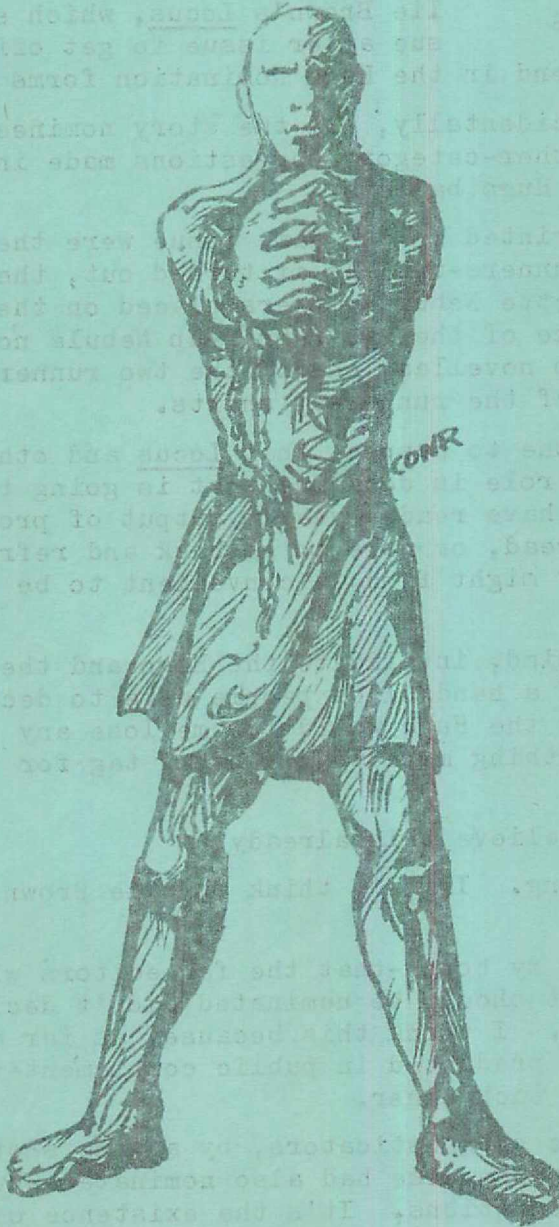


THE LOW-WOW



The purpose of LOW-DOWN II is to provide a service to fandom; to provide in a near-neat package reviews of and comments on the nominees in the ten Hugo categories, with the hope that having them on hand will encourage more of you to vote. LOW-DOWN II is edited by Richard Labonte, 971 Walkley Road, Ottawa 8, Ontario, Canada, with the help of Many; is published on Pressed HaM Press; is distributed gratis to as many people as I can afford, and whose address I have. If you aren't a member of the St. Louiscon and you have received this, do join so we won't have wasted an issue; send \$4 attending, \$3 supporting to St. Louiscon, Box 3008, St. Louis, Missouri 63130. Comments will be appreciated. LOW-DOWN is the first publication of the Montreal in 1974 bidding committee, and is sponsored by Acusfoos, the science fiction club at Carleton University.
----- May 24-June 8, 1969. -----



SHOOTING
OFF
AT
THE
MOUTHS

The number of nominations received by the St. Louis committee was 410.

That number is close to the circulation of Charlie Brown's Locus, which encouraged people to issue after issue to get off their collective's and send in the Hugo nomination forms he had been sending out.

Co-incidentally, all the story nominees, and all but four of the other-category suggestions made in Locus appeared on the final Hugo ballots.

And printed in the same issue were the Nebula Award winners and runners-up. As it turned out, the novel, novella, and novelette Nebula winners placed on the Hugo ballot. So, too did one of the two runner-up Nebula novels, both of the runner up novellas, one of the two runner-up novelettes, and both of the runner-up shorts.

All of which could lead one to suspect that Locus and other widely distributed fanzines play a dominant role in deciding what is going to be nominated to the Hugo ballot. Few people have read a year's output of prose, and even fewer remember all that they've read, or care to go back and refresh their memories before voting. And so they might find it convenient to be told what is good and what is bad.

Which fact would, to my mind, invalidate the Hugo and the concept of a popular award based on merit. If a handful of people were to decide what is or what is not to be nominated, then the Hugo would for me lose any significance it might have, and would become nothing more than a handy tag for publishers to use when pushing a book.

Some people, of course, believe this already.

I think they're still wrong. I don't think Charlie Brown is quite the Secret Master of Hugos yet.

It's my guess--certainly, my hope--that the fan editors who printed predictions or recommendations of what should be nominated didn't decide people's choice, but rather reflected them. I think this because, as far as I can see, the picks of some of the people who predicted in public complemented each other without being drawn directly from each other.

Now, not all of the public prognosticators, by a long shot, recommended the nomination of everything someone else had also nominated--but there was always some overlap in the recommendations. It's the existence of this overlap which

leads me to believe that Charlie Brown and others think like, and not for, Hugo voters. (It would be interesting to know, by the way, what percentage of the people who send in nomination forms never see fanzines, and so aren't affected by what is said in them...and how their nominations compare with those of fanzine readers. My guess is that they would be about the same.)

Charlie Brown, Linda Eyster, Buck Coulson all picked Rite of Passage--the Nebula novel award winner--as deserving to be on the ballot; Buck Coulson, Banks Mebane, and the Galaxy Reader Poll people picked Goblin Reservation as a goodie; Linda Eyster and the SFWA voters liked Past Master; Charlie Brown and the SFWA and Piers Anthony liked Stand on Zanzibar. That's a fair amount of overlap, and indicates to me that, while the people involved thought highly of works which were not nominated to the final ballot, they also all chose several works in common. The trend is the same in the novella category, where all the nominated stories were on the list of Nebula Award finalists, and the three which finished up on top in the Nebula voting were Hugo finalists. Charlie Brown also chose the Silverberg novella, as did Buck Coulson, who also chose the story by Dean McLaughlin.

To me, it all adds up to the fact that the worthy works, on a ver high average, do get nominated to the Hugo ballot; and I think this is because people recognize the good stories, not because a few fanzines tell them what is good. In the fan categories, of course, which don't mean as much to a lot of people, voting is, I'm sure, swayed by fanzine comment. But in the story categories, it is not.

Unless voting is light.

Heavy voting makes the awards so much more meaningful; it offsets the chances of something winning the Hugo without really deserving it.

The purpose of Low-Down, then, is to try and encourage a large vote turn-out, so the Hugo will be representative and worthwhile. The idea is based on the premise, of course, that the Hugo award itself is worthwhile, that it means something.

Does it? That's another matter, of course, and something I imagine will be talked about for the next little while. I'd welcome opinions on the subject, from those of you who take fandom seriously enough to think it needs guidance.

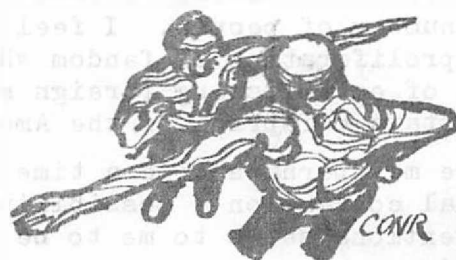
In the meantime, try to bother voting; if you can't read some of the nominees I hope the reviews and comments which follow will help you.

--Richard Labonte

WHITHER One of the questions widely aired at
????THE regionals and in fanzines in recent
??WORLD months is 'Whither the Worldcon?'

????CON The fact the problem is worded in just that particular way indicates to me the misconception under which many fans are apparently laboring. The Labour Day gathering is no closer to a 'world' convention than the October rounders is to a 'world' series of baseball. The so-called world convention is, by tradition and be evolution, an American institution and all logical arguments indicate it should remain so.

Until quite recently, fandom was primarily a North



American phenomenon, with perhaps a less developed English brand being its only cousin. So it's quite understandable that 25 of the 27 principal science fiction conventions have been held in America. Now, however, there are active fandoms in several foreign countries such as Japan, Germany, Australia, and these overseas fans naturally wish to enjoy type of gathering that North American fans have established in their worldcon. However, to attempt to legislate these fan gatherings by by-laws of the present convention is ridiculous. Why should overseas fans be restricted to one con in four years? What if no-one wishes to bid for an overseas con? What if an inferior bid wins an overseas con merely because there is no competition? Why should North American fans who now make up the vast majority of the world's sf fans, be denied the type of convention that they have established in the present worldcon system? I have yet to hear a convincing answer to these and similar questions.

The main argument of those who advocate the present five-year rotation plan or a variation thereof, seem to be an accusation of selfishness on the part of those who wish to abolish the overseas con and combined with the consolation of a national con to be set up for those years in which the worldcon goes outside North America.

This argument is not valid.

No matter what anyone may say, the co-existence of an overseas worldcon and a National convention cannot help but set up a conflict for a great many fans (and possibly some pros) who could not afford to attend both. This plan is self-defeating since it eliminates the possibility of creating a truly world con. And even if the National convention is not set up, there will be a large number of fans who will not be able to attend the convention in Europe or Australia and will thus be deprived of the peculiar atmosphere that is exclusive to the world con--and this is a kind of selfishness on the part of the overseas fans.

What, then, is the solution?

On the one hand it is unfair and illogical to deprive North American fans of their established major yearly gathering, the 'worldcon'. On the other, it's high time the overseas fans had the opportunity to attend conventions. The obvious answer, as I see it, is to eliminate the overseas convention-by-rotation set-up entirely, rename the present worldcon the North American Science Fiction Convention, and strongly encourage other fandoms to establish their own national cons. This admits the fact that with fandom scattered over all parts of the globe, and with a large number of fans unable, for one reason or another, to attend a convention outside their own countries, a truly international sf convention is almost impossible to hold while allowing the largest number of people possible to attend a major convention once a year. It also ensures that if in those countries where fandom is sufficiently active to merit a major con such an event will occur.

This is not, however, a case of adapting an inferior plan to satisfy the greatest number of people. I feel it is the only logical solution to the problem of the proliferation of fandom while at the same time it promotes the worthwhile goal of establishing foreign science fiction as an entity of its own, not merely a bastard offspring of the American scene.

There may perhaps come a time when overseas air travel will make a truly international convention a possibility, but for the time being this system of national conventions seems to me to be the best answer to the question, 'Whither the Worldcon?'

--Mike Glicksohn

best novel

NOVA

Samuel Delany

PAST MASTER

R.A. Lafferty

STAND ON ZANZIBAR

John Brunner

GOBLIN RESERVATION

Clifford Simak

RITE OF PASSAGE

Alexei Panshin

I think I've lost my
Sense of Wonder.

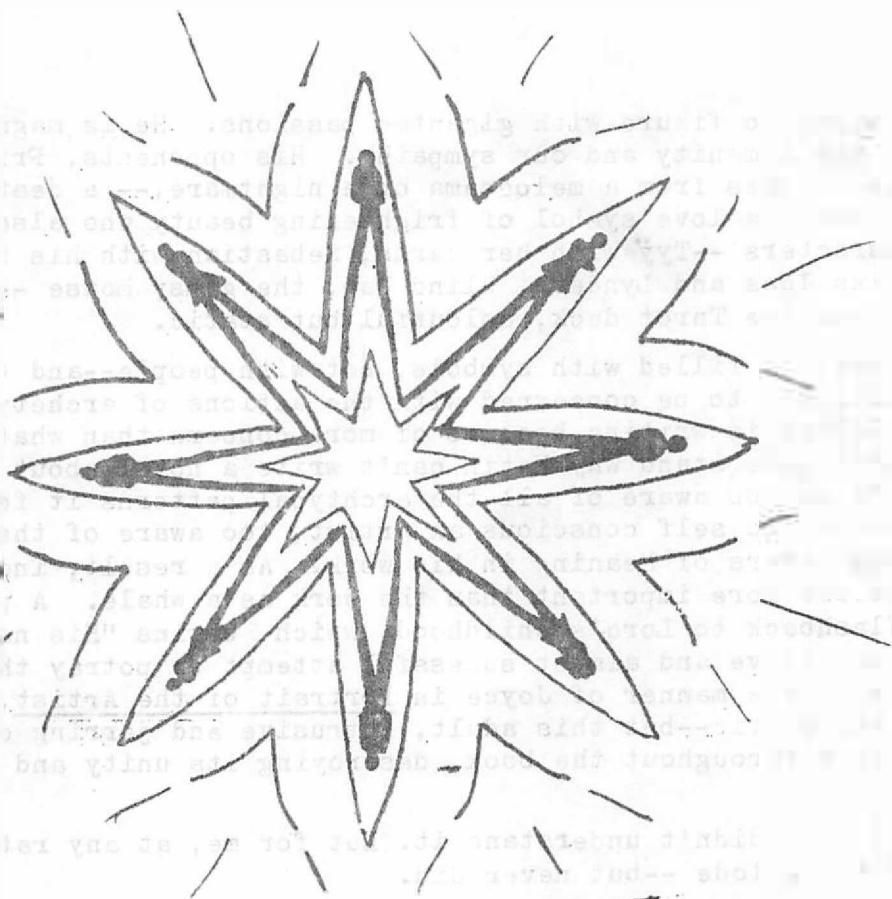
I've just finished reading, and re-reading, the five novels nominated to the Hugo ballot. All of them received enthusiastic reviews somewhere; all of them doubtless deserved the praise they received.

But there isn't one I can rave about without reservation.

