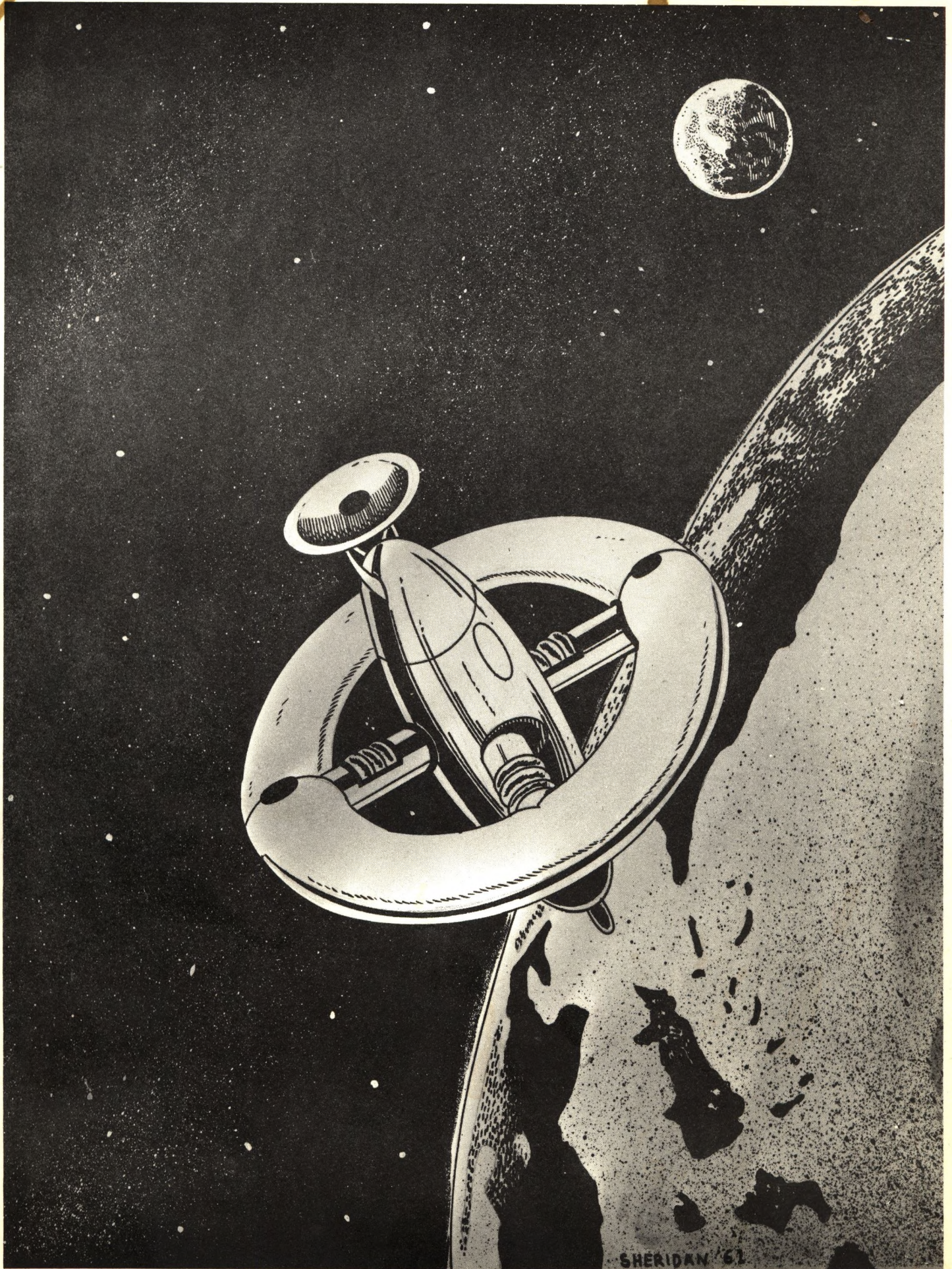


#47

NIEKAS



SHERIDAN '61

CONTENTS

NIEKAS #7 (15 December 1963)

1: A Non-Abelian Group of Editorials by the Commuting Editors	
A: Bumbejimas (by) Ed Meskys	1
B: Mailing Uncomments From Maynem House (by) Felice Rolfe	7
C: Vazhenda (by) Anne Chatland	10
2: The Art of Nightmare (an article by) Poul Anderson	12
3: Elric the Character (part II of an article by) Al Andriuskevicius	15
4: The End of the Wine (a poem by) C. S. Lewis	22
5: Laiškai (a letter column)	24

ARTWORK

Bob Sheridan	cover
Harry Douthwaite	14
Dick Schultz	19
Anne Chatland	21, 24
Jerry Burge†	28
? *†	33
Jack Harness†	backcover†

* Courtesy PAS art table

† Electronic stencils thru PAS

‡ IF Bjo can have the stencil done on time

NIEKAS, the (not so) colorful fanzine is edited and published quarterly for N'APA by Ed Meskys (letters to T Div, Bldg 162/LRL, Box 808/Livermore Cal 94551, fanzines % Metcalf, Box 336, Berkeley Cal 94701) and Felice Rolfe (1360 Emerson, Palo Alto, Cal) and is available to nonmembers for trade or letter of comment. (Trade zines & LoCs to Ed Meskys, please.) Chief Poorf Reader, Felice Rolfe. Assistant Poorf Readers, Len Fisher & Anne Chatland. Chief typist, Ed Meskys, tho Felice typed almost everything done an Anne's 11 pitch typer. Our thanks to Alva Rogers for giving us Poul's article when he couldn't publish the issue of BIXAL for which it was intended, to Karen Anderson for putting up with one of us (EM) for lo these many hours while the zine was run off, and to Chuck Speake for the letter-press work. +++ If you failed to receive a copy of 6, Blame that on Anne and her cover. First of all, Al Schuster didn't print up enough good copies so that perhaps 100 coverless copies are lying around my house. But Anne has insisted on making certain hand corrections before letting any copies out. She still has about 20 copies which she has now had for over two months and which she refuses to correct or return for use as is. +++ Apologies for the skimpyness of this, especially (to N'APA members) for a lack of MCs by EM. Time simply ran out, and I (EM) am glad that three promised SF articles didn't come thru in time for inclusion. Well, maybe next quarter we'll start early and do better.

Of recent developments

Much has happened in the last quarter to change my mode of existence. It all started on September 29th when a person I had gone to school with, Len Fisher, arrived in California to take a job at the radiation lab. First of all, this gave me a friend in Livermore that I could talk to if I feel like company. (Actually, at about the same time I became acquainted with another Livermore resident working at the lab, a Chemist named Jean Senkin, so this was no longer so singular.) Also, tho Len had had no previous contact with fandom he did read the stuff. I therefore brought him along to several Little Men meetings and the quarterly G&S party, and he seemed to like these things. He intends to come to about one meeting a month and this will greatly simplify my getting to and, far more important, from the meetings on those occasions.

But he has upset things in an even more vital way. He taught me how to drive

RECEIVED JAN 6 1964

and I just got my driver's license. And I suppose I will be conforming to the mob and getting a car soon tho I'm still not sure just what kind or how old it will be. But if I had to spend the money I would so rather get an executive typewriter ("text" face) and multilith!

Actually, Len only facilitated what I suppose I would have had to do whether he had come out or not. The actual cause of my ceasing and desisting my procrastination is the imminent arrival of my parents for a month's visit. I will need some sort of transportation for them when they arrive, and had actually taken a few driving lessons even before I knew Len was coming out here. If not for my parents' visit I suppose I would have never really gotten around to doing anything.

As I said I'm not looking forward to it. I suppose it's partly due to my NY background, but a car strikes me as so repugnant! Now, coming home from a Little Men's meeting I get a ride from Alva Rogers or someone as far as Hayward, and usually have an interesting conversation on the way. Then I read as I wait for and ride on the bus to Livermore. OK, so this takes two or three hours while it would take only one if I had my own car. But these two or three hours are of some enjoyment and/or use. I talk to whoever is driving me, and then I read. Or at least I read except on those few occasions when I am too tired to, and wish I didn't have to wait an hour or two for the bus. But then I would also be too tired to drive, I imagine. Traveling alone and staring at the road ahead of me will be such an utter waste of time. The more I think about this the more I wish I weren't getting involved with any such nonsense!

That crazy Gilbert & Wazzisname stuff, chapter 5

This quarter I got to see two of 'em...one for the first time but the other was a repeat. The repeat was "Ruddygore" put on by the Diablo Light Opera Company in Walnut Creek, about 20 miles north of Livermore. They do two productions a year, one "Broadway" musical and one G&S operetta. Their next item will be "Finian's Rainbow."

I saw the Long Beach State College production of "Ruddygore" about a half year ago and wrote it up in NIEKAS 5. (Good grief, that means it's a half year since I was last in LA. There goes my embryonic reputation as a "traveling giant!") I went into plot details then so there's no need to repeat myself now. I preferred the first act of the local production because the large orchestra at Long Beach had drowned out much of the singing while here I was able to understand every word. On the other hand Long Beach's second act had this one beat by many miles. Here again they tried the same stunt for making the pictures come alive...that is, having the paintings done on screens and suddenly illuminating the actors standing behind these screens, but it just didn't come off as well.

But the singing, acting, and scenery were quite good on the whole, and I am quite glad I went even if I didn't get home until after 3. I am looking forward to future productions put on by this company.

The other one that I saw was the "Lamplighters" production of "Princess Ida." This was at the ... thirdly? ... Futurian G&S party on October 5th, and the most successful one to date. I believe our total attendance was 46. Visitors from LA included Ronel, BJohn Trimble, Bruce Pelz, Dian Girard, Al Lewis, Steve Tolliver, Don Simpson, Fred Braddock, and Dave & Katya Hulan. And all of Berkeley fandom turned out for this...if someone wasn't there he wasn't a part of Bay Area fandom.

As usual the day started with a trip to Palo Alto to meet the LA people and join them at the Rolfes' for dinner. Felice fooled us this time by having chicken instead of the now traditional spaghetti, and Ron got squirrelish and made quite a fuss. He insisted that Felice had mentioned in a letter that it would be spaghetti

again, and complained that he had therefore brought along a bottle of appropriate wine only to be doublecrossed, while she insisted she had made no such statement at all.

After dinner the migration North began. First off was Al's Econoline with the nine LA people who had stopped by (all but the Hulans), then Eph Koningsberg with Anne and myself, and finally Joe and Felice.

There was a bit of a mixup with the tickets which I had to get settled with the management while the others chatted with the cast. This took longer than expected and due to a mixup Len and I ended up stranded at the theater. We had one hell of a time following the others out to Brennan's to join the party and arrived rather late. (Len had gone to a winetasting party that afternoon and didn't want to risk taking his car.)

But we eventually arrived and I promptly attached myself to the group consisting of Poul Anderson, Joe Rolfe, Eph, Dave Hulan and a few other people with a strong interest in discussing things of a technical nature. That broke up rather quickly as the bar closed at 1:30. Most of us then drifted to Jerry & Miri Knight's place. Here was wine and beer in liberal quantities and the conversation flowed along 'till the LA people decided to leave about 3:30. Len & I were staying over at the Rolfs' too (for a total of eleven houseguests!) and we wanted to arrive there at about the same time as the LA people did so that we wouldn't wake them up coming in and so that it would be easier to decide on who would sleep where. There was no room in the Econoline, of course, and the Rolfs had long since gone home with Anne, but Eph had volunteered to leave whenever we had to and drop us off on his way home.

The party was still going strong, and I was reluctant to leave it, but what could I do? The LA people had been up since about 5 the previous morning and were quite tired, and it was a one hour drive to Palo Alto.

At this party I met Dave & Katya Hulan for the first time. Katya was most charming and I hope you send her to future parties, Dave. You can stay home if you like, just be sure to send her. In fact, I think most of us would prefer it if you did stay home!

Anyhow, we eventually arrived at 1360 Emerson and had the battle over who got the beds and who slept on the floor. Len was THE loser, tho voluntarily so, since he slept on the dining room floor sans sleeping bag or rug. He spent most of the night in the kitchen reading Asimov's The Hugo Winners, and when I woke up about 8:30 we started discussing some of the stories in the book. Unfortunately my booming voice carried and we woke up some of the LA people. Apologies to all on this...I just keep forgetting to control my voice tho I don't think I'm as bad as I used to be.

Next morning half of us went for breakfast to "Stickney's" at the "Town and Country" shopping center about five blocks away. Both the food and the service were really lousy and the prices were quite high considering the caliber of the establishment. We were all very irritated about this and the dirty cups and utensils provided. Anne was supposed to write a grotchty letter to the local board of health, but as usual she procrastinated and never did it. (Felice once accused her of having a large moment of inertia, and she replied "'Moment,' hell! It's several days!")

The second shift was supposed to take the Rolfs out for breakfast, as everyone was awake by now, but they decided time was too short and they would have to be heading back with some people still without breakfast. We were naturally sad to see them have to leave then, and I had wanted to discuss a number of things with them too.

However Len and I wound up staying until six or so. Joe and Len watched one of the World Series games (I think it was the last one) while Anne and I did some work on NIEKAS and Felice did homework for her math course. (She had an exam coming up in a few days.)

Strangely enough the opera itself left almost no impression whatsoever with me. I can't really say whether I liked it or not.

As Martyn Green points out in his book the setting is quite indefinite and confused. The general impression is Medieval but many props and references imply a later century. The stage directions call for telescopes, binoculars, and opera glasses in the opening scene, which immediately make the setting rather recent. And later the women make a major point about "Darwinian Man" and how men (but not women!!! Thus confirming the old stfnal hypothesis of alien origin) descended from apes. This definitely places it in the 19th century. Actually, the whole cultural background is virtually contemporary with the time of writing and only a few trappings of the distant past are given. I suppose this has as many anachronisms as Shakespeare's "Julius Ceasar." But then I suppose this doesn't really matter for it is not an attempt to seriously depict some other era, and all of its points are contemporary.

The stage settings for the opening scene impressed me very much. Several people stood clustered around a large terrestrial telescope. They swung it on its pivot as they peered thru it in all directions. The main source of stage illumination at this point was down in the footlights and a perfect effect was achieved as the shadow of the telescope swung across the backdrop. I think this little bit of staging was magnificent, but unfortunately it was ruined a few seconds later when a heraldic crest was lowered from above the curtains.

Depending on how you want to look at it the operetta either consists of three acts of a prologue and two acts. According to Green the opening night program said "prologue and two acts" but that all the reviewers and critics ignored this and spoke of three acts. They made it stick, as even the libretto in Green's book is so labeled. In virtually all productions it is referred to as being in three acts, but not here! The "Lamplighters" program booklet proudly carried the words "prologue and two acts." But then they do seem to do things in a more than traditional manner. For instance, after the first few performances the name of "Ruddy-gore" was changed to "Ruddigore", and the operetta has been known as such ever since. However the "Lamplighters" announcement of future productions it is given the old spelling.

And here I go along with them. I think it is more appropriate to refer to the beginning as the prologue. All it does is introduce the male characters and set the scene while all of the points are made in the two acts. The prologue is limited to some general humor such as King Gama's song wherein he wonders why he is so despised despite being so kind as to point out everyone's shortcomings to him.

The prologue introduces all of the important male characters, King Hildebrand, his son Hilarion, Hilarion's two close friends, King Gama, and his three sons. We learn that 20 years ago Hildebrand had defeated Gama in battle and demanded of Gama the marriage of his one year old daughter, Ida, to Hilarion. This is the date upon which Gama is to deliver up his daughter for the consummation of this old marriage under penalty of death for failure to do so. He shows up without her and announces that she has renounced all men and has established a university for like minded women at Castle Adamant. Gama and his sons are taken prisoner and Hilarion goes off to investigate this university with the aid of his friends.

The first act shows the university in operation and has as its central theme the mockery of some of the extremes of the feminist movement. Also, there is the traditional humor of men disguised as women, for it is death for a man to pass thru the castle gates. After much humorous foolishness it is discovered that they are men and Ida falls off the ledge she is standing on into a river. Hilarion rescues her but she makes no exception to the rule and sentences the three of them to death. A number of the students are quite young and don't even know what a man is, so one wonders about their motives for entering this school. On the other hand there are some older students there too, so that one pair of students is a mother and daughter.

The second act shows the women falling apart under threat of attack. As they

prepare to defend themselves against the army without one after another drops out, doctor, military band, etc., and Ida takes on that task too. Finally she is all alone but still determined to defend the castle against Hilaron's rescuers. Her father is released upon promising to return in order to plead with her. He urges her to yield up the three men for Hildebrand is torturing him by being so polite and considerate that he can find nothing to gripe about. She takes pity upon him and does, whereupon he provokes a fight between them and his three sons. There is an amusing scene wherein the three sons shed the armor they had been wearing all along in order to not be encumbered by it in the fight, after which they are promptly defeated and wounded. (I didn't care too much for their armor. It was supposed to be comically looking but the made-from-tin-cans effect did not impress me.) Finally comes the reconciliation of Hilaron and Ida and her submission to him, and the implied fairy tale ending of "they all lived happily ever after."

The main point of the second act seemed to be that while they might be trying to make themselves like men via the feminist movement women are still women and everything else is thin veneer. There were also some attacks on ivory-tower intellectualism. For instance the medical officer shied away from having to actually have to amputate a leg or something in the battle. When Ida chided her saying that she had often done so in theory she replied "In theory I'll cut them off again with pleasure, and as often as you like, but not in practice," and made a hasty retreat. Similarly Lady Blanche (superbly played by June Wilkins), the "Professor of Abstract Sciences," was always spouting learnedly about the Is, and the Must and the Would Be but when presented with a real problem she pleaded that her abstract philosophy could not handle it.

