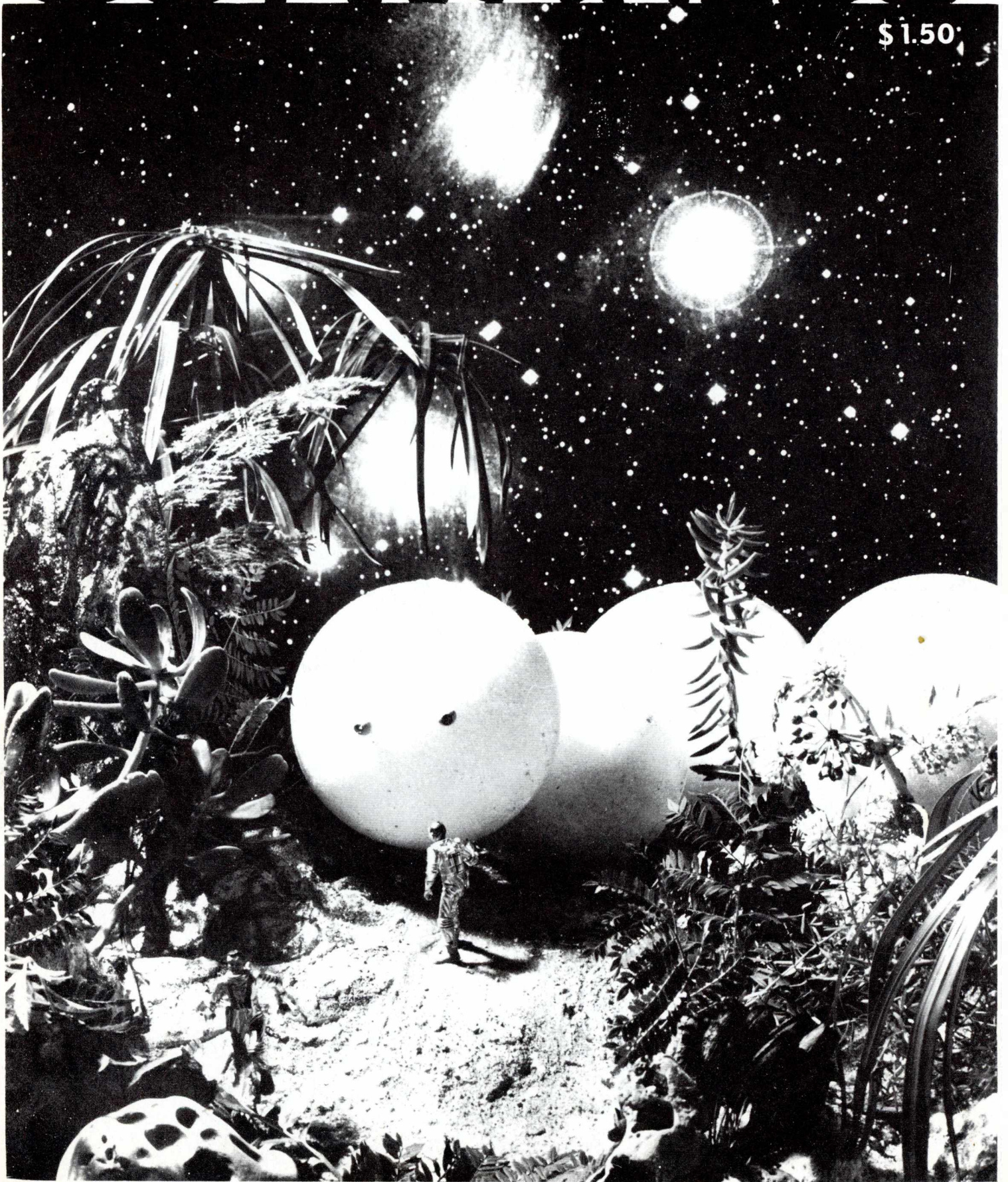
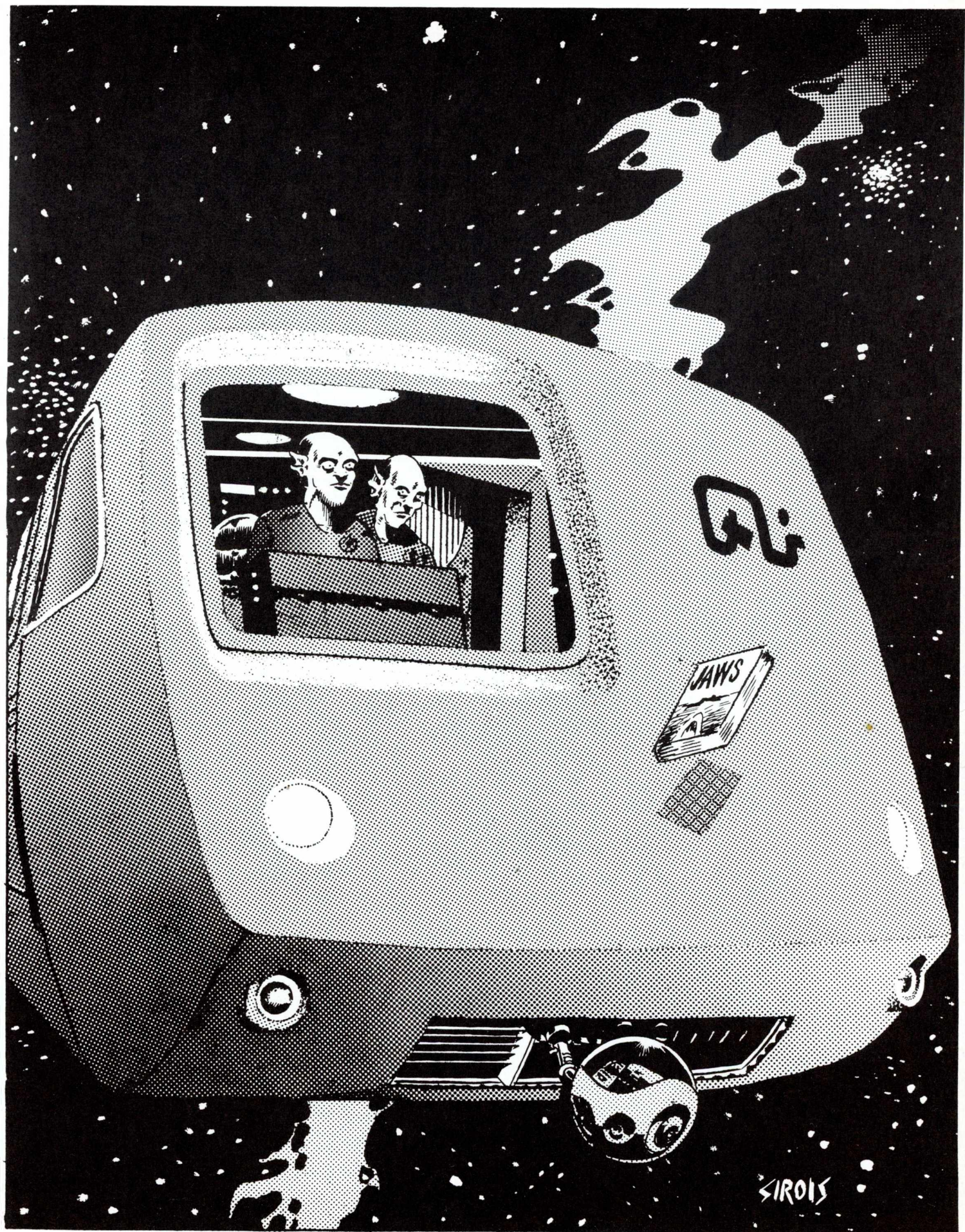


SIXTH
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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OUTW(2)RLDS

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Bilbo Production #83 * This is Page 1019; you may now proceed...

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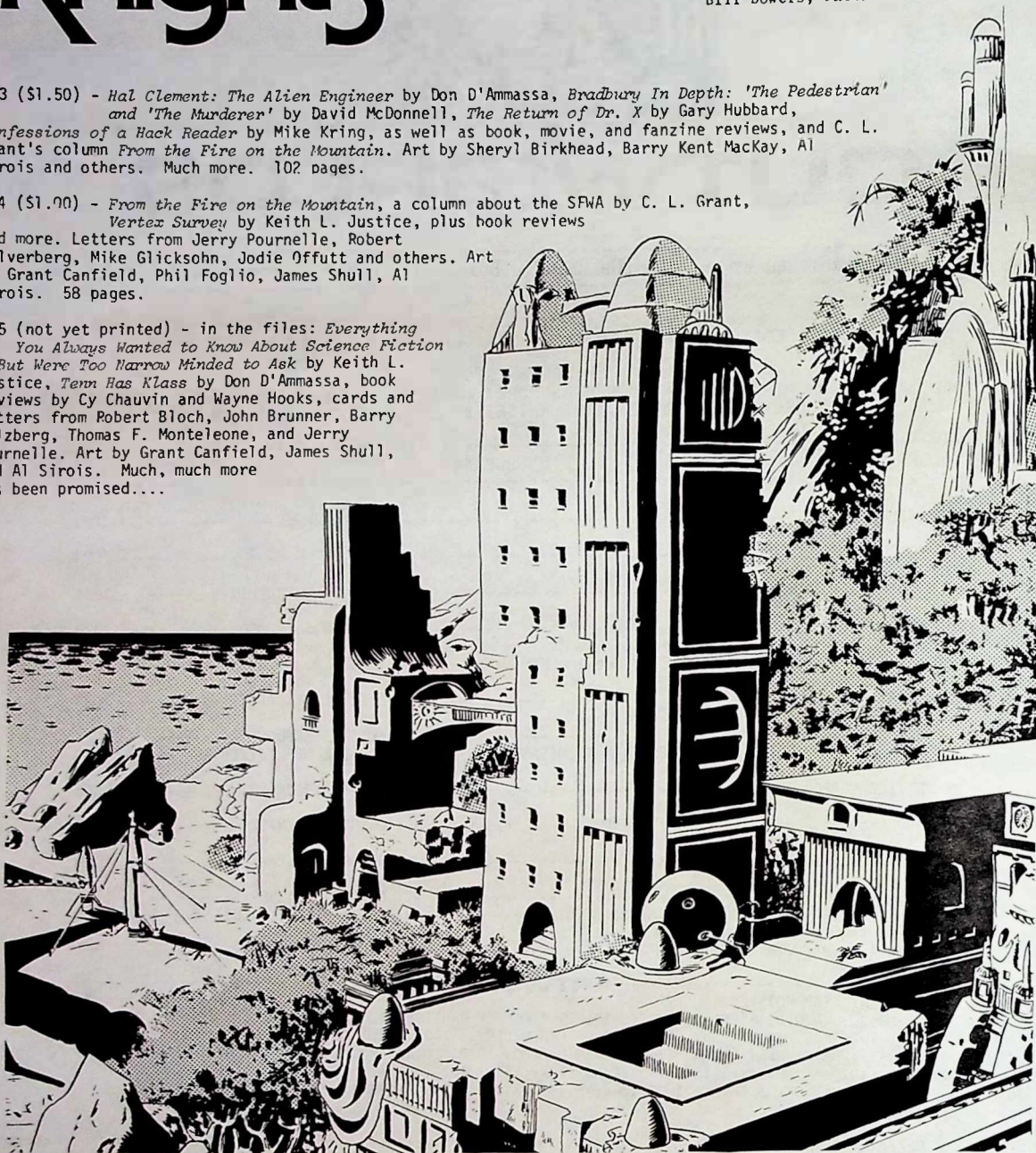
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Bill Bowers, *Outworlds* 26

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from William's Pen

BILL BOWERS

...ah yes, the Sixth Annish; and quite probably the last annish that *Outworlds* will see in *this* incarnation. But, before we get on to that tale, there are several other things to cover...such as some Old Business from OW25 & OW26:

Item: I have been assured by people in a position to know that Harrison is *not* "Kent Bromley". (They also offered to reveal the identity of the culprit, but I begged off: if (s)he doesn't care to come forward, having the knowledge second-handed would do me no good. And at the moment I'd really rather forget it all!)

Item: As of this writing, I have not heard from Elwood on OW25, or from Piers or Dean since the publication of OW26. (...in case you were curious.)

Item: As might have been expected, my little bit on SF Expo in the last editorial produced a vocal, and rather varied, response... A few thought I was totally unfair to Linda, or that I don't "like" her. Wrong...at least on the second count: I've known Linda since the 1969 Philcon, and I consider her one of my closest fannish friends (and hope that the reverse holds true). It's just that...well, Linda does, on occasion, express her opinions rather forcefully...which is one of the things I like about her. But in this particular case she happened to strike a nerve, and I used it as an excuse to react. I probably would have found some other way to say my piece even if she hadn't happened to have pushed the SF Expo button.

On the positive side: As a result of my little soiel, and through the generosity of a certain Bio Time Editor/Publisher, I now have an offer of a place to stay in NYC (which will make it affordable), and have been assured of meeting several fans (ones who don't make it to midwest conventions) that I've wanted to meet. There's good and bad in everything. Certainly I will miss seeing a lot of my friends at Midwestcon...but no more than I'll miss others in Minneapolis and Baltimore over Easter, or in D.C. over the Memorial Day weekend. Not even I can be two or three places at once. Not yet, anyway...but I'm working on it.

Perhaps it's simply that I'm too tired to be objective (I've been working on this issue solidly for a month, to the total exclusion of about everything else besides hanging on to my job); or it may be that I'm overly impressed with my own genius...but it seems to me that, in a lot of ways, this is the "best" *Outworlds* yet. It is certainly the best balanced of the offset ones I've done in the last two years (seems like a lot longer, but #19 came out in March, 1974)... "balanced" in the sense of a blend of long and short items, light and heavy, serious and fannish, art and text--and balanced to the extent that while no one subject dominates, there are certain themes running through several of the pieces. (There's also a little time-binding...that little red felt apple in Ro's tale made a previous appearance in OW21...)

A few comments on the contents:

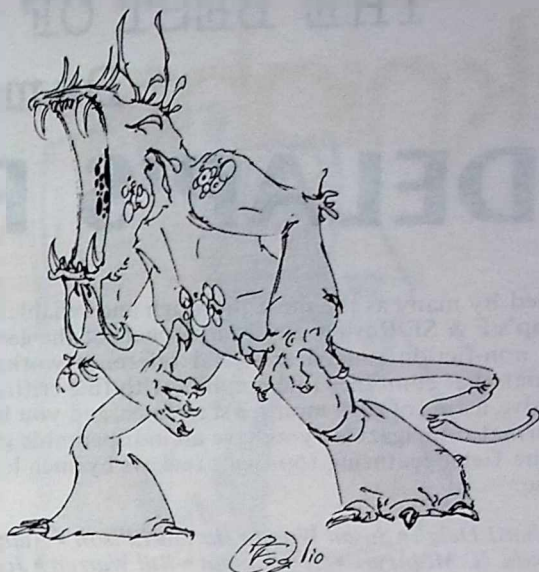
I first heard Ro Nagey relate the Real & True story of The Secret Handgrip of Fandom at the first Windycon, when he, Lin Lutz, Mike Glicksohn and Gay Haldeman were standing in the hallway outside the con-suite party...and I was sitting against the wall in my usual hall party pose. (I am old and I try to avoid standing whenever possible; besides, when both Ro and I are seen standing nearby, Michael seems to shrivel even more than usual... and I'm nothing if not considerate of the feelings of lesser beings.) It was a good thing I started out on the floor because, as I recall, it wasn't all that long before the others joined me, rolling in hysterical laughter.

I've heard storytellers before, and excellent ones at that. I knew some masters of the art in the service, where storytelling and role playing is one of the ways of surviving. (Drinking is the other way of survival; in tandem, the two are almost as much fun and as "real" as politics.) But I swear, I've never heard a story told like this before: Ro had all the nuances, all the suspenseful pauses down pat.

Or perhaps I'd just had one too many Cokes.

I told Ro then: You write that down the way you told it, and I'll print it.

That was October of 1974.



He related the story, again, in my presence at Marcon.

I said: You write that down, and I'll print it.

That was, of course, March, 1975.

He told it... I said... He told it...

