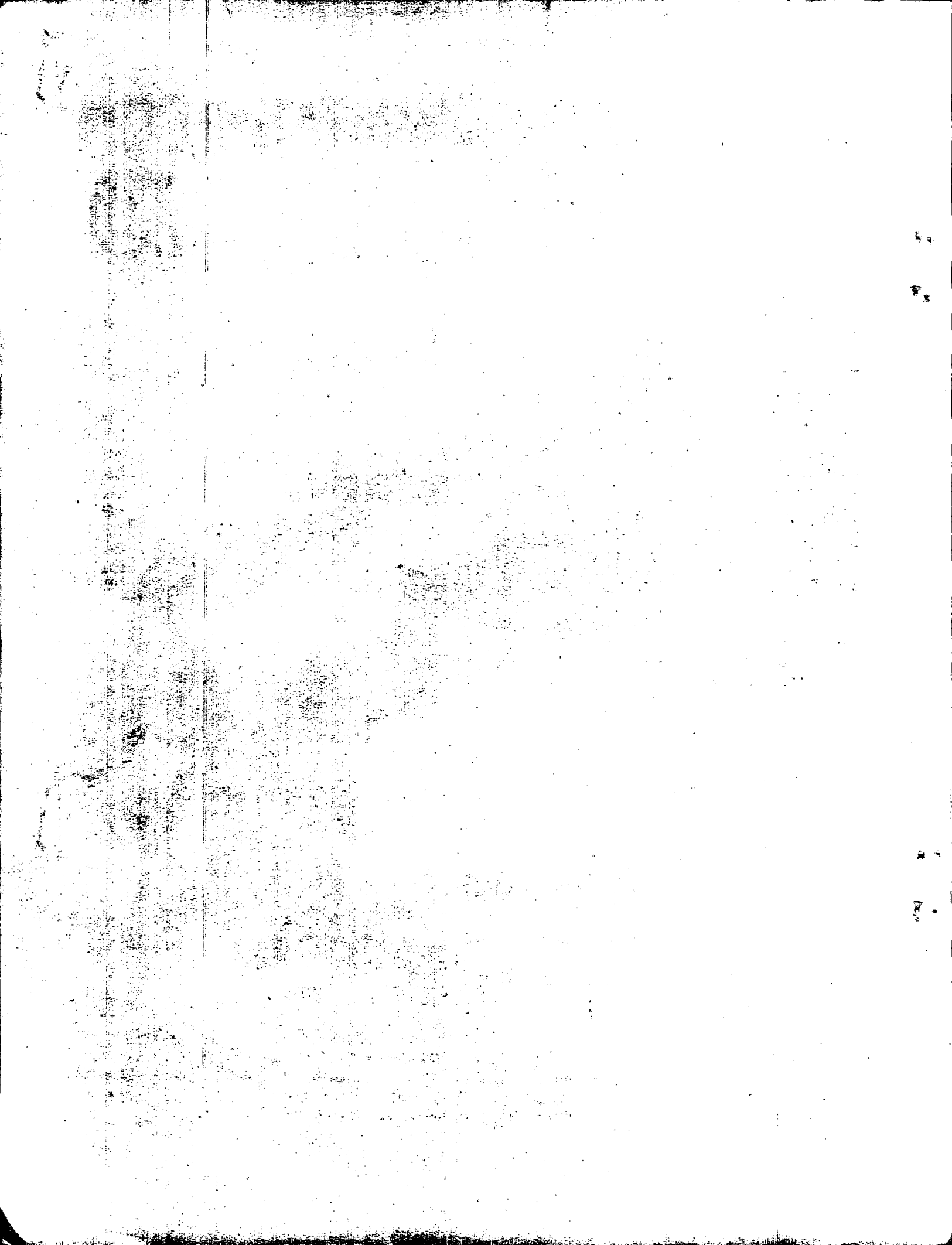
PHANTASMICOM 10



PHANTASMICOM 10

NOVEMBER 1972

JEFFREY D. SMITH, editor
4102-301 Potter Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21229

Donald G. Keller
editor emeritus

artwork

Mike Archibald	29 34 48
Cy Chauvin	37 38
Seth Dogramajian	61
Connie Faddis	FC
Jim McLeod	45
Dan Osterman	19 28 39 40 44 60
S. Randall	47
Bill Rotsler	7 10 13 14 18 23 26 41 46 49 52 53 56 BC

PAUL ANDERSON, Australian Agent
21 Mulga Road/Hawthorndene, S.A./Australia 5051

Belatedly, this is Phantasmicom Press Publication # 20

 To be published one more time. Available for contribution, trade, and money. Issues available @ 75¢, 3/$2 -- 5-11. Thanks to Jay Haldeman for the covers, Jack Chalker for the electrostencils and Linda Bushyager for passing on some of the art.

JEFF SMITH

EDITORIALIZES

I have the inexplicable feeling that while many of you may have many different opinions of me, none of you consider me fandom's answer to Speedy Gonzales. But, fout upon you all, PHANTASMICOM 10 is arrived, contrary to popular belief. And, if you don't have too many objections, I'd like to talk about it for a while. But, to make a point of it, I'd first like to direct your attention to that spot on the contents page which displays my address--it is not the same address I sported in PhCOM 9. Yea, verily, I have moved, and whereas before I lived with brothers and sisters and parents and such, I now reside with my wife. It's a nice feeling to wake up and know I am not alone.

PHANTASMICOM is my fanzine now, something it never was before. In the past it belonged to Don Keller, alone or with me, and this issue represents my own sole efforts--though Don had full control over his article in this issue, arranging illustrations, doing layouts, even stencilling it himself. This issue represents a return to the roots, so to speak, in that science fiction is its full concern. Of late we had been running all sorts of clever faanish articles, and when Don's influence was strongest the fantasy outweighed the sf. Now the fmz is sf-oriented, with fantasy touches and hopefully handled with a light-enough touch that you won't think you're reading RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY. That is Policy; watch closely, it will probably change before your very eyes. *sigh* It always has before.

To follow the career of Donald G. Keller, now that he has abandoned you here, write him at 1702 Meadow Court, Baltimore MD 21207. He is publishing a personalzine, DYLANOID RELIC, which is not generally available but which you might be able to get if you have something valuable like a good fanzine to trade or a good letter (D is a nice one) to write. (There are not too many extra copies of this, so you'll have to try hard.) He is also editing HOLWE LOND, a serious fanzine of creative fantasy. If you like fantasy try it. This is easier to get, because he sells it 2/$1. It is a good fanzine.

This PHANTASMICOM is a little shorter than I expected, but I didn't have the money to buy any more paper, so the rest of the stuff will be held over till next time--which won't be nine months from now. (Only eight.) (Only kidding.)

This issue I'm not ecstatic about, despite the good material. I guess after nine months of working on an issue it has to get a little stale, even if much of the material is recent. (When I started this issue back in March all I had that is now here is Jeff Clark's piece, Paula Marmer's poem, and the letters.) The feeling just builds up of, "Oh, PHANTASMICOM...haven't I done that yet?" I imagine when I start working on #11 I'll be much more enthusiastic, and hopefully I will get the issue out before the enthusiasm wears off. (And PhCOM 9 was such a bummer to produce, though a good issue, that I had vague mis-

givings about ever publishing again. But I did two issues of my personalzine KYBEN (3/$1, saith the huckster), and gradually won myself back to PhCOM.

From an art standpoint, this issue is a flop. Almost every piece of artwork is from the Filler File, and some of it is around two years old (so at least it's nice to get it published), but there isn't too much and the layouts are barely competent. Of course, it isn't too easy to get great artwork for a book review column...but we'll see how next issue looks.

As for the articles, there's a story behind many of them. I shall regale you...

The Stephen Hunter article appeared in the Baltimore SUN's Sunday Supplement this summer, and I thought it was rather interesting. Hunter apparently knows something about sf, but not an overwhelming amount. But I enjoyed reading somebody trying to explain a science fiction writer to the general public, even if he wasn't totally effective. (The article is reprinted verbatim, save for two things. At Roger and Judy's request I spelled their son's name "Devin" instead of "Devon"--and at Roger's request I omitted one fact which he had given Hunter "off the record," or so he thought.)

However, I didn't think it fair to give you just Hunter's article re Zelazny, since there won't be too much that will surprise you therein. So, after Don Keller, Jeff Clark and I had read it we wrote up a list of questions--admittedly, not all were based on the article --and presented them to Roger. (Who responded with "Where did these come from?") And he answered them, fascinatingly.

(And if you wonder why we persisted in calling him "Lord of Sci-Fi," it's because the article headings in the SUN referred to him that way.)

The only other really interesting story-behind-the-story concerns this issue's story: Mike Archibald's "Rag-Bone Man." For one thing, it's the first bit of Mike's writing we've yet published, though his artwork has been in PhCOM since issue 4. But the real thing worth mentioning is that it is a short story here, though I had not originally intended on printing "fan fiction." I finally decided that with so many of my friends attempting to write--and sometimes succeeding--and almost all of them writing non-commercial stuff that has no market value whatsoever, that...what else is a fanzine for, really, than to publish what you want?

So there will be a short story or two in each issue.

The stories will not be amateur science fiction.

"Rag-Bone Man" is a mainstream short story, a childhood reminiscence which hints at Mike's admiration of Bradbury, but is totally an Archibald creation (even to the billcrosbyism about midway through) I have also on hand, for future issues, a Charlie Hopwood historical story about the Spanish Inquisition, a Chelsea Quinn Yarbro short-short written for James Tiptree, a Jeff Smith story that is the best thing he has done but that has too many references to sf for it to be marketable, and there are more I might be able to get hold of. These are good, all of them, and if you skip them because you never read fanzine fiction it will be your loss. (They're better than the Dick

Geis story you all read in REG 3.) (Did I type billcrosbyism at the beginning of this paragraph? Damn if I didn't.)

I couldn't decide whether "Ah! The Cerealand Parade!" belonged in PHANTASMICOM or KYBEN. It was fannish, but it was critical. I finally left it here because there was more room, and that was pretty much the sole consideration.

Incidently, you might be wondering why this issue is 76 pages long. I can see you out there now: "Hey, I wonder why this issue is 76 pages long? I hope he says why in his editorial." So I will. The lettercolumn originally ran about 8 pages, all of comments on Jeff Gloncannon's article last time. Then I decided to put in some of the other things--I was mainly interested in Jeff Clark's letter and Christine Kulyk's poem--and it worked out to 13 pages, which is a respectable length. I figured if I put the lettercolumn and the editorial on the purple I had on hand, and then buy a box of green. I divided 175 into 5000 and got 28, which meant I could have 56 pages on green paper. Plus a six-page editorial, and ta-dah! 76 pages.

I'll have a slightly smaller number of copies this time than last, because last time we aimed for 175 and thus ran 185 copies of each page through. This time I'll have 165 or so copies, if I'm lucky. The mimeograph has been playing bitch goddess and demanding the sacrifice of paper. Also, you may have a bad page or two where she printed on the back. This happened too often to just toss the bad pages out. If it was legible it was saved. (I was hassling with the lettering guides and Don was hassling with the mimeo: "You s.o.b.," he muttered, using initials probably in deference to my wife, who was in the kitchen. "I question the use of 'son of a,'" I offered. "Why?" he asked, when he should have known better. "I think it's a female." I waited for another "Why?", got it, and replied, "It reproduces." That got me a painful stare. Later, when Ann and I took Don home, I thought I was going to be lynched for what I considered a lesser offense. We took all the trash cans down to the apartment dumpsters, and then rather than lug them back up to our apt--a Barsoomian ice monster--we tossed them in the back seat of the car, to be returned to their places upon our return to ours. Don started talking about how nice of me to take the trash cans out for a ride now and then. I said I often emptied them when I was picking Ann up from work, so they got out a lot. Either he or Ann asked if I carried on conversations with them while driving, and I said, "Yes, but they have filthy mouths." This seemed to me a rather innocuous statement, and nowhere near as bad as my best stuff, but the two of them went wild. Fortunately, neither of them can drive (did I hear a "neither can you"?), and they had to leave me alone while the car was in motion.)

When we started PHANTASMICOM we had a print run of 100. Seeing the number of copies we got stuck with, #2 had a run of 50. These went quicker, and we were going to go up as far as 75 for #3, until we realized that the special Lafferty material (including a story by RAL) would probably induce more people to buy it than before. We were right. By now we were on our way up, and 4 and 5 both had 150 runs. 6 and 7 had 200 runs. I still have lots of 6 and 7. 8 went down to 150, and I'm very low on that. 9 had 175, and I still have a fair number of copies, though not as many as of 6 and 7. The grand total for the first ten issues is somewhere in the vicinity of 1450. That's how many LOCI are printed every two weeks. It's taken us over three years, and even considering PhCOM is ten times as big....

To wrap up the print runs of Phantasmicom Press, HOLWE LOND 1 had 100, KYBEN 2 175, and KYBEN 3 125. This has all been for my benefit, not yours. Now I can throw away that little piece of paper with all this stuff on it.

I owe lots of people mentions, but not too many are going to get them. Stephen Gregg got his first issue of ETERNITY out (POBox 193/ Sandy Springs SC 29677/$1). I can't review it now as I'd like, but it deserves your support. This is a new prozine; I would call it semi-pro. The stories are minor but readable, the features and art are good (Jeff Clark reviews JACK OF SHADOWS), and I hope Stephen gets enough support to keep it going. (And Steve--when you reprint something, even a little one-page article like this time...credit it, okay?)

I do definitely want to mention the Science Fiction Foundation in England. This is a professional/academic organization with a three-fold objective: to publicize sf, to act as an information centre for those wishing to know more about the field, and to investigate "the usefulness of Science Fiction in Education." They are building up a research library, sponsoring lectures, and--of most interest here--publishing a magazine. This is FOUNDATION, which is somehow managing to be both academic and readable. It has articles (Darko Suvin, John Clark), writers on their careers (Brunner, Blish, LeGuin), stories (Tiptree), reviews, and all kinds of fercon goodies for those of us with that kind of bent. It costs 50p per issue, but I don't know how much that is; ask your bank. However much it is, send them some money. The address is:

The Administrator
The Science Fiction Foundation
Northeast London Polytechnic
Barking Precinct
Longbridge Road
Dagenham, Essex RM8 2AS
England

Do you believe all that? It would never fit on a mailing label. Of interest to me is that they will be reprinting "If You Can't Laugh at It, What Good Is It?", the interview I did with James Tiptree back in issue 6. (There go my hopes of selling that back issue to you all.) Also, the French GALAXIE is making an attempt to translate the interview--ghod only knows how that will turn out. And <u>they're</u> going to pay me for it. Wow.

***

Next order of business is a rather unhappy one for me. Many of you are aware that it was my intention to in this issue present Bill Rotsler with the Phantasmicom Award--an intention brought about because Bill had again missed out on the Hugo. Flyers were distributed with KYBEN 3, and I had a fairly lengthy list of friends, fans, pros, admirers, etc., all people who supported the award. Tim Kirk, who had beaten Bill out for the Hugo, drew a full-pager of a Rotsler character accepting the award--

--But Bill didn't. Although every effort on our part was made to keep Bill from knowing in advance of our intentions, a friend of Bill's called him and told him. This friend, also a friend of Tim's, thought that giving Bill an award, one of the bases of which was that

he hadn't won the Hugo, was an insult to Tim Kirk. Tim didn't think so, but nonetheless... A couple phone calls to California (I haven't gotten the bill yet, but when I do...ouch), one returned to me at 2:30 AM Eastern time, could have fixed things so that no mention of "Hugo" would have been involved, that it would have been "merely" an award for excellence. But it was too late. Bill had been told of the award, and did not feel he could accept it under the conditions it was being given.

The letter from Bill:

Listen, man, I appreciate what you and all the others (and Tim himself!) would like to do, but I just cannot accept such an award. Not if it is a sort of Pseudo-Hugo, certainly. I have been getting this You-Should-Have-Won-Because-You-Deserve-It-And-You've-Been-Doing-Stuff-For-Fanzines-Since-The-Year-One from all over. But that is not what the Hugo is for. It is for THAT YEAR'S WORK! Poul Anderson didn't win a Hugo because of umpteen years of writing, he won it for a certain story. Tim won the fan artist Hugo, and deserved to win it, because of a certain body of fine work done during that year. And people thought so and that's the way it is and that's the way it should be.

I don't care if Tim was "in on the award" to me. What other position COULD he be in, really? I think he truly thinks I should have won, but that decision is neither his nor mine. If you think I deserve a Hugo, or that anyone else does, then vote for them, or campaign for them. But, please, don't undermine the worth of anyone's Hugo by saying "But on the other hand Joe here should have won and so we're going to give him one."

I know you meant well and I appreciate that, truly, but such a process really undercuts any award procedure (any that's run honestly, that is.)

So I thank you and hope you and whoever else was involved will understand. There are some fine fan artists that have not yet won a Hugo, such as Grant Canfield, who has been doing a super job these last few months especially. Vote for him, or whoever. But unless the "established" award system is fan-world-wide and representational of their thinking then it means nothing.

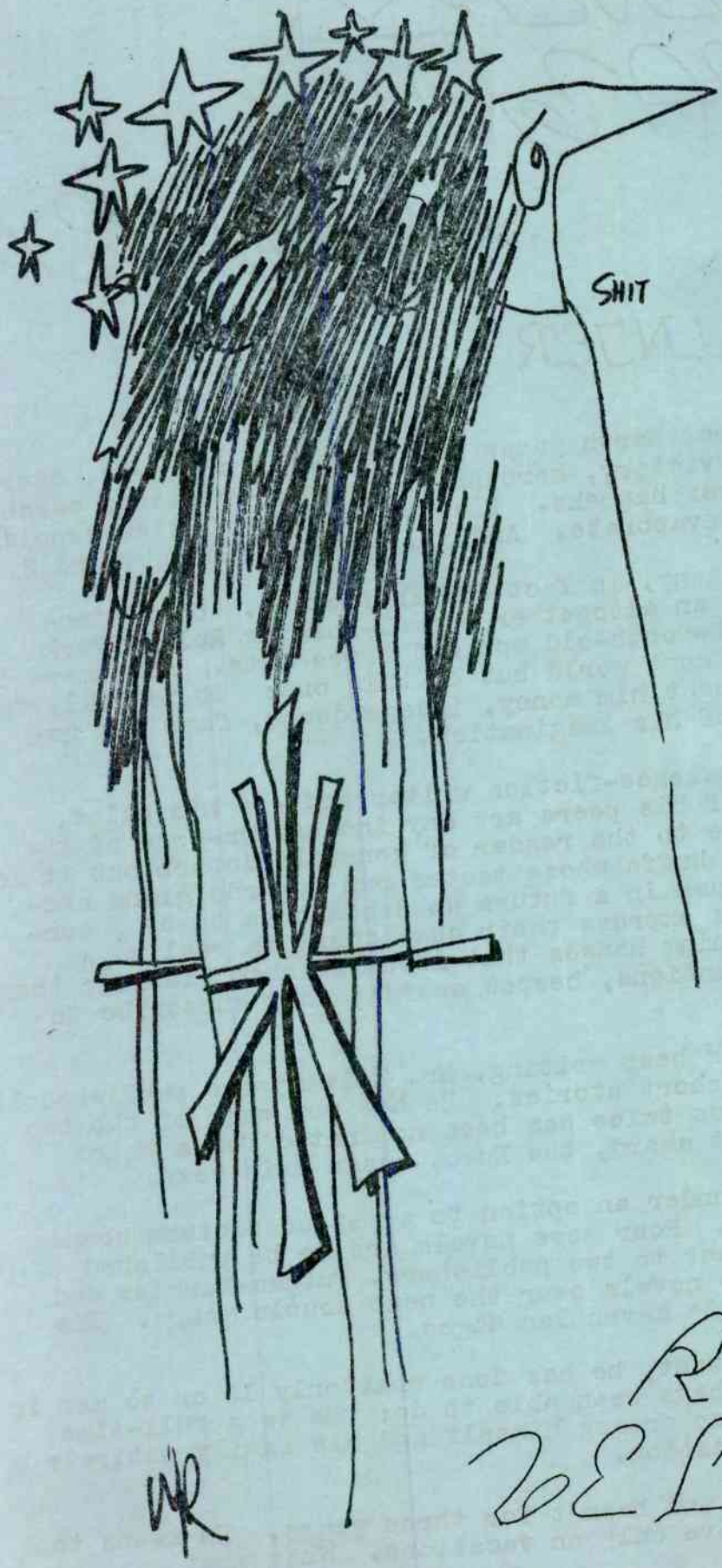
After all, I can buy a Medal of Honor in a hockshop.

I replied, trying to explain what we had been trying to do, showing him Tim's drawing, and asking if we had been able to surprise him and he had gotten his PhCOM unaware and saw the award, as drawn by Tim and with all his friends' names on it, if he would have been unhappy. His second letter:

Jeff, you nit!

Look, damnit, I am pleased that someone would like to go to all that bother & effort & emotional zap to give me recognition. Really, I am. But, don't you see that home-made hugos are not it? I really hope you publish these letters so others might understand. (S(And I'm doing so only because you asked.)S)

--continued on page 76



ROGER
ZELAZNY.

THE UNIVERSE, R. ZELAZNY, OWNER

STEPHEN HUNTER

Zelazny of the Planet Earth gazes down upon his universe, decrees life or death, agony or victory, heroism or tragedy--whatever catches his mood. What he decrees happens. Plagues strike. Cities topple. The dead walk. Planets evaporate. And all between midnight and 2.

There is such a Zelazny, in fact and in fiction. Christian-named Roger, he occupies an altogether normal-looking Roland Park rowhouse with his wife, 5-month-old son and three cats. And there is such a power, not of the next world but of this one: It is real, tangible in that it has brought him money, independence, fame and respect. It is the power of his imagination.

Roger Zelazny is a science-fiction writer and--if his sales, awards and the opinions of his peers are any indication--one of the best. His name is obscure to the reader of general fiction but it is legend to science-fiction buffs whose tastes run towards giant sea-lizards and palace intrigues in a future so distant as to be inconceivable. But the readers express their commitment in real ways: They patronize the publishing houses that issue science fiction; they organize clubs, hold conventions, bestow awards; they subscribe to science-fiction magazines.

In the 10 years he has been writing, Mr. Zelazny has published 10 novels and a multitude of short stories. He has won each of the two major science-fiction awards twice has been nominated for a third Science Fiction Achievement award, the Hugo, again this year.

One of his novels is under an option to a motion picture company for late-summer production. Four more novels are to be published soon and he is under contract to two publishers, Putnam-Berkley and Doubleday, for another four novels over the next couple years. His work has been translated into seven languages.

And, perhaps most important, he has done what only 15 or so men in the country, by his count, have been able to do: He is a full-time science-fiction novelist, supporting himself and his family entirely on the agility of his imagination.

He doesn't have a boss and hasn't for three years. He keeps the kind of hours most men achieve only on vacations. When most are pour-

Reprinted without permission from THE SUN MAGAZINE, July 9, 1972

ing a third or fourth cup of coffee about 10 A.M., the idea being to keep alert, somehow, until lunchtime, Mr. Zelazny is just stirring. And after the late-night talk shows, when most men are fitfully chasing nightmares about another tomorrow at the office, Mr. Zelazny is alone with his pipe, typewriter and imagination, cleaning up this book, creating that one.

If 14 novels isn't a bad life's work, what is it for a 35-year-old? A thin man, Mr. Zelazny has sparse hair, a pointed jaw and joints of elastic. Given 20 minutes of conversation on the green-and-white dappled couch of his living room, he'll find 25 positions in which to arrange himself and then begin to explore permutations on the basic 25.

His dress is casual young-married at home---slacks, sandals, open-necked shirt. His wife Judy sits across from him with their son Devin. Cats lounge here and there in a room that is, in Mr. Zelazny's words, "decorated in crowded oriental." A 90-year-old statue of Confucius competes with a "Swyngalyng" device for Devin. A bas-relief rubbing taken from the temple at Angkor Wat competes with a plastic playpen.

The contrast is stunning between the portrait of husband-with-wife-and-child and the imagination that produced such a vision as, "The high-frequency prayers were directed upward and out beyond, passing into that golden cloud called the Bridge of Gods, a bronze rainbow at night and the place where the red sun becomes orange at midday,"

And while some science-fiction devotees may believe that Mr. Zelazny was deposited on earth full-blown in 1965 by the chrono-synclastic infundibulum, he was in fact born in Euclid, Ohio, in 1937. He attended Western Reserve University near Cleveland, where he majored in psychology and English. He took an M.A. at Columbia in Elizabethan drama, spent six months fiddling with Nike missles in Texas courtesy of the Army Reserve and then joined the Social Security Administration in Dayton, Ohio. During this period, the first 24 years of his life, he wrote not one word of science fiction. Instead, he was a poet.

"For about four years while I was in college, I wrote nothing but poetry," he remembers. "But the only people I could think of who were making a living of it were Carl Sandburg and Robert Frost."

While in the Social Security training training program, he finally tried sci-fi.

"I always enjoyed reading it and when I finally did get around to making the attempt to write, it seemed the natural area."

Mr. Zelazny calls what followed his "over the transom days," or "out of the typewriter and into the slush pile." His manuscripts joined those of other unpublished, unknown and generally unwanted writers in the piles that swell in the editor offices of the few American magazines that publish science fiction. But in six weeks, AMAZING STORIES, a publication that has since ceased to exist, purchased a 2,000-word vignette. "From there, things started to go," Mr. Zelazny recalls. In that year, 1962, he sold 17 stories.

For the next seven years, Mr. Zelazny was a part-time writer.

He was transferred to Baltimore in September, 1965, and worked as a policy analyst at the Woodlawn Social Security office. He would sit down at night to put a thousand words on paper.

