



THE IRREGULAR FANZINE (Pass the prune juice.)

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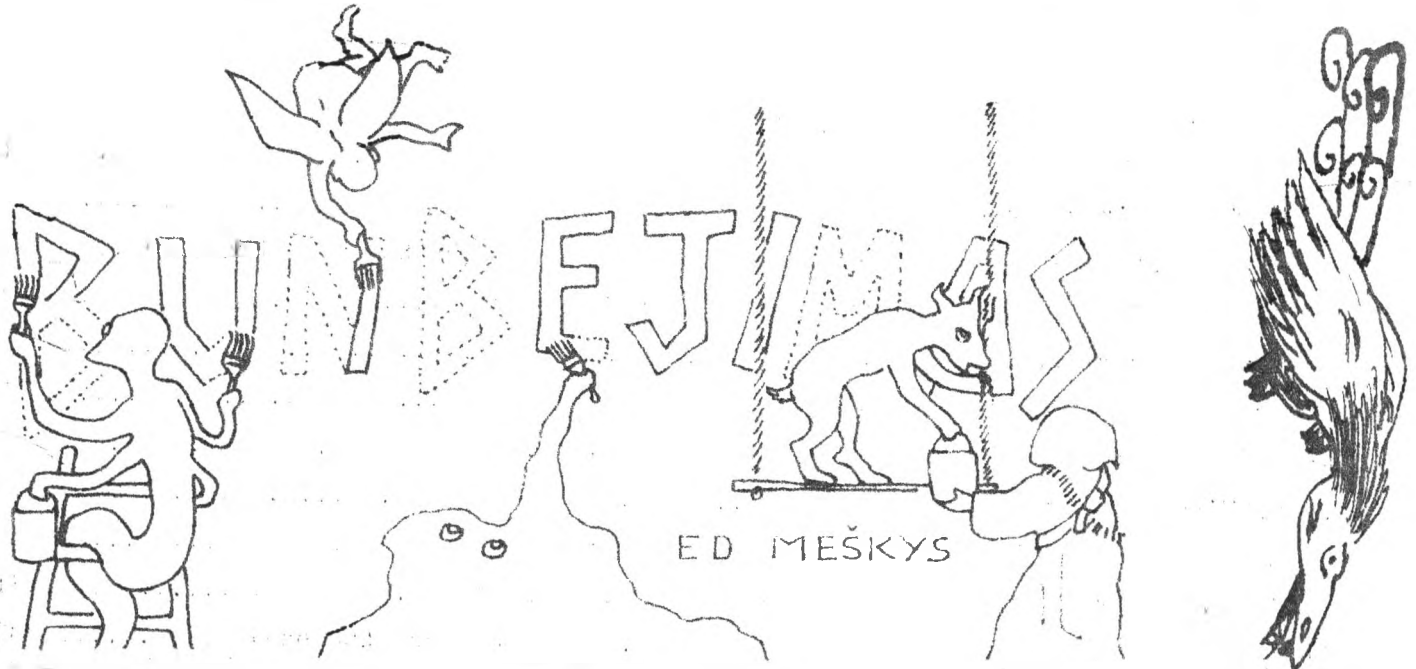
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OF MISSING READERS

I am still trying to find people who had subscribed to NIEKAS in its last incarnation 10 years ago. If you know of any, please send me their names and addresses. Ditto for any regular contributors or letterhacks.

BUT WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH SF?

NIEKAS has always been a personal zine as I and my coeditors have always ruminated about whatever concerned us at the moment, whether or not it had anything to do with fandom. For instance, in the past issues you have seen many pages devoted to Gilbert and Sullivan, and to Georgette Heyer. I feel a need to explore certain feelings and this is the obvious place to do so. About three years ago I became involved in the blind civil rights movement, and I have just returned from my first National Convention of the National Federation OF the Blind.

In many ways it was like an SF convention, only the programming was much more serious. For instance, whenever the program was in session the huckster's room was closed in order to avoid distractions.

The NFB was founded in 1940 by a group of educated and actively employed blind people who were tired of being treated as incompetents by the various governmental agencies. The most important word in the organization's name is OF. There are many groups FOR the blind, but this is the first and largest organization OF the blind.

We fight for equal employment opportunities and access to services and facilities, and against the custodial attitude of most government and private organizations for the blind.

A blind woman completed her education, practiced and got certified as a teacher, but the school board refused to hire her or any other blind teacher. The NFB won the court case, she was given a chance to try, and did well. This landmark decision opened the elementary and highschool teaching fields to the blind. Now there are many blind teachers.

An insurance company refused to sell a policy to a blind person because some blind have diabetes or other diseases. The NFB appealed to the state insurance commissioner who declared that companies may not treat blind people as a class in setting rates but must look at their other attributes. This ruling is now spreading from state to state.

The sheltered workshop in Cincinnati paid its blind workers 54¢ an hour (in 1978) because it "can't afford any more" but paid its top manager \$55,000 a year.

The NFB got the Teamster's Union to help the workers organize an effective collective bargaining unit.

The FAA says blind persons may not have canes with them at their seats on the plane because they might be a hazard in an emergency. Yet these people would need these very same canes to find their way out of such a situation. These are fibreglass canes weighing only a few ounces, and with very broad tips. On the other hand, unbreallas, weighing several times as much, and with deadly sharp tips, are allowed. One blind person protested the enforcement of this ruling by United Airlines, before the flight. The airline called the police and had the man dragged off the plane and put in jail. This issue is still in litigation, and during the convention a 1000 of us went to Washington to picket the FAA.

I have chosen to use a dog, but I do have a folding cane for those occasions when the dog would be an inconvenience or would be uncomfortable. Most people who use the cane all the time prefer the non-folding type for it is far more sensitive. I would think that as a matter of courtesy these people could have folding canes as well. For example, a long cane would be in the way in a crowded restaurant or theater, or on a bus.

However I will agree that they should not be forced to do so.
I was on the barricades in Washington.

There have been many other cases where the NFB has stood up for the rights of the blind, and I am very active in the NH affiliate. We have helped pass much needed legislation, gone to court to insure our rights, and fought off the overpowering custodial attitude of many organizations FOR the blind. Many agencies are beginning to pay lip service to our need for independence, but still have a subliminal custodial attitude. The prime example is the American Foundation FOR the Blinde, one of the oldest and largest agencies. Don't mistake me... they do a lot of good, making and selling needed appliances like Braille watches, Braille writing equipment and talking books. But deep down they do not trust the abilities of the blind to do things for themselves and want to dominate our lives. A few organizations, like the Jewish Braille Institute, support our desires and our movement wholeheartedly.

We are a civil rights and consumer movement. You have heard of the Black Panthers and the Gay Panthers. Why not the Blind Panthers?

The NFB has operated under charismatic leadership. Its founding president was Dr. Jacobus TenBroek, a professor at UC Berkeley and he remained president until his death about 10 ago. He was apparently a born leader who could rally unquestioning support from virtually every member and no one

ever dared challenge him for the presidency except for one man, but more on him anon. When he died he was replaced by Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, head of the Iowa commission for the Blind for ten years. (All NFB national officers must be blind, and are not paid for their work.) Dr. Jernigan continued as president until one year ago when he resigned for reasons of health.

Here the story gets complicated. Dr. Jernigan is undeniably a charismatic leader. I have only met him for a few minutes tho I hope to see a lot of him when he is in NH at the NH state convention in September 1978 (I am writing this in mid July but realize you will read this after his appearance.) I have heard records and tapes of his speeches, and he is absolutely fantastic. I am really looking forward to hearing him live in NH, and to meeting him at the all-night parties. Incidentally, he is an SF fan and his favorite writer is Heinlein.

The pressures of heading up the NFB, running the Iowa Commission, and serving on numerous governmental and agency panels was too much and Dr. Jernigan tried to cut back on his load by resigning his presidency of the NFB. No real successor was ready, and the first vice president, Mr. Cape, would not take the position.

The nominating committee picked Ralph Sanders, director of Maryland Industries of the Blind, to fill the spot.

Because of past difficulties which I will come back to, the organization is a little paranoid about enemies. The slate picked by the nominating committee is kept secret until the time of the elections. There is opportunity for nominations from the floor, but it is psychologically impossible to make such nominations viable. Last year was the first sort-of open election with the resignation of Dr. Jernigan. I wasn't there so I don't know what the tone was. He was in the middle of a two year term, and Ralph Sanders was picked to fill out his remaining time. This Spring Dr. Jernigan resigned his post as director of the Iowa Commission, and at the convention expressed his willingness to run for the presidency again. This was greeted with wild cheers but with a few doubts... mostly among the newer members.

I have been a member of the movement for only 3 years, and this was my first National Convention. We had a total of 9 in the New Hampshire delegation, of whom 6 were recent members like me. Only one of these 6 had attended a single previous convention. The three old timers have been active for over 20 years. I noticed a very sharp difference in our attitudes and philosophies.

Ken Jernigan was nominated unanimously by those present, and in general session was elected by acclamation. By constitution the chairman had to ask three times whether there were any nominations from the floor, and there weren't. 90 or 95 percent of those present really and truly wanted him as president, and the majority had its will. Perhaps five percent shared our disquiet. We felt he was a wonderful president and would continue to do a good job, but wondered if, once he had stepped down, he shouldn't have taken some other role in the organization. We heard a bit of similar rumbling among the younger members of other delegations. He could have been just as good a spokesman without the title of president. Our doubts must have been recognized at the top. After the nominations had been closed, Ken Jernigan spoke about what a good president Ralph Sanders had been, how he would have a top role in the administration, and that he would be Ken's successor when he retires for good.

Psychologically this is all wrong. People like to feel that they have meaningful input. Also, what if something were to happen to both Ken and Ralph? I think several possible successors should be groomed, so that when the time comes people will feel they had a real choice. [Is happening]

Some 20 years ago, when Dr. ten Broek was just as firmly entrenched as president as Ken Jernigan is now, a rival faction sprang up. I was not there, of course, but I can see a psychological tone of dissatisfaction growing and centering around a ring-leader. Apparently a man with an ego a mile wide wanted desperately to be president of the NFB, and when he failed to get support he fermented a major revolt in the masses. This resulted in a "civil war" within the movement, and after a violent parliamentary battle which Dr. ten Broek won, the rebels left and founded a rival organization. The American Council of the Blind has a drastically different policy, and is only one tenth the size of the NFB. The NFB is too militant for the tastes of some blind, and the ACB is too accommodating to the agencies for others. They accept financial support from such groups as the American Foundation for the Blind, and so are not free to criticize.

I only hope that the current dissatisfaction does not grow and eventually lead others to rally around a new person on an ego trip.

Don't mistake me. I am a staunch supporter of the NFB and am in favor of 90 percent of its actions. The membership present shouted Ken Jernigan into office by acclamation. Also, when some proposed constitutional amendments came up, they were discussed and debated at great length, and in the end modified from the floor before being adopted. There was real democratic discussion.

Well, I'm afraid I've bored you to tears with this stuff. But it has been stewing inside me since the convention and I had to get it out where someone can see it.

By the way, I recently read a biography of Martin Luther King and a book by one of the leaders of the American Indian movement. Our internal problems are nothing compared to the dissension that has rocked other parts of the civil rights movement.

ANACHRONISM, CREATIVE AND OTHERWISE

Sandy Shorter taped for me Deryni Rising by Katherine Kurtz, and is working on the rest of the series. I enjoyed the first book very much and am looking forward to reading the rest. As most of you probably know, it is a Medieval fantasy set in an alternate world where there is a small group with hereditary PSI powers. They are regarded as witches by people and Church, and are condemned as such. These are the Deryni. It is a bit like Randall Garrett's Lord Darcy series, except that it is set in the 13th Century. The author is a medievalist and a member of the Anachronists, so I presume she is accurate in her portrayal of the era.

When you come across an inconsistency it destroys the illusion of the story. This could be a technical goof like the roaring meteors of so many early space films, or a bit of unintentional anachronism in an historical fantasy. Two scenes so struck me in Deryni Rising. The boy king had to undergo an initiation rite to gain his PSI powers, in which he pierced his hand with a needle. The people involved knew to put an antiseptic on the needle before using it. Then the hero, watching a wounded man die, thought about the blood pumping out of his arteries. The circulation of blood was not discovered, with separate function of veins and arteries, until several centuries later.

I asked Sandy what she thought of these things. She hadn't noticed them while reading the book, despite her Med Tech background. She speculated that perhaps in this alternate world the PSI people had realized that certain substances prevented infection even tho they didn't know about bacteria. Also, fighting men undoubtedly had a practical, if not theoretical, knowledge of wounds. Some bled but were not fatal. Others involved rhythmic spurting of blood and usually were fatal. This knowledge would have been common

Sherwood Frazier Science Fact



I would like to comment on what I feel will be one of the most lethal blows ever dealt the American system of free enterprise. A treaty that, if allowed to pass, will spell the beginning of the end for capitalism; the downfall of free people around the world. I am speaking about the so called "Moon" treaty.

Exploration for and exploitation of space resources is of the utmost importance to the future of the free world. Are we destined to suffer at the hands of foreign oil cartels throughout the rest of American history? Are we going to be burdened with a scarred or destroyed biosphere because our earth-bound mining and industrial complexes have to step up production to keep up with demand?

We can not allow this treaty to pass! It is not only our future, but the future of our children, and our childrens' children.

What is the Moon Treaty? It is one of the most disasterous agreement to be proposed in the history of mankind. If it passes it will dictate the activities of man not only on the surface of the Moon but anywhere man travels in outer space. Drafted by a UN committee, influenced by the Third World and Soviet bloc countries, and under the approval of the United States, it presumes to protect the "Common Heritage of Mankind". This is not so; it is quite the opposite.

The Moon Treaty would put an indefinite moratorium on the exploration and exploitation of space. This moratorium would be in affect until an international council could be established to govern resource and development of the solar system. This council will resemble today's UN General Assembly in that it will be composed of representatives of all the member nations. Each nation is allowed one vote. This moratorium, coupled with an assembly made up of nations that are not all favorable toward vigorous resource development in outer space, would certainly spell destruction to an already shakey economy.

To understand some of the implications of the Moon Treaty, we must better understand some of its terminology. One of the most deceptive concepts involved is the phrase: "Common Heritage of Mankind". First I would like to give you the internationally accepted legal interpretation as given before a house subcommittee by Leigh Ratiner, legal counsel for the L5 Society.

. . . common heritage of all mankind---a phrase which is believed by the vast majority of nations to mean common property . . .

Thus, the agrument runs that, if the resources belong to all nations, they can only be found in an international organization comprised of all countries . . .

For Third World Countries this terminology means they could collectively control the exploitation of space resources. This concept does not allow for the fact that industrialized countries have a greater need for the resources, to say nothing about the fact that they have the ability to use them. Many Third World countires do not.

Furthermore, this terminology does not only deal with space resources but also with the means or technology by which we retrieve these resources. It is implied (and recognized as international law under the "common heritage" statement) that the technology of space resource retrieval will be transferred to this international council. With this interpretation being generally accepted internationally, what company is going to risk investing monies in research and development if they can't keep or sell what they have discovered or produced to whom they chose?

At this point I think it is important to take a look at what this council or assembly will be like. As I stated earlier in this article, it would resemble today's UN general assembly in that it will be comprised of representatives of all member nations. What is important here is that the overwhelming majority of member nations would be Third World countries (130 out of 155 in the case of the UN today). As one can see by looking back over the history of the UN the Third World countries have a consistent record of voting against our interests.

This would have an immediate effect on world peace in that it would put the United States on the defensive. Our foreign policy would have to become immediately aggressive towards the Third World countries to prevent another OPEC-like cartel from strangling our economy.

Finally I would like to point out one of the more subtle effects of the Moon Treaty. Our system of government is rather unique in that it guarantees each and everyone of its citizens certain rights. These rights would be discouraged in outer space by the Moon Treaty. For example, the Moon Treaty gives the right to all member nations to search the extraterrestrial facilities of any other member nation. Under a situation such as this, where international law is in direct opposition to our rights as individuals, where would one turn for protection should this treaty be ratified? Furthermore, if absolute control is handed to a centralized council of nations, what kind of future can be expected for our space settlers? Are space colonists of the future to be resigned to a sharecropper's existence? Does not man have the right to govern himself any way that he feels the particular situation under which he is living warrants?

In conclusion I would like to emphasize the vitalness of space exploitation to the future of the free world. If the Moon Treaty becomes law it does not give the U.S. any new rights, in fact it limits the existing rights to scientific purposes only. At the same time it takes away the U.S.'s existing right to exploit space for its commercial value. Without this right, industry would be foolish to spend money on space commercialization. Our economy needs this aspect of the future in order to survive its present doldrums. If our economy is to recover, it needs a new base; space can offer this in the form of energy and raw material.

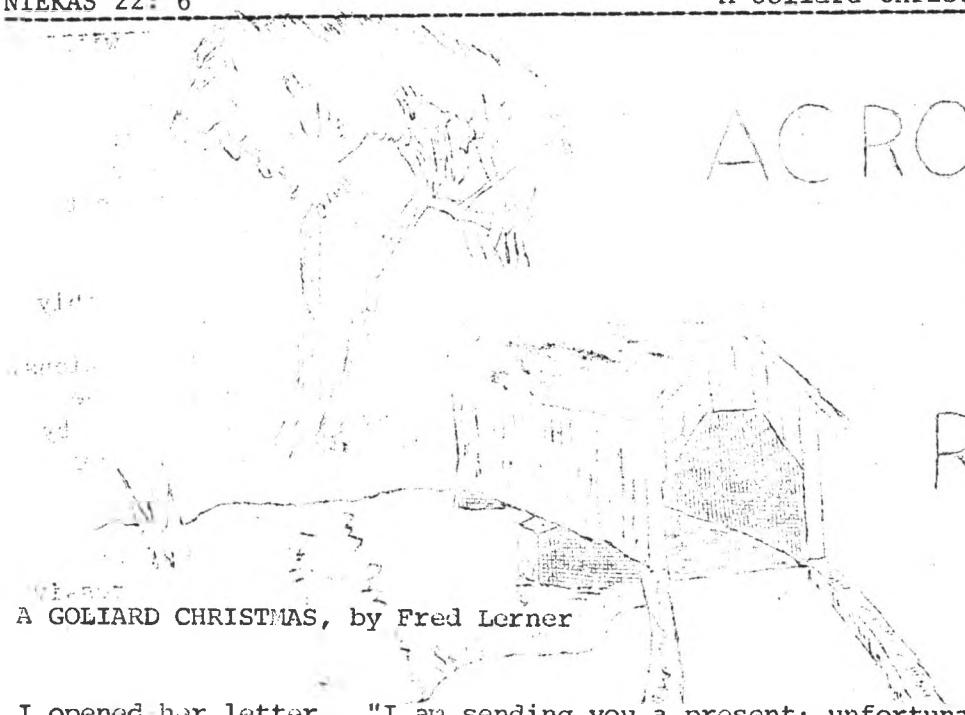
What can be done to prevent ratification of the Moon Treaty? A lot! Start by writing letters to the following officials:

1. Deputy Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs, Richard Cooper
2. Secretary of the Treasury, G. William Miller
3. Secretary of Defence, Harold Brown
4. Your local state representatives.

It is very important that you educate yourself, know the facts, and form clear concise lines of argument. A good way to start is by sending \$1.00 to cover mailing and Xeroxing to your local L5 chapter for an information packet. In this packet is a copy of the Moon Treaty along with an analysis of its implications.

