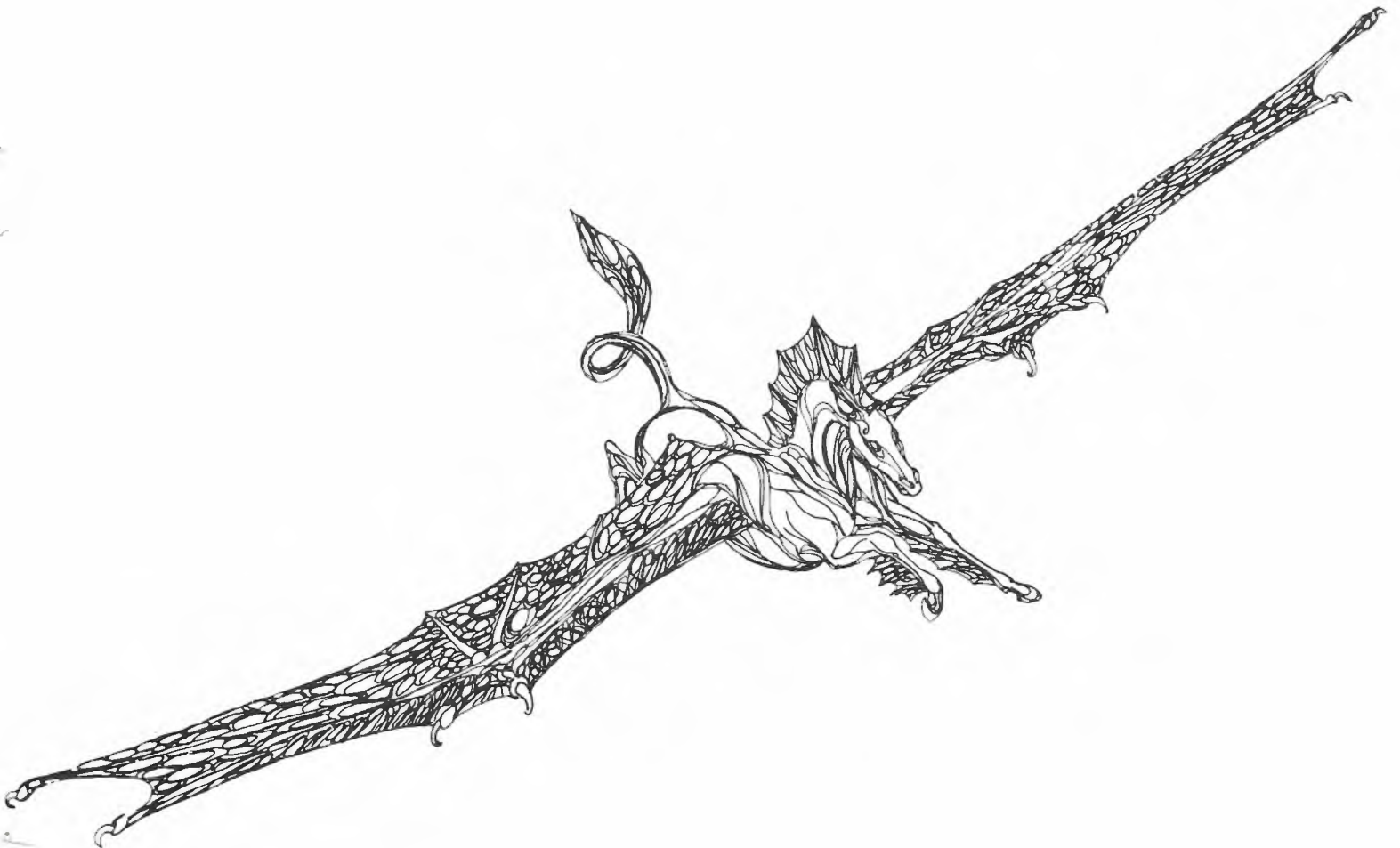


Mythologies



MYTHOLOGIES

#5

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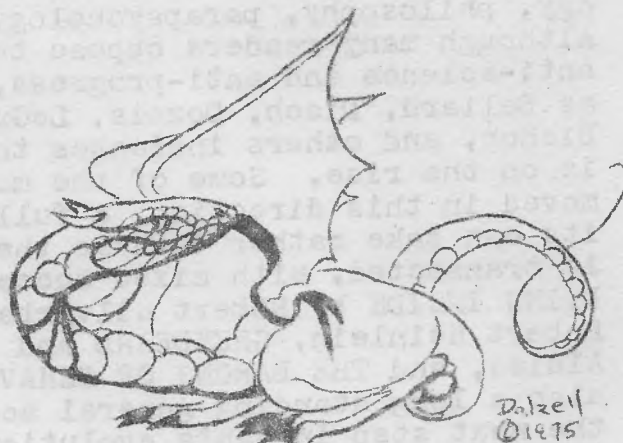
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"Then let us compare
mythologies.
I have learned my
elaborate lie."

---Leonard Cohen



MYTHOLOGIES is a personally
oriented fanzine dedicated
to the comparison of
realities.

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for loc or editorial whim
only. One sample issue
costs 3 ten cent stamps.

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MYTH

There has been an increasing trend in science fiction this past decade to concentrate on the so-called "soft sciences", psychology, philosophy, parapsychology, social science, even theology. Although many readers oppose this "turning in upon humanity" as anti-science and anti-progress, the popularity of such writers as Ballard, Disch, Dozois, LeGuin, Delany, Ellison, Tiptree, Bishop, and others indicates that interest in this type of SF is on the rise. Some of the more traditional writers have also moved in this direction, a fuller examination of humanity for its own sake rather than as the instrument through which science is transacted, with mixed success; notable examples would include DYING INSIDE by Robert Silverberg, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL by Robert Heinlein, GREYBEARD and BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD by Brian Aldiss, and THE BARONS OF BEHAVIOR by Thomas Purdom. There is also a long standing general acceptance among SF readers that the next step in man's evolution is likely to be mental rather than physical. Unfortunately, speculation in this area has been rather confined by convention to the psi powers - telepathy, clairvoyance, teleportation and the like, or a quantum jump in individual intelligence. The occasional story which falls outside of these limitations is often more interesting because of its novelty than its plausibility. One thinks immediately of the novels THE LATHE OF HEAVEN by Ursula K. LeGuin or THE INFINITE MAN by Daniel F. Galouye, in which one man's mind can alter the universe, or any of Philip K. Dick's novels in which the universe is radically changed because of the perceptions of particular individuals. But no SF writer has ever convinced me that he has found a convincing, plausible way in which the human mind might evolve, might be evolving, might - to some extent and in some individuals - have already evolved. Clifford Simak, in CITY, comes very close in his portrayal of man as becoming independent of social pressures, but he ignores the implications of his suggestion. But there has been speculation outside the field, notably by psychologist Abraham Maslow. Maslow has produced in his book, TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF BEING, Van Nostrand Press, an untapped treasure trove of ideas for psychological SF.

Psychology, as a field, is now splintered into three main areas, each of which encompasses a variety of schools of thought. Behavioral psychology, characterized as "rat psych", is replete with Skinner boxes, stimulus-response analysis, and a technical jargon which would make a physicist green with envy. The second area is therapeutic, the Freudians and all of their rivals, and a host of practitioners whose primary justification for existence is the correction of personality malfunctions. The third area is humanistic psychology, into which Maslow falls.

Maslow questions many of the basic assumptions of the Freudians, whose views have come to color the philosophies of most of us, either consciously or unconsciously. He is particularly incensed, for example, by the concept that man is basically evil, immoral,

a "killer ape" as Konrad Lorenz and Robert Ardrey contend, that his various internal drives are irritations which he is driven against his will to satisfy. This is evidenced by such passages as the following from Donald Barr's SPACE RELATIONS: "We're all Liberals, you know. We like to think institutions distort people. But slavery is a frightful institution because it doesn't. It allows the most direct and unrestrained expression of human nature." The role of the psychologist, say the Freudians, is to adjust humans to accept their inner drives for what they are, channel them into socially acceptable means of expression, adapt them to society, allow man to be at least content if not happy.

Maslow rejects the concept that man's nature is basically evil; he feels rather that we are at heart basically neutral. He refuses to accept that our inner drives are irritants or that tensions are harmful stresses which need to be relieved. Some tensions - sex, creativity, the urge to do or know or be - are strong positive motivations, necessary for a healthy mental life, rather than annoyances to be assuaged in order for the individual to maintain a tension-free, if somewhat colorless, equilibrium. Similarly, he denies that psychology should be a tool by which humans are reconciled to their environment. As an example, he presents two fictional guards at Auschwitz. The first is guilt ridden, has nightmares, finds it difficult to perform his daily tasks. The second is cheerful, carefree, unconcerned. Obviously the latter is better adapted to his environment, but most people would insist that the former has the healthier mental attitude. Maslow suggests that one of the main reasons for our misapprehensions about the value of therapy is that Freudian psychologists study only the "sick" people, and generalize from this to the population as a whole. Normality is defined as the "psychopathology of the average". In place of this traditional view of the role of psychology, Maslow offers an alternative interpretation and approach. He assumes that our personalities are basically neutral, and that most personality disorders are actually deficiency diseases, reactions to frustration of our normal drives, and the subsequent deprivation of the desired results of those drives.

To understand Maslow's views, it is necessary to have some familiarity with his perception of human development. The child, we are told, is essentially an unspoiled, healthy individual. He or she experiences life as a series of choices between growth and safety. Since the normal child is curious and accepts change with little difficulty, he will continue to grow whenever possible. The need for security acts as a brake. A toddler who enters a strange room with a parent may initially explore the room visually, then physically separate from the parent. At the first sign of danger, however, the child will return to the parent for security and reassurance.

Ideally, then, children should be allowed to grow and experience life as rapidly as they can, without exposure to unnecessary physical or psychological dangers. The difficulty is that most parents are not conscious of this choice situation, and are often

unwilling or unable to allow the child a sufficient degree of freedom: "It is still the unusual parent who approves and enjoys curiosity in his children." Since parents represent security to a child, growth will be sacrificed when the parents appear to be disapproving: "If the only way to maintain the self is to lose others, then the ordinary child will give up the self."

Parental inhibitions of growth are everywhere about us. One need only consider the response of most parents to sexual curiosity in their children, or the repressive conditioning used to force male and female children into socially acceptable sex roles. It isn't necessary to be a psychologist to appreciate the impact of social approval or disapproval on the individual. In CITY, Simak tells us of "the need of one human being for the approval of his fellow humans, the need for a certain cult of fellowship - a psychological, almost physiological need for approval of one's thought and action." The insidious element of this process is that it is self-perpetuating; a person may react against the specific repressive measures of his parents when raising his own children, but he is unlikely to avoid transmitting a generalized fear of growth because of his desire to see that his own kids "turn out right".

The result of all this seems to be a fear of knowledge, particularly self-knowledge. Knowledge tends to alter our situation, which endangers the security that most of us are now disproportionately concerned with maintaining. Self-knowledge is the worst of all, because recognition of our own shortcomings would imply the necessity of changing our personalities, the most extreme of all forms of insecurity - the possible loss of our selves: "We tend to be afraid of any knowledge that could cause us to despise ourselves or to make us feel inferior, weak, worthless, evil, shameful." We see this fear of knowledge expressed in much of our folklore, Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge, Prometheus, Oedipus, Hawthorne's quest for the ultimate sin, "there are some things man was not meant to know", etc. But in denying ourselves insight into the baser attributes of our personalities, we are also led to the denial of our best side, of our talents, of our finest impulses, of our highest potentialities, of our creativeness." This particular brand of self-inflicted blindness is aggravated by the rapid rate of change in our technological society, the "future shock" we have heard so much about. The highly emotional reaction to our society's changing morality is much more comprehensible when viewed as an extension of the insecurities of individual humans who have allowed the desire for safety to overpower the desire for a fuller experience of life.

Society as a whole creates institutions to restrict and punish knowledge. Censorship of television and literature is probably the most obvious example; Presidential and military restriction of information from Congress and the public more heinous. The public education system - ostensibly a means of growth - is generally used to channel and limit this growth within the conventional modes of expression. Military and industrial promotions are based less on innovation and creative management than on social acceptability and the willingness of the subordinate to avoid rocking

the boat and to downplay his own abilities. Women often suppress their own intelligence and education to avoid overshadowing their husbands. This internal conditioning by society is so strong that even individuals who apparently transcend its limitations find themselves feeling insecure in their own accomplishments: "Many brilliant women are caught up in the problem of making an unconscious identification between intelligence and masculinity."

Maslow then poses the question of whether or not it is possible for psychologically healthy individuals to live in our society. He points out that "every age but ours has had its model, its ideal. All of these have been given up by our culture; the saint, the hero, the gentleman, the knight, the mystic. About all we have left is the well-adjusted man without problems, a very pale and doubtful substitute." As mentioned earlier, the criterion of adjustment is of questionable validity. It is obvious that our society has lost its model for behavior; our statesmen have become politicians, our astronaut-heroes are military public relations men, our religious leaders are opportunists, and the military appears narrowminded, incompetent, and occasionally inhuman.

Through observation and testing, Maslow concludes that there are some reasonably healthy individuals, although he estimates the figure to be somewhat less than one percent. He refers to these people as "self-actualized". Rather than reacting to a deficiency (essentially a negative stimulus), the self-actualized person develops inner drives (positive) which he then derives pleasure from satisfying. There follows a listing of attributes which tend to be more firmly possessed by the self-actualized individual than the rest of humanity, including increased self-acceptance, tolerance of others, spontaneity, resistance to enculturation, altruism, creativity, few but more intense friendships, detachment, a desire for privacy, richer emotional reactions, and superior perception of reality. Some of these are, of course, value judgments, which point I shall return to later. For purposes of comparison, Maslow refers to self-actualized humans as B-beings, and deficiency actuated people as D-beings. He then makes a series of interesting comparisons about the two, from which - granting for the moment the rectitude of his observations - some unconventional and potentially revolutionary inferences can be drawn.

Our B individual then is a person who enjoys the means as much as the ends, who is happiest when involved in projects which tax him to the limit. Pleasure is the result of a completed project, where with the D person, there is only a sense of relief at having things done with. He is frequently anxious and irritable prior to the completion of a task. B receives gratification independent of others, needs less praise, values it only when the source is someone whose judgment is respected. D needs to have external praise and will accept it indiscriminately wherever and whenever offered. D is incapable of engaging in a project for its own sake. He views his environment as hostile and praise functions as a form of temporary security, constantly in need of renewal.

B tends to view people as individuals, not as Blacks, Whites, Men, Women, Asians, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, Liberals, or Conservatives. D perceives people in terms of their roles, accepts stereotypes. B is independent minded, tends to view things initially as a whole, then analytically. D is "afraid of independence, freedom, and separateness", perceives only the parts of things which have particular relevance to himself. B receives satisfaction from knowledge in the way that a researcher is pleased at a new discovery; D only seeks relief through knowledge, as in finding out that a strange sound was not, after all, a burglar. B tends to remember few of his dreams; D fears his subconscious and dreams frequently. B is self-disciplined, expresses anger as a reaction to an external stimulus; D uses anger as a cathartic release of tension and expression of insecurity. It is interesting to note at this point that Maslow seems to consider himself a D-being, but it should also be pointed out that none of these attributes are absolutes, merely tendencies.

