

PLACEBO



AND IT'S
NOT ORGANIC?
IS IT?

J. M. ELLIOTT
TOM FOSTER
1970NE

©1971

PLACEBO III

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This is PLACEBO 2, the issue for the quarter beginning January 1972. PLACEBO is the genzine of M.Feder and B.Smotroff and a band of kibitzers called The Science Fiction and Fantasy Society At Queens College. PLACEBO is published quarterly and is available in trade for other fanzines (a copy to each editor), for contributions of artwork or articles, for substantial letters of comment, and for 35¢ a copy (or a three issue sub for a dollar). PLACEBO is published at the facilities of the Q.C.I.C.C. All rights are reserved to the artists and authors.

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VARIOUS NICE PEOPLE collators

MOSHE FEDER comatose zombie and midnight typist

SINUOUS CONVOLUTIONS

MOSHE FEDER

Not unexpectedly, this, the second issue of PLACEBO, is appearing about a month behind schedule. There's no need to go into the reasons (which involve the coincidence of our publication date with finals week) but I hope you won't hold it against us.

The response to PLACEBO 1 was gratifyingly large and generally encouraging. One of those responses has become one of the highlights of this issue, the marvelous cover by Elliot and Foster. Receiving it was the sort of pleasant surprise we'd like to have more often. I hope that Jim and Tom will be happy with the job our printer did and send us more illos and covers of the same quality. In fact our main problem so far has been getting good outside material like the cover and "The Cosmic Circle". Editor-written issues are fine once in a while, but PLACEBO is not a personalzine. Of course you're probably all waiting for proof that PLACEBO is worthy of your contributions; but if all you great artists and writers out there wait, how will we ever become worthy?

..... * * *

There seems to be some confusion about PLACEBO's exact status vis a vis the S.F.&F.S. at Queens College. I believe we have two other mutually contradictory statements on that subject in this issue. So to set the record straight: PLACEBO is officially the fanzine of our Queens College group, for instance - it is mimeographed on campus, and club members get it free. But this is a matter of pragmatism and convenience, and doesn't, as far as we can see, make PLACEBO a "clubzine". This fmz does not report club news, nor have we had or do we anticipate substantial contributions from our fellow members. Aside from the fact that it was through the society that I became friends with my co-editor Barry and our art editor Paul, we could just as well produce PLACEBO without the society's existence.

! ! ! * ! ! !

I have recently seen Kubrick's new film "A Clockwork Orange" and recommend that you see it and vote it the Hugo it deserves. Burgess' novel may have been only incidentally sciencefictional but it was a fascinating good book. The movie does true justice to the book, and while its SF content is still only minimal, it is a great work of film art. It is science fiction enough that we should claim it as our own. After all, we'll all be telling all our mundane friends that we read the novel years ago anyway. The photography is perfect, there is a perceptive use of varying speeds, and of classical music. The acting is also deserving of praise. The result is both effective and affective. Many may say that "enjoy" is the wrong word to describe their reaction to this film, but few will deny that "marvel" and "appreciate" are accurate.

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I attended Philcon this year and enjoyed myself. Even had the parties and program (what little there was of it) not been as satisfactory as they were, the experience of meeting and talking to one of my favorite authors - Keith Laumer, would have made it a memorable weekend

On Saturday night I read my newly bought copy of Smith's Nightlife of the Gods. I read and didn't sleep. No, the book wasn't that good. But as I learned that night, Barry enjoys poker, and doesn't mind staying up past his bedtime to play it. So he was joined by Ted Pauls and ten or twelve other people who wandered in at one time or another to play or to watch, and they kept at it until five a.m. Since one bed was being used as the game table and the other was occupied by a sleeping friend, and all the chairs, as well as the window ledge (over the radiator) were in use; I huddled in a corner alternately watching the game, reading and yawning. It was an interesting experience, and next time it can be in someone else's room. Do you have any idea how boring a card game can be for a non-cardplaying observer?

One of the other memorable things was my first experience with fannish songs, in the hallway outside the Washington party. As you probably know, most of the songs have their origin in verses originally incorporated in S.F. stories, or are otherwise based on fantasy, S.F., or other matters of interest to fan. Although I was sometimes at a loss for words I joined in heartily when I could and listened carefully otherwise. Unfortunately, my condition at the time was not such as to allow me to memorize many of the lyrics. I resolved to write some lyrics of my own and set them to some existent melody. I also resolved to request that any of you who know such songs should commit them to paper and send them along to me. I also decided to request in these pages that some qualified person do an article on fannish songs and the history, people, and anecdotes connected with them. There's a place in a future issue for such an article. Then I think I can stop resolving and start singing . . .

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I suppose that at some time every avid reader of S.F. becomes a collector, even if it's only a collector of paperbacks or the complete works of Kilgore Trout. The joys and agonies of collecting are innumerable, and many of them are common to all kinds of collecting. Just ask any collector of stamps, coins, bottlecaps, matchbooks, baseball cards, bottles, cars, paintings, sculpture, records, or books. But just as some of the experiences of collecting are universal, some are peculiar to one species of collecting.

I have always found one of the special pleasures of book collecting to be in the inspection, studious contemplation, and appreciation of the wrappings that my mail-ordered books arrive in. Experience has brought with it the growth of a new aesthetic, and as a result a new collection.

The most common wrapping material for small orders is plain brown paper, which admittedly holds only a limited fascination for the conniseur. I have only a basic representative sampling in my collection, for the sake of completeness. Larger orders come packed in boxes of corrugated cardboard. These are usually used boxes that the book dealer obtains from various sources, often in the shipments from publishers. But there is no hard and fast rule where boxes are concerned. More than once I have received books from Dick Witter's F&SF Book Co., packed in boxes marked "Loft's Candy". Boxes, no matter what their origin, are much more interesting than paper and are eagerly sought after by collectors. One of my

is a particularly fine example of this kind of ephemeralia; it was one of the first pieces in my collection. Upon receiving it, my then already perceptive eye noted that the box had been used more than once before. Careful removal of the book dealer's shipping label revealed a publisher's label and a smudged rubber-stamped return address that was L. Sprague DeCamps. After recovering from the genteel elation attendant upon this discovery I sat down and wrote my first fan letter to an author (to which, I might add, Mr. DeCamp was kind enough to reply).

Passing quickly over the specialized areas of gummed tape, string, and excelsior, I would like to move on now to an aspect of wrapper collecting that many consider the most interesting.

When there is space left in a box, or when a second layer of protection is desired around a packet of one or two books the material often most readily at hand is newspaper. By the time you receive them these papers are always old, and depending on whom you ordered the books from, often from interesting or far away places. The stars of my collection in this area came with shipments from the Fantast (Medway) Ltd. in England. When I receive such packages the books sit unexamined while I pore over my latest wrapping acquisitions. Here are some choice quotes from some of the more recent ones. (You notice that I am slightly unorthodox in one sense. I hold that it is permissible to take an interest in what is printed on the paper and do not confine my appreciation to the paper itself). From the Wisbech Standard, August 20th 1971:

GIRL IS FRITTERING HER LIFE AWAY

A 19-year old Wisbech girl who was said to be "frittering her life away" appeared before a special Wisbech (Borough) Court on Friday.

Probation officer, Mrs. Betty Fraser, said that the girl was "Frittering her life away either on the boats or in the home of an elderly gentleman who seems to harbor young girls of this age."

COLLISION

A Vauxhall Victor driven by Annie Whitham, of the Swan Hotel, Outwell, was involved in a collision with a stationary Ford Anglia at West Street Wisbech, on Friday.

Owner of the Anglia was Mr. Simon Clarke, of Plt 7, Millroad, Friday Bridge.

Two other headlines were: "TEACHER'S GOLF CLUBS STOLEN" and my own personal favorite, "HAIRDRESSER VALERIE OFF TO AUSTRALIA." And here's a letter to the Daily Mirror, Saturday Oct. 2, 1971:

Are other readers getting sick of the type of adverts we are being subjected to on television?

Every time I sit down to my tea I am regaled with chat about ninety-nine percent of household germs, shots of lavatory pans and graphic descriptions of understains.

The commentary says they are "the stains most difficult to talk about."

Well, nobody seems to find it difficult any more. But what is, I find, is trying to enjoy my bangers and mash at the same time!

G. Leather

There are also a number of fascinating advertisements, but since they are best appreciated in their original illustrated form I have not quoted any here.

I hope this short essay inspires you to begin to examine your packages more closely. There may be a rarity in your mailbox. Then eventually will come the day when we are all getting vintage twine and newspaper cradled in a protective packing of forgotten science fiction books and some imaginative young man will ignore his new gummed tape or cardboard box for a moment and look curiously, and then with a collector's gleam in his eye, at the books it came wrapped in.

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Those of you who have seen the latest issue of ENERGUMEN know that Mike has bought himself a pet snake. This set me to thinking on the peculiar relationship between men and snakes and the role snakes have played throughout history. Snakes figured importantly in the Garden of Eden, in ancient Mexico, and on an American flag. Snakes are almost universally feared, and everywhere their image is fraught with symbolism. The point is, my mind has been on snakes lately and I couldn't help noticing the following item in the New York Times of Sunday January 9, 1972, a clipping of which I am forwarding to Michael Glicksohn.

#### LARGE SNAKE FOUND IN BUILDING AIR DUCT

Columbus, Ohio (AP) -- The police found a 30-pound, 8-foot boa constrictor in the air ducts of an apartment building recently, apparently none the worse for its six-month confinement there.

The police said the snake apparently managed to survive on mice and small birds trapped in outside air vents.

The occupant of one apartment in the building had opened the grill on his blocked air vent, had seen the snake, and then had retreated to call the police.

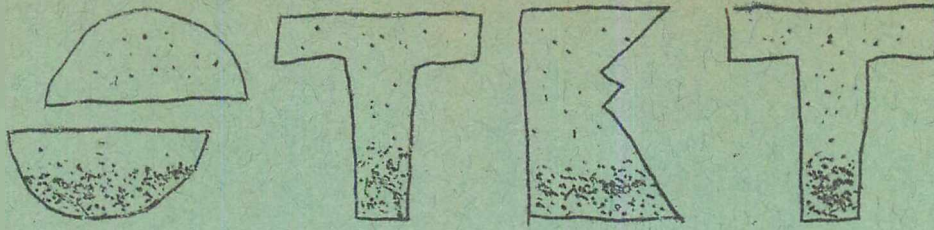
Officers put it in a big metal can and turned it over to the Columbus Zoo.

Authorities said the snake had escaped from its owner and had deserted its mate about six months before at the apartment building. The owner later left town.