Martyn Green (for those of you who came in late, I am referring to his annotated Treasury of Gilbert & Sullivan) protests quite vociferously that the attacks are on pseudo-Amazons and the pretentious, not all women and intellectuals. However unless an author takes great care to give no such impression I am afraid it will be there. An attack upon the sham in something is all too likely to smear the real thing too. About the only way I can see to univocally avoid this is to contrast the good with the bad directly. Only then can one be sure that the good will not be smeared too, and this precaution was not taken here.

All in all it was interesting but as I said I have no firm opinions on the operetta as a whole. Little seems to have struck me one way or another...maybe things will be different after I see it again next week.

So now I've seen virtually all of the G&S operettas, and I expect to see most of the remainder in the next few months. Of the ones in Martyn Green's book I have n't yet seen "Trial by Jury," "H M S Pinafore," "The Sorcerer," and "The Gondoliers." The next GuGFuS theater party will be to see a double bill of the first two, and the following one will include "The Sorcerer." This leaves only "The Gondoliers," and I could have seen that a few weeks ago. It was playing in LA but I was simply too busy to take a few days off for a trip down there to see it. I was tempted to fly down Friday evening, see it Saturday, and catch the first plane back Sunday morning in order to return to the Bay Area in time to use my tickets to "Falstaff" that afternoon, but that would have been just too much.

I don't expect I will ever get to see any of the remaining operettas, "Thespis," "The Grand Duke," and "Utopia, Ltd.," for they are rarely performed. In fact, the music to "Thespis" was lost ages ago so that it can never be performed again.

As I said a few paragraphs back, the next G&S party will be to see "Trial by Jury" and "H M S Pinafore." This will be sometime towards the end of January, the exact date to be set as soon as I hear from LA when the various schools have their final exams. The date will be set soon, and if it happens before I finish "Bumbejimas" I will mention it at the end.

The following quarter things will be a bit more complicated for the "Lamplight-

ers" are doing something unusual. Starting May 8th they will be presenting "Iolanthe" on Fridays and "The Sorcerer" on Saturdays. I imagine we will have a "double-header" party that month, but I expect the attendance at the latter will be quite a bit larger than at the former. First of all, it will be difficult for the LA people to make the first one. But also the "Sorcerer" is a far more rarely performed operetta so anyone who can only make one of them will choose that. In fact, there have been two different productions of "Iolanthe" in Berkeley during the last year.

Tentatively I plan to ask for 48 seats for "Sorcerer" but only 32 for "Iolanthe." Also, I do not expect that we will be able to have two major parties, and suppose that something like this will be worked out. Those few who want to will stop off for a snack at the Hyatt House or some other convenient location after "Iolanthe" and chat for a while, but the major party at Brennan's and someone's house (wonder who'll volunteer this time) will be on Saturday as usual. But of course this is all very tentative, and things might still be changed rather drastically. And I suppose the whole thing will either start on the 8th, or will be put off into the middle of June after all the final exams are out of the way.

The next "Lamplighters" production after that will be "Ruddygore" in September.

G&S annex

Well, now that I've seen most of the G&S operettas I felt some curiosity as to what a full opera would be like. Last summer I saw a notice on the lab bulletin board that the S F Opera Company would be presenting Verdi's "Falstaff" at the Hearst Greek Theater on the Berkeley UC campus on October 20th, and at about the same time I saw an ad in the S F papers saying that they would be doing "Falstaff" in San Francisco in English. I jumped to the conclusion that the campus production would also be in English and ordered a pair of tickets. When they finally came I was disappointed to find that the production would be in Italian, dammit!

Well, there was nothing I could do about it so a week before the date of the performance I went down to the Livermore library to get a copy of the libretto. Fortunately "Falstaff" was among the 21 translations printed in the only thing they had along those lines, David Logerman's A Treasury of Opera Librettos. I only had time to read thru it once, but still when I walked thru that gate I had a good idea of the plot as a whole and remembered quite a few specifics as to what happened in the various scenes. While watching the action I was sufficiently reminded of what I had read to always know what was supposed to be happening even if I didn't remember the specific points in the dialogue. Much of the humor came through just from the action, such as when the four women, upon learning of Falstaff's plot, mock and ridicule the fat oaf in their discussion of him; or when the servants try to carry out the laundry basket bearing Falstaff.

The opera is based on Shakespeare's "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and concerns the frustration of Sir John Falstaff's schemes to seduce two women and rescue his shrinking purse by stealing their husbands' money. They learn of his plot when they brag to each other of the propositions made them and discover that both received identically worded letters from the same man. Thereupon they immediately cook up a scheme to confound his plots and make a fool of him.

The plot of the opera is simpler than that of "Wives" in several ways. Principally, there are far fewer characters. Falstaff loses one of his henchmen, leaving only Bardolf and Pistol, for instance, and Ann loses one of her suitors. This latter simplifies the plot, of course. The major omission in the plot is the women's second stunt, having the husband of one of them mistake him for a witch and give him a sound thrashing.

It seems to me that a bit more attention is paid to Ann's and Fenton's romance than in the play, and that Falstaff seems to be more concerned with/proud" (cont. pg. 32)

Mailing Uncomments From Mayhem House

By Felice Rolfe

Ed has mentioned that I call this place Mayhem House. So: When he calls me at 5:30 pm, I'm in the middle of getting supper, I have two kids, two cats, one husband and one Hopeful Nemesis* underfoot complaining because it's not ready, three strangers have just been invited to eat with us, and Ed's call is the sixth time the phone has rung in the last 20 minutes, he's surprised I answer "Mayhem House"? What would you call it?

*This is a bit of literary license. Hopeful Nemesis is more likely to be helping than complaining. Besides, she's standing over me with a brick (Hi, Ron, we found one) while I write this.

Ed said also that he would be publishing my MC's. Fact is, since he's worried it will unbalance NIEKAS, I don't intend to write mailing comments. Just comments on the mailings. Ground rules for uncomments are: (1) I'm not going to comment on every zine. I enjoy all of them, including the ones that make me mad; every one is worth careful reading, because every one is a try at communicating. But formal mailing comments imply an obligation to say something about everything, and I simply can't. (2) If I have a really strong criticism of your work, strong enough that I feel impelled to let you know about it (which will be seldom), then I'll do so in a private letter. It's my opinion that public criticism cannot be constructive. By the way, that "you" is singular; the plural is another matter, as you'll soon see.

FROM THE VOOOVORK OUDT

I wrote to Len Bailes awhile ago, purely because I saw his name in TNFF as a new member and I'm a sucker for Leonards. (Leonards, too.) So what do I find out? (a) He's a high school junior. (b) He has a valid criticism

Even if I break the corflu, Anne, it's not the only bottle in the house. Now stop kibitzing. Put down that brick!

of the "math" in my letter to TB 21. (NO, I'm not going to tell you what it was.) That'll teach me to watch out for the mathematicians in the woodwork. But a 17-year-old mathematician?

As a consequence, I noted Len's and his friends' work in this mailing with much interest. Which leads me to

OF CLIQUES AND FEN

It has been mentioned with pique that N3F has cliques. Of course we do. We're a bunch of drastically different people, even though we have a common interest., and naturally we'll drift into groups/cliques of one sort or another. N'APA, for instance, has two well-defined subgroups; those who've been around for awhile, and those who haven't. (What else is new?) There's a strong correlation between time in grade and type of zine published. You can make two neat piles of the zines in this mailing: Pile 1, them as has fan fiction, and Pile 2, them as is mostly conversation-type writing. With the exception of Patten and maybe Labowitz (wnom I don't know), Pile 1 is neos.

You people from Pile 1 go write something for a minute. I want to talk to our friends in Pile 2.

Pile 2, I get the impression that you think Pile 1 is mostly crud, not worth the ink and paper. You were expecting maybe Heinlein? Of course fan fiction isn't commercial quality -- by definition. But consider; spirited, witty conversation is certainly an art, and one that many of you have developed beautifully; but a consistent, integrated plot takes discipline as well as talent. These kids are obviously serious about writing. They may never make the grade as pros, but they're at least trying. So instead of general condemnation, how about a little constructive criticism? And some example-setting, maybe? I know that elsewhere in N3F Alma Hill and others are doing a very nice job of helping out the would-be pros -- but it does seem like N'APA is a logical place for some of this.

All right, Grandma's through, you guys in Pile 1 can come back now. In fact, you should hear this next -- because I don't think Pile 1 is crud. The plots aren't new, most of them, but the writing is what's important. John Russke has some very nice imagery in "Youth's Joy" (MICKEY), and Kirk Patrick's piece there shows real promise. Len Bailes' CURSED has some good satire, and Len himself writes a lucid article both here and in SPIRAL. As for the rest of the fiction, all of it was readable and a good bit of it was fun. That's not a bad average, I'd say. These remarks are rather sketchy; I'd like to give the same type of review to fan fiction that I've given the pros in the last two NIEKAI. Maybe it can be incorporated into this thing, if time is available next time.

Although I do not grok poetry, the unsigned poem "Death" in BEYOND REALITY #2 was meaningful for me. Speaking of poetry and Forman, his reprinting of "Lament for a Four-Time Loser" was my first opportunity to see what all the fuss was about.

Was that what all the fuss was about? My, my.

USES AND MISUSES OF PROFANITY

Come over here in the corner, all you of Pile 1 who are tempted to use profanity in your zines. Grandma has a word for you. Pile 2 might listen in too, I hope.

First let me make my position clear. I have no moral, esthetic, or any other kind of objection to profanity. I have a pragmatic objection to its use in print; it's ineffective.

Profanity is definitely a part of the language. Many women don't use it and don't like to hear it. Most men do use it; words like "hell" and "damn" lard the speech of all but the most prudish or those whose professions, teaching for example, demand an artificial purity. Use of the more objectionable words is commonly believed to show an inverse relationship to social status, i.e., the professional man is supposed to be less likely to have a "dirty" vocabulary than a stevedore. It ain't true. The professional man's vocabulary may be different, but it's no milder.

One of the legitimate uses of profanity is the expression of strong emotion. When you've hit the thumb instead of the nail. When you find that the cat has just kittened in the front seat of your new Ferrari. When Senator Goldwater or Our Glorious Leader (depending on your leanings) expresses an opinion with which you disagree so strongly that only a four-letter scatological

term will adequately express your disgust.

Many times an author will use an objectionable word for its shock value, hoping thus to lay firm hands on his reader's attention. Unfortunately, the shock is usually so great that the rest of the piece might as well not exist, since the reader in his outrage sees only the offending word. This is much too extreme a reaction, but it does occur -- mainly in the kind of reader whose attention the author was most interested in engaging. Therefore, I claim that use of profanity in print is self-defeating, and you might as well not bother.

Anybody want to argue about this on pragmatic grounds?

*IS FANDOM MADE UP OF MICE?

*which phrase I stole from Bjo. I see she was right in predicting that no one would object to Judi Sephton's review of BEYOND REALITY #1. Pity.

YEAH, FREE SPEECH

In BEYOND REALITY #2, Harvey C. for Controversial Forman editorializes about a meeting of the Conservative Club at his school, thereby activating one of my personal peeves. Harvey, why shouldn't they close the meetings to nonmembers? A club is responsible only to its members, not to the general public; and conservatives have good reason to worry about uninvited attendees.

I have little patience with the young liberals' tendency to try and break up conservative meetings. I'm a liberal myself. One of the things I'm liberal about is freedom of speech, and to me, this means freedom from interruption. Remember that the cycle of accepted political views in this culture has only recently gotten back to the somewhat-left viewpoint, and that until the last 3 or 4 years, liberals were subjected to the same heckling, harassment and disapproval that they now focus on the conservative contingent. Truly was it spoken: No one is so inconsiderate of others' freedom as he who has but recently gained his own.

Alright, so maybe they wouldn't have interrupted. Wanna bet?

THAT CRAZY GILBERT AND WHATZISNAME STUFF, ADDENDUM

I wish to proffer a public and unqualified apology to Ron Ellick. I did too tell him spaghetti. Twice.

WHO SAYS ED CAN'T SPEL?

Yes, Charley and Marsha, it certainly seemed time that Ed got somebody to poorf-read NIEKAS for him, and he has taken me up on my offer.

PAGE FINISHING REMARK

Just to correct any misconceptions (DISclaimer), I'd like to add that Grandma's not yet thirty. Cheer up, you too can be crotchety, whatever old you are.

Lelice

VAZHENDA by Anne Chatland

The other day Felice, Joe and I were having a somewhat philosophical discussion of the meaning of $x!$ (x factorial), where the conventional definition of $x!$ for real numbers is $1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 \cdot \dots \cdot x$; but in our case $x = \text{woman}$. I brought up the question; Felice said that such an $x!$ would be one very mad woman, while Joe disagreed, and said that $x!$ should be declared the definition of a harem. This little game proceeded without any definite answer being reached.

Another little game, with definite although temporary answers, is the one played at EDL Sylvania, called Follow Your Desk. ((Lockheed also plays this game; one morning as I walked down the hall I met my desk going the other way. (I knew it was mine because the sign on it read "ESP Systems Group".) I followed it to find out where it was going, then went back to my old office to learn why. It turned out that my transfer to another department had been approved, which shows that even an extremely large organization like Lockheed can be 102% efficient, because I hadn't yet gotten around to requesting one. --Felice)) Follow Your Desk is played on the changing, obscure chessboard that is the laboratory, with the technicians, clerical personnel, and some of the engineers as the bewildered pawns. The players are apt to be laboratory managers, although I'm not sure; I do know that one afternoon last week my office contained the pawns, one of whom was very surprised (stunned was the word she used) when she came in two days later after a sick leave absence. Although the game has variations, and usually involves no warning at all, I became suspicious when a laboratory manager came into the office, scrutinized the desks, and asked who sat where. About an hour later my supervisor came in, looked everything over thoughtfully, asked whose safe (which is a filing cabinet with a special lock, used to contain classified material) it was, and walked out without any explanation. Then my office-mate's supervisor came in and asked to see a notebook in one of her drawers in the safe. As I was opening the lock I told him what had happened so far that morning, and asked him if he thought I might be moved. He looked at my desk and the litter of papers on it, and said that he thought it was quite possible; he had followed his own desk the previous week without as much warning. He picked out a notebook, showed me that it contained his material and left with it. I closed the safe again and cleared off my desk as quickly as I could, since I knew that when it comes to actual moving, three men lift the desk onto the platforms and leave with it. If at that time you are unfortunate enough to have classified material out, you have to stay behind to lock it up. At such a time it is advisable to ask your Office-mate to follow your desk to find out for you where it's going. ((What happens if her desk leaves while she's gone? --FR)) I had heard about this moving procedure from an engineer who told me that he had come back from lunch one day to find that he should have stayed in to follow his desk, especially since he had no idea where it was going. Therefore, I spend the rest of the morning asking people if any of them know where I might be going, and at last got a probable indication -- as it turned out, that's where I would up.

At this time I should mention a smaller game within the main game, known as "That's My Safe Now!" This usually crops up when two people who have previously shared a safe are moved into two separate offices, the more widely separated the better. I have never seen this played when both office-mates were present; mine, as I have mentioned before, was not there, so I had no trouble keeping my safe. When the moving time finally came, my desk and then my safe were briskly moved out to another office already containing seven people and next to some sort of building area where, from the sound of it, several husky workmen spend their days jumping up and down on large areas of sheet metal, or rolling heavy objects around the ceiling for diversion. After finding out where my desk was settled, I went back to my office and put up a sign with my new extensions on it, and one telling my office-mate where she

could find her desk. (This sign was taken down by the person who moved in the following day -- before she returned.)

* * * * *

Two Days Later

Today's date, November 22, should explain why I am writing this next section instead of something in a lighter vein. I first heard the news of the assassination between 10:30 and 11:00 PST this morning, when the document custodian turned from one of her safes and asked me if I'd heard that President Kennedy had been shot and critically wounded.

"What?" I asked incredulously.

She nodded, and then turned on her radio, tuned out a lot of uncooperative static, and adjusted the volume as an announcer repeated what she had told me. I went straight to my office where I found some seven engineers standing silently around a transistor radio propped on a desk. I listened for a few minutes where I was by the door, and then, as Radio Moscow injected its usual sour note, opened my safe, put away my classified materials, and sat down at my desk to listen. For the next twenty minutes people shifted around some, but there was no talking. For that matter, when I was going to my office, there was almost no one in the halls and again no talking, except the softly spoken question, "Have you heard?" and the equally quiet answer, "Yes. I can't believe it." A few minutes after eleven, and some more exasperating static, came the simple announcement, "The President is dead." There was still no talking, and even no noise (the racket next door had quieted down almost half an hour before this; I suppose none of us noticed until later.) I could tell that most of the people in the room believed the announcement from the subtle change in expressions, from waning disbelief and anxiety to a stony grief and horror. One person left the room immediately. For the next ten minutes or so the radio reports hedged around the apparent contradictions between the statements of the priests who had attended President Kennedy. I was in one of the lobbies on my way home for lunch when I heard the official word come through. The lobby was crowded with people, employees and visitors alike staring at the large TV originally set there for advertising purposes. Only the guard looked around when a distinctive buzz from the door lock indicated that some one was leaving the laboratory. Here too there was no talking. I went out to my car after watching for awhile, and, once I was pretty well out of traffic, I tuned my car radio away from some rather frivolous music until I found a station where there came a short announcement of the assassination, followed by a very impressive (and very appropriate) performance of Bach's C Minor Passacaglia and Fugue. On other, differing stations I found Berlioz' "Requiem", Mozart's "Requiem Mass"; and the sublime "I Know My Redeemer Liveth" from Handel's Messiah, on a station known only for its continuous rock-and-roll. At home my landlord, who had also come there for lunch, tuned in the TV immediately, and we ate as we watched. Most notable were some films taken in Dallas before and after the assassination. Especially one picture of Mrs. Kennedy's roses on the floor of the presidential car.