Reading Nova made me feel guilty. I looked forward to reading it more than any other book published last year. Delany is, undoubtedly, one of the best of writers around--in fact, he's one of the best writers, never mind the genre. Babel-17, The Jewels of Apor, and The Einstein Intersection become more fascinating with each reading. Nova itself was widely praised.

So I felt guilty because I just couldn't respond to it with the appropriate enthusiasm. I know there are many good things in Nova. Delany's style has been called poetic so many times it's become a cliché--but like all clichés, the statement is true. Many of the passages in Nova can only be described by the overworked adjective beautiful. The life these whirling words describe is constructed with the usual dynamic imagination; Delany's unique skill makes the world 1,100 years in the future seem deceptively familiar, while almost casual statements--like Katin's remark about the universal acceptance of the fact Tarot cards can actually predict the future--hint subtly at how totally it has changed. The most revolutionary and fascinating of these concepts is the integration of men and machines; all human beings in the Nova world are "cyborg studs" with sockets in their wrists, and at the base of the neck and spine, enabling a human brain to literally fly a ship through space, and human eyes to watch a sun go nova. The flashback to Prince Red's gala party in Paris at which Lorq falls in love and is scarred forever is another brilliant piece of world-creating.

But it is a world almost without people in it. Only Katin, the likeable, bumbling writer obsessed with the five-thousand-plus notes for his someday novel, seems fully alive. For me at least, his problem--the need to lose his artistic self-consciousness in order to create--stole the book away from its ostensible subject, Lorq Von Ray's mad and magnificent quest for seven tons of Illyrion and with it, control of the Draco empire ruled by Prince and Ruby Red. Lorq himself is a super-



hero, a gigantic figure with gigantic passions. He is magnificent; but as such, he loses his humanity and our sympathy. His opponents, Prince and Ruby Red, are fantastis figures from a melodrama or a nightmare,-- a death symbol with a warped mind and body, a love symbol of frightening beauty who also brings death. The other characters --Tyŷ with her cards, Sebastian with his birds, the black-and-white twins Idas and Lynceos, blind Dan, the gypsy Mouse -- are one-dimensional figures from the Tarot deck, colourful but static.

Nova , then, is filled with symbols, not with people--and this is where it fails. It is difficult to be concerned with the actions of archetypes; and ultimately the way Delany is writing becomes of more concern than what he is saying. When Mouse can't understand why Katin can't write a novel about their quest, the latter replies, "I am too aware of all the archtypal patterns it follows." Like him, Delany seems too self conscious an artist, too aware of the Significance and Symbolism and Layers of Meaning in his work. As a result, individual brilliant components become more important than the work as a whole. A particularly noticeable is the flashback to Lorq's childhood, which begins "His name was Lorq Von Ray..." Here, a sensitive and almost sucessful attempt to potray the consciousness of a child, as in the manner of Joyce in Portrait of the Artist, is destroyed by sudden shifts into poetic--but this adult, intrusive and jarring description. Such conflicts occur throughout the book, destroying its unity and thus diffusing its impact.

Perhaps I just didn't understand it. But for me, at any rate, Nova continually promised to explode --but never did.

Past Master, too, is an ambitious book, at war with itself and uncertain of its ends. It is also, despite the high-powered praise from the younger ghods of sf shouting from the back of cover, a thoroughly pretentious and often irritating book.

Past Master sets out to re-create Thomas More's Utopia, on a future Earth colony whose perfection has suddenly been stricken with blight where order and comfort now seem like madness, and the horror of a stinking slum like sanity. More himself is snatched from England a month before his execution to become the Past Master, a figurehead for the power mongers who wish to save or destroy and re-create this Utopia.

And this is where the problems begin. Lafferty seems uncertain of what to do with More, and with his story. Is More really just a figure-head, a shallow man without conscience or ideals ready to adapt to his situation until it destroys him? If so, then the book is a black comedy, and the choice of More as a hero the biggest joke of all. Lafferty seems to begin this way emphasizing More's shock and dismay on learning that his Utopia , an ironis treatise on how not to govern, has become the blueprint for a society. The grotesque monsters, the beast-men who rule Astrobe the Golden, the whole nightmare vision of men fleeing a pleasant community to die like animals in the slums of Cathead and Barrio, reinforces this interpretation. But the nightmares reamin on paper -- they fail to enter the brain and chill the bloodstream. Programmed killers, machine men trained to kill, seem foolish; where Bradbury's mechanical Hound for example seemed a positive threat, these creatures only seem foolish and easily outwitted. The whole concept of Astrobe, a society which turns all men, not just the Programmed people, into mechanical polished automatons, remains an abstraction, not not a felt horror.

Moreover, the character of More, and Lafferty's purpose, waver from comedy into tragedy. The Past Master revolts exploring his new world for himself; More seems about to develop as a character, to gain the consciousness of his own situation and of his individuality essential to a tragic hero; his story seems about to become an allegorical quest for spiritual awareness and insight. Unfortunatly this

development remains a potential, not an actual one. More protests against the aims of Astrobe--and a few chapters later, without explanation, defends them unquestioningly. He gains awareness of the need for individuality on Electric Mountain and is changed--or so Lafferty says; but he returns to Cosmopolis the same man, to do as he is told. He is sentenced to death in spite of himself, and is rescued in an ending which is either the biggest irony, or the biggest cop-out, of the book, but which is certainly not tragedy.

Similarly, the intellectual content is at war with, and ultimately destroys, the story itself. Lafferty, too, is a self-conscious writer; unlike Delany, he is deliberate about it. Personally, I prefer to explore a book for myself; I do not like to be told constantly what the author is about. But Lafferty seems determined to make sure no one misses a symbol, an allegory, a significant passage, or any other cleverness. The killing of the hydra, for example, is not allowed to just happen--instead, the Significance and Importance of the Ritual Act is firmly stressed, from the continual repetition of the word 'devil' to Thomas' statement. 'Why, this is allegory acted out before my very eyes.' Lafferty continually preaches, instead of allowing his message to arise naturally and logically out of the story. Perfection destroys man's humanity; men must remain individuals, continually striving, or they cease to become men, he says. Fine, but why tell it? Why not show it, by making deadly boring the machine-perfect cities, the horror of a man feeling himself becoming a robot, into real and felt things?

Even more irritating is the diction of Past Master, an awkward mixture of genuinely evocative images, out-of-place 1960's slang, pseudo-Elizabethanisms, and pompous rhetoric. At first, it seemed as if this jarring combination was being used to illuminate More's character--a great fuss is made of the fact he says 'nowt' instead of 'not', revealing his Tudor origins; he uses slang, calling Evita 'brat kid', and saying 'Shove it, my little mechanical mento', indicating he is just an ordinary man; and he makes pronouncements like, 'I am a special case and I may not die until my own special time has come', indicating he is aware of the power inherent in empty rhetoric. But everyone else, including the intrusive Mr. Lafferty, talks this way as well.

With all this, Past Master offers flashes of genuine beauty, horror, and insight. But they are only flashes; the book as a whole remains episodic, fragmented, obscure, and arty. It's an unreal exercise in word-play. It's dead.

Stand on Zanzibar, on the other hand, is a distractingly clever book. I had difficulty again appreciating the book as a whole; I was constantly stopping to examine a word, a phrase, an idea, and thinking, 'How clever!' But unlike Past Master, it is alive and vital.

Part of this is, of course, a deliberate effect. Brunner hasn't written a novel, he's assembled a film script whose three main plot lines are broken and illuminated by a rich, strange collection of fragments of sub-plots, stage directions, poems, single-sentence newsbulletins, snatches of conversation, and examples of all the other forms in which words can be joined to create images. When it's put together, the script makes a world--our world, in the next century, when the population explosion has finally caught up with us. In fact, the earth is so crowded that "if you allow for every codder and shiggy and appleofmyeye a space one foot by two thou could stand us all on the six hundred forty square surface of the iskand of Zanzibar." By the end of the book, you can't even do that.

Brunner succeeds where pages of statistics fail in creating the horror of this crowded world. It's our world, only worse; crime is as common as garbage in the streets, birth control and even abortion are compulsory, overfertility is grounds for divorce, a simple walk in a strange neighbourhood at night can start a riot, and a supercomputer named Shalamaneser is the most important entity in the world. Brunner's world is based on logical extrapolations from twentieth-century devel-

opments and trends; he doesn't offer anything startlingly new in the way of future prophecies, but the picture is certainly convincing. In particular, his development of 21st century slang is vivid and natural. But the scope is so wide, and many of the components are so obtrusively clever, that it is difficult to comprehend or appreciate the book as a whole. The three main plots do not give it the unity it needs. Chad Mulligan, the sociologist who attempts to re-enter the world society, is introduced as a person too late to make a real impact. Norman House's discovery of Beninia, an island of peace and sanity in the African jungle, is the weakest part of the book; the idea of synthesizing a peace-producing compound "brotherly love in an aerosol can" based on an ingredient found in the natives' sweat, is not only far-fetched, it seems too easy a solution to the overwhelming problems of this world. The story of Donald Hogan's spy mission, his death as a man and his transformation into an efficient killing machine, is too broken to sustain the tension and interest necessary to tie the book together. The film lacks continuity, and thus the tension and interest are diffused; Stand on Zanzibar is a book you can put down and not feel any urgent need to pick up again. But if you can read as many of the 507 pages as possible as rapidly as possible, without letting yourself be distracted too often, then you'll enter a real world, terrifying in its possibilities.

After three experimental novels of varying success, Simak's Goblin Reservation has, at least, the charm of unpretentiousness. It sets out to tell a good story, and it succeeds. But it's just not extraordinary.

The story concerns Peter Maxwell, a professor whose specialty is dragons, who arrives home on earth to discover that he is dead. Actually, as it happens, he's been split in two by the transporter beam (just why and how is never, unfortunately, explained); while one Maxwell was off doing his research, coming home, and getting killed, Our Hero was being chosen as sales agent for a unique treasure--the accumulated knowledge of another, alien universe. Again, just how and, in particular, why, he was chosen for such a vital job is never made clear; Maxwell doesn't come across as a particularly influential, powerful or even resourceful chap. In fact, he doesn't come across as much of anything--just a nice, superficial ordinary-man hero who bumbles around, getting into and out of scrapes and brawls, until he discovers the Secret of the Artifact and Defeats the Aliens. He acts as the plot requires, as it moves in a predictable leisurely fashion to a satisfying conclusion.

The best thing about Peter Maxwell is his friends. There's, of course, the girl; her name is Carol, and she spends most of her time getting mad at him--but she does own a saber-toothed tiger named Sylvester. Then there's the likeable cave-man, Alley Oop (what else) brought forward in time by the time-travel section of the university. His favourite occupation is making beer; that is, home-brew. And there's Ghost, who sort of drifts in and out of the plot, wondering who he is. And, best of all, there are the Little Folk of the Goblin Reservation--the Banshee, the trolls, O'Toole the goblin who brews October Ale, and all the other beings from folk-tales who have been found to be real after all. Unfortunately, though Simak says they are real, he fails to make them real--but they are interesting and colourful figures.

The only disappointment, really, is the Wheeler, the mysterious alien who is really a hive of writhing insects. A great fuss is made of the potential threat posed by the wheelers, and of the urgent need to secure the Crystal World's Knowledge before they do--but the alien remains a grotesque and foolish figure, not a menace. The necessary tension and suspense just aren't created. It gets diffused, somewhere, in the profusion of incident, lengthy descriptions of the Reservation's natural beauties, and extraneous characters. (Shakespeare, for example, ((--Susan's reviews are continued on the back of the last white page; onward--))

((The following is a selection of quotes from fanzine and magazine reviews of the novel nominees; I hope their inclusion will balance and broaden the reviews Susan has written, by presenting some diverse viewpoints and opinions.))

Stand on Zanzibar

by John Brunner

...always the details are cumulative and convincing. The things that Brunner foresees--the changes in fashion, drugs, marriage, speech, are logical from present-day trends. I am immensely impressed by this book and cannot praise it too highly."--Ethel Lindsay, in Scottish 52.

Judith Merrill says of the book, "In a sense, Brunner has written the first true science fiction novel. That is, he has taken a true novel plot, developed it in proper novelistic style, and at the same time extrapolated fully, in accordance with all the basic science fiction rules, a future environment whose initial assumptions provide not only the background for the story, but an essential component of its central conflicts. The 'classic' science fiction novels of the past have ordinarily achieved their fame by doing (either) one of those jobs so successfully that any simple passable performance of the other was acceptable."

"Read it straight through, or dip and skim; there's something for everyone, and an impressive amount overall. (The book is so full of a number of--fascinating--things that it doesn't really matter whether they add up to that increasingly ambiguous term, A Good Novel.)"--Judith Merrill, in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, February, 1969.

Norman Spinrad, getting into a review of the Brunner book, says, "...Unlike the 'mainstream' novelist, the sf novelist really starts out with blank paper: he must not only create characters, theme, forces of destiny and plot but (unlike the mainstream novelist) must create from scratch a universe entire in which character and plot and destiny interact with each other and with the postulated environment."

Spinrad goes on to say that sf novelists have tried to solve the problem of reconciling these two necessities of the "genuine sf novel" by throwing in chunks of universe-explaining background, or by letting the reader pick up the background "by a kind of osmosis". But, he believes, Brunner has come along with a third alternative...

