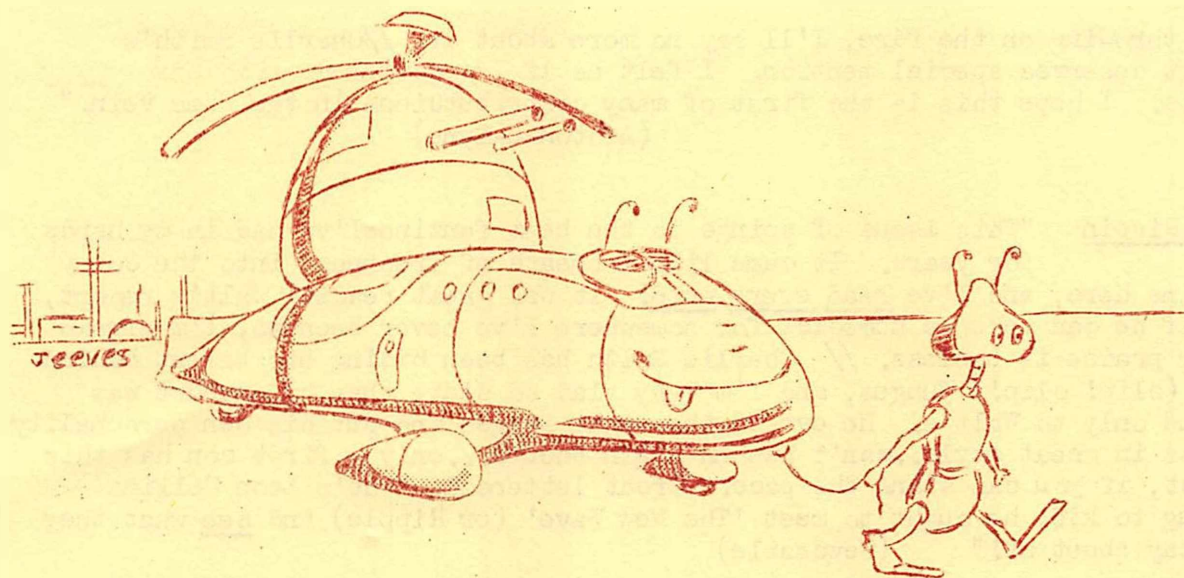
Eddie's two illos are very good, especially the heading for Jhim's column. I presume the face on the left is Jhim Linwood's and the face on the right must be Charles Platt's. I think Jhim is one of the very best columnists at the moment.

I couldn't disagree more with Leon Collins. I think fans know as much about most subjects as do other people, and I don't understand why fans shouldn't discuss everything that interests them in fanzines. Neither can I understand why fans should write, talk and discuss nothing but sf - any human who thinks of nothing but one single subject is bound to be rather restricted and one sided.

I don't think sf was ever 'out of fandom', but there can conversely be too much of it. If one wants to read sf, one can easily read a prozine where the quality is about five hundred times better than fanzine sf.

I was never taken aside by a mature fan and told the golden rules of fandom yet I have learned to like fanishness. I read a 'fannish' fanzine like LS much more enthusiastically than I read most 'serious constructive' fanzines. They have a habit of going pretty dull, after some time. As would fandom as Leon Collins envisages it....I can see it now... "Dr Harbottle is here today, gentlemen, to read us his latest dissertation on the 1938 issues of Amazing Stories." I wouldn't like to be a fan then and neither would I like to see the fanzines which will be 'directly influenced by professional magazines' because I think they would be pretty bad, with no personality and with nothing but dull and/or bad stories by neos who can't get published professionally and thus send their rejected stories to fanzines.

Jin Carthorn "I was rather disappointed that anyone who can equate the practices of Miss Keeler and her sister professionals with (quote) 'natural and healthy recreation' should flinch, however fleetingly, from the prospect of venereal disease. What, after all, do we pay our National Health contributions for?" (Gateshead)



Ron Bennett "A brief word on the mighty bulky weight of LS. We are now repairing the hallway floor just beneath the letterbox. At one time I used to read fanzines over breakfast. The sheer size of this issue has caused me to swear off breakfasts. Hand painted covers, yet, and reproductions of conbooklet artwork. Good copies they were, too. Almost as if you'd got hold of the original stencils....

