

# Pittes 140

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE INSTITUTE FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY STUDIES

"In Hoc Signo Vincas, Nu?"

Special Series 140

Theodore R. Cogswell  
Secretary  
Committee on Expurgation

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204 McKenzie Rd.  
Muncie, Indiana

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As a matter of convenience to your secretary, it would be appreciated if correspondence would be directed to him at his business address as follows:

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### FROM THE SECRETARY:

My apologies to the membership for the long delay in producing this issue but the pressure of other business during the past few months has forced me to let more important Institute matters slide. I trust that future issues will appear at more regular intervals.

Department X, a new section which will be devoted to critical comment by the membership on recent sf of special interest, will begin with the next issue. Already scheduled are a discussion of Budrys's ROGUE MOON by Gordon Dickson and an appraisal of Aldiss's S&SF "Hothouse Planet" series by R. MacKenna. Contributions dealing with these or other relatively current works will be most welcome.

### SPECIAL NOTICE:

The sixth Annual Milford Science Fiction Writers Conference will be held Sept. 11 through 16 at Stenzler's Cottages, Milford, Pa. The sponsors, Damon Knight, Judith Merrill, and James Blish, may be contacted for registration information at Box 337, Milford, Pa. Cottage rental is \$40 to \$50 for the week; there will be a bachelors cottage as usual & inmates will pay \$10 to \$20, according to how many of them there are. Conference fees: \$3, plus \$2 a day; e.g., if you stay the week, \$17. Wives and husbands of writers welcomed as auditors. Children will be babysat during sessions. If you wish to take part in workshops, bring at least one recent ms.

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F. BORDES (FRANCIS CARSAC) SAYS:

I got Pitfas -138, and I enjoyed reading it. As I said in my last letter, I have many things to say, but not much time. Well, perhaps I can try saying some of them.

First: who killed SF? I will try to answer, not as a writer, but as a reader of SF. And I will definitely say: Bigheads!

What is SF? or rather, what should it be? Fun! F. U. N. As the Illiad was fun for the old greeks, or the Odyssey. What do we get today in most SF novels or magazines? Hogwash.

Why? because SF writers did grow bigheads.

Don't get me wrong. When I say fun, I mean that the story must not be boring, or infantile, or plainly stupid. I do not mean that it must be light entertainment. I can appreciate serious writing, being it mainstream or SF. But what I hate is either fairy tales, when the writer does not believe in fairies, or "we-are-here-to-think" stories.

In France, SF began with writers which were not only SF writers. Jules Verne did write a lot of ordinary fiction, and, after him, our best writers were people who did more of mainstream fiction than of SF, not excepting J. H. Rosny aine, who was our H. G. Wells. They wrote SF when they had something to say which could not be said in any other way, either because it was about the relations of man and the Universe, or because it gave a good background to their social or political ideas. And we had to wait till about 1950 before the new generation of genuine SF writers. Of course, back in the 30's, they were some authors who did only SF and adventure novels (some of them really good) but as a whole the SF writer is here something new.

In the States, as I know it, it was different, and with Amazing and the other specialised magazines, you had very soon pure SF writers. At the beginning, they were not very good, with some rare exceptions, and today I cannot read them when I find a back issue of Amazing or Astounding stories. The plot is poor, the characters are not cardboard, they are steel plates, and the style is something like that: "and then the irresistible desintegrating ray battered futilely against the impervious screen of the arch-pirate of Zangomar. Lola screamed at the top of her lungs" and, after 20 or more pages of impervious rays against irresistible shields, the story conks out with the brave scientist saying: we shall be back!

Well, little by little, things got better, and when Campbell took Astounding, he did a very good job of improving the stories. It is often said that the Golden Age of SF was somewhere between 1938 and 1950. It seems to me to be more or less true. At that time, some writer had found the right mixture of science, characterisation, adventure, etc. which makes a story enjoyable. There is no, and I think to Paul Anderson, Heinlein, etc.

But, . . . some others did grow big heads, and began to think! They were not contented to put in their stories, as a background, their personalities, their ideas, their feelings, their yearnings. No, they began building their stories around them. We are the reformers, are we not? We dare to think what no other would dare! Look at us, with the light of the future on our foreheads! And, of course, if I imagined a future state at a variance with the modern ones, I did feel compelled to imagine another one more at a variance. And so on, and so forth. There is no harm in it, intrinsequely, but for the fact that they were so busy at this work that they simply forgot to tell a story.

And there were others, who took at characterisation. No harm in it, either, except that I like a story with living people in it, but a story! It is true that most of



them are readable. Not so about the modern ones.

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And then came PSI; I am fed up with psidiocies. I do object to PSI. Not because I don't believe in it (who can tell? and I used telepathy in one of my novels), but because PSI, till now, did give us only bad stories. At least when it is the center of the plot. The reason? Well, with PSI, all is too easy. You put your damn hero in a jam, and, pfuit, teleportation, telekinesis, or what you like, and out he goes, with not even a spot of jam on his jacket.

And don't speak about "The Humanoids". It is a great book, the only one I know where PSI is handled cleverly. But the basic idea is not PSI. It is what man will become when he has perfected the perfect machine. And that is the reason for which I do even prefer "With Folded Hands".

Another thing; we, SF writers, are too much sensitive to what literary critics say about our work. They don't understand it, it is out of their experience, so they try to sink it under such criticism as: infantile, or without characterisation. All right. Let us take them here, and try to do better at creating "living" people. But . . . are we sure that people who are living to us will ever be living for them? We do not have the same scale of value. People who will be mainly involved with the future, be it space travel or anything else, will very probably never be of the Proust category. I don't think that introspective (I don't say introverted) people will ever make good spacemen. I cannot see people of that kind on Mars. They would very quickly die, either of boredom with themselves, or by the hands of their comrades. The so-called introspective fellow is, in truth, a kind of mind vampire, who always seeks to pry in the mind of other people to compare with his own. You can see the result in a Mars Dome or a spaceship. No, people who will survive, and do a good job of it, will be people who will be interested by something else than psychology. By the ferrous content of the sands, by observations of Jupiter, and so on. And I do not except the psychologist of the crew, who will be interested in the sanity of the others, not so much in his own precious ego.

That does not mean that they will not think. It is quite possible that the captain of Spaceship "Fortune" will come back to Earth with a valuable contribution to philosophy. And this tinkering with reality, be it geology or philosophy, will never interest literary critics. For them, the only interesting studies in man are the following ones: Do I go to bed with Jane or Mary? Do I kill my mother, or rape my sister?

Of course, this is a rather extreme point of view. But, perhaps not so extreme. To be "good", a book must concern itself with MAN alone. Man, cut out of his work. The trouble is that MAN does not exist, in truth. I know lawyers, fellow scientists, grocers, miners, sailors. I do not know MAN.

Well, things being what they are, as de Gaulle says, we will never achieve recognition by the tenants of mainstream literature, and more so by the literary critics. So, to hell with them. Of course, they do their demolishing work well, and it cuts on the money we could get. But what can you do, except to wait for the end of the so called "humanistic" trend, and help a little to kill it.

But we will achieve nothing by trying to get on the wagon of mainstream literature. They don't want us, and we can get there only at the price of writing SF no more. Oh, if you write antiscience fiction, as Bradbury or Lewis do, then they will welcome you. Then can accept a SF setting, if you admit that Science is bad, and that only humanism, that is looking on one's navel, is good.

Now, I am waiting for the howls!

Some comments on number 138.

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George Cowgill: no, it is not because our ancestors did have small brains that they stayed so long at the handaxe stage. It is because man is conservative, that creative (I don't say intelligent) people are rare, and since man at that time was not very numerous, the odds against a creative mind appearing each generation were enormous. And, by the way, the handaxe did evolve, and became better and better.

Ted: Thanks for your answer to Gallet. I don't give a damn if my english is not kingly, as far as I can make me understood. It was good enough to give lectures in several US universities. And I have been told by english friends that King's English is spoken only some miles around Windsor!

Demon Knight: Bradbury a science fiction writer? Pooh! A fine writer, I agree, but an antiscience-fiction writer! Reminds me of a friend of mine who, everytime something goes wrong with his car, goes in a long declamation against modern civilization instead of learning to fix his motor.

George Price: Hurrah! Somebody who thinks that murderers are dangerous! You must be mad! They are poor victims of the society. You know!

Jacques Sadoul: Yes, Henneberg was a born writer. A pity he died before cutting out of his work all this nonsense about a planet not visible from the planet of a far away star, and so on. You like fantasy, and do not like what I write? All right, it is to me proof that I am on the right way.

Andre Norton: delighted to know that you have joined us. Here is somebody who knows how to tell a story, Bester to the contrary (Well, this last one don't).

Ted: Hurrah for Pitfcs! When is the next issue coming?

With all best wishes to people who write stories, and to hell with the Bigheads!

P. S. One more thing:

John Boardman: Who told you that democracy was dead in France? Because we don't have anymore the minister merry-go-round? Well, Americans should be the last to complain about it! You did reproach this to us enough! And de Gaulle has in truth less powers than Kennedy. (Not now anymore!)

REG BRETNOR SAYS:

Would like to add my voice to those who are opposed to extending the subscription list to persons outside the field. I think the result would be pretty similar to what happens to a press club when ad men and suchlike are admitted. Suddenly you find that the working press is gathering at the pub down the street and the interior decorators have taken over.

JOHN BRUNNER SAYS:

Your post as secretary of the committee on duplication reminds me that the great advantage of human beings over robots is that they can be produced by unskilled labour. Who first said so? I'd like to give him credit for a Great Thought.

PITFCS as usual is full of Great Thought. Myself, I'm withholding judgment on the Dean Drive controversy and such. Every last Friday of the month (and anybody visiting

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this Fair Land of ours is welcome to make a note) we hold open house in the evening and a month or two ago we had a bright young lad of sixteen or so among the visitors who had figured out a way of adapting the Dean Drive to some variant form or other - I recollect only that he introduced another rotatory component into the system. Anyway, he and an engineering draughtsman we know spent the whole evening huddled over his drawings and they could not figure out why it shouldn't work assuming adequate synchronisation and so on. So judgment suspended. I'm waiting for bright-boy to call around with a working model. Better yet, riding a working model.

I think Kipling hit on his number, Doctor, for reasons well and sufficiently set forth in Wentworth and Flexner's Dictionary of American Slang under the headword "Sixty-nine".

Main controversy currently raging appears to be the same as most places: west v. east, capitalist versus communist or whatever you like to call it. I've been having big slices of this lately. Like when Garry Davis arrived in Britain at Easter (Harry Harrison was also here and staying with us). For two years I've had a Word Passport of Garry's - though I had never met him before this visit - on the grounds that now we have a choice not between west/east or whatever, but between the arms race and the human race and I'm on the side of the human race. Like also being delighted to find the staff of the Soviet Embassy here in London far less dogmatically marxist than their opposite numbers from the US are dogmatically capitalist.

Weird situation. . . I distrust dogmatism per se; I don't think anyone ever anywhere was clever enough to wrap up human behaviour and human society in one set of all-embracing precepts.

From this side of the water, though, what scares us English liberals about the US is that there seems to be so little use made of the so-called freedom over there. What I mean is that . . . well, Kennedy makes this gigantic blooper over Cuba, for instance, and instead of people getting up and telling him the facts of life all the reports in the papers here say NATION RALLIES BEHIND PRESIDENT and so on. (Notable and praiseworthy exception: Joseph Alsop.) This was a piece of truly superb and horribly dangerous incompetence. Anyone see the USIS handout called CUBA, by the way? It was mailed in huge quantities over here, like an MRA publication, to anyone they had the address of, apparently. Far as it goes, it's true enough; there are plenty of documented facts in it. It just leaves out such important information as what decorations Batista was awarded by the US, and suchlike. Important, I'd have thought.

On this touchy subject: I object to pots calling kettles anything. Ever looked at a map of the US bases surrounding the Soviet Union? Cuba is eighty or ninety miles away by sea from Florida. Turkey, for example, a NATO country, has land borders with Russia. I don't recall Russia affording facilities to disgruntled Turkish expatriates to overthrow their government because of the NATO bases within a short distance of the frontier. What a squawk that would have blown up.

The other evening I was at a meeting addressed by Ella Winter, wife of playwright Donald Ogden Stuart who lives not very far from here. We covered Cuba and the Bomb and American foreign policy in general and American public opinion in particular. If half what she said is true, then we in Britain enjoy a freedom of opinion and action such that the US ought by rights to regard us as subversive and unreliable. (And a bloody good thing too. . .)