"Brunner has dealt with the paradox of sf imperatives versus novelistic imperatives by the simple process of dissociation. He gives the reader background in the 'Context' and 'The Happening World' sections. He writes a rather conventional unexceptional and unexceptionable sf novel in the 'Continuity' sections. He gives his world depth and extension in the 'Tracking with close-ups' sections."

"Brunner is not a great master of prose, nor a great master of characterization, nor a great master of plotting. Yet he has written a great book....What he has really done is applied a film technique to prose fiction and it works because Brunner has a great deal of talent for film editing, whether he ever thought of it in those terms or not."--Norman Spinrad, Science Fiction Review 29.

The Goblin Reservation

by Clifford Simak

Reviews of Simak's book were scarce, probably because, unlike Brunner's book it was not considered significant enough to merit buying in hardcover by fans, or for full-scale review in the magazines; besides, until recently, unlike the Panshin and Lafferty books, it had not been published in paperback, but only in serial form in Galaxy; and it has not been around in hardcover as long as Delany's book. Judith Merrill saw the Simak book as belonging to "...the genre of supernatural science, of the technology of magic, matter-of-fact fantasy, the territory just this side of weird-gothic-horror, fantastic whimsy, and sword-and-sorcery." But Simak's book "...is neither Disneyland whimsy nor latter-day Robert Nathan." And

"...Simak is approaching a new level of meaning as significant as that he found with his first Webster family stories," believes Miss Merrill. "The fact remains that I could not put ((it)) down until it was done."--Judith Merrill, The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, February, 1969.

Past Master
by R. A. Lafferty

"Past Master is the longest, most sustained piece of sf humour ever to appear, and the serious, philosophical underpinnings give balance and true meaning to this very witty and rewarding book."

"Lafferty's idea is not new, but his treatment is, and his comments on the human condition--simultaneously applicable to yesterday, today, and tomorrow--are bound to strike responsive chords from any reader. Past Master is sure to become a classic."--Richard Delap, Granfalloon 3.

"Now I'm sure this book will be recognized widely in fandom for its significance --it says a hell of a lot of profound things, many of which I'm sure I missed-- and the quality of writing; and also as a strong current in the New Wave. The fact remains, though, that it bored me stiff. Portions of it, small portions, unfortunately, were greatly exciting and moving, but they didn't last and were overcome by the rest of the work."--Doug Lovenstein, Arioch 3.

"Past Master is an eccentric, idiosyncratic minor masterpiece. It will not appeal to every taste, but to those who can approach it, it offers real rewards.It has all of Lafferty's usual colour and pyramiding of manic invention. Besides this, it offers easily the most real and immediate problem of spiritual agony yet seen in science fiction. It offers it subtly, and though it offers it in Catholic terms, it offers it universally. I found the ending genuinely affecting. Past Master is minor because its characters and setting are not as alive as its inventions and ideas."--Alexei Panshin, Amazing, January, 1969.

"Here is Lafferty with an allegory of our own society, developed into the harmonious glory of a golden mediocrity. Here is Lafferty writing like the heir of Cordwainer Smith, yet always completely himself--more macabre, more cryptic, with more of the humour of the incongruous that crystallizes in the Dulanty clan. Here is what Samuel Delany calls 'ultraviolet' humour on the cover, and Harlan Ellison 'a great galloping madman of a novel', and I agree with them both."--P. Schuyler Miller, Analog, November, 1968.

"If PM hadn't been written by Lafferty, and did not have all those good reviews on the backcover, I might have quit half-way through."--Dave Locke, Yandro 182.

"What makes this book uneven is the recurrent lack of unity between the chapters. Some chapters could be excerpted entirely from the book and reprinted as short stories without disturbing the balance of the novel. Despite this fact the reader is rapidly caught up in Lafferty's narrative pyrotechnics and is rewarded with a totally enjoyable reading experience."--D.C. Paskow, Science Fiction Times 458.

Nova
by Samuel Delany

"Samuel R. Delany is the best science-fiction writer in the world. As partial evidence, I offer you Nova....it successfully combines a number of strong, well-handled story elements. It is highly entertaining to read, and it involves the reader in the unfolding of events. It does so on a number of levels, and it does so while using classical science fiction elements."--Algis Budrys, Galaxy, January, 1969.

"The writing style is, as usual, great. I found, reading it most of an afternoon, that it can best be appreciated in small bites. Returning to it later, I was surprised at the improvement, but it was only a rested mind and a new day."--Ed Smith, Flip 2.

"Delany is still writing prose-poems, failing when too aware of the subject (as in Babel-17), succeeding when unobtrusively supporting the subject (as in The Einstein Intersection). Nova falls somewhere between these poles. Such stylistic techniques as breaking descriptive sentences with fractioned dialogue is captivating until it becomes tedious with repetition. The erotic undertones are bizarre. It may be that I remained unaware of the contextual meanings of the brief tales of background injected into the dialogue, making me feel that they were occasionally overlong and distracting. But there are also colourful yearnings for consummations on every level: kaleidoscopic blendings of man and machine, the dividing line between them almost too narrow to be measured; and some of the most exotic window-dressings that science fiction has yet come up with. Nothing, nothing stands alone...all is interchangeable, beauty and ugliness, power and weakness, profundity and shallowness. Nothing is what it seems at first glance. There is much here to ponder and read again, but I think all of it together will never be understood but by one person...the author. Delany is someday, if my guess is correct, going to write a great book. Nova isn't it, but it is good. I only wish I could understand more of it."--Richard Delap, Pegasus 4.

"If you let yourself go, it will run away with you; since the author failed to set up stop signs, the reader must either make his own (put the book down and pace the room once between chapters?) or plan on a second, slower reading after the fun of the first. Or settle, of course, for a good read, and never mind mining out the gold."--Judith Merril, The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, November, 1968.

Rite of Passage
by Alexei Panshin

"...Panshin has presented a gentle story that succeeds in defying the subtle editorial proscriptions against non-violence. That is a genuine service to the field, and I applaud it; it takes a real skill to maintain interest non-violently. I consider the book to be a fine family-type piece of science fiction worthy of a place on the Nebula/Hugo shortlists, and the chain of editors who rejected it prior to its acceptance by ACE are self-convicted clods who should be fired before they do any more harm to the field."--Piers Anthony, Speculation, February, 1969.

"I did not like this story at first. Through some flaw in my character I find it impossible to identify with or have any sympathy toward teen-age characters. This is an emotional response: on an intellectual level I recognized this as one of the most important stories of the year, sure to be nominated for a Hugo. Mr. Panshin has created a fully consistent society for his starship citizenry, one of the better-realized societies in sf. He has realistically delineated the character of a young girl during her maturation. He has also told a whopping good story."--J.B. Post, Science Fiction Times 457.

"Alex's book comes out as a slightly improved model of a Heinlein juvenile (and when you can improve on Heinlein, you're good)....The plot and action are good. The only flaw--and it's a minor one--is in the conclusion, which seems a bit forced."--Robert Coulson, Yandro 182.

"For what it intends it is poor science fiction, poorer as a novel of psychological insight. Its intent puts it into competition with any other such novel in any other field. It doesn't stand up. Then, to read it as an offering of an unusual sort (in 'our' field), as a portrayal of a young girl coming to maturity, not standing it against any other, nor even the cover blurbs, it is still less than believable. There is no real insight and the manner is cardboardly offhand and unconvincing. It is full of small errors of inconsistency, both in the category of 'hard' science and in the milieu of the ship society....There are unsupportable deviations and character switches, illogical reasoning behind decisions and plot twists, inconsistent action on the part of the protagonist. So many as to amaze this reader by their profusion."--Ed Cox, Psychotic 27.

best novella

HAWK AMONG THE SPARROWS

by Dean McLaughlin
(Analog, July, 1968)

NIGHTWINGS

by Robert Silverberg
(Galaxy, September, 1968)

LINES OF POWER

by Samuel Delany
(F&SF, 1968)

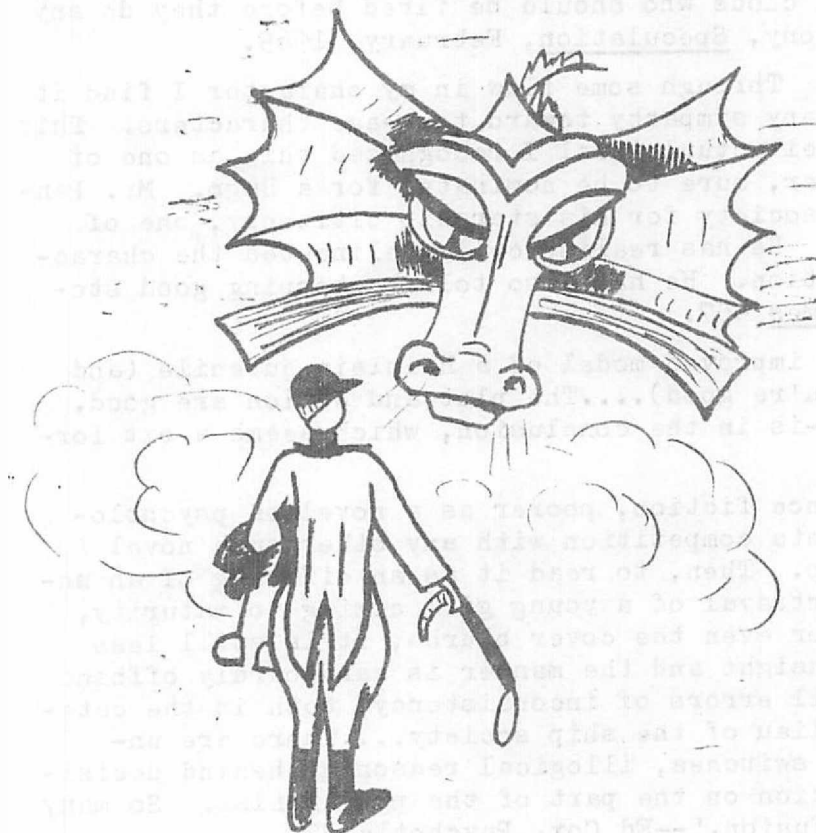
DRAGONRIDER

by Anne McCaffrey
(Analog, Dec. 1967-Jan. 1968)

Dean McLaughlin's "Hawk Among the Sparrows" is the least involved of the stories; it's about a few-years-from-now pilot who while spying on a French nuclear explosion, is catapulted into First World War France and is faced with the problem of adapting to a society which can neither understand nor support the technology he has come from. The telling of the tale is lucid and straightforward; this is the story for people who like their literature of a level that can be digested along with a minute breakfast. It's smooth, and it goes down easily, and doesn't do much to upset your stomach--or your mind.

Neither does Anne McCaffrey's "Dragonrider". Miss McCaffrey has created a world and filled it with a people who live in a sort of feudal society with a bunch of dragons who fly around in space and, when it's discovered to be possible, in time, to save the world of Pern every few hundred years. She has written an elegant story; it is soft and easy and pleasant to read, because it is simply a story, an adventure story to read and not necessarily to think about. If this sort of tale is well done, it is very good. "Dragonriders, for what it is, is

an excellent story; it's for people who appreciate a well-done action story. More than that, though, recommends "Dragonrider"; it is a novella which, in telling a story, creates a society to tell the story in. It is still an adventure story, but because of the craftsmanship of Anne McCaffrey, it is an adventure story with class. Complaints that it moves slowly, that the pace of the action is slowed down by the complexity of the world and the people in it, are valid...the pace is slow and the description is stolid. But these traits are part of the world created; and some stories are meant to be read slowly. If you like sedate adventure, the sort of thing that goes well with a fire and a dog at the feet and whiskey at hand, this is it.



Robert Silverberg's "Nightwings" is a moody piece of writing, and a delicate one. Silverberg, like Anne McCaffrey, has created a society; but his is of an earth of the far far future, a world one senses has gone through holocaust and has only a dim memory of previous civilized achievements. There exist professional guilds; one man, the hero, is of the guild of Watchers. His task in life is to watch for a predicted invasion. As it turns out, one of the Watcher's travelling companions, a Changeling--a man made by man and weaned on drugs--is the forerunner of the invasion. The Watcher senses the invasion after the Changeling reveals himself to him. The plot, then, is simple; man must watch, after centuries of watching. Man does watch, but, like fellow members of the guild, wonders how valuable the watching is; man discovers invaders and accomplishes his purpose in life.

But there is more to the story than the plot. For one thing, the writing--first person narrative--is powerful, indicative of the better writing Silverberg is turning out lately--such as the novels Man in the Maze and The Masks of Time. It is, as I said, moody; evocative is a word which suits it. It is also smooth reading, like the other novellas; not as facile

as "Hawk Among the Sparrows", but not as involved as "Dragonrider". It's more the type of story to read on a stormy day, with the wind rattling windows and the rain lashing roofs and the lightning breaking open the sky; it's a warm and a comforting story, like most mythic stories.



Samuel Delany's "Lines of Power" is the most thematic and the least "pure-story" of the nominated novellas. It is placed on earth, in a near-future--the next century--in which a globe-girdling source of power is made necessarily available to all people in the world. Some few small communities still exist which have not been given the lines which lead in the power, and one such has been discovered in Canada. The introduction of the lines of power into this small society--made up of a future variant of today's Hell's Angels--threatens to destroy the structure of the way of life the people have built. It is the duty of the authorities to install the power lines; the people in the hamlet do not want the lines installed. The confrontation that can be read into the work is basic; the infringement of society on men who are free. Also present, though, is the idea that the men who have ignored society for the sake of wild freedom will be unable to survive as a group if society forces itself on them.