I'm sure that in similar circumstances Mike would be more patient with his snake and not run out on it.

~~~~~

Speaking of the New York Times, all sercon fen should be glad to learn that the Sunday Times book review section has instituted a regular column of SF book reviews to be written by Theodore Sturgeon. I personally



Quick now. what do you think of the logo? It's from a cubist alphabet, at least that's what the book I got it from calls it. I kinda like it and as it sands now I'm going to keep it as my logo.

I'm sitting here looking at a list of the things I want to talk about and praying that there will be enough material for the three or four sides that we planned on. I hope so. At any rate, here goes. First on my list is this ish. Moshe originally wanted to call the loc-column "Gulp" with the tagline "Where the readers digest or regurgitate PLACEBO." I wanted to call it "Broadway Local" after a NYC subway train. But it was Moshe that came up with the title that now adorns the loc column, "Smoked Salmon." When I mentioned this to my mother she said that some people outside of NYC might not get the pun in this title. Hmmnn, maybe.

Response to PLACEBO 1 was pretty gratifying. We had about 26 responses of various kinds of which half were locs. From a mailing list of 150 I think that's pretty good. Note that in the loc column the un-initialed responses or comments are from both of us.

In case any of you are foolish enough to want another copy of #1 for someone, forget it. We're all out. Print run last ish was 200 and there were 15 or so copies that were defective enough to never get collated. This ish has a print run of 260, so hopefully we'll have 250 copies for distribution (that's how many covers we're having offset). Distribution is like this: 166 people are on the mailing list, about 25-30 get it at the college, and no doubt the other 55 will be given away somehow. That's about it, except that this issue is costing a bit more than last issue. Which brings to mind a line from one of the Lucille Ball shows: Mr. Mooney to Lucy - "You've gone for broke . . . and made it!"

Next on my list is the Post Office. Some people sent locs to PLACEBO at my address that were returned marked "addressee unknown." Mike Glicksohn's loc came via Charlene Komar after it had been returned to him. But my favorite story is of Loren MacGregor's problem's. I opened up his envelope and inside was a letter, which was wrapped around an envelope, which in turn contained the loc. Let me quote from Loren's covering letter:

Dear people:

Well, you see, it's like this . . .

I sent a letter to PLACEBO, addressed naturally enough (I thought) to PLACEBO @ the address given. It seems that the Post Office minds warp @ names like that, so they sent it back. Entering into the spirit


of the thing, I sent it back c Barry's name
["@"] I've heard of, but "c"? , anyone know its
origin? - BS/ in place of PLACEBO (as a pla-
cebo so to speak).

It never got out of Seattle this time.
In the meantime, my address had changed . . .
so I put my new address down and underlined
the Flushing, N.Y. address and sent it wing-
ing back on its way.

I don't think it even got out of the
neighborhood this time. Since the Post Office
is only two blocks away, and I got it back in
the afternoon mail (they didn't even postmark it)."

What are you going to do? At any rate, address your locs, contributions,
and whatnot to the editor of your choice at the address you choose and
not simply to PLACEBO.

Moshe and I now to to FSFSCU meetings. That's the Fantasy and
Science Fiction Society of Columbia University. Only we no longer meet
at Columbia because we can't afford the \$5 a week it would cost us to
rent the room. We now meet at the avocado Pit (sometimes known as the
domicile of Eli Cohen, Jerry Kaufman, and David Emerson). Listing the
members would be boring I suppose, but I do want to mention at least two.
They are the late BUMP and SNAP. BUMP was the Brighteyed Ubiquitous . . .
Multiplex Pussycat. Unfortunately BUMP is no longer with us. But now
there is SNAP (Snub Nosed Avocadivorous Pussycat). "Avocadivorous"?
Well, you see Eli and David like Avocados and have a couple of avocado
plants in the apartment, and if one takes the suffix of carnivorous or
herbivorous and adds it to avocado. . . . But I babble. The point is
(or should be) that I've met a hell of a lot of damn nice people. And
I'm especially grateful to Jerry Kaufman. There I was at the first FSFSCU
meeting of the year, not knowing a soul except for one person who was
also there for the first time. I'm standing there feeling (and probably
looking)abit lost and over comes Jerry and says "Hi, I'm Jerry Kaufman."
He talked to me and introduced me to the people. He was damn nice and I
appreciate it and thank him here.

I now have a good time there, although once I felt a little guilty
about one meeting. Meetings are held Thursday nights and on the Friday
after this one, at 9am, Eli had a six hour qualifying exam for his PhD
in mathematical statistics. But did this daunt Eli? Hell no. He refused
to cancel the meeting and during the meeting he sat in David's room and
pretended to study. I suppose that if he didn't know it by then he never
would, and we did break up half an hour early before proceeding to Phase II
of the meeting. At a normal meeting (there's a paradox for you) at about
11:30 Eli says, "what time is it?" and everyone answers, "it's Baskin Robbins
time", and we adjourn to the Baskin Robbins. Even when it's 30 degrees
outside or colder. That is devotion. We descend upon the place en masse,
about ten or so of us. We then proceed to drive the folks behind the counter
nuts. Like asking for Eggnog and Cherries Romannof, with the Eggnog on the
bottom please. Or asking, out of all there 31 flavors, for vanilla.
(Someone did this once and they took a while to find it.) But all this
is minor. There is this girl Barbara (pronounced with three syllables) 
whose job is to go to the door at 10 to 12 and turn people away because
the store closes at midnight (she also works behind the counter). But she

is not too good at it, at least, she doesn't like to do it. But I babble again. At midnight (and at 111th street and Broadway, if you know the neighborhood) we sing "God Save the Queen". Loudly. Sometimes we sing the Baskin Robbins Chorale as well (the words "baskin robbins" sung to the tune of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus). Usually there are only one or two people in the store beside us, but last week the situation was different. Picture it. Six of us are standing at the door just inside the store singing G.S.T.Q.. The dozen people in the store all turn and stare at us, the two people who came to the door to come in turn away. Barbara is standing there holding the door open, wearing a Baskin Robbins uniform, conducting us. We then go outside and sing the B.R.Chorale. People avoid us. Can't imagine why.

Since this is supposed to be the fanzine of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Society at Queens College I suppose I'd better talk about the college. Foremost in my mind is, I suppose, the campus crime rate. If you stand in the Caf for a while you're bound to see someone's wallet or purse stolen. And chances are that if you follow the thief he or she will steal quite a few wallets and purses before stopping. If they're caught they just claim it fell and they are returning it. It's damn difficult to prove anything. Two recent incidents show how bad the situation is getting. Two people were seen breaking into the lockers in the gym. They were chased by ~~some~~ ~~students~~ who caught up with them and would have beat the hell out of the two (one a drop out, one a highschool student) if security guards had not intervened. And recently two men walked into a class, pulled out hunting knives and stole \$54 dollars from a professor and five students. Something has got to be done and soon. By law the college is required to rehire it's security force every year. This is done by picking the lowest bidder, also as required by law. We now have Burns security guards who are paid the minimum of \$1.85 an hour. The college pays Burns \$2.90 an hour for each guard. Is it any wonder that the guards are ineffectual? Usually, police are not allowed on campus, but there are undercover police there now. I for one am not objecting. I want to quote from one of the campus papers (12/21/71): ". . . our crime rate has been at an all time low in the past few months. During the third week of October, the number of thefts averaged 9.0 a day. The number of thefts during the week of Dec.13-18 averaged 0.3 per day." And those are just the ones that are reported.

I have a cousin name. Michael who used to live in Washington Heights (an area in upper Manhattan). He got married, and moved to Oklahoma. He's back for a visit now. When he lived here (10 years ago) he never saw what he sees now. On St. Nicholas Ave., stores have to have iron gates put on to protect them. In Oklahoma, he says, they don't even lock their car or house; and if Anita (his wife) wants to, she can go shopping at night without worrying. I guess you have to see how good it can be before you really appreciate how bad it is.

As long as I'm talking about the college, I might as well talk about WQMC, the college radio station. I don't have a show yet, but I may next term, or at the latest the term after that. As is, I'm an engineer. Mainly because I enjoy doing it. For those of you interested in the technical details, we are a 25 watt carrier current station with two Revoxs, two tapecaster cart machines, a Sparta board, a spotmaster distributor amp (temporary), two Bogen Challengers, and Russco turntables. And of course other paraphernalia, like the transmitter. End of technical details. An engineer cues up records and works the equipment. Unfortunately, most DJ's

combo (do their own engineering) and so us poor engineers only get one hour a week. Since DJs get two or three hours, I want to be a DJ. If I do get a show (or rather, when I get a show) my sister Wendy has suggested that I call it the "BS SHOW" (Barry Smotroff, BS, get it?), but I may call it FIJAGH. We'll see.

Would you believe that there are three fans on the station? They are, Donna, Miriam, and myself. Donna is our business manager and Miriam is a newscaster. The latter is getting a show the former has one. But alas, neither is a fannish fan. But we shall convert them, especially since I introduced them to fandom. Yes I did. I showed them fanzines and All Our Yesterdays, and I even got them to go to a FSPSCU meeting. Nothing like two young femme fans into fandom as a way of getting egoboo.

The station is a fun place. Like the Friday before the Monday we went on the air there was no schedule posted. Last week, Poki (who I usually engineer for) didn't show up and I ended up engineering for the station's general manager. I wonder if that had any relation to the fact that it was the best show I ever engineered.

A month or so ago we were off the air for $2\frac{1}{2}$ weeks. Two weeks of this was how long it took for a part to reach us from California. That $2\frac{1}{2}$ weeks of radio silence resulted in a loss of \$1000 advertising revenue. This, when standby to California is \$100-\$125. Round trip would therefore be \$250. If we ^{had} sent someone to California we would only have lost about \$750. But it would have been difficult to explain why we sent someone to California for about one hour to pick up a part.

We had hoped to print this issue by Xmas vacation and get it mailed out by the New Year. We would then wait for the locs to come in along with the contributions and maybe (?) the money. But the ICC did it to us again. I walked into the ICC one day to ask for the forty stencils we estimated we'd need. When I told them that we wanted forty of them, they looked at me and asked why the Science Fiction and Fantasy Society had to publish anything. But they gave us all the stencils they had on hand, all three of them. So over the Xmas vacation Moshe bought two quires of stencils. And at \$5.00 a quire, NEVER AGAIN will we buy directly from Gestetner. And well things happened and we didn't put anything on stencil except for two logos. And classes started again and somehow we didn't get anything on stencil that week either. The next week was finals, so that week was shot. But Moshe has persuaded someone from the ICC to be there during intersession and PLACEBO 2 will be printed and mailed out by February 1st (so we can avoid the rise in third class rates).

Yes it will. Real soon now.

- Barry Smotroff -

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

OR, THE CULT OF KUBRICK REVISITED

There is, I believe, an acknowledged snobbery amongst the elite corps of science fiction addicts, especially concerning anything within our domain which finds general acceptance with the "masses". 2001 is an excellent example. Regardless of the film's faults and virtues, it was without question s.f. cinema, so naturally it could be discussed and understood most intelligently by those within the field. But the "2001" phenomenon snowballed right into the counterculture, became the rage of the freaks and the heads, who viewed it as a new species of visual-aural acid trip. It's popularity was based upon the two features which most annoyed and angered s.f. fans, the ambiguity and obscurantism which Kubrick obviously planned on. Ugh. Those of you, including myself, who feared that Kubrick might pull off a similar stunt with the Burgess novel, well, all that I can say is that your fears were justified. "A Clockwork Orange" is a good film, worthy of our attention, and also of the Hugo it will receive, but it ain't a great film. The cult of Kubrick is in full swing again, and I'd like to de-mythologize this hero by cutting the film down to humanoid size.

To begin with, the advertisements read; "the adventures of a young man whose principal interests are rape, ultraviolence and Beethoven". Outta-sight. Worthy, I believe, of a latter day P.T. Barnum. The point is, these claims happen to be true, both in the novel and the film, and it is the violence, and the music which has attracted practically most of the attention of the critics and the cultists. The violence has raised the usual idiotic moral and ethical questions, with everyone flying his or her banner. Pauline Kael clearly states the anti-violence position, that this horrible monster Alex, who goes around maiming and killing people is portrayed so sympathetically that he becomes just another lovable anti-hero, and once again we choose to side with the perpetrators of violence against defenceless society.