I get confused by remarks like Avram D's here in PITFCS: the one about the man facing jail for contempt and talking of his Quaker background, etc. What is "pro-Communist"



supposed to mean in such a context? Would I, for example, fall into the same category for arguing that the way to settle the struggle between the eastern and western ideologies is to allow them to evolve together into a viable world civilization instead of striking bomb-dropping postures and snarling at each other?

"My country right or wrong!" is a fine battlecry, but thoroughly out of context in the nuclear age. I agree that "my country right but not otherwise" is less suitable for shouting. On the other hand, what else is the good of freedom of opinion?

The word "free" has been so badly debased by the inclusion in the "free world" of countries like Portugal which is a one-party state of very nearly the worst kind that it's hard to stick to its original meaning nowadays.

No, for myself I refuse to be pro-anything except pro-human. We get the impression over here that the US government is fighting yesterday's battles today. A standard crack used to be that the Russians' picture of England was derived from Dickens's novels. Thanks to improved travel facilities and the thaw over there, things have changed. I don't know where the standard American picture of Russia came from unless it was from the texts of the twenties and thirties -- and that's a long time ago. It doesn't jibe with the personal impressions of British commentators like Crankshaw or laymen like myself. While the west is shadow-boxing against a ghost from a decade ago, the east is going places. They're even learning that not every westerner is a capitalist red in tooth and claw.

Just to make things quite clear: this isn't pro-Russian either. It's pro-whatever is demonstrably advantageous. And I'm in favour of universal literacy and manned spaceflight and improved living standards and so on.

If I go on I'll find I've written a book. Must stop.

Bob Silverberg: you're quite right, I do give myself time off between writing stints. These I use to catch up on recently published stuff in any field I'm interested in, to read texts, research new ideas to see if there's anything in them, and so forth. I actually write about half your annual output, I find by calculation. I didn't mean to give the impression I write 10,000 a day all the time. And as yet I'm a long way from selling everything I write, because whenever I get ahead of the ratrace I do a straight novel and over the past two years I've done 250,000 words' worth of these and not sold them. Still hoping.

If I start on George Price, I'll never stop. And stop I am going to. Every now and then in the New Statesman and similar papers they run competitions based on an idea I like very much: produce a digest of well-known books in clerihehew form. This I want to commend to the readership.

Few examples of my own:

Lorelei  
Behaved immorelei.  
She would indulge in any sort of foolery  
For joolery.  
(Gentlemen Prefer Blondes.)

On Airstrip One  
Sex just isn't done.  
Thou shalt love Big Brother -  
Not each other.

(1984)

Three men on a raft  
And a girl sitting aft.  
When the voyage was done  
Then there was nun.

(Sea-Wyf and Biscuit.)

Basil Seal's solution  
Was to help the emperor with his revolution.  
But despite their acquaintance at Balliol  
It was a falliol.

(Waugh's Black Mischief.)

And so on. A Case of Conscience, come to think of it:

Father Ruiz-Sanchez  
Didn't pull his panchez.  
He called it a trap of the devil  
- On the level!

And No Blade of Grass:

The grass-blight's ravages  
Turned people into savages.  
People who live on grasses  
Are asses.

JOHN BOARDMAN SAYS:

Willy Ley has done a great favor to science by running down the canard about the mathematically impossible flight of the bumblebee. This story makes its appearance whenever an anti-scientific philosopher attempts to discredit the scientific method by way of establishing instead his own brand of mysticism.

Isaac Asimov's reference to Kipling's "nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal lays" brings to mind Kipling's less widely anthologized works. The Poet of Empire is generally supposed to be responsible for "The Bastard King of England" and "The Sexual Drive of the Camel"; from here to the quoted line is a distance no wider than a couch, psychiatrist's or otherwise.

The political discussions in PITFCS show an ominous but interesting polarization of opinion now taking place in American society. This same polarization took place here at Syracuse University, anent a recent showing of Operation Abolition. On the one hand are people who believe that American security can best be preserved by preserving American ideals, and that complete freedom of speech, publication, and association ought to be guaranteed to every person and political group, regardless of the doctrines they advocate. On the other hand are those who hold that the Communist danger, internal and external, is so serious that our country's security necessitates restrictions on these freedoms. Certain people are to be prohibited from advocating dangerous or potentially dangerous doctrines, and the rights of free speech, press, and assembly should be denied to these subversive elements and their sympathizers and dupes.

The cleavage between these two groups is getting serious, as the recent flap over the John Birch Society and the widely acclaimed revival of conservatism show. All of this reminded me of something I'd read before. The following passages are from an eloquent editorial by Bernard DeVoto in the May 1954 Harper's:

"Enough people have been convinced that popular discussion and debate are treasonous. Enough have been convinced that constitutional guarantees of individual and civil freedoms are the last refuge of Reds. A judicial decree merely opens the bench to Communism. . . . We begin with a group of sufficiently scared people and the outbreak comes when then collide with a group who have got their backs up because they think that the subversion of popular institutions has gone too far. . . . There is a collision between the group of angry citizens, who will certainly be called the Reds, and the group of sufficiently scared ones who may as well be called the Yellows. . . . It starts because the Reds have no recourse but arms and the Yellows have been taught that no other can be trusted. Peaceable assembly and petition for the redress of grievances are treason, due process is a Communist snare, civil liberties cannot be granted to traitors."

Well, the blow-up didn't come in '54, partly because the "Yellows" had the inept and opportunistic leadership of Joe McCarthy rather than the firmly grounded ideological position of Barry Goldwater or Robert Welch. But since that time, the Supreme Court decisions against segregation and in favor of the civil rights of various people accused of subversion, the success of Castro and his movement in Cuba, and the likelihood that the Peking government will soon be voted into the Chinese seat in the UN, have given new vigor to conservatism. The present situation could be called a "cold civil war", and the "Yellows" now have very competent leaders. As my beliefs put me firmly on the side of the "Reds", I'll stand with them should the cold civil war get hot, but frankly, I'm apprehensive now. I understand that one result of the exposure of the John Birch Society is that it is now getting applications faster than it can process them.

Upon re-reading my letter in #139, I find it possible that someone might question my implication that there is no more room for internal discussion and dissent in the Republican Party than in the Communist Party. I stay with that remark; I saw how the convention delegates were dragooned into line for Nixon, and how the chairman vainly tried to gravel out of existence the ten pitiful Louisianans who stuck with Goldwater to the last. Of course, this by no means implies that the Republicans, if elected on their program instead of on the military record of their leader, would deliver a totalitarian regime, or enforce on us all the conformity they enforce in their own councils. After all, a party which includes Jacob Javits, John Lindsay, and Silvio Conte is not beyond all hope.

I can't afford drinkable whiskey; would a jug of vishniak now patiently maturing in the closet qualify me for membership in the Sons of the Whiskey Rebellion?

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR. SAID (IN THE JUNE 1945, A. S. F.):

Finally, television, my own guess is, may never reach the stage of being in everybody's home, as radio broadcast receivers are now. Why?

Radio receivers today are used largely for three types of entertainment --- from the receiver owner's viewpoint. It is used to pick up certain programs which the listener wants to hear. Such programs as dramatic and comedy and news reports; to a lesser extent symphony programs. Second, it is used by housewives, evidently, as a sort of anaesthetic gadget while doing the routine, boring household tasks. The listener's mind isn't made so conscious of the dull job. Third, and by far the greatest use for radio, is as background music for some other occupation. Is your set on at the moment for such a purpose? It may be a bridge game, a magazine or book, or the monthly bills that is in the forefront of your consciousness; the music is a very pleasant and unobtrusive background.

Of these three functions, television can supply only one. It can't be unobtrusive; you have to watch it. But you can't watch it, if you're doing housework, bills, playing



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bridge, or reading. And dialogue cast for television use is unintelligible unless you do watch; try following the sense of a motion picture sometime by closing your eyes and listening only to the sound accompaniment. Even the music sounds bad; it was paced to point up and emphasize the action, not to be listened to for itself alone.

My own hunch is that too few people will buy the expensive, four hundred dollar television receivers to support the commercial advertiser's very expensive show.

ARTHUR CLARKE SAYS:

Many thanks for Pitfcs No. 138 which arrived here recently. I am afraid my comments will always be about two issues out of phase owing to the inevitable delay in transit to this remote corner of the globe.

First of all, in case no one has already reported this, I'd like to draw your attention to the formation of the H. G. Wells Society (Address: 39 Rugby Road, West Bridgford, Notts., England). It puts out a journal called the Wellsian and I suggest those who are interested write to it for information. Its initial publication suggests that most of us would be interested in following its activities.

Though I don't want to comment on matters which have probably already been thrashed out by other contributors, John Brunner's remarks on his output have somewhat shaken me. When he says he does up to 10,000 words a day as a matter of course, and has hit 18,000, I feel somewhat shattered. A lot of people consider me prolific but I regard a good average day's output as 1,000 words and my conscience is satisfied when I have reached this. Actually, when I'm working hard on a novel I frequently reach 2,000, or 3,000 words a day and the maximum I have ever reached was about 5,000.

I think that most serious writers (and I am not trying to needle John about this, and recognise that anyone who tries to make a living from magazine writing has to have a pretty prodigious output) must operate around the 1,000 words a day level. After all, that means publishing three books a year, which is somewhat phenomenal. Only a very few prodigies, such as H. G. Wells, exceed this level. I am aware that natural phenomena such as John Creasey and George Simenon can churn out a book a month for twenty or thirty years -- but how many of them are remembered within a month of publication?

I really agree with my old roommate, Bill Temple, about fan magazines. For the amateur they are invaluable training, for the pro they are a problem and largely a waste of time. Needless to say, this comment has no relevance to Pitfcs.

I don't agree with Bill however, that much of my output has been "dribbled away into the flat fenland of the casual reader." In PLAYBOY I think I reach a pretty influential audience. In any event, everything I want to be preserved has been published between hard covers, or will be in the near future.

A comment on the Secretary's third proposal. I am definitely against extending the circulation because much of the charm and value of Pitfcs lies in knowing that we are all members of a friendly and compact (well, compact) little circle and can say what we please about each other. Much of this intimacy would vanish if every Tom, Dick and Harry could join in. I know there's a danger of cliques, but in this case I think the risk of in-breeding is negligible. As far as lightening the financial burden, I am sure that many of us would be willing to increase our subscription for a guaranteed period if it would help. You can call on me for ten bucks at any time.

A couple of personal items. I hope to be in the U. S. during the fall to take part in the big American Rocket Society "Space Flight Report to the Nation." I have been asked if I'll take part in a T. V. panel discussion on the U. S. space programme, moderated by Ed Murrow and featuring von Braun, General Doolittle, Krafft Ehrlicke and others. I'm to be the impartial "Devil's Advocate"; I'll expect a subpoena from the

The other item is much more improbable. The most fantastically distracting event in my hum-drum life as a down-to-earth science-fiction writer has just occurred. Sitting less than 5 ft. away from me as I dictate this, is a large wooden chest containing two beautiful bronze cannon and more than a 100 lbs. of pure silver in the form of Mogul rupees, most of which appear as if they have come straight from the mint despite the fact that they have been lying on the sea-bed for 260 years. This interesting little souvenir was brought back by my partner, Mike Wilson, as a by-product of his last underwater film-making expedition. I can say no more here, but you'll be able to read all about it in my next book but three or four (advert.). For the 99.99999 per cent of the population which has never come into direct contact with sunken treasure, I can report that the experience is confusing, intoxicating, and generally disorientating. But certainly stimulating.

POUL ANDERSON SAYS:

After studying the last several months' production of the leading science fiction magazine and pocketbook publishers, I have a modest proposal to advance in Pitt-Fox.

Obviously these enterprises are all too impoverished to hire proofreaders. I suspect that some would be too poor to have type reset, even if they got their galleys corrected free.

We have been complaining for some time now about editorial havoc wrought on our stories. But this is a secondary issue. First we must see to it that the final product can be read at all, in any way, shape, or form. I therefore suggest that the Institute sponsor a charitable foundation which will accept donations for the purpose of hiring for Street & Smith, Mercury, Ace, et al. those printer-type personnel they currently lack.

Won't you let a publisher love you?