Act now! It is vital to the future of this and all other free nations of the world. Remember! Without a future for our children, there will be no children in the future.

REACH FOR THE STARS!



ACROSS THE RIVER

A GOLIARD CHRISTMAS, by Fred Lerner

I opened her letter. "I am sending you a present; unfortunately, it is all I can afford. It is a verse I discovered..."

*Boiling in my spirit's veins with fierce indignation,
From my bitterness of soul springs self revelation:
Framed am I of flimsy stuff, fit for levitation,
Like a thin leaf which the wind scatters from its station.*

While it is the wise man's part...

There were twenty-five stanzas of it. "Does the scansion remind you of something?" Indeed it did: for Orpheus' Song from *Silverlock* has long been a favourite of mine. I first learned it thirteen years ago, when I heard Karen Anderson sing it, to a tune by (I believe) Bruce Pelz. And in my turn I taught it to several friends.

*I have known both joy and grief, neat or mixed together;
Cold and heat I've known and found both good drinking weather;
Light and darkness I have known, seldom doubting whether
Tammuz would return again when he'd slipped his tether.*

To Shandon Silverlock, the Commonwealth is a land of illusion. To the reader, it is a land of allusion; full of people and places and deeds and legends from all the histories and literatures of Earth. Now, I knew that Orpheus' Song was a paraphrase (in six lively stanzas) of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. And I knew that Orpheus was but one of O Widsith Amergin Demodocus Boyan Taliesin Golias' myriad names -- in fact Silverlock usually called him Golias. So I realised that Golias or Orpheus or whatever you'd like to call him was by way of being the Universal Bard. But it didn't occur to me that the allusion might go well beyond mere nomenclature. I should have realised...

The verses, she told me, were taken from a medieval history textbook, which in turn had reprinted them from John Addington Symonds' *Wine Women and Song*, a book of Goliard poetry. Like every well-educated young man I had heard of the Goliards: there was even one of their poems printed in my C.C. book, indicating that sometime during my freshman year I was supposed to have read the thing. Well, whether I read it or not, it obviously didn't take -- else I would have identified Golias with the patron of the wandering medieval scholars who took the name of Goliards.

I determined to find out more. This is when it comes in handy to run a statewide inter-library loan system. I looked up Symonds in the Vermont Union Catalog, and learned that

Nine Women and Song contained translations of medieval student songs taken from the *Carmina Burana*, a Latin manuscript songster discovered in a German monastery and first published in 1847. I teletyped to Middlebury College for Symonds. A tracing on the catalog card led me to look up *Carmina Burana*, and I discovered that the University of Vermont owned a bilingual Latin-German edition. Again the teletype clattered.

I wanted to find the Latin original to the poem I'd been sent, and to see if its metre was the same; for I'm extremely fond of the tune, and of singing in languages I don't understand; and a medieval Latin drinking song would be a fine addition to my repertoire. But how would I tell which song in *Carmina Burana* was the right one? I haven't enough Latin for that, but I could probably find it through its German translation -- and I could learn it in German as well.

When Middlebury's Symonds came in, I learned from it that my song was entitled "The Confession of Goliath", and was ascribed to a probably nonexistent twelfth-century "Archpoet of Cologne". While I waited for UV's *Carmina Burana* to arrive, I remembered my C.C. book, and in it I found this:

*When through all the realms of earth "Go Ye Out" resounded,
Priests began to gad about, monks with rapture bounded,
Dreams from the Evangeles rose, weary of redundancy --
One and all our order join, seeking life's abundance.*

This "Song of the Vagrant Order" is obviously another song entirely, though its sixteen stanzas fit the metre of "The Confession of Goliath". I think I prefer its thoroughgoing impiety to the note of repentance with which "The Confession of Goliath" ends.

I was thinking of all these things while straightening out my living room one day. I had come upon three paperbound Latin textbooks which I'd purchased last summer at a library booksale. Before taking them upstairs to their proper place in the lumber room, I sat down and flipped through them. And in the second volume of Sadler's *Modern Latin* I encountered:

*Aestuans intrinsecus ira vehementi
In amaritudine loquor meae menti,
Factus de materia levis elementi
Folio sum similis de quo ludunt venti.*

The twenty verses were entitled "The Confessions of Goliath". The metre fits perfectly (only two elisions are required in the twenty stanzas!) and it has a marvellous sound to it. And when I get *Carmina Burana* I'll learn it in German too. And if I get a moderate amount to drink at some party I'll sing it in Latin and German both.

Meanwhile, I've started reading some histories of the medieval universities; and I've decided that someday I'd like to write a story or two about the Goliard life. It's been a pretty exciting week, and it doesn't look like being over yet.

It may have been all she could afford. It was a damn fine Christmas present.

(An earlier version of this piece appeared in the author's *GREEN MOUNTAIN BOY* #29 for *MinneApa* 98.)

Eurydice by Ruth Lerman

So great his love
 He came to Hell for me,
 And men said
 Never was such a love.
 So great his love
 Demeter's daughter cried to think of it,
 And the nameless lord of Hades yielded
 to her tears
 And let me go.

But I who slept,
 Dreaming the dreams of narna
 In the earth,
 I went with him
 And would have looked again
 At the changing world
 That turns to the uncertain sun,
 Where love risks death,
 If he had thought I had
 So much of death's reliability in me.
 As to be trusted
 Even while I returned to life.

And so I had.
 I think I had.
 I dream it
 In the stone.
 And if I had,
 Never was such a love.
 But now we will not know.

He feared.
 I did not wake.

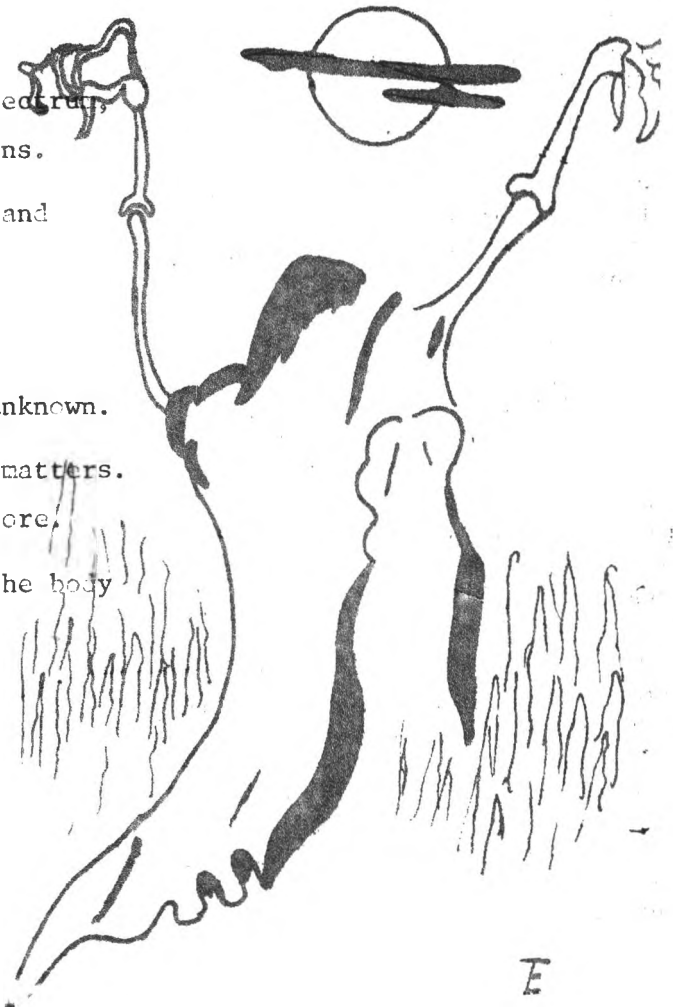
Dreams took me
 Out of the world of mutability,
 And the stone flows round me,
 And I dream.
 I dream the dreams of narna,
 And I do not wish to see the sky.

But I dream, sometimes, of music,
 And of wrinkled bodies in each other's arms.

Celestial Excursion by Sherwood Frazier

Endlessly the stars pass, colours have no spectrum,
 galaxies swirl aimlessly in unknown directions.
 Limitless are the cons, as nebulae of green and
 blue drift weightlessly.
 Nova explode with colours yet unnamed.
 Stars unborn remain shapeless in the void.
 Constellations are meaningless with shapes unknown.
 Speed is not of the essence, time no longer matters.
 Lightyears pass as instances of galaxies before.
 Beyond races the energy of the mind out of the body
 that has served it.
 Impelled to blend with empyrean.
 Lost forever to infinity.

People who live in glass houses
 should use Lexan.



RECORDINGS FOR THE BLIND

compiled by John Boardman

continued from NIEKAS 21

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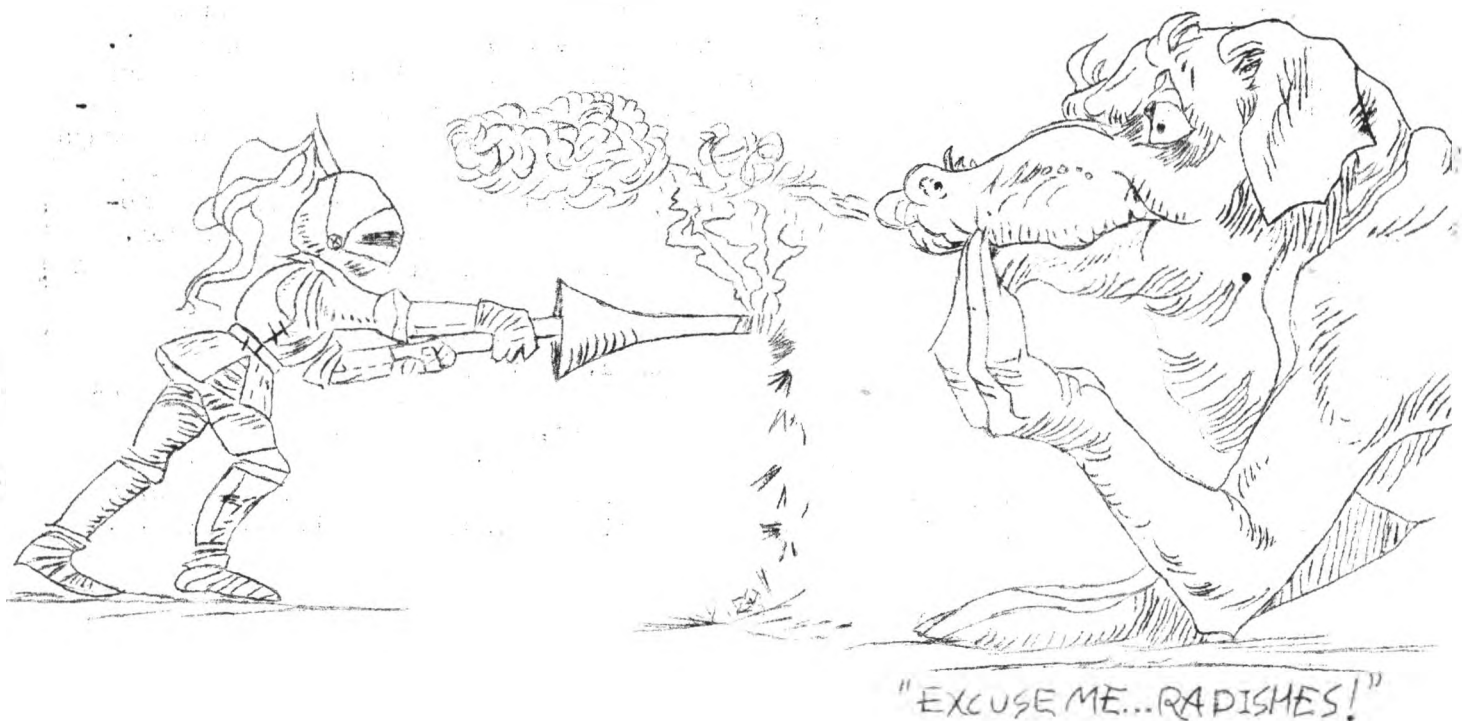
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"EXCUSE ME...RADISHES!"

THE JOURNEY OF THE RING-BEARERS

BY

Golden Pan

"The Journey of the Ring-Bearers" is the original title that J.R.R. Tolkien gave to Book IV of the Lord of the Rings trilogy. The name suggests an over-all theme for Frodo's lonely quest to destroy the ring (from the time that he sets off away from the fellowship at Amon Hen to the casting of the ring into Mount Doom). Changing from the vast epic sweep of the grand councils and battles that occur around this this Journey, Tolkien concentrates on three characters: Frodo Baggins, Sam Gamgee, and Gollum. These form a triad with important links to each other and to the ring itself that set out a motif of character development and contrasts symbolic of several recurrent Tolkien themes and symbols through the rest of the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Through each other, Sam and Gollum symbolize the contrast of good and evil servants that will guide the master, Frodo, to his journey's end. Through his servants, Sam and Gollum, Frodo becomes the diminutive symbol of the King-Liege-Lord and angelic spirit of mercy. Through Frodo, Sam and Gollum reach their greatest heights as characters: Sam becoming the servant-hero and Gollum the tragic, pitiable figure of damnation. Together, the three are bound by their common identities as hobbits of one sort or another and as ring-bearers. As such, they symbolize many of the major, more powerful forces at work in this period of upheaval and transition in Middle Earth and thus help to tie Books IV and VI back into the rest of the trilogy.

At the beginning of Book IV and the Journey, Frodo, facing the near hopeless task of getting through to Mordor, eloquently states: "It's my doom, I think, to go to that shadowyonder, so that a way will be found. But will good or evil show it to me?" (II, p. 266). As becomes clear, both will show it to him. Sam and Gollum plainly symbolize the good and evil servant who take Frodo to that "shadowyonder". The Journey can be divided into rough halves, with Gollum as the primary guide for most of Book IV and Sam as the primary guide in Book VI. Here, the types of guidance involved are symbolic: Gollum, as a dark underworld sort of figure, takes Frodo through the Dead Marshes and various desolate wastelands before leading him to the dark passageway of Cirith Ungol. Sam, being a more physical Middle Earth figure, provides a practical kind of guidance for Frodo during the journey through Mordor, feeding Frodo, rousing him out of sleep, and finally even carrying him on his back on the last leg to Mount Doom.

As the servants of Frodo, Sam and Gollum have both similarities and sharp contrasts in character. Both are very simple-minded, showing concerns for relatively trivial things and a detachment from much of the epic story whirling around them. Sam continuously refers to the Quest as a 'job', for instance, when he asks Frodo at the start of the passage through the Dead Marshes: "How long's it going to take us to do this job?" (II, p. 292). Sam himself realizes the small viewpoint on life that he has. Tussling with Frodo in the stairs of Cirith Ungol, he says ...

"...I mean plain ordinary rest, and sleep, and waking up to a morning's work in the garden. I'm afraid that's all I'm hoping for all time. All the big important plans are not for my sort..." (II, p.408). Gollum too has this same type of simple outlook. His main goal, once he gets the Ring back, is to "eat fish every day, three times a day, fresh from the Sea." (II, p. 304).

Both Sam and Gollum are also virtually inseparable from Frodo during the Journey, but for sharply contrasting reasons. Sam has an innate instinct for following Frodo, wherever he might go. At Amon Hen, he alone of the Fellowship is able to figure out Frodo's plan to leave. Sam's ability to go wherever Frodo goes becomes almost supernatural at times. When Faramir awakens Frodo about Gollum's sneaking into Henneth Annun, Sam, out of "some instinct of watchfulness" also awakens and thus follows immediately. (II, p. 371). Gollum likewise is tightly bound to follow Frodo but only because of the attraction of the Ring. When Frodo tames him at the hills of Eryn Mui. Gollum tries first to swear his fealty on the Ring itself, but at the insistence of Frodo, he finally has to compromise, saying, "We promises, yes, I promised !... I will serve the Master of the Precious." (II, p.285) (emphasis added). Thus, Sam is the true servant in devoting himself completely to Frodo, while Gollum is a false servant, in that his real master is not Frodo but the evil Ring.

The good and evil servant aspect can also be seen in the way Sam and Gollum serve Frodo. It is clear that Sam serves out of free will and his deep love for Frodo (Frodo makes a point of never forcing Sam to go anywhere with him), like Merry's service to Theoden. Gollum, however, serves Frodo only because he is forced by "the pressure of the Eye, and the lure of the Ring that was so near, and his grovelling promises made half in fear of cold iron." (II, p. 301). Gollum as a servant thus thinks only of himself, and acts out of an enslaved drive to possess something too powerfully beyond him. In this he is like Denethor and the various other bad servants in the trilogy.

Gollum can be viewed in this contrast as only an evil corruption of Sam, a sort of a corrupt Alter Ego, for evil on Middle Earth exists only as mockeries of good ("nothing is evil in the beginning." I. p.351- "The shadow ... can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own." II, p.233). Sam's free will in contrast to Gollum's enslaved state of mind is one example. Gollum has also become unnatural, a scavenger who hates living things, while Sam is a gardener and thus the caretaker of natural things. Gollum is also treacherous, unstable (wavering between Smeagol and Gollum halves) and self-destructive (willing to suffer almost anything to get the Ring) whereas Sam is a thoroughly honest and solid hobbit. These are all common elements of evil versus good on Middle Earth. What happened to Gollum in the very beginning, also, was a corruption of his original self, Smeagol. It was a corruption that, as Gandalf says, "might have happened to others, even to some hobbits I have known." (I, p.86). The brief and occasional moments in which Gollum lapses into old Smeagol identify (the poor, hungry, down-trodden hobbit) sharply accent the idea that Gollum is a would-be servant corrupted into evil.

Similarly the Gollum/Smeagol split personality is an ironic, inverted twist of the two sides of Sam Gamgee shown during the Journey. The dominant half of Gollum/Smeagol is the evil Gollum consumed by the Ring while the dominant half of Sam is the heroic and devoted servant of Frodo. During the Journey, Smeagol, the poor



unloved hobbit, is the minor side of Gollum while Sam's minor side is that of a foolish and intolerant Shire hobbit. The split personalities of Sam and Gollum/Smeagol are generally matched in one way: Gollum is dominant at the same time as Samwise the loving servant, while the intolerant part of Sam tends to come out with the appearance of Smeagol. The chapter "Of Herbs and Stewed Rabbit" very strongly shows an intolerant and callous Sam pushing the Smeagol half around. In the stairs of Cirith Ungol, it is this same Sam that suddenly awakens and lashes out at what is clearly the Smeagol half. Most of the last half of the Journey, inside Mordor, Gollum is dominant as is Samwise the heroic servant. This contrasts with the first half of the Journey which is interspersed with Sam-Smeagol conflicts. Thus, as Smeagol gradually declines into the totally evil Gollum during the Journey, so Sam in inverse gradually rises to his greatest

height as servant as the Journey progresses. A further example of this inverted symmetry is that in Book IV, Gollum has had a self debate about what he should do next while Sam has one in Book VI. In both, the dominant half comes out strongly, as the case where the evil Gollum half nearly attacks Frodo and then later the devoted Samwise, the servant, hardens his resolve once more. These relationships between Sam and Gollum point out the corrupted Alter Ego connections between them.