"The con reports were good and I did want to say a special word about the one of dear old Charlie, even though his spelling at times does make me think that his beard got caught up in his typewriter keys. I have been under the impression that the con was the worst I've attended all year. Ah, this was a terrific report, length, detailed, spirited and one that recaptured the good old days of the Kettlecons. Ah, excuse me while I cry in my shandy and spend a little time recapturing the old glories of yest'eryear and all that must. But seriously this was a great report, with the convention atmosphere recreated at its best." (Harrogate)

Betty Kujawa "So you had WWeber for a visit. I ask you, isn't he the nicest guy in fandom? He is one hell of a fine person, who did and does so much for so many without any expectation or desire of recognition or glory.. He's a great addition to fandom...would we had more like him everywhere. He's excellent company. At the Westcon last July, bless him, he spent an amazing amount of his time in my company (voluntary, mind you!). Getting locked in the art show room for 3½ hours while judging was a joy of a time. And no matter how witty or swinging sharp others can quip, ol Wally waits till its over and quietly tops them all with such style. My husband Gene, thinks highly of Wally, and did from the instant he met him, and Kuj is one fine judge of men and of character...a real shrewd when it come to spotting phonies and no-goodniks." (South Bend, Indiana)

Bert Hosson "Do you really get letters like the one you quoted in SITDOWN? It really drips venom and I feel sorry for whoever wrote it. He must be on the verge of suicide or something. As it deserves nothing more

than throwing on the fire, I'll say no more about it. //Charlie Smith's report deserves special mention. I felt as if I were there with him enjoying it too. I hope this is the first of many contributions in the same vein."
(Ashton-u-Lyne)

Alan Rispin "This issue of spinge is the best fanzine I've had in my hands for years. It came like a breath of freshness into the corny routine here, and I've read every word! It was great reading Walt's report, and if he can make me homesick for somewhere I've never been to, I'm afraid other praise is useless. // Charlie Smith has been hiding his talent behind that (clip! clip!) fungus, and I'm very glad to state that his report was second only to Walt's. He evoked the right images and put his own personality across in great style...can't happen again though...only a first con has this effect, if you can stand the pace. Great lettercol. Who's Leon Collins trying to kid, he ought to meet 'The New Wave' (or Ripple) and see what they can say about sf!" (Newcastle)

Julia Stone "The name Les Spinge does not appeal to me one little bit. It hardly seems fair to call anything that. It's not a nice sound at all, nor is it very easy to roll off the tongue. I much prefer a name like "Typotrath" or "Opex". // I've never read before anything like Archie Mercer's "Earth is Womb Enough". Utter rot that's what it is. And it's not even sf really is it? Jhim's column is true to life. Half the time Sunday newspapers are filled with scandal and such like. In fact, it is really a bit of a giggle because it is quite possible to read on one page that the paper is all for the stopping of filthy books, cards etc coming into this country and corrupting young children's minds and suchlike. Then over the page they try to cram in as much sordid scandal as they can."
(Chipping Norton)

Ken McIntyre "Thanks for the two halves of your excellent zine LS. It was quite a surprise to receive these and although I'd seen you reviewed several times, never until now had I experienced the pleasure of such an adult production. // Charlie Smith, eh? It's pretty obvious that he was at the con, but I cannot recall having met him. Although that's not so strange because I don't remember meeting lot of people that I knew were there - the new groups, for instance, and one can't or isn't inclined to make the acquaintance of so many. Then there's the bar in my case. Usually if I happen to run into similar type characters to myself - y'know, boozy types, well then, we just naturally trickle towards the bar, and, well, trickle!"

