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The One Dull Thing You Did  
Was to Die, Fletcher

(for Fletcher Pratt, one night in Rome)

To you, Fletcher, from my dark house asleep  
in the sound of its lives breathing, at three  
of a tired morning, and, as it happens,  
in Rome--which could also be Oslo or Shanghai  
to any sense of mine: a place like any,  
a distance equally anywhere from you  
engraved in your dull death--and a damned poor likeness.

. . . I read a fool's book late, then puttered  
along a marble hall a block-long nowhere  
at a hundred-thousand lire a month, and poured  
my last shot of real Armagnac.

And now,  
here I am, a sheep-face in the mirror,  
the drink raised in this crazy Italian dim  
of every bulb too small for what it does  
and everyone saving a lira the wrong way.

Here I am in this light that sticks to shadow  
without half-changing it; and there you are,  
as long as rent; and time wherever it is  
in a lira's worth of something saved from dying.  
God, what a silly way to keep a budget!  
Well, here goes: from your budget's end and mine,  
the last of what there is--to you, Fletcher,  
maudlin, but in the best money can buy.

-- John Ciardi

(Reprinted from The Saturday Review by permission of the author)

William F. Temple  
Lan Wright

### IN THIS ISSUE

Bob Arthur  
Isaac Asimov  
Brian Aldiss  
Lloyd Biggle  
James Blish  
John Boardman  
Bob Briney  
Rosel Brown  
John Brunner  
Albert Blaustein  
Knox Burger  
Ted Carnell  
John Christopher  
G.W. Cottrell, Jr.  
Theodore Cogswell  
George Cowgill  
Betsy Curtis  
Avram Davidson  
Chan Davis  
Miriam Allen de Ford  
Michel Ehrwein  
Harlan Ellison  
Albert Ferlin  
Georges H. Gallet  
Will Jenkins  
J. Martin Graetz  
Harry Harrison  
Joe Hensley  
Stephen Kandel  
Serge Hutin  
Damon Knight  
Dean McLaughlin  
Edgar Pangborn  
John R. Pierce  
George Price  
Mack Reynolds  
Geroge Scithers  
James White  
Kate Wilhelm  
Jack Williamson  
Richard Wilson  
Donald Wollheim  
Arthur Zirul  
Richard McKenna  
Jacques Sadoul

My Day in Stir, Harlan  
Ellison, p.2  
ANALOG and "Fact", G.H.  
Scithers, p.11,  
The Harvard Library Science  
Fiction Collection, G.W.  
Cottrell, Jr, p.19  
An Ethic for Editors, Dean  
McLaughlin, p. 23

THE ANGRY MIDDLE-AGED MEN'S CORNER:

"Perhaps," said Herbert, while he and Pencroft were working, "our companions have found a superior place to ours."

"Very likely," replied the seaman; "but, as we don't know, we must work all the same. Better to have two strings to one's bow than no string at all!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Herbert, "how jolly it will be if they were to find Captain Harding and were to bring him back with them!"

"Yes, indeed," said Pencroft, "that was a man of the right sort."

"Was!" exclaimed Herbert, "do you despair of ever seeing him again?"

--from "Dropped from the Clouds",  
The Mysterious Island, Jules Verne

Each morning, after the tumult and the shouting die and my wife and girl children depart for their respective schools, I retire to the small pink bathroom, bearing with me a large mug of black coffee and followed by a small gray cat, for a few minutes quiet cogitation upon The Meaning of It All. First on the agenda comes a despondent contemplation, not of my navel, but of the small but unsightly roll of blubber beneath it that testifies to the sedentary nature of the past few years. I give it a tentative poke with my right forefinger and then pull in my stomach muscles to see if it will go away. It doesn't. And then a sudden look of eagles comes into my eyes and, as I glare sternly at the pink towel that hangs above the roll of pink tissue, I make a firm resolution to impose enough order on my chaotic days to make possible a regular workout in the college gym. I am then interrupted by the cat, a less contemplative beast, who, after a ritualistic kicking of legs, steps daintily out of the box of Kitt-Dri (Trademark Registered) underneath the wash basin and scratches the door as a signal that he wants out.

Alone at last, after giving a moment of wistful consideration to the practicality of trying to seduce the maid, I light another cigarette, take a swallow of tepid coffee, and turn my mind to equally frustrating matters -- writing, and why I'm not. Since, unhappily, the rolls of the Institute are liberally laced with colleagues who have fallen prey to the same sort of verbal impotence that plagues me, I originally proposed to advance in this column certain of the conclusions arrived at during my morning meanderings. Last night, however, I came home to find the new (February) F&SF waiting for me, containing a blast at SF writers by Alfred Bester in his "Books" department that seems calculated to keep the pot boiling nicely for the next several months. I therefore, and without Bester's knowledge or Mills' permission, will devote the rest of this department to several lengthy excerpts from the article, trying as best I can to avoid pulling them out of context. The full text can be obtained by plunking down thirty-five cents at the corner drug store. (As an extra bonus the issue also contains Robert F. Young's STORM OVER SODOM:

"Two men and two women stranded, perhaps forever, on an unknown planet. . . ." and "Collins, his wits blunted by self-complacency, was turning the screw. "We could be a hell of a lot worse off," he was saying. "Suppose, for instance, that only three of us had survived--one man and two women, or two women and one man? Not that I'm trying to break down everything to sex, but just the same, we'd have a problem on our hands!"

"I'll say!" said Nina, her brown eyes regarding him reverently."

And with that, reverently, we will turn the podium over to the absent Mr. Bester.

"Almost everybody," he said, "agrees that science fiction has fallen upon bad times. . . . We think the authors are responsible." "The average quality of writing in the field today is extraordinarily low. . . ." "(They). . . usually make themselves clearly understood, and if they rarely rise to stylistic heights, they don't often sink to the depths of illiteracy.

"No, we speak of content; of the thought, theme, and drama of the stories, which reflect the author himself. Many practicing science fiction authors reveal themselves in their works as very small people, disinterested in reality, inexperienced in life, incapable of relating science fiction to human beings, and withdrawing from the complexities of

(continued on p. 49)

FROM AN EXPATRIATE

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand  
And cast a wistful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land  
Where my possessions lie.

See them cavort in little herds,  
Stamping feet and twinkling words,  
Cropping imagination's plain,  
Far from envy, far from gain.  
Oh vision rare, beyond compare,  
Fair writers stripping fair souls bare,  
And how I wish that I was there.

Some write of unions endlessly,  
And others of philosophy,  
Stale subjects, charming only here,  
Or after cans and cans of beer.  
Oh cans of beer, apartments drear  
And points unclear of friends most dear,  
How, how I wish you all were here.

Fettered by convention's gyves  
With editors if not with wives,  
Seduced away by slicks and sex,  
How can SF survive its checks?  
Oh, riches pall, commitments gall;  
What fat cats want cannot be all,  
And back into their ways they fall.

Writing tripe for gold's a sin,  
But venial, a heart-whole giving in;  
A whoring after foreign gods  
Makes SF writers boring clods.  
Oh lovers pure, I can't endure  
The shoddy mainstream's tinsel lure;  
The bait is bright, the wages sure.

--John R. Pierce

SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, JOHN

Those wages, friend, are not so sure,  
Nor quite so easy to procure.  
Will they buy what we have to sell?  
I offer now a parallel:

There once was a tart so obese  
She could only ask tupence a piece,  
And it's her that I wish to report upon.  
For she said, "If I tire of this role,  
I've a wonderful ace in the hole:  
I can always get rich as a courtesan."

--Theodore R. Cogswell

ISAAC ASIMOV SAYS: I generally go over each copy of the Proceedings looking for some bitter comment about myself so that I can take off my jacket, spit on my hands, and wade in. However, it doesn't happen. I'm noncontroversial---or, perhaps, non-existent. No one mentions me except in the barest aside. So I will talk about myself without provocation and the hell with all of you.

It so happens that last month (November 1960) saw the publication of the fanciest book I have ever attempted, yclept THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE (Publishers title, and I have heard all possible witticisms about intelligent women, and moronic man and all the rest of it, so spare me.) It's in two volumes and though I say it myself as shouldn't, it is hot stuff. Anyway for months I am racked with a question of ethics. Ought I or ought I not make use of my monthly column in F&SF to (Page 4)

## MY DAY IN STIR, OR BURIED IN THE TOMBS

Harlan Ellison

If Hemingway hadn't said: "A man should never write about what he doesn't know," I might not have spent 24 hours recently as a guest of the New York City Police Department. But he did, and so I conscientiously decided if I was going to write about juvenile delinquency, I would have to join a kid gang, run with them as one of them, to deal with the subject truthfully.

That was six years ago, and from the 10 weeks spent with the Barons in Brooklyn's Red Hook section, I produced a novel ("Rumble," Pyramid Books, 35 cents) and a book of short stories ("The Deadly Streets," Ace Books, 35 cents). I also came back with assorted weapons used by the kids of the streets which were later used in an extensive tour of PTA, boys'-club, and youth group lectures on the evils of j. d. Among these implements were a 6-inch Italian stiletto (without switch), several pairs of brass knucks, and a .22 short revolver.

The revolver was in working order, and despite the fact that it was never used for any purpose but that of visual-aid during lectures, it was a weapon. That was fact one. Fact two: the Sullivan Act.

A frightened weirdo whose name will remain forever burned in my heart, bugged at me because I took a dim view of his pawning a typewriter I had loaned him, called the police some three weeks ago and informed them--anonymously--that Harlan Ellison not only had a deadly arsenal in his apartment but (to get quick service from the fuzz) also tons of heroin, marijuana, pep pills, hashish, and the like.

Sunday, September 11, I was arrested by two plainclothes detectives of the Narcotics Squad, who found no junk (hell, I don't even use No-Doz) but who did find a gun. Thus followed a tour through the New York detention system I won't quickly forget. A guided tour through Dante's Inferno.

The Charles Street pokey was my first residence. I lay in durance vile in a cell whose dimensions, if accompanied by handles, might have served a a coffin; a toilet without a seat or flush equipment, a flat hardwood bed-slab, and a light that never went out. The evening was spent sleeplessly, for the body has not been constructed that could find respite on that bunk, reading three books brought by a friend. (For completists, they were Conrad's "Nostromo," "The Wizard of Oz," and "Eichmann: The Man and His Crimes." I sometimes wonder about this friend.)

Early Monday morning, September 12, I was taken by paddy wagon to 100 Centre Street, where I was mugged (having already been printed) and tossed into a pen with perhaps 30 other gentlemen, fine specimens all. At one point I was handcuffed to a chap who had hammer-murdered a 14 year-old girl when she would not, as he succinctly put it, "give out with a little trim." After being shunted in and out of a dizzying sequence of pens, cages, and assorted grey-painted enclosures, all of which smelled faintly of vomit and urine, I was brought before the arraigning judge.

Unless you have seen the conveyor-belt justice of an over-crowded New York court, until you have felt the helpless inevitability of not being heard, you don't know what it means to be hung up. The judge, harassed, tired, overworked, and impatient, found it unnecessary to hear any of the facts in the matter and dulcetly intoned: "One thousand dollars bail," at which point my literary agent, on the scene by request, collapsed in an ulcerous heap.

Then began the jollies, as I went through the police-detention routine, while awaiting bail to arrive. The Tombs, as they are aptly called, are very clean, brightly lit, and because of this perhaps more frightening than the typical conception of Torquemada's inquisition chambers.

The closed-in feeling, the almost claustrophobic terror of being chivvied, harried, moved in a line without face or freedom--the entire weight of the building, the city, life--everything comes down on you. Don't believe it, a grown man can cry. Frighten him sufficiently, it'll happen.

I saw teen-agers, arrested for the first time, hustled around and caged in with time-tested homosexuals, junkies in the last stages of withdrawal, acknowledged rapists, heist artists, homicidal types.

It was something out of Kafka or Dinesen, almost Surrealistic, the narrow grey world of the bars, going through the disrobing-and-showering scene, one Negro queer (who carried a bottle of new, clear Stopette roll-on deodorant and two bottles of perfume in his jeans) trying to perform obscenities while the teenagers blanched and dodged. They put you down there, helpless, and then they rub your nose in your own misery. The sauced hounds and wineheads vomit on the floor; one of them missed and my shoes carried it for three days no matter how hard I scrubbed them. I stared with morbid fascination at my hands as, after the shower, they were once again fingerprinted, with no soap or water to wash off the black stains; a physical manifestation of my current state as a criminal.

And when they brought in a line of old bums and vags, I saw the truly damned ones of our time. Old men, their baggy pants and white hair and stubbled jowls almost a uniform. The stench of dead whiskey on them. I stared into their dead, hungry eyes and I wanted to say something to them, tell them they could have a piece of my life, anything to stop the hopelessness of what they had become. A cop who had been smoking threw a half-inch butt on the floor and four of them grabbed for it; the one who got it was shaking so badly he burned his lips getting it lit for one puff before his spastic movements confounded him.

The waiting. The nothing-to-do. The putting my hands through the bars so just a little of me could be free. The feeling I was no longer a human being; just another can of anchovies being labeled, packaged sent down the conveyor belt. The absolute loss of all humanity; the penultimate agony of realizing my life was in someone else's hands completely, subject to his whim or fancy. And you can't yell: "The game is off. I don't want to play any more!" It's their game, their rules.

And finally the bail came through, I got out--and found the newspapers had been "tipped" to my misdoings and had run a cleverly worded story which (1) made it clear that no narcotics were found, (2) explained that the weapon in question was in my possession for a thoroughly rational reason, and (3) defamed me completely. By inference. By nonstatement. The twisted word, the malleable wonder of "have you stopped beating your wife?" And in 24 hours I found myself referred to as: "Oh, yeah, Ellison. Isn't he the writer that got picked up on the junk charge?"

So what good is it? You try to make it in this game, you ply your trade the best you can, and what good does it do? Because there are people who will play with someone's life and career, for a lark, for revenge, for misguided idiocy. There are people who will wash a guy down the drain to get five bucks from the Daily News for a not-quite-accurate tip. There are newspapermen who will go for news even if it isn't really news; to hell with him, if we're wrong we can run a retraction.

Who do you curse? That's the question, God help us all. That's the big thing: who do you blame? Or is the common man just too common?

I've got this Common-Man Wind-Up Doll, see. You wind it up, set it down on a table. . . and it finks.

(Reprinted from The Village Voice, Sept. 29, 1960)

\* \* \* \* \*

ASIMOV SAYS: (CONTINUED) to stealthily, seductively and subtly plug the book? I could do ~~it~~ so easily and the Kindly Editor would never think of stopping me. Finally with a sigh of regret, I decide to do the integritous thing and never mention the book. The hell with what they do on television and the hell with Madison Avenue psychology. I'll go along with the professional attitude of non-self-advertising. So I never mentioned it. And in the issue of the magazine which hit the stands in November I read my plug-free article with a vain regret sifting through me (why wasn't I born an unethical bastard? and like that) and then just as I am about to put the magazine down, I notice a full-page advertisement of my book on the back cover which had been inserted by my publisher without informing me and accepted and printed by the Mercury Press without informing me. Which just shows you that Honesty is the Best Policy, and Virtue is its own Reward ((except at conventions, TRC)), and Cast Thy Bread Upon the Waters and it Shall be Returned Tenfold, and all like that there. The reason I tell you all this is not because I want to point a moral, however. I just like to talk about myself.

\* \* \* \* \*

BRIAN ALDISS SAYS:

PITFCS is dead. Long live PITFCS!

Who says life does not improve? Lady Chatterley acquitted at the Old Bailey last week, PITFCS arriving this week. Incidentally, I hope you got a fair reportage on the case of Lady Chatterley's Lever (ow, Freudian slip!) because it was most interesting. My own private theory about the fuss is that we (the English) are not a money-conscious but a class-conscious race, and the consequently Lady C has always stuck in many people's gullets - gullets which may have swallowed far "messier" novels like 'Lolita' and 'By Love Possessed' - simply because the enjoying went on between defferent classes, a Lady and a gamekeeper. Anyhow, don't imagine this all makes us now in any way a less prudish nation generally; following the enormous public interest in the trial (more people in Britain now have heard of Lady Chatterley than of the New Testament!) "The Sunday Graphic" is serialising the book - in its expurgated version!

Now I've started off on sex, please may I keep on the subject, as it's my favourite? Phil Farmer has something to say about the matter in 137, and about the caution of editors in using the theme. Ted Carnell tells me he is serialising Sturgeon's Venus Plus X in New Worlds some time. I just would like to see Ted up in the Old Bailey; then maybe we'd have a really BIG circulation of magazine.

LLOYD BIGGLE SAYS:

I have been cavorting too far from the SF Mainstream. Somehow, early in my writing career, I acquired the naive misapprehension that editors want to buy stories, and that they'll buy a good story regardless of who wrote it. I have interpreted my frequent failures as an indication, not that I should move to New York, but that I should write better stories.

I wasn't aware that a rejection slip may represent a personal insult. I didn't even know that John Campbell had a bent for totalitarianism. Could it be that I shouldn't have sent him those two stories based upon galaxy-wide democratic systems? (He bought them both.)

Perhaps I lack the experience and perspective to properly evaluate Mim Harmon's dissertation, but I would raise a point that seems valid: In a dispute of this kind, what's the profit even in being right?

JAMES BLISH SAYS:

Know all ye that my union proposal is withdrawn, in consideration of (1) insufficient response, and (2) deficiencies pointed out by others in PITFCS. I have not, however, lost hope, and there is another idea in the works (not entirely mine by any means) which looks promising; the membership will have all the details as soon as there are any details.

The hostility toward the social and psychological sciences aroused by the McConnell letter was predictable; and though I think that it's justified to some extent, there's also a confusion of targets. It's very easy to jeer at the psychologist ~~when~~ <sup>he</sup> announces that he, too, is running an Exact Science, and then comes out with a series of platitudes as the results of his work. It's also easy to jeer at the nonsense offered as educational theory, especially since those boys have adopted a special language of unparalleled deadliness. And, it's easy to mock psychotherapists, as Russell does, since not a one of them agrees with any other, and there is no existing system of psychotherapy which works.

Okay; but we ought also to recognize that we have not covered the whole universe of discourse here. Psychotherapists are not psychologists; Russell has shot at one target under the impression that he was hitting another. The facts are that great things have been happening in this field recently, which have the



the effect of moving psychology farther into the domain of physics (and I, like Poul, feel that this is the fundamental science of them all). To avoid confusion, let's drop the term "psychologists" in this context and name these people by what they do.

First of all there are the electrophysiologists, like Adrian, Grey Walter, McConnell's friend Olds, Harold Himwich, etc. These boys are using objective measuring instruments (the EEG, stereotactic surgery, etc.) to correlate objective phenomena (brain waves, brain areas, etc.) with behaviour. They are getting duplicatable results, of a kind with which even the most rigorous physicist would find it difficult to argue.

Next, we have the psychopharmacologists -- and believe me, this field embraces a great deal more territory than Miltown. This is a terrifically exciting field and brand new (though of course it lay around in embryo, in the form of alcohol, opium and so on, for ~~many~~ thousands of years). These men are exploring what I think I can call the chemistry of the emotions, without being accused of oversensationalizing it. They are exploring the domains and activities of the neurohormones, like morepinephrine and serotonin; the actions of pertinent enzyme systems such as monoamine oxidase; the immunology of mental disease (the Russians in particular are hot on this); and a great deal more that was undreamed of 10 years ago. Incidentally they have already done more to rehabilitate mental patients and lower hospital case-loads than the entire tribe of "talk" psychotherapists have in fifty years of jabber. And this is only the beginning. Their ties with the electrophysiologists are of course very close, but each of these two fields is obviously so vast that specialization is required.\*

Then we have the recrudescence of the Pavlovian kind of attitude, which relies heavily upon duplicatable (I have now spelled that two ways and neither one looks right any more) phenomena such as conditioning and upon measurable outcomes such as salivation, diuresis etc. Some of the experimental procedures recently introduced in this field, such as the skinner box and the recording apparatus that goes with it, would make first-class Astounding covers; they are unfamiliar to most s-f readers and look futuristic as can be. (That's a side remark necessarily; I hope nobody thinks I am offering this seriously as a virtue). Here the boys are in the process of developing a jargon which bids fair to outdo the educational sociologists for sheer ugliness, but in their case the jargon is about something real and measurable.

All this, it seems to me, can be paralleled only by what happened to somatic medicine in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when physicians of good will revolutionized their art by stopping in their tracks and admitting that all the practices they had inherited from the past were in fact useless, and that they were going to have to start from scratch by studying the body very humbly and trying to learn something from it. This was the great age of Virchow and other pathologists, but pathologists don't cure people (nowadays, of course, they help). For the patient, it was a bad age, an age of therapeutic nihilism, when the doctor stopped giving him calomel and mustard plasters and instead just stood by helplessly muttering, "Primum non nocere". The result was an explosion of faith-healers like Mrs. Eddy and health systems like vegetarianism and Grahamism and a tremendous increase in quackery. But in the end, it paid off.