The other moral position I've heard raised is the gang beating of an old drunkie, the kicking in the groin of a bound up man to the tune of "Singing In The Rain", the bashing in the head of the Catlady with an enormous penis, these acts are portrayed so graphically that any sane person is repelled by them. As to the music, many viewers are convinced that Kubrick's use of Beethoven's 9th Symphony proves that there is a streak of violent nazi-like passion in the work of Ludwig von after all.

My contention is that most of the critics, and presumably the patrons who seem to form a 24 hour line around the theatre, they all have missed the mark by a mile. True, the violence is superb "horrorshow", beautifully choreographed as if it was a ballet, and the score is exquisitely disturbing, but this is nothing more than Kubrick's masterful way of keeping the suckers mystified.

COSMIC

CIRCLE

MUSIC: The Phoenix Suite, by Ray Nelson.

ANNOUNCER (VOICE OVER): And now Pacifica Radio brings you once again the sensitive fannish voice of Ray Nelson and his friends, The Cosmic Circle.

RAY (AS THEME FADES OUT): You really should send this station some money, you know. I mean, even if you don't like what's on this station, you should send a little something. You can at least become a student member, not just a lousy freeloader. I'm not crazy about a lot of stuff on this station myself, and that's a fact, but here I am. You see, instead of just grumbling about about how I didn't like the programs on this station, I put my discontent into the concrete form of a few specific program suggestions to the powers that be around here, and, more importantly, volunteered to back up my suggestions with action. To put it simply, I volunteered to produce the shows I wanted to hear myself.

I just came off the street and presented a few sample scripts, and at first things were kind of slow, but finally they let me do a pilot show, and that went over pretty well, so here I am about a year later, with a half-hour time slot every other week all my own, an in prime time too.

I had several beefs to make, back then when I started. The first was that there was no replacement for Tony Boucher's old science-fiction review program. Well, now that's taken care of. Another beef I had was that there was no good radio drama in the style of old-time radio, with dialog, radio, and sound effects. Unless they bounce me off the air, I'll be putting on a few shows like that, here on the Cosmic Circle, and I'm also planning to produce another show for this station called the NeoVictorian Theatre, adapting for radio some of the best of the well-made plays of the Victorian era.

We'll be doing Galsworthy and Alfred Jarret and Ibsen all right, but we'll also be reviving the playwrights who were thought by the public of their own time to be the greatest. We'll be bringing back such fine old Victorian names as Henry Arthur Jones, Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, Victorien Sardu, and Eugene Scribe.

I want to tell you something that maybe you don't know . . . something about the copyright laws in these here United States. A statutory copyright in published works is only effective for a period of 28 years, after which it may be renewed for another 28 years. That's a total of fifty-six years of copyright protection. When these fifty-six years are up, so is the copyright. There is no copyright protection in any work of drama or literature that lasts longer than that, and

RAY

NEVER STOP

thus any play published or produced before 1914 is now in the public domain. I can do as I like with the entire golden era of Victorian drama, and nobody can do more than sputter with indignation.

They won't trip me up with the copyrights on translations either. Cyril Connolly made a translation, for instance, of Alfred Jarry's "Ubu Cocu", and he could blow the whistle on me if I used his translation, but fortunately for me, and for you too, I speak pretty good French myself...Oui, je parle francais aussi bien...and I'll make my own translation. Connolly's translation is pretty awkward and stiff anyway. It wouldn't play well.

You see? The only way you can stop me from putting this stuff on is to write letters of protest to the station. And they'll listen to you down here too.

That, in fact, is the whole point of this little sales pitch. A station like this listens as well as talks. If you think that there is some sort of program that the world needs but isn't getting, you can put that program together yourself and have a pretty good chance of getting on the air with it. There's no place ^{in the} else radio or TV universe where that is true.

So if you like this station, say so with money, and if you think there's some sort of show we should be putting on instead of say, The Cosmic Circle, you put that show together and get on down here with it. If I can do it so can you.

I know this program is going to change. For one thing, if I can get the Neovictorian Theatre going, I'll shut up about neovictorianism on the Cosmic Circle. We'll stick to strictly science fictional and fantastic topics around here.

The science iction topic that's uppermost in my mind at the moment is a new hard cover book just out from Harper and Row. It's The Universe Makers by Donald A. Wollheim. It's not fiction, let alone science fiction. It's a serious critical study of science fiction.

There have been critical studies of science fiction before. Like the popular but wrong-headed New Maps Of Hell by Kingsley Amis, or the virtually unknown but very influential (among pros) In Search Of Wonder by Damon Knight. I'll talk about these other books later on.

Right now I want to say that Wollheim is the first man to write a book about science fiction that got beyond the surface appearances and told us something about the roots of science fiction as it really is.

You see, Donald Wollheim really knows. As writer, editor and, most important of all, fan, he's been around a long time, and the books published by his company, Ace paperbacks, has been grabbing an awful lot of awards down the years, an awful lot of Nebula awards and Hugos.

Donald Wollheim knows, and he doesn't keep it all to himself either.

Kinglsey Amis seemed very wise when he tried to reduce science-fiction to one of its forms, the anti-utopia, but his brilliance was at least slightly dimmed by the fact that what he was saying just wasn't so.

Donald Wollheim points out things I hadn't noticed before, but which I could kick myself around the block for not noticing things that aren't obvious but which are unquestionably so.

For openers, he points out that the writers of science-fiction have over the years, gradually developed a sort of history of the of the future which they all draw from in common, each doing his own variations but all at least subconsciously following the communal outline.

This future history is almost as clearly defined as the history of the past, when you allow for all the distortions the past has undergone at the hands of nationalists; and propagandists for various religions, philosophies, and economic theories.

The future, as Donald Wollheim abstracts it from the public domain of science-fiction as a whole genre, is divided into eight ages.

First there is the First Age of Space. This is the era we are just now entering, the age of the first explorations of the other planets of

our own Solar System. For a long time most science-fiction stories have been set in this First Age of Space, tales of Martians, Venusians, and the exploration of Pluto, Jupiter, and Mercury. This is the age of the first human colonies on other worlds, their problems internal and external, their conflicts with Mother Earth, their breakaway or interplanetary commerce, spaceship trading lanes, space pirates, asteroid mining, the fantastic new forms of government that result from space-age technology. Now that we have actually entered the first age of the history of the future, the interest of science-fiction fans has moved on, to the Second Age of Space.

The Second Age of Space is the time of the first flights to the stars, and to the planets that surround them. This is an age dominated by the problem of the speed of light. Will the crew have to make the trip in deep-freeze? Or will generations have to live and die on board ship before they



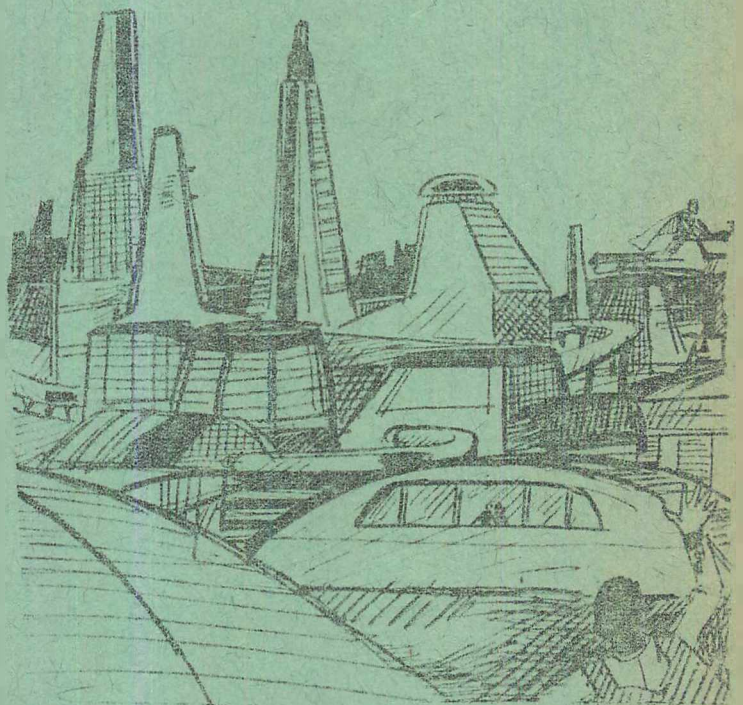
reach their destination? My own feeling is that this problem will solve itself. The slowing of time at speeds near that of light will make it seem to take a few weeks or even only days to reach any star in our Milky Way Galaxy. By Earth time it may take centuries or eons; so that if and when the explorers return, they may find Earth so changed that they themselves are completely forgotten in the mists of prehistory. This is the age of contact with alien intelligences, of the struggle between dependence and independence of Earth; and of commerce in things we can hardly dream of now.

Third comes the Rise of the Galactic Empire. Human colonized worlds and worlds of alien intelligences come to trust and do business with each other, and vast star kingdoms appear. There are treaties, defensive alliances, and perhaps some aliens too alien to fit in and who must be fought. After a long period of struggle, one power triumphs and unites the empire of a billion worlds; usually, but not always, led by Earth.

Fourth comes the Imperial Age, with commerce between planets an established fact, and adventures while dealing with worlds in and out of the Empire. The stars on the Galactic Rim, one of which, by the way, is Earth, can at one time be maverick rebels against the powers of the center of the Galaxy. Here we have tales of making over planets in the image of Earth, of politics, intrigues and dynasties on a scale almost beyond the imagination, of robot mentalities versus human mentalities, of exploration of the rest of the galaxy by official exploration ships, commercial pioneers, religious fanatics or just plain adventurers.

Fifth comes the decline and Fall of the Galactic Empire. Intrigue and palace revolt weaken the system. A few planets break away, then more, then whole sub-federations. The alliance of worlds is strained beyond the point of no return by rebellion, alien wars, race wars, corruption, scientific inability to keep up with the sheer mass of raw, indigestible, information poured in from the billion worlds. Commerce crumbles. Contact between planets is lost. The great union of worlds becomes almost a myth.

Sixth comes the Dark Age of Space. Many worlds revert to pre-spaceflight conditions, savagery, barbarism, superstition. Those planets that can still send ships across the void take to raiding defenseless planets, hastening the fading out of knowledge. There are efforts to revive, each weaker than the last, then finally thousands of years of almost complete loss of contact. Humanity changes to fit the new planets they now inhabit,



and forget their origins. There are evolutionary changes, mutants . . . giant men, tiny men, water-dwelling men, men with wings, men with strange, almost supernatural powers.



Seventh comes the rise of a Permanent Galactic Civilization, the restoration of trade and communication between worlds, the re-exploration of lost or uncontacted worlds and the return to a high technology culture, a democratic society. Here we have the efforts to bring about a return to the old attempts to form empires as in the previous periods, and their failure, and then, finally the rise of galactic harmony among all intelligent beings, followed by the explorations of other galaxies and of the entire universe.

Eighth comes what Wollheim calls the Challenge to God. Galactic harmony and an undreamed of high level of knowledge lead to experiments in creation, to the creation of man-made planets, filled with man-made plants, animals, and even man-made men. And while we're at it, why not man-made suns and man-made galaxies? And why not the exploration of other dimensions and planes of existence? Why not existence as pure mind, without the need for any physical body? Why not seeking out and confronting of God, face to face, in some kind of vast cosmic shoot-out on the main street between two galaxies? Why not the end of the universe, the end of time, the beginning

of a new universe or a new space-time continuum?

That is the future that has gradually developed out of the dreams of all the writers and fans, famous and forgotten, who have helped to shape the genre of science-fiction.

I wonder. I wonder if perhaps we are not in the age we think we are. Perhaps we're not in the first age at all, but in the sixth, the Dark Age between the fall of the galactic civilization and the rise of the next, and our prehistory is not really what the evolutionists tell us it is. There are so many myths about how we came down from the sky . . . about war in heaven and the fall of the angels . . . about gods who seem to act like men and who are associated with different planets and constellations. But let's not go into that now.

What interests me is the concept of the eighth age, The Challenge to God. There is, as you know, a passage in the Bible that has always puzzled theologians, no matter what their creed. That is the passage where Isaac-Israel wrestles all night with Jehovah in person and, as the dawn is about to break, wins and forces God to give him his supernatural blessing.

How can a mere man beat God at wrestling? This has never been explained.

Only now, with the rise of science and of the fantasy that science allows us to dream of, does a possible meaning for this passage begin to appear. Perhaps a time comes, now and then in the space of eons, when man rise to grapple with the gods on an equal footing, and even have a chance of winning.

This is the dream that provides the inner driving force for science-fiction. Good writers write about it well and bad writers poorly, but all true science-fiction writers, consciously or unconsciously, with pride or with fear and shame, nourish the longing for the Eighth Age.