Delany and McLaughlin have written novellas which are loosely linked by the portrayal of man forced to adapt to different societal environments; McLaughlin's hero in the past, and Delany's Hell's Angels who are living in the past, are faced with opposite but equal challenges of learning to cope or being destroyed.

Delany has written the only novella which demands thought and application because of its content; "Dragonrider" also demands concentration, but more because of its style. The writing is tight but smooth, fluid but concise.

The four nominated novellas are probably not the best four of the year, but they are certainly representative of the best. They're also representative of the type of story which doesn't have to be carried on the crest of a New or an Old wave; they're all both. They're all neither. They are simply good stories. One is a better-than-averagely-written Analog story; one is a well-woven adventure tale; one is a myth of the future; and one is a turn on the theme of man versus encroaching society. Simple story, complex story, sensitive story, thought-provoking story; those are the choices. I like to think...--Richard Labonte

best novelette

GETTING THROUGH UNIVERSITY

by Piers Anthony
(If, August, 1968)

MOTHER TO THE WORLD

by Richard Wilson
(Orbit 3, Damon Knight, ed.)

SHARING OF FLESH

by Poul Anderson
(Galaxy, December, 1968)

TOTAL ENVIRONMENT

by Brian Aldiss
(Galaxy, February 1968)

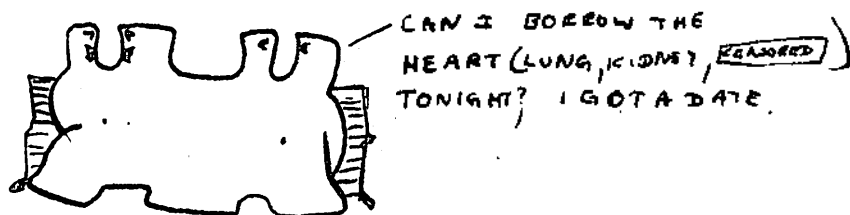
If I was looking for one word to describe this year's nominees in the novelette category, that word would be "ordinary". No daring new concepts, no particularly memorable characters, nothing experimental about these three stories. (The fourth novelette, "Total Environment" is reviewed separately, for reasons too harrowing to mention...) They're just solid competently-written and moderately enjoyable examples of the type of science fiction we've been seeing for years.

This trait, by the way, shows up in the novella category as well. The yearn of the conservative in fandom too, perhaps?

It's generally foolish to try and pigeon-hole a story as to type, but considering the nature of this fanzine it might be worthwhile in the instance. The three novelettes under discussion do seem to stress different aspects of the short fiction form. Thus while all three stories are presenting a common idea, we have a choice between a story of theme ("Sharing of Flesh" by Anderson), a story of character ("Mother to the World" by Wilson) and a story of situation ("Getting Through University"). These are broad classifications, of course, but I think most readers will find that this is what the choice boils down to.

In "Sharing of Flesh", a scientific expedition lands on a former earth colony that has reverted to primitivism after the collapse of Old Earth. A biologist, Donli Sairn, is murdered, and his body cannibalized by a crippled native, Moru.

while Evalyth, Donli's wife, watches in horror on a television screen. The story deals with her vengeance, her tracking down and capturing of Moru, the revelation of the reason behind the cannibalization, and the final overcoming of Evalyth's desire for personal revenge.



Anderson is dealing with the theme of humanitarianism and the theme of cultural imperatives--the underlying drives that mold and control an individual's action at the most basic level, and over which he has little, if any, control. Man does not murder out of greed, hatred, or any other personal reason, but because on his planet a young man approaching puberty has to devour another male in order to achieve sexual potency and ensure the survival of the species. And just as Moru was forced to act according to the dictates of his society, so Evalyth is compelled to track down and exact personal vengeance on her husband's killer. In the not-at-all unexpected conclusion, Evalyth tracks down the hormone deficiency which has necessitated the ritualistic cannibalism and frees Moru, thus proving that her essential humanity can overcome cultural imperatives. As I said, the idea is hardly earth-shaking.

The writing is standard. Anderson is one of the few writers still using science in his stories, and he does it quite well. The locale is nicely established; the story is well-paced but the characters are basically dull and hardly come alive, although Anderson does give himself an out--Evalyth chemically rendered unemotional--which helps explain her lack of depth. It's a pleasant story, but not much more.

Much the same idea, that of a person's humanity overcoming all obstacles, is dealt with in Anthony's "Getting Through University" but here the emphasis is on the rather humorous situation with the characters being mere caricatures and the theme being masked by a light, casual air. Again, the story is not new. Dillingham, a Terran dentist, is trying to enrol in a Galactic University of Dentistry. Despite a constant series of set-backs, and his apparent total failure, it turns out that he is actually successful at passing a far more significant set of exams, those for the position of Administrator of the university.

Anthony uses exaggeration and a collection of weird and wacky alien students to amplify the basic situation of the University. Most enjoyable of all is an over-emotional walking oyster who turns out to be the head of the whole school. The writing style is bright and breezy, to match the almost farcical nature of the story; as a result the whole thing is quite a bit of fun even if it is nonsense.

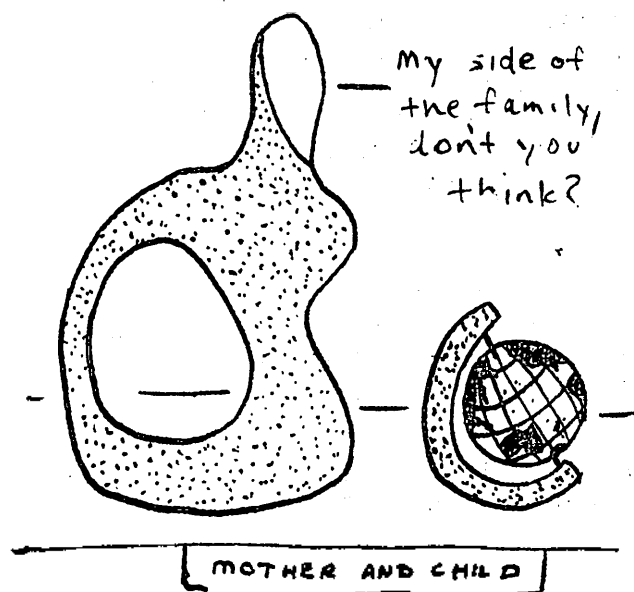
On the debit side, the ending is obvious quite early in the story, and the pithy little homily that concludes the story is just too much; I'm sure we all got the point without Anthony belting us over the head with it. If you like Retief, you'll probably find this story passable, but I really can't help wondering whether or not it would have stuck in people's memories without those beautiful Bode illos.

Richard Wilson has yet a third approach to the basic concept of the three novelettes. His last man-last woman story is primarily a character study and as such is an eloquent and moving piece of work. The situation is again extremely familiar and, as with most destruction-of-the-world stories, a little far-fetched. A biological agent released by China in retaliation for a nuclear attack by the United States destroys human flesh while leaving buildings and the like untouched. As always happens, the move backfires and wipes out every one except for two people who just happened to be spending the night in a closed environment research room and are therefore saved. Wilson introduces a nice twist, though. The girl, Siss, is retarded; she has the mentality of an eight year old, and Martin Rolfe is unable to fully accept her as his only companion in an unpopulated world.

The story deals with Rolfe's attempts to accept and enjoy his situation and is related in terms of human relationships. There are no incredible dangers in Wilson's post-Ragnarok world, no shortage of food or conveniences--in fact, many might consider Rolfe to be a lucky man. Rather than making his survivors mighty heroes who manage to perpetuate the human race despite tremendous obstacles, Wilson has taken an ordinary man and told a low-key story of his adaptation to his circumstances. Thus we see Rolfe visiting a zoo to release the harmless animals and destroy the dangerous ones before they starve or die of thirst, getting drunk when the need for intelligent companionship becomes too much to bear and dancing foolishly in the thunderstorm.

Though less featured than Rolfe, Siss is also an effectively drawn character. Her patient and uncomplaining acceptance of the situation and of Rolfe's inability to adjust to it is typical of the retarded person. There are one or two spots where she does not quite sound like an eight year-old but these do not hinder the story. Wilson has taken a very old theme and given it a fresh treatment, and the results are very satisfying.

As the title suggests, Rolfe and Siss decide to give mankind another try and bear a son, named, obviously, Adam. It is Adam who eventually helps Rolfe



Mother to the World

accept the facts of his existence which enables him to truly love Siss. This provides a "happy ending" which rings a trifle false as I find it difficult to believe that Rolfe would be so contented merely to have an intelligent son when his daughter is still an infant. But the point is made and Rolfe's basic humanity wins the day.

Wilson is a very capable writer and his style suits the story; it is simple but evocative and skillfully indicates Rolfe's changing attitudes. Wilson uses flashback and diary forms to good effect to produce a novelette with originality of approach, and skill of presentation. It may not bowl you over, but it's a good story.

There are no 2001's among this year's short fiction nominees but there's a fairly clear-cut choice between Anderson's adventure story with a nicely presented theme, Anthony's humorous piece of didactic fluff, and Wilson's moving character analysis.

These cover just about the whole spectrum of those elements fans consider important in a story--it's up to you as to just which element you rate as number one.

--Mike Glicksohn

((The fourth nominated novelette, Brian Aldiss' "Total Environment", is reviewed here separately, with apologies to Mr. Aldiss. The story appeared in the February 1968 Galaxy, an issue which everyone had bought but which no had on hand when we needed it. I know I had a copy.... Frantic hours-long searches through over a dozen Ottawa second-hand bookstores failed to unearth a copy, and it was only at the last minute that a review could be written.))

Back a while ago, a man named Malthus predicted man would outstrip his productivity within a few centuries; that is, he believed man would breed himself to death.

In "Total Environment", Aldiss attempts to recreate such a society on the basis of experiments which involved placing people in closed environments. Unfortunately, his world remains an academic creation, a theoretical exercise undertaken as a class project by a slightly bored undergraduate and placed in a deliberately confusing frame. Pity and horror are implicit in the situation he describes--but they remain implicit and unfelt. You can't get involved in Aldiss' theories. Societies are made up of people and what the people do; but there are no people in "Total Environment", just abstractions from a deck of data cards. Ultimately, even Aldiss seems uninterested in his model society; and if an artist dismisses his creation, as he seems to do, how can the reader take it all seriously? His attempt to make the experimental situation he constructs in India meaningful fails, and thus, to me, so does the story, despite its surface polish and careful craftsmanship.

best short story

THE STEIGER EFFECT

by Betsy Curtis

(Analog, October, 1968)

ALL THE MYRIAD WAYS

by Larry Niven

(Galaxy, October, 1968)

MASKS

by Damon Knight

(Playboy, July, 1968)

THE BEAST THAT SHOUTED LOVE

by Harlan Ellison

(Galaxy, June 1968)

DANCE OF THE CHANGER AND THE THREE

by Terry Carr

(The Farthest Reaches).

The range of style and approach and intent in four of the five nominated short stories is staggering, much more in evidence than in any of the other three fiction categories. There are the two standard-yet-different works of Curtis and Niven, whose stories, while they are in the form of more traditional science fiction writing--bland, pat, exploring a new or a sudden concept in an old and an uninspiring way--at the same time reflect two completely opposite themes. And there is the slick smooth polish of the Knight story, which is new-style old-form science fiction; his story is closer in style and substance to Ellison's allegory.

It's quite a range of stories, more representative, I think, of the broad spectrum that science fiction can straddle

and still have meaning and form for fans and readers.

Betsy Curtis' story is the sort of story one associates with the thinking of John W. Campbell simply because everyone is telling us that this is the sort of thinking he espouses. Men want to trade with a planet whose sole export is its poetry; this race has no machines of a diesel sort, so the trade is arranged. The men had planned to leave behind electrical-based machines, but the inhabitants had refused to accept them because they seemed to work by magic; the diesels left behind were meant to operate from a minidiesel starter which could be set off with matches, which the race would accept. When after a year the traders return, they find that the machines no longer work. Surprise ending is that it seems internal combustion machines won't work without the psi presence of a man around, and that all these years man has been using the things it has been his mental makeup, and not mechanical prowess, which has been making the things run. It's an interesting, if fallible, idea; but you have to be hung up pretty high on this sort of sf to really like the story.

Larry Niven's story is also of the more traditional sort, in that it mentions the word science and contains at least the germ of a scientific possibility. A method of crossing into different timelines, a current of happenings in which there was no Hitler or in which the flower growing at the foot of the house at the corner of Heron and Bank Sts. never grew, has been developed. Niven has postulated a possible effect on society of its realization that there is an infinity of possible worlds, in some of which they never existed, in some of which they were brought a cup of coffee, and in some of which they got the coffee, ... didn't get coffee, and didn't want coffee, and didn't know coffee existed.... It's Niven's theory in the story that such a realization led to complete despair on the part of society; it knows that there is an infinite number of other its, and so it doesn't give a damn about its own existence. So people, Niven says, commit suicide. It's a fascinating, if not new and daring and bold, concept, and Niven handles it well. Style carries this story.

