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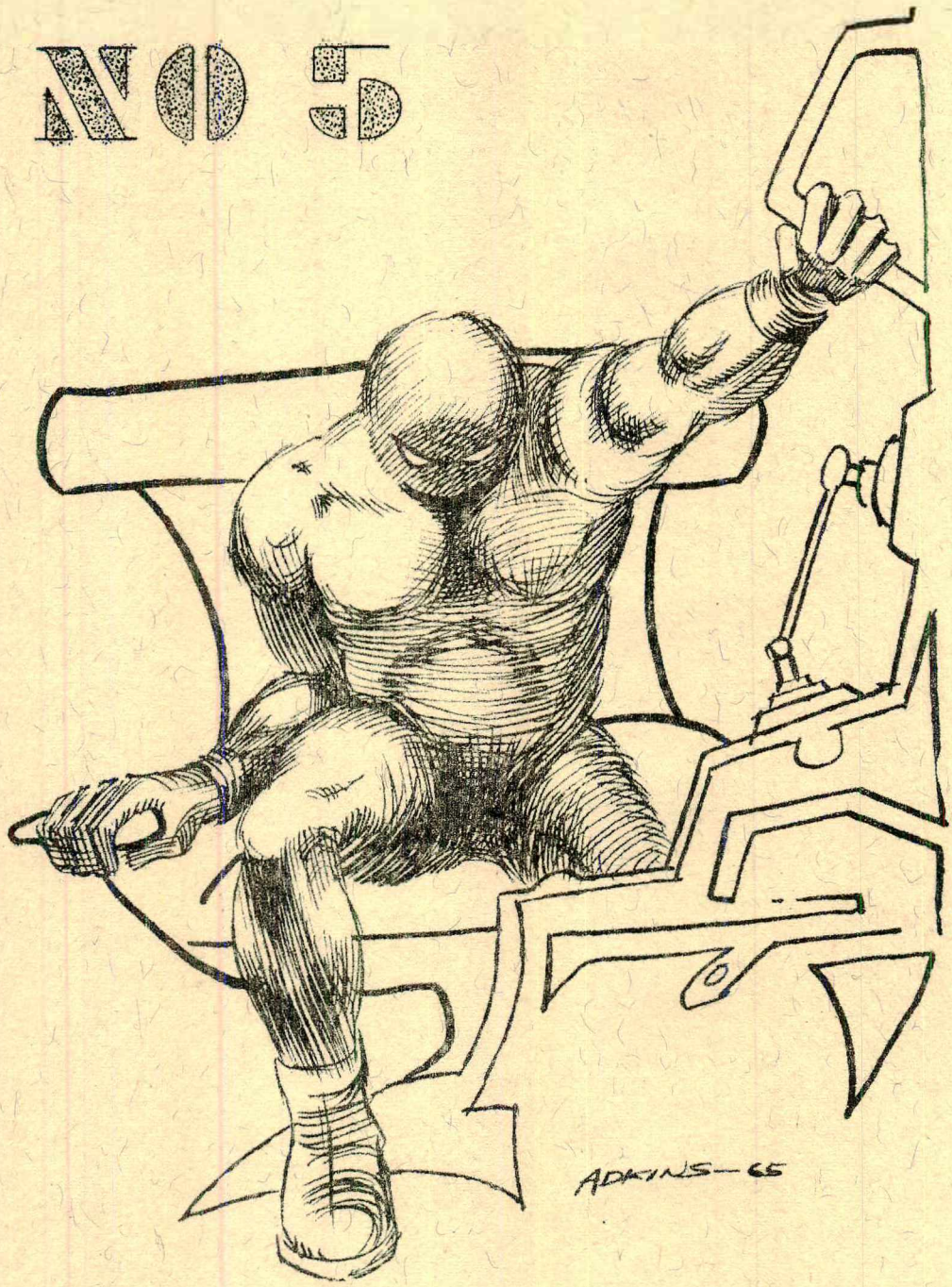
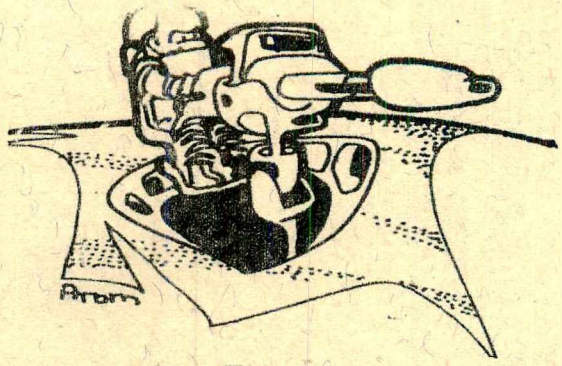


NYARLATHOTEP

Nyarlathotep

May 1967 No.5



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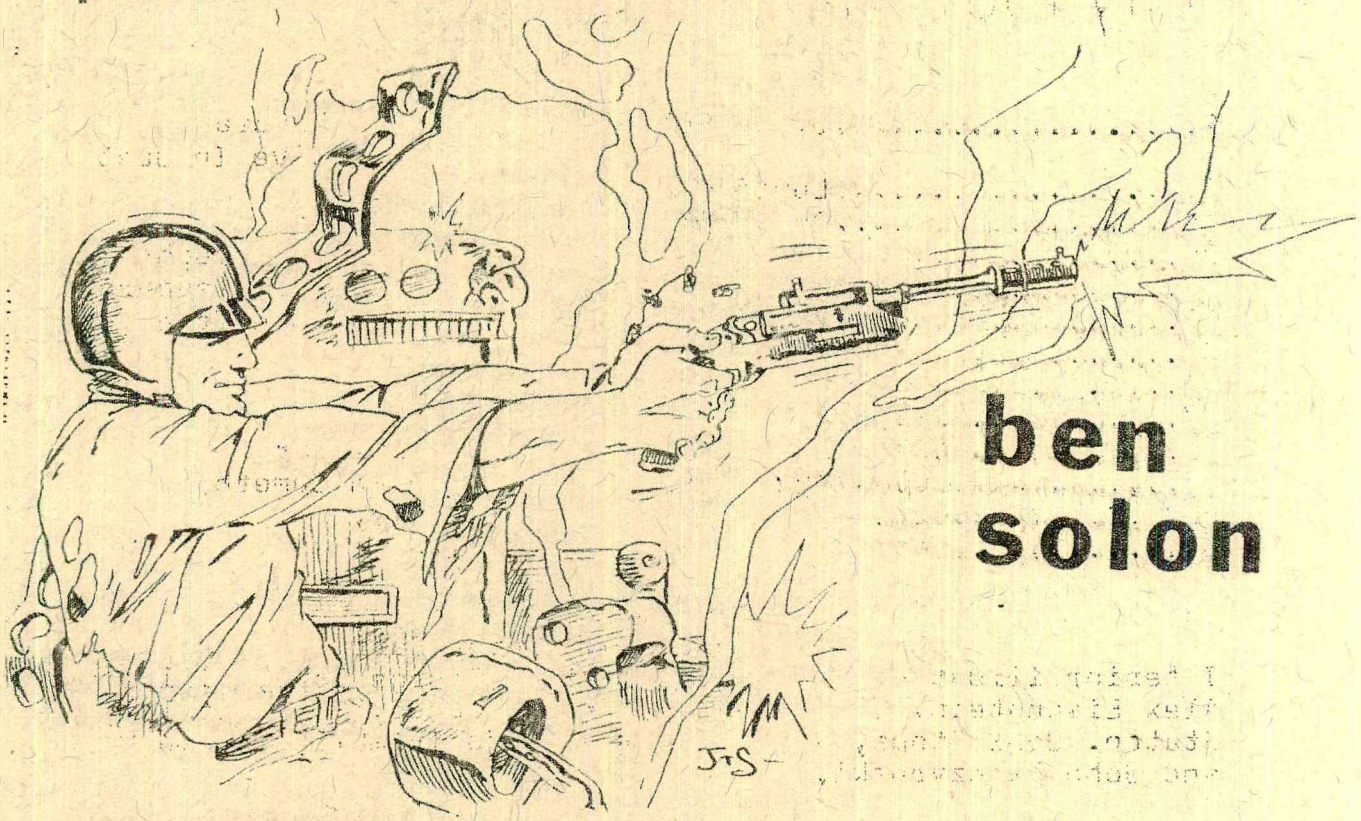


THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF HORATIO L. HACK

In commenting on the last issue, several people remarked that they were "put off by the slightly enormous letter column." If 14 pages out of 58 can sink an issue, then I fear that this one will fare no better than its predecessor--if anything, it will probably do worse: this issue's "Quagmire" covers some 15 pages. A word to the wise: this is just a fanzine; you don't have to read every word. If you find 15 pages of letter column boring, skip it. Fanzines should be read by fans, not by martyrs.

However this may be, I do have a good reason for publishing "slightly enormous" letter columns: Nyar, like most other fanzines, thrives more on egoboo than on hard cash. This being the case, it is obviously necessary that the letter writers be kept at a certain level of contentment, lest they vanish into the night. Believe me, this isn't as easy as it might sound: letterhacks, being human, sin and sin often. They are often boors, foaming at the mouth over this or that. They may send letters to "Nyarlathotep c/o Ben Solon" or some other such idiocy, despite requests that they kindly refrain from doing so.

But letterhacks do have their rights, even though the urge to with-

draw them is often too strong to resist.

It goes without saying that potential letter writers should be informed that their missives are subject to publication at the editor's whim, thus giving them the opportunity to deny this right or to phrase themselves appropriately. Even if a letter writer is a Loud Mouthed Jackass, he is entitled to both a certain say and the privileges of DNQ and DNP.

I feel that it is of primary importance to allow a letter writer his fair say on a given topic; this means quoting him exactly (minor changes in spelling and grammar are, of course, permissible) and in context without interrupting the development of his ideas, without the quasi-quote, and without abusing the obvious editorial advantage that allows the stencil-cutter to have the first word, last word, and any words inbetween. This last is obviously violated quite often--I have been guilty of it often enough in the past--; fans seem willing to go to Great Lengths to interrupt letters distinctively. Ed Meskys, for example, used a script golfball in his (*sigh*) IBM Selectric to type his comments in several issues of Niekas, while others, myself included, rely on less distinctive methods of interrupting. Brackets and double parenthesis are about the most common devices for separating the editor's comments from those of his correspondent.

The major consideration in editing a letter column is just how far to go in supplying egoboo to one's contributors: Providing the fanwriter with his egoboo is equivalent to sending the professional his check. A writer's greatest single reward is viewing that portion of comment devoted to his masterpiece in the letter column of subsequent issues of the magazine. Some editors therefore chose to publish all such material, which, while it may be pleasing to the writer, makes for a deadly dull letter section: Let's face it, not all missives are worthy of publication and the accompanying egoboo: Any fool can scrawl a few lines on a poctsarcd --many do--; but, on the other hand, someone who takes the time and trouble to compose a thoughtful and interesting letter should certainly receive a certain degree of recognition for his effort. My policy has been something of a compromise: anything interesting is automatically published, and the redundancy--if any; there has been precious little of it to date--is eliminated by finding what I've been calling majority letters and letting those stand for the general run of comments.

But if egoboo for writers is an absolute necessity, it is still possible to go Too Far; to turn the letter column over to mutal backscratching (or backbiting, as the case may be) strikes me as being downright silly.

I would suspect that most beginning faneditors get all enthused over the prospects of comment on a letter section dealing with capital punishment, censorship, or the future of science fiction. They assume that such letters will draw further interesting missives--I speak with the voice of experience in this matter. They may, but there is certainly no way of telling in advance. Nyar's letter column, for instance, has featured subjects ranging from old fantasy films to race relations to the future trends in women's clothing; from the death of God to Stephen Pickering to the gold drain. I can testify that the only safe prediction an editor can make is that his interests probably won't be shared by his readers. Letterhacks, contrary critters that they are, may very well skip over

an erudite discussion of the John Birch Society and instead spend several pages discussing the number of semi-colons in Robert Bloch's article.

FROM BAD TO NURSE

Some time ago, I wrote a letter to the editor of Berkeley Books asking, "Who buys all those nurse stories you and a few other pb houses publish at the rate of about a million a month?"

A few weeks later, I received an answer: "Teen-age girls, who else?"

That set me to thinking: It hasn't been so very long since I was a teen-ager, you see, and I can't remember buying anything from the "teen-age" rack for years and years--since I was about 12, in fact--; all through high school, my reading matter consisted mainly of "adult" books. So, in the interests of finding out once and for all just who did read those nurse books, I asked our next-door neighbor, a perfectly normal high school sophomore, if she'd ever read a nurse book. She said no, and looked at me as though I'd made some sort of indecent proposition. Did any of her friends read nurse stories? No. Did I make some sort of indecent proposition? No.

I was getting nowhere fast, so I went down to the basement book mart in Kroch and Brentano's and stood around near one of the racks on which a number of nurse stories were displayed. I had hopes that a teen-age girl--or someone--would come along and buy one. I stood there for nearly 15 minutes. I'd have stayed longer, but I had an uneasy feeling that people were begining to wonder who was that fellow standing there watching the teen-age girls.

I decided then that there was only one way to find out what there is about nurse stories that makes them so popular with whomever they're popular with: I'd have to read a few myself. I picked out a dozen at random and began what turned out to be an extremely ardous task.

The first thing I noticed about nurse stories is that they cost 35, 40, or 50 cents apiece--never more. I recall that the flunky who answered my letter explained that nurse books are priced for the teen-age market. This amused me considerably: perhaps my tastes have become more extravagant in the past few years, but it seems to me that I always had more pocket money during my high school days than I do now that I'm earning my own keep. At any rate, if it costs more than 50 cents, it isn't the real Nurse McCoy.

Second, all but a tiny percentage of nurse books have the word "nurse" in the title. For example: Once A Nurse, Holiday For A Nurse, Nurse Martin's Secret, Office Nurse, Chicago Nurse, and so on; there is even one entitled Surf Safari Nurse (I am not making this up!). You'd think they would run out of titles, and at times they do: a few months ago there were two called Viet Nam Nurse on the stands simultaneously.

As the titles imply, the plots are not all precisely the same, but it is probably safe to say that if you can write one, you can write a dozen. No devotee of nurse stories can possibly be unfamiliar with the names Arlene Hale (Mountain Nurse, Private Duty For Nurse Scott) and Suzanne Roberts (A Prize For Nurse Darcy, Hootenanny Nurse). It is also

reasonably safe to say that if you can review one nurse book, you can review them all. The names and places change; the romantic situation, which is the heart and soul of every nurse story, remains the same.

Invariably the heroine is a young and dedicated nurse who is in a young and dedicated tizzy over a man, a doctor, who doesn't know she's alive. She is a nice girl, you understand, so there are limits to what she will do to capture his attention. But he is either so dedicated to his profession or otherwise hung-up that she gets nowhere. Consequently, she throws herself into her work in an effort to sublimate. In the process, she becomes so physically and emotionally exhausted that she is vulnerable to the attentions of Another Man. This fellow is usually handsome, and he is often a patient, though he need not be as long as he is somehow flawed. Possibly he is on the rebound himself. Maybe he is looking for a mother instead of a sweetheart. Or maybe he's a *C*A*D* of one sort or another. Whatever his problem, it's something that appeals to our heroine's instinctive need to help others. And before long, she is asking herself: "Is it love?"

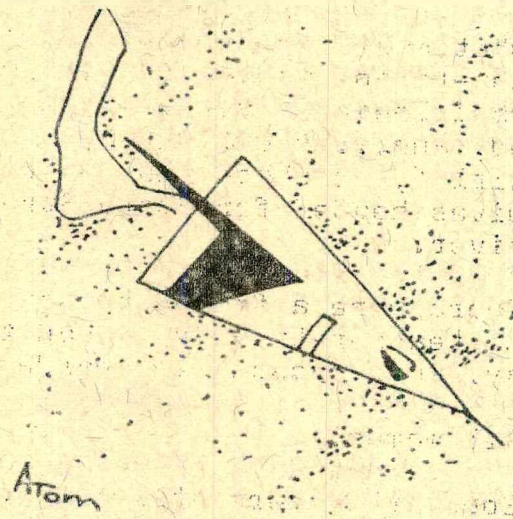
It isn't, of course, but fear not. Before things get out of hand, there will be a crisis through which he will realize her mistake and the doctor who didn't know she was alive will realize his. At the end they look into each other's eyes.

"Where have you been all my life, Nurse Dedicated?" he asks.

"I've been right here," she says. "You just never noticed."

"Well, you can be sure of one thing," he says. "I'll never let you out of my sight again."

And so, having found each other at last, they walk into ~~the bunnies'~~ operating room, hand in hand...eyeball to eyeball.



And I just hope that I haven't inadvertantly started 10th Fandom there.

THE DEATH OF CHIVALRY

Alex Panshin lived in Chicago for 10 months during 1965-66. He didn't care for the city at all. His dislike for Chicago was so great, in fact, that he took to paraphrasing Shelley: "Hell," said Alex, "is a city very much like Chicago."

"You're right," I said. It doesn't pay to disagree with Alex Panshin.

"And what is more," Alex continued, "Chicago isn't really a city. It's a small town with Delusions of Grandeur."

"Why do you say that?"

"I come from a small town, baby, and I know,"said Alex.

And, upon reflection, it occurs to me that Alex is absolutely right; the attitudes held by the average Chicagoan are disgustingly provincial.

I offer my bus riding experiences as a Horrible Example of sorts.

Like most Chicagoans (and city dwellers everywhere, I guess), I find it more convenient to take public transportation to and from work; it is slower than driving, but it's easier on the nerves. My suburban-dwelling friends sneer at this and tell me there is nothing like the commuter train for journeying to and from work.

They may be right; I wouldn't know; but for fast, dependable, intra-city transportation, I'll take a CTA bus every time.

Yes.

The bus I ride to work originates at Chicago's northern boundary and rattles, crawls, lurches, and spurts over a 10 mile route. It's slow. It's bumpy. It's dominated by the elements: a heavy rain can double the running time; snow can triple it.

And those are only the minor irritants.

What makes bus travel nearly impossible is the standing-up problem: the when-to and when-not-to of it. This became apparent the very first morning I began traveling via Green Giant. The conveyance pulled up, I boarded, and...women! Everywhere women. Young secretaries, older career "girls", scrubbed and sweatered high school girls, baboushka-bundled housewives headed for State Street. Only three other males--including the driver.

There were a few empty seats. I took one next to an attractive graying teacher-type and began to read my newspaper. As we stopped along the way. more passengers boarded.

All women.

Soon they were standing in the aisle. I continued to read, but I began to feel female eyes looking, watching, staring.... My concentration slipped away. Some of the standees glowered; some frowned. One wore a sweet, martyr-like expression; I could almost read her thoughts: "Poor fellow, probably has back trouble. And so young, too."

I tried feigning sleep, but with all the bouncing and jolting, I couldn't have decieved a third grade dropout. Even if I had managed to doze, I couldn't have slept for very long. A *F*A*T* woman in the asile was systematically banging her hip against my shoulder. And no one was crowding her. I was almost angry, but I reminded myself that I was in the wrong: I really should have offered her my seat, and I knew it.

The trouble was, she did too.

I sat and mulled it over. My hands began to sweat. I had never given up my seat before. What should I say? Whom should I offer it to? Not Hippy, I decided, but it was too late anyway; she had moved further back. Finally, in one convulsive move, I bolted out of my seat and blurt-

ed to a pleasant-looking fortyish woman: "Here, take my seat."

I breathed deeply and was beginning to develop a healthy inner glow when a tiny sixtyish woman whom I hadn't noticed said to her companion, "I wish somebody would offer me a seat. I've got foot trouble, y'know." Her friend, a lady of about the same age and also standing, nodded and looked at me very gravely.

The next day, I decided not to sit down at all.

The bus arrived and there were 10 empty seats. I stood. A few more passangers boarded and then still more. And yet there were empty seats. I began to feel somewhat foolish. We continued southward. I was getting as many looks as I had on the previous day. I came to the conclusion that the bus ahead must be taking all the passengers. So I sat.

And then the floodgates opened: At the next stop, half a dozen women clambered aboard.

I got up again.

Then, for some unexplained reason, 15 people got off. Again there were seats. Again I sat. I began to feel like the resident clown. (There was some agreement on this point: a bobby-soxer started to giggle; a working girl snickered.)

The next day I boarded the bus and sat. The bus filled up. I stood and offered my seat to the oldest-looking woman in the vicinity. "No," she said. "I'm getting off at the next stop." I turned to another woman. Same offer. "No thank you." This in a voice than would freeze lava. Was it because I hadn't asked her first?

That night I thought it all through and concluded the only way to avoid trouble was to get up and walk away from my seat, saying nothing. Next morning, that's exactly what I did. The woman nearest me smiled and started to sit down. Just then, another woman came up from behind and beat her to it.

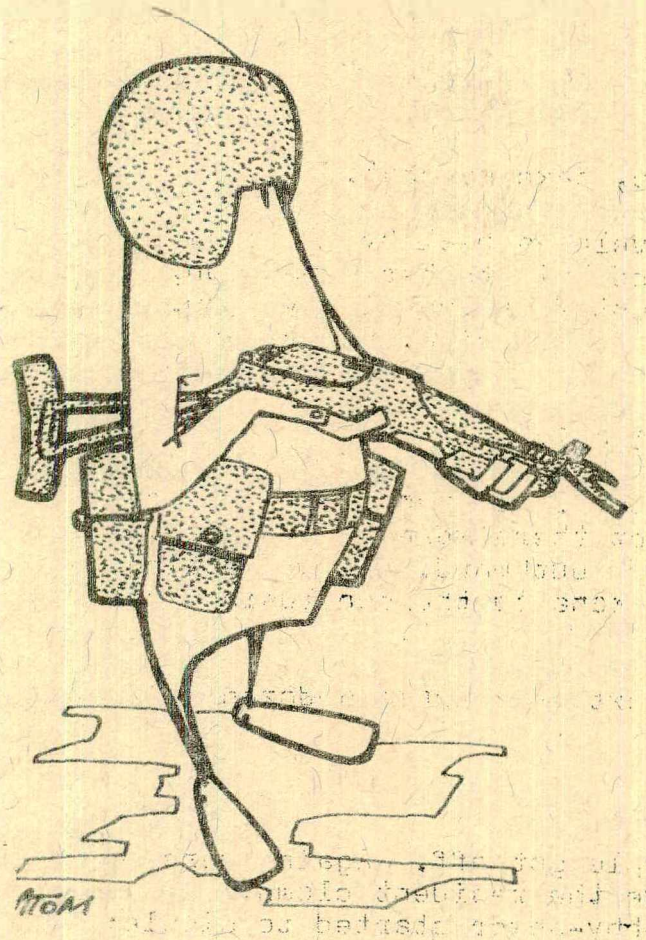
"That was very rude," she said. "He got up to give me his seat. Didn't you?" She turned to me. Several others looked up at me, waiting.

"I...I..."

...I pulled up my coat collar, got off the bus, and walked six blocks to work.

A DISTANT TRUMPET

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find a reprint from Psychotic 19; April, 1955. It originally ran as an installment of Vernon McCain's "The Padded Cell", a column he wrote for Dick Geis' fanzine. And while it is true that fannish etiquette demands permission be secured before republication of material like this, it is impossible to do so in this case: Vernon is beyond my reach, having died in 1958; and Geis' whereabouts are a complete mystery to me. However, I trust there will little outcry at this pillage: I don't think Dick Geis would begrudge us this reminder of Vernon McCain's enormous talent.



BE MORE CREATIVE IN JUST SIX DAYS OR GHOD WHERE DO YOU GET THOSE CRAZY IDEAS?

by Lewis Grant

A year ago, I did something which started me thinking about "creativity" and its cultivation. I joined Mensa, the organization for those in the top 2% of ~~[illegible]~~ "intelligence" (as defined by Mensa). To wit, you have to pass an IQ test summa cum loudly, or otherwise demonstrate that you are in the top 2% in IQ.

This started me thinking about creativity because I was then involved with two groups, one composed of (supposedly) highly intelligent people; and the other, while it contains some of the same individuals, is not specifically selected for high intelligence. (I suspect, though, that the average IQ of the second group is well above 100.) It is, however, composed of people who I think are highly creative, and I postulate that people don't get involved with this group unless they are above average in intuitive creativity. This second group, by the way, is "organized" science fiction fandom.

The reasons I believe sf fandom is extra-creative is first, because I think the mental attitude that makes one creative is one that allows you to read and enjoy sf, and, second, a large number of sf fans not only read science fiction but also attempt--sometimes successfully--to create their own.

After thinking over this question for six months (much to Ben's distress: he has been waiting for this article), I have come to the conclusion that there are three types of creativity, perhaps more, and each of the three types can be cultivated by the proper mental exercises. These three main types are:

1. Logical creativity or problem-solving activity. This is the Hi-Q type which produces good results on IQ tests. It is the classical types best expressed by Sherlock Holmes: "Eliminate the impossible and then whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the correct solution."

2. Intuitive or lightning-bolt-in-the-boxing-glove type creativity. The main difference between this type and logical or intellectual creativity is that the user of logical creativity can tell you the logical steps leading to his conclusion, while the intuitive type may never know how he arrived at the answer. His unconscious did the work.

3. Serendipity, or the facility for noticing lucky accidents, and making useful observations. The intuitively creative often come up with the same answer as the logically creative but much later. Their unconscious is the serendipitous observer. The highly intelligent are often very poor at this; they are the typical absent-minded professors. If you present the puzzling observations to them, they will often come up with the right answer, but they don't notice the strange behavior of the dog at night.

It is plain that neraly everyone has a certain amount of these three abilities, and some geniuses are high in all. I think it is also plain that they are three different abilities, and each varies quite a bit from one person to another.

There is an interesting discussion of the difference between the highly intelligent and the highly creative in Creativity and Intelligence by Jackson and Getzels. I heard Dr. Jackson lecture on the book at the University of Chicago some years ago. He said that a good deal of the research for the book had been conducted at a"nearby private school", at which the cognoscenti in the audience laughed a knowing laugh. We were right across from the U. of C. Lab School at the time, wich made me Suspect....

Cognoscenti: Those who know what the word "cognoscenti" means.