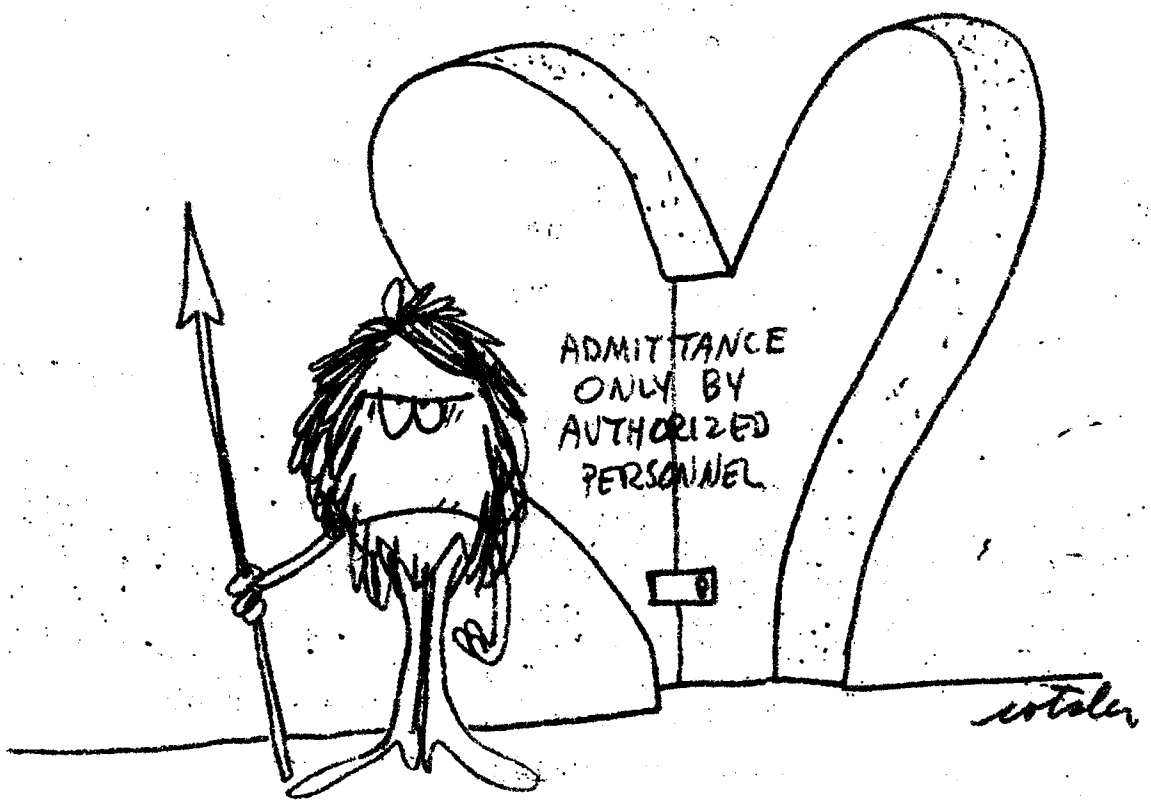
"There were times when it was hard to write after eight hours on the job. But writing fiction is something I enjoy. There are times when one does get stuck or blocked and not every section of a book is as enjoyable as the key thoughts that come to you when you first get the idea.

"But the most important thing is to attempt to write something every day, whether you feel like it or not, whether it comes out especially good or not, just for getting into the reflexive habit of producing copy every day. Because it has to become a reflex if you're going to do it full time."

As his career developed, his stories became longer. Moving from short story to novella to novelette, he wrote a full-length piece in 1965. That first novel--THIS IMMORTAL--was written "on spec," on speculation (to say nothing of optimism) that a publisher would accept it. Originally published in THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, the book was bought and published by Ace. It won the Hugo, the award of the World Science Fiction Convention, as best s-f novel of the year.

Two more novels for Ace followed and in 1967 he published his most ambitious work, LORD OF LIGHT, for Doubleday. The book, based on Hindu mythology, won him his second Hugo and sold about 200,000 copies.

In 1969, Mr. Zelazny quit the government to write full-time. It was something he wanted to do, but the decision was not a hasty one or an easy one. At the same time, Mrs. Zelazny quit her job (she, too, had worked for Social Security). Neither has regretted it.



He writes in two small rooms on the upper floors of the three-story house. They are so much alike it is easier to think of them as one. Piles of magazines, stacks of books lie in random arrangement on most of the table surfaces. His two Hugos, spaceships climbing upwards from pedastals, and his two Nebulas (from the Science Fiction Writers of America), starbursts frozen in Lucite, repose on a radiator cover. Awards from science-fiction societies glitter like diplomas on a doctor's wall. An electric typewriter, shrouded in plastic, sits on card table or desk.

Somehow, he brings order to the chaos. But even he is not sure how he does it.

"I have a haphazard method of approaching things. I do have a rough word quota I try to meet. Sometimes I exceed it; sometimes I don't. I usually start writing about 1 o'clock in the afternoon with frequent breaks. Again, I start in the evening about midnight, quit around 2.

"I'm pretty much a subconscious plotter. I have certain key scenes in mind, certain things that I know are going to occur and I work with them in mind. Other actions are generated by the interactions of the characters and the plot generally unfolds as something of a surprise to me, too.

"My first copy is my last copy. I used to re-write, but I discovered that if I just took my time I made all the changes. But I like to be thorough in my cultural background. When I was doing LORD OF LIGHT I had a stack of books on Hindu mythology that rose about 3 feet off the floor. It worked out all right."

Thematically, the Zelazny oeuvre seems to spurt in two directions. One, as might be expected, is pure "science" fiction, extrapolations of current technology into the near future. These are the kind of hard-driving, flat-out narratives that, although perhaps more sophisticated, owe their origin and style to the pulps of the Twenties and Thirties and, back even farther, the dime-novels and penny-dreadfuls of the late Nineteenth Century.

In DAMNATION ALLEY, the United States has been ravaged by nuclear warfare. Only two cities remain, Los Angeles and Boston, and Boston is dying of plague. Los Angeles has the cure but neither planes nor radio can penetrate the inland atmosphere. So a man is sent.

The mechanism is as simple as it is traditional. Start the hero running on Page 1 and don't stop him until the paragraph above "The End."

His other, perhaps more significant, direction is...well, only a coined phrase is accurate: mythos-fiction. In what have been his most successful books (LORD OF LIGHT, CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS) Mr. Zelazny cranks his imagination into hyperdrive.

These are dense detailed works that have as their basic assumption that anything conceivable is possible. He creates more than new worlds; he creates new universes, new laws of physics, new mythologies.

In perhaps his most fanciful, CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS, the dog-god Anubis, master of the dead, and the bird-god Osiris, master of the living, each dispatch a message to destroy the Prince Who

Was A Thousand, a once-mortal who has discovered the secret of immortality and thereby upset the normal flux of the universe. The two emissaries, however, must destroy each other before they can attack the prince; and furthermore, the battles between them are not conventional warfare--or even unconventional warfare; rather they are in "temporal fugue," a sort of karate in the fourth dimension in which the opponents leap backwards in time attempting to catch the other fellow in an unguarded moment somewhere in the past.

As the foregoing synopsis--perhaps criminal simplification would be a more accurate term--might indicate, Mr. Zelazny believes that the days of conventional science fiction are at an end.

"Things like faster-than-light travel or parallel worlds are pretty much understood and one no longer explores them as such, but just uses them as a point of departure. Science fiction has evolved from what it was back in the Thirties and Forties; now, a novel about space travel is passe."

He is also quick to point out another change, not so much in the genre but about it. As it mutates in content, he suggests, so it alters in critical opinion. Recently the New York TIMES BOOK REVIEW began a column of weekly commentary on science fiction by Theodore Sturgeon. Writers such as Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., and Michael Crichton, who write science fiction, have attracted large audiences from the general reading public. And more than 50 courses are taught at American universities on science fiction as literature, which, Mr. Zelazny says, "gives it a little more respectability."

"It's catching on rapidly. The distinction between science fiction and serious fiction is beginning to break down; in a few more years it'll probably be less important than it is now."

Other countries are beginning to enjoy the genre, most notably the French, the Dutch and the Japanese.

"I have no theories on why a culture suddenly becomes interested. It could be any number of things--increasing literacy, increasing technology, a concern for the environment, pure chance.

"One thing that is interesting though is the configuration different countries put on the genre, particularly Iron Curtain countries.

"In socialist science fiction, if you found a world inhabited by reasonably happy, reasonably sane, well-adjusted people, it was always a socialist setup. If they were miserable it was pretty much a classic case of economic oppression and the visitors would help them pull off a revolution."

Mr. Zelazny will continue to publish his two books a year for the next several years, but he is already thinking of a vacation from the genre. He has already written a conventional mystery (to be published soon) and is negotiating a contract to write two more. One idea is for a book based on The Fox, the unknown vigilante from the Fox River Valley in Illinois who has made it his private crusade to harass industrial polluters.

"A mystery has to be more tightly plotted than a science-fiction novel," he observes. "There are certain outs you have in science fiction you don't have in mystery." (Imagine, if you will, Sherlock

Holmes zipping into temporal fugue to grab a villain.) He also would like to write a general novel or perhaps a travel book.

A reviewer once invented a term for writers like Roger Zelazny. He called them "twice-a-year pros." They will never be accused of writing the great books of Western literature, nor is it likely that SATURDAY REVIEW will devote memorial issues to them when they die. Yet in their solitary, professional way they have set out to entertain, to beguile, to relax, to free you from the summer's heat. All they ask in return is a modest advance, 10 per cent of the take and a shot at a small immortality.

In a sense, they are the last of the free-enterprise capitalists. They manufacture a product, believe in it, sell it. They starve or feast at the whim of the consumer. To them, the things that a Saul Bellow or John Updike would talk about in an interview are irrelevant. They live by their wits, not in the hard and fast of the business world, but where it may be harder, faster: lonely rooms with typewriters and blank paper waiting to be filled.

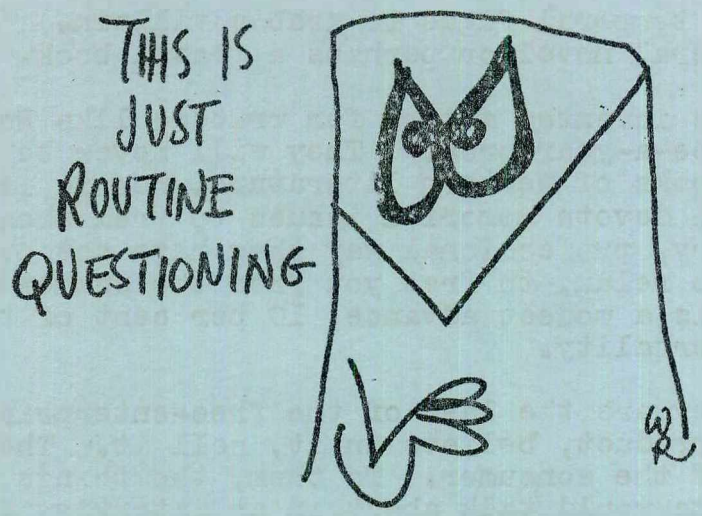
"You just do it, that's all," says Roger Zelazny.

He once wrote a story called "He Who Shapes," which featured a device by which one man could enter the subconscious of another, shape dreams, alter fantasies, stimulate images. Whether it was science fiction or autobiography is still open to debate.

*****

editorial updatings et cetera november 1972 jeffrey d smith

A few comments may be in order, to clear up a few items. I'll try and catch them in order. "Roland Park" is not a city, so letters addressed to "Roger Zelazny, Roland Park, Maryland" will die a slow death. Roland Park is a part of Baltimore. Devin is now almost a year old; I think he was born December 26, though it may have been as late as early January. Roger has written 14 books, but not 14 novels. Devin has outgrown the blasted "Swyngalyng," which took a frustrating hour or so to assemble. AMAZING STORIES, of course, is aliver than ever. And the punchline of a long, sad story is that the mystery, THE DEAD MAN'S BROTHER, is now without a publisher, though it has had at least one.



UP AGAINST THE WALL, ROGER ZELAZNY!

phantasmicom vs. the lord of sci-fi

PHANTASMICOM: When you began writing, you wrote stories the best you could and hoped they would sell. Now, everything you write is already under contract, with an almost-guaranteed acceptance. How does this fact affect you? Do you think that perhaps it allows you to sleep a little, to relax and not worry about rewriting that slightly off chapter, to submit a novel that is just "good enough"? Do you then have a sense of cheating your readers, by publishing a lesser work under your quality name? Or does JACK OF SHADOWS have the same amount of work in it that THIS IMMORTAL did?

ZELAZNY: The main effect of having contracts in advance of writing something is that I have perforce shifted almost exclusively to the writing of novels in recent years. This is something I both desired and required, in order to reach a point of freedom necessary for many things I wished to do. Short stories were, and still are, my first love in sf. I will eventually get back to them. In the meantime, however, there are quite a few things I want to learn about writing which I can only learn from the novel.

In every book that I have written to date, I have attempted something different--a structural effect, a particular characterization, a narrative or stylistic method--which I have not used previously. It always involves what I consider my weak points as a writer, rather than my strong points. These efforts are for purposes of improving my skills and abilities. Let x represent a book I am writing, and y the elements with which I am experimenting. Then x-y is what I know I can do well. I count on my x-y for sufficiency in carrying

the entire book, regardless of how y is received. I could not attempt such experiments in a short story. Too tight a format.

The sum of all my y's since I began writing is the quantity which interests me most, for it is out of this that I hope to enlarge my x-y ability. In any given experiment, the balance of these factors is a difficult thing to predetermine. For example, increasing the value of y to the extent I did in, say, CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS, cut the force of x-y down near to the break-even point. I probably learned more from writing this book than I have from any other, though.

What I am trying to say is that I operate under a continuing need to experiment, and the nature of the experimenting requires that at least part of the time I write from weakness. It would be easy to write a (I think) very good book by not purposely introducing the y-element, by consciously avoiding it, by writing around and slicking over my deficiencies. If I were to do this though, and do it repeatedly, I would have strong books for a while--and then someone would notice that they were sounding more and more alike. I might as well be stamping them out with a cookie cutter. I would start to shrivel up as a writer.

The nature of my book contracts has very little, if anything, to do with the substance of the books themselves. To date, I have found myself possessed of as much freedom as I ever had with respect to what I say or do not say. And what I say, or do not say, is governed by my continuing consideration of y. The work involved in JACK OF SHADOWS, for example, as compared with that in THIS IMMORTAL, was work of a very different sort because of the value I had assigned to y--but sweat-wise they were about equal. If a lesser work should appear under my name, it will not be because I did not try, but rather that y proved too potent a value or x-y insufficient for its assigned function. Such is the number of the beast.

PHANTASMICOM: What is the difference between being a struggling young writer and a multiple-award-winning author admired as one of the best in the field?

ZELAZNY: The struggling is shifted from a break-into-the-field-and-consolidate-your-position level to a situation where you are competing with the person you were when you broke into the field and consolidated your position.

PHANTASMICOM: What kinds of satisfaction do you get out of your writing--in the actual process of writing? C.S. Lewis said (somewhat simplified) that before you can approach the criticism of literature you have to realize that people read for different reasons--and with different consciousnesses, in a sense--and that perhaps the more qualitative ways you can read a book, the better it is. It could be the same with writing: the more satisfactions one seeks to effect in his writing, the richer his writing will be.

ZELAZNY: Kinds of satisfaction? Many. I would have to get quite autobiographical in order to answer this question in more than a general way. --Emotional satisfaction, for one. My own, plus analogues of the characters' feelings. My own mainly being release, relief and a kind of high followed by a pleasant fatigue, in that order. --Intellectual, for another. From the pleasure of contemplating an intentional or unintentional symmetry, balance, contrast--

pattern--as it emerges and works through to some sort of completion. Something akin to listening to a piece of music I enjoy. I give everything I am at the moment to what I write and I enjoy it in the same capacity. It is a funny feedback sensation that I do not fully understand, but then I do not wish to understand it fully.

PHANTASMICOM: In keeping with the fact that much of your writing is subconscious, if you come up with any last doubts about what you've written and some apparently reasonable alternatives for certain sections arise, do you tend to (perhaps superstitiously) regard your initial intuitions as more correct and truer?

ZELAZNY: Always.

PHANTASMICOM: What major works did you use for research in your major mythological works LORD OF LIGHT and CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS? Did THIS IMMORTAL involve any similar research?

ZELAZNY: I already knew something of the subject area before I began work on LORD OF LIGHT, but I read the following:

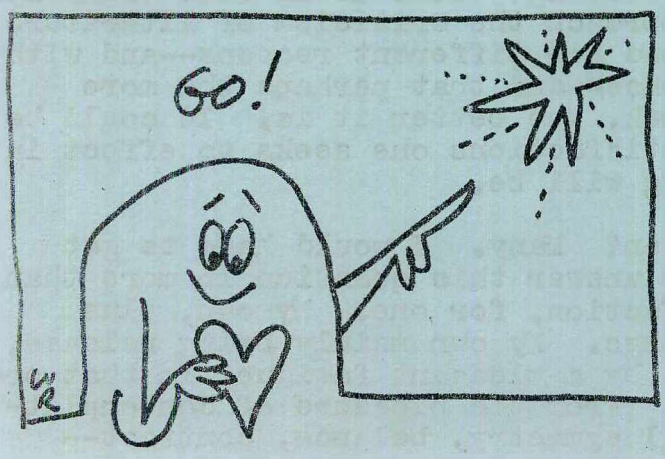
THE WONDER THAT WAS INDIA, by A.L. Basham
THE UPANISHADS, Nikhilanada
INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: A CRITICAL SURVEY, Chandradhar Sharma
THE RAMAYANA
TRADITIONAL INDIA, ed. O.L. Chavarria-Aguilar
GONE AWAY, Dom Moraes
LIGHT OF ASIA, Edwin Arnold
PHILOSOPHY OF THE BUDDHA, A.J. Bahm
SHILAPPADIKARAM, Prince Ilango Adigal
BUDDHIST TEXTS THROUGH THE AGES, I forget the editor's name.
GODS, DEMONS AND OTHERS, R.K. Narayan.

And around three dozen others--skim-wise--which now elude me.

For CREATURES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS: Nothing.

For THIS IMMORTAL: A roadmap of Athens.

PHANTASMICOM: In F&SF when the first portion of LORD OF LIGHT was published, the author's-note said you were working on NINE PRINCES IN AMBER then, and were 40,000 words into it. Does this equate to the first half of the novel as published? Do the two halves of the novel strike you as being stylistically or thematically different?

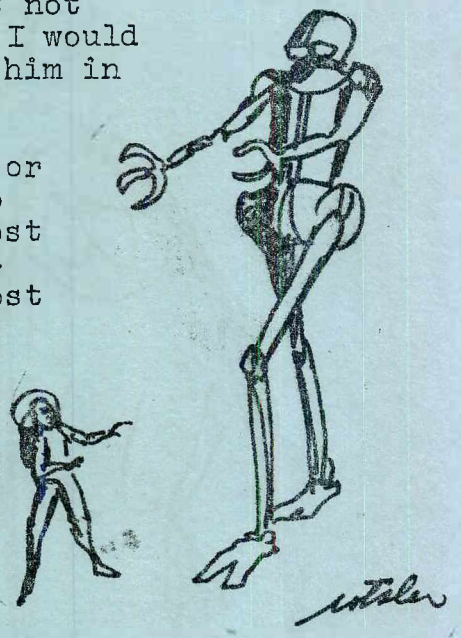


ZELAZNY: I do not honestly remember the point at which this was said. That book was written very rapidly, so it is all of a close piece, time-wise. I do remember though, that I did not think of it in first-half, second-half terms, but rather as part of a much longer story. Now the second book--THE GUNS OF AVALON--has a stylistic shift (I'll leave it to you to determine where) because of a long time lapse between the writing of one part and the rest. This was unintentional, however,

and simply the effect of my writing style changing during the interval. I don't see the book as suffering for it, though--or if I did, I wouldn't admit it.

PHANTASMICOM: Is there any chance of your writing "purer" fantasy than JACK OF SHADOWS and the AMBER trilogy--i.e., world-creation a la Tolkien? Have we seen the last of the Dilvish series, or do you have further plans for it?

ZELAZNY: Yes, there is. In all likelihood, I will--eventually. I can't say when, though. Not in the immediate future. I do intend, also, to get back to Dilvish, but not before I get back to shorter pieces. I think I would like to put him in a novel one day, but I see him in a number of short pieces first.



PHANTASMICOM: Which of your works--long or short, whichever it may be--do you consider to be the most ambitious, and to have been the most difficult to execute? Is this one your favorite? Which piece of fiction do you get the most satisfaction from, and which do you find to be the most miserable failure?

ZELAZNY: LORD OF LIGHT was the most ambitious and the most difficult. It is a tossup between this and THIS IMMORTAL as my favorite and most satisying longer work. I favor "For a Breath I Tarry" and "This Moment of the Storm" among my novelettes, and "Love Is an Imaginary Number" among short stories.

My worst? "Song of the Blue Baboon." I wrote it to go behind a cover for IF or GALAXY. I had twisted, stretched, bent, folded, spindled and mutilated things to fit in the cover scene. I sort of looked upon the cover as the scaffolding that was holding up the building. Due to a complex mixup, the story did not get paired with the cover. Unfortunate. All the king's horses, and all the king's guys in armor...etcetera.

PHANTASMICOM: What sort of a typewriter do you generally use? Can you work with an electric on a first draft?

ZELAZNY: First of all, I do not like to sit at a desk. I have never been able to do much in the classic underwood observa position. I write in a semi-reclined position with my feet elevated and the typewriter on my lap. My favorite typewriter for this purpose is my Remington portable. If something should be wrong with it, my Smith-Corona Galaxie portable with a special, snap-apart case is my backup machine. Then I have a very light, very small Smith-Corona which I take with me when traveling but do not use at any other time. Too light for prolonged use, and I am not overly fond of the close grouping of the keys. My electric is an Olivetti Underwood Praxis 48, on which I can compose--but of course this involves sitting at a desk. I save it for letters, pretty stuff, and very fast stuff. I also keep an old upright Royal around for sentimental purposes. It was my first typewriter. My father got it for me some 24 years ago, used, and it cost all of $5 then. It is still in great shape, but I seldom use it these days--both because it is not lap-able and because it has

an Elite typeface. The most satisfying typewriter I ever had was a Sears & Roebuck Tower portable, purchased in 1955. Unfortunately, it fell apart some years ago and I never could find another like it. The present Remington--which I've had a little over four years--is the closest thing to it that I have since come across.

PHANTASMICOM: How much time, relatively speaking, do you spend on--how conscious are you of--the prose, the sentences with which you phrase your answers to the sort of questions being asked here? (You've got to expect this sort of thing when you're a legitimate Lord of Sci-Fi.)

ZELAZNY: I don't really know. I pay very little attention to time when I am not writing and even less when I am writing. But non-fiction does seem to come faster because I am not working with a plot. I am just translating my thoughts into words, and it works pretty much like a reflex. I am not constrained to juggle my words within the plot-sub-plot-situation nest of boxes and, flowing from the sessions of sweet silent thought, I can bash them and toss them--this way, that--with a pitiless irresponsibility, safe in the knowledge that the medium, like a padded cell, is stout enough to contain the sense.

PHANTASMICOM: Do you like the term Sci-Fi? Science Fiction? Speculative fiction?

ZELAZNY: I prefer "science fiction," because it is the term I learned first. I never even heard "sci-fi" until the mid-sixties. "Speculative fiction" sounds a bit pretentious, and I learned it later, also. Maybe it wouldn't sound funny if I'd heard it first. Dunno. I'll stick with my habit, though...probably.

PHANTASMICOM: Do you find cat-hairs a hazard, psychologically and/or physically?

ZELAZNY: Only when they are attached to a vicious and sadistic cat.

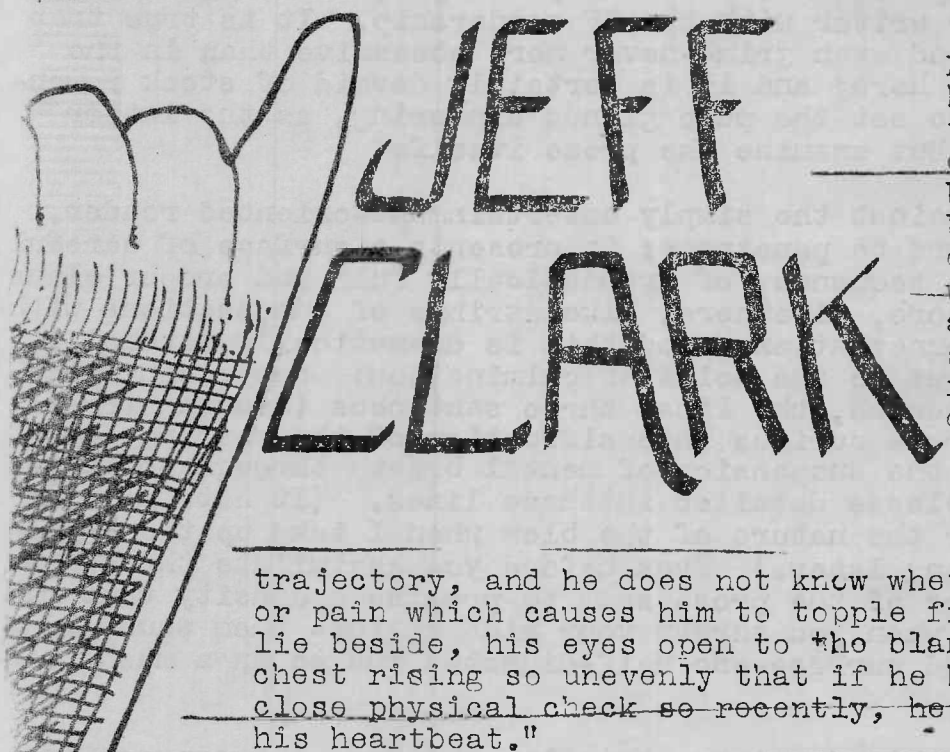
PHANTASMICOM: Have you anything to say in your own defense?

ZELAZNY: I am innocent, pure, noble and sweet, by reason of artistic license.

*****

MAKING WAVES

MALZBERG SCALES AN APOGEE



"DOCKING MANEUVER: He feeds himself into her slowly, feeling the tentative hold, the slow circling motions of orbit, anxious to grasp, but fearful that if he does so the connection will be broken./.../ Up and down, in and out, scatology moving in the foreground against a deeper, almost solemn hush./.../ And so he spills into her, gasping, broken, feeling her cycle into a new trajectory, and he does not know whether it is fulfillment or pain which causes him to topple from her so abruptly and lie beside, his eyes open to the blankness of ceiling, his chest rising so unevenly that if he had not had such a close physical check so recently, he would be doubtful of his heartbeat."

and

"--Coming against the Moon, deep in a voyage, Martin had thought that it was beautiful, and the beauty was of a sort he had never suspected before. Rather than voyaging out, the Moon

had given him the feeling that he was coming in, moving into something as familiar as it was accessible, and he had hovered on the window long beyond necessity just to look at it: the faint scattering of colors at the edges, the crevices in the center that looked so deep he could hurl himself and fall forever. Into the pit of memory.

These are two selections--one strung together, one intact--from THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS. Apart from any consideration of thematic content, I think they begin to reveal why Barry N. Malzberg is not a particularly popular writer with the SF readership. It is true that his work is solemn and even grim--never more obsessive than in the novel I'm discussing here; and it is certainly devoid of stock romanticisms calculated to set the pulp glands slavering, as the latter section indicates. But examine the prose itself:

It militates against the simply entertainment-oriented reader. It promises to be hard to penetrate; it presents a surface of careful phrasings stacked in sequence, of grammatically full and proper clause constructions and more, elsewhere, like strings of conjunctions without the relief of punctuation. And this is dramatically natural in its own context, right to the point of culmination: comprising nearly a page in total length, the final three sentences (seeming for all intents like one) are a curious intensification of the reading experience, resulting in the suspension of mental breath through the pattern of emotional release detailed in these lines. (It hits me like that; but I'll infer the nature of the blow when I take up the implications of that ending later.) Even before you assimilate the coherent images, the lines of the prose seem to promise a density that may give you a headache when you thrust your mind against them squarely and suddenly. A hard surface--no half-digested images in a mushy narrative soup.