AVRAM DAVIDSON SAYS:

Bloch & Russell got the right ideas. How'm I ever going to become a success in the moon pitchers if I continue to read and to write you? To say nothing of getting go-to-Chi money to finish the epipi (for epic opus) with H. E.? If I don't do the extra two chapters Knox Burger insists on before he'll part with so much as another small ecu; not that I blame him.

You seen the June F&SF? Best issue in ever so long, every story a gem (though Arthur C. Clarke's lacks lustre), except for the last one, by Randy Garrett and some hack nobody ever heard of.

You know that Bob Silverberg is RIGHT about your stapling? Here I and all of us have been struggling with the unfoldable pages for years now, and all the time a remedy was at hand. Whyn'tchu use it?

Nor do I know why you are afflicting me with the lousiest mimeo job to pass my eyes (the latest crudzine was impeccably clear, alas); after all, I sent you two dollars. First I sent you one dollar, then I sent you the other dollar. You look in your records, I sent you . . .

The situation re me & fanzines has changed summat since last. Instead of once a month I'm now getting a couple a week, it seems, thanks to such staunch figures as Aunt Harriet Kokchack and Uncle Sidley Coleman. And say do you know what? Some of them are real interesting, in part. I have been moved to write letters, but that's nothing, I write



letters to everybody: Brenda Starr, Bishop Pike, Dick Nixon, Uncle Don, Registered Hubbard Scientologists, milkmen in Madison (Ind.) -- in short, to almost anybody. Result: A hektographed questionnaire for WHO'S WHO IN FANDOM -- 1961, published by Lloyd Douglas Broyles of Waco, Texas. I think this flatters me more than the Hugo. But my innate modesty will prevent my answering. Also, who has the time which fan activity would ultimately require? I've all to catch up on since my membership in the Science Fiction League lapsed in 1935. No, no. I'm too old. But I'm very pleased, very pleased indeed. Thank you, Lloyd Douglas Broyles, of Waco, Texas.

All right, P. J. Farmer: your challenge was received up this way, and duly accepted. I admit I don't reach much of your writing, just as I seldom eat avocado. But I did read the ALLEY MAN. I maybe won't go so far as to say that you are "sick," no sir. One a month is all I can handle, I was injudicious enough to write a kid Lovecraft fan that I thought Lovecraft was depraved; kid promptly peached to Aug. Derleth, who came forth roaring with rage and rent my quiv'ring flesh: so: no sick, Farmer. But I cannot forgive you for THE ALLEY MAN. Because why, sir? Because the idea that Mousterian Man was content, in OGRE (IF), to kill him off in 1556 not only still exists, but lives on as a pariah on the fringes and dung-heaps of hom. sap. civilization, is a great idea, a wondrous idea, a rich, lovely, vigorous idea, full of infinite possibilities. And then you dropped it like an ice cream cone on a sandy cement sidewalk. H. neanderthal. alive and emptying our garbage cans I can accept. But H neanderthal. recollecting details of battles 40,000 years ago, and toting a paleolithic Lily Dache hat down the millennia; no, no. Absurd. And what came after that? Poop. Grunts, groans, stinks, and utter confusion. You waste your genius. You ought not to. But I wish you well in your attempt to be one of the c. 67 white men who can speak Navaho properly.

George Price is a man of good sense. Who is George Price?

I gotta new one to add to Creative Editing, Creative Chairmanship, etc. Thanks to my world-wide reputation, and a friend who is working in Hllywd on a new TV series, I was given a samll job of ammassing data on graft in hospitals.\* (\* for a new TV series.) I was able to dig up about 12 pp of newspaper and magazine copy on that subject and sent it out. I'm now informed that they're, well, satisfied, but what they really wanted was "well-organized, dramatized, and fictioned-up hard-hitting expose-type" material. In short, to use their very words, "CREATIVE RESEARCH."

Should I open a Bureau?

WILL JENKINS SAYS:

I would like to offer a subject for argument. In a discussion recently I suddenly overheard myself insisting, all hot and bothered, that the real opponents of the progress of science throughout the ages have not been the clergy, but the fat-heads who worm themselves into positions of vast authority in the sciences and professions. Vesalius had no trouble with the church, when he did an accurate anatomy. It was the the doctors who fought bitterly to keep from being proved wrong. Semmelweis had the same trouble. Once a man gets into a position where his words carry weight, he fights ruthlessly to keep that high estate. In the standard example of obscurantism, it was not a clergyman who refused to look through Galileo's telescope and see that Venus was a crescent. It was an astronomer. The clergy offered no objection until Galileo insisted that, rightly understood, the Bible taught Copernicus' system and that everybody who didn't agree with him was a heretic. Here the clergy happened to be right. Right now, for example, people who doubt the exploding universe theory (like myself) are scorned. That's orthodoxy, - and much more insistently insisted on than clergy-men insist on anything.

There is, now, an increasing distrust (so people say) of intellect. There is a growing

"anti-intellectualism" in the US. I don't think this is necessarily true. There is anti-"Intellectual"ism. There is a spreading and absolutely necessary distrust of opinions uttered by fat-heads. Even new opinions can be wrong as well as old ones. Even newly graduated science majors can make idiots of themselves. There are an awful lot of people who took to the sciences in the first place because it would make them what they considered big shots. (In Central and South America a lot of people join the clergy for the same precise reason.) Idiots are idiots, and fat-heads are fat-heads even when they have college degrees or imposing positions, just as they were idiots and fatheads when they specialized in divinity.

I think it deplorable that public self-exhibitions made by self-appointed pundits bring the actual exercise of intellect into disrepute. There was a time when a similar narcissism among the clergy brought the age of faith to an end. The current flatulant self-approval of self-appointed scientists could bring the age of science to an end.

I don't particularly want to defend this thesis, but it would be interesting to see some reactions.

DAMON KNIGHT SAYS:

When Amis says he didn't ignore Heinlein, Bradbury, Sturgeon et. al. in NEW MAPS, I suppose he means he didn't ignore them completely. As for sympathetic and informed literary critics vetting our canon (you do, poy, and you schvab it oudt!) and confirming the heirarchy, yes, of course this has happened. S. F.'s sympathetic and informed critics are Anthony Boucher, Basil Davenport, James Blish, P. Schuyler Miller, me, and one or two others; the late Fletcher Pratt was one; if you polled these people, their list of the most important living s. f. writers would be substantially the one I gave.

If you're writing a geography book, it isn't enough to say that Marseille is the largest city in France: first you want to prove that Paris is full of dwarves.

I was going to suggest that the dialog of ideas Poul Anderson misses vanished from s.f. when it lost its predominantly rational quality because you can't very well argue about a story that only hits you in the viscera, much less about one of the "ideas" in Campbell's violently irrational and antirational psi stories; but come to think of it, s. f. was never that cool & cerebral, except in spots. Where the trouble really dates from, I think, is the loss of the technically educated letter-writing audience. That happened, I guess, sometime in the mid-40s. Earlier letter-columns are full of enthusiastic and technically informed comment on the stories. It seems reasonable to suppose that a lot of people in those days were spending their time reading & thinking about s.f., who later on found opportunities to do something more immediate about rocketry, atomic physics, &c., &c. Nowadays, the articles in s.f. magazines still draw comment, but the stories don't. Too bad, but you can't very well wish all those talented, intelligent people out of their laboratories & back into hall bedrooms.

This would be flagrant gernsbacking, of course, but maybe it would work: publish a story and an article on the same controversial topic, in the same issue. . . .

DEAN McLAUGHLIN SAYS:

The last couple of PITFCS' struck me as a bit spiritless, except for perhaps Bester's Blast; and that I'd already seen. (Did you really think many of us don't even flip the pages of the magazines any more?) Obviously, everyone is waiting for someone else to cast the first stone --- I can't believe we've run out of gripes already.



But while we're on the subject of Bester . . . from where I sit it looks like he's missed the point of Sturgeon's Law --- that 90% of everything is junk. By speaking of this preponderant 90% as if it was the whole --- and furthermore, by doing so in public! --- he has done science fiction and the Institute a disservice. It is all the more disturbing because he had previously attempted to brand himself as a "friendly" reviewer. I also question whether it is proper for a reviewer --- and I call him this rather than a critic (a very different thing) --- to publish comments such as he has published without a target to dissect.

Then there's the matter of Bester himself. I will rate him as competent for THE DEMOLISHED MAN and a few of his shorts. But THE STARS MY DESTINATION, for example, is nothing more than an attempt to "top" DEMOLISHED MAN's more flamboyant aspects; in this I admit he succeeded. It was a most colorful piece of work. But if gaudiness is the measure of value, the Indians who sold Manhattan were the ones who pulled the swindle.

While we're at it, what about that Bester novel that was announced "coming soon" a whole year ago? Where is it Alfie? Where's your nerve?

Put up or shut up. Or is Bester, perhaps, among the lazy, irresponsible, and immature he was castigating? It's up to him to prove he isn't.

I was rather amazed to see John Campbell make the effort to reply to George Scithers; usually, he declines to so demean himself. I can only gather that his scathing reply was the equivalent of a yelp of intellectual pain.

Mind you --- I'm not trying to put myself into that argument. I'm not qualified to pass judgement on the technical aspects; assertions and counterassertions fly over my head like machine gun bullets, but all I notice is the sound of their passage.

However, it does look like John is using a bit of one-upmanship in the form of the philosophic problem of first causes; that is, every explanation given can be demolished simply by looking innocent and inquiring, "yes, but why?" It is a valid device, of course, and John is right in pointing out that science is still full of the unexplained. However, as a forensic device, I hope he realizes it is useful only in demonstrating the absence of knowledge, and not for demolishing facts which have been established.

As for the Dean device, I sincerely hope we've heard the last of it. Too many unoriginal humorists have tried to make miserable by calling attention to an obvious pun. I remain a total skeptic on the subject. (Even tho I once described its principle to a mechanical engineer who at once informed me, "certainly it would work." I might have taken his judgement, of course, but I happened to know he was a fathead.)

Why do I refuse to believe? Well, I do prefer a nice, comfortable universe where everything behaves the way I always thought they would, and by-the-bootstrap-lifters are a little bit beyond the pale. But more important, I have yet to be given a really good reason to believe.

Even Mr. Campbell admits he has not seen the Dean device ascend under its own power. He has only seen that ~~& off~~ bathroom scales gimmick --- and as long as I'm being real paranoid, I might inquire whether John is really sure that what's under the lid of the scales (not the obviously trick-free lucite frame) is really the usual mechanism found in bathroom scales. (Has he, for that matter, investigated the mechanism of bathroom scales?)

Furthermore, had Mr. Campbell really been inclined to be impartial and cautious-critical in his science-reporter self-assignment, it seems to me there were several very

elementary, on-the-spot-possible tests he could have tried --- provided Mr. Dean would have allowed him.

First, to hold the bathroom scales on his hands while Dean plugged the thing in. A change in apparent weight of 12 pounds should have been noticeable. Second, to lie the device, scales and all, on its side in some sort of low-friction wheeled device --- a kid's wagon or a small baby buggy. Under power, provided the mass of the vehicle wasn't too great, the effect should have been immediately apparent.

If these two tests were negative, it would be the burden of Mr. Dean to explain why they were negative. If he couldn't, well, in Isaac Asimov's words, "my time is reasonably valuable." Come back when you have something to show me.

In fact, from the beginning, the burden of proof is on the inventor-discoverer. If he can't do that, tough luck. If the tree in the forest falls, and there is no one to hear it, does it make a sound?

Of course, Mr. Campbell assures us that confidential sources assure him that all manner of things are being done to develop and test the Dean device. Fine. I shall wait. Perhaps someday they will come forth with perfected versions of the thing. But until that time I shall hold to my present beliefs. There is a great virtue in holding a conservative attitude --- you don't change your ideas until you have a damn good reason for doing so. That, brothers, is the only way to achieve solid progress.

In other words, John, perhaps you have seen the light --- but you cast such a big shadow every time you try to tell us about it.

Politics? In the Price-Cogswell debate I'm afraid I have to hold to the side of Cogswell. Price, who means well, manages to confuse a vivid hyperbole (everything to the left of Barry Goldwater) for a literal statement. Furthermore, he continually tries to reduce complex and many-valued questions into simple black and white dichotomies. Perhaps it's possible to make this sort of mistake in a country where there are only two effective political parties. (Both of which --- as Price and many others fail to notice --- embrace wide spectrums of opinion. The party of Barry Goldwater, for example, is also the party of Nelson Rockefeller. The party of the New Frontier is also the party of the Dixiecrats.) No doubt the politics of a nation like France would reduce him quickly to gibbering idiocy.