Jackson and Getzels first made up some tests which they thought showed creativity, and I thik so, too. For instance, they gave a group of students a paper with the name of a common household object (the kind Grouch Marx used to use) at the top, and the students were asked to rapidly write down uses for the object, such as a thumbtack or a brick. Some students wrote down answers like "building houses, paving roads, building walls, edging flower beds, lining blast fur aces, etc." Another group of students wrote things like: "smashing cockroaches, measuring lengths, exercise weights, hot pot pads, Stonehenge models, grinding up for red pigment, etc."

Jackson and Getzles arbitarily decided that students who had a high percentage of weird and unusual answers on these tests were creative. They then divided the Lab School students involved with this study into four groups. A^2 had high IQ scores and high creativity scores. AB had

high IQs and low creativity, BA types had high creativity and relatively low IQs, and group B^2 was low on both. (Let me point out that low IQ in the Lab School ((or in sf fandom, for that matter)) is only relative.) Groups A^2 and B^2 were dropped, and groups AB and BA were studied to see if there was any difference between them.

It became clear that there were great differences in personality, home environment, etc. between the two groups. The Hi-Q group came from happy, well-managed, well-read, intellectual homes. They led well-planned lives, because they apparently felt that planning was what intelligence was good for. They knew what they wanted to do at a very early age; their goal was, generally, to be a Big Name in a well-paid, high prestige profession. Their rooms, their personal effects and their minds were neat and tidy. They were future "thinking machines".

The highly creative, on the other hand, were oddballs from the word go. They weren't "sick"; in fact, they often seemed to have more fun out of life than the Hi-Qs; they did what they wanted, and were content to let the world do what it wanted. They collected material and informational trivia; their trivia, incidentally, wasn't the organized trivia that some people collect as a hobby, but miscellaneous trivia. Some woman, writing on Hi-Cs said of them: "They have junkheap homes and junkheap minds." Moveover, the materials they collected were not pieces of string, etc., to be used later in the "proper" manner but various bits of junk. These bits of junk were saved because there might be some use for them at a future time--even if it wouldn't be the use for which they were designed.

Hi-Qs were, in general, sercon and sobersided, which Hi-Cs had a wild sense of humor. For instance, one of the tests that Jackson and Getzels devised was to pass out pieces of paper with captions such as, "Playing Tag in the Schoolyard" and then allow the students to illustrate them. Hi-Q students generally illustrated the captioned papers with nice, conservative pictures of children playing tag in a schoolyard. About the furthest out was the boy who put his name on the school.

The Hi-C group, on the other hand, produced humorous and oddball pictures. One drawing showed children hanging tags on the walls of a school. Another sketch depicted little students in stahlhelms goosestepping across the yard: They were playing "Der Tag". One boy did nothing to the blank paper for the entire 45 minutes, then rapidly scribbled at the bottom of his paper, as it was collected; his caption then read: "Playing Tag in the Schoolyard During a Blizzard".

Creative types often didn't know what they wanted to do in life. If asked, they would reply, "Deep sea diver," or "Ballet dancer," or some other unusual profession. They apparently felt that they would get along in life somehow; they were having too much fun now to worry about the future.

People with serendipity are often described as "sharp" rather than "smart". Little escapes their notice. They are the individuals who notice Frudian slips or the fact that you're wearing a mismatched pair of shoes. They are also good at faithfully observing, remembering, and reporting events without confusing them with their personal prejudices or wishful thinking. Serendipitous people can repeat exactly what you said --even if they heartily disagree with you; most other people cannot.

They often misinterpret the data they observe; serendipity and high intelligence do not necessarily go hand-in-hand, but they are able to make observations that the Hi-Qs would not make, being too engrossed in solving a chess puzzle in their heads. I heink the best recent example of this is Marshall McLuhan who has noticed sertain effects caused by print, television, etc., but whom I don't think has analyzed them correctly. He is obviously of high intelligence, but it may be that this analysis is too tough for the 10 most intelligent men in the world--and McLuhan is perhaps only 110th. Only time will tell.

Serendipitous people often have a sense of humor but it is usually of an ironical nature, rather than creative. They see the Emperor doesn't have any clothes on. They tell jokes and are good at remembering all the little details that compose them, but they usually create humorous material themselves. They do, however, tell funny stories which have actually occurred; the kind The Reader's Digest specializes in (although, alas, a goodly percentage of them are invented by creative but crass minds). The kind of thing that appeals to a serendipitous person's sense of humor may be found at the Unique Delicatessen near my home: They have a dining room called the Unique East. Serendipitous persons get the point of most jokes and laugh heartilly; they are not easily offended; Hi-Qs, on the other hand, feel Some Things Are Sacred.

I think that serendipity is somehow linked to artistic ability. It is obvious that representative painters are apt observers, and that some modern artists are much more representative than they were formerly thought to be (like: Nude Descending A Staircase). I suspect that abstract artists are good observers of emotion, and produce designs which duplicate (more or less) those emotions when viewed.

Tests have been devised to show serendipity. One is a time test using pictures which have faces worked into tree limbs and leaves, tufts of grass etc. The underlying idea is that observant, that is, serendipitous people will find large numbers of these in a specified amount of time, while people lacking in serendipity will not. Another type of test is aimed at the subject's emotions: He is shown a picture of a Negro dressed in a business suit, riding on a subway car, while a white man, clad in clodhoppers, overalls, and carrying an open razor stands over him. The subject is shown this picture for one minute; then he is given another test for 20 minutes, and then asked to write down the details (or recite them to the examiner) of the picture. I don't know the percentage of times the gentleman in the overalls develops a fast tan, but I imagine it is fairly high. Serendipitous persons may show overt race prejudice, but they can still describe the picture accurately.

The most famous example of serendipity I can think of is the dis-

covery of penicillin by Fleming. Petri dishes are about one hundred years old and for 69 years people had been saying, "Damn, another patch of fungus!" Fleming was the first person to wonder why the fungus was surrounded by a clear ring.

Of course, any given individual may have these three creative abilities in widely varying amounts. When you combine this with the three main body types, the introversion-extroversion scale, the highbrow, middlebrow, lowbrow trichotomy, etc. it becomes clear that any given human psyche is a highly variable and very distinct object.

Intellectual creativity is painful, hard work: One reason why so many people don't think is that it hurts. Intuitive creativity, on the other hand, is pleasurable. Of course, people who are being paid for creativity and can't produce go through some traumatic hours, and there is a peculiar sort of restlessness which sometimes comes just before you think of a new idea; but, in general, intuitive creativity is fun. The agony comes in seeing your mental children stoned to death either because they are deformed or produced before their time. The latter occurs quite often, because, in general, it is possible to say that while the intellectually creative find answers to questions, the intuitively creative think up answers and then attempt to find the questions. Quite often the answers are produced decades before the questions have become important enough to make seeing the answers worthwhile.

In my opinion, we will be hearing a lot more about these three kinds of creativity--even though "creativity" has become the nonce word of the nonce, already. The reasons is that our culture, because of the peculiar properity of cyberculture, is accelerating in evolution. The ideas which were arrived at last year are no longer useful; new ideas have to be thought up.

Before the invention of writing produced the accumulation of information, civilizations evolved so slowly that there was almost no perceptible change in a given society in three generations. The only method of storing information was in human memories (slightly assisted by pictographs). This meant that the furthest back store of information was the earliest memory of the society's oldest inhabitant. These memories were likely to be useful because life hadn't changed too much. Therefore, for advice, you turned to the Old Men (who might be all of 40 or even 50). Grandfathers were relatively rare, and probably getting close to senility; the majority of the Old Men were fathers. This is why we have a large number of words for advisors in our various languages meaning either Old Men or Fathers, viz: Patriarchs, patricians, senators, aldermen, city fathers, church fathers, etc.

After writing was invented, however, it soon became apparent that someone, somewhere, had come up with a better idea than your father had. Pretty soon, your grandfather's ideas were old-fashioned; a relatively new concept in the world of ideas.

When printing was invented, and it became possible to reproduce a book accurately a thousand or more times, instead of inaccurately 10 or 100 times, the information explosion began. The chain reaction began when the scientific method, the first cybernetic process, was discovered and utilized. We graduated from culture, which is the piling up of

accidental discoveries, to cyberculture, where we produced our own discoveries. The nature of the creators changed the serendipitous, who were responsible for change throughout most of human history, to the intellectually creative.

Today, our problems are becoming so complex that we are changing from the logical analysis of the Automatic Age to the intuitive creativity of the Cybernetic age.

There are methods which enable one to develop the ability to create in all three ways. The schools, of course, are the best places to develop intellectual creativity; when they talk about Learning to Think, they are referring to exercise in intellectual and logical problem-solving. The main trouble with the schools is that they also expect their students to learn lots of old and obsolete information as well as lots of old but still useful data--it is difficult to tell which is which. Solving puzzles and logical posers is useful in developing one's intellectual creativity, but quite often the hard work involved is grater than the pleasure derived from obtaining the correct solution.

Creativity of the intuitional type is strangled quite often by formal schooling, and I am not at all certain that it can be improved or developed by exercises. One of the best exercises in intuitional creativity I know of is the one used by the Red Queen*: She told Alice she had thought of ten impossible things before breakfast.

If you tell this to a group of sf fans, they will say: "Of course, how obvious!" However, people who are low in creativity either don't get the point or are unable to apply it. This is why Lewis Carroll is basic reading for sf fans.

Another useful exercise is thinking up answers to Jackson and Getzel's tests. For instance, make a list of 100 uncommon uses for the common or garden brick. People who cultivate the habit of looking for uncommon uses for common objects may find it comes in handy when they have a problem to solve and are lacking the proper equipment. Even the "test sophistication" of knowing about these tests is helpful if you develop the attitude of looking at any problem as a test where a hidden observer is watching you to see if your solution is unusual.

There is a story, which John Campbell relates, about a test involving a pingpong ball in a pipe; the object of the test being to remove the ball from the pipe. One group has, among the available tools, a bucket of water. The second group has, for its thirsty members, a table with a pitcher of water and a dozen glasses. Guess which group pours water into the pipe and floats the ball out. However, I heard about a young man who took one of the rods provided, cut a piece of rubber off his heel with his knife, melted it onto the end of the rod with a match and fished the ball out with the sticky rod. He was creative!

Serendipity, I am sure, can be developed and improved by mental exercise; just learn to ask yourself, "What is that strange feeling at the back of my head which tells me that this occurrence is different." Quite often, people are serendipitous but have learned to ignore the feeling.

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*Now don't you all start to carol, "Lewis you're misquoting."

Another serendipity-developing exercise is the game "Rumor". You begin by writing down a story and repeating it to a second person. He writes down his version, and repeats it to a third individual. No fair repeating the story without having a written version. After the rumor goes through a dozen persons verbally, you compare the written versions --you will probably find that tremendous changes have occured. The most fantastic additions and subtractions take place, not to mention multiplications and divisions, extractions of the root and binomial expansions. Yet this is nothing more than a harmless story passed from person to person as part of a game. You can well imagine what happens to a true story spread in the same manner.

If you can learn to make your account of an occurrence as factual as possible, by recounting your version of a newspaper story into a tape recorder, and checking it against the original, you will be building a talent which is valuable in developing serendipity.

Another thing you can do is first repeat a statement made by an opponent, and then disagreeing with it. It is astounding, but not at all surprising, that a number of people argue with their own version of what they think the stupid lout on the other side must have said--he's the kind of dope who would say a thing like that, you know.

In Kim, Kipling describes another game which is useful in building serendipity. This is looking at a tray of miscellaneous oddments, and describing them after it has been removed. I find that after I read something like Science News, I can go back through the magazine or whatever and say to myself, at appropriate places, "This is what I want to remember."

Try it; you too can be a trivia expert.

"Freedom is a girl in a black sweater, toilet articles in a brown paper bag under her arm, angling for a pad for the night." FM

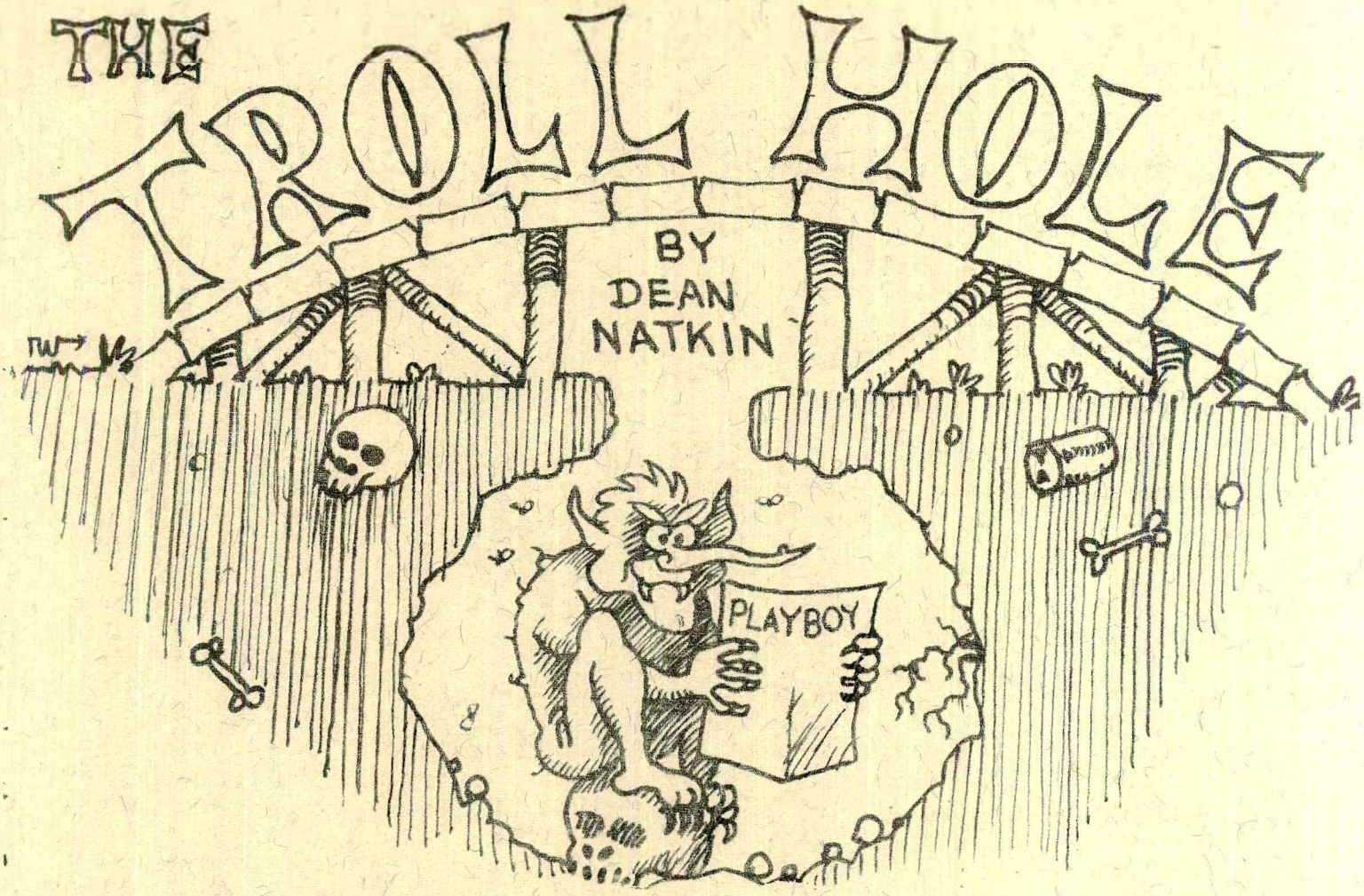
"Remember the house that Jack built? The English have modernized it:

"A tiny button fell off a factory switchboard. Two engineers tried to replace the button, which rolled under a cabinet. To move the cabinet required two carpenters, who tore the linoleum. To restore the linoleum took two linoleum layers, who found a heater that had to be moved first. To move the heater required two electricians, who discovered a hole in the floor. Finally, it took two bricklayers to fix the floors that supported the heater that stood on the linoleum that was under the cabinet that was over the button that fell off the switchboard.

"But this is no nursery story. It is a dispatch from Reuters. All in all, it took 18 specialists from six different unions to replace that button.

"Thanks to modern methods of organizing a labor force, an entire economy can now be organized into futility."

--Chicago Daily News; Mar. 30, 1967



AN OPEN LETTER TO BILL BOWERS

Dear Bill:

I read and enjoyed your column that appeared in the last issue of Nyar, particularly that portion of it entitled "A Modestly Immoral Proposal". Your comments on the shameful bloc voting that obtained--not won--a Hugo for ERB-dom were both pertinent and timely. I have only one bitch about that piece. Why--after suggesting a legitimate way to counter any future attempt to manipulate Hugos for ERB-dom--do you then chicken out by saying, in effect, that it probably wouldn't work?

Parlor psychoanalysis is always dangerous. It's not as dangerous as the real thing, but it is dangerous nevertheless. I will brave this danger and risk looking foolish by trying to locate your motive for chickening out in the words that you used to express your idea for preventing a repetition of last year's voting farce. I am going to quote a short segment from your column, Bill, as I believe that it contains the answer to my question. I have underlined those words which I feel give some insight into your character.

"Hence my modestly immoral proposal.

"Assuming for the moment that the NYCon III Committee will offer five candidates in each Hugo category--next year's

final Hugo ballot will put forth four science fiction fanzines and ERB-dom. Which leaves us nicely split...unless we play dirty, dirty, dirty.

"Let's consider playing dirty."

Immoral? Dirty? I don't agree.

My impression of you, Bill, is that of a man who has been victimized by a highly unethical trick, but whose own code of ethics refuses to allow him to use similar tactics in either defense or retaliation. Your mind is quite capable of inventing other and better tricks, but your ethical code will not permit you to put them into effect.

Let me tell you a true story, Bill. I have two good friends who formerly were roommates. One of them coveted the other's girl, so he went out and proceeded to steal her from behind his friend's back. The victim, after waking up, retaliated by going behind the thief's back and stealing the girl right back...after which he dumped her. I'll never forget the words that he used in describing his former friend's actions to me: "I'll play the game according to any rules you want; and if you want to change the rules in the middle of the game, that's all right with me, too. Just let me know about it."

Bill, the rules of the game have been changed, and I see nothing immoral or dirty about your excellent suggestion. I, as yourself, would prefer to have the former rules in effect, but the only way in which that could be accomplished would be to find some method to change them back again...perhaps making any fanzine that represented a special fandom ineligible for a Hugo.

But wouldn't that make fandom a less open society than it already is? Wouldn't this discriminate against deserving fanzines whose editors and publishers are honorable men and whose only crime--if crime it is--is that they happen to belong to a specialized fandom? These are legitimate questions that deserve answers. Unfortunately, I can't provide them.

Even now, our society is feeling the beginning of the convulsions that it must undergo as a result of the destruction by our courts of the balance that had formerly existed between the rights and freedoms guaranteed to each citizen, and the restrictions imposed upon them in order to secure the public safety. This is not an attack on the Escobedo and Miranda decisions, but an example of what can happen whenever a balance that has been established over the years is upset. The reason(s) for upsetting this balance may be legitimate, they may even be desperately overdue, but that price that must be paid for doing so is high; and it must be paid continuously until a new balance is struck. The same thing happens whenever a sharp lawyer finds a loophole in the law: A flood of inequities occurs until remedial legislation is enacted and a new balance established.

The Bibliophools have set a precedent in fandom, and there is nothing to prevent any other specialized fandom from taking advantage of it.

If one finds it impossible to play according to the new rules, then one must succeed in reinstating the old. It would be worthless to compete

otherwise. The old balance that was based upon the understanding that the whole of fandom was greater than any of its individual parts has been destroyed.

I don't publish a fanzine, Bill; the problem isn't mine. It belongs to you and Ben and every other fanzine editor: All of you have a vested interest in protecting the integrity of the fanzine Hugos.

What would happen if some publishing house decided that it would be worth a few thousand dollars to have one of the books on its list win a Hugo? What is to prevent them from buying a thousand convention memberships? Think for a moment what one thousand votes for one book would do to the final count.

The trouble with upsetting any balance is that it opens up all sorts of opportunities for imaginative operators to make a shady profit. Their operations can't really be considered unethical, as a commonly observed ethical standard that has been successfully violated without penalty is no longer operative and will continue to be observed only by those individuals in our society who are willing to risk being called conservatives.

Any man who still believes that "He who would surrender his liberty in order to achieve security deserves neither," is living in the far-away past. All security is achieved by the surrender of some liberty. The only problem is to determine which of our liberties we must surrender in order to achieve security, and which of our liberties we must retain at any and every cost. I don't know of anyone who regrets the passing of a man's liberty to sell tainted food to the public; or to work an employee seven days a week; or to hold slaves and whip them to death. But that's only because I've never known anyone who was actually in a position to do any of these things. Even now efforts are being made to take away the freedom of some of us to pollute our air and water, in order that the rest of us may feel secure about such things as breathing. Congressional action has been initiated to take away our liberty to sell firearms through the mail. Since I personally have no desire to overthrow the government by any means, I do not regard this as an abridgement of my liberties. However, if I did, I would consider any such legislation to be an intrusion upon my freedom to overthrow the government by force or violence.

There have always been sharp and/or unscrupulous operators who, upon becoming aware of a defect in the law, have exploited it in order to take advantage of their fellow citizens. Sooner or later, some operator gets too greedy and upsets the balance. His fellow citizens then proceed to see to it that his liberty to take advantage of them is curtailed, or even removed, in order to restore the balance.

The bloc voting that enabled ERB-dom to acquire a Hugo has set a precedent in fandom, but history is full of such precedents and the means to handle them.

I wish you success in establishing a new balance, Bill...or in re-establishing the old.

"The only thing wrong with block voting is that someone kicked the 'h' out of it." DN

THE SECRET NAME OF GOD (Part 2)

(Synopsis of what has occured before: Not much has occured before. Read on.)

"Truth is strange...even wild truth."
--Lord Buckley

There was no doubt about it. I was intoxicated. My thoughts resembled a superpride of lions stampeding through a catnip patch. Hundreds of lions chased their tails in a mad fugue orchestrated by James Joyce, as they proved to my satisfaction that Lewis Grant's concept in regard to the evolution of God was incomplete.

Don't you see? The evolution of God from many gods is only half the story--and the second half, at that. If the concept of the one true God has evolved from the concept of each object being inhabited by a god, then where did the concept of each object being inhabited by a god originate? Surely not by spontaneous generation. First there must be some sort of an awareness of the concept of godhood itself. And where could such a concept--one that could be easily absorbed by primative man's mind--be found? Why, in the sun, of course! The sun...and from His rays streamed forth the basic idea of Divinity, for whence it was diluted to each boundary stone having its own personal god.

God did not evolve from many to one to none, as Grant thought. He is a cycle that can only be compared to the expanding and contracting universe. When He reaches His primal unitarian stage, He pauses. Then... with the most transcendental Big Bang that you ever saw...He explodes all over the place, forming pantheon after pantheon of gods and dispatching them even unto the furthest corners of the universe in a most awe-full display of ecumenism, in order that all may share His presence. But no matter the distances involved, He will always return to us. He must, for we are all he has.

God, what a theory, I thought. I must discuss this with someone...but who? I noticed that I was knocking on Ahgdoud Abidjian's door. It was settled, then. I would discuss it with Abidjian. He was the perfect choice. How wise of me to choose him.

Abidjian and I once lived in Old Town, before high rents and button-popping teeny boppers so polluted the area with their presence that Bidj and I could no long survive in what we had always felt was out natural environment. We and our now scattered playmates had always thought of

ourselves as individual types who had an affinity for each other's company. Our former neighbors called us "Bohemians". That word, unfortunately, is now obsolete. We, however, are not; so don't push us too far, teeny rebel; or we'll counter-revolt, and Mommy and Daddy won't be able to protect you: We're smarter and meaner and more inventive than all your parents put together...and that goes for all the high-priced baby sitters that they hire to teach you in college,too. We could take over the world because our fangs are bigger--only we're so inner-directed that it is impossible for us to agree on anything--except that we hate you...we hate you teeny rebel, so don't try to spread that perfumed crap that your Sunday school teacher slid down your throat. The perfume has worn off, and it stinks whenever you open your mouth. You can call it altruism all you want--just like your Sunday school teacher told you to--but it still gives off the sick smell of masochism. Don't push us too far,teeny rebel; nothing is as dangerous as a Bohemian that is alienated from society--or as vindictive.

Let me describe Abidjian. It is important that I do so, for he is our best. He once made his living by playing the horses--then suddenly switched to playing the stock market with an even greater success. Once he bought a slum and rebuilt it. He did all of the work himself.... All of it, do you understand? Can you understand? Can you possibly understand a mind that would buy a building just because the roof sloped to a point that was just right for providing an acoustical perfection that was worthy of the sound system that he later designed and built for this one room. I have never heard such fantastic presence as I have in that room. Bidj take his music seriously, too. He once threw some guy from Connecticut out of the window--just because the fellow had asked him if he had Leonard Bernstein's recording of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony. I don't blame him either. Abidjian also has an entire floor devoted to film; he plays Baroque jazz on the krummhorn; and is recording secretary of the Chicago chapter of the Dick Butkus fan club. We have no leader, but if we did, our leader would be Ahgdoud Abidjian. His is an honest entity.

Abidjian opened the door. "Come in, Natkin," he said, "I've been expecting you." I followed him into the kitchen and watched as he reached inside the freezer and fished out a plate with something yellow on it. "It's lemon jello," he said. "What's on your mind?"

I began to work on the lemon jello. "Abidjian," I said,"I've just come across a great religious mind-blower. I was walking down the street, thinking about Lewis Grant's idea that the concept of God had evolved from a concept of many gods to that of one and then to one of no gods, when I found myself walking on Wells Street looking at the buttons that the teenies were wearing."

Abidjian got up and took a large bowl of jello from the freezer. "Those New York buttons really turn you off,don't they? Why don't you get your revenge for 'Don't Flush: There's A Water Shortage' and "Make Love, Not War' by making up a 'Don't Make Love, Make Water' button and flooding New York with them? That should piss them off."

"How did you know what happened?" I demanded.

"I subscribe to Nyar; I read all about it in the last issue."

"What did you think of my column?"

"I might as well take your column apart right now. It will save my having to write into Quagmire."