I step back at this juncture, briefly, and read the expressions of my last paragraph. I can see that I've come on rather strong. If this puts you off, and if Malzberg's previous work puts you off, then you might drop out when you like. If you're going to read the book regardless, just for the story you may expect from the cover blurb, then you should know that I'm going to reveal some of it, the ending included. This book is a lean and exemplary nightmare of our time though, and as such it is effective no matter what you know about it or whether you've read it before. In a way it bears the essence of Malzberg's talents, however, and if you're going to read him at all (or at least give him another chance), this is the novel to try. Not caring at all for this, you'll probably never like him.

So much for the "gentle reader" posturing.

Barry Malzberg <u>is</u> a science fiction writer, no matter what his personal comments concerning his work are in AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS. His attitudes toward the space program and traditional SF aside, he grapples with science fiction material as if he were really concerned with it: it is more than story fodder, and it is other than somethin perverse to be assimilated through the application of a respectable cultural patina. Antiques appeal to unviable instincts; I have a closer and more natural affinity for writers who approach the substance of SF with unabashed concern and clarity. They often go straight to the heart of the awe (or wonder, if you will) and cut away the cultura

bullshit along the line. And in the line.

Here is an observation on this:

> He is here to see the rocket go up, not to stand and look at Very Important People and take notes in a notebook while he sweats in the heat./.../ Besides, he dislikes the VIPs, dislikes most of them taken one by one, and certainly dislikes them as a gang, a Mafia of celebrity, a hierarchical hive./.../ If this display of greed, guilt, wickedness, and hoarded psychic gold could not keep Saturn V off its course, then wickedness was weak today. Or did wickedness crowd to the witness stand to cheer evil on its flight?/.../ It was pure American lunacy. Shoddy technology, the worst kind of American shoddy, was replacing men with machines that did not/work as well as men. /A/ crowd of a hundred thirsty /do the reporters could have been handled in three minutes by a couple of countermen at a refreshment stand in a ball park. But there was an insidious desire to replace men everywhere with absurd machines poorly designed and abominably put together; yes, this abominable food vending trailer was the proper opposite number to those smug and complacent VIPs in their stands a half mile away; this was the world they had created, not the spaceship. They knew nothing about the spaceship but its value in the eyes of the world--that was all they had to know. The food vending trailer was their true project. Then they mouthed their portions of rhetoric, when they spoke, lo!, their mouths poured forth cement--when they talked about poverty and how poverty could be solved by the same methods and discipline and effort devoted to space, he would have liked to say to them: Solve your food vendors first: Solve your shoddy appliances first! your planned obsolescenses!--then you may begin to think of how to attack the poverty of others. He was in a fury at the complacency of their assumption that they could solve the problems of the poor. His favorite man, Lyndon Johnson, was telling Walter Cronkite on television, "There's so much that we have yet to do--the hunger in the world, the sickness in the world. We must apply some of the great talent that we've applied to space to these problems." Yes, his mouth poured forth cement.

and then:

> There was just no way of anticipating what was going to happen to him on that fifth orbit. Maybe it had been a fool's paradise not knowing but it had been nice anyway, a pity that it could not last. He knew that they deserved it down there. He was giving them surely what they had always wanted, all the blank men with headphones sitting at their desks, staring at the screens. They had taken degrees and fucked joylessly and bought houses and gone into debt for possessions just so they cou ld be ready for what he had to give them. At night they dreamed it, it would appear to them in the cover of dreams, this end, and now it was coming closer and closer: he would give it to them. He would give them a disaster so enormous and irrevocable that they could only give up and join with it forever. They would no longer have to cope, they could let everything go in the simultaneity of collapse. Oh, they had had a taste of it, a little foreknowledge /.../ but they were still not quite ready for it. They insisted upon

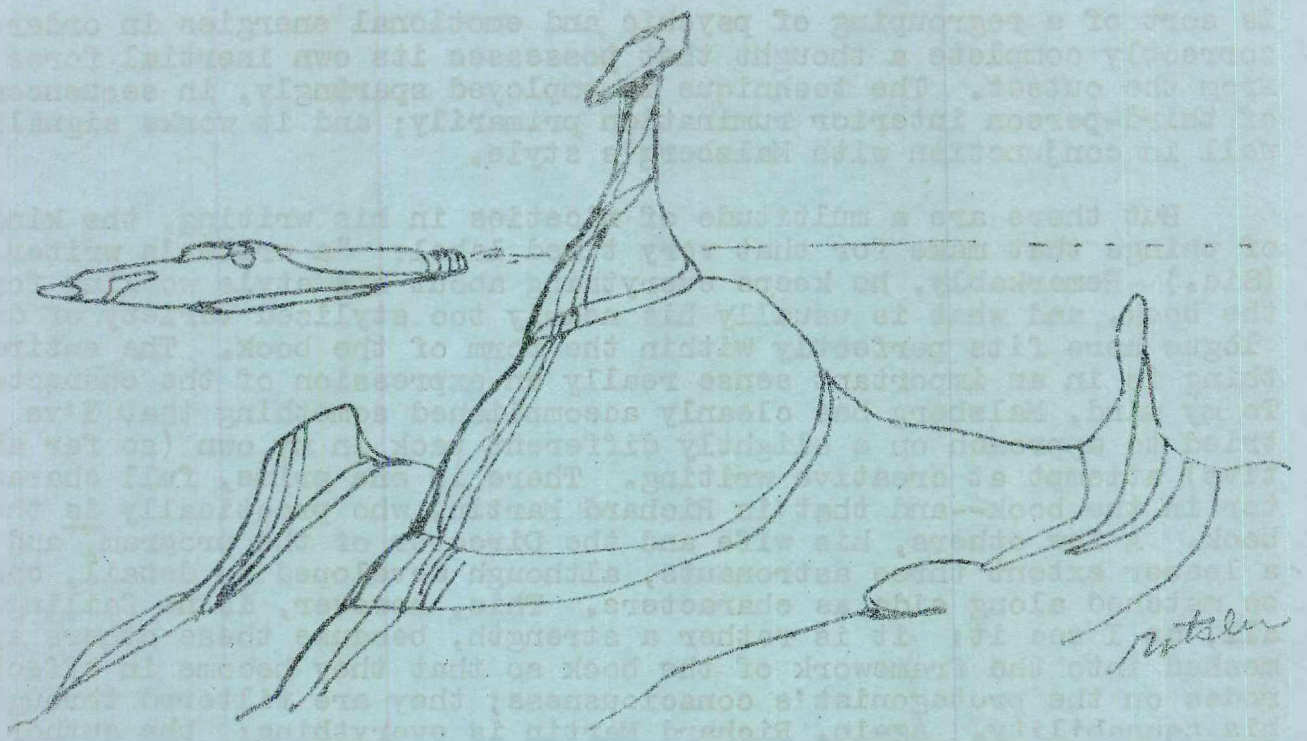
struggling against their destiny, they had not yet learned to accept it, they were still trying to act as if their headphones and desks were real and as if they were in a rational business. But it was not, it was not rational at all--

--there was nothing sane about it. How clearly he saw it! how clearly they would see it.

Two passages--one from Norman Mailer's OF A FIRE ON THE MOON, the second from THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS--both nearly emotionally intact, if not physically. And in that emotional aspect notice that, despite their seperate contents and dependent connotations, these writers are evoking essentially the same indignation at an irresistible moral problem. The statement of each trail tendrils embedded in the main bodies and concerns of the individual books--one impressionistic documentary, the other impressionistic fiction of a sort--but they are treating with two extremes of the same social sensibility, the VIP politician/celebrity and the upper middle class, both solvent in and nurtured by the American capitalist system. These books do have their other interests, but in the sense of this convergence it becomes apparent that Malzberg's passage has the greater emotional force and clarity. The style and rhythm it has is working in its favor--yet the content is as stripped and direct, as clean of information-line as the prose style itself. Mailer is working with the components of a real event, Apollo 11, while Malzberg is fashioning a fiction, a speculation from a similar concrete basis, but one as lean and succint as he is capable of in the expression of his intentions. Yet he is direct--emotionally assaulting, although not at the expense of the valid observations that prompt this reactio

But Mailer has obligations that must run him on a more devious route, obligations to his task at hand. And, I'm tempted to say, obligations to his role as a Mainstream Writer. The great writer, he dances about the ramifications of his document a bit much, noodles in his reactions to them a bit excessively, and on occasion plays a little lofty with his dubiously modest third-person viewpoint coloraturas. (I trust my inference is clear? It is not entirely apparent in the quoted passage, but it <u>is</u> something that stretches out to transparency over the course of the book.) It strikes me--as it so often does when a genuine "outsider" attempts SF material, here turned-sudden-fact--that Mailer has attempted to assimilate a uniquel awesome event (in historical Terms) by embedding it finally in a literary ooze where cultural barnacles can collect, largely through the medium of his too-substantial personal vessel, his own life.

In fact, OF A FIRE ON THE MOON struck me in several adverse ways when I read it. At one time I was prepared to discourse on my reactions to its various elements--the Manichean moralizing, the gorgeous description of the space hardware, the incantatory flab (which could be, would be, improved upon by Zelazny!), and so on. But the book is too far behind me now for that task to be undertaken without another reading. Likewise, I only invoke it here, seldom, to help establish Mr. Malzberg's comparative validity and worth in our field, and will not pursue individual analogies further as I had once anticipated. (Anyhow, Mailer has already been treated to one previous whine from the ghetto via my review of UNIVERSE DAY.) Barry Malzberg can speak for himself, like it or not. I've put myself here to help convince people that he is a good thing in the SF field.



THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS is, in essence, Malzberg's attempt to understand significant aspects of our space program as it exists. It has this in common with Mailer's book, although it is fiction. Richar Martin, the protagonist, is for all formal purposes the author himself. He is a former astronaut who is now being gradually siphoned off the program because he has had a "problem" out in lunar orbit--namely, the fact that he almost succumbed to the desire to head back from orbit, leaving his team-mates stranded on the Moon. But he was talked out of it by mission control, and finally, having set his head partially to rights, they have made him press relations liason for the current launch, after which he will be gone for good. He does not like his situation; he cannot understand what is happening to him in this program.... And then the ghost of what he almost did--of what he failed to do--becomes on this mission a full-blown nightmare, and a crisis which he must help to ease.

The narrative is formed from the inside: it is not standardly dramatic, but possesses that peculiar interiority of Malzberg's style. It seems to be constructed after the fashion of a man trying to work his way out of a maxey box. He does not understand all of his circumstances, and he is searching for origins. We follow Martin in a careful third-person reconstruction of the details of his discoveries and the final climax, while the omniscient author almost never intrudes.... No. Better yet, we follow him closely in the construction of the mental processes that move him toward the revelation from which he decides his final act.... For the whole thing is brought closer, made more immediate by casting the narrative in the present tense; it is being created before our eyes, as we read, in a more urgent sense than simply the fact that we don't know what's going to happen next in the story. This book contains the most effective, most emotionally justifiable use of the present tense I've ever come across, at least in our field. The author also has a functional device of breaking off a sentence in the middle of a phrase or between phrases, and placing a set of the usual double-hyphens between the paragraphs--as in the last passage I quoted from the book. You can only partially observe from that passage the effect of this technique. In context, it

is sort of a regrouping of psychic and emotional energies in order to correctly complete a thought that possesses its own inertial force from the outset. The technique is employed sparingly, in sequences of third-person interior rumination primarily; and it works signally well in conjunction with Malzberg's style.

But there are a multitude of niceties in his writing, the kind of things that make for that very tired label: "a writer's writer." (Sic.) Remarkably, he keeps everything about his style working for the book, and what is usually his nearly too stylized variety of dialogue here fits perfectly within the form of the book. The entire thing is in an important sense really an expression of the character. To my mind, Malzberg has cleanly accomplished something that I've tried to approach on a slightly different tack in my own (so far abortive) attempt at creative writing. There is one prime, full character in the book--and that is Richard Martin, who practically is the book. A few others, his wife and the Director of the program, and to a lesser extent three astronauts, although developed in detail, cannot be matched along side as characters. This, however, is no failing at all, as I see it: it is rather a strength, because these others are meshed into the framework of the book so that they become in effect nodes on the protagonist's consciousness; they are filtered through his sensability. Again, Richard Martin is everything: the author is in the usual sense lacking in presence: yet the fiction is sensibly an autobiographical extension of the writer. And how much simpler and more graceful it is than trying to smother a complicated historical event with an overblown ego!

Was it Ballard who remarked that one thing he likes about SF is that there's no past to it, it's all the future? If so, he was probably referring to the spirit of the literature (implying its partial freedom from "origins") as much as to the explicit choice of subject matter. In something of this sense, that is one aspect of this book's directness that I find attractive. Also, Malzberg does not overdo technical, Agency jargon; he provides just enough general knowledge of the space program and its workings to imply that a great deal can (and should) go unsaid, and that you are, indeed, in good, sure hands. (Very few SF writers can really make their technical and scientific sermons very palatable and involving by the strictest critical standards, anyhow. And one has to be a rather exceptional writer to transcend even that achievement and make such passages work toward some greater effect. The only writer who has evidenced this talent throughout much of his work--who comes to mind at the moment--is Arthur C. Clarke.... And, in a somewhat different way--to give him his due--Norman Mailer, in his technological descriptive passages concerning the launch.) Malzberg's preoccupations are elsewhere; and he often uses technical terms more as a matter of form than anything else--mainly for their image quality.

Here and again, I'm brought back to form, form and style. I feel compelled to mention a couple of those consummate writer's "niceties." In one chapter of six pages Malzberg details the compulsion which urges Richard Martin to abandon his companions while he retains sole control of the space capsule; this section contains some of the most driving manic reasoning in all the author's writing. He makes use of the afore-mentioned double-hyphen trick and, especially, of CAPITAL LETTERS. This technique is reserved primarily for "statements" made by the (retro-fire) BUTTON as it tries to "talk" Martin into pressing it. To try and explain the force and weight of those capital letters is more than I can manage economically and untediously, but suffice i

to say that they are extremely effective--especially when lodged in the steady vicissitudes of the author's prose style. I've never read better emotional use of capitals.

Likewise, I've never read a writer who can swear better in print. Certainly no one else can use "sons of bitches" (or its singular) so often, so unerringly. And, lest you think this is trivial and cute--well, it's not. Most SF writers' cursing is forced, mannered, or rote, but Malzberg's should be called rather deliberate; and more than this, it is real, primal, and affrontive language, as it should be. What I might call the "expletive emotion" is something the author uses well, and it is integral to the heart of this fiction --and therefore to what the space program means to him.

At which point I come close to the final reckoning. Perhaps I've seemed to ramble a little, but I have not yet lost sight of my intentiond. Being rather loose in organization, this discussion is not meant as a methodical review, at least. I have enough paper- and head-notes at my disposal to germinate a tortuous analysis of this book that would contain material much more dense or diffuse than anything you've come across so far. THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS is still fairly recent on the paperback market, and Barry Malzberg does not, at any rate, have a very large and enthusiastic readership in the SF community. So, realistically and in all probability, what I'm doing is trying to sketch small centers of my admiration for the book and--through this communication--to persuade as many people as possible to read it, and to appreciate it. Whether neutral or hostile, with a temporarily receptive mind you may discover some surprising things, and even an awe at the core of the book's implications which is not so far removed from the best of this field as you may think.

Anyway, it's not likely that a more effective anti-NASA statement will ever be made.

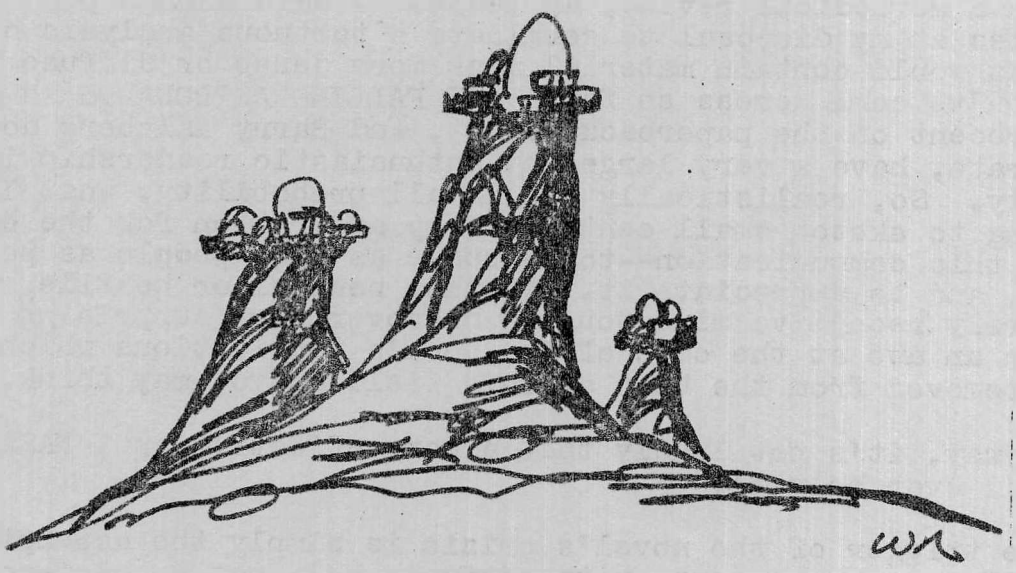
The trigger of the novel's crisis is simply the assumption that astronauts are human (and quite actively so), not problem-solving cardboard machines as in much of antiquated hardcore SF. Of the three astronauts sent up on the shot for which Martin is press relations officer, one is mentally disturbed in a decisive way. He gradually loses his sterile image before the television eyes of the public, kills one of his companions, and reduces the other to an ineffectual wreck. This is all graphically communicated in prose that achieves a fixed-vision intensity comparable to the physical one of the single-camera set-up in the space capsule, but without the drawbacks of its predictable distance and literalness; the situation has been precisely arranged by the previous depiction of the astronauts as the protagonist has encountered them. There remains but the ultimate act--the one Richard Martin could not perform himself--and the disturbed astronaut, Busby, decides and threatens it: he will swing around the moon, return to Earth, and release the nuclear explosives meant for lunar testing....

> "/.../That's the interesting thing about this. There's surprisingly little concern./.../we're getting a lot of phone calls, mostly from people who want to know how it all came out. They seem to think that it was part of the production plan./.../you see, as far as I can deduce anyway, these things /telecasts/ were so devalued a long time ago that they're another kind of television. People don't believe what they see on television anymore so this becomes part of the cultural mix. It's very hard to get

people really involved these days. They've seen so much. And television, I'm sorry to say, is a very poor medium for what we like to think of as reality."

So speaks one harried government official. --Grimly plausible? Or perhaps, a little too neat and excessive in its grim irony, and therefore only capable of satiric reality?...Maybe not:

When Armstrong and Aldrin touched down and walked, in furry images two media removed from our sight--one physical, one electronic--I observed them under circumstances of optimim tension and interest. Just before they landed, the TV I was watching them on suffered a distasteful disfunction and the event had to be concluded via radio. I was at a friend's house in N.Y.C., and while they prepared to disembark and set up camera we drove swiftly upstate toward my then suburban area, to share with the rest of my family the communion of the very first image--one that I could



still not conceive of, though I knew habitually what its technical limitations on the tube must be. The moment came, and I remained in a continuous state of amazement which was elongated, yet not attenuated; the embryonic drama that the astronauts' mundane and innocuous little motions might have feebly and unconsciously striven toward did not enter into that momentous reality, that totally new situation in real time.... Eventually--with a lengthy passage of time, while with no change at all in the "proscenium"--word came through that there were some people down the block, people I do not even remember knowing in that stultifying small town, who were actually complaining because none of the channels, none of the independent local ones, were running any old movies. There was nothing other than the dull physicality of this actionless moon show (without a change in set-camera scenery as even George Melies provided in A TRIP TO THE MOON!). No alternatives to a cerebrally acknowledged event of incredible reality. No alternative to this momentary reality... but, then, there would likewise be none if and when the brief reality of Busby's bomb were dropped squarely onto their middle class environment.

If Malmberg has a very likely point, and if as well I was informed correctly, then I would be inclined to say that these

people had at the very least traded a novel (TV) unreality for a mundane and repititive one, old and familiar and worn, with grain and splices in its texture--and commercials, so one knows that he's having his time consumed by a habitual entertainment that serves to constantly supplant any capacity for reading, even. But that is part of most of our environments. You didn't have to like the taste of the show's relative reality, but to try and wholly ignore it in preference to tunnel (tele)vision is something else again....

I might say those people were spiritually void in an awesome area of the intellect. But they are part of the monolithic system that makes the space program what it is, that caused and causes us to react to the shows as we variously do, that attempts to mold the astronauts for a machine-like clarity of function, and that helps make Malzberg into the individual and responsive system that has created the writer he is....

But beyond everything is the fact of space itself, a neutral thing. The author has started with the particular, but finally reaches for the abstract: from the detail-work of the mechanized emotions of NASA, to a final and almost desperate attempt to grasp space itself in the abstract, to grasp an open and mindful (rather than mindless) attitude toward it. Of course, there are no conclusive solutions. But we are presented with this:

> He had never understood why the center would not let them curse./.../ Space was, when you thought about it, an entirely new experience: they should have allowed them to work into it in entirely different ways. None of the old rules could apply in the new circuit; space was no freeway, spacemen were not pilots./.../ There was something to be said for the preservation of space as a moral quality inimical to the obscenities and laxity but on the other hand, it had to seem like a hell of a waste of opportunity. The fact was that you never knew. You could never make a positive and final calculation, there was never a point at which one way or the other you knew what had to be done and the time of alternative was over. No one had had that happen in the history of the project right up until Busby who, it seemed, had made his choice, God bless him.

This material is part of a short chapter which--if you trace the development of its implications all throughout the course of the novel--possesses more genuine sense of awe than most of the numerous cheap and naive fancies of traditional space opera. If you read this novel with some receptivity, you may see that there is something beyond the author's anger at the blind manipulations of NASA. It is more than anger that he portrays:

> The very presence of space is something that we cannot yet fully know, especially in the manner in which we are implementing its exploration. It is something as unique as the event of the first moon landing itself: the physical conditions of either, alone, cannot explain these things and inform our emotions. When we insist on making space a continuation of the vulgarities of our environment--here, the sterile, pre-digested TV shows featuring dimensionless men who are to be pathetically considered Everyman heroes -- we do a disservice to space itself. In fact, it is very nearly an affront to the cosmic (and to the imagination), and

Malzberg's argument verges on this. (Quite often it seems to me that space may be the focal point where the physical and the metaphysical converge, especially for the purposes of art--and one of the best examples I can cite is the film 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY.) We simply have no right.

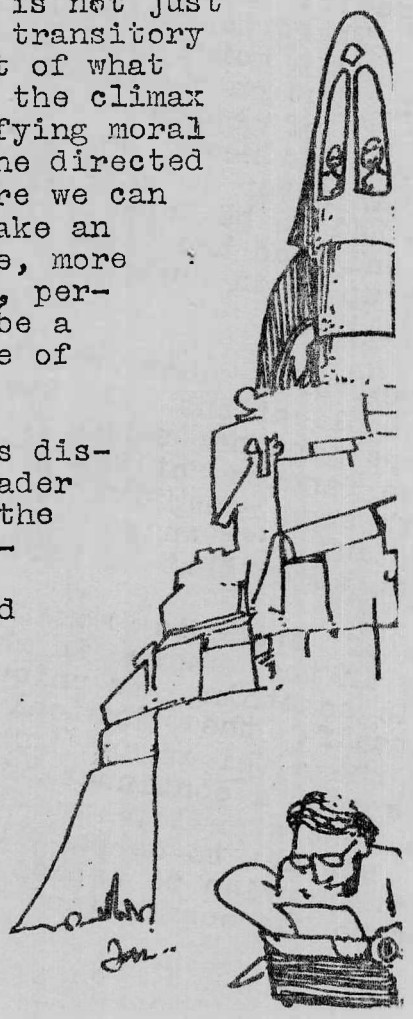
And this is almost an absolute moral judgment. When Martin is requested to talk Busby out of dropping his bombs via a closed-circuit transmission, he finalizes the horror and brings it home in the torturously long sentence(s) of the novel's closing lines. With all the emotion and conviction he can muster, he swears Busby on, urges his faltering will to return all the way and "drop those fuckers." Is this merely a personal vengeance?

Not quite. This is not just a satisfying but transitory thrill. In light of what has gone before, the climax contains a horrifying moral righteousness, one directed at us all. Before we can begin again to make an approach to space, more sanely next time, perhaps there must be a purge...maybe one of nuclear fire.

Whatever his disposition, the reader must admit that the novel raises pertinent questions and problems; and it is open to further investigation and possibilities, as most good SF should be. It is intensely focussed, unlike Mailer's ambitious and diffuse work, which I rather perversely consider to be the best attempt the Mainstream has produced at grasping something totally alien through "acceptable" means. Mailer almost plays both sides against the middle by taking an admittedly unique event and proceeding to pack it firmly in an unperturbable cultural excelsior. OF A FIRE ON THE MOON is not nearly as vital a finished literary creation, but it did net its author a National Book Award nomination. On the other hand, THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS has not even received the status of An Ace Science Fiction Special, for which it had been destined; instead, it has gotten a partially misleading cover blurb and a pathetic, insensitive cover.

Yet I hope Barry Malzberg has not raised his last question on the subject of Space:

> "...Martin realizes that he never thought about space at all, not until the very end on the fifth time around and then it came with such a rush of complication that space seemed seemed to be something else. Call it love. Call it loss. But never give it its real name. Because it had none we could give it."