We all long to fight against God like Isaac-Israel, and win.

Most of the western world remains in the grip of an earlier fantasy.

In the first century AD the subject peoples of Rome wrote hundreds, perhaps thousands, of visionary stories about the end of the world and the establishment of heaven on earth. One of them remains . . . one of these cosmic melodramas of the vengeance of God. That is the Book of Revelations in the Bible. The others are either lost or known only to specialized scholars and historians.



This one, however, embodies the dominant ideas of them all, particularly that the world as it is is so evil that God must smash it to bits, so powerful that man is helpless against its evil and must wait for God to impose his rule, like a Roman emperor, by force.

It was a good dream for the time. It was the best they could do then. At least it gave them hope that they might one day be free of Rome.

There are still people who believe in this, the apocalyptic vision of the future. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe it. The fundamentalist Christians believe in it. I regularly receive a magazine called "The Plain Truth" from a group of evangelists at Ambassador College, and they believe it.

The trouble is that the Christian dream is no longer big enough for us. It's not enough for man to have heaven on one little planet way out at the edge of the Milky Way. Science-fiction has taught us to want more, shown us a bigger, grander, prouder dream. We don't want heaven any more. We want the heavens. We want everything.

We're not even satisfied with the secular version of the Christian myth of bloodbath and utopia, like the communism of Marx, the pessimism of Spengler. We're not satisfied with the doomcryers of ecology, with the back to nature primitivists. Yes, we'll save the Earth because someday it will make a valuable outpost on the rim of our galactic empire. We'll save the Earth because it will make a good tourist attraction.

The End of the World has been canceled due to lack of interest.

Donald Wollheim writes in a matter-of-fact way. He doesn't sound like a visionary. He sounds like a successful business man. He sounds like a modest bettor in the literary sweepstakes who has just happened to pick a lot of winners. Yet he, alone among those who have written works of literary criticism, has grasped the vital point. Only he has, in his matter-of-fact way, told us what science-fiction is all about. The underlying force behind the field of science-fiction as a whole is the longing for the Eighth Age, the age when men challenge God.

Damon Knight, when he wrote In Search of Wonder didn't see that. He was too busy digging at fly specks in the work of other individual writers, criticising them for putting in too many substitutes for "said" or for not sticking to the letter of science. Yet, he titled his book In Search of Wonder.

Kingsley Amis, when he wrote New Maps of Hell didn't see that. He thought political satire was what it was all about, and managed to convince a lot of people of this wrong-headed notion.

People can take political satire. They can understand it. It's almost cozy compared to the terrifying vastness of the void above our heads. It's cozy compared to the distance between the stars. Yet the petty little arguments and crisis situations that satire is concerned with will pass. The most crucial of them will seem, tomorrow, rather boring. The stars however will still be there and we will still want them.

Sam J. Lundwall, when he wrote Science Fiction: What's it all About? missed the big picture, though he did a fine job on the details of science-fiction's past. Instead he worried about sex in science-fiction. Sex? I've written some of the dirtiest sex passages in science-fiction with these two hands, but I tell you that there are other instincts more important than sex. It is these that science-fiction deals with.

Donald Wollheim coins the word "cosmotropism". He puts forth the theory that man has an instinct for the stars. Cosmotropism is the inborn gene-directed drive for the spreading of the species and its continuation. Mr. Wollheim dares to brush aside the tired Freudian cliches of men like Lundwall and propose a new instinct, an instinct that includes sex and gives sex, for the first time, a meaning and purpose.

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Did William Atheling show such daring in his book, The Issue at Hand?
Did the distinguished contributors to Of Worlds Beyond and The Science
Fiction Novel? NO.

It remained for Donald Wollheim, in The Universe Makers, to quietly
and without fuss, muss, or bother, show us the mainspring of science-fiction:
the dream of the galactic empire and a challenge to God that all of us in
the field have been suing all these years without consciously knowing what
we were doing.

Yes, it's a Harper and Row hardback.

I have it on a short shelf beside my typewriter, along with the
dictionary, the Bible, and Roget's Thesaurus. As the truth dawns on them,
I think all writers of science-fiction and all hard core fans as well will
give it a similar place of honor.

Don't take my word for it. Read it and think it over. Then meet
me here again two weeks from now for the next session of The Cosmic Circle.

-Ray Nelson

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(Jeff Schalles Fannish Retreads are here continued from page : 22)

"I-I just f-f-finished getting this g-g-golden sh-sheepskin so
that I-I can be the m-most popular a-and sought after G-guest of Honor
in all of F-f-fandom!" He replied.

"HA!!!" They all said.

"Just for that, I-I'll n-n-never let y-y-you g-g-get into
any of the closed p-p-parties th-th-that I'll be able to get into now that
I'm the m-most popular a-and sought after G-guest of Honor in all of F-
fandom!" He yelled.

And he didn't, either.

the end

End notes: I really should warn you that this is the first installment
of this wonderfully new fannish column. But I won't.

-Jeff Schalles
12/7/71

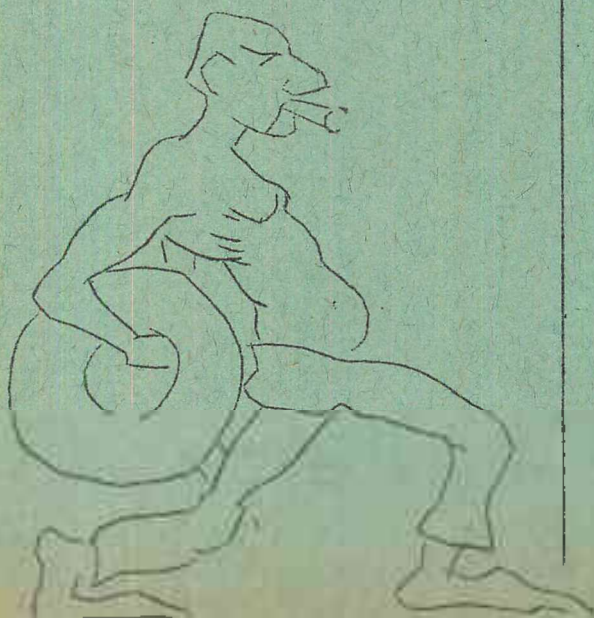
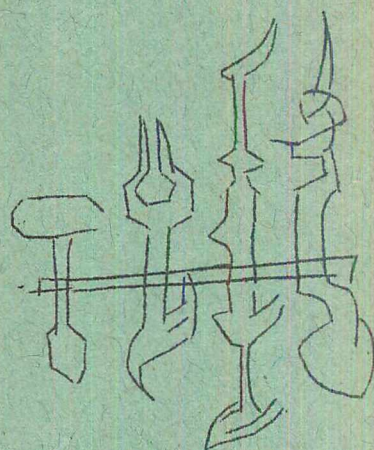
JEFF SCHALLES

FANNISH RETREADS

HARRY
SIEGFRIED
SHE'S GETTING
AWAY!



FL



P

Having sat back and watched Terry Carr get away with his brilliantly innovative "Entropy Reprints" concept for about as long as I can stand it, I have decided to offer my own little spark of fannish energy to to the growing market for insurgent material. For this attempt at ~~stealing the show~~ following in the illustrious Mr. Carr's footsteps, I have chosen the following little piece of faanfiction. It was first published in 1948 under one of the earlier pseudonyms of Stan McDonald, "Baljus Udries". The fanzine it was published in, BLUE RIBBON FAN QUARTERLY, was a small circulation hektazine published by "Fling" Burdick from the spring of 1947 until its final ill-fated attempt at becoming readable in late 1948.

There is an interesting story behind this piece that I really should tell you about before starting into it, but I won't. So with no further fuss, I present you with:

"Sydney and the Golden Sheepskin"

A couple of life cycles ago, before the invention of atomic bombs and post-nasal drip, there was a young fan by the name of Sydney. Being a somewhat normal and well brought-up young fan, he of course aspired to become the most popular and sought after convention Guest of Honor, along with every other somewhat normal and well brought-up young fan. Being the most popular and sought after Guest of Honor was a pretty good thing to be, especially if you were the sort who disliked working for a living. Having had the opportunity literally stolen out from under his feet time after time by fans who's only edge over him was the possession of a glib tongue and a dashing appearance. He finally turned to the local ghu-ru for guidance.

"Whats yer problem kid?" spake the ghu-ru.

"I-I-I w-w-w-ant t-t-t-to be the m-most popular a-and sought after G-g-g-guest of Honor in all of F-f-fandom." said Sydney, in his most suave, sophisticated manner.

"Hmmm . . . let's see now. Uh-how would you like to go on a quest for the Lost City of the Inkas? Oh yeah, I sent that new guy, Culvey, on that one. Let's see what else we got here . . . " He pulled a drawer out of a large filing cabinet and began to flip through various moldering manilla folders. "Ah! Here's one that's about your speed. How would you like to go to the Island of Bull and rip off the Golden Sheepskin? If you can find it and bring it back, it will fill your every wish!"

"H-how d-d-do I get to this Island of Bull?"

"That's YOUR problem kid. What do you think I am, a travel agent or something? Now beat it. I got some important SMOFing to do."

So with a gleam in his eye and a finger in his nose, Sydney set off to become the most popular and sought after Guest of Honor. As he stepped into the street, he ran into Manny Clicksohn, a giver of good advice from way back.

"H-hey Manny, h-how d-d-do I get to the I-island of B*b-bull?"

"Ahem . . . er . . . uh . . . well . . . I think you take the A train to hundred-thirty second street and look for a big palace with a maze underneath it . . . "

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"Gee th-thanks!" He said as he scampered off into the wilds of the Land of Subway. After getting lost three times in a row, he finally got off at the right stop and pushed his way through the crowds of people dressed in strange yellow furry clothes and hurried outside into the dingy sunlight.

At the top of the stairs he found two signs, one reading "This Way To The Enchanted Duplicator" and the other reading "Beware of the Mino-taur.". Not being able to read, he hurried past them and entered a low, dark doorway. At first the stone corridor that he was walking down was clean and brightly lit from closely spaced lightbulbs, but as he proceeded deeper and deeper into the intricate system of corridors and rooms he noticed a growing feeling that things were getting dark and smelly.

Fumbling along in the dim light provided by clusters of burning Riverside Quarterlies, slipping now and then in the piles of green slime that covered the floor, he started to wonder if he really did want to be the most popular and sought after Guest of Honor. Maybe he could become a newszine publisher instead.

Suddenly without warning a huge, slavering bestial form lunged at him from a side passage. It tried to grab him with one of it's immense nail-bitten hands, but he quickly stepped aside and grabbed it by it's bull-like horns. Through clenched teeth he began to chant an ancient spell told to him by an ancient spell maker:

Heavy Heavy Nelson Eddy,
Gimme a bheer to keep me steady.
Puppy barf and Claude Degler,
Smite this beast or I'll cut off your Locus sub!

Not being much of a spell to begin with, it's effectiveness was cut down still further by the fact that he wasn't standing on his head as he spoke it. Still, a small bolt of lightning appeared from a small ghod-like cloud that appeared near the ceiling, and it sizzled the fur right off the monster's nose. Seeing his chance, Sydney ran off down a small side corridor that happened to be nearby. It also happened to be the one that the monster had come out of, but he had forgotten that. As he ran it began to get warmer and lighter, and suddenly he found himself in a small, low ceilinged room with a golden sheepskin hanging on the far wall. The warmth and golden light was radiating from it, and he proceeded to grab the wondrous object in his shaking hands. With his prize clutched tightly to him, he ran back up the corridor to where the monster was sitting holding it's nose. Sydney took a flying leap and sailed clear over the creature, crashing into the wall on the far side.

Dazed but still scared shitless, he ran like hell up the corridor, with the bellowing monster right behind him. It seemed as if he had run for miles and miles, when suddenly he remembered that the sheepskin could grant his every wish.

"I wish I was back in my very own little slan-shack!" He yelled, and suddenly he found himself standing in the middle of a collating party, still clutching his golden sheepskin.

"Hey Sydney, where you been?" Asked one of the people sitting on the floor surrounded by stacks of paper.

Besides, Kubrick doesn't bother to make his gore appear realistically natural, his approach to everything is to create an illusion which is far more real than reality. Burgess-Kubrick uses Alex to make this point explicit. While Alex is being "cured" by Pavlovian conditioning watching a film of a man being brutally beaten, he muses "It's funny how the colors of the like real world only seem really real when you viddy them on the screen." Although admittedly I felt a little squeamish when the "krovvy" started flowing, I quickly calmed down, settled back, and enjoyed it. The violence is so slick that it is almost impossible to be perturbed; to believe that any of this could have a long lasting effect on the viewer is to believe that the equally slick pornography of Russ Meyer "nudies" are capable of making me horny enough to step out of the theatre and rape the first female I can grab. Only two scenes broke through my cool and actually upset me. One is when Alex is spat upon; the sight of blood and spit dripping down his lips is literally revolting. Later on, when Alex's eyelids are forced to remain open with a mechanical contrivance; you know these scenes aren't faked and react accordingly.

To concentrate on this, would be to miss entirely what is the essential interest to science fiction people. What Kubrick has really done, I believe, is to create the first plausible science fiction satire on film. Alex, the narrator and central character isn't really a fully developed character at all, he's a character type, a two dimensional figure, and so is everyone else in the film. This isn't a criticism, rather I want to point out that C.O. fits neatly into the genre of s.f. satire, where the function of a character is a device to parody aspects of human nature and keep the plot moving. Alex is kind of like a Dr. Strangelove, in the real world of 2001, whose barbs are not just pointed at the military, but at all of society. Kubrick, in short, conceives of the dichotomy that Burgess sets up between the notion of free-will and societys controlling of behavior in terms of parodying them both. Neither Alex nor the state is the villain; they are both equally corrupt and, I think if you look closely enough at the film, they are also equally mocked.