Finally, in early August, Po visited Mecca (here) for a weekend...and wrote it out, longhand, while sitting in my living room. He read it to me. I loved it.

But we needed a victim, a trial run on someone who hadn't heard the vocal version. So we drove up to Cleveland (having to tie up the muffler on my car halfway there) and he read the written version to Joan.

She loved it.

I said: You type that up, and I'll print it...

He told it again at Pghlanque in late September. You'll never guess what I said to him. (This is a family fanzine...)

Then...a couple of days before Thanksgiving, Ro called, and in his usual direct manner he got straight to the point. About five minutes into the phone call, I finally pried out of him the information that he'd actually sent the story off to me several days earlier, and was curious as to why I hadn't called the very instant I received it to heap praise and abuse on his body. You see, Po, as his subtle way of showing how really impressed he was to be a small part of such a prestigious publication as *Outworlds*, purposely had not sent the final three pages of the mss. hoping that I would read it through, come to the middle of a sentence that had no end...and instantly call him and say, "Hey! What the...!"

The only problem was that I hadn't received the manuscript.

You see, rather than spring for the extra dime (this was the Old Days, folk) that would have carried it First Class, Ro had sent the mss., all nine pages of it, *third* class. I think it was about then that I decided that, yes, this was the man to go into business with.

Of course the lost envelope did show up eventually, taking eight days to cover the 200 miles between us. ...and yes, he drove down here the weekend before Christmas to hand deliver the final three pages (he wouldn't give them to me when I was up there over Thanksgiving). And yes, it is in this issue...

I swear...never have I worked so hard, so long, sparing no time, effort, or expense, to bring to you readers something so beneath the usual high standards I apply to selecting material for this magazine.

I hope you like it...

In all seriousness, I am curious as to the reaction of the ones who have been fortunate to witness Ro's verbal telling of the tale. I think he's done an excellent job of getting it down on to a two-dimensional surface. (And should you others ever get the opportunity of seeing him do the routine in person, it is something you shouldn't miss.)

(Now, I'm waiting for Ro to put together the nine hours of George R.R. Martin's life that he has on tape... I mean really, when it is obvious that he used the promise of publishing the interview in OW to ingratiate himself with a Hugo winner! Has he no shame at all?)

[Continued on Page 1058]

"THE BEST OF THE REVIEWZINES"

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Dracula in Literature - Fact - Humor

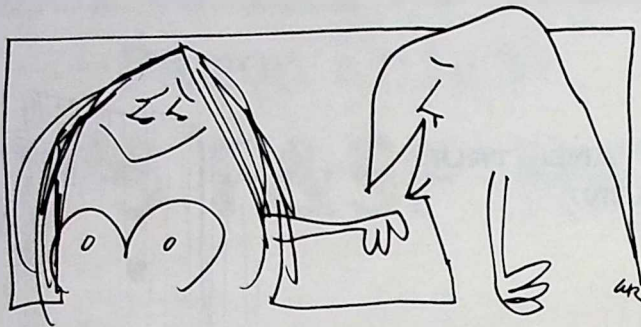


RO NAGEY



RICHARD: What sort of party is this?

*Names are changed because I'm making a snide reference.



...stopping and talking momentarily to each femmefan that they encountered and then moving on.

A femmefan approached me.

"Po, you'll never guess what happened."

"Whazzat?"

"Those two jocks--those--over there...asked me--quote--Do you want to come up to my room and fuck?--unquote."

Hmmmm. They might have dressed out of *Playboy*, but they talked out of the *Penthouse* lettercolumns. I refocused my attention on their goings-on. Classical chain reaction. Question from goons. Opening wide of eyes by femmefans. Expletive not deleted. Undaunted jocks move on. Femmefan joins evergrowing group with statement, "You'll never guess what those--those--those apes over there asked me!" Question from goons. Opening of eyes.....

*There are times in every man's life when he is forced to look after the weaker sex and protect them from goons such as these. Fortunately, I'm a fan and not a man, and my credo is "Everyone for themselves" or, since this is Outworlds, haven for the uncensored phrase, "Cover your own ass, ~~assholes~~!"***

Still, from deep within, there were those stirrings of machismo lurking about. Besides, I figured I had the right to proposition the femmefans first. Isn't that what the registration fee is all about?

Standing in a circle with Moshe Feder, Ctein, Lin Lutz and Linda Bushyager, my first thought was that we should all yell SHAZAM! in the hopes one of us would turn into Captain Marvel. Unfortunately, with the singular exception of Linda Bushyager, I was sure it wouldn't work.

"This is shameful," I bemoaned. We were on our own. No Bob Tucker to ask for guidance, no ΕΙΣΙΤΗΙ STAGE OF FANDOM to refer to. Then, my eyes aglow, in my best Andy Hardy voice, "Here's how to take care of them. Let's get Patia Sandra von Sternberg!"

Ebulliently, we all ran up the two flights to the room where Patia was holding forth at her Infinity con party. Excitedly, interrupting each other, we outlined our plan. As we went on in our narration, her face became transfigured by the challenge.

She was adorned in a skimpy outfit: a black bikini top and a black skirt slit all the way up. Accepting the challenge, she slinked over to her suitcase, the one that is stocked with items obtained through her direct hot-line with Fredericks of Hollywood. On went the opera-length gloves and out came an eight inch cigarette holder that she waved about, Marlene Dietrich style. On her right breast, an inch or so above the top of her narrow bikini top was affixed a small red felt apple.

Like little children pulling a prank on the teacher, we quickly ran down the two flights and positioned ourselves, with great dignity and above suspicion, about the con suite.

I went over to my two gonadal hyperthyroid friends and attempted to engage in small talk.

"What do you do for a living?" I feared they would answer, "Whatever we want to." Instead:

"We work for an insurance company." Uuhh. I imagined their sales routine; "This is a nice place you got here Mr. Bonaducci, wouldn't it just be a shame if something happened to it." My mind became fixed on that image, so they had to pick up the conversational ball.

"Do you know where we can get laid?"

"Well, er, there must be some good bars downtown where you ought to be able to find someone to service you."

***...Outworlds, formerly home of the uncensored phrase! Editor*

"Don't get us wrong, we're just normal guys." Yes sir, Clark Kent. The guys looked like they could take on the Empire State Building and win.

At that precise moment, Patia Sandra von Sternberg sashayed into the room. Boom ta da Boom ta da Boom Boom Boom. Red animal lust sprang forth from their eyes. Their jaws dropped open at '9 c and their tongues dangled helplessly out.

As moans issued forth from their throats, Patia would turn and talk, touch and kiss various fans and then -- with a Boom ta da Boom ta da Boom Boom Boom of hips -- move on and repeat the process.

With all the humility and innocence that I could muster, I queried of the two, "Would you like to meet her?"

Assuming that their murmurs of adoration, glazed eyes and rapid breathing could be taken as an affirmative answer, I escorted Patia over. Putting her best efforts, and her chest, forward, she approached. BOOM TA DA BOOM TA DA (I AM WOMAN!) BOOM BOOM BOOM!!

"There are some people that I would like to meet you," sez I.

"Helloooo. My name is Patiasandravonsternberg."

"Uh...can we call you something--er--shorter?" sez Richard.

"Some people," she said, shifting her weight from one leg to the other with an impressive, suggestive circular motion of her hips, "call me...the Countess." She took a puff from the cigarette in that incredibly long holder and blew smoke into their eyes.

"Well, it certainly is a pleasure to meet you, er, Countess." The rutting drive was so strong in these two bulls that they hadn't noticed the smoke at all. In fact, Raymond, the smaller of the two, had lapsed into a semistupor. Richard, on the other hand, saw the little red felt apple and saw, apparently, that his name was written on it. He reached out, index finger extended, in an attempt to touch it, and asked, "What does this mean?"

As he thrust his finger forward, Patia made a dipping of the right shoulder, a twisting of the upper torso and a parrying move with the right arm that not Antoinoni, Truffeau nor Fellini could have directed better. The parry, instead of saying "No", said, in a very promising manner, "Yes, Yes". With this move she replied, "Don't touch me unless you plan to do something."

CLICK

I awarded Patia both ears and the tail. OIē. She had killed the bull neatly and with style. He was now little more than a machine. Upon her statement, his parried hand formed into a cup, he centered his sights about two inches below the red felt apple and homed in on his target.

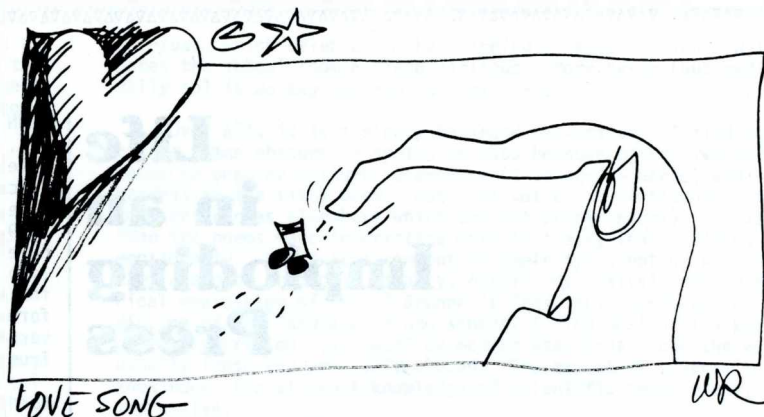
And--oh my god--another parry, better than the first, unbelievably, saying in effect "Not good enough, big boy, but you'll learn." Richard got the message alright. In the suave and sophisticated manner of one of his upbringing, he asked, "Why don't we go up to my room and fuck?" Subtle. (Raymond was insensate at this point, suffering from terminal sensory and fantasy overload. He took to muttering silently.)

"I only go to bed with big name fans," Patia replied, smiling sweetly. "Are you a big name fan? How many conventions have you been to?" Flutter, flutter of the eyelashes.

"This is my--er--first."

"Well, come to five or six more and I think that I can fit you into myschedule." And another shifting of the weight with the circular motion of her hips.

After a bit more conversation following this same level, Patia informed them that she had to move on. Richard, obviously wanting to leave a good impression, extended his hand in the



thumbs-up Freek handshake.

"This is the handshake of brotherhood and I really believe in that, you know." The sincerity that dripped from his voice formed little brown puddles, ankle high, beneath him.

"It was a delight meeting you!" She shook hands and breathed heavily. "In fandom, we have our own secret handshake, don't we, Ro?"

Now, mind you, I had no idea of what she was going to do, but I knew that it was going to be good.

"That's right, Countess."

"See you later, Ro." So saying, she reached down and grabbed my crotch and gave it a squeeze and walked off. Boom ta da Boom ta da Boom Boom Boom.

The Crucifixion of Jesus. Napoleon at Waterloo. The Fire-bombing of Dresden. Armstrong on the Moon. These events fall in contrast. I had seen a Real and True miracle. Patia Sandra von Sternberg and the Real and True Secret Handicap of Fandom.

"Who was that woman?" Richard asked.

"That," sez I, "was the Countess." So saying, I took my leave.

Patia and I went from small group to small group; retelling the story time and again. Each and every time I got to the Secret Handgrip of Fandom, she would reach over and demonstrate on me. I began to realize that I wanted to tell this story as often as possible. As long as Patia was standing next to me.

Elation raced through us all when Raymond left. He paused at the door, surveyed the reveling fen and said, "Fucking weird people!" He split, halving the field in the process.

Then the field report came in. In that inconspicuous manner of fans, my shoulder was nudged.

"Hey! Take a look at that!" Half the room turned to look. Oblivious, aware only of his madonna, there was Richard with his puppy dog eyes and sprung steel muscles. I sauntered over, my sprung steel eyes flicking back and forth between the two; my puppy dog muscles rippling, cleverly hidden by my shirt. Somewhere, perhaps in the far land of Hagerstown, Richard would find the answer to his quest. In Pittsburgh, however, Patia was fondling the people nearest her, ignoring him.

The field may have been halved, but apparently this half-ass would be a harder prey. Something New was Needed.

"May I have your attention, please?" Perhaps quicker silences have occurred elsewhere. Perhaps Shaver is right.

"As you well know, *any* con can have a Pro Guest of Honor, and *any* con can have a Fan Guest of Honor," I intoned in my best #7 sincere voice. "But only Pghlange has adapted to the changing times. Pghlange is proud to announce the Lady of the Night Guest of Honor. The Lady of the Night is none other than *Fatia.... Sandra.... von STERNBERG!!*"

The house came down when Patia stood with a Boom ta da Boom still lingering in her hips.

The image was quickly conveyed that the best a Pro GoH can give you is an autograph; the best a Fan GoH can give you is an egoboo mention in his zine; the best a Lady of the Night GoH could give you would eliminate the need for Fan and Pro GoHs at conventions.

The only *fair* way to give out the honor was by lottery. The only *fairish* way was to rig the lottery. Numbers were assigned

to each member in the con suite. Cheers came from all parts of the room when Jerry Kaufman, whose reputation is spanning the globe, won the draw. Richard was downtrodden. When Jerry picked another number, gasps of surprise came from all. When Rusty Hevelin, the winner, picked yet another number, enthusiastic applause broke out. Moshe Feder, whose winning brought several appreciative New York femmefen to their feet in gratitude, picked still another number. The four winners, Rusty, Jerry, Moshe and Jeannine Treese picked up Patia and ran out of the room.

Richard approached, downcast.

"There were four of them!"

"She's quite a woman."

"But one of *them* was a woman!"

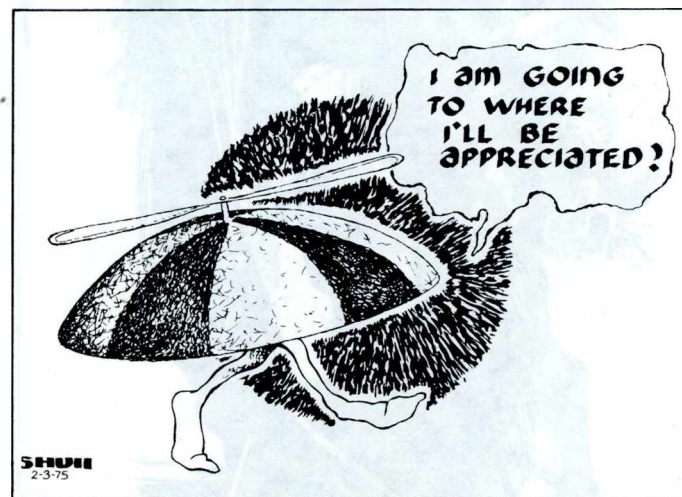
"Yes sir, she's quite a woman."

Richard split.

Nanoseconds later the con suite door closed. Game, Set, Match. Since he would be unable to find the five, having locked themselves in Patia's room, we would say when he returned that "well, the party is over" and "hope to see you again real soon". A nonviolent solution had been found and a Good Time was Had by All.

...except Patia et al forgot to close the door. The suite emptied to lend support and to observe the goings-on. Eventually, after additional merriment when, after Richard's most recent proposition, Patia said she had to consult with her wife, we formally announced vespers and everyone went their own way, only to regroup in the stairwell and, safely later, back in Patia's room.

As time passed, I began to feel a little, well, *evil* about the whole thing. When I heard that Richard had later confronted one of the femmefans and asked, "Why are you people trying to make fun of me?", I felt worse. Until I found out that he had asked the question while standing well inside the ladies' john on the main floor. I felt justified once again.



And that is the Real and True (my version) Story of the Secret Handgrip of Fandom. Or....should that be the Secret Fan-grip of Handdom?

--- RO NAGEY

Life in an Imploding Press

J. R. CHRISTOPHER

JOHN BRUNNER is mainly known to us for his science-fiction novels. For example, in 1965 appeared *THE SQUARES OF THE CITY*, a novel placed in an imaginary South American country, "Aguazul" (located in the place of Venezuela) -- a novel based, move for move, on a game of chess: Steinitz-Tchigorin (Havana) 1892. In 1969, Brunner won a Hugo, of course, for *STAND ON ZANZIBAR*, a novel dealing with overpopulation in the future and put together like Dos Passos' USA trilogy. (I cite these two books to prepare for an interest in South America and for mild experimentation in form.) He also writes poetry, and I have one pamphlet of his verses called *LIFE IN AN EXPLOSIVE FORMING PRESS* (London: Poets' Trust, 1970).