We have been through our age of quackery in psychology, or at least two thirds of it, and the boys are now going back to basics: first, admitting that they know almost nothing of how the central nervous system operates; and second, gradually, painfully, but with great enthusiasm developing the techniques of finding out. An age of psychotherapeutic nihilism, but it is already beginning to pay off in terms of therapy too. It is, I firmly believe, the death knell of the witch-doctors against whom Russell quite properly rails.

\* I may be able to supply the membership with a brochure by Himwich, with 7-color illustrations, detailing present finding in some areas of electrophysiology and psychopharmacology. Anyone interested should drop me a post-card.

So throw thunderbolts at psychology if you must, but take better aim. Some of these men are scientists in the fullest sense of the word. They don't make headlines and they don't spawn colorful or poetic systems like Freudianism or Jungianism, but they are at work and what they are prosecuting is a revolution.

Two s-f writers who have been thoroughly aware of this all along are Pohl and Kornbluth, and I'm surprised that this escaped McConnell's notice. WOLFBANE, for instance, elaborately explores the question of the virtues of being wired to a machine, and ends with the hero going back to it very gladly; it has enlarged his universe immeasurably. And part of the plot of GLADIATOR AT LAW turns on flicker-feedback. (Anybody read a novel called THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE?) Notice by the way that the hero of WOLFBANE does not go back into the machine simply because he's getting regular jolts in the Olds pleasure area (though he does get them, as the novel explicitly states); but because the machine provides him with extensions of knowledge and experience superior in his judgement to what he can get from his senses alone. This is, as far as I can see, exactly the same impulse that has led my boss, an advertising agency account executive, to buy himself a thousand-buck astronomical telescope. He is "wired" to that for most of every night when the seeing is good, yet nobody would consider that the machine enslaves or degrades him. On the contrary; it enlarges him, both to himself and to those who deal with him.

Having Amis in the fold is a boon; he is such an acute critic that it is too bad he isn't even better, and possibly we can help. I would put to him first of all the proposition that we do not need better anti-Utopias; what we need is a moratorium on the damn things. I have no figures but will guess that there has been at least one anti-Utopian novel now from the pen of nearly every writer in the field, in addition to uncountable short stories. It's become almost automatic, and it sure as hell is dull for readers who do not share Amis' view that his is the best kind of thing s-f does. I still enjoy the off-beat-society background, as well done by Heinlein or Pohl/Kornbluth; but Fred by himself is now writing almost nothing but anti-Utopian copy and I think it's a terrific waste of talent. Here is a field in which we have succeeded too well, and have turned s-f's potential power as social critic into nothing but a grinding cliché.

The second cliché which Amis implicitly endorses in his book is the automatic switch, the kind of thing Sheckley often does and which give Galaxy its air of persistent trifling. (It was not always thus, alas.) Not only is the surprise usually predictable from thirty thousand miles away, but most of the writers who have fallen into this kind of thing depend for their plots and their surprises on characters of invincible stupidity, who launch themselves into tough situations without asking questions that would occur to a child of six. (In the AAAA Ace series, for example, the heroes commonly do not know what the job is that they've contracted to do.) There seems to be an unwritten rule that all such stories must contain the following line of dialog: "There's something wrong here, but I can't quite put my finger on it." Well, the reader can; my dog could, and she's unusually stupid, even for a dog.

Jim Harmon's bitterness is kind of sad and I wish he'd look at a few facts of monumental obviousness, such as the existence of large numbers of successful s-f writers on the West Coast, Tom Scortia in the midwest, and Russell in England. Knowing the editors personally is inarguably helpful in some instances, particularly if a Campbell or a Gold has an idea he wants you to feed back to him; but you can get to know an editor through the mail just as well as you can in person -- better, maybe -- provided only that he is interested enough in your work to take the time to write to you. Campbell has always been most outgoing in the respect. I am far from the only writer who has received mail from him that was a positive gold mine. And Jim might want to ponder the fact that though I first met JWC when I was 15 years old, and since then have always lived in or near New York, I have had story interviews with him face-to-face no more than three times. That's three in 24 years. I have met Horace Gold personally once, though I have probably run up 10 or 12 hours of telephone conversations with him (number of calls, about four). For every writer like Harlan who aggressively peddles his work, there must be 10 like Damon Knight who haven't been in an editor's office since the last glaciation. That is what an agent is for, and if your stuff isn't getting through and you are utterly convinced that it's good stuff, maybe it's time to ask the agent some questions.



My feeling is that we are not getting nearly enough new blood in this field, that editors are aware of it and wish they could do something about it. But Jim surely ought to know that for the individual new writer the way can sometimes be hard. People who visited my house before the 1955 flood can testify that I had two walls of my office and most of a third papered with rejection slips. If I could have made my way by pull, or any other easy way, I'd probably have taken it. But the only easy way is to be so talented that you sell the first story you submit, the first time out, like Heinlein and del Rey. (Both those stories came in to Campbell's office from a thousand miles away, cold, by mail.) Lacking that, you have got to be dogged -- and not waste emotional energy in complaining that you are persecuted. It ain't so.

I endorse Leiber on the mainstream, with one small exception: very few writers that I know operate by sticking a moustache on a friend and giving him another name. Characters tend to be composites of two to ten people, in the mainstream as elsewhere. But on the question of blockage/embarassment, he has me dead to rights, at least, which of course makes me think it must be universal.

On Heinlein: George Price seems to me to have settled this argument beautifully. There is an aspect of it, however, which I think has a distinct bearing on Farmer's letter. I can hear Farmer asking, "If one were to write a story showing way as necessary to society, and a civilization in which only veterans were considered responsible enough to vote, where would he sell it?" We all know the answer to that one now. Nor do I think I am doing Farmer any injustice by inventing this point for him, for you will note that he does ask this kind of question about the wired-to-a-machine notion, yet that story too has been written, and sold. And the segregation-has-a-sound-scientific-basis story (complete with Nietzsche, though you'd have to know a specific work of Nietzsche to recognize that) has also been written and sold: v. A Dusk of Idols in forthcoming (March 1961) Amazing. (Not only segregation, but extermination.)

And it seems to me that the only justifiable thing a writer can do if he sharply disagrees with the moral being preached by a confrere is to write another story, directed at the same audience, which can act as counter-propaganda, or at least as a counter-irritant. This not only makes better ethical sense than badgering public librarians like a Legionnaire, or trying to cut into the other guy's sales, but it is also much more likely to be effective. (So far as trying to keep the other guy's book out of people's hands is concerned, it seems to me you ought to start with, and stick with, a consciousness of the possibility that you might be wrong about the idea at issue.) Suppose, for instance, Harmon or McLaughlin were to do a juvenile s-f novel which shows that in modern warfare the first nation to pull a gun has admitted its own insanity? A novel, say, in which the art of the diplomat is handled as lovingly as Heinlein handles the art of the soldier? And the, finally, supposing he were to sell the book to Putnam's, the publisher of the offending (?) Heinlein work, thus assuring that it would get very much the same distribution?

Well, as is probably obvious, these questions are actually academic. The thing has been done. But what does the membership think of the approach, in the abstract?

.....Like AJ, I can do without AMRA. This also goes for reprints from AMRA.

#### JOHN BOARDMAN SAYS:

John Campbell's editorials raise the following observations:

Gaetano Mosca established the intellectual "justification" for Mussolini's overthrow of Democracy in Italy.

Alfred Rosenberg established the intellectual "justification" for Hitler's overthrow of Democracy in Germany.

Jacques Soustelle established the intellectual "justification" for De Gaulle's overthrow of Democracy in France.

Whom is Campbell working for?

BOB BRINEY SAYS:

My reaction to NEW MAPS OF HELL was apparently the same as Groff Conklin's. I objected principally to Mr. Amis allowing his dislike for the type of science fiction written by Anderson, Budrys, Kuttner, Oliver, Sturgeon, etc., to express itself as a (sometimes only implied) condemnation of the quality of their work. In several instances, also, he seems to have gone to great effort to find the worst possible specimen at which to launch his attack. Judging any field of creative endeavor by its poorest exemplar is, at best, careless, and also rather pointless. (Was there really anything in the "special monster issue" of Super Science that was worth all the space spent on it in the book?)

Let me hasten to add that there are large portions of the book which I enjoyed very much; and the overall attitude toward the field is certainly refreshing.

Derleth on Lovecraft, and Derleth on critics, has indeed "been widely enough printed in various places." The trouble being that in the past fifteen years he hasn't seemed to find much new to say on either topic. His current potshotting (potshooting?) at critics reads very much like the fulminations in his introduction to Howard's SKULL-FACE AND OTHERS back in 1946, the only difference being that he now has someone like Damon to aim at by name. And this continual apology-and-defense of Lovecraft is becoming a bit wearing. Lovecraft's best stories (which include the two named by Mr. Derleth) have enough intrinsic merit not to need this type of thing. Damon has many times in print stated that he doesn't care much for fantasy; it is certainly his prerogative to say so, and to write his critical pieces on this basis. ~~The~~ whole affair is somewhat like a Kraft Foods executive attacking a bacon-and-tomato-sandwich-eater for having publicly expressed a dislike for grilled cheese sandwiches. . .

Regarding the flyting department: if it were to become a reality, would it be up to the writer to do his own segregating of flyting from non-flyting material, or would this task devolve upon the Secretary? Either way, it might involve more trouble than benefit.

"Strolling on the Banks of the Mainstream" presents quite a persuasive argument for one aspect of the claim that there is only a small gap between good sf and fantasy and good mainstream writing. But even if the mechanics of the imaginative process which enter into these two types of writing differ only in degree, what of the other aspects? The question intent, for one: what is the author ~~trying~~ trying to do, or to say (assuming he has anything in mind at all)? And what of the relation of the finished work to the reader? Surely a good fantasy requires an entirely different type of effort on the part of the reader than does a good mainstream novel. MESSIAH or OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET as contrasted with a Kazantzakis novel, for example.)

It is unfortunate in a way that reading about science-fiction and fantasy is so much more enjoyable than reading the product itself these days. But until some new vitality and variety appear in the field, I'm thankful for ~~things~~ things like PITFCS; may the latter aid in producing the former. . .

ROSEL BROWN SAYS:

This issue was delightful and Mr. Leiber's communication just happened to scratch where I've been itching for some time. It happened that I had been thinking seriously of writing PITFCS and asking if anyone had a formula for not writing fantasy. I keep tuning my lyre, you know, and changing the strings (like Anacreonatic 23), but it won't sing anything but fantasy. I recently did a mystery novelette, but it's full of odd noises and ~~manifestations~~ manifestations -- which turn out at the end to be All Right -- but I do think one should be able to write a story without having ghosts walking in and out all the time.

It was very heartening to find that others have this problem (though no doubt different people have different reasons) and that one eventually emerges.

I do not agree with Mr. Leiber that the attraction of sf is that it is basically a disguise. It may be that, too, but I think there is a deeper reason for wanting to write sf. (At least, I had come to this approximate conclusion about it before seeing PITFCS this issue.)

My conclusion was this (which I will have to say several ways. Otherwise you'll think I'm saying something entirely different): We feel that there are things about life that are indescribable. We need to describe this feeling, however, so we do it by using indescribable apparatus (monsters, etc.). Then we describe the indescribable apparatus (It was indescribably horrible. It had cerise spines oozing a bluish-yellow bile. . .) and by simple cheating solve neatly a problem no philosopher would have anything to do with. Shirley Jackson's HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE is a beautiful example of this done in fantasy).

Similarly: There are things about life which are not simply unknown but unknowable. Such as where the future comes from, since it logically cannot be contained in the present. . . it's been ten years since I read Bergson, but I've never recovered from this) (Maybe I should read another book?). I think what we want to do is evoke the feeling one gets from consciousness of the unknowable, or maybe just the unknown and we do this by writing stories about all sorts of unknown worlds and creatures.

And really, looked at this way, it seems a rather obvious and clumsy way to approach the mysteries of life. Let's say my analysis is absolutely correct and I've found out what I want to write about and I've decided one should be able to say it without sf trappings and not only that, but I'd like to say it for money. Then why don't I go ahead and say it some other way. I can't think of any other way, that's why. (Anyway, I'm not sure I mean all this. I'm never really clear about what I'm thinking until I write it down and then I look at it and think, Is that my magnificent thought?)

Mr. Leiber's analysis of why one writes sf was certainly clear, honest and illuminating. But I mistrust these single cause things and I particularly mistrust sex. Or perhaps he meant we each disguise our own bete noire. . . but even so, this doesn't explain why people read sf and I imagine they read it for the same reason we write it. (Anyway, how would they enjoy the bete properly. . . never mind. I can't finish that sentence and maintain the dignified tone of this letter.)

Judy, you shock me! The rule in my neighborhood is that all women agree with each other, and I said something first. However, I stand by my statement that women compromise ~~their~~ integrity almost as a matter of habit and men make much more limited compromises and raise all kinds of hell about it when they do. Suppose our friend Joe Jones had a boss who reduced him at least once a day to a state of gibbering idiocy, by whatever means. Would not Joe Jones quit and find another job, refuse to write for the particular editor, join a union or whatnot? Yet most of the women I know are treated in this inhuman fashion by children between 1½ and maybe 4, and not one of these women would quit their jobs. I'm not complaining. I'm only saying there are very good reasons why women do not go about burning with hard, gem-like flames over art.

Suddenly it occurs to me that I didn't send in the registration slip to continue PITFCS, though I did pay my bill. I can't find it, and assume the baby threw it in the waste basket with this month's bill, all of which were taken off by the trash man (or was it last month's bills?) Anyway, I do want to continue to be a member of PITFCS

Also, if no one else points out that Hans Santesson could not possibly have been rude to anyone, I would like to point it out. I cannot imagine Hans being unpleasant under any circumstances.

I enjoyed seeing your Burning story in print a couple of months ago. I remembered it from Milford, of course. I'm working on a mystery novel now, though I keep starting sf stories and tearing myself away from them. When I say "working," I mean at the rate of about two lines a day, which is all I have time for usually. Have been working with a group trying to keep the public schools open here -- don't know at the moment if we will succeed. The ardent segregationists are having a field day, there has been violence in the city and probably more to come. But at the moment we have token integration, and I feel pretty sure that in the long run people in New Orleans will adjust to it. (I assume you have been hearing news of the integration crisis in N. O.) The violence has been almost all white against colored. I spent last night listening in on the local negro radio station and guess what the colored people are doing while white teen age gangs rove the city? The colored people are praying for the white people. (What are the white teen agers doing? They're indulging in a local sport known as "nigger boppin'", the name of which is self-explanatory.)

ANALOG and "Fact"

by

George H. Scithers

Some comment is in order on Analog's "fact" articles. The trouble is that no one person, unless he be a latter day Ben Franklin, can realize just how bad they are. For example: I thought the article on crystal growing pretty good; a friend of mine feels it more properly belonged in "The Electrical Experimenter" or some other publication, vintage 1920 or so. Reason? He's a thermo-chemist, I'm an electrical engineer. (Strictly speaking, I'm a propagation engineer - no wise cracks, please.) When one of these "fact" articles is about one's (Americans read "your") own specialty, one sees just how poor it is, but an article outside one's own field gets swallowed whole.

The trouble with the crystal article was that Uncle John kept making a great mystery about things which have been thoroughly understood by workers in this field for years. For example (and it must be understood these examples are from William Evans of the National Bureau of Standards, who is not responsible for the misquotes): the reason many crystals will crystallize out in one crystal, given the chance, is that the energy content of a single large crystal is less than that of two or more smaller crystals. (The mixture of crystal and solution always tends to arrange itself in the lowest energy state; a dilute solution is a lower energy state than the crystal, and the crystal is a lower energy state than a super-saturated solution.) On the other hand, if the energy gap between the solution and the crystalline states is very large, or if the energy gap between the large and small crystals is very small, the material just won't bother to make large, single crystals in its haste to form any sort of crystals at all. The whole subject of crystallography is fairly well understood; the exact mathematical model for many structures has long been known and applied. The unknowns in this field are on an entirely different level than Uncle John's article. In fact, the Bureau of Standards uses crystallization to purify certain hydrocarbons; as a matter of routine, they prepare pure benzine by crystallizing it out of solution at about 5° above absolute zero, and among chemists, even this is taken for granted.

In the matter of Dr. Dudley's Marvelous Electrostatic Rocket, I am more in my element; actually the article was fascinating in an awful way. Let us follow the King of Hearts' instructions, and go back to the beginning Dr. Dudley mentioned: Benjamin Franklin's discovery that electricity comes in one fluid, not two.

Franklin wasn't the first to rub rods and produce two kinds of electricity - folk had been doing that for years. It was well established, furthermore, by Franklin's time, that resinous electricity repelled resinous electricity and attracted vitreous electricity. (Hard rubber hadn't been invented in Franklin's time, incidentally.) Franklin's (and simultaneously, in England, Watson's) one fluid theory depended on the invention of the Leyden Jar, which was the first practical means of storing static electricity. Franklin found that if he charged a Leyden Jar with vitreous electricity, he could induce a charge of resinous electricity in anything brought near the Leyden Jar terminal. Similarly, resinous electric charges could induce vitreous electric charges. Ben quite properly theorized that one kind of electricity is the absence of the other. It is awkward, but by no means the disaster that Dr. Dudley paints it, that Ben picked the wrong kind of electricity to be called positive.

Actually, the only application where the odd convention on current flow causes any trouble is in electron tube circuitry. In electrochemistry and in solid state electronics - i.e. transistor design - the general custom is to describe current as flowing from positive to negative, just as Franklin did. The average electrical engineer is able to work with either positive-to-negative or negative-to-positive electricity with equal facility; it just doesn't make any difference to him.

Coming up to present time (if you'll pardon the old Dianetic expression) we have the Good Dr. Dudley's experiments. These are described in considerable detail - such complete detail that we can be pretty sure that what Dr. Dudley didn't mention, he didn't do. For example, repulsion of objects placed on a positively charged Van de Graaff generator operating inside a building is described in detail. (Note: ((in pure Anglo-Saxon, read Look Well:)) a first reading of the article may give the impression that the balls rose in the air and then hung there. A closer reading will show that Dr. Dudley specified a high-speed camera to record

how high they rose - evidently the balls were repelled up, slid to the side, and fell to the floor.) One feels pretty sure that the experiment was not performed in the open air and was not performed with a negatively charged generator. If they had been, Dr. Dudley would have found a negative charge repels objects quite as effectively as a positive one does.

Dr. Dudley's "(-) charged zone above the earth" is but an erroneous conclusion drawn from his work with positive generators in conducting buildings. The only substantial negative charge in the vicinity is the one induced in the building around the generator by the generator's charge.

As for the rocket experiments, Dr. Dudley again has described matters so carefully that one gets a pretty good idea of what he hasn't done. For example: there are a number of silicone based sprays and paints that repel water so effectively that surfaces coated with them decline to conduct electricity no matter how wet the atmosphere. Dr. Dudley apparently has used none of these. Further, he describes no efforts to insure that the rockets, with their various painting and spraying, are identical in weight, balance, or moments of inertia, all of which have very substantial effects on rocket ballistics. Furthermore, there is no indication of any effort to assure uniform propellant cartridges, nor to assure the cartridges are at uniform temperature before firing. And finally, there is no mention of the changes in rocket trajectory that should be expected due to changes in the air density between winter and summer conditions. In short, Dr. Dudley's results - such as they are - can most easily be explained as the inevitable result of sloppy experimental technique.

In fact, if a charge on a rocket have any effect on its trajectory through the earth's rather weak magnetic field, that effect would be to cause the trajectory to be curved, NOT straight - and don't tell me facts don't bear out theory - the deflection (NOT straightening) of the path of a charged body is the basis for the operation of cyclotrons, synchrotrons, and the like.

Even TV uses this principle to bend the electron stream that paints pictures on the screen.

On the other hand, Dr. Dudley, with all his faults, is following the tradition of the asterisk. He is aboveboard - and therefore almost certainly honest.

The tradition of the asterisk is simply the tradition in reputable scientific journals to asterisk the author's name, which \* leads down to an \* at the foot of the page where the author's business address is given. Generally this is an institutional address of some sort - such as "Stanford RadioScience Labs", which is my former address, or "Box 9006 Rosslyn, Arlington 9 Va.", which is my present one. The author thus tells where he can be found, and if it is pertinent, for whom he works. This is important information, since statements made in a fact article (as opposed to a "fact" article) will be relied upon by other researchers, and they want some indication of the reliability of that writer's statements. (I myself have spent a good many cold, wet weeks trying to verify reports of reputable scientists that turned out to have been based on error; I'll be cursed if I want to do the same for reports if the reporter won't back those reports with his reputation.)

Dr. Dudley has identified himself. He has told who his employers are, and incidentally made clear that his specialty is medicine, and further, following the traditions of proper scientific reporting, he has said enough in his article that folk can tell just what he is up to.