Kubrick also gives us ample hints about his intents, drugs are legally administered in teen-age milk bars like the Korova, the droogs get their drug spiced moloko(milk)from the breast of a nude figurine. The futuristic dwelling that Alex lives in looks more like a ghetto dwelling, in his room there is a statue of Christ figures raising a clenched fist, curiously resembling our own militants. The Job like suffering Alex goes through in the hands of the totalitarian State always seem slightly put-on, not wholly believable.

At the end of the film, when Alex triumphantly announces "I was cured!", to the tune, again, of "Singing In The Rain", sung by Gene Kelly, it is obvious that Kubrick isn't describing the submission of the individual to the will of the state, or, on the other hand, the triumph of the individual over the state. I suspect he is more likely ending the film on a nicely cynical note; both Alex and his politician friend are venal and corrupt enough to use each other to achieve their own ends. A Clockwork Orange is destined to be another incredible Kubrick success, but don't let that deter you; it's good science fiction and a credible adaption of the Burgess novel. Horrorshow indeed.

-Victor Olefson

HO

HUM

There seems to be a bad case of enthusiasm sweeping fandom these days, and I'm afraid that I haven't caught it. It's only natural, I suppose, that a change-over from a serious and constructive approach to fandom to a more relaxed one isn't going to mean that people are going to lose that seriousness and constructiveness right away, but this new Excitement is showing up, for the large part, in people whose reputations weren't built on an ability to get excited. Ray Nelson, for instance, finally confided to Potlatch readers that for years he's harboured these plans for a Jiant Fandom that would encompass all hobby groups existing, and, in the same fanzine, no less, Dick Geis lets us in on his idea of an equally Jiant apa that would embrace almost 'll Fandom. Good, practical proposals, both of them, but where this zeal is becoming most evident is where fans try to combine there enthusiasm for fandom with a fanaticism for more mundane things like religion. Mike Glicksohn has admitted that he draws most of his inspiration for fanac from a belief that the Pope is a fellow fan, and Bill Kunkel, quite subtly, drew comparisons between the fore-runners of the fannish resurgence-like Metanoia-which he likened unto John the Baptist, and those new faanish fanzines which have followed in their footsteps, like his own Rats!. All of which seemed to imply, in a rather neat manner, that he was publishing one of the Jesus Christs of Fandom. (I suggest he continue by announcing that he's being forced away from it all this coming Good Friday, then Miraculously getting back into fandom two days later.)

WILL

ST. AW

But I can't, as I said, feel like I'm a part of this Enthusiastic Sweep, because I learned long ago that to show enthusiasm for anything was to show neofannishness, and I altered myself to the point where I can't get excited about anything. Oh, it was intentional at first, of course. About the same time it occurred to me that Harry Warner seemed to be making out fairly well in fandom, I noticed that his most outstanding characteristic seemed to be an unchanging ability to stay calm and blasé about everything. Less experienced fans rise every so often in veritable Everests of fanaticism, but the passion, or lack of it, that Harry Warner has can be likened more unto a level, low plateau about 10,000 feet below sea level if you want to continue the analogy. And I immediately set out to pattern myself after him. SAPS, one of the first places I intruded upon, made it all so easy by having developed a tradition that the official editor of a particular mailing print the arrival date of each contribution beside its name on the contents page, and a little experimentation with the mails gave me the information I required: I could send me zine at precisely the right time for it to get there at the last possible minute, and it invariably appeared in the bottom three of the mailing. (The other two, presumably, having chosen the same path as I.) Eager young fans like Arthur H. Rapp or F.M. Busby gave the appearance of doing the next zine the minute the mailing with their previous one arrived, but it was obvious that Will Straw couldn't fulfill the minimum requirements without a good deal of effort. (And references to Much Grunting and and Sweating and Several Cups of Coffee as necessities for getting those six pages finished added to the effectiveness.) SAPS, unfortunately, is a rather small part of fandom, even assuming, as I did, that each member was certain to tell one non-member correspondent or friend of my crash display of apathy, and the impact on fandom was rather minute. So I've expanded; I don't do letters of comment on fanzines until at least two weeks have passed since their arrival and I'm pressing for other apas to adopt a date-of-arrival listing similar to that of SAPS. I'd been under the impression for quite some time that I'd exhausted all possibilities in the field, but Harry Warner's letter of comment in Energumen #10 and its references to waiting a wonderful six weeks before commenting on #9, has given me new ambitions.

All that is fine and dandy, certainly, but the time is bound to come when I'll be interacting with a local fan club, and ploys that succeed in letters and amateur press associations can't easily be applied to in-person fanac. With that in mind, I'm currently about 3/5 of the way through preparation and rehearsal of the Straying Attention Gambit: this involves reading a fanzine at a fan gathering and giving actual, visual evidence that you're bored by what your eyes are going over, no matter how compelling the fanzine is. It's been a slow climb, up from transcripts of Sam Moskowitz' con speeches-basic, first year material-into more attention grabbing stuff, but I'm now at the point where I can read the Harp State-side and my eye will actually wander, as if of its own will, from the page at hand.

No: of which seems to be backing up my contention that fandom has deadened me, you say, because everything described above has been a Put-On-a visage, as we say in the bilingual nations of the world. But it's in my mundane life that the actual evidence has been presented to me. Two or three years ago, I would get worked up over something at the slightest provocation-ask the head of the Toronto Board of Education. I don't suppose he ever did or will make another decision in complete confidence after having received a letter I wrote him in a fit of fury one long ago afternoon

following my reading in the newspaper that he'd dropped Edgar Rice Burroughs from the Recommended Reading List of Toronto schools. Or, and this is much more convincing, inquire of any person in this area as to which event he associates most with the summer of 1968, and I'll wager it will be the unsuccessful but far-famed Great Anthropological Expedition, which I conceived in a fit of enthusiasm brought on by reading Thor Heyerdahl's account of the Kon-Tiki Expedition. I was unable to round up a crew or secure any financial backing, so it will be up to those who pick up where I left off to sail across the Niagra River in a raft and prove that the Americans originally came from Canada, but that the idea occurred to me, and dominated my thoughts for the better part of one summer is evidence inconclusive of the zeal I once had. These days, I've even lost my Political Awareness and Concern. I stayed home and watched Bedtime for Bonzo on the Saturday Afternoon Movie rather than go out with my friends and protest the Amchitka Blasts, which shows a complete turn around from the Will Straw of yesterday. (Oh, I justified my actions later, when questioned--Ronald Reagan, the star of said film, is High-Up in American politics, and, therefore, a potential enemy if the blasts did destroy the west half of Canada and we did go to war. I was, then, actually studying the opposition.)

Despite all that, I must confess that I am rather enthusiastic about a plan currently taking shape in my mind, though the nature of it may not alter at all what I've said above. It's nothing minor-like, for example, my plan to make three million dollars and film a fan-parody of Citizen Kane about Giant Publishing Tycoon Charles N. Brown--so perhaps I can be forgiven for possessing a certain amount of excitement. It will, after all, be the final ploy of the types discussed in paragraphs two and three above, and I'm hoping for some kind of success.

I'll be at the Toronto Worldcon, you see--at one of those big parties I've read about. Everyone will be there--Bobs Tucker and Bloch playing poker in one corner, for starters, and Art Rapp reciting "The Birds and the Beanies" from the table next to them. And the Ultimate Punnish Clash between Willis, Grennell, and Ackerman that was postponed from 1962 will finally be about to begin, just as soon as Bill Rostler has finished explaining the aspects of Harry Warner's sex life that he didn't dare reveal in his cartoons, and the plonker shoot-out between John Berry and the forces of Fakefannishness has reached a conclusion. With all this going on around me, I'm going to arrange it that, at one particular moment, everyone turns and looks at me.

And I'm going to fall asleep.

-Will Straw



A consummate Victorian, English to the core, bluff, pragmatic, yet sensitive and human, Anthony Trollope was one of the great novelists of the nineteenth century in England. Students of that period of English literature know him as the author of over fifty entertaining novels that are among the best records we have of that mannerly restrained age. Not because they're accurate historical reportage, but because they are filled with a blissful illusion, the image of genteel Victorian life that the Victorians wanted to see. He was the positron to Dickens's electron, by writing as he did he implies as much about the people as Dickens tells us of the social realities. Those scholars know him as an essential mind in the development of the modern novel. As we shall see, Trollope also played, or at least, came close to playing, a role they never considered.

Trollope was born in 1815. His mother was an intelligent, capable woman, his father was an eccentric, undependable, character out of Dickens brought to life. When he died, his wife supported herself and her children by writing over 114 books in 26 years. Trollope's childhood was not an easy one, it lacked security and order. That and his early career as a postal clerk did not bode well for a creative life. He worked at the G.P.O. in London for seven troubled years. Then in 1841 he was transferred to Ireland as a surveyor's clerk, and he was married there in 1844. His life took a turn for the better. Trollope began to show a previously unevidenced practical streak and with improved financial security he was able to relax and observe his society and his people. He wrote methodically, and as he reveals in his remarkably candid autobiography treated writing like any other trade. His *modus operandi* was as disciplined and orderly as the world of his novels. He wrote at a rate of one thousand words an hour, and worked regular hours each day to fill a weekly quota of pages. If he finished one novel before lunch he would start another after. He kept accurate perfect records of the income from each book. His most famous novels are the so called chronicles of Barset, an imaginary county.

The most obscure and certainly the most curious of Trollope's many novels is The Fixed Period (London, Blackwood 7 Sons, 1882, orig. pub. in "Blackwood's Magazine", Oct. 1881-March 1882) long out of print. Our first reaction is that a book about the year 1980 could not have come from a more surprising source. Indeed his biographers and critics seem shocked into silence by its very existence. They don't know what to make of it and are reduced to explaining what it isn't or in some way dismissing it in a few lines of text or in a footnote. Admittedly The Fixed Period is not a great novel, it doesn't approach Trollope's more famous books. But that doesn't mean it isn't interesting or even important.

The Fixed Period is the story of certain singular events in the small former British colony of Brittanula, as told in flashback by John Neverbend, first and last president of the Brittanulan Republic. Neverbend has been relieved of his post by a British governor, and is on board a warship on his way to exile in England.

The settlers of Brittanula were the cream of the colonists of New Zealand. They were convinced by Neverbend that the way to insure the continuing well being of their already prosperous nation was to eliminate all the old people when they reach an age to be determined by law. The Brittanulans are logical, intelligent people, and because they are young they are able to look at the issue unemotionally. After a good deal of argument, the parliament decides that at age 67 all old people will enter "the college" at Necropolis", where they will live out their last year in pleasant surroundings and be gently killed before they reach their 68th birthdays.

Neverbend's best friend Gabriel Crassweller, a rich sheep herder, is to have the honor of being the first to be "deposited". But as the day approaches, Crassweller, formerly a vigorous advocate of the plan, begins to have reservations. He is worried about his lovely daughter Eva, and fears that a neighborhood cad will marry her and inherit his property. Eva is aware of this, and although she is really in love with Neverbend's son Jack, has been pretending interest in the other young man as part of her effort to keep her father alive.

A group of young English gentlemen are visiting the capital, Gladstonopolis, to play steam powered cricket against Brittanula's best. Eva and Jack agitate against the implementation of the plan, and Jack convinces the already disturbed visitors to arrange for British intervention.