The character of Gollum also comes out through his relations with Frodo. Gollum is, as well, a sort of Alter Ego of Frodo, a figure of damnation, contrasted with an angelic Christ-like figure. Throughout much of the trilogy, Gollum is thought to be an evil and slimy figure deserving of death. Frodo himself states at the beginning: "I do not feel any pity for Gollum... He deserves death." (I, P. 92). It is not until the Journey that full character of Gollum comes out in detailed display. It is then that Frodo realizes that "For now I do see him, I do pity him." (II, p. 281). This pity for Gollum is the same realization for the reader.

During much of the Journey, Gollum is a diminutive type of Sauron in all his treachery, selfish lust for the Ring, and distaste for free living things. He is not, however, absolutely evil. His emaciated appearance evokes pity from those wise enough to understand his plight (during the Journey, only Frodo and, later, Sam). He is basically a coward, grovelling and whining when faced directly with physical punishment. His lonely life is a sort of symbolic punishment for his taking of the Ring by murder. When Frodo comes to Gollum and gives him kindness and pity for the first time, he becomes torn by a desire to accept and respond to this form of love. This reawakening of his better half is faint. In his self-debate in the the desolation past the dead Marshes, the Gollum side nearly wins. On the stairs of Cirith Ungol, he comes the closest ever to redemption when, seeing Frodo peacefully asleep, he nearly repents of his planned treachery. Even though Sam's awakening and suspicious way drives Gollum back to his evil self again, it is unlikely that Gollum's repenting, had it occurred there, would have lasted all the way to Cracks of Doom anyway, for, as

Sam says, "...the nearer they get to the Enemy's land, the more like Stinker Slinker will get." (II, p. 410). Gollum's final, total possession by the ring at the mouth of Mount Doom would not change, for he is ultimately unredeemable because of the deep, unshakable, and growing influence of the ring. By showing him trying to respond to the Christian mercy and pity of Frodo, Tolkien to us is able to present this evil character as a tragic, pitiable symbol of damnation, the ultimate anti-hero. Gollum's dual nature is underscored in Sam's remark in the stairs of Cirith Ungol: "Why, even Gollum might be good in a tale, better than he is to have by you, anyway... I wonder if he thinks he's the hero or the villain?" (II, p. 404).

Through Gollum, Frodo becomes an angelic, Christ-like figure, a sort of diminutive Gandalf. When Frodo expresses pity for Gollum in the hills of Eryn Huil, he does so thinking of Gandalf's words: "...be not too eager to deal out death in the name of justice, fearing for your own safety." (II, p. 281). Frodo regularly treats Gollum with pity, and in various symbolic passages, he is constantly hoping for his redemption. At one point in Eryn Huil, Gollum whines, "Poor, poor Smeagol, he went away a long time ago. They took his precious, and he's lost now." To this Frodo replies, "Perhaps we'll find him again, if you come with us." (II, p. 283). The contrast of Frodo as an angelic figure and Gollum as a damned creature comes out clearly in a scene in the Dead Marshes, when Gollum symbolically rejects the food of the Elves, prompting Frodo to say, "I think this food would do you good, if you would try. But perhaps you can't even try, not yet anyway," (II, p. 290). Several times in confrontations with the evil Gollum, Frodo suddenly appears to increase in stature, much like Gandalf. In the taming of Smeagol Frodo momentarily becomes "a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud" (II, p. 285). When a totally possessed Gollum attacks him outright on Mount Doom, Frodo appears to change to a "stern, untouchable now by pity, a figure robed in white." (III, p. 272) Gandalf like, he speaks prophetically and commandingly to the evil demon: "Begone, and trouble me no more! If you touch me ever again, you shall be cast yourself into the Fire of Doom." (III, p. 272)

Through Sam, a second aspect of Frodo's greatness is revealed. He appears as a wise and noble liege-lord, like a diminutive Theoden or Aragorn, though he often falls into deep despair from the burden of the ring. Like Theoden and Merry, the bond between Frodo and Sam is not just that of master and servant but also that of two devoted friends. The two are thus Alter Egos of a nicer sort in their constant companionship. In the passage of the Dead Marshes, Frodo expresses this most clearly, calling Sam "my dearest hobbit, friend of friends" (II, p. 292). Frodo is also the leader, the driving force behind the Journey. When he falls on Shelob's Lair, Sam is unwilling to leave and carry out the Quest alone by himself. Again, at the base of Mount Doom, when Frodo asks how far there is to go, Sam can only reply, "I don't know, because I don't know where we're going." (III, p. 269) Much of the Journey is seen from the viewpoint of Sam, who believes that Frodo is "the wisest person in the world." Frodo shows only one weakness as a liege-lord, his growing despair at successfully completing the Quest as they go towards Mount Doom. To Sam, he says on the Plain of Gorgoroth: "Lead me! As long as you've got any hope left. Mine is gone." (III, p. 252). In most aspects, however, Frodo seems to embody most of the best traits of a diminutive liege-lord, showing wisdom, leadership, and a strong care for his servants' welfare.

Sam, through his loyal service to Frodo despite all dangers and little hope for success, becomes a timely heroic figure, like Merry in this trilogy and Beorhtwold in "The Battle of Maldon". Throughout the Journey, Sam's love for Frodo overcomes his various hesitations. Alone in Shelob's Lair, Sam overcomes his fear when "his love for Frodo rose above all other thought" and so he crosses into Mor-dor to rescue Frodo (III, p.213). Then when nearly overcome by the evil lure of the Ring, "it was the love of his Master that helped most to hold him firm." (III, p.216). Sam clearly realizes the hopelessness of the Quest and yet goes on because of Frodo. On the Plain of Gorgoroth, Sam thinks to himself, "So that was the job I felt I had to do when I started, to help Mr. Frodo to the last step and then die with him? Well, if that is the job I must do it." (III, p.259) Sam's code of "never leave your master" is much like that of the servant-hero Beorhtwold. Faced with impending doom, Beorhtwold proudly states his heroic code: "Will shall be the sterner, heart the bolder, spirit the greater, as our strength lessens." ("The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth", p.5) One scene clearly shows this servant-heroism in Sam. When faced with the hopeless tasks of crossing fifty miles of desert to Mount Doom, he despairs of ever coming back. Then, Beorhtwold-like, "but even as hope dies in Sam, or seemed to die, it was turned to a new strength. Sam's plain hobbit face grew stern, almost grim, as the will hardened in him. . ." (III, p.259). Sam's devotion to his master reflects a constant Tolkien theme throughout the trilogy (Merry being another example), that "it is the heroism of obedience and not of pride and wilfulness that is the most heroic and the most moving" ("The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth". p.22).

All three of these characters in the Journey are linked by the fact that they are all hobbits and all Ringbearers; as such they symbolize the important forces at work in Middle Earth during the War of the Rings. The three represent all the original types of hobbits (I, p.22) in that Sam is mainly a Hartfoot (a gardener and homebody, afraid of boats) Gollum: a Stoor (having originated from around the River Anduin) and Frodo a Fallohide (having an 'elvish air' according to Faramir).

That the fate of all Middle Earth should be left to three hobbits in this Journey shows not only the anti-heroic nature of the Lord of the Rings trilogy, but more importantly here, Tolkien's primary use of the hobbits as diminutive symbols of larger, more powerful figures in Middle Earth. Frodo, Sam, and Gollum, as hobbits and as Ringbearers, symbolize several of the major forces involved in the War of the Rings. Gollum is the Ringbearer of the past, desiring to get the Ring back and thus eventually starting off a second war involving the Ring. As a hobbit, he's like a diminutive Sauron, the evil demon who reappears out of the past, haunting the society and the heirs of the Ring. He took the Ring from him (the Shire and "Baggins" in the case of Gollum and all of Middle Earth and the heir of Elendil and Gil-galad for Sauron). Gollum is also the Ring's servant, like Denethor, possessed by lust for the Ring and ultimately ending in total damnation and symbolic plunging into fire.

Frodo is the Present Ringbearer during the Journey and symbolizes the current generation of heirs to the



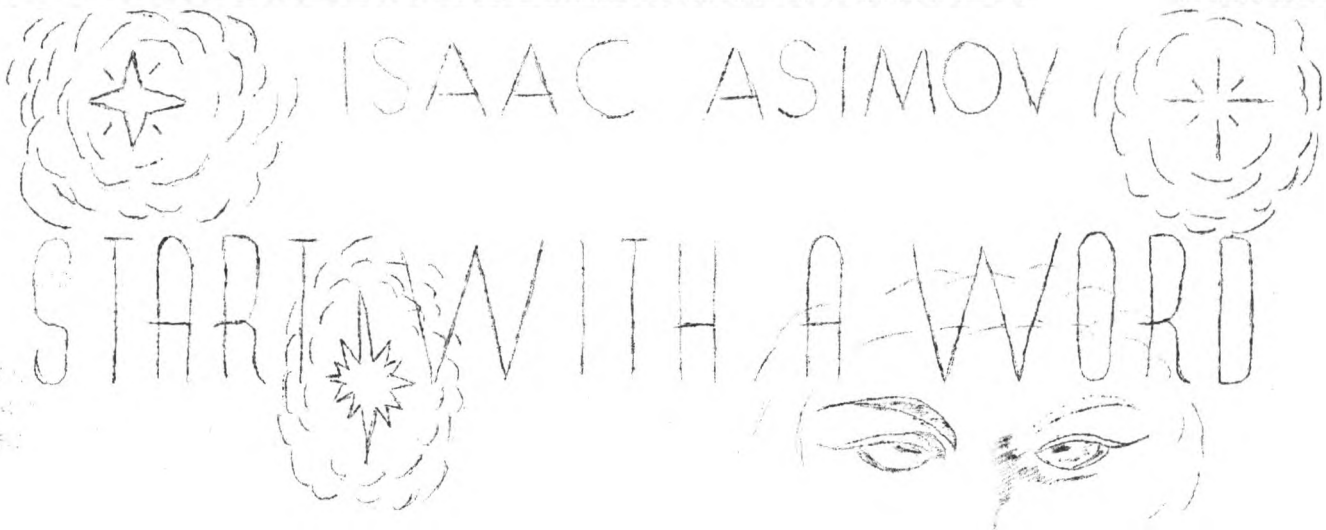
Ring (Aragorn, the Elves) who have inherited the burden of somehow destroying the Ring and its evils for the sake of future generations. At the same time that he fights the evil forces, he offers mercy and pity to his enemies, showing that he is truly on the side of the good. Frodo is like the current generation of the spiritual forces of Middle Earth (Gandalf and the Elves) in that having destroyed the Ring and its evil maker, he must pass onto the heaven-like uttermost West.

Sam is the last new Ringbearer, and represents the transition into the future generations. During the Quest, he is the faithful Steward, and like the many steward-figures in the trilogy (Gandalf, Merry, Pippin), his willingness to ultimately sacrifice himself for his service leads to the critical blows in the destruction of the Ring and its associated evils (Gandalf against the balrog and Merry against the Lord of Nazgul, as examples in the rest of the trilogy). Finally as a gardener and the heir to Frodo, he symbolizes the renewal of Middle Earth as well as the beginning of the future generation in the Fourth Age.

Book IV and the part of Book VI that deals with the Journey of the Ring-bearers, are so different in scope the content from the grand style of the rest of The Lord of the Rings that they appear distinctly separate from it. However, besides fully revealing the characters of Frodo, Sam, and Gollum, the relationship of these three to each other during the Journey also forms the themes and symbols that tie it back into the rest of the trilogy. Tolkien is too subtle to have made this unique section of The Lord of the Rings an outright paradigm, but it does definitely share some of the common symbols and themes with the main body of the trilogy.

The three main characters are all Alter Ego of one sort or another to each other. The contrast between Sam and Gollum show an inverse relationship with Sam as the good servant and Gollum as the evil one. Frodo appears as a kingly and angelic figure through Sam and Gollum. In return, Sam through Frodo becomes Tolkien's idea of the most heroic hero while Gollum through Frodo becomes Tolkien's most tragic and pitiable character. The three, through their common identity as hobbits and Ringbearers are distinctive symbols of greater and more powerful forces found elsewhere in The Lord of the Rings.





People who do not write science fiction are sometimes amazed that anyone can think up the so-called crazy ideas that seem to go into science-fiction stories. Some people have even hinted that I had to take drugs before I could make up a story.

It's not so. As a matter of fact, thinking up crazy ideas and building them into a complicated story requires a sober, thoughtful mind. It isn't madness or mysterious inspiration that creates the science-fiction novel; it's the careful consideration of the consequences of something different.

I happen, for instance, to remember exactly how my novel "The Gods Themselves" (BR 1860) came to be written. It began with a single word.

Attending a science-fiction convention in January 1971, I heard two well-known scienc-fiction writers on the stage discussing our craft. One was intent on demonstrating that literary value and human emotion were of more importance to a science-fiction story than scientific detail.

"The motivation behind your character's action," he said, "is of far greater interest to the reader than the exact properties of...."

He paused to find a fitting conclusion to the sentence. Then, snatching at the phrase without proper thought, he said, "... plutonium-186."

I laughed to myself at that, for I knew the writer had made a mistake. There was no such thing as plutonium-186. The number of particles in the nuclei of plutonium atoms had to be in the 230s or 240s. To have as few as 186 was omcpnceovab;e. It was like saying that in 1976, the United States was made up of 32 states.

Then I thought, "Wait a minute. I never heard of anyone using a wildly impossible isotope in a science-fiction story. Maybe I can do it."

So, beginning with that one word, here's how the build-up went.

Suppose plutonium-186 exist. How is that possible? The law of nuclear structure won't permit it!

Ah, they don't permit it in this universe. Suppose there is another universe with different laws of nuclear structure in which plutonium-186 can exist

Well, then, how did it get into this universe?

Can it be that intelligent beings deliberately sent it into this universe? If so, why?

If the laws of physics are different in the two universes, plutonium-186 might be stable there, even though it was explosively radioactive as the laws of our universe seep into it, and we can then get energy out of it. Meanwhile it replaces something in our universe that is stable here but radioactive there, and when it goes there, they can get energy out of that.

All right so far, but where are the complications?

If the two universes are exchanging material they may also be exchanging some of the fabric that controls the nature of the laws of physics. Their laws get a trifle more like ours, and ours a trifle more like theirs. It doesn't affect them dangerously, but the exchange does affect us. Even a little admixture of their laws can, for instance, sufficiently destabilize our sun as to cause it to explode.

That's a pretty big problem, and only my hero sees it.

What does he do about it? How does he fix it so that we can get the energy without danger?

Maybe he can't. All he can do, perhaps, is warn people and get them to stop the material-exchange process.

... Yet no one believes him. People want the energy so badly that they won't accept the fact that it is dangerous.

It's an unhappy ending, but it has a present-day application.

So I wrote the story; it was about twenty thousand words long, and I showed it to my editor at Doubleday and asked him if he thought it would be suitable for an anthology of science-fiction stories Doubleday was planning to publish.

He read it and said, "No, I want to make a novel out of this. Make it four times as long."

But how? I couldn't just pump up the story and change every word into four words. Never! The story would be bloated into worthlessness.

The alternative was to continue on past the ending, but how? The ending was fine as it stood.

So I thought hard and decided to tell the story again from the other side --from the other universe--and come to the same ending.

That was a challenge. I almost never had extraterrestrials in my stories, but I would have to now. I suspected that some people felt I didn't write about extraterrestrials because I couldn't, so I'd have to show them. My extraterrestrials were not going to be human beings with bulging foreheads or with six fingers. They were going to be different. So I made them semigaseous.

Then too, I almost never had any sex in my stories and I suspected that some people felt I didn't write about sex because I couldn't, so I'd have to show them again. I gave my extraterrestrials three sexes and based the whole plot of that section on sex--extraterrestrial sex, of course.

Once I finished that section, I still only had fifty thousand words. What next?

The ending of the first part had been satisfactory to me, and the second part ended in the same way--the problem was unresolved.

I had to add a third part to bring the story up to novel length, and now I had no way of avoiding going past the ending. That meant I had to find a solution for a problem I had worked hard to make solutionless. What's more, since I had the first two parts in radically different scenes, there would have to be a shift in the third part as well.

So I placed the third part on the moon, and I found a solution. (No, I won't tell you what it is. You'll have to read the book.)

When I was done, I found that although I had written the story in parts, without having planned the whole thing at one time, the book formed a balanced whole. The first part was highly intellectual; the second part was highly emotional; the third part was highly romantic. The first part had a male protagonist the second part a female protagonist (though an extraterrestrial one); the third part a pair of protagonists, male and female. I could go through the book in many different ways and find a balance.

notes from

Diana L. Paxson



Elfhill

Legend has it that from time to time people disappear into the elven hills, only to reappear many years later (if at all) and then not unchanged. I am told that in the days when my family and I were attempting to handle all the business of the Society for Creative Anachronism in the spare time left after jobs, writing, and children, the tendency of papers and people to be absorbed into the house led some people to give our home (more generally known as Greyhaven) the name of Elfhill.

That period in my life is over now, but in a larger sense I can still embrace "Elfhill" as a definition of the place where I live. I take in ideas and information, and eventually they emerge again, sometimes in forms whose origins even I cannot trace. So it seems to me that this is an appropriate title for a column started up again ten years after I last wrote an installment of "Patterns" for NIEKAS, which is now starting up again too. May its second incarnation be even better than the first!

TOWARDS A TAXONOMY OF FANTASY

"What are you I wonder? I cannot place you. you do not seem to come in the old lists that I learned when I was young. But that was a long long time ago, and they may have made new lists. Let me see! Let me see! How did it go?"

Treebeard

A taxonomy is a sort of display rack for ideas familiar to those who have taken graduate courses in Education and other fields purporting to be scientific, or Biology and other disciplines that actually are. It is, essentially, a system of classification. Ents seem to have been natural taxonomists.

It may seem rather unnecessary to devise such a system for fantasy, but after reading Andrew Offutt's introduction to the stories in SWORDS AGAINST DARKNESS (excellent collection, by the way), in which he repeatedly describes what I would call Sword and Sorcery tales as "heroic fantasy", it would appear that some kind of definition is needed. Among other uses, it might help publishers to label books properly so that readers looking for fantasy will not be unpleasantly surprised by what they get, or frustrated by what they miss.

The fact is that even more than Science Fiction, "Fantasy" is a label that can be applied to many kinds of stories. It includes a confusion of sub-genres such as "Sword and Sorcery", "fairy tale", "horror fiction", "occult thrillers", and even "Gothic romance".

The one thing that seems to separate fantasy as a genre from other types of literature is that some element in the book must be impossible not only by any scientific law we know of, but also by any such law that can be safely deduced. This usually means that the story includes supernatural creatures, beings, places, devices, or powers. And yet there is so great a difference among kinds of fantasy that the book which one reader raves about will produce a revulsion bordering on violence in another.

Given that it might be desirable to develop a classification for types of fantasy, one must decide into what classes the stories shall be divided. This process is almost as relevant to psychology as to literature, because words represent objects or ideas only because the people using them agreed that they do. Categorization is a matter of convenience and convention, based on what the majority are willing to accept as the most important quality of the item in question.

You are all probably familiar with the classification exercises used on programs like "Sesame Street". The kids are shown a picture of an apple, an orange, and a plum, and one rubber ball, and asked to identify the one which is different. The conventional answer is the ball, because it is not food. However a child with a different set of priorities might choose the plum, because it is smaller, and purple, and he would be just as "right".

Classification is also dependent on the language being used. I am told that Eskimos have separate words for snow in every imagineable form, but no word for the phenomenon in general. Obviously, teaching children to prioritize qualities for categories that way other people do is an important part of cultural socialization.

