

MOEBIUS TRIP

14

AUSTRALIA IN '75



ERIC LINDSAY
JACK WODHAMS
GEORGE TURNER
JOHN J. ALDERSON
SHAYNE McCORMACK

PLUS

JOANNA RUSS

INTERVIEWED

PHILIP J. FARMER

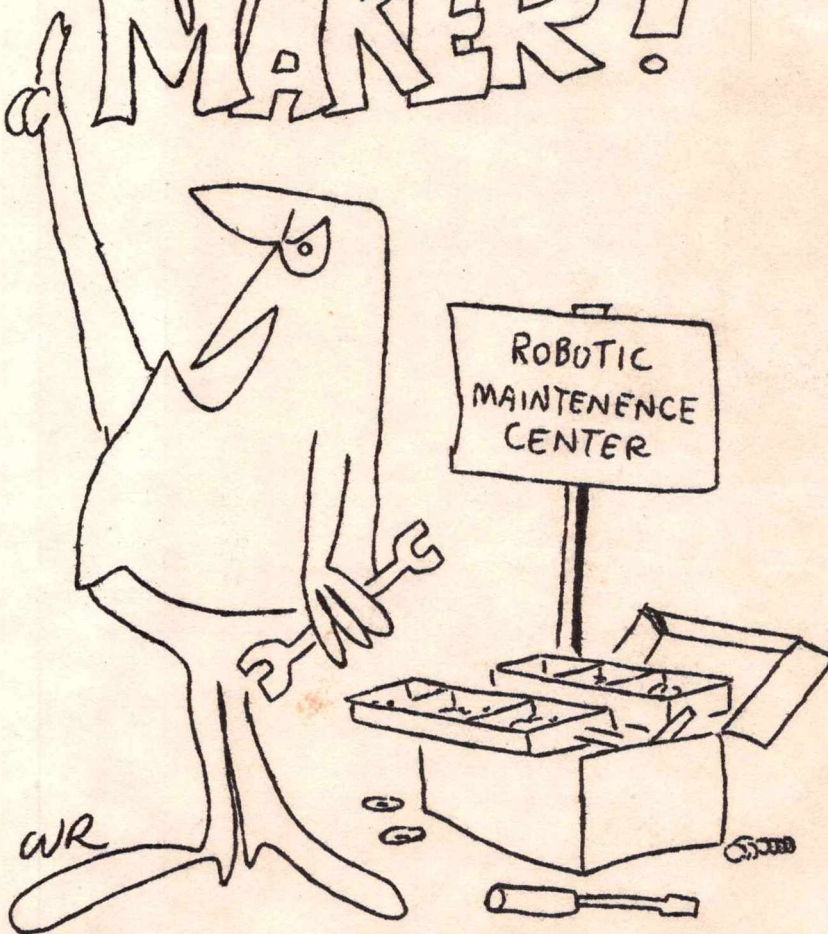
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THE
SF VIEW
FROM
LONDON

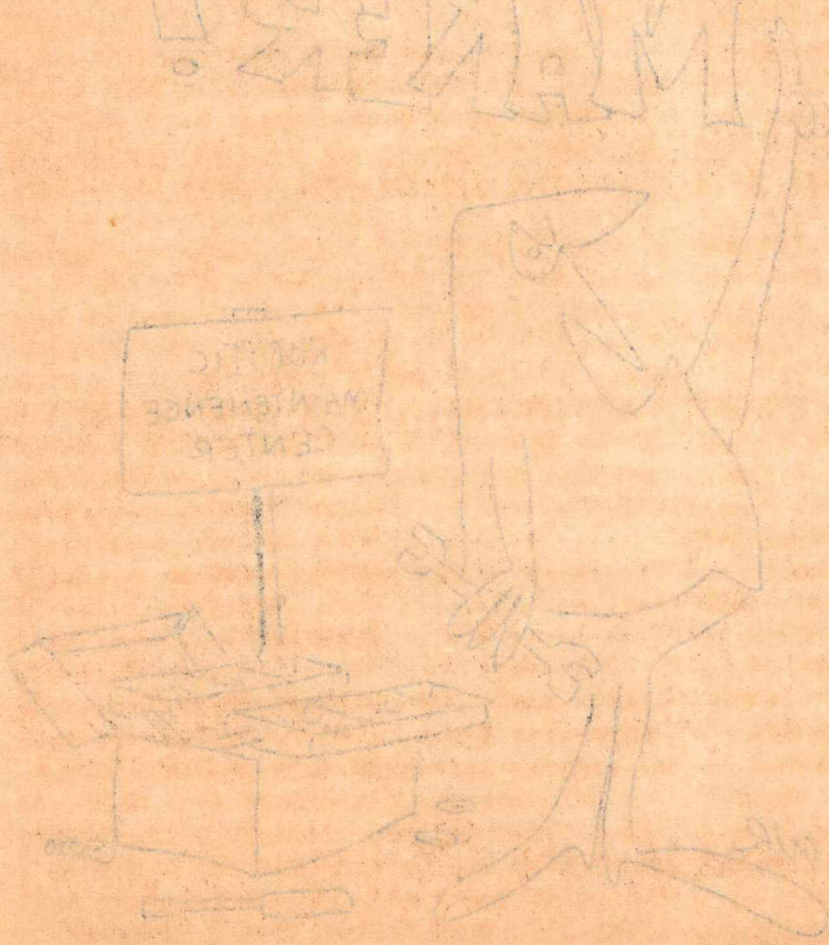
COVER BY

WILLIAM ROTSLER

PREPARE TO
MEET THY
MAKER!



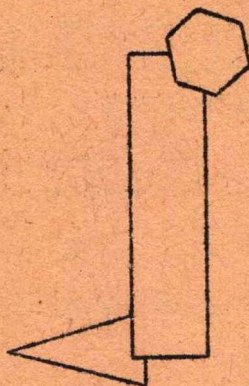
MAKER!
MIST TRY
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JULY
1972

QUESTIONS:

PAUL WALKER



ANSWERS:

JOANNA RUSS

Question 1: Are you a mystic?

RUSS:

Well, I am temperamentally a religious mystic, as I suspect many s.f. writers are. The "sense of wonder" and all that. Hard to explain -- mysticism cannot be expressed directly or analytically in words. It has no content that I can see, though the poet Blake is a good example.

I remember attending a summer school class in college on Blake and being told that nobody could understand Blake, that unfortunately those who did talked just like him and nobody understood them. I contested this point and tried to explain the poems -- which seemed very clear to me -- only to have the professor turn to the class after a bit and say, "You see?" It is hard to say whether this is "religious" or not. After all, Taoism gets by very well with a metaphysics but no God, and so does Buddhism in its pure state. Neither is a religion by Western standards, though both I think could be called religious. Blake took the Devil's side because it was the side of Energy; he did not believe in Old Nobodaddy and neither do I.

Question 2: What of "And Chaos Died"?

RUSS:

"And Chaos Died" is NOT about mysticism or religion. It is about perception, and is based on a genuine s.f. premise -- the idea of a people who can perceive everything (objective and subjective) at a distance and instantaneously -- although this violates Einsteinian relativity, but no matter! I employed as much as I could about Gestalt thinking, breaking cognitive "sets", and so forth, but there is not a single mystical experience in it.

Among other things, "Chaos" was an experiment in kinesthetic sensations, synesthesia, trying to express metaphorically the interval sensations we have and can't name -- balance, pressure, health, ill-health, pain, pleasure, satiety, etc. Somebody says somewhere that we have 22 senses, not five, but that most of the 22 are internal. For example, "touch" is physiologically (1) pressure (2) pain (3) temperature (skin temperature as opposed to internal bodily temperature) (4) pleasure, and so on.

I ought to say, too, that "And Chaos Died" has nothing to do with drug experiences because at the time I hadn't had any. I have since smoked hashish (once) and pot (about three times) but as I'm not a cigarette smoker, my eyes and tonsils get so irritated that I've given up the stuff. I never got past the stage of euphoric giggling and a somewhat altered perception of music which I found novel but not particularly interesting afterwards.

If I were ever to take drugs, I think I would much prefer stimulants. I very much like being stimulated (by coffee, which makes me sick, or by conversation, which makes me sleepless) but having been a self-trained student of perceptions for a long time, altered perception doesn't attract me. (As Harlan Ellison once said, when you're naturally up all the time, you don't want anything upper.)

I mention all this because students at Cornell, where I am an Assistant Professor in the writing program, assume that I am some sort of psychedelic adventurer. Alas (or Thank Heavens) no.

Question 3: You've been an Assistant Professor at Cornell for two years, and before that an Instructor, and before that you

graduated from Cornell with a B.A. in 1957, then received an M.F.A. from the Yale Drama School in Playwriting in 1960. Before that -- what?

RUSS:

My mother is an elementary school teacher (ret.) and my father a high school shop teacher (also ret.). Jewish on both sides, although I had perhaps the most secular bringing-up possible; all I remember about "God" was early asking my mother what "God" was and being told that some people believed there was a God who made the world, but she and my father didn't. Period. Consequently, meeting people with religious backgrounds really fascinates me now; it's as alien to me as, say, the beliefs of the Trobriand Islanders.

My mother's family were atheists and Socialists who fled Czarist Russia about 1905, something I found out when I was in my teens and thought very romantic -- Grandma hiding Socialist radicals in her sheitel store (sheitels were the wigs Orthodox Jewish women wore when they got married and cut their hair). All this was really quite distant, tho'.

My mother and father are great readers and the house was full of books. I read everything; one of these little kids who even reads soup cans and cereal boxes when there's nothing else. When I was eleven or so, I came across something called "The New World of Physics" -- all about relativity -- and was immediately fascinated. Of course, elementary school had included trips to the Museum of Natural History -- I adored the dinosaurs, thrilled to astronomy, wept at evolution -- no kidding! the sense of wonder with a vengeance.

My father loved making things (book-cases, china closets, chests, ceramics). I learned the joy of work from him. And from my mother, if one can learn such things, the joy of literature. She used to read poetry to me when I was a baby. We played a childhood game in which we'd take the "Oxford Book of English Verse", pick a first line at random, and ask Mother to name and recite the poem. She was very much a writer manque, so when I began to write at five, I was much encouraged.

Question 4: Why did you begin to read s.f.?

RUSS:

I started reading s.f. because my mother brought home huge Groff Conklin anthologies to put her to sleep. I stole them. I read horror stories, too. All this from about twelve on. I had no real idea that these things were written by actual people or that they could be found in magazines; they were just part of the public library. S.f. and fantasy seemed to me a revelation, a tremendous widening of horizons. I had no idea such astonishing things might be going on in the world (or out of it). It was the blend of possibility and high fancy that was so wonderful -- I would look at the stars and thrill at the idea that there might be life on other planets.

Of course, most of those stories are transfigured by memory; I try to avoid reading them again because usually they are disappointing. But they were magic.

Question 5: When did you begin to write it?

RUSS:

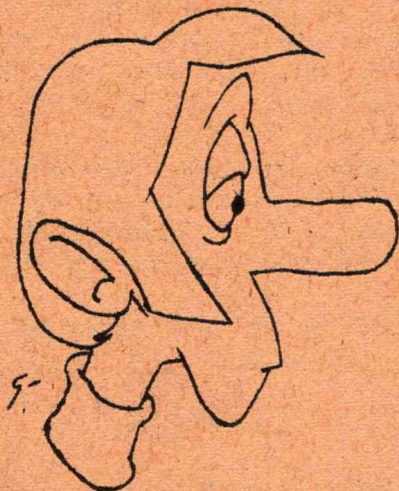
Not until my last year in graduate school. Having wrestled with play-writing for three years and lost, I began to write fiction again, and it was s.f. I think I must have felt (1) that I knew nothing of "real life" as it was manifest in the fiction of the day (2) that what was supposed to be good current fiction, like Saul Bellow, bored me stiff and (3) I had always loved s.f., so why not write it? And there was that awe at, and love of, astronomy, evolution, physics which had to come out sometime -- did you know I was one of the ten top finalists in the Westinghouse Science Talent Search in 1953?

I do feel now that we are in what some critics have called a "post realistic" period. That is, good "mainstream" fiction is becoming unrealistic, surrealistic, fantasticated, etc., viz. Nabokov, Zarth, Barthelme, et al. So perhaps s.f. was just ahead of the game all along.

Then, too, when I was in college, I was much encouraged as a writer by my teachers. Nonetheless, when male sophomores brought in material about rapes, fist-fights in bars, brutality, sperm, etc., the class (mostly male) would receive such writing with respect, even reverence because it was "deep", "raw", and "real." When I wrote about a high

school dance, this was considered "unimportant", "trivial", and so on. Not the writing, you understand, the material itself! There was a profound bias there as to what was the proper material for "great" writing. I got the message -- I didn't know about "real life" (after all, I had never raped anybody or been in a fist fight in a bar), which may have been one of the reasons I turned to science fiction. If I wrote about Mars, well, no-body knew anything about Mars (except indirectly).

Of course the male sophomores in that



class knew no more about life than I did -- in fact, a lot of the Hemingwayesque or Mailleresque writing was sheer fantasizing, but I didn't know that at the time.

Question 6: What was your first published work?

RUSS:

Two poems in Epoch when I was still an undergraduate in 1956. This was a bit premature -- my second published work was a science fiction story in F&SF in 1959, "Nor Custom Sale."

My first novel, Picnic on Paradise, grew out of a series of stories, most of which appeared in Orbit. "The Second Inquisition" is really an afterpiece to "Picnic" and the stories.

Question 7: How many drafts of a novel or story do you do?

RUSS:

I revise as I go along; every paragraph must be just right or I can't build on it further -- so there's no formal revision but many places have in fact been

rewritten 10-12 times.

Question 8: In a very short time you have established the reputation of being a very formidable critic. What is criticism? What good is it?

RUSS:

I think you are really referring to reviewing, which is of interest to a much larger public than criticism, which is really a specialized business. Ideally, criticism should teach one to write or to read better, or how to read or write at all. Ideally, reviewing should be (1) clear (2) fairly rational (3) amusing. Ideally a reviewer should make her/his prejudices and preferences so clear that a reader can tell from the review (1) what kind of thing the X under consideration is: is it frivolous, grave, tragic, etc. and (2) would the reader like it? Ideally, reviewers should not reflect the public taste, but try to explain, describe, perhaps entertain, perhaps educate. Damon Knight's and James Blish's collected reviews are good models; George Bernard Shaw's are even better.

Whatever value criticism/reviewing is to any kind of literature, it is of exactly the same value, no more and no less, to s.f.

Question 9: Ideally -- how is it accomplished?

RUSS:

Critics work mainly by reacting to books, then trying to think why they reacted that way and not another way. But the reaction comes first. One of the reasons serious critics are so aggressively cross is that they have to go through such a vast amount of crap, but they cannot race through it or throw it away as a mere reader can do. They must give it a chance. They must read it carefully. There is no torture like the frustration of plowing through a bad book or sitting through a bad movie or play -- it's worse than boredom, it's excruciating -- and if you love the medium and want it to be good, the torture is ten times worse. So crankiness is a mark of the trade.

Readers ought to know that a persistent trait of all reviewing is to either over- or under-estimate things. One is

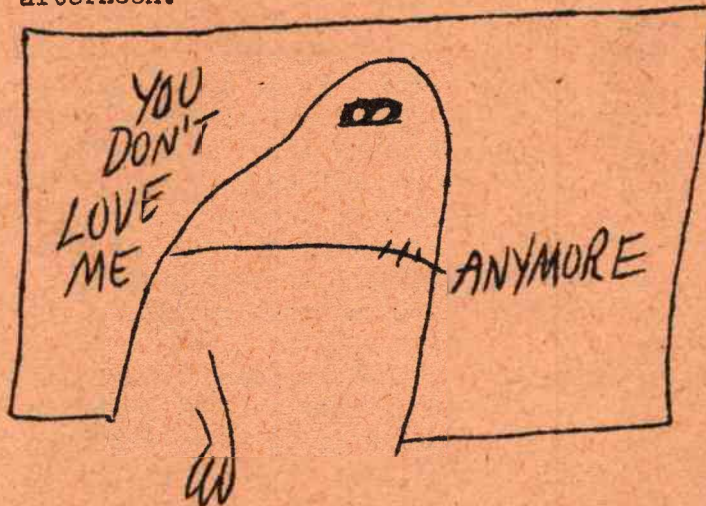
so grateful for the occasional work that gives at least some pleasure that one sobs with gratitude and praises it too much. This is unavoidable.

Critics should have very long vacations. It's the reacting part of you that goes first; then the confidence in your own judgement; and finally the printed word becomes loathesome in itself. (I say this from my experiences with student writing at Cornell.) However, the experience, background, and erudition remain long after one's emotional/judging reactive equipment has turned to mush.

Question 10: How do you review a book?

RUSS:

First, I read it. This is essential. Usually, I read it twice, making notes the first or second time. Ed Ferman generally sends me a bundle of five-six books to review en masse, so that I read them all, making twenty times as many notes as I'll need; then mull for a while until the whole review seems more or less set for all of them (i.e. if there is a pattern to them as a group or something I wish to stress). I write it then in one exhausting Sunday afternoon.



Question 11: Should a critic consider the writer's feelings?

RUSS:

Eric Bentley once said that the critic's job is to walk on live bodies and make them bleed. I figure I get my lumps as a reviewee so I don't feel guilty about being a reviewer. Only a passion for fiction and perfection in fiction can forgive the necessary cruelties of reviewing and only such passion can make reviews worth reading.

I repeat: most of a critic's job is reviewing the great, gray 99% of everything which is mediocre, so that one ends up distinguishing between mediocrities. The very good or the very bad is relatively rare. So all reviewers tend to overpraise or underpraise simply to bring out the highlights in their own reactions. The underpraising is usually accurate, the overpraising isn't.

I don't think a writer's feelings should be, or can be, considered by a reviewer — one should not publish without first developing a hippo hide — and unless the book is freakishly bad or seems to have been cut by someone other than the author I try not to think of the author at all. A book sent to a magazine for review is entering a public arena and unless a reviewer slanders the author's personal character or is guilty of errors in fact (such as attributing a title to somebody who didn't write it) authors ought not to answer reviewers.

While I am writing reviews I feel neither God, Goddess, nor human-kind — the job's too demanding for that — but afterwards I hope that what I write will be taken impersonally and understood to be the fallible judgement of a mortal.

Authors who are hurt by unfavorable reviews are behaving like human beings and that is O.K. but authors who resent them are foolish. The best thing is to curse and scream to oneself and then NOT WRITE THAT LETTER.

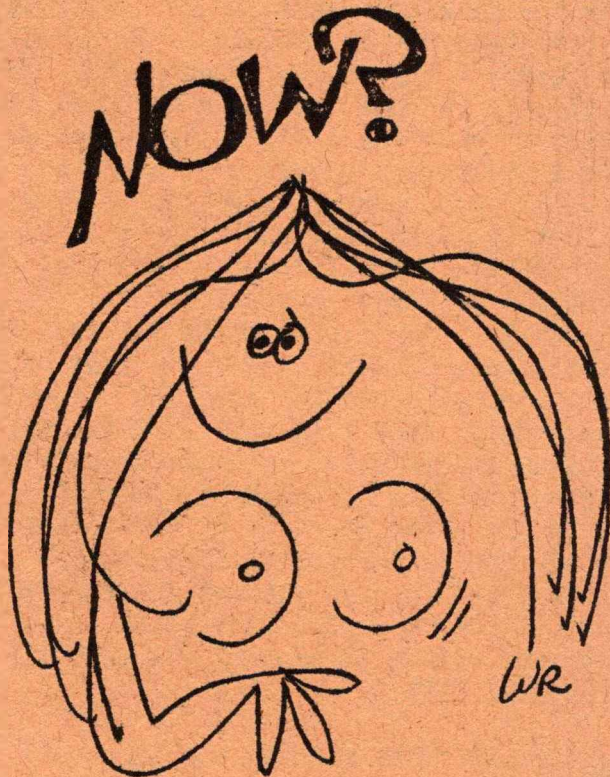
Question 12: What are the special problems for a "woman writer" in s.f.?

RUSS:

The difficulties that confront women writing s.f. are the same as those that confront women who write anything, though there may be a special difficulty in our conventional notion that science is an especially masculine activity. I can't separate the experience and difficulties of being a woman from those of being a woman writer — in s.f. or otherwise.

Our culture is male, which does not mean that most men have created it nor does it mean that all men profit from it more than all women do (though I think as a group men do) — what it means is that the point of view from which our culture is thought of, the values it embodies, the definition of "human" it takes for

granted are all male. A woman trying to find models of behavior in Western literature should come to the conclusion that all she can do is dress up, attract men, get married, take care of her children and -- if she wants real adventure -- commit adultery. (I will not even refer to the grosser forms of bias: that women are supposed to be unintelligent, passive, etc.) Our stereotypes and myths were made by men for men: men's standards for each other are made by men; the standards for women are likewise made by men. It is a very lopsided situation.



Naturally this has consequences for women writers. "All the great artists are men," which isn't true, but was certainly the official version I got in college. "All the great subjects" (violence, brutality, power, etc.; things most women do not experience at first-hand) are masculine. And this is getting more so, not less. A woman who is an artist or a professional worker or intellectual has to somehow split herself down the middle and be two people because what she is as a thinker is supposed to take away from what she is as a sexual being: men's success enhance their masculinity; women's success detracts from their femininity. Consequently, I have been told that I write like a man and that I have a man's mind, as if I somehow had to undergo a process of binary fission in order to be intelligent or to write: women, as we all know, cannot be self-assertive, strong, am-

bitious, etc.; obviously women qua women cannot write.

The strain of trying to be two people at once is not good either for one's work or one's personal life. For years I tried to tell myself I was "different" from other women, I had a man's mind, I wasn't really a woman like those stupid, passive nits out there who didn't do anything. It doesn't work, of course. Professionally, women writers must either restrict themselves to love stories or work with a male protagonist whereupon most of their own personal experience becomes irrelevant to what they are writing, and fully-rounded characters cannot come from observation only.

This is not true in science fiction. The myths of science fiction (the plots, the basic stories) are without gender. They can happen to either sex. The problems-conflicts-plots of science fiction are about the adventures of the human mind or spirit, so it is perfectly possible to imagine a world with seven sexes or perfect equality, though I do not think we do this very well as writers are only human, and most s.f. writers subscribe to the good old cliches; but still, s.f. is committed to exploring new worlds, not only physically but conceptually; finding out what the rules of a society are; making machines; assessing social and ecological consequences. It is its science-fictional-ness that keeps it free from gender stereotypes, just as detective stories are often written by women (primarily as intellectual puzzles), but detective stories, as horror stories, in my opinion, are pretty much dead genres, whereas s.f. is open-ended per se.

Question 13: Granted, a woman writer may have a few special problems in a male-oriented culture, but aren't you exaggerating the problem of gender in fiction writing?

RUSS:

Consider:

Two strong women fight for supremacy in the early West: This town isn't big enough for both of us, Beth.
Alexandra the Great!
A young woman in Minnesota finds her womanhood by

killing a bear.

A girl from the provinces goes to the big city to find success. She builds a business empire and ends up keeping a harem of Playboys and giving vast parties every night.