Maslow does have some reservations about a society dominated by B-beings. Their normally passive contemplation often results in a difficulty in making decisions or acting upon them. They are prone to fatalism. Their high degree of tolerance is perhaps too indiscriminating, resulting in acceptance of extremes of behavior from others and a loss of aesthetic taste. Self-actualization is very difficult to transmit between generations in any case.

There are several implications in this theory that contradict "truisms" in our society. Inherent in self-actualization is the idea that all sources of value are within the individual, not dependent on religion, philosophy, or political ideology. If a minority announced that their judgment was superior as individuals to that of our major religions, political philosophies, or social conventions, it would inevitably arouse a hostile, anxious, insecure majority intent on denying that such knowledge is possible to the individual, because to accept such a statement would be to acknowledge their own abdication of the responsibility for their own lives.

Another point in Maslow's book is a clear challenge to western ideas of government. A large group of chickens were presented with a variety of food, forced to choose which to eat. Over a period of time, it was evident that some chickens made consistently better choices than others. The former became larger, healthier, and more active. The experimenters then forced the bad choosers to eat only the food selected by the good choosers. The bad choosers became larger, healthier, and more active. The conclusion drawn was that, at least in this case, "good choosers can choose better than bad choosers what is better for the bad choosers themselves."

A third implication is a bit more subtle. Once again, we must grant Maslow's assumption that D-beings are capable of making moral judgments and that they have a clearer perception of reality. If this is true, it "is in direct and flat contradiction to one of the basic axioms that guides all scientific

Thought, namely that the more objective and impersonal perception becomes, the more detached it becomes from value." If Maslow is correct, it places in question the entire scientific approach to knowledge.

Lest the reader believe that I have swallowed Maslow's theory whole, I should point out that I have strong reservations about many of his conclusions. He is too heavily dependent on existential thought, for one thing. He has defined the judgments of B-beings as valid, and then defined B-beings as those who make these judgments. This implies that Maslow is personally capable of determining the validity of those judgments, obviously a point open to argument, particularly in view of his self-characterization as a D-being. This does not invalidate his observations or theories; it does leave the question unresolved.

TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF BEING is a fascinating book, replete with ideas for SF stories. "Self-actualizing people", according to Maslow, "have so much to teach us that sometimes they seem almost like a different breed of human beings." Might it be possible that Maslow has given us a glimpse of a form of psychological evolution? Maslow assumes that B-beings could not form a workable culture, primarily because they have difficulty in working cooperatively and in transmitting their approach to knowledge to the next generation. If these people really are a new breed, however, it may be simply that Maslow is incapable of thinking out the form of culture they will develop.

* * * * *

"I think D'Ammassa must be demented to contribute to so many fan-zines."

SFinctor #3

"If I ever read as much as Don does, I'd have to recucle my eyes."

Michael Carlson
JAWBONE 12

"Even Don is thinking rationally, more or less..."

Loren MacGregor
AWRY 7



* * * * *

"I recently mentioned to Tony Cvetko that I think Don is a computer."

Al Sirois
GUYING GYRE 3
(he isn't...sd)

TEACHING OLD DOGMAS NEW TRICKS

by Paul DiFilippo

Nowadays, psychiatry is in a sorry state. It is the object of ridicule on all fronts. Stand-up comedians with a juvenile desire to show off poke fun at this science. Pipe-smoking intellectuals with oral fixations coolly dissect it. Although we must ask ourselves why this is so, I don't want you to strain yourself unduly, because I plan to tell you. The reason is that psychiatry is no longer new. Now almost a century old, psychiatry no longer satisfies the human desire for novelty. Obviously, it needs revamping. I offer here several possible revisions, new schools of thought which will attract more people to the infinitely non-applicable art of psychiatry.

JELLO THERAPY

Which physical medium is the most congenial to the human psyche? If it is water, then hydrotherapy makes sense for soothing the mentally troubled. If it is freely circulating air, then nudity is the practice to follow. And if it's strait-jackets, then we're all in trouble. Fortunately, it is none of the above, but Jello, which is the home court, so to speak, of Man.

All of the human race's longings and frustrations prior to the discovery of Jello can be traced to its lack of this tranquilizing "fourth state of matter". Hopefully, now that we have Jello in abundance, it will be applied in the manner best suited to it. When the whole race gradually discovers that soaking in a tubful of warm Jello, with its pastel colors subtly reflecting the sunlight and its insinuating substance suffusing their pores, is the one true method of achieving nirvana, we will have reached Utopia. A somewhat sloppy one, but Utopia nonetheless.

REVERSE DREAM ANALYSIS

In conventional dream analysis, everything is symbolical of sex. Caves and boxes and bananas, falling and dying, are all tokens of genitalia and orgasm. Is this sensible? Are not bananas, falling and dying in themselves more important than sex? Of course. In RDA, this logical flaw is corrected. Dreams of sex are interpreted as revealing hangups about fruit and caverns. Dreams about fruit and caverns reveal obsessions with fruit and caverns. Everything is related to fruit and caverns, and the true meaning of dreams is discerned. The benefits to the patient are myriad, and in this manner are the secrets of the gods manifested to Man.

PRIMAL SNORING

When confronted with the practitioners of Primal Screaming, one is forced to say, "How near, yet how far." They have the technique, but apply it to the wrong process. Every day experience shows us that screaming and yelling are hardly conducive to serenity, nor do they really alleviate any problems. Rather, it is when one blissfully falls asleep that peace is obtained. And when one snores, the peace, at least for the snorer, only intensifies.

Scientific studies have shown that snoring prevents nightmares and improves muscle tone, reduces the danger of heart attacks and strengthens the lungs, all the while instilling new resiliency in the brain. Practice can bring all these benefits to the average person within days.

Adherents of Primal Snoring sometimes sleep up to 23 hours per day, thereby incurring little in the way of debts and enmity from their fellows, and insuring that they will live a markedly hazard-free life.

ACTUAL GESTALT TREATMENT

Reader, beware! The gestalt therapy you have all heard so much about is a fraud. The therapists are all normal humans, and therefore lack the prime requirement for administering to your needs. In AGT, only professional gestalt personalities, such as the one in MORE THAN HUMAN, are employed. The patients are all treated telepathically, and their inner workings are thoroughly restructured. Eventually, in groups of four, they form new gestalt personalities of their own. The Gestalt Institute of America has some interesting statistics about how many people they have treated and expect to treat. This could be the shape of the future.

TRANSACTIONAL THROAT-CUTTING

A darkened room and several sharp knives are the essentials to this therapy, which combines all the features of Esalen and its offspring. Participants - who, for best results, should know each other well beforehand -- sit in a circle in the lightless room. Taking turns, they reveal to each other all their faults, humbly omitting their own while concentrating on those of others. Soon, the talk will be dropped for more immediate actions, as everyone scrambles for the hidden knives. Much anxiety and bitterness will be acted out and dispersed.

Payment should be collected prior to the analysis, and therapists are warned to leave midway through the debate.

NON-SUPPRESSIVE ACTUALIZATION

This final new method for understanding and helping the beleaguered self is a simple one, and requires no assisting doctor. The individual undertaking the treatment merely decides that he will do whatever he pleases, disregarding costs or prohibitions. Simplicity itself! Frustrations and restraints are banished, the individual is unfettered and whole. A slight problem resides in the fact that Man's body is limited, and tends to burn out after a regimen of this sort. Of course, the concerned authorities might choose to step in before this could happen. As many people have been known to say, however, it's fun while it lasts.

Anyone interested in following this plan is advised to find a partner or two for the more intricate self-realization.

PARABLE

Mildred Clingerman is not one of the acknowledged giants of the SF field. She has had only 19 short stories published over a period of 23 years, one paperback collection now out of print, a handful of anthology appearances. Many of her stories are fantasy, not SF, which may explain why all but one of them has appeared in F&SF, but none of the other professional SF magazines. Anthony Boucher's high opinion of her resulted in his dedicating the seventh "Best" volume from that magazine to her. It is hardly the quality of her writing that has kept her out of other markets; it may well be the subject matter she chooses. Most of her fiction appeared between 1952 and 1962. After a gap of 13 years, now a grandmother, Mildred Clingerman has started to write once again. A look at her early stories is, therefore, rather overdue.

Clingerman's career in SF began with "Minister Without Portfolio" (F&SF, February 1952), a first contact story about a slightly batty old woman who encounters a group of aliens trying to decide Earth's fate. The aliens are impressed by her ready tolerance, perhaps not realizing that she is unaware, through her color blindness, that they are green, and they dub her the "one sane human found on Earth". As a result, they decide to spare humanity and she becomes an anonymous hero. Clingerman makes frequent use of the apparent irony of having an insane, nutty, or otherwise oddball character be uniquely capable of acting sanely. "Minister" was very successful for a first story, and has since been reprinted in INVADERS OF EARTH edited by Groff Conklin (Tempo Books, Pocket Books), STORIES FOR TOMORROW edited by William Sloane (Funk & Wagnall's), and ENCOUNTERS WITH ALIENS edited by George W. Early (Sherburne Press).

"Stair Trick" (F&SF, August 1952) was her second story, a fine fantasy about a bartender who escapes from the drab competitiveness of a world for which he is unsuited by way of an imaginary wine cellar. Again, it is the man out of step with the rest of humanity who succeeds. Clingerman's distaste for certain aspects of our modern technological society is more evident in "Winning Recipe" (F&SF, November 1952 - reprinted from COLLIERS). Miss Mersey is a spinster who is terrified by the various housekeeping machines which her brother is constantly forcing upon her. With the installation of the Kitchen Autocrat, she finally gathers enough nerve to fight back and drive the device's computerized brain crazy. Miss Mersey feels directly threatened by science: "Science, she thought, simply did not take into account people like her."

"Stickeney and the Critic" (F&SF, February 1953) is one of the most satiric pieces Clingerman wrote, almost farcical in its depiction of a modern literary critic. Stickeney is an unseen presence lurking in an abandoned well. When he gobbles up a pretentious British literary critic, the narrator remarks: "I do hope, though, it's just a taste for modern criticism Stickeney has acquired. God knows, he's quite capable of swallowing it." Despite its very real humor, "Stickeney" has only been reprinted

once to my knowledge, in PORTALS OF TOMORROW edited by August Derleth (Rinehart). It has never been available in any paperback anthology.

"The Word" (F&SF, November 1953) is an amusing but slight story about aliens who secure food supplies by trick or treating on Halloween. "Letters from Laura" (F&SF, October 1954) features a suave, high sophisticated and competent young girl from the future who time travels back to ancient Crete, where the minotaur is no match for her. Boucher included this in his most ambitious anthology, A TREASURY OF GREAT SF (Doubleday). In "Birds Can't Count" (F&SF, February 1955), a young wife is convinced that she is being watched by some unseen presence. Despite her husband's hints that she is imagining things, she perseveres and discovers a way to see a sort of extra-dimensional eavesdropper. Clingerman's taste for irony pops up once more as we learn that it is not the human but her house cat which is being observed. This was the first of Clingerman's stories to appear in F&SF's best anthology series (Volume 5, Ace Books) and was also chosen for Judith Merrill's first YEAR'S BEST SF (Dell).

"The Last Prophet" (F&SF, August 1955) was also reprinted in THE BEST FROM FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION #5, Ace). A rich playboy is generally considered to be more than slightly nutty because of his strange behavior at parties. After several unsuccessful attempts to relate his theories, he finally tells friends that he has noticed a tendency toward awkward silences at precisely 20 minutes past each hour, from which he concludes that we are subconsciously listening for something. Once again we see the idea that true sanity can exist within the mind of the apparently unsane.

"Mr Sakrison's Halt" (F&SF, January 1956) reprinted in THE BEST FROM F&SF #6, edited by Anthony Boucher (Ace), would have made a typical episode of Rod Serling's TWILIGHT ZONE. A near senile woman journeys daily on the same railroad line, seeking the station at which her youthful fiance disembarked many years earlier. At that magical stop, black and white people are treated equally, the sun shines and the flowers bloom year round, and everyone is eternally young. The young girl through whose eyes we see the story recognizes "how terribly far Chapel Grove still is from Mr. Sakrison's halt." Although her intentions are good, Clingerman resorted to rather obvious preachiness, turning this into the kind of well-crafted but lifeless story that filled so many pages of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

One of Clingerman's best short stories is "First Lesson" (alternately titled "Watcher in the Dream"), which was reprinted from COLLIERS in the December 1956 issue of F&SF, the March 1964 issue of ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE, and in A DECADE OF F&SF edited by Robert Mills (Dell). The wife of a paratrooper has a recurring dream of his death by impalement during a practice jump. Recognizing that he will never accept the validity of her prescient visions, she resorts to magic in order to save him. Ironically, the person she consults for the magical solution does not herself believe in magic. Clingerman used magic for the opposite dramatic effect - terror and doom - in "The Wild Wood" (F&SF, January 1957, reprinted in THE BEST FROM F&SF #7 edited by Anthony Boucher, Ace, and SPECIAL WONDER VOLUME ONE edited by J. Francis McComas, Beagle

Books). This time a young wife is strangely unable to avoid an annual confrontation with the sleazy proprietor of a Christmas tree store, and is ultimately forced to switch personalities with that individual's repulsive sister.

"The Little Witch of Elm Street" appeared originally in WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION, was later reprinted in F&SF (April 1957), and in MORE LITTLE MONSTERS edited by Roger Elwood and Vic Ghidalia (Manor Books). Garnet is a precocious young girl who is uniquely able to manage the demonic personality of her pre-school age niece, Nina. Nina's unrelenting hostility is diagnosed by Garnet as possession, which she promptly - and successfully - cures by exorcism. This is another very good story, marred by a "cute" ending. The dispossessed spirit takes up residence in a hen-pecked husband, and the proverbial worm turns. "A Day for Waving" (F&SF, August 1957), on the other hand, is a straightforward, extremely well done ghost story. A young child's dead father returns anonymously to reassure her about her mother's forthcoming marriage.

"The Day of the Green Velvet Cloak" (F&SF, July 1958) was her first straight-SF story in three years. An unhappy woman encounters a time traveller from 1877, to whom she feels a strong attraction. He returns to his own time, still wearing her cloak, which is then returned to her by one of his descendants. Clingerman makes it quite clear that the attraction is just as strong in the fourth generation as it was in the first, and that it is mutual. Purists might be upset because there is no explanation of the two time displacements, but it is only incidental to the story.

In 1961, Ballantine published A CUPFUL OF SPACE, an inappropriate title for a collection of those stories mentioned above, plus two new stories original in the paperback. One of these was "The Gay Deceiver", a competent but rather silly story which shows us the Pied Piper of Hamelin still ranging the world over to lure to their deaths the descendants of those unfortunate townspeople who crossed him. The second story was "A Red Heart and Blue Roses", one of the most horrifying stories I have ever read. A middleaged woman becomes increasingly irritated with an unwanted houseguest who is trying to pre-empt her attention from her own son. When she finally orders him from the house, he vows that she will never be rid of him. From that point on, she encounters him or hears of him wherever she turns. Each time he seems to have grown a few years younger. The final revelation is that she is unexpectedly pregnant, and she has the horrible fear that the baby will be born with the same tattoo her nemesis wore as an adult. This story has been reprinted in the May 1964 issue of F&SF and in Terry Carr's NEW WORLDS OF FANTASY (Ace Books).