If a system for classifying fantasy is to be useful, it must be based on a set of categories which most readers can accept as valid. However, given the individualistic nature of readers of imaginative literature, and the inherently arbitrary character of class definitions, it is not necessary to agree that the categories chosen are the most important.

However they must form a logical class, and they must be broad enough to accomodate the examples they include without too much overlapping. The test of the system lies in whether it can be a useful tool for displaying and analyzing its contents.

Ideally, one would be able to build a multi-dimensional grid on which all the important aspects of a work could be displayed. However the state of the art confines us to two dimensions. In order to evolve a set of sub-genre titles, we must begin by taking two aspects of any literary work-- form and content, identifying the most common ways in which they are used in fantasy, and attempting to apply them to as many actual works of fantasy as we can.

The categories presented here have been refined several times already after some heated discussions with family and friends. Whatever else this project may accomplish, it seems to be a natural conversation starter.

During the next year I will be presenting this scheme at various conventions, publishing it in fanzines, and using any other methods I can think of to give fantasy readers an opportunity to try it out. The categories can be lined up to form a grid, whose boxes can be filled in with titles of appropriate works.

Most fantasies include more than one fantasy element, and people are bound to differ in their perceptions of what the most important elements in a given book may be (is the heroic conflict the focus of LOER, or is it the magical device, the legendary creatures, monsters, adventures, or Middle Earth itself?). Presumably, the particular boxes in which the greatest numbers of readers place given works will tell us something about how people perceive them.

By comparing filled out grids and questionnaires, we may learn the answers to such questions as: what kind of person reads fantasy? Why? How do readers' definitions of books compare with publishers' labels? What books do readers tend to class as fantasies whether they are so labeled or not? Science Fiction has been subjected to this type of analysis for several years now. It is possible that this project will help us develop an equivalent language for fantasy.

If any readers of NIEKAS would like to fill in the boxes of the grid and answer the questions on the back of the page, I would very much appreciate it. Send them to me-- Diana L. Paxson, at 90 El Camino Real, Berkeley, CA 94705.

Thank you-- and have fun!



MAPPING THE MANY WORLDS OF FANTASY

The impulse to classify things seems to be natural to humans and certain other creatures, such as rats. Thus, I have been developing a system for analyzing the universe of fantasy which I would like to test by having fantasy readers use it. In addition to allowing one the pleasure of reconsidering favorite works in order to classify them, this effort may serve several useful purposes. It can provide scholars with a consistent critical language. It might even help publishers label books accurately. At present, "fantasy" is used to describe everything from fairy tales to occult thrillers. The common element in all these kinds of fantasy, and the thing that seems to separate the genres from others, is that something in the book must be "impossible" by any known or deducible scientific laws. This usually means that the book features supernatural creatures, places, or powers.

The act of classification is as much the concern of psychology as of literature. The act of defining and filling categories depends on the convenience and conventions of the reader. For a system of classification for sub-genres of fantasy to be useful, it must be based on a set of categories which most readers will find valid, which are logical, and which are broad enough to accommodate their contents without too much overlap. The test of the system is its usefulness. The categories described below have been modified by considerable ~~argument~~ discussion. I would like as many readers of fantasy as possible to participate in trying them out. If you respond, this project may provide not only a handy system for classifying and discussing fantasy, but some unique information on the ways in which its readers perceive it.

Please read and consider the following definitions carefully, fill in the grid on the second page with appropriate titles and authors, complete the questionnaire on its other side, and give or send them to:

Diana L. Paxson
90 El Camino Real, Berkeley, Ca. 94705

Dimensions and Categories:

Horizontal-- Primary Story Focus. This should be the most important fantasy element in the book. Other elements will probably be present as well-- choose the one you feel dominates the book and governs the action.

- I Stories about Ghosts, Monsters and Demons. These are descended from folk tales (and nightmares) and include most stories classed as "horror" fiction, tales of terror, etc. Generally the supernatural element is presented as evil. Examples are vampire stories, American monster movies, stories about black magic, etc.
- II Stories about Legendary Beings. The literary ancestors of these stories are fairy tales, myths, and the medieval romance. They feature elves or fairies, gods, unicorns, dragons, dwarves, etc. which may be dangerous, but are not inherently evil. Stories in which fairy godmothers solve problems, people meet gods, or have pet dragons.
- III Stories about Magical Devices. Also descended from fairy tales and romances. Set on earth or elsewhere, they depend on some magical implement, talisman, etc. which people are seeking, guarding, fighting over, or using. Stories about the Holy Grail, magic rings, swords, harps and jewels fall into this category.
- IV Adventures in Imaginary Worlds. Also stemming from fairy tales and romances, the important thing about these stories is that they take place in Faerie or some other imaginary setting. Other elements are present, but the memorable thing about the story is the feeling of being Somewhere Else.
- V Travels to Another World. These stories trace directly back to the medieval Dream Vision, in which the protagonist is transported to Heaven or an imaginary environment where he sees marvels and learns lessons which will help him solve personal or societal problems when he returns home. In modern versions the hero is often a misfit here and may stay in the fantasy world instead of coming back.

VI Transformations. These stories seem to be a development of the modern cult of the individual. They focus on the protagonist's psychological and/or physical transformation as he is exposed to natural or supernatural factors. The result is a creature either non- or super-human in some way.

VII Conflicts of Heroes. These are the offspring of the classical and medieval epic. Personnel and settings generally contain elements from other categories, but the action focusses on the career of a protagonist who has or achieves heroic stature as he battles towards his goal. Often the action is military, involving the interplay of massive forces of good and evil.

Vertical-- Story Treatment or Tone. This dimension deals with the way in which the story is told. It includes both the writer's attitude towards his material and the style used to present it. Treatment governs the way a story "feels", so that two stories with the same plots but different treatments will seem very different to the reader.

1. Sensation-al. Used in its original meaning, as appealing to the senses. The author's main intent is to appeal to the reader's feelings by evoking terror, wonder, excitement, etc. It tends to emphasize plot and setting or atmosphere.
2. Serious. Not a value judgment, but a term for the kind of story in which the author wishes to compel belief in the fantasy elements, to make the reader take them seriously on their own terms. Such stories are very intense, involve the reader completely, and often have very complete and detailed settings.
3. Rationalistic. Fantasy elements are presented as if they are true in terms of our world-- they are explained by scientific or traditional religious theory so that it is not clear whether anything supernatural has occurred. All events have naturalistic interpretations even if the protagonists believe them supernatural. Includes historical novels about legendary figures, stories in which magic is treated as a science, etc.
4. Detached. Stories in which the author maintains a distance between reader and story, may make editorial asides or uses an elaborate or "literary" style. The story is to be appreciated as an artistic creation, but not really believed. Examples are many children's books, 19th cen. novels, stories beginning "once upon a time..."
5. Didactic. Stories in which the writer is making a moral, philosophical, or religious point. Allegories, and stories in which the plot is broken up by long discussions of Reality or The Meaning of Life belong here.
6. Humorous. Comic fantasies in which the material of any of the major genres is treated in a mocking or humorous manner. These range from stories which frankly parody another fantasy type to those which merely treat their subjects in a light-hearted way. Other types may include humor, but in these it is the main point of the story.

Note that many fantasies (perhaps all the best ones) will include more than one of the categories in both dimensions. Choose the ones which are most important to you. If necessary, list a given work in more than one box. Have fun! *



----- detach here -----

PANTASY "MAP"

<div> Story Focus Story Treatment </div>	Ghosts, Monsters, Demons, etc. I	Legendary Beings II	Magical Devices III	Adventures in Imaginary Worlds IV	Travels to Another World V	Transformations VI	Conflicts of Heroes VII
	1. Sensational						
2. Serious							
3. Rationalistic							
4. Detached							
5. Didactic							
6. Humorous							

COMMENTS ON THE FANTASY MAP

Now that you have filled in the "map", you probably have a number of reactions to it. I would appreciate it if you could answer the following questions and add any other comments you may have.

1. Are there any works of fantasy you could not place on the grid?

If so, what category do you think would cover it/them?

2. Are there any other dimensions (kinds of categories) or individual categories which you think would work better than those used? Why?

3. How would you distinguish fantasy from other kinds of literature?

4. Approximately how long have you been reading fantasy? _____ since childhood;
_____ since college; _____ later.

5. What is your favorite kind of fantasy? Use categories from the map or give examples of your favorite books:

6. What kind of book commonly labeled fantasy do you like least?

7. What kind of literature do you like best?

8. What other kinds of literature do you habitually read?

9. Do you or have you ever written fantasy? _____ Other kinds of literature? _____

10. a. Age _____ b. Sex _____ c. Occupation _____

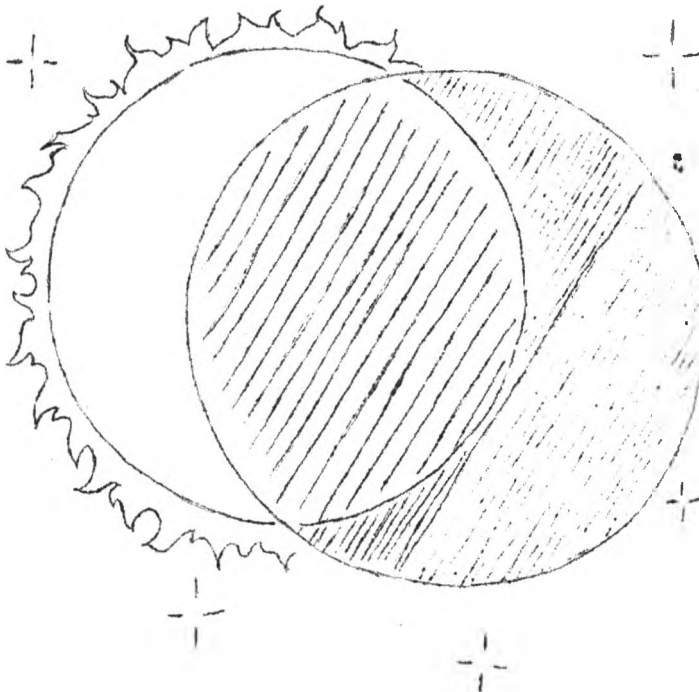
- d. School major (past or present) _____

Thank you.

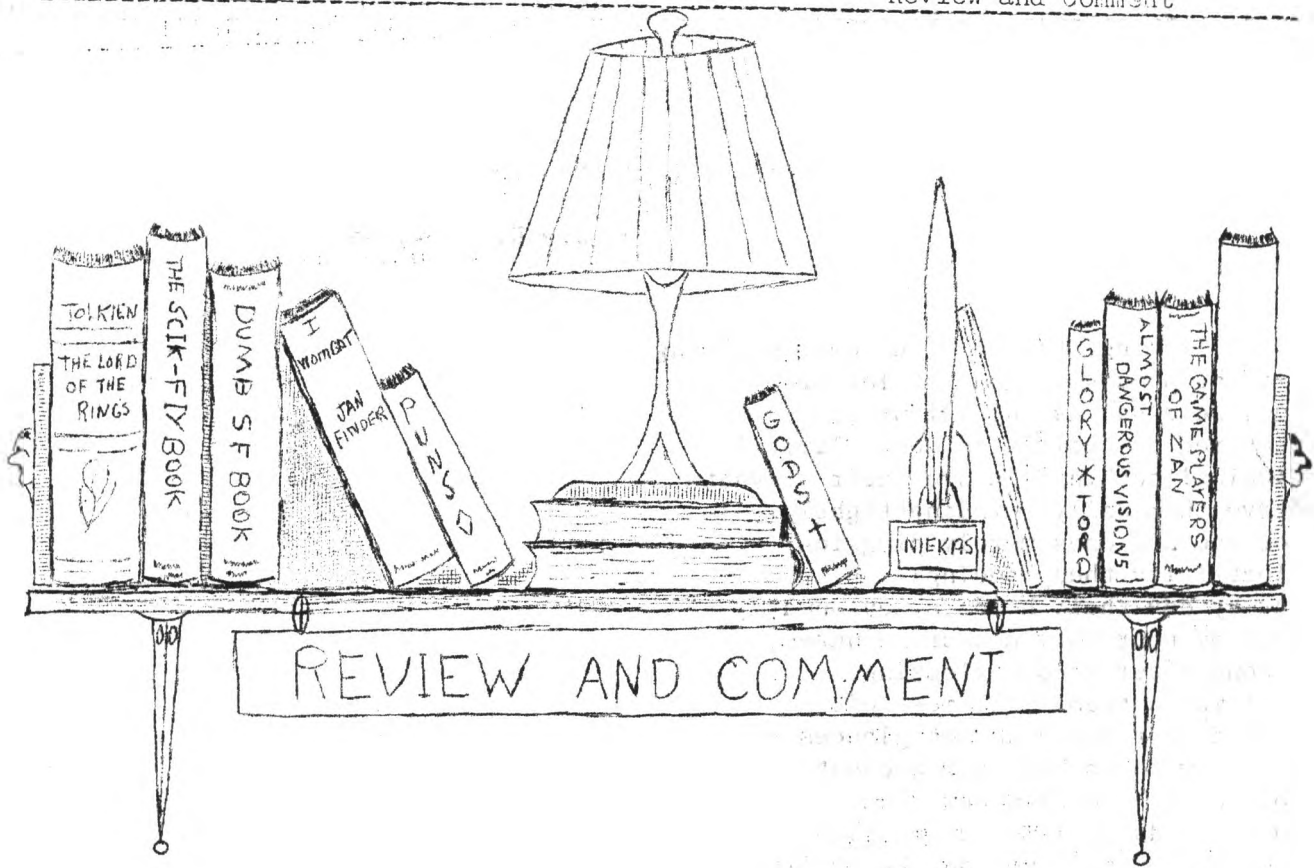
Bowing before the Idols

by Joe R. Christopher

Ticking! tocking, on their shelving,
 sit the household gods at leisure
 (no one else has any leisure,
 measured by their straitened limits);
 ticking! tocking! We are their servants
 serve them daily, winding tightly
 (or the new ones merely plugging,
 electricity then feeding);
 day by day their hands sweep onward,
 hour by hour they measure minutes,
 second after second fleeting.
 Gaze we on them, yes, most often;
 most devout our constant glances--
 for we wish to know our present,
 for we wish to plan our future:
 so the gods we come to question--
 "How much time?" we ask the godlings;
 "When?" the oracles we query.



Sacred they who rule our lifetimes,
 holy they who're us controlling,
 magic in directions told us,
 they our lars and our penates,
 ticking! tocking! But, most strangely,
 even gods at last grow older,
 even gods at last grow ancient:
 so they die and stop their speaking;
 oracles their prophecying.
 We no longer act devoutly
 once our gods have stopped their ticking;
 never worship gods untocking.
 Then we take our lars most sacred,
 touch the holiest penates,
 take them from their numened shelving,
 drop them in the trash's basket,
 and we go and buy another:
 yes, another sacred godling,
 him to serve, to watch, to worship,
 him to now obey most straitly,
 him to ask for day's direction,
 ordering diurnal ritual,
 with his ticking, with his tocking.



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EX LIBRIS

OZ REVISITED

THE WIZARD OF OZ, L. Frank Baum, Ballantine	28223,	\$1.95
THE LAND OF OZ, " "	28224,	"
OZMA OF OZ, " "	28225,	"
DOROTHY AND THE WIZARD IN OZ, " "	28226,	"
THE ROAD TO OZ, " "	28227,	"
THE EMERALD CITY OF OZ, " "	28228,	"
THE PATCHWORK GIRL OF OZ, " "	28229,	"

While browsing through ERM's exhaustive (exhausting?) library I met some old friends. They had new faces (though I had no trouble recognizing them). They had shrunk a bit (but the years are often unkind in that respect). But inside, where it counts, they hadn't changed at all. These companions out of my past were the tales of the Land of Oz by a storyteller named L. Frank Baum.

Del Rey Books has just released the first seven books in this extraordinary series in paperback. And what paperbacks!

For those of you who are not familiar with Oz (shudder) or think that this wonderful land extends no further than a certain MGM motion picture of the 1930's, are in for a treat. From the first book of this series, THE WIZARD OF OZ, come the premier characters which people are most familiar with: Dorothy of Kansas, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, the Cowardly Lion, and last (but certainly not least) the Wicked Witch of the West. Also contained within these tomes are such distinct personages as the Wogglebug, the (g)nome King, Polychrome the Rainbow's daughter, Allegro da Capo, Tik-Tok, Jack Pumpkinhead, the Shaggy Man, Belinda (a talking chicken), the Skoodlers, etc. and so on.

The front covers offer full color renderings of original black and white sketches by John R. Neill and W. W. Denslow. The interior drawings are faithfully reproduced though sometimes rearranged throughout the text. I found the Denslow art a bit too cartoonish but the Neill conceptions were just as I remembered them -- alive and articulate.

I would like nothing better than to give these books an unqualified nod of approval but I must play the devil's critic. These stories show more imagination than literary skill. I found several minor inconsistencies throughout these stories. The storylines are very linear and uncomplicated, which is consistent with the juvenile market that these stories were geared to.

On the plus side, these are terrific stories of adventure and courage, emotion and Love. These tales are didactic by example. For instance: instead of dismissing the bellicose Wheelers as evil folk because they threaten to hurt our heroes (Dorothy and Co. in OZMA OF OZ), Baum explains why they do these antisocial things. It is because they feel inferior and must over-compensate. In one short parable a valuable lesson is learned.

If you haven't read an "Oz" book, try the first two or three at least. I think that you'll be hooked. Considering that these books are so beautifully illustrated I don't believe that the price is extreme as this collection would be a welcome addition to anyone's library and deserve a place right next to your dog-eared copy of LotR. As children's books they are fit and fitting presents to give to a generation brought up on Count Chocula and the Six Million Dollar Man.

FOR MORE ON OZ AND OZIA: I highly recommend THE BAUM BUGLE which is published by The International Wizard of Oz Klub, 220 North Eleventh St., Escanaba, MI 49829.

Michael Bastraw

Magic Lantern Review

ALIEN

After viewing 20TH CENTURY FOX's latest SF offering for the first time, I could not help but wonder why a warning wasn't placed at the beginning of the film along the lines of the one that would start each episode of OUTER LIMITS. In particular the statement that "we are controlling all that you see and hear". In the case of ALIEN, director RIDLEY SCOTT takes the audience one step further. He actually controls the person that does "see and hear" this visual and visceral tour de force.

I first started this item with a detailed summary of the movie before I realized that 1. any verbal recreation of this decidedly visually orientated film would be hopelessly inadequate and unfair to all those involved in its production and 2. if you haven't seen ALIEN yet you shouldn't be reading this article anyhow. (NB: Statement #2 is not meant to be hyperbole.)

ALIEN has tapped a sub-genre of SF film which hasn't seen anything of real quality for more than twenty years. One of the most famous offerings B. A. (Before ALIEN) is certainly the Howard Hawks production of THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD. This class of celluloid has been referred to as "Gothic" horror (SF). After extensive research (lapsed time 45 secs.) I have found two recurring definitions of Gothic which seem to have some bearing on the film arts, i.e. "barbarious" and "lacking in wisdom". The former is certainly understandable in relation to ALIEN and that latter I'll twist to mean "not knowing what is going to happen next".