Not so in the articles on the drive of Dean. The basic trouble here is that the experimenter himself is not writing - it is Uncle John. These have been articles by one man about the work of another - and something may be lost in translation. If what is written in Analog is not what has been happening to the drive, there is no one person upon whom we can fix responsibility for the discrepancy. Campbell can say, "Dean said . . ." but Dean can reply, "I did not."

In spite of the resistance that the articles on dowsing inspired, we must admit that Campbell was very thorough in his reporting. He told who was using the rods where, and at the Detention, produced one of the users. On the other hand, the reports of the Drive of Dean have been a tangle of "There is a laboratory that has . . ." and "An electronics firm is . . ." with too little identification of exactly who has been doing what. Example: "An electronics firm in Clifton, N.J. . . ." which has been variously identified as AT&T, ITT, and Bell Labs. Who, by name, has been getting what results?

Law courts forbid hearsay evidence (with specialized exceptions) because the hear-sayer cannot be properly crossexamined. It is high time that the same high standards of verifiable reporting invade the "fact" articles in science fiction magazines.

Or to put it another way, duels are not challenged anonymously; the thought is preposterous. Yet a scientific reporter reporting a revolutionary theory or discovery is in effect challenging the scientific world to a duel of facts. Further, the challenged party, not the challenger, in duels, has the choice of weapons.

To carry the dueling analogy further: Dean (via Campbell) has offered to be tested with bathroom scales and strain guages. The doubters have demanded beam balances. My money is on the beam balances, a flying model (after all, if one expects to put up a self-propelled device eventually one certainly ought to be able to produce some results with the motive power coming from the wall socket), or a model which, when hung from the ceiling with a long string and turned on its side, will make the string hang at an angle, observed by somebody I can believe, and reported by the observer himself.

Frankly, I think the difficulty in getting "fact" (or fact) articles for Science Fiction magazines lies with the fields reputation (compounded of Palmer's flying saucers and Deros as well as Campbell's Dianetics and Hieronymous machines) for printing wild, unverifiable, and erroneous material.

But I haven't the least idea what to do about it.

\* \* \* \* \*

ALDISS's SEXUAL SURVEY of HABITS in OUR LITTLE- EXPLORED SYSTEM

MERCURY

The Mercurians, though rather dandies,  
Eat up sex the way we eat up candies.  
What makes them so keen is  
A detachable penis  
Which they flourish mutatis mutandis.

The ASTEROIDS

On Eros, despite its fair name  
The sexes are one and the same.  
If amusing oneself  
By abusing oneself  
Leads to pregnancy, isn't life tame?

VENUS

The Venusians don't kiss or pet  
Or work themselves up in a sweat  
About sex; they get wed  
Then all feeling goes dead.  
How alien, heck, can you get?

JUPITER

On Jupiter sex is now dated,  
For who could get cosily mated  
In an n degrees frost?  
For the minimum cost  
You can now get your tools automated.

EARTH

The Venusians, out on a mission,  
Found Earth in a puzzling condition.  
They could understand part  
Of our laws and our art  
But got stuck in the fifteenth position

SATURN

On Saturn the sexes are three -  
A sad state of affairs you'll agree.  
For performing con brio  
You must have a trio.  
And it even takes two for a pee.

The MOON

"Vita brevis, ars longa" is true  
As the better-read Lunatics knew  
(They looked much as we,  
But the light gravity  
Made head bigger and ars longa too.)

URANUS

On Uranus the whole thing's so dirty  
As to even make PITFCSers shirty.  
The men are all queer  
Till their ninety-nineth year  
While the menopause hits girls at thirty.

MARS

There once was a bad little Martian  
Whose way with the girls was a hartian.  
But the cliamte's so cool  
Flagellation's the rule,  
As I thought I'd just mention on partian.

PLUTO

The Plutonian male is so small  
He lives in the vaginal wall  
Of his mate. Yes, de trop -  
But he likes it, you know,  
And chacun a son gout, after all.



JOHN BRUNNER SAYS:

Of all the ways I've yet found to play havoc with my writing schedule, receiving an issue of PITFCS is just about the most infallible. Here I sit with #137 on my left and 36,000 completed words of a novel on my right; said novel has taken me twice as long as usual and I've had to scrap 18,000 words because it went adrift. . . and I take the next ~~page out of the~~ typer because of PITFCS.

This is especially dangerous at the moment, what with financial problems and such. Marjorie and I decided we'd have a holiday this year, which we haven't done properly since '57, and we debated where to go, and in the end I said let's go to Greece, because a friend of Marjorie's has been working out there - in Salonika and now Athens - for the past few years and has kept on telling us what a hell of a country it is. So we ~~piled~~ luggage and sleeping bags and so on into the car, and went. That was on 1st September. We went overland across France and crossed Northern Italy to the coast at Rimini, stopping off to see friends in Lyon and Turin, and then went down the Via Adriatica to Brindisi and took the very good, not too expensive new car ferry (very new, too -- in service on 1st August this year) to Patras.

The original idea was to spend a couple of weeks in Greece and then drive north, calling on more friends in Switzerland and Germany, to see Harry Harrison in Denmark. We didn't get that far. We finished up by spending far longer in Greece - and also on Corfu - than we'd meant to. Marvellous country, wonderful people, wine at about 11¢ the carafe, sunshine, glorious sea and huge deserted beaches, the freshest fish (especially squid) I've ever eaten: all this and ruins too.

So we headed for home, and about forty kilometres from Paris a farm tractor came out of a side turning without slowing down and we hit it at about 45 mph and that was the end of the car. A pity; I hadn't had it long, and I'd grown very fond of it. It is/was a 52 Morgan Plus Four, originally a 4-seater, but cut down to two and with the rear end converted into the biggest baggage compartment I've ever seen on such a small car.

Anyway, a sizeable slice of our capital was tied up in it and it's going to take a long time to get it back from the French insurance company which covers the tractor. So what in hell am I doing writing letters? We've decided to go and live in Greece, at least for a while, as of next summer, so we should be stacking up the capital.

We got to see Harry Harrison eventually; he was over to see Leslie Charteris about the Saint strip he's ghosting now, and stayed a night with us before going home. By the way, you'll probably have heard or be hearing from Ted Carnell about a writers' conference scheduled to be held here in the spring. About time, too.

Bretnor talks too much sense for me to comment at length. But later on we come to Gordon Dickson, and - yes, okay, this I want to talk about.

The idea of a novel as 12 to 20 shorts laid end to end. Well, there's a far, far simpler route past that obstacle than ~~thinking~~ about 12 to 20 rewrites of a short story. (Who's the nobody who doesn't boggle at that idea? Me it makes the head spin off! The only reason I can conceive for that kind of polishing is in order to approximate closer and closer to a rigid formula, and if there's one thing that I detest it's rigid formula writing. Alternatively, the writer is doing on paper what he damned well ought to have done in his head. Maybe I'm just a non-commercial Englishman, but I never yet rewrote anything more than four times; in my view, if it gets to that stage it's gone stale on me and is better junked and used again, if at all, next year. Mostly nowadays I sell my first draft, hand-revised, or at most I throw away all pages subsequent to the last point at which I was satisfied and continue from cold. So I'm not selling to the SEP; but I'm actually writing, selling and getting reader-comment on twice to three times as much material as I otherwise would, and . . . I'm young yet.)

Reverting: my first sale was a short novel, 36,000 words; my second was a novelette, 21,000; third, a short novel, 40,000. Back then (I was 17 or so) the pages stretched ahead of me endlessly. Those first 36,000 I ~~sweated~~ sweated out, stopping every few yards to measure the remaining distance. I much preferred to do shorts - I got the sense of accomplishment in typing THE END so much sooner!

So I wrote shorts, and some of them I sold. But (a) they didn't pay well; I often had to spend as long plotting them as I might have done on a novelette - and (b) imperceptibly, in any case, I found the lengths gradually extending, automatically, as I got better

and better at visualising the logical possibilities of a postulated situation, at depicting settings, at creating believable dialogue, and the rest.

Now I've sold 56 items, of which twelve are novels and short novels, and at least half the rest novelettes. It just gets more and more necessary to write longer stories, so far as I'm concerned. I don't get short story ideas much any longer; maybe I write two or three shorts a year. But I'm doing anything up to a quarter of a million words in novel and novelette lengths.

It shakes me to see a statement like "I ran 20-30 pages a day on DORSAI there...not because I was trying for any record." I did 24 pages yesterday evening without much trying; I do 8-10,000 words a day as a matter of course when working on a novel (blocks, of course, excepted, but I don't hit more than about two per book in general), and I have often hit twelve thousand. The best I ever did was eighteen thousand between getting up and going to bed.

Well - why not? I mean, if Gordon Dickson is right to say that an MS is the encoded result of what goes on in the writer's head, and he's given adequate thought to the plot and the characters before actually sitting down to the machine, then why not? It's around lunch-time now, and we're going to a party tonight; I propose to spend this afternoon doing another three chapters, or 24 pages, and the remaining three tomorrow. Total in all: 50,000 near as dammit. And it's not bad, so far.

Jim Harmon hates editors. Well, of course, over here we have just one editor: Ted Carnell. So presumably Ted could be as bloody-minded as he liked, and we'd have to lick his boots. He isn't; we don't. Something's gone wrong with Jim, obviously.

Speaking personally, it's not impossible to sell a novel without even having set foot in the States, let alone in New York where this cliché (sic) of writers hangs out. (By the way, Jim, criteria is plural; criterion, singular.) (Like phenomena.) I never got closer to Hans Santesson, so far as I'm aware, than the width of the Atlantic. He treated his overseas authors pretty well while at FU, so far as I can judge. Peasants are revolting, aren't they?

And now for the meat of the issue: Leiber.

When I was at school, and hadn't much cash to waste on things like science fiction, one of my criteria for buying or not buying a magazine was whether or not it included a Simak, a Sturgeon, an Anderson - or, naturally, a Leiber. I just plain liked those four in especial.

I'm fairly sure that if it had come out before he wrote this piece, Leiber would have made mention of a novel just published over here: "Doctors Wear Scarlet". (Haven't read it yet; have read four long reviews and fully intend to.) Here is a more or less naturalistic novel in structure and treatment, the setting contemporary, the characters mostly straightforward enough. The theme, however, happens to be vampirism. I don't know yet how well it's done; reviewers are divided - hardly suprising.

Digression over.

The last few lines on p. 21 seem to me to hold the essence of my own opinions on this subject. Mundane, suffocating - yes, it's all too easy to feel this way about a realistic novel. But I wouldn't say the same hard things about the SF or fantasy writer's attitude towards characters and contemporary events. Let's say rather that it's a matter of engagement in society. Let's say that an SF writer will engage more readily with absolutes (all right, lack of oxygen if you wish). And this isn't without its own validity. I'm reading Joan Wynn Reeves's "Body and Mind in Western Thought" at the moment - a historical perspective on psychology, and very well done. In her book, Dr. Reeves depicts the growth of psychology as (currently) a movement away from absolutes like the "substance of mind" and towards the individual. Nonetheless, absolutes remain: so long as we are capable of formulating the concept "human being" there must be considered to be absolute common denominators between all individuals - even if they amount to no more than "class human" in the same sense as "class of two" in number theory.

This is probably why characters in SF stories are so often dismissed as cardboard by

ERRATA:

Harlan Ellison was inadvertently omitted from the list of members in good standing published in PITFCS-137. This omission was not the result of nonpayment of dues since they have since been paid.

non-enthusiasts (and even by enthusiasts). Characters in absolute situations, common in parallel non-SF example. Consider a battlefield, rather less parallel. Then consider an ordinary town in peacetime, and you've moved the whole way along the spectrum of settings. The majority of settings in SF seem to me to be of the polar variety.

From that follows a whole lot more. Pure hacks left aside (there are none, surely, in the PITFCS!), you've got to assume that the writer must be interested in what he's doing, or the reader probably won't be. I make this an invariable rule; stuff I have to line out on the page word by word I reject, and start something new - without engaging my own interest, I can't engage the reader's. But what makes SF interesting is like what makes foreign travel interesting - different views, different associations, different smells and tastes and noises. Whereas the realistic novel depends on something far subtler, closer akin to what makes life at home interesting, such as friends dropping in for coffee. (I'll cite no more examples; that does well for me, anyway.)

A further point (I'm not trying to link these up in a logical thesis): a polar situation is capable of being visualised straightforwardly. Realistic writing calls for more than that - it requires a precise auditory memory for dialogue, a sharp eye for reactions which are by convention not overtly displayed, ability to read hidden motives, and so on. And in the end you run just as much risk of failure. Speaking personally, I'd say a book like James Gould Cozzens's "By Love Possessed" wasn't worth the eight years lavished on it; to me it read like a superbly photographed and altogether unedited documentary. There's a point at which art approaches so close to life you'd be better off going out and living it instead.

Where do we wind up? I'm not sure. All that really bothers me is that when a well-known mainstream writer (L. P. Hartley, for instance) turns to SF, the result is even worse from the point of view of characterization than it usually is. Frustratingly, critics are tolerant of books like "Facial Justice" and patronising about (say) "Dragon in the Sea" which is superior from most points of view, including that of accepted literary standards. And the SF which sells to the slicks is so damned cosy it's lost most of its bite.

George Price: I found the values of "Starship Troopers" repugnant in themselves, but my main objection to it was that it reminded me of a Victorian children's book. I mean, it was as much of a tract as it was a novel. I'm pretty certain that the situation depicted therein could work; it's a very close analogy to a couple which have - Nazi Germany, and Stalin's Russia - in that power is confined to members of an elite that is small compared to the population at large. In fact, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union provides an extraordinarily close parallel, the main difference being the qualifications required for membership - in Heinlein, military service, in Russia service to the Marxist-Leninist cause.

You can argue along Heinlein's track, certainly. I think, though, you invalidate your premises in referring to aliens as "skinnies" the way Koreans were referred to as "gooks". Implicit in this is primarily the preconceived intolerance which has given the Communists one of their major paths of infiltration into Asia, and at one remove the positively Nazi brutality which - again - was manifested in Korea. A friend of a friend of mine was in the French contingent of the UN army out there and claims to have witnessed the herding into a cellar of orphan children who were making themselves a nuisance, and their burning alive with a flame-thrower. (He's been jailed since then, for refusing to participate in something similar in Algeria, and is still inside.)

On the question of objection to propaganda per se, in question-answer 1 of George Price's letter, I think the point is this (and mustn't be bypassed). Militarism and racial intolerance have given rise to demonstrable evils, defined in terms of the values we officially subscribe to in a democratic society, and must be considered as having failed to prove commendable. Propaganda against them complies with our official values. This does not mean that official values are necessarily best or even good; merely that our ideals must be regarded as worthwhile.

I like Russell's idea of an authors' co-operative.

And as for JTED, the editors will have to be more careful than they have been so far. I refer to the proposed paper on "Darwinism vs. Lamarckianism in ~~Fremlin~~ Evolution". Gremlins did not evolve. As is (or should be) well known, they were a case of special creation. They arose by spontaneous generation in the Royal Air Force during World War II, from the celebrated brand of ale marketed by Fremlin's Brewery.

Fremlin's trademark is an elephant, by the way - I think.

ALBERT P. BLAUSTEIN SAYS:

And now a word from the least known and least active member of the Institute.. Of course I am being modest. But then again I do have so much to be modest about.

Subject: Authors League or union or association

Conclusion: Let's stop talking and do something.

I have read and reread everything that has appeared in PITFCS on the subject. And I find myself in surprising agreement with virtually everything which has been said. Why not? While there is much disagreement, all of the pronouncements have been made by reasonable men and the positions taken have all made sense.

But a union cannot be a debating society. And no one will ever find the perfect union cast in his own image. Nor will any union continue to be the same kind of union after it is in existence any length of time. So what ever type of organization is founded, it will be at best an amalgam of compromises.

What kind of compromises? Who the hell knows? That depends upon the union organizers, constitutional draftsmen and leaders. And who will these be? How will they be selected? This answer I can give: Those who will somehow find enough time to volunteer to do the work.

So elect leaders, express a willingness to follow their dictates and pray. And don't find fault with the union which is formed. If you don't like something, volunteer to work and become a leader yourself -- and let other people find fault with you.

This I write as a lawyer. No, not just because I belong to a pretty good professional society. It is because the lawyer is the one social scientist whose job it is to transfer social theory into social action. So there. (I'm not being modest on this point.)

Let me add that I'm a lawyer who gave up the practice of the law to become a law professor. Clients like most (many, some) of you drove me to it.

There, now I got this off my chest, and now I feel better. And now I can thank you for making PITFCS the best of all possible publications.

I want a favor -- make it two. Among other things I teach wills. Surely one or more of you have written SF or fantasy based on wills or which involve wills. I'd like copies or references. Am engaged in some "scholarly" (note the quotes) research on comparative wills and could use a few "out of this world" ideas.

Further. I've always wanted to do an anthology on the "to live forever" theme. I don't know that I can find the interested publisher, but I'd like to build up a story file. And if I can't sell it, well, I'll still have an interesting file.

KNOX BURGER SAYS:

Enclosed find check for \$2.00 for another year of your Seminar in Mimeo. Your change of preposition is good. Some of my best friends are science-fiction writers, and they can be stubbornly difficult on matters of prose style and syntax. I am not anti-semantic, but I spent three quarters of an hour in hot argument with

ERRATA:

"In the article by George Cowgill and myself, reprinted from Amra, in #137, I think the Scandanavian "ø" came to grief in the word "Jøtunar". Since there is no "ø" on my distressingly monolingual typewriter, this vowel has to appear like an "o" with a stroke through it, which leads to confusion with a cross-out. "Jøtunar" as the plural of "jøtun" is George's; I hope it's correct. If it isn't, you will no doubt have heard from Poul Anderson, whose credentials as a Viking are in far better order than either of ours.

It's not to my liking  
To hear the word "Viking",  
May his ship be leaking  
Who cannot say "Viking."

--~~John~~ Beardman

A. J. Budrys over the felicity or infelicity of the phrase "he took a handful of steps. . ." which appeared in his manuscript, ROGUE MOON. As I recall, I lost the argument with my usual good grace, and permitted the passage to remain. Just let's hope S. J. Perelman doesn't get hold of it.

I might add that the girls in our proofroom, who are all young and imaginative and highly educated, and mostly quite Zen, loved the book - as have a number of the more hard-boiled readers. I even have a sneaking admiration for it myself.

TED CARNELL SAYS:

Well, that's one way of obtaining correspondence -- dissolve the Institution, form a new one, and co-opt the old members into rejoining. Someone must write something when rejoining.

Understand your country is on the verge of bankruptcy; enclosed two dollars to shore up the crumbling edifice. In any case, with devaluation in January or thereabouts, I'm unloading.

Haven't had time to peruse (let alone digest) the latest massive #137 but had an enjoyable discussion recently with Wyndham, Sellings and Flood over several cups of coffee regarding your previous opus. Several weeks earlier Harry Harrison had paid a lightning visit from Copenhagen and we had mulled over PITFCS maunderings.

JOHN CHRISTOPHER SAYS:

We British (I suppose this is one of the occasions on which we English must include ourselves with the lesser breeds) have lived so long in a currency nightmare that the obvious shocks us. It never occurred to me that you could use pound notes over there, but after all, why not? Time was when the Bradbury was a universal traveller, and it probably still goes almost as far as the Swiss franc. I almost sent you a Guernsey pound, with an engraving, in purple, of St Peter Port harbour, but you might have difficulties with that one, I fancy.

The chief interest to me this time -- apart from the interest and pleasure of seeing PITFCS again -- was in the discussion of s-f vs. general fiction writing. We shall make little progress on this, though, until it is admitted that one big difference between the streams is that competition is so much tougher in the latter. People like Kingsley Amis, with the very best intentions, ~~here~~ do a disservice to science-fiction writers by sliding over the fact that they are using different sets of standards in their assessments of, say, Sheckley and Peter de Vries. (K. A. does the same thing in music -- nothing will ever persuade me that he regards such people as Pee-Wee Russell and Blues Venuti as having been in the same league as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart -- or even Paisiello -- but the superficial Amis-reader may get this impression).

((Continued on p.21))

G.W. COTTRELL, JR. ON THE HARVARD LIBRARY SCIENCE FICTION COLLECTION:

. . . I am delighted to hear that a full set of the Institute's publications can be added to the Science Fiction Collection. I have already indicated how valuable an addition to the Collection I think such a set would be, and am deeply grateful for your kind cooperation in getting it together. I look forward to its arrival.

I'd like to put together an account of the Harvard Collection for your next issue, but I am very much on the wing right now (not because of the birds), and can only make some suggestions, in the hope that you will find it possible to write up something yourself.