Or consider:

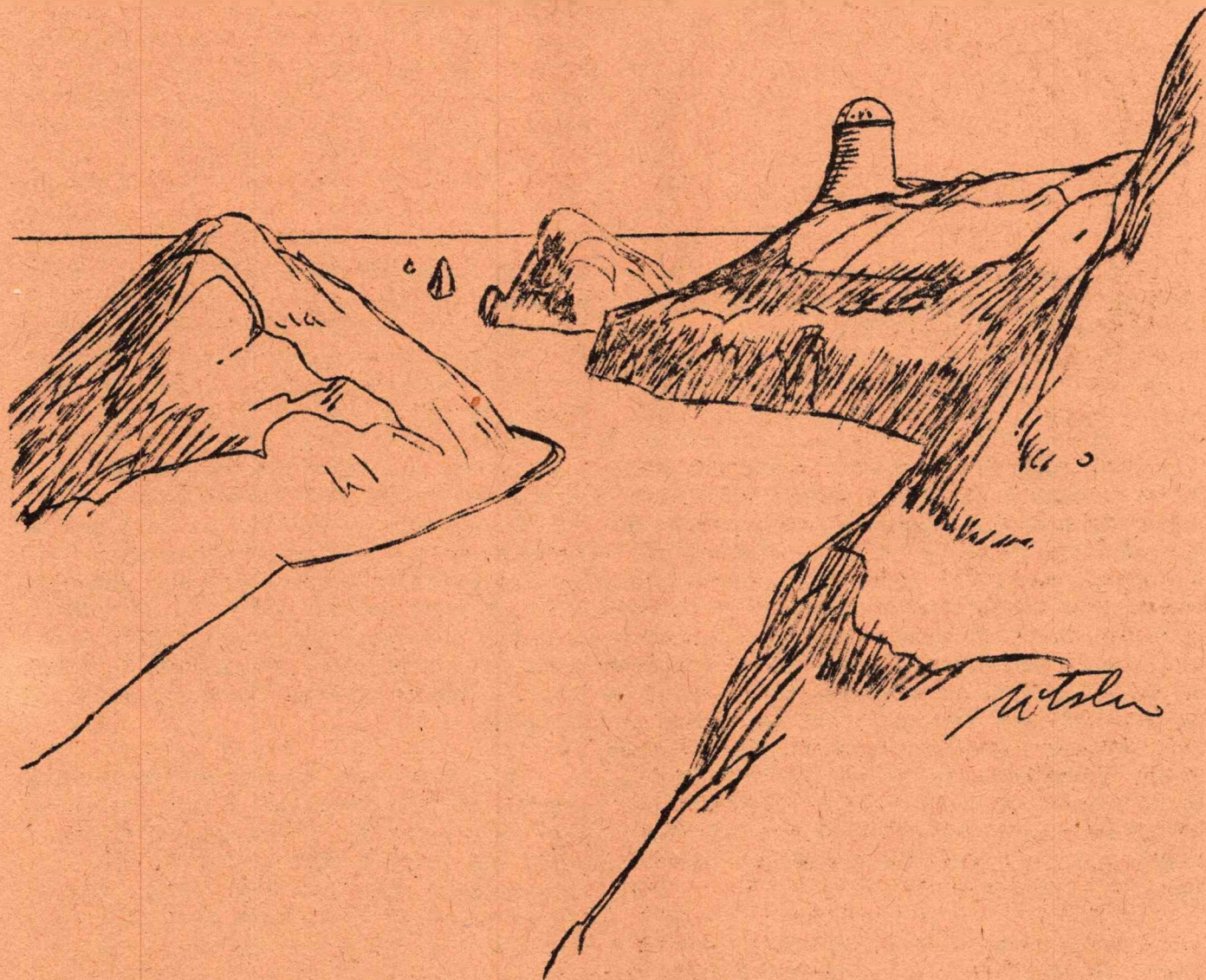
A handsome young man, quite virginal, is seduced by an older woman who has made a pact with the Devil to regain her lost youth. When the woman becomes pregnant and proudly announces that the young man is the father of the baby, he becomes so ashamed that he goes mad,

steals into the house where the baby is kept, kills the baby, and dies in prison, from which he is borne up to Heaven by flights of angels.

That's Faust and Marguerite, of course.

My point is that a special problem for a woman writer is that most of the archetypal, floating-in-the-air plots, upon which many male professionals base their entire careers, cannot exist with a female protagonist.

——Joanna Russ/Paul Walker.



THANKS FOR THE FEAST

NOTES ON PHILIP JOSÉ FARMER

BY

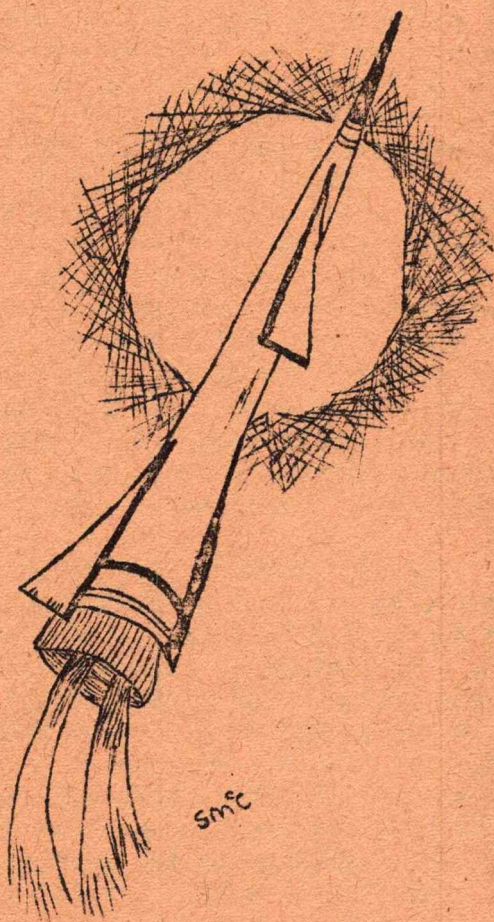
LESLIE A. FIEDLER

Philip José Farmer seems now to have reached the point of public recognition, and I for one am feeling a little dismayed. I don't suppose that publication in Esquire alone is enough to make an unfashionable writer a chic one, but it is a real, perhaps irrevocable, step in that direction. I liked it much better when a taste for Farmer's fiction could still seem a private, slightly shameful pleasure, or a perverse affectation on the part of a scholar, an eccentric vice. In those days, he belonged chiefly to readers who did not even suspect that the novel is dead -- to an audience which took him off the racks in drug stores or super markets or airports to allay boredom -- and with no sense certainly that they were approaching "literature." Beyond them, there were, of course, a few others, some themselves more highly touted writers of Science Fiction, who knew that he was something very special; but they wanted to keep it a secret.

To be sure, Farmer had won a Hugo Award or two, one for his earliest work and

another a decade and a half later. But he was never the object of cult adoration, like Robert Heinlein, for instance, after the appearance of A Stranger in a Strange Land; nor was he regarded, like Kurt Vonnegut, by his group of the faithful, as a hidden "great writer." To tell the truth, Farmer does not behave much like an aspirant to "mainstream" greatness. With all the modesty of a hack, he inclines to throw even his best conceptions away -- writing hastily, sometimes downright sloppily; so that we are likely to be left with the disconcerting sense that his work, especially when it aspires to novel length, runs out rather than properly finishes.

None the less, he has an imagination capable of being kindled by the irredeemable mystery of the universe and of the soul, and in turn able to kindle the imagination of others -- readers who for a couple of generations have been turning to Science Fiction to keep wonder and ecstasy alive in times apparently uncon-



(A somewhat emasculated version of this article appeared in the Los Angeles Times "Book Review" of April 23, '72, under the heading "Getting Into the Task of Now Pornography." See Philip José Farmer's letter in this issue. Suggested further reading is Mr Farmer's newest book, "TARZAN ALIVE" - Doubleday: \$5.95 --Ed.)

genial to those deep psychic experiences. That wonder and ecstasy, wherever it is found in Science Fiction, is ultimately rooted in our sexuality; and the best writers of the genre during its period of flowering after World War II, appear to have realized instinctively that to succeed in their enterprise they had somehow to eroticize machines, gadgets and the scientific enterprise itself — or at least to exploit the pre-existent erotic implications of the paraphernalia of a technological age.

Philip Farmer was, however, during the 50's, the only major writer of Science Fiction to deal explicitly with sex. He constituted, therefore, a singular exception, an eccentric case — in a genre whose leading authors created protagonists themselves apparently desexed, though they and their adventures implicitly symbolized or projected sexuality; since they constitute, as it were, the communal dreams of a technological, urban civilization. And that civilization knows in its sleep, what it denies waking, that at this point, it must eroti-

cize the Industrial Revolution or perish; just as it thinks it knows waking, what it denies in its sleep, that sex must be reimagined as machine technology or rejected out of hand. The latter is the task of modern pornography, even as the former is that of Science Fiction.

It was inevitable, therefore, from the start that Farmer would, at the climax of his career, produce two works at once fantasy and bald, explicit pornography — "hardcore pornography," as the cant phrase has it: The Image of the Beast and A Feast Unknown. Both books were published by the same sub-respectable firm and distributed through channels ordinarily unsympathetic to any work not aimed exclusively and directly at simple-minded titillation, "jerk-off literature," in short. Never mind that A Feast Unknown begins with a quotation from May Swenson's poetry and ends with an apologetic Afterword by Theodore Sturgeon, in which he insists that this piece of sado-masochistic porn, whose hero can only have an orgasm over the bleeding

body of his victims, represents somehow "the very core of the healthy truth expressed in the slogan, 'Make love, not war.'"

A Feast Unknown is hilarious parody of the pop literature of superheroic adventure; but its essential characteristic is a shamelessness beyond all possible apology. To speak of the imagination which informs it and its predecessor (in whose key scene an extra-terrestrial girl with sharp iron dentures goes down on an unwary cop) as "healthy" is an inadvertent error or a deliberate lie. They are about as healthy as the works of the "divine" Marquis de Sade himself; which is to say, they may function therapeutically, but only by releasing in us, or exploding out of us fantasies in themselves sick. And they have, in fact, helped pave the way for a new brand of Science Fiction, which deals frankly with human passion, "sick" and "healthy"; providing us with real phalluses and wombs, against which we can measure their symbolic projections in space ships and underground cities on unknown planets. The paperback periodical, Quark, for instance, in which Farmer himself has been published, has also printed the work of younger writers, his debtors and descendants — in the form of candidly-worked-out genital fantasies, often by recently liberated women, eager to excel him in the candor of their language and the brutality of their images. But Farmer was there first.

I remember reading many years ago my first Farmer story, which was called "Mother," and being astonished and gratified (a little condescendingly, perhaps) to discover certain Freudian insights into the nature of family relationships, ingeniously worked out and made flesh, as it were, in the world of intergalactic travel and an endlessly receding future. My surprise and delight were not only cued by the prejudice which then possessed me utterly — my conviction that pop fiction was necessarily immune to the insights of depth psychology; but arose also because the mythology of Freud was based on the belief that the neuroses were rooted in the past, and that, therefore, the revelation of sexual secrets depended on retrospection. It needed a writer like Farmer, committed to the anticipation of the future, to turn psychoanalysis in the direction of prophecy. The

concerns first explored in "Mother" and the other tales later collected in a volume called Strange Relations have continued to obsess him, reaching their culmination in his Hugo Award winning story, "Riders of the Purple Wage." In that tale — whose title puns on Zane Grey, of course (as he is always punning on names out of earlier literature, popular or elitist), and whose not-so-secret motto is "the family that blows is the family that grows" — he has taken advantage of the greater linguistic freedom of the past decade. And he has thus been able to render even more explicitly the vision of a cloying and destructive relationship between Mothers and Sons, with which he began nearly twenty years ago.

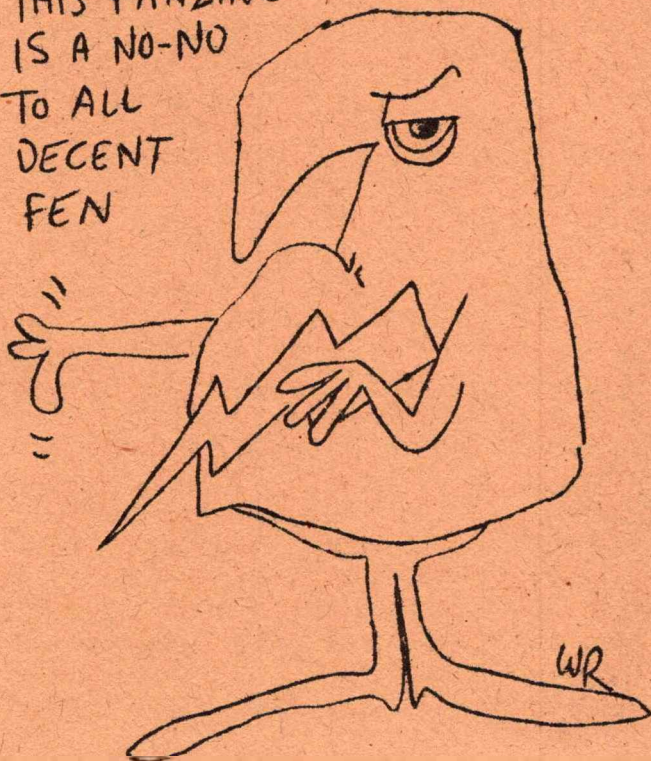
One of Farmer's major obsessive themes, as a matter of fact, is precisely the theme of Mother as a threat to freedom, a temptation to regression, a womb turned prison. And closely connected to it is the second of his major themes, the discovery of new religions in a new world; for those religions always turn out to be matriarchal and are presented as an overwhelming challenge to the patriarchal faith of Christianity. Yet it is a Roman Catholic padre, more son than father though he is called Father John Carmody, who in various short stories and the extraordinary novel, Night of Light, somehow comes to terms with those alien mythologies and rituals; or even manages to defend them and his own machismo simultaneously with gun and fist.

In any case, the Cults of the Great Goddess have always obsessed Farmer; and, indeed, there seems something deep within him that yearns for a time, real or imagined, in which the male was not a Hero but a Servant of that great principle of fertility, as in the bawdiest of his sub-pornographic novels, Flesh. Yet Farmer's third obsessive theme comes into direct (and perhaps irreconcilable) conflict with this fearful nostalgia for the matriarchal security each of us has known in infancy. And this is the myth of The Hero With a Thousand Faces, the lonely phallic über-mensch triumphing by his ability not to create but to kill. Farmer's favorite name for the extravagantly male super-Hero is "Tarzan"; a killer presumably suckled by a she-ape rather than a mere

female woman; but really created out of his own head by a god or devil called Edgar Rice Burroughs, and endlessly recreated by a subsidiary deity or demon called Philip José Farmer.

In five major books at least, he has returned to that key figure — who also flickers in and out of his other fictions, sometimes quite irrelevantly: in Lord Tyger, A Feast Unknown, Lord of the Trees, The Mad Goblin, and most recently in Tarzan Alive. The first of these deals with a boy brought up in the jungle by a mad scientist (a caricature of Farmer himself?) eager to save Burroughs' honor by proving that a Savage Noble can indeed survive under the conditions described by Tarzan's original biographer. The second is a sado-pornographic account of a struggle to the death between "Lord Grandrith" (the true Tarzan) and "Doc Caliban" (the true Doc Savage): a struggle which reaches an initial climax when the two super-heroes duel with erect phalluses on a knife-edge of stone bridging a chasm, and ends with both of them deballed. The third and forth, issued as a double paperback — this time without the warning, "ADULTS ONLY" — represent, in Farmer's own words, "something unique...the only spinoff of 'clean books' from a 'dirty' book."

THIS FANZINE
IS A NO-NO
TO ALL
DECENT
FEN



In all of them, however, "clean" or "dirty," Farmer insists not only on Tarzan's virtual immortality, but — even more strongly — on his extraordinary sexual endowment: his superiority in this respect to his primate pals and his Black neighbors (though he argues heatedly that Tarzan is no "racist") — as well as, one presumes, to his author and his readers. The same themes obsess him still in the fifth, to be published April 28 — but already excerpted in Esquire. It is in all respects the culmination of the others: a delightfully monomaniac attempt to "'prove' through the use of quasischolarly tools..." that Tarzan is a) "a close relative of such modern heroes as Professor Challenger, Holmes and Wolfe, Lord John Roxton, Denis Nayland Smith, Bulldog Drummond, Lord Peter Wimsey, Raffles, Leopold Bloom, and Richard Wentworth (who is not only the Spider but was once G-8 and is at the same time the Shadow)..." and b) "that Tarzan is the last of the Heroes of the Golden Age, Nature's final expression..."

But Tarzan, for all his encyclopedic comprehensiveness, represents only a small part of Farmer's larger attempt (at once absurd and beautiful, foredoomed to failure but, once conceived, already a success) to subsume in his own works all of the books in the world that have touched or moved him. For him, the traditions of Science Fiction provide a warrant for constructing Universes of his Own: worlds whose place names turn out inevitably to demand as many footnotes as T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land — Dante's Joy, Baudelaire, Ozagen (Oz again!); and which are inhabited not only by new species but old friends, fictional or real — Hiawatha, Alice in Wonderland, Sir Richard Burton, Ishmael (Melville's), and Herman Goering.

Particularly in his "pocket universes" series and in his more recent Riverworld Books, To Your Scattered Bodies Go and The Fabulous Riverboat, all that seemed to have died here on earth (everywhere at least except in the head of one voracious reader) is resurrected — or at least reconstructed in quasi-immortal form by omniscient computers in Worlds Out There. Obviously, it is the deepest level of childhood response which Farmer has reached in this pair of novels, in

the first of which Sir Richard Burton pursues amorously Lewis Carroll's chastely loved Alice Lidell; while in the second, Mark Twain searches with equal passion for his lost wife, Livy, and for iron ore deposits rich enough to make possible the building of a paddlewheel steamer. The primary images seem erotic, even genital; but in the Riverworld there turns out to be more detailed description of eating than of sex. And, indeed, the most important gadget in its extraterrestrial technology is the "Grail," a kind of portable short-order kitchen provided by the invisible masters of a warmed-over universe.

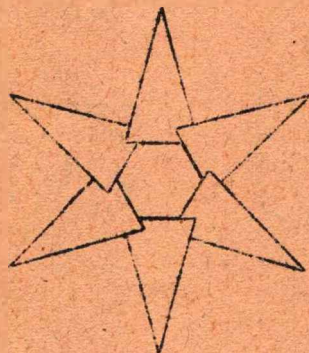
But this is fair enough; since throughout Farmer's work he demonstrates himself to be the most oral of men — his heroes being more typically blown than laid; his image of ultimate horror a bitten-off penis; and his vision of utopian bliss a kind of not-quite-kiss, in which the partners (functionally neither totally male nor female) move their lips ecstatically around a pale snake-like organ which wriggles out of the mouth of one into that of the other. In this light, it seems appropriate to describe Farmer's cultural imperialism as a gargantuan lust to swallow down the whole cosmos, past, present and to come, and to spew it out again.

Farmer wants even to eat and regurgitate himself; the industrious hack who writes his books, plus that hack's fantasies of what he secretly is or might be. And in the end, he does manage to mingle almost unnoticed among superheroes and mutants and monsters, as if the character Philip José Farmer were as real as any

fiction: the writer without real fans, who, for twenty-five ((five is correct)) years, tried to make it in Southern California, baffled by apartment house living among Jewish neighbors, improbably married for the whole time to the same wife — and fleeing at last back to Peoria, Illinois where he was born ((correct place of birth: North Terre Haute, Indiana)). Usually his self-portraits are betrayed by the initials, P.J.F., as he himself points out: "Kickaha (Paul Janus Finnegan) is me as I would like to be. Peter Jairus Frigate (To Your Scattered Bodies Go) is me as I (more or less) really am."

Finally, I suppose, Farmer must dream of swallowing down his readers, too, or at least of "taking them in," as the tell-tale phrase has it, with jokes and hoaxes and "scholarly" proofs. And there is something satisfactory, after all, about imagining ourselves, complete with wives, kids and worldly possessions, disappearing into an utterly fictional world along with Alice and Tarzan and Kilgore Trout, the Scarlet Pimpernel and Jack the Ripper and Samuel Clemens. But not before we have managed to say, as I am trying to say here: Thanks for the feast.

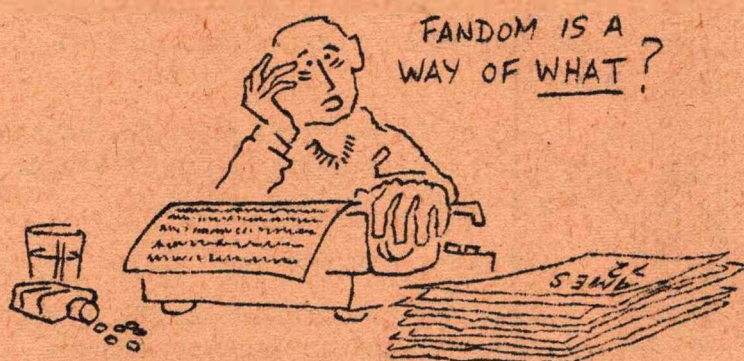
—Leslie A. Fiedler
Buffalo, New York
1 April 1972.



AUSTRALIA IN 72!

OR

WHAT IS A NICE BLOKE LIKE YOU...?



BY

GEORGE
TURNER

Well, what is a nice old bloke like me doing in the mind-shattering trap of fandom? I'm not even a fan. I like science fiction, but I also get so fed up with its inanities that I refuse to read the stuff for months at a time. Then something really good shows up, and I am sucked softly back in....

Not that science fiction has much to do with fandom; it's only a peripheral excuse for joining the riot. But I didn't join it. I'll lie on the floor and drum my heels and swear I didn't join it. It joined me. And struggle how I may....

I had been reading sf for forty-odd years, in a satisfactory group of one, when fandom caught up with me. Like this:

Here was I, at fifty-two, a sedate, mildly arty mainstream novelist (critically successful and financially disastrous) who wrote because he liked writing and let the publishers worry about the finance. And, working for my publisher, was a persuasive young gent whose soft voice concealed determination wrought in spring steel. We met by chance (in, no doubt, a carefully guileless fashion) and somehow I agreed to dash off a piece for his magazine — and had I known the things were called fanzines I

might have drawn haughtily away and saved myself at the eleventh hour. The abomination was called Australian Science Fiction Review, which surely nobody but himself had ever heard of, probably handwritten on the backs of old Weetie boxes and distributed under the cover of night.

Such was Fate, calling itself John Bangsund. And if you should meet him here in 1975 — he'll make sure you do — you will discover what I mean. Whatever he asks of you, simply agree. The alternative is slow suffocation in the invisible glue of a personality unaccustomed to refusal.

Once I realized what had been done to me in that chance meeting, I plotted revenge. I planned an article to end all fan articles and teach JB never to disturb a recluse in his den. To this end I looked over a couple of issues of his fanzine (repulsive word — disgraceful in-group language destruction) and was irritated to find it legible, literate, fairly entertaining — aside from the in-groupery which didn't, and still doesn't, impress — and quite lavishly produced.

In fact, this old gent would really have to work at it to create any impres-

sion. So I chose a lauded, revered novel to which writers, reviewers and fans all bent the humble knee, chopped it into fine critical outlets and threw it out with the trash. The point of the article was that if this book was so much approved, then the general appreciation of sf wasn't worth a pinch of rat poison and the average fan couldn't tell good from bad.

And that, by the way, is still my not so humble opinion. Thus I go about winning friends and influencing people. The book was "The Demolished Man" and the article, damn it, was a success. Everyone loathed it. Loudly. Leigh Edmonds, years later, has still not forgiven that hatchet job on Bester.

Ah, the sweet smell of even a success! There just had to be a follow-up. It took the form of an article suggesting that the average sf novelist hadn't an original idea in his money-grubbing head. Unfair of course, in fact deliberate crowd-baiting, and did it draw the crabs! Alex Eisenstein set up a howl from Chicago that blistered my unregenerate ears and some nit in England wrote one of the most personally offensive letters it has ever been my lot to read.