As might be expected in a volume published in 1970, it contains several political poems. *The Coffintree Carol* describes the head of a baby charred by napalm. *Admission Free, Emission Somewhat More Expensive* celebrates President Johnson's Great Society; it begins:

Hooray for the free world baby
Hooray for the marvelous place
you can recognize any time baby
by the smell of its cordite and MACE

And he also suggests what he thinks of *The Silent Majority*; here is the second stanza:

When a man crawled along the gutter half-blind
crying for help because he'd been mugged and robbed
the silent majority decided not to get involved.

But perhaps the most radical of the poems in the booklet is a semi-Italian sonnet titled *Soy Tupamaro*. (I say "semi-Italian" because it rhymes ABCBBABC DEFFED, with A & C being off rhymes.) The *tupamaros* are, or were, the far left in Chile, famous for their kidnapping of an American agricultural expert several years ago. According to a State Department official who in 1972 visited my campus, they were then embarrassing (although that may have been the State Department's wishful thinking) President Allende by taking over in the name of the people smaller acreages than the government was currently redistributing.

The sonnet of course predates the Marxist government (and its overthrow). The octave says that "all references to us are banned" from the papers, and that the people

murmur admiration of our capers
And see how carefully each coup is planned
To pay the workers what's due from their labors.

It is ironic that Presidents Allende and Castro (who visited each other in 1971) urged the copper workers to restrain their desires for a raise in pay, for the sake of the economic well-being of the country.

The sestet celebrates the *tupamaros'* stealing in order to build schools and hospitals, and concludes:

The bosses haven't realized, the fools,
But every prosecution swells our ranks.

Although I personally prefer the Robin Hood ballads as a poetic celebration of attacks on the establishment, I must admit the tradition should allow modern examples. As far as this particular poem is concerned, I cannot see the sonnet form either helps or hurts the content particularly. There is only one South American reference: an image involving the copypu in line 9; the rest -- "workers", "the people", "the bosses", "ranks" -- is fairly standard international Marxist rhetoric. And a damning comment about any poem qua poem (whether its message be religious, Marxist, or psychological) is to say it employs standard language.

(2)

IN THE FIRST SECTION I considered the political poems in John Brunner's *LIFE IN AN EXPLOSIVE FORMING PRESS*. I would like to go on to a survey of the other types of verse. Will I be pardoned if I begin with an example of scatology? (Probably I will, these days...) *A Small Point But Significant* is the next-to-shortest poem in the booklet:

In order to blow someone's mind
there is absolutely no need
to get down on your knees in front of him.



As a three-line, vulgar joke that is amusing enough. It is a verbal attack on the person addressed (and the "your" puts the reader to some degree into the range of the shell). I suggest that the poem is structured on a trimeter line beat, with some secondary accents:

In order to blow someone's mind
there is absolutely no need
to get down on your knees in front of him.

Further, the off-rhyme of *mind* and *need* (perhaps nearly consonance, with their nasal openings), and the repetition of beginning sounds in *need* and *knees*, support the first two and a half lines of this tercet. But what is wrong with this as a poem (a free-verse limerick, so to speak) is implicit in the technical comments I have just made: the last line is weak where it should be the emphatic line. We have final stresses (with off-rhyme) in the first two lines (the second ends with a double, alliterating stress), but the third trails off after its last stress in a prepositional phrase, "of him". (The poem would be just as clear, I think, if the phrase had been dropped, although less close to speech.) Also, I think the echo of *need/knees*, while effective in emphasizing the second stressed word, tends to make the latter part of the last line an anticlimax. (I wonder if anyone has ever written a sexual poem about an anticlimax?) The failure is one of technique. Catullus, with his distich, could have structured the poem metrically; Pope, with his heroic couplet, could have tied two lines together with a rhyme. To leave myself open for attack on the poetic merits, let me attempt a tetrameter couplet on Brunner's theme:

Enlarge his swelling thoughts? You'll find
You need not kneel to blow his mind.

Not all of Brunner's poems are free verse: most, in fact, are in one regular verse form or another. Several are sonnets, one--"Are You Sure You Had It With You When You Came?"--with one odd tetrameter line (l. 8) amid all the pentameters. (After all, if you're going to play the game for thirteen lines, why not make it fourteen? *Soy Tupamaro* (which I discussed above) is a better sonnet, and the title poem, *Life in an Explosive Forming Press* is an interesting experiment, with the beginning metrical phrase appearing at the end of the poem instead of in its empty space at the start (presumably to suggest one should start through the poem again). And one poem--*He Was Such a Nice Chap--Why Did He Do It?* -- incredibly enough, is a sestina.

I suppose I should say something about the rest of the contents. Several poems are comments on love affairs: the sestina is about a man who is impotent, and the sonnet with the tetrameter line is about loss of virginity and the meaningless of it. Others are social satire (if that's distinguishable from political protest, as I believe it is, by tone): *Asking*, about white expectations from blacks; *America*, the shortest poem in the book about a Carlylean cash-nexus; *Wishful Thinks*, which details various things the speaker would like to do; and *The Silent Majority* (mentioned above), which is a list of failures to be just and honorable. Still others are less classifiable, such as the exuberant diatribe, *A Flying upon Mr. X*, which is fifteen outrains of abuse ready to be applied to anybody. (My desk dictionary does not list "flying", but it is a fine Scottish word for an abusive poem.) Here is the fifth stanza:

Hanger-on, bletherer, half-truth gatherer,
Confidence-trickster, cheat,
Current-fad follower, dishonest borrower,
Moron with two left feet!

Also a few poems are on science-fictional themes: *What We Have Here* is about man's descendants journeying across the galaxy:

They came very shortly to Arcturus
And there found bones in heaps around machines
Which had been listening to the sky a million years

(to quote three lines from the middle of the poem). Another clear example is *Excerpt from a Social History of the Twentieth Century*, which is about the Establishment taking over the drug revolution.

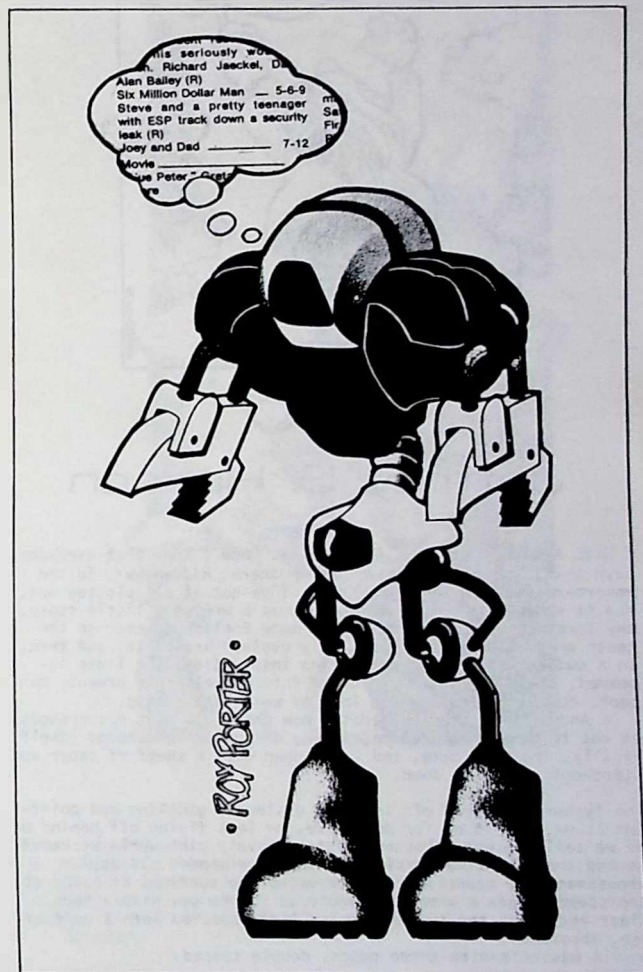
To balance the science-fiction verse, one may consider the medieval touches. Two of these have been mentioned--the *Flying* and *The Coffintree Carol*, which echoes the medieval title of *The Cherrytree Carol*. Another medieval parody is *Only My Name Isn't*

Porcival, which celebrates the learning of modern science which makes the school room a siege perilous. More bawdy (but medievally so) is *No Lay for the Last Minstrel*.

Over all, it is a nicely balanced collection. I find some of the poems obscure in spots, perhaps because of British references or popular culture references (I recognize Warhol and Jimi Hendrix in the title poem, but I do not claim certitude about some references elsewhere which are not proper names). I also find the poems more interesting intellectually than exciting emotionally. (This is a comment on their type, not on whether they are good or bad.) Finally, despite my analysis of the metrical weakness of one of Brunner's free-verse poems and my dislike of the language of one sonnet, I find most of the poems carefully crafted (at least by modern standards) and the words usually fresh and precisely chosen. The amount of scientific knowledge (or at least knowledge of scientific terminology) is impressive.

I suppose one is supposed to conclude even such a brief study with some sort of evaluation-in-light-of-eternity of the poetry; however, Brunner has clearly established his role in the majority of these poems as an ironic observer of the modern world, and contemporary irony is usually temporary irony, even though John Dryden and Alexander Pope made it more than that. Brunner is closer to Dryden's unevenness than Pope's polish, and he does not seem to me as successful as Dryden (perhaps because he's writing lyrics, not the longer genres); however, that's the league in which he's competing.

--- J. R. CHRISTOPHER





Jeffrey S. Hudson

I HAVE A NOVEL locked up in my brain. Now I know that everyone says that, but I really have one up there, hidden away in the reverberating loops of my cortex. I've got it all plotted out, and it's beautiful. It started out as a wretched little story, the first thing I ever wrote, for some English teacher in the tenth grade. Other stories slowly evolved around it, and then, in a sudden white flash of blazing inspiration, the links appeared, the whole thing organized into one glorious organic concept, descended from heaven into my weak little mind.

And it kept growing, adding new chapters, plot occurrences. It got to be a chambered nautilus, doing circles around itself. Finally, the time came, and I sat down with a sheaf of paper and started to write it down.

The typewriter raced off into the distance, giggling and pointing at me. I held on for dear life, my legs flying off behind me as we sailed along. Up, out, into a lovely pink world we raced, me and the typewriter rising through rose shaded clouds, whooshing over mountain tops, skimming the surfaces of lakes at top speed. Then a great volcano rose before us, with a huge blast and crash the typewriter and I disappeared into a puff of ash, absorbed.

I was left with three pages, double spaced.

Finally I gathered up enough strength and crept away from the table. Oozed down the staircase and sat before the dinner table, drained. After carefully detaching several of my limbs and plugging them into a wall socket to recharge, I sat down again and prepared to eat.

But oh no! That would not be permitted of me, oh no! Down it came, like a sun kicked out of heaven and falling to Earth, settling with a roar in the backyard, causing the swimming pool to evaporate, burning the shrubbery to a bar-b-q crisp!

Yet I am not upset. No, for it is not everyday an Apollo space capsule nestles like a dove into your backyard.

Suddenly a ramp protrudes from the side of the spacecraft and pokes through the sliding glass door. Glass splinters decorate the rug like ornaments, diamonds form a footpath for the kids.

Ho, ho, call the family, the inhabitants of the can are going to enter our home!

The typewriter waddles in, its keys done up in curlers. "But wait," it asks, "is this the way it happens on television?" Indeed not! For the capsule pops open and down they come. Descending the ramp like June Taylor Dancers, legs kicking in the air, three little teevees!

My typewriter shrieks with delight, running to the base of the ramp, jumping in anticipation as the dancing darlings descend.

"Careful, dear," I caution, "You don't want to get glass in your feet." But my typewriter does not heed me.

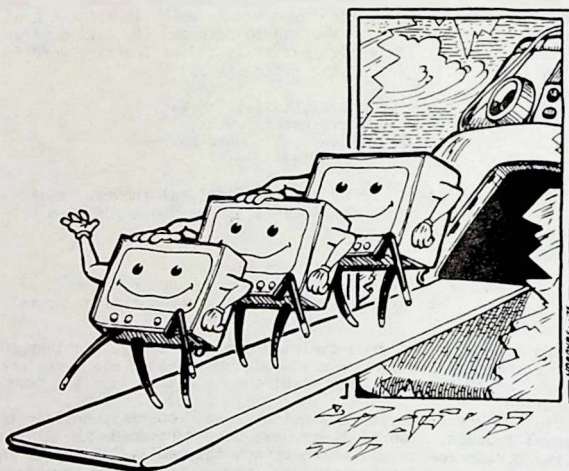
The teevees reach the bottom of the ramp and one walks over to me, puffing smoke in my face. "Let's make a deal," it says. It maneuvers me over to the dinner table, where we prepare for discussion.

Meanwhile the other two teevees have dragged a book rack out of somewhere. You know, one of those revolving wire things that decorate the supermarkets of our land, with fine literature for all. It is filled with a distinguished assortment of science fiction paperbacks; the two teevees sing and dance about it, faster and faster. The teevees leader is disturbed and anxious; I am paying more attention to the other two than to him. My typewriter, meanwhile, stands in the background, squeaking and jumping with glee, fists bobbing in a rhythm of their own.

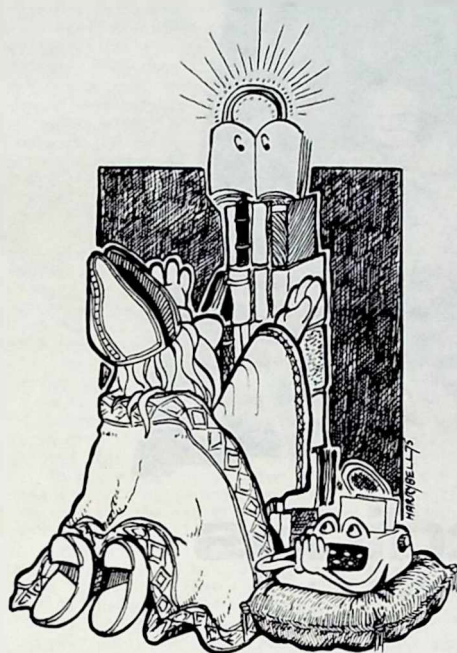
"Ahhem," reminds the leader, but I refuse to look away. The other two teevees are now rotating the book rack, faster and faster until it blurs and the paperbacks fly like frightened birds about the room. My typewriter races about, little quakes clapping out of its mouth, gathering the fallen paperbacks as if they were letters from heaven, depositing them solemnly in a little pile beside my voluminous collection.

Meanwhile the leader has attached my right arm again (it is fully recharged) and I absently sign the contracts he sets before me, while I watch the spectacle. Finally, they all pack up and leave. I collapse, my mind spent, on the bed. My typewriter pulls the covers over me and kisses me, then trots off to do the dishes.

I have not written a thing for the novel.



ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY BELL



Once again I sit before the typewriter, once again the sheaf of paper, the fresh ribbon.

With a fiendish grin I prepare to type, the plot and characters clambor in glee, they are about to be released, to live as words! I have carefully, deliberately headed off all obliquations at the pass. I am free!

Slowly I begin, one word, two. I am writing whole sentences now, I am really getting places...

Over the hills and far away, off in the distance a voice, a single note calls. Many times I have heard it, it is most familiar, yet immediately my head snaps up, I gaze toward the sound. I am transfixed!

The collection!

My hands cease their pounding, I sit motionless for a moment. The voice is stronger now, now it is joined by others, a trio, a chorus. More and more join in, a mighty orchestra calling me to the temple, to fulfill my religious duties.

Silently I leave the typewriter, it sits dead still, it understands. Without a sound, I walk to the bookshelf, genuflecting the whole way. My feet barely touch the carpet.

I kneel before the altar, my fingers running slowly, lovingly over the sacred, beloved volumes. Here in the holy of holies, the voices rise to their full values, sweeping me away in their glory.

With complete reverence I open my mouth and begin the holy chant, the Old Litany, "A for Asimov, B for Bester, C for Campbell (here I genuflect)..." And on through Z.

Then I glance to the top of the collection once again, touch the volumes with care, and begin the New Litany, equally holy. "A for Aldiss, B for Ballard, C for..."

Once I have completed the two sacred litanies, my hand reaches out of its own will and grabs one of the books. It opens before my eyes, the reflex falls into place; I read. It is superb. Of course.