Of course, Mr. Price may not have noticed any pressure on himself to conform --- to hold no ideas except everybody else's. Some people --- perhaps he is one --- are notably insensitive to these pressures. This is not a bad thing --- it gives for independence of mind. But most of us live in a society wherein the division of labor makes us dependent on the "good will" of others. (Just for example, how many members of the Institute --- at least among the currently practicing members --- care to go out of their way to offend John Campbell? Raise your hands. Aw, c'mon, somebody!)

(Mind you, now; I don't accuse John of letting personal differences influence his editorial decisions --- I'm reasonably certain he doesn't, and will cite evidence if challenged. On the other hand, why do you think I'm hedging like this?)

Enough politics.

Phil Farmer invites us to call him names. He admits he is sick. Well, I'm not one to dispute the matter. However, I don't feel he goes deep enough in his self-analysis. To propose specific psychological ailments on the basis of individual stories is not, to my mind, a valid critical approach. More to the point, how many stories has he written which do not concern themselves largely with sex? Can it be, perhaps, that



he has somehow come to the belief that sex is the only subject it is manly and virile to write about? Most people --- I think --- have their brains at the other end.

I also accept Phil's correction on which state he lives in. I apologize to the state of New Mexico.

Finally, a complaint --- and a new subject for discussion. It has struck me lately that the novel is becoming a more prevalent form within the sf field, but at the same time, purely commercial considerations have caused many of them to achieve publication only in abridged form. Often, the story suffers as a result. (I've caught Ace books doing it several times, and if Brother Wollheim cares to challenge me, I'll cite him chapter and verse.) Frankly, this situation offends me. The DeWitt Wallace school of editing may be fine for people who like to Improve Their Minds without exerting them, and perhaps it is useless to complain that detrimental cutting is being done in a field which is not considered True Literature. But the result is that, far too often, sf is not being shown at its best --- that the published product is not as good as the author made it. (Why, I ask, do they want to buy a thing if they're going to ruin it before sending it to the printer?) I haven't been bitten by this myself, yet, but I've seen some of you boys get it without making a sound. It's time someone said something in public.

CHAN DAVIS SAYS:

Having recently celebrated the 7th anniversary of my appearance before the UnAmerican Committee, I find it galling to be still rebutting sneers to the effect that I am not to be respected because too far left. Against exactly the custom of so sneering I set forth on crusade in 1954, and dented the custom less than myself; today, people who act afraid of hearing a word too Red from me, can usually avoid hearing any word at all. But I guess I should rouse myself to rebut Avram Davidson's somewhat non-standard sneer.

To wit, "that when a man facing jail for refusing to answer Congressional inquiry (a refusal which may in certain situations perhaps be justified) talks a great deal to the press about his Quaker background, but talks no word to the press about his pro-Communist background, I find myself beginning to doubt said man's honesty. Which may not, of course, justify his conviction on a specific charge."

Now I am unusually far left by 1961 US standards (am as well as was), but also, by damn, unusually honest. Specifically on the subject of free speech and Congress, I have wild radical ideas, for which I do not claim clarity, palatability, indeed any virtue except validity; few of my Communist, anarchist, or Quaker friends are very close to me on this, I stand off with Lloyd Barenblatt, Alexander Meiklejohn, and 5 or 6 others (Hugo Black seems to be somewhere nearby, which is cheering, but many of my friends, even fellow-defendants, are not). On this since 1954 I have written a pamphlet and sounded off to a series of uncomprehending Congressmen, university administrators, well-wishers, and reporters. Some of them could at least understand my feeling that when charged with political heresy, a reasonable way to express one's conviction that such an offense does not exist, is to refuse to plead either guilty or not guilty. This does not mean I've begun posing as a conservative --- but I have sympathy for radicals who do --- why should they keep getting fired year after year just to convince flabby spectators of their honesty? I do pose as a calm, constructive, rational human being, but that's hardly a pose, I actually fancy myself one.

WINSTON P. SANDERS SAYS:

For some time I've been wanting to sound off, but felt rather diffident in the presence of ladies and gentlemen who have written so much more that was so much better than my few offerings. Finally I decided to take a self improvement course. I spent several weeks trying to become an All Star Author with the dramatic virility of Clarence Budington Kelland, the humanity of Kathleen Winsor, the gloss of Mickey Spillane, the dispassion of Horatio Alger, the encyclopedic enthusiasm of Harold Bell Wright, the courage of Norman Vincent Peale, and the high style of Karl Marx. But no one beat a path to my door except a little man selling better mousetraps. So I'll raise my questions anyway.

First, though incidentally, can someone explain to me just what it means to call a writer courageous? As long as the First Amendment remains more or less in force, what do we risk but a rejection? Admittedly someone will attribute nasty personal characteristics to us if he dislikes some viewpoint expressed in a story. However, this happens all the time, regardless of how innocuous we try to be. A friend of mine was once told to his face that he (and Edward Teller) were among the fascists Out To Get a certain poor local boy. It seems the --- sympathetic, mind you --- Machiavellian hero of a story by my friend happened to have the same name. I myself was (good naturedly) accused of having joined a national conspiracy to ignore West Virginia. Probably the rest of you have many such anecdotes to relate. Still, I don't see where any courage is required. . . . Well, yes, there is one exception, one class of writers who may indeed be considered brave, since they risk actual prosecution. Pornographers.

Second: you know, Amazing Stories ought not to have published that anniversary issue. They really oughtn't. Now my most cherished illusion lies shattered at my feet, less than the dust. The one about Buck Rogers inventing the bazooka. Bazooka first described in first Buck Rogers story, vintage 1929. I daresay we all believed that. Read it in books; told it to our infidel acquaintances; made it an article of faith. But then, finally, came the black day when Amazing Stories reprinted the original scripture. And we beheld with our own eyes. And lo, Buck Rogers did not have a bazooka. He had a closed tube from which rocket shells were launched, thereby missing the entire raison d'etre of the bazooka.

For that matter, I am uneasily unable to find where Verne ever published that famous description of the submarine periscope which allegedly rendered it unpatentable. I know for a fact, and wish I didn't, that Cleve Cartmill's atomic bomb of 1943 not only wouldn't work but couldn't have been built in the first place. I tried once to read Ralph 124etc and didn't get far (it was even harder sledding than James Gould Cozzens, and he beats Pearl S. Buck by a hair as the most overrated writer alive) but what I saw was mostly sheer pseudoscience. As for the "radar," that was described rather more vaguely than Hertz had treated the same idea a generation earlier.

No, it just doesn't pay to check up on one's own folklore. Now I have even begun to feel gnawing doubts about the Easter bunny.

However, if science fiction isn't technologically predictive, let alone sociologically, it's fun. Anyway, it used to be. There seems general agreement that in the last few years the salt has gone out of it. Past Proceedings of this Institute have discussed favorite villains, such as publishers, editors, inflation, television, unions, lack of unions, readers, critics, fans, the HCUA, the CP, the John Burp Society, the general decline of fiction, the general advance of science, even (horrors) the writers. But don't you gentlemen think that Eric Frank Russell's suggestion of senility contains the largest grain of truth? Surely none of us want to write, or read, or edit, or publish stories about psionic pseizures, crafty inter-

steller do-gooders, and future worlds where the certified public accountants have Taken Over. It merely seems to be the best we can do these days.

So can we take any steps to improve this situation? Well, let's first see if we guess what brought it about.

Now the conventional historians of magazine sf say that it began as the Gernsbackian gadget story. When this grew stale, the Campbell era developed: accept the gadget and see what happens to society. The postwar renaissance was sparked by Boucher-McComas, who introduced more up-to-date literary techniques (such as concentrating on characters as individuals rather than mouthpieces), and by Gold, who got the excellent idea of paying enough to make the labor of applying those techniques worthwhile. Today, we are told, this latest period has run its course, and sf is in the doldrums waiting for some fresh new concept.

Hm-m-m, is this all quite so certain? Verne was writing gadget stories and Wells writing people stories long before the Electrical Experimenter was a gleam in anybody's eye. These three traditions have continued to run parallel and to cross-fertilize each other (right out in public, too) ever since.

If you actually read the old-time sf magazines, rather than read about them, you will find that in fact they published only a minority of "pure" gadget stories. Most of their tales were pulp adventure, some were sociological or people-type. On the other hand, the heavy science story survives to this day and is still greeted with pleasure when well done --- e.g., by Hal Clement. Campbell and his stable did not create the sociological approach. What their great years amounted to was a new sophistication in developing the logical consequences of assumptions, as well as in characterization, style, and all-around literacy. Likewise F&SF and Galaxy did not invent anything revolutionary, they only developed a fresh set of emphases. For example, upbeat endings became less mandatory and sex was allowed to exist.

So what do we want Radically New Concepts for? We've done all right hitherto without them.

Nevertheless, the existing situation is undeniably not good. The stories certainly do tend to be dull, repetitious, and carelessly written. They have not quite fallen to the level of the early 1930's. (That's why Lovecraft is so revered, y'know. Turgid and tedious though he be, he stood above his contemporaries like a peacock in a chicken coop.) And believe it or not, newcomers to sf do still enjoy the magazines. I've talked to many such. (Another point often overlooked by us old timers is that the average sf reader only sticks around for a few years. Then he goes on to something else. We True Believers remain in the field long enough to get bored, but we may well be an insignificant minority.)

Agreed, then, with the above reservations, that sf is in a bad way. What should we do? Just as everybody has his pet cause to blame, so everybody has his pet cure. Writers all tend to see the line of salvation in whatever they do best. Thus Mr. Bester wants more psionic fantasy and verbal gymnastics; Mr. Amis, more satire; Miss Merrill, more human cuddliness; Mr. de Vet, more boppings on the bean; Mr. Knight, more phallic symbols; etc., etc., etc. I am not sneering at any of these good people. But is there really only one road to heaven? If my historical analysis is right, the answer must be no. There never has been any new approach, concept, or what have you. Instead, the good eras have been those when new refinements were being introduced --- ideational and literary --- and writers got genuinely excited about what they were doing.

I wonder if the next renaissance may not come in books rather than magazines. True, the current state of the sf novel is almost as depressing as that of the novelet and



short story. Probably only half a dozen novels in the last year were even worth taking out of the library, let alone buying. But if you add up the wordage of those half dozen, and compare it to the total wordage of shorter fiction that was of any interest, the preponderance seems already to lie with the books.

Why this should be, we don't ask. But a couple of reasons suggest themselves. One is financial. I am told, by Poul Anderson and others, that when the final results are in, the word rate for a novel is quite respectable. Also, as Gordon Dickson remarked once in the Proceedings, the amount of effort per word is less in the longer form. So that is one cause for hope, however crass. After all, the Institute seems to feel almost unanimously that adequate reward is a necessary if not sufficient condition for consistent high quality. A writer who can make as much money from a 50,000 word novel as he could from 100,000 words' worth of short stories is obviously working under less pressure.

But in line with my historical theory, I feel there is also a subtler and more basic factor involved. The Campbell golden age amounted to writers mastering the elementary techniques of magazine fiction; the Boucher-Gold renaissance amounted to them acquiring more advanced skills. They may now be in the doldrums simply because they've gone as far as they can. Oh, sure, of course they are still way behind the Kenyon Review. But Analog is not the Kenyon Review, whose social concepts (in this technological century) are way behind Analog. Could it be, then, that we are writing boredly in the shorter lengths because they hold no further challenge for us?

Well, is so, the novel is still wide open. Past successes only suggest a few of the possibilities. Heinlein, for instance, the perennial pioneer, has had fun for years adapting the suspense novel to sf; lately he seems to be making some preliminary experiments with straight social-consciousness methods. Budrys has used symbolic techniques, Sturgeon has preached, Vonnegut has played ducks and drakes, in ways which only the freedom of the novel form allows. At their best, the results have been delightful, at their worst no worse than the average present-day novelet.

Important: if my hunch is right, then the flowering of the sf novel will not mean the decline of the sf magazine. On the contrary. In past golden ages, the magazine field gave us our classic novels as a by-product. They were written as serials, with subsequent book publication mere gravy. In this hoped-for future golden age --- and in spite of a numerical decline in good novels, I do hope for it --- may not the refreshed excitement of the sf book have the side effect of rejuvenating the magazines? Many novels will be serialized, which by itself will raise the general tone. But mainly, when writers who once again feel interested in their work do something at shorter length, they can hardly help making that good too.