[I would rather have a good letter of comment than a paid subscription, Abidjian. Write it up and send it in, anyway.--BCS]

"WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT???!!!!"

"Oh, that was just BCS. He's my editor. BCS, I'd like you to meet my closest friend, Ahgdoud Abidjian."

[I'm pleased to meet you Mr. Abidjian. Natkin has mentioned you quite often.--BCS]

"Pleased to meet you, too BCS. Would you care for some lemon jello?"

[No, thanks. Being non-corporeal, I'm unable to eat. Good night, I really must run now.--BCS]

"Good night, BCS. You know, I'm glad he dropped in. I've been meaning to have you two meet for quite some time."

"It's just like you to have a disembodied editor, Natkin."

"Quit picking on BCS, Abidjian. I wouldn't trade him for any other editor in fandom. What editor besides BCS would let me get away with a stunt like this?"

"I'm not saying there's anything wrong with BCS. It's just that it's kind of creepy to have a voice come at you like that; and why does he talk like that?"

"All editors speak in brackets, Abidjian. It's an occupational hazard."

"Well, your taste for surprises has succeeded in making me forget my manners. Just for that, I'm really going to tell you what I think of your column. First of all, you've got to quit picking on poor Mao Tse-tung."

"What?"

"You heard me. He's the best thing that ever happend to the U.S."

"Bite your tongue."

"I should know; I'm the one who interviewed him. Remember?"

"Have my ears gone berserk? Take back your jello, Abidjian."

"Listen to me, Natkin. I know how you feel about the Red Guards wrecking the birthplace of Confucius in Shantung Province, but then you always were a sentimentalist."

"I hadn't heard about it. Are you sure, Bidj?"

"I got it out of the Peking People's Daily, so I can't vouch for its accuracy; but it would be an easy thing for them to do: Who could stop them?

"Now you listen to me, Natkin. It's time you woke up and learned to live in the Electric Age. You've been reading those books that say Mao is a genius. Those books were written by the power worshippers. If Mao has any genius, it's a genius for making people think he's a genius. Mao is a fugghead if there ever was one. He never won a battle that he either organized or led. He built a reputation by getting his troops in trouble and then letting Chu Teh--a brilliant professional soldier, even if he is a communist--get him out of the hole, a hole that he would have never gotten into in the first place if he wasn't such a fugghead.

"After Mao joined Sun Yat-sen's army, he never got promoted beyond orderly. It takes more than compiling an anthology of ancient Chinese proverbs to get into Mensa.... And don't let the static that's going on right now fool you. China may be a paper dragon thanks to Mao's fuggheadedness, but Mao is no paper chairman. He just wants to insure his wife's succeeding him to the chairmanship, so that the world will remember him whenever they refer to Madam Chairman. How ironic.... The history of China may come to a full cycle in little more than half a century.

"Who but a fugghead could bungle China into the mess that she now is in? What would happen if the stories about Mao losing control were based on fact? It would be a disaster. If the pragmatists--or as they are known in China, the conservatives--were to take over, the first thing you know, China would have a modern army instead of its present conscript police force. Next, they would probably prevent the Communist Party from meddling in the economy to the extent that the country might begin to prosper. And lastly, they would undoubtedly attempt a reconciliation with Russia. Where would that leave us? Wait! I've saved the worst for last: What would happen if they invited Chiang Kai-shek back to run the country?"

"Have you been smoking baked banana peels, Abidjian?"

"Such power shifts are not without precedent in Chinese history. Chiang's rule, despite its authoritarian complexion, has enabled Taiwan to eat three times as well as the mainland; and the people who run the mainland know it. They also know who built 90% of China's modern roads during the '30s, while eliminating all but one of China's warlords; and, if he had succeeded in eliminating that particular warlord, Chiang would still be ruling China today, instead of the warlord that he failed to account for, and we, Natkin, would be buried by the one true genius that has always resided in China: The genius of the Chinese people for hard and painstaking work. Chiang knows how to run an emerging nation; and the pragmatists--even if they are communists--are pragmatic enough to remain patriots."

"Patriots! Abidjian, you just said a dirty word."

"Wake up, Natkin. Men in power don't get where they are by reading stupid books written by power worshippers. Do you now see what I meant when I said that Mao was the best thing that ever happened to the U.S.?"

"I'm sorry I called you names, Abidjian; I lost my head."

"When you replace it, consider the advantages of a cooler model; and stop acting so humble in print. You aren't big enough to act humble. Wait until you've won a Hugo--or a Pong--; then you can act humble--like Harlan Ellison*. Another thing: Get out of the politics bag, or people will start thinking of you as just another would-be opinion-molder. It's all right to be an opinion-molder...just don't advertise it; and remember to hate the sin but love the sinner...at least in public. It is permissible to hate him in private. The best reason of all, however, for not writing about politics is that you don't have to answer letters written by people who disagree with your positions."

Do you people out there understand me now when I tell you that, aside from being the best friend a man ever had, Ahgdoud Abidjian is also a benefactor of mankind? My stomach exploded.

"Abidjian, you fiend! What did you put in this jello?"

"It's ordinary lemon jello. I merely substituted vodka for water."

"Abidjian, old friend, I've always said you were a benefactor of mankind. Have you named this concoction? Who else has tried it?"

"I haven't named it yet, but I fed some to Donovan; he calls the jello mellow yellow."

Thoughts of God began to integrate with the jello; religious ecstasy reclaimed me for its own. It had merely lain dormant until it sensed an opportunity to advance to a higher state. The intoxication that belongs to him who is stricken with God began to escalate through my reality until it reached a stage when it began to mimic sexuality.

This is dangerous, I thought, and must be stopped. To allow it to continue would be to risk having my psyche lamed.

"As the noted philosopher once said," I began, "What profiteth a man if he gain the entire world, yet loseth his pole?"

Abidjian stared at me in amazement. "What philosopher, noted or otherwise, ever said a thing like that?"

"Don't you remember? It was Peter Abelard." The frenzy continued to climb. "Abidjian," I said, "I am in trouble. My religious ecstasy has invaded my loins. What can I do to rid myself of it?"

The necessary answer formed in my mind with a hypersensitive rush ...before Abidjian could speak, I said: "I know. I must go to someone whose madness equals mine and talk this insanity out of my prostate and back into my mind where it belongs. Enough! Who can I talk to? Where can I go?"

Abidjian went to the freezer and brought out more jello. "Here, Natkin. As long as you insist upon being intoxicated, you may as well be intoxicated on something worthwhile.

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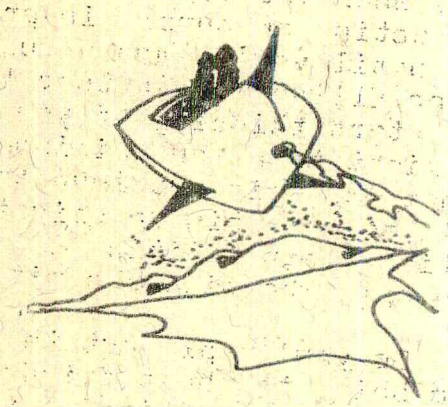
*A science fiction writer whose humility and modest behavior is a byword among fen.

"I have come to the conclusion," Abidjian said, "that the only religious people left in the world today are those of you who participate in science fiction--both the writers and the fans--, you and the astronauts. Your mission to achieve space travel is truly religious in nature, for it is a quest for God. Impatient after so many aeons of divine neglect, you go to seek Him out. True fen remain unsatisfied with the secular gods that are presented to them by the First Estate, as they recognize them for what they are: substitutes.



"Natkin, I'm going to help you solve your problem, for you will soon be able to discuss it with God Himself.

"Have you ever wondered why God has abandoned us to His surrogates? What reason could be strong enough to make God even consider deserting us? We are all he has, you know, so His reason must be strong beyond our understanding. I know that reason, Natkin; before the night is over, so shall you."

I immediately sobered up. Abidjian was wearing his grim look of determination. He never joked with that expression on his face. I felt like the English professor in the Asimov short story who was told that William Shakespeare had been brought to the present via a time machine and enrolled in one of his Shakespeare classes. I was determined not to repeat that professor's mistake and flunk Shakespeare.

Abidjian continued: "Do you know what Yahweh means, Natkin. Of course you don't: You're an enlightened Jew, so I'll have to tell you. Yahweh is God's alias. He did not reveal his name, as the ancient Hebrew fathers believed that to tell one's name was to put oneself in the power of whomever knew it. Yahweh literally means 'the incommunicable name of God'...incommunicable, because it is secret. The ancient Hebrew fathers were correct in their belief."

(My heart swelled with chauvinism. There are some things against which even enlightenment is not a defense.)

"To tell a man your name was to put yourself in his power, and you are going to learn the secret name of God.

"In Armenian folklore, there are tales of a rare plant which, when found and ingested, will put one in communication with God. I had always wanted to visit Armenia; and, when I was finally able to do so, I made it my business to investigate this legend. Do you want to know something? It's true."

Mighod, I thought, he's gotten hold of some LSD.

"It seems that this beautiful orchid...don't gape like that, Natkin ...there are orchids in Armenia. They just happen to be rare. They also grow in an almost inaccessible place: Russian Security is sensitive about allowing tourists to wander about their nuclear proving grounds--even if the tourist's heritage is Armenian. But you know me, once my

mind is made up--I even managed to smuggle out enough seeds to start my own orchid farm. I had to invent the Armenian Radio Joke in the process, so I like to think that the Russians got something in the excahnge.

"It seems that something in the orchid weakens Time as a dimension. Don't ask me how: This is fantasy, not science fiction. The starving Armenian who was reduced to eating orchids for breakfast was thus able to return to a time when God still resided among His people. I grew a few orchids, just enough to make the stock market my private bank. Whenever I need money, I talk to my broker, and he does the rest. I never overdo it, though; no use in killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

"I later had chemists isolate the active agent in the orchid, and I want to tell you that it's a complicated little rascal. I also got lucky. One orchid seed mutated--probably due to exposeure to radioactivity at the Russian nuclear proving grounds--and its offspring produce an active agent that is five thousand times more effective than that of a normal orchid. It is so potent that it eliminates Time completely; I was able to search the future for God; and, what is more, I found Him. Yes, I saw God. I didn't speak to Him, but I saw Him, and I recognized him at first sight.

"Do you want to know his name? Do you <u>really</u> want to know the secret name of God?"

I nodded numbly. Abidjian went to the 'fridge and returned with a vial filled with a <u>pusse cafe</u>-like liquid.

I began to shake. "Please, Abidjian," I said, "I'm afraid of needles."

"Don't be an ass, Natkin; this stuff is for chug-a-lugging. It is an essence distilled from those Armenian orchids I told you about."

"Could I have some jello as a chaser?"

"No. If you are going to gaze upon the face of God, you will need a clear head and even clearer instincts. Don't be afraid. If will be necessary for you to pass through time. This orchid juice is merely the medium through which you will pass."

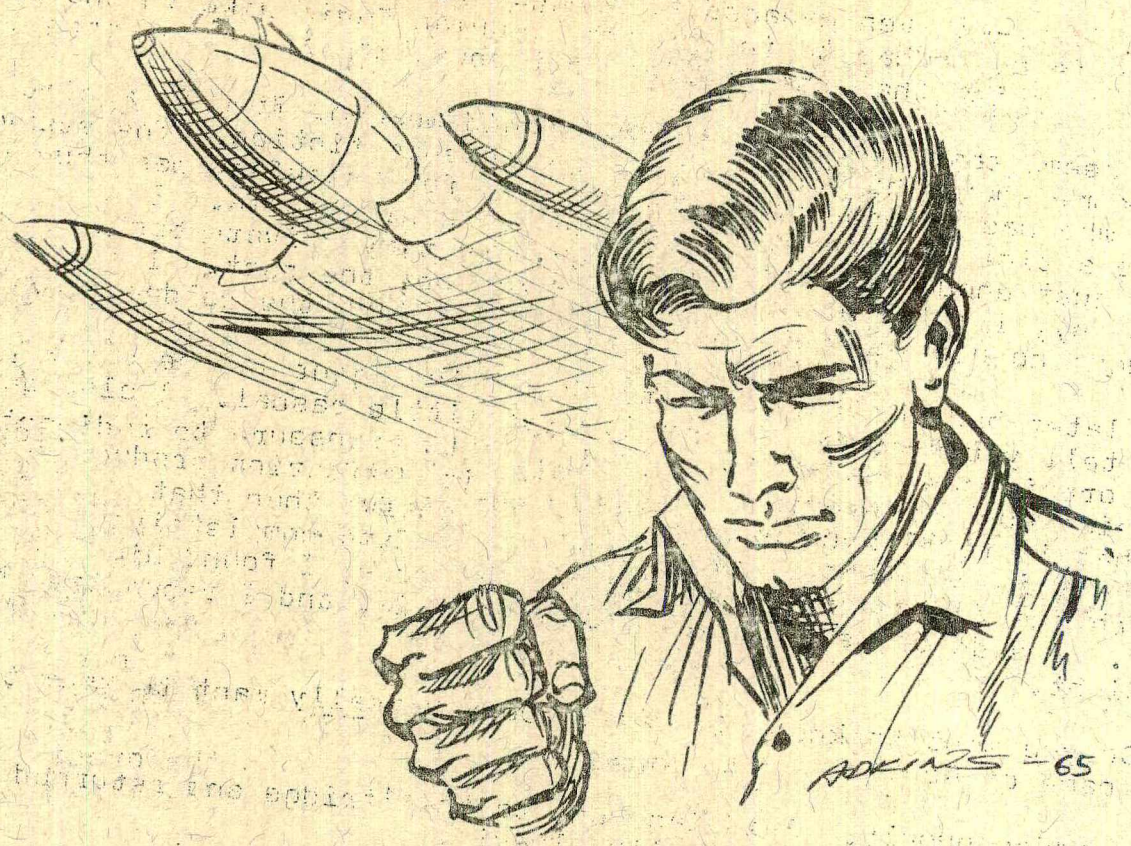
"Now I understand: The medium is the passage."

"Drink!"

I drank. My world view altered as I sensed the absence of Time. I permitted my God-hunger to intuit the whereabouts of my quarry and how best to locate Him. At once I was standing beside a spare figure whose sensitive features filled me with joy. I cannot describe this joy, as it was an entirely new emotion. Joy is but a convenient word which I use as a pointer...I felt completion as it worked and understood the meaning of meaning. I was elated. My new ecstasy had surpassed that of religion and even of sex itself. The ecstasy of knowledge always does. The entire history of our planet now made sense to me.

The secret name of our Creator is Baron Victor Frankenstein.

(To Be Concluded)



HARLAN ELLISON

I cannot speak for ERB-dom in the matter of Hugos, but I can certainly speak for myself. And I can even spell better than Mr. Bill Bowers: the word is spelled t-h-o-u-g-h-t, not t-h-o-t. But then, perhaps Mr. Bowers' twisting of grammar is indicative of further disorientation. He states as a fact that I personally asked for my Hugo. If he has some substantiated proof of this, I insist he submit same. If he hasn't, then let him apologize like a man, or continue to squeak like a fink (one of the lesser rodenta).

Not having the specific figures on the balloting before me, I cannot give exact figures, yet I offer Mr. Bowers the statement of Mr. Ben Jason, who was in charge of the awards, that my story,"'Repent Harlequin!' Said The Ticktockman" polled more votes than the next two candidates put together. If Mr. Bowers believes I personally asked each and every one of those voters to vote for me, then he must believe that fans are clots, who will vote for someone merely because he begs long enough. He credits himself with far more nobility than he seems ready to proffer on his contemporaries.

Perhaps it is tunnel-vision on my part, but I happen to think the story was a good one, and I would have voted for it, so I don't think the brevity of Mr. Bowers' comment is going to do much in the way of con-

AN OPINIONATED THOUGHT

vincing me the story was a piece of shit. Nor do I think it will convince the three anthologists who selected it this year (and one other, a certain Miss Merril, who wanted it but could not get it, because it had already been selected for the Carr/Wollheim "best"), nor the writers who voted it a Nebula, nor the several hundred people, both here and abroad, who have written me personally to say how much they enjoyed the story. If Mr. Bowers' personal taste does not run to stories such as mine, let him say so, but he should truly force himself to restrain his flyaway tongue in asserting I asked for the Hugo personally.

Further, and in a general vein, allow me to say that I have noticed no great gobbets of taste in the past selection of Hugo winners by the fans. It is always the loudest, or the most clique-ish, or the most publicized work that gets the award, every year. I have seen Cat's Cradle and Rogue Moon and The Whole Man and The Lovers lose, while far lesser novels by Great Old Giants Of The Genre have won strictly because the fans knew them. Don't talk to me of giving Hugos to the best, friend Bowers, when Phil Farmer has never won a Hugo, nor Ted Sturgeon, nor Ray Bradbury, nor Kurt Vonnegut, nor J.G. Ballard, nor dozens more. When you start to think about the ones who haven't won, you tend to think, "Well, hell, he must have once," but if you check it out, you will find the list is staggering, while the Heinleins and the Simaks have won more than their share for works which I personally (if it works for Bowers, it works for me) feel were inferior.

Now we get to the real nitty-gritty of the problem. Mr. Bowers is offended by my arrogance in thinking my story was good enough to win beforehand. Well, Mr. Bowers, let me assure you in full that the most I did in the way of "campaigning" was to tell people I liked my story, and they should read it, and if they like it, to vote for it. Would you rather I did the poormouth humble Jimmy Stewart-shitkick routine and say, "Aw shucks, it ain't much,"? That may be your style, friend, but it ain't mine. I'm sorry you don't have the faith in your work that I have in mine. I see nothing wrong with pumping for your own work when you feel it has merit. I bought no votes, bribed no votes, intimidated no votes, and certainly didn't bash anyone in the head to get them to vote for me. So what means this "asked-for" jive/junk...?

And I see nothing wrong, when I think about it from even your warped and off-center position, with ERB-dom taking an ad asking for attention to its potential for a Hugo. The persisting myth in fandom that there is something basically distasteful or even (as you seem to think, Bowers) dishonest in letting people know you are up for an award, is a kind of lunacy I cannot fathom. If the greatest science fiction novel of the past 10 years was being run in The Orchid-Growers Gazette, would it be dishonest for the author to bring the work to the attention of fans who might never see it? (In point of fact, most of them don't even read Atlantic or Harper's, much less Playboy. They think the universe is bounded on all four sides by Analog, cheap paperbacks and fanzines. They refuse to buy hardcovers, they never poke their heads out beyond the genre magazines, and their tastes are in the main so secular, they would no more think of nominating or voting for Anthony Burgess than they would of ignoring the cheapest piece of nonsense by Laurence Janifer.

What it boils down to is this: Mr. Bowers does not like to have to play in the big arena. He wants the backwater eddy of the genre to remain

the status quo. He wants the whim and fancy of the few to govern the most important award science fiction has to give. He is not prepared to let the mass of fans (and even outsiders, dammit) get in on the action. What he is saying in his brief and insulting "thot" is that too many of the out-group are deciding for his in-group what he will revere this season. He doesn't like it. He want to clutch sf to his bosom and keep it suffocated and safe. Well, them days is gone, Bill-boy. We are in the world now, and even if you don't like what the others call "best", you'll just have to live with it.

And go ahead Bowers, tell us how few people you spoke to, in behalf of Double:Bill when it was up for a Hugo. Let him cast the first stone who is without whatever....

Just to shut you up, boy, I may have to win another Hugo next year. The difference between you and me is this: I know I can do it, and you're afraid I can.

Keep trying, some day you may get out of the fanzine playpen and exchange punches with the big boys.

Those who can't...bitch.

"A fanatic is a man with the courage of his compulsions." DN

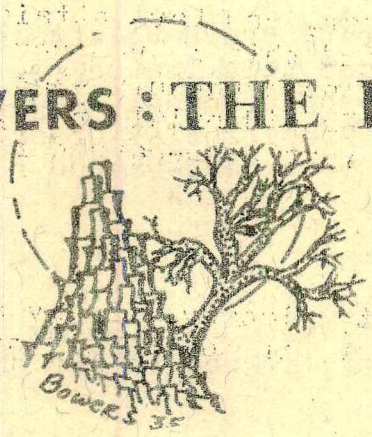
The Mantle of Shakespeare

If this poem
lacks rhyme and meter.
and all the other outworn devices
like, for instance,
alliteration and assonance,
it's because I don't know
an anapest
from a trochee,
and my rhyming dictionary
was lent to a friend
who writes greeting cards.
He doesn't know an anapest
from a trochee
either,
but we admire each other's work
tremendously.

--Flanders Modrian

"Flanders Modrian's poetry has that certain something...that certain yop tvoi u mat." PE

BILL BOWERS : THE LOVELY LEMON TREE 2



IN SEARCH OF A PURPOSE

Maybe you can't beat the system; but you sure as hell can clip a few of the corners.

By the time you read this, I'll have been active in Fandom some five and a half years...and in the U.S. Air Force a little over two years.

Comparison--to one who is currently, voluntarily 'stuck' in both --is inevitable; whether desirable or not, that is a moot point.

Therefore....

I suppose that it is obvious that both Fandom and the Military can be considered analogous to the basic life cycle of birth, growth, and eventual death--even in admitting that both are, at best, a slightly distorted view thereof.

The fact that one is basicly desirable, while the other is abhorrent is, it seems, merely the dictates of one individual's peculiar tastes in such matters. The fact that one, we like to think, demands a certain level of 'intelligence' above the basic norm, while the other seems dedicated to the proposition that the less 'intelligent' you are, the happier you'll be--neither of these suppositions can be considered FACT, per se.

Or can they?

Let's take a look and see:

Firstly, you are presumably born, hatched, or whatever; you enter Fandom as the rankest of Neos; you join the Military as a basic, a jeep. Slowly, or swiftly, you gradually mature. (At least physically.) You somehow flounder through adolescence, presumably to become 'of age'; you letterhack, publish scores of crudzines, and write reams of stories enjoyable only to yourself, before finally embarking on the eternal FAPA Waiting List; or you leave Basic, somehow manage to struggle through Tech. School or OJT, and finally receive an assignment as Permanent Party to some base you've never heard of.

Now you are middle-aged, dormant, and patiently or no, only awaiting Death, now you have finally reached that fannish apex--FAPA--and although you may be referred to, in solemn and sombre tones, as Brilliant Deadwood, you have essentially passed from beyond the ken of those who still retain

some degree of activity; now, in a year, you have attained the required skill level in your unchosen field, and this leaves you with only three years to kill...either constructively or drunkenly--but at least you know the date, barring Global War or Presidential Order, or your sought-for Death, and the passing beyond to your hard-earned reward...Blessed Civilian Status.

Yes.

A pretty picture...no? (Alright, already...So my prejudices show. But then, what else are prejudices for, if not to air on occasion?)

A pretty picture...Yes!

However, so much for generalities. Let's examine a specific...a sucker who has inadvertantly fallen prey to all three. Me.

Fandom...I enjoy, but sometimes wonder why; the Air Force I abhor, and always know why. As to the Life itself, I'm a neutral on the subject. I mean, it's an interesting enough journey, but I wouldn't want to make an eternal career of it. After 23 years, it has yet to become overtly undesirable...but it has its ups and its downs.

And so...just what does all this tend to prove; or, at least, seem to prove?

I suspect that basically, it tends toward proving that I have been involved in one of the Three Games a mite Too Long. And, naturally, I also have my suspicions as to which is the culprit.

For all my sometimes disparaging remarks on Life--made, I suppose, to uphold the age-old concept of the Angry Young Man--I have in the past (and have all intentions of doing so in the future) received a fair amount of 'kicks' from it...and I'm certainly not about to willingly resign from it, and trade it in for the proverbial plot six feet under.

This leaves Two.

Although I've never really dug deeply into my reasons therefore, I strongly suspect that I'm really a FIAWOLer. Certainly--although a majority of those around me at present would tend to disagree--my at times tenous contact with Fandom has had a large part in enabling me to retain some degree of sanity during the past two years. (And I certainly expect it to prove even more helpful in the next two.)

There remains only the Third--the Service.

My beliefs and opinions thereof are doubtlessly as illogical and unfounded as the Service itself is. That the Service is as inefficient and red-tape-ridden as any other sub-brance of the Government (and I had almost four years experience working with defense contracts before I joined) is, I know, a firm fact. A bit more opinionated, perhaps, is my equally firm belief that no one with a molecule of intelligence or personal incentive has any reason to make a career of the Military.

Oh, I'm not saying that I can't see why some do just that; it can

prove tempting, even, at times.

For the Service is security, personified; it is, if you will, Utopia in Our Own Time. You put up with a certain amount of bullshit, and you forget about calling your life your own. In return you are clothed, fed, and bedded--why, you even receive an allowance in addition to All This. At least enough for a pack of cigarettes a day.

It's also ever so Noble and Praiseworthy to be a lifelong Defender of God, Country, and Cherry Pie.

So I may wonder about the relative 'smartness' of the career-types; but then, that's their problem, isn't it?

It's not for me.

Now I don't believe that I've ever been accused of so dreadful a crime as being overly ambitious; I'll take the easy way out--every time.

But I do, on occasion, like to believe that I've got enough get up and go to be able to manage my life on my own. (This is undoubtedly as naive as the decision which led to my joining the Air Force rather than taking the draft--to quote 'get an education' unquote.)

No doubt, after two more years, I'll look back and say--as so many have said to me--: "I wouldn't do it again for anything; but I wouldn't take a million dollars for the Experience." (Try me...just try me!)

Right now, however, I can't help but feel that I have acquired all the 'Experience' that I can stand, already, in the first two years--and that the remaining two years will involve only the agonizing killing of time. Now this is a 'piss-porr' attitude, I have been told; it makes the Service useless to me...as well as vice versa. (I can't get overly concerned about the latter...sorry.) Be that what it may...it's my attitude of the moment--may you have an equally poor attitude for your very own!

Cheerio!--all you merry Draft Dodgers Out There.

HOY VAY! HERE COME THE PONGS!

Change is the birth pains of progress. Or so they say.

The NYCon III Committee members are obviously the current prophets of Progress in our little fannish circle. Not only will we have, this Labor Day weekend, a real live Fan Guest of Honor but also a brand new set of fan awards named in honor of one of said FGOH's many-flavored alter egos. In triplicate, no less: Best Fan Writer; Best Fan Artist; and Best Fanzine...or something like that.