Clingerman's last appearance for over a decade was "Measure My Love" (F&SF, October 1962), a rather disjointed, rambling account of two women in search of a love potion who wander into a combination interstellar aid station, drug store, and SPCA. It was only this year, after a lapse of more than a decade, that Mildred Clingerman appeared in print again, with two short stories just as thoughtful and well executed as was her earlier work.

"The Time Before" (F&SF, March 1975) describes the sexual encounter between a young girl and the god Mercury. Her marriage to a normal human is so dull in contrast, that when she encounters Mercury again in her older years, she berates him for having spoiled her life. He returns her to that day in her youth and offers her the chance to refuse his advances. She doesn't.

"Annabelle, I Love You" (F&SF, June 1975) is another ghost story. An ailing divorcee is helped by a new neighbor to regain her health and interest in life. When she later attempts to visit the neighbor, she finds the house abandoned and eventually realizes that it was the ghost of her mother who returned to help her build her life anew. As in "A Day for Waving", the ghost is a friendly rather than malevolent force.

Clingerman's stories are perhaps best characterized by the words brevity and control. She always knows exactly what she wants to say, and usually excludes extraneous material. The longest of her stories only runs about 12 pages, and most are considerably shorter. Her stories, even the SF, deal more with the magical qualities of life than the scientific. I hope there won't be any more decade long interruptions in her career.

* * * * *

BYPASSING TIME AND SPACE WITH ISABELLA FIGHOLLER

--Sam Long

Isabella Figholler, Fellow of St Ompa's College (Osteen University's equivalent of All Souls, Oxford, or Princeton's Institute of Advanced Studies) and her fellow Fellow, Bertrand Betot, had spent a fine and most enjoyable day at the coast, sailing in the University yacht and swimming in the ocean north of Cape Canaveral. Bertrand had said to her the evening before, "Iz'bel, let's go sailing tomorrow. Put by your researches into the construction of wagon wheels, and I will cease fretting over the history of Egyptian peasants. Fellow and fellah shall lie fallow and we will follow our desires." To which she had replied: "Yes, let's! The thought of facing Philo again tomorrow was making me feel low."

The sun was low when Isabella and Bertrand had finished reloading the car. They were about to start back to Osteen when she said, "Bertrand, what's this gray film on the car windows?"

"Oh, that's salt. Tiny droplets of spray from the surf are blown in on the seabreeze. They evaporate and leave the salt behind. I'll have to wash the car when we get back." Isabella mused, "I haven't noticed this in Osteen."

"Well," said Bertrand, "there's 20 miles of swamp between the beach and Osteen. The droplets don't get that far. They rarely get more than a few miles inland, in fact."

"Oh, I understand now," said Isabella. "The glass is always cleaner on the other side of the fens."

WHEN DID THE CHILDREN GET PUT ON THE PEDESTAL?

by Mark M. Keller

I'M in a bit of a rush this week, exams and papers and all, but I do want to include a few words about the "history of childhood" which emerged from Paul Walker's discussion of sex roles. And by the way, I still maintain that Biology teachers have it as bad as English teachers. That Jesus Freak is back in my Botany class loudly protesting at every opportunity that Evolution is a Fake. (Am I glad I don't have to teach in Arkansas, where the Board of Regents might agree with him.) And one of the students in Zoology has emerged as a hollow-Earth fan. Brings in the books by Bernard and Eric Norman to show me that serious people have written about it. We're in for a long siege.

* * *

Anyway, on to childhood. A number of French social historians have been working on the development of perceptions of children recently. Most are from the Annales school, which applies the graduate-student team approach to masses of data. They go into a village, inspect the Church registers, and come out with figures on whole populations over centuries: marriages, births, namings, deaths. The church rolls and the names on the stones in the local cemetery can give you a very good idea of age-structure, marriage habits, risks of childbirth, etc.

How can you tell that? Well, here's a family plot. Jacques Dupont, died age 53, in the sixteenth century. First wife, married at 15, child at 18 (died), child at 20 (died), child at 21 (lived ten years). First wife, Marie, died at 23 bearing fourth child, also dead. Second wife, Juliette, same pattern, six kids, dies at 36.

Note that three-year span between marriage and first child, attested by wedding and baptism records. Birth control? Not likely. Women of peasant families usually began menstruation late, and became fertile late, well up into their teens. Probable cause - poor nutrition, lack of fat deposits, caused by meager cereal diet. The daughters of the nobility got plenty of meat, became fertile earlier, had their first children at age 15 perhaps.

This should be a warning: in a feudal class-stratified society, statements about the "role of women" based on records of the aristocracy don't say much about the role of peasant women (the majority).

If Firestone bases her data on literary sources ("courtly love", pedestals, etc.), she is working from a very small and unrepresentative number of cases.

The first thing a historian learns is to suspect one's sources. The review that Paul Walker saw in NEWSWEEK was probably one about Phillippe Aries' Centuries of Childhood. Aries does make his case rather well. In fact, there is a new psycho-history journal, on the changes in family structure, following up his work.

Many kids did die very young, throughout medieval Europe. But most of this hit below one year of age. Smallpox took its 10% of each generation, respiratory diseases of winter took a few more. Once you got past your fifth year, your chances of living to be an adult were pretty good. Infants had the high mortality, not older children.

That 35 year average lifespan is misleading, you see. If half the children die under one year old, and the rest live to 70, what's the average lifespan? What's the life expectancy? That's right, 35.

Once the medieval child could talk, once it became a human being, in other words, it joined the community in its own status. There was very little idealization of the "joys of childhood". The kids worked as soon as they were old enough (i.e. ten or twelve years). Peasant kids helped in the field or house. Noble kids male served as pages or assistant huntsmen, noble kids female joined the ladies in maintaining castles or making clothing.

Children were dressed as little adults, spoken to as little adults. There was a children's sub-culture (nursery rhymes, games), but it was tolerated rather than encouraged.

Kids were treated roughly, like any servants, with beatings and whippings considered normal. Even royal children, future sovereigns, were hit often (though girls less than boys in this case). Louis XIV as a boy was expected to work on his lessons as hard as a peasant boy worked in the field. He learned Latin and violin before age five, spoke with adults, visited parties and salons - no idea that children are too weak of intellect to develop skills early. "Learn or get beaten" - he learned.

So in this sense, yes, childhood is a recent invention. It is an eighteenth century luxury, starting in middle class homes. The children need not work; we are rich enough to support them in comfort. But what will the children do? A special child's world is developed to fill the need.

Children were still maltreated, right up through the nineteenth century. The population expansion of Europe began about 1650, when the new foods from America (maize, potato) improved the diet of all. By 1800, a lot of the babies were failing to die young as they had in the Middle Ages. Too many kids, too many mouths, not enough food. It's there in Dickens, if you know where to look: much sentimental nonsense about "innocent babes", savagery in practice. (They killed the babies. I mean literally killed them, in Victorian England. Langer's papers on this have raised dispute, but there were "baby farms", where poor families boarded out infants for 15¢ a week. Hundreds of babies in a room, given bottles of milk laced with opium to keep them quiet. Mortality rate over 95% per year. Infanticide in the slums of London - it's there in Dickens if you look.)

So, was childhood invented to chain women to the home? Is the nuclear family a plot formulated in the collective unconscious of the dominant males that rule the Patriarchy?

From here it looks more like a conspiracy against the children than one against the women. Sure, our current view of childhood is recent. (This may startle some people, who think the customs of their tribe are the only possible way for human beings to behave.) Firestone is correct in that.

But a change in the current view will benefit the children perhaps more than the mothers. Look what we have now: protective laws that do not protect, unequal justice (special secret "juvenile" courts), compulsory twelve year formal education, restriction on restriction.

I do not side with the libertarians who want to abolish all child labor laws. (Send the eight year olds back into the mills!) But there is a point where protection fades, and restrictions of access begin. (Some women have begun to notice this, as they are barred from certain jobs "too dangerous for ladies"?)

When writers who don't believe human nature has changed try to figure out how we got where we are, they come out with statements like Firestone's on "child as house-chain". There is no psyche of woman or man or adolescent. Social roles are invented every few generations.

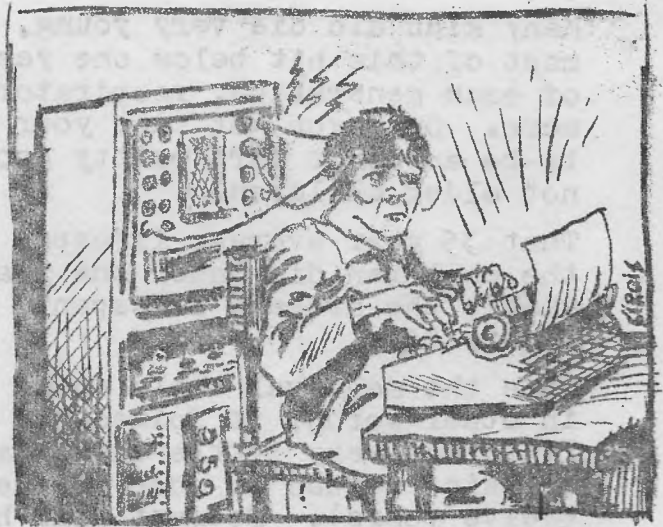
* * *

If I had time, I would like to investigate another historical theory, one that has become almost received doctrine in some feminist circles: the primacy of matriarchy. You know how it goes. The original human society was ruled by wise old females. (I don't say "women" because they didn't fit our current social definition of women.)

All was peaceful. Work consisted of foraging, or maybe farming. Love abounded, babies cooed, the males were respectful. Then alas! One day a group of males invented a new technique: brute force. Gangs of club-swinging hierarchical males drove the females from power, keeping them down by threats and violence. Patriarchy was here, in rape and war. We've still got it with us.

Recognize the theme? "The Lost Golden Age" - farewell Eden, farewell Atlantis, goodbye, goodbye to the Islands of the Blessed. But was there ever such a time or place? Is there any evidence?

The concept of the "original matriarchy" is mid-nineteenth century, designed by anthropologists studying matrilineal inheritance systems. Does anyone out there know if there are any factual data on this matter?



FABLE

1. FIREMAN, HEAL THYSELF

When I was younger, considerably younger, I lived in a small town in Connecticut. One of the villages within that town was named Yalesville, and Yalesville had a Men's Club, one of those whitewashed buildings with almost no windows, where the only female allowed inside was the cleaning woman. We kids all knew what went on inside, the wild parties, heavy drinking, the "educational" films, and whatnot, as did the rest of the community. In order to achieve some kind of moral balance, the Men's Club finally gave in to pressure and agreed to sponsor a Boy Scout troop. There already was one troop in the area, but it was sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church, and good Protestant boys couldn't be expected to consent to mandatory Mass and the like, now could they? So the Men's Club donated its basement once a week and Troop 27 was launched.

All of this went smoothly and the troop began to do surprisingly well in a very short time. We did a lot of camping and hiking, and even did some constructive things around the community from time to time. But it seemed that we had not laid entirely to rest the suffering consciences of the club members. Each club member was approached by the troop leader to lecture us on whatever field he happened to know a bit about. Since there were several volunteer firemen in the membership, we learned a great deal about how to build, control, put out, watch, improve, and otherwise manhandle fires. Every month or so, yet another fireman would volunteer to devote an hour to teaching us the essentials all over again. And so, one hot summer evening, we were all assembled in the grassy field that ran down past the fire station to the Methodist Church to learn, once more, how to build a safe campfire.

Kelly, our firefighter, carefully uprooted all of the dry grass within six feet of the fire site, then used a branch broken from a nearby spruce to sweep aside all of the dried twigs, leaves, and miscellany that were left, thus presenting us with a circle of bare, rather porous earth, about twelve feet in diameter. A small fire, for demonstration purposes only, was soon blazing away in the exact center. Kelly cautioned us about the care necessary in adding new fuel, so as to avoid a fountain of sparks that might ignite nearby foliage. He admonished us never to indulge in horseplay near a fire. We were warned never to throw scrap paper, trash, or dried leaves on a fire, because a gust of wind might lift a burning shred into a tree or bush. Then he demonstrated the proper way of dousing a fire, sorting the ashes, soaking them thoroughly, and so forth and so on. In a way, it was a good thing he was so longwinded, because if we'd left any sooner, there might have been a real disaster. As it happened, we were all still there when flames began to erupt outward from the ground all about us, and smoke began to pour out through the soil in billowing funnels. What Kelly had not noticed was that the ground in that area was almost like peat, that large channels

of air existed under what appeared to be solid surface, and that these channels were lined with dry, decaying vegetable matter. Almost as fast as we noticed that something was amiss, the entire twelve foot circle was aflame and the dry summer grass was igniting almost as fast as we could run clear. A few minutes later, Kelly stared aghast at the flaming field while one of our members hit the fire alarm button on the side of the fire station. Volunteers began arriving within minutes, and we soon found ourselves either building backfires, beating at the grass with water soaked burlap bags, or running about the village to roust more help. Every time we suppressed the flames on the surface, the flames would spread underground and pop up somewhere else. If there'd been any wind at all, the fire would spread through several blocks. The fire had by now approached to within only a few yards of the fire station. This was no joke; the fire station was made of wood. Yalesville's only fire truck was moved out of harm's way. We managed to hold the fire off only after digging a foot deep trench, to prevent further underfires. Our victory was shortlived.

Further up the street, the fire was menacing the grammar school. Since this was also wood, we set to with our shovels and opened another trench. A hydrant made it easier to spray water here though, and we were able to complete the trench in time. Someone suggested getting a bulldozer, but nothing ever came of it. At that point, it appeared that we had finally confined the fire to a very small location, and we should have had time to dig another trench and confine it entirely. But then the wind came up. The fire came right over our narrow trench and raced toward the school building. Another fire company arrived about then, just in time to spell us weary boy scouts. They finally did get the fire out, although the school lost its back stairs.

I must admit, in retrospect, that it was an effective demonstration, if somewhat overly dramatic. After four hours of backbreaking work to stop that fire, not one of our members ever overlooked a single step in campfire safety. There was no way we were ever going to go through that again.

2. THE BRIDGE PARTY

Toward the end of my scouting career, I became a patrol leader, member of the notorious Hawk Patrol. We had been a fairly constant nuisance to Walt Munday, the troop leader, though he would admit off the record that we were his favorites. But after over two decades of service in scouting, Walt had decided to retire. As it happened, a large scout camp was going to be opened that same year, and the state council decided to honor the outgoing troopleader by allowing him to cut the ceremonial rope.

In order to present a good picture for the photographers, all of the area troops were moved to the area the preceding night, feverishly setting up campsites, sprinkling the area with handcrafts, mathematically perfect campfires, and other photogenic paraphernalia. The Hawk Patrol had made a fetish of getting all of the routine work out of the way in a hurry, so it

was no surprise that everything assigned to us was done before dark. So off we went to investigate the parade ground.