And style certainly highlights the Knight story; it is slick clean writing that makes this tale a pleasure to read. Like Niven, Knight examines the effect of a scientific advance on man. The man in question here is the ultimate in transplantation techniques, a human mind and soul and bundle of nerve and synapse encased in a shell--an all-encompassing prosthetic. As it turns out, the man

loses himself to his stainless-steel shell; he rejects the filth and the dirt of putrid flesh and poisoned blood. Knight is writing about man--the man who built the artificial shell--alienating Man--the person who finds the antiseptic prosthetic creation...the world of the machine...a better thing than the human body.

And Knight leaves the reader thinking if perhaps the machine, the sterile shell, isn't perhaps better after all. It's a strong story, tight and fast and, above all, smooth, that Knight has written; it's also a very good one.

And then there is Harlan Ellison's "The Beast that Shouted Love at the Heart of the World", the most intense and the least facile of the shorts. Ellison is full circle from the stolid staidness of Betsy Curtis in style and in intent, though it could be said that both stories examine the ways and results of man's thinking--but where Curtis deals with a pseudo-scientific effect, Ellison is concerned with an emotional cause.

His story is about love and hate and insanity. It is not a Point A to Point B and then to Point C story, and this probably puts some people off; it demands a re-reading or two, before the ideas Ellison may have put into the story can be pieced together and lifted out.

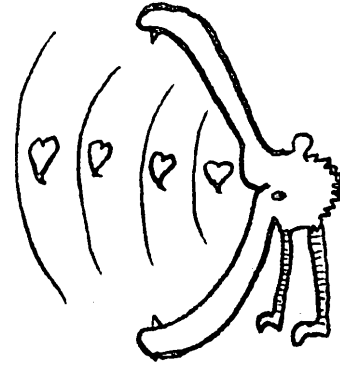
Which is always so with the science fiction of ideas rather than action; so I don't judge a story on the basis of whether or not the author has put something into it, but rather on whether or not the author succeeds in challenging me to try and dig the ideas out. (If the ideas are bobbing about on the surface of the story, as with Curtis and Niven, that's fine too; I'm as lazy as the next person, and I'll take my relaxation on a spoon and sprinkled with sugary construction and handling).

For all I know, Ellison wasn't saying anything in the story; but he convinced me he was, and that what he was trying to say was worth scratching under the surface for. On that basis alone, the story succeeds.

The plot doesn't really matter, and doesn't even exist, for that matter, except as a vehicle for the concepts contained in the story. Some unimaginable somewhere, some things perform some experiment to try and cleanse the world of hate and rage and insanity; but that hate and rage and insanity has to go somewhere, and it seem to go back to Earth, and cause a man to poison milk and blow up planes, and such. Or maybe I have it wrong; maybe it's the other way around, and I don't really know what Ellison meant to say. But the story is still a success, and I got all I wanted out of it. It's just a question of a different standard, is all.

The four stories reviewed range from the patter-than-pat of Betsy Curtis, through the fresh-pat of Larry Niven, to the slick-pat of Damon Knight, and on to the un-pat of Harlan Ellison. It makes quite a range for people of all science fictional likes and dislikes to choose from.

The fifth nominated story, by Terry Carr, is not reviewed, and I apologize to Mr. Carr. The only source I could track down for the story was something called the Farthest Reaches, and it seemed to be available only in Hardcover; not a single Ottawa bookstore or library had it, and none of the people working on LOW-DOWN had read it. Charlie Brown, who may be, after all, the Secret Master of the Hugoes, said it was the finest story of the year. You'll have to take his word for it. --Richard Labonte



best dramatic presentation

FALLOUT (THE PRISONER)

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

CHARLY

YELLOW SUBMARINE

ROSEMARY'S BABY

In some ways, "The Prisoner" was to the television series format what 2001 was to the theatrical feature.

Concerned with the destruction of the individual in today's society, Patrick McGoochan (producer, director, writer, star) conceived and executed a strangely fascinating setting

--a prison world called simply The Village. All the inhabitants of The Village are numbers. They are there because they have some secret within them.

The Prisoner (McGoochan) is known simply as Number Six, a man who will not tell why he has resigned from a top-secret organization. Every physical and psychological device known is used to break his resistance.

Who "they" are, why they run the Village, which side they are on--in fact, where the Village is located--is simply a mystery. Their job is to extract information from Number Six.

"The Prisoner" series was unique in that it did develop from week to week, and it did have a concluding episode. This concluding episode, "Fallout", was something different, and the like of it has seldom if ever, been seen before or since on commercial television.

A bare story outline of "Fallout" would not, could not, describe it. If you saw it, you either loved or hated it; but it was one of the grandest pyrotechnic displays in the history of TV; a wildly fantastic finale which, in its own fashion, was consistent within the series framework.

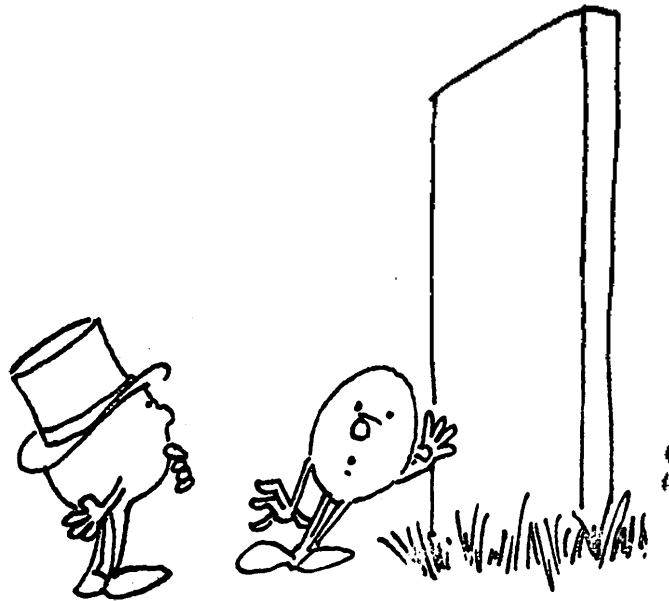
Fantasy? Allegory? New Wave Science Fiction? It hardly matters. "Fallout" was easily the highpoint in what was probably the finest television series ever produced.

Well, I trust you've seen 2001: A Space Odyssey.

What can one say without repeating some of the millions of words already expended on the subject? Certainly, 2001's mind-blowing beauties and symbolic ambiguities have been staple cocktail party conversation fare for 10 these many months.

One of the most anxiously awaited of motion pictures, it opened to disappointing reviews in the New York papers and a particularly scathing dismissal by Lester Del Rey in the pages of Galaxy. Now, a year after its initial release, over 40 leading international journals have named it the "motion picture of the year." In the current Avante Garde the director of the Museum of Modern Art film library includes 2001 in a handful of all-time motion picture classics.

It has been praised and it has been damned; but without doubt, this multi-million dollar intellectual spectacular, this gorgeous, difficult, austere magnificent epic is a film like none other.



IT'S HUMMING THE 'BLUE DANUBE'

Call it a shaggy God story if you will, sneer at Kubrick's messianic temerity if you like, but the facts remain: 2001 approaches the unapproachable, it dares suggest the unknown, the eternal, the unknowable. This has always been the prerogative of the highest forms of art and, hopefully, of the highest forms of science fiction.



'2001' IS 'STAR TREK'
IN A VERY, VERY
CLEVER PLASTIC
DISGUISE.

In my opinion, 2001 is not simply the best science fiction film of the year; it is the best motion picture of any type released in 1968. It is a great movie; it is a classic.

And, ladies and gentlemen, it is science fiction.

So, too, is Charly; and, unlike most science fiction motion pictures, it is an adaptation of a minor classic in the genre --Daniel Keyes' Flowers for Algernon.

Producer-director Ralph Nelson and ace screenwriter Sterling Siliphant have adapted Keyes' story into a highly visual cinematic experience. Many fans have expressed disappointment in the screen translation, but within the romanticized overstated Hollywood tradition, Charly is a good film.

Cliff Robertson has won an Oscar for his portrayal of Charly Gordon; certainly his integrity and ability contribute much to the film, as does the intelligent performance of Clair Bloom.

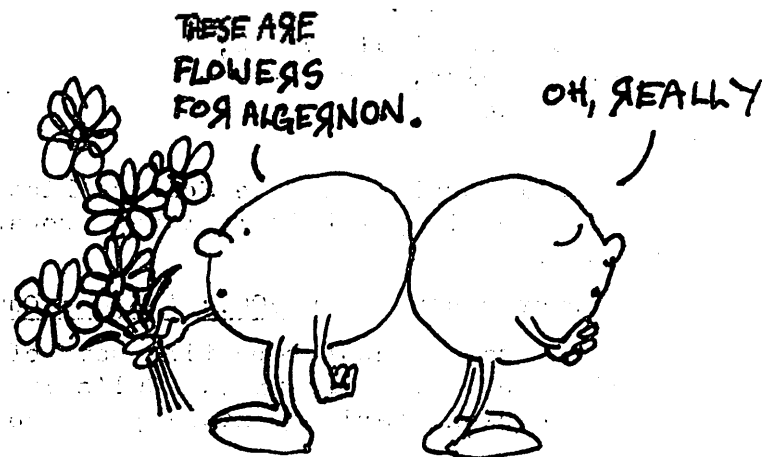
The trouble with Charly is that too much is made of his retardation; his transition to genius is covered sketchily. A multi-screen Expo-type sequence and an artfully photographed romantic montage are used to indicate Charly's adjustments. The sequences are well done and fun to watch, but compared to the novel they are simply not convincing.

Also, in a year of heart transplants, I think that many of the general public will not equate this film with science fiction; the subject is too close to the sort of medical "miracles" that now sell daily newspapers.

Nevertheless, the film is a popular one, and I think deservedly so. It is a stylish work and yet honest enough to elicit an emotional response to the plight of Keyes' unforgettably tragic protagonist.

Also unforgettable...Blue Meanies. Pepperland. Science fiction. Op art. The Beatles. Dangerous Voyages. Puns. Gags. Monsters. Comic book heroes. Surrealism. Fantasy. And more, friends, Much more.

The Yellow Submarine is simply a gas.



To be sure, the animation is crudely photographed--its inadequacies should not have been enlarged to Panavision proportions--but what the hell, who really cares?

You see, there's this place called Pepperland where all is music, joy, and light. But lo, the jealous Blue Meanies subject Pepperland to an anti-music missile attack; they turn their wicked "splotch guns" on the innocent Pepperites. A character called Old Fred escapes and travels in a yellow submarine to Liverpool to enlist the aid of the famous Beatles.

Armed with their guitars and lots of songs, the boys and Old Fred traverse the dangerous Seas of Time, encounter Monsters, Consumer Products, Nowhere, Phrenology, Holes, and other Phenomenons, natural and unnatural. For 85 enchanting minutes they have adventures galore before reaching Pepperland and finally rescuing the citizens from the wicked Meanies.

The story is a kind of mad mod Lord of the Rings, but is less important really than the puns, gags, satire, songs, visions, and allusions to the facts of human existence.

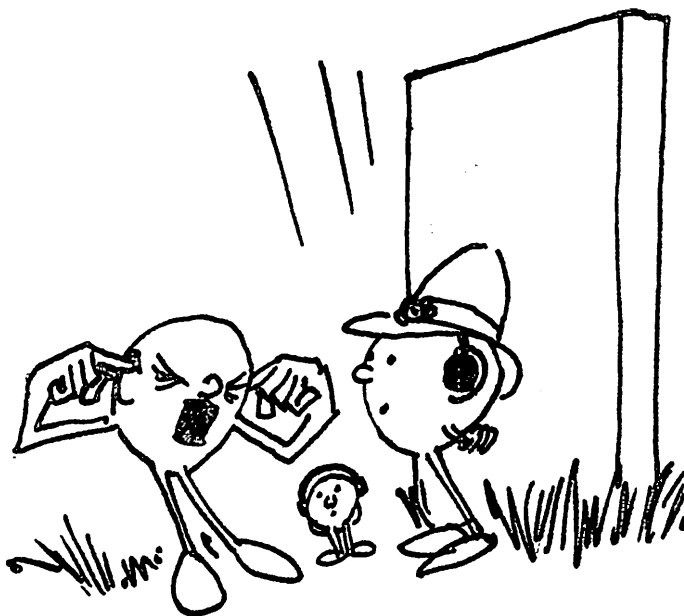
George Dunning takes direction honours. The drawings are by Czech-born Heinz Edelmann. John Lennon wrote much of the dialogue, and it's very, very, funny. Like 2001 and The Prisoner, you'll have to see this one more than once to pick up everything.

In his European films, the young Polish director Roman Polanski established a talent for the unusual, the macabre: Repulsion with its oppressive mood of psychotic terror; the black humour of Cul-de-sac; the horror parody of The Vampire Killers.

For his first Hollywood assignment, exploitation film producer William Castle handed him the screen version of Ira Levin's smash novel, Rosemary's Baby. Polanski had complete freedom in adapting the book to the screen; in fact, he wrote the screenplay himself. To almost everyone's surprise, he chose to transfer the book as faithfully as possible. The result was a superbly crafted, well-acted film that illustrated the style and control of a director who knows exactly what he wants.

In his handling of minute details, the building of inexorable terror from the reality of day to day happenings, Polanski proved himself the master of the craft of story telling. Seldom has a fantasy motion picture been so convincing in its ability to suspend the disbelief of its audience. And seldom has a fantasy film had such an uncompromisingly "right" ending. Let us hope Mr. Polanski does not lose his predilection for the unusual. My only disappointment is in learning he will not be directing Clarke's Childhood's End as reported.