I was fairly sure that EDL would close for the afternoon, but I went there anyway to be certain. I pulled into a suspiciously good parking place and saw a patient exodus in progress. The flag in front of the laboratory was draped motionlessly at half mast as though carved and painted from the same wood as the flagstaff. I got out of my car and asked two people if EDL was closed, and was told that this was officially so. I noticed that there seemed to be none of the usual rush for the parking lot, and that the traffic past EDL did not seem to be as heavy as normal. I joined the stream of cars and arrived home in somewhat less time than usual. A little while later Felice arrived, and told me that the San Jose State College cafeteria was as quiet as I have described EDL, and with a good many more people in one large room than were concentrated in any similar room in EDL.

The Art Of Nightmare

By Poul Anderson

Offhand , it seems a little hard to understand why there is such a continuing preoccupation with Nazism. Hitler is as dead as Attila, and considerably more discredited. One is not surprised that Jews and Slavs remember so compulsively, after the special horrors for which they were singled out. Yet, if I am not mistaken, their tendency is to think of the Nazi crimes as German crimes, a thing for which the German people can never be forgiven. I can empathize with that attitude, but it doesn't really make sense to me that the stock of Bach and Goethe should be racially corrupt -- at least, any more corrupt than the rest of us. Nazism itself was the monster, and could have arisen elsewhere.

But as for the persistence of the memory , why does it still haunt the nations that merely had to fight a war to suppress it? We were quick enough to pardon Japanese atrocities.

And they were, in many instances, nearly as great. For that matter, Stalin probably caused more human misery and degradation than Hitler; if his methods were a trifle less blatant, he had more years in which to apply them. And Communism remains an active menace. What is the peculiar fascination of the corpses stacked at Buchenwald?

Perhaps it is due precisely to the fact that Goethe's people were the murderers. If only subconsciously , we expected cruelty to come out of Russia and the Orient. When the ultimate cruelty arose in our own heartland, we saw that nobody is safe, nobody is sane.

And the insanity of Nazism is another reason why we can never forget. Historically, the thing was an aberrant offshoot of Communism. But however alien and fanatical, Communism has always been in touch with reality , Stalin's personality was not Hitler's. The difference between the movements is roughly like that between Torquemada and a homicidal maniac. Though I feel that even a nuclear war would not be too high a price to prevent a world victory of Communism, the Soviet Union under Khrushchev does show that some leeway , some hope for the distant future , would remain in the latter event. But if the Nazis had taken over --

Fiction has produced several speculations about that. Among the most interesting is Swastika Night by Murray Constantine, first published in England in 1937. It depicts Europe centuries after Hitler conquered the West, a Europe in which he is now worshipped as the Only Man , the Son of God the Thunderer. "Who was, not begotten, not born of a woman, but Exploded!"

All male Germans, save the ruling caste of Knights, are known as Nazis; the men of favored foreign nationalities, like the English, are Hitlerians; the rest are scum. The Jews have long been exterminated, but a few Christians survive as a similarly despised and persecuted class , their religion as altered and debased by generations of mass illiteracy as is everything else. Hardly superior in rank to them are women -- non-Christian women , that is -- barracked, shaven-headed, soulless, slaves of their husbands, to whom their sole function is childbearing. A man's only real sexual satisfaction is in pederasty.

Against this background the novel tells a curious, moving story of the relationship between the simple Nazi Hermann, his intelligent English friend Alfred, and the old Knight whose family has secretly preserved through the centuries a few writings and photographs from Hitler's own time, which hint at the truth behind the myths.

If you know a little about the actualities of Nazism, you will see that Constan-

tine's extrapolation is hardly an exaggeration. To be sure, there are logical flaws. One may well doubt that a victorious Germany would have retained that character of hysteria and nescience long enough for a complete dark age to set in; every other important society has undergone internal evolution, if only in the direction of peaceful stasis. I certainly don't believe that a male-female relationship such as is depicted here could last indefinitely. It would be too unstable; if nothing else, women so animalized and unattractive would produce too much male impotence for a nation which still has an Asiatic rival to survive. Nor do I believe that the women would, for some mystical reason, finally begin to stop bearing girl children. Nevertheless, this book is more than a propaganda tract. It deals with approximately three-dimensional people, neither black nor white, who simply want to make the best of the culture into which they were born, and who, like us, cannot hope for more than small uncertain triumphs. It is much superior to Sarban's highly touted The Sound of His Horn.

Still, it is not as good as Phillip K Dick's The Man in the High Castle. This may be the ultimate story of the world in which the Axis won. Unlike the other two, it is not projected into the future, but takes place right now, in that alternate time line where the lunatic's bullet did not miss Franklin D Roosevelt in 1933 and, as a consequence, the United States defense effort was too little and too late. Now the Germans have Europe, Africa, and the eastern part of America; the Japanese have Asia, the Pacific, and western America; between the two zones of occupation lies a feeble Rocky Mountain Federation, nominally independent, actually a buffer state under both thumbs.

The story, or rather the several loosely interwoven stories are laid in California and the Rockies. We meet just a few Germans, and hear only indirectly of what they have been doing: of their gruesomely clean sweep in Africa, for instance, or their intricate maneuvers against Japan. This mutes the horror, even when we see how the Japanese covertly hate and fear them, but adds to the realism. How many Russians have you met?

Like Constantine, Dick is not interested in putting marionettes through the motions of pulp heroism, but in examining how people act in situations as complex and poorly understood as those of life itself. His Japanese are not rapacious tyrants; they are men like touching little Mr. Tagomi, trying to get along in a world they never made. Nor are his Americans gallant freedom fighters; they are shopkeepers, artisans, minor intellectuals, also trying to do no more than get along. The many faceted interplay between individuals of the two cultures, tension, strained politeness, mutual fascination, is beautifully handled. The Germans themselves are shown to have a relatively sane faction, desperately intriguing against the nihilistic schemes of the really far-out Nazis.

Well, there is one figure who might be called heroic: Hawthorne, the author of that banned and widely read novel The Grasshopper Lies Heavy, which treats of a world in which the Allies won the war. The quotations from this book are among Dick's most dazzling tours de force. Hawthorne's extrapolations are sometimes right, in terms of our own history -- and sometimes so wildly wrong! Just by themselves they form a nearly complete commentary on the potentialities and the limitations of science fiction.

Yet Hawthorne's sole act of physical derring-do has been to dismantle the defenses of his home and take his chances on Nazi assassins. And it must be on purpose that Dick only introduces us to him briefly, in the last chapter. He is a symbol, and Dick is writing about ordinary people.

Perhaps they are too ordinary, too sympathetic. In the light of what actually happened elsewhere, I have trouble believing that a Japanese occupation of American soil would go quite so smoothly, that personal friendships could develop quite so soon. Having known a number of Japanese, I can readily accept Mr. Tagomi as a decent person. But would not too much tyranny, murder, rape, plundering, enslavement, and star-

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vation separate him from us? The average Philipino still has small use for Japanese
...any Japanese.

There are some annoying minor flaws in the book. For instance, it's possible that a Swede could be named Baynes; his father might have immigrated from England or something. But is it possible that a German posing as a Swede would call himself Bayne? One could pick some other nits.

However, I don't want to. I am only praising with faint damns. Phillip K Dick has written here an outstanding work of disciplined imagination: one which, besides having high narrative interest, casts some light on the madness buried in us all.



ELRIC THE CHARACTER

being PART II of "ELRIC, A STUDY AND INTERPRETATION OF A
FANTASY HERO" by

AL ANDRIUSKEVIČIUS

I expect the "sword and sorcery" stories are by far the most popular type in the realm of fantasy fiction. And it is in this classification that Michael Moorcock's Elric stories belong. In the realm of fantasy fiction we come across types of heroes. Of these, perhaps the most frequently found is the "super hero" who by either his superior cunning or his superior sword handling manages to evade the most dire of predicaments.

Usually, heroes of sword and sorcery stories are merely endowed by their creators with great cunning and superior sword handling, and though the hero manages to encounter difficulties of the sorcery type they are rarely of his own creation or to his benefit. Elric, however, is somewhat unusual as far as characters of this type come. In Elric of Melniboné Moorcock has chosen to combine the elements of sorcery and swordplay by making his hero the descendant of an ancient and powerful race of Sorcerer Kings of which Elric is the last.

Thus, being the descendant of a long line of sorcerers it is only natural that Elric himself should embrace the ancient art and possess a wisdom and fearful knowledge which mortal men could never hope to nor dare to try to achieve. But Elric differs from his ancestors in that (1) he willingly gave up his birth right, the Ruby Throne of Imryr, to travel through the outside world, and (2) he is a pure albino lacking the vitality and strength of an ordinary man.

As a hero Elric is even more unusual and falls into an entirely new category, that of the "dependent hero." Dave Keil in an article entitled "Elric, the Dependent Hero" (GARDEN GHOULS GAZETTE #15) labels Elric thusly for Elric is truly that, a dependent hero.

Dependent may appear to be a strange classification for a hero for after all, a hero is more cunning than and superior to the ordinary individual. But Elric is far from being that. As was mentioned previously, since Elric is a pure albino he lacks the strength of an ordinary man let alone that of a hero, and must find an artificial source of strength. Elric finds his "crutch of strength" in the ancient and alien forged runesword which he bears, Stormbringer.

Stormbringer is also somewhat unusual as far as magical swords come. Probably the two best known magical swords are King Arthur's Excalibur and Prince Valiant's "Singing Blade." Yet both of these swords merely aid their masters in battle but do not impart strength in their wielders. Stormbringer is more than just a sword but is more like a living entity in itself. And yet, like any blade it needs a master. Between Stormbringer and its master, Elric, there exists a symbiosis. For without the strength which the blade gives, Elric is helpless, and yet without a master the blade cannot function. Unless it is guided by its wielder's hand it can neither drink the blood nor claim the soul of the opponent, which later is so necessary for the blade's life and by which it imparts strength to its wielder.

Though Elric draws his strength and life from the runesword he is ignorant of the actual power of the sword and its true purpose.

In one story after another Moorcock progressively continues to build upon this dependency that Elric has on the sword. In the first episode (The Dreaming City, SF # 47) Elric appears not even aware of the fact that he is indeed dependent upon the

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sword. He does not realize it until he tries to rid himself of it at the end of the episode in hopes of expiating his crime of accidentally slaying Cymoril whom he loved. But upon throwing away the blade he finds that his strength fades immediately. In later episodes Moorcock continues to build upon this framework where Elric develops an intense hatred for the blade and his own weakness which makes him so dependent upon it. Elric learns that in battle once the blade has tasted blood it begins to exhibit a life of its own which Elric finds he cannot control. He is forced to follow the blade's actions rather than guide them himself. In still later episodes when Elric has found a new source of strength, drugs, he makes another attempt to rid himself of Stormbringer, but the blade merely returns back to his possession. And finally in the sixth episode (The Dead God's Homecoming, SF # 59), Elric at last learns something of the blade's significance and purpose, and that when Stormbringer and its twin Mournblade are used together they may be controlled by vocal command.

As a character Elric remains essentially simple and uncomplicated as can be seen from the factors which motivate his behavior.

The two main influencing factors appear to be revenge and a desire to find peace and purpose in his life. Both factors seem equally strong. It was his desire for revenge that caused him to lead the raid against his own people of Imryr the Dragon Isle and it was also revenge that motivated his attack against Theleb K'aarna, the Sorcerer of Pan Tang. In both episodes the intense drive for revenge led to tragic consequences for Elric. In the first he was forced to inadvertently slay Cymoril, the one he loved, and in the second Stormbringer caused Elric to kill one Nikorn of Ilmar whom Elric had promised earlier to spare in exchange for his own life when he had been captured by Theleb K'aarna.

This second incident especially serves to draw the reader's focus upon Stormbringer's individuality as a magic sword, for here it is clearly evident that Stormbringer has a life of its own which its master cannot control. Elric had given his word to Nikorn that he shall not be harmed but when Theleb K'aarna, Nikorn's ally, was slain by Elric Nikorn, in a rage of fury, forced Elric into a fight. Elric still true to his word attempted no action save defense, but Stormbringer, being individualistic as an entity, forced Elric against his own efforts to control it to slay Nikorn, and claimed his soul for its life.

Both incidents, the slaying of Cymoril and of Nikorn, were considered by Elric as his fault. They served to heighten his dislike for Stormbringer and even more so his dislike for his weakness which made him so dependent upon the hated blade. More than this, the incidents revealed another aspect of Elric, a severe conscience.

This is not to say that other heroes do not have consciences, but in their cases it merely acts as a guide to behavior. Usually any incident committed by the hero against his conscience is shrugged off as evil but necessary and so is hardly given a second thought. In Elric's case this is not possible; his conscience will not allow him to shrug off his "crimes" and hounds him relentlessly. In more than one episode allusions are made to the fact that Elric suffers from nightmares in which the name Cymoril is heard often and Elric lapses into a strange tongue which no one can understand. Elric imbibes of a wine which would render an ordinary man mad but which he quaffs in great quantities so that he may not dream.

However, a strange paradox exists in the case of Elric's conscience. For as a sorcerer and in the attainment of his rank Elric had to shed blood in many strange and devious ways and has yet to give a second thought to any of the "killings" committed then. It would seem that an individual so used to shedding blood would hardly be bothered by a conscience and in all practicality would have abandoned it long ago. Yet with Elric this is not so. It is understandable that he would have remorse over the death of Cymoril as it would appear that he loved her deeply. But why remorse over a perfect stranger? Elric had never met Nikorn of Ilmar before his capture by Theleb N'aarna. Though he promised Nikorn his life Elric was not really bound by the promise as Nikorn himself forced Elric to fight him, and thus Elric via Storm-

bringer to cause his death. And yet Elric felt guilty and responsible for Nikorn's death.

If this "onset" of conscience appears to be sudden, it is terminated with equal rapidity. When Elric meets Zarozinia, she becomes his wife, and he settles down with her in Karlaak. Elric's conscience appears to no longer bother him and no further mention is ever made of the nightmares which had previously plagued him.

The second influencing factor in Elric's behavior, his desire to find peace and purpose in life, is equally as strong as his desire for revenge. In his pursuit for the Dead God's book, Elric and Shaarilla encounter many difficulties along the way. And though Shaarilla is at first as eager as Elric to find the book she soon begins to fear that they will never reach their goal and pleads with Elric to turn back and give up the quest. Even though Elric realizes that their obstacles are deliberate attempts to stop them he will not listen nor turn back until he has reached the goal he had set out for. It is also this drive for peace that motivates Elric on several occasions to try and rid himself of the cursed blade, Stormbringer.

In a sense, Elric may be likened to the Greek "tragic hero" bearing the traditional "tragic flaw" or Hamartia. Though the Hamartia is usually one of character, in Elric it is two-fold and physical in nature. Elric is abnormally weak and Stormbringer merely accentuates this weakness through his dependency upon it. This "flaw" of weakness and Stormbringer is the cause of Elric's suffering for, as mentioned earlier, Elric is hounded severely by his conscience because of Stormbringer's actions. He is also an outcast and a despised figure among his own people because of the raid that he had lead against Imryr. It is because of Stormbringer that he has gained the names of "kin slayer" and "woman slayer." It is thus that Elric is both cursed and feared wherever he travels and so is essentially a loner.

Like the Hero of the Greek tragedies, Elric is bigger than life and so it is only natural that his sufferings should be of equal stature.

The fact that Elric is primarily a loner would appear to lead to the conclusion that Elric has no friends. But oddly enough Elric does have a friend, Moonglum of Elwher. Unlike Elric, Moonglum is a gay, happy-go-lucky, adventurous sort and it seems unlikely that such a close friendship should exist between two people with such different personalities. But exist it does and though Moonglum shares four of Elric's adventures he is not responsible in any way for any of them.

Moonglum appears to serve only as a contrast to Elric, to heighten and make Elric more distinct to the reader. Moonglum is essentially unnecessary to the series and Moorcock could have left Moonglum out entirely without changing the pattern of the stories to any great degree.

Although a pretty detailed picture of Elric's character is obtained, he still remains a mystery. And though Moorcock has provided Elric with an elaborate setting nothing is known of Elric's personal history. He is introduced rather suddenly and though an elaborate setting is developed Elric's early background still remains a mystery.

Even when placed along side of other heroes of the sword and sorcery type, such as the Gray Mouser and Conan the Cimmerian, Elric still stands out as an individual.

The Gray Mouser is perhaps the only one who can stand up to Elric in strangeness and bizarreness of appearance. Leiber, in his Two Sought Adventures, describes the Gray Mouser as such:

"The general appearance of the man spoke of the city. His dark face was that of a jester. Bright black eyes, snub nose and little line of irony about his mouth. Hands of a conjurer. Something about the set of his wiry frame betokening exceptional competence in street fighting and tavern brawls. He was clad from head to foot in garments of gray silk, soft and curiously loose of weave. His slim sword cased in gray mouseskin, was

slightly curved toward the tip. From his belt hung a sling and a pouch of missiles."

And Moorcock describes Elric of Melnibone thusly:

"Elric was tall, broad-shouldered and slim-hipped. He wore his long (white) hair bunched at the nape of his neck and for an obscure reason affected the dress of a Southern barbarian. He had long knee-length boots of soft doe leather, a breast plate of strangely wrought silver, a jerkin of scarlet wool, and a cloak of rustling green velvet. At his hip rested his runesword of black iron--the feared Stormbringer, forged by an ancient and alien sorcerer when Melnibone was young.

"His bizarre dress was tasteless and gaudy and did not match his sensitive face and long fingered almost delicate hands, yet he flaunted it since it emphasized the fact that he did not belong in any company--that he was an outsider and an outcast."