At this point I would like to address myself to some criticism of ALIEN which may crop up. (You head 'em off at the pass . . .) I REALIZE THAT ALIEN IS A COMPOSITE FILM. It has direct conceptual roots which are found in several previous films of/not of this type. The two I would like to provide for consideration are IT - THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE and the aforementioned THING. Both of these films are stories of life and death conflict within a limited environment. If you haven't seen IT and the THING, the former is a release about the struggle between the crew of an interplanetary ship enroute to earth and an irresistible creature of particularly Gothic (first definition) aspect. The THING is a similar encounter except the venue is a North Polar research station and the protagonist is Kenneth Tobey instead of Marshall Thompson. Both these films have the same thematic approach but it would be unfair to berate one because the other happened to have been released first. Now to the scene stealing department.

If you have ever seen the film DEMON PLANET, aka PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES (don't let the title fool you, it isn't a totally bad flic) you will see a scene very similar to the one involving the derelict ship in ALIEN. But, as a friend opined to me one day, bad artists borrow - good ones steal. The points brought up in this and the above paragraph might upset some bona fide filmmakers but I'm a firm believer that a film should stand or fall on its own merits and not on the whims of chronological order.

ALIEN has strength in many areas. Production values are high and the simple storyline allows room for directoral and thespian creativity. This freedom has been seized upon and utilized to the max by RIDLEY SCOTT and his company of players.

SCOTT's success has a lot to do with the fact that he has a healthy respect and aptitude for preproduction conceptualization, a talent which he had considerable opportunity to hone in his work on numerous TV commercials. He did his own storyboards for the entire film. Not all were used, more often than not due to considerations of time and money. He sets up most of his own camera shots and often works with one unit at a time. This, above anything else, gives him intimate control of the overall look of the film and justifies the opening credit which proclaims that ALIEN is a RIDLEY SCOTT film.

The cast as a whole turns in an ultra low key, ultra believable performance. The dialogue is taken over by the players and made into a reality which they and the audience can accept and be at ease with. As the story unfolds, it is hard to believe that there is any acting per se. If anyone was out of character while the camera was rolling those frames never made it out of the editing room.

Particularly impressive was the portrayal of Warrant Officer RIPLEY by SIGOURNEY WEAVER in this her film debut. This new star on the horizon (cliche) shows everything she has in this film (metaphorically speaking of course. Well . . . almost.) She paints a perfect picture of an Everyperson trying to cope with a seemingly impossible situation. RIPLEY/WEAVER is in a constant struggle not to let her emotions affect her management of each subsequent crisis. Except for her preoccupation with a certain feline type she is mostly successful. Even this apparent breakdown in logic accents an inner strength of character and provides a red herring for the finale. The scene shortly after DALLAS' (TOM SKERITT) death where she confronts MOTHER and learns the truth about their mission is a hallmark execution of the dramatic arts. Just barely controlled rage, frustration, and sorrow fairly leap off the screen.

Now - to the title character. Conceived by Swiss artist H. R. GIGER (gee-gar) this creature has got to be one of the most memorable in filmatic history. GIGER has managed to hit a chord of profound dissonance but will not let us turn a deaf ear to it. His creation is ugliness, deadliness, and beauty incarnate throughout its various stages of development. This entity, along, with the derelict ship and its fossilized occupant, all have subliminal biological roots which are prevalent in the bulk of GIGER's work.

If the "alien" designs are visual tour de force, then the terran vessel and artifacts are certainly tour de subtleté. NOSTROMO interiors, exteriors, and equipment were designed with an eye to creating a feeling of lived-in-ness that was used so successfully in STAR WARS. Engineering spaces are dirty and living areas are kept relatively clean. Who would have thunk it!

To augment the claustrophobic feel of the ship's interior SCOTT uses minimal lighting. Light comes only from sources apparent to the camera's view and then only where absolutely required. There are few who have seen this movie and not been in the throes of deadly expectation when BRETT (HARRY DEAN STANTON) goes looking for JONES, the cat, in the landing gear bay. The combination of camera cuts, soft filtered lighting, jangling chains, and dripping water would be right at home in any dungeon scene and the fact that it is on a space vehicle of the future does not diminish the effect.

SCOTT's build-ups are Hitchcockian in method and effectiveness. Whenever the JERRY GOLDSMITH composed score fades below audibility you know that something's going to happen, and does. I counted half a dozen "heartflutterers" and about the same number of out and out coronary percipitators. (As opposed to the three and three count for JAWS.)

Now we come to the big question of the movie and why has no one asked it? What was the Alien doing with the bodies? The Allan Dean Foster novelization of the movie answers that one but, unfortunately, due to considerations of running time, they were not able to present it in the final film (even though it was actually shot). The creature's victims, after capture, were encapsulated in caccoon-like structures which continue its reproductive cycle. RIPLEY, on her way to the shuttle, discovers the unfortunate DALLAS and BRETT hanging in one of the lower compartments. DALLAS, still concious, begs her to put them out of their misery. Which she does.

If ALIEN doesn't cop Oscar nominations in several major categories I will be disappointed but not too supriised. Historically SF and F has not faired very well with the ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES. This writer will always be puzzled on that account. There should be no doubt, however, as to the Best Director so far this year. (NB: His name is RIDLEY SCOTT.)

A POST SCRIPT: If ALIEN is just a rehash of the old monster on the loose in a haunted house story, then is ROCKY just another fight picture?

Michael Bastraw



WIZARDS - A MOVIE REVIEW

Let me warn you, this review is a pan. If you liked WIZARDS you can save both your time and feelings by turning to the next item on the menu.

If you've reached this far, let's talk.

WIZARDS is about 80 minutes of unrealized potential. The story is the post nuclear holocaust conflict between twin brothers, Avatar, the good guy on our side, with the green robe, and Blackwolf, the evil genius. Avatar resides in Montagar, a "feudal-democratic" society, a cross between rural Switzerland, modern southern California, and Northern New Jersey. Scorch, where Blackwolf reigns supreme, resembles the Cambridge Massachusetts Industrial Park after a collision with Pittsburg and the Bayonne New Jersey Gulf Oil Refinery Tank Farm.

Avatar is called upon by the people of Montagar to help them against the people of Scorch who, under the leadership of Blackwolf, are attacking with all the devils their authoritarian monarch can muster. He also has a secret weapon, a movie projector which comes with a complete assortment of Nazi propaganda films which he uses to hype his troops to a fighting pitch and mesmerize the other side. A generation prior, the forces of Scorch were vanquished by the armies of Montagar. This time they don't fare nearly as well and turn to Avatar for help.

Avatar is living in splendid isolation in a castle away from the rest of his people. Like many humanistic philosophers, he loves his people in an abstract fashion, and, like Jubal Harshaw in STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND, it's not mankind he hates, it's people he can't stand. He has with him a few chosen friends. Princess Elinor, who's a delightful little tart who is the old man's joy and warmth in his old age, has as the same relation with royalty that truth does to history, i.e. none. Being Blackwolf's twin, Avatar is everything his brother isn't. He's gruffly kind, was the apple of his mother's eye, and even comforted her when she was on her death-bed. Avatar always suffered from one weakness, he can't resist helping people in trouble.

The story follows the adventures of Avatar, Princess Elinor, a stalwart Montagar Kun-fu dwarf, and a turn-coat robot named "Peace". This little band is going to gather an army and proceed against Scorch to stop Blackwolf once and for all.

Scorch itself is the "badlands" which remain after the holocaust where all the 20th Century technology is found along with all the horror aspects of post nuclear war environment. Deformed children are born, machines with no technical support break down and can't be repaired. The troops of Scorch, because of their intrinsically evil roots, commit all manner of atrocities against all subject people in the new territories.

The voyages of Avatar and his hearty little band are followed through the land of the Fairies, the Desert, the high Mountains. Princess Elinor is kidnapped, and Avatar, unfortunately for both the story and the film, goes slightly da-da with guilt and remorse that he's the cause of her apparent eventual death.

At last, when confronted by war, reality, and his twin brother, Avatar snaps out of it and he and his brother play a round of "Mom always liked you best". At this point, as Blackwolf is just about to unleash the forces of evil about Avatar, our aging, pripata-tic hero whips out a gun and shoots Blackwolf through the heart with a well placed bullet. This just goes to show that all you need is love and a well cocked gun.

My major complaint about WIZARDS is its uneven presentation. The combination of animation, still drawings, and genuine Nazi propaganda films and surrealistic color reversal of WWII air and armored combat footage is interesting but overused. The feeling of a not bad science fantasy story line with 40 mins. fill simply can't be shaken. There are individual skits which even isolated would be very funny, but the overall effect is that a heavy hand was at work here. ----- RAFF FOLCH-PI

This should be a third shorter. This would immediately produce a tighter, more controlled visual story. The pace would be faster and more comfortable. The use of a sexy female narration to provide essential "historical" detail is a nice touch but by the end of the film I felt she didn't care. Either did I. I hate to condemn a film with so much going for it. After awarding an "A" for effort the outcome is a "C minus" or worse.

Rafe Folch-Pi

* * * * *

SHORT TAKES by Margaret Shepard

As this is the first time for this column, I want to explain a few things. The opinions are mine unless otherwise stated. I have read all the books I review from cover to cover unless specifically stated otherwise. Some are review copies, some are ones that caught my fancy in book stores or book clubs, or were recommended by friends. My criteria for comment is based on whether or not I enjoyed and/or learned from these books. The two do not always coincide.

As you will note, I claim the right to comment on books other than science fiction. Again I have read all these books and feel that by giving you a fair sampling of what I read and enjoyed, you will find some criteria by comparing your views with mine.

I have found this helpful in my association with people, both ~~for~~ alike. As one is hard put to read everything, some judgements from other people helped in preliminary weeding.

There are sometimes when I feel that I should great degree, and other times when a few words suffice to give my impressions.

The Princess Bride by William Goldman, abridged, Ballantine, 1973, \$1.95

Excellent! A fairy tale that's a learning experience, a lark, a laugh, and a good cry. My reaction to this book is a very emotional one. Too hard to explain and would only lose in the attempt. But read it!

The Best of Phillip K. Dick edited and with an introduction by John Brunner. Ballantine, 1977, \$1.95

A book of stories to make one think of possibilities of the future.

A Billion Days of Earth by Doris Piserchia, Ballantine, 1976, \$1.50

A rather interesting turn of future but depressing with combination species with human traits and a "Shein", Gods and "men", rich and poor, and a battle for personality.

Caviar by Theodore Sturgeon, Ballantine, 1955

Good Stories. "Prodigy" would have made a good "Twilight Zone" story. And "Ghost of a Chance" turned out to have an "of course" ending.

Monsters and Melies by James White, Ballantine, 1977, \$1.50

Five Stories. Very well written in most cases. James White takes the mind to some new places without unhappy endings. He's more prone to unhappy middles. I enjoyed "The Apprentice" best.

Merlin's Godson by H. Warner Munn. This book was so fascinating that I went out and purchased Merlin's Ring.

A Comment -

I am not a critic and, like Charlie Brown, I am of the feeling that a great deal of critics and of the liked-not liked variety.. The comments I make I make on the books I read are of this variety. I know what I enjoy and what leaves me feeling bored and unsatisfied. I can say that I have completed Merlin's Godson by H. Warner Munn and that I thoroughly enjoyed it. So much so that I went out next day to buy Merlin's Ring. Perhaps it was too much of a good thing, or the old sequel is not the same, but I did not find the "Ring" was as enjoyable for me. I thoroughly enjoyed the story of Gwaichmai, the young man, and the life and times in which he lived, but the character in Merlin's Ring was somehow quite different, and the book seemed to drag more than I thought it ever would. It seemed to be more "peechy" if that's the correct word. It was interesting but not as moving.

Merlin's Ring by H. Warner Munn, Ballantine, 1974, \$1.95

Sequel to Merlin's Godson which very tidily ends the story of Gwaichmai by bringing in the history and the people across several centuries. Rather a strange twist to the story which was unexpected after reading and enjoying the first book. This book was enjoyable, but I liked the first in the series better.

Dragonsong by Anne McCaffrey, Bantam, 1976, \$1.95

Another beautiful adventure with the Dragons and their masters as only Anne McCaffrey can write them. the story of Menolly and her fire lizards - beautiful, just beautiful. Everytime I finish one of these books I want desperately to go out and buy the next ten. The writing is incredible.

The Doomfarers of Coramonde by Brian Daley, Ballantine, 1977, \$1.95

Time travel, wizards, a journey into Hell, hand grenades, dragons, tanks, and escape from Viet Nam. What else could anyone want? Rather a fun book.

The Heaven Makers by Frank Herbert, Ballantine, 1977

Another interesting mind-trip by a certified past master of the trade. What would it be like to be a god? Is it good or bad to be able to live forever? Read and enjoy!

The Broken Sword by Poul Anderson, Ballantine, 1971, \$1.50

Elves and England, Odin and Norse mythologies. A somewhat untraditional battle

Assasin of Gor by John Norman Copyright 1970 by John Norman. Published by Ballentine Books. Paperback. \$1.50

This volume five of the Chronicles of Counter Earth. The story of the revival of Ar and the strange journey of Jarl Cabot to find his own killer in the slave house of Cornus. Also a story of the training of slaves and the training of a barbarian girl.

A Voyage to Arcturus by David Lindsay. A Del Rey Book - Copyright 1963 by the Macmillan Co. Paperback \$1.95

In all fairness to the author, I finished this book but did not particularly enjoy it. I don't care much for Plato either. More philosophy in the guise of science fiction than anything else. Make your own decision about this one. I made mine. Poor page printing.

Nomads of Gor by John Norman. Copyright 1969 by John Norman- Ballentine/Science Fiction Paperback \$1.50

Volume four of the Chronicles of Counter Earth. The Wagon Peoples' Story and of the siege of Turia. Concerning the hunt for the egg of the Priest Kings and the taking of Turia by Kamchek Ubar of the Tuchuks. Good.

Millenium by Ben Bova. A Del Rey Book- Published by Ballentine Books. Copyright 1976 by Ben Bova.

A story of an attempt to keep earth from its own destruction at the hands of two superpowers. The attempt comes from the Colonial Moon. Very well done, with a hero one can identify with, and who is beyond destructive nationalism.

Star Wars by George Lucas. A Del Rey Book published by Ballentine. Copyright 1976 by the Star Wars Corp. Paperback \$1.95

A fun journey but not terribly recommended. See the movie, it's better, because the book's no different.

Foudroyant (alias Isabella Fighler) Issue: Second.

Being quite new to the applied science of zenology and proper classification thereof, I can only say this one should go somewhere under sub-phylum Amusing (funzine). Isabella Fighler should be more than able to hold her own at 'Callahan's' anytime!

As for Don D'Amassa's SF Cinema, I hadn't seen Maneater of Hydra (oh Yes! I watch those too.) in a long time but the memory came flooding back in all its Needle - tree -er- Glory. Who says we forget painful incidents??

Congrats for Refreshingness!

A FEW ITEMS FROM THE MAIN STREAM

The Other Side of Midnight by Sidney Sheldon. A Dell Book- Dell Publishing Co. NY Copyright Sidney Sheldon- 1973. Paperback \$1.95

Enjoyable fiction with a few rather interesting twists.

The Shining by Stephen King. Book Club Ed. Literary Guild. Copyright 1977.

Once again he's done it! I read this one in one sitting! Very good edge-of-the-seat story.

Trinity by Leon Uris. Book Club Literary Guild Ed 1976. Hardcover \$8.50

I have yet to be disappointed by this author. Excellent, but in case of my own Irish heritage- infuriating. As far as oppression is concerned I can compare it to roots.

Coma by Robin Cook. Book Club Literary Guild ed. 1977. Hardcover \$6.99

Very good food for thought. A look into a possible present/future. I am not ashamed to say that this book took me by surprise. Enough Said.

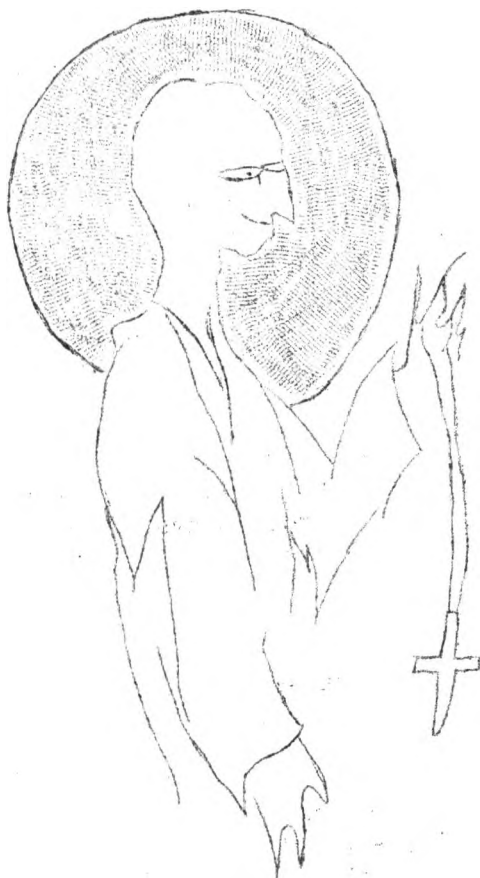
Adolf Hitler by John Toland. Book Club Literary Guild ed. Hardcover 2 vol-\$9.99
Informative but long! Unfinished.

Roots by Alex Haley. Book Club Literary Guild ed. '76. Hardcover \$8.99.

More than enough has been said about this book so that you have by now either read it or decided not to. I can say only two things. First, Mr. Haley, in my opinion, is to be credited with a good account of his family without leading into sickening emotionalism that could make it unreadable. Secondly, I made a bad mistake reading it directly after Trinity.

Ceremony of the Innocent by Taylor Caldwell. Book Club Literary Guild ed. 1976
Hardcover \$7.99

A good writer. A well written story, but a horror. More so than any of the so-called 'Horror' genre. The people I feel should read this book- if only to learn from it, would probably be destroyed by it!! This is no slur on the author. I can truly wonder about the people who enjoyed this book. There's a definite moral here.



1977 LORD OF THE RINGS CALENDAR, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., approx. \$7 from a British dealer, \$10 from an American dealer.

You might wonder why I am reviewing a 1977 calendar at this late date (Yes. mb). The pictures are of lasting interest, as are the notes. (Oh! mb) 11 previously unpublished drawings by J.R.R. Tolkien of scenes from Lord of the Rings are presented here. Some were drawn when Lot R was in early draft, and the descriptions have since been changed. Most valuable of all are Christopher Tolkien's notes on the pictures, commenting on the subsequent changes in the scenes, and on the Cereth lettering. Some look like colored pencil sketches but considerably more artistic than that of Smaug on the cover of the British paperback Hobbit. Only one is unfinished ... Rivendell looking West. The twelve scenes are, Old Man Willow, Rivendell looking East, Moria's Gate, Forest of Lothlorien, Fangorn Forest, Helm's Deep, and the Hornburg, Dunharrow, Minas Tirith, Shelob's Lair, Walls of Barad Dur, Rivendell looking West and 3 Leaves from the Book of Marzabul. Several pictures are made up of 2 or 3 distinct parts ... details or other views. Some are completed pieces of unified artwork. The village by Minas Tirith is very Spanish looking with red tile roof roofs. The cover of the calendar is the Eye of Sauron reprinted from the dust jacket of the first British Lot R. Christopher Tolkien has gone on in detail and translated all of the writing on some other pictures. I would be interested to hear from a Cereth or Tengwar scholar just what they say.