All in all, 1968 was a tremendous year for sf in the cinema. I suppose we can't have everything.--Don Hutchison



HASN'T IT GOT A VOLUME CONTROL?

Galaxy MAGAZINE

Fifty issues of the five nominated magazines were on the stands in 1968; it's a shame that such a quantity of magazines contained so little good material.

GALAXY had nine issues in the year, reflecting a switch from bi-monthly to monthly in mid-year. Some of the highlights of the year from this one were Leiber's brilliant and brilliantly illustrated A Spectre is Haunting Texas, and, as it seems, a goodly number of this year's Hugo nominees.

SCIENCE FICTION SCIENCE FACT

analog

Analog turned out twelve issues, always on time and on most of the stands; there was Harry Harrison's The Horse Barbarians, and Poul Anderson's Satan's World, and James Schmitz' The Tuvela, in serial form; and for consistency there's P. Schuyler Miller's book reviews and the colourful covers. While Galaxy improved, and If decayed, Analog staid on.

Silverberg's Man in the Maze was the serial highlight of the year, with Mack Reynolds Computer Conspiracy, which finished off the year, showing how low If had gone. It catered, more and more, to a young audience, and the large-type, E-Z Read paper-printed novel extracts and short condensations which began to show up weren't much of a boon either. It was If, though, which began to provide a listing of upcoming cons. That's something, I guess.

WORLDS OF



SCIENCE
FICTION

I can't help but think that New Worlds was nominated because a lot of people had heard about it, and decided it deserved to be on the ballot simply because it represented a different form of science fiction. 1968 was the year in which Disch Camp Concentration was printed, and in which the distribution of the magazine was all fucked up by Spinrad's Bug Jack Barron. You can't deny that NW is the best among its peers, but to contend that daring is equated with quality is false.

new worlds

F&SF is the most literate of the U.S. prozines, and as adult as Analog. It published Anthony's SOS The Rope, and was about the best magazine on an average; it may not appeal to as wide a range of people, but it was more appealing to me.

Fantasy and Science Fiction
APRIL

best professional magazine

ANALOG

ed., John W. Campbell

GALAXY

ed., Frederik Pohl

IF

ed., Frederik Pohl

MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

ed., Edward L. Ferman

NEW WORLDS

ed., Michale Moorcock

Analogue(-og): an analogous, parallel word or thing.

The 'established' science Fiction/Science Fact prozine is Analog by name, analogous by nature. Which is to say if you've read one, you've not necessarily read them all, but you will certainly know what to expect. Expect a consistent quality story, fact and art content supplied by the established, accepted sources. Expect a magazine written by old pros (of all ages) for old fans (of all ages); a magazine scientists read without feeling guilty and escapist. Expert analytic, speci-

fic, and painstaking features. Do not expect to be lightly entertained very often. Analog is a weighty man's prozine. It does not really need a Hugo; that might disturb its peaceful orbit.

Where Analog is analogous mainly to itself, Galaxy and If are analogous to each other. Edited, produced, and published by the same people, the only differences are in which one uses the other's slush pile.

Both magazines buy the same contemporary writers, unfortunately often by 'name' rather than by quality of material. Bode, Gaughan, Adkins, and Finlay ensure the magazines the best exterior and interior artwork in the field, with If featuring more talent on the covers. If only the art had been the best reproduced!

There is a subtle difference in attitude which differentiates the two. Galaxy is the more processed, Analog-type 'zine. If gets the 'higher risk' material, departures from normal styles, fantasies, first efforts, and modern, more 'immediate' (as opposed to futuristic) sort of stories. These innovative stories, plus a few features, make If a fresher, if irregular in quality, magazine. This year the split is less brilliant.

F&SF is perhaps the most literary and least strictly fan-cliqueish (and juvenile aimed) of the prozines. It has no stable of writers, but maintains a wide and balanced variety of talent. There is a finesse to the magazine; a finesse of quality writing, of format which includes Asimov (informative without being pedantic) on science, a rotating board of book reviewing pros, author background and information with each story. Not to mention its bi-annual index and its special issues dealing in depth with particular pros.

As if you hadn't guessed, my bias is towards a Hugo for the 1968 F&SF.

--Rowan Shirkie

Rowan, like most North American fans--and probably a lot of British fans, if circulation figures mean anything--has not seen the 1968 issues of New Worlds. But from the odd bit of discussion which had made its way into British and American fanzines, it's safe to say that NW was certainly experimental, more so than If; it was at the opposite end of any sort of spectrum to Analog; if its experiments succeeded, it approached the literacy of F&SF; and it was probably not as entertaining as Galaxy sometimes was, because it tried--or forced--people to think about what they were reading.

Since all the prozines do differ, if only slightly, and most are aimed at different sorts of audiences, the pattern will be for people to vote for the magazine aimed at them. Why not, instead, vote for the magazine which fails the least at doing what it is trying to do...?

--Richard Labonte

best professional artist

JACK GAUGHAN
KELLY FREAS
LEO & DIANNE DILLON
VAUGHN BODE

Jack Gaughan is one of the favourite artists in the science fiction world, and one of the most prolific; and in his case it's easy to equate quantity and quality. His greatness shows in the professional world, where his works ordain many a pocketbook and prozine; and in 1968 he seemed to show up in all

sorts of fanzines with work that was more often than not the equal of the work he made money from. His style is his trademark; the use of colours and shape show the true measure of his love for it; each cover seems to have something the reader can immediately grab and say; "This I recognize"--a spaceship, a satellite--and yet make him ask, "What is this?"--a shape, a colour, a combination.

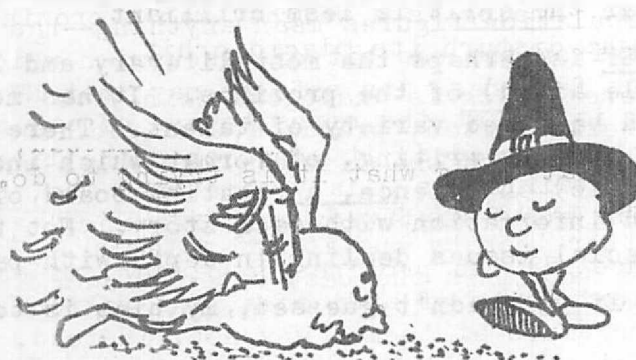
Freas, neither curious nor fuzzy, but painterly, did most of the covers for Analog. A Freas cover intrigues as it usually provides scenes of the old in a new situation. And his style also has a dream-like quality that draws one into the scene. Inside Analog, his black and white work comes in two types. One seems to be along the lines of his covers, and the detail really comes out in his black and white works. In his line drawings they take on a different characteristic and are usually quite funny. Like Gaughan, he varies his style; he can control it.

Leo and Dianne Dillon are known in the field for their superb set of covers for the Ace SF Special series. They have broken away entirely from the mold of traditional science fiction illustration, and, even more important, succeeded in their innovative attempts. They have turned the paperback cover into an art form--a miniature one, but an art form nonetheless. Their work was certainly not traditional, and a comparison of what they did and what the rest of the nominated pro artists were doing would be difficult to make. It's a case of 'I don't know art, but I know what I like,' here.

Bode started out drawing SF cartoon strips for the University of Syracuse, and developed a style there that was so distinctive he later would have trouble convincing people he was an sf artist. But he certainly was. He leaned towards the comedy, a type of communication that had been lacking in both the writing and the drawing forms of professional science fiction. When he did begin to be accepted as an sf artist, he was plagued with problems, notably with his work in If and Galaxy. He quit university to try and make it as a professional, yet the SF field could not support him and his family, and he has since returned to school to finish his last year, and the only remaining outlet for his professional work is Cavalier.

Bode's greatest contribution to science fiction illustration was his humour; some called it brutal and unnecessarily violent, and were repelled by it; others saw in his drawings a deep current running against violence, by means of parodying it.

Lots of different styles for different tastes, then. All of them worthy choices.



FLYING BLIND AGAIN, PYGAR?

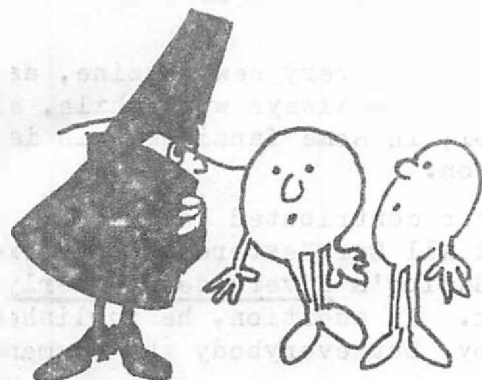
--John Mansfield

best fan writer

BANKS MEBANE
RICHARD DELAP
HARRY WARNER, JR.
WALT WILLIS

The announced intention of Ted White to withdraw as a nominee in the fan writer category (and he was nominated) leaves four fans-without-a-doubt in the running; the situation is thus unlike that of last year, when some people, for one reason as asinine as any other, questioned the nomination of Ted White, Harlan Ellison, and Alexei Panshin.

But to question the pure-blooded fanness this year's nominees--as if it mattered--would be a difficult task; they all have fannish pedigrees which, while they don't all cover years, do have quality. The fannish bloodline may be slightly tainted: Harry Warner Jr. may have indeed sold a few stories a decade and more ago, and may have more recently translated from German into English for International Science Fiction; Walt Willis may have indeed used his talents to write a book about Ireland; Banks Mebane may (or may not) have sold professional stories or reviews; and Richard Delap may indeed have won an NFFF story contest.



PSST!-HARRY WARNER JNR IS A
NEOFAN!

So it makes them fans who have sold professional works instead of fans who have not sold professional works. So what? And if you still cavil at a professional taint in the pedigree, remember that Richard Delap won a fan-run contest, and Walt Willis honed his talents in fannish writings, and Harry Warner has spent years writing about fans and their past.

(As an aside, it could be noted that Ted White, who said he would withdraw if nominated, is now printing sometimes-good fiction in his two new fanzines, Amazing and Fantastic, as well as fanzine article reprints and fanzine reviews. He must have the heart of a fan, despite a crusty pro-like exterior visible on the prozines. But this is all 1969 talk, and isn't quite applicable.)

Two of the nominees, Banks Mebane and Richard Delap, directed most of their writing in 1968 towards criticisms of science fiction.

Banks wrote a regular magazine review column in the Washington Science Fiction Association Journal, the best (albeit almost the only, except for a few by Rick Norwood in Yandro early in the year) around. His method of attack was to take the highlights of each issue and discuss them briefly, and then note the other stories. His reviews had the virtue of being timely, thanks partly to the frequency and regularity of the Journal.

Late in 1968, Banks Mebane published in Andy Porter's Algol a particularly fine discussion of the writing of Roger Zelazny, a piece of work almost as good as the prose itself he was discussing.

Richard Delap is one of those burst-on-the-scene people, who was active as a writer for the first time in 1968, with book and film reviews and the occasional piece of fiction appearing in Granfalloon and Psychotic and any number of other fanzines; though he was usually associated with the newer fanzines, such as Frank Lunney's Beabohema, his skill as a writer enabled him to find his way into other, more well-known and popular fanzines.

He also, last year, won the NFFF short story contest.

Delap's reviews are seldom wishy-washy; they are usually barbed and sharp and to the point, full of intelligent discussion, argumentative opinion, and solid criticism and comment. And when he doesn't like a novel, he says so. Lord of Light, for instance, was on his Out list--whereas Banks Mebane loved it.

And that's the difference between the critics; both of them write well, but they have different opinions...so you're welcome to pick the critic who agrees with you.

Harry Warner Jr. is the ubiquitous fan. He writes to every new fanzine, as well as to the old ones, and his letters of comment are always worthwhile, always contribute to the discussion in the lettercol; in some fanzines, his is the only letter which contributes to the discussion.

As well as writing letters of comment, Harry Warner contributed columns to several fanzines; for Arnie Katz' Quip he revived All Our Yesterdays, his excellent discussions of fannish pasts; in Leland Sapiro's Riverside Quarterly he started Opere Citato, a fanzine-comment column. In addition, he publishes Horizons regularly for FAPA; I've never seen a copy, but everybody who comments on it praises it highly.

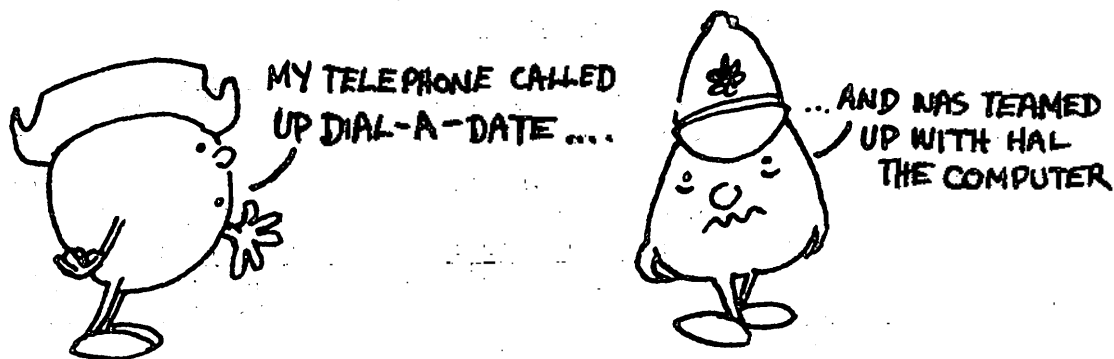
Harry Warner's fannish pedigree, like Bank Mebane's, is a long and a regal one; Richrd Delap's is far shorter, but also full of quality. And another long fannish pedigree is that of Walt Willis.