Clearly the two men are distinct and stand apart. But the dissimilarity between the Mouser and Elric goes even further. The Mouser appears to be a fun loving adventurous rogue and a thief. What wealth he does acquire he freely spends on wine and gambling. Elric is serious, bitter, moody, and though Moorcock attributes a gusty humor to him, Elric rarely exhibits humor and when he does it is of a cynical nature. Wealth to Elric means little. He is more of an "idealist" than he is a materialist and sums it up thusly:

"I am from crumbling Imryr, the Dreaming City, from the Isle of the Dragon, hub of ancient Melnibone, and I know what beauty really is. Your baubles cannot tempt one who has looked upon the milky Heart of Arioch, upon the blinding iridescence that throbs from the Ruby Throne, of the languorous and unnameable colours in the Actorion stone of the Ring of Kings. These are more than jewels, madame. They contain the life-stuff of the universe."

Conan differs from both Elric and the Mouser. The only quality he seems to share is his uninterest in accumulating wealth. His main drive is adventure and a good fight. Religion is not for him and he recognizes no gods save Crom and only appeals to Crom on occasion. Sorcery for Conan is as real as it is to Elric and the Mouser, tho unlike either Conan has never attempted to dabble in it and prefers to keep his distance from it. For Conan the only solution to a problem is a sword; to outwit an opponent rather than kill him would not occur to Conan. However, all three, Conan, Mouser, and Elric, share their disregard for danger. This is probably the only characteristic the three share.

Like Lovecraft with his Cthulhu/Elder Gods mythos, Moorcock has also chosen to create his own mythos for the Elric series. Unlike Lovecraft, Moorcock has gradually built up the Mythos through introduction of various different factors in each following story until the sixth story in which he finally combines the various elements of the previous stories. And in the episodes prior to the sixth Elric's adventures have been nothing more than random and probably selective wanderings with little purpose. But now in the sixth episode, "The Dead God's Homecoming," (SF # 59), the random wanderings come to an end and an overall pattern emerges in which Elric's role becomes clear.

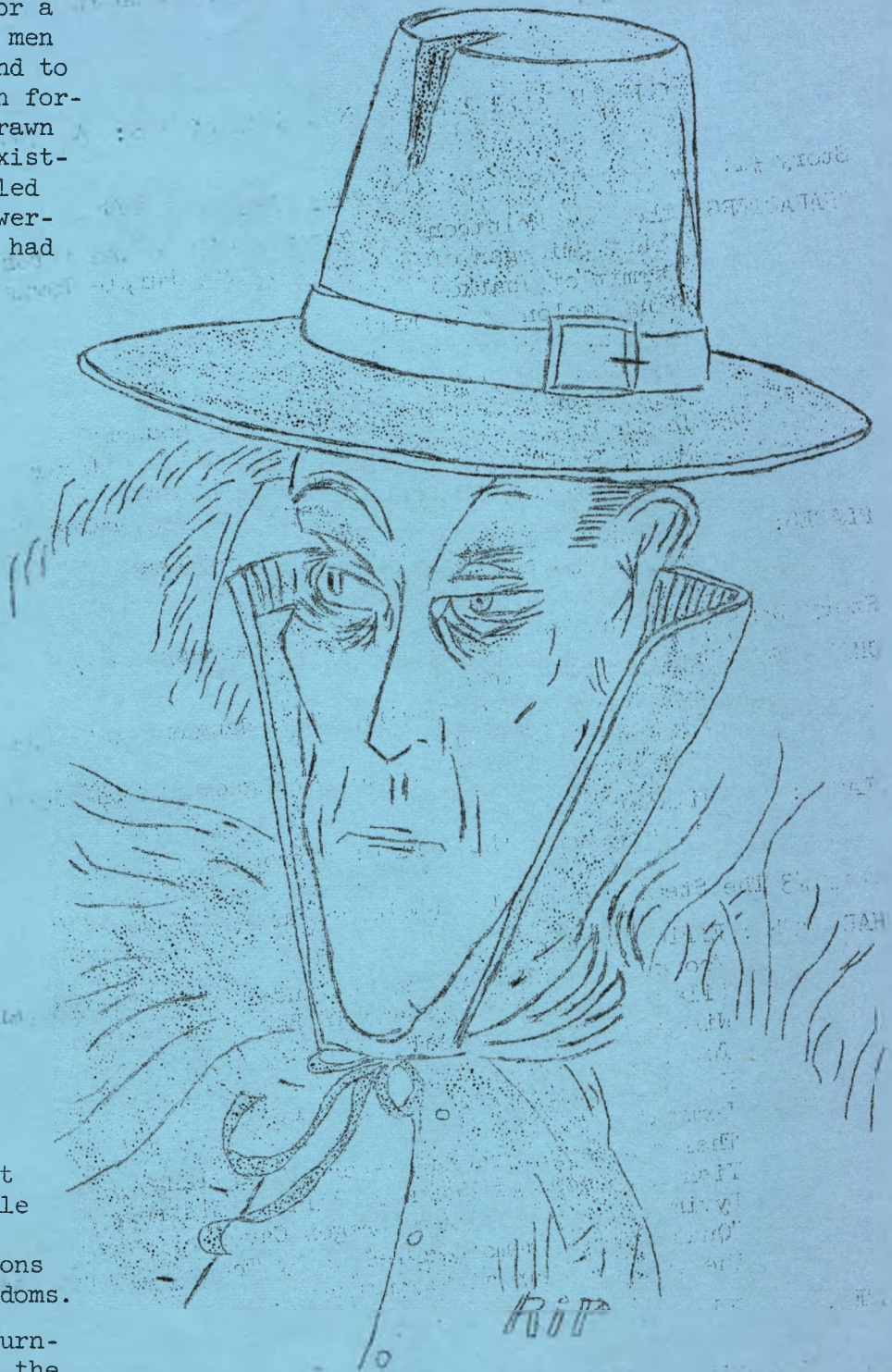
Basically, Moorcock has created three main forces in Elric's world; Chaos, Law, and the Gray Lords. Chaos and Law are the two major forces and are antitheses of one another. The Gray Lords appear to be a neutral force and their purpose is unexplained by Moorcock except that they are weaker than either of the two other forces and on occasion side with either force depending upon their whims. However one basic law governs both the forces of Law and Chaos, the unbreakable law which forbids them to attack men directly. They had to use human agents for their work.

The lords of Chaos created the earth and ruled it for a long period of time, and men were created to put an end to this rule of Chaos. Both forces apparently had withdrawn from the earth and the existing races essentially ruled themselves. The most powerful of the ancient races had been the Melniboneans and it was through their efforts that a rule of order existed on the earth. But the ancient Melnibonean empire had now come to an end, her people scattered, and Elric, the last descendant of the royal line, was a ruler without a kingdom.

The Melniboneans, it appears, were the descendants of an alien race which preceded them and who were servants of the Lords of Law. They had forged the two runeswords, Stormbringer and Mournblade, and with them had driven the Dead Gods, agents of Chaos, from the earth.

But the agents of law had now become scattered and weak and so Chaos had once again returned to the earth. But because of the unbreakable law, a war soon erupted between the various nations of the Age of Young Kingdoms.

Stormbringer and Mournblade are key factors in the struggle between Law and Chaos and whichever side gains possession of the two blades could turn the tide and claim victory. Since Elric was the possessor of the runeswords, Darnizhaan, one of the Dead Gods, had returned and had Elric's wife Zarozinia kidnapped. She was to be exchanged only for the two runeswords, but the servants of Fate intervened by telling Elric that he could determine the outcome of the battle. They said that if he turned the blades over to Darnizhaan Chaos would once again rule the earth and all order would cease to exist, but Elric could weaken both Chaos and Law. Then neither could gain control and while Elric's world was one doomed to be forgotten new civilizations would spring up in which justice and order rather than absolute Law or Chaos would rule.



Thus Elric's destiny is clearly established and all future stories leading undoubtedly to his death will deal essentially with the theme of Elric as a shaper of the world to come.

CHARACTERS AND PLACES: A CHECKLIST

Story #1: The Dreaming City (Science Fantasy # 47)

CHARACTERS: Elric of Melnibone, rightful heir to the throne of Imryr
Count Smiorgan of Baldhead of the Purple Towns
Darmit of Jharkor
King Naclon of Vilmiria
Yrkoon, Elric's cousin
Cymoril, Yrkoon's sister
Tanglebones, servant in the royal household
Divin Tarkan, commander of the walls of Imryr
Magum Colin, Admiral of the Melnibonean fleet
Dyvim Tvar, Lord of the Dragon Cave, Dragon Master of Imryr.

PLACES: The fjord of Count Smiorgan of Baldhead
Imryr, the Dragon Isle

Story #2: While the God Laughs (Science Fantasy # 49)

CHARACTERS: Elric of Melnibone
Shaatilla of the Dancing Mist, daughter of a dead necromancer
Belbane, a Mist Ghoul
Orunlu, the Keeper of the Stronghold of the Lord of Entropy

PLACES: Filkharia
Stronghold of the Lord of Entropy

Story #3 The Stealer of Souls (Science Fantasy # 54)

CHARACTERS: Elric of Melnibone
Moonglum of Elwher, the Outlander. Elric's companion in future episodes
Pilarmo, wealthy merchant in Bakshaan
Nikorn of Ilmar, rival merchant
Tormiel
Kelos merchants in Bekshaan
Demstaf
Theleb K'aarna, the sorcerer of Pan Tang
Yishana, Queen of Jhankor, Elric's mistress
Dyvim Tvar, Lord of the Dragon Caves of Imryr
"Quaolnarga", demon called up by Theleb K'aarna against Elric
The Lasshaar, an air elemental

PLACES: Dakshaan

Story #4: Kings in Darkness (Science Fantasy # 54)

CHARACTERS: Elric of Melnibone
Moonglum of Elwher
Zarozinia, daughter of the chief senator of Karlaak
Gutharan the Mighty, King of Org
Prince Hurd, Gutharan's son
Veerkad, a blind minstrel, Gutharan's brother
The Hill King, a dead king of Org

PLACES: The Forrest of Troos
The Citadel of Org

Story #5: The Flame Bringers (Science Fantasy # 55)

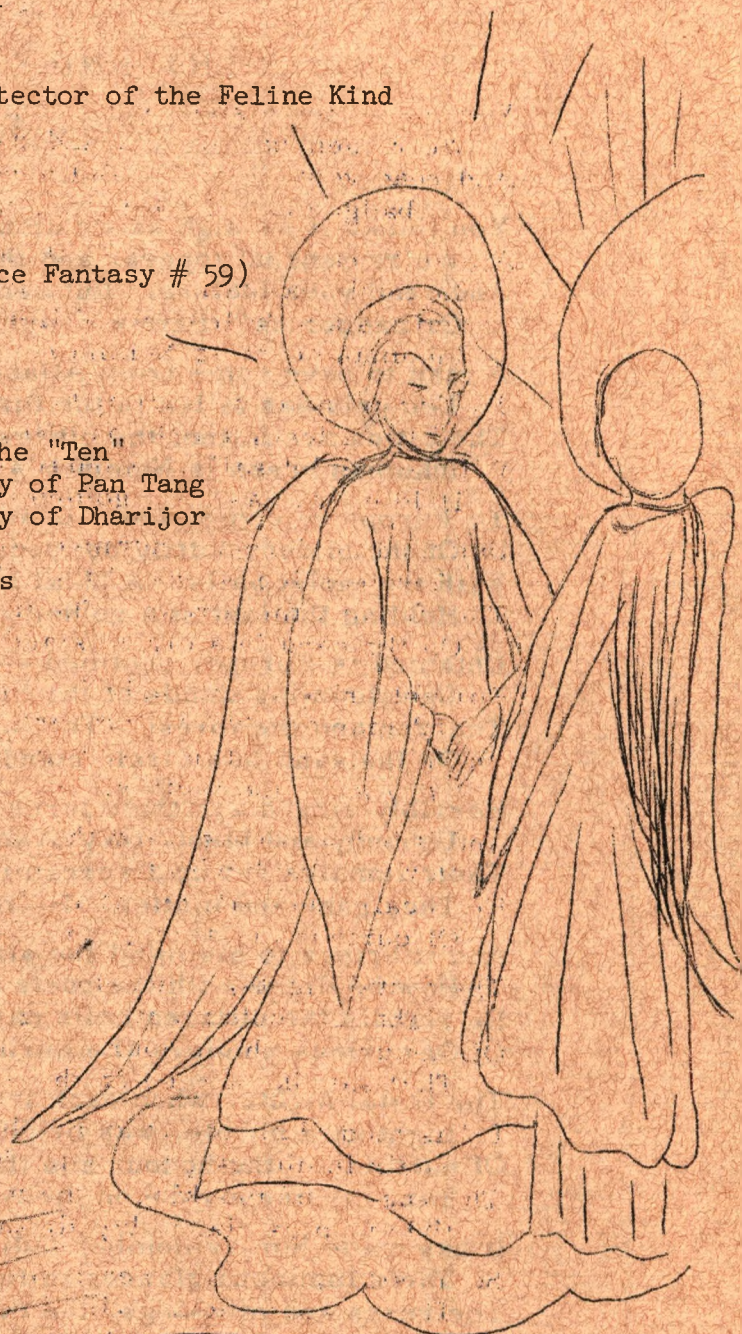
CHARACTERS: Elric of Melnibone
 Moonglum of Elwhar
 Terarn Gashtek, Lord of the Mounted Hordes, "The Flame Bringer"
 Drinij Bara, an Eastern sorcerer
 Zarozinia, Elric's wife
 Dyvim Sloran, son of Dyvim Tvar
 Meerclar, Lord of the Cats, Protector of the Feline Kind

PLACES: Karlaak
 The Weeping Wastes
 Gorjihan

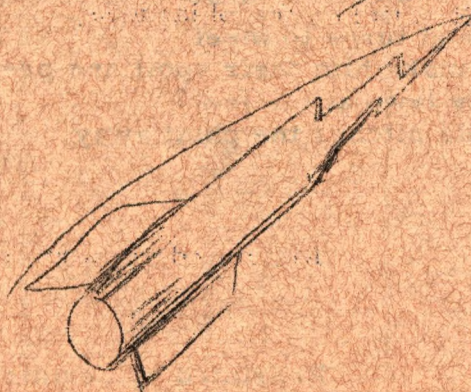
Story #6: The Dead God's Homecoming (Science Fantasy # 59)

CHARACTERS: Elric of Melnibone
 Zarozinia
 Dyvim Slorn
 Yishana
 Sepiriz of Nihrain, leader of the "Ten"
 Jagreen Lern, leader of the army of Pan Tang
 King Sarosto, leader of the army of Dharijor
 Orozn, a Shazarian foot soldier
 Dernizhaan, one of the Dead Gods

PLACES: Karlaak
 Sequaloris
 Nihrain
 Vale of Xanyaw in Myyrrhn



They have some quaint
 idea about Heaven's
 being nothing but empty
 space... "



THE END OF THE WINE

C. S. Lewis

You think, if we sigh as we drink the last decanter,
We're sensual toppers, and thence you are ready to prose
And read your lecture. But need you? Why should you banter
Or badger us? Better imagine it thus: We'll suppose

A man to have come from Atlantis eastward sailing ---
Lemuria has fallen in the fury of a tidal wave;
The cities are fallen; the pitiless, all prevailing,
Inhuman ocean is Numinor's salt grave.

To Europe he comes from Lemuria, saved from the wreck
Of the gilded, loftily builded, countless fleet
With the violet sails. A phial hangs from his neck,
Holding the last of a golden cordial, subtle and sweet.

Untamed is Europe, untamed --- a wet desolation.
Unwelcoming woods of the elk, of the mammoth and bear,
The fen and the forest. The men of a barbarous nation,
On the sand in a circle standing, await him there.

Horribly ridged are their foreheads. Weapons of stone,
Unhandy and blunt, they brandish in their clumsy grips.
Their females set up a screaming, their pipes drone,
They gaze and mutter. He raises his flask to his lips;

And it brings to his mind the strings, the flutes, the tabors,
How he drank with the poets at the banquet, robed and crowned;
He recalls the pillared halls carved with the labours
Of curious masters (Lemuria's cities lie drowned).

The festal nights, when each jest that flashed for a second,
Light as a bubble, was bright with a thousand years
Of nurture --- the honour and the grace unreckoned
That sat like a robe on the Atlantean peers.

It has made him remember ladies and the proud glances,
Their luminous glances in Numinor and the braided hair,
The ruses and mockings, the music and the grave dances
(Where musicians played, the huge fishes goggle and stare).

So he sighs, like us; then rises and turns to meet
Those naked men. Will they make him their spoil and prey,
Or salute him as god and brutally fawn at his feet?
And which would be worse? He pitches the phial away.

I first heard of the poem printed opposite when Poul Anderson quoted bits from it during the closing hours of the Westercon, early Monday morning at the "wake" party. These excerpts fascinated me both by their own merits and their apparent relationship of the poem to Lord of the Rings. Poul was kind enough to provide me with a typescript of the complete poem.

When I wrote Professor Lewis for permission to reprint the poem I also asked him about this apparent connection between his "universe" and that of Professor Tolkien. Both here and in That Hideous Strength he referred to "Numinor" and the "True West" and in the introduction to the latter he even referred to the then unpublished manuscripts of Tolkien. (I am still wondering why, as I asked in NIEKAS #5, a footnote wasn't added in the Collier reprinting stating that The Lord of the Rings is now available.) I also wondered when The Sumerillion would be available, and asked whether he would have any objections to my quoting any reply he would care to make.