The title? Well, would you believe 'Pongs'?...

I thought you might not.

But we must admit that this is certainly a Step on the NYCon Committee's part, and seeing as how we've been discussing progress, it must be a step forward. And since all we fine star-begotten souls keep our thoughts far up, ahead, lest we be accused of being mid-twentieth century hicks (even though Harlan Ellison, he of another Committee, says we dress as such), we of the fan multitudes must, of necessity, instantly cheer this great step forward that has come to pass in our own time.

However...in the brief lull before we strike up the band...I would like to interject one minor quibble. I know that none of us really gives a damn what that big, wide mundane world thinks about our little anti-intellectual group's self-awards, but it seems to me that recently I've been seeing quite a few books with the word 'Hugo' splashed across the cover. Hmmm...Let's develop that a little....

Naturally, since you're the crazy kook who reads that 'stuff' someone who is not With It notices a paperback in your hand by Hugo Award Winner John Doe and begs...well, asks...you to tell them all about this Hugo bit. Being a 103% Neffer, you naturally launch into an extended spiel about those Historic Times when Our Father in Gernsbackania created *Amazing* *Stories* from Pre-Atomic Darkness. Then you give him a capsule review of The Immortal Storm and all those Nasty Commies 'way back when, the gleam of a born Messiah burning in your eyes.

After 15 minutes, the questioner's snoring interrupts your line of attack, so you reach for the emergency cord and say, "It's an award named after Hugo Gernsback; he publishes *Sexology*."

Presto! You are once more in command of the situation, and your now alert listener is panting with barely repressed desires. He grabs you forcibly by the sweatshirt collar, and breathes some of that stuff that may be dangerous to your health in your face. "But I didn't know there was sex in science fiction!"

At once you assume the role of the superior being you truly are, and proceed to enlighten this sadly misinformed, abject excuse for a human being. "Well, it's a rather closely guarded secret, and I'm not really sure I should tell you, (IN A WHISPER) but some of our more mercenary authors actually write for the girly magazines!"

"You don't say?"

"Yeah...Asimov, Bradbury, Sturgeon, Ellison, etc. But that's not all: In the March 1967 issue of The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, the field's most penetrating and incisive reviewer, none other than Judy Merril Herself, has at last condoned sex in science fiction! In fact, she's even asked for more of it, and assigned those authors who will be held responsible for providing it, by name!"

...and as the scene slowly fades, we see the brand-new convert busily underlining all the dirty passages in Earth Abides.

+ + +

+ + +

Alright, already...so it's not the easiest thing in the whole wide world to explain what a Hugo is. A fanzine Hugo, even less so. ("But this is the way Bradbury started!") It's a difficult task; but not an im-

possible one. But let's examine the wholesome fun involved in explaining an object known as a 'Pong' to your friend, neighbor, or broadminded relative.

"What's a...uhhh...Pong?"

"Uhh...it's an award named after Hoy Ping Pong."

"Hoy Ping Pong!!! You've got to be kidding!"

"Well, actually, that's a pseudonym used by a science fiction fan called Bob Tucker."

"...called Bob Tucker?"

"He's written professionally under the byline of Wilson Tucker."

"...byline?"

"Someone, sometime, mentioned Arthur Wilson Tucker, and pointed to the same man...."

"Well, what's his real name?"

"I doubt if anyone knows for certain...but I half suspect that it might be Hoy Ping Pong...."

Will the REAL Fan Guest of Honor please move to the right of his alter egos?

+ + +
+ + +

Of course, next year when the WorldCon moves to the West Coast, the odds are that the Fanzine Hugo will be reinstated, which will leave three people with a 'Pong' to explain away. But, then too, we'll have had our one fling at progress in the meantime and we wouldn't want it said of us that we're against progress in any way, shape, or form.

Progress is a wonderful thing...and so, I guess, are the Pongs....

cheer, cheer, cheer.

EXTRA ADDED ATTRACTION

Since this is apparently the year for vast and sweeping changes in the WorldCon awards structure, I'm sort of sorry that the NYCon Committee didn't follow through with the brilliant start they made in initiating the 'Pong' awards, and add a few Special Categories. Just in case the '68 WorldCon Committee is listening, however, I do have a few suggestions:

"The G.M. Carr Friendship Award" to the person who does the most to make fandom such a friendly place. "The John Boardman Pole Pillar" to the author of the most incisive bit of political commentary during 1967. The Albert C. Ellis Award" to the next fan editor to publish a filthy and degrading Ray Nelson cartoon. The "Dave Van Arnam Sympathy Card" to the next fan to put out a Shadow FAPA Mailing. And, of course, "The Stephen E. Pickering Anti-Intellectual Nemesis" to the fan who has increased his

Word Power the most during the last year.

We may have some more 'Special Category NYCon III Awards' next issue.

"I got an electric toothbrush today, and it's already betrayed me." JH

"A couple of months ago at Forry Ackerman's birthday party, I was talking with Rick Sneary. A crowd milled through Forry's house eye-tracking prozines, original paintings, and Trina Castillo, and Rick stood to one side watching them.

"'You know Terry,' he said, 'I've just realized that I've become a member of the Old Guard.'

"I stared at him awestruck. Ever since I've been in fandom, Rick Sneary has been a name to conjure with to me, and to have him say right out of a clear blue sky that he was just realizing his venerable position croggled me.

"'Why, 10 years ago,' said Rick, 'I was president of a fangroup called Young Fandom. Now there's a collection of my fan-writings in print, South Gate in '58 has come true, and new members of LASFS wonder who I am when I make it to a meeting.'

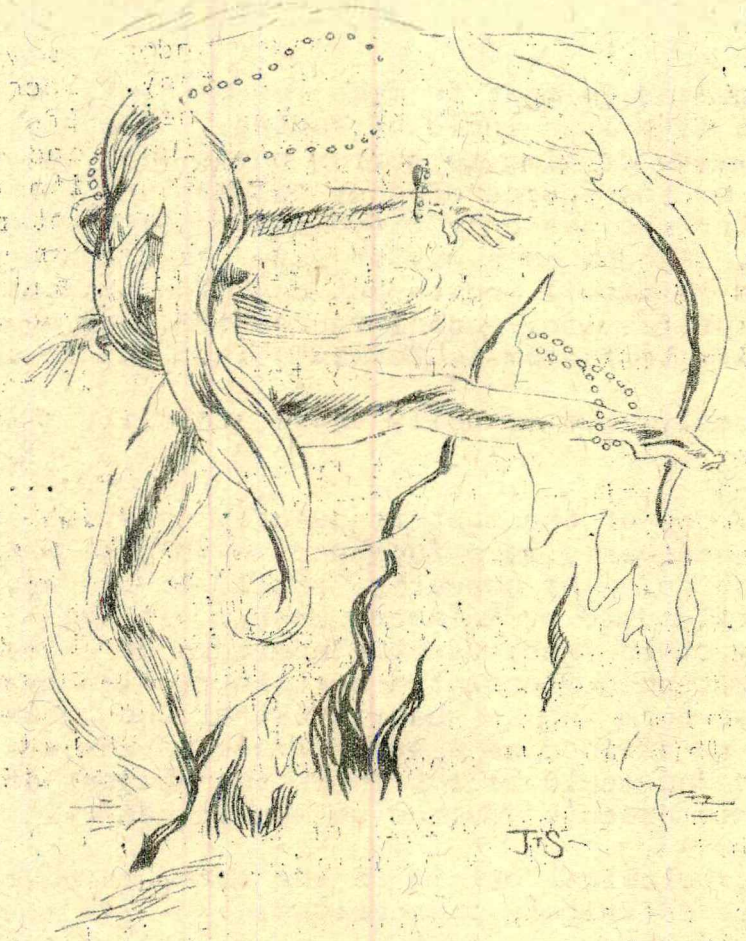
"'That's fantastic, Rick,' I said, and fell to wondering when that horrible feeling would come to me, when I would suddenly realize that I, too, was a member of fandom's Old Guard. After all, I entered fandom at the age of 12, and here I am married and turning 22 about the time you'll be reading this.

"We never finished our conversation, though, because just then somebody came by and wanted to know who Earle Bergey was."

--Terry Carr, in Cry 124

"I first met Claude Degler at the 1940 Chicago convention. He was a quiet, good humored youngster who persisted in tagging along after Forry Ackerman and Myrtle Douglas; they were his gods. He was also very poor and dressed in old trousers, a gray sweater, tennis shoes and perhaps socks for all I know. He was unwashed, uncombed, unkempt, and startlingly unintelligent; he displayed all the characteristics of many world dictators except the power to sway great masses of people to his will. That saved us. I don't know where he slept or how he managed to exist at the convention--perhaps by sponging. I always managed to shake him each time he attached himself to me, and I later regretted that for what he was to become. It would have been highly rewarding to have studied him in his cradle, so to speak. I think he was responsible for one of the crackpot pieces that came up on the convention floor. The matter is pretty hazy at this late date and I can't back it up one hundred and one percent, but I believe he was the fan who gained the floor and bored everyone to tears by reading aloud a long-winded report supposedly from Mars--the Martians were laying down the law to we earthlings and we had the choice of complying or suffering a fate worse than death. He insisted it was true, and I think he later published the paper."

--Bob Tucker, in Grue 21



A Way of Life

In the beginning was the word. And the word was this: There are the Star-Begotten and there are the 'others'. The Star Begotten follow the Path of Destiny...that path's name is Fandom. And Fandom is a Way of Life.

That was in the beginning. But then came Degler to present a horrible example of the lengths to which this pleasant little Fantasy for Schizophrene and Egoboo could be carried. And later came Laney and a whole host of imitation Laneys to attack with high-voltage typewriter and unleash sneers against the befuddled innocent who had not yet got the word, and still regarded fandom as his way of life.

It seems to me the antis have had their innings long enough; it's time for an examination of the other side. Why <u>not</u> fandom as a way of life?

Usually the undesirability is treated as pre-proven and no attempt to justify the condemnation is given. But just what are the reasons given on those occasions when they've been voiced?

by Vernon McCain

First and most often repeated is that to make fandom a way of life is to retreat from reality, to live in a world of fantasy. Second, it is considered a self-obvious waste of time to narrow one's life to such a small arena. It is said to be the source of easy triumph and worthless fame since the fourth-rater who has only fifth-raters with whom to compete is hailed as a genius. Fandom as a way of life can interfere not only with one's mental and spiritual growth but can also prevent possible advancement in one's profession, social recreation, and even love-life. To devote one's life to fandom is to waste it. And so on.

Have I missed any? Probably, but actually these are all variations on the same general theme.

Oh yes, I did miss one...one of the most frequently used...that any fan who takes fandom that seriously is a fugghead. And just what is a fugghead? That is a question. Any answers? Well, it so happens to be a word coined and primarily used by F. Towner Laney. It has received more limited usage by other fans, usually admirers of Laney, including, at times, myself. It does pinpoint a certain fannish type more effectively than any other term and as such is useful upon occasion. But that type can best be defined as a sort of person who was anathema to F. Towner Laney and who would be apt to be the subject of a critical article by Laney. This doesn't advance us much, does it?

Ignoring the somewhat scatological origin of the term, we have an undefinable slang word which is definitely opprobrious.

My personal feeling is that in any serious exchange it is best to state what is meant explicitly rather than resorting to slang...especially slang with no positive meaning. However, we have seen the term "fugghead" used all too frequently in supposedly serious articles and it has come to have, within fandom, somewhat the all-embracing and general semantic connotation, if not the emotional overtones, that the word 'communist' has acquired in the general society of the U. S. A person who is a 'fugghead' should be disliked and a person who is disliked automatically merits the term 'fugghead'. And there you are. We find ourselves on the same intellectual level as two angry five-year-olds calling each other horrible names which neither understands but which have been very carefully gleaned from the conversation of their elders and are recognized as being extremely insulting. "We told him off, all right...that <u>Vegetarian</u>!"

Fandom, alone, <u>is</u> an inadequate way of life and there is, perhaps, a suspicion that only a inadequate person would be willing to settle for fandom as his way of life.

Certainly to make fandom one's primary interest in life is to retreat from reality. But is the fan unique in this respect? Has he retreated any further from reality than the housewife who uses soap-operas to deaden her brain to the realities of the detested housework she is performing as she listens; than the adolescent who pays no more attention to her studies than she can avoid and instead spends every spare moment reading movie magazines or day-dreaming about a miraculously de-pimpled and filled-out version of herself to whom Gregory Peck makes passionate, though chaste love; than the woman who wraps herself up in her own family to such an extent that she finds it impossible to discuss any other sub-

ject at all, so complete is her ignorance...and who becomes actually angry if forced to listen to a discussion of those 'awful unsolved world problems' which have 'nothing to do with me, anyway'; than the businessman who is so tied up in the race to make money that he works 14 hours a day, acquires ulcers, never takes a vacation, and doesn't even know his own family; than the hedonistic young woman who knows all about make-up, all about men, all about the best places to go...but lacks the knowledge necessary to retain a job, raise a family, or vote intelligently; or even than the important politician who is so wrapped up in world affairs and his own importance on the stage of current events that he thinks only in terms of the diplomatic camouflaging of truth, the international power-play, the sly political counter-move...and loses all contact with the normal low-income unimportant individual who comprises 99½% of the world's populace?

I shan't even mention the other hobbyists who make stamp collecting, model railroading, or sports-car racing a way of life. The similarity is too obvious.

Which of these people is truly normal? Which one is not, in his own method and to his own tastes, retreating from life and reality? Each has one piece of reality which he chooses to regard as the only important portion. The science fiction fan has also, although the fact is not usually recognized. His portion of reality is the future...the part which has not yet come...and also, to a lesser extent, the frontier of man's mind, his imagination.

Where is the individual who is 'normal'? Can you produce him? Is there, anyplace, a person so free of the weight of the world's woes that he has not fashioned for himself a retreat from reality, even though he may not recognize it as such? The American who complains about hard times...but has two cars, one for his wife and one for himself...a newly purchased, gaily-painted set of lawn furniture on which he and his family loll in front of their home in their long hours of leisure after completing their eight hours of work, persuing the newspaper which gives him all the latest information from all over the world...and yet he assumes his existence is the normal one...'this is the way man lives'...but he has a bulging larder and a overflowing closet within...riches such as these are possessed by only a minor portion of the Earth's populace. Or the illiterate Asian working in the rice paddy as long as the daylight lasts, his family working beside him, in tattered clothes and with hungry bellies to retire at night within an insect infested hut and sleep fitfully, almost totally unaware of the world beyond his village...he also regards his own lot as typical. Yet is either of these two normal? Can either regard himself as typical of humanity as a whole?

There is no such thing as true normality, only a statistical average. Normality comes in two billion different patterns...and new ones are constantly being created while old ones are being destroyed. Perhaps the only insanity is that which occurs when the individual fails to keep faith with his own personal 'normality', the pattern which is right for him.

If all the world is an asylum, if reality is too big for any human to accept in its entirety, then is the science fiction fan (and I'm referring to the all-out, way-of-life fan) actually 'different'? And if

not, why does he receive ridicule, so frequently from family, friends, acquaintances, business associates, even the press?

First you must remember certain types of abnormality or retreat from reality are more noticable than others. The woman who pours herself into mothering to the exclusion of all else not only tends to draw a certain amount of approval, since her mania is devoted to a constructive purpose, but also is well-camouflaged; at a casual glance she can pass for any other more normal (in this respect) housewife.

Reading garish-covered magazines instead of kicking a football around after school is noticeable in the adolescent. Also, the more widely known eccentricities take on an aura of respectability and acceptedness. There are probably a hundred stamp collectors for every science fiction fan. There are probably a thousand movie-struck adolescents for every one who is entranced by science fiction. Science fiction fans number, at even the most generous estimate, around two thousand. At any given time probably not more than 200 are active and, as one prominent fan has said, there are usually only about a dozen or so people who really keep fandom operating.

Two thousand out of two billion is a ratio of...well, did anyone ever tell you you were one in a million? I wouldn't advise you to go around broadcasting the fact, however.

But one thing many stf-fans with persecution complexes do not realize is that they are not the only scoffed-at minority. As a long-time jazz enthusiast, I have just, in the past two evenings, written two long letters straightening out misconceptions of non-jazz-minded stf-fans who, through ignorance, were mislabeling it and had some weird ideas about it and its devotes. The sort of slanted and wildly inaccurate reporting which is the almost invariable lot of fandom is nothing new to the jazz fan. We've been used to the same thing for years. In fact, in many respects, it is worse since jazz fandom is larger, and therefore of more general interest, it is treated more frequently by the press, but seldom with greater accuracy. And the very real problem (although a minority one) of dope addiction within the ranks of jazz musicians lends an easy peg for sensationalism which is invariably distorted and blown up beyond all recognition. (For a parallel, stf has had the Shaver Mystery and L. Ron Hubbard.)

And the general public joins in eagerly with their misuse of (usually out-of-date) jazz terms which they frequently don't even understand. How many times have I read one of those Bopster 'crazy' jokes in some fanzine! And how those same fannish editors would scream if fannish terms were subjected to such persistent ridicule and idiotic misrepresentation elsewhere.

The jazz enthusiast actually takes all this much more moderately than does the stf-fan. It's been going on longer and at greater volume so we're more used to it. And, more important, the average jazz fan is

older and has learned getting heated up about the matter solves nothing.

You can still frequently read items in the music magazines pointing out the usual inaccuracies and wild reporting and ridiculing them. But only rarely does anyone get really disturbed.

Science fiction and jazz are two fields I know well. But I have not the slightest doubt the same applies to every specialized hobby and most other specialized interests. The hot-rod fan (mainly adolescent) probably suffers just as much and is made even more angry (though lacking the means to vent his displeasure, not being an amateur publisher) than does the average stf-fan at the misrepresentation he receives. And in every case the golfer, collector of Ming vases, or Genealogist undoubtedly is ridiculed by his family and friends and urged to do something more useful.

Just to prove the point, let me ask you this: can you truthfully say you've never made fun of someone else's interests or attitudes or pastimes, if only in self-defense, when the Mickey Spillane fan was making fun of you for reading science fiction?

There are exceptions (here, as so often elsewhere, Redd Boggs is the one I know of) but I think in the vast majority of cases fans enter fandom with stardust in their eyes. The virtues of fandom are so enormous and unexpected that its drawbacks do not become visible until your eyes have had time to focus and put fandom's advantages in their proper relationship.

I'll admit (though I probably shouldn't) that when I first entered fandom it was with a thrill at discovering what I'd long been searching for and while I hadn't yet heard the phrase, 'fandom is a way of life,' I was very much a partisan of that philosophy. My first fanzine contribution was an article to that general effect. May I say that my fondest hope is that someday the last remaining copy of the issue containing that piece will be destroyed.

But fandom's once boundless horizons quickly shrank to their present proportions and the alluring vista gradually showed up as a rock-strewn and crevasse-spotted terrain.

It took me perhaps three months to get over the 'fandom-is-a-way of-life' kick and another nine months before I was no longer ready to devote every spare moment to some fannish activity.

Since then I've regarded fandom as an important and valuable segment of my life, one which claims a quite generous portion of my time. Fandom offers me certain rewards I cannot obtain elsewhere in any way and I only wish they were available in a more satisfying and elegant form. Fandom's gaucherie can sometimes be appalling.

But I have far too many other interests, several of which equal fandom in their attractiveness, to be willing to devote all my spare time to fandom, much less build my life around it. (Not that I'm laying any claims to normality, please note.)

Fandom has more in the way of virtues than most of its detractors

will grant, but it is a narrow field, too narrow to satisfy me by itself. But if there are those who can see in fandom dimensions not visible to me or who can be satisfied within narrower confines, then I fail to see why they should be condemned by me, or by anyone else. If someone wishes to make fandom his way of life, why shouldn't he? It's certainly more desirable than pyromania; it is certainly more wholesome than sex crimes; it develops the mentality more than comic books; and it is less damaging to the reputation than alchololism.

Perhaps it doesn't match Einstein's Unified Field theory as a contribution to society, but perhaps the fan in question lacks the ability to produce a theory to top Einstein.

Fandom strikes me as an essentially harmless and in many ways constructive activity. Even of the minuscule number entering fandom, only a very small percentage will be satisfied enough to make it their way of life. But where those fans are concerned, it's their life, so why not let them?

Probably the one unmistakable instance of a person who has made fandom his way of life is Ackerman. Ackerman had some faults, of course, and he was not always the most brilliant fan of all time. But the sum total of Ackerman's record with fandom shows a balance of worthwhile contributions to fandom far outweighing the occasional lapses in which his somewhat eccentric devotion to the genre may have been some minus factor.

Of course, the fandom of Ackerman's day was a somewhat different thing. It was far more slanted towards the pro field than now, and Ackerman's first devotion has always been to science fiction, not to fandom. Despite his frequent Herculean efforts in supporting fandom, I suspect his interests toward it were solely in aiding in the potential support for his favorite fiction. Analysis of Ackerman's feelings would probably show little, if any, loyalty toward fandom for itself as an entity.

Holding true to his own type of fannish loyalty, Ackerman has exited the fannish scene almost completely, building his entire life around his current professional connections with science fiction. I might say that Ackerman the fan was both more valuable and easily admired than Ackerman the pro, but that is another matter. No other person has so completely made fandom his way of life as Ackerman...even though to do so has led him out of fandom.

I don't know that I would actually encourage any young neofan to make fandom his way of life. I do think there's something a little unhealthy about it, and I wouldn't try to steer anyone directly into it. But I fail to see why the fan who chooses this course should become fair game for anyone's gibes.

I recall an article written some years ago by Francis Laney in which he announced the new term 'fen'. As Laney defined the terms, 'fen' and 'fans', fen were no longer human...they were a subspecies of life...the plural of fan, a creature who lived of, by, and for fandom...who was addicted to fandom and could not live without it, who would go through actual suffering if he were denied his fannish participation, while 'fans' were merely those 'normal' human beings who p.rsued fandom as a hobby which they took none too seriously, and who could cut their fannish activ-

ity short without the slightest pain. The article was biting as only the Laney prose has ever succeeded in being, and at times it was close to vicious.

Laney heaped scorn upon the 'fen'; he denounced them in every way. They were loathsome, below contempt, utterly without justification. He did everything but call for a holy crusade to exterminate them.

I've never been fond of the term 'fen', which seems to me an unnecessary artificialization and not a particularly useful one, but that article went too far. This column probably started germinating at the time I first read that and has been growing ever since. Why should these 'fen' (to temporarily accept Laney's terminology) be so objectionable? I can see why they might be an object for pity...just as the hopeless addict of heroin or morphine would be pitied. To one who can partake of something or bypass it, it is disturbing to observe a weaker individual who has lost the ability to refrain. But why should that individual be condemned?

It was a question Laney never satisfactorily answered and, for that matter, was, in essence, the universal enigma running like a thread through all Laney's writings; why did the man have such a near-psychotic hatred of so many seemingly innocous things; why was he compelled to attack and attack and attack? Perhaps it is an example of Robert Bloch's 'in-group/out-group' antagonism, the instinctive mistrust of that which is different from ourselves which is at the root of so many of humanity's darkest chapters. I do not know.

Laney is no longer in fandom and I, for one, miss him. He wrote with an acrid style which no one else has been able to approach or duplicate. Much of his output was brilliant. He had an ability to see instantly through many layers of sham and pretense, and had the utter amoral frankness of a two-year-old in exposing it, undisturbed as to the consequences. Laney provided a flavor to fandom which is now missing. Without him we are once again in danger of allowing affectedness and self-deception to grow beyond reason.

But Laney also did damage. Partly it was in his own effectiveness ...Laney became an idol, the head of a cult...and a far more potent one than his close friend Burbee, who has been the recipient of so much open praise. For Laney changed the face of fandom. Many fannish institutions are far different than they would have been had he not existed, and, too often, lesser writers try to emulate him...many of them without knowing they are doing so, or even knowing who Laney was or what he had written. For Laney is still a current in fannish affairs, one which the new fan instinctively feels and, in some cases, attempts to emulate without knowing what he is imitating. Much of the boorishness of some of the younger fans is traceable to this. Of course, you might have called Laney a boor (Although I really don't think so. Laney's bad manners were usually highly pointed, while, it seems to me, that the essence of boorishness is pointlessness.),but,if so, he brought to boorishness a class and elegance beyond the ken of the current practitioners.

The other respect in which Laney can be considered a fannish liability was in his seeming unconcern for who he attacked or how. He never seemed to bother reckoning the possible personal repercussions to

his victim. Undoubtedly many fannish careers were turned into far different channels due to an attack from Laney. And it would be hard to estimate how many non-pugnacious or sensitive individuals left fandom as a result of Laney's acts, rather than further submit themselves to the sort of verbal brutality of which Laney was a past master.

Unlike Laney's arch-enemy, Ackerman, whose plus-value is easily ascertainable, it would be difficult to decide whether Laney's contributions to fandom outweighed the damage he did. For the legacy of Laney remains with us. And part of the legacy is the near-ostracism suffered by the earnest young fan who wants to devote his life to sf and/or fandom.

I repeat, what's wrong with fandom as a way of life?

"Modern weapons don't need your number--just your area code." LG

"Almost everybody in this country should be happy. The way I look at life is that until you're 21 your parents are responsible for you. At 65, the government's going to take over. You only have 44 years to look after yourself. One third of that time you sleep, one third you play. Sundays, mealtimes, and holidays you have off. The average person works only seven years in a life time."

--Ken Barry

"...I really haven't much faith in medicine. I know they've made great progress, especially in surgery, but I'm leery of doctors just the same. I'm particularly prejudiced against specialists. When you're sent to them they don't know you and they don't want to know you. They make an efficient chart of that small territory of your afflicted carcass which comes under their jurisdiction and they don't care a hoot in hell about what has broken loose in the adjacent county. The ulcer man is busy with his ulcer routine, the eye-and-ear man will go down as far as the throat, but the kidney man doesn't give a rap what goes on north of the bladder.