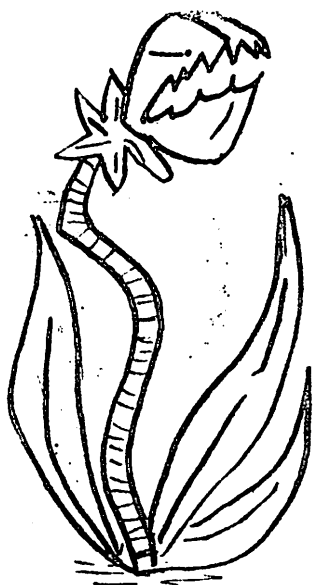
Walt Willis's writing began to appear again on a regular basis with the revival of Warhoon last year. His column, The Harp That Once or Twice, is fannish writing at its best. It does not comment to any great extent on science fiction; nor does it contain discussions of any aspects of the field. It is just good pleasant humorous witty anecdotal essay writing.

In the fanwriter category, then, there is a wide-range of writing styles. If you appreciate prozine commentary and the occasional critical article, you could take Banks Mebane; if lots of solid and short book reviews suit your taste, there's Richard Delap; if you like placid, non-controversial, but genuinely good whimsy-and-droll writing, try Walt Willis; and if fanzine commentary, ever present and always relevant (one is tempted to say omniscient) letters of comment, and fan history columns appeal to you, there's Harry Warner Jr.

I'd vote for the all-around man.

--Richard Labonte





best fanzine

PSYCHOTIC

ed., Dick Geis

RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY

ed., Leland Sapiro

SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES

ed., Ken Rudolph

TRUMPET

ed., Tom Reamy

WARHOON

ed., Richard Bergeron

it produces top-quality "faanish" material; humorous columns, reports on fan activities, articles on pot, and so on. In fact, it was worth getting last year just to see who Ted White was going to insult this issue.

Riverside Quarterly is on a more intellectual and pedantic level. Emphasis is entirely on science fiction, with literate, heavily researched, definitive (and, alas, somewhat dull) articles on the field. Where Psy featured professional authors being entertaining (that is, if you're entertained by arguments) Riverside Quarterly features pros and bibliophiles being informative.

Shangri L'Affaires is produced by the younger generations of fans. The emphasis is on fandom rather than science fiction, although there are stf articles present. I find it a rather pedantic faanishness, far more dull (because of less intrinsically interesting subjects) than RQ. But presumably I am out of step with the times, because others found it interesting and enjoyable enough to put on the ballot. A very wide variety of materials is featured.

Trumpet is the most professional-appearing of all fanzines. Quality of material varies more than in the other fanzines on the final ballot. Artwork is usually superb. Material on stf movies intrudes too much for my personal liking, because I am not a movie fan. The columnists seem to vary from mediocre to brilliant--not from one columnist to another, but from issue to issue. Partly this is in contrast to the brilliant packaging; material which would be acceptable in a sloppily mimeographed fanzine seems out of place in this impressively reproduced one. (Which is not fair, as the editor has pointed out, but is the way things are.)

Warhoon is the odd-ball of the finalists, as far as packaging is concerned. The usual dark, odd-coloured paper and the total lack of illustrations make it a hard fanzine to pick up and read. (The editor has said he is interested in readers who are capable of perusing a page of solid type, as they would in reading a book. Which is all very well if he produces the same amount of information or entertainment per page a good book does.) The material tends to be more psychological and philosophical than that in other finalist fanzines. Like Psy and RQ, it is usually written by experts, or at least people who know more about their subject than I do. (Anybody I can't catch in a mistake is an expert....)

Of course, no reviewer can give more than the bare idea of what a fanzine is like, no matter how much space he takes. Any reader interested enough in fanzines to vote on them should obtain at least two issues of the finalists and judge for himself. And if everyone does this, Richard can quit asking people like me to waste perfectly good time doing reviews for you. And if you want to know which fanzine I'd vote for; it might be Psychotic but will more likely be Warhoon.

--Robert Coulson

A brief and probably bitter look at the fanzine nominees:

Psychotic is the nearest thing to the all-round fanzine; the 'focal point' for all fandom to rally around, that we have in the running. It features a heavy emphasis on science fiction, with professional authors dropping their inhibitions in a manner second only to their performances in the SWFA bulletin, and with large numbers of book reviews. At the same time

best fan artist

GEORGE BARR

VAUGHN BODE

TIM KIRK

DOUG LOVENSTEIN

WILLIAM ROTSLER

Q: What's Amid the Speed-Balls and the Ball Points?

Here's hoping this issue contains other comments on the nominees, because I suspect mine are to be woefully inadequate. Part of the problem is that suffered by anyone who enjoys fan art: that elusive matter of 'I know what I like'. I like a great many styles of art, from representational to the opposite; but like many others I am often unable to point to two similar works by different artist and say precisely why I prefer one.

But enough people agreed on the following five fan artists to nominate them, and they certainly deserve a small analysis, inadequate or not. If I help to jog your memories about any one artist, I shall in small part have succeeded.

George Barr has been contributing generously of his time and talents to fansom for some years. A careful, meticulous draftsman, he rarely has difficulty selling his output at the Worldcon Fan Art Shows, and fan editors faunch for his illos (which George is occasionally cautious about dispensing; understandably, he wants to make sure the fanzines can do a good job of reproducing some of his delicate work before turning it over to the untender mercies of some editors). He has experimented with several styles, but the most familiar one to fanzine readers is his photographically detailed one, characterized by line shading with a ball point. George has an impressive amount of patience and a love for tiny detail. When he renders an alien costume or a furry whatsis, every tear drop jewel and sequin is visible, every hair is ruffable.

Vaughn Bode work I feel especially inadequate to assess because I've had no personal contact with it. The Bode work I have seen is distinguished by a style generally known as 'bold'. Detail lines are simple, strong, figures are outlined often in bold dark lines. Sometimes backgrounds are included, but just as often everything but central figures are eliminated. The general approach is cartoony, and I have yet to see anything by Bode I wouldn't put in that general pigeon-hole--and that is not a put-down. Some readers have criticised Bode's work with the complaint it is too violent. His devotees insist this is a shock approach to make violence itself so revolting the viewer will turn away from it, I shall not be drawn into Freudian arguments on this account, but just say I have not found his work either revolting or lesson-making. (To be honest I should state I am neither pro nor con Bode's work and style. I am indifferent to both, which may make me un- in fandom).

Tim Kirk is a relative new-comer to the ranks of fan artists. I have seen very little of Kirk's work, but presumably enough fans saw sufficient to place the name if nomination. All the material by Kirk I have seen has been in the Star Trek genre, and as such certainly adequate. The style is, in the ST bracket, semi photographic, but somewhat more sketchy than George Barr's. The drawings give me a feeling of movement, as though motion were frozen but not quick-stopped. Again the medium looks to be ball-point, but handled lightly instead of with the firmness Barr treats the same subject. The drawings seem to me to be in soft focus, to me at least.

Doug Lovenstein is a young artist first met at a Midwestcon. He is much too young, in fact, to be as talented as he is. Such things give poor oldsters inferiority complexes, and with good reason.

When he began working for fanzines, Doug's work had a faintly comic-book feel, though he was obviously reaching for and developing his own style. He liked a felt tip pen, and occasionally experimented with absorbent paper for different effects. His style is noticeably loosening, and has been for over a year. It now has a freedom that promises more and more experimental work.

Most of Doug's work is definitely 'young'--I'll not use the word 'mod' because I think he's beyond that. It is very vital and moves. Even more than Kirk's drawings, Lovenstein's illos create an impression of things going on, even when the subject is a static central figure.

William Rotsler is undoubtedly the granddaddy here, in terms of time spent in the fanzines. Bill's forte--as long as I can remember--is a little shmooish freeb with a big nose and occasionally a heart-shaped hole in his middle. Sometimes he points a fat and sharp finger at pertinent verbiage, sometimes he looks sly, and sometimes you must write your own captions. The Rotsler style--whether women or shmoo--is always simple and clean-cut. His work looks like it's been done with a good quality fountain pen. All of them have a quick silver look about them, as though they were sketched on a tablecloth in some exotic bistro on the Left Bank, just before the artist left to pursue a Gallic beauty to a movie studio. (And to trace any Rotsler illo onto a stencil is but the work of a moment.)

--Juanita Coulson

Tim Kirk...A feller I don't know but one whose style is uniquely his own while yet relating to the whole genre of fairy-tale and fantasy art. In my opinion the only one around, pro or fan, who can or should illustrate Tolkien (in the absence of Arthur Rackham). His line is light but inventive and his use of space has all the sureness of a seasoned professional.

George Barr...an excellent draughtsman whose 'tightness' tends to render some of his drawings a bit wooden. His fan work has more freedom than his pro work which he seems to 'freeze' up on. An excellent craftsman and decorator much reminiscent of Arthur Syzk, but in a sword and sorcery vein. I don't like at all those greased and shiny muscles as they remind me of an unsavory line of publications aimed at the limp wristed crowd; but that, perhaps, is a matter of taste.

Vaughn Bode...A hard one. I am repelled by his unceasing BASH and CRASH philosophy and gratuitous violence. His style, altered by the introduction various kinds of markers and drawing pens, is reminiscent (in its swing and gesture) of Don Martin if Don used markers. As is his bash and smash humour with the exception that I thought Don was funny. He's an inventive draughtsman and has a great sense of decoration. I think, too, he's a talent to be reckoned with, but I feel he does not yet know himself where that talent lies. He has a strong and vociferous following whom I am no doubt annoying.

Doug Lovenstein...A young and versatile draughtsman who has not yet seen where he is going and could care less as he just keeps GOING. He can pick up any three styles from any three guys and render them his own. He's been a tireless contributor to the fanzines and would be my choice for the fan Hugo were it not for ...

William Rotsler...(sorry, Doug, but read on) the visible man. An unmatched cartoonist whose cleanness of line and clarity of thinking (howbeit convoluted) should be the envy of any working cartoonist. He has long been a contributor to the fanzines, and his quality is always high, his wit observant and to the point. Not just on the strength of his years but on his wit and individuality (after all, what has a cartoonist to work with?) which are adult and fully developed and unflagging, he's got my vote without reservation. And there are some damned good people in the above list.

--Jack Gaughan

((--continued from the eighth page, the best novel, reviews of; having it here makes the whole magazine so much more unified, wouldn't you say? And it accomodates the extra page written by Susan Wood, who, like all scholars, does indeed probe into a subject--))

is totally irrelevant--nice to have around even if he didn't write the plays, but irrelevant.)

Still, Goblin Reservation is an imaginative and an entertaining book; it's a fun place to spend an evening.

Finally, there's Rite of Passage. It's a good, solid, thoughtful book. And Alexei Panshin is a true artist. He's created a world which has credibility, completeness, and depth. Not everyone will be able or able to enter it--but i at least, was and did.

Both the ship society and the people in it are described in rich and convincing detail; thanks to the leisurely pace of the story, you can get to know them well.



ALL THE PEOPLE
I KNOW WHO'VE
READ S.O.Z. COULD
STAND ON A COPY
OF "LOW-DOWN"

One flaw which should have invalidated the book for me--but didn't--was Mia's age.

She is credible as a female character, but not, really, as a fourteen-year-old--she seems too controlled, too aware, and too adult.

But she is supposed to be an exceptional child, in contrast to the 'ordinary' children, like Veenie, around her; she has spent most of her time with adults; and she is narrating her story with the benefit of five year's hindsight. At any rate, the rest of the book is so convincing I'm willing to reactivate Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief' to encompass her.

Panshin's skill as a writer, however, is most evident in the subtle way in which he not only shows Mia's mind developing and maturing, but makes the reader share the process.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the reader, like Mia, learns that the Ship society is not the satisfying, idyllic, perfect world it seems to be; rather, it is a narrow-minded, closed, and fallible one.