The camp consisted of a large wooded area to the rear (where we were all camped) separated from a parade ground that faced the roadway by a small river. Or perhaps a large stream might be a better description, for it was only about twenty feet across. Although two wooden bridges spanned the river, a third, temporary, bridge had been erected for the opening ceremony. This bridge was one of those fiendishly clever and complicated rope bridges that troop leaders relish (chiefly, I suspect, because it keeps so many mischievous hands busy). Anchored to trees on either side, the bridge consisted exclusively of rope, closely woven so that you couldn't fall through, although the footing was treacherous and balance a real problem if you weren't used to it. In the exact center of the rope bridge, an extraneous rope had been stretched across. This was to be cut the following morning by Walt Munday, our retiring troop leader.

I'll bet some of you readers are already ahead of me. Right after taps, the Hawk Patrol slipped out of its tents and back to the bridge. With flashlights and instinct, we set about laboriously reweaving the bridge, cutting a few strands at strategic places, taping the ends together so our sabotage wouldn't show. When we were finished, it was only necessary to cut one rope to allow the entire structure to collapse. And that one rope was the theoretically unnecessary ceremonial rope.

The following morning, we were all mustered and lined up in formation, waiting for the arrival of Walt Munday. The ceremony had been scheduled for 8:00, but it was soon close to 9:00 with no sign of our victim. Then an announcement came over the loudspeaker. It seemed that Walt had been called away unexpectedly and was unable to attend. Luckily, we were told, state senator Paul Peters had been passing by and had agreed to take Munday's place. We looked on in uncomprehending horror as Senator Peters, wearing an expensive tuxedo, walked unsteadily out onto the rope bridge. We silently prayed that our machinations would fail, that our calculations had been shoddy, that the bridge would stay up after all.

It didn't. Down he went, along with one or two other officials, though only Peters ended up completely soaked. Luckily, he was a strong swimmer and had a sense of humor. We never heard even the faintest suspicion of sabotage, although I don't believe anyone was fooled. After all, the ropes had been cut. It never became public news. Peters had no intention of revealing his ignominy. But for months, the Hawk Patrol was the tightest mouthed (and best behaved) bunch of Boy Scouts you ever saw.

.....

"I must admit that until I read Don's letter I had never considered that fanzines could be considered subversive material. If it wasn't for all the other evidence in the direction of tampering with mail, illegal search, etc., I'd consider Don's comments a little paranoid."

---Eric B. Lindsay, in KALLIKANZAROS 9

DREAMSLAYER

I am the slayer of dreams.
I lay them to rest.
Gently I lay them down.

The dark dreams of terror and loss,
The too bright dreams of romance,
I lay them down.

"Why kill the dreams?" the poet cries,
"The gentle dreams,
The dreams which soften life."

"Why kill the dreams?" the Child cries,
"The brilliant dreams,
The dreams which promise all."

"Why kill the dreams?" the Warlock cries,
"The dark dreams,
The dreams of power and control.
The red dreams,
The dreams of tissue death and pain.
The grey dreams
Dreams of despair and defeat,
The dreams of grey, flat, unchanging days stretched
row on row, forever."

I shall answer why
I kill the dreams,
The dreams far brighter, darker, flatter than the world.
The dreams that shield the I from the world.
Today I shall answer why.

I slay the dreams that the I be free,
To taste the world,
The less than blinding world.
The not so dark world.
The world of fascinating things,
stretching way on way,
difference on difference,
forever.

(postscript to DREAMSLAYER

I at first hoped that the poem would stand by itself; however, friends have asked me to comment on it.

This poem is about the destruction of projections. Projections are the internally generated patterns through which we look at reality. We form them in childhood, and the first encounters that we have with romance in the all-inclusive sense are heavily colored because of the projections that we impose on the world.

To see a person through a projection is to be blind to the person, seeing only the ideal archetype we think that person is. From our projections come our first flesh & blood villains. When we finally see the person rather than our projection we frequently react as if we have been betrayed or misled. We then direct anger at our idol who has shown feet of clay. But, actually, the clay feet were always there.

To be the victim of a projection is also unreal. No matter how one acts the projector will only react to his internal vision. One is not oneself; one is a fantasy in someone else's mind. Then when we are finally seen as we are we are accused of betrayal.

With the realization that one is capable of projections and with the identification and control of major projections comes the first death of romance. It is sad.

There is a feeling of nostalgia for the over-bright land we have left with its magic figures.

So we grow.

What's next?

(DREAMSLAYER first appeared
in APA:NESFA 52, Sept. '74)

BONNIE DALZELL

BYPASSING TIME & SPACE
WITH ISABELLA FIGHOLLER

by Mike Blake

After a hyperdrive malfunction forced Isabella Figholler to land her sleek one-person starcraft on Abaddon IV, she soon learned chance had picked her one of the worst of all possible worlds to be stranded on. The settlers on the planet, which they called Mather's World, were religious fanatics who carried puritannical mores to the furthest of extremes. Believing the only way to heaven was to present themselves before the eyes of God as completely worthless sinners begging for salvation, they took a perverse pleasure in describing to each other what errors they had fallen into since last they met, to the point where the ritual greeting between Matherites became "What err?"

Assuming anyone with Isabella's reputation was bound to be an encyclopedia of sins, great numbers of Matherites began accosting her on the street with the words, "What err?" Which Isabella pointedly ignored. Soon, however, she found herself being followed everywhere by crowds shouting the phrase.

Isabella found her second problem living among the Matherites particularly distressing. In order to further debase themselves in God's eyes, the only drink they served at meals besides water was made from the excrement of the most common native lifeform, an animal almost identical to the earthly otter. Each huge liquid drop was separately gathered and allowed to ferment slightly. To an imbibor of Isabella's stature (her limitless capacity for fermented and distilled beverages was legendary), this situation was impossible.

Things came to a head one evening when Isabella attempted to eat a peaceful dinner at the inn where she was staying. While she ate a Matherite's usual meal of cold, sour soup and hard bread, the other patrons of the establishment tried to catch her eye and call out the standard greeting she had heard a thousand times that day. The crowning blow came when Isabella finished the uninviting repast and was served the drink with which she was supposed to wash down her food. The mug contained a syrupy brown otter drop.

This was too much. In disgust she threw the mug across the room and overturned her table with a loud crash. The Matherites around her sprung to their feet in dismay.

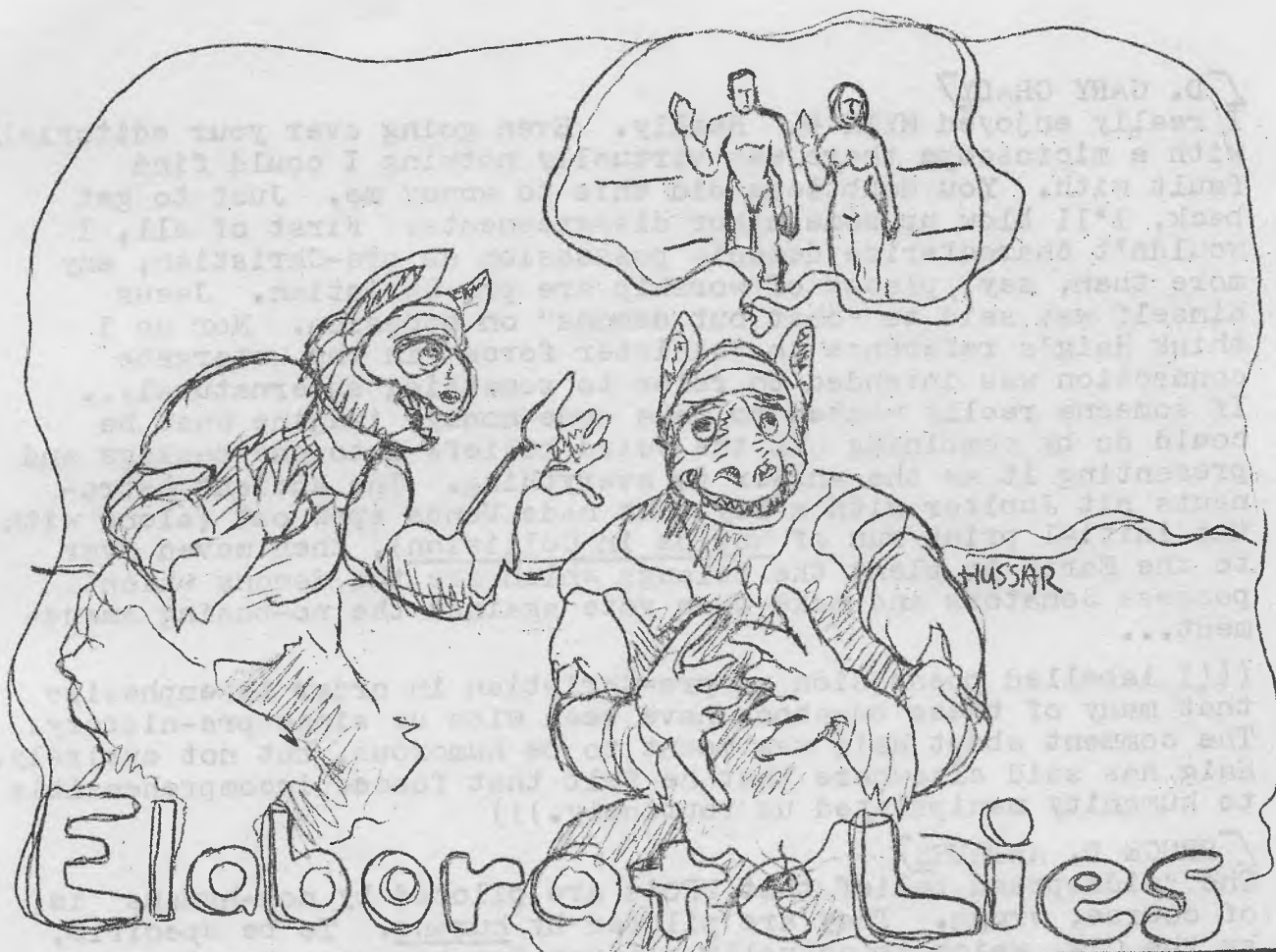
"What err?" they cried, "Woman, why do you show your wrath before the eyes of the Almighty?"

Fed up at last, Isabella summed her anger and frustration in two terse sentences.

"What err? What err? Everywhere! An otter drop to drink!"

.....

And on that note, I want to plead once more: No more Fighollers!



SUPERSTITION

[PAUL DI FILIPPO]

Superstitions have always appeared to me to be attempts by Man to supply some sort of explanation for instances which would otherwise drive him crazy with their surface meaninglessness. Prior to the advent of science, superstitions and theology were the only barriers between Man and the universe. As such, they were immensely important, and we should hardly expect them to be eliminated so soon by such a relatively new discipline as science. In fact, as you emphasize, it looks like superstition may be subsuming science.

As far as using superstitions to deny individual responsibility, I think we are encountering nothing new, either in kind or degree. I refer you to Edmund's speech in King Lear, I,i, where he says, "...we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, the stars, as if we were villains on necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion... all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star!" It seems to be a widespread trait in humanity, this evasion of culpability. In fact, humanity's whole style of living, from the delegation of power to governments and the reliance on religious and secular authorities, seems to indicate that Man is happiest when he has the least power over, and responsibility for, his own life. Superstitions are just one manifestation of this.

[D. GARY GRADY]

I really enjoyed MYTH 4. Really. Even going over your editorial with a microscope there was virtually nothing I could find fault with. You doubtless did this to annoy me. Just to get back, I'll blow up some minor disagreements: First of all, I wouldn't characterize demonic possession as pre-Christian, any more than, say, places of worship are pre-Christian. Jesus himself was said to "cast out demons" on occasion. Nor do I think Haig's reference to "sinister force" in the Watergate connection was intended to refer to something supernatural... If someone really wanted to make some money, imagine what he could do by combining ALL the weird beliefs into one package and presenting it as the answer to everything. The Ancient Astronauts hit Jupiter with a ray that made Venus spew out (along with the initial print run of Worlds in Collision), then moved over to the Earth to plant the telaugs which are the demons which possess Senators and make them vote against the no-busing amendment...

((I labelled possession as pre-Christian in order to emphasize that many of these bugaboos have been with us since pre-history. The comment about Haig was meant to be humorous, but not entirely. Haig has said elsewhere that he felt that forces incomprehensible to humanity manipulated us routinely.)))

[BRUCE D. ARTHURS]

The "widespread belief that UFO's are piloted by non-humans" is, of course, wrong. They are piloted by humans. To be specific, by the CIA, which is actually a cover for the secret male organization keeping women subservient. The saucers also have time-travelling abilities, and the CIA has used this ability to go back in time and build Stonehenge, the pyramids, and make those lines in Peru, as well as numerous other projects, the purpose of which is to serve as a giant, horrendously complex code-book. The CIA is also responsible for all the assassinations of history, back to Julius Caesar and beyond. (Judas Iscariot was an undercover agent, incidentally.) The planet Clarion that Mark Keller mentions in his article is not a planet, of course, but a college campus where a workshop for amateur sf writers was held. (It is referred to as a planet merely as a cover.) At this workshop, much brainstorming took place among these slannish amateurs, with ideas tossed down on scraps of paper and just as quickly tossed away as not suitable. One of these scraps of paper, by odd coincidence, contained the rough plans for the time machine the CIA now uses. It might have ended in some landfill project except for the remarkably coincidental presence of one Robin Scott Wilson, who headed the workshop, and who happened to be a former CIA agent...Lest one think that these coincidences piling atop one another are too farfetched to be believed, there is a simple explanation: once the CIA had built a working model of the time machine, their first task was to go back in time and arrange events so that the slip of paper would be sure to fall into their hands...

((In an attempt to tie a couple of current crazes together, Mark Keller attempted to sell Bantam THE ANCIENT ASTRONAUTS COOKBOOK. They declined.)))

[PAUL WALKER]

The notion of our separateness from nature, from the lower animals, has always been essential to our thinking: just think of all the Thought that is based on it. The fact of this "notion" has led us to the Moon; without it, we would share the eternal indifference of the animals to the universe, concerning ourselves only with what directly involved our immediate welfare. But because we conceive of ourselves as "separate" from nature, we can view nature objectively, aesthetically. Of course, there are many, including myself, who will argue that this notion of separateness is illusory and has led to danger for ourselves as a species, and to unhappiness for ourselves as individuals, but the notion is not an arbitrary invention of theologians -- it is phenomenological fact. Even to primitive man, nature is something "other" than himself; something he usually anthropomorphizes, because he can only conceive of nature as a rational being like himself, too often acting irrational out of spite or sentiment.