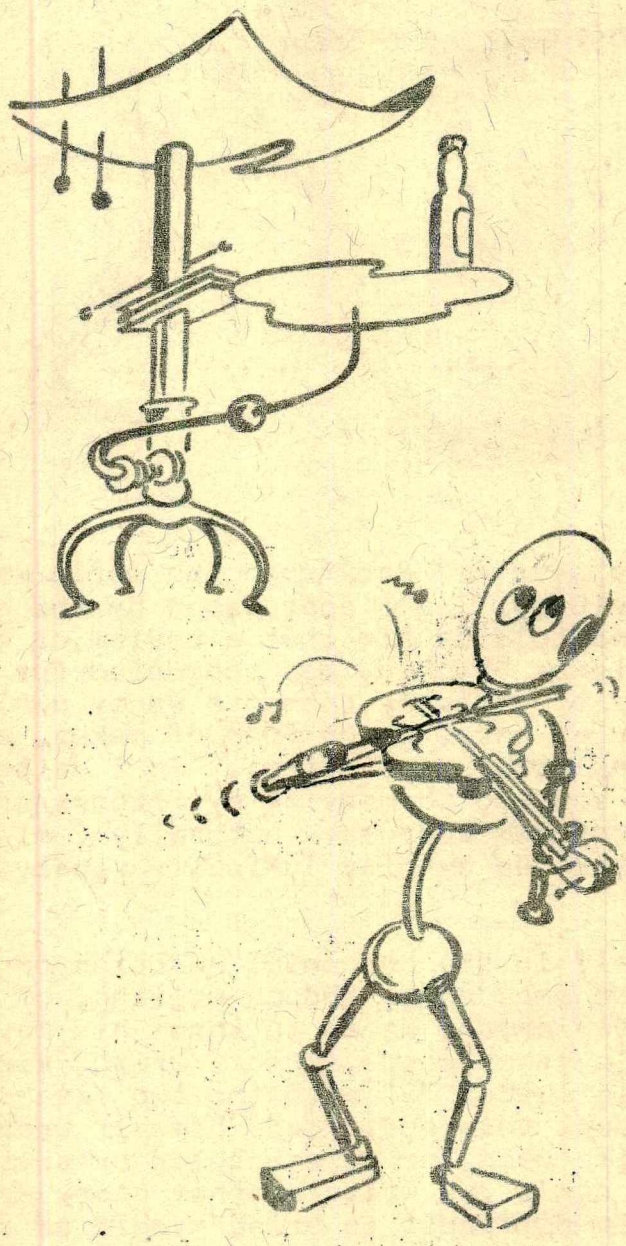
"For my money they can all drop dead of their specialty."

--Alexander King, in Mine Enemy Grows Older

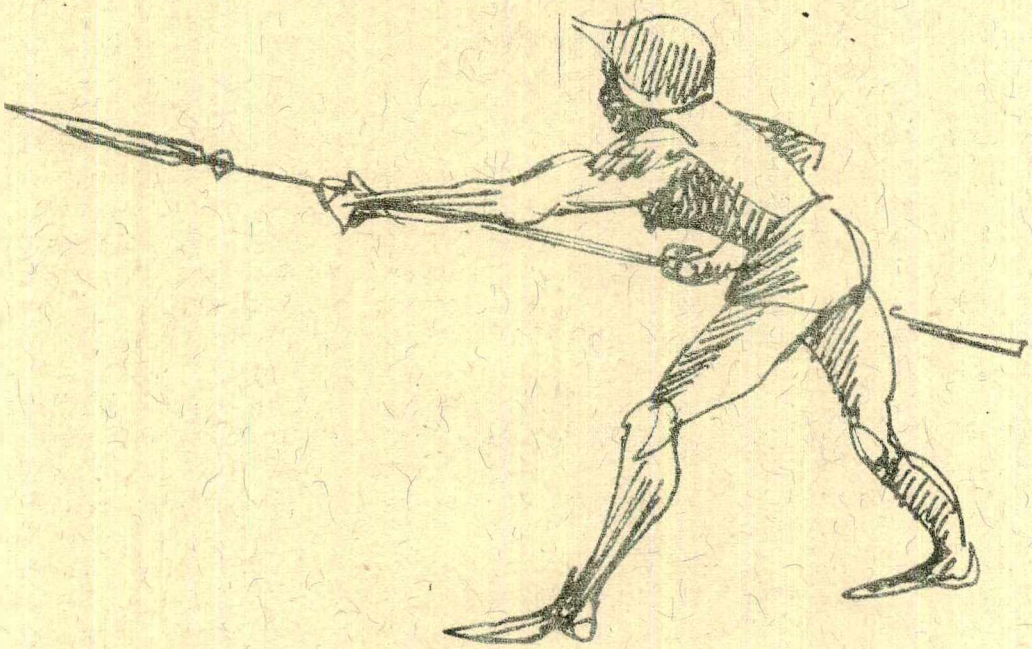
"California is a very arid state, and it is possible to drive about in it indefinitely without finding the Pacific Ocean. This is because most of it has been cut into little chunks and put in people's backyards. In the movie colony these swimming pools are cut into odd shapes to symbolize how the star in question made his money, Liberace's being in the shape of a grand piano, and so on. Robert Bloch's pool is book shaped."

--Walt Willis, in Warhoon 19

"Carl Brandon is more real to me than you are--and I've met you." CEB



by Roger Zelazny



De Gustibus

I just received Nyar 4. Back when the world was young (I am referring, of course, to the TriCon), I was approached by the good editor of this goodly periodical and told by him that a review of my tale, This Immortal, (Ace's title), by Alexei Panshin, was scheduled for a future issue, and would I care perhaps to offer my comments on my own work as a companion-piece? I grew leery at once, being fond of poker, and I explained that I would like to see the other piece first. So I waited. Then I moved without--cough! cough!--sending to many of my friends/enemies/aquaintainces/relatives/creditors my new address. Naturally I missed the critical issue. After a bit of complicated by-play I finally received it--like I said first thing--today.

And I find myself in the perennial position of someone who writes primarily for his own amusement, though willing, of course, to accept every greenback dollar anyone wants to throw his way as a result of the finished product. In other words, when I write, kicks come first--and second comes the big letter "S" with the two slashes "//" through it. Such a person, at least this one, finds himself unable to rebut, refute, take issue with, smile upon, or be counseled by anything that anyone says to him beyond, "Why don't you write another story about such-and-such?" In other words, it is difficult to bring myself to respond to criticism, unless it contains real live factual errors, which I always delight in pointing out. Mainly, it is because I don't really much care what anybody says about what I write. But Alex Panshin is a bit different from people who collar you at parties and tell you what you did wrong--bless their hearts!--because he is doing something that I want to encourage. He is more than a party-commentator, of the sort who has never had anything published himself but delights in telling professional writers what's wrong with their stuff.

Alexei Panshin has gone out of his way to become the sort of person science fiction needs desperately today. The man has devoted an enormous quantity of his time to becoming informed with the entire area and everything that has to do with it. His reasons, as I think I see them, are not the same as my own. He has the proper bent of mind, the enthusiasm and sufficient academic background to become the leading science fiction critic in the world. I am not exaggerating.

Most persons in academic circles shy away from sf. It has a built-in prejudice factor that we're still trying to live down. That leaves it mostly to established persons--such as, and mainly, Kingsley Amis--who have a fondness for the stuff and care to dabble in the area, to say what they would of it. But Amis speaks whenever he chooses, which isn't often, and though he rouses many a hackle when he does, he is one of the few on the outside who occasionally speak for and of us. Atheling has been silent for, lo, many a day, as has Knight--primarily, I suppose, for lack of decent vehicles. Who does that really leave? A guy named Alexei Panshin, a guy who digs the stuff we dig sufficiently so that he'll say what he has to say and see it published anywhere, just in order to be heard by someone. That's who. I hope he never loses this compulsion.

How rare a thing is a real, dedicated science fiction critic? Turn your calendar to the month of June and set the population of the world (say, three billion) beneath it; and multiply this by a hundred thousand over one. That's a rough estimate. What is so rare?

Alex, I feel, should be encouraged to go as far as he can. He is about to do a book for Twayne on science fiction. We need more of them, if anyone is to really notice us. Let me move nearer my bookshelf. There...

Who here present can claim a hundred volumes of criticism re sf? I see Future Perfect by Franklin, and Into Other Worlds by Green. I see Bailey's Pilgrims Through Time and Space. I see Lagman's stupid Horn Book, Tolkien's Tree and Leaf, A Requiem for Astounding by Rogers, and Ellik and Evans' Universes of E.E. Smith. I see a horde of specialized paperbound biblios of various authors, from Burroughs to Lovecraft. I see New Maps of Hell, The Issue At Hand, Of Worlds Beyond, The SF Novel, In Search of Wonder, Explorers of the Infinite, Seekers of Tomorrow, a dozen or so other biblios and indices, a few other special books and checklists, and things like The Immortal Storm, and 333, and DeCamp's SF Handbook, and that's about all, folks.

I will not sit in judgement as to the soundness of all or any of Alex's work. I respect the fact that he is doing it at all.

If he keeps it up, and I hope he will, right or wrong, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, and suchlike fake terms, we all need what he's got to say, agree or disagree, because of the fact that he's got guts and ambition enough to keep on saying it and to grow while he doing it.

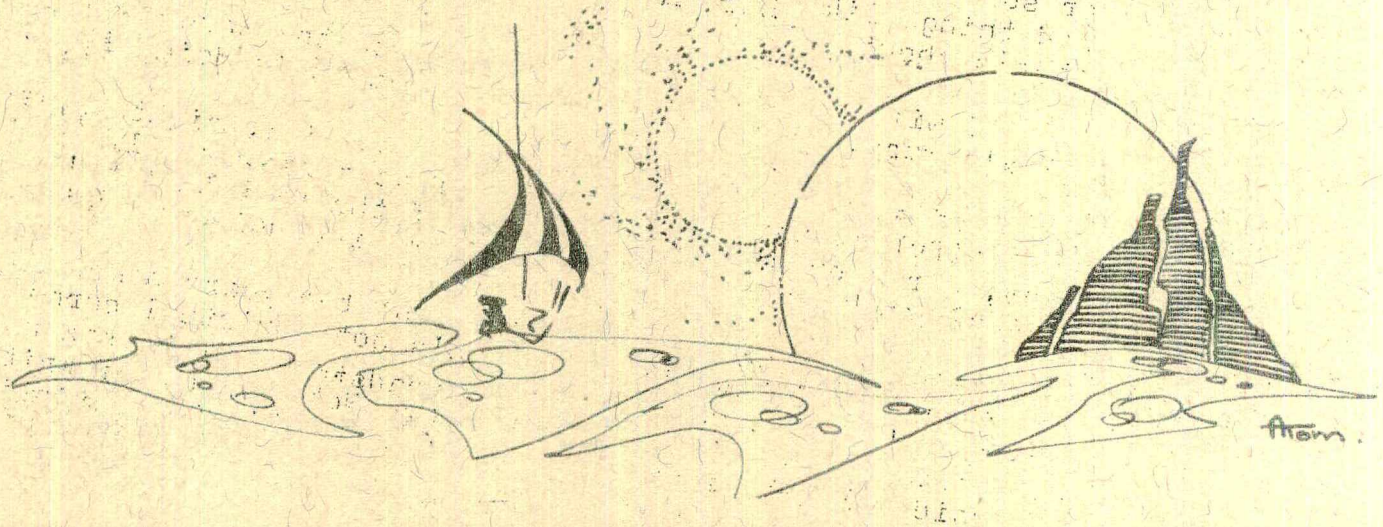
Consider the Alexei Panshin of ten years hence. I hope it's as big a figure as I have in mind. He's got a virtual corner on the market right now, he's got a monopoly and a headstart. If he can keep it up, he has my blessings. He will be a big man. Not because of writers like my maybe stupid self who ignore criticism and delight in pointing out factual errors

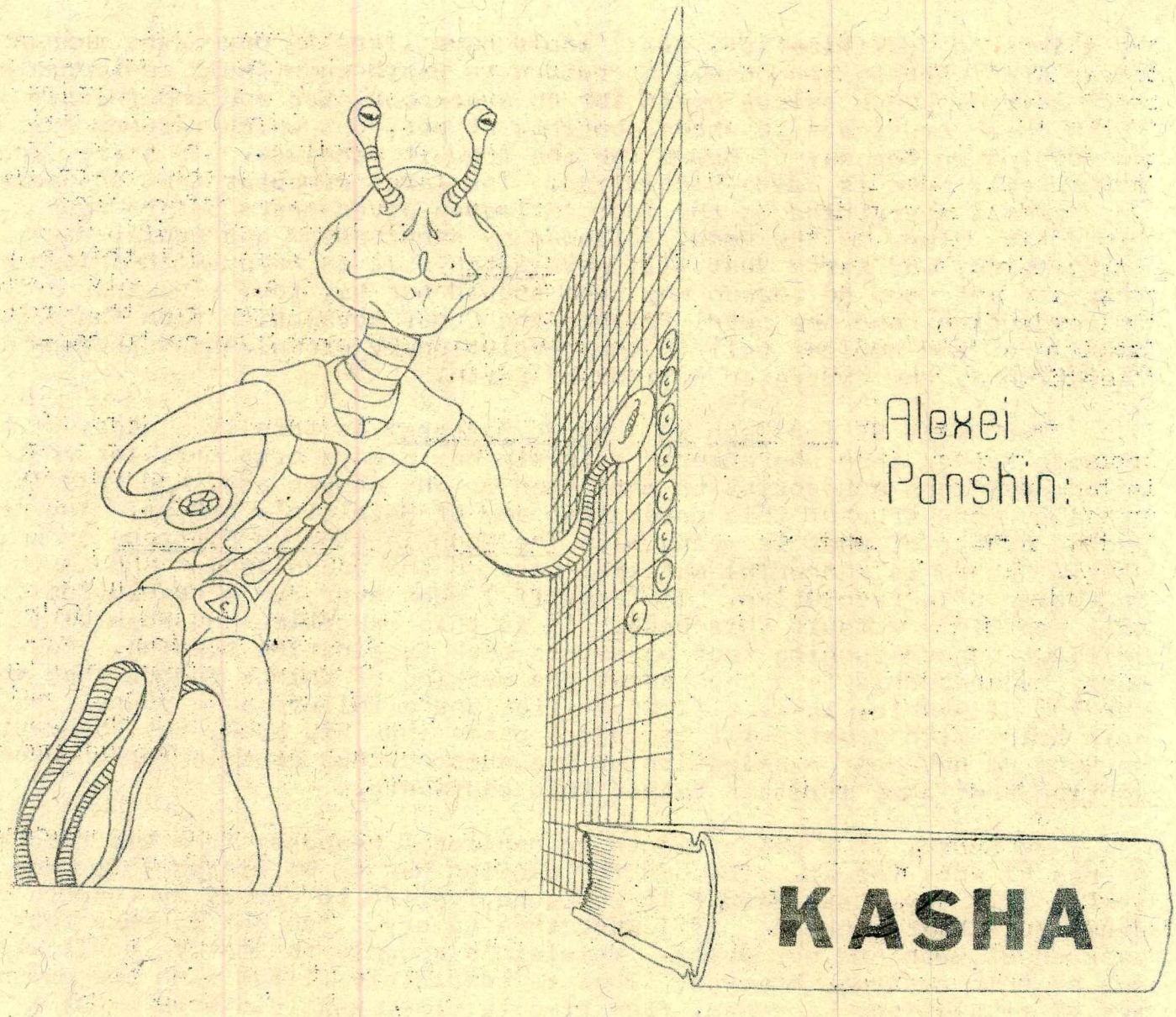
and because of other writers who do otherwise, but because the place of the critic is an interpretive one--not to the guys who write the stuff so much, but everyone else who would like a few insights. A writer isn't always sure of what he is doing. Dismiss that notion. Conversely, I don't think Lionel Trilling/Leslie Fiedler/Name Your Own has ever talked anybody into writing "their sort of book". But don't dismiss the notion of a good critic's importance. They're here to stay, and the better they are, the more I'll like them. We wouldn't be in sf if a certain amount of controversy wasn't second nature to us. The more the better, I say. That's why we need people like Alexei Panshin. And when one arises, people such as myself should never say such things as, "I didn't say what 'the final forces of disruption' would be disrupting when I referred to them on pages two and three, true, but I did on page 168--so I was not lying," and things like that, even if they delight in pointing out such things. No.

Critics should be welcomed by all, as they offer points of departure for many interesting speculations. Mock them, argue with them, yes; but never try to destroy them. Authors should steer clear of crossing swords with them, and should accept them for what they are--devotees of the thing we love and good friends of us all--as I do Alexei Panshin, wishing that he may prosper, flourish, and make out in spades, as I think he will.

If there are any other Alexei Panshins in the crowd, will you please stand up?

"Kurt Vonnegut loses airplane tickets." JDM





THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS, by Robert A. Heinlein; Putnam, 1966, $5.95

In recent times I was talking to a friend about a novel he had just read that he thought heavily influenced by the work of Robert Heinlein, mostly, I gather, because it had a meticulously worked-out background. The only trouble was that he found the novel dull. This is one flaw that Heinlein's work has never had, and The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress is no exception. Line-by-line, it is fascinating reading. I suppose that Heinlein could even write laundry lists that would be entertaining to read. Moreover, The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress is less flawed by sermons and constructional weakness than his other recent novels, starting with Starship Troopers. I must admit, however, that fascinating as I find it, I don't think The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress is a good or effective novel.

The plot line of this, the second longest of Heinlein's novels is simple enough. In 2075, Luna is a penal colony, a dumping ground for transportees, much as Australia was at the begining of the last century. Because of irreversible physiological changes (so Heinlein says--for once

he skimps on justification, and I would have liked to have seen evidence) these transportees are unable to return to Earth when their sentences have been served. Luna raises grain for an over-populated and undernourished Earth which continues to shove convicts at her, but which returns next to nothing in the way of goods for the food it receives. In short, and in general, Luna is being victimized. The large computer that co-ordinates almost everything on the Moon estimates seven years before food riots take place on the Moon, followed by cannibalism and social disintegration, and Earth just will not listen. It is happy with things as they are and sees no reason why Luna should not be, too. The only answer is revolution, and the novel follows the Lunar Revolution from the organization of the nuclear cell in the revolutionary organization to capitulation by the Federated Nations of Earth.

The heart of The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress is totally a story of process rather than character. Heinlein has always been more interested in how machines and societies work than in why people act, and this is probably more true of this novel than any of Heinlein's others. And it is the center of what is wrong with The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress as a story. There is wonderful material here on the organization and implementation of a revolution. In fact, if I must ever run a revolution I will certainly consult this book. It is this expertise and Heinlein's skill at phrase-turning that make this book fascinating reading. However, because this is a book about the working of things rather than the working of people, it is ultimately flat and a failure as a story. Heinlein tries with great skill to inject drama into his book, but the devices he uses do not bear examination or are such obvious appeals for unearned emotion that they irritate rather than captivate.

In truth, if a writer wants an emotional response from his readers, he has to work for it. The bid for emotion has to be placed in a context. If I say, "Beth died," it would be foolish to expect my readers to break out their hankies. If I want them to cry, I've got to make them care about Beth and her dying. Heinlein's appeals to emotion don't arise out of this context, however. That is completely filled with the mechanics of revolution. Instead, from time to time, Heinlein breaks out a bugle or a violin and plays for a paragraph, and then puts it away again. The title of the novel, for instance, is a ringing phrase that means not very much in particular and exactly nothing in relation to this book. The--Moon--Is--A--Harsh--Mistress. Hear the bugle?

Or this: "Station was mobbed and I had to push through to see what I assumed to be certain, that passport guards were either dead or fled. 'Dead' it turned out, along with three Loonies. One was a boy not more than thirteen. He had died with his hands on a Dragoon's throat and his head still sporting a little red cap."

This is effective writing. There is no question of that. It is also basically shoddy. I don't believe that in the entire history of the world that a boy not more than thirteen has attacked a soldier with his hands and "died with his hands on a Dragoon's throat and his head still sporting a little red cap." If Heinlein had said that the boy had skulled a guard with a rock at thirty paces and got shot as a consequence, I'd believe that, but "Dragoons" and "little red caps" are the devices of propaganda.

The date of the story is deliberately chosen for resonance with the American Revolution. The Lunar Declaration of Independence is settled on the 2nd of July, 2076, and announced on the 4th. In one sense you can say that this was intelligent capitalization on historical sentiment by the Loonies, but in actual fact it is nothing more than Heinlein doing a bit of auctorial cheating. The sentiment being capitalized upon is not that of the North American Directorate in 2076; it is your sentiment now. The closer the similarity between one revolution and the other, the more obvious it is that Heinlein is trying to fife-and-drum us into accepting what we would not otherwise find moving, and when he says, "A dinkum comrade, Foo Moses Morris, co-signed much paper to keep us going--and wound up broke and started over with a little tailoring shop in Kongville," he isn't talking about the Lunar Revolution at all. He's talking about Robert Morris, financier of the American Revolution, who died in poverty, and as a consequence I somehow just can't quite accept "Foo Moses Morris", who never appears again, as being real. Notice, too, that when Heinlein wants to jerk a tear he throws in the word "little". Not just a tailoring shop, but a "little" tailoring shop; not just a red cap, but a "little" red cap.

Heinlein also tries to give his story dramatic force by tying it on to the tail of another of his novels, The Rolling Stones. An important character in that book is Hazel Meade Stone, and a moderately prominent (but not important) one in The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress is a little girl--sorry, a young girl--named Hazel Meade, who eventually marries a young tough named Stone. Apparently your affection and interest in her, earned in The Rolling Stones is supposed to pay Heinlein's way in this novel. The only trouble is that it is impossible for the Lunar society of The Rolling Stones to be derived from the supposedly previous society of The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress, and it is impossible for the Hazel Meade Stone of one book to be the Hazel Meade Stone of the other. (See pages 184-185, and 190 of The Rolling Stones just to start.) Heinlein doesn't care about this--he is interested only in the effect of the tag "Hazel Meade Stone".

The Lunar society that Heinlein creates doesn't seem completely self-consistent. For one thing, he states that half the newcomers to Luna die with reasonable immediacy: "Luna has only one way to deal with a new chum: Either he makes not one fatal mistake, in personal behavior or in coping with environment that will bite without warning...or he winds up as fertilizer in a tunnel farm." Yet he produces Lunar idiots and asses to suit his purposes, exactly the people one would think would make fatal mistakes. Moreover, he has a number of very idealistic martial systems that horrify North Americans but which newcomers seem to be able to accept immediately, the systems being based on the Heinlein-given fact of two million men and one million women on the moon. Yet, the women are given as being protected and half of the newcomers die. One would think that would tend to balance things. Only 5% of the population, according to Heinlein, is actually convict--one would think that, as with the Mormons who immediately attracted many more women than men, in a reasonably short period the natural balance of children would assert itself, and by the time the number of old settlers was far larger than the number of incoming convicts (and the hero is a third-generation Loony) that the numbers would be approximately even. This doesn't seem to bear examination, and certainly requires more figures than Heinlein has given us.

The most obvious device Heinlein uses to manufacture suspense is patently artificial. One of the four members of the original cell and the whole-hearted co-ordinator of the revolution is Mike, the computer mentioned earlier. The notion of a sentient computer is not particularly objectionable in itself except for the consequential diminishing in stature of the human characters. However, at the beginning of the story the computer announces that the odds against success are seven to one. Thereafter, at frequent intervals, new odds are announced, getting longer and longer until they eventually reach one hundred to one. Throughout, however, to our apparent view things are going exactly as planned. We have to take Heinlein's word that things are actually getting worse. One would think, too, that the initial odds would have taken into account all the necessary chances the revolution has to take, and that only the unexpected would materially affect the odds. The unexpected does not seem to happen, but the odds--Heinlein's computer tells us--keep getting longer and longer. The result is an altogether unreal sort of suspense that lacks the power to compel belief.

The most irritating device that Heinlein has used in the book, however, is the language it is told in. The narrator thinks and writes in a sort of babu-Russian in which the first person and definite articles are all but missing. This is bothersome to read in itself, but it is also both artifical and irrelevant. First, it is not consistent either with itself or with actual Russian grammatical construction (buttonhole a passing Russian and check the book out with him). Second, by 2075 one assumes that everybody will talk differently enough from the present to need translation into our terms. The future equivalent of "damn", expressed in present terms, is "damn". If one assumes that in 2075 English is spoken on the Moon with a Russian grammatical structure, it will not sound then as though an ignorant present-day Russian were trying to speak English. It will sound "normal", and therefore should be represented by normal English, with perhaps an odd word or two for flavor. Third, and reinforcing this point, it is a fact that the narrator is the only character in the whole book who speaks this artifical jargon. Was he bitten by A Clockwork Orange?

Part of the problem is that this main character is a cipher. His claims to individuality are his one arm and his dialect. Other than that, he is faceless. This main character may mark the end of Heinlein's tradition of writing about competent men, an end begun in Heinlein's last two books; in Farnham's Freehold, whose main character was supposed to be competent but obviously was not, and in Glory Road, whose competent hero had to be led around by the nose. Our present hero does nothing throughout The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress but report the progress of the revolution. He does not himself act. In fact, at the one point in the story at which he is called upon to act, he is not present and able, and the computer, which overshadows him throughout, imitates his voice and issues his orders for him. The narrator has no opinions of his own, no tastes, no individual will--he is exactly the person to be replaced by a sentient computer.

In spite of the success of the revolution, the symbols of doubt and defeat that have infected Heinlein's fiction in recent years are triumphant here. The narrator is a faceless nobody, essentially impotent. The revolution, in the long run, is described as a failure. Don't be surprised to see more of the same in Heinlein's next book, more impotence, more futility, more inability to act.

Read The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress--particularly if you have intentions of starting a revolution. It isn't dull reading. But it isn't worth shelling out six dollars for. Wait for the paperback.

WORLD OF PTAVVS, by Larry Niven; Ballantine, 1966, $.50

In a recent issue of Riverside Quarterly, I was accused of writing purely technical criticism. I say "accused" because the letter writer, an Austrian, held this to be a flaw, feeling that I, like most American critics, avoided the real heart of literary criticism--moral judgment. I personally think that moral judgment, if it must be brought up at all in conjunction with literary works, is something for the reader to haul out in the privacy of his own closet. If I start endorsing one writer's vision of God or condemning another's particular brand of sadism, all I do is reveal my own hang-ups. All I'm required to do is point out that the vision of God or the whips and boots are present, if I feel they have any importance. As a matter of fact, I took the comment as more of a compliment than anything else, becuase pure technical criticism is both what I want to write and what I try to write.