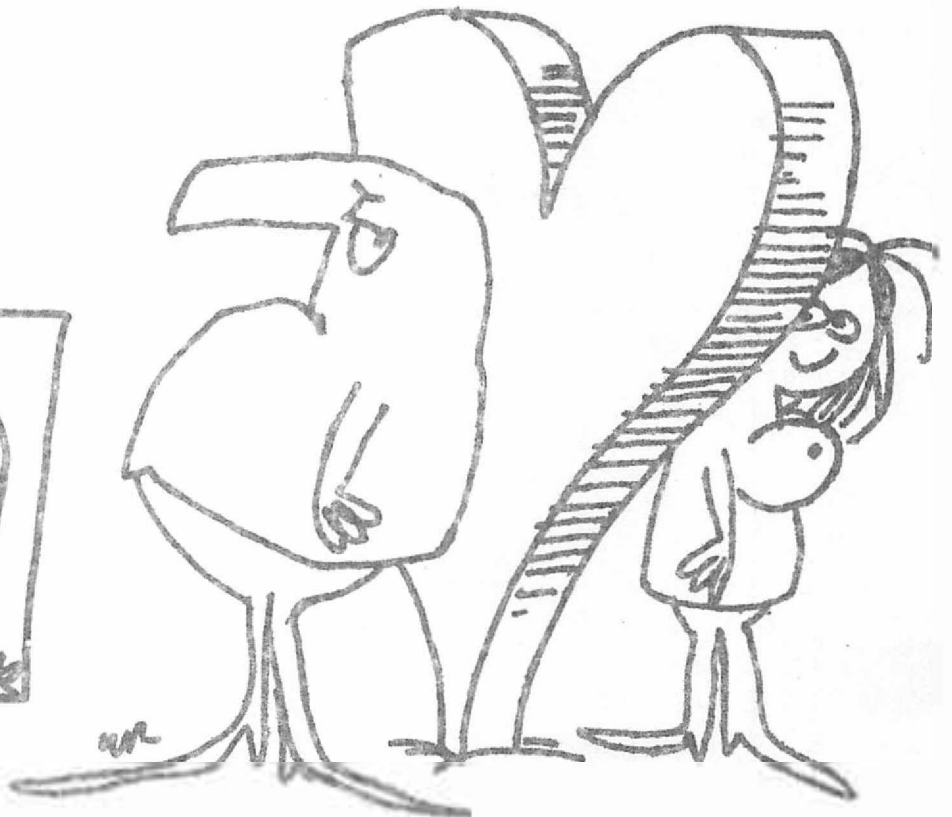
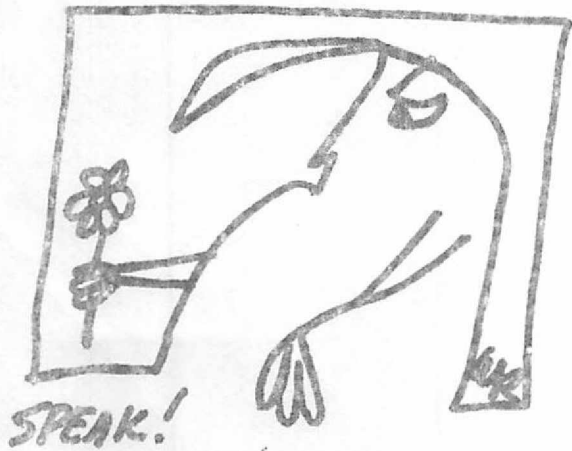
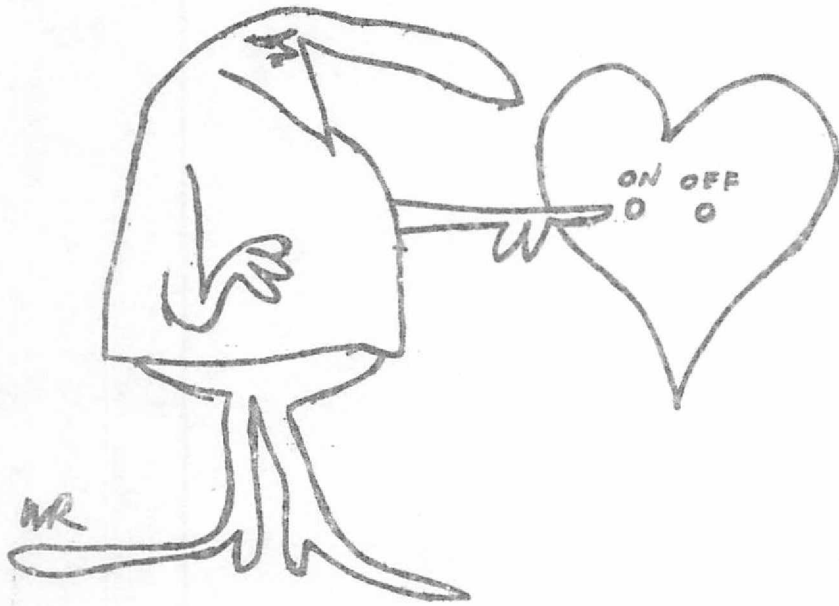
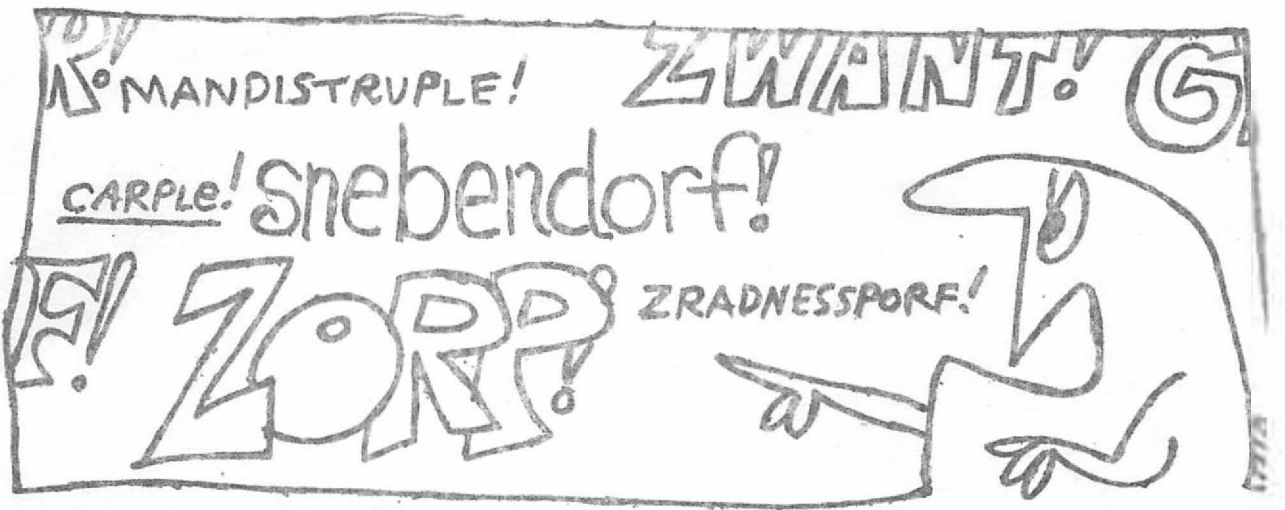
Both development processes culminate in the rite of passage itself. Mia learns from direct experience that 'mudeaters', planet-dwellers, are human too; the reader realizes just how silly and wasteful this symbolic testing is, since survival depends on luck as much as on skill, intelligence, and other 'adult' qualities it is supposed to reveal; and since this rite is a central fact of the Ship society, he learns to question that, too.

Rite of Passage has important things to say about the need for flexibility, compassion, and humanity in life, the need to learn that the world is bigger than you think. But Panshin doesn't preach; nor does he display a lot of flashy technical tricks. He just presents a fascinating tale in polished prose.

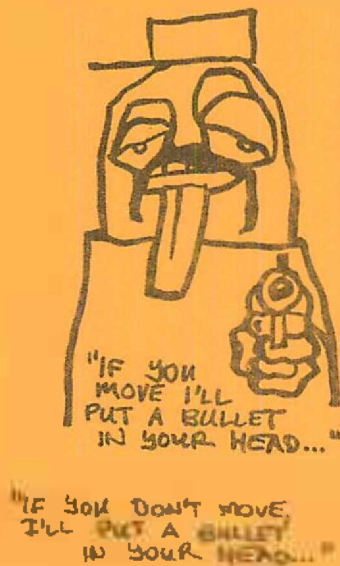
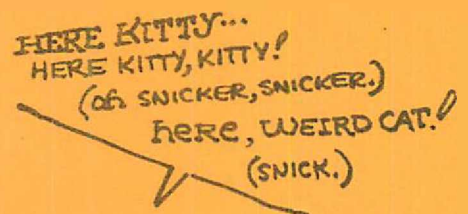
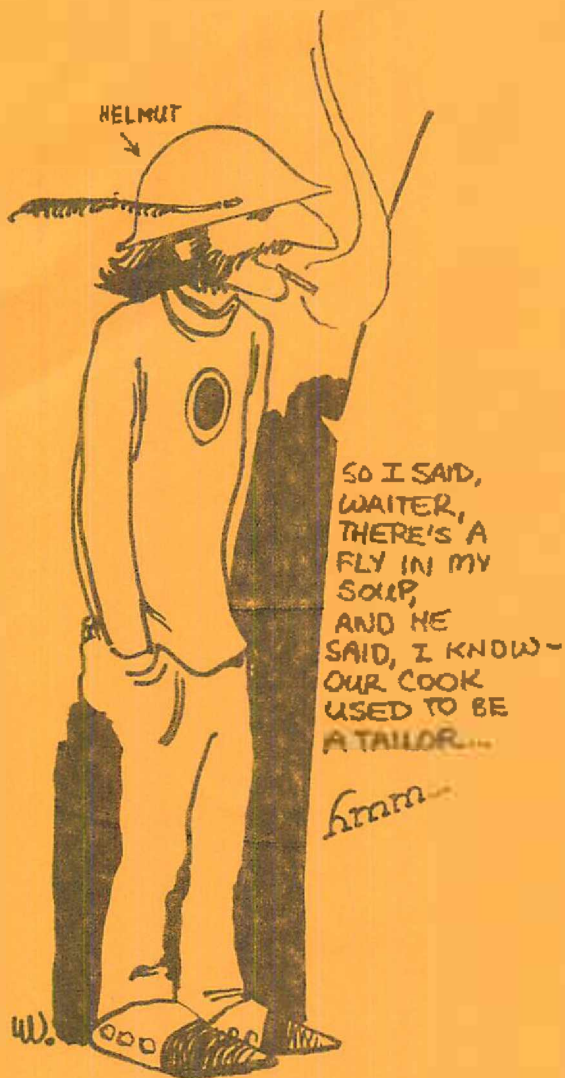
There, then, are the five novel nominees, as I see them. Now, go and read them, thoughtfully; I hope you'll disagree with me.

"May the sense of wonder never leave me!" prayed Rimrock in Past Master. May yours never leave you either.

--Susan Wood







a table of contents, of sorts:

Cover--logo by Murray Long, art by Connie Reich
Shooting off at the mouths--Richard Labonte, art by Terry Romine
Whither the Worldcon--by Mike Glicksohn, art by Connie Reich
Best novel--by Susan Wood, art by Susan Phillips and Mike Glicksohn
Best novella--by Richard Labonte, art by Susan Phillips
Best novelette--by Mike Glicksohn, art by Susan Phillips
Best short story--by Richard Labonte, art by Susan Phillips
Best dramatic presentation--by Don Hutchison, art by Derek Carter
Best professional magazine--by Richard Labonte and Rowan Shirkie
Best professional artist--by John Mansfield, art by Derek Carter
Best fan writer--by Richard Labonte, art by Derek Carter
Best fanzine--by Robert Coulson, art by Susan Phillips
Best fan artist--by Juanita Coulson and Jack Gaughan
Portfolios--by Doug Lovenstein, William Rotsler, Tim Kirk
Montreal ad--art by Alicia Austin

About the portfolios: I had written to each of the five fan artists asking for some samples of their work to use, or permission to re-print some of their work from other fanzies. As of today, Thursday, June 5, I had heard from the three artists whose work is included. If before the copies of LOW-DOWN are mailed out I receive art from either Vaughn Bode or George Barr, I'll include it as well. Tim Kirk art reprinted from Psyience Fiction Review 29 and Shangri L'Affaires 75 by permission of the artist; two of the Doug Lovenstein works, upper right and lower left, from Science Fiction Review; William Rotsler work all original.

The shortshort deadline also served to foul up Jerry Lapidus, who sent an excellent essay on the dramatic presentations after Don's equally excellent reviews had been typed up and run off. By way of atonement, I'd like to quote Jerry's title: "The Monolith Versus Satanists, Strange Prisoners, All the Blue Meanies in the World, and Even a Few Nuts, All Fighting Madly With Shovels, Rakes, and Implements of Destruction--or--Why 2001 Deserves the Hugo". You can see where his sentiments lie...

Thanks go to a lot of people who worked a lot of hours to turn out LOW-DOWN; the people who sent in contributions at a moments notice, Don Hutchison and the Coulsons and Jack Gaughan and John Mansfield, Tim Kirk, Bill Rotsler, and Doug Lovenstein and Derek Carter.

And to Joyce Fisher, who gave me the Hugo nominees over the phone when we were ready to start and had nothing to start on; to Ray Fisher, whose letter arrived the next week, very late; huzzah for Bell Tel.

To Crayden Arcand and Bob St. Germain and Bev and Vic Davies, Susan Phillips who typed as well as drew, and is responsible for the mis-spelled name on your address lable; Keith Wilson and Leland Sapiro from Montreal and Regina who each helped out for a day; to Maureen, who coughed bronchial germs all over the paper; to Frank Tait and Lee and Steve Grant.

LOW-DOWN II was assistant-edited by Mike 'Jeez, Labonte, can't you do anything right' Glicksohn, and Susan 'Go away, Labont, I'm writing' Wood, who seemed to think this whole thing was worthwhile.

Don't forget, after all this, to vote. That's the Raison D'Etre.

Montreal in 1974...watch the Expos lose their 568th game in a row...

--Richard Labonte



WE'RE THINKING OF MONTREAL IN '74...

HOW ABOUT YOU?

richard labonte
maureen bourns
rowan shirkie
alicia austin
carolyn clifford
susan wood
eric morse
crayden arcand
susan phillips
rosemary ullyott
fred barrett
bink acheson
frank tait
earl schultz
mike glicksohn
keith wilson
acusfoos
osfic
derek carter
peter gill
don huthchison
john mansfield
james juracic
sheila simpson