Doreen Parker "I liked Archie Mercer's article on the Con. It's amazing how good he is at giving pen portraits of people. I feel sure I could recognise all the members he mentioned when next I meet them. I didn't enjoy the other conrep, mainly because of the reference to the 'vociferous lady' (which was ME) and also because to read Dr Smith's report one would think the only people attending the con were from the London Group. There were a few of us others there! // Re. Makeup. Will somebody please tell Archie that ALL women after the age of 25 need makeup to a greater or

lesser degree. (Peterborough)





REPLIES BY IAN PETERS

I would like to reply to some of the comments on my last LS article. They raise some points of controversy which I would like to clarify. Someone would place the blame on humanity rather than just America. I could not let this pass, I'm afraid. The British Colonial record, in spite of all the current sneering and denigration is astonishingly good, in my opinion. I would draw attention to two comparable instances. The first concerns the New Zealand Maori who existed at a very similar level of culture. Here again, the inter-racial conflict was the result of the settlers, greedy for land, breaking the Treaty of Waitangi which gave them permanent ownership of land (how many Amerindian tribes were ceded their own land for "as long as the grass grows" only to find that in a few years that such promises were only scraps of paper?). I quote Sir Winston Churchill. "The land was their life blood." 'By woman and land are men lost' ran the Maori proverb and the older chiefs realised that if they lost their land their tribal life could be extinguished. ".....by 1859, settlers had occupied 7,000,000 acres in North Island.. the result was the Maori Wars of 1843-1869...when the risings were defeated." But "A series of Native Land Acts, passed in the 1860's protected them from extermination; in 1867 they secured direct representation in the legislature..."

A sobering thought - in the midst of war, they were given direct representation! And this was only a year before Custer massacred the peaceful Southern Cheyenne in the depth of winter finally killing Black Kettle who had survived the Chivington ("nits make lice," he said

"so don't be too fussy about killing Indian kids.") sneak attack on the same tribe under the protection of the American flag at Sand Creek in 1864. Even after this attack the tribe tried to keep the peace. On one side we have successful British Acts to ensure land rights and survival. On the other side we have constantly broken treaties and decimation.

The other example is closer to home (for Yanks, that is); Canada, too, had its Plains Indians to contend with. The North-West Mounted Police were formed around 1870 to combat the trouble caused by American whisky traders among the Indians. The Cypress Hills Massacre, of Blackfeet by Americans, brought the thought of war close. Prime Minister John MacDonalld created the force of 300 men for a vast area of 3,000,000 square miles. The man who really established the force was James Macleod another Scot and the second Commissioner. He made friends with the supposedly intractable Blackfeet by laying down the first great rule of the Mounties: that justice should be impartial for Indian and white alike and the Indians knew and trusted his word. He became Commissioner in 1876 that fateful year when Washunko Witko, the Crazy Horse of the Ogalalla Sioux stood up in his stirrup and shouted: "Come on, Dakotas, it's a good day to die!" and led his warriors against Custer.

Sitting Bull led his Sioux north, to the Grandmother's Country where they considered they would be safe. The warrior survivors of the Little Big Horn, Hunkpapa, Ogalalla, Minniconjula, Cheyenne crossed the border, desperate and dangerous, "We have no place to sleep. Let us become your children," they told Superintendent Walsh, and the tough little Irish Mountie explained the Queen's law and demanded the return of three stolen horses. They were returned. "We are British Indians," declared Sitting Bull, and produced his medal of George III to prove it. One constable led the 1100 strong war party to a reservation through country alive with their hereditary enemies the Blackfeet. They carried him home with them, he was the chief, because they realised he would have fought till he died. Why were the coats of the Mounties Red? Because the Indians respected the red coats of the British and detested the blue jackets of the American cavalry. And so the peace was kept while in America the Plains and South-eastern Indians fought and died or starved in the reservations. In Macleod's six years in command not one single shot was fired at an Indian.

Do I make my point?

Harry Warner maintains that the Indians would have done the same to the whites. That may be so and of course I could list numerous massacres of whites by Indians, treacherous and otherwise, but there we are dealing with a society based on tribal warfare where every man not of the tribe was an enemy, and as I said, in nearly every case of first contact I can recall, the Indians were friendly, if amazed at the white skins. This friendship was virtually always taken advantage of. Every little incident was tit-for-tat, but it all went back to the racial policies of the whites and their greed for land.

Charles Smith's comments were amusing. Everyone, I think, enjoys a good Western. But a diet solely of fairy tales must pall after a time. Personally I would have thought that a knowledge of the historical background would have enhanced his interest in the mythological accretion.