He answered with:

3 Oct. 63

The Kilns

Headington Quarry

Oxford

Dear Mr. Meskys

By all means use the poem as far as I am concerned: but I expect you need Punch's permission as well.

I fear Numinor (= Atlantis) is the only point at which there is a tie between Tolkien's mythology and mine. When you'll get any more in print from him, Lord knows. You see, he is both a procrastinator & a perfectionist. You have no idea with what laborious midwifery we got the Lord of the Rings out of him!

I'd write more if I were not rather ill.

Yours sincerely

C. S. Lewis

John Baxter
Box 39
King St. PO
Sydney, NSW
Australia

Dear Ed, NIEKAS 5 turned up about two weeks ago. It's a very creditable job. If this sample is any indication, it will be a force to be reckoned with one of these days. Well-produced fanzines dealing with serious sf material are rare, unfortunately, although the success of WARHOON seems to indicate there is plenty of room for them on the fan scene. Who knows, NIEKAS may become a F-CAL P-OINT, if you'll pardon the expression.

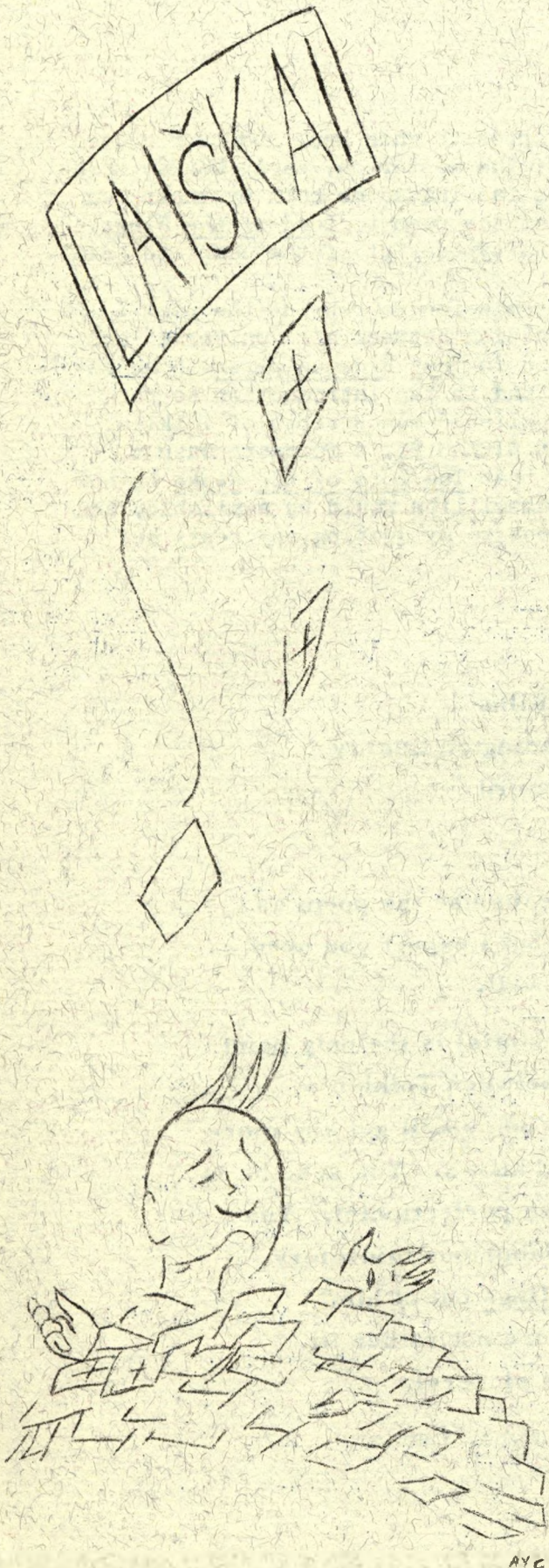
Comments: Well, none, really, though I might mention that Keith Woodcott, whose Crack of Coom you enjoyed, is a John Brunner pseudo, and that Bob Presslie's Remould isn't all that bad, considering the general standard of British sf at the moment. I thought the opening sections were excellent, though nothing you say about the ending could possibly be strong enough. If there is one basic fault in British science fiction, it is rooted in the average author's tendency to go shooting bear with a pea-rifle. The best writers are those who realise that we can't all write epics--Aldiss, for instance. No idea is too slight for Brian. He's a supreme miniaturist. As ever, John

Tom Dilley
1590 Robinson Dr. N.
St. Petersburg
Florida 33710

Dear Ed: NIEKAS #5 was nicely filled with matters of which I know nothing, and, therefore, a wonderful thing to read but a problem for letterhacking.

From all the accounts, I find myself feeling more & more sorry over living where I do: this town is liable never to see a production of G&S. Of course, I enjoy sitting around and listening to G&S records, but still...

The thought of practically everyone's being able to put out his own battered version of G&S, what with the copyright almost expired, sent me running, hand clapped over mouth, for the nearest toilet. On reconsideration, however, it occurs that some good may come of it after all; the film "The



Notorious Landlady" has already managed to use music from "Pirates" to advantage.

By some odd coincidence, I too read a bit of SF lately. No, you can lay down the morningstar; it was only Damon Knight's anthology, A Century of Science Fiction, and I am guilty of nothing worse than catching up on a couple more stories that everyone else read years ago. And it was an accident, at that; there I was, just between finishing Dostoyevsky and beginning H. James: I reached out to the shelf and grabbed the wrong book.

And I trust I've amply excused myself: I have this frightening picture of a sextet of dark little men in light little trenchcoats kicking in the door and announcing, "We're from the SFSS; we hear you've been reading SF." I'll be drummed off the mailing lists.

I Liked the review of The Beast so well I don't have to read the book.

Harry Warner: It is saddening to think how many musical compositions (eg, your "Penzance") seem to have been performed more ably for recording when the only medium available was the 78 rpm record. The best recording I've heard of, say, "Messiah," happens to be the 33 reissue of the old 78 Beecham version, which was discontinued by RCA as soon as their stereo version came out. In the latter recording, Victor did a better job, but Beecham wasn't as good. Also, the best recording I've heard of Prokofiev's 3rd Piano Concerto is an old William Kapell, which is sadly out of print. And I'm still trying to find decently played versions of Beethoven's 3rd P.C. and Brahms's 1st P.C. recent enough to be in stereo. Were it not for a few heartening exceptions, I should be tempted to complain that the art of playing music has altered in inverse ratio to the improvement in recording technique. YAY And where do you get your old 78's?

((And from a later letter....))

NIEKAS #6 was one hell of a good-looking fanzine. I am awed at the thought of someone's going over the covers of however many copies were issued with colored pencil; an unthinkable prodigious task. But I must admit, it makes for a striking cover. YAY And the sequence of colors in the pages is very attractive; I liked best the color of pp 27/28 and 37/38. ((That was Truray "charcoal", and you should have heard Bjo bitch about its unreadability! ERM))

Vazhenda provides us with what fandom needs: an Angry Young Woman. Unfortunately, I haven't seen the particular MC she's mad at, but gathered enough from the excerpts.

The collection of book reviews & allied articles, though I invariably read them with interest, are lost on me as I haven't read a thing discussed. Ah, well, next time anyone does something on the contents of ancient and crumbling Weird Tales, I'll think of something to say.

Hmph! That Coulson is a heretic. He must refuse to believe in the existence of sorrow. Blues monotonous, eh? Fortunate he is that he will never be exposed to my "Endless Blues", a composition happily never transcribed out of my head. It goes on for about 45 minutes, winding up with a phrase which circles back to lead into the beginning notes, and so around. YAY Some of the most compelling pieces of music I know are blues. But then anyone with Coulson's opinion of Bessie Smith.... YAY Ah, I forgot! Wells is now living in twang-twang country. But there's at least this to be said for hillbilly music: a good deal of it is a great deal more sincere than the crap that hits the "top fifty" list (to which I am unavoidably exposed by vice of working for a station that always plays it).

Leave the MC's in. They are very often well worth the reading, and one can generally tell well enough to what they might refer.

Yours very truly, Tom

Dear Ed... Al Andriuskevicius r 2730 Burnside Street r Detroit Michigan, 48212

The cover for #6 was terrific even if it did need some retouching. A Chatland cover for #7 by any chance? ((Sorry, not this time. She simply procrastinated too much. ERM)) Interesting review of Glory Road by Felice Rolfe. Who's the clever genius that thought up the captions for the whatchamacallits on pp 21,22? 1 or 2 more by that same genius wouldn't hurt anything. ((I, sir, am the clever genius (thank you) who captioned those whatchamacallits, which are both Desargue's Configuration, and there really is a theorem in there someplace. FR)) Likewise, I found the article by Purdom an interesting glimpse into one writer's viewpoint on what's wrong with modern SF. All in all #6 was an interesting issue, in spite of the fact that it contains a contrib from yours truly.

I have caught up somewhat on my Heinlein reading, having just read Stranger, Poddy, and the highly "controversial" Glory Road. The last is an interesting blend of SF and fantasy, something like a cross between the Shea stories and Sharkey's It's Magic, You Dope, and something one might expect to find in True Romances or something of that sort. The basic fault, for me, was that Heinlein overdid the romance bit. Otherwise it was enjoyable. I doubt that it will get a Hugo, tho; Stranger was much better than Glory Road. YAY Have just finished reading a batch of pocket books I had borrowed from Elinor Poland, 4 from the Lending Library and 4 from her own collection which she was kind enough to lend me. Seth Johnson has been suggesting for some time that I give Dennis Wheatley a try. The only trouble is that his pbs are difficult to obtain in this country. Elinor happened to have Devil Rides Out by him so I borrowed it. I liked it and found an interesting parallel between Wheatley's descriptions of protective barriers against psychic forces (the book itself dealt with a cult of Satanists in England) and Hodgson's in his Carnacki. For instance Wheatley mentions Saiittii manifestations, and Hodgson has Carnacki encounter a Saiittii manifestation in The Whistling Room. Also, Wheatley mentions the last line of the Sussame ritual and has his hero use it in one instance, while Hodgson has Carnacki also use it in TWR...only Hodgson calls it Saassmaaa ritual. YAY I also read one of Hal Clement's novels, Needle, which I found quite enjoyable. I believe he also wrote Ice World which I read some time ago. I would like to read some others by him; the only remaining difficulty is to obtain them. ((Yes, Clement wrote Ice World. You might look up Cycle of Fire and Mission of Gravity if you like his work. FR.))

Fanac is on the upsurge again in Michigan. So far two meetings have been held of "Michigan Fandon," and I have attended both. This is an entirely new group and not a revamp of the MiSFitS. Howard DeVore was present at both meetings and at the first meeting I got an opportunity to ask him what happened to MiSFitS. According to Howard they are dead tho never officially disbanded. YAY MF appears to be getting off to a slow start for the attendance of the second meeting was only one greater than of the first. But people who didn't make the first meeting replaced those who only made it. Dean McLaughlan was present at both meetings, and I met Dick Schultz at the second meeting. This guy appears to be quite a character. Three of us, Dan Plachta, Dick, & I, were the last to leave the second meeting. Dan offered to give both of us a lift home but just as we were about to take off he turned to us and suggested we join a party that was in progress in one of the adjoining rooms of the motel where we hold our meetings. So we crashed the party and contributed three bottles of wine to the refreshment debt. Interestingly enough noone seemed to notice that we invited ourselves in. We left after making our farewells to the few remaining stragglers at about 3:30 and never did find out what the party was all about. YAY Incidentally, don't be surprised if you see ads in various fanzines reading something like "Mention Detention for 66," for it's one of the things MF is seriously considering. ((Blanchard in '66! EM))

Fantastically yours, Al.

 Charlie & Marsha Brown r 2719 Morris Ave r Bronx NY 10468.

Dear Ed: We received the copy of your latest fanzine and found it very interesting. The only thing bad about the spelling was the fanzine (oh hell, you know what I mean.) We certainly hope you take up Felice Rolfe's offer to poorf read for you.

The article on Elric was very interesting and I am anxiously awaiting the second part. I found the Elric story in the latest issue of Science Fantasy very dull. It seems as if Moorcock is losing interest in the series himself. The same seems to be true of Fritz Leiber. The last four Fafhrd & Mouser stories have been nothing much to speak of. The best sword and sorcery stories today seem to be written by Andre Norton. Her latest one, Judgement on Janus, is just about straight fantasy and a damned good book. In fact we think we'll nominate it for the Hugo this year. Witch World is not as good a book and neither is Key Out of Time, but all three are eligible for the Hugo this year. Good grief, Star Gate is probably also eligible since the paperback reprint came out this year. The sequel to Witch World, which we think is called Quest for Kolder, may be out this year, also. Andre Norton certainly deserves a Hugo for sheer mass. We would also like to push her for Guest of Honor at the Cleveland convention in '66 if there is one. {{Blanchard in '66!}} There are rumors of Cleve in '66 and since she lives there she'd be a natural choice. The only other book that we can think of that would be nominated is the Heinlein book and is nowhere near that good. It would be a riot to get a Hugo ballot which listed four Norton novels on it. GOOD GRIEF! If you can get hold of a copy of Judgement on Janus read it, it is well worth the time.

This is supposed to be a commentary on NIEKAS but we seem to have gotten side tracked. Sword and sorcery seems to be coming into its own this year. For the short story nominations there are the Michael Moorecock stories, the Fritz Leiber stories, the John Packham stories (they have been appearing in Science Fantasy for the last few years and are rather good fantasys if not as spectacular as the Moorcock ones. I think that they will last better than the Moorcock stories.M), there are the John Jakes stories which are appearing in Fantastic, and there must be many others that we can't think of at the moment. For the magazine award Science Fantasy is the top magazine although our vote will go to Galaxy because of the great improvements it has had since Fred took over. {{I just heard that Science Fantasy will fold next spring. A damn shame...it was my favorite prozine.ERM}} For the best fanzine award there is a movement here on the East Coast to nominate F&SF. May we solicit your vote? {{Sorry, no. I don't like it either as a prozine or a fanzine.ERM}} Speaking of fanzines, Larry Kafka has a new one out called ISHPAK. You'll be seeing it as a rider with the nes issue of AMRA. It's a straight sword and sorcery magazine. YAY Speaking of fanzines, one page ago we seem to have been reviewing some zine called NIEKAS. Here we go again. We didn't particularly agree with John Baxter's article on Jack Vance although it was very interesting. We see nothing wring with dactyls especially in the case of Jack Vance since they give his work a more chanting air and tend to add to the poetic and dreamy atmosphere that adds so much to the story. The review of Glory Road is pretty good and covers the book very well. The comment that Oscar is a dupe rather than a Hero is very well taken. All adverse comments aside, we still enjoyed Glory Road; it has a flavor and gusto all its own. The Tom Purdom article was also very interesting although some of the misspellings jarred. Even the letter column and the fanzine review were interesting. In fact, if this is the kind of fanzine you are putting out these days by all means keep us on your mailing list. this issue of NIEKAS is going up on the shelf along with the very few other fanzines that we save.

You seem to have become really tied up with Gilbert & Sullivan. We have always enjoyed G&S and hope to see a number of their plays this coming year (alright, operettas if you want to be technical). keep up the comments on than and why not try to stick in more background such as a brief summary of the plost (my typing is rather lousy today, you'd harly think that this is what I do for a living.M) {{No, you wouldn't.EM, FR, & AC}} of some of the less well known ones.

That's all for now. We'll see you when we see you. Charlie & Marsha

Dear Ed, Mike Moorcock r 8, Colville Terrace r London, W. 11, England

I was somewhat overwhelmed to see Part 1 of the Elric breakdown in NIEKAS 6. This has been most interesting to me since a thorough synopsis of this kind helps me spot faults in my construction which I might otherwise have missed. YAY Incidentally, there's a book out now, containing the slightly revised first five stories. ((Yes, I tried to order it from Ken Slater several months ago when I first read of its impending appearance in a Carnell book review, but got back a curt reply to the effect that it won't be available for some time. ERM)) YAY Like NIEKAS very much (particularly John Baxter's article -- there's an important talent there) and find it one of the best (from my point of view) US fanzines I've seen for some time.

Look forward to hearing from you,
Mike Moorcock.

Dear Ed: Harry Warner, Jr. r 423 Summit Ave r Hagerstown, Md., 21740

This is not the compleat answer to you. It doesn't contain any comments on the sixth NIEKAS. That arrived just a couple of days ago, it's going to be a while before I get to read it, and I'm late in treating other matters so I'll handle them now and comment on NIEKAS later. YAY I reacted to the worldcon almost exactly as I'd expected myself to react. This is strange because my behavior rarely follows the predicted path. I enjoyed it without getting the wild exhilaration that some fans experience at a con, particularly a first worldcon. I wasn't enraptured enough to plan to attend the Pacificon, and my presence at the London convention will probably depend on what kind of deal and timetable a chartered plane would provide; I'd probably take the trip if it meant that I could get much sightseeing done with plenty of days for non-fannish activity there. But to be honest, I think I got more pleasure per hour from the Phillycons than from the Discon, simply because at the smaller event I felt that a much greater proportion of the people around me were friends or at least known quantities.

Your trip to see "Ruddigore" ((described in a letter... see this's "Bumbejimas" ERM)) was enough to make me want to close up the house in Hagerstown and head for California where such things can be found outside the biggest cities. It's one of my favorites among the G&S series and I'd particularly like to see it because of the chance that a live production would include some of the numbers cut from the recording. I think it's the most severely abridged of all the official Carte productions and I've never heard some of the music as a result.