Makes a nice daydream, anyhow.

KATE WILHELM SAYS:

Two dollars, done! Red faced, naturally. Because of the way I neglect paying bills we have a credit rating of less than zero.

A couple of months ago one of those extra high pressure salesmen came chiming on my door chimes with the old "a lifetime. Subscribe to one magazine for three years and be up to here" spiel. He said I must; everyone does. I said, not I. He said, do you read any magazines at all? If so, he had it listed, and I could get it for less than half price. He was very glib, had a beautiful smile, and he used Man-Tan, so of course I fell for him, as he knew all along I would. So, yes, there were a few things I subscribed to regularly, I admitted. We're in business; he seemed to be

pushing a wee bit harder against the storm door, but my muscles were better than his, and it held. If you'll just give me the names of them. . . He poised his pencil over his order pad expectantly, and showed even more teeth that he had been right from the first. He did have very nice teeth. Well, I said, there's SKY AND TELESCOPE, and NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, and SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. And, I added perfectly straight faced, Pitfics (the nearest I could come to saying it). He closed his notebook and I closed the door.

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## FRUSTRATION

A Story in Verse  
(or)

Lines Written by an Electric Typewriter During a  
Soft Spring Night

He carried me over and put me down  
By a window in the hall  
And cast an eye at the stormy sky  
And plugged me in the wall;  
Then down he sat at his working-mat  
And wriggled off his shoes  
And bowed his head on my key-board bed  
Waiting for  
the Muse

(The lightning made a ghastly mess;  
The utmost in Togetherness.)

They scraped him off and buried him.  
They eulogized his name.  
They put me on the work-room rack  
But I've never been quite the same.  
I try to dwell on typing well  
But every circuit whirls---  
Caused, I find, by my surging mind  
As it meditates  
on Girls.

(Are only writers so pleasure-bent,  
Or are humans all concupiscent?)

It cut him down in the prime of life,  
His story still untold.  
No more will he year for the words to turn  
His tinsel thoughts to gold.  
His spirit soared to its just reward  
(Whatever that may be)  
But as it did it left his Id  
Inscrutably merged  
in me.

(Sgd) IBM # 1430798

--Allan Hayes

The membership shows an understandable reluctance to strengthen its ranks at the risk of weakening its solution. The great good thing about PITFCS is that even if some of us don't know what we're talking about (stop looking at me like that) we all know what we're talking to. Whence comes this lovely unhealthy in-group feeling of loyalty? Is it because we've been reading sf so long or because we are a minority? When I sent my agent a story a fortnight back and <sup>he</sup> suggested he might sell it somewhere that would pay better money than anywhere in the sf field, I felt at once complimented and sorry -- "Dammit, I wanted the people I know to read it!" I'm sure Bob Silverberg will pounce on this suicidal attitude, but I'd guess most sf writers feel something of the sort. The current heart-searching about whether or no to acknowledge fanzines is evidence of this same shamefully unmonetary quirk.

I didn't mean to write more than to say that I'm moving in the middle of next week, to a small town house, the address of which is 24, MARSTON STREET, IFFLEY ROAD, OXFORD, ENGLAND. All bills, correspondence, visitors, and PITFCS to there from now on. My regards to the membership, especially those living in hopelessly far-flung hideaways like Guernsey.

A.J. BUDRYS SAYS:

It seems to me I owe Kingsley Amis a drink. And the explanation, too involved to give ~~W~~ here, for why his kind mention of me should have restimulated the following Memory From True Life:

When I was a boy in the 1950's, Horace Gold once rejected a story of mine for reasons both unarguable and unforgettable. Handing back the manuscript, and solemn as an owl, he said that while observations made in the story were valid, sharp, and entertaining, it wouldn't be right to use them because they could never have been made in the mind of someone with my physical appearance and social manner.

And ever since then, I've been just a shade suspicious that the Higher Criticism can be carried too far. Certainly, it does seem to me that we have lately gotten so involved in who deserves what stature, and what motivates the writing of a given story, that we have left off trying to find out what makes one story better than another story of the same kind. We are producing too much ~~ad hominem~~ criticism; we are presuming that a man's total career is more important than any given ~~story~~ story, which is quite true from the viewpoint of the man involved, but is contrary to the interests of the reader and so ultimately to our own.

A story is not intended to be, or sold to the public as, an item of evidence in support of a critical theory. It is primarily intended to be enjoyable and enjoyed. Nor is it quite appropriate to apply, to this commercial field in which the novel is not yet the most important form, the critical techniques applied to the artists of the classical main stream. These techniques prove useful to me in determining where I stand in the pecking order at a meeting of writers. But when I get down to work, it is an examination of the body of pre-existing work, regardless of byline and as ruthless as I can make it--with regard to mine as well as anyone else's--that furthers my purposes. That being the case, I hope you will understand why I feel justified in recommending the latter critical technique over the former. It seems to me, in short, that the proper study is of the function of story components, not the motivations of the writers, none of us being psychologists assigned to such a project. And if that is true, then it does no good--though it is interesting--to spend our time deciding who is better than whom, or even what a particular writer's strengths and weaknesses are. We need at most two or three critics concerned with such a basically historical project. We need an army of inquisitors taking individual stories apart, and making their findings known, so that if we are going to have large research projects at all we will have at least one that might usefully substitute for the strong but not domineering editor this field



Poul Anderson, for example, repeats a judgement a great many people have made--roughly, that full characterization is incompatible with the needs of the science fiction story. Now, I feel in my bones that this is an error. The technical problems posed by the need to simultaneously characterize and "ideate"--ugly word--are obviously more difficult than in any other field. But they are only problems, and furthermore it seems to me that these problems have been solved in a fair number of stories. Some of them are special cases. But are all of them? Personally, I can't decide what is meant by characterization in this context. Is anything less than Hamlet not characterization? And is Hamlet established beyond all question? We pass among ourselves the dogma that sf achieves its best characterizations in its aliens--as with Weinbaum's creatures. So I assume, tentatively, that what "characterization" means in this context is the creation of someone who is nailed down beyond all question because we actually know nothing about the class of creature he represents. He has the strength of our ignorance about his differences from his fellows. Hamlet does not, and by that test a denizen of the Martian wastes is more believable than a human being. I would say the test, and the assumption it springs from, is not in great accord with reality. It may be that the problem with characterization in sf is that the context prevents the "meat people" from ~~seeming~~ seeming as real as the exotic tin woodman we can conjure up from the same delineative talents. But this is only a relative difference. This does not mean that exact characterization of human beings is inherently impossible. And since we have now for many years not had an advance in the amplitude of the ground sf can cover, and since this looks like the likeliest area for further advance, I would like to see it explored. In the course of that, or any other exploration, the hierarchy of talents will realign itself without much need for critical impositions.

As a matter of fact, where I would like to see some ad hominem criticism applied is in evaluating the work of the second-best writers this field has--the hobbyists who publish one or two stories a year, polished with an affection not many busy professionals can devote to all their own products. When Ralph Williams, Allen Lang, or Robert Abernathy are good, they are quite frequently the authors of better reading than one of the top names is when hurried. Things have gotten to the point, as a matter of fact, where I for one will look for their names first on a table of contents, knowing rather well what is to be expected from Ted Sturgeon on one hand, or Mark Phillips on the other. I will certainly return to the Sturgeon immediately, and perhaps find it a more imposing story, but the three men I have mentioned, more or less at random out of a considerable group, are no mean craftsmen, and usually write and ideate with an elan the prolific Master is hard put to duplicate.

These people--these amateurs, you might call them--are cursed by silence. (And don't point to the occasional anthologized story of theirs; it's too easy to point back to all the second-rate Master stories taking up the space that also properly belongs to these men.) No one seems to recall that Robert Abernathy's When The Rockets Come, fifteen years old, is an exact presager of the kind of fiction we all wrote ten years later, and are still writing, but didn't pay any attention to at the time. The patient anthologists, digging back in search of juvenilia by Big Names, have completely missed the evocative short pieces Bertram Chandler was doing for Planet at about the same time--and though Chandler is not quite the same sort of case as the others I've mentioned, this is clear proof that when a man goes some distance out of public view in sf, so do his stories.

There are people in this field who have been working for years, accumulating a body of material slowly but, by now, quite convincingly. These are the people who have worked and gone, leaving behind considerable legacies, without ever getting their due in attention. No one, for instance, who sets out to 'explain' me, is going to do an accurate job if he doesn't understand how and why I have read When The Rockets Come at least twenty times, learning something each time. Or why one of the most poignant phrases in science fiction, to me, is "Goodbye Earth, Goodbye Venus, Goodbye Ma--" If someone ever lets me edit my sf anthology, you will see why, but it frightens a publisher to

look at a proposed table of contents full of names barely if at all visible in the studies of Bretzner, de Camp, Knight, and Amis. And I think you would find it a good anthology, at that; not a superb one, illuminated by one hitherto-undiscovered masterful story by one of the prominent names-- there are no such any more--but a good, solid one, shining with the vigor and excitement of men who continue to write despite any great return for it. A Dozen Good Science Fiction Stories. Show me a recent anthology, no matter what names on its jacket, that could honestly have used that title.

So I think there are grounds for believing that science fiction today is over-studied and under-evaluated, and that I would rather see that condition corrected than know what is the latest protocol among the fifteen or thirty sharply various individuals we keep trying to number off.

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Isn't there a story, in some ways as persistent as the "bees can't fly" legend, that Kipling missed Poet Laureate because Victoria Regina believed he wrote "The Bastard Kind of England"? There may have been more behind those thick glasses than is to be found reflected in "Wee Willie Winkie." After all, the man was a science fiction writer, wasn't he.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, Jr. SAYS:

Your journal is, perhaps, one of the best media for communicating something that I find needs to be pointed out---because a considerable percentage of those who don't like it are actively avoiding seeing it for themselves.

In the May 1, 1961 issue of Missiles & Rockets there is a feature length article on the "Controversial Dean Drive."

The publication of that article, with the data it gives concerning work done at Western Gear Company, proves in full that the position I took on the Dean Drive matter in the June 1960 ANALOG was 100% valid. Those who have blasted off against the piece don't like the proposition made in it---but I want to restate that position clearly, so that there can be no confusion as to the issue under discussion:

I stated that there was a powerful emotional resistance on the part of the orthodox scientists against true break-through ideas and that, as evidence of that fact, I could cite the Dean Drive problem. That Dean had been rejected without examination of his demonstration, because his discovery was theoretically impossible, pure nonsense.

And that whether Dean was right or wrong, if there was a doubt, a true scientist would be required to look.

The Missiles & Rockets article reports the Dean Drive as "the Controversial" Dean Drive. After a year, during which serious and competent scientists have investigated the device---and be it noted, almost entirely due to the fact that ANALOG did publish that article!---the matter of whether or not the Dean system actually works remains unsettled.

And that fact proves my position in June 1960 was valid!

If, after a year, the matter is not settled, after competent scientists have studied it, it proves beyond argument that there was very definite reason to doubt---and therefore, true scientists should have investigated carefully to resolve that doubt.

Actually, Missiles & Rockets states that Dean has "a proof-of-principle device," but that no practical machine has yet been built. If he does, in fact, have a device that proves his principle...then not only was there room for doubt, which should have been settled by experiment, but Dean was right!

In either case---whether Dean was right or wrong---the Government scientists were wrong. They were guilty of what we might call Urbanism---like Pope Urban, they wouldn't look!

That was my contention in June 1960. I hold that that contention has now been 100% validated. The Government scientists flatly failed in their duty as scientists,

At the Pittsburgh convention, a letter from NASA was read, in which they stated that they had officially inspected the Dean demonstration on April 26, 1960---which was just a wee bit late in the game. They turned it down flat then, too.

Western Gear made two types of analysis of the device; a paper analysis by physicists said "it can't work." An electronic computer simulation run, however, said "it works."

Under these conditions, obviously the matter is in doubt, and in that situation the Scientific Method demands an experimental test---not theoretical hassling.

Incidentally, it's worth remembering that no theoretical solution for the general three-body problem has been developed yet---but when I made that statement, many people wrote in to assure me that that was nonsense, because electronic computers could solve that problem to any desired degree of accuracy.

That is, electronic computers can get the right answer even when theory is incompetent.

O.K.---then maybe we'd better throw out the physical theory answer that the Dean Drive won't work, and accept the computer's answer that it does, because computers can correctly answer problems even when theory can't, huh?