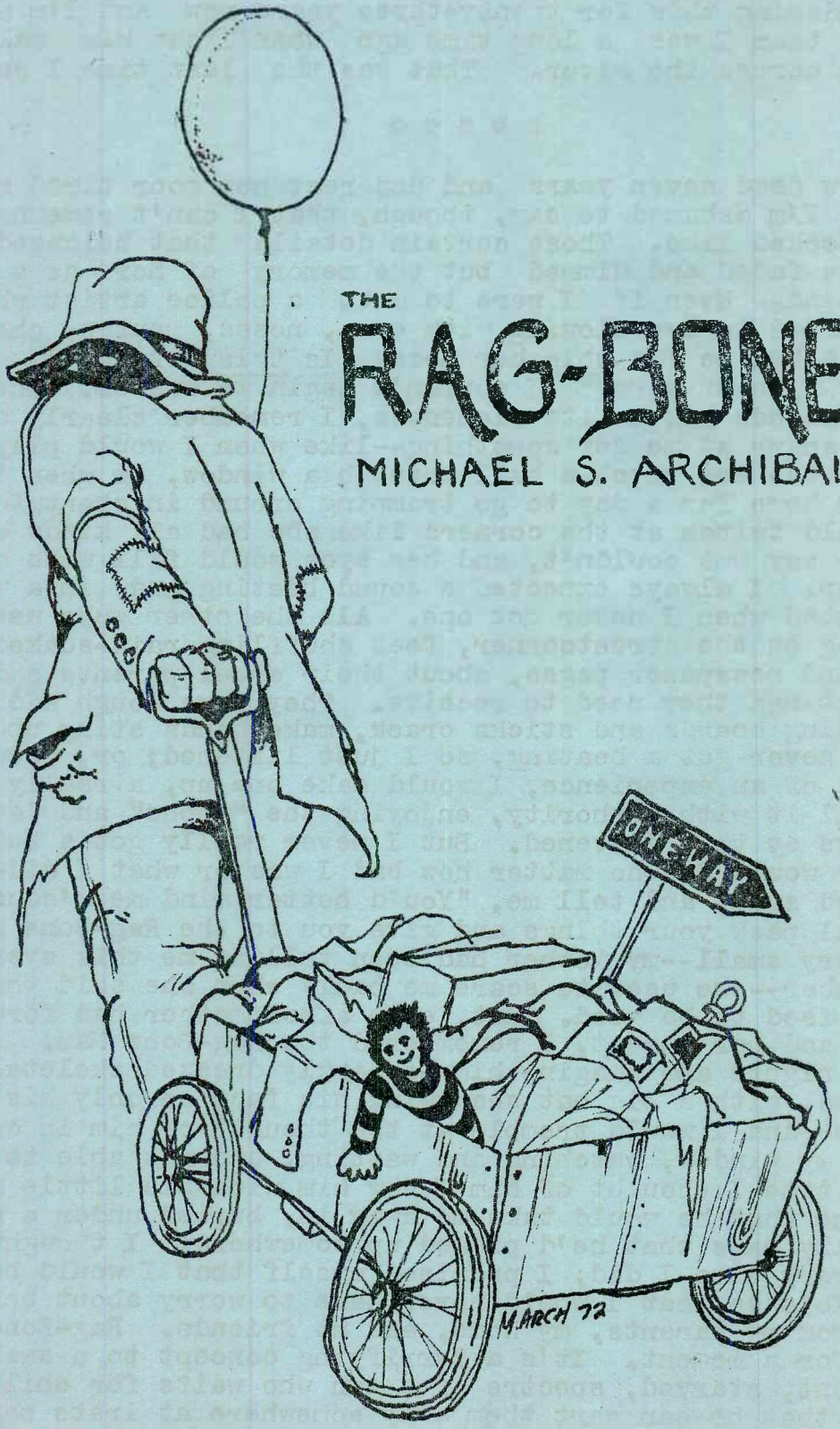


Barry N. Malzberg:
THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS
Ace 75¢ 191 pages

--Jeff Clark

THE RAG-BONE MAN

MICHAEL S. ARCHIBALD



I've always wondered what happened to Charley. Nothing new, though. I've been wondering this for twenty-three years now and I'm no closer to an answer than I was a long time ago when I saw him walk toward the shanties across the river. That was the last time I saw him...

* * * * *

My mother, now dead seven years and God rest her poor tired soul, was a fine woman. I'm ashamed to say, though, that I can't remember clearly what she looked like. Those certain details that belonged to her features have faded and dimmed but the memory of her as a whole is still in my mind. Even if I were to meet a police artist who had a briefcase stuffed to overflowing with eyes, noses, mouths, cheeks, and ears, and he asked me "Is this her nose? Is this her mouth? Is this your mother's type of ears?" I couldn't begin to answer. One thing only, and it stands out in its aloneness, I remember clearly of her. When she was angry at me for something--like when I would play catch against the house and pitch a ball through a window, or when I would run away from home for a day to go tramping around in shantytown--her mouth would twitch at the corners like she had all kinds of things she wanted to say but couldn't, and her eyes would fill with a red light of anger. I always expected a sound beating and, in a way, I was disappointed when I never got one. All the other guys used to brag, standing on the streetcorner, feet shuffling rain-soaked cigarette packs and newspaper pages, about their cruel parents and the monstrous beatings they used to receive. They were tough kids, able to make whipping boards and sticks crack, make hands sting upon impact. But I never got a beating, so I just listened; or, when I was asked to tell of an experience, I would make one up, a really wild tale, and tell it with authority, enjoying the "ooohs" and "aaahs" of the other boys as they listened. But I never really got a beating. All my mother would do--no matter how bad I was or what I did--was shake her head sadly and tell me, "You'd better mind me, 'cause if you don't I'll pack your things and give you to the Rag-Bone Man." When I was very small--my mother had been telling me this ever since I could remember--she used to scare me badly when she said this and I always promised to be good. But, even after mother had forgotten the incident and her threat, I remembered the Rag-Bone Man. I would lay awake at nights and imagine him--a darkly dressed skeletal figure, in old clothes, with a big hat shadowing his face so only his eyes shone through--and I would tremble at the thought of him in our yard, just outside my window, watching and waiting, and not able to be seen. Every time I thought of him I saw him with his little wooden wagon, the one that he would take me away in, buried under a pile of smelly and oily rags that he'd picked up somewhere. I thought of him often and, every time I did, I promised myself that I would be as good as possible so that I would never have to worry about being taken away from my parents, my home, and mt friends. Rag-Bone Man. Think of it for a moment. It's a terrifying concept to a small child. A gaunt, starved, spectre of a man who waits for children to be bad so that he can cart them away somewhere at irate parents' requests. It got so bad that I even imagined him whistling while he pulled some child away in that wagon of his. A job well done. The more I thought of him, the more terrified I became of his possible presence around my home. Mother mentioned him so much--it was the

one way she knew I would listen to her--that I knew he would have to materialize some time to see why she used his name so much. I became afraid to go outside even, and if I were forced by my father on some errand--like going to the store for bread or taking the garbage out--I would carefully look the yard over, peek around corners into alleyways, before I would even move. It was a terrible life for me at the time and my mother was to blame. It was she who had placed in my head the terrible spectre with the wagon. It became even more terrifying for me when I discovered that there really was a Rag-Bone Man. His name was Charley. Charley. That's not a very terrible name really. It should have been a name like...like...Hell! A thing as terrible as a Rag-Bone Man shouldn't have a name. I don't think that there's a name terrible enough for something like that. But this man's name was Charley and he was my mother's threat personified. When did I first see him? Let's see...oh, yes! It was on a dark night, the kind of dark that wraps bushes and trees in the yard in a blanket of black. I was in bed, wrapped in a cocoon of warmth, listening to the wind howling outside the window in my room. Suddenly there was a crash on the patio--a trashcan fell and I heard it clattering across the red and grey flagstones. I grunted to myself that it was the wind playing tricks. I was ready to drop off to sleep when I heard him outside, shuffling around in the dark, his feet--probably wrapped in rags like the rest of him--making muffled scrapings on the stones. I was terrified and lay there in the dark in a cold sweat. Should I call for Mother? No! No, that wouldn't do at all. She'd probably invite him in and pack my suitcase for me and then help me get into the wagon. Father? How about him? As I lay there in bed, listening to the feet outside, I knew that it would be useless for me to call my father. I could see him opening one sleep-infested eye, look at me blindly, and say, "Oh, stop imagining things. Go to sleep" and then roll over, showing me his pajama-d back. Either that or he would go along with mother, like he usually did. I knew that I could only help myself. But what should I do? I thought I would just lay still and wait for him to leave. But he didn't leave. It seemed like hours that I lay listening to his feet shuffling around and the trashcan clattering on the stones. I could see him--almost--picking through the contents of the can as the wind blew it this way and that for some small item that he might be able to use. I then tried praying for him to leave our yard, to go and find some <u>really</u> bad kid that deserved to be carted away. I still heard his noises on the patio. I kne, as soon as I had finished my prayer, that God wasn't listening. God's an adult and I knew that he must be taking my parents' side. The Rag-Bone Man was still outside and the trashcan was still clattering. I knew of only one thing to do. I got brave. One possible thing--scare him away. I knew I'd have to move fast while I still had my courage. I got out of bed, shivering a little as I encountered a draft of cold air. I pulled on a pair of jeans over my pajamas and then went to my closet. Rummaging around for my pair of good shoes, I found them and put them on, purposely not tying them. Fitting loosely like they were, they would make more noise. I shakily clumped downstairs in the dark, my shoes flapping noisily against the wood of the steps. I hoped that my shoes would make enough noise to frighten the spectre away or, at least, wake my father up so he could scare him off. I reached the bottom of the stairs and I didn't hear my father grumbling about what was all the noise downstairs; so that part of my hasty plan fell through. I started flicking lights on in every room I passed through, hoping the sign of someone alive in the house might frighten him. No. I still heard him outside. There was nothing for me to do but tell him to leave. I made it to the utility room, the one where my parents kept the washing machine. It had a door that led to the

patio. Oh, the patio! Clattering trashcan and starved spectre! I had to confront him. I could never sleep with him out there. My left hand was on the door latch, my right on the light switch. Slowly, slowly, a careful turn of the knob, and I abrubtly flung the door open and threw the outside light on. For just a brief second I saw him there, bent, his eyes flickering, face lined with a stubbly growth. He was clothed in rags like I thought he would be. Not rags, really, but certainly very seedy and threadbare coat and pants. "Rag-Bone Man!" I shouted. "Rag-Bone Man, get out of here! Leave me alone!" He turned, startled, a scared and furtive look in his eyes. Made me feel good to scare him. He deserved it. He really did. I continued: "Go on! Get out of here! You can't scare me now!" A rustle of loose clothes in the wind and he was gone, an inkspot consumed by more darkness. I stood in the door, the wind blowing leaves into the house. I suddenly felt cold standing there, so I quietly shut the door and turned the light out. I looked outside once more just to see if he had decided to come back. No sign of him. Good, good, good, good, GOOD! Gone, vanished, no more Rag-Bone Man. My fear of him was forced out the door, like the leaves I pushed outside. I walked slowly upstairs, flicking house lights out as I went along. Everything in the house was silent except for the trashcan outside, still rolling on the patio. Just as I was climbing the stairs to my room, I saw my father standing there, sleep-swollen eyes dimly staring at me, pajamas wrinkled, and pillow-marked hands on hips. "What was all that noise downstairs, Mike? And who the hell were you talking to at this hour?" he says. I brushed past him politely and headed toward my bed. I was suddenly feeling very tired. "Nobody, dad, nobody," I said.

* * * * *

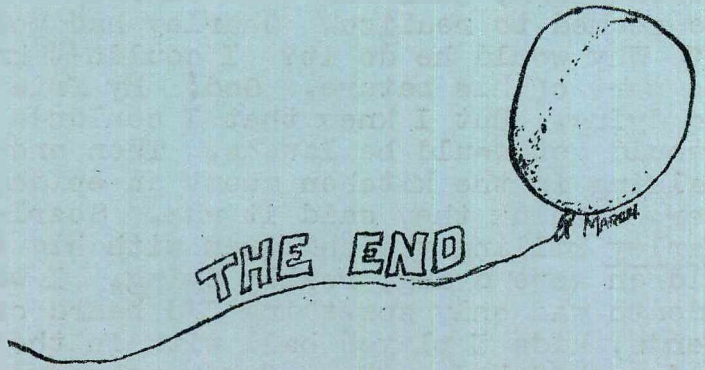
Kids love to get scared and love the things that scare them. Remember the monster movies on Saturday? We were always there early at the theatre to watch the assortment of creatures with horrified glee that lumbered, croaked, groaned and clawed their way across the screen. We would sit for hours watching them, sometimes staying for second and third showings. Love to get scared, love it. Loved Frankenstein, Wolf-Man, Mummy and Dracula. Dracula especially. He had that air of quiet horror about him, something you knew damn well was evil but didn't appear that way. Charley was like that to me. Perhaps this is why all the kids in the neighborhood liked him so much. Everybody but me, that is. I knew him for what he was. His disguise of a hobo didn't fool me. I knew that, even while watching him--from across the street, safely ensconsed behind a lamppost, you can be assured--picking through trashcans that lined the street, his occupation was just a front. He hovered around the neighborhood waiting for mothers to offer him a son or a daughter who had misstepped their bounds in the house. He was evil. Evil. No one could tell me any different. Even my closest friends, Jimmy Hanlan and Tony Rosciutti, who both liked Charley immensely and talked to him a lot, couldn't get me to believe that he was a good person. Oh, he was nice to everyone. But that was only on the surface. What can I say to make you believe me? A lot of things probably. Yeah, a lot of things. But I don't want to lose my train of thought though. So listen. Charley became a regular sight in the neighborhood. Everyone, really everyone but me, liked him enormously. He had those eyes that seemed to melt anybody that happened to look at him. A patient, watery stare that said, "I'm poor. Give me a dime for a cup of coffee." Everyone treated him good, plying him with leftover pies and cups of steaming coffee which he devoured greedily, offering profuse thanks. I watched him often, keeping mostly out of sight. My friends, Jimmy and Tony,

I often saw with him. He would give them little things that he'd found--marbles, big glass shooters and cat's eyes, and old rubber balls that he'd picked up somewhere. His wagon--yes, he had one!--was stuffed to overflowing with piles of cloth and assorted things, and it was from this that he took the things that he gave to the kids. Once, while he was having some coffee with a neighbor, I was tempted to rummage in his wagon, look under that pile of rags. But I backed out. Scaredoof what I might find. I watched him closely, a purely defensive move on my part. I figured that if I knew what he was doing and when and where, I wouldn't have too much to be scared of. He wouldn't be able to sneak up on me from behind. I knew from this close surveillance probably more about Charley than anyone else in the neighborhood, even Jimmy and Tony, who now seemed closer friends with him than they were with me. Trapped in the web of an incubus. They'd regret it someday, I was sure. Charley, I knew, would pick rags and things from one trashcan in one block and sell them on the next. Sneaky, sneaky! But he was just biding his time. Even my own parents bought some rags from him! I was so disgusted that I didn't even tell them that they came from the Philips' can down the street. My mother said to me when I asked her why: "I feel so sorry for him. He's such a nice thing and he's poor. I was just trying to help him out a little." Sure, mom, sure. That's the one time in my life I can look back and say my mother was stupid. I had to admit Charley was smart. He had them eating right out of his grubby hands. I would have bet money that, if he had asked, some gullible mother would have given him her son with no questions asked. She would "feel sorry for him." I tried to warn Jimmy and Tony to stay away from him. But they only laughed and went to see if he had any more shooters to give them. Then, one day, Charley did something new. It was winter, a fresh cover of automobile exhaust-colored snow lay on the streets and sidewalks and, now and then, an occassional stray snowflake would find its way earthward. Charley came to the neighborhood from shantytown. I don't know where the man ever slept over there but that's where he went at sunset each day now. Anyway, I said Charley did something new. He was giving out balloons! But not for free. He charged a penny for them and I'll admit they were worth the price--they were giant red things. I had an idea where Charley got them--talked some shopkeeper into giving him a case. Now he was making money from someone else's kindness. Don't ever underestimate the treachery a Rag-Bone Man is capable of. Every kid in the neighborhood was buying balloons from Charley. And then a strange--though not unexpected for me--thing happened. The children who took balloons from Charley got sick. A hideous realization dawned on me, an immature insight at the time, just how evil Charley was; and it was an evil no one else seemed to realize. Charley had poisoned the balloons! Why though? Why would he do it? I couldn't know his reason so I put it down as part of his nature. God! My friends poisoned and on their way to dying. But I knew that I couldn't say anything to anyone. All I would get would be laughs. Then one night I overheard my parents talking in the kitchen about an epidemic in the town. Scarlet fever, I think they said it was. Scarlet fever! How stupid! It was Charley killing the children with his innocent-looking balloons. And children were dying, really dying. I was young then and the notion of death was only something I'd heard of and never seen close. But my friends, kids I played ball with in the street, were now lying in sweat-drenched beds, their faces peppered with rash, fever burning their brains to ash. And dying! Tony Roscuitti was one of the first. I couldn't believe it when my parents first told me. Dead! No ball playing, no swimming in the river, no nothing anymore. A sob-drenched casket lowered into a cold plot of earth.

More died, mostly children who had come into contact with Charley. They wouldn't listen to me. Adults, a few of them including Tony's mother, complained of feeling ill. I had seen her fooling with one of Charley's balloons, trying to blow it up for Tony. But none of them died. Charley still walked through the neighborhood, expressing his sincere regrets to grieved parents. Regrets! I'd bet the only regret he ever had is that he didn't think of his murderous plan earlier, like in the spring, maybe, when kids would be really eager to be outside playing. I wanted to kill Charley, so help me God if I didn't! As I lay in bed, unable to sleep, I could feel my small hands around his scrawny throat, squeezing the evil that was his life out slowly. I made up my mind to confront him the next morning. I rose early, hearing the crunch of his shoes and wagon on the snow-covered sidewalk. I took a crucifix--I had seen the vampire hunters in a Dracula film use one for protection against evil--with me and went outside to find the Rag-Bone Man. He was walking slowly, unsteadily, down the street, three houses and a block from my front door. His back was hunched in a tired stoop and his hat hung low on his head. "Rag-Bone Man!" I cried, brandishing the crucifix. "Rag-Bone Man, stop! Stop!" I ran the distance seperating us, my breath coming out in wispy vapors in the frosted air. He turned in my direction, stopping his walk, and looked, blinking, at me. I saw the gloss on his eyes, the red spots on his face, the sheen of sweat on his forehead--just like Tony was before he died. I ran up, thrust the crucifix at him. He gaped at me for a second, then took the crucifix from me in a shaky hand before I could even say anything. He clutched the object to his breast, then said, "Don't come near me, son. I've got the fever. And," he waved the crucifix slightly, "thanks." I stood there, speechless and cold, watching him make his way slowly toward the bridge that led to shantytown across the river.

* * * * *

My parents had heard later that Charley had died of the fever. This was mere supposition on the neighbors' part; it was true, though, that he wasn't seen anymore in the town. I didn't believe a word of it. Not a word. I knew, felt rather, that Charley had merely moved on somewhere else in his quest for bad children and irate parents. Still in the service of the devil. And I also felt that if he had died, like everyone said, he'd probably talked Peter into letting him in and was busy, busy, busy selling poisoned balloons to angels.



Harlan Ellison has become one of the strongest voices in the drive to promulgate speculative fiction as a viable myth literature for our time...

--back cover of January 1971 GALAXY

In earlier times, the removed world was actually stated to to be just over the next hill. Fact and people who have been places and know better have pushed the removed world out of America, out of Africa, out of the last Pacific Islands, off earth entirely. It is no accident that science fiction should have appeared as a genre in the 20th Century at exactly the period when the very last earthly Shangri Las could still pretend to exist. You might say that the rockets of science fiction were the vehicle of escape for the removed world...

--Alexei Panshin, August 1970 FANTASTIC

Verne's inventions were a new imaginative vocabulary, one which gained its authority from science. They were a latter day equivalent of the gods and spirits and magical powers of an earlier literature, and they were believable in the same sense those earlier symbols had once been believable... --David Pringle, "Death of the Future," CYPHER 7

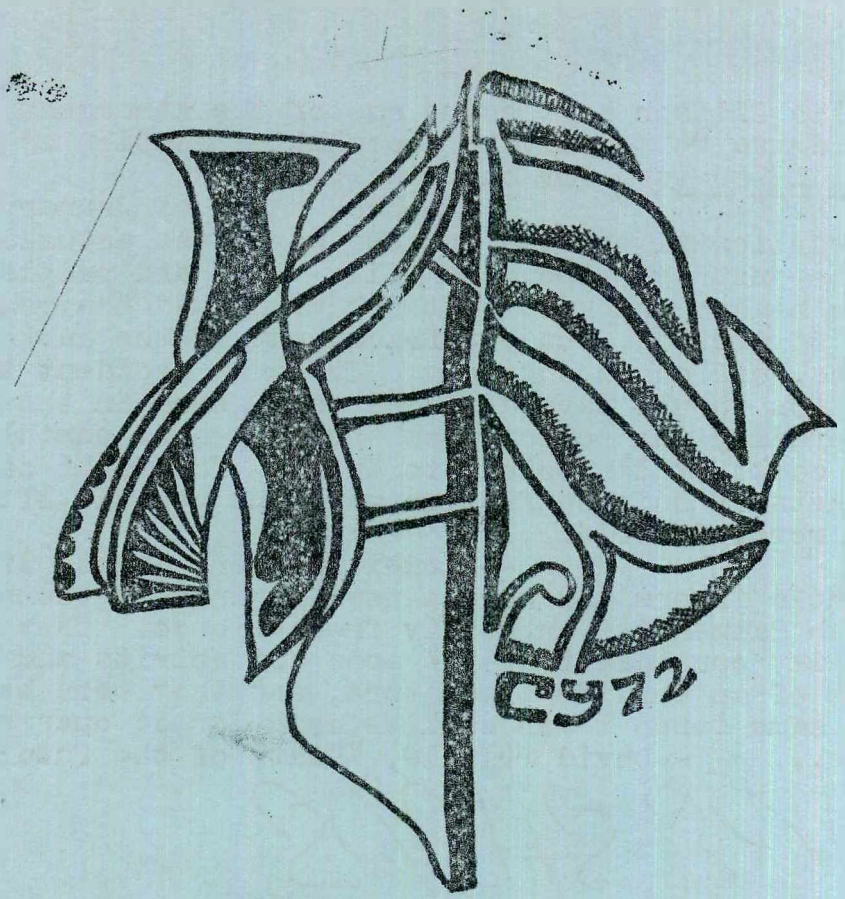
SPACESHIPS DRAGONS & SECONDARY UNIVERSES

CY CHAUVIN

Have you ever wondered just what that strange, incestouos relationship science fiction has with fantasy is all about? Have you ever wondered why fantasy stories win "Science Fiction Achievement Awards" (Hugos), "Science Fiction Writers of America Awards" (Nebulas)? Why one of the leading magazines in the field is FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, why they all publish the stuff occassionally, and why most fans seem as intensively devoted to one as to the other?

If so, you need look no further.

The passages I quoted above give some hints and clues as to how the two types of fiction are interrelated; I think David Pringle's statement is probably the best. He says that science fiction is basically a collection of technological/scientific symbols, such as aliens, spaceships, warp-drives, time machines, etc. Fantasy is also a collection of symbols, a collection of mythic symbols, however, such as fairies, dragons, hobbits, spells, gods, etc. Both fantasy and sf act upon the reader in the same way, using different tools to achieve the same ends. What ends? Note Alexei Panshin's last line--



"the rockets of sf were the vehicle of escape for the removed world." Both fantasy and sf remove the reader from the "real world", whether by the addition of a single spaceship or dragon, or the creation of an entire alternate/secondary universe. That is the purpose of the sf and fantasy symbols--and that is what distinguishes these two types of fiction from all others, what makes them unique and different.

Don Keller also suggested to me an interesting idea. While both fantasy and sf remove the reader from reality, they take him in different directions. "Sf seeks to expand horizons, to take man where he has never been before, while fantasy takes man inward, to regions he has always been, but has forgotten or never realized." Besides "feeling" right, in that vague, uncanny way that some things do, Don's theory can be backed up by the very nature of sf and fantasy symbols. Fantasy symbols are mythic symbols, and where do myths come from? From inside the mind. Sf symbols are technological-scientific symbols, and where does science/technology come from? From an observation of outside reality. As you can see, sf and fantasy are similar, but different. There is a relationship between the two.

But before people start throwing bricks carefully disguised as words, let me go through the old, "classic" ideas on the nature of sf and fantasy. Sf is supposed to be "possible," while fantasy is not. This all sounds very nice and neat, probably simpler than my own explanation of the subject. But if you take a look at all the material that is generally considered sf and not fantasy, you run into problems: most of it is not "possible."

For instance: Is an alternate-world story such as Philip K. Dick's THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE possible? Or how about those time travel paradoxes, such as Heinlein's "By His Bootstraps" or Silverberg's UP THE LINE? Possible...or impossible? Or how about Heinlein's "The Man Who Sold the Moon"? It was possible, once, but is no

longer--does it jump from one catagory to another? Or how about Jack Vance's stories, Delany, things like Keith Robert's PAVANE and Roger Zelazny's LORD OF LIGHT and JACK OF SHADOWS, where there seem to be both fantasy and sf elements mixed together--even though some of their stories may be entirely "possible." Fantasy...or sf? What about Larry Niven's fantasies, which are reasoned so accurately that they seem entirely "possible"? Or how about THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS? If I took the spaceship, the trucks, and the few references to other planets out of the story (which would require only minor surgery) what would the result seem more like? There are kingdoms, legends, small villages, and a long trek across the frozen wilderness. Fantasy...or sf?

Ah, but if you accept my explanation of the relationship between sf and fantasy, all this confusion and contradiction melts away. Sf is sf because it uses technological/scientific symbols, and "By His Bootstraps" is sf whether it is possible or not. Fantasy is fantasy because it uses mythic symbols, whether or not it is "impossible." Stories which seem to be a mixture of both seem so not because they are both possible and impossible, but because they contain a mixture of both sf and fantasy symbols. Spaceships and willowboats.

I don't think the "possibility" or "impossibilty" of a story explains anything. I don't think it explains why "By His Bootstraps" feels like sf, even though it's impossible, or why ANALOG readers may lap up E.E. Smith and his galaxy-galloping tales, while shunning "that impossible fantasy stuff." I don't think that that theory explains why people are attracted to sf, either. If it is the "possibility" of the story that really matters, and is the distinguishing characteristic, it would seem to me that sf readers would be more attracted to realistic stories than to fantasy--since these are, after all, far more "possible." On the other hand, if readers are attracted by the scientific/technological symbols used in sf, and the fact that sf (and fantasy) removes them from the trappings of present-day reality, then this is entirely changed--and the relationship I explained between sf and fantasy obvious.

So, dear reader, through your bricks carefully disguised as words --but I warn you, they may come hurtling back!

CLARION WEST:
A LOOK FROM THE INSIDE

When I attended the University of Washington SF Writers' Workshop, I had been writing science fiction seriously for slightly longer than two years. In that period my only contact with the rest of the sf writing community was a series of form rejection slips from various editors, so I arrived in Seattle not knowing if I had any actual talent. One of my primary aims there was to discover if I could make it as a professional writer.