The American dealer has to charge more than the British one because of the import duties on multiple orders. I also suspect he had to order from other dealers and not from the publisher, so that he could not get the usual dealer discount. If you want a copy quickly I would suggest ordering it from the Cornerstone Bookshop (110 Margaret St., Plattsburgh, New York, 12901). If you don't mind first writing to get the exact price, and then waiting several months for your order to arrive, order from Fantast Medway Ltd., 39 West St., Weisbach Cambs PE13 2LX, England. Either way, if you love Middle-earth, do get this calendar.

ED MESKYS

THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTERS, Ballentine #01628, 95¢

by Lord Dunsany

In the early evening and night sometimes, a certain mist rises in hollows and valleys. Simple principles of physics explain it perfectly and completely. But somehow the sigh sight of it arouses thoughts and impressions, a living crowd of fantasies and imagineary countries, and that reaction is not so easy to put into words.

Here is a book that I think is based partly upon this human experience. In it, Lord Dunsany supposes there is another world beyond that mist, different from and yet like the world we know. He uses this idea to explore a man's quest, a woman's heart, and something of our everyday lives.

The story begins with young Alveric, Prince of the Vale of Erl. The Vale needs something new and remarkable; Alveric will find it in Elfland. Off he goes, and he stays there for some hours, which is a much longer time in the real world. He returns with his bride Lirazel, who is the daughter of the King of Elfland.

Their marriage is fairly succesful but there is some lack of understanding. A son arrives, and is named Orion. But Lirazel's father works a magic spell which is finally effective enough to transport Lirazel back to Elfland. She leaves their son, Orion, behind.

Alveric tries desperately to reenter Elfland, but now he cannot even find it. At last, Orion discovers unicorns. Seeking this elusive game he finally gets assistance from Lurulu, a troll of very different variety from the ones in Tolkien's work. But Lurulu finds unicorn hunting difficult too, and he enlists the aid of additional trolls. And taking a page from the will-of-the-wisps book, he lures many of them from the swamps bordering Elfland, because he needs their light. There is almost a general migration from Elfland to the "fields men know".

Meanwhile, Alveric does poorly in his search, though he travels great distances and becomes almost a legend. Most of his men return to Vale, but at last Alveric discovers he cannot find Elfland because the King, sensing Alveric's magic sword, always moves the boundaries away from him. Alveric finds how to overcome this magic, but then is frustrated by the two remainig men in his company. These men are quite mad. At last he returns, beaten, to the Vale.

But Lirazel is not happy, though she is returned to Elfland. At last she prevails upon her father to extend Elfland over the "fields men know", bringing Alveric and Orion back again for a happy reunion.

The story's considerable charm consists partly of Dunsany's use of experiences most people have in childhood. He puts these together around a fairy-story theme, using a good bit of invention. His style is patient and complete, and in the course of the story he mentions some of his purposes in writing it. The work cannot be read rapidly, and may need rereading to bring some details into perspective. It's well worth it. This book has a place on my shelves, and will appeal to all those who find something good in the work of Tolkien, White, and others in this new adult fantasy field.

MATHA DAMS

A few minutes sufficed to read this book, or so it seemed til I got up from my chair. Then I knew I had been much longer at this curiously styled fantasy novel. It is in the same class as Tolkien's work, and something like it. There are differences too, very substantial differences more attributable to the writer than to his time. This story first appeared in 1895.

At age 25, Golden Walter is the unhappily married son of a wealthy merchant. His wife is hard and shrewish, and well, she gets around a lot. That story is familiar enough without any books about it, and Morris simply uses it to explain why Walter goes off to sea.

After an interlude in some foreign ports Walter finds his ship at the shores of a completely unknown land. About two days later he is on his way to the interior, travelling alone.

A period of hard walking brings him to a region inhabited by a Lady, a Maid, a Dwarf, and a man known only as The King's Son. Walter immediately finds there is evil in this land, and that his presence was arranged by the Lady's magic. He is to serve as an adult toy for her. He also finds the Maid, a thrall, is his true love. He is in that land for some time, working out his part in a subtle, difficult conflict.

The others die in that conflict, but Walter and the Maid survive. They promptly set out for parts unknown, since the Maid feels the Lady's evil lingers on.

Coming into the Valley of the Bears, who are bearish men or maybe mannish bears, the Maid passes herself off as the present embodiment of a legendary goddess. This act, if act it is, gets them through the valley alive, and up into the next pass. But coming down the other side into a new valley they find what could be the worst kind of news: a reception committee of knights and armed men.

It turns out a great city in that valley, Stark-Wall, has lost its king and his line. Their customary solution to this occasional difficulty is to make their King the next man who appears through the pass. It works, too. Walter becomes their new King.

He soon learns this system for finding Kings has another side to it. Incompetent Kings don't last long in Stark-Wall. But Walter turns out to be an excellent King, and the Maid a fine Queen. In a way powerfully suggestive of Tolkien's later ending of his work in "The King Returns", the story comes to an end.

This is a hard book to read, and well worth the effort. Part of the difficulty seems rooted in Morris' slightly archaic English, and at least for me some of it originated in the curious line of the plot.

Upon reflection afterwards some of this worked itself out, with the seemingly simple book appearing as actually a set of four stories. These are, Walter's reasons for travelling and his experiences at sea; his finding the Maid in that strange Wood Beyond The World; their escape from that Wood and their experiences in the Valley of the Bears, and finally their crowning in Stark-Wall and in very brief form, their succesful lives there.

MARTHA ADAMS

A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE, Peter S. Beagle, Ballantine Books #01502, 95c

The fine and private place of the story title is the grave. Yes, the kind you find in cemeteries. But real cemeteries do not have the human characters appearing here.

Mr. Rebeck has been living in a mausoleum for some nineteen years. He is so adapted to his life style he finds he cannot even leave the cemetery any more. A friendly,

~~talkative and by turns soft or tough-minded~~
 raven brings in food and news. For entertainment Mr. Rebeck plays chess with the ghosts of recent arrivals.



But after they have been there awhile, the ghosts fade out. It takes two weeks to a month, or more. The ghosts forget what it was like to be alive, and they gradually go away somehow.

Then one ghost arrives (with the appropriate body) who insists he won't fade out. He liked living too much. Michael, it appears, died after being poisoned by his wife. He is surprised and annoyed by this inconvenience.

And shortly later, Laura arrives. Laura never really lived, she says, and she thinks death is really a convenience. Laura was not very attractive, and one day she happened to walk in front of a bus. She is satisfied with the result, and she sets about fading as fast as possible.

A third character appears. Mrs. Klapper mourns, very sensibly, for her husband Morris. She visits the cemetery frequently, and at last she meets Mr. Rebeck. There are some obstacles to get over, as Mr. Rebeck's life style is a bit hard to explain. Slowly they reach some understanding, and as this goes on Michael and Laura are also coming together.

The story continues as a remarkable account of a human chemistry played out in the most unlikely way anybody could imagine. It is not a morbid story--there is much humor, of a very restrained type. Its ending is somehow indeterminate, and yet appropriate. A curious and above all unlikely book, but a good one.

MARTHA ADAMS

BREAKTHROUGH, Richard Cowper, Ballantine, 1969, #01653, 75¢

An Ancient Race theme lies behind the plot of this book. It is developed in a curiously roundabout way, as such a matter might actually come gradually into view after hard study and work. In this story Jim Haverhill and Rachel Bernstein were made for each other, and we learn the making occurred some thousands of years previously. Their meeting sets some strong forces in motion. Yet it all begins casually enough.

Jim is an assistant lecturer at a university partly financed by government money. There, he meets a professor who is working at parapsychology. Taking a moderate interest in this, Jim assists the professor in some work, meets a Miss Bernstein, and seemingly that is the end of it.

But later the professor's work brings them more closely together. They find there is some relation between them that enables Rachel to make terrifically good scores in some of the test work. And the professor, getting results from his experimental program, finds more money and an electronics expert for working out new ideas.

The plot gets deeper, darker, and more interesting as it appears Jim and Rachel are connected somehow with beings like people, who lived many thousands of years previously. The relation is nearly fatal as a highly complex situation is gradually

unravelling. Final answers are explicitly stated, but the story comes to an end that suggests some further thinking.

It is a good story, yet in some places it could have used more invention. Choosing names for beings so distant they are nearly aliens is going to be a tough job in any case. But such examples as Haalar, Kroton or Araaran seemed too stereotyped. And some of the science could have used a nicer handling, while other science was well done. In summary, spotty sometimes, but generally good.

MARTHA ADAMS

THE OCTOBER COUNTRY, Ray Bradbury. Ballantine #01637, 75¢

This wonderful book is Bradbury's collection of nineteen of his stories published between 1946 and 1957. He has edited or even rewritten some of them while making it up. The publisher's list of printings indicates real success, my review copy being the sixth printing. This list could well continue indefinitely.

The stories have something in common, but I cannot describe it. Bradbury touches on this likeness in an opening note saying in part, "... that country where it is always turning late in the year. That country where the hills are fog and the rivers are mist, where noons go quickly, dusks and twilights linger and midnights stay." Such a land could be dreadful indeed. In some of his stories it is, with a slow, almost ceremonial awfulness. Yet there is humor and a sense of bright life, too.

For example Uncle Eimer, a member of the Family, flies one night into a high-tension power line. He is badly scorched, and falls to the ground. Next day he is found by Brunilla, a warm-hearted yet not very marriageable farmer's daughter. They strike it off well enough during his recovery, but it turns out his accident has destroyed his night-flying ability. Their marriage is a good one yet Uncle Einar must be very careful about flying in the daytime because that would upset the neighbors. Finally the frustration really gets to him, but by that time they have four healthy children who like to fly kites. One of the children has an answer...

Another story is that of Drew Erickson, an honest old farmer whose farm has failed. He comes upon another farm. In the house an old, dead man, lies in his bed with a note leaving the farm to whoever should next enter the door. There is work to be done, and Erickson sets about it. Much strange wheat has to be sycthed. And he has to keep it up even when he learns what he is really doing.



Or the story of severely hypochondriac Mr. Harris, who becomes convinced his skeleton is a hard unwanted thing inside him. He finds a man ... man? who will cure that. This book seemed rather hard reading at first but became easier as I worked through it. Maybe we all have some of Bradbury's "October County Country" within us?

MARTHA ADAMS

"People who make sweeping generalizations are stupid."

CZAR 1904 A.D.

"There is no such thing as an absolute."

CZAR 1863 B.C.

Y*SEX*MONEY*FAME*FORTUNE*WEALTH*POWER*MODERN CONVENIENCES*BREAKFAST CEREALS*OMNISCENCE*SEX

Now that I have your attention . . .

The other night (morning) Sam and Larry and I were watching a vintage (old) German SF movie on the insomniac's best friend, ie: channel 11 out of the Apple. At one point we heard the following utterance:

"Activate the magnetic spoon!"

Sam assured me that "spool" was the word which would make the command marginally sensible. However . . .

It gave me a great idea. (The only kind I seem to get.)

Why not let the NIEKAS readership have a crack at illustrating this historic scene. It isn't necessary that you view this movie as I am sure that fertile imagination imaginations will have no problem bringing this scene alive for the rest of us.

So . . .

Send us your best efforts. Enter as often as you wish. Please keep all submissions within a 3½ inch square box. First prize for the best rendering will be a one year subscription to NIEKAS. Second prize will be a two year subscription to NIEKAS. (I know this is an old joke but I haven't been well.) All entries must be in by April 1st or later.

MB



GOING OUT OF A LIMERICK DEPT.

VERSE BY JOE R. CHRISTOPHER

Variations on A., L. Tennyson:

There was an old Chinaman, drunk,
Who at a piano would plunk--
He'd jangle the keys
And pedal with ease,
But still it all sounded like clunk!

There was an old Chinaman, drunk,
Who invented a ray which things shrunk--
He flared on himself,
Producing an elf:
Of the Chink there was left but a chunk.

There was an old Chinaman, drunk,
Who fell from his sampan--splunk!
A gurgle he gave:
"No water I crave:
My drinking's all neat--or I'm sunk."

In Reverse

There was an old man of Fort Worse
Who never had pity
On the souls of that city
For he'd drive them down with a curse--
And hit them again in reverse.

Sacrificing to the Idols: An Exclamation

O toilets, your maws I will sing you--
You gulp down faeces we fling you,
You drink down our urine
(With a handle-caused stirrin')--
Penates, our offerings we bring you!

NEWS AND NOTES

NASA NOT TAKING PASSENGER RESERVATIONS FOR SHUTTLE

Contrary to recently published reports, NASA is not accepting reservations from potential passengers to ride on Space Shuttle missions.

The implication that the agency is accepting reservations for \$500 has been made in articles which contain information about NASA's program to carry small experimental payloads on the Space Shuttle on a space-available basis. These payloads are limited to sizes up to 0.14 cubic meters (5 cu. ft.) and weights up to 91 kilograms (200 lbs.), and \$500 earnest money is required to reserve space for the payload.

NASA has no plans to offer seats on Shuttle flights to paying passengers.

GALILEO MISSION POSTPONED DUE TO SPACE SHUTTLE DELAYS

NASA associate administrator Dr. Thomas A. Mutch has announced to a House subcommittee that delays in the building of the Space Shuttle have caused the postponement of the Galileo mission to Jupiter. The original plan was to have the Shuttle carry both the Jupiter orbiter and the atmospheric probe, this was to occur in 1982, but is now slated for 1984. The new launch will take the orbiter first, and the atmospheric probe will go on a second launch. According to Dr. Mutch the revised plan will add more than \$184 million to the originally estimated \$450 million mission.

GALAXY BOUGHT BY GALILEO

Arnold Abramson, owner and publisher of GALAXY has announced the sale of GALAXY to GALILEO, published by Vincent McCaffrey. McCaffrey will edit as well as publish until a new editor can be named. No money has changed hands as of this writing, but 90% will be owned by GALILEO while 10% will be retained by UPD. Present plans by Vincent McCaffrey will include switching to a 8 1/2 x 11" format, returning the old logo, as well as rearing it to younger readers.

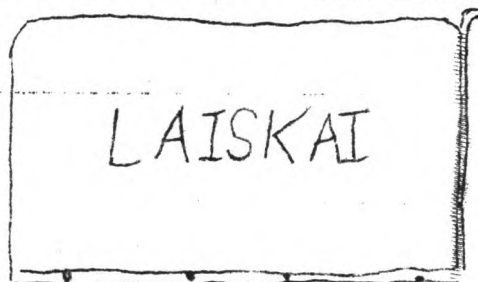
HOME-GROWN SPACE FAIR

The Lakes Region of Central New Hampshire was treated to a six-day exhibit of Man's future in space recently, courtesy of NIEKAS editor Sherwood Frazier. Frazier along with some of his cohorts held a symposium highlighted by a traveling promo van from NASA complete with Assistant Professor Minot H. Parker who is acting as an Aerospace Education Specialist for the agency.

The space fair included rock-ups, photos, and posterwork compiled by Frazier from sources such as the Boston ES Society, NASA, Fitts Foto, and a local rocket club.

Frazier believes that "people are not paying enough attention to our space program and are not aware of the necessity of exploration and exploitation". (Ed. - more on this in SF's ed. 1E) Through his one to one contacts with his audience he tries to convey these sentiments.

"We cannot be indifferent to space...to turn back now would be to deny our history." A quote by James A. Michener, that can be seen over the door of Frazier library, sums up his feelings toward the future of the space program.



Dear Mr. Meskys,

My feeling in regard to Watership Down was that despite his elaborate claims of authenticity he was really writing about primitive people, rather than rabbits; neither the rock-paintings of the trapped rabbit-culture nor the militarization of the other group were plausible. Of course, there are plenty of stories in which rabbits or other animals have such things, but I found his attempt to synthesize this with the everyday modern English scene awkward. Shardik on the other hand was openly about people in an acient (or ancient-level technologically) culture and I thought he handled it very convincingly. Essentially I agree with what I gather is your estimate: it is very good but very very grim. Speaking as a historian, which I happen to be, I think I can assure you that Shardik is set in an imaginary time and place. While I do not pretend to know all about Indian culture, which is enormously varied, the horse has been known there since ancient times, although I believe it does not thrive in the southern parts of the country. It is just possible that there was some part of Southern India or Southern Africa (N. Africa had plenty of horses from early on) that would fit the general situation, but we are supposed to understand that the country is reasonably large and I know that neither it nor its neighbors are notice in the fairly general histories of those areas, which are what I am familiar with. The Ainu of northern Japan, an aboriginal "white" people now almost extinct, had a bear-cult, but they were never conquerors--their history is one of gradual longterm conquest by the Japanese--and they (if I remember my casual reading on the subject) kept their bears in pits and did not regard them as war-leaders. Of the "unfamiliar" plants and animals, those Adams italicizes he has apparently invented. On the whole his inventions appear to me to be minor and not justified by any particular distinction between the invented object and a real one he could have used--as he in fact does most of the time. I have a strong feeling that he is under the impression that any fantasy world "has to have" a few funny new names in it, but that is not, in my opinion, one of his areas of strength.

The fact (unless I am mistaken on this point) that the setting is imagined (and in general, vividly imagined), does in my opinion make his novel fantasy without overt supernatural elements. I might add that although I concede that the powers attributed to Shardik himself are plainly intended to be understood as subjective, there are certain powers, notably whatever is in the Streels, that I think we are supposed to believe in--although a power whose most important action is a nonacting--sparing the bear and the man--is hardly "overt". A cynic might even say that the fact the Streels spare Shardik and Keldarik proved they had no real powers. However it seems to me that the theme of the book is in the epigraph Adams takes from Jung; "Superstition and accident manifest the will of God". Not "are said by ignorant savages to manifest" but simply "manifest": so a divine purpose is worked out by the foolish and even horrible reactions of humans by what they imagine to be divine. The fact that this whole novel is (in my reading) an elaborate exploration of this possibility, done with immense subtlety--there is far less open moralizing than in Tolkien, much less Lewis--would justify the claim that it is a "Philosophical Novel" if I understand that term correctly. But the existence of the underlying divinity would also, in a very quiet way, be an excuse for calling it fantasy.

On the other hand, the fact that Adams, as you noted, resembles Tolkien in constructing his histories so they offer several possible comparisons with human history as we know it, means that my reading is by no means the only possible one. I have already indicated that a more materialistic reading is possible, and perhaps

such is even Mr. Adams' intended reading; I like to think I have uncovered his intentions, but I have not seen any exposition by him of what he meant Shardik to mean.

I was very glad to see the interview with Carol Kendall as I like her books, especially Gammage Cup. The information was fascinating but unfortunately I don't have any really intelligent comments.

Much of the rest of the magazine left me the same way--interesting but not for my comments.

I would like to say that I have the record of "The Hapless Child" and I am not entirely happy with it. The style is basically one of rather droning recitation with a bizarre tuneless musical background. While this may be reasonably appropriate for "The Hapless Child" and some of the other pieces, which are really prose and not suitable for "singing" in the ordinary sense, I personally prefer "The Insect God" done as a broadside ballad (as its form suggests) rather than in this manner, which seems to me to lose much of the insane cheerfulness of the original. This is, of course, very much a matter of taste. I do not dispute the high technical quality of the performance on the record. But I get more fun out of singing "The Wuggly Ump" to the tune of "O Tannembaum", one of the lesser Christmas rituals of my family.

I was also much less impressed with Tolkien and the Silmarillion than your reviewer. In particular, I thought the title misleading. The book is largely Kilby's reminiscences of Tolkien; there is little or no material about the Silmarillion not already available elsewhere. Kilby's remarks are interesting but minor Tolkieniana.