I've already said most of the things I would have said about your references to the works in Bumbejimas in the fifth NIEKAS. YAY I've read quite a few prozines over the summer and I reacted to them just about as you did, with a lot of puzzlement over the problem of why I was reading them. I found one first-rate story in the dozen issues I read, a couple of good stories, a few others that weren't too bad, and the rest impressed me as trash no better written than the average fiction in a sercon fanzine. YAY Bob Sheridan's item had personal associations. I declined to join that Phillycon panel on "My Favorite Year in SF" on the grounds that I preferred to watch and listen rather than participate actively in my first con. Before I decided against the panel, I remember having thought out the gimmick I'd use. I had intended to describe vividly this story of the first men to reach the moon as one deriving from my favorite year in science fiction, then reveal at the very end that I was talking about the real thing and my favorite year will be the one in which space travel attains its first major goal, a human landing on



B

the moon.

I thought I remembered reading somewhere of a no-music production of "Pinafore" in this country when the operetta was new and at the height of its fame. But I can't find any such reference now and I may have imagined it. And that may not be what you wanted to know. If you wondered if the G&S work derived from some source that also produced a plain play on the same topic, I'm sure the answer is no. But there were some remarkable things done with it in the old days. There was an all-negro version, an all-children version, and at one time there were so many companies competing with the same work simultaneously in New York that one of them filled the entire theater by inviting all the other casts to come and watch how it should be done. YAY As you might guess from my fan-oriented interests, I think the greatest need in indexes is a start at the task of listing what is where in the fanzines. Someone with plenty of fanzines, time and patience could help researchers and addicts and various others immensely by producing lists of all the known appearances in fanzines of the best writers, pro and fan, along with titles and some hint as to the nature of each item. How would you go about tracking down all of Willis' fanzine articles, if you had to do it in a hurry? It's impossible without some indexing. But I imagine that both the index to book reviews and the index of indexes would sell quite well to mundane libraries and you'd have a much better chance to recoup your investment on something like those.

That was a wonderful cover on the issue that I'm not commenting on, but I'll try to go into detail on it in a few weeks.

Yrs., &c., Harry.

Hi Ed: Janie Lamb r Route 1, Box 364 r Heiskell, Tenn. 37754
Enjoyed your N'APA zine, always do...the cover was beautiful, maybe the trouble paid off. But Ed, I thought YOU didn't like feuds//////// But if this doesn't start one, I'll eat my words, with seasoning of course. Have an idea Judi can pound that typer too....never a dull moment. ((I don't know what I'm getting myself in for, but I do not want to be involved in a feud. If it develops into one, Anne's side might end up in a separate little zine published only for N'APA. Well, we'll see.EM))
Best, Janie the Lamb.

Ed, darlin': Betty Kujawa r 2819 Caroline St r South Bend 14, Ind
Very much taken with Anne Chatland, Ed! You know me, I likes a gal who stands up and says things when she sees injustice, yassuh. Thought her writing and opinions highly worthwhile and hope to find more, lots more, of her in the future in NIEKAS....please? Best part of this issue, I believe, was Anne. YAY Second in rating would be Felice and her review and comments on Glory Road....I hope you get Ethel Lindsay's SCOTTISHE, and that Felice read Ethel's comments on same...I quite agree with both gals. Buck Coulson, I believe, suggested that perhaps this was all a satire-parody and not to be taken as 'straight' fiction. Like someone else replied did it have to, then, be so damn dull? YAY I quite agree with Felice, the dangers that Oscar faced simply didn't ring true. I couldn't have cared less for the characters in that story as it was. YAY Bjo, too, was excellent in this issue. As a matter of fact I was saying, on tape, to Wrai some weeks ago that this was the b-e-s-t issue I've ever seen by you, Ed...really, the whole thing was something to be highly proud of. YAY Sigh, Bjo says what I was saying in LoC to Ethel last Friday...this jazz of fen TALKING a good line of courage and convictions but damn few ever putting their money where their mouth is. All the most brilliant posturings and spoutings in the fan world don't mean damn to me without a little real action...deeds not talking about it, count with me.

Junior Colleges...ones I know of and the one I went to consisted of the last two years of high school and the first two years of collere. YAY Ed, I thought your comments to Phil Roberts' zine on adolescents and s*x were excellent! Well put, indeed.

Let's see...a down is a hill with a grass-grown broad treeless top. Turf covered undulating tracts of upland, in other words. A dune, on the other hand, is a hill of loose sand heaped up by the wind near a shore. These two, then, are not similar, one being permanent and one being an everchanging shifting thing devoid of flora (in most cases...devoid of turf all over it, let me say instead.) As to what a valley must have to be called a dale, you got that the wrong way around, Ed. A dale is a small valley.

A working democracy is unique to the Anglo-Saxon culture, yes, but you did not add the other vital prerequisites, hon. Working democracy is unique to a Anglo-Saxon (or the cultures of Scandinavia, too...Swe den, Norway, etc...they=qualify in my books), Protestant culture, baby...Protestant....Give a long hard look at history and at the world today. To me the facts are self-evident...you see in the Protestant society there is most always a good firm healthy strong middle-class, no mass of ignorant superstitious peon/peasants ground under and kept in poverty by a small arrogant upper-upper class of aristocrats of times aided and abetted by The Church. Give a good look at South and Central America...of today and yesterday...and at Spain and Italy. Without that middle-class you get the injustices, strifes, and instability that have been long gone from the likes of Canada, England, US, Swe den etc for the most part....what say you? ((This is awful difficult to answer off the top of my head in a few sentences in the middle of your letter. It's too long since I read any history of that era, about 10 years, so I am no longer sure of what came before what and it is difficult for me to try to figure out cause and effect. But you said Protentantism encouraged the development of a middle class. The only thing I can think of along those lines at the moment are the predestination theories of the various Calvinistic sects which morally rationalized cut-throat capitalism. Y Speculating off the top of my head, I believe that various individuals were coming up with variations on Christianity (or Catholicism) at all times, but most simply didn't take root tho a few like Jansenism flourished for a while. Finally a whole bunch of things peaked at once...corruption within the Church itself, due largely to the plague killing off most of the conscientious clergy, intellectual rebellion against accepted dogma inspired by the overthrow of many classical scientific theories, the rise of a new wealthy class which needed a moral self-justification, various political schemes which required changes in the established setup, etc., which made the time right for these rebellions to take hold and propagate...and they did. So it does seem that the middle class came with Protestantism, but I suspect that the former was a cause of the latter and not vice versa. And I suppose that a strong middle class is a necessary condition for democracy, but (to use a mathematical expression) it is not sufficient. Just look at Germany, for example! ERM))

Please....leave in the mailing comments when sending me my copies of NIEKAS.... your comments are always good and well worth reading, Ed. I enjoy them as much as anything in your zines...don't wanna go without them...please? Bye for now...Betty

Ruth Berman Y 5620 Edgewater Blvd Y Minneapolis Minn 55417
Dear Ed, Thanks for NIEKAS 6. The cover is gorgeous. I am very glad Anne Chatland went to all that trouble to draw it. I take it from the description of the various troubles that this, at last, is the picture of Gollum at Mount Doom. I don't think it looks at all like Gollum at Mount Doom. The rocks and the flames are not craggy enough to fit my idea of the place, and the figure looks like a beautiful boy, not lean, old, scrawny Gollum. But I like the picture even though I don't like it as an illustration. I think I would like a story written using the picture as a starting point. Has the boy flown to the top of the crag drawn by the magic ring? Is he bracing himself between the two walls of a narrow cleft while he reaches desperately for the golden light? One element in the picture seems odd to me: I cannot see why none of the light rays go downward, the more so since the golden light seems to be reflected by the boy's face which is beneath the light source. Anyway, I like the picture. YAY Looks as if you've caught a real goof in "Iolanthe." I suppose one

could get out of it by insisting "once a mortal, always a mortal"--that the mortals retain certain homo sapien qualities so that even though they can fly off to fairy-land they are somehow still mortals. Something on the order of Italian-American, or some other Nationality-American versus native born???

Best, Ruth Berman

Dear Ed, Arthur Thomson r 17 Brockham House r Brockham Drive r London SW2 England
Nice to receive NIEKAS 6 and your letter. You say though that you have sent several issues along to me, but this is the first I've had. Fact. I'm a little perturbed about this, for it might have meant that you thought my silence on the issues you sent somewhat ungracious. Certainly this issue arrived ok, and was correctly addressed on the envelope, but I'm wondering if the others were. ((They should have been for I took the address from the same filecard. ERM!)) Sometimes mail for me has gone astray because it wasn't fully and correctly addressed. You see this is a new housing development I live on...well, fairly new, and it isn't listed or mapped out on street directory maps yet (I believe in fact that it just has started being placed on them) and unless the whole address is used...the 'Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London SW2' mail has gone astray. Why, even fans who have tried to visit here and have gone to the police station to find the correct address have found that they couldn't get correct directions from the police unless there was someone there who knew the new layout of the roads and streets in the development...and where in fact it was. You see it has been built on old bombed areas and the original streets have been built over and new ones named, whilst most of the street maps list the old gone streets. YAY The cover for N 6 is quite competent. The general effect of the figure falling over the chasm was well done but would have been better if the chasm had been placed in more of a perspective which would have shown the depth etc more and heightened the drama of the situation.

Best

Arthur

Dear Ed; Dick Schultz r 19159 Helen r Detroit Mich 48234
Tom Purdom has reminded me of Dean McLaughlin's famous story of "The Man on The Bottom." Dean was asked by Larry Shaw, then editing Infinity and SFAdventures, to send in some material. So Dean did so and Larry sent back "The Man on the Bottom." Dean then sent the story to HLGold, then to Mills, and then Larry Shaw suggested he send it to Campbell. Dean did so and Campbell bought it and made it the cover story of aSF. YAY So much for the idea that the best-paying markets automatically garner the best works. YAY I must congratulate you on your Ejo, Douthwaite, Barr & Zuber artwork. Simpson can do good work too, on occasion. I suggest you bug him for some more stuff. He can do the wickedest castles and such-like that I've seen outside of a Cameron oil. However... That Anne Y Chatland may be a real slick chick as the archaic slang couldst state, but her covers do nothing for me. They are crude, undefined, ill-balanced and stiff besides being misproportioned and suffering from poor perspective. However, apart from that they're not bad. ((Dick went on to give a number of helpful suggestions, & ended with:)) Believe me, I've had worse said about my work..... Hoping you are the same, Dick Schultz.

IALSCHEARDFROM: John Boardman: "NIEKAS good but cover bad", Hal Lynch, Frank Wilimczyk, Piers Jacob, Pvt EL Elliot K Shorter: "I am now at 'US51517420/E-11/4 (MP/USATC/Ft Gordon Ga 30905' and it will be good till the end of the second week in January (last mailing day for you). I received NIEKAS 6. WOW! YAY Where did you hear that there was a branch from the IRT to the '39 World's Fair? Where did it run? Through the Corona yards? ((I saw the branch tracks and assumed that that's what they were from)) and "The Troll". The article by Tom was excellent, more of this would be good in fan-zines. Although I didn't hear the speech when it was given I wish I had."

/CONT fm pg 6/ of his pot-belly. Other than that and the simplifications the plots are identical and therein lies a bit of difficulty. The program, the libretto, and a book of plot summaries all say that this is based on both "Wives" and "Henry IV," but if the entire plot came from "Wives," what is left to have come from the other? I've never read "Henry IV" but the only things that I could see as even having a remote possibility of having their origin in a source other than "Wives" are the slight differences in characterization, primarily of Falstaff but also of the women. (The other men remained unchanged, or were simply less strongly characterized.) But the introduction to the edition of "Wives" that I read said that tho the main character of "Wives" had the same name as a character in "Henry IV" they were entirely different people. Therefore it seems to me that even this influence is unlikely. And the only change in the women seemed to be in the way they went in for the ploys. In "Wives" it seemed to be more with an attitude of "let's show this fat oaf a thing or two! Thinks he can put something over on us, does he?" while in "Falstaff" it seemed to be because they were hurt upon discovering that his advances were not genuine.

The stage was quite wide, about three times normal, and had no curtains or anything like that. There were some very small wings at the ends of the stage which were capable of holding a few people, but they were rarely used. Most of the actors waiting to go on simply sat in what looked like church-pews at the ends of the stage, in full view of the audience. This necessitated an unusual presentation. There was a minimum of props and scenery, just barely enough to suggest the scene.

Only the center third of the stage was used for the action, with the other props, etc, left out in view on the remaining two thirds. At the rear center was a platform, about 15 feet above the stage, which could be reached by four stairways. When the script called for two groups of actors to be on the stage but out of sight of each other, as in the case of the groups of men and of women in the second scene, one would be on the platform and the other under or before it. The front stairs connected the two parts of the stage while the rear stairs were used for exiting. The first time an actor went up one flight and immediately exited down another there was some laughter from the audience. But the people adapted to the inelegant production rather quickly and weren't bothered by it any more.

At several points in the script exiting actors were supposed to continue conversations from the wings but because of the unusual setting they were still in full view of the audience, either still on the stairs or on the outer 2/3 of the stage. Only once, for some strange reason one of the women stood behind a screen left over from the scene in Mrs Ford's room.

The only props and scenery for the first scene were a table and chair for Falstaff. A men in costume came out carrying a large sign saying "INN", stood there with it in the center front of the stage for a minute or so, and exited. In a similar manner all of the scenes were set...with a sign at the beginning and one or two props. Thus in the final scene only the haunted oak tree was there to represent the forest. And at the end the actor carried out a sign reading "THE END."

When the orchestra started playing I was all set for a long overture so when the first two actors appeared on stage I thought they were only more stagehands out to make some final adjustments. I was quite surprised to realize that this was the actual start of the opera and that there was no overture. Also, as we were in the third row, almost on top of the orchestra, it drowned out the singing for me for about the first five minutes. I don't know if my ears adjusted to the relative volumes or the orchestra played at a lower volume, but after that I was able to hear virtually all of the singing.

The production seemed to be plagued by a number of mishaps. The most notable one was at the end of the first scene when Falstaff was chasing Pistol & Bardolf around with a broom. As he swung wildly the head of the broom came off and went flying over the orchestra and into the audience. For a few moments more people were paying attention to this broom-head and the part of the audience it had landed in

than to the actors. My eyes, too, followed the broomhead and I didn't notice this, but Anne said that there was a look of complete shock on Geraint Evans' face...and I can well imagine that there would be! Thank heavens he wasn't chasing them with an ax.

In the scene after next Falstaff almost tripped while climbing a flight of stairs and had to be helped by Ford. Finally, during the next to the last scene one of the props from the second scene, a tree, fell over. Things did get rather sticky for a while in the last scene too. The "haunted oak tree" was shaken rather severely by the wind and kept threatening to topple over, much to the distraction of the audience and (I suppose) the actors.

As I mentioned earlier, much of the humor was in the form of sight gags and carried despite the language barrier. For instance when Falstaff got into his "finery" to keep his tryst with Alice Ford in the second act, he almost brought the house down for it was so ridiculous. And the big sunflower he was carrying did little for his dignity!

Then there was the little byplay with that sunflower in the next scene. Falstaff marches into Alice's room, sees a vase with a flower in it, throws out the flower and replaces it with his sunflower. Alice picks up and fondles the discarded flower while he makes his pitch.

I wonder about a few things in the opera. For instance, what is the meaning of the horns which Falstaff and Ford seem to be obsessed with? Perhaps it is a matter of some expression contemporary with Verdi or even the XV century? I particularly remember one point at which Ford thinks Falstaff was successful in propositioning his wife and he worries about being thought a fool by the villagers and (figuratively, of course) horns sprouting from his forehead.

And is "Trust in the moon, love always renews it" some Italian proverb? Ann Ford said this countless times to her lover in such a way as to give me that impression. He had an often repeated line too, "Just kiss me soon and you always will do it." What in the blazes is that supposed to mean? She usually answers it with the "proverb."

One thing I didn't notice in the performance despite having read about it beforehand in a plot summary concerned the music at the opening of the third act. It started low, barely audible, at the very opening when Falstaff was feeling miserable after having been dumped in the river with the dirty laundry. However as he drank a mug of hot wine his strength and self confidence returned and the music built up to a crescendo. I was concentrating on his actions and appearance at that point and unfortunately didn't notice that.

I do want to see the opera again, but in English this time. As you might gather I am more interested in opera as drama with music than as absolute music. (Were the latter to be the case, I suppose there would be little point to seeing a live performance. A good recording or radio broadcast would do equally well.) One reason for this is my lack of knowledge of the mechanics of music. I wouldn't recognize a change in key if it bit me on the nose, and I realize that much of the enjoyment of music comes from an intellectual following of the little games the composer plays



with the themes, etc. I keep telling myself that someday I will have to study up on these things...perhaps a good start would be to learn the rudiments of manipulating some instrument so that I would have a better connection between the written note and the sound heard. But I just can't see finding the time in the foreseeable future.

Anyhow, I do hope to see more opera, preferably in English. (And no, don't worry. I will not be starting up a department in NIEKAS parallel to the G&S comments, which do not seem to have ended despite my promise in NIEKAS 5.) This year's opera season is over so there won't be anything before the Spring. I did almost get to see "Dialogues of the Carmelites," but it conflicted with the Little Men's Hallowe'en party. I suppose I will make 2 or 3 of the Spring Season offerings, but not many more. This fall there were a total of two dozen performances but they were cramped into a six-week period, and I don't know how extensive the Spring season is.

As I said above, I do want to see this again, and other opera too, but in English. I realize that there is some loss in translation, but no matter how much is lost it is still better than the total loss involved when you don't understand what is going on. A friend at the lab who is an opera buff, Jean Senkin, tells me that at the SF Opera you can buy copies of the libretto in booklet form, along with pocket flashlights, and follow the singing. But this strikes me as far worse than listening to a translation. Word order is changed in the translation and you cannot follow the fine shades of acting -- how do you know just which word was really stressed? And to follow it you would have to keep your nose down in that book about 1/3 of the time, so that you would miss a lot of the physical action, the gestures etc., which are particularly important in a comic opera.