GT had definitely arrived. And by then he had decided that it was His Mission to clean up fan reviewing and Teach Fandom A Proper Respect For Criticism. Such paranoid fits descend upon us old bastards at irregular intervals, and you folk just have to allow for them. The result was a vast 15,000 worder called "On Writing About SF". It was, of course, a piece of sheer impudence, but I would alter very little of it today.

One immediate result was a menacing growl from James Blish over an admittedly incautious remark, and next thing we were exchanging letters. That's how it goes -- little by little you become involved in more and more. And then America's Harry Warner sang a whole song of praise about the goddamned article; the ego chuckled and patted its swollen tummy.

Then ASFR ceased publication and I told myself that at this point I could retire to the tower with Tolstoy, Henry James and such dependable company and thereafter pay proper attention to the serious business of literature.

But, in some fashion never quite comprehensible to me, I seemed to have committed myself to writing reviews for Bruce Gillespie's "SF Commentary". I had merely swapped masters.

And, equally unreasonably, I seemed to be addressing meetings and sitting on discussion panels (one or two of these were famous disasters, bringing the ego back below shoulder level) and agreeing to write unnecessary articles on unnecessary subjects for all manner of undeserving people. And getting into polemical disputes with John Foyster, than which there can be few less profitable endeavours.

And so it goes, as that man kept on saying in his slaughterhouse of words. There doesn't seem any way out.

Because, you see --

Bangsund has started up "Scythrop" and conned me into a regular column,

I have all sorts of unfulfilled commitments to Bruce Gillespie,

a new discussion group has been started in Melbourne,

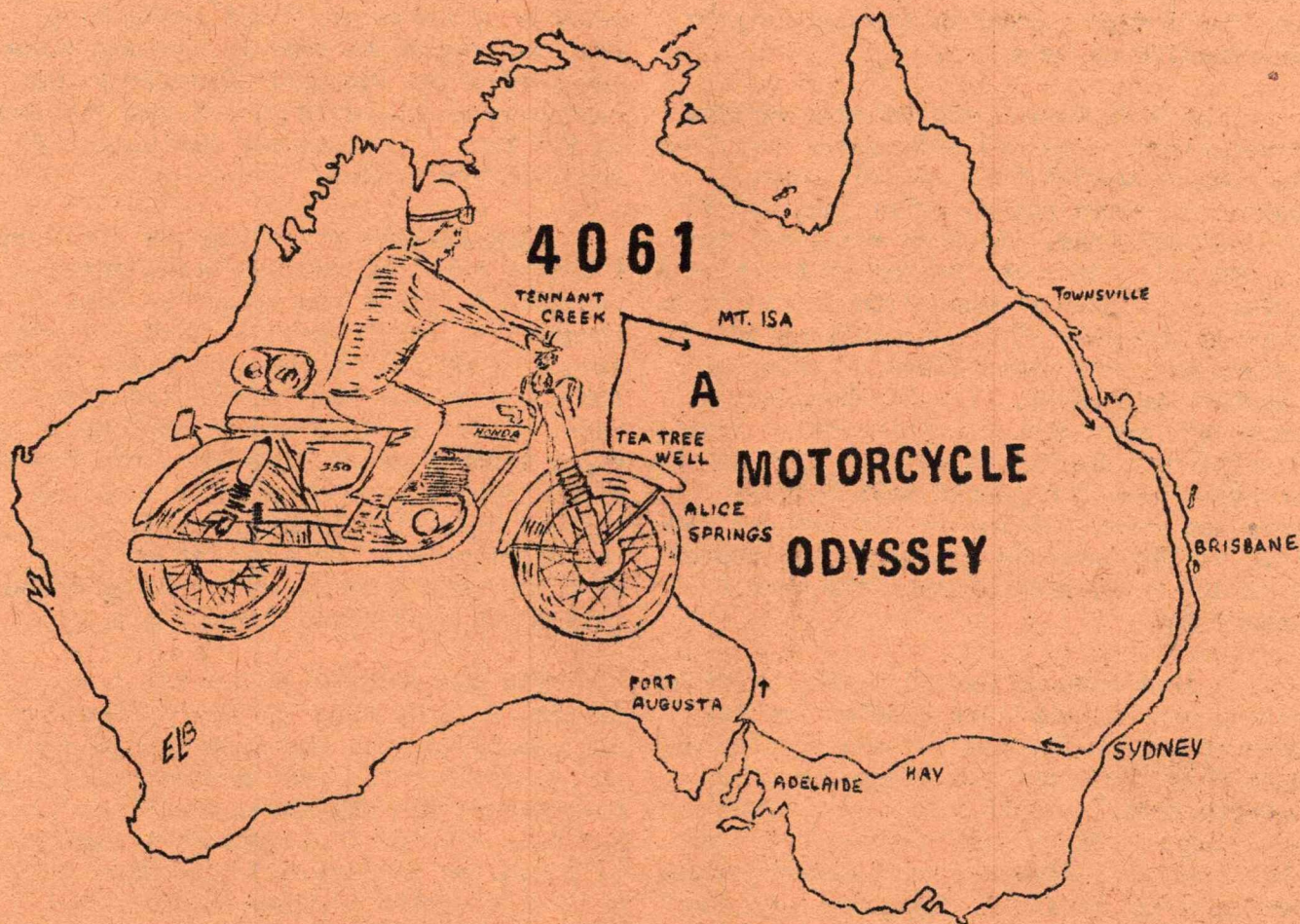
and, God help me, I am reviewing sf professionally for a newspaper which is, fortunately, the most literate in Australia.

As if all this were not enough, there is now the Australia In '75 thing, and these same fans who steadfastly refuse to regard me as a genius (or even as anything more than another fan oddity) shamelessly bespeak my time, my labour and my bloody pen.

I don't care about Australia In '75. I don't care if they hold their horrid convention on Heard Island or in Scapa Flow. I won't be there. I am not, repeat not, going to be part of that dreadful revelation of fandom unleashed and baying.

But if I should just happen to be having a quiet beer in the Southern Cross Hotel (or whatever) at that time -- not with any ulterior purpose, mind you -- and should just happen to run into some of you visiting firemen....

-----George Turner.



ERIC B. LINDSAY

The sun was a golden orb, low in the east of the azure dome of the sky. The earth extended, dead brown and red soil unmarked by the green of plants, until it merged into the shimmering silver heat haze that hid the horizon. Behind me, diminished by distance, were a few scattered buildings. As I turned out of the half mile long petrol station driveway at Tee Tree Well, onto the Stuart Highway, a sign caught my eye: Adelaide 1066 miles, Darwin 813 miles. I suddenly wondered why I had travelled so far from home.

It had all started a few weeks before my annual holidays. As usual, I could not decide where to go. A combination of advertisements for outback tours, and a letter from a friend who had hitchhiked to

Mount Isa, made the answer clear. To make the most of the trip I decided to go to Mt Isa via Alice Springs and return along the Queensland coast. As I had no car at the time, and very little money my transport was to be my Honda CB250 motorcycle.

To test the reliability of the bike I went on a one day trip through the Snowy Mountains. Despite rain after leaving Tumut I covered around eight hundred miles in twenty four hours. The only problem was a broken tachometer which was later replaced under warranty. One other future problem became apparent; at high speed the bike consumed a full fuel tank in less than a hundred miles, so it was obvious that I would have to carry extra

petrol. Some petrol stations in Central Australia were listed on the map as over two hundred miles apart.

The NRMA (New South Wales motorbike association) provided maps and a very handy little booklet that advised taking stacks of spare parts, extra fuel and five gallons of water. It also mentioned that it would be the rainy season at the time I intended to go. I decided that I would be able to get away with four gallons of petrol and only two gallons of water in plastic containers. I also thought that as it was near the end of the rainy season I would be able to get through without trouble. As it happened both decisions were bad ones, but the result was not serious as the excessive water in the creeks provided me with drinking water when I needed it.

I left home on Saturday, the first of March, and followed the shortest route. Bathurst, then the Mid Western Highway to Hay, then the clear run along the Sturt Highway that leads to Adelaide. After spending the first night camped just off the highway, I awakened soon after sunrise, had an early breakfast from the supplies I carried and prepared to leave.

When I tried to start the bike I discovered that several of the wires in the electrical system were short circuited. The extra weight of the luggage, some hundred and fifty pounds with the full fuel containers, had pushed the seat down and had worn through the insulation of some wires, and had broken one. The starter motor cable had also broken close to the battery. I repaired the wires with tape solder, matches and insulating tape, rearranged the fuel containers, and set the rear suspension on a harder setting to prevent a reoccurrence. The starter motor cable was a harder problem as it was a quarter of an inch thick and could not be repaired by the roadside. At Buronga I stopped at a Shell garage where they gave me a loan of an acetylene torch to make repairs. Much to my surprise this worked fine and the resoldered cable is still in use.

I travelled fast for the rest of the day to make up for the late start. I stopped only for petrol, and to take photographs of the ferry across the Murray River

and a few other interesting scenes. It was one of those brilliant sunny days that never seem to come in summer, without a cloud in the sky. Despite using suntan cream at every stop I was sunburnt by the time I reached the foothills of the Flinders Ranges.

Port Augusta was a welcome sight and I booked into the caravan park, where I was able to get a shower and do some laundry, at about seven o'clock. I had covered just over a thousand miles in the two days and was starting to feel the pace. Later I discovered that both of my empty plastic water containers had broken at the seams, and the plastic fuel containers were also leaking badly. During the night my air bed also let me down, onto the hard ground, so I decided to do things the easy way and catch a train.

The Commonwealth's Central Australian Railway runs 213 miles from Port Augusta to Marree, and then changes to the three foot six inch narrow gauge line that covers the 540 miles to Alice Springs. The train leaves Port Augusta at 5 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays and arrives at Alice Springs at about midnight on Tuesdays and Fridays. Fares are reasonable at \$24.45 including sleeping berth, all meals and afternoon tea. Car freight costs between \$50 and \$90 depending on weight but the cost of freighting the bike was only \$14.30.

Early in the morning I booked my train passage and then spent the day sightseeing. The Thomas Playford power station, one of the largest in the state, has conducted tours at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday to Friday. A short ride to look at the Flinders Ranges and a quick look at the road to Alice Springs soon filled the morning. At about 2 p.m. I delivered my bike to the railway station and then walked round the town, selecting a few science fiction books at the news agency to while away the train journey.

The first two hundred miles to Marree were covered in a modern air conditioned train, from there passengers changed, at about 11 p.m., to the narrow gauge sleeping cars of the very ancient wooden train that was to take twenty-four hours to cover the remaining 540

miles. The upper berth, some six feet from the floor, presented a minor problem in gymnastics, although in fairness to the railway I found that normally a ladder is provided in each compartment. The jolting, swaying clatter of a train is not usually conducive of sound sleep but after the past days riding I found no difficulty in dozing off.

During the next day the conductor pointed out places of interest at each of the small settlements on the line. In most cases these towns consisted of a pub, a post office and a few tin sheds. Meals were excellent considering the limited space available on the train, and an incredible quantity of tinned beer was bought at the dining car, indeed the trainline was littered with relics of past travellers.

When the bike was unloaded at Alice Springs at about 1 a.m. on Wednesday I found that the rear mudguard and the carrier rack were broken. After finishing repairs at about 4 a.m. I rode out of town to get some photos of Simpson Gap, Heavitt Gap in the McDonnell Ranges that surround the town, and a panoramic view from Anzac Hill just outside the town. Returning to the town for breakfast and more sightseeing was an anticlimax. It is just like most other medium sized country towns.

The Stuart Highway, a bitumen defence road built by the U. S. Army during the last war, straightens some miles from the town and then it almost never varies from straightness as far as Darwin. The flat red of the centre becomes monotonous after hours of riding, and the towns eagerly awaited, although in most cases they con-

sist only of a hotel, petrol stop and the ubiquitous tin shacks. The names are something out of history, Ti Tree Wells, thirteen miles further on and three miles from the highway is Central Mount Stuart, the geographical centre of the continent, then Barrow Creek. The names are eloquent reminders that water is the primary need for the development of the north.

A few miles north of Wauchope the highway passes through "The Devil's Marbles", huge natural granite boulders standing on a gentle rise like cast away playthings. These rounded monoliths extend on both sides of the road over several acres.

The Flynn memorial, fifteen miles past the gold mining town of Tennant Creek, is a monument to Flynn of the inland, the founder of the Flying Doctor service. It also marks the turn off to the Barkly Highway, another defence road that is sealed to just past Mt Isa.

The road is dead straight for almost 90 miles from the turn off. Although broken by small streams and meager grassland the monotony of the surroundings led me to increase my speed until I was passing the ponderous road trains that ply the Northern Territory roads at more than 80 miles an hour. I clamped the throttle twist grip full on with the friction screw to give my right hand a rest. After some fifty miles I topped what I thought was a small rise at 90 mph to find a herd of cattle spread on both sides of the road. Most scattered away from the road, but one calf changed direction and plunged back across the road. The bike passed between the rapidly narrowing gap between the



edge of the road and the calf with about a foot to spare. When my heart had slowed down again I resolved to keep a more careful eye out for cattle on the road.

Daylight had faded into night by about 8 o'clock and soon after I camped by the road about fifty miles past Barry Caves, having covered some 600 miles during the day. Staying awake the night before had left me tired and after collecting some brush for a bed I was able to get a good night's sleep.

Next morning I was up early and soon passed the Northern Territory-Queensland border where I stopped to take photographs. A few miles past Camooweal the metal toolbox that supports part of the mudguard and carrier rack broke apart. The broken part had a jagged hole several inches across torn from the metal and proper repairs were obviously impossible. I managed to tie things together with about twenty feet of nylon cord, and this repair, although unsightly, lasted until I reached home again.

Before midday I reached Mt Isa and hired an overnight van at the local caravan park. Accommodation was very expensive at Mt Isa and the \$5 I paid was less than a third of the cost of staying at a motel. Sulphur fumes from the mines made my eyes water while I was there although the locals did not seem to notice it. I found my friend installing a telephone exchange in the town and after exchanging greeting arranged to meet him after work for a tour of the town.

During the afternoon I went shopping, replacing my air bed and buying a repair kit for it. I was also able to get my bike serviced at the local Honda dealer. Despite the interest of seeing the town I was anxious to leave early in the morning as the night had been overcast and storm warnings were being broadcast on the radio. I wanted to reach the coast before the road was cut.

After an early start I reached Cloncurry before 9 a.m. The temperature seemed even higher than at Alice Springs and the thermometer on the bike was jammed past the end of the scale at 120°. Despite the hot weather, when I was replacing the spark plugs at a Rover dealer at Clon-

curry I was told that the road was cut by flooded creeks farther on.

The road now degenerated into a real mess. In places six inches of bull dust on each side of the wheel ruts made progress very slow. It took me more than five hours to cover the ninety-one miles to Julia Creek. During this time I fell off twice when I tried to push my speed up to fifty and ran into an unexpected change in the direction of the wheel rut I was following. The second time I broke the gear lever off the bike and had to loop a piece of cord around the stump and haul on this to change gear until I was able to get it welded at Julia Creek.

The hot weather must have lowered the levels of the creeks that intersect the road because most had only six inches or so of water in them. Only one presented any problems, but I was able to find a spot a hundred yards from the road where the water was only about eighteen inches deep and the sides of the creek sufficiently shallow for me to get the bike across. I think the road would have been impassable to passenger cars at the time as there appeared to be about three feet of water in the creek at the point it crossed the road.

Past Julia Creek I discovered that my last plastic water container had sprung a leak. After I had finished the water in my canteen I kept an eye out for a clean-looking creek or pool. Creeks were rather scarce but I eventually came to one and, since I had seen sheep grazing, sterilized some water with iodine drops from my first aid kit. The result tasted terrible but a bit of lemon and lime powder disguised the chemical taste and I did not really care about the taste as long as it was cold and wet.

It was after 6 o'clock before I reached Richmond, ninety-three miles from Julia Creek, where I bought a few bottles of milk and soft drink. Prices were very high in northern Queensland, no doubt because of the cost of transport to these isolated areas. While milk was only 9 cents a pint, soft drink was over 30 cents a bottle and petrol at one point was 72 cents a gallon.

Some thirty miles past Richmond

I gave up struggling to manhandle the bike through the sand in the failing light and again camped beside the road for the night.

During the trip I used freeze dried foods whenever I camped, and with some water from my gallon plastic container, now patched with a band-aid, I was soon enjoying stewed beefsteak with peas and vegetables. The food available for lightweight camping now is really marvelous. Those packets had been in my pack since leaving Sydney, and had not deteriorated.

Another hundred miles of dirt road took me past Hughenden where the road changed to good bitumen. From this point I covered the remaining two hundred miles to Townsville before lunch. After changing the oil in the bike I went sightseeing along the waterfront, but as it was starting to rain soon decided to travel further along the coast in search of sunshine. I was unable to dodge the rain, and spent the night camped in a canefield outside Mackay, with a sheet of plastic over me as protection from the now continuous rain.

The morning was fine and the coastal scenery marvelous, a beautiful day for a swim. Unfortunately before noon it started raining again and I decided to continue down the coast. Despite the warmth of the day the continual rain was chilling as I had been soaked for eight hours or so. That night I hired a cabin at a camping spot in Maryborough so that I could have a hot shower and get warm again.

It rained the following day and I was again soaked before I reached Brisbane. I arranged a service for the bike and spent the afternoon shopping for SF books in Fortitude Valley. Late in the afternoon I pushed on and reached Grafton where I spent the night at a caravan park.

It was still raining the next day as I sped down the Pacific Highway. I was by now tired of being wet and determined to reach home as soon as I could. For the first time in ten days I was again in familiar territory. I reached home at about three o'clock that afternoon having travelled 4061 miles by motorcycle and about 900 miles by train in eleven days.

Considering the amount of country I had seen the cost was very reasonable. \$33.37 for petrol, \$11.23 for oil and servicing, \$38.75 for train fares and freight, \$10.60 for accomodation, and \$7.40 for food other than that I took with me. The total cost while travelling was slightly over \$100.

For anyone thinking of a similar trip I have only one piece of advice.

GO BY BUS!

——Eric B. Lindsay
Faulconbridge, N.S.W.

Eric Lindsay is editor and publisher of the fanzine "Gegenschein," now approximating its sixth issue and intended to become "a visually exciting magazine."

"4061 - A Motorcycle Odyssey" is reprinted with the author's permission from "Iselt 2," OMPazine of Carey Handfield.

The Editor.

TO CATCH A TRAIN

BY JACK WODHAMS

Brisbane. In Anzac Square, where the Eternal Flame flickers, and where steps lead up, and a subway leads down, to the Station.

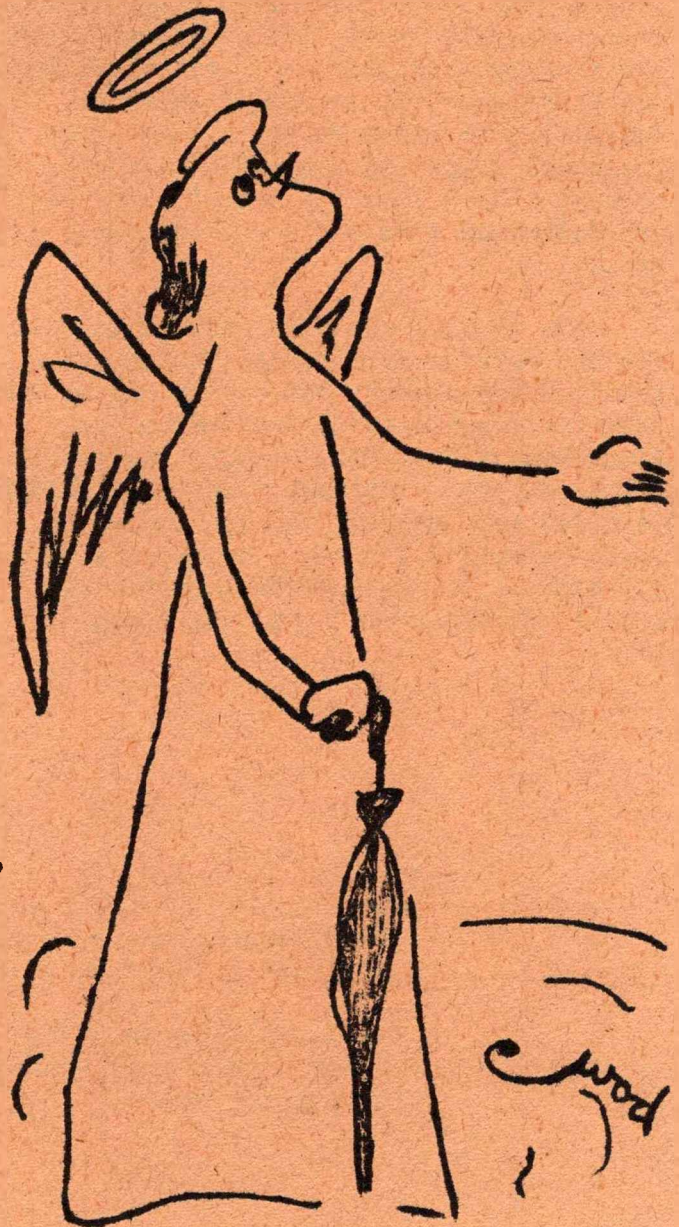
A pleasant park, and work is over, and sitting on a bench, and people passing, ones of people, tens of people, hundreds of people.

Old man, tycoon unhorsed, briefcase bearing, staring down. Girl walking quickly. Man walking aggressive, as though he owns the world but not a decent suit. Girl with shoulders back and chest out so much, her neck is bent in misalignment. Young man, velvet jacket, legs like spikes, a box on spikes. Long-haired youths and short-haired youths, and a soldier, big boots, with a young lad, and business types, gray suits, hatted, discussing a way to gain another dollar. And Bowlers, and a piled-high blonde, and a young old crone striding. Fat woman (why do they wear large flower patterns?), wheezing, making good speed. Long woman, permanent anxiety, how will it all end? Man on crutches, obstacle, skip around.

They are bodies, going home, oh, my aching feet, what a hard day, and two lovers on a seat.

Passing by, passing by, in uniforms of business houses, walking fast, walking slow, woman with large bust in mini-skirt, girl with pony-tail steps legs bent in high heels, man scratching himself, older woman rolling, pregnant colored woman and white man escort, and a smart man going by, trim in hat and tie, trailed by a lunch-box and a pair of greasy coveralls, all passing by, mixing, white shirts, women thin, women fat, proud, tired, taking it easy, just putting one leg before the other, people, people.

(In the event you, the reader, think that this study by Mr Wodhams has no connection with SF or F, would you say that it is SF-nal if I told you that it is to be among the contemporaneous memorabilia to be placed within a time capsule to be opened in the year 2222 after burial in the vicinity of Brisbane's Anzac Square? You wouldn't believe me? Hmm...in that case the connection is F -- just one of my little editorial fantasies. --Ed.)



A thousand eyes glancing at a thousand reflections in a thousand plate-glass windows, how do I look? how do I look right now? and a schoolboy in a boater, and a strolling policeman surveying, and a go-go girl, and what would she know of law or sums? Her own little world, all with their own little world, passing by, passing by.

The boy selling newspapers, and the bundle grows thin, and his arm gets closer to his side. Every day a paper. Every day. Every day for years. To read, maybe, on the 4:53. Earthquake, flood, famine, war, stop, five cents, a paper. To read on the 4:53. The sports pages, the women's pages, the comics. What will they think of next? Another revolution in South America. I wonder what Martha's got for dinner? If that new boy gives me any cheek tomorrow, I'm going to report him to Harvey. Up three points on yesterday, not bad. Oh, I think he's lovely, he's got the most gorgeous blue eyes.