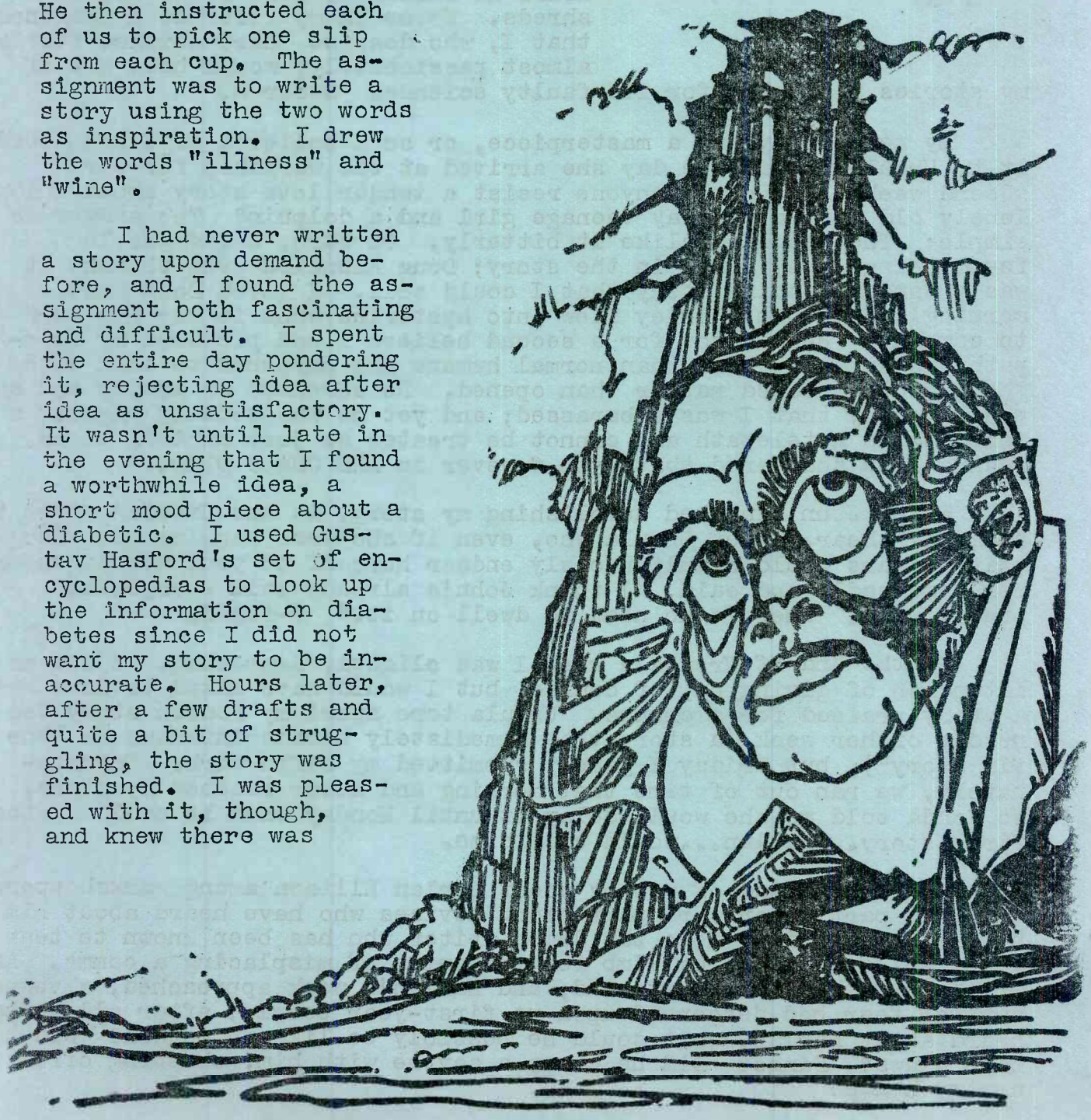
The first morning of the workshop Vonda McIntyre (the program coordinator) suggested we submit backlog stories until we had time to write new ones. I had brought a recent story with me, one written the previous week in anticipation of the workshop. I submitted it to Vonda and that afternoon she made copies of it to distribute to the twenty-six workshoppers. That evening they each read my story (and the others which were submitted that day) and prepared their criticisms of it.

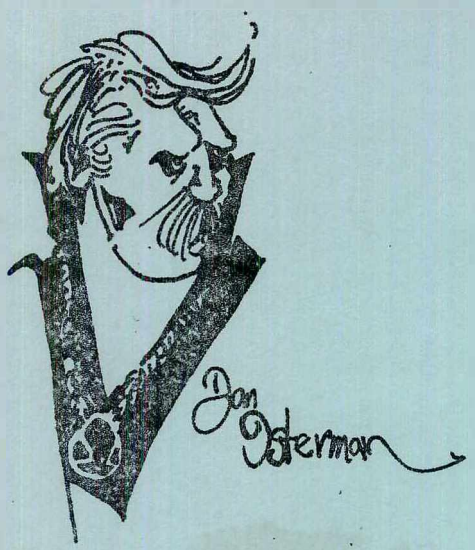
Avram Davidson was our visiting instructor the first week, and he was as kindly a person as you are likely to find anywhere. I seriously believed that he and my fellow workshoppers would like my story immensely and immediately hail me as a young writer with unlimited potential. I was wrong. They found so many flaws in my story, which I had never suspected but which from hindsight were so obvious, that I felt stupid having missed them. The story was criticized very harshly, and, in only my second day at the workshop, I knew there was quite a bit I had to learn about self-crticism.

I submitted my second story on Wednesday as part of an assignment of Avram's. What he did was place small slips of paper with a single word written on each

of them into two paper cups. He then instructed each of us to pick one slip from each cup. The assignment was to write a story using the two words as inspiration. I drew the words "illness" and "wine".

I had never written a story upon demand before, and I found the assignment both fascinating and difficult. I spent the entire day pondering it, rejecting idea after idea as unsatisfactory. It wasn't until late in the evening that I found a worthwhile idea, a short mood piece about a diabetic. I used Gustav Hasford's set of encyclopedias to look up the information on diabetes since I did not want my story to be inaccurate. Hours later, after a few drafts and quite a bit of struggling, the story was finished. I was pleased with it, though, and knew there was





no way anybody could possibly dislike it.

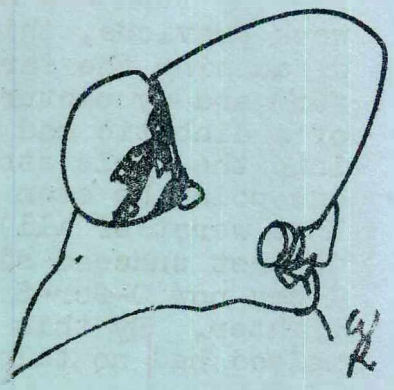
The next morning I was massacred. For openers, nobody believed my story was actually a story; it was a vignette. That did not bother me, though, for Ray Bradbury has made a career of writing vignettes. The major criticism came from Bruce Taylor, who in the three days at the workshop had become one of my best friends. Bruce calmly told me he was a diabetic--which I had never suspected--and that all the facts in my story were wrong. For what seemed like hours he smilingly tore me to little shreds. Never in my life had I imagined that I, who despise "hard science fiction almost passionately, would have one of my stories ridiculed for its faulty science. 0-for-2.

My next story was a masterpiece, or so I believed as I submitted it to Ursula LeGuin the day she arrived at the workshop for our second week. How could anyone resist a tender love story about a lon lonely old man, a runaway teenage girl and a dolphin? The answer is simple: They could dislike it bitterly. Oh sure, a few people found things they liked in the story; Doug Kinnaird even thought it was a tender, moving story that I could sell. I loved Doug that morning! But John Shirley flew into hysterics whan it was his turn to comment. He did not for a second believe I had pictured my telepaths as anything more than normal humans who happened to talk with their mouths closed rather than opened. He screamed so loudly and so vociferously that I was embarassed; and yet he was totally right: a telepath is a telepath and cannot be treated as just another human. Joanna Russ shattered that myth forever in AND CHAOS DIED.

After John finished demolishing my story, it was Ursula's turn to comment. Dear, sweet Ursula who, even if she were ripping you with thin daggars would simultaneously endear herself to you, merely shook her head sadly and said, "I think John's already said everything pretty well. There's no need to dwell on it." 0-for-3.

By the end of Ursula's week I was slightly depressed. I had no intention of giving up, of course, but I would have liked to have had a story praised for a change. Ursula tore apart my fourth story Wednesday of her week (a story that immediately became infamous as "the fix story"), but Friday I gamely submitted my fifth work. Unfortunately, we ran out of time that morning and never reached my story, so Vonda told me she would delay it until Monday when it could be the first story...Harlan...would criticize.

There's a kind of mythos about Harlan Ellison among workshoppers, and it's particularly rampant among novices who have heard about him but never met him. He's the demon writer who has been known to tear young writers limb from limb for the crime of misplacing a comma. As Ursula's weeked neared its end, and Harlan's week approached, a vague aura of fear had descended upon us first-year people; after all we had heard about Harlan, what could he possibly be like in person? Did he have claws? Fangs? Did he carry a scythe with him, chopping off unwary heads?



Harlan arrived Saturday afternoon, and he seemed as friendly as his two predecessors were. He walked through the dorm, greeting each of us individually, even stopping into various rooms to talk awhile. He told us stories about the killer heat room which was devastating the East Coast, making it sound as if all that was saving us in Seattle was the Rocky Mountains. Late that night he gathered us in the hall at 2 a.m. and actually read us a bedtime story, a gruesome little piece called "Bleeding Stones." By Sunday afternoon Harlan seemed more like a fellow workshopper than our writer-in-residence for the week. When we went to sleep that night, we felt sure that the Harlan-legend was largely false and he was actually a total prince of a fellow.

That impression lasted until exactly eight o'clock the next morning, when he ran through the halls like a drill instructor, banging on everybody's door, demanding that we get out of bed.

"What's going on?" I asked Lin Nielsen, a veteran workshopper.

"That's the way Harlan gets us up for the morning session," she explained.

Getting up an hour before class was not a desirable thing. Generally we stayed up until at least three or four o'clock in the morning, reading each others' manuscripts, writing our own stories, and spending time unwinding in the Crossroads of the Galaxy (which was originally Lin's room until reconverted). That extra hour of sleep until 9 o'clock was a necessity if we were expected to function during the day. We did not get that hour during Harlan's week.

At precisely nine o'clock we staggered into the lounge which served as our classroom. Those who were unfortunate enough to be late were treated to a second visit by Harlan, who this time practically dragged them to class. I could swear that I saw him carry two people over his shoulders into the lounge, but I am told that was a delusion of my feverish mind. By nine-fifteen, we were some twenty-six zombies sitting around a circle with a whirling demon at our center, admonishing us for--of all things!--sleeping.

It turned out that my story was not going to be first on the chopping block that morning. That fate befell Neil Ruttenberg. Unless my memory fails me, it was the first story Neil had submitted to the Workshop (we had no quotas to fill) and he had not yet develop the protective armor which guards the ego from the harsh criticism directed against the stories. The only way such armor can be acquire is to undergo the criticism process frequently enough until one becomes naturally immune. But this was Neil's first shot at being criticized, hence he was very fragile. And Harlan was merciless! I've never seen anybody so driven in my entire life as Harlan was that morning. He ranted and raged and screamed himself hoarse, all of it directed at poor Neil. Every single thing Harlan said was tru but that in no way lessened the impact. After the massacre was over, nobody spoke to Neil for the rest of the day, but he spent long hours walking in a semi-daze, muttering, "I'm gonna make it! I'm gonna make it!"

My turn was next, and harsh as John Shirley had been on me one week previous, this morning was worse. Lucy Seaman spent a long time discussing the farm setting of my story. It seems she lived on a farm and my picture of one was pathetic, even worse than my portrait of a diabetic had been. After she finished haranguing me, Harlan tore into the whole story as unbelievable, amateurish, comic-bookish (at one point he even asked me if I read Marvel comic books; that point hurt worst of all). I tried to be stoic about it, but apparently I did not succeed since the rest of the day friends kept consoling me.* I was now 0-for-5 and my whippings were getting worse rather than lighter. By this time I was nearly on the verge of believing that I indeed had no talent. I was not yet ready to give up, though.

Harlan gave us an assignment his first day. He wanted us to write a gut-level story, to probe our most secret fear, our achille's heel, and spill it all in a no-holds-barred, tell-it-like-it-is story. I'm basically an insecure person and I have many fears. Some of them are small fears, others are major ones, still others are so deep I would never dare tell them to anyone. At first I considered writing about one of the big fears and I began a few stories with that intent. But as I discarded false start after false start I reconsidered. Harlan's intent in the assignment was for us to get deep into ourselves, to write about the one thing we were always afraid to tell before. If I were to fulfill the assignment honestly I would have to get to one of my secret fears; anything else would be cheating. It was a difficult decision and a few times I came close to backing off, but I finally got the deep secret on paper. It took me six drafts to polish the story and when I was finished I was afraid to submit it. There was so much of me written into the story that I was embarrassed anyone should read it. But I did think it was a good story--as usual!-- so it would be foolish not to submit it. I gave the story to Vonda the next morning.

Until Harlan's week, the workshop had operated on the system that each member would have his chance to criticize each story. The major drawback of this system was that frequently we had to listen to people speak who really had nothing to say that had not already been said by somebody else. It was time-consuming and Harlan decided to change it. Each morning he posted a list of all the stories to be criticized that morning, and each workshopper was instructed to sign up for whatever story he wished to criticize. When the list with my story was posted, five people signed up for it: Lisa Tuttle, Russell Bates, Art Cover, David Wise and Phil Haldeman. These names probably mean nothing to you, but seeing them written next to my story frightened me. With the possible exception of Phil (who was the gentlest person at the workshop) the other four were the toughest critics in our group. They were all veteran workshoppers who knew that a writer learns by stern criticisms, not by gentle praise and slight compliments. All of them signing up for my story was not a good omen. I sweated all evening. I did not know how my next bloodbath could possibly be worse than my previous ones, but I was sure it would be. By midnight I was a nervous wreck. Could I possibly survive until dawn?

---

*Jeff Smith here. Bob, I underwent a similar experience at a con with Harlan, but I guess I can't really shed any light on the matter. Did we still look visibly shaken hours later, or did people just know we were in dire need of kind words. Fans murmurred sympathy Barbara Silverberg patted me on the head...but I survived, as did you.

Then, close to three a.m., a strange thing happened. I saw Harlan in the hall and he stopped me and said he liked my story. He even congratulated me.

The next morning my story was critiqued. They liked it. Sure, nobody claimed it was the latest classic, but they did think it was good. Harlan said that along with Steve Hust, I had fulfilled the assignment best. I felt very proud that morning. What doubts I had about myself a few days ago were all gone then. I had come to the Workshop knowing I wanted to be a writer; that morning I new I was going to succeed. In my mind it was no longer a question of whether I would be able to do it; it was a matter of how long.

This article does not have a completely happy ending. I submitted another assignment story to Harlan and it was a total bust. He harangued it as badly as he had my first story. Friday afternoon, after his week was officially over, Harlan made a point of telling all the workshoppers what he thought each member's chances were of becoming a professional writer. He was as tough then as he had been all week. He told quite a few people he did not think they would ever make it. He told me I should give up writing. He suggested I try authodontistry. I think he was tougher on me than on anybody else, possibly because he knew how serious I was about writing. Whatever his reasons were, I ignored them. What he told me did hurt quite a bit, and while on Monday of that week I was so depressed I might possibly have taken him seriously, on Friday nothing could discourage me. And that's the way I feel now. To paraphrase Neil, I'm going to make it. I have not the slightest doubt about that statement. I'm going to be a professional writer.

*****

When I decided the write this article about the University of Washington SF Writers' Workshop, I was undecided whether to write a subjective article explaining precisely what it is and how it functions, or a personal essay relating how I feel about the workshop and what it did for me. It turned out there was no decision to make. Nobody who spent six weeks at the workshop could possibly be objective about it afterward. He may hate it (which is possible, should he be extremely sensitive to harsh criticism or less than totally serious about writing) or he may love it, but he will not be objective about it.

I make no secret about the fact that I love the workshop. I am sure that anybody who has serious inclinations toward being a science fiction writer would do well to consider one of the sf workshops. Don't be frightened away by those few so-called science fiction fans who have been speaking out publicly against the workshops. I find that most of these people know little more about the workshops than what they are told at late-night convention parties. Ask any ex-workshopper what his opinion is; I'm sure it will be very similar to my own.

*****

DARRELL SCHWEITZER ON LOWERING THE COST OF HUGOS

I have never voted for a Hugo. Never, even though I've maintained a vital interest in SF and its fandom for nearly five years now, have built up an almost encyclopedic store of knowledge and lore, and have probably written more for fanzines than anyone else during that time. I didn't vote, but it wasn't out of apathy.

It was out of thriftiness. The damn awards cost too much. Six bucks can very easily be put to much better uses. I am very reluctant to spend it on something as fleeting as a single Hugo vote when it could be much better invested in something like a copy of ECHOES FROM AN IRON HARP, which will no doubt be worth a small fortune in a few years. I think a lot of people feel the same way, and are not voting for the same reason.

This is bad, if you'll excuse me for belaboring the obvious. In order to make the awards worth anything at all they must have as wide a base of support as is possible. With high costs lots of exceedingly qualified people are not voting. What to do?

Well, there has been much discussion about this problem recently. Ted White suggested in FANTASTIC that the difficulty stems from greedy con committeemen who like big profits. Jerr y Lapidus thinks that the costs should be lowered to one dollar, and the awards seperated from the conventions, save for presentations.

Fine, but these ideas must be banged around a bit to make them work. Suppose we assume the worst, and take it for granted that con committee people really are Scrooge-like misers who are intent upon profiteering off of li'l old fandom. What are we going to do about it?

Nothing. It seems to me that an effective short-range solution for lowering the Hugo costs isn't about to change the hearts and minds of men. It will lower costs and nothing more. Then the missionaries can go to work if they please. Personally, I doubt that

there are many people left who are willing to run an enormous worldcon without thoughts of financial renumeration. Hate the profiteers, sonny, but at the same time you must depend on them. Running a convention is a lot of work. Are you willing to go through all the trouble?

I thought not.

Now then, assuming that the convention is designed to rake in a profit, let's see how we can keep the price down anyway. The current six bucks for "supporting membership" (which means essentially a Hugo vote) is simply too much. It must come down, but a workable solution must be devised to keep the $$ rolling in to the con committees.

I propose the following:

1) The fee for voting on the Hugo be made one dollar.

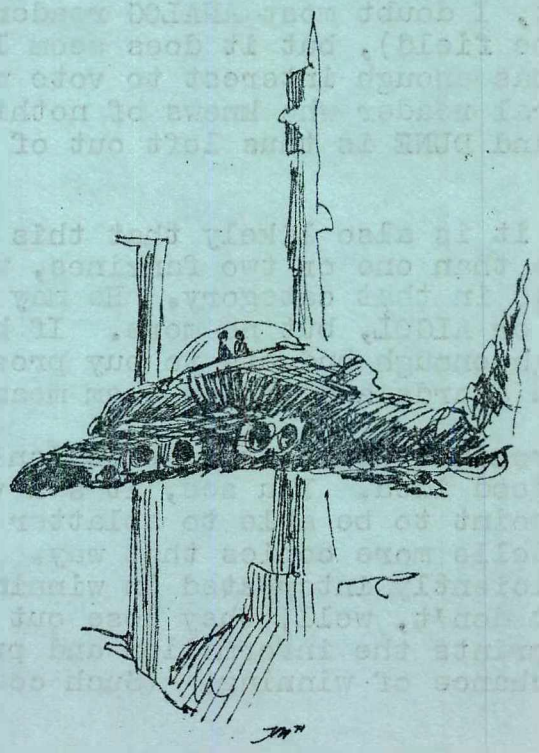
2) Membership in the convention no longer be required for voting and nominating in the professional categories.

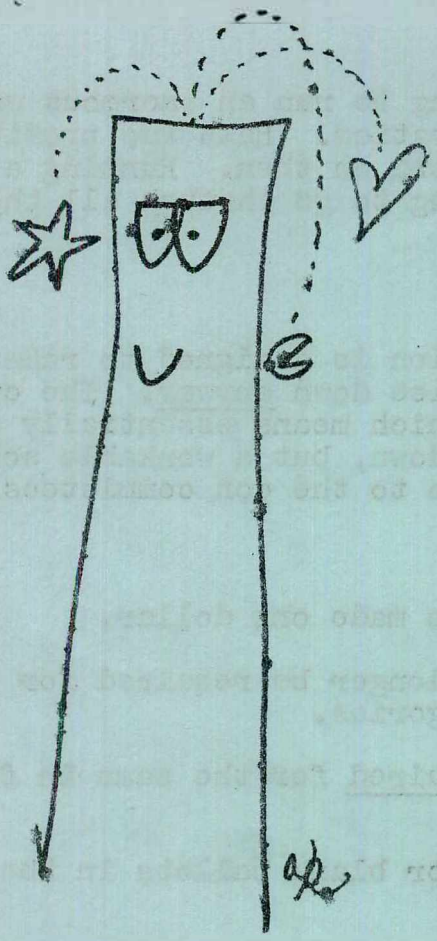
3) Membership in the convention required for the same in fan categories.

4) Placing of Hugo information and/or blank ballots in the prozines.

5) Prozines generously donate the space required for 4).

6) Hugo voting fee and membership fee made seperate, but the former deductible from the latter.





7) All money taken in from the awards goes to the convention committee.

A bit of explanation:

The first point is obvious, but the next six are required to make it work, assuming the convention committee is not made up of saints or would-be fannish martyrs.

The object of the second point is to gain a wider base of voting appeal. The tastes of fandom are not always those of the general readership, and since there is no universally accepted definition for "good science fiction" (or even "science fiction" for that matter) the award is, let's face it, a popularity poll. The narrower the range of voters, the less the poll reflects what is really popular.

Number six, if you don't mind my skipping ahead, is to prevent the con committees from getting carried away and making the Hugo fee something to be added to the membership fee. That wouldn't do at all.

Number 4 relates to number 2. We want readers with some knowledge of science fiction in order that they might vote intelligently. Not all readers of any given prozine will have this knowledge (in fact, I doubt most ANALOG readers are at all familiar with the rest of the field), but it does seem likely that anyone who reads prozines and has enough interest to vote will know what he's doing. The very general reader who knows of nothing but STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND and DUNE is thus left out of the picture as he is intended to be.

However, it is also likely that this same prozine reader won't have seen more than one or two fanzines, which is why he shouldn't be allowed to vote in that category. He may have seen a couple fanzines such as LOCUS or ALGOL, but no more. If he were voting, those fanzines with high enough budgets to buy prozine ad space would totally monopolize the awards and render them meaningless.

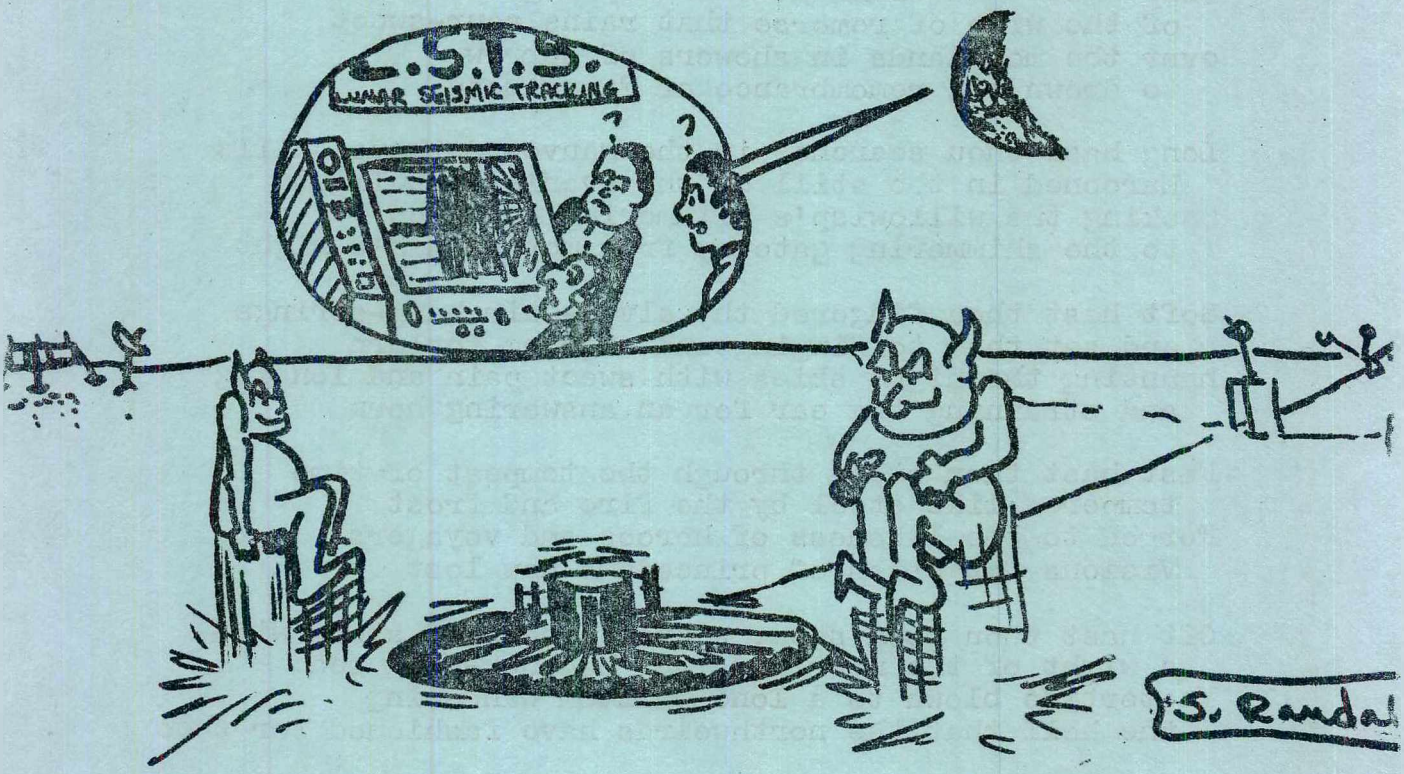
Having prozines donate the space isn't really necessary, but I think it's a good idea. You see, it's a very nice thing from an editor's viewpoint to be able to splatter HUGO WINNER!!!! all over his covers. Sells more copies that way. Surely most pro editors would be sufficiently interested in winning to print such information. And those that don't, well, they lose out to those that do--because if prozine X prints the information and prozine Y doesn't, X has a much greater chance of winning. (Such could produce a hundred votes,

which would be all that's required to turn things around.)

In requiring convention membership for the fan categories, we are assured of voting being done by fans, but then there's that old expense problem again. I see no solution for this right off, but I think it's the lesser of two evils. At least we liberated the pro categories, didn't we?

The final proposal is the happy ending. Con committeemen might gripe at getting their incomes shaved down to one sixth of what it was previously, but they should consider something. Even though it will take six times as many voters to get things back up to where they were, with the combined circulations of the prozines printing the ballots, it should be very easy to get those six people, and quite possibly six more. Thus the con committee actually makes more money than ever before.

Thus, even if they are all greedy bastards, the price of the Hugo vote gets lowered. Which is what we wanted all along.



jdsmith -- Anyone considering Darrell's proposal would be wise to also consider these points: Does the worldcon possibly already have more tasks than it can handle, besides taking on hundreds . more people interested only in adding paperwork? At a dollar a vote, wouldn't it be easy for some unscrupulous and rich pro like Bob Silverberg to stuff the ballot box? (Remember, it is probably true that ~~[illegible]~~ a Canadian fan did this recently, at greater expense.)