But about translations; as I started to say, quite a bit must be lost. In fact, I imagine a singable one like those in the Logerman book must be fiendishly hard to do. The way I understand it, the usual procedure followed in writing an opera is for the librettist to write the words, which the composer then sets to music. Writing the words must be like writing a poem. The author is limited by the meter, etc., but he can still do pretty much as he pleases. And if he can't fit what he wants to say he can always scrap the whole bit and start anew with a fresh meter. But once the music has been written the translator is committed to following that scheme and even having the emotional peaks at the same points. And he must try to convey the fine shades of emotional meaning in the original, without compromise.

Perhaps the original librettist wanted to use a particular word to convey a certain exact meaning but just could not fit it in. So he had to use a substitute and lost a bit of what he wanted to convey to the audience. Then along comes the translator, trying to match what was written by the long dead librettist, and to make things fit he must compromise a bit getting still further from the original intended meaning. If he knew the librettist's originally intended meaning he might have been able to find a word to match said intended meaning more readily than the word in the actual libretto. I have come to the conclusion that for a good translation the translator must have more skill and talent than the original librettist.

Four men and a motorscooter

This is a sort of belated Discon report, and, unfortunately, not as well thought out as I would have liked it to be. YAY I tried to combine several things into the trip East and stayed there for a total of two weeks. However, except for the Discon itself I got in very little fanac, most of my time being spent fighting St. John's University over my thesis and degree. I did spend a fair amount of time with Carl Frederick and Matt Chlupsa but the only other fans I saw were Chris Steinbrunner and Elliot Shorter. Carl & I ran into Chris on a subway and chatted for a few minutes when we were going up to visit Elliot. Elliot was to go into the army in two days and was working like mad trying to get his room into some semblance of order and his stuff filed away. Considering the pressures of the circumstances and

the usual tendency towards procrastination found in fans (hi, Anne!) he was having a remarkable amount of success. We chatted for several hours and just as we were about to leave he mentioned the model railroad he and his sister had built in the basement. When he learned that we hadn't seen it before he dragged us off to the basement, tho he didn't have to pull too hard, and we spent several more hours exploring and playing with their monstrous layout.

The dramatic personae of our Discon expedition were Matt Chlupsa, who provided the wheels, Carl Frederick, and "The Greeb," also known as "The Mushroom" and Barry Green. The last is a friend of Carl's and a member of the City College SF club. It was at Sci Fi that Barry got the nickname of Greeb. When he signed up he wrote "Green, Barry" and secretary Marsha, then Elkin now Brown, promptly declared that "He shall henceforth be known as Green Barry." This slowly metamorphasized into "Greeb." The "Mushroom" bit is something I added when he and Carl were at my house just before leaving for the Discon, but he seems to dislike it quite a bit. You see, the Lithuanian word for mushroom is "grybas," pronounced "greeb-us," and the "as" is merely the masculine nominative singular case ending.

We were to leave Thursday about noon, largely because Matt had to work until then to avoid losing pay for Labor Day. Since Matt worked at Picatinny Arsenal in Dover New Jersey while the rest of us were in New York we had to meet somewhere in order to leave for DC. Fortunately my parents were going to their summer place in Newton about then and had to pass Dover to get there, so they volunteered to leave at a convenient time and drop us off.

Carl and the Greeb arrived at my place about a half hour before we were to leave and I casually asked Carl if he knew anything about electric motors -- something seemed to have gone wrong with the speed governor on my typewriter and no matter how I set it it typed with enough force to make a postcard look like a mimeo stencil. "Sure," he said, "I can have it fixed in a few minutes," and proceeded to take it apart. One and a half hours later he had the parts of the motor scattered all over my basement study and we just couldn't put off leaving any longer. He promised to finish it after the Discon (and did, spending two more days on it...he only discovered that the cause of the trouble was a burned out condenser at the end of the first day, and it took him a whole day to put everything back together after I bought a replacement condenser) and we took off for the swamps of New Jersey.

I had hoped that we would arrive at the lab gates before Matt did, and I would be able to shoo away my parents, for I knew what his car would look like. It is a 1953 Mercury hardtop and shows every day of its age. Also, it carries a "lifeboat"! Mat had long ago removed the back seat and carries his motor scooter there, at least on long trips. His idea is to abandon the car when he gets to the general area of his destination and get around on the far more convenient and easy to park scooter. And he did use it as a real life-boat once. On a weekend trip to Rhode Island his car had one of its periodic breakdowns when he was ready to go home and he had to make the 200+ mile trip on the scooter. Next weekend he got a ride back there and managed to get the car started and home.

But that isn't all! The thing doesn't quite fit so the right end of the front seat had to be detached from the floor and pushed almost up to the dashboard. And that morning he didn't have time to get it properly stowed so the front seat was a little further back but the right door couldn't be closed. Matt let the three of us in the car, all in the front seat, tied the doors shut with a monstrous chain with two inch links, and climbed in the window. I didn't even dare try to imagine what my parents thought as they watched this!

Anyhow, we drove down to Matt's house on the other side of Dover where he got a pillow for a person to sit on in back, re-stowed the scooter so that the door could be shut, and we were off. However the seat was now so far forward that we had to get in and out thru the driver's side and Matt still had to climb in thru the window for his door could not stay shut unless slammed shut. And he could not get up enough mo-

mentum from inside the car.

"We drove down back roads until we hit Trenton where we ate a late lunch, and picked up the New Jersey Turnpike. Unfortunately we could not take full advantage of that road for everytime we would go over 50 or so the "timing chain" would start to rattle and Matt would have to momentarily shut off the engine to quiet it.

We must have really left some strange impressions on our way down. Every time we would stop for gas or food Matt would have to make some adjustments on the engine of the car to make sure it wouldn't die on us before the next stop, and while we waited Carl would unpack and practice on his set of bagpipes. Then after we finished eating or whatever the stop was for three of us would climb in and Matt would go into his door-slamming routine. After some 20 tries it would finally catch and he would climb in thru the window and we would drive off. Towards the end of the trip we were really tired and beginning to feel a bit giddy and acted up worse than usual. I think the Greeb really shook up the people within earshot of us at the coffee shop by remarking "And to think that we are three physicists and an engineer...."

We finally arrived in DC about 8 and checked into the hotel. When Matt phoned about our reservations he goofed and asked for a double instead of a twin room, but the hotel was very nice about it and put in a roll-away for us. Tho the room was in Carl's & my name, it was the Greeb & I who got to use the beds. Matt had a sleeping bag and Carl took to the floor. We kept this system until the last night we were there when a total of 6 slept in our room, the two extra getting to use the beds, one in the double with the Greeb, and I joined the others on the floor.

We then went down to the lobby to meet fans. After a while about a half dozen of us, including Carl, Dian Girard, Bruce Pelz & a few others went to a local White Tower for a snack. The place provided a large-diameter soda straw made of thick paper and Carl proceeded to demonstrate another of his talents...making musical instruments out of such straws. Unfortunately the diameter was just a little too large and things didn't work out quite right. He would cut holes in the straw at appropriate places and make a sort of wind instrument out of it. When he broke the straw in half and started to play a duet with himself that was too much for Bruce who screamed "he's a nut!" and ran out of the place.

For the last hour or so of our trip and in the lobby Carl & the Greeb were composing a filk-song to the music of "This Land is Your Land." They were supposed to give me the final result before we left DC but didn't get around to it. Carl recently mailed me the revised version presented here.

"The song, "Discon is your Con" is a funny animal. Its words seem to change and depend on whether you see them before or after the con.

Discon is your con
Discon is my con
It is a sure con
A scotch and rye con

We're for conventions
With no dissentions
Discon was made for you and me

Our thoughts while driving
They were not random
For every moment
We thought of fandom

Of Discon's features
For fannish creatures
Discon was made for you and me

Discon was your con
Discon's not my con
I want no more con
Let's say good-by con

No more conventions
For with best intentions
Discon was sheer insanity

As I was walking
I started thinking
I'll give up worldcons
And take up drinking

For I think it's safer
To guzzle Schaefer
Discon was sheer insanity."

Both sets of verse were original and appar ntly what was written on that day has been lost. I think all in all Carl & the Greeb had written some 50 lines then.

Carl included with the same letter the following two items. ("Fostipple Snee" is taken from a piece of verse by Hannes Bok in the late & unlamented Journal of the Interplanetary Exploration Society. The first two lines of this horror read "Graz-dipple Bonk/Dooze Fostipple Snee," and the thing simply caught Carl's imagination so that he often quotes excerpts from it.)

"Another song sung at Discon was,---

The Fostipple Snee (A GROGorian Chant)

The grog, it was flowing
We were having a ball
When good old Ed Meskys
He slid down the wall

For drinking is wicked, amen amen
And good old Ed Meskys--slid down again

He was reading a fanzine
Was it SHAGGY or GAUL?
Catch me, he cried
As he slid down the wall

For drink is a mocker, a destroyer of men
And good old Ed Meskys--slid down again

Now Ed's on the wagon
He's heeded the call
He says "Not again
Will I slide down the wall."

But wait 'till the Worldcon, We'll all wait 'till then
To see if Ed Meskys slides down again.

99 Bottles of beer on the wall
99 Bottles of beer
If one of these bottles should happen to
fall
Good old Ed Meskys might slide down the wall

But...but...I stayed sober thruout the Discon!

I'm now rather vague about the rest of Thursday night. I might have found a party which I attended briefly before quitting, but I don't think so. I seem to remember deciding to quit rather early that night in order to be in shape for the rest of the con, particularly since little seemed to be doing.

Next morning Carl & the Greeb went off sightseeing and Matt & I decided to do the same. We hopped on his scooter and drove around for a while and finally decided to visit the zoo for a while. After a few hours Matt dropped me off at the hotel and continued his sightseeing while I chatted with fen in the lobby, and the fan-art & huckster room.

That night there was again a scarcity of parties but I had an invite to Charlie Brown's. It was a small but pleasant affair with a constantly changing population. When I arrived I talked for a long time with Willy Ley, John Boardman & H Beam Piper about Little Fuzzy and (since Boardman was there) politics. After that broke up I got into a long discussion of ancient fan politics with Art Saha. Art had been one of the co-ten ants at "Riverside Dive" where the NY SF Circle had held its meetings when I first joined it late in '55 but the only person I had gotten to know to any extent whatsoever then had been Harvy Segal, and I didn't even get to know him too well. So this was in effect a first meeting with Art and I found him a most inter-

esting person.

The next day the con itself got under way. At the Chicon I got in with PAS people and had an awful lot of fun helping them out. When I wasn't in the art show room I was talking to some fans in the lobby or con-room foyers, and in general having one heck of a good time. This necessitated missing virtually all of the program but I wasn't worried because I knew I'd read all about it in the Proceedings. (A great idea and I'm glad to see Discon follow precedent.)

At the time, there was rumor that Discon might publish one too, but things were still uncertain then. I would estimate I made a little over half the program this time, but not because I was afraid I wouldn't read it. I just didn't seem to be getting into such interesting conflicting activities as then, tho I did miss a few items I wanted to see because something conflicted.

Of the parts I did see, by far the worst was the "pro skit". It was completely pointless, plotless and unfunny. I kept waiting for the point but it never came. All that happened was that a bunch of writers visited a head-shrinker who cooked up a concoction for each to drink and then had him sit under a sign bearing a "typical" cover of the mag the hs thought he should write for. Alles!

Carl and The Greeb had been cooking up some kind of stunt to pull at the costume ball but they thot it would be held Monday night. Since it was two days earlier they were totally unprepared. I don't know what they were planning but I suspect things worked out best for all concerned when they didn't make it. The costume ball itself was superb. The costumes were magnificent, and the staging was efficient.

That night I had invites to at least two parties -- that of the new Baltimore club and Al Schuster's. I wanted to talk to Dave Ettlin about some N3F Tape Bureau Business so Matt and I went to the Baltimore shindig first. We found their room packed to the rafters with a mob of teenagers, most of them already quite drunk from the beer they had been drinking. After taking a quick lookaround for Dave we beat a hasty retreat. I heard some remarks from which I gathered that they were doing some very foolish things, such as dropping empty cans out the window, and we made it out of there just in time. We ran into George Heap and Cindy Cramer in the hall where we saw some officious looking man heading for the Baltimore room. We hastily decided to put off going to Al's party for an hour or so and I phoned Al to warn him that a mob of drunken teenagers would probably be trying to get into his party in a few minutes. At the same time a mob of them accumulated at the nearby elevator and Andy Silverberg came over with a friend or two. He heard the tail end of the conversation and tried to find out who I was talking with. When I wouldn't tell him he resented "being associated with the drunken teenagers" but I just didn't want to go into the long story of how nobody was likely to get into Al's party for the next hour or so, especially if he were someone that Al didn't know. (And let me say here that neither Andy nor his friend were drunk.)

After the four of us, plus a fifth whose name I forgot, spent a pleasant hour chatting in my room, we cut up to Al's party. There George broke out into filk*song, mostly Tolkien songs like "The Orcs' Marching Song". (He promised to send me copies of these, which haven't been published for several years, and I'll use some next ish if Bruce won't have come out with his filk-song anthology yet.

The party was small and quiet, but I had a very good time, first listening to George's filk songs, and later in various conversations. But Al was bitterly disappointed, largely because of a completely different outlook on fandom and sft. Thru the City College group and ESFA he became friendly with

Randy Garrett and a few other pros, and got them to agree to come to the party. Then he used these names as drawing cards to invite other pros he only knew slightly to his party, and was very happy at the prospect of having some 10 or 15 there. He wanted to talk SF with them and was not too interested in fannish chatter. But then one of the pros, I think it was Randy Garrett, had a party of his own and none showed up. In fact, some fans like Charlie Brown too ended up going there instead.

Shortly after George and Cindy left a few people including Paul Zimmer and a girl I know as "The Troll" wandered in. She plonked herself down on the floor next to me and said "Tell me all about California -- I'll probably be going out that way soon." This must have been at about 2 and we talked about her possible trip and the reasons for it for awhile. We then decided to see what was doing in the N3F room, found little of interest, and sat down in the hall outside to continue our conversation. Mebbe an hour later we were joined by someone who came out of the N3F room. I forgot his name but he immediately reminded me of the Greeb. His voice sounded the same, as did his speech mannerisms, and he has the same strong interest in the Dean Drive.

After a really lousy breakfast at the all-night People's Drugstore he went off and we continued to talk until 8. Neither of us was really ready to quit but I felt we had best. (The banquet was to be in the early afternoon so I had to make a morning Mass.) So we made an appointment for the banquet and went off to sleep.

Let me explain that "Troll" bit. I first ran into her at a Philly conference three years ago, at the official con party in a pair of connecting hotel rooms with the beds removed. Her gambit had been to stand in the connecting doorway and block people from passing from one room to the next. She would hold her hand out, palm up, and say "Troll bridge". One guy, I remember, made her rather indignant by flicking some cigarette ashes in her palm as his payment. She wouldn't say who she was, and when I had asked if she were the same kind of troll as in The Hobbit all she would answer is "I am simply a Troll." I had listened to her and Carl discuss the "Christopher Robin" books for a while, and I know that Matt had had a long conversation with her, but I hadn't had any more contact with her then. Oh yes, when we were ready to leave for NY we couldn't get Matt to come with us, so I told her "We need a Troll's help" and she helped us get him to the car. (No, Matt wasn't driving then...we had gone down in Carl's "Gogomobile.") I had also run into her very briefly at the following Phillycon and this year's Lunacon, but had said little more than "Hello" on both occasions.

I did learn what her real name is, since then, but I have always thought of her as "The Troll" and whenever she came up in a conversation with Matt or Carl we referred to her as that.

I ducked into the banquet room a few minutes before meeting her in order to stake out a pair of seats and ran into Wally Weber who invited me to join him at the SAPS table. There was just room for two more there so I claimed them and went to collect the Troll. Unfortunately four of the places at the table had been grabbed by two of Campbell's satellites for JWC & wife. JWC & the satellites (whose names I forgot) generally ignored the rest of us and kept muttering to each other in low voices. I could occasionally catch the words "Dean Drive" so it looks like he's still interested in the thing despite the lack of mention in Analogue. With these three firmly established and taking up a third of the table no one else seemed to have the nerve to speak up loudly and try to start a general conversation. Ruth Berman talked with Wally Weber, Bruce Pelz with Dian Girard, & I with the Troll. Mrs Campbell was pretty well left out of JWC's conversation and (I suppose) out of sheer desperation started up a conversation with the Troll and me. She was a very interesting and charming woman but seemed totally lost & out of place at the con.

After the banquet we went our separate ways again and met her and her group about 9 or 10 when we went out for dinner together. This consisted of Paul Zimmer, Don Studabaker, Richard Robertson, and a few others. Just as we were finishing we saw Carl Frederick and the Greeb going past the window and waved them in to join us. Paul had been wanting to hear Carl play his pipes all convention but had never been around when Carl did. So we set up an appointment...Carl would eat, and immediately afterwards would join us in our room and demonstrate the things. Well, the rest of us went back and yakked as we waited in the room the 4 of us were sharing. Rumer spread rather rapidly that some sort of party was going on and before we knew it about 40 people were packed into the room DESPITE the lack of alcoholic refreshments and the competing open California Victory Party...the Con's first open party. We had several fine swinging bull-sessions going by when Carl showed up very much later. It was exactly 12 now and I figured that the management would be rather unhappy about the noise but told Carl to go ahead anyhow. I was curious about how long it would take the hotel detective to arrive. Ghu, but those things are loud in a small confined room! Several people couldn't take the noise and made a hasty retreat, and about 10 minutes later the house dick did show up. Somebody suggested we go to the nearby "DuPont Circle" where the beatnicks hang out and hammer away at their bongo drums all night, for we probably wouldn't be bothered there.