One hundred and sixty pages later, I put the book down. Glorious. My typewriter leers at me, jealous and righteous at the same time.

It is the middle of the night and I haven't written a thing.

Yet again I seat myself before the typewriter. *This time I am going to do it. Several pages, maybe even a chapter; nothing will distract me!*

The typewriter, vexed, spits and bites my fingers. I swear and continue. Slowly, agonizingly I climb up the mountainside, clawing for each inch, beating back the forces of the clutch up that resists me.

Ridges fall, and minor peaks. I will make it to the top! I fight wickedly, slashing with adjective, pressing my attack with a mighty climax. Finally I reach the top; I can see it all now, above me, my characters move, alive.

Hoho, they see me! I am having trouble breathing (the air at this height is very thin) but having made it to the top I shall not leave.

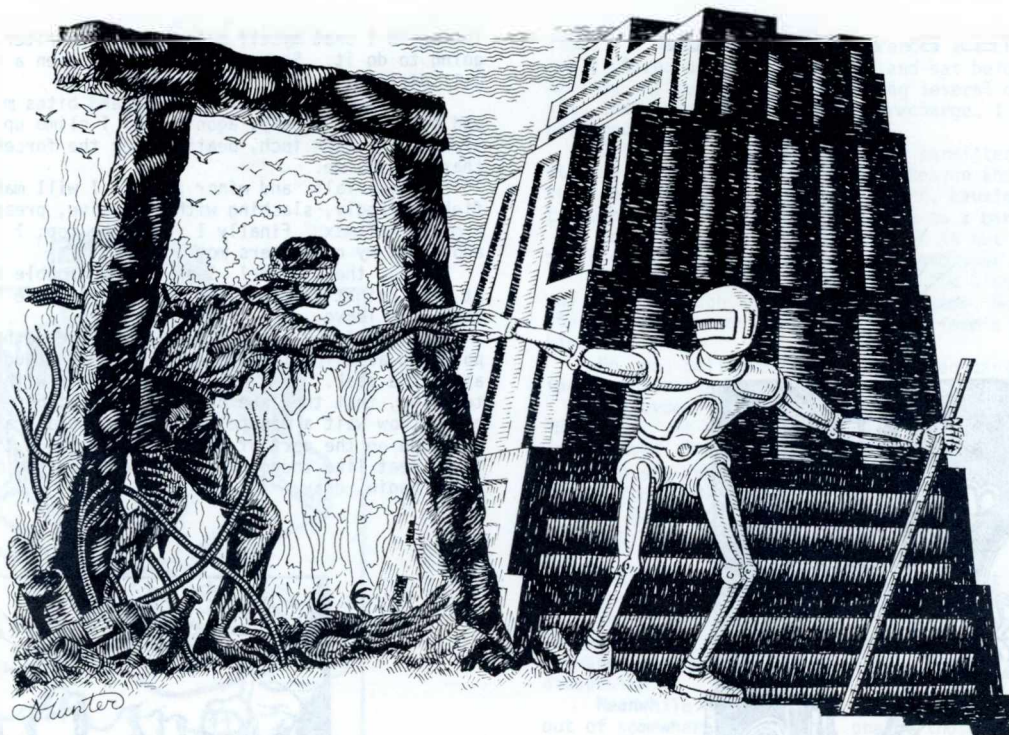
No! But the central characters are gathering about me, pointing accusing fingers as the thunderclouds gather and storm about the peak. No! They will not work with me, they say I am too slow, that they are on strike for higher wages, shorter work hours (now wait a minute!) and, in general, a more congenial attitude on the part of the proprietor. And then they stomp off, their feet like thunder, and leave me on the mountaintop. The rains begin, gray.



Someday I will write the novel. No doubt it will come out as an Ace Double, but some kind reviewer will recognize it as a classic. He will show it to everybody and it will win every award in the field of science fiction, and I will make witty, modest remarks as I drag off all those awards.

Someday.

--- JEFFREY S. HUDSON



Understandings

ROBERT A.W. LOWNDES

The Differences That Knowing Him Made

A SPRAWLING, SUBJECTIVE REMINISCENCE OF JAMES BLISH

"I am the cat who walks by himself, and all places are alike to me. ..."
(Kipling, JUST SO STORIES)

WELL, NOT EXACTLY ALIKE, and there are such things as preferences. But I'm like Kipling's cat in that while I will make concessions (and rather large ones at time) for the sake of temporary amusement or something more important that I want at the time, there comes a point where I will go no farther; and that has often been distressing to people who felt very sure that I was safely settled in a path of their choosing -- so long as I could be kept away from what they considered subversive influences.

Such a viewpoint was no more flattering to those who held it about me than to me, myself; but I'll admit that my temperament makes such a conclusion both easy and seemingly plausible. I suspect, though, that Don Wollheim was aware of the truth about me back in 1945 when circumstances he had a hand in brought me into a position where I could get to know James Blish well beyond the level of acquaintanceship and occasional meetings. He may even have suspected that some sort of drastic alteration in my views was due sooner or later, anyway. John Michel, on the other hand, seemed to think that I could be kept safely where I was, so long as I was protected from "undesirable" associations.

I'd seen letters by Jim in the various magazines--there was one in *Astounding Stories*, September 1932, the same year that my own first letter appeared in print (*Wonder Stories*, July) with my name spelled "Lownder": had met him briefly at the International Scientific Association convention in 1937, the one where-

in the committee to arrange for a science fiction convention to go along with the 1939 World's Fair, was set up (chairman, Don Wollheim); had heard about Jim now and then in relation to continuing the ISA when, later in 1937, Will Sykora resigned as president in such a manner as to break up the organization; had become his agent some time in 1940, after his first story, *Emergency Landing*, appeared in the initial issue of Fred Pohl's *Super Science Stories*; and had run at least one letter by him in the departments of my magazines. That letter had to do with the Fortean Society and with the comments of one Mallory Kent; I recall that Kent's reply took a dim view of the Fortean Society on the grounds that it seemed to be regimenting doubt. Jim was astonished later on to learn that I was Mallory Kent.

And some time in 1942, I believe it was, while he was in uniform, he joined a number of us at one of our gathering places -- the old Dragon Inn on West 4th Street. The highlight of the evening, for me, was an animated discussion of *FINNEGANS WAKE*, which I had not read, though I'd managed to acquire a copy of *ULYSSES* in 1939 and found it splendid. I do not know whether any of the others had read *FINNEGAN*, though I know that Don had some of the "Works in Progress" material, which had appeared in various literary and avant-garde publications of the time. He'd shown me some samples, and they did, indeed look like pretty meaningless jumbles of sounds to me--far beyond the free association parts of *ULYSSES*, which do have continuity and make sense if you just pay attention.

Jim's contention was that the book entire makes sense, however difficult and obscure -- after all, Joyce was exceptionally learned, knew many languages, and puns in all of them, so that any reader has to bring an equal amount to the reading of the book in order to get everything out of it. At that point I dropped out of the argument and listened. Since then, while I still

In 1945, I was a member of the Futurian Society of New York (founded as the Futurian Literary Society of New York in 1938; we dropped the "Literary" shortly afterwards for the sake of simplification) and a member of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association--in fact, president of that society. Outside of being a registered Democrat, for the purpose of voting in the Presidential elections, I was not a member of any political party nor did I take active part in national or local politics. My views, however, were very largely "stalinist" -- small "s" and quote marks, to indicate that I wasn't under the strict discipline that members of the Communist Party -- the genuine Stalinists -- were, nor did I expend any time or energy on the day-to-day aspects of the class struggle, etc. If memory serves right, I'd long since stopped reading the *Daily Worker* and most other Communist publications. Nonetheless I still thought of myself as a communist, still believed that the USSR was a more just and happy society than could be found in any of the capitalist countries, and favored the "International Soviet" referred to in the *Internationale*. I believe that the above description pretty fairly describes the views of the rest of us who were the hard core of the FSNY.

That such doubts had not, as yet, made any real change in my attitudes is shown in that I saw nothing wrong in the Futurians attempt to amend the FAPA constitution, requiring censorship of any and all material that we considered "racist" (and the censure or even expulsion of any members who wrote such material or ran it in their FAPA publications). On the contrary I had a definite hand in the wording of the amendments. I was quite sure that passage of them would make FAPA genuinely democratic. When the amendments not only were voted down by the majority (although there was considerable support for them) and the Futurians were attacked for proposing such "undemocratic" measures, I was outraged and disgusted with FAPA. As I saw it then, a vote against the amendments was a vote for continuing the anti-Negro and other "racist" material that some FAPA members included in their publications.

The upshot of all this was that one day I said, in effect, Look, Don; you started FAPA--well, now that it's gone completely sour, let's form a new apa along lines we find more congenial. There are enough progressive-minded fans who would come in, and the waiting list on FAPA is pretty long now. And this time, let's not make the mistake of letting anyone else take it away from us. (What had happened earlier, when Futurians held office in FAPA was that, in a period of disgust with fandom, we threw our control away--1938.) All highly democratic you see, with us Futurians -- the most politically enlightened, we were sure -- being chief democrats; none of us saw anything wrong with that outlook at the time.

That was one of the times, though, when I really meant a suggestion. The slogan "Wollheim is our leader" (from the great feud times of the 30's) was partly a warm-hearted jest; but the fact is that Don *did* show more consistent and sound leadership abilities than any one of the rest of us. Among those is the

I would, and did, and essentially this is the article that I sent him. All this was on the QT, because Dick wanted the project to reach Jim in its completion as a surprise.

In reading this *Warhoom* thing over, I got the feeling that it's as worth publishing now as it was then-how's that for an ambiguous sentence? It did need some reworking, and that's what the newly typed pages are about. The poem at the end is new, too.

IT WAS AT SOUTH ORANGE THAT SUNDAY that I first heard a Bruckner symphony. Jim invited me to stay over, while Don and John went back to New York; he'd felt, from reading what I had written

Most of the revisions did nothing but to make those sentiments unworkable.

It wasn't pleasant to learn that writing poetry worth reading in the present day (that is, poems that are good enough to justify the potential reader choosing to read them at this particular moment, instead of a masterwork of the past) is hard work, even for a poet of great talent and some genius. There were many arguments, many of which were thrashed out in the Vanguard mailings. One of the most persistent ones (expressed in many different ways) can be put most simply as: "How hard can the surface of a poem be without becoming a private cryptogram?"

One of the differences between poetry and "verse" is that verse necessarily has a very soft surface. Almost anyone can get the point on a single reading, and without much thought. And there are many truly great poems which have soft surfaces, too; the difference being that the great poem has a lot underneath the surface: it says much more than that simple and effective appearance suggests -- but for those who do not care to look any farther, here is a well-made thing that says something meaningful. Verse is all surface; there's nothing beneath it to dig out -- although the light verse of earlier times may require your brushing up on customs, usages, idioms, and events of the day.

Pound claimed that poetry should be defined as "words charged with emotion", then added "as much as possible". Which won't do; if you put the highest charge possible into each word, then you are going to wind up with a cryptogram.

And there was the question of "obscurity" and multi-lingual poetry. I suppose there is no reason why a poet should be barred from putting anything (or for that matter everything) he knows into a poem, but at that time it seemed to me that some liberties just weren't sporting to take. Multi-linguality seemed to me to be one of the worst offenses. It shuts out the person who does not know more than one language, without necessarily providing the motivation to learn. Of course, it is not necessary to learn the entire language; and I can see now that what I was really objecting to was the poet's demand upon me -- the demand that I learn the right to enjoy his poetry; and each particular poem may have different requirements.

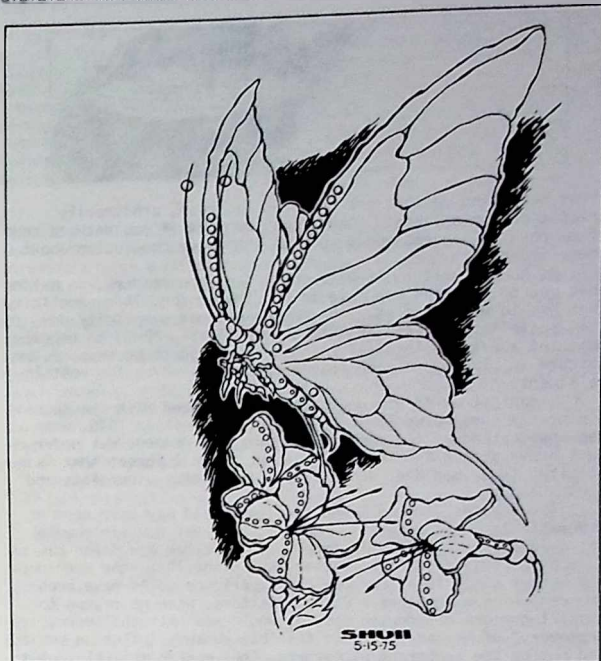
What I learned finally was that often the rewards are worth the effort, because each problem solved opens up wider areas of appreciation to you. The labor one may undertake to grasp a particular *Canto* of Pound, for example, is not going to result in a little package of new information floating in a vacuum. You may or may not feel that what the particular one says was worth the effort involved to find out; but it may pay off better with latter *Cantos*, or with other poetry, or--most wonderful of all--with something which would not seem to be remotely connected, and might not be at all.

How hard should the surface of a poem be? I don't believe there is a simple answer, but my present feeling is that hardness of surface should not be something which the poet works for. I'm not convinced that the poems which Jim ran in his Vanguard publications, etc., were written with the intent of excluding as many of his potential readers as possible even if it did seem that way. And I know I had no such motivation with my efforts. But both of us managed to produce things which were quite obscure to others (and to each other!) although he came out with a higher score.

The difference that knowing Jim made, in respect to poetry, is a much more definite one, than with music. I think it is very likely that otherwise I would have been content to continue on the same level of comprehension as before. And since I do not regard any knowledge as evil (even though no knowledge may be truly sufficient), it was a good thing for me to be shaken up. Being lazy (something which Jim never caused and certainly did all he could to cure), I stopped writing poetry a few years later, when it had become still more difficult. But that may not be quite correct: Lazy as I am, I somehow do find the time and do manage to make the effort over things I really want to do. (And that is one way of finding out what I really want to do.) So the answer may be the simpler one of no vocation. Which does not mean that I might not be moved to try to write a poem once in a while.

Sam Moskowitz so moved me in 1966 or 67 by asking permission to reprint a thing for Edgar Allan Poe that was published in *Fantastic Novels*, back in the '40s; he wanted to run it in his anthology of stories wherein Poe appears as a character. Well, he said, when I replied positively *no*, how about writing a new one for this anthology? I did; all I can say about it is that it was *not* easy to write, and that I don't believe it's difficult for anyone to read. (A little background knowledge of Poe may be helpful, though.)

Ezra Pound has been proclaimed as very difficult, but I don't find him excessively so. Despite his use of ideograms and expressions in foreign languages, *once you know what he's talk-*



ing about at this particular point, he comes across. (And you can now get an annotated index to the *Cantos*, that includes translations of the multi-language material -- which really does not take up a large percentage of the work, and is nearly always paraphrased reasonably near to the excerpt.

The real difficulty is to know when he's jumping from one subject to another; and Jim hit the nail squarely when he noted in an article on EP and the *Cantos* (*Rituals on Ezra Pound*, *The Sewanee Review*, Spring, 1950) "Pound assumes, in short, that everything he ever wrote is going to be carried forward to posterity in the same steamer trunk; ..." There are many personal references in the *Cantos* which will remain obscure to the person who has not read various personal memoir material by EP--unless he has a thorough annotation handy; and some of those references are important to the tone of the context.

I remember a junior high school shop instructor who urged us not to copy someone else's mechanical drawings--not just because it was cheating, but because everyone makes some kind of mistake, and if you copy someone else then you're going to wind up with his mistakes in addition to your own. And that principle certainly applies to trying to imitate a poet or writer you've just become enthusiastic about. You haven't really digested him, but some things seem to be quite clear, so you imitate what moves you. Unfortunately, those are the very things which may be your model's weaker aspects. The finest aspects can't be imitated at all; they can only be caricatured.