Thinking, thinking, going home, going to catch the train. Thank God tomorrow's Friday. Lighting a cigarette. A tubby woman putting paper in the litterbin, very thoughtful. Train hooting, and a man in a Panama hat, don't see many of those these days. Youth swinging transistor, straining the strains of the Hotter Rotters latest disc. A gentleman with an umbrella, smiling, a woman pacing him, talking, and she is fond of him, you can tell. And a mother playing hidey-go-seek with her child around a bottle-brush tree, a nice thing to see.

One or two men lying on the grass, benches thinly occupied, few at leisure, bodies passing by, passing by, high heels, flat heels, crisp, and scuffy, people, people, a weaving drunk, and chuff, chuff, chuff from the Station.

Three paths converge from the street to focus on the steps and the gaping, swallowing, subterranean mouths of the human disposal unit. People, people. Pluck a sleeve. Where are you going, sir? Going? Going to catch the 5:15, of course.

Sit I on. Passing by, passing by, knees bending, muscles flexing, skirts too short to swish, handbags dragging, shopping dragging, brief-case dragging, duffle-bag dragging, home, home, let us get home.

Do you know what happened to me today? You'll never guess who I met in town. What, sausages again? What has he done this time? Don't start nagging as soon as I get in. I'm sorry, honey, it clean slipped my mind. What's on the telly tonight? Shall I wear my white dress or the pink? I wonder if Andy will come round tonight?

Hurrying by, work over, catch the train, the special train, the train. Always, every night, week after week, never miss, and the same old seat is like to have the impression of the butt.

People, people, where are you going, people? day in, day out? What is your purpose, walking folk, briskly footing, sweating, aching, itching, woodchips, bricks, cement, nuts-and-bolts, desks, accounts, typewriters, chit-chat now behind you as you hustle-bustle home, what for, home? and train, what for, train? Where go you people every day in your petticoats showing, in your tastelessness and taste, so altogether so alone, world upon world upon world, ones in a crowd, a crowd that is made of ones, all differently the same.

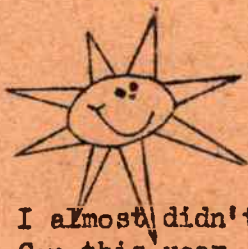
Where are you going, people?

I get me up. I do not know. I am lost. I, too, am one.

It is today, and I know where I am going. I am going to catch the 5:35.

-----Jack Wodhams.





THE 1972 MELBOURNE SF CONVENTION

I almost didn't make it to the Melbourne Con this year. My trusty Volkswagen started showing unhealthy symptoms, and a major overhaul was indicated (this came about only a week before I was due to go), but I said "Dash it all..." (or some such phrase)... "why should I let a little thing like a possible \$100 repair bill stop me? Would it stop a BNF?" So, I re-ordered my flight ticket, packed my bag (this was my bag's 6th convention) and boarded the 11:10 a.m. flight to Melbourne.

Melbourne's new Tullamarene Airport is a beautiful big place, but an awful long way from the city, so it was a long, chilly wait till my friend Jim Morgan arrived in his smart orange MGB to pick me up. MGB's are lovely sporty cars, but they just don't have the luggage space (at least where my size bags are concerned).

Anyhow, we eventually arrived at the Savoy Plaza Hotel (opposite the charming Spencer Street Station, overlooking the railway lines). It's a great grey stone structure, and it swallowed the small convention up with hardly any sign. After putting my bag in room 704 (which I shared with Christine McGowan) I made my way down to the first floor where the Con room was located. It was a good-sized room, with plenty of light and good loud-speaker systems. Various people were standing or sitting around indulging in that favorite fannish pastime of gas-bagging. I said hullo and joined in.

At around 2:00 p.m., Paul Stevens, the Convention Organiser, officially opened the convention and introduced the Fan GOH, Dennis Stocks, who spoke on his fannish experiences in Sunny Brisbane. This was followed by what is titled "The Elizabeth Foyster Half-hour" in which Mrs Foyster spoke at length on the cover art of SF, which turned into a rather funny Women's Lib rage.

After a short break, Lee Harding, now a book seller as well as writer, spoke on his experiences in the Space Age Bookshop. After this, there was a rather

boring talk on the psychology of horror films, in which a learned gentleman spoke at great length on a lot of things I totally disagreed with but couldn't think of an intelligent way to voice my disagreement. I didn't catch the whole of this talk, as my stomach started complaining of ill-treatment, and I dashed across to the Railway Cafeteria for a quick dinner. On my return I found that the company had gone its various way, and on entering the restaurant I discovered a table surrounded by such people as Chris McGowan, Mervyn Binns, Bruce Gillespie, Bill Wright, Leigh Edmonds and girl Valma, David Grigg, and others I can't remember. I didn't eat, just sat sipping a lemon squash, talking, and watching Merv complain about the awful soup.

I popped up to my room, changed for the evening (it was a cool night) and returned to the con room to watch the beginning of "Flash Gordon"...the first few episodes were fun, but really, I'm afraid STAR TREK has given me a different set of values. Then followed the Paul Stevens Show, a regular Melcon item. A supposedly genuine Buck Rogers script was acted out by Lee Harding as Buck, Valma as Wilma, Dennis as the Navigator, Leigh Edmonds as Special Effects and John Foyster as Announcer. It was over-acted and very funny. Robin Johnson then put on a sheet and played God, looking for a miracle ("...they want to hold a Worldcon... in Melbourne...oh yes, that's the swampy bit down the bottom..."). I enjoyed it all. I missed part of it through the necessity of returning to my room for a powder, but returned in time to see "As-torix and Cleopatra", a French cartoon marvelously done, even though it was in French and I therefore understood one word in a hundred. "King Kong" I loved, it was the first time I had seen this old classic and I thoroughly enjoyed it. After seeing another Flash Gordon episode, a few of us adjourned to my room where we had a small con party, which wound up around 2:30 a.m.

Saturday came, and I managed to stagger

BY SHAYNE McCORMACK

down to breakfast before the restaurant closed at 10:30 a.m. After eating, Chris and I took a taxi to lovely downtown Melbourne to visit the Space Age Bookshop, which has just about the biggest selection of SF and similar material in Australia. Hate the place...spent \$4 of my precious cash in there. It was almost worth it just to be sold a book by Lee Harding. After a quick window-shop, we returned to the hotel. We didn't see any windows we liked.

The day's programme, as is customary, started late. John Foyster gave a talk on the pulps (even though he had prepared his talk of polyps) but he did manage to talk about various kinds of pulps (and polyps...had no idea there were so many kinds of polyps in SF...). There followed a panel on UFOs, most of which I missed even though I'm told it was quite interesting. The Auction presided over by Lee Harding followed and aside from being insulted by Lee and buying a 1951 Startling, I didn't have much to do with the Auction. I did try to outbid Ron Graham for Lee Harding, but didn't succeed. Lee looked relieved, as well he might. Everyone then departed hurriedly to prepare for the Masquerade/Banquet.

The scene in my room was reminiscent of Dante's Inferno. If you haven't seen 4 women trying to get ready for a masquerade in 20 minutes, you have missed an extraordinary scene. There should have been a movie camera present; it would have made a very funny film. But things did work out alright, and we eventually made it to the Banquet.

A few things helped to mar what was otherwise a fine occasion. The food was so bad it was almost funny, the speeches dragged, the band deserted, but aside from that I enjoyed myself. A few people came in costume (about 15 I'd say) and I came as some kind of gypsy. I won the female award to my great amazement. Bill Wright was presented with the MSFC Award for his hard work throughout the year, and the Fantasy Film Group Award was given to the movie THX 1138.

After the banquet eventually finished, various movies were shown, including an episode of UFO in colour...it was really marvelous to see this good British SF Series in colour, it's the first time I have, and it certainly increases the effect. That night I retired to bed at the unearthly hour of 4:30 a.m.

By the time the next morning arrived, I was only just with it. The Australia in 75 Committee meeting was held in my room, after which I discovered that someone had managed to wind the Con up, and things were happening. My mind was rather befuddled, but I remember a few things, like a panel on Australia in 75, recent award-winning novels and a publishing panel that attacked Gordon & Gotch for their poor distribution in Australia. I then dashed off to have dinner. It was a holiday Sunday, and the hotel was having problems. It took them an hour to cook up some spaghetti. Merv was concerned as to whether the trout he had ordered was being given a fair go. Paul Stevens gave up in disgust, and left, still hungry. I eventually got my spaghetti and then had to eat it in 3 minutes. No way to treat good spaghetti.

Groaning, I made my way down to the Con room, watched "Beauty and the Beast" (a marvelous Fantasy film), "Navy v. the Night Monster" (what must Murray Leinster have thought...) and "Lock up your Daughters" (not an SF, but a lovely way to end an incredible day). By this time I was so tired that I couldn't walk a straight line. So, at 4:00 a.m. I collapsed into my bed and died.

Conventions are not for the weak.

Anyhow, the last day dawned cloudy and later than usual. Another A75 Meeting, an open panel and a fanzine produced by around 8 people were the final events.

David Grigg drove Michael O'Brien and myself to the airport, and I sank into the comfortable plane seat, my mind awl with memories and plans and things I had to remember.

Another Convention was over. But only 4 months to Syncon! Such are the tortured paths of fandom.

-----Shayne McCormack.

ABORIGINAL MYTHS AND COSMIC CATASTROPHE

BY JOHN J. ALDERSON

The philosophical burden of proof affects all science the same whether astronomy or mythology. One accepts mathematics as correct; there is no way of proving so. Masses of facts can be assembled to support a theory but they do not prove it. The theory of evolution has not been and cannot be proved. The theory of Velikovsky¹ cannot be proved but a mass of facts support its possibility. In presenting the following study I have in mind that Velikovsky did not quote at all from this source, and that here we have a body of mythology that does add its support.

In the beginning it is well to remember that the drama began about 1400 B.C. and finished about 700 B.C., that Greek myths were written say within 200 years of the last act of this drama, and most other sources within 700 years. However with the aboriginal myths over another 2000 years of memory have been added so that their mythological systems are considerably overlaid and one is not going to get the clear astronomical significance as for example in Homer where the action of the gods is a mere replay of the drama observed in the skies.

Briefly Velikovsky considers that the planet Venus was expelled from the planet Jupiter to become a comet with an erratic orbit interfering with those of Mars and Earth. The first brush with Earth turned Earth "upside down" and thus reversed its direction of rotation, and later encounters gave other angles of the inclination of the axis to the plane of the orbit. The first encounter caused the plagues of Egypt including showers of meteorites (the hail), a heavy cloud that hung close to the surface of the earth, a vast tidal wave and wholesale burning of forests, etc., howling gales and a climatic shift. The planet Venus hung in the sky like a great fiery monster with a huge black tail giving rise to stories of dragons, fiery

serpents, the Hydra, Typhon etc., and amongst the aborigines, the Rainbow Serpent. Finally continual buffeting by the Earth, the Moon, and Mars brought Venus into its present almost circular orbit, and it sank from its place in the zenith to its present position as morning and/or evening star.

The Djanggawal² brother and sisters are subjects of an important Arnhem Land fertility cult, and the first songs of the song cycle record how the three of them left their darkness shrouded homeland and led by the morning star which had been made for their benefit they paddled for weeks over the dark ocean until they made their landfall. (They were not the first aborigines as they found others already living there.)

Other myths repeat the story of this great darkness, "the shadow of death" which hung on the earth. A Victorian myth...³,

"A long time ago there was no sky as it is now, for it lay flat upon the earth, and covered it like a blanket. It rested so hard that the people were not able to move, and were in sore distress.

"At last Gorul, the Magpie, managed to prop up one corner of it and some of the people were freed and enabled to come to his assistance. Between them they lifted it up to where it is now."

And a New South Wales myth...⁴:
"...and the night came down like a thick cloud and veiled the world in darkness, letting neither Moon nor stars be seen. But as Bohra the kangaroo liked to feed at night he objected to this darkness, and, being a great wirinun⁵ he determined to put an end to it. So he just rolled the darkness back as if it had been a rug, and let it rest on the edge of the world, while the stars always, and sometimes the



Moon, shone out."

The difference of this darkness to ordinary night is obvious, and it had an unpleasant and deadly nature. From the story of Yhi and the Flowers⁶....:

"as far as eye could reach the earth was bare and brown. The circle of dead and dying plants was spreading through the whole world. Death of flowers raced ahead of the searching woman, and all the raindrops sent by the spirits of the sky, and all the smiles of Yhi⁷ could not arrest it.

"The air was filled with the black bodies of bees as they flew frantically from one dead plant to another in search of honey.

"Now we shall have no honey,' the women cried. 'There is only the sweet gum of the trees that Baiame left, and they are his and we may not touch them.'

"Even as they were speaking, trees grew up around them, and down their trunks flowed a clear liquid that quickly hardened. One woman, more venturesome than the rest, scraped some off and put it in her mouth.

"It is sweet,' she cried. 'Baiame has seen our plight and sent this food for us...'"

Compare this story with that of the Children of Israel finding the manna in the wilderness. This is the aboriginal version of the manna of the Hebrews and the ambrosia of the Greeks.

Usually following the story of the darkness is the creation of the morning and/or evening star. (The aborigines realized they were the same body.) Sometimes this follows a conflagration as in the story of Mullian-ga the Morning Star⁸

which tells how the eaglehawk was burnt to death and became the morning star. In the story of Yhi and the Flowers mentioned above, after the lifting of the darkness Yhi sends the Morning Star to herald the coming of the sun.⁹

The Djauan tribe tells of the creating of the Evening Star....:

"And Munjarra went away from Morwey the sun and waited until Morwey had gone down out of the sky. And then Munjarra came out and began to light up the nighttime. He was the first star, burning brightly above the place where Morwey had gone out of the sky."¹⁰

In this we catch a glimpse of the time when Venus had its place in the zenith with the sun and Moon.

Time and again some passage like this occurs...: "When the heap is nearly big enough¹¹ they send out the Morning Star to warn those on Earth that the fire will soon be lit."¹² In the Song Cycle of the Djanggawal there occurs the information that the Morning Star had a be-feathered fishing line which reminds one of the early representations of Venus with a beard, a remnant of the tail of the comet.

The older representation of Venus is as the Rainbow Serpent. Roland Robinson¹³ writes of this, "The Rainbow Serpent is prominent throughout Northern Australia. It was the Rainbow Serpent which dropped from the sky its egg into the Central Australian Desert. This egg, turned into stone, is called, in the Pitjantjara tribe, Ulura. The white men call it Ayers Rock." More southern tribes point to the huge gibbers (rocks) that litter the plains as eggs of the Rainbow Serpent. (This is paralleled with the harras of Arabia.) The Rainbow Serpent is also credited with the making of many water-courses and much of the topography. It is

obviously of the same origin as Rahab (whose bones fell in the wilderness) of the Hebrews, the Hydra slain by Heracles, Typhon (crushed by Zeus with a thunder-bolt) and Cernunnos (the double-fishtailed god of the Celts and ultimately Herne the Hunter and the Horned God of the witches.)

Mangowa the hunter¹⁴ was misguided enough to chase a young girl called Pirili who fled into the Milky Way. Mangowa followed her tearing up great handfuls of stars and throwing them at her in order to drive her back to Earth. These falling to earth made the circular lagoons that fringe the shores of the coastal lakes of South Australia. At least the aborigines knew that meteorites are rocks which fall from the sky which sometimes make craters, and that at least once they witnessed a great shower of them.

The tilting of the axis of the Earth would produce a change in climate and we have this myth from the Dieri tribe...¹⁵:

"Once the deserts of Central Australia were fertile plains. Forests of giant trees grew there. The land was traversed by rivers and contained lakes and lagoons thickly fringed with waving reeds. Instead of the present brazen vault, the sky was covered by clouds so dense that it appeared solid. The air, that is now filled with blinding, salt-laden dust, was washed by soft, cooling rains. The rich deep loam of this land supported luxuriant vegetation which spread, from lake-shores and river banks, far out across the plains. The trunks of the lofty gum-trees rose through the close undergrowth and held up a distant sky of interlacing branches and foliage. In this sky-land of foliage lived the monsters called the Kadiamakara. Scents of the succulent herbage on the Earth often rose to this roof-land and tempted the Kadiamakara to climb down the gum-trees to the Earth below. Once when the monsters had climbed down the gum-trees, and were feeding on the luxuriant herbage and fruits of the earth, the three gum-trees, which were the pillars of the sky, fell down. The Kadiamakara were cut off from their roof-land. They were forced to roam on the earth and to wallow in the marshes of Lake Eyre until they died."

This myth related by Dr A.W.Howitt to the explorer J.W.Gregory was the cause of the latter's expedition to Central Aus-

tralia where he found the huge fossil bones of the Diprotodon in Lake Callabonna. Later discoveries have found that the aborigines hunted and ate the Diprotodon, deduced from the split and charred bones in their fires.¹⁶

The references to the gum-trees which held up the sky occur in this myth as well as many other widespread myths. There are a number of instances in Victoria when "news" was sent that the eastern prop (which was supposed to be in the charge of an old man on the High Plains) was rotting, and that the guardian would not repair it unless a specified number of presents of stone axes and possumskin rugs were sent. Otherwise the sky would fall and everybody would be killed.¹⁷ One cannot help but think of Atlas holding up the sky.

Perhaps connected with this is the Kulin myth of the flooding of Port Phillip Bay.¹⁸ It is evident that the aborigines witnessed many violent catastrophes. These did occur and the aborigines have myths, but I seriously question the possibility of preserving a folk-memory for say 20,000 years (about the usual minimum according to conventional dating).

None of these myths are conclusive in themselves but together they indicate that the aborigines believed that once Central Australia was a fertile land with a gentle climate, but that the sky fell and caused a great darkness that killed many things and that during this time they were preserved by a sweet substance which came down. That this darkness lifted and the Morning and/or Evening Star was made. Finally they have the legend of the Rainbow Serpent whose eggs were stones which fell from skies. Nor does this prove Velikovsky's theory. It merely adds a tithe of evidence to the huge amount he has amassed, from a corpus of myth he did not examine.

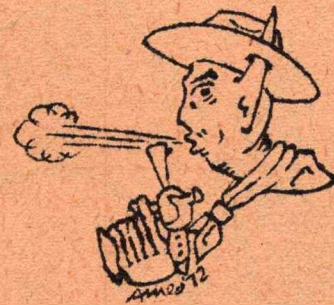
—John J. Alderson
Havelock, Victoria.

NOTES

- (1) Velikovsky, Worlds in Collision, London, 1954; (2) R.M.Berndt, Djanggawal, London, 1952; (3) A.Massola, Bunjil's Cave, Melbourne, 1968 p.16; (4) K.Langloh Parker, Australian Legendary Tales, 1953, p.93; (5) a witch-doctor or magician; (6) the sun-goddess; (7) A.W.Reed, Myths and Legends of Aust., Sydney, 1965, p.27; (8) Parker, *ibid.* p.58; (9) Reed, *ibid.* p.18; (10) R.Robinson, Abor'l Myth & Legends, Melb., 1966, p.106; (11) to be next day's sun; (12) Parker, *ibid.* p.7; (13) Robinson *ibid.* p.45; (14) Roberts & Mountford, The Dreamtime p.60; (15) Robinson, *ibid.* p.112; (16) Mincham: Vanished Giants of Aust. p.52; (17-8) Massola, p.105, p.47.

THE S-F BOOKSHELF

BILL
WOLFENBARGER



You're All Alone by Fritz Leiber; Ace Books, #95146; 191pp., 95¢.

The first adventure in Leiber's trio here is actually the title story, which is actually a short novel from the July 1950 issue of FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. What happens to you when one day you realize the world is a great big engine, and everyone is merely a part that keeps things going? You look at the people around you and then you realize they're not even alive; they're all just playing a part the big engine has selected. But if you do become aware of what is really happening and break free, you're in constant peril. Because the machine won't run as it should if one of the parts is missing. The only way you can make it is to fake it. And that's the situation Carr Mackay finds himself entangled in.

The suspense is thick. There's also a good amount of action. And there's a lot in You're All Alone to set you thinking.

Has there ever been any doubts about Fritz Leiber being a prophet? Take the example exemplified in this short novel; it was published originally in 1950; by the mid-50s a bunch of people in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Venice West, Paterson, N.J., Denver, St Louis and in small towns all over the nation got the same sort of torment in their heads about Society and themselves and what was going on. Through newspaper press these searching young people became known as the Beat Generation. Now we have hippies, yuppies, whathaveyou.

The second selection in this collection is Four Ghosts in Hamlet, and comes from the January 1965 FaSF. It's a ghost story equal only to a Fritz Leiber, and concerns an old deserted theatre re-awakened by a Shakespearean company involved in Ouija boards, reincarnation, and William Shakespeare in a rather frightful manner. The quality of the

prose is excellent. And Fritz writes here of a world he knows inside and out.

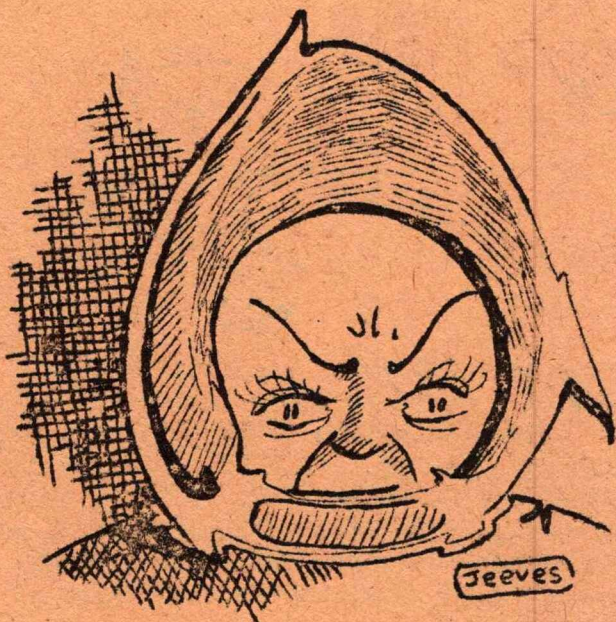
Final selection is The Creature From Cleveland Depths, and first appeared in GALAXY for December 1962. I think this story is, among other things, a moral on fallout shelters and the evils the collective (and separate, as well) mind of Man can do.

I've been a Fritz Leiber fan for a good while now, regardless of what field he chooses: Fafhrd-Mouser epics, serious constructive trip-inducing science fiction, scientific articles, the weird tale and the supernatural horror story, book reviews . . . And no matter how you look at it, Leiber is a head of his time.

Note of Interest: This will be the last installment of The S-F Bookshelf. The reasons are varied: I don't really find much exceptional material in the current science fiction & fantasy magazine field worth raving over, and I'd much rather rave a writer and his/her effort than damn a writer's material to all creation. I've been doing this column for nearly two years now, and I feel it's time I moved on to other things. I've enjoyed the column, and the participation received from You Readers; I really have. Maybe when things pick up this column will be revived. But for now I can only say it's been fun and I hope you've enjoyed it. If you and our Kindly Editor will bear with me, next issue will begin a new column, a strange thing called The House the Gorgon Built, part fact, part fiction, with a scattering of nonsense from a Midwestern mind. As with The S-F Bookshelf, I welcome any-&-all comments, pro and con.

I still say, SUPPORT THE MAGAZINES!

-----Bill Wolfenbarger
Bloomington, Ill.
June, 1972.



FI IN THE SCI

BY

JOHN
WINDSOR

This article originally appeared April 7, 1972 in the newspaper THE GUARDIAN, London, U.K., & is reprinted with the permission of THE GUARDIAN.