We got a bit lost but eventually arrived and Carl immediately became the center of attention of the people crowded there. But, alas, it didn't last. About a half hour later a cop came along and chased us away, saying that he could hear us from a half mile away!

Someone else suggested we go to the Washington Monument, about 3 miles away, and we were off. I would estimate that at this point there were still some 20 fans in our group, but when we stopped for a snack about 2/3 of the way there we lost about half of them. Carl began to get cold feet and wanted to back out, but we wouldn't let him. We finally arrived at about three, but Carl was now so winded from all the walking that after a few seconds he simply couldn't play the pipes any more. We were a bit disappointed, but had a lot of fun just sitting at the base of the monument and talking. After a while Carl took the "chanter" off of the pipes and played that alone. John Mayhew had his flute along and joined in. They played several very fine duets...I particularly remember "Ride of the Valkyrie". Fortunately Carl was about twice as far away as Mayhew from where the Troll, Paul & I were sitting so that the inverse square law reduced his far louder chanter to the same volume as the flute. Somehow this odd assortment (if you can call two instruments an assortment) matched perfectly. The radically different sounds really blended well, and I hope I get to hear the combination again!

We began to feel cold and headed back for the hotel at about 4. We settled down in the N3F room where Carl and I both tried to play the flute. Despite an hour's work neither of us got a single sound out of the bloody thing! We just couldn't seem to blow over that hole the right way for it to work.

After a while we finally broke up, and the Troll and I continued our conversation from the previous night for another hour or two before finally quitting. I must say that I suspect I have finally met someone with even more endurance than Karen Anderson! Because of several crises at and associated with work she had had a total of only 4 hours of sleep in the 5 days before the con started, averaged only 3 a night during the con, and still was quite alert.

So it was that I missed the only really open party at the convention, the "California Victory Party" held that Sunday night. There were two other parties then that I could have made too, but I had just as good a time as I could have had at the parties, if not better. But this sets me to wondering about the party situation in general. What was with Friday and Saturday nights? Both times I made the only party I heard of, and tho both were very good I am quite surprised that I hadn't heard of any others. Like, both held no more than 30 people at any one time, so where the hell was everyone else?

Monday was the typical last convention day...running around in circles trying to get in that one last word with everybody, et cetera. I ran into Steve Stiles on an elevator that afternoon and it brought me up with a start. This was the first time during the entire con that I had seen him, and I suddenly realized how many more people that I knew must be at the con whom I hadn't seen. But then this was an unusual con in that I spent almost half of it with a very small group of people, the Troll's "rat pack", as she called it, consisting of Paul Zimmer, etc. Actually, I had spent a good part of the last Westerncon with only a handful of people too, Betty Kujawa, Don Franson and Ed Wood, and it too left me feeling rather strange. This is apparently a year of strange conventions for me. Well, no, I guess I can't really say that for there was nothing strange about the Lunacon in April.

This had been the first time I met Paul and the first time I really got to know the Troll, and I'm looking forward to seeing both of them again at future cons.

Anyhow, we finally checked out of the hotel and left our luggage in the lobby. Carl and the Greeb had left the room a total shambles. They wouldn't let Matt or me in to see it before they spent several hours cleaning it up, and even then it looked like three cyclones, a tornado, and...er, I better not use the name I had in mind 'cause I've made enough enemies as it is...had hit it. It was heaped almost to the ceiling with rubbish. I literally cannot imagine what it must have been like before they cleaned it up, and what they could have been doing that morning to have caused such an unholy mess. It was literally unbelievable!

We scattered for a while for dinner with plans to meet at the party in the convention suite, and were to leave at about 11 for Matt had to work the next day. I went to a Japanese restaurant with Dick Robertson and the Troll but I don't know what the others did. This was my first experience at such a place tho I've been to the Fuji Inn in Berkeley several times since.

At the party confusion broke out as to who would be traveling with whom. Matt and I both wanted to talk to the Troll some more, and she hadn't had a chance to say much to Matt or Carl and wanted to talk with them, so we decided to add a 5th to the car, and offered her a ride to Philadelphia. That wasn't the end of it, tho, and after an awful lot of changing plans, etc., Carl & the Greeb ended up staying at the con and party while Paul Zimmer & the Troll came with Matt & me. Because of all this confusion Matt & I got almost nothing out of the party. And dammit, that was the first party at which I saw Steve & Virginia Schultheiss. I had enjoyed their company very much on past occasions, particularly a long conversation with them and the Andersons "down at the bar" on the last evening of the Westerncon, and I knew that this was the last time I would be seeing them for at least a year.

So we made arrangements for Carl, Matt, and me to get together with the Troll the next weekend if she could make it up, and took off at about midnight. Paul was in back with the scooter and the Troll, Matt, & I were squeezed into the front seat. Our conversation took a totally unexpected turn. She knew that both Matt and I are Catholic and started asking us all sorts of questions about our beliefs, mostly about the implied cosmogony. Good grief, but some people have a distorted picture of Catholicism, picturing it as something naively fundamentalist. For instance, they think we picture heaven as being a definite physical location in our 3-space and existing over a time interval -- as an actual place in our universe. And that angels are

physical beings which look more or less as pictured by artists. And any number of other things usually associated with Southern fundamentalist sects. But then she admitted that most of her information was vague hearsay picked up from prejudiced sources who knew little themselves, and I must admit that, on the other hand, a few Catholics do have these naive ideas, particularly if they haven't had much education in their faith.

But largely we centered on the concept of the universe as a whole, time, etc. This was something that had always interested me so that I caught even passing remarks in the various courses I took, remembered them, and even carried them forward myself. I had since forgotten much of the proper terminology so most of this discussion was carried on using the vocabulary of science fiction. For about the first half of the trip Paul took a quite active part in the conversation. The perceptiveness of his follow-up questions amazed Matt & me. (Let me say here that the tone of the questions was one of simple curiosity...a sort of "we have someone here who knows so let's see what this business is all about" attitude, and I have no idea of what could have started it.)

At about the midpoint of our journey Paul finally fell asleep (he was feeling rather sick when we left the con, and we were surprised that he remained awake as long as he did) and the three of us continued on this and other matters. We finally let ourselves into the place Paul would spend the rest of the night, let him collapse, and continued talking over tea and coffee. Our "host" woke up for only a few seconds and I doubt that he was even aware of how many were in our group. After quite a bit of talk the Troll wanted to take us up onto the roof for she said that the view of Philly was magnificent. I was game but Matt said he simply had to get to work, so around 4 or 5 we headed North and she for her apartment.

We had no trouble with the car and stuck to the main roads all the way to Dover, hitting town around 7:30, I phoned my parents to pick me up, and Matt went home to change and thence to work.

As I said, it was a most unusual con for me and afterwards I didn't even feel that I had been at a worldcon. Somehow I felt it had merely been a long Phillycon.

ABOUT...NOTHING

This issue of NIEKAS is now the 7th consecutive quarterly one published. Each quarter I barely made it in time for the N'APA mailing and (usual story) swore that I would start the next issue earlier. But three months later there I am again working on NIEKAS 'til 3 or 4 AM and getting up for work at 6:30.

During this period NIEKAS has undergone a large number of changes. The first issue was dittoed and the masters were typed in New York...the last fanzine I produced there before moving out to California. Bob Lichtman, then OE of N'APA, ran them off for me and I got them back from him shortly after arriving here. So it was that, quite accidentally, the change of my N'APazine title to NIEKAS coincided with a major transition point in my life.

The first issue contained nothing but mailing comments and only 3 of the 6 extra copies were ever distributed. It was then merely a title change for my LOC zine, PESKYS, at a time I still expected POLHODE would be my genzine title. (Marsha then-Elkin's constant referral to me as "pesky mesky" was what prompted the change. And I might repeat here for the benefit of those who came in late that "niekas" is the Lithuanian word for "nothing.") Number two saw the transition to mimeo, the addition of some editorial nattering and the publication of an article by Mark Walstead. This article had been submitted for use in POLHODE a year earlier and I used it then because it was beginning to get dated.

I made NIEKAS a genzine with #4, and acquired my coeditors with #6. Trouble is

I was tired to the point of incoherence when I typed the colophon and forgot to note the fact.

So I am now reasonably content...I have at long last a regularly appearing genzine, and am managing to get a number of fair to good contributions. The coeditors complement me and while I know I can never produce a really good fanzine alone I think the three of us might make it.

And I like the current mixture of serious articles on various aspects of SF and fantasy with personal chatter, tho there is a little too much of the latter and too little of the former in this issue. So I have only one more problem to lick, aside from my chronic deadline scraping, and that is getting the $\rho\tau\Delta$! things mailed out within a reasonable time of publication. Almost every quarter something has happened which caused a number of copies to be mailed out late. With #6 it was a foulup with that 4 color cover. First off there was a bit of trouble with the drawings themselves and, as mentioned last time, Anne volunteered (volunteered, hell, insisted is more like it) to hand correct them. This involved more work than she bargained for, and she is even more of a procrastinator than I am, so the covers arrived here and the copies went out in a steady but oh-so-slow trickle. Then too, there was trouble with the actual printing. Now Al Schuster had done a fine job of modifying the negatives and plates to make up for most of Anne's and my mistakes, and had printed a large number of extra copies to compensate for any misprints, but he was careless with the inking on the black plate and the registration on the red. By when we had sent out 50 or so non-N'APA copies the pile of rejects had grown alarmingly large while that of remaining copies was rapidly disappearing. I sent a panic letter off to Al screaming and begging for more copies but a month has passed with narry a word from him. I do hope they show up soon so that I can get the rest of the $\gamma\delta\tau$ copies in the mail. And when I do get them I won't let Anne get her hands on them but will use them as is immediately.

I am currently planning to have, come December 15th, over 100 copies of NIEKAS #7 in addressed, stamped envelopes ready to be dropped in the mailbox...but I am NOT willing to take on any bets that something won't foul me up again!

But some day, oh some day, that last problem will be licked.

FINALE

Well, I'm finishing late as always. The first 40 pages were shipped off to the OE two weeks ago but this brief supplement is being done at the last second--largely because I didn't want to break off in the middle of the Discon narrative and because I had already first drafted the above section. (Let me say here that pp 1, 15, and 40 to the end were not proofread and that, as is obvious, page 40 was composed on stencil.) Tho pp 41-end are a separate supplement in the 19th N'APA mailing they are included as an integral part of non-N'APA copies of NIEKAS #7.

And let me add that I forgot to mention, in the credits that the cover was printed for me by Don Fitch...many thanks for the fine job.

I just saw the Lamplighters production of "Ida" again and caught a major misinterpretation on my part which I hadn't caught when I read the libretto. Gama didn't convince Ida to submit to Hilarion, but to allow a fight between Hilarion & friends and her brothers decide her fate. This was an even greater violation of her principles than direct submission to Hilarion would have been. So Gama didn't provoke the fight by his insults, but merely tried to unnerve Hilarion and his two friends.

I also noticed in this production that it wasn't Gama but one of his sons who flirted with Lady Blanche, and that she didn't rebuff his advances. I hadn't even noticed this the first time I saw it and didn't know it "should" be otherwise until I read Martyn Green's commentary. And I must say that the music and singing at the

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end of the first act were wonderful...particularly that of Ida. It approached the operatic.

Reservations have now been made for the next G&S party, for "Trial" and "Pinnafore", to be held on Saturday, February first. Contact Ronel, Alva Rogers or me for tickets or more information. Also, the Lamplighters will be doing "The Mikado" at Stanford University on Sunday, 26 Jan, if any of you are interested in seeing that again. Wish it were the weekend of the party, but that just doesn't seem to work out. Tho the reservations are already made there is a small possibility that the party might be moved up a week to put things on the same weekend, but that is most unlikely at this late date.

My apologies to the N'APA members for the lack of an "atsakimas" this quarter. There are two reasons for this--lack of time and the fact that this issue is already too heavily overbalanced with my own writings. Also, Anne was supposed to write most of the MCs this quarter, with me only interpolating a few comments, and she procrastinated as usual and only got around to writing comments on one pair of zines. So how could I write interpolations when there was nothing to interpolate into?

I just want to add a brief note to our esteemed OE relative to the N'APA YAP in the "official post-mailing." I think we should wait at least a year before taking any action relative to our waiting list. After all, a WL of 5 isn't unbearably large, especially with our rapid turnover. And last time we had a WL it certainly didn't last for a long time! But we should not go back to the insipid discussion of "whither now" which permeated N'APA from the 3rd to 6th mailings, for I feel that these helped bring on the slump.

Finally, here is the only comment that Anne got around to writing:

I am commenting on BEYOND REALITY #2 and PHILADELPHIA PHAN /sic/ together since my objections apply to both. Although I am sure you did not do so intentionally, Harvey, these two fanzines certainly made me look foolish after my defense of your possible future contribution in last issue's "Vazhenda." My opinion of your standards has been revised downward, and some doubts about your motives in joining N'APA have been raised. In the first Vazhenda I was balancing a poor BEYOND REALITY #1 with a reasonably good JELERANG #2, together with the information that you have recently bought a number of fairly expensive and sophisticated reproduction machines. Therefore, these two fanzines were quite a disappointment, to put it mildly. My doubts of your motives center about the question of why you would contribute such poorly done work to N'APA when it is quite obvious that you can do good offset printing, as shown by JELERANG #2. My first idea was to suggest that you add some mailing comments to JELERANG and submit it to fulfil your requirements, but I see that it (JELERANG) is not really your very own fanzine. However, I do have a few more suggestions, the most obvious being that if you must use two pieces of paper which have been printed on one side and paste the scrap sides together, use something other than flour and water. Seriously, if you can afford the equipment I mentioned previously, what is keeping you from buying fresh paper?

And this finally ends another issue of NIEKAS. Apologies for the scarcity of illos, and for not printing the few I did use in color. This was a time-saving expedient due to my very late start on this issue. 'Til next quarter....

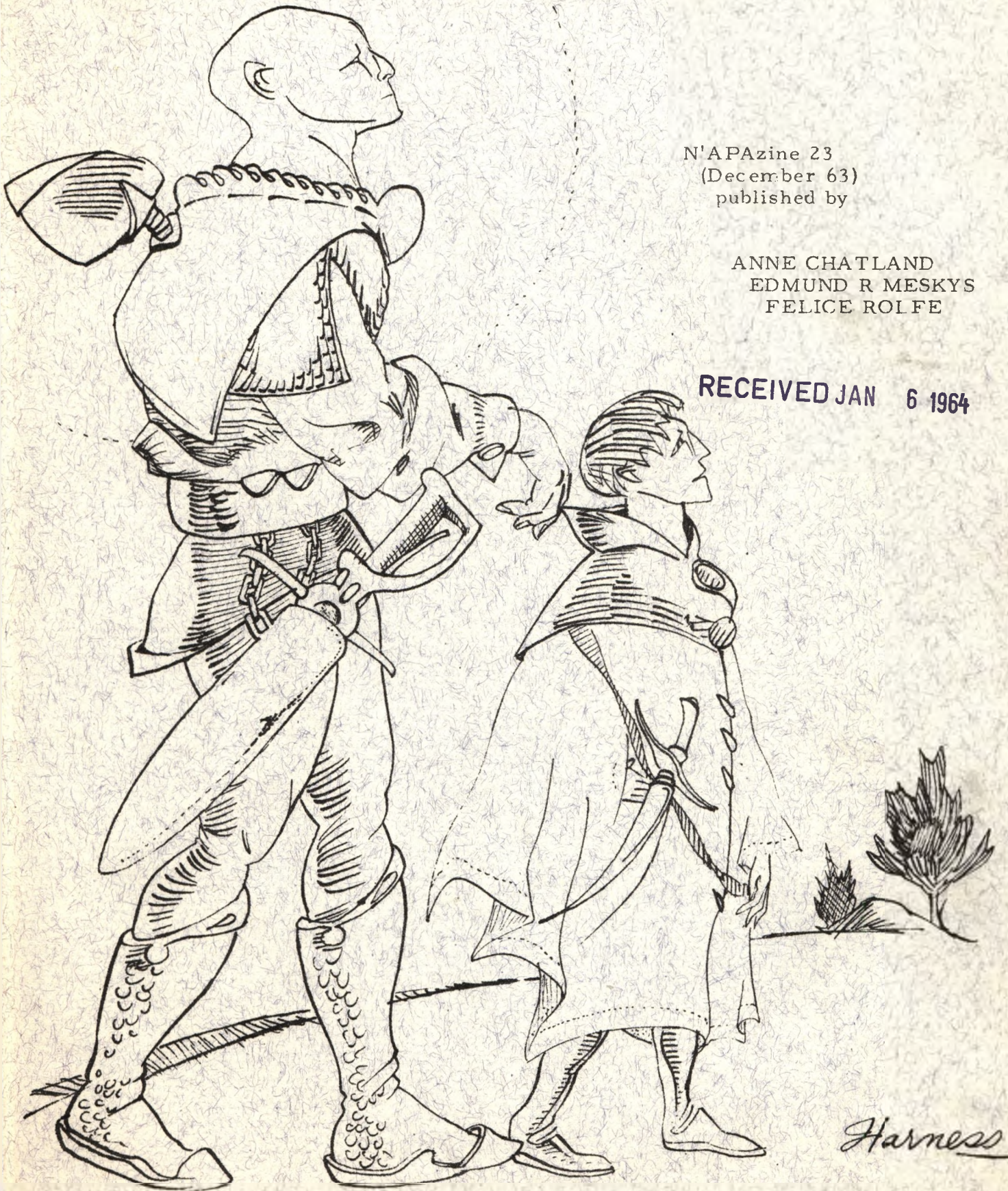
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