My own definition of technical criticism would be that it is the critic's answer to the questions "What has the writer tried to do?", "What has he actually done?" and "Was it all worth doing?", framed in terms of what the critic knows about writing, literary tradition, and the world at large.

There is one place where technical criticism may go askew, however, and that is misplaced emphasis. In discussing The Judgment of Eve, I may say that I feel the book is ultimately unsuccessful and then argue the point at length. The point has to be argued at length. The virtues of the book, on the other hand, are obvious and don't require extended argument. The final impression that the review leaves may be that the book is a bad one.

I feel quite strongly that The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress is an unsatisfactory book, and I attempted to show this at some length. However, it quite definitely has some things to recommend it. The trouble is, that in discussing a book like World of Ptavvs, I may sound as though I am making the same sort of case that I was with The Judgment of Eve and The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress. I am not. World of Ptavvs is nothing so respect-worthy, because unlike these it does not attempt a great deal and fail to bring it off. World of Ptavvs attempts next to nothing and fails flatly. I want the distinction understood.

World of Ptavvs is as close to being a totally amateurish failure as any professionally published book I have ever read. The writing is bad, the thinking is superficial, and the story is pointless. I haven't read enough of Niven's work to pass judgment on his talent, but a number of people have told me that other stories by him, including the shorter version of this book,

have shown genuine merit. Out of charity, let me guess that this novel was written relatively early in Niven's career, that the magazine version was an abridgement more successful than the original, and that Niven made the error of resurrecting his original manuscript when he was presented with a book contract.

It is an elementary rule in writing that one ought to avoid giving characters in a story similar names lest they be confused with each other. Recently, I started a job where some six people have last names begining with "K" or hard "C", and after three weeks I still haven't gotten them completely straight in my mind. Our acquaintance with characters in a book is only a matter of a few hours--which means there is all the more reason for keeping them completely separate. Niven, however, has characters named Lit, Luke, Lew, and Larry--if I haven't missed a couple--two or three of whom may turn up in any one paragraph. Since we lack anything on the order of distinct and consistent characterization, the story population is a blur.

Niven's writing is clumsy and overblown. A character might legitimately say, "He was a burly man who walked like he had bad feet," if he were given as stupid or uneducated or speaking colloquially. Niven writes a sentence, and a hundred more as bad, in direct exposition, which leads me to believe he doesn't know any better.

Here are three consecutive sentences from a single paragraph:

"Judy thought he looked like the oldest man in the world. His face was as wrinkled as Satan's. He rode a ground-effect travel chair as powerful as a personal tank."

Niven's short simile-laden sentences total to nothing, but do give an impression of movement. He never stops to explain or elaborate, but merely throws out more similes, his sentences rushing on. We never know what things <u>are</u>, merely what they are <u>like</u>, and by the time we stop to question them, they are half a page behind us. The result is fast-paced and foggy.

The thinking throughout is superficial:

An alien is about to be released from a stasis field. One would think it would be sensible to take precautions in case the alien proved to be hostile. None are taken. As a result, a human telepath brought along to communicate with the alien gets a mental overprint from the alien so that he has all the alien's memories and believes himself to be the alien. The man runs amuck and eventually is caught in Topeka. Knowing this, one would think the characters would put the alien under restraint. Instead, it is dragged off to Topeka where it conveniently can have the opportunity to escape and grab a spaceship. Our deluded hero, the one who thinks he is the alien, gets the chance to escape and grab a spaceship, too.

Our hero speaks English and, one assumes, thinks in English. The alien, quite naturally, speaks only its own native language. Somehow, however, when our hero gets that mental blast he is able not only to communicate with the alien, but also has all its memories including the ability to read and write its language. This is an awfully convenient

sort of transfer--I'd like to see Niven try to provide a penny's worth of justification for it. It might lead to an instananeous elimination of illiteracy in the world.

In the Russian press last winter criticism was made of a story in which a spaceship window got obscured with cosmic dust and a cosmonaut had to go out into space with a vacuum cleaner to get the dust off. I actually laughed then...but Niven is every bit as incredible. His spaceships are a weird bunch: some of then are single-seaters (monoplanes, no doubt), and all of them can apparently turn on a dime and putt-putt off in a new direction. The worst point comes when our hero has made some mystical passes so that a number of pursuing ships have clouded windshields--a pretty good equivalent of the situation in the Russian story mentioned above. The pursuers are completely bollixed, of course, because they can no longer see where they are going. (No, I'm not kidding.) So we get this: "'First, we let the instruments carry us for a while. Second, we're eventually going to break our windshields so we can see out...'" American ingenuity, I'd call it--an altogether more direct and efficient solution than the Russian. The reference to "windshields," by the way, increases my suspicion that we are really dealing with a monoplane--I'd guess about a 1927 Lockheed Vega.

Even the climax of the story falls completely flat on its face. The hero, his own personality recovered, and freed from a mental command not to move by some means Niven doesn't think important enough to explain, locates the alien on Pluto, walks up to it, punches a button on its chest and turns it off. It would have been interesting to know that this was possible beforehand. Unfortunately, Niven can't say that it is. If he does, he must explain why at any prior moment the alien might not trip over its own feet, fall on its chest, and turn itself off. He says the alien is stupid--he almost has to--but if he gives us the full truth we can only know the alien to be so <u>really</u> stupid that we cannot possibly accept it as a menace. So Niven cheats a little bit. He tells us on the one hand that the alien is a terrible threat to the world that must be stopped at all costs, and on the other makes the alien so stupid that he wears an Off button on his chest for the hero to punch. And a Kick Me sign on his behind.

If this story had a single striking character, insight or point, it might still be worthwhile, but it has none. It is 188 pages of bad writing, incredible stupidities, and typing exercises. It is about nothing. Stories as a rule make more sense than life, but this novel, without really meaning to, makes less, and that is why it is a failure.

If Larry Niven does have talent, Ballantine did him no service in publishing this book. They've given him no incentive to learn his craft. If Larry Niven lacks talent, Ballantine did him no service in publishing this book. They've misled him into thinking that this sort of material is acceptable. In any case, in publishing this book, Ballantine did Ballantine no service.

THE SECRET OF THE MARAUDER SATELLITE, by Ted White; Westminster, 1967

To appreciate what I am going to say, you need some information:

To begin with, when I read or write or eat, whenever I'm at home,

I like to have music playing in the background. Not Muzak--real music. I like the music I listen to enough that I suspect that if I had to make a choice I think I would rather go blind than go deaf. I am so hung-up on music that if I ever met a girl who could play the nose flute I would probably marry her on the spot.

Recently, I moved to New York bringing with me the five boxes of basic books and the quarter of my record collection that I felt I couldn't live without. The books were put to immediate use, but the records have been sitting ever since. You see, I don't own a record player. Until now, I've never needed to. So in my first month in New York I had my 80 long-playing records, plus the 15 new ones I had bought since I arrived, and I had nothing to play them on. In view of my needs, I think you'll understand when I say I was visibly twitching.

Fortunately I have friends. Ted White came to my rescue and lent me a spare record player. Practically simultaneously--I won't to so far as to claim the two events were directly connected--he gave me the galleys of his soon-to-be-published juvenile science fiction novel, The Secret of the Marauder Satellite, to read. With the record player just out of reach, I shuddered and promised to read the book, and then went trotting home with the galleys under one arm and the phonograph under the other.

Let me say that my expectations were not high. Ted is the author of Android Avenger and Phoenix Prime, after all, neither of which I can honestly say I admired. They were, at best, paperback trifles--and at worst--well, something less.

The point of this is not what it may seem--the lengths that I'm willing to go in order to have the chance to play my Lawrence Welk and Guy Lombardo records. My need to make public confession is not that great. The real point is that midway through the third galley sheet I reached over, turned the phonograph off and put my record away. I wanted to give my attention completely to my reading. I was enjoying myself enough that I didn't want to miss a thing. After a long dry month that is far more than I would do for most books.

The Secret of the Marauder Satellite is nothing I ever expected to see from Ted White. It's not just competent, it's not just professional --it's a good solid book that he should never have reason to be ashamed of. Where his earlier books have been superficial, fast-paced, non-realistic adventure, this story is leisurely, realistic near-future speculation with an emphasis on character.

The model, of course, is Heinlein. The model for almost anybody writing juvenile science fiction is Heinlein, and Ted White has studied his model well. That is, White has learned the techniques of calculated digression, of illustrated chalk talks, even the dash of mysticism that mark Heinlein's work. But it is the techniques only that White has learned--the voice is his own, telling hos own story.

In another direction, White probably owes something to Del Rey's Step to the Stars and Clarke's Islands in the Sky, two space station juveniles published by Winston 12 or 14 years ago. However, again the

thinking is White's own. He shows more technical knowledge than I ever suspected him of having and more conscious cerebration than I ever believed he would be willing to spend on a story.

The center of the story is a young man in the 1980's going to a space station and making something of himself. It's the old, basic story of the person who begins by trusting things more than people and gradually comes to terms both with others and with himself.

The first person narration by the hero, of course, makes this change easier to see than if the story were told from the outside. At the same time, it is a limitation. We see so much of Paul Williams and his mind at close range that the other characters in the story come through more as sketches than as people. If Williams were not real--and he is--this would be a flaw. As it is, it is merely a limitation.

The book is limited in another sense. White throughout is conservative, consistently underplaying his material, never striving for difficult effects. In a sense you might say that he has taken no chances for failure, and thereby limited the possible extent to which he can succeed. This is not entirely fair to White--his past work has been overwritten, so that this book may have required considerable effort for him to bring off. Now that he knows how to write with greater control, however, I would be disappointed if he stuck quite so close to first base next time around.

The novel is not completely successful. There are a few minor grammatical fluffs, and a few misaimed words, all of which White's editor should have caught. There is a scene involving juvenile delinquents in Central Park that is sloppy story construction. By this I mean that this story is the sum of its parts; but in this case, only a small part of the value of the scene is added to the story equation. The scene is too big for the small amount of plot advancement in it. And one last point--White names a female Russian scientist Yentov. This isn't possible. She either has to be named Yentova, or she's really a male scientist going around in drag.

These are all minor points, however. In general, the story is quite successful. Its major virtue is a pervading feel of realism, a sensible and entertaining sort of realism: "We put our first men on the moon in 1972. I remember the tremendous hullaballoo on TV--they'd interrupted Capt. Whizz and His Intergalactic Patrol to broadcast all these terribly dull scenes of men sitting around talking to each other and looking at monitors, and every so often announcing something or other."

Besides this, for those who fancy such things, there are Lee Hoffmans and Bob Tuckers and Dean Grennells wandering around in the background, scratching and spitting. The population of the future.

Reading a novel in anything other than ordinary book form is always a bit difficutl. Carbons are impossible to deal with. Manuscript is pretty bad. Even galleys, all laid out in print, aren't easy. Because I'm not used to judging from galleys, I can't say how long the novel actually is, but as I was reading it I wished there were more of it. I think the kids it is written for will enjoy it, and so will more than

one adult. Bob Tucker, Lee Hoffman, and Dean Grennell, if nobody else. And me too, even if I'm not a character.

Ted, please do it again. Not the same story over again, but another one as good or better. If you do it often enough, you may yet turn out to be the Ted White of your writing generation.

"Tiger Mann books are the kind you give John Boardman for May Day." AK

THE NATURAL MAN

I used to have
a speech defect---
I told people what I thought--
and,
as a result
they voted me
ugliest man on campus

But this year
I gave up thinking
for Lent
(it was all I had to give),
and not they say
I'm not so ugly.

After I've bought
oral antiseptic
roll-on deodorant, pre-frayed tennis shoes
and all the other things
my new friends say
I really need,
I'm think of saving
for a lobotomy

Then
I'll be
beautiful.

---Flanders Modrian

"A rightist will kill you to make a profit; a leftist will kill you for your own good." GP

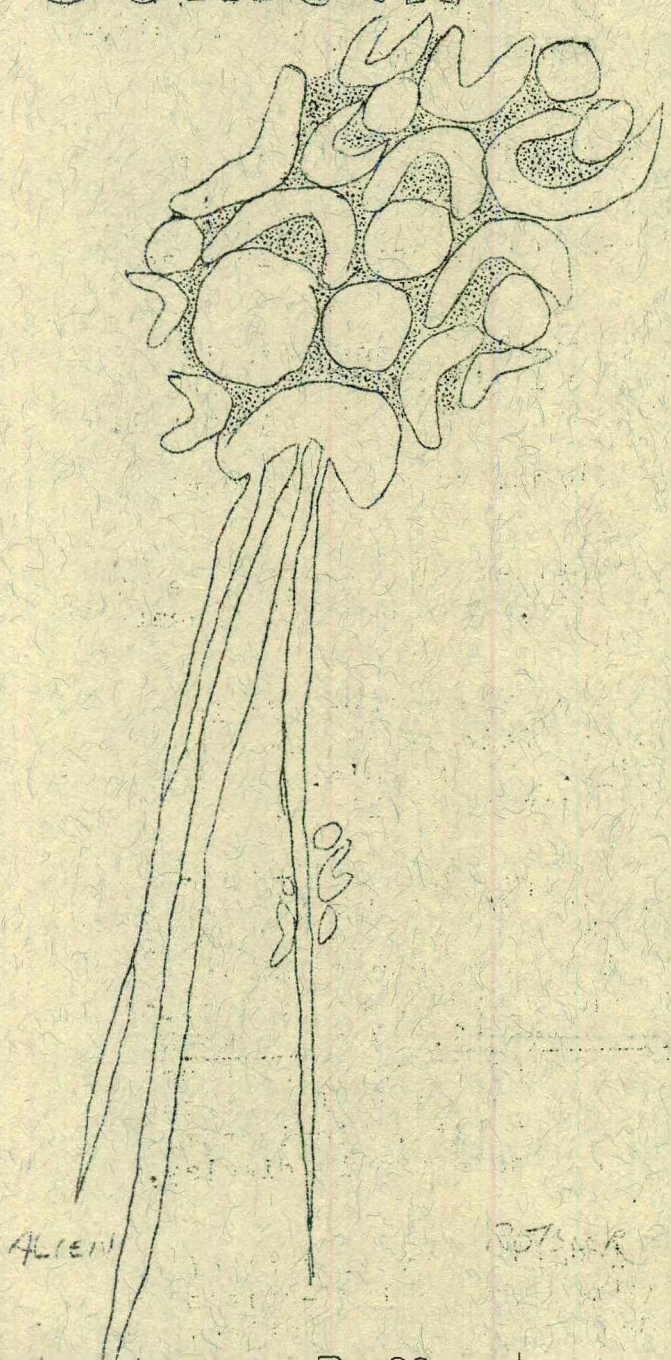
"...talent is a weird substance. It is an absolutely unjust and undemocratic commodity. It has a willful tendency to settle on the most unworthy brows. It comes, unreasonably, to strange pimply girls who have never been within semaphore distance of glamour. It comes to lisping Southern fairies who act like probationers from a booby hatch.

"I know it isn't fair. But there you have it.

"Clean-cut people from nice families who take courses in poetry and playwriting, and who seem in every way suitably equiped to serve as nesting places for the damned thing, just can't seem to attract it. It's enought to make a body wonder whether those antiperspiration creams really do as much for you as the advertisements say."

---Alexander King, in Mine Enemy Grows Older

The Fireman Cometh



by Jerry DeMuth

Francois Truffaut's film version of Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 begins in a promising manner. For one thing, telling the story through a visual method, rather than the printed form, is well-suited to Bradbury's theme--that books are illegal and must be burned. The idea is thus given more impact. Also, the book is essentially filmic, and need not lose anything in being transferred from one media to another.

True to this visual versus written thesis, the credits are not shown at the beginning of the film; one does not read them: They are recited by an off-screen voice.

(The credits, by the way, include as photographer Nicholas Roeg whose work for Roger Corman's Masque of the Red Death may be remembered. Roeg's work here is equally impressive.)

Unfortunately, everything after the opening sequence, except for some isolated scenes, is not only disappointing, but destructive of the ideas behind Bradbury's novel.

The key to the film's failure lies in the casting and directing of Julie Christie in the dual roles of Montag's wife, Linda (Mildred in the novel), and of Clarisse. These two women in Montag's life are direct opposites: Linda is cold and conforming; she is a person who does not participate in the world but allows others to act for her. Clarisse, on the other hand, is warm and social; she is a person who reacts to and participates in life.

Clarisse is the book reader; Linda is the book hater.

They symbolize the differences between a world with books and a world without books.

Truffaut not only has one actress play both roles, he also has

Julie Christie--against her wishes--play both roles similarly. At the film's beginning, for example, Clarisse asks Montag, "What is your wife like?" and Montag replies: "She is like you--except her hair is longer."

Under Truffaut's direction, however, there is some difference between the two women; one might call it role reversal. Clarisse, with her hair cut short is somewhat cold and removed in her relationship with Montag. Her conversations tell the viewer that she is something of a non-conformist, but her actions do not display a free spirit.

Linda, on ther other hand,has long hair and a warmer appearance. The conflict between her and Montag,which is present in the book, is played down in the film. In fact, Linda and Montag even bounce into bed in one scene and make love at her instigation.

By casting Julie Christie as Clarisse, Truffaut has had to raise her age. She is not a student in the film; she is a teacher. Also, Truffaut does not have her killed at the beginning of the film: Clarisse is able to escape her home via the skylight when the firemen arrive, and joins the book people in the forest.

But althought Clarisse appears more in the film than she does in the book, she is really in the film less than she is in the novel; she does not dominate Montag's thoughts in the film as she does in the novel.

What helps make Montag change from a book-burner to a book-lover? We do not know; Truffaut does not tell us.

Why does Montag have such a huge book collection? Why does he read? Clarisse? Perhaps. But in the context of the film, she does not appear to have much influence upon him.

By raising Clarisse's age, Truffaut could have had a love affair develop between her and Montag, an open and free affair of the type he can show so well (and as he did in Jules and Jim). He doesn't. As I have already pointed out, he shows love between Montag and Linda.

Actually, if Truffaut was going to change the age of the 17-year-old Clarisse, he should have made her younger, say 15: Bradbury's teenage rebel has more relevance and meaning today than she had some 15 years ago when Fahrenheit 451 first appeared. Today it is the young who are in revolt against many of the institutions in contemporary society which are also present in Bradbury's society in Fahrenheit 451. Even Newsweek recently (February 6) spoke kindly and with acceptance of the hip branch of youth because of their "spontaneity, honesty, and appreciation of the wonder of life." This "appreciation of the wonder of life," incidentally,is a quality which Clarisse and the other book people should display, but which they seem to lack in Truffaut's film.

There is only one scene in the film which involves any element of today's youth: On a wall screen, we see the police grab a long-haired youth and begin to clip his hair while an announcer launches an attack on non-conformists like him. (When I saw the film, by the way, the audience applauded during this scene; friends who have seen the film said they too witnessed this same reaction.)

Thus a scene because of the way it is handled brings out from the audience a fascist reaction against the boy--rather than an anarchist support of him. This is in almost direct opposition to the theme of Bradbury's novel.

Truffaut even has Montag sitting down with his wife and watching the view screen with no apparent disgust for the entire sequence of events.

(Instead of the three wall screens that are mentioned in the book, incidentally, Truffaut has only one; it is about two feet by three feet and set in the wall. Reducing the size of the screen is a good idea; a large wall screen would have conflicted with the film medium used to tell the story.)

The scene involving the wall screen has a tremendous effect. It is the sequence in which Linda participates, giving innocuous answers to the other characters when questioned. In this scene, two men discuss the proper number of people to invite to a party and in what room they should stay, etc. At times they turn toward the audience and ask, "What do you think, Linda?" at this point, a light flashes, a buzzer sounds, and Linda gives her answer.

It is a stupid conversation, echoing Clarisse's remark in the novel that people don't talk about anything. This remark, however, does not appear in the film, and nothing further is made of the emptiness of the characters' conversations.

Empty conversation is, of course, a natural product of a society in which people are not permitted to read books. However, one of the film's weak points lies in the fact that the reason for books being banned is even less clear than it is in the novel.

In the film, Montag (who, incidentally, is played very unconvincingly by Oscar Werner, one of the stars of Jules and Jim) says a few things about people being unhappy because of books and Captain Beatty gives a brief explanation, taken partly from his overly long explanation in the book. But the Captain's explanation only adds confusion and at one point is so worded as to add fuel to any anti-Negro and/or anti-Semitic feelings the members of the audience may possess.

In the novel, Captain Beatty mentions Negroes objecting to Little Black Sambo, whites objecting to Uncle Tom's Cabin, the cigarette industry objecting to a book relating lung cancer to smoking. It is clear in the novel that since some person or group objects to some books--another side of the books make people unhappy argument--all books should be banned. In the film, however, Captain Beatty, while in a secret library with Montag prior to a book burning, clearly states that Negroes objected to one book, Jews to another...and then he mumbles something about cigarettes which is impossible to catch unless one knows beforehand what to expect. Nothing further is said.

In the novel, however, a more detailed explanation re books is made by old professor Faber. Unfortunately, Faber does not appear in the film. (Clarisse's uncle appears briefly but does not replace the missing Faber.)

In the novel, Faber provides a link between the anti-book society and the book people in the forest; he is the person who can relate books to society. Truffaut's deletion of Faber weakens what is already an insubstantial part of the novel, a part that should be one of the book's (and the film's) strengths.

In the novel, Montag asks Faber, "Would books help us?" and Faber replies, "Only if the third necessary thing could be given us. Number one, as I said, quality of information. Number two: leisure to digest it. And number three: the right to carry out actions based on what we learn from the interaction of the first two."

In other words, books cannot exist by themselves. They must exist with, and as a part, of society. Thus the books preserved by the book people--either in printed form or in the mind--must be saved for the day when they can rejoin society.

"There is a person behind each of these," Montag says of books in both the novel and the film. This is given as one reason why books must be destroyed. This is not explicit in the novel, but Bradbury does make it clear that people are not permitted to exist as individuals. In a world which does not permit individuals to exist, books, an expression of individuality, of course cannot be permitted to exist.

None of these points, however, are clear in the film.

On the question of individuality, Truffaut is somewhat at odds with the novel; the lack of individuality that Linda and her friends share is neither clear nor strong. The book people also lack individuality.

Perhaps this reflects Truffaut's world-view: that people are people, and there is little difference between them. This is in conflict with Bradbury's weltanschauung.

In the novel, the book people have memorized different books and different parts of books; in Truffaut's film, each book person has memorized one book. And when Montag arrives at their camp each one introduces himself as a book title. Each book person, then, has suppressed all individuality because of a book, rather than becoming an individual because of a book. The film's last scenes show them all wandering around, reciting half to themselves the book each has committed to memory.

It is somewhat frightening.

(The way they introduce themselves is somewhat ridiculous. For example, twins introduce themselves as Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, one having memorized volume one, the other volume two; one is called "Pride" and the other is called "Prejudice".)

The half-dead way in which the book people wander about, muttering to themselves, makes them, in a way, less human than the people back in the cities; Truffaut even has them burning books.

The point is made that the possession of books is illegal and that they dare not incur the wrath of society which, after all, does permit them to exist unmolested. So: after having someone memorize a book, that book is burned.

Montag arrives with The Collected Tales of Edgar Allen Poe and is told to quickly memorize the book so that it can be burned.

In the novel, at the end, Faber is on his way to St. Louis with money from Montag; he is going to see an ex-printer in order to resume the publication of various books. This is the beginning of a revolution against the anti-book society, but Truffaut will have none of this.

Instead, Truffaut makes it clear that the book people will go on memorizing books (a dying father is shown "passing on" a book to his young son) for generations while the city people will continue with their way of life.

(Incidentally, there is no destructive war in the film as Bradbury has in his novel. The only reference to a rather abstract war occurs during a background conversation, and is made by one of Linda's friends.)

Fahrenheit 451 is a flawed novel. But while great novels usually make bad films, lesser novels usually make very good, if not great, films because of the strengths a good director is able to bring to them. Truffaut is a good director. His previous films--The 400 Blows, Shoot the Piano Player, Jules and Jim, and The Soft Skin--are testimony to that. And there are some well-directed scenes in Fahrenheit 451.

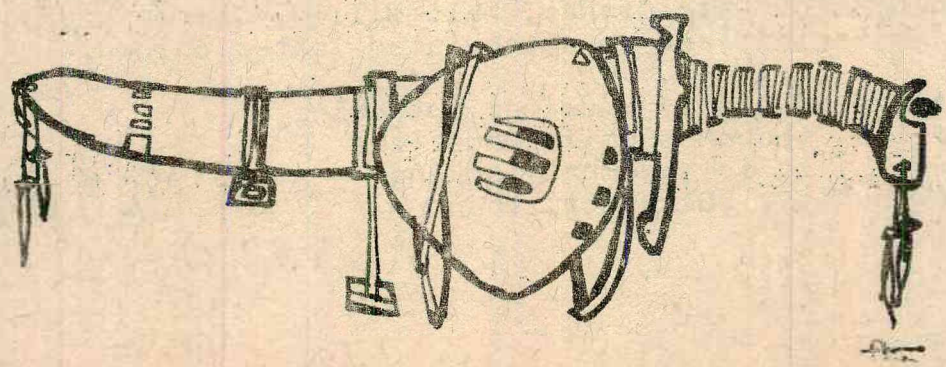
But this rule of thumb does not apply to Fahrenheit 451 simply because Truffaut is not a director whose films contain any message as Fahrenheit 451 does. His previous films are enjoyable for the brilliance of the directing, the spirit behind them, the quality of the acting, and the musical score. Truffaut is actually the wrong director for a film like Fahrenheit 451.

Why he chose to direct Bradbury's novel is a good, but, for the time being, unanswered question.