Deep hast thou drunk at the tempting of time
  of the wine of remorse that rains sour-sweet
over the moorlands in showers of sorrow
  to drown the remembrance of Faery mead

Long hast thou searched in the mauve-heathered hills
  Marooned in the still of the even's last light
Seeking the willowisp's glimmering guidance
  to the shimmering gateway from mortal man's night

Soft hast thou fingered thy elven-hair harp-strings
  and set them to singing and sighing forlorn
haunting the night skies with sweet pain and longing
  and straining thy ear for an answering horn

Fast hast thou stood through the tempest of time
  tempered like steel by the fire and frost
Forged to the likeness of heroes and voyagers
  Visions forgotten of princedoms now lost

Oft hast thou been seen, a wraith born of storm wind
  a wight of the moorland, the heather-clad sea
Yestertide blown to a lone phantom wandering
  the hell that the northweirds have fashioned for thee

27-28 April 1971

I am swamped with fanzines. I have been digging through the boxes in the closet that hold fan publications, trying to find all those I received since doing the review column in PhCOM 9--and while I haven't completely succeeded, I think I have most of them scattered here on the floor: over fifty, and I'm not going to be able to cover them all. But I'll do as many as I can without skimping too much.

Six editors graced me with over a hundred pages in the nine-month period. The zines: SF COMMENTARY, 4 issues, 232 pages; MOEBIUS TRIP, 3 issues, 169 pages; LOCUS, 18 issues, 147 pages (plus columns and ads); RICHARD E. GEIS, 3 issues, 143 pages; YANDRO, 3 issues, 110 pages; and ENERGUMEN, 2 issues, 98 pages (plus portfolios). I have not wanted for reading matter.

The highlight of the year has been the first three issues of RICHARD E. GEIS (POBox 11408/Portland OR 97211/$1 a copy), a fanzine in which, day by day, Geis records his thoughts, his letters, his book&fanzine reviews, his fiction, and anything else that comes to mind. This is something almost anyone could do, but few could do well. Dick does it very well. There are plenty of weak spots--frinstance: in the second issue, there was lots of real soap opera in Dick's life, but the conflicts were pretty well resolved by #3, so that #3 has Dick straining for things to say in the "diary" portions. ("I come halfway awake around 6 A.M. when stepbrother Jerry

AH! THE CEREALAND PARADE!

fanzine reviews by jeff smith

clumps down the stairs from his bedroom in the converted attic. He pisses and shaves (electric) and eats a bowl of dry cereal and milk. (Snap-crackle-pop.)") And the book reviews are a half-breed race, some full reviews and some mere comments. This is how Geis reviewed books in his SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, but it doesn't seem as good here. (Perhaps because in SFR the reviews were all together while they're scattered here?) And the fiction, which started in #3 and will probably be in each issue from here out, is not terribly good. If Virginia Kidd can sell this for him then I'll be positive she's the best agent in sf. All told, though, the strong parts of the zine are solid enough to support the entirety easily.

A portion of REG is sexually oriented, and it is not the romantic sex of an Anne McCaffrey novel. I give you warning.

A dollar will buy you almost a novel-length's worth of honesty and wit. I find it engrossing reading. And Dick Geis has my vote as Best Fan Writer of 1972--yea, even over Rich Brown and Terry Carr.

The second issue is Rich Brown's BEARDMUTTERINGS (410 - 61st St. Apt. D4/Brooklyn NY 11220/one issue free for asking) is here, and damn if Rich (pardon--rich) isn't damn near as good as dick (pardon--Dick). BM (the temptation, the temptation...ah, resisted) consists of rich saying opiniated things about fandom, hiding until the letters stop coming in, and then re-emerging and replying. Do send for your free issue; do.

THE INCOMPLEAT TERRY CARR is available for $1 from Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B/Brooklyn NY 11201), but unfortunately when I found this out I had just lost my job so I still haven't gotten a copy myself. I do feel quite safe in recommending it sight unseen, and hopefully if they ever do a Part Two they will include the eight pages in Arnie's FOCAL POINT (3/$1) 35, which is fabulous. A short quote couldn't possibly do it justice, but here's a taste (the Carrs' car has broken down in Billings, Montana): "So I sighed and we began to read some books, and I thought it wasn't really such an unpleasant place to spend the weekend; there was that nice crisp smell of smoke, for instance. Then the motel burned down." (Arnie's editorial and Ross Chamberlain's marvel-ous cover are also note-worthy this issue. And John D. Berry's final line: "This fanzine is round like a ball, you know. And I'm going to sail off the edge.")

Other faanish stuffs I haven't room to review, but which I enjoyed, are: FIAWOL (Arnie and Joyce Katz, 5/$1) the faanish newszine (that's two dollars I've got to send him), RATS! (Bill and Charlene Komar-Kunkel/84-45 121st Street #1-D/Kew Gardens NY 11415/50¢, 3/$1), MOTA (Terry Hughes/Route 3/Windsor MO 65360/25¢), and, in a different vein but at least as good, AWRY (Dave Locke/915 Mt. Olive Dr. #9/Duarte CA 91010/six 8¢ stamps).

A note to the Brooklyn Insurgents etc.: I'm only trading KYBEN for your zines unless you really want PhCOM, too. If you do, let me know.

Frank Lunney (212 Juniper Street/Quakertown PA 18951) is publishing again, and has produced SYNDROME 1 (50¢). However, Frank says future SYNDROMEs will only remotely resemble this one, so I can't yet suggest you enter into a strong commitment with it. Actually, SYN 1 reads almost exactly like a BEABOHEMA 21 would have read had Frank kept that up--except that BAB 21 would have had one of my music col-

umns. Aha! I understand now, Frank, I see it all. You wanted to drop my column without hurting my feelings, so you killed BAB to do it.

SYNDROME 1 would have made a good issue of BEABOHEMA, even if it maybe isn't a good issue of SYNDROME.

Two of my favorites among the newer fanzines are KRATOPHANY (Eli Cohen/417 W. 118th St, Apt. 63/New York NY 10027/50¢) and PLACEBO (Moshe Feder/142-34 Booth Memorial Ave/Flushing NY 11355/and Barry Smotroff/147-53 71st Road/Flushing NY 11367/35¢, 3/$1). KRATOPHANY somehow evokes the aura of the Pittsburgh fandom of a couple years back. (Was Eli there, or did he admire it from afar? I don't remember.) The best part of the second issue is a little piece by Ginjer Buchanan, who was of that early-PgHlange era. It also has Eli Cohen, of course, who is good, and a Judy Mitchell/Mike Mason comic strip that is a bit sloppy but still highly enjoyable. (Judy is good, and does a lot for KRAT.)

The editors at PLACEBO are stuggling hard to publish a good fanzine, and they are struggling, but they are struggling, and the issue-to-issue improvement is, I'm sure, quite heartening to them. They have more than a couple visual problems, but the layout has finally reached a serviceable level by the fourth issue. The two staff artists, Stu Shiffman and Paul Jordan, are neither very good, though, and this hurts them. They try for a sercon/faanish balance, though predictably the faanish material outweighs the serious stuff. (It's easier to write.) I thoroughly enjoyed Dave Emerson's "Tales of the Hula-Hoop Mythos" in the third issue, and the two editorials which comprise the entirety of the fourth issue are well done, both. I want to watch this one grow.

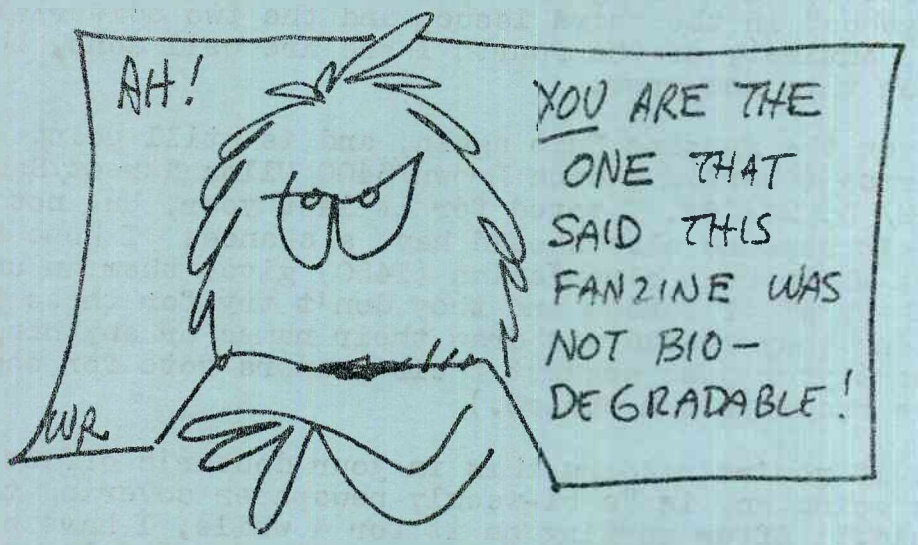
LOCUS won the fanzine Hugo again, and is still going strong at its new address (Charlie & Dena Brown/3400 Ulloa Street/San Francisco CA 94116//12/$3, 26/$6). I voted for it last year, but not this year, because I felt someone else should have a chance. I hope the Browns realize that their huge circulation (1450) gives them an unfair advantage over the rest of fandom and they don't try for three in a row. (I don't think they should withdraw their names or anything, but come Hugo time next year just suggest their readers vote for something else--of the reader's own choice.)

LOCUS, if you're reading this in your doctor's office and have no idea what's going on, is "a bi-weekly newspaper covering the science fiction field." After working on it for a while, I have come up with two main criticisms: A) Stories are sometimes not followed up. In #110 they promised they would print the contents to Fred Pohl's BEST SF FOR L(&" anthology, but they never did. In #118 they told us Bett Ballantine had left Ballantine Books and that Fred Pohl had left Ace, but we haven't heard anything since. There should at least have been a note saying they hadn't heard anything yet. B) They had a tendency to occassionally send news out as third-class mail, so that sometimes I would receive a first-class followup before I had heard the original third-class story. I wrote and suggested sending only non-news (reviews, anthology contents, etc.) in the bulky third-class issues, but there hasn't been a third-class issue since so I don't know if they'll keep doing it or not.

(Incidently, when I looked at Steve Stiles' title drawing for LOCUS 124 I finally saw where the title came from, and indeed why

Charlie started it in the first place. We all know that to a fan, Happiness Is a Full Mailbox. This craving for mail appears to be even stronger in Charlie than in the rest of us, so he started a fanzine the entire nature of which demanded an incredible influx of postal material. And furthermore, in his title Charlie asks for more! What else does LOC-US mean?) (Took me about two years to figure that out.)

I just started getting Ed Connor's MOEBIUS TRIP (1805 N. Gale/ Peoria IL 61604/50¢. 5/$2), who this year has been publishing on a fast quarterly schedule. I don't think I'll ever forgive Connor for not attenting PgHlange 1970 (since Connor wasn't there, Harlan attacked me instead), but he has been sending me some nice fanzines lately. MT is a 50-60 page genzine of varying quality, and the good is quite good while the bad is quite bad. Paul Walker, who never impressed me when he was reviewing for Dick Geis, is the shining light here. Part of this may be due to the fact that MT is nowhere near as good as SFR was, but Walker has improved with age, it seems. The highlights in MT are his interviews with writers (Blish, Russ and Schmitz in issues 13-15), and his reviews are good, too--particularly the one on LOVE IN THE RUINS in #13. There is a good article on Philip Jose Farmer by Leslie Fieldler in #14. There are nine awful pages in #15 by Jack Wodhams, who drew cartoon answers to the question Walker had given Russ the issue before. In all, a wild mess of good and bad, but, as I said, the good is good, if you have the patience to seek it out.



Mike Glicksohn (32 Maynard Ave. #205, Toronto 156 Ontario) is folding his Hugo-nominated ENERGUMEN, a process known as Quitting While You're Ahead. If you send Mike two dollars cash you might be able to be around for the swansong.

It's an unusual comment on me, I guess, that one of the reasons there was such a long interval between PHANTASMICOMs 9 and 10 was that PhCOM was in some ways becoming like NERG, and in ways I didn't like. Nerg is a near-perfect blend between faanishness and sercon-ism--and what that means by current standards is that there are some intelligent sf discussions tossed into the personal reminiscences of Mike's contributors. This is how PhCOM was headed, and that isn't what I wanted. But it is what Mike wanted, and he did it well. The thirteenth issue, in particular, had only one undistinguished

piece ("What, No Mad Scientist?" by...Bubbles Broxon?). As to the rest, Mike and wife/co-editor Susan each wrote faanishly, as did Rosemary Ullyot. Walt Liebscher wrote on a variety of unusual words enjoyably. Grant Canfield drew seven of his little creatures full-size. And then there were two articles of sf--Sandra Meisel on Fred Saberhagen and Angus Taylor on Philip K. Dick. (And Taylor is the only person who has finally convinced me to try Dick again someday, a feat no-one else had managed. A fine article.)

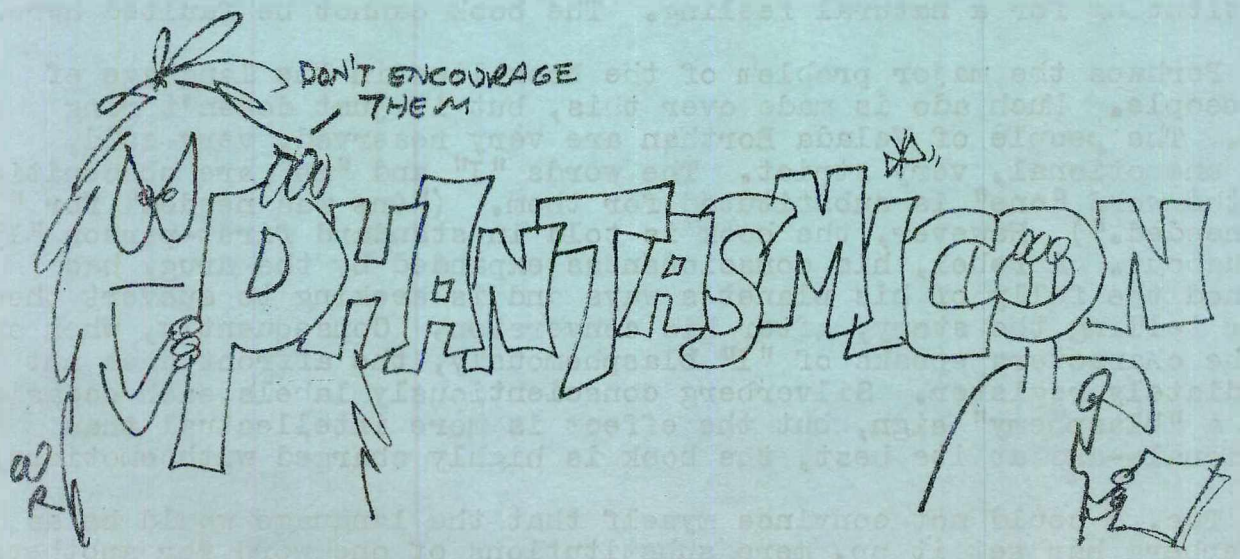
Can you imagine PHANTASMICOM like that? It almost happened. I have noticed that most genzines have a preponderence of faanish material--as I noted earlier, it's easier to write faanishly. The new LOCUS that came right after I typed the last sentence mentioned that ENERGUMEN 13 "leans more to serious SF than fannish," and you can see above how much serious sf is in there. NERG 12 had a review of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE and an article on Marvel comics as its sercon contribution, so there has indeed been a slight upswing, eh?

But the material in 14 was very good, making it the best issue I've seen.

I should briefly mention Bill Bowers' OUTWORLDS (POBox 354/Wadsworth OH 44281/60¢, 4/$2), which has gotten rather small, 20-30 pp., but which is better than ever. Visually it is as attractive as ever, with many full-page drawings and good small ones as well. Issue 3.2 featured Canfield and 3.3 Fabian. The written material no longer takes a back seat, though, as it did at first. The article Piers Anthony wrote about his collaborations and collaborators found a home here, and Susan Glicksohn has a fine faanish piece in 3.4, and Pauls and Brunner and Meisel and Benford and Anderson and...I even think Bill's sercon/faanish balance leans slightly sercon, which is nice.

GW is no longer quite as noisy as it started out, but it is better. Very literate, very attractive, very nice.

Before I close out the fanzine section, I want to mention mine again. It is called PHANTASMICOM. phantasmicoM. And there's no "i" between the "s" and the "m". And it's not PHANTISMICOM. I want it spelled correctly, y'understand? Or I'll drop you off the mailing list! You betcha!



HAD WE BUT WORLD ENOUGH, AND TIME...

JEFF SMITH

The battle over Robert Silverberg's THE WORLD INSIDE was a hard one. On the one hand was the Hugo Committee, which passed the edict that the novel was a collection of short stories and hence ineligible for the Best Novel award--although any story from it published in 1971 would of course be eligible for one of the short fiction awards. On the other hand was a number of fans deluging Los Angeles with letters insisting the work was a true novel. (Save Star Trek.) (My letter was a page and a half.) So, very commendably, the Committee reversed its decision and placed THE WORLD INSIDE on the ballot, along with another Silverberg novel, A TIME OF CHANGES.

The author withdrew it.

This withdrawal tactic is one I disagree with implicitly, undermining as it does my freedom to vote for my choice. In this instance, it also exposes Silverberg's desire to win an award, his fear that having two novels on the ballot would result in a split vote sending both down to defeat. (Okay, Bob, zap me!)

And the worst part of it is, I feel A TIME OF CHANGES is a far inferior book to THE WORLD INSIDE, so much so that had I not been reading down the list of Hugo nominees I would not have finished the book at all, but rather abandoned it in midair in search of more rewarding reading.

The second half is extremely good, but the half leading to it struck me as a monumental bore. It was far too slow, full of far too many irrelevant details. (Incidently, the one criticism of the novel as a whole that I've seen often has been that it's "another salvation-through-drugs novel" which is patently ridiculous. The drug in the novel is not so much a drug as it is a metaphor, an artificial device substituting for a natural feeling. The book cannot be faulted here.)

Perhaps the major problem of the book lies in the language of its people. Much ado is made over this, but it just doesn't ring true. The people of Velada Borthan are very reserved, very cold, very unemotional, very strict. The words "I" and "me" are obscenities, and the word "one" is substituted for them. ("One was needed" for "I was needed.") However, the book is told in standard first-person "I" throughout. A rebel, his consciousness expanded by the drug, has learned the folly of his planet's ways and is seeking to subvert them. He is telling the story, after his conversion. Consequently, when one of the characters speaks of "I" blasphemously, the affront does not immediately register. Silverberg conscientiously labels each occasion with a "blasphemy" sign, but the effect is more intellectual than emotional--and at its best, the book is highly charged with emotions.

Too, I could not convince myself that the language would be as Silverberg has set it up, mere substitutions of one word for another.

I feel rather that the whole grammar would have changed to passivity. (We say, "I went to the store." Silverberg's people say, "One went to the store." I think they would have said, "The store was gone to," eliminating the active subject entirely and even casting doubt that the speaker is even talking about himself.)

Now, a little thought shows that Silverberg's novel could not have been written my way--he would have had to further extend the book putting the hero on Earth several years later (so he could write with Terran grammar), further framed the novel so the fact that it was "translated" gets mentioned, or done it (far less effectively) in the third person from an omniscient viewpoint. And, obviously, none of these fit what he was trying to do.

Unfortunately, as it stands the novel suffers from a vague implausibility, and to write an award-winning sf novel you should only tamper with improbability--as in, say, THE WORLD INSIDE...

Interestingly enough, the tally of Hugo votes printed in LOCUS show A TIME OF CHANGES running a solid fourth all the way through, never far behind third-place THE LATHE OF HEAVEN until the LeGuin book leaped over Anne McCaffrey's DRAGONQUEST and edged into second place. McCaffrey beat Silverberg easily for third, but as far as LOCUS took the balloting Silverberg was far enough above Roger Zelazny's JACK OF SHADOWS to seem assured of fourth place--yet it placed fifth. I get the impression that a fair number of people cast no vote whatsoever for A TIME OF CHANGES--my wife didn't, feeling that no great second half was worth a Hugo if you had to sleep through the first half to get there. I gather she was not alone; I can think of no other explanation. And I think it shows that Silverberg may have been wrong in his pull-one/push-one ploy.

I don't think having two stories on a ballot necessarily means they'll both go down to defeat anyway--if there wasn't much support for them they wouldn't have been nominated in the first place.

I also don't think any rule could be set up outlawing withdrawal, but I do wish double-nominees would control their Hugo-lust and refrain from exercising their rights--and depriving the voters of theirs. (Are we still friends, Bob?)

THE LAST FLIGHT OF DR. A

The advance news that Isaac Asimov had written a new novel left me with mixed emotions. Asimov had always been one of my favorite "old wave" writers, particularly for THE CAVES OF STEEL and THE NAKED SUN--and an odd fondness for THE END OF ETERNITY. But the recent memory of Heinlein's I WILL FEAR NO EVIL reminded me that things had changed in the sf field since 1957, and I feared that Asimov might be as out-of-step as Heinlein.

There are good things and bad things I must say about this novel, now that I've read it. The main good thing is that I enjoyed it very much, most of it anyway, and for a while I thought I wouldn't have anything to really complain about when it won the Hugo--as of course it will. And while there is very little physical action, the dialogue is nowhere near as cute as Heinlein's generally is, and makes for pleasant reading. The characterization, while hardly comparable to that of, say, D.G. Compton, is competent enough to be noteworthy.

The novel is divided into three parts, each with its own set of characters. This is an awkward form, but, as in Silverberg's THE WORLD INSIDE, we are primarily following an idea.

Part I takes place on Earth, and presents the basic problem: Due to the scientific advances resulting from our non-verbal contact with a parallel universe, Earth is at the peak of prosperity. However, due to physical changes in the universe, our sun will supernova in the indterminate near future. Proof of this is tenuous, to say the least, and Earth is not going to give up its properity for a crackpot theory--particularly when the "inventor" of the Electron Pump itself is the one to label it "crackpot." His reasons for doing so are his own, however. The parahumans of the other universe were the true inventors of the Electron Pump that made Earth wealthy--they needed those electrons pumped into their universe. Admitting that the Pump might be dangerous would also force the "inventor" to admit that it was not his own creation. And that would not do.

The hero of Part I is Peter Lamont, thwarted at every turn by those in power, possessing a communication from the para-Universe verifying the dangerousness of the Pump, but helpless to do anything about it.

Part II may well be the best bit of science fiction Isaac Asimov has ever written, a gorgeous depiction of a totally alien world, peopled with Hard Ones and Soft Ones, Rationals, Emotionals and Parentals. The connection between all these is not original, but it is nicely realized. The loving detail spent on alien sex is unusual and very well done. The different types of aliens are depicted excellently. In all, a truly fine bit of sf.

A "family" consists of a Rational, an Emotional and a Parental. One of these "families" is the focus of Part II, as the Emotional member realizes that their universe is killing ours off with the Electron Pump. It is she who sends the message to Lamont.

Part III concerns another Earth scientist with misgivings about the Pump, and takes place on the Moon. Again, the lunar society is nicely handled, if not up to the second part's excellence. Denison, the scientist, and Selene (*sigh*), a highly intuitive girl, set about trying to solve the problem themselves. Alas, they do. If you were going to wonder about whether the world would be saved or not, I apologize for giving you the ending. But it's so damed unsatisfactory that I must bitch about it for a while.

You see, the three parts are largely independent, in that no-one from any one section actually appears in either of the others--except for Denison of III, who appears briefly in I. So, when Denison solves the problem, nobody else who has worked on it and with whom the reader would like to share a victory is around. We are told that Lamont has been acclaimed a hero, but that happens offstage. We are told the

solution will not affect the para-Universe any differently than the meddling with ours (which they wanted) has done, but we don't know what the Hard Ones think of the matter.

And the solution itself is highly disappointing--the deus ex machina of going to yet a third universe for electrons to send to the para-Universe. It makes good logical but poor literary sense. The Big Solution does indeed (presumably) solve everyone's problems, but it does not arise out of the conflicts the characters and thus the readers have been wrestling with for over two hundred pages. The real problem of the novel was not to save the universe, but to convince people the universe needed saving. The solution was to save it without telling them, which is a bit of a cop-out. (Asimov does prepare us for the cheat by stating several times in the novel that when you can't solve a problem by the obvious method, you try something else. It doesn't help.)

The novel just seems to fizzle out in the last thirty pages, when the people become Intrepid Heroes conducting experiments on the lunar surface which prove to be wildly successful and everything's ducky, love.

It's a damn shame. I liked Peter Lamont of Part I, and I liked everything about Part II, and I liked the lunar society of Part III.

But the ending destroys the work as a whole, leaving me with just pieces. The pieces are of sufficient quality, however, that I can say with all sincerity that I don't want to have to wait fifteen years for the next Asimov novel. But this one, for all its good qualities, is a failure.

And when it wins the Hugo next year, I will not be happy.

BEST OF THE YEAR VS. REST OF THE YEAR

On the next two pages you will find a list, laboriously compiled by me, my library and LCCUS, of the 69 best stories of 71, as chosen by the editors of the six (six!) best-of-the-year anthologies. I hope you find it interesting--and readable. I realize now that instead of the x's I should have used B's, c's, d's, h's, p's and w's--but what's done is done.

I find the list very interesting myself. "Occam's Scalpel" by Theodore Sturgeon was the winner with three inclusions, but was on neither the Hugo nor the Nebula ballot. Of the fourteen stories in Robert Silverberg's anthology NEW DIMENSIONS 1, seven were reprinted in the six books--and of the seven not selected, two were among my favorites, Gardner Dozois's "A Special Kind of Morning" and Josephine Saxton's "The Power of Time." I think that clearly shows that ND1 was the best of the new anthologies last year. (On the other hand, Terry Carr's UNIVERSE 1 placed four stories, three in the Nebula book and one in Terry's own--the latter Piglet's marvelous "All the Last Wars at Once.")

I can't claim to have read all these yet--at this writing I haven't seen either the Harrison/Aldiss or the del Rey book, and the Biggle hasn't been published. But a few vague generalizations can be offered, if you feel like sticking around.

The first thing I noticed about the Biggle/Nebula anthology was its size. In the last couple years the Nebula anthologies have had so much non-fiction the fiction seemed in danger of being squeezed out altogether. This year there's a lot of fiction, and good solid stuff, too. A lot of perhaps minor stories, but not bad ones.