After some dubious attempts to be a little multi-lingual, I stopped trying to imitate anyone in particular, or to come up with symbolism that turned out to be too personal, and went back to a model that was more congenial to me, and seemed to come more naturally; the King James version of the Psalms and the prophets. I grew up in a Bible-reading family, and despite my having put religion aside, still found much of the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament moving as literature. While that turned out to be easier in a sense, it wasn't easy. Free verse that is worth reading is *not* easier than writing in the more or less fixed forms; and I'd say generally that in order to do free verse well, you need to have attained some mastery of the strict forms, in order to obtain a feeling for flow, rhythm, cadences, etc. Otherwise, what you'll turn out will prove to be something that could have gone just as well as prose -- which means, as EP noted, that it'll go *better* in prose.

Let me confess that one thing still baffles me. There are times when I really can't be sure that a particular poem in free verse would be much different when typed out as prose. I've tried it at times--and can only say that reading it as prose did not destroy any of the sense, but something did seem to be missing. In other cases, that exercise of typing the poem out as



As to obscurity: It will come, for some readers, no matter what you do; it does *not* have to be striven for. It's simplicity that has to be worked at, I've found--but not simplicity down to the "socialist realism" or "democratic" level. But, to repeat, anything above the level of a jingle is going to be obscure, or obscure in places, to *some* reader or readers--even the most intelligent.

The debates Jim and I and the others had may have been exasperatingly intellectual in content, but they certainly were not cold and passionless in tone. Jim's father had taken him on a vacation trip to Germany either in 1934 or 1936--the year does not matter since in either one the experience would have been impressive to a teenager. Casual visitors, with no reason to suspect horrors behind the facade, would see only the impressive "recovery" of Germany from the terrible runaway inflation period and notice the exuberant atmosphere. They wouldn't likely get to see or talk to any dissidents.

Politically, then, he was opposed to any and all "leveling" systems, which meant that he was not only anti-Communist, but anti-socialist. (He had no animus against Mussolini's Italy prior to the alliance with Germany; art and artists were encouraged there, and while "subversion" of the Corporate State could not be tolerated, the artist was not compelled to confine his work to exaltations of the party line.)

It was also in late 1944 that Damon Knight knocked on my door at 308 West 11th Street one night, with a female in tow: Judy Zissman. That first meeting with Judy was not impressive; as I told Damon a few months ago when he called on me with a tape recorder to talk about old Futurian days, my first impression of Judy was anything but erotic. I had to admit that later acquaintance quite reversed that initial impression; but that night in 1944 she *did* look as if she might have ridden to my place on a broomstick.

Judy's husband, Dan, was due to return from service soon. I remember him as a good fellow, unfortunately out of place in the Futurian menage. (Jim, Virginia, Judy, Damon, and Larry Shaw were voted in as members.) Judy divorced him not long after and when she became a published writer later, changed her name to Merrill.

Particularly the Ezra Pound case: the marxists (with one exception) considered him a fascist who ought to be tried for treason or whatever, and pronounced his poetry and criticism worthless. I was the exception; truly, I was bothered by Pound's affection for Mussolini and the fascist regime in Italy, and somewhat more than bothered by the nasty anti-Jewish digs that pop up in the *Cantos*. But I could not really look upon him as a war criminal, or consider everything he wrote as bourgeois rubbish. Toward the end of the year I had become heartily sick of bolshevik bigotry and resigned from the Futurian Society. I knew that that would strengthen the suspicions amongst the marxists that I was becoming some sort of fascist, but I really didn't care--although I hoped that we could remain on friendly terms as persons. With one exception: I'd have liked very much to get away from John B. Michel entirely, but splitting with him would also mean breaking with Don Wollheim -- which I did not desire.

So I got dressed and accompanied them to Fort Wit (the name of the Blish-Emden combine) to find that we were seven. The mimeograph was set up and I was handed the stencils for a one-sheet (two sides) publication, X, which would broadcast the purge in the Futurian Society to all fandom. My signature was solicited. I read it -- omigawd!

I saw before me three choices: to refuse to sign and return to the "stalinist" fold, which would mean breaking off with these six; to sign, which would mean breaking off with Donald and Elsie; to declare neutrality--refuse to sign but not repent and reform my lapses from marxist orthodoxy, which would mean that I would essentially be an outsider in respect to both groups.

The first, however, I knew was no longer possible. I could not pretend to be the orthodox comrade I'd long since ceased to be. Nor did I want to make any such pretense.

I knew I was wanted, so made my joining the conspiracy conditional. The text of X would be definitely toned down, and mine would be the blue pencil to make the cuts and modifications. It still might be actionable, but there was no doubt in my mind that the original text was libellous and malicious beyond necessity. I still believe that the lawsuit, which *did* follow hard upon the heels of the mailing of X, would have turned out differ-

ALPAJPURI'S POEM

Head so sleepy it won't quit dreams
but coffee coming soon
dreams going on while I'm awake
in these hours hours
in these dreams beneath the Buried Star
where mortal man came questing
for a music beyond dreams and the singing of stars
where a phantom womb of darkness
crawls in the Legend of the Deeper Night

Old comrades of the road come to me in dreams
& we hitchhike the endless highway
bound for the legend of America
& dreams of future journeys
up mountains down streams in Autumnal Wood
dreams my head in my hand on the kitchen table
woozy consciousness mind images
a feast for the head
dreams of the night in continual spaces
in a house in Oregon country
leaving a.m. for San Francisco for a while
for the epic poetry of the streets
dreams pouring in from the window at night
but Everlasting Now too fused to woo it to paper

And once I found the legend of America in the rain
in Oklahoma, when I couldn't get a ride out of midnight downpour
a hungry little bum heading home
while the vast Panhandle spaces
linked me with road blues and a faint glimmer of light
at the end of my mind.
I read Jack's books / he's gone from us now these 6 years
his bones lie in Lowell, Mass. gone in sentient October
and
dreams of me in a new beard the colors of Mars---
i hope Jack's in Heaven with lots of happy paper---
i hope the dream comes to an end so we can live the dream.

night for dreams.
the drama of the universe is old.
Earth is but a place we borrow



-BILLY WOLFENBARGER
outside Harrisburg Oregon
June 30th, 1975

The Autumnal City

DOUGLAS
BARBOUR

*Some Notes Towards a Putative Review of
Samuel R. Delany's DHALGREN*

1. Let's get this out of the way at once: I liked this book. That I also found so much to provoke thought, various kinds of aesthetic & emotional responses, critical theorizing, & delight follows, though not necessarily (I rather liked--to take a fairly far-flung example--Phyllis Eisenstein's Alaric stories, but they did not *demand* the spectrum of complex responses DHALGREN does). I suspect it is necessary to like something this big if you are ever going to finish it (I liked GRAVITY'S RAINBOW, too). I further suspect that a lot of sf readers are not going to like DHALGREN sufficiently to keep going through all 880 pages of it. Fine, but that doesn't give them the right to dismiss it as a poor job. And I, for one, believe it is a very strong, major work of contemporary fiction.

2. Is it science (or even speculative)

[Continued on Page 1040]



StandonD



Dully Grinning Delany Descends to Disaster

DARRELL
SCHWEITZER

*Refuting Douglas Barbour
An Essay With Numbered Sections*

1. In 1970 James Blish wrote an article on what was then called "The New Wave" and you can find it in his collection of critical essays, *MORE ISSUES AT HAND* (Advent, 1970). One of the more interesting points made, from the viewpoint of 1975, is a rather cautious statement about Samuel R. Delany:

That Delany has drive, insight and a certain music I cannot doubt, but neither his clotted style nor his zigzag way of organising a story strike me as being much better than self-indulgent and disdirected. If I am right about this--and my experience with Ellison suggests that I am more likely to be wrong--Delany's early popularity, laid on well before he was either in control or was convinced of the necessity of being in control

[Continued on Page 1041]

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

other people don't or can't, that's their worry finally, not mine. But I did not enjoy it in the same way I enjoyed earlier Delany works. I couldn't put them down--with the books & stories following EMPIRE STAR, I couldn't put them down even on 3rd or 4th reading. Well, of course, with an 880 page book you can't read it straight through, but my point is I could put DIALGREN aside, even in the middle of a paragraph, & not feel any pressing need to finish at least this chapter. Unlike most of Delany's earlier books, there is no urgent plot movement urging me on (as in Bester's TIGER, TIGER, as well). There is a very diluted quest pattern here, but it too isn't as central to the drive of the narrative.

Indeed, Delany is not, apparently, interested in narrative thrust in this book the way he was in earlier novels. One of the possible reasons it is his longest novel is that he is filling in the perceived moments of a life slowly passed in an autumnal space rather than rushing us through larger happenings with precision, wit & a delicate complexity of understanding -- & only a few, important scenes taken close-up. So DIALGREN is different,

as is my response. I savoured scenes, & lines, argued with some, thought a lot about what was happening between readings, & eventually, happily, reached the end of the book. It's a difficult book, not always a nice book, a demanding book. Don't read it because I say it's good. It's good, all right, & I like it, but I know it's for certain tastes only. Still, I hope there are enough people out there (both steady readers of sf and others) who will be intrigued by this book, & will eventually find enough in it to stimulate them, that it makes enough money to satisfy Bantam's accountants that Fred Pohl is a worthy editor (after all, he also bought Joanna Russ's THE FEMALE MAN, yes!). DIALGREN is but one step on the way, Delany is still a maturing author. I want to read the book that will follow. I think it's entirely possible that it will be shorter & apparently lighter of touch. Possibly it will appeal to a wider audience. If so it won't be because DIALGREN doesn't mark a necessary, & artistically important stage in Delany's development as a major writer of contemporary sf.

--- DOUGLAS BARBOUR

DULLY GRINNING, DELANY DESCENDS... from Page 1039

of his manner or his matter, may well turn out to be destructive. He would not be the first writer whom early praise (though every writer longs for it) put out of business, at least for a dammingly long period... (p. 135)

Back in 1970 I was reading Delany and I considered him to be one of the greatest living science fiction writers in English. He had the drive, the insight, and the music Blish spoke of to an enormous degree. He was interesting, occasionally profound, brilliant once in a while, and ceaselessly inventive. I found him to be better organized than Blish did occasionally. Only THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION teetered on the brink of chaos, and even that pulled itself back by the end to become a meaningful whole.

But now with the publication of DIALGREN (Bantam, 1975) I'm afraid I have to admit Blish was right. Chalk up one astoundingly perceptive prediction for him, but still it hurts to do so. Writers of the first water are worth more than all the critics there will ever be.

DIALGREN isn't just a poor book, it is a shockingly bad one. This sudden disintegration of all Delany's artistic strengths is numbing. If it can happen to Delany it can happen to the best of us. It has.

In retrospect there were a few telltale signs, but I dismissed them at the time. There was a story called *Night and The Lives of Joe Diostanzo*, published in an anthology called *ALCHEMY AND ACADEME* (Doubleday 1969, edited by Anne McCaffrey) which was the first time Delany ever did slip off the handle and go spiraling out of control into non-meaning. I met a rabid Delany fan who read the story in the collection *DRIFTGLASS* and said of it, "Well, I assume that one was just filler." No way. Delany isn't the kind of writer who produces filler. Something was fundamentally wrong.

Also there's something called *THE TIDES OF LUST* which I cannot evaluate because I have not read it. It apparently sold all of a half a dozen copies before going out of print, and is now extremely rare. It would be quite valuable if anybody wanted it. I saw a copy only once, in the hands of another Delany admirer. He told me the book was bilge, that it made sex dull, and the only point of interest was trying to figure out who was doing what to whom in some of the more complicated orgies. You needed a diagram, he said. I dismissed this too. I thought maybe Delany was just goofing off. But I can't believe that now, in the light of DIALGREN.

2. One of the most curious things about DIALGREN is the fact that very few people manage to finish it. I'd like to see *Locust* take a poll asking "How far did you get?" The answers would be fascinating. DIALGREN has become a fanish endurance game, and few people make it to the end. I did because I was reviewing the book for a magazine called *Concett* and felt obligated. I've taken a little survey of my own and discovered that among maybe thirty or so people asked, one (1) person finished DIALGREN. The most common breaking point is about page 200. About half the people gave up there, and of those who went further, the next most common point was page 500. That took care of all but the people who lasted less than 50 pages (maybe 15%, including two well-known SF writers) and a few oddballs like the guy who went as far as page 800 before abandoning the thing.

This is amazing. There have been controversial books before in SF, and terrible books, but a score like that is without precedent I think. The obvious question is *why?* Style isn't it. The

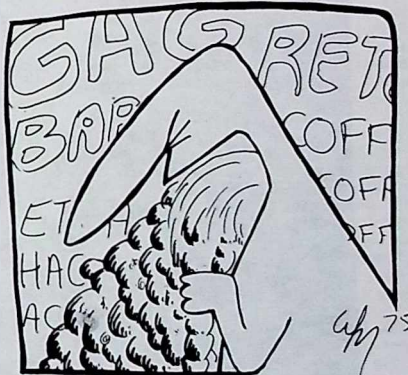
prose is inferior prose, which sometimes becomes so concerned with putting words into novel combinations that meaning is lost -- sound becomes more important than sense, a classic symptom of self-indulgence -- but for the most part the book is extremely readable. The descriptions are usually clear with a few exceptions, like what seemed to be an "attack" on a deserted department store by people without weapons facing guards with rifles. In a sequence I can't make heads or tails out of, and for the most part people talk like people, the prose flows along nicely. In the best parts the style is almost invisible.

Now many books are unreadable because of turgid prose. Henry James had an absolutely tin ear for language, and few people have been able to finish his novels. James Fenimore Cooper suffered from the problem of being only partially literate, with no genuine powers of observation, and again no ear for language. On the opposite end of the spectrum there's Joyce's *FINNEGAN'S WAKE*, which is unreadable to most people because it is too difficult. It has to be studied rather than merely read before any meaning comes out at all, and most novel readers are unwilling to exert that sort of effort. But DIALGREN isn't like the works of James, or Cooper, or the later Joyce. It is easy to read, so the problem must lie elsewhere.

3. The universal complaint of all those people who failed to finish the book is that it is dull. It did not interest them, and when I read it I saw why. The overwhelming impression it left was one of rambling emptiness. It is a dreary, dead book, about as devoid of content as any piece of writing can be and still have the words arranged in any coherent order. In the review I did for *Concett* I synopsised the whole thing in a single paragraph, and said that meant a lot, because I'd like to see you do the same with another novel of the same length, say, *WAR AND PEACE*. You can't. Tolstoy's book is too complicated. Delany's is very simple, and doesn't merit its length.

For the first time Delany is wasting words wholesale.

4. Fred Pohl insists that DIALGREN is great literature, even though its meaning may not be known to us at this time. He's



(This is not what I meant by saying I liked "gag" tillos!)

I'm not holding my breath for the Great Revelation, because I don't think it will come. DHALGREN has no meaning. By traditional rules it isn't even a novel, because a novel has to be a *story*, and a story is a series of significant events which lead to some sort of character change. If the character is the same at the end it is because the development has run a complete circle, and the sameness is the point of the story. DHALGREN makes a few weak noises about a cyclical structure, but the essential movements aren't there. You can excise any section you want and there's no difference, because nothing is being dismembered. The book has no structure beyond the kid's entering and leaving the city. The great bulk of it is a formless lump.

Pohl seems so think DIALGREN is great literature, but I would have to disagree. Great literature is something which speaks to people of all ages and all times. It's something you read when you're young, and maybe only enjoying it for the superficial story. Then when you're a little older you come back, and it means something new to you, something visible only now that you have entered a new phase of life. You keep coming back, and the work continues to speak to you. I've had that reaction with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

5. When you get down to it, DHALGREN is pornographic in the strictest sense of the word. I don't say this to condemn it, only to describe it. The book works on no other level but the erotic, and even that is only in passing intervals between large chunks of complete non-function. I've been suggesting rather cynically for a while now that the thing should be subtitled "The Collected Fetishes of Samuel R. Delany", and that's how I explain much of what others call the book's kinkiness, the fascination with dirt, human odors, and chains. There have been traces of this sort of thing before, in *Time Considered As A Helix of Semi-Precious Stones*, in *NOVA*, and in *Night and The Lives of Joe DiCostanzo*. Delany seems to be on a grime and bondage trip. To each his own.