If you're going to say that lack of a theoretical answer isn't important because we have computers---then stick to your decision, bub, and accept computer answers!

Now I did say, in June 1960, that it was my personal belief that the Dean Drive worked. (And, I repeat, I said then that that was not critical to the central point; that orthodoxy was blocking American achievement in scientific break-throughs.)

It was, and is, unimportant to the question of whether or not American Government Science is orthodoxy ridden---but it is interesting, naturally, as a separate question in itself.

As of June 1961, I'm ready to bet that the Dean Drive will, within three years, be recognized as a break-through discovery of a new fundamental law of Nature---a discovery of a means-of-observing the hitherto concealed, but always present, Natural law. Dean has not discovered that law; another man, I have reason to believe, has. He's not quite ready to publish; when he is, we'll have one of the first articles in ANALOG.

I say "I'm ready to bet," and I mean put money on it. Some few of my friends know that I have a psychological bloc against gambling; I simply can't bet unless I know the other fellow is a sucker. Like betting I can see more than fifty miles away on any clear day (You can hook quite a few people on that one, because they just never think of the Sun.)

There's been a lot of yakking about my publishing material like the Dean Drive, and the dowsing rods for locating pipes, as being utterly nonscientific.

You've forgotten what Science really is, if you think that!

Science fiction properly deals with the "not yet" scientific devices. Rocket-ships in 1930---atomic power in 1935---or airplanes in 1900.

There are, however, two different kinds of Not Yet devices. Type I is the theoretically-explainable-not-yet-practical device, such as rocketships in 1930.



Type II is quite different. It's the already-practical-not-yet-theoretically-explainable.

Please recognize one simple proposition that's fundamental to Science: Anything that is real, and really works, can be---and must be!---explained by Science eventually. Therefore, anything that actually works is "scientific" in that sense---or Science is based on a false postulate!

Then a Type II device---on that already works, but is not yet explainable---is a science-fiction device, just as truly as a theoretically-explainable-not-yet-workable device.

In one sense, a triple star system is a Type II device. It's a legitimate subject for a science-fiction story, because such "devices" are known to "work"...but the theoretical analysis of the three-body problem hasn't yet been achieved.

A better example of a Type II device is the X-ray tube. When Roentgen first observed and reported the phenomenon, he named the "X" rays, because he hadn't the foggiest notion of what or why or how they worked. Yet within months, X rays were being practically applied in surgical problems. That was pure science fiction at the time---and it was an already-practical-not-yet-theoretically-explainable device.

Now, of course, we do have an explanation. But at that time we had a technical device that worked, without any explanation available.

Too many science-fiction people are happy to accept the Type I science-fiction device---and utterly reject the Type II. But...all the great breakthroughs must start as Type II devices! They must. Because only when a totally new type of phenomenon is encountered, will a major revision of theory be imposed on science. And that, of course, is what we mean by a break-through!

Becquerel discovered radioactivity---which was a Type II phenomenon, and so led to naming the radiations only by Greek alphabet letters, as Roentgen names his discovery for the unknown.

All break-throughs must arise from something beyond the borders of known science.

The deadly-dangerous effect of an Orthodoxy is that it has a powerful tendency to defend the borders, and prevent alien invasions into the realm of the Known.

Jupiter's moons, in Galileo's time, were a pure Type II phenomenon---which is why Orthodoxy rejected it. It could be observed that the moons "worked," but couldn't be explained.

Dean's drive can be observed to work; until it is explained, it is a perfectly legitimate Type II science-fiction device. After it's explained, of course, we'll have Type I descendants of the newly discovered Fourth Law of Motion.

And the human ability that is involved in dowsing for buried pipes can also be observed as a practically-working-system---and can't be explained. So there, obviously, is another major break-through waiting to happen.

Incidentally---anyone who doubts the reality of the dowsing phenomenon is invited to give up their Orthodoxy---their "barism"---long enough to try it. Even individuals perfectly convinced that the thing is impossible nonsense experience the reality of the phenomenon themselves. (Ted Cogswell is in a position to confirm that statement!)

((Ted Cogswell is. A year or so ago I dropped by John's, and he took me out in his back yard and turned me loose with a pair of his Mark I dowsing rods. As I went wandering over the turf, explaining at some length as I did so that things like that



never worked for me (for example, plates on H machines get sticky for other people but never for me) when all of a sudden the rods came swinging in. (Someplace in his archives JWC has a lovely snapshot of Cogswell with his chin resting firmly on his chest.) I backed up and tried again. Sure enough, at the same spot in they came again while I kept muttering something brilliant like "Well, I'll be damned. . . ." I then continued walking and got equally positive reactions at one or two other spots. It was only then that John took me to the back of the lot where there is a sharp drop off and showed me two or three places where pipes emerged. Assuming that they went straight across the yard to the basement (and there seemed to be no particular reason why they shouldn't) the rods had spotted their location exactly. I should add that I had never been in that yard before, that John said nothing before hand to indicate the number or location of the pipes, that there were no excavation markings on the lawn itself, and that the point of entry of the pipes themselves could only be seen by walking to the extreme edge of the bank and looking down -- and it was only after the rods reacted that John took me to the edge of the lawn and pointed them out to me. I might add that the shock I felt when the rods came swinging in came not from the fact that they did (I've never been one of John's "orthodox" -- sheer ignorance has always barred me from taking strong scientific positions) but rather because it happened to me. But, I think the whole incident illustrates my long standing argument with John. I am heartily in favor of his periodic enthusiasms -- my life would have been a much duller one if they hadn't come along. But, what I have always objected to is the way he terminates them. He captures me interest, promises that great revelations are coming, but then, just when results should be coming in, the whole subject somehow gets dropped and we're off on something else. John's contention has always been that his job is that of arousing interest, that it's up to those whose interest has been aroused to carry the ball. This is quite legitimate, but I feel strongly that he does owe it to an audience that is scientifically oriented to devote a page now and then to a factual followup. As it is I wander around asking irritably, "What ever happened with X? Was there something there or not?" The standard scientific journals obviously aren't going to be carrying anything, so what's left? Only ANALOG. And all I get there are occasional odd bits in the letters section that serve only to whet my ~~curiosity~~ rather than satisfy it.

With all his contacts in the scientific community it shouldn't be too hard for John to persuade individuals with the proper credentials to run a few standard tests for him. (For example universities are full of bright young instructors who are just itching for a chance to let some of the hot air out of the old brass.) And the results would make for some really good science-fact. If the dingbat works, fine. If it doesn't, fine too. (How many creative research men can boast of a hundred percent batting average?) And if the results are open to debate -- as with ESP statistics -- why at least we'll have something concrete to wrangle about. In short, it's quite all right for John to say, "Go build one yourself and find out."; all that I ask, and I'm not alone, is that later on he let us know what they did find out when they did build one.

To battle the orthodox one needs ammunition. The best kind I've been able to find so far is that produced by a simple application of the traditional scientific method. According to ANALOG the Dean machine has been studied and tested in a number of industrial laboratories during the past year. Why not publish the full results? Then, if there is something there, I can go to my orthodox colleagues and say, "These are the organizations making the tests, these are the individuals who conducted the tests, these were the procedures used in the testing, and these are the results. Now explain this if you can." Every one worth his salt as a scientist -- and I know several -- would be off to the lab like a shot to check the results for himself.

Let's hoist the fat bastards on their own petards, John. All that we need is a little help from you. TRC)

(Campbell continues) If type I science-fiction devices are legitimate---what's so horrid about Type II devices? Must we eliminate from stories multiple star systems, because



they're not theoretically explainable?

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For that matter...ever think that what we mean by "thinking" is a pure psi-type phenomenon? Subjective, isn't it? You can't show me one, can you? Or demonstrate that this thing you call "thinking" is real and logical, and yet differs from what a computer does, can you? It doesn't always work when you want it to, does it? And even when you think it's working, it doesn't always get the right answer, does it?

See! Pure psi phenomenon!

ARTHUR CLARKE SAYS:

Many thanks for No. 139; my copy should be quite a valuable collector's item -- page 18 was upside down and there was a splendid collection of fingerprints on p. 15. But I won't sell.

No particular comments this time, as I made most of the points I wished to in my last letter and the inevitable time-lag will get me further out of phase. However, a few items for general information:

(1) I imagine that few of you can have avoided it by now, as practically every magazine and periodical seems to have published it (including the latest LIFE to reach me) but all sf authors must read C.P.Snow's Science and Government. Has any US commentator drawn the interesting parallel between the way Cherwell captured Churchill, and the way Teller captured Eisenhower? For details, see the special volume of Daedalus on Arms Control.

(2) Here's a magnificent theme for a first-class serious S.F. novel, which could have a really big impact. What about a piece on the Second Civil War? And who would win this time, now that the South has Cape Canaveral, the Savannah River H-bomb plant and half the aircraft-electronics industry? Over to you....

(3) I've just been asked to contribute to a volume of unusual interest to all of us. It's called: The Scientist Speculates: An Anthology of Partly-Baked Ideas. Other contributors are J.D. Bernal, Koestler, Warren McCulloch. UK publishers are Heinemann; don't know about US.

Finally, so that you will all know when to take to the hills, I hope to arrive in New York on 31 August and will be there through September, before going on to the IAF Congress in Washington first week in October. (Any bets that Gagarin will be there?) Have to give a lecture sometime that week to the International Institute of Space Law. Then back for the SPACE-FLIGHT REPORT TO THE NATION of the ARS in New York 9 - 14 October. (Understand Margaret Mead will be on our TV panel, and look forward to meeting her.) Anyone with gifts, contracts, fatted calves etc. can locate me via Scott Meredith or at (probably) the Hotel Chelsea. Hope there's at least one Hydra meeting while I'm in town.

HOWARD DeVORE SAYS:

As you may know I have a large stock of used (Stf) books and magazines, something like 7-8 thousand I suppose. I have no desire to huckster these through the organization but if the members should mention to you their need of tear sheets, etc. I'll be glad to supply a reasonable amount, no charge, of course. SCIENCE FICTION SALES, 4705 Weddel Street, Dearborn, Michigan. In the next few days I'll send you a copy of A HANDBOOK OF STF AND FANTASY. Will you contribute a brief biography and bibliography patterned on this? Could you circulate a printed sheet asking members to do the same? I would print a sheet, asking for any information we do not have at present. ((Will do. TRC))



We are greatly enjoying living in Mexico--enjoying it to the extent that we have decided to stay for another year at least. Right now we're living in a nicely furnished 6-room ranch-style house, complete with hi-fi and TV aerial, on a quiet street. We are the only Americans on the street, but we are very fortunate in that our neighbors are the children and grandchildren of a famous Mexican painter and all of them speak excellent English. They are teaching our children to speak Spanish, as well as read and write in English. Here children must know how to read and write as well as add and subtract before they can enter first grade.

Just for the record, we have heard much maligning of Mexico lately. In fact, we have heard as many generalities on the country as we know people to make them, and have been quite guilty ourselves. And we have never found one generality that can fit Mexico. If you stay on the tourist route you will see as much of Mexico as you will see of America when you go to Atlantic City. You can like, hate or merely tolerate the servant classes, but they are only a small part of Mexico. For genuine kindness, helpfulness, humour, goodwill and human friendliness, we have met as much among the middle classes of Mexico as we are liable to meet any place in the world.

As for Communism, in the city of Guadalajara, population 700,000, they were able to raise 300 law students for a demonstration which was broken up long before it reached the American Embassy by other students and workmen laying and throwing bricks. We are not speaking of all Mexico, <sup>up</sup> but of Guadalajara, but from what we have heard it has always been students who broke any riots, and the only physical damages were suffered by the Communists.

As to health, we live three blocks from the Artesian Wells that supply the Chapalita area with water. We buy sterile water for our guests, but we and the children drink the water from the faucets. We buy pasteurized milk from a delivery truck daily at about 15¢ a quart. We do soak our fruit and vegetables in Halizone tablets. For bugs, there are fewer than we had in New Jersey, and we doubt if they are as lethal. For all around climate, it can't be beat, summer clothes all year round, warm in the sun, cool and comfortable in the shade. Mexico is more expensive than it used to be, but a family of four can still live in a very nice house, eat and drink well, and maintain a car for under \$300.00 a month. This will not include life insurance or US income tax, but it does include doctor bills and medicine, which are almost nil.