I sent you last spring a copy of the Harvard Alumni Bulletin containing an article by Wayne Batteau on the Collection as it was in 1957. In case that copy is not now available, I'm sending you another, and also a tear sheet of a brief note (the first formal announcement of the Collection) that appeared in the Harvard Library Bulletin for Autumn 1955. With these two, plus the following additional data, you should be well fortified:

Present totals:

1,000 books (including separate works of fiction, anthologies, critical works, and some relevant non-fiction)

2,000 periodicals (including 111 titles)

several hundred duplicates, very useful for exchange purposes

In addition, there are many works in the main collections of the Harvard Library that complement the Science Fiction Collection proper or form a foundation for it, especially works of earlier writers, whether straight'forerunners' or of a peripheral or tangential nature.

It would be splendid to have an account of the Collection in PITFCS, and I sincerely hope you can see your way to it.

Yours sincerely,

/G. W. Cottrell, Jr/

SCIENCE FICTION, PROPHET & CRITIC:

Harvard's Collection of an Esoteric Literary Genre

by

D. Wayne Batteau

Eyes tired of watching for Sputniks in the skies may turn to the stacks of Houghton Library for accounts of such things written years, even decades ago. In Houghton's air-conditioned alcoves are housed--along with incunabula and illuminated manuscripts and other rarities--Harvard's collection of science fiction. When the first Sputnik went into orbit, all of science fiction fandom shouted for joy, repressing its regret that we had not been the first to achieve the feat. With the successful placing of a satellite twice as far out as the first and bearing a living passenger, fans look forward with eager foreknowledge to the nearer planets, Venus and Mars . . .

((An excellent three page discussion of the development and present state of science fiction has been deleted for reasons of length. In it, however, he speaks warmly of the work of E.E. Smith, John W. Campbell, Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, Frank Herbert, H. Beam Piper, Chad Oliver, Wilmar Shiras, A.E. VanVogt, L. Sprague deCamp, and Hal Clement, special kudos going to Smith, Heinlein, and Asimov. TRC))

. . . Since the end of World War II and with increasing significance since about 1950, new authors have appeared to comment, castigate, and chortle. In my attempt



to point out the mainstream and the significance of science fiction, I have not mentioned most of my favorite authors. For this, I can only offer my deepest apologies to these writers whom I respect and enjoy, and assure them of their rightful place in the Harvard Collection of Science Fiction.

Recognition of science fiction and commensurate fantasy as an important literature continues to grow. Apparently the only utopian stories being written today are found in this field. Also in these writings the predictions and extrapolations of a scientific nature, and social comment and criticism are deeply interesting to the scholar.

Thus the science fiction library of the late Dick Clarkson was accepted as a nucleus for a collection at Harvard. Richard W. Clarkson '56, who died of cancer in his junior year, had been a sincere and discriminating collector for many years. The excellence of his selections can be attested by Lauriston Ward '03, who is informally the curator of the Harvard collection, and by William Cottrell '26, editor in the Harvard Library, both of whom have excellent collections of their own destined some day to be added to Harvard's. A prize in Dick Clarkson's contribution is a complete set of Unknown, which is quite rare. In addition to the more than 1,500 items comprising the three collections mentioned, Mr. John W. Campbell, Jr. has contributed approximately forty books and is contributing a number of original manuscripts. Books and magazines have also been contributed by Willis A Boughton '07, Burt Franklin (in memory of John F. Franklin), Everett F. Bleiler '42, and Olaf Prufer '56.

Because many of the important publications in this form are printed on pulp, and very cheaply bound, it is necessary to restrict the use of the science fiction collection, and to that end it has been located in the Houghton Library. It is hoped that this collection may become still more comprehensive, particularly by filling of gaps in the American and English fields, and by the addition of important German, French, and Russian works.

That a collection of writing of this sort should be assembled at Harvard would seem unthinkable a few decades ago. But then, so would Sputnik have seemed unthinkable -- except to scientists and readers of science fiction.

--Excerpted from the Harvard Alumni Bulletin,  
30 November 1957.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### A SCIENCE-FICTION COLLECTION FOR HARVARD

The growing recognition of science fiction, in its more developed aspects, as a significant medium both of imaginative literature and of social criticism has led to the establishment at Harvard of a special collection in the field. The nucleus has been provided by the private collection of Richard W. Clarkson, of Baltimore, who died in December 1954, in his junior year at Harvard; this collection, relating chiefly to the "modern" period (since 1930) of the subject, has been presented to Harvard by Richard's father, Paul S. Clarkson, LL.B. '28. It joins the distinguished collection of Utopian literature given Harvard in 1932 by the Reverend Francis G. Peabody, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals. In addition, collections of Lauriston Ward, '03, and G.W.Cottrell, Jr, '26, largely supplementing the Clarkson gift, are destined to come to Harvard in due course

With all these collections as a basis, it is hoped in time to build up at Harvard a comprehensive assemblage of science fiction and related types of imaginative literature, ranging from the earliest examples to the present. To that end, Mr. Ward has consented to serve as curator. First steps are concerned with coordinating the collections at hand, and in filling gaps from Widener's general holdings where possible. A modicum of increase through purchase is also contemplated. However, large-scale growth can come about only through the donation of other private collections. Such donations will be cordially welcomed.

As a necessary protection against excessive wear, the science-fiction collection is classed as closed, or non-circulatory, at least for the present.

-- Reprinted from the Harvard Library Bulletin, Autumn 1955.

"I am working on an anthology tentatively entitled HEAVENS, HELLS, AND  
HEREAFTERS, a collection of stories based on imaginative concepts of  
the state or adventures of the soul after death. I shall be much  
obliged for any suggestions."

John Christopher (Continued from p.19)

Personally I don't regard the far-out science-fiction writers as being fiction writers at all, in the true sense. They are literate technicians, for want of a better term. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it makes comparison almost impossible. All that is clear is that where the two fields impinge the s-f writer comes off a poor second.

I was delighted to see so many old friends in the current issue, and all so characteristic. Arthur reporting the state of the market, Bill Temple displaying his usual suave intelligence, Eric Russell epater-ing the intellectual bourgeois. I did love that 'steaming pudden of rectal wax' and can only hope that he will one day forget science-fiction for a few months and produce that epic Rabelaisian novel for which we have so long been breathlessly waiting. Now that Lady C. has got the green light in this land of Bogey-Grundy, is there anything to hold him back?

Rereading this, I think it should be pointed out that every general novel I have published has been a monumental failure -- and there have been seven of them.

The Rogers Terrill Literary Agency  
8 East 48th Street  
New York 17, New York  
is pleased to announce that  
Robert P. Mills, Authors' Representative  
has joined them as an active associate.

A POEM TO DELIGHT MY FRIENDS WHO LAUGH AT SCIENCE-FICTION

That was the year  
the small birds in their frail and delicate battalions  
committed suicide against the Empire State,  
having, in some never-explained manner,  
lost their aerial radar, or ignored it.

That was the year  
men and women everywhere stopped dying natural deaths.  
The aged, facing sleep, took poison;  
the infant, facing life, died with the mother in childbirth;  
and the whole wild remainder of the population,  
despairing but deliberate, crashed in auto accidents  
on roads as clear and uncluttered as ponds.

That was the year every ship on every ocean,  
every lake, harbor, river, vanished without trace;  
and even ships docked at quays  
turned over like wounded animals, harpooned whales, or Normandies.  
Yes, and the civilian transcontinental planes  
found, like the war-planes, the sky-lanes crowded  
and, praising Icarus, plunged to earth in flames.

Many, mild stay-at-homes, slipped in bathtubs,  
others, congenial indoors-men, descending stairs,  
and some, irrepressible roisterers, playing musical chairs.  
Tots fell from scooter cars and tricycles  
and casual passersby were stabbed by falling icicles.

Ah, what carnage! It was reported  
that even bicarb and aspirin turned fatal,  
and seconal too, to those with mild headaches,  
whose stomachs were slightly acid, or who found they could not sleep.  
All lovers died in bed, as all seafarers on the deep.

Till finally the only people left alive  
were the soldiers sullenly spread on battlefields  
among the shell-pocked hills and the charred trees.  
Thus, even the indispensable wars died of ennui.

But not the expendable conscripts; they remained as always.  
However, since no transport was available anywhere,  
and home, in any case, was dead, and bare,  
the soldiers wandered eternally  
in their dazed, early-Chirico landscapes,  
like drunken stars in their shrinking orbits  
round and round and round and round,

and (since I too died in the world-wide suicide)  
they may still, for all I know, be there.  
Like forsaken chessmen abandoned by paralyzed players,  
they may still be there,  
may still be there.

-- Edwin Rolfe, 1909-1954

SPECIAL NOTICE:

Dr. Eric Temple Bell, 77, professor emeritus of mathematics at California Institute of Technology and a noted science-fiction writer under the pen name John Taine, died yesterday after a long illness. Bell was one of the nation's most prominent specialists in the theory of numbers and is credited with solving outstanding problems in the field. He published nearly 300 scientific papers and 10 books on mathematics. In the science fiction field, he had ten novels published and a number of stories in magazines. (UPI, Dec. 22)

## AN ETHIC FOR EDITORS

by

Dean McLaughlin

Not long ago in PITFCS, an extended and often acrimonious discussion took place concerning what an editor could do and what he had absolutely no right to do. None of the major editors---by which I mean the triumvirate, Campbell, Mills, and Gold---took part in this fracas, although all three are members of the Institute. (Correction: Horace Gold did say something, just as the brawl was ending. Unfortunately, stripped of its secondary clauses and etc., what he said was, "Uncle!" which is evidence more of the sharpness of some of the complaints than---perhaps---of their justice.)

Having myself taken part, and having myself expressed my personal feeling on the editors right---or rather, his lack of that right---to revise and/or rewrite without permission, I cannot now defend the practice. Nor do I, as a practicing writer, intend to write such a defense.

But the larger issue was never settled. No one has tried to outline exactly what an editor's rights and responsibilities are, and how they relate to us practitioners who are the largest single faction within the Institute.

Of course, it's presumptuous for me to try. I've never occupied an editorial chair, and have only a hazy idea of the behind the scenes duties which these gentlemen are required to perform. But I think a bit of common sense indicates pretty well where an editor's basic obligations lie.

First of all, an editor is responsible to his readers. He must select, commission, or otherwise obtain the best stories (and articles) he can get within the limits imposed by his budget. Or, rather, stories and articles which his readers will prefer---which they will enjoy, find worthwhile, or at least interesting.

Most of the time, the editor has only the haziest idea of what his readers think is good. He has to rely on his own judgement, which may be good, bad, or awful. If his right guesses outweigh the bad ones strongly enough and consistently enough, his magazine continues to be published. If his wrong guesses are too frequent, his magazine falls by the economic wayside.

(Magazines fail for other reasons, too, of course; this is only one reason for that phenomena. See Kemp's WHO KILLED SF?)

Once in a while, though, an editor does get an idea about what his readers like and don't like---from their letters. Thus John Campbell discovered that readers were getting just a little bit weary of "atom doom" stories back in the late forties. Similarly Sam Merwin was informed that the dictatorship-overthrown-by-freedom-loving-citizens plot have overstayed its welcome. (At this point I could pause to nominate a few contemporary targets for a never-will-be missed list, but shall refrain; instead, I call upon the membership to compile their own catalogues of ennui.) John Campbell's AnLab also supplies a certain degree of guidance, but has a number of dreadful bugs in it---especially when it comes to indicating long-term trends.

Aside from the likes and dislike of his readers, an editor is responsible to only one authority, his publisher. This is the man (or corporation) who controls the purse strings, and who holds the power of life and death over the magazine---and therefore the power of employment or unemployment over the editor himself. However, presuming that a market exists for the magazine in question, an editor's best chance of keeping his publisher happy is to keep his readers happy, satisfied, stimulated, and---most important---coming back for more.

As for writers . . . to them, an editor has no obligations at all. To be sure, the editor must not so thoroughly alienate writers that they absolutely refuse to submit to him, any more than a man can hope to keep a mistress (psychopathology aside) if he beats her every night. (Speaking for myself, there have been several editors who I have either boycotted or toward whom I've been more than a little cool; most of them know who they are, and I won't embarrass them by naming names.)

Similarly, since there do exist some writers who are popular with the readers, there are writers who the editor must court, cajole, and otherwise persuade to give him first chance at their stories, and from whom he will be inclined to accept stories which he would never buy from a minor writer or an unknown. Thus, John Campbell may buy an aliens-outwitted-by-clever-Earthmen story from Eric Russell, but I or Jim Harmon would have to do something very special and different in order to get by. (Of course, Eric Russell usually does do something special and different---and even when he doesn't he tells an enjoyable yarn. Usually.) These favored writers will also find themselves urged to write stories more closely aligned to "what I really would like to see." Some resist the pressure. Others (yes, Randy, this means you) have no resistance at all. This same pressure-persuasion is also exerted on lesser writers, of course.

All this is, of course, merely part of the editor's attempt to make his magazine more desirable to his readers. That, usually, this gives the appearance of rule by whim---this has nothing to do with it; the editor's personal judgement is, as I've said already, most often the only guide he has to follow.

An editor can therefore buy or reject any story or article submitted to him, and he can do so for any reason---or for no reason at all. The writer has no right to protest. (Of course, the writer can resubmit. Editors do change their minds, sometimes, and sometimes they are hard up for copy. Sometimes, for all I know, maybe they flip coins. At least that would explain some of the things I've seen printed.)

Similarly, if an editor believes alterations are advisable, he can make changes in a story. These can range all the way from fiddlin' little changes--a word here and there--to radical changes of plot and detail.

(I say he can, in the sense that he is not responsible to authors. So far as the readers are concerned, he gets away with it. However, this isn't a privilege for indiscriminate use; if the comments seen in PITFCS are any sign, nothing can arouse an author's ire more than to see his story---which was sold intact---published with changes he himself did not make or approve. Not even failure to pay seems to be as infuriating. Therefore, the wise editor will leave revision to the authors---or at least ask their permission. If he does not, as Horace Gold discovered, he risks losing their cooperation; as the whore said to the werewolf, "There's a limit to what I'll submit to.")

Most of the foregoing is, of course, obvious to 99% of the Institute, and I suppose I'd have more business saying these things in, say, Writers' Digest than in PITFCS. (In fact, why don't I? It pays more.)

But writers are funny people. In fact, some of them are downright queer. They will sometimes send their copy, not to the editor who pays most, but to the one whom they like most.

And the Secretary of the Institute, Brother Cogswell, is an editor.

Besides, he sort of asked me.

#### SPECIAL NOTE FROM HARLAN ELLISON:

Seeing as how you ran that ridiculous AP wire, I'd appreciate seeing the full text of the enclosed article in the next PITFCS. ((See p.2, TRC)) You might add the following addenda.

NEWS ITEM: Harlan Ellison, recently arraigned on charges of violation of The Sullivan Law, went before the Grand Jury on Monday morning, Nov. 1st, 1960 at 10:00 AM. After fully testifying before the foreman and Grand Jury, sitting in full convention, the group took seven minutes to deliberate and passed down a decision for dismissal of all charges.

I hope this amuses my colleagues who--like me--try for a modicum of authenticity in their fiction. N.B. The gun was not loaded at all, contrary to newspaper and AP reports

GEORGE COWGILL SAYS:

PITFCS - 137 does not evoke many comments, not because I don't find myself taking sides on a few issues, but because there is not much I have to say that at least one contributor hasn't mentioned. However, the point that Leiber brings up on p.22 -- about an early tendency to avoid "real life" stories in part because of fear to show off ignorance -- might be pursued a little farther. It seems that any writing which in any way can claim to be anything other than sheer entertainment depends in some way on the writer's either knowing a bit more or having thought a bit more about some aspect of experience than have most people. Likely this is even true of good entertainment. So if we ask "What is the suitable form of creative expression for the person who knows or thinks a bit more than most about science or technology?" an obvious answer is science fiction. I have to confess I am fairly ignorant about recent views on what sf is or isn't good for, but surely this is one point of importance.

I am a bit disappointed by some of Schuyler Miller's comments -- he seems to know a lot about human prehistory but his interpretations bother me. He implies that people (or near-people) made nothing better than chopper tools or hand axes for some hundreds of thousands of years because they didn't have ambition for anything better. I think there is good reason to feel that the reason was fundamentally biological -- our dim ancestors didn't have enough brain to make anything better. When it comes to the New World Indians of the past few millenia there is of course no question of intelligence, but I still don't think it can be maintained that pre-agricultural Desert Cultures were more backward than food gatherers in the well-watered eastern U.S. because the people in the deserts were more complacent. I think the simple fact is that they were far too busy keeping body and soul together to have much time for fooling around with the kind of elaborations in hardware which delight the archaeologist and lead him to call a culture "advanced". It is hard to see what kind of worthwhile technological innovation these people could have made until they worked out food-production.

If one really wants a case where people apparently had both the brains and the economic and subsistence resources for innovations, but nevertheless remained fairly static technologically, many of the world's highly centralized pre-industrial empires seem to come closest. Here it seems that, with the State essentially the only market for craft products, there was no particularly enhanced market value for new ideas, and considerable commitment to the status quo. Why should a man spend his time tinkering if he couldn't expect to profit from it, or, if he did tinker anyway, there was not much chance that others would copy him.

BETSY CURTIS SAYS:

I appreciated Reg Bretnor's long disquisition on books and pay because it was so well thought out and consistent that I got a good long look at what I disagree with (albeit pusilanimously). "We need..." he says, in what I think is his main point, "an arrangement which will not stifle talent, but which will protect us from cheap-labor competition."

Now I'll agree promptly that:

We have something to say;

We like saying it;

We want respect; (which includes access to a respectful audience, respect for our decision to spend time writing...the right to write:

We seem to need money.

But I think we pull a blooper when we try very hard to make a package deal of it by tying these four premises together indissolubly, each absolutely necessary to the others, by some system of rationalizing and justification. If we don't get money for our writing, for instance, we decide to believe that we lose the respect that gives us the right to write and be read. We come to consider that we must protect the cash-justification for writing as it protects us from frustration of communication. Some of us go so far as to make work (i.e., the causing of motion against a resisting force) out of writing in order to justify our doing it at all (an old puritan notion that if it ain't work it ain't respectable).



But we know, uncomfortably perhaps, what is implicit in that "not stifle talent" clause....that more talented writers than we (if you'll pardon the expression Asimov, Heinlein, and each and all of you) have sometimes won their right to be read by being the cheapest competition available. In fact, some of them discovered the best-hidden 'secret of the ancients'...how to give the stuff away.

Margaret St. Clair and Arthur Clarke have noticed (with amazement) the bulkiness of the communications from folks supposedly dedicated to the proposition that writing equals or should equal cash on the line. I humbly submit that this writing represents a much desired opportunity to communicate free and freely and a denial of the proposition that what doesn't bring in a certain cash rate per word is not respectable. (You, too, Bretnor -- do you really believe that the high probability of having your cash-protecting ideas put into practice was the chief justification for six pages legal length; or was it OK and fun even for free?) I think we love PITFCS because it's both free and respectable.

I'll admit quite frankly (before the flyting starts) that my attitude toward money (I distrust the stuff wholeheartedly) may be feminine and kookie -- I work like a slave at housework and child care today merely for the privilege of doing it again tomorrow without being required to pay cash for the privilege. And I'll admit, too, that part of my writer's block springs from both my inability to justify doing as I'd like and the inability to give away the products.

Comment, anyone?

AVRAM DAVIDSON SAYS:

What the hell was your purpose in reprinting the AP dispatch about the arrest of a certain writer? Did you suppose it was your Duty to such of the sept as missed the original report? Did you think it was Funny? I can assure you that the writer in question, who spent over 24 nasty hours in jail isn't thinking it's funny. Perhaps you ought to reprint, while you're reprinting, his report on it to The Village Voice. Just for chuckles, of course.

((When a sf writer gets jugged it's news. So far PITFCS has run the gamut from Davis to Ellison. As a matter of public record, however, neither the Institute nor its Secretary is necessarily in favor of members in good standing being incarcerated.TRC))

As for the Post Office's consideration of an amendment to Rule 39 CRF Part 22.2 (7), which Robert M. Guinn estimates would put "70% of all small publications out of business immediately," I'm not sure but what this would be a very good thing. I would gladly forego 70% of fanzines if 70% of the scurrilous hate-sheets would vanish, too. Perhaps, of course, they wouldn't.

Reg Bretnor's piece is crammed with goodies. I will comment only on one: that a writers' organization must secure the support of other unions. This means that the other unions must secure the support of the writers' organization. Are all the magazines we sell to, all the printers of the books we write (or are anthologized in), fully unionized? And how can we know? And what to do, if not? No rhetoric--sincere questions. Though I think his proposals encompass too much and might end up by accomplishing nothing for that reason. Compare Gompers' "Straight Trade-Unionism" ((The younger members probably won't dig this, but how about taking as our slogan, "A fair day's blood for a fair day's thunder"?TRC)) with the IWW's "One Big Union" which aimed at remaking society.