Peter Nicholls looks like becoming Britain's first lecturer in science fiction. The North-east London Polytechnic, where addiction to SF is no longer a whispered affliction, hired him as a part-time lecturer six months ago. The Poly is paying his expenses to the first European Congress of Science Fiction in Trieste and his application for full lecturer status is already on the faculty table.

Nicholls is a 33-year-old Australian lecturer in English whose Harkness Fellowship in film making yielded the 16mm "Where were you when I needed you, Jane Austen?" He was looking for work in British films on the strength of it when he answered a classified ad and found himself as administrator of the newly formed Science Fiction Foundation set up under the Poly's department of Applied Philosophy.

Arthur C. Clarke ("2001") is patron, James Blish the American Hugo award winning SF novelist now living in Britain is on the 12-strong board of management, Mr George Brosan, the polytechnic's director, a long standing SF fan and member of the British Interplanetary Society, is convenor, and the chairman, who reads the Bible from cover to cover every year, is Charles Barren, senior lecturer in applied philosophy and prodigious author of history, biography and SF.

Barren edits the only professionally published SF review in Britain, which happens to be the Foundation's academic journal. The first issue of "Foundation," out this month has titles like "The God motif in dystopian fiction." George Hay, an executive of a voluntary communications consortium who engineered Radio London's "Star Gazers" and set up the Foundation a year ago, says that it will drown itself in footnotes if it is not careful.

Nicholls admits that most SF is rubbish -- only addicts, incidentally, are allowed to say things like that -- but his defence of it is strikingly more ambitious than those which stop short at rebutting insults about bug-eyed monsters. He maintains in his lectures that whether we date the realistic English novel back to Jane Austen, as Leavis does, or to Henry Fielding, as most critics do, this "mainstream" appears as just a trickle compared with the 3,500 year history of literature. "My own simplification," he says, "is that the mainstream of literature is science fiction." He concedes that anything written before Copernicus' astronomical studies 350 years ago can have little connection with what we know as science today. Nevertheless he places works which invent an imaginary world as a comment on the real world in the same mainstream as science fiction.

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF

"THE INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE OF TODAY:

SHAKESPEARE IN A SPACE HELMET"

Posters for Nicholls' external evening course show Shakespeare in a space helmet. It is beyond a joke. He compares "The Tempest" with the SF film "Forbidden Planet," whose plot, he says, is a direct lift from it. The grim-faced scientist on the planet where a spaceship is wrecked is really Prospero. His beautiful daughter who falls in love with the spaceship captain is Miranda. The articulate robot who escorts the ship's crew to the scientist's home is Ariel. A mysterious monster -- Caliban's equivalent -- makes attacks on the crew until the scientist realizes that the monster is a subconscious projection of his own fruitless lust for knowledge and destroys it and his scientific creation by surrendering his daughter to the captain. Much that was beautiful becomes thin air.

These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits,
and
Are melted into air, into thin air,
and like the baseless fabric of this
vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous
palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe
itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall
dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant
faded,
Leave not a rack behind.

Today's science, says Nicholls, is yester-

day's magic. But "The Forbidden Planet" is not really about science any more than "The Tempest" is really about magic. It is about the effects of science on a man and his world. Even the relatively crude film has as its theme the possibility of even a noble man being corrupted by his own creative powers and both film and play recognize the lust to create and control as basic in man, admirable though dangerous. Prospero's farewell to his magic arts -- "I have bedimm'd the moonlight sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds" -- does not even need a paraphrase to become science fiction says Nicholls. He remarks that few, if any, of Shakespeare's plays are set in the present. Shakespeare chose the remote past for his greatest tragedies for the same reason that SF writers use the future -- to gain elbow room to construct imaginary societies and so mirror the dilemmas of the present age.

With a wink, Nicholls put forward his deliberately provocative "great tradition" of science fiction, which purposely misses out books widely accepted as SF. Don't be put off by artificial distinctions between SF and mainstream, he says, just see how "close in feeling" they are.

1. The Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh. Third millennium BC. The world destroyed by flood: the earliest piece of science fiction.

2. The Odyssey. Set in areas of the real world which were then unknown.

3. Beowulf. Heroic victory over

early versions of the bug-eyed monster.

4. The Arthurian cycle. Heroic quest for a cure beyond the boundaries of the known world.

5. Shakespeare's Tempest.

6. Milton's Paradise Lost...two complete new worlds, Hell and Paradise before the Fall.

7. Dr Johnson's Rasselas. Lost races and imaginary societies hidden in unknown valleys. Would be regarded as hardcore SF today.

8. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Good example of the imaginary voyage category. Its images have a mythic quality.

9. Bronte's Wuthering Heights. At first sight a realistic novel. But the uncanny intensity of Bronte's world corresponds more to a psychological than an objective reality, for example in her subjective and unearthly descriptions of the Yorkshire landscape.

10. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The predecessor of all the android stories. Hardcore science fiction in every sense, primarily a moral fable.

11. Bleak House or Little Dorrit or Hard Times by Dickens. The dusty law courts, the crumbling house and the unspeakably logical schoolteaching: the satiric and symbolic force of the vision depends on its bizarreness. Border territory between traditional and science fiction.

12. Joseph Conrad's The Heart of Darkness. The captain of a ship going up-river into tropical jungle becomes less and less able to relate to reality as he enters a primitive, unknowable world.

Nicholls does not seriously claim Conrad, Dickens and Bronte as SF writers -- "I simply want to point out how close they get to it. When you think about it, all writers create imaginary worlds, images of our condition. If it turns out that SF is very traditional indeed, then we shouldn't beat our brains about the question."

Embedded in the tradition which he puts forward is the device of the voyage of discovery -- the "Odyssey," space flight -- and the creation of myths, "the most ancient of all kinds of literature." The comparatively recent "realistic" writers have made little use of either element.

Nicholls sees myth as the most important predecessor of science fiction. Myths

such as Orpheus, he remarks, have retained an obsessive grip on the imagination through hundreds of generations -- no explanation of their symbolism has the same force as the images themselves -- and he looks to today's SF to create new myths for future generations. "Not all imaginary worlds have the power of myth. I do believe, however, that the most memorable modern science fiction goes beyond simple story telling or even subtle social analysis and enters the sphere of myth."

He instances the peculiarly science fiction image of the totally enclosed society, static, solid, quiescent, in which one man with imagination rebels. He discovers that though his society is static, his world is not. His world is in fact a space ship and the image of a dying world is juxtaposed with the image of silent velocity in the freedom of space. The image has been taken up by numerous SF authors such as Robert Heinlein in "Universe" (1941), Brian Aldiss in "Non Stop" (1958), and Harry Harrison in "Captive Universe" (1969).

ANYONE who really fears that the academics are in danger of inflicting death by footnote on SF would do well to dip into some of the half dozen British "fanzines" -- amateur SF fan magazines -- in which the critical judgments of untrained minds are put forward with the intensity of common room squabbling. You do not need "A" levels to enter fandom, indeed the rejection of SF by almost all teachers and lecturers must have drawn countless youngsters into its forbidden territory (there are about a million regular SF readers). The typical fan's expertise resembles that of the "B" stream lad who fails maths exams but is a genius at betting odds. There are amateur bibliographers poised to spring into print at the drop of a page reference. "Cypher," a duplicated international fanzine published in Lymington, Hampshire, was recently taken to task by a vigilant fan for saying that Philip Dick's "Preserving Machine" was the first major collection of his stories. "You took that practically verbatim from the Gollancz edition blurb" he complained haughtily, citing four other collections dating from 1955 and proclaiming that he had had a letter of apology about it from Gollancz's joint managing director.

The fanzines' literary criticism is chat-ty, forthright, lightly opinionated and quick to cut down authors thought to be interlopers in the SF ghetto. This, from an American correspondent in "Cypher," captures the flavor: "Good grief, here we have Leon Taylor on Barry Malzberg. It's quite typical of the nonsense engendered by the original publicity for the New Wave that we should have a critic taking a hack like Malzberg seriously. Ballard one can at least respect for his stylistic ability, even if his ideas are insane. But Malzberg is purely derivative -- a mere literary status seeker. He was at the May meeting of the Eastern SF Association, and it was typical of his shallow thinking that he gave a rambling speech about Evil Technology "swallowing" poor humanity -- then drove off in the Cadillac he purchased with money earned from his books attacking crass materialism." In the introverted world of the fanzines, criticisms of criticisms of criticisms are not uncommon. In such a minefield, visiting journalists should tread carefully.

The highly personal criticism which SF writers endure -- "Bloggs is an old friend of mine, but I think his latest science fantasy lacks relevance" -- is their reward for making themselves accessible to fans at SF conventions, like the oddly abbreviated Chessmancon, the annual gathering organized at Chester last weekend by Manchester's Delta SF group with the help of the British Science Fiction Association. Authors of Westerns, romance, detective stories and mainstream can afford to remain aloof or form discreet coteries, but SF authors, like pop stars, ignore the fans at their peril.

It all boils down to the survival instinct of the literary ghetto. While SF is scorned as not quite respectable and until a living SF author makes a name for himself outside fandom (how many British non-addicts have heard of Heinlein or Asimov?), the fans and the authors will cling together. The lowliest backroom fanzine can still attract correspondence, or even original work from big names. "SF Commentary," an amateur publication circulating worldwide from Melbourne, Australia, has printed much specially translated work by the Polish author Stanislaw Lem, whose later novel "Solaris" has created a stir among British fans.

In London, writers and fans from miles around gather on the first Thursday of each month at the Globe Tavern in Hatton Garden to bargain over treasured volumes and swap pints with authors. The talk is of Cantorian transfinities, mesons and ego-bo (the arrogance of authorship). Such authors attend as Arthur C. Clarke, Michael Moorcock, Ken Bulmer and the prolific and flamboyant John Brunner (over 60 books to his credit) who never misses a Globe night because he thrives on the feedback from fans. Such fans as Brian Burgess, who has made the 220-mile round trip from his home in Bournemouth to the Globe ever since the railway line was electrified five years ago. He arrives back home at 2:15 a.m. and gets four hours sleep before rising to start work as a paint and wallpaper storeman. He bought his first SF mag in 1946 at the age of 14 and his garage is now filled with 4,000 American and British magazines stuffed into packing cases. He reckons his 1937-46 selection is the finest in the country, but his mother is still threatening to chuck the lot out. At a recent Globe meeting, his copy of the memorial volume of Stanley G. Weinbaum, who died in 1936, was passed reverently from hand to hand. Only 352 copies were offered for sale before it was withdrawn, he explained. He had been offered £50 for it but was not thinking of selling. Nor his magazines. Not yet, anyway.

Sam Moskovitz, the American SF critic and bibliographer who ran the first-ever college level SF course at City College, New York, in 1953, was in the Globe last month. He had been using his first visit to the country for 14 years to buy up SF manuscripts and rare volumes. He said: "The literary and academic world have been guilty of snobbing SF and are now desperately backtracking to get material they never gathered." That should be a warning to any fan still with a few quid to spare. There are now over 20 major SF collections at American universities where there are an estimated 200 college-level SF courses.

One of two Londoners who have joined the rare SF book trail for a living is John Eggeling, aged 26, who six months ago left his job as an accountant to set up his own SF mail order business in Tottenham. He specializes in the 1890 to 1910 period when Percy Grag was prophesying

interplanetary flight, George Griffiths was predicting future invasions, and Ryder Haggard was discovering strange civilizations. He has found that SF collectors are willing to pay £6 or £7 for books costing six or seven bob in the dustier corners of second hand bookshops.

Second hand prices of even recent SF titles are rising because -- with one or two honorable exceptions -- SF is still a blindspot in British publishing. Titles which win international SF prizes like the Hugo, polled by members of the annual World Science Fiction Convention, usually held in America, and the Nebula, polled by members of the Science Fiction Writers of America, the professional body, are often not published here until months later. New British authors find it hard to break into print.

Derek Stokes, who runs "Dark They Were and Golden Eyed," an SF shop in Soho named after a Ray Bradbury story title, has built up his trade by claiming that he can supply any SF title in print. By hook or by crook. "Most British writers are published more in the States than here," he said. "There's E. C. Tubb who's an English demonstrator salesman who had seven volumes of the Dumarest series published in the States between 1967 and 1971. Only the first has been published here -- in 1968. But I can get the other six." Newspapers virtually ignore SF, he complained. "They will never review new SF authors and don't like reviewing paperbacks anyway. If they do, the standard review is 'This is terrible, but the fans will lap it up'."

Stokes is 26 and set up "Dark," where both long-haired and pinstriped addicts rub shoulders, two years ago after studying the market as a bookshop assistant. His girl friend, Diane, said: "Science fiction is an addiction. We've got a lot of junkie customers who have gone off heroin and onto SF. They come in here and spend all the money they should be spending on lunches. I feel sorry for them, sometimes. One man comes every five or six months, spends £20 or £30 and then goes home and hides the books in his dustbin so his wife won't see. Another had his wife after him when he came in so he came back later and said: 'Quick -- I've got rid of her in C and A's.' Some of the kids look old before their time, like 12-year-olds smoking and paying £2 for a comic."

Particularly in the past six months, there has been an increase in sales of the American pocket-sized story magazines, Fantasy and Science Fiction, Science Fiction Classics, Amazing, Fantastic, If, Galaxy and Analog, which sells 5,000 copies a month on bookstands. Britain has New Worlds (founded 1946), and New Writings in SF (founded 1964), both by John Carnell. Britain's doyen of science fiction who died last month. There are few established British writers today who have not been published by New Worlds and given encouragement by Carnell. Visiting authors from abroad always got in touch with him as soon as they arrived because no one knew more about the British SF world than he did.

SF magazines are still clearly a marketing enigma. Tandem, who will begin marketing If and Galaxy in May and June will be treating them as books. But a November feature in National Newsagent which predicted bigger sales for SF recommended that magazines should be displayed well away from the books.

Illustrators have yet to make a name for themselves in such an undeveloped market. The typical fanzine art offering deserves to be passed round a science class but no further. Copies of Eagle's multi-color Dan Dare strip are still prized as a publishing breakthrough. Penguins, who admit that the past year in SF has been "not terribly good for us" plan to market the first strip cartoon novel called "Superslave," half in color, in September. Superslave, who emerges from the sea with a ball and chain seeking his destiny in space and beyond (another Odyssey myth in the making?), sounds like the big brother of either Barbarella or Octobriana. Penguins promise that he and his humanoid companion, Doggo, who can camouflage himself at will but always manages to get the process wrong, will be allegorical and witty, "great fun for both kids and adults." New Wave addicts might expect to find it terrible but the critics will probably lap it up. Penguins, incidentally, are publishing the SF author Michael Moorcock's "A Cure for Cancer" as a mainstream novel. "It jumps the category," they say.

The Science Fiction Foundation is trying to lead publishers toward new worlds, though secretly it might like to take a

ray gun to them. Two publishers are bringing out reprints in collaboration with the Foundation. But "I don't want to become a PR man to publishers" says Nicholls: "We are already doing a lot to help them."

The small groups of students and adults who attend Nicholls' lectures occupy an iota of his time compared with inquiries which the Foundation has stirred up from outside. Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies is funding a ten-minute color video film on SF and two Foundation members spoke on utopias at Newcastle University town and country planning department's conference on possible futures in February. Philip Strick, the SF film maker, an associate management committee member of the Foundation, has been running an SF course for London university for the past three years and at present has six students sitting for a sessional certificate in SF.

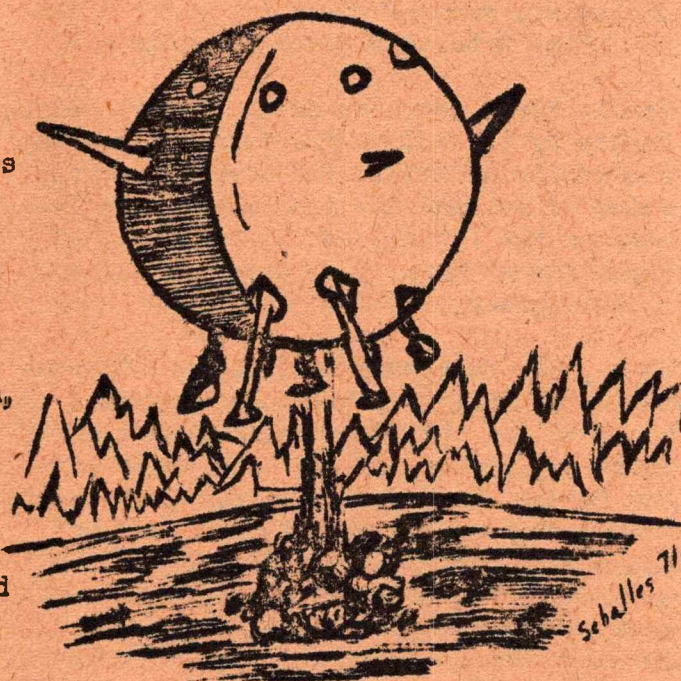
The Foundation's mobile book exhibition is touring universities and an SF readership survey, something which publishers should have invested in long ago, is under way. Chris Priest, one of the board members, is going to Belfast to make the first of six 25-minute color film documentaries. This will be on Bob Shaw and James White, two SF writers of opposing religious faiths whose authorship has survived the bullets.

A research library is slowly being accumulated which includes the donated papers of the late Samuel Shenton, president of the Flat Earth Society. These have attracted about 50 inquiries from seekers after truth, a slight embarrassment to Nicholls who has a secret conviction that the earth is round.

A "Peopling of Space" conference is due to be launched by the Foundation in 1974 timed in between solar eclipses in an attempt to encourage scientist speakers. Devotees of both science fact and science fiction will discuss means of putting out radio messages to distant planets. With at least 100 billion stars up there, they reckon that someone, somewhere, will want to tune in. Other conference topics which may sound far out to mainstream readers have already been relegated as SF cliches. Like the effect of earth's over-population on inter-planetary migration. The time-shrinking effect within an accelerating

mass relative to its point of departure. Genetic engineering versus genetic selection. Communication problems between species (with reference to recent research on whales and dolphins). The possibility of non-carbon based life-forms. And the possibility of peopling space within half a century.

Science fiction or science fantasy? Ever since Hugo Gernsback, the American SF magazine editor, coined the term Science Fiction in 1926, the genre has been lampooned as unscientific. In the main, it has been unscientific. The magazines of the Thirties, Forties and Fifties, when the Superman syndrome was at its height, offered heroic fantasies which, if they claimed credibility at all, cited technological advances simply as an excuse. Those were the days of "space opera" when Space Station Zero was just another name for the OK Corral of the Westerns. There were some good adventure yarns, with hard plotting, gritty syntax, and one-dimensional characters who stretched what fans call the "sense of wonder" to its limits.



One wonders whether, had Gernsback and his successors pinned the SF tag onto Aesop's fables, Shakespeare's "Tempest," Orwell's "1984," or Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings," these works would have suffered the same critical opprobrium. Fantasy can expand our understanding of the real world by relating to it metaphorically. To require myths, fables,

and parables to plead scientific justification is to misjudge them. Not that all SF asks to be taken seriously. Some of it is just fun.

Instead of disowning the SF tag, modern speculative writers have found themselves forced to accept its challenge. The accelerating pace of technological change has outfantasied the fantasists. Ray guns have been outmoded by lasers, robots by computers, and, above all, interplanetary travel, if only to the moon, is now a reality. Take this for a modern fable. It comes from an editorial by Ben Bova in this month's Analog, the American SF magazine:

"On the weekend that Mariner 9 went into orbit around Mars, I received a call from the New York office of the BBC. A pleasant-voiced young woman asked if the editor of Analog would be willing to make some comments, via transoceanic telephone, about the Mars flight for a BBC radio show.

"What we want is something wild and far-out...you know, something science-fictional, sort of crazy."

"The interview never took place."

Moral: "Even prophets of the future can be thrown by the BBC." The joke, of course, was really on Bova. The shrill, mocking voice of science has been echoing in the ears of the fantasists for decades, but for a few of them, the interview has yet to take place.

Today, accurate speculation, even if presented as analogue, has been enshrined as the ideal of the so-called New Wave of SF writers. Instead of sticking a pin into the future, they draw graphs. The move is away from escapist thrillers and their carelessly projected worlds filled with spurious interplanetary hardware towards more meticulous predictions. More and more authors are asking not only "What might happen?" but "What will it really be like?", the emphasis having shifted from the "hard" technologies...like rocket propulsion which gave birth to space opera, to "soft" technologies...like sociology and psychology. From outer space to "inner" space. The vogue word today is "relevance."

The most respected SF authors have been writing relevantly for years. As early as

1959, Isaac Asimov, usually classified as hardcore rather than New Wave, described in "The End of Eternity" a technician whose job it is to visit different centuries in time, making delicate adjustments to cause and effect in order to keep eternity on an even keel. On a gross level, it is just a yarn. On a subtle level, it is an examination of the possibilities and pitfalls of social engineering (don't believe it isn't already taking place!), and the human fallibility with which it must be carried out. John Brunner's Hugo award winning "Stand on Zanzibar" (1969) is set only 38 years ahead and deals with population control and genetic engineering. Christopher Priest's "Fugue for a Darkening Island" (1972) describes an England under a right-wing regime racked by a civil war caused by a massive influx of Africans following a nuclear disaster which, heaven help us, could happen tomorrow.

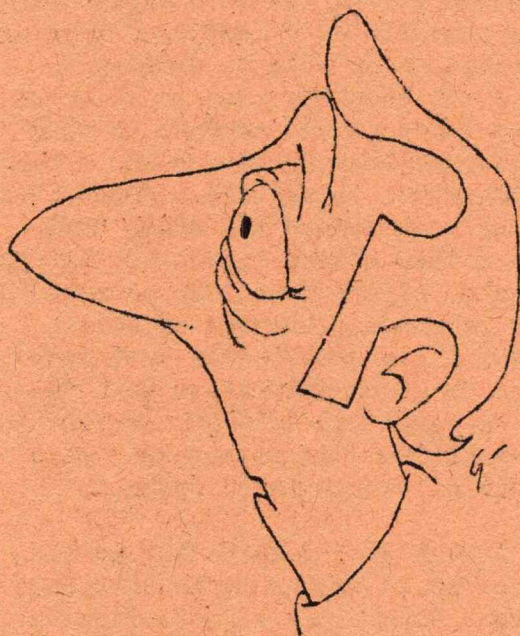
In a critical essay, James Blish traces the trumpetings of the New Wave as a literary movement to its advocacy by the American Judith Merrill, who made her reputation with her annual "Best SF" anthologies. He points out that in her eleventh anthology in 1966 she seized on and announced an earlier proposal of Heinlein's that henceforth the S in SF should mean Speculative.

Science, Heinlein said, is not absolutely essential to science fiction — a creed still denounced as heretical by many fans. Some fear that the progression from hardcore science fantasy to science fiction to sociological speculation will end with SF degenerating into a pretentious realism, drowning itself in the mainstream.

The controversy over the importance of science content has become something of a red herring. What seems to bother fans more is that as the New Wave becomes more interested in the present, the sense of adventure in the future is in danger of being lost. It is possible to write "science fiction" which has nothing to do with the future. Like the New Wave pioneer J. G. Ballard's short story fantasy "Prima Belladonna" (1956) in which the hero's girl friend, a mysterious genetic mutant, seduces one of the singing plants which he sells for a

living. The style is racy, polished and realistic but even the Khan-Arachnid orchids tuning up under the UV lamps cannot disguise the fact that the hero's world is unmistakably the present. There is no juxtaposition of present and future. It is more a clever mainstream story than part of the literature of technological change.