Yours very truly, John L. Leland

Dear Sherwood, Ed, Margaret;

Ed's article on the various devices available for blind would-be readers astounds me with the almost total incompatibility of any system to another. Everyone who develops a system must believe their's to be the ultimate system, until six months later, when they change their minds, Or worse, until six years later, when they change their minds.

I must remind Margaret that with her article on how great SF is, she is directing her sermon to those already converted. I will resist the temptation to come up with another two dozen favorite futures out of my library!

Hyah! L-5! I fully intend to go as soon as they open up. By then, I should be a useful computer indsutry type person that they'll take me, too. While not liking the term Si-Fi, one must admit that it is better than, but often confused with Sci Fi, whose major use now a days is to point out utter crap.

In my five worldcons, I have now seen two costumes of green vikings, called a norse of a different color. This has got to stop. Must agree with Rafe that Filthy is ubik. That's the best anyone can possibly say. Rafe's reaction to the Dorsai was the general reation, and truly the group is going to get their collective asses in a sling by acting as an unbonded security organization. I had not heard that the lost camera was returned; I'll pass this information on. Is any one out there familiar enough with Dickson's universe to want to join a group called the Friendly Soldiers?

I was there at the founding of marshmallow fandom, when a party degenerated into the flinging of the marshmallow's. Someday an article will be written, and Ben will pay big bucks for all the copies of this article, to prevent the spread of the story. Just as Joe Haldeman would rather not see another box of lime Jello, again. Hence the box of lime Jello at the Midamerclone masquerade.)

The Roger Zelazny article has been shown to all of my Zelazny freak friends, and they have all been dutifully impressed that a book like Lord of Light could have been inspired by a shaving cut. Wow. As George Hay once said, "I don't know if I can trust anyone who doesn't like Lord of Light."

In reviewing Sword of Shannara, one finds one's self realizing that every bit of publicity points out that this is just like LotR, and so the book is compared. I doubt if this is the del Rey's doings, but rahter that a nervous Random House, trying to get back the money sunk into the project. The Brothers Hildebrand illos I believe to be terrible and lifeless, just as all their other work for Ballentine has been. The painting of all the questers has been justifiably compared to the same scene that they

did for the 1976 Tolkien calendar. They are so much alike that characters can be picked out. I have not read the book, so will not talk of that, but I consider myself to be an SF art fan, and therefore fully qualified to speak of the illos.

Anderson's letter is neat, as he speaks of doing stories of Dom Flandry that take place after the originals, and he didn't finally do that until 1974. In his letter, I also note the origins of an ANALOG story of some two years ago, DOWN ON BANDERLOG FARM. Hhhhm.

Very good, Very interesting.

David Stever

Glancing one final time through the copy of Niekas which you gave me in Boston before passing it on with other imz to our local SF group, I was reminded of the time when I offered to record my work as it was published, for the blind - living in London then, I could quite easily have done at least the shorter items - and was flatly turned down.

John Brunner

Dear Ed--

I see that you sent NIEKAS 21 back in August--my delay in replying is typical of my fall. I've missed two deadlines, among other things (neither deadline involved my Inkleing Bibliography, happily). You asked in your note about Dick West's address. Probably you have it by now, since Dick got out a new ORCRIST this fall--but if you don't, it's 1922 Madison St., Madison, Wisc. 53711.

The Carol Kendall interview was interesting, even though I've read few of her books (I guess she really hasn't written very many). I think one of her responses was omitted on p. 19. The old letters were also interesting, in a historical way. Down with the New Wave (or whatever), indeed!

Margaret Shephard's Witchery I would be more convinced by if she didn't think Heinlein could characterize; maybe she hasn't read enough of Heinlein to see his repetitive characters. (I like Heinlein's books, but I don't go to them to learn about human personality.) I'm reacting to her comment on Stranger in a Strange Land, of course. Would she like to discuss Heinlein's understanding of women as revealed in that book, also? Heinlein seems to me to be mainly an idea man.

Frazier's column was mainly an introduction of himself as a fan. Hello, Sherwood. (May readers assume the drawing by Frazier on the same page is of his wife? If so, an interesting double introduction.) (I noticed that Sandy Frazier's column on p. 9 also insists on spelling Sci-Fi as si-fi; shades of Fu Manchu!; at least the Fraziers are consistent.)

And Rafe Folch P1's column is a con report. At one point, I noticed that the marshmallow salad becomes a mushroom salad. Odd. The caps of mushrooms are not really that texture.

But the front cover says it all: the phoenix has arisen indeed! It's difficult to say that not nothing has returned, for there's a certain void, filled only with niekas, which has existed in the



MIDDLE-AGED BARBARIAN



MIDDLE-AGED BARBARIAN'S WIFE

imaginations of fanzine readers for, lo! these many years. And now, from the nest of spices, born after a long lapse of years, comes the ... eagle? Well, it doesn't look like a phoenix to me.

Best regards, Joe R. Christopher

Dear People,

I've wondered about the location of Shardik too. But While the animals and such may well point to some particular area, the actual geography certainly doesn't correspond to any actual location in this world. It's a good-sized country, and there just isn't any such location surrounded by near-impassable deserts and jungles (and with a great river such as is shown on the map). So it does qualify as a fantasy on this count.

Ah, Sherwood, "sci-fi" is bad enough, but at least familiar; "si-fi" is unheard of!

The origin of marshmallow fandom is no mystery, but I suppose it'd better be told before it becomes "enshrined in Filklóre". It all started at Lexicon #, in the summer of 1974. There was this party to which someone had brought a bag of marshmallows ... and before you knew it, marshmallows were being thrown in all directions. (I did not actually observe the outbreak myself, but was one of the wondering spectators drawn to see what was going on.) Anyway, Ben Bova was one of the protagonists, and has never been allowed to forget it. Marshmallow fights have been staged at a number of subsequent conventions, but never with quite the insanity of the first time. Among the more impressive products of the marshmallow mythos is Rick Sternbach's painting of the LSM (Large Space Marshmallow), which hangs enshrined in the NESFA library. Then there are marshmallow jokes, a field which has never been properly developed ... (The Moon Is a Harsh Marshmallow? The Marshmallow Chronicles? I think this needs a little more work.) Stay tuned for further developments.

The lettercol certainly does bring back memories, but it seems a little futile to try continuing any of the topics discussed at this late date. You probably should have included the dates when the letters were written: it would have imparted a proper Sense of Wonder to the zine.

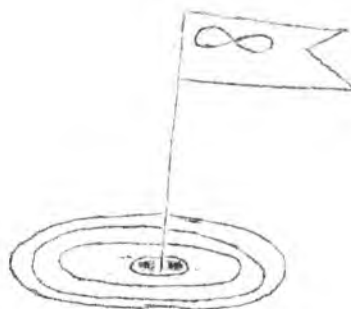
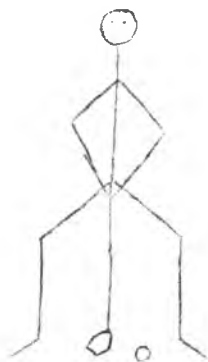
Support Boston in 1980 (advrt.)!

Sincerely yours, George Flynn

Dear Sherwood,

I should have written weeks ago to proclaim my great happiness at the return of Niekas. But I've fallen even further behind on fannish obligations that I was seven or eight years ago . . .

It's particularly good to know that his (ERM mb) blindness hasn't destroyed his interest in fandom and in science fiction. Many of the things he describes in this issue about the resources available to him were unknown to me, and they impress me as an example of progress almost as much as the space program. One thing he doesn't mention was described in a record magazine a short while ago: someone has come up with a system for speeding up the rate of speech in recorded form without raising the pitch of the voice. It's done by a gadget which somehow chops tiny fractions of seconds



out of the longer sounds in the words, usually the vowels, leaving the vital consonants untouched, thereby reducing sharply the time needed for the material to be played back. I'll have to hunt for the note I received about a year ago from a New York City fan who said she is blind and wanted to know sources of science fiction on tape and records. I could give her only the most generalized advise then. If I can find her letter, I'll copy off some of the facts in this issue. (Ed. - I haven't yet talked about it, but I have such a machine. ERM)

I agree thoroughly with you on the need to push space technology. Sometimes I feel that people aren't as much opposed to spending tax money on space research as generally pictured, but the anti-space slant of the media has been having an effect. But I wonder if efforts to get the space program going again wouldn't be most effective if directed to Russia. If the Russians should accomplish something dramatic in space, the United States would get moving again exactly as we did after the first Russian Sputniks went up, and after the first cosmonauts got into orbit.

The notes on MidAmericoCon were interesting and in a few places contained information that was new to me. The reaction to the Dorsai was quite moderate, compared to some things fans have written about the new institution. I'm inclined to consider the Dorsai a good thing, because the only real alternative is mundane security personnel now that cons are growing so large. There's bound to be some kind of awful happening at a con if some sort of visible authority isn't maintained and it's better to have fans and semi-fans doing the patrolling in case of crises of a peculiarly fannish nature.

Much of the Carol Kendall interview was over my head, because I'm not familiar with any of her books. But the interview itself was more relaxed and friendly-sounding than most interviews with pros that get published in this dialogue format.

My letter in this issue might have been written deliberately to dramatize how fandom would change in the course of the 1970's. I don't know how long it has been since the last worldcon system which was so much discussed when I wrote this loc. The New Wave seems ready by now to become as much a part of the nostalgia area as the Marx Brothers. Vaughn Bode was just rising to prominence when I wrote and now he is tragically dead, illustrating how brief are the careers of many individuals in produm and fandom. Meyer Fandon has been almost lost amid all the other sufandoms which have sprung up in recent years.

Like Ed, I didn't consider Niekas as a personalzine in the sense that the term is generally understood: a fanzine which is mostly or entirely written by its editor and usually lacks division of its material into separate articles and columns with titles of their own. What Niekas always symbolized to me was the simonpure fanzine whose editor chooses material on the basis of whether he's interested in the material, not because he thinks it will enable him to build up his circulation by several hundred more copies per issue or because he is determined to win a Hugo by persuading famous pros to contribute. Niekas was also free of the current tendency of some fanzines to stir up the kind of controversy that makes participants genuinely angry with one another, for the sake of lively reading. You will undoubtedly receive a lot of criticism about the crowded appearance of many of the pages. But I think this gives the fanzine a distinctive appearance and personality and maintains the general continuity of Niekas, because that's how it looked when Ed was doing all the work.

The Phoenix on the cover was most appropriate, under the circumstances, and I liked most of the interior illustrations, even if your electro-stenciler didn't give you as black an image as needed for some of them.

Yrs., &c., Harry Warner, Jr.

Dear Ed:

Niekas 21 received July Thirty STOP oops, this isn't a telegram, is it? I'm trying to follow your instructions for opticon reading. I will try to keep this brief. I thought of sending my comments verbally by cassette tape, but I am in the throes of moving and finishing my Novel God of Tarot (over 200,000 words in second draft and growing yet) and I just can't handle the extra complication at the moment. See my new address above. I also thought of paying for the issue, but that would count as a sub and have to go to a different address. So for now, no tape and now money--but keep me



on your mailing list and I'll come through with both next time.

The magazine is a mere shadow of its former self, and the letter column is dated--but this is understandable. More power to you in your emergence from the Gafia Grave. I approve the blind readers swap net; you should check with Joanne Burger (55 Blue Bonnet Ct. Lake Jackson, TX 77566), who does all kinds of listing of talking books, and would be a real asset to you if she did. I believe she made a tape of my novel Hasan; I know you don't know of that because you didn't list it. I have mentioned the matter to her, and maybe she is already in touch with you. (Ed. - No she hasn't yet. ERM)

My daughter, Penny, whom you met at Goddard College last year when she was eight, sends her Hello to you and to your seeing-eye dog. Um, I'm not clear whether you plan to attend the Miami con--you probably said somewhere in the magazine and I overlooked it--but if you do, and you need a place to stop on the way, bear in mind that we are on the way. If you go by air, we're not convenient; our new address is in the Hinterland. But if you go by car, we're about ten miles off I-75 in North Florida. I have not forgotten how you shepherded me through New York City in 1966. I am enclosing a home-made detail map of our area, just in case; locate Brooksville or Inverness on your main road map, then go to this one, and on into the sub-detail inset ~~Wales~~ in the forest.

I read Shardik and concluded that its locale was in the vicinity of Central Asia of the Samarkand region. I researched that area when doing my novel Steppe (published only in England). It became a prime area for raising fine horses, but horses may have been introduced there after Roman times. Since the Romans are mentioned in Shardik, as distant neighbors, this might fit. Main Problem is the Savage River; the rivers of that region dry up in summer. So maybe you are right: turn south to India. Margaret Shephard's column grabbed me: that's the kind of reader I want to write for. So many readers seem to resent being made to think. She might enjoy my novel OX. (Ed. - The whole trilogy: Omnivore, Orn, and OX is brilliant. MB) Regardless, I wish there were a few hundred thousand more such readers; then there might be less pabulum published.

Best to you, Ed. I am not going to SunCon or any con (in case my reference above was unclear) so have conveniently few contacts with fans or other pros these days. If I don't see you again, at least I'll see Niekas.

Piers (Anthony)

Dear Ed,

I could not get into Watership Down myself, and haven't tried Shardik, though I have a copy. I assumed from what I have heard about it that the locale of Shardik is more or less prehistoric Europe probably because of the bear - bears are found mostly in the temperate and subarctic.

I see there is a lot of Borges on the talking book list. He was on Firing Line recently, Buckley went to Buenos Aires to interview him, and even more amazing, was moderately polite to him.

I must try to get The Hapless Child that you review here! But if Aaron Frazier likes Gorey at age 6, I shudder to think what he will be up to when he's grown . . .

Probably the closest current zine to the atmosphere of the old Niekas is Donn Brazier's Title, which never got as large as Niekas but has reached 50-something issues in the last 5 years. But I don't think his circulation is anything like yours was.

Best, C. W. "Ned" Brooks Jr.

Dear Ed, Margaret, and Sherwood,

While this may not have been as long an interval as between issues of NIEKAS, nevertheless it does mark an equally unconscionable absence, and so I can only send my apologies - at least, those I have left after extending the same to almost every fanzine I've received in the past year - and beg your forbearance. It's been a long and winding trail back to fandom, and some day I might write an article about it!

Now I cannot with much authority devote any space to a eulogy of NIEKAS as it was in years past, as there was actually only one issue that I ever saw: but even though there's not the same number of pages (and that must have been three issues in one!), the air is still there. If I can pin this elusive quality down, it can only come from a group of like-minded fen coming together, helping and contributing, and producing a zine that makes you want to go on reading and arguing after the last page is turned; and if this is what gives a zine its Hugo-winning quality, then I'll be voting for you next year!

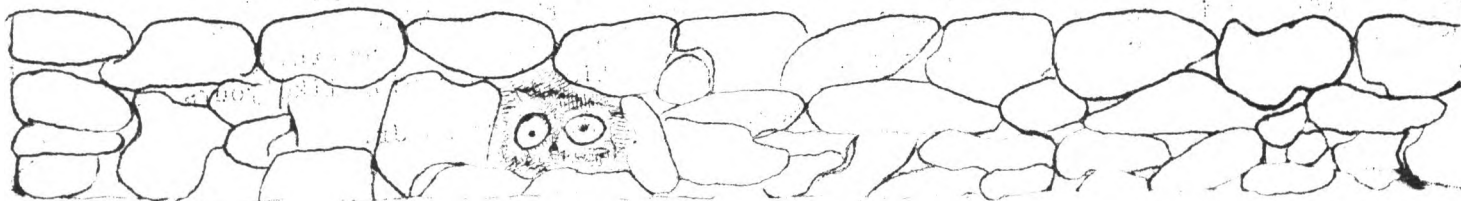
Of the current issue, I can't help but agree with Margaret on her reasons for reading sf and fantasy (which might make for a very unenthusiastic LoC!; the most inspiring - and most readable - sf I've found is that which looks outward to the stars, and while not entirely ignoring the darker side of man, does focus on a more hopeful interpretation of the data. There's much of value that's been chronicled by an increasingly bitter generation of sf writers (the Malzbergs, the Brunners, etc.) about Man as he is; but surely as much needs to be said about Man as he might become, a little lesser than the angels, maybe, but not knocking on the gates of Hell for admittance, as those writers would have us believe! I'd be wading in deep philosophical waters with the thought that because we write about something and enough people believe it will come to be; but if we keep writing across the stars, and the planets beyond the stars, and the heritage that one day we might have, these things might very well become true. More so anyway, than if we keep our feet in the mud! So herewith one vote for the stars.

Enjoyed (if that can ever be the right word, for something so enlightening) Roger Zelazny's musings on his Lord of the Light, and wish I'd been able to read it at the same time as the novel. I've read any amount of informed (and otherwise) opinion, learned articles and argument on this Hugo winner-and-worthy-of-it, but I firmly believe there's nothing can match what the author has to say about his own creation; so I'm looking forward to seeing a detailed exegesis on the Amber saga in the very next issue, in as much detail. And maybe also Poul Anderson with his Merman saga? (Ed. - We will try for an article such as this each ish as we have done with Dr. Asimov's on page 22. SF)

I have to admit that (shamefully) I've never even heard of Carol Kendall, though in defence it's mostly what I read fanzines for, to gain information and people and friends that weren't there before; and if I can find any of her books that have been published in English editions, they'll certainly go on my Must Read list. I've tended to overlook children's fantasy, if not dismiss it altogether, since leaving school; but increasingly I've come to the conclusion that in writing for a more discerning and even greater nitpicking audience than a bevy of sf readers, the best books tend to be even better; take Tanith Lee for instance, and contrast her Companions on the Road with Quest for the White Withh. Strikes me that we give up far too much when we give up childhood!

Anyway, I'd just like to say, in getting this belated show on the road, that I've appreciated this issue of NIEKAS very much; and even if comes the unhappy moment when you decide to leave that next issue uncollated, unprinted, and unsaid, I know I'll have this single issue to remind me of how fandom once used to be. And also, it's brought to me something which was rather academic before, and that's the problems of blind people in this society, and how they can cope or otherwise; so I can be doubly grateful for this issue.

best wishes, Roger Waddington



among fighting men, if not medical men. True, but the author should not have put the word "artery" into the hero's mind.

As I write this I am about 90 percent through a historical novel by Robert Nye called Falstaff. It is a strange but interesting book, and might even be regarded as a borderline fantasy...because of an intentional anachronism.

The book is supposedly the reminiscences of Sir John Falstaff, of Shakespeare's MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR and character in several of the historical plays. He supposedly lived in the late 1300's and early 1400's. I gather he plays a major role in HENRY IV which I haven't yet read, and is briefly mentioned in HENRY V which I've seen twice a about 14 years ago. I've read WIVES and seen the Verdi opera based on it.

A point of confusion. These reminiscences are supposedly written in 1459 when Falstaff is 81 years old and Henry VI is king of England. I could swear that near the beginning of HENRY V someone tells the young king that his old friend Falstaff just died.

The book is well done as the ravings of an egotistical and lecherous old man. His supposed sexual exploits are staggering, rivaling those of the heroes of hardcore porno in frequency and endurance. This is by far the most obscene and scatological book I have read.

The exploits can be dismissed as the ravings of a vain old man. However two points in the book jarred me as I came across them. Early in the book he describes something as potato-like. I know that potatoes were discovered in Peru and wondered if they were common in Shakespeare's time. Do they appear in any of the plays?