I don't know Jim Harmon and don't have on hand or recall the exchange of letters which prompted his in #137. But while he is not an amateur and may not be frustrated, he is certainly bitter. His charges are neither all right or all wrong. Editors may tend to "buy from people they know" but in almost every case they got to know them from buying from them--not because they went to school together or swapped wives or something. While living across the Bay from Tony Boucher and being able to see him personally (which I did) I sold him exactly one story. I sold one tiny item to an editor in LA whom I knew personally, not because I was a promoter, but because I happened to be on hand when he needed a particular item and could explain exactly what. On and after removing to the East Coast I sold Tony--I forget how many stories. Lots of them. I would be the last to deny the value of Personal Contact; it has been very important to my sales. But I don't think I flatter myself when I say that if I haven't got the goods to deliver no editor will buy no matter how personal the contact or hot

the promoting. Gordie Dickson, who lives in Minneapolis, makes his living by selling to editors in New York. A thousand writers living in New York don't sell enough to buy beans. Surely Harmon doesn't think there is sectional prejudice involved if certain other authors who live in New York sell more than he does? The simple fact is that a phone call and/or a meeting are infinitely more helpful in explaining and exchanging ideas (NOT the same as "promoting"! ) than any number of letters. This may be unfortunate for the out-of-town writer (it hasn't been for Gordie, Mack Reynolds, Fred Brown, Harry Harrison, etc.), but it doesn't seem to me to be a legitimate cause for grievance against NYers. Or Chicagoans. Or Angelenos. As for the unpleasant experience Harmon reports with Campbell and Santesson in Detroit, I will simply say that I don't understand it and am sure it is all a dreadful misunderstanding.

Schyuler Miller's kind words go only to confirm what I've known for a long time, namely that he has a Beautiful Soul. Few critics have spoken so consistently well of me. Sir, your Servant to Command.

Ward Moore (in town en route to live in England--British fans take note and contact him c/o Messrs Heineman) desires me to add a footnote to my Reply to Harmon. WM says that if you take hold of an editor's lapel and say, "Buy my sweet lavender" he'll do it whereas he may not if the pitch is made via mail. My (AD's) remarks still stand.

In conclusion I wish to say that I feel I am on the threshold of a great expansion in both my writings and their sale, newing my youth like the eagle, taking big deep breaths of air, and now and then drumming my chest and emitting a voluminous and far-sounding cry, alias Barbaric Yawp. College profs in Hooserland, I greet you! Writer-types in the Heartland, all hail! Litterateurs and -teusses in the moss-draped Southlands, howyaw! And all you other authors and afficionadoes in the Cactus Lands and by the shores of the blue Pacifica, my greetings, my greetings, and my eternal love!

CHAN DAVIS SAYS:

J'ose proposer a la redaction des PITFCS (Comptes Rendus de l'Institut des Etudes du XXI Siecle) l'introduction d'une seconde langue officielle, a savoir le francais. Vu l'inscription d'un nombre croissant de membres d'expression francaise, il parant ((parait?TRC)) genant que se borner a l'anglais -- a ne rien dire de la contribution que pourrait faire a notre science la clarte renommee du francais. Ce pas en avance exigera tout d'abord qu'on pourvoie d'accents la machine du Secretaire perpetuel, et ensuite que celier- ((celiu-?, celui? etc.?)ci recoive quelques censeiguements en l'orthographe francaise. ((Those readers made unhappy by the absence of accents should feel free to supply them where most needed. TRC)) Cependant je ne veux point suggerer l'emploi du francais par M. Versins. Mon effort de repandre l'usage de langue maternelle n'envisage pas restreindre l'usage de la notre, sous une forme d'ailleurs tellement revelatrice

((Such confusion as exists above is the result of Chan's use of a single squiggle to represent u, ie, ei, m, iu, ui, eu, ue, ii, and ee. In fact, his is the first letter I ever received which looked like a J.W. Campbell signature extended for fourteen lines. TRC))

MIRIAM ALLEN deFORD SAYS:

I like Reg Bretnor's outline for an ideal writers' union very much. But he ignores the existence of the Authors Guild. It would be much more hopeful for all of us (including s-f writers) to join the AG and try to transform it as he suggests.

MICHEL EHRWEIN SAYS:

I must warn you that my english is likely to be very poor, for I learnt it at school, some years ago, did not put one foot(or more) on any english speaking ground, and have been improving my knowledge of this language for years by reading american crime novels. O.K.? In spite of or maybe because of which I'll join with pleasure your Institute for and so on. I thank you for your invitation, and it is comforting for us, French writers, to know that you American ones are remembering us.

I have been reading with great interest the PITFCS 135 you sent to me. I saw that Francis Carsac and Gerard Klein are members of the Institute by now. You must know that both of them are our top-writers or so, although very different from each other. I hope that many other French authors will join the Institute, and more contacts will take place between us.

I understand that the problems American authors have to face with are the same French ones have or will have to. For me, French S.F. is ten or twenty years late by the American one, or ten or twenty years younger, as you like it. So, when looking at the latter, we can see some aspects of our future (a nice time travel!). You know that we have one S.F. magazine ("Fiction") only, few book series, and fewer good and steady authors. Fewer readers who are sensitive to quality, too! The greatest number of them are reading cheap novels, French or shortened English translations. A French proverb says: "A beau mentir qui vient de loin". A minority only can enjoy short stories or "Non stop" or "Case of conscience" or Lovecraft or Bradbury. Another minority is reading S.F. without taking notice of it, they are the common readers: "On the beach", "Limbo", were published as common novels, outside the S.F. series. I doubt such people will ever buy a Von Vogt or a Heinlein! Another minority is enjoying popular science books -- in fact, it's more than a minority, for there is a boom in this field presently, and I am told it is a more lucrative job than writing S.F. There is a boom in the missile field, too. Some years ago, it was about flying saucers...!

About the latter, I DON'T believe in them. But...Charles Fort is one of the gods of my own pantheon. There is a scientific guy here in France named Aime Michel, who wrote a book titled "Mysterieux Objets Celestes", with maps and so on, about the matter. He discovered that the UFO had been seen flying, from several and very remote places, by people knowing nothing of each other, along straight lines, several hundreds kilometers long. And many a time several UFO were seen at the same time flying along straight lines from one place. He suggests methodical exploration of the earth, but doesn't conclude, and I don't.

About editors cutting in texts. French ones are doing so, too. I think that in case a story is too long, it's their right to request the author to shorten his text. They pay for it! But it's not fair doing so themselves. For the same reason, they can suggest changes in the story. It happened to me, for my first story. I don't know if the editor was right, but I know that my second writing was not worse than the first one. It happened again, for my second story. Again I was asked for a second writing of the last part of the thing. But, after going through with it and mailing it, I got the idea of a third one, wrote it, sent it, and had it published. For the fourth story or so, I was asked the usual rewriting (in fact, shortening). This time, as I did not see how to manage it without damaging the whole ~~thing~~, I refused, wrote a circumstantial letter and had my request granted. But the next time they had my story shortened by two paragraphs without giving me notice!

Before taking leave, must not I introduce myself? Born in 1933. Have studied commercial and economic sciences. Literary culture: detective stories -- and S.F., of course. Tried to write detective stories and failed. Turned to S.F. writing, and was first published in 1956. Up to now, 14 stories published. A lot still in my files: when I have enough I may make a book of them. I wrote some essays, too. When I have the energy, maybe I'll turn to novel writing (next year? -- I said so last year and the year before)..

Shake hands with everybody there.

#### HARLAN ELLISON SAYS:

Short comment in re PITFCS 137, specifically Reg Bretnor's polemic anent "writer's union" and how all of us poor s.o.b. writers are being jobbed by the insensitive, loutish masses who would rather blow five G's on Detroit iron to pile up on Anderson's freeway next Sunday than investing three and a half for a book by (sigh!) One of Us Writers.

Frankly--and all personal references to RB and his talent, which I freely admit is more arresting than mine, and which I admire moderately, aside, what he says gives me an unsettling twinge in the gluttus maximii (alter sp. as fits). Despite the fact that we all know We Have The Word, it is my poor muddled contention that Bretnor's Slob Masses can spend their loot on whateverthehell they want. If a guy feels he needs that jug of Thunderbird more than he needs my scintillant new opera, than goddamit, he is entitled. After all, Reg, snobs we can be all we want, in our spare time, but it is his money!

Perhaps this is the shortcut out of the labyrinth, but I take the realist's stand that if a guy spends his money on something else before bopping over to buy me, then I haven't done the job 100% right. "By Love Possessed" was a helluva good book (though not nearly as good as "S.S. San Pedro" or several others that AJ turned me onto some time ago) and it was bought by a lot of snit-pickers who had ripe under-arms and fuzzy cerebrums. Credit it to exploitation, or controversy, or just plain brush-fire enthusiasm, but he sold... and that was because the Slob Mass was convinced it needed a dose of Cozzens' literacy before it needed the new FishFin 8 out of Michigan. Read it this way: A product's success is guaranteed in direct proportion to the degree of "need" set up in the consumer for that product. If yours and my writing get the ho-hum from the patrons of The Glass Teat and the Kallikak Box, then we aren't reaching them. On my next book, "Rockabilly," from Gold Medal, I've got a pretty fair chance of coming out with a big paperback winner. The reason, I'm certain, will not be because I poured a lot of sweat and stuff into it, but because the exploitation by Knox Burger and the Gold Medal boys will be something to see. Okay, what the hell do I care how it gets sold? My job is to write it the best way I know how, and I don't care if they pack the book into every new Maidenform bra so its the first thing a woman gets next to her ((Somehow the thought of Harlan peeping over the rim of a B-cup frightens me. TRC)) -- as long as somebody reads the damned thing!

Snotty upstart that I am, the way I see it is that you aren't griping because you (using "you" to mean the Writer as a cultural whole) aren't being read, you're griping because people are spending their bread on "less important" things. Well, Reg, you see how important a book is over a car if you have to get from your home to an office three miles away, have to pick up yours&your wife's&your son's laundry, have to bring home the groceries, have to do this that and the other...

You and I may know how much more important being literate and hip and well-versed all around is, but try and tell it to the Slob Masses who have--unfortunately for us--been brought up to believe that wheels are the way to glory. And only squares read books. You aren't trying to write better, or get read more critically, or even more widely, Reg...you're carping at the Times, at the Culture, at the way the old Tootsie Rolls, and the way the mop flops, and also the current manner of engaging in battle with City Hall.

Win? That isn't our problem. We aren't supposed to win. It isn't our war, except as observers of the fighting, faithful recorders of the guerilla warfare and as participants only as individual citizens, not as Writers. Clear your semantics. One thing doesn't mean another.

And as far as I'm concerned, one and all, the idea of a writer's union is about as appealing as an acrobat in a polio ward.

Later.

The further I read in the goddam PITFCS 137, the more I find I have to spout. I re-read Bretnor, and concur all the way down the line on what he says about TV. I took it home and with thesaurus, dictionary and threats of no comic books or TV for the next ninety years, read it and explained it to my 12 year old son (who calls me "Dad" with only the barest suggestion of a snicker up sleeve). He thinks I'm a kook. Which just goes to prove you can try forming these unions and making people read, but even the idea of joining up with other muscled organizations (such as the AFL-CIO) strikes me as hollow. (A) These cats aren't going to think reading is any more important a cause (except on "Library Day" or those other phony education holidays) than the Slob Masses, and aren't going to bother dispersing their strength to aid a bunch of eggheads like Us. (B) Getting tied up with goon squad Unions such as these only means we'll be more restricted, not less, and (C) what are we going to do, threaten to stop all trucking in the USA unless everybody rushes out and buys our books? C'mon, stop clowning. Your heart is in the right place, Reg, but your thinking...well...

Jim Harmon: I resent like crazy your inference that you are the better writer of us two, and the only reason I (still) sell more than you is that I have "pull." The only trouble is that, in part, you're right. I am a promoter. I do push my stuff. One part of me is the writer (who firmly believes he can write rodeo rings around you) and the other is the businessman who feels that a workingman is entitled to his due. If I write it, and can sell it, damn it, that's what I intend to do. I'm not talking to myself. My job is to say what I have to say, the best, truest, most me, way I can, and then get it out to be read. Trunks are fine, but not for the stuff in which I believe. You may be right, Jim, that "pull" had something to do with my sales



record. But also, push, shove, jam, cram, nudge, cajole, promise, intimidate, threaten, slug and swagger had something to do with it. Any and all of them, but not beg and cheat. I've even compromised a lot, but never out of choice, and never with pleasure. But don't sell editors short, Uncle Jim. Guys like Paul Fairman and Hans Santesson and Frank Robinson at Rogue may be friends, but any one of them knows crap from cwality, and they bounce as easily as they buy. My bounce notes outnumber my letters of acceptance by three to one. Horace Gold and Bob Mills are (I've been led to believe) my friends, also, and Gold has rejected me consistently, and Bob Mills has my all-time record of having turned away mss. from EQMM, VENTURE, and F&SF over fifty times. Now suck on that a while, Dostoevski.

((NOTE: Harlan has equipped himself with a new wife, new child, and new address. . . all within the last sixty days. Although I have no information on the first two, the last is 139 Callan Avenue, Evanston, Illinois. Collect calls can be made to UN9-0153))

ALBERT FERLIN SAYS:

((What follows is a rather free rendering. I'm just not up on continental script.TRC))

. . .I was glad to read in your number the texts of Francis Carsac (and others of course) I don't know Carsac personally because I missed him the two occasions when he visited a friend's. I think it is curious to have news of him from America. Next time it may be from the moon.

Until now I only wrote short stories. My profession is Chef de Bureau de Prefecture, i.e. civil servant of the French Republic. I am also Press Correspondent of R.T.F. and as my wife is periodist, accidentally I am Press-Photographer.

Some of my short stories were:

- 1) in Galaxie -- "Tele-pathie", "Le Commando de Mars"
- 2) in Fiction -- "De Memoire d'Homme", "L'Enfer", "Le Monde Orphelin"
- 3) in Ailleurs -- "Le Voyageur", "L'Apparition"
- 4) in Satellite -- "Le Robot devient Fou"

I hope to publish a book of these and those unpublished. I am writing a novel: Les Enfants. I like Asimov, Bradbury, Clifford, Lovecraft, Borges, Carsac, M. Renard, Klein, VanVogt.

Now, I tell you I was born in 1912. Began to write in 1941 -- SF in 1955, and lost a lot of time Studying, Painting, Trading, War-ring, and so on. Next time, after having gathered myself together, I send you a letter explaining some points of view.

GEORGES H. GALLET SAYS:

Many thanks for your kind invitation to membership in the ITFCS. I do feel much flattered and would be quite willing to join in such distinguished company as I find in looking through the pages of your Proceedings.

But it seems that your organization is more or less a correspondence club, and I must say that I am primarily a free lance journalist, specialized in science information, who must somehow eke a living out of his typewriter. Which, with quite a few other activities -- i.e. being notoriously a science fiction editor -- leaves me too little time for writing for the fun of it or even as a labor of love. I have several books planned that I would like to write and can't. It is only because of the publishing business lull during the summer months that I could leave Paris last July and flee south to a small fishing village on the Mediterranean, near Marseilles, to write a rather lengthy work on Astronautics (from the invention of the rocket by the Chinese (?) through the evolution of the space travel idea in literature, mathematics and technology up to the latest space experiments, leading on to the ultimate views on man in space, the conquest of the planets and the problems involved -- distances, velocities, time relativity, biological and sociological aspects-- by the voyage to the stars) in collaboration with professor Leonid Sedov, for a forthcoming Science Encyclopedia.

And here I am back in Paris since the beginning of October and again in the frantic rat race, with scarcely time enough to breathe, even on Sundays... My many American friends know from dire experience that letters from me are few and far between. Even if theirs should deserve a prompt answer. I do feel sorry of this situation but it seems unavoidable in my circumstances. And I am full of admiration for people who seem able to make much better use of their available time.

Further don't you think that the King's English butchered in such letters as you publish unabashedly from French signees - i.e. Klein or Carsac - do look a bit... odd, not to say out of place, besides the prose of star American or English writers like Asimov, Blish, Boucher, or Brunner to name the first few in PITFCS 135?

((But have you thought what the Republic's French would look like if butchered by such star American or English writers as . . . ? Or what has already been done to the King's English by such native born writers thereof as . . . ? TRC))

So should I or should I not sign that application for membership? And if I do, what good will it be unless I can take active part more or less regularly in your open forum? Or do you really care for such erratic membership?

Anyway, please be assured that I genuinely appreciated the honor extended to me in your invitation.

((In spite of his best efforts, Georges H. Gallet has just become a member in good standing of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies by inadvertently complying with the provisions of Section VII, Paragraph 2, c, 4 (as amended) which states in part: "All writers who write long letters to the Proceedings to explain that they are too busy to write long letters to the Proceedings shall automatically be considered members in good standing of the Institute." TRC))

J. MARTIN GRAETZ SAYS:

Gee, what a good boy am I! Last night I sat down to work on a story for the first time in at least six or seven months, and today, as reward I guess, comes PITFCS 137. I'm glad you're back in business; even more, I hope my new spate of activity will result in rather more justification for my remaining on the rolls than mere money (of which some is enclosed). Natural laziness, coupled with the fact that I have a steady job which I enjoy and which brings me enough cash to do as I wish, manages to keep me from the typewriter, at least as far as fiction is concerned.

Oh hell, I'll tell you the real reason. Any writer worth his salt has got to get involved, and I just can't seem to. At least not all the time. I've got too much Antonius Block in me (see Bergman's The Seventh Seal for the reference). In order to get involved with his characters, a writer has to be involved with humanity to start. Not necessarily with all of humanity---one will do, if only for a beginning. I've come to the conclusion that a writer, composer, painter, any creative artist (cliche, but it's true) should be married, have a mistress, be a homosexual, anything, just so he is involved. Alfred Bester sums it up neatly, if a little extremely, in his recent review of Jim Blish's latest book: "We urge Mr. Blish, for the sake of his formidable talent, to abandon intellect and take to drink, drugs, seduction, politics .....anything that will shock him...." and so on.

But the fact is, you gotta be with it, in its literal, not currently popular sense.

And it works just as good if you imagine yourself involved; after all, what does everything boil down to? So I have a reason to get involved again. So ~~maybe~~ it isn't particularly real. So what the hell. As long as it works.

((Involvement with homosexuals? TRC))

There is little I wish to comment on in PITFCS 137, or could if I did wish to. But there seems to be a healthy trend away from the "oh dear, what martyrs we all are writing this crap for love and starving" attitude seen a while back.

Now look. You all know this so I'm telling you again. There are exactly six-count-em-six magazines specializing in the amorphous stuff we like to call science fiction and fantasy. As far as writers are concerned, there are really only four, since it is the editors who are the market, not the titles. Now of these editors: One edits a magazine by ear, while he rides his hobby horses until they drop from sheer fatigue. One has good intentions, but, I imagine, a bottom-of-the-well budget. He seems to be somewhat literate, far more so than his predecessors, but after all, what can one do

working for Ziff-Davis? One baffles me completely. How such utter tripe can share the same pages with such good work, and how the good work just misses being really good, is as inexplicable as why I keep reading Galaxy. One---one editor, Bob Mills, is literate. I think maybe three or four really outstanding editors have ever concerned themselves with science fiction and fantasy. Mills is one. Francis McComas was another. Robert Lowndes should have been another, but for his publisher's policies. (I'm speaking here of magazine editors only, to avoid muddling the picture.)

And as long as Mills keeps publishing everyone's best work, no one is going anywhere. The best thing that could happen to this little field, from an author's standpoint, would be for Mercury Press to fold up William and quietly steal away. Maybe that would force some of the people who have it to get to work and show it where it counts.

Pause, while I look around and try to find someplace where it counts. Harper's? Playboy? The Atlantic?

And I say something is wrong with the business of fiction when Budrys has to publish "Rogue Moon" in a 3¢/wd magazine. ((Amen! Though Knox Burger, bless him, had the sterling sense to pick it up for Gold Medal. Clumsily written opening but high voltage once you get into it -- the magazine version, that is, I haven't been able to pick up the pb yet. Anyway, AJ has my vote for next year's Hugo. TRC)

#### HARRY HARRISON SAYS:

137 a joy, as with all preceeding issues. But I'm getting a stuffed head with trying to follow the tangled threads of the discussions that have been going on for years now. I appreciate Judy's attempt to save space by giving only the coded answers to now-forgotten questions and statements. However my attention wanders and the issue she was quoting from wasn't at hand and the whole damn thing began to read like fragments from an agony column. So I have a brilliant suggestion that will confuse things more or clean up this matter.

Suggestion: All members writing general letters and new jazz do it -- like this -- in the usual letter form. But when the time comes to respond to other and earlier arguments, do it in a separate paragraph with a crystal clear heading, naming the topic by issue and page if possible. If enough white space is left between these paragraphs, our sore-pressed Secretary can snip them out and put them in an old shoe box. (Initials after every paragraph, please.) If there are enough on one topic they can be assembled with an appropriate heading and will make all sorts of wonderful sense. If not they can be stapled back to the original letter. Or jumbled at random in one lump to please Damon. Here is how this mish-mash might look. Take that little item of Ike's for instance:

#### I. ASIMOV DISCUSSES HIS QUALIFICATIONS, No. 137 PAGE 5

Some science-fiction writer-- can't even spell Azimov right! -- A.J.B.