Alienation as a function that allows us to perceive this separateness from nature, also allows us to perceive our separateness from our selves, and makes it possible for us to control ourselves in ways the animals cannot. After all, what are we? Mind and body, we are as much a biochemical reality, as mundane as such, as any animal. And yet we are convinced that we are "more". Some call that "more" the soul, or the spirit, or reach for more inarticulate mystical and supernatural definitions. But primitive man himself is as sure as we are that there is something "more" to himself. He can identify that "more" in palpable terms. He can see spirits and sense them. We know better, or rather, we are more clever. We put our "more" in places like heaven or hell and claim extra-rational evidence for them. But regardless of how you feel about such beliefs, you cannot dismiss them as superstitious nonsense without substance. Again, they are beliefs that arise from concrete perceptions of the human experience - we all feel that something "more" in ourselves and must account for it to ourselves.

Alienation is the function that allows us to feel that "more"; and in my humble opinion, alienation is precisely what that "more" is. We tend to think of our brains as divided between "mind" and "body". The mass of the brain is given over to bodily functions, while the "mind" is divided again into the territories of conscious and unconscious, with the latter calling the shots, containing the "true" substance of ourselves. We conceive of alienation as a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious; a failure to align our conscious self-image with the real "us" in the subconscious. But I disagree with this. To me, there is only one source of what we call "ego" in the human mind and that is the conscious, and the conscious is not a thing as the subconscious is, but a function which includes the subconscious. There is no division between them; nor any division between both and the rest of the brain. But there appears to be...The great problem created by our ignorance is that the function of the conscious is to explain all things to us by means of verbal imagery. It is the nature of the conscious,

if not the need of it, to structure all experience in terms of words in order for them to be useful to us. If we encounter an experience that cannot be so translated readily into a unified concept, anxiety results. The conscious will not tolerate a vacuum. It must have an explanation for all its sensory input, regardless of the validity of that explanation. So a person who has severe pains in his tummy may readily conclude he has cancer, although he has no proof whatever, and even after a doctor tells him he has nothing wrong with him but an excessive fondness for mince pie, he will go on convinced he has cancer. "Cancer" is the only verbal concept that can articulate his sensory experience. The conscious, then, is like a board with round and square holes into which verbal structures are crammed to fill them up.

The person who readily believes in little green men from Mars or Divine Astronauts is really acting no more "irrationally" than the grey-haired Utopian who believes that socialism, and a diet of stewed prunes, will save the world. Likewise, the belief in ghosts, flying saucers, and things that go bump in the night are articulations designed to serve the needs of the conscious, the same needs we all have, and fill in, generally, equally irrational ways.

(((While I agree pretty much with what you say, Paul, I don't think it really addresses my major concern. To use your example, why cannot the over-eater accept the doctor's statement that his stomach pains are caused by over-indulgence? This answer should be equally palatable, perhaps more so since it is backed by Authority. There seems to be an active tendency to choose the irrational even when a rational explanation is available. The sole criterion seems to be that people choose that explanation which absolves them of personal responsibility. This is a perfectly obvious human attribute, but I don't understand why it is, and I suspect that it is becoming increasingly common.)))

[RICK BROOKS]

Rejecting Astrology on present evidence is as unscientific as accepting it. As in most things, I prefer to regard my opinion as subject to change. I've been interested in astrology as I've found no one that has done an analysis disproving it. Asimov annoyed me by bringing in the red herring that astrology is earth centered whereas the solar system is sun centered. I know of no one who was born on the surface of the sun. Michel Gauquelin has published several books on his statistical studies in Europe of the horoscopes of thousands of people in a profession. I would like to see his raw data. However you don't hear much about him as he neither debunked astrology nor supported conventional astrology. His relationships were significant, but only covered the positioning of the planets with respect to the sunrise line and the zenith. I found most interesting his results indicating that conventional astrology has the cart before the horse. The planets influence the body no more than the clock does. Children born naturally tend to be born at a certain planetary position rather than the planets "influencing" them at the moment of birth.

((Neither do I rule out the possibility that astrology is to some extent correlative with reality. My opinion is that it is probably nonsense, but I think I have an open enough mind that facts could convince me otherwise. What bothers me is that so many people pattern their behavior by it without proof. Of course, the same thing could be said about major religions, I suppose, and I don't exclude established religion from my charge.)))

[AL SIROIS]

It's been my opinion for some time now that the proliferation of the Jesus Freaks and the Maharaj Ji freaks may be due in part to the "urge to belong", the desire for security in the face of a fragmenting society. You may perhaps have heard that the Guru Fatty himself has been denounced by his own mother as a fraud and an opportunist. If that isn't fitting irony, what is? I also agree with George R.R. Martin's quote. I would say that that is precisely why we read sf - the "Sense of Wonder".

((Fatty's mother first tried to replace her son as head of the cult personally, but since God has to be male apparently, she now favors an older son. The government of India is threatening to slap them all in jail and has already revoked their passports. They still haven't paid their bills in the US either.)))

[SAM LONG]

I know what you mean about the revival of semi-occultism: a good friend of mine, hitherto a complete rationalist, now has astrological books in his library and defended it against my scoffing. ...I'd not call those things you mention superstitions. Beliefs, yes, but not superstitions. Superstition requires a common set of customs and a belief that the luck of a person is a function of how he keeps those customs, and neither gurus nor flying saucers nor McCarthyites can be said to be customary or concerned with luck. But you redeemed yourself with that magnificent paragraph on page 4 wherein you state that the implication of all these beliefs and superstitions is that we are not entirely responsible for our actions. I would add to your "individually" the word "collectively" too, for especially in the case of the Danikenites and flying saucerists, it is asserted that mankind is "controlled" from the outside.

((I think you put too restrictive a definition on the word "superstition". Surely belief in ghosts, vampires, and suchnot is superstition, though not linked with luck. But after the brouhaha after my definition of "maturity", I'll try to avoid semantic arguments.)))

[BRETT COX]

I think that you're too concerned about beliefs and cults that are basically of no consequence. Astrologers and UFO fans and von Daniken fans and Tarot believers and students of the occult are, in my mind, harmless. What we should really be worried about are the larger religious movements like the Children of God and the Maharaj Ji followers, and to lesser extent, the Satanic cults. It is here that the danger to society lies, if there is any. Some little old lady in Hoboken studying the Tarot is harmless. A group of people using Christianity to brainwash thousands of

people and gain power in the process isn't. Second, I think that you're too quick to dismiss the beliefs you mentioned in your editorial as mere nonsense. I believe that every single superstition that you mentioned in "Myth" could conceivably be true. They're all possible. They're improbable as all hell. But they're still possible.

((((It isn't the individual groups that bother me so much as the generalized abdication of personal culpability. Insofar as the Christian extremist groups are concerned, any organized belief system, including Christianity itself, engages in "brainwashing". I've been conditioned since birth to believe in a personal God, and even though I am no longer Christian, I cannot psychically escape the feeling that I'm being watched. Neither did I say that all of these people are nuts. I mentioned specifically that not all evidence was "spurious", that they generally contain at least a "germ of truth". I don't happen to believe in most of them myself, because I'm emotionally and intellectually prejudiced against any theory that tells me I'm not responsible for my own life.)))

[FRANK BALAZS]

You are overlooking a major point in your thesis that myth is being used to retreat from reality. "Each implies that we -- as individuals -- are not entirely responsible for our own actions." I do not quibble with your later extrapolation, but with the apparent obliviousness to (for lack of a better word) historical perspective. The paragraph from which I quote seems to demonstrate this. You imply that this abdication of responsibility is a new phenomenon. In many cultures the question of individual responsibility does not even arise. Primitive peoples are engaged in strict traditional rituals in which they are constantly repeating that which has already happened. For example, in many cultures (including the early Greeks) whenever new ground is broken or a city or village is to be built, a ritual symbolizing the creation is enacted. The individual does not think of himself as an individual. He is the representative of his ancestors who in turn have the same function. Actions have already been done a countless number of times in the past and will be accomplished a countless number of times in the future. Originally, it is the culture-hero who went on the first hunt or settled the first village. Each successive descendant is merely repeating what has gone before (by the gods or the hero). Responsibility does not even arrive as a question at this point.

There is the failure of your thesis. Contemporary society has in various fashions changed to the extent that individual responsibility for individual actions is more than a question. I am not saying that people do not retreat into fantasy; it is not merely a current trend. If anything, this phenomenon has lessened. It may increase again as you suggest, but the trend in Western society has been away from outer (non-human) forces and hierarchies affecting either humankind or the individual.

((((I don't understand how you could have so completely misunder-

stood me. I said repeatedly that I believed we were seeing an upturn of the cycle. Certainly this does not imply a lack of historical perspective. Toynbee points out that while the wheel of history turns in circles, the cart is also moving on. I'm unsure that we can any longer tolerate the kind of societal abdication of responsibility that was formerly absorbed by our civilization. Can humanity survive another Adolf Hitler in the era of nuclear weapons? I suspect not. The upsurge in belief in these superstitions is symptomatic of our culture's retreat into nonsense. Rather than disprove my point, I think your letter reinforces it.)))

[GEORGE FLYNN]

What was the exact wording of that Gallup Poll question? It does make a significant difference: I believe there are Unidentified Flying Objects; it's all these people who are sure that they're Identified that bother me. As for the comparison to Nixon's veracity, at least no flying saucer has ever lied to us.

Mencken's definition of faith is too restrictive; it is of course intended to define the problem out of existence by denying the possibility of reasonable faith. Say rather that faith is belief in the absence of proof. It is an act of faith to say that the sun will rise tomorrow: this belief has a very high degree of plausibility, but is not subject to actual proof until the event. This is a special case of the general belief that the universe operates in a predictable fashion, which can be taken as the fundamental dogma of the religion we call science. And like so many religious principles, it has a distorted equivalent in the popular mind that can be called a superstition - in this case, "What has always been true will continue to be so," a pernicious doctrine indeed when applied to such matters as the population/resource crisis. This is where "future shock" comes from. But the basic principle isn't wrong, only its indiscriminate application. For "faith" in the pejorative sense, then, (which I insist as a matter of semantics is not the only sense) a better definition than Mencken's would be "an unthinking belief in anything" (whether probable or not).

[JEFF MAY]

I fear I was somewhat taken aback by your editorial in #4. As you know, I am interested in astrology (and more or less in the other things you mentioned). I don't expect everyone to believe in it, but nevertheless I found it somewhat appalling to see astrology lumped together with UFOs, the possession fad, von Daniken, Jesus Freaks, Guru Maharaj Ji, conspiracy buffs, etc., and the all used as proof of anything. I am unable to agree that these topics have in common a force of nature which takes part of our free will away from us. Now I'll grant that some true believers of all those things will yield up their free will to their faith: your friend who checks his date's "sign", or the religious who follow their leader (or Guru) blindly. But most of those I know who read horoscope columns do so as a joke for their amusement, and believing in flying saucers is a far cry from believing that saucerians are controlling the world.

As for your comment on possession, I don't feel that General Haig had the devil in mind when he made that comment on "sinister force." After all, he was acquainted with Richard Nixon.

((When I finished the Myth for last issue, I knew I would get a loc from you. You never did answer the pertinent point though. Belief in astrology does remove the onus from humans for their actions. The fact that, as you mention, many people consult horoscopes as a joke, merely shows that they don't believe in it. They're not the ones I'm talking about.)))

[ROY TACKETT]

Your recounting of popular beliefs and superstitions is unarguable. Most people hold on to one or more of the things you enumerated. It indicates, I think, that despite several millennia of progress the bulk of mankind is still huddling in the caves shivering in fear of the things that go bump in the dark. And there will always be shamans such as von Daniken, or your local preacher, who, for a price, will charm away the demons. All one has to do is believe -- and, above all, not turn on the light.

Your mention of the Black Muslim belief that their race is the only true Man calls to mind the belief in the Fifth Men one finds in the Caucasus and its adjacent regions (for the most part, although there are some adherents in the west). The Fifth Men, also, are supposedly the only true men and the Secret Masters of this or that. Stalin, for example, a Georgian, is said to have been a Fifth Man whose efforts were bent to preserving the secrecy of the Fifth Men's stronghold which is located somewhere in that vast system of mountains which stretches from northern Mesopotamia to the steppes. The Fifth Men are supposedly an ancient race (ah, yes, always) which has all sorts of old and forbidden (?) knowledge. It is said:

The first men were apes.

The second men were apes who looked like men.

The third men were men who looked like apes.

The fourth men were almost men.

The fifth men are true men.

And most of us are, at best, only Fourth Men.

[DOM QUADRINI]

As for Mark Keller's article, I could not agree more. But unlike Keller, I would not intimate by taking them to task that the semi-liquid secretions clinging to the pages of those books express ideas worthy of logical debate. Don't misunderstand me. I am not a book burner, and I do believe that an individual has the right to express his thoughts unhampered by the disagreement, however vehement, of others, provided, of course, that the metatarsi and related parts of others are not stamped upon.

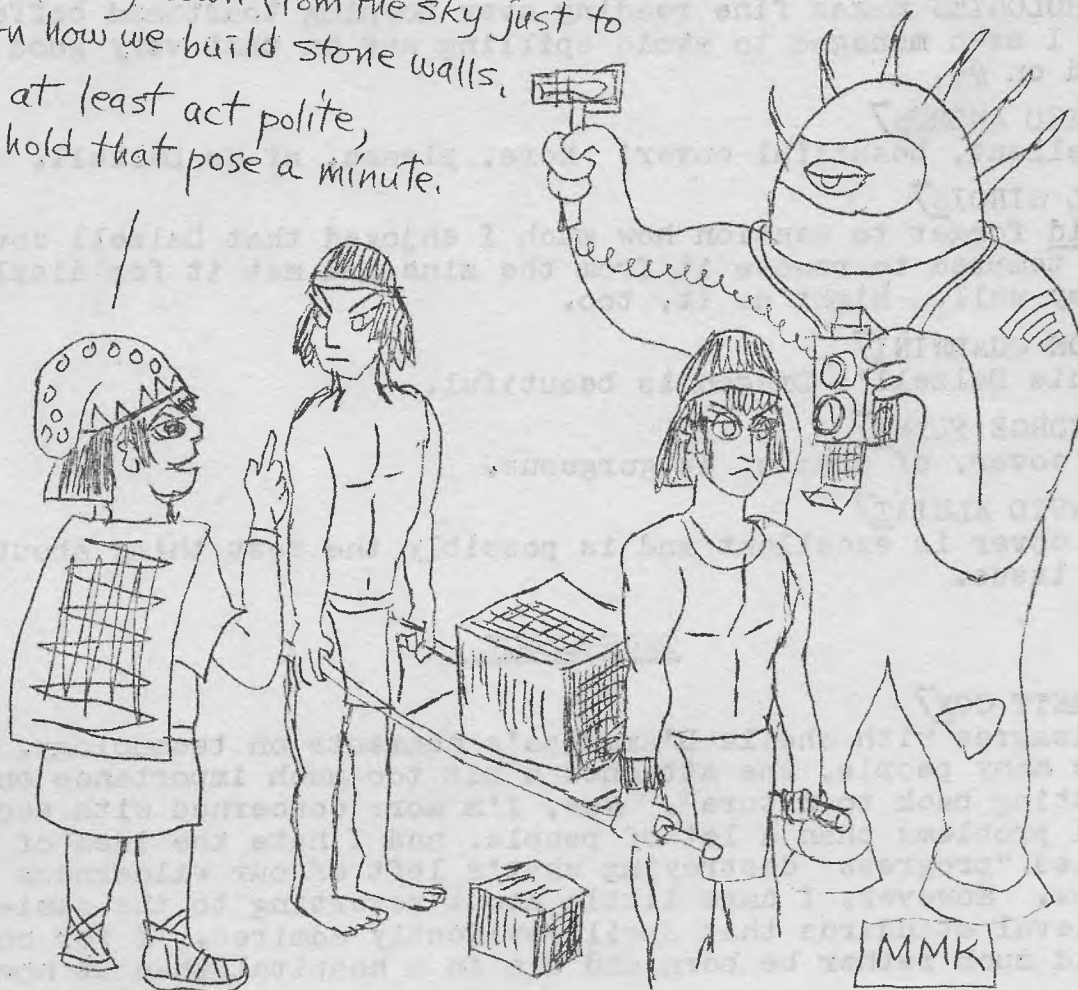
These books do perhaps deserve the hackneyed description used by most high school students when they can't think of anything to say about a given subject, especially a book they supposedly have read and have been assigned to report on - "interesting". I say this as if to provide at least some meager justification for the creation of these monuments of sophism, when it is highly

probable that the justification - money - is not meager at all. I can see the von Daniken's, heroes of the Chariots Fandom, sitting in their favorite easy chairs chuckling to themselves as they read arguments such as Keller's, which counter the theses (feces) set forth in their books. The fact that these ideas have merited the consideration of scholars and educators (alas, even Carl Sagan in The Cosmic Connection took up the sword against them) has served only to strengthen the faith of the saucer and Chariot disciples. The weapon of reason is as ineffective against their dissonant theories as water thrown upon a grease fire. It does not expunge the flames, but spreads them. Keller admits having experienced the frustration of this phenomenon in his "discouraging conversation with a Chariot fan at Discon II last September." I read somewhere that the ability of a literary work

THROUGH TIME AND SPACE WITH ERK VOM DENKEN
#1. "Maybe they came as tourists..."