Then several chapters later he described winning a battle in Ireland by throwing a bunch of potatoes at the stupid Irishmen who quit the battle in order to fight over who got to eat them. This destroyed the mood of the book.

But then came a beautiful touch of fantasy. About 80 percent of the way through the book one of Falstaff's secretaries, taking the dictation, puts in a long note of his own, which he knows Falstaff won't read because he is near blind. In this he dismisses the whole book as a pack of lies, and says that he has never heard of such a thing as a potato, and there can be no such thing anywhere in the world.

Otherwise the book seems to have the flavor of the times and is a very interesting portrayal of the character. The book is available on 19 cassettes from the Jewish Guild for the Blind.

OF KURZWEIL AND SUCH

I had the opportunity to try a Kurzweil machine recently. It's terrific! You walk up to a machine about the size of a suitcase, put a book down on a glass plate on top of it, and the machine reads the book out loud to you! October 1977 I got used to the one at the Jewish Braille Institute in NY at the NY Public Library and got to try and improved model at the NFB convention. Five prototypes had been built at a cost of \$50K each. Then 45 of the Mark 2 were made at \$29K. The accuracy is fantastic. I never would have believed that a machine could handle English spelling so naturally. A Spanish version is in the works. They hope to have the cost down to \$5K by the early 1980's, with a machine capable of reading virtually any language. You would have a cassette library of linguistic instructions. If you want to read English, you feed in the cassette with English rules of pronunciation. If you want to read German, you feed in a German cassette. The machine will spell any word you are unsure of, read at any speed from 50 to 200 words per minute, skim ahead, handle multi-column formats like the NY Times, and have a tactile output for drawings. It now has a built in talking scientific calculator (with exponents, trig functions, ect.). It even senses the context and reads in an emotional, not a flat, voice. Now if they could only make it in the form of a robot that could pick up the book and turn its own pages!

At least one competing system is under development. Telesensory Systems Inc. will introduce a spoken word output module for the Optacon in the fall of 1980 for "under \$10K". The competition between the systems will force improvements and help reduce the price. The TSI system will require hand tracking of a finger sized TV camera across the page, 'Tho later models will do their own scanning.

I would guess that within 5 years every major college and public library that wants to bother will have one of these machines available. And as the price works its way down individuals will have them too.

This will not replace the talking book. The reading is not perfect, and you do have to stand there and either hand scan or turn pages for it. I do a lot of my reading by turning on the player while cooking, eating, washing dishes, dusting, doing and sorting the laundry, doing non-noisy house repairs, etc.

Most recorders and players for the blind have variable controls. Thus you can play an 8 rpm record at 12 rpm and read a 10 hour book in 7 hours. As you get used to the speed and change in pitch you can play it faster and faster. Distortion and the difficulty of the information to be absorbed place upper limits on your speed. I have now tried 2 different pitch restoration devices which use a microprocessor chip to generate new tones, eliminating the Donald Duck effect. The cheapest device available is \$80 and while not the best it does help me read considerably faster than I could otherwise. I think I will buy one before the year is out.

I was really impressed with another gadget called Paperless Braille. A French company, Elinfa, came out with the first production model this year. Two others are under development in Germany, one in Spain, one in Japan, and one in the US. From this proliferation of devices it looks like a tool whose time has come. Price on all is in the \$2.5 to \$3K range.

The basic device is the size of a portable cassette recorder and it works off of line cord or rechargeable battery. It has a Braille typewriter keyboard, a digital recorder and a tactile display output. You can take Braille notes very rapidly and read them back. It has a buffer memory for editing text. A single cassette will hold as much information as almost a cubic foot of Braille books. The machine has a 25 pin connector so you can hook it into a computer and use it as an I/O device, reading and writing. If you connect it to an electric typewriter with a 25 pin connector it will make a Braille copy of anything that you type. You can edit and correct the tape on the Braille keyboard, and then the machine will make the typewriter retype a perfect copy.

Unfortunately no cassette made on one of the 6 types of machines can be played back on another type. When and if Library of Congress picks one of these systems for its use, the others will probably redesign for compatibility.

The microprocessor chip is making many other new gadgets possible, including a talking computer terminal for between \$1K and \$2K, a talking telephone directory, etc.

MORE ON RABBITS, BEARS, AND CRUELTY

Last time I had muttered a little about my reactions to Watership Down and Shardock, especially the cruelty of the slave master in the latter. I just finished reading "Twilight at Eckenswell" by Anthony West (Choice Magazine Listening #92, July 1977, reprinted from Quest #77, May-June 1977). This article really brought things back full circle. Mr. West was a pacifist, almost Brahmin in his repugnance at killing anything, even insects, needlessly. When World War II broke out he bought a farm which was in the area where Watership Down was set. Every hill and town on the map in Adams' book was a real place well known to West. What he didn't know when he bought the land was that it had been infested with rabbits. They completely destroyed his first crop, so that he only harvested about 10 percent of the expected yield. If he didn't increase his return, the farm would be taken away from him. He what a terror that was; Hitler had to be defeated. England desperately needed the food. As he put in his article, he became the Eichman of the rabbits of Eckenswell Hill. The article was fascinating but grizzly, detailing how he had to go against all his principles to kill rabbits...1500 with shotgun and steel trap, then 3000 by gas.

I have recently read several other books which emphasize man's cruelty to man... Gulag Archipelago, (from the Xavier Society), and The Last Escape (from the Library of Congress). Apparently Solzhenytsen divided his story into 7 parts. The first two parts, about the arrest and interrogation process, and the transport process, were published in a single volume and this is what I've read. I understand the third part is out as a second volume, and I don't think anymore has been published yet. People might argue about a few details like the "Doctor's Plot" and accuse him of some exaggeration. However, there is no doubt in my mind that most of his book is true. I know from direct testimony of close relatives that many details of the roundup of refugees at the end of the war, and subsequent deportation of conquered nationalities is true. I can well believe the rest. This book was emotionally draining, with endless details of cruelty. At times I could take it no longer and had to rest several days and read something more innocuous while I regained my composure.

of cruelty. At times I could take it no longer and had to rest several days and read something more innocuous while I regained my composure.

Bishop's book, The Day Christ Died, written over 20 years ago, is now badly dated. Progress in historical and theological study of that era has been rapid. A book written just a few years later, Doctor at Calvary, disagreed in some points. And more recent books differ radically. Whatever one does or does not believe, a few basic facts are known. Such a man was cruelly tortured and executed by the morally weak, and politically fearful, or ambitious. This was but one of countless executions that occurred each year...all purposefully slow and cruel.

Ruth Kluger, The Last Escape, told her own story of working frantically to smuggle Jews out of Romania and into Palestine between 1939 and 1941. Few outside her militant group seemed to believe in the disaster that was overtaking the Jews in all parts of Europe. The madness of antisemitism that struck in all countries, and the resultant barbaric massacres are staggering. She sketched two pogroms in Romania, the first while she was there, the second while she was fleeing. These lesser ones are so horrible that it is hard to imagine the greater ones in Germany. Again, I was upset by parts of this book...but for different reasons. The opening chapters quoted her early fund raising speeches. The facts are well known today, 'tho they weren't then, and the tone was so emotional and hysterical that it bugged me. I can understand her feeling these emotions, especially in retrospect, but I wasn't prepared to sit through 11 - three hour cassettes of hysteria. I almost shipped the book back unfinished, but the hysteria calmed down and I am very glad I did finish it. Again, the cruelty of the Romanian Green Shirts (and the Blue Shirts, Brown Shirts, Black Shirts, etc. in other countries) is overwhelming.

Mankind does seem to have two contradictory natures, and you can see where the Gnostic belief in dual creation would arise. In every generation there are those who crave the gentle life and feel sympathy for all people and animals in pain. Then there are the "realists" who scorn the gentleness of the pacifists. I wonder how many of the MVD, the Sanhedrin or the multicolored shirts were real sadists or simply were trapped by their actions like Anthony West...that they hated what they were doing but felt that it was essential for the "greater good". Neither the pacifists nor the realists can ever understand each others viewpoints. Trying to explain this conflict must have resulted in literary works like the early parts of Genesis. The myth of the serpent in the garden seemed to explain evil and pain in the world. But these myths are now dissipated, except among fundamentalists. What explanations do we have today to replace them?

STF & THE PRINT HANDICAPPED

Print handicapped is a generic term that covers anyone who cannot read ordinary books for whatever reason. Besides the blind, it includes people who cannot hold a book and turn its pages because of arthritis, missing limbs and muscular or nervous disorders, and people with mental conditions such as serious dyslexia. All are eligible to obtain Talking Books from the Library of Congress program and to use most of the other agencies providing recorded reading matter.

John Boardman's compilation of STF related recordings continues in this issue. I asked John, as someone widely read, to scan the catalog of Recordings for the Blind and list everything which might be relevant. Of course no one is familiar with every book published and some which have been included because of the author's general reputation really do not belong, while others have been missed. I picked up two C. S. Lewis titles which John didn't know were fiction. If you see any titles here which you think do not belong, please let us know. I hope to have others scan the catalog for titles which might have been missed. Eventually we will compile a master catalog from all agencies. Agencies which I know have recorded at least some fiction titles include the Library of Congress, Volunteers of Vancaville, Jewish Guild for the Blind, (all of which have many SF titles), Xavier Society for the Blind, Jewish Braille Institute, Episcopal Guild for the Blind, King's Transcriber's Library, and Mensa Friends. If you know of any other groups we should consider, please let us know. Some regional and sub-regional libraries in the Library of Congress system prepare recorded books and magazines for their local clients, but will swap with other libraries so that their materials are available throughout most of the country. As an

example, the NH Library services for the Blind and the Physically Hadicapped has recorded the book Who The Hell Is William Loeb, and does Yankee Magazine and the New Hampshire Times on a regualr basis. I still have to find out if any of these have done any SF. Before the Library of Congress took over recording Galaxy Magazine in July 1974 for talking book records, it was done on open reel tape by the Cleveland So Society for the Blind, but as far as I know all the tapes were recycled and no copies were saved. Perhaps some tapes have been preserved somewhere and can be rescued for re-circulation.

Tentatively I do not plan to index the coollection of the Iowa Library for the Blind, which has one of the largest accumulations of STF in the country, for it is virtually impossible for anyone outside of Iowa to use it. They say they are supported by state taxes and do not have the time or personnel to handle the flood of requests that would result were they to open their servies to outsiders. As I said, some other state libraries produce their own materials and set up exchanges. These libraries exchange such materials and other services among themselves, thus making more agailable to their readers. Unfortunately Iowa disdains participation in any such network, saying they can produce themselves anything their residents might desire to read. When I approached Mr. Gertsenberger of the Iowa Library at the NFB convention, he said his exchanging with other libraries would be like the New York Public Library setting up an exchange program with the Podunk village library.

While at Galaxy, Jim Baen had started a SF for the blind project which John Pierce had continued. As I revise this part for final stencilling it looks like Galaxy might be gone. I have not gotten any issues on Talking Book Records since the November issue, and LofC seems to be gearing up to start recording a new magazine. I hope that what Baen has started can be continued and the work will not be lost.

Two distinct parts were involved in this project. When an isolated blind person writes in for help, he is sent a list of volunteers in his area. The volunteers can provide live reading and transportation to science fiction meetings. Most non-geriatric blind are mobile and travel extensively using long canes or dog guides. Of course everything must be in walking distanc3, public transportation must be available, or volunteer drivers are needed.

The other goal was to establish a science fiction library making more STF available on a national basis. At least three groups, the Minneapolis STF Society, Jack Chalker, and NESFA, have expressed an interest in coordinating such an effort. Just what each group would do remains to be worked out. Various individuals, and groups such as the Ottawa SF group, have volunteered to record materials. The NH library has a high speed tape duplicator which will produce either standard for special 4 track half speed cassettes from open reel or cassette masters. What we need is people to gather the copyright releases to circulate the tapes among the print handicapped, dub the volunteer made tapes onto 4 track master tapes for duplication, and maintain a file of back issues of recorded periodicals which can be circulated to new readers.

I also have a collection of about 20 STF and FSY books which were recorded for me by various friends, and I would like to share these books with others. I am sure other blind SF fans have similar libraries which I would like to gather in and make available. Again, these will have to be dubbed onto 4 track masters cleared for copyright, duplicated, and stored for distribution.

I was going to start the project with Geiss' Science Fiction Review, and John Boardman has taped several issues which have been circulated in master copy. However he does not have time to tape every issue and my alternative taper has fallen through. I will continue to circulate these in master until I can get a regular recording schedule set up. In the meantime I am working with people from NESFA and Noreascon 2 to make that the first totally accessable worldcon, with progress reports and Hugo nominees taped, and the program schedule avaiable during the con on a telephone answering device with a tape loop.

All of these proposed projects depend on the active cooperation of Eileen Keim, head of the NH Library and an SF reader of many years standing.

ON FAN HUGOS

The withdrawal of Andrew Porter, Charles Brown and Richard Geiss from the fan Hugo categories elicits memories of St. LouisCon when Jack Gaughn won both the pro and fan art higos to everyone's cheers. How attitudes have change. The pro Hugo was recognition for the work he had done for Galazy and the like, and the fan Hugo for the totally different work he has done for numerous fanzines. I detected none of the rancor that has surrounded the Geiss and Brown Hugos. Was Jack Guaghan doing fan art in the late 60s? Are ALGOL/STARSHIP, LOCUS and SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW fanzines? Andrew Porter says no.

A CLOSING PERSONAL NOTE

This is aimed at old friends to whom I am sending NIEKAS as a sort of letter substitute.

My mother has sold her house in Brooklyn and has moved in with me.

My son Stanley is doing very well. He is now 5 years old, talks a bluestreak, and wants to know about everything. He knows I am somehow different and that my eyes are "broken". Nancy has remarried and lives 6 miles from my home. I have a church annulment and so am free, but have no plans for the foreseeable future. We have joint custody of Stanley. He spends just about half his time with each of us.

It is 3½ years since my last job ended, and I am trying to do a little writing and am very active in volunteer work. I am on the Governor's Commission for the Handicapped, and chairman of one of its committees. I am secretary of the NH affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind. I was on the board of directors of the local Lions Club and local Community Action Program. I have just joined the state library advisory board and the Fostergrandparents board of advisors. These, all in all, take almost as much time as a full time job would, and I do not know what I will do when I find work again.

As always I am ridiculously far behind in my correspondence and my reading.

I continue attending a few SF and F conventions that are in the area, and hope to make more in the future.

(Ed. - ERM just participated in an NFB national leadership training seminar and has been asked to serve on three NFB committees. MB)

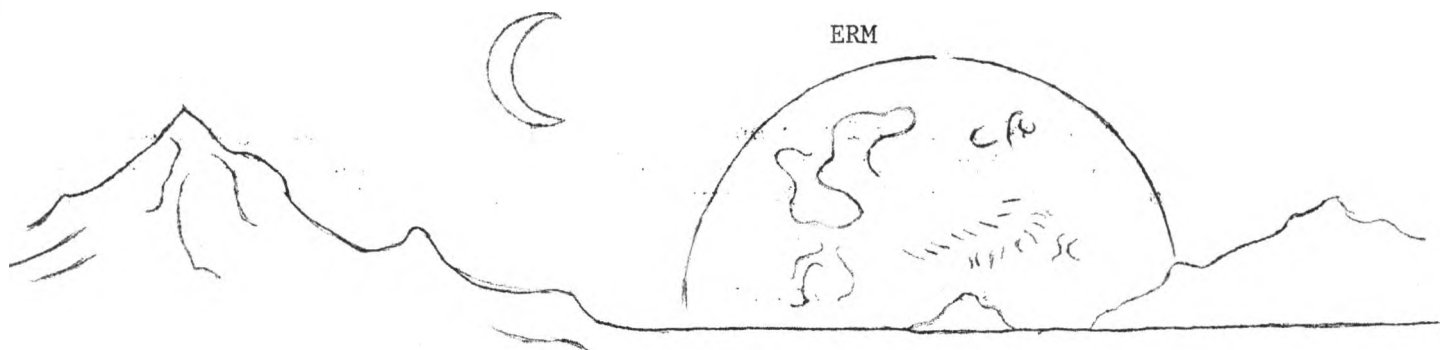
Last issue I described the new staff members. Since then we have acquired several new people. Rafe Folch-Pi has graduated from columnist to full coeditor. Rafe is a biologist turned computer programmer. Rafe has been an off and on fan for about a dozen years, is an unreformed trekkie and media fan, and is a rabid space freak and our representative to the Boston L5 Society.

Lawrence of Belmont, aka Larry Laflam, is a machine operator and is our chief artwork stenciller.

Todd Frazier, Sherwood's brother, works as a landscaper and grounds maintainer. He is our chief artist and helps with the layout.

Mike Bastraw, our new coeditor, is in his mid 20's and is the youngest member of the crew. (ED. - Not true. Todd E. is 3 months my junior. MB) He is a deputy sheriff for Belknap County and is also our chief stencil typist. He has much free time for typing stencils while on the midnight to eight shift. He has a very large collection of SF pulps dating back to the 30's and is a media fan.

We are looking for new material for upcoming issues. Please send any articles, comments, art, etc. that would be of interest to our readership.



ED. PEE ESS

As junior editor of this magazine of magnificent heritage, I have been prevailed upon by ERM to say a few closing words.

By way of introduction: "these are a few of my favorite things" (apologies to RR and OH): motorcycle riding, lasagna, entertaining movies, good movies, hockey (watching and playing), music (listening and playing), and reading.

Ah yes. Reading . . .

That's where it all started. One day a friend lent me a copy of Starman Jones by Robert Heinlein. The rest, as they say, is history. Since then I have bled myself poor buying SF and (to a lesser extent) F in pulp and paperback. Needless to say, it has been worth every cent.

Up until a year or so ago, when I first met SF (Sherwood that is) and, later ERM, I considered fandom a lunatic fringe and the fanzine, their bible.

I still do.

But now I see that it is a Noble Madness much akin to the psychosis which led to the Crusades, the American Revolution, and pet rocks.

The best thing about being part of fandom is being able to rap with other members of this strange sub-species of the human race. I constantly pick brains, solicit opinions, and check my own evaluations against the SF and F norm.

I see the fanzine as an important part of this communication process. The fanzine provides a forum for ideas and, later, the reactions to these thoughts. The editorials and columns allow us to present our musings for your approval or disapproval. The featured articles provide more grist for your mental mill. The illustrations are there to soothe, amuse, and (sometimes) confuse. The lettercol lets you comment on the whole shebang.

At this point in our resurrection, the lettercol is the most vital part of NIEKAS. It will let us know what is interesting to you. I hope that the current readership of NIEKAS (bless you) will hang in with us while we are picking up the pieces. I believe that the resolve is now present within the staff to make NIEKAS one of the premier fanzines available. We have some big shoes to fill to enable us to, once again, walk among the numerous fanzines already on the market. But . . .

FILL WE WILL!

See you next ish.

MB

(START WITH A WORD - cont.)

And that sort of balance does not come merely from a "crazy" idea. The idea itself is only a tiny part of the whole task. The real job is putting the story together part by part, sentence by sentence, word by word, doing it all in the right order and the right way.

I can tell you how I got my idea and developed it, but I can't tell you how I wrote the story, because I don't know how that is done. I only know I can do it.

, After the book was published, by the way, it received the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award, the two highest in science fiction, and that made me almost as happy as writing the book.

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THE END