Great lover, HAH! He impregnated me with twins at the Loncon and I din even wake up. -- (name withheld for security reasons.)

Listen here you. I don't go sneaking around Boston telling you how to teach biochemistry and I don't want to see you sneaking around SF trying to teach me anything about loving. The field is sewed up. Tight! H.H.

You see what I mean? The possibilities are tremendous. Let me start it off. The following can be run as a talk to J. Harmon, No. 137 - p.16. Sub-head, Flyting in the style of Bretnor.

Look, lad -- all you're doing is proving that A.J. was right. You do sound like a bitter amateur. Uninhibited the pages of our journal may be-- but must you stoop to personal insult? I have never known John Campbell to act like anything but a gentleman in public. If he treated you like dirt in Detroit, you must have been acting like dirt. And you can't sell me the one about Hans Santesson pushing you in the face either. Completely out of character for him. Except under dire provocation. What the hell are you trying to prove, anyway? That we are all dirty pros who are locked together in some sort of repellant daisy-chain, buying only from other members plugged



into the ring? And are you the Clean White Knight on the outside? Away with this kind of nonsense, it doesn't belong in PITFCS. I think you are up to there with it-- like Valjean in the sewer-- and let this be the end of it. I am not of advanced age so next convention time you can take a stab at breaking my arm. Think you can learn to type with one hand?

After this exercise in calculated insult, a more mundane matter. Money. A personal note to K. MacLean now follows. Kay-- wherever the hell you are-- will you write me! For three years I have been trying to contact you, by mail, and in person when I was back in New York. Impossible! I have cash for you, girl. SCIENCE FANTASY in England reprinted our joint WEB OF THE WORLDS (cut and with some rewrite) at least that long ago. I have long since spent your half, but will scratch it together again if I can ever find where you are. Write me at Nregnebakken 10, Bistrup by Birkerød, Sjaelland, Denmark, and give me your address.

Copenhagen is one of the aerial crossroads of the planet, as has been proven by the healthy number of SF types who have dropped by here. The open house invitation still stands. You too, Jim Harmon, we can rassle in the garden.

JOE HENSLEY SAYS:

Milford was powerful stuff ((The Milford Science Fiction Writers Conference. TRC)) and I hope that someone reports on same. Don't feel myself completely able to do so. I fitted somewhere in between the serious types who saved their partying for the nights and the completely relaxed types who began their drinking at an early morning hour. Everything was usually blissfully hazy, but not completely indistinct. But it was enjoyable and, this being important, Char and Mike enjoyed it too, which facilitates return. I think that the things that I learned at Milford have been helpful to me in the tiny amount of work I've done since returning and I recommend it highly to any writer of any kind of material (whether he's sworn off sf or not). Most of the stuff in the workshop wasn't sf or fantasy. I think the best parts -- and this isn't to knock the organized stuff -- were the talk-talk things that were impromptu. Usually these were at Mac McKenna's, and Mac and Eva, and Kate Wilhelm who stayed with them, got little night'sleaper

Milford did drive me to various conclusions. Most Writers are genius types-- and-- Gordie, Judy, Dan Sugrue, Randy, and I are drunken genius types and Avram is our keeper. I missed AJ when compiling the first list. And perhaps others.

((Your secretary is happy to announce that Colleague Hensley was elected as a state senator during the recent pleasantness. Thus, for the first time in his life, he can now be addressed as the Honorable Joseph Hensley. TRC))

SERGE HUTIN SAYS:

. . . Your "Institute" seems to be a very much fascinating institution. More and more I am finding all sorts of science-fiction, fantasy, and other so-called "weird" productions to be the most significant testimonies ever given to the present period -- and the near future ages, too! There are -- so I esteem -- more higher metaphysics and revelations in Lovecraft's and Merritt's works than in the average handbooks of philosophy or theology!

My country ((France. TRC)) is gradually surmounting the old strong prejudice against the "absurd" literary and artistic tastes which are ours; but there remains here big hindrances (for instance, only a little part of the numerous good fantastic and s.f. films produced in the English speaking countries are shown in Paris). And you have, too, more financial opportunities: the American ~~men~~ men are eager to give funds even to so-called (by french bourgeois prejudice) "silly hobbies" -- like s.f. and fantasy fandoms, etc. In Paris, we have no more even normal protectors of the arts: French millionaires are buying only "sure values" (Picasso, Bernard Buffet, etc.) -- as they would be buying oil or coal shares. Contrary to popular foreign opinion, today's France is not at all an "artist" and somewhat "lazy" country: except for some literary or artistic stars (Bernard Buffet, Françoise Sagan, etc.) there are no lavish possibilities offered to "unproductive" social elements like writers or painters; the old bourgeois spirit (not in the marxist meaning, but in the older and more simple Romantic one) is rampant in my country. My best wishes to your researches and projects.

WILL F. JENKINS SAYS:

Thank you very much for "Esta Estrella Sera Libre", which is "This Star Shall be Free" stolen into Spanish. ((I sent tear sheets of a Spanish SF magazine I picked up in Mexico this summer to the writers whose works appeared therein. TRC)) I have some others; including a complete magazine, of which every story was stolen from an American writer, every illustration from an American illustrator, and even the magazine cover air-brushed over for use in Mexico. My stuff has been stolen, I think, in nearly every Latin-American nation -- except that I have been paid quite honestly for books published in Argentina. I am rather dubious about some West German firms, but there is one thing I like to trumpet.

During the World War (Two) the magazines that had been printing my stories in Denmark and Norway continued to print them under Nazi occupation. I knew nothing of it. But after the war they honorably paid me for the stories they'd gotten copies of through Sweden. The publishers of Norway and Denmark are honorable men! Heaven knows they didn't have to be, in my case, but they were. I salute them publicly whenever I can.

In the last Proceedings, Schuyler Miller suggested that I might have something to say about a writers' union. I can imagine circumstances under which a writers' union might be necessary (in Russia, if it were allowed) but I think that there could be difficulties here. A union is, after all, a bargainer at wholesale; it deals in the prices and conditions of sale of thousands of man-days of labor of specified kinds, just as a grain merchant deals in the prices and conditions of sale of thousands of bushels of wheat or corn or oats. But for bargaining at wholesale one has to assume that one man-day of a certain kind of labor is equal to another man-day of that kind, just as one bushel of wheat or corn or oats is equal to another.

I think this assumption is absolutely necessary in any wholesale bargaining process. It can be a valid assumption in something like bricklaying, where union rules forbid the laying of more than so many bricks per day. There, one bricklayer-day is equal to another brick-layer-day. But no surgeon's man-day can be compared to another surgeon's, nor one lawyer's to another's, nor one architect's to another architect's. I do not think that fair bargains for professional services can be made at wholesale -- and I consider writing a profession. I have a brother-in-law who says it's one of the oldest.

This may not be a sound viewpoint, but it's a viewpoint, anyhow. My position is really summed up in the statement that I, personally, would rather not join a writer's union. I hope I shall not need to.

I have been hoping to be invited to join the Institute. I have cherished its Proceedings and itched to put in my two-cents-worth. Thanks.

((But is there so much difference between a flat rate of so much per bushel and a flat rate of so much per word? TRC))

STEPHEN KANDEL SAYS:

Larry Klein, of Electronics Illustrated, sent on a copy of PITFCS #137 to me, on the grounds I'd be interested -- and I am. I say "interested" is a defensive way, because I note the frequently hepatic viewpoint on movie and/or TV writers -- into which category I am now firmly planted.

I've done some SF, a very little, in both films and on TV, and while I must agree with the general censure, I'd like to make a point. The SF magazine and book field is not a mass communication medium. Far from it. And yet, even in this highly specialized area, there's a good deal of limitation. In TV, the attempt to get SF a mature showcase is about nine times as difficult. BUT, the basic problem, the basic responsibility is still the writer's. Instead of attacking the field as if it were a monolithic inimical structure, why don't more SF writers try to break into it? God knows they could be a welcome addition.

Reg Bretnor's suggestion that Pay/Subscription TV will be the answer to what is essentially a creative problem just isn't so. Tell me the last time you saw competent imaginative drama on Broadway? (Visit to a Small Planet?) Nothing's to stop anybody from writing a good SF play, trying for Off-Broadway at least, and aiming at Broadway at most. On the other hand, nothing's going to automatically make for increased

literary and/or dramatic quality in Pay TV, any more than that mysterious "anything" has operated in motion pictures. The problem of writing good is a writers' problem; nobody else is going to do it.

Which brings me to Bretnor's other point -- re a creative Guild, Union, call it what you will. His idea is fine, but what's wrong with infusing a little life into the Authors' League? James Cain, about fifteen years ago, suggested, as I recall, something called the American Authors' Authority, sort of an ASCAP for writers; an organization that acted for all creative writers, and operated as a clearing house, a protective agency, and a mass bargaining agent capable of dealing with the structures of mass media that use writing. If enough people got behind that idea and pushed, it might be a considerable help to the writing game (I refuse to call it a profession) in two ways: stronger protection for the individual, and a blurring of those distinctions between novelist, short story writer, radio, film, TV, poet, you name it.

However, the idea of including publishers, booksellers, et al is akin to the UAW inviting the NAM to consolidate. Why join 'em until we at least try to lick 'em?

DAMON KNIGHT SAYS:

Good to see PITFCS back; I applaud its dissolution & resurrection. This is a chunky issue; it has its usual quota of flatulent nonsense (most of it in the first half of the alphabet, for some reason), but "Strolling On the Banks of the Mainstream" is a really solid piece of work, for which I am grateful. So is George Price's contribution. I'm glad to see someone defend STARSHIP TROOPER so capably. The screams of fury this book aroused puzzled me for a long time, but I think I have figured out why it got under some people's skins. To a dedicated pacifist, "War is horrible" is a basic premise and is interpreted literally. It follows that no recognizably human being could be a professional soldier. But professional soldiers exist. Therefore they must be essentially depraved and brutalized people. When professional soldiers are depicted in fiction as being normal human beings, the pacifist's whole position is threatened; and he screams. So would you.

Kingsley Amis: I am no Amis-hater like Judy Merrill, who uses every other blurb in her new anthology (in what seems to me a grotesque lapse of taste) to attack your book; & in fact I think we all owe you a debt of gratitude for having done more in one stroke to make s-f respectable than the rest of us have been able to do in 20 years: but when you suggest that there is no hierarchy of taste in s-f, you are mistaken. There is substantial agreement that the most important active s-f writers (not necessarily in this exact order) are Heinlein, Bradbury, Sturgeon, Leiber, Asimov, and one or two others; if you consider them inferior to two writers who belong to the second rank in our canon, you should try to demote them by showing where their deficiencies lie; simply to ignore them gives a faint suggestion of ignorance.

August Derleth: Tu quoque, sir, with knobs on.

Mark Clifton: Mark, I wish to hell you wouldn't smear it around so. It only makes it tougher to mop it up, y'know?

RICHARD McKENNA SAYS:

I am sorry that, in taking exception to my tentative taxonomy of the genus Ajay, Ike Asimov has gotten himself mistaken for Feghoot. I gladly concede that he can outhoot Feghoot when he sets his fertile mind to't, but the issue is still moot. I had meant to respond learnedly and at length to Dr. Asimov's strictures, then thought the Institute had folded, and so did not. I will only say that his second and professedly horrible example (Lay of the Last Minced Royal) is a very fine Ajay and the better of his two examples by the Gresham-determined values of this sick, sick planet. And as to all the invidious comparisons, I will quote Kipling at him: "There are nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal lays/ And every single one of them is right."

On Poul Anderson: Science is also the attempt to explain and where possible control as much as possible of human experience in terms of cause and effect and statistical correlation. The latter is less tiddlywinks than a powerful tool for extending the boundaries of science. The one value of pure science is confidence at as low a possible percent level. Value judgements beyond that, including mathematical elegance, are more properly humanistic, and it is axiomatic that only electric computers are pure scientists. Pure science sets out to make mathematical relationships the

measure of all things. Humanism makes man the measure of all things. An s-f writer will have a foot in both camps, but his center of gravity must necessarily be on the humanist side. Science continuously enlarges the range of human experience, but only for a few specialized humans. Both engineers and writers translate new knowledge into terms of more common human experience. They humanize it, tailor it to man's measure in such humanistic terms as utility, ethics, and esthetics. Humanism began as a revolt against Theism, in which revolt natural philosophy was a principal weapon. The latter, become science, is still properly included in true Humanism, and good s-f writers work to keep it so. Too many academic "humanists" are over-precious, spirit-feeble crypto-Theists who fear new knowledge and have no right to the name.

I enjoy a rousing historical novel, whether it is set in Merrie Engelande or Helsingfors 956, but I think certain contemporary straight fiction novels come nearer being intellectually arresting social science fiction. Sociologists define a long term trend in which the structure of society is shifting from static to dynamic and the social unit from the family to the individual. The U.S. is in a late transition phase of that. What does it extrapolate to? What has the Marxist extrapolation to do with the peculiar effects their societies are producing in our world? Is not the deliberate destruction of the family a kind of grisly, four dimensional mass genocide and will not a society of atomic individuals be something as genuinely new and irreversible under the sun as was the Neolithic village in its time? How does it feel to be an otherwise quite unexceptional atomic individual ahead of one's time? Camus explores that in The Stranger. I consider my own nostalgic yearning for the days of Sir Nigel and the White Company to be akin to 19th century pseudo-humanist recoil from science. I indulge in it shamelessly. But I think the best social science fiction is that which continues to look searchingly and with lively interest at what distressing tide goes right on leaving bare on Dover Beach.

On Reg Bretnor: Makes good sense, but I fear public libraries are more sacred than Siva's bull. I tend to be defeatist on the whole idea. I fear the bitter economic truth is that we are purveyors on non-essential luxuries with little prestige value to our particular society, and that most members thereof feel obscurely that we are GETTING AWAY WITH SOMETHING if we even survive marginally. In my best Sam Hallish moments I feel that way myself. Everyone knows we do our best work while starving in garrets. Still, it would be nice to have a depletion allowance on accumulated life-experience wherewith to go prospecting for more life-experience suited to sprightly narration.

Concur completely with Groff Conklin on A.J. Budrys. I predict A.J.'s finest science fiction, still to come, will not be published as science fiction.

Discur violently with Derleth and wonder whether the johnsonian petard he presumes to set under Damon Knight has not long since hoisted Mr. Derleth himself into the empyrean orbit from which he condescends to admonish us. Mr. Derleth should take a reef in his nose before someone tweaks it.

Appreciate Dickson on the novel and hope the kind of s-f Farmer thinks can't be sold will continue to be saleable for original book publication. See Condon's "Manchurian Candidate" published by McGraw Hill (!).

#### DEAN McLAUGHLIN SAYS:

Enclosed you will find the wherewithal to make me a member (card-carrying?) in good standing, thereby entitling me to receive all slings and arrows of outrageous fellow members, as well as deliver a few of my own.

Like now.

I never thought I'd find myself defending any editor for anything, but that is exactly what I now feel compelled to do. (Mind you, I do not defend any editor for anything he has done as an editor---nor, for that matter, does any editor need any such defense; if an editor so chooses, he does have the right to be entirely arbitrary. All editorial decisions are not subject to appeal, even when totally wrong-headed and unfair.)

But Jim Harmon's personal attacks on Hans Santesson and John Campbell call for an immediate reply. If, as Jim claims, these two gentlemen have treated him like dirt (Jim's words, not mine) I can only venture the suspicion that perhaps Jim asked for

it. That Hans could apply hand to face and shove--as Jim asserts--is something I cannot conceive of gentle Hans doing except under extreme provocation. (Or perhaps, Jim, he mistook you for the door to the Men's room.)

Nor can I entirely agree with Jim's claim that NY editors "are more favorably inclined towards writers who happen to live in NY" True, a number of high-production hacks do hang out in and around the City, but this proximity to market provides advantages other than the ability to "buddy-up" to the editor. (It allows ye-haqqe to get on the inside track on Campbell's latest hobby horse, for example. Or suppose Horace Gold needs a story exactly 4,733 words long to fill out the latest issue, deadline 24 hours away. Would he put in a rush call to Mack Reynolds?)

Special note to NY residents: I don't necessarily mean you in particular. I'm not even sure I can define "hack" in a way that excludes those of unquestioned ability who happen to be able to write fast and well and thoughtfully.

Let it be borne in mind that Poul Anderson resides in Berkeley, Gordon Dickson in Minneapolis, Eric Russell in England, Phil Farmer in New Mexico---or is it Arizona? And so forth and so forth. (And really, Jim, if you really think this is the way to sell and sell and sell, New York rent isn't all that expensive.)

I, too, was among those disappointed by Prof. James McConnell's revelations, after the press-agentry with which he made his original charge. His essay might have been better titled, "Some popular misconceptions of Psychology," rather than anything SF writers (either in general or in specific) have been guilty of. I noticed, for example, no compilation of titles wherein these asserted errors have been made. His claim, I submit, is not yet proved. As for his one possible shocker---the ease with which the True Believer's mind can be switched into reverse gear, I've a suspicion McConnell got trapped in his own hyperbole style. At first look, he seems to be saying that any mind can be made to believe anything. Yet, examined closely, what is actually and literally said, is that extreme beliefs can be reversed. Nothing at all is said about the wishy-washy ordinary guy who more or less believes certain things, but not very hard. I rather suspect that most of us are immune to the sort of thing McConnell was talking about.

Special note to Conklin: speaking for myself, I can't claim authority as to whether or not congress can throw a guy in the clink for not talking about his political activities and/or beliefs. No doubt Chan Davis' warden has a somewhat different opinion from yours.

Reg Bretnor almost makes sense, but torpedoed himself with the line "wouldn't have a prayer except as part of a more comprehensive organization." As for Russell's suggestion, publish our own magazine---I think the MWA tried a mag or their own a while ago. Unfortunately, it didn't do so well. (Or did it? Check me Tony.) At least, I don't see it on the stands any more.

P.S. If you're up on the Nobel prize news, mayhap this will be intelligible to you: "See here, Glaser. What's this about buying beer with your research appropriation?" And another, just to wear out my welcome, "Yes, that's quite an accomplishment, Mr. Wright. But what have you done with my bicycle?"

#### EDGAR PANGBORN SAYS:

I'm sorry to be late in getting aboard -- so late, in fact, that I regretfully think of myself as a have-been in s-f. Not that I love s-f any less, but other work more. #137 is quite wonderful. All those guys with their pants down -- gee! My own are slipping. But I haven't much to suggest at the moment. Except that I wish Reg Bretnor, in his splendid flyting at TV, could have gone a step further and pointed out that free whorehouses run in conjunction with the high schools would, unlike TV, render our culture a mite more interesting.

And I think Fritz Leiber overlooks or minimizes the assimilative process in the production of realistic fiction. All fiction is fantasy -- he implies that, and I couldn't agree more. But realistic writers don't just put mustaches on living originals -- I wouldn't know how to go about it that way if I wanted to. The characters in my own stories are considerably further removed from original observation and experience than bread is from flour. For my own work I keep a rickety old battery-powered yoga in the basement. It has a combination hopper and grinder at

the top, which takes material either dry or sloppy, and the stuff is supposed to feed down from there into an oven. I generally fill the hopper in the evening before going to bed, and let it clank all night - 's why it's in the basement - and in the morning, if it hasn't gummed itself all to hell, the drippings are ready to bake, cool, slice, and butter. GE, or IBM, or somebody, is said to have a new type model, but even if I could afford it I wouldn't believe it - just getting old and cantankerous, that's all.

#### GEORGE PRICE SAYS:

Eric Frank Russell's diatribe on the stupendous nonsense which passes for psychological and social science was well taken, if perhaps a bit exaggerated. The apparent absence of any workable way to determine sanity with respect to crime is, I suggest, due largely to inappropriate definitions, coupled with a misunderstanding of the social function of police and prisons.

The commonly used test of legal sanity is the McNaghten Rule: that one is insane if he cannot tell the difference between right and wrong. That is, one should comprehend that there is a fundamental difference between killing a man and killing a mouse. This is a moral distinction, and on that account does not go to the heart of the matter. I should rather define an insane person as one who (a) is unable to understand the difference between legal and illegal, that is, between what is permitted and what is forbidden, or (b) understands, but is unable to govern his actions accordingly.

The McNaghten Rule introduces an extraneous moral dimension to what is basically a question of overt behavior. The murderer who holds the life of a human to be no more valuable than that of a cockroach may well be clinically insane, but he should be held legally sane if it can be shown that he knew killing is forbidden, and that he had sufficient control over himself to have refrained from killing, if he so desired. Neither specification has anything to do with morality. Incidentally, if he makes the slightest effort to conceal his action, that is prima facie evidence that he knows it is forbidden.