In the meantime, Crassweller has reconsidered, and for the good of the state has decided to resign himself to his fate, and submit. But on the day of deposition a British battleship appears in the capital's harbor as Crassweller is driving through the streets for the last time, the president at his side. An officer appears who stops the proceedings by threatening to destroy the city with the ship's powerful single main gun. Soon after, Neverbend is removed from office by the British. They restore the island to its colonial status and install a governor. To prevent him from fomenting a revolution, Neverbend is forced into exile. On board ship he writes his memoirs and consoles himself with hopes of popularizing his ideas in England.

Although TFP has satirical and utopian elements it is not a satire or a utopian novel. I think mainly it is most like what we now call Science Fiction. True, it lacks the emphasis on hard science and technology often associated with SF, but modern sophisticated readers of the genre know that

this association is more of a stereotype than a requirement. TFP lacks the adventure type action often found in SF, but that is not a requirement either. What TFP does have are the most important traits of SF.

An SF story starts out by positing a single premise, usually of an unusual or a fantastic nature, and building on that premise in an absolutely logical, realistic way. An SF must be internally consistent, true to itself, it doesn't break more natural laws than the premise requires, and the people in it act as naturally as so the characters in any work of fiction, the only difference being that they are reacting to and acting in unusual situations. Detailed characterization has traditionally not been very important in SF. Not because the writers thought there was anything wrong with it, but because of the limitations of the primal short story form, and because it simply wasn't the point. SF is often satirical and often utopian or anti-utopian, sometimes as a primary interest, sometimes as a background. This is not an accident. It occurs because modern SF is part of the same evolutionary chain of which I think TFP is a link. The Fixed Period has satirical, utopian, and developmental characteristics much like those of the scientific romances of its day and the true SF that was to follow it. Most significantly, Trollope develops his story in the modern (by modern I mean post 1935, not this year) science-fictional manner. He takes a genuine SF sort of premise, "the fixed period", and then imagines how real events would develop if the premises were true. He understands that just because a man has been captured by aliens, is living on Cygnus IV, has travelled in time, or is living in a society that kills its senior citizens, does not mean that he will think or act radically differently than men always have.

It is surprising that TFP lacks the technological element that would stamp it as obvious SF. For one living in the age that produced a Verne, an age of scientific ferment and industrial growth, Trollope is remarkably unimaginative in this area. The Brittanulans of 1950 live much as Trollope did. All scientific advance is represented (perhaps for satirical reasons) by power cricket playing equipment, two musical instruments, the steam tri-cycle, and a large, powerful, naval gun. However, as I've already noted, technology isn't everything in SF. Perhaps even more important than the tale of the marvelous invention has been the story of societal SF, where the science is history or sociology.

The premise has the mordant outrageousness of Swifts "modest proposal" and thereby suggests satire. Yet because Trollope tells his story with a straight face, and doesn't closely associate himself with the narrator, it is very hard to determine Trollope's own attitude to the fixed period, and the philosophy behind it. Did he choose it simply for its shock value, or because he really believed in what it suggests about old age. None of the critics can decide, and perhaps both are true. The critics are also symied when they try to understand Trollope's motives for writing this book. Cockshut makes a half-hearted attempt to argue that TFP was originally meant to be a definitive statement on death, and also notes that (yet) "here for once the ubiquitous personality of the author is excluded by a talkitive, untrollopian narrator." He argues that in a book written two years before Trollope's own death, where death has become the central subject, we might expect to find a statement of the author's feelings towards death (he had already state his beliefs), but we don't. No one dies in TFP, and death, which is a real event in the other novels, becomes an abstract, no more than a subject to debate. He feels that TFP fails as a novel and as a study of death, because Trollope has set up elaborate safeguards against personal

confession. His subject challenges him to generalize, but he evades this necessity. And so I'm afraid does Cockshut, who is little help to us. B.C.Brown does no better, saying only that TFP is an exception to Trollope's adherence to "an adult, on-centre quality" a dislike for distortion or letting one part grow out of proportion to the whole. Sadleir says nothing except to note that it was written out for Trollope by his wife Rose, and to classify it as a "Fantasia". In short, he is perplexed about it, or at least supremely uninterested in it. Like the other critics he brushes it off as not worthy of his attention.

If his critics wonder at this book for being so different from Trollope's others, they should be reminded of the basic "raison d'être" of all fiction. It is, to tell a story, and never mind how you do it. I think they are wrong in their speculation about Trollope's purpose being a definitive statement on death, the ideal society, or Britain's foreign policy. These may or may not figure in TFP but they are not its purpose. I think Trollope wrote this novel (aside from his usual businesslike reasons) to try a new area that was just at that time opening up to writers; the future. He may not have felt that he had filled up, used up, or worked out the present (though in his prolificity he was certainly making a good try) but he probably thought that it wouldn't hurt to spy out the land before he was forced into it. Another reason is that though of course he hadn't used up the present we certainly can't blame him if he was a bit bored with it. Finally, and most importantly, we should consider that there was a real trend in the 19th century to write about the future, and a surprising number of writers tried it. Whether this was an attempt to escape the problems of the present, or to profess optimism or pessimism about the future, is not at issue here. This trend did exist, and Trollope joined it because he was impressed with someone else's work or perhaps because the idea simply came to him independently and interested him.

All of Trollope's critics agree that The Fixed Period is of no importance as far as Trollope's novels are concerned and therefore of no importance at all. I think we can safely grant it some significance, at least as far as Science Fiction is concerned. By this I don't mean to magnify its importance by what Matthew Arnold called the historical fallacy. I am unable to claim that it had any direct influence on later writers, anyway. But by coincidence, happenstance, or luck, TFP is a very convenient example, an "archeo-literary" specimen illustrating the state of a genre's evolution at a moment in history, and proving the mainstream writers' interest in that genre at that time before the artificial schism that occurred in the 1920's.

The Fixed Period is not a book that I urge you to go out and read immediately, it just isn't that good, and you won't be able to find a copy anyway. But it is one of those literary curiosities that makes the study of authors and books so fascinating. It's also just the thing to cite when your "re-educating" a mundane "oh, that Buck Rogers stuff" snob. Trollope wasn't a great SF writer, but he had and has prestige, and in his own way, the essential mind.

-Moshe Feder

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Fanzines needn't restrict themselves to SF and faanish matters. Barry wanted to write something besides his editorial. So following is an article about an author and some books perhaps you should run out and read immediately. - MF

ANOTHER ESSENTIAL MIND...

by BARRY SMOTROFF

Unlike my co-editor, I do not write about a science fiction writer. Instead, I write of Kahlil Gibran. Those of you who have read Gibran will, I believe, agree with me as to my praise of Gibran. Those who have not read Gibran? I hope that this article will cause you to read and enjoy him as so many others have.

To those of you who may think that Gibran is an author known only to a few fanatical followers I present the following. Of his books (his art has been compared to Rodin and Blake) The Prophet is his greatest masterpiece. It took Gibran five drafts, starting at the age of fifteen, to write it. Since its publication in 1923, it has been translated into more than twenty languages and as of November 1969, the American edition had seen eighty five printings and the sale of three million copies.

Gibran died in 1931. His literary executrix, Barbara Young, gives this description of his funeral: "An endless stream of sorrowing humanity passed silently before the quiet form of their habibi, and there was murmured between sobs, by young and old . . . When the service was over, we who passed out between the waiting crowds saw a sight seldom seen in any western city. Hundreds of people dropped to their knees, on the sidewalks, in the streets, and there was a sound of low, hardly controlled weeping . . . The people rose and followed the cortege, and in the great city of Boston the traffic was halted for twenty minutes, . . . for this man from Lebanon. The Arabic press bears witness that never was such homage paid to any man, living or dead. From far and near the throngs of the grieving came to their Capitol city . . . Officially reported in the 'Syrian World', we find these words: 'The body was received with official pomp and ceremony. Government representatives in official dress were present at the pier, with priests and high dignitaries of the Church in their clerical robes, and a multitude of just plain people' . . . The president of Lebanon with his ministers, members of the High French Commissariat, and ranking officers from the French Admiralty attended upon this silent man, and 'all differences, social, political, and religious were forgotten'. Christians, Moslems, and Jews left the mission, and the mosque, and the synagogue, to stand beside his bier . . ."

And what does the above paragraph mean? What does it contribute to this essay? I do not know. Perhaps it shows that I am not alone in my feelings toward Gibran. Perhaps it tells you to look at Gibran's work and see what this man has done for so many. And what is my reason for liking Gibran? I think it is simply what he says and how he says it. It is difficult to talk further of Gibran. His best description is his own work, and the inherent beauty of it. So I shall give you two quotes from The Prophet, in the hope that they may show you something of that which I and others see in him.

Then said a teacher, Speak to us of Teaching.
And he said:

No man can reveal to you aught but that which lies
half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.

The astronomer may speak to you of his understanding of space, but he cannot give you his understanding.

The musician may sing to you of the rhythm which is in all space, but he cannot give you the ear which arrests the rhythm nor the voice that echoes it.

And he who is versed in the science of numbers can tell you of the regions of weight and measure but he cannot conduct you thither.

For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man.

And even as each one of you stands alone in God's knowledge, so must each one of you be alone in his knowledge of God and his understanding of the earth.

That was the chapter on teaching. Here is the chapter on Children.

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you, but not from you.

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies, but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backwards nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with his might, that his arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so he loves also the bow that is stable.

Those are two chapters of twenty-eight. The others are: The Coming of the Ship, The Farewell, and, On Love, On Marriage, On Giving, On Eating and Drinking, On Work, On Joy and Sorrow, On Houses, On Clothes, On Buying and Selling, On Crime and Punishment, On Laws, On Freedom, On Reason and Passion, On Pain, On Self-Knowledge, On Friendship, On Talking, On Time,

On Good and Evil, On Prayer, On Pleasure, On Beauty, On Religion, and, On Death. Or, in toto, On Life. I am sure that there is something among the chapter listings that will interest you. Pick up a copy of the book and read that chapter. You'll find I think, that you will then open the book to the front and start reading.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever," and Gibran is a joy forever to those who read him.

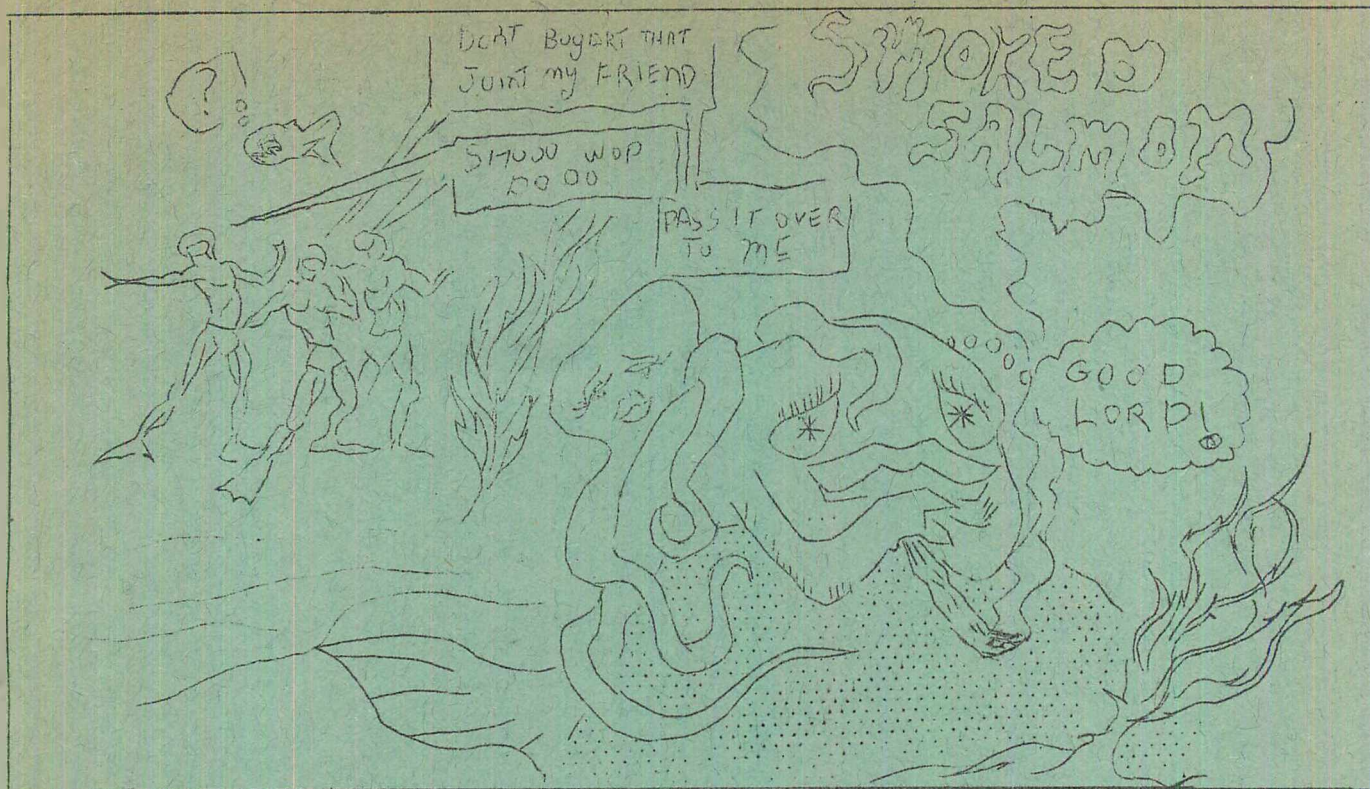
BOOKS BY KHLIL GIBRAN

The Madman - 1918
The Forerunner - 1920
The Prophet - 1923
Sand and Foam - 1926
Jesus The Son of Man - 1928
The Earth Gods - 1931
The Wanderer - 1932*
The Garden of the Prophet - 1933*
Prose Poems - 1934*
Nymphs of the Valley - 1948*
Spirits Rebellious - 1948*
A Tear and A Smile - 1950*

* Published Posthumously

I have in this essay talked only of Gibran's writings, and then only of The Prophet. But Gibran wrote both prose and poetry. And he was an artist of high ability. For instance, there is the story of his picture of the head of Jesus, . . . but I could talk for pages. And, unfortunately, I do not have the room to. But buy his books. They are not expensive, and are illustrated with his own drawings.

- Barry Smotroff



Harry Warner, Jr.