Terry Carr's is much the same way, and I would say his is the best of the lot. Of course, I've known all throughout the history of the Specials that Terry's and my tastes are quite similar--so maybe it's not so much that his is the best anthology as that his is the one that most appeals to me. For instance, I hardly consider Ursula K. LeGuin's "Vaster Than Empires and More Slow" one of her better stories--perhaps this fits in with Judith Merril's comment once that if she were only to include what she thought were the best stories of the year in her books, she'd be publishing an awful lot of Ballard. The moral? A good story by one of your favorite writers may get in your book over a better story by someone else, just because you like

---

Lloyd Biggle, Jr.--NEBULA AWARD STORIES SEVEN (Harper & Row)
Terry Carr--THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION OF THE YEAR (Ballantine)
Lester del Rey--BEST SF STORIES OF THE YEAR (Dutton)
Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss--BEST SF: 1971 (Putnam)
Frederik Pohl--BEST SCIENCE FICTION FOR 1972 (Ace)
Donald A. Wollheim--THE 1972 ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF (Daw)

	B	C	D	H	P	W
Brian Aldiss--The Hunter at His Ease				x		
Kingsley Amis--Report				x		
Poul Anderson--A Little Knowledge			x			x
--The Queen of Air and Darkness	x	x				
Auerbach--If HAIR Were Revived in 2016				x		
Donald Barthelme--The Genius				x		
Charles Baxter--The Idea Police State				x		
Eddy C. Bertin--Timestorm						x
Lloyd Biggle, Jr.--The Frayed String on the Stretched Forefinger of Time		x				
James Blish--Statistician's Day				x		
John Brunner--The Easy Way Out					x	
Doris Pitkin Buck--The Giberel	x					
B. Allan Burhoe--Ornithanthropus			x	x		
Arthur C. Clarke--A Meeting with Medusa		x		x		
--Transit of Earth						x
Michael G. Coney--The Sharks of Pentreath						x
Thomas M. Disch--Angouleme				x		
Gardner R. Dozois--Horse of Air	x					
George Alec Effinger--All the Last Wars at Once		x				
Harlan Ellison--At the Mouse Circus					x	
--One Life, Furnished in Early Poverty						x
--Silent in Gehenna					x	
and A. E. van Vogt--The Human Operators			x			
Philip Jose Farmer--The Sliced-Crosswise Only-on-Tuesday World		x	x			
Burt K. Filer--Hot Potato			x			
Alan Dean Foster--With Friends Like These...						x
Stephen Goldin--The Last Ghost	x					
Harry Harrison--The Wicked Flee			x			
Steve Herbst--An Uneven Evening				x		
H.H. Hollis--Too Many People					x	

the one author's work generally.

I've read very little of del Rey's selections, but the general impression I get is of a good selection of more traditional material. Again, mostly minor, but it does look like a worthwhile collection of more concept-oriented stories.

The Harrison/Aldiss is, of course, the replacement for the defunc Merril series. When the series began with stories from 1967 (actually you could claim the series began with the 1966 Nebula book, which they edited) they ran a credo by James Blish stating that a best-sf-of-the-year anthology should run science (pause) fiction. Harrison did indeed begin as if he were taking the credo to heart. Now, as I said, he is running the Merril route. I will be quite interested to see what he has managed to dig up this year, but I don't expect to like it. Among the recognizable items, however, are a few goodies, so the paperback won't be a complete loss.

	B	C	D	H	P	W
R.A. Lafferty--All Pieces of a River Shore						x
--The Man Underneath			x			
--Sky	x					
Tomasso Landolfi--Untitled				x		
Ursula K. LeGuin--Vaster Than Empires and More Slow		x				
Grahame Leman--Conversational Mode					x	
A. Lentini--Autumn Time			x			
David Locke--The Power of the Sentence			x			
W. McFarlane--To Make a New Neanderthal			x			
Katherine McLean--The Missing Man	x					
Barry Malzberg--Conquest				x		
--Gehenna				x		x
Ryu Mitsuse--The Sunset, 2217 AD					x	
Larry Niven--The Fourth Profession		x				x
--Inconstant Moon					x	
--Rammer			x			
Cynthia Ozick--The Pagan Rabbi				x		
Edgar Pangborn--Mount Charity	x					
Alexei Panshin--How Can We Sink When We Can Fly?		x				
Richard Peck--Gantlet				x		
Doris Piserchia--Sheltering Dream					x	
Frederik Pohl--The Gold at the Starbow's End					x	
Christopher Priest--Real-Time World						x
Joanna Russ--Gleepsite						x
--Poor Man, Beggar Man	x					
L. Sail--Fisherman				x		
Thomas N. Scortia--When You Hear the Tone			x			
Robert Sheckley--Dr. Zombie and His Furry Little Friends				x		
Robert Silverberg--Good News from the Vatican	x		x			
--In Entropy's Jaws		x				
Norman Spinrad--No Direction Home		x		x		
Theodore Sturgeon--Occam's Scalpel		x	x			x
Stephen Tall--The Bear with the Knot on His Tail						x
James Tiptree, Jr.--I'll Be Waiting for You When the Swimming Pool Is Empty			x			
--Mother in the Sky with Diamonds					x	
Leonard Tushnet--Aunt Jennie's Tonic						x
Kate Wilhelm--The Encounter	x					
Gahan Wilson--The SF Horror Movie Pocket Computer				x		
George Zebrowski--Heathen God	x					

Unfortunately, Frederick Pohl's does not look to be too good of a one. Its main feature, in fact, is probably Pohl's own novella--which might conceivably turn up in some of the others' books next year. (Pohl jumped the gun and included a couple 1972 stories.) The Tiptree story is not all that good, to my mind, being far too dense and overcrowded with incidents and ideas and etc. (The one in the del Rey book is quite good.) Of the Ellison stories, "At the Mouse Circus" is fascinating but "Silent in Gehenna" is very second-rate Harlan. There's definitely a balance to the book, but who needs that kind of balance?

Don Wollheim's is a pretty good one. The two ANALOG stories (by Anderson and Foster) weren't too impressive--and sppaking of unimpressive, I didn't realize I was rereading the Priest story until the end, when they argued about whether the hammer was falling fast or slow. Oh yeah, I already read this one... But Wollheim did indeed pick some good stories everyone else overlooked--the Tushnet, the Coney, the Tall. Despite some failings, this is a goodie, and you should pick it up. (Be sure to read the Bertin if you do.)

But I still feel the Carr is the best. He picked real stories, with people in them even. Watch Terry's books, and Bob Silverberg's ND--this is where sf is heading, really. It's becoming cliche, but it's nonetheless true: sf has learned the tricks, and now it's using them instead of just showing them.

SELECTED SHORTS

I've been into collections lately, for some reason or another, so that a full-size novel will be quite a welcome relief. The collections, though, were mostly enjoyable. A few brief comments:

THE WORLDS OF THEODORE STURGEON (Ace) is billed as "representative of Sturgeon at all the periods of his career," which isn't true. There is one story from the beginning of his career, five from the late forties, nothing from his best period (the early fifties) and three from the good late fifties. Nothing since. However, it is a good collection; just not as good as it could have been. (A number of his best stories have never been in any of his eleven collections.)

The highlight of WORLDS is "Maturity," a gorgeous depiction of an immature genius, presenting the theory that the two terms are interlinked. (This, "Shottle Bop" and "Memorial" are reprinted from Sturgeon's first collection, WITHOUT SORCERY. They were not in the paperback edition of that book, NOT WITHOUT SORCERY.) Another of his excellent psychological studies is "The Other Man." "There Is No Defense" is one of his best space-opera stories. In fact, of the nine I only disliked "Memorial" and "The Perfect Host."

After a bit of an absence, Frederik Pohl has begun writing science fiction again, and the only reason I haven't mourned the scarcity of new Pohl fiction lately is because I've far from caught up on the twenty-odd Pohl books already available from Ballantine. Yet, if THE

GOLD AT THE STARBOW'S END is any indication. The next time I pick up one of the older books I'm going to be disappointed a little, because this new book shows Pohl to have improved--and not at all left behind by the genre's recent advances.

The new book with the awkward title is a fine one, with three good shorts and two better novelettes. (Actually, I suppose the title story is a novella, even though it's shorter than "The Merchants of Venus.") The novelette is a good story story, just a highly enjoyable narrative. The shorts are witty (especially "Shaffery Among the Immortals") and the title novella is fabulous. If I were giving these four collections long reviews I'd spend as much time on these seventy pages as I do on most novels. Pohl-the-writer has never won a Hugo or Nebula, but next year he might. This story, of a secret plan to develop a space crew into genius mentalities, is one of the best things he has ever done.

Arthur C. Clarke's THE WIND FROM THE SUN (Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch) is somewhat disappointing, in that in its brief 193 pages, 43 are full of junk. There are eleven stories in those forty-three pages, and Clarke just isn't one of sf's masters of the short-short. To say just how bad they are would be disrespectful to a man who has proven himself one of the genre's best writers, and who is still occassionally producing quality work. (Should you count the pages yourself, you'll find fifty pages of short stuff. One, "The Light of Darkness," I liked.)

But in the remaining 143 pages are six stories that show Clarke still writing well. "Maelstrom II" has a man in trouble on the moon, flying unaided and uncontrolled in low lunar orbit and heading toward a mountain range. "The Shining Ones" is about underwater intelligence. "The Wind from the Sun" is a fascinating, almost plotless, story of a unique space race. (Thinking back...yes, I did read this in BOY'S LIFE back around 1963.) "The Cruel Sky" is a minor piece about mountain-"climbing" with anti-gravity devices. "Transit of Earth" is the last recording of a man on Mars knowing he'll soon be out of oxygen.

And "A Meeting with Medusa" is the excellent story of descent into Jupiter's gaseous atmosphere with a modified dirigible. I think it shows hints of the time Clarke spent on 2001 in its cinematic qualities: a highly visual series of images (Clarke double-crosses you at the end and shows you you haven't been seeing what you think you've been seeing) and an interesting and effective lack of transition between episodes, particularly between the first three.

In all, a thin book, but a good one. And it would have been better thinner, without the junk and only 150 pages.

In the Clarke book the stor-

:e: are arranged in chronological order, a logical sequence for this particular collection. Unfortunately, the order to the stories in Roger Zelazny's oddly titled THE DOORS OF HIS FACE, THE LAMPS OF HIS MOUTH, AND OTHER STORIES is detrimental to the book as a whole. I don't know whether Roger or Doubleday ordered it, but the thing is odd.

(To dispose of the matter of quality right off, the stories are mostly good. There are five long ones and ten short ones; and the long ones are very, very good (in descending order: "A Rpse for Ecclesiastes," "This Moment of the Storm," "The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth," "The Keys to December" and "This Mortal Mountain" and the short ones vary from the highs of "The Man Who Loved the Faioli" and "Love Is an Imaginary Number" to the lows of "Corrida" and (poor!) "The Monster and the Maiden." It is a good book.)

However, it is oddly balanced in that the long pieces are at the beginning and most of the short pieces are at the end; so the reader gets the gorgeous fictions right away, eight stories in 180 pages, and then in the last fifty one very short story after another, bang bang bang. (Unlike those in the Clarke book, these are mostly genuinely clever.)

The main problem with the book, though, is a sense of sameness. (I'm about to give away story endings: be warned. The stories are good enough that they won't be hurt, as they are eminently rereadable. There are the five major pieces. In each there is a male protagonist and a girl. In three the girl dies at the end. A fourth is another tragedy. (In the fifth she's just"sick.") Toward the end of "This Moment of the Storm," which I was reading for the first time, I was muttering, "C'mon, Roger, just this once, don't kill the girl off this time," but he did. This impaired my enjoyment of the story a bit, even though I recognized that it was one of his best works. I would have enjoyed the story more had I read it isolated.

The ideal solution would be to have not included all these particular stories in this particular book. But, if all were to be definitely included, they should have been arranged better. The short, minor works should have seperated the long major ones. Interspersing several other plots between each tragedy would have helped considerably to make the reader forget that the story was bound to end unhappily. Also there would have been something meatier toward the end of the book.

Maybe nothing would have helped. But something needed trying. It's a shame when a writer overkills his own good book.

EDITORIALITIS

The ½-marks above are supposed to represent the editor who feels a bit like a ½-wit. The review of the Asimov book a few pages back does not include the name of the book, which is of course THE GODS THEMSELVES, by Isaac Asimov, published by Doubleday. This omission occurred because the review was originally written for "Prosoversepix," the review column which will no longer appear. In "Prosoversepix," all such information appeared as a heading. Displaying his acute editorial awareness, the editor failed to notice that no such information appeared in the actual body of the review. Ah, well...

PHANTASMICOM-MUNICATIONS

POUL ANDERSON
2 March 1972

Thank you for PHANTASMICOM, a handsome production. I am moved to comment on Jeff Glencannon's "How Do You Dream Your Dream?" since it is an eloquent statement of a much too real problem.

Of course the self-appointed literary intellectuals have from the start been either exquisitely bored by the space program or violently against it. For fifty years or more their class has cut itself off from, taken positive pride in its ignorance of, science and technology--which is to say it has isolated itself from the heart of all modern creativity. So ignore them; they have scant relevance to anything except each other.

But when many science fiction people begin to feel the same way, and when even dedicated ones like Mr. Glencannon admit the wonder of something like a lunar landing is flagging in them, we'd better stop and inquire why. It's a symptom as well as a symbol of a possibly very grave condition.

To a large extent, NASA itself is to blame. In its palmy days it hired the usual flacks, who treated us all with their usual contempt for our intelligence. There was no particular attempt to get the truth to us, both the scientific and the human truth. In setting launch dates, the idea of making them convenient for the public never entered into the calculations. NASA is now in trouble and is trying to reform all this, but admittedly it's rather late in the day.

However, the truth is available, and what we personally can do is take the small amount of trouble needed to find it out for ourselves and pass it on to others. We will quickly discover, then, that the space program is not taking bread out of the mouths of the poor. Rather, if NASA were entirely abolished, including its aeronautical functions, and its annual appropriation turned over to the poverty program, the percentage gain would be negligible. (The real gain would be nonexistent, since the poverty program doesn't seem to be accomplishing a damn thing except support a gaggle of bureaucrats and demagogues; but that's beside the present point.) In fact, meteorological satellites alone have already repaid society many times over for the entire space program, in terms of resources gained and lives saved. Only by detailed studies--the kind which can only be made by men on the spot--will we understand our own planet; not just its immediate space environment, but comparison with its neighbor globes is essential to this; and only by understanding Earth can we hope to find means of saving it. The industrial, biological (thus medical and agricultural), and even psychological implications of research in space are incalculable, but the most conservative forecasts based strictly on known data, make them enormous.

Well, I need not multiply examples, though believe me, I could. The works of Arthur C. Clarke and Neil P. Ruzic, among others, will do that for you. They ask merely to be read.

The astronauts are not, repeat not robots. Mostly, they're prisoners of the flack machine, and something ought to be done about that. To some extent, no doubt, they use the robot facade to protect their privacy. Remember what happened to Lindbergh. And the liftoff of a Saturn is an unbelievable spectacle; to watch it is almost a religious experience. And the pictures brought back include some of the most beautiful you will ever see; Rembrandt, as well as da Vinci would have known how to appreciate them. And the scientific discoveries being made--even in so dull-sounding a place as a laboratory analyzing moon rocks--are truly mind-expanding, yes, spirit-expanding. And the sheer adventure!

Was it Amundsen or Nansen who said, "Adventures happen to the incompetent"? By that, of course, they meant disasters, certainly not the achievement and beauty and discovery and widening of their own interior selves which they experienced. It makes sense for NASA to organize a lunar venture at least as carefully as those men organized their polar expeditions. Doesn't it?

Old science fiction hands feel some disappointment that space flight isn't being done by individualistic professors who built the ships in their back yards. They make unfavorable comparisons to Columbus or perhaps--since he had government backing, was on a frankly commercial quest, and was himself greedy for wealth and power--to Leif Eriksson. Well, okay, take your bold Viking type (though Leif wasn't, really). The ship which made it possible for him to cross oceans was the culmination of thousands of years of growing technology, right on from the first log which somebody paddled across a river. In other words, a vast collective effort, nearly all of it made by completely unknown people, lay behind the Viking ship, not to speak of later types. It was simply dispersed through time. The collective effort of the space program has been compressed in time, and therefore is plainly visible. But it doesn't change the fact that before we can do wonderful things, we have to work out how.

The wonder hasn't changed. We only need eyes to see, minds understand. Our own Ray Bradbury does, and he's about as humanistic as they come. Norman Mailer, even, does; he admits he fought it every step of the way, but was finally forced to confess to himself that here is something beautiful, marvelous, and profoundly meaningful.

The Russians do. Never mind chauvinism, power rivalries, or any such thing. I recommend a book whose English title is RUSSIANS IN SPACE, by Evgeny Riabchikov; among other things, it will give you the human side of their space effort. Well, no matter how peaceful the world of the future, the only people who'll have much real say about what is done in space will be those who are out there doing it. Is our country, our tradition not entitled to a vote?

I wonder if the downgrading of the American space program--by Americans, not by the Russians or by ordinary folk and working intellectuals throughout most of the world--is basically due to the fact that so far it has overcome its initial difficulties and succeeded splendidly. Could it be that the West is not supposed to have any successes? Its literary intelligentsia seem to have developed a profound death wish. That's their business, until they start trying to drag the rest of us down with them.

We are not compelled to listen, though. We're still free to turn our senses and our minds outward, toward a universe which is still full od challenges and changes, mysteries and marvels, and a quite incredible beauty. Of course we are awkward and loudmouthed as we reach for the stars, and do a lot of that reaching for all the wrong reasons. Has man ever been any different? Will he ever be? I doubt it. No matter. What counts is that we are reaching.

You and you and you can help. In the course of that, you can experience a wonder and exhiliration which makes anything that fiction can do look very small indeed.

JAMES TIPTREE, JR.
Somewhere in East Quintana Roo/31 Mar 72

Can't comment on the cover; it got into seawater before I saw it. The result is definitely pleasing but may not reflect the normal state.

Dear Don. Being as you may have guessed on another track than fantasy, I wasn't too keen a reader until this last issue. But I'm much impressed with your swansong, and feel I may have missed something, or maybe a long-atrophied tendril is reviving. Anyway I'd like to say thanks and maybe you'd like to know that your Tolkien-TV piece was read with very serious interest, and I am counting seven marginal marks meaning seven books I'm going to buy. Your type of review is the best possible, most persuasive persuasion, the demonstration of a literate person obviously interested and evaluative. It makes the bystander want to get in and paddle too. Your own prose is admirably adapted to the job, being gentle, personal, and with that clarity which comes from--and only from--direct reporting of genuine thought. Hate that word genuine but it's 5:45 AM...what I mean is clear, I hope; the person simply explaining why he personally prefers a modified V to a trihedral hull is a hell of a lot more memorable than a huckster...(That isn't much better, but it's still 5:46 AM) ...Anyway, if you have any interest in proselyting the barbaroi you sure succeeded with this one. Although I prefer your own prose to the whilems and wood-reeves, but that's because in my own life I'm striving to clean up the gingerbread... Your care & work in giving examples & synopses is appreciated. By the way, funny you mentioned Photogen & Nycteris. That came in through one of the tender chinks in my own early life and I'm glad to know who wrote it. Again thanks and may the secret herb Moly defend you--

I agreed with most of the review on Moorcock's QRLY 2 except that for me Pandora's Bust (Pollack) was the 2nd best tale, after Roberts' Monkey Pru & Sal. Maybe because of my own writing efforts the freshness of Pollack's yarn struck me more, it's genuinely (oops) idiosyncratic, I thought it was one seamless piece from beginning to end and a great send-up. My only criticism, looking back at the margins, was the word"slurping" (too easy) for the sound of the ultimate organic nexus (how's that for a euphemism?). Those touches on the rude "beast shambling toward Bethlehem to be born" (Yeats, dear) was the kind of thing that joys these old viscera. Yay, Pollack! Can he keep it up??? The bastard is original and complex. AND funny. Oh, christ, those taxi-angels. No, for my money, or rather my life, Pollack's to watch; that's a real footprint on the sand. Gave me the shiver that maybe a dog gets when a strange muscly-looking dog with real teeth looks down the ends of the street.

...Funny thing about writers. There is a basic tendency to competitive evaluation. Could I have writ this? Thunk that up? (I mean, if it's worth doing, if it scares you.) You feel real benevolent toward the ones you know in your secret heart you could have done if you'd wanted to work at it, but the ones that know something you don't are in a special class. Part of learning to write seems to be reducing that special class...little by little...until it just holds people like Dostoievsky and you'd have to go back and get some different genes to figure out how they did it.

By the incredibly irrelevant way, I happened to reread Ellison's "Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World." I take that one seriously where I do NOT take seriously many of the lads conscientiously doing their little sadism bit, or their little free-association-brilliant-phrase bit, etc. Ellison would probably faint, but I regard him as a serious, sober guy with actual wings. The ego-bashing is strictly frosting...I think you know this, Jeff. Although the guy is apparently traumatic in personal contact, that just happens and doesn't fundamentally matter....You know this too. (I could not have thunk up his list of things that happened in the city during the walk... And the end horrified me, a real despair.)

I have a comment on Jeff Glencannon's Dream piece; it comes in two parts, one of which is offensive. The non-offensive part is that I agree with him whole-heartedly, goddamn, goddamn, the loss....The offensive part is that the piece was a beautiful example of sentimental ranting in the strict sense, and not thunk through. I can't go along with anybody who for several pages seriously bewails the fact that water won't burn, or that shit doesn't taste good. WHADDID YOU EXPECT? To correct the dreamlessness of the Apollo missions we've got to correct several of the things that are wrong with the whole fucking scene. Moreover, the earnest clunks that put Armstrong up there and littered the moon (the moon!) with golfballs aren't villains, spielers, or plastic androids...they are just badly deprived and deformed examples of Homo Sap acting out their cultural imperatives and doomed to dream their de-balled dream by the special nature of USA 1960-1970, which has its roots in a whole complex of history, and there but for the grace of god goes Art Pelsudski himself. (I mean, had Art or DCK or JG been born into that groove, he'd have come out the same dedicated plastic.) Fore one thing--and this is only a symptom--the divorce between science and humanity is partly to blame, the fact that half-people are found on both sides. Both sides. Can you (or Art) do simple calculus? A humanist thinker, even a playboy, of the Renaissance could do the equivalent of his day. We are chopped off too...And it's beautiful, the calculus I mean. It moves.

I won't even go into the other awful cause, the runaway growth of tribal militarism and its take-over of our economic activity. A ten-year-old cub scout can define the evils and dangers in our institutionalising of aggression. (By the way, don't be too sure they won't figure some way to involve the moon in it.)

Now Glencannon is a good lad; he ends with trying to recommend something practical, and his basic idea is really the only one. We should get in there. But what that really means is, our children should. You and I aren't going to learn the technical skills that'll put us in there. And let's not kid, it takes skills. And it takes a very reliable nervous system--can you honestly point to one perfectly flawless job of driving between, say, Philly and Baltimore? I-

absentminded moments you corrected for, no vagaries? There really is zero room for bloopers the way things are now in space. It takes tolerating sustained real discomfort not only on the trip but all the boring training. And it takes not realizing in your guts that you're the hell and gone into dark space and out of sight of earth and in a STRANGE place. AND it takes being willing to sit in the command module while other guys go down TO. THE. MOON. In short, it takes extremely thick, stable, computer-like people....So then we damn them for being such. And is it really sane to damn them for not carrying along a poet or a kid or a creative thinker? Is it?

Look at it this way: The moon, really, is a rather boring chunk of close-in real estate. So maybe also is Mars. So let the Tin Woodsmen get us there. The crunch, the time we have GOT to do it different, is when we meet ...Somebody ...Else ...out there. (And think of the shock if they are sending their clunks.) It seems to me our job at the present time is to get dreams going again in the earth, in our society, to close out the Bronze Age, to change the system so that greed and fear are not the engines of our social life. By, as Glencannon says, getting in there. Part of our trouble has been that we've let George do it. Do politics, do business, do science, do national policy (war). And George has a pointy little head and mad eyes. And he's made our world--not by malice, but because he couldn't think of anything different. George takes not only telling; George doesn't hear too good. George takes joining; to fix George you have to be physically with him. (Or you can kill him, but there's an awful lot of him. Old age will reduce his numbers some, but unless we get into his operating-space there'll be enough of him to go right on.) Maybe, as Herbert Gans says (16 Feb NYTIMES, a good piece), things have got so centralised we can't break in. Maybe We have to try.

...And, if we succeed, then there's the job of keeping our own dreams, a task very few humans with a full belly and a big desk have ever succeeded at...but that's another story.

JEFF CLARK
223 Lenox Road, Apt. E11/Brooklyn NY 11226/May 3, 1972

Don's fourth installment of "It All Started With Tolkien" is up to par--and sort of useful, because I never have the time to read most of the books he deals with. He does invoke one writer from rather far afield, though, whom I'd like to make a point of: Charles Williams. I don't see much written on him, despite his being more available in paperback now. I discovered him not too long ago, and on the basis of having read only two novels so far, I think he's some sort of great and highly individualistic writer. (He can give me a species of religious creeps in spite of my not having nearly the same kind of sensibility and bent as he does.) Don seems to have mixed feelings concerning him. I wonder if he'd consider discussing Williams in an article for PhCOM or his own HOWE LOND sometime in the near future. More people should be aware of this writer. (S(William is one of the prime concerns of the Mythopoeic Society, along with Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, but this does not expose him to fandom as a whole.)S)

Ted Pauls' reviews are two of the best I've ever seen from him, as far as my limited reading of his work allows me to judge. More I would not be able to say--other than that he's expansive and thorough as I haven't read either book under scrutiny. But he makes me want t

read Compton (--in fact, any of those Special volumes lying on my dusty shelves). (S(I recently read Compton's FAREWELL, EARTH'S BLISS myself, and hereby second Ted's recommendation. There aren't many writers in sf who have Compton's feel for characters; I couldn't help but care for all of them, even the "heavies," because their own personal problems were evident, and each was struggling with his own demon. And the ending, which was so quiet it almost slipped past me, sent shivers up my spine--if I may utilize an appropriate cliche. Compton has been far too ignored in the fan press; a lot of writers are trying very hard to get where Compton has already reached, and I can't help but wonder if they have read him.)S)

Jeff Glencannon's "Apollo piece" is certainly a special feature in this issue, and I'm very taken with it. Even though I don't think I agree with everything he implies. But he scores anyhow--he uses that informal, conversational style of his eloquently, and for all it's worth. I wonder if Jeff's feelings have altered at all concerning anything he's put into that piece? I know some of my feelings about the moon shot(s) have altered across time--as my thoughts about a lot of things I write about do eventually, and even rapidly.

Tiptree, again. It's nice to see a writer talk about writing the way he does. I can be pompous (sic), but he can be informal and rambunctious without taking to "aw, shucks!" posturing. He says quite a bit and says it strikingly: "Start from the end and preferably 5,000 feet underground on a dark day and then DON'T TELL THEM. Straight from behind the pancreas." Anyone who can write lines like that has got my admiration. I agree: "Reality, go away." Good writers deserve to be reread, and need to.

Jerry Lapidus, in the lettercol, seems to have a problem which concerns me. He thinks I over-read books, though he refrains from putting his finger on any specific thing in my reviews. Could this mean that he's really not quite sure that he believes what he says he does? Believe me, I do question what I'm reading into a book--but generally before I write the review. I read rather slowly, leaving spaces to think--and probably don't get through more than several SF books a month. But there is a point somewhere around here: even if I were to read things into books that would amaze the authors, this is not a Bad Thing in itself. Especially if the perceptions are valid ....Let me put it this way: If an author's stated intentions are greater than what he's actually achieved in his book (which must stand on its own merits), then that's tough for him. He's failed, irregardless of his earnestness. On the other hand, a similar perspective can apply to the things or qualities apparently extra beyond his intentions. Because he is unconscious of, or did not intend, certain things does not mean they don't exist. Much of the best writing is at least partially unconscious; when you're writing good, no matter what you think, you can't be aware of and in control of everything that's coming out. (I'll bet Tiptree knows.) All this, of course, depends on whether my or anyone else's oddball comments are sound... but there's one later aspect to this thing. What an apparently over-reading reviewer says can be other than expressing qualities beyond the author's knowledge: he can be saying essentially the same thing --only not as good (a valiant try, but to the reviewer's detriment), or better than the author (and that's not saying too much for the author), or simply differently than the author would have conceived it (and did conceive it). This last is perhaps best of all because it adds a new perspective that benefits the reader--and maybe even the author.... I think that explains it as far as I'm concerned.