The matter of self-control is dealt with at length in Anatomy of a Murder, both book and movie. The lieutenant is acquitted of the murder of his wife's rapist, on the stated grounds that he had an "irresistible impulse" to slay the villain. Without doubting that this is indeed the law of Michigan, it seems obvious that the acquittal should logically have been followed by commitment to an asylum. For certainly a man who has proved himself subject to "irresistible impulses" to kill should be put away for the protection of everyone else. To be sure, the story clearly implies that the doctrine of "irresistible impulse" was merely an excuse which the jury seized upon to justify acquittal. The actual, though unspoken, verdict was that the life of a rapist is forfeit to the victim's husband. But that the "irresistible impulse" doctrine should ever exist shows an unrealism in jurisprudence.

The fundamental purpose of the police and the penal system is to enforce the laws of society, a function which has no direct concern with the system of morals by which the rules are determined. In deciding the fate of a law-breaker, these questions should be asked: Is this person (a) capable of apprehending that society does have rules? (b) capable of understanding what the rules are? and (c) capable of obeying the rules? And the question of whether he approves of, or even understands, the moral system behind the rules should be a matter of legal indifference. If the malefactor flunks any one of the three tests, he should be segregated from society ---not because he is "evil", but because he is dangerous.

The trouble with hospitalizing insane criminals is that all too often, as Mr. Russell relates, they come out just as insane as they went in. Unfortunately, while the courts act upon the principle (correct in itself) that the criminally insane need treatment, not punishment, they neglect to realize that so far there are no reliable means of treatment.

In passing, the lack of a workable therapy leads me to a somewhat unpalatable conclusion. The only reasonable justification for the execution of a sane criminal must apply equally if he is insane: that he is too dangerous to be left alive. Insanity may be an explanation for a crime, but it is by no means an excuse. As Poul Anderson remarked in, I believe, "Perish by the Sword", I prefer to save my sympathy for the victim. It is about time that we began to temper mercy with justice.

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And speaking of misplaced sympathy, what's all the fuss about the recent imprisonment of Chandler Davis for refusing to reveal his "political opinions" to an investigating committee. It seems to me that by seeing the issue as "political opinion", we are missing the point. Western society is in a death struggle with Communism; surely it is legitimate to ask if someone is on the side of the enemy.

Communism being what it is, to ask if one is a Communist is equivalent to asking "are you a current or prospective agent of a foreign power?" Refusal to give a responsive answer to the question is a hell of a lot more serious than refusal to say if one is a Democrat or a Republican.

Perhaps the most significant fact, and a source of great semantic confusion, is that the Communist Party is despite its name not a political party in the American sense, such as the Democratic, Republican, Socialist, or Prohibitionist Parties. ((I believe it is the consensus that the actions of the Prohibitionist Conspiracy are highly un-American. After all, "A Family That Drinks Together, Thinks Together." We talk loudly of freedom but tell me, can you go to the bar of your choice this Sunday? A question not to be asked! And what are such "patriotic" organizations as the DAR and SAR doing about it? They prate about the preservation of individual liberties but both organizations are riddled with "parlor drys" and crypto-Prohibitionists. I propose a new society, The Sons of the Whisky Rebellion (the SWR), which shall be dedicated to restoring human dignity to those of our fellows who are now trapped behind the Arid Curtain. TRC.)) The difference is that the Communists are committed to the use of illegal means of taking power; they reject the community of interest by which other parties agree on the methods and limits of the political process. By thus placing themselves outside the American universe of discourse, the Communists have automatically deprived themselves of the protections accorded legitimate political opinion and action.

Belief in Communism is not a "political opinion"; it is a commitment to the use of criminal means, in order to achieve criminal ends.

Now I am not familiar with the particular laws under which Mr. Davis was imprisoned -- maybe they are not Constitutional. Or perhaps his trial was improperly conducted. To this extent, his imprisonment may be unjust. However, the discussion in PITFCS has been generally on the moral aspect, not the legal, and morally Mr. Davis is completely and abysmally wrong. His position amounts to a claim that society has no right to seek out those whose firm purpose is to destroy society.

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A lot of this talk about a writers union reminds me of one of the basic fallacies of socialists and the more fugg-headed kind of union zealots. They assume that wages are low through the sheer meanness and greed of the blood-sucking bosses. In industry this is about 99 per cent pure balderdash, and it just might be that the same applies to the writing business. It would be well to make sure that the market will actually support your proposed exactions. Probably the most sensible suggestion I have seen is that of Russell, that the s-f pros start their own house, a la Nova Publications. That would be a real put-up-or-shut-up deal, for if it failed they would have no further excuse for carping at the presumed injustice of the present situation. Well, I wish you more power, who ever is brave enough to try it. God knows science fiction needs a deal of improvement, both in quantity and even more in quality.

PPS: Eric Frank Russell quotes a T.V. speech by Bertrand Russell saying in effect: "The constant propaganda about the lack of freedom of thought and speech in Soviet Russia is designed to imply that we have freedom of thought and speech in the West -- which is absolute nonsense!" So? And for making that speech--on television, yet --I presume that Russell was immediately shot by the Gestapo? or at least arrested? or, well, surely a warning from a magistrate? This reminds me of a remark back in the McCarthy days, about "people screaming at the top of their lungs that they weren't allowed to speak above a whisper." The lot of the modern self-appointed martyr is a hard one--even after he has gathered the wood, built the pyre, and tied himself to the stake, nobody bothers to throw a match.

COGSWELL SAYS:

It seems to me that Price's reply to Bertrand Russell's statement has an uncomfortable parallel in the old Communist rejoinder to any criticism of the Soviet Union: "Well, what about your lynchings in the South?" Me, I'm about fed up to here with



the cliches of the Orthodox Right and the Orthodox Left, not because they tend to be mirror images of each other but because both reflect a neat little two valued world populated exclusively by "good guys" and "bad guys", and anytime I venture a word of mild disagreement with a particular position of one, I am immediately accused of being either an underground agent for, or a dupe of, the other. I think we might all get out from underneath an oppressive load of semantic nonsense if we all agreed to begin with that (1) anytime we get into complex areas of human behavior we are concerned with matters of degree rather than absolutes, (2) orthodoxy of any variety is concerned with the preservation of such elements of the status quo as operate to preserve its vested interests, and (3) the only meaningful freedom is freedom to dissent.

So, to get back to Russell, the relative degree of freedom present in system A has nothing to do with an appraisal of the relative degree of freedom present in system B, e.g. the fact the one system punishes unorthodox opinions with death while the other contents itself with imprisonment does not of necessity mean the second is justified in so doing. Degree of freedom of action and opinion within a given system can only be discussed in terms of the system itself. And since "freedom" is an operational rather than an abstract term, its degree can only be judged by the severity of sanction imposed upon dissent from orthodox thought. Otherwise the term is meaningless since every orthodoxy, no matter how repressive, has always granted the populace complete freedom to endorse its acts and tenets. How many doctors have been expelled from the AMA recently for attacking "socialized medicine"? In Spain how many devout Catholics are denied the right to attend the church of their choice? In America how many editorial writers are fired for courageously attacking the Castro regime? In Russia . . . but why go on?

I would suggest that though the midnight knock on the door is more dramatic (and certainly more unpleasant), the use of direct violence is only one of the means by which orthodoxy keeps itself firmly in the saddle. In terms of the ends desired, those of throttling dissent, other pressures have proven themselves to be much more effective, since direct force and violence can engender an equal and contrary direct force and violence. Both more subtle and more efficient is the use of economic and social sanctions. It should be axiomatic that the easiest way to control man is not through the whip and the gun but rather by giving him a relatively high standard of living and then threatening to take it away from him if he doesn't conform. I believe the second method to be a much greater threat to individual liberty than the first. The outward paraphernalia of the police state -- the arm bands and the various colored shirts, the concentration camps and the firing squads, -- are concrete and ever present reminders of an evil that must be destroyed. And even though the individual is intimidated and remains silent (as he usually does), he at least knows who is doing what and how. And when his day comes, as it did in Hungary, even though only for a few days, he knows where to go and what to do about it. In the bourgeois state, alas, things are not that simple, nor are the instruments of coercion so open and direct. Here, instead, we find a gradual erosion, a month by month shrinking of areas of safe dissent. And the insidious thing is that the individual himself often doesn't realize the extent to which he is being intimidated: he just stops talking about certain things, and sometimes even thinking about them, not because of any fear of a midnight knock on the door, but rather (if he stops to think about it at all, which he usually doesn't) a vague fear that hostile and powerful strangers (who don't "understand") might accuse him of being a "bad guy". And since he stands to lose much and gain little by speaking out, he tends more and more to limit himself to the safe and non-controversial. (It may be objected that such behavior is most unheroic; but, since we are concerned with real people living in a real world, we have to separate that which should be from that which is: saints and martyrs -- even the unburned ones -- have always been hard come by. It is true that the ordinary man is capable of heroic acts, but these are usually performed during periods of physical emergency when the alternatives are obvious and immediate and direct action can be taken.)

Let us then admit the obvious, that limitation of thought and speech exists in our society as well as others (and that as long as the welfare of the group is placed above that of the individual, some limitation must always exist), but reject as intellectually bankrupt and personally offensive the attempts of the orthodox, no matter what their particular dogma, to impose an absolute and two-valued system on a relative and multi-valued world. I don't necessarily suggest that there are as many valid ways of approaching the problems of China (not "China" -- a Formosa by any other name etc.) and Cuba as there are of constructing tribal lays, but it might be interesting to raise the question of whether voicing an opinion that differs somewhat from that of Barry Goldwater does automatically give aid and comfort to the ENEMY.

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SPECIAL NOTICE: Poul Anderson says he still has a couple dozen copies of SMORGASBORD and wants to get rid of them. Address: 3 Las Palomas, Orinda, California.

MACK REYNOLDS SAYS:

Enclosed, check for \$3 to cover delinquent dues, plus two dollars as requested in PITFCS. Unfortunately, the wanderlust has hit me and I'm not sure where I'm going after January 1st. Possibly Southern Spain or Portugal until the weather warms up. If possible, I'd like to get up into Russia in the summer, coming around through Norway and Finland, and then emerging into Roumania along in Fall. I wasn't able to get into Roumania last year, but I hear they've loosened up tourist requirements considerably. I was in Russia a couple of years ago and I am anxious to go back to see if there is any noticeable difference. After all, they'll soon be going into the third year of the seven year plan of theirs, and if they are going to catch up with Uncle Sam, you won't have to wait for the last year before it's obvious.

Actually, I'm even more fascinated in watching developments in Yugoslavia than the other Commie countries. I first went there in 1956 and was appalled by the poverty. A second and third visit in 1959 shocked me, but in a different way. I had never expected to see pet shops, department stores, and supermarkets in Belgrade. They've still got a long way to go but at the pace they're setting, I'll stick my neck out and predict that within five years the average standard of living in Yugoslavia will be higher than the average in Western Europe.

It's a tremendous experience being over here and observing some of the changes so rapidly taking place in our world. I've lived these past two years in Morocco whose basic socio-economic system is feudalism (there are even traces of chattel slavery) and which is now in a condition of turmoil as native capitalists and proletarians try to dump the Sultan and his crew. Previous to that, I spent a couple of years in Spain where it was interesting to watch the progress of a latter-day fascism -- backed by Uncle Sam's money, of course. By the way, I wonder how many Americans know that the treaty we have with Franco involves our coming to his military assistance in internal as well as foreign troubles. In short, if the Spanish people decide to establish a democracy, based on American, British, or whatever forms, we're treaty bound to shoot them down.

Rereading the above, it occurs to me that some Institute members, by this time, are probably muttering in their beatnik beards, "Ha, that Reynolds is a commie." Well, ha, that Reynolds isn't. However, here's another neck sticking out prediction about who is going to win the Cold War. The United States has already lost it. And so has Russia. Whether or not it is possible for one or the other to win if the war gets hot, I don't know, but I am of the opinion that capitalism as we know it in the United States and "Communism" as we know it in the Iron Curtain countries have both been weighed and found wanting by the world. Blow ups such as those that have happened in Hungary, on one side, and in Cuba, South Korea and Turkey are some of the first signs of a "curse upon both your houses" attitude that I find everywhere over here.

Which brings me, I suppose, to Poul's letter in Issue 137. I wouldn't deny that man makes his progress in fits and starts and that sometimes he even goes into reverse, but I do believe there is progress in society as there is in physics. I'm of the opinion that man won't make his real start toward whatever his destiny might be until he reaches a certain take-off point, and that take-off point is when he will have achieved an abundance of all the necessities of life for everyone. When food, clothing, shelter, education, medicine, entertainment, are available and overflowing for everyone. So long as we have not had these things, a man has occupied himself largely in trying to achieve them for himself and his family. And, anything goes. Such socio-economic systems as chattel slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and stateism (such as is found in the commie countries) are examples of this pre-take-off period in man's development. Once the problem of abundance for all has been solved, man's motivations will change and class divided society no longer makes much sense. That's why I think it unlikely that the far future will see a Duke of Helsingfors in revolt against the Czar of All the Terrestrials. I don't suggest that following this take-off point all man's problems will be solved; he'll undoubtedly have an ample number of new ones. But such matters as class divisions of society, wars, depressions, unemployment, racism and such, should disappear for all time.

Of course all bets are off if we're thrown backward by such a stupidity as a nuclear war.

A word to Jim Harmon. I've been living out of the States now for some eight years, but I still have made my living writing. I've only briefly met Campbell and Gold and I don't know any of the other science fiction editors at all. I think it helps to know editors and publishers, but it's not life and death to a writer. However, I'm of the

opinion that it's damn near life and death not to have an agent who lives in New York. ((To those of you who are currently productive and don't have an agent, may I recommend two members of the Institute who are both ethical and excellent: Harry Altshuler, 225 West 86th St., N.Y. 24, N.Y. and Robert Mills, the Rogers Terrill Literary Agency, 8 East 48th St., N.Y. 17, N.Y. TRC)).

A question to the Secretary. How did that new spot in Mexico turn out--- the writer's paradise to replace San Miguel?

((Well . . . . . I took my wife and family along -- which is fine for vacationing but hole-in-the-headish as far as getting work done. TRC))

JACQUES SADOUL SAYS:

Science fiction writers be hanged -- if only as a service to the public salubrity.

Why?

Well, to paraphrase Aldous Huxley who used to say: "Let us beware the imaginary creations of our mind; oftentime they soon pass into reality. . ." is there need for greater proof that SF writers are at the source of past, present, and future abominations, arms, A-Bombs, mutations, etc.? Their guilt is at once evident and incontestable. Moreover, this natural law expounded by Huxley should be all means have a retro-active effect, by which, it seems only fair to me, they would be charged equally with all past horrors which indeed they could have foreseen.

I am all the more in favor of this summary indictment that I myself do not delve into SF but rather in fantasy and weird tales, my favorite notables being Lovecraft, Derleth, Merritt, Van Vogt, etc. I have already written a few short stories and two novels: Passion According to Satan and Who Indeed Is Sane of Mind. (I am only 26). I have asked my publisher to send you three or four copies for those members who understand French. ((Three copies of La Passion Selon Satan arrived and will be passed on to those of you requesting them. TRC))

In France the best SF writer, with all due respect to our colleague Carsac, is Charles Henneberg who has written three novels: La rosie du soleil, La chant des astronautes, and especially his unforgettable La naissance des Dieux (Birth of the Gods). He would be a select recruit for the institute, notwithstanding a difficult one to obtain, at least for the time being, since he died a short while ago. Should some members be inclined to read our esoteric language, I would be willing to send them one or two copies of Henneberg's works. ((Jacques Sadoul, 6 rue de la Poste, Toulouse, France.))

Language is always a formidable barrier. The members whose SF works are published in French would be pleased, I'm sure, to see how the translations come out -- especially since they are so often done by "hard laboring hack translators"! No wonder that most of their best books turn out to be little more than gibberish or altogether unintelligible. Fortunately the public, crassly uninformed, fails to realize this and finds them entertaining, which, of course, is all that really counts.

These subjects are, all of them, highly philosophical and accomplished -- need I add that my favorite magazine is Mad! I am completely in agreement with your project of solidarity, seeing that I am hardly acquainted with it, for as yet I have heard about it only from Gerard Klein, and to understand Klein, this is another matter, well....!

Thus I anticipate with no small interest your next issue, in the meantime, chin up and clear sailing.

JAMES WHITE SAYS:

Just a short but sincerely meant thank you note for PITFCS 137 and the preceeding Proceedings which I have received and enjoyed immensely. I've even gotten myself all het up about some of the things I've read in them and started mentally framing a suitable reply, only to find that somebody has said everything I had meant to say, only much better, a couple of pages further on. Regarding the "Starshoop Troopers" controversy, my feelings are very much similar to those so well outlined in George Price's letter, from which you can see that I lean heavily towards the middle in this argument, and while the middle is often an exciting place to be, the middleman's

I suppose this is because somehow there is something about you that I do not like, though we have never met. This need not disturb you (as I know it doesn't) in case you happen to encounter me as editor, because I publish a lot of people I don't like. I try to be impartial within the limits of the job (sometimes I succeed). Nevertheless, Dr. Fell, I suppose I shall have to keep on seeing what you're up to.

Meanwhile your latest issue continues the usual parade of author idiosyncracies in all their ugly manifestations. Poul Anderson, a good writer, manages to parade his assinine side in full display. Reg Bretnor dreams a fantasy about writers which ain't ever going to happen (except as a matter of fact under something like the Soviet system, where his Authors' Equity is law in a different form). Groff Conklin I suddenly find I like. Phil Farmer parades his particular sickness--and, man, he's the sickest! And Jim Harmon I like, in spades redoubled. Kick 'em again, Jim, they won't lie down.

Judy somehow shapes up this time as a blithering old lady taking up space for nothing. Schy Miller talks sense, and George Priwe seems to have actually read the book everyone else is talking about and therefore also makes sense within his own philosophy. Eric Frank Russell is logically subversive as expected -- and makes the only suggestion that would ever put sf writers on top of their market (which will never happen in the USA). And Fritz Leiber is brilliant, and his little essay makes a valid contribution to the relation of fantasy to so-called realistic literature.

But--my ghod--do you realize how thoroughly these authors reveal their own stereotyped selves? They all write like so many hack characters endlessly repeating their special hook lines.

ARTHUR ZIRUL SAYS:

It's wonderful to see you back in operation. Enclosed is my two bucks. If more is needed just holler. I don't know if anything can be done to up the base pay of S.F. but I do believe that something should be tried. If nothing else, a minimum (that is not laughable) should be fought for. I, for one, have already returned a \$12.80 check for a short-short and asked for \$20.00. I didn't get it. It wasn't the editors fault, but it was somebodies fault. It's not that I think anything I write is worth \$20.00, but if it's worth printing it's worth at least that.

BOB ARTHUR SAYS:

So pay the man his two dollars (worth more). So here it is. Glad to see you're still in business. Missed seeing you this June. Only had 12 hours in Milford myself. Been tempted to write occasionally as one or another dilates upon the need for a union of SF wroters, higher rates, and so on, but it seems pointless. The union is impossible and higher rates are probably so too. Even the Writers Guild out here has trouble maintaining solidarity during a strike!

Reg Bretnor's long screed in the current issue is very cogent and persuasive. I'd like to believe such an organization is possible, but I'm afraid we won't see it in our lifetime. French writers have a very efficient union. We might with profit study their organization (and how they got organized in the first place) and see if anything thus learned could be applied. I tried to join the French writers guild, whatever the actual name is -- Society of Dramatists, Composors, and Authors, I think -- and couldn't pass. They wanted from me both a birth certificate and a certificate of good moral character. I could have supplied one or the other, but not both. This is one regulation we'd better skip in the happy day when we have our own organization.

I think it was James Cain who arrived in New York about 15 years ago, all steamed up to organize a society of authors patterned along the French lines. This society would hold in trust the copyrights of all works written by members and lease them to publishers. Publishers would agree, as I think the case is in France, to buy a stipulated percentage of everything they published from the society. A large audience of writers heard the speech and many sided with Cain, but obviously opinion was strongly divided, and it was apparent many writers, individualists all, would not want to entrust their copyrights to any society. I think he had a good idea there, but I'm not in a position to appraise the details because, for one thing, I don't remember them clearly enough. Maybe someone else can recall this incident more clearly than I can.

However, only a tight organization, actually a union, along some such lines will ever

ideas lack the black and white simplicity of the "He's a great writer, and not afraid to jump on a few ideological corns" school on one side and the "Tar and Feather the blackguard!" camp on the other to make exciting reading. I do feel strongly about some things, of course. A thirty-five thousand worder has just come back for an end-to-end re-write. Do you know if there is anyone among the membership who has hair and nail clippings of Ted Carnell? And on top of this rejection my wife has come down with the influenza and I've had to look after the children, the oldest being three-and a half. My feeling on this, the fifth day, is that parents should keep the first child and drown the rest. Is this a subject for controversy?

((How about doing a short paper for the Proceedings on problems of translating American and English SF classics into Belfast Gaelic? How does Doc Smith sound in Erse? TRC))

KATE WILHELM SAYS:

Was I ever glad to see PITFCS doing business at the same old stand! And long may it wave!