Science, of course, is going to be a pressing theme for a long time to come. Although at times the New Wave seems more interested in stylistic experiment than Moskovitz's maxim that SF writing must start from a precise scientific base, the sciences themselves are breathing new life into fiction by becoming more speculative. Due no doubt to what the fans call "future shock," scientists have become less content simply to analyze past phenomena and are more aware of the need to assess noumena, potentialities.



They are a pessimistic lot. As pessimistic as the New Wave which has pensioned off the herioc Supermen and invited us to contemplate Doom without them. Will there be race riots? ask the sociologists. Will we manufacture Einsteins? ask the

geneticists. Will we all starve? ask the economists. Or go mad? ask the psychologist. The questions are the same both in fact and fiction. It would surely not have been all that surprising if the recent debate between the authors of The Ecologist's "Blueprint for Survival" and the editor of Nature had taken place between the covers of an academic science fiction journal. (The Ecologist's New Wave maps of hell v. Nature's hardcore fantasy that Superman will win in the end.)

The convergence of the two cultures of science and literature has already sparked some comical rivalry between SF and the new pseudo sciences like futurology. John Brunner says: "I joined the World Future Society of Washington but resigned because I couldn't see anything in their bulletins which was not in SF 20 years ago." He adds: "The broad trend of SF is irresistible. It must go where speculation is strongest."

Prediction is a dicey business. Science fiction as a whole has not earned itself a reputation for accuracy. But then neither has science — precise predictions forged in narrow scientific disciplines will always be vulnerable to unknowns which only the instinct and the imagination could have foreseen. This is where SF comes in. Not because prediction should be the writer's responsibility but because imaginative writing is fun. SF is a medium which invites us to express what we feel in our bones will happen, rather than what statistics tell us to expect. And who is to say which will be more accurate in the end? The rest of our lives will be spent in the future. It is a pity that more of us are not writing about it today.

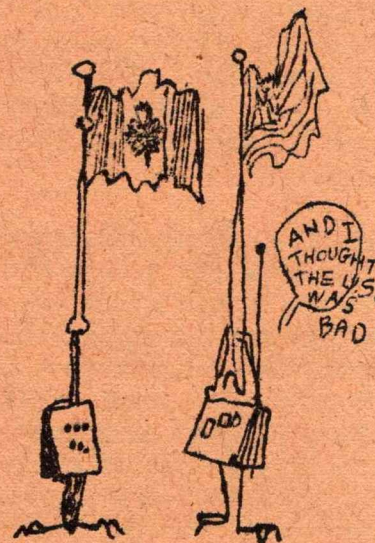
——John Windsor.



LEON TAYLOR'S SHAFT

THE
SHAFT

BEING A REGULAR COLUMN
COMPRISING COMMENTARY
ON "SF" ISSUES OF THE DAY,
"F" ISSUES OF THE NIGHT,
OR MERELY AS A PILLORY FOR THE INCAUTIOUS . . .



I see that John Baxter has replied : very gratifying. A lot of the pros seemed to have been scared off by the SFR-style madness, where any sort of discussion over a literary work turns into a Holy War: but it needn't be that way, unless some fans or writers have pathological attachments to their typewritten words (a sane, healthy conceit is one thing. But writing in congratulatory locs about your own stuff is where I draw the line!). God knows that a writer has the write (ulp) to defend his honor: just as long as he remembers that his honor is probably a figment of the imagination anyway.

But back to Baxter...yes, I think that he contributed an excellent pithy paragraph, thanks to Mervyn Barrett, who should run for solicitor or something. I hadn't meant to pass judgement on Jack Arnold -- as Baxter suggests, I haven't experienced enough of him to say anything but mum -- but the afternoon that I was reading SF IN THE CINEMA the SF-film Revenge, etc. just happened to be on, so I watched it to see how my opinion would jibe with Baxter's on the merits of that one film. And I tried to transmit my opinion as honestly as possible: sorry if I wasn't too coherent, but what do you expect of a boy who was raised by the cows?

At first I almost agreed that "bits of dialogue and facetious remarks aren't an argument" but later I decided, well, yes

they are. Reviewing, naturally, is all about the impact of a work of art: and impact is what lingers with you. Even though there were a few nice directorial shots in the film -- I mentioned some of my favorites in my article -- I must frankly admit that what had real impact on me was those golden moments of piss-poor dialogue, abysmal acting and a handful of ludicrous situations. Maybe it is my natural bent toward the stage that makes me notice things like that, but yes, those faults affected me just as much as Arnold's occasional touches of talent (note that I say occasional, just as I qualified my above criticisms with "moments". Revenge was neither a sustained work of brilliance or ineptitude; most of it left me rather indifferent.)

I think I know what John Baxter is asking of me: he is asking me to overlook the "cliche situations...amateur casts" and direct my attention to the way Arnold handles it all. It is not an unreasonable request. I am emotionally affected, for instance, when a high school class puts on an enthusiastic rendition of Our Town -- never mind the beginning flaws -- or when an amateur orchestra really gets involved in something like New World Symphony -- altho you can hear all along the clarinet squeaking like a waterpipe. But there are two objections here. One is that, objectively (or relatively so), I would have to note the mispronounced

and misphrased speeches, the nervous clar-very happy.
inet in a review: for me to leave that
out would be as unfair as for me to omit
the mention of the enthusiasm. So naturally I made ado about some of Revenge's
shitty materials: they were there.

Second, John Baxter evidently found Revenge imbued with a sense of zest or something that could enable him to overlook some of its rather mandatory faults (I hope I'm not reading in to him anything he did not intend to say). I'm cheerful for him: I hope that he sees a thousand more movies that impart to him such a feeling. But I didn't get that out of Revenge; as I said, most of it left me rather indifferent. It had nothing to do with me being prejudiced: I enjoy a lot of hack films, especially Errol Flynn ones, and if I had any preconception of Revenge it was favorable, based as it was on John Baxter's critical perceptions, which I substantially admire. Now maybe I'll get turned on by a future Arnold or Curtiz or Leisen film: I don't know. But I didn't get a charge out of Revenge, and I'm rather confused as to why John Baxter objects to that. Facetious remarks? That was the way I saw the flick. Have I misunderstood something?

And the Queen save me before I ever regard the NY Daily News as "an infallible arbiter of opinion on the cinema". That was a faulty inference, as they say. It was simply that at the time I had a book of collected News movie reviews, and I looked up the comments on Arnold. I quoted the critique (well, not really. "Opinion"?) of Monster On the Campus because I thought that it provided an interesting contrast, and Steven Scheurer does carry a certain amount of popular influence. No adulation in my quoting him, however.

Best to avoid the issue of whether a pecuniarily-motivated creator will produce his best works of art, I think. That sounds like it could lead Mr Baxter and I into philosophical differences, which would be bereft of the point. Enough for me to say that I agree that Hitchcock has done some fine stuff and got paid for it, and that both phenomena probably make him

I hope that John Baxter also noted all the nice things I said about his book, because I did learn muchly from it. Sorry that he feels that most of the sfial response has been superficial and shallow: could I suggest that perhaps one way for him to remedy the situation would be to contribute more in the fanzines' direction about his beloved field, sfilm? He is quite knowledgeable on it, God knows: I think some further stuff from him would make fascinating reading. For instance, I wish that he would take issue with my knocking at his premise that there is really no such creature as the sfilm: his is an interesting theory, and unless he has changed his mind I'd like to hear more.



There was no need for Jack Wodhams to label Cy Chauvin as a "pretentious twit", or for any of the other various members of the lettercol to insinuate him as a Chauvinist, etc. I damn well disagreed with every word Cy uttered about abortion, but that hardly gives me the right to draw inferences about his character that I know to be false anyway. For the record, Cy is about as far from being "pretentious" as anything I can think of: and to employ ad hominem arguments in debate is pretty much dirty tactics. Why can't we simply disagree with someone and await a reply? None of us seems to be so gifted with Perfect Truth that we can afford to ignore different arguments, different approaches. And to descend to personal accusation is nothing more than an attempt to shut the guy up: which is stupid.

It's ironic but true, as Ted White notes, that altho paper gives the advantage of thinking before leaping, we too often decide to lay it on anyway.

I can do without rolling heads.

-----Leon Taylor.

BOOK REVIEWS

YOUNG DEMONS

(Edited by Roger Elwood & Vic Ghidalia) -
AVON - #V2434 - 160pp., 75¢.

Reviewed by Ed Connor

This is a new collection, mostly of old favorites like Ray Bradbury's "Small Assassin" and Kris Neville's "Bettyann," but containing such recent material as Joe Hensley's "Shut the Last Door."

 Ah! You already know that the "Demons" are children! Naughty, even nasty ones...with unusual abilities. Hensley's Willie can hate, can attain revenge, just retribution; but at the ending the author lifts the story beyond that with his brief and clever look into the brooding Willie's mind. "Sradni Vashtar" by "Saki" is an oldie -- unread, perhaps, by most fans -- which is also, for all of its charm, concerned with hate, that of a 10-year-old for his female guardian. And her comeuppance arrives in quite an unusual way.

"Bettyann" is the longest of the book's tales and since it is a classic, of haunting simplicity and masterful construction, I'll merely suggest that you read it if you haven't yet done so. R.A. Lafferty's "Transcendent Tigers" ends on a note which shows how much fun some kids get from destruction: just make a game of it & anything goes. Anne McCaffrey's "Apple" concerns a crime occurring in a society where parapsychological Talents are registered. But the criminal is a "wild" Talent and leads everyone a merry chase that ends in tragedy. This surely must be one of Anne's best productions. "Games" by Katherine MacLean starts out in a very pedestrian way, gradually shifting gears into the real thing. And the gears shift, and mesh, & you end up enjoying the "game." Jack Williamson's "Jamboree" gives a hint of things to come, if humans don't shape up; we could use a "Pop," such as we find in this yarn, today...if not the "Mother." Ted Sturgeon's intro to the book is excellent.

The cover painting is itself a classic. It should very effectively contribute to the sales total of "Young Demons."

-----EC.

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THE RUINS OF EARTH

(ed. by Thomas M. Disch) - BERKLEY - N2175
- 95¢.

Reviewed by Don Blyly

The Ruins of Earth is supposed to be a collection of ecology-related SF. The book is divided into four sections: The Way It Is, Why It Is The Way It Is, How It Could Get Worse, and Unfortunate Solutions. In his introduction, Disch admits that the first section isn't even SF, unless you let the S stand for Speculative.

The Way It Is consists of Deer in the Works, a very nice story by Vonnegut; Three Million Square Miles, a very short, unimpressive story by Gene Wolfe; and Closing With Nature, a long story by Norman Rush. Closing With Nature is by far the worst story in the book -- I had to force my way thru it. It embodies almost everything bad that anybody has ever said about speculative fiction.

Why It Is The Way It Is consists of The Plot to Save the World, a short, pleasant story by Michael Brownstein; Autofac, a very good story by Philip K. Dick which I consider second best in the collection; Roommates, the best story in the collection, by Harry Harrison; and Groaning Hinges of the World, a pleasant but unimportant fantasy by R.A. Lafferty that really didn't belong in the collection.

How It Could Get Worse has more stories than any other section. It starts with Gas Mask, a fairly good story by James D. Houston, followed by a fairly well handled New Wave-ish story by Geo. Alec Effinger called Wednesday, November 15, 1967. The Cage of Sand by J.G. Ballard is one of the best stories in the book. Accident Vertigo by Kenward Elmslie is a poorly handled New Wave-ish story. The Birds by Daphne du Maurier was a very good story that was ruined for me by the movie -- I kept expecting things to happen that didn't happen, and the shock value was missing for me.

Unfortunate Solutions contains some strange things. Do It For Mama! by Jerrold J. Mundis is an extremely believable story about the day New York tried to make a crime of owning a dog. The Dreadful Has Already Happened by Norman Kagan is a very New Wave-ish story about a drug oriented future society which I didn't understand very well, but wish I could. In fact, when I finished it, I found myself wishing that Kubrick would make a

movie of it. The Shaker Revival by Gerald Jonas deals with a future rock group that starts a new religion. It was interesting, but the ending was sort of a let-down. America the Beautiful by Fritz Leiber ends the book in a strange way. America has wiped out pollution, created the great society, funnelled all hostilities into small wars scattered around the world, and a poet from England can't stand it.

Out of sixteen stories, I thought four were either too poor or too trivial to have been included. Not too bad, I guess. If Disch had limited himself to SF and not published the first section, the score would have been better -- one bad and one trivial story out of twelve. And there is a lot of good stuff here. I'd say the basic idea behind the book was good, and the story selecting was fair.

-----DB.

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NEW WORLDS QUARTERLY #4

(ed. by Michael Moorcock) - BERKLEY - N2176 - 95¢.

Reviewed by William G. Bliss

A paperback prozine. Not the greatest sf ever written but a big cut above average on the average. All shorts & long shorts with one exception. Two articles front and back in the book. The Problem of Sympathy by M. John Harrison has to do with the validity of the reader identifying with fictional characters. Attack-Escape by Charles Platt is about how Alfred Bester does his best. If memory serves me correctly, some of that was very good. And, close to the appendix is a short list of relevant data on the authors herein. The cover is a typical sf pb cover -- abstract and having nothing to do with the contents. Near as I can make out with a magnifying glass, it is by Powles, other illustrators are Mal Dean & R.G. Jones & Roberts. Starting back through from the front, The Exploration of Space by Barrington Bayley is about a chess board that is used as a landing field by people from another universe. Simon by William A. Woodrow is an old well worn plot about a man who wakes up in a human bee hive and has been chosen as the male of the year, but unfortunately that is good for only one command performance. The First of Two Raped Prospects by Marek Obtulowicz is a strange thing. Somewhere in all of that there should be great drama, but this reviewer was unable to ferret it out. And that fetches us up to the novelette, 334 by Thomas M. Disch. It is written for the most part in inverse flashback -- the reader needs patience and it is rewarded half way through when the pieces of the story start dropping into place. It is about common

people in a common mundane messed up grubby cheapjack near future world, and their aspirations and mundane faunchings are in a world whose horizon is obscured by smog and buildings. The characters are far from dull -- an automobile fetishist -- two lesbians who have a pregnancy problem -- as far as that goes since all of the people in the yarn are common people they have interesting bags of problems which are delved into in depth. The prose is at least as explicit as a typical underground comic book. Quadruple-X-rated sf has come in our time. Alan Aubrey's Man in Transit is similar to A Man Without a Country, it is a latter day thoughtful ironic rendering of the theme. It has to be sf even if not cast in the near future -- a man spends his entire life in airports and on airplanes and without one crash. John Sladek fascinatingly explores locked rooms in The Locked Room Mystery. Weihnachtabend by Keith Roberts keeps running through the mind after it is read. It presumes England & Germany made an alliance in the thirties (at least that can be assumed) that lasted. A Nazi foxhunt in merry olde England can be very unusual indeed. Atrocious even. Livewire literature -- but definitely not for the faint-hearted or squeamish-gutted. And that brings us around to where we came in -- the excellent article on Bester, how such stellar talent is expended on commercial scripts like soap operas for money....

-----WGB.

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ASSIGNMENT IN TOMORROW

(ed. by Fred Pohl) - LANCER - 78699 - \$1.25

Reviewed by Ed Connor

Sixteen stories. Let's first examine the last one in the book: Philip José Farmer's "Mother." (The very same "Mother" referred to by Leslie Fiedler on page 12 of this issue of Moebius.)

Human mother and son are the only survivors from their crashed ship. Exploring the strange planet, the son is captured, by an alien mother. Farmer's skill as a writer is outstanding in this piece, which was first published nearly 20 years ago. His descriptions are terse and detailed; his narrative anything but tedious; one becomes absorbed in this strange tale by fascination with what the author is accomplishing as much as by sympathy (and the suspense of wondering how it'll all end) for the characters involved. And then, when the end has come, one can see why "Mother" must be considered a genuine classic and perhaps, as I did, say "Incredible!"

Other tales of this anthology are, briefly, old master Jack Williamson's

"The Peddler's Nose," H.L. Gold's "A Matter of Form," Richard Wilson's "Back to Julie," Fredric Brown's "Hall of Mirrors," Alfred Bester's "5,271,009," Lester del Rey's "Helen O'Loy," Ray Bradbury's "Subterfuge"

(still a gem after nearly 30 years), Ted Sturgeon's "Mr. Costello, Hero," plus yarns by James Schmitz, Algis Budrys, Peter Phillips, Fletcher Pratt, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., C.M. Kornbluth, & Jerome Bixby.
—EC.

RECENT NEW FANZINES

RICHARD E. GEIS #1 - \$1.- from R.E. Geis, P.O. Box 11408 - Portland, Ore. 97211. 44 pages containing over 20,000 words, which is a fabulous thing all by itself. The writer alternately comes across as cutsey, snotty, clever, dense, acrimonious, coarse, honest to a fault, parboiled, gross, gluttonous, morally effete, and — while the over-all impression gained is one inducing sympathy for the writer (after all, we all have our problems, faults & hangups) — Geis has lost maybe 90% of the humor of his SFReview ramblings by reducing "Alter Ego" to near-impotency. Nevertheless: well worth the \$ & not to be missed! Geis, by the way, has gone home to Mama.

AFRICAN #1 - (50¢, trades, etc.) from Nick Shears (address page 54). RAY BRADBURY special issue...loaded with material about Ray's life & works including a section of reviews of Bradbury books by Paul Walker, Kingsley Amis, John Alderson, etc. Locs by Ted White, Ron Clarke, Mike Glicksohn, etc. A first class zine.

MASIFORM D #2 - (50¢, trades, contris, etc.) From Devra Langsam - 250 Crown St. - Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225. 72pp, Austin cover, very neatly done. Partly STAR TREK oriented. This issue features a lengthy "Glossary of Darkovan Terms" by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

OSFIC QUARTERLY #1 - (50¢ trades, etc.) From John Douglas, 808 Kingston Road - Toronto 260, Ont., Canada. Very well done. Contains a wide variety of stuff, mostly by Toronto fans (Glicksohns, etc.).

AN #1 - The monthly newszine of SFFC (Science Fiction Fan Club). Director and Editor is Sezar Erkin Ergin - Bakanliklar - P.O. Box 56, Ankara (G-10), Turkey. 18pp (half in English, half in Turkish). Contains news of all categories of SF in Turkey, plus reviews of fanzines received, letters, more. May be procured for trade, International Reply Coupons, etc.

REGURGITATION SIX #2 - (25¢, Loc, contrib.) From Norman Hochberg (address p. 46). 8pp-plus. Featured is an illuminating "Index to Locus Collators," editor-com-

mentaries, etc.

ANANT #2 - from Penny Hansen - 1607 Lincolnwood - Urbana, Ill. 61801. For trade, Loc and so on. An interesting concoction, featuring "Harlan Ellison in Springfield" by Don Blyly. Also has reviews and letters.

AXOLOTL EXWARD #2 - (Trade, Loc, contributions of art, columns, articles, poetry, stories. (No money.)) Mike Scott's covers are both fine productions. Miscellaneous material is by Ben Indick, Wolfenbarger, etc., with letters, cartoons by Schalles & other stuff.

MADRGAL #1 - Steve C. Carrigan - 158 Sutton Common Road - Surrey, U.K. 14pp, free; a collection of oddments, including poetry.

GARUDA #2 - (20¢, etc.) - Terry Ballard, 3816 N. 32nd St., #86 - Phoenix, Ariz. 85016. A genzine with some pretty good material (a Con report, interview of Zenna Henderson) and some not so good.

AWRY #2 - (2/\$1 or Loc, etc.) - Dave Locke - 915 Mt. Olive Dr., #9 - Duarte, Ca. 91010. A quirky zine with stuffing from the editor, Ed Cox, Tina Hensel, and various readers. Any resemblance to "Pelf" is unavoidable.

AXOLOTL EXWARD - No, this isn't a review of #3...yet. I merely forgot to put the address in up above: It comes from Gary S. Mattingly - 207 Marlatt Hall - Manhattan, Kansas 66502.



EDITORIAL NOTES

We can thank London's George Hay for getting permission from The Guardian for the reprinting of FI IN THE SCI.

George is "Features Editor" of FOUNDATION (A Review of Science Fiction), which originates with the SF Foundation of the North East London Polytechnic. If you do not yet have a copy of the first issue of this fine printed publication it may be had (50p in U.K.) from Transcripta Books - 30 Craven St. - London WC2.

The Foundation's series of documentary video-tape films is due to begin about this time, under George Hay's overall production & using the video facilities of the NE London Poly; various SF writers will be teamed with interested & relevant scientists/academics.

(Hmm...I really should note that the 1st issue of FOUNDATION might be sold out.)

*

Congratulations to Harry Harrison for his August F & SF condemnation of Alexei & Cory Panshin's error-packed review in the March F & SF. Panshin's reply is printed & is a neat example of how to sidestep facts.

Ted White also picked up a little flak (in the August '72 issue of Fantastic) from Star Trek fans, who resented some of the high-handed invective Ted used in the April issue. In fact some of the remarks White made in re Star Trek were crass; he slips several more in between the letters in the current ish. However, I imagine that attempting to make him see the light would be as fruitful as bashing your head against a stone wall.

*

The hunt for the Loch Ness Monster may be cooling off. The Bureau that has been investigating for 10 years -- from a trailer beside the lake, with permission of the authorities -- has been denied a request to erect a permanent station. And the permit for the temporary post, says a recent story from Scotland, has not been renewed & the "official" watch for Nessie has ended.

(But...wait! If this story was as garbled as the one about the recent April Fool joke "monster," which intelligence just rec'd from Roger Waddington tells us

had the incorrect zoo, or the wrong branch or somesuch, listed, we are at least lucky in that there are only two possible alternatives: either the Bureau's watch for Nessie will continue, or it won't.)

*

This issue is being wound up late on the 4th of July. Firecrackers have been going off all day (all week, for that matter), even though not legally. A little while ago (maybe 10:45) a big cracker went off almost against the back of the house, causing the cat to bound out of the kitchen window in disgust. I investigated. Several other hot powder rolls shot, in rapid succession, into the black night of the yard over my head, blowing up at fairly close range. Some slob across the alley was lighting the wads, quickly dropping them into a tube with a spring release, and projecting them at random all over the neighborhood. (Last evening another near-drunken adult neighbor, shrieking with laughter, was tossing salutes out his front door at random; the dog next door bolted in terror, disappearing into the distance & not returning for an hour or more.)

*

Pecon 3 (July 7-8-9) occurs at just the right time for me to hand out copies of this issue to attendees who'd get it anyway. I've done this once before, at Pecon 1 two years ago, but only as an afterthought to one or two people (the others had already been mailed out). Now, though, I expect to hand out copies to at least 12 persons, maybe as many as 15 or 20. Mayhap some other fanzine editors will bring copies of their latest issue. The Coulsons plan to be here, but will Donn Brazier come? The Luttrells, Railee Bothman, Couches and who knows who else from Missouri -- all representing a mind-boggling array of fanzines.

And of course Tucker from the Bloomington area, fronting for certain unmentionable Apazines and/or underground literature in general. The mind reels at the thought of whom, among fandoms' far-flung legions, might pop into the Peré. Oh well -- remember that the Rooster-Booster is coming...& not to Pecon 3. Heh.

O O
L C L
O O



PHILIP JOSÉ FARMER

(4106 Devon Lane - Peoria, Ill. 61614)

Leslie Fiedler's review of TARZAN ALIVE appeared in the Book Review section of the L. A. Times, April 23, 1972. As you will see, it's actually more of a review/analysis of my career as writer, or my motives, than of the Greystoke book. The goofy looking Tarzan riding the obviously phallic rocket ((used to illustrate the Times version of the article; see pages 10-14. --Ed.)) looks like the work of Wood, the MAD comic book illustrator. The first illustration, turned in by an artist whose name I do not know, was rejected. Not for its artistic or esthetic merits, or lack thereof, however. It showed Jane going down on Tarzan. Too strong for the L.A. Times, though I wouldn't be surprised to see it pop up in The Staffer(?). This is, if I remember correctly, the present title of the L.A. Free Press. Something like that, anyway.