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People who produce dual-edited fanzines always create tension and insecurity complexes and indecision crises for me. How should the loc be addressed, which address should it go to, which editor should get top billing, how will

the recipients take the "you's" in the loc, and such problems mount up. To make it worse, I'm never very good at distinguishing the paper personalities when two fans whom I'm not familiar with suddenly do something together. To this day I'm not certain that I have Bill Bowers and Bill Mallardi properly sorted out in my mind and it hasn't been too long since i congratulated myself on having at last attained full confidence in ability to remember that Terry Carr isn't Pete Grahm and vica versa.

A couple of comments come to mind about your title. For one thing, when you resorted to the random choice from a dictionary system, in the search for a title, you were following an excellent precedent. That's how Walt Willis chose a few of his galactically famous fanzines titles. (He didn't like the first word he pierced with a pin and did it again, then years later had an attack of conscience and used the original first choice for another fanzine. You know how violent these Irish become on occasion, and that undoubtedly accounts for Walt's use of a deadly weapon inatead of the naked hand approach you people used. If you go on to create fanzines as famous as Hyphen, Slant, and Pamphrey, you have a pleasent future in store for you.

Islandia received some attention from fanzines when it was a new book. But fanzines didn't devote nearly as much attention so long ago to books as they do today and this volume hasn't been mentioned very often in fanzines down through the years. I seem to have a hazy recollection that it had some influence on the California fans who created a fantasy world of their own,

Coventry, developed it jointly, and even had a feud over the handling of it. It would be interesting to know if the book had any influence on Professor Tolkien or on the science fiction writers who have mapped out elaborate backgrounds for large novels or series of stories in more recent years. And, in turn, I wonder if Sinclair Lewis could have had something to do with Austin Wright's project? Lewis was near the peak of his fame after Wright's death, but Wright might have heard about Lewis' system of working out many details of the imaginary city and state in which so many of his novels were placed.

Something mentioned in passing in this review caused me to do some pondering, the reference to the future fan who might run out of reading matter after a war had stopped the output of fresh material. I got to wondering how long it takes the new enthusiast of science fiction right now to read all the science fiction worth reading. That is, all the stories that were generally considered to be the best of the year, all the fiction by the most famous authors even including their worst novels, all the fiction around which special subfandoms were born, all the classics like the stories of Verne and Wells, all the stories that have special interest as the origins of movies or inspiration for much greater works, all the best juvenile science fiction, and so on. I don't see how anyone with a normal amount of spare time for reading could do it in less than two or three years, even if he abstained from all other reading material during that time. If World War Three doesn't come for a couple more decades, we may reach a situation in which almost nobody will be able to talk familiarly on any major science fictional topic, simply because the backlog of important fiction has grown too large for a person to assimilate without devoting his life to systematic reading.

Mike Glicksohn
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It seems that Bill's worries that your first issue would be too serious were groundless. Even without his article you have a majority of the lighter fannish writing.

The usual first editorials (I've just been prompted by Bill's comments to dig out a copy

of my own first issue. It wasn't quite as bad as he describes, but the editorial did have the usual "How it appeared", "Who to blame", and "What will it print" sections. But clichéd as they may be, they're really a necessary evil.) about which I can say little. I hope you get the response you'd like, but don't be too disappointed if it takes a few issues for the locs to start coming in. I imagine Harry Warner and I will write to you and if you used the RATS! mailing list you'll probably get quite a few other letters as well. But lack of response is the commonest complaint among all faneds today, so be prepared for the worst.

Coediting is a fun way of publishing. It's even more fun when one editor is an unreconstructed serious fan and the other a dyed-in-the-hyphen fannish fan. I hope you can work things out between the two . . . er . . . three of you. (Or is it four? Argghh!) [Approximately 3.14159265358]

I must take exception to Bill's remarks about first issues however. He overgeneralizes somewhat. There have been several zines which produced quite creditable first issues, primarily because the faneds had the patience to wait until they knew a little about mimeos, about fanzines and about fandom. Jay Zaremba's ESSENCE, for example, or Susan's ASPIDISTRA. For that matter, he said in modest humility, the first issue of my own fanzine, ENERCUMEN, was quite well received. It featured an offset cover by Alicia

Austin, an offset fold-out by Jack Gaughan and a variety of quite well written material. And it had a modest print run of about 175 and ran a sensible 36 pages. The difference was, I think, that I waited until I not only knew a bit about fanzine production and fanzines, but until I knew enough talented artists and writers that I didn't have to have my little sister (not that I have one) write my reviews nor the famicat scratch out my illos. Of course, since then I've let out all the stops and am now printing an astronomical 250 copies of each issue. Such is fame.

Jerry Kaufman
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. . . Some of the drawings by P. Jordan were rather interesting, but I couldn't make out the detail too well. (Some of Jordan's work however, I thought was rather ugly, like that on the first page.)

I'm afraid that the material was the real disappointment, since I thought Bill's article at least, would be interesting. Instead it proved to be a letter of advice on technical matters. I may go back and read it when I'm intending to do a fanzine, but for now I found it boring.

Moshe's editorial and supplement (why wasn't it all in one piece? Find yourselves with an extra page to fill?) was a bit clumsily written and not too amusing. Barry's editorial was another bore for me, although I think that direction might be amusing, i.e. having Moshe be the serious editorial writer, stating policy and perhaps doing editorial-type musings (Is Science Fiction In A Rut?) and having Barry doing the amusing tales of Queens fandom. I just didn't find listing every suggested name for the fanzine amusing. As for Moshe's summary of Islandia, well, it wasn't much of a summary, introduction, or analysis. I thought it an interesting, and, in places very good book. It's worth reading (though if I had been editor I'm sure I would have attempted to cut it another hundred pages) and deserves to be described at greater length and in greater depth. (In fact, it may have been such an article in a fanzine that first helped to draw me to it.)

Aljo Svoboda
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I'm sorry to say I didn't enjoy Paul Jordan's art very much. Maybe it was partly due to the tracing, but the illos reeked of comix fandom to me, and that's something I don't care to be reminded of. It's funny,

two months ago I was busy admonishing others not to be so prejudiced against comix fandom, and now, I've succumbed to the same sort of bigotry myself. I suppose my main point against them (the comix fen) is that it takes money to become one in the first place. It's a collecting fandom, basically, though tainted with SF literary fandom. Collecting fandoms tend to be much more impersonal than literary fandoms. I think, as evidenced by the comix adzines that claim thousands of people on their mailing list.

Gargh, a sercon fanzine? No, no, no! At least, if you do turn sercon entirely, I will probably do something drastic. What, I don't know yet. Actually, your only sercon piece this, that review of Islandia, was more like a book report or a publisher's blurb than a review or criticism, I mean the book must've had some weak points, right? (I haven't read it meself). Hmmm . . . I donno if writing is all that important to all authors. They could survive if not allowed to write, even if they might suffer occasional pangs of "hunger", to use your own metaphor. You're right: it's the readers who would suffer, until they finally decided to start providing for themselves, as fen now do, in part.

[Both you and Jerry Kaufman have misconstrued my intentions in writing the "Essential Mind". It is not really meant to be a critique, a summary, or a review, but frankly - a paean. Overenthusiastic praise for books and authors that deserve more attention. Books and authors that are interesting, rare, important, or simply among my favorites. See what you make of this and future issue's articles. - MF]

Will Straw
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Canada

Thanks for PLACEBO 1, though I must admit to a good deal of disappointment when I opened it and saw your name. In the last RATS! Bill Kunkel mentioned forthcoming faanish fanzines from a whole slew of people like Rich Brown, and PLACEBO didn't have a return address I recognized as being that of

Katz, Couch, or Kunkel, but was from NYC, so I ripped it open with no small enthusiasm. I enjoyed PLACEBO quite a bit, but it's crossed my mind once or twice that either of you might be hoaxes, particularly as a result of both you and your co-editor's names being W.C. Fieldsian. I have an issue of OOPSLA in which Walter Willis talked about an Orville Mosher, then went on to define words like "mosh" ("To engage in activity of a bureaucratic or pseudo-organizational nature") and "mosher" ("One who moshes", naturally) and it seems the kind of reference any of the New York fan desirous of creating a hoax would use. (What is Troff [The Real Old Fashioned Fandom - BS] and why is Barry its Secret Master Of? [Just lucky I guess - BS]) [Tell you what Will. You believe in us, and we'll believe in you]

I can't see at all how "PLACEBO" ended up as your title with so many other better suggestions from which to choose, though I'm pleased in that I'll be able to make a choice from among the suggestions you were given when my existing supply of fanzine titles isn't adequate to meet the number of fanzines I'm engaged in publishing. But some, like "Ersatz" or "Yngling" are so much better than "PLACEBO" that I'm croggled by the final decision.

Bill Kunkel was funny at times, but I hardly think he's reached the position of being enough of an Old Fan and Tired that he can turn around and start publishing advice columns in the way that people like Buck Coulson or, say, Bob Tucker do. And there are so many unmentioned things that first issue editors could and should do to protect themselves that never seem to get written down - publishing in ditto, for instance, so that you know most of the copies will have faded in ten years, and that any enemy you make won't be able to go back and reprint one of your early poorer pieces of writing for a large audience, to get at you. (I'm running into this problem now, with letters of comment I wrote a year or two ago turning up in half-forgotten fanzines that haven't seen an issue in that time, and setting me back a couple of years any time I seem to be making any headway. I make a habit of being ashamed of anything I wrote more than two or three days in the past, but I cringe to death over letters more than a month old.) [Hmmm, it's been about three months now, sorry about that Will.]

I don't know what a sinuously convoluted syntax is, and I don't know if that's good or bad (my dictionary is downstairs) but any non-teacher in public school who used to read anything I handed in, and I was among those, generally agreed that it was all so much bull shit. I've always been fairly widely read, and I'd purposely use pseudo-professional techniques in an essay to suck in the teachers, and it almost always succeeded. (I often felt guilty because what I wrote looked like much more work went into it than actually did, but I think there's a vast difference between bull shit that reads like bull shit and bull shit that reads like something drafted and

revised four or five times and that learning to be able to do the latter was as much work as learning to do a good straight essay.)

I'm gonna finish this, then go down and look up "syntax" and "sinuously convoluted", though it sounds obscene enough that it might not be in my Oxford. ("It was an accident that I got her pregnant; that syntax I used - it was sinuously convoluted, and I didn't notice.")

Rick Sneary
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The cover was interesting . . . -- That is, if it isn't an electric stencil? How did you get all that near solid black . . . (If it is an electric stencil, your artist can't draw a straight line) / What's the connection? /

It was not clear what was happen . . . It looks like a Fool in a hand made hot air blimp, dumping a load of something on someone with glee. . . The mechanism for doing so is not clear though . . . much less the reason. / It was an interpretation of a scene from Ellison's "Repent Harlequin . . ." /

One thing, you have probably set a record as to the percentage of a first issue devoted to talking about the fanzine itself. . . . Slightly less than 90%. . . I'm a little surprised that Kunkel wrote such a basic How To article on the subject. . . I don't disagree with him in the least, in what he says. . . But the fact is that most of the people who will read it allready know those truths. . . and those who need to know them, rarely see them, or listen if they do. . .