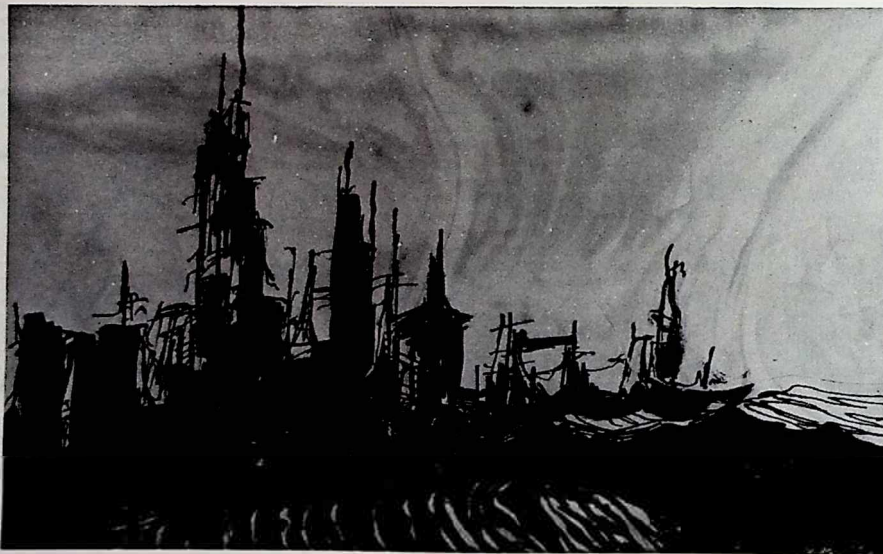
The book has been enormously successful in America. It has

The thing about all this is that the self-conscious reader who imagines himself to be an intellectual can read this soothing mind-wash and pretend all the while that he's experiencing great art. And the sexual angle shouldn't be overlooked. Most people are ashamed to be seen reading hardcore smut. DHALGREN is packaged respectably. No one will ever know.

Science Fiction's Great Hope of the late 1960's has just fizzled out.

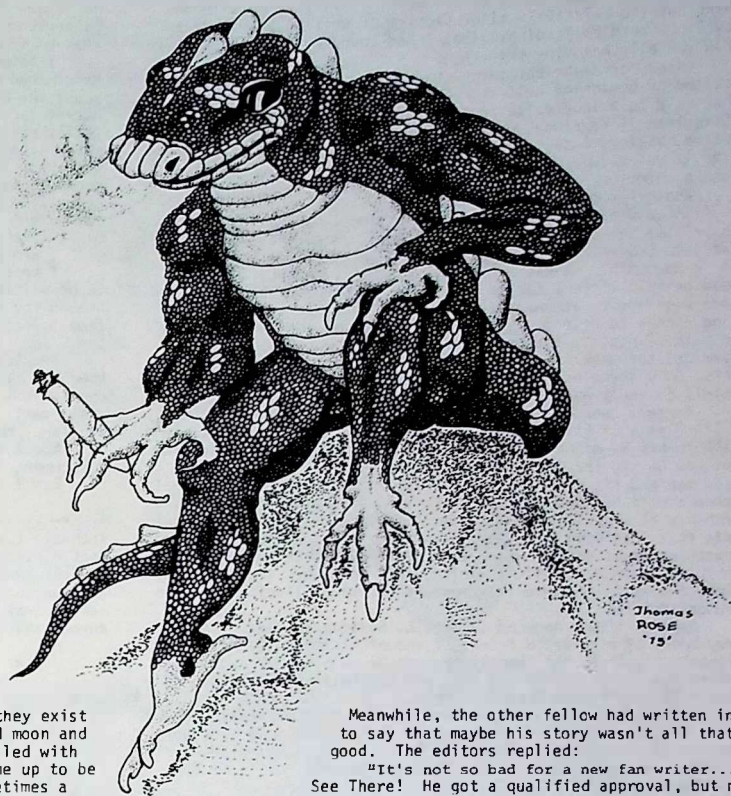
--- DARRELL SCHWEITZER

Goblin's Grotto is available, for the usual, from IAN WILLIAMS, 6 Greta Tce., Chester Rd, Sunderland, SR4 7RD, Tyne & Wear, U.K. #2 only is available (no subscriptions) for 35p or \$1.00 (cash).



My Writing Career

S. A. STRICKLEN, Jr.



ON CERTAIN SPECIAL NIGHTS -- they are not many, but they exist -- I withdraw into myself and sit under the stars and moon and gaze upward into a universe which is far away and filled with a fountain of diamond stars and which seems to draw me up to be the rainbow that must dance atop that fountain. Sometimes a gentle breeze disturbs the molten silver of full moonlight and shatters it against the trees into myriad magical fragments each beckoning me onward. Then I feel a fluttering near my spine and a rising thrill and an overpowering urge to express myself.

Whenever this happens, I usually express myself with a loud yelp and shake the moth from underneath my shirt. Then I finish my beer and go inside.

At other special times I think that I want to be a writer. This feeling lasts, usually, about four pages, and I realize for the thousandth time or so that I don't want to be a writer at all because it is such terrible hard work. What I want to do is dash off first drafts at forty words a minute and have people gape in awe and make me rich and famous. Possibly I am not alone in this desire.

When I do try to write, my ego dances between two extremes, one minute growing vaster than empires and substantially less slow, and at other times shriveling smaller than a mote, not even large enough to make a good parable out of. I feel I ought to mention this because I doubt that many of the readers of this article will be familiar with such feelings.

It was, as I recall, in the summer of '63 that I was particularly exhausted from my real-life career as a free-lance genius and happened across an issue of the late lamented *Double:Bill*. Here, I thought to myself, is the perfect outlet for my literary aspirations. I wrote a story and sent it in, and got back another copy of the magazine with my story in right there for everybody to see. Also I got a nice letter. In the next issue, people wrote in and said nice things about my story. My heavens, I thought, perhaps I'm better than I ever dreamed. I scanned over the fiction in various fanzines. Yes, I could do that well. Over the next year or two I sent in a couple of other stories, not too badly received. Vaster than empires, I believe I said. But was there any competition?

With one exception, I thought I could compete with the other fanwriters. The exception wrote with a rather poetic style -- but was sometimes hard to understand. Competition, perhaps? Rely on another opinion, had I not better? Ah, but complacency. The editors of *D:B* said of me:

"We have always considered Si to be one of the best finds in fandom."

Meanwhile, the other fellow had written in to say that maybe his story wasn't all that good. The editors replied:

"It's not so bad for a new fan writer..." See There! He got a qualified approval, but my approval had no strings attached. The other

fellow's name was Zelazny.

Meanwhile, my interest returned to my work. I had a particularly important assignment around then: the government had accepted my offer to arrange for a small (preferably fifth rate) power to pick a war with one of our allies. I figured that a quick military victory would unite the country and raise morale at home. The editors of *Double:Bill* kept putting issues in the mail until eventually they got tired of it. Naturally, with an exciting job like mine, I couldn't be bothered with mundane things like changes of address.

After I had taken care of my project, the old lust started to rise again, so I wrote in and asked for back copies. The reception was pleasant, and I sent in a few more stories. My correspondence in those days was with Bill Mallardi, so I asked (roughly every letter) how one went about getting into print, how much money would one get, and do on.

Then came the -- I can't very well say high point--the hot spot of my ambition to write. Under the spell of Mallardi's insidious pen, I decided to go to the '69 Worldcon in St. Louis. I figured the place would be just oozing with people who knew all about writing. I not only wanted market details, I wanted to get some critical remarks about the structure of novels, how to do characterizations, and suchlike.

I arrived in St. Louis with definite queasiness. Aside from Mallardi and Bowers (both know to me only through the mails) I did not know a single soul in fandom. The whole thing could have been a disaster, especially for someone with my shy, retiring personality. Fortunately, Mallardi and Bowers (and lots of other people) turned out to be full grown and mature. I saw little of Bowers--he was busy with other things, and, anyway, was too respectable to associate with the likes of me. Luckily, I was sharing a room with Mallardi, so he couldn't get away that easily. Thanks to him I met a number of interesting people, both fan and pro.

I was interested in trying to be a pro, so I asked Mallardi the same questions from time to time (maybe every ten minutes) about sales and so on. He eventually managed to get me into a room which also contained Terry Carr, who told me what the going rate from Ace was at the time, who to submit things to, and what

the chances of a beginning writer were. This left me with nothing but the relatively minor problem of writing a brilliant novel. I told Mallardi all that I had found out. "I could have told you all that," he said.

Later, or maybe earlier, I had that unique experience so coveted by beginning writers. Someone (I simply can't remember who) said in a loud voice from all the way across the room, "Si Stricklen! I've always wanted to meet you!" and came over and met me. Vaster, I say, than empires. Ninety seconds later, whoever it was said, "Well, it's been good to meet you." Smaller than a mote.

Another room, which Mallardi got me into, contained Andrew J. Offutt and his wife Jodie. At that time I had seen his name in print a few times and figured, probably incorrectly, that he had just broken into print and would be all full of good advice for a newcomer. He was busy just then, so I cozened Jodie into reading an article I had in D:B 21. As it turned out, Andrew had some business to attend to, but he did let himself be disturbed long enough to help a newcomer with advice on writing. "Write," he said, "write." I turned back to Jodie. Her eyes had glazed over and the magazine had slipped from her cold, uncaring fingers. As I stumbled from the room, Andrew looked up at me with a fairly friendly eye. "Write," he said.

I spent much of my time looking for R. A. Lafferty because I liked some of his stories so well; I thought maybe if I could talk to him he might be interesting, and also maybe I could find out how he did it. One time I was sitting in a room next to a nice man and his nice wife. They weren't talking to anyone, so I asked him if he knew where Lafferty was. He said Lafferty was probably at such and such a place, and why did I want to know? I said that I thought he was a good writer and might could tell me something about writing. I then excused myself and went to look for Lafferty. As I left, the nice man's name kept scratching my mind. I knew I had heard it somewhere before. Silverberg. Sure sounded familiar.

Another time I managed to meet L. Sprague de Camp. An old army buddy of mine was a friend of one of his sons. He was quite friendly at first, but shortly grew to be rather cool. On later reflection, I concluded that this was probably because I persisted in calling him Fletcher Pratt.

The whole convention experience had kindled my writing desires to white heat. Unfortunately, I was called away to supervise the security arrangements for George Wallace's presidential campaign, and I also had a minor job designing a rustic bridge from Chappaquiddick Island to the mainland.

In the meantime, D:B folded and Bowers won me in a crap game, or something like that. He started up OW and kept on sending me copies. I eventually sent in a story which he said he liked better after reading it a second time. The story drew no comments from readers. Smaller than the smallest mote.

After that minor rekindling of the lust, I got a big contract with the Soviet Union to establish a training program for the Syrian Army. Whilst I was engaged on this important business, Bowers grew tired of sending OW off into the void. Time passed.

Then Bowers sent me a flyer which said that Terry Carr had picked up my first story of all in his FANTHOLOGY '64. Vaster than empires.

I immediately set to work writing again. This time I was determined to do a good job. I sent in a story and asked Bowers about the writers market these days, and where would there be a market for what I wrote. He didn't know, but was encouraging. I really polished up a story and showed it to whichever of my wives or mistresses I was with at the time. Tears glistened in her eyes. "That's fantastic," she said. I really thought that I ought to try to sell it, but Bowers had been good to me, why not send it to him? I packed it up with some other stuff and sent it off to him. He sent it back by return mail. "It's not that I don't like it, but -- it is a bit much." Mote.

I wrote another story. Very nice card from Bowers. Vast.

I kept meaning to write more, but every time I was supposed to be writing, I was either on a secret mission as an underground spy or with the wife of a close friend, except for the time I went off to Nova Scotia to see the total eclipse of the sun.

Eventually I finished up my consultant work with the McGovern campaign. Hey! One of my stories got picked up from OW and I got a tiny sum for letting them reprint it! Vast, oh, vast, vast. Then I got a rejection slip from Fantasy & Science Fiction. Mote. mote, mote.

Now I have to go back to work again, this time helping the government with its anti-inflation program.

But I just finished this article. Vast.

With all these nasty letters in OW lately, I better make it perfectly clear that all the above is a fictional story designed for the amusement of the readers. Anything dredged by my feeble and inaccurate memory couldn't possibly resemble a living person -- much less a dead one. No indeed. In the ridiculous event that anyone thinks otherwise, he should write directly to:

S. A. Stricklen, Senior Partner
Stricklen, Stricklen, Stricklen, Stricklen, & Stricklen
Attornies at Law
Penthouse, The Stricklen Building
6969 Stricklen Boulevard
Stricklen Heights
Atlanta, Georgia 30030

Lawyers, nitwits, and the insanely stubborn can write to:

Judge S. A. Stricklen III
U.S. Court of Libel and Slander
Stricklen Courthouse
3 Stricklen Plaza
Washington, D.C. OHOH0

--- S. A. STRICKLEN, JR.



INTRODUCTION, BY J. KAGARLITSKY TO A VISIT TO FANTASY LAND

(an anthology of SF & F, almost entirely by mainstream writers)

Translated from the Latvian edition (Riga: Zinatne, 1971)

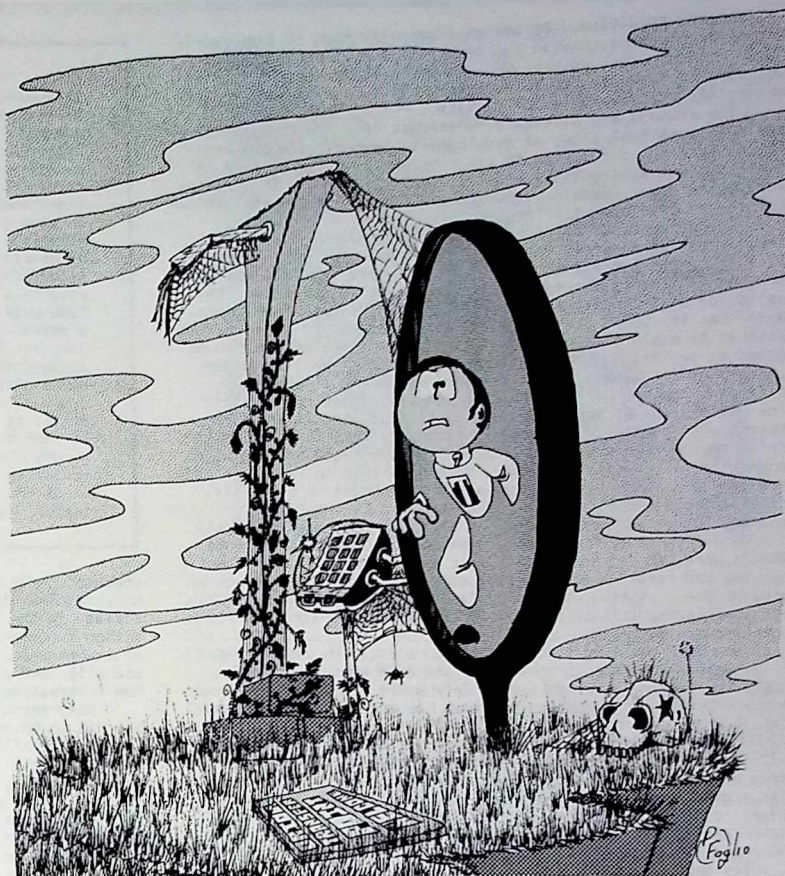
by DAINIS BISENIEKS

A LOOK AT THE TABLE OF CONTENTS of this book will show you such names as Jack London, E. M. Forster, O. Henry, Andre Maurois, Primo Levi, and Truman Capote. Rarely will you find all these writers in one place, but this is an exception: they have met in the land of fantasy.

Where is this land? Some brave explorers have reached it, but they found it hard to determine its boundaries and to give a complete description. One region differed from another, the climate was not uniform, and the natives had their peculiarities. To the traveler's inquiries about the inhabitants of the next village they would answer, giving the stranger a queer look, that no other village existed: beyond the hedges of their fields began the reaches of space. Yet, hard as it was to give an account of this land, there was no doubt that it existed. After all, many people had visited it and made themselves remembered, while others felt quite at home there.