I'm trying to get the original artwork for the first-offered illustration or at least a copy.

Leslie Fiedler had been lecturing at the University of Illinois a few days before I returned from my vacation in Salem, Virginia. (Where I was investigating rumors of the resurrection of the Confederate underground.) Fiedler phoned from the university and asked if he could visit me for several hours on May 7. Naturally, I said yes. For those who don't know, Fiedler is a very distinguished literary critic, an instructor in English at the University of New York, Buffalo, and is author of the critical essay-collections, AN END TO INNOCENCE, LOVE AND DEATH IN THE AMERICAN NOVEL, and his recent THE STRANGER IN SHAKESPEARE. He has written several novels, and he is author of GETTING BUSTED, which recounts his experiences after being accused of having drugs on his premises without notifying the authorities.

Fiedler told me that his article in the Times was cut by the editors so as to change the sense of some sentences or deprive them of certain modifying clauses. He is also not responsible for the title of the piece. Fiedler feels that he "discovered" me. His companion on the trip told me that he has a nose for picking out talented writers years before anybody else finds them. I replied that I hoped that didn't mean that I smelled badly.

After reading the article, I felt more like Kilgore Trout than ever. But I was pleased with it, even though I don't agree with some interpretations. On some counts, however, Fiedler struck home. He did make some errors in the publishers of some books and the prices, in saying I'd been born in Peoria, and that I'd been in L.A. 25 years. But it's the spirit, not the letter, that counts.

Fiedler had also read the New York Times review of TARZAN ALIVE, and he agreed with me that the reviewer did not understand the book and that, even though he made fun of it, he was obviously fascinated by it.

JOHN BANGSUND

(GPO BOX 4946, MELBOURNE 3001 - AUSTRALIA)

...George (Turner) is something of a phenomenon: a novelist who has a secure place in the history of Australian literature, but who also knows a hell of a lot about science and (as he mentions) has been reading sf for over 40 years. His novels are all mainstream: A STRANGER AND AFRAID, YOUNG MAN OF TALENT, THE CUPBOARD UNDER THE STAIRS, A WASTE OF SHAME, THE LAME DOG MAN and — as yet unpublished (owing entirely to the depressed state of Australian publishing: it's his best completed work to date) — TRANSIT OF CASSIDY.

Partly through my constantly dogging him, mainly because he feels like it, he is at present writing a science fiction novel. I have read the first 80-odd pages in typescript, and it is magnificent. Knowing George, it could take him two years to finish it: he is an absolute perfectionist. But I will predict that when (and if) he completes it, this novel will become one of those unclassifiable classics of sf: the kind of book like LAST AND FIRST MEN, BRAVE NEW WORLD and EARTH ABIDES which stands completely by itself.

I regard it as the ultimate Turner novel (for the moment, anyway), since for the first time he has applied to a work of fiction the whole of his knowledge, insights and interests. He thinks differently — it is "an intellectual challenge!"

Every weekend we talk about the book. Every weekend I say something inane which sets him thinking. Tonight I mentioned my enjoyment of the books of Walter Starkie, and he said "Who?", and I expounded a bit, and suddenly there was a new slant on the novel: the alien culture in a different world. He was off. A possible develop-

ment in the story, something to mull over. I stopped talking about Starkie, even though I had several anecdotes ready. I instantly stopped being surprised that George hadn't heard of the man — and there are very very few literary figures he hasn't read, doesn't know about. I just stopped and listened to him developing a theme, which might or might not eventually appear in the novel.

Even if one day I write something worthwhile myself, I will be more proud that I was a friend of George Turner.

WILLIAM ROTSLER

(8420 Ridpath Drive - L.A., Calif. 90046)

I find myself writing a letter to a fanzine. Remarkable! I do this about twice a year whether I want to or not, and usually I don't. But if I don't sit here writing I must either (1) go out in the backyard and skim the pool and that means I will get involved with the four (yes, four) nude girls lying there sunbathing. And that will keep me from writing an article I have in mind and if I don't make money (instead of girls) I will starve and therefore not have the strength to make girls. Or (2) I must write the article and it is a well-known truth that writers hate to write and since I have been writing for money instead of fun-in-fanzines I have become aware of that truth.

We now have a guest editorial from a naked lady who just came in wondering if it was all right to drink the beer she found in the icebox. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Antoinette Maynard, better known as "Supertongue"...

Hi.

That was the extent of her vocabulary and attention span. She is hitting me on the back, not noticing that her left boob is in my face. How can I type like that, Sup? (Pron. "soop")

She doesn't seem to care, well, would you like another chance? This is a lady (oops, hard to type around a nude girl) lad who lives in Peoria, in the heartland of America. Talk to him.

I'm not interested in heartland. Higher or lower, yes.

That rambling speech, unprecedented in these pages, was brought to you by

SUPERTONGUE, Lady of Mystery (which means I don't know who she is living with now) who is now lying on the waterbed watching Sesame Street with a 2.75 year old child who is trying to fornicate her. Yes, you read right. He is determined, too. Ah, well, we learn by imitation.

What has all this to do with Moebius Trip? I dunno, I've just run off at the typewriter. Maybe it's to thank you for the Hugo plug. Mainly it is to kill time.

That space indicates a time lapse of approximately 45 minutes, five of which were consumed in pool skimming, ten in eating a bowl of fruit & preparing it, and about twenty minutes lying on a nude girl. Nothing erotic happened so your prurient interest need not activate itself. Why am I telling you all this? You'll only publish it and people will get the wrong idea. This is NOT a den of iniquity, sin, or even sex. Nudity, yes. It's summer and when you have a pool you are very popular & when you have a secluded semi-nudist park you are VERY popular.

#13 had a TERRIBLE cover. Shape up, Ed.

A girl named Terri or maybe Terry just came in and looked over my shoulder and said, "what's that?" in aghast terms. I don't think #13 was a big hit with the naked lady set around here. I did not attempt to explain fanzines or fandom to her. I patted her rear and sent her for a glass of apple juice. Now I must write. I will bill you \$6.50 for this letter at my usual word rates. *1*

1 Hmm...I see why you thought 13's cover subpar: with so much of the real thing you don't accept substitutes.

The Mike Scott cover last issue was partly symbolic, a view of an L.A. of the future, representing "The City as Mother," replete with appropriately suggestive "particulars."

HARRY HARRISON

(2592 Palm Ave, Imperial Beach, CA. 92032)

...Very much enjoyed the Blish interview, Jim is so easy to agree with.

STONEHENGE will be out about July from Scribner's, or if you know a British bookdealer it has already been published there by Peter Davies, Ltd. Plenty of attention in British press, TV. *1*

1 No doubt the Scribner's ed. of your
46

book will be out at the time (or shortly thereafter) most U.S. readers receive this issue of M.T.

NORMAN HOCHBERG

(89-07 209 St, Queens Village, NY. 11427)

...The Blish interview was excellent, your best item this issue and Walker's best interview to date. A very valuable look into Mr Blish (who comes across far more old-line than I imagined) and something sf fans need more of. Is Paul planning on publishing a collection of his interviews.

Donn's pieces are, as usual, well written, except for his tendency to politicize. Like his first triplet I disagree with his positions (and his low-blow at the New Wave) but liked his style especially in "The First Step." Unfortunately, I found the last of the three rambled too much...

...I define sf more by feel than anything else, sort of like the teacher definition of poetry ("Poetry is anything we point to when we say 'this is poetry'.") George Hay uses this definition too. Originally I rebelled at that but last semester I was given a theatre project — "define theatre." I struggled with it for four months, writing definition after definition only to have them rejected by my professor for one valid point or another.

Finally I came to my own conclusion (something that the professor had hinted at in our first few lessons) that theatre had no real definition since it was always changing.

This is, I suspect, where most of the problem in defining sf comes in. Sf readers are, mainly, science oriented and the scientific mind must define and classify things — this is the nature of science.

But this is not the nature of art. I doubt whether much in art can be defined or categorized at all simply because art (because it is art) has very few categories. Try separating theatre into expressionistic, impressionistic, avant garde, non-theatre, dramatic et al and all you get is a page full of arbitrary (and, usually, uncertain categories — even to the categorizer) designations and a big headache.

Most of the theatrical community has long since abandoned any attempt to define itself (then there are the critics...). But science and writing do not mix (phil-

osophy-wise) and so the battle goes on. As far as I'm concerned there is no need to define it....

A word on your art. Your cover irritates me (as do his other two illos). It seems sloppy and has an unfinished look to it. I'm continually shocked by the accuracy of your tracing.... ...how do you get the solid blacks like on page 23? (The slower the drum is turned, the blacker the ink, unless a solid area is too big. However, this must be controlled to prevent excessive "see-thru" and/or getting adjacent typescript too dark.)

Roger — All of Vonnegut's novels are being filmed. As to his college use — an intro to bio ((?)) course at my college uses Cat's Cradle as required reading.

Why the great paranoia about Vonnegut in most of the letters? Okay, Vonnegut has a "nouveau riche" attitude towards sf but, damn it, he doesn't really owe us a thing (us meaning fans). Our reaction sounds like a spoiled kid's. So, now that he's been accepted into the big kid's playground he doesn't want to play in our backyard anymore? So what? That doesn't diminish by one iota my admiration for his immense writing talents.

...Mitch, abstinence and birth control would be fine if they could be legally enforced. Enforcing abstinence would be quite interesting to see. (Vonnegut — oh God!, not him! — has posed the situation in Billy the Poet's story.) And many questions of ethics and the individual's rights are raised by enforced birth control. Abortion, on the other hand, is free to be accepted or denied. The only questions as to rights are raised when a person is forced not to have one....

JOHN W. ANDREWS

(2301 E. Foothill Dr, Santa Rosa, CA. 95404)

...Paul Walker rather covered the ground in his Blish and Matheson interviews. The old riddle came up with Richard Matheson: fantasy vis-a-vis SF. I'm glad I don't have to solve it. No one has found a rule of demarcation. Often the question can be ducked — but then cases bob up like that of Ray Bradbury. Matheson seems to have his feet on the ground — for a writer. Recognizing men for good craftsmen does nothing to solve the ultimate riddle of SF (What is it: what separates it from mainstream?).

I must admit, Bill Wolfenbarger, that illustrations on SF paperbacks are just as

public as prozine covers. Yet p-back covers don't hit fans associated with the artist. Only a small percentage of fans are going to have enough samples by one particular artist for appraisal — if they buy by story or author. I see no way around this. (Do one's criticizing standing before the news-rack, hmmm. Poor man's art gallery.) I could really stand a longish article or two just on recent paperback covers. And don't many publishers fail to cite the illustrator? A crying shame.

Here is an Analog-esque item and a plea for help. In 1966 I'd discovered the game Space War, blazoned in the July 1971 Analog. All these years I've been frustrated in attempts to study the program. None of those who programed the game or played it saved a listing showing how it's done. And many men (women?) must have re-done it for divers small computers.

I have a charitable reason for my latest frantic search. Recently I've volunteered to help set up a community, youth-oriented, non-profit computer center in San Francisco. You can't imagine the headaches, even if one had the wealth. I just won't have time to re-do the game from scratch. I do claim that the kids and apprentice programers — everybody — there will love it. I plan to let them tinker with it, after the program has been tamed (converted for this installation). So, if you fans are "up" on modern things; you or your friends — I offer to pay postage if you send me a readable copy. Please pass the word for me.

...fans see Vonnegut, Jr., as mostly an outsider, resent something about his career, but they appreciate the shadow-play of Kilgore Trout. What is it rubs you the wrong way, fen? I would like to read more reactions. Think I'll bring it up at my next Con. If art resides authentically in the artist (not works), then here could be the touchstone, the qualifying difference, that sets off SF from mainstream. The Sirens of Titan did not bore, but irritated me. Why?

Does K. Trout represent the "dark" side of Vonnegut — the person he had to suppress as he claimed independence of our genre. Do SF writers lock up a frustrated, mainstream self?

Well, I got a complete scattered spectrum on my translation. I am hard put to make a summary reply about essay on Lem: did you all know that Soviet critics

(and scientists and engineers, &c.) have to put on those Marxist trappings? Seasoned readers globally learn to recognize the onset and buzz over it — the way we fiddle around during the TV commercials. Then they take and concentrate on the thread, again.

Yes, Mr Mumper, a message has been presented about Lem's basic drive. Undoubtedly, D. Suvin underlines it, crystal-clear, in the Afterword to Solaris. Namely (as Andreiev implied several times, especially in Lem's "talk"), Lem utterly rejects any closed, final system of values. Man no longer stands as measure of all things; man in any age can do no more than measure his failure or adequacy to explore further. Beyond old limits.

ROBERT BLOCH

(2111 Sunset Crest Dr. - L.A., CA. 90046)

How thoughtful of you to send me Moebius Trip #13! But then the issue itself seems an unusually thoughtful one, locs and all — and its definitions and quoted opinions on sf deserve saving for reference. At the same time, you're not sercon, in the put-down sense of the term — just sensible....

GENE WOLFE

(27 Betty Drive - Hamilton, Ohio 45013)

...The interview with James Blish was excellent, stimulating and entertaining. It is very hard to comment at length on something for which one has nothing but praise — so what can I say but that I wished it were twice as long, and included photographs of both men.

Three in One was interesting, but the center piece ("Happenstance") was so far superior to the others as to harm them by its shadow.

I find it difficult to summon up pity for Jeff Schalles because he is forced to keep Christmas, but he is still young and will discover better injustices as he grows.

Harry Warner Jr.'s was the best letter, but I would like to point out (and this, believe it or not, is a terribly serious thing) to Rick Sneary that the catatonic is conscious, and is highly aware of his (or her) surroundings — this despite the fact that a catatonic individual may remain immobile for years (if permitted to do so) exhibit "waxy flexibility" and so on. The prognosis for these patients is poor, but both cures and

spontaneous remissions do occur.

On second thought Sandra Miesel may have the best letter, although she says, "Surely the psychological criteria Gene Wolfe cites are meant to be applied on a species-wide basis, not individually. Otherwise severe brain injuries etc. could snuff out personhood." She is beginning to get the picture, in other words; she just doesn't like it.

PETER E. PRESFORD

(10 Dalkeith Rd. - Sth. Reddith, Stockport SK5-7EY - Cheshire - England.)

..."Madcap" 1 is soon to be pushed out. Printing troubles now solved. "Madcap" is on the same lines as Lisa Conesa's "Zimri". I am pushing it out for the standard British fan.

"Malfunction" is just that, a micky take at British fans, authors, or anything made of fire, earth and water. "Mal" 2 is also underway. Say, I have one or two contribs from the British colony of America, but would surely like one or two more.... All contribs, send to my address. Would also like to do swap reports with a SF group from USA. This could be a good idea, like an insight to each country's group activity on a small scale. Any-how will send all zines when ready. Moebius -- nice zine, good article on Stan Lem, really liked it. "Not For Prudes" would have gone well in "Malfunction." (If I'd thought of it soon enough I'd've prob'ly told Omar to send it to "Fouler.")

...Can't see what John Piggott's ranting about in your letter col, he don't do too much himself and it wasn't apathy on Ian Maule's part with "Maya", just no duplicator. But since he has just bought one he can't be that apathetic.... Manchester alone now has 5 zines, which ain't too bad, seeing that one year ago it had none. Good old Brain ((sic?)) Robinson's "Hell" is one year old, and so's M.A.D. ((Manchester And District SF Group.))

Don't forget my plug for contribs.

BOB VARDEMAN

(P.O. Box 11352, Albuquerque, N.M. 87112)

...I've noticed a growing tendency in fmz to print articles like Angus Taylor's; footnoted, quotes oozing from every paragraph and terribly Scholarly. Not that I have anything against technical papers, perish the thot, but my ideas of what an amateur publication should be like don't have such serious things in it. I've al-

ways been a bit off on having to use voluminous footnotes anyway (to show that you can steal from many sources as opposed to just one; this is the difference between research and plagiarism) preferring to invent my own quotes.

Taylor's article was certainly well done, bringing out the points in each quoted author's statements for the reader to ponder, but I just can't kick the feeling that it is out of place in a fanzine. 21 quotations? Better in a literary journal where the merit is determined by the number of footnotes. *1*

I was a bit appalled at first, then amused when I read that LAcon was calling for abstracts of papers to be presented. A call for papers from a sf con? Where will it all end?

As much as I hate to do it, I have to fully agree with Paul Walker and his conclusions on Jack of Shadows. Zelazny has shown he can be a marvelous writer with any number of short stories and novels, but recently I've felt very let down. Jack of Shadows could have gone great distances and didn't. The almost hero turns out to be a real bastard, the villains even worse and nothing much really happens. At least nothing happens to involve me with the characters or what they are doing. No emotional ties at all like that forged with Gallinger in A Rose for Ecclesiastes or, really, almost any of Zelazny's major characters (Isle of the Dead, ...And Call Me Conrad).

Have you seen the recent (July issue of Amazing? Rotsler has a story in it, which aside from the myriad tuckerisms, is a damn good story. It seems his talents pervade all of sf-dom.

I was more or less unimpressed with some of his earlier serious sf, but with There's A Special Kind Needed Out There he's shown promise that may develop into

Hugo (writing) quality. Wouldn't that be something to be the only person to even have a 50-50 chance of winning both an art and a written Hugo?

Ah, what talent!

1 I mostly (99%-plus) agree with you that footnotes are out of place in fanzines. Exceptions are as in the case of Angus' opus: the article itself is so interesting that the realization that such a wide variety of sources exists is illuminating to many. Alderson's footnotes in this are at least a hint of sources which most of us may never have heard of.

Another point: Some of the articles in a periodical like Riverside Quarterly (to use a handy whipping-boy) are too far-out themselves, let alone their footnotes. Probably one of the reasons RQ's status as a "fanzine" remains in doubt. (Altho it occurs to me that a fan's idea of what constitutes a fanzine parallels the defining of SF: For all practical purposes each individual has his own definition.)

ANGUS TAYLOR

(482 Markham St., Toronto 174, Ont. CANADA.)

I wholeheartedly support the Australia in '75 bid. What's more, I would like to see the Worldcon go to Stockholm in 1976. I think it would be a sign of fandom's maturity to have two successive Worldcons held outside North America. Up until now "Worldcon" has been rather a misnomer, since the convention has been pretty much a North American preserve which is on occasion generously rented out to "foreigners". (But give it back to us next year, mind!)

...Mike Scott's cover for No. 13 was quite a letdown after No. 12. As a matter of fact, it was pretty awful. He should have quit while he was ahead.

I'm afraid Alex Vitek's article on the elusive sense of wonder managed to elude me completely.

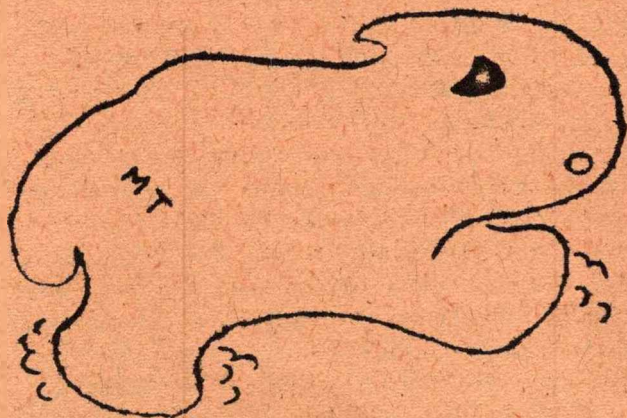
I haven't read TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO, but I hope it was better than its sequel, THE FABULOUS RIVERBOAT, which is nothing more than a hack adventure story. (Ho hum.)

Paul Walker's intelligent contributions are appreciated here....

CY CHAUVIN

(17829 Peters - Roseville, Mich. 48066.)

I've heard that argument consists merely of defining and redefining one's



position on a subject, and as this abortion thing has gone on, I realize how true this is. Basically, this whole issue revolves around just one question: is the fetus a person? If it is, it's guaranteed "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" under the Constitution. If it isn't, there's no debate. Actually, tho, to narrow the matter further, it's a question of when does the fetus become a person. An infant is a person; therefore, a fetus is a person, or at least becomes a person at some specific time in the womb for some specific reason. (Agreed so far?) I believe that this point is at conception, since here a person receives his unique genetic makeup, which determines his major body developments thereafter. If anyone else has a better answer, or an equally as good one, I think it would be very interesting to talk about. But everything else is really a side issue, and there is no point in discussing them. *1*

Let's face it, somebody's views are going to be forced on someone. But if we discuss it, perhaps we can find out what is the most valid view. Here I agree most with Angus Taylor, rather than Sandra Miesel, since I really do believe that the issue must be discussed. We cannot close our minds off to the other's viewpoints...

1 It is argued in certain circles that "conception" merely produces a collection of chemicals, as in the pouring together of the ingredients of the average cocktail, milkshake, etc., or in the piling up of the materials that will go into the building of a house.

It is said that there is a point where the product can be considered "bearable," but it is usually far from the point of "conception."

One might say, however, that the human fetus is unique, holy, etc., as some do.

But is there anything holy about an object which has the equal potential for good...and for evil?

Hence, when any fetus is capable of living outside the womb, and of being trained and influenced mentally, then — and only then — can it be looked upon as a viable being.

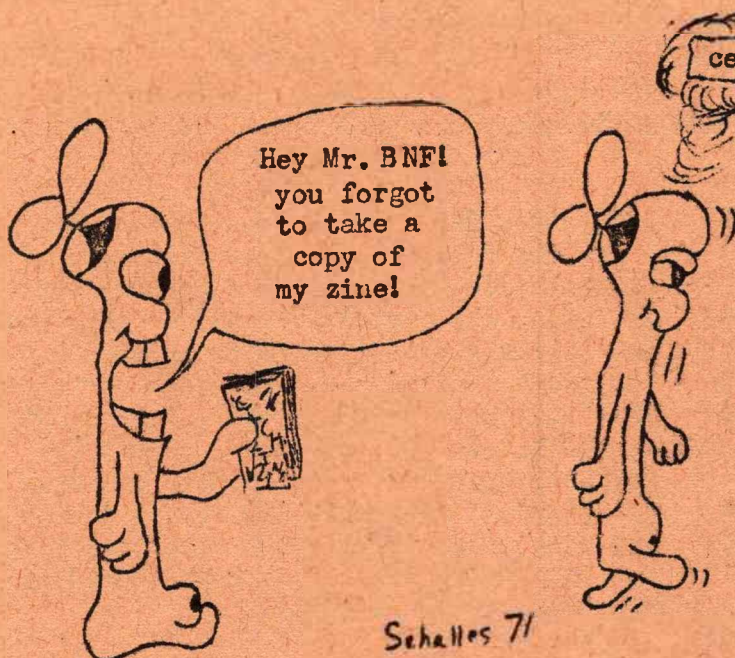
DONN BRAZIER

(1455 Fawnvalley Dr., St. Louis, Mo. 63131)
Thoroughly, thoroughly enjoy Paul

Walker's interviews and James Blish is articulate and has a platform of solid opinion. When Blish says that he thinks ORBIT offers a taste of things to come, I can only sigh, oh, I hope not. I do not want to diffuse and dissipate the clear mountain stream of SF in the homogenized expanse of the wide ocean. When I want stories that are doubtful SF and non-SF, period, there are libraries full; SF, after all, still occupies two-four shelves in one library corner. If I were to re-order my thinking about SF, there are any number of non-SF books I would have to re-classify as SF. It's not that I want to preserve the label, the genre, as a sort of long-lost friend in the cockles of my heart; it's that I don't want to dilute a strong form with some non-science-oriented "great literature" copycat's idea of what he can sell as SF.