The account of how you selected the name was fairly amuseing, and suggest you have an ability to write, and forcast better things to come. I'm a little suprised you didn't mention what a placebo is. . . . or maybe I'm wrong, and other people didn't have to look it up. . . - I rather like Chronique as a title. . . It does have a nice sound to it, even if it has less meaning.

Dave Szurek
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Y'know Barry, at first I didn't think I was going to like PLACEBO 1. Why? Well, you see, I handled it in the traditional manner of reading stuff in order of appearance; and as much as I hate to say it, Feder's editorial just didn't quite make it, reason being his late attempts at humour. I can't put down Moshe completely, as "The Essential Mind" proved him to be a good witer. Notice I said good "writer" not good "humorist". The result of this was that the editorial came out more silly than funny. As long as he sticks to serious writing, he's all set, but when he tries to be a clown he falls flat on his face.. Gripe aired, I'll move on to pleasanter words.

Unlike Moshe's editorial I muchly enjoyed yours. The trying ordeal of choosing a title made for very amusing reading. I rather like "Yngling", "Medusa's Maidenhead", and "Apocalyptic Orgasm", but "PLACEBO" is still better than "Werefan" or "The Gotterdammerung Gazette".

Of course, several times in the past, fanzines have sprung up unknowingly bearing the title of some deceased fan publication. This seems predicable enough when its happened to more conservative titles (thankfully, those types aren't used too often) but a little more amazing when its occured around titles derived from some little spoken, obscure word, so it appears

that the only recourse that a fan ed. seems to have is to utilize words he himself has made up. Of course too, some fan ed. may some day be pioneering enough to discard a title whatsoever, and merely refer to each issue as "Number One", "Number Two", et al. [Ruth Berman does this, the latest being NO.9. Also, I hate to be picky, but "et al" is used for people only, "etc." being correct here. - BS] [And I bet you all thought I was the finicky one! -MF] Another idea would be for each ed. to simply name his book after himself, thereby turning PLACEBO into "The Magazine of Moshe Milton Feder and Barry Smotroff" as an example.

Ah, Kunkel - my fondness for his utterly personalized writing grows more every time I see it. Not only was "Keeping Up With the Jones" highly entertaining, but also brought up what I consider, a few very good points. In my book, one of the lowest points of first issues is that there is no letter-col, but then I'm a bit of a loc fiend anyway. I hope PLACEBO doesn't end up too sercon. I much prefer the faanish to the sercon.

Hank Davis
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I can't agree with Bill Kunkel that you can't have a second (ish) without a first." He just doesn't have enough faith in American ingenuity and the indomitable spirit of Man. Just publish your first issue with the number "2" proudly flying from

the masthead, and everyone will assume they missed the firstish. In one: swell-foop, you will escape the "first ish" syndrome. No fanzine reviewer will write of it, "not bad for a first issue." Curious fans will send you sticky quarters for the firstish ("if you have any copies left", they will write) much more readily than they will send you a quarter for the nextish. You will, naturally, not have copies of the firstish, and your coffers will swell; removing all financial problems of getting the nextish out. If you really want to pull a fast one, you can run a letter column. There are three types of letters you can run.

You can corner absent minded fans by sending them a postcard noting that you are almost ready to publish the secondish, and you don't want to be pushy but if they want to send a LoC in time to get into that ish, they had better step on it. (Pardon my slang.) They will search in their piles of fanzines for the firstish, will not find it of course, then, too embarrassed to admit that they lost it, will write you a letter which makes a few vague comments about the firstish, then goes on to some other subject entirely.

The second type of fan is the completely unprincipled one, such as I. You notify fans of this stripe that you need a LoC on a nonexistent ish, and they will be glad to join in the hoax. In my case, you would have the additional advantage that my LoCs are so confused that no one will be able to figure out what the hell I'm writing about. This second type has one disadvantage, - he may try to blackmail you later. But this can easily be handled by sending him a fanzine stapled shut with a curare tipped staple. (I, of course, where gloves while opening staples . . .)

Finally you will write letters to your own zine, then attack names of real fen to them. The trick is that each name will be that of a fan who has recently gafiated, hence will not note that he is an involuntary party to a hoax. This will make the nonexistent first ish even more talked-about, for it must have been a boss zine to cause gafiating fans to pause long enough to write a letter to it.

This sort of skulduggery can save you from the poorhouse in your old age too. As the years pass, that firstish will become more famous, more desperately sought after, until fantastic prices are offered by collectors for a copy. Then, you will put together that formerly nonexistent firstish, let it sit around for a few years more until the paper gathers reputable looking staple rust stains and yellowing, then sell copies on the quiet to those collectors for those fabulous prices. And your only worry will be if you should get a Cadillac (to support American industry) or a Mercedes-Benz.

If you want to be a bit more honest about it, never minding that you may become a burden on your descendants or the taxpayers in your declining years, you might just name the zine "PLACEBO 2". See, the "2" is part of the name. Since it's the firstish, you don't need to put a "1" on the cover or in the colophon, right? If you want to be almost superhumanly honest, so that butter in your mouth not only doesn't melt, it freezes so low that it becomes a superconductor, then put a "1" after PLACEBO 2. Just spell it out in Sanscrit or in the language of lost Atlantis. (there are organizations around the country who will be delighted to show you what the word for "one" looked like in lost Atlantis. Be sure to use the version that looks most like an abstract design . . .) When you publish your secondish you will decide to change the name of zine - to "Chronique" or something. And you will naturally start the numbering over, calling it CHRONIQUE 1. But, you will explain in the editorial, the issue is not actually a firstish. And you have again escaped the firstish syndrome . . .

In a more serious vein, I don't agree with Bill's comments about reviews, either. Obviously, he sees reviews in fanzines in a different light than I. His comment that reviewers in the small fanzines will be duplicating the work of "the top reviewers in the Big Fanzines" is a bit dated now, but may have been written before SF REVIEW folded. Since then, there haven't been all that many zines pubbing reviews, what with such old standbys as SCYTHROP (formerly AUSTRALIAN SF REVIEW) and SPECULATION continuing only spasmodically, and most new zines joining the crusade against book reviews. [Bill tells us that his col was written when there were more zines pubbing SF book reviews.] Besides, at least forme, reviews in fanzines do not operate as either important criticism, or as shopping lists. (For one thing I try to buy everything; and read it, though I am hampered by being a slow reader) I see them as the reaction of a fan to a book. And I see them as being just as fannish as the reaction of a fan to a trip to a dentist, getting a haircut, taking a bus ride through a ghetto, talking with the operator of a health foods store, serving jury duty, etc. (All real examples, which I have read in fannish zines in the last year, incidentally . . .)

Lane Lambert
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You got a laudable first issue together, with enough meat to leave naivete in the alley. Hmmm - seems every firstish I've seen has an editorial in which the editor explains How The Fanzine Came To Be and some bit about about its policy on material.

Sadly, there is hardly any way around this, except perhaps - and some degree better - a longer colophon. Yeah, a colo is the best solution [It wouldn't be practical because of space problems. Actually, most fmz use a combination colophon and masthead. Technically the colo should include only info on the printing and typesetting process.]

Moshe, I dig your column title. A visual name, in an abstract sort of way. I looked at the title and began seeing twisting, psychedelic rainbow snakes and streams of color. Far out!

By the way, which name do you go by? Identifying "Convolutions" by Moshe in the contents page and by Milton on page 4 does cause confusion. [It's a long story. As a child I always used Moshe, and that is how I think of myself. I had always assumed that Milton was my middle name. (I've never seen my birth certificate, and my mother couldn't remember, or at least, couldn't convince me that she was sure about which name was put down first). Finally, around the time that I was applying to colleges, getting a driver's license, and registering at the draft board, I decided that Milton was indeed my first name, and I so indicated on the various forms. That was a decision that I now regret. Anyway, all my friends call me Moshe, and that is the name I'll be using here from now on.]

I jotted down several comments on "The Essential Mind", none of which really dealt with the central point. Do you think, really, that following World War Three, fans would even contemplate reading? (assuming any fans were left.) Unfortunately, I'm shining a flashlight on a rather small nit.

Seriously now - the opening page of "The Essential Mind" was another thing to which I readily related. At the moment I possess about 70 unread SF novels - stuff from Syndic and A Case of Conscience to The Flying Sorcerers and Ground Zero Man. The thousands of pages I want to read, versus the seeming minutes I have in which to read, are croggling.

Seth McEvoy
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It's damn hard to write a LoC on a first issue of a clubzine, [See my editorial - MF] Especially when so much of it is devoted to being a first issue. The only thing that wasn't first issue was the review of Islandia. I read about half of Islandia this summer, and enjoyed it, but I haven't heard anybody else on it. My only gripe with the review is the use of the word "Utopia" - I suppose that its unavoidable, but Thomas More took the term and used it one way, and everybody took its meaning not from his meaning, but from their judgement about his book. "Utopia" is merely an anglicisation of "ou topos", or Greek for "no place". And from this Islandia is certainly utopian. [I agree with your implied analysis of More's book, but where the word itself is concerned I'm afraid we have to accept the common connotations, even though they conflict with the intentions of the coiner.- MF]

Somehow I never find it hard to come up with zine titles. My best one yet is LIBEL, the name I use for my SAPS work. Other favorites of mine are GENERAL CHUNTERINGS (swiped from a Ken Slater column in VECTOR), TYPHON MED FHE FHAKED (for MYRIAD, before I quit), and THE LAST OF THE CLICQUOT CLUB ESKIMOS.

Loren MacGregor
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Seattle, Wa. 98115

Dear MMF & BS

...it a minute. Somehow, "BS" doesn't look too good as a salutation. Maybe I should change it . . .

Ah, the hell with it. To get on with this, it seems I'm being inundated

by New York Fanzines - yours is the fifth I've received recently. Well, keep carrying on, as Joyce Katz might say.

I just discovered I type better with one finger, so maybe I should carry a "sugar daddy" sucker in my hand every time I write to fanzines.

At any rate I received PLACEBO whole and relatively unharmed. It upholds the tradition of first ish fanzines in being very fannish, very dis jointed, and poorly mimeoed, but in spite of that, it was interesting. I can't say that the idea of a sercon fan is particularly appealing at the moment, since I've just gone through firstish throes of agony with the most incredibly neofannish chap imaginable. He's very intent on becoming a BNF by publishing Lasting Works of Art and Literature, thereby taking the SF and Fantasy world by storm.

A few years ago, when I wanted to start a fanzine, I searched and searched (Something like "searched") for a title, discarding one after the other. First it was going to be "Focus" (This was before I knew of either LOCUS or FOCAL POINT) and was going to be primarily a film-book-record review thing. (I was into all three at the time, and "Focus on Filmmaking" sort of appealed to me). Then it was "Antares" with a cut line that said "At the Zenith of Science Fiction." Fortunately, that idea too sank without a trace. I finally settled on "Triandro", because it didn't mean a thing, except in my own mind. I never did get it into print, however, because I found out you needed money to publish a fanzine, and I never had any.

I've never read Islandia, though I've had a copy of it for several years - I've just never gotten around to it. But yours is the second review of the book I've read, the first having a totally negative view of the subject, considering it the most monumental bit of garbage in the last 20/30 years. With two such opposed viewpoints, I'll have to read at least part of it to get my own opinion. Be sure you get a good piece past that slow opening - MF

I'll leave you with these words of wisdom: "Exactly what is Flushing?"

WAHF: Lewis Russel Chauvenet, Stephen Gregg, Gordon and Rebecca Linzer, and Steve and Sue Scheiber.

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WE TRADE _____
WE'D LIKE TO TRADE _____
HOW ABOUT AN ARTICLE _____
HOW ABOUT A LOC _____
ARE YOU THERE? _____
HOW ABOUT A REVIEW _____
HOW ABOUT SOME ILLOS ✓ _____
LOOK FOR EGOBOO _____

NO MATTER WHICH LINE ON THE LEFT
THERE IS CHECKED - IF YOU HAVE A
FANZINE WE ARE NOT AWARE OF AND
YOU WOULD LIKE TO TRADE - PLEASE
LET US KNOW.