This is not hard to explain. The wide variety of climate and scenery characteristic of this land enables almost anyone to pick out a region to his liking. Those whom we meet in this collection are little like each other as fantasists or otherwise as authors. Of course, each appears here in an unusual guise, but we should easily remember that we've met the man before, only in different dress. Sometimes a mirror image is before us, but even then it's not hard to understand just who is in front of the mirror. Even in the realm of magic it's difficult to turn into another being. And maybe some aren't trying to change. They enter the land of fantasy not to be freed from themselves but with another purpose. In this land they try to discover themselves more fully, to uncover yet another stratum of their talent.

In the past decade the attraction of this land has grown so



much that we may suspect yet another reason common to them all. Indeed there is one: it's called the 20th century. All the great revolutions in man's history have been accompanied by fantasy. The Renaissance was permeated by it; the rational age of Enlightenment paid it homage. Every one of these had its own conception of the fantastic, but none are imaginable without the fantastic tales they left us -- GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, MICROMEGAS.

Fantasy has always had an active role in changing the real world, and of course in explaining it. To Swift's contemporaries, the voyage to Lilliput shed light on the essence of court intrigue, the mechanisms of government and party quarrels. The voyage to Laputa helped them understand whom the achievements of science would serve if they were exploited by the privileged classes; the flying island is used to intimidate people and extract taxes from them ... and as for the "upper classes" (in a literal sense) though they are foolish, they are not foolish enough to neglect their advantages.

But here is a wonder: though there was fantasy, there were no fantasy writers. Neither Rabelais nor Swift nor Voltaire could be called such. If the term applied to them, it is only to stress how much they contributed to the development of fantasy. All literature was their province. If they wrote fantasy, it was because the conditions of literature at the time required it. Fantasy had not yet developed into a separate branch of literature which could flourish or wither: it was there all along, whether society had any great need for it or not.

The tendency of fantasy to live within its own boundaries developed only in the 19th century. The work of Jules Verne accelerated this trend. Since then fantasy has had its own writers, its own readers, its own favorite themes. It has become a separate movement in literature. But isn't there a certain danger in this? Couldn't fantasy become isolated from the main stream of literature?

It could, of course, and did so more than once. But then, whenever the world's artistic trends had need of it, fantasy could respond to the call, bringing its own methods and its un-

But is that the most important thing? 20th century SF is by no means as attached to technology as that of Verne's century, the 19th. It does not ignore technology, but prefers to allude to its products instead of describing them. After all, by now we know that time does not bring only the perfection of the mechanical devices we know. The very principles by which they are made

This, too, has its roots in the work of Wells. In one of his stories (*The Door in the Wall*) the protagonist as a boy came into a marvelous garden, where great panthers rub themselves against people and which is full of beautiful meadows, buildings, statues, and people with kind and beautiful faces. He passes that door many more times -- as a schoolboy, as a student, as a political worker, but he no longer has time. The restless life of his era seems to him the only real one: the world beyond the wall, tempting as it may be, is a daydream, a dim memory of childhood. At the end the author asks: maybe this world of true human values is the real world--and not that wearying, leveling everyday existence.

looked down on.

In our collection this tendency is represented by *The Machine Stops*. It is one of the earliest stories of its author, and maybe it made his reputation. It was written in 1911, when Forster was 22 years old. Less than ten years passed, and it turned out that Forster had been the founder of a whole new trend in modern fantastic literature.

Of course those who start something new in literature are themselves followers, and this is true also of Forster. It can be readily seen that his story was written following an old tradition, and Forster himself later spoke of his debt to Butler's *EREWOK*. He rated Butler's work higher than *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*. But Forster's story marks an important turning point in the development of this tradition.

The happy world without machines which other writers of anti-machine utopias so loved to portray remains on the periph-

ery of Forster's story. We learn quite casually that somewhere on the Earth's surface there live men who breathe ordinary air, subsist without the services of the ubiquitous machine, and are capable of interest in and sympathy for their fellow men -- they can even come to the other's aid. The author concentrates wholly on those who are in the machine's power. He portrays the realm of the machine with masterly insight, and no few writers of the next several decades have followed his lead. A few sentences here, some lightly sketched scenes there, or a passing gesture will remind us of the works of Huxley, Bradbury, and Vonnegut which were to come; they wrote of the contradictions of bourgeois progress, which in certain circumstances could turn its forces against humanity.

Forster keeps emphasizing that men who have become dependent on the machine have degenerated not only physically but also spiritually. They have become homogenized--one like the next. If something still distinguishes one from another, don't worry, soon these differences will disappear, and there will come "a generation which will know how to free itself entirely from facts, from personal impressions; a generation that will have no faces of its own, a generation divinely free from the burden of individual traits." Nothing worries them, and likewise nothing leaves any impression on them. Since people no longer need anything, they have lost a common goal. They all live under identical circumstances and are themselves identical. But this uniformity does not bring about the unification of mankind. On the contrary, it leads to its complete disintegration.

Everyone lives for himself here. One can live for years without meeting anyone and without feeling any need for contact. If anything unites these people in any formal sense, it is not the remnants of human feeling still flickering within them, but rather the Machine, a force external to them which determines the conditions of their existence.

Not only has society disintegrated, but also any integral conception of the world. Nobody can get an overview of the world any more. Even the Machine, the only part of the world accessible to people, already seems to be something mythical. It is too complicated for their indolent minds. It cannot be grasped as a whole. Faith has replaced science: people pray to parts of the machine for protection against the whole.

Forster's story is not only a warning against what is threatening us, it is a satire against the egoistic, fragmented and yet spiritually unified bourgeois milieu which the writer himself has experienced. His subsequent works of this sort also unite warning and satire. In this respect Forster showed himself as a prophet who got into a blind alley: he could not free himself from the society which he portrayed.

Whatever the case, Forster and his followers help give us a perspective on unacceptable variants of the future. Now that is important: important to learn today how to hear what the future is saying. Are there dangers in it of the sort which Forster shows? One must learn to hear all the voices of the future. But one must not let oneself be lulled by the gentle voices or frightened by the harsh ones. One must listen and learn the truth.

No, today we don't visit Fantasyland just to pass the time. It is little suited for that. It isn't easy to find there a corner where real life might be forgotten. The shadows which gather around you may be dark and strange, but the objects that cast them are perfectly real. If the shadows are dense, this is largely because the light is intense. Under the fiery skies of this land hot disputes are ignited about man, society, and the world. This world, after all, is illuminated by Understanding.

There is no chance to forget reality here, for here it is made clear.

...I should think the primary interest of this piece is that it's a Soviet Russian's view of SF&F. I have also read (and translated) a preface by Kagarlitsky to a book of Kuttner's stories; he stresses that Kuttner is fond of plain folk: witness how unpretentious the Hogbens are.

You'd think from some of the things he says that our critic lived in a free country, where such things as WE or 1984 or ANIMAL FARM could be freely published. But all in all I find this piece, and most of the others, detestable. It stinks of agitprop. K. is trying hard to get across a point of view, and he uses various tricks of rhetoric to this end. Like the flights of metaphor. They all get my back up; they are condescending...

DAINIS BISENIEKS, November 26, 1974



Jodie Offutt

ONLY WOMEN BLEED



UNTIL RECENTLY my experience as a hospital patient was limited to trips to the maternity ward, and those several years ago. All that's changed now. I even watched *MEDICAL CENTER* one night and said things like, "It's not *really* like that, you know..." All-knowing and full of disdain.

MY BATTERED BODY

I WENT TO THE HOSPITAL because my Pap smears hadn't been normal for awhile. My doctors decided a more thorough inspection was in order. And that, in medical terminology, involves a surgical procedure.

For the curious and the concerned, let me interject that no, I don't have cancer; my womanhood is still intact. A little the worse for wear, perhaps, but in working order. "The trauma of childbirth" is one of the phrases the doctor used when referring to my cervix.

It occurs to me that I'd never read about any of the inherent risks involved in having babies, while pamphlets and magazine articles have kept us constantly informed over the years of the dangers of all methods of birth control. It's odd that the more militant feminists haven't picked up on that.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FEMININE CONDITION

ANOTHER ODD THING--as I think about it after some time has passed--was my attitude and reactions to the situation. The possibility of cancer wasn't nearly as much of a threat that had to be coped with as the fact that I might have a hysterectomy. It seems that the AMA and the Cancer Research people have done a very thorough selling job on the cancer detection test. So good, in fact that cervical cancer implies no fear whatsoever. I thought at the time--and still do--that my attitude bordered on the nonchalant, a bit frivolous.

At the same time, the prospect of the removal of an organ I was definitely through with, had no intention of ever using again -- in fact, I'd been taking a drug for a number of years to prevent its functioning!-- caused me quite a bit of anxiety. As illogical as it was, I had some notion that my femininity was threatened.

I suppose I suffered a female version of the castration complex.

My dentist tells me that his women patients in general seem to go through more trauma at loosing teeth than do men. And most females who suicide do not go about it in such a way as to cause disfigurement. Perhaps it is more psychologically important for women to remain... *intact*.

While I have always felt that men are as vain as women, it could be that this is the basis for the popular female vanity that is supposedly inherent in all women.

SIGN IN, PLEASE

THE DOCTOR had suggested I go to the hospital ahead of time to pre-register myself and give them a blood sample. They were more interested in getting my Blue Cross number than my blood, but they took both and were very nice about it. I think hospitals have been concentrating more on PR for the past few years in an effort to improve their image.

It was a good thing I'd pre-registered, too, otherwise I might have had to wait! Longer than the hour and a half I *did* sit around, that is. Then there was the lab (more blood and urine in a bottle) and the X-Ray (two views: one up-against-the-wall stance that Dolly Parton could never have done and one with my arms draped over my head in sort of a cheesecake pose).

I was finally presented with my plastic bracelet, escorted to my floor, weighed in and shown to my room. At this point I had been in the building nearly three hours. Since there was no good reason for his presence, and since he's not particularly noted for his patience with institutions, Andy had long since gone.

When I was finally left alone, I felt somewhat uncomfortable

myself. I unpacked my bag, talked to my roommate a bit, messed with my bed and sort of felt like "How what?" It seemed kind of silly to put on a gown in the middle of the afternoon. On the other hand, it seemed dumb to be sitting on a hospital bed in my regular clothes. I settled on my robe.

Somebody came along to tell me what they intended to do later that night and what to expect the next morning. More PR. Much appreciated, since I'd have assumed I was near death had I discovered in a state of semi-awareness the IV dripping fluid into my body via the back of my hand.

Besides the TB patch test, they came for another dose of blood and urine. Those people know more about my body than most of us think there is to know!

"What," I asked, "are you doing with all this stuff?"

This latest sample was for a pregnancy test, I was informed. And you know what? For some strange reason, I felt vaguely flattered about that. I could even feel the corners of my mouth trying to curl up. It's an even stranger reaction when you understand that I was well aware of the fact that I was in a Catholic hospital and the good sisters were taking no chances than an inadvertent abortion be done right under their holier-than-thou noses. (I was to have a D & C the next morning.)

The flattery was swiftly negated by my next visitor: a girl with an EKG machine and the word that EKGs were routine for all patients forty or over.

KLUNK!

I asked a nurse if I could wander around. Sure I could, as long as I didn't get too far "out of pocket". As it turned out I was downstairs in the lobby conversing with my daughters by phone when they were ready to begin the cleansing rites.

One of the aides, if her cute little grin was any indication, seemed to enjoy her work. She was the one who gave me the "deuce"--that's what she called it. (I might add that she was about the size of a VW bug.) Actually, she gave me a pair of deuces--and that was just for openers. You wouldn't believe how un-septic I was by the time they finished. I felt practically virginal and *very* pubescent.

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

EARLY NEXT MORNING after two shots of Demarol, I was wheeled to the operating room, all shiny chrome and wrinkly blue, given a saddle block, then poked with a pin ("Can you feel anything when I do this?"), had a piece of me cut out to be sent to the pathologist (my scattered body), sewn up and wheeled hazily back to my room, intervenous bag drip-dripping into my arm. Andy was waiting with the mail.

That was that.

I had two books: ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN and Silverberg's *SON OF MAN*. I started both of them, and stuck with *Watergate*, probably because I was familiar with the plot, and I couldn't muster the attention that *SOM* deserved.

The two books I decided *not* to take were Marc Stevens' *10 1/2* (It made me wince--it was just the wrong time.) and Norman's latest *Gor* tale. (I was in no mood to read about submissive women; I was being submissive enough.)

LONG-HAIRED HIPPIE TYPES AND THINGS THAT GO IN THE NIGHT

SINCE THE HOSPITAL is across the street from the high school, the boys visited daily. Jeff celebrated his birthday that week. I told him I felt pretty much like I had 14 years before -- sort of touchy through the middle, as though something had been taken from me. A couple of Chris's buddies paid their respects; I suspect they were more interested in having a legitimate reason for skipping classes than in the state of my health.

I had two roommates while I was there. One was a young woman who'd had a complete hysterectomy, plus the removal of a



grafanedica

A FANZINE COLUMN ABOUT FANZINES

THE WITCH'S BREW

Gerard Houarner

(with a little help from William S.)

Being an article on the construction of an artificially organic and symbiotic reproduction machine designed for use by male and, with certain alterations, female editors currently involved in producing irregular periodicals that pass the rigid obscenity inspections of the Post Office disguised as pornography.

FIRST YOU GET A CAULDRON. Any cauldron will do, although you'd best get a good solid metal one, since cauldrons made of marsh-mallow, though very tasty, tend to ruin any mixture you might be trying to cook in them. You might also try a charmed pot, though you must be very careful not to confuse a charmed pot with a charmed pothead, or even worse, a charming pothead like Mike Glicksohn. Not only will it ruin your efforts, but it will quite probably put you in ill favor with certain government officials who are currently gathering evidence against charming potheads in order to send them very far away for a very, very long time. After you've acquired your cauldron or charmed pot, as the case may be, you put it up on your stove and light your fire. Or rather, light the stove's fire. Anyway, somehow get a fire started underneath the cauldron. Once you've done that, you are ready to begin the brew.

Poisoned entrails are, of course, a must. They will ensure your machine has the proper "intestinal fortitude" to survive the most nauseating garbage you might ever choose to print. Follow this with a toad, which will give your publication an edge over normally printed fanzines in that they will be able to hop to their destination instead of risking life and staple in the dungeons of the Post Office. A word to the wise: do not confuse toads with frogs, since the latter will only sit around drinking wine and eating bread and cheese all day long, occasionally mumbling things like "vous coulez" and "merde".

Stir gently and let boil, toil and trouble for five minutes. Then you can add the fillet of a fenny snake. No one knows what this ingredient adds to the entire process, but it has been shown that brews without fillet of a fenny snake show a marked tendency to vomit at the first application of cor-flu, and some have even slithered down drain pipes rather than reproduce a William Rotsler cartoon. Obviously this can be a severe handicap in publishing a fanzine, so be sure you add this ingredient.

Wool of bat and tongue of dog will keep readers warm in the winter and allow zine reviewers of a particularly shallow nature to call your effort "Man's best friend, sort of". Be prepared for nasty letters from vampires and the ASPCA, though, as some members of these two groups might question your method of acquisition.

In order to capture the essence of any insulting retort you might make to a letter of comment, or to add spice to a denigrating book review, you will need adder's fork and blindworm's sting. Of course, a blindworm's sting might prove insufficient to carry the full strength of your words, and so you can either substitute with or add the more modern and far rarer wit of Spiro T. Agnew. One lizard's leg and a howlet's wing will allow your

machine to walk, talk and crawl on its belly like a reptile. This will save you needless movers' bills when you are thrown out of your apartment by the landlady, who will no doubt have strenuous objections to your cooking habits after you've finished this recipe.

Allow to simmer, bake and bubble.

The scale of dragon will render you impervious to any snide remarks other editors will make when they find out your method of reproduction, and the tooth of a wolf is always a good idea if you're planning any kind of a review section. All fanzines need some sercon contributions, so the addition of a witch's mummy will not only provide the correct atmosphere for the discussion of academic affairs, but it will also fill the head of the editor with arcane and useless information that, though it will have no bearing on anything under consideration, will confuse the academicians and render their arguments ridiculous.