Enough of the Freases on Mexico. I'm sure you know by now that we are in favor of it. As for work, we are still doing the MAD covers and ads. At the same time trying to prepare enough canvasses for a one-man show, painting portraits which we enjoy immensely, and about to begin illustrations for a book. In between times, good rum, gin, brandy, etc. and etc. cost around \$1.00 a fifth, and beer around \$1.50 a case. And within a half-mile area there are a dozen families of interesting Americans. Life doesn't get dull at all--our biggest trouble is not enough time.

P.S. You can publish address as well as letter if you care to, in case anyone wants to write or drop in for a visit. La Merced #914, 4a. Sec. de Chapalita, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

P.P.S. F.Y.I. Puerto Vallarta has in the last year become a major tourist attraction --Chapalita is probably cheaper, and Tlaquepaque, about 20 minutes away, is VERY cheap.

ROBERT MILLS SAYS:

As of July 3, I open my own agency:

Robert P. Mills, 527 Lexington Ave., New York  
17, New York. Plaza 2-4057



RICHARD MCKENNA SAYS:

Everything George Price says is so self-evident that it disturbs me. I would hope from our crew to hear some offbeat insights into this question, notions that would not find easy entry into more orthodox minds. It has been suggested that we are playing poker and the Russians are playing chess. He have all the money in sight, but our king is always in check. Adding that to Price and a few others sparks an idea.

It is self-evident to Price that our vaunted human rights are dependent on property rights. So was it to folks down this way just a hundred years ago, and right manfully went they forth in grey to die for that there truth. In Jefferson's day it was not self-evident; there could be and was wide and free debate here on slavery. But when the heat came on, the mind of the South swung closed. Anyone who questioned the morality of property rights in human flesh risked being lynched. The conservative mind in the North snapped shut also; it was in Boston they almost lynched Garrison. Right, Avram? All those good people knew that they were free and the Abolitionists were the ones who threatened freedom. Who can be sure that that kind of mind-closure is not happening to us again, on a much more subtle moral issue? Drop a frog in hot water and he will jump out. Put him in tepid water and he will sit there feeling just fine until he is cooked. Someone should stick a fork into George Price. A Martian reading Cash's "Mind of the South" today might well consider it the mind of all America. Galbraith's "Affluent Society" is in part an updated rewrite of Thorstein Veblen's "Engineers and the Price System," but my God the contrast between Galbraith's circumspect, euphemistic, constantly apologetic handling of the idea and the way old Veblen spoke out loud and clear! The interval between those two is about the same as that between Thomas Jefferson and Jefferson Davis. How sure are we that the U.S. is not being maneuvered, by forced moves across the chessboard, into becoming a latter-day South Carolina in the world community, hell bent for checkmate at a planetary Appomattox?

We had a fine story once on the theme: How do you know you are sane? Well: How do you know you're free? We hold that "clear and present danger" justifies abridging freedom. Our danger is held to be social revolution; that of Soviet Russia is counter-revolution. Our dangers seems to be growing, theirs decreasing. The curve of personal liberty in the Soviet Union has begun, however little, to rise. Ours trends downward. With no reversal of trends they may conceivably meet--perhaps in 1984?

It also seems self-evident to Price that "an unhampered free market is more efficiently productive than any conceivable system of centralized economic control." So he is obliged to doubt Russia's high growth rate which, if it exists, is only an artifact of a very low starting base. The chilling fact that Russia's growth continues largely in heavy industry and the automated production of producer goods accounts for the still modest level of private consumption there, which so reassures him. Yet he cannot see the even lower starting base explaining away the German "miracle," nor the several other special and temporary factors in play in Germany. This matter of production is a good takeoff point for stories, and I am pleased to hear that Mack Reynolds is using it. After World War I Veblen told us that we Americans were the people who had first passed a critical point in human history: there was no longer any physical reason why our engineers could not produce abundance for all. There was, however, a social reason why they could not do it. That was the "unhampered free market", which he called the Price System. He noted that, precisely because it was now effectively threatened, it was becoming divinely ordained and so enwrapped in the Stars and Stripes that it would soon be treason to question it. After World War II a man of our own ilk, Norbert Wiener, told us the same thing more emphatically. He said automation was going to be tantamount to a second Industrial Revolution. Well, we now have hidden persuaders abetting wastemakers in driving us all deeper into personal debt in a vain effort to consume the glut, yet we still do not have abundance for all, and our hard core of about five million unemployed is being charged to they very little automation we have dared to use. I know of no theoretical reason why a controlled economy cannot exploit automation to the hilt, and in point of fact Russia means to do so. Veblen makes plain the reason why we cannot, and the prophetic truth in old Veblen's book is so apparent



in Galbraith that it is painful.

Consider an irony: have we Americans pioneered a paramount break-through in productive technology only to stand stalled upon Mt. Nebo, unable to take credit for what we cannot admit exists, unable to share in it, unwilling to see anyone else try? Have we invented a wonderful new bullet, to find that it will only fit our enemies gun? Is there even a science-fictional solution? I wish JWC would set his stable to grafting human ecology on economics. I wish he would revive and revise Technocracy. He might score the biggest predictive triumph yet for science fiction.

Closed minds abound in self-validating propositions. These are not necessarily true, but are capable of being made true if the adherent thereto consistently behaves as if they were. Give a dog a bad name and he may as well have the game too, especially if it will prevent you from hanging him. So we support dictators and Castro has Red allies. We are in no doubt about the Russian mind being closed. But suppose that their dogmatic proposition of what the U.S. is in world history is being inexorably self-validated and we as a nation are being forced to become what they think we are. D'ye ken John Birch? What do we do? And may not our tendency to equate any radical social change, any tampering with the peculiar institution of private ownership of the means of production, or any outspoken advocacy of such action, may not our growing tendency to equate that to SELLING OUT TO THE RUSSIANS be also a self-validating proposition? We are never going to know for sure<sup>now</sup> about Cuba. But it is worth wondering whether our own closing national mind is not beginning actually to manufacture the communist man and nations Price deploras.

I think that is what Cogswell means by the gradual erosion of intellectual liberty in this country. Any educated American today who honestly believes he has a much freedom of thought and expression an Americans had in 1910 is in himself a disturbing demonstration of how far the process has already gone. I am not comforted to be told that I now have more freedom to use obscene words in print and in mixed company. I do not think that is fair exchange. I think that is the same kind of deal the Indians got on Manhattan Island.

#### JAMES MCKIMMEY SAYS:

After sitting over a Martini with Poul Anderson, at which time he mentioned your Institute, I was pleased to receive PITFCS-138 with an invitation to join up. For some reason I have failed to return the signed application with money sooner. Now I find myself in a situation similar to entering a neighborhood bar at midnight for an infrequent drink. I know some of the faces, the conversation is vaguely familiar, but everyone is six drinks ahead of me.

I do have a great deal of time in which to say quite a lot. As a full-time fiction writer I don't have a hell of a lot to do. Today, for example, I had to fill the swimming pool, write a letter to an old friend who is now an off-Broadway producer about a novel he is eager to have me adapt into a dramatic script, take a look at a small cabin I am planning to rent for an office and conjecture the completion of a new novel I have securely begun and tightly outlined. The only problem is that aside from saying that I think PITFCS is a noble contribution to be applauded, I don't know what to say. Perhaps I now can catch up with the other members at the bar and say something later. ((Given Hensley, Garrett, McKenna, and Dickson at the bar -- nobody ever catches up. TRC))

P.S.: After reviewing the above note I feel disinclined to let an image stand quite like that. The truth is that I did have a lot of time today. But I think I should note that the swimming pool is one I bought at a toy-shop sale for a price under three figures and filled with the garden hose. The letter to the producer was written in white heat and high blood pressure because I suddenly sensed that he was not so very eager about having me adapt the novel into a dramatic script and I wish him to be --



I lost a couple of fingernails on it. The reason that I am renting this cabin is because my in-laws are arriving shortly and I've got to get the hell out of here at any cost. The new novel has been started and neatly outlined, but only after considerable kicking and crying and delivering of profanity; it has just brought a contract and partial advance, so that now I am wholly frightened about touching the typewriter--tomorrow it will be a fraction better. I will get maybe 5 or 6 pages, all the while kicking and crying and delivering profanity. Then I will sit beside the toy swimming pool, with a lot of time left in the day, dismally conscious of that knot in my stomach as I wonder how five or six pages--maybe 8 or 10 if it's lucky--are going to go the next day, all the time wishing I had saved the writing of this letter until then, since PITFCS seems like such a marvelous place to bitch with vengeance about most anything. But today I can't find a damn thing to say.

MACK REYNOLDS SAYS:

Institute members will undoubtedly be shocked to learn that PITFCS is being censored by either (or perhaps all) Morocco, Spain or France. Either that, or the Secretary is getting mighty sloppy and perhaps the membership should begin considering automation of the job. At any rate, when 139 caught up with me after being twice forwarded, it went only as far as page 21. In fact the last line reads:

"WFHA-fm, 7 Broad St., Red Bank, N.J., is a hundred watt station located about 21 direct"

And stops there. Fer crissakes, I haven't been able to work since I got 139. I've been trying to finish that sentence in such wise as to make sense. Currently, I'm giving it a fantasy approach, but without much luck.

Anderson: That's the point. We're beating our brains out today trying to achieve, within present frameworks, an abundance. We put our full energies into achieving such a goal, or, if achieved, in securing it. And we do it in a dog-eat-dog, every-man-for-himself-and-the-devil-take-the-hindmost (laughingly known as free enterprise) way. Few of us really achieve abundance and there is no man who can claim real security in our world. Not even the queen of England can be sure she won't wind up before a firing squad (like her relative the Czar), or dead broke, like various other former royal relatives now bumming their living in Estoril. In our efforts to achieve abundance and security, we pile ourselves with debts, ruin our health by overwork ((I think Mack means THEM, not US. From liquor, maybe, but WORK? TRC)), undermine our moral codes in our day to day competition, even to the point of resorting to crime (on all levels). My contention is that when and if man achieves to the point where there is abundance for all without the need for this degrading competition for it, he will have passed one of the race's more important mileposts. Freed of the need to fight for his basics, food, clothing, shelter, security, etc., he should be able to turn his efforts elsewhere.

George Price: Mentioning Mr. Shlesinger's letter in the March ANALOG referring to Russia's economic growth, calls in turn for Asimov's answer in the June issue of the same magazine. Says Ike: "I was very unamused by Mr. Shlesinger's letter and his reliance on Fortune's statistics. There is one way to stay ahead of the Russians and that is to carefully cook statistics until they look as if we're staying ahead. I don't find this satisfactory myself."

While it is quite true that the Commies lie whenever expedient (as does our own government--I cite both U-2 and Cuba as recent examples) few competent observers are of the opinion that industrial progress in Russia and China consists of phony statistics. Less than fifty years ago Russia was not one of the first half dozen industrial powers. Today she is second. The Paris edition of the New York Herald-Tribune tells me that in the first quarter of 1961, for the first time in history, Russia poured approximately the same amount of steel as did the US. We, of course, were running at roughly 50% of



capacity, and the Russians, as always, 100%.

The cry, "you can't believe Russian statistics," is similar to the contention of some that far from ever having sent a rocket around the moon, photographing the far side, the Russkies haven't even launched Sputnik One. It's all done with mirrors. Nonsense. Toying with the thermometer (statistics) isn't going to alter the temperature and, stupid as some things the Russkies do might be, they aren't so silly as to believe that phony statistics on such things as steel production wouldn't eventually be exposed. Just as faking pictures of the moon's far side would soon be exposed to the double detriment of the fakers.

Actually, every nation must have accurate, usable statistics of their own production. Certainly a country attempting to plan production must have them. The Chinese a couple of years ago were quick to admit it, when they found that exaggerated figures had got out on their steel and other production. If a nation attempted to get out a double set of statistics, one for foreign propoganda release, and one for her own planners, then the world's intelligence agencies would soon reveal the fakery. I've never read an account of the CIA or European equivalents ever claiming Russian or Chinese figures to be false.

But the point is well taken that we should do some seeing for ourselves. Rather than accept the propaganda of either East or West, we ought to try getting nearer the sources. This summer when I go into the Balkans, I'm taking camping equipment so that I can get nearer to the people than is usually possible traveling the usual tourist routes by train, bus and plane. I'll have a further report to the Institute this fall.