For Antonio Dupla, and any others wishing to learn more of the Amerind I would recommend this bibliography.

"Pictorial History of the Amerind" by Oliver La Forge: Andre Deutsch remaindered at 15/- and a bargain. He is an authority on Indians and a great friend of present day Indians who has done a lot to put right wrongs.

"The American Heritage Book of Indians": Simon and Schuster Inc at 135/-. A really beautiful book, more for the connoisseur than the general reader.

Popular accounts:-

"The Long War Trail" by Lauren Paine. Gorgi 2/6. A racy, colourful account from the first landings to the Wounded Knee Massacre.

"Death in the Desert" and "Death in the Prairie" by Paul I. Wellman. Exciting, colourful, harrowing and historically correct though possibly biased on the side of the Indians. Personally I feel this is inevitable for any sensitive person studying the subject. His later books like "Glory, God and Gold" are mines of historical detail, vastly more interesting and exciting than any tawdry Western fiction.

Fiction:-

"No Survivors" by Will Henry. Gorgi just reissued at 5/-. Closely follows history up to the Battle of Big Horn and its sequels. Gives one the feel of the period; does not ignore the smells and cruelties but also sees the colour, freedom and dignity of the Plains Indians. His description of the encampment of the Greasy Grass before Custer's attack is moving and unforgettable.

For one who wishes to know the psychology and spirituality of the Plains Indian read "Eagle Voice" by Prof. John G. Neihardt. Panther 3/6 1956. Based on the life of a close friend of the author - Black Elk, Sioux Holy Man who died in 1945.

-- Ian Peters

WORCS SAUCE



I had intended to write a very serious column comparing my personal philosophy with that of Peter Hite. The gist of it was to have been that I am too cynical and naive to take life very seriously and that Peter Hite is idealistic and informed thus being interested in Serious Discussions and Pressing Problems of Our Age. My conclusions would have been that we were probably so basically dissimilar that we'd never really understand each other.

However, my good intentions were shattered when I looked over the material in this issue. I was oppressed with a feeling of weightiness - the old carefree air is too confined by these serious items. I'm not saying anything against these items, just that they seem, to me, to be rather frightening en-masse.

It did, in fact, rather remind me of an unfortunate incident that occurred a few weeks ago.

Here my friend lives, you see, there is an old dirt track in close proximity to the H 1 motorway, and one day a group of college students conceived the idea of painting a diversion sign with the intent of turning traffic up this lane instead of onto the H 1.

Anyway, they went off to the local town to get some paint and, as luck would have it, couldn't find a parking place for their car. So Tom jumps out by Woolworths while the others did a quick tour of the streets. He goes into the paint department and buys a couple of tins of blue and white paint and being in a hurry he doesn't wait for the assistant to wrap them. Well, as he dashed in the direction of the door a bloke stops him and asks him where he's going. So Tom hastily explains that he has to catch a friend. This doesn't satisfy the bloke and he asks Tom whether he's paid for the paint, or not. He naturally didn't believe Tom when he said he had so Tom was dragged back to the paint counter. Well, it seems that the Woolworths people are very hard on assistants who don't wrap goods, but anyway, when the store detective asked the girl if Tom had bought the paint she looked him straight in the eye and said that he hadn't.

Tom was taken, protesting vigorously, to see the manager. He wasn't in so the detective locked Tom in his office and went to find the manager.

As Tom stood there alone in the office, it occurred to him that things looked rather black and in a spot of panic went across to this window. To his joy he saw that it opened onto a low roof from which he could jump down to a courtyard. No sooner did he see this and he was tugging the window up...as luck would have it, at the moment the Manager chose to return. Poor Tom swings his leg over and puts his head and shoulders out, but before he can get his other leg out the Manager rushes over and grabs it. So there's our Tom, halfway out of the window, and there's this Manager and Store Detective inside, pulling away on poor Tom's leg, just like I'm pulling yours.

00 00 00

I will, with commendable forbearance, or...forbear to relate other stories from my store of shockers. Instead, let us consider the humble bicycle.