The maw and gulf of a ravined salt-sea shark is an extremely important part of the mixture since it will give you the proper attitude towards any contributions that might cross your path. Unfortunately, there are several problems in acquiring this particular ingredient, not the least of which involves the loss of one or more limbs. But you, the editor, must remember that publishing requires sacrifices above and beyond the call of ordinary human endeavors. So ignore any losses you may incur in the search for a shark and remember the famous phrase of a bit actor in *JAWS* who, upon performance of his role, was heard to say "ouch".

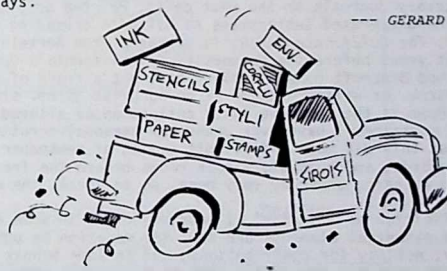
Now go into your neighbor's garden sometime tonight and dig up the root of a hemlock. Do not ask what your neighbor is doing with hemlock growing in his garden, just be thankful that as soon as you finish cooking your landlady will throw you out and you will never have to see that neighbor again. Throw the root into the cauldron, making sure to stand clear and avoid any bubbles that might rise out of your pot and explode, releasing noxious fumes. Then you may proceed.

In order to avoid any unpleasant religious altercations, you will have to add the liver of a blasphemous yak. The gall of a goat and the slips of yew are a great help in facing any typos and lay-out errors with disdain and arrogance comparable only to Bill Bowers. For good, clean, entertaining fun, there is nothing like the nose of a Turk and Tartar's lips. Remember, half the fun involved in those last two objects is obtaining them without any undue loss of vital bodily parts that the shark might have missed. Finally, the finger of a birth-strangled babe ditch delivered by a drab will round out the zine with a fine and noble sense of humor.

Add a chaldron of tigers to thicken the mixture and cook for forty days and forty nights. Cool with baboon's blood. For added effect, dance and sing around the cauldron like an elf or fairy.

Note on use: This method of reproduction depends a great deal on the symbiotic relationship between man and artificially organic machine. The zine editor must either imbibe or otherwise force his construction/mixture into an easily accessible orifice a week before running off the first issue, after which the machine will be sufficiently in tune with the editor, and vice versa, so that the resultant product will be an instant nominee for the Hugo award. Just goes to show you what a Hugo is worth these days.

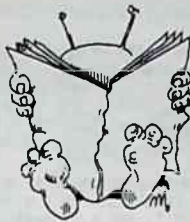
--- GERARD HOUARNER



[illegible]

Spring, 1873

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INW¹⁷ORLDS

TEWS & MISCELLANEOUS * REVIEWS & MISCELLANEOUS * REVIEWS & MISCELLANEOUS * REVIEWS & MIS

A GOREY CELEBRATION? Yes, yes, & it's surely long overdue. At any rate, though I only discovered him a few years ago, I cannot understand why he isn't a great cult figure. He deserves to be. To be known by far more than the small group of devotees who must congregate about his work. Edward Gorey has published over 40 books, all small. All of them have illustrations; most of them also contain words. Both the words & the pictures come from Gorey's mind, & there are some, perhaps, who would argue they should have stayed there. Not me, but I've always loved purity in madness. A number of the books are supposedly for children, as for example the "Three Volumes of Moral Instruction" which make up *THE VINEGAR WORKS*. They are about as far from Little Golden Books as you can get & still be in the same space/time continuum (actually, I'll have something to say about this later, but the books exist in this world anyway). Most of Gorey's voluminous output has first appeared in small press editions (as, for example, his marvelous *THE SOPPING THURSDAY*, available from the Capricorn Press in Santa Barbara). This past summer, however, Berkeley Publishing Corp.--blessed be their name!--published a huge & beautiful paperback collection of the first fifteen Gorey books under the title of *AMPHIGOREY*; & it's only \$4.95. Such a bargain I haven't seen since I don't know when.

Look, all I really want to say is, *Get this book!* You'll be sorry if you don't, but I suppose that's no skin off my teeth. Nevertheless, I'm going to go ahead & celebrate Gorey things. They're like the mushrooms in *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*. To quote Grace Slick, They feed your head. If they don't, you're somewhere else already, & good luck to you.

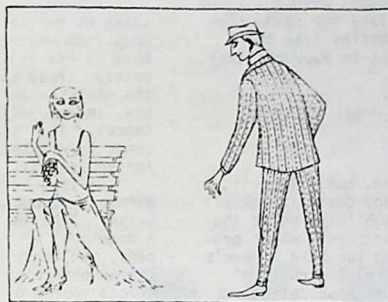
It's my firm belief that Edward Gorey is a visitor from an alternate universe, who decided to settle here & produce realistic drawings & tales from his past else/where & /when. In the universe Gorey comes from Edward the Sixth ruled for a long, long time, there were no world wars, & London, indeed all of England, remained essentially Edwardian--both in the upper crust estates & the slums (there's still a white slave trade in young girls & boys)--till the present day. H.G. Wells' Time Traveller, had he gone sideways as well as forwards, would have felt at home here. Except, perhaps, for one thing: it's a very queer, dark, evilly *funny* place. Definitely Gorey events occur there. Gorey's essential landscape is English-weird.

Actually, the stories & pictures aren't always examples of black comedy; sometimes they're just comedy. Gorey's first book is entitled *THE UNSTRUNG HARP, OR MR. EARBASS WRITES A NOVEL*. All you writers out there should read this one. You'll revel in its grimly funny glimpses of the ultimate truth of writing, such as this:

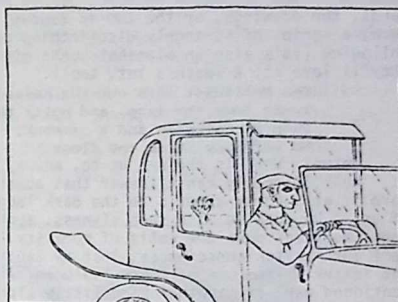
The first draft of *TUH* is more than half finished, and for some weeks

a Gorey Celebration

DOUGLAS BARBOUR



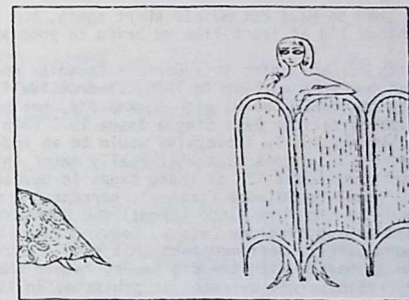
Alice was eating grapes in the park when Herbert, an extremely well-endowed young man, introduced himself to her.



He invited her to go for a ride in a taxi-cab, on the floor of which they did something Alice had never done before.



After they had done it several times in different ways, Herbert suggested that Alice tidy up at the home of his aunt, Lady Celia, who welcomed them with great cordiality.



Lady Celia led Alice to her boudoir, where she requested the girl to perform a rather surprising service.

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More... Than Just A Pretty Face:

Richard Geis says that ALGOL: The Magazine About Science Fiction is "professionally magnificent;" Bill Bowers says, "fantastic Gaughan cover," referring to the present issue. Of course ALGOL has a full color cover by Jack Gaughan on ultra slick Chromecote paper; typeset interiors on slick paper, with imaginative layouts and use of artwork. But more than that, ALGOL has Robert Silverberg's 15,000 word autobiography; an interview with Gardner Dozois; Ted White's overview of the SF world in "My Column;" fascinating and controversial reviews by Richard Lupoff in his "Lupoff's Book Week;" solidly fascinating letters, ads for dozens of books and bookstores, a convention calendar, and much more. Last issue ALGOL featured a full color Mike Hinge cover, interview with Ursula K. Le Guin, articles by Jack Williamson and Brian Stableford; next issue ALGOL welcomes Vincent Di Fate and Susan Wood as contributing editors. And then, of course, there's ALGOL PRESS... If you're not subscribing to ALGOL, you're missing a lot. Try one copy for \$1.50, or a six issue (3 year) subscription for \$6.00. Use the coupon below to order ALGOL and ALGOL PRESS titles.



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Having expended so much space on a neo-contributor, I must of necessity be brief in the remainder of my comments:

Jeff Hudson, in between writing *the novel*, has made one pro sale--*Half Mixed Publisher's Delight*, by Jeffrey S. Hudson and Isaac Asimov--which appeared in the late, lamented *If*. He is also totally crazy, but his heart is in the right place: "I really don't mind that you don't pay anything (not that I couldn't use the money) but let's face it, print is print and *Outworlds*, from all the informations I can gather, is a rather prestigious fanzine." Harry Bell's illustrations will help it stay that way!

My biggest "editorial decision" this time was finding something with which to follow Doc Lowndes' impressive column/essay; I didn't want something light, and I didn't want an ad...and I didn't have a suitable full page illo. But I wanted to use Bill's poem this time, particularly since it was "bumped" last time... and it seemed to "fit" right about there...

Darrell sent me his piece, offering the N.A. rights, but I said I would use it only if I could also arrange to print Doug's piece it responded to--presenting both sides, don't you know? I have so arranged, but only by inadvertently stepping on the toes of another U.S. faned whom Doug had offered the N.A. rights to on his piece! *sigh* My apologies to all concerned...

I've had that center-spread illo of Connie's for about four years...I have patience if my artists permit...waiting for just the right piece(s) to use it with. I think I found them.

Tom Rose is a young professional artist who works for the Stopas. Joni is trying to get him into doing fan art, and I think you will see why. (This particular illo [p. 1043] will also be a postcard published by Imagination Unlimited.)

I told Jodie, when she sent in this "column", that, had she outlined the subject matter in advance, I would have automatically said, "No way...!" Just goes to show you how wrong I could have been...

Robin Michelle Clifton is, as she says, not a sf fan, but I really enjoyed getting this article out of the clear blue sky... However, if Robin Michelle is upset with Tucker's response, I'm not eager to see how she'll react to Ro's version: You see, he swears up and down that it is a hoax article. (The fact that he was unable to find any reference to QRQ, Wilson, or William Wright through the reference desk at the local library doesn't help...) I don't think it's a hoax, and see no reason why it should be...but my contention is that it doesn't really matter if it is: I enjoyed it and I enjoy thinking that someone such as Quentin Wilson *did* exist. (But then I'm a self-confessed plebeian: I even watch and enjoy *SPACE: 1999*...it has pretty colors.)

And, in case some of you think that you're seeing double on the page opposite this, yes, that is a repeat of Grant's cover from *OW19*: this time, as promised, presented without my overlaying screen, for your listening enjoyment.

It's a good issue. Enjoy.

In case you haven't heard, the TAFF race is all over and -- surprise! -- it ended in a tie. Which means that both Roy Tackett and I will be going to Mancon over Easter...at last I'll be able to meet Terry Jeeves--who I've known for fifteen years--and many, many others who are more than "names" on paper to me. I'm looking forward to it...and only hope I can carry off my end of the deal!

Actually, I'm rather pleased that things worked out the way they did; I've known Roy almost as long (we stopped at his home on the way back from Pacificon II in '64) and in some ways wasn't too happy at having to run "against" him. (I'd thought there would be at least one other in the 'race', but...) This means that we will be joint American administrators for the next TAFF race...one to bring an European fan over to an American convention. You will, of course, be kept informed through this medium...

In the meantime, there is a DUFF race underway at the moment, to bring an Aussie fan to Midamericon this year. The candidates are John Alderson, Shayne McCormack, Christine McGowan, and Paul Stevens. The deadline for voting is March 31 (this year), and if you don't get a ballot by other means, I'm sure a s.s.a.e. sent to the American Administrator (Rusty Hevelin, 3023 Old Troy Pike, Dayton, OH 45404) will get you one. As with TAFF, it is not required that you be eligible to vote in order to contribute; do so!

A lot of people wrote after the ad in *SFR* 15 appeared wanting to know where their issues were. (I even got one phone call from California, before I received the *SFR*!) I really appreciate your concern people, but sometimes it is possible/desirable to advertise an issue before it's actually out. So, rather than responding to every letter/note, I kept working and got *OW25/OW26* out as soon as possible. If you *still* haven't gotten them, let me know...but usually the only reason you *don't* get it with everyone else is that you move, and don't let me know... Stay put!

One thing I've been meaning to mention for a long time is this: I get a lot of mail addressed to one "Mr. Bowers"; *that* happens to be my father. The "William L." you see occasionally on the contents page is simply for posterity; *my* name is Bill. So Be It Known to One & All, that only the following three individuals are required to address me as "Mr. Bowers" (with an optional but respectful "Sir" afterwards): Michael Glicksohn, Jerry Kaufman, Larry Downes. (I told you I'd make you famous, Larry...)

This leaves me less than a column for the "good stuff":

Those with a perceptive eye and an interest in trivia will have caught a change in the "press" name. I'm not sure who dubbed me with the "Bilbo" handle (I would suspect Bentcliffe or Jeeves)--in fact, I'm not all that certain I even *like* the name! But I needed a new label for my own activities, and it'll serve as at least a temporary version of same.

As to *why* I needed to change the press name, and by way of explaining that little comment in the first paragraph on p.1021:

I've said, for a long time, that eventually I wanted to get into publishing on a serious basis, to eventually do it fulltime and that I considered *OW* my self-teaching training ground as an editor/designer. Up until now that's all I've done--*say* it. I've never permitted myself to graduate.

I first met Ro Nagey at Discon II...it was in the KC suite when Randy Bathurst was trying to form "Big Fandom" (criteria: over 200 lbs., or over 6 foot in height...sorry, Mike), if fading memory serves me right. Then at Windycon he told the Handgrip story, and I said to myself, This kid has possibilities. At Marcon he asked me to be fan G.O.H. at Confusion, and I *knew* he was wide beyond his tender years. Midwestcon, the long drive to and from Byobcon with he, Lin, and Sandi, his visit down here, Pghlange, yet another Windycon...

We started talking about what we wanted to do, *really* wanted to do with our lives...he to write, me to design/edit...

Double:Bill was "born" while Mallardi and I drove back from Chicon III. ...and it was during the ride back from Pghlange that Ro and I said, what the hell...let's go after the dream...

Ever since then, being basically a coward, I've been trying to find a graceful way of finking out...but I haven't been able to find one. Besides, deep down, it *is* what I want to do...and if I don't go with it now, I probably never will...

What "it" is, is this: Ro and I are in the process of incorporating under the title of "Outworlds Productions". What we intend to do is to establish a working, viable, self-supporting publishing house over the next several years.

That's the dream, that's the path...

We have plans, some big, some small, some definite, some tentative... And we have faith in our own abilities...

He is the business end; I am the creative/editorial half. Together we decide what projects to tackle. And that's basically what I've needed all along: someone I can trust, yet someone who can give me a budget and say that's it, you do it with that much money, and not a penny more. Someone to take the worry of raising the capital off me, so that I can concentrate on doing my thing.

Right now things are in a bit of a flux until Ro & Lin get married (there'll be a change of name...for both), and get moved to where Lin will spend the next four years of internship/residency. At least we now know where that will be. But we hope to have our first book out by Midamericon, or shortly thereafter. And the one definite commitment we have to each other is to get the first issue of our magazine out by Suncon.

A real, honest-to-goodness science fiction magazine no less --and yes, I'm quite aware of everything I said to Mike Gorra in *OW25*; answering others is one way I employ in answering my own doubts about certain things...

We have a name for the corporation; we needed a name for the magazine, a good, solid science fictional name. We examined the possibilities, but always came back to one certain title...

Outworlds #30 will be the last one in this fanzine/eclectic format. I wanted this last year for several reasons: to match *D:B's* longevity (the seven year itch), it'll give me twice as many issues as *NERG*(1)...but mainly I want to wrap it going up, one last shot at giving it the very best I've got. You've now seen one fourth of that final volume.

The new magazine will, of course, be titled *Outworlds*.

But, being what I am, I will still be publishing a fanzine; in essence, actually, *this* fanzine, but under a different, and a not necessarily sfnal title. The major difference is that it will not even pretend to a regular schedule, and will probably be considerably smaller...but just as varied, and hopefully will have the same columnists/contributors...if they are willing.

(Yes, we're selling shares...at a three-figure price; we'd rather be fan-owned than bank-financed. Contact Ro...not me...)

There you have it. Give it your best shot...and take care.