#### ERIC FRANK RUSSELL SAYS:

Now I'm indebted to you for #139. Thanks, thanks, and more thanks. To my mind the undoubted highlight of this ish is Vonnegut's letter about the guy who gave up reading and "don't itch all over any more." So far I've read it five times and enjoyed a gentle, buttery bowel movement each time. It's therapy, pure therapy, man.

Maybe I needed this enema because I notice how tired I'm getting of some things. I get more than tired of the flatulent bum who every once in a while gets on his soap-box and yells, "Hey, fellows, what say we all kick hell out of Campbell?" The would-be kicker, having lost his sense of wonder, resents the character who still retains it. I could say more about this but Azimov and others have said it better.

I also get pretty damn tired of pro and anti Commie hysteria. The slow, ponderous, inexorable march of history will settle our social systems for us and all the interim yapping strikes me as so much waste of breath. In an interview with Lippman, Krushchev declared it his bones belief that "Russia is on the side of history." Uncle Nikita may prove to be wrong and, if so, all his machinations won't save him. Or he may prove to be right and, if so, all the insults in the world won't save the abusers. What will decide the issue once and for all will be the standard of living of the average Russian as compared with the average American, twenty, thirty or forty years hence. Anyone who fills in the time making prejudiced prophecies is farting in a vacuum. ((A process which which also might have an interesting use as an emergency space drive. TRC))

And I am getting thoroughly bone-tired when I read those lectures by self-styled literary experts who presume to tell us just what is wrong with s-f and how it "ought" to be written. I can't speak for other writers but, speaking for myself, I can say I've never yet turned out a yarn in the hope of pleasing critics. My sould purpose is to make an honest effort to entertain the readership and, in doing so, I am well aware that readers' judgements are wholly empirical. To the reader, any yarn that gives him a kick amounting to fair return for his money is, by virtue of that, a "good" story regardless of what literary eggheads may think of it. Any yarn that fails to satisfy the reader is, by virtue of that, a "bad" story even though it may have sold at 20¢ a

word to Satevepost and received the praise of every purist from here to Shanghai. It's as simple as that.

The problem the writer has to solve is that of finding out what the mass-readership wants and giving it to them, regardless of whether or not it coincides with what some literary expert thinks the readers "ought" to have. It's the readers who give with the dollars. If we were dependent upon the income derived from critics, literary poseurs, self-appointed tutors and other hecklers in the crowd we'd have all starved to death years ago. This seems to me so obvious and elementary that it hardly needs stating -- but obviously does need it.

\* \* \* \* \*

A TRIO BY JOHN R. PIERCE

I

(Lines Commiserating Phillip Jose Farmer)

Ach, Lieber, Bloch, Blish, I am vex;  
Explain by concave and convex  
Why if John doesn't nail  
A concuspicent tale  
Kay Tarrant will cut out its sex.

II

Two bear the children on Druv,  
One the lower part, one that above,  
Then they screw them together,  
An act that is rather  
A rite than incestuous love.

III

Although Time runs backward on Truckey  
The females are human and -- ducky,  
But to first storm the fort,  
Then successfully court,  
A man must have nerve -- and be lucky.

\* \* \* \* \*

"HELP! I'm a prisoner in an Analog factory."

--Randall Garrett

(as relayed by Howard DeVore)



SPECIAL NOTICE TO THE MEMBERSHIP FROM JUDITH MERRIL, PO Box 368, MILFORD, PENNSYLVANIA:

In re: "THE THIN EDGE" - - - an anthology of unusual stories, to be published by Regency Books.

When they asked me about editing a new book for them, the editors at Regency described it this way:--

"...a collection that is neither science fiction nor fantasy, neither psychological suspense stories nor terror yarns, but a melding of all four: stories that literally defy categorization. They must be originals, never-before published anywhere. I specifically want to see the sort of stories that writers have wanted to write all their lives, but have never been allowed to do for magazines or books with taboos. They can be rugged politically, sexually, violently, emotionally, or theologically. Good taste of the author's own discretion is the only restrainer..."

After making allowance in full for publishers' language, I still felt there should be an exciting book to be done. That is: I do not believe there is a good story a good writer cannot get published--somewhere--no matter what content or theme. But--there are a great many ideas that cannot be sold to the big magazines, and a lesser number that are not likely to be published even in "little" or science-fiction magazines (the last refuges of controversy in fiction, as far as I know). Thus I felt that for those authors who do not happen to have a book of short stories about to be published, an anthology of this type might provide a good outlet.

The catch, of course, is in the price. Regency is a new house, trying to establish a "quality" line. They want to produce a good-looking package, appropriate to the idea of marketing the book as "offtrail mainstream" rather than "category" fiction. This all adds up--or subtracts--to somewhere around 2¢ a word for original payment on stories selected. (The contract will, of course, provide for royalty-sharing; this could mean anything from \$00.00 to--I'd guess--\$100 per author, later, with a reasonable prospect of, say \$25-\$59, above the first payment.) In short--

There is simply not enough money in this for me to ask the kind of writers I'm hoping will respond for the quality of material I want to use, unless...

...unless, that is, you just happen to have, in your files (marked "reject," "unfinished," "idead"), or in your mind, a story you've wanted to do and not done (or not sold) just because you couldn't find the market that would print the particular kind of off-trail, controversial, experimental, plain-language, violent, or you-name-it kind of thing you had in mind.

So: never mind if it's second sheets or has frayed edges or pencil corrections; if it's readable without (severe) eyestrain, and it's something you want to write, and to write right--let me have a look, please?

--Judy Merrill

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DEPARTMENT X: ORVILLE PRESCOTT ON ROBERT HEINLEIN (REPRINTED FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Last week with the thermometer outside my window registering 93 and the humidity in my library coating my books with mildew it seemed a good idea to read something light, something clever and not too taking on the brain cells. Like what? Well, not like "Stranger in a Strange Land," (Robert A. Heinlein. 408 pages. Putnam. \$4.50.) by Robert A. Heinlein. My selection of this disastrous mishmash of science fiction, laborious humor, dreary social satire and cheap eroticism was a frightful mistake.

My excuse is that I was deceived by Mr. Heinlein's reputation as one of the masters of that curious subdivision of literature known as science fiction. Jules Verne and H.G. Wells are its founding fathers. Its leading practitioners today, in the opinion of most aficionados, are Arthur C. Clarke and Ray Bradbury. Next in ranks, perhaps with two or three competitors, comes Mr. Heinlein.

Robert A. Heinlein (b.1907, United States Navy Academy 1929, former mechanical engineer) is the author of twenty-eight books, several hundred short stories, numerous radio and television scripts. He is known to have prepared a chart of future history outlining the principal events up to 2600AD. A Democrat and a Methodist, he takes a dim view of politics and religion in this country and expresses his sardonic opinions with violence and gusto in "Stranger in a Strange Land." Unfortunately, he has failed to write an even passably mediocre novel and he has not come within light years of his "Green Hills of Earth," a short story that is a classic of sorts, at least a science-fiction classic.

#### Heredity Re-Environed

Sometime in the not too distant future, when the United States had become only one of the many humble members of the World Federation of Free States and the moon had been profitably and thoroughly exploited, a human baby was born on Mars. His parents and others on board the rocket ship died, but the child was raised by Martians. Some twenty-one years later a second rocket reached Mars and brought Valentine Michael Smith back to earth. In appearance he was human. In thought, habits, instincts and mysterious powers he was a Martian. His life on earth and how it affected the lives of numerous others is the story told in "Stranger in a Strange Land."

So, just as eighteenth-century authors wrote the impressions of Europe drawn by imaginary Persians and Chinese, Mr. Heinlein writes of earthly and American matters from the supremely "unworldly" point of view of a Martian. But his satire of international politics, religion, various kinds of corruption, and many ordinary customs is singularly ineffective, crude and tedious. Mr. Heinlein has little gift for characterization, a flippant and heavy-breathing style, a ponderous sense of humor and a sophomoric (high school, not college) enthusiasm for sex.

His beginning is adequate, with some ingenious science-fiction gadgetry and some mildly diverting legal and political complications. Does Smith own Mars? Is he a sovereign? Is he a boon to science, or a menace to world peace?

But when Smith joins the household of an eccentric doctor-lawyer-writer the bottom falls out of Mr. Heinlein's story. The doctor is rich and employs three beautiful secretaries to take his dictation, to cook his meals, to mix his drinks. The girls interest Smith in human sex and Smith soon experiences several aspects of human life. Smith is a master of levitation and can make objects and people disappear and cease to be with a wave of his hand. He becomes a carnival magician. He serves a hitch in the Army. He investigates a new, popular, and crackpot religion. And finally he founds his own religion, a compound of Martian metaphysics and a mass sex orgy.

Bombast and Conjurv: Stremn through "Stranger in a Strange Land" are numerous harangues expressing an agnostic and sceptical philosophy about everything. They are very dull. But they are not as dull as the Martian's innumerable miraculous sleight-of-hand tricks or as the intricate ramifications of his Martian sex cult. It is difficult to tell whether Mr. Heinlein thinks that his monotonous variations upon an erotic theme are funny, or whether beneath all the verbiage and leering lubricity there is supposed to be some serious plea for the "innocent" promiscuity of Smith's cult. In either case, much of "Stranger in a Strange Land" is puerile and ludicrous. A friendly little orgy can be funny in fiction if described with a proper combination of farce and ribald gaiety--a la Thorne Smith. But when a non-stop orgy is combined with a lot of preposterous chatter it becomes unendurable, an affront to the patience and intelligence of readers. (From BOOKS OF THE TIMES, p. unknown, NEW YORK TIMES, 4 AUGUST 1961)

FROM THE SECRETARY ON LEGIBILITY OR LACK THEREOF IN PITFCS 139:

Most of those who appeared in PITFCS 139 wrote in to complain that their particular contribution was unreadable. There was, however, general complaint that the de Camp letter was in especially bad shape. Since retyping the entire issue is a bit impractical, your secretary will content himself with reprinting the contribution that aroused the most comment.

L. SPRAGUE deCAMP SAID IN PITFCS 139:

Allow me to add a note to Scithers' piece in PITFCS-138, p.11, about John W. Campbell and the Dean Drive. This I have long wanted to get off my chest, but I have lacked an outlet.

At the Pittcon, at the panel discussion on "What is Scientific," the evening of Sept. 2, the Dean Drive came up. Specifically, it was asked whether the device had been adequately tested. To settle matters Campbell asked if there was a mechanical engineer in the house. I put up my hand.

Campbell asserted that the device had been tested by some governmental agency (Bureau of Standards?) by hanging the device by a rope from the ceiling. The rope went over a couple of pulleys and came down to a spring balance. Campbell looked at me and asked if it was not true that the most modern, scientific device for testing such forces was the strain gauge.

"Well, ah -" I said.

So, continued Campbell, here were these so-called scientists, testing a device of this importance by a rope and a couple of pulleys, instead of the most modern and scientific devices, which were undoubtedly available to them. He turned to me for a confirmation.

Unfortunately, I am the kind of guy who thinks of crushing rejoinders half an hour later. So I said:

"Well, ah -"

And this, continued Campbell, showed the prejudice, incompetence, and other faults of the testers.

Half an hour later I had my answer formulated, but the meeting was over. So here is what I should have said, had I been faster on my feet: Sure, there is such a thing as a strain gauge, but somebody has been misinformed about the function and purpose of this device. In fact, somebody has confused the technical meanings of stress (force) and strain (deformation).

A beam balance or a spring balance, like that used in the test, measures force or stress directly. A strain gauge measures stress indirectly by first measuring strain and deriving the stress by calculations from the measurement of strain. A strain gauge is attached to an object like an airplane wing truss to be tested. There is no easy way directly to measure the stress in the various parts of the truss when the truss as a whole is under stress. But, by means of the strain gauge, one can make a delicate measurement of the tiny deformation of the part and from this strain can calculate stress.



The desired datum in the case of the Dean device was the stress or force produced by the device on its supports. For such a purpose it was logical to make a simple direct measurement by means of rope, pulleys, and spring balance, rather than make an indirect measurement by a strain gauge and subsequent computations. To have employed a strain gauge in this case would have been like using a radar set, or a surveyor's transit, instead of a tape measure to measure the length of a sofa.

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FINAL NOTE:

The membership will little note or long remember what is written here, but it should be noted that Institute Proceedings are typed with two fingers by the Secretary of the Committee on Duplication and then never looked at again until the masters are finally run off. Those annoyed by the large number of typos per page should feel perfectly free to make such corrections in their own copies as they feel necessary.

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