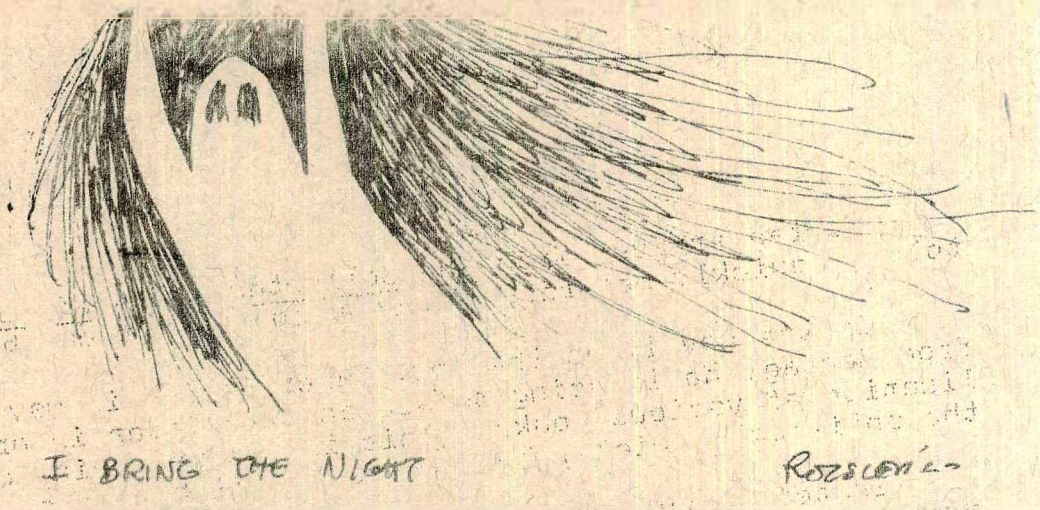
It will be interesting to see where Truffaut goes from here, and whether, because of the fact that a director of his stature chose to direct a science fiction film, any other good foreign film-makers will follow suit.

Godard, with his enjoyable and entertaining Alphaville, has done so. I wonder who will be next.

"For orgies you don't need chairs." WR



Blood Alley



LIGHTHOUSE 14: Terry Carr, 35 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201; available through FAPA, for contributions of material and/or artwork, letters of comment, trade, 25¢ the copy or four for $1; mimeoed; highly irregular.

This is the first issue of Lths to appear in almost a year; but, if I am any judge of fanzines, it was well worth waiting for. Between two well-executed Jack Gaughan covers lie 87 pages of uniformly excellent material. There are, of course, a few itmes in this issue which I personally do not care for, but they are well-done nevertheless. There is nothing in Lths 14 that can be considered crud by any stretch of the imagination.

Lths' appearance is very good. TCarr possesses a layout-designing talent that is equalled by very few in fandom; he is in a class with Redd Boggs, Bill Donaho, and Ted White. And since Lths is mimeographed on the sturdy QWERTYUIOPress, reproduction is well-nigh impeccable.

The work of some of fandom's best artists appears in Lighthouse: The current issue, for example, features fillos by ATom, Bill Rotsler, Cynthia Goldstone, Colin Cameron, Steve Stiles, and a number of others. In fact, Lths' listing of art credits reads very much like a Who's Who of Fanartists.

The written material is of an extremely varied nature; items presented in this issue run the gamut from Philip K. Dick's unclassifiable "Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected, and If So, What Becomes of Robert Heinlein?" through a travelogue by Thomas M. Disch and include the following: a plea for more--and better--humor in stf from Greg Benford; a rather outrageous story by G.C. Edmondson; a slice of American history by Pat Lupoff; and a survey in depth of Roger Zelazny's work by Alexei Panshin. In addition, there are humorous articles by Jack Gaughan and Gina Clarke; columns by Pete Graham, Walt Willis, George Metzger, and Carol Carr; an editorial; and an abbreviated letter column.

PKDick's piece is highly amusing; but being a collection of his thoughts while under the influence of LSD 25, it is somewhat lacking in internal continunity. Dick more than

by Ben Solon

makes up for his lack of coherence, however; some of his "thoughts" are truly inspired: "Avram Davidson fascinates me--as a person, I mean. He is a mixture of a little boy and a very wise old man, and his eyes always twinkle as if he were a defrocked Santa Claus. With beard dyed black."

Greg Benford's article, "Bright Shiny Ideas and Inept Slapstick", dealing with the lack of humor in stf is quite well-written, and Benford makes a very good case for his point. I believe he is correct in saying that most stf writers know little or nothing of humorous writing techniques; and that most of the "humorous" science fiction that is currently being published is dull and contrived.

However, I do think that he is wrong in presenting fandom as a possible training ground for would-be writers of humorous science fiction. While it is true that "...fandom is the only audience [fledgling writers of humorous stf] will ever find that remotely resembles the stf magazine readership...", a neophyte writer will not obtain the criticism he needs in fannish circles. One finds very few attempts at assessing writing as writing in fandom--and even fewer attempts at criticizing humorous writing. This is not surprising. Good writing in general is extremely hard to pin down, label, and dissect; humor, being far more ephemeral than "good writing", is consequently more difficult to analyze adequately. During my time in fandom, I have seen only one discussion of the components of good humorous writing: Walt Willis' review of Beryl Henley's Link in Zenith 7.

"Jack Schoenherr Gave My Dog Ticks" is an account by Jack Gaughan of a visit made by the Clan Gaughan to Jack Schoenherr's home in Flemington, New Jersey. This is a very nicely done article--Gaughan's writing is almost as good as his artwork--but nevertheless, it is a somewhat minor piece.

G.C. Edmondson's "Oh Pioneer" is one of the damnedest bits of fiction I have ever read. The story is of a completely indescribable nature; it must be read to be fully appreciated.

In "The Western Outlaw: From Cave in the Rock to Hole in the Wall", Pat Lupoff presents a long and informative summary of old western outlawry, the second in a series of articles dealing with various aspects of the old west. Pat's writing is very good, and she covers the careers of such notable desperados as the Harpe brothers, the Loomis brothers, the James-Younger gang, and Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch in considerable detail. Fascinating.

Alexei Panshin's critique of Roger Zelazny's output, "On Professional Jealousy and Other Things" is cogent and penetrating. Panshin wields the critical pen with skill and restraint as he outlines what he considers to be Zelazny's two major shortcomings: an over-reliance on first-person narration and weak plots.

Of the other material included in this issue, I found Thomas Disch's account of his travels in Mexico, Morocco, and Europe, "Around the World with Thomas M. Disch" of little appeal. It isn't badly written or anything, it just isn't my cup of tea. The columns of Pete Graham, Walt Willis, George Metzger, and Carol Carr are lively and entertaining

but are of an almost uncommentable nature. Much the same can be said of Gina Clarke's facetious "The Cultural Deprivation of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant"--although Gina'a article does contain one genuinely memorable line: "...the wasp's biggest handicap as a writer is having no wasps oppressing him," and of TCarr's editorial chatter; they make excellent reading, but there is very little one can say about them.

The letter column, as I mentioned above, is rather short and scrappy. However, it does include the second round of a debate between Phil Dick and Vic Ryan re psychiatry, psychotics, and the nature of reality. The other letters--except for George Metzger's missive--could have been eliminated without damaging the fanzine's over-all presentation in any way.

All things considered, Lighthouse is probably the best fanzine being published today. It is superbly edited and produced, and features an extremely wide range of good material; it is the fanzine to beat for this year's Best Fanzine ~~Hugo~~ Pong.

"Atheism is a Goddamned religion." BCS

"Concerning the latest on 'abstract' art: A hold-up man entered Picasso's studio and robbed the famous abstractionist. Hearing about the robbery, the gendarmes questioned Picasso and asked him to describe the thief. The abstractionist replies: "I'll draw you a picture of him, and you'll have no trouble capturing him.' He drew the picture. The gendarmes went out and arrested a one-eyed ballet dancer, the Eiffel Tower, and a wheelbarrow."

--Harry Hershfield

"According to the laws of average, there should be quite a few geniuses in the world to offset the mass of politicians, economists, etc. What happens to them? Do they die young, or is there some secret Shangri-La where they are assembled until Der Tag, only venturing out occasionally in flying saucers? And moreover, where are all the intelligent kids, the Odd Johns, Hampdenshire Wonders, Camberwell Miracles, Wonder Children...are they really 'in hiding'?

"These reflections are prompted by a news report concerning one Jeremy Spenser. He finishes a stage season shortly...legit theatre. 'I'm not worrying about the future,' he is quoted as saying. 'I have one or two jobs coming along in tv and films...I've written several short stories...one is to be published next month...I'm only sorry they haven't chosen one of my more mature works...I wrote 'The Bluffing Lover' when I was 10.

"Spenser can well afford to look back upon those works of his youth with an indulgent smile.

"Spenser is now all of 14 years old."

--Vinø Clarke, in Hyphen 3

"...he laughed like an apoplectic foetus." AK

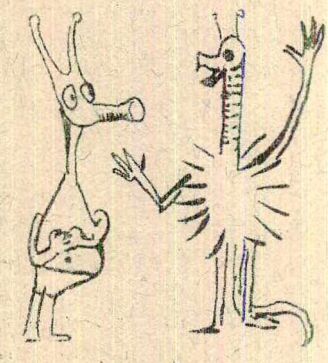
HARRY WARNER: About your editorial, I have two main reactions. One is that we shouldn't worry too much about the esotric elements in fandom. We keep forgetting that a certain puzzlement and uncertainty is one's reaction upon entering almost any new environment, even if it's something as mundane as the high school in the city to which you've just moved or a church which you've suddenly decided to start attending. Nicknames, in-group jokes, special names for things that usually go by plainer nouns, and so forth are just as baffling to the individual under such circumstances as when he becomes a neofan. I still refuse to believe that the whole concept of fandom is too difficult for most persons to understand. I keep remembering a fellow employee of a few years back, who stood behind me, reading over my shoulder, one slow night at the office, for two or three minutes, while I was looking through the new issue of Cry. I had turned the pages perhaps three times when he asked, "Is that a magazine put out by people who like science fiction?"

When someone has difficulty explaining his fannishness and the hobby he likes, it may be his own fault for clumsy communicating, not an inherent difficulty in the concept and he might do better to let his friend read a few of his letters or look at a conreport in a fanzine to orient himself.

I wrote on and on in a loc the other day about censorship, and I'd better not get deeply involved again. So, for now, I just point out that the Constitution does not prohibit censorship. It prohibits federal lawmakers from setting up censorship. As long as there is no group or thing in the nation more powerful than Congress, I think that this is the best state of affairs with regard to censorship. I would strenuously fight any attempt to prevent the Catholic Church, for instance, from listing the movies that it considers unsuited for its members to witness, and I would respect the right of a citizen group to picket an offending newsstand, although I'd probably cross the picket line if I thought the action

Harry Warner, cont.:
unjustified. As long as the reading matter or the movie or whatever is available to me, with a little extra effort, perhaps, I am not going to get all riled up about local instances of censorship; not as long as I have the right to expatriate myself if the nation becomes too puritanical.

Lewis Grant's article may be a part of a general reawakening of interest in shortwave listening in this country. Now that the FM bands have become badly infected with low quality stations that drown out some of the more distant high quality stations, I've been listening more to all sorts of AM programing, including the shortwaves. Besides the shortwaves represent the only way I can get the play-by-play accounts of major league baseball from Los Angeles and San Francisco, via the Armed Forces Radio Network transmitters in Europe. (Despite what someone says in this issue, the world is still big enough for AM reception on the regular broadcast bands to reach out from Hagerstown no further than Salt Lake City.) Incidentally, even a shortwave receiver is not necessary to hear what the rest of the world thinks constitutes the day's news. In many parts of the U.S., the Canadian stations come in loud and clear on the regular broadcast band and provide quite a different viewpoint of many international affairs and the United States' role in them. If you have a good knowledge of Spanish, there are all sorts of super-powerful stations in Cuba and Mexico blaring it out constantly.



The Hugos long ago stopped having any real importance to me, after I learned what a microscopically small proportion of the worldcon members vote each year, and after the effort to introduce similar awards for fan achievements was killed by people high in con places. My own preference would be to turn over the Hugos to the pros altogether and simply provide time at the worldcon banquet for the winners to be announced; then the pros could spend their own time and money on efforts to recruit blocks of votes, intrigues, and self-glorification. I resent any effort to regiment fandom, even when it seems anxious to be regimented. The recent attempt to lobby via fandom for Star Trek has been another unpleasant manifestation of how fandom is being used. This is particularly ridiculous, because it seems to be a lot of fuss over nothing. Star Trek has never been reported in any great difficulties with the ratings and already one of the competing programs in that time slot on another network has been killed by lack of viewers, who obviously were watching either Star Trek or the offering on the third network.

Ed Wood's conreport is unexpectedly good--there's nothing unexpected about the quality of the writing, but it is surprising to find him so charitable toward the fannishness around him. Sometimes I suspect that he'll be the Abe Lincoln of fandom, recognized only by future generations for all his brilliancies, while his contemporaries assume that he's just a one-track sercon fan.

Alexei Panshin's reviews are splendid; with a small amount of smoothing over the rough spots in the syntax, they wouldn't suffer in comparison with the material in a first-rate mundane literary journal. I'm on his side about revealing facts in the plots of novels in the course of a review. If a book exists only because of some kind of surprise or shock on its final pages, I'm not going to be happy that I've spent all those hours reading it; only a short story whose sole merit is its ending is quickly enough absorbed to justify the investment in time.

Harry Warner, concl.:

The Judgement of Eve is a book that I want to read, in any event. From this review, I might make a couple of guesses that will undoubtedly turn out to be wrong. One is that this future legend might be the distortion that centuries and wars could create in a much older legend, the one involving Paris, Mt. Ida, an apple, and three goddesses. If you don't think the reversal of the sexes could come about, I have another suspicion. It sounds as if Edgar Pangborn, who is famous for his love of music, might have taken off from the last opera by Richard Strauss: Capriccio. There are many similarities although the opera has two men competing for a girl. But in the opera, just as in the novel, the conclusion is reached with no definite revelation of what the girl made up her mind to do; and the framework of the novel as the consideration of a legend has a parallel in the Strauss work in which the characters decide that their situation is sufficiently interesting to become the basis for an opera libretto. Aside from all this, there is one little point that Alex seems to overlook, unless something in the novel which he doesn't quote clears the point up. If we take literally the statement at the end that the marriage endured until Eve"grew old and died"it becomes unlikely that she chose Claudius. He is about 25 years older than she is, and would, statistically, be quite likely to end the marriage by dying before she had grown old and died.

Roy Tackett doesn't know as much about German fandom as he does about Japanese fandom, if he describes the former as "overly loaded with seriousness". I think I get about half the German-language fanzines published, I read most of those that arrive, and I can find nothing in them to back up his claim; moreover, the Germans have been descending on British conventions in rather large numbers and have been receiving the best of praise over there for their non-Teutonic attitude toward serious things, and I have yet to find anyone who didn't thoroughly enjoy the cons in Germany and Austria that attracted American and British fans. There are a few German fans who view fandom as something sacred to talk about science fiction and a stepping stone to prodom, but they have the virtue of publishing quite good fanzines to exemplify their interest, and much can be forgiven them as a result.

[I quite agree that the Catholic Church should have the right to limit what its members may see and read. But, unfortunately, the Catholic Church often attempts to dictate to non-members what they may have access to; their recent attempt to block distribution of birth control information,by government agencies, among the recipients of Federal welfare monies is a good example of this. #The basic issue is whether any such religion is entitled to any such claim on the lives of non-members. With Catholics, this is a matter of faith, not reason. To the Catholic True Believer (or a True Believer in any faith for that matter) any deviation from the Official Line is error, and "error has no right to exist." It is less a matter of logic than a matter of faith.--BCS]

ANDY PORTER: Bill Bowers has a valid point in his fanzine Hugo discussion; were such a situation as the ERB-dom ad to come up in the NYCon Progress Reports, I think we'd look long and hard at what effect such an ad would have on the voting. I agree that the "Vote For Us" ad that was placed should not have been published, and the Tri-

Andy Porter, concl.:
Con committee should have been more aware of the effect such an advertisement would have on the membership.

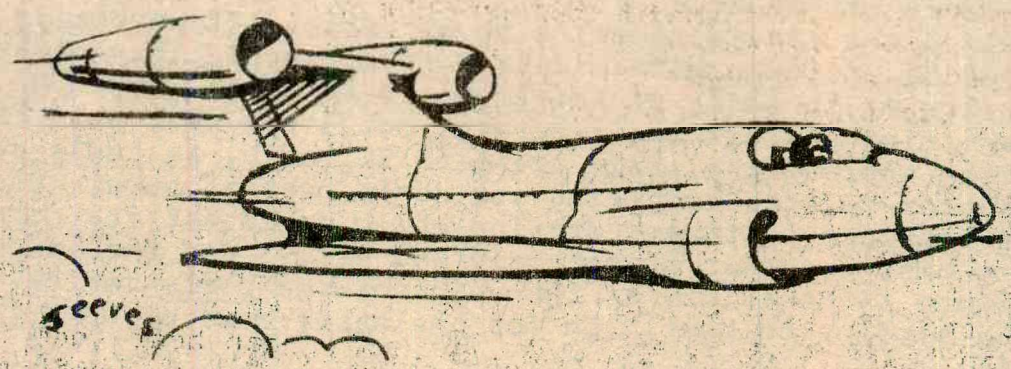
I much appreciated Ed Wood's WesterCon report. Ed has left a tremendous number of occurrences out of his report, due, no doubt, to his not being present all the time: Rotsler and the sunny-side-up egg; the Golf Course Incident; the Costume Ball; the Not-A-Satisfied Customer badges; all these and many more such happenings will make the 1966 WesterCon a Thing to be Remembered. Not to mention the fact that San Diego fandom will wait many years before it is given another WesterCon to foul up.

TERRY CARR: Got Nyar recently...and enjoyed it immensely. It may be the best single issue of a fanzine I read all year, even. [Thank you.--BCS] Dean Natkin was excellent, for instance, and Bill Bowers showed a writing talent which I'd never suspected. And of course there's always Alex Panshin, reviewing books so throughly that there's neither need nor desire on anyone else's part to read them for themselves. It really seemed to me he went out of his way to be a cad and a bounder when he mentioned he'd given away the punchline to The Sirens of Titan in Yandro, and then proceeded to recapitulate his transgression for anyone who may have been lucky enough to have missed it the first time. One could make a case for giving away plot secrets for the purpose of discussing a book throughly, but Alex wasn't discussing The Sirens of Titan here, so it was just plain meanness. Harlan Ellison has a theory that mild-mannered, friendly ole Alex is secretly a rapist and a child-murderer, and this seem to be evidence to support Harlan's thought.

I don't know whether fandom is heading for another spate of fannishness or not (I doubt it), but I do take exception to your saying: "Fannishness has many merits and I enjoy it, but no one can deny that it is esotric. I can't imagine a neofan enjoying his first issue of Honque, Lighthouse, or Quip..." I'll let the editors of Honque and Quip fend for themselves, but I challenge the statement as it applies to Lths. I don't publish a particularly fannish fanzine these days (and even Innuendo went out of its way to explain its fannish references), and I'll have you know that Jack Gaughan's mother-in-law, who hates fanzines and never reads them, read the latest Lths cover-to-cover, commenting it was the first fanzine she'd ever seen that she could understand. What, after all, is so esotric about things like (to mention items in the last few Lighthice) Metzger's columns about army and/or beat life; Gina Clarke's half-jesting analysis of the Tolkien trilogy as "fag literature"; Jack Gaughan's article on Bok's painting techniques; Carol's columns satirizing Fellini and Antonioni, or Helen Gurley Brown and Hugh Hefner; Ted White's and Pat Lupoff's articles on the old west; etc. etc. etc.? [You've made your point.--BCS] If there is any trend back toward fannishness, I'm not part of it with Lighthouse. I like fannish stuff, but I haven't seen much of it in recent years that I wanted to put in Lths.

About Alex's review of The Judgement of Eve (which book I haven't read): If the gal had three choices, all of whom seemed to be equal to the rest, and if, after all their trials, they still seemed equal and in fact were equal--then what's the difference whom she chose? Wouldn't an answer be necessarily anticlimactic? Sometimes we get very hung-up over choices which are really useless; either way we go we can't lose or gain a thing, yet we worry and cudgel our brains seeking an answer. Maybe in such cases we should accept an easy choice, which is no choice, and flip a coin.

I don't know if this is what Pangborn had in mind--in fact, I doubt



Terry Carr, concl.:
it, judging from his last line, "finding your own answer is simply...a necessary part of the human condition," which suggests that the reader is to use the book's characters as a method of finding a little insight into his or her own possibly unsuspected preferences--but if that isn't what he was thinking of, maybe it's just as good. Yes, I think I've convinced myself of that: since I can't think of a better point to the book (at least on the basis of this review...), I may as well accept that one.

BOB BLOCH: Nyar 4 darkened my door and lightened my life considerably today...I started on page 1 and emerged on page 58, laughing and scratching. While admittedly the magazine is not in a class with ERB-dom, it does have a certain panache. And I am happy to know that Lewis Grant and Ed Wood are still as artfully articulate as ever; andrew offutt is Superb.

WALT WILLIS: I liked your editorial. That first bit, the frank admission of difficulty is an old technique but you do it very well. The second bit, about fanzines, interested me very much, but I feel rather diffident about commenting on it; I've been so out of touch that I don't know what other people may have said. I gather the point has been made about fandom losing its sense of common purpose and its exclusive status, and you make the point quite well about our loss of interest in contemporary sf, and all I think I have to offer is a suggestion I made to Terry Carr when he was here last year: that fandom, and specifically genzines, have declined because they are too good. People like Carr, Grennell, Ashworth, and many others [Such as yourself.--BCS] have produced such uniformly excellent material that people have come to expect it of them and take it for granted. So they don't get excited any more and the older fans lose their incentive and continue publishing more out of a sense of duty or a feeling of nostalgia than for any real enthusiasm. They tend accordingly to produce either monumental works which are too big to comment on, or ephemeral chatter for the apas for, as you point out, instant egoboo. Not only that, but the excellence of the top class genzine inhibits the newcomer, who feels he could never do so well. I remember vividly that the first time it ever occured to me to publish a fanzine was after I had received a crudsheet and thought, "Well, surely even I could do better than that." So it's arguable that the best way to revive the genzine is for every fanzed to publish at least one item of such flabbergasting ineptitude that it provokes his readers out of their lethargy. If it works, it will, of course, be known as the

Walt Willis, concl.:
Recrudescence of Fandom.

Lewis Grant was fascinating on SW radio. If anyone in your readership is still in touch with Willis Conover, would they please pass on a request from me to Voice of America? It is this: SHUT UP! It is not that I have anything against the programs, but I can hear them from stations in Europe. Whereas the whole point of SW radio, as Lewis points out, is that you hope to hear something you don't hear at home. If there was just one American shortwave station which broadcast its normal medium wave programs, used car commercials and all, I and thousands of others would listen to it avidly as the voice of the real America, not just what They want us to hear. Oh for the happy days of W8XK (KDKA on SW) and W2XAD.

Ed Wood's conreport was fascinating for its frank and fearless expose of Ed Wood. I often wondered what sort of person Ed Wood thought he was; now I know he doesn't even consider the possibility that other people might think of him otherwise than he himself does. By the nature of things it is not often that we get a glimpse behind the thick skin of the pompous extrovert: it's interesting to find that there's nothing there.

Space is dwindling, but I must leave enough to say that I spoke too soon in my suggestions for reviving the genzine: you have anticipated me. I do think, though, that you might have tried to get a human being for the job: Stephen E. Pickering is too obviously a not very well programmed computer.

PHYLLIS EISENSTEIN: Does Alexei Panshin know what kasha means? Last night, my spouse asked me that and it took me half an hour to explain. I finally realized that I don't know what kasha is, although I've eaten it half a dozen times. It's a starchy type of Jewish and/or Russian food which is sometimes put in chicken soup in lieu of noodles, kreplach, or matzo balls. But what does it have to do with books?

FELICE ROLFE: I think you're right about the revival of the genzine. Of course the only apas I'm in are N'APA and APA L--I'm on the FAPA waiting list, as who isn't, but I only see the titles listed in The Fantasy Amateur for the most part--but those seem to be dwindling; while there are more, thicker, better-quality genzines in my mailbox in the last year than when I first got into this rat-race. I disagree though, that fanzines must move away from discussions of sf because its mostly all been said. We manage to fill a good many pages in Niekas with science-fictional topics. (Of course, we fill a good many pages with non-sf topics, too; let's face it, we just have too many pages.) I realize that this is reasoning from a single example and thus is invalid ...but Niekas is the only zine I know anything about...it started out as a small N'APAzine, you know.

Lew Grant's column is very good. However, I really must point out that if the speed of transmission of the electronic media really was zero, nobody would never hear nuthin'. I think he meant infinite or instantaneous. Would you believe "non-measurable"? No? How about the speed of light? (And what's this I hear about some physicists thinking the speed of light might be variable after all?)

Bill Bowers, what do you think of NYCon's idea to change the fanzine Hugo to the Pong Award? I haven't really talked this over with Ed, so I can't say what Niekas will do, but I personally do not feel inclined either to compete for or to accept something called the Pong Award. I

Felice Rolfe, concl.:
much prefer the Hugo, though I'd not be too upset if they called it something else, something like the Bradbury or the Ike (for Asimov). The Harlan,even! ...As long as you've brought up the Hugos of last year, I'll add my 2¢ worth. I wanted one. Probably I'd have been all bent out of shape if we'd lost to any other zine but ERB-dom. That, however, was a very funny feeling; I was mad as hell, but I couldn't feel it any any connection with Niekas quality or shortcomings. Because, of course, it hadn't. Again, I haven't checked with Ed...but at least half of Nieaks is with you in your little plot to foil bloc voting and keep the Hugos (or whatever they may be called) having some significance.

Dean Natkin,, enjoyed very much. I prefer the Beatles as gods over the one we've been stuck with all these years; they can make mistakes, and we can even catch them at it.

Ed Wood gives an entertaining WesterCon report....except for making me the Invisible Little Man...Sturgeon awarded it, did he? News to both me (as chairperson of the Little Men) and Ted (who is not)!

[Felice, I didn't say that fanzines must move away from discussions of stf; I said that they would. This isn't because everything there is to be said has already been said, but because there is very little contemporary stf that is worthy of in-depth analysis; and, furthermore, there are very few people in fandom who are capable of producing critiques that are both informed and entertaining. --BCS]

JERRY DeMUTH: ...why the insistence that one's political beliefs must be kept out of the classroom? This reflects the general anti-communist hysteria of this country, and implies that Marxism is some sort of aberration which does not merit serious consideration. One gets political theories of some sort in history, economics, and other social science courses. A Marxist view has every right to be heard, as do other viewpoints,if these courses are to have any meaning. Herbert Aptheker, for instance, (whom one must read if one is interested in southern pre-Civil War history, history of the American Negro, etc.) is looked down upon in this country because he is a communist; in any other nation, he would be on the faculty of some university.