Herewith I offer the Cheslin Lk. 1 Plan for dealing with the traffic problem. It's ridiculously simple (like all my plans) really, all we have to do is ban all cars within two miles of city centres and make people commute the remaining distance by Corporation Bike. For where one car could be parked you could leave half a dozen bikes...and bikes are less dangerous to pedestrians, cause less wear and tear to the roads, make no toxic fumes or nerve straining noises. They are also a healthy form of travel and would promote the health of the nation like no other form of transport could. Now off n too, do we see cars traveling into a city with only a driver? An empty car takes up as much space as a full one, but a bike has no wasted space...hmm, unless we allow them to... .

Rickshaw-like bicycles would be allowed for people who could produce a triple signed doctor's certificate and for the very young or aged, but under no other conditions. The people thrown out of work by the fall in car sales (which would actually be rather small as cars would still be used for inter-city transport) could be employed in the cycle factories or in bike service stations.

The lightness of the bike suggests that it would be feasible and quite cheap to provide special ramps for bikes, separated from pedestrians completely. Also why not arrange these ramps so that the cyclist could coast to the outskirts of the town from the centre and vice-versa. Take him up a tower by lift and then he wouldn't even have to paddle.

The beauty of the plan is that it needs no new technological advance, enough bicycles could be made available within a year or two and the whole scheme would cost a ridiculously small sum.

Then again, there are all those cars parked outside the two mile limit.

OO OO OO

Dave pointed something out to me the other day which I found rather amusing. Like Moorcock and Jhin Linwood have both been jumped on - from a comparatively elevated position - though writing things that compared to my warblings, are very wishy-washy indeed. This makes me wonder why more people don't jump on me? Not that I want people to jump on me, but I don't like, either, to think they might think I'm just a good-natured idiot. In fact I'm just a peaceable soul who wants nothing better than to be left in peace. All I want to do is to natter idly when the whim takes me, to make sophisticated sounding cynicisms now and again but certainly not to get involved in discussions involving 'burning issues'. Apathy is my watchword - if everyone were as apathetic as I am the world would be a better place. Who would take the trouble to burn the fiery cross? Nobody, they'd rather be at home with their feet up, watching telly. Who would want to go to war? Why, no one for who would bother to manufacture weapons. You can't eat the products of war, can't use a tank for anything or build houses with high explosive.

Admittedly some things do have a peaceful use. Atom bombs can be used for electricity and some military equipment such as jet engines may have a civilian use.

This reminds me of a story in a 1954 INFINITY where aliens give Earthies this sword and tell them to solve this problem or we'll destroy you. The solution was to beat it into a ploughshare and they had to recognise the problem, that the sword was good for nothing but war.

Somebody (and this does follow on from the foregoing - if you're not with me, well join all the others reading different parts of spingo) said the other day (one of Beryl Henley's boys I think) that us sf types should all jump into a flying saucer and flee the world. I replied that the only thing stopping us was the scarcity of transport.

And I then had a bit of a natter with Beryl about Joe Gibson's Star Flight adventures in G2. Fans still have that sense of wonder, you know - over us old and ragged specimens - this was shown, I think, by the interest people took in the G2 adventure.

Ah! Isn't it grand to look up at the stars - don't you yearn for the opportunity of getting Out there. Do you curse the luck that got you born a thousand years too soon? This, I believe, is one of the characteristics of a fan. It's not the actual traveling we want, spaceships are mere tools for travel, we use them to enable us to see, hear and feel new experiences. This isn't a startling new observation - all I'm describing is the sense of wonder. That sense of wonder, so often stated, so often bewailed lost.

One thing that is perhaps overlooked. Fans are more than just fans - they are also people. Fans are people whose sense of wonder led them to science fiction, as other people's sense of wonder led them to read historical novels, astronomy or physics. Fans don't lose their sense of wonder - rather it becomes harder to arouse. A new thing is new only once, only once can it give that special thrill. A new angle does recapture part of that sense of wonder, but it stands to reason that a fan who has been reading for years comes to know the usual form of the stories, and it takes a better written story, a new approach, to stir him.

Hmm.....I now seem to have worked around to that damned "New Wave v Old Timers" problem. That's enough, I'm not going into all that again.

Even though Dave probably won't get this out till well into the New Year, I'll wish you a happy one for what's left of it.

-- Ken Cheslin





LES SPINCE