Now, listen - our visitor has come
all the way down from the sky just to
learn how we build stone walls.
So at least act polite,
and hold that pose a minute.

©1975
M.M. Keller



to spark the imagination and foster constructive debate is a measure of its worth. Yet Keller's query to the von Daniken fans, "Don't they see there is nothing new in the Chariot theory...?" manifests the tiresome and therefore unimaginative nature of the theme. This, together with the initial assertion that the theme does not deserve formal discussion, pro or con, clearly establishes its paltry worth. Why then, by responding to its hollow challenge with logic, attribute to the Chariot and Saucer fantasy even the slightest impression of scientific dignity it would not otherwise have? In short Mr Keller, "Do not throw your pearls before swine", or "Your words fall on deaf ears", or "Save your breath", or...

((Ah, but the interesting aspect is not the beliefs of the von Daniken nuts, it is their very existence. The followers have become a phenomenon more interesting than its origin. This is why STAR TREK fandom is stronger now that the TV show has been cancelled than it was while the show was on.)))

THE COVER

BRUCE ARTHURS

The Dalzell cover was marvelous. Rather wish she'd show up more often in fanzines...

DAVE LOCKE

MYTHOLOGIES makes fine reading over morning toast and coffee, and I even managed to avoid spilling any on that very good cover used on #4.

REED ANDRUS

Excellent, beautiful cover! More, please, of Ms Dalzell.

AL SIROIS

I did forget to mention how much I enjoyed that Dalzell cover. I'm tempted to remove it from the zine and mat it for display on my wall. Might do it, too.

DOM QUADRINI

Bonnie Dalzell's Dragon is beautiful.

GEORGE FLYNN

The cover, of course, is gorgeous.

DAVID KLEIST

The cover is excellent and is possibly the best thing about the issue.

TECHNOLOGY

BRETT COX

I disagree with Sheila D'Amassa's comments on technology. Like many people, she attaches a bit too much importance on "getting back to nature". Now, I'm more concerned with ecological problems than a lot of people, and I hate the idea of so-called "progress" destroying what's left of our wilderness areas. However, I care little about reverting to the semi-medieval standards that Sheila evidently admires. I for one would much rather be born and die in a hospital than at home,

and I shudder at the thought of forcing young children to live in the same house with the sick and the dying. Such conditions would, I feel, be far more traumatic and damaging to a child than any lack of "closeness" could ever be. As for her worries about being separated from "our biological heritage", well, all I can say is that man, by his ability to consciously alter his environment to extreme degrees, has separated himself from the rest of nature. It is no longer valid to view man as being on the same ecological level as other animals.

((I find it hard to believe you said most of this. First, I did not understand Sheila to say we should eschew hospitals, just that we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that death and disease are an inescapable part of life. I suspect your goal would be a world full of Dora Copperfields, sheltered from the little routine traumas until a big one comes along and knocks one over. I cannot accept at all the idea that man is somehow superior to nature. No matter how hard I try, I cannot breathe any other gas than oxygen, just to cite a ridiculous example. And what happens to man's civilization when the energy sources give out?)))

[GEORGE FLYNN]

It's true that progress can't be equated with technology, but be careful here. The advance of technology indeed does not necessarily bring progress; but in our world as it actually exists, the lack of technological advance - of the right kind - may make progress impossible. I have the feeling that as a society we're in severe danger of throwing out the baby with the bath water.

SEX ROLES

[HARRY WARNER, JR.]

I object to the women who contend that their cause is the most important cause in the nation today: it's very important but it doesn't rate as high in my problem priority list as a new, expanded space program, a complete overhauling of the nation's educational system, and a revision of foreign aid spending to achieve the real necessity, that of feeding the starving millions instead of strengthening one clique in a far-off nation or raising a standard of living that already permits participants to get enough to eat.

I feel, too, that propagandists like Shulamith Firestone ignore too consistently the biological considerations. No matter how fully a woman's mind breaks from the traditional female subservience, things are going on in her body as the result of millennia of ancestral behavior. Call it instinct or ascribe it to glandular secretions, it doesn't matter; the important thing is that an abrupt revolution in the relationship of the sexes involving extra-uterine propagation of the race, communal raising of infants, pro-transsexuality atmosphere and similar things are going to set up enormous physiological and psychological difficulties with results as awful as the social consequences of the Emancipation Proclamation as a wartime propaganda measure. It's silly to think that women can cast off their special group of instincts and infants can grow up without the family in an overnight revolution. It's been centuries since most people really tried to follow the Ten Commandments and the lie detector still works, because even the

most hardened criminal can't make his body be as indifferent to his falsehoods as his superego is. So I think that women should continue to press for progress in sexual equality at the same rate as they've moved ahead in the course of this century. I think there's as much danger of a female Hitler smashing up civilization by militant tactics as the real Hitler achieved by his racial belligerency. I believe that accomplishment of the goals of the female militants at the cost of destruction of the family would produce more misery for both men and women than satisfaction for women.

((I don't know if you realize it, but you've just said that the rights of minorities should be subject to the greater need of society as a whole. That's an awfully dangerous policy. A case might well be made that the two party system needlessly divides the population. M. Stanton Evans, conservative columnist, recently recommended that all those people who opposed publicly the conduct of US involvement in Indochina be disenfranchised because their efforts were against the national interest. There are feminists and feminist positions with which I disagree, but I can't imagine ever telling anyone that he ought to wait for full equality.)))

[LEAH A. ZELDES]

I have known several women and girls who, when a door is opened for them, will go out of their way to use another one. And that's silly. Myself, I don't see that it's hurting anyone if someone holds a door for me, or helps me with my coat. It's merely a pleasantry, and there are damn few these days.

((Chivalry is viewed by many as a symbol of inequality, and their symbolic rejection of it is emotionally rewarding. That's their privilege. Frankly, I'm one of the males who has always resented and often refused to open a door for or give up my seat to a woman.)))

[JIM GOLDFRANK]

It seems to me that in all this discussion of feminism, masculinism, sexism and the like, the obvious has been neglected: the natures of women and men. Now speaking in generalities is always dangerous because there is always a case to prove the generality wrong. Perhaps we can find a general though not universally applicable truth in them. Given the assumption that what is best for any individual to develop that individual's potential to live a happy productive life is found within that individual's own nature: I must ask what qualities are typically masculine or feminine. Here I must speak from gut feeling and personal conviction. I believe that masculine nature includes aggressiveness and physical strength. I believe that feminine nature is more sensitive and empathic, and on the physical side more inclined to agility and fine coordination. Other abilities like sports, managerial, technical, creative and so on are found distributed among either sex, as are capacity for hard work, moral determination, and physical endurance.

Now let's examine why male and female roles have gone out of balance in the past, as well as today's corrections and overcorrections. Because of physical strength and aggressiveness, men

have placed women in subordinate roles, jobs below their intellectual and creative abilities, and until only recently historically speaking, placing them somewhere between a citizen and a slave, denying them the right to vote or hold office. Faced with a state of affairs like that, militantism and over reaction is necessary. It goads more moderate men and women out of an acceptance of things as they are, to see and to work for more rational roles in society for women, men's equals in every respect, according to those talents which are distributed among the sexes.

Unfortunately militantism generally goes too far; happily it does not generally die out without having realized some of its more moderate and reasonable goals. Women's liberation should not end in women's domination. That would be as wrong as male domination. Neither should it mean women trying to assume masculine characteristics, or even psychologically neutering themselves and becoming "persons". It should mean an equal chance for any woman to develop her own potential and advance according to her individual capabilities in business, industry, artistic fields, educational fields, medicine, and so on...without sacrificing her femininity. The good Lord willing, society seems to be moving in that direction.

((I'm afraid I don't agree with your basic statement, but with most of the derivative ones. Recent studies with children show that there is no more tendency toward aggressiveness in males than in females, but because of the general masculine physical superiority, feminine aggression usually takes a different form. You might want to read Philip Wylie's The Disappearance, in which he makes this point quite well.)))

[SHERYL BIRKHEAD]

I'm sure the sexism topic will continue to rage on. I'm kinda used to having to fend for myself. In the sciences (once the initial shock has worn off the faces of the male students who realize you ARE serious about this stuff and not using it as a means to an end), I suppose you get used (or at least more used) to fending for yourself a bit more. In most cases there are ways around needing help, which generally just involve using your head a bit instead of some muscle.

[D. GARY GRADY]

Puh-lease stop taking the US to task for being sex-role restrictive. We are as liberal as any society I know of. There are isolated cases of greater sexual freedom (e.g. women are admitted to the Turkish military academy), but as far as I know a woman in the US gets treated fairer on the whole than a woman anywhere else. Things can stand much improvement though.

By the way, I am opposed, I have decided, to equal pay for equal work...unless women are willing to pay their way in to see a movie or eat a meal...By truly matriarchal I meant a society where the rulers are generally women. I know of none, although some women have acquired leadership roles in almost every society.

((Who singled out the US? But I'm not going to excuse our society just because someone else is worse. Would you call me honest if I said I steal less than almost anyone I know?)))

[REED ANDRUS]

I deem myself a humanitarian chauvinist, which translates into "You do your thing, and I'll do mine, and so long as I get no static, I'll give none in return." I'm mildly defensive on the sexism subject. A local magazine editor refused my film reviews on the grounds that he was turned off by my blatant chauvinism. Several people, admittedly friends (but of both sexes) could not understand that charge, and I've been brooding about it ever since. I suppose my marriage can be termed "standard" in that the roles of myself and Chris, my wife, are fairly well delineated. She believes in cooking, cleaning, etc., and I bring home the necessary financial support. In other words, a low income family with middle class ideas - the stereotype that turns most people off. But my sister and her husband went through the "open marriage" contractual bit, and found it wanting, so I feel I've missed nothing except a lot of unnecessary grief. And I don't think maturity or lack thereof has anything to do with it. It's pragmatism, pure and simple: Whatever works, is right.

((Or, as they say, different strokes for different folks. We are in agreement. There is nothing inherently wrong in a middle class existence. I have even been known to drink beer while watching TV after mowing the lawn.)))

[JERRY KAUFMAN]

I have been following the sex role discussion closely. I would only like to observe that there are a number of different emphases possible. As Sheila points out, Firestone wishes to retreat from her body and its physical differences from men's bodies. The opposite is often applauded. What I mean is that some feminists revel in their bodies and the differences they have. They are physically able to give birth and to nurture life, and don't need men except for the initial lunge. They can have midwives, they can have women lovers and support each other through pregnancy and the child's early life.

Although many women who feel this way proselytise their beliefs, most women feel some emotional need for us men. This is fortunate for us. Men could live without women, using other men for sex and for dominant-submissive relationships (I think very few relationships are of perfect equals; I think the average healthy relationship has the partners alternating positions), but most men won't. There's a strong aversion to sex with men, as we all know. And of course a solely masculine world would die out. But I'm not so sure that a good number of women couldn't be persuaded they'd be better off without us. This is what frightened me when I read Sex and the High Command.

((John Boyd is very good at raising instinctive fears. His novels betray an almost pathological fear of women with any degree of competence or aggression, or anyone younger than forty. This is particularly evident in his recent Bantam novel, The Gorgon Festival, which I recommend not because it's a good book, because it's not, but because - like D. Keith Mano's The Bridge - it provides an extraordinarily clear glimpse into an extraordinarily muddy mind. Boyd's first couple of novels showed so much promise too, Sigh.)))

[RICK BROOKS]

As for romance among intellectual equals, the Romans tended to rate homosexual love highly since they considered that love for a woman was not love for an equal. Love is a word like nice. We love our girl, our parents, our country, and our sf, and the word loses meaning. The paper just carried a story about a man who tried to marry his horse after homosexual marriages were allowed. Unfeeling bureaucrats refused. Among other things, the mare was only eight years old.

D. Gary Grady's remarks on sex roles, on the "typical male" and "typical female" being present in all cultures is not true. In Margaret Mead's Blueberry Winter (Pocket Book ed) she says (pg 234) "among the Tchambuli the expected relations between men and women reversed those that are characteristic of our culture." Or (pg 224) "Here again, in Mundugumor, I found a very strong cultural styling of personality, but as in Arapesh, both men and women were expected to conform to a single type: the idea of behavioral styles that differentiated men and women was totally alien." Mead found a reversal culture as well as all "masculine" or all "feminine". A fascinating book. I doubt at present that we can find many constants in sexual differences.

[PAULA LIEBERMAN]

The pedestal women were stuffed on was largely a Victorian device. In the middle ages there are records of women who were educated and wrote, women who designed cathedrals, some monarchs... Last year, a female writer, Tillie Olsen, was the writer in residence at MIT for the year. (She didn't think that sf was a valid field for women who were interested in fiction and science to go into, but that's another story.) Her point of view was that there were many women in the last century and in this century who, because they were female, were denied their place as writers -- that not only were they ignored as writers, but that most of them were never even given the chance to do any real writing.

((The most famous example is probably George Eliot, whose real name was Marian Evans. Evans became totally alienated from her family because of her unseemly intellectual pursuits. The Mill on the Floss is largely autobiographical. Women's novels were usually tolerated in the same category as any other parlor trick. Jane Austen's contemporaries would have been amazed at her high position today, or that WUTHERING HEIGHTS would one day be widely considered one of the ten best novels in the English language.)))