Someone among that 126 "members in good standing" has put me in good with the mailman. I owe that someone a thank you -- I think. Anyway, whoever has been sending the magazine MOTOR, from London, yet (is it you, Ted? you're the only one I know in the crowd who whips around on a motorcycle) ((Nope. TRC)), but as I was saying, thank you, I think. In all honesty I must say that the only thing I know about cars is if it won't start when you turn the key and push on the gas, get out and look helpless. It is infallible, can be learned instantaneously with no practicing, and you never have to get any smelly grease or stuff on your hands. ((But can you imagine deCamp or Ted Thomas standing beside a car and looking helpless?TRC)) I never questioned the origin of the magazine; it has to be from someone in the Institution (whoops!) because it would take a special kind of a nut to send me a magazine concerning cars and motorcycles, and it is addressed to Kate--not Catherine. There aren't half a dozen people on the 'outside' who call me Kate.

Has it ever been aired whether or not science fiction writers believe in flying saucers? ((Ask Hans. TRC)) I've been asked to do an article for our newspaper here about local sightings of UFO's and the Sunday editor I talked to assumed that we all believe explicitly that extraterrestrials are spying on earth continually. Do we? Even if each and every one of us saw them regularly, who'd believe us? I had thought that the interest in the whole thing had vanished, but apparently the local populace is having a field day and the Courier-Journal has decided to give it space. So how about some comments. Are science-fiction writers solidly in the pro camp?

Fritz Leiber's "Strolling . . ." A case in point. After a story of mine that was in Amazing -- even though it wasn't sf, a woman in Maine wrote to me indicating that it was her story. If I had known her, had known her story, I wouldn't have considered doing it for fear of hurting her feelings, opening old wounds, etc. But I didn't know her. I wonder how many 'real life' stories I've put out of mind because they were too unbelievable!

JACK WILLIAMSON SAYS:

I'm pleased to discover that you have been able to revive the Institute. Even though I'm still taking an involuntary holiday from science fiction, while I'm trying to set up shop as a college professor ((A mug's game if there ever was one. TRC)), I find the Proceedings interesting -- I'm even still hoping to finish a couple of novels I have on the shelf.

RICHARD WILSON SAYS:

It's time I dug up the two bucks to keep from being excommunicated. But you really shouldn't set deadlines; that brings out the stubborn streak in people who otherwise would rush to volunteer ((I was afraid of being trampled in that rush. TRC)) Besides, no application blank was enclosed with my copy of #137. Tarfu in your clerical division. ((But if I fire me, who's left?TRC)) I enclose an extra added contribution in the form of a  $\frac{1}{2}\phi$  stamp received via junk mail. Since you've been

keeping records, and I deplore it, I expect to see the \$.005 accounted for, perhaps forever, in your balance sheet. Except to louse up your books it's a useless piece of mintage and B. Franklin deserves wider circulation.

This is being written in the horrible hiatus between publication of 30-Day Wonder (Ballantine) and appearance of first reviews, if there are to be any. So far as I can tell, the only people who've read it are those I gave copies to, a suprisingly large percentage (50%) of my family, and ol' Bob Tucker who, judgingly by the cryptic salutation in a letter that didn't mention it, got at least as far as page 6.

Somebody was discussing in Our Journal--or was it at Milford?--how a book gets written. Gordie, maybe. My way, or at least my way for 30-Day Wonder (you ought to settle on a style, Ted--all caps, as above ((regret to report that I'd settled on a style before I got to your last paranthetical remark. TRC)) or underlined: 30-Day Wonder (if I don't talk it up who will?)) was to write at night--early morning actually, after working 8 hours on the night shift at Reuters, in the attic, in longhand, on the backs of old New York Times hektographed proofs. The original plan was to write it in 30 days. There are thirty chapters, each covering one consecutive day in the narrative. As it turned out it took two and a half years. Lord knows when you'll see the next one; 1963 at this rate.

A twinge of conscience sometime in 1959 spurred me into the spurt that wound it up. Ballantine had advanced me \$250 in 1957 on the probability of a novel (when the contract for THOSE IDIOTS FROM EARTH was signed) and this helped make up the down payment on the house in which the aforesaid attic is situated.

The point I may be trying to make is that, aside from the opening chapters, the first 7 or so, the novel as published is virtually first-draft copy. When I settled down to produce, I wrote a chapter in longhand and turned it over to a gal down the road to be typed. There was no revision to speak of. If she had a query--and it was mostly about my 3 a.m. handwriting--we straightened it out on the phone. Her typed copy, with superficial editing for spelling and style (capitalization, italicization) became the final draft. Nor did Ballentine require any revision; merely a few cuts to bring the length down and eliminate one discrepancy.

The typist's price, incidentally, was \$50 for the original and two copies, with paper and carbons supplied by me. Too little? Too much? We haggled and finally based the price on the Writer's Digest typist ads. She had wanted \$150, which I righteously pointed out would be 10% of the advance. I won't use her again; she's making more by typing envelopes for her husband's mail order brokerage firm and I'm hopeful of training my teenage daughter to type ms. copy.

Oh, yes. (One should give all the facts.) A cigarette smoking writer needs something to whet the whistle. Sometimes during the spurt to the finish it was beer or ale, but mostly it was Scotch and soda. The first few chapters had been done, chiefly in the daylight hours, on coffee. Is there a detectable difference?

The trouble with beer is that you have to go to the bathroom too often. But if bathrooming is convenient I recommend A&P's own brand of ale (not their beer), Tudor. My Scotch preference is Grant's 8-year-old if I'm affluent or, if I'm not, which is more often, John Begg or Hanky Bannister.

You know when you have written your daily quota: it's when the combination of alcohol and fatigue makes your handwriting indecipherable. Then you go to bed and sleep the sweet sleep of accomplishment.

Anyhow I'm proud of the quotation from Richard Milhous Nixon which heads chapter 26. And I'd like it understood that most of these chapter headings did not come from Bartlett's; they were the happy fruit of years of note-making and clipping-saving. Contributions to future works gratefully accepted.

#### DONALD A WOLLHEIM SAYS:

I was moderately disappointed to see PITFCS appear again in the mail, though I suppose the masochist in me managed to read it through with a certain amusement. For a fact I do not think the appearance or disappearance of your journal will make the slightest difference in the sf world.



work. Writers have, it appears, a strong distaste for the word "union", but that is what it amounts to. Only by being strong and tough has the Writers Guild of America got anywhere. Only, also, I may add, by being in a unique position whereby the writers have to work in close contact with the producers, almost as creative technicians, has it been possible to make the guild work. Writers are still lowrated everywhere, but at least dramatists, TV writers, and screenplay writers have made gains. Just to make a very rough generality, a TV writer gets about 5% of the budget for his efforts---say \$2,500 for a \$50,000 production, \$1500 for a \$30,000 production. It can be more or less, and of course he gets residual payments if there are any reruns. The Writers Guild has signed a new contract which may bring writers 4%---possibly more---of the gross received for residual sales, in perpetuity.

Let's say the TV writer's stake in a production is more than 4% of the gross. It should be more, of course---imagine building fantastically valuable properties out of raw material, extremely refined and processed by the writer's brain in a unique contribution, at an overall cost of only 4%!

TV writers are reasonably well paid because, and only because, a single writer usually writes a show. If a TV show, like a magazine, was the product of five or ten highly skilled writers, the compensation would be miserable---perhaps as little as \$250 per man! On the basis of percentage of total cost, or total gross, whichever you please---let's take the latter---the penny-a-word magazines actually pay very high rates, comparatively speaking. A magazine selling fifty thousand copies at \$.35 a copy will get approximately \$10,000 back into the till. If the publisher has paid \$600 for his raw materials---the stories---he has paid 6% for his material, or fifty percent more than the TV writer gets.

I don't know what the average cost of the editorial contents of a slick magazine like SEP costs, because I can't assess the factual material nor the contributions by the editors. However, one of R. Bretnor's points fanned a fire that has been smoldering in my breast for decades. He points out that SEP and other slicks have munificently raised their rates from \$500 during the depression to \$850 now. Consider increased income taxes and depreciation of money values, and this "raise" works out to an effective cut in rates of about \$137, or 1/3. My figures are rather hastily arrived at, and without benefit of slide rule, but I can't be far off. (I'm figuring the \$850 will buy \$363 worth of goods at 1940 figures.)

I have long nursed a potential article for writers to be called "Do the Slicks Pay Sweat Shop Rates?" Without further verbiage, the answer is a resounding YES. If the SEP, to take an outstanding example, pays \$30,000 for its editorial contents-- and of course it may pay more when it assembles some big names---it is paying less than 3% for its priceless raw material, or exactly half what the penny-a-word magazine pays, percentagewise. I'm going on the basis that the gross of the SEP will average \$1,000,000 an issue. Many issues carry more than this in advertising, entirely eliminating the receipts from sales, which possibly---I dunno---represent a loss on the cost of production.

Anyway, slicks should lead the way in raising rates for writers. An absolute dead minimum for a first story in a slick should be \$3,000. The editors all cry to heaven about the difficulty of getting good stories. That's because they don't want to pay for them.

A study of writers appearing in slicks over a period of several years was carried out some time ago and if I recall the figures, it showed that the average new writer appearing in the slicks lasted about four years. Talk about your mortality rate of actors, oil wells, and prostitutes! Writers lead the way!

A handful of old pros go on and on and on, as good old pros do. They get the attention; unsung are the strugglers who sell two stories a year---I believe the same survey showed that this was the average sale of the writers to any one slick magazine---and after four years drop out, whipped. It is no wonder our best writers are dropping out of SF. It happens in much better paid---seemingly---fields too.

What other profession asks its successful practitioners to undergo years of training for a professional life of four years in which most of them merely eke out a living? Of course, you who are reading this have mostly hung around more than four years, but the averages are balanced by the great numbers who only made it for one year or two.

I don't know how or when an effective organization of writers can get started, and I am extremely sceptical of the prospect of getting large numbers of writers not working



in close contact to agree on much of anything. However, it may help if the writer starts with the reflection that as far as our society is concerned, he is--no matter who he is--effectively a penny-a-worder and looked upon as such. TV, books, Saturday Evening Post or whatever, the writer's percentage on the whole will come to less than the proportion of the gross a cent a word writer gets.

That's why most writers are part-timers now. Most book writers and magazine writers have other jobs--even well known book writers. Obviously, they can't write as much or as well as they could if they could really look on writing as a vocation they could pursue, rather than an avocation they indulge themselves in. It's not realistic for critics to deplore how bad our writing is in all fields in the US today-- they should instead acclaim it as being of superior quality, considering the miserable conditions of underpayment, insecurity, and brief working life under which writers labor.

I've spent an hour I didn't plan to spend pouring this out. I don't pretend to be an expert on editorial costs and other figures, but I can't be far wrong. What price creativity? It's been established--from 3% to 6% of the gross. That's what you're worth to the world, fellows. Next time you look a publisher in the eye, reflect that you cost him less than the paper you're printed on costs him, and conduct yourself accordingly.

Later:

As is obvious this was mailed late--written sometime ago, however. In my discussion of rates, of course, I omitted the case of the hardcover book, where the author gets from 10% to 15%. This is more of a proper percentage, and pays off when sales are big ---as much as a quarter million and more sometimes. Unfortunately, sales are generally small so that total pay is small. Still, the percentage is respectable and if applied to other fields would make a proper remuneration for an author. In the TV field it would mean the writer of a half hour TV show would get \$3500 to \$5000. In the slick magazine field, say the SatPost, he'd get--what? \$3,000 to \$5,000 more. True, established writers get this now--but this should be a starting minimum, and I'll argue the point with any editor alive! Obviously, paperbacks should pay more than they do--at least a 10% minimum.

#### WILLIAM F. TEMPLE SAYS:

From innumerable points deserving of comment in PITFCS-137 I light on Arthur C. Clarke's one re fanzines, are they worth writing for &/or acknowledging? Doubtless because I've spent the afternoon carefully composing a 1500-word letter to an American fanzine. Was it worth it? I don't know. Only know I had to write it. Because I felt it was something that had to be said to counteract a bad trend infiltrating into s-f fandom. Why should I think fans important? Ted Carnell likes s-f readers: they provide revenue. But fans, he opines (probably rightly) read little s-f and buy less (they borrow). However, I've observed from experience that what fandom thinks today the world tends to think tomorrow. ((I wish Temple had given just one example. TRC)) The audience at large little notes nor long remembers. The fan-type notes and remembers. Arthur's "expense of spirit" (must he measure everything by spermatozoa or \$?) has for the most part, I hazard, dribbled away into the flat fenland of the Casual Reader. How many PLAYBOYS are going to care a damn about the "impact of Astronautics upon Literature"?

He ought to know better. Before the war he and I churned out a fanzine. Its circulation was less than 100. Of that elite a respectable percentage became professional s-f authors, influencing more fans to become authors, influencing... For what it's worth.

Still, fanzines are a problem to the pro. A recent survey by the British Authors' Society shows most authors have to combine a full-time bread-and-butter job with writing. Their writing time is therefore limited. I average an intake of one fanzine per day, even though I subscribe to none (I'm as cagy as Arthur when it comes to trying to avoid inroads on my writing/thinking time). By the time the job, the family, friends, relatives, and un-amputatable (is there is such a word -- there is now) interests like literature, music, beer, films, theatre, sometimes TV have gorged their fill, I have maybe an hour, two at most, left. A bulky fanzine -- and how bulky they are these days -- and my response to it can swallow that. Then I curse fanzine editors, who are mostly young bachelors with few other interests, not even women, and all the time in the world to kill. They tend to think I'm a curmudgeon

for not writing for them. Isolated in Oshkosh, they think they are the only pebble on the beach. Forgetting a writer must write for money or the lisping kids at his knee will famish. And even the author's cat needs feeding. And then I remember the late nights long ago, sweating at that handle, duplicating, stapling, addressing, sending our fanzine off into the blue, hoping for a response for our efforts.

If a writer can't imagine himself in another's place, he's no writer. If he does nothing else but that, he'll never be a writer. Where does one draw the line? A little lower than Arthur Clarke does, I think, and a little higher than I do.

((If any of the membership knows of a diplomatic way to handle the problem of unsolicited fanzines, I know that a number of us would be most grateful if it would be passed on. A few carry mature and provocative material that I thoroughly enjoy (Bob Leman's publication being a case in point) and I'm grateful that I was included in the audience. Most of them, however, are loaded with extremely dull and sophomoric accounts of private doings that produce little more than bored mystification. (Though the detailed discussion in this issue of whether or not somebody stuck his finger in Jim Harmon's eye with malice aforethought would probably produce a similar reaction in an outsider. I suggest that that particular matter be dropped and that those who are in the mood for a bout of flyting (and I trust there will be many) take on Alfie Bester in the next issue.) But -- back to fanzines -- it does seem rather bad manners not to acknowledge receipt -- after all, even if I didn't ask for it, the poor bastard who cranks the thing out has invested a hell of a lot of time and at least some money in his little horror. But if I do, it keeps coming. TRC))

LAN WRIGHT SAYS:

((One of the many things I like about our English colleagues are their addresses. Lan lives on Sandpit Lane in St. Albans. TRC))

Herewith membership application duly completed, but more than thirty days late -- I hope it doesn't disqualify me. Personal troubles and business difficulties have occupied me to an unprecedented extent these last weeks, and I'm beginning to realize how Sysiphus must have felt with that blasted rock.

Thankfully I received PITFCS 137, which as always provided several hours enjoyable reading - I'm always interested to read other people's psychological disrobings - one thing about Fanmags and their like seems to be that you can say all sorts of nasty things about others without the slightest risk of a libel action. Apparently people don't care what is said or thought about them by others providing the 'others' are of the same genre. ((Nobody but us hacks can call us hacks hacks. TRC)) It's only when outsiders are brought in that trouble begins. Which only goes to show how broadminded we SF people are (within our own sphere - outside it might be a different matter.)

One thing puzzled me in 137 - surely Isaac Asimov must be Ferdinand Feghoot? After all, from what I've read, Feghoot (like Asimov) is a biochemist, a science fiction writer, and an unbelievably great lover. By his own definition Asimov admits his guilt. Perhaps its a dual case of split personality and Reg Bretnor only thinks he's F.F. because Asimov doesn't -- if you follow me. In any case neither of them needs to be embarrassed - all the best Napoleons think their real name is Joe Doaks. The desire for anonymity in authorship can be traced to shame at what one has written - hence the resounding use of pen names until public reaction is known. After that the unwilling author can allow it to be dragged from him by red hot knives and other forms of torture that in reality he is Ferdinand Feghoot or Joel P. Goelightly. I used a pen name once and once only, and on that occasion I was told by a friend(?) "Great Heavens, did you read that load of \*\*\*\* by that new chap \*\*\*\*\* in \*\*\*\*\*?" The experience so shattered me that I determined never to do it again. After all, if your best friend will only tell you under cover of a pseudonym (Yours, not his) then the adverts about a certain type of soap must be all wrong, and I'll never use it again - the pen name, not the soap. Or perhaps I mean both.

One thing I've been interested in for a long time without reaching any definite conclusions - do other authors have as many unfinished plots lying around as I do? You know the sort of thing - ten or twenty pages of sheer delight that just never seem to get finished for some reason or other because the idea suddenly went sour. Is so, why not an exchange system between people caught in the same boat? After all, I'm sure Heinlein or Asimov or Cogswell could do great things with some of the ideas I started. Come to think of it - I might not be able to do much for the ideas they left lying around. Ah, well - that's another idea that came to grief!

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(Bester Continued)

living into their makebelieve worlds."

"Their science is a mere repetition of what has been done before. They ring minuscule changes on played out themes, concepts which were established and exhausted a decade ago. They play with odds and ends and left-overs. In the past years this has had a paralyzing effect on their technique."

"This department is exasperated with the science fiction author who seizes upon a trifle and turns it into a story by carefully concealing it from the reader. His characters behave inexplicably in a bewildering situation; little by little he lifts a corner here and a corner there, and leads the reader down the garden path of curiosity until at last he removes the cape with a flourish to reveal . . . nothing"

And later -- "The appeal of science fiction has always been its iconoclasm. It is one field of fiction where no cows are sacred, and where all idols may be broken . . . But in order to be an iconoclast, an author must be more than merely aware of the idol he wishes to destroy. He must be intimate with it and understand it in all aspects. This means that he must have devoted serious thought to it, and have beliefs of his own which will stand up in the place of the broken idol. In other words, any child can complain, but it takes an adult to clash with accepted beliefs . . . an adult with ideas."

". . . Outside of the exceptions mentioned above, science fiction is written by empty people who have failed as human beings."

"As a class they are lazy, irresponsible, immature. They are incapable of producing contemporary fiction because they know nothing about life, cannot reflect life, and have no adult comment to make about life. They are silly, childish people who have taken refuge in science fiction where they can establish their own arbitrary rules about reality to suit their own inadequacy. And like most neurotics, they cherish the delusion that they're 'special'."

"So it's the immature, the inadequate, the maladroitness who are killing science fiction today. Most of the adult authors have moved on to other fields. The bright young people who might be expected to bring in fresh blood are living in days when there has never been a greater demand for promising young talent in television, movies, magazines and publishing houses. With the exception of an occasional spare time short story, they sensibly refuse to waste their time on science fiction. They can earn more, learn more, and fare farther in other fields."

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FROM THE SECRETARY:

I. The Institute extends a cordial welcome to the following new members:

ENGLAND	Serge Hutin	Harry Altshuler	Larry Ivie
John Wyndham	Jacques Sadoul	Richard Ballantine	Will Jenkins
		Lloyd Biggle, Jr.	Stephan Kandal
FRANCE	GERMANY	John Boardman	Daniel Keyes
Jacques Bergier	Jacqueline Osterrath	Manse Brackney	Marvin Larson
Michel Ehrwein		Robert Briney	Andre Norton
Albert Ferlin	USA	Fred Brown	Edgar Pangborn
Georges Gallet	Forrest J. Ackerman	George Cowgill	George Price
	Howard DeVore	Lynn Hickman	Hollis Summers

II. The Secretary on Auxiliary Activities is happy to announce that Miss Joni Cornell of the Monassan, Pennsylvania, Chapter of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Institute for Twenty-First Century Studies is hereby appointed a Junior Fellow in the Institute.

III. It has been suggested that as a means of lightening the present financial burden on the membership and also of solving the continuing problem of requests by members that interested friends who are not professionally associated with the science fiction and fantasy field be placed on the Proceedings mailing list, subscriptions without the right of membership be accepted from outsiders. It has further been suggested that if such action is agreed upon brief notices might be inserted in the classified ad sections of such publications as the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. Your secretary, with reservations tends to favor the idea since (1) he has belatedly learned that a large run doesn't cost much more than a small one and (2) additional revenues would make possible the hiring of somebody to handle such chores as stapling and collating. What are your feelings?