Walker states he is more fond of the novel than the short story, and Blish goes on to tell of the financial perils in writing the shorts and that many shorts are simply novels in short form. I'm in agreement with Blish, I guess, from the writer's viewpoint, but if we confine our "short story" to an honest-to-goodness short story a la most of E.A. Poe's unity of character, time, situations, etc. I myself vote for the short story. Besides liking the tight, cleverly executed short-story as a form, there's the advantage of picking up more SF gimmick-ideas per reading hour. Again, the short-story must be genuine SF, and a story — not an incident.

Angus Taylor writes on a topic — though attempted many times and in many places — still about the most interesting subject a group of fans can talk about (staying within SF field). I don't think he's answered the question in any final way, but the work is valuable for bringing together some diverse views. I don't agree with the Asimov idea as quoted. SF need not deal in the future and with society, unless future is so broadly defined that it means that a present day miraculous event or discovery is in the future simply because there is no historic record of this event yet happening. Much of the incident in the FOUNDATION series is not very science-fictional, even though it's all in the future. In novels I don't think business deals, politics, economics, governments, etc. are SFinal; nor is sociology and society as a utopian



Schalles 71

or anti-utopian extrapolation....

Additional note on SF: I'm not such a SCIENCE fiend that I nitpick violations of known science. That's why I permit Bradbury to do anything he wants to do on Mars. What's the difference? He could have called the planet SPLFRSK — doesn't change a thing.

FIAWOL — no. Not the overt activities, etc.; but the mental way of looking at things, the spirit of wonder again, the undying curiosity — these things, yes. Just one little point in Weinberg's article set me thinking of this: common people, the masses, if you will, won't get any future shock. A recent survey (maybe some 8-10 years ago now) showed that 30% of the people asked had never even heard of the atom bomb. They won't get any shock because they don't think of anything, don't read; they eat, sleep, work, and make love. They will eat, sleep, work, and make love no matter what the future brings; or they will be dead, and they won't care or wonder of the reason why. If I sound cynical about the herd, it's because I am. People in FIAWOL are not the type to know the masses; nor are writers, editors, publishers of SF; nor are engineers, technicians, scientists, professors, etc. Get a job tending bar (as I did nights for 4 years); play in a dance band (as I did nights for 3 years); work on a building construction crew (as I did summers for 5 years); work with truck drivers in UPS (as I did nights for 2 years). And serve a hitch in the military service (as I did for 5 years).

Still on the Weinberg point. He said, "Lasers, mas-ers, transistors, and the like have little meaning to most people." I agree but, on the other hand, they have no need to know, don't care to know; if the light goes on when they flick the switch, that's enough information. How many people of the last century knew anything about the steam condenser on a locomotive; the governor, the composition of the gunpowder in a shell, etc.? No, they, too, ate, slept, worked, and made love.

I'm not saying anything here about many of the things in FUTURE SHOCK, the book. However, I did think the book overstated the obvious and exaggerated the effects....

ANDREW STEPHENSON

("Woodlands", Islet Road, Maidenhead - Berks. SL6 8HT, Britain.) *1*

...Bill Rotsler is good, isn't he? — with those few lines he says so much. But Jeff Schalles?...hum, I'll need to see more. Your readers appear to like him though, and there has to be a reason; perhaps it simply happens not to be in MT-12. Sorry Jeff, opinion withheld pro tem. Mike Scott, however: yar, liked the cover very much — the scruffy appearance was most effective;...

It was interesting to read the Stanislaw Lem biography, not so much for what it said about the man himself, or the reviews of his books, but for its inadvertent analysis of Soviet (or should I more correctly say "Russian"?) attitudes to sf and the future. Lem himself seems to be a genuine progressive in his own way; I could imagine him chuckling quietly to himself as he set out to write those social parodies of his, because so many of the themes described I would rate as being conducive to restlessness within the Soviet State and therefore to an urge to independence — when the stars are waiting, who can be bothered with Red tape? Okay, it's larded with idealism and the PartyLine, but what the hell d'you expect from someone who's got to live with it? It's a part of his way of life — Communism Is A Way of Life, so to speak — and you surely don't expect the fellow to get up and denounce his own country, to start preaching the values we in the West hold so dear — they're different over

there, and this is what we've got to accept in reading their stuff. Once we are prepared for the unusual attitudes, and the occasional sermon, Lem's writing ought to appeal to us; both it and homebrew "fan" commentaries on it can be read as being written by aliens (BEM type, that is), and hence my interest in it: to figure out the other guy's viewpoint.

There, that should stir up a bit of dust.

1 You noted that the address I printed was good "until the end of May," but didn't send any other address & I haven't -- after an exhaustive search -- been able to find any other, which I assume would be in or near Manchester....

GEORGE SENDA

(340 Jones St. #1163 -

San Francisco, CA. 94102)

...Paul Walker has graduated from thousands of book reviews to scores of interviews. The Blish interview was excellent, as it gave me an insight into the mental processes of a man whose writings I've long admired and who comes out in print so seldom except in books like *The Issues At Hand* and *More Issues At Hand* (That is to say, that his review-speculation comes to us so seldom. He still writes some damn good SF.) I do wonder, tho, when Walker will ever interview an author/editor/publisher in person. It was suspected in the heyday of SFR, that he was a hoax and I still think so. I miss his book reviews, 'cause I was able to sort out the wheat from the chaff when I bought books.

Donn Brazier is insane, but delightfully so....more!! more!! more!!

Jeeves is also very good this ish and I wish now that he had won TAFF last time.

SHERYL BIRKHEAD

(23629 Woodfield Rd., Gaithersburg, Md. 20760)

First comment - on Jeff's article one specific comment. The Bible hasn't been used in the courtrooms I've been in (now a witness merely raises his right hand and swears to tell the truth). Picky, but just wanted to set that "Item" straight.

One more comment. I finally bought *Solaris* and couldn't really get interested in the book (but I'm still slugging my way through). Wonder if something's wrong with my sense of appreciation since so many other people seemed to enjoy the

book so much?! *1*

1 Your view of *Solaris* seems to predominate among opinions I've read lately.

MIKE KRING

(Rt. 1 Box 223 - Eagle Pass, Texas 78852)

Leon Taylor is full of bullshit.

Since no one (and I do mean no one) can be loving life (sic) over 50% of the time, his entire argument falls to pieces. Taylor, just name me one, just one, person who "...truly loves himself..." over 50% of the time. Got you there, didn't I? Besides, those so-called people who seek out life and attack it are really one of the main causes of all the misery in this fucking world. As Alfred Bester said in *THE STARS MY DESTINATION*:

"Foyle turned on the others. 'That thing's right,' he said, 'and you're wrong. Who are we, any of us, to make a decision for the world? Let the world make its own decisions....'"

Taylor, your so-called lover of himself runs out in the sticks and sees people dying and appoints a committee to see why and pours billions of dollars down the drain because money and good will helps everything. Your lover of himself is so sure that he's doing right (and besides he's better educated and really knows what the shit is going on) he ignores the protests of the people he is upgrading. WHAT THE FUCK HAS UPGRADING EVER DONE FOR ANY GROUP OF PEOPLE?? Except make them miserable. And there is no such thing as brotherhood, buddy. Come down to Texas (only I wouldn't advise it if your skin isn't white). See brotherhood in action. You'd be surprised. This ain't called "Easy Rider" country for nothing, y'know. And just what in the hell can anyone do about wars, pollution, racism, hatred?? Ralph Nader has been going at it for gods know how long and still hasn't made a major hit yet. And he's got lots of congressional muscle and pull. Sheesh. You must be living in a dream world if you think love can conquer anything. I care for me and mine, buddy, and everybody else can just go to hell. And believe me, that's what everyone else thinks, too. So stick that in your peacepipe.

MARK MUMPER

(1227 Laurel St. - Santa Cruz, CA. 95060)

Paul Walker's critique of Love in the Ruins is excellent -- he is beginning to apply himself to extended views of important works. However, his interview with Blish is what I'm concerned with at the moment. Somehow it sets the tone for the rest of the issue: many of the topics mentioned in it appear in other articles, especially in Angus Taylor's piece.

Blish's comments on criticism are fascinating and should be heeded by not a few "critics" looking into sf these days. Righteous moralism enters into too many articles and reviews I run across. Discussion of moral and ethical issues raised by art is of course necessary and welcome, but so often the critic will take one step further and acclaim/condemn the artist for his or her moral stand or opinions. For a recent and aggravating (to me) example, see Pauline Kael's "review" of Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange in the Jan. 1 1972 New Yorker. She takes issue with Kubrick for his "glorification" of violence and anarchy, in effect saying that the film should not be seen, because of its "harmful" effects. In addition to having missed the point of the film entirely, she steps into an area in which she has no right to be, when she questions the ethics of an artist making a statement.

I disagree with Blish that a distinction should be made (in any category of literature) between interest and concern for the present and interest in/concern for the future. Sf in particular is not future oriented to the exclusion of our past and highly real present. All time is within sf's domain. It cannot restrict itself chronologically, because being concerned with man it must concern itself not only with the multitude of futures but also with the past and the present. Indeed, if it did not grasp the reality of the present time, it would have no meaning for us at all.

I also strongly disagree that sf and myth are antagonistic forms. They both serve a basic purpose, and for the most part use the same methods. Both attempt to explain the workings of the universe and man's place in it by utilizing human situations. To do this they must draw on collective knowledge and subconscious feelings. Myth is a very powerful and expressive tool for the sf writer, quite as valuable as a decent knowledge of human

psychology. In fact myth can be likened to the dreams of an entire species or race. The creation of a valid myth is one of the best things a writer can do; to rely upon an already existing myth may at times be a crutch, but I don't agree that such myths are invalid merely because they have been used before. The works of Delany, Zelazny, et.al., are no less effective or beautiful for their adaptation of pre-existing myth structures. After all, most myths are similar or repetitive. They must be, for by their very nature they reflect universal (or at least universally human) truths.

Angus Taylor's speculations on the nature of sf contrast well with Blish's ideas. He reaffirms my belief that sf is not "future oriented" but rather "universe oriented" in that it deals with and accepts the entire spectrum of space and time in its quest for the knowledge and poetry of man. I was surprised to find Asimov restricting sf so in his "definition." At times I feel that Asimov in fact has no idea what sf is for. He often demonstrates a myopic tunnel vision. We may never arrive at a satisfactory definition of sf, but we must remember that it's more free and open than we can imagine -- the limits must constantly be stretched.

Robert Weinberg's thoughts on fandom are a welcome change from the put-downs and up-lifts we're continually buffeted with. Most of them relate to no reality other than that within the writer's head. I agree with his views, but I wish fandom could become more kinetic. It is within our grasp to implement our "future adjustment" in an organized, influential socio-political fashion. I can expect numerous groans from this suggestion, but if there are those who believe we are immune to future shock, why don't we get together and see how we can spread that immunity? We can all learn to create our own roots and cope with the world on our own terms. Anyone interested?

...I liked the yellow cover stock, and I also think Scott is doing a fine job on the covers.

DAVE HULVEY

(Rt. 1, Box 198 - Harrisonburg, Va. 22801)

Your cover was real futuristic, yes indeed. I was literally zonked with the outastic domes. I felt snorched sporadically by the liddle craft hovering so momentarily in the pale brown sky of

the far future. Within these liddle crafts, all these I find are more fun stoned than wondered I, are there the robotic minions of Zontar, the Thing From Venus? Or, is the Invisible Creature lurking out of sight just beyond the horizon, ready to spring forth at any moment and destroy the sleeping villagers below? but no, I thought, this could not be. It is merely a picturesque view of the Global Village where all men are equal, and women too. And just in time too. Yaazz, I'm sure they all love the future, where everyone is so Clean. There's no sadists where they abound, ah no, only lovable tyrants and friendly fascists. Certainly they shall multiply according to Murphy's Law, and their progeny will press the flesh in carefully controlled genetic experiments. Superman will be born. Ain't it the truth, and justice and mercy shall reign from the end of a flashlight forever.

Jeff's year old article is topical in a way. Right now I've just seen the final gaffiation (or so he seems to imply) of Dan Osterman from fandom. Dan's really gotten into this Jesus People movement. He came to see me and his girlfriend, who goes to a local college, just a couple weeks ago. I talked and argued with him for hours, but his Christianity was totally alien to mine. Fundamentalism has done some bad things to his head, I think, but I don't deny his own right to go that route. I was further saddened, however, when it seemed he was trying to drag others down with him through locs to various zines. I suppose those "spirit-filled" Christians feel they must get out and bring the last scoffer into the fold. That's sad. Religion seems to be such a personal thing that it really is pretty gross to try to force your views on others. I think it's better to try to play Good Samaritan and help others, regardless of their views, than to slap a cross on their shoulder, and a Bible chained to their wrists.

...Gene Wolfe, good man. I love his delightfully misplaced use of those old radio shows' esoterica. It wasn't esoteric then, but I suppose it is now. Hmmm. Ed, you know I always talk sense. And I swear before ghu and man that I have never, never ever gotten stoned, and written a letter of any kind. Now, I used to kid peepull that I did, but it's just not so. I save my dope for more important things than fanac. I can't imagine anything as dull as fanac done under the influence of a psychedelic. Watching old movies, listening to records, getting laid, rapping:

straight. But fanac, never!

Congratulations to you, Sandra Miesel! You're the first person who's really stepped out with a cogent argument against abortion. I don't happen to agree with you, but neither do I agree with the extreme feminists either. I have not decided on my final position re abortion. But all the intellectual rednecks in fandom are not gonna persuade me with their shrill rhetoric. Hear that, Cy?! If you'd talked half as rationally, and compassionately, as Sandra a lot of peepull wouldn't have come down as hard on your head as they did.

NICK SHEARS

(52 Garden Way, Northcliff 4 -

Johannesburg, South Africa)

...Roy Tackett -- even if you were just about the first US fan ever to contact SA fandom (way back before it became organized), and according to Claude and Rhoda Nunes (remember them? You wrote to Rhoda after having seen a poem of hers in ANALOG, asking about SA fandom and fanzines. They said there weren't any, and sent you a list of the tiny amount of sf that had been published here. Remember now?), even with that to your credit, and even tho you send me Dynatron, you'd better stipulate that your comment about Kilgore Trout/Thomas Disch was in no way disparaging, OR ELSE! No enemy of Disch is a friend of mine. (aYou're a bigger kiddy than Hulvey.)c

Who is Mike Scott? How come he has no work in other fanzines (at least, I can't remember having seen any)? Why are you depriving fandom of his immense talents? I demand that you reveal the whereabouts of his dungeon immediately, or...(More kidding.)c

Now, I have a favor to ask of you and your readers, Ed. South Africa's first Convention will be held next year, date and site having yet to be determined. We are hoping for it to be a great success, as it will determine to a fair extent the immediate future of SAFandom. Could you and any of your readers who have attended cons in the past drop me a line or otherwise let me know any pertinent points about cons: popular items, things liked and disliked about organization; in fact, any information that might help us in arranging a successful con. Thanx in advance, on behalf of the future Committee.

BUZZ DIXON

(519 Aberdeen Dr. - Raleigh, N.C. 27610)

Angus M. Taylor's article makes me think that the copy he sent you had bypassed a teacher or a professor first. If that isn't a term paper, Angus must certainly have a fetish for footnotes. Still, it's good to see someone collect all the definitions of SF. He left out Norman Spinrad's definition from his article, FIAWOL! (but more about that later),...

A couple of weeks prior to reading Angus' article and a direct result from reading S F COMMENTARY'S massive reprint of EXPLODING MADONNA and J.O.E. (a Sigh... that's about the only issue I've never seen....)q, I came up with the following (and to the best of my knowledge, original) definition, "Science Fiction is the branch of fiction in which the author gives his views on science."

Think about it. I think it covers the question very well. When I speak of science I do not refer alone to technology but also to mathematics, medicine, the social sciences, astronomy, chemistry, and some para-sciences (i.e., serious E.S.P. research but not astrology).

My definition explains why hardcore, softcore, satiric, and some New Wave SF really is SF. Of course, this removes many Edgar Rice Burroughs novels from the category of SF (meaning Science Fiction, not speculative fiction).

Seriously, I'd be interested in knowing what other readers of Moebius Trip think of my definition. Perhaps I'll write an article explaining it.

Getting back to Spinrad's FIAWOL!, did Robert Weinberg know of Spinrad's title when he wrote FANDOM IS A WAY OF LIFE?

Terry Jeeves' article reads like a takeoff on Larry S. Todd's "The Warbots". Am I right?

The U.S. Army is going to fafia me June 5th....

MICHAEL J. MEARA

(Flat A, 5 Kedleston Road,
Derby, DE3 1FL - England.)

...a few brief comments on MTll. The Repro and much of the artwork is barely up to the standard I've come to expect from an American fanzine. The print-through on my copy was terrible, nearly as bad as that in LURK 1! Layout is uninspired too. The Trout piece was lost on me - is it supposed to be funny? My excuse is that I am unfamiliar with Vonnegut's work. Cy

Chauvin provoked some beautiful letters in number 12, and deserved all he got. He must have been putting us on. And that is about all I can find to comment on, until we reach the lettercol, definitely the best part of the zine. Your letterhacks write better and more interestingly than your contributors.... *1*

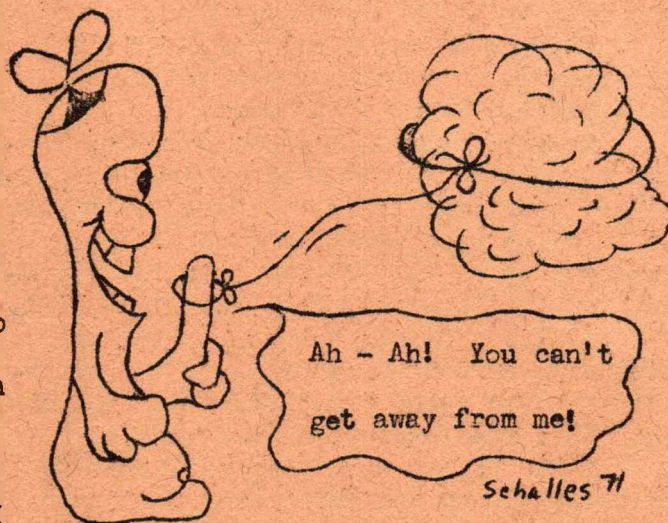
1 Too bad I can't get in more of your Fouler-like comments, but I'm running out of room.

LEON TAYLOR

(Box 89 - Seymour, Ind. 47274)

...This one (Paul Walker interview) on Matheson is regrettably skimpy but...ah, illuminating. Some juicy gossip liners in there (what is Rod Serling really like? Is it true that he types his stories in the nude?) This author interview-by-mail is beginning to turn into the most handy commodity since Gladbags. Think of it... five minutes for copying out questions from your high school journalism textbook and the ego-mad pro instantly responds with an autobiography! Somewhere in this mess I call home I've got an interview with Former Promising Pro Neil Shapiro, before he took a quick drop out of existence (at least, I haven't heard about him in a while). May publish it, if I ever find the questions that go along with the answers (probably a hangover problem from philosophy)....

W.A.H.F.: Ben Indick, Lynn Hickman, Eric Lindsay, Meade Frierson III, Railee Bothman, Shayne McCormack, Mike Scott, Ken Budka, Ann Chamberlain, Verne O'Brian, etc., including Peter Kennedy & Alan Sandercock.



JACK WODHAMS
(Box 48 P.O. CABOOLTURE -

Queensland 4510 - Australia)

Back around 1930 my parents got careless, and in due course thereafter Jack was born. The family was already large enough, and had birth-control systems been as promoted and available as today, at all stages, the chance is fair that I never would have made it. Now - would my absence have been a great loss to the world? would there have been any major sense of deprivation had Jack failed to made the scene? Hey, quiet that chorus! But shee, let's face it, even I wouldn't have missed me if I hadn't been here to know that I wasn't.

Ignorance is truly bliss, and first there has to be a consciousness of existence, before the right of our purely personal existence can gain any real value. Had mine been an early aborted life, mine would have been the least of mind to feel concern upon the event. And the fact remains that no-one gives much of a stuff for the individuals who are not aborted, for ourself, or for these folk we call our fellow men. Tell me, contraceptively unthwarted buddy, has anyone given a damn about you lately?

In seeking to sanctify unfinished fetal flesh, we, the unaborted, may be seen to be displaying our masochistic desire to suffer as multitudinously much as possible. Some pious purist on TV here the other day nobly defended anti-abortion with the wondering conjecture that - who knew? - a terminated pregnancy could destroy a potential Einstein (who incidentally materially aided Fermi to create THE BOMB), or an incipient Paderewski, or maybe another Michelangelo. He grieved the unknown loss, the saintly bastard. It did not seem to occur to him that such an abbreviated development must equally affect the chances of another potential Atilla, or Napoleon, or an Al Capone.

Mostly, though, unaborted babies simply turn into unaborted slobs like the rest of us, and, like Ed says, there don't seem to be a lot of sympathy around for born humans. My oh my, but the idea for retro-active abortion, now, that has some merit.

Again, I wonder how many potential Einsteins have their intellects irretrievably stunted through malnutrition in India, and other like over-populated places?

Angus Taylor much over-estimates my sense of my own self-importance. Unborn

at one end, or senile at the other, I do not much care, if I ain't there. Consequently it is my opinion that we should not place a higher value on what's coming, or what's going, than what we place upon the most important certainty of here and now. Oh, and as for his gratuitous crack about the White Australia policy, we do not see the U.S. exactly welcoming Asians with open arms, and U.S. immigration restrictions can be quite as stringent as many another.

It saddened me to have the excellent Terry Jeeves so unfairly dismiss FOUNDLING FATHERS as "rubbish". As an illustrator, Mr Jeeves has pleased me more than once and, as James Blish made plain, it is unwise to permit malice to prompt hurtful and unjust reciprocations. Two Wongs don't make a white - as Mr Wong noted upon examining his blond-haired firstborn - and Mr Jeeves is wrong for making this common, brutally blithe and careless criticism. "Rubbish", "Garbage", "Crap", - where bluntly applied without specific supportive reasoning - is a viciously lazy way for one writer to wound another. It is also a very fast way for such sloppy critic to lose the respect of his peers.

I can assure Mr Jeeves that FOUNDLINGS FATHERS is not rubbish, and for him to off-the-cuff arbitrarily assert it to be so, not only insults me, but impugns the perspicacity of one of the greatest editors in the business, and also maligns the intelligence of the many people who read the story with enjoyment. Briskly crude pejoratives, indeed, should never be used at all where art is being discussed, for quite usually such shallow observation reveals the ignorance of the speaker. Should I call a Picasso "rubbish", simply because I cannot understand it? Should I call THORNS "garbage", simply because I do not appreciate Bob Silverberg? Should I call a Grieg symphony "crap", simply because it does nothing for me? Thus and so, in this instance, I say, that Mr Jeeves' brains would appear to have been bigger than his boots. May we hope to see less of such damaging utterances, which are too easily tossed in casual thoughtlessness, for I know that many of my contemporaries have much thinner skin than mine.

Oh, and apropos the contretemps over the Kelly Freas illos for FF. Well, news of blether arrived here late as usual, & no-one ever asks me, anyway, fait accompli, and, "Why don't you go back to contemplating your navel, Jack, huh? there's a good fellow." Hmp, ha! yes, well, just for the record, be it known that I think that Kelly's artistry is superb, he has my faith and trust, to me he's just about the best there is, and he can illustrate work of mine any time. He does me favor.