[LESLEIGH LUTTRELL]

First to Paul Di Filippo. He is wrong in believing that sex bigotry is not as serious and life threatening as race bigotry. For example, Florence Maybrick and Edith Thompson were both convicted of the murder of their respective husbands and sentenced to death mainly on the basis of their sex. In both cases their real crime was adultery - a "crime" which would have been ignored or even forgiven in a man by a group of his peers. Thompson, who demonstrably did not take part in the murder of her husband, was hanged. Maybrick escaped the gallows only because the higher-ups in the English judicial system felt she should not be executed for pumping her husband full of arsenic when it could not be proven that the arsenic found in his body was feloniously administered (he

was a known "arsenic eater" -- a habit some thought healthful at the time.) Florence Maybrick was not pardoned, though, and spent a good part of the rest of her life in prison. One could not pardon an adultress.

You may object that these women were punished for their real or supposed crimes, not for their sex. They were really punished for stepping outside the narrow bounds of proper conduct for their sex as established by the society they lived in. Surely this is also the real crime of most victims of lynch mobs: white men are seldom lynched or even legally murdered for the crime of rape. Only a Hitler can afford to kill people merely for being what they were born; a Jew, a black, a woman, etc. Most societies content themselves with establishing narrowly defined roles for the groups in question and tolerating the existence of members of that group only when they conform to their expected roles. There are generally severe penalties, including death, for stepping outside the confines of such a role.

Of course, the same thing applies to everyone who lives in society -- there are punishments for stepping outside of its circumscribed limits. The major difference being that the roles open to the group in power are much broader, the choices are much greater, than for others in that society. We must recognize that in limiting the choice of one part of society we are limiting all, and that human variety is so great that we cannot assign roles strictly on the basis of the classifications of sex, race, etc.

No, Mr Di Filippo, I don't stay up at night worrying about the sexist remarks made by a drunk stumbling out of the bar down the street, but the idea that I may not get the kind of job I want, that I might be unable to do what I want with my life, to do what I am capable of doing and qualified to do, simply because of my sex is more than a minor annoyance; it is a major problem.

As for a professional opinion on the presence of the same sex stereotypes in all societies, you really want a cultural anthropologist to answer such a question. I am a physical anthropologist, which is a somewhat different thing. Still, I do know enough about the subject to assure you that what Mr D. Gary Grady considers typical male and typical female stereotypes are not universal.

The great contribution of the anthropologists of the 20's, 30's, and 40's was to point out that not all societies have the same values. It seems to me that one of the great myths in Western Culture is that while other peoples may be and probably are inferior to us, still they should benefit from having our value systems imposed on them from without, be they Christianity or democracy. (The Women's Liberation Movement is probably guilty of such thinking also; there are some people who consider themselves "missionaries" of the movement.) The fact is that not all cultures share the same views of the roles of the two sexes. Perhaps the biggest difference is that most cultures view the role of the woman as just as important economically as that of the man. In a hunter-gatherer culture the food-getting role of the women as gatherers is as important if not more so as that of the man as hunter. For a long time women have been economically unimportant in Western culture, and so we have had to develop

myths to explain the importance of women (other than reproductively; it's hard to talk about reproduction without bringing up the subject of "sex" which is dirty). So women were thought of as the complement of a man, as possessing all those characters that man did not have, most of them being traits men didn't particularly want to admit to having. Obviously male and female are "complementary" in reproductive terms, but there is no real evidence that such polarity should be extended to other traits, physical, mental, emotional, etc.

Now, I do not think that men and women are exactly alike and all the differences between them are socially imposed. That would be as ridiculous as thinking all individuals were exactly alike and all differences between them environmental. No one believes that, yet most of us in this country at least like to spout off about the equality of man.

What are the justifications for believing that "all men were created equal"? For one thing, it is difficult to measure the differences between people. How can one claim men are more aggressive or more logical when there is no absolute scale for measuring such things. That's not the same as saying that, on the average, men are taller than women, because you can measure stature and find that it follows a relatively normal distribution in both males and females, with the female mean being somewhat below the male mean stature. Can you do that for "aggressiveness"?

The real justification for talking about equality is that humans are all members of one species, and groups are capable of interbreeding (especially when those groups are men and women). Thus it is impossible to limit any traits which have any genetic basis to one particular group forever. So you cannot make sweeping judgments about the capabilities of particular groups of people yet unborn. Most importantly, in our society there is no real need to assign particular roles to particular groups of people based on beliefs about that group. There are more roles in our society than most of us can even imagine, and there is no reason why they should not be filled by any capable person, rather than limiting them to people of a certain sexual affiliation. Mr Grady, and most of your readers, seem to be in favor of doing away with official limitations of this sort. What many people overlook is that it does no good to say that such and such a position is now open to any capable person, no matter what their sex, when persons of one sex are discouraged from childhood from entering such a field because it isn't appropriate to their sex.

Personally, I'd rather have a society with no ready made ideas about what the differences are between the sexes that force people into certain roles, and let people find out for themselves what they are and are not suited for. I think we can afford to allow a little individual choice in the matter at last.

((That is precisely why I do see validity to Feminist criticism of such things as sexually loaded words (chairman), children's literature that repeats stereotyped roles, "chivalrous" behavior, and the like....I also agree completely about Western imposition

of its own mores on other countries. Indochina should, but won't, drive this point home to all of us. I see nothing inherently wrong with communism under certain circumstances, and certainly wouldn't go about telling people they cannot have a communist government if that's what they want. I once seriously suggested that the US should have sided with the North Vietnamese, not the South. The Vietnamese have a longstanding fear of the Chinese and might have been quite willing to ally themselves with the US. Why shouldn't we have communist allies? For that matter, Barbara Tuchmann recently revealed that Mao Tse-Tung had offered to come to Washington to discuss a treaty with the US, but that he was rebuffed by a minor state department official who knew that FDR would not deal with Communists. But all this is off the point...I've always believed that the phrase was supposed to be interpreted, all men are equal before the law. Not that the founding fathers even believed that, since they tolerated slavery...A more immediate example of the dangers of sexism is Joann Little, who may yet be sentenced to death for killing a jail guard who attempted to rape her.)))

[SHERYL SMITH]

To Paul Di Filippo: First, let me say that I am not myself an activist for women's liberation -- I am too busy being an example of same, and writing verse tragedies. I do agree with many activist positions on this question but stop short of those which hold the male sex to be the Enemy, as I consider the two sexes to be one race, and equally human. However, I do not care for your remarks on this subject. The complacency and self-righteousness with which you say, in effect, that you are completely satisfied with the way you treat women makes me (at least) doubt that this is as equivalent to your treatment of men as you claim it is; and since you can trivialize the problem in general by comparing it with the price of sugar, I find it difficult to believe that you have a compassionate understanding of the matter. And if you are unable to put yourself in a woman's position, as it seems, I hope it isn't fiction you are trying to "get published", because you surely couldn't be much good at characterization.

As for your arguments, they are no great shakes either. When sexism pops into your life several times a day - and some women's jobs, and lives, are such that it will - it would be very difficult for them not to worry about it. Apparently the legal safeguards against sexism are not as adequate as you believe since feminists feel such a need for the Equal Rights Amendment. While it may not be your moral responsibility, sir, to change the attitudes of other men, I would suggest you look to your own. Finally, if you consider women's liberation relatively unimportant because no one was ever lynched on the basis of sex (yeah, Cotton Mather burned his female witches, didn't he?), you assume that it is worse to suffer death than to suffer a seriously circumscribed life, which is a moot point at best: the pain of lynching is much shorter, is it not?

[GEORGE FLYNN]

Paul Di Filippo may be right in calling sugar refiners (or other monopolists) arrogant and avaricious, but "stupid...pitiable,

unthinking dullards"? Would that things were that simple. --- As for Paul's argument that one shouldn't worry about such "annoyances", that's an argument I've often heard and never liked: One shouldn't waste time concerning oneself with Problem X, when Problem Y is so much more important. Well, if that were carried to its logical conclusion, everybody would rush off to the glamorous problems, and nobody would take care of the routine jobs that keep society going...or the frivolous activities that make it livable. Most people aren't qualified to tackle the big problems anyway, and even those that are need to relax some of the time.

PAUL DI FILIPPO

First, let me correct a misconception arising out of my statement on Feminism. I do not simply shrug sexual bigotry aside, I try to stomp it into the ground, in myself and others, whenever it surfaces. BUT, I will not spend my whole life waging a crusade against it. This attitude stems from my feelings about the whole realm of social action. In the best Christian tradition (although I generally laugh at and revile the religion) I believe that the only meaningful changes come from inside a person. To paraphrase Luther: The man determines the works, not the works the man. I think it is quite useless to legislate morality. Not one aspect of this society will be changed until the intellectual atmosphere of a majority of the country is receptive to change. To turn your example around, no on-the-books law is going to stop teachers from teaching little girls to be subservient and little boys to be dominant (unless that law includes a cop in each room to watch for violations). The only way teachers are going to decide to instill notions of equality is if they come to the inner realization that such notions are the only sane ones to teach. Naturally, then, you can see how I would be more interested in the consciousness-raising aspects of Feminism, rather than any of their platforms of social legislation.

When D. Gary Grady says that there has never been a "truly matriarchal society" he is absolutely correct. If we define a matriarchy as a society in which women are the dominant forces in the political/military/economic/social spheres, then we are forced to say that there has never been one matriarchy. Most people confuse matrilineal societies with matriarchies. In matrilineal societies (descent determined through females), women naturally acquire a little more prestige than in patri- or unilineal societies. Most SF readers will probably be familiar with the matrilineal society detailed in Walton's Mabinogion books, and they will notice that it is an accurate example of what anthropologists know: even in a matrilineal society, the women have little real power. And not only has there not been a matriarchy, but the percentage of extinct and extant societies which were and are matrilineal is only around 17%. Nobody knows the reason for this situation and, off hand, I can't think up one.

And as for Jackie Franke's contention that a subsistence level culture will "generally treat the sexes in a far more equal manner" than one such as ours - this seems a bit of Noble Savage

hokum. Subsistence level cultures are, if anything, more brutally male oriented than ours. For example: Among the Kalahari Bushmen, the women bring home 80% of the food supply, by root and grub collecting, etc. Great, you say, Woman The Breadwinner, she'll surely be top dog in this culture. No damn way! She is excluded from everything ranging from hunting to storytelling, and generally occupies a Feminist nightmare.

The N'dumba of New Guinea have a society strictly segregated along sexual lines. All the adult males live in a huge round house situated behind an actual stockade, designed to keep out the women, who live in a smaller house with their children. A woman who so much as touches the stockade will be executed if caught in the act. When males reach puberty, they are ritually cleansed in a rite of passage intended to remove all female contamination. Male and female food supplies must be kept in separate locations and, should you trick a male into eating female food (in reality, no different from his) and be so unwise as to reveal it, he would undoubtedly kill you, then proceed home to die of psychosomatic causes. I could extend this list further... but I think it suffices. Primitive societies are no better than ours, and usually worse, in regard to sexism.

MISCELLANEOUS

[GENE WOLFE]

Ben's remarks on architecture started me wondering about the buildings of the future. Certainly the "age of glass" is over -- our glass boxes will seem as odd to the future as the Crystal Palace (in old prints) does to us now; walls will be blind, or nearly so, to lower the costs of heating and air conditioning. The real question is whether steel will remain the material of choice -- or to be more realistic, how long steel will be the material of choice, and what will replace it. Wood cannot do the job; brick and stone can't either, and are costly besides; the light metals (like aluminum) require too much energy for their formation; oil-derived plastics are out. Some interesting stuff remains: pre-stressed concrete, fibre-reinforced ice (plant cooling cools in the walls as you go up, sheath inside and out with insulation), and plastics derived from vegetable sources, to name a few. My own favorite is balloon construction -- inflated walls of rubberized fabric. Sway is the big problem, and to beat it the architects will probably abandon the tower shape that is a near-standard today and go to truncated pyramids. Such buildings would go up fast, cost little, hold heat or cold well, and not over-shade the streets they lined. The blowers provided to keep them inflated would have sufficient extra capacity, of course, to make up for minor leaks, and a system of check valves would prevent the whole structure from collapsing if a section was removed.

I'm going to be giving a talk on sf writing to a group of high-school students next week. I think I'll start off by trying to find out how many of them really want to do it -- that, I believe, is the whole trouble with education: the students don't want to learn what the teachers are trying to teach. If the student is

told (as he is) that the basic purpose of education is to enable him to get and hold a high-paying job, then if he (or she) decides he doesn't want one of those, or if he comes to believe (often correctly) that he can get one without the education, the system has lost him.

There are eight or nine ways around the problem, of course. Our grandfathers beat it -- literally -- by caning students who did not learn. We've stopped doing that, but it is certainly arguable that our practice of permitting millions of people to blow their one real chance for education is still more cruel. A kinder method (than caning) would be to reward learning with status. If the best algebraist in the junior class were on a par with the second string center of the football team, this would soon be the best educated nation on Earth.

((As the resident "class brain" for many years, I can readily attest that there is little peer prestige adhering to the title. I was able to throw my way around a bit with the teachers, but brains counted for nothing with most of my classmates. As an ex-teacher, I also agree. Threats of caning or bad job opportunities are inadequate and often counterproductive elements in the learning process. Kids should learn because they want to. For that matter, so should adults. I'd like to see the public education system replaced by many educational centers, open to the entire public of all ages and backgrounds, with all types of formal and informal learning situations available. Of course, this would mean a major alteration of our culture and style of living, and it isn't likely to happen. But then I've never been very practical in any case. On your other subject, I more than half expect an increase in underground office buildings. The Hive society that T.J. Bass has been writing about strikes me as all too plausible.)))

/HARRY WARNER/

I haven't read Dying Inside, so I can't properly criticize your review. But I enjoyed the thorough analysis and the kind things you said about a writer whom it's becoming fashionable in fanzines to decry, presumably because of the urge to shoot down the top dog. One problem, though: someone has misled you about the main character's name. Selig doesn't mean pitiful in German, unless it's in some brand new slang connotation that I've missed and Bob Silverberg wouldn't know. Selig means happy or blissful or even blessed, as a rule, and it has one special meaning when used before the name of a dead person, to signify the fact that he's dead, much as we speak in English of the late Joe Medwick. I can't think of any German word that is similar enough to have caused you the mix-up, unless it's elend, which generally means misery or wretchedness.

((Thanks for clearing this point up (my source was apparently mistaken), but you've caused me a problem thereby. I've been engaged in two major arguments about the book. Cy Chauvin says it is an excellent novel, but poor SF, which bothers me since it implies separate standards for the field, a position I am somewhat reluctant to accept. But I can handle that argument, I suspect. But Jerry Kaufman and I have been disagreeing over

whether or not it has a happy ending, and I think you've just strengthened his case. I suspect that Silverberg and I (since he reportedly considers it happy) start off with a deeper gloom about people than does Jerry, so that what seems optimistic to us is pessimistic to him.)))