The John Birch Society is more of a danger than the Klan and the other para-military groups because, to para-phrase Norm Clarke, they don't lynch "socialists" but use other methods. Violence alienates most of the population, and Klan-type hostility makes it impossible to infiltrate organizations other than small-town southern police forces where violence is acceptable. The John Birch Society quietly infiltrates organizations and gains control of them for their own purposes. The havoc the JBS has been able to create across the nation is of a different sort than the Klan's but in the long run it is more dangerous. The Klan ends lives; the JBS destroys reputations.

[A Marxist view has every right to be heard, but not in the classroom. I may be wrong, but I have always thought that it is a teacher's job to present facts as objectively as he is able to, and to allow his students to draw their own conclusions from these facts. However, I will agree that the fact that a man is a Marxist--or a Bircher--should not keep him from getting a job as a teacher. #Personally, I don't think the JBS is any more of a danger than the CPUSA.--BCS]

GEORGE PRICE: When I wrote "Now What's That Supposed To Mean?", I expected disagreement. What I did not expect, and find very distasteful, is to have it assumed that I had not even bothered to read the texts I discussed. John Boston, for example, carefully calls my attention to the indisputable fact that the full text of "love thy neighbor" is "love thy neighbor as thyself." This information is a bit superfluous, in view of the fact that I spent the better part of a paragraph...in exegesis of what the phrase "as thyself" implies.

Creath Thorne takes me to task for my vast ignorance of matters Biblical, but seems to have missed the elementary point that I did not say that "love thy neighbor" means to "indulge in sirupy semtimentalism...," but was denouncing that as a misinterpretation. And when he says that the "sirupy" version is not taught in churches today, he is just plain wrong. Certainly it is not taught by any minister who really knows his Gospel, but that's the point. There misinterpretations are spread by people who surely ought to know better--and don't.

I grant that my substitution of "respect" (not "self-respect" as Mr. Thorne misquotes me) for love is arguable. Mr. Thorne suggests I Corinthians13 for a concise definition of love in the Christian sense. Even better, read that chapter in both the King James and Revised Standard versions. The differences are edifying.

I am also aware that the Christian revision of Mosaic law imposes upon us a certain responsibility for our fellows, though I think that "my brother's keeper" is a rather poor phrase to express it. My point was, and is, that this cannot be educed from the story of Cain and Abel, from which that familiar quotation is taken.

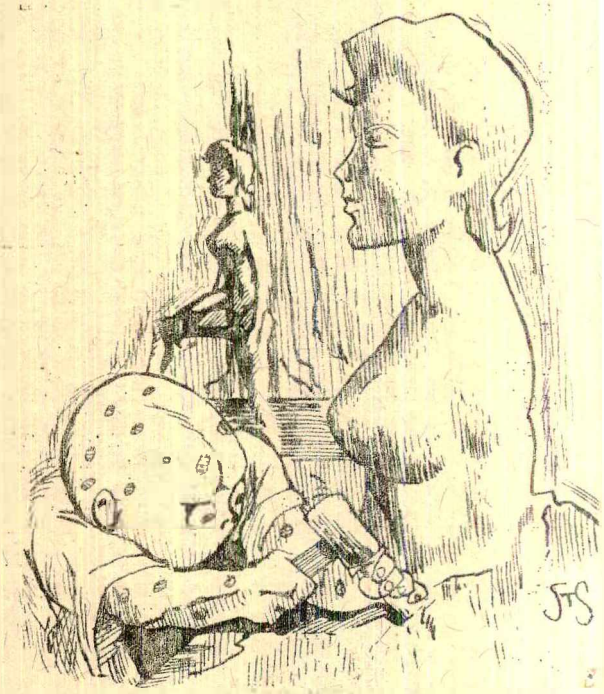
Norm Clarke: Yes, Prof. Genovese said, in so many words, "I am a Marxist," and "I welcome a Viet Cong victory," i.e., a VC government for South Viet Nam. He has said it repeatedly and publicly; he does not "admit" being a Marxist, he proclaims it loudly and proudly. I can at least admire his honesty, though not his judgment. While on the subject of Marxist professors, let me toss out a subject for debate: Marxists ought not be hired to teach sociology or history or economics for the same reason that flat-earth fanatics ought not to be hired to teach geography.

My explanation of "witch-hunting" seems to have stirred up some political emotions. Buck Coulson implies that Congressional committees are ineffective in catching communists. Don't try telling that to Alger Hiss or Owen Lattimore! They were both exposed by Congressional investigations, along with a bunch of smaller fry. The job of exposure fell to Congress in the late '40s and early '50s because the Executive branch could not be trusted to do the job; it was too busy covering up the embarrassing evidence of how extensively the communists had infiltrated the government.

Buck, and also Bob Briney, object that a good many people were "exposed" falsely--guilt by accusation, etc. Perhaps my memory is at fault, but I can recall hardly anyone being publicly accused by a Congressional committee later turning out to be innocent. I must add that I count in the committees' favor all those who took the Fifth Amendment; while their guilt might not be provable in court, taking the Fifth is sufficient indication that the accusation is not wholly groundless. For if it were, why not say so?

An examination of the methods used by the committees shows that witnesses were treated quite fairly, with very few exceptions. The methods employed were at least as fair as those used, without complaint from Liberals, in investigations into, say, the drug industry. The

George Price, concl.:
suspicion arises that what was objectionable what not the "methods", but any investigation into communist activity, since such investigations all too often showed how foolish the Liberals had been. This unpleasant suspicion is exacerbated by the blatant disparity between the few cases of investigatorial misconduct and the enormous outcry of "thought control", "character assassination", etc. Even more, it is very apparent that the committess's loudest critics were determined to see no communists no matter how ponderous the evidence. The perfect example is the case of Owen Lattimore.



You may recall that Senator McCarthy said that he was willing to stand or fall on the strength of his accusation of Lattimore as a Soviet agent. Now this was a bit of oneupmanship on McCarthy's part, because it was not his committee at all that exposed Lattimore; it was the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. The evidence accumulated by the SISS was monumental; I do not see how anyone could fail to be convinced that Lattimore had indeed been a communist agent during his career with the Institute of Pacific Relations.

However, McCarthy reckoned without the "McCarthyism" conditioned reflex that dominated so many Liberals during that period. McCarthy just had to be wrong, his accusations must be lies: So if McCarthy accused Lattimore, then Lattimore must be innocent. Immediately, Lattimore practically became a folk-hero--the very model of an honest Liberal wickedly accused by the monster McCarthy. To this day, Lattimore's "ordeal" is cited as an example of witch-hunting and persecution. The solid evidence of Lattimore's subversive conduct has never been refuted--as far as I know, there has never even been an attempt to refute it--it has simply been ignored. To treat it honestly, you see, would be to risk admitting that the investigating committees did do some good work. I submit that what infuriated the Liberals about the "witch-hunting" committees was that they smelled out real witches.

/ A few dissents if I may: I'm afraid I can't agree that "Marxists ought not to be hired to teach sociology or history or economics" simply because they are Marxists. Perhaps I am being naive, but I don't think the fact that a man is a Marxist necessarily makes him incapable of teaching the social sciences in an objective manner. #I also think a professor's off-campus activities are his own business; Genovese, for example, has a perfect right to be a Marxist. As long as he doesn't use the classroom to present Marxian dialectics as Ultimate Truth, or as a podium from which to advocate the violent overthrow of the United States' government, Rutgers has no right to fire him. If, however, Genovese is using the classroom as a pulpit, he should be flung out on his ear; he is paid to teach, not preach. #The one point you fail to take into

account re Congressional investigating committees is the use of Congressional exposure as a political weapon. HUAC, for example, certainly has the right to make known to Congress and the people facts which it discovers. Likewise the President has many special powers which he may invoke in emergencies. If the President were to declare the country to be in a perpetual state of emergency, grant himself a perpetual right to his most extreme emergency powers, he would be acting within his legal powers, but the nation would--I hope--soon rise up against him. This is approximately what HUAC has done, however. It has been given a perpetual license to go on investigating from now until Doomsday, it has made use of its powers of subpoena and inquiry in extreme fashion, often playing outrageous games for the sake of publicity and frequently using its power of exposure to make political threats. Its Congressional immunity enables it to go about claiming that various people are communists or fellow-travelers, withholding its sources of information as confidential, and immune from retaliation or even a fair chance for rebuttal by its victims. #Also, few people have questioned the Committee's right to expose subversives, but have protested that what it accomplishes is little more than name-calling in Clever Plastic Disguise. A witness is frequently asked questions, not to add information to that possessed by either the Committee or the public, but to enable the Committee to set before the public certain insinuations and charges contained within the question. # Incidentally, the fact that Liberals have used tactics that would make McCarthy turn green with envy--Bobby Kennedy's campaign to "get" Jimmy Hoffa while he (Kennedy) was Attorney General, for example--does not justify them; communists, labor racketeers, and other undesirables are all entitled to due process.--BCS_/

LEWIS GRANT: My opinion re censorship is simple. I am in favor of it. That is, for persons in jails and loony bins and for the young. These people have demonstrated that in most cases their think-works are not in good operating condition or that they belong (unfortunately) to a class with a large percentage in that classification. Otherwise, we have to say that "normal" adults either have to be trusted to evaluate data properly, or the culture is going to smash and all the king's men and cavalry are not going to put it together again.

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binary: aviary for cuckoos

Since man is, in my opinion, a neotene, an animal that never "matures" in the biological sense, we can't set a natural age and say people on this side are "mature" and people on the other side are not. We have to set a completely arbitary date. We can say that people get closer to maturity as they grow older, because their sex organs and metabolism slow down, and they are no longer run at 100% full speed by their gonads.

Lewis Grant, cont.:
So we set a date at approximately the point they begin to slow down after the tremendous shakeup of puberty and the few years that follow it. In primitive tribes, where life is short and well-structured, there is no such thing as a "teenager". One week you go through a puberty rite, designed to see if you are tough enough to take it. (Children squeal when they are hurt, adults don't.) The next week you are an "adult" ready to hit the warpath. Unfortunately, in complex societies, the brain lags behind the gonads, and puberty is only about 2/3 the necessary preparation for "adulthood". So, civilizations set arbitrary ages, several years past puberty, for "adulthood" since they realize that "puberty" and the endocrine changes that accompany it take several years to reach a steady state.

The Romans had a Thing about even numbers, so they set their arbitrary age at 21. My suggestion for the arbitrary age in this...decimalized culture is 20. I think 18 is too young to set the changeover, for one thing. Secondly, we celebrate the 40th, 60th, 80th, and 100th birthdays as something special, why not the 20th? Thirdly, we have a special name for person who have, essentially, passed puberty but who are still not adults: We call them "teenagers". And what is a person of 20? He is not a teenager, and he is not, legally, an adult.

I realize that there are a lot of 15-year-olds who are more "mature" than some of our 40-year-old playboys. All I can say is, tough luck kid, and remember: one of the things an adult is supposed to have is patience and a long-range view.

Anyway, what this all leads up to is the fact that I think a certain type of censorship is useful for people under 20, just to make sure that they get all sides of controversial questions, and are not swayed by demagogues who are adept at making the glands squirt. A teenager's gonads are large and powerful; and they are not controlled very well by his cerebral hemispheres.

In this vein, he needled, I was wondering if the term, "He's nuts!" doesn't refer to those who are run by their nuts instead of their frontal lobes.

I agree with Poul Anderson's comments about Money--partways. Our problem is that we are going through an era where we still don't know too much about information theory. In the past, trade was an exchange, a real trade, of useful matter. Gold was by far the most valuable material around that came in amorphous instead of crystalline form. (Diamonds, rubies, etc., were more valuable, but diamond was found as "a diamond" of unique size, shape and clarity, instead of as "diamond". If gold nuggets turned into worthless dust when broken, they would have to be sold as "a gold" instead of as the amorphous material "gold" and we would have never had the gold standard.) People would trade all sorts of things for a small piece of gold. So the government took the gold and made it into small, uniform disks, which said in essence: "The U.S. Government guarantees this to be 90% gold and weigh one oz."

Since these similar, uniform disks were handy, it shortly turned out that people were willing to pay more for them, in goods, than they would pay for the same amount of gold in the form of gold dust or nuggets. Similarly, people will pay more for frozen French fries than they will pay for the same amount of raw potato (plus the skin, eyes, dirt, etc.).

Pretty soon, the government's Smart Boys said, "If people are willing to pay more than equivalent gold prices for these disks just because they are handy, and people don't know exactly what they are doing, we'll

Lewis Grant, concl.:
just cut the amount of gold a smidgen, and maybe the people will still pay the same price in potatoes or sugar for the disks." This was the beginning of government inflation as distinct from true inflation; under true inflation there is so much gold around that you have to pay two pieces of gold to get a sack of potatoes.

Later on, the Chinese had a wonderful idea. They took a piece of paper, and printed on it: "Locked in our vaults is a piece of gold weighing one ounce, which you can get by handing this paper over." This saved people the trouble of carrying gold, which is pretty heavy, around.

The Smart Boys soon discovered that if they had 1000 pieces of gold in the vaults, they could put out 1001 or so receipts, because some were bound to get lost or destroyed.

Then things started to get complicated; people had switched from trading one kind of matter for another kind of matter, to trading a piece of information about a piece of matter for another piece of matter. The only trouble with this was and is that space-time and matter energy obey completely different laws than structure-information. People were also confused by the fact that the information was embodied in the structure of printer's ink on a piece of matter; they found it difficult to grasp that this matter was completely irrevelant to the information. They didn't understand the most important point: that you can't make two pices of matter where one was before, but you can make two pieces of information where one was--or two million. Matter cannot be destroyed...or created. Information can.

We have now arrived at the present mess, where a few people understand the branch of information theory called economics fairly well, but not completely, and most people don't understand economics at all.

The trouble with solving the problem by going back to matter-matter exchange, using li'l pieces of gold is that there isn't that much gold around. You can't keep it moving fast enough; people tend to hoard it for emergencies. Also, the governments, the banks, the loan companies, etc. find that their version of three card monte, using dollar bills, checks, contracts, etc. dazzles Joe Bleaugh so well that they don't want to give it up. In fact, they are so dazzled by the system themselves that they couldn't imagine giving it up.

In the near future, I imagine we'll work out information theory to the point where we can talk about "natural economics". In essence, we have a certain amount of matter, arranged in various ways, a certain amount of energy, either in the form of buried energy like coal, oil, and uranium; or quarterly dividends from the sun, a certain amount of human man-hours of widely varying value; and a large and rapidly increasing accumulation of information on what to do with this matter, energy, and time. We won't get lost in the economic jungle quite so easily; we will come to understand that information can be created or destroyed, decays with time, and can be duplicated (with small loss). Matter theoretically can't be destroyed, but matter in usable form has a certain structure and if this structure is destroyed, the matter is pretty well lost. Iron turns back into iron ore, but that iron ore is then so dilute that it cannot be extracted cheaply. So paint machinery.

To sum up, I believe that the paper money people haven't really grasped the problem; and the back-to-the-gold standard have, but only dimly; they want to go back to a system they think they understand better. Sic transit gloria money.

[I agree that youngsters should be protected from communist and/or fascist propaganda, but I think

that such protection should come about not through the negative way (censorship) but through the positive method of imparing healthy skepticism to them as a necessary part of their education. If they don't get this in the schools--and from my own experience I can say that they most assuredly do not in the Chicago public schools--, they will have to get it at home or through discussion groups. It is also necessary to consider what type of person falls victim to communist propaganda: it is, if I am not mistaken, the uneducated and unoriented individual; one who has no purpose in life and no strong personal or ideological loyalties. He is not, and does not consider himself to be a member of the classes with a vested interest in preserving things as they are; he is a potential True Believer, all he lacks is a Holy Cause. #Is there any way to prevent children from growing up with such an outlook? Is there any way to get them to scoff at propagandists "pushing" various authoritarian and totalitarian ideologies as the Wave(s) of the Future? To the first, I fear I must answer "no". To the second, the answer is certainly not censorship but educational--and possibly practical--experience; a good background in comparative political systems.--BCS_/

JAMES H. SCHMITZ: Many thanks for letting me see Alexei Panshin's review of The Witches of Karres. I've no real comeback to make to it, though. I didn't think the story called for a sequel, either, and this was simply the best sort of sequel I could whomp up under the circumstances. Now that it's done, I feel rather kindly toward it.

DEAN NATKIN: How can I tell John Boston that he misunderstood the point that I was trying to make after all the nice things he said about me? The answer is that I can't, so I'll just say that it was my own fault for not making things clear enough in the first place; as that is (or should be) the responsibility of the writer.

I'm sorry if my article in Nyar 3 implied that Prof. Genovese spouted Marxism in the classroom. I have no knowledge of Prof. G's teaching methods, nor did any of the articles that I read about the case mention any accusation of his doing so. I personally don't believe that Prof. Genovese, despite his infantile world-view, was guilty of that particular offense; inasmuch as he was attacked by another professor for not doing so. I lost my clipping of that story; and I wasn't as sure of the details as I felt was necessary; otherwise, I would have included his case in my article. This professor was a genuine religious fanatic, a dyed-in-the-wool would-be world ruler, a definite example of the Intellectual Establishment's mandarinate, and an out-and-out *nut*. I think his name is Prof. Drew, but I'm not sure. If memory serves (and thank God for the unknown benefactor of mankind who thought up that qualifying phrase), Prof. Drew is also a self-proclaimed Marxist who teaches history at Rutgers. Prof. Genovese probably disclaimed any right to indoctrinate his pupils inside the classroom; he was attacked by Prof. Drew, who held that not only did a teacher have the right to teach his personal beliefs in the classroom, but also the duty; and if Prof. G didn't use his class-

Dean Natkin, cont.:
room to fill his pupils' minds with the desirability of establishing a Marxist society, then he was a traitor to the Cause.

My attack was aimed not so much against Prof. Genovese as against those who defended him in such a way as to support Prof. Drew's position by equating academic freedom with the right to free speech. I merely used Prof. G. as a horrible example.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court never got around to reading my article. Last month they decided a case in which the majority opinion, written by Justice Brennan, equated academic freedom with free speech; Justice Brennan apparently felt that any curtailment of the freedom of expression for teachers would have a stifling effect on the academic mind. I wonder how the good justice could possibly tell. A minority opinion, written by Justice Clark, asserted that this decision "swept away one of our most precious rights, namely the right of self-preservation." Justice Brennan's opinion was couched in language that was so loosely drawn up as to seemingly permit the Prof. Drews of this world to introduce treasonable or any other type of socially undesirable statements into their teaching as long as they don't mention God. I can hardly wait until the Mattachine Society gets around to organizing a chapter at Rutgers. Can't you imagine the battle royal that will occur among the professors for the privilige of serving as faculty advisor? My money is on the Nazi prof. to beat out the professor of abnormal psychology.

Hey! I just thought of something. If a teacher can do what the Supreme Court's decision seems to imply that he can do at a state supported university, what is to prevent him from doing the very same thing at a high school? Or at an elementary school? But why stop there? ON TO OPERATION HEAD START!

Norm Clarke is another matter.

First, he accuses me of neglecting to "include a single scrap of evidence" to support my charge against Prof. Genovese, yet he neglects to describe the type of evidence that he would consider to be acceptable. If you want a tape of the teach-in, Norm, I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint you; the CIA took away my copy of the tape along with my subsidy. Actually, all of my information came from newspaper articles, and the accuracy of my facts, as well as my quotes, is dependent upon the accuracy of my sources: the wire services used by Chicago's four newspapers.

I think the basis for Clarke's attack is to be found in his sentence: "I think that it's significant that these alleged statements are not quoted or even quasi-quoted." His use of the word "alleged" in reference to statements made at a public meeting by Prof. Genovese and later repeated by him for the benefit of the press, suggests that Clarke had never heard of Genovese before. As his letter appears to be written by a reasonably well-read man, Clarke probably felt that I was making the whole thing up. If this is correct, then I can understand his attitude. I don't know why the Canadian press neglected to print this story; I could be snide and say, "I can't help it if Canadian reporters like to get their Viet Nam news from Student Union for Peace handouts whenever they do their drinking at Yorksville." I won't say that, though. My guess is that the Canadian newspaper editors probably felt that the story wasn't of sufficient interest to their readership. At any rate, Clarke will have an opportunity to get the facts from Prof. Genovese him-

Dean Natkin, concl.:
self: I have just read that he has accepted a teaching position at a Montreal university.

Clarke also writes: "...he warns that the next step, if we Don't Watch Out, might be the introduction of politics into the classroom. And, dear me, everyone knows that that's never been done before, right?" You have a point, Norm, but you overlooked mine, which was that politics have never been introduced into the classroom before with the approval of either society or--until recently--of the Supreme Court.

Everyone is concerned with a professor's rights. Students, apparently, have no rights. A professor must be permitted to teach his personal beliefs in the classroom, but neither Justice Brennan nor anyone else has said whether or not a student has the right to disbelieve him.

I guess that Justice Brennan is part of the price we have to pay for electing Eisenhower.

It's all right for a student to listen to Prof. Drew's attempts to indoctrinate him and pretend to believe his prattle. It's even all right for a student to memorize Drew's cliches and repeat them in class--after all, no one wants to be flunked. As long as the student doesn't become emotionally involved in these little games, he's safe enough; these little games are Prof. Drew's substitute for reality, not the student's. The times are changing too rapidly for anyone to get hung-up on someone else's neurosis. Let them do as I do and get hung-up on their own.

One should never surrender his intellectual independence, for that is what enables one to change one's mind; and so much new and pertinent information is being turned up these days that not even Einstein is safe.

If science is big enough to change its mind, why isn't Prof. Genovese? The answer is that he isn't big enough. By becoming emotionally involved, he has forfeited whatever intellectual independence he may have had when he first started out...and he just isn't big enough. Perhaps he never was.

It will not be necessary to crush Prof. Genovese's revolution, Norm; this is one revolt that will fall apart from its own internal contradictions.

andrew offutt: Let me say here that i admire alexei panshin's reviews and his guts in nyar as much as i did his "sons of prometheus" in analog recently. i too am nutty about schmitz' witches of karres--i can remember the illustrations, charmingly well-done, as well as the story. Thanks alexei panshin...i won't buy the book and spoil it all.

Flanders modrian should be shot...before it reproduces.

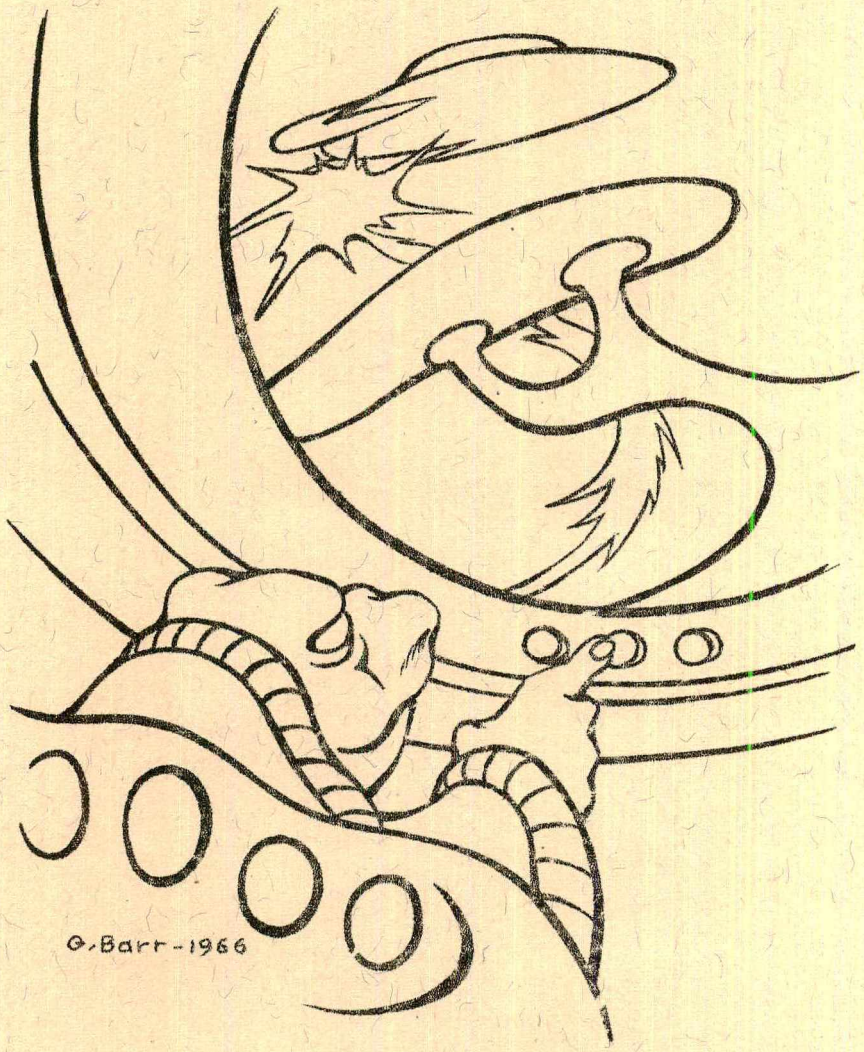
By the way, even donald wollheim is trying to sell me novels. He hasn't quite made it yet, but he has ability.

MIKE DECKINGER: ERB-dom's Hugo is tragic. The award is coming to mean less and less each year. In this case, it is no token of inherent quality or acceptance, but a slick demonstration of the organized bloc voting Bill Bowers mentions.

Dean Natkin generates a lot of wasted energy. He's a better writer than Pickering, however.

BILL CONNOR: I really enjoyed Ed Wood's WesterCon report, even though it may well lack sociological significance. Like, I could just hear Ed putting Harlan down on the subject of fannish attire.

AHF: Steve Stiles, Rick Brooks, Joe Staton (who sends art), Arthur Thomson (who also sends art)and a number of people with Dirty Money.


G. Barr - 1966