HARRY WARNER, JR.
423 Summit Avenue/Hagerstown MD 21740/March 31, 1972

Jeff Glencannon's long article had special interest for me, because of how strongly I feel about the space program. I can sympathize with his viewpoint, I share some of his opinions, and yet I don't think he has the right basic answer. "Dream" is a word that runs through the article once or more in almost every paragraph. It's proper to dream of things like the first trip to the moon, and to feel regret when the first trip to the moon differs from the dream. But when this feeling of regret has run its course, it's important to start dreaming about other unaccomplished feats. Continued nursing of the dream about the first flight to the moon after it has happened brings the mind too close to the habits of the scizophreniac. And I don't think that the reality was really so much worse than the dream. Astronauts aren't the cookie-cutter figures that Jeff implies. I've met one and he's a complete human in my memory from just a few minutes in his presence. I heard one of them mutter "Son of a bitch!" when something went wrong with his rocket ship in outer space and that's something I never found a fictional space explorer say in a prozine. If the astronauts do exactly as they're told on their missions, that's good for the mission, no matter how much it may offend the people who prefer to do as they please in every circumstance, because obedience to whims is dangerous in Apollo conditions. Once again, I wonder about the way people are grasping for ways to criticize the space program. Nobody complained when polio vaccine and anti-biotics were created that they weren't discovered by a half-mad scientist with a beautiful daughter while a newspaper reporter was watching, as such things always happened in the science fiction stories that gave us dreams about advances in medicine to save lives. (S(But neither was Jeff complaining that the first moonship wasn't constructed out of tin cans and manufactured in the brilliant young inventor's back yard.)S)

I liked "The Rock Scene" immensely. It's even educational: it shows clearly the meaning of some symbols that may have left us a trifle mystified when we encountered them in single Rotsler cartoons containing rocks in other fanzines.

When spare time stretched out in vast expanses on all sides, I used to do a lot of rereading. I even had some annual re-reading rituals, because a story had seasonal appeal or simply because I'd first read it on a hot summer day on the porch swing with a hunk of ice wrapped in a cloth to lick and gnaw, so the following summer I would imitate my younger self to insure repitition of all the elements that had entered into the previous enjoyment. But now there's not enough time to read the first time most of the things I want to read and I deliberately avoid some fiction which has the reputation of requiring repeated readings to be fully enjoyed. But I still found James Tiptree's article fine and it's worth reading again.

Ted Pauls' reviews are always better when he stretches them out to a couple of pages and goes beyond the usual plot synopsis and brief value judgment. Now if he would just remove about one-third of the long words and in the space thus gained he would say a bit more about the books, all would be splendid. It's odd about your opening review, because I just recently read CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY for the first time, too. I also liked it, but kept feeling unhappy over one thing: the fact that it hadn't been written when I was about twelve years old. It would have put me at that age into the state of total bliss that

only a half-dozen books of my boyhood provided.

Dies irae are the opening words of an old Latin poem that is part of the liturgy in the Catholic church and usually turns up in requiem masses. It describes the day when fire will consume the earth and the last judgment will occur. The old Gregorian chant's melody has turned up in several works by famous composers, particularly Rachmaninoff and Dohnanyi. But I like it best in the setting Verdi gave it in his Manzoni Requiem. You hear the women screaming and there are loud thuds as pieces of the earth go crashing down and the strings whip up a genuine firestorm with chromatic scales.

If the Hugos are kept in proper perspective, there's no need for the fanzine editors with small circulations to feel too bad. Hugos show the preferences of the people who join worldcons. This is not necessarily the same thing as the preferences of the people who read fanzines, despite the overlapping between the two groups. Sometimes I think that some sort of new award should be set up, to be given out by mail after the worldcon: the winners would be determined not by the poll of one particular fanzine or the people who go to worldcons, but by compiling the preferences of fanzine editors. Lots of fanzines already publish recommendations on how the Hugo awards should go, such as Don Keller's editorial in this issue. The results wouldn't represent eternal verities any more than any poll can give insight into the only true values. But the system would guarantee an assemply of opinions by people who are interested and energetic enough to publish fanzines, unalloyed by lots of votes from people whose fanac consists of going to one con a year or subscribing to one fanzine. (S(Hmm. We could have an organization like SFWA: Fanzine Editors of America--except that there are excellent Canadian and British and Australian fanzines, too. Okay--Fanzine Editors of Terra: FET. We could have awards and closed parties and all kinds of neat things. Sounds like fun.)S)

I liked the front cover very much. Why fret about the way it came out, when the whole course of modern art is rolling along on the premise that it's the total effect that counts, not trivial imperfections of technique or reproduction mechanics?

CHRISTINE KULYK
15407 80 Avenue/Edmonton 51, Alberta/March 26, 1972

Maybe there's an oracle somewhere that can explain to me why I always feel slightly dazed after reading an issue of PHANTASMICOM. It's as though I had just passed unprotected through a room filled with hundreds of people, all discoursing on different subjects, leaving me vainly to try and untangle the barrage of words--it's tough enough for me to just tie it all together in my mind, let alone comment on it. I can't think of any magazine more difficult to write a loc on than yours is. I guess I could try it, but I get the feeling that I'd have to write a book to say even half of what runs through my mind as I read the articles and the reviews, not to mention the fan fiction and the other unclassifiable goodies in each issue. If I had to find one word to describe PhCOM, it would be "variety"--I'm almost swamped by it. It's rare to find a zine where the editor's prerogatives don't eliminate the presentation of conflicting points of view, and of contibutions by individuals with widely-differing philosophies. PhCOM continually opens its doors to contributors whose views are vehemently opposed to those of the editors and the other contributors. As I said, I'm often confused by the variety,

but I wouldn't have it any other way--I love it.

Of course, now I've worked myself into a corner. Having already stated that I couldn't unscramble my impressions of PhCOM enough to comment on it, I'm still left with the task of finding something to say for the rest of this letter. (And if by now you're saying to yourself, "Boy, is this kid in trouble!", just think--I'm the kind of person who LIKES PhCOM.)

Well, how about this: I'll tell you about one of the little nagging irritations that disturb me in the world of SF and fantasy fandom. Namely, I'm disenchanted with the bulk of fantasy fiction which is published because of the type of hero which it portrays. The few fantasy stories that I do like deal with people who are facing the dangers of their world--strange as it may be--head on, in attempts to solve the bizarre problems of the situations into which they are plunged. They don't go out looking for trouble, any more than you or I would do, although they might go out looking for fun and find the trouble by accident. I find it extremely difficult to empathize with the swashbuckler who seeks fame and fortune through luck and/or muscle power, and who feels it necessary to seek his glory somewhere outside the vales of normal experience. I guess I'm as susceptible to the charms of the adventure-romance as the next person, but I'm much more apt to be caught up in the perils of a hero who solves his dilemnas and his cravings within the framework of his world than with one who takes off into the dark depths or the unreachable high reaches in search of only-he-knows-what.

Oh, what the hell! Here's something I wrote a while back which says it as well as anything I'm going to come up with now:

"The Song of the Merry Buccaneer"

Ha, ha, Buccaneer, you journeyed far, you travelled near,
You pommelled many a tortured ear
With stories of your Quest, I fear!
    But did you never halt to think
    What were the dreads which made you shrink
    From all attempt to ever drink
    At living's bitter foaming brink?
(You touched the edge, but missed the sink.)
Weary me not with tales so dry,
    Of golden hoard and Dragon sky.
'Twere better you had stayed at home
And bartered at the banks of foam
    Than to have quitted life to roam
So far.

You've nothing but a Giant Shell,
    A prize from Where the Giants Dwell,
A ring of Glass from once-fair Lass,
A passage from a Sage's Rhyme,
And one small angel's wing of stone
To show for all your mighty deeds.
    (So that's where mighty valour leads!)

Your pockets still are empty, although your words are full;
Your legend never written, because your life was dull.

--Christine Kulyk

CY CHAUVIN
17829 Peters/Roseville MI 48066/March 5, 1972

Despite all Don's lamenting, the cover of PhCOM 9 is exceptionall striking, and I hope you try something like it again. The thing to do is to simply eliminate the name of the fanzine from the cover-design, if that's too complicated to print well; after all, you aren't selling PhCOM on a newsstand, so it doesn't matter if the title is on the cover or not. The repro and especially the layout for the rest of the issue has improved tremendously; there seems to be a great deal more creativity in the arrangement of illos and title headings this time around. The stencil-guide lettering also looks a lot better than the hand-lettered stuff. I think if you can keep up this level of competence, no one will complain about the repro/layout. I might add also that I like the way you use one artist's artwork throughout an entire article; even if his stuff doesn't actually "illustrate" the article, it does add a sort of continuity to the piece that is quite effective.

I share both Mike Glicksohn's and your own concern about the "Best Fanzine" situation. But why couldn't some notice like the following be put on the final Hugo ballot (in Big Black letters): "IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH ONLY ONE OR TWO OF THE NOMINEES IN A CATEGORY, PLEASE DO NOT VOTE IN THAT CATEGORY." At the moment, every effort seems to be directed at encouraging people to vote; perhaps if more emphasis was placed on responsible, knowledgable voting, things would work out better. Of course, fringe fans might not pay any attention to some notice like that, you can't really tell. But if it did work, it might produce better results in all categories...

I enjoyed "Jeff Glencannon"'s (isn't his real name Jim Saunders?) (S(No)S) article on Apollo and the moonlanding immensely, and I think he pointed out all the faults of it nicely. As far as the "blandness" of the astronauts goes, however, I might like to remind Jeff that while it would have been nice to have had a couple of long-haired radicals (depending on how radical) on the first moon landing, we could have had a couple of bigots instead...or something even worse. Of course, perhaps we should have. Perhaps we should have had a bigot, a radical, a black...at least it would have been more realistic. Perhaps we would have finally learned, too, if the challenge/ordeal of space can truly unite different people together, as some sf writers have prophesied.

I ran across one of the stupidest objections to the space program yet: "Space exploration is not yet emotionally permissable.... To find the advent of the space age premature and therefore alien and repulsive, is the proper reaction of any sensible man." (from Encounter, quoted in SPECTRUM #3) I suspect that Thomas M. Disch would agree with that statement, however; here's another similar gem from the introduction to his anthology, THE RUINS OF EARTH: 2001 "with devastating clarity showed that the physical grandeur of the Space Program can only be achieved at ruinous spiritual cost. Technology was equated with the curse of Cain." Such beautiful thoughts these people have. Personally, I have always found the astronauts bring back of sweeping lunar landscapes and the rising earth to be quite dramatic and even religious. There is a certain sense of grandeur in a picture of a tiny spaceship lost in a field of billowing stars, as well as a certain insignificance that emphasises, for me at least, the spiritual side of man. John J. Pierce, in fact, wrote an article in which he said that science fiction deals with the same stuff that religion is so concerned with..."eschatology." You should read it.

MIKE GLICKSOHN
32 Maynard Ave, #205/Toronto 156, Ontario/May 3 1972

Perhaps the cover didn't quite live up to your expectations but I found it an impressive attempt nevertheless. And the mere fact you tried it gets plaudits from this source. It's a truism that an artist always sees the flaws in his work with a magnifying eye, and this is equally true of a faned. Flaws in repro that seem to leap off the page and shout "amateurish" at a faned are generally unobserved by the readership. I'm not saying your readers will not notice that the cover is flawed, but if they say it really isn't too bad, believe them, because it is a striking cover despite your disappointment.

Don't you realize what an anachronism you are? Not only did giant sized fanzines disappear from the fannish scene some time ago, but American fanzines devoted to reviews and serious discussion are one with the dodo and the great auk. And here PhCOM is a combination of the two! (And, before you think I'm trying to put you down for it, a refreshing and generally interesting change you make, too.)

Jeff Glencannon, whoever he may be, has written a piece that I can only describe as eloquent. I don't agree with everything he says, and I think he'll probably have changed many of his opinions since that first moon landing (the last pair of moon walkers were so damned human they seemed incompetent!) but I could still understand his views and enjoy the elegant manner in which he presented them. Because of the somewhat dated nature of the piece, I rather doubt that a detailed rebuttal is either necessary or of much use. I will say that Jeff's desire for the romantic hero ideal of the spaceman is a bit unrealistic in light of the technical requirements of the missions but I imagine he'll agree that later astronauts showed a bit more emotion than did the first three. I too have objected to the propaganda dispensed by some of the missions but again I'm realistic enough to expect that this will be a part of a space program set up the way the US one is. For me, at least, the sense of wonder is still there, no matter who the men themselves may be, or what they may represent. But then I guess in some ways I'm one of Jeff's dreamers. (Imagine yourself as Armstrong, Jeff, knowing that whatever you said would become one of the most famous phrases in the history of man. Do you think you'd have been any less pretentious? Academic question, though, isn't it? Did you catch Bob and Ray on the Vonnegut "Through Time and Timbukto" special? I think they put that particular phrase into its proper perspective.) (S(David Frye on his first album also took on that Famous Saying--which I still believe Armstrong misquoted. On I AM THE PRESIDENT Nixon wanted them to say "I am the first man on the moon, and make no mistake about it," the astronauts' own choices were "Shucks" and "Hey! I'm on the moon!" It was William F. Buckley who came up with the Historic Words.)S)

DAN AYRES
2020 W. Manor Parkway/Peoria IL 61604/August 11, 1972

I back you on the statement about SF as worthwhile literature for the most part. Modern fiction offers little that interests me, with the notable exception of Nikos Kazantzakis. I think it was Gustav Mahler who said something to the effect that he couldn't explain his music in words because he needed an enormous canvas in which to work, which is my feeling as well. What canvas is there larger than the entire universe?

The one thing I hate is a review that gives away the plot, which is part of the reason I skip through them, looking for words that I can use as a guide to buying without telling me the story. Maybe that's why I tend toward shorter ones. If I want critical analysis, I'll go read the book and come back. (S(That's as worthwhile a thing to do as any, and I like reading reviews after reading the book, as well as before. However, one of the basic feelings we at PhCOM seem to share is that you can't hurt a good book by talking about it. The surprise-ending story just hasn't the power of a story in which the highly-charged emotions are present throughout the work. Also, sf - today is highly mythic, and myths--due to retelling and retelling--are not prized for plot and ohenryendings as much as for the qualities beneath. In "Making Waves" Jeff Clark reveals the ending to Barry Malzberg's THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS, but knowing the ending in advance will not lessen the novel itself for you. Malzberg is a very myth-centered writer, although he works more in the realm of contemporary society than most sf writers. ## I'm not saying that plotting is obsolete or any such thing, I'm saying that plotting and storytelling are very important...crucial, because you have to tell a story and you're better off telling it well. But the state of modern sf is such that the story is not the only thing, and knowing the story in advance will not keep you from enjoying it.)S)

DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road/Strafford PA 19087/Feb 28, 1972

I suppose the Glencannon article is something of a debut for him, being the first non-offensive thing he's done, and therefore the first and only item of his which may be taken seriously. So it is a debut.

I tried to read it, too, forgetting who had done it and taking the article by itself. (Not a difficult trick--any editor must learn to seperate biases from material, you know. And I've been editing for three years now.) I say I tried to read it because I never did manage to finish it. For openers it seems to be twice as long as it needs to be, and the prose is just two flowery and purple for a non-fiction work. (Jeff is not alone here; Leon Taylor sometimes has a similar problem.) Occassionally he does turn a good phrase, but then he goes on to beat it to death by repitition. And even that is lost in the rattling of every cliche imaginable, and the constant knocking down of straw figures (politicians, "hacks"--that word crops up every other line). All I can say is that it's obvious why it took him so long to place the thing, but why you were the one who gave in I'll never know. (S(The main reason he could never place it is because he had only vague ties with fandom for a while. Also, Phantasmicom Press has always--and you should know this, Darrell--been willing to publish long works. As for your reading without bias, I find it interesting that yours is the only negative comment received, and at least two people--Poul Anderson and Mike Glicksohn--found it "eloquent." And that's why I published it.)S)

I suppose it is a start for Jeff, though. As he matures and gains more experience in fandom he'll soon see that more and better egoboo can be had by creating things and trying to get points across than by tearing down others. And his prior course always comes into a diminishing returns type thing where it inevitably blows up in the perpetrator's face.

In answer to Jerry Lapidus' question of why Glencannon "hates"

me, I'll first point out that it is nothing personal, as I'd never had any contact with, or even heard of, him before he started this. I suspect there was no reason at all, his choosing of me as the object on which to exercise his ego was entirely arbitrary. He probably spread a few recent fanzines out in front of him (he told me he is not familiar with those of a year or so ago) and saw my name occurring quite often and then picked his target very much like drawing a name out of a hat. And considering the fact that it's taken him this long to turn out a piece that isn't devoted to insulting me (probably written prior to the whole thing) I must have developed into some sort of obsession with him. Also considering that he admits not having read the material he pretends to review, there is a suggestion of some sort of mental disorder which is most unpleasant. (S(Careful, Darrell.)S) He certainly isn't airing a legitimate dislike.

So this new piece, poor as it is, is something of an encouraging beginning. (S(For those not in the know, the Shweitzer-Glencannon feud began in GRANFALLOON, where Jeff reviews fanzines--and where he has no good words for Schweitzer's writing. Darrell's views above come from a rather strange encounter at last year's Philcon, which had Darrell expostulating and Jeff amused. I doubt that the total confrontation will ever be resolved.)S)

DAVE HULVEY
Rt. 1, Box 198/Harrisonburg VA 22801//3/8/72

Jeff Glencannon's piece was powerful. Extremely well written, it highlighted the dilemna of the hardcore sf oddball confronted with the empty reality of his glorious vision of man on the moon. His feeling about the commercialization, the grotesque appeals to moribund nationalism and how the men of little imagination and idealism raped the space program are closely akin to my own.

When I was young I accepted the prophetic words of J.F. Kennedy as a solemn promise to reach the moon with only the best in the American Dream Machine. This was not to be. The bureaucrat, the capitalist adman, the short-sighted Mid-American, the political administration decided their own "enlightened" self-interest took precedence over something Authentic or Real. The astronauts might well have been sent to Harlem in solid gold Cadillacs for all the inspiration they received from the words of social prophets. For many, the moon is for "whitey." For many others, it is for the "straights." For a few, it is for fun and profit. Pass the green cheese, please, and praise the Lord (for with Him and Money anything is possible. In fact, He is Money). Moneytheism made it possible for us to go to the moon.

soheardfromwahfwealsoheardfromwahfwealsoheardfromwahfwealsoheardfromwa

A few other members of the great unwashed out there were heard from, but not too many. Those we did hear from were:

Paul Anderson	Robert Bloch	Mark Francis
Mike Glyer	Seth McEvoy	Laurine White
Alan Sandercock	Robert J. Whitaker	

That's a grand total of sixteen lettersofcomment received on PHANTASMICOM 9, a truly inspiring total. And I check through ENERGUMEN 13 and see that on his last issue he got somewhere in the vicinity of 75. Sigh. Sigh.

Continued from page 6--

As long as there are awards--in any area, in any field--there are going to be emotional reasons as well as technical or intellectual or whatever reasons. People ARE going to give Oscars to actresses because they lost out the year before, etc etc. But it's another Oscar, not a home-made one.

Granted, everyone should give yearly awards on the basis of the work done during the year, but you and I both know they don't always. There is really no way around it. But "Minority Report" awards really downgrade the whole process, in my opinion, as much as it might please the ego of the receiver of such blessings.

So don't get uptight because I said No. But like I said before, the winning of a Hugo should be by the rules of that game. If you don't like that game you are free to start your own. Perhaps I would not have been so negative if it hadn't been represented to me as a Should-Have-Been Hugo. But I assure you that you are incorrect in saying "...you had just opened PhCOM and seen it you'd have been pleased."

I suppose I might take any award offered, I mean, why not, unless there are strings attached...except I won't take any Minority Report Hugo, Nebula, Oscar, Emmy, Little Orphan Annie Secret Decoder Ring, Best of, or any such. It's the Real Thing or nothing.

This time, I hope you understand.

But don't go away mad.

And that's it for now on the Phantasmicom Award. I have no further comments.

In the home stretch now, twenty lines to go and PHANTASMICOM 10 is over--almost. Don's article is not yet stencilled, and I pick the covers up Tuesday night. Wednesday night I haul Don back over and we finish up.

Don.

This couldn't possibly be done now if not for Don. He's come over and been running the mimeo while I've been typing and electrostenciling and lettering, and it just couldn't have been done without him. I had to wonder, though, if it could be done with him...

He started one page upside down. (Remember how closely I computed the paper? Scratch 35 sheets of paper.) He forgot to take the stencil off once and ran it again. (Scratch 25 sheets.) He managed to knock the drum loose once, and to move the speed control that is completely inaccessible from the outside. It's been incredible. I don't know how he's managed some of this.

But we love him anyway.

Next issue--I actually have some material ahead; an article by Darrell Schweitzer, another by Cy Chauvin, and a new series: story fragments by writers, an idea from Tiptree. See you then.

SMITH PULLS A GLICKSOHN

more editorialitis

And what that means, in essence, is that there will be but one more issue of PHANTASMICOM after this one. It just doesn't seem to be worth it any longer. For instance, the typing of this stencil is the first bit of work to be done on PHANTASMICOM 10 since the covers were printed up last November. Everything but the space reserved for Don's fantasy article has been printed and collated since before Philcon, November 17-19. Tonight is January 31, 1973. So I am going to fill in the hole with an article recently received from Bob Sabella and whatever else fits in after that. Don's article will appear next issue.

The delay was caused by non-receival of artwork drawn by Paula Marmor for the reviews. When they were completed, Paula sent them to Mike Glyer's electro-stenciller, Ed Green of LA, CA. This was a mistake. We have never seen either originals or stencils, nor have any inquiries concerning the matter been answered.

This was a big disappointment, and may have been the straw that broke the camel's back. At any rate, the only thing to do with a broken-backed camel is put it out of its misery.

I do think my continual policy changes--something like five since PhCOM 9 came out--evinced a deep dissatisfaction with the zine as an entity. On the other hand, I am very pleased with KYBEN--and with the tremendous egoboo it has been netting me--so I will devote my whole faned's-worth of energy to it. That too will change somewhat--without PhCOM around I'll have to add a little sf to KYBEN. But KYBEN will always be a people zine, and any sf comments will be people-oriented in some way or another. Don't ask me for details--I don't have them. I just know that tight standards will be imposed on KYBEN material; if I put out mediocre issues I don't get no more egoboo. And I <u>love</u> egoboo.

The next PhCOM will be a wrap-up issue. It will be retrospective. The people who were most involved in PhCOM will write of their experiences with it; I'm going to try and get new columns from all past and present columnists, and other stuff. A true farewell issue. Pulling a Glicksohn.

All subs will be transferred to KYBEN in some arcane manner. If any of you subscribers have any real objections to that, I <u>will</u> refund whatever balance I may owe you. But I'd rather send you KYBEN.

There's little more to say now. Next issue is the obituary. Tune in then. For the moment, if you turn the page we'll talk about the best sf of 1972 for sixty lines or so. We may have Hugo ballots enclosed; if not, they are readily available elsewhere. Use them, please. The Hugo Award is useless if you do not.

1972 was the Year of the Novella; so much good, so much. How does one choose between Ursula LeGuin's "The Word for World Is Forest," Frederik Pohl's "The Gold at the Starbow's End," and Gene Wolfe's "The Fifth Head of Cerberus"? While I have not read all the stories I am about to mention--lists compiled by Don Keller, Jeff Clark and Jeff Smith--each of those three rank in my mind as among the best sf ever written. They are all so fine... The middle section of Isaac Asimov's novel THE GODS THEMSELVES is also a very fine--if not independent--novella. Don listed Richard Lupoff's "With the Bentfin Boomer Boys in Little Old New Alabama," but mentioned it wasn't as good as the others. Also, David Gerrold's "In the Deadlands," but who knows what category that belongs in? I'm sure it's less than ten thousand words, but it takes up 67 pages of his Ballantine collection. Probably a novelette.

Don lists for novelette Kate Wilhelm's "The Funeral," James Tiptree's "Painwise" and Gardner Dozois' "A Kingdom by the Sea," with I believe the preference toward Dozois, which I haven't read. I will agree on the quality of Wilhelm's--I like her stuff very much and this is one of her better works--but not the Tiptree, which I thought too spotty and episodic, though it has a very powerful ending.

For short story Don mentioned three from AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS: "Totenbuch" by A. Parra (y Figueredo), "The 10:00 Report Is Brought to You By..." by Ed Bryant, and Gene Wolfe's "Against the Lafayette Escadrille." (I haven't read the first, thought the second was good but not that good, and did very much like the third.) I would add Ray Nelson's marvelous "Time Travel for Pedestrians" and Joanna Russ's moving "When It Changed." I also though Bernard Wolfe's non-sf "The Bisquit Position" was excellent. The fourth story on Don's list was Tiptree's "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side," which I must agree upon. I have only read it once, and thought it was one of Tip's better stories at the time; by now it seems I have read it often, though I never have gone back to it, for the story is so disturbing that it comes back to me at odd moment. I picked up the HISTORY OF ERIC CLAPTON record set and browsed through the liners, and there in the "Clapton Is God" phrase is Tip's story--or a small part of it. "And I Awoke..." is a story that could only have bee n told as science fiction, yet which is a vital portrait of our current culture.

Novels--I haven't read anything yet which I would be inclined to vote for. I fully expect Asimov's THE GODS THEMSELVES to walk away with the prizes, but as I explained in my book review section, I found it totally unsatisfying and it is not That Good. It is not bad, but... Barry Malzberg's BEYOND APOLLO is totally paranoid; I didn't like it, but I sort of admired it. Jeff Clark liked it a lot. Roger Zelazny's THE GUNS OF AVALON is to my mind the best he's done since LORD OF LIGHT, though by no means approaching that novel's stature. You should read it even if you're not familiar with NINE PRINCES IN AMBER. But best of the year? I would like to think there is something better. I must read THE SHEEP LOOK UP. Don and Jeff both liked it, though not as much as STAND ON ZANZIBAR. Jeff said, "often lengthy moments of brilliance, overall staggeringness of conception." Don recommends Piglet's WHAT ENTROPY MEANS TO ME and Gerrold's WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE. (I hadn't liked the origina l short story.) Jeff also liked Avram Davidson's PEREGRINE: PRIMUS, LeGuin's THE FARTHEST SHORE, Richard Matheson's HELL HOUSE, Bob Shaw's OTHER DAYS, OTHER EYES (yes, good), M. John Harrison's THE PASTEL CITY and Bob Silverberg's DYING INSIDE. Read and decide.