[SHERYL SMITH]

I was amused and delighted by John F. Kusske's MUAF thing; I too was rather skeptical of your remark that male dominance is a consciously plotted thing, although a sex-wide conspiracy a la "The Secret Masters of Fandom" may have been a bit more than you had in mind.

I don't really have to wait for your article on Dozois to be able to discuss him further (though I look forward to reading that and all your criticism): him I've read lately. Yes, I know Dozois characters don't admit defeat and all that; but Panshin aside (he is not one of the critics I am wont to trust) I myself personally do not consider that particularly optimistic. However much staying power they have, Dozois' characters always seem to be caught up in, and shoved around by a Hardyesque, indifferent-to-malevolent universe; their lives are largely beyond their control, and no matter how much they fight, they are continually being thwarted and overwhelmed by unaffordable forces. I realize that this view has been the predominant one thus far in the 20th century literature - and I do not deny the optimism of it with pejorative intent, since I do appreciate that view when it is well expressed - but to call such hopelessness optimistic seems to me quite misleading (though I gather even Dozois himself believes himself to be so). When characters' lives are such willy-nilly affairs, and when the characters, in the rare moments they obtain any semblance of control over things, can only succeed in making them worse - well, this is a legitimate, often commendable artistic position, but it's not an optimistic one that I can see.

(((Tsk. You let John Kusske lead you down the garden path. The quote he attributed to me is incomplete. I said that men were consciously plotting the subjugation only in the sense that some labor unions have taken steps to exclude them or limit their infiltration. I think our disagreement about Dozois is much the same as the disagreement I'm having with Jerry Kaufman about Dying Inside. It strikes me that the important battles for real people are the little ones, the ones that are won by Dozois' characters. We know that none of us can single-handedly save the world, but it is within our grasps to become a bit more fully human, to understand ourselves better, to take pride in our humanity even while waiting for the world to end, to find that even in the most debased circumstances, we still recognize our shortcomings. I am not a very optimistic person, I admit, and I find "King's Harvest" and "Chains of the Sea" at least as optimistic as, say, Doc Smith, who predicted that the identical corrupt institutions of our present society would be with us forever. Cautionary tales should not be viewed as unrelieved pessimism. If Dozois was the pessimist you paint him, he wouldn't try to write this kind of story, because he would believe that man could not avert the consequences of sin.)))

[AL SIROIS]

Speaking of art and intellectualism, I have a few other points. The same night that I sat down with a friend (a glass of scotch-and-coke, stirred with that most fannish of swizzle sticks, a pencil) to read MYTH, I also happened to have next to me the latest RANDOM and GUYING GYRE #1. Now, as it happens, I read RANDOM first. In it, there was a loc from Sheryl Smith who said, among other things, "...when an artistic form is used to persuade rather than enlighten (and the artist who will do this is of limited capacity), much potential scope and basic-ness of the form is left unfulfilled. The didactic artwork will lose in power through its over-emphasis on specific intellectual communication, and its appeal will be restricted to those who are already adherent of or who are prepared for conversion to its particular viewpoint (and sometimes not even all of them)...Great art... 'says' things by leading us to indirectly experience them, and does not stack the deck in favor of any ideology (sometimes defying the author's own intentions, even...)."

I thought that was interesting, as far as it went. Much to my further interest, tho, as I was reading MYTH I came upon Paul Walker's comments on page 29 in the third paragraph. An interesting contrast, I think. I suspect the true explanation lies in the middle of the two viewpoints.

((MYTHOLOGIES provides what the readers want. Here, Al, is Sheryl Smith commenting on Paul Walker.)))

[SHERYL SMITH]

Your (((Paul's))) discussion of artists/critics and their inability to pose practical solutions to social problems seems a fairly romanticized notion though it may be correct. What I would dispute is that all artists want to solve social problems inherent in your acceptance of Orwell's statement that "all art is propaganda", a very 20th Century - nay 1930's - notion which, though it (like anything else) can be supported, ain't necessarily so. If your definition of "propaganda" is as broad as your definition of "artist", I imagine you can bring it off. My own definition of "artist" is considerably narrower (and does not include Shulamith Firestone, for God's sake), and I would prefer to limit that term to those who, in their artistic personae, are too busy expressing "the human condition" to be beguiled by the "perfectability of man" fallacy. My own criticism of The American Dream is that the "myth and ritual" Mailer pitches into the novel (to give it significance, I guess) comes off as superstitious absurdity: Mailer's "myth", like D.H. Lawrence's "paganism", is so adolescent it's pathetic. And then there's Mailer's notion of a "hero": a rich and famous stud who kills the "bitch goddess" and achieves simultaneous orgasm. That's not only sexist, it's simpleminded: they often go together these days.

((Unfortunately, Mailer apparently really believes much of his myth. In Prisoner of Sex, Mailer - possibly unwittingly - reveals his fear of the mystic powers of females. It's sort of as though he had realized the truth inherent in Tiptree's "The Women Men Don't See", but all out of proportion. He really believes that women have psychic powers over the sperm and egg and that they somehow choose the circumstances of conception.)))

[JOHN ROBINSON]

That estimate concerning the sex ratio of fandom is easily 15 years behind the times. I've checked membership lists for Discom and the N3F and as nearly as I can estimate they came out 27-8% female. But the real change shows in college clubs. The ASSFS has a 40% female membership and the Wayne Third Foundation has a 1:1 sex ratio. I predict that the sex ratio of fandom in 1980 will be 3 male to 2 female. Blame it mostly on Star Trek and the so-called New Wave. Gadget stories are waning while the social sciences, and characterization, gain, thus more femfans.

((Sexist.)))

[WAYNE MARTIN]

Graham England fails to see a very important point in the Northern Ireland conflict. One side calling the IRA the "army" and another calling them "terrorists" is far from the only difference. Religion is not it either. The problem is that of politics. The Catholics desire a united Ireland. They don't want NI ruled by Britain as part of the UK. The Catholics are, for the most part, the native descended Celts. They share that bond with the Southern Irish (while over 90% Catholic, they've had Protestant presidents). The Scots who migrated to the Northern portion of the island way back when, under word from London, form the bulk of the Protestants' ancestry. With the aid and support of the British, these Scot settlers took control politically and economically. Thus when Ireland gained independence, the Scot settlers kept the Northern provinces "loyal" to the crown. Loyal to their own interests is more like it.

((I don't see anything particularly unusual about any of that. The colonial revolutionaries in this country were in a distinct minority. Why, then, are the two segments so thoroughly at each other's throats? I suspect economic and religious problems - both implicit in the political situation - to be responsible.)))

[DAVE LOCKE]

On the subject of maturity, and the sub-topic of draft dodgers, my personal opinion is that draft dodgers are both immature and irresponsible. I can't really fault anyone for being a coward or for wanting to save his own ass, but I do buy the philosophy that society has a right to expect some return for the freedoms and benefits extended the individual. But let's get down to specifics. I was against the Vietnam war when it wasn't fashionable to be against it. And I drew a lot of flak for being outspoken on the subject. I did state, however, that my personal objections would not prevent me from going into the thick of it if I were drafted, nor would they prevent me from killing - which is another subject I have objections to. The point is that you can't enjoy freedoms forever if you don't agree to share responsibilities (I speak generally: a handful of draft dodgers isn't going to send the USA down the tubes, but a country full of them certainly would). I realize that the point can be debated endlessly, that the matter is not black and white, and that it's not easy to fault a guy who says "I don't believe in it, and I ain't gonna do it" (especially when your life is on the line and you don't want to get it snuffed out over a cause you don't believe in). But it's

my personal opinion that under such a circumstance the responsibility is still there even if your concurrence doesn't go along with it.

((As you undoubtedly know, I tend to be critical of the majority of the draft evaders myself. I too objected to the war when it was unfashionable (even when I was classified 4F, exempt from draft status. Of course, when that was reversed and I was drafted, the problem became more personal, but I went to Vietnam anyway. But I am uneasy over the entire situation. I oppose conscription categorically. I suspect that the US had no legal right to involve itself in the war in the first place, which throws into question the legality of sending people there. I cannot accept any moral obligation strong enough to coerce one into killing another human being defending his own rights. I do believe that an individual has a responsibility to society, but I don't believe that society has the right to force one to exercise that duty. This is contradictory enough that it may be the basis of a future "Myth".)))

[BEN INDICK]

Alas for Paul Di Filippo's scientifically unsound article, he is WRONG! Any soundly installed dryer will have an external vent! Thus, whereas the damp basements he inspected were unscientifically constructed, here in enlightened Teaneck, the cellars are dry (except mine, into which heavy rains penetrate) but our ALLEYWAYS are soggy with steam! Grass and weeds proliferate near the vent. Therefore, I say, send our crabgrass to Africa. They're sending us their bumblebees anyway, so it's tit for tat.

Michael Coney's letter is excellent, and brings up good points. Indeed, I must agree that if Shakespeare were a "mature" and contented man, he might have remained grazing sheep in Stratford. It is a need which makes a person an artist, and that need is sometimes seen, correctly or otherwise, as a dissidence with society and its norms, which is a synonym for immaturity. Rembrandt's best work came after society had rejected his work; Michelangelo NEVER got along with his bosses. Beethoven? He was a grump.

[GEORGE FLYNN]

I agree that "With Morning Comes Mistfall" is a fine story, but more because of the questions it raises than the answers Martin implies. Dubowski is presented as an insensitive boor, but he's right: "Knowledge is what man is all about." More precisely, I believe that mankind's highest activity is - and ought to be - increasing our understanding of the universe. This is a principle I hold to with ardor and faith, i.e. a religion by the definition you quote. And indeed, I regard as what I can only call blasphemous the idea that some mystery should deliberately be left uninvestigated. There is no danger that we will lack for mysteries to enrich our existence: the universe is inexhaustible.

Telepathy may not be a more worthwhile subject than "human uncertainty and the quest for self-understanding", but it's

certainly more appropriate for SF. That is, those other topics can be treated in any genre, but telepathy can be treated only in SF. This is not to say that mainstream conventions don't apply, only that SF has its own conventions, which are significant to the extent that one judges a work as SF.

((To your first point, I have no good answer. It's one of those senseless things that would only bother a nut like me. As for the latter, I see some conventions within the field that have limited usefulness. I don't think every book (or any book, for that matter) should have to explain how interstellar travel works, for example. But I don't think these standards are or should be universally applicable. They are shortcuts that an author may use, not that he should use.)))

[/PAUL DI FILIPPO/

I'm very pleased to hear of the forthcoming wedding between Mike Carlson and Diana Rigg. I couldn't think of a nicer couple, and I always said that she was too good for Mr Steed. I'm glad to see she's giving up truck driving and is settling down. I only hope she can get used to being a professor's wife. By the way, was Diana's truck called a Rigg rig?

[/ROBERT COULSON/

Actually I suspect that faith in psychiatry did more to subvert individual responsibility than any of the ones you mentioned. Religion may have taught that God rules all in this best of all possible worlds, but not really all that many people acted as if they believed it. When it became fashionable to look for "influences" on one's life, however...

I wonder if high school conformity is worse than it used to be, or worse in large schools, or both? (And if the second, how much good are these new big consolidated rural schools doing?)

((A professor at MSU once pointed out to me that man used to think that he was special because the Earth was the center of the universe and unique, and Galileo took that away. So man felt he was unique because he was created independent of nature, and Darwin took that away. So, finally, he believed that he was a unique individual, whose mind worked in unique ways, and Freud took that away. And nothing is left.)))

[/MICHAEL BISHOP/

Tell Sheila, too, that her astute remark that Zelazny's blurb on Panshin's Rite of Passage is "internally inconsistent" says in two words what I didn't manage to get out in two paragraphs.

[/MIKE SHOEMAKER/

MYTHOLOGIES 4 is filled with too much commentable material. Yet, it is a great burden to loc, as I feel that many of the disagreements arise from basic philosophic differences. There are some fine arguments and counter-arguments in the lettercol, all very convincing, but the impression I receive (quite strongly) is of people, for the most part, talking at one another rather than to one another. Most seem more interested in assuredly defending their own ideological position and avoiding loss of face when met with contradiction, rather than achieving any meaningful communication. The lettercol reminds me of a Hoffer

quote: "In human affairs every solution serves only to sharpen the problem..." Yes, and the problem, it seems to me, is that basic philosophical differences bar forever universal agreement or even understanding. Over the past three years I have acquired an intense suspicion of smug, logical, certain pronouncements on what is right in human affairs. This even extends to anything as "basic" as morality.

((It looks to me as if you are saying that since we cannot find universal answers to these questions, there is no point in discussing the questions. The purpose of MYTHOLOGIES, as indicated in Cohen's couplet on the contents page, is to compare belief systems, not to convince anyone of anything. I want to re-examine my own beliefs in the light of other positions by defending my own views and by becoming aware of alternate views. I find it very useful, and hope the same is true of my readers.)))

[ELST WEINSTEIN]

I would like to present another side to the women's rights discussion. First, I believe that qualifications for any job or opening should be based solely on ability. A person's sex, race, religion, etc., should not be either a hindrance or a help. I might even be considered a victim of this second thing where people less qualified than me got positions just because they were of the RIGHT minority group. Second, there should be equal pay for the same job for all. However, as for women being equal to men, I say bull shit! I can prove in many ways that there are major differences that are not implanted by culture and training.

((Many people forget that being equal (before the law) does not mean being equivalent. As you say, there are obviously differences between the sexes. I too am unhappy with many aspects of the quota system of employment, enrollment, what have you. It's reached the point where one has to determine which is more of a minority, a Black female or a disabled Puerto Rican veteran.)))

* * * * *

With great reluctance, I am cutting off the letter column here. There were a great number of other letters and parts of letters represented above that I really wanted to print, but I'll never cut off the growth in size if I keep increasing it now.

I did some analysis of the distribution of Issue #4 which I thought I would share with you. MYTHOLOGIES 4 was sent to 157 males and 53 females, some married couples being included in both. 21 copies went to foreign countries. Australia had 4, Great Britain 8, Mexico 1, and Canada 8, broken down, Ontario 5, Saskatchewan 2, British Columbia 1. The balance, distributed in the US, was as follows: Massachusetts 20, California 19, Rhode Island 15, New York 13, Michigan 10, Pennsylvania 9, Virginia and Illinois 7 each, Connecticut, Maryland, and Ohio 6, Washington & Minnesota 5, Indiana & New Jersey 4, Florida, Missouri 3, Two to Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Vermont, & Wisconsin, one each to Alabama, Ariz, Del, Ga, Maine, Miss, Mont, N. Mex, Ok, S. Car, Texas, & Utah.

THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE LISTED BELOW ARE MORE OR LESS RESPONSIBLE
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Frank Denton, Tom Collins, Mike Bracken, Robert Whitaker, Glenn
Blacow, Larry Downes, Tim Marion, Alyson Abramowitz, Jodie Offutt,
Susan Wood, Paul Walker again - by phone, Terry Jeeves, D.F.
Drake, and Steve Dorneman.

I want to take this opportunity to thank any readers who helped
put my name on the ballot for the FAAN Best Fanwriter Award, but
I urge you all to vote for Don Thompson, who deserves it.

If there is a check mark here _____, I suspect you're not that
interested in MYTHOLOGIES. Write and tell me how wrong I am.